

1850

Mar. 31 - June 26

The Bride, W

S

[Journal of an overland trip
from Goshen, Ind. to Salt Lake
City]

A. MS. 87 p. fol.

April 21, 22, 23rd. Nothing particularly worthy of record transpired on these days. Part of the time it was with great difficulty we could get feed for our horses - corn was 75c. & 1/2¢ per bushel - I paid 50 cts for about 4 lbs. of corn blades, every thing washing. We passed through Liberty and Pottsville & arrived at St. Joseph on the 24th of April.

April 24th

We arrived at St. Joseph about 10 o'clock A.M. Never, probably since Peter the Hermit preached the Crusade had such a motley group of men been collected together. St. Joseph resembled in some respects a vast business city. Along the bluffs to the west, where were some springs, long rows of tents were pitched so closely under the bluff rocks that the All the principal roads leading to the town were thickly beset with white tents on either side - while the heights immediately to the north of town were also covered with tents, wagons, & horses, and thronged with men. The streets were crowded with men, horses, mules, oxen, & wagons so that it was almost impossible to get along - a great crowd were continually at the Post office window, pulling, hauling, & surrounding each other in order to get letters from friends. Auctioneers were selling mules & horses and all kinds of merchandise all through the streets. Music of every variety could be heard from the grocers and gambling houses. Intelligent looking men, ignorant men, dandies, clownish & negligently clad men, old gray head men, drunken men, young & green looking beardless boys, negroes, Indians and all sorts of men, could be seen there crowding along together, all bound for California. Minstrel girls promenade the streets singing "Oh California, that is the land for me", with great crowds of motley men and boys following them. We passed on to the river where there were three ferries plying night and day. Here among the vast crowds we pitched our tent, a

little to one side, in order to await our turn for crossing the river. Here feed was exceedingly high corn sold for 1/2¢ per bushel which ordinarily brought only from 12 1/2¢ to 15 cts. - Beans & greenies were cheap - ania fruits & white beans were 1/2¢ to 1/4¢ per bushel.

Many emigrants had already gone out on the plains two weeks since, & were now starting out daily.

April 26th. A steamboat arrived here this morning with 3 fatal cases of Cholera aboard, a gentleman, Lady & child. A great many are encamped on the opposite side of the river.

April 27th. A man died suddenly today about one o'clock creating great panic on account of cholera - but he probably died of Apoplexy - he had a life insurance policy to the amount of \$1000 - he leaves a family in Ohio. About the middle of this afternoon we crossed the river. Whilst we were crossing a wagon was run down to a ferry boat & run on it into the river, where it sunk in deep water - all this companies stores were thus lost.

We passed on through the river bottom, about 4 miles where we encamped about a quarter of a mile from the river - every few rods in this bottom along the road were encampments of small companies -

When we encamped there was some young and tender grass, & we turned our horses out to graze, guarding them most of the time, for there was a great many horse stolen here. In the mean time, as cook made some preparations for the plains, buying and grinding a tin-cup full of coffee & smoke. Other similar preparations - Our encampment was pleasant among the tall forest trees upon whom branches frequently sported flocks of 3 beautifully colored parrots. In the mean time we now await the return of some of our friends who desire to travel across the plains in our company, among whom are Capt. H. Co. James Kirkpatrick & Co. Mr. Lee & Co. & several others - Here in camp I am settled to several of my friends -

April 28th. Sunday - In company with Enoch Willett I rode out upon the bluffs to see how many they ~~traded~~ ^{traded} a large train of 25 waggons drawn back by 4 mules were starting out - the wind blew cold and raw. There was no vestige of ^{fresh} grass here; the bluffs looked barren and uninviting - some men were walking along a foot - others on horse back, some on mules, each one carrying his rifle, scabbard knife and some had muskets - better armed men probably never went out to bloody warfare.

Other trains we also saw starting, and some getting ready, striking their tents and packing their waggons and pack animals - As I looked upon this vast concourse of men pouring out along the Great Thoroughfare I thought of the old Roman adage, "Whom the gods have determined to destroy they first make mad." It came to my mind with singular force, and more than once since have I thought I have seen the truth of it verified.

On going back to camp which was close to the road I sat down and looked at those that were passing - All seemed jovial and full of life and spirit. Many fine teams were now then hourly passing - the horses too seemed full of life and spirit & pruned along like gay studs on a celebration day. The men all looked hearty and robust, the horses were sleek and gay - this is the going out upon the plains - We will see by & by how it contrasts with the "coming in from the plains."

April 29th. As I have just been speaking of the splendid outfit of the greater part of emigrants generally some of on the contrary were going out with most inferior teams, occasionally the horses were small and poor - One man passed us with a small poor cow harnessed to a homemade cart in which he had his provisions and clothes stowed away - he was joined at by the emigrants generally - when we were two days out upon the plains we passed this man's cart at the road

side, while he was away at some distance grazing his cows - Several men, we saw, who were going on foot with heavy packs upon their backs -

One man passed us, whilst we lay encamped, who had all his stores upon a wheel borrow - as I have returned I have ascertained that the wheel borrow man has become quite a noted personage - I saw the veniable wheel borrow man, & he seemed to be jogging along at a good pace, and in good spirits for aught I know.

Another man I also saw, who was going with a heavy cart. These men possessed great advantages over the rest as long as their provisions lasted & they were outstripping.

May 2nd. Going on to the Plains -

On this morning our company (14 waggons in all) being ready we moved out towards the plains, on our long journey. The day was very warm and pleasant.

We traveled this day only about 15 miles putting up early on account of rain - We encamped on a small creek where were a good many others encamped. We traveled over a broken and undulating country, being the river bluffs - The hills are often very abrupt so that we have to go round three miles to make one - A great many waggons are often times in sight - far away ahead they can be seen slowly winding around some hills, while far back behind can be seen others slowly moving along - sometimes 50 or 60 are in sight at one time -

Jason Sawyer, one of my old neighbors and patrons called upon me for medical aid this morning - He had a severe attack of Pneumonia or Lung fever I consider him very dangerous - I advise him to rest because they have a heavy load & only three of one of these is balky, another is so badly foundered as nearly to be able to get along on the third one's own shoulder - But this obstinate boy says he will go on as long as there is life in him & when the time comes out then he will go afoot and hunt -

through to California - There were two of these Lawyer boys & I shall have more to say of these brave aversive fellows before I finish this journal.

To-day one of our company witnessed the execution of California laws upon a thief. A man was detected with \$94 in gold coin, which he had cut from his companions pocket & made off with it. He stole this too from his friend & benefactor, who had kept him for three months during a spell of sickness, & had then fitted him out for California. He was brought back to the encampment where he was stripped of all his clothes except under shirt & drawers - ropes were lashed to each hand and foot - he was then stretched upon the ground and whipped with a black leather whipped whip - he was whipped most unmercifully; even back he cried aloud & implored his tormentors to desist and send him to State prison. They replied, he was a California emigrant & must submit to California laws. He was finally permitted to go back to the State - when, it was afterwards rumored, he died of his wounds.

May 3rd.

On account of the rain on the previous evening and last night, the roads are slippery and traveling is bad. Traveled about ten miles to Wolf creek which washed out a deep channel in the soil so that, emigrants, or the Mission had bridged it with poles - but was a man stationed demanding toll on behalf of the Indian tribe - we paid his demand without hesitation which was 25 cents - even this would make a very little fortune in the course of the season if he was not ousted, as he should have been. We crossed over & crossed on the opposite side - two miles farther on we came to the Methodist mission, among the Iowa Indians. This was a fine farm on the border of the more level plains - Wheat looked well - their fireweed looked well - they had good stock - The buildings were

ordinary log houses. On leaving the Mission we struck out upon the more level plains, leaving the river bluffs entirely. ^{And} now they became level but gently undulating like the Ocean - And ^{here} ~~now~~ nothing was to be seen save the green earth & the blue sky, and human music that may be admired by the natives, traveling on the plains soon became most inhuman and monotonous. The grass was but just starting, it was so short and thin as to be of but little pastoral benefit to us yet.

