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Diary of a Forty Niner
by
O. J. Hall

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Extracts from the daily Journal of O. J. Hall, Nauvoo, Illinois, who in company with Phineas Kimball and N. K. Hall with outfit of wagon, three yokes of oxen, one yoke of cows-whole cost of outfit with the exception of clothing-\$500.

Wedn'sday May 2, 1849.-Crossed the Mississippi River at night-drove one mile and one half and encamped at Esq. Beckleys-they were very kind towards us perhaps rather more so on account of their having a son-in-law started on the same expedition.

Thursday May, 3, 1849-The next day we proceeded on our way to Josiah Henkles-distance 18 miles. There were some very hard showers of rain during the day, roads muddy-Nathan rode on to Camps and met us that night at Henkles.

Friday May 4, 1849-Kimball and myself went back to Charleston and about to look up another yoke of oxen, as our load was too heavy for the team we had. We did not find any that suited.

Saturday May 5 1849-This day we went to Farmington and there purchased a yoke of Oxen for \$40.

Sunday May 6, 1849-This morning we left Henkles and proceeded-weather fair-Camp overtook us nine miles on our way to bid us a parting farewell-called and saw Miss A-proceeded to Bonapart-crossed the river and encamped-distance 13 miles.

Monday May 7, 1849-Drove 15 miles near Mechanicsburg -nothing much took place except we got stuck and had to unload to get out.

Tuesday May 8, 1849-This morning we find a prodigious bad mud hole and got stuck again and had to unload-here we overtook two ~~two~~ horse teams which rendered us assistance in getting out of the mud-tonight we reach Stringtown and encamped by an acquaintance Norman Chirman-distance 15 miles.

Wednesday May 9, 1849.Today we traveled 15 miles and encamped near Drakesville.

Thursday May 10, 1849.Proceeded to Soap creek-17 miles-I amused myself in shooting birds-we were overtaken by Olmon Babbitt who has contract to carry mail from Council Bluffs to Salt lake Valley-he took supper and

and breakfast with us and then he treated with brandy and cigars.

Friday May 11, 1849-Started on our days journey and reached Whiskey point-distance 20 miles.

Saturday May 12, 1849-This morning we took an early start and reached Chariton Point-distance 25 miles and laid by for over Sunday-did some little necessary fixings and I tried to make biscuits-I had tolerable luck.

Monday May 14, 1849-We fell in with some company from Mineral Point, Wis, consisting of four wagons, three ox teams-they appear to be very nice people two ladies. Distance 20 miles.

Tuesday May 15, 1849. We traveled 23 miles near a place called Lost Camp-during the day our Wisconsin Ladies got on their riding skirts and mounted their horses, as they had two of them along. Kimbal soon fell in company with them and the way they galloped away over the prairies was a caution.

Wednesday May 16, 1849-This morning we proceeded on our journey and encamped in Pisgy-distance 15 miles-in crossing Grand River at this place we had eleven yokes of oxen to draw us up the bank.

Thursday May 17-Today we crossed two branches of Grand River and proceeded on to the 30 mile prairie-16 miles.

Friday May 18, 1849-Today we have traveled 14 miles, and encamped on a branch of the Notway in company with 12 teams-crossed a number of narrow deep streams.

Saturday May 19. Kimball is complaining and thinks he is going to be sick-some rain during the day, only 6 miles.

Sunday May 20-We concluded to lay by today-afternoon heavy rain-Kimball no better.

Monday May 21, 1849-This morning we start on our march again-considerable rain during the day-we traveled 12 miles. A doctor from Michigan company attends him.

Tuesday-This morning we got an early start in order to lead other company-roads generally good-two sloughs took ten yokes of oxen to drag wagon through. Tonight finds us encamped on the Knishnabotany in a place called Indian town-six houses. The Indians left one year ago. We visited some of their burying grounds-they lay body on top of ground and cover it with a

bark or puncheon and a little dirt on top; as it decays the body becomes naked. Distance 14 miles.

