

A Trail of Hardship to 'The Land of Gold and of Plenty', 1850

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Editor's Note: In traveling across this land on a paved highway in a high-powered car we tend to forget that there were travelers in the past who did not have it so easy. Television shows a version of early day travel. This paper illustrates the true nature of the problems faced in crossing this country in the early days. These were truly hardy people crossing vast distances with little more than their own two hands and a strong determination. After reading this account, I am not sure I could have done it.

Costmor Harris Clark was born on the first of May, 1810, in Chester, Vermont. He descended from ancestors who, six generations earlier, had emigrated from England to America in about 1640. Clark was a stonemason by trade. He and his wife Mary Stockwell Clark lived in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and had three sons, Leonard, Charles, and Frank. Mary Stockwell Clark died in 1845. Clark and his sons moved to Milwaukee and boarded with John Nelson Mount, his wife Eleanor Hulsart Mount, and their four children (Emary, Charlotte, Harvey, and Timothy). Mr Mount died in 1847. Eleanor Mount and Costmor Clark were married later and moved to the Clark family home in Oak Creek.



Costmor H. Clark, 1810-1905

This photograph was made from an old negative which was made from an old photograph.

Clark, at the age of 40, left the family at the farm in Wisconsin and joined the emigration to California in the spring of 1850. After he arrived in Hangtown (now Placerville), California, he spent some time in the mines where he became a partner in the Starr King Mine near the Tuolumne River. Then he moved to San Francisco and returned to his former trade of bricklayer and plasterer. In the winter of 1852, he returned to Wisconsin, took his family to New York where he booked passage for all to Nicaragua, crossed the Isthmus, boarded the S.S. Sierra Nevada, and arrived in San Francisco on June 16, 1853. Three children (Laura, Hattie, and George) were born after the Clark family arrived in San Francisco. The family moved to Napa, California, in 1856 where Costmor helped build the Napa County Court House. Costmor bought a ranch in the valley near Napa and remained there until 1884

when they had a home built in town. Costmor served one term as Justice of the Peace in Napa sometime after 1884. Eleanor Mount Clark died in November of 1887. Costmor died in early December, 1905, at the age of 95 years 7 months. Costmor Clark was a man of sterling worth, strong convictions, great energy and determination, and a staunch supporter of democratic principles.

We do not know the details of Costmor's journey from Oak Creek, Wisconsin, to just west of South Pass, Wyoming (then unorganized territory). From the Journal, we know that he passed through St. Joseph, Missouri. The presence of the journal was not known to the Curtis L. Danner family until after the death of Mary Frances Taliaferro Danner (daughter of Laura California Clark Taliaferro and granddaughter of Costmor Clark) in 1966. The journal was on separate, unbound sheets which had been stored in a grocery bag.

The following is a transcript of the Journal of Costmor Harris Clark. We have interpreted his writing as best we could and have tried to retain the original format and spelling.

June 30, 1850. (12 miles) Left our last encampment upon the Sweetwater travelling for 6 miles over a comparatively level plain we reached the South Pass¹ & crossed the dividing ridge at 10 O.C. Six miles farther down a slightly inclining plain or valley brought us to the "Pacific Springs" which consist of a bog or marsh of several acres in extent. The sod covering the surface not being sufficient in some places to bear up the animals that were allowed to fall upon the grass that covered it, and in consequence many animals were mired and some of them died before they could be rescued. At this place was the last station of Estill's Mail Express and hundreds of emigrants were laying by for the purpose generally of improving the last opportunity this side of California of writing back to their friends. To improve this opportunity we encamped at 12 M.

Mon July 1st. (5 M.) Spent the day until 4 O.C. in bating² our horses and writing our letters. Estill's charge for conveying them to the states was 50 cts each. At 4 O.C. P.M. we resumed our journey—glad to leave a place made very offensive by the stench emitted from dead and putrid animals in every direction. After traveling 5 miles encamped upon the plain turning out our horses to feed upon the bunch grass growing amongst the sage, no water. Wait refusing to watch any part of the night.—An unpleasant and disagreeable fool.

Tues 2nd (24 miles.) At 3 A.M. awoke my companions, having been out with the horses all night and the extreme darkness making it very difficult to keep them from straying in search of better fare and water. Ten miles travel brought us to the junction of the Mormon & Main Roads, here we held a consultation in reference to the road we should take. Herriman & Wait in favor of going by Salt Lake & I opposed. Of course the majority ruled & we turned off upon the Salt Lake road. Six miles from junction crossed the Dry Sandy and eight miles farther to the Big Sandy where we encamped. Grass abundant—no company.—

Wed. 3^d July (24 M.) Nineteen mile travel brought to Little Sandy. From thence to Green River it was 10 miles. We crossed this river by ferry paying \$8. for our waggon & 5 horses and encamped one mile and a half below ferry. Passed this morning Messers Chadwick Stanford. &c³ Greenleaf & Furman encamp upon the other side of the river. Good wood & grass.

¹South Pass, El 7,550 ft, now about 42 mi. south of Lander on Wyoming state highway 28.

²Bating—from baiting: feed & water

³&c - etc.

Authors are great-great granddaughter, great grandson, and great granddaughter-in-law of C.H. Clark. Samuel is a botanist, USDA, ARS, 8408 Hildreth Rd, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82009 and daughter of the Danners.

The authors wish to thank the Curtis L. Danner family for their help in the writing of this article (Curtis and Noel are brothers.)

Thursday July 4 (24 Miles) We were aroused from sleep early this morning by the firing of guns in all directions reminding us that the day of our country's glory had again arrived. We turned out. Prepared our breakfast—fired a few guns in comemeration of our nations birth—and then resumed our solitary journey making a late start. Sent Wait ahead to find grass for the Midday bating—Discovered him at noon upon a high bluff making signals for us to "come to grass". We turned out of the road and travelled over an almost impassible plain of deep sand and sage for two miles to the foot of the "bluffs"—where we unharnessed, and led our expectant animals up the mountain where we found Wait, waiting—but no grass "this was grass." Doct. Myself & the horses felt very indignant but said nothing—not wishing to stir up the bear. But we unanimously made up our minds that he would not fool us again this is not the first time by many. After a short stay and a hard pull we reached the road & resumed our journey. Towards night Wait volunteered to advance & select camping ground for the night upon Blacks Fork. We reached the fork about dusk and continued our course down the stream looking out for our hopeful companion until eleven O clock P.M. when Wait came storming up behind demanding in a furious tone if we were going to travel allnight. This time he got as good as he sent. The Doct. giving him a regular going over, being seconded by myself occasionally. We came to a mutal understanding upon one point at last that Mr. Wait would be relieved in future from the duty of finding camping ground & forage. After groupings⁴ about an hour or more in the dark we found a patch of grass upon the river flat & turned out. (No supper).

