

DOCUMENTS

ROMANZO KINGMAN'S PIKE'S PEAK JOURNAL, 1859

Edited by Kenneth F. Millsap

The announcement in 1858 that gold had been discovered in the region vaguely known as Pike's Peak aroused once again the American gold fever. By the year 1859 the rush of the prospectors to this area began to assume "epic proportions."¹

A picture of economic conditions in the United States in this period will perhaps give a clearer indication of why the gold fever became so contagious by 1859. First of all, the country had just experienced the severe financial panic of 1857. Factories were closed and men thrown out of work in the cities; farmers lost their markets; and many people lost their life savings as the result of the failure of banks, particularly in the Middle West. The prospect of recuperating their fortunes in a comparatively short time intrigued many people. Another element was the memory that still remained in the minds of the many people who had participated in the rush of the Forty-Niners to California.²

Gold was first discovered on Ralston Creek near present-day Denver in the spring of 1850 by a party of Cherokee Indians. The report in 1848 that gold had been found at Sutter's Mill in California had interested the Cherokees living in Indian Territory. They had already had considerable mining experience at their old homes in the gold fields of northern Georgia. On April 20, 1850, a company of Cherokees departed from near present Stillwell, Oklahoma, for the California gold fields. They stopped in Colorado enroute and it was this group that made the famous Ralston Creek discovery.³ John Lowery Brown, a young Cherokee, kept a diary of this

¹ George A. Root and Russell K. Hickman, "Pike's Peak Express Companies," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 13:163 (August, 1944). Richard A. Bartlett in his article entitled "Reception of the Pike's Peak Fever in the Chicago Press and Tribune," *Colorado Magazine*, 25:30 (January, 1948), states that nearly one hundred thousand people traveled to the Pike's Peak area in 1859.

² For a more detailed discussion of the economic conditions that favored the Pike's Peak gold rush see Percy Stanley Fritz, *Colorado, the Centennial State* (New York, 1941), 103-104.

³ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Cherokee Goldseekers in Colorado, 1849-50," *Colorado Maga-*

expedition which serves today as a contemporary record of the finding near Denver.⁴ After prospecting in California the Cherokees returned to their homes in Indian Territory, but many of them remembered the Ralston Creek discovery. Eventually, in 1858, a group returned to the Pike's Peak area and was joined by a party from Georgia led by William Green Russell. The destination of the combined Russell-Cherokee company was undoubtedly Ralston Creek.⁵ Finding little gold, the majority of the company turned back, with the exception of thirteen men led by Russell. This group found gold in July on Cherry Creek, a branch of the South Platte.⁶

The news of the Russell discovery was at once circulated far and wide in the newspapers. One of the first notices in Iowa was in the Des Moines *Iowa Weekly Citizen* under the headline of "Gold Discovery in Kansas." This account reported that two men with "inferior implements washed out \$600 in one week. . . ." ⁷ By October, 1858, the newspapers of Iowa were carrying the story that the gold discovery had been officially confirmed by James W. Denver, Governor of Kansas Territory, in a letter to the Secretary of Interior.⁸ Luke Tierney of Iowa claimed that from \$2.50 to \$15 per day could be earned.⁹

However, by the spring of 1859, letters were being received that reported that the entire rush was a "humbug" and that it was ridiculous to believe that a fortune could be made quickly.¹⁰ The reports in the newspapers became so conflicting that three eastern editors, Horace Greeley, Henry Villard, and Albert D. Richardson, went to the region to report the

zine, 15:101-109 (May, 1938). See also a discussion of the possibility that the discovery was made in 1849 rather than 1850 in LeRoy R. Hafen (ed.), *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859* (Vol. 9, *Southwest Historical Series*, Glendale, Cal., 1941), 34-7.

⁴ The entire diary of Brown has been published in the *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 12:177-213 (June, 1934). The diary records the discovery of gold on Ralston Creek but mentions one Ralston as the original discoverer (p. 190).

⁵ Hafen, "Cherokee Goldseekers in Colorado, 1849-50," 106. See account of Luke Tierney, one of the party, in Hafen (ed.), *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859*, 106-107.

⁶ Hafen (ed.), *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859*, 71; Tierney's description of this discovery, 111.

⁷ Des Moines *Iowa Weekly Citizen*, September 8, 1858. Note: The eastern half of Colorado was until 1861 a part of Kansas Territory.

⁸ *Ibid.*, October 6, 1858.

⁹ *Ibid.*, February 2, 1859.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1859.

facts for their newspapers. On June 9, 1859, these three newspapermen signed a joint statement from Gregory's Diggings which stated that while evidently there was gold in this region, mining was a business that required "capital, experience, energy, endurance. . . ." The report enumerated the successes of several individuals in that area and stated that many others had left too hastily.¹¹

This report, coming in the midst of the 1859 gold rush, may have discouraged some potential miners, but Iowa towns in that year witnessed a seemingly never-ending number of caravans that crossed the state seeking the gold fields. As early as February the Des Moines *Iowa Weekly Citizen* commented that companies for Pike's Peak were passing through that city almost daily. This same account noted that the men were largely "energetic, industrious mechanics; who being out of work, feel that they cannot be idle and are disposed to try their fortune at the gold mines."¹²

Typical of the caravans crossing Iowa in 1859 was one with which Romanzo S. Kingman of Sparta, Wisconsin, traveled. Kingman, who was born near Cleveland, Ohio, on May 19, 1829, was the eldest of five children. His parents were of English descent, but a Spanish grandmother probably accounts for the unusual name, Romanzo. He received a good education and taught school before coming to Wisconsin in 1851 with his two brothers. He was active in the organization of Monroe County, Wisconsin, and in selecting the county seat; later he served as the first elected register of deeds of the county. In the spring of 1859 Kingman went to Pike's Peak and became a part-owner of what was known as the "Bobtail Lode" but sold his interest and returned to Sparta the same year.¹³ Kingman while on this trip kept a journal which is now in the possession of his grandniece, Mrs. Harry E. Narey of Spirit Lake. Mrs. Narey has kindly loaned this journal to the State Historical Society for copying and publication.

Monday March 21st 1859

My teams started for Pikes Peak in the morning in company with C. P.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, June 29, 1859.

¹² *Ibid.*, February 23, 1859.

¹³ Biographical data from copy of obituary in Sparta (Wisc.) *Herald*, Feb. 5, 1901, furnished to State Historical Society of Iowa by Mrs. Harry E. Narey.

Damman & co and Chase & co very pleasant day. roads very good settled up my business preparatory to starting

Tuesday March 22d 1859

(Morning) packed my kit for Pikes peak and bid the folks good bye for the present. started for LaCrosse [Wisconsin] with Jerry in a wagon. went as far as Bangor then took the cars¹⁴ for LaCrosse. on the cars I found Burbanks on his way to meet his teams at LaCross[e] found the boys in good spirits. Anxiously waiting for a Boat

Wednes[day] March 23d 1859

At 10 o'clock drove our Stock and traps aboard the Steamer Metropolitan.¹⁵ bound for Dubuque. had a very pleasant trip arrived at Dubuque next morning at 4 o'clock day was very pleasant but windy Cattle stood the trip first rate Fair to Dubuque \$60.00

Thursday March 24th /59

Got off the Boat at 4 o'clock morning every thing in confusion cold and windy. as soon as day light packed our *duds* and went up to town to feed our teams but could not find hay enough to do so. pronounced some awful curses on the town and left. drove out 4 miles and put up for the day with a farmer by the name of Austin Palmer the day was cold and very windy with some snow. went back to Dubuque to look for Fred Peck and my cattle at 4 o'clock he came in

