

## From Illinois to Montana in 1866: The Diary of Perry A. Burgess

*Edited by Robert G. Athearn*

THE YEARS immediately following the Civil War saw thousands of young men hurrying westward, anxious to take part in the gold rush then in progress throughout the Rocky Mountain area. A large part of the emigration was in the direction of the Montana mines, which were reported to be fabulously rich. Although gold had been discovered earlier in Montana, few "paying" mines were in operation until the sixties.<sup>1</sup> As news of the various strikes spread, men poured into Montana from all directions. There were several ways to get into the northern mines country: up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, the head of navigation, and then overland for two or three hundred miles; northward from Fort Hall, located on the Oregon Trail; up the Columbia River through northern Idaho and into Montana by way of the Bitterroot country. By 1865 Montana had a population of about 60,000, most of whom were engaged in mining. It was a dependent population, which procured the larger part of its supplies from outside sources, and therefore needed the best possible means of transportation.<sup>2</sup>

In 1865 plans were made for a road which was to run in a northwesterly direction from Fort Laramie, around the eastern end of the Big Horn Mountains, and then to the Yellowstone River and into the Gallatin Valley. This was the route which had been followed by John Bozeman, with emigrant trains, in 1863 and 1864. In the spring of 1866 the Army began preparations for protection of the Bozeman route by ordering the establishment of a series of forts between Fort Laramie and the Yellowstone River. Fort Reno, at the headwaters of the Powder River, was enlarged; Fort Philip Kearney was located about a hundred miles northwest of this point; Fort C. F. Smith was built on the Bighorn River to guard the entrance to the Yellowstone Valley.<sup>3</sup>

The years of 1866 and 1867 saw violence and bloodshed along this new military road to Montana. At a treaty negotiation held at Fort Laramie in June, 1866, the commissioners had insisted that the Indians occupying the area of the proposed military posts grant the right of establishment to the Army. While the question was being argued,

<sup>1</sup> See a discussion of the Grasshopper Creek strike and others in Charles S. Warren, "The Territory of Montana," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, II (Helena, 1896), 63, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Grace Raymond Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, I (Cleveland, 1922), 201-35.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill G. Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier* (Helena, 1942), 118.

Colonel Henry B. Carrington and his troops, en route to the north country, passed through Fort Laramie. The Indians, seeing that the forts were going to be built with or without their permission, withdrew from the council and presently went on the warpath, determined to preserve their plains domain with its rich stock of buffalo.<sup>4</sup> The three forts—Reno, Philip Kearney, and C. F. Smith—were practically under a state of siege during their entire existence as guardians of the road. By the spring of 1868, General Grant was obliged to issue orders which provided for the abandonment of the forts, and by mid-summer of that year most of the materials and stores were hauled away.<sup>5</sup> The Indian menace and the existence of other routes had resulted in the closing of the Bozeman Trail.<sup>6</sup>

It was along this historic route, in the significant year 1866, that Perry Burgess made his way to Montana in the employ of his uncles, Mansel and Lewis Cheney. After a stay of about a year and a half in that remote territory he returned to his home at Lena, Illinois. He had failed to strike it rich in the "land of gold," as he referred to Montana, and had been obliged to make his living herding cattle and working at various odd jobs. Nevertheless the West intrigued him, and within a few years he was in Colorado trying his luck, unsuccessfully, at placer mining near Hahn's Peak. He later homesteaded nearby, at Steamboat Springs, and when the Milner Bank was organized there in 1889 he became its cashier.<sup>7</sup> He remained in the Steamboat Springs locality until his death at the turn of the century.

## THE DIARY<sup>8</sup>

March 29, 1866. The long looked for day having at length arrived, I picked up my dunnage and we viz. my uncle Mansel Cheney, his wife, three children and myself bid goodbye to our friends and started on our journey toward the land of gold. Not wishing to go through on my own hook, I have hired to Mansel for \$25.00 per month the through trip to Montana. We start[ed] from home with two wagons, one pair of mules to each wagon. To-day we travel[ed] to the Mis-

<sup>4</sup> Report of N. G. Taylor, Commissioner to the Secretary of the Interior, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 13 (July 12, 1867) [Serial 1308], 3.

<sup>5</sup> Report of General W. T. Sherman, Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 40th Cong., 3rd Sess., *House Exec. Docs.*, Vol. I [Serial 1367], 3.

<sup>6</sup> "The new route to Montana by Fort Phil. Kearney is unnecessary. All the supplies and emigration now going there is up the Missouri to Fort Benton, or by the southern or former route. When the Union Pacific railroad extends to the base of the Rocky Mountains, which will be very soon, there can be no public good obtained by garrisoning Fort Laramie or the posts north of it." N. B. Buford, Special Commissioner to E. M. Stanton, June 6, 1867, in Letter of the Secretary of the Interior, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 13 (June 6, 1867) [Serial 1308], 60.

<sup>7</sup> *Steamboat Pilot* (Steamboat Springs, Colorado), July 27, 1934; Charles H. Leckenby, *The Tread of Pioneers* (Steamboat Springs, 1945), 14, 188.

<sup>8</sup> The manuscript of Burgess' diary was made available to the editor by Mrs. Walter H. Buckingham of Boulder, Colorado. In reproducing it the author's vagaries of spelling and grammar have been preserved.

Mississippi River and stopped for the night at the town of Savannah. The road we travel[ed] over to-day was very hilly, the day was warm and pleasant and the snow, which was six inches deep this morning has nearly all disappeared. At noon to-day I ate a large piece of cake and some apples which my dear, kind mother put in my pocket this morning. I think Savannah is a pretty hard place from the number of doggerys it supports. Distance travelled to-day 27 mi.

March 30. We intended to have cross[ed] the Mississippi this morning; but the ice was running so that we could not get over until late in the afternoon, when we were set across to Sabula, Iowa. There we sent for Uncle Lyman Cheney who was superintending a job of chopping a few miles below town. He came late in the evening after I had retired and I did not see him until next morning, when he made arrangements for joining us at Plattsmouth [Plattsmouth] and going to Montana with us. It seems quite natural for me to make blunders for this morning while harnessing a span of mules I put one of the collars on wrong side to and could not for the life of me tell how the blamed thing was 'til some one modestly suggested the propriety of taking it off and putting it on right side to. We put up for the night at Sabula. Distance to-day 3½ miles.

March 31. Hitched up and started on our journey this morning, crossed deep creek at Deep Creek Mills and stopped at Spragueville where lives Dr. Cheney, (Levi) to make him a farewell visit. In the evening I was playing on my violin for their amusement, a few of the young folks came and danced until 12 o'clock. The country over which we travelled to-day was very hilly, destitute of timber and tolerably well improved. The wind blew hard and from the N.W. and although it thawed fast and was very disagreeable riding. Distance to-day 15 mi.

Apr. 1. Left Spragueville late in the forenoon and travelled to Mequoketa [Maquoketa], put up for the night together with a number of fellow travellers and the evening passed pleasantly away in telling stories and adventures. Country poorly timbered, hilly and not very well improved, weather warm, cloudy and has the appearance of rain this evening. Distance 18 mi.

Apr. 2. Rolled out from Mequoketa this morning and travelled to Monmouth. The country along our route was well timbered and watered and tolerably well improved, although hilly. We crossed several fine creeks to-day. The weather was warm, rain[ed] a little this morning but clear and pleasant afternoon with the exception of the roads which were very bad on account of the frost going out. Heard frogs croaking for the first time this year. Distance 12 mi. to-day.

Apr. 3. Left Monmouth and went to Wyoming, a distance of 8 miles and took dinner with a couple of men who were going out into the western part of Iowa on a trapping expedition, who over took us and stopped for noon. After dinner we hitched up and traveled ten miles, put up for the night at a farm house. The day was pleasant with the exception of a little rain this morning, roads very bad and

country, prairie some what rolling and improved. Distance to-day 18 mi.

Apr. 4. Hitched up and travelled to Wyoming [?], passed through the fine, flourishing little city of Aromosa [Anamosa]. The roads were very muddy and the country low, level and sandy. The weather was cloudy and uncomfortably cold for travelling. Wind N.W. Saw some men plowing to-day. Distance to-day 17 mi.