Friday 5th July (30 M.) Two miles from encampment crossed a branch of Blacks Fork where resided a rich Mountaineer and a number of Snake Indians. The Mountaineer owning large droves of horses & kine many of which were bought by emigrants. At noon we halted upon the plain finding good bunch grass. Here I shot an antelope at 40 rods distant. I ran into the river where I gave it a second & deadly shot, and in order to get it waded nearly waist deep. This afforded the first "fresh" we have had (excepting one rabbit) on our journey. We were overtaken and joined today by Greenleaf & Com. Danl. Baxter & Co. & Putman & Capt Furman and Brother, and all encamped in company on Blacks Fork—finding good willow wood and fine grass.

Sat. 6th July. (30 M.) We were considerably puzzled today as the road over which we were travelling did not agree with the "Morman Guide" and were upon the point of encamping until we could learn where we were and where going. But finally concluded that we were travelling in the right direction we were safe in going ahead. This proved to be the case, and our road a new and more direct road to Fort. Bridger which we reached about dark and were escorted to our encampment a mile beyond the Fort by Mr. Jones who had preceded us for the purpose of selecting camping ground. It was a good one, furnishing good water, wood and grass.

Sunday July 7th. Voted to remain in camp. A rumor was current today that a large body of Indians were concentrated in our neighborhood with the intention of attacking the emigrants and that runners had been sent ahead to all the Indians between us and Salt Lake to give them notice to collect for the same purpose. The reason for this hostility of the 'Snakes' was that a party of emigrants had fallen upon an encampment of Snakes in the night while they were asleep and murdered nineteen men women and children. (The whole party excepting two women, who made their escape to Ft. Bridger.) We could not doubt the story of the murder as the women were there and manifesting great distress and insisted upon the truth of their report. And towards night we saw a Delaware indian who had been to the scene of slaughter.

We expected bloody work and prepared for the worst—Guns pistols Knives were all put into working order and we intended to use them to the best advantage should the attack be made. Fort Bridger is a trading fort only and derives its name for its owner a Frenchman who has been an Indian trader & mountaineer for many years. The Fort seen from our encampment (I did not go to it) was a long low building perhaps 80 feet by 20. Situated in a beautiful valley plentifully supplied with good water and grass.

Monday July 8th (25 M.) Left the Fort at 6 1/2 o'clock travelling over a

rough uneven country with timber mostly dwarf cedar growing upon the hills & mountains. Passed a soda spring—near which we stopped at noon—of which I tasted and found the water very agreeable to the taste—undistinguishable from soda water of the shops. This afternoon crossed Bear River where it divided into several streams forming small islands. The water running very swiftly by them & we had some difficulty in getting over in consequence. We found several broken waggons on the West side & their owners busily at work repairing them. Several miles travel brought us to the encampment selected by Greenleaf & Firman who went ahead for the purpose. It was a sly nook in the mountains affording us plenty of good dry poplar wood excellent spring water & an abundance of grass & wild onions. No Indian as yet. But we keep a good look out for them. Bear River is separating line between the Snake and Utah indians. So we are out the Snake country & I hope out of danger from the "Snakes".

Tuesday July 9th 25 Miles. Passed this morning the creek on which the Indian murder was committed. Near our crossing is a coal mine and a spring affording a substance resembling tar and used by the emigrants as a substitute for tar and grease. Roads rough. Hills almost impassable. Encamped upon the head of a branch of Weber R. Grass and water good and abundant.

Wed. July 10. (27 Miles) This forenoon passed through a deep valley under purpendicular ledges of rocks perhaps five thousand feet high. Towards night reached the Weber and the junction of the old and new roads to the city⁵. The old bearing to the right and the new (which is a toll road) turning to the left up the stream. This is recommended by a notice posted upon the guide board to be a nearer and better route—improved and subjected to toll by "authority" of the "State of Deseret" after five or six miles travel up stream came to a halt for the night finding good wood and grass upon the bank of the Weber a cold pure mountain stream some five rods wide and two feet deep. Herriman quite unwell this evening.

July 11th 22 miles. After sixteen miles travel up the Weber we turned right into a Canyon and over a most tremendous hill and descended after dark into an extensive valley watered by a considerable stream cold and fresh from the mountains. We were guided to our encampment by the light of a fire kindled by a part of our company who had preceded us. Doct. Herriman quite sick of mountain fever.

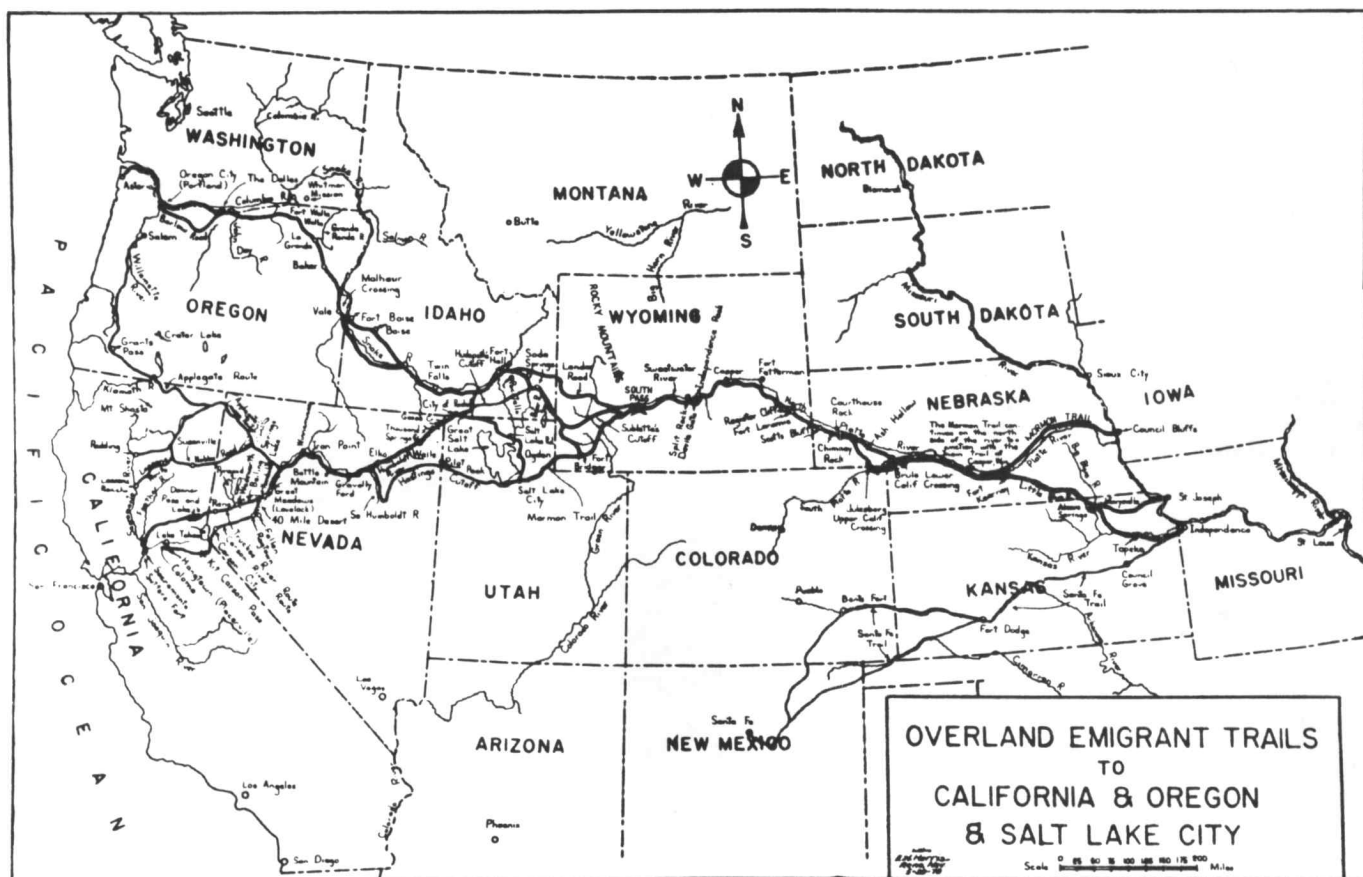
Fr. 12th 15 miles. A hard days travel through a Canyon. The continual crossing of the creek where in many instances the wheels were over hubs in mud and water. The sideling roads and stumps and roots proved a smasher to many waggons and a hard pull to all the teams. We escaped however without a breakdown and emcamped about dark in a thicket of weeds and bushes but no grass. We finally concluded to lead our horses up into the mountains where we found a good supply of bunch grass, and turned them loose. Herriman no better. Myself quite unwell all day. Wait as usual lazy unaccommdating & impudent.

