THE UNITED STATES IN 1829

VIA MAZATLAN & VERA CRUZ

Captain Elliot Libbey reports to the owners of the trading Barque Tasso from "St.Diego March 4.1845" as follows: "Mess Wm Appleton & Co./Gent/ I arrived in this port on the 12th inst after a very long and tedious passage of 188 days having experienced very severe weather during most of the passage - the Barque proves herself to be staunch and strong, and as tight as a bottle. I immediately on my arrival despatched a courier to Mr.Mellus* agreeable to your instructions and am now daily expecting him, the country upon my arrival was in a State of revolution which is now all settled, I received on the 28th inst an order from the head department to leave here and proceed to Monterey but before I could get ready for Sea by getting water on board, an extraordinary courier arrived countermanding the order and that I should remain in this place until the arrival of Mr.Mellus - it appiars by a letter I Saw a few days since written by Mr.Mellus he has not received your favour forwarded before sailing of the Barque as he writes that he has seen by papers received by the way of the Sandwich Islands the clearing of the Bark, but says he does not know to whom she is consigned. the Barnstable sailed on the 17th of December with a full cargo of 32,000 hides - there is now in this house about 10,000 hides but the prospect looks very bad in the leeward ports for this season as there has not been any rains during the winter, if you Should despatch another Ship next fall please send for the Barque some molasses as the[re] was only enough put on board for two years giving the regular allowence to each man of one quart pr.man - there is nothing else that I am in want of at the present. Please acept my Sincere thanks and wishes for your prosperity. Your Obst/Elliot Libbey"

Barque Tasso "

*Henry Mellus was the supercargo [agent] to the trading ships TASSO & ADMITTANCE.

Elliot Libbey

Letter was carried by a ship from San Diego to Mazatlan, Mexico, where it was given to MOTT TALBOT & CO. and then forwarded by them to VERA CRUZ, where it entered the mails on "April 14" 1845. On arrival at NEW ORLEANS MAY 6, it was rated "SHIP 27" cents - 2 cents ship fee and 25 cents postage. The postage and forwarding (if any) charges through Mexico were apparently paid in cash. See Bull letter opposite page.

CALIFORNIA HIDE & TALLOW TRADE 1846

Folded letter written from "Monterey March 7,1846" by Captain Elliott Libbey of the American bark TASSO. It was handed over to Thomas O.Larkin, the U.S. Consul, who forwarded it "pr Brig Hannah" to Mazatlan,Mexico. Thence overland to Vera Cruz.where it was given to a ship bound for New Orleans,where it was placed in the mails as per postmark "NEW ORLEANS La MAY 3" 1846 and rated "SHIP 12".The reverse of cover bears the scarce handstamp FORWARDED BY THOMAS O LARKIN MONTEREY CALIFORNIA.

Libbey writes to the owners of the ship back in Boston:" Mr.Mellus (Henry) writes all the particulars concerning business &. On the last passage up from the leeward coast to this place I discovered the ship Bonsprit to be very rotten and split badly and I shall be under the necessity of getting a new one and putting it in in St. Francisco....We are all expecting the Barnstable. Mr. Mellus will remain here until she arrives while I proceed to St.Francisco.....I am in hopes to be able to leave the coast next winter with a cargo of 30,000 hides at least....."

U.S.PRIZE BRIG MALEK ADHEL*

" St.Diego,California January 20th 1847

"This will be forwarded by the U.S.Prize brig Malek Adhel which sails with government dispatches in a day or two.....California now belongs to the United States the particulars you will learn by my letter to Melissa...when we shall have collected 11000 Hides in addition to what we now have our cargo will be complete - in all probability we shall load for home in July next which will bring us home in the winter of /48.....we leave this place for St. Pedro on our way to St.Francisco as i trust for the last time...how bitterly disappointed i was upon the arrival of the Barnstable in not having a letter from you.....our carpenter owns 640 acres of land in Texas and offers me 320 acres provided that i will at my return remove my family thither.the land he says is situated about 30 miles only from Galveston.....John C.Bull"

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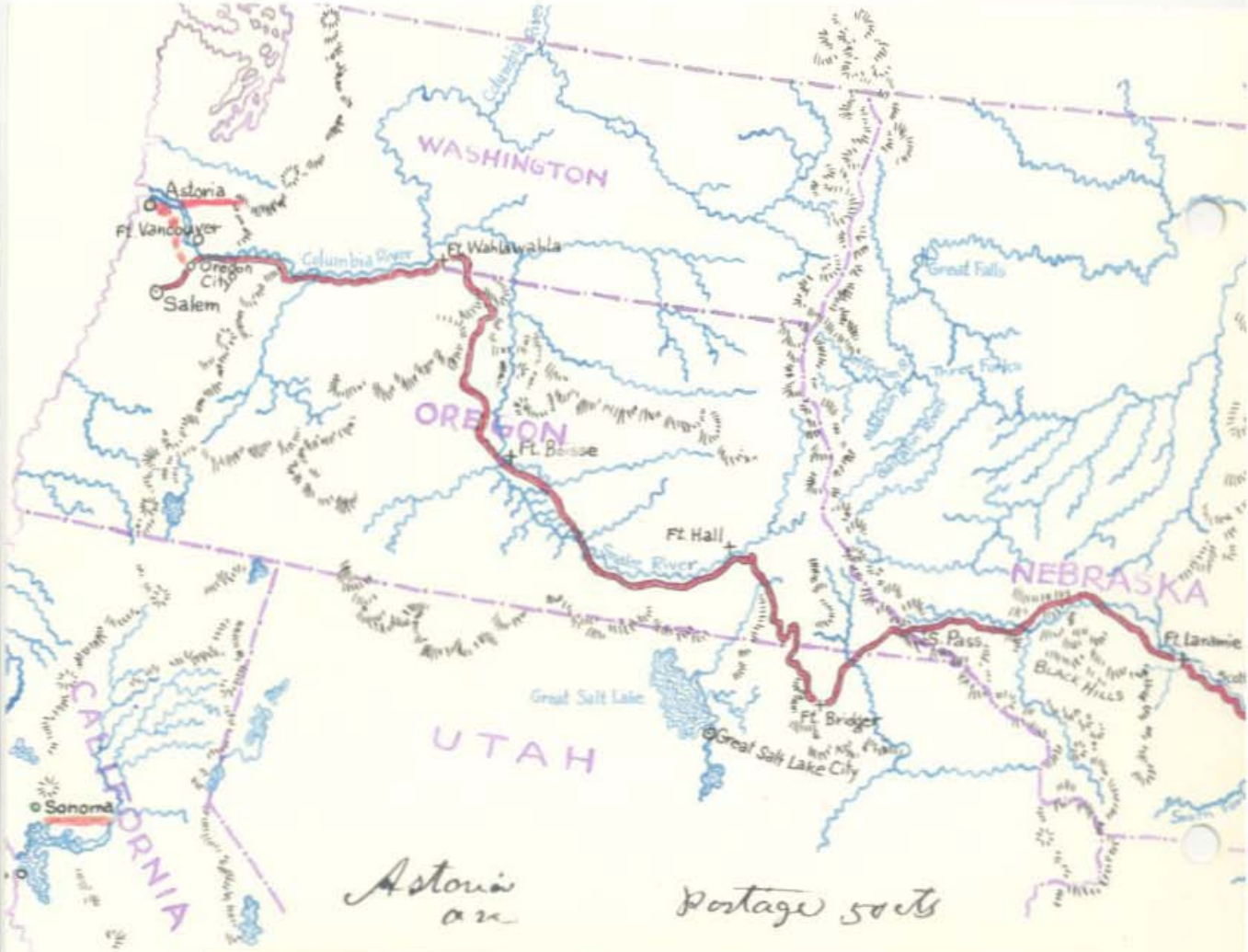
*The **MALEK ADHEL** was captured by the U.S.S.Warren at Mazatlan on September 7th,1846 and sold at San Francisco in September of 1847.In all probability the Malek Adhel carried this letter to Mazatlan or some other neutral port where it was carried overland to the Gulf of Mexico and thence by ship to New Orleans where it was placed in the mails. The partial strike of the numeral 10 is from that post office.




Lawrence Ville
Pa Aug 17
50
Paid 10
Postage 50 cts
Mr Ralph Lee Hilburn
Sonoma upper California
Mexico
Astoria
Or
To the care of the Post
Master at Independence
Jackson County - Mo
to be forwarded the first
opportunity

Oregon Trail — First Official Mail

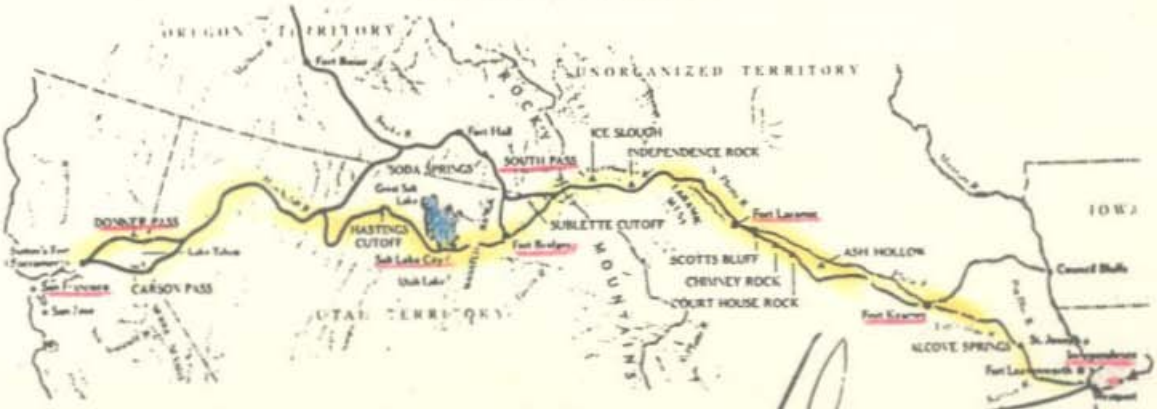
This letter originated, as per postmark, at "Lawrence Ville Pa Aug 17" 1846. It was routed to "SONOMA UPPER CALIFORNIA / MEXICO via TO THE CARE OF THE POST / MASTER AT INDEPENDENCE / JACKSON COUNTY - Mo. TO BE FORWARDED THE FIRST / OPPORTUNITY." Here it laid in the Post Office until the spring of 1847.

On March 9, 1847, John M. Shively was officially commissioned to carry the mails and government despatches to Oregon, and to establish the first U.S. Post Office west of the Rocky Mountains at Astoria, Oregon.

The *SPECTATOR* of Oregon City, under date of Sept. 2, 1847, reported in its columns that an advance company of 16 wagons, under guidance of a Capt. Nat Bowman, was camped within twelve miles of the Dalles, and *"we learned that Mr. Shively, who has been in Wasington City, was in company with a large quantity of papers and letters for the settlers in Oregon."*

On Sept. 8th the *SPECTATOR* reported that John M. Shively, Deputy Postmaster at Astoria, had arrived in that city the evening of Sept. 7th.

When Shively finally arrived in Astoria, he postmarked the letter "Astoria On," rated it Postage 50 cts," and forwarded it to California. The "Paid 10" was the rate from Lawrence Ville to Independence.



THE EMIGRANT TRAIL TO THE GOLDEN WEST 1849

10
40
50

This letter originated at Granville, Ohio on August 26, 1848. It is addressed to Captain Joseph Aram in Monterey, California, via Independence, Missouri, with the following directive: **It is politely requested that the Post Master at Independence Missouri will forward this by the first opertunity/Callifornia.** The Postmaster at Independence rated the letter 10¢ from Granville to Independence and a 40¢ forwarding charge to California, making a total rate of 50¢ collect. The letter apparently laid in the Independence Post Office until the opportunity to forward it arrived on about June 21, 1849. It was probably carried overland by an emigrant wagon train.

Of historical note, the writer states: "I receved yours dated March 19, 1848 Monterey. **Supose it came by Lieutenant Carson favour to St. Louis.**" The celebrated Kit Carson, fur trapper, guide, and Army Scout, made three trips from California carrying despatches and mail to the east coast - 1846 - 1847 - 1848. Lt. Brewerton, who was with Carson on his last trip, states that the party left Los Angeles May 4th. The *St. Louis Reveille* gives the date as May 5th when reporting the arrival of Carson in Saint Louis on July 31, 1848.


MIGRANTS CROSS GREAT
PLAINS HEADING TO CALIFORNIA.
BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

GOLD FEVER 1848!

"Monterey,Cala.Oct 23,1848" Dramatic letter written by Wm.Rich, Army Paymaster to General Towson, during the excitement of the gold rush and its effect on the military.The following is the entire transcript of the letter: "I arrived on the 18th inst. from San Diego;and have paid the four companies of the 1st New York Regiment in full,[Col.J.D.Stevenson commander],and they have all started for the gold mines.The three companies composing the command of Lt.Col.Burton are now here and will muster out today or tomorrow and paid by Major Hill immediately,as the residents are extremely anxious to get rid of them:they have the place in their power.Nearly all the men of Company "F" 3d Artillery,have deserted.We have the Ohio,Warren,Dale,Lexington and Southampton[U.S.War ships]in port,but they cannot land a man,as they desert as soon as they set foot on Shore,the only thing the Ships could do in case of an outbreak would be to fire upon the town.The Volunteers at Santa Barbara,Los Angeles &c behaved very well,no murmuring or difficulties of any kind with them:they complained that they were not allowed traveling allowance. The funds from Mazatlan[Mexico]have at last reached here,the amount is $130,000:it arrived very opportunely as we have expended nearly all we had.The amount is a great deal more than will be required as there are at present but two companies in California,one of 1'Dragoons the other of 3d.Artillery, the latter reduced to a mere skeleton by desertion,and the former in a fair way to share the same fate.I should suppose $20,000: would be sufficient to pay the present force(provided the companies are filled up)for a year.Treasury Notes are good for nothing now;Bills on the United States could not be negotiated on any terms.Gold dust can be purchased for eight or ten dollars the ounce and it is said to be worth $18.00 in the U.States,consequently all remittances are made in it. Col.Mason[Richard B.,later General]and most of the Army officers are at Fort Sutter.Commodore Jones[Thomas Ap Catesby]thinks it would be very imprudent to bring the public funds on shore except in such sums as may be required for immediate use;he does not like to leave a ship here on account of the difficulty of keeping the men. The whole of the 1' New York Regiment may be considered as paid off; the last two companies are to be mustered and paid today. The only accounts outstanding,which I am aware of are,are Col.Stevenson's for July 1848,Capt.N.Taylors for Oct.& Nov.1847,& Lt.E. Williams for July 1848,all which have been transferred to their famalies to be paid in the United States. The gold fever rages as bad as ever and the quantity collected has not diminished but increases.Provisions,clothing and all the necessaries of life are at most exorbitant prices,living was always expensive in this country,but now it passes all reason,board four dollars per day,washing five to six dollars per dozen.Merchant's clerks are receiving from $1,800: to $3,000: per annum salary! what the Government will do for civil officers I do not know.Salaries will have to correspond with the times.The pay of Governors, Judges &c as allowed in the United States,will hardly compare with that paid to salesmen & shop clerks here. Wm.Rich"

GOLD FEVER 1848!

Folded letter above originated at Monterey,California Oct. 23,1848 and was probably carried by a ship to Mazatlan or Acapulco,Mexico. At this point it was probably handled by the British as indicated by the manuscript "1/"shilling rate. On arrival at Vera Cruz,as per postmark on reverse. it was placed in the Mexican mails and forwarded to New Orleans,where it arrived on "JAN 12"1849.It was then rated SHIP and forwarded collect to Washington.