Apr. 5. Passed through the beautiful town of Marion and also Valley City which is situated on the east side of Cedar river at Cedar Rapids. Country very sand[y], the same drifted like snow, in some places around the fences. Crossed Cedar River at the Rapids, went three miles farther and put up for the night at a farm house. The country over which we passed to-day was well timbered, well watered, well improved and some hilly. The day was very cold, froze all day. Wind N.W. Distance travelled to-day 20 mi.

Apr. 6. Travelled to-day over a fine prairie country, not much improved and poorly timbered. Put up three miles east of Marengo. Weather cold, wind N.W. Distance to-day 19 mi.

Apr. 7. Passed through Marengo, took a lunch by the way, afternoon went through Brooklyn, crossed the Iowa River near Marengo. Country well timbered and watered, but poorly improved. Day beautiful and roads good, saw many prairie fires burning in different directions. Distance to-day 30 mi.

Apr. 8. Pulled out early this morning and passed through the town of Grinell [Grinnell] and put up for the night at the city of Newton. The country travelled over was mostly prairie and well improved. The roads were good and the day fine. Distance to-day 32 mi.

Apr. 9. Left Newton and journeyed until noon. We then pitched our tent for the first time. The country we passed over to-day was hilly and poorly improved. Passed by two steam saw mills this afternoon. Day was cloudy with rain this afternoon. Dis. 12 mi.

Apr. 10. Lay over to-day. I went hunting and shot three wild ducks and a couple of large hawks. Day warm and pleasant. Vegetation begins to start.

Apr. 11. Broke up camp, passed through the cities of Mitchell and Des Moines, the capitol of Iowa. It is a large and flourishing town to be situated so far from railroad and steamboat navigation. We saw a house burning out in the country. The weather was fine and the roads good, considering the roughness of the country. I shot three prairie hens to-day. Distance 26 mi.

Apr. 12. Travelled to the city of Winterset. The country was hilly and poorly improved but well timbered. Passed in sight of two steam saw mills. The day was cold and windy. Distance to-day 31 mi.

Apr. 13. Hitched up and travelled to Springville. Country prairie, no timber and not much improved. Saw large prairie fires burning. Distance to-day 28 mi.

April 14. Left Springville, travelled all day over an unimproved prairie country and camped for the night in a piece of woods. Roads good and day cold. Distance 25 mi.

April 15. Broke up camp and travelled 15 miles to Louis. Nooned. Hitched up, went 18 miles, stopped for the night at a farm house. Country prairie, not much improved. Roads good and to-day pleasant.

April 16. Traveled till noon, eat our dinner and then travelled till sundown and stopped at a farm house for the night. Day very warm and the wind blew furiously all day from the south. Country hilly and people have to dig very deep for water in this part of the state and crib up their wells with plank or sticks, there being no stone. The water is of an inferior nature when they get it, being rily and disagreeable to the taste. Distance to-day 25 miles.

April 17. Hitched up and travelled until three o'clock when we came to the Missouri River, passed through Glennwood [Glenwood] 7 miles east of the Missouri. It commenced raining and as we reached the river we were obliged to wait an hour or so until the ferry boat came and set us over to Plattsmouth, Nebr. territory. The river was very swift and muddy and the bank kept dropping down as the current of water undermined it. At Plattsmouth I was introduced to my Uncle Fred Burgess whom I had not seen for 21 years. The country we traveled over today was hilly, but well timbered. Distance to-day 20 mi.

Stayed in Plattsmouth 7 days. Was joined by an uncle and a couple of brothers-in law of his and another fellow viz: Lewis Cheney,<sup>9</sup> Lucien Rogers, Wm. Blair and Wm. G. Blair. Plattsmouth is a dirty place and drinking, fighting, etc. are the principle amusements, there was two shooting brawls during my stay there. At one of them there were 30 or 40 shots fired and no body hurt although one drunken man in crossing the street fell down and scratched his face a little and stoutly maintained that he had been scratched with a bullet or knife but did not know which. Lewis and Mansel Cheney entered into partnership to buy stock together to drive to Montana and hired Lucien and the two Blairs to help drive across the plains.

April 24. Traded one span of mules for 16 head of cattle and us boys, four of us, started on foot to drive them to Salt Creek where we were to head quarter until time to start across the planes. The cattle were poor and drove easy only they went very slow. So we moved on, each being provided with a hickory staff to support our selves and to use as an argument with our bouvine companions in case they should become unruly. We travelled most of the way over a beautiful rolling prairie which was mostly burned over by prairie fires. There were plenty of ground squirrels along our road and when

<sup>9</sup> In Lewis Cheney the party was to find a man with some previous experience in plains travel. He was born in New York in 1830, and at the age of twenty he made a trip with an ox-train overland to California, where he stayed until 1854. Returning to Lena, Illinois, the starting point of his trip, he entered the mercantile business and remained there until 1866. In that year he joined the train bound for Montana at Plattsmouth, as the diarist has noted, and returned from there in the spring of 1867. Later he moved to Missouri and finally to Boulder, Colorado, where he entered the banking business in 1877. He died in 1885. *Portrait and Biographical Record of the State of Colorado* (Chicago, 1899), 82.

we became tired we would stop and take out our six shooters and practice shooting at their expense. At noon we were overtaken by Mansel with the team hauling our dunnage and tent together with some provision[s] for our consumption during our stay at Salt Creek. He also brought some cheese cakes and a bottle of bitters of which we imbibed rather freely and felt much refreshed, *very much indeed*. After eating and drinking to our hearts content we proceeded on our journey, put up for the night at a dutch farm house, fed the stock hay and corn and having refreshed ourselves with some supper proceeded to fill our pipes, smoked and talked until bed time and then "tumbled in" for the night. Distance to-day 14 mi.

April 25. Arose at the invitation of our stolid host, fed the stock, washed ourselves at the little creek that ran by the house and went into breakfast. We dispatched enough sour kroust to astonish a native, we paid our reckoning and our kind hearted land lady having milked our cows (we had two) for us we started on our journey with lighter hearts than stomachs. We travelled over a wild prairie country until noon when we came to a hut and being very hungry and tired sent in to see if they would accommodate us with some dinner which they would not do having no license to feed travellers but we bought a dozen eggs which we ate without the ceremony of cooking.

Proceeded on our journey about a mile farther, came to a place where they did keep folks and there we got a good square meal. We then went on to Salt Creek, crossed at Salt Creek bridge and stopped at Parkes Ranch where we rested from our labor. We pitched our tent and cooked our first bachelors supper and ate it with as good relish as could be expected considering how it was prepared. Distance 18 mi.

Salt Creek is a deep sluggish stream, the current is hardly perceptible and the water in the spring over flows the banks and carries up drift wood which lodges in piles along the shore and is impregnated with brackish water. This decaying sent forth an odor similar to carrion, which if the wind is blowing can be smelled half a mile away and is very nauseous to those who are unaccustomed to it. We thought there must be a lot of dead cattle decaying by the smell that greeted our nostrils as we approached the creek.

April 26. We took our little herd out . . . about a mile and a half below Parks on a large tract of bottom land where the green feed was quite good. This flat contains a little alkali which the cattle lick up greedily. There are also a number of ponds which abound with wild ducks and a number of species of curious snipes, some with white plumage, with the exception of the head and neck which is red. I failed in my many attempts to shoot one, they were so wild.

There were also a species of black bird with yellow spots instead of red on their wings. Rattle snakes and bull snakes are abundant around Salt Creek. We kill some of them every day. Wm. G. Blair, in one day killed a rattle snake and seven snakes of other species. Salt Creek is the home of countless numbers of turtles, some of them very large. Garr [gar pike?] and catfish are frequent caught out of

the creek. Cattle fatten very fast and the people are very healthy around there. There are two towns started, one at the bridge and one at the ford five miles below. There is a grist mill, saw mill, a couple of blacksmith shops and several stores and saloons at the town below. The timber is cotton wood and not very abundant. The fences and houses are built of cotton wood lumber as also the city of Plattsmouth and other towns along the Missouri. Land can be had here by settling on it and a number of farms are under a flourishing condition.

