

Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868

Source of Trail Excerpt:

Jaques, John, [Diary], in Stella Jaques Bell, *Life History and Writings of John Jaques* [1978], 118-22, 129, 134-37, 140-41, 143-44, 150.

Read Trail Excerpt:

Fri. [July] 25: Moved off the hill into the flat, 1/4 mile.

Sat. [July] 26: Had a meeting in the afternoon.

Sun. [July] 27: Across to the mill.

Mon. [July] 28: Cloudy and showery. About 6 p.m. the camp struck tent and the handcarts moved off nearly a mile for a start and then camped again. The handcart emigrants were divided into two companies, one under Edward Martin and the other under Jesse Haven, altogether numbering about 600 persons. Some of the emigrants who came in the company were numbered in the two wagon companies.

Tues. [July] 29: Rose at 5. Cloudy, cool day. Several of the family in my tent have the diarrhoea. Mr. Stratford, who lives near the city by the river, brought Brother Loader several pounds of mutton, a few young potatoes, and some onions.

Wed. [July] 30; Rose at 5. Cool day. Got up a list of the persons pertaining to the company. Public prayer meeting at one end of the camp. The cornetear to sound twice in the morning within half an hour; the last time at 6 o'clock, for prayers. Same at night but last time at 9 1/2. Two spades, 2 axes and 5 hatchets delivered to the company as follows--Captain Wignall, 1 ax and 1 hatchet; Brother Thomas Franklin, 1 hatchet; Brother Jonathan Clegg, 1 hatchet; Captain Stone, 1 spade, 1 ax, and 1 hatchet; Captain Jaques, 1 spade and 1 hatchet. The three ox team wagons to be apportioned to the captains of hundreds, to take care of. Father [James Loader] went to the city and bought us a ham, 8 lbs. 1 dollar; a quarter of a pint of brandy, 20 cents; 2 lbs. of cheese, 25 cents; 1 tart, 10 cents; 5 cakes, 5 cents. Received a can of grease for my hundred. Gave it into the charge of brother Charles Lord. Bed at 10.

Thurs. [July 31]: Rose at 5 1/2. Very cold morning, heavy dew with fog. The three ox teams started about 9 1/2 a.m. Nearly all the men in camp started to look for a yoke of oxen belonging to Elder D. Tyler. Started at 12 p.m., went 5 miles, passing part of the wagon company camped about half way. Camped about 7 p.m. Plenty of good water, feed and timber.

Fri. [August] 1: At 10 a.m. started and at 7 p.m. pitched tents on top of a hill. Good camping place, good feed, water a half mile off at a spring against a tree, near a house in the valley. Wood sufficient.

Sat. [August] 2: Expected to start at 7 p.m. but were detained by a thunderstorm till noon. Traveled to Brush Creek at dark. Damp and bad camping place, sufficient water, feed good, plenty of timber. Shot a rabbit in woods just before coming into camp.

Sun. [August] 3: Traveled 7 miles and camped east of Hilton Creek, plenty of timber, water, and feed. Three miles from Marengo, on our right. After traveling half a mile saw a ball of fire before us shooting down from the sky; when near the ground, it changed into the likeness of a spear and then vanished. Two wagon loads of rough men came to our camp from Marengo with the intention of creating a disturbance, but they were unable to and went away in a short time shouting and yelling, one man standing up and with uplifted hands crying out something about the Holy Ghost and the "Mormons."

Mon. [August] 4: In the morning went with Brother Tyler shooting in the woods. I killed 4 blackbirds and a crow. I shot and missed a wild duck. Saw very little game of any kind. Saw 3 small squirrels. A chuck wagon and 3 yoke of oxen came to our camp while we were away. We had been waiting for them. At 4 p.m. we started, crossed the creek, took left hand road, (the right leading to Marengo), passed through the woods, kept Marengo in sight for 2 or 3 hours. Traveled about 7 miles, forded Bear Creek, about 5 yards wide, shallow and muddy. Pitched tents on sloping ground. Feed poor, water sufficient, wood plentiful.

Tues. [August] 5: Started about 8 p.m., through woods, 7 or 8 miles. Baited for dinner on Bear Creek, a good spring near, feed poor. Two miles further camped for the night in an open bottom with wood on each side of the road, plenty of water and feed. The axle of two carts broke down. Temporary axles were lashed on, and the carts run to the halting place where new axles were put in them.

Wed. [August] 6: Thunderstorm detained us till 12, traveled about 10 miles, part by light of the moon, camped on an 18 mile prairie.

Thurs. [August] 7: Started about 7 a.m., traveled about 15 miles. Baited on the prairie after 10 miles. Pitched tents about 1 mile past Westerfield.

Fri. [August] 8: Traveled 18 miles, road hilly. Passed through Newton, town of about 2000 inhabitants. Two or 3 miles further camped at 8 p.m. in a valley through which a creek ran. Wood by the side of the road.

