

[Christian Gnos]

INHS

March 12, 1850

St. Joseph Mo.

My Dear Parents-

I must address a few lines to you and let you know where we are and what we are doing.

We arrived at this place yesterday at 10 oclock in the morning. And commenced unloading our things immediately. After a 2 day of hard work we succeeded in pitching our tents about half a mile from town.

You can better imagine our camp when I describe it. Sixteen tents and covered wagons. Scattered along the side of a little hill with a little stove at the door of each and our fancy cooks engaged in their cooking and other kitchen employment would present an appearance not a little interesting.

We got on board of the Confidence at Lafayette on Wednesday afternoon and got as far as Terre Haute the next day, where we made a bargain with the Daniel Boone to take us to Saint Louis at \$5.00 a person.

There we laid in our provisions and other outfit which took us nearly 2 days. Here again we chartered the Daniel Boone to take us to St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is a very pleasant place situated on a gentle slope on the Missouri side of the river. It is about twice as large as Delphi, nearly all houses are built of brick for good lumber is scarce here.

Prices of goods are not much higher than might be expected as the distance and danger encured on this river is very great.

About morning as we got up the whole river was floating full of barrels and boxes and other things which indicated that something was wrong up the river. About a mile above St. Charles we seen the cause.

The steamer Rowina which had been heavily loaded on her way to St. Louis had ran against a snag and sunk immediately, so that water stood above the cabin windows. No lives were lost.

Our company was the third one that has arrived here this season.

I had joined the Cadden mess and Charles has joined John Patterson, it is impossible for us both to get into the same mess without getting up a new one which we could not do without taking in persons who would not have made very agreeable companions. Though we are in different messes yet we are not far apart than though we were in one mess.

I think we have done very well this far for my health has been very good, better than it has been for a long time.

I would write a great deal more but it is impossible now for I am writing on a board and it is near supper time and must use it for a table.

As soon as we get fixed I will write again, how soon we will start from here I do not know.

Samuel Gordon, James Newton, David Martin form my mess.

Yours  
Christian Gros

St. Joseph, Mo.

March 22, 1850

My Dear Parents,

I must again address you and inform you <sup>how</sup> far we have got on our journey. We arrived at this place the 19 in good shape, health and fine spirits.

Our prospects so far have been good and should Providence continue to smile upon us we shall soon be in California.

Though we left Delphi and our friends there with feelings consequent upon parting from old and cherished friends yet with a full purpose to go through if possible, and have never yet regretted that we started.

Nothing occurred of any interest except that Mr. Robertson lost a pocket book while we were on the Daniel Boone. Immediately upon his missing it a search was made among the passengers and other persons employed on board but proved unsuccessful.

There are some very fine villages and towns along the banks of the Missouri river among which Fort Leavenworth is one of the pleasant places I ever saw.

Jefferson City, Booneville and St. Charles are also are also very fine and flourishing places.

But I must leave off these subjects and give you a short outline of our plans and intentions.

We are now camped about a half mile from town here we intend to remain 2 or 3 weeks until our teams are rigged out when we shall again set out and go a hundred miles from here though we cannot leave the settlement until the first day of May. Yet it will be a hundred miles nearer our journey and besides feeding our cattle will not cost us half as much as it does here. We shall probably go to Fort Kearney as we have all our provisions with us.

To tell you what things cost here it is impossible for they have no certain prices for anything but take whatever they can get especially if they see a person with an Indian rubber coat and cap on.

Oxen are selling at from \$50 to \$75 a yoke. Wagons from \$80 to \$100 a piece, 3 of our yoke of oxen cost \$58 a yoke. Flour sells at \$5 a barrell for wheat is plentiful and of the best quality, corn 25 ¢ to 30



cents a bushel and other things in proportion. That is if the person has eyes open as the saying is.

Our company numbers 95 or more, Ours was the third company that arrived here this season, every boat brings more. Some messes from Kentucky and Illinois have been here for some time.

If any person has any fears that an outfit cannot be obtained here he is mistaken & for this place is nearly 3 times as large as Delphi and everything that is necessary can be obtained here if you only have money in hand.

Two days ago I wrote a letter but didn't date it, if I rightly remember, because I did not intend to send it until I could give more particularly of our plans and arrangements, but as since if the boys were going to town in the evening I sent mine along and forgot its unfinished condition so I concluded I must write another and explain myself.

