

California Here I Come—1849

Gold Rush Journal Sets Out in Detail a Crossing of Nebraska 102 Years Ago

PUBLISHED below is a section of the Gold Rush Journal of Elijah Bryan Farnham (1825-1898). The section printed here takes Emigrant Farnham from a point just south of the Nebraska border to what is now the Wyoming line. That trek, an easy day's trip by auto nowadays, took him exactly one month.

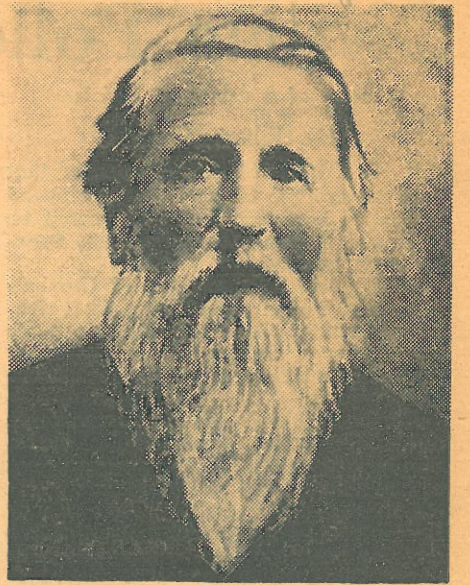
The original Farnham Journal is owned by Dr. Esley J. Kirk of Omaha, whose mother, the late Carrie Bell Kirk of Lincoln, was one of Mr. Farnham's five daughters. The other four are still living. One, Eva Jane Carter, lives at Madrid, Neb.

Merrill J. Mattes, regional historian of the Region 2 office of the National Park Service in Omaha, says he

considers the Farnham Journal "one of the most honest, most faithful and most 'revealing' of more than one hundred Gold Rush diaries that he has seen and studied.

Mr. Farnham had served in the Mexican War. He apparently didn't strike it rich in California because he returned East. He married, served three years in the Civil War, taught school in Ohio and later took up farming in Green County, Indiana.

Spelling and punctuation—or lack of it—are as they appear in the original diary in Dr. Kirk's possession. The footnotes are condensed from those prepared by Mr. Mattes and Dr. Kirk for the recent publication of the entire journal in the Indiana Magazine of History.



Elijah Farnham . . . From an old tintype.

THE FIRST pages of Elijah Farnham's Journal tell of his arrival at Independence, Mo., on April 19, 1849, the forming of a train of eight wagons with loads of "2,500" each, including provisions for the journey and clothing for two years for each person. Starting May 8 from Independence, the party camped the night of May 15 on the bank of the Red Vermillion, where the trail swerved north from its westward course along the north bank of the Kansas, to climb north-westward towards the Platte River.)

16th Had to take out our Picks and Spades and fix the road before we could cross the creek. We fastened ropes on to the hind end of the wagons and held them back going down the bank.

Trebled teams to pull up the opposite one found some wild onions and had a fry of them. There was a large patches of them in different places on the plains D T 22 (1)

16th We having Broke an axeltree to day were compelled to stop this evening before selecting our place slept on the wet ground at night

17th had the axeltree repared and was on the road at 7 o c had the pleasure of drinking a cool drink out of a spring that we found by the side of the road After our D J (1) camped by a butiful stream of water

18 Was in the road early at noon crossed the big blue (2) D T 25m

19th Went 22 miles to a runing stream and camped (3) the grass is not so high here as back on the road but finer and a more nutritious kind

20th Sunday lay still

21th Went 22 miles and camped by a wet wether stream Saw a bride and groom to day that had ben tied together this morning Saw timber some distance up the road There was a considerable wrangling about mess No helping themselves to bread.

22 had a cold morning While eating our noon piece saw Antelopes a loping over the plain in the evening past the Columbus and Ilaniois company (4) that were laying still on account of losing thier cattle On the night of the 20th thier cattle that were correlld got fright-

ened at the lightning during a thunder storm and 87 broke out of which they had recovered but 20

23th Crossed Sandy Creek 3 times and then wended our way along the big blue (5) Saw an indian village at a distance Here we first see prickly pears

24th had two heavy showers today one with hail once lightening struck near us Went 15 miles and stoped It rained all night

25 the wind blew the fine rain in our faces the whole day left the big blue at noon At night camped by the stream of pools (6).

