

Wm Vanbuskirk, a Veteran of the war of 1812, well to do farmer and resident of Morrow County, Ohio, residing near Pulaskivill in 1851, planned to leave his home in Ohio and make the trip to Oregon over the Overland route, being inspired by the hope of a better Country for himself and children.

The Company comprised himself and wife and his entire family of sons and daughters and their families making a total of 23, being the Vanbuskirks and their husbands and wives and children, as follows:

Wm Vanbuskirk and Mary J Vanbuskirk, his wife.

John Vanbuskirk and Sarah S Vanbuskirk, his wife and 3 children.

Joseph T Vanbuskirk and Sarah P Vanbuskirk, his wife and 3 children.

Andrew Vanbuskirk, Single.

Elizabeth Vanbuskirk Henderson, her husband, T.B. Henderson, 1 child.

Daniel Vanbuskirk, Single.

Sarah Vanbuskirk Whisler, her husband, and 4 children.

In the fall of 1851 they left Pulaskivill, Morrow County, Ohio, for Oregon with their entire family then living as listed above, date of same being October 2 1851, their route was Via Columbus Ohio reaching there October 5th 1851, Indianapolis Indiana October 13th, Springfield Oct 22 Crossed the Mississippi river at Hannibal Missouri October 27th and landed at the Vanbuskirk settlement near Savannah Missouri November 7th, stayed here through the winter of 1851 and 1852.

On April 29th 1852 they crossed the Missouri river at Elizabeth town and started for Oregon, being 23 of the Vanbuskirk family and 3 hired help or 26 all told. They reached Fort Kearney May 24th where the sign board pointed the way to Oregon 2000 miles, the road from there being well defined from 50 to 150 feet wide and 5 to 10 feet deep. At this point the road forked, the Santa Fe or trade, leading south.

The ups and downs and trials of this little <sup>company</sup> are indicated in the diary of Andrew Vanbuskirk which we herewith record, there being eight of their number that died on the way, or almost one third of all, many of the remainder despaired of ever reaching their destination and communicated their fears to the friends they had left behind, who also gave them up as destined to perish as the following letter would seem to indicate.

" Pulaskivill Ohio, January 17th 1853, Dear Friends with pleasure I will write to you at this time and it is a pleasure that we had long since given up the thought of ever being ours again" I have had to read your letter to four men today who had made the trip to our place to hear from you, being your old Neighbors and friends!"

#### Diary of Andrew Vanbuskirk

April 29th 1852, Crossed the Missouri river at Elizabethtown, and started for Oregon and travelled on about 100 miles and the Company was in perfect confusion and quarreling. On the night of May 15th we stayed on Wolf Creek, and I found a Bee Tree and saw a great many Indians, we travelled 15 miles and camped an Indian had been shot the day before and we expected danger. 15th Travelled 15 miles, crossed the little Sandy, the road was crowded with wagons. 16th Travelled 5 miles and E.F. Whislers team took a stampede but no particular damage done. 17th Travelled 10 miles and our teams all took a stampede except Josephs and Fathers, Whislers team was behind and mine next, Whislers team scared mine it run but nobody seriously hurt, our teams stampeded twice on the same day. 18th remained in camp and washed, repaired our Yokes and picketed our cattle. 19th Drove a mile and a half and came to Little Blue and then drove up it 4 miles and camped. 20th Travelled up the Blue about 15 miles and camped, saw where a man had been shot. 21st Drove 12 miles up Blue and camped. 22nd Drove 15 miles and camped in the bluffs of Platte river.



23rd Went up Platte 15 miles and camped in sight of Fort Kearney. 24th Passed Fort Kearney and travelled up Platte 10 miles and camped. The Platte is a beautiful river, it looks something like the Mississippi, but not much depth of water, but little timber on the South side. 25th Travelled 12 miles up Platte River. I have been unwell for two or three days, now on the mend. 26th Drove 18 miles and camped found wood plenty but green. 28th Drove 20 miles. Whisler, Snyder and myself went out on a hunting expedition, we saw game plenty, but I was so sick that when I would get off of my horse to shoot I could not hold the gun to my face, that spoiled hunting for sometime. 27th Travelled 16 miles and camped, I still remain unwell with dysentery. 29th Drove 15 miles and camped. 30th Travelled 8 miles and crossed a small branch of the Platte and then drove 8 miles and camped. 31st Travelled 20 miles crossed the Bluffs without water or grass. June 1st Drove 15 miles and camped had a very hard days drive. 2nd Drove 15 miles and ascended and descended the bluffs of Platte, the road was all sand. 3rd Travelled 14 miles, ~~pr~~ principally all sand. 4th Drove 18 miles through a considerable of sand. Snyder was taken with Cholera or a similar disease. 5th Remained in camp on account of Snyder being sick. 6th Drove 18 miles and camped opposite the Chimney Rock, it is said to be 600 feet high, it is a singular appearance of rock. My Journal is said to be one day behind the times. Drove 16 miles, Sarah Whisler sick.

