

WAGON ROADS

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Commencing on page number 128 of this book is a report, in the form of a journal, to the Quartermaster General, of mounted riflemen to Oregon, from May 18 to October 5, 1849, by Major O. Cross, quartermaster United States Army. This report is dated at Philadelphia, May 20, 1850. The first four chapters read as follows:

"General: The order which I have here annexed will show the duty assigned me by you; and in compliance with it, I took my departure from Washington city, on the 25th of April, for Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, where the rifle regiment had been directed to assemble, to make such preparations as a march like the one contemplated might call for.

I arrived at St. Louis on the 8th of May, and finding that the cholera was prevailing to a very alarming extent, left on the 10th, on board of the steamer San Francisco, after making a hasty outfit there. It will not be out of place here to remark, that the cholera was not only in St. Louis, but has spread through every town on the Missouri river, and in many instances had raged with great violence on board of several steamers, one of which, after losing nearly thirty passengers, was entirely abandoned and left tied to the shore. We were, however, more fortunate on board of our boat, having but one case, which may be principally attributed to the untiring efforts of Captain Keneth, her commander, who spared no pains to keep his boat in excellent police, and make his passengers comfortable.

The troops had just passed up the river; and with so great a number it could hardly be expected that they would not be more or less affected by the epidemic; I was, therefore, exceedingly anxious to reach Fort Leavenworth, to ascertain what effect a pure atmosphere would have in dispelling a disease with which all were in some degree threatened who travelled the Missouri river, and I was much pleased when I landed, on the 19th instant, at that place, after a passage of nine days from St. Louis.

It was expected that the regiment would be in readiness to take the field by the 1st of May, but it was not prepared to do so, for several reasons, until the 10th instant. To organize properly a train, and make all necessary arrangements incidental to a journey of 2,000

miles, required much more time than was at first anticipated. The officers were to make an outfit for a permanency in Oregon, or at least they were to be separated from the civilized world for some time, with their families, and it was by no means an easy task to make all proper arrangements even for their comfort while on this long march; but in addition to this, the spring had not advanced sufficiently to justify an earlier move.

On inquiring at the fort, I learned that the troops were ten days in advance of me, which was a very long start, as my mode of travelling was the same as that of the regiment. If I could have been fortunate enough to have procured a few pack-mules, in place of wagons, it would have greatly facilitated my movements, as I could have travelled much more rapidly; but not being able to do so, I had no time to lose, and on Sunday, [p.129] at 2 o'clock p.m., I left for Fort Kearny, after a short stay of twenty-four hours at this place.

Last evening was very pleasant, and the sun, in setting, left behind a bright sky, which was indicative of a fair morning; but, contrary to our expectations, it became cold and commenced to rain during the night, which made it extremely disagreeable for our party, whose only shelter was a common tent; but as they had to come to it sooner or later, every one took it quietly and made themselves as comfortable as their means would permit. Many of them were unaccustomed to a life of this kind; and the scenes they were about to pass through, as well as the toil and hardships which they would be required to endure, would be a new life to them, of which, in reality, they knew but very little.

It had been threatening to rain all the morning, and continued cold. The sky was becoming overcast by heavy clouds that were rising rapidly in the southwest, and it began to rain very hard before reaching the base of a hill over which our road led; here we began to realize the labor and trouble which were in store for us. The evening was one of the most unpleasant I had ever experienced. The rain poured down in torrents, as if the clouds had been rent asunder by the heavy thunder, which seemed to increase as the vivid lightning flashed incessantly around us. The whole sky was at moments wrapt in one dark canopy, while at others it presented one glare of lightning. Having reached the base of the hill, we found it necessary, from the weak condition of our mules, to attach twelve of them to one wagon to pull up about 1,200 pounds, and, with the assistance of all the hands at the wheels, we succeeded, after two hours' work, in reaching the top of the hill, in the midst of the storm, and continued our march, which brought us to a small stream, about four miles from the garrison, after sundown, where we made our encampment for the night.

It continued to rain very hard; and, as wood was scarce, we had no means of kindling a fire, the party placed themselves under cover as soon as possible, without having eaten a thing since morning. As for myself, I was completely overcome by fatigue, and much harassed at the gloomy prospects before me. Every stitch of clothing I had on was thoroughly drenched, and in this condition I was taken with a fever, which lasted several hours; but during the night it passed off, and in the morning I was much gratified to find myself able to resume my journey.

My outfit was as indifferent a one as ever left for any station, much less the Rocky mountains. The mules were poor, unbroken, and by no means calculated for such a march as we had to perform. The drivers were not only stupid, but totally ignorant of their duty, as they had never been employed in this capacity before, and seemed to have no other object in view than to reach the gold region with the least possible expense or trouble to themselves; they were, however, the best among those left at Leavenworth by the regiment, and I had no alternative but to take them. They had been hired at \$15 per month, without the least knowledge of the duty of a teamster, or any capacity to learn. I had men of this description with me in Mexico, who generally made out to destroy more public property from gross ignorance than would have double the number of good teamsters; but, from the system that is now observed, it will always be difficult to remedy the evil. It is a laborious life, and the [p.130] sum of \$15 per month will never bring into the service good and efficient men who are calculated for such duty; and it is to be regretted that some plan cannot be adopted to supply the department with experienced drivers, who are so indispensably necessary upon long marches like the present one. I have been in favor for some time of enlisting men who are particularly qualified for this duty; and I regret that the plan you have so long recommended has not yet been adopted.

May      May 21. --- The teamsters commenced their labor at daybreak, but the unbroken condition of the mules was such that the greater part of the morning was consumed in bridling and harnessing them, and we were not prepared until half past eight to commence our journey.

Whoever has witnessed the scene of preparing unbroken Mexican mules for the road, will not be at a loss to imagine the position of one with men who had hardly ever taken a whip in their hands, and now in charge of such teams. This, in a word, was our condition; and I had witnessed enough yesterday to warn me of what might be realized before arriving at Oregon, or even Fort Kearny, and the display this morning had not tended



in the least to lessen my conviction. This was the beginning of a long and hazardous journey, filled with difficulty and labor. We were soon to find ourselves on a desert waste, cut off from all resources except those we might have with us, and it certainly was no time or place for experimenting.

I sent back this morning for an entire outfit, but the post teams, being considered by far too valuable to be spared for such service, were withheld, probably because it was thought I was on the same footing with the balance of the outfit of the regiment. If so, I could have no cause to complain. Be this as it may, to this subject I shall again take occasion to refer before completing this journal.

This day may be noted as the commencement of our march. The morning, although cloudy, gave every indication of a pleasant day, which we stood much in need of, after the cold rain of yesterday evening and last night. It still continued cold today, which greatly facilitated our traveling.

The road lay over a prairie, which was skirted with timber, and at 5 o'clock p. m. we came to a steep hill, somewhat difficult to descend, but succeeded in reaching the bottom without much trouble; for while some attended to the mules, others held on to ropes attached to the wagons, which brought them to the base without any accident. The broken tongues, hounds, and other parts of wagons showed plainly the trouble which the command had met with at this place. As the evening was drawing to a close, we made out encampment for the night on the banks of a small stream which was running at the base of the hill. Here we found plenty of good water and wood for our use, and fine grazing for the animals, which they stood greatly in need of. We had not more time before sunset than would suffice for the arranging of our meals and making a few alterations which were required before leaving in the morning. Our tents were scarcely pitched, and all things properly prepared for the night, before it began to hail, and continued until nearly sundown, when it cleared off and became very cold, making a fire quite comfortable.

May 22. --- The morning was clear, and we left our encampment at 5 o'clock. The road passed over a rolling prairie, and across several small [p.131] streams, which were well wooded, as is generally the case in this vicinity. Towards the close of the day, the country became very broken, as we were still near the great Missouri valley; but our trail began to diverge a little, which was soon to carry us from it, where the beauties of woodland scenery were to give place to an endless prairie country, which strikes one as being very beautiful at first sight, but becomes

tiresome beyond any description after the novelty has worn off. It could hardly be expected to be otherwise, when you see nothing from day to day but the broad canopy of heaven above, and the greensward below.

We arrived at Wolf creek at half-past 5 o'clock this evening, having made a march of twenty-two miles today. I had thrown away nearly all of the two loads when starting yesterday morning, so that we had but little more than our trunks to transport, which could be very easily packed.

The country was not the least interesting in this day's journey. It was much more broken than yesterday, which made it very fatiguing to teams that were entirely unaccustomed to travelling. The weather had moderated through the day, which made the evening delightful. It was the first pleasant weather we had experienced since the 19th instant, and it appeared to give new life to the whole party: we certainly stood greatly in need of a change. It was also very favorable for our mules, which had suffered much from the cold rains since starting. The thermometer at 6 o'clock p. m. ranged at 70°, and we had every prospect of a fine day tomorrow.

Since leaving Fort Leavenworth we had met with no one, and our two days' march was very tiresome and monotonous. This evening our camp was visited by a Sac Indian, who was dressed, as is customary among that tribe, with a red blanket and head ornamented with feathers.

He soon presented me a paper which had been given to him by the sub agent, the purport of which was to request emigrants passing this way to make these Indians a small present for the use of their wood, which they had complained of having been destroyed by the emigrants. He also made quite a talk about the grass which the animals consumed, and appeared to be fully impressed with the idea that they were entitled to some compensation for it.

We gave him something to eat, and sent him off very soon after, evidently disappointed and much displeased at not receiving money, for he had doubtless made up his mind on having a fine frolic on his next visit to St. Joseph's and Western, places which are frequently visited by them for that purpose, much to the annoyance of the inhabitants.

It is surprising why those employed with Indian tribes are disposed to humor them, as is often the case, with erroneous impressions. Here, for instance, was an Indian furnished with a paper to receive a tribute from all who passed; and more than probable, if he should become displeased by not receiving some

compensation, the tribe were likely to annoy every one by stealing horses, or in some other way. If these people really deserved compensation for the wood used, which was of itself too absurd to think of for a moment, it was a proper subject to lay before the Indian department; but, to get rid of them, these papers are furnished, which can have no other tendency than to annoy travellers and endanger their property.

May 23. --- We commenced making preparations at half-past three [p.132] o'clock this morning, and started as soon as it was light enough to see the road. It was a cold, misty morning, and the thermometer was as low as 48° at sunrise, making a difference of 22° during the night. The country began to rise, and, with the exception of the distant wood on the borders of several small streams, and the valley of the Missouri, nothing could be seen but a high rolling prairie.

We had been travelling for the last three days on a trail made partly by the Oregon expedition, but had not proceeded very far this morning before a new scene broke suddenly upon our view. We here came into a road as large as any public highway in the United States, leading from St. Joseph's and Western. Large trains were coming in from all points of the Missouri river, on trails intersecting this great highway, which was to lead them, after endless toil and much suffering, to the gold region. All these trails followed ridges, which placed the wagons frequently in such positions that they seemed to be crossing the prairie in every direction, and, as their white covers were well trimmed, they looked at a distance not unlike vessels on the wide ocean steering for different parts of the globe. For the first time we passed one or two wagons today that had broken down, and also several persons returning, who had already lost their cattle, which they were ready, of course, to attribute to the Indians, and not to their own neglect. The truth was, they had become discouraged, and were willing to make any excuse to return than to continue the journey.

In this day's march I overtook Captain Granger, of the rifle regiment, whom I passed, and about six o'clock in the evening made my encampment on the prairie, where I found a small stream, which was entirely destitute of wood, there being but three solitary trees to be seen. The day was very fine, and the distance travelled was about twenty five miles. At this encampment our horses found an abundance of grass. The evening was very pleasant, and the thermometer, at six o'clock p. m., stood at 62°. I learned that the command was not over seventy miles in advance of me. They had met with much difficulty with many of their teams since leaving Fort Leavenworth, which had given us the opportunity of gaining already considerably on them.

May 24. ---- The bugle sounded at three o'clock this morning, when all hands were immediately up and soon prepared for breakfast. At half-past four o'clock we were ready to commence our march, the thermometer standing at 60°. The day was extremely fine for travelling, and we arrived on the Nemahaw at eleven o'clock a. m., where we made a halt for an hour to rest the teams. This is a pretty little stream, about sixty feet wide, and is a tributary to the Missouri. Wood is to be found in abundance on its banks, consisting of oak, hickory, walnut, ash, elm, and cottonwood. I judged the soil to be good from its dark appearance, and no doubt would be productive. We continued our journey some distance further, leaving many emigrants at this stream and the several water-holes in the vicinity of the road, as the cholera had prevented many of them from travelling.

One or two families, whom I overtook at the Nemahaw, passed us at Fort Kearny, and by good management were able to keep with the command, which generally travelled faster than the body of emigrants.

The cholera now began to make its appearance along this route, and the number who had died with it was sufficient evidence that the emigrants were suffering [p.133] greatly from its effects. They were truly to be pitied, as no aid in any way could be afforded them; on the contrary, they were often compelled to travel when it was almost death to them to be moved.

The country along here is high, and in fair weather very dry, and nothing to aggravate the disease, as the atmosphere was as pure as the mountain air, and not the least decomposition of vegetable matter to engender it. Still the cholera continued to prevail among the emigrating parties, and, with every care they resorted to, it remained among them until they crossed the North Platte, in the month of July, and in many instances raged with such violence as to carry off nearly whole parties.

I arrived this evening on a small stream, such as are frequently found among the hills near the Missouri. There were many emigrating families here, who were necessarily compelled to stop in consequence of the prevailing epidemic. The evening was cloudy, and it began to rain very hard soon after our tents were pitched. The rainy season had now commenced, which we would be compelled to endure until our daily marches carried us to a section of country where rain seldom falls during the summer, which is generally the case with that section of country found between North Platte, the Sweet Water, and Snake river. On the prairie between Forts Leavenworth and Kearny, it commences as early as May, and seldom stops until the latter part of June.

May 25. --- The rain fell in torrents through the night, and was accompanied by sharp lightening and heavy thunder. The bottoms of our tents were partly under water, particularly those that were not protected by an embankment, which should always be made, whether the evening is clear or cloudy, as little calculation is to be made upon the weather during the rainy season in this country.

When the call was sounded at four o'clock this morning one of my teamsters was absent. This man, finding that he knew nothing of his duty, and having exhausted the patience of all who endeavored to teach him, thought it the safest plan to relinquish his situation as teamster to the Oregon expedition, and had run off during the night, leaving us, the wagons, and but one teamster, to get on the most convenient way that could be devised by the party. The corporal of the escort scoured the country, without being successful in finding him. We afterwards learned that he had returned to Fort Leavenworth, satisfied, no doubt, that he was not destined to reach the gold region in the capacity of teamster, and would wait for a more favorable opportunity.

The morning was very unpleasant. The thermometer at five o'clock stood at 52°; it, however, cleared off towards the middle of the day, after a drizzling rain all the morning, and the remainder of the day was extremely pleasant.

During the day I met two wagons returning to the Missouri. These people were already discouraged, and thought it more advisable to return than to attempt a journey of two thousand miles, and run the risk of never reaching their place of destination. Many of them had started very unprepared, while others were entirely unacquainted with a prairie life, and little calculated to accomplish a journey fraught with so many obstacles as this certainly is.

This day's march carried us over a high prairie, very much like that [p.134] we had already travelled over, and brought us within five miles of a stream called the Big Vermilion.

May 26. --- It was cold and rainy this morning, which prevented us from leaving as early as usual. We left our encampment at half-past seven, and soon came to the banks of the Vermilion, a stream which is about one hundred feet wide, quite rapid, and barely fordable at this time. From this point the road commenced to ascend gradually; the ground was firm, and the wagons were able to move rapidly through the day. The country was not so rolling as heretofore, but presented rather a series

of plains, rising one above another.

This day's march brought me to a stream, having on its banks cottonwood and scrub oak in small quantities. The soil bore much the appearance of that on the streams we had already passed.

From the great exposure which the party had been subjected to, a teamster was taken with the pleurisy, while one of the escort was seized with the cholera. Having no medical aid along, our situation was certainly a very unpleasant one. We, however, administered to them such medicine as we had with us, and rendered them all the assistance in our power; but, being compelled to continue our march, it was impossible to make them the least comfortable.

It would be useless to attempt to enumerate the deaths that occurred among the emigrants. The graves along the road too plainly told us that the cholera was prevailing to an alarming extent. At this point we were one hundred and thirty-eight miles from Fort Leavenworth, and one hundred and seventy-two miles from Fort Kearny, entirely cut off from all assistance or the least possible means of getting any relief. It was out of the question to lie by; for, being in the rear, we were compelled to move rapidly on to overtake the command. It was a serious subject to think of, and I know of no danger that I would not sooner be exposed to than again suffer the uneasiness of mind which I experienced at this time; for we had not only full proof of the prevalence of this dreadful scourge along the road, but were actually carrying it with us in our wagons.

If I were to enumerate all the sufferings of the emigrants, and enter into a minute description of our critical situation, it would take more time and space than would be proper for me to devote to this subject; but I feel that it is necessary to touch upon it, so as to give the department some idea of the peculiar position in which we were placed, and the great risk every one ran who travelled this route; for when we arose in the morning it was a question among us as to who might fall a victim to it before another sun.

We met at our encampment this evening two men who were returning to their homes in Tennessee, having heard of the death of some of their relatives, which required them to retrace their steps. This presented a favorable opportunity to us to send letters back to our friends, who, hearing of the existence of the cholera along our route, would doubtless feel great solicitude for us, and be much relieved on hearing of our safety thus far.

The distance passed over today was about thirty miles; having a good road, and travelling quite late in the evening enabled us to make a very long march; but it was somewhat necessary, as water to-day was scarce upon the route. I hired an emigrant last evening to drive one of my wagons as far as Fort Kearney, in place of the teamster who had so unceremoniously deserted us, and I found him a very efficient man, who earned well his dollar a day, which I was compelled to give him while in my employment. (p. 135)

May 27. --- The bugle this morning called us up at half past four o'clock, and, after the usual preparations for breakfast having been made, we were ready at half-past five to resume our march. The morning was clear and bracing. The thermometer, at six a. m., was as low as 54°.

The road lay over a flat prairie all day, which was very muddy and difficult to pass in bad weather. We overtook at least one hundred wagons, and met one man and his family returning to the states. Many of these people were from Illinois, who had crossed the Mississippi at Palmyra and struck the Missouri at St. Joseph's and Western. Those destined for Santa Fe generally stopped at Independence and Liberty, which are below the mouth of the Kansas river.

We crossed today two streams, one about ninety feet wide, that in rainy weather would be difficult to pass, but at this time the water was lying in holes and very indifferent to drink.

Our teams were kept back by the number of trains we overtook today, and did not reach our encamping ground on the Big Sandy until nearly the close of the evening. We found a large number of emigrants on this stream, who were to be seen in every direction, above and below the crossing. A great number were also passed at the several water holes along the road, and, it being the Sabbath, many of them had stopped to rest--- some, no doubt, from religious scruples, while others believed it indispensably necessary to lie by one day in seven for the purpose of resting their animals. It is a very good plan, and should be resorted to whenever time will permit.

Towards the close of the evening very little was heard but the cracking of whips, and a general talking among the parties coming in as to where their encampments were to be made, and whether grass and water could be found contiguous to each other; for they relished but little the idea of driving their cattle any distance from camp, where they would be compelled to guard them during the night.

Dr. Browne, of St. Louis, was kind enough to visit

the sick this evening and prescribe for them, but pronounced one of their cases to be a very hopeless one; he rendered them every assistance in his power, and visited them again in the morning before our departure.

Since leaving Fort Leavenworth I had seen no game of any importance, although this is a region where deer and buffalo are generally found in the greatest abundance. At this season herds of buffalo are always seen on the Little Blue, a stream which we were fast approaching; but the immense emigration that had already gone on would no doubt drive them from the vicinity of the road and cause them to become very wild. The few deer I had met with thus far were extremely shy, and showed the effect the emigration had produced already in passing this spring.

The distance travelled today was about twenty miles, and the grazing at our encampment was very good, as I had generally found it since leaving Fort Leavenworth.

May 28. --- Wood being very scarce on the Big Sandy, we did not succeed in getting our breakfast before a late hour, although it consisted, as [p-136] usual, of nothing more than fried ham, stale bread, and bad coffee; it was, therefore, after six o'clock before we commenced our march.

The land on the Big Sandy is of a light soil and poor. The wood on this stream is very scarce, consisting principally of cottonwood.

The road today led over a prairie somewhat level, though much better than that of yesterday. It brought us on the Little Blue, where the road passes along its valley for at least forty miles.

Among the multiplicity of troubles which we had met with since leaving, one of the wagons today broke down, and was abandoned, in consequence of having neither timber to substitute nor mechanics to repair it. The sick, together with a part of the escort, were left with it. I was not with the wagon when the accident occurred, and this arrangement was made by a person in charge of the teams. It greatly annoyed me, and, although near sundown when they came into camp, I directed them to unload and return for the party they had left behind. This was accomplished, and they returned to camp about twelve o'clock at night.

By this time, the man who had the cholera became entirely deranged, and required the strength of one person to keep him in the wagon. His sufferings were very great, and his cries most distressing, particularly as it was not in our power to render him any assistance or relief. The condition of the sick, as well as the general indisposition among the party, rendered it necessary to reach Fort Kearny as soon as possible, or it would become necessary



to lie by. I was now reduced to one wagon to transport the sick, my own outfit, and that of the party, as well as the luggage of the escort. I determined, therefore, to leave all the stores that were not absolutely necessary for us for the next two days, hoping by that time to arrive at the fort or overtake the command.

May 29. --- The morning was clear and pleasant, after a rainy night. I did not leave the camp until seven o'clock, for the loss of one of our wagons had greatly deranged our movements, and compelled me to make entirely new arrangements. Beds, boxes, and all bulky articles were left behind, and having a heavy load, I attached eight mules to it, with two drivers, who succeeded in getting them along much better than any one anticipated. The remainder of the animals were driven by the escort, and gave us much trouble; being wild, they greatly preferred the prairie to being driven quietly along.

The road here passed along the valley of the Blue, except in one bend, where it crosses a high level prairie of about six miles wide, which I found very muddy, and in wet weather is extremely difficult to travel on. This is generally the case on all parts of the road where the prairie is not sufficiently rolling to carry off the water. The ground in this state becomes saturated, making the sward easy to cut through, by which the wheels sink and cause the hauling to be extremely fatiguing.

Wagons, as usual, were to be seen at every bend of the road, and along the banks of the river. Having made a late start this morning, we were necessarily thrown behind large trains that had started before us, and we were compelled to travel much slower than usual. I therefore found it a better plan to make early starts in the morning, as emigrants seldom move before sunrise, and, by reaching some spot in the evening where there were none, it would enable us to keep clear of them during the day.

It is not frequently the case that you meet on the prairie mountaineers [p.137] returning with their peltry; but today I met with a Frenchman who left Fort Laramie with two wagons loaded with buffalo skins, and had been twenty-three days from that place. Although he gave me the cheering news that the regiment was only one day's march in advance-- which was the first correct information I had received since leaving Fort Leavenworth--he was the harbinger of unpleasant information relative to the country over which he had travelled for the last three weeks. He stated that there had been much rain between Forts Laramie and Kearny this spring, which had swollen the Platte river, and made the trail very heavy; and there was every probability that it would be too high to cross on our arrival. From his statement, several

thousand wagons were already ahead of us. Many of them had passed Fort Laramie, and at all the most convenient places for stopping the grass had been pretty much consumed. The Platte valley, which in dry weather is generally very fine to travel over, had been so cut up by the immense emigration that he found much trouble in travelling, and it was highly probable that we would find it but little better-- the only hope was that it would cease raining, and in that case a few clear days would make it passable. It was extremely gratifying, however, to know that we were so near the command, as it would enable me, should I overtake them, to get clear of the sick, who in my present condition had become a great burden.

We stopped today at two o'clock to graze our animals, which had become very tired and were near giving out. This was not very suprising, when we reflected upon their condition when we started, and the distance they had travelled. I would recommend by all means to small parties to stop in the middle of the day, and particularly those who move with pack-mules, as the loads are easily adjusted, and but little time lost; by it your animals become greatly relieved; but with large trains there is much trouble and but very little advantage, unless you are driving oxen, which never require more than a few minutes to turn loose, and are equally as easy to prepare for the road again.

I here began to discover that the grazing had changed very materially on the Blue, which was caused not only by the number of cattle that had been grazing on it for some time, but the cold weather had considerably impeded its growth, and confirmed me in the opinion that the first of May is too soon to leave the Missouri, unless you contemplate a rest after arriving on the borders of the Platte; in that case, if you have the means to carry along a small quantity of grain, which can always be done, instead of the many surplus articles that often encumber your loads to but very little purpose, the earlier you start the better, as a rest of a week or ten days has a great tendency to prepare your animals for a long journey, which they would not have by being kept constantly on the march.

The day was pleasant; but our late start, and the difficulty of passing the trains along the route, brought us into camp after sundown, and we did not accomplish more than twenty-four miles during the day. The thermometer this morning at six o'clock stood at 54° and this evening, at the same hour, it was as high as 76°.

Since striking the Blue, I have not met with any buffalo, as the passing of the emigrants this spring has

driven them entirely off. Not more than a half a dozen have been seen within the last ten days. Deer are [p.138] equally as scarce, and you seldom meet with either without travelling some distance on the prairie back from the river.

May 30. --- We left our encampment at five o'clock this morning, and continued up the Blue about four miles, where the road turns off across the prairie to the Platte river. The night, was threatening, and it commenced raining early in the morning, and continued until ten o'clock, when it cleared off, and the remainder of the day was more pleasant. We pursued our journey through the day until we came in sight of the hills which form a small range that divides the prairie from the valley of the Platte, where I encamped for the night.

My encampment was upon the borders of a pond of water, or what is more generally called a water-hole, which is often found on the prairies. It was half-past seven o'clock before my wagons arrived, and some time after sundown before we made ourselves comfortable for the night. The evening being damp and windy, the cold was felt very sensibly. The thermometer in the morning stood at 62°, and at half-past seven o'clock this evening it was at 56°. We met here another family returning to the Missouri river, already surfeited with gold-hunting, which had cost them much labor, and deprived them of the many comforts of life. Having staked out our animals, and taken a scanty meal, we retired to rest, being very much gratified with the pleasing reflection that the march in the morning would bring us to Fort Kearny.

The distance of our journey today was twenty one miles, and we passed a stream, about eight miles before we reached our encampment, that was extremely boggy and difficult to get through. The Prairie from the Blue, over which we had travelled today, is very high and level; but the road being filled with wagons, we had much trouble and detention in passing them.

May 31. --- We left our encampment at 5 o'clock this morning for the fort, the distance being about ten miles, over a sandy road, and reached it at ten o'clock, simultaneously with the rifle regiment.

It rained during the day, which made it very cold for the season.

The regiment made their encampment about two miles above the fort, intending to remain until the whole train was examined, reorganized, and put in a condition to renew the march.

Fort Kearny is situated on the right bank of the Platte river, at the head of Grand island. It is garrisoned by a troop of the 1st regiment of dragoons, and a company of the 6th infantry. This post was located here as a substitute for the one formerly at the mouth of the Platte, being more on the direct route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Laramie, as well as the small towns on the Missouri river from whence emigrants generally take their departure. It is very well located to keep in check the Pawnee and Sioux nations, and is also a great protection to the emigrants who travel this route to California and Oregon.

The small pox, as well as other diseases, has greatly diminished the Pawnee nation. A few years back they were looked upon as a large and powerful tribe, but they have dwindled away so rapidly of late years that they are no longer feared by the neighboring tribes; the Sioux are fast encroaching on them, and frequently make war on them successfully.

The site for this post is not a very pleasing one, having nothing to recommend it in the way of beauty. The valley of the Platte is entirely [p.139] destitute of wood in this vicinity, besides being low. It has the muddy Platte on one side, which gives the Missouri much of its color, while a chain of unprepossessing sand hills are seen on this side, which forms a dividing ridge between the valley and the country back, and is the commencement of the first highland that ranges along the river, which gradually rises until it becomes a bluff of considerable height.

What few buildings were inhabited, I observed, were made of sward, cut in the form of adobes. The hospital was the only building which was being erected. These buildings were under the direction of an officer of the engineer corps, who, for the want of proper materials, was unable to progress very rapidly with them.

Wood can be obtained on Grand island, which is about thirty miles in length, and about five miles wide. Lumber for buildings is extremely scarce, as cottonwood is the principal timber found on the island, and is considered very inferior for building.

The stream is not very wide between the mainland and island, and is seldom more than five feet deep, the bottom of which is very uneven and filled with quicksand, like other parts of this stream.

In the partial cultivation of the soil, it has been discovered not to be ~~that~~ productive. Gardens have been started, but to little purpose, except that the experiment had partly convinced them that it was only labor lost. Still I am of the opinion, when time has been allowed to find out its qualities better, that not only vegetables may be raised

in abundance, but grain of every description.

Grazing for our animals in the vicinity of this post is extremely good, but I apprehend that grass for hay is very difficult to procure in the fall. The emigrants had not been permitted to encamp immediately around the fort, which gave our animals a fine field to range over during the time they remained; and they stood greatly in need of it.

This day's journey had not only brought me to the regiment, which I had been pursuing with all possible speed for ten days, but also to Fort Kearny, a distance of three hundred and ten miles from Fort Leavenworth, and now I considered that I had fairly reached the point where my duties were to commence.

The march from Fort Leavenworth was a very severe one. The rainy season having set in, it rained nearly every day from the commencement of our journey to our arrival at Fort Kearny. If we were fortunate enough to be blessed with one bright morning, we were certain to have a shower either in the evening or during the night. Among persons totally ignorant of a life like this, whose avocations have unfitted them for such labor as is incidental to a prairie life, the experience which they had already gained by the journey thus far would teach them at least that it would require a great deal of philosophy and patience to surmount the obstacles and endure the hardships that were still to be met with before reaching Oregon.

The entire route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearny passes over an undulating prairie, which is of a dark vegetable mould, and in many parts might be productive if cultivated, particularly on the large streams. In rainy weather the whole route becomes extremely muddy and very difficult to travel over, but in this respect it does not differ from any of the prairies of the West. When the season is dry the ground becomes very firm, and, as there are no hills to impede travelling, nothing can prevent trains of any size from moving over it with much ease and great rapidity. The few obstructions met with are found in crossing some of the streams, which could be removed with very little labor; and it is in the power of the government to make it one of the best public highways in the western country.

There are many small streams crossed on this route, such as Wolf creek, the Big and Little Nemahaw, the Vermilion, Big Sandy, and the Little Blue, besides many others, which may be looked upon as drains to the prairie. There are water holes off from the road, which may be known by mounds or small groves of timber, which, added to the streams, afford an abundance of water.

This is a part of that great prairie country which ranges from the Red river of the North to the Rio

Grande, and can be traversed throughout the whole distance without the least difficulty. As far back as 1828, cattle were driven from Independence, Missouri, to the St. Peter's river which empties into the Mississippi river a little below latitude 45°; and it was not unfrequent for sheep to be carried as far as the settlement on Red river in the British territory. From Lake Qui Parle to the Yellow Stone, it was commonly the route taken by the traders to carry their goods, instead of ascending the Missouri river; and there is nothing to prevent this whole range from being gravelled as the Rio Grande, except the danger of encountering hostile Indians, who are frequently met with between Independence and Santa Fe, and particularly the Comanche tribe, who are constantly ranging between the Arkansas and the southern boundary of Texas.

Game of every description is found on this prairie; buffalo, elk, and antelope are seen in great numbers; but this year very few have been met with, owing, doubtless, to the great emigration passing this way, which has driven them further south.

While at Fort Kearny, I had occasion to converse frequently with Colonel Bonneville, the commander of the post, who had been many years ago among the Indians in the Rocky mountains, and had obtained while there much valuable information, which he freely imparted to me; and I found it, in more than one instance, of great importance, before arriving on the Columbian river.

[p.140]

## CHAPTER II

March from Fort Kearney to Fort Laramie -- a distance of 273 miles.

