

CRAMER'S JOURNAL
CONTAINING INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL
ACROSS THE PLAINS
FROM
KANSAS TO CALIFORNIA
IN 1859
BY
THOMAS CRAMER

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Sacramento, November 8, 1859.

Dear Father [Major Thomas Cramer]:

I have looked over these pages and made some obviously necessary corrections, but I have not thought worth the trouble of exhorting Horace's motto: "Saips stylum veritas" upon, as they are not intended for publication.

You I know will care more about the matter than the style.

Yours Affectionately

Thomas J. B. Cramer.

JOURNAL

MAY 12, 1859

Left home about 12 o'clock, M, and struck the old California Trail near the claim of Dr. Robertson, where we learned that the train of James Ellison had passed about two hours ahead of us; pushed on and at the Big Springs found a small crowd of persons listening to an abolition speech from the late distinguished, but now infamous, Ex-Secretary F. P. Stanton. Here inquiry put us on the Tecumseh [Kansas] road, erroneously the train of Ellison having there taken the Old California Road. When near Tecumseh we were overtaken by Brother ^SDam, who informed us of our error, and aided us in getting forward to the house of a settler two miles beyond Leecompton where we put up and were kindly accomodated by the proprietor, whose sweet wife by her gentle kindness subdued even the Alpine heights of my anit-Yankee prejudices.

MAY 13

Rushed off after an early breakfast to cut off the train of Ellison beyond Topeka, where this road would intercept the California Road. Were obliged to take

across the prairie as the bridge over Chingamung Creek was reported down. Drove some hours over a beautiful country, and finding when we reached the California Road, that Ellison had not passed we camped to prepare a cup of coffee, and while we were getting it ready Ellison's train arrived. They preceded us to Burnetts to camp, where we followed and arrived in good camping time. This is a beautiful place belonging to a Pottawatamie Chief of the name of Burnett, who is a man of much influence among his people. I should judge from his size and appearance that he was a half breed. It is located on one of the branches of the Chingamung Creek, a fine Creek which flows near the towns of Tecumseh and Topeka. This is truly a lovely prairie country, finely watered, very fertile and possessing some timber. It is, however, a part of the Pottawatamie Reservation and, of course, shut against pre-emption squatters, which much retards the progress of wealth and population in the neighboring towns of Tecumseh and Topeka.

MAY 14

Remained in camp all day, where we have been making the best of an exceedingly wet and disagreeable day. Brother Sam has been in the saddle almost all day looking for our work cattle which were out of the way this morning. Three o'clock P.M., returned to find that the

cattle had not gone far from camp. Camp all in motion gathering wood and water and preparing for the night, which continues wet and lowering. Some fish in this branch of the creek and some fishing has been going on all day but does not pay well as they are small and difficult to catch.

SUNDAY, MAY 15

Moved camp about 12 o'clock M., over on the Mission. Run about five miles from our present location. Evening light and cheery. We encamped on a beautiful bottom prairie, where the ladies spent the evening in gathering and cooking gooseberries, which here grow wild in great abundance and of an excellent quality and prove quite palatable. About dark the whole heavens became overcast with lurid clouds. Rolling thunder and an incessant blaze of lightning to the west. The wind, having been steadily from the South East all day, we hoped that the storm would pass over us. But about 8 o'clock P.M., it broke suddenly from the South West and never have I seen a more formidable one of wind and rain which penetrated everywhere, more or less, and turned our camp grounds, (so pleasant in the evening) into a perfect mudhole. We were all in a most melancholy predicament. Tents were blown down, canvas rent and scattered, picket-pins pulled

up and cattle stampeded. In short:

"That night a child might understand,
The devil had business on his hand."

MAY 16

After drying up and repairing damages we started for Smith's Ferry over the Kansas River, which proved a better fix than it looked to be, and in a short time we passed our wagons and carriages over in safety. It was the intention of Ellison to swim his cattle over. The attempt was made to drive them into the stream, but only two had the hardihood to attempt the current, and only one to make the crossing. The other, after being swept away by the current for some distance, with difficulty got back to where it started from. The whole herd were then ferried. The train then went to camp in the midst of the great bottom on the north side of the Kaw River, which extends from the mouth to Fort Riley with a few breaks. It is a splendid body of land but all owned by Indian nations as their Reservations. Thirty miles square just here is owned by the Pottawatamies. Everywhere these Indian Reserves will prove a bar to the future progress of Kansas.

MAY 17

Rolled over to the great Military Road which leads

from Ft. Leavenworth to Fort Riley. Had a weary and heavy drag all day, which was hot and sultry and oppressive to the poor oxen, two of which gave out, and one of which died last night, I learn. These belonged to the teams of James Ellison. At the bridge over Cross Creek, saw two Pottawatamie beaux dressed not "a la mode de Paris," but a la mode de Pottawatamie. One had on a calico skirt and nothing more; the other had hat, coat and skirt, but both alike were guiltless of brich clout or pantaloons. They seemed well pleased with their own appearance, but the ladies of our train did not admire their costume much.

MAY 18

After some delay caused by the difficulty of finding the cattle of John M. Smith, which having been hard pressed the day before seem to have hidden for the purpose of avoiding a like fate today if possible. We drove two or three miles and reached the Catholic Missionary establishment in the Pottawatamie country where we stopped to purchase some articles, but were unable to find them as their supplies are only intended to meet the wants of the Indians, who notwithstanding the efforts of the Priests and other civilizing influences are yet in the main but wretched Savages, and according to report, have

been practicing their old barbarities upon a couple
awnee horse thieves taken "flagrante delicto" and
so scalps are now on exhibition at a neighboring house.

MAY 19

Broke up camp near the Red Vermillion Creek and proceeded by the way of the bridge over that stream. About a mile west of that took the road leading up to the divide between that and Rock Creek, which was hilly and rough leading into a very high region of rolling prairies and pretty little streams over which we proceeded about twelve miles to find an excellent camping ground on one of the lower branches of Rock Creek, where we made ourselves comfortable until about 4 o'clock on the morning of the 20th when it rained heavily, much to our discomfort.

MAY 20

After a drive of about three miles we came to the crossing of Rock Creek, a fine bold stream running between high rough knobs on the Eastern side and between beautiful rolling prairies on the Western. Found the Creek too high to cross in consequence of the rain, and were obliged to go back and wait until the stream ran down which we hoped it would do by the morning. Spent

the remainder of the day in drying up, repairing damages, branding cattle, &c. We tried here for some fish but they were either shy, scarce or did not like our bait. At all events we got none.

MAY 21

After an early breakfast we crossed the creek and made good time all day, which was fine and cool, over a very lovely prairie country. Cattle have not suffered at all today notwithstanding our progress was so good, making about eighteen miles by the middle of the evening, which brought us in sight of the timber on the Black Vermillion Creek, which is the stream on the head of which John Jett was operating in 1854 and 1855, and where he died. This is the principal branch of the Blue River from the East side, as the Blue River is of the Kaw River from the same side. Near the mouth of Blue River is the town of Manhattan.

SUNDAY, MAY 22

Soon as we had breakfasted we went to cross the creek, but found it too deep for fording, and had to encamp near it and wait until evening, when by blocking up our wagon beds we undertook to cross, where a general scene of fuss, fun and confusion commenced and continued

until all had passed over which required about two hours. The women and children were taken over on horseback, which we considered safer than the wagons as the coming-out place on the western side was very sideling and dangerous. After crossing we passed through an encampment of returned gold seekers from the [Pike] Peak, who seemed to be in good spirits. Soon after, we encamped.

MAY 23

Left camp soon after breakfast and drove all day over a very beautiful country of low rolling prairies covered with a light green grass of the kind which some call Buffalo grass, and well watered, seeming to me to be exceedingly well adapted to the uses of a stock raising people, but a single feature of beauty and becoming monotonous. Indeed, all eastern Kansas is of the same general appearance, and one who has seen a few square miles of it can form a pretty accurate judgement of the whole. After a drive of about eighteen miles we arrived about camping time at the south side of a creek near the town of Marysville or Palmetto City on Blue River.

MAY 24

Drove early to the ferry to secure as early a chance to cross as possible. Found the ferry crowded as usual,

and that they were constantly plying between banks with loads each way, and at the enormous charge of two dollars a wagon with a single yoke of steers. This stream does not exceed seventy-five yards in width, and the round trip can of course occupy but a few minutes. On this day the receipts at this ferry must have reached a hundred dollars, as there is as much travel from the western side as from the Eastern on account of the [returning] tide of PIKE'S PEAKERS, with the appearance of one of whom I was much astonished, as he carried on his back his bedding, cooking utensils and provisions- an enormous load, and yet he strode along quite cheerfully and at a round speed. Some of these men, a few days since, under the influence of whiskey, exasperated at the enormity of the charge undertook to seize the boat, which brought on a difficulty. Revolvers were used and two of the gold seekers were killed and one desperately wounded. Crossed the ferry soon after midday and went about twelve miles to encamp on a very pretty little stream where we found good grass and water. Here we found a peddler and his wagon who had been following the gold seeking emigration with oysters, pickles &c. We bought a pot of pickles of him.

