

1-1-1945

From Lewisburg (Pa.) to California in 1849; Diary of William H. Chamberlin, I

William H. Chamberlin

L. B. Bloom

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

Chamberlin, William H. and L. B. Bloom. "From Lewisburg (Pa.) to California in 1849; Diary of William H. Chamberlin, I." *New Mexico Historical Review* 20, 1 (1945). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol20/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

See also the diary of William H. Chamberlin

FROM LEWISBURG (PA.) TO CALIFORNIA IN 1849

(Notes from the Diary of William H. Chamberlin)

Edited by LANSING B. BLOOM

IN A recent book¹ dealing with gold seekers who went overland to California in 1849, one of our esteemed collaborators in the field of Southwestern history has called attention to the fact that "in popular conception, emigration to California was limited to the northern routes"—the Santa Fé, Oregon, and Mormon Trails. "That similar scenes were enacted farther south is not generally known. Few journals were kept and little has been written about the emigration here. Yet the amazing scenes of preparation for departure from Independence across the 'Plains' were repeated on a smaller scale at Fort Smith and Van Buren, Arkansas, on the border of the Indian Territory."

Some ten years ago while we were making a short visit to his ranch about three miles south of Estancia, New Mexico, Mr. J. V. Chamberlin handed us a bundle of old newspaper clippings which he thought might be of interest to the readers of our quarterly. The clippings were from the Lewisburg (Pa.) *Saturday News* which, during the fall of 1902, had published in twenty-four "chapters" or installments the diary which had been kept by his uncle, William, while going overland by the Canadian River route. Four of the installments were found to be missing, but with the help of an old school chum now living at State College, Pa., we were able last summer to secure copies of these from the office of the newspaper which, it seems, is still being published in Lewisburg.

The book by Grant Foreman which we have cited is based on the official report of Capt. Randolph B. Marcy,²

1. Grant Foreman, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers* (1939), xii.

2. Randolph B. Marcy was a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy (1832). He had risen to a captaincy by May 18, 1846; served during the Mexican War, and afterwards at Fort Towson and Fort Arbuckle. Still later, he was to serve in Texas, Florida, and Utah, and was to distinguish himself during the Civil War. At this time, he was in command of the 5th U. S. Infantry at Fort Towson. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 689; Foreman, *op. cit.*, 145.

enriched by passages from diaries of '49ers who followed this route, letters, and news items which Mr. and Mrs. Foreman were able to glean during some years of diligent and widely extended research. The diary which we are here editing did not come to their attention, nor have we seen any other mention of it. Aside from any other importance which it may have, the diary is of especial interest because of the relation which it shows between this little party from Lewisburg and the military detachment under Captain Marcy which had been directed to lay out a new road from Fort Smith to Chouteau's Trading House (keeping wholly to the south of the Canadian River) and to escort emigrants coming that way through to Santa Fé. From there, the federal authorities expected them to find a direct route through to California over the Old Spanish Trail!

According to his own report,³ Capt. Frederick T. Dent⁴ left Fort Smith on March 27, 1849, with Lieut. Joseph Updegraff⁵ and twenty-five men, the advance detachment of Marcy's command which was to mark out the new road. Captain Marcy himself with the rest of the escort started, according to previous orders, on April 5 and delayed at several points on the road to allow emigrants to come up from the rear. As we shall see, the party of six men from Lewisburg set out from Fort Smith on March 28; the third day out, they overtook Dent's detachment and from then until they arrived at Chouteau's the two parties were at no time far from each other. Indeed, the record seems to show that the Lewisburg party was in advance much of the time, pioneering the new road. See, for example, what young

3. "Report of Capt. R. B. Marcy's Route from Fort Smith to Santa Fé," in *Senate Ex. Docs.*, 31 cong., 1 sess., No. 64, pp. 169-227; also in Foreman, *op. cit.*, 134-141.

4. Frederick T. Dent was a native of Missouri and graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in 1843. He won two brevets during the Mexican War, but at this time was a first lieutenant of infantry, captain by brevet. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 368. Foreman (*op. cit.*, 141) notes the fact that U. S. Grant was a classmate at West Point, and after graduation he visited Dent, whose sister Julia he afterwards married.

5. Joseph Updegraff was a native of Virginia who went into the Mexican War as a private and came out as a brevet 2nd lieutenant of the 5th U. S. Infantry. Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 978; Foreman, *op. cit.*, 146, note.

Chamberlin wrote on April 28: "Lieutenant Dent, to save his credit, came up with us this evening, alone, determined to be in advance to Choteau's, so it cannot be said that we laid out the road for him, although he has ordered the troops to follow our trail." Of course there is no indication of this in the official reports of either Dent or Marcy.

CHAPTER I.

1849—Monday, Feb. 26. We left Lewisburg this morning about 8 o'clock, with spirits as buoyant as could be expected, after parting with our friends and all we hold near and dear on earth, especially when we take into consideration the long and hazardous journey before us. No doubt we will soon experience the loss we have sustained in leaving home, with all its comforts, our friends, and the many social ties that have heretofore bound us to society. But the love of adventure and prospect of reward have overcome all "home feelings," and today finds us on our way towards the great point of attraction. Our company consists of R. B. Green, D. Howard, John Musser, S. F. Schaffle, Cyrus Fox and myself. If but a small portion of the good wishes of our friends (I hope we have left no enemies) are realized, we will be amply rewarded. Three weeks ago I had not the slightest idea of going, and within that time I have been obliged to take an inventory, settle up my business, and make preparations for the journey, being busily engaged up to the moment of departure. I did not have the pleasure of seeing all my friends, which I regret very much, but if I live, will make up for all deficiencies on my return. I was advised to go by some, by others, (the greater number) to stay at home, but my mind was made up. Stayed at Musser's, Millheim.

Tuesday, Feb. 27.—After seeing the friends that accompanied us safe on their way home, we started on our way westward. Raining, which makes travelling very unpleasant. Arrived at Stover's inn about dark, and sat down to an excellent supper of ham, eggs, etc., to which we did ample justice.

Wednesday, Feb. 28.—Entered Huntingdon county after leaving Stover's. The mud very deep, and almost impassible, until we reach the turnpike, within seven miles of Water Street. The winter grain looks bad, being severely frozen. Passed several furnaces and forges on Spruce creek,

and a great number are in operation in the vicinity. Although this hilly country is not so well adapted to agriculture as other portions of the State, it fully makes up in mineral wealth. The scenery is romantic and beautiful, especially along the banks of the Juniata river. The Central Railroad company have commenced tunneling the mountain at the mouth of Spruce creek. Dined at Water Street, and arrived at Hollidaysburg, 6 o'clock this evening. This place, situated at the connection of the canal and railroad, commands a large portion of trade, and has quite a business-like appearance.

Thursday, March 1.—One of our wagons being out of repair, we did not leave until 10 o'clock. Walked about 8 miles this morning which whetted our appetites for a lunch, which we partook of at the mountain coal-gate, with many good wishes for Mrs. Glen G., who with prudent foresight had provided us with bread, ham, etc. If we had our wagons upon runners we could get along with less labor to the teams, there being several inches of snow upon the ground. Arrived at the Summit House about 4 o'clock and concluded to stop for the night, having traveled about 10 miles to-day. Col. J. W. Geary, a resident of this place, started for California a short time since, with the commission of postmaster at San Francisco.⁶

Friday, March 2.—Left Summit about 6 o'clock, entered Cambria county this afternoon. Passed through Edensburg—the country very rough on all sides, and thinly settled. Rain and sleet fell during the whole day, which made our journeying very unpleasant. Stopped at Armagh.

Saturday, March 3.—Snow fell during the night, and this morning it is several inches deep. Our wagons draw very heavy. Reached Blairsville at 12 o'clock, had a check and concluded to take stage for Pittsburg, with our heavy trunks—ten passengers in all. Got along pretty well until within 13 miles of Pittsburg, when we stuck in the mud, about midnight, but by "putting our shoulders to the wheels," we succeeded in getting along at the rate of three miles in five hours—walked all the way, and were pretty well exhausted when we reached Pittsburg in the morning.

Sunday, March 4.—At 6 a.m. put up at Exchange Hotel,

6. H. H. Bancroft, *History of California*, vi, 213, note 63, tells us that John W. Geary was born in Westmoreland county, Pa., and rose to prominence in Pittsburgh as a civil engineer and railroad president. He served in the Mexican War with the 2nd. Pa. Volunteers, and rose to the rank of colonel; he was wounded in the battle of Chapultepec. On January 22, 1849, he was appointed postmaster of San Francisco, and "with his family he reached San Francisco on the *Oregon* on April 1st."

our clothes literally mud from head to foot; called on a barber, and after being washed, shaved and changed, we felt somewhat relieved. Walked out to take a look at the "Iron City." Cannot say that I was much pleased with its general appearance, everything the eye rests upon having a dark, dingy appearance, caused by the dust falling around from the numerous iron works which are constantly belching forth fire and smoke, yet the traveler cannot but notice the bustle and din of business in this great manufacturing town. The West and South are the markets for her products. Thousands of laboring men find employment in these establishments, and make a comfortable livelihood for themselves and families.

Monday, March 5.—Kelly and Herbst arrived this morning with our wagons and baggage. We engaged passage on board the steamship "Winfield Scott," Capt. Devenny, to the mouth of the Arkansas river, at \$10 apiece and \$7 freight for our two wagons. The boat is new, and runs her first trip down the river. Rained all day, the Ohio river rising. We are all very anxious to be off.

Tuesday, March 6.—After pulling our wagons aboard, Kelly and Herbst started for home. Purchasing tools, cooking utensils, clothing, etc. Commenced boarding on the boat this morning. Met T. Sargeant, formerly of Lewisburg, and Mr. Hoons, besides several other acquaintances.

Wednesday, March 7.—Engaged purchasing India rubber goods, etc. Our boat left the Pittsburg landing about 6 o'clock p.m. We have few passengers aboard. The cabins are elegantly furnished, and the table covered with the choicest viands. The bar is well filled up, where the choicest liquors and cigars are dealt out. We purchased an "Aerometer" to-day, of the inventor, Mr. Aiken, for the purpose of weighing and ascertaining the value of gold.

Thursday, March 8.—Came to at M'Farlin's Warehouse, in sight of Steubenville, Ohio, and took aboard 1500 bbls. of flour. Occupied the greater part of the day. The telegraph wires cross the river at this place. The river being high, the pipes of the steamboat "Messenger" on her way up came in contact, and broke one of the lines. We have Ohio on our right and Virginia on our left hand. The scenery on either shore is very fine; at times rich tracts of cultivated country, stretching away as far as the eye can reach, on either hand, and again nothing but bold, barren hills presenting themselves. Landed at Steubenville this evening. It being the captain's place of residence, our cabin was soon filled with visitors admiring the new boat, etc.

Friday, March 9.—Dropped down the river a few miles this morning and took on 750 bbls. flour. In the meantime some of us went ashore and amused ourselves by firing at a target. I made the best shot and my rifle proved herself a first-class shooter. Reached Wheeling this evening. Before we arrived, a young man, said to be of respectable family, had a violent fit of "mania potu." He had been drinking for some days, and was in great distress; but he recovered so as to go on shore when we landed. Took aboard 500 bbls. of flour at this place. The amount stowed away in one of these boats is almost incredible. Mr. M'Donald and myself went to a concert by the "Eddy Family." They have improved very much since I heard them sing in Lewisburg. Mr. Schmidt performed his part on the guitar admirably. The river is now very full, being 25 feet above low water mark.

Saturday, March 10.—Left Wheeling at 8 o'clock; stopped at Marietta this afternoon. This is the oldest town in the State of Ohio, and a handsome place, resembling Lewisburg in some respects. There is a college here, and a burying-ground in the suburbs, in which stands a large mound filled with human skeletons. It is not known whether it was an Indian burial place, or the work of an antediluvian race; the former is the general supposition. Several of us visited this curiosity during our short stay.