June 1. -- The whole outfit was carefully examined today, that it might be put in as good condition as our time and means would permit; and it required but little experience to see that the condition of the miles was not such as to justify the command leaving for the Columbia river with any certainty of arriving there without accident.

The mules were principally those brought from the Rio Grande in the fall of 1848, and were wintered in the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth by contract. They had been badly taken care of, and, when the spring commenced, there was not sufficient time to put them in a proper condition for the march. Many of them were partly broken down by former [p.141] hard service; while others were wild, and it seemed almost impossible to break them to harness. They had just completed a journey of three hundred and ten miles, in very unpleasant weather. The

citizens and soldier teamsters were entirely incapable of driving, with the exception of a few of the former, who had been in Mexico. With this combination, it had greatly impaired the condition of many of them

The responsibility which was about to devolve on me, to transport the troops safely to the Columbia river, whether much or little was expected by the department, determined me not to take the charge on myself without letting it know the condition, at least, in which I found things.

Although I did not consider that any one was to blame since the march commenced, I preferred calling for a board of survey, and it was convened, in compliance with the letter here annexed. The board inspected the animals, and passed their opinion upon them, and, out of the whole number, condemned one-third, as I was unofficially informed. Although this was their opinion, I never was able to obtain a copy of the report, as they committed an informality, which caused the proceedings to be annulled.

This was the aspect of affairs when I took charge of the department, and relieved the officer who had accompanied the troops to Fort Kearny.

June 2. -- This day was passed in making out papers and arranging the train. The command moved about four miles above, to change their encampment, get better grazing, and be nearer to the water.

An order had been issued by Colonel Loring separating the command into three divisions of two companies each, which were to march at an interval of five miles between the first and third divisions, and encamp in the same order, until otherwise changed. This necessarily separated me from the greater portion of the command, and confined me for a time to a division, changing from one to the other as my services were most required.

Having only Lieutenant Frost with me as acting assistant quartermaster, who was in charge of the regimental train, and similarly situated, I was compelled to trust much to the agents, which greatly increased my responsibilities, as it was expected that I would not only see that the property was taken care of, but the troops properly transported.

This plan was decided on before I took charge of the department, and no views of mine, founded on former experience, could alter it. If it had been absolutely necessary to cause the divisions to mark several days apart, from the great scarcity of grass, the plan would have been a very good one; but this was not the case, and increased the commanders, when I found one amply sufficient. While



I saw no good reason for it, and having no officer of the department to receipt for the property in the several divisions and superintend their movements, my position became a very unenviable one, increasing my labors threefold, both bodily and mentally.

June 3. -- It became necessary, before leaving Fort Kearny, to increase the subsistence stores, which called for additional means of transportation. I was, therefore, compelled to resort to ox teams, being the only transportation that could be obtained at the post -- and we were very fortunate even to get this. I placed them under charge of a wagon-master, to proceed directly on to Fort Laramie in company with the emigrants, without being governed by the movements of the expedition, as we were re- [p.142] quired to make short marches in consequence of the delay of the beef contractor, and it would enable them to get considerably the start of us.

June 4. -- We left this morning at seven o'clock, and arrived at Plum creek early in the evening, where the third division made its encampment for the night. This is a very small stream, which rises among the bluffs and empties into the Platte a few miles below where the road crossed it. My tent was pitched on the banks of the Platte for the first time this evening, which was swollen and extremely muddy from the heavy rains that had recently fallen, which gave us much apprehension that the information recently received would prove true; for, in its present stage, it was very doubtful if we were not detained on reaching the crossing of the South Fork.

When we look at the width of this river, its muddy water and rapid current, we are greatly reminded of the striking resemblance it bears to the Missouri, of which it is one of its principal tributaries; but when we reflect that there is only a short portion of the year that it is not too high to prevent you from fording it, we are impressed with its total uselessness and insignificance when compared with the smallest navigable river in our country. Although it is large, it is but a drain for the melting snows from the mountains, and can only be remarkable for possessing more sand bars, less depth of water, and more islands half covered with useless timbers, than any other stream of its size in the country. It is not navigable, nor can it be made so, and, in a commercial point of view, has very little to recommend it.

This river is formed by the North and South Platte, which, after passing through the western prairies from the mountains several hundred miles, come together eighty miles above Fort Kearny. The South Fork we were soon to cross, when our route would be along the North Fork for nearly four hundred miles, until it turns to the south, where it rises in the mountains, west of the Medicine Bow range,



at least  $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  from where the Oregon and California trails leave it.

The valley of the Platte being as destitute of a tree as the adjacent prairie, or that which we had passed over, we found wood very difficult to procure at our encampment this evening, and what little was used by the troops they brought on their shoulders from an island, which they reached by wading to it.

The mode adopted for the arrangement of the three camps was the same. Each division or squadron occupied two sides of a rectangle, the tents pitched sufficiently far apart to make room on the other two sides for the supply train. This generally made sufficient space to contain all the horses and mules. The wagons are driven sufficiently close to allow the tongue of one to reach the hind wheels of the other, which is called karalling a train, and makes a very formidable defence either against foot or mounted troops. When it is desirable to leave the camp open, the train is generally parked in several lines, making them as compact as the nature of the ground will admit.

At the end of a day's journey the horses and mules of the division are staked out until sundown, and then brought into the Karall, and there kept until the morning. Each animal is made fast to a lasso about twenty feet long, which is attached to an iron pin of about fifteen inches in length, which has at the head a ring that works on a pivot, and allows the horse to move around without disturbing the pin. About four o'clock in the [p.143] morning they are all taken out, and allowed to remain until five, when they are prepared for the march. All being ready, the squadron moves off, followed by the baggage train, and next the supply train, which has an agent whose duty it was made to examine his train throughout the day, making such alterations as might be deemed necessary to facilitate its movement. The train is divided into sections of a certain number of wagons, placed under a wagon-master, who is responsible to the agent for the good order of that particular part of the train; and I generally found that twenty wagons were as many as one man could properly superintend, particularly when the teamsters were indifferent, and the roads very bad; for on this march it was not infrequently the case to require his services at several points at the same time, and, in that case, I never found that I had too many in my employment. And I will take this occasion to remark that the number employed did not render my own situation a sinecure; for, being always at the head of my own train, I often found myself, as well as my clerks, with our shoulders literally at the wheel, working as hard, as it is well known, as any laborer along. I found it necessary to do so to enable us to accomplish our march.

This was the course adopted and continued through the route. As the baggage train was necessarily required to be in camp early, it was under the direction of the acting assistant quartermaster, who was responsible for its order, as the property was under his charge. The supply train, not being required to reach camp so early, generally moved less rapidly, and in consequence came in less fatigued and in much better order.

June 5. -- Large trains could be seen this morning wending their way along on both sides of the Platte. The river here is nearly three miles wide, interspersed with islands, some of which are thinly covered with very small cottonwood and willow; but in many instances they are entirely bare. It rained a little before we left camp, which made it muddy, but, as it remained cloudy, it was pleasant for travelling, and rather facilitated our movements.

Our march was only eleven miles to day, as it had been but little more than changing encamping-grounds since leaving Fort Kearny, it being necessary to wait for the contractor, who was hourly expected, before we could proceed. This gave the mules and horses an opportunity of recovering from their march from Fort Leavenworth.

Having arrived in camp early to day, I overhauled the wagons which contained the lumber intended for such repairs as we might require on the route, and found that we had but very little along with us, there being but four pair of hounds and eleven tongues, which was a scanty allowance for the repairs of one hundred and sixty wagons, that were to pass over rough roads for two thousand miles. I had no desire to send back for timber, which had been done previous to my arrival, some fifty miles -- rather preferring to trust to a good trail and the improvement of teams and teamsters.

June 6. -- It rained very hard last night, and continued this morning. The dark clouds, accompanied with wind, were fast covering the heavens. The lightning was very severe, and it rained and hailed very hard. We left our encampment at half past nine o'clock, and travelled about ten miles to-day. The march being short, nothing occurred worthy of note. The evening cleared off beautifully after the rain, and the mules bid fair to [p.144] be well prepared by morning for a good day's journey, as they were up to their eyes in grass.

While quietly wending our way along the Platte today, I saw for the first time an antelope, and was somewhat disappointed in its appearance; there was not that beauty in its form that I expected to find, from the descriptions so often given "of the swift-footed antelope," when compared with the deer; and I consider it by no means as handsome or as delicately proportioned. At a distance, however, it is much the same. The head of this animal is very much like that of a sheep; the body appears shorter than the deer, with hair much coarser and longer. It stands very erect, and leaps with much quickness, gathering its feet apparently at the same time immediately under it. Its curiosity exceeds any animal I have ever seen, except the mountain goat. When it first saw me it approached almost within gunshot, when stopping for a few minutes, it ran off for a short distance, and turned again, apparently to satisfy its curiosity. It then ran parallel to the road, getting sometimes ahead, and then returning; if I stopped suddenly, or there was anything seen to attract its attention still more, it would run directly towards me until its curiosity was fully satisfied, and then bound off with great rapidity over the prairie until out of sight. It is much lighter in color than the deer, particularly on its sides, breast, and hind-quarters; this, with a black stripe which it has about the eyes, gives it a striking appearance, though it does not add much to its beauty.

Whether from the alarm of the cholera or a distaste for soldiering, I am unable to say, but desertion at this time was rapidly increasing. Four men ran off last night, taking a complete outfit with them. This was not very unexpected to us, when we considered the material of which the regiment was composed, who merely enlisted, it is well known, for the purpose of getting comfortably transported to California at the expense of the government, and not from any partiality for the profession of a soldier.

June 7. -- The command got under way quarter before seven o'clock this morning. The rain of last evening made it very muddy, and the hauling along the valley very heavy. The day was quite warm; the thermometer, at six a. m., stood at 52°, and at twelve m. it ranged as high as 80°.

To-day buffalo were seen for the first time, which created no little excitement. We had been hoping for several days to be gratified with a sight of them, for the road was entirely destitute of interest, and we were much pleased on hearing the news that game was so near us. We were now getting into a section of country where it is generally found abundantly in the spring,

and looked forward to something in the way of sport to divert us from our monotonous life for a time; for a journey over a prairie affords no pleasure except that of hunting, and, when that cannot be found, any other scenery is by far more preferable.

After arriving in camp, which we reached early in the day, having travelled but twelve miles, Mr. Wilcox and myself ascended the bluffs, and continued for a short distance back into the country, where the prairie was very much broken, forming deep ravines, that appeared to continue for a long distance, and rising at the same time quite high. The ground was so much broken as to make it difficult to travel on horseback on these ridges. Nothing could be seen but large buffalo trails; the deep ravines were much trodden and torn up, forming what are generally called [p.145] buffalo wallows, which are resorted to by them when these places are partially filled with water. We expected to have been successful in finding game beyond the bluffs, but were compelled to return after sundown without seeing one buffalo. A large hawk was the only thing killed, which measured four feet ten inches from the tip of one wing to the other, and was quite remarkable in other respects.

To-day the contractor arrived, who had been looked for with so much anxiety, as it would enable us in a few days to increase our daily marches. The grazing at this encampment was much the same as had been met with for the last few days.

June 8. -- We left our encampment at seven this morning, and travelled about three hours, making about six miles, when we halted for the day. The road was extremely heavy from constant rains. It was very pleasant; the thermometer at seven o'clock in the evening was ranging at 75°.

To-day a buffalo was killed by Mr. Leach, one of the train agents, and it was the first time I had ever tasted the meat of one. The hump is considered a great delicacy, but, for my part, I did not consider it anything to compare to beef. It was unfortunately an old bull; the young cows are doubtless much finer, but we had just been feasting on fine Missouri beef, and were therefore ready by comparison to condemn the wild beef of the prairie. I think, if we had been pinched by hunger, it would have been unanimously pronounced to be the best of the two.

The command stood greatly in need of wood, for we had reached a region of country entirely destitute of it, where a tree might be looked on as a curiosity: we were therefore compelled to resort to the Vache de bois, which is a fine substitute when you get used to it, and is always used by hunters, who never think of the scarcity of wood when this can be obtained.

Grazing along the river banks was becoming very indifferent, which made it necessary to encamp nearer the bluffs, which often made it difficult to procure water; but it probably was better in some respects, as the Platte water was thought to have greatly increased the cholera symptoms since we first commenced to use it.

July 9. It rained a little last night, and had much the appearance of it this morning; the thermometer at six o'clock was at 64°.

We got under way at half-past six o'clock this morning. The day being fine, it enables us to make a long march, and at half-past two o'clock we arrived in camp, having travelled nineteen miles. Here we pitched our tents on a small branch about half a mile from the Platte, and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit for the night. It continued cloudy during the day, and became quite cool in the evening; the thermometer at sundown stood at 55°, making a difference of 9° since the morning.

The bluffs about this point begin to approach the river very near; they have varied heretofore from two to four miles from the banks of the Platte. Our encampment was made within five miles of the junction of the North and South Forks of the Platte, and sixteen miles from where the emigrants make their first crossing on the South Fork, commonly called the lower crossing, which, I believe, is generally considered the best. Mr. Wilcox (the guide) went over the bluffs last evening on a hunting excursion, being a fine section of country for buffalo and antelope, but returned, after travelling twenty miles on the prairie, without being successful -- a [p.146] disappointment seldom known to a hunter along the Platte before this spring.

This valley has been heretofore a great range for game of all kinds. Herds of buffalo, consisting of thousands, have been seen grazing at one time, a few years since; but such has been the effect produced on them by the immense emigration this spring, that it has driven the game far beyond the bluffs; and the buffalo seldom return to the river except when forced to do so for want of water, and then in small numbers. Their range is now on the headwaters of the Blue and Kansas, and from thence to the Arkansas. I have no doubt, if the emigration continues a few years more, as large as it is this year, not one will be found along the borders of the Platte, or near Fort Kearny, where they have been known to approach the out-buildings, apparently for shelter in the winter.

We had the unpleasant duty to-day to perform, as once before, of passing along the road many graves of the unfortunate emigrants; among them was the grave of a man who had died at the age of sixty-four years, from general debility. One would suppose, with a man who had arrived nearly at the age of three score and ten, that his thoughts would have been on anything else than the treasures of this earth; but such is the charm in wealth, that, on this route, it was not unusual to overtake men and women who were scarcely able to walk from age, all destined for the gold diggings.

I had not proceeded very far beyond this place, before I came to the resting-spot of Captain P. S. Gray, of Texas, who had served in the Mexican war. I could not help thinking, as I passed, that he had travelled far to find a solitary grave, so distant from relatives, and in a spot where the prints of white man's footsteps were never seen until within the last few years. His comrades, however, had performed the last act of kindness, by decently interring him in this lonely spot, and placing at the head of his grave a well-cut slab, with the date of his death, name, age, and the disease with which he died, being cholera.

On the right of the road, and not far distant, we passed the encampment of a party of Cherokees, who had broken up their party, which had become very general among the emigrants since leaving Fort Kearny. It consisted, a few days ago, of fourteen persons; since yesterday six had died with the cholera. One was dying at the time they were visited, and the remainder were all too ill to assist in burying the dead. Among the whole of this party there was but one man who really was able to render any assistance to the others. This was a sad spectacle to behold. These people had left homes where many of them were no doubt comfortable and happy, and never perhaps had been required to labor for their daily bread half as hard as they had on this march. The gold mania had, however, spread far and near; and, being seized with it, they had abandoned comfortable homes, blinded with the belief that fortunes were soon to be realized, which in a great degree was imaginary, and they have, like many others similarly situated found their graves in this wild and lonely region.

Much fear was entertained that the cholera would increase; we certainly had every reason to suppose so, from the many deaths among the emigrants along the road, and their present helpless condition.



Within the last four days the command had lost several men by the cholera, and it had every indication of increasing among them. On the fourth two men died, and one on the seventh, and Doctors Moses and [p.147] Smith were seriously attacked by it, who were the only two physicians along with us to attend the three divisions, that were required to travel some distance apart.

I had seen so much of it between Forts Leavenworth and Kearny, that I did hope the command would, before our reaching it, be entirely clear; but it seemed to move as the emigrants did, and we were destined to keep it among us in spite of every precaution, until our arrival probably in Oregon.

I think it was about this place that a man was found near the bluffs who had entirely lost his reason, and had been abandoned by the company to which he belonged, either to starve or to be picked up by some emigrating party who might possess more humanity for him than was shown by them. He was taken to Fort Laramie by the troops, and there left under the care of the physician of that post.

The road to-day was much cut up by gullies, which are the natural drains from the highlands to the river, and in many places were so broken as to render it necessary to cut down the banks and make other improvements before we could pass them, without which it would have made it very fatiguing to the teams. The road this far along the valley of the Platte was good, and, with the exception of the mud, which made it very heavy, it could hardly be surpassed by any I have ever travelled over. It reminded me very much of the roads in the Mississippi bottom, which are always fine in good weather, but are the reverse whenever the rainy season sets in.

The valley of the Platte is very level and uninteresting, and but little better beyond the bluffs; there you find a little under-growth in the ravines, of dwarf oak and elder; where you get the wild gooseberry and currant, which are the only fruits to be met with about here, and are very inferior in taste when compared with those cultivated. They can be made palatable when properly served up, and afford a little variety to those who are compelled to resort to salt food, which is so very deleterious to health when constantly used on a long march like this.

June 10. -- To-day being the Sabbath, it was a day of general rest among the emigrants. As the command had been considerably delayed since leaving Fort Kearny,

it became necessary to make up for lost time, and we therefore did not follow the good example set by our fellow-travellers, deeming it more prudent to rest towards the end of our journey, if time would permit us, than at the commencement of it. I think, however, one day in the week should be taken for that purpose, it relieves the teams, and prepares them anew for their labor. The morning was cloudy and disagreeable. The thermometer at 5 o'clock was at 58°. Each division marched off about the hour of six, the third division having fallen some four or five miles in the rear of the second, which was some distance behind the first.

I ascended the bluffs this morning, and could easily discover where the two forks of the Platte river came together. It is not immediately below the lower crossing of the South Fork, but at least sixteen miles, and a short distance above where our encampment was made last night.

To-day five buffalo were seen. When first discovered they were running from the river across our road, and making towards the bluffs. It created, as might have been expected, a very great excitement; from the [p.148] highest to the lowest all seemed to be desirous of joining in the chase, and it was with some difficulty that they were prevented.

Several of the officers, with some of the men, gave chase, and soon came up with them, when the firing commenced. One of the buffalo was singled out, and, taking a circuitous route, received an additional fire as he passed towards the rear, and before being brought to bay there was a small troop in pursuit of him. He at last came to a stand, and, although writhing with pain, he would now and then make at the nearest horseman who was disposed to approach him. One of the soldiers, it may truly be said, attacked him sword in hand, giving him a blow over the head, as if he really thought any impression could be made upon him.

I think I counted sixteen mounted men after this poor animal, who, with revolvers, kept up a regular fire. All seemed to be eager to have the satisfaction of saying that they had shot a buffalo, if they were not successful enough to kill one. Lieutenant Lindsey at last brought him to the ground, and had the credit of being the victor. The other four were all disposed of. Lieutenant Frost killed one; but the most successful of the hunters was Captain Rhett, who being mounted upon a fine swift animal and extremely active, was well prepared for a good chase, and singling out an old bull, was determined to kill him without assistance of any one. His horse being very fleet,



soon brought him alongside of the buffalo; he had not run very far before he was able, with his six-shooter, to place a ball in a vital part of the animal. The horse appeared to enter as much into the spirit of it as the rider, and being very manageable, could be placed wherever required.

Having amused himself by riding sometimes alongside, and then chased for a short distance by the animal, he at last put an end to his sufferings; and, in the true hunter style, taking such portions as are considered the most delicate, left the rest to be devoured by the wolves, which are found in numbers prowling about the prairie, and particularly in a buffalo range. Mr. Leach was not last in the hunt; he killed another, making his second since we left Fort Kearny.

We met this morning a man from the Salt lake, who informed us that he had been robbed by a party of Crow Indians, who took from him his horse. He also gave us the unpleasant information that grass was extremely scarce beyond Fort Laramie, caused by the immense emigration which had already passed the fort, having started early in the season. By him we were able to send off letters; for such opportunities were very seldom met with, and we were glad to seize upon any, and particularly one so favorable as this.

We soon came to the lower crossing of the South Fork, where we found a number of wagons on both sides of the river. Some had crossed, not without much difficulty; others were then crossing, but with much trouble, for the rains had greatly swollen the river, so as to endanger their stores, as well as running the risk of losing their wagons; while many were on this side waiting for a more favorable opportunity to get across.

The banks of the South Platte seemed to be lined with large trains, moving on both sides of the river, and over the divide which separates the North and South Forks. They could be seen as far as the eye extended. To look at them, it would seem impossible that grazing could be found for such an immense number of cattle that must necessarily be thrown together when it sometimes becomes necessary to stop for water. As the [p.149] emigrants passed Fort Kearny this spring, the wagons were counted by the guard daily, and on the first of June better than 4000 had passed, not reckoning those that were on the left bank of the river, which could not be seen from the fort. While on the journey to Oregon, I had a good opportunity of ascertaining the number of persons with each wagon, and it was a small average to estimate four to each one; which would make, at this time, nearly 20,000 persons ahead of us. The number of oxen were very seldom less than ten to each wagon, and more frequently twelve. With this number, together with the many outriders, as well as cattle which were driven along, the number of

animals in advance of the regiment could not have been less than 50,000.

From this statement it will not be difficult to calculate the number of emigrants who went to California, as but few, comparatively speaking, were destined for Oregon.

To this number add those who took the Santa Fe route, also those that were still in rear of us, and it will not fall short of 35,000 souls. I feel confident in saying, that on this trail there were not less than from eight to ten thousand wagons passed during the season, with animals in proportion.

There were with the command about 1200 mules; the horses belonging to the whole regiment amounted in all to about 700; a pretty round number, altogether, to provide for daily for a period of five months. On a prairie, where one million of buffalo have been seen scattered over the hills and valleys, it may be thought that the animals ahead of us were of but little importance; but when you think of this number stopping on the borders of some convenient stream to be adjacent to water, and required to be kept within a short distance of camp, it will strike one with surprise how we ever got through the country beyond this, where grazing is always bad, without some great disaster; and when I now reflect upon the past, it often seems astonishing to me how we ever reached the Columbia river without losing half of our teams.

Colonel Loring concluded to ascend the river from this camp, hoping to find a better crossing, and we continued our march a few miles further, where the second division encamped among the hills, and their horses were taken to an island to graze for the night. The first division stopped about five miles ahead of us; and the third in the bottom near the lower crossing, which we had passed during the evening. The distance travelled to-day was twenty five miles; the road being excellent, and the day pleasant, our teams came into camp much less fatigued than usual.

June 11. -- We did not get off before six this morning; the storm of last night having scattered our mules, much time was lost in hunting them. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, knocking down our tents and blowing off the wagon covers. The rain fell in torrents, as if it would deluge the valley below us, and it was very fortunate that we had encamped among the hills.

I do not know when I have ever experienced such vivid lightning; so great was the glare, that the whole camp was at moments perfectly visible. The braying of mules, lowing of cattle, and the racing of horses through the camp, gave an additional excitement to the scene, and very little

rest was enjoyed by any one through the night. The storm caused a stampede among the horses and mules of the third division; four belonging to the travelling forge ran off, but were overtaken and brought back, except one, after having been followed nearly fifteen miles.

[p.150] There was much firing among the hills during the night by the emigrants, who were guarding their cattle; the storm having caused a stampede among them. The guard in following them became separated, and were only able to find their camps by this means.

On a march of this kind many amusing scenes take place, and seldom occur without being seen or heard of by the whole command. Thrown together as they are while in camp, and travelling during the day, every little occurrence that takes place is treasured up for the want of any better, for those who are always ready to amuse themselves at the expense of others. One of our men wandered out of camp last night in pursuit of his horse, and getting a little confused, his whole mind filled with Indians and the thought of losing his scalp, he lost his self-possession, and doubtless thinking that he had been out longer and had gone much further than was really the case, set up a yelling, with the hope of bringing some one to his rescue, and made as much noise as if he had been attacked by a band of Indians. The guard found him in this condition, running about the hills, with but little knowledge of what was doing, and much less as to where he was going, and relieved him, no doubt much to his satisfaction, and greatly to his surprise to find himself within a few hundred yards of camp. It was soon known this morning, and the poor Dutchman, who had never dreamed of a prairie or an Indian until he came on the march, had but little rest the balance of the journey.

The day was clear. The road lay over a rolling prairie, which soon became dry and firm, and we travelled fifteen miles, reaching camp about five o'clock this evening without any difficulty. We had now been several days in the valley of the Platte, on a road not the least rolling, and it was a relief to the troops, as it was to the teams, to get among the hills again. It is less severe in hauling than on a level road, such as we had travelled ever since leaving the fort.

A short time before stopping for the evening, we saw on the opposite side of the river an encampment of Sioux, who immediately struck their lodges, proceeded up the river, and stopped nearly opposite to us. A deputation, consisting of the old chief and about eighty of his party, came over to see us. This old savage had tried to make himself look as respectable as possible, and had given

a coloring, with a little vermillion, to his gray locks, which hung profusely around his shoulders. His only article of dress was a green frock coat, not of the latest cut, that reached to his ankles, and on his shoulders were an old pair of epaulets, that looked as if they had seen some service. His leggins, which were of grey cloth, were a substitute for pantaloons. To complete his costume, his cap was made of grizzly bear-skin, with a long red feather, supported by a large brass plate in front, and a medal suspended from his neck, made in 1809, with the likeness of President Madison on one side. To take the whole group together, with him at the head, would have been a scene for any painter; for of all attempts at dress, this exceeded any I have ever seen among Indians. He felt, no doubt, that he was dressed for the occasion; and we should have felt ourselves highly honored, although it did afford us a little amusement. This was the celebrated Queve de Bocut, one of the Sioux chiefs from the plains.

These Indians were very anxious to let us know their great friendship for the whites, and expressed much pleasure at seeing so many white warriors. They were very inquisitive, in wishing to know how far we [p.151] had come, where we were going, and how long we would be travelling, and ended their visit, as is usual among them, by asking for provisions and a few presents, which the Colonel gave them. This was a war-party who had been in pursuit of the Pawnees, and were then returning from below.

We were unfortunate not to have an interpreter along who could speak the language, as it would have been well to have explained to them our object. I believe I was the only person in camp who could understand anything they said, and my knowledge was very limited of their language, having forgotten much since being stationed among them, many years since.

Having obtained for them such things as they seemed to desire, I returned to the second division, which had encamped two miles in rear of the first. I found at my tent two young warriors, one of whom presented me with a piece of buffalo meat, which, like all Indian gifts, cost me in presents double its value. He commenced by begging for bread, meat, and whiskey; and indeed he wanted something of everything he saw, and finally concluded that he would like a Mexican blanket I had on my bed, which I declined giving him, and at the same time making him fully understand that it was time to be off. He very soon left, but not without getting a little whiskey, which he coolly put into the tripe of a buffalo which he had killed that day, and appeared to be as well satisfied as if it had been placed in a cut glass decanter. What the taste of it could have been by the time he drank it, will not be very difficult to imagine.

Shortly after leaving the Indians at the encampment of the first division, quite an excitement occurred among them. It proceeded from a horse being ridden into camp by one of their young warriors, which was recognized as taken by the command. It appeared that the animal had been carried off by a deserter, and, as they said, sold to the Indian, who believing himself justly entitled to it, could not be made to understand why it should be taken from him, as he had come honestly by it. When the mark of "U.S." was pointed out to him, and they endeavored to make him comprehend by signs that the horse was the property of the command, it seemed impossible to do so; a shake of the head was all that could be got from him -- he either did not or would not understand anything that was said to him. It was, however, made very plain to him, when he saw his horse led off to one of the companies, that there was more than one owner. The deputation moved off quite incensed at the wrong which they conceived had been done one of their party, being too much offended to carry off the provisions that had been given to them.

Upon reflection, it was thought to be the better plan to send back the horse to their encampment, as the Indian had obtained him in good faith, although the animal was stolen property; at which they became quite pleased, and expressed much satisfaction, and soon sent for the provisions that they had left. It was very well that this course was adopted, for they would have given us during the night much trouble to secure our horses, having it in their power to have annoyed us considerably without the least fear of being punished.

Our encampment was made near the bluffs this evening, the bottom being too wet and low to approach the river any nearer.

The mosquitoes were very numerous here, and had annoyed us very much throughout the day; our horses were frequently covered with them, [p.152] which made them very restless, and had greatly troubled them since leaving the fort.

June 12. -- The night was cloudy, and the morning quite chilly. The command left at six o'clock, and travelled about twelve miles to another ford, which we found, upon examination, to be too deep. The bottom was very uneven and filled with quicksand. One squadron crossed, after much difficulty. It was thought to be too deep to venture the train, and, as the trail lead further up the river, the Colonel, with the two guides, Lieutenant Frost and myself, followed it about 15 miles to where it crossed, leaving the command at the middle ford, where they made their encampment for the night. Finding the bottom of the upper ford much more even, and less quicksand, we determined to cross at



this place, and returned again to camp, which we reached at 7 o'clock p.m., in time to get clear of a very severe thunder storm that was fast gathering.

About a mile from the upper crossing an Indian lodge was seen, standing alone in the prairie, which we took for a medicine lodge, or where some chief had probably been buried. It was too late for us to visit it, as the evening was drawing to a close, and we were necessarily compelled to postpone it until to-morrow.

For the last two days, antelope in great numbers were seen on the prairie, but very few deer. This evening was very rainy and disagreeable. Grazing for the animals at this encampment was very indifferent; the spring being backward in this section of the country, it had impeded the growth of the grass very much.

June 13. -- Our tents were left to dry, which prevented us from getting off early this morning. The divisions left at 7, 8, and 9 o'clock, making an hour between each. We proceeded to the upper crossing, where we found that the river had risen a few inches during the night. This was much against us, being already too high to risk the trains. The colonel's carriage was first sent over, and reached the opposite side without much difficulty. We next tried a loaded wagon, drawn by six good mules, which was nearly one hour getting over. The river here is 1,090 yards wide, and I began to think at one time that it would not reach the opposite bank in safety. After this I had ten mules attached to each wagon, and half the supply train driven in at one time; and as long as the leading wagon kept moving, the rest followed very well, and got across much better than any one supposed. The mules frequently got into the quicksand; but the extra-duty men being stationed in the river at the worst places, were ready to give immediate assistance. Such was the course adopted, and the trains were all passed over in safety. Out of 160 teams we lost but two mules, which were drowned in recrossing the river: being compelled to return against the current, they often became entangled in their harness.

It was the astonishment of all that more accidents did not take place; for it was not uncommon to see teamsters down in the water at the same time with the mules, and so entangled with the harness that it appeared impossible to extricate them. To make it more disagreeable, it rained throughout the evening; but the command all got across in safety, and encamped on the left bank of the South Fork this evening, much to the gratification of every one -- for we dreaded the crossing of this stream more than the value of

the journey.

We had with us four families, who remained in their carriages while [p.153] passing over, and deserved great credit for the firmness and presence of mind they evinced; for there was not only great danger, but the looks of the muddy water, the great width, and the rapid current of the river, were enough to deter the stoutest hearts. On examining the trail, I was pleased to find the stores all safe, having suffered but very little damage, although the river was deep enough in places for the water to enter the wagon bodies. The mules, after the labors of the evening, were much the worse for wear, and a day's rest would be of great advantage to them, as the grazing was very good at this place. Having reported their condition, an order was issued for the 2d and 3d squadrons to move on the 15th, and the 1st at 12 o'clock to-morrow.

I examined this morning the lodge referred to yesterday. It was of a conical form, made of dressed buffalo skins, nicely stretched over sixteen cotton-wood poles. There were inside, the remains of an Indian lying on the ground, and covered with a buffalo skin pinned to the ground with small wooden stakes. A small scaffold was erected over the body, supporting what appeared to be a pack, and several small trinkets, that were formerly worn by the deceased. On the outer side of the lodge, and out of our reach, there were several strands of hair, indicating the number of scalps taken by him; and, from the great care in which everything was arranged, I inferred he was some great chief.