We encamped about sun-down in a narrow meadow a pool of standing water - (We had no wood) - We cut weeds and stems of long dry grass and filling our shirt iron stove managed to boil the tea & ^{to} fry some meat. It was cold this afternoon - so I wore my overcoat with comfort. We estimated we had traveled 25 miles to-day.

May 4th

Struck our tents very early this morning and departed. We saw a great many prairie wolves this morning one of the company killed one. The weather was pleasant to-day. Stopped at noon on a small creek ^(12 miles) on the opposite side of which were three graves - last year's emigrants. Then we made a fire of willow sticks & cooked some dinner - feeding our horses out as there was no grazing of any importance. My Patient Jesus Lawyer is now some better - though far from well. The roads are generally good, but there are some wet places, or as they are called by western slows (sloughs) which were very bad, and some of the teams frequently struck, and thus caused considerable detention. We encamped this evening again down a slope 2 miles from the road on the bank of a small stream where we had plenty of good wood and water, and some grass for the stock.

On this evening our company organ and staid Post Hanger Captain, a conductor - this was thought would prevent detention on our way to Denver, when and how to make encampments - to stop the spreading and protesting of the horses &c. &c. Came 25 miles to-day.

May 4th. The wood on this stream was small scraggy oak none of it tall enough nor straight enough to make rails from. There was abundance of limestone rock here. The soil was evidently very rich. We encamped on the creek bottom which was full of *Gophers* hillocks - we saw several of these little animals - they are larger than a wharf rat, and of a gray color, and will evidently be a great pest if this country should ever become cultivated.

May 5th. Sunday - As there was no pasture here we deemed it expedient to proceed on our trail as far as we could while our horses feed remained. Traveled 12 miles before coming to water - this we found in a semi-stagnant pool away to the left. Here we halted and nooned. About 10 miles farther on we came to the Brimchaugh a beautiful clear blue stream of water, with plenty of small trees and bushes growing on its banks. We had to let the wagons down a very steep bank and crossing back to the water edge - this was done by making a large rope fast to the hind of the train, a dozen or fifteen men holding on to the rope and letting the wagon down, one span of horses only being attached. We drove the wagons around so as to form a corral or circle - then strong ropes were stretched from one wagon to the other; the horses being placed ^{inside} around the circle the tents and fires were placed on the outside - this was done in order to prevent a stampede of the horses; as this is sometimes occasioned either by Indians, buffalo, or some accidental and casual circumstance - even a wolf may sometimes communicate a panic to a whole herd of horses or cattle and thus render ^{them} even if we could nearly unfit for the further prosecution of the journey. Our company was then to be divided into three watches. The night was then divided into three watches, of 4 men each watch, so that 12 men were called out each night.

coming each one turn about every fourth night. All this extraordinary pains has oftentimes appeared to me so unnecessary and unnecessary that I have often laughed about it. - *Gophers* pains could not have been taken if we had been marching through the most hostile country. We omitted the danger and the tracking to be feared from the Indians. There was a dead horse on the banks of the Brimchaugh which makes the sixth one we have seen since we left the frontier. Traveled about 22 miles today - weather was pleasant. Country rather more undulating than previously - good wood and water here but no grass.

May 6th. Coming to my turn, was called at half past ten, on guard - found my boots wet - put them on, also a gun coat and fur gloves, and with rifle in hand put on and paced around the corral for three long hours. All this time it snowed and rained hard. I had no apprehension of any Indians just then, but I thought I would sooner be at home in bed!

May 7th. We traveled about 22 miles today over a rather broken country, but with water. In about 8 miles came to a clear stream, then another about 3 miles farther on, where we halted and nooned. From this we traveled about 12 miles farther and pitched our tents, as on the previous evening outside of the corral of wagons, or a small dead stream, probably Little Brimchaugh, where we had plenty of wood, but no grass or wood. Then Mr. Porter's horse of Rochester became very sick, & he subsequently lost him.

A company were encamped below us in the regular corral place, but broke up in the morning in confusion, each one departing as suited them. Already we have complaints about our own organization. We traveled with our coats and thick mittens on today.

May 8th. We traveled about 20 miles today, the evening being slippery - We crossed one very bad slough 3 or 4 miles east of Blue River - then several of our wagons stuck, and detained us sometime - Today we made but halt to

we reached the Big Blue River. This is a beautiful stream of clear blue water, with smooth gravel bottom - fishing good at this time. There were 2 last year's gonies on its banks, and on fresh on the first we have seen a boy having died of measles was here buried.

There were a great many teams and tents on the west side of the stream, so that it presented a lively scene almost resembling a village. We crossed over and passed up a deep ravine to the left of which we traveled about a mile when we encamped. There was an excellent spring and plenty of wood, and a very little pasture. I caught a very fine fish in the evening. ~~the stream~~

The Big Blue is probably about 6 rods wide. Perhaps there might be sufficient timber on this stream to sustain a small settlement for a few years.

The land is evidently rich. Limstone is abundant here.

We put on company with others going back today. They had become discouraged at the scarcity of grass. Scarcity of their supplies, and alarmed at the immense multitude of emigrants en route.

May 8th 35m. Made an early and sumptuous breakfast from our five fish, which was well flavored & excellent food. We then struck our tents and traveled 8 miles when the junction of the St. Joseph & Independence roads took place. And here I must confess I felt much like taking the back track. If we had been surprised at the vast crowds we had seen en route hitherto, what was our surprise on finding the numbers doubled when the roads joined. And then we knew there was probably an equal number going on to the plains from Council Bluffs. It did seem that when they all would all come together, that they would be like a swarm of locusts, ~~destroying~~ ^{stripping off} every tree & grass as they went along. The plains here were more bare than for the last two days. We could often times count more than a hundred wigwags at one time in view. As far ahead as we could see the road was thronged with long trains of wigwags, and as far back as vision could extend the same sight pre-

sented itself to the view. There were mostly horse teams. The great body of mule teams was ahead and the great body of ox teams was behind. We crossed several small ravines which afforded water. We hunted and grazed at noon on a slope when were some moderately good grass. After traveling about 25 miles we encamped to the right on a small creek when we could obtain some wood. But little grass. We feed our horses and now as we have done thus far out. Several Antelope were seen in the distance today - this is the first game we have seen, except wolves.

May 9th 25

After traveling 5 miles we came to a small stream called Rock Creek. This was timbered scantily. On the banks of this was a grove of a now aged 73 years an emigrant of last year - about two miles more brought us to another good stream, where we moved. We then traveled ten miles to Big Sandy where we pitched our tents in the usual form. Here there was wood, but little grass. This was near the junction of this stream and Little Blue. Saw a dead bittern ^(Pumpkin) today at the road side. Weather is warm and pleasant.

It was rumored at our tent this evening, that a few nights since a train had been attacked, and several horses stamped - on the strength of this idle rumor our Capt. ordered all of us to have our arms in order and at our sides in other words, "to sleep on our guns." All lights were extinguished, by order, at dark & the sentinels instructed with a pass word and alarm signals took their stations. We were now in the bar our country, and all that we had seen and heard of these prairie robbers came up fresh to memory. It would have required a strong band of brave warriors to have surrounded us that night - often we found our own fears, troubled us much more than the Indians. I think none were timidly, but rather foolishly vigilant.

May 10th 30

Departed early this morning and crossed a number of dry sandy hills, some

of which contained stagnant water. After a hard
drive of about thirty miles through a country destitute
of water, grass and also destitute of timber we
again came to the Little Blue. No grazing of any
value here - saw remains of 2 dead horses. Country
has generally level; soil now sandy than heretofore
but still rich. The forenoon was cold, the P.M. warm
and comfortable. The mirage was seen by us today for
the first time. It looked like a great sheet of
shimmering water in the distant horizon.