Though the weather is cool and a little rainy yet life goes fine. Though many inconveniences attend to tent life the boys are all well, satisfied and full of sport.

Dr. Beck's tent is one of the round ones and is ~~denominated~~ denominated the court house and the other larger ones the Buford House, City Hotel and many other like names.

The town folk often come out here to see us and invariably pronounce our outfit better than any one of the other companies that have ever passed through here.

The articles which you sent by Dr. Beck I received. You could not send anything better, for good bedding ~~xxxx~~ is very comfortable on the cold ground.

On the boat that we came up on there were several gentlemen who were on their way home from California. All of them gave a ~~story~~ very favorable report. One of them had about 40,000. This information I received from the pilot of the boat who was well acquainted with the man. The others had less, but all had a considerable amount.

Yours Truly,  
Christian Gros.

Nichienabotany Ferry  
Atchison County

April 22, 1850

My Dear Parents,

I must take this opportunity of addressing you as we are now in the neighborhood of a postoffice. And may be the last chance of addressing you between this and Fort Larimie.

I am happy to inform you that my health is fine, better than it was ever in Delhi. And hope my letter finds you the same.

On the 30 of March we left St. Joseph for <sup>real</sup> Fort Kearney and are now within 30 miles of it. The main company was already a day in advance. Whom we reached on the following evening camped near a small creek where they had engaged a lot of corn.

Although a great deal of dissatisfaction prevailed in the company with the manner in which business had been conducted by the Captain and his standbys yet no expression had been made to that effect until a ~~fresh~~ fresh cause occurred. And the division of the company was the result. Amongst the messes that split up or off was my own, had not the division separated me and Charles I should not care a cent.

For the sooner we got rid of Captain Cowdey the better. He has proved to be everything but what we took him to be.

The above guard occurred on the 31 of March and on the next morning we set out in company with those that split off and did camp any length of time until the 14 of Apr. when we stopp'd on the edge of a fine prairie near the small town by the name of Oregon.

There we were joined by the Zook boys who have since sold their wagon to the Grifeth and Mc Cormick mess.

On the 14 we again resumed our journey. The road lay through on one of the finest prairies on earth covered with tall grass and so dry that upon being touched by with a match in a few minutes the flame would roll along in a perfect sheet of fire accompanied with a loud rolling noise that was truly grand and awful.

This prairie is called Nichienabotany bottom. It is from 5 to 10 miles wide and 150 feet long. It is bounded on the west by the Missouri river and on the



east by a fine ridge of hills that hem it in the whole distance to Council Bluffs.

We reached the Tarkie river in the evening and camped on its shore. A mess from New York City were camped on the other side composed of two men and their wives and children with two drivers. The women were ~~beginning~~ engaged in washing and had just hung their clothes out to dry.

In the morning we pulled up and proceeded on our journey, very near making an end to our teams and wagons and of some danger ~~in~~ of a still more serious accident. The Tarkie river is 15 to 20 feet deep with a high bank on each side. The bridge over this stream is scarcely wider than the tracks of a wagon with no hand rails to guard the sides. To cross over this with a 5 yoke team it is necessary to have some person drive or lead them.

James Newton had this station and he came near being pushed off into the river, and the bridge was very muddy and slippery.

When the lead cattle were about in the middle of the bridge that began to slip to the left ~~side~~ the side that Jas. was on and came so near the edge that he was ready to jump in a minute. Perhaps our whole team would have been dragged after them had we not succeeded in bringing them to a halt.

At 2 oclock in the afternoon we camped near the Missouri River that as worth all the trouble and time of traveling the distance to see it.

The whole river was choked up with large masses of ice and driftwood which in rolling over the snags were hurled up and down like so many chips. Every now and then large trees would tumble and splash in such a manner as to cause the whole scene to appear alive.

Mr. Picksler is 3 miles from the lower ferry, the other ferry is 20 miles up the Michianabotany at this the other company were camped when we were at ~~Missouri~~ Pickslers and have been quarreling ever since we ~~split~~ split.

But did not come to any open outbreak until a few days ago the whole company broke to pieces, principally on our account, as the Delphi boys that remained with the main company declared that we

were treated wrongfully and that they would no longer submit to the arrangement that they were ~~then~~ then engaged in and declared themselves independent of the Lafayette company.

Although some of the Delphi men acted rather on the other side and were still Cowdey men yet ~~xxxxxx~~ these were overruled. And a new company was organized.

And have since asked to rejoin them which I expect we will do in a few days.