May 7. They have bought, drove in, and branded stock so that we now have 58 head to herd. The Cheneys (Lewis and Mansel) have gone back to Plattsmouth to buy up what they can around there and to-day we received a letter from them wanting two of us to come and help drive. Lucien Rogers and Wm. Blair volunteer[ed] to go, so Wm. G. Blair and myself are in charge of our little herd. We have to watch them very close for some of them are very anxious to get back to their former master and improve every opportunity of escaping from us. We have one horse to ride between us. The corral into which we put the stock nights is none of the strongest and they break out sometimes nights causing us to crawl out of our nest of blankets and to [go] out to drive them back and fix up the fence again without as much clothes on as we might have if we had taken more time to dress.

May 14. Packed up and started on our journey toward the land of gold. We have two teams, one 14 ox team with 4700 pounds of provision[s] and a small trail wagon coupled on behind containing stove, bedding, my chest and other articles and one two mule team hauling Mansel's family and 2500 pounds of provisions. These, together with nine mounted drivers and our 300 head of loose cattle of all sizes completes our outfit. We travelled 7 miles and nooned, yoked up and travelled 8 miles farther and camp[ed] for the night. The day was pleasant, the country rolling prairie and no water until night except what we took. Distance to-day 15 mi.

May 26. Rained all the after part of last night, did not move to-day. Rain most of the time.

May 27. Hail, wind and rain all night, cold. I was out on herd part of the night, very disagreeable. To-day the weather was clear and cold for the time of the year. Took the stock two miles from camp to graze. I saw a number of wolves and shot some sunfish in some little ponds, without any inlet or outlet to them.

May 28. Rolled out in the morning, the day was clear but very chilly. Wind blew hard from N.W. Camp[ed] on a little slough where we obtained water. Were obliged to carry wood  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to cook supper with. Lost a yearling out of the herd, supposed to have eaten some poison weed. Distance to-day 20 mi.

May 29. Comfortably warm. Passed by Giddings ranch and drank at the spring where he was murdered a few days ago by some teamsters. They had some difficulty about the teamsters driving their stock into the spring, when, Giddings ordered them off they shot several

bullets into him killing him instantly. The murderers are under arrest and their trial is now going on. Distance to-day 19 mi.

May 30. Came in sight of the Platte River to-day at 10 o'clock this morning. The country we passed over yesterday afternoon and this [afternoon] was perfectly level as far as the eye could extend and very sandy. A burning wind blew from the south that chapped our lips and blistered our faces. The reflection of the sun's heat caused a mirage and one could see what appeared to be large streams of water with beautiful islands, groves etc. Then sometimes you could fancy you saw countless numbers of horses and other animals all running in the distance. We came down onto the great Platte bottom or valley at noon and stopped for dinner. Have very poor water. After dinner we moved on to Clear Creek (as it is rightly named for the water is icy cold and clear as crystal) and camped. Some of the boys saw some fish (suckers) and we constructed a net out of gunny sacks and caught some for supper. The Platte river is very wide, swift, shallow and muddy. The river is full of beautiful islands covered with cedar and cotton wood trees. Passed several ranches or farms this afternoon. The ground is covered in spots with crystalized alkali, which is white and tastes like soda we use in making bread. Distance to-day 20 mi.

May 31. Rain in the forenoon but did not hinder our travelling. We went over fields of wild onions to-day miles in extent. The road was slippery. We stopped for noon close to the river and intend to lay over the rest of the day. Some of the boys went over on an island and cut some cedar for fire wood. We took a bath in the Platte although the water was uncomfortably cold. Saw a grave by the road but the lead pencil marks on the head board were so obliterated by the weather that we could not make them out. One of the boys found a couple of "plug" hats which we proceeded to put up and shoot at as a target until the unfortunate hats were sadly riddled with bullet holes. Distance to-day 7 mi.

June 1. The country over which we passed to-day was very sandy and those of us who thought it would be pleasant to walk barefoot in the sand were soon convinced of our mistake by having our feet pricked with burrs which lay hidden in the sand. The weather is very pleasant to-day. Distance to-day 15 mi.

June 2. Travelled five miles, nooned, took a swim in the river, yoked up, harnessed up and saddled up then rolled out 8 miles farther. Camp[ed]. Alkali puddles. Have to watch the cattle to keep them from drinking too much of the water. Grease or fat, bacon is administered to stock that becomes alkali-ed or get[s] poisoned by eating weeds. The weather is pleasant. Distance to-day 13 mi.

June 3. Travelled till noon and laid over the rest of the day. Shod some of the cattle that had began to get foot sore. Found a deep place in the Platte and took a glorious swim, saw prairie dogs and burrowing owls, the first time that we have seen any. Weather beautiful. Distance 8 mi.

June 4. Left the bottom and took to the bluffs travelled on a dry ridge all day. Camp[ed] at night close to the river. Drove the stock

down a very steep bluff to water. We travelled through a very disagreeable rain in the forenoon but the afternoon was pleasant. Distance to-day 16 mi.

June 5. Came down upon the Platte bottom a little after noon to-day, passed through a little town built mostly of sod and mud. Dead cattle were laying very thick around there. We saw prickly pears growing wild for the first time. Weather cold, with some rain in the afternoon. Distance to-day 20 mi.

June 6. Saw the first Jack rabbit or hare to-day and large numbers of dead cattle. Weather lovely. Distance to-day 18 mi.

June 7. Saw many buffalo skulls to-day along the road, also many dead cattle. Killed two jack rabbits, wind blew furiously all day, about 6 o'clock P.M. it commenced to storm, hail, rain, and wind. Terrible storm, a perfect tornado and lasted about one hour. Four of us boys who were to herd the stock that night went out with blankets. Harry and "Texas" took the first watch, Lucien and I the second. The night was cold and rainy so that we were most chilled through when we went to camp after our breakfast. There was a man caught up with us to-day who had a couple of whiskey barrels which he was taking to Montana. So three of us boys went to him and made known our wishes, he immediately took a long quill out of his pocket, gave it to us and told us to get into his wagon and help ourselves. We took two "sucks" apiece at his old whiskey barrel through this quill, paid him 30¢ each and went away so joyfull that we forgot all about being wet and cold. Distance 15 mi.

June 8. Passed through Kearny<sup>10</sup> and the fort. Kearney City or Doby town<sup>11</sup> is built mostly of sun baked brick. There are many trains of wagons going westward. We saw the skeleton of a buffalo to-day. The head and neck of which had the hair on yet. Day warm and pleasant. Distance to-day 8 mi.

June 9. Warm and windy, cloud[y]. Distance to-day 16 mi. Roads good.

June 10. Four of us went out on herd last night. "Texas" and Harry Bliss were to take the first watch, it rained all night, cold, the cattle stampeded so the boys could not find us when it came our turn and we could not tell which way they were, or where camp was, so we were obliged to lay and take it until morning. We were so chilled in the morning that we could scarcely walk when we got to camp a

<sup>10</sup> See discussion of "Kearny" vs. "Kearney" in "Along the Trail," *Nebraska History*, XXIX (September, 1948), 294.

<sup>11</sup> Kearney City, or Dobytown as it was called because of its adobe construction, grew up near Fort Kearny because merchants were not permitted to do business on the military reservation. The principal occupation of Dobytown is said to have been the dispensing of whiskey to the travelers. Lyle E. Mantor, "Fort Kearny and the Westward Movement," *Nebraska History*, XXIX (September, 1948), 203, 204. Root and Connelley describe the place as consisting of about a half dozen sod buildings used principally as saloons. "The soldiers quartered at the post who drank bought their whiskey at 'Dobytown,' and the large numbers of ox and mule drivers going across the plains seldom failed to stop there a few moments, to fill up on 'tanglefoot,' thus making it an immensely profitable business for those keeping such places." Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, 1901), 207.

potation was prepared for us which soon warmed us. Rain most of to-day, we did not move.

June 11. Warm and pleasant. Moved camp. Distance 17 mi.

June 12. Pleasant, saw some swifts or sand lizards. Lyman killed a snake that he called "the shovel snake" from a curious projection of the upper jaw. Distance moved to-day 19 mi.

June 13. Shot two jack rabbits, passed a ranch where they had a large pile of dead wolves, that they had poisoned. I should think there was over a hundred. A party of soldiers passed us going west. Distance to-day 18 mi.

