

IN A PRAIRIE SCHOONER, 1878

Introduction

Although the completion of the Union and Central Pacific Railroads in 1869 made possible thereafter a journey by train and boat from the East or the Middle West to Washington Territory, not a few emigrants from the "states" made the journey overland by wagon in the seventies and early eighties. The Walla Walla newspapers of the decade of the seventies contain many references to overland parties of emigrants that passed through Walla Walla en route to the Palouse and Spokane regions. But after the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad, in 1883, it is likely that the number of emigrants who traveled in this way diminished greatly year by year. At least they were greatly outnumbered by those who adopted the more convenient mode of traveling by train.

The document which follows is a diary of a trip overland from Wisconsin to Dayton, Washington Territory, in 1878, the year of the Bannock Indian uprising. Many journals of trips over the Oregon Trail in the forties and fifties have been published—a few in the *Washington* and *Oregon Historical Quartermies* and several in the *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association*. Very little attention has been paid, however, to the later period of immigration, when conditions of travel had changed considerably and some of the hardships which had characterized the earlier period had disappeared. The journal of Mrs. Ide is offered as a contribution to the study of the later period of migration to the Pacific Northwest.

One who studies this journal in comparison with those of the forties and fifties will observe several differences. In the late seventies the ox-team had given way to horse—or mule-teams, the journey required less time, the necessity for carrying large quantities of food no longer existed, the wagons were lightly loaded, and few or no loose cattle were driven overland. In fact, by this time stockmen of the Northwest were driving large herds of cattle across the Rocky Mountains to the markets of the Middle West and of the East. Nevertheless a journey overland by team in the late seventies was not exactly a pleasure trip. There were still hardships in plenty to be endured. The

Indian menace was not entirely removed; bad weather and bad roads had to be contended with; fuel, water, and forage were sometimes difficult to get; horses and mules gave out; and the travelers were still exposed to disease and still subject to numerous accidents.

All of the persons in the party whose overland journey is herein described came from Mondovi, a small town in Buffalo County, in the western part of Wisconsin. Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Ide subsequently gave the name of Mondovi to a town in Lincoln County, Washington.

The route followed by this party led from Mondovi across the southeast corner of Minnesota and through the state of Iowa into Nebraska. Here the party struck the route of the old Oregon Trail and followed it (in a general way) through Nebraska, southern Wyoming, northeastern Utah, southern Idaho, and northeastern Oregon, into the valley of the Touchet River, Columbia County, Washington Territory. The diary ends with the arrival of the party at Dayton. So accurately has Mrs. Ide described the route of travel that one can easily retrace it on a modern map.

Mrs. Edith Gifford, widow of John Gifford, and a member of the overland party, now lives in Spokane. From her the writer recently obtained some information regarding the members of the party. The following are dead: Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Gifford, Katie Gifford, John Gifford, Gifford Christian, Henry Hunter, Frank Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Ide, Clarence W. Ide, Ernest W. Ide, George L. Ide, Mr. and Mrs. James Hunter, Cushman Hunter, Lena Hunter, Elma Hunter, Lucinda Hessler, and Will Allen. Charles Gifford lives in Kiesling, Washington. Chester Gifford and Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Christian live in Spokane. Mrs. Henry Hunter, Anna Hunter, Earle Hunter, Lelia Hunter, George Baker, Everett Eager, Will Eager, Hattie Eager, and Ed Eager live in the Walla Walla country. Mr. and Mrs. Luther Eager and James Eager live in Western Washington. Mrs. Gifford believes that George Hunter and Nellie Eager are now living in Idaho, and that Mason Hunter lives in Portland, Oregon. She is uncertain of the whereabouts of Mr. Gardner and of F. Matherson.

Mr. and Mrs. John Gifford lived for some time in Whitman County. They then moved to Lincoln County, and in recent years have lived in Spokane County. Mr. Gifford became a prominent member of the Masonic Lodge of Washington and in

1921 was elected Grand Master. He was elected clerk of Spokane County in 1920 and was serving in that capacity when he died in May, 1926, at the age of sixty-nine.

