

Marango, Iowa County, Iowa, April 18, 1859.

There are few men in this Mundane sphere, who are insensible to the unspeakable inconvenience of being poor, and fower still, who schooled in that condition, will remain so, when a suitable opportunity presents itself for amassing an independence. Consequently believing as I did, that there was an ample field, and a fair prospect of remuneration for the industrious man in the neighborhood of Pike's Peak - a few others and myself in all a round dozen, left Marango today at 3:00 P.M. en route for the diggings - some like myself, leaving a comfortable home - a loving wife and family for the sole purpose of placing them in easier circumstances - others again for the mere sake of fun and frolic, who probably have a vague idea that they will make something handsome. None, however, with any very extravagant hopes - a jolly crew of devil-may-care fellows - men whom I have known for years, and who can be depended upon in a pinch, well-provisioned, armed, and equipped, ready for anything honorable - Blacksmiths, carpenters, millers, coopers and a general assortment of Jacks of all trades, determined to make a start, and not caring about crowding our raw teams. We have only come five miles, and are now snugly encamped on Little Bear Creek, some of our friends paying us a parting visit here, and seeing us safely off, and little does anyone of us know, though all so happy and anticipative now, what various hues and shades the future may assume, either in regard to himself or those he is in company with.

April 24, 1859.

The past week has been one of unremitting toil both for ourselves and cattle. The sloughs deep and miry, and the mud stiff, rendering travel very difficult, especially for untrained cattle such as ours. We are constantly passing and repassing teams bound for the same goal, though we sometimes pass a few bound straight through to California and Oregon. The spring is very backward, little grass to be seen as yet, and that only in the timber and sloughs. We have passed a few towns on our way - Brooklyn situated at the head of Bear Creek Grove - a small town that will probably increase rapidly when the railroad is completed. The survey runs a mile or so south of town. Newton is the next town of any importance, neat and thriving, with an excellent courthouse recently erected, at considerable cost to the county, and the finishing touch given to it by the citizens themselves, each subscribing liberally for ornamenting the structure. This county appears well adapted for farming. We have had travellers luck in general, sometimes making good time, and sometimes sticking fast for an hour or two. Yesterday we crossed Skunk Bottom - the d__st place in spring, this side of h--l. We put all the cattle on one wagon, taking one at a time as did many others in company, and then commenced the yelling, cursing, whipping, pulling, floundering, sticking fast, falling down and rolling in the mud, far exceeding anything I ever thought possible to be enacted in such a short time. We spent three-quarters of a day in getting three wagons over, and pulled our cattle so that we concluded to lay over here, and spend the Sunday resting ourselves and them. Were I a resident of these parts, I would use every endeavor to have Skunk Bottom

John M. T. Gibson
alias John Blunt (?)

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...passage: here it for nothing more than the morality of the thing. What an amount of cursing it would do away with.

May 1, 1859.

Leaving Skunk River, we proceeded on our way making good time, till Tuesday afternoon, when one of my young steers appeared to give out. The result, no doubt, of Saturdays pull. The consequence was we all had a fit of the blues, which was noways improved on reaching Fort Des Moines, the capitol of the state, far from being a nipe looking city. Maybe a little longer - that is extended over more ground than Iowa City but far inferior in point of situation and general appearance. The day was wet and disagreeable, rendering the view of everything around dark and dismal. Here also we lost both of our dogs, Les and Rover, and of course we know the day now amongst us by the name of Blue Tuesday. We saw during the week a team returning from beyond Council Bluffs in consequence of one of their number having got accidentally shot with his own revolver. We have had several messes of fish and ducks within the last few days, every one appearing eager to carry death into the firmy and feathered tribes. Saturday last. We had another fit of the blues on account of the same steer again giving out. I sold the yoke to a man buying stock for California, for the small sum of \$35.00. Today, contrary to our custom of not travelling on Sunday, we come about 15 miles and are now about eighty from the Missouri River, with high hopes for the future, and a full determination to push ahead, and see for ourselves, independent of all reports that are circulated by certain parties for certain purposes.

May 2, 1859.

We inadvertently left camp this morning and got caught out in a most pitiless rainstorm, ten miles at least from timber. We had nothing left for it but push ahead in the midst of the storm, and are now engaged in cutting about an acre of scrub oak for our campfires. Today we were passed by a company from Indiana, enroute for California with 22 fine looking horses. We have been paying from 75¢ to \$1.00 per hundred for hay and the same per bushel for corn. We have got tired, however, of the hay business, and have turned our cattle out on the sloughs; but we intend to feed corn for a couple of weeks longer. Our camp commands a full view of the road for two miles, and the word with all is "still they come".

May 3, 1859.

Last night a little before sundown, another team from Karengo headed by three Cripes, have in sight and camped along side of us. It rained a little in the morning, and the roads were considerably muddy, nevertheless we travelled about fourteen miles down Turkey Creek Bottom doing without corn till night, when we bought enough to feed our teams, at \$1.00 per bushel and had to beg for it at that. So wags the world - it takes a mint of gold to reach the land of gold.

May 4, 1859.

Today I parted with two hundred weight of flour in order to lighten our load, the roads ahead being very hilly. We killed a great many rattlesnakes, and snakes of all descriptions, and near night just passed Lewis County seat of Cass county and camped on the creek immediately beyond town, which numbers I believe somewhere near 300 inhabitants and can boast of a courthouse nearly as good as Marengo.

May 5, 1859.

This morning we were made the victims of the most barefaced gouging that I ever experienced. A little d--d creek in the outskirts of the town of Lewis, that one can nearly jump across, has got a one-horse ferry boat in active operation - skinning the traveling public, surely such an institution is a disgrace to any town, and will most assuredly, as well as deservedly, damn the place eternally if not speedily removed. We travelled about fifteen miles today over excellent roads, and are now camped in the open prairie just in sight of timber and that is all, but our cattle are up to their knees in excellent grass, while behind us half a mile there is another company camped with as many cattle as we have. Every one appears to enjoy himself and throws all care to the winds. Reports from the gold regions are still variable.

May 6, 1859.

All nature seemed green and growing this morning, the roads were hard, level and pleasant, skirting small groves, crowned, and beautiful with the blossoming plum and crab-apple, emitting as we journeyed on the sweetest perfume, but alas for human hopes and fond anticipations, for the duration of the agreeable was short and evanescent - the lightning flashed, the thunder roared, and the rain poured down in torrents, drenching to the skin everyone who was not fortunate enough to be the possessor of a gum coat. We have therefore concluded to let our cattle rest and wait here on the Nishna Botana near Stubzmaria Kill 25 miles from Council Bluffs, until the roads dry up a little.

May 7, 1859.

It rained all night, in the morning the roads were muddy and heavy, and so we concluded to lay over till noon. When we again took the route leaving the Council Bluffs road, and the Cripe boys who concluded to go that way and travelled down the Nishna Botana some 11 miles on our way to Plattsmouth and reached Mud Creek Grove, where we camped by an excellent spring. There are four teams going to start from this grove on Monday first for the mines. We are in Mills County 16 miles from Glenwood, the county seat.

May 8, 1859.

Was sick as a dog all day - slept nearly all the time in the wagon, and consequently did not see the best farming land that any of

our crowd ever saw. Got a ride from a stranger some 5 miles into Glenwood - the prettiest town in the west - little groves of small timber, trimmed and thinned out. Part of them in full bloom. It must undoubtedly render the town peculiarly inviting during the warm weather. Leaving it behind we passed a place in the road where some workmen, in tearing out a stump, killed 273 snakes of all sorts and sizes. We saw the pile - rather a nasty sight, with a far worse smell. A short drive brought us into Pacific, or California City, three miles from Glenwood. More than one-half the houses are deserted and oh how changed for the worse since 1857 when I was here before. Most of the inhabitants have gone to the mines. Here we camped for the night.

May 9, 1859.

Five miles travel brought us to the Big Muddy, which we crossed, and landed in Plattsmouth, a thin scattering village with only one outfitting store in the whole place. They, however, do a smashing business - have enormous profits, and sell more goods than any one store I have seen in the west. We bought our outfit here, saw some fine gold specimens from the mines, and were altogether more encouraged than we have been since we started. I wrote my first letter home from this point. We went out about a mile, camped and then returned into town, where, most of the boys indulged in a general big - each one imagining he could do as he pleased on leaving the United States. We had a jolly time of it and everything was carried on in good humor.

May 10, 1859.

After last night's relaxation, most of the boys felt a little squeamish, some even went so far as to evacuate their stomachs. We struck tents about nine o'clock, and travelled up the Platte some 16 miles over the best farming land that can be found in any country. There is one great drawback, however, the scarcity of timber. There is a little skirting the Platte in the distance, and a trifling amount along some of the creeks we have crossed, and that is all. Today we have met some teams coming back whose hearts have failed them. They bring all kinds of reports, such as land-robbers, robbing the provision wagons, men being killed ahead of us, and everything else tended to dishearten the timid - but we think we are made of sterner stuff, and are determined to see the peak, gold or no gold. Harper has amused us all today, stopping every man he met and asking if he had got any reliable news. We heard today from Old Mr. Miner, who left Karango some three weeks ahead of us. We passed the place where his son-in-law lives. The old man started on again for the mines some ten days ago, and several teams start from the same neighborhood tomorrow.

May 11, 1859.

Talk about your eastern rainstorms. They sink into utter insignificance when compared with what can be got up on short notice along the Platte. The lightening flashed almost simultaneous with the clashing, deafening, reverberating reports of heavens artillery. The wind howled a perfect tornado, leveling onetent in company, and forcing the inmates to scamper in their shirt-tails and seek shelter in ours, which was strained in every stitch to the utmost tension; but with commendable

promptness, every man sprang to his feet at the first onset, manned the ridgepole, and stood to his post, till the extreme violence of the tempest was abated, and then the windows of heaven were opened and the rain descended much in the same way while it lasted, as it did in Old Captain Noah's time. In fact, I never recollect seeing it rain any harder. This morning on starting we met a man on horseback making all haste back, and about noon we met another in pursuit who stated that the horse was stolen - he meant to bring him back dead or alive, and I don't doubt it a bit. There was a fixed determination written on his countenance, which plainly indicated that he was just such a man as would shoot, if the others didn't come to an anchor right suddenly, when called upon to stop. Today we have had a trying time for the timid, having met 43 teams on the back track, bringing all kinds of reports but we have now ceased to give credence to anything at all connected with the mines, and are resolved to see it through.

May 12, 1859.

