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Diary as discourse

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INTRODUCTION

Mary Riddle was a young woman when, in 1878, she and her husband, Moses, and her three adopted children, Ada, Frank, and Henry, left their farm near Dow City, Iowa, and started for Oregon. It is possible that the Riddle family moved west because of the California Gold Rush or because of relatives already settled in Washington. It might be also speculated that the Panic of 1873, whose effects were reaching Iowa farmers by 1878, might be a cause for their move; nonetheless the Riddles are well supplied and there are no suggestions want. The true motive for the Riddles move is never made explicit.

As is typical of many pioneer diaries, Mary notes much about the landscape, the weather, and everyday happenings on the journey. Yet the diary is more than an account of her migration. It expresses real fears and emotions that were part of the pioneer woman's journey to the west. It is these fears that form the subtext. The diary communicates the immediacy of Mary Riddle's self, her reactions, her moods, her dreams, and her fears. It does not communicate much of what we today think of as an individualized personality. Mrs. Riddle is even tempered, moderately optimistic, and steadfast. But her individualized personality is not brought out as in fictionalized characters.
In my research, the saying that everyone in a small town knows something about everyone else certainly has proved true. At the onset of my search for a pioneer woman's diary, I inquired of our county historian, Ms. Anna Schneller, and she immediately responded, "I believe one of the Griffith girls has one." I followed this lead, and sure enough, when I contacted Vicki Griffith she confirmed Ms. Schneller's information. "Yes, we do have a journal of my great-grandmother. I'm not sure where it is though. Let me call you back." After a thorough search of her basement, Ms. Griffith found the manuscript and gave me permission to work with it.

I have worked from a typescript of the diary, rather than from the original handwritten manuscript. The typescript was produced by Ms. Griffith from the original in 1962. Only a few fragments of the original notebook now exist in Ms. Griffith's keeping. Ms. Griffith's testimonial to the diary's accuracy and authenticity cannot be doubted. This diary has its own distinct writing style, and I chose to correct only those errors which were obvious typographical errors. In no case have I changed the meaning or order of Mrs. Riddle's words.

The diary consists of two parts: the first has 95 entries, starting at May 8, 1878 and ending August 6, 1878. The second part begins again on May 9, 1879, with the final
entry dated May 16, 1879. The form of the diary is shaped by its purpose. At the end of the diary, the long final entry constitutes a retrospective of the entire trip and the two years since the beginning of the journey.

I use the words "diary" and "journal" interchangeably in my text because both terms fit my work perfectly. A diary is a daily written record of one's experiences, while a journal is a daily written record of one's happenings. Both are needed to express the journey as a whole. Ms. Riddle's work is a combination of personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings and a reflection of both the family and the train communities happenings.
There are thousands of diaries in the world. Some of these are published, the majority of those being the diaries of famous men and women. There are, however, many journals written by common everyday citizens. A significant number of these journals were kept by women who have recorded their ideas, thoughts, desires, happenings, and travels. In the nineteenth century, diary literature became important to women as never before. Women were influenced by changing social and cultural attitudes arising from the industrial revolution, romanticism, and the emergence of self, or more precisely, the inner self. Margo Culley, author of A Day At A Time, states, "As the modern idea of the secular diary as a 'secret' record of an inner life evolved, that inner life--the life of personal reflection and emotion--became an important aspect of the 'private sphere' and women continued to turn to the diary as a place where they were permitted, indeed encouraged, to indulge full 'self-centeredness'" (4).

Diary writing is not a modern idea--it has been a means of expression throughout the nineteenth century. In Early Nineteenth-century American Diary Literature, Steven E. Kagle states, "The diary is one of the oldest literary forms in America" (1). It's surprising then that this genre has, as Kagle points out, "... been largely ignored as a subject for serious critical attention" (416). Why is this
so? Critics say that the diarist did not intend for the
diary to be read. Thus, they lacked the "artistic intent
necessary for effective communication" (Kagle 416).
Furthermore, the diarist was also criticized because the
diary form lacks the organization and style appropriate to
its being considered literature.

