

# To Pike's Peak by Ox-Wagon

THE HARRIET A. SMITH DAY-BOOK

Edited By FLEMING FRAKER, JR.

A number of Iowa families emigrated to Colorado in the years following the gold rush to Pike's Peak in 1859. One of these early Colorado pioneers from Iowa was Porter T. Hinman, who took up 320 acres on Left Hand creek in Boulder County in 1860. He left his two older sons, Mort and Platt there in 1862, while he returned to Saylorville in Polk County, Iowa to remove the rest of his family and household goods by ox-wagon, also driving 300 head of cattle, to their new homestead. A young niece of the Hinmans, Harriet Amelia Smith, accompanied them on the 70-day trek, and kept a day to day account of their experiences on the trail. Mr. Dwight T. Smith of Boerne, Texas, a nephew, has kindly permitted use of the original manuscript during this centennial year of the rush to the Rockies.

The journal provides an interesting picture of travel across western Iowa and the unsettled plains of Nebraska and Colorado during the Civil War. It is apparent that Hattie Smith at the age of twenty-two was a curious and observant young woman. She carefully jotted down the daily progress of their small party, noted her impressions of the country through which they passed, and candidly described the people they met. When opportunity afforded, she mailed completed portions of the journal back home to her mother and youngest brother, Sidney Leroy, on the family farm near Lynn in Warren County, Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

Porter T. Hinman developed his ranch near Ni Wot,

<sup>1</sup> Martha Bassett Smith and her husband, Sidney Smith, left Ohio and brought their five younger children west to settle on a farm in Jefferson township, Warren county, Iowa in 1856, where Harriet's father died three years later. Sidney Leroy, the youngest of nine children, remained at home on the farm to take care of his mother for many years, later married and raised a total of six children on the old family homestead. Harriet's other brother who came to Iowa was William Christie Smith, later a well-known Methodist minister in Warren county, and the author of a short family history, *Our Family History and Ancestry*, Indianola, Iowa, 1935.

Colorado, acquired mining interests, and became a quite prominent citizen and political figure in Boulder County. Two of his sons, Platt M. Hinman and Merritt L. Hinman who was ten years old when he made the trip described in the Hattie A. Smith day-book, also became well-known early settlers in Colorado.

Hattie Smith soon returned to Iowa to live with her widowed mother. She taught school a number of years prior to her marriage September 7, 1881, to Wesley Nickle. Her husband died in 1908, and she lived on their farm until her death, September 6, 1923.

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Tuesday July 21st 1863. We started for Pike's Peak.<sup>2</sup> Ate dinner in Sailor Bottom.<sup>3</sup> At night stayed at Unc Buzzards.<sup>4</sup> Had a very good supper of chickens and new potatoes. The folks were well excepting Unc, who had a boil on his leg.

Wed 22nd. Started for Des Moines at 9 o'clock and waited there for the drove of cattle, they came about noon and went on about four miles. Mr. Smith, aunt<sup>5</sup> and I & Frank<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This was the common name of the region before the organization of the Territory of Colorado in February 1861, and for some time thereafter.

<sup>3</sup> More formally known as Saylorville, this was one of the first settlements north of Raccoon Forks, located about six miles up the Des Moines river from Fort Des Moines. Laid out in 1850 by John B. Saylor, it soon developed into a flourishing town and was a formidable rival of Raccoon Forks for the seat of Polk county. Will Porter, *Annals of Polk County, Iowa*, Geo. A. Miller Printing Company, Des Moines, 1898, p. 890.

<sup>4</sup> This was probably P. H. Buzzard, who first came to Des Moines in 1846, had been to California and Utah and settled at Saylor Bottom about 1853, where he became a prosperous farmer, opened a blacksmith and wagon shop, and made the first plows and wagons in Polk County. *The History of Polk County, Iowa*, Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880, p. 961.

<sup>5</sup> Mary A. (Smith) Hinman was born in Connecticut about 1819, and lived at Coshocton, Ohio before her marriage around 1840.

<sup>6</sup> Frank A. Hinman was a boy of six, the youngest of the six Hinman children. The other four Hinman boys were: Merrit L., 10; Homer L., 15; Platt (given as A. P.), 17; and Mort P., 18; A daughter of about 20, A. M. Hinman, was a teacher and did not accompany the rest of the family to Colorado at this time. *Iowa Census Records, 1860*, Vol. 94, p. 594, Iowa State Department of History and Archives.

stayed in town until five o'clock. he was loading his wagon. Then we came on to the wagon and cattle by a small bridge, and stayed there until 11 o'clock. they lost five of their cattle and had to go back after them. Jary Ligget had sent his cattle with the drove, and said he would overtake us.

Thursday 23rd. All the men went back after the cattle. had no trouble finding them, excepting Unc<sup>7</sup> and Bill Smithe (a man that Unc hired to drive cattle) who had to watch the cattle. Unc and I fixed the things in our wagon so that we are very comfortable. can lay down just when we want to. I feel better than I did when I left home. Aunts leg hurts her some but not any worse than it did at home. Stopped at one o'clock to let the cattle rest and get water. It is very warm, it makes me sweet [sic]. Something new. Melvina Bails did not go. Her folks did not want her to go, so we did not take her. At night camped in the small town of Hanover,<sup>8</sup> 9 miles from Des Moines. Got supper in a house; Unc, Aunt, Frank & I slept in the house because we had a thunder shower. Very clever people.

Friday 24th. All well; had quite a time to keep the cattle during the storm; some they could not find until late so we did not start until late in the morning, so we drove within 4 miles of Adell where the rest of the cattle were; so we [were] there until morning for we could

<sup>7</sup> Porter T. Hinman, born in the State of New York in 1816, joined the gold rush to California in 1849. After returning to farm in Illinois in 1853, he and his family came to Des Moines two and a half years later where he worked a year as an assistant in the United States land office before becoming a sawmill operator at nearby Saylorville. C. L. Baskins, *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado*, Chicago, 1880, pp. 644-45, Courtesy, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming*, The History Company, San Francisco, 1890, p. 581.

<sup>8</sup> A village laid out October 12, 1859 in Walnut township, Polk county, near the Dallas county line. It disappeared after the towns of Commerce and Ashawa were built on the Rock Island and Des Moines & Fort Dodge Railroads in 1871 and 1876 respectively. J. M. Dixon, *Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa*, Des Moines, 1876, p. 81.

not drive the cattle [thru] the timber (which was three miles through) when the cattle were dry and hungry.

Saturday 25th. Rain last night; had a rabbit for breakfast. The dust is settled; very good traveling. Had three ladies call on us last night, and Bill Smith went home with them and stayed all night or part of the night. He lived here all summer herding cattle. As we came through Adell<sup>9</sup> there was a lady who came out of the tavern and wanted to know if she could ride, that she was going to Council Bluffs from New York City. Aunt told her that we were heavy loaded and did not like to take her in, and drove on. And when the ox wagon came along she told Bill Smith that she was going up the road a little way and wanted to ride, so he took her in. She says that she will do anything we want her to for she is without money and has to work her way. She says now that she is going about 150 miles on the other side of Fort Carny [Kearney]. Her husband is a captin in the rebel army and has not heard from him since he left, and has been gone three years. She has had eight children, four alive, but some she does not know where they are; two are in St. Louis, Mo. She has a sister at Salt Lake, and she has been there twice; and the last time she was there her sister would not let her have her youngest child; she stole her in a manner so she says. We intend to try her. Ate dinner one mile on this side of Adell. The people of Adell were celebrating the down fall of Vixburg. We camped at night a mile from Redfield<sup>10</sup> (came fifteen miles) where there was no water for the cattle, but feed.

<sup>9</sup> The oldest and largest town in Dallas county, having a population of 600 in 1868. Located on the old state road, which the Hinman party followed to Council Bluffs, it was the route of the gold seekers, and also used by the Western Stage Company which had a full-fledged station at Adel. See the *History of Dallas County, Iowa*, Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1879, pp. 435-37; Eugene N. Hastie, *Hastie's History of Dallas County*, Wallace-Homestead Company, Des Moines, 1938, pp. 109-11.

<sup>10</sup> One of the older towns on the stage road in Dallas county. Originally called New Ireland, it was later named Redfield in honor of James Redfield, a prominent citizen, state senator, and Civil War hero, who purchased a tract including the town site about 1860. R. F. Wood, *Past and Present of Dallas County, Iowa*, The S. J. Clark Publishing Company, Chicago, 1907, pp. 212-13.