Last night again visited us with a scathing thunderstorm - being now accustomed to it. However, we didn't mind it much - we reached Salt Creek today at noon (crossing it at the ford, the bridge road is two miles further up) and I shall never forget the sight I there witnessed - up and down the valley on each side, some 500 teams in all were clustered together in little villages. The white wagon covers and as yet unstained tents adding greatly to the rich effect of the lively scene, while hundreds of wagons are pouring back having met friends and acquaintances on whose statements they can implicitly rely - some of these are rolling on in all haste towards home, others again are drawing into camp for the night - and the unconvinced are seen pushing ahead, swearing that they won't turn back - No, not they! and yet probably they stop and question the very next team they meet huddle together - linger a little - and then wheel clear around within the hour. We met 350 teams today by 11 o'clock, all homeward bound - how many more since is more than I can tell. I quit counting and just looked at them passing frequently in strings a mile long and so close together that one couldn't drive between them. The report reached us today that an express agent named Bassit, who had been instrumental in getting up the humbug, was deliberately shot. Another named Sparks, who was accused of forging letters, was shot some 10 miles above here a few days ago, and last night (I was told by a man who came in to-night) One Oakes from Pacific City, who induced a great many to go out, was taken and shot. My informant says there is a board at his head with this inscription "Oakes, the Speculator is dead, buried, damned, and gone to hell." And to end this chapter of horrors, I am told the fellow who stole the horse, has been caught, and brought back, and will be tried and hung tonight. The boys are now gone to learn the particulars. All is wild excitement, and utter recklessness and I believe if the same multitude under the same excitement were only within reach, they would burn up root and branch every town on the Missouri - for there they think the whole Babble had its origin.

May 13, 1859.

No hanging took place last night as was expected and so leaving Salt Creek, where all that are discomfited either in Politics or anything else generally betake themselves, we continued our journey

meeting teams by the hundred, and though a little hard to persuade, we must have been hard-headed indeed if we could have stood out in the face of all we saw and heard from authentic sources. We therefore held a council of war - passed a resolution that Pike's Peak was the d--est humbug ever got up in any country - that it had ruined thousands, beggared twice as many and had absorbed the little all of the destitute poor who could only raise enough to go out that far. We next debated the point whether we would go on to the Peak anyhow, and then return home or strike straight for California and try our fortunes there. Over the plains had the majority so here we go, barely enough provided for such a trip. This afternoon we met old Mr. Miner on his return home, fully convinced that he had been sold most unmercifully. By him I sent word to Harengo of my determination, and probable destination.

May 14, 1859.

It rained again last night. We however took a late start and travelled over a road crooked enough to break a blacksnake's back, should he ever attempt to follow it. We have passed every conceivable kind of vehicle, from a handcart to a carriage and four, on their way back, there being only one sort of conveyance I have not seen, and that is - a bull hitched to a sulky. We passed the grave of a man who had been shot on the prairies and buried some 80 yards from the road with parts of his saddle at his head and feet, and a bullet hole in one part of the saddle. There are so many stories told about his death and the cause of it that I refrain from giving any. More tribute I believe has been paid to the tomb of this stranger than anyone I ever recollect seeing. There is a deep path worn in the sod on each side, one going to and another coming from his grave. We have all been speculating on the probable amount of travel, on the valley of the Platte at the present time. This we consider the best travelled road of the three and put it down at 25,000 a low estimate. The St. Joe road will average 50,000, and the north side of the Platte will go equally as high, making in the aggregate 125,000, a pretty good crowd to be caught out on a fools errand. Some of our crowd have got a fit of the Blues tonight, I don't know how it may work out by morning.

May 15, 1859.

According to our previous calculations, two of the boys, Jacob Vogt and Henry Mitchker, hitched up their cart and took the back track, and this being Sunday we concluded to lay over, more especially, as it rained all day. There is a large train camped right below us bound too for California, but we are of opinion that they have rather too much loose stock along, for us to join them. We may probably find some teams more to our notion tomorrow, if we do we shall join them forthwith, as we are in rather a dangerous locality at present, being only 15 miles from the Pawnee village, and immediately on the trail leading south. We are therefore bound to watch our cattle closely, for the Pawnees are particularly noted for their thriving propensities.

May 16, 1859.

Rained again as usual, started however, and joined three more young fellows from Humboldt County, Iowa. Their names are

Henry Badger, Horace B. Bellows and Curtis Bellows - the two last crossed the plains in 1852. We have been stamping every man we met for some sort of a trade or other, and so Powell traded off his kit of carpenter tools for a first rate rifle. Travelling heavy and hard on our cattle, and the road more crooked than ever, one bend in particular, five miles across and over twelve round - at all events it took us nearly all day to make it, and we have set down this days travel at fourteen miles. We have met as many teams today as we have met on any previous day since the stampede commenced.

May 17, 1859.

For some days we have been travelling for every place in general, completely boxing the compass every two hours. Today, however, we have had a rather straighter road, aiming it would appear for some point in particular, the land has been more level and better adapted to cultivation with the usual drawback incident to Nebraska. The extreme scarcity of timber and for anything I can see there are more inhabitants in the territory at the present time than ever will be found again at any future period. We passed this forenoon what appeared to us to be a grave, probably the last resting place of some poor wayfarer, who lies here far from home and friends. There is a pile of rocks on the tomb placed there no doubt by some pious hand to keep the spot sacred from the ruthless touch of the oft-passing wagon wheel - rest his ashes in peace whoever he be, who knows but we also, at least some of us may find rest in a similar place.

May 18, 1859.

A few hours after starting this morning, I concluded to trade off one of my wagons, or rather give it away, for a trifling amount of provisions. We stood in need of, accordingly, I struck a trade, and Ben Owens got rid of his carpenter tools for a gun and a keg of butter and thus by our delay got entangled in a large California train. By noon we again sighted the bottom lands of the Platte, the prettiest piece of country that lays out of doors. As far as the eye can reach, the view is still the same, and the road as level as a house floor. Tonight a gentleman from above Fort Kearney staid with us. He had lost seven horses and one mule strayed or stolen and he was hunting for them. We are now ahead of the large train, and mean to keep so if we can.

May 19, 1859.

We started this morning from near Elm Creek. Had a nice cool morning and pleasant roads, till about the middle of the forenoon, when my wagon got settled in a marshy piece of country about a mile wide. All hands except the drivers took hold of 100 cwt. of flour each and put for dry land. The team managed the balance easily, the other boys happened to get through first rate. About noon we reached Clear Creek, a distance of eight miles, the road delightful, skirting the Platte all the way. There is no timber on the Platte, save on the islands, which are covered with cottonwood and Red Cedar, the latter looks cool and pleasant at a distance. Some of the company sighted a wolf, another some geese but did not succeed in killing either. The large train is now ahead of us, but we can always start one hour earlier than they

can, and I have already learned by noting their movements, that a man with a small number of work cattle, has no business in such a crowd, the torment and vexation, occasioned by the insubordination of his cattle in such a mixed multitude, would put me crazy in a week. I would ten times rather make the trip singly and alone. I believe we have come 18 miles today, and the whole bottom so far may be regarded as a complete Eden.

May 20, 1859.

We had a perfect hurricane last night. It blew like the devil, and rained in proportion. Consequently the roads were sloppy, otherwise sandy and good. I took my gun and started up the river. Shot a goose on one of the islands about 250 yards out. It fell back into the river, drifted nearly half a mile, and lodged against a sand bar, being no swimmer I was afraid to venture in and so went for some of the boys, but when we came back the goose was gone, and all we could see was the track of a wolf or some other vermin who had appropriated the goose in my absence. I hunted the island over in quest of the plunderer, but could not discover his retreat. There were recent traces of Indians also plenty of beaver sign, both here and up the river for several miles. We are now camped at the Pawnee Village. We visited what is called their Chief's grave - round it is described a circle some 20 feet in diameter, the outer rim fringed with the skulls of horses, the noses pointing inward to the center. These horses are said to have been killed in the battle between the Pawnees and Sioux Indians in 1850. The Pawnees were then victorious. There are about 60 horses heads in all. In retaliation the Sioux returned in greater force, and burned the village to the ground, so that all that now remains are the ruins of their wigwams, and their caches or places of deposit for grain. These are dug about 8 feet deep in the ground, narrow at the top and hallowed out underneath in the shape of a gallon jug. The trails of the Indians are plainly seen, traversing the bluffs in every direction.

May 21, 1859.

I went out early this morning to look after the cattle, and accidentally met one Wesley, who lives north of Marengo. He and three others went to the peak early in March, footing it all the way and packing provisions. He was 11 days in the mines - tried it faithfully all the time. Could not make anything, and saw none who did, so he left for home. We gave him breakfast and filled his kit with provisions and while I was gone hunting the other boys met Tom Carter from Toledo, who told the same story. Some of the boys saw several antelopes but didn't get near enough to shoot. We pulled up pretty early this evening in order to do up a good bill of washing that has been accumulating ever since we left home, and we all realized in part, what the women have to endure in order to make a home comfortable and tidy. We rubbed and scrubbed till the skin came off both hands and shirts. It would have been an interesting sight for a painter to see - all hands up to their elbows in soap suds and their awkward attempts at washing. I don't think any of us will ever forget our first acquaintance with the wash-tub. We are now nearly 60 miles from Fort Kearney.

May 22, 1859.

Today being Sunday, we laid over and were variously employed in washing, fishing and hunting, as the case might be. We caught three splendid catfish weighing about 10 lbs apiece, they made a glorious mess. In the forenoon five of the Marango boys, John Dillin, Frank Reno, Wallace Hamilton, Jacob Laines, and Craven Gardner, who had been at Cherry Creek met, and camped all night with us. They fully confirm previous reports from the mines, and all agree in saying it is the greatest humbug ever got up in any age or country. Sam Dillin, brother to John, formerly of Marango, now from Council Bluffs, was in the mines all winter, and had the richest claim that was worked, and could not make with the hardest kind of work more than \$1.50 per day. Wallace Hamilton goes with Ben Owen to California, while William Liddle belonging to my crowd goes home, and one Mackenzie who came with the boys from Cherry Creek takes his place. The Platte here is over two miles wide, studded with islands of every size and shape, said to contain any amount of deer and elk, we visited about 12, saw plenty of sign but no game, the water is in no place over knee deep and muddy just like the Missouri. All the old Californians tell us in drinking to stick to the Platte and not change it for any other as long as we can get it. They all pronounce it healthy. The boys had a jolly time tonight and most of them got pretty mellow, perhaps I might have been in the same fix myself but luckily the liquor was all gone by the time I got home from hunting.

May 23, 1859.

We parted from the boys, with three times three in full chorus - saw tears glisten in several eyes and gee up brandy we went against a head wind all day. The sand blowing enough to blind us. Altogether the most disagreeable day we have had since we started. We are now opposite Grand Island, said to be 80 miles long. Camped by the river, and are now holding on to our tents to keep them from being torn up bodily. It has blowed great guns for several hours, and not done yet.

May 24, 1859.