Sat. [August] 9: Started about 10 a.m., traveled through woods and across creeks. Baited about 2 p.m. at the edge of a wood. Indian Creek 3 miles from camp on the west side. At 3 p.m. left and went through wood in thunderstorm to Snake River, camped, wood, water and feed excellent.

Sun. [August] 10: Rested Tamar today. Sacrament administered in the afternoon. Elder Tyler addressed us.

Mon. [August] 11: Started at 10 1/2 a.m. One of the mules got away over night, came back by himself. Traveled about 14 miles, and baited on Spring Creek about 4 p.m. Good feed, sufficient timber, a small clear stream and a spring on the right. Camped near a farm house 8 miles from

ford.

Tues. [August] 12: Expected to start at 7 a.m. but 2 of the mules ran away and delayed us till 9 a.m. Camped about 6 p.m., 3 miles east of Skunk River, half a mile before road strikes the woods. Feed good, water spare, small stream 1/4 mile from road, timber good.

Wed. [August] 13: Mule team went to a mill for flour, passed through Rising Sun 1 mile from camp. Baited 1 mile east of Fort Des Moines. Passed fort and river and baited 4 miles from fort. Made 12 miles, plenty wood and good feed but water thick.

Thurs. [August] 14: Forded Coon River, good water not more than knee deep. Four miles, baited on Panther Creek. Water, feed and timber good. 15 miles forded middle fork of Coon River. Camped west of it in woods.

Fri. [August] 15: About three miles through a wood with a dry creek, then prairie and hill descending 9 miles to Sugar Creek, nearly dry. Yankee said a good spring 2 hundred yards from road, feed and timber good. Uphill 9 miles.

Sat. [August] 16: Left camp about 7 1/2. Traveled 17 miles. Three or four old houses at commencement, one at 14 miles. Camped on a hill past Mud River, good water and feed, timber scarce, hilly. Dalmanutha—17 miles.

Sun. [August] 17; Left camp about 7 a.m. Crossed prairie about 8 miles. Tolerably good spring water by a post and white flag. About 17 miles to Turkey Creek by a stage station. Hilly road, no help but Brother Lawley. Wet at night.

Mon. [August] 18: Cloudy. 3 1/2 miles crossed creek. 10 miles baited along Turkey Creek, good place, sufficient wood and feed. About 3 miles further crossed off from creek over hills. Camped on Nishnabotna River. Made 20 miles.

[Tues.] [August] 19: Jones and Albertson pushed with me. Traveled about 10 miles and baited 3 hours on Walnut Creek. Grass poor, water tolerable, timber scarce, willow roots. Passed along 11 miles by woods to Jordan. Timber scarce by road side, water and feed good. Two miles to Indian Town, near which crossed Indian Creek. Made 21 miles.

Wed. [August] 20: One mile, crossed Middle Creek, clear water. Four miles from camp crossed through woods and west branch of Nishnabotna by a mill. Ten miles from camp baited half hour at Mud Creek, no timber, grass good. Ten miles from bait to Silver Creek, good camping place, very little wood, plenty of feed and muddy water. Saw a wolf at the carcass of a calf, close to the road. I arrived after dark. Lame with fester. Made 21 miles.

Thurs. [August] 21: Started at 8 a.m. Passed Pony Creek. About 7 miles to Mosquito Creek, baited, muddy water, very little wood but plenty of feed. Three miles to Council Bluffs, then 8 miles to Missouri bottom, where we camped about three miles from the Florence Ferry. A spring where the road turns off from the bluffs, plenty of wood, water and feed.

Fri. [August] 22: Started about 8 a.m. to the Missouri. One hundred rods wide where we were ferried across by about 6 p.m. Met Elder Richards, Spencer, Linforth, Grant, Kimball, Ferguson and McAlister, who welcomed us. In the evening we were addressed.

August, Monday 25th, cool, dry morning, provisions delivered out, a general lightening of our luggage, some sold the extra, some deposited it in the church store to be forwarded later. About five o'clock the camp struck tents, and after short addresses from Elder Martin and C. G. Webb, moved off over the creek bridge, through the town, over the hill at the back thereof, and over a hill road for Cutler's Park. After two and a half miles, we camped. Sufficient wood on either side of the road and a small, clear stream of running water. Left Tamar at Brother Linforth's to come on in one of the wagons. The people started off in excellent spirit. Each cart had on 100 pounds of flour, and the tents were carried by the carts, a heavier load than ever before. The wagons stayed behind. President Martin returned to the camp at Florence.

Tues. [August] 26: Most of the men went back to Florence to fetch up the cattle. Mon. [September] 8: Left camp in the morning and traveled over many sandhills. Baited in about eight miles, within about one and a half miles of Loup Fork. About half way on our right are two places for water, nearly dry creeks or sloughs, perhaps one or two miles apart. In about nine miles we camped. Saw some wells, many of them dry.