Yet, these arguments can be easily rebutted. Kagle
states "there is no such thing as a totally private diary .
.. a diarist envisions an audience" (5). This is true.
The audience is the diary itself - the diary is the
audience. Culley too addresses this issue: "'Dear Diary'
is a direct address to an ideal audience; always available,
always listening, always sympathetic" (11). She goes on to
say "The importance of the audience, real or implied
conscious or unconscious, of what is usually thought of as a
private genre cannot be overstated. The presence of a sense
of audience, in this form of writing as in all others, has a
crucial influence over what is said and how it is said"
(12). Moreover, since most diaries are not written to be
seen by others, the audience is also the diarist. Mrs.
Riddle states this in her first entry: "Now I intend to
write a Diary of our trip to the far west." She proposes to
keep a diary not for others to look, but for herself. She
is the audience.
Another common argument against the style of the diary asserts that the diary cannot be regarded as true literature because it does not follow the traditional form of literature. True, the form may be different from "correct" styles, but a diary has its own unique format. A diary recounts more than mere facts and contains varieties of material. It reconstructs anecdotes, describes characters, setting, mood, and place. It also follows themes of romance, spirit, exploration, and travel. There are certain literary elements which make the diary special; but it certainly does not make it not worth reading because it is not "literature." The diary, in a large sense, is a historical voice that tells us what life was like in a certain time and place, and the diary is also useful to study because it develops a historical, geographical, and personal context for us to study in.
GENDER

Where does one begin to analyze a diary as a piece of literature? The best beginning is a concentration on the author herself. The reader must ask what kind of character the diarist is. Robert Fothergill has a hypothesis about women as protagonists in their journals. He states:

...the need to project an ego-image does not appear to be a leading motive in diaries written by women. This is not to say that the personalities of women be rendered any less vividly or variously in the diary imprint than man's, but the projection of self as a dramatic protagonist is not the mode which the imprint commonly takes. It is the merest platitude to observe that the position of women in society had tended to preclude the assertion of individual ego... Egotism in men and pre-occupation with an effective self-image have been accepted and rewarded; in women they have been discouraged. A woman cannot easily cast herself as a protagonist, when society and the controlling personal relationships of her life demand proficiency in exclusively supporting roles. Nor does it follow that she might, therefore, tend to project a more rather than less assertive ego in the diary... Hence one does not find in past centuries women diarists who strut and perform and discount on their own singularity (Culley 17).

This is certainly true of Mrs. Riddle. She does not strut and perform on her unique singularity. In fact, seldom does she concentrate on her "self." At the beginning of her diary, she uses "I," but in following entries that "I" turns to "we." She does not distinguish herself from her family or the group. An example of this is her May 9, 1878, entry:
We got up early . . . we are all so happy as can be.

Mrs. Riddle does not use "I" to proclaim her singularity. Rather, she feels the need to include herself in her family or the group. This divorce from self can again be seen in her May 20, 1878, entry. She has been thrown off her horse, Nelly, and suffered a horrible injury, yet her injury is never specifically identified. Yet, in the same entry and following ones, Mrs. Riddle does not preoccupy herself with her injury. She states on May 21, 1878:

I am very lame and soar I can't stand or move only as Moses lifts me--I have suffered more today than my tongue can tell--just terrible.

But that is as far as her tongue will tell. She does not go into detail about where she hurts, how much she hurts, or how much the injury is affecting her. After Mrs. Riddle talks briefly of her illness, she goes on to describe how her sons are helping out. She immediately shifts the attention from her ego to others.