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Christian, who are among the survivors of the party, are now residents of Spokane. Mrs. Christian is a sister of John Gifford. Mr. Christian took a homestead at Latah after reaching Washington Territory. He moved to Spokane in 1884, where, with the exception of two years, he has since lived. During the years 1886-1887 he conducted a general merchandise store in Mondovi, Washington. In a recent conversation with the writer Mr. Christian recalled the fact that in 1885 he had freighted ore from the Old Dominion mine of Spokane Falls for shipment.

One of the evidences of the close bond of affection which held together through life some of the families in this overland party may be seen in the Greenwood cemetery, at Spokane, Washington. Side by side are the graves of Mrs. Lucy A. Ide (1838-1903), Ernest W. Ide (1867-1903), Homer Gifford (1878-1921), Elihu B. Gifford (1830-1898), Catherine S. [Mrs. E. B.] Gifford (1835-1917), Mrs. Mary Hunter (1826-1906), and John Gifford (1857-1926).

Mrs. Lucy A. Ide, the diarist, and several members of her family were closely identified with the development of the Inland Empire. Mrs. Ide was much interested in social welfare and was for several years president of the home in Spokane for friendless children. She was a sister-in-law of the late John S. Cochran, who married her sister Cordeila. Alice Cochran, who is mentioned in the diary, is a niece of Mrs. Ide.

Clarence W. Ide, a son of Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Ide, went to Spokane County in 1879 and for several years engaged in farming there. In 1888, he was elected surveyor of Spokane County, and in 1892 he was appointed special agent of the General Land Office for the examination of surveys. He was elected in 1892 as a State Senator from the Fourth District, in Spokane County, and served in the State Legislature in the sessions of 1893 and 1895. He was subsequently United States Marshal for Washington, and still later was Collector of Customs at Port Townsend. When his term of service at Port Townsend was ended, he moved to Seattle and engaged in business. He died there several years ago.

George La Vergne Ide, another son of Mr. and Mrs. C. D.

Ide, was for several years Cashier in the United States Customs House in Seattle. He died in Seattle a few months ago.

Two brothers of Chester D. Ide—Fred and Daniel—came to Spokane after 1878 and both died in that city. Gilbert Ide, a son of Fred Ide, has been a resident of Colville, Washington, for several years. A daughter of Fred Ide, Victoria, married I. N. Peyton. Both Mr. and Mrs. Peyton are dead. Another daughter, Alice, married the late Judge Houghton. Daniel Ide left a son, Irwin, and two daughters, Alice and Lucy.

A typewritten copy of Mrs. Lucy A. [C. D.] Ide's diary was recently obtained by C. S. Kingston, vice president of the State Normal School at Cheney, from Wilson G. Ide, who lives in Seattle. This copy had been made by Ernest W. Ide from the original notes of his mother. Later it came into the possession of George La Vergne Ide, and was by him given to his son, Wilson G. Ide. It is doubtful whether Mrs. Ide's original notes are now in existence. From the manuscript obtained from Wilson G. Ide two additional copies of the diary were made. One of these is preserved in the library of the State Normal School at Cheney; the other has been submitted to the editor of this *Quarterly* for publication.

Spelling and pronunciation have been retained as they were found in the typewritten copy of the manuscript. A few foot-notes have been added, primarily for the purpose of helping the reader to trace on a modern map the route of the party in 1878.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. William S. Lewis, of Spokane, Washington, for assistance given me in collecting information for this introduction; to Mrs. Edith Gifford and to Mr. A. L. Christian, both of Spokane and both members of the party, for information regarding members of the party; and to C. S. Kingston, of Cheney, Washington, who has helped me in several ways.

J. ORIN OLIPHANT.

Mrs. Lucy A. Ide's Dairy

May 1. [1878].—Our company starts today from Mondovi,¹ upon our journey to Washington Territory; I am at my father's at Gilmanton:² shall start tomorrow and meet the train at Mr. Bailey's, where they camp tonight.

¹ A town in the northern part of Buffalo County, Wisconsin; population 1554. (Populations are from the Census of 1920.)

² A town located a few miles south of Mondovi; population, 805.