MAY 25

Traveled all day at a lively gait making some eighteen or twenty miles and encamped about sundown on a bright running rivulet, a tributary of the Little Blue River, which is itself a tributary of the Big Blue River. Here we found the traces of a terrific hail storm which had lately visited this region, and which fortunately did not reach as far East as where we were. Every vestige of foliage was stripped from the trees and shrubs and, in many cases the grass from the ground. Report says the birds and hares were killed, and even in some instances the cattle were beaten down in the yoke. Here we were visited about nine o'clock by a most severe rain storm, which continued all night, and as our camp was a low place we were overflowed and made very uncomfortable. The prairie still beautiful to look at, but is declining much in fertility, and is now of light color and quite sandy.

MAY 26

Morning clear but cold and windy. Made a good drive, but the teamsters have had a severe day as were all who were exposed to its influence. The general appearance of the prairie does not change much but value of the soil is rapidly approaching the condition of a desert region as it is now mere sand covered with light

thin grass; waters are also much less plenty. After a drive of about eighteen miles we found ourselves encamped on a very fine bottom on the Little Blue River, where we had plenty of wood; and getting up large log fires we were soon comfortable. As the sun went down the wind declined, and the night is bright and beautiful.

MAY 27

After spending half the day in drying up, branding cattle, fishing, and amusing ourselves we started for the crossing of Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Little Blue, where we arrived and camped near the old trading post of Daniel Patterson, who was an old trader among the Pawnees for many years, and tradition says he had many a rough and tumble fight with them. He left behind him quite a pretty home, and one might judge from what he sees here that he was a man of education and refinement.

MAY 28

After an early breakfast we drove on up the divide between the waters of this creek and those of the Little Blue and moved along lively as the day was cool and fine.

This is a most monotonous looking country and is now of but little value, as it is not only thin and badly watered, but destitute of timber and stone and must be exposed to a Siberian degree of cold during the winter.

SUNDAY, MAY 29

Had a good breakfast of antelope and left camp all in good spirits. No change in the appearance of the country. Still going up the Little Blue. Made about eighteen miles which brings us to the head branches of the Little Blue and into a high and naked region of boundless prairies, sparse grass and limited water courses.

MAY 30

All well this morning and everything going smooth. Early morning light, but fog came down thick and heavy and has been succeeded by a very warm day, but the road is so good that the stock does not suffer much. We are now in the heart of the Pawnee Country, but have not yet seen any of that very ENLIGHTENED and HUMANE people, who are said to be in a starving condition, as their too powerful foes - the Sioux - will not permit them to pursue the buffalo beyond this immediate vicinity, which is now around Fort Kearney. Report says that a party of

these Sioux came lately to a trading post in this vicinity and finding a Pawnee there they watched their opportunity when the white men were at breakfast and killed and scalped him. These Pawnees are said to be almost exterminated from this, their old and favorite home. The Sioux and Cheyennes never spare one which they capture.

MAY 31

Morning light and clear with the wind from the South. About sunrise the fog came down and the promise was for a hot and sultry day, but it soon clouded over and blew a rough and constant gale all day. Stopped at noon at a branch, known as the Thirty Mile branch or station East of Fort Kearney. This is one of the extreme heads of the Little Blue and we found it a mere drain affording barely enough of very indifferent water for our cattle. This is a most unfruitfull looking country, and must long, if not always remain a naked waste; and would seem to have been designed for the buffalo and Red Man.

JUNE 1

Left camp about twenty-five miles East of Fort Kearney and proceeded on our way over as fine a natural

road as the world can offer to ox animals, and arrived early in the evening at our camp in the midst of the great bottom which lies on the South side of the Platte River, which is here about ten miles wide, beautifully shaped and "very desirable to look upon," but is poor and sandy, and seems to exude a species of alkali, which resembles the "Sal Soda" of commerce. As the cattle were tired we encamped in the midst of the bottom. The first supper I ever ate cooked with the "Bois de Vache" we had here this evening.

JUNE 2

Traveled only five miles to find a more commodious camp to rest the cattle and to allow time to bring up some lame ones which had been left behind. We are now encamped on a slough running into the great Platte, a few miles East of Fort Kearney. The bottom on this side of the river is of vast extent, destitute of timber and stone, even the bluff is nothing more than a ridge of sand hills.

JUNE 3

After a drive of a few miles we arrived at Fort Kearney which we found located in the midst of the great bottom exposed to all the winds which blow over these in-

terminable prairies, but having the advantage of being near Grand Island which affords abundance of fuel, a great advantage in so cold and naked a region. This post is situated about three hundred miles west of Fort Leavenworth and about one hundred and eighty up the Platte River from Nebraska City. It is a mere cantonment, ^{our} ~~an~~ barracks for troops, and is only designed to overawe the Indians who roam these wide prairies. Drove fifteen miles and camped.

JUNE 4

This morning soon after daylight word was brought to camp that some buffalo had been seen near the bluff. Four of our hunters mounted and went in pursuit. Scarcely had they left when a herd was seen crossing the river immediately in front of the camp. Great excitement was now created and every gun was brought into requisition to attack the buffalo as they came out of the water, by men on horseback and on foot. After a chase of two or three miles a noble bull was slain by young P. Ellison. The buffalo were now seen crossing the river above and below in large herds and our party made their attack so severe that two were killed in the water and two more just on

the bank. Some were driven through the camp and put to flight our horses and mules; of these two more were slain near the tents. There was a general scene of uproar and confusion in the camp at the time of this stampede as there can be no more formidable looking savage than a frightened or deranged bull buffalo bearing down on you, and these seemed to be disposed to take shelter among the tents. In the meantime I had gone to the bluff, distant about three miles, to bring home some of the beef of the one killed by Ellison Jr., which I found to be a most magnificent beast, with his head and neck covered with the finest mane, so thick and deep that it was with difficulty we could get to his neck to sever it from the body. I do not believe that a ball from an ordinary gun would have punctured this coat and the thick underlying skin. The party which had gone out in the morning had, after a sharp ride, overtaken them but found that none of their steeds would approach the game, except the mare of Thomas Ellison which, having been rashly driven upon the horns of an old bull was so severely gored in the haunch that she could with difficulty get back to camp, and we feared she would die. She eventually however got well and came through. Theodore Phillips and Brother Sam then ran this old fellow to bay and he succumbed to a shot from the hands of Brother, who brought in one of his quarters as a treat for us. These were all old bulls, as the

cows did not venture across from the other side of the river. After dinner we hitched up and continued on up the Valley of the Platte. To one who has seen this stream it is easy to understand where the old Missouri gets its bad complexion, as it runs through a waste of sand with a current of great rapidity, and of a remarkable uniformity from bank to bank, and is filled with innumerable Islands, little and big. This whole country-bluff, hill & bottom - is composed of loose sands which the stream is constantly carrying away.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5

As we progress up the Platte we are struck with the wearisome monotony of the whole country and were glad to go off a short distance to the left to encamp in a singular place on Plum Creek. Our encampment looks more like a walled city than any thing else. It is a cove of some forty or more acres of level ground through which the now almost dry bed of this creek runs. It is surrounded by a natural wall of sand so steep and compact that you can only enter it at one or two natural gateways which admitted our wagons. Here we found a sufficiency of wood, which is a great desideratum nowadays.

JUNE 6.

Soon after leaving, we crossed the ford of Plum Creek. It was at the crossing of this stream that the United States mail was destroyed with its guard and out-riders by the Brule Sioux in the fall of 1854, for which they were severely drubbed by Gen. Harney in the following summer at "Ash Hollow". Today at noon five skiffs built at Denver City, at the mouth of Cherry Creek, in the South Park, passed us, each having two or three men in it. They told me that they had been about two weeks coming down and had laid by about four days. On this current I suppose they would make about fifty miles a day, which would place Denver City about four hundred and fifty miles west of us. The South fork of this river comes out of the South Park, and is said to be much the larger of the two and much the swifter. This evening we passed what is called a hand cart, drawn by two dutchmen and containing a poor fellow who was a victim of the Inflammatory Rheumatism. Poor fellow! He seemed to be a bad case, and here entirely without the aid of medicine and judicious nursing. However he would soon reach Fort Kearney where he would be received at the hospital. Camped, and cooked supper with Bois de Vache.

JUNE 7

Pushed off up the Platte bottom. Day fine and road good. After making a good day's march we camped near a mail station, where I wrote and mailed a letter to my Father.

JUNE 8

Pushed off. Day hot and Sultry. Dust terrific. Passed Cotton Wood Creek, found it only a crick with only a few stunted trees in it. Character of the country growing worse. Bottoms narrower and more broken. Some small cedar on the bluffs and the Trading post is built of a good growth of it brought from the hills near by.

