

The Washington Historical Quarterly

CROSSING THE PLAINS*

At this late day it seems strange that any man in his right mind, who owned a good home in or near Princeton, Illinois, should leave it to encounter all the dangers, hardships and privations of a five-months' journey, when every day brought something of annoyance, of anxiety, and when the journey was ended he had to begin life anew among strangers where the conditions were altogether different from what he had always been accustomed.

Princeton is on a level plain surrounded by level plains a hundred miles in every direction from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. In the early days there were groves all over that region of oak, ash, maple, walnut, hickory, butternut, elm, wild plum and many other deciduous trees, with but few evergreens, though I can still remember the scent of the red cedar which was quite common and of no more value than the other woods. Little streams and larger rivers traversed the country bordered by trees and shrubbery of many kinds. Wild plums, grapes, crabapples, paw-paws and nuts of many varieties were abundant in their season. The lands were rich and crops abundant with no droughts nor plagues of grasshoppers or other insects that in later years broke the hearts of the farmers of the Middle West.

The dark side of the picture was the prevalence of malarial diseases and lack of means to get the crops to market. The level lands, in the springtime, were covered with water, the drainage was poor and the hot sun soon covered vast areas with stagnant

*NOTE:—The paper following, giving an account of the trip across "The Plains," was prepared for my children and grandchildren, who have long been urging me to do this work that they might have a permanent record of the experience of their parents and grandparents in that arduous undertaking. Ours was "Bethel Company," and it may also properly be called a "Seattle Company," for more than half its members came to this city to live not long after their crossing and most of those have died here. Only three members of the original party survive and all live in Seattle. These are Mrs. Susie Mercer Graham, Mrs. Alice Mercer Bagley and the writer.—Clarence B. Bagley.

ponds. Ague, (chills and fever) was almost universal, and in those days nearly every summer, cholera was prevalent as no efforts were made to prevent its spread; in fact no one knew it could be kept from spreading all over the land.

Railroads had only just begun construction—a short line ran out of Chicago a few miles toward the Northwest; a short canal from La Salle had been cut to Chicago. Wheat was twenty-five cents to fifty cents a bushel, oats ten to twenty-five cents, corn five cents, a good cow ten to fifteen dollars, a good horse fifty to sixty dollars, a man's day wage fifty cents and for a good harvester seventy-five cents. In the summer one could take a load of wheat to Chicago and get a better price but it took a week for the round trip. About all a healthy man could do was to make a bare living with the torrid heat in summer and arctic cold in the winter.

To escape these almost intolerable conditions was the impelling motive for most of those who then went to Oregon.

Father had a sufficient reason, however, for his migration.

In the spring of 1850 father and mother and I went by the Great Lakes to Erie, in Pennsylvania, thence by canal to Conneautville within a few miles from the Whipples, Bagleys, Smiths, Fishes, Carrs, Amidons and a large number of families who were more or less intermarried. Leaving mother and me with "Grandma Whipple" father and Uncle Whipple went by way of Pittsburg to Washington and Baltimore. Father's chief errand was to attend the Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. During its session, the matter of establishing that Church in Oregon was canvassed and a determination on father's part to become a "Missionary" was fairly settled but not until the following year, 1851, were the necessary arrangements made between him and the national organization of that Church that made it possible for him to begin preparations for the momentous departure, which went on carefully for months.

During this period others had also decided on going to Oregon. From those who had returned from California and Oregon intending emigrants had the benefit of good and intelligent counsel and instructions for their guidance on the way. They learned the character of vehicles required and the kind of foodstuffs best suited for the trip. What was equally important, they were told that sentiment must give way to prosaic necessity. Books, keepsakes,

household furniture and bedding must be kept down to the minimum. It was emphasized that nothing that would not be worth a "dollar a pound" when it reached Oregon should be taken. The soundness of this advice became apparent, months later, when the grazing for the animals became scanty and the ribs of the draft animals stuck out like hoops on a barrel. We did not need to lighten our loads by throwing away cumbersome and heavy articles, and not an animal in our train was lost on the trip except one horse belonging to Aaron Mercer that died from snakebite or eating some poisonous food.