Sunday, March 11.—Arrived at Portsmouth. It has a business-like appearance—windows shut and door open for trade. Very little respect is paid to the Sabbath in places situated on these western thoroughfares. Spent the day in reading, not forgetting a few chapters in the book of books. Weather warm and sultry, with thunder showers this evening. The dense fog obliged us to come to anchor.

Monday, March 12.—Arrived at Cincinnati about 7 o'clock a.m. The fog was so dense that we could see nothing of the surrounding country, which is said to present a beautiful appearance, being under a high state of cultivation, and abounding in vineyards, fruitgardens, etc.; but after the fog broke away we had a fine view of the business portion of the "Queen City." In population and substantial wealth it is, perhaps, increasing faster than any city in the Union, and its vast resources and commercial facilities, together with the enterprising spirit of her citizens, are destined to make Cincinnati one of the first inland cities in the world. Here we purchase provisions for our over-land journey—bacon, ham, dried beef, flour, cornmeal, hard bread, beans, rice, coffee, sugar, tea, saleratus, salt, pepper, chocolate, etc. Left Cincinnati at 4 o'clock p.m.

Tuesday, March 13.—Some new passengers aboard; the evening agreeably spent, music, reading, anecdotes, etc. The porter on this boat is four feet high and as broad as long. We have dubbed him "Gen. Taylor," and have a great deal of sport at his expense. Being an endless joker himself he stands a butt for all who may aim at him. Arrived at Louisville this morning, just as we turned out of our berths. It makes a fine appearance from the river, and does not deceive its looks. I was better pleased with Louisville than any of the western towns we have passed through. Here we made our last purchases of over-land equipments, including a few trinkets, beads, rings, vermilion, etc., to barter with the Indians. Goods of all kinds command a percentage here, judging from the rates we paid for some articles. Left Louisville about 10 o'clock a.m., passing through the falls, but the river being so full, we scarcely noticed them, although entirely impassable in times of low water. Passed Shippensport, Ky., and New Albany and Troy, Indiana. The appearance of the country on both sides of the river would warrant a productive soil. To-day I notice trees coming out in leaf, frogs singing, and all nature wears the aspect of early spring.

Wednesday, March 14.—A clear and beautiful morning, and a cloudless sky, welcomed us this my 21st birthday. With what fond anticipation does the child look forward to that eventful day that shall make him a "man." He forms plans and builds "castles in the air," which his restless ambition is doomed never to realize when he arrives at that period. As time glides along, and he passes from childhood to youth, his aspirations weaken, and continue to grow fainter during his rise from youth to manhood. He is not sensible of the change, and all the fond imaginations of his bright and joyous days are forgotten or give place to other thoughts and feelings. This has certainly been my experience. Little did I think, years ago, when I "wished I was a man," that this day would find me in my present situation with the present object in view.—But I am off my subject. The country on both sides of the river is flat, the banks full and overflowing in some places. The settlements along the banks, for some time have presented a most squalid appearance, wretched cabins, sunk in the sand and mud, surrounded with drifts, destitute of outhouses. Evansville, in the distance looks like a small place, and is the largest town in Indiana.

CHAPTER II.

Thursday, March 15.—Using the river water has given some of us accustomed to limestone water a severe diarrhoea. Many feared it was the cholera, which is prevailing to some extent in this country, but we soon found out to the contrary, much to our satisfaction. Landed at Cairo, situated at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. It is a poor, distressed looking place, almost inundated at present. The characteristics of these two rivers differ very materially. While the Ohio is one continued broad, smooth stream, the waters of the Mississippi are most turbulent, very crooked, cut up by islands, and running in different channels. Its banks are low and overflowing in many places at present. Sometimes for miles it is lined with cotton-wood trees of different growths. These regular varieties in size are caused, I suppose, by the formation of new banks, and the deposits of seed, as the river changes its channels. Every now and then we see a lone squatter living in something that has the shape of a habitation, but generally so small and wretched looking (surrounded by water when the river is up) that a person can scarcely but wonder how human beings can content themselves in such an isolated, and apparently miserable condition. But I am told that they are contented with their lot, which is a blessing many in far more enviable situations do not enjoy. They procure the necessaries of life by furnishing the steamboat with wood, and occasionally we see a garden patch or a small lot fenced in and planted. It appears to be the highest ambition to live "from hand to mouth," as it is called, and wrestle with the fever-and-ague, which is their constant enemy. Like Daniel Boone, they think that when a person settles within twenty miles of them they are getting "too neighborly" and wish to encroach upon their rights. I cannot envy the condition of the poor squatter on the lonely banks of the Mississippi. I would prefer a log cabin, with a dog and a gun, amongst the wildest mountains of old Pennsylvania. I am no admirer of flat or prairie country; I imagine it will be severe on the eyes when the sight is unobstructed by forests, or blue mountains in the distance. Today we saw the first canebrake; they are beautiful, being ever-green.

Friday, March 16.—A delightful morning. Passed a number of cotton plantations, with a row of negro huts near the mansion houses; some of them looked very comfortable. Landed at Memphis about noon—weather almost insupportably warm. The town is situated upon a bluff, and

has considerable trade, principally in cotton. It is said there are fifty cases of cholera in town. We lay here half a day, discharging freight. The U. S. navy yard at this place is under way, and is a very heavy contract. About 200 Californians are assembled here from different parts of the South, making preparations for starting. The half of the population of Memphis are slaves. We saw some specimens of the traffic to-day. An Arkansas lawyer purchased a little girl and brought her on board. She was literally torn from the arms of her mother, and their mingled cries were truly distressing. Another case was of two little brothers. The purchaser was taking them to Red River, Louisiana; they, too, had been taken from their parents, and looked and no doubt felt as though they had buried father and mother. Another was a planter, who told me he had run short of change, and to replenish his purse, he selected one of his slaves, a comely looking fellow, about twenty-three years of age, and was taking him to the New Orleans market. He was in chains; his master said it was because he refused to go, or in other words, as I learned from the slave himself, to be torn away from his wife, whom he loved and had been married to about four months. I did not wonder at his refusing to go. But more happy and contented beings than slaves do not exist, when well treated and properly clothed. No matter how hard they are continually singing, jesting, etc. To sit an hour or two on the wharf at Memphis and listen to their peculiar lingo, was a rare treat to me. Corn has been already planted in this part of the country, and peach trees are out in full bloom.

Saturday, March 17.—Left Memphis yesterday morning, and arrived at Napoleon, at the mouth of the Arkansas, this evening. This place consists of several old steamboats converted into storehouses, hotels, etc., and two or three "stray buildings." We stowed our traps, and took lodgings in one of these wretched wharf boats, while the "Winfield Scott" sped on her way towards the "Crescent City." Success to her and all on board. This abject looking place ill deserves the lofty name it bears. Everything about our boarding house appeared filthy, and the victuals were almost disgusting.

Sunday, March 18.—There being about forty Californians here, awaiting a passage to Fort Smith, I was obliged to sleep on the floor last night. Caught a catfish this afternoon, which we considered quite a feat; he was a monster, weighing 45 pounds. Some straggling Cherokee Indians about here, on their way to St. Louis to dispose of their furs.

They are in canoes, and are very poor. They remind me of the "last run of shad." About 3 o'clock this afternoon we started up the Arkansas, on board boat "Wm. Armstrong," a small propeller, which we engaged to go through to Fort Smith for \$15 per man and \$8 per wagon. The river is in good, navigable order, and the water is more turbid than either the Ohio or the Mississippi, rather inclined to be red. The banks are lined with cypress, cottonwood and cane-brake.

Monday, March 19.—Rained all night; river falling, and full of snags; the current is very strong, but we are making good time. Arrived at Pine Bluffs about 2 p.m. It is a small but pleasant village, situated upon a high bluff overlooking the surrounding country. Saw some pine timber here (growing), which is the first we have met since leaving Penn'a. I was very much deceived in the general appearance of the Arkansas country. Shortly after leaving the Mississippi the banks became higher, well timbered, and an apparently finer-looking country I have never seen; but I am told the soil is rather light. There is a bluff on one side of the river, while the opposite side is low lands, and the formation changes sides alternately. Cotton and corn are the staple products of this country. It is said to be very healthy here, and is certainly a great opening for emigrants. We amused ourselves to-day by firing at ducks and geese off the deck of the boat; but made few successful shots. The accommodations on board are very indifferent and the fare horrid; all the meats appear to have been in a putrid state before cooking. Complaint was made by the passengers, (and we afterward had the satisfaction of eating some of our own provisions, not knowing it at the time).

Tuesday, March 20.—Awakened this morning by a violent storm. It came on about 2 o'clock, accompanied by thunder and lightning and high winds. Hail fell about the size of an egg. The boat was blown upon a sand-bar, which saved us from being capsized. By the screams of the wild geese, we supposed they were sorely pelted. After the storm subsided we cleared the sand-bar and arrived at Little Rock about day-break. This place, which is the capital of the State, contains from 4000 to 5000 inhabitants. It is situated upon a high rocky bluff, from which it derives its name; (these are the first rocks we have seen since leaving the Ohio river). It is a well built, healthy and pleasant place. The government buildings are substantially and handsomely situated. There are a number of fine private residences in town, the yards, gardens, etc., of which are adorned with a

great deal of taste, and the inhabitants are generally of the best class of society. A short distance above Little Rock we met with the first mountains since leaving the Ohio, and they are but hills compared with those of Pennsylvania. We have passengers aboard bound for California from Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, South Carolina, and other of the Southern States. They are generally young and hardy looking.

Wednesday, March 21.—Another violent storm last night; rain fell in torrents. We arrived at Lewisburg this morning. It is an insignificant looking place; has nothing to recommend it, and bears no resemblance to the Lewisburg we left behind us. Arrived at Ozark City at 10 o'clock a.m. From the appearance of the place the founder's expectations could never have been realized. The Ozark chain, that crosses the State here, gives the country a more mountainous appearance. The current of the river is becoming very rapid and difficult to ascend. Reached Van Buren about dark. This was published a rendezvous for emigrants. We had thought of stopping here, but concluded to go on to Fort Smith, five miles ahead, where we arrived at 8 o'clock p.m. The boat immediately discharged her passengers and freight and put off down the river. When we succeeded in getting our traps together, we found our groceries missing. This explained the cause of our change of fare aboard the boat. But she was off, leaving us to renew our loss as best we could. There being no storehouses here, we were under the necessity of lying on the bank all night to protect our baggage. This was our first night's experience in "camping out."

Thursday, March 22.—After passing a sleepless night, we proposed to go out and encamp at Sulphur Springs, about two miles distant from town. Fort Smith is quite a village, situated on the east or Arkansas side of the river, containing about 1000 inhabitants, made up of people from all parts of the States, slaves and Indians included. It is an Indian trading station, and every day they come to town in numbers, bringing furs, marketing, etc., to exchange for the necessaries of life. There are a number of government troops quartered here, and the fort and outbuildings are brick, adding greatly to the appearance of the town. The government buildings are enclosed by a heavy stone wall.

Friday, March 23.—Green and Musser gone to Van Buren to purchase mules. The boat Pennyweight arrived to-day from New Orleans and discharged a cargo of Californians. They buried seven persons on the way up who died with the cholera. Purchased another stock of groceries,

which we are busy sacking, drying and smoking our bacon, etc.

Saturday, March 24.—Bought seven mules at \$50 a head. Mr. Armstrong, from Ralston, Pa., arrived to-day and joined our company. We use the sulphur water, although the taste is rather nauseous. If we do not require its medical virtues, it cannot injure us. Our mules are in bad condition, which will require us to travel slow in the start.

