

Notes by the Camp Fire;  
being a  
Narrative of an overland journey  
from  
the United States to California  
in the year 1849

NOTES

Some time in the month of 2  
December 1848, I first conceived  
the idea of going to California  
and having made up my mind  
to it shortly after, I cast my  
eyes diligently about me in order  
to ascertain the most advantageous  
method of making the trip

At this time there was great  
excitement throughout the United  
States in relation to California, and  
the newspapers daily published the  
most glowing (and in many cases much  
exaggerated) descriptions of its riches.  
These accounts a good many believed  
and some few doubted.

After duly considering the matter  
pro and con, I decided that the  
most agreeable method of travelling to  
California would be by some of the land  
routes, and accordingly purchased a  
share in the Navilah Mining Ass<sup>y</sup>.  
(a company consisting of upwards of



thirty members) in the month of  
February 1849 - Before I joined  
them, they had decided upon going  
by the "Fort Smith route", which was  
thought at that time to be much  
shorter and better in all respects than  
the "Independence route" - We all felt  
anxious to get off, and being most of  
us young men under 30, we felt of  
course very sanguine and in our own  
opinion capable of doing impossibilities.

Almost every night until the day  
we left N. Y. we held meetings at  
which the usual amount of wrangling  
and blowing was transacted - After  
enough voting and trouble, sufficient to  
have elected a President of the U. S.  
we at last purchased all our supplies,  
paid for them and resolved in general  
Council to leave New York on the 19<sup>th</sup>  
March 1849 - The largest proportion  
of our machinery and supplies were  
shipped by sea in charge of three of

our number, who professed that route  
The balance of our supplies & we  
~~procured at New York~~ took with us, from  
New York, Pittsburg, Cincinnati  
and Fort Smith



March 1849.  
Journal.

17<sup>th</sup> Having got every thing in readiness  
and having bid farewell to my friends  
and relatives, I braved up my courage,  
got on board the Quey City Ferry Boat  
in company with my friend Hoyt, and  
at 5 P.M. was out of sight of dear  
old Gotham, and actually under way  
at last for California - To say that  
I did not turn my back upon the city  
without regret, would be an understatement  
for there lived many dear and esteemed  
friends, and there had I passed at  
different times, some of the happiest  
moments of my life - These sorrowful  
reflections were however soon absorbed  
when I thought of the adventurous  
and interesting trip I was about taking,  
a mode of travelling at that time but  
little understood but from its very  
uncertainty fraught with chances to a  
mind fond of adventure

Shipped by sea

March 1849

17. About 9 P.M. I arrived in Phil-  
-adelphia, which much boasted city  
I do not like the general appearance  
of, so well as New-York - Distance  
from New York 87 miles

19 Left Philadelphia at 8 1/2 A.M.  
for Baltimore, at which city I arrived  
at 3 P.M. - Am much pleased  
with the appearance of the city and  
spent some hours very pleasantly in  
walking about and viewing the various  
buildings and monuments - Distance  
from Philad.<sup>a</sup> 97 miles -

20 At 7 1/4 A.M. I left Baltimore  
and proceeded on my way to Cumberland  
where I arrived at 6 P.M. - Some  
of the scenery on the road is beautiful,  
as much so, as any I saw afterwards,  
on the plains - I think Cumberland is  
about as pretty and disagreeable a spot  
as any I ever set eyes upon - Distance  
from Baltimore 177 miles



March 1849.

21. Left Cumberland at 9 A.M. by stage - The day was very cold, and most of the time we were pelted with lithic rain or sleet, which did not improve a previously miserable and uneven road - Several times we were in imminent danger of upsetting having a great deal of baggage upon the roof of the stage, which made it top heavy - Thus were 11 of us inside wedged a little tighter together than being in a box - As may be imagined we suffered some - After riding 27 hours we at last crossed the mountain and reached Painesville at 12 A.M. the next day - This upland is, if possible, still nastier & meaner than Cumberland - Distance from Cumberland 72 miles

23. Got on board a steamer, and went down the Monongahela to Pittsburg where I arrived at 5 1/2 P.M. - Distance from Painesville 69 miles

Shipped

March 1849

24. Remained in Pittsburg, where I met  
the balance of our Company - This is  
a very considerable manufacturing place  
but its appearance is very much hurt  
by the eternal atmosphere of smoke  
and soot from its numerous factories,  
making every thing look very dingy  
and dull - Owing to the same cause  
it is quite impossible to keep ones  
self clean for over an hour at a time

25 At 10. A.M. left Pittsburg and  
proceeded down the Ohio to Cincinnati

27 Arrived in Cincinnati at 7 A.M.  
of a beautiful day - Find it to  
be a place of very busy appearance &  
not unlike New York in looks

29 Left Cincinnati at 8 A.M. and  
arrived in Louisville at 8 A.M. next day

30 Remained in Louisville a few hours  
and find it an extremely pleasant little  
place - Since we left Cincinnati we  
have encountered the Cholera all along  
at various places



March 1849

30 - We left Louisville this afternoon and arrived at Cairo (at the junction of the Ohio & Mississippi) at about 8 A.M. of the 1<sup>st</sup> April - After stopping here an hour or so, we proceeded on our journey down the Mississippi, and arrived at Napoleon (junction of the Arkansas & Mississippi) about 9 P.M. of the 2<sup>d</sup> April - The Mississippi is a scabbed river and is justly termed the "Father of Waters" - Its water is very yellow from the large quantities of Earth held in solution, but it is to my mind the most deliciously tasted water I ever saw. The banks from Cairo to Napoleon were overflowed on both sides, and in some places I was assured that the water extended 100 miles inland from its banks. On this account it did not appear to so much advantage as it would have done otherwise, appearing now like a sea than a river - Cholera seems to be prevalent all along from Cincinnati

of our

and many

April 1849.

2. but now of our company have been affected by it - About 11 P.M. we left Napoleon and proceeded on our voyage up the Arkansas.
5. Arrived at Little Rock about 6 P.M. - The banks of the river up to this point are rather flat and monotonous - This is quite a thriving town, and is well situated upon the top of a high bluff, which I believe is the first stone I have seen since leaving Louisville.
6. Left Little Rock about 1 P.M. and arrived at Fort Smith at 4 P.M.
9. on the 9th, having in 23 days travelled 2503 miles from New York. The banks of the Arkansas, from Little Rock to this point contain quite a variety of scenery, some of which is very romantic and beautiful, and some rather flat and uninteresting. We were all busy to-day in the midst of a heavy shower, in getting



April 1849

9. our various supplies and baggage  
from the boat

25-

Up to this time, we have been  
encamped 2 or 3 miles from Fort Smith  
waiting for the roads ahead to improve  
they being reported as very heavy  
In the interim, we have been improving  
the time in breaking mules, arranging  
loads in our wagons, and putting  
things in order generally for our long  
and rather uncertain land voyage

The weather during the time we lay  
here, has been very fine, though variable  
frequently differing in the course of 12  
hours, from a temperature of 35° to  
40° up to 75° or 80° - Our mules  
we find to be a pretty sorry set  
being mostly too young and light  
and withal unbroken and full of  
vice, a fault which has made us  
no little trouble inasmuch with  
amusement, to correct - Although  
we have not thoroughly broken the

of our man  
by seal in charge of

beasts by any means, yet we think  
they are sufficiently tractable to  
answer our purpose, and have made  
up our minds to start, and take the  
risk, being afraid that by too long  
a delay here, we run the risk, each  
and all of us, of losing that antic-  
ipated fortune for us in California.

The most of us are becoming  
accustomed to eating bacon & crackers,  
and living "out of doors", and rather  
like it for its perfect freedom from  
restraint - Some few bewail with  
bitterness of spirit, the total absence  
of "chickw' fixin'" & other delicacies,  
but only get ridiculed by the rest.  
It was some of this latter class who  
induced us to take among other things  
from New York, at cost for every man  
to ship on, supping that thereby our  
health & comfort would be much  
promoted - By actual experience we  
find however, that for health and



April 1849

25. Comfort combined, sleeping upon the ground is altogether preferable, and the most of us have accordingly dispensed with cots - While coming down the Mississippi River, we organized a system of guard for the night, and we have now somewhat altered it so as to bring two men on guard at a time, who after standing two hours retire, and others then meet on the roll take their place - The guard for the night commences at 8 P.M. and ends at 8 A.M. - One of the guard is expected to watch one half of the camp, the limits of which is set by the captain each evening, and the other to attend to the other half - They are to carry loaded rifles & pistols, and are not only to look out for the camp itself but to walk out some distance and keep an eye on the animals, especially should they see anything ~~suspicious~~, ~~the~~ ~~time~~, Indians, or suspicious people looking about the camp after the watch

April 1849

is set, they are directed to fire upon them, if after halting them, they do not either give some account of themselves, or "make tracks" instantly.

We have two wagons with cows, to each of which are attached six mules. The near wheel mule is rode by the driver of the team, and by means of peculiar twitches on the leader, the whole team is guided.

Several of us have fine horses, and anticipate much enjoyment upon the road when once we get started.

25 About 1 P. M. we at last got under way, but owing to our mules being pretty unmanageable, and the drivers rather "green", we were only able to make some 3 miles during the afternoon - Encamped at Sulphur Springs which are occasionally visited by invalids for the benefit of the water, which although tasting like the minings of a



April 1849.

25. gun barrel, I found very clear and cold, and not particularly unpleasant after becoming accustomed to the taste.
26. Moved ahead for a few miles, but owing to the rascality of our mules, & the inexperience of most of us in driving, some of the wagons were broken very seriously and we were compelled to stop at "Magard Prairie" for three days to repair them - We find the roads are still rather too heavy for the good of our teams & wagons.
29. Hitched up again, intending to make the crossing of the Potomac to day, but our ill luck again overtook us, and we were compelled to encamp again, after going some 5 miles.
30. Traveled some seven miles and luckily after much labor, & anxiety besides no inconsiderable amount of danger, we were fortunate enough to succeed in crossing the Potomac, upon the banks of which, we encamped, heartily shipped by sea.

April & May 1849

20. weaned with our toil during the day  
Remained in camp next day, busily  
employed in repairing our wagons, which  
already are becoming somewhat shaky.

May  
2.

At 8. A.M. we got under weigh  
again, made about 12 miles, and  
encamped in a beautiful prairie of  
some 3 miles in extent - This part of  
the country abounds with these little  
prairies, and I know of no scenery  
more soothing and grateful to the  
senses, than such as these - This  
part of the country is occupied by the  
Choctaw Indians - The land is very  
rich, and easy of cultivation, rocks &  
stones being hardly known here - I have  
seen a good many Indian farms, and  
they generally appear to be under a very  
good state of cultivation - Perhaps some  
of our wagons as usual

3. As our last stopping place did  
not afford us the kind of wood we  
wanted, we drove on a little further



May 1849

I pitched our tents, and set ourselves  
to at the interesting employment of mending  
10 broken wagons - To add to our other  
misfortunes, soon after we arrived it  
commenced raining and kept it up with  
the exception of occasional intermissions  
for a week - We unluckily being planted  
on the "bottoms" we caught the water  
finely, and all the clothes we wore, as  
well as our blankets, were more or less  
wet all the time, but in this splendid  
prairie air it is not easy to catch cold  
from exposure, such as in the U. S.  
would be certain to lay a man up.