Another reason for getting along so well with our stock I have always attributed to the fact that we did not travel on Sundays or overdrive at any time unless it was absolutely necessary on account of food or water for them at the end of the usual drive. I have not been a rigid observer of the Sabbath on religious grounds but I have always believed human beings, work animals and even machinery needed frequent and regular periods of rest. When I carried on a large printing business it was my rule not to have work done on Sundays except in rare instances when a lack of employees made it necessary for those in the office to work longer hours than usual.

Father bought two good mules for \$120; two good horses for \$120, and two choice mares for \$125. One wagon cost him \$60 and a coach with springs at \$125. The mules drew the wagon and the four horses drew the coach. The outfit cost him about \$550 and when he got to Oregon he sold it for more than \$1,000, thus realizing profit enough to pay the other expenses of the trip across the plains. The coach was used for many years as a stage carrying passengers and mails. The reverse of this glowing picture was when we had to pay \$100 for a cow, \$60 for a stove that had lost some of its more unimportant parts, in Salem, soon after our arrival. Also that winter, which was quite severe, we had to pay four dollars per bushel for potatoes and for flour \$25 per barrel.

All through the upper Mississippi Valley the roads were impassable in those days after the frost left the ground until the earth had "settled". We held back the time of starting until the roads about Princeton were fairly good but the trip from that place through Illinois and Iowa to Council Bluffs or Kanessville took us from April 20th to May 22d. The roads were horrible. A wagon

would settle down to the hubs in the mud, then extra teams would be hitched to it and the men would use rails or poles cut for the purpose and pry it out, perhaps having to do the same with the next one, though if we were where we could get out of the road on the grass the horse and wagons could secure fairly good footing. In the timber there was no escape; but there was but little timber along the road.

We crossed the Mississippi River not far from Davenport, on a horse ferry boat. In those days there was a sort of treadmill attachment in common use whereby a horse would turn a revolving platform from which power was transmitted to the motive power of a boat, threshing machine or other machinery.

Our route lay through Oskaloosa and Des Moines in Iowa, and we reached the Missouri River on May 22, 1852, at or just below the old Mormon town of Kaneshville. On the opposite banks of the river were hills then termed Council Bluffs, I believe from the fact that it had often happened that treaties and "councils" with the Indians had been made there.

It took us all day to cross as there were many other wagons to be taken over and all of ours did not have the right of way at the same time. My recollection is that this ferryboat was operated by steam.

We were now at the westerly limit of civilization. On the east bank of the river were a few small trading villages but on the westerly bank the Indian country began. There were thousands of Indians camping on the river bottom and on the bluffs where Omaha now stands. We waited here over one day, Sunday, May 23, 1852, to get all ready for our real start for Oregon.

The migration of 1852 was the heaviest of any to Oregon and California. It was then and always has been estimated that it reached fully 50,000. On all our part of the trip we had no fear of the Indians except to protect ourselves from the pilfering of articles about camp and from stealing our horses at night.

Among Father Mercer's papers I found, several years ago, his original list of the night patrol of sentries that went on guard each night with the stock as most of the time they had to be taken quite a distance from camp in order that they might have sufficient grass to feed upon. This was a serious handicap all along the

route and became much worse after the migration on the south of the Platte crossed over to the north side, somewhere near Fort Laramie, I believe.

Bethel Company as it started from Princeton, consisted of the following:

Thomas and Nancy Mercer and daughters Mary, Eliza, Susie and Alice. Mr. Mercer in the fall of 1852 came to Seattle and selected his Donation Claim that extended from what is now Highland Drive to Mercer Street and from First Avenue North to Lake Union. Mercer Street, Mercer Island and Mercer Slough all bear the family name.

Daniel and Susannah Bagley and son Clarence whose activities have been presented in other publications.

Dexter Horton and wife and daughter Rebecca. Mr. Horton achieved a fortune in merchandising here and helped to found the great banking institution that bears his name.

Aaron Mercer and wife. Mrs. Mercer died soon after reaching Oregon and he married again. In the early 'sixties they came here to live.