JUNE 9

Left camp after some delay caused by the necessity of burning some of the young cattle's feet with hot grease and tar to cure the disease called "Foot Evil", which is caused, I think chiefly by traveling in the mud too much. Found the bottom narrow and broken, and the bluff higher at one point than we had yet seen it. Three of us visited the top of one of them and had a fine view of the valley of the Platte for many miles East and West. This view was much more impressive than

pleasing on account of the air of boundless extent and desolation which it presented. Some of our party here saw some Indians on a neighboring eminence watching our motions very particularly, but I suppose with no hostile intention as they made no attack. The Indians have been very shy and we have seen none of them since we left the quiet Pottawatamies. Today was cool and slightly showery. Road high and dry, and a long ways between drinks for the poor cattle. Encamped after night fall on a slough of indifferent water. Night bright and beautiful. Had a fine Serenade from a big wolf when on guard, but he did not come near our rounds. Bluffs are flattening down and the bottoms extending again, but still growing less and less valuable on account of extreme sterility.

JUNE 10

After a drive of about five miles we reached the junction of the two branches of this river. Continued about five miles up the South Fork and stopped to noon. Here we were visited by the distinguished war chief of the Ogalla Sioux, Red Plume, a fine large and well formed man of the true eagle-beaked and warlike contour of face;

of much dignity of mien and friendly address, but no Neopolitan lazarene could be a more inveterate or skillful beggar. Understanding that each wagon comprised a family, he suggested very insinuatingly that if each wagon would give him something that what he might receive would come lightly of all. He had papers which he required one to examine from an Indian Agent named Bliss, and others which gave him a high character as one great in war and council and as having rendered great service to Gen. Harney in obtaining from the Brule Sioux some persons who had been engaged in the Plum Creek massacre; also in effecting the final treaty with the whole Sioux nation in 1855 and that he had always been the "friend of the White Men". He was so much pleased with Molly's liberality to him that he proposed to swap me a squaw for her, but she objected and it was "no swap". This south branch of the Platte is an extraordinary looking stream, by no means inviting in its appearance. The bluff here is on the North side and is as destitute of even a bush as the crater of a volcano. The bottom on the South side is wide and clothed with a sparse crop of grass, but badly cut up with sloughs, filled with poisonous waters, and of a general elevation of from two to three feet above the plane of water in the river. The

river is about a mile in width, of a very dark muddy look, and of a uniformity of current from bank to bank. It is of great rapidity. There is not wood enough here within the whole scope of our vision to make a fire in a stove. The impression upon the mind is dreary and discouraging in the extreme.

JUNE 11

Day cool and fine. Progress very good over an excellent road which brings us to an early encampment within eight or ten miles of the ford over the South Fork of the Platte. No change in the character of the river or country. All hands busy attending to stock and preparing for night. The bois de vache is our only chance for fuel but it does very well, especially mixed with a little brushwood or weeds. The chief objection to its use being the vast amount of ashes which it deposits, thereby choking up the stove and reducing the heat of the fire.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12

This is a warm and very disagreeable day on account of the wind being in the wrong direction which carried the dust into the wagons and on the drivers. After a drive of eight or ten miles we arrived at the ford of the Platte, which is here about a mile wide. Generally much

ing's drive. Turning a little off the road we encamped on a flat on the North Fork of the Platte where it wound its "NOT slow lenght along" through these dark and sombre hills covered with the stunted dark pines from which they get their name - Black Hills. The sighing pines and dreary looking wastes make me think of Ossian, and one would conjecture, that it was scenery like this that shaped the mournful mind and feeling heart of the Bard of Morven. At least I am sure that dwelling here some time would make me melancholy mad if not poetical; and see the "Poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling", might "glance from Heaven to Earth and from Earth to Heaven" again, and would see only objects of the sublime and terrible, suggesting first such images as preponderated in the imagination of the good and noble Ossian.

JUNE 27

After a drive of a few miles came to Horse Shoe Creek, a name given it by some barbarian White man. Could not learn its Indian name, which would have been, no doubt, descriptive of its real beauty. The mountain peaks are looming up across the line of our Western horizon in goodly number and grandeur, but we have no one to tell us their names. No doubt Pike's Peak is one of them, as I am told it can be seen from this road, dis-

tant sixty miles.

JUNE 28

Moved on over a pretty hill country with a very fine road. No game to be seen as the Indians are too numerous and take care to keep it out of the way of the emigration. After a drive of about fifteen miles we came to a most lovely creek called La Bonte, bright beautiful waters and fine fish. Here grass and fuel are plenty. Last night we were visited by a number of wild prairie warriors on their ponies who galloped uncereemoniously into camp and made themselves at home by consuming all our "cold victuals". They left saying that after one sleep they would come to trade. The chief was a fine looking man and could talk English pretty well, but wanted to swap ponies for "Squa Bulls".

JUNE 29

Laid here half the day. Moved after dinner. In about three miles came to what is called Red Bank River, a small stream running among sand hills as red as brick dust. Country looks poor and desolate enough to contain gold mines, and unless it does contain some valuable metals it would seem to have been made in vain, for it certainly can never under present regulations produce

anything of value in the vegetable kingdom. After a drive of an ordinary length for a half day came to what is called Spring branch, where we spent the night with tolerable comfort. Last night Jos. Ellison lost a beautiful white bull of great value. Cattle dying all along the road. Many thousand head are dropping off and traders will lose heavily.

JUNE 30

Traveled all day over a rough and worthless country. Made about eighteen miles which brought us to Box Elder Creek, a very fine stream running down the western side of the Black Hills and having some right good bottom lands on it upon which there is enough of grass, and plenty of the wood from which it takes its name.

JULY 1

Continued here all day to recruit the cattle after their drive over the Black Hills which they have now nearly crossed. Here we got up a seine of gunny bags and caught some fine fish which made a very acceptable change in our diet as we are beginning to be tired of "hog".

JULY 2

After a drive of about three miles we came to the North Platte River again where we complete our drive

and their crests in many places covered with snow. Its elevation and consequent coldness, together with the extreme aridity that belongs to all this slope, have reduced it to what is so common here, a desert of sand covered with sage brush and the thorny grease wood.

SUNDAY, JULY 10

Forded the Sweetwater twice today. Grass slightly improving as we go up, and water getting colder. Snow in great abundance on the mountains from which the breezes come quite cool and refreshing. Experienced men tell us that this is the first season in their knowledge that they have been unable to keep meat without salt in this region, and that dew fell here on the 8th instant for the first time in many years. This may be due to the unusual quantity of snow on the mountains. Dead cattle thick and plenty all along here. Saw the head of a mountain goat in the road, just cut off; but have not tasted the flesh either of that or the Big Horn, or mountain sheep.

JULY 11

Had to cross a stretch of twenty miles today without water as we are crossing a bend of the river. Dry, cool and fine, and road equal to a much improved city avenue.

Valley growing narrower. Grass and water improving as we ascend toward the backbone of the mountains. Cattle are many of them sore footed and badly used up. When one sees what they have to endure there is no wonder that some give out. A war party of the Arapahoes passed near us on an expedition against the Utahs of the Salt Lake Valley. They are under the command of a chief who was picked up when a child, abandoned on these naked wastes by the celebrated guide Fitzpatrick, and taken to St. Louis where he is said to have been educated and brought up to the trade of a tanner, at which he worked a while, but becoming dissatisfied with his position among white men, returned to his people and has become their principle war chief. A man named Knight, who travels with us told me that he had a long talk with Friday, as he was called, after the day of the week in which he was found, and that he allged as a reason for returning to the life of a savage the fact that the whites would not treat him as an equal, that no white woman worth having would marry him, but here I am a Chief and a man of consequence.

JULY 12

After a half day's drive we stopped on the bank of Sweetwater about twenty-five miles east of the South

Pass. There we will leave Nebraska and go into the State of Oregon. I have not seen a single square mile of the Nebraska country which I would think a desirable property, even if it were located east in the settlements. It is virtually a desert waste of sterile sands, indifferent waters and sparse grasses. Here we have found some wild goose berries, which are very fine and when cooked eat quite pleasantly.

JULY 13

After a drive of some miles came to Strawberry Creek, on the banks of which we saw snow in large quantities. This is a sterile region of rocks and sand. The snow drift is about six feet deep, but is gradually melting away. The waters of this creek are, of course, cold and sweet - and full of fine trout. We went on further and encamped on a small run where we passed the night comfortably. The Wind River range of mountains in plain view, covered with snow from top to foot. Looks from here like a white wall in the Heavens.

JULY 14

Started for the South Pass. After a drive of two or three miles crossed the Sweetwater for the last time. It is here a bold clear creek coming down from the north

side of the Pass and out of the Wind River Range. The ascent through this famous pass is so gradual that it takes close observation to tell when you cease to go up and begin to go down. This arises in part from the gradual and equal ascent, and in part from the superior excellence of the road. The descent is only a little more rapid as far as I have gone, which is to the Pacific Springs on the western slope, about four miles. Water cold and clear, but sulphurous.

JULY 15

This morning, for the first time, we have the sun rising on us over the crest of the great Rocky Mountain chain, and gradually diffusing warmth through the joints of this stiffened atmosphere. Started for Little Sandy Creek, and after a drive of about thirty miles - protracted into the night - we reached it. This is a beautiful stream running down from the south west face of the Wind River Mountains, through a most desolate country, covered with red sand, greasewood and sage brush. No game here except a few sage hens, a splendid cock bird of which species was shot by Joe Smith. It is as large as a well grown turkey and nearly as beautiful as a golden pheasant.