The prairie near here abounds with  
various flowers of small size, the most  
beautiful of which is the sensitive plant  
which flourishes here in great quantities  
Millions of strawberries very large and of  
unequaled flavor, may be got for the  
trouble of picking - I am informed that  
bituminous coal is quite abundant in  
the prairie near here; in fact, I have

of our  
by seat in charge

May 1849

11. saw it myself in one or two places  
Left the "Slough of Despond" alias  
Cache Creek, at 3 P.M., travelled  
2 miles and encamped within 20 miles  
of the River Sanborn, in a beautiful  
rolling prairie
12. Started at 6 A.M., made about  
19 miles, and at 4 P.M. encamped  
about a mile from the River Sanborn
13. Most of us remained in camp  
I was out of a party detailed to cross  
the river, and make a saw wagon  
road, which we accomplished in some  
8 hours, after an incredible amount of  
labor in digging down the river bank,  
chaining the brush &c, working all the  
time in mud some two feet deep
14. Still encamped to-day
15. After much vacation and labor, we  
managed to cross the Sanborn, but were  
8 hours in doing it - Made but two  
miles this day, every body being very  
weary) - Saw hairy Bat Smith, cross



May 1849.

15. Progress has been much retarded by having poor animals nearly unmanageable and very heavy roads, by means of which we have been much delayed by the breaking of our wagons.

16. Left camp at 8 A.M., and made some 15 miles.

17. Made some 10 miles and encamped in a fine belt of timber on the edge of a prairie - Such a situation as this, is one of the finest for a true enjoyment of prairie life, where we can procure plenty of fuel, excellent water, and as much small forest game as we wish.

18. Traveled 10 miles to day and pitched our camp about half a mile from the River Canadian - Passed on the road two parties of Californians on their return - They started from Fort Smith a month ahead of us and one night were caught by a sudden freshet and lost all their animals, wagons

of our machine / charge of us

May 1849.

18. *Provisions* - They gave a most horrible account of their sufferings (which we subsequently ascertained to be much exaggerated) and advised us by all means to turn back - We had however started for the express purpose of "seeing the Cliphout", and concluded we should have as good a time ahead as upon the back track at any rate.
19. Crossed the Canadian by means of a ferry boat, the water being too deep to allow us to drive over - Saw a good many Indians of both sexes and all ages, and made considerable trade with them for eggs, fresh, corn meal &c &c -
20. Remained in camp waiting the arrival of four of our wagons, which were unable to cross yesterday.
21. The balance of the wagons having come up after some considerable trouble & delay, we all moved on some three



May 1849

21. miles, and encamped at the edge  
of a prairie - We are now about  
90 miles from Fort Smith, having taken  
only 26 days to make that distance

22 Our wagons having been much  
to strained, twisted and broken, we drove

28 ahead some 2 miles and encamped in  
a spot suitable for making our  
necessary repairs, with which we were  
engaged until the 28<sup>th</sup> - We find  
along our route plenty of spiders, wood  
ticks, mosquitoes, and bugs generally  
but as we are now growing somewhat  
used to them, we don't mind them  
so much as at first, when they were  
a terrible annoyance - The country  
from this side of the Canadian, is  
occupied by the Creeks, that on the  
other side, by the Choctaws, which  
last are great big game - This country  
is very beautiful, and a great many  
Indians have farms which an Eastern  
man would covet. They are also

May 1849

22 possessed of plenty of live stock of  
to all sorts - also a general thing

28. However, the Indians are too lazy to  
make more than a bare living at  
farming - We buy plenty of Eggs  
at 10¢ per doz: - Milk at 10¢ per quart -  
Chickens 10¢ each - Butter 10¢ per lb.

Excellent Beef 2¢ per lb: - Our camp  
has been visited every day by plenty  
of Indians of both sexes, a very few  
of whom, speak passable English.  
They generally dress in a half  
civilized style, and are extremely  
well behaved - The Indian way of  
trading, seems to be now to open a  
trade first themselves, but frequently  
will remain about camp most of the  
day, doing nothing and waiting for a  
bid from the white men - and if they  
are lucky enough to thus raise 10¢  
a day, seem to be perfectly satisfied.  
We have had for two nights, tremendous  
thunder storms, which frightened our



May 1849

27 animals very much, and caused  
to about a dozen of them to break  
28 loose; but after considerable chasing  
we fortunately recovered them  
Now on the prairie, the thunder storms  
are most terrific, being in comparison  
to those in the U. S. as the discharge  
of a cannon to that of a pistol -  
The peals of thunder are most tremendous  
= being during the heaviest of the  
storm, almost continuous, and seeming  
as though a grand battery of a  
million cannon was being fired -  
The lightning is of an almost over-  
= powering brightness, and flashes  
incessantly, keeping every thing almost  
as light as day - Add to this a  
perfect gale of wind, and the rain  
coming, not in drops, but in sheets  
and one can form a faint idea  
of what a magnificent affair  
a storm on the prairie is - The  
27<sup>th</sup> being Sunday, some of us went

May 1849.

22 to a Baptist meeting held about  
to 7 miles from us, and some went to

28. saw an Indian ball play - About  
12 P. M., they returned, and I judge  
that both parties were amused & edified  
though from losing their way in the  
forest and getting into the mud  
they were in rather a sorry plight

28. Having finished our repairs  
we left camp about 7 A. M., and  
made some 14 miles over a variety of  
country; some of it being most beautiful  
prairies, and some of it exceedingly  
rocky hills, over which it seemed almost  
a miracle to drive our wagons. - I  
rode up some of these hills and was  
well paid for my trouble, being able  
to see a most beautiful landscape  
all around for nearly 100 miles

At 7 A. M. we left our camp, &  
at 6 P. M. encamped, having made about  
25 miles - The most of the road was  
terribly rocky; now so that I have



May 1849

29. Cow seen on my road - Most of the wagons, on account of the intricacy of the road, were obliged to have a man at the head, leading the horses by the bridle - I was attached to one of the wagons in this manner, and for 20 weary miles, I hung to the bridle sometimes stumbling among the mules feet, they sometimes tripping and falling down, requiring me to keep my eyes wide open to get out of the way, and sometimes becoming unmanageable and jumping from one side to the other of the road, when if I let go my hold they would be liable to shew, and upset the wagon in the only road, to the detriment of those behind.

By the time we got into camp, I got considerably bruised all over, and ached awfully - and some 10 days elapsed before I began to feel natural again. Truly, a mule is a most delightful animal to have much to do with.

May 1849

30. Traveled 18 miles and encamped in the woods on the eastern bank of Little River, where we found nothing for our animals to eat, and were in consequence forced to tie them to the trees to prevent their straying in search of food. Had heavy rains for the most of the night. Indeed, since leaving Fort Smith, has fallen during the night, rendering our journey rather unpleasant. We are now distant some 100 miles by direct route from Fort Smith.

31 Crossed the river and after driving 3 miles, encamped in order to give our animals a chance to feed. At Edwards trading house on this side of the river, I saw and shook hands with "Wild Cat" the celebrated Seminole Chief. He is a stalwart noble looking man about 5 1/2 feet in height, and dressed in a beautiful Indian costume, brilliant



May 1849

23. with silver ornaments, beads and red cloth - I told him how glad I was to shake the hand of such a great Indian brave and warrior, with which compliment I suppose he was well pleased, for a smile broke out upon his gloomy face like the sun suddenly shining out after a shower. We are now about entering the domain of the less civilized Indians, but from all accounts, they appear to be disposed to treat the whites in the most friendly manner.

June 1

Left camp at 10 A.M., and about 6 P.M. encamped in the center of a beautiful prairie - Met a troop of some 20 Kickapoo Indians upon the road, all well mounted on fine horses - These are the first we have seen dressed in the Indian style, which consists of a sort of buckskin shirt and leggings of cloth or buckskin reaching half way up the thigh, accompanied

shipped 207

~~At~~ June 1849

1. with snow or less ornament - They are great horse traders, and not one kibble behind their white brethren in the arts of jockeying - With the "soft sea" side saddles seem to be not known, as they and their "loads" ride in just the same manner - Made to-day but 8 miles, the road being very bad, obliging us to spend a good deal of time and labor in repairing it

2. Left Camp at 7 A. M. and after travelling 12 hours encamped, having succeeded in making but 5 miles over a continued succession of mire, rocks and tremendous hills and gullies. Our animals seemed to be just as much fatigued by it, as though they had travelled 25 miles over an ordinary road - In one part of the road was a very steep hill of a quarter of a mile in length, down which we were obliged to lower the wagons with ropes



June 1849

22. which flows slow, consumed some  
of hour - Saw a rough bridge over  
one stream, which I suppose was built  
by some of our California predecessors  
and which is the very first I have  
seen in two months

23. Being Sunday we remained in camp  
according to our usual custom - The  
weather was very fine and the most  
favorably prospect one could desire - I  
don't know when I have passed a more  
pleasant Sunday - There were numbers  
of ~~that~~ Nickerpoos about camp all  
day, scattered everywhere, and with  
their succeeding meddlesome curiosity  
and getting to be nuisances - I am  
afraid that their ideas of meum and  
tuum are rather confused

24. Found on getting our animals  
together to-day that three of them were  
missing - We hunted for a considerable  
time after them and hearing nothing  
of them, was obliged to leave 2 or 3

June 1849

4. of our men behind to recover them & started without them - Suspicion of their abduction falls upon our Indian visitors of yesterday which suspicion is confirmed by the fact that not a soul has shown themselves about the camp to-day - Made to-day about 12 miles, over a rather better road than that of Saturday - Met a few accidents with wagons of course, but we are now growing used to these things - Since leaving Fort Smith, we have managed to break every part of our wagons except the axles

5. Left camp at 9 A.M. made about 12 miles, & encamped at 3 P.M.

6. Made some 18 miles to-day over a pretty good road

7. Made 6 miles to-day - Crossed another bridge, which being small, obliged us to send the animals over first, and then draw over the wagons by ropes. The weather was very warm



June 1849

8. Made 14 miles, about 5 of which was over a horribly muddy, sticky and nasty road, and the balance on a beautiful prairie - Encamped about 1 mile East of the ruins of "Chouteau's" trading house, the proprietor of which, some few years ago, got into a quarrel with the Indians, who murdered all the traders and burnt this Establishment.

9<sup>th</sup>  
13  
inst. Remained in camp during this time, busily engaged in repairing our wagons thoroughly for the balance of our trip - We had now got through all the bad roads of consequence, and hope after this, to be able to travel more expeditiously - Had two or three terrible thunder storms which here in the night as usual, and the whole crowd got fairly drenched within their tents - Shot here several wild turkeys, which are most delicious eating - There are plenty of deer about

Shipped on

June 1849

but none of us have as yet shot any.  
We are now about 240 miles from  
Fort Smith - We were visited by  
a few Wichita Indians, a tribe of  
great and established reputation as  
professors of horse stealing - Those  
we saw, were about as miserable devils  
as could be imagined, the average  
value of their clothes and equipment  
being I judge about 1 cent per head.

14. At 7 A. M. left our camp and  
made some 20 miles - Weather cloudy  
until 11 A. M. when it commenced  
raining and kept up without intermission  
until 4 P. M. - When we reached  
Camp, we were all thoroughly soaked  
and presented rather an interesting  
appearance - The road to-day was  
through a prairie, and very good - For  
the first time since starting, we are  
able to look all around and see us  
bounded to the view, other than the  
prairie, the best description of which



June 1849

14. is that of a "sea of land"
15. Made 20 miles under most beautifully clear weather, still surrounded by the prairie
16. Drove about 25 miles and after all, was forced to encamp in a bad spot for fuel, although not deficient in other essentials. For the first time, we could find no wood, and was obliged to burn the usual substitute of "buffalo chips" which do very well when dry, providing a man keeps to windward of his fire
17. Traveled about 8 miles and at 12 A.M. halted on the edge of a ravine about a mile long, and 200 feet deep and broad. The prairie abounds with ravines of all sizes; the largest ones generally filled with small timber of different kinds. Passed on the road a village of "prairie dogs" about a mile in diameter and containing some 500 habitations.

