

## IOWA TO CALIFORNIA IN 1862

*Journal of Jane Holbrook Gould*

EDITED BY PHILIP K. LACK

### Part IV

*Continued from the Spring, 1965 Issue*

Thursday, September 18th – Did not travel today, the boys worked some for hay. Lou washed. There is a large good-looking house here. Mrs. McMillin went on this morning.

Friday, September 19th – Had twenty-one miles to go today without grass. Traveled twelve miles to a well here, we watered and fed some hay and ate some dinner ourselves. Were quite surprised to find Ellen here, she had hired out for a month for twenty dollars. Her husband is at Virginia City working for fifty dollars per month. After coming five miles farther we came to another well and a tent for a station. Found Mrs. McMillin here just ready to go, went on together a mile and a half. Lou and I and she and Annie walked so as to visit, at the end of the mile and a half they turned off for the City and we went on to the river, arrived there sometime after dark. Came on with the telegraph once more, very glad to see it.

Saturday, September 20th – Met some people that we traveled with on Platte River, they went the Salt Lake route, both came here to this place on the same day. When the men went for the stock they got three cows mired, one of them had to be dug out with a shovel and then drawn out by the oxen. She was so weak that she could not stand for some time but after a short time she was so as to be driven six miles up the river where we stopped at noon and staid till the next morning. Here at this ranch we found Dick Pritchard one of our acquaintances from Mitchell Co., Iowa. He has the ague. Sanford of the Wapsin was there too.

Sunday, September 21st – Did not start till late, the boys had some trouble about finding the cattle. After going four

miles we came to Dayton, a nice village of one hundred or more houses, they have all been built since spring. They are of pine lumber which sells for 60 dollars per thousand. The town is very lively, there is a quartz mill there in operation and on Sunday too. Fresh fruit sells here for 25 cents per pound, apples, peaches, pears, and grapes. Did not stop for dinner, there are houses and public wells all along the road to Empire City which is ten miles from Dayton. We staid at Empire all night. This town is not as large as Dayton but the streets are full of freight wagons. We see a great many fruit wagons here from Cal. There is a quartz mill here also. Money seems to be plenty, buildings going up fast, there is the place to make money especially for a man without a family. Can (get) fifty dollars and board per month for most any kind of work, and mechanics get more.

Monday, September 22nd — The men looked around some this morning so we did not get away very early. After going some five miles we saw Carson City off to the right, we only went to within three miles of there. There is a great deal of freighting going on from Cal. over here, all kinds of provisions and groceries and fruits. Such large wagons as they use with six and eight mules or horses to a team carrying from three to six ton. I never saw horses and mules in better condition than those used for teaming. Albert bought some turnips today, paid five cts. per pound, they were very fine ones, were raised here. Saw some small patches of corn today, it is rather small. Camped at night at a ranche, had to get our teams ranched, paid 12½ cts. per head.

Tuesday, September 23rd — Had an early start but did not get along very fast for we stopped so much. Albert sold his harness and rifle at the town of Genoa for fifteen dollars cash. Charlie sold a good Colt revolver for six dollars. They bought some potatoes, the first we have had since the other side of Ft. Laramie, also some syrup and beef and bacon. Lou and I had to get some new shoes, we got them here for about the same price that we used to pay in the States. Passed the Placerville toll road some time after noon to go on and take what is called

the Big Tree route, there are three traveled roads through the mountains. The two I have just mentioned and what is called the Hennis Pass, which is farther north than the other two. We see some nice fields here. Camped near Fisher's store, tavern, and ranche, hired the teams ranched.

Wednesday, September 24 – Left camp early, traveled seven miles before we entered the mouth of Carson Canyon, nooned without feed, rested and watered the cattle, paid toll for a bridge and the canyon road. The road is rather rough but not as bad as some we have seen on the Landers Route through the Bear River Mountains. Did not get camped till sometime after dark, staid in Hope Valley. Hired the teams ranched again, 20 cts. per head. The ranchman told us there was seven inches of snow fell here on the 21st of this month. Bought some nice onions, paid ten cts. per pound.

Thursday, September 25th – Did not start early on account of our late drive yesterday. We made some elderberry pies, there are a great many of these berries in the mountains, they are the sour ones which make better pies than the sweet ones. The road is very rocky. Nooned on Carson River, ate our dinner by the side of a large rock. Have met a number of pack teams, they are very heavily laden, it seems too bad for the poor creatures to have to carry such great loads. They are driven by Greasers and paid for ranching the cattle. Our reason for coming this route was we thought there was free feed and have had none yet.