JULY 16

Marched over six miles to Big Sandy Creek and encamped to allow the cattle to get something to eat if they can find it, as this whole country is to all intents and purposes a desert waste. Where we are encamped we are exposed to every wind that blows, and have to eat sand, breath sand, and sleep in the sand.

SUNDAY, JULY 17

Still going down Big Sandy. Find nothing agreeable here. All is desolation and death. The poor cattle are literally starving. Many die, I believe as much from exhaustion as disease.

JULY 18

Started for the Mormon Ferry over Green River, which we reached about noon, and crossed all safe. Here we parted with the Ellisons, as they prefer to go by the Fort Hall and Sublette cut-off route, and we the Salt Lake City road. Moved down the river about seven miles. At the trading post at Middle Ferry met an old Kansas acquaintance named Ashton, originally from Kentucky, but for some time a Border Ruffian in Kansas. He appears to have done well, and I hope he has, as nothing less than an ample fortune would compensate a man of mind and man-

ners for a year's residence here. Here I got a copy of the "VALLEY TAN" newspaper published at Salt Lake City. No news of importance in it.

JULY 19

Crossed the divide between the waters of Black's Fork and those of Green River. Country very little improved. Distance fifteen miles. This is a singular looking stream, and indeed would deserve the name of Minnesota from the milky colour of its waters. We are now about one hundred and forty miles from the Mormon City.

JULY 20

After staying in camp half the day to recruit stock and shoe oxen, we crossed over to another point on this stream. About two miles further crossed over Ham's Fork, a clearer and better looking stream than Black's. Here we got two pounds of very good butter, made at Salt Lake City.

JULY 21

After a long and weary march, protracted until late into the night (until two o'clock A.M. of the 22nd) over a country not worth a cent a square mile we camped in a pretty little mountain meadow near Fort Bridger.

JULY 22

Continued here half the day to rest the cattle after our long drive of yesterday. In the evening we passed Fort Bridger. This is now the property of the general government, by whom it was recently purchased of the old proprietor after whom it was named. It is pleasantly situated on a mountain meadow Island in the head streams of Black's Fork, and surrounded by mountains capped with snow. We camped just west of it.

JULY 23

Left our camp and proceeded to climb the eastern edge of the basin of Salt Lake. Found the road good, leading through pretty valleys with pleasant green hills on which the grass is beginning to be plenty and good. Our other necessities of wood and water are much plentier and better than they have been since we left Kansas. These mountain valleys are quite fertile looking. If they would not produce well it would certainly be the fault of the climate, which is no doubt arid and cold. Passed a man who had brought a drove of cattle in by way of the Smoky Hill Fork of Kansas and Denver City. They looked well, but he had lost heavily by some poisonous weed.

SUNDAY, JULY 24

Made about twenty miles "into the bowels of Salt Lake Basin", and must be allowed to admit that we have never seen a more beautiful hill or mountain country. Rich little valleys, green hills and bright running streams give it a charming appearance. Only trees are wanting to complete the picture. In about ten miles of our starting point we reached the South Fork of Bear River, which flows into Salt Lake. It is a fine clear strong stream and filled with fine fish. Here we obtained from a Mormon trader some "Valley Tan" cheese, but it was not good, like most everything Mormon. They call all home manufactured things "Valley Tan", hence the name. We are now encamped in a beautiful mountain valley. Good grass and water. Everything agreeable but the mosquitoes, which are the largest and fiercest I have ever seen.

JULY 25

After delaying until noon to shoe some cattle, we traveled about twelve miles to Echo Canon, which we reached through the prettiest little valley that one could desire to see. The point at which we are now encamped is one of singular beauty, being a deep angle, or rather two of them cutting each other at right angles,

and enclosed by fresh green hills, which look like they had just left the mint, or as if they had just heard the fiat "All is good". Here we find the finest wild currants, which make us an excellent pie. We were overtaken by three Mormons traveling in a wagon from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City. A very unlikely looking set of scoundrels, one of them a Mexican Mongrel named George, who said he did not believe Mormon doctrine, but like MORMON WAYS.

JULY 26

Continued down Echo Canon. On the right side going down we have the wall rising to a great height and thrown into various shapes like great buildings of brick, which they resemble also in colour, as they are a species of red gravel like grouted walls. Right here we found the remains of the ridiculous preparations which the Mormon General Wells made to check the advance of General Johnston, U. S. A. They would really give anyone a poor opinion of the intellect of the Mormon leaders if he could believe that they were in earnest, but this no one believes, but on the contrary that it was a ruse on their part to inveigle Uncle Samuel into a lavish expenditure of his phlethoric purse, in which they have been success-

ful to their utmost wishes. Brigham Young is by common consent a shrewd long headed man, and knew that it would always be possible to prevent a collision between his ragamuffins and the U. S. A., by a timely submission, and in the meantime that he would enlarge his consequence among his people, and his fame in the gentile world, and also by thus enlarging government expenditure here he would have his starving hundreds fed. My old acquaintance, William Rogers of Va., told me that he thinks that if the war had not been commenced by the U. S., for three months longer that the grasshoppers would have cleaned out the Mormons. After passing along the Canon (pronounced Canyon) we debouched up the ravine of Weber River at a Trading post kept by a vile old Mormon scoundrel. Here the Mexican George, previously mentioned was murdered by his Mormon fellow travelers a few minutes after we passed for his money. Sam and I had some talk with George when we passed. He was a low browed evil looking mongrel with a jaw like a wild boar, and we thought from what we saw of him that some one would love to shoot him, as he appeared very insolent to some men in our presence, but we did not expect to hear of his death so soon. He had about three hundred dollars.

JULY 27

Went up a beautiful little valley for some miles and down another as far through beautiful green hills, overtopped with snow capped mountains. We arrived at Bush Fork of Weber River which flows along the base of the vulgarly named "Big Mountain", from the top of which, men say, we will see the valley of Salt Lake City. We found the road excessively bad, but the creek itself is very beautiful, and has been in times past the favorite home of the beaver, many remains of whose skill and industry are still to be seen. We passed one dam which seemed to be still doing duty, but its constructor was gone, a prey to the rapacity of man. Near this we encamped and did pretty well.

JULY 28

Found the road bad on the Creek and much worse when we turned to the right to ascend Big Mountain. Through a rugged canon at the mouth of which we found some more "baby houses", which the Mormons dignified with the name of "Field works". After proceeding up this about four miles we came to the top of Big Mountain. Here we had the finest view of mountain and valley which the Union affords - at least the brightest picture. It resembles

a great dish of many miles in diameter in the bottom of which we could see the valley around the "Holy City", and others of less size, and the fresh green hills interspersed, around which ran, overtopping all, the grand rim or edge formed by snow capped mountains. The tout ensemble was very fine. After a drive of ten miles down the mountains of very rapid but not dangerous descent, and through a canon lined with flowers and June berries, we encamped within ten miles of the "Holy City" of "The Latter Day Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ", as the vagabonds very modestly style themselves, as if they were the only true Church. One might think, if Christianity has indeed culminated in them that Christ had died in vain so far as human judgement can go. We camped near the ranch of a Mormon, who has an irrigated garden and some other patches, in cultivation. He does not seem to be a man of any note as he has only one wife. Here the measure of a man's consequence is the number of his wives.

JULY 29

Started for the "Holy City". After a drive of some hours we debouched from the ravine upon the plain and the Mecca of the Mormons came to view. From this Birds

Eye view it loomed up through the mirage of the plains with but little more dignity of appearance than a Prairie dog town. This arises from the mirage in part, from the poor character of its building in part, and from its necessarily low position, for the essential purpose of securing irrigation, which is here the real "sine qua non". It is irrigated throughout. Pretty little streams of cold clear water run on each side of each street. It is certainly a unique place to say the least of it, but they injure their best buildings by the real or fancied necessity of enclosing them all by sombre walls of gravel and sand which destroy all the effects of their architecture. We arrived here about eleven o'clock A.M., but only stayed a few hours to purchase some necessary supplies, and pushed on; nor did a longer stay seem desirable from the character of population which we saw there. The gentiles whom we saw here bear down on the administration at Washington tremendously on account of its Mormon policy, and swear roundly that that community is worse now than it was before the government declared war on it; but it may be that this is the policy which will overcome them best at last, as a Sterner one would raise the cry of persecution and greatly increase these already too numerous fools and scoundrels. After buying a few things we started on. In a few miles we came to the

Warm Springs, where bathing booths or shanties are erected, and three miles beyond that the Hot Springs the water of which is hot enough to cook an egg. It is salty and smells dreadful. Near this we camped and hired pasture of a Mormon named Moore. Originally a Yankee, a talkative and ignorant fanatic with whom we had some conversation about the Mountain Meadow Massacre and other Mormon affairs. He undertook a very zealous defence of Brigham Young against the Mountain Meadow affair and other charges; but after much injudicious talk he left the impression very distinct upon my mind that the Massacre was a Mormon job. He was not more happy in defending the Mormons against the charge of treason against the United States, even pretending to justify them by asserting that our government had uniformly been disposed to tyrannize over the Mormons, until Joe came, after listening to a great deal of his talk, and drawing him out on various subjects, Spiritual, wifery &c., I left thoroughly convinced that he was a precious scoundrel and attached to the most infamous system of things which now exists on the globe.

