

IN A PRAIRIE SCHOONER, 1878

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July 12.—Are passing through Bridger's Pass; magnificent scenery. One thing I would mention; it is a sand mountain, standing between two mountains that are covered with green grass—no trees—all about the same height—the sand a leather color; it looks like a picture; it is splendid. We came through the Pass and camped at another toll bridge. The usual rate, 50c a team, was charged to cross it, but after threatening to tear the bridge up and cross in the old ford, which they had built the bridge over, they decided to let us pass at the rate of 10c per team, so over we go and camp. We found here a tent pitched;—a family living here. They had ploughed up a little patch of ground—had potatoes, peas, etc., growing. I can assure you we looked with wondering eyes upon that garden—the first of the kind we had seen for weeks and weeks. There used to be a Fort here—used also to be a stage station in the old days before railroads crossed these barren wilds, and it was called Sulphur Springs—truly it was rightly named, for the water in the Springs was pure sulphur; could put your hands in, reach the bottom and take out large pieces of clear sulphur; they used to come a great distance to these springs and drink the water and bathe, and many sick people used to visit this resort, they tell us here. Here, also is a little grave yard near the ruined fort, and as I looked at the faded tomb stones, thought some one mourns their buried dead, likely never knowing where they rest, and in this lonely place among the Rockies; looking at the ruined fort and the tumbling tomb stones I think I would rather be laid at rest nearer the friends of my youth and nearer to civilization.

July 13.—Begin our journey this morning at the usual time; our Dakota friends started on the lead—have given us French leave, I guess; we camped for dinner at a place called Muddy Creek; start at 2 o'clock—and now we take the hardest trip we have yet experienced—travelled all night. Came to Bitter Creek—a poison stream—we dared not stop or use the water ourselves or let the horses have it; so on we go the whole night long;—a beautiful moonlight night—but a gloomy mountain road, with high rocks standing guard, through deep passes and over little valleys, but nothing to be seen but great beds of alkali; it gives one food

for thought, I can assure you. We stop at 12 o'clock midnight, and rest the weary horses and eat a lunch; and as we gather around the little fire, some making tea, others making oyster soup, etc. with some looking sad and lonely and some quite merry, I can say it is a scene, that once witnessed will never be forgotten, for we do not know how long and how far we shall have to travel before we shall reach water and grass for the horses. And to add to the list, one of our horses has been taken very lame—poor Dolly, she can hardly hobble along, but *must*.³⁴ Got to fresh water this [?] morning.

July 14.—At 7 o'clock got some breakfast; the first thing then took a nap—all are very tired, so are the teams; it is Sunday. We came yesterday afternoon and night over 50 miles—this is what tries men's souls—and women's too—but now we are resting; near us are camped a company of Princeton, New Jersey, college students, hunting minerals and fossil, petrified wood, etc., and having a good time generally; are going down to see their collection. Went down this afternoon; they seem very nice, refined young men—they have some very nice petrified woods and other specimens of the bones of animals that are now extinct. One gave me some choice specimens of petrified wood and a beautiful moss agate. They related some of their adventures to us, and we, in turn, told them of some of our hardships;—altogether the day was passed quite pleasantly. It seemed so strange to meet refined and cultivated people here, hundreds of miles in the wilderness of the Rockies, and likely shall never meet them again, but shall always remember the day passed on the mountain on the Bitter Creek. In the evening the students came up to Henry Hunter's tent—it being the largest—and had [a] grand sing, they singing their old college songs; and all joined in singing some of the songs sung by Sankey and Moody, and I thought it probably would never again happen that so large a company of good singers would make the Rocky Mountains echo the music of Sankey's and Moody's songs, hundreds of miles from any human habitation.

July 15.—Started at 8 o'clock this morning. Old Dolly is very lame and stiff; got a horse from Mr. Gifford to use; went as far as Pine Buttes;³⁵ camped near a spring just a trifle better than the Bitter Creek water; went up on top of the highest point—was 2 hours getting there; got some mossy stones to remember

³⁴ Mrs. Gifford told the writer that "Old Dolly" completed the journey.