William H. Shoudy, brother of Mrs. Horton. He married in Oregon and about 1863 they came here to live, he going into the store as a clerk for Mr. Horton. Several years later he and Henry A. Atkins bought out the store. In 1886, Mr. Shoudy was elected Mayor of this City. John A. Shoudy, another brother, was the founder of Ellensburg.

John Pike. Mrs. Pike and son Harvey later joined Mr. Pike and they lived for many years in Seattle. He was an architect and builder. The plans and specifications of the first University building were his work. He also did much carpentry work on that structure. Pike Street bears his name. The son Harvey took a claim that included the land between Lakes Washington and Union and he undertook to cut the first canal, using pick and shovel and a wheelbarrow.

John Rosnacle, a blacksmith, who took care of shoeing the horses and mending the wagons. Sometime in the 'seventies he came to Seattle, bought him a home in South Seattle and many years later died there.

William F. West and Jane, his wife and my mother's sister. They had a son born to them at old Fort Boise on the Snake River

near the mouth of Boise River. The boy was named Fort Boise in recognition of the place of his birth. Dr. Ossian J. West and Mrs. Myra Ingraham, children of Mr. and Mrs. West, and born in Oregon, now live in Seattle.

Edna Whipple, my mother's sister, who was of our immediate party and who became the wife of George F. Colbert not long after reaching the Willamette Valley.

Four brothers Warren, named Frank, George, Phinneas and Daniel, all of whom settled on the Columbia River and later engaged in the salmon industry and became quite wealthy.

Ashby West, a young Englishman, a brother of William F. West, and who always lived with them while on the farm near Jefferson and later in that town.

Daniel Drake, who drove our team into Oregon, but of whom I remember little.

Prior to our reaching the Missouri River a family, named Gould, consisting of husband and wife and grown son, joined our company. Mrs. Gould died of cholera on the Platte River, the only death in our party.

Giles Hunter, who became a friend of the family and with whom we kept up correspondence for ten or twelve years. The last time we met him was in San Francisco in 1864.

Isaac Depew, S. Minard, A. P. Turner, George Taylor, Albert Long and Daniel Truett joined the company somewhere on the trip. The latter came through to Oregon with us. The others I do not remember.

At Council Bluffs, Thomas Mercer was elected captain of the company and directed its movements across the plains. It was a necessary custom to select a captain of each party, who directed the movements of the train about stopping for the night and starting in the morning, about "Laying over," on Sunday or any other time it was thought best. Otherwise there would have been frequent disputes and disagreements about the movements of the company. The trip was one to bring out all the good qualities and the bad ones, as well, but I do not remember any serious disputes along the whole of the route.

After resting over one day, we made our real start "across the

plains" on the 24th of May, 1852. This proved to be a comparatively early start as thousands came after us. We found better grazing in consequence and less dust, no small item in an alkaline country. About twenty miles out we had to cross a narrow, deep sluggish stream, called The Elkhorn. Here we had our only dispute with the Indians. A band of Pawnees had constructed of rushes a floating pontoon or bridge that would hold up a wagon and team. They demanded for each team and wagon five dollars. This our people felt was exorbitant and they offered to pay one dollar instead which in turn was refused. Our men got out their rifles and told the Indians that it meant a fight unless the lower offer was accepted. After a lot of loud talk matters quieted down and the Indians agreed upon the dollar and we came on our way.

All through May and June we drove on up the Platte and its tributaries. For hundreds of miles the road was so level that but for the Platte running eastward no one could have told we were gradually ascending toward the Rocky Mountains. In one stretch of two hundred miles we saw but one lone tree, a Balm of Gilead on an island in the river. Our fuel was called "buffalo chips", though I am sure that much of it was from the cattle that had preceded us, instead of buffalo. That year the migration was so large and close together that the buffalo were frightened away from our vicinity and we never saw one on the trip.