Reach Platte Valley

26TH at 4 O-c P.M. Came into the Valley of the Platt it is about 6 miles wide and perfectly level There was a number of encampments in various parts The plain was every where spotted by the numerous herds of cattle a grazing on the luxurient grass

27th Sunday This morning as we wended our way up the river we saw a great many teams that had stoped and the companies Were lightning thier wagons by throwing out some of thier load

We saw large piles of bacon that had been thrown out from the overloved teams Some of the companies when they are out of wood make use of this bacon for fuil We stoped and camped at noon

No sooner had we camped than some were making ready for lighting up We had some of the bread taking out of the boxes and put in sacks and thus got rid of a good deal of weight It was impossible to keep the bread whole or clean this way

Yet we were forced to submit to this inconvenience and econimise in this way and relieve our cattle of every pound that we could for the roads that had heretofore been good when on the level were here Sandy and the waggon pulled hard over them and from the information that we could get from guides They were so for some ways ahead

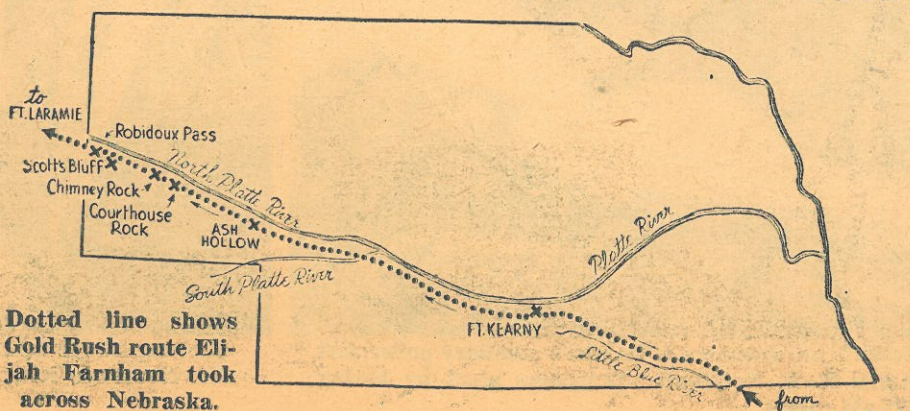
We also throwed some beans out Some of the company that had some rough boxes Tried to get up an excitement to have all the trunks thrown away

But as it was allowed by the constitution for every one to have a light trunk and as the majority had articles that they wished to keep secure those considerate schemers could not succeed Days T 8 m

28th This morning after going 3 miles came to Ft Carney or Charles (7) This is but a small Station the houses here are but one story high and built of mud these together with several tents compose the village the fort is of mud also We tried to sell some of our ammunition here but could sell nothing but a small portion of our lead at half what it cost in St Louis Powder we could get nothing for Went 8 miles further and camped.

A Busy Trail

29TH Got an early start The broad river on our right the Sand hill bluffs on our left The bluffs and river run paralld to one another for the whole way being only 5 or 6 miles apart The soil here is Sandy but black and ritch



Dotted line shows Gold Rush route Elijah Farnham took across Nebraska.

There are three trails here and these are filled with waggon for as far as the eye can see

We here learnt that 2822 waggon were ahead of us on the 27th (8) saw three men start back to the States with their knapsaks on thier backs The men genirly bid them good Speed as they went past

This night camped on the river bank among a huddle of other camps Here the plain is everywhere spotted with tents and numerous herd of cattle and horses are grasing on its luxurient pasture It is a fine sight to see so many beings enlivening these dull monotonous plains

We failed of getting wood and had to burn buffalo chips to do our cooking They did not make a bad fire either The river banks here are so low that to look at the river when aways from it it looks the highest D.T. 20 m

30th This morning got out of a wet pile of blankets for it had been raining in the night and we were late starting on account of its raining So this morning it was 10 O clock before we were under way We went through a town of prairy dogs

There was a tract of ground a mile square in extent crowded full of oval mud houses and populated by this canine race These little vilagers will set for hours on thier houses a barking at passer by and at the near approach of any person will jump to their holes that lead into the top of thier dwellings

Some of our men shot a few of these saucy vilagers as they were on top of thier houses but did not get many after killing them for the others would come out and drag them in These animals are about half as large as an opossum and good deal of the same build and of a reddich brown colour