June 14. This is my 23rd birthday. The gnats and mosquitoes are getting exceedingly troublesome and bite as fierce in the dust and hot sun as in the shade. The mosquitoes rise in clouds from the ground as we ride along, to the great annoyance of the stock as well as ourselves. Distance to-day 20 mi.

June 15. Laid over waiting for wagons and men enough to form sufficient company to get by the Fort (Cottonwood).<sup>12</sup> The government requires that all trains passing Forts shall consist of at least 20 wagons and 30 armed men.<sup>13</sup> I took a long hunt after antelope. Saw many tracks but no antelope.

June 16. Laid over. Some [of] the boys went up into the hills after some wood to burn along the road, there being none west of here obtainable for many miles.

June 17. Passed Cottonwood, day pleasant. Distance to-day 18 mi.

June 18. Travelled 20 mi. Weather fine.

June 19. Saw a part of the Winnebago Indians that had been in the employ of the United States to fight the Sioux.<sup>14</sup> Distance to-day 17 mi.

June 20. Moved 18 miles to-day. Rain in the evening.

June 21. Travelled 16 miles. Weather pleasant. Prickley Pears are in bloom. Their flowers are of two different colors, pale yellow and pink. They resemble holyhock blossoms in smell and taste. The pods that the thorns grow on are tough and very glutinous and slightly acid to the taste. Cattle can hardly be drove through a bed of them and they sorely inconvenience footmen unless the feet are protected

<sup>12</sup> Located about half way between Fort Kearny and Julesburg, just east of Cottonwood Springs.

<sup>13</sup> Early in 1866 Major General Pope, in command of the Department of the Missouri, laid down the rules for travel in Indian country during the ensuing season. He designated several points of rendezvous, Fort Kearny among them, at which the trains would be organized. Each train was required to elect a captain and other officers who would command the personnel of the train. No train with less than twenty wagons and thirty armed men would be permitted to proceed into Indian country. General Order No. 27, Letter of the Secretary of War, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 2 [Serial 1308], 2, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Colonel H. B. Carrington's wife mentions passing a group of Winnebago Indians near Fort Laramie on June 17. "Many of them wished to go back with us, but there was no existing authority to employ them, and it was generally understood and distinctly affirmed by Major Bridger that some of the Sioux at Laramie expressly demanded, as a condition of their own consent to peace, that these Indians should leave the country. If this be true, it was sharp in the Sioux, for the service lost its best scouts. . . ." Margaret Irvin Carrington, *Ab-sa-ra-ka, Home of the Crows* (Philadelphia, 1869), 94.

by heavy cow hide boots. Saw an antelope to-day. Mansel fired a shot at it with his rifle but it was out of reach. They are very wild. Prairie dog villages are scattered thickly along the Platte. Lyman shot one a few days ago. They belong to the Marmot species and as near as I can describe, they are about half way between the common grey ground squirrel and the American ground hog or wood chuck. The burrowing owls that live with them are a queer little bird. They look about the size of a quail, they usually sit on the mounds, near the mouth of the burrow. If you frighten them they will fly to another mound and as they light, have a very amusing habit of facing you and making you a very profound obeisance [obeisance].

June 22. Day very hot. Travelled 17 mi.

June 23. Travelled to Ft. Juelsburg [Julesburg]. There is a small town building east of the Fort, one and one-half miles.<sup>15</sup> Day very sultry. Distance 15 mi.

June 24. Crossed the South Platte river, in company with a freight train which is bound for Salt Lake. Before starting across, were obliged to raise the boxes of our wagons 7 or 8 inches above the bolsters to keep the water from running in and damaging the freight. The river is very swift, about one mile in width and the average depth is about four feet. The bottom of the river is composed of quick sand and in going across the wheels of the wagons raise up then drop suddenly down which shakes the wagons as if driving over a log way. It took nearly all day to get the stock and wagons across. The water was cold and to prevent being injured by being in it so long the boys partook of whiskey, some of them rather freely so that by the time we were all over the stream some were jolly drunk, especially one of them who in attempting to wash his trousers lost them in the water and came into camp presenting a very ludicrous appearance, having only a single garment and that unfortunately extremely short. He was soon provided with another pair of unmentionables and order [was] at length restored. Distance to-day 1½ miles.

June 25. Pulled out at day break. Travelled till 10 o'clock and camp[ed] on Lodge Pole Creek, a fine little stream. Lay over the rest of the day. Rigged some hooks and lines and soon caught several messes of small fish. Shot three hares. Weather very fine. Distance 5 mi.

June 26. Made a 10 mile drive this morning. Camp[ed]. Spent the afternoon shoeing cattle. Patterson gave chase after an antelope but did not get it. The grass along this creek is rich and green. We make only one drive each day and give the stock a chance to feed the rest of the time.

June 27. I started out hunting this morning at sunrise and was fortunate to kill a large fat buck antelope a couple of miles from camp. Came back in sight of camp just as the train was moving out and made a signal for some one to come to me. Uncle Lyman came with

<sup>15</sup> Julesburg was one of the most important stopping points along the Platte. Here the California-bound stages crossed the river while others, bound for Denver, turned southwestward. Julesburg is said to have boasted of the largest buildings between Fort Kearny and Denver. Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, 65.

his pony to take my game and we soon caught up after Mansel met us with my pony. We stopped early so as to have some of the antelope for dinner. It was the first we had and we partook of it freely. Excellent eating. Distance to-day 7 mi.

June 28. Lyman and Mansel went hunting to-day. They overtook us late in the afternoon and brought a couple of fawn antelope with them. Distance to-day 15 mi.

June 29. Moved 5 miles in the morning. Lay over until three o'clock P.M. then leave [left] Pole Creek. Travell[ed] over a dry ridge. Camp[ed] after dark at a pond of water. Lyman went hunting to-day. Killed an antelope. Rain by spells all afternoon. Distance to-day 15 mi.

June 30. Moved 13 miles. Nooned at Mud Springs.<sup>16</sup> Shod some cattle, had a small thunder shower. Some of the boys went after some wood to take with us for to cook with. We rolled out again at dark and went 4 miles farther. Camp[ed]. Distance to-day 16 mi.

July 1. Passed Court House rock which reminds me of pictures I have seen of the ruins of some ancient castle. Did not go to it, so can not judge the dimensions of this wonderful piece of nature's handiwork.<sup>17</sup> We camp[ed] to-night on the North Platte river, are in sight of Scotts Bluffs. Can see Chimney rock ahead of us. Distance to-day 16 mi.

July 2. Nooned to-day opposite Chimney Rock. Wm. G. Blair and myself went out to see this great monument of nature which was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from camp. This rock seems to be composed of a mixture of sand and clay. Is as near as we could judge 150 or 200 feet in height.<sup>18</sup> Its base covers about  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of ground. It is in three divisions, or stories, the last or top story is about 15 ft. square and 50 ft. high. I should think that it might be the center of a high hill, the outside of which has been gradually worn away by the action of the wind, rain and floods. There were a great many initials and names cut around its base and we did not fail to leave ours there. A little above where we nooned to-day was a place where some soldiers had entrenched themselves and had a fight with Indians and which must have lasted some time by the amount of cartridge shells that lay on the ground. There was one grave outside the breastwork. Distance to-day 18 mi.

July 3. Halted for noon to-day at Scotts Bluffs<sup>19</sup> which seem to be composed of the same material as Chimney rock. They rise

<sup>16</sup> "At Mud Springs are both wood and water, but neither are abundant. In midsummer, the dry sandy bed of the stream shows only here and there a few small pools; but the shovel will soon start it, and any train will find a full supply by patient labor for an hour." Margaret Irvin Carrington, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Carrington described the rock, which she passed on June 7, 1866. "The rock itself is mainly composed of sand, hard pan, and clay, so that it is easily chopped with the hatchet, and thus steps are made for those who have the nerve and patience to climb to its top, nearly six hundred feet above the water of the creek." *Op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Carrington thought Chimney Rock "nearly three hundred and eighty feet high." *Op. cit.*, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Versions concerning the naming of Scotts Bluff can be found in Merrill J. Mattes, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader," *Nebraska History*, XXVI (July-September, 1945), 127, 162.

abruptly to the height of two or three hundred feet and look grand. After dinner moved on through a pass, partly natural and partly artificial, camp[ed] near Fort Mitchell.<sup>20</sup> Weather pleasant. Distance to-day 17 mi.