(July) 14 M) (Sat. 13th) This morning much concern was created in our camp by the absence of all our animals. A turnout of all the camp (that were able was made) after the horses and it was near noon before they were found. They had wandered many miles probably started into a stampede, either by Indians, or wolves. Towards noon continued our journey travelling through a deep kanyon for several miles we emerged into the Great Salt Lake Valley. The city, the cultivated fields and cottages were most welcome objects to our view. Everything before us even the cheering voice of the chanticleer reminded us of civilization and of home. Finding no publick house in the city, and no pasturage near we passed through and beyond, about eight miles to Willow Springs where we find very good grass and water and have pitched our tents for several days. Myself quite sick with mountain fever. Herriman better but quite morose and unsocial towards me. Wait a perfect bear or rather all but bristles a hog. Our company besides ourselves now consists of Messers Greenleaf Jones & Warren. Firman Putnam & A. Furman our former travelling companions still behind. A few days rest we hope will recruit ourselves and animals & prepare us for the journey still before us.

Monday 15th Just able to ride into Town. After considerable enquiry and a tiresome walk from street to street succeeded in finding Mrs.

⁴groping

⁵Salt Lake City



C.H. Clark followed the Mormon Trail from South Pass to Salt Lake City, the Hastings Cutoff west of Salt Lake, and the Carson River Route in western Nevada.

Map reprinted from: Everett W. Harris, *The Overland Emigrant Trail to California. A Guide to Trail Markers Placed in Western Nevada and the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California by the Nevada Nevada Emigrant Trail Marking Committee, Inc., Reno, Nevada. (1980)*

Mount and a seat in a chair with a back to it, (for the first time since leaving St. Jo.) was a most welcome luxury. Mrs. Mount received me in a very friendly manner. I remained with her overnight. Occupying for the first time in two month a bed which I had all to myself. How unlike a birth⁶ in the waggon crowded up between two so extensive men as Doct Herriman, and Wait with his elbows and growls. Our long lost comrades came up today—All well.

Tues. 16 July. Remained in the city until near night when Doct. Herriman drove up and complained that he had been put to much trouble in finding me and seemed quite out of humour. In riding out to our encampment we got lost and drove above over the plain until near morning when we came to a halt and turned out our horses. The jolting of the waggon as I lay upon the bottom almost drove me distracted. My fever was very high and my head seemed ready to burst with pain. I made up my mind that I was not long for this world. Exceedingly glad was I when the waggon stood still. Lost our way in consequence of taking one of Herriman's cut offs.

Wed. July 17th Awoke this morning feeling much better than I expected after my distressing nocturnal journey. Daylight enabled us to find our camp which we reached after an hours drive. Remained in camp the remainder of the day. Commenced to prepare to pack—having made up our minds to go the "Morman Cut Off". Standfords came up and pitched their tents near us. Chadwick missing. Self quite sick. Herriman claimed the exclusive ownership of the two mares and Wait that of the pony. What next?

Th. 18th July - 3 Miles - Found my self quite ill this morning. Doct.

Herriman refusing to prescribe for me and treating me in a rude manner—his reason was that I had expressed dissatisfaction at his treatment of the horses & I told him he never need fear another solicitation of the kind from me. Moved this afternoon from the plain up into the mountains encamping in a small Kanyan shaded by bushes and supplied with good water which flowed through it in a fine stream from the mountains. Our horses feeding upon the mountain grass above us. Doct. Herriman volunteered this afternoon professional advice, and prescribed physic. Seemed more friendly than it has been for many days. The manufacture of packs and pack saddles continued. Encamped with us are Gen. Hutchinson Doct. Green Messrs Steel, Preusen, Hugunin and several other gentlemen from Racine. Greenleaf Hoyt Jones Willard—Capt and A. Furman Putnam &c all going the "Cut-off". We have disposed of all our provisions excepting rations for 25 days, which we hope will last us through.

Fr. Sat. Sun. Mon. Our preparations are now complete and we are to resume our journey tomorrow. Herriman claims the two mares—packing one and riding the other. Wait claims the ownership of the pony and is going to ride him. Old Charley is to take a pack of provisions. Bill is assigned to me. But the poor animal is in no condition to travel, and I expect to ride but very little. Our horses have improved but very little if any by stopping here. I think they have failed since we left Willow Springs. Bill & Charley especially.

Tuesday 23^d 14 M. Left our mountain encampment for the city, where we remained until 4 O. C.P.M. where we crossed the Jordan by swimming our horses and encamped upon its bank 3 or 4 miles below the crossing.—Feed indifferent—

July 24th. 28 M. At 7 A.M. in company with Hutchinson Steel Preusen

⁶birth—berth

⁷Hastings Cutoff on map.

Doct. Green Hugunin & several others (from Racine) Messrs. Putnam Furman & Furman of—⁸. Danl. Cameron & Follet, Cook Dewey and Shields from Milwaukee and vicinity—Greenleaf Hoyt Jones Warren-Willard and several others from different parts of the States. We struck out upon this long talked of "Cut off" travelling over the level plain towards the point of a mountain some 15 miles to the South West. After reaching it and travelling along its base some three miles we stopped for dinner at a salt spring. The water was cool and limpid but too salt to be palatable or to quench our thirst. Here we encountered quite a copious shower of rain.