Sunday, March 25.—Went to hear the far-famed Mr. John Newland Maffit preach. I knew him by reputation, but had never seen or heard him before. He is certainly an eloquent speaker, but I came to the conclusion that he is more renowned for eccentricity, than either piety or the future welfare of his listeners. He was formerly of the Methodist Church, but is now an "outsider." Although upwards of fifty years of age, he does not appear to be more than thirty, and I am inclined to think that more of his time is spent at the toilet than at the Bible. There appears to be more regard for the day in camp than in town.

Monday, March 26.—Musser went to Van Buren after our mules. The weather is fine, tempting us to start. We are anxious to be on our way and will get off as soon as possible. Purchased three mules at about \$50 per head. We have now five to each wagon, intending to purchase riding ponies from the Indians on our way. Having our mules shod, wagons repaired, and making every necessary preparation we can think of.

Tuesday, March 27.—Judging from the amount of goods sold to the emigrants at this place, and the prices realized, the self-interested citizens of Fort Smith could well afford to publish to the world the many advantages (no doubt exaggerated) this place has as a starting point, for an overland journey to California. The gamblers are fleecing many persons, who will be obliged to return home and take a new start. We disposed of our provision chests and exchanged our tent for a larger and more convenient one; purchased saddles, extra mule shoes, pickets, etc.

Wednesday, March 28.—Commenced raining this morning; packed our wagons harnessed to our gaunt looking mules, and rolled out about 3 o'clock this afternoon. Our teams moved off finely; the road very bad; continues raining. Encamped on a small run; no grass; fed our animals upon corn, which we brought with us. We use our camp chest as a table; we have an abundance of blankets, with which we make ourselves comfortable. After enjoying our humble supper of coffee, bacon and biscuit, we retired to rest, pretty

well pleased with our first day's journey, and were lulled to sleep by the hooting of owls and the howling of wolves. We appointed a guard which is to be kept up throughout the journey, each standing half a night, alternately. Distance, six miles.

CHAPTER III.

Thursday, March 29.—Traveled over a very bad road, the wheels sometimes sinking to the axles, but our mules did not flinch. Ferried over Polo river, a sluggish stream about 40 yards wide. Passed through the "Choctaw Agency"; a great many Indians and squaws were lounging about the place; some of them have pretty comfortable cabins, and cultivate a few acres of ground.⁷ They are very fond of dress; some of the squaws were clad in calicoes of the most gaudy colors. Some of them had "papooses" lashed to a wicker frame, swung over their backs. In this way they carry them for a whole day, not even loosing them when they suckle, and the little "brats" never murmur. Liquor is not allowed to be sold in the nation; this is a law of their own, and a very sensible one. Indeed, it would be an example worthy of imitation by our enlightened States. They raise a great many horses, cattle, hogs, poultry, etc. There is a detachment of government soldiers in advance of us, surveying a new route for emigrants on the south side of the Canadian river to the plains of "Great American desert," thence on to Santa Fe, on the same side of the river.⁸ Capt. R. B. Marcy, with a detachment of U. S. troops, is to leave Fort Smith in a few days as an escort to the company of emigrants from that place. He is to travel by this new route. Strange that persons living upon the borders or frontier as the Fort Smith people do, accustomed to dealing with the Indians, require an escort of troops, while many of us from the States, who never saw an Indian, are obliged to fight and cut our own way. Senator Borland, of Arkansas, whose influence brought all this about, must be a 'cute old 'un. When we came to where the new road struck off from the

7. "More than 400 wagons passed the Choctaw agency during the first three weeks of April on their way from Fort Smith to California." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 155, note, quoting the *Fort Smith Herald* of Apr. 25, 1849.

8. At the beginning of his official report, Captain Marcy speaks of this detachment of twenty men under Lieut. J. Updegraff as having been sent forward to assist Captain Dent in examining the country and opening the new road. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 152. As already stated, Marcy himself with the rest of his detachment was to start on April 5.

old one, we were influenced to take the former by a man stationed there for the purpose. We were the first that traveled it,⁹ except the military detachment, which consists of two wagons and 25 men, who are but a few miles ahead of us—and ahead of them, a wilderness of 250 miles! They are guided by the old Delaware Indian trail, which runs about 20 degrees S. of W. to the edge of the plains. We crossed a prairie a few miles in width; the ground is very soft; once we mired down, and it was only by unloading, double-teaming, and putting our shoulders to the wheel, that we succeeded in getting the wagon out. Obligated to encamp on the prairie, but found enough wood and water to answer our purposes. Saw a great many grouse and prairie snipe to-day; but, either because they were too wild, or we inexperienced in the art, did not succeed in killing them. Distance, 22 miles; 28 miles out.

Friday, March 30.—Started early. Soon found the road almost impassable. This portion of the prairie had been lately burned over, which made it much worse. Mired both wagons and mules very frequently, and it required all our strength, ingenuity and courage to get them out. We almost despaired getting through, for scarcely would we get them out, until they were in again. Came up with the troops this evening, and encamped with them in a beautiful spot on the border of a small prairie, through which ran a brook of clear, delicious water. The air was perfumed by a variety of shrubbery that grew along its banks, now in full bloom. Saw a few deer at a distance to-day. Out of corn for our mules, and the grass too short to afford them much nourishment. Very much fatigued by the day's labor, and turned in early. Distance, 5 miles—33.

Saturday, March 31.—Became acquainted with Lieuts. Dent and Updegraff—both apparently clever fellows. Dent has a brother in California. Almost worn out, but "necessity is the mother of invention," and we do not find ourselves in so great a dilemma, when our teams bog down, as we did at first, having learned to extricate them with less difficulty. Again encamped on a small stream, on the skirts of a "miniature prairie." This evening Howard and myself each mounted a mule, and started in search of corn for our suffering animals; after following a trail about three miles, we

9. Chamberlin so believed when he wrote this in his diary. Later, on April 7, he speaks of "a mess of Texians" with whom they caught up who "had left Fort Smith several weeks ago" and who were waiting for company but "scarcely knew where they were going." Perhaps, however, he did not regard them as an organized company.

came to a cabin of an Indian. He at first said he had none, but we knew by the stalks in his patch that he was lying; we were determined to have it, which he saw and gave in. We got as much as our animals could carry for \$1.00 per hundred ears. In the meantime the old squaw was busily engaged dissecting a fine wild turkey, which she did without much ceremony, using her hands instead of a knife. Night overtook us and it was with difficulty we found our way back to camp, which we reached in time to partake of a hearty though simple supper. Distance, 4 miles—37.

Sunday, April 1.—Did not move camp. If ever the Sabbath was required as a day of "rest," this was, as well for our animals as ourselves; but idleness in camp becomes monotony, and as we could not endure that, some of us went gunning, and others fishing. I shot several large fox squirrels; others caught some small fish, resembling what we call sunfish. Our game made us a very palatable supper. The troops moved on this morning. The Sabbath is not observed in the army.¹⁰ We have crossed several mountains and found abundance of iron ore and indications of coal. The soil in the valleys and prairies is undoubtedly good, judging from the luxuriant growth of grass in season. The Indians with their rude implements of cultivating the ground, raise fine crops of corn, although from their natural distaste of labor, they seldom grow more than they require for their own sustenance. While out gunning, strolling along an Indian trail, I almost trod upon a very large rattlesnake, stretched across the path. He commenced making music for me in a very high tone, but I silenced it by a bullet through his pate. Saw a number of deer, but could not get within shooting distance of them. The water in this neighborhood has a milky appearance. A number of Indians and squaws visited us today, begging tobacco, bread, etc. They are on their way to the agency, to traffic and encamp near us. The squaws imitate the men in riding by sitting astride the animal.

Monday, April 2.—Cloudy, indicating rain; the road somewhat better. Purchased some corn at \$1.00 per bushel. Traveled over mountains and strips of prairie, the scenery varied and beautiful. Met an American in company with some Indians; they had been out on a hunting excursion.

10. Probably young Chamberlin had seen little of army life, and this sounds like a bit of prejudice. A quick glance at Marcy's report, for example, shows that his command did not move on Sundays, May 6, 13, and 20; and on May 27 we read: "Today (Sunday) in accordance with a rule I have adopted, we "lay by," to give the men time to wash, and the animals to graze and recruit." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 198, 204, 212, 217.

The American had six fine wild turkeys suspended from his saddle. He had lived with the Indians a number of years, and adopted their dress and customs. He was an intelligent man and said that he had been educated at one of the best literary institutions in the States, and received his diploma. What induced him to forsake civilized society and dwell among savages, he did not inform us. He certainly has a romantic fancy. The military ahead of us had very imprudently set the prairie on fire; it was rushing toward us, consuming everything before it; we could not retreat, but, halting our teams, some of us went ahead and encountering it at the edge of the woods, and after a severe effort, succeeded in arresting its progress in one spot wide enough for our wagons to pass through, which they did in safety. It was a fearful sight, and we were lucky in escaping the devouring flames so easily. We encamped on the skirt of the woods, bordering on a prairie, where we found a small pool of almost stagnant water. Purchased fowls, sweet potatoes, and peanuts, of some Indians, who had followed us all afternoon for the purpose of trading. The woods and prairies on fire all around our camp. Distance, 1 mile—49.

Tuesday, April 3.—After the wagons started this morning, I rambled through the woods and shot a fine mess of pigeons and partridges, and had a long tramp before I again overtook the company. Met an old Indian of whom we purchased some eggs, or "chickens," as they call them in broken English. The Choctaws are very dark colored. A good pony can be purchased of them for \$5. Very thoughtlessly, I did not purchase one, for while we were making such short stages, I preferred walking, and gunning occasionally, to taking care of an extra animal. (I had reasons afterwards for repenting this negligence.) The road to-day was very good in comparison with what we have passed, except crossing the San Boy river, a stream 10 yards wide and pretty deep. The hills here abound in iron ore. Encamped on Cooper's creek this evening.¹¹ The grass is about three or four inches high and affords indifferent pasture for our stock. Some of the landscape scenery is truly fine being a constant succession of hills, vallies, woodland, and prairies, the last of which are now clothed in green interspersed with innumerable wild flowers of every variety and hue. Occasionally our table is furnished with a dish of "green" or wild onions. The old Indian trail, in many places, is not more than a foot wide, by which thousands pass yearly on their

11. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 156, remarks: "Cooper's Creek appears as Beaver Creek on modern maps."

way to the settlements to trade. The timber in this country, which is principally oak, is rather scrubby. Distance, 12 miles—61.

Wednesday, April 4.—In the course of the day we crossed the bridge, very difficult of ascent and descent. Overtook the government train and encamped on a stream of good water. I shot a very large hare, which made us an excellent supper and breakfast. Purchased some corn of an Indian by the way, and found we could get as much for three or four dimes as for a dollar, they preferring small change, and at the same time we gave them full value for their grain. They generally treat us very civilly, and never attempt to pilfer even the most trifling article. Distance, 9 miles—70.

Thursday, April 5.—Started early, but owing to the bad state of the road, we made but little progress, crossing many deep ravines, and encamped early. Rain this evening, but our tent comfortable. I shot eight gray squirrels as we traveled along to-day, which furnished a savory dish this evening. Distance, 6 miles—76.

Friday, April 6.—In to-day's journey we crossed a beautiful prairie about 8 miles in width, and over a very difficult mountain. A deep and apparently impassible ravine was now before us; this we crossed with less trouble than we anticipated, but not without a hard struggle on the part of our teams, which we doubled. A very heavy thunder shower now fell upon us, wetting us completely. Shortly afterwards we reached the bank of Gaines' creek.¹² This, after another hard siege, we forded, and encamped on the opposite bank about noon. The rain continued falling in torrents all night. We thought of encamping on the other side, but luckily for us we did not, for immediately after we crossed it commenced rising, and was soon full, the banks at least 30 feet high. There is a small mongrel settlement near us consisting of half-breeds, Indians, and negroes, which is reported as a place infested with thieves and robbers. The spot where we are encamped, although the best we can find, is a perfect mud hole. Distance, 11 miles—87.