This morning we left the bottom, and took the bluff road. Met George Hardins Company. George went on to California, the others returned, George Nixon among the rest. Wallace Hamilton traded his mare to one of them for a yoke of oxen. I bought some whiskey in the afternoon, got behind the wagons, took a cut off which turned out to be about six miles long. The day was warm and toting a two gallon jug pretty heavy work, so to lighten the load I tasted semi-occasionally, and I believe once or twice too often, as I cannot give a very connected account of the other proceedings of the day. I was not so far advanced however, that I could not perceive the first appearance of the alkali. It looks as if the ground had been sowed over with flour, and tastes like the strongest kind of soda.

May 25, 1859.

Another thunderstorm - rained all night, concluded to go a hunting. Saw 17 antelopes, very shy. Couldn't get near them. Some of the boys saw a couple of hares or jackass rabbits as we are in the habit of calling them. Got in hungry and tired and just in time to save ourselves from being drenched to the skin again.

May 26, 1859.

The father of all the thunderstorms, we have as yet encountered since we started, fell in full force upon our devoted heads today, drenching us to the skin. Some of us concluded to go as far Kearney and try there to get some shoes for our oxen, so we started through the mud some 15 miles. Saw Tom Mitchell, Mike and James Murphy formerly from Marengo. There were four women dressed in mens clothes in the same company, doubtless a kind of travelling gin-shop. We met a government train from Fort Laramie, going to the river for supplies. There were 20 teams, consisting of three spans of mules to each wagon, and 6 spare wagons in the train, another ox train from the same place, 14 wagons with five yokes of oxen to each and 10 spare wagons. What clumsy, unwieldy overgrown wagons they do have - timber enough in one to make three. We passed another train from Atchison in Missouri loaded with groceries, bound for the peak. They were all assembled in solemn conclave, and think seriously of taking the back track. We visited the Fort, quite a respectable little place. Got dinner at 75¢ a head, and enjoyed the good things of mine host amazingly, but felt it somewhat odd sitting at a table, instead of squatting on the ground, as we have been so long accustomed to do. There are about 200 soldiers quartered here and they all look decent and orderly, though mostly Dutch and Irish.

May 27, 1859.

We started this morning five miles below Kearney and had a little better chance to see the town. There are a good many houses, some built of wood and some of sod - rather primitive looking. The soldiers in part were on parade, but made a very poor show. There are several brass cannons, small sized. We met another large Government train - left the Fort some 17 miles behind, making the biggest drive today we have yet accomplished. We saw one of the jackass rabbits that a fellow had shot. They are similar to, but lighter in color, than the Scotch hares, and I think they are a little bigger - how they do run. I wish I saw a grayhound after one of them.

May 28, 1859.

Travelled over what I denominate the Buffalo Flat, intersected every two or three rods with deep trails and covered with wallow holes where the animals are in the habit of wallowing in the mud to prevent the flies, gnats and mosquitoes from annoying them. The whole flat is impregnated with alkali and resembles a bonedyard. Here lies the bones of many an unwary ox who had drank to freely of the poisonous water. There too, the remains of the wounded and worn out buffalo - with here and there a pile of bones that look as if the Indians had killed them. We had the good fortune to kill a hare, and a fine wild drake. Some of the boys are now out after the antelopes and not have yet returned. We are said to be 42 miles above Kearney, encamped on Plum Creek, as dry as a chip, but having a deep and wide channel.

May 29, 1859.

The boys came in last night without any game, but hungry as wolves, and we all did justice to a good mess of haresoup, - got

up in the most approved style and contrary to custom, - we traveled today in the forenoon making about 12 miles. Put some shoes on one of our cattle which was beginning to get a little footsore and rested ourselves and cattle in the afternoon. Some of the crowd went out and saw a few buffaloes but didn't get near enough to shoot. The country here is all plentifully covered with the cursed alkali.

May 30, 1859.

Six weeks today since we left home, and we are now nearly 600 miles on our way - travelling over good hard smooth and level roads, winding and twisting through patches of alkali. The same as it has been for several days. We are having both a rarity and variety for our meals - catfish, pigeons, and a splendid antelope that Kay killed. He and Wallace Hamilton packed it to the wagons at least six miles - four more of the boys are out hunting and have not yet returned, and it is now dark, no doubt of it, they must pass the night out.

May 31, 1859.

As we expected, our hunters found their own beds last night. Bukey and Harper arrived at camp about daylight, having traveled all night and were much annoyed by the wolves hanging on their trail and feeble and pretty well used up for want of food, water and sleep. The other two, H. B. Bellows and Henry Badger, did not arrive till noon. They killed a buffalo with my double barreled smooth bore, 15 miles from the road. They carried about 50 lbs. of the meat to where they expected to find us, but lo! we were all of 25 miles ahead, so they gave away their meat, and overtook us at noon, tired and footsore. I tried hunting myself, saw two deer but didn't get either, and came home in the same plight. We are now camped by cottonwood Springs, far famed in western literature. This is a spring of excellent, with only a trading post and a stage station immediately by it. Here is also a new made grave, the man died this spring.

June 1, 1859.

The first of June and cold as greenland this morning. A nice day to drive, however. We have made first rate time, passed the junction of the north and south Platte, and have a glorious time generally, feeding on the fat of the land-wild ducks and antelopes, the latter tender, juicy and good, better in my opinion, than any venison I ever tasted. Powell caught a young wolf and traded it off for whiskey enough to treat the crowd. We saw a deer but none of us got to shoot. We are now camped on a slough that puts down from what are called Fremont Springs.

June 2, 1859.

More agreeable this morning. Good day, though dusty for a long drive. A few more ducks, and another fine antelope brought in by Kay to vary the monotony of pork and beans. We live like fighting cocks and are now capable of almost any amount of physical endurance. The climate is dry and healthy. The proof of this is: We just hang up our fresh meat, and eat till we finish it - there being no such thing as taint in the atmosphere. Last night a prowling wolf came about

our tents and ate up one of our best buckskin whip-lashes. I had the satisfaction, however, today of pouring a couple of doses of shot into one of the species and I hope it was the same one. We passed a colony of what are commonly termed prairie-dogs, and instead of finding as described by Emerson Bennet, "a regularly organized town, laid out in streets and squares, with an elderly fellow who occupies the center pavilion, and acts as chief magistrate", we found no more regularity, than there is among so many molehills in a meadow. Towards night we passed O'Fallon's Bluffs where there is a trading-post and 23 wickie-ups, belonging to a company of Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. Two young braves came galloping up to our tents, as if the devil had kicked them on end, reined in and dismounted - drank some coffee and were greatly amused at Badger, who is attempting to mount one of their ponies - came very nigh being thrown, the pony running backward faster than most can go forward. After chatting a while by signs and a few words of broken English, they rushed off again in the same unceremonious manner in which they had come.

June 3 - 4, 1859. —

Roads dusty, dry, hard and gravelly; sore on cattle's feet - nothing of importance transpired, save passing another small Indian village, where we saw a lot of splendid ponies, and according to previous calculation we reached the crossing of the South Platte in time to cross, which we accordingly did all safe. We raised our wagon-beds about six inches and kept everything dry. We found the Crossing very disagreeable, however, owing to the shifting of the quicksand, and having to quarter downstream, our teams were kept at a hard pull for over a mile but it is all over now, and we consequently feel pretty much at our ease until we reach the crossing of the North Platte.

June 5, 1859.

Sunday once more, and both we and our cattle require rest; we have been pushing ahead most too fast for several days in order to reach the crossing, before the river should rise thereby rendering the passage dangerous if not altogether impracticable. There is a continual string of teams crossing and the whopping and yelling put me in mind of skunk bottom. We are only 240 miles from Pikes Peak, at this point.

June 6, 1859.

We struck across this morning for the North Platte, by the way of Ash-Hollow, distance 18 miles. Killed the fawn of an antelope, and scared another half to death in the forenoon. Powell and I tried our hand again in the afternoon. Sneaked up about two miles on an Indian grave, supposing it to be an antelope. Got caught in a most pitiless pelting hailstorm, as big as marbles, how they did sting through the thin shirt-sleeves, it latter-rained worse than it hailed, till we were both soaking wet, chilly and chafed up before we reached the camp. We passed something like what the Alps must have been in Napoleons time, coming almost perpendicularly down into Ash-Hollow.

We now have mail-stations regularly, everyone keeps store and sells liquor at 25¢ a drink.

June 7, 1859.

Travelling up the Platte - three droves of horses passed us bound for California. Alkali worse here than any place we have yet seen, roads awfully sandy and dusty, extremely hard on the cattle, owing to this we have camped early. The boys killed three jackass rabbits today.

June 8, 1859.

Roads better, weather warm, made good time. Hunted occasionally. Met with poor success. The hares here are commonly found amongst a sort of brush that grows in bunches, and very much resembles what is cultivated in the gardens of Scotland under the name of Southernwood or Apple-Rennie - the whole country is covered with it.

June 9, 1859.

Started very early. Awful hot and dusty - got in sight of courthouse rock, apparently a mile or so from the road. We had a great dispute about the distance, and two of the boys, Powell and Harper, have been out, and are now coming in, convinced no doubt of their error, as they reluctantly acknowledge that they travelled about five miles before they reached it. We are now past it and in full view of Chimney Rock.

June 10, 1859.

When opposite Chimney Rock about 10 o'clock A.M. nearly all the boys went up to see it. It is composed of sand and clay, and is as near as I can judge, quite 400 feet in height - 200 from the base to the highest ascending point and then 200 feet more sticking up on the top like a chimney-stack. The boys say that there are any amount of names cut out in the soft rock. The bluffs all along jut out in every conceivable form and shape covered here and there with dwarf cedar. We killed three hares, and made a fair drive of about 17 miles.

June 11, 1859.

We struck out this morning for Scotts Bluffs, a place much celebrated in western literature, and I must say they interested me more than any place I have yet seen. You come on approaching them into a regular amphitheater in shape of a semi-circle completely walled in with soft rock of all shapes and sizes. Here a sculptor might appropriately take lessons from Madam Nature, and be greatly profited - here are pinnacles and peaks, turrets and towers, domes, citadels and fortresses in every style of architecture. But the greatest curiosity in these latitudes is - the remarkable purity of the atmosphere, as well as the extraordinary ease with which one is liable to be deceived in regard to distance - for instance you see a bluff or mountain apparently not more than a mile at any rate, which in all probability you won't get to it short of four or five. Another thing observable is - when an ox or any other animal dies, it is not subject to putrefaction

as in most climates, but naturally dries and shrivels up till it gets too hard for a wolf to eat. We have seen several such carcasses today, and have come about 22 miles.

June 12, 1859.

Last night was our first experience in the way of mosquitoes. None of us slept any of any account, and those who did, looked as if they had had a good milling - eyes bunged up, and faces swelled up skin-tight. This is Sunday once more, we accordingly laid over and let our cattle rest. One of Ben's oxen showed some symptoms of being sick, but got considerably better by night. The day was passed in reading, writing, sleeping, washing and overhauling and changing our loads. A great many teams passed us today, but every dog has his day, and very likely we may get ahead of most of them yet.