The dirt was carefully thrown up around the lodge, and, strange as it may seem, the wolves had not in the least disturbed it. An old United States flag was suspended from the top of the lodge, much torn, by the effects of the wind, against the points of the poles. Some emigrant had cut a small hole about two inches long in the lodge, to gratify, no doubt, his prying curiosity, which we found to be very convenient for the same purpose.

It is a curious fact, that in no instance will one nation disturb the dead of another, or anything that may be about them, not even when at war. The Indians deserve great credit for the respect they show their dead. Each tribe has its own peculiar mode of burial, and in many respects they are very similar.

An order was given that the lodge should not be disturbed, which was very proper, as there might have been some thoughtless persons who would not have considered it a very heinous offence to have taken a beautiful pipe, for a curiosity, which was lying on the scaffold inside the lodge.

June 14. -- The second and third squadrons remained here all day, the first leaving at 12 m. To-day was passed in unloading, drying, and preparing everything for to-morrow. We had now been out thirty-five days from Fort Leavenworth, and much longer than it should have taken; but the mules were poor, and several days were lost in waiting for the beef cattle.

We now began to feel as if the journey had really commenced; having crossed the South Fork of the Platte, we had no more obstacles to pass between here and Fort Laramie.

June 15. -- We left our encampment this morning at 5 o'clock, crossing the "divide" between the forks. This is a high level prairie, until you approach near the Platte, where you strike Ash Hollow, a deep ravine that runs to the river, and is about two miles long. The country about it is very broken, and we were compelled to let the wagons down into it by [p.154] ropes. In this hollow there are a few ash trees and dwarf cedars. The bluffs are very broken, and composed of rotten limestone and sand, which are generally the composition of those along the river.

It rained last night very hard, making the roads heavy, until the middle of the day, when it cleared off and became very pleasant. We encamped on the North Platte this evening at 5 o'clock, having marched twenty-two miles, and accomplishing the distance without any difficulty, losing not more than three hours in letting down the wagons. We found the ravine very sandy, as well as the bank of the river equally so.

I saw, while crossing the prairie, a large herd of buffalo; but valuing my horse much more than the pleasure of the chase, I passed without disturbing them. They were the last met with until arriving at Deer creek.

The country in the vicinity of the North Fork is entirely destitute of wood, but in this respect it does not differ from that already passed over. The river is much narrower than the South Fork, but less muddy, and differs materially in the formation of its bluffs, which, in many instances, become rugged, steep, and frequently approach near the bank of the river, making the valley in places very narrow.



The grass was very scarce this evening, compared with that at the crossing of the South Platte.

June 16. -- The day was very windy and clear, making it a fine day for travelling. The road was extremely sandy, which made the hauling very heavy. We commenced our march at 6 O'clock in the morning, and stopped in the afternoon at 5 o'clock, having travelled only eighteen miles.

I was called on to-day to assist an emigrating party, consisting of a woman, her son, daughter, and son in law, all of whom were too sick to attend to their wagon. I placed one of the extra-duty men with them for the day, to drive until they were able to hire some one, or take charge themselves.

We passed many emigrants to-day, who were very much discouraged at their condition; for while the greater portion were sick, others began to consider it a hopeless undertaking, and many were turning back, who brought, as might have been expected, discouraging news of the country ahead.

It was very evident that out of the immense emigration that had left the Missouri, there were a great number who must suffer before they could possibly reach their place of destination, or where assistance might be given them. As to the little they received from the troops, it was merely temporary; for large numbers required the same, and it was impossible to render them all any material aid; besides, it would have hazarded the accomplishing of our own journey to have attended to their wants.

I will not here attempt to give any description of the sufferings of these people, as I should be compelled to diverge too much from the narrative which I am required to give of what appertained simply to the command. The public prints, in different parts of the country, have long since given a detailed account of their sufferings, and I can only say that they were not at all exaggerated. Our encampment this evening was made between the river and the bluffs, and the grazing along here was very indifferent.

June 17. -- We started at six o'clock this morning. The road lay along [p.155] the river, and passed over a much higher and more rolling country than yesterday. After a march of twenty miles, we came in sight of the Lone Tower and Chimney Rock: the former is about six miles from our encampment, and to the left of our road; the latter could just be seen, and was still one day's march from us,

although, from the state of the atmosphere, it appeared but a very short distance.

Our road to-day led by a hill where the Indiana company had interred three men -- Russell, Judson, and Phillips -- who died with the cholera, on the 14th, 15th, and 17th inst., while encamping at this place. As this hill is somewhat prominent, it will be a landmark hereafter for future travellers who pass this way.

The grass for our animals this evening was very good at our encampment, which was on the banks of the Platte. The evening was delightful, with every prospect of a fine day to-morrow.

June 18. -- The morning was calm, and warm. We started at 9 o'clock, and I visited the Lone Tower on the route; it is about two hundred feet high, and stands alone on the prairie. It has much the appearance of a tower or old ruin, as you approach it, and no doubt was once connected with the high range of bluffs that pass the Chimney Rock, twenty miles from here; but at present it stands entirely alone, the range of bluffs not being within two miles of it. A small stream passes its base, which, after winding through a valley about three miles wide, empties into the Platte, near where we encamped last night.

We encamped this evening three miles from Chimney Rock, on the banks of the Platte, after a day's march of twenty miles, where we found very good grazing.

June 19. -- I visited Chimney Rock this morning, as the command wended its way along the river. The Column did not appear to be more than fifty feet high, and is composed of light clay, which I found to be extremely soft, and the same composition as that of the bluffs near it and the Lone Tower. From the base of the hill on which it stands, it is probably over two hundred feet high.

There is no reason to doubt that this column of earth once belonged to the bluffs which are very near it, and by time, and the assistance of the elements, has been worn into its present form. When approaching it, it takes a variety of forms -- sometimes that of an old ruin, then a very sharp cone; but, after all, more the shape of a chimney than anything I can compare it to. The variety of forms which are seen proceed from the winding of the road, and the position of the bluffs about it.

We left the river soon after passing it, and reached a valley near Scott's Bluffs, where we made our encampment for the night, having travelled twenty-three miles.

The scenery for the last two days has been very picturesque. The hills are much higher and more broken than any we have seen on the march, and begin to change the monotony which we have had so constantly since leaving Fort Kearny.

This evening we suffered for water, having only a small spring for two squadrons, and the water used for the horses came from mud-holes which we found near the camp. Wood, as usual, was very scarce, but we obtained enough in the valley for our use, that had been swept from the hills by the heavy rains which frequently fall during the summer. What was found, principally consisted of dwarf cedar and pine. We had but very [p.156] little for our horses at this encampment, and the grass began to change as rapidly as the face of the country.

June 20. -- Previous to reaching our encampment last evening, we had a heavy shower of rain, accompanied by hail, which made it very cool this morning. We got under way at 6 o'clock, and after passing up the valley about five miles, ascended the first high hill since leaving Fort Leavenworth. This is partly covered with cedar, which was the first we had met with on the march. There is also a spring of delightful cold water which we should have reached last evening, but, from the want of a proper knowledge of the country by the guide, we failed to do so. Here was a blacksmith's shop and trading-house, built in the true log cabin style, which made us all feel as if we were in reality approaching once more a civilised race.

Shortly after ascending the hill, we came in sight, for the first time, of Laramie's Peak, which belongs to the range of Black Hills, and was probably eighty miles from us. The scenery is very beautiful from the top of this hill, presenting to the view mountains, hills, and valleys, in every direction, changing entirely the scenery which we had been so long accustomed to, and convinced us that we were in reality approaching the Rocky mountains, so long talked of. I do not know when I have witnessed a more delightful sight. The road from here began gradually to descend, until towards the close of the evening, when we arrived on the banks of Horse creek, and made our encampment for the night, accomplishing to day a distance of nineteen miles. It remained cool all day, which made it very pleasant for travelling, and we got on without much difficulty.

One of our teamsters ran off this morning, taking with him a public mule. A party was dispatched in pursuit of him, but finding that he was closely followed, he took to the hills, and succeeded in escaping. Another mutinied to-day, and threatened to shoot one of the agents: he was placed in close confinement, and taken to Fort

Laramie, where he was left, to be sent back to Fort Leavenworth by the first conveyance. This was the commencement of difficulties with the teamsters, who began to show signs of insubordination, and it was feared, as we approached the South Pass and Salt Lake, that many of them would leave us. For my part, I placed very little dependence in any of them, and would not have been surprised to have seen them leave at any moment.

June 21. -- Before arriving in camp last evening, we crossed a very miry creek, that gave us a great deal of trouble. We were frequently required to haul the mules out of the mud, besides breaking several of the wagons. It weakened the teams more in crossing this stream, than the distance travelled since crossing the South Platte. We got off at 6 o'clock; the morning was fine, but bid fair to be very warm through the day. The bluffs were very broken, and the road sandy. This proved to be the warmest day experienced since commencing our march. It had rained but very little since crossing the South Fork, which made it very dusty. Our road to-day passed close along under the bluffs, which intercepted the breeze, and made it almost suffocating.

In addition to this, the mosquitoes and buffalo gnats were very annoying to the animals and men; we had been much troubled with them ever since leaving Fort Kearny. We encamped on the Platte this evening, at 3 o'clock, having [p.157] travelled nineteen miles, which was a good day's journey, against the heavy, dusty road passed over, and the heat we were compelled to support.

It was at this place that we got wood for the first time since the 9th instant, and the men seemed eager to gather it for fear of a scarcity the next day. Our animals fared very badly at this encampment, as they had for the last three days; and it was fortunate we were so near Fort Laramie, where it was in contemplation to rest, for our mules were fast giving out and the cavayard was daily increasing.

June 22. -- The morning was fine. Having prepared for the march, we left our encampment at 6 o'clock, and arrived at Laramie's creek at 2 o'clock p. m., where the trading-house is located. It was excessively warm and dusty; although we had a light shower during the night, it had but little effect in laying the dust.

Fort Laramie is situated on Laramie's creek a rapid stream, about sixty yards wide, with a firm, pebbly bottom. This stream rises among the Black Hills to the west, and falls into the North Platte, about half a mile below the fort.

This fort is built in the form of a quadrangular figure, and of unbaked clay, or adobe; the wall is about twenty feet high, with a small palisading on a part of it. There are two block-houses at the corners, diagonally from each other, over the main entrance, which faces the river, there is also another small block-house. The buildings are made inside, the wall forming a part of them. They are very small, and have but few comforts to recommend them.

There are no trees about the fort to protect it from the rays of the sun, which are reflected from the surrounding hills. It is by no means a handsome location, the scenery of the adjacent country being entirely intersected by small barren hills, which form the valley of Laramie's creek. The hunting at this place has generally been very good, and its only attraction; but even this has greatly diminished since the emigrants have made it the great thoroughfare to Oregon and California.

There is fine grazing on Laramie's creek, where hay may be gathered in the fall. Wood is scarce immediately in the vicinity of the fort, but pine and cedar may be procured on the hills across the Platte, about eight miles above here.

We had now arrived at Fort Laramie, 639 miles from Fort Leavenworth, a point where the government has established a military post, where two companies of the rifle regiment were stationed, which was to be a resting place for us for a few days. Our train could now be overhauled and repaired, leaving such wagons as might be dispensed with, and mules that were broken down and unfit to continue the journey. There was still plenty of time for them to be recruited and sent back to Fort Leavenworth before the fall.

Since leaving Fort Kearny, we had travelled 327 miles, over a bad road, which in dry weather does not present one obstacle, but in the rainy season, it is extremely heavy and very severe upon teams; in such weather, I think it worse than the road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearny. There are many deep gullies which require repairing, but a small party can always render them passable by being a little ahead. Water is generally to be had through the day, as the river is frequently touched, and is always in striking distance, except at Scott's Bluffs, where you leave it, and do not strike it again for forty miles. [p.158]



From the 1st of June, our time was made very unpleasant by constant rains; it made the roads very heavy and the hauling extremely hard. Wood is not to be procured from the time you leave Fort Kearney until you arrive at this place, and nothing is to be seen but the naked valley and boundless prairies, in whatever direction the eye is turned.

There is a little more variety after arriving on the North Platte, as I have stated in my daily marches; the high bluffs on the banks of the river, as well as the several broken ranges in the vicinity of Chimney Rock and Scott's Bluffs, are a little relief after the great monotony which we have so long looked upon.

### CHAPTER III

[p.158] March from Fort Laramie to Independence Rock, on Sweet Water River, 134 miles.

June 23. -- The day was fine, and every possible arrangement was being made for a speedy departure. The whole train was overhauled to-day; the clerks were kept busily engaged until 11 o'clock at night arranging papers, so as to be ready for the march.

I regret to say that the dissatisfaction on the part of the teamsters was becoming more manifest, making it necessary to place another in irons who had openly resisted the authority of those placed over him. Indifferent as I found them, I do not know what we should have done without them, for the soldiers were raw recruits -- some, not speaking the English language, were not capable of taking care of one horse, much less a team of six mules. Although their threats were regarded as of no importance, still we were in a country where there was neither law nor order. I therefore left him at Fort Laramie to be sent back, thinking it by far the better plan to get clear of such disaffected men, as the example which they set did not tend to benefit the others, who, in many instances, were disposed to do their duty.

The commanding officer of this post released them a few days after we left, considering, I presume, he had no authority to keep them in confinement, and they followed the command and the emigrating parties, stealing whenever an opportunity offered. They stole several mules from the command. One of the thieves was taken twice; but the guard not being vigilant enough to secure him, he was allowed to escape.

My labors with the command were daily increasing; both the agents and myself were required constantly on the alert. This was done until we were completely worn down, although I was fortunate enough to be blessed with health, which kept me in the saddle from the time I commenced my journey until I arrived at the Dalles, on the Columbia river.

June 24. -- I was agreeably surprised to find that the ox-teams that had started from Fort Kearny with subsistence stores on the third of June, had arrived in very good order. It was not my intention, when they first started, to take them any further; but their condition was so much better, compared with the mules that I determined to push them on to Fort Hall. They crossed Laramie's creek this evening, having given the wagon master [p.159] orders to move with such emigrants as are regular in their daily marches, and not to be governed by us.

This was a very fine day, although much warmer than heretofore. The clerks worked hard throughout the day, and very late to-night, to get everything in readiness by the morning, so as to leave. All the stores were overhauled, and inventories taken of them; besides the papers connected with the property left at this place, as well as the report of our march made to the head of the Quartermaster's department. I turned over to the acting assistant quartermaster at Fort Laramie twenty wagons and one hundred and twenty mules; also other property for the use of the post, and reported the train in readiness to move in the morning. Having completed the labors of the day, and the writing which was necessary to be done, he eleven o'clock at night we retired to rest, pretty well fatigued.

June 25. -- The squadrons left at six, half-past six and seven o'clock this morning, all being ready before the first squadron crossed Laramie's creek. This stream was very high, and up to the wagon bodies, which damaged a little some of the stores.

Having all got across without any accident, it may be said that we had now fairly started again, not to stop before reaching Fort Hall, a distance nearly equal to that which we had travelled, and by far worse; for we were to pass over spurs of mountains, and through a broken, hilly country, almost destitute of grass; and without overcoming all this, our journey could hardly be expected to be accomplished.



We had now commenced a journey over an entire new country, filled with hills and valleys, and in many places broken and rugged, which was to cause us much labor and fatigue. Our road was a very rough one to-day; mountains were to be seen at a distance rearing their heads far among the clouds, presenting a scene which was beautiful to look upon, and admonished us that what we had still to contend with would not be accomplished without much toil and suffering not only to ourselves, but more particularly our animals.

We continued our journey among the barren hills until we came to a deep sandy ravine, through which the heavy rains from among them pass into the North Platte, probably eight miles from the fort. On the right side of the road, and about three hundred yards below where it crosses the ravine, there is a fine spring that breaks from the side of the hill and affords an abundance of water. The men made an excavation that collected a sufficient quantity in a few minutes for the whole command. It was very refreshing, being the first we had met with since the morning, and by no means warm, although not as cold as springs generally are among the hills.

The road turns a little to the left, and leads through a deep gorge, ascending a high steep hill, covered with cedar and dwarf pine. After reaching the top you again strike the prairie; and about three miles from here we took a road to the right, commonly known as the Mormon trail. It had been but little travelled this year, and there was every prospect of meeting with better grazing for our animals for the next two days, than by following the road which leads towards the mountain range, although it was much more rugged than the old trail.

We made our encampment on a small stream in a very broken part of the country, having on its banks a little cotton-wood. Before reaching it we had a very heavy rain, accompanied by hail, which certainly fell [p.160] faster than I have experienced for some time, making a hill which we had to descend very difficult for the train. I doubt if this rain will ever be forgotten by those who were exposed to it, as it was among the last of any importance until we arrived at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia river. It lasted but a short time, and was very partial, as the rear division got none of it.

The water came in torrents from the hills. While crossing the bottom beyond the creek we met it rolling on, half-leg deep, to the stream below. The ravines, which a few minutes before were dry, soon became filled, and the dry bed on the creek which we had just passed was made suddenly a large stream.

The evening cleared off, and the night was very pleasant. The distance marched to-day was twenty-one miles.

The mules and horses were very much fatigued, as the road throughout the day passed over hills and valleys that were very rough, and entirely different from any day's march since the commencement of the journey.

July 26. -- The road this morning passed along a narrow ridge; and after getting under way at the usual hour, Captain Tucker and myself descended a deep valley, being entirely surrounded by perpendicular rocks. There is a small canon which led to the river, which is the outlet to the water which we found in this small valley, and accumulates principally from a spring at the head of it.

There was very fine grazing in it, sufficient for two thousand horses, with fine water running entirely through it, which came from the spring. As the view of this place, from the road, was intercepted by other small hills and ravines, there are but few who ever notice it! Here I got possession of a fine pair of elk horns, which, from the size, induced me to carry them to the Columbia river, and thence to Washington, as they are probably the largest ever brought from the mountains.

This day's march brought us to Horseshoe creek, near Heber's spring, after a march of fifteen miles, where we procured wood, water and grass in the greatest plenty. This surpassed any encamping ground we had met with since starting on the march. The grazing at Fort Laramie was certainly very excellent, but nothing to compare to this. The country, although uneven, was not very hard to travel over to-day, and we completed our journey by two o'clock p.m.

I received orders this evening, from the commanding officer, to fit out Colonel Porter with materials to prepare a raft at the Mormon ferry, on the North Platte, now eighty-seven miles from us. Although late at night, it was complied with, and he left the next morning early for that place.

June 27. -- This morning was very pleasant, after a slight shower of yesterday evening. We proceeded along a level road to-day, until we again struck the river, at a grove of cotton-wood trees, about twelve miles from where we encamped last night. Since leaving Fort Laramie we had travelled but little on the Platte, being separated from it by high rocky cliffs and broken ground along its banks.

Trees were lying in every direction at the cotton-wood grove, having been cut down by the emigrants, the few years previous, for food for their animals. It may be thought a poor substitute, but the bark as well as the small limbs are very nutritious, and have often been resorted to in this region to sustain life for months.

\* After crossing the Bitter Cotton-wood, and before stopping for the night we came to the base of a hill, where we found a large quantity of gypsum which is very near a stream, where the water was lying in holes and of a very inferior quality.

We continued up the valley a few miles, when we left the river, not to [p.181] strike it again until we came near Deer creek, where we might be required to cross. Our march was now through narrow gorges, winding around hills the whole evening, until it brought us on a ridge, where the country could be seen in different directions for a long distance. Here we made our encampment for the night, although a very poor one, as the grass was very indifferent. Since leaving Fort Laramie, we had passed over a fine range of country for game; elk and antelope abound in great numbers, and if time had permitted us to hunt them, they could have been killed without any difficulty.

The scenery from the top of the ridge was very picturesque. Laramie's peak and the range of Black Hills could be very distinctly seen, and frequently reminded me of some of the mountain scenery I had met with in Mexico. I ascended several high hills, and had a fine view of the country as I travelled along to-day, but there is nothing to recommend it except the beauty of the scenery, as the land is very poor and barren, being of very light soil, and covered principally with wild sage.

June 28. -- The morning was clear and mild. We did not commence our march until 7 o'clock. The road led along the ridge for some distance, then passing into deep ravines and over high hills, where our route could be seen twenty miles ahead. At such places it was very distinctly marked, as the soil is of a reddish cast, being a mixture of red marl and sand.

About the middle of the day we arrived at a rapid stream, called the Bitter Cotton wood, which is about thirty feet wide, and the water very fine. Previous to reaching it, the road became very sandy and difficult to get over. There is a fine cold spring to the right as you enter it which is seldom seen. After crossing the stream the road ran along the left bank for several miles, when it again turned in among the hills and ravines, and, at the end of our day's journey, we arrived at the base of a range of high hills, which might be more properly called a mountain spur, where water could only be obtained by digging for it. This is commonly known as the Spring branch. Here we made our encampment, having travelled twenty-one miles.

\* There is much bitter cotton-wood on the stream we first passed to-day, from which it takes its name. With the exception of this, we have met with no wood of any importance; the hills and valleys being entirely destitute of anything like vegetation, except artemisia.

June 29. -- Our road to-day passed over a dreary and uninteresting route -- more so than any since leaving Fort Laramie. The Hills are not so high as you approach the Platte, but entirely barren. Nothing was to be seen but the artemisia, or wild sage, which is extremely uninteresting,

having neither beauty nor usefulness to recommend it, and its odor by no means pleasant. We were now destined to travel a very long distance where this shrub was constantly to be seen, and in greater quantity than had already been met with, for it may be said that we had just entered it, as it was not very plenty or large, compared with what we afterwards met with on the route.

There must be something in the composition of the earth particularly [p.162] adapted to its growth, for, whenever grass was scarce, we invariably found it in great quantities. I have travelled for days, before reaching the Columbia river, where nothing could be seen on the highlands and plains but the artemisia, which for miles looked as if the whole country had been cleared of all other vegetation to make room for it.

The morning was clear, and the day throughout very warm. The command was detained by the hunting of horses and mules, which was usually the case, but more so this morning. With all this, we accomplished twenty-six miles. As it was necessary to reach the river, we were told to get grass for our horses, but we encamped at the mouth of Deer creek, where grazing was even worse than might have been found at some of the streams which we crossed to-day, having crossed several; one of which was the Bonte, a fine, clear, rapid little stream, which came from the Black Hills, and falls into the Platte about ten miles from where our trail crosses it.

The route to-day was very well watered by these streams, which was the only recommendation it had, as the soil and face of the country have been the same since leaving the fort. We got in very late this evening; twenty-one miles was a long march, as well as a warm one, and the indifferent grazing for the last two days and the heavy hauling over this uneven country had weakened our animals very much, and jaded them considerably. Seven of our teams gave out to-day, which was very discouraging; but our consolation was, that while we were crossing the river it would enable them to become sufficiently rested to pass over the barren region which lies between the Platte and the Sweet Water, where better grass would be obtained, as the valley of the Sweet Water had been heretofore noted for it, as well as for its good water.

It was too late in the evening, after arriving at camp, to examine the country around us; the horses and mules were therefore staked out, to do as well as they could for the night, intending to take them to the base of the mountains in the morning, which was seven miles distant. This will, no doubt, appear a long distance to drive animals to obtain grazing; but such was the state of the country this season, that it became necessary to do it to prevent starvation, and it will give some idea of what we were frequently

compelled to resort to on this march for the preservation of our horses and mules.

June 30. -- Although the morning was very pleasant, we did not leave camp until half-past seven, as the horses and mules had scattered in every direction among the hills, having got but very little last night, after a long day's march. It was our intention to go but a few miles to-day, where we would be nearer the base of the mountains. Lieutenant Frost and Palmer left camp early to examine the range, and did not overtake us until we arrived at Crooked Muddy creek, a distance of ten miles from our encampment this morning.

We encamped on this creek, and sent the mules and horses to where there was very good pasturage, about seven miles off, and had them guarded by the teamsters while there. The river presented a very busy scene; emigrants were crossing in several places, while others were engaged in constructing rude rafts of dry logs, which are attached together and pieces pinned across to confine them. By placing at the end two oars, which are used as sweeps they are propelled to the opposite side, descending at the same time partly with the current. After reaching the [p.163] opposite side, a yoke of oxen are attached to it, and it is carried up the stream sufficiently far, so that, when let loose it reaches the point where it originally started from by the force and effects of the current and the aid of the oars. The wagons are taken apart, and it generally takes about three trips to carry over one wagon and its load. This you will perceive is very slow work, and would be still more so with a train as large as the one with us.

July 1. -- The command remained here to-day, it being extremely warm, and at the same time would give us an opportunity of resting, being the first day we had stopped since leaving Fort Laramie. I went to the base of the mountains, accompanied by Mr. Dudley, and had a very unpleasant ride, as the ground between the river and mountains is very rough. We saw antelope in great numbers, and one or two buffalo, which we chased for two or three miles, but being better able to clear the gullies and difficult places than we were, they soon left us out of sight, for although large and apparently unwieldy, they are extremely active. It was in this chase that I saw Miller, one of my wagon-masters, for the last time, as he was seized with the cholera after returning to his camp, where the mules were grazing, and died in a few hours. He was a very efficient man, and a great loss to me. In the morning he was as well as any belonging to the train, and had been sent out to take charge of the party who were guarding the mules; but before the sun went



down, he was no longer among the living, but resting quietly in his grave. This was the last case of cholera, I believe, which occurred in the command, much to the gratification of every one, for it was by no means a pleasing reflection to think we were surrounded by a disease which carried off the strongest without a moment's warning.

This range of mountains was thickly covered with cedar and pine, where lumber for public purposes could be easily obtained. There is coal on Deer creek, and along the valley. In one of the hills, near the Crooked Muddy creek, I discovered it myself, and I have no doubt it may be found in great quantities. Having returned to camp, orders were given for the third division to cross at this place, while the first and second should move up the river to the Mormon ferry, where we might attempt to cross on rafts, or use the ferry. It was not far, as the distance was only eleven miles from here.

The Colonel and myself left camp about six o'clock p.m., for the purpose of reaching Colonel Porter's encampment, and having travelled about eight miles, diverged from the road towards the base of the mountains, when, after riding some time, we came to the place which he had left this morning. Where to find him we did not know, as the guide to the camp was completely lost. Having wandered about for some hours, we again reached the river, and arrived at the Mormon ferry about twelve o'clock at night. At this place we learned that the party we were in search of was up the river about four miles; we pursued our journey, and, after winding among the cotton-wood trees and the bends of the rivers, found them at half-past one o'clock in the morning. It was a bright moonlight night, and with the exception of being lost, and the fear of not finding the party before the next morning, the ride was by no means unpleasant.

July 2. -- The morning was clear and quite cool before sunrise. The raft was hastily put together, and every preparation made for crossing the [p.164] river; but it was soon found that the length of time, and the injury which the property would sustain by exposure, would not justify it, when the Mormon ferry could be hired for \$4 per wagon, and the same guaranteed to be delivered, with its load, on the other side of the river in safety. The raft was therefore abandoned, and the ferry hired.

July 3. -- This evening several wagons of the first division were crossed, and instructions given by me to have the mules of the first division train swam across early in the morning, which was accordingly done. The day, though warm was very pleasant, but the mornings and nights were getting quite cool.

July 4. -- Previous to leaving our encampment, which was about five miles from the ferry, a partial stampede took place among our horses, created by a general stampede of those from the first division. They had been turned loose to cross the river, but evinced no disposition to do so; and, after making several efforts to get them over, they broke through the command, running at full speed in different directions -- some towards the base of the mountains, and others up the river, passing by our encampment, and taking with them a number of our horses.

It was in this stampede that one of my riding horses played a conspicuous part. He was hobbled by his fore-legs, so as to range about camp, believing him perfectly secure; but I was soon convinced that this mode of hobbling horses was no prevention against their running off, for he ran with them several miles, and was not very far behind the gang. They were, however, turned and brought back, after having run for several hours.

This stampede was very injurious to the horses, and they showed the bad effects of it a few days later. My horse was brought back with his legs much cut by the hobbles, and was more injured by it than by the march from Fort Leavenworth, and did not recover throughout the journey.

From the time the troops commenced the march the horses and mules had never been allowed to run loose, but were staked out at the termination of each day's march, and now finding themselves free, were extremely difficult to manage. The proper course would have been to have supplied side-hobbles for the horses of each company; and by allowing them to range around camp on the prairies, where grazing was not difficult to procure, they would very soon have become used to them, and could at any time have been turned out without the fear of their running off; but I am compelled here to remark, in connexion with this subject, that there was not one hobble along, nor could I find in the whole train a bell, which is frequently required in herding animals, when it becomes necessary, from the scarcity of grass, to turn them loose.

The hills, or, more properly speaking, the range of mountains, which are a continuation of the Black Hills, approach the river at this place within four miles, and are thickly covered with very fine pine and cedar, and the hills and valleys beyond are



also covered with timber of the same kind. This is a great place for buffalo and game of every description. It is said that grizzly bears are found here quite numerous; they were seen and shot at by the emigrants, but none of our command were so fortunate as to come across them here, or on any part of the journey. Large herds of buffalo were seen towards the head of Deer creek; but as our time did not justify any delay, or that we should waste the strength [p.165] of our horses, which were already in a poor condition, we had to forego the pleasure of chasing them.

This morning a fine elk came within gunshot of our camp. He was chased by a party of us into the mountains, without being successful in killing him, although he was shot at. The black tailed deer are quite numerous about here, but it was difficult to find them without crossing the range, which would have occupied much more time than we could conveniently lose.

The grazing on Deer creek, and along the base of the mountains towards the head of Little Muddy creek, is extremely good, and there is everything here to recommend it as a pleasant location for a post should the station be changed from Fort Laramie. It brings the troops nearer to the South Pass, where the Indians on war parties often frequent, and probably would be more disposed to commit depredations here than at any other point between Fort Laramie and Bear river. An excursion could be taken by the troops, during the summer, along the Sweet Water, where their horses would have fine grazing, and would give them an opportunity of scouring the base of the Wind River mountains, where they would most probably meet the Crow Indians. About the mouth of Deer creek, and along the river for fifteen miles, the emigrants commerce crossing; and by establishing a good ferry here by the troops, it would pay for the erection of a post, if the emigration should continue for a few years longer as large as it was this year; for the price of crossing the Mormon ferry varies from \$3 to \$4 a wagon.

The morning was fine, but very cold at five o'clock. The temperature of the nights and mornings at this place was sufficiently cold to make it necessary to resort to fires to keep ourselves comfortable, although in the middle of the day it is generally very warm. The first division succeeded in crossing to day, and the second moved down to the ferry, towards the close of the evening, and commenced to cross.

This was the manner in which the Fourth of July was spent by the command, while throughout the country, in every city and hamlet, it was kept as a day of rejoicing. We had tried to reach Independence Rock in time to spend it there; but owing to our great detention immediately after leaving Fort Kearny, we were unfortunately prevented from doing so, by three days.

July 5. -- The second division crossed over five of their wagons last evening. This morning, at quarter after four o'clock, we commenced to ferry the remainder, and finished at two o'clock p.m., and made our encampment on the hill immediately above the landing, where we remained for the day.

An order was issued this morning for the divisions to travel one day apart. The scarcity of grass through the country which we were about to travel over, rendered it necessary to adopt some plan of this kind. The face of the country having entirely changed since leaving Fort Laramie, it was only at certain points in our day's marches hereafter that grass could be procured, and even then in limited quantities.

The first division commenced its march this morning. Our mules were driven out about three miles from camp, being by far better than on the banks of the river, where they were guarded during the day, and kept until the morning.

In crossing the river yesterday we were so unfortunate as to have two men drowned; one of whom, wishing to get something from the opposite [p.160] side, rode his horse into the river, and being fully equipped for the march, no sooner reached deep water than both man and horse went down. In the other case, one of the rafts was loaded with saddles and men. When reaching the middle of the stream an accident occurred, by the breaking of an oar, and, being carried down the current, produced a panic among those on board, who, rushing to one side, careened it, so as to induce them to think it was sinking; when every man, losing his presence of mind, jumped overboard, and made for the opposite side, which they all reached in safety but one. It was astonishing what little forethought and presence of mind the men evinced in many instances on the march; and they reminded me more of children than persons who had arrived at the age of maturity.