We sold one of our horses to day This night we camped where there was plenty of wood and water done a good deal of cooking so as to be prepared for immergences ahead D.T. 15 m

31th This morning started off in a drizzling rain which continued without cessation for the whole day this was mixed with sleet and the wind blew it hard in our faces the road was muddy and hard to pull over We hauled our wood from the last stopping place if we had not of took this precaution we should have been out of fires for wet buffalo chips are a hard article to burn and even in dry wether this is the only combustible material in these parts D T 20m

Fording the Platte

JUNE the 1st Today met a train of Waggon loaded with buffalo skins from Ft Larimy (9) Three antelope were brought into camp this evening on which we made quite a feast

June 2nd Still kept on our river course. The bluffs that still run paralell to the river are here on fire The islands in the river are also on fire (10)

3rd lay by this night we saw the islands of the river on fire it showed fine

4th A days rest so refreshed our cattle that they traveled off quite nimbly. The road in some places approached within a few rods of the bluffs These bluffs are mere sand piles The soil here is poor and sandy

There was a herd of thousands of Buf-

falo by those that went off the road to hunt Went 20 miles Grass not so plenty as heretofore

5th About 10 O.C. came to the Platt where we had to cross (11) The river here at the ford is about ¼ of a mile across

It mite seem like a somewhat venture-some undertaking to attempt fording a wide river like this where the waters are so muddy that one cannot see the bottom of the stream

But we drove our teams through waded ourselves and found the water to be but 3½ feet in the deepest place

We had to exert ourselves in wading to keep up with our cattle when pulling so as to hurry them and not allow them to stop if they had we should of been stuck

The bottom is composed of quicksand and the waggon are constantly settling down This settling shakes the waggon awfully The shaking would not be more over a rough rocky road There was a large concorse of trains on each bank and a long line of waggon crossing with us.

There was a great many Sioux Indians here at the ford (12) These are the first of this tribe that we have seen

They are proud noble looking race of good proportion tall strong athletic and good horsemen They dressed with little clothing The only clothes that most of them had was a breechcloth over thier hips They wore a great many ornaments the tusks of animals pearls and strings of beads They ornamented thier mocassins with beads

One Indian prided himself in having about a dozen Pawnee scalps a wearing over his shoulders One of these nakedly dessed Indians took quite a fancy to one of the women that was traveling in company with us and offered her husband before her face 3 horses for her She must of felt herself highly flattered

In chilly wether these Indians wrap buffalo hides around them this serves also for bedcloths The flesh part they ornament with different figures by paint This night camped in a mile of thier grand village Men Squaws and children came to our camp tonight it was interesting to them to observe our buisy doings The meat of two buffalo were brought in off which we made a hearty meal

Through Indian Village

6TH THIS morning we were troubled in getting started early on account of some cattle having run over the bluffs So as to take us some time to find them It commenced raining as we got started We went through the indian village of wigwams This has a population of about 2000 souls Their

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8. The Farnham party rode the crest of the migration wave.

9. Fort Laramie, the remains of which are now preserved as a national monument 20 miles west of Torrington, Wyo., was then an outpost of the American Fur Company.

10. Prairie fires were deliberately set by the Indians as an auxiliary in the pursuit of game or, in some cases, to spite the invading white man.

11. To judge from mileage estimates, it appeared that Farnham crossed the South Platte just above the great fork near the site of present North Platte.

12. Brule and Ogalalla bands of the Teton Dakota Sioux had at this time pre-empted the Platte Valley, a choice haunt of the buffalo.

Civilian Police Gear for Action

Second of a series of articles.

By Robert Houston

E. W. DEVEREUX has an idea that the average Omahan hasn't stopped to realize how terrifically life could be disrupted if, during a major war, Omaha were bombed.

Mr. Devereux is director of Omaha's Auxiliary Police under the Civil Defense Agency. The organization is made up entirely of civilian volunteers and is prepared to help regular police in times of emergency.

Omaha had a five-hundred-man force of auxiliary police during World War II, also headed by Mr. Devereux. The threat of bombing seemed rather distant.

But this time, Police Chief Henry Boesen and Mr. Devereux figure that the city will need around one thousand auxiliary policemen to cope with emergencies that might arise.

