

Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868

Source of Trail Excerpt:

Beecroft, Joseph, Journals 1844-1883, reel 3, vol. 6, 42-54.

Read Trail Excerpt:

Sunday 13th [July] I arose a little after four and in company with Brothers [Thomas J.] Franklin and Woodcock, went for water to some Springs about a mile off, at the edge of a river, where we washed our feet. in our road Brother Franklin killed a butiful Snake, and he saw another in our way back. The day was exceedin[g]ly hot[.] A 9 last 9 night we had a meeting and organized the companys[.] Elder Dan Jones captain over the Waggon company[.] We had Bishop Taylor who presided over meeting and Elder Daniel Spencer, G.C. Webb, Millen Atwood, James Furguson MacAllistor[,] Edwen [Edward] Martin and Jesses Haven, We had some good council given[,] some of which was we were to sell our surplus provision and to have prayer night and morn in our camps. About 10 this morn we came to gether for meeting, and hear our doctrine Ably set forth by Bro Furguson, and Bishop T[a]ylor, We had a many strangers in their gigs who was very attentive. We met again a little to four, took Sacrament, the meeting was presided over by Bishop T[a]ylor, who spoke very ably for an hour and an half. Strangers bough[t] Bootes afterwards. The day was fine but hot. We got to bed soon

Monday 14th I arose about half past four and soon went to work at Tent Poll making and persued it all day till tired out about sun down. We finished every Pool bout one upright. I was awoke about 12 aclock at mi[d]night by rain, which continued most of the night at interval, accompanied by thunder and lightning. Our tent proved safe guard[.] The Day fine and hot[.] retired soon very weary.

Tuesday 15th I arose about 5 oclock, and at 7 was called to prayer by the Horn. Afterwards got a good breakfast. The heat oppressive. A many has resolvd not to go thro this season because of the sacrafice to make with clothing and the little difficul[t]ies already befall[ing] them. We commenced to lessen our lugguage by selling 1 Stuff and 1 Cotton Bed Quilts which we did for 1 dollar and 46 cents. Did nothing but write[,] eate[,] and look about. about sun down we witted the first move towards Salt Lake of the Hand Cart Emmegrants that came in the Enoch Train. The Hand Carts was all put in order and parties were appointed to take down the Tents who at a given signal had all down in a few minutes, and in a few minits more the Saints commenced to move, slowly out and crossed the hill and formed a circle at the other side and camped for the night, soon after we attended prayer and went to rest.

Wed 16th I arose about half past four, and fetched water, got breakfast and at 7 P M was put on guard between camp and city. Between eleven and 12[,] 3 Indians on horse back came into camp highly ornamented with beads[,] rags[,] Hoops, rings and other trap[p]ings[.] These were the first Indians we had seen in coustume. Between 2 and 3 was releived. Got a good sleep after dinner and sweat profus[e]ly. Assisted my wife with Baking for tea, Just before sun down I witnessed the departure of 2 Hand Cart companys. which was on ground when we came[.] the[y] reached

more than a mile in length. I saw them a little on their journey. In returning I had to wade the Creek and I and Bro Jackson carried his wife and sister Carroline Merchan chant over in our arms[.] Darkness soon followed the setting of the sun, and after offering up prayer and getting a little refrestment I retired to rest but did not sleep much before 12 on account of the intence heat

Thursday 17th I arrose about five and dressed and attended to water fetching and during the day I assisted my wife in arrainging our lugguage & selected some things we shall take to vall[e]y. My wife sold a bedtick for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a dollor. We had a publick meeting after dark, which was addressed by President Martin[,] Bishop T[a]ylor, Dan Jones and Daniel Spencer. Retired to bed a little past 10, the ful[l] moon shone beautifully

Friday 18th I arrose alittle past five attended a meetiing of our company, and President <Martin> gave us instructions about starting on munday next &c[.] I fetched water, breakfasted, and collected my Books into a Bag and weighed over 17th pound each of lugguge. We sold a few things. Just as the moon had begun to light up the sceens I took my fiddle and went to a distance from our Camp and tryed to please my self by playing a few airs. Came home as the guards shouted 12 aclock and all is well. Found all in bed in tent.