That Mrs. Riddle cannot easily cast herself as the protagonist is primarily seen in her struggle with the rest of the group. The wagon train was moving at an extremely rapid rate of speed. Time and time again, Mrs. Riddle remarks how tired she is and how tired the group is. Even
when she is ill she states "The captain of the train will not stop and let me get better" (May 25, 1878). She has a choice of just going along or being left behind. This is really no choice at all. Can she assert herself and demand that they stop? No! Such an idea was never mentioned. Even when the tension of traveling too fast heightens . . . "we are getting very tired--and some are as mad as fury at the fast driving" Mary does not project her feelings. She was angry. She wanted to stop. She wanted to rest. Why couldn't she just say so, be listened to, and finally have her desires heeded? I predict that even if it had been, it would not have been taken seriously by the rest of the train because Mary Riddle could not truly be listened to because her role was a supporting role. She was in charge of taking care of Moses, Frank, Henry, Ada, the cooking, the cleaning, and many other things which did not influence the entire train directly. She is not a leading actor in the journey, and she was certainly not a director.
FEAR

An undercurrent of fear forms the dominant subtext of the diary, and the fear is not an unwarranted one. The group lacked the necessary preparation for an overland trip to Oregon. Even before they began their travel in earnest, the group had to stop outside of Omaha and buy more supplies. Moreover, it must be noted that the group lacked a "formal" guide. They did not hire anyone to take them to Oregon; they relied on those who had gone before them and listened to the experiences they told of.

More specifically, there is an overwhelming strand of concern or fear of Indians that runs throughout Mrs. Riddle's journal. In Landscapes Of Fear Yi-Fu Tuan asks, What exactly is fear? Tuan describes it as a complex feeling in which alarm and anxiety can be clearly distinguished from one another. He states, "Alarm is triggered by an obtrusive event in the environment . . . anxiety is a presentiment of danger when nothing in the immediate surrounding can be pinpointed as dangerous" (5). Such an anxiety is certainly reflected in Mrs. Riddle's journal. Time and again, she alludes to the Indians; she mentions them, and most important, she fears them. In the pioneer mind, an Indian generally meant a wild savage, one who would attack, pillage, rape, and finally conquer the entire family. The Indian was a legendary presence on the
trail. He was like a ghost. Tuan describes this fear, "Fear of ghosts is rooted in the human apprehension of the unknown and the bizarre" (113). This is just what the Indians are in Mrs. Riddle's writing: the unknown and the bizarre. As a result, the Indians are a large part of her consciousness. This fear is not unjustifiable. Indian warfare on the plains was highly possible and we cannot ignore their presence because they caused her much anxiety and overwhelming fear.

The Indians mighty presence is seen from the beginning of Mrs. Riddle's travels. On the third day, Mrs. Riddle mentions a story of an Indian:

May 15, 1878 . . . in about a half an hour drive we come to the little stream where the boy was skinned alive some years ago for shooting an Indian.

This story has become legendary. "Some years" indicates that the horror of this story still haunts many pioneers, and it gets passed on to each traveler. This Indian has achieved the status of a ghost because he is never seen and never heard, but his story is widely accepted, especially by Mrs. Riddle, as being possible. This story fits Tuan's definition of fear. The boy being skinned alive is truly bizarre and causes great apprehension to Mrs. Riddle.
As the journey continues, and the group faces less familiar landscape, Mrs. Riddle's fear heightens. Her anxiety is heightened because "nothing in the immediate surroundings can be pinpointed as dangerous" (Tuan 115). Note that on June 2, 1878, Mrs. Riddle writes about the new landscape and the Indians at the same time. The two go hand in hand, and her uncertainty about both causes her stress:

June 2, 1878 ... that Moses and John Church was out in the dark and storm in this wild strange country ... they had gone out late at evening to hunt a while ... we was sure that the Indians had got them

This mythical Indian has now materialized enough to attack her family. No longer impersonal, the Indian is highly immediate in her life. Two days later on June 4, 1878, Mrs. Riddle's fear is even more immediate. The entire group is now taking precautions against the "ghosts": ". . . we are very scared of the Indians now all the time ... we corell the wagans every night and keep a guard out."