In the afternoon we passed several other Salt Springs and a portion of Salt Lake the water of which is salt indeed and the shore slightly encrusted with salt. From this point our course lay nearly South over a soft salt marsh. Our path being crossed by several salt streams flowing from springs at the front of the mountains upon our left and producing a luxuriant growth of wild cane which seemed quite palatable to our animals.—Encamped—turning our horses into the canes. Salt water to cook with on wood so impregnated with salt as to be almost incombustible. Our blankets spread upon the canes—our bed.

Th. July 25th 35 M. Over salt plains and marshes in many places so slightly encrusted as to be almost impassible—many places would not bear up a horse or even a man, and we were obliged to make circuits to void them. We travelled upon the plains to make a cut off. Most of the travel taking the surer but longer road at the foot of the mountains at our left. Towards night we left the "bogs" and joined the prudent travellers upon terra firma.—Reached our place of encampment sometime after dark—We can see nothing of the "lay of the land" but a very unpleasant smell reaches us from every direction said to be an emission of gas from the springs and bog in our neighborhood. The water that we are using is rather "bad to take". The grass is poor. I pity the horses—and prepare to make my bed in the open air expecting if I sleep to dream of salt—of swimming in salt and breathing sulphuretted hydrogen and every other stink on earth—

Fr. July 26, 32 M. Not feeling inclined to breakfast at our encampment we left at an early hour and travelled on five miles to another camping ground where we found better water and grass. We remained here until 1 O'C. after noon, for the purpose of feeding our animals and cutting some feed for their use upon the "90 m. desert"⁹.

At 4 O'clock P.M. left encampment each with his bundle of feed consisting mostly of canes. Bills back having been badly chafed by the saddle I put him before Cameron & Co's waggon and rode one of their ponies—Continued to travel in a Southerly direction along the front of the mountains for about 16 miles where we made a short turn to the North-west striking for a range of mountains ten or twelve miles ahead—we were obliged to make this angle—the softness of the ground at our right preventing our taking a more direct course.

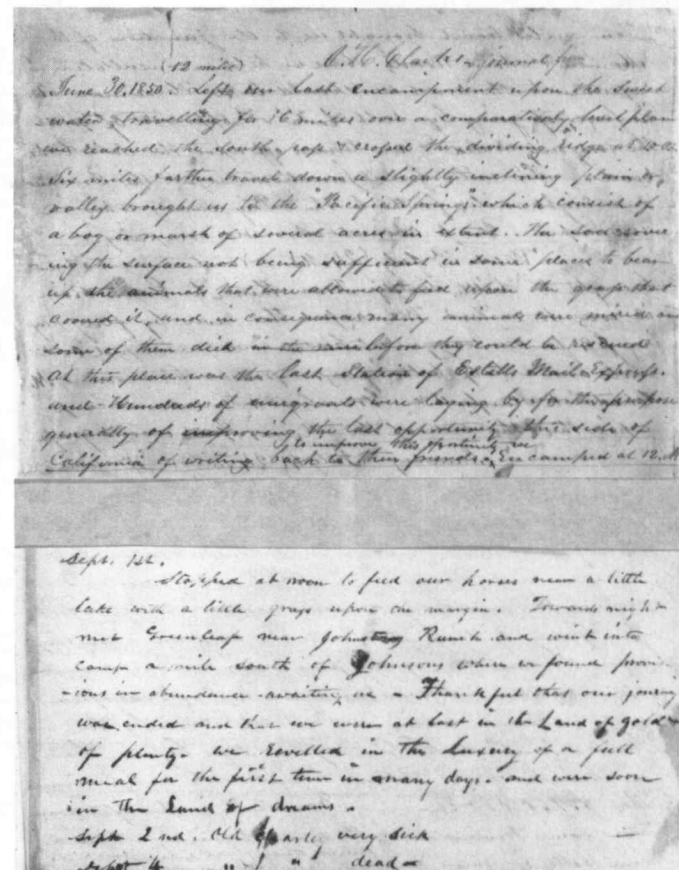
At this angle of the road we found a spring approximating more nearly to fresh water than any we have yet found West of the City. I was travelling alone—Some of our company ahead and others who had stopped to look for fresh water in the mountains behind. The night had set in with every indication of a severe thunder storm. I dismounted and hurried on the pony hoping to reach the mountains before the rain should soften our path and make it quite impassible—a result we had reason to fear from the nature of the soil. I succeeded in making 5 or 6 miles of the distance only when it commenced to rain violently—I turned out of the path, tied pony to a sage brush, wrapped myself in my blanket and waited the result—the continued flashes of lightning revealing to me distinctly the mountains which I feared I might not reach without great difficulty. Fortunately the violence of the storm soon abated and I started on, travelling however with great difficulty over the softened marl (if it is marl) and reached the mountain encampment at daylight where I found all hands drying themselves before a blazing fire made of a kind of dwarf fir which covers the sides of the mountains and ravines.

Sat. 27th July Our encampment is upon the Eastern side of a chain of broken mountains—with lofty peaks and deep ravines. Some hundreds of emigrants are waiting here to recruit their animals and prepare for crossing the great "90 mile desert". The feed here is "bunch grass" which is found growing rather sparingly upon the sides of mountains and ravines.

Water is found by digging holes at the bottom of a ravine. It is of a very inferior quality, and flows so slowly as scarcely to supply the demand of immediate use & we shall have to economize in order to save what we wish to take with us for use upon the desert.

Sunday 28 July Remained in camp saving water and making preparations for crossing the desert until 4 P.M. when we left encampment, and the last place of grass and water East of "Pilot Peak"¹⁰. Twelve miles travel through the mountains brought us to the verge of the desert where we stopped for half an hour to take a hasty cup of coffee, and then lunched¹¹ out upon the broad expanse before us just as the sun was setting. For the first 15 miles we travelled through a bed, seemingly composed of sand ashes and salt mixed with cobble stones into which we sunk almost knee deep—continually stubbing our toes against the stones until those of us who were travelling in moccasins (as I was and for the first time on the journey) were almost crippled, and worse than all, the dust raised by the travel ahead and blown into our faces by a strong wind was almost beyond endurance. It was the greatest difficulty we could either see or breath. At 12 O'clock reached a high rocky ridge which was very steep on both sides and difficult to cross on the summit of which I rested my horse a few minutes—threw away my moccasins and resumed the stogies—my feet so much swollen that my no. 11's were a very tight fit—

July 29 At 3 O'clock A.M. reached another ridge of sand where we fed our horses their bundle of canes and rested while they were feeding. At 4 resumed our journey travelling over salt plains towards



First day and last three days of the Journal of Costmor Harris Clark, 1850. Notice the change in the quality of the writing between these two pages.

a ridge of mountains which bounded the horizon to the Westward—passing at short intervals the bones of animals, waggons and various other articles of property a small portion only remaining above the surface. This was property belonging a company of Mormons, who, while attempting to cross the desert were overtaken by a rain which

⁸unreadable

⁹Great Salt Lake Desert

¹⁰Pilot Peak, 10,704 ft., north of Wendover, Nev., just west of the Utah state line.