June 1849

17. These animals are of a light brown color and appear to be a species of ground squirrel, although they resemble a rat considerably in appearance. The entrance to their dwellings, is a hole about 3 ins. in diameter, around which is thrown a mound about a foot in height erected I suppose to keep the water from running in - This name of "prairie dogs" arises from the fact of their yelping like a young puppy - Of a few days they may be seen throughout this village sunning themselves upon the mounds, or going in every direction paying visits to each other, for they appear to be a very sociable animal - It requires a good shot to kill one of them so as to prevent him tumbling into his hole which they almost invariably do when struck.

18. Left at 7 A. M. and drove some 13 miles when we encamped on the



June 1849

18. Edge of a bluff of some 300 feet high overlooking the Canadian River. Crossed a number of ravines to-day mostly about 100 feet deep. Just as we got into camp, an enormous wolf trotted leisurely past us at the distance of about 200 yards. He would occasionally stop and take a good look at us, which rather provoked some of us who caught up our rifles & pistols and set out in chase of him for about a quarter of a mile and fired several times at him, but without effect. The view from the bluff where we are encamped is very pretty, the river being discernible like a silver thread for about 20 miles each way.

19. At 6 1/2 A.M. started again & crossed the Canadian, which was not more than 18 inches deep and abounding in quick-sands which oblige us to keep every thing moving from the

June 1849

19. instant we enter the river, as were they suffered to remain stationary a moment, they would be in great danger of becoming stuck in the sands, inextricably - To-day and yesterday I saw on trees in various places the names of a good many persons who had preceded us some 4 to 6 weeks, & who must have had an "awful time" if all their stories so recorded should be believed - For some two weeks back, we have been favored with an abundance of rattlesnakes, and some of our company have killed a few and some have had narrow escapes from being bitten - I have not as yet seen any, but have heard them occasionally while walking through the grass - but bearing in mind that "discretion is the better part of valor" Content myself with getting out of the way as soon as possible - On some parts of the road, fine mushrooms



June 1847

19. are very plentiful, and found no  
measurable relief to our simple fare  
We encamped near several mounds,  
of very regular shape from 200 to  
800 feet high, and apparently of  
volcanic origin - I ascended the  
highest one, and was rewarded for my  
trouble, by seeing a magnificent prospect  
at this point, the new army road  
forks off from the regular trail

20. Left Camp at 7 A.M. - Saw a  
large number of mounds, apparently  
of the same character as those seen  
yesterday - Found also several beds  
of alabaster - Some of our company  
killed two deer to-day and at supper  
the whole crowd had a right jolly  
time eating venison - Distance made  
to-day, 15 miles over a very good road  
although broken with very deep gullies  
which made us some times & trouble to  
cross - The water in this section of  
Country is extremely flat, and about

shipped

June 1849

20. unfit for washing or drinking, but we have to use it for want of a better article - We are now fairly in the Comanche Country, but as yet have seen none of those much dreaded warriors, who by all accounts, are the worst customers to meet

21 Started at 7 1/2 A.M. and made about 18 miles (Memo: - Our distance are based upon calculations made by ourselves, at various times, the result of which average 2 1/2 miles per hour with teams) Road like that yesterday

22 Left Camp at 7 1/2 A.M. and made some 14 miles - Saw several deer upon the road, but shot none Passed several hills, upon which I found fossil sea shells, &c in abundance

23 Left Camp at 7 A.M. & travelled about 20 miles - Road as yesterday - Found large quantities of alabaster & fossils of various kinds

24. Being Sunday, we remained in camp



June 1849

24. performing the duties of cooks, washer=  
=women, journalists &c - Slight rain  
about 11 A. M., which has been quite  
unusual, about all of it falling in  
the night - Our road for a week  
past has abounded with "branches"  
(the beds of small streams) which having  
an inclination of  $35^{\circ}$  to  $45^{\circ}$  make  
bad crossing places for wagons - Until  
yesterday however, we have been lucky  
enough to cross all our wagons safely;  
but we then broke two wheels all  
to smash in crossing a branch - As  
we have however, mechanics in the Co:  
of almost every kind, we can manage  
always to repair again - The grass for  
a week back has been very poor & thin  
quite different from that we have met  
previously - In many places the last  
year's grass is still standing, which being  
dry, requires great care in kindling  
our Camp fires, as it catches easily,  
burns fiercely, and, in a breeze is very

supper

June 1849

24. difficult to extinguish - Our wagons  
& tents have been in imminent danger  
of being burnt two or three times for  
this cause - Some of our company  
report having seen buffaloes off the  
road, which is probably true, as we  
have seen pretty fresh bones of them  
recently - We do not know anti-  
-cipate getting much buffalo meat  
as they have (as is their habit) gone  
farther north and perhaps luckily  
for us the Indians have followed them

25. Left camp at 8 A. M. and made  
20 miles through a regular desert of  
very thin, bad grass & no water -  
Passed a great number of mounds of  
angular shells, some 20 feet high &  
about 100 feet around - Saw also a  
great deal of sandstone & alabaster  
The weather during the last 10 days  
has been very oppressive, and our  
animals have been sorely pestered with  
house flies, which swarmed in great



June 1849

25. abundant - One of our loose mules  
being missing on our arrival at camp  
I was appointed a committee of one  
to go back and endeavor to find him  
Just about dusk I left camp on  
my voyage of discovery and had just  
got fairly on my way when down  
came a shower which wet me to the  
skin, which combined with the fact  
that I set out minus my supper did  
not put me into the best of humors -  
I rode back 7 miles, hunting along  
for the quadruped, but could not find  
him; so about 9 1/2 P.M. I turned about  
to reach camp - To add to my other  
afflictions, the animal I betook was  
a mule and one of the laziest and  
worst beasts I ever saw - I wanted to  
get back to camp by this time and in  
order to effect this object, kept spurring  
with all my might, but all the mule  
could or would do, was a tolerably  
slow walk - The night was quite

shipped by sea in

June 1849

25. hazy, & I could see nothing very distinctly, but heard enough, for I was favored all the way back, with a delightful serenade by the wolves from both sides of the road, & rather too near to give me pleasure. Among the voices in the serenade, I could distinguish the treble of the small wolf, and the deep bass of the large prairie wolf, which last animal was the only one I cared much about. I was well armed, and made up my mind momentarily to have a skrimmage. They did not attack me however, as they would probably not be hungry just at that time. About 11 1/2 P.M. I got into camp in pretty bad humor, and found the company much alarmed at my absence, ~~they~~ a company of 6 or 8 being about starting to hunt me up - it so may be supposed, I did my supper amply justice upon my return.



June 1849

26. Started at 8 A.M. and travelled about 20 miles on the most hilly road I have yet seen - In the afternoon, we drove along the bank of the Canadian, which we intend to cross for the third time - Saw some 5 miles off, the "Antelope Buttes" which are 8 or 9 hills of pretty good size and flattened on top - They being of a different shape from other hills are a great landmark for travellers - Just as we got into camp, we were visited by a terrible thunder storm wetting us all to the skin

27. Passed the Antelope Buttes this day - Some of our party ascended them, & were in contact with the prospect from them - Road still on the banks of the Canadian, but now level than yesterday - We occasionally saw deer, antelopes & other game, but not as plenty as might be supposed, our predecessors

June 1849

27. having frightened them off - Have not yet seen a buffalo - Their bones lie bleaching in all directions around and the sight of them is rather tantalizing - Saw plenty of wild plums, poppies & many other plants with whose names I am not acquainted - There are two kinds of grass usually found in this section; one rank & thick, called the "nuoguest" & the other thin bladed & short, called the "buffalo grass", which latter is much preferred by our animals. Passed a number of dry river beds.

28. Started at 7 A.M. and made about 22 miles over a constant succession of high hills & deep vallies which utterly exhausted our animals. Passed a village of prairie dogs, but saw not one - Also several dry river beds - According to our own estimate, we are about 480 miles distant from Fort Smith.



June 1849

29. Left at about our usual hour and about 11 A.M. we brought up having heard the agreeable intelligence that one of our company had actually shot a buffalo about a mile off the road - With others, I went to see the illustration, defunct and found him to be one of the largest kind of old bulls measuring 10 feet from the nose to the tip of the tail - During the balance of the day we were busy in bringing the meat to camp, cooking it & cramming ourselves with it - Although the meat of this particular animal was tough through age, yet it was exceedingly juicy and sweet, & not unlike beef in appearance - Our road to day has been over the river flats, parallel to, and about a mile from the river

30. Concluded to remain in camp to day in order to recruit our men, and jerk some buffalo meat.

June 1849

30. In the forenoon, we were visited by about a dozen Maudis with a large drove of horses & mules, which they had obtained in trade from the Comanches - They are a very dirty and ragged looking set, and appear as though they had not washed themselves since about the time they were boys. We drove quite a brisk trade with them in old clothes in exchange for Lariats, deer skins & buffalo robes

July 1849

1 Sunday - In camp still  
Our Maudis friends packed up their traps and left us this morning

2. Travelled about 18 miles along the river bank - Opposite to camp the river bank presented a singular & beautiful appearance, looking precisely like the wall of some fortified town, which had besieged and battered down in places with artillery - Road quite level -



July 1849

3. Made 15 miles over a level road. Weather extremely warm - Encamped on a branch of the river, where we found water & wood in abundance the latter of which particularly, has been rather scarce lately, and occasionally water has been scarce also

4. At sunrise, we hoisted our flag, and find a salute to the back of our ability - Immediately afterwards, another man & myself started upon the "back track" in search of our horses, which we found luckily at the camp from whence we started yesterday morning - We found the grass there had accidentally got a fire, and had been burnt for several miles around - Started back with the horses, and in the evening about 11 reached our camp of this morning, after a horseback ride of 30 miles under a terribly hot sun, which with the myriads of horse flies & mosquitoes annoyed us & our animals

July 1849

4. my mule - The train had in the meantime gone ahead 18 miles
5. At 8 A.M. my companions and I saddled our horses and determined to make an effort to reach camp that night, which we were lucky enough to reach about 8 P.M. after a ride of 40 miles during the day. The train made 22 miles - The weather all day was intensely hot, and we and our animals suffered somewhat for want of water - About 12 A.M. my companions insisted on stopping & taking a snooze which did not suit my views, so I rode on without hind for several hours, frequently obliged to dismount and walk a few miles to rest my animal. About dusk, I saw by the roadside a very small pool of the dirtiest kind of water towards which my animal and I directed our steps, being by this time awfully thirsty, and having no cup I threw myself on my face at full



July 1849

5. length, & although the water was of the filthiest kind & swarming with ~~fish~~ tadpoles &c &c, I took a hearty drink and thought I never had tasted anything so delicious - Shortly afterward, my companion came up & together we proceeded to camp, where we "rested from our labors" - The wagons to-day left the river entirely and ascended a tract of high table land, known as the "Plains Estacada" or "Staked Plains" and which are said to be about devoid of verdure or water - However, we are "in for it" & must now "stand up to the rack, fodder or no fodder"