May 11th.
15

Traveled only 15 miles today and encamp-
ed on again on the Little Blue - no water fit for use
in that distance - crossed other dry sandy hills.
The plains look as brown and arid as any stubble
fields. No grazing here. Water froze in our buckets
last night. Weather is warm today. Just back of
our encampment a half mile is a gentleman, his wife
and two children, with two hired hands who are in
distress - night before last he had seven horses
stamped - he could not tell the cause
of their panic, but thought it might have been
wolves - they had but two left - but he had
been able to purchase some more and expected
to proceed next day. Those two that he had left
were only saved by being entangled in the corn and
linseed ropes and were held to the ground by the
men jumping on them and holding them down -
The others dashed through the corn, against the wires
and over the fence.

This afternoon some of our men had a foolish chase
after Antelope, supposing them to be elk - several
of them ran their horses almost down and all for
no avail - It looked kind of picturesque to see
them away in the distance the pursuers and the pursued
the dust flying from their hoofs, and over and over again
the smoke curling up from their rifles, but no shot, nor
report of rifle could be heard, so great was the distance.
It looked like a life-like painting. I did my
first washing at clothes this afternoon.

May 12th. We met today at our encampment. I crossed the
small river in company with several others in order to
pasture our horses in some prairie where there was
a little good grass. Many of us feel much distressed
and at the prospect of our journey our horses have
to be supported mostly altogether from the grain that
we have carried thus far which is almost exhausted.
Our own supplies are already seemingly dwindling
away rapidly. The most emigrants in greater or less
numbers going back daily.

Several Antelopes have been seen today but they are
very wild - great drove of large snipes are seen
running over the ground during snow - there are
also a number of ducks and geese - there is a
kind of lark here too that sings, but not like the
lark of the States - The plum trees are not in full bloom
on the margin of the stream are yet not in full bloom.
Here I saw the first and only beaver cuttings I have
ever seen - quite large willows and other shrubs have
been cut off quite smoothly, like the sapling had
been drawn over and cut up with a drawing
knife - Fresh signs of buffalo have been quite common
for a day or two.

May 13
20

Traveled up the Little Blue about 20 miles and en-
camped to the left of the road on the bank of the
stream. Weather was exceedingly warm today.
But grass cannot grow because the soil is destitute
of moisture.

Mr. Porter killed a large Buffalo bull today, and Mr.
Douglass a female Antelope, so that we had two
new dishes in camp for supper & breakfast - but
the meat was not very good as steaks, but made
excellent soup.

May 14
28

This morning Fred, Sumner and I
left the train to proceed by the road, while we
crossed the creek or river to hunt. We soon
saw great drove of Antelopes - but they seemed
shy and as we did not understand their nature
did not kill any - One flock numbered thirty -

These little animals are very beautiful and singular creatures - Aftertimes we would see two or three for for in the distance, coming to us like the wind - they would come directly towards us for till within 60 or 80 rods and then they would stop and examine us a few minutes and then away they would go and come up upon the other side of us as before & then they would soon disappear in the distance - they always seemed on the full lap, and when seen for away on the plains, they looked like a prairie hen on the wing - the hair spread out long upon either side of their hips long and white, which together with their upturned white tail makes them quite conspicuous. They seem possessed of an unusual amount of ingenuity - for no sooner do they discover any thing strange than they make towards it to ascertain what it is, by this means they are easily captured - let the hunter show a red hoodkinship from behind a clump of sage bushes or grasses he will hardly ever fail to entice the antelope close enough to shoot it.

The train proceeded about 10 miles when it left the Little Belu finally, then 5 miles more to a small stream, and then on to our place of encampment, where were some ponds of semi-stagnant water, a very few dry turgs but no grass - This day was exceedingly warm. The country presents the same general appearance undulating brown plains, for the grass did not yet make them green - the soil is good.

About 2 miles from our night's encampment we crossed the great Pawnee Trail leading from the Arkansas waters in the south to the Nebraska or Platt river - this trail consisted of 8 deeply beaten paths sufficiently wide for pack animals to walk abreast. It did not seem to have been much used since the dry season had set in - It is probably used most in the spring & fall. We were gone for on our hunting excursion about three hours, whilst

out we counted 80 antelope and seven wolves - The only thing I killed was a large yellow rattlesnake. Beautiful white hawks with dolphin shaped tails were common - The porcupine grass a species of cactus with a tall shaft upon which grows a flower was common although they were not in bloom.

A pair footman came along this evening with only a small pack of provisions on his back - he borrowed fire of us to make his coffee, he laid down upon the cold earth, not having neither a blanket nor overcoat to wrap around him - he seemed to be a man of good ordinary sense, and had made good progress in his journey - it is strange that any one would den undertake so long and tedious a journey as the one before him without any means whatever, but his own determined will.

May 15th.
20

Made an early start, and a forced drive of about 20 miles to the Platt river which we reached about 3 P.M. Several antelopes ran across the road this morning and foolish and inconsiderate parties were made by several horsemen - It also saw some large objects making for the bluffs far away to the right which I took to be buffalo - Before coming to the Platt bottom we passed over a succession of sloping sand and clay hills, destitute of vegetation - The bottom was about 5 miles wide from the bluffs to the river - this was almost destitute of grass - and many parts of it was covered with a white saline effluence which I now suppose to be the same as the alkali which we afterwards saw so much of.

When we first struck the river was opposite Grand island - the greater part of the river flowed on the other side of the river island. Then our men crossed the horses over on to the island where the grazing was tolerably good. On the island there was considerable timber and brush, but none on the main land, not even a willow. Here we had to make use of the Bois de watch, or as it was generally called Buffalo chips, for fuel to cook with - it burns very much like good rotten wood - It

a hot fire and a great deal of ash - this is the only objection to it - it is perfectly clean to handle, just as round as a rotten wood - this with the droppings of the animals which frequented the river during the winter and spring, & not the accumulation of several years & dried in the sun as some have stated, - for the hot fire applied to it consumes it - the latter kind of it so that the product of each winter & spring is annually turned up by the fire on the plains. But the droppings of summer is like that of domestic cattle and the fire passes over it without consuming it - therefore we had to use the new chips to cook with as there were really superior to the old sundried ones.

The scenery here as it presented itself to me for the first time seemed beautiful and worth a passing description. A great many groups of tents and wagons and hundreds and hundreds of domestic animals grazing as far as and down the river as we could see; a clear transparent atmosphere, a glorious sunset behind the ^{distinct} river bluffs, with the broad yellow Nebraska rolling down in a mixture of water and sand towards the Missouri, make a combination worthy of the painter's pencil.

Whilst driving across the flat bottom to the river the mirage showed most beautifully; a dozen men were walking a mile forward of us and they looked like giant plants 14 or 15 feet high - horses looked double their natural size - and there seemed to be rivers of water when there was no water. This was singular, but was a very common occurrence all the way up this river. This evening we made a comfortable meal of corn bread & butter, rice & molasses, and coffee & tea as usual.

We now anticipated better things for the future - we now expected to have good grass, and good roads - In the latter we were not disappointed.

We often times had music and singing in our encampments - To night our two field hands, Mulvaney & ——— played some of their best strains, and several of the boys feeling joyful had given a kind of dance music and dancing was kept up till ten o'clock - As I lay here in my tent and hear the merry music

and the chuffling of strong men feet over the turf I cannot help but feel a melancholy foreboding - These poor souls that are now dancing and merrily cannot know, nor do not think of what hardships await them on their long and tedious journey and in the plains of California and some of us are no doubt doomed never to reach California and others perhaps may never get home to their friends and families. Weather was warm and comfortable.