7th Drove 18 miles and camped opposite the Chimney rock, it makes a very beautiful appearance. 8th Drove 12 miles, stopped at noon, Snyder died, we buried him 12 miles West of the Chimney Rock. 9th Drove 10 miles and passed through Scotts Bluff, they were a very romantic sight. 10th Drove 20 miles. 11th Drove 20 miles, John was sick with the dysentery 12th Fort Laramie; remained in camp preparing for getting wagon tire set. 13th Remained in camp, Wm Whisler being sick. 14th Drove 13 miles crossed Laramie Fork at Laramie, camped without any grass. 15th Drove 8 miles in the Black Hills and camped. 16th Remained in camp until noon and then travelled 5 miles. 17th Drove 20 miles and camped on the Platte. 18th Drove 22 miles and camped on the Lahonde River a beautiful stream it was. 19th Drove 20 miles, 5 of which was Red Hills, the ground in the road was red as ever paint was. 20th Drove 10 miles crossed a little stream and camped on another small stream. 21st Drove 18 miles, crossed Deer Creek and camped. 22nd Drove 18 miles and camped at the Ferry of North Platte. 23rd Crossed the Platte and drove one mile and camped. 24th Drove 22 miles and camped. 25th Drove 21 miles and camped passed the Willow Spring, we now find the Alkali plenty. 26th Drove 17 miles and passed Independence Rock and the Devils Gate crossed the Sweet Water. Independence Rock is just a single rock, as small mountain, standing separate and apart from any other rock or mountain, it is situated between the road and the river. 27th Drove 20 miles up Sweet Water. 28th Drove 19 miles through sand. 29th Drove 17 miles and crossed the Sweet Water. 30th Left the Sweet Water about noon drove 17 miles high hills and rocky for 5 miles, camped on Strawberry Creek, crossed the Sweet Water 4 times. July 1st Drove 16 miles crossed the Sweet Water again, found plenty of snow. 2nd Remained in camp to recruit our cattle, we had ice in the buckets last night. 3rd Took the South Pass on the summit of the Rocky Mountains, drove 22 miles and camped, crossed Dry Sandy and camped on Little Sandy, took Subletes cut-off. 4th Crossed Little Sandy and drove 8 miles, our cattles feet are getting well worn. 5th Remained in camp, drove the cattle 5 miles to grass, poor at that, prepared for crossing desert on Sublets Cutoff, Margaret Ann sick and Joshua Hardy sick. 6th Crossed Big Sandy and started on the Desert, drove 6 miles and camped, rained at night. 7th Drove 28 miles by driving until 10 oclock at night. 8th Drove 17 miles, ferr-