6. Traveled about 15 miles over a pretty level and good road - Had a shower in the afternoon, which purified the sultry & oppressive air, and gave us plenty of water, which of late has been uncomfortably scarce - Passed through several villages of prairie

July 1849

6. days - We find the most of ~~the~~ grass upon this table land, to be buffalo grass, but sparsely scattered and half dried with the intense heat

7. Made 20 miles on a very good road, it being rather level, or in very gentle ascents - On account of the heat our men, were much exhausted Passed through several villages of prairie dogs - I found at various places to day some very good specimens of agate, with which, besides other stones, the tops of the numerous hills abound

8. Sunday - In camp all day as usual - Weather very warm, the thermometer being 100° in the shade

9. Traveled 18 miles on a level road - Passed several prairie dog towns, but saw none of the designs Kind considerable trouble to find sufficient wood & water for our use Just before we got into camp, our



July 1849

9. head wagon (which had preceded us, a short distance and had turned the corner of a hill, so as to be out of sight) came driving back at a terrible rate; its driver our Captain crying out at the top of his voice - "Look out boys, there are 500 Indians ahead about a quarter of a mile & now hurry up and range your wagons so as to give 'em jessy when they come" at the same time pointing out a spot which he thought was a favorable one for us to take our stand. The sound that ensued was rather a comical one, for all our wagons being anxious to reach the spot began forthwith to belabor their animals most lustily, at the same time swearing at them in the most approved style in order to increase their speed. Now was our driver, who having lost his whip and not desiring to be left behind, had recourse to the point of

July 1849

9. his knife in order to facilitate the  
progress of his animals, who not under-  
standing the remedy, ran away about  
a quarter of a mile - Another team  
in its haste had run into a slough  
and stuck them, with the driver lashing  
& cursing his oxen, like our men. Another  
team I noticed had from some unlikeli-  
hood reason, suddenly stopped in the regular  
road and its driver tired of urging them  
ahead from the saddle, had dismounted  
and was frantically "stirring them up" with the  
butt of his gun, which appeal they  
answered by taking a retrograde instead  
of a forward motion - There was one  
man running around like our distracted  
Eudeavouring to borrow some powder - another,  
some bullets - another, caps - another, a  
rascod, it appearing that they had in  
some very unaccountable manner, mislaid  
those articles - I think I never saw  
a scene of more confusion in my life  
for the few minutes it lasted - when



July 1849

9 - our Captain gravely announced to us that the matter was "only a joke". The occurrence has however had a good effect, as it will teach us to be more prepared for sudden surprises - a large rattlesnake was killed in the evening while in the act of cutting one of the mus boxes, when several persons were standing - A few days since, one of our dogs was bitten by one, but we immediately tied her to a wagon wheel and poured a pint of strong Brandy down her throat, which neutralized the poison.

10. Traveled 22 miles over a sphered road - Saw a good many antelopes, & a herd of wild horses about half a mile off - Saw several prairie dog towns. Passed several ranges of hills so hollowed out by the action of the weather, as to appear almost exactly like a long chain of fortifications.

11 - Made about 25 miles over a very fine road, but few want of

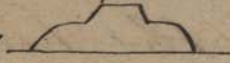
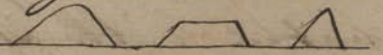
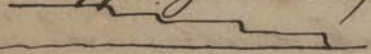
July 1849

11. water, and the heat, our mules were  
worn out. — Encamped on pretty  
high ground near 3 pools of water, all  
impregnated with Saleratus & salt.  
For about 3 weeks back, we have  
been out of the region of dews, which  
before that time fell very copiously.  
Some of our company killed two large  
rattlesnakes to-day.

12. Made 20 miles — Had a heavy  
shower at mid-day, by which the most  
of us got wet, of course — Encamped  
near a gully where we found water that  
had fallen at noon — If it had not  
rained to-day, we should have been obliged  
to go without water entirely — Saw on  
the left of our road most of the day,  
very high long ranges of table lands,  
noticed in some places, many beds of  
rock, apparently limestone — There has  
been plainly in sight all day, a remark-  
-ably shaped butte, differing from the  
Purchased, I have seen elsewhere — It



July 1849

12. outline is thus:  - I forgot its Spanish name, but it is a great landmark with them - The general outline of the others are thus:  - The bluffs generally run off after this manner: 

13. Traveled about 12 miles over a road similar to that lately - About 2 P.M. had a north-east rain storm which made the temperature unseasonably cold. At our camping ground, we found about a dozen Pueblo Indians, who were bound to the northward for the purpose of trading with the Comanches - Saw on a tree a notice of the passage of the U. S. troops at this point - They say that the distance from here to Fort Smith is 641 miles, and some 10 days travel to Santa Fe - These to-day are the first Indians we have seen for 29 days.

14. Made some 20 miles - Road same as yesterday - Saw on the route, many isolated hills, some of which were of

July 1849

14. Considerable height

15. Being Sunday, remained in camp which was surrounded on nearly every side by high bluffs apparently  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile off, but on actual trial really from 3 to 5 miles - This is occasioned by the extreme clearness & purity of the air - We are now about clear of the "Lans Estacads", and in the "Angostura" or narrows; a passage given by nature between bluffs and mountains which lie near us on both sides of our way - Saw a troop of 20 or 30 antelopes, but was not able to approach them - In this region, the clouds approach very near to the earth; and I have frequently seen them hanging about a hill within 50 feet of the ground and leaving only its summit and base visible.

16 - Traveled about 25 miles, over quite a varied road, being for the most part between high bluffs appearing



July 1849

16. as though they had been wrenched  
asunder by some violent force of  
nature - In the sides of many of  
them, I could perceive regular strata  
of different colors and of different  
angles of inclination - In others (by  
some volcanic action probably) the  
strata had been entirely disjointed  
and twisted in every direction - About  
5 miles of our road lay through a  
forest of dwarf cactus and huckleb  
trees, which with different varieties  
of the Cactus family, composed about  
all the vegetation.

17. Made 20 miles, and encamped by  
a huge pile of rocks, in the cavities  
of which we found plenty of water, thanks  
to a thunder storm with which we were  
favored this afternoon - The article of  
water for the last 2 weeks, has been  
scarce with us, we having generally  
been obliged to avail ourselves of any  
min hole we were lucky enough to

July 1849

17: find along the road - Road to-day  
was rather <sup>more</sup> level than usual lately  
Saw on our sight, a high peak of  
snow 2500 ft in height, which  
presented more of the appearance of  
a mountain, than any hills I have  
seen for some time - Saw a herd  
of some 150 antelope, but our  
saddle horses being nearly "used up"  
we could not succeed in procuring any.

18 Made 22 miles - Had as usual  
a fine shower (that is, a thunder storm)  
in the afternoon, which was "got up"  
in the most magnificent prairie style  
Saw on the road, a Mexican with  
three donkeys - also a herd of about  
30 cattle - The sight of these  
domestic animals was, as may be  
imagined, quite refreshing to us, making  
us think somewhat of home  
After we got to camp I purchased of  
the Mexican herding the cattle, some  
milk, which though thin, was a very



July 1849

18. great luxury - Road to-day, by  
land a succession of valleys, with but  
few hills

19. Had a very pleasant days  
journey of 20 miles, on a road  
abounding in beautiful prospects  
Passed through large tracts of dwarf  
oak, cedar and pine - But on the  
road, two unfortunate quadrupeds, blew  
over a horse, loaded with a strapping  
Mexican and a Mexican woman seated  
in front of him, besides various little  
household utensils &c - The other  
unfortunate was a donkey (or rather a  
poor Edition of one) loaded with a  
sack of corn as large as two of him  
and another Mexican seated behind  
the bag clear astern - The Cavalcade  
appeared to be making a mile an hour  
which rate appeared to suit the riders  
just as well as though it was twenty  
Altogether, the concern presented a very  
comic sight

July 1849

19. After we got to camp and had got our culinary arrangements fairly in operation, down came a terrible thunder storm, which put out our fires & cut short our supper, besides, as usual, giving us a comfortable ducking.

20 Remained in camp to-day waiting our president's return, he having yesterday separated from us and gone, as we knew whither - One of our men discovered this morning that a mule was missing, and on looking a little farther, found a man's tracks leading away from the camp, followed by those of a mule - Whereupon nine of us set out well armed in pursuit, and after riding 12 miles saw the mule a short distance ahead with 2 men, who the instant they descried the party, left the mule and took to their heels, stopping once or twice to fire upon the advancing party, who



July 1849

20. not wishing to be outdone, returned  
the fire - After chasing them about  
3 miles, one of the thieves was caught  
while in the act of drawing an  
arrow upon the forehead of our party  
The other escaped, and the party came  
back to camp in triumph, bringing the  
thief and also a bow & arrow, cubins  
powder horn & pouch, which they reserved  
as trophies of their valor - After  
much debate and high words among  
ourselves, we at last agreed to give  
the criminal a flogging - We therefore  
stripped off his clothes with the  
exception of his pantaloons, and five  
of the men were deputed to  
"put him through"; which they did by  
tying him to a cart wheel and laying  
in 30 strokes with a cart whip  
and a good will - During the operation  
the patient alternately cursed bitterly  
in Spanish, or invoked the assistance  
of all the saints in the calendar, to

shipped my

July 1849

20 - Sulp kind out of the scrap - When the operation was finished, he dressed himself and slunk out of camp, no doubt wondering at the clemency of "Los Americanos", as I understand the penalty for horse stealing in these parts is death - Had another fine shower to-day

21. Travelled 15 miles through a beautiful Country - About 11 A. M. we struck the "Independence Trail", leading from Independence to Santa Fe, and found it to be an excellent road of some 30 or 40 ft in width - Saw yesterday & to-day quite a number of Mexicans, from whom we purchased at most exorbitant prices goats' milk, cheese, eggs, bread &c - In the afternoon, we reached the village of San Miguel, situated on the River Pecos - Saw a great number of goats fastened upon the hills about - Our president returned



July 1849

21. after two days absence, during which time he had been waiting for us ahead

22. Sunday - The grass at our Encampment being very poor, we concluded to harness up, and travel ahead in search of better, which we found after going 15 miles - Encamped about two miles from the town of Pecos, upon the river of the same name. Just on the road, a number of wagons on their return trip to Independence. They are generally drawn by 8 oxen, and usually carry about 6000 lbs. weight. It is quite refreshing after our tedious trip, to see and speak to the few Americans about their Caravans - Our road to-day was mostly through a wooded country, abounding in cedar, pine and dwarf oak - Our route for a few days back has led between ranges of mountains varying from 1500 to 6000 feet above the level of the plains

July 1849

23. In camp, recruiting our wearied animals - Several parties of traders, as well as Californians passed our Encampment to day on their way from Independence to Santa Fe. Their animals were seen and much in splendid order, showing a very marked contrast to ours, which are but mere frames - A number of Mexicans visited us during the day endeavoring to trade off their horses & mules - Their appearance is not very surpassing, and it is just as well for a man when in their company to keep a sharp look out for the "movables", as they are said to be rather light fingers.