JULY 30

After remaining here half the day to recruit and shoe cattle we moved on, taking the road on the north side of

the Lake, which we could see off on our left. Found the road very good but a little hard on the tender feet of our cattle leading through the midst of the Mormon settlements. After a drive of some eight miles we encamped just off the north shore of the Lake on tolerable grass and water. Today we passed the two thrifty villages of Centerville and Farmington, which are very pleasantly situated on the plain at the foot of the mountain ridge which bounds the valley on this side and is well watered.

SUNDAY, JULY 31

Moved on up the north side of the Lake which lies off broad and large on our left as we roll along through the midst of the little irrigated farms of the Mormons. The Lake is now very low as we can see the salt marshes have encroached upon it a great ways all around. Upon many hard places of which we can see the white salt lying thickly encrusted. When full it is said to be about one hundred and eighty miles around, and is filled with mountain Islands. After getting about forty miles West of the city, we came to Weber River again, just above where it empties into G. S. Lake. There it is a fine strong creek, on which the Mormons have constructed some valuable mills. We camped and had a fine rain, a rare occurrence here.

AUGUST 1

After a drive of some miles came to the town of Ogden on a Creek of the same name, which we found a pleasantly situated place of some three thousand inhabitants it is said, but I do not believe it as there are not houses enough to contain that population even considering their style of domestic arrangements. It is admirably situated for purposes of irrigation and seems to be an unusually thrifty town. We went on and encamped, where we had the bad luck to lose our old off wheel ox, a noble old fellow that had done good service on the tramp. On this journey we get to have a moral interest in our animals and we all feel as if we had lost a relation in "Old Broad".

AUGUST 2

This morning, which is hot and sultry we passed the Hot Salt Springs. Found several strong fountains of clear, hot and very salt water flowing from the foot of a hill of gray sandstone over some red sand, just on a level with the SALT MARSHES which border the Lake. An unfortunate frog had missed his leap and was lying "done brown" on one of the fountains. Soon afterwards we came to the Mormon village, or, as they term it, district of Box Elder, as under their theocratic form of

government they have their Church jurisdiction divided into districts, over each of which there is placed a Bishop, who is both a temporal and spiritual magistrate over his people in that District. The Bishop here, as everywhere else we found to be a pestiferous Yankee. His name was Nichols. We did not get to see him, as he had gone to Salt Lake City to see the Governor to place in his hands some daguerreotypes and other evidences of the fact that the Indians had cut off a train of emigrants named Sheppard on Myer's cut off just north of this about a day's drive. These relics were obtained from some Indians who were here yesterday openly boasting of their deeds of blood and rapine. The Mormon settlers here are nearly all a recent importation of Welsh, very ignorant of course, and just such material as these d-d Yankee Priests can mould to their wills.

AUGUST 3

After a drive of about fifteen miles arrived at Great Bear River again just above where it empties itself into the Great Lake. We could not pass the ferry this evening and had to encamp on the east side of the River and wait until morning. And here we must be allowed to measure the mosquitoes by the acre, as it would

be troublesome to give anyone an idea of their extent by any other mode. The valley of the River here is nothing better than an Artemishian desert, and although beautifully shaped and surrounded by glorious looking mountains, is on account of its sterility a very undesirable looking resting place. Here was the Mormon Settlements on this road. Having traversed them I have more hope of Mormonism than I had before I saw it. They are certainly very industrious, and their occupations are those of rural life generally, which are purifying and elevating in their tendencies. This, together with constant contact with the democratic mind of this country must eventually elevate them above their monstrous delusions. I mean, of course, the honest mass, for I regard their Priests, who over all nearly Americans, as unhallowed scoundrels. For them I have neither hopes nor fears. Trains are said to be rendezvousing ahead to protect themselves against the Indians who cut off Shepherd's train and others we have not learned the name of. We will of course join such an organization and do what men should in defence of life and property.

AUGUST 4

This morning crossed Bear River at the Ferry, which is about twelve miles from where it empties into the Lake.

It is here a deep and sluggish stream. After crossing we started for a spring nine miles off. In three miles crossed a deep and narrow creek called the Molad, originally no doubt "Mal Kan", as its waters are too bad for man or beast. We rendezvoused at the Spring, and found that we had twenty-seven wagons and about fifty men able to bear arms. Indians reported very bad on the Humboldt. They are said to be under the control of the Mormons, as believed, but at any rate, white scoundrels. The most deadly prejudice exists in the gentile mind against the Mormons, and it would be an easy matter to recruit a force here to rub them out. And indeed there is cause for this opinion, or prejudice of the emigrants. I saw enough among them to convince me that the Indians of this whole region regard the emigrants as the enemies of the Mormons, or they would never come into a Mormon settlement to exhibit the scalps and plunder which they had taken. We remained at the Spring all night as it was too far to the next drink. We have a long and weary drive before us tomorrow.

AUGUST 5

Started before day to make a good day's drive of it. After driving until 4 o'clock P.M., we arrived at

the Blue Springs. Strong fountains of warm brackish water in a desert place. After waiting to let such cattle as would drink do so, we pushed on, and after a drive protracted late into the night we arrived at Hensell's Spring, located in a mountain gorge surrounded by tractless wastes of sand. This fountain is strong and sweet and most gratefully acceptable to wayfarers on this journey. Here we went supperless to bed and to sleep away our weariness. It is an exceedingly unprofitable looking sort of country along here and I have no desire to "take a claim."

AUGUST 6

Started to cross over to the crossing of Deep Creek, distant six miles. When we arrived about noon-day found a clear, bright stream of slightly brackish water, flowing rapidly between deep banks, from which the stream gets its name. It runs through a desert covered with Artemisia, or wild sage. After nooning, we crossed and continued down stream to the Sink of Deep Creek, where we arrived in good camping time, making only twelve miles today. Here the Creek rises up to the level of the surrounding plain and spreads itself over the land in such a way as to make it produce enough grass to meet the wants of the emigrants. This is the first of those streams which flow down from

the hills and sink, which mark the distinctive character of what is called the Desert Basin.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7

After a drive of about ten miles we arrived at the Pilot Springs, two lone springs in a desert place in which we found enough of water to give our poor cattle a sufficiency to sustain life. After nooning we pushed on to the foot of a mountain taking what is called a "dry camp". Here we found some bunch grass and will make out. In this desolate region very small advantages are acceptable. The mountains and plains all around us are as brown as a berry and scarcely promise the means of support to man or beast. We are now in the Basin which is sometimes called Fremont's.

AUGUST 8

After a good drive we came to Stoney Creek about noon. The cattle being tired and hungry we decided to lay over until tomorrow. This is a beautiful little stream of ice-cold water coming down from a low mountain in the midst of sandy plains, on the top of which the snow lies in a large field a very short distance above our elevation; and just below, it drinks in these thirsty sands and disappears forever. Nature seems to have lost

sight of her usual economy in pouring her treasures of water into the maw of these thirsty lands; but if it were not so, no man could pass these interminable wastes.

AUGUST 9

Went over to De Casure Creek twelve miles to noon and afterwards continued on six miles to the upper crossing of Lane Creek where we encamped for the night. This is a large strong creek coming down from the mountains covered with snow, which separate the waters of this system of basins from those flowing into the Columbia River, to which latter system I believe it belongs. This is a singular country and it is hard to tell what its future will be. I do not think it can be any populous country ever, as it is destitute of the elements of wealth, unless there should be mineral wealth, of which we see no evidence as yet.

AUGUST 10

After a drive of about five miles came to the junction of the Fort Hall and City Road. This place is known as the City of Rocks, from a collection of high conical rocks just here, which the imagination might torture into a resemblance to a city. After passing here we went on to camp on Goose Creek, twenty miles further on over a country of the most desolate appear-

ance possible to conceive of. In the course of this day's tramp we crossed the Goose Creek mountains, which are found very steep and rough. The early emigrants had to chain trees behind their wagons before descending, but we were able to get down with the security of good lock-chains. Encamped on Goose Creek.

AUGUST 11

Continued on up Goose Creek about fifteen miles through a narrow and well grassed bottom on which our stock is doing very well. This country is sterile and worthless - an Artemesian waste. Alarming reports of the Indians ahead, but they are probably all gas; but still the emigrants seem all wide awake and determined to take care of themselves.

AUGUST 12

Passed over the head ridge of Goose Creek and into the basin of "Thousand Spring Valley", which we do not find very well supplied with springs notwithstanding its name. Encamped on a sage desert on a dry camp.

AUGUST 13

Leaving camp we pushed on through valleys clothed with sand, sage and greasewood, and possessing no

beauties or advantages that I could see. Made a good day's march and encamped on one of the many little bottoms of this Thousand Spring Valley. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the desolation that one sees here and of the constant signs of the sufferings of the poor cattle of this and past emigrations. Pyramids of bones attest everywhere their lingering and painful deaths.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14

Continued on up "Thousand Spring Valley". Find but little improvement in the water or grass. Passed a spring of boiling water. Fountain very large and situated in the very midst of the bottom surrounded by poisonous looking sloughs. We are now in the Southern part of the State of Oregon. She need never be jealous of her rights of soil, as there never can be any population here, within any reasonable probability.