June 13, 1859.

This is the hottest day we have yet had, roads confoundedly dry and dusty - passed a small deep creek about six feet wide, with a toll-bridge where they charge 25¢ per team. We crossed, however, below the bridge, and rather than be imposed upon in such a manner, we would have taken our shovels and filled it up in less than half an hour, and so have crossed on dry land, it always makes me mad to see such efforts made to gouge the hard up travelling emigrant. Horse Creek comes next wide and shallow but clear and pretty. Any amount of cattle laying dead, all swelled up, supposed to be killed by alkali - passed three Indian villages, and several excellent springs. Sighted Laramie Peak, covered with snow, contrasting strongly with the suffocating heat we have endured all day.

June 14, 1859.

Dry and dusty. Saw more dead cattle today than we have seen on the trip. Passed any amount of Indian lodges - reached and crossed Laramie Fork on a toll-bridge \$2.50 per team. Went into Fort Laramie, 8 miles beyond the Fort. No one being permitted to camp inside the Reserve.

June 15, 1859.

Started up the valley of the Platte, passed through pretty little nooks, studded with wild roses and young cottonwoods - then climbed the bluffs for an extended view, came down again, described a few acute angles, scaled heights - tumbled down precipices, and had a hell of a road generally among the Black Hills, which probably take their name from the black appearance they present, being all covered with fir and cedar. Laramie Peak still in sight - Long's Peak and Pike's Peak, are but a continuation of the Black Hills - any amount of dead cattle still, and I am led to believe that more than half of them perish by inhaling the dust, which hangs like a cloud around us.

June 16, 1859.

Still among the Black Hills, trying to get past Laramie's Peak, now 35 miles south, saw some pretty little vales environed by mountains, and fringed with fir and dwarf cedar, as well as small growths of a species of timber indigenous to the locality. We have also seen

some splendid springs, how delicious the cool water tastes, after being nearly suffocated with the heat and dust. The creeks too roll over beautiful gravelly beds, and small groves of timber mostly fir, dot the mountains far and near. We have got ahead of a large train of provision wagons bound for Salt Lake. There is still another about two miles ahead, and I must now conclude as there is considerable of a thunderstorm brewing over us.

June 17, 1859.

Luckily the storm didn't come our way. We visited a cave near where we camped; it was not very extensive, however, though capable of sheltering a good many. Here some fellows had been prospecting, and penciled fabulous amounts, that they had made, on some of the trees around. We are still clambering among the mountains. The boys brought in three sage-hens, nearly as big as wild turkeys and badly wounded a deer which they didn't get. In the afternoon I took a solitary ramble among the mountains, got into a bed of a mountain torrent, where it used to rush and scathe and boil among sheer precipices, where rocks of enormous size were poised on the giddy heights, "As if an infants touch could urge Their headlong passage down the verge". Saw plenty of sign but no game. Followed a considerable stream till it lost itself entirely in the sand, then reappeared again about two miles ahead, then reappeared again about two miles ahead, in the shape of a splendid spring. We are now camped on a beautiful stream with a beautiful Indian name, which I cannot remember long enough to get it into my Journal. One of the most expert Indian hunters, and a pretty fair marksman, is now trying our rifles, while several squaws are laying around, trying their best to trade us some "Pinohey".

June 18, 1859.

Powell and I started up the creek this morning on a hunting expedition, followed it some 8 or 9 miles, got completely walled in with mountains. Struck for a deep gorge in one of them, where we thought our course lay, travelled about 12 miles, suffered greatly for want of water; found a large creek with a current swift as a mill tail, followed it for six miles down through the mountains, wading through it up to our middles over 20 times, clambering, slipping, sliding, rolling and tumbling on precipices in accessible to anything but mountain-sheep; other six miles down the creek luckily brought us to Camp, having actually travelled 33 miles (Powell puts it down at 40). We hunted faithfully all day, and only saw one deer which I shot at and missed - about a mile from camp. We are both pretty well used up, and having fasted all day, I am so d--d hungry I can't write any more - so here we are two months on the road.

June 19, 1859.

Today being Sunday, we laid over half a day, hunted, caught and killed considerable lice, this being their first appearance, and I think we must have got them in some of our company places, as we have all been very attentive to cleanliness, changing our clothes regularly - hitched up again in the afternoon and made about 8 miles, camping on another beautiful mountain stream - toward night Kay, Bose and Bellows brought in a fine fat antelope to vary our fare again.

June 20, 1859.

Got started bright and early - made a long steady drive and reached Deer Creek a little before noon. There is a trading-post here, quite a number of whites, and a large village of Indians. Reached the Platte once more, travelled up it some 9 miles, and camped just behind the large Salt Lake train, and some of the boys brought in three hares.

June 21, 1859.

Ben and I let the wagon-master of the Salt Lake train have 200 lbs of flour each, to be paid again in flour when we got to Salt Lake, this saving our teams from hauling it so far. Passed the bridge on the Platte - fare \$5.00 for one wagon and four yoke of oxen - went upon the South side still as far as the ferry, about 8 miles above the bridge, and one mile above the old Mormon Ford, where we now are.

June 22, 1859.

Still at the Ferry, two young fellows got nearly drowned this forenoon attempting to swim the river. One of them was almost exhausted when pulled out. The current is so swift it takes a mighty good swimmer to perform the feat, and besides the water is so cold coming straight from the snowy mountains, one is apt to get chilled clear through before he can get across. I saw one who was said to be as good a swimmer as there was in the country try it, and he was carried down nearly a quarter of a mile, making the passage. Some of the pulleys got broke up, consequently there was little crossing done today, and a good many teams have to cross yet before our team comes. Went out and hunted a little, only saw one hare, and shot it.

June 23, 1859.

Got over the river about noon. Came pretty near having a fight with some Missourians who attempted to get in before us. We took our stand, however, and kept it. They, no doubt, thought it safest to let us alone, and well they did for we were all armed to the teeth and fully determined to take the ferry and do our own crossing should we not get over when our regular turn came. Travelled 8 miles and reached Poison Springs the last camping place on the Platte. Passed a woman who accidentally got her arm broke.

June 24, 1859.

We have now followed the Platte some 710 miles, and found one of the best natural roads in the universe. Plenty of grass, water and wood, at intervals all along the route. True there is considerable alkali distributed over the entire distance, but a little care will in a great measure nullify all that there is. We were in company today with Eg Holbrook formerly of Marengo, now from Monona County, Iowa, two of the Talbotts from Poweshiek County, and Frank Mosier, whom I visited on the Missouri, during my trip in 1857. We travelled over a good road today - sighted the Rocky Mountains at last. Nooned at Willow Springs. Could not make out why they are called Willow Springs. No such timber, and none of any kind grows here, little grass, and water thick with mud. We are now camped 21 miles from the Platte

... called Fish Creek - and one of my oxen is pretty sick.

June 25, 1859.

One ox gone dead and no doubt it would have been laid to the alkali if we hadn't known better this time. I believe myself that it was owing to the dust inhaled, while dying it appeared to have great difficulty in breathing, and died in convulsions. The wind blew a perfect tornado, the dust absolutely blinding, and to make matters worse, the road lay on a dry, parched up, desolate, barren, sandy waste, where no vegetation except stunted sage-brush can live. We are now ahead of both of the Salt Lake Trains, and met another on the back track, going after goods. We passed a solitary little grave this morning, neatly rounded off, and fixed up very tastily, with a plain piece of board at its head, and elegantly carved on the board was the following affecting and appropriate inscription:

"Here I laid my dear little Monroe
K. Maxwell"

How sweet, how short; but how expressive. No doubt some loving family moving west to better their condition, and here in this desolate waste, perhaps the sweetest blossom dropped from the family bouquet. We are now camped on the Sweetwater, and consider ourselves half way to California in distance but not in time. Some of the boys are out hunting, but have not yet returned.

June 26, 1859.

Last night the boys came in with another antelope, and one sage hen. Being Sunday we laid over as usual, and the three boys who joined us near Plattsmouth, traded off their wagon, and joined teams with Ben Owon, so we now have only two wagons, and thirteen able bodied men and a boy - the latter is the best ox-driver in the crowd. The whole country is impregnated with alkali, and round Saleratus Lake which lays in our immediate vicinity. The ground is fairly encrusted with the stuff, much resembling a winter morning after a hard freeze, when there is an inch or so of snow under foot. It crackles and crimps as we go along.

June 27, 1859.

Immediately after starting one of Ben's wagon-tires rolled off, and so spoiled our forenoon's drive. Coming up the Sweetwater we passed a trading post where we saw a young grizzly bear cub. Then comes Independence Rock, a large isolated, oblong, irregular shaped mass of rock, several hundred feet long, and its greatest altitude I would suppose was somewhere near a hundred feet, every available point literally covered with names as various as the dates. Six miles farther we passed the Devil's Gate, where the Sweetwater, foams, rushes, and thunders through between two perpendicular mountains, at great inconvenience to itself, when it might just as easily have gone through where the road runs, but then it would have sounded bad for all the travel to go through the Devil's Gate. No saying where it might have lodged in that case. On putting up our tents tonight, we had a slight taste of a regular hurricane, the dust coming down before the wind in clouds sufficient to obscure the face of nature. We have a fair

prospect of having a substantial mess of hare soup in the morning.

June 28, 1859.

About bed time last night the pleasantness of the evening was all gone. "It blew as if 'twad blown its last", and levelled two tents close by us, though ours stood its fury. Today it still blows, though not so violent. Roads sandy and deep. Slowish travelling - met a good many Californians returning, some bringing good accounts, and some bad from the mines, just as each was successful or otherwise. Killed one hare, and are now camped again on the Sweetwater.

June 29, 1859.

Crossed the Sweetwater four times today. Good roads. Drove 17 miles - killed two hares and one rabbit, one of the other boys shot two sage hens. The mosquitoes are truly annoying, unlike what they are at home, where they are troublesome only in the evenings and mornings, while they never appear here, only in the middle of the day, when the sun is at the hottest, and disappear altogether when night comes. The immediate vicinity of snow probably accounts for this.

June 30, 1859.

Left the Sweetwater at three o'clock in the morning, passed about daylight what are called the ice-springs that is a regular quagmire, where it shakes all around and on digging down about a foot, you find a stratum of ice about three inches thick, clear, pure, and nice. Each of the wagons took along a bucket of ice - a few miles farther we passed some hot springs, but not seeing them myself, I can't describe them. 15 miles from our morning camp we again reached the Sweetwater. The mountains covered with perpetual snow are now in sight. We intend to reach the summit of the Rocky Mountains tomorrow. Shot 4 hares and we are now beginning to get tired of them. They don't taste as well as they did at first.

July 1, 1859.