The river is not over four hundred yards wide at this point, and has a very rapid current. To have attempted to cross the whole command on rafts would have caused much delay, as well as the loss of property and lives; for no emigrants crossed without losing a portion of their stores and wagons, while others lost their lives; besides, the state of the country which we were to pass over rendered it necessary to lose no time in getting ahead of the great mass of emigrants who were making every effort to push forward to get to better grazing.

There is but little timber along the Platte; the river is almost as destitute as the upper part of the South Fork. What there is consists in cotton wood, found scattered along on its banks for about fifteen miles.

To-day was extremely warm, the atmosphere dry and sultry. Rains had become less frequent of late, which made the nights cold and the middle of the day suffocating. We are now fast leaving the country for game, and a few more day's marches would carry us to the South Pass, where buffalo and deer are seldom seen now in large numbers; the country between the mountains being almost too barren to support them, and the immense emigration driving them from the Sweet Water valley, where they frequent early in the spring, in large herds. We were soon to see no more of them after leaving here Captain Granger informed me that there must have been on Deer creek one herd of at least five thousand. This has always been considered a great range for them, as they were seen in gangs, at the time General Kearny returned from California in 1847, to the number of a million.

We observed, this evening, lights in the mountains, supposed to be made by deserters, as signal fires; for many had left the command, and we had every reason to think that there was a constant communication between them and those who contemplated leaving, and who were doubtless supplied of nights, in many instances, by provisions from the command.

July 6. -- The second division commenced the march at half-past six this morning, passing up the river, and over a very sandy road for about eight miles, making the hauling this distance very fatiguing. It became better during the day, as the road leaves the river at this point, and does not touch it again, but passes over a rolling country filled with alkali ponds and artemisa. The ponds are covered with an incrustation of salacratu, and

much of it is deposited at the bottom.

Our march to-day brought us in sight of the Red Hills, where we made our encampment for the evening, about a mile from the road, below an alkali swamp and mineral spring. The water at this spring is very cold, [p.167] and it taste that of stone-coal. There were other springs also passed, and were considered very deleterious, the taste being extremely disagreeable.

This was the first day we had observed that the cattle of the emigrants were dying, and it was a lamentable sight to see these fine animals lying along the road, at distances of not more than a few hundred yards apart; and in one instance I saw where an entire team had been stricken down where they stood linked together to commence their daily work. From the Platte they were constantly met with along the road, in large numbers, until we arrived at the valley of Bear river, a distance of 300 miles, when they began to diminish, much to the gratification of the emigrants.

The death of these animals was attributed, by many, to the drinking of alkaline water. There were several causes, doubtless, combined, to which it might be ascribed; the change of atmosphere, which had become dry and sultry since leaving Fort Laramie; the drinking of impure water when much heated, after a hard days drive over a dusty road, filled with alkali. As emigrants along this route commence to increase their marches, being often compelled to do so to arrive at a place where grass and water may be obtained, and for fear of not arriving at the end of their journey before the fall, they travel with much more repidity than the condition of their teams should justify.

Our horses fared very badly this evening for grass, as there was none of any importance, and what little they did get was trampled down by the horses of the first division and cattle belonging to emigrants who were still ahead of us. While on the prairie, between Forts Leavenworth and Kearny, there was no portion of the route but what grazing could be had at any moment, though much better in some places than at others; but such is the formation of the soil, and its extreme sterility, that you are compelled to travel sometimes a whole day

before getting to a spot where you can find the least quantity, and these places this spring have been entirely consumed. Our march was eighteen miles over a very dusty road, but we were compelled to stop here, or go further and fare even worse. The camp was pretty well supplied with wood, as we procured as much as we required for the night.

July 7. -- The command left at seven o'clock, and struck the main road two miles from our encampment of last night. We continued our journey over a rolling country, entirely barren, having no scenery to interest one in the least, until we arrived at the Willow Spring, where we found, for the first time today, a small stream of fine, pure, cold water, which came from the head of a small ravine formed by several hills. The spring takes its name from the number of small willows about it, and along the gorge where the water passes. A number of emigrants had collected at this place, where some of them had been for several days.

This water was, by far, better than any the emigrants had met with since commencing their journey, and they seemed disposed to make the most of it before moving forward. We found a large number who had encamped and taken their cattle over the hills about four miles to graze, where they represented it to be better than at the last encampment, or any since crossing the North Platte. This is not to be taken as any proof of good grazing, for that was not to be found among these hills; but being in the vicinity of good spring water, which seems to be valued so highly by these people, the grass that was found was better than nothing; and, in their estimation, the want of quantity was made up by the quality of the fine, cold [p.168] stream which gushed from the base of the hills, and, increasing as it passed through the gorge, finds its way along the hills and through these dry plains, until it reaches the Platte, to which we had now bid adieu for the last time, our course leading to the northwest, while the Platte soon turns to the south.

After winding up the gorge and ascending a very long hill, a new scene broke upon our view. We could easily see the spurs of the mountains that formed the Sweet Water valley, while others ranged to the northeast, forming with the Wind River mountains, still further to the north, a large and extensive valley. We had a very fine view from this place of the adjacent country in every direction.



The Sweet Water valley was beautifully marked out by hills until it reached the Platte. The country to the north was interspersed with mountains and valleys, while that to the east presented a broken and uneven country, entirely sterile, the whole destitute of wood, which to scenery is so indispensable.

It was too early in the evening to stop at the spring, and we continued on to Greasewood creek, which comes from the Wind River valley, and encamped for the night. Several places were passed in the eveing, but the water was too impure to encamp; they were nothing more than alkaline bogs. Our horses were taken about three miles from our encampment to graze for the night, and carefully guarded by the teamsters, who were responsible for their loss. From among them a guard was formed, whose duty it was to keep watch all night, under the direction of the wagon-masters and agents. The extra-duty men were also required to perform the same duty, which, after walking, and frequently working pretty hard during the day, to be required to stand watch was sometimes found to be severe duty, and a little more than they had contracted to perform.

I found in a range of hills a fine specimen of coal, which I was unfortunate in losing before arriving at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia river. The country from Deer creek to the Sweet Water river, I have no doubt, abounds in coal in great quantities. It is found on the left bank of the Platte at the Mormon ferry, and up to this place the hills bear every sign of it. The specimen I obtained to-day showed a very fair quality, and I think it might be obtained in great quantity here. The distance of country travelled over, where coal may be seen in places, is about forty miles, and no doubt continues entirely across to the Wind River mountains. The train came in this evening in very bad order; many of the teams completely worn down, and several of the mules had given out.

In this day's march of twenty-two miles there were not less than fifty dead oxen passed on the road. The grass in every ravine was eaten to the ground, and the earth presented a frosted appearance from the deposits of alkali; nothing but wild sage and the greasewood shrub were to be seen all over the country.

The wind through the day blew very hard, and the dust was so thick at times as to hide the whole division; both men and animals suffered very much, particularly the teamsters, who were unable to avoid it. I required the wagons to be kept some distance apart, so as to escape as much as

possible the heavy clouds of dust that were constantly kept up through the whole day. It was very cold during the day, and, the wind sweeping over the snow-capped peaks of the Wind River mountains, [p.169] which were not far off, made it as unpleasant as if it had been the middle of October. No wood was to be had on this stream but the astersia and grease-wood, which were used, and answered as a very good substitute.

July 8. Last night was very cold, and a good fire of oak wood would have been acceptable. The morning was clear, and it continued cold. We got off at 8 o'clock, and after passing along a level but sand plain for eleven miles, arrived at Independence Rock, which had been the theme of conversation with us since leaving Fort Laramie. It was a spot often spoken of by those who had passed before us, and known as a great resting-place, and made somewhat noted by emigrants who had been fortunate enough to be there on the 4th of July. We expected to have reached it this year by the 4th instant, but, from unforeseen circumstances, were prevented from doing so.

It is immediately on the Sweet Water river, leaving only sufficient room for the road to pass. It is of granite, and about five hundred yards long, one hundred and fifty wide, and forty yards high. It stands entirely isolated, at the east end of a small valley, formed by it and the adjacent hills and mountains. This rock bears the name of almost every one who can take time to carve or write his name on it. There is nothing very remarkable about it, except that it is not frequently the case you meet with so long a mass of rock without the least vegetation on it of any kind, as you find in this case; and then its position makes it somewhat remarkable, looking, as it were, like some huge monster rising from the ground.

Our encampment was made about a mile above the rock, on the bank of the river, where we overtook the first division, which was much exhausted by the very fatiguing march of the last three days. Many of the mules had broken down, and were compelled to travel so slow, that the second division had gained one day, since leaving the Platte, on it. This division encamped above us, at the Devil's Gap, until the 10th instant, when we all moved about five miles up the river, and beyond the mountain that makes across the valley.

The grazing was pretty good along the base of the mountains. There were several alkaline ponds in this vicinity, which by evaporation had become dry, leaving their beds well covered with alkali, which had very much the appearance of snow. I procured several specimens, which I carried through the whole journey, and brought them safely home.



This day's journey was extremely disagreeable. The wind seemed to collect between the openings in the mountains, and came upon us with all its fury, blowing the dust and sand, mixed with with alkali, into our faces and eyes, until it became insupportable. Several persons had their eyes very much affected by it; my own suffered very severely, and have never recovered from it to this time.

The scenery about the valley of Independence Rock is very beautiful; the mountains, though not high, are very picturesque and pleasing to the eye. The valley is about four miles long, made by small ranges of mountains to the north, and high hills to the south, covered with a few dwarf cedar and pine. It has to the west a spur of the mountain, through which the river passes, and small disconnected hills to the left, which give a distant view of the scenery beyond.

The Sweet Water can be seen quietly running towards the mountains, through which it passes with a great deal of violence, between perpen--- (p. 170) dicular rocks, which are several hundred feet high, and, resuming again its natural current, quietly flows through the valley, until it mingles its crystal waters with the muddy stream of the Nebraska.

July 9. -- The day was very pleasant, except the wind, which, blowing as usual, created a great deal of dust. As we remained here today, the 1st division train was placed in a condition to continue its march; repairs and alterations were also made to the 2d division, so as to enable it to move with as much ease as possible. The condition of both trains greatly required it, as our march to Fort Hall was to be a long and tedious one, being 400 miles distant, and the teams becoming weaker every day.

In this vicinity game is generally abundant; one of the clerks killed an antelope near our camp this morning, and I found the meat extremely fine; though much like venison in flavor, I think it even better. This range has been very good for buffalo, but the valley along the Sweet Water being very narrow, they have been driven off by the emigrants, and could not be seen without going too long a distance after them.

The mountains about here abound in mountain sheep, which are often seen among the high rocky cliffs, but, being extremely shy, are hard to shoot. Several of our party, who were acquainted with their habits, went into the mountains in pursuit of them; and though unsuccessful, they brought into camp several antelopes.

The camps of the emigrants now began to bear evident signs of their condition. Provisions of every description were lying about in piles; all surplus baggage, which had

impeded their march, and assisted in breaking down their teams, was now thrown away; their wagons were broken up to ~~and~~ others, while some were left along the road; their loss of cattle was daily increasing, and it seemed very doubtful whether many of them would ever reach Oregon or California.

These people were very fortunate in having got rid of the cholera so early; we had seen no cases since crossing the North Platte, as the last one which occurred among us was at Crooked Muddy creek, eleven miles from the Mormon ferry.

On pages 242, 243 and 244 of the above mentioned book is the following statement of the march of the regiment of mounted riflemen from Fort Leavenworth to Oregon City, showing the distance travelled each day, with remarks, commencing May 10, 1849, and ending October 13, 1849.

Date	Camps	Miles	Amounts
1849			
May 10	Marched from Camp Sumner to first Camp	8.000	. . . . .
12	Thence to camp on a small stream	9.000	17.000
13	" " " on a creek	15.000	32.000
14	" " " on a small stream	15.000	47.000
15	" " " " " "	12.000	59.000
17	" " " (water one-quarter of a mile distant)	15.000	74.000
18	Thence to camp near a creek	20.000	95.000
19	" " " four miles beyond the Nemahaw	20.000	114.000
20	" " " beyond big Vermilion	24.000	138.000
21	" " " on branch of Blue	16.500	154.500
22	" " " " " "	8.000	162.500
23	" " " " " "	24.000	186.500
24	" " " on Big Sandy	21.000	207.500
25	" " " Dry Branch (water scarce)	13.000	220.500
26	" " " Little Blue	15.000	235.500
27	" " " " "	20.000	255.500
28	" " " beyond the Blue	20.000	275.500
29	" " " " " "	16.500	292.000
30	" " " near Fort Kearny, (six miles)	12.000	304.000
31	" " " beyond Fort Kearny, (two miles)	8.000	312.000
	[Making to Fort Kearny, 310 miles]		
	To camp beyond Fort Kearny from Fort Leavenworth	. . . . .	312.000

Date	Camps	Miles	Amounts
June 1	To camp	2.210	314.210
2	" "	9.760	323.970
3	" "	12.420	336.390
4	" "	14.640	351.030
5	" "	11.980	363.010
6	" "	10.870	373.880
7	" "	12.860	386.740
8	" " on junction of North Fork of Platte river	6.210	292.950
9	" " on a branch	19.080	412.038
10	" " six miles above lower cross- South Fork	25.070	437.100
11	" " " " " " "	15.750	452.850
12	" " " " " " "	11.810	464.660
13	" " on crossing at south Fork of Platte, (upper Crossing, 3,271 feet wide	13.310	477.970
14	" " beyond the crossing	6.650	484.620
15	" " on north Fork of Platte, through Ash Hollow	18.860	501.480
16	" " on Platte river	17.750	519.230
17	" " " " " "	20.850	540.080
18	" " three miles east of Chimney rock	21.300	561.380
19	" " near Scott's Bluffs	26.510	584.890
20	" " on Horse creek	19.280	604.170
21	" " on north fork of the Platte	19.330	623.500
22	" " one and one half miles be- yond Fort Laramie	15.500	639.000
[Distance from Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie 327,500 miles]			
25	To camp beyond Bitter Cotton-wood creek	21.740	660.740
26	" " on Horseshoe creek, near Heber's spring	14.200	674.940
27	" " among the hills	19.520	694.460
28	" " on Spring branch	21.080	715.540
29	" " Deer creek	26.620	742.160
30	" " on Crooked-Muddy creek	10.000	752.160
July 2	" " on crossing north fork of Platte, (Mormin Ferry)	11.750	763.910
5	" " near a marsh and mineral spring	18.630	782.540
6	" " Willow spring, (on spring three miles beyond)	18.850	801.390
7	" " on Sweet Water, (two miles from Independence Rock)	15.080	816.470
8	" " on Sweet Water	7.320	823.790
10	" " " " " "	10.050	834.290
11	" " on branch of Sweet Water	18.750	853.040
12	" " on a morass, where ice was found at twelve inches in depth	16.050	869.540

Date	Camps	Miles	Amounts
13	To camp on Sweet Water	16.250	885.790
15	" " on a stream nine miles from South Pass	25.000	910.790
16	" " on spring branch, nine miles beyond Sublette's or Green-wood's cut-Off	16.250	927.040
17	" " on Little Sandy, thirteen miles back of Sublette's or Green-wood's cut-off	20.750	947.790
18	" " on Big Sandy	11.250	959.040
19	" " on Green River ferry	23.000	982.040
21	" " on Black fork	20.500	1,002.540
22	" " on Muddy	16.946	1,021.506
23	" " on Black's fork, two miles from Fort Bridger	15.070	1,036.576
24	" " on Big Muddy	18.695	1,055.271
25	" " " " "	16.946	1,072.219
26	" " on Bear River	25.527	1,097.746
29	" " on Spring branch	23.447	1,121.193
30	" " on foot of Big hills, two miles from Smith's station	17.090	1,138.283
31	" " on Camp spring	18.220	1,156.503
Aug. 1	" " on Bear river, two miles beyond Soda spring	21.923	1,178.426
[The California trail, by way of the Great Salt Lake, four miles beyond, turns off to the left]			
2	To camp on Port Neut creek	23.351	1,201.777
3	" " on Rock branch	15.000	1,216.777
4	" " four miles from Fort Hall	22.846	1,239.623
7	" " beyond crossing of Port Neut	12.789	1,252.412
8	" " on Snake River bottom, near a spring	13.750	1,266.162
9	" " on Snake river	14.200	1,280.362
10	" " on Raft river	15.000	1,295.362
11	" " on Snake river	25.440	1,320.802
12	" " " " "	13.817	1,334.619
13	" " on Rock creek	16.116	1,350.735
14	" " on Rock creek, where it runs in deep canon	14.424	1,365.159
15	" " on Chute or Salmon Fall creek	23.000	1,388.159
16	" " on Snake river (on the bluff)	19.500	1,407.659
17	" " on First crossing of Snake river	13.292	1,420.951
20	" " on dry branch	6.816	1,427.767
21	" " on Snake river	12.205	1,439.972
23	" " " " "	20.194	1,460.166
24	" " on Catharine creek	11.715	1,471.881
25	" " on Snake river	21.946	1,493.827
26	" " on a small creek	6.461	1,500.288
27	" " on Snake river	13.920	1,514.208

Date	Camps	Miles	Amounts
28	" " " " "	14.400	1,528.608
29	" " near Fort Boisse, second crossing of Snake river	14.244	1,542.862
30	" " on Malheur river	15.515	1,558.367
Sept. 3	" " on Birch creek	22.308	1,580.675
4	" " on Burnt river	9.192	1,589.867
5	" " " " "	11.355	1,601.222
6	" " on Spring branch of Burnt river	13.515	1,614.737
7	" " in a mountain gorge	10.373	1,625.110
8	" " on slough of Powder river	17.590	1,642.700
9	" " on second fork of Powder river	13.660	1,656.360
10	" " in Grande Ronde	16.500	1,672.860
11	" " on branch of Grande Ronde river	7.250	1,680.110
13	" " on Blue mountains	12.000	1,692.110
14	" " at Lee's encampment, near springs	16.647	1,708.757
15	" " at base of Blue mountains, on the branch of Humatilla	14.604	1,723.361
16	" " at crossing of the Humatilla	13.948	1,737.309
17	" " on a plain, (water one-half mile distant)	12.710	1,750.019
18	" " on Humatilla	16.000	1,766.019
19	" " on Columbia	13.523	1,779.542
20	" " " "	16.213	1,795.755
21	" " on creek one-quarter mile from river	12.502	1,808.257
22	" " on Columbia	14.871	1,823.128
23	" " " "	12.000	1,835.128
24	" " on John Day's river	5.373	1,840.501
25	" " on Columbia	17.265	1,857.766
26	" " at the Dalles of the Columbia	19.646	1,877.412
29	" " on spring branch of Dalles creek, due northeast from Mount Head	6.750	1,884.162
30	" " on first branch of Chute river	9.210	1,893.372
Here the other road, which turned off September 22, comes in.			
Oct. 1	To camp near Indian village, or large branch of Chute river	16.410	1,909.782
2	" " on brook branch of Chute river	12.060	1,920.842
4	" " four or five miles from foot of Raymond's hill, on a stream [The odometer gave 14 miles -- one mile allowed for double dockage]	15.000	...

Date	Camps	Miles	Amounts
5	To first camp on Sandy, passing the dividing ridge between the waters of Chute and Sandy	8.750	1,944.892
6	To camp on second prairie; odometer displaced, and gave only 4.25 miles	7.000	1,951.592
7	No grass; remained here, the men cutting grass	. . .	. . . . .
8	To camp beyond the fourth crossing of Main Sandy; odometer gave 12.63 -- disallowed	12.750	1,965.342
9	" " on Heru Prairie; water in springs sixty rods to right of road; odometer displaced	14.000	1,979.342
10	" " at the opening in the woods; no water; odometer gave 12.69, sixth crossing of Sandy	13.500	1,992.842
11	" " At Fosters; odometer displaced again	4.000	1,996.842
12	To headquarters of the regiment of mounted rifles at Oregon City	20.000	2,016.842
Total distance from Fort Leavenworth to Oregon City		. . . . .	2,016.842

The story of the Military Road to Fort Kearny gives some indication of the road building activity of the time. The road had its beginnings in a law passed by Congress and approved on February 17, 1855. Fifty thousand dollars were appropriated for the purpose of "constructing a territorial road on the Missouri river, opposite Council Bluffs, in the Territory of Nebraska, to New Fort Kearny in said Territory."<sup>40</sup> Captain John Dickerson of the United States Army Topographical Engineers arrived in Omaha on June 26, 1856, to commence a survey of the road. He remained four days during which time he hired a guide, collected information in regard to the route, and had some leveling rods made. The party left Omaha on July 1, 1856, and commenced a preliminary survey. They crossed the Big and Little Papillion Creeks on the route followed by the Mormons and surveyed a route that ran along the Platte Valley north of the river to a point opposite Fort Kearny.<sup>41</sup> The Pawnee Indians promised not to molest the surveyors yet at the same time objected to the road, observing that roads always brought white men who chased away the game.<sup>42</sup>

Dickerson completed the survey on August 14, 1856, and entered into a contract with one Matthew Ragan for bridging Omaha Creek, the Big and Little Papillion Creeks, Rawhide Creek, Shell Creek, and for grading the approaches for a bridge on the Elkhorn River. Dickerson warned of the danger of prairie fires and stated that deep trenches had been dug and embankments thrown up around the abutments. Some of the bridges were of corduroy construction, flush with the stream bed and secured so the logs would not wash away.<sup>43</sup>

Acting-Governor Thomas Cuming stated in his message to the legislature in December 1857 that the Military Road was nearly finished, including



bridges built after the most improved plans. The Elkhorn River bridge was two hundred feet in length.<sup>44</sup>

The road was a heavily travelled highway. A soldier who passed over it in 1863 described it as a "well beaten track, four or five hundred feet wide, on which an enormous traffic for years had been operating... The road was hard and smooth as a floor, for the dust and gravel had been blown off from it by the wind."<sup>45</sup>

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40 United States Statutes at Large, 1855, 608.

41 Report of the Secretary of War 1857-1858, 525-532.

42 Idid., 531.

43 Idem. See W. Turrentine Jackson, Wagon Roads West, (Los Angeles, 1952) Chap. VIII for a discussion of the federal roads across Nebraska Territory.

44 Nebraska Advertiser, Brownville, December 24, 1857, 3.

45 Eugene Ware, The Indian War of 1864 (Topeka 1911), 18.

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATE FOR FORT KEARNEY, SOUTH
PASS, AND HONEY LAKE WAGON ROAD

LETTER

From

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

Transmitting

A communication from Colonel Lander in regard to the Fort Kearney,
South Pass and Honey Lake wagon road.

FEBRUARY 11, 1861. - Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, and
ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
February 11, 1861.

Sir; I have the honor to enclose herewith, for the consideration
of Congress, a communication from F. W. Lander, superintendent of the
Fort Kearney, South Pass, and Honey Lake wagon road, and several peti-
tions, numerously signed by emigrants, in reference to the construction
of a bridge across Green river and some of the smaller streams in that
vicinity and along said road.

There will remain about \$10,000 balance of the appropriation of
the above road applicable to this object; and I would respectfully call
the attention of Congress to this work as being of great importance to
the overland emigration, and recommend that the additional sum of
\$15,000 be appropriated to accomplish it.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

MOSES KELLY,
Acting Secretary.

Hon. Wm. Pennington
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

WASHINGTON, January 5, 1861.

Sir: The subject of the construction of a bridge across Green river has been repeatedly referred to in my reports of previous years. In that of 1859 I related the fact of my stationing a party of men at that river, equipped with ropes and excellent mule teams, by the aid of which the emigrants crossed it without much difficulty, although some property was lost by them and one individual drowned. At that time the emigrants drew up two petitions asking that this river might be bridged, which, bearing several thousand signatures, in fact, the names of all the male individuals of their trains, were brought by me to Washington and referred to your department.

Last summer, while constructing the western division, I again met the emigration, and learned from it that, from the changes of the river bars, the ford had become nearly impracticable.

The emigrants argue, with much force, that after leaving the old road at South Pass they make several days' journey before reaching Green river. They have then either to attempt its passage, at much risk of property and life, or return to the ferry of the old road by an additional travel of two hundred miles. The force of the current over the sand bars at the new crossing is such as to preclude the establishment of a ferry.

The News Fork is another very dangerous and difficult crossing on the new road, as well as Smith's Fork of Bear river. If you should decide to expend the balance of the appropriation in the construction of a bridge at Green river, it would be expedient to add the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to the amount remaining of the appropriation and bridge the river below its junction with the News Fork. This sum would also enable a party, once equipped and in the field, to bridge the Smith's Fork of Bear river.

Your instructions of previous years have been so explicit on the subject of not erecting costly bridges, that I could not do more than lay these facts before you in my yearly reports. The view you have hitherto taken, that the bridges would be destroyed by the mountain traders owning ferries on the old roads, is undoubtedly a correct one; but if the important crossing of Green river is to be bridged, the expedition might be directed to erect there a common block-house and blacksmith's forge, and furnish them rent free to any reliable mountaineer of former expeditions. There are several individuals who, if thus provided for, would be glad to remain at the bridge and keep it in order for travel. I cannot apprehend the destruction of a properly constructed bridge by fire.

#### INDIANS

It would be highly expedient to furnish the building party with at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) worth of Indian goods, to procure the further good behavior of the Washikee band of Snake Indians. The well known probity of Washikee would render any agreement made with him for the protection of the bridge a perfectly safe one.

Should you direct the expedition to then pass on towards California, which, regarding the sale of stock, would be the most economical course, I have the honor to again most urgently refer to my late report to the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, detailing the causes and circumstances of the late Pah-Ute-Indian war. By a conditional armistice concluded by me with the leading war chief of this tribe, hostilities were suspended by both the Indians and the emigrants and border whites for the space of one year. But, on the part of the Indians, it was with the express condition that I should lay the statement of the chief before the authorities at Washington, and use my best endeavors to procure some recognition of the claims of the tribe by government.

It will be impossible to again pass the unprotected emigration through this tribe, as I was enabled to do last summer, unless steps are taken to prove to the Indians the disposition of the government to notice their complaints. I have every reason to know that the Pah-Utes have, until very recently, been in league with the Shoshocos, and if I had possessed the authority to visit the latter as well as the Pah-Ute chief, that the massacre of emigrants, referred to in my report as having taken place near Salmon Falls, might have been prevented. While the Shoshocos held the upper road to Oregon, the Pah-Utes had assembled in large numbers along that to California, and were concentrating to attack the trains when the armistice was made.

Referring to my Indian report for further information, I would respectfully suggest that, if the expedition be ordered to California, such a portion of the Indian funds as you may deem expedient may be placed at the disposal of the officer in charge, that he may visit the Pah-Utes and lay before them your views on the subject of their application. Without wishing to intrude upon the province of the regular agent of this tribe, I have simply to say that, being thoroughly acquainted with their northern haunts and the points at which they usually assail emigrants, I should consider it a most cheerful duty to again visit them, and prevent their attacking trains.

Should you instruct me to do so, I have no doubt of being able to prevail on the principal chiefs to accompany me to Washington and execute a treaty here.

They desire to sell the lands now occupied by whites, or adjacent to the settlements, and thus create a fund out of which they can be taught to farm.

If these or other steps are taken I have reason to believe that the passage of the Pah-Ute Indian country will be practicable to emigrants, and that the war of western Utah will not be reopened by those savages at the close of the stipulated year.

The California road between Fort Hall and Tubb's Meadows on the Humboldt should either be protected by mounted rangers or by cavalry, directed to keep the field from June 15 to the middle of September.

This line of country is occupied by the Shoshocos or Western Snakes and Pannacks, during the passage of the emigrants, and the late trains are invariably attacked. The band of Snakes which frequents Salmon Falls on

the Oregon road, during the fishing season, have numerous trails crossing the canon country which divides Snake river from the Humboldt, and direct their aggressions towards either road as opportunities offer. No engagements made with these Indians can be regarded reliable until they are thoroughly chastised.

If the regular troops are not directed by the War Department to keep the field until all the trains have reached the Pah-Ute line, there will be no safety for emigrants while passing through the Snake country.

If it should be incompatible with your views to carry out so extensive a programme as is herewith submitted, or if Congress should fail to pass the additional appropriation, I have the honor to suggest that the balance of the funds now on hand be applied to the bridging of Green river, by a contract with some responsible party who will give bonds to keep the structure in repair, by being permitted to charge a low rate of toll, say one-tenth part of the price per wagon now paid by emigrants at the ferries of the old road.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

F. W. LANDER,  
Superintendent.

Hon. JACOB THOMPSON,  
Secretary of the Interior

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We the undersigned, emigrants to California and Oregon, having just passed with our wagons and stock over the new government road from the South Pass to Fort Hall, (called Lander's Cut-Off,) do hereby state that the road is abundantly furnished with good grass, water, and fuel; there is no alkali and no desert, as upon the old road, and while upon it our stock improved and rapidly recovered from sickness and lameness. We are much surprised at the great amount of labor that had been done in cutting out the timber and bridging and grading the road, and in all respects it more than met our expectations, especially those of us who have heretofore travelled the other routes. But we would most respectfully suggest that a bridge should be erected, as soon as possible, over Green river, the fording of which is dangerous and the cause of much trouble to the emigration, and in one instance the loss of life. We have been treated kindly and, in every case where the circumstances required it, aided and assisted on our way by the wagon road expedition, and we have likewise received the kindest treatment from the Indians, and we advise the overland emigration to California and Oregon to take this road, as the shortest and best adapted for the comforts of the traveller and the preservation of stock, especially if the government, in view of the many advantages of this route, should cause Green river to be bridged.

Statement of emigrants to California and Oregon.