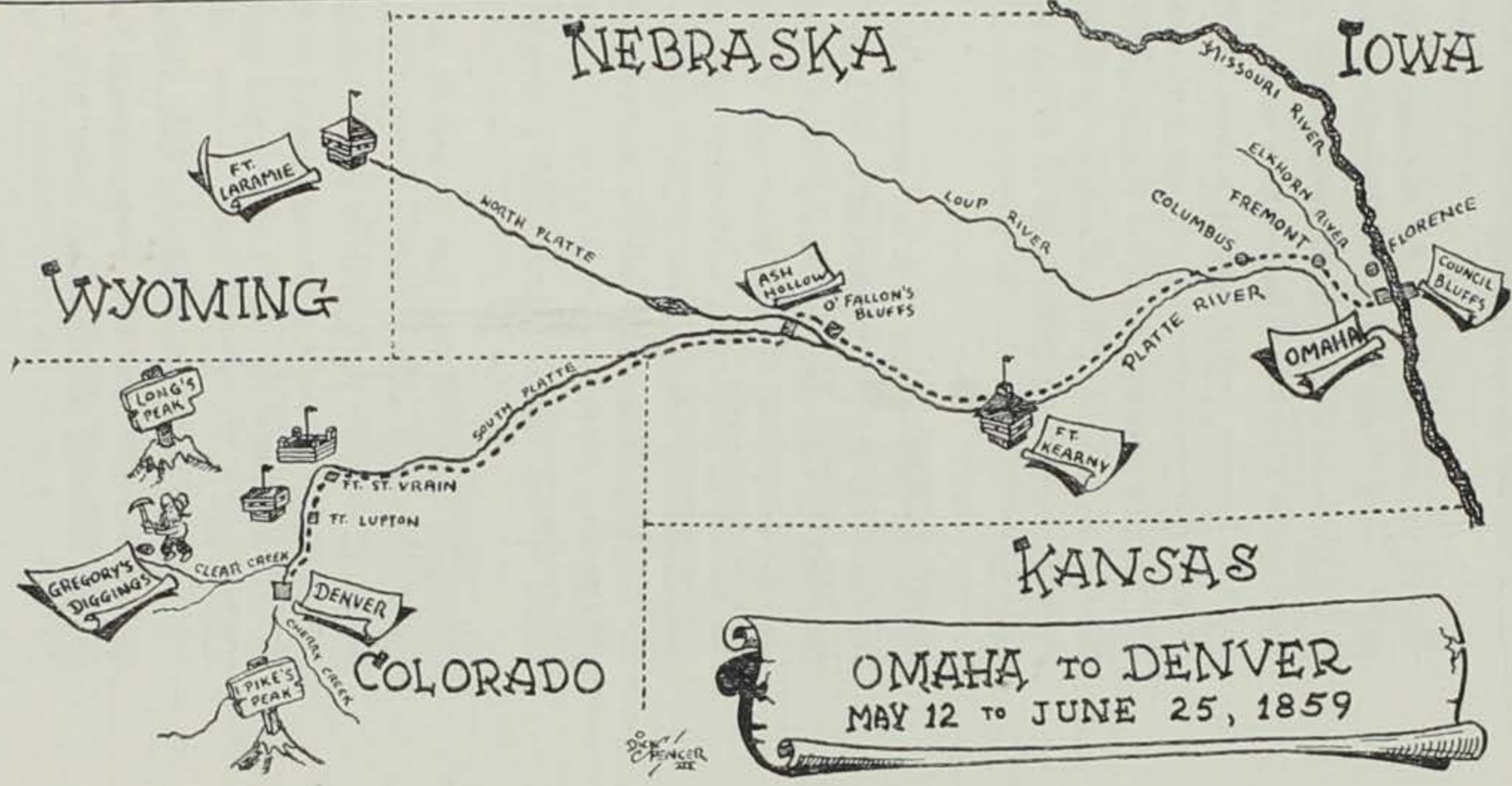
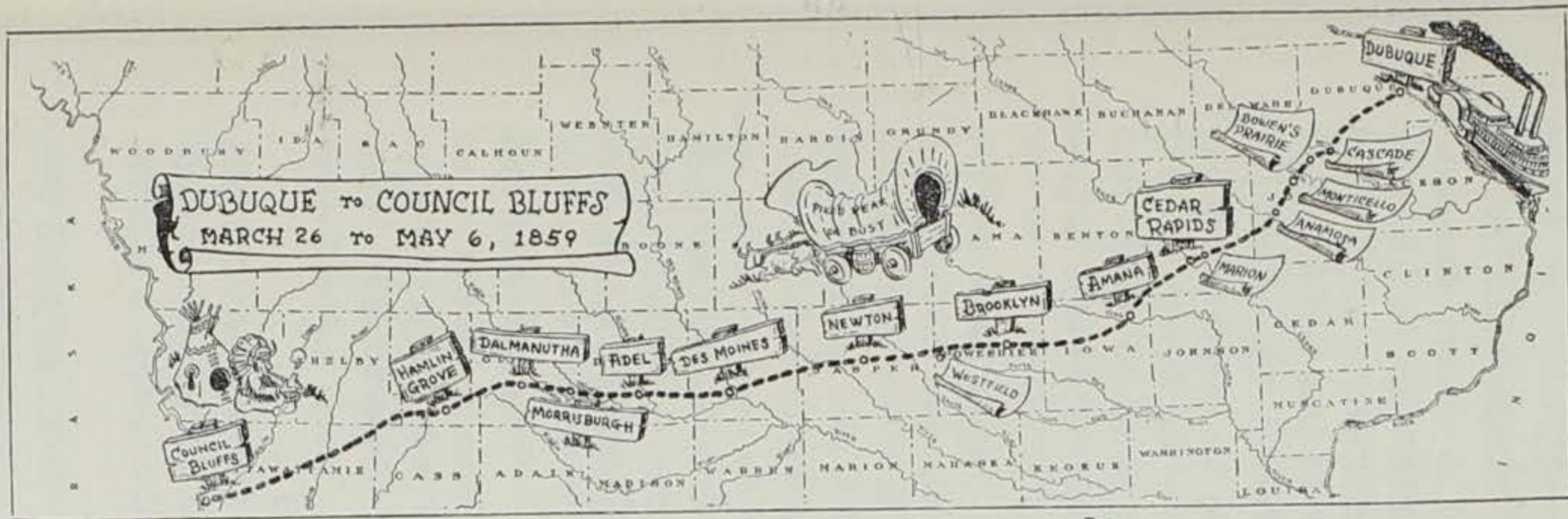
Friday March 25th /59

Went over to Dunleith¹⁶ and waited for my cattle. at 10 o'clock they came and we crossed the river. took old John Horse and rode on to where our teams camped found teams gone and Griffin and Cornelius waiting for me. fed my horse and took dinner and started to overtake my teams found them near Whitewater Creek and camped. distance from Dubuque

¹⁴ Probably the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad, which had reached the Mississippi by 1858. The panic of 1857, plus mismanagement, bankrupted the road, which later became a part of the Milwaukee & St. Paul R. R. William Francis Raney, *Wisconsin, a Story of Progress* (New York, 1940), 183, 185.

¹⁵ The *Metropolitan* was a side-wheeler of 313 tons, built at Pittsburgh in 1855 for the Northern Line Packet Co. From 1856 to 1859 she was in the St. Louis to St. Paul trade under the command of Capt. Thos. B. Rhodes. She was sunk by an ice gorge at St. Louis, December 16, 1865. *Burlington Post*, May 19, 1917. (Beginning in 1914 George B. Merrick contributed to the *Burlington Post* a series of articles on "Steamboats and Steamboatmen of the Upper Mississippi." The information on the *Metropolitan* is taken from this series.)

¹⁶ Dunleith (now East Dubuque) was in Illinois, directly across the Mississippi from Dubuque.



22 miles. the country this far is settled almost entirely by Irish and Dutch my cows came up to the camp.

Saturday March 26th /59

Started in good season in the morning. drove to Cascade distan[ce] 4 miles. stopped and bought some provision and had some repairing done. this place is 26 miles from Dubuque on the north fork of the Makoquita River and is a very enterprising little town left this place and drove out 6 miles to Bowens Prairie making a drive of 10 miles. Camped in a very plesant little grove near a creek our route today has been through a very rich farming country roads are getting settled so that they are nearly as good as in summer Quite a number of teams are on the road to Pikes Peak Cornelius and Griffin gone on to Des Moines to see what the prospects are

Sunday March 27th /59

To-day we laied over to cook &c. some of the boys went hunting. Others staid in camp and run bullets and wrote letters &c a very plesant day we have had no rains since we started. boys are all in good spirits and health with the except[ion] of colds which most of them took on first nights camping we are all pretty well hardened in now and the worst is over we can now all rest any where on the ground. we take turns watching cattle nights one watching till midnight and the next till morning. Our train consists of 13 men — to wit Douglass, McCay, Peck, Rice, McMillen, Damman, Miles, Chase, Britton, Lovejoy, Case, Leigh & myself

Monday March 28th

Last night it snowed very fast packed up our things and started on our journey about 8 o'clock. snow 5 inches deep, very disagreeable time. traded off old John for a yoke of steers. passed through Monticello roads extremely bad drove 8 miles and camped on the Prairie cold and rainey all day. watched cattle till 11 o'clock and turned in

Tuesday March 29th /59

This morning the ground froze very hard did not start till 9 o'clock roads continue very soft and bad. passed through Prairie country. 8 miles and camped in a very plesant village called Animosa

Wednesday March 30th

Very plesant morning passed through the village crossed the Wapsapinican river passed through a timber and Prairie country all improved. roads continue soft. very bad traveling indeed had to double teams nearly all the

way. one place it took 13 yoke of cattle to draw the wagon through. drove 8 miles and camped near an old Quaker of whom we bought our hay on the whole had a hard days drive.