At that time there were millions of them roaming over a vast region between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains. They had mostly disappeared west of that range. It is one of the tragedies of the west that they should have been so remorselessly slaughtered, mostly for their horns and hides. Until the Union Pacific Railroad was constructed no great inroads upon their numbers had been made but, with the repeating rifle and ease of access to the country, it was not long before they began to disappear from much of the region where they had been so numerous. About 1876, they had been mostly killed off so that the problem of food for the Indians had become a serious one. In my childhood, as father and mother drove across the broad Illinois prairies without regard to roads, deep paths were common, almost like trenches from twelve to eighteen inches deep. Father told me these were buffalo trails made many years before when immense herds of those animals frequented the great plains on the east side of the Mississippi. Even at that time deer, wild turkeys and wolves were plentiful.

On the plains we saw lots of antelopes, wolves, prairie dogs and rattlesnakes, the latter of several varieties. In the mountain regions the latter were longer and not so thick through the middle as those common in Illinois and they were much more active. On the west side of the Rockies, scorpions became plentiful and much care had to be exercised in shaking one's clothing and shoes before putting them on in the morning. I saw mother shake one big one out of her stocking one morning.

Our drinking water was taken out of the Platte River. We had been forewarned against using water from springs along the bank of that stream because of the presence of alkali and other mineral salts that were poisonous. The river was from the distant mountains and was pure except for the silt it carried in solution. One could not see through a glassful of it when first taken from the stream. If we had time we could stir a teacup full of cornmeal in a bucketful and let it settle fifteen or twenty minutes when it became reasonably clear and the bottom of the bucket would be covered with half an inch of mud. If we did not have time we drank it plain, mud and all. It was a common saying that while crossing the plains every one had to eat a peck of dirt. We also had provided a large quantity of acetic acid and quite often a lemonade was made from it that served to make the water more palatable.

We carried "reflectors" and "bakeovens" to bake our bread in and for other cooking purposes. The latter were big iron pots from twelve to twenty-four inches across the top, which was flat with turned-up edges, thus making a big iron plate. The oven was set on a bed of coals and coals heaped on its top and it did not take long to bake the bread which was wonderfully sweet and palatable. Of course we did not long have butter after leaving Iowa but we had meat in plenty and made plenty of gravy. I do not remember that any shortage of food occurred at any time. Also, we had no difficulty in getting flour from other trains which had started with more than they needed or from families that had lost so many of its members that those remaining had to sell it or throw it away.

The Platte River was and is a remarkable stream. Rising in the Rocky Mountains, of course the small streams are rapid and run through gorges and carry immense quantities of soil with them.

When we got to the upper reaches of the stream the route was rough and at times the scenery was wild and beautiful, especially to us who had never seen a real mountain. When it becomes a large stream the adjacent ground is comparatively level and it flows slowly over a shifting bottom, quite often quicksand. Where we first saw it and for hundreds of miles as we followed its banks the water was shallow and a mile or more across. The men often waded across, and one time they let me go along and I also had no difficulty in getting across.

For hundreds of miles we saw a constant procession of wagons on the south bank as well as on our own north side. We came to recognize some of the trains on the further side and of course on our own side. Years later I often heard father addressed by someone in Oregon who told of meeting our train on the Platte or on the Snake River. Along the Platte the most notable feature of natural scenery was "Chimney Rock", that was shaped like an immense circular chimney set on a hill. It was on the south side of the river, a few miles away from it. Its formation was of a soft rock or indurated clay that in that arid climate was subject to slight erosion. It has been an object of frequent note for one hundred years, and in the years since we saw it has shown but little change in shape or height.

We forded several streams that were so deep that blocks were put under the beds of the wagons so that the water would not damage articles in them. One of the large branches of the Platte, Loup Fork, was the most notable of these. It was necessary to drive very rapidly to avoid sinking in the quicksands all the way across, yet the wagons rattled and jolted as though the bottom was broken rock instead of sand. It greatly excited my curiosity at the time and I never have understood the peculiar formation that would let a wagon or animal settle in it and soon engulf it and yet seem like rock when driven across. We took the precaution to have our horses drink all the water they would before driving into the stream that they might not try to stop on the way across. All little details of our every day life had to be carefully thought out to avoid unnecessary delays and difficulties.

