

John Grindell
Diary .

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The Diary of
John Grindell

His trip from Platteville, Wisconsin
To
California.

in 1850.

Sketch Book of the travels from
Platteville, Wisconsin to California.

A small sketch of each days scenery
commencing on the 25 day of March
1850 and continuing until i arrived
in California.

John Grindell
Platteville
Wisconsin
Grant County.

I was at Fort Carney May 17. John Grindell, Fort Carney.

June 1, 1850

we are now incourage some for they call it 553 miles to Salt
Lake and 700 to fort hall and 1200 to sacramento city. *And 700 to Joe*

Distance from one point to the other according^e to my
estimate from *Humble* to St. Joseph is 234 miles and from St
Joseph to fort Curney is 293 miles and from fort Curney to
fort *Bascom* is 34 miles. *And 700 to Joe*

See p. 16

June the 11th We are now at Independence rock it is near the running water 1 1/2 miles to salt it is composed of a [granite?] as hard as flint there is no penetrating it with a chisel wrote ~~at~~ my name with tar it is estimated to be 250^{ft} high and of an oblong shape smaller in the south and covers 100 Acres of land now we are coming in to the mountains there is rock on both sides from 600 to 1600 feet high and some of them is covered with snow now we crossed sweet water and came on 5 mi to the

[Devil's Gate] Levels flat this caps all yet it is a space in the rock for the river to come through it is 600 feet perpendicular and hard to ascent without some trouble i got to the top and looked far over then came down in a

then i was up with the creek and it was impossible to ascend it again so i undertook to ford it and took off my boots and carried them on my finger then plunged in and get half way across then the current got so strong that it took my feet to strike and swim but the water got in my eyes so that it took me down but with some exercise i struck my foot on a rock and drew myself near the shore i made it with some difficulty and came in and had to ford it again.

drove 16 miles

all day good

March 25th Monday 1850. We started from Platteville to
 [Hannibal?] Galena and took the steamer for Hannaville it cost us only 6:20
 dollars for passage. Wind sharp on the [east] an one horse sick trav^{le}
 25 miles first day and took a good supper of our own make cooking.

March 26th Tuesday. Traveled all night and passed a good
 many small towns on the river we traveled 200 miles this time and
 plenty of game on the river but an chance to get them. we now have
 a good crowd and not much room to stir all well.

March 27 Wednesday. still on the Mississippi traveled till
 10 o'clock and then we had to onsh^{ip} all our party to get [over?] ^{le}
 the rapids it took us the most of the day for to go 12 miles and all
 well and good hart as yet and will be in Hannaville soon

28, Thursday. We got a shore at 11 o clock and camped out
 for the rest of the night but this was our first night for camp-
 ing out next morning we bought a good many things for half what
 it cost us at home we left town at noon 15 miles out with a heavy
 load and bad roads now camping comes again

29, Friday morning got up and had breakfast then hitched all
⁴ ~~the~~ horses in the team, some had roads still to cross Weather
 getting quite warm traveled 16 miles then camped. and there is
 lots of wile geese here and ²/₃ of our men went out to hunt some but
 didnt get any.

30, Saturday. next day started and crossed salt river and a
 small village went on 16 miles came to Paris the county seat and
 camped over Sunday one of our horses took the ~~lots~~ and had like to
 day on the road now ~~camping~~

April 1st Sunday laid over. Monday. We camped from Saturday till Monday near a plantation and had sport with his negroes it started to rain on Sunday and was very wet all night the water had like to drown us out soos that we had to get up before morning and start a fire it was a hard job it rained till noon we traveled 12 miles to Madison and

2, Tuesday took up fd all day travelled but 6 miles it rained all day the roads is very bad now we have to walk all the time we camped in a nigger hut all night

3, Wednesday. we started again for the roads and traveled 17 miles but found it hard to find any feed for our horses it still was wet and very windey we camped out this night the wind very high

4, Thursday. with great trouble we got all hands to work to start on the road for a better camping place we traveled 16 miles before we could find a place to get our horses out of the storm the roads now very bad.