May 16th Traveled about ten miles up the river and came to Fort Kearney about noon. This fort is situated at the head of Grand Island on the south side of the river. The distance is generally reckoned at 300 miles from St Joseph and I believe has been so measured with a good barometer - I merely guessed the distance and it can be seen how nearly correct I have done it. Most of the buildings were constructed of thick prairie sods laid up like bricks - they smoke warm and dry but dark habitations. There were several frame houses in course of erection - there were no walls, palisades, or ramparts around the houses and I expected to see - so this did not really seem as much like a fort as a trading post - There were about 200 soldiers here and many other hands and retainers in the service of the fort. They had to draw all their lumber and building materials from the frontier, except only the timber which they procured from Grand Island. There was not the appearance of the first grain vegetable in their gardens. After looking around at the fort awhile we proceeded on and encamped about 8 miles above to the left of the road a half mile from the Nebraska or Platte river. Here we had good grass for the horses & this was now a very important consideration as all our grain, save about 2 bushels which we kept for attire & emergency, was fed out. We obtained good water by digging about three feet in the quick sand. A well bleached human skull was picked upon our camp ground, probably a Pawnee skull for it seemed wanting in most of the organs of that make the individual good, kind and great.

Wrote a letter this afternoon to my dear wife and starting from the encampment at dark arrived at the fort and got into camp again about midnight - A great many camp fires were seen as I tramped to the fort on the other side of the river, for the emigrant road from St. Joseph passed up the north side of the river - The camp fires seemed as numerous as they are on our own side of the river. I made a purchase of a few pounds of pickled pork at the fort at 38 cents per lb. as we were already getting short of meat.

already getting short of meat. As I have heretofore stated our company consisted of 14 wagons 6 of them were from Lutter be la and personally acquainted with some of our friends - Our Captain had selected a camping ground early and had the ~~requested~~ the teams to turn out. Those from Roseau who complied but those from Lutter drove on so our company ~~was~~ ^{was} perfectly divided, but ~~not~~ this circumstance was not disagreeable to us, for our train was far too large - three or four wagons with ~~similar~~ teams of equal capacities got along far better & pleasanter and ~~more~~ as safely as large unwieldy trains - These large trains were sure to have a great deal of trouble, a great many long delays, a great deal of fault finding and grumbling and could not travel as fast as a few wagons by themselves. So we formed new regulations and instead of having 4 men on guard constantly we had but two out at one time. At Fort Thormy a company of 8 wagons of French mountainer traders passed ^{us} loaded with robes and furs. We have seen no Comanches since we left Big Blue. Struck our tents and departed.

May 19th
28

left Big Blue. Struck our tents and departed about 8 A.M. Grass very poor all this days travel. We encamped on Plumb Creek. 28 miles from last nights encampment. Here we had good grass for the horses - but no wood - used Buffalo chips to cook & bake with. One of our company killed a Badger this afternoon and I roasted him for supper but I think his flesh was not as well flavored as that of a young pig - notwithstanding we eat it with good appetite.

The weather is warm today.
 Halted for noon today in the vicinity of an
 old train track - This was Redman south of Seattle or
 with 7 very heavy wagons loaded with buffalo
 and furs - This is an old French Canadian - he has
 trading in the mountains for 20 years - told me he has
 several times in his life not tasted bread for the
 space of two years, living principally on Buffalo meat.
 He was taking his route to St. Louis when he would
 get \$1.00 etc a piece for his furs - they cost him in the
 mountains from three to six York shillings.
 He had a mountain dog with him - he was a year
 old - he was exceedingly sulky and stubborn in his char-
 acter and was spotted like an ordinary dog. He was
 suspended to one of his wagon by the head and
 horns of a Black tail deer - the head of a mountain
 sheep, a pair of large Buffalo horns & a pair of
 enormous Elk horns, then he was coming to the city
 as curiosities. He gave me a great deal of information
 about various tribes of Indians and their character.
 He said there was no sickness in the mountains, only the
 fever, and that generally terminated fatally - He said he
 had often times fought the Indians from morning till night.
 He showed us several scars upon him - one upon his
 right cheek made by an arrow. He gave the Flat-head
 the best character for honesty. The miners showed very often

the best character for himself. The mirage should very often to-day and more distinctly than we had ever seen it. Several times we were certain ^{that} lakes of clear water lay directly ahead of us; and sometimes great giants of men, horses and wagons seemed to be wading through them. This appearance is produced by an unequal refraction in the lower strata of the atmosphere, and can be explained by the laws of Optics. We frequently travel up on the banks of the St. Lawrence or Lake St. Lawrence, which I think in one respect does not merit the description Washington Irving gives of it, when he says it is "the most beautiful but useless of rivers." The water is as yellow as sand and its waters are low.

impregnated with fine quick sand and yellow clay. On lifting a cup full of it stand ^{all it settles} one fourth of it is fine sediment. I should guess that the stream from Fort Kearney up to ^{the junction of R.R. & Platt} with average one and a half miles in width. This wide river can be forded in a great many places by footmen and horsemen safely but with great labor as the bed of the stream is a mass of rolling quick sand, and it is dangerous to halt long in it. It is unfit for any kind of navigation, not excepting ~~piqued~~ and canoe. The water flows swiftly too. There does not seem to be any fish in it - nor did we see but very few water fowls upon it. This river looks so much like sand that on first coming to it above Ft. Kearney one of my friends actually mistook it for a large plain of sand. The valley on either side is very beautiful and rich in soil - it sweeps up with a gentle curve to the abrupt and beautiful bluffs which are generally from 5 to 12 miles distant from the river. Nothing but absence of timber could prevent this from being a good farming country. The roads when we traveled were as good as any plank road could be; but when there is much rain they are evidently very bad and muddy as tracks of horse and wagons were very plainly visible on the road, when they had sunk in very deep. This description of the Platt ~~with~~ is applicable to it from Ft. Kearney to Ft. Laramie.

May 18th
30

Traveled about ten miles and made our noon halt. Grass poor - we then made a forced drive of 20 miles in order to find grass and then failed - encamped on a small slough about 2 miles from the river - used stagnant water for supper - Gave the horses a liberal feed of our precious oats, and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would admit. Elected J. P. Lu conductor for the evening with after a great deal of trouble and contention quarreling and fault finding. Our company now consists of three wagons, one having attached itself to us since the Sutton Co. left us. Many of the

horses in our train are getting very poor and unfit for the trip - many of them cannot hold out a great while longer; some of them now can with great difficulty keep along with the better teams. Our team is among the best.

May 19th
31

Sunday - After ten miles travel we encamped on a small creek where were a few cotton wood trees, a little grass for the horses - Here I baked some soda biscuit baked some hard biscuits and had rather extra dinner - I also did a little washing for the second time on the journey. This morning the river has been for one to two miles from the road, the swampy nature of the soil prevents the road from running near to it.

May 20th
15

Traveled 15 miles today. Crossed a creek about 5 miles from morning's encampment where was a spring of most excellent water - this indeed was a luxury to us, for we were now tired of the warm yellow water of the Platt. Late in the afternoon as we discovered ~~some~~ timber to the right we drove down to it and encamped on a half mile from the road. Here was some cotton wood and elm trees with a thick undergrowth on a low circular bottom into which we turned our horses, where the grass was moderately abundant, but difficult to get at. Here we found a well of good water.

May 21st
25

Made rather a late start this morning, because two of the animals had strayed away among the underbrush & could not be found ^{for some time}. For about 5 miles the bluff lay from for one to two miles to our left; these were assembled thus what the *Voyagers* call *battis* or we westerners call a knob - these were too lofty to be called hills and two low and detached to be called mountains. We then traveled about 20 miles from there to 6 miles from the river, the bluff to the left have disappeared and exceedingly undulating plains occupy their place. Here we saw considerable amount of cactus or prickly pear for the first time. The buffalo grass is also abundant or has been, for now it is almost all eaten off to the ground.