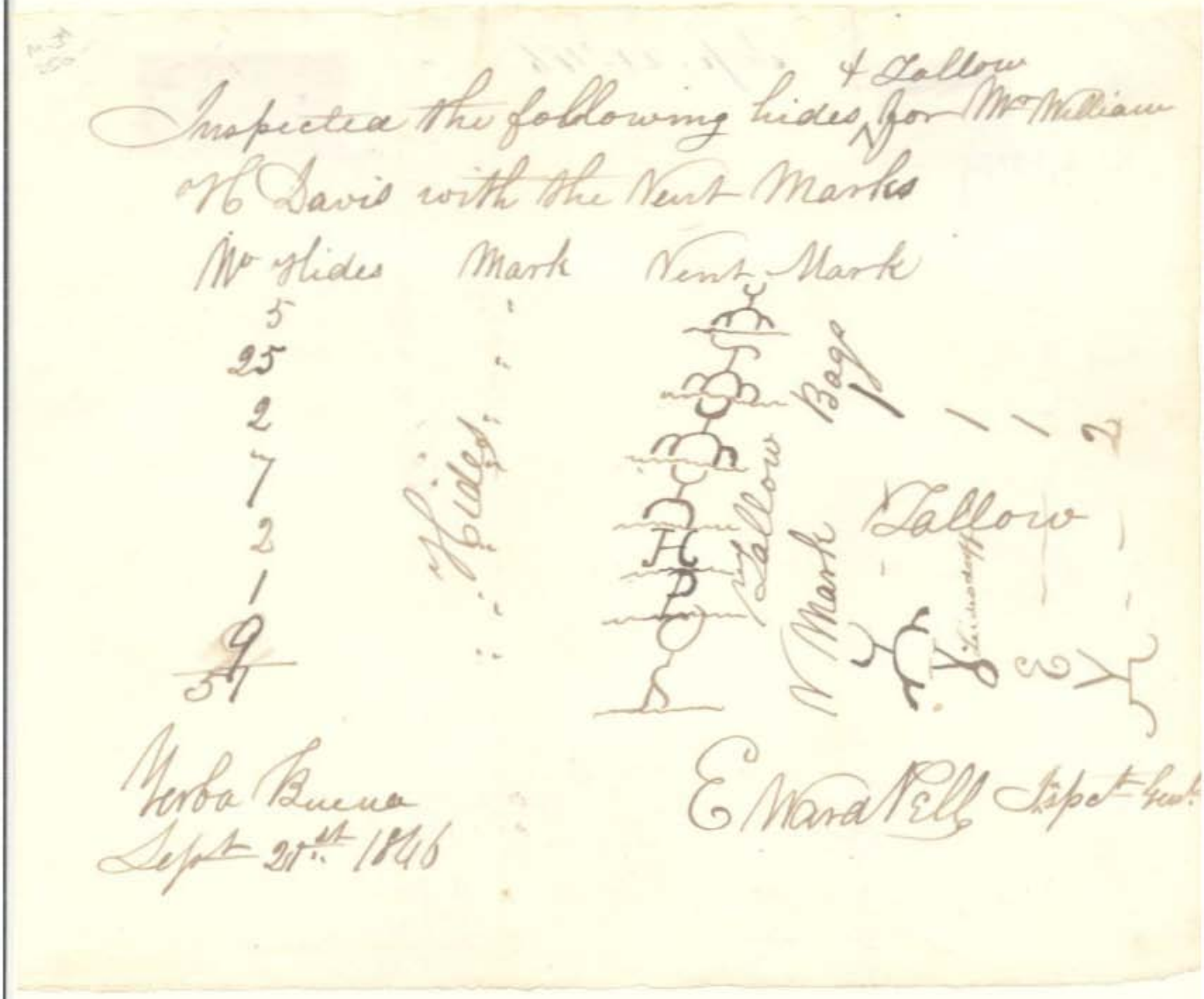
GOLD FEVER 1848!

"MONTEREY,CALA.Oct.23,1848" Dramatic letter by Wm.Rich,Army Paymaster to General Nathan Towson,during the excitement of the gold rush and its effect on the military situation in California.The following extracts are from the letter: "I arrived on the 18th inst.from San Diego;and have paid the four companies of the 1st New York Regiment in full,[Col.J.D.Stevenson commander],and they have all started for the gold mines....the command of Lt.Col.Burton are now here and will muster out today....as the residents are extremely anxious to get rid of them....Nearly all the men of Co."F" 3d Artillery, have deserted.We have the Ohio,Warren,Dale,Lexington and Southampton[U.S. War Ships]in port,but they cannot land a man,as they desert as soon as they set foot on shore,the only thing the Ships could do in case of an outbreak would be to fire upon the town.....Treasury Notes are good for nothing now...Gold dust can be purchased for eight or ten dollars the ounce and it is said to be worth $18.00 in the U.States ....Col.Mason and most of the Army officers are at Fort Sutter..... THE GOLD FEVER RAGES AS BAD AS EVER and the quantity collected has not diminished but increases....." A great letter!

[29] [CATTLE BRANDS.] Pell, E. Ward. Original autograph manuscript signed, showing Pell's inspection of various hides and tallow for Mr. William H. Davis, with the number of hides listed and the brand marks on them drawn in. 1 p., 8vo. Yerba Buena, 21 September 1846.

Pell was one of the Mormon colony, an elder and a counsellor, who was excommunicated and became an inspector of hides and tallow. Davis was the California pioneer, who wrote *Sixty Years in California*. One of the brands belonged to Leidesdorf. This must be one of the earliest records of American brandmarks in California.

Edward Eberstadt catalog #159,lot 29.


Inspected the following hides & Tallow for Mr William H Davis with the Vent Marks

No Hides	Mark	Vent Mark
5		
25		
2		
7		
2		
1		
9		
51		

Hides

Tallow Bags 1 1 2

Tallow

Vent Mark

Yerba Buena
Sept 21st 1846

E Ward Pell Insp't Gen'l

YERBA BUENA, on San Francisco Bay, was the nucleus of what was to become the City of San Francisco. It was first settled by Captain Wm. A. Richardson in 1822. He was the "solitary settler" which was described by Richard H. Dana, Jr., in his book "Two Years Before the Mast"

U.S. CONSULATE TALEAHUANO, CHILE.

Cover on left dated Feb.15,1848 was routed "via Panama", was carried by the captain of a ship to Callao, Peru. where it was delivered to "care of J.H. Johnson to be forwarded to New Bedford, Mass. It entered the mails as per postmark - NEW YORK SHIP JUN 25/7 cts and thence by the regular mails to its destination. It had been kept out of the British mails to save postage, taking over four months ro reach New York.

The writer, William Crosby was the U.S. consul at Taleahuano until 1851. In both letters he sends the Editor of the "Whalemen's Shipping List", information on the arrival of American Whalers, giving names of ships and masters out of New England ports and their cargos. He is no longer the Consul, "being relieved from the burden of official business, through the kindness of the President", and that he has established the firm of Keen, Crosby & Co., Ship Chandlers & Commission Merchants. Also, "About five days ago the people rose in revolt against the government and overturned it completely". The letter below was forwarded by **ZACHRISSON, NELSON & CO.** via Panama The above quotes are from this letter dated Sept.19, 1851.

"Santa Fe N.M. April 4th 1849 "

"Dear Brother Newton The night of the 30th ult brot us a mail from the states, the first we have had for more than four months - & with it your letter of 28th Dec last & from that, back as far as the early part of September some four or five in all. Also the one from father, forwarded by you, it is come of heartful congratulations once more to hear from you all & unfigned gratitude to heaven that you were all the alive & enjoying usual health. The reception of your last letter just as this particular time, seems opportune & well fitted to my purposes & feelings, for I was almost on the point of starting for California when it came, having concluded sometime since to go there - I have nearly completed my arrangements & expect to start in a day or two in company with about forty others. We take two or three wagons with provisions for 60 days about which time we expect it will take us to perform the trip; for it is from here by the practiable wagon route not less than 1200 miles*, we are only half-way from St Louis via Santa Fe, but I think we can get there before they all do, altho some must beat us! I presume the excietment here concerning the Grand El Dorado [discovery of gold], is at best as great as anywhere in the states, everybody is going that can get off & many who cannot runaway, some start on foot & risk geting a mule on the way by trading with the Indians. It is so all the way down to Chiwawa [Chihuahua] & from every point in Mexico of which I hear: Santa Fe will soon be nearly deserted ofits Am. population consequently business must continue very dull until arrivals from the states begin to come in. - Our party expect to follow generally the road laid down on the Maps by Coln. Cook, from this place we go down the Chiwawa road within about 60 miles of ElPasso, thence strike across to the Gila[river] a little below the "Copper & Gold Mine" - down the south side of this River to its mouth, then either cross the Colorado [river] or make a raft & go to its mouth & there take shiping* . - The object of all is to make as straight a coat-tail for the Gold Mines as possible to get there as quick as possible & to get as much as possible when we doget there. I am extremely anxious toget home & intend to take water [ship] for that place this fall, but as I return by way of California I shall probably stop there afew weeks while I can collect afew hundred pounds of Gold wh[ich], when I arrive at N.Orelans can charge off for coin & have something to bring home with me. I cannot tell where you may next write me with certainty, but think it quite probable letters addressed to the Town of San Francisco, or Gold Mines, would reach me via N.Orleans - The Indians have broke loose & war again rages round about us, a Battalion of volunteer troops has been called out the last company of which takes the field tomorrow, it would do you good to see with what avidity these Mexicans flock to the standard, & how awkward they appear with our arms & uniform - all the com's but one are composed of Mexicans*. I could have had a commission had I wished but my ardour is somewhat abated in that line. It is now after one o.c. night[1 AM] & I have been working hard Packing up my things for a start so I beg you will excuse all deficiencies - I shall write you as often as I have opportunity - You might address me general letters as before indicated wh[ich] if they did not come would not matter materially. I expect to be in the before mentioned place & from what I can learn the going & comeing will be principly from that quarter.....I must now retire to rest, for the chicks are crowing for day. E.B.Bateman"

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* It took 135 days from Santa Fe to California. See Bateman's letters after he had reached his destination in California, in this collection - August 26th and October 4, 1849.

Santa Fe N. M. April 4th 1849.

Dear Brother Newton

The night of the 30th ult brought us a mail from the States, the first we have had for more than four months — & with it your letter of 28th Dec last & from that, back as far as the early part of September some four or five in all also the one from father, forwarded by you; it is some of heartfelt congratulation once more to have from you all & of unfeigned gratitude to heaven that you were all then alive & enjoying usual health.

The receipt of your last letter just at this particular time, seems opportune & well fitted to my purposes & feelings, for I was almost on the point of starting for California when it came, having concluded sometime since to ~~start~~ go there I have nearly completed my arrangements & expect to start in a day or two in company with about forty others. We take two or three wagons with provissions for 60 days about which time we expect it will take us to perform the trip; for it is thought, we shall start on foot & then pack mules on the way by trading with the Indians. It is so all the way down to Chihuahua & from every point in Mexico of which I hear; Santa Fe will soon be nearly deserted of its American population

INDEPENDENCE
MAY
25
MO.

3

Prof. Newton Bateman
St Charles
Mo

Sullivan Aug. 26th 1849.

Honorable & Venerable Father

Dear Sir, the time is, & doubtless appears long to you, since you have received any communication from me direct, but it has been for the want of an opportunity - True I have written afew lines to Newton at the great uncertainty of his ever receiving: but in case he does, with Special request he will advise you of the same immediately.

I arrived here on the 20th inst, after a very tedious journey of 135 days from Santa Fe. Our rout was down the Rio Grande 150 miles to Socoro, thence across the mountains to the head-waters of the Rio Gila, thence down that River to a point six miles below its mouth where we crossed the Rio Colorado of the West; thence across the Great Desert & through the mountains again to the Puablo Las Angalos, or "City of the Angels," thence on & near the ~~east~~ coast northward about 250 miles, thence Eastward across the Mountains again to the head of the Tulalles Lake in the Tulary Valley, thence across & up the Rio del Rey, or Kings River to the point where it emenates from the Base of the Siera Nevada, thence a north-westerly course up the valley & across the Mercey, Tuwalamie, Merri-posas, Stanish-Low & a branch of the San joaquin Rivers to Stockton; - thence to this place 75 miles; which is a small stream emptying into the Tuwalamie twelve miles distant. From the point where I last struck into the mountains you will perceive a great digression from the ordinary rout, this was owing to our having fallen in with a Detachment of Dragoons dispatched to the head of Kings River to chastise some Indians who had recently killed a party of Americans & we thought it a good opportunity to penetrate where others had failed & have the first chance at the Gold which is said to exist there in great quantity, but greatly to our disappointment on arriving in about two days travel of the designated point, we learned the Indians had fled far into the Snowy mountains - Our Rations falling short & animals broke down, the commanding Officer determined to proceed asfast as possible to the neighborhood of Stockton; where he was ordered to

GOLD 1849 - ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY FIVE DAYS FROM SANTA FE

Letter written by E.B. Bateman from Sullivan, California on Aug. 26th 1849. It is postmarked at San Francisco Oct. 1 and rated 40 cents via Panama. He describes his overland journey from Santa Fe to California:

"I arrived on the 20th inst. after a very tedious journey of 135 days from Santa Fe. Our rout was down the Rio Grande 150 miles to Socoro, thence across the mountains to the head-waters of the Rio Gila, thence down that river to a point six miles below its mouth where we crossed the Rio Colorado of the West; thence across the Great Desert & through the mountains again to the Puablo Los Angalos, or 'City of Angels', thence on & near the coast northward about 250 miles, thence eastward across the mountains again to the head of the Tulalles Lake in the Tulary Valley, thence across & up the Rio del Rey, or Kings River to the point where it emenates from the base of the Siere Nevada, thence a northwesterly course up the valley & across the Mercey, Tuwalamie, Merri-posas, Stanish-Low & a branch of the San Jouquin Rivers to Stockton; thence to his place 75 miles; which is a small stream emptying into the Tuwalamie twelve miles distant.

"From the point where I last struck into the mountains you will perceive a great digression from the ordinary rout. This was owing to our having fallen in with a detachment of Dragoons dispatched to the head of Kings River to chastise some Indians who had recently killed a party of Americans & we thought it a good opportunity to penetrate where others had failed & have the first chance at the Gold which is said to exist there in great quantity, but greatly to our disappointment on arriving in about two days travel of the designated point we learned the Indians had fled far into the snowy mountains. Our rations falling short & animals broke down, the commanding officer determined to proceed as fast as possible to the neihborhood of Stockton . . . The Gold region as far as discovered, you will perceive has two great natural divisions by the water-courses they contain, the one with the Sacremento & the other the San Jouquin & their tributaries. I am in the last mentioned region . . . I intend to practice medicine & what leisure I may have spend in picking up loose Gold scattered about the surface . . . have just recd. report of the death of Ex President Polk, Coln. Benton, Genl. Worth . . . also destructive (steamboat) fire in St Louis & the overflow of N. Orleans." He also comments on the cost of living in the California of the GOLD RUSH - 1849.

Sullivan Sept, 30th 1849.

Dear Brother Newton.

I arrived at this place on the 20th Ult 135 Days from Santafe. This is 75 miles from Stockton & 200 miles from San Francisco, on a tributary to & twelve miles from its confluence with the Tualumne River: at this immediate point there is not a great number at present, but in the nighborhood (say) within three miles there are probably Three Thousand & yet this region from all accounts is more sparsely populated than most others & the cry is : still they come. There is a strong feeling here, & which I think is every day gaining ground that great Events are pending the next two years, or less time, & which the immense emigration will tend to hasten. I wish I could be there or you here, then.

The climate is sulubrious & the people in this region generally healthy, (altho, I hear of considerable sickness in other parts,) but the heat & excessive drouth are pppressive during the hours of sunshine - you will recollect that we have no rain, nor any clouds, during the entire warm season (say) from april to january or there-abouts, I have seen none of consequence on either side of the Rocky-Ridge since last march.

It is about 50 days sail from San Francisco to China & about ~~12~~ twelve to the Sandwich Islands, from which; and I believe, from all other countries, there are people here, seeking what appear to be generally considered "The one thing needful."