May 2.—Commenced my journey to the far, far west: the hardest of all is bidding farewell to your near and dear friends—many of whom I fear, I have seen for the last time on earth: we stopped at Mr. Bailey's to bid them good bye: she gave me some butter and a cheese, God bless her:—went as far as Henry's and stopped in front of his house beside a small stream and stake our tents for the first time: N. K. Fisher and wife came as far as this: here they turn back.

Following is a list of names composing our company:

Mr. & Mrs. E. B. Gifford, Charles Gifford, Katie Gifford, Chester Gifford, Mr. & Mrs. John Gifford, Mr. & Mrs. A. L. Christian, Gifford Christian, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hunter, Anna Hunter, Frank Hunter, Earle Hunter, Lelia Hunter, Mr. & Mrs. C. D. Ide, Clarence W. Ide, Ernest W. Ide, George LaVergne Ide, Lucinda Hessler, Mr. & Mrs. James Hunter, Cushman Hunter, Lena Hunter, Elma Hunter, George Hunter, Luella Hunter, Mason Hunter, Mr. & Mrs. Luther Eager, Nellie Eager, James Eager, Everett Eager, William Eager, Eddie Eager, Hattie Eager, Mr. Gardner, George Baker, Will Allen, F. Matherson.

May 3.—Everything being new and strange, but little sleep visited our eyes, last night:—we start as early as we can get under way, but as everything is new to us, it takes some time to get things together: here we part with Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, also Mr. Clafin came out to bid us good bye, and I sincerely hope it is all the old friends I shall have to part with: It is almost more than I can bear. May the Lord spare them and us to meet again—but who can tell—We go as far as Winona,³ today, and cross the ferry over the Mississippi River, and passed through the city. While the train was passing through the city, the people thought it was a circus and we occupants of the wagon, the wild animals I guess, as we did not feel very tame, as it is cold and snowy. We camp on the fair grounds and make quite a display.—The following members of our train showed the "white feather" by going to a hotel and getting supper and remaining there all night: Mr. & Mrs. Gifford, Henry Hunter's family, Mrs. A. L. Christian, Elma Egar, [Eager] Nellie Egar [Eager] and Katie Gifford. The rest of the camp remained in their respective tents and weathered the storm. Lucinda and I got the supper as well as we could, with half-frozen fingers; then tumbled ourselves into the wagon and covered up and soon were warm. By the

³ A town in Winona County, Minnesota; population, 19,143.

way, when we went to get some of the butter which was kindly given us, we found it had been stolen by some dog.

May 4.—It snows, it blows: but we try to make the best of it, and comfort ourselves with thinking over the old adage "a bad beginning makes a good ending." Our tents are very comfortable and so are our wagons.—We start as early as the company can get their things together and only travel five miles: we camp tonight in a gentleman's pasture: got our horses into the barn. We have a nice spring of water near us. This afternoon the change in the weather was quite noticeable: the sun came out brightly and the snow is nearly all gone.

May 5.—Sunday morning: it has cleared off very pleasant, indeed, but we stop over Sunday here, to get a good fresh start tomorrow.

May 6.—We start this morning in the rain; did not rain long. We went as far as Enterprise, a distance of 12 miles from where we started this morning; here we stopped for dinner. Chet picked dandelion greens and Lucinda and I looked them over as we rode along, and cooked them for dinner; they were good. We start again, and travel about 10 miles; stop at a farm house owned by a man named Hevath: beautiful place, with very nice grounds surrounding it. We pitch our tent by the side of the road and get our supper: go very tired to bed. We have passed by some excellent farms over some extremely bad roads, on account of the recent rains.

May 7.—Started this morning at 7 o'clock: rode over some very rough roads and passed some nice farms; stopped at Chatfield* for dinner—this is a nice little town, set between two rows of hills, but nice when you get to it: for dinner we had beef steak, with all its accessories, bread, potatoes, etc. After dinner, the train moved on about 12 miles and camped for the night.

May 8.—At 7 o'clock our company was ready to start: went 12 miles over about the same looking country as yesterday—some good looking country and some not so good looking, and stop to get our dinner: at half past one we continued our journey for a distance of 14 miles, camping for the night at Mr. Eager's a brother of L. Eager, who owns a farm quite pleasantly situated.