24. Still remaining in camp, endeavoring  
25. to get the animals into decent  
26. marching order again, which of course  
27. slow on account of the goodness of the  
28. grass. Progress very slowly - Have  
29. been visited all the time by Mexicans



July 1849

24 of all descriptions and ages, with  
to some of whom we have exchanged a  
29 few of our weakest animals. - Now  
myself & partners exchanged the American  
horses we brought from Fort Smith,  
(which after but little riding, had  
become nearly "used up") for a stout  
Mexican pied horse, christened by us  
"Pecos" - Some of our company caught  
which had a quantity of real mountain  
trout from the river, which we all  
partook of, and found the flavor  
Equisite - by far better than any  
thing in the fish line I ever saw at the  
North - One morning on turning out  
we found one of our mules, a short  
distance from camp dreadfully lacerated  
in one of the hind quarters. - We  
suppose from the marks about, that we  
have been visited by a grizzly bear  
with which, as I understand, the  
mountains in the vicinity abound.  
While here, I visited the ruins of

July 1849

24 Peos Church, about a mile from  
to Camp - This building is said to  
29. have been originally one of the aboriginal  
Mosaic places of worship, and  
afterwards turned into a Catholic Church.  
It is built of adobe (sun dried brick)  
and is now mostly in a very dilapidated  
state - It was kept until within  
a few years back, the "sacred fire"  
of the Mexicans, whose priests had  
kept the holy flame alive for ages.  
The Comanches however attacked the  
place, killing most of the inhabitants  
and the fire was then extinguished  
about the church, I collected quite a  
quantity of Indian arrow & spear heads,  
made of obsidian, jasper &c - besides  
a great variety of ancient pottery.

In the afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> we  
had a hail storm - The hail fell  
in large quantities from the size of a  
pea, to that of a grape shot.  
The river water here is splendid, being



July 1849

24. as cold as ice, and as clear as  
to crystal - If anything, it is rather  
29 better than the fine famed "Cotton"  
We intend to remove on the 30<sup>th</sup> to  
Galisteo, a small town about 25 miles  
distant from Santa Fe, where there is  
a much better chance of getting our  
horses into good condition, and where  
we calculate to make the necessary  
arrangements for the balance of our  
journey

30

At 7 A.M. we left this place  
after having exhausted all the feed  
within 7 miles or so, of us - and  
after a terribly tedious journey over  
a rocky & mountainous road, arrived  
at Galisteo, where we calculate to  
remain a month

to  
1<sup>st</sup>

We have remained at Galisteo up  
Sept. to this time, engaged in recruiting our  
stock for the balance of their  
journey - We have decided to pack

to Sept: 1849

from this point to San Diego, as  
we think our progress has already  
been much impeded by having wagons,  
and are told that a part of the  
route is not practicable for them  
at any rate - We are heartily tired  
of wagons, and generally think that  
packing, although disagreeable on many  
accounts is infinitely preferable to  
them - I was appointed a com-  
-missioner of one (being the only  
saddler now in the Co:) to go up to  
Santa Fe and purchase all the  
saddles, bridles and other parapher-  
-nalia required by me, in that  
line, and in the execution of my  
Commission, had occasion to visit  
Santa Fe twice; remaining there  
about two days each time

This place I find tolerably well  
situated in a valley of the Gaudalope  
Mountains, some 7000 ft above the  
level of the sea - The houses (with



to Sept: 1: 1849

the exception of a very few wooden  
ones built by Americans, (owing a  
saw mill) are built of "adobe"  
as is usual in all Mexican towns,  
and are almost universally one  
story high - The valley is watered  
by a mountain stream, and produces  
a considerable quantity of wheat, rye,  
corn, barley, vegetables &c - In order  
however, to raise these crops, the natives  
are obliged to have recourse to  
artificial irrigation. The water for  
which, is supplied by the river.  
Were it not for this artificial irri-  
-gation, this valley would be as barren  
as elsewhere - All the wood and grass  
is brought to town on donkeys from  
a distance of 3 to 10 miles, and is  
consequently very high - Other articles  
also, bring enormous prices - I got my  
good board harrow, at the American  
Hotel for \$1 per day - The town is  
full of Californians and traders, &

shipped my

to Sept: 1: 1849

"I think it is the most dissipated  
and lawless place I ever heard of  
boils constantly occurring, and not  
a few murders - There are a good  
many women to be seen about the  
streets, but of the very lowest class  
and the worst kind of prostitutes - The  
better class very rarely go out of doors  
Have occasionally in passing by  
peeped into doors left open and seen  
many beautiful and very lady like  
Spanish women - Went out evening  
to a fandango, but found it to be  
a rather sorry affair, as the company  
was not very select, being composed  
of the women above mentioned, the  
roughest kind of Californians and  
transients all more or less excited by  
liquor - There is a small U. S. post  
stationed here, who keep the place and  
district in a little better order than  
before its occupation by them, though  
there is still much room for



to 1<sup>st</sup> Sept: 1849

improvement -

Had several showings during our stay at Galisteo, sometimes accompanied with hail - The weather generally was extremely hot, except on one or two occasions when the mercury suddenly fell about 60 degrees - After much trouble, we at last succeeded in getting our 10 wagons, which cost us some \$1500 for about \$500 -

I am informed that there are several places of gold, near here which general reports say are very rich - I have however seen several persons who have been working them and who are unanimous in one opinion, viz: that they did not make more than 6<sup>d</sup> per day - There is a multitude of rumors in circulation in Santa Fe similar to the above and all tending to one object; that is, to prevent the Californians going on

to Sept: 1, 1849

and thus Enable the merchants & others in Santa Fe to flee them (a process which they well understand) to the fullest extent - Hearing many stories pretty well authenticated of depredations committed by the Apaches, Navajos, Utahs & other Indian tribes, we have joined other Companies to us, making our total number about 80, which we think will be sufficient to Enable us to proceed without hesitation - The whole body have a Mexican guide who is said to be well acquainted with the best route for pack routes

Our company is now divided into 7 messes, of 4 men each, who have 4 saddle animals and 8 mules each, making 28 men and 70 animals - There are 3 men besides not belonging to any mess, who have 4 animals among them - Total 31 men and 81 animals - Each



to 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 1849

miss has a tent to itself, and has its own provisions, ammunition &c, which was formerly kept in common - Our animals, now seem to be in excellent order, and our preparations being now about complete we are exceedingly anxious to be on our way again, as we ought by this time, to have reached California.

While lying here, we have kept our animals at night in a corral owned by a very civil and intelligent Spaniard who has treated us with much attention - Our nightly guard have been sleeping at his house in a large room where men, women & children lie stretched along the floor indiscriminately - Many of the population at this season are in the habit of sleeping out of doors, which I think is decidedly most agreeable

As a matter of course, we have been constantly visited during our stay here, by men, women & children of all

to 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 1849

ages - Some of the women are very  
reputable as well as handsome, and  
many are just the reverse - They all  
take a great interest in us, and are  
terribly afraid that the Indians will  
attack us on our route and cut us  
in pieces - They have pretty good  
foundations for their fears, as this part  
of the country has frequently been  
overrun by them - We tell them  
"Los Americanos no temen a los indios" (The  
Americans have no fear) to which they  
generally reply "Caramba, estos hombres  
son muy bravos" (Dear me, these men are very  
brave)

September 1849

1. Busy most of the day in getting  
up our mules and packing them  
surrounded by a crowd of Mexican  
lookers on - About 3 P.M. we got  
our cavalcade ready, and started  
but our packs being badly arranged,  
our mules in "high feather" from resting



September 1849

1. So long without labor, and we being unacquainted with the art & mystery of properly packing, the consequence was, that we had no sooner fairly left camp than many of the mules taking a great dislike to their burdens ran away, plunging & rearing until their packs were well scattered around and the whole company thrown into disorder - After considerable vacation and labor, we at last succeeded in getting matters all right again and proceeded one mile, when we encamped and remained the next day engaged in more accurately adjusting our packs

2.

Got under way at 8 A. M. and travelled about 7 miles - Our mules improved a little, though we have met with several accidents to-day, such as breaking of saddles, shifting of packs, running away of mules &c - After a few days trial, we shall not have much trouble with them

September 1849

4. Made some 20 miles mostly through of pine & cedar - The day was intensely hot, and most of us suffered considerably for water. Passed through two or three small villages - Our road lay between two ridges of mountains, called I think the Sierra de los Nimbres.
5. Made 7 miles and Encamped early, as some of our mules had slipped away in the morning, and some of us were engaged in hunting them.
6. Traveled to-day about 20 miles through the most wild and picturesque region I ever beheld - About 3 P.M. we entered the valley of the Rio Grande, and at 5 P.M. Encamped about 2 miles from the town of Albuquerque.
7. In camp - In the afternoon, went to Albuquerque, which I found quite a pleasant place, though of a very



September 1849

7. Liferes appearance - Considerable quantities of peaches, grapes, apples, melons &c are raised here - The grapes are particularly fine, and make a wine famous in these parts as the "El Paso" wine - They are not raised on arbors overhead as in the U.S., but the vines are fastened to stakes and kept trimmed so as nearly to resemble a bush about 3 ft high and the fruit hangs in very large clusters near the ground

8. We have found the Rio Grande whose waters were about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet in depth - Traveled 18 miles, passing through several small towns - The land in this valley is very fertile, and appears to be pretty well cultivated - Stopped near a village of Pueblo Indians, who we found extremely amiable in disposition as well as very prepossessing in appearance and also more intelligent than the mass of the

September 1849

8. Mexican population, many of the young being able to read, which is the case with very few of the Mexicans.
9. Traveled about 20 miles, through a sandy road - Found the soil every where encrusted with salt - Passed through 2 or 3 towns - Found plenty of good grass & water, but wood very scarce.
10. Made about 20 miles down the valley, passing several villages during the day.
11. Distanced to day, some 25 miles. Had during the forenoon, a heavy shower of 4 hours duration, pretty well soaking us - During the night had considerable rain.
12. Rain pouring down most of the day, and we therefore concluded to remain in camp - The soil here is mostly clay which when wet, clogs the feet to such a degree that it is very hard work to lift our feet.



September 1849

12. after the other - For some days back, we have seen our old friends the cotton trees, which we have lost sight of since leaving the Canadian River - Am much annoyed at night by mosquitoes, which swarm all along the valley
13. Made about 15 miles and Encamped 6 miles south of Socorro which like most other Mexican towns is very filthy and without much regularity - Here are stationed a few U. S. Soldiers - Purchased here flour and other supplies, fearing that our present stock would not suffice for our journey
14. Traveled some 15 miles mostly along the river bottom when we found abundance of heavily seeded grass and wood
15. About 20 miles made to-day along the river bottom - We find plenty of rabbits, quails, and wild

September 1849

15. ducks and geese, which make a very pleasant change in our diet

16. Made some 20 miles to-day mostly through a pack mule trail instead of the wagon road as before. The vegetation in the river bottom through which we pass is very luxuriant, the shrubs overtopping my head as I ride along - Saw large quantities of flowers of various kinds, which though small, would be much prized at home for their color, rarity and delicate scent - Our camp to-night, is the one which in Lieut. Emory's work is described as "the last day with the wagons" and the drawing of which is a very correct representation of our camp

17. Made 22 miles, still along the river - Road about like that of yesterday - Saw large quantities of stone which was evidently of volcanic origin - On some of the hills, saw



September 1849

17. Considerable sandstone found by the action of the weather into almost every imaginable shape

18. Remained in camp recruiting our mules which have been much galled by their packs, as well as exhausted by the extremely hot weather since we left Santa Fe. During the night, our guide upon whom we relied so much, saw away stealing a fine mule, some arms and money - I suppose that like all other Mexicans, he had a great dread of the Indians, and took this opportunity to "save his bacon"

19. Travelled some 20 miles along the river - When we got into camp the united companies held a meeting and decided as our guide had left us and we <sup>were</sup> not acquainted with the pack trail (which thus far has been very rough) that we should abandon that, and strike into the route known