Thursday March 31 /59

Got up in the morning and found the snow about 4 inches deep. started in good season went about a mile got into a mud hole where it took 6 & 8 yoke of cattle to get a wagon through. Ira was sick and I had to drive his team drove 7 miles and camped

Friday April 1st /59

Last night very cold the ground froze hard this morning. wind blew very hard started 10 o'clock late snows make the roads extremely bad got [stuck] frequently and had to double teams to get out passed through a very pleasant village called Marion drove 9 miles and camped in a little grove.

Saturday Apr 2d

This morning rains and Snows very unpleasant weather laied by on account of rain and bad roads boys are all in good spirits. afternoon went to Cedar Rapids ahead of the teams

Sunday Apr. 3d 1859

Waited in Cedar Rapids for teams till noon. went back [to] see what hindered them found that Fred had broke out a wagon tongue got it nearly fixed when I met them got into Town little after noon put on 800 [pounds] of meal crossed the Cedar River and drove 6 miles and stopped with a Scotchman made 8 miles today pleasant but cold

Monday Apr 4th 1859

[Amana] crossed the Iowa river drove 13 miles and camped roads very a very cold windy [day] froze all day camped in a valley near a little creek

Tuesday Apr 5th /59

Very pleasant day warm but windy passed through the Dutch Colony [Amana] crossed the Iowa river drove 13 miles and camped Roads very passable

Wednesday Apr 6th /59

Fred Peck sick drove his team traveled 15 miles and put up at Menatt's.¹⁷

¹⁷ For the Manatt family, see *History of Poweshiek County, Iowa . . .* (Des Moines, 1880), 841. For two other diaries of goldseekers who followed this same route across Iowa, see Lynn I. Perrigo (ed.), "Hawley's Diary of His Trip Across

roads very good with the exceptions of a few bad places timber most of the way Morrison went cousining [visiting] very tired at night

Thursday Apr 7th /59

Traveled 12 miles across prairie all the way. passed through Brooklyn a small God-forsaken looking place Fred continues to be sick drove his team. Camped at Bates' on the prairie out of sight of [illegible] traded cows with Menatt. Saw Ruel Whitman on his way to Pike's Peak roads good. day plesant but windy.

Friday April 8th /59

A Little snow in the morning went about 3 miles and Uncle Bill broke out his wagon tongue mended up and went on traveled 13 miles and camped at 2 o'clock put in a new wagon tongue very fine day prairie most of the way passed through a forsaken looking town called Westfield.¹⁸

Saturday Apr 9th /59

Fred was able to take his team Britton and myself went ahead to Newton to buy meal &c — roads good Newton is a plesant little town about as large as Sparta is the county seat of Jasper co. day was very fine drove 3 miles out of town and camped. drove today 19 miles a large company camped with us fellow travelers to Pikes Peak evening boys all went to a bit of a dance

Sunday April 10th /59

Rained hard in the night roads quite muddy. very misty drove 3 miles and came to the long dreaded Skunk bottoms.¹⁹ found them as bad as

the Plains in 1860," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 19:319-42 (March, 1936), and "California Diary of Charles M. Tuttle, 1859," *ibid.*, 15:69-85, 219-33 (September and December, 1931).

¹⁸ Westfield in Poweshiek County was also called Sugar Grove (a post office from 1849 to 1862), and Latimers Grove. It was located some three or four miles southwest of Grinnell on the old "State Road." Like many other small towns of the fifties, it was abandoned when by-passed by the railroad. See Grinnell *Herald*, July 24, 1925, June 29, 1934; Brooklyn *Chronicle*, January 21, 1932; Leonard F. Parker, *History of Poweshiek County Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1911), 1:255.

¹⁹ "Ever since the early settlement this stream [the Skunk River] and its bottom lands have been a terror to travelers. . . . This was known and dreaded by people from Maine to California. At an early day the Skunk river was wont to raise out of its banks after a hard rain storm with great rapidity, and many a traveler has passed over with water belly deep to the stage coach teams. . . . So famous was this bottom away back about Civil war days, that *Harper's Weekly* contained an illustration of crossing the "Skunk Bottoms," in which a stage coach loaded with passengers were [sic] sitting swamped in the mud, waiting for a pioneer farmer, who is seen approaching in the distance with a yoke of oxen to help the weary

expected and that was bad enough. we had to double teams for over a mile wagons down to the axletrees all the way. raining all the while. Got across however without any bad luck drove 4 miles further and camped rain all the time this has been the most disagreeable day that we have had.

Monday Apr 11th /59

Morning very cold and raw wind. Cleared off about noon very pleasant. grass begins to look quite green. our road today was across the prairie country very thinly settled drove 8 miles and camped at 2 o'clock in crossing a little stream today Uncle Bills team run off the embankment and came near upsetting his load in the creek got his oxen in all over evening went [to] Des Moines in the stage distance 14 miles traded off an old wagon for a new one.

Tuesday Apr 12th /59

A wet showery day was in Des Moines Teams got within a mile of town and camped in an old house roads very bad cattle extremely tired could get no hay for them.

Wednesday Apr 13th /59

A raw windy day last night staid at the Everett House²⁰ in Des Moines Teams got into town about 7 o'clock. got a few hundred [pounds] of hay at a high price to give my cattle a light feeding had to pay 70c for corn bought my supply of meal for 6 months for 10c per pound received a letter from Damman informing me that he had gone on to some point 90 miles or so ahead to buy hay and grain Des Moines the capitol of Iowa has a population of about 6000²¹ is situated at the head of navigation on a river by the same name is very much scattered houses are small and have the appearance of being new afternoon started out with the teams and drove 2½ miles and put up. bought hay of a man by the name of Lloyd.

Thursday April 14th /59

This morning got up and found the snow about 4 inches deep hitched up

horses in pulling the coach to firm ground. It is said, however, that the profanity occasioned could not be illustrated by Harper's artist." James B. Weaver (ed.), *Past and Present of Jasper County, Iowa* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1912), 1:28.

²⁰ A hotel was started by B. F. Hoxie in 1846-1847; it later became known as the Marvin House and was so called until 1854 when it was purchased by James C. Savery and renamed the Everett House. It was located on Third and Walnut streets. Will Porter, *Annals of Polk County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1898), 845-6.

²¹ Population of Des Moines is here exaggerated. In 1865 the population was only 3,733. *1836-1880 Census of Iowa*, 564.

our teams and drove 1½ miles bought a stack of hay of a man by the name of Murray and camped for a few days in a pleasant grove on Walnut Creek²² Afternoon snow all gone. White & Boardman of LaCross camped with us.

Friday Apr. 15th /59

Morning very pleasant but cold Bowles came to our camp Afternoon went to Des Moines with a load of corn to get ground Bowles company came up with us in the evening all in good spirits

Saturday Apr 16th /59

Very pleasant day compared with what we have had spent the day in fixing up washing cloths cooking &c the boys all happy. Cornelius came back to meet us.

Sunday Apr 17th

Day pleasant and comfortably warm spent the day in hunting ducks and doing whatever was necessary to be done about the camp

Monday April 18th 1859

Left our camp on Walnut Creek and started on our journey roads have become quite good day pleasant and warm. drove 15 miles and camped in a small grove could not find any hay consequently our teams had to eat post hay boys tired and cross Bow[les] company went on 2 miles and camped at Parker cottages

Tuesday Apr 19th /59

Morning frost and cold raw winds. got an early start went about a mile. Got into a bad mud hole. Fred broke a wagon axletree and Uncle John broke a yoke had a hard time but succeeded in getting out and mending up so as to go on drove five miles and came to Coon river²³ here we were detained till nearly night crossing the river on a ferry boat. the water being high we had to ferry ½ a mile immediately after crossing the river we came to the village of Adell the county seat of Dallas county considerably scattered. has a population of about 500. has a splendid Court House but on the whole looks rather unpromising here we repaired our wagon which took us till night. myself and 3 of the boys and 2 teams staid in town.

²² Walnut Creek flows through Walnut Township, Polk County.