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
Ferguson Chappell, Cedar county, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	8	-----
S. H. Boardman, Connecticut . . . . .	1	3	4	-----
J. M. Dewey, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	3	6	Oregon----
William Steel, Wisconsin. . . . .	1			-----
James M. Torrence, Iowa . . . . .	1	3	30	Oregon----
Thomas Wilson, Illinois . . . . .	1	5	4	-----do-----
R. H. Anderson, Missouri. . . . .	12	41	240	California
Hiram Buell, Illinois . . . . .	8	22	24	-----do-----
Joseph Woodward . . . . .	9	40	115	-----do-----
William Fowler, Michigan. . . . .	2	13	10	-----do-----
W. M. Orcult . . . . .	3	9	14	-----
William Jacobs, Morris, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	2	-----
Fayette Lincoln, Cook county, Illinois. . . . .	3	11	11	California
J. R. & J. B. Adams. . . . .	3	10	14	-----do-----
A. D. Gillson, Michigan . . . . .	2	11	8	-----do-----
Daniel Hire. . . . .	4	4	20	-----do-----
James Ferguson, New York . . . . .	2	10	37	-----do-----
John P. Higgins, Illinois .c. . . . .	1	5	8	-----do-----
Henry Robinson, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
J. Holfreld, New York. . . . .	1	8	4	-----do-----
William D. McIlroy, Iowa. . . . .	14	37	209	Oregon----
K. D. Todd, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	7	-----do-----
Frederick Burhoff, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	4	12	California
W. G. Brown, Wisconsin. . . . .	8	30	48	-----do-----
Philip Hyde, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	4	-----do-----
Jas. A. Archer, Iowa. . . . .				-----
Stephen Rily, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	6	California
A. M. Gaylard, Missouri . . . . .	5	22	43	-----do-----
Peter Large, Illinois. . . . .	3	14	11	-----do-----
William Black, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	9	-----do-----
J. S. Perkins, Minnesota. . . . .	2	4	8	-----do-----
A. Garrison, Iowa. . . . .	4	4	18	-----do-----
I. A. Cardwell, Nebraska Territory. . . . .	13	63	150	-----do-----
Dr. J. Goyer, Rock Island, Illinois. . . . .	6	19	32	-----do-----
Robert Steer, Otsego, New York. . . . .	3	17	19	-----do-----
S. H. C. Mason, Madison, New York. . . . .	1	6	6	-----do-----
C. F. Kauffman, Oregon. . . . .	3	15	35	Oregon----
S. C. Jolly, Illinois. . . . .	1	11	32	California
G. C. Ledyard, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	17	-----do-----
J. S. Patterson, California. . . . .	1	6	66	-----do-----



Statement -Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
E. Crain, Missouri. . . . .	1	4	17	-----do-----
F. H. Hathaway, Illinois. . . . .	1	7	6	-----do-----
J. M. Coalter, Iowa. . . . .	---	6	4	Oregon-----
R. E. Wood, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	5	10	California
J. F. Lyon, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	6	12	-----do-----
D. Vandehoof, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	4	6	-----do-----
J. Brown, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	5	14	-----do-----
William H. Sockrider. . . . .	2	4	17	Oregon-----
A. J. Ball, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	16	33	California
J. F. Wood, Wisconsin. . . . .	6	28	54	Oregon-----
S. Maxson, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	2	5	-----do-----
T. B. Borst, Iowa. . . . .	3	11	17	California
William Coad, Illinois. . . . .	4	16	22	California
Seth Ferrel, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	4	Oregon-----
Brethnel Ferrel, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	2	California
Caleb Witt, Tennessee. . . . .	2	5	2	-----do-----
Jas. Witt, Tennessee. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
M. R. Renshaw, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	5	-----do-----
William Coad, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	7	-----do-----
J. D. Hanscom, Michigan . . . . .	3	9	14	Oregon-----
Thomas Yunsal, Michigan . . . . .	1	2	11	-----do-----
Seymour Carr, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	13	California
George W. Newsom. . . . .	14	53	103	Oregon-----
L. W. Dickey, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	5	California
George Thaner, Iowa . . . . .	2	4	11	Oregon-----
Bidwell Coons, Ohio. . . . .	5	14	26	California
J. G. Smith, Missouri . . . . .	1	4	6	-----do-----
N. B. Rine, Missouri. . . . .	2	5	6	-----do-----
C. W. B., Ohio. . . . .	1	2	7	-----do-----
Thomas Gurn, Missouri . . . . .	10	52	370	-----do-----
A. J. Gallaway. . . . .	---	---	16	-----do-----
William T. Ramsey, Augusta, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	16	-----do-----
S. Ramsey, Augusta, Illinois. . . . .	2	3	21	-----do-----
Theodore T. Ramsey, Augusta, Illinois . . . . .	---	---	---	-----do-----
Cawsun M. Barnham, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	4	11	Oregon-----
William E. Haxie, Illinois. . . . .	---	---	---	-----do-----
Charles Caldwell, Illinois. . . . .	---	---	---	-----do-----
J. C. Rhoads, Illinois. . . . .	---	---	---	-----do-----
Charles King, Illinois. . . . .	---	---	---	-----do-----
S. M. Worthington, Kansas Territory. . . . .	3	4	5	California
Napoleon P. Byrne, Missouri. . . . .	7	23	225	-----do-----
Wheeler Elgin. . . . .	3	18	474	-----do-----

Statement-Continued

Name and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
William Rice, Independence, Missouri. . .	8	37	879	-----do-----
David Cummins. . . . .	1	3	25	-----do-----
Daniel Powell, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	10	Oregon-----
J. Adams, captain, Lagrange county, Indiana company. . . . .	4	12	43	California
P. H. Poindexter, California. . . . .	8	30	300	-----do-----
Stephen O. Gray, Michigan. . . . .				-----do-----
Charles H. Conklin, Michigan. . . . .	1	7	2	California
G. W. Winder. . . . .	1	7	16	-----do-----
H. Tuel, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	21	California
S. Gilliland, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	2	3	-----do-----
O. B. Nellis, Michigan. . . . .	2	9	14	-----do-----
Levi R. Geer. . . . .	1	3	5	-----do-----
James McClosky, Michigan. . . . .	1	4	4	-----do-----
Bela Rathbun. . . . .	9	42	56	Oregon-----
S. P. Jallen. . . . .	1	4	4	-----do-----
F. M. Rice, Iowa. . . . .	5	21	320	California
A. Vangiesen, Canada West. . . . .	3	12	16	-----do-----
Sobieski Brown, Canada West. . . . .	3	9	17	-----do-----
Elmore J. Ferguson, Illinois. . . . .	3	5	7	-----do-----
Job Huff, Nebraska Territory. . . . .	1	3	2	-----do-----
T. Wallingbock. . . . .	1	7	7	-----do-----
Isaac Walker, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	7	California
Richard Gant. . . . .				-----do-----
Sam T. Welch. . . . .	3	12	85	California
C. B. Welch. . . . .	4	11	29	-----do-----
William Haskin. . . . .	2	4	6	-----do-----
E. Griffith, Iowa. . . . .	2	5	8	-----do-----
A. H. Whitcomb, Illinois. . . . .	2	6	7	-----do-----
Edwin Pett, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	2	-----do-----
J. Camton, Illinois. . . . .	2	4	8	-----do-----
W. Townsend, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
H. Whipple, Michigan. . . . .	1	2	11	-----do-----
E. W. Mahoney, Iowa. . . . .	2	4	6	-----do-----
H. Thompson, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
W. Thompson, Illinois. . . . .	3	5	14	-----do-----
William A. Allard, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	4	-----do-----
M. J. Sampson, Illinois. . . . .	2	11	8	-----do-----
O. F. Sampson, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Joseph Cheasebro, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	2	Oregon-----
Sherman Hatch, Illinois. . . . .	3	5	15	California

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of Stock	Place of Destination
C. D. Needham, Illinois. . . . .				do
Stanley Willey, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	8	do
John Hoy, Ohio. . . . .	1	4	16	do
John Wells, Iowa. . . . .	4	14	40	do
George W. Harvey, Ohio. . . . .				do
Franklin Connelly, Iowa. . . . .				do
Andrew Tash, Iowa. . . . .				do
Bedy Akers, Iowa. . . . .				do
Thomas Ralston, Iowa. . . . .				
F. Noble, Iowa. . . . .				California
Jonathan Boyce, Iowa. . . . .	3	14	38	do
William C. Humphrey, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	15	do
J. W. Wilson. . . . .				
William E. Harper. . . . .	1	2	5	California
J. T. Vaughan, Iowa. . . . .		1	8	do
M. A. Babcock, Iowa. . . . .	2	7	19	
James A. Smith, Iowa. . . . .	1	6	11	California
A. Babcock, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	16	do
E. Babcock, Iowa. . . . .		1	31	do
J. F. Knowles, Iowa. . . . .		6	11	
J. W. Babcock, Iowa. . . . .	2	7	47	California
George Urie, Iowa. . . . .	3			Oregon
W. Babcock. . . . .	2	12	26	do
C. A. Daniels, Michigan. . . . .	1	7	9	
Jesse Perkins, Michigan. . . . .	2	7	15	Oregon
Salem Longeon. . . . .	1	3	7	
J. McGinnis. . . . .	1	8	1	
Peter Saling. . . . .	3	7	49	Oregon
Thomas McKee, Michigan. . . . .	1	4	4	do
Wm. C. LaDow, Iowa. . . . .	1	1	1	California
O. W. Kelley, Iowa. . . . .		2	3	do
S. W. Fero, Iowa. . . . .		1	2	
Thomas Nuttle. . . . .		2	4	
Thomas Brady. . . . .	1	2	4	
E. P. Wirts. . . . .	1	5	8	California
A. Ashworth, Michigan. . . . .		1		do
J. L. Davies. . . . .				
D. H. Carpenter, Iowa. . . . .				California
John R. McClure. . . . .	1	4	4	do
John L. Davis. . . . .	3	10	36	do
Robert Hastie. . . . .	4	7	23	do
P. Earlie. . . . .	1	4	40	do

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
William Moore, Virginia. . . . .	4	10	34	Oregon----
T. P. Denney. . . . .	4	10	65	-----do-----
F. S. Turner. . . . .	1	2	2	-----do-----
A. T. Shreeves. . . . .	3	13	17	-----do-----
G. Hutchinson, Iowa . . . . .	1	4	5	-----do-----
William W. McHenry, Iowa. . . . .			2	-----do-----
M. Welch, Ohio. . . . .	2	9	17	-----do-----
D. Houck, Ohio. . . . .			1	-----do-----
E. N. Dunbar, Indiana . . . . .	1	4	7	California
H. M. Kingsbury, Ohio . . . . .	2	11	13	-----do-----
Edwin Houghton. . . . .	2	8	17	-----do-----
O. S. Coddington, Indiana . . . . .			3	-----do-----
O. M. Jackman. . . . .	2	7	13	-----do-----
D. J. Houghton, Ohio . . . . .				-----do-----
F. Bellup, Ohio. . . . .	13	22	78	California
John Price, Ohio . . . . .	3	7	19	-----do-----
D. Best, Ohio. . . . .	1	3	11	-----do-----
D. Yerby, Iowa . . . . .	1	4	13	Oregon----
H. Billups, Iowa . . . . .	4	9	17	-----do-----
E. Hemmingway, Virginia. . . . .	11	19	49	California
Thomas J. Bunker, Virginia . . . . .		1	2	-----do-----
E. C. Lindsey, Oregon. . . . .	1	2	13	-----do-----
Abram Lindsay, Ohio. . . . .	3	7	19	-----do-----
Thomas Lindsay, Ohio . . . . .	1	4	11	-----do-----
L. Stockman, Ohio. . . . .		1	3	Oregon----
W. C. Adams, Ohio. . . . .	1	1	7	California
Joseph M. Bock. . . . .				-----do-----
H. H. Hill, Wisconsin . . . . .	1	2	9	California
S. F. Iedyard, Missouri . . . . .	2	7	19	-----do-----
J. W. Burnell, Maine. . . . .		1	1	-----do-----
Marshall Murray, Illinois. . . . .	2	9	17	-----do-----
James Cheney, Illinois. . . . .	7	11	34	Oregon----
Thomas Sullivan, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	11	-----do-----
James Larninger, Michigan. . . . .		1	1	-----do-----
William Reynolds, Indiana. . . . .	9	13	47	California
M. Alberron, Indiana. . . . .	3	11	23	-----do-----
S. Preston, Missouri. . . . .	3	7	17	-----do-----
John Moore, Missouri. . . . .		1	1	-----do-----
E. Phelps, Missouri. . . . .	13	22	117	Oregon----
J. Leinenger, Missouri . . . . .	4	13	79	-----do-----
B. Doty. . . . .		1	3	California
R. S. Wilkin, Indiana. . . . .	7	19	85	-----do-----
E. Burget, Indiana. . . . .	1	3	17	Oregon----
J. E. Carrol. . . . .		1	4	California

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
J. S. Waldrige, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	4	California
D. E. Knight, Illinois. . . . .	2	9	11	-----do-----
W. Brown, Illinois. . . . .	4	8	18	Oregon-----
A. F. Wells, Michigan . . . . .	1	3	5	-----do-----
John Rice. . . . .				California
Thomas Lewis, Inciana. . . . .	1	2	3	-----do-----
E. S. McClellan, Michigan. . . . .		1	1	-----do-----
Ambers Thornburgh. . . . .		1	9	Oregon-----
John Phelan, Iowa. . . . .	3	11	13	-----do-----
Emmor Ramsey. . . . .				-----do-----
A. J. Clark, Indiana. . . . .				California
C. Carson. . . . .	11	17	49	Oregon-----
D. R. Bittinger, Michigan. . . . .	2	7	9	-----do-----
James Stone, Ohio. . . . .	1	5	7	California
J. Warley, Ohio. . . . .	2	7	17	-----do-----
S. W. Puffingher, Indiana. . . . .	7	9	29	Oregon-----
Wm. Bradford, Wilmington, Del. . . . .		1	3	California
George Robinson, Iowa. . . . .		13	37	-----do-----
Peter Helbey, Virginia. . . . .				-----do-----
Amos Barnhart. . . . .	7	14	39	California
S. C. Burns, Virginia. . . . .		1	1	-----do-----
B. Manning, Ohio. . . . .	11	17	48	California
John Woods, Ohio. . . . .				-----do-----
H. Herman, Iowa. . . . .	2	5	13	California
F. M. Jolly, Iowa. . . . .	1	6	48	-----do-----
F. M. Mounts, Iowa. . . . .	1	5	11	Oregon-----
J. E. Moore, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	17	-----do-----
E. G. Banks, Michigan. . . . .	3	11	43	-----do-----
Henry Burkāt, Ohio. . . . .	13	19	91	California
N. Piles, Ohio. . . . .	2	9	18	-----do-----
George Bradfield, Ohio, , , , . . . . .	9	18	89	-----do-----
F. M. Lewis, Indiana. . . . .		1	7	-----do-----
T. F. Ryan, Indiana. . . . .	19	31	211	Oregon-----
David Carter, Indiana. . . . .				-----do-----
David Enos. . . . .		1	1	California
Wm. Moore, Ohio. . . . .	11	17	129	Oregon-----
Daniel Claton. . . . .				-----do-----
John M. Bryan, Ohio. . . . .	2	11	39	-----do-----
J. T. Hartman, Virginia. . . . .	7	19	229	California
William Burgett. . . . .				-----do-----
A. F. Core. . . . .	2	11		California
E. R. Wright, Iowa. . . . .	2	8	23	-----do-----
Edwin G. Wood. . . . .				-----do-----
E. E. Davies, Iowa. . . . .	7	19	47	California

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
John Marshall. . . . .		1	2	Oregon-----
Frank Demask. . . . .		8	17	-----do-----
George Wood, Ohio. . . . .	2	32	273	-----do-----
Lanis Darling, Ohio. . . . .	13	5	12	-----do-----
O. Olsan, Oregon. . . . .	1	1	3	-----do-----
Geo. Klingaman. . . . .		19	123	-----do-----
Thomas McVay, Oregon. . . . .	7	13	27	California
Warren Dunham, Ohio. . . . .	2	5	23	California
Alexander Glen, Indiana. . . . .	1	14	32	Oregon-----
J. L. C. Sherwin, California. . . . .	5	6	15	-----do-----
Wm. Adle, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	19	-----do-----
John Walling, Illinois. . . . .	1	11	39	California
Franklin Shores, Illinois. . . . .	3	19	73	-----do-----
Samuel W. Empey, Michigan. . . . .	7	11	24	California
Charles Helm, Wisconsin. . . . .	3	3	11	-----do-----
John F. Bush, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	23	83	Oregon-----
James N. Anderson, Missouri. . . . .	13			-----do-----
Ira A. Garrison, Wisconsin. . . . .		1	7	California
E. Fifield, Maine. . . . .		19	41	-----do-----
J. L. Thompson, Wisconsin. . . . .	7	3	9	-----do-----
G. W. Brown, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	1	3	-----do-----
David Brown, Wisconsin. . . . .		1	3	-----do-----
Lewis S. Kelsey, Missouri. . . . .	19	29	108	Oregon-----
John Beadle, Iowa. . . . .		1	1	California
Park Winans, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	3	-----do-----
Geo. W. Grimes, Iowa. . . . .	2	9	11	-----do-----
Emanuel Brannan. . . . .			7	-----do-----
Frederick Morrisson, Missouri. . . . .	1	3		-----do-----
Claiborne Vaughan, Indiana. . . . .	1	3	11	Oregon-----
S. F. Lewis, Indiana. . . . .	2	7	8	-----do-----
J. H. Claughton, Missouri. . . . .	1	4	10	California
W. B. Wooldridge, K. T. . . . .	1	9	15	Oregon-----
George Peck, Minnesota. . . . .	1	5	8	California
John Fr. Adler. . . . .	7	14	98	-----do-----
Samuel Allen. . . . .	1	3	6	-----do-----
E. A. Hall. . . . .		1		-----do-----
Albert Allen. . . . .	1	3	7	California
Reuben Allen, Minnesota. . . . .		4	5	-----do-----
S. S. C. Spencer, Minnesota. . . . .	4	11	61	-----do-----
F. Kingman, Illinois. . . . .	1	6	11	-----do-----
Charles Kingman, Illinois. . . . .	3	9	49	-----do-----
Daniel A. Ellis, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	8	Oregon-----
Wm. Albaugh, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	8	-----do-----
Jacob Gauntz, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	6	California



Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
James Runyan. . . . .	3	7	19	-----
W. L. Mathews, Iowa . . . . .	-----	1	2	California
Jas. H. Underwood. . . . .	-----	1	1	Oregon-----
Alfred Graham, Indiana. . . . .	11	17	119	-----do-----
Thomas Brown, Indiana. . . . .	1	4	5	California
James H. Story, Iowa. . . . .	-----	1	1	Oregon-----
Wm. O. Miller. . . . .	5	15	30	California
Andrew H. Dennick. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
Henry J. Miller. . . . .	1	9	11	Oregon-----
John Bryan. . . . .	-----	1	1	-----
J. Amore, Maine. . . . .	17	28	117	Oregon-----
Wm. Fee, Missouri. . . . .	3	13	48	-----
W. Sherwin, Missouri. . . . .	-----	1	5	California
Geo. Jones, Virginia. . . . .	19	31	238	Oregon-----
H. A. Leavens, Illinois. . . . .	5	20	45	-----do-----
J. S. Beamis, Illinois. . . . .	7	13	27	-----do-----
T. Dickerson, Illinois. . . . .	1	5	13	Oregon-----
H. H. Case, Wisconsin. . . . .	17	27	117	-----do-----
Thos. S. Sloane, Wisconsin. . . . .	3	9	17	-----do-----
Alfred Hawk. . . . .	-----	1	3	-----do-----
Chs. Fegley, Iowa. . . . .	13	17	73	California
S. J. Dickerson, Iowa. . . . .	7	11	39	-----do-----
Gregor Shreeve. . . . .	1	4	9	-----do-----
Hiram Cain. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
F. T. Howard. . . . .	1	3	3	California
Geo. W. Howard. . . . .	-----	1	2	-----do-----
H. C. Minick. . . . .	3	7	43	-----do-----
Robert Schenk, Wisconsin. . . . .	7	13	79	Oregon-----
Joseph Britt, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	9	-----do-----
S. H. Hinds, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	7	17	-----do-----
Richard Talbart, Illinois. . . . .	-----	1	2	-----do-----
W. M. Franks, Illinois. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
James H. Bowen, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	23	California
F. Michaelson & Co., Illinois. . . . .	5	15	40	-----do-----
T. Michaelson, Illinois. . . . .	-----	1	1	-----do-----
Anderson, Illinois. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
G. Michelson, Illinois. . . . .	2	5	17	California
H. Stak, Iowa. . . . .	7	19	75	-----do-----
Lauson, Iowa. . . . .	-----	1	2	-----do-----
H. Seeman, Iowa. . . . .	13	27	276	California
A. Seeman, Iowa. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
P. Seeman, Iowa. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
T. Seeman, Iowa. . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----
T. Streiff, Iowa. . . / . . . . .	-----	-----	-----	-----

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
T. Streiff, Iowa. . . . .				
H. Hunt, Iowa. . . . .				
T. Serringer, Iowa. . . . .				
T. Boilsle, Iowa. . . . .				
F. Lagerson, California. . . . .	6	27	46	
Peter Timm, California. . . . .	3	17	171	California
Peter Jacobs, California. . . . .				
Martin Haman, California. . . . .				
Marx Dittmer, California. . . . .				
Peter Sanger, California. . . . .				
Johann Trede, California. . . . .				
Claus Gergen, California. . . . .				
John Dussler, California. . . . .				
Peter Carsten, California. . . . .				
Claus Hinrichsen, California. . . . .				
John Rohneer, California. . . . .				
Henri Weinholz, California. . . . .				
Friderich Frahm, California. . . . .				
Henri Soos, California. . . . .				
John Soos, California. . . . .				
Henri Timm, California. . . . .				
Henri Thomsen, California. . . . .				
Christian Leisner, California. . . . .				
John Miller, California. . . . .				
Peter Conk, California. . . . .				
Claus Budendorf, California. . . . .				
Joachim Saga, California. . . . .				
Charles Willmaka, California. . . . .				
Joseph Watson. . . . .	13	29	269	Oregon----
Lewis M. Garvin. . . . .	7	18	73	California
Lancelot Carr. . . . .	5	15	36	----do----
Benjamin J. Curler. . . . .	4	18	35	----do----
William Gughton, Illinois. . . . .	7	15	24	----do----

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, City and County of San Francisco, ss.

E. P. Ream, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is acquainted with H. Seemann, whose name is written at the head of the list of names on this sheet; that the said Seemann acknowledged to this deponent that this is his genuine signature, and also that he wrote the names following his at the request of the said parties thereto, who were members of a train of emigrants under his lead, bound to California.

E. P. REAM.

Subscribed and sworn to before me October 25, 1859.

HENRY HAIGT, Notary Public

FORT HALL,  
Oregon Territory, July 15, 1858.

This is to certify that we, the undersigned, have travelled over the Pacific wagon road, better known as Lander's Cut-Off, and find it a very acceptable road for emigrants. We think it preferable to any other road across the mountains in many respects; most of the way it is well worked, and with a bridge across Green river (the only stream at all troublesome) it would be as good a road as many now travelled in the States; it is some five days' travel shorter than any other road across the mountains. There is no desert to cross on this route, no alkali to kill your stock; but instead, plenty of good water, abundance of grass, and wood enough to satisfy any reasonable man. Many of the undersigned have crossed by other routes, and give this the preference.

William Glaze, Missouri.

J. B. Nevins, New Hampshire.

Erastus Downing, Missouri.

William Martin, Missouri.

William A. Stone, Missouri.

Ole. Emins, Wisconsin.

William Flanagan, Missouri.

George W. Linderman, Illinois.

George W. Brown, Iowa.

Alexander Anthony, Missouri.

John Bagby, Missouri.

Marion Stow, Missouri.

E. W. Newkerk, Iowa.

A. Clubb, Iowa.

B. F. Griswold, Iowa.

Henry Y. Goldsmith, Wisconsin.

F. Williams, Wisconsin.

Joseph M. Nelson, Ohio.

Jervies J. Hedgpeth, Missouri.

William Wright, Missouri.

Jacob Arter, Iowa.

Amos Crater, Iowa.

James S. Mooney, New Hampshire.

William Norman, Illinois.

Thomas Redy, Illinois.

John Longhead, New York.

D. S. Sage, Wisconsin.  
James Wetherhead, Wisconsin.  
William Carll, Illinois.  
John Wetherhead, Wisconsin.  
Joseph G. Daniel, Iowa.  
Amos Smith, Wisconsin.  
Thomas Butler, Wisconsin.  
David Chubb, Wisconsin .  
James Contell, Wisconsin.  
Charles Kaye, Wisconsin.  
William Shirly, Wisconsin.  
David Atkain, Wisconsin.  
William Robertson, Wisconsin.  
Thomas K. Ober, Wisconsin.  
Luke Smith, Wisconsin.  
Lyman Carpenter, Iowa.  
George W. Martin, Iowa.  
Garret Clawson, Iowa.  
S. T. Armstrong, Trenton, Wisconsin.  
Geo. Gray, Nininger City, Minnesota  
G. R. Kidder, Claremont, Minnesota.  
Allen Mead, Illinois.  
Robert Steere, Oswego County, New York.  
G. W. Squires, Carl county, Illinois.  
C. F. Kauffman, Louisa county, Iowa.  
A. H. Kauffman, Louisa county, Iowa.  
E. R. Wood, Palmyra, Wisconsin.  
R. E. Woods, Omaha City.  
John H. Squier, Cass county, Michigan.  
Wm. Wheeling, Bernadotte, Fulton county, Illinois.  
A. W. Robinson, Bernadotte, Fulton county, Illinois.  
J. R. Carey, Illinois.  
Hill Burkhart, Washtenaw, Michigan.  
J. G. Smith, Missouri.  
N. B. Rine, Missouri.  
J. T. Day, Missouri.  
J. M. Kaufman, Missouri.  
B. Crain.  
Charles Lawrence.  
J. L. Kinkade.  
Charles Jolly.  
W. H. Wells, Wisconsin.  
J. M. Contter.  
E. H. Scott.  
S. C. Whitlatch, Illinois.  
F. H. Hathaway, Illinois.  
James Patterson.  
Ol J. Rogers.  
R. Christy.  
Martin Christy.  
Michail Bourk, Wisconsin.  
Amberson Huff, Michigan.  
George McVicar, Wisconsin.  
R. W. Tilton, Washington county, Pennsylvania.  
C. Hickey, Wisconsin.  
G. R. Vansiolen, Michigan.

James Guild, Chicago, Illinois.  
John A. Hickey, Wisconsin.  
Benjamin Sanders, Marengo, Illinois.  
John Pettinger, Dubuque, Iowa.  
Howard Peterzon, Minnesota.  
George Quigle, Illinois.  
Alfred Graff, Elgin, Kane county, Illinois.  
J. S. Deneson, Michigan.  
Chester Smock, Minnesota.  
H. B. Beach, Marengo, Illinois.  
John Quigle, DeKalb, Illinois.  
John G. Sneider, Anderson county, Kansas.  
Jacob Whitbeck, Delhi, Iowa.  
Edwin G. Kinne, Oconomowock, Wisconsin.  
Francis Eatoh, New York.  
Charles W. Ryder, Wisconsin.  
J. H. Ingersoll, Delhi, Iowa.  
Thomas Eagan, Waukesha, Wisconsin.  
Peter Eagan, Waukesha, Wisconsin.  
James Johnson, Illinois.  
Charles Follansbee, Kane county, Illinois.  
James E. Beach, Elgin county, Illinois.  
Riley McHenry, Elgin county, Illinois.  
Amos Van Vleck, Wisconsin.  
Wm. H. Springer, Michigan.  
John Arnold, Wisconsin.  
William B. Tiffany, Hastings, Minnesota.  
Salmon Scott, Oakland, Michigan.  
Bartlett A. Day, Minnesota.  
George W. Springs, (Illegible.)  
James E. Harvey, Minnesota.  
Rauben Burroughs, Ontario county, New York.  
James Coughran, Reedsburg, Wisconsin.  
Comfort H. Knapp.  
Thomas V. R. Rathbun.  
Samuel Coughran, Reedsburg, Wisconsin.  
T. H. Jewett.  
Henry B. Gaige, Reedsburg, Sauk county, Wisconsin.  
James W. Beebe.  
Albert Marston.  
Levi S. Reed.  
James Law.  
George Winchester.  
Leonard Law, Iowa.  
John W. Allen, New York.  
Jerome Beebe,  
John Anderson, Iowa.  
G. W. Colwell, Iowa.  
William A. Evans, Pennsylvania.  
John Levander, Iowa.  
Charles Catterell, Iowa county, Wisconsin.  
Levi Burgess, Wisconsin.  
Anthony James, Wisconsin.  
George Selvester, Wisconsin.  
John A. Bloomer  
David C. Reed

Abraham Selvester, Wisconsin.  
W. H. Legol, Wisconsin.  
George W. Hill, DeKalb county, Illinois.  
James Temple, Illinois.  
D. C. Adams, Iowa.  
Thomas Walker, Wisconsin.  
A. M. Johnson, Iowa.  
John Stanaway, Wisconsin.  
S. S. Chandler, Wisconsin.  
H. H. Rice, Wisconsin.  
R. Alderson, Missouri.  
E. C. Sessions, Wisconsin.  
B. F. Saltzman, Wisconsin.  
A. C. Coates, Wisconsin.  
Thomas J. Coates, Wisconsin.  
Charles P. Traber, Wisconsin.  
Jesse L. Coates, Wisconsin.  
M. D. Dyhee, Kentucky.  
Thomas Anderson, Kansas Territory.  
Christian Finger, Kansas Territory.  
Thames G. Murray, Kansas.  
E. B. Purdom, Franklin, Kansas.  
J. Bowley, Lawrence, Kansas.  
Moses Wright, Indiana.  
M. H. Merton.  
J. B. Bennett.  
Harry Burk.  
J. C. Purdom, Franklin, Kansas Territory.  
Benjamin Purrott, Franklin, Kansas Territory.  
David Vanostan, Franklin, Kansas Territory.  
James Rogers, Franklin, Kansas Territory.  
A. H. Earby.  
H. W. Tiel.  
S. W. Smith, Freeport, Illinois.  
S. Gregory, Blackford, Indiana.  
H. M. Wells, Illinois.  
R. Haines, Jackson, Iowa.  
William Rice, Jackson, Missouri.  
John C. Richardson, Janesville, Wisconsin.  
Charles P. Murphy, Janesville, Wisconsin.  
Francis Gafferty.  
John G. Alason, Iowa.  
Isaac Bradwell, Alleghany county, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.  
C. L. Lamoreux, La Porte, Indiana.  
Charles A. Sankey, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.  
Almon Menter, Homer, New York.  
Martin Menter, Syracuse, New York.  
John Thornbury, New Cumberland, Virginia.  
D. B. Conger, Homer, New York.  
C. Slack, Michigan.  
G. M. Pierce, Michigan.  
William Walton, Pennsylvania.  
James Brenneman, Ohio.  
Chester Menter, Homer, New York.



John McMichael, Alleghany county, Pennsylvania.  
John H. Sawyer, Bristol, Kenosha county, Wisconsin.  
G. B. Franklin, Fort Dodge, Iowa.  
P. McVicar, Salem, Wisconsin.  
R. Spencer, Bristol, Wisconsin.  
John W. Cleveland, Bristol, Kenosha county, Wisconsin.  
O. S. Smith, Kossuth county, Iowa.  
Dr. Joel Richardson, Hartland, Maine.  
Benjamin C. Berwise.  
Dr. O. W. K. McAllister, Blue Earth county, Minnesota.  
Alfred N. Ludington, Dallas county, Iowa.  
James Manitz, Freeport, Illinois.  
Charles L. Buckman, Franklin, DeKalb county, Illinois.  
Augustus Stiger, Freeport, Illinois.  
Joseph Schwab, Freeport, Illinois.  
Frederick Stoll, Freeport, Illinois.  
O. L. Manfield, Warren, Illinois.  
C. P. Ludesher, Davenport, Iowa.  
George S. Lamin, Freeport, Illinois.  
D. T. Culbertson, Wisconsin.  
D. D. Atkinson, Wisconsin.  
H. H. Longley, Rochester, Minnesota.  
Edward K. Finson, Iowa.  
Alexander Spaulding, Minnesota.  
R. Sherer, Minnesota.  
Rufus Emery, Maine.  
Homer L. Clark, Iowa.  
William Todd.  
Ferguson Chappell, Cedar county, Iowa.  
Nicholas Simmons,  
Franklin Finson, Iowa.  
Moses H. Finson, Iowa.  
Rufus B. Emery.  
R. N. McCollum, Michigan.  
S. S. Cox, Liberty, Michigan.  
George W. McCollum, Michigan.  
James Young, Michigan.  
Caswell Coil, Logan county, Illinois.  
Philip Marvel, Missouri.  
William Black, Mobile, Alabama.  
C. C. Parker, Springfield, Illinois.  
George C. Hurd, Menasha, Wisconsin.  
A. D. Nelson, Jackson county, Michigan.  
E. P. Bradford, Cook county, Illinois.  
William Jacobs, Grundy county, Illinois.  
(One name illegible.)  
John P. Higgins, Richland county, Illinois.  
Elisha Swift, Hillsdale, Michigan.  
William Fowler.  
John Millikan, North Carolina.  
L. H. Rouze, Ohio.  
Samuel Dagget, Mercer county, Illinois.  
James Ferguson, Brownville, New York.  
Almiron Dagget, Warren county, Illinois.  
E. D. Ketchum, De Kalb county, Illinois.

John Case, Iowa.  
Richard Jones, Illinois.  
Fayette Lincoln, Cook county, Illinois.  
David Wilson, Marion county, Iowa.  
D. C. McKercher, Stephenson county, Illinois.  
Joseph Woodward.  
John C. Creswell, Multnomah county, Oregon.  
James Cummings, Fremont county, Iowa.  
E. Humphrey, Illinois.  
William Orcutt, Hillsdale county, Michigan.  
(One name illegible.)  
James Daily, Michigan.  
(One name illegible.)  
A. J. Clem, Iowa.  
Joseph Whaling, Illinois.  
H. Ex. Doc. 63 - 2  
J. L. Wagner, Illinois.  
Oliver Bowers, Illinois.