As the journey goes on, the stories of the Indians become more frequent and more fearsome. It must be mentioned no Indians are encountered, but their fear of them grows and grows:
June 12, 1878, . . . from the Indians for which we are hearing so much about now all the time. . .

June 16, 1878, . . . we heart bad news about the Indians . . . we were rite in their country now . . .

June 23, 1878, . . . but we have got to far to go back now they tell us some fearful bad Indian news . . . it is bad . . . we are really afraid to go on . . . we are all tire and out of heart

July 5, 1878, . . . we heard bad Indian news--it seems dangerous to go on--I wish we was back home again--

July 9, 1878, . . . we had another Indian scare. It's enough to turn one grey headed to hear the stories they tell us--

July 12, 1878, . . . this place was the most dangerous part of the road for Indians--they were seen here last week watching this part of the road--here we was scared in earnest--. . . not a word was spoken--nor hardly breathing whole we were passing through--but we saw no Indian--(very glad of it too)

These entries are self-evident in their fear. Mrs. Riddle and the entire group were affected with fear of the
ghost-like Indian. What is ironic is the fact that not once do they see an Indian, but the fear stays with them until the end of their journey.
FEAR OF LANDSCAPE

Besides fear of Indians, there is also an intense fear of the landscape in Mrs. Riddle's diary. Time and again, she remarks on her immediate surroundings--remarks which may seem entirely natural because Mrs. Riddle is going to a new place and is regularly seeing new things. The landscape was something to be remarked upon. Mrs. Riddle, however, was truly threatened by it.

Mrs. Riddle was justified in being frightened. In the pioneer's world, nature with its energetic weather, was highly unpredictable. Again I quote Yi-Fu Tuan who remarks on this type of landscape anxiety: "Human beings cannot bear to live in a permanent state of anxiety" (69). Mrs. Riddle had absolutely no control over the weather or the landscape; therefore, she was constantly in fear/anxiety of the entire trip. The landscape was a hostile force to her. On the first day of her trip Mrs. Riddle writes:

May 8, 1874, . . . there is a dark threatening looking cloud laying off in the West"

On June 2, 1878, Mrs. Riddle has a similar comment on the landscape, "... Moses and John Church was out in the dark and storm in this wild strange country." This seems to be more than a comment on the weather. It is a true fear of the landscape that she projects.
Mrs. Riddle's comments on the weather are a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy for her. When Mrs. Riddle comments on the weather being good, it is highly likely that she and her group are at ease. Yet, when the weather/landscape is bad, the group and Mrs. Riddle seem to be facing some sort of chaos. According to Tuan, this fear of the unknown is not unlikely. He states that when the weather posed a threat the pioneers' fears enlarged. He defines types of fears: "One is fear of the imminent collapse of his world and the approach of death - that final surrender of integrity to chaos. The other is a sense of personalized evil, the feeling that the hostile force, whatever its specific manifestation, possesses will" (7). This hostile force is especially apparent as the journey progresses and the landscape becomes less familiar. For example, throughout the journey there is a noticeable theme of the desire for water which may not seem extraordinary. Yet, when the search for water becomes almost desperate, Mrs. Riddle internalizes her fear and the absence of water is considered hostile.

June 18, 1878, ... the water is very bad--O dear what I would give for a good drink out of the old pump at home (this is awful)
The absence of water truly poses a threat to the pioneers. Without it they cannot sustain their animals, their children, or themselves. They are willing to do anything for it. On June 22, 1878, they heard they could get water just two miles off the road. Mrs. Riddle comments:

... we drove on the eight miles then off the two miles--we was all willing now to drive fast for once to reach the water we got to it about five o'clock ... no one knows how to enjoy a drink of water till they want it as we did--... even the horses are standing around in it as tho they are afraid to leave it for fear of the same old thing happening to them--