We are now in the Buffalo country. Great herds of these animals can now be seen away down to the right on the ~~river~~ ^{either} side of the river - they resemble flocks of eiders, ~~which~~ present a low black and undefined appearance, but occasionally shifting to and fro like the dark shadow of a cloud, so far off are they that they emit no noise. Reached at 2 o'clock P.M. at the first water from last night's encampment, on a small creek to the right on the river bottom. We then passed on 10 miles & encamped on a small clear stream where there was good water and grass. ~~Since~~ ^{Today} the road has been very rough from the buffalo trails running across the road. These are single furrows running close together so that the wagon is kept continually bouncing over them. The whole road to-day has presented the appearance of a well stocked cattle yard, covered with manure & trod up. All the flat ground where water will stand is filled with these wallows, which resemble large deep hog wallows. In these mud holes, these animals lie down and bask themselves with mud perhaps to keep off the gnats. At our noon halt was a company who had lost the greater part of their cattle during the night - they having been frightened away by a herd of buffalo making past - some of their party were out on the plains in search for their cattle, whilst others had been engaged in killing some meat - they had just killed a young bull which they did not need - they told us where it could be found; several others with myself started for it - I fortunately found it first and therefore had the first cut of ~~it~~ ^{him} from his horns he was called three years old, but I never remember of seeing an ox so large - he was as round and plump as a horse - ~~These animals have a long beard hanging down from their jaws two or three inches~~ ^{which with their necks but tufted tails sticking out straight behind and their heads thrown towards the ground} I therefore proceeded to dissect away his tongue which in the state I well knew would be considered a delicate morsel, & bring from four to six shillings

at St. Louis. After taking out the tongue I commenced on his haw & by the time I had obtained my load more than a dozen crows were intently engaged in ~~carving~~ ^{cutting} away on him.

One of the company killed a large hare and brought it into camp this evening; this flesh is very good. We had Buffalo soup for supper this evening - I need not say it was much relished by us all.

May 22nd. Our company was much alarmed last night by a herd of buffalo rushing by our encampment. Our horses were closely spancelled, but so great was their panic that they almost escaped from the guard. As the vast herd were coming up they sounded like distant rumbling thunder and grew louder and louder till they passed & were soon lost to the ear on passing out on to the undulating plain. This morning whilst engaged in harnessing the horses a herd of Buffalo were seen coming under full speed, apparently heading directly towards our encampment. All save the timorous rushed for their arms and those that had horses mounted them in order to intercept these formidable animals - as they drew closer they espied us and shrank very slightly to one side and crossed the creek above us - All the footmen ran up the creek & fired on them as they ran through it, from a hundred yards distance. As these huge creatures came booming along, their beards ~~which~~ ⁱⁿ pendant from their jaws 10 or 12 inches and almost swept ^{the} ground, their long necks but tufted tails sticking straight out behind, their great brazen necks and shoulders covered with long flowing hair or mane, with their large heads thrown towards the ground, ^{with their long tongues hanging out} eyes rolling and fiery, they looked like ~~they were~~ ^{most} formidable ~~enemies~~ ^{a most noble & formidable enemy}. As these noble and ~~large~~ ^{looking} ~~monsters~~ ^{monsters} came up, I felt a deep sympathy for them - it seemed like they were running the gamut, for numbers of horsemen and footmen stood ready ^{to give them a warm greeting} ~~for~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~monsters~~ ^{they} ~~they~~ ^{they} ~~into~~ ^{into} the creek and engaged on the other side - but they paid no manner of heed to them, neither

30
halting nor swerving from their bear line, nor even
accelerating their pace, they moved on like absolute
stolid mortals - Ten or a dozen shots were fired at
them as they plunged into the muddy stream, and one
or two of the old patriarchal bulls staggered and wavered
to and fro on moment but then passed on - then ten
or a dozen mounted men rushed into their midst &
each one singling out a fellow dived off and soon
very soon they were away off on the undulating plains
and were soon ^{lost} to our view - I thought too much of
my poor good mare to ride her at full speed in waiston
sport after these animals.

But a few minutes had elapsed after the tumult and excitement
produced by these pursued animals till one of our men
was brought into camp badly injured - This was Mr. J. S.
Long of Elkhead Co. La. Whilst closely pursuing a huge bull
he slipped from his horse and upon him the buffalo
fell to the ground - Mr. Long commenced reloading, but before
he had accomplished it, the buffalo rose and rushing
at him furiously thrust him to the ground, ran over
him and left him as in contempt. As the buffalo was coming
at Mr. Long felt for his pistol, but in the confusion he had
lost it - When he found his horse took fright and ran
away a few paces out of his reach. At the excitement of
the moment he jumped up and caught his horse and mounted
him and with assistance that he soon after met with he
rode into camp. He called in me for assistance - I
found the anterior superior spine of the ilium
fractured - in other words the upper part of the hip bone
broken off - the skin was ruptured about six inches
on the lower part of the abdomen, and his back and
shoulders were severely contused - He could not walk
nor get in nor out of the wagon unassisted for several
days - I stitched up the wound and bandaged the
fractured bone.

Two buffaloes were killed and the small quantity of their
flesh that was mended was brought into camp.

Another of our company whilst hotly pursuing a
buffalo missed a severe fall in which he injured

his knee, his horse fell on account of having leaped
into a ditch or hole.

Made a late start on account of the detention
already detailed - traveled about two miles when
the road fork the lower road going to the lower part
of the South Fork; we kept the upper road & after
traveling ten miles halted for noon opposite an
island which was covered with small timber; here was
but little grass.

We have for some time seemingly been falling behind
in the emigration - many of those now traveling having
left the St. Joseph from four to eight days later than
we did - We have traveled in too large a train, which
occasions a great many delays on other accounts -
Many of the teams are nearly given out; but our
own horses seem quite lively yet, although they are
getting thin - We have therefore two teams of us
separated from the other company and gone on, in
order to be delayed less, to travel more speedily -
One fault that our men found was that often-
times their horses would stand horsehead up and
hour before the other would be ready to start
This would not be the case if we traveled alone
We now see but few large trains, but a great
many wagons going alone or at most three four
or five together. We have but little apprehension
of "Indian" depredations now.

From the noon halt we traveled ten miles farther
and encamped to the right on good grass near
a creek; cooked with buffalo chips -

Yesterday we traveled through a limestone country,
but today there is none, but the road is sandy
and flat, but very much worn by buffalo trails
crossing it, so that it is fatiguing for the horses
to be drawing the wagon over an alternate succession
of ridges and hollows - the trails run in close
parallel tracks across the road down to the river
Buffalo wallows are also very numerous
(Weather warm and pleasant)

May 23rd. Traveled this day over smooth roads from two to three miles from the river - after a drive of 12 miles down to the ~~left~~ ^{right} to a drain ~~then~~ a half mile from road where there was good grass and some water - here we moved. We then drove 5 miles farther and watered the horses from a pool - then 8 more to where we encamped for night on the river bank opposite a small island where we found excellent grass for the animals; cooked with buffalo chips. Heard a solitary wild goose squaking this evening the first water fowl we have seen or heard since we left the Missouri river. Saw several large herds of Buffalo today.