Sunday 26th. The cattle are trying to get away for they are dry so we have to go on. We drove the cattle to Middle Coon River<sup>11</sup> for water and the wagon across the river and camped. Then drove the cattle back on the prairie; three of the cattle they could not find so some of the men had to herd the cattle while the rest went for the lost cattle which they found on this side of the river (they came to the river for water) about five o'clock in the evening. Aunt and I went to Christian preaching in Redfield, had a very good sermon from Mr. White.<sup>12</sup> There was one woman baptised in the river. Frank is sick this afternoon; he has a fever every afternoon. Very nice cool weather, not dusty for we have rain.

Monday 27th. Cattle all here; they put them in a yard last night. The boys start with the cattle by twenty minutes of seven, and Unc and Bill with the ox wagon. Mr. Smith had to get his horse shod and did not start until most ten so Aunt and I washed and baked three ovens full of break bread and washed one towel and three rags. We have just come through some timber, and are now sit[t]ing in the wagon on the prairie waiting for the boys to count the cattle; for they think they have lost some coming through the timber.<sup>13</sup> We have had something to hinder us every day since we started. This is a very nice day; wind is blowing enough to make it comfortable. All well. They found that two of Smith and one of Unc were gone. they hunted all the afternoon and did not find them. In the morning Unc and Bill kept the main road, and the rest of us went another road to avoid timber and was to meet in three miles but we had to stop, and they went on six miles and Homer had to go after them and brought them back.

Tuesday 28th. Hunted all day for the cattle and only

<sup>11</sup> A narrow, rapid river with a sandy bed which flows in a winding course southwest through Redfield, joining the South "Coon" a mile south of the town.

<sup>12</sup> The first preaching in Redfield was done by J. C. White in an old schoolhouse in 1860. Two years later he organized the first Christian church there. Wood, *op. cit.* p. 214.

<sup>13</sup> Redfield was sheltered on the north by a belt of heavy timber.

found Unc's. We are in Guthrie Co about 50 miles from Des Moines.

Wednesday 29th. All well for this time in the year. Had a very hard thunder shower last night, but we are nice and dry this morning. Aunt and [I] are sitting in the wagon and our servant girl (her skirt is made of a soldiers blanket) is doing the work in the kitchen. she has a short dress on and looks right smart. we expect to start now, with those two cattle. Started at eight o'clock. Passed through two small towns and one river.<sup>14</sup> Traveled about fifteen miles, and camped in the prairie by a small creek called Beaver.<sup>15</sup>

Thursday 30th. Very heavy dew. Aunt made bread in the wagon and Unc done the cooking; and our servant girl had to wait on us. I did not get out of the wagon for fear of taking cold, but washed, combed and ate in the wagon. Ate dinner in the prairie miles from any house. passed through the town of Dalmanotha<sup>16</sup> in the morning, but in the afternoon never passed a farm until night when we came to a few house[s] by a creek where we camped after traveling about twenty miles.

Friday 31st. Fine morning for traveling. Bill had the ague yesterday, the rest middling well. One calf sick, had to carry it in the wagon, sold it for \$1.50, drove about 14 mi. the[n] camped about 7 mi. from Lewis.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Morrisburgh and Dale City were early stations on the old state road near the South Raccoon river crossing.

<sup>15</sup> A tributary of the South Raccoon in the southern part of Guthrie county.

<sup>16</sup> The site of Dalmanutha was on high rolling ground about six miles north of the present town of Casey in Guthrie county. Located on what was then known as the Mormon Trail, and a station on the old stage route, the most important business of the place, it at one time boasted three hotels, three blacksmith shops, a dry goods store and a grocery. Dalmanutha was abandoned soon after the Rock Island railroad reached Casey in 1868. *Past and Present of Guthrie County, Iowa*, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1907, pp. 240-42.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis was the seat of Cass county from 1853 to 1869, and had a population of from three to five hundred. It was served by two daily stage lines in 1863, one from Oskaloosa and one from Des Moines which made the trip of about 105 miles in thirteen hours including all stops for changing horses and the mails. Lafe Young, *History of Cass County, Iowa*, Telegraph Steam Printing House, Atlantic, Iowa, 1877, p. 56.

Saturday 1st. Started by sunrise. traveled 6 mi then ate breakfast by turkey creek. Left our servant girl in Lewis. Camped at night on Turkey Creek.<sup>18</sup> Fell in company with a family of three, Father, Mother & Daughter who was about 21 years old. she made us a visit after supper.

Sunday 2nd of August 1863 Rained last night and untill 9 o'clock in the morning, then we got breakfast, then started. traveled 14 Miles. Rode on horseback 3 or 4 mi. for the first time and drove cattle. Camped by Nishnebotna River.<sup>19</sup>

Monday 3rd. Could not find one yoke of cattle until 11 o'clock, then started and traveled about 8 or 9 mi., then camped on Silver Creek.<sup>20</sup> The boys got to fooling with Homer's pony by throwing a lasso around it, and it got to kicking, then it got away from them and run back to place where we camped Sunday night.

Tuesday 4th. Rain last night but is quite pleasant now. traveled about 8 mi. Ate dinner on a creek by a stage station.<sup>21</sup> In the afternoon I helped drive cattle about two hours. Camped on Mosketo creek<sup>22</sup> not far from Council Bluffs.

Wednesday 5th. Rain last night. Started before breakfast because there was no feed and to[o] much brush for

<sup>18</sup> They followed the course of Turkey creek in a southwesterly direction through the northern part of Cass county to where it forms a junction with the east branch of the Nishnabotna river just north of the town of Lewis.

<sup>19</sup> The old road from Lewis to Council Bluffs crossed the valley of the two branches of the Nishnabotna in eastern Pottawattomie county, the first bridge being finished in March, 1856 near the Western Stage Company station at Big Grove, later called Oakland. Homer H. Field and Hon. Joseph R. Reed, *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa*, The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1907, Vol. I, p. 180.

<sup>20</sup> Probably at or near the station of Pleasant Taylor in Washington township in central Pottawattamie county.

<sup>21</sup> Hardin Station.

<sup>22</sup> Mosquito creek runs southwest through Pottawattami county, enters the eastern part of the city of Council Bluffs, and empties into the Missouri river a short distance below the city.

the cattle. Passed the city of Council Bluffs. No great city but a awful ugly looking place among the hills.<sup>23</sup> Some nice looking houses. Ate breakfast about a mile from Council Bluffs, then drove as far as the Mo. River and camped. Mr. Smith went to Council Bluffs to buy his load.

Thursday 6th. Thanksgiving day and the stores are closed and Mr. Smith did not get his load so we stay all day. Homer and I go to the river to see it and find it a muddy stream. nothing good about it. saw a boat.

Friday 7th. About 35 cattle gone this morning. hunted and counted all day. I began a head dress for Aunt. worked a short time. Took a pain in my stomach and went to bed.

Saturday 8th. I feel pretty well. Aunt was [sick] last night and this morning. Went to Council Bluffs along with Unc and Mr. Smith and stayed all day wating for him to get his load. there was seven Indians passed by here, the first we have seen.

Sunday 9th. Pleasant morning. No meeting today near so we stay at home. Our nearest neighbors children came to see us and sung for us. they were English people and had sweet voices. they were smart children.

Monday 10th. Rain last night. some hopes of starting this morning. Showers all day. Started and got to the ferry about one o'clock and was until five crossing the Mo. river. Camped just on this side of the river. Quite wet and muddy.

<sup>23</sup> Council Bluffs, the gateway to the Platte valley, the natural route to the west, had developed into a booming frontier community of nearly 8,000 persons following the discovery of gold in California in 1849 and the rush to Pike's Peak ten years later. However, the raising of troops became its principle business with the outbreak of the Civil War and its population had declined to 2,062 in 1863. *Census of Iowa*, Des Moines, 1896, p. 266. See Walker D. Wyman, "Council Bluffs and the Westward Movement," *Iowa Journal of History*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (April 1949), pp. 99-118.



Tuesday 11th. Fine morning after the rain. It is now ten o'clock and we are just starting. We are just in the edge of Omaha.<sup>24</sup> Left Omaha about noon. I could not see much of the town for I was sick, and was sick all day; but what I saw [was] much nicer than Council Bluffs. We ate dinner about 5 mi. from town where there was a Mormon encampment up the hollow about a mile.<sup>25</sup> Traveled about 3 mi then camped for the night. there was a wagon with eleven people in it that camped there to[o], who were going to Denver to the Theater. They were a hard looking set.