ied Green River and camped on Blacks Fork, the cattle had no water from the time crossed Sandy until we got to Green River, being 46 miles, 60 hours without water. 9th Remained in camp to recruit our cattle and the boys to cut their wagon beds off. 10th Remained in camp on Blacks Fork, bought a steer for Father for \$50.00 11th Remained in camp. 12th crossed Blacks Fork and drove 20 miles over the mountains and camped in a deep ravine. 13th Drove 18 miles and crossed Fergusons Fork of Green River and ascended a very high mountain and the soil rich. 14th Drove 16 miles over very steep mountains and camped on muddy fork of Bear River near the mouth. 15th Remained in camp. 16th Drove 16 miles, crossed two forks of Bear River, one was Thomas Fork. 17th Drove 19 miles and camped on Falls Creek of Bear River, found the grave of R.F. McCracken from Chester Township Ohio, and we repaired his grave according to the wishes of his Father and we camped within 40 rods of E.F. Whisler and his horses strayed from him. 18th Drove 5 miles, I staid behind with Whisler to search for his horses, it being that he had gave them up, I was lucky in the pursuit, found the horses and brought them in to camp by the middle of the afternoon, I then went to our camp and Whisler bore my company until I saw our wagons  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off to the right of the road, I turned to the right and he pursued his course. 19th Drove 22 miles and camped near the Soda Springs. 20th Drove 20 miles, passed the Soda and Steam boat Springs and left the California road, took the Oregon road to the right. 21st Remained in camp till afternoon, Araminda very sick and our were all sick and vomiting, I suppose they had got some poisonous herb or water, hitched up and drove 6 miles and camped on Fort Neuff Creek. 22nd Cattle yet sick, remained in camp all day and crenched our cattle. 23rd Drove 13 miles and camped near a big spring, coming out of the mountain nearly on top of the mountain. 24th Drove 15 miles and camped on a small stream. 25th Drove 18 miles and camped near Fort Hall. 26th Passed Fort Hall, drove 17 miles and crossed a branch of Snake River. Weeks left the train. 27th Drove 20 miles and came to then American Falls of the Snake River. 28th Drove 18 miles, crossed 3 bad streams. 29th Remained in camp until noon and then drove 9 miles and camped on Raft River and it was one of the dustiest times I most ever saw. 30th Drove 15 mile and camped on Marsh Creek and Hoppin left the train. 31st Drove 15 miles and camped on Goose Creek. August 1st Drove 7 miles by noon and camped on Snake River again. 2nd Drove 17 miles and camped on a little run with water in pools. 3rd Drove 15 miles and camped on Rock Creek and set my wagon tire. 4th Drove 11 miles and camped. 5th Drove 18 miles and camped without grass. 6th Travelled 5 miles and camped on the river again, Whisler drove up his cattle in the morning independent of all and left the Company without ceremony but we camped within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of him on the first night and John went to his camp in the evening to know what he meant by leaving in the way he did and he said that he expected we would drive on and camp where he did that night and John said that we did not know what his calculations were but expected he was going on to leave us, and he said he did intend to go right on. 7th We remained in camp on account of Mary and Joseph Vanbuskirk being sick and Whisler drove past while we were eating breakfast, near Salmon Falls. 8th Drove 13 miles and camped without water. 9th Drove to the river in the morning and drove 17 miles and was then across the desert and at the upper crossing of the Snake River to go to Fort Boise. 10th Remained in camp till noon and J Hardy left us, we then drove 5 miles to the old crossing of Snake River to go to Fort Boise and camped. 11th Remained in camp, J.T. and Mary Vanbuskirk very sick yet. 13th Remained in camp. 14th Remained in camp. In the morning about 4 oclock, Joseph T. Vanbuskirk departed this life, we buried him on the same day, near camp, near the lower crossing of Lewis or Snek River to go to Fort Boise, on the South side of the river, between the



river and the road, on the top of the first hill or raise from the river bottom  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from where we ascended the hill and about 200 yards from the road, right opposite the grave there is an Island in the river, from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 mile long where we pastured our stock for several days; the slough of the river near 100 yards wide but no trouble to ford it. From the grave to the Island  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile or upward. In two miles and a half the road comes to the river again.

Mary Vanbuskirk died late in the afternoon. On the morning of the 15th we buried her beside her Father.