May 24

p. 33

Struck our tents and departed very early and traveled for 8 miles up the river bank about a half mile from it, over most excellent roads - this brought us to the Paper Ford - then the river is about a half mile wide. The water was about belly deep to the horses, and flowed swiftly - the bottom is a kind of floating quicksand - We forded without any particular difficulty but it fatigued our horses very much - We were compelled to halt a short time in the middle of the current to rest the horses, and ~~then~~ then it was with the utmost difficulty the wagon could be started again, having sunk so much in the sand. On crossing the river we filled our keg with water and then made an ascent of a mile and a half, which was quite steep - this brought us on to a dry barren plain destitute of grass water or wood - The distance from the North Fork to the South Fork over this plain was 22 miles. We came to the river down through "Ash Hollow" celebrated for "Indian divotins" as the Pathfinder would say. On this plain were several carcasses of buffaloes with several large wolves prowling around them - the wolves look plump, fat, & impudent.

The descent from the plain into Ash Hollow was very steep and difficult - We had to unseat the lead horse from the tongue, and ~~then~~ ^{they} lashed long ropes to the hind axle to make the descent safely. I descended through a winding zigzag path through the rocks a kind of by path - then I descended a most beautiful species of moss. The leaves looked like bright silver velvet thickly interwoven with together, with a small crimson flower thickly scattered over it. The rocks seemed to be limestone and conglomerate pebbles. We found good water at the lower end of the hollow where we sloshed down our thirst and that of our weary animals. There were a few small scrubby ash trees here and some shrubs and vines growing in the crevices of the rocks - The ash trees were wonderfully smooth under the lower branches and on the under side of them where they leaned over - this was done by the buffaloes rubbing ~~them~~ against them - a man could readily leap into the branches of these trees - But here in this deep hollow it was quite pleasant & shady and the birds sang and chirped as we had not heard them for many long weary days - There was no grass here so we were compelled to pass on farther before camping - We accordingly passed up the ~~road~~ ^{river} three miles and encamped opposite the mouth of Beattie creek and near to a village of Sioux Indians consisting of lodges - then the river runs close to the bluffs which are high, rugged, perpendicular rock of many queer and fantastic shapes. I talked and conversed with the Sioux Indians a little while - they gave us the privilege of grazing ~~their~~ ^{our} horses there tacitly claiming it as their property - A French trader at the same time lived with them, complaining at the same time that the immigrants were going through their country killing and carrying away their game and eating up their grass without making any compensation for it - He seemed to complain for them bitterly as I suspect would gladly have excited them to plunder us if they would have attempted it.

The Indians seemed very friendly. Short dark haired the oldest one of the elder men of the village came to our camp and presented a recommendation to us from an officer at Fort Hiram, probably the Indian at the same time informed us if we had any thing to give him he would receive it thank fully - asking for sugar, flour, coffee.

We are now again in close view of the Council Bluffs road on the North side of the river - the plain is dotted here and there, in thick clusters as far up and down the river as we can see, with incampments and great herds of stock are grazing around them. One large train of about 50 wagons is encamped in a small island they seem generally to be incamped in that manner as if apprehension of Indian aggression - they seem to travel in much larger trains than we do on the south side of the river. The North Fork is perhaps twice as wide as the south fork but it is a river of the same character, both of water, bottom and shore. We saw the river water here, and gathered up fragments of wood that had been left by other emigrants - as no wood grows here.

May 31st.

Mon. 16

Struck our tents and departed early - In a short time we were opposite the famed "Castle Rock" There are very steep rugged cliffs of jagged rocks. I could not see that they much resembled any pictures of the castles that I have ever seen but they are exceedingly good landmarks in a country so destitute of them as this, and they were picturesque and fanciful, if not beautiful. Ten miles from the last night's encampment we passed through a second Sioux village consisting of 30 lodges made of the buffalo skins dressed without the hair. Here one of our company traded a good broken down horse with a much better taking in exchange an American animal which had been obtained from the last years emigrant. This animal proved amiable. We drove on beyond this village a short distance &

halted to graze our horses - here was plenty of the short curled buffalo grass, which is the best grass there is on the plains. Three miles ahead of us could have seen another still larger village, and even and around we could see mounted men coming ~~at~~ at half speed (a brisk gallop) towards us, and this speed was kept up all the way from one village to the other - sometimes there would be two men or short boys on one horse and still the same gait was required of the horse. Many of these Bidons of the plains, would come loping down to us. Some proposed trading horses, others merely looked at us in silent silence. Some would ride up and sit upon their horses just a moment then would dart off at full speed with a loud whoop. One old stout looking fellow came up with a very large roll of dried buffalo flesh tied on behind him - this resembled a great roll of salami - it had been carefully dissected away from the animal in long wide strips and dried in the sun - It was hard and insipid for it contained no salt - this they found fine between stones and make soup of.

On arriving at the other village we ascertained that it consisted of about one hundred large lodges thickly spaced around on either side of the road. The natives are exceedingly friendly their women coming with masses to trade for sugar, coffee, flour of which they are exceedingly fond. One莽莽 looking fellow met us a half mile out of the village and begged of us for crockery sugar. He seemed ashamed of his profession & therefore had gone out of the village - the children thronged around us begging crockery - but none of the men or women asked us for any thing - most of the men were out on the plains hunting - But those that we saw were exceedingly fine looking fellows - they sat upon good horses like great bronze statues with no covering upon them but their "brush cloth" and all they rode their horses without saddle, or bridle or any

trapping during the twisted rawhide lariat which is always supposed to trail upon the ground. They sit upon their horses like a part of the animal erect and firm, graceful and at ease. The men are large with stalwart frames and heavy well formed limbs. The women are well dressed and many of them were good looking and not far from fair, with a natural bloom on their cheeks, indication of health and ease. Their features were regular and their faces generally set in on the chubby order like the Chinese females are said to be. The younger children were noticed - they looked gay & healthy and were exceedingly well formed. The children were very numerous. These Indians have vast herds of horses, quite a goodly number of American horses and mules. They were said to be preparing to make war upon the Pawnees who are universally hated by ^{the} other Indians of the plains. Their universal salutation to us was. "Me good too, no bad Pawnee."

I was very favorably impressed by these sons and daughters of the plains, and thought of them that

"Many a flower is doomed to blush unseen
And spend its shortness upon the desert air."

With their strong and well proportioned physical constitution, their regular and comely countenances, and black piercing eyes I know their must be latent talent & genius, perhaps equal to any the world ever produced. I have said their women were well dressed.

Their dresses or robes were snowy white often times; they were made of the Antelope skins, and is as soft as velvet - it makes beautiful gloves. These Indians had large quantities of buffalo robes and they traded them away on very good terms.

After going three miles farther we were compelled to encamp on account of an exceedingly bad wind. The wind blew a regular strong steady gale. Our waggon was almost overturned by it and two of the men had to walk beside of it to keep it from going onto "beam ends" as the sailors would say. So strong was the wind that sometimes the horses could

hardly proceed. In the midst of this gale we halted ~~and attempted to~~ spavined our horse and pitched our tents. It required the five of us to do it & then we fastened it by means of a rope to the wagon wheel to keep it from blowing down. Towards dusk the wind lulled and I cooked supper with Boisi. Our horse had good grass here. The upper Platte is rather noted for its severe storms of wind but this was all the one we encountered.

One of our company seemed very much panic-stricken this evening on account of our dangerous situation, as he supposed a large Indian village three miles in our rear, another monstrous great one around about the same distance in our advance, ~~and that~~ ^{of which} the lodges ^{of which} seemed to cover all one side of a large slope, while there seemed to large herds of horses shifting to and fro; but all this proved to be a mist for the supposed lodge & herds of horses, proved to be nothing more or less than dwarf cedar forests, so that our friends fears were in great part unfounded. Saw and tasted some alkali water, today for the first time. It tasted like moderately strong wood ashes. Saw the alkali earth in several places which tastes & looks like strong unleached ashes.

May 30 Sunday - Traveled about 5 miles and encamped on the bank of the Platte, where we cooked washed &c. I also went into the river to bathe - whilst standing on the bottom I felt myself slowly, gradually, but steadily sinking in the quick sand, so that every minute or two I was compelled to draw my feet up to the surface of the sand otherwise I would evidently soon have become high locked in the quick sand. The water of the river seems to be getting colder & some clearer.