Wednesday 12th. Rain this morning. All not very well this morning so there was not [much] eaten, but started and traveled about 7 mi and ate dinner on Ranch No 1 by a house where the people were as dugh as sour crout; looked very destitute in the house as well as dirty. Sold another calf this forenoon for \$2.50 because it got hurt on the ferry and was to[o] lame to travel. Arrived at Elkhorn River<sup>26</sup> six o'clock, crossed it and on this side we found some wagons stuck in the sand and had a good time getting out. it was about 9 o'clock when they got through, and not through but stoped for the night. The Elkhorn is quite a stream.

Thursday 13th. All somewhat smart this morning. Had a long bad bottom to pass through. Passed by one house

<sup>24</sup> Staked out by enterprizing associates of the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company, largely as a speculative venture in the winter of 1853-54, the little settlement of Omaha had 150 inhabitants when it was chosen the capital of the newly organized Territory of Nebraska in February 1855. It became an outfitting point for emigrants to the gold mines and had 1500 buildings and 4,000 inhabitants by 1859. *History of the State of Nebraska*, The Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1882, Vol. II, pp. 1050-1.

<sup>25</sup> This was on or near the site of the old Mormon "Winter Quarters" camp six miles north of Omaha. The village of Florence established in 1853 thrived for a number of years as Mormon trains still stocked and provisioned themselves here before venturing out across the plains as late as 1858.

<sup>26</sup> A bridge crossed the Elkhorn River, an important tributary to the Platte, a mile west of Elk City or Elkhorn City as it was originally called. It had a Western Stage Company station, heavy settlements, stores and plenty of grass, timber and grain. Lillian Linder Fitzpatrick, *Nebraska Place-Names*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1925, p. 56.

and through Rawhide Creek,<sup>27</sup> and ate dinner about 2 mi this side. Traveled about fifteen mi. roads bad. Camped by the little town of Fremont<sup>28</sup> about a mile from the Platte River.<sup>29</sup>

Friday 14th. Pleasant. All well. Unc had to get a band on the wheel of the wagon so we did not get started until ten o'clock. traveled about six mi then ate dinner by a pond of water about a mi from the Platt. traveled up the Platt all day. saw many pond lilies which were nice. No hills but roads not very good. Traveled about 15 mi. Camped near a house by the Platt, who was from N.Y.

Saturday 15th. Rain last night. Got breakfast. Aunt and Unc are in the house visiting his friend Yorder, and

<sup>27</sup> Rawhide creek is a small, sluggish stream running through Dodge county, Nebraska, northwest of Fremont, and emptying into the Elkhorn river. It is said to have been given its name after the Pawnee Indians forced a wagon train bound for California in 1849 to surrender one of its members after he had carried out his boast to kill the first Indian he saw by shooting a young Indian woman. According to this story he was flayed alive as an example of Indian justice and died in great agony on the banks of the creek. Cass G. Barns, *The Sod House*, Madison, Nebraska, 1930, pp. 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> Established at the junction of the Platte and Elkhorn valleys which are nearly ten miles wide at this point. It was described April 26, 1858 as "a country with a smooth, level, gray surface which appeared to go on toward the west forever and forever. On the north were the bluffs of the Elkhorn river, but the great Elkhorn Valley was a part of an unknown world. South of the little townsite of Fremont the Platte river moved sluggishly along to meet and be swallowed up in the great Missouri. Ten or twelve log cabins broke the monotony of the treeless expanse that stretched far away, apparently to a leaden sky." Mrs. Theron Nye, "Early Days in Fremont," *Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences*, The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1916, p. 84. Fremont became a stage station after a line was put through between Omaha and Fort Kearney in 1859.

<sup>29</sup> The Platte valley is a level plain about ten miles wide from the Elkhorn river to the Loup river fifty miles to the west. This northern route became the most important of the three main overland highways to the west before the advent of the railroads. In the 1830's and 1840's it was known as the Oregon Trail. The old Mormon trail keeping to the north side of the river, also followed the Platte valley for five or six hundred miles, and in the 1860's the road was frequently referred to as the Overland Trail. By 1860 regular settlements were frequent for the first two hundred miles along both the northern and southern of its three eastern branches, which all came together at Fort Kearney. Express stations, trading posts and supply ranches were scattered along the remainder of the route to the gold regions. A correspondent for the *Omaha Republican* reported in May 1860 "that since leaving Fort Kearney there had not been less than fifty to one hundred teams in sight at any time." J. Sterling Morton, *Illustrated History of Nebraska*, Jacob North & Company, Lincoln, 1905, Vol. I, p. 108.

it is raining quite hard. Homer, Merit, Frank and I are in the wagon. Mosketos were bad last night. Hitched up and went to the Platt river and washed. two Squaws came and helped us wash; one stole my apron that belonged to Rose and I. One had six ear-rings in one ear and 4 stran of beads. Unc gave them twenty five cents and they went home. they had a house about a half mile off. There was a train of Mormons passed by us of sixty wagons and about 250 people. The Platt is a wide shallow stream.

Sunday 16th. Ursula<sup>30</sup> if I were there I would give you a good whipping. Pleasant morning. I[n] a hurry to get along. start by ten minutes of seven. Passed by the Mormon encampment then they passed us. then we passed them when they were eating dinner. then we stoped for dinner and they passed us; take them all together they are a hard looking set. Traveled about fifteen miles then camped by a pond of water where we made a kettle full of mush for supper.

Monday 17th. Started by 10 minutes of seven. got to the Platt river by 9 o'clock. had to ford one branch. had a hard time in crossing for the sand was deep. then ate dinner on the Island by the ferry called the Shin Ferry.<sup>31</sup> the river was very low, so it was hard crossing the ferry. drove about three mi then camped by the river bank.

Tuesday 18th. Pleasant. Started by 6½ o'clock. The boys caught three fish one buffalow and two cat. the former I should think would weigh about ten pound. drove about twelve mi then stoped and got dinner by Clear Creek<sup>32</sup>, a very nice stream. I found some spermint

<sup>30</sup> Harriet had an older sister, Ursula Newell Smith, who was born July 16, 1832. She had married Wm. S. Baldwin, a widower with four children, and settled on a farm in Warren county, Iowa, two years before her parents took up an adjoining homestead in 1856.

<sup>31</sup> Shinn's Ferry was established in 1858 some fifteen miles below the confluence of the Loup Fork with the Platte, afterward the site of Savannah, Nebraska. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>32</sup> A beautiful tributary of the Platte in Polk county, Nebraska.

on the bank. cooked about half of the fish and ate it all up and the boys wanted more. started about five o'clock and drove about 8 mi then camped one mile from the river by two houses made of mud.

Wednesday 19th. Mr. Smith and Mr. Clifford have left us this morning and gone on ahead for the cattle cannot travel as fast as the horses want to go, and left his boy Hez to drive cattle with us. Cooked all the rest of the fish for breakfast but there was some left so the boy[s] got all they wanted once. they have not got sick of them yet for they have gone to the river for some more. they find holes with fish in, then they drive them out, then kill them with clubs. there are a good many fish in the platt along here now and expect to have all we want. I have just made some light bread and am now waiting for it to raise. Aunt has gone to the house to see if she can cook some of it in the stove while I cook the rest here. I have got some dride apples cooking. Unc has bought some vinegar an[d] cucumbers. I expect we will have them and the apples and bread for dinner. The people here are very kind. they gave us some water-melons to eat and the little boys took our little boys over to the patch and they got all they wanted to eat. We came so far yesterday the cattle are tired and we do not expect to start until late in the afternoon then travel until the moon goes down, for the cattle can travel better when it is cool and we had some work to do this morning. the boys have got tired of bisket and we are agoing to make east bread awhile. warm today. I got a fine lot of horse hair this morning and I expect to make it up. I made a pair of bracelets yesterday and they are the longest I ever made. I had seventeen knots and could have put on one or two more . . . After dinner had every-thing that was good. Made four dride apple pies and baked them in the stove in the house. There was a train [of] freight wagons, 26 in number, passed us this morning for the mountains, and one from there. It rained in the afternoon and we did not go any farther.

Thursday 20th. Started, drove six miles then stoped by a Schabang (house or a ranch) and ate dinner. the boys bought some watermelons an[d] mush melons, and we had all we wanted. drove six miles more then Camped for the night. Mr. Smith traded a cow that was lame with a man where we stayed last night, and we tried to tie her but she got away from us and run back we suppose.

Friday 21st. The boys have gone after the cow and have to stay here untill they come back. Aunt has been to the river and washed three pair of pants for the boys. I have made some bread and am agoing to bake it in the house. I am working in the hair buisniss. The boys came about three o'clock and we started and traveled about 4 mi, then camped by the river where the mosketoos liked to eat us up. I never saw them so thick.