²³ The Raccoon River. This ferry "across the North Raccoon river, where the State road runs across said river, at the town of Adel," was first established in 1850 by Horatio Morrison. It continued to operate, under various owners, for a number of years. *History of Dallas County, Iowa . . .* (Des Moines, 1879), 360-61.

balance of the teams and boys drove out [to] Rollenbaugh's 1½ miles
Came across A. D. Smith from Spring Prairie

Wednesday Apr 20th /59

Morning plesant and warm roads good the first day that we have traveled
all day without finding a mud hole drove 15 miles and camped at Morris-
burg,²⁴ a paper town here I saw 8 tame Elk.

Thursday Apr 21st /59

Day cold windy and very unplesant roads very good drove 16 miles to
Delmalutha²⁵ and camped at 2 o'clock

Friday April 22d /59

Got an early start in the morning. drove 20 miles to Meeks Grove.²⁶ here
we came up with Jerry & Griffin who have been buying up hay and grain
for the purpos[e] of stopping over till grass comes.²⁷ Boys and cattle al-
most tired out for the last 3 days our roads have been over prairie and
along the dividing [ridge] that divides the waters of the Mississippi and
Missouri At Hamlins grove²⁸ 2 miles East of Meeks grove we came to the
first waters that ran west.

Saturday Apr. 23d /59

Day very plesant Boys and teams are enjoying a fine rest we are all
together now and number 29 men 21 yoke of cattle 17 cows 11 wagons
9 horses and 4 Tents we have got hay and grain to last us 10 days and by
that time we expect to have grass to feed cattle

²⁴ Morrisburgh, on the stage route through Guthrie County, was platted in 1855 by James Moore and Jonathan J. Morris. By 1859, when Kingman passed through the town, it consisted of a few stores, a hotel, and several saloons. A disastrous cyclone in 1871, coupled with the coming of the railroad, which by-passed the town, ended Morrisburgh's existence. *History of Guthrie and Adair Counties, Iowa . . .* ((Springfield, Ill., 1884), 471; *Past and Present of Guthrie County, Iowa . . .* (Chicago, 1907), 238-40.

²⁵ Dalmanutha. Another of the towns built, in 1856, on the Des Moines-Council Bluffs stage route through Guthrie County. This town, likewise by-passed by the railroad, no longer exists. *Past and Present of Guthrie County, Iowa . . .*, 240-41.

²⁶ The Rev. Richard Collins Meek, of Kentucky, was a Methodist minister who had come to Audubon County in 1855. H. F. Andrews, *History of Audubon County, Iowa . . .* (Indianapolis, 1915), 126-7.

²⁷ It was necessary for travelers to wait until the grass was up on the plains before they left the settlements along the Missouri River, since there would be no chance to buy grain for their cattle.

²⁸ Hamlin's Grove, named for Nathaniel Hamlin, was located in Exira Township, Audubon County. It became a post office in 1853. In 1873 the name was changed to Grove; in 1888 the post office was discontinued.

Sunday Apr 24th /59

Day very fine and warm Boys are passing the time in reading and writing letters and lounging around. no shooting to-day out of respect to the preacher Mr. Meek on whose land we are camped and who by the by is a fine old man. in the evening at our request he and the family came into our tent and the boys all came in and he preached us a fine sermon.

Monday Apr 25th /59

Spent most of the day traveling around with Jerry trying to trade horses and oxen did not succeed at supper we set a long table in front of the tents and invited Mr. Meek and family to take supper with us which they did Grass has grown fast today day has been warm and plesant wrote a letter to Mate evening rained very hard indeed

Tuesday Apr 26th /59

Today has been wet and lowery Jerry and Griffin started on this morning to Council Bluffs 60 miles from here to do some trading. will waite there till we come up Miles was taken quite unwell rode all day trying to trade oxen. succeeded in trading off a yoke of old broken down oxen for a splendid yoke of 4 year old steers.

Wednesday Apr 27th /59

Dry extremely warm and plesant grass growing finely. turned out my cows and they filed themselves well on grass. spent the day breaking my new Steers and getting home hay Miles still sick

Thursday Apr 28th /59

Spent the day lounging around camp, wrote a letter to Father. Miles continues to be quite sick day warm and plesant

Friday Apr 29th /59

Very plesant day doing whatever I can to kill time plesant and warm Miles continues sick not able to travel

Saturday Apr 30

plesant and warm doing nothing but taking care of cattle Morrison started on to the Bluffs to find his Sister

Sunday May 1st /59

Got up early in the morning with the intention of starting on our journey Miles not well enough to go concluded to stay another day. went 2 miles north. bought a load of hay. day somewhat rainy wrote a letter to Greenman

Monday May 2d /59

Started again on our journey Miles is able to ride on a bed made up in the wagon passed through a very nice grove of timber. crossed the East Nishina [Nishnabotna] river traveled 17 miles and camped on Indian Creek²⁹ Old Dr. Ballard camped with us evening rained hard

Tuesday May 3d 1859

Morning wet and muddy Crossed Indian Creek on a very poor bridge where we had to unyoke our oxen and draw our wagons over by hand traveled all day and never passed so much as a bush crossed several small streams and camped on little Silver³⁰ where we again had to unyoke our oxen and draw our wagons over by hand and camped not a tree or bush in sight. drove 16 miles day fine. turned our oxen out to grass for first time

Wednesday May 4th /59

\ Drove up our oxen and yoked them up and felt very much relieved in not having a bill of \$5.00 to pay for hay. Miles getting better fast. drove 6 miles. Crossed Silver river bottoms very bad broke 2 wagon tongues had a hard time drove 12 miles and camped day warm and fine

Thursday May 5th /59

Day very nice grass growing finely and most splendid roads being mostly on a ridge from which we got splendid views of the country this western portion of Iowa that we have traveled over for the past 100 miles is certainly the richest land I ever saw all it lacks is wood to make it almost a paradise. drove off[f] the road to get water and camped within 6 miles of Council Bluff. drove 18 miles today day fine

Friday May 6th /59

Morning left ox teams and went to town with horse team in company with Bowles and others. road very hilly got into town found Rose & Damman waiting for us. Ox teams soon came in rained hard as we passed through town drove on crossed the Missouri river to Omaha drove up the river 3 miles and camped in a vacant tavern where we had plenty of room and good accommodations Council Bluff is situated 3 miles from the river the flat between the river and town frequently overflowing. this is not a very inviting looking place it is situated between two bluffs one main street

²⁹ In Clay Township, Shelby County.

³⁰ Little Silver Creek is in central Pottawattamie County.

only and a very few good buildings Streets and revines crowded with teams and emigrants³¹ On the Nebraska side of the river is a very handsome flat of land inded on which the city of Omaha a very plesant place is situated

Saturday May 7th /59

Morning lowery afternoon clear and plesant. Wrote several letters and watched camp boys nearly all gone to town. boys had stag dance in the ballroom

Sunday May 8 /59

Morning cloudy & cold afternoon plesant. After breakfast Damman Griffin and myself went to Omaha and from there west 4 miles into the country to look at some oxen and a wagon we thought of buying got home at dark. no trade

Monday May 9th /59

Went to Town to trade horse for oxen. tried hard all day did not succeed day fine and warm. Town full of emigrants fitting out for the mines³² boys went to a dance at Florence³³

Tuesday May 10th /59

Morning took our teams and drawed a house to Omaha in afternoon went to town to buy our supplies. intend to start on our journey in the morning sold our Pony for \$30.00 Got home at dark did not get through buying outfit consequently shall not start tomorrow day plesant

Wednesday May 11th /59

Finished buying our outfit Traded wagons packed our loads over pr[e]paratory to starting in the morning Evening sent out our horses and wagon and got in about a dozen ladies and had a first rate dance in the tavern

³¹ For Council Bluffs at this time, see Walker D. Wyman, "Council Bluffs and the Westward Movement," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 47:99-118 (April, 1949), especially pp. 109-113 for Pike's Peak gold rush.

³² For Omaha during the Pike's Peak gold rush, see Alfred Sorenson, *The Story of Omaha . . .* (Omaha, 1923), 180-88.