1. We, the, Undersigned, emigrants to California and Oregon, having just passed, with our wagons and stock, over the new government road from the South Pass to Fort Hall, (called Lander's Cut-Off,) do hereby state that the road is abundantly furnished with good grass, water, and fuel; there is no alkali and no desert, as upon the old road, and while upon it our stock improved and rapidly recovered from sickness and lameness.

We were much surprised at the great amount of labor that has been done in cutting out the timber and bridging and grading the road, and in all respects it more than met our expectations, especially those of us who have heretofore travelled the other routes; but we would respectfully suggest that a bridge should be erected as soon as possible over Green river, the fording of which is dangerous and ~~and~~ cause of much trouble to the emigration, and in one instance the loss of life.

We have been treated kindly and, in every case where the circumstances required it, aided and assisted on our way by the wagon road expedition, and we have likewise received the kindest treatment from the Indians; and we advise the overland emigration to California and Oregon to take this road, as the shortest and best adapted for the comfort of the traveller and the preservation of stock, especially if the government, in view of the advantages of this route, should cause Green river to be bridged.

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Statement of Emigrants to California and Oregon

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
C. J. Bullock, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	9	-----
Ervin Crane, Michigan. . . . .	2	5	12	Oregon-----
O. J. Britton, Missouri. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
John Monholland, Missouri. . . . .	1	4	6	California
Franklin Durshee, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	8	-----do-----
Richard Dowler. . . . .	1	2	9	Oregon-----
C. I. Peterson. . . . .				-----do-----
A. Cullings. . . . .	2	9	17	California
--- Marvel, Missouri. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
John F. Moore, Kansas. . . . .	1	7	12	-----do-----
Caswell Coil, Illinois. . . . .	1	7	8	-----do-----
James Young, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	6	-----do-----
James Caruthers, Wisconsin, (1 pack mule)..	1	5	7	-----do-----
William Jones, Missouri. . . . .	2	9	15	-----do-----
Eli S. Newson. . . . .	1	4	10	-----do-----
Cyrus Crouch. . . . .	1	1	2	-----do-----
Thomas Goodhue, Illinois.. . . .	1	1	3	-----do-----
D. Loveland, (passenger). . . . .				-----do-----
Allen Ensley. . . . .	3	5	28	California
German Buckland, Illinois. . . . .	4	8	23	-----do-----
John W. Ensley. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
C. E. Parker, Springfield, Illinois. . .	4	8	27	-----do-----
Truman C. Clark, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	8	-----do-----
A. M. Gibbans, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	2	-----do-----
F. G. Gilbert, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	2	-----do-----
R. C. Maynes, Illinois. . . . .	3	13	33	-----do-----
L. Klerkx, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
J. D. Freeman, Minnesota. . . . .				-----do-----
George A. Bronson, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
R. Layton, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
John Poplman, Wisconsin. . . . .				-----do-----
E. Bronson, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
Johann Blum, Wisconsin. . . . .				-----do-----
Amasa Adams, Michigan. . . . .				-----do-----
G. H. Brown, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
J. S. Brown, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
Martin Dean, Wisconsin. . . . .				-----do-----
L. B. Barkalow, Iowa. . . . .				California
H. W. Rumze. . . . .				-----do-----
E. G. Rumsey. . . . .				-----do-----
W. B. McCune. . . . .				-----do-----
T. C. Tenwick. . . . .				-----do-----
S. Newell. . . . .				-----do-----

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of Stock	Place of Destination
J. S. Dodds. . . . .				
S. B. Carr. . . . .				
Wm. Pursel. . . . .				
Wm. H. Payn. . . . .				
J. Mitchell. . . . .				
Marcus Tenwick. . . . .				
John Batgen. . . . .				
John Johnston, Illinois. . . . .				California
Wm. Cherry, Illinois. . . . .				do
Oliver Johnston, Illinois. . . . .				do
Wm. Isirel, Missouri. . . . .				do
James Isirel, Missouri. . . . .				
Leman G. Hall, Illinois. . . . .				
Alex. Carpenter. . . . .				
P. W. Cunningham. . . . .				
M. Bell. . . . .				
John R. Lam. . . . .				
T. H. Ekley, Michigan. . . . .	1	2	4	California
H. Coffin, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	4	8	
S. B. Butler, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	2	4	
Robert Duffey, California. . . . .				do
Wm. Taylor, Illinois. . . . .				do
M. R. Croft, Iowa. . . . .				do
B. F. Couch, Pennsylvania. . . . .				do
H. White, Illinois. . . . .				do
Edwin C. Marshall, Illinois. . . . .				do
N. R. Penney, Illinois. . . . .				do
P. B. Lovett, Illinois. . . . .				California
G. W. Buck. . . . .				
L. H. Brady. . . . .				
John Walter, Illinois. . . . .		1		California
John Stewart, Wisconsin. . . . .				
Robert Steen, Wisconsin. . . . .		1		California
James McNaughton, Wisconsin. . . . .		1		
(One name illegible). . . . .				
Samuel McNaughton, Wisconsin. . . . .				
Malcolm McNaughton, Wisconsin. . . . .		1		California
Alexander Vass, Wisconsin. . . . .				
Charles Kittleson. . . . .				
And. W. Calley. . . . .	3	18	24	Oregon
John Foy. . . . .				
Rufus Ammon. . . . .				
Robert Rintoul. . . . .				
Robert McCalley. . . . .				

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
George Reining, Ohio. . . . .	4	25	35	Oregon-----
Sylvester Patten, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
Lester Patten, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
W. G. Nickerson, Wisconsin. . . . .		25	35	-----do-----
Wm. Babcock, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
A. Sconton, Wisconsin. . . . .		25	35	-----do-----
John Fronk. . . . .			35	-----do-----
D. S. Bonsom, Wisconsin. . . . .			35	-----do-----
F. Homes, Ohio. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
G. W. Wolder, Illinois. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
Mark M. Powell, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	25	35	-----do-----
Edward Allen, Wisconsin. . . . .				-----do-----
George Lonel. . . . .				-----do-----
John R. Benefiel, Indiana. . . . .				-----do-----
John Thomson, Illinois. . . . .				Oregon-----
Tristram Mayhew, Massachusetts. . . . .				-----do-----
D. W. Harris, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Thomas Walters, Illinois. . . . .	4	25	35	Oregon-----
Charles Porter, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
H. Parker. . . . .				-----do-----
Luther Hower. . . . .				-----do-----
Ransom Northup. . . . .				-----do-----
Ira Isted, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
Aiken Tart, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
Henry M. Hall, Michigan. . . . .	7	15	38	Yreka, Cal.
G. B. Ross, Wisconsin. . . . .				-----do-----
John Johnston, Illinois. . . . .				California
J. M. Gilliland, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
W. F. Everett, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
William Gill, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Alfred J. Cooper, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
George W. Scofield, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Thomas Fuller, Illinois. . . . .				California
S. H. Loomis, Illinois. . . . .				California
H. S. Phillips, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Russell J. Wells, Iowa. . . . .	1	4		Oregon-----
George S. Barnes, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	4		-----do-----
Hiram M. Jones, Iowa. . . . .	3	15		California
Michael Hallasy, Illinois. . . . .	2			-----do-----
Ira Moshier, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
George Sharp, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
J. R. Bennett, Indiana. . . . .				-----do-----
J. N. Bennett, Indiana. . . . .				-----do-----
George Clark, Michigan. . . . .				-----do-----
Wm. Hall. . . . .				-----do-----
R. D. Harkness, Illinois. . . . .				California

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
James Ardery. . . . .				
Chapman Warfins. . . . .				
Patrick Age. . . . .				
Edward Kerr. . . . .				
Michael Fegan. . . . .				
Daniel Matthews, Illinois. . . . .				
Edward Fagan, Illinois. . . . .				
Patrick Deny, Illinois. . . . .				California
Robert Perry, Illinois. . . . .				do
John Kane, Illinois. . . . .				do
James Sinaman, Illinois. . . . .				
Jared Kerble. . . . .				
Thomas E. Stanton, Iowa. . . . .	6	21-	35	California
Elon White. . . . .				
F. H. Hazard. . . . .				
Joel Stanton. . . . .				
A. Waterman. . . . .				
Edward Pew, civil engineer. . . . .				
N. R. Stanton. . . . .				
Robert Brown. . . . .				
William Bunting. . . . .				
Joseph Richardson. . . . .				
Hiram Dodge, Neb. . . . .	4	14	25	Oregon
George W. Stone. . . . .				
Augustus W. Burrill, Maine. . . . .	1	4	8	Oregon
W. J. Broughton. . . . .			6	
George W. Crist, Iowa. . . . .				California
H. R. Dickerson, Illinois. . . . .				do
E. A. Dodge, Illinois. . . . .				do
P. Lightle, Illinois. . . . .			9	do
R. F. Brown, Illinois. . . . .				do
H. E. Rankin, Illinois. . . . .				do
H. H. Lewis, Nebraska Territory. . . . .				do
Rut. Hoffman, Ohio. . . . .				do
J. B. Hoffman, Ohio. . . . .				do
H. S. Tarrington, Illinois. . . . .				do
John Balluf, Illinois. . . . .				do
W. Parsons, Iowa. . . . .				Oregon
J. A. Everett, Illinois. . . . .				California
H. Harrington, Illinois. . . . .				do
A. La Veille, Illinois. . . . .				do
John Kunkle, Illinois. . . . .				California
John W. Balluf, Illinois. . . . .				do
Joseph Balluf, Illinois. . . . .				do



Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
A. B. Moore, Iowa. . . . .	5	19	30	Oregon-----
J. H. Dow, Iowa. . . . .	4	12	64	-----do-----
William Richardson, Iowa. . . . .	2	5	11	-----do-----
R. S. Butler, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	2	-----do-----
J. Bierschback, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	6	6	-----do-----
L. Kords, Wisconsin. . . . .	-----	6	6	-----do-----
F. Kords, Wisconsin. . . . .	-----	6	6	-----do-----
E. G. Crane, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	8	California
Sylvester Critz, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	5	-----do-----
S. W. Maxwell, Illinois. . . . .	6	20	63	-----do-----
James R. Hyhes, Illinois. . . . .	7	19	90	-----do-----
Samuel A. Bone, Illinois. . . . .	2	9	16	-----do-----
J. J. Kunzler, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	6	-----do-----
Alexander Brander, Illinois. . . . .	1	1	2	-----do-----
W. W. Belden, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	4	14	-----do-----
James W. Easterly, New York and Missouri.	11	28	118	-----do-----
William H. Perry, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
D. F. Edwards, Illinois. . . . .	11	8	811	-----do-----
M. M. Harrison, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	6	9	-----do-----
L. W. Ingalls, Illinois. . . . .	2	6	9	-----do-----
William H. Waggoner, Illinois. . . . .	-----	6	-----	-----do-----
L. C. Chamberlin, Illinois. . . . .	2	4	12	-----do-----
William Lee, Ohio. . . . .	2	7	7	-----do-----
B. Geithmann, Illinois. . . . .	5	27	43	-----do-----
J. D. Willson, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	2	-----do-----
C. L. Kron, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
D. S. Zessin, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	2	-----do-----
L. W. Miller, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	9	-----do-----
George Westolp, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	8	-----do-----
J. Jeffs, Illinois. . . . .	2	9	16	-----do-----
Samuel Harrison, Wisconsin. . . . .	11	16	110	-----do-----
Torkel Keirson, Iowa. . . . .	1	5	11	-----do-----
John R. Caldwell, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	22	Oregon-----
James B. McElhany, Oregon. . . . .	2	11	58	-----do-----
M. W. House, California. . . . .	2	13	250	-----do-----
Washington Farmer, California. . . . .	4	120	700	-----do-----
S. M. Farmer, Ohio. . . . .	3	9	31	California
John Hale, Ohio. . . . .	7	17	131	-----do-----
Thomas Dickins, Ohio. . . . .	1	5	21	-----do-----
John Woods, Wisconsin. . . . .	4	13	79	Oregon-----
James Wison, Wisconsin. . . . .	-----	1	3	-----do-----
John McClube, Wisconsin. . . . .	14	33	271	-----do-----
Charles Bellnap, Wisconsin. . . . .	9	17	139	-----do-----
William Watson, Ohio. . . . .	3	-----	38	California

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of Persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
O. Sproul, Missouri. . . . .	3	10	35	-----do-----
A. Donovan, ----- . . . . .	1	4	13	-----do-----
S. Zrivers, Indiana. . . . .	7	13	33	-----do-----
T. Zrivers, Indiana. . . . .	9	17	108	-----do-----
J. T. Wadsworth, Indiana. . . . .	17	31	371	-----do-----
Millard Robinson, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	13	California
Levi H. Chasch, Illinois. . . . .	7	11	47	-----do-----
G. K. Campbell. . . . .				-----do-----
John Luos, Illinois. . . . .	11	19-	113	California
Joseph A. Jacobs, Minnesota. . . . .				-----do-----
J. L. Criss, Minnesota. . . . .		1	4	California
William H. Robinson, Illinois. . . . .	10	21	62	-----do-----
N. S. Batcheller, Illinois. . . . .	3	7	29	-----do-----
S. H. Blonger, Minnesota. . . . .	7	17	129	-----do-----
Ed. N. Wadsworth, Indiana. . . . .	27	42	27	-----do-----
R. V. Newsham, Minnesota. . . . .				-----do-----
D. W. Anderson, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	3	-----do-----
W. Roberts, Iowa. . . . .	1	1	12	-----do-----
W. Y. Franel. . . . .	1	4	10	-----do-----
A. Denniston, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
H. Littell, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	2	-----do-----
W. W. Waynick, Iowa. . . . .	1	4	14	-----do-----
E. Culbutson, Iowa. . . . .			14	-----do-----
H. H. Roderick, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
Aaron Gilbert, Iowa. . . . .	1	13	7	-----do-----
George Boardman, Iowa. . . . .			3	-----do-----
Gilbert W. Hoffman, Iowa. . . . .		2		-----do-----
James F. Stout, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
Richard Alexander. . . . .	1	3	8	-----do-----
Charley Switzer, Missouri. . . . .				-----do-----
William Alexander, Illinois. . . . .	11	13	97	California
J. Collins, Illinois. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
R. H. Stralburg. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
John C. Fink, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
Elonzo Odell, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
O. B. Dodd, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
H. W. Briggs, Iowa. . . . .	3	13	56	-----do-----
O. S. Howe, Maine. . . . .	1	3	8	-----do-----
John W. Anderson, Iowa. . . . .				-----do-----
John Springer, Ohio. . . . .				-----do-----
Thaddeus Sterling, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
Jesse H. Chrisman, Pennsylvania. . . . .	1	4	8	California
Joseph E. Rapp, Pennsylvania. . . . .	1	4	8	-----do-----
James A. Field, Pennsylvania. . . . .	1	4	8	-----do-----

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
Elijah Jacobs, Illinois. . . . .	1	5	8	-----do-----
David Ashby, Illinois. . . . .				-----do-----
C. A. Trueman, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	11	31	California
William Moon. . . . .	1	2	6	-----do-----
N. B. Ingram, Iowa. . . . .	6	24	36	-----do-----
Patrick Haugh, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	20	-----do-----
Andrew McGee. . . . .	2	6	12	-----do-----
Ivory McKinney. . . . .	2	15	500	-----do-----
George W. Gilbert. . . . .	3	12	12	-----do-----
A. D. Buck, Wisconsin. . . . .	6			-----do-----
Th. Hale, Illinois. . . . .	1	53	8	California
Thomas Parker, Illinois. . . . .	1	5	8	-----do-----
Dawson Green, Illinois. . . . .	1	6	8	-----do-----
Rufus C. Gates. . . . .	1	3	8	California
Alfred Sutton. . . . .	1	1	2	-----do-----
Luke Shaw. . . . .	3	5	10	-----do-----
Charles Duncan, Illinois. . . . .	1	5	8	-----do-----
J. Jenkins, Missouri. . . . .	3	11	90	-----do-----
John H. Warrington, Iowa. . . . .	1	5	8	-----do-----
Edwin Green, Illinois. . . . .	1	6	8	-----do-----
Robert Witherspoon, Illinois. . . . .	2	3		-----do-----
Ira Trelsher, Wisconsin. . . . .	3	6	13	Oregon-----
John Thomas, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
William Christy, Ohio. . . . .	1	1	3	-----do-----
F. M. Scott, Missouri. . . . .	1	3	7	-----do-----
Andrew Clark, Iowa. . . . .	2	10	19	Oregon-----
W. W. Markwell, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
Edward F. Pearce, Wisconsin. . . . .	6	24	67	California
Nathan Hall, Iowa. . . . .	1	3	2	Oregon-----
Jason C. Pratt, Michigan. . . . .	1	2	11	-----do-----
M. P. Scott, Missouri. . . . .	1	3	12	-----do-----
James Ritchie, Maryland. . . . .	1	3	6	-----do-----
Daniel Shipper. . . . .	4	16	20	California
Fr. Bath. . . . .				-----do-----
G. W. Gallanar. . . . .				-----do-----
David Crock. . . . .				-----do-----
Henry Boughnow. . . . .				-----do-----
Nicholas Gallanar. . . . .				-----do-----
William Shiffer. . . . .				-----do-----
John F. Shiffer. . . . .				-----do-----
James M. Shiffer. . . . .				-----do-----
H. P. Hawkins. . . . .				-----do-----
Abraham Ede. . . . .	2	9	80	California
John Walters. . . . .	1	3	6	-----do-----
John Stewart. . . . .	1	3	10	-----do-----

Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
Robert Panter. . . . .	11	5	4	Oregon-----
William Panter. . . . .				
James Panter. . . . .				
Samuel Slife, Iowa. . . . .	4	10	18	California
John B. Collins, Iowa. . . . .				
Richard Loney, Iowa. . . . .				
Zebulon Walker, Iowa. . . . .				
Sutler, Walker, Iowa. . . . .				
Abram Wilson, Iowa. . . . .				
Ichabod Hubbard, Iowa. . . . .				
A. C. Ely, Iowa. . . . .				
Edwin S. Brown, Michigan. . . . .				
D. S. Blouse, Iowa. . . . .				
G. O. Vose, M.T. . . . .	4	14	22	California
C. D. Hapgood, M. T. . . . .				
William N. Bulb, Minesota. . . . .	5	19	33	California
Aaron Lampher, jr. . . . .				
D. Berry, Iowa. . . . .				California
William Morse, Iowa. . . . .				

The undersigned, emigrants from Iowa and other States to California, desire to state, for the benefit of those who may emigrate hereafter, that they travelled the road leading by Salt Lake and found it very mountainous and rough, and most of the streams on said road were bridged and ferries established, over which exorbitant tolls were exacted for the passage of trains and teams; and where there were no bridges or ferries over the streams the fords were not only difficult but dangerous. They would also state, for the benefit of those who may emigrate hereafter, that they were compelled to pay from twenty-five cents to five cents per head a night for pasturage of their stock at Salt Lake and as far up as Bear river, a distance of nearly one hundred miles. That for about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the South Pass, towards Salt Lake City, the country was nearly destitute of grass, and might almost be called a barren waste, and the road strewn with carcasses and bones of dead animals lost the present and past seasons, caused doubtless by the great scarcity of grass; and they especially advise all future emigrants not to travel the Salt Lake road.

John E. Movers  
Z. N. Hewitt  
E. E. McAvoy  
G. A. Quick  
Joseph Stiffler  
David Davis  
Levi Adams  
Lewis Herren  
Hiram Young, Mercer county, Pennsylvania  
John Babeison  
Wm. Ostander, town of Winterset, Iowa  
Thomas Trester, Missouri  
J. C. Halloway, Honey Grove, Fannin county, Texas  
Mark Anthony, Indiana  
William Henry Ford, Illinois  
Duncan McKay, Vermont  
Charles Sullivan, Minnesota  
S.V. B. Shull, Kansas Territory  
William Peasly, his x mark, Minnesota  
S. H. Hartly, jr., Illinois.  
John E. Janes, Minnesota  
Samuel Renslow, his x mark  
Fredrick M. Frisbee, Minnesota  
Samuel Ash Davidson, Illinois.  
Joseph Jones, Indiana  
H. Reynolds, Minnesota  
William McIntosh, Minnesota  
Alex. Phillips, Arkansas  
L. M. Lawley, Arkansas  
A. J. Ruxby, Pulaski county, Arkansas  
Robert Rolston  
David Athy  
John Athy  
H. H. Bierly.  
H. Ex. Doc. 63 - 3

W. A. Townsend  
 N. D. Townsend  
 E. Mownsend  
 S. C. Movers  
 A. S. Lineback  
 J. W. Taylor  
 Wm. Dutton  
 Philo. Clark  
 John M. Chipman  
 L. B. Trowbridge  
 N. A. Trowbridge  
 Charles Harner  
 A. D. Miller, Michigan, (to California.)  
 A. A. Miller, Michigan  
 Edward Bonyman, Illinois  
 Daniel Lathrop, Vermont, (California)  
 John Bonyman, Illinois, (California)  
 H. F. Bennett  
 William Haskell, Maine  
 A. J. Young, Maine.  
 R. C. Brann, Maine  
 A. C. Day, Boston, (bound for California.)  
 Sam Haskell, Maine  
 Enoch Philbrick, Maine  
 Daniel Bryan, New York  
 Egbert Hizrodt, New York

Names and residence	Number of wagons	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
Lucian Wright. . . . .	4	19	42	California
Roswell Burt. . . . .				
R. S. Walandt. . . . .	1	2	2	California
Asa Butler, Wisconsin . . . . .	1	2	4	do
F. Carnsworth, Wisconsin. . . . .	2	4	8	do
G. W. Reynolds, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	4	2	do
M. H. Balsie, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	5	6	do
E. Grenard, Indiana. . . . .	2	3	9	do
R. Anderson, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	9	do
Horace Douglas, M.D., Michigan. . . . .	1	2	2	do
R. B. Ware, Pennsylvania. . . . .	2	5	17	do
Jacob Christian, Illinois. . . . .	1	8	10	do
Jacob R. Vogdes, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	12	do
Tobias Teller, Illinois. . . . .	2	3	9	do
D. W. Rinewalt, Illinois. . . . .	1	4	10	do
William H. Freid. . . . .	2	7	8	do
J. T. Miller, Illinois. . . . .	1			do



Statement-Continued

Names and residence	Number of wagons &	Number of persons	Number of stock	Place of Destination
Charles Shrom, jr. . . . .	4	1	20	-----do-----
Robert R. Miller. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
A. H. Simpson, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	2	-----do-----
Robert Orfield, Illinois. . . . .	1	3	5	California
Ogden Edwards, New York. . . . .	2	9	8	-----do-----
Isack G. Cork, Pennsylvania. . . . .	1	4	4	-----do-----
John Baird, New York. . . . .	7	24	14	-----do-----
Alexander Brown, New Hampshire. . . . .	6	26	28	-----do-----
A. F. Brown, New York. . . . .				Oregon-----
Jas. W. Maxwell, Illinois. . . . .	5	12	29	-----do-----
Hiram Stuart, Nova Scotia. . . . .	1	2	5	-----do-----
Jacob Elliott. . . . .	2	11	12	-----do-----
Henry Emrick, Iowa. . . . .	2	14	21	-----do-----
William Emrick, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	4	-----do-----
R. F. Lane, Missouri. . . . .	6	26	610	-----do-----
Isaac Pferheimer, Missouri. . . . .	6	26	17	-----do-----
Thomas Lane, Missouri. . . . .	11	20	78	California
W. A. Huff, Missouri. . . . .	12	20	1010	-----do-----
John T. McFarlan. . . . .	1	4	28	-----do-----
Solomon. . . . .		2	6	-----do-----
John Lamb, Missouri. . . . .	4	12	60	-----do-----
T. J. Faulkner, Missouri. . . . .	1	6	19	-----do-----
R. V. Kelly, Missouri. . . . .	5	24	822	-----do-----
(Unintelligible). . . . .	4	19	89	-----do-----
W. H. Wise, Illinois. . . . .	2	4	12	-----do-----
C. H. Bingham, Wisconsin. . . . .	1	3	12	-----do-----
B. M. Rabert, Missouri. . . . .	7	18	79	-----do-----
J. W. Lambert. . . . .	2	4	11	-----do-----
John Deasy. . . . .	1	1	3	-----do-----
Zina H. Fairchild. . . . .	4	11	16	-----do-----
A. Evans, California. . . . .	5	21	325	-----do-----
R. E. Ross, California. . . . .	1	3	4	-----do-----
W. Smith, Ohio. . . . .	1	3	22	-----do-----
Isaac Harp, Illinois. . . . .	2	7	11	-----do-----
J. N. Evans, Ohio. . . . .	4	20	300	-----do-----
Henry Cosgrave, Ohio. . . . .		1		-----do-----
M. L. Crawford, Iowa. . . . .		1		-----do-----
Sam. H. Dewey, Iowa. . . . .		1		-----do-----
Peter Gnio, Michigan. . . . .	2	14	65	-----do-----
Frank House, Ohio. . . . .	9	28	111	-----do-----
John Brown, Iowa. . . . .	6	23	36	-----do-----
John Dobkins, Iowa. . . . .	2	10	29	-----do-----
Charles Gilbert. . . . .	8	23	113	-----do-----
Zalbrah Archibald. . . . .	1	2	21	-----do-----
U. S. Ingram, Council Bluffs, Iowa. . . . .	1	2	2	-----do-----

Title Report of Captain John H. Dickerson of the United States Army Topographed Survey on the Survey of a Territorial Road from Omaha to Fort Kearny. Source Report of the Secretary of War 1857-58, Senate Documents Vol. 3 sec. 920, p. 525.

By instructions of the War Department-----May 28, 1856, I was placed in charge of the location and construction of the territorial road in Nebraska, connecting New Fort Kearny and a point on the Missouri River opposite Council Bluffs, Iowa. I arrived at Omaha City June 26----On the first of July I commenced the preliminary survey..... I crossed the Big and Little Papillion on what is known as the winter quarters trail; the route usually pursued by Mormon emigrants struck the Elkhorn river eighteen miles above its Junction with the Platte and at a distance of 24 miles from Omaha City. Crossing this stream I came to the Loup Fork of the Platte, four miles above its mouth A ferry has been established across it (the Loup) near its mouth to facilitate the Mormon emigration but sand bars originate rapidly, and interrupt the crossing. In going to Fort Kearny the ferry was good, but on returning twenty five days afterward, sand bars had formed, and the wagon train was gotten over by men wading by the side of the boat, winding about among the bars, hunting out the deepest water.....

I continued up the south side of the Loup for 57 miles, when I left it, and, marching 23 miles across the range of high broken sand-hills intervening between it and the Platte valley, I struck Prairie Creek. This creek meanders through the Platte bottom for 80 miles. Where it is first met with after leaving the Loup Fork it is a pretty little stream with clear deep water and a rapid current, without trees, shrubs or hills to indicate the presence of a watercourse. I continued up it 20 miles. Before leaving it its banks became high with a continuous short growth of ash and Elm on their slopes. The volume of water is also greater here than it is lower down. Before reaching the Platte the water disappears for the greater part of the year, sinking in the quicksands, which prevail in the valley at a depth of from 6 to 10 feet below the surface. This disappearance..... is common to all the small tributaries of the Platte in this section of its valleys. While their beds are dry and overgrown with grass and weeds near their mouths they are running streams toward their sources.

Leaving Prairie Creek, I crossed Wood river 25 miles above its mouth. For thirty miles its direction is nearly parallel to that of the Platte and about five miles from it. Its banks are high but gradually decrease towards its mouth, and these slopes are covered with a short growth of ash and Elm. I kept up Wood river for six miles, and then diverged to the left again, struck the Platte river near the head of Grand Island.....moved down the river and encamped opposite Fort Kearny.....

I was satisfied a shorter route could be obtained by going down the Platte. . . I surveyed a line due north from the fort for three miles. . . to the rising ground on the north side of the river. From this point the line strikes Wood River nine miles from the Fort (note. about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of the site of Gibbon. This preliminary survey does not coincide exactly with

Report of John H. Dickerson--2

the road when finished. - H.S.R.) and continues down it to near its mouth where a good ford is found. The bed of the stream is firm and the banks low. From Wood river I continued down the Platte, crossing Boovis and Prairie Creeks, and struck our outward trail in the valley of the Loup Fork, four miles above where I had crossed in going up. To this point the Platte river line is 26 miles shorter than the other, and is superior to it in every respect. It affords good points, for camping grounds, from five to fifteen miles apart, with abundance of wood, water and grass: and the necessity for bridging Wood River and Prairie Creek is obviated. Prairie Creek and Boovis Creek, a small stream 35 miles below Wood river, can be crossed by corderoy. . . . .

Research by Hervey S. Robinson  
June 9, 1941

## OMAHA, IN AUGUST 1856

A correspondent of the Brownville, Nebraska Advertiser (August 30, 1856 page 3, column 3) writes under date of August 18, 1856. He tells of attending church services in the large dining hall of the Douglas House in Omaha City. As there is not a finished church edifice in the town. Mr. Mills, the proprietor permitted the use of his dining hall for church purposes. The congregation was large well behaved and attentive, bearing the appearance of morality and religion. Many united in the singing which reminded us of olden times in the land of settled habits.

The Catholics, Methodists and Presbyterians have their houses under way and will be finished probably this fall.

The Capitol has reached the floor of the second story and will probably not be raised higher than the square this season, and will probably not be ready for the ereception of the Legislature this winter, as was in the spring anticipated. When finished as designed by the architect, it will be one of the handsomest of its kind in the United States. Situated as it is on the summit of Capitol Hill, it can be seen from this end of "Extension City." and also from Calhoun, Crescent City, and Council Bluffs, in the State of Iowa, and commanding a large and extensive view of the surrounding country.

The correspondent comments upon the grading of Farnam Street, then in progress, designed to extend to the river at a cost of over \$4,000, continuing to the steamboat landing he saw several new buildings for various purposes besides several large warehouses and the steam sawmill of Salsberry and Smith, which was doing a good business.

"On returning to their horses (presumably tied near the Capitol Square) the party had their attention directed toward some new stakes," which by inquiry we ascertained to be stations, on the line of the new military road, just completed by Captain Dickenson and his engineering corps, between Omaha and New Fort Kearney, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles, at an expense of probably, thousands of dollars, whilst one of our western field surveyors, would have located the road for as many hundreds. The road passes up on the north side of the Platte River through Elkhorn City. North Bend, Buchanan and Columbus, at the Ferry on Loup Fork. The probability is that they will proceed immediately to improve the crossings of all the streams on the route, and expend the money, appropriated for the road."

"Property has risen in value very rapidly since the adjournment of the Legislature. Lots which could then be purchased from \$2.00 to \$100.00 will now sell for from \$50 to \$3,000.

Preparations are now being made to extend the limits of Omaha and Florence, and unite the two. It is also contemplated to enlarge the boundaries of Council Bluffs by extending it to the river front.

From Brownville Nebraska Advertiser  
August 30, 1856, p. 3. col. 3

By Hervery S. Robinson, June 6, 1941

A Letter from A Council Bluffs Correspondent dated Sept. 1, 1856 says:

"The engineers, I understand, are on their return from Fort Kearny, with the survey and location of the Military Emigrant road from Omaha to the valley of the Platte, on the north side, to Fort Kearney. The valley is rapidly settling with intelligent farmers, who are making their mark, by turning the sod and making ready for an early commencement in the Spring and I think it will, in a few years be considered the most productive and wealthy portion of the interior of Nebraska.

From Bownville, Nebraska Advertiser,  
September 1, 1856, p. 3. col. 3.

By Hervey S. Robinson,  
June 6, 1941

## A RIVAL ROAD

An act to establish a territorial road from Brownville to New Fort Kearney was passed by the Legislature and approved February 9, 1857.

R. S. Holladay, J. L. Dozier and C. A. Goshen were appointed commissioners to locate the road. It was provided that the road need not for the present be extended farther than Tecumseh but within two years it should be extended to Fort Kearney.

From Brownville Nebraska Advertiser  
May 7, 1857, p. 3. col. 4.