Saturday 22nd. Pleasant morning. My face feels a little sore. I found a patch of plums by the river and picked and p[a]red enough for dinner; and the boys caught two fish, and we had quite a dinner which we ate by the river by a Schabang. traveled about 15 mi then camped about a mi and half from wood and water about 4 mi. from any house.

Sunday 23rd. Started and traveled 4 mi. then camped for the day. I have taken cold in my face; for it very sore swollen just like it use to. The wind blows very hard and the sand flies and we are in the wagon by a house fifteen miles from another.

Monday 24th. Cold enough to freeze a negro alive, and the wind blows and the sand f[l]ies; my face is sore and I stay in the wagon until breakfast ready; then we all go in the tent and eat except Hez who is sick. Aunt baked bread in the house while Unc gets the breakfast. Start at nine o'clock. traveled seven miles and a half. ate dinner then drove the same number of miles in the afternoon. then camped near the river by a house which they call schabangs, where we went down a very steep hill to the river. The boys took the cattle down to the

river to water and was gone three hours, and came back with five cat-fish which we dressed. then they ate their suppers then retired for the night.

Tuesday 25th. Another cold morning. I do not know what we would [do] if it was this cold all the time for we are all shivering with the cold. I had rather have heat than cold. Start by half past eight o'clock. drove about eight miles then stoped, ate our dinner, made some east bread, and expect to bake it to night if it gets light enough. it is so cold it does [not] raise fast. was stoped about an hour then drove on untill we came to a house which are along about six to eight and sometimes fifteen miles apart, where we stoped to water the cattle. took them to the river where they found some more fish. they are all there now while I am in the wagon writing and keeping off all wild beasts that might happen to come along. This is a very nice looking part of the world. it is flat and can see a great ways. I would like it better than I do Iowa if there was more timber. I have found very nice wild flowers and have a very fine smell. There is one that I would call wild flox, like that root that I got of Alice Burlingame. The timber that grows along the river is cotton wood and cedar. O how I wish that you had about six dozen to put in your yard and the grave yard. they are nice I do declare. they caught one buffalow and four bass, and we had them for supper with some smashed potatoes. baked two loves of light bread in the evening and made two more to bake in the morning. traveled about 16 miles then camped.

Wednesday 26th. Cool morning. All well. Got breakfast, baked bread, churned. got a lump of butter larger than a goose egg. Started by eight o'clock. traveled about nine miles then stoped and ate dinner. It looks very much like rain. started, traveled ten mi then camped by a house where a man had been murdered the week before, or near there.

Thursday 27th. Cloudy. start by twenty minutes of eight. ate dinner by a small town where the St. Jo

road<sup>33</sup> comes into this. very comfortable today, not too cold or hot. wrote a letter home. Camped five mi east of Fort Kearny. pleasant moon light night. cooked some beans.

Friday 28th. Cloudy morning. started by fifteen minutes after seven. passed through Fort Kearny<sup>34</sup> and Kearny City which are two miles apart.<sup>35</sup> Ate dinner in the edge of the City. This place is a hard place. it is about the size of Greenbush.<sup>36</sup> All well today for this time

<sup>33</sup> "The road strikes the Omaha route near Kearney Station along the south side of the Platte and then follows the river eight miles to Fort Kearney." Henry Villard, *The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1932, p. 162. "Here was 'Dogtown' eight or nine miles east of Fort Kearney not far from the present town of Lowell. Mr. M. H. Hook was the keeper of the permanent stage station, and also ran the post office under the name of Valley City. The 'city' contained three buildings, one being a store." Frank A. Root and William Eelsey Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California*, Topeka, 1901, pp. 202-203.

<sup>34</sup> Established on the south bank of the Platte river in June of 1848, one of several military posts provided by Congress to afford protection to the numerous emigrants to Oregon and California through the unorganized Indian country. "Fort Kearney, in 1863, was a rather lonesome but prominent point. It was a place of a dozen or more buildings . . . Here it was that the stages, ox, and mule trains west from Atchison, Omaha, and Nebraska City came to the first telegraph station on the great military highway. It was a grand sight after traveling one hundred and fifty miles without seeing a settlement of more than two or three houses to gaze upon the old post, uninviting as it was . . ." Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>35</sup> "Just west of the reservation sprang up perhaps a dozen huts and hovels known as 'Adobe Town,' sometimes shortened to 'Dobytown,' and also called Kearney City. The buildings were occupied almost exclusively by the worst kind of dives, and a number of the people were disreputable characters of both sexes. It is related that the place at one time had fourteen saloons, though there were only six families there. The soldiers quartered at the post who drank bought their whiskey at 'Dobytown,' and the large numbers of ox and mule drivers going across the plains seldom failed to stop there a few moments, to fill up on 'tanglefoot,' thus making it an immensely profitable business for those keeping such places. Freighters (the owners of the freight, especially) were always glad to get out of 'Dobytown' and did so as soon as possible. There was a great amount of thieving done in the vicinity, and ox and mule drivers and those who had any money and who spent a night there, would be frequently drugged with the vilest liquor, robbed, and often rendered unable to go on westward with their trains the following morning." Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, pp. 207, 243.

<sup>36</sup> A prominent village in northern Warren county, Iowa, during the Civil War. Most of the business houses were moved about a mile southeast to the town of Spring Hill when the railroad came through in 1872. W. C. Martin, *History of Warren County, Iowa*, The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1908, pp. 307-08.

in the year. After dinner drove 8 mi, then camped by the bank of the Platt by a house and the man's name was Tom. there is no water in the river only in holes, but by digging a foot we have good water. saw some antelope just before we camped.

Saturday 29th. Very cold this morning. ox yokes white with frost. did not get up until six o'clock then it was cold enough, you bet. got breakfast, then Unc tried to trade wagons but could not so he had to go and get a load of wood to set the wagon tires for the fore wheels. all the spokes were loose and he took them off and fixed them and by that time it was night. Aunt and I done the work, churned, baked bread, cooked apples and beans. I washed a little for my self. The boys Homer and Hez went a hunting, came back with an antelope, so we had some for supper. it is very good meat. so the day is gone.

Sunday 30th. Pleasant. got breakfast, then the men went to work to set the wagon tire and by the time we had the work done they had them done. Started at one o'clock and drove 15 mi then camped where one of the cows run with the yoke and scared us all. I jumped over the dishes for the wagon just as Homer came with a bucket of water and spilt half of it all over me. Aunt was sitting a chair, and she stood with it before her. the cow run until the yoke broke, then she was free.

Monday 31st. Pleasant. After nine start and drive until three then camped for the night . . . and not till then, on account of water for it is not very plenty. we saw two buffalow just before we stoped. they were running about two miles away. the boys went a hunting but did not catch anything. Aunt washed some and I baked bread. had visitors in the evening. they was a man and woman from Kansas going to the mountains. Homer has a sore foot.

Tuesday September 1st. Very pleasant night. the moon shines as bright as day. Aunt, Uncle and I got up at



twenty minutes after eleven, made a fire and was going to get breakfast when I looked at my watch and found it was midnight. then we went back to bed until four then we got up again, got breakfast, done the work and the men yoked another yoke of cows; so we did not get started very early. Very dusty and warm traveling. drove eight miles then stoped for dinner about three. The boys took the cattle to the river to water them, found a little, then drove them on the island to eat grass. There was two mice in the wagon and we had to get them out, so we threw out all the loose articles then moved the boxes and found them. I tell you they were killed with good hearts for they had eaten three large holes in Aunt's new carpet and some in the old one, and one sheet, and ate a hole in the flour sack, and sack of crackers. I tell you it was some work [to] take thing[s] out and put them back. By the time we got ready to start it was six o'clock. then we traveled seven miles, then camped by a house by the river where there was plenty water runing in the Platt; but we did not know it then because it was too dark to see. the boys milked and we ate some bread and milk and went to bed. after the moon arose it was very pleasant.