³³ Florence, Nebraska, incorporated in 1853, was originally the site of a Mormon camp in 1845. A. P. DeMilt, *Story of an Old Town . . .* (Omaha, 1902), 22-3. "Florence money" circulated widely in Iowa during the fifties, before banks of issue were legalized by the Iowa Constitution of 1857. The Bank of Florence was chartered in 1856 under the laws of the Territory of Nebraska, the stock being held by Cook and Sargent of Davenport and their branches in Iowa City and Fort Des Moines. Howard H. Preston, *History of Banking in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1922), 62-3.

whic[h] we are occupying broke up about 1 o'clock. soon after it commenced raining hard

Thursday May 12th /59

Started on our journey in a train composed of 13 wagons 86 head of cows and oxen and 38 men all from LaCrosse & Monroe counties drove 12 miles over a rolling Prairie and camped on the banks of the little Pappoe river.³⁴ met 27 teams returning³⁵

Friday May 13th /59

Morning cold enough to freeze afternoon more pleasant good roads. met 62 teams returning and reporting bad news from Pikes Peak. passed through the village of Elkhorn which consisted of 3 solitary buildings on the open prairie. passed on a few miles crossed the Elkhorn river and came into the great Platt[e] valley.³⁶ an extensive plain of flat land as far as the eye can reach from East to west and from 4 to 20 miles from North to South. from Omaha to this point is a most beautiful rich country lacking nothing but wood to make it almost a paradise from Omaha to the crossing of Elkhorn river is 21 miles drove to Rawhide creek and camped meeting so many men returning today has rather shaken the faith of some of our boys

Saturday May 14th /59

Morning rained quite hard with no prospect of clearing off[f] hitched up and started in company with an other train about the size of our own

³⁴ "This morning we left camp at seven o'clock. We soon lost sight of the Big Muddy, and pursued our journey over magnificent roads, the route leading over an undulating prairie, . . . to Pappillon (formerly called Pappoe) creek." "The Platte River Route: Diary of E. H. N. Patterson," *Overland Routes to the Gold Fields, 1859 . . .* (Vol. 11, *Southwest Historical Series*), 105. (Hereafter listed as "Patterson Diary.") Patterson's party preceded Kingman's by about two weeks, on practically the same route along the Platte.

³⁵ Here Kingman begins to meet returning "Peakers" who had either failed to find gold, or had been turned back by discouraging stories before ever reaching the gold region. For newspaper accounts of this eastward movement, see *Des Moines Iowa Weekly Citizen*, May 11, 1859; *Marion Herald*, May 26, 1859; *Cedar Rapids Cedar Valley Times*, June 9, 1859; *Columbus City Enterprise*, June 16, 1859. See also, letter of E. C. Stinzey written from Omaha on May 15, 1859, in *Nebraska History Magazine*, 17:158-61 (July-September, 1936). Patterson recorded at Fort Kearny, May 9, 1859, that "Five teams are going back to where one is going forward—except those that are going through to California." "Patterson Diary," 116.

³⁶ Kingman's party is here following the Military Road, over which a "tri-weekly mail is carried . . . from Omaha City to Ft. Kearny, in good post coaches." "Patterson Diary," 106.

making a train of 25 wagons 75 yoke of oxen & 68 men. this morning Judd Blake concluded he would go no farther and turned back. we traveled in the rain 10 miles over a country as flat as the sea to a stage station and P. O. called Fremont³⁷ and camped a little beyond the town on the bank of the Plat river still raining at Fremont we saw several men on their return to Pikes Peak who wintered there last winter and assure us that there is gold there and in paying quantities Roads bad all day

Sunday May 15th /59

Morning lowery and wet got up our teams with the intention of starting on but about the time we got them yoked it commenced raining and rained hard all day. did not start. I have heard a great deal of the Platt and Missouri water but never could realize what it is till now. there is no other here and we are obliged to use the riley stuff. it tastes however a great deal better than it looks Wrote a letter to E. F. Ring

Monday May 16 /59

Morning foggy and damp latter part of the day warm and clear. drove about 16 miles and camped roads today have been very muddy from the time we crossed the Elkhorn to this place there has not been an elevation or depression whatever but as level as the sea soil is a sandy loam to[o] flat to be good farming land however there is occasionally a man trying to open a farm but it must be discouraging business. no timber in this section but cotton wood and but little of that. passed a paper town called North Bend P. O. 2 houses & Steam mill continual pasing and repasing of teams. I counted 49 returning.

Tuesday May 17th 1859

Morning very plesant sold a cow for \$25 crosed Shell Creek and stopped for noon.³⁸ very warm Ira's Team came near running into the river. 2 of our cows gave us the slip and went back 8 miles to where I had sold their calves the day before, before I overtook them. did not over take the teams till dark. found them camped on the bank of a little pond. Continue to meet a great many teams returning and reporting unfavorable news from

³⁷ "Started at seven o'clock, and descended the bluff to Elkhorn river, one mile distant, which we crossed on a fine bridge. . . . Three miles further on we crossed Rawhide creek on a bridge, and then for eleven miles pass over an unsettled country to Fremont, a Massachusetts settlement. . . ." "Patterson Diary," 107.

³⁸ See "Patterson Diary," 109. Patterson passed through North Bend on April 30, 1859.

the mines and among them was Tracy. Taylor his partner has gone to California.

Wednesday May 18th /59

Morning looked like rain passed off and proved to be a nice day Burbank got discouraged and left us this morning and started for home. came in company with Geo & Chester Colwell and she that was Ruth Ells now Colwells wife old schollars of mine at Union also Caughran & Goodwin from Reedsburg on their way to California.

Passed through a paper town called Columbus.³⁹ a very pretty sight for a town and as handsom a country around as I ever saw but no timber camped on the banks of Loup Fork in the edge of the village. we are now 85 miles from Omaha

Thursday May 19th 1859

Today is my birth day and I have celebrated it in fording Loup Fork a very rapid stream and about 80 rods in width w[h]ere we forded and is considered one of the worst streams in the west to ford. After we had waded through in several places and ascertained the proper channel we bolstered up our wagons as high as we could to prevent the water from running into the boxes and then tied a rope to the yokes ahead of the oxen and 20 men ahold of the rope to steady them and prevent the current from taking them down stream. And several men on each side of the wagon to prevent it from tipping over the bed of the river is nothing but quick sand and is consequently changing frequently several times a day and if a man, beast, or wagon stops he is sure to sink and the stiff current will take them down. in this way I waded the stream 18 times got our wagons and teams all safely across about 2 o'clock and camped men all tired and as wet as could be. A company of 12 wagons came down to the ford to cross with us but it looked so perilous they did not undertake it and went 15 miles up the river to a ferry⁴⁰

Friday May 20th 1859

Last night we had as severe a rainstorm as I ever saw water came down in torrents and the wind blew severely blowed down Bowles' tent and drowned out all the inmates except Bowl[e]s who lay and took it like a

³⁹ "Columbus is a little border village, containing ten or a dozen houses, including a tavern, store and post office." "Patterson Diary," 112.

⁴⁰ Patterson mentions two ferries crossing the Loup Fork in this area, one on the Military Road and one on the old Mormon Trail. See "Patterson Diary," 112-13.

soldier. the rest of the Boys all fled to other tents. morning found us nearly as wet as when we came out of the river. last night a Du[t]chman bought of me a plow and some other things amounting [to] \$30.00 and left a yoke of oxen in pawn till he should pay me this morning. but instead of his coming with the money the wife came and demanded the cattle which I refused to give up. she tried to drive them one way and I drove them another put them into the train and drove them along. about noon the Sheriff and a posse of 4 men armed overtook us and demanded the cattle which I refused to give up and they came to the conclusion they could not get the cattle. I made them a proposition however and at night they overtook us again and accepted my proposition and took the cattle day passably fine but very cold towards night. roads quite muddy in consequence of the rain Crossed Prairie creek and camped on the bank of the Platte drove 18 miles

Saturday May 21st /59

Fine day Our course is up the platte the scenery is every day the same. an extensive plains as far as the eye can reach on our right and not a stick of timber have I seen since I left Omaha. on our left hand is the Platte river $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles in width and interspersed with islands timbered with cottonwood and this is all the timber there is in the country and we frequently have to wade in water waste deep to get wood to do our cooking We are never without wood enough to last us one night or more which we carry along with us for fear we may be obliged to camp where we cannot get any. today we had to take on a supply to last us 50 miles as we do not expect to get any more within that distance. today we saw a drove of Antelope off to our right. a number of the boys took after them but did not get a shot. drove 22 miles

Sunday May 22d 1859

Morning fine and plesant A dispute arose this morning in the company as to wheather we should travel today or not. it resulted in about half of the company going on and the balance remain[ing] wheather we get together again is a matter quite uncertain our teams C. P. Dammans teams Brittons team Griffins team & Whites team went on Bowl[e]s company & Jacksonville Boys stay passed "Lone Tree" station⁴¹ and once more

