

## REES, WATKIN – REMINISCENSES

### TRAIL EXCERPT – From Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel

The voyage from Liverpool to new Orleans 5700 Miles was made in 6 weeks and Six days without accident. We ware mett at the Bar about 100 miles from New Orleans by a large tugboat wich wich touk [took] us up the River to that City, ware we ware transferred into a large steamer the John Simons that carried us up the River some 11 or 12 hundred miles to Saint Louis[.] on the way up the river the colera broke out amongst us and some of the people died and was buried on the river bank. when we reached St Louis we ware quartered in what had been an [h]ospital and the Colera broke out amongst us there and some died here also and here we had to wait for a boat and some of us sought and found employment, and two others, George Munro and William Jones, we three had left wales together from the same iron works, I had a job as a heater in the Bremen Rolling Mills, they as pudlers making good wages but we did not stay long for a boat was soon had wich took us up to Kansas City, the landing here was the natural bank of the River it being a new place[.] there was here a Custom House and about half a dozen resident houses and it seemed to be a shiping point for Santa fe Mexico

we ware landed in the woods about a half a mile above, ware we put up our tents and camped two or thre[e] weeks and ware soon joined by other Emigrants from Denmark. the River bottom here was quite flat and covered with tall timber covered with climbing grapevines so dence that we had to look straight up in order to see the sky;

this place was very unhelthy the c[h]olera brokout again and many people died here and after camping here about two or three weeks we ware moved out to Magees farm several miles away from the River, and then again soon after, farther out, to a place near Westport on the edge of the pririe, near wich, is about 8 miles from Independence Mis[s]ourie, ware we camped about three Months waiteing for cattle and wagons, wich arrived in the Latter part of June, the various companys was now soon organized, ours with Daniel Garns of Salt Lake as captain William Empy being emigration agent for that year;

The wether was fine, and we ware in an open prairie country the fitout seen that was furnished us was for the most part wild unbroken cattle and the start we made was anything but elegant.

The foremost teams whent right along for they had broken cattle used to work but some of those that followed ran in every direction; as I mentioned it was an open grasy country, and swampy as well in places ware we used to herd the cattle on;

The Oxen ran for their grazeing ground takeing the wagons with them and they never stoped until they ware fast in the mud

there was an aged sister rideing in one of those wagons and Considerable anxiety was felt for her but she was not hurt.

this stampeed caused a delay of a day or two repareing wagons[.] New wagons that had been broken on their first day out;

This driving Oxen was a new business to most of us Emigrants, many of us having never Seen a pare of Oxen yoked together before we came to America (some of us seem to think that everything that had horns was cows[.] One lady looking at a bunch of Oxen that had been brought together to be yoked up asked how they milked them cows, they looked difrent to the cow she had seen milked) and we had to learn as well as the cattle but fortunately there ware plenty of us 10 to a wagon and as a rule two teemsters [teamsters] could be furnished to a wagon, one on each side to keep the team in the Road, and pulling the heavy loads soon quieted the cattle down so that they could be managed by one teamster.

These Great Prairies look to us the people from Little England, like the open sea, there is not a mountain, or a tree in site in some places, there is plenty of grass, and the cattle are doing well, Buffalos are frequently seen in site, and seemed to have become somewhat tamed, a small herd of about twenty Buffalo passed right through our train going back from the watter, and some of our hunters gave chase and managed to kill one Cow.

We are now nearing fort Laramy [Laramie] we have had no accident or Incident worthy of note since our stampede on the first day out; we are camped for the night[.] a courier comes into our camp from fort Laramie warning us to be careful of the Indians, for they were on the war Path and two thousand of them had had a fight with soldiers at the fort the day before where they had killed thirteen soldiers.

We passed that way the following day the Indians were all gone, the ground they camped on an extensive grassy flat was smoothly tramped as if many people had camped there;

The courier was going east for reinforcement, while the people at the fort had shut themselves up in fear lest the Sues [Sioux] would return and kill them all

The trouble seem to have started over a lame cow belonging to a Danish Brother in the company ahead of us, the cow had dropped behind not being able to follow[.] one of Indians killed the cow, probably for the meat, and the Brother wanted pay for him and complained to the Officer at the fort[.] The officer proceeded to arrest the Indian, but they would not give him up, the Officer ordered a platoon of soldiers with a cannon, and to intimidate the Indians, they fired a shot, over their heads. as soon as they done that, the Indians was upon them and cleaned out the whole platoon, and broke camp and left

We are now in the neighborhood of the Black Hills we come to a trading post kept by a Frenchman and camped for noon, we had been preceded by a large band of Indians to this place, they had their horses tied head to head in a complete and compact circle as Indians [k]now how to tie them in the absence [absence] of hitching posts

we did not stay here long there were no water for our animals[.] in leaving this camp two of our wagons was tardy and dropped behind, and the camp was a half a mile on the Road when one of the men from the wagons that was left came running after us saying that the Indians seeing that the train had gone was helping themselves to everything, so the train was stopped, and men ran back armed with guns and in time before there was much damage done other than a fright to these people

I ran back with the other men but had no gun, willing to do what I could to help those people but before returning to the train a strange thing happened. I was armed with two pistols that I had found in the brush

there had been probably a fight or a massacre by Indians where those Pistols were dropped[.] both Pistols were of English make, and considerably rusted I gave one of them to William Carter of provo for cleaning the other one Brother Carter was a returning missionary and our Blacksmith on the plains!

When we were nearing the rocky mountains it was found that provisions were running low with some of the people and some were almost entirely without but by enquiry it was found that there was plenty in camp to take us through to Salt Lake, so those that had more than they needed turned it over to the Captain to be divided out to those that was short[.] there had to be a readjustment also of teams for some of them were lame, and some had given out, but we managed to get to Salt Lake with all the wagons[.] we started with arriving in Salt Lake about the 6 of October 1854 when Conference was in session; here on the Public Square many of the emigrants were met by friends others had places to go to and it was not long before the whole camp was disposed of it happened that I and the wife and baby was left till last and we felt somewhat Lonesome without money without friend and all gone but us it looked blue . . .