Saturday, April 7.—Heavy showers continued falling during the night, and it has not ceased this morning. The military are encamped on the other side, where they must remain until the water falls. About noon we struck our tent, traveled about 3 miles, and encamped on another stream, so

12. Marcy identifies Gaines' creek as "the south fork of the Canadian." Foreman speaks of it as "the east branch of the South Fork of the Canadian" (*op. cit.*, 156, note).

swollen as to be impassible. There is a mess of Texians on the opposite bank, who have been waiting for several days for company. They had left Fort Smith several weeks ago and followed the Indian trail thus far. They scarcely knew where they were going, but I suppose had heard of California, knew it was westward, and were pushing forward in that direction. Distance, 3 miles—90.

Sunday, April 8.—On "watch" until 1 o'clock this morning. Stormed all night, making it impossible to trade or do anything else; we are almost swamped in mud and water, and are obliged to lay in our tents.

Monday, April 9.—Rained all night, cleared off this morning. Our mules wandered off during the night, but found them this afternoon; unable to proceed on account of the soft state of the earth. Busy drying bed clothes, repairing wagons, etc.

Tuesday, April 10.—Remained in camp for reasons given yesterday, engaged airing our provisions, washing our clothes, etc. The large, flat stones on the bank of the stream answer admirably instead of a wash machine, and the appearance of our linen, when "hung up to dry," would reflect honor upon a washerwoman skilled in the art. Endeavored to catch some of the small fish that appear to abound in the stream, but with little success. Howard fired at a deer yesterday but without effect. Quarreling among the soldiers, and punishment accordingly. Whisky the cause.

Wednesday, April 11.—Our teams were again under way this morning and crossed the stream a short distance above. The prairies and hills are very soft, but we got along tolerably well. The army kept along the side of the mountain, but after upsetting both wagons, they concluded to come back to the trail, which we had not left. Stopped at 4 o'clock. We have been in the Chickasaw Indian country since leaving Gaines' creek. They are fairer in complexion than the Choctaws; some of them can speak a little English. They grow some corn and vegetables. Distance, 10 miles—100.

CHAPTER IV.

Thursday, April 12.—Made an early start; road very bad; frequently had to take the axe and cut out a new one, to avoid swampy places. About 11 o'clock we overtook the military, who were badly bogged, and shortly afterwards encamped, having apparently got to our journey's end; swamps, creeks and mountains on all sides. What we will

do next is yet to be determined; some exploring will have to be done. While washing the other day, the sun burned my arms severely; they are now swollen and very painful. Raining to-day, very cold and unpleasant. If I had been told before starting that we could pass over such a country and roads, I would not have believed it; but perseverance accomplishes wonders. Our wagons have held together in places where I expected them to be "smashed into pi." We are all in good health and spirits; our only cause for complaint is that we do not get along faster towards our place of destination. Walking all day gives us a keen relish for our frugal fare, which we enjoy while seated around our camp chest. Many a joke is cracked and many an anecdote of by-gone days is related. We almost forget that we have heretofore lived in a civilized country, and enjoyed the good things of the world. Nearly every day we grace our table with a dish of game, which take the place of bacon, and though not accompanied with the "fixin's" generally used in cooking, it is not to be sneered at. We find our India rubber coats, caps, beds, etc., very useful in case of rain, and the ground is constantly damp. Carrying an extra supply of clothing is an absurd idea, and I never would do it again. We have not a fowling piece in the company for shooting small game, which we regret very much.

Friday, April 13.—Remained in camp to-day. Another heavy thunder shower. From all appearances we will not reach "Choteau's" for weeks to come. We are within a few hundred yards of Coal creek, which we shall be obliged to cross.¹³ It is much swollen and the water very cold. Another company has overtaken us, consisting of six tailors, lacking three of the complement necessary to "make a man," which is no joke in this instance, for, from their outward appearance, they are certainly "out of their element."¹⁴ They and the Texians crossed the creek to-day. It was a foolish and

¹³. A comparison of distances from Fort Smith as given by this diary and by Marcy makes it probable that the Lewisburg party crossed Coal creek by what Marcy calls "the second ford." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 157.

¹⁴. One is curious to know where this young Pennsylvanian had picked up the old English proverb that "Nine tailors make a man." Had he been reading Thomas Carlyle, whose *Sartor Resartus* was published in 1833-34? In Book III, chapter 11, that author takes the proverb back into the 16th century in the passage: "Does it not stand on record that the English Queen Elizabeth, receiving a deputation of eighteen tailors, addressed them with a 'Good morning, gentlemen both!'" As if there were but two men in her presence. Ben Johnson, Shakespeare, and others seem to have allusions to the proverb; or again, in a letter of July 26, 1819, Sir Walter Scott wrote: "They say it takes nine tailors to make a man—apparently, one is sufficient to ruin him." *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, vol. ix, Part 2, "tailor."

unnecessary undertaking, but they finally succeeded, after wetting all their baggage and being obliged to swim.

Saturday, April 14.—We have concluded to wait until the creek falls, which is yet impassable. A very sudden change in the weather, too cold. Hail and rain this afternoon, very disagreeable.

Sunday, April 15.—Snow fell to the dept of three inches last night; the thermometer is down to 25° this morning at sunrise, which is something uncommon for this latitude, at this season of the year. It has rained almost continually since this month came in, and it is a fortunate circumstance that we have a waterproof tent and clothing. The grass is several inches high, the trees are in leaf, flowers in bloom, and everything indicates approaching summer. "Dame Nature" has certainly assumed a dress this morning that ill-becomes her. Emigrants should never leave the frontiers before the first of May; they only expose themselves to the inclemency of the weather, and use up their animals; indeed, a good deal of rain may be expected after this date.

Monday, April 16.—Weather settled, with prospects of its continuance, at least for a short time. Musser and myself busied ourselves at altering and fitting our harness, which have been too large for our mules. Lieuts. Dent and Updegraff visit our camp frequently to discuss politics, and the general topics of the day. Lieut. Dent is a graduate of West Point Military Academy, and Lieut. Updegraff was promoted from the ranks. Both served in Mexico during the war, and bear the evidence upon their persons.

Tuesday, April 17.—Making preparations to cross the creek this morning. We were obliged to "corduroy" the banks on both sides, being perfect swamps. "Hauled out" about nine o'clock, succeeded in crossing, with a great deal of difficulty. Passed through a canebrake.

Came across an Indian settlement, and purchased some corn of "Mr. Tecumseh." Encamped on the border of a small prairie, having made but little headway. Our road was through a continued swamp, and we frequently bogged down. After such a day's work as this our clothes present a sad appearance, for we cannot avoid the mud. We are all very much fatigued, need rest, and will "turn in" early. Distance, 4 miles; 104 miles out from Fort Smith.

Wednesday, April 18.—Made an early start and crossed what we supposed to be Cedar creek. The military employed two Indians this morning to guide them. We traveled over some very rough mountains, cutting our own road the greater part of the day, and when we at last emerged from the

woods, a prairie lay before us, with all the beauty in which Nature has arrayed these "natural fields" of the west. On the edge of this we pitched our tents, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The sight of these "spots" has an amazing effect upon our spirits, the timber land being more boggy, besides which, shouldering the axe and opening our way is not light work. This evening several men with pack animals encamped with us who had been but four days out from Fort Smith! Of course, we "scratched our heads," and wished we had our traps similarly arranged. Distance, 10—114.

Thursday, April 19.—Under way at 7 o'clock; crossed a small prairie and found ourselves at the foot of a high and very steep mountain, and the military at a stand—the Indian guide said there was no way but to cross the mountain, and they were afraid to undertake it. Armstrong and myself took the axe, and in a short time cut a road to the top, winding around to make the ascent more gradual. Up this the mules finally succeeded in dragging the wagons, assisted by all hands. But, strange to tell, we had not proceeded far, on the very back-bone of the ridge, until we were badly mired down. The descent at the farther end was also very rough and difficult, but at the foot we found a small, clear stream, on the bank of which we encamped about 4 o'clock. Caught a fine mess of sunfish for supper. To-day Lieut. Dent received an express from Capt. Marcy with information that he was on the road, but "travelling under ground" a great portion of the time. The man who brought the news (to hear him tell the story) was "downed" several times, "starved to death," and "killed by the Indians" as often. He was indeed a picture of a "used-up-man." He must have been "awfully scared"; but he stowed away the pork and beans, when they were passed around, as though nothing had happened.

Friday, April 20.—Our general course thus far has been a few degrees S. of W. The road better than usual to-day; crossed a creek within half a mile of its junction with the Canadian river. We are now in the Shawnee Indian country. Passed through one of their villages;¹⁵ they appear to be a more civilized tribe than any we have yet met with. They have very good log cabins, arranged in a straight line, with a road or street passing along in front of them. The old chief of whom we purchased corn had a stern, commanding appearance, and intellectual physiognomy, and "fire" in his eye, but was very obliging. He said that he had been at war

15. This was probably what Marcy calls "the Shawnee village," not to be confused with Shawneetown (below).

with the whites, had fought many battles with them in the States, but was now at peace with everybody and hoped to remain so. As he said this his moistened eyes appeared to wander around upon the fields, and cabins, of this, a portion of the remnant of his once powerful tribe, with a seeming, though melancholy pride. Some of the squaws were handsome, with regular features, and in dress imitated the style of the whites. One in particular, the wife of a white man who was absent on a hunting excursion, was quite fashionably dressed. Her house and contents were comfortable and neatly arranged, and not the least prominent article of furniture was a clean looking bed and bedstead, curtained and festooned off *a-la-mode*. From this lady we procured eggs, chickens, milk, etc. Distance, 8 miles—122.

Saturday, April 21.—Made little progress today; our course lay over a rough and mountainous country. We were followed all day by Indians wanting to trade with us. They had corn and potatoes, and generally wanted clothing of some description in exchange. They have a good idea of the worth of the different articles we offered them, and are well acquainted with the value of money. These half-civilized Indians have a great dread of the wild "Redskins" of the plains, and tremble when the word "Comanche" is named. They appear to think that we are a foolhardy set to venture through this country, and that we will certainly get into trouble. The grass is becoming more nourishing to the stock, which are fast improving. We have pitched our tent upon the bank of a brook, and have quite a crowd of Indians about us. They are very independent and even insolent, but will beg tobacco, this being the first thing they ask for. Distance, 6 miles—128.

Sunday, April 22.—Rain this morning. For fear of detention by high waters, concluded to travel to-day. Crossed a number of deep, boggy slues, in one of which we broke the bolster of our wagon; another upset in the stream, injuring the wagon and wetting our baggage; a third broke the tongue of their wagon. We soon repaired ours and were again under way. Soon after we reached a prairie several miles in length, but quite narrow. From the number of horses and cattle we saw grazing, we knew we were near an Indian settlement. We encamped early, and were soon visited by a number of squaws, bringing eggs, fowls, milk, butter, etc., to sell, and afterwards by the men on horseback. We learned that we were within two miles of the Canadian river, five miles of Edwards' trading house on the opposite side, and half a mile of "Shawnee town." This village is situated in

the woods between the prairie and the river, very much scattered, being several miles in length. The Canadian divides the Shawnee and Creek Indian Territory. Distance, 10 miles—138.

Monday, April 23.—Major Green and myself rode over to Edwards' trading house, which is situated on Little river, near its junction with the Canadian.¹⁶ It is 180 miles from Fort Smith on the old road, which is the one we should have taken. We forded the Canadian, which is here about 600 yards wide. The water is brackish, turbid, and of a yellowish color. The bed of the river is entirely quicksand, which is in constant motion. We were obliged to hurry our animals across to prevent them from sinking. There are a number of cabins about this trading post, inhabited by a motley race of whites, Indians and negroes. Old Mr. Edwards has grown wealthy, but at the same time gray, and bordering on second childhood, in this traffic with the Indians. The Knickerbocker company from New York passed Edwards' last week. They disposed of many of their effects here; have had a great deal of trouble and contention in their party.¹⁷ Two wagons overtook and encamped near us this evening. A heavy thunder shower last night; to-day very pleasant.