After leaving Iowa the first white settlement we saw was at Fort Laramie. We did not visit the place as it was on the south side of the river, and our supplies were still plentiful. This station

was a notable one and afterward became an outlying post of the United States Army. It was on the easterly slope of the Black Hills, near their foot, at the junction of Laramie Fork with the Platte and between the two streams, about five hundred miles west of Council Bluffs and about one hundred miles west of Chimney Rock.

The Black Hills are a spur of the Rocky Mountains and they gave us our first experience of hill and mountain travel. In fact they were higher by far than any land thousands of the emigrants had ever seen. Their dark blue appearance was the same as our own mountains but were new to those who gave them their name. A scrubby growth of evergreens covered them, among the rest red cedar, and here we had unlimited supplies of wood for fuel for the first time since leaving Iowa. The scent of the wood of a cedar pencil often recalls the campfires of my childhood on the road to Oregon.

In this region was about the first time we had use for the brakes on our wagons. All of them had been fitted out with chains fastened about one-third of their length securely to the wagon box, and when the brake was used the longer end was passed between the spokes and securely fastened by a hook or toggle joint thus preventing the wheel from turning. We had them on both sides of our wagons but not often had to use more than one at a time.

removing?

From Fort Laramie to the 'South Pass' the road was full of interest and most of the time quite rough. When we reached the North Fork of the Platte we traveled up it to a beautiful affluent called the Sweetwater. At times this stream passed through rocky defiles and became deep and turbulent. On its banks was and is "Independence Rock", a mass of rock lying detached and covering, as I remember about ten acres. It was about 900 feet long and perhaps 100 feet high and its top was accessible only in a few places. It was the great directory of those who had gone that way for many years and had thousands of names marked on it, some in chalk, some and mostly in tar and here and there one chisled in the rock. I am told that many of these are still legible after seventy to a hundred years of exposure to wind and weather.

There were nine crossings of the Sweetwater, by which time it became a small stream, little more than a rivulet.

July 4th, 1852, we reached the "South Pass", which is still

considered the most favorable of any in the whole range for a wagon road although the "Oregon Short Line" crosses the range about thirty miles further south. Here we had our first experience of finding beautiful spring flowers all about and only a few feet away big snow banks many feet deep. I have not recently consulted reference books but I believe the pass is about 7,000 feet above sea level. Here, within a few feet of each other, little rivulets started for the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean.

For many days the heat was excessive while the sun shone but at night we could not keep warm as water froze in our buckets. I went barefoot most of the time and I still remember how cold my little feet became as we started on the road in the early mornings.

Soon after leaving the Pass father became seriously ill with "mountain fever," which was common in that region. My recollection is that we had to remain in camp for several days to let him recover so that it was safe for him to travel.

We had now reached 'OREGON.' Old Oregon as we now call it. At that time the Territory of Oregon reached from the Pacific Ocean to the summit of the Rocky Mountains and from British Columbia to California. Since then Oregon, Washington, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming have been formed out of it.

Heretofore each day had brought to the workers of the company long hours and tiresome nights and days but they had been accustomed to similar work all their lives and thought but little of it, but from that time on the hard work began. Long drives had to be made from one watering place to another. Most of the good water was in the streams that flowed down from the mountains, the rest of it was full of minerals of many kinds. Mountains had to be crossed between these streams. Little and often no grass was found for long distances. Soil, volcanic ash, that was light as thistle down filled the air at the least disturbance and there was no escaping it. If the leading wagon was far enough to escape the dust of some other train all the rest of our own had to endure it hour after hour. The road ahead would look perfectly level and smooth but the wagons sank into it oftentimes to the hubs.

Going westward we forded a number of beautiful streams, often having to block up the beds, but when Green River was

reached we had to pay five dollars a wagon to the Mormons who owned the ferry and who were glad to levy tribute from the Gentiles. About the middle of July we reached "Soda Springs", a region full of all sorts of strange things. In fact it seemed to our people just one remove from Tophet. Boiling springs were everywhere. Sulphur springs, soda springs, soap springs—occasionally a spring of good, cold water. At this place "Steamboat Spring" was the most notable. We had heard of it before leaving home and often on the way across. I got down into it when the water was not flowing and found it little larger than my body. It would be quiet for a time, then the water would begin to flow, gradually increasing in volume and power until it would make a roaring noise similar to the exhaust of a high-power steamboat that could be heard a half mile, or even a mile if the breeze should be in the right direction. It was on the bank of Bear River, and within one hundred feet of it was one cold spring and not far from that another so hot that one could not hold one's hand in it.