The World War II force was disbanded at the close of hostilities in 1945 but was revived in 1949 with a skeleton force of 82 men. After the Communist invasion in Korea the building up process began, and now there are 302 trained men on the Auxiliary Police lists.

Instructor Leo E. Hays, who is in charge of training the civilians, expects that two hundred more will be enrolled in classes starting in September. Before another year is up, he hopes that the thousand-man goal can be reached. This is a ratio of four for every thousand residents in the city.

There are also two hundred men in Omaha with special training in police work who also can be counted on in an emergency.

"I claim that one member of every family in Omaha should be interested in Civilian defense work," says Mr. Devereux. "These people are gathered together to protect life and property. A well organized effort can accomplish wonders in reducing deaths and damage."

Training With Police Planned

MEMBERSHIP in the auxiliary police is open to able-bodied men between the ages of 25 and 65. The roster includes doctors, dentists, lawyers, machinists, electricians, heads of stores and businesses, radio men and laborers.

Beginners take a first aid course taught by police instructors. This involves attendance at class once a week for 10 weeks and covers standard, advanced and atomic first aid. An exam must be passed before a first aid certificate is awarded.

Then the trainees go to class one night a week for six weeks to get rudimentary police training. Traffic regulations and traffic control take up three of the sessions. The others are used for familiarizing trainees with other police duties.

They hear lectures on what a policeman does, how he makes an arrest and how he follows through. They learn about gathering and preserving evidence, interrogation, finger printing, traffic and guard duty, prevention of sabotage and riot, communications and control.

Instructor Hays says that the Auxiliary Police now are working out details

with Chief Boesen that will permit the civilians to receive in-service training with police, starting this summer. The trainees will accompany police in cruiser cars, go along with detectives and accompany policemen who are walking a beat.

Once a volunteer has received his training, he is obligated only to attend meetings of the group held once a month. The sessions are skipped in July and August.

First aid instructors include Instructor Hays, Sgt. Charles Crick, Sgt. Glenn Gates (now in the Army), Patrolman William T. Nickels and Patrolman Peter F. Leonovicz.

Auxiliary Police carry membership cards and have badges which the police used to wear before the new blue badge was adopted. The badge labels them as civilian police.

The Auxiliary Police has the support of Police Commissioner Caldwell and Chief Boesen. Police regard them as a valuable group who can assist them in times of flood, fire or riot as well as in possible bombing emergencies. Possession of the civilian police badge does not give the volunteer any special legal authority.

'Plan A' Developed

MR. DEVEREUX reports that the organization has a well developed plan of operations in case of emergency. It is called Plan A.

A chain telephone system has been devised to notify all members of the auxiliary organization to report for emergency duty. It can be carried out in about 20 minutes. There are other methods besides the telephone of alerting the auxiliaries.

Seven areas at which the auxiliary force will gather are at Central Police Headquarters, South Side Police Station, Municipal Stadium, Miller Park Pavilion, Benson American Legion Post, Douglas County Hospital and Fontenelle Park Pavilion.

Two-way radio communication will be available in case telephone communication is disabled. The auxiliaries are ready for action on a 24-hour per day basis. Detailed plans for traffic control have been worked out, and members have been familiarized with the plans.

Commanding officers at the seven dispersal units will maintain constant radio contact with the city's control center. Mr. Devereux says that Police Capt. Al Clinchard had much to do with working out the emergency plans.

The Auxiliary Police have three assistant directors, Leland R. Reifschneider, Archie W. Campbell and William H. Metcalfe. There are 10 men on the executive committee. Besides Chief Boesen, Instructor Hays, Mr. Devereux and the assistant directors, they are Milo E. Cowdery, chairman of the attendance and qualification committee; John H. Trenerry, Jr., chairman of rules and regulations; C. Clifton Nelsen, chairman of transportation, and Jerome Korisko. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Korisko head the communications and controls committee. Mr. Reifschneider is chairman of the training committee.

Mr. Devereux also is director of civilian police for Douglas County. A force

Plans Made for Emergency; Force of 1,000 Is Needed



Omaha has a Plan A for emergencies calling for use of all regular police forces and the auxiliaries. Discussing it are, left to right, Police Chief Henry Boesen, Auxiliary Director E. W. Devereux, Police Commissioner Harold Caldwell.