By Hervey S. Robinson,  
June 6, 1941

MESSAGE OF ACTING GOVERNOR CUMING  
in December 1857.

"The Military Road to Fort Kearney has been nearly finished, including bridges built according to the most approved plans for strength and durability (the bridge across the Elk Horn being, 200 feet in length) and the road itself give access to one most fertile and commercially important valleys in the great West.

From Brownville Nebraska Advertiser  
December 24, 1857, p. 3. col. 4.

By Hervey S. Robinson  
June 6, 1941



Title -- Military Road to Fort Kearny Source-- United State Statutes at Large. Date 1855. Page 608.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: That for the purpose of constructing a territorial road from a point on the Missouri River opposite Council Bluffs, in the territory of Nebraska to New Fort Kearny in said territory, there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of fifty thousand dollars.

Approved February 17, 1855.

Hervey Robinson  
June 6, 1941.

File Roads

## WIDTH OF PUBLIC ROADS IN TERRITORIAL NEBRASKA

In 1855 the Nebraska territorial legislature passed the first road laws.

An act approved March 15, 1855, provided that when the lands of any person shall be surrounded, or inclosed, or be shut off from a public highway the owner of such land could have a road, not more than fifteen feet wide, established to connect his land with the public highway.

An act approved March 16, 1855, established the width of public roads. It provided;

Sec. 3. All county, territorial, and other public roads shall have a wothd of sixty-six feet, and the staked line marking such road shall be on the northern edge of the said sixty-six feet, if the road is running east and west, and on the western edge if the course of the road is north and south.

An act approved January 26, 1856, provided that all bridges on public roads should be at least sixteen feet wide. This act also provided that public roads should be worked and kept in good condition for a width of forty feet.

When Nebraska Territory became a state in 1867, the legislature provided that all territorial laws should become state laws and that wherever the word "territory" should appear in the law it should mean "state." Consequently the legal width for all public roads continued to be sixty-six feet after Nebraska was admitted to the Union.

Territorial legislatures enacted about two hundred special road laws establishing public roads, usually between points in adjoining counties, but none of those laws provided for roads of more or less than sixty-six feet in width.

Research by  
Samuel McCoy

E. G. CHAMBERS ET AL.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 352.]

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February 1, 1852.

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Mr. Giddings, from the Committee on Territories, made the following

R E P O R T.

*b* The Committee on Territories, to whom was referred the memorial of E. G. Chambers and twenty others, praying that Congress would bestow upon them the means of surveying and locating a wagon-road from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean, and also bestow lands along said road on which to commence settlements, report:

That the subject is one of great importance, demanding the immediate consideration of Congress. It is found, upon investigation, that sixty-five thousand emigrants, over two hundred thousand head of stock of various kinds, more than seven thousand wagons, and all the indispensable equipage necessary for such a vast multitude, have crossed the plains during the past season. It is also found that, notwithstanding all the toil and suffering of former emigrants, emigration is annually on the increase, and that women and children form a large portion of every train. Your committee represent that, as the genius of our country fosters such enterprise, and as the spirit of our institutions encourages it, so Congress should adopt measures to facilitate it.

It is supposed that more deaths occur annually on the route to California than on all the other routes within the United States put together. These are brought about by exposure -- a great part of which is no doubt involuntary. The sick emigrant has no place to stop; when once started, go he must, sick or well.

These facts show that we have a large amount of property, and a great number of lives, travelling over a route nearly two thousand miles in extent -- a route so neglected, that water, which Heaven designed should be as free as air, is dolled out for the exorbitant price of ten cents per pint. Can any one, who has not been in a similar situation, imagine what must be the emigrant's feelings when compelled to pay that price for a drink of water for his sick child or famishing wife?

But emigration is not the only cause which imperiously demands an improved route; a telegraphic communication with the Pacific, in consequence of not having it, is prevented.

A proposal was made some time since to put up a line of telegraph, if Congress would only furnish the means of protecting it. The demand for such a communication is a fixed fact, loudly calling for attention.

It is well known in some parts of the country that one of the wealthiest stage companies in the United States has, for some time past contemplated putting a line of coaches on the route to California, if the proper facilities for such an

enterprise could be obtained. The method proposed by the memorialists to accomplish this object seems to be simple and practical. They propose to have a survey made and a new road located, for the purpose of finding a more direct and feasible route than is now used. They next propose to take up four sections of land in all places along the route suitable for a settlement, provided they do not occur oftener than once in twenty miles. On these four sections they propose to begin each settlement by employing a suitable number of men to form a sufficient protection not only for themselves, but also for single families, who without this preliminary could not be induced to locate in a new settlement. They propose, further, that all lands situated within seven miles of each place of beginning shall be given to actual settlers on the same. This would multiply settlers, and numbers begetting competition, travellers would be exempted from extortion in the procuring of the necessaries which they require. "Then people of small means could travel upon their own conveyances, without other expense than the provisions consumed -- the equipment of animals and vehicles being about worth their cost, either for use or disposal, after their arrival. Then people could communicate, could have intercourse, and could go and come without paying enough to an ocean line to set up a small farmer, or taking the chance of death from disease, starvation, and Indians on the exposed and neglected inland route."

## MILITARY ROAD

The military highway which extended west from Omaha to Fort Kearny had its beginnings in a law which was approved on February 17, 1855. "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: That for the purpose of constructing a territorial road from a point on the Missouri river, opposite Council Bluffs, in the Territory of Nebraska, to New Fort Kearny in said territory, there be and hereby is, appropriated the sum of fifty thousand dollars."<sup>1</sup>

Captain John Dickerson of the United States Army Topographical Engineers arrived in Omaha on June 26, 1856, to commence survey of the road. He remained there for four days during which time he hired a guide, collected information in regard to the route and had some leveling rods made. On July 1 he commenced a preliminary survey. He crossed the Big and Little Papillion Creeks on the route followed by the Mormons and struck the Elkhorn river eighteen miles from its junction with the Platte, and some twenty-four miles from Omaha. Captain Dickerson reported that the Pawnee Indians promised not to molest his surveying party, yet at the same time they seriously objected to the road. They observed that roads always brought white men who chased away the game.<sup>2</sup>

Captain Dickerson's party completed the survey on August 14, 1856. He entered into a contract with one Matthew Ragan for the bridging of Omaha branch, the two Papillion creeks, Elkhorn river, and Rawhide and Shell creeks and for grading on the west bank of the Elkhorn. After paying for the above and for the survey some \$4500 remained of the appropriation of \$50,000.<sup>3</sup>

Governor Cuming in his message to the Legislature in December 1857 said, "The Military Road to Fort Kearny has been nearly finished, including bridges built after the most improved plans for strength and durability (the bridge across the Elkhorn being 200 feet in length) and the road itself giving access to one of the most

fertile and commercially important vallies in the great west."<sup>4</sup>

Captain Dickerson had warned his superiors of the danger to the bridges from prairie fires. As a precaution deep trenches were dug on either side of the bridges and heavy embankments of sand thrown up against the abutments and covering the approaches.<sup>5</sup>

The Military Road ran northwest from Omaha from 45th and Grant streets to 72nd and Boyd streets. Benson's location is said to have been determined because of the location of the road.<sup>6</sup>

It was a well travelled highway. A soldier traveling between Omaha and Fremont in 1863 described the route as follows: "The condition of the country between Omaha and the Elkhorn river was that of a wild Western country. The road was a well beaten track, four or five hundred feet wide, on which an enormous traffic for years had been operating... The road was hard and smooth as a floor, for the dust and gravel had been blown off from it by the violence of the wind."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Statutes at Large 1855. p.608

<sup>2</sup> Message of Pres. of U.S. Vol.II 1858. Report of Secty. of War, pp.524-534

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Nebraska Advertiser, Brownville, Dec. 24, 1857, p.3

<sup>5</sup> Messages on cit

<sup>6</sup> Nebraska History Magazine Vol.XVI, no.2, April-June 1935. p.99.

<sup>7</sup> Eugene Ware, The Indian War of 1864. p.18

Donald D. Walker  
Nov. 18, 1953



## ROADS

### Across the Plains (662)

Fort Abercrombie, Ho. Dak.	to Ft. Pembina (928)
Fort Benton	to Ft. Walla Walla (778)
Fort Bridger	to Uintah Agency (1196)
Fort Defiance	to Colorado River (727, 729)
Fort Dodge	to Dubuque (606)
Fort Gratiot	to Sand Hill (513)
Fort Howard	to Fort Snelling, Wis. (386)
Fort Howard, Wis.	to Fort Wilkins, Mich. (504, 862)
Fort Kearny	to South Pass and Henry Lake (789)
Fort Leavenworth	to Fort Larned (814, 822)
Fort Leavenworth	to Pierre, Nebr. (680)
Fort Leavenworth	to Mississippi river (297)
Fort Madison	to Fairfield (414)
Fort Ridgley and South Pass	(797)
Fort Smith to California	(571)
Fort Smith to Colorado river	(762, 782)
Fort Smith to Santa Fe	(592)
Fort Snelling	to Fort Howard (417)
Fort Laramie city	to Fort Pettorman, Mont. (885)
Fort Mississippi river	to Ridgley (749)
Fort Missouri river	to Mexico (747)
Fort Missouri river	to California (686)
Fort Missouri river	to Gallatin, Idaho (822)
Fort Niobrara	to Fort Robinson, Nebr. (1168)
Fort Niobrara	to Virginia City (842)
Fort Sidney, Nebr.	to Sioux Indian Reservation (1168)

(Numbers in parentheses refer to Index to Catalogue of Government Documents -- get document references.)

## **Military Road**

**Nebraska City News, 11-13-58**

**From Nebraska City to Ft Kearney needed.**

**From Nebraska City to Ft. Laramie, reserving  
one mile on either side for the use of the  
government, herding and emigrant crossing the  
plains. 12-11-58**

## **Route**

**Nebraska City News, 12-4-58**

**Great, National of Majors, Russell and Waddell,  
starts from Nebr. City. Editorial.**

**The best route to the gold fields leads from  
Nebr. City. 12-4-58**

## **Route**

**Nebraska City News, 10-23-58**

**Military road to the crossing of the South Platte,  
best -- to the gold fields.**

**Between Nebr. City and Ft. Kearney to be shortened  
40 or 50 miles, for the purpose of testing the  
mineral waters of Salt Creek. Prospecting for coal  
on Salt Creek and Big Blue. . . . From Ft.  
Kearney best -- for emigrants to the gold fields.  
11-6-58**

**Question of opening a new -- between Otee City and Nebr.  
City, which would be a shorter one and without much  
expense or labor. 10-16-58**

## **Road, Military**

**Nebraska City News, 3-13-58**

**Bill in Congress to construct -- to Ft. Kearney.**

Roads

Nebraska City News, 10-16-58

Resolution for construction of wagon road from Platte River to Kansas line, referred to Military Com. in Nebraska Legislature. . . . General road bill passed by unanimous vote in Nebr. Leg.

Natural ridge road from Nebr. City to Kearney.  
Best route over Western Plains. 11-6-58

Opening of-- of Importance to Brownville.  
(Brownville Adv.) . . . Editorial: Best road to Western Ports to Utah and Calif. lead from Nebr. City. 12-4-58

An act to establish a Ter. -- from Nebr. City to Salem and from Nebr. City to Plattsmouth. 12-11-58

Roads.

Nebraska City News, 11-21-57

Wagon -- completed to the Pacific section of Calif.

Movement in Congress for wagon road from Nebr. City to Ft. Kearney. 2-20-58

Bill in Congress for completion of wagon road of Ft. Riley and South Pass. 5-22-58

Fremont Herald. In making a trip to Nebr. City, says no excuse for country to be without--after receiving 100,000 acres of land from the state (Nebr.) 6-17-58

Joint petition in Congress for wagon road from Platte River to the Kansas line. This project is worthy the attention of Congress. 10-9-58

Roads.

Nebraska City News, 1-17-57

Editorial endorsing article written by "Traveler recommending public roads built.

Bill for an appropriation of \$500,000 for the construction of a wagon road to Ft. Kearney via South Pass to Rocky Mts. . . . Appropriation for \$30.00 for Nebr. roads. 3-7-57

Wagon road has been completed from Nebr. City to Manhattan at the mouth of the Big Blue. 115 miles between the two points. 2-21-57

Wagon road to Calif. Construction of - from Ft. Kearney via South Pass of Rocky Mts. and Great Salt Lake Valley. Passed both Houses. 3-28-57

Roads

Peoples Press

The distance to various points on the new road via Ft. Kearney. 5-4-60

New road open. See Vifquain. 5-8-60

Four from Ft. Kearney to the Mo. river. 10-4-60

Vifquain, M.

Peoples Press

From Beranger, on the Blue, at Nebr. City. Reports the new road open and all crossings of streams in excellent condition. Met 40 wagons on the way out. 5-8-60

## Ft. Kearney

### Peoples Press

Military road to Nebr. City. 9-13-60  
Railroads from -----Nebr. City and Plattsmouth  
defeated in congress. 9-20-60  
Ft. Kearney---Nebraska City. Road pledged. . .  
Daily favors R. R. from Nebr. City to -- 10-4-60  
Nebr. City telegraph line promised but not built  
by company. 10-25-60  
Western Stage coach passed. -- for Omaha. 11-21-60.

## Routes,

### Peoples Press

Editorial recommends Central or Nebraska City  
route to the mines. Emigrants favor. 2-10-60  
Omaha Route impassable to mines. 4-13-60  
The Platte route to the mines, one of the  
greatest natural advantages from which to  
approach the mountains, by the larger portion  
of emigrants, from Chicago, eastern, northern  
and north eastern states. . . .  
The Santa Fe route to the mines limited for the  
accommodation of emigration. 3-20-60

## Routes, Great Central

### Peoples Press

From Nebraska City, considered best. 4-24-60  
From Nebraska City, A. Majors to make starting  
point. 5-4-60  
See Newspapers, Omaha Nebraskian. 5-11-60

## Roads, Military

### Peoples Press

Legislature recommended to Congress to make an  
appropriation for--from Nebr. City to Ft.  
Kearney. Gov. Black endorses. If government  
will open a good road--an important measure  
accomplished, and the line of the Pacific R. R.  
marked out. . . . See Appropriations,  
2-17-60

Roads, Military (continued)

Military road and California Trail, abandoned.  
4-13-60

See Appropriations. 6-23-60  
Nebr. City to Ft. Kearney. 9-13-60  
North of the Platte, up the Mo. \$30,000  
appropriated money wasted, Omaha to Ft. Kearney  
\$60,000 mostly wasted. 9-20-60

Roads,

Peoples Press

New one to the mines, 75 miles saved, direct from  
Nebr. City to Ft. Kearney. Wood, water and feed  
in abundance. 3-30-60  
The distance of new districts to points on new  
road via Ft. Kearney. 4-6-60  
The distance to various points on new road via  
Ft. Kearney. 4-13-60  
All the roads from Mo. river, except the one  
from Kansas City via of Bent's Fork, center at  
Ft. Kearney, and also the new road from Nebr.  
City to Ft. Kearney is a straight line, being  
5 or 6 miles longer than air line, and nearest  
point to gold fields. 4-10-60  
New--to Ft. Kearney opened and in good con-  
dition thruout. 4-24-60

Roads,

Peoples Press

From Nebr. City between southern tributaries  
of the Platte and the northern ones of Kansas,  
and crosses but one stream of more than a few  
inches of water on the whole route. Well timbered  
and watered for camping purposes. See Fremont  
County, County Judge. . . . Legislature re-  
commended to Congress, to make an appropriation  
for a military road from Nebr. City to Ft. Kearney.  
Gov. Black endorsing. If the government will open  
a good road--an important measure accomplished, and  
the line of the Pacific R. R. marked out. 2-17-60  
To Ft. Kearney, settlers of Saly Creek and Big Blue  
working upon, and the road will be open in a few  
weeks. J. Cadman has taken hand in work.

3-23-60

## Roads

The new Road to Fort Kearney from Nebr. City - Repairs and bridges necessary to make it the shortest route from the Missouri River west to mountains.

Neb. City News Dec. 22, 1860 Col 4 p 2

## Roads

The great Central Route from Nebraska City, its advantages, as stated by Cap't. Branchorn of Boone County, Mo. just returned from the mines as it avoids the difficult streams of the other routes. He came in by the North Platte route, was obliged to swim the streams, saw thirty wagons at Loup Fork waiting to cross, water waist deep for miles. Its advantages to the gold mines are, - The shortness of the route, the excellence of the road; and the cheapness of the outfits at Nebraska City.

Nebraska City News 4-2-59 p 2 col 1, 2 & 3

## Roads

Central Route declared to be by far the best route for the miners, by one thousand pounds to the wagon, by Mr. Byrum, Wagon Master, in employ of Russell, Majors & Waddell, long connected with freighting over the plains and familiar with the different routes.

Nebraska City News 2-19-59 p 2 col 4

## Roads

Card #1

The Central Nebraska City Route is being firmly established by the facts and experiences of thousands, all going to show the wisdom of the Government in selecting this route and Nebraska City as the disembarking point. The wealthy men of Leavenworth, with a capital of half a million, organized and equipped an express with a daily line of coaches - they had skillful engineers explore the most feasible and practicable route -



Roads (Continued from Card #1)

the capitalists reside at Leavenworth and the road must lead from there, but the company were compelled to abandon the route. And so the Leavenworth route to the Nebraska gold mines - for they are in Nebraska, notwithstanding the desperate attempts of the Leavenworth papers to locate them in Kansas, must go by the board. The Kansas City route is no longer talked of. The experience of present season establishes the statement the News made early this Spring that there were but two routes to the mines - the Central, or Nebraska City Route and the route from St. Joseph. The almost uncorssable state of Platte river, render the Platte route impracticable and quite out of the question.

Advantages of the St. Joseph, first it is perhaps a better outfitting point for some articles and second it has better Eastern connections.

Advantages of the Nebraska City route over the St. Joseph and all others - the superiority of the road across the plains; testimony of hundreds added to that of the government showing it is unequalled.

Nebraska City News 7-23-59 p 2 col 1

Trails

Card #1

Table of distances to Fort Kearny obtained from Sergeant Hooper in employ of the Government and entirely correct. From Nebraska City to Fort Kearny, Great Central Route.

Weeping Water	20 miles
Salt Creek	30 miles
Cotton Wood	12 miles
Oak Grove	10 miles
Platte Bottom	16 miles
Clear Creek	15 miles
Old Pawnee Village	12 miles
Willow Slough	18 miles
Point of Bluffs	16 miles
Point of Timber	12 miles
Fort Kearny	18 miles

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179 miles

and plenty of wood, water and grass, along the whole route. From Fort Kearny the routes are one and the same. Nebraska City News 4-2-59 p 2 col 3

## Trails

## Editorial

Territorial road from Dakota City to Fort Kearny was authorized by last legislature. An excellent road is possible via Columbus, bridging only one stream. Would open market and increase price of produce 50%. Direct route of miners. Provide a short cut to Peak from Iowa, Dakota Territory and Minnesota.

Dakota City Democrat 3-9-61 p 2 col 3

## Trail

## Editorial

This article describes a trip from Wyoming to the Salt Creek--36 miles--Country. From Wyoming to Weeping-Water, Nebraska City & Kearney--14 miles. Cannot be surpassed for fertility of soil, good lime stone, timber and stone coal. Land selling at \$1.25 per acre. Good water and grass. Reek Ford, then Salt Creek. Skirts of timber and beautiful prairie.

Wyoming Telescope 5-7-59 p 2. col. 1.

## Trails

An important public meeting is to be held this afternoon in Bank Hall, to devise ways and means for shortening the road from Nebraska City to Fort Kearny.

Nebraska City News 4-16-59 p 2 col 4

## Trails

Beyond doubt, emigration for the gold mines is to center at Fort Kearny, and then take the valley of the Platte as its route. About equally well settled is the fact that the national route of Russell, Majors & Waddell, the Nebraska City Route, is to be used for emigration to the gold regions. Nebraska City is directly east of Fort Kearny, by the statement of Surveyor General of Kansas and Nebraska, the distance but one hundred and sixty-eight miles. Road is not equalled by any in the western country with all its advantages of a perfect ridge road, supplied with an abundance of wood and water suited to camping purposes.

Nebraska City News 2-12-59 p 3 col 2

### Trails

The most important consideration in making a trip across the plains, is to select the route which can give the best accommodations in way of wood, water and grass. The settlements along the great Central route, the Nebraska City route, possibly do not extend as far back as upon the more prominent routes, but it does afford, and no other route does, an abundance of water and grass. This is its great advantage, aside from its being nearer an air line.

Nebraska City News 2-19-59 p 2 col 3

### Trails

Notes on roads through Nebraska, Mormon trail etc.

Neb. City News Apr 26, 1862 col 4 p 2

### Trail

Having just returned from the mines over the new straight road to Fort Kearney, permit me to say it is the best road in the Western country. At convenient intervals there are good farms, Wm. Ileis, Mrs. McKee's at the Nemaha, Cadman's, Goodwin's, and Davison's at Salt Creek, and Vifquain's on the Blue, where every accommodation afforded the stranger. Letter from Harry Magee, Neb. City June 21, 1860.

Neb. City News June 30, 1860 col 6 page 2

### Trail

Military Route to Gold Mines from Nebraska City.

Neb. City News Dec. 4, 1858 col 5 p 2

### Trail

Military road from Nebraska City to Fort Laramie.

Neb. City News Dec. 11, 1858 col 2 p 2

**Trail - Nebraska City "Cut off".**

A very large portion of the emigration is taking the new road to Fort Kearney this season. This saves about 75 miles of travel and makes the distance about 173 at least 50 miles shorter than any other route traveled from the Missouri River to Fort Kearney.

Neb. City News May 5, 1860 col 2 p 3

**Trail - Nebraska City "Cut off"**

Most of our readers are aware that there has been opened a new straight road from Nebraska City to Fort Kearney. It is what the people above and below us very much dislike to have called an "Air Line" road.

Neb. City News June 16, 1860 col 2 p 2

**Trails**

Great Central Route - table of distances from Neb. City to Denver City, list of ranches and camps as kept by John McMeekan.

Neb. City News Mar. 22, 1862 col 2 p 3

**Mormon Migration --**

from Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains, 1845-1846 by Pierre Jean de Smet (vol. 29 of Early Western Travels)

"A few miles below [the ancient trading post of Lisel de Cabanne] is the new temporary settlement of the mormons, about 10,000 in number. . . .

The charter of Nauvoo, their Illinois settlement, having been revoked early in 1846, the Mormon leaders organized an emigration, and moved west through Iowa to the Missouri river. Having held a council with the neighboring Indians, they established winter quarters at what is now Florence, Nebraska, where deSmet found them. Early in the spring of 1847 a delegation was dispatched to seek a permanent home. The Valley of Salt Lake was chosen, and removal thither began in 1848. . . ." (p. 371)

**MILITARY ROAD OMAHA TO FORT. KEARNY.**

**Report of the Chief Topographical Engineer Nov. 22, 1856.**

For the construction of a territorial road from a point on the Missouri river. (opposite the city of Council Bluffs) in the territory of Nebraska to New Fort Kearny, in said territory, fifty thousand dollars."

The survey for this road was commenced in June last by Captain J. H. Dickerson U. S. A. His report and estimates have been received and the road put under contract. There are seven bridges to be built with lengths varying from fifty to two hundred feet, which when finished, and the proper approaches made will render the road passible at all seasons, except during the heavy freshets in the Platte when the water backs up from the river into various sloughs with which it connects, rendering them boggy and impracticable for loaded wagons.

Senate Documents 3rd Sec. 34th Cong. 1856-57 vol. 3. p. 371 (Serial 876.)

(For detailed report of Captain Dickerson see Senate Documents 1st. ses. 35th Cong. 1857-58 vol. 3. pp. 525-532.

In the same volume p. 293 col. J. J. Abert, corps Top Eng. reports during the present season (1857) the bridges over Omaha creek, Big Papillion creek, Little Papillion Creek, Rawhide creek, and Shell Creek have been completed and the bridge over the Elkhorn river will be completed this fall by contract.

Besides the above a bridge over Monroe creek and one over prairie creek, by hired labor.

## TERRITORIAL ROADS

Session Laws, Second Session, 1856

This session voted to locate the following roads:

Brownville to the Kansas line, in the direction of Marysville . . . Allen L. Coit, R. J. Whitney and John W. Hall commissioners. Cost to be paid by the organized counties through which the road passed. Approved Jan. 21, 1856. P. 203.

Kenosha in Cass county on the West bank of the Missouri River westward to Salt Creek. Benjamin Williams, Elza Martin and John Carroll, commissioners. (Report, compensation and payment as in foregoing Acts.) Approved Jan. 21, 1856. Pp. 203-204.

Brownville via Nemaha to Archer: A. L. Coit, Strander Froman and E. G. McMillen commissioners. (Cost compensation and payment as in foregoing acts.) Approved Jan. 22, 1856. P. 204.

Nebraska City to Plattsmouth via Wyoming, Kenosha and Rock Bluffs. Commissioners Thomas Patterson, J. M. C. Hagood and J. H. Cowles. Approved Jan. 22, 1856. Pp. 204-205.

From La Platte to Fontenelle via Elkhorn City; Charles E. Watson, Thomas Gibson and G. B. Tunison, commissioners. . . Approved Jan. 26, 1856. P. 205.

South bank of the Platte River near the La Platte Ferry Company landing thence southerly via Three Grove to Nebraska City. Commissioners Levi G. Todd, G. W. Hunt and J. H. Cowles. . . Approved Jan. 22, 1856. P. 210.

From Omaha via Elkhorn City to Fontenelle. Commissioners John Evans, A. F. Salisbury and C. H. Downs. . . Approved Jan. 21, 1856. P. 210.

From Tekamah in Burt County to Fontenelle in Dodge County. B. R. Folsom and W. B. Beck of Burt County and E. G. McNeely of Dodge County, commissioners. Approved Jan. 26, 1856. P. 210-211.

From Omaha City to the Platte River ferry landing in La Platte via Bellevue and the mouth of Papillion Creek. Alexander Davis, Robert Hamilton and William Larimer, Jr., commissioners. Approved Jan. 22, 1856. P. 211.

From the Little Nemaha river at or near where the military road crosses the same near Dr. Jerome Hoover's mill, thence southerly via Maple Grove ford on Muddy Creek, thence to the ford on the Grand Nemaha river, below the Falls, known as the Singleton Ford, thence to the Kansas line. William Trammel, Louis Misplay and Levi Dodge of Richardson County, commissioners. Approved Jan. 22, 1856. Pp. 211-212.



From Florence to Elkhorn City in Douglas County. G. W. Dodge, George Howe and Levi Harsh of Douglas County, commissioners. Approved Jan. 26, 1856. P. 212.

From Omaha City to Dakotah via Florence, Ft. Calhoun, De Soto, Cuming City and Tecama. A. F. Salisbury, Wm. B. Beck and P. C. Sullivan, commissioners. Approved Jan. 26, 1856. P. 213.

From Omaha City via the Junction of the east and west forks of Papillion Creek near the old Indian village to Cedar Island in the Platte river, thence via Eight Mile Grove and Cedar Bluffs Mills in Cass County and Cowles Mills in Otoe County to Nebraska City. William Young of Cass County, D. M. Martin of Otoe County and A. D. Goyer of Douglas County, commissioners. Approved Jan. 25, 1856. P. 223.

From De Soto in Washington County to Fontenelle in Dodge County. P. C. Sullivan of Washington County, Thomas Gibson and William H. Davis of Dodge County, commissioners. Approved Jan. 23, 1856. P. 232.

## ROADS

### SESSION LAWS THIRD SESSION

1857  
PP. 237--255

The following road were authorized by the third session of the Legislature in 1857. It must not be assumed that all of these roads were surveyed or built. Many of them had for termini ghost towns that never had any actual existence, as for example Chester, the county seat of Lancaster county. All data except description of the routes has been omitted in following transcript.

From Nebraska City to Omaha City via Coles Mills in Otoe county (as nearly as practicable.) Wattville in Cass county and Cedar Island in the Platte river.

From Nebraska City and Kearney City landing by the nearest and best route to Brownville in Nemaha County.

From Brownville via St. George and Table Rock to the Kansas line in the direction of Marysville.

From Bellevue via Hazelton, Iron Bluffs, to Fremont in Dodge County.

From Brownville to Nemaha City. From Plattsmouth to Chester, the county seat of Lancaster county.

From Fontenelle, Dodge County to a point on the Missouri river opposite Curing City.

From Elk Horn City, Douglas County to Iron Bluffs in said county.

From Nebraska City and Kearney City landing via Hamilton to Tecumseh.

From De Soto in Washington county, via Woodville and Central City in Burt County to Decatur City in Burt county.

From Elk Horn City in Douglas county by the way of Fontenelle and Manhattan to the forks of the Elkhorn river.

From Nebraska City to Weeping Water Falls in Cass county via. Spring Grove.

From Omaha City to Elkhorn City.

From Florence to Columbus via Golden Gate.

From Fremont in Dodge county via. Fontenelle to Central City in Burt county.

From a point near the junction of the Big and West Apillion Creeks, connecting with the Territorial Roads to Bellevue and Omaha in Douglas county, to Fremont, Dodge county, thence north westerly to a point to the head waters

of Maple creek near the north west corner of Dodge county.

From Omaha City to Manhattan in Cuming County, via. Fontenelle, in Dodge county.

From Bellevue to a point on the Platte river south of the residence of S. W. G. Dailey.

From Plattsmouth to Weeping Water Falls in Cass County.

From Fremont, Dodge county via Iron Bluffs, to Hazelton, Douglas county.

From Ft. Calhoun in Washington county, by way of Fontenelle in Dodge county, to Buchanan in Platte county.

From Omaha City in Douglas county, by way of McKinneys's claim and Hazelton, to Chicago on the Elkhorn river.

From Omaha by way of Hazelton, Gauntree, Salina, and Ashland to the city of Chester in Lancaster county.

From Elk Horn City to Omaha City following the Indian trail to the Big Papillion creek and crossing said stream at McCardles, thence to Omaha City.

From Omaha, Dakota county to the mouth of Running Water river, via., Logan, Saint Johns, Ponca City and St. James.

From the Missouri river to the foot of Main street in the city of Louisville; thence via the cities of Parallel and Salina to New Fort Kearney.

From the crossing of the Big Papillion at McCardles to the Elkhorn river at a point south of Elk Horn City.

From Bellevue to Omaha City.

From Bellevue to Iron Bluffs on the Elkhorn River.

From Omaha City on the most practical route at or near the Junction of east and west Papillion Creek thence to Bennetts and Carlilas ferry at or near Cedar Island in the Platte river.

From Omaha to a point at or near Bridges Mill thence to Fairview on or near the Platte river.

From Jamison's Mill in Otoe county to Hoovers Mill in Nemaha county.

From Brownville in Nemaha county via St. George and Tecumseh in said county to New Fort Kearney on the Platte river.

(Verbatim)

### KEEP IT BEFORE THE PEOPLE

A gentleman, for whose veracity the News pledges its own reputation, who went to the mines by the North Platte route, has written the following paragraph in a letter to his friends, published by our contemporary last week:

"We had a tedious time crossing the Platte, were from 12 o'clock Saturday till 2 p. m. on Tuesday, packed our goods on our backs and in our feed boxes. I could not advise any one of my friends to come to the North Side of the Platte River."

And, besides the Platte, emigrants by that route have to cross the Loup Fork, at the risk of sticking in its quicksands and mud, of long detentions from high water: any rate of ferriage from three to ten dollars per head at the caprice of the ferryman a thing of frequent occurrence thereabouts.

Nebraska City The Peoples Press  
April 13, 1860  
p. 2, col. 3.

Research by  
Hervey S. Robinson

## TO EMIGRANTS

The North Platte Route is the old Overland route: the streams are all bridged with Howe's patent truss bridges, except the larger ones, the Loup Fork and the Platte, which have good ferries: the Western Stage Company's coaches travel this route daily: it is well settled the entire distance to Denver. Camping grounds of the best kind are found everywhere, and the roads are level and good. All who have ever traveled this route give it the preference over all others to the mines and the Pacific coast.