Tuesday, April 24.—Started at seven o'clock this morning, the road better, and the country more open than usual. We have been luxuriating for some days upon the many good things we procured from the Shawnees, such as wild turkey, fresh pork, milk, butter, eggs, sweet potatoes, peanuts, etc., and a dish of fritters; butter cakes or doughnuts, is not uncommon on our table. Distance, 10 miles—148.

Wednesday, April 25.—Remained in camp to-day. The government teams gone back to Shawneetown for corn. The

16. Foreman (*op. cit.*, 157, note; 159) locates Edwards' trading house more definitely as "on the right bank of Little River one and one half miles above where it debouches from the north into the Canadian." It was the last settlement on this route until reaching the first Spanish villages of New Mexico.

17. This Knickerbocker company had not come over the new road, but the older one which followed the north side of the Canadian. Numbering about 75 men, well armed and well equipped, they had left Fort Smith on March 26 and reached Edwards' on April 11. Chamberlin's observation about them agrees with that of others; as one wrote: "The New Yorkers divested themselves of many dainties and much extra clothing which they had provided between Fort Smith and this point (North Fork Town). They gave them to the Indians and threw them away—any way to lessen their lading. . . . Clamor and dissension have prevailed in every one of the organized camps. . . . Every party is breaking up and a part of each are packing. The New York party that preceded us about 75 strong, will return, not more than half their number, with the wagons. The others will pack." The Knickerbocker party did succeed in maintaining its identity, however, and after reorganizing at Edwards' on Little river, they had continued west (as here noted) several days before the Lewisburg party arrived by the new road. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 22-24, 169-170, 175, 178-9.

Indians promised to bring us corn and "coot flour" to camp, but did not fulfil. Persons living in a civilized country, unacquainted with the Indian character, would naturally sympathize with them and would dwell for hours upon the wrongs they had received at the hands of the whites, but a short acquaintance with these Redskins, will suffice to change that opinion. They are a treacherous, lying, dishonest people, with but few redeeming traits of character. We gave them no opportunities to pilfer from us.

Thursday, April 26.—Started at 6 o'clock this morning, and traveled over a level country, at a pretty fast rate, until 9 o'clock, when it commenced raining, and the troops encamped. We determined to go on. I ascended a high point or bluff, off which I had a fine view of a large and beautiful scope of country—woodland and strips of prairie alternately, wanting but the houses to give it the appearance of a vast settlement. We made the compass our guide, and steered in a due west direction, cutting our own road for about five miles, when we encamped, satisfied that we had done a reasonable day's work. There is a great abundance of iron ore in this section of country, and the soil is a rich loam, producing fine grass. The water in the small streams we crossed to-day was as clear as crystal, but of a soft, brackish taste. The sun is generally very hot during the day, and the night uncomfortably cool. Distance, 13 miles—161.

Friday, April 27.—Started early, and after crossing a creek, struck upon a high prairie, over which we passed at a good rate until 2 o'clock p.m., when we bore a little N. of W. and soon found ourselves in a tight place—rocks, ravines and woods all around us; but we finally reached our camp ground, after upsetting one of our wagons in a deep ravine; fortunately we broke nothing. Part of our course to-day was through a fine country. Crossed what Lieut. Dent called the Delaware mountains; the scenery from some of the peaks was truly magnificent. The streams of water crossed to-day were limpid, but saltish in taste. From the appearance of the country, we must be near the Canadian river, and by what we can learn from the Indians, about 25 miles from "Choteau's." It is high time we reach that point, which has been more the topic with us than the gold mines of California. We have no good feelings for the founders of the new road, and hope but few will venture upon it. Distance, 18 miles—179.

CHAPTER V.

Saturday, April 28.—Several of us started ahead of the wagons, early this morning, to "cut and blaze" the road, which we did for about four miles thro' a scrub oak and briar thicket, when the wagons came up with us; crossed a wide creek, flowing towards the Canadian, the bed being quicksands; passed through several miles of timber, which proved to be the "Cross Timbers" which separated the Indian Territory from the Plains of "Great American Desert." The Delaware Indians inhabit this portion of the country; the mountains of name are nothing more than a high, bald prairie. About noon, we came out upon the great plain, which extends north, south and west as far as the eye can reach. Saw two antelopes today, and fired two shots at them as they ran or rather flew by us. Several fine turkeys killed today, and a prairie chick's nest robbed of 14 eggs. Tonight, as I sit by the fire on guard, I am well serenaded by wolves, which keep up a perfect chorus. As yet, we have seen no buffalo, except their old "crossings," and a number of "frames" or skeletons. By uniting a hard day's labor with a hard day's travel, some idea can be formed of how we have been getting along, and how we feel when we encamp at night. We have been one month out from Fort Smith, today. Lieutenant Updegraff has encamped some miles back, to await the arrival of Captain Marcy with provisions; Lieutenant Dent, to save his credit, came up with us this evening, alone, determined to be in advance to Choteau's, so it cannot be said that we laid out the road for him, although he has ordered the troops to follow our trail. A good pocket compass is an indispensable article in traveling through this country. Wild turkey for supper. Distance, 15 miles—194.

Sunday, April 29.—Remembered the "Sabbath" today, by pursuing our journey. We left our encampment at 6 o'clock and had a fine high prairie for several miles, but were again interrupted by creeks and slues which detained us very much. Encamped this evening within two miles of the river. We breakfasted on turkey and venison. Strawberries are abundant on the plain, and beginning to ripen. There has been a strong hot wind blowing today; water very scarce, and unfit for use. Distance, 12 miles—206.

Monday, April 30.—Our course today was along the dividing ridge between the Canadian and Watchita rivers. Encamped on a small ravine, where we could scarcely procure enough water for cooking purposes. This evening a Delaware Indian visited our camp. He called himself Big

Buck, and could speak a good deal of English. He said that we were within 8 miles of Choteau's, and gave us a great deal of information in regard to the country. In return we gave him his supper, and he ate fully six men's rations, enough, he said, to last him three days. When he departed he promised to come in the morning and guide us to Choteau's, and find us a good crossing, etc. He and his companions are out from their village on a hunting expedition. Distance, 15 miles—221.

Tuesday, May 1.—Big Buck came according to agreement, to act as guide. On reaching the river, several of our company crossed, and went in search of a trading house. We caught some fine fish, in which the Canadian abounds; and the Indians trap a good many otter along its banks. This afternoon we crossed our teams, with but little difficulty, the river being wide, but shallow. We were obliged to keep the wagons "rolling" to prevent their sinking into the quicksand. Encamped on the north side of the river, where we had excellent feed for our stock. Distance, 6 miles—227.

Wednesday, May 2.—Reached Choteau's this morning, in an hour's travel.¹⁸ We found an organized company of emigrants here, about 200 men, with 40 wagons, under the command of Captain Bass;¹⁹ also some scattering messes, and some families, who were waiting for Captain Marcy's escort. We heard that the Knickerbocker company had passed several years [days] ago, also the Cherokee company,²⁰ and a pack mule company. Encamped, and deliberated upon "what was to be done next." Distance, 3 miles—230.

Thursday, May 3.—This morning, I visited what was formerly an extensive Indian trading post, established by Mr. Choteau, of St. Louis; how long since he abandoned it, I am not able to learn.²¹ Some years ago, Mr. Edwards, of Little River, 80 miles below, sent up a lot of goods and ne-

18. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 198, quotes Simpson's *Report*, p. 6, as saying that Choteau's trading-house "is at this time a locality with a name but no habitation."

19. Captain John L. Bass headed the Western Rovers Company of 96 members who organized at Sulphur Springs on March 31 and started from Fort Smith on April 3,—evidently by the older road. The number here given shows that they had had many additions en route. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 27.

20. That the Cherokee company had passed Choteau's is surprising but may be correct. The company was organized on April 24 "at the crossing of the Grand River at the Grand Saline near what is now Salina, Oklahoma." They did not go through by the new route, but they did pass Choteau's. *Ibid.*, 67-69. A. C. Russell, in a letter which he wrote from Little River on April 17, mentioned the Cherokee company: "The Cherokees are on the road, and will, perhaps, join us before we leave here." *Ibid.*, 176.

21. Col. A. P. Choteau built his post here in 1836 and maintained it until his death in 1838. Foreman, *op. cit.*, 200, note.

groes, with a man in charge, to trade with the Indians, cultivate corn, etc. After they had a crop raised, and everything going on as well as could be wished, they were suddenly attacked by the Comanches; the negroes fled, and the overseer was killed; the buildings were set on fire, and everything burned to the ground. From the remains, it can be seen that there were several buildings, enclosing on three sides a court about 150 feet square, the open side to the east.

We have determined not to travel with a large company, if we could find 20 or 30 men of our mind. A mess of nine Virginians have concluded to go with us. This evening we struck camp, and traveled a few miles upon the plain; halted on a small ravine, amid heavy rain; here we found a mess of eight men from Baton Rouge, La., who also agreed to go with us. Distance, 6 miles—236.

Friday, May 4.—Rained all day but we continued moving along. Encamped early, for the purpose of organizing a company for mutual protection as far as Santa Fe or Rio Grande. Elected Major Green, captain. There are 31 men in our company, and nine wagons. Fitzhugh, Winston, Winston, Jenifer, Burnell, Rockyfellar, Hart, Bornan, and Jim, from Virginia; Dixon, Dixon, Gathwait, Heddenburg, Pieren, Meeker, Martin and Henry, from Louisiana; Dougherty, Dougherty, Green, Faras, Parker, Campbell and George from Texas—these, including our mess, formed our little company. Some thought it rather rash to attempt passing through the Comanche country with so small a force, but all agreed that our animals would fare better, and we would be more likely to get along in harmony, (both of which proved true). Distance, 30 miles—286.

Saturday, May 6.—Started at 8 o'clock. Traveled over a perfectly level plain. The road being good, we made excellent time. The road is so much better than that we have been traveling over for the last five weeks, that we scarcely know when to stop. We are now fairly launched upon the plains, and if "wind and tide" favor us, we will "probably live" to see the end of our journey. We were obliged to leave the road a mile or more this evening, for the purpose of encamping with wood and water. Rain and heavy thunder showers during the night. Distance, 30 miles—286.

Sunday, May 6.—In the course of today's travel, there was frequently not a tree or shrub in sight. Passed through a large prairie dog village; the earth was very spouty and damp where they had burrowed. We saw a number that were apparently guarding their habitations, but turned in upon our approach. We did not succeed in killing any. They

are said to be delicious eating. Encamped on a ravine and had good water and feed. Distance, 15 miles—295.

Monday, May 7.—Left camp at 8 o'clock, shortly reached and crossed the Canadian river; it has the same singular, turbid appearance, and quicksand bed. The road today has been very good. This route has never been traveled before, so that our course is merely marked out and not a solid road. There are probably 20 wagons in advance of us. We are now in the Comanche Indian range, but as yet have seen but few traces of them, or rather it may be considered neutral ground between the savage and half-civilized Indian tribes. Game is very scarce, and although there have been at one time vast numbers of buffalo on these plains, yet as civilization advances this animal retreats toward the setting sun. We have pitched our camp upon a high point, where the horizon does not appear to be more than a half mile distant on all sides. Distance, 20 miles—315.