Wednesday May 23-Kimball anxious to stop till he gets better-Dr. Terrie of St. Marys Ill. stoped with him-tonight we encamped on West Knishabotany distance 20 miles-here we had to swim our cattle.

Thursday 1849. We traveled on six miles because of rain-stopod within 8 miles of Kanesville-Mr. Stone and I went on into town. Now we find ourselves in Mormon Town just 330 miles from Nauvoo-on the road 22 days.

Friday May 25, 1849-We took lodging at national hotel and now we hurry to meet the boys with their teams-Bought a barrel of flower for \$11. This place consists of three stores and one tavern.

Sunday 1849.-Today the boys pick on me with anpther man to go up the river to Ferry 12 miles-to see what companies are forming-on my way come across Rufus Bates-returned and found a Methodist preacher, Brier in camp-he preached to us at 4-quite a smart man. He is on his way to California, his company is forming tomorrow.

Monday. Nothing of importance, moved down the river 4 miles-to 20 wagons-plenty of Indians begging.

Wedn'sday-Still here on our old camping ground-today we organized into a San Francisco company-it consists of one colonel, one adjutant, two wagon masters, seven captains. John Brophy-Colonal-Kimball returned today, health better.

Thursday 1849. Two keel boats landed today with fur-the men running them had squaws for wives-there is prospect of our getting Ferry day after tommorow.

Friday. Moved our incampment down to ferry-Kimball gone to Kainsville-thinks of crossing at upper ferry 18 miles above and then meet us at Elkhorn river-orders are given to be ready to commence ferrying at 4 a.m.

Saturday. This morning I set my foot for first time in Indian soil in west-we are over the river about 12 teams encamped-Indians as thick as toads around a mill pond.

Sunday. Encamped near a missionary station-last night standing guard

I shot an Indians dog-today I attended meeting at the station,heard two sermons. It was interesting to hear Indian students sing.

Monday June 4,1849.Nothing of importance-we are waiting for the rest to get over the river-pretty country-this station has 40 acres included, mostly in grain wheat,hedding out.

Tues.A company was dispatched this morning to assist in getting the ballance of teams over the river-some suspision last night of Indian attack false alarm.

Wednesday.Last night at sounding of horn ,company gathered together to take into consideration the propriety of allowing a man with his family to move on with us-she is expecting to have a child-a committee was appointed to report-a motion was made that they should not be allowed to go with us-a vote was taken to move at eleven next day. Our divisions were organized and captains elected. H. Ambrose was captain of our division. This morning a storm came up at seven-it cleared off so we started. There are three tribes of Indians Pawnees,Omahaws and Otos. The Pawnees are filthy. Country rich broken soil-prairie on one side and woods on other. Our course is parallel with river northwest. 14 miles then camped. Another bad thunder storm.

Thursday June 7.Pleasant morning started at seven. On our travel we discovered two graves supposed to be imigrants.Incamped on Pappea,good spring-country more level-good for wheat,the beauties of nature are around us.Grass 12 inches high with wild pink rose.

Friday. Last nigh a man overtook us with company of 25 wagens-vote was taken and decided in negative-orders wer to start at seven-reached the Elkhorn at 11-distance 9 miles-all prairie. No country from Nauvoo has equaled it,timber well grown up to grass. River 5 rods wide. Here we overtook fifty wagons of Mormon company. We cross tomorrow. The ferry is a raft. I stand guard tonight.

Saturday June 9,1849-From two to three hundred Indians assembled on bank as we left the river.traveled 13 miles.Indians friendly-sandy soil.

Sunday. Orders were to start on-drove 13 miles and formed a corral-sand roads most of the way-good wheeling-a vote was taken whether we should travel any further-it was decided that we should not-Brier preached at six.

Monday. Rain, some of company started without regard to order-it soon stoped and we had a pleasant day except for some deep sloughs-one wagon broke down-officers are consulting. I had a fine chase after two antelopes my horse fell and left me crippled but not serious-traveled 22 miles-camped by Platte no timber.