5. Friday. we started from Glasco and traveled 18 miles shot 2 wile geece and had a goos pot py for supper grain verry scarce we had to travel 5 mi threw watter up to our kneese and then came into the city of brunswick it is on the Mazura

6. Saturday. and at the mouth of the grand river the city is in very low ground and all mud here we ~~camped~~ concluded to stop 1 mile till Monday we had to pack hay and corn for ~~Monday~~ and pay 50 cents^{bu} for corn and 1 dollar for hay per 100

7. Sunday. we still lay in camp we now maid up our minds to get on board of a boat for St Joes if we could we tried several but could not get a chance of one for less than 40 dollars that was very steep

8. Monday. 10 miles today. We stoped till noon and could not get a boat for less than 60 dollars so we conoluded to ship some of the heaviest of our load and go on with our team We came to the ferry and it was broke so we had to go across ourselves it was a hard job.

9. Tuesday. we started very early and got 30 miles on our way the most of the way is in the Missouri bottom it is 30 miles long and very flat there is lot of deer here i started up a flock but could not get near enuff to kill them we camped on the prarys this night

10. Wednesday. we started and went 12 miles then we overtook hoosiers team and had dinner together and traveled on 10 miles the roads is on the mend now our company had some hard words now and then. We passed threw richmond and feried crooked rivver to [Ocen?] [Oken?]

11. Thursday. last knight we had to pay 60 cents for oats [does he mean at Oken?] ^{field} ~~and~~ had to pay for a ~~place~~ to stop in we took the roads for it again and went on 26 miles and camped in the prarie all knight corn scarce we got some hay for our horses this day at 3 bits.

12. Friday. we started and overtook 10 california teems in Plattsburg now we are 30 miles of st Joes the teams are very ^hick now we came on to platt river here ^{we} had to wate for ^{half} a day before we could get across in the ferry it cost 65 cents we traveled 22 mi.

13. Saturday. we started and got in St Joseph at noon the streets are just alive with the folks our man is not come in the boat yet and he did not get in till night our things cost us 50 cents a hundred we can buy corn for 50¢ here now 12 miles.

14. Sunday. we camped last night in a lot in the town and this morning we came out to the rest of the plattville men and camped there now we have W Chatman with us as his partner threw him off ~~th~~ he is stopping with us till he can get a chance to go.

15. Monday. lay in camp all day and nothing new going on

16. Tuesday. still in camp it started to rain all day and makes our roads bad the ice is now coming over ^[?] the rivver fast

17. Wednesday. Still in camp nothing new i wroast to my Brother today.

18. Thursday. still in camp and nothing new as yet on hand

19. Friday. No sines of grass as yet still cold and wet weather

20. Saturday. now we have got all our provision and traded our horse and poney for 2 others, only 10 dollars to go on with now.

21. Sunday. i wrote back today to Mr. Hollida to day grass now growing fast and we think of starting for the ferry tomorrow.

22. Monday. now we are getting our provisions and all ready for a start in the morning.

23. Tuesday. we started this morning for to cross the river with hard work we got a cross at 3 o clock it cost 150 cents we now have to use the Kagaria water and it is the muddiest ~~ma~~ i ever saw the currant is very swift, we camped 2 miles in the bottem now we have to stand guard for the first¹ [time]

24. Wednesday. we are now in the indian land and are starting for the bluff 7 miles from St Josephs on a small stream but clear watter the bluffs are about 200 ft high and good land here. our companeys have come up.

25. Thirsday. we are all in camp yet. the weather is very warm now and there was a man deyed last night near where we were camped and 3 shot ^e since we came here. there is a good many teams starting on the road. we had some fish that we ca^upt

26. Friday. we are now preparing for the road there was 3 men died today and several waggens brok down on the road

27. Saturday. today we went to town and sean a good many of our old friends the town is near stripped of all that there is in it

28. Sunday. our company organized themselves and chose their captain. A. F. Willard was chosen our company intends to have 6 teams and to start on the first of may. Grinvill Handcock sold out his shair in the team to Wm Gillis for 115 dollers in chash

29. Monday. Gale and Gilles is gon to town today to get all their things for starting on Wednesday morning the weather has taken a sudden change and is very warrem now the teams are all on the moove now

30. Tuesday. nothing doing now for a start

36 days on our journey.