⁴¹ "At this point is located a log hut, called the 'Lone Tree Station' of the Western Stage company, tenanted by the stage driver, his wife and child. This is the first human habitation this side of Loupe, thus far." "Patterson Diary," 118-19.

camped on the banks of Platte. though the water in this river is as riley as rut hole yet it tastes very well. Today we came to see the Alkalye which is so spontaneous in this country. drove 11 miles today

Monday May 23d 1859

Wind blew a perfect hurrycane all day towards night looked very much like rain but finally faired off drove about 20 miles and camped on the bank of the Platte had very good roads. Passed through another Nebraska village called Grand Island City.⁴² two or three shanties inhabited by old bachelors is the extent of the town Scenery is the same as we have had for the last 100 miles

Tuesday May 24th /59

A very fine day Crosed wood river. most splendid roads drove 18 miles and camped on the banks of Wood river our course now being on the south side of said river a stream very much like the Platte river though much smaller we now begin to come into a section of country abounding in Buffalo, Elk & Antelope. several of our boys were out today but they did not get any game

Wednesday May 25th /59

Last night it rained very hard cleared off about 11 o'clock. Bowles' teams came up and we drove on and Camped on the prairie and got our water out of a sink hole. Today we passed Dr Henry's⁴³ the last dwelling house on the frontier 10 miles from the Fort [Ft. Kearny] Several of the boys were out hunting again but got no game. they found a man back from the road dead had either been killed by indians or had been out hunting and perished they could find nothing about his person by which they could find out his name or from whence he came had evidently been dead two weeks or more

Thursday May 26th /59

This morning and last night is the most disagreeable weather we have had since we started. rain & snow so disagreeable that we could not proceed on our journey we were camped however in a bad place for a storm and we

⁴² Patterson reports that Grand Island City was a German colony of some 35 families. However, in the previous January, an "unprincipled scoundrel . . . out of pure malicious mischief" had set fire to the prairie grass and the resulting fire had destroyed most of the village. "Patterson Diary," 119-20.

⁴³ On May 8, Patterson wrote ". . . we arrived at a settlement known as Dr. Henry's Ranche, that gentleman — together with several relatives — having made a claim of nine hundred and sixty acres on Wood river." "Patterson Diary," 122.

hitched up our teams and drove off from the road 5 miles to Wood river where we could get wood & water. Almost all the boys wrote letters and in the afternoon Damman, Rose, Boardman, Frost & myself started for Ft. Kerny⁴⁴ to male them got over to Platte river 8 miles and found the river very high with no way of crossing but to swim. Damman & Boardman & Frost were anxious to get over so they rolled up the letters in an oil cloth so that they should not get wet and plunged into the river which at this stage of the water is 2 miles wide and swam and waded and were soon out of our sight among the islands. Rose and I were to waite on the banks of the river with the team until they should return dark came and no boys in sight yet we could do no better than to return to our camp Got in at 10 o'clock.

Friday May 27th /59

Got an early start this morning Our company started on our journey and I went over to the ford expecting the boys to return this morning. waited till 3½ o'clock in the afternoon. no body in sight. concluded that they had found dangerous crossing the day before and dare not undertake to return and had gone to a ford several miles above and I started to overtake the train. came up to camp about 9 o'clock boys had not got in while waiting at the ford I saw a Squaw of the Pawnee tribe shot by the chief of their tribe. Crime was adultery with the whites⁴⁵

Saturday May 28th /59

Clear fine day. after breakfast hitched up the horse team & started back in search of the boys drove about 8 miles and met them. they had got acrost the stream in a skiff 10 miles below where they had crossed the day before in getting over to the Office the[y] lost all the letters sent to be mailed some 20 or more said they came near perishing they were in the water so long. After I found the Boys started back to camp. hitched up our teams

⁴⁴ Fort Kearny, originally called Ft. Childs, was established on the Platte River in 1848. See Albert Watkins, "History of Fort Kearny," in *Collections, Nebraska State Historical Society*, 16:227-67 (1911); J. Sterling Morton, et al., *Illustrated History of Nebraska . . .* (3 vols., Lincoln, 1907), 1:91-2; 2:163-5.

⁴⁵ Kingman does not mean here that he saw the actual shooting. Patterson reported on May 9, 1859: "Near the landing place of the Ford, lies a dead squaw, enveloped in a blanket and buffalo robe, with moccasins on her feet, and head bare, upon the sod wall of an old house. She was the daughter of a Pawnee chief, and had left her home and lost her virtue. Several weeks ago her father came up here, got her across the river, and then rubbed out the dishonor she had brought upon her family by taking her life." "Patterson Diary," 123.

and drove 6 miles and camped saw a buffalo off on the prairie Damman & I saddled our horses and gave chase but did not overtake him we are now in a section abounding in Buffalo, Elk & Antelope. At suppertime 2 of the boys who had been out hunting came into camp said they had killed 2 Buffalo this excited all the Boys in camp. nothing would do but we must have a buffalo hunt. And accordingly all went to preparing their arms for a hunt next day

Sunday May 29th /59

Beautiful morning. breakfast was over at an early hour and all that could be spared started for the hills anxious to get a shot at a buffalo. went about 8 miles back into the bluffs and came onto several large heards [sic] here the boys separated a few going in each party, there being 8 in the party I was in. we hunted till dark & killed 5 buffalo. we dressed 2 of them put them into our wagon & started for Camp at about dark distance about 10 miles. soon lost our way and were compelled to stay on the prairie without anything to eat or water to drink saw thousands of buffalo and had a good time hunting at 10 o'clock concluded we could not get into camp and stopped for the night saw worlds of game today

Monday May 30th /59

At daylight started on our course for home we suffered considerable from cold last night, not having had even a coat or vest but we suffered more from thirst had nothing to eat or drink from the time we left camp till we returned which was about 10 o'clock. had a good time but awful tired. the rest of the boys got in last evening and killed in all 4 making 9 killed by our company. Started on our journey drove 12 miles and camped. the day has been warm and fine.

Tuesday 31st /59

Day fine and plesant roads good. drove about 23 miles & camped near a slew.

Wednesday June 1st /59

Last night we had an awful blow⁴⁶ it blew down all the tents but White's & ours. this valley is very subject to high winds & whirl winds. at Buffalo Creek last Monday night a whirl wind tore 3 wagons belonging to emi-

⁴⁶ Patterson encountered a similar storm on May 10: "Just at sundown a black cloud commenced rising in the west, and in about an hour a regular Platte river storm, of an hour's duration, swept down upon us. The lightning furnished an illumination for the scene — the rolling thunder beat the reveille and retreat of the

grants all to pieces and scattered the loading all over the prairie as far as 3 miles off. wagons & loading was an entire loss

Thursday June 2d 1859

A very pleasant day. drove about 20 miles and camped on the bank of the Platte once more roads sandy. No wood now for several days drive. We use buffalo chips for fuel.

Friday June 3d 1859

Started in good season in the morning day fine roads sandy and muddy. drove 16 miles and camped on the banks of the Platte. Met a Mormon train of mules going to Florence after Machinery Attempted to wade onto an island and get wood water so deep had to give it up

Saturday June 4th /59

Cold and windy. Over coat and mittens were comfortable indeed. I believe I never was in a country where there was such sudden changes. One day extremely warm and next cold enough to snow Crossed 3 very pretty little streams camped on the bank of the 3d one. roads have been very sandy indeed today. passed the forks of the Platte.

Sunday June 5th /59

Today has been excessively hot and roads most of the way sandy prospected for a ford 7 of the boys waded the Platte but found the water too deep to ford with safety drove on crossed several pretty streams and camped on Platte

Monday June 6th /59

Day fine hard shower about camping time. drove about 18 miles and camped near a fine spring of water we are all anxious to get to the ford to pass over the Platte. the water is so high we are anticipating some trouble. boys are all in good spirits have not met any teams returning since we left F. Kerney. the valley of the Platte here is about 2 to 3 miles wide not a tree have seen [sic] for a number of days. we burn nothing but buffalo chips & willow brush and we do not expect to have any thing else till we get across the river

clouds — the wind came in powerful gusts — the rain fell in torrents — and the hail beat down in fury; it took several of us to hold up our tent poles, and when a hail stone the size of a quail's egg would strike our knuckles, it left its mark." "Patterson Diary," 125-6.