Fears lessen as the group nears Oregon. Mrs. Riddle changes her landscape outlook from "strange and wild" to "strange and beautiful sights" (July 5, 1874) because they are moving towards their new home, a place to settle, a place that is more civilized. She comments on seeing good farm county. She is feeling more secure, less anxious. She calls Oregon "wonderful land (Oregon)" (July 29, 1878). The feeling that she and the group are going to be all right is apparent.
Another anxiety that dominates Mrs. Riddle's diary has its source in group tensions that eventually led to division within the wagon train. As the families were in transit, there was real anxiety about the rate at which the train was moving. Although a reader has no exact sense of miles covered per day, it is obvious that the train was moving much too fast for some of the members of the group. It is characteristic of a sizable group that there should be arguments especially in the absence of a true leader. Because each man in the train wanted to manage the trip his own way, arguments arose early in the journey. On the Great Platte River road, Merrill Mattis writes, "The best organization was one with a minimum of official routine, led by one strong fair-minded leader; but the tendency was to over-organize (34). This is true of Mrs. Riddle's train. Essentially, it was the men, Moses and Mike Riddle, Dr. Crappers, and Ned Smith, who dominated the train's decision. But, the group lacked a true leader and the men quarreled because of this. The first hint of quarrelling and tension in the group is on May 25, 1878. Mrs. Riddle states:

I think our crowd is a little mad and divided tonight-- . . . water is so hard to get along here and two captains everybody feel mad
It is apparent that the fighting has begun quite early. The group had to start making rules to live by so each male member of the train would have a chance to lead. Again May 27, 1878, Mrs. Riddle comments:

Now they have made it the rule to drive in the lead by turns one man one day then the next day that one will drop back behind the train and so on until all have had a lead a day.

As the tension and anxiety grew within the group, the women watched fearfully, and justifiably so. It seems that Mary believes the large group to be protection for her and her family. If the train breaks up, they are more susceptible to Indian attack or to any "natural" forces. In the pioneer's case, there was power in numbers.

As the journey continues, the tension mounts. The captains go too fast or too slow. The quarrelling and traveling brings down the group's morale. On June 26, 1878, Mrs. Riddle remarks:

I'm so tired of so much fussing and quarrelling all the time--but as long as Moses and I keep out of it we can bare it.

The fear of true division was truly immediate on June 27, 1878: "I fear we will have a real rebellion in camp
soon—the train is likely to break up and divide at any time." On June 29, 1878, the group divided. Yet fear of Indians and of the unknown kept the groups basically together. They played a sort of "wagon hopscotch"—passing one another periodically.

June 30, 1878, . . . both trains camped within one hundred yards of each other they all are afraid of the Indians so they are afraid to get too far apart—but too awful contrary to keep together

Their fear was immediate and real enough to keep them always within sight of one another though divided. Mrs. Riddle remarks that the fight is "perfectly ridiculous—foolish—silly—simple— (no sense at all)" (July 12, 1878). When fear of the Indian becomes its greatest, the wagons wait for each other so they can travel as one group. Yet, when fear of Indians lessens, the fear turns into fierce competitiveness. Each group wants to reach Oregon first:

July 19, 1878. We started early our other crowd was ahead of us they said they would beat us into Boise city or bust—but we passed by them—
A reader of a journal is different from that of a reader of a text. A reader of a diary needs to take an even more active role in creating the world within the diary. Remember that it was not written for a specific audience in mind and as a result, the reader needs to put pieces of the journal together. Margo Culley states "One source of the engagement of reading a private, periodic record is precisely this activity, which can be akin to putting together pieces of a puzzle - remembering clues and supplying the missing pieces, linking details apparently unrelated in the diarist's mind, and decoding 'encoded' materials" (21).

All diarists are writing within their own minds of self-knowledge and personal experience; and as a result, the reader cannot help but be excluded from the knowledge. There are definite limits to what a reader can do. So, what can we do to reach the most complete understanding of the diary? Culley believes we must identify the silences in the diary. By silences, I mean the themes that the reader glimpses and needs to know, but that the diarist only mentions or perhaps fails to verbalize at all. In doing this identifying, we must organize elements such as technology, ritual, etiquette, plan, history, and form, to reach at an unknown silence. These silences must be
identified because they have a powerful influence on the
author and, in turn, on the reader.