Saturday 19th I arrose about five and got Breakfast then got leive and went to City where I saw our surplus goods sold by Auction. came back in Waggon with President Martin and others. Got back about 2 P M. Attended to a few things and retired to bed about 9 aclock

Sunday 20th I arrose about half past 5 after a good nights rest on the hard ground save arug and so on. Got Breakfast, fetched water[,] Bathed in the Iowa River got home wrote part of a letter to sister Elizabeth Walker, the fo[u]r and I went to meeting where we were favoured with a discourse by Elder Dan Jones, on Happyness. He spoke highly phosophical[.] Meeting was closed by a benediction by Elder Daniel Spencer. Got a good dinner of Bread and tea and a little Sleep afterwards, and attended meeting near four, pertook of sacrement and heard Bro Haven and Bro Stones speak to us, and Bro MacAllister Sung us a number of Zions songs afterward.

Monday 21st I arrose before five, and attended to the duties of the morning. Wrote to sister Walker. Saw 12 Indians 7 males and 5 female with a few children on hors[e]back; the last an aged man rode up to me and shook hands with me asked how I did and passed on. I wrote a l[e]tter to my son Christopher. Retired to rest about 10 oclock. We had a fine day[.] got my hand cart and wrote my name on it. The camp is all alive, selling Surplus things and preparing for off

Tuesday 22nd I arrose about five aclock after a night of sound and refreshing Sleep, lighted fire[,] attended prayer in our tent, Got Breakfast and assisted Bro Frankling [Thomas J. Franklin] with his Mules to grass. At ~~xx~~ [blank space] I went on guard and was released and got home soon after 12. About 7 the 6th company left here and went behind the creek

Wed 23rd I arrose soon after 5 and attended the duties of morn. I wrote a letter to sister West and one the day before to sister Gillson. Went on guard at 2 and remained till past 6. We guarded the cattle away from Camp and was almost swe[a]ted by the sun. Brough[t] up the Herd and got releived. Got to Rest about 9 aclock, My wife got 100 bb of goods—entered for the waggon for

Salt Lake vall[e]y

Thursday 24th I arose soon after five and prepared for breakfast, put canvas on my hand cart and other duties of a like nature, attended to a little buisness for Elder Martin, and went with others to the carrel but had no perticular work to perform[.] I fetched water at dusk and after prayer we retired to bed

Friday 25th July After a good night's rest I arose about 6 aclock, got wood and lighted fire and got water on for breakfast then assisted Bro Franklin with his Mules[,] got Breakfast, went on guard and while on duty I fixed up a fiddle for Bishop Tylor's son ~~xx~~ and got Brother Jackson to gaurd till I carried home, thence to my post[.] My wife is Ill with dyerea [diarrhea]. They are weighing up their lugguage[,] fixing it on the hand carts ready for off[.] The weather continues fine. we have not had a wet day since we left ship board nor any rain except on 3 ocasions which happened at night. While on duty I finished a letter for Sister Tabitha West, and commenced one for my mother. I was releived from guard a little to one[.] I went home[,] got dinner and did a little in preparing my hand barrow. We retired to rest abou[t] half past 9

Saturday 26 We arose soon after five and endeavored to get my hand cart fit up and got on my coade and waited for the command to move. we were ordered in lines with our carts and when the word was given to Strike tents away we went to work and soon had our tents down and in the Mule Waggon, and soon were ordered to move on when a very exciting scenen took place. It took a little time to get into place or order, and then we moved round the hill and then struck out for the main road[.] went about a half a mile and then struck in the prarie[,] brought our Carts into 2 lines, and then turned shaft to shaft of those on the opposite line and side to side of those in our line. We soon had our tents up, and fires lited for food which we felt to need very bad. It took us the day out to reload, refit up our tents and carts, and about half past 9 we framed for rest, amidst thunder[,] lightning and rain. About 11 I was called up for guard and prepared for a wet night, and just as I got out of tent it came on very wet, while the lightning was awful. When I got to the Captain he said he had got a man in my place so I had to go to bed[.] The night was very wet, but I slept pretty well[.] We were rather desturbed by those in the other tent[.] A sick sister was groaning under the same while other was taulking and laughing and all in confusion

Sunday 27 I arose about half past 5 and before 6 was on guard about the camp and was not released till past 2 aclock. Got dinner of flower poridge and then atten[d]ed meeting[,] pertook of sacrament, and heard good remarks by Elder [John] Jaques[,] Stones and President Martin. While we met there were several carriages with stranger in which paid good attention. Thunder rolled in the distance and the lightning quiverd, and all passed with a few drops of rain. — and the day became beautiful. Retired to rest about half past 9

Monday 28th I arose about half past five and worked at the hand cart and other jobs till noon, at one I was placed on guard where I remained till about 6. A little after Six our Camp took up the lines of march, crossed a stream over a crazy Bridge of wood and camped about a half a mile from where we were before. It was quite dark before we had god [got] our tent up and pegged. got to bed about ten.

