

## Adventure and Experience of A Forty-niner.

In the year 1848 I was living in Cadiz the County seat of Harrison County, Ohio. When the news came that Gold had been discovered in California, the excitement ran high, and nearly everybody was going to dig it out by the ton. People of all trades met nearly every night and consulted, planned, and signed agreements to go in the following Spring. Toward the latter part of the winter it began to become serious. An article of agreement was drawn up binding each signer to pay \$200.00 to commence getting ready, to buy Mules, wagons, and all other supplies necessary for the occasion. And all who failed to go to forfeit what they paid to those that would go. That brought the matter down to business, and the result was, that only 18 came forward and signed out of more than fifty who talked loudest at first.

These we appointed a committee to go west and purchase Mules.

after their return with the Mules all but two were unbroken. Never having been haltered. We then had a lively time breaking Mules. getting Firearm knives & to kill Indians. Along in the Spring about the fore part of March we were all ready to embark. It was rainy and mud nearly knee deep when we left Cadiz. In our favor certain for the Mules all green and the men did we make the Ohio River at Martinsville about a mil. above Wheeling West Virginia where we loaded our Mules, Wagons, and our whole outfit on a steamboat that we had previously chartered to take us to St Louis.

Now we start down the river our first stop was Cincinnati didn't stop long. The next Louisville Ky. Then we met a young man by the name of Spotswood from Virginia who applied for the privilege of joining us. We took him in on the same terms as the rest of us, and he proved to be a very agreeable companion.

After leaving Louisville we didn't stop at any other place long until we reached St Louis. There we unloaded everything put our Mules in a lot secured and boxed a supply of Hard tack. Side Meat and other things we thought we might want.

And Chartered a Steamboat to take us to Weston about 25 miles below St Joseph on the Missouri River. as far up the river as we could then get a Boat to take us. There we unloaded everything again. Hitched our Mules to the Waggon. loaded our goods. and drove out about two Miles to an empty School House where we pastured our Mules in a stock field. Camped in the School House about two weeks and had a jolly time. We had a man in company who played the fiddle pretty well. The darkies soon found us out and we were well supplied with butter and Eggs. and darkies dancing in the School House every night. When we left the School House we drove to a place called Bear Lake about 10 or 15 Miles from St Joseph. There we stayed about ten days waiting for one of our Company who had preceded us to Missouri to visit some relatives. While there was taken with Smallpox and

had to left finally. While at Bear Lake we lived fine on fish, fowl, and corn bread. When we left Bear Lake our next stop was St Jo. We tried to get across the river but found that there was no chance without getting in line and waiting over twice, which would keep us there two week longer. So concluded to go on up the river and run our chances of getting over. So we drove on up about a hundred miles. Crossed a corner of Iowa, bought as much corn as we could haul for feed, found a private ferry and crossed the big muddy. The first habitation of white after crossing the river was what was then called Fort Childs. or New Fort Kerney on the Platt River. Before we reached the fort we encountered quite a number of Indians. Chiefly Pawnees gave us no trouble. We forded the South Platt a little ways above the fort, then traveled up between the rivers before we crossed the North Branch which we had to ferry in canoes lashed together. Swam our mules, had ropes which we fastened to the canoes two miles to the other end and landed them safe one at a time. It took lots of rope but we were provided with it.

and it came in good play many times afterwards. We traveled them on the north side of the Platt for quite a distance with fairly good roads. Met Indians nearly every day. had no trouble with them and got along fine. Plenty of game in sight most of the time. and we got our share of it. I remember within sight of the first Black-tailed Deer I ever saw. And the same day a Sage Turkey. we had a fine feast the next day Sunday. as we had made a rule not to travel on sunday when we could avoid it we cooked and washed on Sunday and rested our Mules and profited largely thereby. The next place we encountered White folks was at Fort Larimer on the Arkansas River which we forded. We raised our waggon beds to keep the contents dry. The mules had to swim in center of the stream a short distance only when the leaders gained their footing they could pull the others and waggon through. We worked six Mules to a waggon. only when we had to double team on steep hills and marshy places when we would

sometimes have to put ten and on two occasions fourteen. After leaving Fort Laramie we had no more trouble with the roads for a long stretch.

We celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July on a beautiful stream called Sweet Water. It abounded with Trout and we caught enough to feast on that day. We had some shelled corn saved to feed the Mules when we failed to find plenty of grass.

Here we fed the last to the Mules. In a few days we came to where the water began to flow to the west. We were through the South Pass. The next stream of any size we came to was Green River. There were some men who had a Sheet Iron Boat which we hired to put our Wagons over. We done all the work took our wagons apart loaded them in the Boat rowed over and unloaded and returned taking one wagon and load at a time. The Mules we swam over. hitched up and started on again. The next stream of any size we came to was Bear River. Here were a camp of Indians on the west side. Some of them came over when they saw us approaching. They came horseback and pointed us over all right. We had Indians with us every day for quite a while

7

We were now on what was called  
the Sublet cut off on the way to  
Fort Hall. After passing Fort Hall  
some distance we came to Snake  
River. Here we had to raise our  
wagon loads but got over all right.

We traveled on quite a while before  
we intersected the road from Salt  
Lake. And came to the head of the  
Humbolt. Which we followed down  
for nearly three hundred miles to  
the sink of the Humbolt.

Now we had a desert to cross either  
to the Truckee or Carson River. about  
40 miles no water or grass on either  
route. Here we had to provide both  
the best we could. There was what  
was there called the big meadows  
off to one side & on 6 miles grass  
in abundance. We drove our mules  
over let them graze one day. Cut  
a lot of grass. bound it in sheaves  
packed it back to the wagons. filled  
our kegs with water and the next  
evening started for Carson River. We  
got within 15 or 20 miles of the river  
by the next morning. the mules began  
to fag. the came out hot, the sand

burned our bare feet and we unhitched  
 our mules, left our wagons, and struck  
 with the mules for the river. Went  
 back the next night and brought our  
 wagons and started again for the  
 mountains. Now we were nearing the  
 Sierra Mountains. We had some very steep  
 places to go down and also up. Here  
 our ropes came in good play. Some  
 places we had to let our wagons down  
 by tying trees of a pretty good size to  
 the hind axel. take of the team, take  
 hold of the tongue, and steer til we got  
 to the plain other places we would tie  
 the rope to the axel and eight or ten  
 take hold and by that means gain the  
 foot of the hill. Going up one place  
 to the top of the mountain it was so  
 steep that many carried their loads to  
 top. Their teams barely able to pull the  
 empty wagon with all the help the men  
 could give. We had six mules to a wagon  
 and all we had to do was to unkook what  
 was called the fifth chain. take the four front  
 mules off hook the chain in front of the six  
 and the other four in front of them and  
 we had a fourteen mule team. Went right  
 on to the top, took the mules back, brought  
 another up until the three were all up safe

without having to unload a pound. After reaching the top we tramped but a short distance till we came to a small lake not very wide perhaps 40 or 50 yards we could see tracks where wagons had crossed.

There was also a track on road around we thought where others had went we could go so decided to cross.

Here was where our ropes again came in good play. When we got about the middle the mules all minded down so we plunged in unknotted them got them to the other side, tied our rope to the wagon hitched the mules to the other end walked the water and me held up the tongue. Started the mules and made the shore without any other mishap only a bath.

The other teams went around. We went on then without meeting with any other mishaps or adventures.

We had then been on the road about 80 days since crossing the Missouri River. In five days more we reached the first running camp on Weber Creek at McDevittville.

There we stopped for a time sent the teams and some men

to Sacramento about 50 miles to dispose of all the mules but four and one waggon. And buy a load of groceries. They got to Sacramento all right but in order to get to good feeding grass for the mules had to swim them across a big slough, in doing so two of them were drowned.

They disposed of the other eight four, bought a load of provisions. Groceries returned and we built us a house concluded to keep a boarding house board there was three dollars a day and plenty of boarders. The rainy season commenced. It rained every day men couldnt work only in the rain and then with gum coats and boots. Everything was high board bills began to grow and grow fast. We finally concluded to quit divide up and every man saddle his own canoe. I returned to Ohio in April 1851 just two years and one month from the time I left with a good deal of experience, if some others did get more gold