We met a company of three or four Mormons returning from the Great Salt Lake valley. I think they told me they left Salt Lake City in the end of April, but had been detained in the mountains 8 days in the deep snow that fell. One of the company started to obtain wood

36
Old friends - a clear stream of water. deception appearance &
from the cedar forest which had crested each
a picnic in one of our number but after travel-
ing 2 miles and the forest ascending further
off than where he started he returned without
us. & we washed & cooked with Bois de cèdre.
On this morning we came up with our old friends.
May 27th. Made an early start this morning, traveling
on 30. most of the day within a mile or two of the
river. In about 8 miles crossed a most beauti-
ful clear creek, about 2 rods wide, with a pebbly
bottom - this was a most refreshing sight
to us who had used the yellow flat water
so long, & our horses seemed to take in long
deep draughts of it. Came about 7 miles further
and turned out on a fine grassy plain for
miles - we are now traveling in company
with the Hultone train who had preceded
us at Fort Kearney - we traveled fast to-
day as the roads were good & the weather
cool - so cold that we wore our overcoats.
We are now apparently in sight of that celebrated
land mark known as the Court House -
Here I diverged from the road to visit the
court house, it seemed distant about 3 miles.
But on traveling 6 miles it still seemed
distant 2 miles, and on traveling 2 long miles
we thought we should certainly make it in
one mile - the country looked level, but
was very much broken by slopes and
deep gullies & ravines - as we drew near
the object of our visit grew much larger &
finally where we thought we should make
it in a half mile it was two good long miles
before we attained it - & several small
objects standing at its base on coming near
proved to be houses & now that we had
reached it we judged we had traveled
12 miles to it; instead of 3 as we at first supposed.
On a direct line the Court House is about 5 miles

37
Court House Rock. Beautiful Prospect
from the road: This was not the first time
far from the last time we were deceived with
regard to distance among the mountains -
It seemed perfectly impossible to judge any
thing like correctly about the distance to an
object. We crossed another beautiful wide
creek on the bank of which were the old exten-
sive circles of several Indian lodges & the
small remains of scanty wood.
The Court House upon a close view, is a stupen-
dous ~~and~~ stone rock, which we judged to be
300 feet high - We ascended it with some diffi-
culty & no little danger to limb & life - one place
the ascent was about 20 feet, perpendicular or nearly
so, we effected the ascent by means of wooden
foot & hand holes cut in the soft rock by means
of knives. On reaching the summit the wind blew
hard and chilly. The top of it is from 6 to 20 feet
wide only, and on the south side it was a perpen-
dicular precipice of 300 feet - I involuntarily shudder
as I looked over this dizzy height. The prospect was
here indeed beautiful & picturesque, a large boundless
slope or level plain, stretched away to the south
to the west across a succession of ~~hills~~ ^{spurs} ~~corners~~ ^{and}
all sorts of fantastic hills, among others in the
distance looked up the fine famed Chimney rock
~~seem~~ like a huge shot tower, distant 20 miles.
On the other side could be seen the winding trail
of the emigrants' road dotted here & there by
groups of ~~these~~ small white objects which we
knew to be wigwags. Near the Court House but
perfectly detached from it, stands a huge perpen-
dicular square column inaccessible, but not quite
so lofty as the Court House - this is called the
jail, from the fact that the jail is generally close
to the ~~great~~ court house - These rocks as well as the
Chimney rock and all the hills in this part of the country
are composed of sandstone mixed with marble & con-
limestone - It is easily cut with a knife and an acce-

Pinckley Point Wild Onion Chimney Rock.

ingly found the Court house rock inscribed with numerous names - so thick that all the eligible locations for names were already occupied - I accordingly went away without carving my name on this monumental rock - These rocks are easily affected by the weather hence their fanciful shapes. On coming to the camp it was near sun set - our team had traveled 30 miles on the road & we had made several more miles.

Pinckley Point has become very common. One very singular & beautiful variety presented itself today - It is of a pyramidal shape and much larger than a goose egg - We encamped a mile from the road to the right and about a mile from the river - Good grass here & good water from one of the usual shallow wells. One of the company brought in a large bundle of wild onions which we ate for supper & breakfast with a good degree of relish. We saw much alkalie earth today.

One of the teams of the Fulton team gave out this afternoon.

May 28 came up late in the evening -
m. 23

In company with others I started early this morning to visit Chimney Rock. It looked from the ~~camp~~ as if it were only about a mile distant but we thought it was about 8 miles distant from our encampment and 3 miles distant on a direct line from the road. The base of this rock is a large rugged roof like a steep hill of sand and mud rocks on this rise the chimney proper a huge perpendicular column at least 100 feet above the roof, which was as high as we could ascend - part of this ascent was made with difficulty being as steep as a house roof if one had got a start from it he could not have stopped till he would have rolled head long to the bottom - from the ground to the top of the chimney is about 200 feet as we judged, and as I have calculated it. The chimney has a large crevice running down through the middle, which will eventually cause it to

Scotts Bluffs

Rubidaria Stet

split asunder and tumble down - masses of it were laying around had tumbled down from the top - as on the Court House, many pieces of name carving, had been before us, and all the eligible locations, so that I did not put my name on this rock. A deep ravine runs at the base of this rock in which is a spring of good cold water. Scotts bluffs were visible from this place distant about 20 miles.

The view from Chimney rock was beautiful indeed. The large broad winding river lay in front of Chimney rock, with the Empress road running parallel to it. Scotts Bluffs with their adjacent fantastic hills lay in the distance covered with black dwarf cedar. I can say with truth that this is a most singular, a most beautiful and the most useless of countries. Learn about fifteen miles from Chimney rock & encamped to the right on the river about 4 miles from Little Bluffs -

Scotts Bluffs present a very regular and architectural appearance - the main one to the right looks like an immense castle in ruins - It was quite cold this morning but became warm & pleasant towards noon -

May 29th.

m. 25 - On traveling about 4 miles came opposite Scotts Bluffs - here the road leaves the river for about 30 miles on account of the Bluffs walling in the river in the canon. Eight miles from the first principle bluffs we came to Rubidaria station - the old french trader whom we met this side of Kearney station his way to St. Louis to sell his robes & furs. There was a most excellent spring on a river - There were two Canadian blacksmiths at work at their trade, who seemed to be making money fast. There were also a few Sioux Indians

Direct view of the Rocky Mountains - Laramie River
 here who had some excellent & finely decorated robes for sale -

Here there lay a poor emigrant sick, who died on the following day - This man on stooping over his load, a pistol fell from a breast pocket, which discharged & carried away a part of his under jaw - subsequently erysipelas set in and destroyed his life - he was a prospector and had his wife & children along, who pursued their journey on to California -

A half mile from Puebloan station we reached the summit of the Bluffs, then we beheld the first sight of the Rocky Mountains - this was ~~Laramie Peak~~ the Medicine Bow range, the most conspicuous among these mountains was Laramie Peak, distant 150 miles, it looked up like a large blue thunder cloud just emerging from the horizon - in the river were the Black Hills looking black and savage enough - On passing over the summit of the Bluffs we turned out to graze - 3 miles farther we came to another good spring - Nine miles farther we crossed Horse creek, a wide clear beautiful creek - but affording no grass, so we filled our bag for cooking purposes and passed on a mile & turned out on good bunch grass for night - We laid in a good supply of cedar wood at Scotts Bluffs

May 30. Made a start a few minutes after sunrise -
 on 30. The roads today were hilly and sandy - grass poor - touched the river in about 15 miles travel - at about 6 P.M. came very unexpectedly to the Laramie river, having traveled thirty miles to-day - found the river considerably swelled and on the rise - the water was cold and pleasant to drink - the current was rapid - To protect our stores from injury we propped up the wagon bed and forded safely & without damage & encamped on the opposite side

Fort Laramie Council Bluffs emigrants

within less than a half mile from Fort Laramie. Near the emigrant road from Council Bluffs forms a junction with the St. Joseph & Independence road. A great concourse of men, cattle & wagons were on the opposite side of the river, waiting their regular turn to be ferried over - the Fort authorities had a ferry established here & ferried wagons over for one dollar a piece, which was very cheap & was a great accommodation to the emigrants. There seemed to be a thousand head of stock feeding on the other side of the river and two or three hundred wagons. The emigration from Council Bluffs had generally got along much better than those on the Southern route - The grass had been good most of the way, and their cattle looked well - As there was no grass when we encamped, we fed our horse a little of our grain which had been laid aside for our horse of need - now we thought that hour had arrived!