Tues. [September 9]: Wind right in our face. Hard pulling over about seven miles of sandhills, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stopped at a round pit where there were two or three dry wells. President Martin went on ahead to look for Prairie Creek. Returned about 4 p.m. and reported the creek 9 miles off and that Elder Hodgett's wagon company were on it. Started about 7 p.m. and arrived at Prairie Creek about 12 o'clock, being drenched on our way in a heavy thunderstorm. No timber. This evening's journey was principally through level prairie country. We were very glad to get clear running water after being without for two days.

Wed. [September] 10: Fine windy morning. Traveled about three miles, and then forded Prairie Creek, steep and sandy banks, no timber. Passed on about two miles and then baited on a dry creek. Later touched Prairie Creek and camped. Creek not running. Beautiful prairie country. Short grass like English grass.

Thurs. [September] 11: Started in the morning and traveled about 9 miles and baited on a dry creek, though so dry as not to be running. Here were the graves of two men and child, belonging to Col. A. W. Babbitt's wagons, killed on August 25th by the Cheyenne Indians. A mile or two before reaching this place, we saw a paper tacked on a board affixed to a post, wherein, the chief of the Omahas disclaimed the murder. Two of the teamsters escaped death and Mrs. Wilson was taken prisoner. Here we buried the infant of the late Sister Ashton who died of childbirth at Cutler's Park the night of August 26th. After traveling about nine miles we camped on a nearly dry creek, steep bank, with a lone tree near where the road crossed about a mile from Wood River.

Fri. [September] 12: Left camp about 8 a.m. In about three miles crossed Wood River after crossing a dry creek with steep banks, taking the cattle off the wagons to cross both. Kept along side of the river for five miles and baited. Robert Pearce was missing and several men were sent

out with a handcart to find him. This detained the company here for the night. He had gone up the side of Wood River instead of crossing it.

Mon. [September] 15: Left camp about 8 1/2 a.m. Hot morning, Windy afternoon and night. Barren country. Uneven road. In about four miles we crossed Elm Creek, dry. Had to push the wagons up. A well in the creek bed, just left of the road, good water. About 8 miles further we baited on a timbered creek. Went on about eight miles and camped on the same creek. Wagon company up at night. Saw some buffalo and deer. Some timber. Brother Stone helped me, and sometimes Brothers Lawley and Whittaker.

Tues. [September] 16: Left camp about 7. Traveled about twelve miles then baited an hour or two, turning off the road a quarter of a mile to the river.

Fri. [September] 19: Left camp about 8. Wagon company started first. As their cows passed us our cows ran among them causing us some trouble and delay. Road sandy at first, harder afterwards. Bluffs receded from the river. Baited after 8 miles. Water from a pond about half mile before we got to Skunk Creek. Forded Skunk Creek. Traveled 7 miles. Camped half a mile east of the cold springs at the head of Pawnee Swamp. Wagon company camped at the creek. This morning we met three teams from Green River Settlement. Informed us the Indians had killed Col. A. W. Babbitt and burned his buggy forty miles ahead.

Sat. [September] 20: Started about 9 a.m. In about 4 miles forded Carrion Creek. Very cold water and a good deal of sand. Passed on about 4 miles and baited on the river. Camped on the river about 4 miles further. Cold, wet evening and night. All the men called out to guard for an hour or two. Got wet through.

Sun. [September] 21: Cold, wet, rainy morning. Someone stole a cow's foot from my cart, also treacle, spice, meat, etc. from Brother John Oldham's cart and a meat dumpling from another brother's cart. Left camp about 1 o'clock and in about 5 miles came to a creek which we forded. Here the wagon company was camped. Passed on about a mile and a half and forded Black Mud Creek. Camped about three miles further on the River.

Tues. [September] 23: Frosty morning. Left camp about 8. Crossed sandy bluffs, about six miles and baited for an hour. In about 2 miles a little left of our road, saw two wheels of a burned wagon, supposed to have been Col. A. W. Babbitts. A little harness with the springs of the wagon and a few other things were there. President Martin brought away the springs of the wagon. In about two miles further we found Captain Benjamin Hodgetts and Elders Moses Cluff and Nathan T. Porter with a dead buffalo, which they had run out of a herd and killed for us, having killed one for their company previously. Some of our company stayed to skin and quarter it, and bring it along on four handcarts. It was divided among the company at night, about one pound to each adult. This was the first buffalo I had tasted. Went on four miles, crossed Sandy Bluffs and camped on east side of bluff Creek. Wagon company camped about half a mile ahead. Heavy sand.