The mining region so far as discovered & worked, comprises a strip of country from eight to twenty miles wide, running parrellel with the mountains & the Tulare Valley, having for its western boundary the margin of the latter & its Eastern, the superior hills (not the principle mountains) of the former. To these limits the experince & opinions of nearly all testify. altho, there are some who think there must be a grand fountain head, to so much Treasure higher up in the mountains, in quest of which several Exploring Parties have already been out, and others are going: I have in contemplation seting out shortly with a party for a region lying

South-East of Kings River. we take with us an experinced Mountaineer & Indian - Man - one who has formerly been employed by Goverment as such for Guide. He declares he knows where the (Big Slugs lie.)
The mines at this point are very rich, but the Gold lies from 8 to 20 feet beneath the surface, the ground is rocky & the water very troublesome. from all accounts the excavation in all the other Districts, is lighter than this, I have been dividing my time somewhat between mining & Medicnie, but find the laboring part heavier than I am able to bear & unfortunatly the stock of medicines I have is so meagre as to afford few facilities in the line of my profession. My health has been very poor the last ten days & unless it materially improves, shall not attempt the expedition before - mentioned. I have but one object of great anxiety & solicitude - that is my dear father, whom I greatly fear I shall see no more on Earth - God grant these fears may not be realised - My mind at ease on this subject, I would be comparatively happy, but it never can be until I hear from him & when O' when shall that be I shall in a day or two send to Stockton for letters & earnestly hope there may be some there. I think by this time you have ceased expecting my return the present year & how can you reasonably expect it when you notice the Dates. My anxiety to return is greater then you can possibly imagine, but at present I cannot, for according to the best estimates I have been able to make, it would cost from here to St Louis (comfortably) 500$ which is a little more than I can at present command, altho, I have made some & have got it now, yet it is not enough: But just as soon as I can accumulate enough to moderately compensate me for my time & toil - homeward I go. I I do wonder if you are married yet; how I would be delighted to see the Fair Prospective: tell me in your next all you know about it.
I forgot in my last ~~to make~~ in my haste, to make acknowledgements oy your last recieved at Santa Fe, which gave me great satisfaction. Your response to the Revd Gentleman above, was mine exactly - the transition with the Doctor was equally pleasing - Resp that little article - a

presant from your brother, sacred to his memory & never part with it on any account. The measures taken for ///// the recovery of the scattered relicks of the of other days I hope ere this have been entierly successful - Those once concentrated in proper hands. I hope in future to make no such other scatteration, for all of these kind officers you will please accept a brothers sincere thanks.

Inclosed are spcimens of California Gold, that taken in this region is generall much larger, but I send the small because ~~ll~~ less liable to detedtion - the average run may be fairly set down at from 6¼ cts to 50$ in value - the piece, observe it is perfectly pure & of the finest quality, no ore, no intermixtion of any kind, the pur original Virgon Gold & this is characteristic of all taken in this country.

Forever your off Bro.

E.B.Bateman

Address me Stockton Upper California.

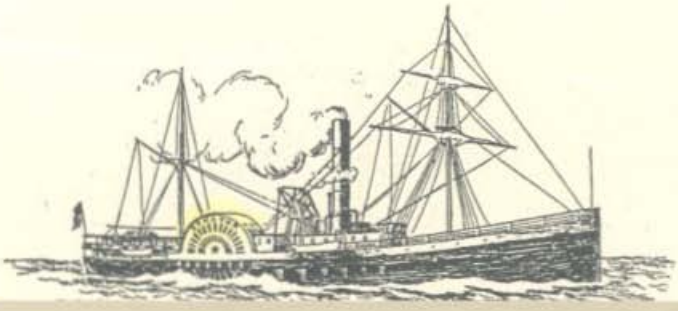
Stockton T.C.
Oct 4th

Sullivan, Sept. 30th 1849.

TERRITORY OF CALIFORNIA 1849

This letter, routed **"Via Panama"**, was placed in the mails and postmarked at **"Stockton T.C."** (Territory of California) on **"Oct. 4th"** (1849). From there it went to San Francisco where it was canceled, rated 40 cents and forwarded to Missouri via Panama.

Bateman writes to his brother, from Sullivan on September 30th, after his 135 days journey from Santa Fe. He gives an account of his journey, but much less detailed than the description he gave his father (see letter in this exhibit). The following is from the letter: "there are some who think there must be a grand fountain head to so much Treasure higher up in the mountains, in quest of which several Exploring Parties have also been out, and others are going. I have in contemplation seting out shortly with a party for a region lying South-East of Kings River. We take with us an experienced Mountaineer & Indian Man. One who has formerly been employed by Government as such for Guide. He declares he knows where the (Big Slugs lie). The mines at this point are very rich but the Gold lies from 8 to 20 feet beneath the surface . . . I shall in a day or two send to Stockton for letters . . . Inclosed are specimens of California Gold. That taken in this region is generally much larger, but I send the small because (it) has (less) lible to detection . . . "



STEAMER SENATOR SACRAMENTO RIVER

1849

The SENATOR was one of the best known steamboats to operate on the Sacramento River during the gold rush period. It was a sidewheeler of 740 tons, with auxiliary sail, built at New York in 1848. On March 10, 1849 she left for San Francisco via Cape Horn, arriving in that port on October 27th. She was immediately put into service on the San Francisco/Sacramento City river run. The folded letter is datelined "**Sacramento River Steamer Senator Dec 27 1849 25 miles from San Francisco 2 O.C.P.M.**" , two months after the Senator had arrived from New York. The following is taken from the letter written onboard the SENATOR by Merit Welton. He writes regarding mail from home and sending Gold: " The last remittence was Sixty two & a half ounces worth$1000 here & I am in hopes 1200 or 1300 there - I paid $ 70 freight & Ins[urance]. I shall write every opportunity & send money when I can send safe....I have travelled from Sutters Mill to Sacramento City which stands on the Sac. River 100 miles above S.Francisco...The roads are almost impassable....It rains almost every day & 20 miles feuther North it snowes as the Mts are all white & and do not look over 10 miles from the Mill.....San Francisco Dec 28th 1849 2 O.C.P.M.- I went to the [Post] Office as soon as arose this morning & being there an hour before it opened I was the 4th man & obtained 6 letters....I cannot get letters without Ceruesy [Currency] here & then spending half a day at the P.O.....The people up in the revines would gladlly pay 1 Oz of Gold a letter if they could have them on the arrival of the mail here or in one week afterwards but they cannot & it is all luck & chance about getting any letters here, even by applying at the P.O. & waiting your turn. The mud here is very bad - you cannot possibly go out without being in the mud (which is excellent clay Morter) about 4 or 5 inches - by picking round & going bettween Houses & back side & in the middle of the street it is up to a Horses belly. There has been a fire here which has burned up one Block of some Millions of Dolls but the speed with which they are putting it [back] again [is like] N.York for dexterity.....Merit Welton"

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The letter transcribed below was written from the Platte River Ferry, also known as the Mormon Ferry, on the North Fork of the Platte, near present day Casper, Wyoming. According to the writer this letter was carried east by the Captain of the Ferry in the fall of 1852 and placed in the mails at St.Joseph Nov.8. It was carried FREE to the post office and charged "10" cents to its destination. No month date, but 1852 written on address sheet.

Platte River Ferry 125 miles from Fort Laramie

In 1852 Saml H. Graham writes from the "Platte River Ferry 125 miles from Fort Laramie: "Dear Uncle I have just been informed by the Captain of the Ferry that he would carry letters back to the States or nearest post office free of charge as soon as the Emigration was past & here I have seated myself upon the ground with my paper spread out upon my pack to sketch a few lines & let you know where Iam & how we are getting along &.....I cannot enter into particulars as my time is 25 minutes to write -all the Boys are well & in good spirits - D.L. Norton says for me write what he is doing - he is eating lasses with a spoon by the side of me - the rest are getting dinner - We sold our wagon at Fort Laramie for 6 Dollars (six$) & some Bacon at 10 cts - Flour 13 cts pr lb. we left the Fort the 5th & find packing a speedeer way of traveling - we make from 25 to 35 miles per day - our provisions consist in Bacon & hard Bread - Dried peaches Tea & Coffee - sugar & some Flour - Our load per mule is about 125 lbs - in all our stock seem to stand it better - I have nothing but a Buffalo Robe for my bed as we cant carry a tent without overloading our Horses - It doe not go very hard - It is nothing to see from 10 to 20 wagons a day that is thrown away & (owners) have gone to packing - our mode of traveling is as follows: we start (at) sun half an hour high, stop at 12 (noon),start again at 2 & stop again at sun an hour high (hour before sundown) but vary (the time) as Grass is good or bad. We aim to travel 10 hours a day. the Grass is Ginerly good & it sems to be much stronger than our tame grass. Equal I think to the Best Timothy(hay). - I have seen but 2 or 3 sick on the road. It is healthy more so than the same No.probably would be in the States - here they are from all the states - all grades & sexes bending their steps like us for the El Dorado of the west - .....the Rocky Mts are in sight partly covered with snow & also dotted over with Cedar presenting a beautiful view for those who admire natural curiosities.....We expect to get to California in July perhaps by the middle....."

SACRAMENTO CAL 20 JUNE 12½ (1849). Post Office established on November 9,1849.Located on the Sacramento River in Sacramento County. Letter datelined "Rio de los Mokeloma Calivaras Co May 27/50",was probably carried by an "Express",as per the "1.50" manuscript charge, to Sacramento where it was placed in the Post Office and forwarded to Stockton. The "12½" in the postmark was the rate for one place to another in California. J.G.Smith,a forty-niner offers some advise to his friend back home: "If you can make $10 or$12 per day at your trade I think you would do better than you would in the mines" in other words stay home!

SACRAMENTO CITY ON THE RIVER

OREGON TRAIL 1848

"St.Joseph Missoure
"St.Joseph Missouri,April 16th 1848"

Dear Brother We left Cincinnati late on Sunday evening and arrived at St.Louis on thursday morning.From information I got on the boat from passengers that the river was too low and would be until the spring rise.- we determined to land in Town - buy teams and go by land.accordingly our goods were all put on shore and I went up into Town to find lodging and get a team to help take us out of Town to some farm house where we could fit out for the journey,but I could find no place where we could get lodging for one night short of eight dollars,and 25 cts a dray load for hauling to a warehouse and storage as much for one night as for a month so that we could not get 10 miles out of town much short of $50.00.- all the family were guarding the goods on the wharf so we lost nothing but one axe & the small brass kettle.There were about 50 [steamboats] boats lying at the wharf a good many of which were going up the Missouri [river] - we determined to go aboard of one of them and get out of St.Louis as soon as possible,accordingly we got aboard the **Cora** bound for Weston 30 miles above Independence & 30 below St.Joseph,thursday evening took deck passage having to pay $30.00 to Boonsville which is about half way to Weston and at the same rate if the water was deep enough to go higher up - we left St. Louis the next evening and went as far as the mouth of the Missouri and lay by til morning as they never run that river at night.That night the **General Washington** and 3 other boats were burnt at the wharf at St.Louis as we heard the next day .The river was low the greater part of the channel was bare sand bars ,and a great part of the river had the appearance of an overflowed bottom where the timber had been cut down and the brush gone and the larger limbs sticking out - from 10 feet above water to deep under water so as to meet boats at any stage [depth] of water SEE NOTE BELOW.* on saturday the 11th Newton took the winter fever,he took a chill followed by a hot fever,a pain in his side and great tightness and oppression in his brest. we gave a vomit and with Composition & snakeroot tea succeeded in about 12 hours in getting him in a sweat,but as the nights were cold and chilly and having to get up in the night he got cold and relapsed worse than ever - on saturday night the boat run on a sand bar where the water was only 3 feet deep and floundered all night - first with one wheel and then with the other so as to work a passage through the sand and about sun rise she got over - she then sailed on deep water til 10 o'clock when she run her right hand wheel on a log or something under water with a tremendous crash throwing her left hand guards down to the waters edge,and then the great metal shaft wich conects the two wheels broke and the boat righted her hull not being injured,the boat being perfectly unmanageable drifted down til near the bank where they Cabled her at a wide cotton wood [tree] bottom 12 miles from the main road and no settlement except some wood cutters shantees within 3 miles - the engineer started back to St.Louis a distance of 70 miles by land to get a new shaft cast and hauled out which would take 10 days - At the time the boat struck we were giving Newton a vomit and the hands being out of employ crowded the deck so that we could do nothing.I went on shore,gave a man a dollar to ride with me to find oxen to buy he being acquainted with the settlement. Oxen being verry scarce we found none until as we returned back in the evening about 3 miles from the boat I bought 2 yoke of a man by the name of John Mc Kinney for $80.00 - he agreed to send the oxen down to the boat in the morning by his Negro man and take us out to his house,furnish a good warm room until Newton got better,I returned to the boat requested the mate to put the waggons on shore so that we could put them together that evening and load up next morning,but he ordered the hands to put everything We had on shore first,the waggons being the last thing put ashore save the cloths Newton lay on,but several of the passengers helped us and we got every thing loaded up before dark - the boats crew being a desperate set of fellows from St.Louis mostly foreiners and the mate no better were out of employ - The watchman a trusty man hired at $30.00 pr.month to walk the deck every night from dark to day told me to guard my goods as I knew not who I was among - So I put the dogs ashore and they lay under the waggons which stood close side by side and Milton and a young man by the name of Baker from Boston of whom I will speak again lay in one waggon with the pistols loaded in their hands - It was clear moon light and we having to be up all night with Newton.