July 4. I went hunting this morning, saw some antelope after riding 4 or 5 miles, but they were on level ground and I could not get close enough to shoot them. The gnats and flies were very thick and my pony became so restive, that I went back to camp. They were busy shoeing cattle when I got in. We finished shoeing cattle about 10 o'clock, greased the wagons,<sup>21</sup> then made a pail of milk punch to drink. The women prepared a splendid dinner for us. Wrote some letters and pulled out [of] camp at dark. Could see Laramie peak ahead of us to-day looming up like some dark cloud. Distance to-day 7 mi.

July 5. Made a 17 mi. drive in the afternoon. Weather pleasant.

July 6. Made one drive, camped for the night among a party of Sioux Indians. There were 400 warriors, beside the old men, women and children. They appeared to be very friendly and peaceable. The chief together with an attendant, took supper with us. We gave them some bread, molasses and a large quantity of new milk. Played some on our violins for their entertainment. Distance to-day 7 mi.

July 7. Weather beautiful. Moved 8 mi.

July 8. Crossed Laramie river at Fort Laramie.<sup>22</sup> We swam the

<sup>20</sup> Fort Mitchell, established in 1864, was named after Brigadier General Robert B. Mitchell who was then commander of the military district of Nebraska. Merrill J. Mattes, "A History of Old Fort Mitchell," *Nebraska History*, XXIV (April-June, 1943), 73; Frances C. Carrington, who was at this time the wife of Lieutenant George W. Grummond, one of Colonel Carrington's men, also passed through this place during the summer of 1866. She refers to "the peculiar and compact little Fort Mitchell, unlike any fort I have ever seen. The external log walls of the quarters, which were in the form of a rectangle, were loop holed and formed the line of defence, with a small parade ground in the centre, and here were the quarters of officers, soldiers, horses, and warehouse supplies." Frances C. Carrington, *My Army Life* (Philadelphia, 1910), 43. In 1866 this little fort had but one company of sixty soldiers to "control" the Indians.

<sup>21</sup> Marcus Clay Fisher, aged 19, made the trip to Montana from Omaha during the summer of 1866. He has left a description of greasing the wagons, an operation so necessary to the success of a freighting trip. "Every noon a gang of men greased half the wagon train. This was done by a crude lever—a long pole with a ring fastened at the larger end to fit round the hub was placed over a block and in this way the wagon axle pried up and blocked so that the wheel could be taken off easily. No jacks . . . were known in those days." Marcus Clay Fisher, "Recollections of the Experiences of a Boy on the Bozeman Trail," *The Midwest Review*, VI (November, 1925), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Fort Laramie was built in 1834 by William Sublette as a trading post. It was taken over by the Army in 1849. In 1866 it was an important supply base for forts along the Bozeman Trail, to the north. LeRoy R. Hafén and Francis Marion Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890* (Glendale, 1938), 28, 139-42, 351-54. Major W. H. Evans, in a report written May 21, 1866, from Fort Laramie, gave a description of its location, the surrounding country and the condition of the fort in that year. He urged that the fort be kept in "a strong condition by repairs and alterations" because of the great number of travelers passing the post and because "There is every probability that a new road to Montana will be opened this year, which will give increased importance to this Post." Major W. H. Evans to Major Rogers Jones, Inspector General,

loose stock and crossed the teams over a toll bridge. Drove two miles and camp[ed]. Tootle and Leach's train<sup>23</sup> from Nebraska City bound for Virginia City Montana also crossed and camped with us. Todd and Parkers train crossed late. Distance 15 mi.

July 9. Travelled 7 miles. We are at the Black Cull. Travel in company with Todd & Parker train.

July 10. Nooned at Limestone Springs, country very hilly. Feed poor. Cattle dying off at the rate of two or three a day, suppose they are poisoned by weeds. Travelled 12 miles to-day. Weather very sultry. Camped at a small stream called cotton wood. Water very scarce and poor.

July 11. Drove 5 miles, nooned on the North Platte. Afternoon passed Twin Springs, where we obtained the first drink of good clear cold water, that we have had for many days. Camp[ed] on Horse Shoe Creek, a pretty stream. Distance to-day 12 mi.

July 12. Moved camp 8 miles. Smashed a wheel of our trail wagon and left it  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from where we camp[ed]. Laid over in the afternoon, went back after our wagon and repaired it. Took bath in the river. Weather very hot.

July 13. Lay over to rest and let the stock recruit a little. Sam Patterson and I went hunting. Saw signs of bear, buffalo, deer and antelope, but did not see any of the animals. I killed a sage hen. We also saw Indian and pony tracks. Found the remains of a wagon, a few barrel stoves etc. that had probably been laying there 20 years. They were 10 miles away from the road.

July 14. Cross[ed] the North Platte river at Bridgers Ferry.<sup>24</sup> River deep, swift, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  mi. wide. We had some difficulty in swimming the stock, but got them over at last. One of the men in Parkers train came near drowning. Distance to-day 13 mi.

July 15. Travelled 14 miles. Camp[ed] on beautiful ground, feed good, weather hot.

July 16. Pulled over some heavy hills. Rain in the afternoon. Distance to-day 15 mi.

July 17. Laid over to let the stock rest and recruit. Cattle dying off, one to three almost every day. Weather very sultry.

July 18. Left the Platte, travelled up a dry creek six miles and nooned. Water one mile to the right. Moved five miles in the afternoon. Camp[ed]. Water to the right in pools. No wood. Have to burn sage brush. Rain in the evening. Distance to-day 11 mi.

July 19. Travelled 17 miles at one drive. Camp[ed] on Cheyenne

Military Division of the Missouri, in *Annals of Wyoming*, IX (January, 1933), 752-54.

<sup>23</sup> The *Montana Post* for September 15, 1866, notes that a 23-wagon train belonging to Tootle, Leach & Company arrived at Virginia City during that week. The Montana Historical Society has a picture of Virginia City's main street showing the store which Tootle and Leach managed after coming to Montana.

<sup>24</sup> Colonel Carrington's command reached Bridger's Ferry June 20, 1866. "The train and command crossed in the ferry-boat, which ingeniously works its own way to and fro by such adjustment of cables and pulleys, and such adaptations to the current, that the round trip was made in about eleven minutes." Margaret Irvin Carrington, *op. cit.*, 85.

Creek. Water by digging. Good wood and feed. Fell in with an emigrant outfit of 10 wagons. Day pleasant. A number of our outfit are unwell.

July 20. Drove 7 miles. Noon. Water in pools. Afternoon travelled 9 miles. Water  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to the left. Do not know the name of the watering places. Distance to-day 16 mi.

July 21. Pulled out ahead of Todd & Parkers train. They lay over to make a night drive and travelled 32 miles without water. Camp[ed] for night on dry fork of Powder river. Water very scarce. The emigrant outfit were camped there also, having out travelled us. I did not get in camp until dark, having stayed behind with a bull that had given out for want of feed and water. I picked up an Indian arrow to-day by the road side.

July 22. Our little outfit pulled out early this morning in hopes of finding more water and feed, where we could rest awhile. We had journeyed 6 miles down the canyon when we came to some small springs where we obtained a little indifferent water. Mansel and Lewis were in advance of us boys who were driving the herd. A party of nine Indians rode down from behind a hill and rode up to them apparently very friendly and commenced shaking hands with them, when one of the red devils suddenly drew a pistol from beneath his blanket and fired at Mansel who fell from his horse dead. Lewis' horse jumped and ran toward us. We were taken completely by surprise, we had supposed the Indians to be perfectly friendly and had treated them all as such. We were wholly unprepared for such an attack, having no firearms about us except our revolver[s] and they only partly loaded. We recovered from our surprise, however, in a moment and drawing our pistols, charged at the Indians, fired a few shots at them, and drove them off. We then made a dash for our wagons, which were ahead, expecting to find them taken, found them  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile ahead. They had seen the Indians ride down off the hill and hearing the firing, had rightly conjectured the cause, and stopped the teams. We got our guns, gathered the cattle and turned back. By this time we could see 25 or 30 Indians gathering around on the hills. Lyman and Lewis went ahead to turn back some stock that had gone on. The Indians fired arrows at them from the top of the hills, but they dodged them. We fired several shots at them as they would dodge up to shoot arrows from the hill tops. When we got back to where Mansel was killed we found that the Indians had been there and stripped him. They had also shot arrows into some of the stock. . . . Todd and Parkers train came up just as we got back and after laying out poor Mansel seven of us went back to where we were attacked. We were well armed and hoped to find the Indians, but was fortunate enough to not find them. They had plundered our wagon, taken what things they wanted and destroyed the balance. My chest was in the wagon when that was left. The Indians had torn the cover off from it and [had] taken or destroyed all it contained, my watch, clothing, keepsakes, a small collection of curious petrifications and in fact every thing I had with me except my violin and rifle which happened to be in the other wagon. The clothing all ex-

cept the blankets of the other boys was in carpet bags and they were also in the other wagon.