Tuesday June 12. Officers think it advisable to take load along and leave man to fix his wagon. Just as we were ready to start up come 100 Indians from a Buffalo hunt-they claim to be Skeder tribe. There were heavily loaded with meat. One span of horses got frightened and broke a wagon tongue-traveled 20 miles-encamped on the Platt.

Wedns. June 12, 1849-We had a prodigious shower-hard getting the guard for later part of night-some are to be courtmarshelled-traveled 9 miles stoped at Beaver river and took dinner. One of company saw Prairie dogs-more rain-It appears that here has been an old mission station-a field inclosed by rails/

Thurs. Started from Plum creek-we came on a deserted Indian town-the wigwams surrounded by an old fourt-their huts were mostly burned down-saw several buffalo heads and horn, some were 14 years old when killed. At Cedar river we had to raise our wagon beds with blocks-bad fording-one of wagons upset-Mr Remington and I went out on hunt 17 miles-encamped-burned weeds to cook by.

Friday. In six miles we reached Loop fork- there we found a company with whom we had traveled thru Iowa-after a shaking of hands they told us they had lost one of their company-he had gone to examine the river for fording when he got into deep water and had to swim. On his tomb is ingraved-In memory of Dr. AA Graham of Adrian Michigan.

June 16-This day is spent in examining the river for a ford-a young

man in other company is very sick with the cholera.

Sunday. Another company arrived reporting they had lost two men with the Cholera-Just informed the man is dead-name Richard Perry.

Monday. This morning commenced ferrying and a hard time of it-all across at 1 oclock-two other companies crossed in afternoon-our company

took a vote to receive one of companies with us-our division then with drew and joined SanFrancisco union.

Tuesday June 19-Traveled 24 milescompany of Indiansasserted they were in pursuit of another tribe. As presents we gave one a handkerchief and another some beads. Very hard traveling-no water soil very poor.

Wednesday.-Traveled 27 miles-camped on Platt-roads better.

June 21-We had a heavy rain last night making roads bad-passed large Dog town-shot one-traveled 22 miles-encamped on Platt.

Friday June 22, 1849-We traveled 23 miles-camped on Buffalo creek-passed beautiful prairie. Six buffaloes seen today but none killed- it is surprising to see dog town-We have shot many but it is getting to

be dull amusement.

Saturday. Traveled 16 miles making 259 from Council Bluffs.

June 24. Traveled 12 miles and encamped no Indians in sight.

Monday. Traveled 19 miles-Rev. Briers wagon upset no serious damage.

Tuesday June 26-Traveled 22 miles-crossed two brocks and one spring.

Wednesday. This morning from some cause the cattle made a break from Corral-broke two wagons, smashing wheels so we had to repair-a party of us went on a Buffalo hunt-we killed wolves and antelopes. Saw many dead buffalo-very tired when we returned.

June 28 1849-Traveled 18 miles -encamped on Platt-this part of country is full of Alkli-as water dries up leaves on ground.

Friday-Traveled 15 miles-crossed Bluff fork in morning, encamped by spring of water-today a burralo was killed by one of company, had a fine supper out of it tonight.

Saturday-Traveled 18 miles-very hard sandy bluffs-today a company of us went on Buffalo hunt-saw siz but did not kill any-a company of Indians are encamped on opposite side of river about 300.

Sunday. Company voted to travel today-started 6.30-8 miles-overtook another company who begged us to stop and turn back as Indians were about to make attack-all went back but one man to wagon-company returned and reported there was no trouble-14 miles.

July 2-Here is first rock we have seen since we left Missouri-this forenoon we passed 12 dead Indians bodies-they are wraped in Buffalo robes other articles laid on top of ground. Yeaterday passed grave of Fisk immigrant. Today at 11 ovlock we passed Lone tree, which we had been

looking for-traveled 19 miles.

Tuesday July 3, 1849-Encamped on Crab creek-traveled 20 miles-quite a stir was raised in mountaineers company today on account of Jim Murphy refusing to do duty-at noon they tried him and tried to tie him to hind end of wagon, but for some reason untied him. At night they carried his trunk of clothing outside of the guard and put him with it-a vote is taken by Company to lay by to celebrate the forth.