Tuesday June 7th /59

Day fine roads good drove 18 miles to opposite Ash hollow⁴⁷ and camped. river is very high we expect to ford here tomorrow if possible

Wednesday June 8th /59

Morning lowery. Lawrence & Leigh prospec[t]ed the ford found it impassible. Bowles resigned his office as captain of the company and we elected Britton⁴⁸ after dinner started on expecting to be obliged to go to Ft. Laramie⁴⁹ to cross the river w[h]ich is about 180 miles out of our way. drove about 8 miles saw a place in the river where we thought we could ford 8 of us prospected and found a possibility of fording. camped here with the intention of giving the matter a more thorough investigation tomorrow a share of the company still insist on going to Laramie to cross rather than risk the crossing here.

Thursday June 9th /59

Day fine and warm. found the ford barely passible the deepest water up to our armpits and the distance nearly 2 miles worked hard all day and crossed Bowles 4 wagons safe

Friday June 10th/59

Forenoon cloudy and cold today we crossed 6 wagons including our own worked hard and so did all the men.

Saturday June 11th/59

Day fine and warm Got up in the morning lame and sore from the effects of fording yesterday breakfast over we commenced getting the rest of the wagons acrost the river got all over safe and sound about 5 o'clock. very tired

Sunday June 12th/59

Fine day dried our loads & cloth[e]s and prepared for a start very lame and bottoms of my feet all worn through from the effects of wading the

⁴⁷ Ash Hollow, several miles west of the juncture of the North and South Platte, was a crossing place for the California and Oregon emigrants from St. Joseph, who had traveled along the south side of the Platte. Morton, *et al.*, *Illustrated History of Nebraska* . . . , 1:78-9; "Patterson Diary," 142. For map, see James T. Adams (ed.), *Atlas of American History* (New York, 1943), Plate 119.

⁴⁸ Practically all companies traveling westward were organized under a body of rules and with elected officers.

⁴⁹ Fort Laramie was in present-day Wyoming at the juncture of the North Platte and the Laramie River.

river the few past days. nearly all the boys are worn out. Curtice & Courtright's companies are fording the river today

Monday June 13th/59

A very dry dusty day. Started on our course. Britton sick and the duty of managing the train devolves upon me. drove down the river to Ash hollow and laid by till 3 o'clock. from here we took a cross cut for the South Platte river without a road or guide. we got our course from an indian trader. by taking this course we save 20 miles and it was necessary to drive it in the night for there is no water on the route drove up Ash hollow 3 miles and then up the steepest hill I ever saw traveled once at the top of the hill we turned out our cattle to feed till sundown & get a bite of something to eat for ourselves we then took our course for the South Platte myself and some others keeping ahead to keep the course which we did till 11 o'clock then it clouded up and we had to stop. boys took their blankets and laid down on the ground till day light. At Ash hollow I met Wells & Livermore and the Cooktown Co. on their way to California the roads today have been literally lined with stock and emigrants for California and Utah

Tuesday June 14th /59

At day light started on our course came in sight of the Sout[h] Platte river about 9 o'clock and camped by the side of a splendid spring here some of the boys washed some dirt and found several particles of goold [sic]. at noon we hitched up and drove up the river in order to find a ford. found one and camped at 4 o'clock raining a little tomorrow morning we have all got to go into the river again and I dread it like the tooth ache, though the crossing is not near as bad as that of the north fork

Wednesday June 15 /59

Breakfast over we plunged into the river, having packed our loads so as to prevent them from getting wet the night before and at 10 o'clock we had every wagon over the river safe and sound. boys all worked like heroes. repacked our loads and after dinner we drove 10 miles and camped. it just begins to seem as though we were going to Pikes Peak now. the distance from here as near as we can learn is about 200 miles.

Thursday June 16th /59

Fine day drove about 20 miles a part of the way very sandy. along the bank of the river is grass in spots, south of us is a barren plain as far as

the eye can reach, producing nothing but cactus and wild sage we are bothered very much for wood to do our cooking we are now among the Cheyene Indians whom we find very friendly passed 2 of their villages

Friday June 17th 1859

Extremely warm day. roads a good share of the way are very sandy and gravelly. drove about 18 miles and camped by a very nice spring there is no variety of scenery in this country on one hand is an extensive barren plain on the other is the swift muddy waters of the Platte with very low banks Elk Deer & Antelope plenty we are now out of the buffalo country entirely

Saturday June 18th /59

Today is as warm as yesterday roads quite sandy in places had one bad mud hole where the roads are not sandy they are very smooth and nice drove about 16 miles and camped on the bank of the Platte. we are constantly meeting return Pikes Peakers who report all kinds of stories. there is also a constant stream of wagons going on to the mines some days I think the prospects are good at the mines at other times I am almost discouraged but I made up my mind long ago not to go home till I had seen for myself. since we forded my feet have been so sore that I have rode the most of the time with the horse team

Sunday June 19th /59

Today is not as warm more wind stirring roads are splendid today. there has been no rain for a long time and every thing is all dried up except the grass on the bottoms. Almost every day it looks as though it would rain hard in a few minutes but it has always passed off without rain. drove 22 miles and camped on the bank of the Platte there is but little water here except what runs in this river most of other water is more or less alkaline

Monday June 20th 1859

Day fine and pleasant Crossed Beaver Creek & Bijou Creek drove 21 miles and camped at a spring. 4 miles of the road very sandy and for 15 miles of the road to come is very sandy also

Tuesday June 21st /59

Started at 10 o'clock in the night in order to get over the sandy roads in the cool of the day here we leave the river and do not strike it again for 15 miles the roads are across a barren plain covered with nothing but cactus and wild sage. got through to the river at 9 o'clock laid over bal-

ance of the day to rest our cattle and do some washing quite a number of the cattle in the train are lame and sick I have got 2 that I cannot work from this point we get the first sight of the mountains which very much resemble thunder clouds. their snowy tops are distinctly visible the highest point of which is said to be Longs Peak⁵⁰ day very warm

Wednesday June 22d /59

Started in the morning at the usual hour. roads most of the way are good. day fine. drove 23 miles and camped. we meet now days from 30 to 60 teams going back today we met 56 mostly homesick men reporting all sorts of stories.

Thursday June 23d /59

Day fine. roads passible drove about 20 miles and camped near St Vrain Fort.⁵¹ our course today has been nearly south up the Platte and parrallel with the mountains which are about 30 miles distant and with their snowy capped tops look majestick

Friday June 24th /59

Day as warm and dry as ever drove about 20 miles and camped. passed the remains of 3 old forts the 2 principle ones are called St Vrain & Ft Lancaster⁵² they are built of brick, dried in the sun but are now all falling down

Saturday June 25th /59

After breakfast Jerry and I started for Denver City⁵³ with the horse team.

⁵⁰ "From Bijou, the road cuts across a bend in the river, leading over high table-land, which is sandy part of the way. There are no good camping-places until the Platte bottoms are again reached. From these table-lands you obtain the first view of the mountains, which are distant about seventy-five miles. Long's Peak is the highest mountain in view at that place." "The Luke Tierney Guidebook," in Hafen (ed.), *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859*, 142-3. (Hereafter listed as "Tierney Guidebook.")

⁵¹ Fort St. Vrain, on the east bank of the South Platte about one and one-half miles below the mouth of the St. Vrain's Creek, was an early trading post owned by the Bent brothers and Ceran St. Vrain. In 1859 it was occupied by C. M. Miles and others, who kept a "ranche for the convenience of miners." "Tierney Guidebook," 143. For a description, see letter of Samuel S. Curtis in Hafen (ed.), *Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859* (Vol. 10, *Southwest Historical Series*), 171.

⁵² This was actually Fort Lupton, built in 1836 by Lancaster P. Lupton. Fritz, *Colorado, the Centennial State*, 95.