¹¹Lunched—launched

so softened the crust which covers the surface of the plain that it would not bear up their teams, they were obliged to abandon them to their fate. At this time in many places the crust will scarcely bear up a waggon however no one has broken through as yet and we have found it very pleasant travelling ever since we crossed the rocky ridge before mentioned. With the exception of these "ridges" of stone and sand the whole plane is a perfect level, resembling a lake covered with ice—the salt on the surface white and glittering in the sun like snow.

At 4 P.M. reached the mountains for which we had been so long travelling with the expectation of finding feed and water at their base, but great was our disappointment to learn that we had still to travel 25 to reach "Pilot Peak".—All around us were animals dying of hunger thirst and fatigue and many men as well as women in nearly the same condition. After resting a few moments started again and it was with the greatest difficulty we could urge our animals to go at all and were obliged to stop again. We took off the packs from our horses and let them rest for nearly an hour under the shade of the mountain after which the poor things seemed willing to make another effort, and we continued our journey along the base of the mountains in a Northwest direction for about ten miles when we came to the point of the spur around which we turned to the left and saw for the first time (at a distance of 15 miles) the long looked for "Pilot Peak". Here we met a young man with two canteens of water and were invited to drink as much as we pleased, and informed us (Mr Millard from Whitewater and myself were together others of our company were travelling behind and some before according to the ability of their animals) that half mile ahead was a waggon load of water sent back by parties who had reached the mountains before us. We soon came up to the "water waggon" and received a supply for ourselves and animals. The "water man" informed us that he was hired to meet the emigrants with water at this point—the money being raised by subscription or contribution rather, among the emigrants as they arrived at the "Peak" and this humane arrangement will probably be kept up until all the emigration have passed.

The danger of famishing for want of water being over I determined upon staying where I was until morning as I was quite lame in the feet and felt as I never did before the necessity of sleep as I had not slept to exceed 3 hours in 84 or four days and three nights. Mr. Millard kindly volunteered to take my horse with his and if possible get them through to feed during the night. I crawled under a waggon to be out of danger of being run over by animals and men and soon forgot in sleep the fatigues of the "desert Pilot Peak", or the golden land. I slept until a late hour in the morning and arose quite refreshed and "put out" for the mountain and reached the encampment about noon. The place has quite the appearance of a town. Tents are pitched on every side and men and women are moving about in every direction. And the beautiful plain which is watered by the streams flowing from a range of snow crowned mountains, are covered by animals luxuriating in "plenty".

Wed. 31st July 3 miles— Moved this morning three miles down the valley to a more convenient and less crowded location.

Th. 1st Aug. 37 M. Left encampment at an early hour. Myself in poor trim for travelling on account of the lameness of my feet, and poor Bill in a worse condition still—the effect of hunger and fatigue in crossing the last desert. It is with greatest difficulty he can be induced to travel, and I have been obliged to take upon my own shoulders a part of his pack. This added to my rifle was a little more than I felt able to carry and I was obliged to lay down my arms, and surrender it to the desert over which we were travelling—hoping however that Cameron and Cook who were behind with the wagon would take it up—if they have not done so my poor old friend is lost, and I am defenseless. We have travelled today in nearly a Westerly direction—crossing in the morning through the range on which is "Pilot Peak"—We descended upon a salt plain some 18 miles in width—crossed a rocky ridge 25 miles from our morning encampment where we found two small springs of water and after waiting our turn for nearly an hour we succeeded in getting perhaps a quart of water each for our animals and perhaps a pint apiece for our selves. Ten miles farther travel over a soft sandy plain brought us to another range of mountains where we find water grass and a large encampment but cannot succeed in finding our company who were mostly ahead of us—so we have turned out our horses and must retire to rest, supperless. Wm Shields was my travelling companion today as far as the two Springs when he went ahead. Soon after

which Mr. Follet overtook me and is now my "room mate". "The ground for our bed, they sky for our curtains". Water here is impregnated with sulphur.

Fr. Aug. 2nd 18 miles Found this morning my partners and others of our company and was extremely glad of a breakfast after fasting for 24 hours—Greenleaf & Co have started ahead and have agreed to wait for us at the first convenient stopping place. Herriman and Wait very anxious to keep up with Greenleaf so much that Wait was in favor of going on and leaving me and poor old Bill to our fate—but this the Doctor refused to do until he had seen me.

The Doct proposed (as old Bill was not likely to be able to keep up Greenleaf) to remain with Cameron Cook & Co who were determined to travel more leisurely, and allow them to go on. I told him if old Bill could not travel, I could and it was my determination to travel in the front rank. So I left poor Bill with Millard took old Charley in tow and started on crossing the range of mountains under which we had encamped. Travelling Westward towards another range of hills or mountains which we reached a little after noon and just as Greenleaf & Company were leaving. We determined upon staying here over night as it was evident that we were overtravelling our horses.

We find tolerable grass and springs of warm sulphur—water quite agreeable to the taste—We estimate having travelled today 18 miles.

Sat. 3^d Aug. 31 miles On the road by 5 O'clock in the morning—through the hills and over a sand plain to another range of hills where we found sulphur springs and grass. The water was quite warm but pleasant. We stopped here for dinner having travelled about 15 miles. After dinner crossed the hills—still keeping a Westward course over a soft plain of sand & reached at sundown the foot of a ridge of snow mountains where we found Springs and Brooks of cool fresh water and plenty of good grass—Travelling after noon 20 miles.

Sunday Aug. 4th 15 So anxious were my partners to overtake Greenleaf that they determined to leave our delightful encampment although it was Sunday and, although it was actually necessary to give our horses a day of rest. Five miles travel over the mountains and ten over a sand plain brought us to the foot of another range of snow mountains where we found Greenleaf & c up to the eyes in green and fresh water in abundance. Reached the encampment at 11 1/2 O'clock A.M.

Mon Aug. 5th 35 M. At 7 A.M. resumed our journey—travelling all day a little West of South along the base of the mountains¹² from which flow at short intervals small streams of clear cold snow water into an extensive valley covered with abundance of grass and wild clover which our animals eat with great avidity—We are undoubtedly travelling too much South—but expect soon to find the road to make a turn through the mountains. We have just supped upon "Penola"¹³ and water and are ready to give ourselves up to "morpeus"¹⁴ & dreams.