Were told this morning, that it was only ten miles across from the Sweetwater to where we would strike it again, so I left the teams and with my little brother-in-law went a hunting - followed the river, climbing precipices, and descending them again almost perpendicularly, saw any amount of snow. Crossed ravines several times on the top of it, while resting on a cliff I observed some geese away below me on the other side of the river, over 200 yards off. Shot one, and waded the river swift as a milltail to get it. Chased some antelopes - killed one, and after packing it and the goose for several miles, we accidentally came across the teams camped on a creek 16 miles from the morning camp and still 9 miles from the river yet. Two more of the boys are still out. I expect they kept up the river to the crossing.

July 2, 1859.

There was ice on our buckets this morning as thick as window glass - reached the crossing where Gilbert's Station is, about noon, the

boys got there last night, the cattle were tired so we laid over in the afternoon and are now refreshing ourselves, drinking ice water. A road starting from this point leads to California, avoiding Salt Lake City - said to be 100 miles nearer. It is called Lander's Cut-off. We might probably have taken this road, had we not let the Salt Lake train have our flour, as it is we must go that way to get it.

July 3, 1859.

Sunday again, but not a day of rest with us. We purposed reaching Pacific Springs, and laying over during the Fourth and therefore travelled some 13 miles in the forenoon, passing the Summit of the Rocket Mountains on what is called the South Pass, and oh what a downfall my imagination-powers received. I had for years pictured to my own mind the appearance the South Pass must present. I had set it down as a narrow rugged gorge, completely walled in on either side by perpendicular mountains, towering to the sky and covered with snow and timber, instead of that the ascent is so gradual, the mountains so like what you have become accustomed looking at, that one would never imagine he was about at the highest altitude, were it not that one sees the little springs and streams stealing away towards the west instead of the east. The fact is as soon as we begin coming up the Platte we commence climbing the Rocky Mountains, and the ascent is so long and gradual, that the traveller gets to the top before he knows it and the comparative insignificance of the mountains and the absence of anything like timber, tend still more to mislead him. Three miles farther and we reached the Springs where they form a kind of guagaire, and flow towards the Pacific Ocean, hence their name. These springs are said to be part of the headwater of the Colorado River. The grass was nearly all eat up, so we struck out again, following the small stream that flows from the Springs, a few miles and it sinks in the sand, compelling us to travel 12 miles this afternoon before we could get water, and that so brackish that we had to hold our breaths till we got it down. There is almost no feed here at all, so there is no help for it, we are bound to travel tomorrow.

July 4, 1859.

We ushered in the morning of the glorious 4th with a few volleys of small arms, and then commenced an arduous drive of 15 miles over a dry, barren and alkali region, destitute of both grass and water. Shortly after starting one of our wagon tires came off, and delayed us considerably, fixing leathers on the ends of the spokes, and between the fellows, then cutting sagebrush, heating and setting the tire. We finished the job, however, and reached Little Sandy about 2 o'clock P.M. nearly exhausted for want of water - what we did use being so brackish that it only aggravated instead of allaying thirst. We expect to lay over here tomorrow and rest our cattle. This is the dryest 4th I have ever passed since I came to the country and what made it tenfold worse to bear was the consciousness that so many thousands over the length and breadth of the land were sipping the sweets of enjoyment while we were toiling, sweating and floundering on, glad to stretch our wearied limbs under the shade of some friendly bush, and catch a refreshing nap, instead of the fuss, the preparation, the excitement and the pleasure of facing our partners in the lively dance, then footing it gaily on the light fantastic toe - so wags the world - what is pleasure wanting pain?

July 5, 1859.

We have laid over all day, having first-rate feed for our stock, and we ourselves have passed the day in setting all our wagon tires, washing clothes and playing cards for our amusement. I have spent most of the day in perusing Gil Blas for the third or fourth time. There is a company of four teams above us on their return from Salt Lake, after residing there one year. They look pretty hard up, and say it was all they could do to raise an outfit.

Y
July 6, 1859.

Report goes this morning that Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune passed here in the Stage last night on his way to Salt Lake City; but I can't tell how true it is. We left Little Sandy and crossed over to Big Sandy, distance 8 miles, and 17 more to the second crossing, a dreary, sandy, barren country, destitute of grass, and had to camp at last, on a place covered with alkali, and the grass scarcely long enough for the cattle to get hold of. Here a road diverges, called Kinney's Cut Off.

July 7, 1859.

We took the old road - I sold my odd ox to a trader for \$25.00 - crossed over to Green River called 12 3/4 miles, but I call it nearer 18. We went to the lower ferry, fare 50¢ per team, and swam our cattle, and are now camped on the river in pretty good grass. Most of the boys are fishing and have caught some small ones, resembling trout. The foremost freight train left as we came in sight.

July 8, 1859.

It was on Green River that the Mormons last fall attacked, burned and destroyed two Government trains, the remains of the wagons are still to be seen. It has rained pretty steady ever since daylight and just before we started out a freight train going east after goods, crossed where we were, - a few miles from the ford we met two Companies of U.S. soldiers, with all their baggage, supernumeraries, and other hangers-on, belonging to the Army - 16 miles in all brought us to Ham's fork of Green River - 4 miles up the fork we camped in good feed with a small company of soldiers about a quarter of a mile above us.

July 9, 1859.

Three miles up we crossed on a government bridge. 1 1/2 miles more brought us to Black's Fork where the road from Pike's Peak via The Cherokee Trail comes in - several teams came in as we passed, 9 miles farther we reached the river again, and three miles more brought us to the second crossing where we now are. We passed more dead cattle today, than any day yet, all of an ancient date however. We saw where several wagons had been destroyed by the mormons. Here lie the remains of the wagons and upwards of a wagon load of heavy log-chains made out of 3/4 iron. Some person for his own amusement had linked several strings of these along the road. I had the curiosity to measure three of them. Each one of these made 50 good paces, and many separate piles besides, as high as haystacks - grass thin and scattering, very indifferent.

in course of erection. Leaving Bear River we approached Echo Canyon (pronounced Kanyon) of Mormon celebrity. A great many springs and first rate feed as far as we have come today and that is about 18 miles.

July 14, 1859.

Hard frost this morning. What we were informed was Echo Canyon turned out to be some other small canyon, we only reached the eastern extremity of it this evening, having passed through the finest pasturage we have seen on the trip - plenty of springs all the way. We are said to be about 60 miles from the city.

July 15, 1859.

We have got through Echo Canyon at last, some 20 miles in all, at the western extremity of the canyon we saw the Mormon Fortification, got up to oppose Uncle Sam's Troops and I must say they are the silliest attempt I ever saw. Some three or four ditches about six feet deep and as many wide, intersect the road, and on the tops of the mountains in every direction, small forts composed of very small stones command the Canyon for some distance, and look for all the world like schoolboys playhouses, falling far short of even a Twentification, in fact any one who ever saw these puerile demonstrations of our friend Brigham, would at once conclude that all the fuss was mainly his troops in order to get a little money into circulation in this section; in this, all know how well he succeeded; leaving these hostile demonstrations we travelled through Prove Canyon, reaching Weber River, a beautiful stream fringed with Cottonwood willow, currants and Jack-Oak, the Canyon now takes the name of Weber Canyon. We followed the river for nearly four miles near which we are now camped, on a bluff overlooking the river, having come some 17 miles of pretty rough hilly road.

July 16, 1859.

Left Weber River, started up a steep ravine, travelled 6 miles, then reached the summit. Struck down a canyon that led us into East Canon Creek, a splendid stream, with plenty of Cottonwood and Willow to variegate the scene, here we found an abundance of gooseberries, currants, and sarvis or June-berries; there are numerous excellent springs all along, and no doubt we would feel glad to come across some of them on the desert before we get through. The Traders here say that deer, bear, antelope, elk, prairie chickens and sage hens are found in great plenty back in the mountains. The Weber and Pinte Indians are those that inhabit this quarter, and are no way remarkable, only for their filthiness, sloth and thievish propensities. We have crossed East Canon Creek, some 10 times, and are now camped three miles from the foot of the mountains and 25 miles from the city.

July 17, 1859.

Sunday again but no rest for the wicked. Three miles and we leave East Canon - ascend a steep, rocky ravine three miles long, and then reach the summit of a chain of hills, then dive down another ravine and follow it for 7 miles. On reaching the above mentioned summit another fellow and I ascended a mountain on the right some 500 or 600 feet

high, expecting to get a peep at the great city, but were disappointed only saw the valley and one large building, through a crevice in the mountains. This evening on camping, I traded off 2 guns, one for butter and the other for a revolver. We are now 11 miles from the headquarters of Mormonism.

July 18, 1859.

Ascending a mighty steep hill we gained another summit and then went down the steepest ravine, we have yet encountered, then up again a little farther, and we are on the hilltop overlooking Great Salt Lake City, greatly inclined to become Mormons for a time; the city at this standpoint presents a very confused appearance owing principally I believe, to the fact that each one has a lot, and builds only one house, and that how, and where he pleases, and cultivates his plot in accordance with his own taste, but on entering the city, the scene changes, and smacks greatly of the agreeable. Every sidewalk being shaded with trees and streams of mountain water running in every street for irrigating purposes. Many peach trees are now far enough advanced for producing. The women in general are very forward, and come about the wagons without any reserve for the avowed purpose of trading. Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune is in the city driving up and down the streets like the devil taking notes as he goes and to a great extent verifying the proverb that "he that runs may read". I have been unable to see either Brigham Young or Governor Cumming. We are camped in the middle of the city, paying 25¢ per head for pasturing our stock. Three months today since I left home, and only two-thirds of the journey accomplished, the remaining third being by far the worst.

July 19, 1859.

We examined the city more particularly today. Saw Young's Harem, neatly fenced in with a very high wall. The Tithing office too is a good and a handsome building and the Temple Square has a beautiful situation, but take it altogether I have been sadly disappointed in regard to Salt Lake Valley. It is at best very unproductive even with irrigation, and I should say not very reliable for crops at any time. Three miles from the city on our way towards Bear River we reach some Hot Sulphur Springs. One of them is actually the greatest natural curiosity I have ever come across. The water boils out of the solid rock in a stream as thick as my body, and hot enough to cook an egg in three minutes. The channel of the stream is completely coated with green slime, and smells pretty loud. Boeze thinks the gentleman in Black must have a county seat in the vicinity. There are some Bathing Establishments here. The roads are good, plenty of pure fresh spring water. We are now at Centerville 12 miles north of the city, the valley too begins to look some richer and produces excellent barley.

July 20, 1859.

Come only seven miles. Laid over to get shoes on our oxen. We have been travelling north, leaving the lake from 4 to 10 miles on our left. There are two islands in the lake, one of them very much resembling the Isle of Ar'ran in Scotland on a small scale. As near as I can learn the lake is a little over 300 miles in circumference, and considerably oblong. We are now at a settlement called Farmington.

July 21, 1859.