Wednesday 2nd. Cloudy this morning and misting. got breakfast and ate it. then Unc went to the house, and the man told him that there was some buffalow<sup>37</sup> across the river and the boys wanted to go a hunting. So we hitched one yoke of oxen on the wagon and drove on the other side of the house where we was near the river and plenty of nice grass. then they fixed the wagon so that Unc could take off the wheels for he wanted to set the wagon tires and fix the spokes into the hubb while they were gone. then they were to get back in time to set

<sup>37</sup> "Much of the country between Fort Kearney and Cottonwood Springs was the home of the buffalo and antelope in the days of overland traffic, especially during the later '50's and early '60's. Often vast droves of the shaggy bison, numbering many thousands, could be seen along the line at different points. In the vicinity of Plum Creek appeared to be a favorite spot for them to roam. Their trails were in plain sight of there leading south into the sandy bluffs." Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

the tires before night, then they started. Aunt is not very well today. she has not felt very well since she washed. we intend to wash a little at a time, that is if we keep well as we have been for the last two or three weeks. so I wash a little today and dry a[nd] iron them with my hands, for they were made before iron. Aunt bakes three ovens full of of light bread. we first thought we would bake it [in] the house and went to see if we could, and the woman said that we might as soon as her bread was baked for she had some just ready to bake. I asked her what she would charge me, and she said that I would have to ask her husband so I went to the grocery door (for all the people in this country keep a grocery) and asked him what he would charge me to bake an oven full of bread if the boys would get the wood; and he told [me] not much. and I asked him how much and he said twenty cents, and told him that I thought that it was a good deal, then left, and thought that a penny saved was as good as one earned. We had beans, dride apples, bread and butter, molasses and cheese for dinner. we cut the last cheese that you gave us yesterday. it is hard and dry, and not very good to my notion. We are now about thirty miles from Cottonwood springs, and when we get there we expect to find plenty of Indians.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> W. M. Hinman, who opened up a farm that grew to two hundred and fifty acres fenced with cedar posts and rails some four miles west of the Springs in 1860, had a large trade with the Indians. He reported nearly eighty lodges of Indians camped near his farm one season. *History of the State of Nebraska*, Vol. II, p. 1091. The population of Nebraska in 1860 was 25,836, according to the United States census, with 5,072 Indians in the territory. The Pawnees had long been the dominant tribe, almost constantly at war with their neighbors, and acting as a buffer between the smaller Omaha, Otoe and Ponca tribes along the Missouri and the fierce Oglala and Brule bands of the great Sioux nation who had moved out onto the plains at the beginning of the nineteenth century to take possession of the country between the Niobrara and North Platte. Part of the hunting grounds of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes were also located in Nebraska. The Indians were becoming increasingly discouraged by the uncertainty of their condition by 1860, having relinquished much of their territory to the white settlers and, greatly reduced in numbers by warfare, the white man's liquor and disease, were being compressed onto tribal reservations and becoming largely dependent upon the irregular annuities and supplies furnished by the federal government. A. E. Sheldon, *Semi-Centennial History of Nebraska*, The Lemon Publishing Company, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1904, pp. 18-29; Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-262.

This country looks all alike to me. we are traveling along the Platt and the ground very level along the river, but back two and three miles there are high bluffs which look very . . . from the road. they say that Prickly-pears grow on them. I see now and then a lone tree. It is night and the boys are not here so we go to bed.

Thursday 3rd. Fog this morning and the grass is quite wet. boy[s] come by the time we got up. they are very hungrey and have a good appetite for breakfast. They turned Merit's pony and Hez's horse loose after they came home, and now they cannot find them. they had not been gone more than two hours when they started after them to go and hunt the cattle that were gone, so they have Homer's only to ride to hunt horses and cattle both. it is noon now and no horses or cattle yet. Pleasant day. Aunt and I baked eight ovensful of bread. The men found the cattle and horses by two o'clock. Then they ate dinner and set the wagon tires, and we started by five and traveled about four miles then camped for the night.

Friday 4th. Very nice morning. All well. Get ready to start by half past five in the morning. drove about twelve miles over the plains. passed two houses then camped for dinner. stayed about three hours, then started and traveled about eleven miles. passed some Indians tents, five in one place and about a mile from them was twenty more. as we passed by one Indian rode up by the wagon and Unc shook hands with him and gave him some bread, and he left and went home. he was dressed up. had on a linen pair of pants, his head was combed, and had feathers in his hair. we camped about a mile on this side of the Indian encampment.

Saturday 5th. All well excepting Homer who is somewhat sick. Just after breakfast there came two Indians on their ponies, one squaw and her papoose and an old Indian. they looked very well for Indians. they had

on some nice mogasons. Unc gave them some bread, and they left. when they started you would have laughed to see the old Squaw kick her pony to make it go. we started by seven o'clock and traveled about ten miles, then stoped on the river bank and ate dinner. there is not any water in the river only in places. In the afternoon traveled about five miles. (Saw an old Indian. I and Frank were a walking when he came up behind us. and he reached out his hand and said how, and we shook hands with him. then he had a role of paper in his hand, unrolled it, and there was money in it, and he said more heap and pointed to me. I held out my hands and shook my head, and pointed to Unc. I was a little streaked for he had nothing on but a blanket and great ear rings and bracelet, all brass. I soon started for the wagon, and he close to my heels. but I soon got into the wagon and presently he left, and you better think I was glad. We have now got into a place where Indians abound). then camped on the planes by the river. got supper then went to bed about eight o'clock, and about eleven woke up and found that there was going to be a storm for the wind was blowing, and thundering and lightening. Unc got up and put up things so that they would not get wet, and woke up the boys who were sleeping on the ground and told them to set their tent. but they had lost the stakes to the tent and they could not put it up, so they got into the wagon. there we was eight in a bed. it did not rain much but there came a clap of thunder and lightening that made our old wagon ring for awhile. it did not hurt us much but we felt it very plain. Hez felt it in his side, and Homer and Bill in the feet. Unc felt it all over. I felt it on the right side of my head. it appeared to me that a ball had struck me, and it made my head ache for awhile. Aunt said that it did not hurt her, but that she heard it ring around the wagon for awhile. it appeared to her that it run around the wagon tires. I think that it was a wonder that some of us was not killed. Unc would not stay in the wagon any longer but got out and took a comfort and wrapped himself up in it and went down under a

bank toward the river and laid down on the ground. he was afraid to stay in the wagon. after that clap it did not thunder much more. after the rain was over [he] came back to the wagon and found us all there safe. Homer had quite a fever and Aunt gave him some pills and we slept until morning.

Sunday 6th. All able to eat breakfast. My head feels just as it would after having on a hot mustard plaster. After breakfast they set two of the wagon tires, one of them they set last sunday. Made yeast bread. Started in the afternoon and traveled about seven miles then camped for the night. We passed through CottonWood Springs (a small town)<sup>39</sup> where there was twenty two Indian tents, and about two miles on this side where the postoffice was, there was eighteen more and we stoped at the office a little while, and of all the Indians I ever saw. I saw there some naked, all but their brich cloth, and some drest in their best, as I supposed, for they had on a great many rings in their ears as well as on their fingers, and their beads, as well as a great many other things. one had beads strung on a string as long as your finger, and on the end of that had a mussle shell painted a

<sup>39</sup> Ranches furnishing supplies to the freighters and emigrants were developed near many of the Overland stage stations from Fort Kearney all the way to the mountains. At first some distance apart, they soon increased in number until it was generally only from ten to twelve miles from one station to another, many of the more important of these having two or three or perhaps several trading ranches ". . . it was no uncommon event to be able to stand at the door of one of these ranches and count from seven hundred to one thousand of the wagons pass in a single day . . ." *History of the State of Nebraska*, Vol. II, p. 1890. Cottonwood Springs situated off to the right of the road was one of the favorite stops because travelers could usually get what they wanted there in the way of supplies on the slow journey overland and the canyons nearby were full of cedar trees; hence there was plenty of the very best fuel, an important item for campers on the plains; water and grass were plentiful; besides, the premises looked very pleasant and inviting. The first building was probably erected in 1858, and being situated about midway between the Missouri and the Rockies it became an important station for all who drove oxen and mules over the overland route. The Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express used it as a "home" station and a depot of general supplies, but aside from the stage station, stables, grain warehouse, and a store or two, there never was much of a town at Cottonwood Springs which derived its name from a spring surrounded by a heavy growth of cottonwood trees comprising about one hundred acres. Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 499.

little with red paint. and some had their cheeks painted red and their head where the hair was parted. Oh you would have laughed to see the little ones cut around. they looked funny as well as ugly. I walked along by their tents that were by the road but could not see much. We passed by a good many. now and then you might see an Indian. On the fence by the road there was two little boys that were naked and our lead cattle did not know what that meant and they jumped around by the hind cattle as quick as you could say Jack Robinson. After we camped we baked five ovens full of bread, made up some more to bake in the morning, got supper, ate it, milked, then went to bed. Cloudy and looks like rain.