May 9.—Here we stopped and did some baking and wash-

ing: got our dinner and at one o'clock were all ready for our journey onward: travel 14 miles and camp on the bank of Cedar River.⁵

May 10.—Were ready to start at 7 o'clock this morning: travelled 29½ miles today; we are now in Iowa: two [of] our teams got stuck in the mud—Eager's and Hunter's—but got out with very little trouble: have not seen a hill for two days—a perfect dead level: it is very cold—has been for two days: a heavy frost almost every night. At every farm house by which we pass, we found a shingle tacked up, with this inscription upon it: "This farm for Sale." And as we look about us we do not wonder at their anxiety to sell—not a hill; not a tree: not a shrub, to be seen—nothing but a wide stretch of prairie as far as eye can see.

May 11.—Just got breakfast and things packed up, and are journeying; travelled as far as Mason City⁶ and camped within about a mile of the City;—the crops through Iowa look very backward, as well as every thing else we have seen.⁷

May 12.—Attended church today at the Baptist Church: an excellent sermon was preached, by one of Mr. Spurgeon's scholars: the church is nice, and the City looks very pretty as we pass through it: it has about 3000 inhabitants: as [sic] have had a great many callers from the City, today.

May 13.—Travelled from Mason City to Clear Lake,⁸ a very pretty small town built upon a lake by that name: the lake is cover[ed] with sail boats: came 18 miles from Clear Lake, and camped;—a little warmer travelling today.

May 14.—Mr. Eager's mules left for parts unknown last night, and we are waiting for them to be found; done some washing; along comes a pedler—bought some dried peaches. The mules were found back towards Clear Lake, 12 miles, and now at noon, we are ready to start: we went 14 miles past a little town called Belmond,⁹ and camped near a small lake—a very pleasant place to camp.

May 15.—Started this morning at 7 o'clock: passed through a little village called Clarion:¹⁰—one of our teams and one of Mr.

4 A town in Fillmore County, Minnesota; population, 1382.

5 Located in Mower County, Minnesota.

6 In Cerro Gordo County, Iowa; population, 20,065.

7 Mrs. Edith Gifford told me that corn was so cheap in Iowa in the spring of 1878 that large quantities of it were used for fuel.

8 A town located on the northeast shore of Clear Lake, in Cerro Gordo County, Iowa; population, 2804.

9 Located in Wright County, Iowa; population, 1797.

10 Located in Wright County, Iowa; population, 2826.

Eager's are down deep in the mud—got them out with little difficulty: we travelled 23 miles today, and tonight camp in a nice place; plenty of wood, good water and grass.

May 16.—Rains this morning and makes it rather hard travelling but we are ready to start and are going, rain or no rain: our wagons do not leak to trouble us: hard time today—through boggs and marshes, had bridges to make; some fun, considerable work, but many hands make quick work, so bridges are built and we move on:—are 10 miles from Fort Dodge: get our dinner and on we go; camp at Fort Dodge across the Des Moines River, on the bank in a pleasant place; coal near by; the boys amuse themselves with collecting it and burning it in our stoves; it burns nicely but makes a very hot fire, and burnt biscuits is the result of their experiment:—Fort Dodge is a nice city of 6000 inhabitants, and has some of as elegant buildings as you ever saw.¹¹

May 17.—The train stayed here until noon: some washed, some baked and now we are ready for a start, 12 o'clock sharp; well, we made a wrong start: went a mile out of our way, but turned about and came only about 6 miles and camped, about 4 o'clock; obliged to camp here on account of wood and water;—rained all night—the hardest thunder shower I ever saw, I think, all night: it wet us through and through—beds, bedding, children and grown folks. Well, well, this is not so romantic; thoughts will stray back (in spite of all our attempts to the contrary) to the comfortable homes we left and the question arises in my mind, is this a good move—but echo answers not a word; but still we move, breathe and have our being and we are most truly thankful for that.

May 18.—Faces are rather long this morning; found other wagons had leaked and other people looking blue, so that cheers me up and I am now ready to laugh at the rest—feel more like it than I did last night about 12 o'clock, when Ernest and Verney¹² were crying because the water was running down their beds; but now we proceed to strip our wagons, dry our beds and bedding; for this purpose we stop here until afternoon. The stream upon which we have camped is call Lizzard Creek; in the afternoon we had some of the worst traveling that ever was, I guess—*mud, mud, mud*; stop at about 6 miles from Lizzard Creek.