Friday, September 26th – Left early this morning, had a good road for three or four miles, came through Charity Valley. There are some of the most beautiful little valleys in these mountains, they are covered with bright, fresh looking flowers, the larkspur, bluebell, honeysuckle, and red flowers such as grow in Iowa and Illinois, they look as if it was spring. After traveling seven miles we crossed the summit, it was a gradual ascent. We are now in Cal. There are numerous little lakes surrounded with good grass. Nooned near one of them, our first dinner in Cal. had tea, bread, milk and pie. A pack train passed while we were eating. Came to.....river expect-

ing to find free grass but 'twas fenced, 'twas near sundown when we passed, started up the hill which is four miles long, went up nearly a mile, found a place that we could drive out one side of the road and did so, thought we would let the cattle pick what they could find. After turning them out the men went in search of grass and were very glad to find they could get the best of fresh bunch grass.

Saturday, September 27th — Had an early breakfast and started up the hill. We were willing to believe that it was four miles long by the time we got to the top, it is a mountain not a hill. Nooned without much feed. People living in the states have no idea how rough mountain roads can be. Camped in a small valley near a house that the roof was broken in last winter by the snow. We had a splendid campfire in the evening, sat up till late.

Sunday, Sept. 28th — Had some trouble this morning about finding our cattle, soon after starting had a very long steep hill to climb. The timber through here is fir and pine of two kinds, nut pine and white pine. About ten o'clock we came to a new road, it is pretty well worked. The weather is very cold, we cannot ride all of the time on account of it. We are somewhat afraid of a snow storm while we are here. We found some of the nicest large gooseberries I ever saw, they are prickly. We nooned on the side of the road in the timber, built a large campfire but that did not keep us warm on both side. Did not camp till near sundown, camped in a pine forest, a very dusty place. Saw a very little oak today for the first time since we left Iowa, it grows gnarly.

Monday, Sept. 29th — 'Twas very cool this morning when we started. The boys think it quite a hardship to ride the horse and more so this cold weather. Came through the most beautiful timber I ever saw, passed the large tree called the Mother of the Forest, it is 78 feet in circumference and 360 feet high, there is a staging built around it up 160 feet from the ground, there are names cut in the wood all over it, it is redwood. I thought it was as large as a tree could be but I found soon after that there was one still larger. After going half a mile we

came to the famous Big Tree Hotel, it is a large three story frame house, richly furnished and well kept (so I am informed). After getting our early supper we went to inspect the grove of world renowned large trees. We went through the grove, saw the Three Sisters, one has been killed by fire, the Pride of the Forest, the Pioneers Cabin, the Miners Cabin, Uncle Tom's Cabin, George Washington, and a great many other large trees with names, the name is on a tin placard nailed on the tree, the height and size of the tree. I don't believe this grove has its equal in the world. Lou and I had a little swing. There are several swings in the grove, at last we went to see *the Big Tree*, it has been cut down, it took two men 27 days, it is bored with augers, it is 29 feet in diameter, on the stump is a ball room, it is sixteen sided round top and green blinds for doors and windows, it is plenty large enough for one set to dance, the top of the stump is smoothed so there is no floor but that except where it is filled in around the outside. Lou and I danced the schottische on it, the bottom part of the log is near, there is a ladder 30 feet long to climb up on it, we went on to it, it is covered with names. There is a bowling alley on the remainder of the tree as it lays. We were all through it. Mr. Graham, the owner of the premises, has from forty to sixty boarders all through the summer who come there to rusticate, besides having visitors from all parts of America and some from Europe to see the wonderful forest, the scenery is beautiful. There are some ladies there now from Stockton and Sonora, also some from the other cities of Cal. There are saddle horses and carriage and horses kept here for the use of visitors. We met today a gentleman after his children over to Carson City. We have some information about them, they came through in our train after the Indian robbery, were among the robbed. He was very much pleased to hear from them and to show his gratitude gave us some two dozen pears and apples, the first Cal. fruit we have eaten.

Tuesday, September 30th — The forest is beautiful this forenoon, the country hilly, passed several ranches, arrived near night at Murphy's, a village of 200 or more houses, it is a mining town. There is a good deal of business done here. There is considerable fruit raised here, it looks beautiful to see so much

nice fruit growing, some of it has been gathered. They raise apples, peaches, pears, and grapes. Albert bought some grapes and apples. I prefer the grapes to all others, grapes are six cts. per pound. Charley got some sweet potatoes, they are four cts. per pound. We also had some peaches, but they were not ripe and not very good, but very large. We see some live oak today.