15th Drove 8 miles and camped, very bad road. 16th Drove 12 miles bad road with rock, broke my wagon tongue. 17th Remained in camp and threw away one wagon. 18th Drove 15 miles crossed Catherine Creek and camped on the river. 20th Remained in camp till 4 o'clock, drove 8 miles Sarah P. Vanbuskirk departed this life, we buried her about 42 miles from the other graves on a level plain on the river bottom  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the river, about 100 yards from the road on the left hand of the road going West, hill  $\frac{1}{4}$  off to the left on the river bottom; on the other side of the river perpendicular bluffs, somewhat rugged appearance, with white placer, perhaps sand, came to the river in four miles from where she was buried, it was all clay ground for some distance, sand hills on the left. 21st Drove 13 miles crossed a little run in the burnt hills, camped on top of the hills, one steer died. 22nd Drove 16 miles without grass or water. 23rd Drove 5 miles and camped. 24th Drove 16 miles and camped passed the warm springs, warm enough for dish water. 25th Drove 5 miles and camped, Elizabeth Henderson sick. 26th Remained in camp. 27th Drove 2 miles and camped. 28th Drove 15th miles and camped. 29th Drove 16 miles and camped. 30th Drove 14 miles and crossed the Owihee River and passed Fort Boise. 31st Drove 6 miles and camped on the Malheur River and remained in camp the rest of the day. Sept 1st Drove 14 miles and crossed Malheur. 2nd Drove 18 miles and came to Burnt River, crossed Birch Creek. 3rd Drove 11 miles crossed Burnt River 3 times. 4th Drove 12 mile crossed Burnt River 6 times. 5th Drove 7 miles and camped on Burnt River. 6th Drove 15 miles and camped and crossed several small branches. 7th Drove 18 miles and camped on a large bottom on Powder River Slough. 8th Drove 15 miles and crossed Powder River, we were in sight of timber. 9th Drove 12 miles and camped near the Ronde, heavy pine in sight all the time. 10th Drove 4 miles and down a long rocky hill, and they had to carry Elizabeth down the hill on account of her being so very sick. 11th Remained in camp till noon and then drove 7 miles on the Ronde. 12th Remained in camp, all sick. 13th Remained in camp. 14th Remained in camp on Grande Bottom. Urbanus Henderson died, buried him on the 15th near a small stream coming out of the hill on the East side of the stream and South side of the road, within 200 yards of the stream. 15th Remained in camp. 16th Remained in camp. 17th Drove out of camp  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile crossed the little stream and drove to the first bench of a long steep hill, Perrin left in the afternoon, Moses Noble left in the night unbeknown to any one, took some things out of the tent which was necessary for the trip to Oregon City. 18th Remained in camp, 19th Drove 8 miles over rough road and camped on Grand Ronde River. 20th Drove 3 miles and camped without water, we are now in the Blue Mountains, most all sick, hardly able to take care of each other, I have been cook some of the time. 21st Drove 7 miles and camped, John broke an axle tree. 22nd Remained in camp till noon on account of sickness. 23rd Drove 4 miles and camped, Mother departed this life about 8 o'clock in the evening.

24th Remained in camp and buried Mother, we dug the grave through a shelly Limestone rock, in the Blue Mountains 4 miles before we came to Arrow Creek, on a small prairie or opening, near the root of a large



yellow Pine tree and some other trees of the same kind, near the road within 50 yards, timber near on both sides of the road, the timber was principally fir and pine, she is buried on the North side of the road. 25th Drove 5 miles, crossed Arrow Creek and camped. 26th Drove 5 miles and camped, lost the old mare. 27th Drove 10 miles and came to the Umatilla, fairly across the Blue Mountains. 28th Drove 12 miles down the Umatilla. 29th Remained in camp till noon and then drove 5 miles and camped. 30th Drove 11 miles and camped without wood, grass or water. October 1st Drove 4 miles and remained in camp the rest of the day. 2nd Drove 6 miles by noon and then remained in camp and in the evening old "Well" was brought into camp, paid \$7.00 for cost and trouble of finding her, Wm and Araminda sick. 3rd Drove 10 miles and came to Butter Creek and crossed Butter Creek and camped, 60 miles all heavy sand. 4th Drove 12 miles and camped without water or wood. 5th Drove 11 miles and watered our cattle at the Well springs, poor water at that. 6th Drove 12 miles and camped without water or wood, plenty of people begging for bread and meat because they did not get it. 7th Drove 6 miles, crossed Williams Creek and camped 2 miles after crossing. 8th Drove 10 miles and camped without water and but little grass. 9th Drove 13 miles, passed a spring about noon, the spring being very weak, we gave them only one bucket of water to each yoke and camped on John Days River, at the spring we saw Whisler, he met us and that was the first we had seen of him since we were at Salmon Falls, he was on pursuit of his grey mare which he said had been stolen from him, he said that he had been informed at the Dalles that we were some distance behind and was about out of flour and he had a sack of flour with him which he said he had brought on purpose for us. but luckily as it happened we had plenty of flour and provisions. 10th Remained in camp till night and then crossed the river and drove 2 miles ascending two thirds the way up a way up a hill a mile long. 11th Remained in camp till late. Araminda Ann Vanbuskirk died. We buried her on the left hand side of the road, on the side hill, one mile from John Day River and then drove 8 miles and camped. 12th Drove 20 miles and camped on the Columbia River, this is the biggest drive we have made for one month. 13th Drove 6 miles and camped, crossed the Deschutes or Falls River, drove up the hill a mile long. 14th Drove 3 miles and camped on the 5 mile creek, crossed the 10 mile creek. 15th Drove 7 miles and crossed the 5 mile creek and reached the long looked for Dalles. Drove 2 miles to camp. 16th Remained in camp. 17th Remained in camp. 18th Remained in camp, sold our oxen \$50.00 per yoke all around. 19th Remained in camp preparing to start down the river. 20th Drove down to the river. 21st Loaded up and I started on the pack trail with Whislers mare and Fathers. 22nd On the pack trail. 23rd On the trail. 24th At the cascades. 25th At the Steamboat Landing below the Cascades. 26th Renewed the trip on the trail. 27th On the trail. 28th On the trail. 29th Arrive in Portland. 30th Went to Oregon City. 31st Remained in the City.