Wednesday-We are now 419 miles from Council bluffs. After arriving at this point the boys prepared a piece of ground and in evening had a cottillion party. Chimney rock can be seen 40 miles away-Scots bluff 50 miles.

July 5-Traveled 24 miles-It is delightful to climb bluffs and examine specimens of rock petrified from different materials-also the different flowers.

Saturday-Roads very dusty-saw a notice of man drowned in crossing chimney rock.

Sunday July 7 1849-Company voted to travel 16 miles-here we find plenty of timber for cooking, the first for 200 miles.

July 9-10-11-All hands lay by to repair our wagons-we cut off our wagon bed-rolled up to Fort Laramie and ferried the river-encamped close, no feed.

Thursday-Traveled 21 miles-arrived at warm spring at noon, cattle would not drink-country very hilly-here is another fine spring-Pine and red cedar-cattle look bad. A number of camps in sight.

July 13-Started at seven-soon overtook a company of Dutch-our trail passed them-some dispute, we threw rocks at them which soon hushed them. Roads very rough-We passed Larima peek-feed tolerably good, 20 miles.

Saturday July 14, 1849-We struck the Platt at noon-scenery-bluffs 250 ft. high-here we saw some mountain sheep.

Sunday-A vote was to travel today-we saw 6 buffalo-reached La Bonte river at noon-company voted to stop-it is cherry music in the night to hear the wolves set up their howl around camp. Large Elk horn along road-six men can set on them.

Thursday-We have finally reached the Platte and ferried the river again, reached here the 17th-Distance from Fort, 97 miles. A very hard time, lost three days, no grass, the cattle had to pick wild sage. Roads are stony so cattle are tenderfooted. We took them up Deer creek 15 miles for feed. It is surprising to see the amount of property thrown away such as wagons, chairs, stoves, clothing and provisions. If I were to start again on such a trip I would take one pound of glue, two pounds of slippery elm bark, one peck of corn, this I could go thru with. Yesterday felt unwell so took medicine. Today helped at ferry. We set three of our wagon tires yesterday. We killed a fine buffalo yesterday and are fixing for a public supper.

July 22-Our supper last night consisted of 35 persons-a toast was drunk by Renington,-it was as follows

Here we are on the River Platt

And heres hoping we never turn back.

Yesterday there came up a violent storm so quickly that we didn't have time to unhitch the wagons. We had to stand by the cattle and stern the storm. After it was over the hail lay six inches deep. On the night of the nineteenth after ferrying the river we made our beds in the open and there came a shower which wet us finely. A vote was taken to travel today but some of our cattle were missing and we did not find them till noon. I had a fine trunk left me by a company leaving their wagons here and goin to pack thru-Kimball had one given him also-so we leave two chests-plenty of bacon thrown away at this place.

Tuesday July 24 1849-Started on our travel at 7-had a hard day because of no water or feed-traveled till 10 when we reached Spring, but no feed-cattle very tired. We passed Avinev rock also Alkli springs during the day we passed 37 dead cattle. Today we traveled 10 miles little feed-passed 26 dead-this country is barren. We expect to reach south pass in about 6 days-we are in mountains.

Wednesday-encamped on sweet watter-here I climbed a high mountain-near camp is Independence rock. It is 300 yards in length and 100 in width. To take a fair view of it would take at least 2 days. Many names written on. Next we came to Devils gate. It is where sweet water goes thru mountain. The walls are 400 ft high.

Friday-Today we voted to rest, it is a general time for washing. Here feed is good, much alkli in grass.

Monday-Up to this date many events have taken place. We are 55 miles from pass-the mountains look as if covered with snow. We had tolerable grass for a few days. Dead cattle and property of all kinds are still strewn along the road. On 28 we came to first rate wagon and left ours and took that-yesterday morning we killed a fine buffalo. We have warm days and cool nights-company all enjoying health. Froze ice in wash pan.