May 31st.

Visited Fort Laramie this morning - The main fort is a large square structure about 15 feet high made of mud, after the Spanish style of building - It was surrounded with a wooden palisade - Within this were the soldiers quarters - Several new frame buildings were under course of erection - The place resembled more nearly a trading post than a military fortification - as in fact it originally was - being under the control of the American Co. for company - There were several trading establishments here at this time - We bought some smoked side meat here at 30cts per lb. & some sugar at 50 cts per lb. Here we also got one of the skins to our wagon repaired. I obtained the following statistics from the office where the emigrants were requested to record their names - There had passed there up to the 31st of May en route for California and Oregon as follows - viz.
 8352 men, 68 women, 59 children, 2266 wagons, 8087 horses

Statistics General observations.

2744 mules, 1544 oxen, 91 cows. I was told that there ought to be an addition of one sixth to this amount as it was supposed there was that number who passed without mending their mares. I think there was a much larger number than this passed without mending their mares and I had a better opportunity of knowing than the residents at the fort, as I conversed more with the emigrants on the subject. I think one fourth did not record - but estimate it at one sixth and we have 9710 men passing up to this time; and then suppose this was the first fourth of the emigration and that three fourths were yet back & we have 38840 men crossing the plains in one season & this estimate I think is moderate.

The number of women & children is very small thus far because the most of them are farther back in the emigration as they generally traveled with the oxtrains. Generally the mule trains are ahead then come the horse trains & finally thirdly the oxtrains, of course with many horses & some mules scattered along coming there.

All the supplies are brought to Fort Laramie from Ft. Laramie distant about 700 miles. Much of the building ~~material~~ material is brought from there as siding flooring &c. The wood used at the fort is the drift wood brought down the Laramie during high water, as flood wood - a large quantity of it was piled up to be used as fuel, as this is about all any of it is good for.

The soldiers ~~and~~ residents here, are said to suffer greatly from scurvy, and even at this time they had no garden vegetables, so late was the season at this place.

A great many large elk horns, and mountain sheep horns were set up against one end of the fort. Among other curiosities ~~was~~ was a beautiful snow white mule - which the owner of which offered

The Mountains in contrast with the plains. -
ten dollars to any one who would back him.

We left the fort about noon, drove out 5 miles to the first pasture on the river bottom, where we turned out for the day. Here the river bottom is narrow, and the bluffs steep. As it was early, in company with a friend I went out and climbed up the bluffs where we had a good view of the country. Near by the country is gently undulating, but not barren, only a thin carpet of grass covers the ground, here & there some scrubby cedar trees come through as scattered oaks in the country. The Medicine Bow Range of mountains extends a far away to the south west as the eye can command. Near by Laramie Peak looms up grand and magnificent, its top covered with snow, and ^{still} ^{remains} by the ^{dark} ^{grim} looking Black Hills intervene and seem to spread out up to the base of the mountains. In the direction the broad yellow Platte is seen winding & rushing along ^{now} ^{more} like a mountain stream than the broad, placid, sluggish river of the plains as we have hitherto seen it. Beyond it rises a succession of grim monotonous black hills - such is the general appearance of the country, rather picturesque and romantic, but at the same time rather stern and uninviting in a practical point of view. But there is something inviting and refreshing here to me, for here are mountains, and hills, and trees (though they be scrubby) to look upon, and divert the mind and attract attention. There is not that unrelenting and tiresome sameness of the plains, where we could see nothing but earth & sky - not a tree a shrub or flower to relieve the tedious and attract attention. These sterile, monotonous, unvaried plains, how many a joyless, gloomy and lonesome hour I have passed on them! Oh! I was glad we were approaching ^{the mountains} ^{they} even so rugged, they cannot wear away the patience & fatigue ^{of the mind} like the plains.

46
Leaving Fort Laramie. Packing - Kit Carson
When we left the Fort on Halton Co. friends remained there, not intending to leave till some time on the following day. We did not think proper to wait for them. I left Fort Laramie with regret, not for any thing it contained, but because it was the last link that bound us to our native land. Hereafter or now, if difficulty, accident, or disease, occurred, we had the friendly aid of the authorities of the Fort to rely upon. Even grievances or wrongs between one another could be here adjusted, as the strong arm of the law, even here, protected the injured and oppressed; but after leaving here, we were without the pail of protection; and this reminds me of an incident that occurred at the road today opposite our encampment. Three soldiers came riding up to an old man who was driving a three horse team, and according said, "See here old man, you must go back with us to the Fort" For some time the old man said not a word, but at length replied hesitatingly reluctantly; "well I suppose I can" accordingly he turned around his team & drove back. This old man had quarreled with, & mistreated a man who was traveling with, who had applied to the said commandant for redress. The commandant of the Fort did something as a Spanish Healer - settling difficulties amicably if possible, if not, he settles them equitably, but if the offences are very gross, he sends the accused back to the States for trial.

Many of the emigrants left their wagons and harness at Fort Laramie and "piled through" There in some instances were sold for little or nothing, or abandoned. When we are now encamped, not far distant, is a large concourse of wagons which have been left, together with many cooking utensils, trunks, camp stores, and various kinds of heavy articles. There is an around the lodge of the celebrated Kit Carson who is here with a large number of Spanish mules to sell to the emigrants. I saw Kit, but did not know who it was at the time.

47
Black Hills - Bitter Creek - Blower Agency
He was commendably engaged in playing cards in his own lodge when I saw him. He is said to be a famous gambler as well as hunter and mountaineer. The horses of the emigrants now generally look thin, but they seem healthy and in good life generally. I have noticed no dead animal since we left the river. Since we entered the Laramie river we have seen the first sign of it.
June 18th. Early in the morning we struck our tents and departed - about 2 miles brought us to a very steep & difficult hill to descend, but by applying the rope to the hind axle tree and using both locks we made the steep rocky descent in safety. About 5 miles farther brought us to the division in the road, the left going through the Black Hills, leaving the river for 80 miles, the other winding up the river & touching it occasionally we kept the latter. Twelve miles farther brought us to Bitter creek, destitute of water, but we found some good springs about 100 yards below in the bed of the creek - one mile farther came to another small creek with good water. 3 miles farther brought us to Dead Timber creek destitute of water. 3 miles more we encamped down the bed of the stream on good grass, making today about 25 miles. Our encampment is in sight of the river 2 miles distant. We have traveled our rough hilly roads today in plain view of the mountains and parallel to the Medicine bow chain. We are now traveling among or rather upon the skirts of the Black Hills - these hills derive their name from their black appearance, which is produced by the stretched cedar forests - the dark foliage of these trees at a distance giving a dark and gloomy appearance to the country. The country seems rather more fertile today than usual, but the prickly pear and the wild rose or Artemisia are very abundant. The air is peculiarly bracing and invigorating here, especially in the mornings. There was some wind & rain this afternoon as well as yesterday afternoon, accompanied with thunder. There is a species of very minute black gnats, common.