September 1849

19. as "Cook's detour" which is said to be a level wagon road, and a good route for pack mules - This route runs S.W. a considerable distance below the Rio Gila into the northern states of Mexico, then turning, it runs in a N.W. direction until it strikes the Gila at or near the "Pine villages"
20. Made some 20 miles along the bank of the river
21. Made about 22 miles - Turned off from the river to-day, and struck Cook's route, after some little trouble in looking for it - We have his narrative and that of Emory with us which is of much use to us in knowing the country, selecting proper camping places &c - Encamped in a beautiful rolling prairie, surrounded by fine hills, and well covered with fine grass, though wood & water were not of much account, the first being very damp and the last a sulphur spring - Had



September 1849

21. a heavy shower in the afternoon & another during the night
22. As it rained most of the day, we remained in Camp
23. Still raining hard, and appears to be an Equinoctial storm - As soon as it set in the mercury fell some 40° in a very short time - Near here, I found many fine specimens of chalcedony, agate and cornelian
24. Traveled to-day 16 hours and made 34 miles, that being our distance to water - Weather exceedingly hot and road very muddy - Animals and men suffered greatly for want of water and it was with great difficulty that every one got into camp, which was reached about 9 P.M. and when we found a fine stream of water Had a little rain in the afternoon Saw a beautiful rainbow, commencing on the ground apparently not more than 100 yards from me of exceedingly

September 1849

24. brilliant colors, and very nearly one  
half a circle in extent

25 Remained in camp, recruiting  
+ our animals - We find we have  
26 made a little mistake, in pushing  
them so hard while in the valley of  
the Rio Grande, as our best plan  
would have been, to have made very  
easy stages through the valley, and  
thus give the animals more stamina  
for such hard work as that on the  
24<sup>th</sup> Inst. - A large portion of them  
have become galled by the pack  
saddles, and the galls, in consequence  
of not being properly attended to,  
have in many cases, been found to  
be swarming with maggots; the  
removal and prevention of which  
is much trouble, as well as particularly  
disgusting and annoying.

Had white snow, two very cold  
and disagreeable showers from the  
North - Wind being the valley of



September 1849

26. The Rio Grande, game of all  
kind, has become extremely scarce  
since leaving Santa Fe, we have  
all got into the way of eating  
but two meals per day: one about  
7 A.M., and the other from 7 to  
10 P.M. - As may be supposed  
this long interval sharpens our  
appetites hugely, and but very few  
are inclined to grumble at our  
bill of fare consisting of coffee, mince,  
milk & sugar, bacon & "slapjacks".

27  
Moved on for 18 miles and  
encamped at "Ojo del Hacedo" or  
Cow Spring - Rained in the forenoon  
shot much grass at this camp -  
As to wood, all we could get was  
the stalks of the soap plant, soaked  
with wet from frequent rains; and  
with these after 2 or 3 hours hard  
labor, we succeeded in cooking our  
supper - Road to-day over a  
level prairie

September 1849

28

Made to-day 20 miles over a somewhat diversified road being a succession of prairie mountains & lowlands, - Weather though very warm, was pleasant - Camped about 2 miles from the road, where we were lucky enough to find a mud hole with sufficient dirty water in it for us and our animals. For fire wood (as usual for some 15 days past) we used such shrubs as we were able to find about; cows for three, being frequently obliged to hunt to a distance of 2 miles from the camp - During all the evening we had a terrible thunder storm during which, I happened to be on guard and got thoroughly soaked. When my relief arrived, I was rejoiced, and pictured to myself the delights of "turning in" in a pair of dry blankets - When I reached my tent, I found a striking instance



September 1849

28. of the "vanity of human expectations", all the blanket being completely soaked - However, as I could not better matters by grumbling, I wrapped myself in them as I was, and took a sound sleep

29. Distanced to-day about 23 miles, weather very warm & fine, and the road level - Camped on the side of a mountain, where we had plenty of water, wood & grass, as well as a splendid prospect - Found on the road, a worn out ox, which we drove to camp and killed - Although the meat was like india rubber in toughness still the change in diet was much relished

30. Made to-day about 27 miles, Road & weather as yesterday. Found in the hills numbers of prickly pear plants, with the fruit in full perfection - The fruit is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in; in diameter, oval shape, and of a

September 1849

30. brilliant crimson - In taste it  
very much resembles an orange - These  
plants have been very plentiful all  
the way from Fort Smith, but their  
fruit has heretofore been very small  
& poor - According to our account  
our distance from Santa Fe is now  
414 miles - We have now reached  
the sweet southern part of "Cook's  
detour" and our course will now  
lie e. W. until we strike the  
Gila, when it will run about due  
West.

Oct 1. Made to-day 12 miles, over  
1. a diversified country

2. Distance to-day about 27  
miles - A portion of the road was  
terribly trying, being through very  
deep and rocky mountain gorges  
and over rocky hills, the passage  
of which appeared as absolutely  
miraculous - We now save 14  
hours making the ~~same~~ distance.



October 1849 ~~September~~

2. to-day, and a good many of our  
wounded animals, required considerable  
"boosting"

3. Last night, or mull having been  
found missing, and supposed to be left  
at our last camp, I with two others

4. ~~of~~ were appointed to return upon the trail  
and search for the animal, which we  
found after considerable trouble. We  
were about 3 days, and had just  
consumed all the provisions we took  
with us when we reached the

company, which had in the mean  
time gone ahead 21 miles, ~~and the~~  
~~distance~~ - The weather as usual  
was extremely hot - Distance made by  
us in 3 days, 75 miles, which tried  
our animals very much, and wounded  
the riders considerably. - The last  
15 miles of the route, being at the  
bottom of a deep and picturesque  
gorge, through which ran a beautiful  
stream of clear water, with its banks

October 1849

covered with wood, and luxuriant  
grass & shrubs

5. Traveled 30 miles - We did not  
know, succeed in reaching the spot  
we aimed for, and were forced to  
camp in a piece of ground thickly  
covered with the cactus plant, and  
but very little water - One of us shot  
on the road a wild bull, numerous  
of which are to be found in this  
part of the country - Passed in the  
forenoon, the deserted village of San  
Bernardino, which perhaps once  
contained some 300 inhabitants

In many parts of the road, I  
noticed a hollow sound, which  
showed the existence of large caverns  
underneath

6. Made 25 miles, 17 of which we  
traveled in the evening having been  
obliged to lay by, in consequence of a  
mule becoming mislaid - Camped  
at 1 1/2 P. M. very weary & thirsty



October 1849

6. Found no wood or water at our stopping place, and were therefore obliged to go to bed and make up our minds to have a drink and a warm meal some other time

7. Sunday - Traveled 15 miles till we reached a good watering place. Moderate rain all the day till 2 P.M. - Road to-day over bottoms and table lands.

8. Remained in camp to-day drying our clothes &c, but more especially resting our mules, which are every day getting more fatigued. Thus far, we have travelled faster than wagons, we having lately passed several which left Galitaco some days previous - About ten days since, we threw away our tents finding it desirable to lighten our packs so as to ease the mules. When it don't rain, I find it extremely pleasant to sleep in the

October 1849

8. open air - and even when it rains provided a man has a good stock of philosophy and blankets, it is not very unpleasant

9. Made about 20 miles to-day over a diversified road, in different parts of which were beautiful mountains covered to the very tops with grass & timber, lovely valleys, and here and there mountains seemingly composed entirely of stone, and as rugged and imposing in appearance as can be imagined - The wood in this section is principally live oak, black walnut and cedar

10. Traveled 10 miles through a ridge of hills till we reached the village of Santa Cruz, where we encamped - This place is small containing I should judge, about 500 inhabitants, and is situated in the old Mexican territory - We here sold considerable of our clothing &c, in



October 1849

10. Exchange for various articles of vegetable food, but were unable to procure any animal food, as the Apaches had, a short time before our arrival, attacked the village and stolen about all their stock. We are now about 200 miles from the "Pine villages", but think we shall be some time reaching them as our animals are now beginning to "back down" and obliging us to abandon them.

11. Traveled 19 miles (10 of this however, is waste travel, we having struck a wrong trail, and returned) Road lay along the bank of the Rio San Pedro, in sight of which, we have been for two days - Saw in different places, ruins of houses, as well as others in good order and apparently deserted but yesterday the inhabitants, being Pima, were better at running than fighting, were

October 1849

11. Scared away about 3 months since by the appearance of the Agency. This valley has beautiful land, and is well wooded and watered. I saw plenty of grass only 7 feet in height.

12 One of our mules having been killed somehow, myself and another set out in search upon the road of yesterday. We found the animal at our yesterday morning's camp, and about 4 P.M. set out on our return and rode till 12 at night.

13 Got up at 4 A.M., and set out on our return. About sunrise, we found a wolverine out on the road which we shot, and enjoyed a gained breakfast. Pushed on, and arrived in camp about 12 at night, having rode 67 miles and rested but four hours during our absence of 42 hours. This is good travelling when



October 1849

13. The public state of our animals and the heat of the weather is taken into consideration - To-day and yesterday the company travelled 49 miles - When I rose this morning, I found a heavy hoar frost on my blankets - This denotes record, as it is the first I have yet seen on the route - Passed two deserted villages, apparently left a short time
14. Made 22 miles, but were after all, obliged to camp without water and but little grass - The animals being very thirsty and hungry, we were obliged to keep a very strict watch over them to prevent their straying in search of grass & water
15. Left camp at day-break, and after travelling 7 miles, encamped about 1/2 mile from the village of San Gabriel, of about 200 inhabitants composed of Mexicans, Apaches, & Pinos

October 1849

15. I found here, a very pretty church which unlike other Mexican churches, was built of brick, and quite tastefully ornamented - It is said to be 100 years old - I here bought for a few articles of cheap jewelry, plenty of fine beef, milk, cheese, eggs &c. - The only fruit I found here, was guineas, which are much more palatable than those in the U. S.
16. Staid in camp, in order to recruit our mules and set our weary bones - etc may be imagined, there was no bacon & "slapjacks" eaten by us while here, but on the contrary, we swelled in the "flesh pots of Egypt"
17. Made 18 miles for the most part through muggito groves, where there is generally no grass or water - Passed through Tieson, a Mexican village of about 400 inhabitants, and encamped



October 1849

17. about 6 miles beyond the village where we found the best "grain" grass we had seen for a long, long time

18. As the grass was very good, we remained in camp endeavoring to appease the hunger of our mules. Purchased in Tucson, four donkeys to replace animals abandoned on the road - The backs of most of our animals are now in a horrible condition, which suffers them much and is a source of constant irritation and disgust to us, we being obliged to wash and dress the wounds two or three times a day - The cactus family flourishes about here in great profusion and luxuriance, some of them growing 40 ft high and 3 ft in diameter, and from this size all the way down to a foot in height.

19. Traveled 22 miles through the mesquite groves - Road excessively

October 1849

19. dusty, and weather extremely warm  
Camped without water, and very little  
grass.

20. On getting up this morning, it was  
found that our four ducks had  
given us the slip during the night.  
As it was generally thought they had  
returned to Tucson; the services of  
myself and another member, were  
called into requisition to go back to  
the village (a distance of 28 miles)  
for them. We set out early in the  
morning and after pretty hard work  
reached the village shortly after  
sun-down. - Our close inquiry, we  
found the ducks had not been  
heard of there. - Took supper and  
breakfast with a Mexican family.