Yesterday a man belonging to Parkers train went out hunting, but did not come back and is supposed to have been killed by the Indians. They called him Mountain Frank. Those that went back after the Indians were Lyman, Lewis, Harry, Texas and myself from our outfit and three men from Todd & Parkers outfit. Lyman went around through the hills and saw a lot of clothing, Luciens violin and some other articles which the Indians had left in a hollow. He brought a pair of pants belonging to one of the boys.

When the Indians came up to the emigrant outfit they came in friendly and wanted something to eat. They were given all they could eat, then they wanted some amunition but were refused. They stayed and talked awhile, then rode off and shot a man who was on herd as they went away. The Indians tried to stampede the stock but did not succeed on account of their being so worn down by hard driving without food and water. The arrows that were shot into the cattle went in up to the feather. The Indians captured Mansels pony, also his gold watch and a considerable sum of money, which he had with him.<sup>25</sup>

July 23. Started all of us in company. A man rode on each side some distance from the train as scouts. We travelled 12 miles and stopped for noon. Dug a grave and buried Mansel, poor fellow, in as decent a manner as we could under the circumstances. Obtained a little water for the stock after hard digging. Afternoon we moved 8 miles farther on to a small military post that has lately been started by the name of Fort Reno,<sup>26</sup> on Powder river, where the poor, tired, thirsty stock could get water in abundance. The soldiers are very much alarmed on account of the Indians and are building a log stockade around the fort.<sup>27</sup> Distance to-day 20 mi.

July 24. Lay over until 4 o'clock P.M., then drove till 12 o'clock. No water. Distance 12 mi.

July 25. Drive [drove] 16 miles without water. Camp[ed] on Crazy Womans fork,<sup>28</sup> a beautiful stream. The feed was so poor that we were obliged to drive the stock half a mile from camp. Charley, Rudolph, Lyman, Lucien and I were on herd until after the other boys should eat dinner and come to relieve us. Harry and Texas

<sup>25</sup> References to the attack can be found in Margaret Irvin Carrington's book *Ab-sa-ra-ka* (p. 124) and in the testimony given by Colonel Carrington before a special Committee at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, in the spring of 1867. Colonel Carrington's testimony is to be found in Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, April 4, 1887, 50th Cong., 1st Sess., *Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 33* [Serial 2504], 18.

<sup>26</sup> Fort Reno, originally called Fort Connor, was located north and slightly east of the present city of Sussex, Wyoming. As Fort Connor it was first located in August of 1865. Mrs. Carrington thought it was "most unprepossessing." *Op. cit.*, 91.

<sup>27</sup> George W. Fox, who arrived at Fort Reno on August 2, 1866, noted in his diary that his train was the first to come through without being attacked by Indians. "George W. Fox Diary," *Annals of Wyoming*, VIII (January, 1932), 592.

<sup>28</sup> Lieutenant Grummond's wife relates that there are two traditions regarding the name of this stream. One is simply that a demented squaw lived near there

came out. We gave them our guns and started for camp. We had got about half way to camp when we heard the cry of Indians, ran up on a little hill just in time to see a party of mounted Indians coming like the whirl wind into the herd and go away with all our ponies and saddles, except two of the poorest. Harry and Texas fired all the shots they had in their weapons but did not kill any of them, that we know of. We rolled out at 6 P.M. and had gone about two miles, when the Indians drive [drove] in our scouts. We instantly corralled the wagons and made preparations for an attack but our red foes did not choose to fight us. A couple of dogs we had with us left us to-day. We think they must have gone back to the Fort. Distance to-day 18 mi.

July 26. Drive [drove] 17 miles to-day. Passed a place where some unfortunate men had fought a battle with the Indians. There were slight breastworks thrown up with small stones. There were two ponies and a mule lying dead and some bloody garments had been left.<sup>29</sup> Camp[ed] for the night at some springs. Water very disagreeable to the taste being strongly impregnated with sulphur and salts, found stone coal cropping out of the sides of the hills in some places.

July 27. Moved ten miles, nooned at Rock Creek, a beautiful mountain stream, clear and cold. The stock rushed into it as eagerly as ourselves. Drove five miles after noon. Weather very hot. Travelled 15 mi.

July 28. Passed Smith's Lake<sup>30</sup> this morning. Did not have time to go and see it. Nooned at Piney Fork, a small Creek. There are large logs and stumps of trees lying in the creek that are petrified, with the gnarls and grain of the timber perfect. After dinner moved to Fort Phil. Kearney, a new military post that has just been established [July 15]. There are 600 soldiers here.<sup>31</sup> There are a number of trains camped here waiting to organize into a large company so that they may safely proceed on their journey. This post is situated on Piney Creek and at the base of a spur of the Wind River mountains. The post is under command of Col. H. B. Carrington. Distance to-day 10 mi.

Hired three men at Fort Phil. Kearney: Lewis Baker, James & Thomas McGarry. There were three trains of us together when we leave [left] the fort: Kirkendalls<sup>32</sup> mule train, Tootles ox train and our train, composed of Todd & Parkers train, the emigrant and our outfit 110 wagons.

and the other that a traveler was killed by the Indians in this locality and his body so badly mutilated that his wife became insane and wandered away never to be heard from again. Frances C. Carrington, *My Army Life*, 72, 73.

<sup>29</sup> See Frances C. Carrington, *op. cit.*, 73-81, for an account of this action.

<sup>30</sup> The diarist refers to Lake DeSmet, named after the famous Catholic missionary.

<sup>31</sup> Second battalion, 18th United States Infantry.

<sup>32</sup> The train of Hugh Kirkendall, like that of Lewis Cheney, had been attacked near Fort Philip Kearney and had been escorted into the fort by soldiers. Kirkendall waited for other trains to come up before entering the country to the north which was regarded as a highly dangerous part of the trip to Montana. Hebard and Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, I, 227, 228.

July 29, 30, 31 & August 1. Stay[ed] over to rest and let the stock recruit.

August 2. Leave [left] Fort Phil. Kearney, travel[led] three miles and camp[ed]. We now number 110 wagons, 171 men, 6 women and 5 children in all.

August 3. Moved four miles, camp[ed] on a small stream called Peam [Peno] Creek. Passed the place where a French trader<sup>33</sup> and four others were murdered a short time ago by the Indians. They had been buried so shallow by the soldiers that they had been uncovered by the wolves or other wild beasts and were partly decomposed. Some of the men covered them again.

August 4. Travelled 8 miles. Camp[ed] on Tongue River, were joined by two companies of soldiers who were going to the Big Horn river to establish a new military post. Two men went hunting this evening and killed a buffalo and an antelope. Saw to-day where a wagon had been captured by the Indians, plundered and destroyed.

August 5. Drove eight miles, saw many buffaloes at a distance. Met an old school mate by the name of A[a]ron Bailey. Weather lovely and the best of feed and water for the stock. Cattle beginning to look well again. Country hilly. Mountain scenery splendid.

August 6. Drove seven miles, nooned on South fork of Little [Big] Horn river. Camp[ed] at night eight miles farther at Front Creek. This would be a splendid country for farming and stock growing. Distance to-day 15 mi.