³⁵ Black Buttes [?] in Sweetwater County, Wyoming.

the place; found [at] the top great piles of stone laid up like a wall, to mark the spot likely for some purpose.

July 16.—Started on time; the first water we came to we camped; we don't pass by good water now, for an uncertain thing, for in this alkali country good water is hard to find;—both boys are sick—. The scenery is beautiful—high mountains, deep gorges—scenery to suit the taste of the most romantic.

July 17.—We began our journey at 7; all are in the best of spirits; Old Dolly is better;—both boys are better, and will come out all right;—the scenery is of the same character as yesterday—through deep canyons; by towering rocks; and over rugged roads;—go into camp at 4 o'clock; here we get our dinner and supper together and did not stop at noon; as we could only make 18 miles, thought it best to make but one drive; we visited a cave large enough to hold 200 people—carved our names upon its mammoth walls, beside the names of hundreds of others who have made a visit to this cave. Raining a little;—quite cool; have not seen a dozen mosquitos since we started, and only one very warm night.

July 18.—The morning opens up very pleasant; travelled over very rough roads—up and down—over mountains, through valleys, on and on, and at last came in sight of the railroad again; it looks like an old friend; we reach Green River,³⁶ after passing the Devil's teapot and other noted rocks, about 6 o'clock. This is the first town we have seen since coming from Laramie—nearly 300 miles away.

This day sadly closed for us; two teams joined our company—they were from Utah—father, brother, husband, wife and little boy, going to Colorado—travelling for the lady's health; but as she came up the mountain she began to fail and as we met them advised them to get her back home if possible, she was scarcely able to breathe the light air of the mountains, so today at noon they overtook us, on their return—they crossing Green River—we camping on the east side as we wanted to get supplies before going on. They had crossed and just turned their horses loose when they perceived the lady was dying; she only breathed a few times and was gone; they came over telling us she was dead; we advised them to hitch up their teams and come over to us and we would do all we could for them. They did so. She had no lady friend with her, but her friends did all they could and seemed almost hearten broken. The little child was only eight months old,

³⁶ Green River, in Sweetwater County, Wyoming; population, 2140.

but the men cared for it as nicely as a woman; it was afraid of us, so we could not do much for it. Lucinda and Mrs. H. Hunter washed and dressed the corpse. She was a nice looking lady, very poor and looked as though she had been sick a long time. I went to her trunks and got out her clothes; she had everything very nice,—had suit after suit of under-clothing, and one suit beautifully made and laid by itself I thought, especially for just this occasion; it so impressed me that I took it. We put it on her, and the men went to town and purchased a coffin, in which she was gently placed. You can scarcely imagine how sad we felt, as we lay camped by the river bank, with this strange lady lying dead, dressed for burial in a covered wagon, a few steps away. Lucinda, Lena and Nellie Egar sat up by the wagon (occasionally wetting her face) all night.

July 19. Staid here with these people, to help them bury their dead. A good many people came from town. We buried her in the Cemetery which lies at the base of the mountains, the Green River rushing by in the distance.

July 20.—Got our supplies; started on our way; forded the Green River, which is rightly named, as the water is a beautiful green color, quite deep—nearly up to the wagon box—and quite wide; but all got safely over; had good luck all day.

July 21.—Sunday; obliged to travel all day, as there was no feed for our horses and we do not like to lay over longer.

July 22.—Traveled 18 miles; went into camp early as it rained; we rather enjoyed the rain as it is something unusual in this section to have rain in the summer.

July 23.—Traveled all day; another light shower tonight; Camped with plenty of wood, water and grass close at hand.

July 24.—Pleasant; we are now travelling through a very nice looking country.

July 25.—Reached Evanston³⁷ today; saw more Chinese here than any place yet—old, young and middle-aged; we stopped to get supplies before going out to camp; while here, another shower of hail and rain struck us. This seems to be a nice lively place, with considerable business going on; went out 1½ miles and made our camp.

July 26.—Came 20 miles out into Echo Canyon; the scenery here is beautiful; it is 29 miles through this canyon; one continuous down, down all the way—high mountains on either side, and the railroad track side by side with us, sometimes not six feet away.