21. and on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> started  
back. - We travelled 44 miles through  
a most desolate and forbidding country.  
No water or grass of any account, to  
be seen anywhere. - Weather boiling



October 1849

21. Hot, and road extremely dusty and sandy - We rode most of the night knowing there were wagons ahead in short distance, but both mules and riders being terribly fatigued, we were obliged to stop at 3 P.M. and lie down till morning - We then rode on some
22. 6 miles and breakfasted at a wagon camp, where we were treated very hospitably - My companion has left me, he preferring to come on with the wagons, and I therefore set out alone. Rode some 30 miles to-day - Weather and road same as yesterday. At about 11 P.M. was fortunate enough to arrive at another wagon camp, where I was well attended to -
- 23 Rode about 20 miles, and reached camp at 4 P.M. feeling rather the worse for wear, having in four days rode 122 miles through a miserable desert, so to speak - Almost the first thing I saw on arriving in camp

October 1849

23. was the four donkeys, which were found by some of the company about an hour after we left camp on the 20<sup>th</sup> - While we were absent, the company had made 60 miles, and I found them encamped <sup>near</sup> at one of the Pine villages.

24. Remained in camp, which was thronged all day with Indians of both sexes and all ages - These Indians are agriculturists, not warriors by profession, but are said to be possessed of much bravery, almost invariably defeating the Apaches when attacked by them - The men are mostly finely shaped, and of intelligent and agreeable countenances - Some of the younger women are certainly very handsome. The fashions for dress generally border rather closely on the primitive fig leaf style; though I saw some of the men strutting about, as proud as peacocks, some with nothing but a



October 1849

24. pair of pants, some with only a  
vout, and some with only a coat  
cut in the fashion of the year one  
and purchased for a consideration I  
suppose of some "hoosier" - We find  
that in matters of trade, they are  
not to be outdone by any Jew -  
They are not over and above honest, we  
having lost white hew, many small  
articles, such as hatchets, knives, &c.  
But very few of them speak any other  
language than their own, which obliges  
us to trade with them by signs.

This town is situated upon a bottom  
and the soil appears to be very fertile  
though it requires artificial irrigation  
They raise large quantities of pumpkins,  
squashes, corn, beans, wheat &c &c

25 - Travelled 15 miles over a road  
extremely dirty as usual - Found  
to day less mizzquite trees than usual  
and rather more water and grass  
than we have before had since leaving

October 1849

25. Saw Gabriel - Passed to-day two  
or three Pinos villages, and at noon  
encamped near a village of Coco  
Maicopa Indians - Grass and water  
was pretty abundant, but extremely  
poor in quality - The ground about  
camp is thickly encrusted with  
salt, which does not improve the  
taste of the water
26. Remained in camp four days  
27. mainly for the purpose of feeding  
28. and resting our stock, which is  
29. in a very feeble condition - We find  
the Maicopa to closely resemble the  
Pinos in every respect - They proved  
I think, as more thievish and saucy  
than the latter - Neither nation are  
particularly clean in their habits  
Many of them own fine horses, which  
are invariably mounted from the off  
side, and which many of them ride  
with singular skill, without saddle  
or bridle - Saw about the time we



October 1849

29. Left San Gabriel, we have been every night surrounded by large bands of wolves, whose snarl is not much inducement to slumber

At 5 P.M. (in order to take advantage of the cool evening) we left our camp, to cross a head of the Gila being a stretch of 45 miles without grass or water - We travelled till 2 A.M. and made 25 miles of the distance

30. At sunrise, left our stopping place where we had neither grass or water and travelled the remaining 20 miles of the stretch by 3 P.M. where we encamped about half a mile from the Gila, in a spot having all the requisites of a camp except grass - Heavy showers in the afternoon and evening

31. Made some 27 miles and camped about sunset in the bed of the Gila. The weather as usual, excessively hot, and we found very great difficulty in making our animals

October 1849

31. go ahead at all; so much weakened  
have they recently become - at slight  
showers in the forenoon - Fed our  
animals upon willow and cotton wood  
branches, which have constituted  
about all their food since leaving  
the Maniopa village, a distance of  
72 miles

Distance travelled this month by  
our age 442 miles - From Sackett  
Is 856 miles, from Fort Smith 1675  
miles and from New York 4178 miles

Nov. Remained in camp - Found near  
1. us, a little grass scattered here and  
there, which we hope may strengthen  
our mules a little, as the food they  
have had lately is not calculated  
for animals which are worked hard  
Even with the best of grass and  
water, they would hardly be able  
to stand the journey through such  
a desolate, dusty and hot country  
Had plentiful showers in the forenoon



November 1849

and evening

2. Pushed ahead for 15 miles  
Road as usual lately, being through  
a sort of desert showing strong  
marks of volcanic action. Camped  
in the river bed, and fed our stock  
on willows & cotton wood. - Today  
I threw away all my baggage, except  
papers & a few other small articles, in  
order to lighten the loads of our  
mules, which are every day becoming  
exhausted and left behind by us.

3. Some of our men having crossed  
the river, reported having found a little  
grass a short distance below. - We  
accordingly moved on, about one mile  
camped opposite to the spot, and sent  
over our mules, which managed to  
get just enough grass to eat, to prevent  
them from being utterly starved.  
For some days back, we have found  
on the road, plenty of wagon wheels  
& bodies, of yokes, chains &c, indicating

November 1849

3. That some of our predecessors in wagons had "seen the elephant" rather plainly

4. Traveled 15 miles over a horridly dusty and heavy road - Weather as usual distressingly hot - Camped 2 miles from the river, where we found a very little grass, but no water nearer than the river

5. Made some 14 miles over a horrid road - Animals greatly exhausted - To-day, much to my grief, I was obliged to abandon on the plain, the horse bought at Pecos in which I held a third interest. He had carried a pack from Santa Fe, all the way (900 miles) and kept himself up like a man, till he could do no more

6. Made about 9 miles, but our animals being very hungry, ~~we~~ were obliged to encamp without making a decent days journey - To-day, I



November 1849

6. was forced to abandon my saddle  
mule, yelkt "Mehitable" - She had  
done me good service on various mule  
searching expeditions, and other occasions.  
Though nothing but a mule, she  
was a bright example for the race of  
mules in general - she being extremely  
gentle, kind and faithful; and  
unlike other mules, wouldn't "back  
down" till entirely exhausted.
7. Traveled 2 miles and encamped  
in a spot where we found sufficient  
grass to give the animals a little taste  
but no more.
8. Started before daylight, and after  
travelling 9 miles, found a little grass.  
Here we staid till late in the day  
when we again set out and made 6  
miles - Camped 2 miles from the river.  
The mules got nothing to eat but cotton  
wood and willow - Road as usual  
very dusty and heavy, and weather  
very warm - We find along the river

November 1849

8. plenty of quails, doves, rabbits &c  
In the river a sort of trout without  
scales is pretty plentiful - and though  
very bony, are good eating
9. In camp - We found to-day  
in the river bottom, sufficient cane  
to feed the animals comfortably  
We now begin to discover that we  
left Santa Fe a little too early - Had  
we left there a month later, we  
should have had the "fall grass" in  
this part of country, and would  
thereby have been saved the necessity  
of sacrificing our mules, as we have  
done - The only grass to be found now  
is either salt grass, or occasionally a very  
little rank and dry bog grass
10. Travelled about 20 miles over  
a heavy and extremely dusty road, as  
usual - Weather extremely sultry &  
debilitating during the day while the  
nights are very cold - Camped close  
by the river bed, and fed our mules



November 1849

10. upon came

11. Remained in camp - We were busy most of the day in cutting cane for the mules, about a mile from camp

12. Still in camp, engaged as we were yesterday - Animals extremely weak and in bad condition

13. Made 13 miles on a detestable road as usual - Weather at first very clear and sultry, then exceedingly windy, winding up with a very heavy snow which as usual, soaked us pretty thoroughly - Fed animals on willow and cotton wood

14. Traveled only 4 miles, when we encamped in the snow bed, went across the snow and cut abundance of the best cane I have yet seen, which was highly relished by our mules

15. Made 13 miles and encamped 2 miles from the junction of the Colorado & Gila - Camped near a

November 1849

15. village of Yuma Indians who appear very much like the Pinos & Maricopas - They are however much more voracious in their prices and more saucy than the latter tribes as well as having a considerable reputation for treachery - We discovered a large lot of musquitos beans stored away by the Indians some two miles from camp and during the night went and helped ourselves to them - As there was not much else for our mules to eat here these came very acceptable to them

16 Made 5 miles to-day, and camped on the bank of the Colorado, which we crossed in boats after considerable difficulty. - There are stationed about 40 U. S. Dragoons who attend to the ferry, and charge fees according to the circumstances of those crossing They also collect a toll of 5% from the Mexicans returning homeward from California with gold - We have lately



November 1849

16. met several companies of them on their way home - We are now eating water melons, pumpkins & just in their prime
17. In camp awaiting the return of some of our men who went back to the crossing to purchase supplies of food of which we apprehend a scarcity between this and San Diego - Fed our stock to-day and yesterday and came out on the banks of the Colorado.
18. Traveled up the river bottoms some 12 miles, passing through a considerable village of Yuma Indians, then struck off in a westerly direction & commenced the crossing of a sandy and barren desert of 90 miles in width Traveled on the desert 10 miles and encamped late in the evening near a well of brackish water dug by Cooke - Fed animals on muggits beans, of which we carried a supply

November 1849

19. Made a dreadfully fatiguing and distressing march of 23 miles over the sandy desert, where we saw not a living creature but ourselves, and not a vestige of vegetation or water. The sun shone down with an almost insupportable heat, and animals and men suffered dreadfully from thirst. Saw many times to-day the "mirage" representing beautiful lakes in the distance overshadowed with trees, which in our situation was a most tantalizing sight. Saw in many places beautiful specimens of agate, chalcedony, cornelian and other stones - but just now, we are not in the humor for collecting. Late at night, we reached two or three wells in which we found a little brackish water, but nothing to eat for the animals, which we fed upon the remains of the muggito beans brought with us -



November 1849

19. Though we saw no living thing during the day, we heard plenty of wolves all night - I was awakened several times by their snuffing and pawing about my bed

20. Started early, and after a terrible day of toil and suffering, encamped at "New River" after having made 15 miles - An obliged to abandon mules long day, they being extremely weak and unable to walk with nothing on their backs - Our road through the desert is covered with the carcasses of animals, wagons and other articles abandoned by previous travellers

21. Remained in camp endeavoring to

22. mend our stock which have lately

23. suffered terribly for want of proper food; they having come all the way from the Maricopa village (258 miles) with not one 3 days old full amount of grass in all that time; their main subsistence being cane & cotton

November 1849

21. wood, which contains no nutriment  
22. in comparison with grass —

23. New River is situated in the center of the 90 mile desert, and some 2 months before our arrival, it was a fine running stream with abundance of fine grass upon its borders — At the time of our visit, the water had ceased running, being evaporated by the intense heat of the sun, and was extremely filthy, having been standing a long time in mud holes. The grass, although quite plentiful was nearly dry — Previous to this year, this spot was entirely destitute of grass or water like the rest of the desert — The general opinion is, that it was formed by an extraordinary rise and overflow of the Colorado. Though some of the Indians pretend to say that it was thrown up from the ground beneath, by some violent commotion of nature — However, let