I went out to the waggons every half hour generally seeing some fellows strolling about on shore - on wednesday 15th we got out to Mc Kinneys in a good warm room and commenced with Newton anew who had got so weak that he had to be carried out of the boat tothe waggon by 4 men in blankets - broke the fever again in 24 hours and kept him in a sweat til Sunday morning,made syrup which loosened his cough and in two weeks he was able to ride horseback in good weather.When at St.Louis a young man by the name of Baker from Boston who had come on to get in with a fur company,but was too late came to me [&] wanted to get in with us to go to Oregon - I told him if he was a good ox driver and would assist in every thing I would take him - he said he knew nothing about driving but would hunt,I refused taking him - he however got on the same boat to go to Jefferson City some distance up the river and as he appeared to be a verry modest young man we still invited him to a cup of Coffee with us and sleep with Milton - he rendered us all assistance in his power in getting ready to leave the boat,and as we were about to start he stood by the waggons verry disconsolate like I told him if wanted to go to Oregon to run and bring his trunk and he should fare as we did - he jumped down the bank and in a minute was back with his effects all but a sword cane which had been stolen from the side of his trunk while helping us to fix - while at McKinneys I took out the tongue and hounds of the big waggon and put in an ox tongue and emteed three boxes into sacks and left left the boxes saturday - bot another yoke of Oxen for $40.00 - Sunday 19th yoked up the 3 yoke of Oxen to the big waggon and my mares to the other - McKinney sent his boys to drive to the Boonslick road,12 miles while Milton and Baker were to learn all they could in that time so we carried Newton to the waggon and started wishing Cities and steamboats all in h____ - we went about 3 miles and overtook a family of 11 persons with 3 waggons bound for Oregon who had started from down the river some miles and were on their way to the state road - his name is Dickens has 3 sons grown 2 younger ones large enough to drive oxen two daughters,an old Aunt 75 or 80 years old,his wife has been sick 10 years mostly bedfast one son has the ague every day and has had the most of last year - we have traveled together ever since and probably will to Oregon.Sunday it rained verry hard which proved our waggon sheets to be good keeping every thing dry.Monday the hills were so slippry that my mares could not get up without a yoke of steers at every hill.Same evening bot a noble yoke for 40 dol. which drew the small waggon with ease.Saturday 25th rained in the evening and snowed at night,lay by Sunday ,Monday bad roads,put the mares before the cattle for 2 days,bot another yoke for 45 dol.Monday April 3 bot 2 yoke of cattle and three milch cows - the oxen 40 dol. each the cows 1 at 8 the other 2 10 dol.each - April 10 stopped in 10 miles of St.Joseph,road in and ascertained that there was to be a meeting of emigrants at the Court house on Saturday next.The manner of fitting out is to have nothing too heavy for one person to pick up with ease .I bot sacks of drilling at St.Joseph at 20 cts each made up which holds 70 lbs,flour,got flour at hughs mill where we lay at 2 dollars pr. hundred and side bacon and hams at 3 cts pr.lb.shoulders were 2,but bot none. The State of Missouri is as rich a Country of land as I ever saw all both prarie and timber land rolling,the highest ridges and points are as deep black rich soil as the bottoms but scarce of timber and water,the greater part we have seen is the worst water I ever tasted warm milky and bitter - their best water is cisterns or wells dug 10,or even 20 feet and troughs carrying the water from the eaves of the houses to the wells,and when that fails,haul water and fill them ,it is the sicklyest state in the union - almost every one I talked with wants to sell and leave - up near St. Joseph the water is good,there is as much ague now in Missourie as in general in the fall in Ohio,we came up the North side of the river - the nearest way is to cross at' Boonsville over to the south side and cross over again at Lexington or Glasgow but to save ferriage and travel in a cheaper country of grain we went North 40,or 50 miles out of our way crossing the streams high up that would have to be ferried near the river,corn was from 12½ to 20 cts pr.bu.If the Missourie River was a safe stream for boats,the cheapest way for emigrants would be to start with nothing but their clothing take water and come to Weston 30 miles above Independence where there is waggos already made in large Numbers purposely for emigrants ox yokes and bows - &c all cheap - I was offered good drilling in St.Jo. as I have with me,for 9 cts.pr.yd. - Oxen are verry dear now - the demand for the army,& Santa fee Trade

St Joseph Missouri April 16th 1848

Dear Mother

We left Cincinnati late on Sunday evening and arrived at St Louis on thursday morning. From information I got on the boat from passengers that the river was so low and would be until the spring rise we determined to land in Town, buy teams and go by land, accordingly our goods were all put on shore and I went up into Town to find lodging and get a team to help to take us out of town to some farm house where we could fit out for the journey, but I could find no place where we could get lodging for one night short of eight dollars, and 25 cts a dea[illegible] to a farm house and storage as much for [illegible] we could not get 10 mi[illegible] All the family were guarding [illegible] but one axe & the small[illegible] lying at the wharf a go[illegible] Missouri we determined [illegible] St Louis as soon as possible. [illegible] bound for Weston 30 mi[illegible] Joseph thursday evening, b[illegible] to Bonneville which was [illegible] same rate if the water was deep enough to go higher, we left St. Louis the next evening and went as far as the mouth of the Missouri and lay by till morning as they never run that river at night. That night the General Washington and 3 other boats were burnt at the wharf at St. Louis as we heard the next day. The river was low the greater

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Harvey Houston
Shelby County, Ohio
Houston office

for the troops now on the Oregon trail and California and Oregon emigrants have taken all the best oxen out of the State, there is plenty of old steers and 3 year old ones but good steers from 5 to 7 are verry high and scarce - the best chance of buying is in Illinois where they can be had for 30 to 35. It has been a verry expensive trip to me through bad luck and want of correct information I brought too much along which I could have got cheaper here and I am told by people right from Oregon that cotton goods are not much dearer in Oregon than here woolens are - I paid $30.00 passage from St. Louis to Boonsville and could get but 10 back when I left [the boat], they told me they would take me on according to promise when the[y] mended [repaired] the boat, accidents will happen - the next day after we left the boat the **Little Missourie** Boat came along, and all the remaining passengers got on her and the water rising some passed on up the river - Some time after I got hold of a newspaper on the road and saw a piece headed "Steam boat disaster - The steam Boat **Little Missourie** ran on a snag near Glasgow and sunk instantly six feet under water boat and load total loss crew and passengers all saved". I have taken out all my load, put the Clock and dresse ware in as small a box as they could be packed in and left all the rest, packed the clothing in sacks of about a hundred wty for convenience in loading and unloading in rafting streams every thing must be light and handy - we had a meeting on Saturday (yesterday) there were 40 or 50 attended we agreed to cross over the river [Missouri] on the 27 Inst. but it is verry cold backward spring and no grass yet - it is uncertain what day we will leave there is some here who came last fall [1847] who are looking for large companys of emigrants yet. they are collecting at Independence, Weston, St. Jo. Fort Kearney [the 1st Kearney on the Missouri] & Council Bluffs - the South side of the river is Indian Country from a little above Independence and the North side is settled with whites up to the Bluffs 150 miles above here - There are 7 Companys of troops at fort Kearney, one company the (pioneer) are now out cutting roads & bridging & one company is to start the 20th Inst - the contracts are let for hauling provisions, the Mormons take two trains for government - part of the troops will go as far as the Dalles [?] on the Platt - immediately on crossing the river here we are among the indians the Sacks of whom there is no danger - 10 waggons can travail in safety, about 200 miles we enter the Pawnee Country where it will require 100 men to go in safety, after a few hundred miles then emigrants may break off into small parties of from 10 to 20 waggons - I will leave St. Jo with about $500.00 my expences now are about one dollar pr. day for cattle & will til grass comes - I have not written half I intended but will write again before we leave here - I intended to write to Franklin too, but have no time - please send this down to him & Mc Candles as soon as you can - I will write to them next with the same request to send it to you - " signed/ Robert Houston
Harvey Houston"

Robert Houston

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Notes: The **CORA** was a sidewheel boat of 144 tons, built at Rock Island in 1846 and was lost in 1851. This explains the use of the "wheels" in getting over the sand bar. Snags or "Sawyers" were caused by the ever changing current, which undermined large trees along the banks and tumbled them into the river. The treets floated with the current until their roots, the heaviest part, after dragging, became anchored in the bottom of the river, There they remained solidly fastened, some extending above the water and others below, thus becoming one of the main causes for steamboat disasters. They could rip the bottom of the boat open. So far the burning of the **GENERAL WASHINGTON** needs confirmation in the newspapers of St. Louis. It could be a false report.
The **LITTLE MISSOURI** was a sidewheeler of 198 tons, built at Cincinnati in 1846 and reported lost in 1848, which confirms Houston's report in the letter.
A great letter on the complex problems of moving a family and property, from Ohio to St. Joseph, via St. Louis. Forty-one hundred persons traveled over the Oregon Trail in 1848, 1300 to Oregon and only 400 to California and 2400 Mormons to Utah. At the time of this letter the discovery of gold in California had not been generaly known.

Sunday afternoon June 3th 1849

Platt River Indian Teritory

Dear Brother

When I wrote to you last I expected to write again before this time but being very busy while at St Joseph I concluded to wait untill I got under way and I have had but little time to write since I started. We did not leave the St Joseph as soon as I expected. We left the ~~Bluff~~ bluffs 5 miles this side of St Joseph on Tuesday 8th of May in company with 50 others called the California Mutual protection company we traveled that week some 50 miles to the Nimahaw river and encamped there over Sunday the second week we traveled about 140 and encamped on the Banks of the little Blue River there on Monday morning over half of our company left us becaus they thought they could travel faster early all the large companies that started together have split up for they find it not nessary to be in a large company for they can agree better in small companies the third Sunday we encamped of the platt River about 40 miles this side fort Kearney formerly ft Childs on the Banks of the Platt we are now encamped on the north Branch of the Platt about 100 miles further up we are now about 450 miles from St Joseph I suppose 1/4 of our distance at California

PLATTE RIVER INDIAN TERRITORY

A forty niner writes under date of:"Sunday afternoon June 3th 1849/Platt River Indian Territory..Dear Brother When I wrote to you last I expected to write again before this time,but being very buisy while at st.Joseph Mo I concluded to wait until I got under way and I have had but little time to write since I started.Wee did not leave st Joseph as soon as I expected - We left the bluffs 5 milesthis side of st Joseph on Tuesday 8th of May in company with 50 others called the California Mutuall Protection company - we traveled that week some 80 miles to the Nimahaw [Nemaha] river an encamped there over sunday - the seccned week we traveled about 140 miles and encamped on the Banks of the little Blue River - then on Monday morning over half of our company left us because they thought they could travel faster - nearly all the large companies that started together have split up for they find it not nessary to be in a large company for they can agree better in small companies* - the third sunday wee encamped of the Platt River about 40 miles this side [east of] fort Kerney formerly ft Childs on the Banks of the Platt - wee are now encamped on the north Branch of the Platt about 100 miles ferther up - Wee are now about 450 miles from st.Joseph - I suppose ¼ of our distance to California. I suppose if wee have luck wee will reach our destination in about 4 months from the time wee left the States and 3 from this time - however that is somewhat uncertain. I have enjoyed myself very well so far and have had very good health - it is a very interesting trip to mee so far - it has been prety much all Prairie cuntry & some of it very beautiful - if I had time I would like very well to give you a history of our trip so far but you have no idea how buisy wee are while in camp - wee had our load to[o] heavy when wee started so wee have packed all our spare mules and have altered our waggon and alwase some fixing to do washing and mending our clothes.but I think wee will have more leasure time hearafter - wee are getting our things better fixed - Wee have not been disturbed by the Indians yet and have seen but very few - I believe they are afraid to come on the road as there is a perfect string of waggons and pack mules passing nearly all the time - wee have never been out of sight of them yet unless when in some ravine - there is some pass us and wee pass some I believe wee travel about as fast as the majority of the trains - wee have not traveled yet on Sunday - the only danger of Indians is of persons leave the trale a hunting and of [Indians] steeling our animals nights - I have heard of several men that has been lost by leaving the road - wee are now in the Sioux country - it is also a great Bufflow country but it has been rather early in the season for them - wee saw our first day before yesterday and some of our men suceded in killing yesterday and wee have had some fine stake since and Buffalow soup to day for dinner - our appetites is all good and enjoy eating very much - we some times find a scarecity of wood but then wee use buffalow chips that is when the weather is dry for they wont burn in wet weather* - wee have had good roads the most of the way. the weather has been very cold for the time of year - wee learned at fort Kerney that there was 1970 waggons ahead of us and I suppose there is more than behind - I will have to close this letter at present - I will write again soon to some of our folk - I will send this with the first traiding party I meet - wee have met two since wee left but if I dont meet any I will leave it at fort Laryma [Laramie] near 200 miles ahead.....Geo Mower"

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No envelope

*The company seems well organized,having extra mules so they can rest hoof sore animals and in this case lighten the load of the waggons. At the time there was little danger from the Indians as long as they kept up a strong appearance and did not stray to far from the train.

*Buffalo dung when dried made a good substitute for wood.

"Platte River, near Fort Kearny
May 9th 1849"

Fred Snyder writes to his brother: "Ihave just time to inform you that we have travelled about 310 miles from St.Joseph and 800 from St.Louis and are now encamped upon the Platte River between Fort Kearney and Fort Laramie - We are now within 16 days travel from the latter fort - Game is abundant but the grass is poor - I shall take every oppertunity to write to you but I have not heard a word from home since I left nor do I expect to until my arrival in California - Do not forget to direct letters for me to San Francisco by the way of Chagres & Panama We meet Indians every day and are now in the Paunee country, - by to morrow we shall be among the Sioux - Nicholas Boismenue of Cahokia accidently shot himself a few days ago and died immediately - He was buried on the Big Blue River - Regards to all - All well"

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Howard Stansbury,Captain Corps Topographical Engineers,U.S.Army, describes Boismenue's grave in his book AN EXPEDITION TO THE VALLEY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE, page 21, "On the left bank was the freshly-made grave of a French trader, whose name was well known to most of our voyageurs . It was heaped up with earth and covered longitudinally with heavy split logs, placed there to prevent the depredations of the wolves; the whole being surmounted by a wooden cross, with the name of the deceased and the usual significant abbreviation, IHS, carved rudely upon it."

Cover was carried out of the mails to Kanesville where it was placed in the post office as per postmark "Kane Ioa/June 13,1849" and rated 10 cents collect.

Camp No.43 - 125 miles above
Fort Kearney.On the South Fork
of the Platte. May 22d 1850.

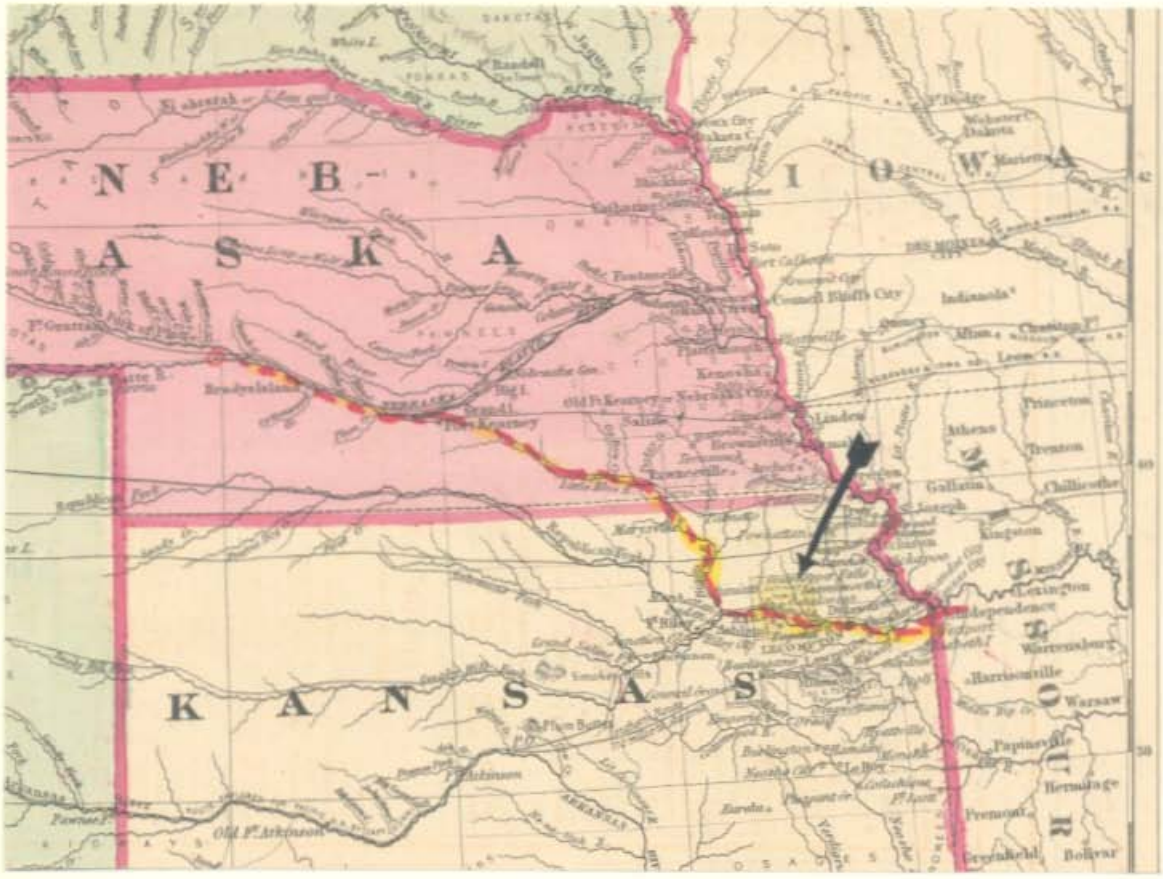
Brother William;