Thursday August 2-We are within 4 miles of South pass encamped. Here is plenty of snow to be seen on mountains. A vote is carried to lay here and recruit our teams-Four government officers met us with deserters arrested one out of our company by name of Baker who had joined us a few days ago-they were from Laranie.

August 7, 1849-The express came and stayed over night with us-they said the Mormons were preparing to accomodate 3000 imigrants.

Oregon Territory Aug 7-Now we are west of rocky mountains-roads tolerably good-last night we encamped at Pacific springs-tonight on little Sandy went 24 miles today without grass or watter. Our company had four cattle die we think from drinking alkli-it seemed strange after traveling 800 miles and water all running one way to see it change.

Thursday Aug 10, 1849-tonight encamped on Green River, country like plain-hardly know we are descending a mountain-we have crossed Little and big Sandy-place looks like home. Willows grow here from one to two feet thru-very clear water.

Saturday-Encamped at Fort Bridger-plenty of grass. We crossed Harri's and Black Fork-mountains covered with snow. Fort is a trading point-one store-whiskey \$2 pint. Tin cups .50 each. Traders have squaws for wives.

some as many as three.

August 13 1849-We lay here to rest and recruit teams-distance from Green river 56 miles-horses per head \$80 to \$150-oxen\$80.

Wednesday-Encamped on Bear river-traveled last night till I found no water-started early and reached here at 8'-altitude 6665 ft.

This river is fringed with willows and groups of hawthorns. Valley 3 or 4 miles wide bounded by mountains on all sides-one mountain we had to lock down $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. We are now among Snake Indians-quite intelligent plenty of fine horses. They ride along tent poles dragged by ponies.

August 19-We are 26 miles from Salt Lake city-Mr Ambrose and myself left the train and traveled into town-found a pleasant location. Distance from Wiber river to city 40 miles, making whole distance from Nauvoo 1364. Teams reached here Monday 20. Nathan reports one ox drop dead in road. Provisions high here, flour \$8 to 12 per 100-Beef .05 to .08 pound, coffee .25-sugar 35, horses 150, good wagons \$5 50\$ 20.

Monday-We have decided to dispose of teams for mules and pack thru-we have one horse valued at \$100-dissolved partnership with Kimball-I attended church yesterday and such a discourse by Brigham Young I never heard. A perfect blackguard, streams of oaths rolled from his mouth thru discourse. This valley consists of 1400 citizens-plenty of snow on mountains-Indians have little intellect-very filthy, eat crickets and sunflower seeds-they are the Utah.

September 1, 1849-This morning we leave Salt Lake, with 9 horses and two mules, 1 wagon, 7 men and 1 lady. Our outfit has been very expensive. our animals cost from \$50 to \$100 each-we have sold clothing to light up-there is a hot spring here a great curiosity, the water is so hot that I can't hold my hand in it more than 14 seconds. Some left a few days ago with ox teams but we thought not safe.

September 16-Today being Sunday we lay by and encamped on Humboldt about 16 miles from the head. Our road has been very rough as a general thing-it has continued from one mountain to another, in some of valleys we found good grass, some English clover and wild oats, no timber here but small willows, wild sage for fuel. We have not been out of sight of snow for several days-we have to be on the watch constantly for Indians, we are not among a tribe of root diggers-a few nights ago the watch found an Indian leading off one of horses which was staked near the wagon. The Indian dropped the lariat and ran for sagebrush. Country not much account.

Sunday. Sept. 23-Another week has rolled around and finds us on Humboldt, roads dusty and hard wheeling. We had to go over mountain to avoid canyon, we had to stop without grass or water, next day we reached water at 10 and grass at one. We overtook some teams of our old company. They said the company that took Hastings cut off, they went 60 miles without grass or water, many died-some that reached water were past speaking with black tongue, blood ran from mouth. When they revived they carried water back to others. It must have been a horrible scene. Wagons lay in piles and property along trail. Indians very thievish-11 head of cattle stolen in one place. Some lost their whole

train by death or theft and have to take pack on back and seem like crazy men. Because of graves along river it is sickly here. A man died in company near us.