1 Days travels. Wednesday. Still in camp now our men are gon to town for the last time to buy some oats they are 100 cents a bushell noose of some deying in town.

2. Thirsday. now we started on the road and crossing the branch our load capsized in the mud and nocked all the things up side down and cracked our exell we have 20 hundred on and traveled 6 miles and camped at a good spring it rained all eavinging

3. Friday. we started this morning and traveled 10 miles over 1 or 2 streams and ^(tall) tool brige cost 2 bits and then came to the misian where there was some large fields and 16 houses and a horse power grist mill and 1 smith shop there is corn for sale here at 150 cents. Gale has gone back to get a board for our ^(board?) waggen i got a pair of mogiscns for 50c

4. Saturday. we had an early start this morning and traveled 28 miles beford we got a camping place, this morning we had to cross a branch and we brock a single tree then we had to turn to packing again this is all open preiry and bogey land and not much watter to be had

5. Sunday. now we are starting to drive on Sunday we drove 12 miles today and got a camping place well off the road where there is good water and now we had to stop and help to ~~make~~ ^{shake} a bridge on the road in a branch. we are traveling near north ~~Southward~~ for this 2 days we are ~~now~~ now 70 miles from St Josephs and ^{at} ~~not~~ with some scares

6. Monday. started on our way and crossed some small branches we came to Minewa creek the banks are steep and hard to cross the creek is about 14 feet wide and stoney bottem good watter here we camped here drove 18 miles i saw 6 dead ~~horses~~ today making 12 since we started.

7. Tuesday. 2 dead horses today it rained all night and we did not start till 10 o clock we had lots of wolves last night i shot a mud hen and shot a coon and had a mess of fish for supper we traveled 7 miles and came to another branch and soon to another then had a cold bight traveled 14 m

8. Wensday. 6 dead horses we are very busy this morning to have an early start and went on 24 m and came to big blue bottom and camped there 4 more teams joined us last night we are very tired tonight there is a great many teams passing on the road we passed trains solid

9. Thirsdlay. today i saw no dead horses we had another start and came 1 m then we had to ford the big blue it took our waggons near to the head it is a firm bottem and about 60 ~~yards~~ yards wide we came on 12 miles it is hard to find any grass now for our horses to graze on we passed the ~~road~~ independence ~~road~~ today and lots of trains now

10. Friday. we had an early start this morning and traveled 4 miles then let our horses out to graze for 2 hours then we came to wood ^[Woodall?] all creek the banks are steep we got here at 3 aclock here we saw 3 graves of last year one old man 78 years. we passed on 2 miles and camped for night drove 19 m today the grass is very short yet and no. . . [inelligible - 3 words one of which appears to be "seen."]

11. Saturday. all in a stir today to get off before the oxen train now we came to a ~~field~~ ^{Explained?} stream of water the roads is very hilly today and we maid a long drive of 30 miles today we are very tired ~~in the~~ tonight we left the rest of our company we camped on big ~~dry to night~~ ^{dry to night} tonight it is deep sand and no watter but holes

12. Sunday. now we are agoing to start for little *blue* roads very hilly today we stoped at little dry and fed here we bought an indian pony from some men that was on their way he cost 35 dollers there is a great maney on their road back 15 mis.