Auxiliary police are given a rudimentary knowledge of all police functions. Here they are looking at samples of tear gas grenades and shells and parachute flares. Seated, left to right, are: H. T. Nothomb and Milo E. Cowdery. Standing, left to right, are: Assistant Directors William H. Metcalfe and A. W. Campbell, Cliff Nelsen, Jerome Korisko, Instructor Leo E. Hays and Sgt. Charles Crick.

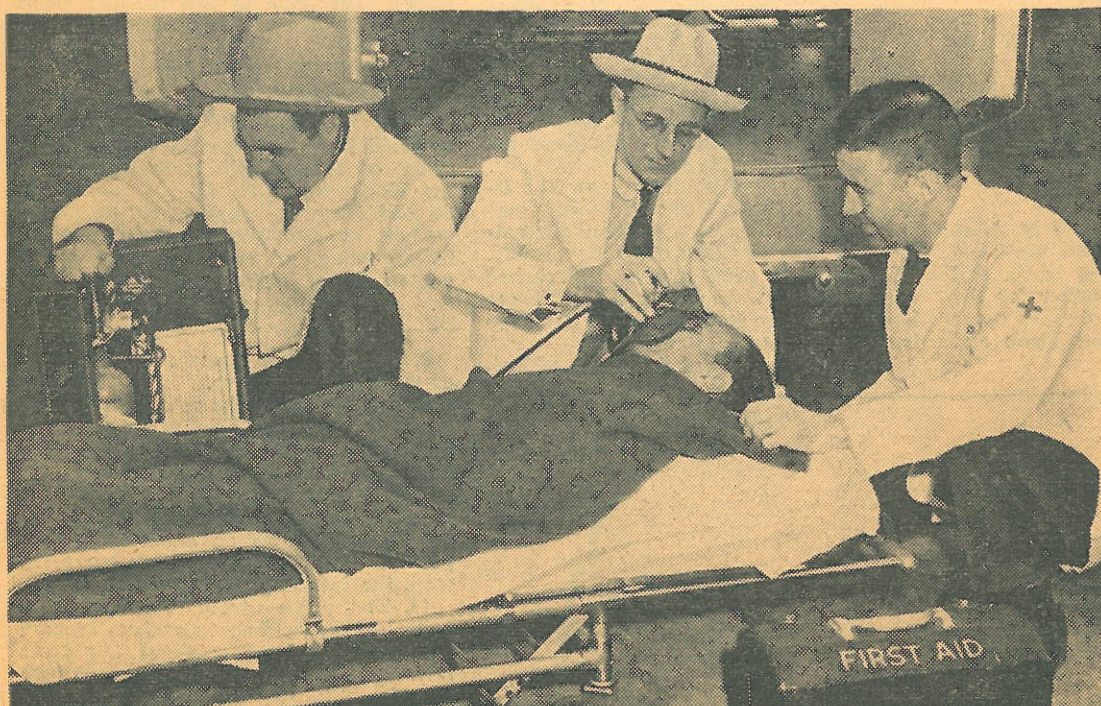
of two hundred men is planned and training is getting under way. This will be a separate force under the direction of Sheriff Richard Collins.

Men Have Been Helpful

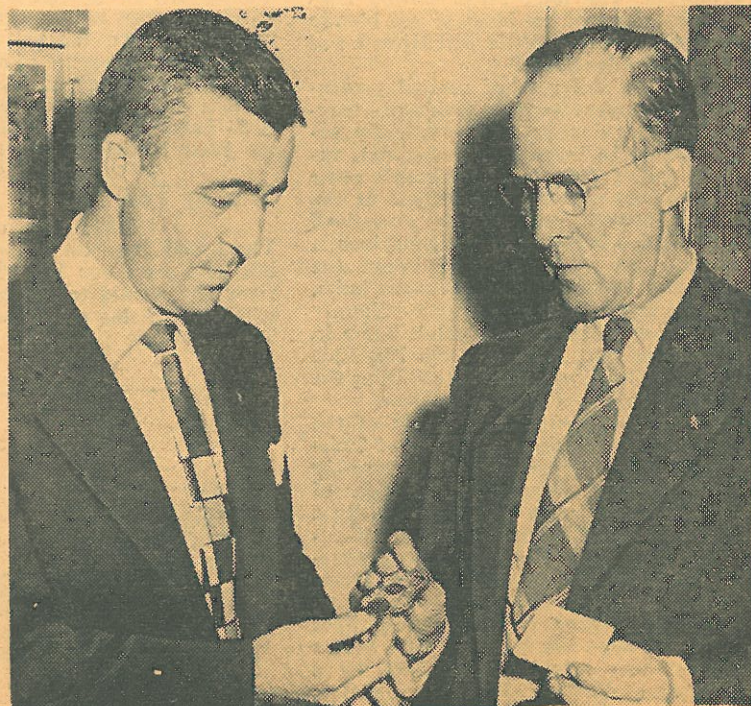
SINCE their reorganization in 1948, which was promoted by former Chief of Police Fred Franks, the Auxiliary Police have assisted police on a number of occasions. A year ago during the Boy Scout show, when police were short of help, a force of 40 auxiliaries helped direct traffic and park cars.