August 7. Moved 20 miles. Camp[ed] at Little [Big] Horn River. Buffalo very numerous.<sup>34</sup> Some of the men killed them and left them lay without even cutting off a piece of flesh. I think that they should not kill any more game than they want to eat. Lyman killed one, the hams of which will be as much fresh meat as we will want for some time. Where we nooned to-day, we saw where a man that was killed by Indians out of a train a few days ahead of us, had been buried in a very shallow grave, some of the men shovelled more dirt upon the grave to keep the wolves from devouring the corpse.

August 8. Nooned after a drive of 8 miles at North fork of Little [Big] Horn. Moved five miles afternoon. Camp[ed]. Could see the hills and beautiful prairies dotted over with buffalo on all sides as far as the sight could extend. One huge bull ran through the train to-day and forfeited his life by the means. Travelled to-day 13 miles.

August 9. Drive [drove] 18 miles to-day. Were delayed and made a dry camp 5 miles from Big Horn river. Day pleasant, country beautiful. Buffaloes very abundant. The men shot them for more amusement.

August 10. Drove one mile in the morning and stop[ped] for

<sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly Louis Gazzous, who with five of his men was killed on July 17, 1866. Hafen and Young, *Fort Laramie*, 352.

<sup>34</sup> Another opinion can be found in the writings of William Murphy, a member of the 18th Infantry, who states that the stories about the Bozeman Trail country being great game country were exaggerated. "All the time we were in that country [1866-1867] I do not believe I saw more than a hundred buffalo." William Murphy, "The Forgotten Battalion," *Annals of Wyoming*, VII (October, 1930), 397, 398.

breakfast at a small creek, saw some beaver dams, rain till about noon. Rolled out after dinner, drove four miles farther, and camp[ed] at the Big Horn river. This stream is deep, swift and about 250 yards wide. Distance to-day 5 miles. Texas shot a buffalo calf to-day, which was very fine eating. Saw large banks of stone coal a short distance from the road to-day.

August 11. Lay over, try [tried] to find a place to ford the river in vain. A man belonging to Kirkendalls outfit was drowned. His body was recovered after two hours search. His watch was still running and his six shooters were found to go every barrel, after having lain so long under water. The name of the deceased was McGear. Found graves of men that had been killed by Indians.

August 12. Moved five miles up the river to the Big Horn Ferry. The soldiers have selected this spot to build the fort. They are going to call it Fort C. F. Smith.<sup>35</sup> There is a few wagons and men on the other side of the river. They are a part of a train that had most of their stock run off by the Indians a few days ago. The rest of the men having gone on to Virginia City after more stock to take the rest of the wagons through. The ferry boat here is a sorry affair. It is constructed of rough planks hewn from cotton wood logs, corked with rags and barely large enough to carry one wagon. Lyman and some others went at work to repair it.<sup>36</sup>

August 13. Kirkendall's train crossed the river; four of his mules were drowned in swimming across.

August 14. Tootle and Leach's train crossed over.

August 15. Our train crossed. Had considerable trouble in swimming stock; but got them over safe. We worked hard all day. Were obliged to partly unload the heavy freight wagons and carry over on a couple of dugouts that were fastened together. Other trains coming up. Three hundred wagons waiting to get across. Some of the men prospected a little for gold; but could not raise the color.

August 16. Roll[ed] out early this morning. One of Parker's wagons broke down and we were obliged to lay over to mend it. Met some men with stock going back to Big Horn after the wagons that had been left there. Camp[ed] on a small creek. Do not know the name. Day pleasant. Rain after dark. Drove ten miles to-day.

August 17. Travelled twelve miles. Roads bad. Day pleasant.

August 18. Moved eight miles. Camp[ed] on a small creek near Prior's [Pryor's] Gap. One of the men in Kirkendall's train were seriously hurt by a wounded buffalo to-day. He had one arm and a leg broken and several ribs broken also.

August 19. Passed through Prior's Gap. Nooned at a creek which we call Beaver Creek, from the number of dams which these indus-

<sup>35</sup> Early in August, 1866, Colonel Carrington sent two companies of the 18th Infantry about ninety miles northwest of Fort Philip Kearney to establish a post to be known as Fort C. F. Smith. Hafen and Young, *op. cit.*, 352.

<sup>36</sup> Others complained about the ferry. Thomas Creigh noted in his diary for September 2, 1866, that his party, "Not being able to ford this river, are compelled to wait & ferry at \$5 per wagon." James C. Olson, ed., "From Nebraska City to Montana, 1866: The Diary of Thomas Alfred Creigh," *Nebraska History*, XXIX (September, 1948), 232.

trious animals are constructing across. Camp[ed] for the night at another creek where the beavers are doing much work. The weather is pleasant. Distance travelled to-day is 14 miles.

August 20. Passed over 14 miles of our road to-day.

August 21. Nooned to-day at Clark's fork. Lyman killed a fat buffalo heifer. Camp[ed] for the night at Rock creek, a beautiful stream two feet deep and one hundred feet wide. While crossing Clark's Fork a dutch man drove his wagon a little below the ford where the water was deep enough so that it ran into the wagon bed and damaged his load some. Clark's fork is 50 yards wide and three feet deep.

August 22. The emigrant outfit and our outfit, 13 wagons in all, left Todd & Parker's train this morning and pulled out ahead. Drove 18 miles.

August 23. Travelled 15 miles. Crossed the south fork of Great Rosebud. This stream is clear, swift, four feet deep and 50 yards wide.

August 24. Moved ten miles. Nooned at Still Water, a beautiful stream, clear as crystal and cold as ice. It is four feet in depth and 150 feet wide. Hitched up after dinner and travelled twelve miles. Camp[ed] on a high ridge near a pond where we obtained water. Weather cool and beautiful. Distance to-day 22 miles.

August 25. Moved ten miles. Came down upon the Yellowstone river. Nooned. This morning we saw a large band of elk running numbering as near as we could judge 500. They were a long way off. We at first thought they were mounted Indians and were considerably alarmed until a spy glass showed us our mistake. Where we struck the Yellowstone we found a Minister, his little son, and a driver that had left the train at Big Horn and gone ahead, murdered by the Indians. They were scalped by the red devils, their stock run off and the contents of their wagon destroyed. They had not been killed long for their camp fire had not gone out. We moved eight miles up the river in the afternoon. Day very pleasant. Distance to-day 18 miles.

August 26. Nooned at Boulder creek. Moved ten miles farther. Camp[ed]. Saw written on a tree at Boulder, that Sawyer's train had been attacked by the "reds" and lost 8 mules. Distance to-day 20 miles.

August 27. Moved six miles to the ferry and lay over the rest of the day. Some of the boys captured an old horse that bore marks of severe riding and whipping. He had probably been in the hands of the redskins.

August 28. Tumbled out of our beds this morning at three o'clock. Yoked and hitched up and got the start of all the rest of the other outfits in getting to the place of crossing. Were ferried over and got the stock across after considerable delay. Ate our breakfast at noon and proceed[ed] on our way rejoicing. Two miles from the ferry we cross[ed] a small creek. Water cold. Two miles farther on, came to a small creek. Was very thirsty just then. The water looked so clear and good that I immediately dipped up a cup full and come near burning my mouth with it. It was so hot. Went two miles and camped on a beautiful little stream called Orange Creek. Moved six miles to-day.

August 29. Came onto the Yellowstone River again after an 8 mile drive. Nooned. Started again after dinner, spent nearly all the afternoon climbing a mountain. Struck the Yellowstone again in five miles. Camp[ed]. Mosquitoes very troublesome. Distance to-day 13 miles.

August 30. Travelled ten miles up the river and nooned on 25 yard creek. A cold storm of rain and snow set in. We left the river and after a four-mile drive camp[ed].

August 31. Moved ten miles. Went upon the divide between Yellowstone Valley and Galletin [Gallatin] Valley. Begin to come into civilization once more. See men travelling the road alone and unarmed.

September 1. Moved 15 miles. Came down into Galletin Valley. Saw people haing and harvesting. Nooned at Couvier's Mills, near Bozeman City. Afternoon moved ten miles down the valley. Camp[ed] at Middleton on Middle Creek. The crops look fine and farmers are very busy harvesting. Two of the hands left to-day. Day cool and pleasant. Distance to-day 25 miles.

September 2. Lay over in the forenoon. Bought some new potatoes. Three of the boys left the train. In the afternoon drove twelve miles. Cross[ed] the West Galletin river. The Galletin is 75 yards in width and three feet deep.