I avail myself of the return of the captain of our train to the States, to write you a few lines to let you know how I am progressing on my journey. After leaving the the state line (the last place from which I wrote to you) we traveled about 50 miles through the "Shawnee" indians. These are a lousy, thievish looking set, numbering about 400 - We then came into the "Pottawattemie" nation, and passed through their trading post , called "Uniontown", at the crossing of the Kansas river - This town consists of about fifty log houses, with a population of about 300, nearly all indians. The government has stationed at this post, a physician, two blacksmiths, a wagon maker, two gun smiths, and a circular saw mill. Crossing the Kansas, we encamped near the hut of a chief; who had the U.S. flag floating proudly over his miserable habitation. A great many ugly looking indians swarmed around our camp, that night; but we had nothing to fear from them, as they only wanted whiskey, an article which the government has prohibeted being sold amongst them. After leaving the Kansas ten miles, we arrived at the "Pottawattamie Mission", established by the catholics, for the conversion of the indian - It is a very neat looking place, consisting of three, or four two story log houses belonging to this church, and about twenty small log huts. The indians here have large farms, and seem to be very industrious. Ten miles farther we camped at the "Little Vermillian" (river).I here found a Frenchman with his family living in a small log house and was called in by him "professionally" to see a sick child - I prescribed for it, and the next morning had the satisfaction of finding it much better. We met many indians here in a tolerable state of civilization, being able to read & write - This nation (The Pottawattomies) number about 4000. In a day, or two we crossed the "Big Vermillian"(river), then struck the "Big Blue"(river). Travelling 71 miles over a level plain almost destitute of wood, & water - we came to the "Little Blue"(river), going up this fine little stream about 60 miles - we turned to the right, and going about 30 miles without water struck the "Platte"(river) at "Grand Island" This is a singular stream, in some places two, or three miles wide, full of islands, and sand bars, with no timber on either side - the water, only about 3 feet deep runs almost on a level with its banks, and at a distance looks much like a large lake - the bottom is of coarse sand and the water very muddy - it is said that it is this river that gives the "Missouri" all its sand. The islands in the river are covered with timber mostly cedar & cotton wood. We stayed at this camp a day repairing & reloading our wagons, and started the next day and Traveling up the river 8 miles to the head of "Grand Island" we came to "Fort Kearney". This post, built on the flat bottom is garrisoned by about 200 soldiers, and about a half dozen six pound guns. According to the register kept here 2400 wagons had already passed - grass is tolerably good, though much more backward now than last season at this time. We meet hundreds of buffalo and Antelope every day, and live nearly altogather on fresh meat. We are now on the South Fork (Platte river) about 200 miles from "Fort Laramie", and one hundred miles beyond that is considered half way between St.Louis, & Sacramento City. There is no sickness among the emigrants; though the road is lined with graves made last year. We will cross the "South Fork" today, and strike over for the "North Fork", and when I arrive at the Fort (Laramie), I will again write to you. The road is excellent, and weather very fine. The country here is low,and sandy with very little timber. On the "Little Blue", Johnson left our mess and joined a crowd from Missouri. 25 miles above Fort Kearney, Sam Hinckley's team gave out - I took my provisions out, and joined Capt.Hay's company, and left Jake, & Sam to "tend to the broke down mules, and take them through if they can. I am going on good terms, with a first rate man, and will be in California by the 1st of August. Sam Hinckley & me got along first rate together,and it was at his suggestion that I left his team, as it lighten his load. I hated to leave

them; but I thought it was better to be certain of getting through,than to risk my chance of starveing in the mountains, and not geting through at all. I think they will get through; but it will be a long time first; as "they are on the road, with a sorry team, and a heavy load" - I meet with curiosities daily, but am unable to carry them along.
I write in a great hurry; as the team has stoped only for a few minutes to allow Capt. Hays to take his provisions out & start back. My health is good - first rate - and this life suits me exactly.....I will again write to you from Fort Laramie and as often as I can find oportunities to write. In great haste.

J.F.Snyder

W.H.Snyder Belleville Ill. On the S.Fork of Platte.



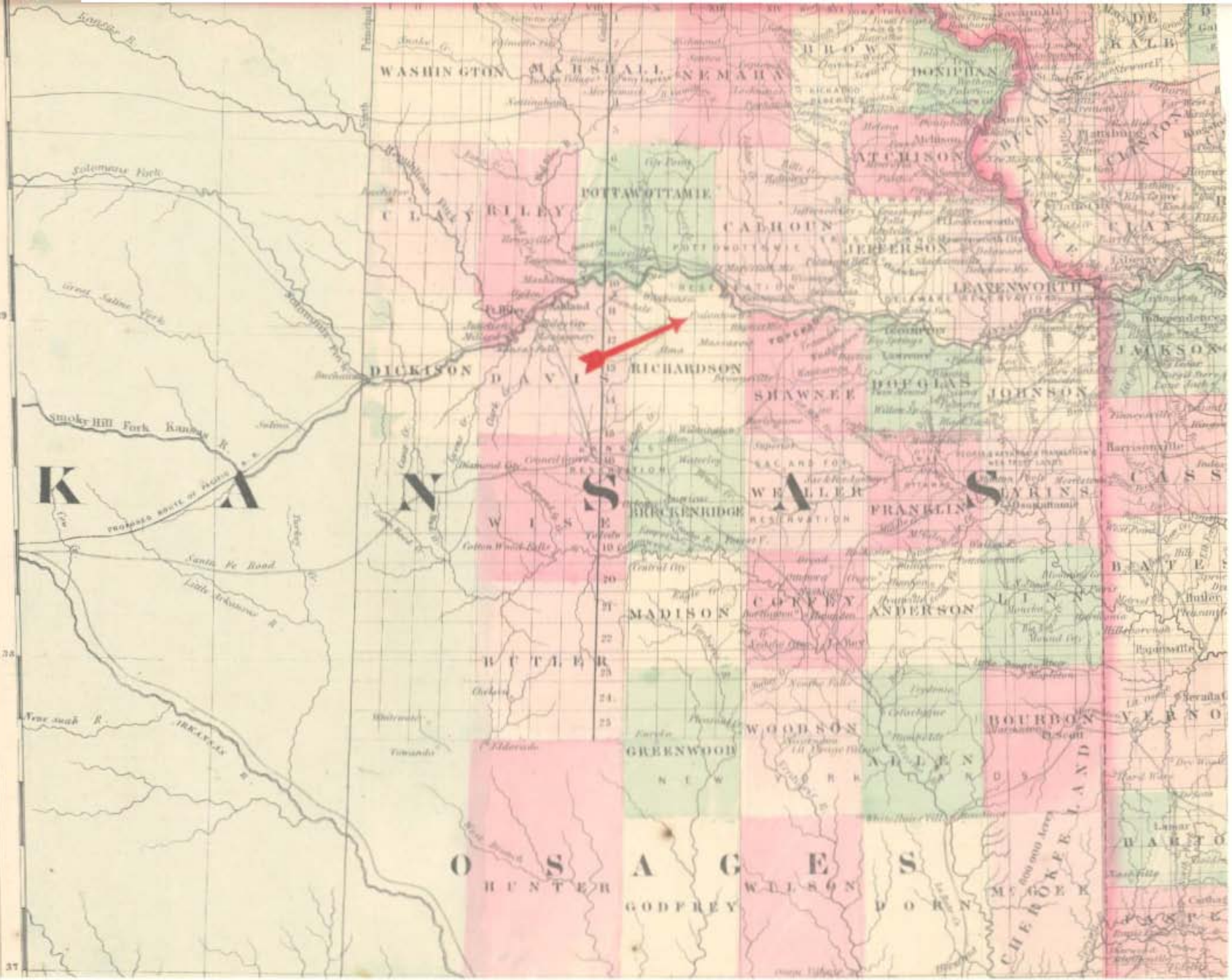
UNIONTOWN, POTTOWOTTOMIE RESERVATION

Great letter describing the overland route in 1850 from Independence, following along the Kansas River to the mouth of the Big Blue, thence north northwest to the junction with the Little Blue, thence northwest to Grand Island and Fort Kearney on the Platte River and thence due west along the Platte to a point 125 miles from Fort Kearney on the Fork of the South Platte near its fork with the North Platte, See map for outline of the route and location of UNIONTOWN which is indicated by an arrow. There was a post office located at Uniontown from Feb.20, 1856 to August 28,1856.

Camp No. 43 – 135 miles above
Fort Kearny. On the South Fork
of the Platte. May 22d 1860

Brother William;

I avail myself of the return of the captain of our train to the state, to write you a few lines to let you know how I am progressing on my journey. After leaving the state line (the last place from which I wrote to you) we traveled about 60 miles through the "Shawnee" indians. These are a lousy, thievish looking set, numbering about 400 – We then came into the "Pottawattomie" nation, and passed through their trading post, called "Uniontown", at the crossing of the Kansas river. This town consists of about fifty log houses, with a population of about 300, nearly all indians. The government has stationed at this post, a physician, two blacksmiths, a wagon maker, two gun smiths, and a circular saw mill. Crossing the Kansas, we encamped near the hut of a chief; who had the U.S. flag floating proudly over his miserable habitation. A great many ugly looking indians swarmed around our camp, that night; but we had nothing to fear from them; as they only wanted whiskey, an article which the government has prohibited being sold among them. After leaving the Kansas ten miles, we crossed


K A N S A S
O S A G E S
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BROWN
DONIPHAN
ATCHISON
POTTAWOTTAMIE
CLAY
RILEY
CALHOUN
JEFFERSON
LEAVENWORTH
DICKINSON
DAVIS
RICHARDSON
SHAWNEE
DOUGLAS
JOHNSON
WISE
BRECKENRIDGE
WELLER
FRANKLIN
LYKINS
MADISON
COFFEY
ANDERSON
LINN
BUTLER
GREENWOOD
WOODSON
ALLEN
BOURBON
HUNTER
GODFREY
WILSON
DORN
McGEE
CHEROKEE LAND
JACKSON
CASS
BATES
VERNON
BARTON
KALB
CLINTON
Smoky Hill Fork Kansas R.
Solomons Fork
Great Saline Fork
Santa Fe Road
Little Arkansas R.
ARKANSAS R.
Neosho R.
Republican Fork
Kansas R.
Topeka
Lawrence
Council Grove
Cotton Wood Falls
Central City
Ft. Riley
Ft. Scott
Principal
Sixth
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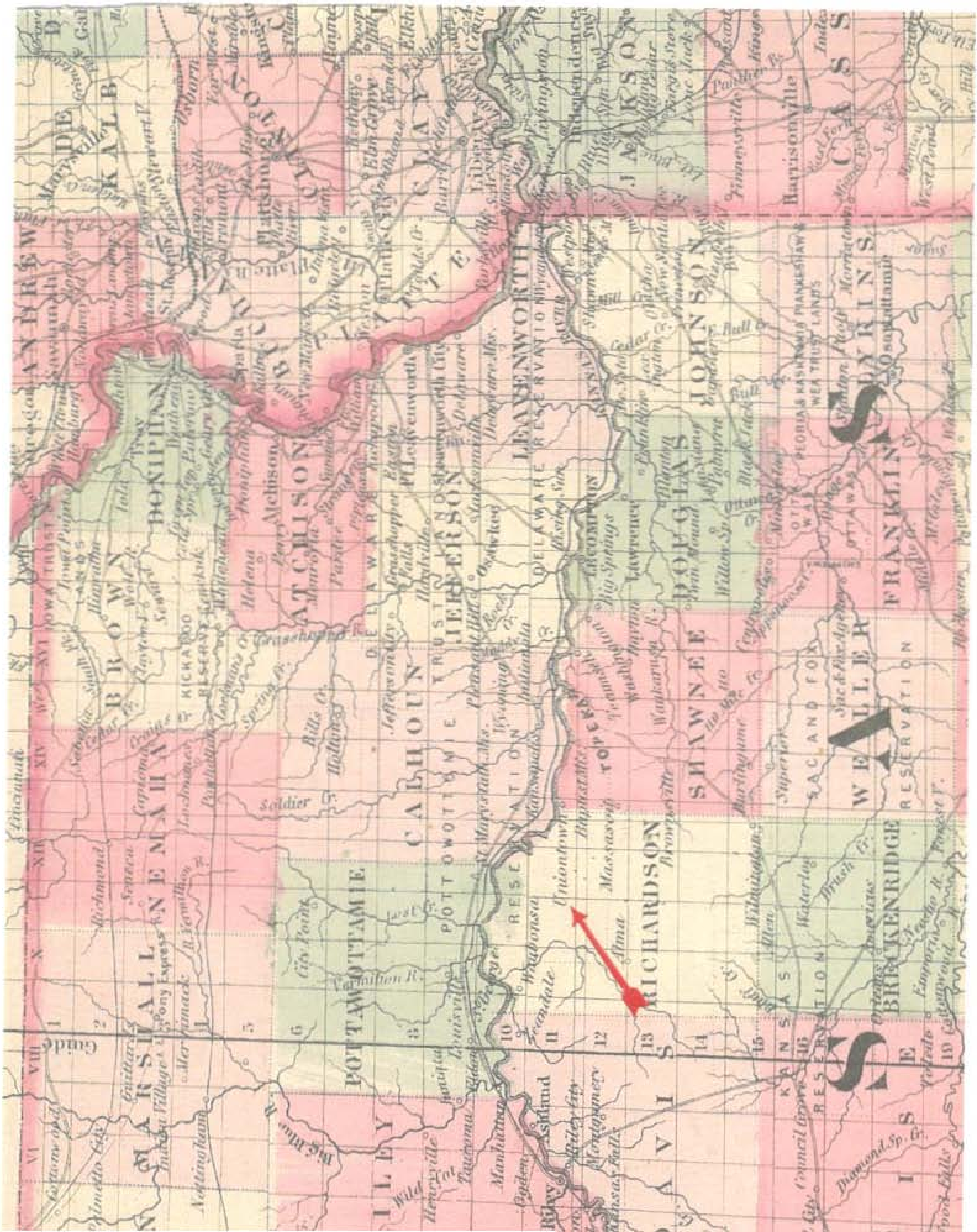
KANSAS
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RICHARDSON
BRECKENRIDGE
WELLER
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LYKINS
RILEY
DAVIS
ANDREW
DE KALB
CLINTON
BUCHANAN
PLATTE
CLAY
JACKSON
CASS
DELAWARE RESERVATION
POTTOWOTOMIE RESERVATION
KICKAPOO RESERVATION
SAC AND FOX RESERVATION
KANSAS RESERVATION
IOWA TRUST LANDS
DELAWARE TRUST LANDS
Uniontown
Topeka
Lecompton
Lawrence
Leavenworth City
Atchison
Manhattan
Council Grove
Emporia
Osawatomie
Westport
Independence
Liberty
St. Joseph
Savannah
Guide Meridian

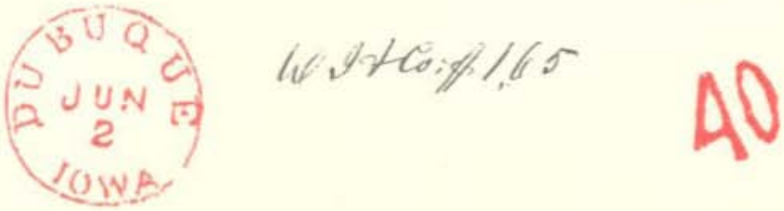
Nebraskey
Big sandy July 11, 63
Dear wife
Farewell once
getting along
drove first
we have been
14 days have
+ 200 miles
tiresome through
and glad to
if info have to
Portreyon 4 da
not have from
2 weeks but expect to get
a letter when I get to fort
curney then not time to
write but letter me
from your husband
G H Griswold

Daniels Ranche N.T.
July 13th 1863
Mrs G H Griswold
Sidney Center
Delaware Co
N.Y.

Daniels Ranche N.T. The post office was established July 13,1858.in what was then Jones County,,Then to Jefferson County.and on January 19, 1865 the name was changed to BIG SANDY.

G.H.GRISWOLD writes to his wife from "Nebraskey Big sandy July 11,63.He has been on the road 14 days and exoects to get a letter from home when he gets to fort curney (Kearney).

DUBUQUE, IOWA TO CALIFORNIA VIA PANAMA 1851



A Forty-Niners' wife wants him to come on home: "Ican do very well without gold."