Last fall, when a child was reported missing, 38 civilians responded to a midnight call from Instructor Hays to join in the search. During the recent fire at the Kellogg plant, an auxiliary offered his services and spent four hours directing traffic. There have been instances where auxiliaries have administered first aid to persons injured in traffic accidents.

Mr. Devereux feels that the Auxiliary Police are ready for any emergency, but hopes that the force can be enlarged rapidly once classes are resumed in the fall.

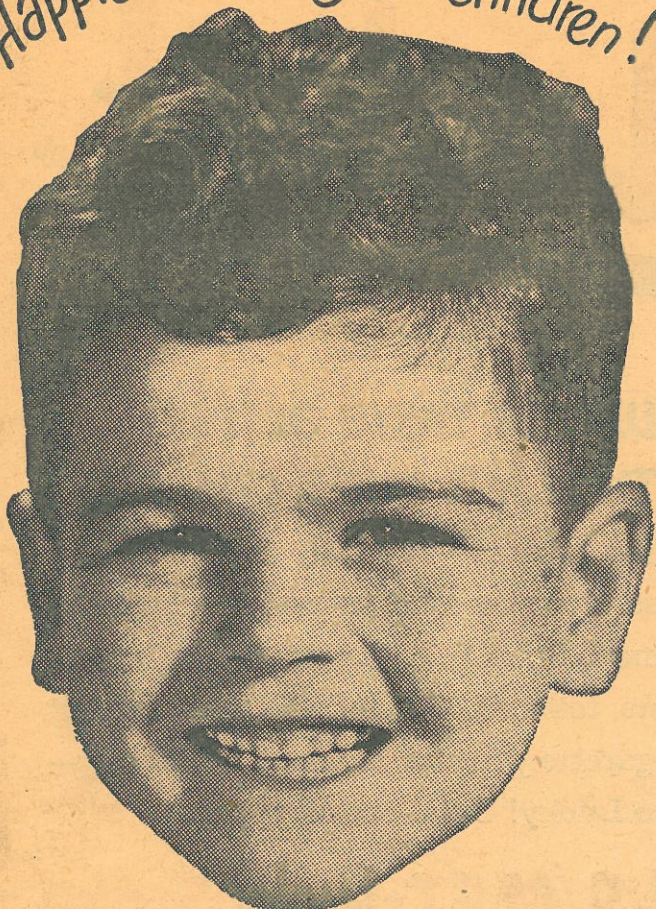


Using an inhalator on an "accident victim" are members of Omaha's auxiliary police, left to right: Howard Roller, Wayne Wilson and H. T. Nothomb. Beginners start by taking first aid course.



Showing badge and card possessed by auxiliary police are Mr. Nothomb, left, and Leland R. Reifschneider, assistant director.

Happiest eating for children!



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Honey-good... 'n'
good for you!"

Happy snack for young and old! Heaping portions of real bee-honey, pure sugar make NABISCO SUGAR HONEY GRAHAMS honestly good! Made crisp, kept tender and so wholesome! The perfect partner to spreads, milk. Get some in the 3 In-Er-Seal Wax Packs now.

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Make This Test

Smooth Z. B. T. Baby Powder on your hand. Then sprinkle with water. Note how water rolls off! Z. B. T. moisture-proofs skin, gives your baby extra protection!