Monday 7th. Misting a little. bake four ovens full of bread for we are now going away from wood and have to travel about two hundred miles without wood, only what we carry along. they have got some logs tied under the wagon, enough to do us if we use some buffalow chips with it.<sup>40</sup> There came an Indian to us when we were eating breakfast. had on soldiers clothes, Indians uniform I suppose. had on tin bands above the elbow, and brass ones on his rist, a red shawl, a straw hat with some yellow birds feathers in it, six rings on one finger. Aunt gave him a piece of bread and butter and some coffee. he ate it, then went away, got his mule and came back and wanted me to get on behind him and go with him. but I thought that I would wait untill some one would give Unc a lot of ponies for me and I would go and stay awhile with them then run away, and then we would have some ponies. Started about ten, and traveled about five miles, then stoped and ate dinner, then traveled about eight miles, then camped by a house where there was lots of water. passed some large bluffs. they looked like some small mountains. there was some cedar trees on them. I did not go up on them, but would have done it if we had been near enough but we were between

<sup>40</sup> The fine stand of virgin trees in the vicinity of Cottonwood Springs was rapidly thinned out by the thousands of emigrants and freighters who passed up and down the Platte valley.

two and three miles to them, and I did not have time to go that far. it did not look a half mile. this is a very disceatful country in that respect.

Tuesday 8th. Cold a misting. Aunt not very well. she has a pain in her back. it hurts her to move. All the rest well but a little cold. I have worne my red flannel sack more than half of the time, and not too warm. Start by quarter off eight. Fell in company with a man by the name of Fred that Unc was acquainted with, who had two wagons, one an ox wagon and other a horse wagon. and had a small drove of cattle, about twenty, and two men driving. and they put both droves together, and then they had one drove and five to drive. then it was better for them all and not so hard for the cattle. We drove thirteen miles then stoped for dinner. Saw some Indians moveing. they had polls of their tents tied on each side of their ponies so that one end was on the ground and that made their wagon, and they had their things tied on them. I was walking when I meet two Indians and they had to shake hands with them, and I thought that they would never let go of my hand. they were some captains I guess by their looks, for they were dressed in their full uniform. one was carrying a nice looking-glass. their fingers had about six rings on each finger. I tell you I never saw the like. After dinner before we started, the Indian that wanted me came up to the wagon where the me[n] were, and swore that he would kill them and pointed his gun but did not shoot. Unc spoke to him very kindly and he did no harm. he was drunk and did not know what he was doing. he soon went away. Afternoon we traveled about seven miles. passed over O'Fallons Bluffs<sup>41</sup> and camped on

<sup>41</sup> The river forks into the North and South Platte about twenty-seven miles beyond Cottonwood Springs, and ten miles further the road ascends O'Fallons Bluffs, runs for three miles on a succession of hills, then descends down through the sand hills to a small stream—part of the South Platte—at an angle of about forty-five degrees for a few rods in one of the most difficult and most despised stretches of the entire route. A postoffice and an express station were located there, and emigrants saw the last tree for nearly two hundred miles, as the road ran along the Platte at a distance varying from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 mile. Villard, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

this side not far from Mr. Williams who had a squaw for his wife. and there was two tents by the house where there lived some Indians, and two of the Squaws belonged to the white men. they were drest like white women. their children looked funny. they also were dressed like white children. This has been a very nice day to travel.

Old Dick one of the old oxen gave out and Unc is a going to leave him at Mr. Bakers until he gets able to travel and then he intends to send for him by some of the teamsters who are all the time . . . traveling this road.

Wednesday 9th. Pleasant morning. All well. Fred cannot find one yoke of oxen. they were yoked together and we are waiting for him. They found the cattle about noon. then we ate dinner, then started. traveled about eleven miles then camped a mile from Rising Sun Ranch by the Telegrfic wire.

Old Mr. Baker is the man that our servant girl (Mary Gilaspa) said that she was going to. she said that he would keep her as long as she . . . had a mind to, and when we got to the place I thought I would go in and see the folks, but there was no way to get into the dwelling house without climbing a board fence. so I went into the store room where I found a young looking woman with long nice curls with a small child in a little wagon, one about five years old by her side. she said she was Bakers wife and had been there about a year, (I suppose she had got in ahead of Old Aunt Mary, as we called her) and she could not stay for this women said that she came about two weeks ago, and worked for them. but she left last sunday for a ranch about forty-five miles above there on this road. She had gone to keep house for a man who wanted a house keeper. Bakers wife said that she wanted to stay but she could not do all of the work but yet was quite nice and tidy, but slow about her work and they wanted



some body that could do all the work. she had two little Indian girls in kitchen washing dishes. she said they were of great help to her. they would often come in and help her for they lived across the road in tents. there was five tents and the squaws belonged to white men, so the woman said, and they tried to dress like her. anything that she had they would try to make them something like it. they wore very large hoops and dressed like white women. Bakers wife (or the woman that said she was his wife but I have my doubts for she said he had been there eight or ten years and Unc said that he had no wife last year when he came home) asked me if I made my head dress. she said that she made just such ones and she asked five dollars for one, and for a whole set she asked fifteen dollars, that is earrings, breast-pin and head dress, all made of horse hair. she said that she paid ten dollars to learn how, that she learned in Keokuk, Iowa. I would have liked to have seen a set but she had none made.

Thursday 10th. Had rain last night with thunder and lightening, but not hard like the other night. The ground and grass is somewhat wet but we are all well and able to get about. made coffee, and fried meat, that was all we cooked for breakfast. Started by seven. traveled about twelve miles, then stoped and ate dinner. this forenoon saw about twelve antelope by the road. Unc took his gun and started after them. they went over the bluffs and he got close enough [to] shoot, but his gun would not go off or he would have had one. Unc and Fred are going a hunting on the horses this afternoon and we are going on, and they will come up to us tonight. There was three antelope by the road down toward the river, and the dogs and Homer on his pony started after them and gave them a chase. but they did not catch them but was quite near them. if they had had a gun they might of had one. In the afternoon traveled about seven miles, then camped. Unc and Fred came home with two jack rabbits. they are about as large as a small dog and are very good. we had some beans a

cooking and we put the rabbit in with them. cooked them until we went to bed and left them cooking all night.

Friday 11th. Raining this morning and had been raining in the night but not very hard. I think we did not have the heavy part of the shower. We had beans, rabbit, and dumplings for breakfast. they were good. Started by quarter off eight. traveled about ten miles, (the longer we traveled the roads got more wet and where we are now they had quite a rain, I guess, for there are ponds of water) then ate dinner. After dinner traveled about eight miles, then camped about a mile on this side of Mr. Browns and about two miles from Old Beaver's, a man that has a Squaw for his wife. We churned, baked bread, browned coffee and got supper, then went to bed. Aunt was some what tired and her legs hurt her some, but I feel perfectly well.

Sep 12th Saturday 1863. All up and had breakfast by the time they could see the cattle. they yoked Charly (A gentleman cow) this morning and it took them a little longer, so we did not get started until seven o'clock. very cool nice morning for traveling. I started a head of the team until I got to the house where Mrs. Gilaspa was. there was a great many Indian tents around the house but they were taking them up and were going away. I went up to one tent where there was a black man with some squaws. he said good morning and I asked him if they had any mogisons and they handed me about a dozen, and I took one pair and gave them one dollar but they asked two. I went into the house and found Mrs. Gilaspa eating her breakfast, and nothing would do but I must eat so I sat down and ate. she was in good spirits. she said that she intended to make it her home. by the time I had my breakfast eat the team came along and I bade her good by and left. but she asked me to call and see her when I went home, and I told her that I would. Traveled about nine miles then stoped for dinner. had to cook some bread so we made some pancakes for dinner and baked

three ovens full of bread, then drove about eight miles and stopped for the night. I went to the river and washed a little. there is more water in the Platt than there was where we was a week ago. it is a very funny river. it is about a quarter and in some places it is a half mile wide sand and water, and now it is low. there is ponds of water and patches of sand and any amount of little islands covered with grass where we are now. along back they were covered with trees and brush but where we are now there is no timber to be seen nor I have not seen any for a week, nor do not expect to see any for another week.

Sunday 13th. Very pleasant, and the sun rose in all its glory and shone upon us while we were working on the Lords day, trying to trust my King. I did part in good spirits hoping that all would be right. We started on our journey about half past six. traveled about ten miles then stoped by the town of Julesburg<sup>42</sup> for dinner. Aunt and Unc went to see Mr. and Mrs. Hayworth and Mrs. Brown, and I got dinner, washed the dishes and wrote a letter home. started at three. traveled about eight miles then camped for the [night] by the road and not far from the river. I cannot describe the place. the country all looks alike to me. we have been traveling for the last three weeks along the Platt bottom between the river and the bluffs. on[c]e in a while (not twice in a while) we go over them, then wind around and get down again on the bottom.