Tuesday, May 8.—Our course today lay over a high, level plain, very solid, which made the wheeling good. We passed a great number of natural mounds today, of various shapes, which gave the landscape an odd, romantic appearance. The mounds are composed of a red colored, rotten sandstone, and earth of the same nature and color. The grass on the plains is short, but very nourishing to our animals. Water and wood have been very scarce today; we almost despaired of finding a place to encamp until 4 p.m., when we crossed several ridges of white stone, which we decided to be plaster; the grass appearing to be more fresh, and we soon found water and wood enough to answer all purposes. The former, however, was so hard that we could scarcely use it. Today we saw the first traces of buffalo—their watering places, fresh dung, and newly cropped grass; and about 3 o'clock, saw seven bulls feeding about a mile from the road. At that moment what would I not have given for a good horse; I could have exclaimed "a horse! a horse! a kingdom for a horse!" As it was, I could but witness the sport. Several of the men gave chase, and succeeded in killing one, and wounding three more. We found seventeen bulls grazing behind a small mound, within one-fourth of a mile of camp. Messrs. Fitzhugh and Winston wounded one of them, pursued him several miles, and finally killed him, but did not reach camp until late at night. During the day we had also killed a deer, turkey, prairie chicks, and ducks, and we are enjoying a bounteous feast this evening. If our situation was known by our friends at home, they would certainly envy us. The bull meat, however, proved rather tough; oth-

erwise it resembled beef, excepting the wild flavor. Wolves, rattlesnakes and toads abundant. Distance, 20 miles—335.

Wednesday, May 9.—Crossed several deep and difficult ravines today, and encamped on a stream running in a S. E. direction. It is about 20 yards wide, and we suppose a branch of Red River. The water is very red, turbid and unfit for use. Fortunately, we had filled one of our India rubber bags during the day, which served us for cooking. Jerking our venison and buffalo meat this evening. We have very fine grass at this camp. Caught some fine catfish and soft shelled turtle in the stream. The weather is very warm, and I find walking all day pretty tiresome work. Passed the remains of a horse, left by some company in advance of us. Distance, 16 miles—351.

Thursday, May 10.—Passed over a high rolling prairie; the few shrubs that grow in the "arroyos" are in full bloom, which served to cheer the monotony of this vast waste. Found but little water, gathered a mess of mushrooms for supper. Encamped upon a small running stream, of very red water. It will not affect soap. Distance, 20 miles—371.

Friday, May 11.—Rain this morning; cleared off, and we started; weather very warm and sultry. About 2 o'clock we were met by a most terrific hail storm; there was a constant stream of lightning and peal after peal of thunder; ice fell to the depth of two inches in a few minutes. Our animals were so frightened as to be unmanageable, and they ran, with the wagon, in every direction over the prairie, and when the storm ceased, some of us were out of each other's sight. I had on an India rubber cap, and my head was sore for several days afterwards from the beating of the hail. Some of the men happening to have some brandy with them, iced it, and drank "hail storm." Found a deserted wagon. It appears by a handbill left upon it, that it was owned by a mess of three, one of whom had strayed off, and was supposed to have been killed by the Indians, the other two had abandoned the wagon, and started in search of their comrade. Thus far we have had but little trouble with our animals. Immediately after encamping, we turned them out to graze until dark, under guard. We then tie them up, and guard them during the night, and loose them early in the morning. We generally form our wagons into a "corral," put the animals inside, and our fires on the outside. Although we apprehend but little danger from the Indians, it is best to be prepared. Distance, 18 miles—389.

Saturday, May 12.—Encamped this evening on the banks of the Canadian river. The water is very blackish and

ill-tasted, but we are obliged to use it. The plains which heretofore were covered with grass, wild flowers and odorous plants, have become barren and hilly; and traveling is much impeded by deep arroyos and sand hills. Distance, 20 miles—409.

Sunday, May 13.—Remained in camp today, to rest, and graze our wearied animals. We very much need rest ourselves. Washing our clothes, and preparing for another week's travel.

Monday, May 14.—Started early, and traveled on, and near the bank of the Canadian all day. We now find it necessary to keep near the river, to find water and grass. Passed a number of mounds. Encamped on a small pool of water, near a deserted Indian encampment, which is not 10 days old. There had been 18 lodges. Distance, 30 miles—439.

Tuesday, May 15.—Opposite our camp on the other bank of the river, there is a desert of sand, entirely destitute of vegetation. It resembles a snow drift, having no doubt been formed by high winds. It is several miles square. There appears to be as much water in the Canadian, here, as there was 200 miles below. I suppose it loses as much by evaporation, as it gains by the few streams, that put into it for that distance. In all respects it retains the same appearance, excepting that the growth of cotton wood on its banks is more sparse. We have not as yet resorted to "buffalo chips" for fuel, but I find that one answers the purpose of a writing desk at present. Distance, 16 miles—455.

Wednesday, May 16.—Our course today has been along the flat of the river, which in places is very narrow, and in other a half mile broad. Occasionally we come across a patch of good grass. For several days we have crossed no streams putting into the river. The sand in our road is very heavy, and the weather hot, which makes traveling very laborious upon man and beast. Passed a number of large mounds upon the plains which resembled the former ones. We are much annoyed by sand flies and gnats. Saw some wild flax, and a great variety of wild flowers, some of which were rare and beautiful. Grapes grow in abundance, and a few dwarf plums. The scalp of an emigrant was taken a few days ago, by the Indians, and hung upon a pole in the road. It was by a company in advance of us. They probably thought to frighten us by this act of hostility, but will find out to the contrary. A hailstorm this morning and a heavy shower threatens this evening. Distance, 20 miles—475.

Thursday, May 17.—We have traveled along the banks of the river for several days. About noon today we crossed

a large branch, which was much swollen, and very cold on account of the recent hail storm. Our general rule for traveling is as follows: Start at 8 o'clock in the morning, and continue without intermission until 4 p.m., when we encamp, and graze our mules, until 8, then tie them up until 4 in the morning, and again start at 8. Distance, 20 miles—495.

Friday, May 18.—Overtaken by a pack mule company this morning. Road very heavy, caused by the recent rains. Saw some beautiful specimens of "cactus" in bloom—they were several colors, but principally yellow. I have suffered severely from toothache for several days; contrary to all rules it commenced after all our sugar had run out. We are getting scarce of bread stuff, but have plenty of bacon and beans. Distance, 20 miles—515.

CHAPTER VI.

Saturday, May 19.—The country presents a rough, broken and very barren appearance. There is a species of rank grass growing on the flats of the river; one stock that I measured out of curiosity was 27 feet long. Crossed a large, dry branch of the Canadian to-day, and it was with difficulty that the mules dragged the wagons through it. We see a great many of "Captain Lee's Mexican toads" on our way.²² Pitched our tent in time to escape a soaking. Distance 15 miles—530.

Sunday, May 20.—The wind is very high, which has blown the sand over everything, ruining our victuals, etc. The grass is poor, and of a salty nature, and the water is strongly impregnated with salt. Although we had proposed remaining here over Sabbath, some of the company, considering our situation, were in favor of moving; a vote was taken and decided to travel. The flat on the river appeared to end here, and we were obliged to ascend a high and very steep bluff. Continued traveling over a high barren plain; crossed one small stream and passed small spring of good water, where some of us fortunately filled our kegs, canteens, etc., for we were obliged to encamp upon the plains, without wood or water, not a tree or shrub to be seen as far as the eye can reach over the barren waste. We are getting out of the buffalo range, but succeeded in finding enough dung to boil our coffee, by carrying the sack full of "chips"

22. Probably horned toads, which are found over much of the Southwest and of northern Mexico.

about two miles. When perfectly dry it is a good substitute for wood, and our cooking was very palatable. We have been traveling south to-day. Distance, 20 miles—550.

Monday, May 21.—The first day we have escaped a shower since we left Choteau's. No dew fell last night, and we had to drive several miles out of our way this morning to procure water. We have seen very little or no game for several days. What the Creator designed this barren portion of the world for is more than I can imagine, unless, like the deserts of Africa, it was thrown in "to fill up." The road was heavy and we made but little progress. Encamped early, with an abundance of good wood, water, and grass. Here we came upon an old wagon road, which we afterwards learned was the route traveled by Mexican traders into the Indian country. Distance, 15 miles—565.

Tuesday, May 22.—Some of the company anxious to "lie by" to-day, but again decide by vote to travel, and accordingly started; ascended a high range of hills and kept along the backbone, over a solid gravel road. Encamped at half past one o'clock; had good grass, water, and some wood. Shortly after we had pitched our tents, we were visited by three Mexicans; they were rough looking fellows and the first we had seen. They said they lived at a ranch ten miles to the south, but could speak no English. A sight of them, however, was cheerful, and we began to think we were near the borders of Mexico. The weather has been pleasant to-day, with a good breeze from the west. Walter Winston has been very unwell for some days, but is recovering. The faces of some of the party, bitten by gnats and sandflies, are dreadfully swollen, and very painful. To-day we saw a new variety of prickly pears or cactus, that grew in the form of a bush. It had some fruit upon it; curiosity prompted some of us to taste it; we were soon satisfied, and came away with our mouths stuck full of small barbs, which we could not extract. We have already decided to pack from Santa Fe, if we can procure the necessary outfit at that place. Weather uncomfortably warm. Distance, 15 miles—580.

Wednesday, May 23.—Visited this morning by several Mexicans; one of them spoke pretty good English. He has been in the employ of Americans for 25 years, and made a trip to California years ago. Some years since, he was employed by "Boyl Drake" (formerly of Lewisburg), to assist him to take 12 live buffaloes to the East for exhibition. Maj. Green had seen them to [at] Philadelphia, and recognized the Mexican although he has since lost an eye, and is otherwise disfigured. Our course nearly S. W., over hard gravel

plains. Prairie dogs abundant. Encamped on a small pool of standing water. Distance, 20 miles—600.

Thursday, May 24.—The country presents the usual appearance to-day. Traveled $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours; crossed a small stream, where we supplied ourselves with wood and water, and went further in search of grass. Ascended several large hills, and continued our course over a high plain; annoyed by a very high wind, which impeded our motion, and filled our eyes with sand. Finding it impossible to keep a hat upon my head, I laid it aside, and received the scorching rays of the sun upon my bare pate. Dr. Winston shot an antelope to-day, the meat of which was pronounced the most tender and delicious we had ever eaten. They are a beautiful animal and as fleet as the wind; we see a good many of them, but they are difficult to kill. Encamped near some puddles of wretched water, the grazing very indifferent. Distance, 25 miles—625.

Friday, May 25.—Passed over a broken and barren plain to-day. The grass is fast drying up. About 1 o'clock we came to a rocky chasm in the bottom of which there was a little water, which was a God-send, for we were very much in need of it. Millions of swallows inhabit these rocks, attaching their nests to them; in one place, under a large overhanging rock, there were a great many hieroglyphics, painted and carved in the stone, imitating persons, beasts, birds, reptiles, and one in particular, which we supposed was intended to represent the evil spirit; there were also a great number of large stone crucibles lying about; what they were used for was more than we could discover. Altogether it is a strange, wild, and picturesque place. There are recesses in the rocks that would shelter and hide thousands of persons. From the numerous trails about it we suppose it to be a great resort of the Indians, to trade with the Mexicans. There were 17 of the latter encamped amongst the rocks, who offered to sell us corn, tobacco, etc.; they pack it hither upon mules and asses. Our road from this point appears much plainer. These Mexicans said they were out upon a trading expedition with the Comanches. They asked \$2.50 per bushel for corn, and sixpence apiece for their hard, black-looking crackers. They informed us that we were yet 200 miles distant from Santa Fe, but we doubted their word, supposing it to be to their interest to sell us their merchandise. We are encamped upon a puddle of water, with a little wood, and poor grass. We have not more than three days supply of breadstuffs on hand. Distance, 25 miles—650.