Traded off two pretty well used up oxen for fresh ones, passed Kay's Ward - another settlement 5 miles from Farmington. Entered on a sand ridge that reaches nearly to Weber River, the same river we crossed before we got to Salt Lake City. It is much larger here, looks equally pretty, and has a very heavy settlement on it called Ogden City. We encountered one of the greatest pests we have yet seen, the advent of myriads of winged ants, they filled the air so we could scarcely breathe literally swarming on our heads, getting into our mouths and completely covering the wagon covers. This lasted 3 miles when a thunderstorm came to our relief and settled them; we are camped close to the city.

July 22, 1859.

Leaving Ogden City we again took the sandhills. Ben traded a yoke of lame oxen, for one a good deal worse, and we camped at noon, in a place where the grasshoppers were skipping in thousands and had eat up every green thing. We tasted the bitter end of a raking windstorm. The air was completely filled with dust, and in order to prevent suffocation we did as they do in the eastern deserts - laid flat on our bellies till the squall went over. About midafternoon we got to a sulphur salt, saltpetre and soda spring all in one and so hot that one can't hold his hand in it. Near night we made Willow Creek Settlement and are now camped about a mile beyond.

July 23, 1859.

A few miles brought us to Brigham City, quite a lively settlement, got some butter, cheese, dried beef and onions, as well as some other eatables, prices here are: butter 30¢, cheese 25¢, dried beef 40¢, sugar 50¢, coffee 50¢, tea \$2.00 to \$2.50 per lb. We passed a great many springs today, one cold water spring in particular, the largest I ever saw; we also crossed a boiling creek, formed from a number of hot springs above. We are now camped for the second time on the banks of Bear River said to be 80 miles north of the city. The river here is twice as large as it was where we crossed it before. Nothing singular transpired today save, that the ground in many places was alive, crickets as large as my thumb, all chirping and flouncing about. The Indians are said to be very fond of them. Cricket hunting appears to be natural with them, here is the modus operandi. A hole is dug in the ground, then Indians, squaws and papooses go round and drive them with brush into the hole, heap on dry wood, then roast and feast. I don't admire the dish much myself. It blows a perfect hurricane and looks like rain.

July 24, 1859.

Last night headed everything I ever experienced in the way of mosquitoes. We went to bed but couldn't do anything but fight the cursed things. So all hands got up and formed a Euchre party. Two against two, the losing party to cut and haul sage-brush and build fires. We kept it up all night, and somehow or other it so happened, that I had no brush to cut till near morning. This is Sunday morning, the anniversary of the founding of Salt Lake City. Bear River here is deep and muddy, we swam our cattle and ferried our wagons, fare, including a tollride on the Malad River, 3 miles ahead \$3.00 per wagon. Six miles from the last mentioned

river we reached a spring on the bluffs opposite Bear River Bottom where we are now. Camped in company with about 30 wagons.

July 25, 1859.

Started very early on as good a road as we found at any time on the Platte. Made about 15 miles before we reached water, and that was too brackish for use. The cattle drank a little of it. We then struck out again and travelled other 15 miles before we could get any water at all. We then found an excellent spring and plenty of company. It was after dark before we got in, consequently after supper the boys couldn't find the cattle, and the general impression was that they were stolen, when lo in the morning they were all laying down about 100 yards from camp.

July 26, 1859.

The spring we reached last night is called Hensoll's Spring. It issues from a mountain on the left and forms quite a little stream where it crosses the road - a six mile drive brought us to Deep Creek where we watered and on making another drive of six miles, we reached it again. At this point the creek sinks and forms quite a large marsh, with abundance of pasturage. As the cattle travelled so far yesterday, we concluded to lay over the balance of the day, and let them rest. While we attended to our washing, mending, etc. Two wagons have travelled with us for a couple of days, and are still in company with us. One of Ben's oxen is quite sick, how it will result we are as yet unable to say.

July 27, 1859.

The ox is better this morning - leaving the Sink of Deep Creek, we reached Pilot Springs after a drive of 10 miles, here we watered ourselves and cattle, one of the latter got mired down, and we had to pull him out with ropes. After proceeding about 3 miles farther we found a few blades of grass for our cattle, and took dinner ourselves. The old road used to run considerably to the left, passing some springs on the mountains, but the road is rougher and a good deal farther. After dinner a few of us went ahead of the teams hunting for water to drink, and found a good spring at the end of 10 miles. You bet I laid in a good belly full of it. A brother of Charles Jenkins who lives west of Marengo passed us here in company with other ten men packing it through to California with mules and ponies. Two miles farther and we pitched camp at Stony Creek, with plenty of snow in sight. Our cattle are pretty tired, the day has been warm and the road dusty. There are ten wagons in all camped here.

July 28, 1859.

Made one long weary drive of about 12 miles through a perfect fog of dust. This has been a trying day on the cattle, owing to the dust and heat. We got to a creek called De Cassure, and crossed it twice through a couple of break-neck places, then travelled up it about 3 miles where we found an abundance of excellent feed. Ben got his wagon tires all out and set by a travelling blacksmith, who has been travelling with us for several days. We too had an ox shod, and are now taking matters easy expecting a perfect onslaught from those overgrown mountain mosquitoes which infest these parts.

July 29, 1859.

It proved too cold last night for the mosquitoes. Consequently we had a splendid night's rest, and enjoyed it too with infinite gusto, breakfast in my opinion was announced a great deal too soon. We took dinner about a mile east of the point where Sablot's Cut-off comes in to the Salt Lake road. City Rocks are in the immediate vicinity - saw a woman on horseback packing it through to California, merry as a cricket, hope she'll make her pile, and catch a mate, she deserves the best kind of luck. Hauled up at the Mountain Spring, splendid water, fair grass, and cool enough to be pleasant. The Indians are said to be very hostile in this quarter, but somehow we all appear to be perfectly regardless, and if a fight should occur - I presume we would all wade in considering that only as one of the parts laid down in the programme. We have a delegation of Shoshones in Camp now, they don't appear to be very warlike, or even capable of doing much mischief. We have come 18 miles today and are now at the foot of the Goose Creek Mountain.

July 30, 1859.

Leaving Mountain Spring behind us, we passed over 10 miles of the cursedest road I ever travelled, up and down almost impassable precipices, and the track six inches deep with sand and dust, however, we reached Goose Creek at last, and there unhitched for dinner; in the afternoon we drove 8 miles up the creek, on an excellent road. Just as we turned out, a mule train from Salt Lake City passed us, carrying passengers through to California for \$40 a head, receiving at the same time \$50 dollars per hundred for back freight. No wonder goods of every description are so enormously high in price out here when such a ransom is paid for only hauling them, but the "Good time" is coming, there must be a railroad across the continent at no very distant date.

July 31, 1859.

Report has it that a fracas occurred a few days ago on Sablot's Cut off, between the members of two families, which resulted in one man getting shot dead. The company being probably afraid of doing anything with the murders, suffered him to run at large - happening a few days after to visit a large train farther ahead, they mentioned the circumstance to him lamenting the unfortunate issue of the affair - "yus" said he "I am the man that killed him, and I shall shoot two or three more of them too, before I get through". They immediately nabbed him, waited till the other train came up, formed court, empanelled a jury of twelve men - examined witnesses, argued the case from dark till daylight - found him guilty and sentenced him to death. A scaffold was made by elevating two wagon tongues, on which, all I can hear, he was hung like a dog. I suppose he had as fair a trial as ever a man had, and the proceedings throughout were orderly in the extreme. Stern necessity in such cases, on such a trip requires just such action. All the legal fraternity to the contrary notwithstanding. A large train of horses that have been behind us ever since we were on the Platte, had a regular stampede last night but they have found nearly all of them today. The Indians are as thick as hops, crouching and squatting in wait, and watching

a chance to commit some mischief. Now I would like to pepper the d--d "yaller skins". I feel just like it after hearing of their cruelties. We only travelled 10 miles - got to the point where we leave Goose Creek, camped, and have had quite a rain.

August 1, 1859.

Leaving Goose Creek and coming up a canyon, we found a pretty good stream, then 12 miles without any water at all, when we reached Rock Spring, a splendid one issuing out of the rock, but no sign whatever of anything like feed, we therefore rested a little and went ahead other 8 miles, where we found plenty of water but no grass of any account. We camped, however, as the cattle were pretty well tired out, quite a number of teams have passed since we stopped, pushing still farther on in search of grass.

August 2, 1859.

Ever since we left Rock Spring, we have been travelling in what is called "Thousand Spring Valley" - 2 miles from our morning camp, we came to some alkali springs on the left, and 4 miles farther on is the sink of the valley. The water runs both ways into this place, the result is there is plenty of excellent feed, but the water is very poor. Last night the Indians got in amongst some migrant cattle, killed one cow and wounded four others. The men gave chase in the morning, found their wickie-ups, but the Indians had vanished, so they burned and destroyed everything they could find. 2 miles more and we found good water by digging in a dry ditch on the left, and then driving 7 miles we camped in as good feed as we have found on the road and very good water too, we have made only 15 miles today.

August 3, 1859.

Nearly 100 teams camped where we did last night, quite a village in appearance; we had a hard toilsome drive of something like 16 miles, when we took dinner at some springs near the western end of Thousand Spring Valley. When driving this forenoon, I had occasion to get into the wagon for something or other and while endeavoring to do so, one of the oxen kicked. I overbalanced, fell backward and had the wagon to run over me which skinned and bruised me up considerably. Eight miles farther we camped at the head of a canon which is said to be the headwaters of the Humboldt, all creation was covered with teams and tents. There was also an encampment of U.S. soldiers on their return to Camp Floyd, they have been out on the Humboldt for the protection of the earlier emigration.

August 4, 1859.

Two miles or so brought us into a narrow rocky canon through which a stream flows - there is another road, however, branching off some five miles back - that is travelled altogether in the time of high water. The road running through this canon is one hundred per cent worse than any part of our trip so far. High rocks piled in every conceivable form and shape, so that we had to cramp, twist and rock the wagon nearly to pieces, so as to get through at all, and it continues no better for more than 8 miles. After getting through the canon we

took dinner, and then drove 8 miles more through a perfect cloud of dust. Ben's team through the bullheadedness of one Bellows belonging to their crowd, drove off and camped by itself about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles behind.

August 5, 1859.

A short drive of something like 8 miles, and we stood at last on the banks of the far-famed Humboldt or St. Mary's River, at this point it is a very pretty mountain stream, cold and pure - the grass is really splendid but the dust is awfully annoying - fellow deep and rising in a perfect fog - hard on both man and beast. We took dinner about two miles down the river and made 8 miles more in the afternoon, and then camped near the river with the oxen belly deep in as good grass as ever grew.

August 6, 1859.

Roads dustier than ever. It appears that the wind makes it a point to blow right in the rear, that we may get the benefit of all the dust. On driving 10 miles, we concluded to refresh the inner man - another mile and we crossed the north branch of the Humboldt. Took to the bluffs and travelled up and down hill for 8 miles more and again camped in good feed as usual. We have had considerable discussion about which side of the river to take, but finally concluded to go it on the north side.