Does not contain zinc stearate

USED BY OVER 1700 HOSPITALS

Gold Rush

Continued from Page 6

tents are made of dressed buffalo skins sewed together are round in shape with a pole passing through the top

The Indians old and young stood outside of thier tents watching the long line of emigrant waggons that were a passing through thier village. They evidently are much wonder struck at the crowds agoing past on these plains that never was untill late years ever disturbed by the rumbling of a waggon wheel That seldom witnessed the apperense of a white man to disturb the monotony of this natural wild over which such swarms are now daily passing

At this time there was a solid train 5 or 6 miles in length and was over two hours a passing through They took a great fancy to the women that were in some of the waggons

They do not understand the value of money coin and would as leve have some trinket of equal brightness.

They highly esteemed our provisions and would give a pair of mocicns for 2 buisket or a robe for 3 or 4 pts of beans We left the south fork here at this vilage and went across the bluffs to the north fork camped on the banks of this stream

7th and 8th We kept up the river sometimes over the bluffs but most of the time over the levil plane About the middle of the day of the 8

On the bluffs facing the river found some ash trees growing Wild current and rose bushes were growing also After this came to a range of rocky bluffs of quite a rugged like apperence There was good springs of cool water running from the foot of these Ceader bushes grew upon the sides

There was no scarcity of rattle snakes among the rocks I saw 3 of enormous size about to pitch at me once as I got so as I could look over onto the top of a rock that I had been climbing I jumped down quick

We got over the bluff into ash hollow (13) it is so named from the quantity of ash trees that grow here

This is the best looking place that we have seen for some time it is cool shady looking place fragrant with different kinds of flowers of which roses and jasmine are the principle

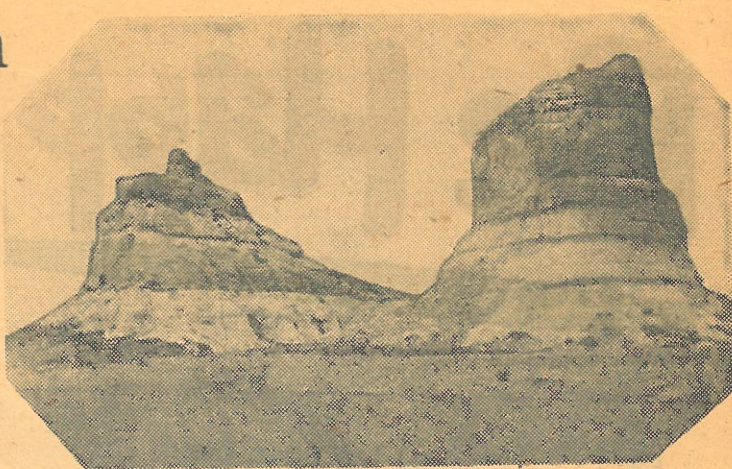
Grape vines and current bushes are plenteous We had to travil late tonight for when we got out of onto the plain was very narrow and a perpendiclar rock hemmed it in the side oposite the river and when we did stop we found very poor grass

9th This morning we went on untill 8 o c and then stopped to graze our cattle After we got started again picked up a man belonging to one of the trains ahead that had shot himself with a pistle while loading it the ball went through the calf of his leg As soon as we camped to night a thunder shower came pouring down upon us

10th resumed our journey We

13. After traversing the section of the North Platte River Valley now inundated by Lake McConaughy, behind the giant Kingsley Dam, the Trail apparently climbed back up on the plateau, then redescended into the valley at Ash Hollow. This is approximately the route now used by U. S. Highway No. 26.

14. Courthouse Rock and Chimney Rock, both mentioned by almost all overland trail diarists, were a welcome relief to travelers who had seen nothing but the low, monotonous Platte for the past several days. They were among the advance guard of a range of picturesque hills, today called the Wildcat Hills, which extend for over 40 miles along the south bank of the North Platte. Farnham echoes most of his contemporaries in giving free rein to his



Courthouse Rock (left) and Jail Rock guided Gold Rushers.

are now going through an alkali region it is said to travil cattle through this when wet will cause thier hoofs to come off Found musquitose plenty where we camped to night

11th Started off lively this morning and was not crowded much with other trains there being but few in sight Saw Chimney and Court house rock this forenoon at a distance ahead of us Camped oposite court house rock tonight it rained again

Chimney Rock

12TH Started again over the sandy road and went to oposite Chimney rock and camped (14)