Wed. [September] 24: Cloudy morning. Clear day. Fresh breeze westerly. Left camp about 8 a.m. Forded the creek, passed over a road, sandy at times. Baited near the river, east of a creek

against a long range of bluffs. Passed the place where it was supposed that Thomas Margetts and wife and child were killed by the Indians, there being a quantity of feathers strewn about, and a blood stained shirt, also a child's skull. Camped on Duck Creek about dark. This evening all the men were called out to form a line around camp for an hour or so. Double guard set as it was apprehended that the Indians were lurking about.

Thurs. [September] 25: Fine day. Left camp about 8 a.m. Traveled on an uneven, sandy road. Robert Whittaker had a boil on his thigh, so he could not help me draw. Sister Oldham assisted me a little, also a man from the wagon company. I pulled part alone, very heavy pulling. Crossed Rattlesnake Creek in about six miles and baited on a small creek from a spring. Wagon company baited two miles ahead. This morning a brother came to us from the wagon company. This afternoon we met five Indians on ponies, who eyed us well and then went towards the Platte River. These were the first Cheyenne Indians the company had seen. Road good and hard most of the way this afternoon. Passed the wagon company. Made 8 miles since dinner. Camped by a spring.

Thurs. [October] 2: Hot day.

Fri. [October] 3: Hot day. Left camp about 7 a.m. A company of U.S. Dragons and Major Hunter with ten or twelve mule teams overtook and passed us in the morning. They were from Fort Kearney for Fort Laramie. Baited opposite Chimney Rock, east of a low bluff, close to the river. Camped about nine miles west of Chimney Rock by river. Traveled about 17 miles. A boy from our company, named Aaron Giles, went with the soldiers.

Sat. [October] 4: Hot day. Left camp about 7 a.m. Baited 2 miles east of Scotts Bluffs, without water. Traveled right through the bluffs, worn away in divers forms. Deep ravine to cross at entrance. Camped after dark about 2 miles west of the bluffs, by river. Road part good and part sandy. Traveled 15 miles. Wagon company camped a few miles ahead.

Sun. [October] 5: Hot day. Travelled about twenty miles. Baited about half way, near the river. Camped about 2 miles from the river. Willow brush near a dry creek.

Wed. [October] 8: Traveled to Laramie, about 12 miles. Camped east of Laramie Fork about a mile from the bank. Road very rough for the last five miles. Before reaching Laramie the company met a fine looking and finely dressed friendly Indian chief on an American horse. Soon after we were met by two dragoons on horse back. They gave the children some sweetmeats and appeared immensely pleased to see the people. The wagon company was camped here, having arrived here this morning, also Brother Silas with four wagons. I took a cup of tea at Brother Haven's and another and another at Sister Dove's. Got a little salaratus from Brother Haven and a little salt from another brother.

Thurs. [October] 9: Many of the brethren went to the fort to buy provisions, etc. I went and sold my watch for thirteen dollars. I bought from the fort commissariat 20 pounds of biscuit at 15 cents, twelve pounds of bacon at 15 cents and 3 pounds of rice at 17 cents and so on.

Tues. [October] 14: Traveled about 20 miles, baited about halfway, on the Platte River and

camped on that river just after the road passes through a series of hills. Wagon company just before us all day. I was unwell today. My legs were swelled, also my hands, and I seemed very short of breath. Zilpah pulled the cart with me nearly all day. Heavy road in the morning. Good in the afternoon.

Fri. [October] 17: Traveled about 5 miles and camped on Deer Creek. Washing done. Luggage reduced. Brother Scullthorpe being in advance stayed with Captain Hodgett's company. Owing to the growing weakness of emigrants and teams, the baggage including bedding and cooking utensils, was reduced to 10 pounds per head, children under 8 years, 5 pounds. Good blankets and other bedding and clothing were burned as they could not be carried further, though needed more badly than ever, for there was yet 400 miles of winter to go through.

Sat. [October] 18: Cool, fine day. Baited on creek. I was nearly half a mile behind. Made 17 miles. Camped on river. Good road before dinner, sandy and uneven after. Tamar at night took her rations with her mother. No cows killed tonight because the guard was reluctant to turn out.

Fri. [October] 31: Windy morning. Fine afternoon. Baited about 5 miles. Afternoon met Elder C. H. Wheelock, Daniel W. Jones and David Garr coming to meet the companies. Elder Wheelock said that he thought of sending me to captain Hunt's wagon company. About dark arrived at Greasewood Creek, where we found Elders G. D. Grant, Charles Decker, C G. Webb, R. T. Burton and other Brethren from the valley with six wagons laden with flour and other things, who had come to the assistance of the belated emigrants. This was a time of joy. Several of the brethren came a mile or two to meet us and helped to pull some of the carts. Here some stockings, boots and other clothing were distributed among the emigrants, also a few onions, which were highly prized, and a pound of flour ration was served out. This was the beginning of better days as to food and assistance, but the cold grew more severe and was intense much of the way.