Monday 14th. All well. Start by twenty minutes past six. traveled about eight miles and stoped for dinner. baked four ovens full of bread, and when we was eating dinner, there was three antelope that came up close to the wagon and looked at us. Unc and Fred got their guns, and Fred shot first and over shot. then Unc shot when they were running but did not hit . . . they got away safe. In the after-noon traveled about eight miles

<sup>42</sup> The original Julesburg, Colorado, completely destroyed by an Indian raid in 1865, was on the south bank of the Upper South Platte Crossing and one of the most widely known stations on the main trail to the Rockies. It possessed the last store before Denver was reached.

then camped, and the place looked just like the place where we stayed last night. all the difference that I could see was by the box that we had fasened on the hind part of the wagon. there was a hole there but last night there was a prickly pear. Passed the tole gate and had to pay \$1.85, also a very sandy road.<sup>43</sup>

Tuesday 15th. Started by seven. cool nice morning. Passed Spring-hill station.<sup>44</sup> Mr. Keeth the man that kept the tavern where we stayed all night the night before we got to our home in Iowa. Traveled about ten miles, then stoped for dinner by Lillian Spring.<sup>45</sup> there was a spring by the house, a very nice spring. Baked six ovens full of bread after dinner. Unc took the pony and went a hunting and we started on, and traveled eight miles and camped. Unc came up with no game, but saw a great many antelope. the wind hard about five and the sand flew and it rained a little. ate supper and went to bed.

Wednesday 16th. Raining but it stoped by seven, and got breakfast and started by eight. got to Mr. Denison,<sup>46</sup> a man that Unc boarded with when he was making hay, so we had to pay them a visit. found a black eyed woman and little boy. I guess pretty nice family. stayed about three hours, then started on and caught up to the others teams by dinner time. ate dinner, then drove about nine miles and camped. the wind blew cold and hard. baked four ovens full of bread, got supper, ate it and went to bed.

Thursday 17th. Cold, and the ground white with frost. got breakfast and started on our journey. traveled about

<sup>43</sup> This probably was a private road laid out to by-pass Antelope station on a particularly rough stretch of the trail eleven miles west of Julesburg.

<sup>44</sup> A home station of the Overland Express kept by Mr. A. Thorne about 24 miles beyond Julesburg. Fire-wood had to be hauled 150 to 175 miles from Cottonwood Springs.

<sup>45</sup> An express station near the South Platte where the road became very bad, passing frequent long stretches of sand, and sometimes whole hills of sand.

<sup>46</sup> Dennison's was a stage-stop thirteen miles from Spring Hill.

nine miles and stoped for dinner. passed two houses which were made of sod. the people all make their houses of sod in this country. some look very nice, and [some] do not. those that have been plastered look very nice and are warm. Ate dinner four miles from the house we just passed and 10 to the next one on the road ahead. Baked two ovens full of bread, and all ate dinner in good spirits and in good glee. after dinner started by twenty five minutes past one with the intention of making a good afternoon's drive. but in one short minute, how quick ones' feeling are turned from glee to sadness and from sadness to glee—but our glee was turned to sadness. we had just started. Merit was driving, and Unc was just behind. Aunt and I were in the wagon. I had just been writing in my day-book and had all my writing utensils in my lap. Frank was standing on the tongue of the wagon. Aunt told him to hand her the wash-pan of water that was standing on the keg that was in front of the wagon. he handed it to her. and he said that he wanted a drink, and Aunt told him to get it for it was in a bucket by the keg. and as he turned to get it his foot sliped and he fell, and both wheels ran over him as soon as he fell. Aunt jumped out of the wagon and picked him up. she said he was breathing when she picked him up. by the time I got there he did not breath (but was black in the face) until I ran to the wagon, got some water and put it on his face. then went and got some camphor, and as soon as I put some on his nose he began to move. we rubed him with camphor and he soon came too so that he knew us. we soon got him in the wagon and he got better. then we started on as fast as we could for Mr. Godfreys<sup>47</sup> at the

<sup>47</sup> H. Godfrey kept a prominent ranch and Overland Stage Company station down the South Platte east of Denver, between Bijou creek and Valley Station. Many ranches and stage stations were attacked and burned, their occupants massacred or put to flight, during the general Indian uprising the following year. But Godfrey and his family successfully fought off the attackers, killing several of them. His ranch was the only one left standing in the Platte valley for a distance of 120 miles. The Indians thereafter referred to Godfrey as "Old Wicked" with his place being called "Fort Wicked." *Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State*, Hastings House, New York, 1941, p. 201; Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, 358.

distance of twelve miles. got there by six o'clock. found very fine nice people and very kind. the man came to the wagon and took him in his arms and carried him in the house, and made us welcome. Frank stood the ride well. I do not think that he was hurt as bad as we expected. We all thought he was dying when we first picked him up and on[c]e after we started. but now he is in good hands and in a house, yet he feels pretty bad.

Aunt & Unc and I ate our supper with Mr. Godfrey. the boys ate at the wagon. not any of us felt like eating any. The boys sleep in the wagon. Unc slept on the floor. Aunt set up with Frank until one. and I lay on the bed behind him until Aunt layed down then I got up. the fleas were very bad so that I did not sleep a wink. Frank was very restless all night. did not sleep but a very little.

Friday 18th. Very cold. froze water by the well. Frank feels pretty bad, and does not want Aunt to leave him. I got breakfast out at the wagon. Aunt is with Mr. Godfrey's. did not do much all day. made some yeast bread but did not bake it for it did not get light, but cooked some beans and pork. Fred and his men and cattle went on and left us.

Saturday 19th. Another cold morning. ice a[s] thick as window glass. Frank feels a good deal better this morning. he complains of nothing but his left leg, or hip rather, where the wheel ran over him. my bread is light enough to bake, so I worked it over and put in pans to bake. got breakfast on their stove and ate at the wagon, all but Aunt and Frank who ate in the house. after breakfast Aunt made up half a sack (or pretty near) full of flour into biscuit, and I baked it in the stove. the boys went a hunting and caught a Jack rabbit, and we got dinner and supper about three o'clock. it has been a very fine day.

Sunday 20th. Very pleasant day. sun about a hour high

when we got up. all of the folks went to a dance last night about two miles away (Mr. Kelleys)<sup>48</sup> excepting the old women and babies and myself, so they did not feel like getting up very early for the[y] did not get home until two o'clock in the morning. Frank is quite well. he thinks that he is able to go and ride. he can not walk but Aunt put on his pants, and can set up. I got breakfast, but no one felt like eating much after the dance. by the time I got breakfast ready I did not feel like eating for I took a pain in my stomach, but I ate and got better. after breakfast and the dishes was washed I went into the wagon and slept about two hours and then I felt better. The folks have not been doing much of any thing. We ate some bread and milk about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Godfrey got supper about five. so we have spent the day and now the evening shades begin to appear. and if any time I think of home it is on sunday evening, and I almost wish I was there so that I might go to church and see a quiet day. We are now within one hundred and thirty miles of Denver. we expect to start in the morning if Frank is as well as he is this evening. About five o'clock Homer took the gun and went out on the island, and shot a deer and wounded it. and when Hez went after the cows he saw it and took after it on his horse, and they caught it and it was young and tender. There are a great many wolves here, some large gray ones. they came up to the wagon about a dozen. they smelt the fresh meat. they were quite bold. they came up near the bed that the boys had on the ground. the dogs drove them away, and they would only get layed down before they would be back where they dressed the deer.

Monday 21st. Pleasant. Start by ten O'clock. The folks were very clever. they only charged us three dollars. We drove about ten miles and ate dinner by the river. After dinner we had not traveled more than two miles before we could see the mountains. saw two high ones

<sup>48</sup> Kelly's station, better known as American Ranch, was 150 miles from Denver. Only the adobe walls were left standing after the Indians fiercely attacked and burned it in 1864.

supposed to be Long's Peak,<sup>49</sup> and before night I could see a long range. they were about 110 miles away. they looked as if they were only three or four miles from us. traveled about six miles and camped by the river by a ranch where Mr. Gates lived. passed Beaver station and Beaver creek.<sup>50</sup> on[e] of the oxen is sick. he hung back all the afternoon, but we did not know that he was very sick. but when we turned them loose he did not go away with them, but lay down. Unc gave him some fat meat and went to bed. but they heard groaning and they got up and gave him some vinegar, but all to no avail. he soon passed away. he had drank alkali water which caused his death. it was a very good ox and the best one Unc had.