August 7, 1859.

Sunday once more but not a day of rest. We have lately been trying another place in regard to the cattle. We allow them to rest only half a day at a time, once about the beginning of the week, and once near the middle of the week. They appear to operate rather better in this way than any other. When travelling this forenoon, some of our loose oxen, feeling pretty good, began to run and kick up their heels and those hitched to my wagon, got scared, and made a stampede, smashing the hind end of it, then geed short off and run like the devil for nearly a mile. Powell shinning it after them, and putting in his best licks - it is astonishing how the cattle have improved for the last week or so, they appear to have new life altogether - We are still camped on the river, and the boys have caught some splendid fish.

August 8, 1859.

Ten miles more through the dust, and we reach a rugged canon - through which the travel passes only at certain seasons. When the water is high, all the teams go over the bluffs, - we took during the passage. The road composed entirely of large cobblestones was pretty severe on the feet of our cattle. Here I discovered a human skull - from its peculiar conformation I should suppose that it had belonged at one time to some unfortunate Indian. The canon is six miles long - two miles on this side and we are again camped in splendid grass. Today I traded off my gun, which had met with several misfortunes, for a Colts' revolver.

August 9, 1859.

Four miles brought us to the foot of a bluff where we had to leave the bottom and take a cut-off of over 18 miles, up and down hills of the steepest, stoniest and roughest description. Ten miles out we found some muddy springs but no feed, so we only rested the cattle and then put out till we reached the river, and camped a little below a sort of travelling trading-post.

August 10, 1859.

Six miles farther and we reached another mail-station where we sold some flour at \$15 per 100 lbs. Six miles more and we camped for the day, and returned on foot to the place we started from in the morning, and bought a beef for \$40, tried to bring it along but it broke the rope, and got into the drove again where we left it. The man we brought if of promised to bring it to us in the morning. It was dark before we left and so we had to travel all the way back after night. I know I was particularly tired and hungry.

August 11, 1859,

Laid over this morning on account of the beef, found that the drove contrary to promise had gone down on the other side of the river, carrying away both the money and the ox. Started out and overhauled them a few miles below, got hold of the ox again and tried to bring him but he got stubborn on our hands. Sent to the wagons for two yoke of oxen and hauled him by the head to the other side of the river, hitched him behind the wagon and drove on, making 12 miles. Camped and killed the ox. A great many Indians gathering around and had a glorious feast on the head and entrails - they cut the tripe up into pieces about twelve inches long, strip them with their fingers, roasted and ate them while the filth runs in streams down their chins and breasts. Ugh! By giving them the hide we got to witness a regular Indian dance. They don't appear to have any idea whatever of music.

August 12, 1859.

Twelve miles brought us to Stony Point, where we took dinner, and then struck up through the sage brush and sand six miles farther, and then left the main road going down to the river about four miles where we camped in excellent feed, the cattle have improved amazingly ever since we struck the Humboldt, notwithstanding the immense amount of alkali that covers the bottoms, worse I believe even than the Platte, but we are very careful, watering only at the river and heading our stock from the sloughs and stagnant ponds. We sold some of our beef, and are keeping the clear hams and shoulders in a piece without any salt, wrapping it up tight by day, and hanging it up at night. Old Californians say that salt will cause it to spoil in this climate.

August 13, 1859.

Kept the bottom road and found it excellent, good travelling - little or no dust and good feed. Made 13 miles and took dinner. Then three miles on and we got into the other road - six miles farther and we again

again left the main road, and travelled other three miles, and then camped in good feed, close by some mule teams which had just crossed from the other side and had got everything in their wagons completely soaked - saw several black-tailed hares today.

August 14, 1859.

More alkali and more dust. Wherever we find sage-brush and grease-wood - there we can safely reckon on sand and dust. Today we passed over ten miles of the hardest and most disagreeable road we have had for a long time. We had to cross a large bend, and when we reached the river again we took dinner and then crossed another about nine miles. Camped and turned out the cattle on the other side of the river - here we found a human skull and all pronounced it to be that of a white man, but who can tell how or when he died.

August 15, 1859.

Had an awful time last night with mosquitoes. Nary sleep - travelled about 18 miles - roads tolerable - dust light - feed good - and few mosquitoes to plague us tonight.

August 16, 1859.

August 17, 1859.

Had pretty sandy roads today. Made ten miles by noon - got more heavy sand in the afternoon and again camped on the river, after driving about seven miles - feel good - some of the boys killed a wild goose and two black-tailed hares. Undeavoring to take a smoke today I found all my matches had gotten wet - took the object glass of a small telescope and with that and the sun's rays effected the purpose - found an excellent buckskin whip. Drove all day steady on about 10 miles heavy sand, steep hills, and deep dust. We have not experienced a worse days drive than this since we started. The cattle appear more fagged and tired than they have for a long time. Feed, however, still continues good.

August 18, 1859.

Four months from home today - and one month since we left Salt Lake. The distance from the city to this point is estimated at 550 miles, we have made very good time, rather too much so I believe. After leaving camp this morning, we travelled about two miles and then left the river for something like 17 miles. Roads deep, heavy and stony - other two miles brought us to Lossen's Meadows, making 25 miles in all - feed good.

August 19, 1859.

This morning we parted company with the five teams that have been travelling with us for some time. They, together with a large drove of cattle and some 30 other teams, are all going in the Honey Lake Route. We only travelled about 12 miles and then laid over in good feed to give the cattle a chance to rest.

August 20, 1859.

We have had another long tedious drive today, completely away from the river over a parched-up, dried up, sunburnt, clayey soil, we had to leave the road at noon and strike for the river three miles distant. We have passed many a pile of bones that mark the last resting place of the poor unfortunate ox, who in obedience to his master has like him has left his home in the states, and then beat up, used up, alkali'd up, here he has dropped and died where he lay. We reached the river again at night, and must have made about 22 miles. The water gets no better faster and faster every day, more muddy and stagnant like and somehow it don't appear to quench thirst at all.

August 21, 1859.

Another Sunday, but we are bound to travel. Here we are 15 miles away from the river, and many a rifle lays strewed along the road, the barrel of each bent like a rainbow to prevent the Indians from using them. We at last reached the river, rested three hours, and struck across another bend, supposing it to be about five or six miles, but alas! we travelled till after dark and did not find either water or grass. We unhitched concluding to stay till morning but some of the boys being ahead, found water about a mile from where we were. We accordingly went down and went supperless to bed. The greater part of the company cursing the luck that led us such a wild goose chase in the dark.

August 22, 1859.

What made us feel worse than ever this morning was the fact that we were camped over night only a mile from first rate feed. We, however, turned out when we came to it, intending to go some six miles farther where some springs are said to be, and there out our hay, and lay in a supply of water for the desert, but alas! for human calculations, relying too implicitly on two of the company, who had stopped there in 1852, we missed the springs altogether, and consequently got neither grass or water. We at length arrived at Humboldt Lake, where the river spreads out over a flat sandy, and in some places marshy bottom and forms quite a lake. There are some waterfowl but not very abundant. No water to drink, only lake water, that nearest the shore is not get-down-at-all, but by wading in about 100 yards and dipping it up it don't taste much worse than a decoction of goose dung mixed with salt water. There is no alternative only to swill it down, if it should gag us. So here we are without a single spear of grass, laying on the shore of the lake, with nothing to do, but gaze at the starry heavens and wish ourselves anywhere else in all creation only here.

August 23, 1859.

Last night he died! The boys who joined Ben's wagon, lost one of their oxen. About midnight we hitched up, and travelled 12 miles before breakfast, not being able to get grass any sooner. We are now at the outlet of the Humboldt, where it runs through a long marshy flat to the right. We have been cutting a sort of coarse long-jointed grass, called cane - brake in this section. The cattle were so tuckered out they wouldn't eat a bite. After resting about three hours, however, they pitched in and did good execution. We have been plunging and threshing through the marsh in water, crotch-deep, cutting and curing

grass for the desert, "Jordan am a hard road to trabble".

August 24, 1859.

Moved over the outlet of the river before breakfast - there is more water here at the outlet than there was at the last crossing of the river. Immediately after crossing we lay over until 1 o'clock P.M. when we made a start to cross the great American Desert, leaving the river to our right where the water covers the whole bottom forming a complete marsh. We cross the river for the last time, about ten miles farther on there is comparatively little water and what little there is runs away to the left and finally disappears altogether in the desert. Now comes the tug of war, bones and wagon-irons lie in huge piles together. Complete corrals apparently formed. Where the cattle have died where they lay and the wagons have consequently been relinquished. Nothing burnable, however, remains now, only the ironwork. On and on the scene is still the same, only a little more so as we advance, and then too the darkness of the night prevented us from seeing all its horrors - occasionally the bleached and whitened bones would glisten horribly and ghastly in the fitful starlight, rendering the inky darkness only more palpable. No one can form any adequate idea of the almost fabulous destruction of property that has at one time or another occurred on the Plains, since the first discovery of gold in California. Every man must see it, before he will believe it. After driving about fourteen miles we took supper, rested an hour and drove nine miles farther and stopped a little at the Wells on the Desert - here we can obtain water for the cattle at 25¢ a head and hay at 12½¢ per lb. or \$2.50 per ton. Bought a little hay and water - by this time it was past midnight.

August 25, 1859.

I have often heard of being entirely overpowered by sleep, but never experienced the sensation until this occasion. I would take hold of the hind end of the wagon and walk along - while in that position I would frequently fall asleep, and fall in the sand. This was the case with several of the company. I noticed Jesse Berkey in particular. He was driving loose stock, fell asleep on his feet, stumbled and fell, and when he awoke he was all of a hundred yards ahead of the cattle. This feeling, however, only lasted about an hour. The road is in general level and good, although frequently interspersed with heavy sand. 7 miles from the Wells the road was tolerably passable and five miles pretty heavy. Here we find another trading post - hay 5¢ per lb. bought some hay - fed it, and a quantity of flour and water to each ox. Gave them what water they wanted from our kogs, and started on immediately in order to get across five more miles of the heaviest sand on the whole route. We made the Carson River by 9 o'clock A.M. just two hours later than we ought to have been. I would recommend to everyone who crosses the desert with cattle at least to start earlier than we did, because we rested but little, travelled a good jog and found the sand a little too hot before we got through. We strike the Carson River at Raptown, but there is no feed at all here, two miles farther and we camped, where we can find a spear of grass once in a while. We had to do it as the cattle were nearly tuckered having travelled 45 miles without intermission, with little or no feed for two days before starting.

August 26, 1859.