Tuesday 6th Aug. 35 M. Continued our course along the base of the mountains for about 20 miles when we left the valley by turning to our right through a gap in the mountains travelling in a N. Westerly direction over a rough hilly country until 9 at night when we encamped in a valley upon a small stream running North. Crossed today several indian fences (if it is proper to call them so) they consist of sage bushes with the roots turned upwards and placed two or three feet apart and extending in a line over hill and valley as far as the prospect extends. What is the use of them is to me a mystery. Some suppose they mark the boundary of different tribes or families and some that they have something to do with the capture of game. It proves to me that we are in the vicinity of Indians and that is no peculiar comfort to me seeing that I am minus my rifle. We are somewhat apprehensive of their stealing our horses if not our scalps—Made a fire of "greese weeds" cooked our supper and turned in.

Wed. 7th Aug. 25 Miles. Continued North down the valley 17 miles—when it was proposed by Herriman and Greenleaf to attempt to make

¹²The Hastings Cutoff went around the south end of the Ruby Mountains and joined the main road of the Overland Emigrant Trail near Elko, Nev.

¹³Penola—a type of bread

¹⁴morpeus—morpeus

a cut off by changing our course to a North-Westerly course in hopes of striking St Marys River¹⁵ by a nearer rout than to follow the creek around (which was supposed to be a branch of the St. Mary's).

The proposition was adopted and we struck off from the valley travelling over an awfully rough country of steep hills and deep ravines for about eight miles, when we reached a valley of good grass but no water. We concluded to stop here for the night uncertain of finding another so good a place. After looking up and down the valley for water we concluded to dig a well and succeeded in finding plenty of water by digging about two feet below the surface of the bottom of the ravine—Thus supplied we lay down in contentment—Company—Greenleaf, Jones, Warren, Hoyt, Willard, Herriman, Wait & Myself. Shields & Dewey Keeping the road.

Th. 8th Aug. 25 Miles. Keeping our course over high hills, and deep ravines, in which we found some grass but no water until 11 O'clock A.M. we came to a halt for consultation and decided (as there was no prospect of water ahead), to turn off towards the valley—We accordingly turned N.E. down a valley hoping it would lead us back to the road and of course to water. Wait proposed to transfer all the packages from "His" poney to old Charley—and so ride the poney by turns—the rider to lead the pack horse. While I was arranging the pack Wait mounted the Poney and started on. As soon the pack was arranged I started, driving Charley before me with the expectation of soon overtaking Wait. Charley followed the other horses until, as they turning the point of bluff, he lost sight of them. When he wheeled about and came rushing back towards me. In attempting to stop him I turned him off into a ravine leading into the mountains, and after chasing him for 4 or 5 miles over hill & valley succeeded in capturing him and getting back to the track, which I took, and followed until I lost all trace of my company—and concluded they must have left the valley. After looking in vain for their trail, I determined to mark out a course for myself—and turning to the East and climbing to the top of the mountain. Saw in the distance before me the mountains, topped with snow, a sure indication of "water" and with courage revived pressed forward hoping to be able to reach it before dark—unless indeed I might fall in with Indians which I apprehended, as I was constantly crossing their tracks and passing their camping places. The mountains and ravines are covered with a kind of dwarf fir, so thick in many places that it was difficult to pass. I succeeded however in reaching, just as the sun was setting the valley, which proved (as I expected) to be the valley & stream we had left the day before—Charley and I were both glad to get back to the green fields and limpid water of which we drank our fill and, then continued our course down the valley in hopes of finding our company for two or three miles, but not finding them I turned out old Charley—borrowed a frying pan of a neighbor—baked and ate a penola pancake and retired thankfully to rest in the "tall grass".

Fr. 9 Aug. 10 miles. Moved down stream 2 miles. I halted to await the coming up of the company which (from information received from an emigrant) I supposed to be behind me.

At ten o'clock the company came up and seemed surprised to find me ahead of them. Wait had a great story to tell about waiting and looking for me which nobody believed. The Doct. had kept up a fire until late at night and discharged several guns in hopes to direct me to their encampment, but I did not see or hear their signals.

Near this point the river passes through a narrow gap in the mountains and for about 8 miles the rocks rise nearly perpendicularly on each side to a great height—We crossed the stream 24 times in passing through—Waggons were obliged to keep the channel of the stream most of the way. At 6 P.M. we emerged into a spacious valley which proved to be the valley of Humbolt's or St Mary's river. Plenty of grass, clover, and wild flax. Encampments of emigrants in all directions. Among the animals we see Dewey's & Shield's "Creams"—Willow wood for fires—Quite a number of animals have been stolen by the indians the first day or two, and some men have had narrow escapes from them. Some Indians have been shot.

Sat. Aug. 10th 25 M. Travelled down the river 3 or 4 miles—turned off to the right upon a cut off over the mountains. After a most horrid series of climbing up and climbing down for 7 or 8 miles we reached the river road and kept it for 9 miles, when we took another cut off to please the Doctor (who is perfectly mad on Cut-off's.) and after five

miles farther travel encamped upon the side of the mountain near a ravine with a small spring of water in it. The sides of the mountains covered with sage bushes—Bunch grass growing sparingly among it.



Common headstone for Costmor and Eleanor Clark, Tulocay Cemetery, Napa, California.

Sunday Aug. 11th 26 miles Awoke this morning and found our animals all safe and our scalps on. Left early travelling over a hilly, rocky road for 12 miles. We descended again to the river, which we kept for 14 miles and turned out. Provisions growing scarce.

Mon. 12th Augt. 30 Miles At 7 O'clock commenced our march. The river at our right upon the other side of the valley. Most of the day travelled along the foot of the hills and over sand ridges. The River being several miles from us upon the other side of the valley. At 3 P.M. found a well containing a supply of inferior water—Here we succeeded in buying 30 lbs of bacon from a wagon at 50 cts pr. pound. Left the road and bore diagonally towards river which we reached after about 6 miles further travel—where we found extra good grass and dry willow wood—Herriman and Warren falling behind and not coming in.

Tues 13th Augt. 27 M. Travelled over sand plains at a distance of several miles from the river. The larger portion of the travel being upon the other side of the stream—at 1 P.M. finding no water, we turned toward the river and found grass and water from our horses upon a slue several miles from the river—The valley at this point is probably 30 or 40 miles wide. Agreed to keep all together.

Wed. 14th Aug. 25 Miles Travelled N.W. about 15 miles most of the way over sand plains—and struck the river at noon—where Herriman and Warren overtook us. After noon left the river upon our right travelling in a Westerly direction for ten miles over a mountainous county—Struck the river again and encamped, Grass poor feed for horses. Passed today several shallow well of water salt as "lots wife". We have decided to go upon short allowance of flour (1/4 lb each twice a day) to be weighed accurately Greenleaf's scales. I am both cook and steward.

The 15th 25 M. Travelling at a distance from the river, touching it at noon for bating & at night for encampment—Herriman & Warren falling behind and coming late into camp.