³⁷ Evanston, Uinta County, Wyoming; population, 3479.

July 27.—Came down to within 5 miles of the mouth of the canyon to camp and spend the Sabbath; arrived at about 1 o'clock.

July 28.—Sunday; it is a lovely day, and we are all resting—our camp is a perfect glen; an old saw-mill is here all ready to tumble down,—was built likely, while they were building the railroad through here; we cannot see the sun at our camp, only two or three hours in the middle of the day; as it warms up in the middle of the day somewhat, we do not miss it;—a slight accident occurred today to stir us up a little. One of the horses got entangled in Jim Hunter's tent rope, got frightened, started and took one half the tent with him—tore it right in two in the middle, Mrs. Hunter being inside the tent, was badly frightened; and Jim did not know what to do for a tent. I told him that it could be fixed. "Never," said he, "can such a rent as that be fixed." But I told Elma to get her needle, and I took mine, and in about two hours the tent was up, just as good as ever; it happened to tear very good to sew up again.

July 29.—Monday, started a little earlier this morning;—there was an eclipse today; Mrs. Gifford and myself went out before breakfast to catch us some trout; I had the luck to get tow nice ones;— we arrived at the mouth of the canyon, at a little town called Echo City;³⁸ stopped in town; got a little fruit and went on.

July 30.—We are now in Weber Canyon; the scenery here the magnificence of which, words cannot express, throws every other place we have passed into the shade; it is the wildest place one can imagine. Here we pass through the Devil's Gate—one solid mass of rocks on one side, towering hundreds of feet above us—the other side down hundreds of feet, while the Weber River rushes madly along, over great boulders, one seething mass of foam, and you can scarcely hear yourself speak, such is the rumbling down this deep canyon; the road is just wide enough for a wagon—barely that in some places; you can rest assured, that we all walked while passing through this gate, and I for one, kept just as near the middle of the road as I could, even then my head swam so that I could hardly walk. I think it is about half a mile through this Gate, but I must say it seemed hours we were passing through it; but the scenes were grand, indeed, after all. After passing through the Devil's Gate, we soon came to what is called the Devil's Slide. This is two parallel walls

³⁸ Echo City, Summit County, Utah; population, 145.

of granite, coming down the mountain side, from five to six feet in height and about three feet in width.

July 31.—Arrived at Ogden³⁹ about noon; we camped three miles out of the city, so as to get a place to pasture our horses.

August 1.—Very warm indeed; here we are resting our teams and doing some washing and baking.

August 2.—Today we have an addition to our company; Edith Gifford has a little boy⁴⁰—born in Utah at the foot of the Waschita Mountains,⁴¹ three miles from Ogden

August 3.—Went out to Ogden today; it is quite a pleasant place—but entirely Mormon; beautiful fruit and shade trees, in every yard—on every avenue, but oh, the dejected, degraded looking women. This is enough to condemn the Mormon Doctrine, leaving everything else out.

August 4.—Today is the Sabbath; we are still here: had a cordial invitation to attend church at the Tabernacle (Mormon) but declined on account of excessive heat;—Edith quite smart—also the baby.

August 5.—Started this morning at 7 o'clock; stopped at Ogden and got some supplies, and went out 15 miles and camped in a very nice place.

August 6.—We began our journey at 7 o'clock this morning. Went out to a boiling spring; here there are two springs, side by side—one is so hot you cannot bear your hand in it, and close beside it is one which is very cold. The water is salt; and salt lies all around on the top of the ground; we washed in the spring, drank of it, and went on, in a short time coming to a place called Corinne,⁴² at which place we stopped for the night. Corinne is a Gentile town and looks very delapidated and poor, as all Gentile towns do through this Mormon country.

August 7.—We are waiting here and trying to ascertain whether we are going to be troubled with Indians.⁴³ The inhabitants tell us we can go no further as the Indians are burning dwellings, destroying property, and murdering people, beyond us. The train is divided, some want to turn back; others are in favor of going on. A decision is reached at noon; the train is to move on. We started at 1 o'clock; traveled 12 miles.

³⁹ Ogden, Weber County, Utah; population, 32,804.