The soda springs were very numerous and seemed to spring out of solid rock, but the fact was the waters were so heavily mineralized that they gradually formed mounds, conical in shape, around them. Most of these springs were intermittent, but there was no regularity of time between the eruptions of water. Some of them were aerated as they came out and by mixing in some acetic acid and sugar were quite palatable to most folks. Conditions similar to these were so common for two or three hundred miles along the road that they soon lost their novelty.

A few miles beyond these springs, coming westward, the roads to California and Oregon separated, the latter turning sharply to the right and northward. Going over a range of mountains, we reached the valley of the Port Neuf which stream empties into the Snake River about fifteen miles below Fort Hall.

It is my recollection that as we drove down this valley newly made graves became so frequent that Susie and I agreed to count them, she taking one side of the road and I the other. Our count reached one hundred twenty for the day. All these were in sight of the road and doubtless there were many we did not see. Most of these deaths were caused by cholera, which by this time was making frightful inroads upon the emigrants. Careful consideration and comparison of figures made then and later generally

agreed that fully five thousand lost their lives on the plains that year from a total of fifty thousand going to California and Oregon.

Father and Father Mercer had been accustomed to treat sufferers from this epidemic for years in Illinois. A medicine compounded of a lot of barks and roots, all full of fire and bitterness, was generally used and if taken early after an attack was quite generally a cure for it. They had made up large quantities of the medicine before leaving Princeton and when cholera became a constant visitor they were called upon night and day to attend those suffering from it. Those who could do so paid something but no one was refused and the no-paying outnumbered the others by far; yet both of them received considerable money that served to help pay expenses. For years afterward it was not uncommon for someone to exclaim, "Hello, Doctor," to father and then explain where some sick person had received treatment.

So far as I have ever known, there was only one diary kept of our trip, and that by Aunt Edna Whipple. After her death I wrote to her daughter near Brownsville, Oregon, about it and received reply that she had never seen it; therefore I have no doubt Aunt destroyed it. For this reason I have no sure knowledge of the dates of reaching different points except in a few instances. However I am sure we reached Fort Hall about the 20th of July.

This was one of the notable features of interest along the route. Its walls were of "adobes" or sundried bricks with roof of poles covered with sod. An American trader (Wyeth) built it in 1834 but his trading ventures in Oregon were unsuccessful and in a year or so he sold out to the Hudson's Bay Company who continued to occupy it for a third of a century.

At this point the evidences of the hardships, misfortunes, and general demoralization that had nearly overwhelmed a large part of the migration became painfully visible. Death of stock, breakdown of wagons, families who had lost the father and often the mother, all combined in necessity to lessen the loads. Wagons were cut down to carts; oxen and cows were yoked together and not unusual was the sight of an ox and a horse, both so poor they could hardly put one foot before the other, fastened together and drawing a scanty-load that could almost have been transported in a wheelbarrow. I heard it said at that time that the wagons, yokes, furniture, crockery, books, ironware, looking glasses and impedimenta of all

kinds covered a space of ten acres at least. This was often confirmed in later years. Any of this stuff was free to anyone who wished to take it. If one found a better wagon than the one he was using, he drove away with it leaving his own for the next one. Our people bought a few supplies here and drove on. Our route from that point was almost the same that is now covered by the Oregon Short Line through Idaho.

We passed American Falls and went on down the south side of the Snake River some distance below Salmon Falls. At the latter place we got our first salmon. This was a notable point for the catching of these fish by the Indians who came there from many miles in every direction to catch and dry the salmon for their winter's food. All sorts of trades were made for the fish. The Indians had no use for money but were glad to exchange for clothing and particularly for ammunition. The emigrants were strangely thoughtless or indifferent in thus supplying the Indians with ammunition, and doubtless many white men and women were killed by the Indians with the bullets white men gave them at this place. Father took the shirt off his back in exchange for a big fish and I cannot now remember of ever in my life enjoying food with a greater relish.