Saturday, May 26.—Started at the usual time this

morning, and traveled until 7¼ p.m.; finding no water except one pool which was too salty for use; some of us suffered very much from thirst. We did not encamp until after dark, when a little water was found in a rocky ravine a mile from camp; we did not get all the animals watered until midnight, then made a cup of tea and "turned in," after a hard day's travel, and our difficulties were soon forgotten in a sound sleep. We met another gang of Mexican traders to-day. A pack-mule company ahead of us, in searching for water, became separated, and lost to each other. The Mexicans also became scattered, being also in search of water. High wind during the night. Distance, 33 miles—683.

Sunday, May 27.—We have had but one day's rest since leaving Choteau's, and concluded to remain in camp to-day. The reason we have not stopped oftener is that we have never found good water, or grass enough for our animals, and being in hopes of finding better every day. Our great objection to this route across the plains will be the scarcity of food. How large companies will fare, I can not tell; but I think that many an ox-team will never reach Santa Fe. Mules endure thirst much better than cattle. The range of the Rocky mountains that runs through New Mexico, is in sight in the west. One large peak has the appearance of a perfect dome, and others have peculiar shapes. There is a long range of bluffs to the south of us, covered with a small growth of cedar. I have been interested to-day in reading Bryant's "What I saw in California."²³ The portion that treats on his journey across the plains agrees pretty well with our experience, except that three great necessities—water, grass and wood, were more abundant on his route, and his road being a plain, well beaten one. Our tent was blown down by the storm last night.

Monday, May 28.—The wind was very high during the night, and when I awoke this morning was almost suffocated with sand. While the storm was raging, we were alarmed by cries of distress near our camp; we answered and groped our way toward them as well as we could in the dark; their continued cries served to guide us to them, when we found them to be a company of Mexicans, who had been scattered and driven out of their way by the storm. They were very much alarmed, and did not move from the spot until daylight. This morning a company of emigrants with six wagons overtook us and turned in to encamp, where we had

23. William Cullen Bryant had been editor of the *New York Evening Post* from 1829. Perhaps Chamberlin had gotten hold of a copy which carried this account.

left. They had been without water since the morning before. We have had a comfortable breeze today, and our course had led over a rather barren plain, broken by mounds and rocky peaks, amongst which we wound our way. One cluster of conical shaped mounds rising up, one behind the other, reminds me of a picture upon the cover of my old school atlas, representing the heights of the different mountains in the world. The general scenery to-day has been grand, gloomy and picturesque. We are now obliged to use the dry branches of the cactus for fuel. Found some wild peas today, of which our animals are very fond; passed through some patches of wild flax, and saw a great variety of wild flowers, but being no botanist I can not give their names; they are altogether strange to me and peculiar to the country and climate. Encamped on a small dry stream, in the bed of which were a few holes of water, so salty that we could scarcely use it; but stern necessity compels us to drink or die. Some wood and grass. Distance, 18 miles—701.

Tuesday, May 29.—To-day our road ran through a valley bounded on the north, west and south by high peaks, pyramid-shaped hills and mounds, covered with a scrubby growth of cedars; the grass is all dried up, and we found no water until 4 o'clock p.m., when we came to a ditch filled with red, muddy water. Our animals drank without measure; when I tasted, I found it so nauseous that I could not drink. We were obliged to encamp and make the most of it. This is a watering place for a flock of several thousand sheep, which are grazed in the neighborhood, and driven into a natural fold in the mountain, where they are watched by shepherds and dogs. The plain to-day has been covered with bear grass; the root resembles a pineapple, from which a large top of coarse grass springs up, very sharp at the ends. The animals are afraid of it and turn out of its way when in the road. A stalk grows out of the center, to the height of several feet, bearing a white, drooping flower. Distance, 20 miles—721.

Wednesday, May 30.—While the teams were passing through the outlet of the valley, I clambered to the top of one of the high ridges. The mountains appear to be composed of red sand, or granite rock; those uppermost were very much washed and worn by water, although from the present parched appearance of the country it would be natural to think that it is never visited by rain. I found some rich specimens of iron ore, of which mineral there is undoubtedly a great abundance in these mountains. Saw a number of mocking birds, and it did me good to hear these little song-

sters, imitating the various birds of the country; I only regretted that I could not listen to them any longer. Shortly afterwards, we found the country more broken. Cedar appears to be the only wood, except a few scrubby pines, the odor of which, when we broke the twigs, resembles a good, ripe apple. Passed a large flock of sheep and goats, herded by dogs and several wretched looking Mexicans. We purchased a sheep for \$1.50 and a lamb for half price; the mutton tasted very good. The wool grown in this country is remarkably coarse, no regard being paid to its improvement, although the country is well adapted to wool-growing. Here we found a basin of water in the rock, strongly impregnated with salt and "sheepishness." We watered our stock and proceeded until 6 o'clock, when we encamped (as we supposed) without food or water, but found a small spring of water about a mile from camp, where we obtained a scanty supply. Cactus for fuel. Distance, 25 miles—736.

Thursday, May 31.—The country to-day has the usual rough, hilly appearance; sun very powerful this morning, and not a breath of air stirring. Overtook a pack-mule company who had lost the greater part of their stock during the night; they were in an unpleasant situation, and we agreed to carry a part of their baggage to the first Mexican town. Found no water until evening, when we encamped on a pure, running stream, about 20 feet wide, very deep and swift. We did not learn the name of it, but no doubt it finds its way to the Rio Grande; it heads in the mountains to the north, and is very cold.²⁴ This is the first running water we have crossed in a distance of 200 miles, and, together with the old-fashioned romantic mountain scenery around us, it had a cheering effect upon us. Used the small green willows that grew upon the bank of the stream for fuel. Distance, 25 miles—771.

CHAPTER VII

Friday, June 1.—Crossed the stream and ascended a long sloping hill, surrounded on all sides by a rough, mountainous country. The grass in the small valleys is very short, owing to the vast amount of stock that is grazed here. Passed through large herds of cattle and sheep. At the top

24. This was probably the main stream of Gallinas creek, a tributary of the Pecos river. When General Marcy was here three weeks later (June 23), he described it as "a fine running stream, with a rock bed, and fifty yards wide." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 244. If it was the same which Chamberlin here says was "about 20 feet wide, very deep and swift," it is evident that Marcy hit a better fording place; also by the last of June the volume of such a stream would be apt to be at its greatest.

of the hill we found a small, cool spring, gushing up from the rocks, the water slightly impregnated with sulphur; shortly afterwards, came to a "fork" in our road. Here we were in a dilemma, not knowing which to pursue; after several hours delay, we concluded to "go it blind."²⁵ Encamped on a small plain; found a small pool of water about a mile from camp, but not enough for our stock. There was a shepherd's camp near us, of whom we procured some of the richest milk I ever drank, and what a luxury! They inform us that we are within a few miles of San Miguel.²⁶ Distance, 18 miles—789.

Saturday, June 2.—Started early this morning, in expectation of seeing some place very soon, but did not reach "town" until late in the afternoon; passed two Mexican ranches on the way; if all the inhabitants of New Mexico live in a similar manner, they are to be pitied. Their miserable mud-dwellings do not compare with the more comfortable log cabins of the colonized Indians, on the border of the States. This country and its inhabitants are certainly "pretty accessions" to the property and influence of "Uncle Sam." Here we saw a rich specimen of the packing business; several jackasses were loaded with about 400 pounds of corn each, and driven off to market. Here we also saw some of the effects of missionary labor. A Mexican woman had several fine looking white children clinging around her; their father, she said, was an "American missionary," but he had "vamoosed" to the states—poor woman!²⁷ Before reaching San Miguel, we came out upon the Santa Fe and Independence road. It is better than any macadamized road I ever saw in the states, being broad, smooth and solid. Crossed Pecos river, a large tributary of the Rio Grande; it is about thirty yards wide, and rapid. The water is good, and very

25. Continuing the quotation from Marcy in our last note, he wrote: "Nine miles from here (where they forded the Gallinas) there is a spring of cold water; and at this place the road forks, the right leading to San Miguel, the left to Anton Chico. We took the latter, and reached the Pecos before night, making a drive of thirty-one miles. This was the first settlement we had seen since leaving Edwards' trading-house. . . ." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 244-245.

26. The full Mexican name of this little town was "San Miguel del Bado" (of the ford). During the Mexican period (1821-46), the Santa Fé Trail forded the Pecos river at this point, and a small squad of soldiers was maintained here to welcome traders with their loaded wagons—to see that they did not evade paying the customs due, as they entered New Mexico.

27. Could someone of the Mormon Battalion have tarried by the way? Certainly no "American" missionary, Roman Catholic or Protestant, arrived sufficiently early to account for this family. One is inclined to think that young Chamberlin was over credulous. The responsible party, or parties, might better be surmised as among the countless traders who had been using this highway for some thirty years.

cold, caused by the snow melting off the mountains to the north, the white capped peaks of which are in sight. San Miguel is situated on this river. It is composed of about seventy-five adobe hovels, one story high, all the outbuildings (if they have any) being within the same walls. There are several stores of groceries in the place, their principal business being the sale of inferior liquor, at a "bit" a glass. We encamped near the town; there is no grass within miles of the place, but we were lucky in getting some corn at \$1.50 per bushel; it is very inferior to the corn raised in the states. The only land in the vicinity that can be cultivated is the narrow flats along Pacos river, and there it requires irrigation. Walked into town this evening to "see the sights." Our attention was soon attracted to a "Fandango," open to all, and especially to American emigrants. This was a curiosity to me; it was certainly a shade faster than anything of the kind I had ever seen before—a medley of Mexicans and Americans, dancing upon a ground floor with the "Marguerettas" of the country, the face of each of these ornamented with a cigarette. Some of their dances were pretty, keeping remarkably good time with the music, the gentlemen being obliged to treat their partners to a glass of wine at the end of each set. But the "noise and confusion," heat, smoke, dust, fumes of liquor, and the strange "lingua," made it sorry enjoyment for me, and I left the scene of merriment at an early hour. Distance, 11 miles—800.

Sunday, June 3—Concluded to remain here until tomorrow. Purchased some Mexican bread, which was very good with one exception, being sour. The Virginia and Louisiana messes started for Santa Fe today. We are anxious to travel with pack animals from Santa Fe; had an offer of three mules each for our wagons, which we accepted with the privilege of hauling our baggage to Santa Fe, fifty miles distant. "Attended church" today—Catholic, of course. The building is a large adobe finished in the most rude style of architecture, the floor covered with rough boards upon which all kneel, having no seats or benches. Thousands of swallows were flying and "twittering" about the room during service. The images and paintings were of the most ridiculous design and finish. It is a gloomy edifice throughout, and well suited to the ignorant minds that pretend to worship God after the manner of that sect. It is said the Padre defrauds these poor deluded people out of \$25,000 a year. Thus it is with their "churches" throughout New Mexico. It is amusing to see the country people coming in, three or four mounted on one little mule.

Monday, June 4—Engaged today in exchanging our trunks, and other things we wished to dispose of, for pack saddles, lariats, skins, blankets, and other articles necessary for packing. I procured a "mustang pony" for my trunk. This evening we heard a shot fired in town, which was followed by a distressing cry of "O Lord!" We hurried in, and found that a cold-blooded murder had been committed. A man named Rob't Stanfield had deliberately shot Joseph Kane, captain of a pack-mule company. There were several eye witnesses to the deed. He fired a fowling-piece, at ten feet distance, two balls entering the back, and coming out just above the heart. An inquest was held over the body by twelve Mexicans who went about it rather awkwardly, this being the first case of the kind that had ever happened under the U. S. laws.²⁸ Mules can be purchased at this place, from \$50 to \$100 each. California gold has affected this country also, for before the emigration commenced they could have been bought for from \$25 to \$40 each.