⁴⁰ Homer Gifford, the eldest child of Mr. and Mrs. John Gifford. He died in 1921 and is buried in Spokane.

⁴¹ Wasatch Mountains.

⁴² Located in Boxelder County, Utah; population, 394.

⁴³ This was at the time of the Bannock Indian War. Mrs. Gifford said that she did not see any Indians until she reached Walla Walla.

August 8.—Travelled in the dust—oh, so dusty.

August 9.—Today we travelled 12 miles, stopped at one Mormon ranch run by a man named Dilly; he has two wives—one seems to be a very smart and intelligent woman; the other is very ordinary and ignorant, and the contrast between the two is enough to convince anyone of the evils of Mormonism.

August 10.—Will stop here this forenoon, and set the tires on some of the wagons; started at noon; went 15 miles and camped on a ranch at a place called the Sink.

August 11.—It is Sunday; some want to travel today—and some do not; but those that do prevail, so we start and here we are at night, still travelling; we have at last arrived at a ranch. I rather think we shall rest another Sabbath day.

August 12.—Beautiful day; one of Mr. Eager's horses tired out yesterday; they feel very badly indeed as we all do for them; they have just traded off the horse for a pair of ponies and left some of their load at the ranch.

August 13.—Reached a place called Marsh Basin about noon; stopped for dinner—some of the parties had some tires set on their wagons; the landlord, running a hotel at this place, offered the girls \$7.00 a week to stop and work for him; some of the girls had quite made up their minds to stop, but after considering it, decided to go on with the train, so we start afternoon and travel 15 miles.

August 15.—Nice weather, but exceedingly dusty, and over nothing but plains .

August 16.—On, on we travel, with nothing before us but a broad expanse of sage-brush plains; here we are at night, at Rock Creek, a very little stream; had a welcome shower this evening—hope it will be the means of laying the dust some.⁴⁴

August 17.—Came 18 miles today, to Mud Creek; we are now right in the **Indian country**, where so many depredations have been committed by the "Noble red-men:" had a smart shower of rain tonight, with a little hail.

August 18.—Stop over Sunday at a stage station: we are now on the stage road, and have good roads to travel over.

August 19.—Went down to the ferry this morning, and crossed the Snake River; at this stage station we find that they have dug a ditch, thrown up breast works, boarded up windows and are prepared for Indians. Indians have robbed the stage many

⁴⁴ The travelers are now in southern Idaho.

times in this section—still, we see none—Elma Hunter and I see in the distance a beautiful waterfall, and start to explore it, we went to the foot first, and then had an idea we should like to see its source; the climb before us we knew was a hard one, but by preserverance, many slips and falls, and stops to rest, we got to the top of the mountain—over 100 feet—and as we looked at the little fountains at the top bubbling up, we felt amply repaid for our climb. I think there is at least a dozen fountains that throw water up from three to four feet; we have a curiosity to examine them, so we take off our shoes and stockings and wade into the water; it seems like a little shallow lake, not over six inches deep but as we near the falls, we are somewhat afraid, although they are small but fall a distance of 100 feet—or more; the stream is about three feet in width where it falls and these little fountains seem to be the holes in the bottom of the pond; we run our hands down as far as we can but find no bottom; they are a curiosity, sure, but the teams are going on; and we must go or be left so we take a last lingering view of the beautiful Bridal Veil Falls and make our way back to the teams. We go as far as the Miladd River; this river is a great curiosity; it runs in a deep, dark gorge, and at the depth of 300 feet in some places; the rocks come up perpendicular; it sounds almost impossible, but it is so, for here I sit on a rock, writing this down, and Lucinda sits on the other side of the river, and we could reach each other's hand I can assure you in one place, a few feet from us, the water falls quite a distance out of sight, then comes up over the rocks, then down again; it is a natural curiosity to look at this stream,—we camp here at Miladd River, at a stage station; and here we see Mr. Buck from Winona, who came in on the stage.

August 20.—At the usual [time]—7 o'clock—we were ready to start this morning; met a wagon train of soldiers; one of them threw us a hard-tack as they passed by; these soldiers are Indian fighters and scouts; we came out 18 miles and camp at another stage station.