AUGUST 15

After a long drive up "Thousand Spring Valley" we stopped to noon in a rather good looking piece of bottom land covered with wild wheat. This very much resembles the cultivated wheat in both stalk and blade, but the grain is chaffy. Here our pet Antelope ate something poisonous, or fell sick from some other cause and died

after a few hours in spite of our efforts and much to our grief, as he had been with us for about nine hundred miles of travel, sharing as it were our beds and board. He was very beautiful and very self-willed and mischievous and kept us constantly amused by his little antics about the camp. He had thriven so well that we confidently expected to take him through, but we left poor little Bill on the road.

AUGUST 16

Pushed on across the head branches of the Humboldt over a country having but little good water, much bad and poor grasses, and passed through a canon of six miles in length where we found a Hot Spring pouring out an enormous volume of hot water. The road through here was prodiciously rough. It was barely passable, with care, to get through. After a drive of a few miles further we came to the first crossing of the main Humboldt River, which we struck and camped in good time. We have to go down this stream somewhere above three hundred miles, and it is by common reputation the worst part of our route.

AUGUST 17

Started early down the main fork of the Humboldt. After a drive of some hours stopped to noon in a bottom

of good grass. Indeed, so far as we have gone down the ravine of this river, we are most agreeably disappointed in its appearance and means of comfort, as the grass, water and fuel are all better than we have previously had. The stream is well stocked with fish and some of the boys are catching them. Immediately out of the vicinity of the river the sand and sage still accompany us. The snow capped tops of the Humboldt Range is on our left bounding the valley in an iron wall.

AUGUST 18

Continued on down the Humboldt Valley. Arrived at the mouth of a rough canon through which the stream passes, but we could not, and were obliged to take the hills. Here this stream receives another fork on the west side of poisonous looking water. We can see the bed and bars of the river overlaid with the white salt the people call alkali, and the constant imbibation of which causes so much destruction among the cattle, a most melancholy evidence of which is to be seen all along the road, and is so offensive that people of delicate nasal organization are made sick. After a good day's drive we camped on the river.

AUGUST 19

Still down the Humboldt, finding grass and water all the way. Made a tramp of about fifteen miles. Moun-

tains still show some snow, but are gradually growing lower as we descend the river.

AUGUST 20

Started early as we had a long canon before us. Found the road, and the crossings of the stream very good. Saw our first Digger Indian. He is best described as a "dirty beast". Certainly he was more beast than man in his appetite and habits. The country is becoming more and more worthy of its reputation as we descend.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21

Left the Humboldt and struck across the hills for a distance of twenty miles, over high ridges of rough hills and sterile sand plains, and down canons which actually strangled the cattle with their heat and dust until the poor creatures were unable to clean the mud from their lolled-out tongues. We arrived at the Humboldt again and after a weary all day's march and into the night encamped on the bank of the river, weary and disgusted. Went supperless to bed. The feelings of a man are sorely tried on this route by the sufferings of his poor stock, and his faith and fortitude are put to the proof constantly by his liability to his entire motive power. We are now at "Gravelly Ford", two hundred and twenty miles from the desert.

AUGUST 22

Went down the river a few miles and laid over on pretty good grass and water to recruit our stock after their long and suffering march of yesterday. River is becoming deeper and the sloughs more numerous and dangerous to stock. Indeed it is now almost impossible to avoid letting them have bad water. The mountains are running down into mere ridges, and no snow is to be seen anywhere; sand plains are widening out, and the river bottoms becoming narrower and narrower, until I suppose they will run out to nothing, leaving a dirty, poisonous stream running through sterile sands. Fortunately the weather is not oppressively hot in the day time, there being always some breeze to modify the heat.

AUGUST 23

Started early and had to cross an ugly sand ridge immediately which distresses our cattle so much. Old Humboldt looks worse and worse, sloughs more and more killing looking, grass and water depreciating in quantity and quality and exhibiting more and more of those vegetable and mineral poisons which kill so much cattle. Marched about thirty miles today and until late at night, before we could get a reasonably safe place to camp on the Humboldt, and here we have overtaken our old friends

the Ellisons, whom we parted from at Green River. I understand that they are suffering much from sickness but have not yet seen them. Camped and supped on "cold victuals."

AUGUST 24

Going down the Humboldt. Find water, wood and grass getting rapidly worse. We now and then see a Digger Indian. If you can imagine a specimen of a man just above an animal you will have a picture of a digger; and then conjure up a country which ought to produce and furnish a habitation to such a man as the above digger, and you have this region before you. Truly there is a most wonderful resemblance between this country and its inhabitants, the Diggers.

AUGUST 25

We camped about fifteen or twenty miles of the Pah Utah, or, as they are called, the Pi Utes. They visited us and wanted to trade fish, ducks, &c. for old clothes and "cold victuals". Some few of them had arms; guns, & bows and arrows, but generally they seemed to be too poor even to have weapons to defend themselves with. We were kind to them and they came about our fires to eat whatever offal they could pick, and to prepare their own fish and ducks for use, which was done in a truly

barbarian style: they not thinking it necessary to remove the scales from the fish, only in part the feathers from the birds, or the entrails from either, just putting them on the fire and eating them as soon as they were burnt a little. Truly they are dirty beasts, and the missionaries are not easily discouraged.

AUGUST 26

We are now all pushing ahead to reach the desert as soon as possible as we are anxious to get some vegetable food as soon as we can to improve the health of many of us who have been unwell. Our family are, however, as well as could be desired. Our old friends the Ellisons are just ahead of us. They have had, and still are having a great deal of sickness among them. Ellison's father has been long sick, and if there is not a favorable change, will not make the passage I fear. The grass and water are both getting worse and worse, and the valley of the River is becoming a mere ravine in a sand desert.

AUGUST 27

No change except a gradual one of depreciation in the grass and water, and a larger exhibition of those mineral and vegetable poisons which are so destructive

to stock. The Mountain Thiersey has broken out again the mules and horses, and many of the finest animals are dying. I saw one or two very bad cases cured by bleeding the animal freely and burning the swelling with a hot iron. The remedy was very severe but it was effectual. We are now driving at the rate of about twenty miles a day, which we desire to keep up until we pass the Desert and escape from these poisonous wastes.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28

Proceeded about twenty miles. Find no change worth recording. Now about one hundred miles from the Sink of the Humboldt, which is the place where this Stream loses itself in the sands of Carson Desert. We are now with the Ellisons, who are still suffering much sickness, but no deaths yet.

AUGUST 29

Moved two miles today and camped to rest the stock before going on a reach of about twenty miles across a great bend in the River. No grass or water on this reach. The Humboldt gets worse and worse, and becomes really what The Humboldt is called "The River of Death".

AUGUST 30

Continued on down the Humboldt. It is becoming

worse and worse and is latterly "clothed with terrors". Deep dust, burning sands, greasewood, sage brush, sand flies and poisoned waters make up the sum of its abominations. No pen of mine could do justice to its desolate appearance or depressing influence upon the mind.

AUGUST 31

Still down the River, and all the horrors enumerated above are gradually culminating as we approach the Desert, now some fifty miles ahead. It is one thing all the time and it is impossible to make anything of interest in a description of it.

SEPTEMBER 1

Made a long and weary march protracted into the night. Encamped in a slough near a trading post, where we made a comfortable night. Here we were obliged to sell one of our oxen for about thirteen dollars, which had cost thirty-three. He had fallen lame at the last crossing of Bear River, and after an infinite amount of trouble to Brother Sam in getting him along this far, we were obliged to leave him. This is the second ox we have left on the road. We still have seven head and hope to get enough of them through to pull us.

SEPTEMBER 2

Continued on down the Humboldt. The desolation rather darkens than grows lighter. The river has entirely sank into a narrow and deep bed and the bottoms are all burned into sand plains. Among the other pests that we meet here is a species of winged ant, which, although it does not bite, is very annoying by flying over you and all about you. Indeed dust and insects, bad smells and bad drinks are among our daily comforts. We will get to the Sink tomorrow if we have luck.