Part of a reply to Andrew Vanbuskirks letter to his Cousin in Ohio, dated August 17th 1853, Miss Briann Vanbuskirk.

Dear and Much Respected Cousin:

I have often thought of you way off there almost at the jumping off place, and wondered whether you had forgotten me or not. But I should not much wonder if you had, as the trials and heart rending scenes you had to pass through were enough to shake the stoutest hearts. I think your faith must have been strong, as well as your hearts, providence smiled on you as it were, that you got through as well as you did, as there was in all probability some that fared a

a great deal worse than you did. We were glad to know that you had got to your destined home and in a fair way to prosperity and happiness. I expect by this time you are all of you on your claims in the beautiful valley of Tliamook, working away for dear life. Well that's all right as this is the Iron Age of progression and steam and I expect if time and posterity should continue, if not us, some one may see the Iron Horse ploughing his way toward the great Pacific, spouting his fiery breath through the hills and over the plains, almost defying old dame nature to set forth his rival.

When I think of the curiosities you saw on the road, I almost wish I had been with you, and help to admire the magnificence of God's works spread out as it were to entice curious human beings to go on to multiply and replenish that goodly land that flows with milk and honey.

Oh and those berries you spoke of how delicious they must be, how I would like to take a snack with you. And there is Balm of Gilead there too, and Hemlock, Alder Etc. oh it is fine I expect you can exclaim with one of old, "It is good to be here".

I must say that I was a little provoked at you for not coming to see us before you left, we should have made a party for you, and invited in the young folks and made a great spree for you, but ye would not. I am very thankful to you for your mindfulness of me and to know that you thought enough of me to write me a letter, and I forgive you all your trespasses and hope for the best. But I shall soon be crossed out from among the gay and frolicksome youngsters. You said if I was married you did not know it. Well Coz I am not married yet But so near it there is no fun in it. I am in business up to my eyes in preparing for it. I expect to be married on the 27th of this month to a Mr Daniel Levering. Oh Andrew how I should like to have you to my wedding, wont you come? Oh no you cant for the knot will be tied long before you can get the invitation. Well I have not got the cake baked yet, but I will send you some pieces of my dresses, the white is the standing up one and the silk is the second day one. The Association commences on Friday before and if nothing happens we shall make our appearance there and a great sight it will be.

Now Andrew if you do have to wait till you get to be an old Batchelor before getting married, do not marry an Indian, I do not have the remotest idea that you will, but I am talking not meaning exactly what I say, as you have judgment enough to choose for yourself, and when you do to make a good one.

You spoke of the people there, the Indians, and I hope you will not be influenced in such a way as to be induced to marry amongst them, as it does not speak well for our state to have its young men mating off to squaws when they could do better to keep Batchelors Hall a little longer.

However those savages, I believe, might in time with a little gentle influence become civilized and be some ~~influence~~ benefit to society.

It would be a glorious deed if a company would colonize amongst them and by their pious examples bring them out of their degraded situation and place them on an eminence of respectability."

"If soft cushioned couches could give the heart ease,  
Then a home with the wealthy I'd crave,  
But their treasures bring care, and death will seize,  
On the hopes of a King or, a Slave,

Oh! then give me a cot in the wild woods away,  
On the hills where the green grasses grow,  
For tis kissed by the light of the first peep of day,  
While the valleys are sleeping below.

May the Lord Bless and Protect You,  
Yours Most Affectionately,  
Oriann Vanbuskirk