August 21.—Begin our journey at 8 o'clock this morning; went 11 miles and camp at the foot of King's Hill, for dinner; well, this is a hill sure, 4 miles in length, and the most of us walk the whole distance—pass a freighter, he seems to be having bad luck; he has ten mules hitched to a trail wagon, and he wants the boys to help drive them up the hill: they help a while, but soon give up their job and go on and leave him, swearing at the poor

mules, while long after we had passed him, there came to our ears upon the sultry air; "Hillaphene, Jule." Oh, but it was hot; but we are up the hill at last; here we find a wagon that the old freighter had brought up the hill; some of the boys made an exploration of its contents, and found some cases of canned fruit in it; when they left the wagon they had materially disfigured the Eighth Commandment. We went as far as Cold Springs and camped for the night: they tell us here, there is a band of Indians camped about a mile from us, and a company of Cavalry about a mile from the Indians; so here we are, in the midst of a band of Indians who are on the war-path; well, if we are to be killed by Indians, we shall not be hung, so we have a little consolation.

August 22.—Today went as far as Bottle Snake Creek⁴⁵ and camp; see no Indians.

August 23.—Went out 22 miles; did not get to camp until long after dark; staked down and old camp that the soldiers have occupied; rather long faces tonight, in camp, as it is very dark; so we get a little supper and lie down to wonder what will come next, for we may be attacked at any moment by Indians.

August 24.—Well, this morning finds all pleasant again; and they have almost forgotten the trials of the night before; so we move on in peace. Over stones and hills we travel, until we are within two miles of Boise City, at a ranch owned by a man named J. P. Walling; came here 31 years ago with oxen; sold some of his oxen for beer to Fremont's perishing soldiers and saved their lives; we are well treated, indeed, and enjoy it.

August 25.—The Sabbath; shall stop over the day here; have enjoyed the day very much; have had the privilege of sitting once more, in a house in a rocking chair;—Mr. Chase formerly of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, but now the Marshal of Idaho Territory, gave us a call, and had a pleasant sing.

August 26.—Start for Boise City bright and early this morning; it is quite a nice place.⁴⁶

August 27.—Here we are lying over until night; we could get considerable of work to do, if we wanted to stay; we talk of staying; I can get work in a shop at \$2.00 per day—Chet can get \$5.00 per day; as we are out of money, we think it best to stop; we pulled our wagons out of the train, and bid all good bye and left crying; Mr. Eager's folks will stop also, as will

⁴⁵ Evidently Rattlesnake Creek is meant.

⁴⁶ Boise, Ada County, Idaho; population, 21,393.

Lena Hunter; but in a short time back comes Gifford and says: "You are not going to stop; come along on to the store and get your supplies and come on." we were only too willing to do it and we get the supplies and follow along; and they all seem glad to see us; as we stop, they all rush up and shake hands as though we had been gone weeks instead of about 15 minutes; well, it would have been lonesome to have stopped, I guess; it is all for the best perhaps;—Mr. Eager's folks and Lena have stopped; while waiting in front of the store, we hear music and find that Bernard's troop of Cavalry have just come in from fighting the Indians, and they look as though they had seen hard work; all are dirty and ragged, but feeling fine; a large pack train follows them, with their baggage; it looks quite grand.⁴⁷

August 28.—Here we are travelling through a beautiful country, good ranches, good gardens, fruit, etc., etc, around looks prosperous and thrifty.

We are on your [sic] way at seven o'clock this morning; nice day but warm; we travelled 12 miles today. At noon came to the Snake River and crossed on a ferry—paid \$1.50 per team; now we are in Oregon.

August 30.—Went about 20 miles today and camped.

August 31.—Travelled as far as McDowell's ranch and camp for dinner; we have a nice place here; they killed some beef and we bought some; they branded some cattle while we were here, the first we had ever seen branded; we think it rather cruel; Verney is not very well.

September 1.—Sunday; and we are laying over; we are exactly where the Indians have been raiding and stealing horses and cattle.