⁵³ In 1858 following the gold discovery of the Cherokees, two towns were founded on Cherry Creek. Auraria, on the west side, was platted by Henry Allen from Council Bluffs in October. During the winter a group from Leavenworth founded

arrived there at 10 o'clock. We enter the town from the east side and [it] is situated south of the Platte and East of Cherry Creek there is nothing very inviting about the place or location some 300 shanties not more than half of them are finished every thing about town looks mighty dull no stir in business mixed in through the village are about 100 Indian wigwams of the Arapahoe nation the noted Cherry Creek is as dry as a powder house⁵⁴ day fine. After-noon drove back and met the teams and camped 3 miles below town there being no grass nearer the village

Sunday June 26th /59

Morning started at usual time. drove into town stoped a short time for the boys to look about town afternoon crossed South Platte and drove 9 miles towards the mountains camped at a spring 2 miles from the mountains. about 5 o'clock it rained just enough to lay the dust said to be the first rain here this season. today we noticed several small gardens but the owners have to water their vegetables every day yesterday and today have been very dusty indeed

Monday June 27th /59

Fournoon went out in search of a place to ranch our cattle and leave our wagons while we go into the mountains to prospect. found a place on clear Creek⁵⁵ 3 miles from the base of mountains. afternoon drove our teams over and camped. Up and down this creek for 4 miles is a perfect village of wagons and tents and it is the same on all the streams in the vicinity and around all the springs along the base of the mountains

Tuesday June 28th 1859

Airing our loads fixing our camp for a permanent stop at least for a few weeks and also fixing to pack into the mountains to look up a gold claim day fine as usual

Wednesday Jun[e] 29th /59

Morning started with my pack in company with the most of our company the town of Denver on the east side of the creek and named it for the governor of Kansas Territory. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming* (San Francisco, 1890), 365-70. In contrast to Kingman's description of Denver, Patterson reported from Auraria on June 17: "Considerable business is going on — the saloons are flourishing — the bakeries making money — the cattle market down." "Patterson Diary," 184.

⁵⁴ "Cherry creek is sometimes a clear, beautiful stream, but this morning [June 17, 1859] the water suddenly ceased running, except a small rivulet at the upper part of the city." "Patterson Diary," 184.

⁵⁵ Clear Creek is in present-day Clear Creek County, west of Denver.

for the diggings went very leisurely traveled about 13 miles and stopped for the night in a narrow revine in the mountains a most huge rough looking place broiled our meat on the coles of a camp fire fried our pancakes and eat them with our fingers after supper examined the formation of the rocks some but made no discoveries evening rolled myself up in my blankets and laid down by our camp fire for a nights repose

Thursday June 30th /59

This morning got up and went ab[ot] cooking breakfast and for a variety we cooked the same as we did last night breakfast over we started on crossed some of the real genuine rocky ranges and camped near a most excellent spring of water in a deep ravine. the high rocky points towered above us seemingly to the clouds after supper Rose and Myself clim[b]ed one of these points which was at least 1,000 feet above our camp it was a most splendid sight to view the scenery from this point in ascending these high points it is very difficult to breath the surroundnig air is so rare

Friday July 1st /59

Today we got into the vicinity of the diggings prospected around all day for a claim and at night got around into Gregorie's diggings⁵⁶ this is the head quarters of the miners and is a place of a great deal of stir quite a village hase grown up here in about six week saw a great many miners at work came to the conclusion that the thing was paying well. nights here in the mountains are extremely cold we being but a short distance from the range that is perpetually covered with snow.

Saturday July 2d /59

After breakfast started back to our teams left my pack here. got home at supper time pretty near used up tired and lame

Sunday July 3d /59

Wrote several letters among them was one to McBride for publication quite lame and stif[f] today from my recent tramp

⁵⁶ Gregory's Diggings, or the Gregory Lode, was discovered by John H. Gregory of Georgia on May 6, 1859, on the north fork of Clear Creek near present-day Central City. This lode was "the richest ever found in Colorado, and one of the richest in the world." Before the discovery was announced the Gregory party organized the district so that "few of those who came found ground to work." Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming*, 377-8. Patterson reached Gregory's Diggings on June 20, 1859, and reported: "when we first went in, we learned that all the claims were taken — that the only show for us would be to buy." "Patterson Diary," 194. For location of Gregory's Diggings, see Adams (ed.), *Atlas of American History*, Plate 120.

Monday July 4th /59

Wrote letters all day to my numerous friends. it has been the qui[est]est 4th of July I ever saw it has really seemed like sunday to me all day

Tuesday July 5th /59

Helping to set wagon tire and fixing to take our loads up into the mountains preparatory to go to mining We are all very well satisfied that mining in these diggings will pay well to a great share of those who persevere but it requires a great deal of hard labor to work a claim.

Wednesday July 6th /59

This morning we intended to start for the mountains but we did not [get] ready in time Bought 2 yoke of cattle of Bowles and 2 yoke and a wagon of Chase. Day fine but very dry and dusty

Thursday July 7th /59

Started for the mountains in company with White, Griffin & C. P. Damman 4 teams of us 12 hundred [pounds] to each wagon got 3 miles into the mountains an[d] broke a wagon tire on our wagon chained it up as well as we could and drove on. camped 8 miles from the foot of the mountain

Friday July 8th 1859

Lost some of our cattle did not find them till 9 o'clock. hitched up and drove on drove over some abominable hills. C. Damman broke a spoke & an axletree out of his wagon we left men to fix it up and the rest of us drove on. we drove in all 8 miles today

Saturday July 9th /59

As soon as we got our pancakes eaten we hitched up and drove on. no bad luck today but awful rough sidling roads. drove about 8 miles and camped at the foot of a high mountani about 1½ mile from the diggings not a spear of grass for our cattle hitched them to our wagons. the mountains have all been burned over this spring and there is but mighty little or no feed any where

Sunday July 10th /59

Early in the morning hitched up our teams and started it took 9 yoke of oxen to each wagon to get up the hill then we had to chain all the wheels to get down on the other side which brought us to the diggings Jerry is awful sick of the trip he says he hopes if he is ever caught in these mountains again that some of his friends will shoot him stowed our loads in an

old hovel and Jerry and Griffin started back with the teams. Saw Strasberger from Janesville had a long talk with him. he has been in the mountains 8 weeks. Towards night C. P. Damman got along in company with Bowles and Chase.

Monday July 11th 1859

Started early with the oxen I bought of Chase & Bowles back where I could find some feed for them in company with C. P. Damman. drove out 4 miles and came acrost a man whom I got to drive the cattle down to the ranch and turned back to the diggings. tremendous hail storm this afternoon All the boys from Sparta are scattered around in all parts of the diggings.

Tuesday July 12th /59

Sick all day threatened with a fever. I have thought that this would be a hard place to be sick in. it would make a fellow think of home [if] any thing would. Afternoon had another tremendous hail storm

Wednesday July 13th 1859

Today I feel a great deal better. visited several of the mining operations afternoon rained hard

Thursday July 14th /59

Morning started for the valley went about 5 miles and met C. P. D. and rode his pony back to the ranch. plesant in the valley but I could look back and see that it rained hard in the mountains

Friday July 15th /59

Today busy settling and helping Jerry get ready to start home. Day fine Recd a letter from Mate, Lewis & E. P. Ring

Saturday July 16th 1859

This morning Jerry & Miles started for home in high spirits. day plesant and warm. traded with Ball for an odd Steer & wagon & also trade for a [illegible]

Sunday July 17th /59

Fixing my loads to take into the mountains tomorrow nice weather

Monday July 18th /59

Started for the mountains with my load drove over the first range and camped.

Tuesday July 19th /59

Got onto the road in good season and arrived at the diggings in good season

had no bad luck. had on my wagon about 1000 [pounds] and 4 yoke of oxen. traded off 2 yoke for a pony

Wednesday July 20th /59

Teams started back to the foot of the mountain and I staid in the diggings to sell my load &c traded my pony for oxen

Thursday July 21st /59

Bought an interest in a claim with White & C. P. Damman went to work to open it.

Friday July 22d /59

At work in my claim have not found any dirt yet that pays. the claim adjoining us however pays from 1 to 5 dollars to the pan

Saturday July 23 /59

Became satisfied that my claim was good for nothing and detremined to sell out the first opportunity

Sunday July 24th /59

Sunday is decidedly the busyest day in the week in a mining village. saw at least a hundred drunken men several fights and attended a number of auctions

Monday July 25th /59

Settling up my business preparatory to starting home Sold my claim and provisions Bought a horse and 2 yoke of cattle. It has rained every afternoon in the mountains for the past 3 weeks and in the valley below it has not rained for 3 months

Tuesday July 26th /59

Started for the foot of the mountains. traveled 33 miles on foot got to my ranch a little after dark. mighty tired & foot sore.

Wednesday July 27 /59

Settling up my business and packing up preparatory to starting . . .

Thursday July 28th /59

In good season in the morning we were on our way to the states all in good health and spirits and our cattle in good condition. our company is composed of myself Fred Peck, M. McMillan, Ira Rice G. & H. Griffin, John Damman John Myres, & H. Lovejoy. we have 4 wagons & 55 head of cattle.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The balance of the diary — from July 29 to Kingman's arrival at Des Moines on September 6 — is omitted, since the party followed the same route on its return.