Our present party numbers 4 wagons from Delphi and Reams mess from Monticello and Sam Maley mess, one wagon is from Lafayette which will make as many as can handily go together.

We have not yet decided upon a day for starting as the weather is rather unfavorable for grass to grow.

Although a great many have crossed the Missouri it is early to risk ourselves into the plains till the first day of May or perhaps even later.

The country between St. Joseph and Council Bluffs is pretty well settled on the Missouri side of the river. The other side belongs entirely to the Indians 13 miles above St. Joseph there is a fine town called Savana and 24 miles from here is a town by the name of Linden all of which are not on the map.

Cowdy and party crossed the Missouri on last Thursday. If you write address our letter to Stockton.

Your affectionate son

Christian Gros.

Michiganabotany Ferry

Apr. 25, 1850

My Dear Parents-

We have concluded to leave this place this morning and instead of crossing at Ft. Kearney we shall cross at Dagnentys ferry where the other boys are waiting for us, 20 miles up the river.

& as soon as we shall get there we shall cross and take several teams with us to haul corn while the grass is still tender. In

You can date our journey over the plains from the 25 of Apr.

For the present I commend you all to the care of God until we shall return.

Yours

Christian Gros.



Fort Larimie

Mar 30, 1850

My dear parents-

I must embrace the few spare moments that I have and let you know how far we have got on our journey.

We have just crossed the Laramie Fork and shall start early in the morning. And pass on to the next point which is the Rocky Mountains which are in sight although over 300 miles from here.

We expect to reach South Pass in 3 or 4 weeks from this time, <sup>were</sup> ~~which~~ the roads are good from here to the <sup>new</sup> as they have been between Fort Kearney and this place we should reach them in 3 weeks for we have averaged 20 20 miles a day for several weeks and our cattle are pronounced by all that we meet as being in good order and very likely to stand the trip.

Most of the teams that are this far ahead are mules and horse teams and many of the ~~source~~ <sup>horses</sup> teams are in a very bad situation.

On the 25 of Apr. we left the Missouri River in good health and there has not been a single case of sickness in our company. My health was never better in my life as it is at present. I can say that I am ~~perfect~~ perfectly well, what I could not say at home.

I suppose you think that by this time I have seen so much of the trip that I know what it is to go to California. And perhaps if I had to go again I would not go. But it is just the contrary for I never was as keen as I am at this time.

Though the worst part of the journey is ahead yet I hope to arrive at the mines before you will receive this letter. We are now one third of the way through the grass which has been very short especially between the Missouri and Fort Kearney.

At the last place we lay up over Sunday where I should have written too, had not several of the boys written. ~~xxxx~~

I must defer this till some future period when I will try and interest our boys with an account of the buffaloes, Pawnee Indians and several Sioux Indian villages that we passed through.

And the large parties the last named Indian ~~that~~ that we met on their way to their winter quarters ~~XXXX~~ moving into the valley of the Platte to graze their ponies.

Some of these parties numbered 1000 or 1500 all dressed in their gaudiest apparel with large white wolves following behind with packs on their backs like mules.

I might also interest Henry very much with a description of the Court House and Chimney Rocks where our names are engraved in the soft rocks on the court house our names may be found on the very highest part. So if we never reach California it can at once be seen that we tried very hard to do so.

But I must turn him to the narrative to the condition of California in the New Yorker which you will see an account of the great storms that are to be met with out here of which we had a pretty good example the day before we got to the Court House Rocks.

Fort Laramie is situated on a very pleasant bottom on the banks of Laramie fork with high lofty mountains in the back ground one of which is called Laramie Peak with its top surrounded by clouds and mist.

~~xxx~~ I suppose you would like to know how my money held out I have all my expenses paid and \$45 left. Charles expenses are larger as their mess has a larger team and their oxen cost more than ours, he has very little left although he has been very saveful.

Where it is possible we lay over on Sunday. We have got so much used to living in tents that we begin to like them very well. Many of the hardships of this trip are nothing more than breaking of old habits.

Our company numbers 4 messes and are as follows  
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~~our company numbers 4 messes and are as follows~~ No. 1 - Dodge, Hatfield, Monfort, Robertson, Kennedy.

No. 2 - John Patterson, Sampson, Gray, Wilson, Charles Gros.

No. 3 - Thompson, Hewit, Lamb, Evans

No. 4 - Gordon, Newton, Martin, Love and myself.

Yours,

Christian Gros.