These two aforementioned rocks are thus named on account of the one resembling a court house the other for its resemblance of a hugh chimney such as is seen at a steam factory

This is about 200 feet high but the dirt at its base show that it has been much higher it is split at the top and looks so that now it might fall apart it is composed of hard baked dirt insted of rock

The action of the water on the hard clay bluffs that lay in the distance have wrought them into curious shapes Fortresses with regular bastions castles with thier doams porticoes doors windows houses with roofs and cornised churches with thier steeples and spires then the bluffs seemed to raise perpendicularly in a cimicircular form around at the back of these So as to look like a regular built wall partly encompassing them

To look at this makes one almost imagine that he is beholding an ancient city partly gone to ruin We here burned the last wood that we had with us This we had carried in our waggons from ash hollow Two antelopes were killed this forenoon

To night had a hevy shower of rain accompanied with hail

13th It began to rain as we started it was bothersome getting over some of the miry slues Scots bluffs were ahead of us

These bluffs are so called from the fact of a party of fur traders headed by a man of name of Scot set him out on the bank of the river and left him to his fate the next spring his body was found high on the bluffs by another party of traders and by

imagination in describing the freakish formations.

15. At least 40 horrendous versions of Scott's death, no two exactly alike, appear in trail journals, beginning with the fur trader Warren A. Ferris in 1830. Among the few certain facts are that (1) Hiram Scott was a clerk in the employ of William Ashley; (2) his death occurred in this vicinity in the autumn of 1828 under circumstances of abandonment; and (3) his remains were discovered in 1829 by fur traders returning to the mountains, who thereupon gave Scotts Bluff its name.

16. This was Robidoux Pass, one of the most celebrated camp sites on the California Trail.

17. Maj. Winslow F. Sanderson, a hero of the Mexican War, was in charge of the company of the regiment of Mounted Rifle-men, destination Fort Laramie.

his clothing he was identified (15)

Here the bluffs were curiously shaped here the numerous ranges of bare clayey bluffs rising the other side of a range of grassy bluffs so close as to seem to be set on the top of them each range raising more high the further they were off these were wrought by the raines So as to have the apperence of a city on a hill

And the deep cut ravines that run down the sides assumed the apperence of so many cross streets and gave it a compact and regular apperence

Surely this is one of nature's greatest pranks of castle building

Stoped to night in a plain surrounded on all sides by bluffs On the bank of a spring run Wood was procured by going about 3 miles to the bluffs and feched to camp on the horses

At Fort Laramie

14TH We started at sunrise Went 3 miles came to a Spring of water of icy coldness here the water driped out of the perpendicular side of a ravine and fell into a natural basin formed beneath The water was so good that we almost disipated upon it This is shaded with trees and brushes This is the first time that we have been near wood with our waggons since we left ash hollow 6 days ago (16)

In the afternoon crossed two streams one called horsecreek After that went to where the road come to the river and pitched our tents Major Sandersons command were camped near us (17)

15th The Government train was before us We were kept back by their slow traveling Got ahead of them when they nooned This afternoon broke a wheel to one of the waggons got it replaced by a wheel of a waggon that was left on the road Camped on the bank of the river 8 miles from Ft. Laramie found plenty of drift wood on the bank

16th Started at sunrise Came to Laramy Creek one mile from the fort and that we had to ford This is a wide clear swift running stream and so deep that we had to block up our waggon beds in order to keep our provisions dry in crossing

We did not cross till we watched while other trains that had got here earlier had to take thier turn And there was quite a number

Our hearts were light in anticipation of getting to the fort There among this multitude all was excitement to get across Something was ahead

It seemed like a galy day as a convention 4 of July or some such time was at hand to which we were agoing to have a recreation

Then the sound of the cannon that was fired to greet the arrive of Major Sanderson came abooming from the fort the hills around echoed the report one from another and it dwelt long among them before it died away It was soul stirring their successive reports in this expansive wild.

Be Happy-Go Lucky!

Our wagon really has been fixed,
But we're not mad a bit.
The sign is cute, and true, to boot,
Like Luckies — it's a hit!



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Fine tobacco—and only fine tobacco—
can give you a better-tasting cigarette.
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cigarette you ever smoked, Be Happy—
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Now here's a sign I like real fine;
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