Tuesday 29th I arose about 5 oclock and laboured a little about my hand cart chopping wood[.]

attended our old camp ground and assisted to take down Bro Martins tent, got it to our camp and set up by dark, one of the bretheren shot a large Waterfowl and some brought a Water Turtle about 1 yard in circumference. Got to bed about half past ten.

Wed 30th I arose about half past five and about 6 attended prayer in Publick. President Martin informed us that at half past five the Horn should sound as a warning[,] at 6 it should sound again and then we were to assemble in publick for prayer, and at 9 at night to sound again and half past to meet as the Horn sounds for evening prayer. I saw a very large snake this morn. I was put on guard at eight oclock, and should have been releived at 12

Thursday 31st I expected being releived at 12 but the man would not get up so I prefer[r]ed going on till four rather than let an old man have my place who had been up two nights. I was releived about a quarter to five[,] came to tent[,] got to Bed, slept till about 8, got up[,] got refreshment and loaded our Cart[,] got ready for off, and just then we were called together and informed we had Elder T[a]ylors cattle to Hunt, and to go after dinner. It fell to my lot to be amongst the hunting party, and wandered by the side of the Iowa River till we got near the City, and returned without the oxen[.] [F]ound Grapes, Nuts and Plumbs wild, Got dinner but before I had finished[,] the word came for moving and about 3 aclock we made a start and jurneyed about 7 miles though with much labour. We felt glad to get home, soon had our tents pitched, and wates fetched and by gray day had our water boiled. Got supper of dry Bread and tea, without Suggur, got to Bed and after awhile got to sleep on our new ground. President Martin brought a Sick Brother to sleep in our tent who had ben left by one of the preceeding companys. five of our party slept in waggons[.] The day was fine

Friday Aug 1st I awoke about half past five[,] got up, lighted fire[,] got on water, my wife ~~sought~~ ~~sugar~~ made porridge and I sought a little suggur, and thus we mad[e] a good breakfast. We have to get ready for off again. About 9 aclock we started on our ardiuous journey, and by 12 aclock had reached a camp ground about 5 miles off. We felt fateagued, got fires lighted[,] water boiled, and our dry bred and tea.

Between 3 and four we started for the next camp ground about 3 miles off which we reached very tired about 6 aclock. I thought I should have had to give it up, for I had a faint fit. Our camp ground was on a hill which we had to mount, and the thought of doing was dreadful. When rested and I fetched water which was not good. Then got our tent up, fire kindled and a good pot of coffee with milk. I washed after tea[,] attended meeting prayer by Captain Stones. came home[,] washed my feet and got to bed a little to eleven[.] I did not sleep for awhile, my shirt were quite wet with sweat.

Saturday Augh 2nd I arose near 6 and soon had fire lighted and attended to prayer meeting, but before service commenced a thunder storm came on and when I got back to tent[,] It had blown some peggs loose, and we had our tent to hold down till wind abated a little. Our fires were soon stecked out and we were confined to our tents for a couple of hours. and about <noon> ~~10 and~~ ~~then~~ we struck tents and was soon moving on for a distance of 10 miles and after a hard tug for it till about 6 aclock just before sun went down, and camped at a place called [*blank space*] on a slope and we pitched tents between the Trees, and at the bottom was a beautiful th[r]ough stream. Though verry Ill we fetched water[,] lighted fire, baked bread before we went to tent and

got to bed about 10 o'clock, glad that our God had brought us so far for we could not have done it on our own strength. I attended prayer meeting.

Sunday 3rd I arose before six and assisted my wife to baking, got breakfast and at half past 9 we started for and reached Willow Creek, a beautiful open camping ground with a few scattered trees [trees] that gave shade during a very hot day[.] we reached this place about a quarter past one very weary. I started for wood, and then went for water which we found a few hundred yards in a beautiful Creek or brook at the bottom of the slope of the hill. My wife weary as she was attended to the fire and soon had tea ready and partook of Bread and a little pork fried which I bought [t] at our Camp last night. We got our repast under the shade of our tree it being too hot in our tent which Bro Robinson had fixed while my wife was cooking. After repast we laid down under the tree and laid till past five, during which time we had a number of strangers to see us. Our days march was about 7 miles. During the afternoon we were annoyed by strangers who hung after Sister Elizabeth Walker. some were rather intoxicated and came out in a threatening attitude and with threatening language. At dusk I got refreshment and then went to bed and slept till near one, when I was awoken by the captain of the guard when, who about one I was put on guard where I remained till near six. The morn was fine, with a strong dew[.] I had Bro Joseph Nightengale who was a very agreeable companion. I guarded the side and he the bottom and at the corner we had a good fire, the benefit of which we enjoyed[.] Just as we had left Camp a meteor fell [meteor fell] at a short distance