In answer to the above puff which we clip from the Omaha Nebraskan of the 19th inst. we will take the liberty of inserting one or two extracts from a private letter received from a friend traveling in that region of good roads and bridged rivers:

Platte Valley, Dodge Co. N. T.  
April 17, 1862

My Dear Friend:

When in Southern Nebraska I thought the road were bad enough in rainy weather but I had little idea what this territory could do in the way of getting up mud until I arrived at the Capitol. (Note--Omaha) There I found the principal streets .... a foot trap, sure enough -- ankle deep -- knee deep and swamp deep. My idea of Mud-town was fully realized ..... If Omaha was only sketched in its present state, by one of Frank Leslie's special artists, attached to some emigrant train, as it worried and lugged its way through mire and mud along these heavy streets, what a sorry figure it would cut as an advertisement for freighters to make this their starting place for the mountains from Omaha to the Elk Horn River the road is good and well bridged, but from that up the valley to Shell Creek -- a distance of near fifty miles -- it is almost impossible for anything but light loaded or empty wagons, and even the stage has to lie by part of the time, or travel only by day.

The time of year (March and April) when emigrants and freighters should be on the road and making full headway ..... is the very time when this road is in the worst condition. Being liable to overflow in times of high waters, it is always subject to more or less mud at every rain and especially on the breaking up of winter.

(Verbatim)

Nebraska City News,  
April 26, 1862, p. 2. col. 4.

Research by  
Harvey S. Robinson.

November 22, 1940

Request of Mrs. R. M. Jones  
1706 South 32 Avenue.  
Omaha, Nebraska.

For information regarding the Military Road from Omaha to Fort Kearney, its origin, where it started in Omaha and where it left Omaha.

Answering the above request:

The following bill was passed by Congress and approved Febr. 17, 1855:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: That for the purpose of constructing a territorial road from a point on the Missouri river, opposite Council Bluffs, in the territory of Nebraska, to New Fort Kearney in said territory, there be, and hereby is, appropriated the sum of fifty thousand dollars."

(U. S. Statutes at Large, 1855, p. 608)

The next spring, Captain John H. Dickerson of the United States Army Topographical Engineers was sent to locate the road. Following is his report to Col. J. J. Abert, Chief of Topographical Engineers, Dec. 15, 1856, taken from the Report of the Secretary of War in Senate Documents, 1857-58, Vol. 3, Serial No. 920, page 525.

"By instructions from the War Department. . . May 28, 1856, I was placed in charge of the location and construction of the territorial road in Nebraska Territory, connecting New Fort Kearney and a point on the Missouri river opposite Council Bluffs, Iowa.

. . . I arrived at Omaha city June 26.

On the first of July I commenced the preliminary survey. . . I crossed the Big and Little Papillion on what is known as 'Winter Quarters trail', the route usually pursued by Mormon emigrants, and struck Elkhorn river, eighteen miles above its junction with the Platte, and at a distance of twenty-four miles from Omaha city.

. . . Crossing this stream, I came on the Platte or Nebraska river, thirteen miles distant, and continued up the north side of it. . . till I came to the Loup fork of the Platte, four miles above its mouth. . . A ferry has been established on it (the Loup) near its mouth to facilitate the Mormon emigration, but sand bars originate rapidly, and interrupt the crossing. In going to Fort Kearney the ferry was good, but on returning twenty-five days afterwards, sand bars had formed, and the wagon train was gotten over by the men wading by the side of the boat, wading about among the bars, hunting out the deepest water. . .

. . . I continued up the south side of the Loup fork fifty-seven miles, when I left it, and, marching twenty-three miles across the range of high broken sand-hills intervening between it and the Platte valley, I struck Prairie Creek. This creek meanders through the Platte bottom for eighty miles. Where it is first met with after leaving the Loup fork it is a pretty little stream, with clear, deep water and a rapid current, without trees, shrubs, or hills to indicate the presence of a watercourse. I continued up it for twenty miles. Before leaving it its banks became high, with a continuous short growth of ash and elm on their slopes. The volume of water is also greater here than it is

lower down. Before reaching the Platte, the water disappears for the greater part of the year, sinking in the quicksands, which prevail in this valley at a depth of from six to ten feet below the surface. This disappearance. . . is common to all the small tributaries of the Platte in this section of its valley. While their beds are dry and overgrown with grass and weeds near their mouths, they are running streams toward their sources.

Leaving Prairie creek, I crossed Wood river twenty-five miles above its mouth. For thirty miles its direction is nearly parallel to that of the Platte, and about five miles from it. Its banks are high, but gradually decrease toward its mouth, and these slopes are covered with a short growth of ash and elm. I kept up Wood river for six miles, and then diverging to the left, again struck the Platte river near the head of Grand Island. . . moved down the river, and encamped opposite Fort Kearney.

. . . I was satisfied a shorter route could be obtained by going down the Platte. . . I surveyed a line due north from the fort for three miles. . . to the rising ground on the north side of the river. From this point the line strikes Wood river, nine miles from the fort, and continues down it to near its mouth, where a good ford is found. The bed of the stream is firm, and the banks low. . . From Wood river I continued down the Platte, crossing Boovis and Prairie creeks, and struck our outward trail in the valley of the Loup fork, four miles above where I had crossed it in going up. To this point the Platte river line is twenty-six miles shorter than the other, and is superior to it in every respect. It affords good points for camping grounds, from five to fifteen miles apart, with abundance of wood, water, and grass; and the necessity for bridging Wood river and Prairie creek is obviated. Prairie creek and Boovis creek, a small stream thirty-five miles below Wood river, can be crossed by a corduroy. . ."

We have been unable to find a printed copy of the map which Captain Dickerson submitted with his report. A Map of Nebraska, from the Explorations of Lt. G. K. Warren in 1855, 56 and 57 and other authorities (Senate, Documents 3rd Session, 34th Congress, 1856-57, Serial 877) shows this road, as does also a Military Map of the United States, Nov. 1857 (Senate Documents 1st Session, 35th Congress, 1857-58, Serial 922). Each of these maps is on a scale too small to be of much value in a detailed study of the route. We have, however, the plats of the federal land survey of 1856 to 1865 through this region, and the route then in use is shown on the various township plats. We have nearly completed copying from these maps a series of township plats for every township crossed by the road showing its location relative to streams, present sites of towns, and other landmarks. By the use of the following table of distances, from the Huntsman's Echo, Woodriver Center, Nebraska Territory, June 14, 1860, it would be possible to locate quite accurately on these maps each of the stations and camp sites mentioned. If the D. A. R. Chapter which desires to mark the route wants that done we will be glad to do it. The task would require considerable time and we should have notice some time in advance.

#### Distance Table

"A correct table of distances between Omaha and Denver City, giving the principal camping places on the route:

Omaha to Little Papillion	7 miles
Thence to Great Papillion	5 "
To Spring Creek	4 "
To Elkhorn Bridge	6 "

Distance Table (con.)

	2 miles
To Rawhide Bridge	
Fremont	12 "
Barber's	6 "
North Bend	10 "
Graham's	8 "
Shell Creek	5 "
Russell's	8 "
Skinner's	5 "
Columbus Ferry	10 "
Cleveland Ferry	8 "
Barnum's	2 "
Prairie Creek	10 "
Eagle Island	8 "
Camp on Platte	7 "
Warm Slough	9 "
Parker's	7 "
Edgerton's (Lone Tree Ranch)	5 "
Stage Station	1 "
Hill's Ranch	1 "
Shoemaker's	10 "
Grand Island City	7 "
Crossing Wood River	7 "
Lamb's	2 "
Moor's	8 "
Wood River Center	7 "
Peck's	3 "
Boyd's	4 "
McLaine's (Ford)	7 "
Miller's	2 "
Fort Kearny	

This road opened up the Platte valley between Columbus and Fort Kearny on the north side of the river. When it was surveyed in 1856 there were two small settlements between those points, a German colony at Grand Island and a group of Mormons at Wood River Center. These were at points where trails from the Loup crossed to the Platte. Ranches began to appear along the route; stage stations were built, and in 1858 the Western State Company began running coaches over the route. In 1860 the Western State company began carrying the Denver mail over this road.

For the route of this road through Douglas county see an article by Dorothy Ruth Mutz on "Benson" and map "The Military Road in Douglas County in Nebraska" History Magazine, Vol. XVI, No. 2, April-June, 1935, pages 98 to 104.

Research by H. S. Robinson



### THE NORTH PLATTE ROUTE TO THE MINES

A long article from which we transcribed verbatim only the portion dealing with early use of the route.

. . . . The old California or Mormon trail up the north side of the Platte river is the nearest and most practicable route in every respect not only to the Cherry Creek mines, but to the Pacific coast . . . . .

(Here follows an invidious comparison between this route and the routes from Plattsmouth and Nebraska City. -- H.S.R.)

This is conclusive evidence, founded upon fact and substantiated by all persons who have ever traversed the North Platte route. It is also well known that during the heavy emigrations to California, Oregon and Utah, during the seasons of 1849 to 1855 inclusive, more persons, teams, wagons and loose stock crossed the Missouri at what was then called the Council Bluffs ferries, than at all other points on the river and during the seasons of 1853 and 1854 old Californians, from Missouri, who had previously crossed the plains and returned exhibited their preference for the North Platte route.

Research by  
Hervey S. Robinson  
July 22, 1941

## THE MILITARY TRAIL

Editor Sir:-- When the writer came to this county over fifty-two years ago, coming with the Sprecher family from Ohio. (note in 1871) we came by railroad to Council Bluffs and there crossed the Missouri river by ferry boats, because there was no bridge -- not even a railroad bridge -- across that muddy stream to Omaha, then a small city on the side of the hill, where we outfitted with wagon and team and drove to the homesteads south of Clarkson four miles. We drove by road, following the old Military Trail west through Irvington and Bell Creek (now the city of Arlington) at which point we crossed the Elkhorn river, on through Fremont and North Bend, then leaving the Military road and traveling over the prairies to the northwest to our destination. --- There were no trees along the entire valley, except here and there where there was a settler along the old Military road, which ran out from Omaha through Irvington, Bell Creek, Fremont, North Bend, Schuyler and on west to Denver. ----- The only roads, except the well defined Military Trail, were the few tracks running into the towns and those followed the line of least resistance, regardless of lines, while the bridges were lacking entirely when off the Military Road.

Then is when I first saw the Roadside, which we crossed east of Fremont and gain northwest of North Bend. (Note the last after leaving the Military road).

Research by  
Hervey S. Robinson,  
July 7, 1941

## THE MILITARY TRAIL

Editor Sir:-- When the writer came to this county over fifty-two years ago, coming with the Sprecher family from Ohio. (note in 1871) we came by railroad to Council Bluffs and there crossed the Missouri river by ferry boats, because there was no bridge -- not even a railroad bridge -- across that sandy stream to Omaha, then a small city on the side of the hill, there we outfitted with wagon and team and drove to the homesteads south of Clarkson four miles. We drove by road, following the old Military Trail west through Irvington and Bell Creek (now the city of Arlington) at which point we crossed the Kibbourn river, on through Fremont and North Bend, then leaving the Military road and traveling over the prairies to the northwest to our destination. --- There were no trees along the entire valley, except here and there where there was a settler along the old Military road, which ran out from Omaha through Irvington, Bell Creek, Fremont, North Bend, Schuyler and on west to Denver. ----- The only roads, except the well defined Military Trail, were the few tracks running into the towns and these followed the line of least resistance, regardless of lines, while the bridges were looking entirely shen off the Military Road.

Then it was when I first saw the Highway, which we crossed east of Fremont and gain northwest of North Bend. (Note the last after leaving the Military road).

Research by  
Harvey S. Robinson,  
July 7, 1941

## MILITARY ROAD

### Reminiscences of Frank Jewell

From an interview with Frank Jewell published in the Central City Monopareil July 16, 1931 page 1 col. 1 and page 8 cols. 5 and 6.

As far as can be discerned at this time Frank Jewell is the earliest living resident of Morrisk county. . . He first came in 1860 before the state and county were organized.

As a boy of eighteen, he came with a load of flour that he bought in Iowa to sell to the settlers who had proceeded him. . . .

Crossing the Missouri at Bellevue, . . . he followed the trail to Columbus where there was a ford over the Loup. He arrived October 30 at Jason Parker's ranch and took up a squatters claim on 80 acres nearby. There he built a little house and stable. He found the Parker family in difficulties because of the loss of their team, which had been stolen a short time before. So he formed a kind of partnership with Frank Parker and together they teamed back and forth between Bellevue and Fort Kearney that winter. They would purchase a load of corn at Bellevue for 30¢ a bushel for which they would get \$1.50 to \$2.00 a bushel at the fort after a six days trip of about 200 miles.

On the first trip they got as far as the Loup, but finding the ice out were forced to sell the corn in Columbus and return for another load. This time the Loup was frozen over and like "Liza" they crossed on the ice.

Plenty of company was available on the trips for teaming between Omaha and Denver was constantly going on. Various drivers were banded together in groups of from 50 to 100 wagons.

What is now a trip of three or four hours to Omaha, then took six days for a loaded wagon to come back from the metropolis to Parkers Ranch. while the empties went down in 4½ days.

A difficult crossing of the river was always had at Kearney, from the trail to the dove town that had been built by the stage companies. There wagons would be floated over for no ferry had yet been established in this wilderness.

On the return half of this initial trip to Kearney one wagon broke down, so that it was necessary to load the material all on the other. The river five miles from Kearney was a mean "critter," for it took the two men two days to get over the many channels, after one channel was crossed in the bitter cold water one man fell in, and it was necessary to take a horse and go clear back to Kearney to dry out and stay all night. The second night out, found them at Wood River, eight miles from the Kearney crossing, at the Boyd Ranch.

There was an overnight camp and the beginnings of a big snow storm that stayed until the trip was over. It was early in January. The next day they helped Mr. Boyd cross the river in his buggy. He considered it was his treat, to warm all concerned with a pint bottle. Twenty years later their friend ran for governor.

In a snowstorm they continued to the ranch of Judge Brewer (later county Judge of Merrick county, who lived two miles west of Lone Tree.) There was no other house for nine miles (west of Lone Tree) at that time.

The blizzard became so bad they could not see from one telegraph pole to another to mark their course. After their return to the Parker house, they stayed there for the rest of the winter. Jewel worked his claim sufficiently to hold it. His team was swapped for two yoke of cattle for farm work, and he joined with his friends in breaking prairie.

The following spring he went with a group of young men to Iowa where they helped in the harvest fields. At the end of that work, a number of Iowa farmers' lads walked into Council Bluffs to enlist. Mr. Jewel turned his team over to a friend and joined the unit of field artillery.

He walked 20 miles to enlist with the Dodge battery 4th Regiment. Iowa Infantry. Later the title changed to Second Iowa Battery and as that went through the war

In 1864 he was on a short furlough and went to Council Bluffs and to Nebraska, where he found his claim had been jumped, so he got another. This time 160 acres. That is the farm now worked by Elmer Jewell, the son of the pioneer.

He returned, re-enlisted, finished the war and again returned to his ranch. This was put into shape and in 1866 he returned to Council Bluffs for his bride, Mary Wilder. She was 18 and he was a veteran of 23. With Mrs. Jewel driving the wagon, he followed on on a extra horse, riding herd on five head of cattle.

When they reached the Platte River on this return trip their wagon mired down in crossing. James Vieregg, another pioneer, who had proceeded them over the river, unhitched his team and came back to help pull the wedding party out of the river.

## MILITARY ROAD

### Captain Dickerson's Explorations for a Territorial Road Between Omaha and Fort Kearney in 1856.

Note--A careful study of Captain Dickerson's report and a comparison with contemporary and modern maps enables us to describe his route pretty accurately. The maps submitted by Dickerson himself are not available. The plats of the Federal Land Survey from 1856 to 1862 show existing roads and trails as well as natural and cultural landmarks. The region from the Missouri river west to the Douglas county line was surveyed in 1856 before the Dickerson explorations. For this part of the route we have consulted the work of Olga Sharp Steele "The Geography of the Mormon Trail Across Nebraska" a thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate College of the University of Nebraska, 1935 and "Bensen: A Residential Suburban Community," a thesis presented to the Department of Sociology, Municipal university of Omaha by Dorothy Ruth Mitz and represented in part in Nebraska History Magazine Vol. XVI, No. 2, April - June 1935 pages 99 and 111. Both of these writers have made a careful study of the trails of Douglas county illustrating their works with maps showing their locations and landmarks.

Captain Dickerson, according to his report, struck the old "Winter Quarters Trail," which led from the present site of Florence, somewhere north or northeast of Omaha crossed the Little Papillion where Irvington now stands, passed two miles south of Elkhorn (now Elk City) and crossed the Elkhorn River just below the mouth of Rawhide Creek. He reached the Platte near the present site of Mercer siding on the Union Pacific Railroad. The road then continued up the north bank of the Platte following practically the same route later taken by the U. P. Railroad to the Loup Fork four miles above its mouth and directly south of the townsite of Columbus. Here he crossed the Loup on a ferry and proceed up the south bank of that stream to a point about due north of the present village of Archer. From this point he proceeded in a southwesterly direction across the sandhills of Merrick Howard and Hall counties (as now constituted) arriving at Prairie Creek about six miles north of Grand Island. He followed the north bank of this stream for twenty miles, crossing it about fourteen miles west of Grand Island and about ten miles north of the present village of Wood River. Thence he proceeded southwest to a point on Wood River, twenty five miles above its mouth and about the location where Shelton now stands. He proceeded up this stream six miles to about the site of Gibbon. Then diverging to the left struck the Platte near the head of Grand Island and a trifle above the fort. Moving down the river he camped directly opposite the fort.

Captain Dickerson states that, from the crossing of the Little Papillion this was about the route of the Mormon emigrants, which was doubtless true at the time of his report. This does not agree with the earlier description of the Mormon Trail, which followed the north bank of the Loup, crossing either at Genoa or the lower ford southeast of Fullerton or at the upper ford about opposite the point where Dickerson diverted his path from the Loup across the sandhills to Prairie Creek.

We have traced this route carefully, not because of any connection it may have with the Military Road but for the information it supplies concerning a later Norman Trail along the south bank of the Loup.

Dickerson was not satisfied with this route for the Military road and chose rather to follow the bank of the Platte from a point due north of the fort on the north side of the river, rejoining his outbound trail four miles above the Loup ferry at Columbus. This "Military Road" may be accurately traced on the plats of the Land Survey. Natural landmarks mentioned in Dickerson's report include Wood River (The first contact after leaving Fort Kearney was at about the present location of Gibbon, thence he followed it to the ford south of present day Alda). The reports mention Boovis creek, which could have been no other than Warm Slough, so designated by the survey of 1862 and still called by the name. The crossing (made of corduroy, i. e. logs laid together over a mud bottom, was in the southwest corner of section 28 township 14 north, range 5 west, just south of the site of Thummel side track on the Union Pacific railroad. Hurley's ranch a well known landmark on the trail was located here and such later Thummel Ranch was established by the T. B. Hord interests. The latter ranch is still in existence.

Dickerson recommended a corduroy crossing for Prairie Creek but the report of his superior officer was the Emigrants' Guide would indicate that a bridge was built here. (section 16 township 15 north, range 2 west, two miles east of Gardner Siding). This crossing is one often mentioned by travelers and should be appropriately marked if and when markers are placed upon the Military Road a bridge were built at Shell Creek which was crossed in section 9 of township 17 north, range 4 east, three miles west and a trifle south of Rogers. Adjacent to this crossing on the east was the townsite of Buchanan, a paper town that never materialized. A tavern called the Buchanan House was conducted here by Nelson Loncray in the earliest days of the trail. Rawhide Creek, legendary scene of the skinning alive of a white man who had wantonly killed an inoffensive squaw, was crossed by a bridge about three miles above its confluence with the Elkhorn (in section 5, township 16 north, range 10 east, near where Valley is now located). Other bridges were at Big Papillion, Little Papillion and when they were crossed by the California trail as described in our account of Dickerson's outbound trip. A small stream called Omaha creek was also bridged but the maps consulted do not show it.

The Lone Tree is now commemorated by a monument three miles southwest of Central City. There are also monuments at Grand Island, and Columbus. Several monuments have been erected in Dodge County by the county historical society. Boyd's Ranch, Jason Parkers, North's and Russells are among the famous ranches whose locations might well be marked.

## THE MILITARY TRAIL THROUGH COLFAX CO.

The first road across this part of the country was made long before the (Colfax) county was laid out and before there was a Nebraska. While there was some travel by white people across this territory at an earlier date, yet the first trail was doubtless made in 1849 when the rush to California was made by the 49ers in search for gold. Following this the government trailed across with soldiers and supplies, and that gave the trail its official name of "Military Road." Freighters across the country to Denver and other western points used the trail when they carried freight with their outfits, which generally consisted of two wagons hitched together and pulled by ten yoke of oxen, although horses and mules were somewhat used.

The old Military Road entered, what is this county now, at a point just east of Rogers near the river and followed the upper or second bank of that stream, crossed Shell Creek near its mouth, angled along to the southwest and passed through what is now Schuyler near the farm home of M. F. Johnson, which was at that time the ranch home of Daniel Haahberger, who settled there in the early 50's. The road angled on, keeping along that second river bank, and left the county just west of the Haney school house. Later on Shim's ferry was put in across the Platte river about four miles southwest of Schuyler and the trail was diverted to the south of the Platte to Denver, that being done because all the streams flowed into the Platte from the north side and there were no bridges in those days and fording with loaded wagons was not easy. However the old trail still continued on west via Columbus. That Military road has been changed somewhat in this county, although some portions of it still follow the original angling trail, that being the case both east and west of Schuyler and along in the vicinity of McAllister's Lake.

When this county was . . . . organized . . . . in 1869 . . . . the only roads in the county were just tracks or trails made by the emigrants going west along that Military Road and by the early settlers driving into Schuyler and driving across the country. There was a track from the north-east one from the north and one from the northwest.

At that time the Military Road just east of Rogers and just north of the Union Pacific railroad track and followed that track along the north until Shell Creek was crossed, about where it now crosses and then went south of the track on south-westerly until it left the county just west of the Haney school house. When the county was organized one of the first acts was to make that an official road . . . . In 1869 . . . there was not a bridge in this county. Shell Creek on the Military Road



was crossed on a bridge made of logs and brush and there was another brush bridge across that creek out north east of here where also a big log spanned the stream for the benefit of pedestrians. The first real bridge in the county was built on this road out north east of here and was put in in 1869.

(Verbatim)

Extract from a letter of  
John C. Sprecher  
in Schuyler Sun.  
Aug. 9, 1923, p. 3. col's 3-51.

Research by  
Hervey S. Robinson  
July 21, 1941

## BEGINNING OF THE MILITARY ROAD

A correspondent of the Brownville Nebraska Advertiser, Aug. 20, 1856, writing of a visit to Omaha says that near Capitol Square his party, viewing the city had their attention directed toward some new stakes which by inquiry we ascertained to be stations, on the line of the new military road just completed by Captain Dickinson and his engineering corps, between Omaha and New Fort Kearney, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles ..... The road passes on the north side of the Platte river through Elkhorn City, North Bend, Buchanan and Columbus at the ferry on the Loup Fork."

(Verbatim)

Extract from a letter in Brownville  
Nebraska Advertiser.  
Aug. 30, 1856.

Research by  
Hervey Robinson.

NORTH PLATTE ROUTE.

This road is favored with travel of the greatest portion of the returning emigration, who seem astonished at the great difference in favor of this route. -- Besides this, a vast deal of trade, up the Valley, that has heretofore gone southward for supplies, are now going to Council Bluffs and Omaha, as a far superior market. We have conversed with many traders upon this subject, who freely admit the truth of our assertion, that Omaha and Council Bluffs offered the best market above St. Louis, either for buying or selling.

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(Verbatim)

Huntman's Echo  
November 2, 1860  
P. 3 col. 2.

Research by  
H. S. Robinson.

TERRITORIAL ROADS

Session Laws  
1855

PP. 329--334

ROAD FROM OMAHA CITY TO CEDAR ISLAND

AN ACT

To locate a Territorial Road.

Sec. 1. Jefferson Saling, Mr. Arnot, and J. Tyson---commissioners to locate and establish a Territorial Road commencing at Omaha City, and running from thence to the Junction of the east and west Papillion creeks, near the old Indian village, thence to the head of Cedar Island in the Platte River.

Sec. 2. - - - Meet at Omaha City, on or before the first Monday in September 1855. . . . take an oath to . . . . perform the duties. . . .

Sec. 3. . . . shall have power to employ a surveyor. . . .

- - - -

Approved March 14th, 1855.  
page 325

Road From Plattsmouth To Archer. . .

Appointing commissioners to run and mark out a Territorial Road from Plattsmouth in Cass County to Archer in Richardson County. . . William Hakes of Cass County, John Singleton of Richardson County and Gideon Bennett of Potosi County . . . Road Commissioners . . . Plattsmouth in Cass County. . . Thence. . . running the nearest and most practicable route to Nebraska City, thence by way of Brownville to Archer in Richardson County, thence to the Kansas line by way of the ford on the Grand Nemaha, known as the Singleton Ford, having due regard to the private property as well as to the ground over which said road passes . . . shall appoint a surveyor and two chain men. . . make out a plat of said road. . . deposit same in the office of the Clerk of the Probate Court of Cass County. . .

It shall be the duty of the Probate Court of each county through which said road may pass to open and keep the same in good traveling order to the width of thirty feet. . . appoint overseers and allot a sufficient number of

hands to open same; and for the purpose of carrying the above into effect, all able bodied male inhabitants of the ages of twenty-one to forty-five shall be compelled to work at least two days in each year, having first been given two days notice by the overseer, and any person liable to work by himself or substitute shall pay to the overseer one dollar and fifty cents for such day so failing to be recovered before any justice of the peace of the county when such failure occurs, and all such fines when collected shall be expended on the road to which it belongs.

The commissioners . . . as well as the chain carriers, shall each receive two dollars per day . . . and the surveyor shall receive four dollars per day. . . all of which shall be paid by the counties, each paying one fourth. . . out of the first money that may be in the county treasury.

APPROVED MARCH 14, 1855  
page 330

Road from the Platte River to Dakotah.

. . . Commencing at some suitable point on the north bank of the Platte River, and running thence northerly to Bellevue, thence through Omaha, Florence, Fort Calhoun, DeSota, Tekamah and Black Bird to Dakotah. David Lindley, James C. Mitchell and B. R. Folsom . . . commissioners . . . shall make a report of the location and boundaries of said road. . . a copy . . . to be filed in the office of the Register of each organized county through which said road shall pass . . . The commissioners shall receive three dollars per day each for their services and all other reasonable and necessary expenses for surveying and other help which shall be paid equally by the several counties through which said road shall pass . . . each county to levy and collect by tax and pay the same.

Approved March 15, 1855, pp. 330-331.

ROAD FROM PARNER (INDIAN AGENCY) TO NEBRASKA CENTER (BUFFALO COUNTY)

. . . Lorin Miller, D. C. Oakes and John R. Bennett . . . commissioners.  
(A certified plat to be deposited with the registers office at Parnes)

Approved March 15, 1855. p. 331.

ROAD FROM BROWNVILLE TO MARSHALLS TRADING POINT ON THE BIG BLUE RIVER.

Thomas B. Edwards, W. A. Finney and H. W. Lake. . . Commissioners and that A. J. Smith, M. H. Clark, and L. Miller be appointed commissioners to locate the road from Marshalls Trading Post, to Nebraska Center, the western terminus on the most eligible route. . .

Approved March 14, 1855. pp. 331-332.

ROAD FROM TEKAMAH TO PARNER (AGENCY).

. . . M. H. Clark, B. R. Folsom and W. N. Byers. . . Commissioners to lay out and establish a Territorial Road on the most direct and feasible route from the Missouri River, at the ferry landing of H. C. Purple and his associates, passing thence to Tekamah in the county of Burt, thence on the most direct and

feasible route to Fontenelle in the county of Dodge thence to Pawnee in the county of Loup or to intersect the Territorial Road from Omaha City to New Fort Kearney at some point between Pawnee and the mouth of Elk Horn River. . . . shall file a copy of their order establishing said road in the registers office in the county of Burt . . . also . . . in the registers office, in the county of Loup; Provided, said county of Loup shall be organized, and a registers office established there, at the time of laying out said road. . . . shall have power to employ a competent surveyor and all necessary help and each shall receive three dollars per day . . . and all necessary expenses to be paid one half out of the treasury of (Dodge County) . . . and one half out of the treasury of (Burt County) . . . Provided, and in case the county of Loup is organized at the time of laying out said road, then . . . each of the aforesaid counties shall pay one third of the expenses and charges. . . .

Approved March 14, 1855. pp. 332-333

ROAD FROM FLORENCE TO FONTENELLE

J. W. Richardson, A. J. Smith and George Howe. . . . commissioners . . . road from Florence in Douglas county to Fontenelle in Dodge county. (Report to be filed with the Probate Judge of each county. Date of approval not given.

ROAD FROM NEBRASKA CITY TO GRAND ISLAND

(Referring to the island not the later colony . . . Oideon Bennett, Curran C. Hall and Byram Bullard . . . commissioners . . . compensation . . . three dollars per day . . . cost paid by the respective (organized) counties through which the road shall pass. . . .

Approved March 14, 1855.

ROAD FROM BELLEVUE VIA, IRON BLUFFS, DODGE CITY, AND FONTENELLE, TO CATHERINE, IN CUMING COUNTY. . . .

A. W. Hollister, Wm. R. English and E. R. Doyle. . . commissioners. . . . make a report to the Secretary of the Territory and by him recorded. . . also recorded in the registers office in such county through which it passes.

Approved March 14, 1855. pp. 333-334.

ROAD FROM DE SOTO VIA FONTENELLE TO PAWNEE. . .

William Clancy, J. E. Robertson and J. W. Richardson. . . . commissioners.

Approved Mar. 14, 1855.

TABLE OF DISTANCES.

From Omaha to Kearney City.

From Omaha to

Lit. Pappillon	8	Barnum's	2
Great Do.	4	Prairie Creek	10
Reed's Rancho	3	Junction Rancho	15
Elkhorn Bridge	7	Parker's	8
Freemont	14	Lone Tree	4
North Bend	15	Buckhorn Station	1
Graham's	3	Hill's	1
Shell Creek	7	Shoemaker's	8
Bushnell	3	Barnard's	10
Russel's	1	Wood River	7
Marie's	10	Lamb's	2
Columbus	4	Miller's	4
Ferry	1	Moore's	2

WOOD RIVER CENTER. (Rancho, Store, Printing Office,  
Post Office, and Blacksmith shop), 6

Pack's	3	Miller's	2
Boyd's	4	Fort Kearney	2
McLain's	7	Kearney City	2

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## THE "NORTH" AND "SOUTH" PLATTE TRAILS

Based on Map Study of Federal Surveys in Custody of Nebr. State Historical Society.

If you will examine the maps prepared by the Federal Land Survey of Nebraska between 1856 and 1867 covering the region immediately adjacent to the Platte river from Omaha to Fort Kearney you will find roads or trails following the river upon either side and conveying at the fort. The Fort Kearny and Nebraska City road in 1858 crossed Salt Creek at Ashland and angling northwest along the high divide between Cottonwood and Oak creeks approached the Platte near the present site of Bellwood and thence followed it very closely the rest of the way. On the north side the Mormon or California Trail followed the river from near Fremont to the Loup Fork at Columbus. Originally it had ascended the latter stream for a considerable distance before crossing over to the Platte. There were fords at the site of Genoa and above and below where Fullerton now stands. In 1856 to 1857 this route was shortened between Columbus and Grand Island by the construction of the Military Road which crossed the Loup at Columbus Ferry and closely followed the north bank of the Platte, rejoining the older road near Grand Island.

A bitter rivalry existed between the towns of Nebraska City and Plattsmouth on the one hand and the new town of Omaha on the other for the patronage of emigrants and freighters over their respective roads. Omaha newspapers extolled the merits of the new military road in the most extravagant terms while the "South Platte" papers derided these claims and set forth the advantages of their own routes.