13. Monday. this morning we start up little blue we traveled till noon and then we met a man that had just shot a buffalo so i with the rest of our cocks started for some meet we ran for ~~4~~ ^{1/2} m and then there was a croud round it we went to work and got as much as we could cary away

14. Tuesday. drive was 18 mis this morning we came to the conclusion that we would lay over this day and cook our meet it was fine the best i ever eat. the weather is very warm today and the grass grows slowly no rain

15. Wedensday. this morning we are for the road again we traveled 21 miles up the little blue this day i saw one poor man get his legue all smashed to pieces with an ox team that run away he is very bad now we saw two indians the first we seen for a week they are naked all but a buffalo robe roun their loins. we are still in the bottom land of little blue grass on the mend

16. Thursday today we had an early start for a long journey we traveled up blue 5 miles then took across to platt we got some muddy watter at noon then drove 18 miles without watter and came to platte bottom at dark we drove 32 miles today no wood at all bad water.

17. Friday. this morning we started before breakfast on account of no grass drove 5 m then had breakfast and passed over 100 teams started again and drove to the fort and camped the rest of the day drove 15 mi today grass is on the mend now. here there is 200 soldiers and a good many canon. wood is scarce.

18. Saturday. this morning we leave the fort and travell up platte rivver there is a great many teams ahead of us the number is 2700 teams has passed here all ready today we traveled 24 miles and found good grass tonight i had the bad luck to cut my league on the nee bad

19. Sunday. all x in a hurry to get off today for a short drive. at noon we overtook a horse that was left for dead and all the *cooks* ^[accoutrements] the ox teams took him on with them drove 20 miles and had a very heavy *thunder storm at night.*

20. ~~Storm at night~~ today we had a very early start and drove 30 miles we crossed plum rivver on Sunday. tonight we have to camp on the bottem 1 1/2 miles from wood or watter we had to carry our water and cook with buffelo chips we passed near 1000 ffalo? [buffalo?]

21. Suesday this morning we had an early start and drove 22 mi then camped at 3 oclock and did up a good deal of cooking we had good grass and wood this last day there is a great

many teams rowling in around us tonight it blue up a storm tonight and rained some we antisapate an early start

22. Wedensday. this morning we started by sun rise and passed a great many teams. drove 15 mi and turned out to graze here we had the best buffalo hunt that i eaver seen there was a gang wof 30 and our men turned out and killed 6 of them their meat goes good drove 30 miles

23. Thursday. this morning we seen a stampeed with some horses and buffalo there was 4 horses killed and 1 man get his league brok^e and another got his arm broken. today we left the north fork of platte and traveled up the south fork today we passed 40⁰ head of cattle today we traveled 28 miles no wood to be had^{yet} at all.

24. Friday. today we are for the ford there is a good many ox teams ahead we drove 25 miles and reached the ford here we camped all night for we antisapated a long drive tomorrow with out watter or grass platte rivver is near a half a mile wide here and some teams upset here in the river

25. Saturday. this morning we [for a] ford the stream crossed the ed^{drove} bluff and ~~drove~~ 15 miles then we came to ash hollow here the banks are very steep in fact it is anatural curiosity to see the bluffs and the small trees growing out of the rocks we ^{drove} 6 miles farther and was caut in a wind storm it was the worst i ever saw it tore the cover off our waggan and sceart our horses bad

✓ 26. Sunday farmers horses smashed their waggon down so we had to turn back for all night today at noon we started for a short drive of 6 miles we passed rock cove house and came to an indian incampment there was about 50 of them ~~they~~ they were quiet.

27. Monday. this morning we had an early start and cold weat weather now we passed a large incampment of indians there was near 200 camps and over a thousand indians there. we drove 15 miles and then ~~grased~~ the roads being very deep with sand we drove 28 miles.

28. Tuesday. this morning there was over 100 teams in a string all trying to get ahead of each other we crossad a clear stream in the fornoon and came to church rock there was a clear stream of watter here the rock is a splendid sight here it is a very large rock it can be seen for some miles we are in sight of chimney rock now we drove 28 miles today

29. Wedensday. this morning i had the curiosity of seeing the rock so i started for it but i found it 4 miles farther than i thought ~~me~~ for it stands 300 feet high and the tip is small about 100 yds in circumference and about 100 feet high then it takes a swell of 300 yards in circumference then it takes an aburat[abrupt] slant till it gets over 1 mile round it i ~~clim~~ over 200 feet high and rote my name here i had like to fall down there is lots of other rocks round it. 30 miles.