Below American Falls the Snake River flows in a deep canyon most of the way until it reaches the Columbia. There was no possibility of driving along its banks. The road followed along the bluffs from 500 to 800 feet above the stream. The horses were watered by leading them down long, steep paths to the river and the water for cooking and camp purposes was painfully carried up the same paths.

Our company decided to cross to the north side of the stream and at a point that later became known as "Payne's Ferry", we ferried over in our wagon beds that had been made with such close joints that a good packing with candle wicking and fragments of clothing made them so nearly water tight that by putting two of them together and laying the tongues and other poles across they held up quite a load. The men stripped entirely naked and directed the horses across and also towed the improvised boats as well. It was dangerous and slow process but all hands had become accustomed to meet difficulties and dangers bravely and efficiently.

From there we drove across the highlands to the Boise River,

going down the hill into the valley at a point that is now well within the limits of Boise. I visited my old friend, Christopher W. Moore, in 1893, at that city, and from his beautiful home in the outskirts he pointed out to me the place where we camped for the night. His train came to Oregon the year we did and they took the same route from Fort Hall. He also confirmed my childhood's recollection of places and events along our route. At the time I was there several irrigation projects had been carried out or were well under way and now the highlands that were mostly covered with sagebrush are producing the finest crops in the world. Boise is about 2500 feet above the sea and its winters are cold but alfalfa grows luxuriantly and they cut three crops in a season.

Here we had our one considerable excitement on account of Indians. As I have said earlier, night watches were kept all along the route. This night Daniel Warren was one of the guards. It was the custom to keep the animals picketed with long ropes so they might readily get their feed but could not stray. Sometime during the night Dan saw Father Mercer's Tib moving in a direction that aroused his suspicion and he soon saw that she was following her rope. He was armed with a revolver of a kind known as "Allen's Pepper Boxes," and he immediately began firing in the direction of the further end of the rope. He heard the whiz of an arrow as the Indian who was leading the mare dropped the rope and ran. Of course the firing and outcry aroused the camp and a considerable uproar ensued. However, when it was found the animals were all safe and no damage done, matters soon quieted down.

Tib was a valuable animal and the Indians had several times tried to trade for her. Father Mercer brought her to Seattle and she gave him valuable service for many years. I believe she was thirty years old when she died.

Our route continued down the valley of the Boise to old Fort Boise which was on the bank of Snake River near the mouth of the Boise. Here we were delayed several days by the advent of a son born to my Aunt Jane (Mrs. West) on the 15th of August.

I believe we were ferried across the river here by men engaged in that business. In the valleys of the Malheur, Burnt and Powder Rivers we found excellent feed for our horses, but the crossing over of high hills or mountains between the streams made it very hard on the animals and everybody else as all who could possibly

do so had to walk uphill and down as well. The crossing of the Blue Mountains was particularly difficult as most of the road was rough and steep. In going down into the Grand Ronde Valley the men doublelocked the wheels and tied ropes to the tops of the wagons and several men walked along on the upper side of the road and by main strength kept the wagons from upsetting.

In the Grand Ronde Valley was an Indian Reservation where the natives had begun to live like white men. They were raising vegetables and other crops and here we got our first new potatoes and garden vegetables.

We continued on down the valley of the Umatilla and on the south side of the Columbia to The Dalles, crossing the John Day's and Descuttis Rivers, most of the time in sight of the Columbia but so far up on the hills that we rarely could get down to it.

We reached The Dalles on September 3d, 1852. Here we reached civilization. The United States army had a regimental post here; missionaries had established stations; several stores well stocked with goods suitable for white men's trade as well as the Indian. Altogether it was a considerable frontier town.

From The Dalles to the Upper Cascades our wagons and their contents were taken down in "bateaux", a type of boat that had long been in use on the rivers of the Middle West and on the big streams west of the Rockies. The wagons had to be taken to pieces for the trip. Our horses were taken down the river on a fairly good trail by the single men of the party.