Wednesday, October 1 — Our roads today really are rather rough. I walked on before the teams two miles or more, called at a farm for a drink and to rest, had the pleasure of sitting in a large rocking chair, the first time for five months, they (had) plenty of fruit-trees. Albert called for me and bought some fine grapes and a pail of tomatoes, the lady of the house gave me some roses and verbenias, they were beautiful and fragrant too. Nooned on a hill, had bunch grass for the teams. I have a sore nose today by way of variety. We came by a distillery and in sight of a little town by the name of Altaville. Have passed through a good deal of old mining ground, the country is not settled much. We are in the foothills yet. The grass and weeds are perfectly dry, it looks so strange to see the face of the earth so dry and the trees all so green, just as green as they were in spring. Camped in some oak openings, ranched our cattle. All the water they use here comes from the mountains brought in spouts.

Thursday, October 2nd — The roads are hilly yet. I never saw so dry looking a country. Most of the buildings we have seen today are little miners' huts, the country is all dug over and cut up with sluices. Did not stop for dinner. Passed a reservoir to keep water for the purpose of mining. Camped opposite a hotel under some fine oak shade trees, two of the girls came to see us in the evening, they told us we would be out of the hills in two miles more travel.

Friday, October 3rd — Left our encampment early. After a few miles we came to more level country but so dry and uncultivated. Nooned by a creek near a house, bought hay. Had twelve miles to go without food or water for the cattle, there was one old house but was vacant. Arrived at the first house in the settlement of the San Joaquin Valley. On this road at

ten o'clock at night, the moon shone brightly, we pitched our tent and got supper. In this part of the country all of the water is pumped by the power of windmills. The orchards are not as they are in the states, they are so small and the trees so near together. Every garden and orchard has its windmill to irrigate it. Saw today Mount Diablo, the highest mountain in Cal. it is in the coast range.

Saturday, October 4th — Were within twelve miles of Stockton this morning, thought we would only go to town and see if we could find a place to settle ourselves in for the winter. Came into a farming country, very large ranches and good houses, they raise grain without irrigation, raise forty and fifty bushels to the acre. Charlie and Albert are looking for situations today. Called at a large house where there was an orchard, bought us a treat of fruit, apples, peaches, pears, figs and grapes. The peaches are 5 cts. per pound, the grapes 6, the apples 8, pears 10, the figs 12½. Figs are a very sweet rich fruit, two or three are as many as one cares to eat, although they are small. It began raining about two o'clock. We camped in a field opposite a fine house. At three o'clock the master of the house told us to come and get all of the tomatoes we could use, it was quite a treat to us. We went to get a pail of potatoes, he also gave those to us. Rained till dark then cleared off. The house cost fourteen thousand dollars.

Sunday, October 5th — Staid here in the same place for the purpose of looking around and resting the teams and ourselves. Are within two miles of town. Borrowed some papers at the house to read. After we had gone to bed we heard the alarm bell ring, looked out and saw a large bright fire, it was in town, the firemen came but were too late, the house burned to the ground.

Monday, October 6th — Lou washed today, the men went to town to see what was to be seen and done. Albert came home sick, went to bed and did not sit up but a few minutes the rest of the day, they found no place that suited them. Mrs. Burkett, the lady of the house, called over to see us, was quite pleasant. She and her husband also called in the evening. There was

raised forty bushels to the acre of volunteer wheat on this place this year. That is where the wheat of last year came up from, what was wasted while harvesting. The water was so high here in this field that the ground could not be ploughed or sowed but still they got a good crop of wheat. They don't plant tomatoes but once, they selfsow. The garden and young fruit trees and flowers here look like early spring, just as fresh. The hay that is made is oat hay, cut while the oat is green. We see no other kind, it is a very common thing to raise a good crop of hay on an oat field of the last year, what they call a volunteer crop. I never saw as nice wheat as we see here, and beautiful fine flour. Hiram is at work chopping wood, gets one dollar per day and his board. Times are said to be very dull here, it seems so to us.

Tuesday, October 7th — Are still staying here. Albert seems to be no better. I almost have the "blues" having to camp out and Albert sick too. While speaking of figs I forgot to say that they bear all of the time from June till November. The day seems long. I can't sit myself to sewing although I have so much to do.

Wednesday, October 8th — Arose this morning with the intention of going to town. Lou and I went over a few minutes to call on Mrs. Burkett, she had a visitor from town, she regaled us with some very fine peaches. Went to town and pitched our tent. A lady called by the fence and told us of a house to rent, also gave us some green corn, the first we have had this year. Charlie went with her to the house, made a bargain provided it pleased all around, which it did. We picked up and went right over. Slept in a house the first time for over five months. The house is one block east of the Lunatic Asylum, the block which intervenes is vacant. We are to board the owner of the house, Mr. Bray, the house is quite convenient, half a mile from the business part of town.

Farewell to the old journal.

JANE A. GOULD

Note: Albert Gould died February 21, 1863.



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