The letter was written on May 21,1851 and is postmarked "DUBUQUE IOWA JUN 2" and bears the handstamped, 40 cent rate of that office. It is addressed to Wiliam Everingham at Sac. City, Upper California, and probably went via Panama since there is no directive to indicate any other route. There is a penciled notation on the inside of the letter which reads: "Recieved Sept. 10,1851." On arrival in Sac.City (Sacramento City) it was picked up by an express company, initialed, rated "W H Co. $1.65", and delivered to Everingham in one of the many mining camps. The name of the express company has not been determined.

THE WESTERN MAILS

MARCH OF THE MOUNTED RIFLEMEN FROM FORT LEAVENWORTH TO OREGON IN 1849. The line of march is highlited in yellow.

Historical letter postmarked FORT LEAVENWORTH MO MAY 8 (1849) refering to the army expeditions to purchase FORT LARAMIE, the march of the Mounted Riflemen to Oregon and the military escorts for the SANTA FE TRAIL following the Mexican War. Laura Sperry writes to her son those exciting times: "The band is playing for tatoo, & I have little time to write to night, but I want to tell you that our destination is at last fixed as I suppose, & we go to Fort Laramie. It is only 520 miles from here & so more accessible than any farther post. The regiment move from here next thursday the 10th except M R-s(Lt.Col.Benjamin S.Roberts - SEE below*) company & one other of the rifles, which wait till the 1st June to escort a train of 400 waggons of supplies for Ft Laramie & Ft Kearney, which last is only half the distance. They carry provisions for a year. When M R- was in Washington,he got an order to go with his company(C Mounted Rifles) to escort some civil officials & their families to San Francisco. This would give him an independent command, & he wrote to his brother Henry & to Pierpont, to come & join him, as he would give them employment & wages of some 40 or 50 pr.mo..... M R- has been determined not to go with the reg'-under command of Col Loring(Wm.W.,who was in command of the Mounted Rifles going all the way to Oregon), but it is arranged that his command (en route) is entierly independent, & the post (Fort Laramie) is to be commanded by Maj Sanderson(Winslow F.) who goes on with the regt. I wish you were here this morning to see how busy our garrison looks. Genl Twiggs(David E.) is here & M Mason(Col Richard B.?) with him & they the troops are on inspection. The Rifles are encamped 3 miles from here but the ladies are all in garrison till they move, which is day after tomorrow. Of course we are full to over flowing. Not only the rifles but a company on infantry to each post, that is at Kearney - Laramie & a post to be built at Bear river near Ft Hall(Cantonment Loring about five miles above Ft.Hall), & all the troops for St Fee(Santa Fe) & the escorts of officers are here. There is another encampment besides the rifles near, & the garrison is full.....Laura Sperry"

*Roberts, as a captain in the Mexican war,raised the American flag over the "halls of the Montezumas",when Mexico City fell to the American army.He entered the army from West Point in 1830 and died January 29,1875 with the rank of Major General.

THE WESTERN MAILS

FORT KEARNY, Missouri Country. There were two Fort Kearnys in what is now the State of Nebraska. The first was located a few miles south of Nebraska City at the confluence of Table Creek and the Missouri River. It was abandoned in the spring of 1848, less than a year after it was founded, for a more favorable site at the head of Grand Island in the Platte River. Troops, under the command of Col. L.E. Powell, began the construction and named it Fort Childs. On Dec. 30, 1848 the name was officially changed to Fort Kearny.

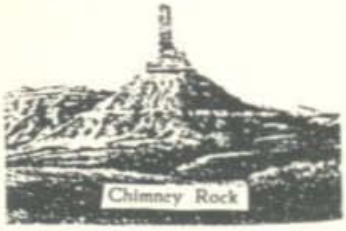
This letter was written by a California bound emigrant, J. Emery, who dated it "On the Plains May 21st 1848". He states that he is camped 20 miles from Fort Childs. The following is from the letter: "**I have an opportunity to use the influence of our Captain** (who was an officer at this post last year) **to get a letter conveyed** . . . there are so many persons wishing to send letters that it would be impossible for the Quartermaster to get them all in the mail." His comments on the emigration are also worth noting: "There is a large number of persons going - all rushing ahead - some one way & some another - some of their teams & waggons already giving out & breaking down & the road is strewn with broken waggons - trunks - boxes - bacon - lead - powder - sugar - coffee & in fact everything which people in their mad zeal throw out . . . some are turning back . . . There is certain to be a great amount of suffering in the mountains . . . We have in our train thirty waggons & about ninety men."

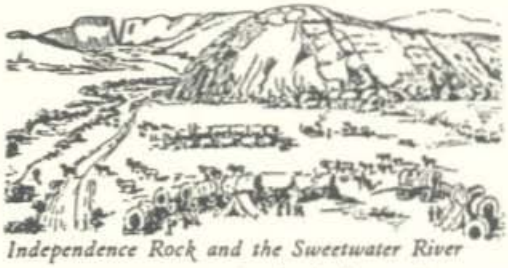
The letter was given to the Quartermaster at the fort and it must be presumed that he wrote in the manuscript marking "**Fort Kearny/Oregon Route**". It should be noted here that they were already calling the fort by its present name FORT KEARNY and not Fort Childs. The letter was forwarded by military express to Fort Leavenworth where it was cancelled and rated 10 cents - **FORT LEAVENWORTH MO JUNE 14**. The manuscript marking "Fort Kearny/ Oregon Route" should be considered as a military marking. The U.S. Post Office Department established a Post Office at Fort Kearny in 1849 on July 7th. During this period, previous to 1854, the area west of the Missouri River was known as the Missouri Country and was unorganized.

THE WESTERN MAILS

ST.JOSEPH,MISSOURI TO CALIFORNIA IN 131 DAYS
1849

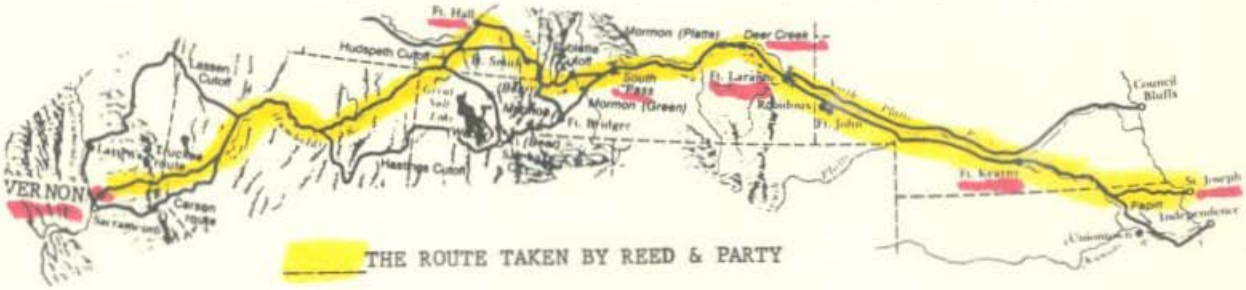
"Vernon Sept 9 1849 California".Moses B. Reed,a Forty-Niner,writes to his nephew in far away Maine,giving a detailed report of his overland journey to California: "....I am in California - The Citty of Vernon - I came here on the 6 six - The 8 eight we sold our teem....I left Iowa the Twenty ninth of March 1849 & Twenty ninth of April left St St Joseph of Missory for Fort Chiles (Kearny) - from Iowa to St Joseph the worst road that I ever traveled - The distence Three Hundred miles in 30 day - From St Joseph to Fort Chiles Three hundered miles - We traveled it in nineteen days - It is good road - To the Castle bluff Two hundred miles in eight days - To rock Chimly 25 - To Court House 10 - Scotsh bluffs 5 miles - The Castle resemble a large house Three hundered feet high - The Chimly rock reseble old fas(h)ion Chimly Three hundered Fifty feet hight - Court House four hundered feet high - Scotsh bluffs Five hundered feet high - From Castle bluffs to Fort Laramie one hundered miles in seven days & laid by two days it was raining - Fort Laramee To summit of the rocky Mountain the distence Three hundred miles in 15 days - At Fort Laramee the commencement of the Rocky Mountains - foure Two hundred miles the hills was so steep that we lock(ed) booth wheels to go down - our load was Twelve hundered for Eight oxen & meny places we could not git along with out dubling our teems - We came to the Sweetwater (river) Two hundred miles from Fort Laramee - The distenc between Plat River & Sweetwater River 50 miles & water is Poison - We lost two oxen by drinking the water -The water of Sweetwater River is the best that I ever drink - Snow on Sweetwater - I.traveled over snow banks from ten to Twelve feet deph in June and I saw snow from 12 May to 13 August - The summit of Rocky Mountains on the pas (South pass) - The pas is Sixty miles wide - no hills to spake of - on each side of this vally or pas of Rocky Mountains it was covered with snow - As we came to Sweetwater there was the Rock Independence - it coverd over Two Acre of ground - Two hundred fifty feet high - There was between five & six hundred Names wrote on by diffrent Persons as they have emagrated to Origon or California or Salt Lake - ten miles from the Rock of Independence then the Devel gate Three hundered feet high - The passage between two bluff Six feet wide Perpendiclar summet of Rocky Mountains - there was a swamp - it contain Eight or ten Acres - 10 inches from the top of the ground it was solled bed of Ice - the water & ice was poison - Four miles from that the hot boilling springs - it boiled so it would throw water up two feet - on the summit it snow & rain & hail - June 21 - To Green River one hundred miles in three days - Two days we maid Twenty seven miles - the desart fifty three miles with out grass or water in Twenty four hours - To Fort Hall in Eight days Two hundred miles - To Bear River one hundred miles from G een R - There was Soda Springs on Bear R - Eight or Ten of them between Bear R & Fort Hall - it is a grate place for springs - some of them pord water suffisant to carry a saw Mill - To Sacramento Eight hundred fifty miles (in) Sixty one days - Fort Hall is on the Bank of Lewis River - we follow it down two days - then for Raft River one day - We past between the Mountains to Goose River Two days - meny places only wide enogh to let a team pass - the passge Raft River to Goose River - the Mountains on each side ware from one to three hundred feet high - Some of them was perpendiclar & Thousands (of) Swallows Nests on the side of the Mountain - the same that is bilt under the eves of a barn - We traveled from Goose R to warm vally Thirty five miles in one day - Twenty miles no water....we left warm vally for Humbolt River Thirty three miles - We traveled on this river three hundred miles - what can I compare that River to - From Humbolt to Truckey River Distance ninety miles - a Desart it may be called - From





Independence Rock and the Sweetwater River and Devil's Gate in the background.

Humbolt Twenty six miles this is the last day travel on the River - To the slew Twenty miles - little grass no water - Fifteen to Sulpher Springs But little grass - we Drink it not (sulpher water)....To the Boiling Springs Twenty five miles no grass - boiling water by cooling some cattle would drink - Thirty miles Truckee River - I saw a dog scald to death in the spring - Coffee boiled & Apples cook - I left the spring in the morning for the River - I was Twenty two hours giting to the River - at sun seat I had Twelve miles to travel - it took me all night to travel Twelve miles - I had no water with me - I was so dry that I could not speak as I was lieing on the ground a man came to me & gave me some water - he told me it was six miles to the River - Seven O Clock at Night I started for the River - While I was washing my self & Drinking some water the Sun rose - When we left the Spring (there) was five of us - Two got (to the) River at Sun seat & Two midnight & I was left alone - now Mountain Sirra Nevada - We rais Four Thousand feet & drope down Eight Thousand feet - You must think we had some hills to go down - There was a number of plases where we have to let down our wagon with roups - one place a mile & half long & fassen all the wheels - then let down with roups - The face of the country From St Joseph to Truckey River there is not Trees groing to make one half mile of Timber for all - The soile loocks like ashes - Grass growes onley in spots (Buffalo grass?) - After leaven St Joseph the wild sage grows - The wild Sage roots we used for wood to coock with - - I am in California - if I was in the States I would stay there - I shall stay here one year - perhaps longer - I shall



start at my traid - not go to the mines - I have ten dollars in gold dust that I dug - From Truckey River (Nevada) to Sierra Nevada Mountains the River is verry rapped for Eighhty miles & hamson Pine timber - After I past the mountain I saw pine trees Two hundred feet high & a few Twenty five feet in circumance (circumference) - Comoon thing to find trees six to seven feet in diameter - Pine timber is in the Mountaines - In the vally there is nothing but scrub Oak - That only fifteen to Twenty rood wide from the River & grass not over half a mile - It is a baring (barren) land - The gold lie in the mountaine - Vernon is at the mouth of Feather River - Sacramento Citty is Twenty five miles below - I have not been there - They say there is fifteen Thousand persons in it & there is not more then twenty Houses in it - But it is a grate citty of tents - Some poles laid up & canvass spread over - This Country is filling up with all kinds of persons - Germans &c - The grate Valley or Basin - it is Mountainous Country but few Valleys in it - Humbolt River Three hundred miles long ....& then it all sinks in the earth no communicasion to the sea - Thomas H.Benton (U.S.Senator from Missouri) should see (the) Bason - he would not ofer a resalusion to make a state of it.....Thare was only Two hundred teams ahead of us so we came a long verry well - But we was in formed there was from Eight to Ten thousand be(hind) us & those (who) was able meny of them bought Indian ponys & pack Through - But there is good meny of them will be oblige to leave there teams & take it (on) foot - There was one family was a head of us left there team & foot (walked) it through the distanc of three hundred miles & there is good meny famleys on the road when we was at Truckey River - They ware Two weeks be hind us - While we was pasing down the Mountain there was not a day pas we saw some a foot - For many years it has been talk to bild a Rail road from Atlantic to Percific But it cant be don - There is not timber - if they would git timber from the Mountains to bild it nothing (would be left) for fuel - I must close - write all the news you can - Moses B Reed"

VERNON,CALIFORNIA was located at the confluence of the Feather and Sacramento rivers in Sutter County.It was a short lived mushroom town during the gold rush period. The Post Office was established in the fall of 1849 and discontinued in November of 1853.and the the town gradually died out.

Folded letter above originated as per postmark at "Vernon,Cal. Sept 22,1849" and was rated "40" cents via Panama.Moses Reed describes his journey to the California of the Gold Rush in the remarkable time of 131 days. He describes the geographical landmarks and the hardship and tragedies experienced by many of the emigrants. For the content of the letter see opposite page.

Orrigan Pacific Springs

To My dear Wife July 27th 1849

Mary — and all my family

Greeting

Here I am in Mr Switzer tent writing, 3 Miles west of the Great South pass of the rockey Mountains 20 Miles south of Fremonts peak which is covered with snow I have eat snow this day brought to me by Sam from Sweet water river just above where I crosed said stream. I have just drank tea made from the waters that run west

C.Swan writes home to his wife in Iowa City"Orrigon Pacific Sorings/July 27th 1849/Here I am in Mr.Switzers tent writing, 3 miles west of the Great South pass of the Rockey Mountains 20 miles south of Fremonts peak which is covered with Snow. I have eat snow this day brought to me by Sam from Sweet Water river just above where I crossed said stream. I have just drank tea made from the waters that run west - I am in Orrigon and within 25 miles of California. I expect to be at Salt Lake by the 15th of August. I am well and hearty - can walk from 20 to 25 miles pr day - sleep on a board and go without many comforts which I thought at home were indispencable to life - My hopes are strong of being at Suters fort in California by the first day of October (a new rout having been opened by the Mormons which makes the distance 150 miles less and brings the Sandy desert in the basin down from 75 miles to 17 where we will cross the western rim of the basin) - I have written all about my hopes - I will now write of my journey thus far.In the first place I was flung from my horse but not hurt much - I rode that day 40 miles but was unable to get on to the horse in the morning - a man rode him from Jackson Co (County) 4 or 5 miles until I got limber(ed) up by packing (it being Sunday I supposed the teams would stop but they did not and I rode all day to overtake them. I was used up for a day or two but then I drew on my long Boots and went into the mud - the Country from Iowa City to fort Demoines (Des Moines,Iowa) is in the opinion of your humble servent a poor country after we pass Skunk river from Des Moines to Council Bluffs is a barran waste and never can be improved. Rackoon forks is a fine place and if the commissioners had been wise and (located) the seat of government at that place (The capitol was moved from Iowa City to the Raccoon forks of the Des Moines river in 1857) Iowa City might bid good buy to her Capitol. at the bluffs I wrote you a few lines we had no bad luck in starting - I was taken sick after we had traveld a few days but nothing bad - the Colera was ahead of us (we judged by graves) from the Bluffs to fort Larima(Laramie) we counted some 80 (graves) nearly all marked with the cause of death - after we left the fort the graves become less frequent untill now we have none - Mc Cormack has had it -- - I had a taste - Mr More has been well all the journey and sends his love to all - his wife and children in particular.....I expect Mr Babbit along with the Mormon Mail...