Fr. 16 August 25 Miles Herriman this morning insisted upon shifting a part of the load from "his" pack "mare" on to old Charley to which I objected—claiming that as he had both the mares and one of them exclusively devoted to his own use, I claimed the right of authority over Charley & intended to ride him occasionally as soon as his load was sufficiently reduced—for which I had been waiting a long time—He reiterated his exclusive right to the mares and joint ownership of Charley and swore and threatened to do just as he please in the matter.

¹⁵The Humboldt River

I proposed to have out the difficulty to the company to which he would not consent. Being just on the point of starting from camp and not wishing to delay the company, I took all the provisions from his pack—with the determination that if he got any of them for dinner or supper he would have to travel for them.

The company participated in feelings and we were soon under way and Doct. Herriman was soon out of sight behind us, and did not overtake us until late at night in camp upon the river.

Sat 17 Aug. 28 miles. Traveling still over a desert of sand—nothing growing upon it but sage. Many miles of our travel today had been over a plain of salt over the sand on which not even a sage bush grew. We reached the river at noon and after noon travelled over a hilly road and turned down to the river again at night. Greenleaf as usual looking out the camping ground. Herriman would not have found us to night had not Wait watched for him upon a neighboring hill. This was remarkable generosity for Wait.

And I am happy to record at least one generous act in him during the journey. Not another man in the company would have taken the pains.

Sun. 18 Aug. 25 M. Travelled away from Herriman and Warren as usual. Herriman probably fearing he should not be able to keep up with us, had the geneoristy to relieve Charley of a part of his load taking nothing but provisions. The river today has run our side of the valley and we have travelled most of the day near its bank. The valley is much narrower here than where we have travelled for several days past, and feed much more scarce. The water in the river very filthy—full of dead animals and swarming with toads and all manner of creeping things. And the air filled with flies and mosquitoes, and the whole valley made up of "slues" and bogs.

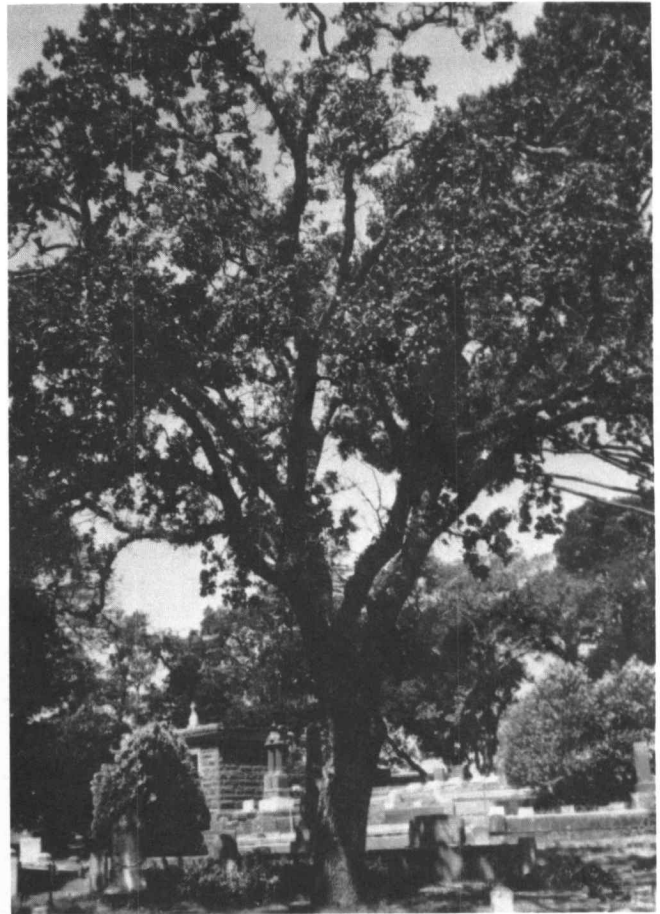
Most of our horses have been mired some of them several times (old Charley two or three times). Last night we had to turn out several times to draw animals out of the river & slues—Saw some Indians today upon a bluff—looking down upon us—I was several rods in the rear of com. & walking on foot and driving Charley before me. As I was passing them a bushy headed fellow started down the hill apparently with the intention of cutting me off from the train. I started Charley off up to the trot, and he was soon up to the company. I continued to walk on brandishing my carpenters hatchet occasionally to show the Indian that I was "armed" and ready for action. Mr. Indian came down to the trail but did not think proper to follow me, perhaps fearing my formidable weapon—an old dull hatchet loose upon the handle—the only weapon left me. My rifle and knife both lost. Indians are very suspicious of white mens weapons. Especially the little guns that shoot so many times without loading—Herriman & Warren absent tonight.

Mon. 19th Aug. 1850 This morning bought of an emigrant 200 lbs. beef at 25 dollars and concluded to remain in camp to jerk it which we did by cutting it from the bone in thin strips and laying it upon a frame made of sticks under which we built a fire, which, with the help of the sun, dried it "brown" and reduced its weight from 200 down to 25 lbs. It took us all day to defend it from the immense number of flies that seemed bent upon devouring it in spite of fire and smoke and all could do. The poor horses are almost devoured by mosquitoes. I spent the greater part of the night in fighting them away from poor old Charley.

Tues. 20th Aug. Continued our journey down river towards "sink"—enquiring of every waggon for provisions. Had flour offered us at two dollars per pound and beans at one dollar a pint. We concluded to eat meat alone rather than submit to extortion. Stopped upon the "great marsh" at the head of the "lake or sink" to bait our horses at noon, where we found good grass and passable water by wading a long way into the marsh. After noon—travelled down the marsh and encamped finding good feed and palatable water by "wading" out into the tall canes—no wood—

Wed. 21st. Aug. Two or three miles travel brought us to the lake—The "receptacle" of Humboldt's or St Mary's River.—which we found to be a large body of water, perhaps ten miles long and half as broad—water much better than we expected. No wood or grass upon the margin of the lake. We stopped at noon near the entrance upon the "Desert"—Bated our horses upon 'reeds' which we waded for and cut in the lake—

Remained here until 4 O'clock—Cooked a pound of rice—the last



This oak tree shades the Clark family plot in Tulocay Cemetery. The tree grew from the soil used to fill in Eleanor Clark's grave in 1887.

particle of food we had left—with the intention of eating it during our journey over the 50 mile desert.

While waiting here Herriman came into camp but was very coolly received by all the company and seemed to take the hint that his company was not necessary. On leaving he gave me an invitation to join company with him which I declined, and consider our connection finally dissolved. At 4 O'clock left the sink and started out upon our nocturnal journey anticipating a hard night—and perhaps the loss of our animals or some of them at least—At 5 1/2 O'clock left the lush place of water East of Carsons river—

After travelling 10 or 12 miles concluded to rest and eat our rice which we found to be sour. All of us however ate a little of it and started on driving our animals as rapidly as possible—passing every thing upon the road and reached the river at 6 O'clock in the morning—Having myself, travelled during the day and night 65 miles all the way on foot. The road across the desert was quite hard and smooth excepting the last 8 or 10 miles which was over soft sand and of course very hard to travel. The greatest annoyance we suffered was the intolerable stench of dead animals which lined both sides of the road the whole distance—in numbers sufficient to have made a bridge of animals the whole 30 miles. And waggons & other property abandoned sufficient to have made another of the same length—It was a most horrid picture of destruction which I never wish again to witness.