Tuesday 22nd. Got breakfast and started by eight O'clock. traveled about seven miles, then stopped by the river and ate dinner. The Platt river has more water in it now than it had a hundred miles back, and the farther we go the more we find. the country we have passed through today looks very barren and sandy, not much grass but what there is it is all dried up. In the afternoon traveled about six miles and camped a mile from a ranch by the river bank. we use the water and it is very good. when we dip it up at night and let it stand all night it is good and cold in the morning.

Wednesday 23rd. Started by seven O'clock. traveled about twelve miles. got dinner and supper close by the river where there was a patch of cane, and went and got some for Frank and some cattails. saw about fourteen antelope in a flock, but they run like deer only a little faster. after supper drove about three miles and

<sup>49</sup> "I shall never forget the view from Kelly's Station, 135 miles down the Platte, a little northeast of Denver. Long's Peak, towering up 14,271 feet above the level of the sea, its summit covered with a silvery white mantle, showed off in grand style." Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>50</sup> Fifteen miles west of Kelly's the Platte road crossed Beaver Creek at its mouth, reaching the express station two miles the other side. A cut-off on almost a direct line from here to Denver was explored in the winter of 1859-60, thereafter saving emigrants to the latter region almost fifty miles of difficult travel. Villard, *op. cit.*, p. 169.



camped on the river bottom, just before we went over the bluffs. Frank is quite smart; he cannot walk yet for it hurts his leg.

Thursday 24th. Started by seven. passed over the bluffs through the orchard called Fremonts Orchard.<sup>51</sup> some pretty deep sand, and heavy pulling for the cattle. drove about twelve miles and stoped one mile from Fremont Station. got dinner & supper all together. After supper we concluded that we would not go any farther today for the cattle were hungry for they had not had much to eat since we left Mr. Godfrey's, and they were eating on a fine patch of grass. Aunt, Unc and I went to the river. Aunt washed some while Unc and I went up the river to find a man's grave who was killed and they laid him on a island in the river and covered him with sand. we found the place and it was a pile of sand. we also found on the sand bar the jaw bone, teeth, and all in excepting a few in front, of a man. there was fourteen teeth. The boys went a hunting, all but Bill, and he stayed with Frank who was not able to walk. When we were eating there came an antelope up near the wagon, but not near enough to shoot it. it appeared to be quite tame. they shot at it but did not hit it. but it ran away a short distance and then came back again, and stayed around there some time. the boys came back without any game. Its very pleasant this evening, and we can see the mountains very plain. can see snow and the air appears to come right off from it. and it appeard that I could almost smell it if such a thing could be.

Friday 25th. I was up by four and saw the moon go down behind the mountains. and I tell you that they

<sup>51</sup> "A post-office was located here; the first one west of Julesburg, more than a hundred miles east. Much of the 36 miles from Beaver station to Fremont's Orchard was through beds of sand, and there was not a drop of water nor a tree or a shrub for . . . sixteen miles . . . It was a real pleasure, after going so long on a walk through such a dreary stretch of sand, to reach the 'Orchard.' There was quite a cluster of stunted cottonwood trees in the bottom that looked much like an old Eastern apple orchard; hence the name of the station." Root and Connelley, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

looked nice, and there was a cool breeze from them. Started by half past six. traveled about ten miles and stoped by a ranch. ate dinner and it was quite warm, and we rested until about three so that the cattle could travel better. We are fast approaching the mountains . . . or it looks so. it look to me as if I could walk there before night, but this country is very disceatful. this forenoon I saw a bird called a Rook, . . . about like a Crow only larger, walking in the road before the wagon and thought that it was a man it looked so large. Traveled about four miles. stoped in the road long enough to milk the cows and eat some mush and milk which we made at noon, then drove eleven miles by moon light. the drove went ahead and our own oxen followed and did not need much driving, for they wanted to get in with the herd and we would have to stop them once in a while to let the herd get a little ahead so that it would not be dusty. Camped about ten O'clock about a mile from Mr. Garies, a man that has a Squaw for his wife.

Saturday 26th. Pleasant morning. Aunt is sick. Frank is quite unwell. Started by six. traveled about nine miles and stoped for dinner close by the river. Aunt and Frank are no better, but worse. Aunt has taken a bad cold. I hope she is not a going to be sick. I got dinner. baked four ovens full of biscuit. Aunt is quite sick so we do not start until six O'clock in the evening then drove until eleven. traveled about ten miles then camped about four miles from the bridge over Platt river.

Sunday 27th. Aunt and Frank are better. started by seven, traveled about eight miles then stoped for dinner near the St. Vrains Creek.<sup>52</sup> Aunt is well enough to go to the creek with Unc to wash themselves. Frank is well enough to play cards with Merit. Got dinner. baked three ovens full of biscuit. after dinner washed the

<sup>52</sup> At the junction of the South Platte and St. Vrain creek the river abruptly bends to the southwest toward Denver. This was the site of old Fort St. Vrain, an abandoned fur trading post established by Col. Ceran St. Vrain and William Bent in 1838. *Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State*, pp. 365-66.

dishes and went to writin, the boys to playing cards. This is a warm day but was quite cool this morning. we are near enough to the mountains to see the trees on them. I can see fire in several places on the mountains burning up trees, I suppose, for there is a great smoke. the mountains look nice from here. we can see the snow now very plain. Started at four and traveled about 7 miles, then camped for the night within about twelve miles of home.

Monday 28th. All well. hoping to get home<sup>53</sup> today so we were up and had our breakfast in good time and started by six. traveled with anxious hearts all the forenoon looking for the house, for Unc would not tell us. but at last we came in sight of it and saw the boys standing in the yard. they would look a while then they would go in the house and stay awhile, then come out and look again. so we found them well. I would not have known Mort, but Platt looks just as he did when he left. The boys were just getting dinner. they had some squash cooking, but not enough for hungry folk that had been starved for vegetables. Mort went to work and made some biscuits, and I tell you that they were good. he says that he can beat half of the women making bread, and I think he can for he got dinner in a little while. After dinner we took a few things out of the wagon, such things as we needed, our dishes, bedding, and let the rest alone until another day. It was just half past twelve when we got here. They live in a nice log house, one room, one door and one window. We had several gentleman that called on us this evening. I had the head-ache, and went to bed in my bed room which . . . in the south east corner of the house. the room was cut off[f] from the other part of the house with two boxes, but the joke was there was one that came to see me after I had gone to bed, but did not see me. so you see I had a beau the first night.

<sup>53</sup> Home was the "rich grazing" valley of Left Hand creek north of the present city of Boulder, Colorado. The stream and the nearby town of Niwot are named for the Arapahoe chief, Niwot (Indian for left hand). *Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State*, p. 201.

Tuesday 29th. All well. Snowed last night on the mountains. Rain some here today. Washed the shelves and floor, and brought in things out of the wagon. unpacked some things. found nothing broak, but the mice had eaten some things. after a pleasant evenins visit together, went to bed.

Wednesday 30th. . . . I like this country very well. the atmospher is very pure, and I think this is the place for those that are all the time grunting in the states for it agrees with me very well. It is now ten O'clock and there is a man to work for Unc today, and will be here for dinner. and we have some dride apples a cooking and [we] are a going to make some pies. he is the man that came the other night after I had gone to bed.

The boys corn was killed by the frost but they have about twenty-five bushel of wheat, and four or five hundred squashes, and two or three hundred pumpkins but no potatoes. Platt had a keg of plums put up in water. I think that Unc is a going to build a house on his claim this month for the folks want the house. it may be they will put up a log one, and it may be they might put up a plank on[e]. they do not know which they will do. One of the boys are (Rose, should this be is or are?) going to Bolder<sup>54</sup> this afternoon to the post office and I expect to get some letters. I will send the rest of my day book and you will see me safe through my journey. and I am well and hearty. can eat everything even to squash and think it is good, but I am in a hurry for my apples are done and I must make the pies.

Hoping to hear from you soon

Remaining You[r] Daughter

H. A. Smith

<sup>54</sup> Boulder City was laid out in February 1859 after a small party had left an emigrant train on the Platte route at the confluence of the St. Vrain the previous fall, pitched their tents at the mouth of Boulder canyon, and discovered gold in the region during the winter. It soon had a population of 2,000, but the 1860's were lean years for Boulder City as the gold camps to the westward quickly declined, and the early settlers were driven to other pursuits, particularly farming. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 576-77.

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