At the Cascades there was a tramroad with wooden rails on which small cars were drawn by horses and many of the emigrants had their wagons and goods taken down below the Falls in these cars but it is my recollection that our people set up their wagons and drove down, thus saving considerable expense.

We camped not far from the river and also very near to the point where the main landing for the steamboats plying the river was later established. Here Mrs. Nancy Mercer was taken ill and as it was apparent she might not be able to move soon most of us went on down the river, leaving Mr. Mercer and family to follow, but her illness soon became serious and within a few days she died and was buried there.

The rest of us hired a man named Chenoweth to take us down the big river to the mouth of the "Big Sandy."

Chenoweth later became a Judge in Washington Territory. He then operated a big scow that carried our wagons and goods, but our horses again were taken down along the bank of the Columbia. In the middle of the scow was a big pile of sand and rocks and on this we built a fire and cooked as we slowly floated down the river.

We landed at the mouth of the "Big Sandy", a stream that flows into the Columbia River east of Portland some twenty or twenty-five miles. The "base line" on which the Government surveys of Oregon and Washington are founded runs directly east from Portland and intersects the Columbia at the mouth of the Sandy. I imagine this was intentional on the part of the surveyor at the time the line was fixed.

Here we again hitched our horses to the wagons and started on the last miles of our long, long trip. We camped on the bank of the Clackamas the first night at Cason's farm, a few miles below Oregon City. As we passed through the latter place we climbed a high bluff as the road then ran over a big hill; now it goes along the bank of the Willamette. That night we camped on a little prairie on the bank of Pudding River. The next night on or near Howell Prairie northeast of Salem, and on September 17th, 1852, we considered our journey ended as we reached the home of "Uncle Jesse Parish" near Parish's Gap. There is a range of hills between the valleys of Mill Creek and the Santiam River and a low point called the Gap was used for many years as the main road to the south. It is about four miles from the little town of Jefferson. Uncle West immediately settled on vacant land adjoining the Parish farm and lived there for a great many years.

Next day father went to Salem and secured the rental of a small house not far from the bank of the Willamette and about the same distance from the north branch of Mill Creek. Uncle Ossian and Aunt Lucie Carr owned a home a couple of blocks from that house for many years; in fact until they came to Seattle, finally, to live.

We remained in this house but a short time, as Wiley Chapman, who had come to Oregon in 1847 and already had a large home in Salem, made arrangements with father and mother to move into it and have Rhoda and Memory live with us that winter while he and Will and Ed went to the mines in Southern Oregon.

Here began the intimacy between Mem and me that continued while he lived. He was the nearest to a brother of anyone of my boyhood playmates. The following summer father built a small home for us where we lived until 1856 when we moved out into the hills south of Salem about six miles. Here we planted a big orchard and gradually acquired a good herd of cows, several horses and quite a farm. Father bought the farm adjoining owned by John Dodge, who moved over to Mimi Prairie near Olympia. This place had been taken as a Donation Claim by Aaron Mercer who lived on it about a year and then sold out to Dodge.

We lived there until we came to Seattle in 1860.

Father established several churches in different parts of the Territory, but after about two years, differences arose between the churches of the Northern and Southern States, the governing body was split and the result was that the yearly allowance to father was not paid and he had to depend upon his own exertions to make a living. He entered the service of the American Tract Society and traveled over Oregon selling and distributing their books and publications. In 1859, he came over to the Sound on that mission and to Seattle where he found Mr. Mercer and Mr. Horton established and he was so well pleased with this region that he decided to come here to live if mother found it suitable for her to live in. She was never very strong and it was feared the climate might not agree with her.

We came over in a buggy drawn by two horses and were nearly two weeks on the way as we had lots of friends along the route where we visited and father was urged to preach at several places.

Ours was the first family to come to Seattle by land in our own vehicle as the road from Puyallup to White River was just being opened as we drove over it; in fact at one place the workmen had to remove a few logs out of the road to let us pass through.

CLARENCE B. BAGLEY