C.Swan"

****

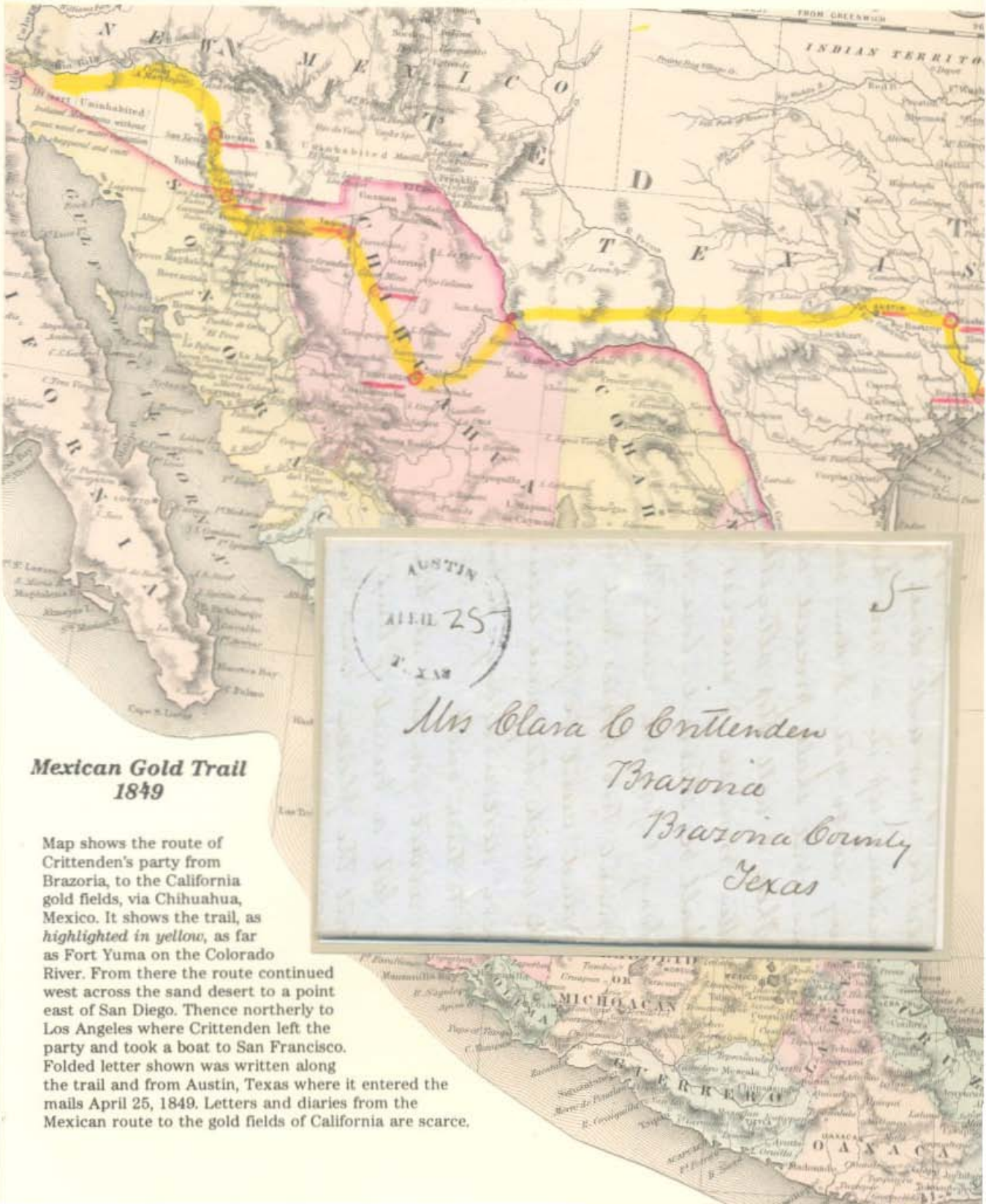
Origan Pacific Springs

July 27th 1849

PACIFIC SPRINGS was located 3 miles west of the South Pass in present day Wyoming. Babbitt's route to Kanesville is outlined in yellow above. Kane was the name of the post office which was the same as Kanesville and changed to Council Bluffs December 10 1852.

"I EXPECT MR. BABBIT ALONG WITH THE MORMON MAILS"

Almon W. Babbitt left Salt Lake City on July 27,1849,the very same day this letter was written, with an express mail and a memorial to congress for territorial status for Utah. It is possible and very probable that Babbitt did pick up Swan's letter at Pacific Springs and deliver it to the Kanesville post office. On September 17th the FRONTIER GUARDIAN reported that Babbitt, with the Mormon mails, arrived at Kanesville on September 3rd, three days before this letter was postmarked - "Kane Iowa/Sep 6".



Mexican Gold Trail 1849

Map shows the route of Crittenden's party from Brazoria, to the California gold fields, via Chihuahua, Mexico. It shows the trail, as *highlighted in yellow*, as far as Fort Yuma on the Colorado River. From there the route continued west across the sand desert to a point east of San Diego. Thence northerly to Los Angeles where Crittenden left the party and took a boat to San Francisco. Folded letter shown was written along the trail and from Austin, Texas where it entered the mails April 25, 1849. Letters and diaries from the Mexican route to the gold fields of California are scarce.

Mexican Gold Trail

Letter written from Chihuahua, July 17, 1849 where it entered the Mexican mails. On arrival at Vera Cruz, it was handed over to the British Postal Agent. Since the British boat did not stop at New Orleans, it entered the U.S. mails at Mobile. It was a prepaid letter with the British share of one shilling in manuscript and the U.S. 10 cents as denoted by the numeral 10.

San Diego

Letter written 30 miles east of Pueblo Los Angelos, entered the mails at San Diego Nov.3, 1849 and was rated 40 cents collect. It bears one of the earliest San Diego postmarks.

San Francisco

Letter begun at Pueblo Los Angelos Oct. 12, 1849 and finished at San Fransciso Nov. 15, 1849. A long descriptive letter of the entire journey of about 2600 miles.

"Nebraska Territory May 26th 1849

Dear wife & Children All Well wee are within Ten miles of fort Kerney formerly called fort Chiles Two hundred and fifty miles from the masourie River - wee have Traveled from fifteen to Twenty miles per day - our Teams is in good plite and wee have pased a grate many teams on the Road and are now Camped within sight of the St Joseph and Independenc Road which is perfectly full of Teams - wee hearn yester Day that there was Twenty five Hundred Teams had pased the fort then and wee think there will be Thirty Hundred by the time wee get there tomorowe where wee Intend leaving our letters where they will be Sent to the States - you wil Hear How many Teams will pass this place this Spring for Every Company is Registered and How many men in Each Company and when the Emegrantes are all passed it will be Published Nodoubt in the missouria Republican - the Health of the Emegrants is good on this Rout But wee have Hearn of Several Deaths on the St Joseph Rout - Wee still Have good nuse from the gold diggens - wee mett Some mormons and they Said that they had Some of them bin in the Gold Diggins and had dug one day for an Extry Days work $750 Dollars worth But if they Did not make 100 Dollars per Day they would leave and Hunt another place - they Had concydrable with them but they Did not Say How much but they Shoed us some which had the Gold appearance - * I expect you will Here many frightful Storys conserning the Distressis of the calafornia Emagrants - But Believe them not for wee believe wee will get there without any trouble - my greatest Trouble is that I

am soe far from you and Expect to be further and the time that I Expect to be absent from you fills me full of fear that I Shall not See you all again but I Hope and trust in God that wee may all live to See and Enjoy the Blessing of our peacful famaly company again - be carful of your Health and the childrens - I Should like the best in the world to Hear from [you] and if it possable to be Home with you allthoe I am not Sorry that I am on my way to Calafornia for if I live I expect to benafitt us all by the trip - yet it tis the Hardest thing that I ever Experienced Excepting loosing our Deer son John - I hope you will Keepe the Children at School as much as possable - I wosh you would have Jessee Write me a letter as soon as you Receive this and Direct hit to Sanfrancisco Calafornia."

Hugh Moffitt

* See Ursulia Hascall letter July 6,1849and the Mormons digging for gold in California on their return from the Mexican War in this collection.
Letter entered the mails as per postmark FORT LEAVENWORTH MO JUNE 14 (1849) and rated X paying the 10 cents postage to Illinois.

Tuesday April 10th 49

My dear Clara

I intended to have written you a long letter this evening but am already experiencing the inconveniences of writing in camp. It has taken me half an hour to find pen ink & paper and the sun is nearly down already.

I found Alex & the waggon at Hall's on Saturday. On Sunday the waggon started. I remained until yesterday morning to have some little preparation made and had a hard ride of forty five miles to overtake the waggon. To day we have travelled about 30 miles and are now encamped opposite where we shall cross the Brazos. Every thing has worked tolerably well so far. The only accident being the loss of my coat which you had so much trouble to repair. Alex left it at Hall's plantation. I am mounted on an excellent mustang pony which I shall probably ride all the way. I shall leave the waggon to morrow and go on up the river to Washington thence to Lagrange where I shall overtake the crowd again.

Keep up your spirits, old lady, and do your duty as I shall do mine. This absence is a painful one but it is necessary and may prove a benefit to us in more ways than one.

San Felipe, Tex
Oct. 12th 1849

Paid 5

Mrs Clara C Entlenden
Brazoria
Texas

1849

Near Fredericksburg
May 2nd 1849

My dear Clara

We left Austin the day after I wrote to you. We had a heavy rain and a very cold and unpleasant Norther the morning we started and about night, just as we were pitching our tent it came on to blow with double violence and to pour down in torrents. We camped without supper and without fire and for some two or three hours had nothing to do but to wrap up in our blankets and keep as dry as possible in the tent. It was a nice predicament but inevitable sometimes amongst the pleasures of campaigning.

We travelled along leisurely, occasionally falling in with a waggon or small party of horsemen. As we advanced, the country became more hilly, almost mountainous indeed - with numerous streams falling rapidly from the hills and frequently pouring over the rocks from a considerable height. The road was fine, better than any we had seen - deer were abundant and we had hopes of encountering buffalo. Parties were constantly out upon pretence of hunting, but in fact to admire the country and enjoy the scenery. We could ride over hill & valley to some comparatively distant range and look back and see the waggon train toiling slowly along looking like a succession of small white specks.

obedient to you and diligent.
Write at least on the 1st of every month - Much oftener if you can. I shall be uneasy if I do not hear from you regularly. Good bye - God bless you

Your affectionate husband
A P C -

Mrs Clara C Crittenden
Brazoria
Brazoria Co
Texas

AUSTIN TEXAS
MAY 19

1879

Presidio del Norte
June 9th 1849

My dear Clara

I wrote yesterday by Chihuahua and write again today by some other route - I don't know which. There is very little chance of any letter from here reaching you but I take all chances to advise you merely of our safe progress thus far. We are on the Rio Grande, 200 miles below El Paso and about 460 from Fredericksburg. We were 32 days on the route - on two occasions had to cross a stretch of 60 miles without water - suffered at other times from the want of it - encountered no indians - brought our wagons through safely - and are here all well. One death occurred on the route. Franklin Fuller of Houston was killed by his own pistol. We leave in a day or two either for El Paso or for Kenos, passing within 60 miles of Chihuahua - I think, the former. The latter is perhaps the best route, but we are afraid of difficulty with the authorities. The laws of Mexico are exceedingly illiberal - we can legally take with us only 5 or 6 pounds of bacon, flour, tobacco, rice &c -

Jerry & Kyle are 15 miles above here on the way to El Paso, all well. Watson is on the other side (the Mexican) of the river. His party suffered awfully - They had the cholera, no water & a terribly mountainous road. One man disappeared, 8 died of cholera. I knew only one of them - Whitehurst from our County. I can hear nothing of

SAN ANTONIO TEX
NOV 26

Mrs Clara C Entlenden
Brazoria
Brazoria Co
Texas

1849

Let me find [illegible] letters at San Pedro

Presidio del Norte
June 8th 1849

My dear Clara

You see from the date where I am. We came here on the 5th. Contrary to my expectations the company cannot venture direct to El Paso and we are still 200 miles from that point. There are some 300 or 350 of us in this region but a good deal scattered. Our own Company came through without much difficulty compared with that met with by others. The heat has been trying and we have suffered at times for want of water having twice been obliged to travel 60 miles without it. No lives have been lost amongst us but one. Franklin Fuller from Boston was killed on the Pecho by the accidental discharge of his own pistol. We have had no difficulty with Indians. All well. We met here Terry's company from Mason all well – and Watson's is on the other side of the river. He came from San Antonio by San Fernando intending to go by Chihuahua. The company took the cholera with them from the start – lost 8 men by it – none of those I knew except Whitehurst (from B) – They suffered dreadfully from want of water – Watson lost two wagons. Frank & Tom McGreal are not in any of the companies here. I think they are with Dr Veatch who crossed below here – was out of provisions – and the men had to eat their mules. They went on to Chihuahua where they got into difficulty with the authorities

the cholera was very severe at this place carrying off 12 or 15 hundred. Shortly after I recovered from my wound I presented my diploma at the prefecture of this state & made application for license to practice, but was refused because I could not speak the language. But when the cholera broke out here, the authorities sent me license begging me to practice. I refused for

Mrs Clarinda Crittenden
Brazoria
Brazoria Co
Texas

1849

FREE

two or three days, but their solicitations were so urgent that I consented. I had five horses but one, & rode day & night for four days without a moments rest, until I could not eat anything the last two days, & broke myself down, & took the cholera myself. What compensation do you suppose I got — why the enormous amount of $80 & hard work to get that. I was requested to visit every house that had a white flag hanging out — & that the government would remunerate me for it. Then 80 dollars was all I got.