Monday 4th About a quarter to six I had water boiled[,] meat fried and partook of a good breakfast just as my wife was getting up. I fetched her water[,] mended her fire and then went to sleep. orders was given for washing and about 3 P M we started for our next camp ground which was at Bear Creek a place amongst or surrounded on 2 side with wood and we camped at the bottom. The distance from our former [former] camp here was 8 miles and we got in at sun set and had to set up our tents at dusk. Bro Robinsons family fetched water[,] wood and made a fire while I attended to other things. I felt well on our journey and at the close especially[.] We got a good supper around our camp fire and soon was summoned to prayer meeting and thence to bed. We slept well and on

Tuesday 5th awoke about half past four and got up at five, soon had a fire, attend prayer meeting and about 7 o'clock we moved out of Camp and passed through a beautiful country with generally a nice breeze, though the sun was hard on us during the middle of the day, for miles before we got to our camping ground or resting ground we called Snooks Grove[,] a beautiful shady place in the neighbourhood of which was beautiful water, we arrive about noon[.] <we were> worse fatigued than on any former portion [portion] of our journey[.] my wife was really finished. We had 2 carriages had their Axles broke in our company. just before entering camp last night we had to strip[,] double up and cross a small muddy stream. About five o'clock we started for our next camp and reached it after a march of 2 miles and a half ~~we reached~~ glad to rest our weary body[.] our camp was in an open space of ground surrounded by trees, about 3 miles in circumference. A small stream ran through the wood which supplies camp with water[.] We met with Bro Hunter and family at our last resting place. Attended prayer and to bed

Wednesday 6th about four we were awoken by thundering which was accompanied by rain and lightning, and it came in at the bottom so we had to dress and gather our bed up[.] We lay down

again after I got my shirt wet through with fastening our tent peggs and we lay till about 8 aclock about which time the rain ceased. About noon we left the ground and went about 8 miles[.] I felt much feateaged[,] feverish and paind

Thursday 8 [7]th we arrose at five and had prayer at half past, and left the ground about 7 aclock. We crossed a verry great prarie where were ~~neither wood nor water~~ no wood so we had to take it with us, we rested near some water and being so near finished I could not fetch water. we started again and came to a place with which was secelected a camp. I[t] was nearly dark. My missiry was traveling. I could not help with tent

Friday 8th we arrose about six and moved a little before 8 aclock, and feeling like staying I had not packed and I had to go out last[.] I felt determined to not to go past my st[r]ength and [*blank space*] we had got a little wagon I could get no further. My cart was fastened to a waggon and I got into another till near our resting place, but having to get out about a mile off[,] I felt finished when I got into camp. We got some nice coffe[e] and started again on our jurney[.] I walkd out of camp and in assending the Hill I felt silly and compleetly finished and threw down and Bro Woodcock came up[,] invited me into his waggo[n] where I remained till we reached camping ground. When got out I felt a little dizzy, very weak, but the pain in my feet and limbs had gone[.] after a little supper I got to bed[,] had the ordinance attended to and fell into deep sleep and sweat so that my shirts were to chang[e]. We jurneyed about 20 miles and my wife and son walked the whole distance, and I was cheered to hear my lad singing alitter [a little] before reaching camp, he fetched water when we got to camp.