Raptown used to be quite a canvass-town in early days, but now

it is quite small, and only boasts of some two or three houses. It is situated on the Carson River at the point where the Desert Road touches the river, a pretty, pure and refreshing mountain stream and disappears in the desert. It is bordered with a genial but struggling growth of young cottonwoods that really looks refreshing, after having ones vision "cramped, cabined and confined" for weeks to the everlasting greasewood and equally detested sage-brush. I endeavored to find Ragtown, last night after dark but failed in the attempt. I wanted to buy some provisions and had to go in the morning. Flour 30¢, sugar 50¢, dried apples 50¢ and butter \$1.00 per lb. We only travelled 7 miles, today, in order to give our cattle a good chance to feed, rest and exercise after their late fatigue.

August 27, 1859.

I have been sadly disappointed in regard to the Carson River, I expected to find a good road all the way to the Nevada Mountains - instead of that we daily encounter as much and as heavy sand as we did on the desert, the road for miles literally paved with cobblestones, winding and twisting up hill and down away from the river 12 miles at a stretch as it was today, we only made one drive - had a regular fuss in the family in which all hands took a part. Our cook threw up his commission, we sullenly dispensed with dinner, every man cooked his own supper. A great deal of jawing ensued. Some considerable gas escaped and everything subsided into a regular order again.

August 28, 1859.

Followed the river some three miles, and then explored another desert about 8 miles in width - heavy pulling all the way - rested about two hours, and then travelled three or four miles and then camped. We find portable trading posts strung regularly all along the road, ostensibly endeavoring to buy cattle but quite unwilling to pay anything for them. Immense numbers of cattle die here, after having apparently overcome every difficulty. They either get their death-wound on the Humboldt or the dry feed on the Carson proves too strong for them after previous privations.

August 29, 1859.

Twelve miles east of last night's camp. There is a station where two roads diverge. We took what is called the river road said to be 27 miles. The other crossed a desert and is said to be only 20 miles. At the junction of the roads again, we find a station, passed it about three miles and unhitched in good feed. The whole country is barren in the extreme, and the mountains appear as if they had been literally burnt, and vomited up by some volcanic agency at some former period of the earth's history.

August 30, 1859.

Six miles driving in the morning and we landed in Chinatown or Gold Canon as it is commonly called, great preparations are here making for extensive mining operations in the fall, making ditches and constructing reservoirs for leading the water of the Carson River into

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the mouth of the Canon. Here I sold one ox for \$30, and Ben sold one that had got lame for \$27. The Chinese here show much of their native characteristics especially in dress. You can distinguish them by their steopie crowned, umbrella-shaped hats as far as you can see them. I had the satisfaction of seeing about two ounces of pure gold. It looks nice and would do pretty well if I only had enough of it. A nine mile desert in the afternoon. One of Ben's oxen went dead and we have turned out for the night two miles or so from Carson City, situated where the old California Trail used to strike up into the Nevada Mountains.

August 31, 1859.

Leaving Carson City to the right we took a cut-off across the sand for eight miles. Since that we have been skirting the Nevada mountains covered with Pine and Cedar. We have passed several ranches and altogether the valley looks more like living than anything we have seen lately. We have now got rid of sage-brush and grease-wood and are regaling ourselves with sparkling mountain streams and ice-cold springs instead of the salt, hot and alkali ones of former times. We came to a halt about two miles below a small town called Genoa. Ben is engaged in cutting down his heavy wagon, making it more portable for crossing the mountains.

September 1, 1859.

Three miles brought us to Genoa, quite a neat little village, snugly unaccounted in a nook in the valley close to the mountains, which rise nearly perpendicular, completely covered with tall pine and cedar, the tall, trim, spiral topped trees, with their bright ever green foliage, look quite ornamental, and add a nameless indefinable charm to the whole scene, which in my humble opinion renders it one of the cosiest little retreats I ever remember seeing. Wallace Hamilton here sold his oxen for \$50, one of them being sick. Getting ahead of our teams, I stepped into a bar room to wait till they came up. I accidentally saw in a California paper, which I picked up, that Mr. Edwards, Editor and Proprietor of the Laramie - Visitor, had been drowned in the Iowa River, while bathing on the 25th of July last.

September 2, 1859.

Nine miles farther on, and we are at the head of the valley - taken as a whole I am much pleased with it. It is about 30 miles long, and about 15 at the widest part and from appearances much more productive than Salt Lake Valley, though far inferior in size. There is a telegraph line established and in running order clear from Carson City to San Francisco, and this is only a beginning. Not many years will elapse until the telegraphic wire spans the entire continent. The Telegraph first and then the Railroad - it is only a question of time, which the unknown future will assuredly decide in favor of an onward progression as irresistible as it is important. We had to pass through a canon seven miles long and as rough as can well be imagined. Pity some enterprising individual couldn't find a suitable grade and make a passable road, winding round among the mountains, such an end accomplished would secure a fortune to the lucky "hombre", as well as the heartfelt thanks

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of the travelling public. Here we are in Hope Valley, small but pleasant, surrounded as usual with tall pine and cedar, the wind sweeping with a mournful cadence through the lofty branches, sweet, plaintive and yet soothing.

September 3, 1859.

Cold as Greenland - snow on the mountains all around and ice on everything this morning. Then up hill and away, steep and rugged, and we at last gain the first summit of the Nevada Mountains, and down to the side more rugged than ever. Here Billy created some amusement by climbing a high rock and delivering a lecture to another noted for his swearing propensities. Giving him a cool and animated advice, and concluded by drawing a contrast between his pious parents praying earnestly for his welfare, and himself acting the d--d fool all the time. All the boys burst into a laugh and down he came from his rostrum, apparently greatly shocked at the levity of his hearers and a face as long as a churn. We are now in Lake Valley, having concluded to rest the balance of the day.

September 4, 1859.

Last night we had to leave the main road about 2 miles, and got very good feed by letting the cattle see a very low fence, by some means or other they got over, and after that we couldn't keep them out. In the morning we came back to the road and commenced scaling a steep grade 2 feet to the rod, this lasted for 3 miles. I am told there are 25 miles of graded road between this and Placerville, constructed at a cost of \$75,000. The road was pretty rough, consequently we didn't make more than ten miles or so in all.

September 5, 1859.

What a road we passed over for three miles this morning, over and between rocks, from the size of a sheep, to that of a church, and yet over such roads what an amount of freighting is done, with stout teams and strong wagons. We sometimes see as many as eight or nine spans of horses or mules hitched to one wagon and then something has to come or break. The balance of the day's drive was mostly a down hill grade, about 1 1/2 feet to the rod. A very good road for mountain travel - day's drive 18 miles or so.

September 6, 1859.

All of our oxen got poisoned with some kind of weed last night. Each one was scoured like thunder. A green slimy stuff running from them all day like water. Rendering them pretty weak before night. We have turned them down on the river about two miles from camp. This is the south fork of the American River. The pines grow tall and graceful, some that are blown down measuring about 300 feet. Redwood, oak and cedar are also freely interspersed all along the mountains. How I would like to chop among those glorious old pines, just to feel the axe sink into the eye - and see and hear the monarchs of the forest thunder and crash to mother earth.

September 7, 1859.

3/p

Went down in the morning for the cattle - one of mine so weak he couldn't navigate. Sent for some whiskey - poured a pint into him, gave him some meal and brought him along. What with his weakness and the whiskey he acted as if he really felt two or three shoots in the wind. Came only seven miles - passed the Bridge on the South Fork. Brockliss Bridge, I believe, fare \$1.00 - heavy grade up from the river, camped. Camping place, called Fish Pond at the foot of Junction Hill, very long and steep. Hay 5¹/₂¢ per lb. McKenzie left us at Brockliss Bridge and went to work on Silver Creek, somewhere in that vicinity.

September 8, 1859.

Powell and Boze took their hudgets this morning and started out to hunt work, the hill we had to scale was pretty steep - 1¹/₂ miles long - hard on the cattle, especially mine as I had only one yoke able to work. About noon we reached a sawmill and found our two boys had got work at \$35 per month. They are at a place called Sportsman Hall - 11 miles east of Placerville. We staid here all day - found some feed for our oxen - four of them are pretty sick - in fact they are all unable to work, and shouldn't but still we jog along.

September 9, 1859.

Started for Placerville - stopped at a sawmill to see them work. The teams went past and got a mile ahead, tried to overtake them - could see nothing of them - got to Placerville or Hingtown - found two of the other boys - bought as many peaches as we could eat - waited till sundown, still no teams. Went back about a mile, found from description that our teams had passed about 2 o'clock. Struck out in pursuit on the Coloma Road - lost it and took the trail. Made a bee line across the country and got to Cold Springs about 11 o'clock and there found our teams. The whole country is dug, washed, tore and heaved up in every conceivable shape and form. Placerville is quite a thriving place and numbers about 3000 inhabitants. Cold Springs is a small dilapidated mining town plentifully sprinkled with Chinese and I should think consists of some 200 or 300 inhabitants.

September 10, 1859.

Four miles farther and we call a halt for a short time in Coloma, where gold was first discovered in California, this is a neat and thriving village but has evidently seen its palmyest days. This is the second day of the County Fair, being the first effort of the kind. Abundance of fruit on exhibition, peaches 17 oz. in weight, apples 23 oz., plums 6 lbs. in one cluster, grapes ditto - and everything else in proportion, not even babies excepted. After feeding and looking at the curiosities, we again started out, passing Uniontown, where there is a toll bridge across the South Fork - fare \$12.5. Here Kay made the first strike for work, and found employment for himself, Harper and me at \$3.00 per day.

September 11, 1859

We had got about four miles ahead when Kay overtook us last night. We immediately camped and made arrangements for returning. I sold or rather gave away one yoke of oxen for \$40, in order to pay Ben some money I had borrowed. Took the back track - bought some provisions, pitched our tent under an oak-tree, and fixed up things in general for regular work in a river claim, and now as my rambles are for a time ended, I retire with a bow until I again start out. Unless I should conclude to jot down a few of my experiences and observations in California - This land of Promise.

John Mc T. Gibson
alias
John Blunt

Tanning Hides

The best general method to be followed for the tanning of common pelts of any kind with the fur on is the following: after having cut off the useless parts and softened the skin by soaking, remove the fatty matter from the inside and soak the skin in warm water for one hour. Next mix equal parts of borax, saltpeter and glauber salts, in the proportion of about half an ounce of each for each skin, with sufficient water to make a thin paste. Spread this with a brush over the inside of each skin, applying more on the thicker than on the thinner parts, double the skin together, flesh inside and place it in a cool place. After standing twenty-four hours wash the skin clean and apply in the same manner as before, a mixture of one ounce of sal soda, half an ounce of borax and two ounces of hard white soap - and melt slowly together without allowing the ingredients to boil, fold together again and put away in a warm place for twenty-four hours. After this dissolve four ounces of alum, eight ounces of salt and two ounces of saleratus, in sufficient hot rain-water to saturate the skin, when cool enough not to scald the hands, wring out and hang up to dry. When dry repeat this soaking and drying process two or three times until the skin is sufficiently soft. Lastly smooth the inside with fine sandpaper and pumice stone.