¹¹ Fort Dodge is located in Webster County, Iowa; population. 19,347, census of 1920.
¹² Ernest Ide and George La Verne Ide, sons of Mrs. C. D. Ide.

May 19.—A beautiful Sabbath morning; but we are obliged to travel on account of wood and water, there being none where we are. Went into camp at 5 o'clock: $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Lake City;¹³ rained a little today.

May 20.—Pleasant again this morning, start at the usual time; a little better road but we have seen a hill and felt like kissing it: give me a few hills; stop at Lake City to bait our horses.

May 21.—A little better road and more pleasant weather, today.

May 22.—Rain again but we start about 11 o'clock; went 15 miles and camped; rained, thundered and lightened all night, again; but did not wet into our wagons so bad.

May 23.—Were ready at 8 o'clock to start; it has cleared off very pleasant; we have travelled through a beautiful tract of country today—passed through Dennison [Denison]¹⁴ and Dowville [Dow City];¹⁵ stopped at Dowville; had a horse shod here; camped a short distance out of town, in a pasture near the railroad, in a pretty little grove.

May 24.—Start this morning at $7\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock; it is a most glorious morning—everything looks pleasant, and so, of course we all feel pleasant; $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles are quickly passed, and we arrive at quite a nice little town called Dunlap.¹⁶ Here, there is a nice little church and some very handsome residences; stopped, had another horse shod, bought a few needed supplies, such as oats, codfish, pickles, etc. Started on again through a nice looking country and passed through a town called Woodbine;¹⁷ stopped just outside the town for dinner, near a farm house; a lady kindly offered us all the mustard we were a mind to pick for greens; we thankfully accepted the offer and had a most excellent dinner.

May 25.—Camped last night, on the bank of the Boyer [Boyer] River;¹⁸ we follow this river all the way to Omaha; today we found a few ripe strawberries, but they were few; a very nice day.

May 26.—Came out 11 miles; passed a little south of the village of Logan;¹⁹ looked nice as we saw it at a distance; another pleasant day and we are passing through some nice looking

¹³ In Calhoun County, Iowa; population, 2110.

¹⁴ Located in Crawford County, Iowa; population, 3581.

¹⁵ Dow City, in Crawford County, Iowa; population, 572.

¹⁶ In Harrison County, Iowa; population, 1455.

¹⁷ In Harrison County, Iowa; population, 1463.

¹⁸ Boyer River, a tributary of the Missouri River.

¹⁹ A town in Harrison County, Iowa; population, 1637.

country; we are only 25 miles from Omaha; camp for noon;—start again on go 10 miles; here we go into camp for Saturday night.

May 27.—Sunday—a nice day; here, we stop for the day, to rest ourselves and teams, and think of our dearest friends, at this time attending their churches.

May 28.—Our train starts out this morning, at 7 o'clock, for Omaha; stopped 1½ miles east of Council Bluffs,²⁰ to get our dinner; we have passed through a part of the state of Iowa, that has the appearance of being an old settled country—nice large shade trees everywhere; but only through the Western part, does it look as nice; once more we start; we cross the muddy looking Missouri River, in box cars into Nebraska—and here we are in Omaha;²¹ now for our mail; it is received and eagerly read—first news from home. I received letters from mother, sister, Alice Chochtane [Cochran], Mrs. N. K. Fisher and Mrs. H. P. Adams—also lots of papers. It almost seems as if we had been back on a short visit. But all pleasant things must end, and, so does our letter reading; we must get our supplies now, and westward go. We bought oysters (a case) lobsters, flour, sugar, crackers, horsefeed, etc., and drive out five miles and came for the night. We have plenty to talk about, as all have had more or less mail, and the news one hears is soon imparted to the rest, for we all have a common interest in dear Mondovi.

(To Be Continued)

²⁰ Located in Pottawattamie County, Iowa; population, 36,162.

²¹ In Douglas County, Nebraska; population, 191,601.