30. Thirsday. last night we reached camp disappointment it is 12 mile from watter we had to stop without watter for our horses we started at daylight for watter and reached a spring at 2 miles

and there was a trading post here we drove on 5 miles and had breakfast and stoped till 1 oclock then drove down to the river and crossed a clear stream about 20 yards across it. drove 16 mi no wood nor chips to be had here

31. Friday. 60 days on our journey. this morning all in a hurry to start at 5 oclock we drove 22 mi and turned out to grase then came on 5 mil to a trading post here they had a snug store of all kinds made of mud. we sold our saddle for 50 [dollars] now we are in sight of Carneys peak it is 150 mi off. there was one minister died from a shot with his pistol. Drove 25 miles.

1 June travels. we are now at work to reach the fort here we have to cross the middle fork of plat it is about 60 yards wide and 2 ft deep drove 10 mi and reached the fort here there has passed 2500 men some 5 weeks ahead here all hands to wrighting home i sent a letter to my Brother. there is 150 soldiers here, started on to hunt up a camping ground. drove 5 miles and was caut in a rain storm.

2. Sunday this morning we made a start for the mountains we drove 1 mile and came to a steep place to get down safe we drove some dâstence and came to a good spring and a good lime kill this is the best lime stone i ever sien. The roads is very up and ruff today and crooked it is ~~up~~ down hill all day drove 10 mi and grased then drove 26 mi and camped on Spring creek we crossed 3 creeks.

3. Monday. this morning we had a late start and drove but 16 miles for there was the heaviest storm I ever seen of rain and hail it rose on the bottem like a rivver and the hail lay from 4 to

6 inches deep on the bottom and we had to camp on a bluff out of the
~~water.~~
~~river.~~

4. Tuesday. we had a hard pull this morning to pass some trains
they all reached 3 miles and the most of them were ~~fast~~ in the
bottom for ^{1 m [the mud]} ~~was~~ belly deep to a horse after a drive of 5 miles
we ~~reached~~ ^{reached} the bluff now the road is very crooked and up and down
hills we crossed the bonta it is 30 ft wide and 18 in deep good
clear water drove on and ~~crossed~~ crossed a branch of bonta
and camped on it drove 27 miles.

5. Wednesday. today we drove over a very ruff hilly but
handsom country drove 13 miles to ^{nowned [found]} creek it is 30 feet
wide and 18 in deep here we ~~found~~ poor grass drove 8 1/2 miles
and camped making 21 1/2 miles today there was a great many teams
passed us here grass meadow and balls whistling all around

6. Thursday. this morning we started at sun up and crossed
fourch Boise river it is 30 feet wide and 2 feet deep came on 2
mi and struck north platt good grass we came on 5 m and struck
deer river 30 ft wide here there is a handsum grove we lay from
8 oclock to 1 oc plenty of fish here but no time to fish willer
passed us now & drove on and crossed little crocket muddy creek to
we drove 21 miles and camped poor grass today

7. Friday. we started at 6 oclock and crossed two small creeks
drove 16 miles and came to the lower ferry and there is no chance
to cross today poor grass. There was a man drowned in attempting
to swim a mule across and another allmost ^drowned this is the
second man that was drowned here now there is snow on the tops
of the mountains very warm today

8. Saturday. this morning we crossed the river it cost 5 dollars we had heavy traveling for 6 miles and came to the upper ferry here we stopped and sold half of our ^[clothes] ~~clothes~~ to make the load lighter then we took for the bluffs and drove 18 miles today and camped on mineral spring and lake here the water is all ^[alkali] ~~alkali~~ ^{poor} ~~poor~~

9. Sunday. last night we had to stop on the sage without any water we had an early start and came to willer spring this is the best water i ever drank but no grass at all drove on ~~the~~ ^{to} greese ~~wood~~ creek good water but no grass now our horses look bad for want of feed today we drove 21 miles cold at night and warm in days.