Tuesday, June 5—Employed as yesterday. Bought a Mexican saddle for \$25. We are very much annoyed by high winds, which blow the sand all over us, into our victuals, etc. This evening our new mules were brought up. They are small, but we have no doubt a pretty good bargain. A large train of wagons has come up, and encamped near us. All are anxious to pack the balance of the way. A wagon will not command a good mule, the market being already overstocked with them. The man with whom we exchanged designs moving down the Rio Grande into Old Mexico, not liking the laws of the United States.

Wednesday, June 6—Struck camp this morning, and left for Santa Fe. High winds which keep up a constant cloud of sand in the roads; the weather very cool, being in the range of the Rocky mountains. Encamped on a small rivulet, as clear as crystal and as cold as ice, near the village of Pacos [Pecos], which is now in ruins.²⁹ There was formerly a large church here, and it was a place of considerable note, the buildings were of adobe (the timber of cedar),³⁰ some of them apparently three stories high. There are a number of very large cisterns in the place, walled with

28. Captain Buford, on the trail three days later, heard of this killing and carried the news to the States; but he had the victim as "Robert Moore of Missouri." It is likely that Chamberlin, who was on the ground, had the names correctly. See Foreman, *op. cit.*, 246, note; 265. The killer was to be hanged on July 10.

29. He is here speaking of the old Indian pueblo of Pecos, from which the last inhabitants had moved away in 1837.

30. The larger timbering in all such ruins was of yellow pine.

stone, and cemented.³¹ This camp furnished no grass for our animals. Distance, 25 miles—825.

Thursday, June 7—This morning, one of our mules was missing; in searching for him, I found some bunches of grass, growing beneath the walls of Pacos, which I cut with my knife, and packed it along in a blanket. I strayed several miles from the road, and did not overtake the wagons until the afternoon. I had been as far as the Rio Pacos.³² There is a small but beautiful valley at this point on the river, with a number of ranches scattered over it; they appeared to have a good deal of land under cultivation. Met the U. S. Mail on the way to Independence; they expected to go through in from 16 to 20 days.³³ I had no letters written; Musser and Armstrong were more fortunate, and embraced the opportunity of sending news to their friends at home. Our course had been north, amongst the mountains, the ascent being very gradual with a good road. Crossed one pretty high mountain.

The first object that attracted our attention, as we neared Santa Fé, was the American "stars and stripes" floating in the breeze. A descending road into the place, which is situated in a narrow valley, on a small stream of water, surrounded by an apparently barren country, and hills of the same nature; in the distance, mountains towering to the clouds, whose snow-clad peaks gave nature a chilling appearance, although the day was very warm. The somber appearance of the town, built entirely of unburnt adobes, the scope of country, stretching for leagues to the S. W., and enveloped in haze, inspired us with rather gloomy sensations; however, we could not but feel gratified that we had reached the important point in our journey. On entering the place we noticed handbills, advising emigrants to put up at the United States hotel, for comfort, convenience, good living, etc. Of course this was "something to our minds," and we drew up before the "U. S." As for comfort and convenience, the quarters, in which about 30 of us were

31. What he calls cisterns were the old ceremonial kivas, or estufas, of which the roofs had fallen in.

32. Apparently Chamberlin had not recognized the "small rivulet" near Pecos ruins as the Pecos river; here he had gotten to the Mexican village or ranches farther up the valley.

33. Captain Buford left Santa Fé on June 6, escorting the mail contractor Haywood and the Chihuahua merchants Mulliken, Hister, Hagen, and Lucas; they arrived at Fort Gibson 24 days later. On June 6-7, between Santa Fé and San Miguel, he reported having met between six and seven hundred California emigrants from Fort Smith and Van Buren "who had left before the departure of the company escorted by Marcy." Foreman, *op. cit.*, 246, note.

stored with our baggage, is a small uncleansed stable, infested with fleas, bedbugs and other vermin, the stench being horrible. Distance, 25 miles—850.

Friday, June 8—Boarding \$1 a day and fed upon mutton. The weather comfortable at this place, and the atmosphere very pure. Fresh meat hung out in the air will keep sound until used, or dried up. Corn is worth \$3 per bushel and very scarce. We are obliged to purchase hay for our mules in small billets, packed in upon asses, at the rate of \$100 per ton. Provisions are very cheap, the quartermaster of the army (it is said) lost about \$30,000 during the winter, by gambling; to make up his loss, he had a sufficient amount of government stores "condemned," and was selling them to emigrants at low rates, although everything was of the best quality. We bought good American flour at \$6 a hundred; bacon at 12½ cents per lb., etc. It was a lucky piece of rascality for the emigrant. All kinds of merchandise is very low, and business dull, at present. Competition has produced a stagnation in trade. There are a large number of stores and groceries in the place, certainly more than will ever make fortunes. Immense quantities of goods, that were prevented from entering Old Mexico at the close of the war, have been brought back to this place, completely glutted the market. Having read of the vast wealth and trade of Santa Fe, and the fortunes that had been made here, our curiosity ran high, but we were disappointed. The appearance and condition of the place, do not correspond with its fame. Having disposed of our wagons, and not being anxious to remain long in town, we prepared to pack our provisions and chattels, and employed a man to give us the first lesson in the art. We made our sacks out of tanned buffalo hides, and purpose putting about 200 lbs. weight upon each mule. The Mexicans are skilled in the art of packing. We employed one to go through with us, at \$12 per month. We have now 22 head of horses and mules.

Saturday, June 9—Busily engaged in weighing, sacking our "traps," and making preparations to start as soon as possible. The Virginia mess have driven their stock out into the country to graze.

Sunday, June 10—Santa Fe is a very immoral place. The population is composed of Mexicans, Indians and foreigners from all parts of the world. The public square and gambling houses are crowded with idle loungers, male and female; the character of but few of the latter will bear a virtuous test. Several Fandangoes are in full operation all the while. The señoretas are of all castes and sorts,

from Indians up to pure Spanish. Some of the California-bound boys enjoy these sports, and lavish their money freely upon amusement. Many of them, however, will find this the "sticking point;" the funds of some have been exhausted in getting thus far, and being obliged to change the mode of travel and renew their stock of provisions, they cannot go on. Others have been induced to deposit what they had left in the "monté banks," which are unsafe, non-paying institutions. Some more prudent than others have gone to the gold mines in the vicinity, where they can make from one to five dollars a day, in hopes of raising enough to continue their journey. I saw a specimen of the gold obtained from these mines; it is in scales, of different sizes, though generally very small, clean and bright, and is worth \$18.50 per ounce in Santa Fé. The place is some forty miles distant.³⁴

This market is completely overstocked with wagons, but mules are very high, commanding from \$60 to \$100 per head. As at Fort Smith, rumors are afloat, that the Apache and other Indians are very hostile on our route, and the most of the emigrants are in favor of forming in large companies. One company is about employing Mackintosh, a half-breed Indian, and somewhat noted as a mountaineer; he agrees to guide them through, by the "Spanish Trail," in sixty days, for the sum of \$800.³⁵ We have again determined not to travel with a large company, let the consequence be what it will. Saw Mr. Aubrey, a merchant of this place, the man that rode from Santa Fe to Independence, a distance of 800 miles, in 5 days and 10 hours. He is a French Canadian.³⁶ It appears that we are yet almost as far from California as the Fort Smith circulars made the distance through from that place. Some of the emigrants are starting north, to

34. The Old Placers (from 1828) and the New Placers (from 1839) were about thirty miles south of Santa Fé,—or from the Rio Grande valley at Bernalillo they lay eastward through the mountains. At the latter diggings, the town of Tuerto sprang up, and in 1845 had 22 stores. That year the yield of both districts was given as \$250,000. H. H. Bancroft, *History of New Mexico and Arizona*, 340.

35. "MacKintosh" may be the Archie McIntosh who, Lieut. John G. Bourke tells us, was employed as a guide with federal troops on two campaigns against the Apaches in December 1872 and Jan.-Feb., 1873. See "Bourke on the Southwest," in *N. MEX. HIST. REV.*, ix (1934), 387, 390-1; 407, 418 (note). We have found no other possible clue to the man here mentioned by Chamberlin.

36. Francis Xavier Aubry (or Aubrey) had made his most famous ride the year before. Coming west in the spring of 1848, he had left along the way a number of swift saddle-mares and at Santa Fé he completed his arrangements for a rapid return to Independence. He rode against a wager that "he could not make the trip in eight days." He did not do it "in 5 days and 10 hours" as told to Chamberlin in the streets of Santa Fé, but he did win the wager. See W. D. Wyman, "F. X. Aubry: Santa Fé Freighter, Pathfinder and Explorer," in *N. MEX. HIST. REV.*, vii, 1-31.

intersect the Independence route;³⁷ others are going by the Spanish trail, or middle route;³⁸ but the majority take the southern route, or those traveled by Kearney, Cook, etc.;³⁹ while a few have already turned their faces homeward, and more intend doing so. Money is a very essential article in a strange country, and many have made short calculations, which now puts them to great inconvenience. We have concluded to go Kearney's route, and follow his trail, or employ guides if we can get them from different points.

At 12 o'clock we were ready to lash on our packs, which occupied two hours. We then started, and after considerable difficulty with our mules, we got out of town. This is a novel mode of traveling to me, but I suppose we will become accustomed to it. Our animals were almost starved in that "poverty-stricken" place, and it is with difficulty we can get them along; they wanted to stop at every patch of grass. The road runs S. W., and the appearance of the country improves as we advance. There are some miniature valleys amongst the rolling hills in which there is a little grass. Passed several ranches, and encamped near one, on a small run of good water. Distance, 17 miles—867.

Monday, June 11—Remained in camp, for the purpose of grazing our animals. Wrote letters; I had no shade, and used the earth for a writing desk. It was a difficult task, and I was annoyed by a young Mexican boy, who wanted me to learn him to talk and write "Americano." We purchased an unbroken mule for Fernando to ride; he found it very difficult to conquer, and gave us some rare specimens of Mexican horsemanship. The first thing is to blind the animal (which is of the greatest advantage), then saddle and bridle him, putting on all the trappings, then he mounts,

37. By "the Independence route" these emigrants evidently intended to get on the trail which crossed the plains to Bent's Fort, then turned north and west by way of Fort Bridger, Great Salt Lake, Humboldt river, and so directly to the gold mines of California. See R. P. Bieber's map with his "Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," in *Mississippi Valley Hist. Rev.*, xii (1925), 344-375.

38. The Old Spanish Trail, or what Chamberlin here calls "the middle route," is the one usually associated with the famous Escalante-Domínguez expedition of 1776. The governor at Santa Fé had been ordered to open a trail through to the California coast at Monterrey. The Franciscan padres started from Santa Fé in July 1776 but got only to central Utah, where they had to turn back because of the lateness of the season. Emigrants could then head southwest across the Mohave desert to Los Angeles, or north and west by the lake and Humboldt river.

39. In some ways this was decidedly the best route for the emigrants, and it had been much used for the past twenty-five years by trappers and traders going to southern California. Another route, not so easy but still more direct, would have taken them west from Old Albuquerque by an old Indian trail to Zuñi; then southwest through the heart of "Apacheland" down the Salt river, and west down the Gila. See Bieber's map, *loc. cit.*

raises the blind, and instead of checking sinks the spurs into his side, and suffers him to run until fairly tamed down. Having no tent, we are now obliged to "bivouak" in "all out-doors," with the heavens for a counterpane, and the earth for a mattress. The sun, during the day is very hot, and the nights cool.

Tuesday, June 12—The country around our camp, abounds in the long-eared hare, which is the only game we see; we killed several; they were very fine eating. Started at 12 o'clock in a southern direction, through barren hills, and over a rough country. Found the Virginia mess encamped in a valley on a small creek; here we concluded to stop, and graze our animals until all our old company would get together. The grass is very short and poor, and the water in the stream very brackish. Distance, 15 miles—882.

(To be continued)