September 2.—Monday; started all well rested for a good day's drive, and went down Willow Creek and camp in a canyon; Verney very sick all night; he is troubled with worms;—it rained and the wind blew during the night;—I sat up most of the night with Verney.

September 3.—Crossed the Willow Creek Mountains; passed a mining camp—have very bad road; came down where there has been a water spout; it has washed out the road and torn up the trees by the roots, but we pass without meeting with any great trouble; we camp at the foot of the mountains, at a ranch called Smith's ranch; here we hear of Mr. Gilkey's sister; she

⁴⁷ For some account of Captain Reuben F. Bernard's cavalry see Chapter XXVIII of General O. O. Howard's *My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians*.

lives a mile off the road; Will Allen went out to see her; she was well and very glad to see him.

September 4.—It is cold and windy today—has been for three days past, so we have to wear wraps and are cold at that; we are in sight of Eagle Creek Mountains, very high and covered with snow; it is a nice looking country through which we are now passing.

September 5.—Passed a quaint mill today; came only 18 miles and went into camp.

September 6.—Came over the mountains today; travelled 18 miles and reached a town called Union, nice clean looking town.

September 7.—22 miles we traveled and came to a town called Somerville⁴⁸—a most desolate, run down looking place, at the base of the Blue Mountain; we are now camped for the night, just out of the village.

September 8.—Today is Sunday, and we are laying over to rest; a minister is stopping here, he and his wife are on their way over the mountains to Walla Walla; his name is Simpson; he came up to our camp Sunday evening and gave us a little sermon; it seems nice to hear one once more; we are now 40 miles from Walla Walla.

September 9.—We are going up, up, up, but the scenery is grand; nice timber; pine, fir, hemlock; we camped near the summit over night; in the evening, we made large bonfires, and told stories, passing the evening very pleasantly; Mrs. James Hunter is quite sick.

September 10.—Mrs. Hunter is no better; we think she is very low, indeed; she thinks she will not live through the night; we all fear she will not; she cannot speak aloud. I think it best to wring out hot clothes and lay on her lungs, it seems to give her much relief; I do believe she is better; I sat up all night with her.

September 11.—She is a little better this morning—but very low; she is very anxious to go on; we have made her a bed in her wagon, as comfortable as possible; we stop at the first house and get her a cup of tea; she is refreshed and we go on; camp at noon on the bank of the Walla Walla River; bought a bushel of apples for 25c.

September 12.—Sallie is no worse; ate a very little but is

48 Summerville [?] Union County, Oregon; population, 116.

exceedingly tired; went 14 miles and stopped at a farm house; had all the water-melons we could eat.

September 13.—Arrived at Walla Walla at noon; camped in a yard to get our dinner; Indians camped in the same place; white men with squaw wives; Sallie is improving slowly; she is up and feels better, shall stop over night here.

September 14.—Are waiting for some of our party to buy stoves; ready to start at noon; Jim got his wife medicine, and she is certainly better; go out ten miles to camp.

September 15.—At 7 o'clock we start this morning; travel 10 miles, and go into camp for noon on the bank of the Touchet River; saw a great many Indians; the Snake Indians are giving themselves up, and are coming in in great numbers; they are all dressed in new blankets and look and seem to feel very nice; arrived at Dayton at 5 o'clock and were warmly welcomed by Dr. Day,⁴⁹ who gave us a good hand shaking and ordered beef and flour for us, as we were nearly out of money and provisions too and went into camp, perhaps for the last time; we expect to stay over Sunday in camp and then see what next will be done; it is our intention to make Dayton our home; at least for some time; other members of our train will stop here; while others will go on to the Palouse country; and some will go into other parts of the Territory; thus we are scattered.

Aunt Sallie's prayer has been answered; her prayer was, that she might be permitted to live to see her new home and see her children once more settled; coming over the Blue Mountains, now and then could be seen lonely graves close by the roadside; and when she began to be sick, she prayed that she might not die on the mountains, the graves looked so lonely to her. And she was spared to reach her journey's end.

So this is the end of our trials and pleasures for this Four Months' and a half's trip across the plains.

LUCY A. IDE.

⁴⁹ Probably Jesse N. Day, the founder of Dayton, Washington.