10. Monday. This morning we ~~start~~ ^{start} but our horses is hungry now for a drive of 13 miles without grass or water and very heavy sand we passed 2 alkali lakes the saleratus is the handsomest and whighest i ever seen it lays from 1 to 4 in thick on the ground and 40 rods wide now we struck sweet water some grass the creek is 6 rods wide and 5 ft deep i went to see independence rock it is 250 feet high and covers over 100 acres it is of an oblong shape it is the hardest granet out and the wind blue so strong that i scarce could stand up

11 Tuesday. this morning we drove a 6 mi and came to the deavils gate it is the strangest sight i ever seen it is where the creek comes threw the rock it is 400 ft straight up and down i climed it and came down the other side here i had to cross the creek here i had like to have been ^{drowned} ~~drowned~~ in the water the current was so strong see 2 page

12. Wednesday. still in sweetwater bottoms and high bluffs on either side snow on the left and rocks on the right we crossed several small streams for this last two days today the river took threw the rock again and an narrow pasige threw the rock heavy sand all day drove 18 mi poor grass today

13. Thursday. this morning we left the river for 9 miles over very heavy sande roads then nooned on poor grass then we had to drive 16 ^{mi} without grass or water ^{on} ~~at~~ high riges ~~in~~ we passed a large alkely swamp then we had to ford the river 2[times] within 1/2 mile and camped without eny grass whatever we drove 26 miles today. now we are in sight of the snow mountains they are covered with it and very high.

14. Friday. this morning we started before breakfast and drove 6 miles over the ridge and strack the river and had breakfast we passed over 100 teams this morning then drove 3 mi and passed a small ~~xxx~~ stream it was very cold and rainy then we left the rivver and took the bluff for a great hight over rocke ridges and alcoli lake we had to camp on the top of the hill and drove 10 mi today it was very cold and weat now and snow all ~~round~~ ^{round}

15. Saturday. this morning we started with a small breakfast and so cold that we had to put 2 suits of cloas on and a blanket we passed strawberry creek sweet watter branch, 2 rods ^[wide] ~~3~~ 3 ft deep willer creek and sweet water 4 rods wide 3 ft deep. now the snow is from 10 to 12 feet deep and very cold the roads is good and levil with a graduel assent up. camped at small bluff without watter. drove 20 miles.

16. Sunday. this morning we passed the twin mounds and reached the south pass at 9 oc it is 11 mls from the one point to the other we are now 70-85 ft above the sea and the mountains on the right is 100 ft high covered with snow. the road is a gradual assent for 30 mls and good roads. last knight the frost and ice ~~in~~ was half an in thick in the pail. we ~~camped~~ at the pasiffic spring all day and shortened our waggen palmer came on with us now. drove 7 miles today

17. Monday. ~~sick men today than i have seen on the road from the change in the atmisfide~~ there is more sick men today than i have seen on the road from the change in the atmisfide we now have a very heavy snow storm all knight and this morning crossed little sandy 9 miles there was a train as far as i could see eather road now drove 21 miles and camped on little Sandy 30 ft wide 2 ft deep poor grass ~~in Gale is very sick all day~~ we joined with Palmer and to wagons and 3 sick men

18. Tuesday. started and drove 6 mi to big Sandy 6 rd wide 20 in deep now we are feeding our horses for the desirt of 45 mi without watter or grass we will start at 4 oclock and drive all knight. our sick man is geting better now. the mountains are whight with snow and they look fine hard frost last knight and snow. ~~we~~ we drove till 12 oclock and camped for all knight with all hands tired and sleepey we made 29 miles today some grass on the road.

19. Wedensday. we started at daylight and came over some deep revines grased at noon roads good as yet drove con and came to the river at 4 oc wd had some very deep ravines to cross and very dusty we had to pay 5 dollars to get our waggen across