Saturday 9th I arrose about 6 and felt weak but much better, assisted in lighting fire and through the kind[n]ess sister Robinson was supplied with water last night and this morning[.] After breakfast we loaded our cart[,] my wife being the principle packer. We attended prayer meeting and heard good remarks from Elder in refference to being sparing of the cat[t]le and the curse that should follow those that linger to beg. After a few remarks by President Martin we were dismissed & was soon on our way with our hand carts[.] I had permission on to go first, but was soon overtaken by the companye who went past. I rested a little and then went on for a little distance, and feeling exhosted[,] Elder T[a]ylor kindly ordered my cart behind the Waggon which so far lighted that we walked to a beautiful little stream which afforded X good water supplied by sister Robinson; Bro Robinson being from morning on the march after his son George who yestertaday while we were taking our rest by the side of a creek he was decoyed away, by a rich man who dwells away west and who was taking a large mashine with them him. After a good rest we were again on the march having at least come 10 mile and in star[t]ing out we were soon over taken by thunder[,] light[n]ing and rain[.] I took the precaution to leave camp before the companeys and got considerably before overtaken, and having my oil rose coate I did not get wet save my trowsers. We were told we had 2 miles to go to camp but found we had been imposed on so that at least we came 6 miles making about 16 according to my reconing. At xx last we came to a river of good water and when a quarter of a mile behond a awkward but firm bridge we were rejoiced to see President Martings [Martin's] Waggon take its stand for the night. I was the 3rd in camp. My poor wife and boy was nearly finished with fateage and soor feet. With pain I slowly gat[h]ered wood, soon had a fire and Robinson fetching and supplying water and [*blank space*] we sat arround our fire and got our last repast for the day. I attended prayer meeting and after remarks from our president, I begged to say that I had acted foolishley and

wickedly by over loading my cart contrary to council and asked to be forgiven[.] President Martin proposed and Elder T[a]ylor 2nd and I was forgiven by a clear vote. I afterwards got some provisions and retired to rest[.] while writing the 10 lines above I had a fit of the Augue.

Sunday 10th I arose but was too late for meeting[.] I soon had breakfast and then went for an[d] brought a large bundle of wood, which nearly murdered me. I came to tent and stayed in all day, and endured horrid pain in my limbs particularly below my hips. My wife tried to comfort me. The day being fine we had a many strangers to see and tried to get us to stay. I was got up with so—have difficulty to have bed made. To wards night I was some what relieved from pain, and good sleep

Monday 11th We started out of camp rather late. My hand cart was tyed to a Waggon, and after walking a the-whole distance I road into camp and felt better than usual but ~~on~~ by no means good. I picked up quite a quantity of ripe wild Cherries which felt truly nice. We got a moderat[e] supper and retired rest. Our camp was on a beautiful level peice of ground very near a nice creek with plenty of wood. Our distance last camp was about 12 or 13 miles. The saints sung delightfully[.] Ange[l]s must have been present.

Tuesday 12th I arose soon after five[,] dressed and washed and some nice tea and eat a little bread, attended prayer, and just as prayer <was done> the Mules ran away so we were detained till they came back, and soon after moved out of camp my cart being attached to a waggon and after walking a Short distance I was ordered into the same and roade till we rested for dinner where was some bad water and plenty of wood. Soon after we started my goods had to be put in the waggon[,] in order that a young sister who could not endure the shaking of the waggon might be carried on in <my cart.> After dinner I and my son John walked out before the camp and after a mile's walk came up to the long wished for sight The city of ~~des~~ Fort Des de moines, and crossing the boat Bridge with the first I hasted on got directed to the place where liquers are sold by government authority I purshed a quart of the best Holland Gin for which I gave 50 cs and <for> a bottle 40, 6, to hold it. I then walked as fast as I could to where I had left my son whome I had charged to tell mother to stop and to tell the teamster to stop, but the lad only told mother to stop, so that they all passed and it was utterably out of my power to reach them. I then resolved I would not leave this city <till> better of my self.

Finding our queer position, and that I could bear to stand no longer, we moved on 100 yards[,] came to a wood yard and in horrid pain we sat down leaving our selves in the hand of our father in heaven. A number of persons asked questions, gratified their curiosity, and then marched away. I then felt my situation gloomy, a fair chance of staying out all night stud [stood] like a spector before me, however this was short. My wife with John sought Lodgings being directed by a kind hearted man whose name she had for a recomdation and who told me I must save what money I had and he would bear our expences, and we were to have an accomodations we needed. With great diffucly I got to the place and were accomodated with a Chair at the door till all was ready for us. We were handed up 3 flights of stairs to a bed soft and good very near a window that faces the River Des Moines Tudor Beall[*blank space*] where we can see both the boat and water ferry or ford. Ever[y] attention was paid and as soon as I had got some little food I gladly got to bed but did not sleep till morning

Wed 13th I slept well till about noon[,] got up and wrote till overtaken with shivering, and got to bed as fast as I could. Was well supplied with agreeable food[,] yesterday morn some Brethren came Camp with a hand cart they left our goods at a post Office about 4 miles off[,] My wife told them, I could not be moved[,] they left their blessing and departed