Ten miles out encountered a couple of waggons having for sale water, and other luxuries, such as cakes pies &c. Not having the "bag" I could not buy, but had the felicity of smelling the flavor of a couple of apple pies which my partner Mr. Cary Wait bought and devoured with characteristic forgetfulness of everyone but himself—a circumstance which I cannot soon forget—as they were bought with co. funds. The price of water—50 cents a gallon. "Pies one dollar &

twenty-five cents, other things in proportion.

At river found quite a trading post of provisions brought over the "Sierra Nevadas". flour selling at 1 1/4 dollars pr. pound. Bacon and other provisions about the same. Grass quite poor. The river a clear beautiful stream about 4 or 5 rods wide and 3 feet deep.

22 Aug. 9 O'clock A.M. Have just had a fine feast of pancakes (made from chile flour) and bacon. Washed up the dishes and are ready to fall into the inviting arms of Morpheus. Refreshed by two hours sleep under the shade of a cluster of oaks upon the bank of the river—arose and took a stroll through the town of waggons and tents. Many are engaged in selling provisions and meals to emigrants and the way that cakes pies and other eatables suffer is a caution—This appears to be a very fine valley and well supplied with wood upon the banks of the stream—We leave here in the morning—

Fri. 23^d Augt. Left our first encampment upon the river and moved 8 miles farther up the valley for better feed. Passed several trading tents—bought nothing but ten pounds of flour at two dollars pr. pound. We might have bought liquor at one dollar a glass. We saw many patronizing the bar but none of our party indulged. We heard of flour sent out from California either by the State or by private subscription, for the relief of the destitute—but those who made application for it could get but one pound of flour each, and before they could get even that must convince the official that they were entirely destitute of any property that they could exchange for food. From what I can learn very little provisions have been furnished to the "suffering emigration" excepting what has been sold at a very high price. Among the travellers today is a woman with a small child travelling on foot and alone. Her husband left her a day or two ago and went ahead in hopes of securing provisions of which they were destitute. The person in whose charge she was left abandoned her upon the desert, when they lost their team. If she does not find her husband—hope she may find a friend who can spare her a horse to ride—

Sat. 24th 25 miles. Continued our course up Carson valley—which abounds in groves of timber of several varieties, good grass and plenty of fresh water—

Sunday 25th 25 miles. Passed today over a sand desert of several miles travelling back from the river. Reached the valley again in good season finding a pleasant encampment under some large oaks. Surrounded by good grass, and water convenient.

Monday 26th 25 miles Have passed to-day (as we have every day in the valley) trading tents at short intervals—Flour is selling at \$1.25, bacon or pork, sugar &c. the same. New mines have been discovered here, and quite a number of miners from the other side of the mountains are "prospecting" in the ravines which open into the valley from the mountains. The sides of the mountains here are covered with pines and are quite lofty and precipitous. Near this point "Morman Station"—is a cut-off through the mountains—which if Herri. was with us, we should be sure to take if he could persuade us to it. But wanting his aid and influence the advocates for short cuts "can carry" and we shall probably "go round". This morning I detected a "poor devil" in the act of stealing a horse—He was tried by judge Synch and condemned to whipped—and accordingly received thirty lashes well laid on. I retired from the scene—but not so far as to be out of hearing of the blows and shrieks which were most painful to my sensibilities—and I more than half repented my agency in the affair.

Tuesday 26th 25 miles Ate this morning our last morsel of provisions viz 3/4 lb. flour and 1/2 lb. bacon which we considered rather a small

allowance for 6 men. Greenleaf concluded to take Mr. Hoyts mare (the best animal in the company) and go ahead in hopes of securing provisions to be in readiness for us when we got through and perhaps meet us with relief. At noon had and opportunity of selling a mule (belonging to Greenleaf) for forty dollars which cost at St. Jo \$120. In funds again and a supply of provisions of course, pork & flour costing us but a dollar & half a pound.

Wednesday Aug. 27th 25 miles Bought flour & pork today at \$1.25 pr pound. met trains of mules loaded with provisions to sell to the emigration, and companies of miners with their tools & provisions going to the new mines in this valley. Meet trading posts every few miles. Thus far the whole valley is uniformly beautiful. The purest water flows from the mountains—Grass & clover covers the whole plain and the sides of the mountains are shaded by beautiful pines down to the valley.

Thursday 28 Aug. After a few miles travel turned to the right into a canyon—the mountains rising to a great height on either hand. The road rough but pleasantly shaded by the magnificent pines. A beautiful brook of water cold and pure, supplied by springs gushing out on every hand is rushing towards the valley.

At noon stopped for dinner during which time a discussion was had upon the questions—whether pancakes were bread!!!—and what amount of money would be sufficient compensation for a journey to California. Wait and Jones—Wait especially—were much vexed at the impropriety of my calling pancakes bread, and insisting upon the correctness of my position. And upon the other question, I was "no whar" in being satisfied with an ounce a day—Mr. Wait swore by the "holy smut" as he had often done before that he would never return home with a less sum than \$150,000.!! Travelled in the afternoon up some tremendous hills and at night entered a fine valley of small extent through which flowed a fine creek & camped for the night.

Grass & water good and abundant.

Friday 29 August Quite a severe frost during the night—in my two pair of pantaloons and three flannel shirts & with coats and blanket around me managed to spend the night comfortably warm.

Met this morning Mr. Chadwick & Stanford looking for their horses which had strayed in the night. This has been a hard days travel during which we climbed to the summit of the Nevadas and commenced our decent towards the Pacific—Snow and ice abounds in all the shaded localities. The nights are quite cold, have build a regular log heap fire of fallen pines and wait the morning.

Sat 30 Aug. Leek Spring Valley was reached after dark, said to be the last place of grass for 40 miles.—Found very little here. Bought flour at 56 cents pr pound.

Sun. 31 Augt. Encamped 28 miles from Hangtown¹⁶ in a deep ravine away from the road (to the South). Found grass and water.

Sept. 1st. Stopped at noon to feed our horses near a little lake with a little grass upon the margin. Towards night met Greenleaf near Johnsons Ranch and went into camp a mile South of Johnsons where we found provisions in abundance—a waiting for us—Thankful that our journey was ended and that we were at last in the Land of gold & of plenty. We revelled in the luxury of a full meal for the first time in many days, and were soon in the Land of dreams.

Sept 2nd .Old Charley very sick.

Sept 4. Old Charley dead.

¹⁶Now Placerville, Calif.