SEPTEMBER 3

Soon after starting we arrived at the head of Humboldt Lake, a pretty little lake of about two miles long by four in width formed by the widening out of the river at this point. Its Eastern bank is covered with shale, or slate, and its Western side is a brown sterile mountain. Between the bank on the Eastern side and another brown mountain there is just room enough to pass over a sideling and rough road. We travelled down the bank of this point at which it pours itself into the sands and there nooned. After noon we moved over to the trading post at the Sink proper, where we laid over on a slough, and did the best we could which was bad enough.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Today we undertook the Carson Desert, about forty miles across. After driving about ten miles over a desolate waste covered with a crust of salt and sand dotted over thick with the piles of bones of animals left behind by this and the previous emigrations, we arrived at a slough of the last remains of Humboldt River, which smells dreadfully, and through which we were obliged to drive the stock with great rapidity to prevent them from drinking, if possible, as it would be sure death to any one that did. Passing this we continued on over the same sort of road for about thirteen miles to a place where there are some shallow wells of very brackish water. These wells are only about eight feet deep and as many in diameter, and one of them is so constructed that you can walk down to the water. Here we watered our horses and work cattle at the charge of a bit a head, and drew the water ourselves. The loose cattle set up a dreadful lamentation when they found they were not to get any. We left here just after night and started to make the remaining seventeen miles, ten or twelve of which are very deep sand, and most painful toil to the cattle. All hands, women and children, walking, we got over just at daybreak on the 5th to the famous city of Ragtown, and our appearance as well became our destination as the

place does its name. This was a Mormon Station of note in the days of the rush to the gold mines, but it has decayed until there is only a poor tavern and a worse store left. It is situated on the bank of Carson River at the point at which the road strikes it, eighty miles from Carson Valley proper. My impression is that this whole desert was once a lake like Salt Lake near the "City" is now, and that it has been dried up, as I believe, the other will yet. Humboldt River on the East, and the Carson, Walker and Truckee on the West all pour their waters in here, and no doubt did once into a shallow lake as at Salt Lake now. Its extent was about the same and conformation also, each about one hundred and eighty miles in circumference.

SEPTEMBER 5

After breakfasting and resting a few hours we proceeded up the Carson River to hunt a better supply of grass and water. The ravine of this river is of considerable breadth, but is all a sand desert except the immediate banks, where there is a limited supply of grass and water - very good and sweet. We encamped as soon as we could find a suitable place, as it was absolutely necessary to rest the worn out cattle. Plenty of wood here, and it is quite cheering to get under the shade of a tree once more. The man who has made this

trip down Humboldt and over Carson Desert is the only one who can appreciate the true beauty of a tree.

SEPTEMBER 6

Continued on up the Carson River. No improvement in the grass, but wood and water very abundant and good. Cattle still dying very fast from the effects of the poison eaten and imbibed on the Humboldt. Weather growing cooler as we ascend towards the Sierra Nevada, which we will reach in a few days if we have luck. No pen can do justice to the impression made upon the mind of the sojourner in these wastes. The man who would be able to pass through here and not be sometimes cross and gloomy would be a most admirably constituted one; few indeed stand the ordeal.

SEPTEMBER 7

Still going up this most desolate and dreary looking ravine. Our stock have much difficulty in getting enough to sustain them. Went a few miles and encamped.

SEPTEMBER 8

Still going slowly up the ravine. Find no change worth recording. For the last two days we have had attached to us as an outrider a pi Ute Indian, who says he

wants to go to California. We feed him a little and amuse ourselves around the campfire with his remarks, and with trying to learn some of the words of his singular tongue. I would judge his language to be very impoverished and incomplete, as I notice that he has none but American names for all but the most common objects. He has none of the lofty self esteem or contempt for labour that belongs to the Savages of the tribes of the East, but will cheerfully bring wood and water to camp, and bake his own bread, when you tell him to do so. He displays a great deal of skill in his cooking, as his bread is always the best baked cake on the ground. I plague my wife a good deal about letting the Pi Ute surpass her. He seems well disposed and gentle in his manners, and gives us to understand that he had learned to work over in Carson Valley among the Whites.

SEPTEMBER 9

More height and roughness in the Hills as we go on, and more indications of volcanic action in the remote past. We are now encamped in a pretty place where our cattle can get tolerable grass and very good water. We will lay over here today and recruit them as much as possible as they have the formidable heights of the Sierra Nevada before them, the higher regions of which

are beginning to show themselves above the western horizon. We are still in Utah, and it is truly a desolate and unfortunate looking country, and this part of it arid indeed. Nearly all of it must remain uninhabited waste.

SEPTEMBER 10

This morning we arrived at Chinatown, a village just going up at the mouth of what is called Gold Canon. These are the now so much talked of "Carson River Diggings". Here we found a number of men, White and Red from the Celestial Empire at work. They told me that the diggings were paying them about three dollars per day, and work very hard, as I would judge it to be from appearance. [Diarist's Note: October 31. There is much talk of great discoveries of silver and gold leads just above China-town, at Washoe Valley, and fortunes are said to be now being made there very rapidly; but there is not much movement in that direction as the Frazer River experience has not worn off yet].

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Left our camp in Eagle Valley and started over to the famous Carson Valley, distant eight miles. This is a sterile valley, although men are settling here I can-

not see what for, unless, as is probably, there should yet be a mineral wealth developed. We are now close under the Eastern foot of the great Nevada range. They stretch away with much grandeur all along the Western horizon, covered with a beautiful verdure of dark pines. The grandeur of their height, however, is much diminished by the great elevation of these valleys in which we now are.

SEPTEMBER 12

Encamped at Carson Valley and will remain here this morning. After resting we hitched up and started for Genoa, the chief town of this would be new Territory of Nevada, where we arrived about 11 o'clock A.M. This is a tolerably thrifty little village, place right under the overhanging crest of the Sierra, shaded by some grand old pines and watered with the purest mountain streams. Here they have several stores, more or less mechanic shops, a fine mill, and a printing press issuing a weekly. After staying a short time we proceeded a few miles further up the valley and camped. I was much disappointed with the appearance of this valley, of which I had heard enchanting stories.

SEPTEMBER 13

We are encamped about eight miles west of Genoa, and about the center of the western line of the valley. Im-

mediately along the foot of the mountains it is hard and sterile, covered with artemesia, and when you can reach the more fertile lands near the creek there is much slough land covered with rushes. Its entire length is about thirty miles and its width from three to five. The Sierra embraces it in steep iron walls. It is splendidly watered as a cold mountain stream comes down on each side every few rods.

SEPTEMBER 14

This morning we leave Hope Valley high upon the Nevada where we came yesterday, through what is called a road, but scarcely deserves the name. We start across the crest of the Sierra distant about twelve miles. Our course lies up the Carson River still. Road quite good. After a drive of several miles we arrived at Head Spring or rather Lake, of Carson River. Here the crest of the Sierra seems to hang over and refuse us a passage. By doubling teams and winding about among the rocks and steepes of its rugged face we finally made the passage, with much - and almost killing - labour to our poor worn out and tender footed cattle. This placed us upon the first crest of the Sierra and in the State of CALIFORNIA.

SEPTEMBER 15

Left our camp in the valley of Spring Lake and

started across the Second Crest of the Sierra which second ascent is made necessary by the impracticability of descending the gorge in which we now are, any lower. This ascent is but little if any more practicable than the one we have just overcome, and is well calculated to use up the remaining strength of our worn out cattle. However, by hitching double teams and whipping and labouring at last made the summit and commenced a rapid and rough descent into the valley below. After making about two miles down the mountains we encamped at a Spring and sent our cattle loose to graze below in the valley of Silver Lake, a beautiful little lake in a hollow of the mountains.

SEPTEMBER 16

Found the road exceedingly rough for some miles as we continued our course down the mountain, but it gradually improved as we traveled on. On these heights we find a moderate growth of pine and some cedar, which are becoming larger and larger as we go down on this long mountain slope. We have just passed a beautiful pair of little lakes, called "Twin Lakes", surrounding which there is a beautiful mountain country with a splendid growth of timber on it, some of the tallest of which are the famous red woods, which attain such gigantic bulk on

this slope of the Sierra. Our descent towards the valley is now very sensibly shown by the rising of the Grand Ridge of the Sierra, behind us, whose top glitters with large fields of snow, over which we have just passed. Yet looking forward we see no apparent end to the descent before us, and we can only see it with the eye of faith. This evening we passed what is called Tragedy Springs, a noted place on this road as it was the scene of a horrid Indian massacre in 1848 of some emigrants who were encamped here, all of whom were murdered and burnt in their camp, of which there is some memorial in a writing on a [cut into] tree, and a pile of stones marking the place of interment of what fragments were found of their remains. We moved on a short distance beyond this and encamped at a good spring in a beautiful cove of the mountains, where we had some grass for the stock. Cattle still dying. Here are friend Phillips lost a fine steer. This is quite a pleasant camp under the tall firs and red woods, which is here the finest tree I ever saw, and yet is a mere sapling to those which are to be found on this mountain slope elsewhere. Here Brother Sam brought to camp a can of butter which he obtained from an old Frenchman, who has itinerating dairy among these hills and valleys and is now located

at Silver Lake, about three miles from him, where he will remain until the season drives him down the mountains, where he will slowly retire before the coming winter. The butter was excellent, but dear - five bits a pound, or 62 1/2 cents, as we say.