Look in the seal, I send you a specimen of the Chilian money.
Yours Theodore

July 6th 1847 –

My dear Clara

If you could just look in upon me this morning you would find me seated in a large room having a plastered and painted wall and a paved floor – a single window closed by a solid shutter barred across as if this was a country of thieves and a door whose solidity would almost defy the axe and crowbar. For furniture there is a single table and a single chair a pile of empty sacks – a lot of cooking utensils, tools, saddles, old boots and bottles thrown into a heap and two or three dirty blankets spread upon the pavement for a bed. Looking out of the door you see a small paved court yard, with numerous doors like mine looking into it. Passing through this, you find yourself in a similar yard going on you enter a handsomer yard, with a few flowers + trees – at the far end of which is a gallery with chairs and benches & a wide passage leading to a street. Looking through some of the open doors you see a long dining hall, a bar room and a billiard room. But walk now through the passage and look out of the enormous door which closed it, and you will find a paved square, surrounded with paved streets and walks – and with stone seats which would accomodate 1000 persons. Over these seats and scattered through the square are green trees and in the midst a column from which streams of water are gushing into a marble basin. On three sides of the square are handsome buildings a hotel stores, town hall + private residences and on the fourth a magnificent stone church, immense in extent + height, with tall spires, the whole covered with the most elaborate ornament. Crosses are thick all over and around it and the statues of a hundred saints and martyrs occupy its niches. Listen to the clock strike the hour and hear the

in California u
or take a return
Still be the s
adventure. I
will not pay
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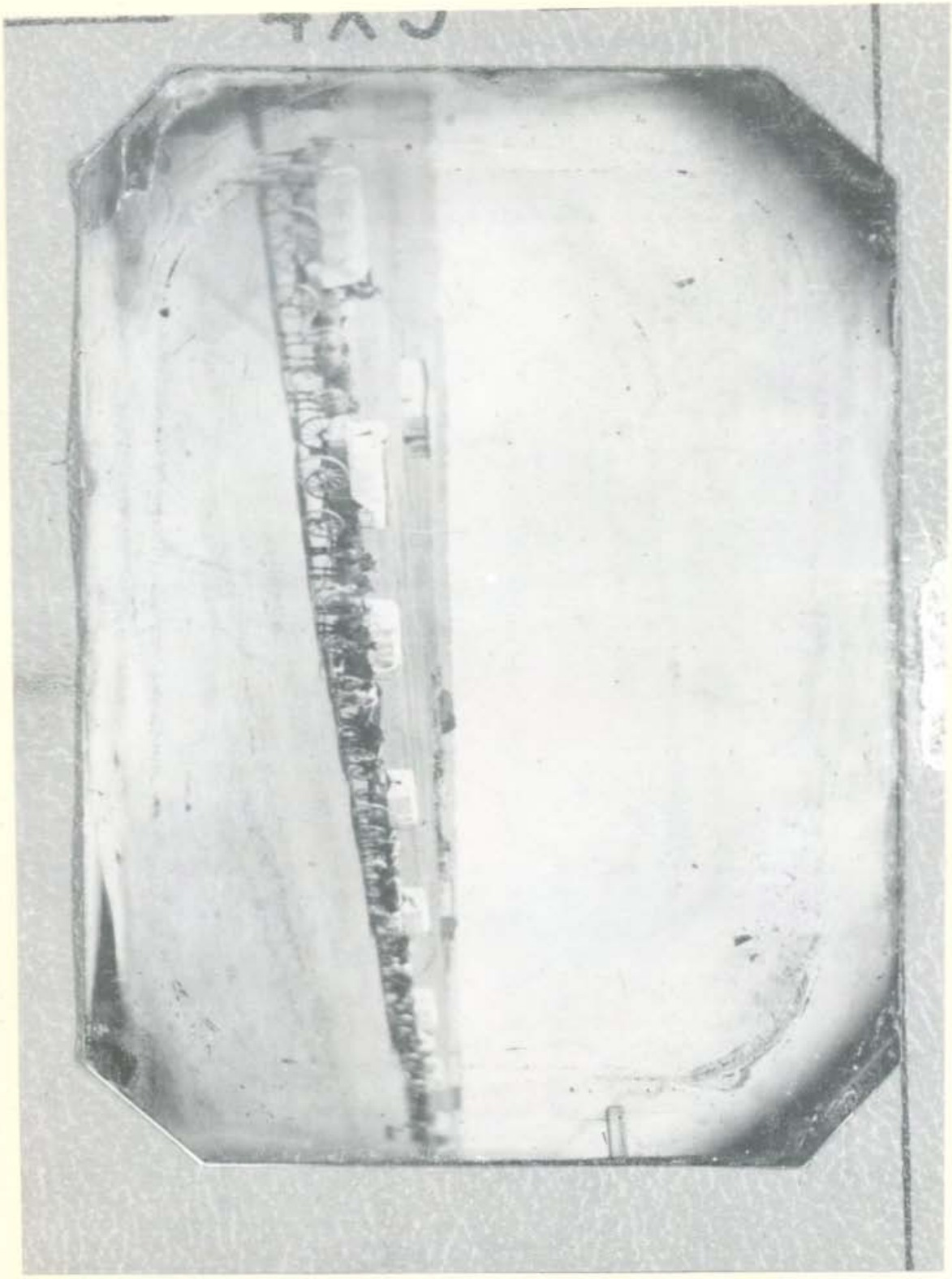
Due

Mrs Clara C Outlenden
Brazoria
Brazoria Co
Via New Orleans
La
Texas



THE LURE OF GOLD 1849

A FORTY-NINER CROSSES THE PLAINS & THE MOUNTAINS

The following six letters were written by Schuyler Holly to his wife back in Schadack Landing,Rensselaer County,New York.The first two were written from the vicinity of St.Joseph,Missouri his starting point. The others from Fort Kearny, Fort Laramie,Deer Creek and the last from California in which he reviews his overland journey. Holly gives a vivid description of the problems and hardship of the long journey to the far west. He arrived at Fort Laramie on June 26th the very same day that Major W.F.Sanderson bought the old fur trade post from the American Fur Company for the U.S.Army.

"St Joseph Missouri May 17th1849/Dear Companion I must tell you a little about my Journey to St Joseph - we had very rany weather and muddy going Some days 5 miles some 6 - we started First of april and got to St Jo 14th(May) - the 12th thare was a boat came up the missouri river from St Louis with 47 deaths - it was the calary (cholera)" He then says that he is not well and has been hunting cows. That he is 8 miles from St Jo and complains about poor ink and an "old goblers quill". Holly then tells her to greet all and take good care of the children and hopes he will be glad when he gets back. On "May 20th six miles above St Joseph" he writes a second letter: ".....I am A Cross the missori River Campt in the Grove in the indian Teritory...to Day I feel Well in good sperits... thare is a grate many a turnning back - the day before we got to St Jo thare was a boat took five hundred Calafornias back to St Louis....I did not see Eny Enjines last knight - one company I am told had a fight with them - some kild on both sides....I am among the savages...thare is one thing sertin that it is a long journey - I am know about two thousand miles from you....oxen are all tied up - the guards will soon be out.... all is well - twelve Waggons 26 men...and a preacher all fine men....." Both folded letters entered the mails at St.JOSEPH MO/PAID X.

FORT KEARNY

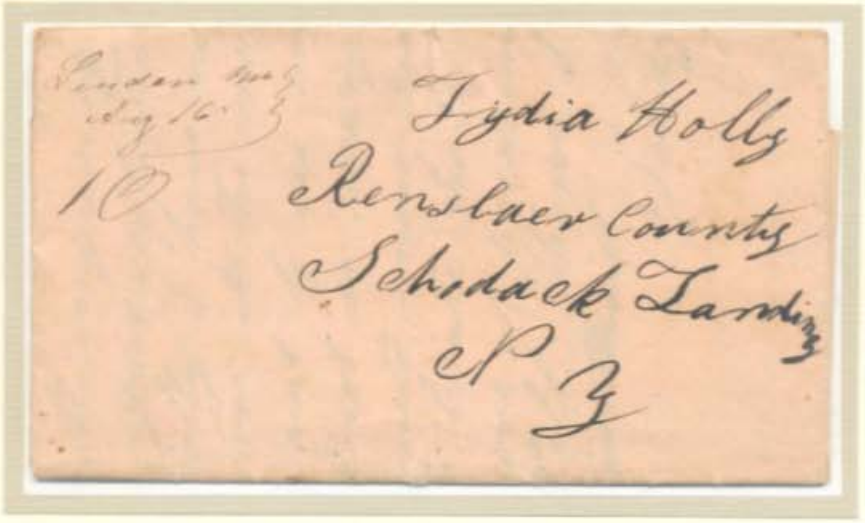
Dead cattle and broken wagons litter the overland trail as sketched by J.Goldsborough Bruff in 1849.

letter above was **written** from the vicinity of Fort Kearny on "June the fifth 1849". It was probably carried by a private party to Kingston, Missouri and placed in the post office on "June 22nd" as per postmark. Holly writes to his wife:"....We are about two hundred and Fifty miles from St Joseph I would like to give you a discreption of the country but ....However I will name a few of the rivers - Blue and Ceder - fox - Pawne - know timber except on the streams...all well.... Sofar we have three yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows to the waggon - we have knot lost eny as yet but thare is a greate meny lying along the road Dead Cattle.We have past About Fifty Graves from St Jo to this plase - we are on the plains about forty miles from fort Carney (Kearny) - we shall reach thare about the seventh of the Month - we have had know trouble as yet with the indians - we wach our cattle knights - I wached last knight - we meet some (emigrant) won **every day** returning home....June 6th we are know at the fort Carney this morning - for about ten miles we found Barren sand hills untill we Reached the Plat river which was about eight miles - then it was handsome and level - the indians stole cattle from a company and they kil five of the Indians - I said fifty graves our Captain sais one hundred and fifty - we average aboute twenty niles a day - the emagrants all pass the fort and they say thare has from seven too Eight thousand teams past the fort - thare is one hundred hear know with in two miles of the fort - this afternoon we had a very hard rain and hail - we could hardly keep our cattle from running away....we follow up the plat (river) five hundred miles **before** we cross....I am bound for the gold reagon...."

Under date of "June the 24th 1849 Indian Territory" Holly writes home:... "we are know aboute forty Miles from the fort Laramia this side - we followed up the plat one hundred and 11 miles and then crost the south branch (South Fork of the Platte River) - thare we saw grat many buffalow - Van shot one....About too Days after we crost the plat over the bluffs we came to the main river (North Fork of the Platte) - thare we campt for the knight - About one mild from us was an indian tent - two others and miself went to the tent and saw the feet of three indians - we thought that thare was more - they was covard up so we couldnot tell how many - thare was two Dead horses - thirteen dogs - one dog had too sticks fix across his neck and on the sticks a sort of a baskit - the sticks was ten feet long and draged on the ground (A Travois - a crude sledge with platform to drag a load along the ground.Also with horses.)....we have knot Learnt wether emigrants kild them or they had a fight among themselves... one man shot another by brushing the flyes off his horse with his gun -We see from too to six graves a day on the average - we have been five days without seeing any wood - we use buffalow chips (dried dung) for wood and carry water with us - we see whare people have left their wagons and some

FORT LARAMIE
Folded letter carried by a private party to the Missouri River. Here it was given to a steamboat and taken to St. Louis and placed in the mails as per "STEAM 10".

have burned them - yesterday we met one team and to(two)men on its Return - he says that there is know feed for cattle beyound the fort(Laramie).... this is a lonesome road - the wolvs howling around every knight so that a person cannot sleep - The muscetoes are very large and thick - they are so bad they eat a person most up - we picket our cattle every knight - we gatherd buffalow chips and (made) a smu(d)ge around them(cattle) - Cloudey knights still is the time for them - then they swarm....the 26th. - we crost the laramie river at knight - we are know campt near the fort - I heard them say that thare was thirty teams waggons going back from hear - feed is poor - one company of forty lost ten (cattle?) thare was some company started from Counsyl bluffs that had most all of thair cattle stolen by the indinans - we keep close wach of our cattle....Remember my love to all inquiring Friends Your affectinate husband Schuyler Holly."



DEER CREEK

CROSSING THE NORTH PLATTE RIVER 1849

Schuyler Holly writes home to his wife in New York:"July the 4th Deer Creek 1849....we are on deer creek one hundred miles west of fort Laramie about one hundred and seventy five miles from hear to the pass (South Pass) Whare we cross the mountains - I had forgot to mention the distances between the places along back in my last letters - its three hundred miles from St Jo to fort Kerney and from fort Kerney to fort Laramie three hundred and fifty miles - Sixty miles back the feed has been poor - our cattle Didnot have any thing to eat of any acount - When we got hear we had to drive our cattle six miles up the creek for to get feed - there has been good feed here but it has fed of (eaten up) - some has Drove their cattle ten miles up the creek - Thare is five hundred waggons campt With in two miles of here - last knight thare (was) a train of forty waggons with mules caled the pineneer train"(Pioneer)*See below..."Mr Dodson is in that train....two men has stopt hear - they are agoing back - ....I have not time to write any more - the man is wating ....Schuyler Holly".

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*This was the PIONEER LINE out of St.Louis,conveying passangers to California,in organized wagon trains,under experienced leadership, at $200 per person.The first train arrived at Fort Kearny on June 8th and at Deer Creek on July 3rd as reported by Holly above. The letter was carried east by a private party and placed in the mails at "Linden,Missouri on "Aug 16" and rated "10" cents collect as per postmark.

The folded letter on this page was postmarked at "SACRAMENTO CAL DEC 25" 1849 - just 47 days after the establishment of the post office on November 8th. It was rated "40" cents and then routed via Panama. After leaving Fort Laramie very few letters were written. By that time the rush was on to get across the mountains and deserts before the snow closed the passes in the high Sierras.

SACRAMENTO CITY,CALIFORNIA 1849

Holly writes to his wife that he landed in the Sacramento Valley on the 30th of October and comments on his trip across the plains: "....we have had one of the hi old times of crossing the plains....But this child calls it crossing the mountains for its nothing eles since we left Fort Laramie untill (we) Reached the Sacremento valley - it has been a Long and Teageous Journey of a bout seven months - we landed in the valley the thirtyeth Day of Oct all well - one hundred and twenty miles up the river - it rained the same day We got in the valley and then it cleared of three Days and then it commensed raining againe and has rained nearley every day since - The old Sacramento (river) is a crazy old stream - it Ris in one knight some said 15 feet. There is know travling after the Rany season sets in - thare has been a greatdeal of suffering in the mountains this winter - it was a sight to see men wimen and children Trudg along and packing what they could with them through the snow from 2 feet to 4 feet - our company has Divided the first day of Dec. - 4 of us La(u)nched our connews (boats) in the Sacramento and was on the water until the twenty second of Dec - I bought Conad(s) Share of the Team - We have had verry good Luck with our Teams - Isaac got in with all his cattle....Mcculeye and I lost our cows - thare was but three whole teams in our train that come through - Isaac and Mcauly went to feather river for thare is gold and make know mistake....Isaac & Mc has taken a Load of provisions about seventy miles and they are to have seven hundred Dollars For it - Thare is not much a doing in the mines know - those that got heare early in the season has done well - we was one month to late - large companys Did not travel near as fast as small - it was astonashing to see Dead cattle and horses and mules - I have counted 20 and 30 head in one place dead - I should knot advise any of my friends to come by Land for it is Long teagous route - I have traveled through the Dust whare it was up to the hub of the wagon - some Days we could knot travel on the account of the dust - the cattle would get so choacked up with the dust that they could scarely breath - it is knot goldust eye mean - understand me....too men of the company has Died since we got in the valey...." Holly then comments on the high cost of living and that he would like to see his family. That they should write and let him know how his affairs are going in Illinois. He closes with: "I am a going up to the mines - they say that they are a halling it oute in big chunchs (gold)....."


CALIFORNIA & OREGON STAGE COMPANY.
CARRIES WELLS, FARGO & CO! EXPRESS AND THE U.S. MAIL.
VIEW OF MOUNT SHASTA 14,442 FT ABOVE THE SEA - ON C.& O. STAGE ROUTE.

CALIFORNIA & OREGON STAGE LINE

The CALIFORNIA & OREGON COAST OVERLAND MAIL COMPANY bought the stock and property of the California Stage Company from J.D.Carr in 1870.The owners were Jared L.Sanderson,Bradley Barlow,Charles C.Huntley,and J.W. Parker, with Sanderson being the principal owner. Thus J.L.Sanderson & Company. They ran a line of stages,carrying the U.S.Mails and Wells Fargo Express, between Redding.California and Roseburg,Oregon, with headquarters at Yreka,California. The line included three branches including Ashland,Jacksonville,Shasta,Tower House,Trinity Center,Etna, Callahan's,Fort Jones and Weaverville. The total distance covered was 430 miles.

They also operated a line of stages on the Santa Fe Trail between Kansas City and Santa Fe under the name of BARLOW & SANDERSON SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL & EXPRESS COMPANY.The W.S.Stone listed on the cover shown above was also the paymaster and assistant superintendent for Barlow & Sanderson on the Santa Fe run.