November 1849

21. its origin be what it may, it has  
22. been the means of the preservation of  
23. the lives of many travellers as well  
as animals which would have been  
sacrificed upon this dreary desert, but  
for its timely aid) - Several of  
our animals have died since we  
arrived here, having become utterly  
exhausted - Found encamped here, in  
addition to a few other Americans, the  
Mexican Boundary Commissioners, with  
an escort of about 50 Mexican soldiers,  
The officers generally, appear to be men  
of Education and intelligence, but the  
soldiers appear to be but little  
better than brutes - They were very  
"Scarecrow" looking affairs, in comparison  
with whom, the regiment of Falstaff  
were as gold to rusty iron - No two of  
them were dressed alike, and they  
appeared like a collection made by some  
amateur of the scrapings of every  
regiment formed since the days of Noah

November 1849

24 - Our stock being a little recruited we left camp early in the morning and travelled some 15 miles and encamped a few hours - At 9 P.M. started again and after making 11 miles, encamped near a grove of mesquite trees at 3 A.M. where we turned the mules loose and let them eat ad lib: of the mesquite not being afraid of their giving us "by bail" - Road to-day extremely heavy, sandy and dusty; in all respects like that part of the desert already travelled over - Found ~~in~~ a very little water at camp being enough for us to wet our lips with, but none for the mules - Saw during the day, many specimens of the "mirage", which of course was tantalizing to us -

25. Made 19 miles, 5 of which we travelled in the night and finally encamped at 11 P.M. - Road and)



November 1849

25. weather as usual - Found a little water and grass, which our mules ate greedily - We have now passed the desert at last, and our spirits rise at the prospect of a speedy termination of our journey - Encamped off the wagon road upon the pack mule trail taken by Col. Collier, and which shortens our distance about 45 miles to San Diego

26. Made 6 miles to-day - This is the hardest days work yet, I think our labor consisting in forcing our mules up the side of a mountain very rocky and steep - By dint of most energetic and long continued labor, we at last succeeded in getting them up, I hardly know how - Some of them gave out entirely and we were forced to leave them behind - I had a mule given into my chaps to be brought to camp and after about 7 hours constant labor

November 1849

26. with the animal, only managed to  
advance one mile - By this time it  
was dark, and the rest of the company  
ahead of us, I knew not where - So  
I concluded I had better make track,  
and therefore unpacked the mule, hid  
the pack by the side of the road, and  
set out to join the camp - After  
travelling a considerable distance and  
seeing no camp fire ahead, I began  
to get a little uneasy, and wondered  
where the company had gone, as I  
knew they could not have gone far  
with such animals, as they had  
Fortunately I had in my pocket a  
Compass which I consulted, and by  
which it appeared I had been for some  
time going in a wrong direction - I  
lost no time in altering my course  
and at length had the satisfaction of  
seeing our camp fire at a distance  
Just after altering my course, on turning  
the corner of a large rock, I found



November 1849

26. myself suddenly face to face with  
a large wolf who stood at a distance  
of 10 feet eyeing me very intently as I  
passed, with a look which plainly  
said "If my appetite was a little  
better, I should like to try a small  
morsel of you" - I walked slowly past  
him with my gun in my hand and  
keeping a sharp look out upon his  
movements - after I passed him, he  
walked slowly off, occasionally stopping  
and looking back at me, apparently  
regretting that his appetite was not  
sharper - as soon as he disappeared,  
I lost no time in increasing the  
distance between us, being fearful that  
might possibly hold a consultation  
with some of his companions, and  
alter his mind - About 11 P. M. I  
reached our camp, which I found  
situated in a very pleasant valley  
in the mountains, where we here again  
enjoyed the luxuries of good grass, wood

November 1849

26. and water

27. Finished the ascent of the mountain to-day, but in order to do so, we were obliged to carry the packs ourselves up a very precipitous and difficult path for the distance of a mile, and thus almost literally carry up our animals after most strenuous exertions for 7 hours, we at last found ourselves and property at the top of the mountain upwards of 7000 feet above the desert - Made altogether 4 miles and encamped in beautiful little valley having every requisite for a camp

28. Made but 3 miles to-day having a fall of rain and sleet the whole day - We find in this elevated region very cold weather making a change any thing but agreeable to us, who have been accustomed for months back to



November 1849

28. extremely warm weather - We found among the mountains plenty of fallen trees of which we made huge bonfires, and which made us quite comfortable
29. Traveled to-day some 18 miles, most of which distance was a gradual descent from the mountains to the plain - Weather very chilly and dreary - Cold drizzling rain during part of the day - To-day, we celebrated Thanksgiving Day to the best of our ability, though all we were able to make ourselves with, was bacon, pine, & flapjacks and coffee without sugar or milk - However, we all had splendid appetites and enjoyed our fare quite as well as those who on that day 3000 miles east of us, were living on the fat of the land & found to-day wild cherries, which considering the season was in very good order
30. Made 27 miles through a lovely

November 1849

30. Country, and splendid weather  
Passed an Indian village and  
a deserted mission - The "fall  
grass" is now just coming up  
I heard here distinctly, the  
roar of the Pacific, 30 miles  
distant - Distance made in  
the month 289 miles -

Dec 1. Made 16 miles over a very  
hard and filthy road - Stopped at  
a ranch on the road where we  
bought bread, meat, tomatoes, &c &c  
at moderate rates - The people  
living there were very respectable  
and intelligent, and lived in a  
style of solid comfort which I  
have not seen among the Mexicans

2. After travelling 14 miles we  
at last reached San Diego after  
a toilsome journey from New York  
of 200 days, and heartily glad  
that our labors and anxieties were  
in a measure now disposed of



December 1849

2. The distance travelled by us, thus far, is as follows

- From New York	4497 miles
" Fort Smith	1994 "
" Santa Fe	1175 "

3  
4

I find San Diego to be quite a town and the residence of many very respectable Americans & Californians. Have been favored most of the time with heavy rains, and tolerably cold weather, producing a rather dreary and desolate appearance about the town - We find provisions scarce and extremely high - Sold here, our animals from \$15 to \$35 per head - Out of 81 animals with which we left Galisteo, we were only able to bring here 25, the balance having been abandoned at various times by us - We ought to consider <sup>ourselves</sup> ~~us~~ lucky to reach here with any at all - Had they been horses instead of mules, I

December 1849

3  
to  
9. I am tolerably certain that we should  
have brought none in - During  
the two last days of our stay here  
we have been permitted to occupy  
a deserted adobe house, which  
although it shelters us from the  
rain, swarms with vermin, from  
which we have received a full  
benefit

7.  
to  
29. Moved down to the "lower town"  
on the beach where the vessel, land  
in order to have a better chance  
of getting passage on some vessel to  
San Francisco - There is no water  
here, but it is in other respects a  
good camping ground - The bay  
abounds in fish and wild fowl,  
both of which can be procured with  
little trouble - Here are quartered  
some U. S. Deacons & Seafarers  
Saw at the upper town several bull  
fights, but by no means conducted



December 1849

4. 7. in the Spanish style - The performance  
to was quite flat, and only had one  
29. good feature about it, which was the  
admirable horsemanship of the  
Californians - The weather during our  
stay here, was warm & pleasant during  
the day, but cold at night - One I  
saw in the morning, ice as thick as  
a half dollar, which I believe is the  
only time I have seen it on the journey  
I have recently have arrived in port since  
our arrival, but we were unable to  
obtain passage on any of them

We are growing heartily tired of  
doing nothing here so long and long  
to arrive at the end of our journey

29. My friend Frank and I, having  
been fortunate enough to procure  
passage on the Big "Pelfast", set  
sail on her this morning, and after a  
passage of 14 days arrived safely  
at San Francisco on the evening of

The 11<sup>th</sup> January 1850 - For the  
privilege of the passage, we paid  
\$35 each, and in addition found  
our own victuals and cooked them  
ourselves - We slept in the hold with  
some 70 others almost entirely from  
the western states, and who were  
unusually verdant on all "salt  
water matters" most of them I suppose  
never having seen any water but fresh,  
in their lives - Most of the time we  
had very rough weather and the 70  
aforesaid suffered some in the way  
of sea-sickness, from which Frank  
and I were entirely exempt - On two  
occasions, in a thick fog, we narrowly  
escaped going ashore upon the  
"Santalones" off the entrance to the  
harbor of San Francisco - about which  
spot we were detained 8 days, in  
consequence of heavy fogs and adverse  
winds - Saw a number of whales



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upon the passage, but they were  
small, not being over 30 or 40  
feet in length - Occasionally we  
caught a flying fish upon deck  
Now I would enter a protest against  
travelling again in company with any  
wretched crew; for a more filthy  
and brastly set of people in their  
habits, it is impossible to find

At length, our journey of toil  
hardship and privation is ended;  
and though we arrive with but our  
skins and the clothes upon our backs,  
yet we are young and in the full  
possession of our mental & physical  
faculties, and are duly grateful to  
the mighty hand which thus  
far has supported us through many  
trying scenes, for the preservation  
of those faculties

<u>Distance travelled</u>	<u>Miles</u>
From New York to Fort Smith	2503
" Fort Smith to Santa Fe	819
" Santa Fe to San Diego	1175
" San Diego to San Francisco	800
<hr/>	
Total miles	5097

<u>Time in travelling</u>	<u>days</u>
From New York to Fort Smith	23
Laid at Fort Smith	16
From Fort Smith to Santa Fe	96
Laid at Santa Fe	32
From Santa Fe to San Diego	92
Laid at San Diego	27
From San Diego to San Francisco	14
<hr/>	
Total days	300

<u>Number of days in which we travelled</u>	
From Fort Smith to Santa Fe	60
" Santa Fe to San Diego	66
<hr/>	
	126

Average time from over  
 actual travelling time, whole route 163  
 Laid at camps, ————— 137 = 300



Actual average distance per day upon  
the days we actually travelled

From Fort Smith to Santa Fe	with wagons	137
From Santa Fe to San Diego	with pack mules	18
From Fort Smith to San Diego		16

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Amount of travelling by me	smiles	
Steam & Stage		250
On foot		700
Horseback		
going ahead on regular road	1094	
Hunting mules & other duties	375	1469
In Wagons		200
Sail Vessel		600
		<hr/>
	Miles	5472

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During the whole of the trip, I  
constantly enjoyed the most robust  
health, and actually weighed 20  
lb. heavier than when I was in  
New York - Some of the Company  
however, were occasionally attacked  
with fevers or dysentery at various  
times - The weather since leaving  
Fort Smith was, with few exceptions  
very warm, with less rain than  
usually falls at the north  
Shower when they do fall, are  
however very copious, accompanied  
with thunder, lightning and wind  
on a magnificent scale

Had we been better furnished  
with animals, wagons &c &c  
I doubt not we should have been  
able to make our journey in one  
half the time we did, and saved



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ourselves a considerable amount of  
labor, care and vexation, and should  
have been better off, pecuniarily -  
we should have arrived much earlier  
in California and at a season when  
there was every chance of doing well.

In conclusion, the writer would  
say, that this book has been  
written at many different times  
after the business of the day was  
over from his original memoranda  
which were hastily scribbled down  
at the close of each day by the  
light of the camp fire - and  
although he is sensible that it  
contains many defects both in style  
and information, he hopes that its  
reader will make due allowance for  
all defects, as the business of  
writing books is entirely out of his  
regular line, and his chief endeavor

in this small effort, has been to  
produce a true narrative of a  
journey over a part of country but  
little understood before 1849, for  
the amusement of those interested  
in his fortunes at home

Geo. Frisbie

Late Treasurer to the  
Navilah Mining Ass<sup>ns</sup>

San Francisco  
March 1850