SEPTEMBER 17

Pushed on down the divide between the waters of the two rivers - Mokelumne and American. The Mokelumne being on the left as we go westward and the American on the right. These mountain slopes are very beautiful and the soil must be excellent, but they have a Siberian winter here in sight of the everlasting sunshine and warmth of the coast. The snows, I am told not melting until the middle of June on these slopes and heights, where there is now good pasture for cattle, many thousands of which are now herded here, being brought up from the valleys of California on consequence of the more than usually severe drouth of summer there. After a drive of about fifteen miles we encamped at a feeble spring of good water, but no grass for the poor stock as it had been all eaten up by the herds of the emigrants and drovers from below. Some of the tallest trees here I have yet seen, both of cedar and pine. Some of the Redwoods must be two hundred feet at least.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Moved off at day light to find grass if possible, and continued on near noon and encamped on very indifference grass, but plenty of water in a spring branch which descends towards the Mokelumne River. Here is obtained some native gooseberries of an extraordinary size, and covered, each berry with strong thorns, which made them scarcely worth the trouble of eating, although sweet and good when you reached the rich and unusually solid pulp. Here also we find in large quantities the bulbous root called Soap Weed which grows on the piney slopes of this light red soil in great abundance, and provides for the wants of the unfortunate emigrants who arrive here in bad want of washing and cleaning as it seems to answer pretty well instead of soap. It is a solid bulb growing in the ground, and when peeled looks much like an onion. The husk is very rough and covered with an outside coating of matter which looks like the coarsest animal hair. We are now pretty well down the mountain, and they rise grandly in our rear as we sit here in the shade of these splendid trees, and look back upon our course. We are now about fifteen miles North East of Dry Town, and sixty-five from Sacramento City. Today we met upon the mountains a Grizzly Bear Hunter, originally from Pennsylvania, as curious a specimen of the

genus homo as ever as I have seen. He was a species of monomaniac, and the "moon of his madness" was grizzly hunting. He had been twice caught and chewed up by bears; from one of which he escaped by the mortal wounds he inflicted upon the bear taking effect before the bruin could bite him fatally, and from the other by feigning death. This last one had crushed him dreadfully in its teeth, and he showed us large scars and cicatrices yet unhealed upon his arm, and told us of others upon his hip and thigh. This happened last October and yet he was going cheerfully out to seek more encounters with these savage beasts. I told him that he ought to seek some less dangerous calling, but he said "his head was shaped that way, that he was good for nothing else, and that he owed the grizzlies a grudge and that he had declared perpetual war with them". He used a double barreled rifled gun of different bores in the barrels, the smaller one carrying a two ounce ball, and yet he said he had shot them frequently as many as nine times through the body before they would give in. These bears are never found in the day time out of the thickest brush, and as the hunters have to attack them on foot and in this brush, which is generally of the hard and horny mansenita, the danger is very great."

SEPTEMBER 19

Continued over the lower slopes and broken lands of this region and find that we are now in the mining country. We find a few men chiefly the sons of the Celestial Empire engaged in digging and washing, but they say it pays but poorly, and from what I saw I would judge it did, as it seemed to be a very minute and sparsely placed particle. These Chinese are queer looking fellows with their pig tails, oblique eyes and umbrella hats, but they are good labourers and must get a great deal of the whole yield of gold of this country. They seem to work in pairs and are generally amicable and quiet in their demeanor. We encamped at lower Ranchero and bought feed for our cattle and horses.

SEPTEMBER 20

Here we lost another of our steers which we brought from Lecompton with us. A strong, hardy and faithful fellow. I know not from what cause he died, but probably from too severe work in pulling up the Sierra Nevada. This country is excessively dry. Yesterday we passed through Dry Town, a village at the foot of the hills on a creek called Dry Creek, and dry enough we found it. The village has several stores, and a good deal the appearance of a business place. It is one of the mountain

towns which have grown up entirely from the mining interests, and which must stand or fall with the duration of them. It is at the very foot of the hills, and hence we will strike the valley of Sacramento at a distance of forty miles from the city.

SEPTEMBER 21

Left our camp just below Dry Town and went on towards Sacramento City. We find this so-called valley to be composed of low rolling plains which are excessively sterile and dry at this time, presenting only a naked surface of light red soil, interspersed with darker red grounds on which there is some brushwood. It does not come up to my expectations, but I see it at the most unfavorable season. Men tell me that it will look altogether another place next March and April. We encamped this evening at the Chain Bridge over the Mokosumne River, a stream coming down from the hills on our right.

SEPTEMBER 22

We left this morning for the City of Sacramento, distant nineteen miles. After driving all day over a low and rather unfruitful country we arrived in the evening at Sacramento - the end of our long and dusty

drive. This place is situated on the left bank of the Sacramento River, on a low plain just below the mouth of the American River. It is well laid out in regular blocks and squares, and the gardens are very beautiful and productive. Its population is about ten thousand and is composed of a great variety of people, including Chinese and free negroes. The Chinese, generally, occupy all the menial positions. As you pass the streets you notice signs saying "Washing and Ironing by Sam Lee", "Shaving and Shampooing by Hong Lee", &c. The Lee family is wonderfully numerous among them. They are a peculiar people and their presence here presents one of the most difficult problems which the future Legislators of this State will have to solve.

SACRAMENTO, NOVEMBER 5

Every kind of business is dull and it is hard to get employment. I am still unemployed and likely to remain so, notwithstanding I have diligently sought it every day since my arrival. When we got here on the 22nd of September we rented a house and proceeded to cheapen our mode of living as much as possible, and in that way have husbanded our little means in such a manner that it may carry us along a while yet. Brother Sam started for Stockton today to see how the land lies there. If any luck should turn up in that direction I

will join him as soon as possible. California is full of adventures and good men seeking employment, and every situation in the country in each and every department of life has a surplus of persons seeking it, except agricultural, and here it takes so much means to start a farm that that door is virtually shut against it. But the periodical rains sat in yesterday, and with them the two great interests of the state, to wit mining and farming will revive, and prospects which are now gloomy brighten up - at least I hope so. Our season here since our arrival has been one long sunshine, with very moderate heat, and the climate is undoubtedly one of the most agreeable in the world. Everybody and everything looks healthy, and the means of the best living are plenty and reasonable, as although meats and fruits are high, still not so when compared with the prices of labour, as wages are very high, though cut down some from the old standard.

SACRAMENTO, NOVEMBER 8

I have thought proper, while I lie idle here to give you some idea of the geography, politics and other interests of this famous young state. This is the great valley of the state and is called the Sacramento. It is included between the Sierra on the East and the Coast Range on the West. It is fifty or sixty miles wide here,

and about five hundred in length along the ravines of the Sacramento and San Joachin (pronounced San Waken) Rivers. All this region would be, and indeed is delightfully fertile, where irrigated, but the great difficulty is to get sufficient supplies of water to meet such an enormous want. Some suggest the use of artesian wells, but I see that, where they have been extensively used, there is much outcry against them, as they are said to dry up the lakes, creeks and rivers, and that the water which they furnish is too cold for the purposes of irrigation. They are, however, obtained at comparatively a small cost. All along the border of this great valley is stretched the Grand Ridge of the Sierra, with its western base of long low ridges and slopes covered with a growth of timber which is beyond doubt unrivalled in the world, unless in the Sister State of Oregon. I have never seen more beautifully shaped slopes and plateaux than these ridges offer. The soil which produces such a splendid growth of timber must necessarily be good, but the mighty ridge of the Sierra chills by its proximity, and here truly "lingering winter chills the lap of May" - and June too, I am told, as the snow does not melt until the middle of the latter month. However, we found a good many ranches being established at the very foot of these slopes, and they had fine peaches, melons, potatoes and grasses on them. I have

no doubt that, as this gigantic primeval forest is cleared away that the genial influences of summer could be more quickly felt in this region, which now only increases the wealth of the state by affording lumber for the cities and pasturage to the herds. On the western slope are many beautiful plains which are highly spoken of, and farther south is the Valley of Los Angeles which many regard as a terrestrial paradise. The grapes which I have seen from there are indeed splendid... Pears and other fruit are all fine, and the grain and grass exceedingly productive. Of the northern portion of this state I have heard very contradictory statements. Some represent it to be but a mountain region fit only for mining purposes, and others say it has many delightful farming districts in it. The Coast Range is but a low ridge of mountain. It has many passes through it, offering but small obstruction to lines of improvement which would traverse the state from East to West. The Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers are the chief tributaries of the Great Bay, on an arm of which San Francisco is situated. The Bay is partly in this valley and partly in the ridges of the Coast Range. There is a great future before this State, undoubtedly, and if Congress could or would lay aside

its bickerings, and the Northern portion of the Confederacy would yield to the dictates of nature, which has clearly thrown the whole geographical advantages with the South, and provide for the construction of the Railroad from El Paso to the head of the Gulf of California, there would be an increase and progress as much exceeding what has been as that exceeds whatever was before. This consideration leads us naturally to think of the political confusion. After looking at the status of parties here, I have been forced to the conclusion that this land is more completely and severely demagogic ridden than any other State in the Union. And this too in no small measure results from the very means taken to prevent it, and to secure the highest merit in high places, namely, the payment of large salaries. The plunder of the public is so rich a thing that every means which can be brought to bear in securing an important office pays well. I am disposed to think that no where else are more unscrupulous measures used than here. When a man has once obtained one of these best offices it affords him the means of keeping it. I am impressed with the idea that the public interests are much neglected and nearly the whole of its very heavy revenues is exhausted in paying immense salaries to office holders,

who spend both salaries and time in promoting selfish and party purposes. For instance, with a Governor receiving a salary of ten thousand dollars a year, they have no State House, and but a very poor character of public buildings of any sort.

Finis.