September 3. Travelled 25 miles down the valley. Rain in the evening. Camp[ed] at Galletin City. Galletin City is composed of a small tavern and grocery combined and a mill, which is building. There are some fine ranches around and tolerably well improved. Here the Galletin, Madison and Jefferson rivers come together and form the Missouri.

September 4. Crossed the Missouri at Gelliers ferry. The hands were paid off and left.

September 5. Lay over. Weather fine.

September 6. Moved two miles up the Jefferson to an empty cabin. This we will fix up and probably spend the coming winter in it.

Galletin valley is twenty miles in width and 40 miles in length. Is settling very fast. It boasts of being the most productive valley in the territory. There is one grist mill and one saw mill completed and now in operation and two other grist mills are being erected in this valley. Wages are now and will be during harvest \$3 per day or \$50 per month. The valley is well watered by the purest of water and timber handy. We see grass fed stock here as fat as any of the stall fed that we ever saw in the states. The prices of groceries and provisions are moderate. Flour \$20 per sack, potatoes 6¢ per pound, cabbage, onions, beets, turnips etc. are from 10¢ to 20¢ per pound. Bacon, sugar and coffee, 70¢ and other things in proportion. The money circulation is principally gold dust. Greenbacks are worth 80¢ on the dollar.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Here the diarist has listed a detailed table of distances from Savannah, Illinois, to Virginia City, Montana. He estimates his total number of miles at 1,633.

Lewis Cheney offered me \$40 per month in gold, board included, to stay and herd stock until spring, which I accepted. He also hired Jas. McGarry for the same purpose. We went at work dilligently and soon had a cabin rigged up. We cut and stacked some hay. We stay[ed] two weeks in this cabin, when Lewis found a better place to winter four miles farther up the river and we moved up there, built a corrall and branded the stock. Cut some more hay and built a cabin. I procured some traps and caught a few beavers and some other furs. Have killed some antelope and other game and now this 25th day of November, 1866. "Jim" and I take [took] the wagon, cooking utensils, provisions, bedding etc. and move[d] out ten miles into the hills, between Boulder Creek and Galletin City to herd the stock. Camp[ed] at some springs. Call this Buffalo Bug camp, from the number of trees of that species growing around. The cattle are getting fat very fast. The weather is beautiful. We have 8 ponies to herd with, so that we have a change of horses as often as we wish.

[Burgess continued to make entries in his diary with fair regularity during the remainder of the winter. Most of them are confined to items like "Cold as Greenland," "Looking after the stock," and "Shot some grouse." A note for May 12, 1867, relates that the diarist was "paid off." With part of his earnings he bought a team of mules and entered into a partnership, the purpose of which was undisclosed, with his uncle, Lyman Cheney. Entries for the remainder of 1867 and the spring of 1868 indicate that Burgess worked at various jobs, from haying to panning for gold. On July 6, 1868, he arrived at Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri River, bound for "the states."]

July 7 [1868]. Started for the states. Took cabin passage on board the *Urilda* of Pittsburg, Pa. left Benton at 3 o'clock P.M. The *Urilda* has on board thirty-five passengers. Cabin thirty, Deck, five. Three of our passengers are ladies. My room-mate is one Christopher Lapp of Freeport, Ill., a huge good natured fellow. The *Urilda* is a fast runner. Several shots were fired to-day at some mountain sheep, or American gorillas, but none were killed.

July 8. Passed Camp Cook<sup>38</sup> at daylight this morning. Saw two immense herds of buffaloes and two flocks of wild sheep to-day. A great many shots were fired at them as we passed, but none of them was killed, that we could see. Stopped at a deserted cabin and took in a supply of ice. Saw the grave of Chief Little Arrow, and six other indians. Passed Ft. Hawley<sup>39</sup> at 3 P.M., stopped at Ft. Miscellshell<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Camp Cooke (or Cook), 120 miles below Fort Benton, was established in 1866. It was located at the mouth of the Judith River where the Missouri is shallow and where, because of this, the boats had to slow down and consequently were often attacked. "Journal of James H. Bradley," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, II (1896), 151; Burlingame, *Montana Frontier*, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Built in 1866 by Louis Rivet, a French-Canadian fur trader, for the firm of Hubbell and Hawley.

<sup>40</sup> The diarist means Muscleshell, also spelled Musselshell. For a description

at sundown. Took another passenger. Ran aground at dark, got loose and tied up for the night.

July 9. Passed large herd of Buffalo. Some of them were swimming in the water and came near being run over by the boat, one fine young bull was killed and brought aboard.

At noon to-day we passed a cabin, saw some men lying dead around it. They had probably been killed by Indians. The boat did not stop to look at them. Ran aground at 1 P.M. at Cow Island.<sup>41</sup> Was fast a couple of hours before we got off. Tied up at dark.

July 10. Passed the mouth of Milk River at 4 A.M. Saw large herds of Buffalo and other game.

July 11. Saw lots of indians. By Camp Beaufort [Buford?], took another passenger.

July 12 to 19. Nothing occurred worthy of note except we changed boats and were delayed three days in doing so. Arrived at Sioux City 4 P.M. July 19.

July 20. Landed at Sioux City one day, then started home. Arrived at Lena, Ill. July 22nd at dark. Saw Uncle Lewis and a great many old acquaintances. Found by inquiry that my relatives were all well.

July 23. Waited all day at Lena; but none of my old neighbors came.

July 28. After waiting till 10 o'clock to-day my folks came after me with the team. We were all rejoiced very much to find each other alive and well.

---

of this Missouri River trading post see Peter Koch, "Life at Muscleshell in 1869 and 1870," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, II (1896), 292-303. Also James H. Bradley, "Account of the Attempts to Build a Town at the Mouth of the Mussellshell River" in the same volume.

<sup>41</sup> Cow Island was a common stopping place. Often, due to low water, boats bound for Fort Benton would unload part of their goods, proceed on up-river, and then come back for the remainder. This was referred to as "double-tripping."

## Reviews of Books

*The Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin Written at Fort Vancouver 1829-32.* Edited by Dr. Burt Brown Barker. (Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1948. iv, 316 pp. \$6.00.)

This volume makes available in print the letterbook kept at Fort Vancouver by Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor in charge of the Columbia District of the Hudson's Bay Company, from March, 1829, to September, 1832. In addition to the 280 letters or drafts of letters contained in the letterbook, Dr. Barker has included useful appendices which list and identify employees of the company and other people mentioned in the letters, enumerate and describe the trading posts in the Columbia district, and list the HBC and other trading vessels that touched on the coast during these years. He has also prepared an excellent essay on the "Technique of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Columbia District."

The letters, Dr. Barker writes in the preface, "show the activities of Dr. McLoughlin in the conduct of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in the region west of the Rocky Mountains before the presence of either missionaries or pioneers raised the question of permanent settlement of the land for domestic purposes." With the exception of several letters written by McLoughlin to his superiors and printed some years ago in the Hudson's Bay Record Society Publications, these letters constitute what might be called the internal correspondence of the Columbia district for the years indicated. They give a remarkably good picture of both the workings of this part of the great company and the man who directed it. The company, under McLoughlin's direction, was an experienced, energetic, resourceful, and often unscrupulous competitor. Thus McLoughlin advised Donald Manson, clerk at Fort George, "as Long as we have Means we must do the Best we can to oppose our opponents and I send you Every thing you ask Except the Guns Which we have not and of course this must be Kept a secret even to our own people and Evade the Demand by saying you omitted to write for them or that I did not send them or that I object to sell our Guns for four Skins—as may best suit your purposes if the Americans are going away it would be well to say the Last by way of preparing them to return to higher prices on the other hand if our Vessel is in the River and the Americans give out they are to Remain or Return you may give out that I write about bringing the Guns down to two Skins—But this must be in a way not to pledge yourself. Indeed even if the Ganymede is not Arrived and that the Americans are not gone it would be as well to throw this Hint out—if we have none to sell ourselves we may oblige Our Competitors to Reduce their prices."

McLoughlin's devotion to what he considered the best interests of the company, his sure grasp of the numerous details of his sprawling empire, and his careful use of the great power he held are all shown