We know what largely seemed to matter to Mrs. Riddle:
the Indians, the weather, the landscape, and thoughts of
home. Yet, some information is omitted, and it is difficult
to deduce much about her personal life. Mrs. Riddle's diary
does not seem to parallel other "typical" women's journals
of the time. Elizabeth Hampster writes in "Tell Me All You
Know: Reading Letters and Diaries of Rural Women" that a
woman's sexuality was something "that women have written
about with more frankness, humor, and frequency than we
might suppose" (58). This is not true of Mrs. Riddle's
diary. Not once does Mary reveal something about her
desires. Even when she refers to Moses, it is only to
comment upon the rate at which he wants the train to move.

What is also atypical in Mrs. Riddle's journal is her
omission of friends and even her desire to make them. At
the beginning of her journey, her friends seem to be very
close to her. She is upset at leaving them: ". . . oh it
is heart breaking any way to be leaving so many dear dear
d friends" (May 9, 1878). Johny and Maggie Gilbreath traveled
for six days with Mary and Moses because they were such good
friends. Mary calls their leaving the "hardest parting of
all" (May 14, 1878). Schlissel reports that on the pioneer
trails, the women often turned to each other for friendship
and companionship. They were their own support system—helping with chores, caring for children, and sometimes even childbirth. Susan Armitage, author of "Aunt Amelia's Diary: The Record of A Reluctant Pioneer" comments, "Other diaries and journals confirm the sense that troubled women did not confide in their men, either because as Amelia's entry shows, she expected only rough comfort or because women hesitated to add their unhappiness to their husband's worries" (71). But Mrs. Riddle does not reveal that she confides in other women. When she was ill, she kept her pain to herself. When the tension in the train heightened because of train and Indian problems, Mrs. Riddle does not turn to other women for comfort. Only once does she describe some women in the group gathering together:

July 10, 1878

--us women meet and visit as friendly as we used to do--we never had any trouble with the women part of the crowd--we always speak and smile as they are passing for we all know its pure contrariness to act so--
May 8, 1878, Wednesday night

Now as I intend to write a diary of our trip to the far west. I intend to write each day's travel at the end of the day—of all that we see and do—and now begin with—I just say that we are in Dow City tonight—all as far as I know the whole camp is a happy one—we started this morning from the dear old home—how very sad it is to break up one's home and leave the good friends behind to go out and seek a better place—So many of the dear friends come this morning to say the last good by's the yard was just full of our friends when we started to drive off. How hard it was to look back at the weeping ones we was leaving—but it has to be parting and meeting—and meeting and parting in this life—Now here we are at Dow City seven miles from home. We come out here and camped so our friends from all around could come into camp and visit us—which they are doing—the whole camp is like a swarm of Bee's moving about from camp to camp, we have so many friends from miles around—it is

1For the most part, Mrs. Riddle does indeed stick with this principle except for June 21, July 3, August 2, 3, 4, and 5 entries. After the journey is over, Mrs. Riddle stops writing for a time, and then she continues as to recap what has happened since their arrival in Oregon.

2The Riddle homestead was located in Dow City, Crawford County, Iowa.
some like last night at home--so many coming and going--last night we never put out our lamps the whole long night--lots of our friends staid up all night--I laid down once just a little while--Moses never went to bed at all--there is a dark threatening looking cloud laying off in the West. It looks like we may get a drenching before morning--Now I must go and call on John and Jannie Coubern for the last time may be in life.

May 9, 1878, Thursday

We got up early this morning to find all in good shape--every body full of life--we did not get started out of camp very early for the friends come around to get a last word--when we got to Dunlap 3 Will Gilbreath 4 was out with a lively team to go a ways with us--Frank and Henry 5 come on to Dunlap last night to stay with Will--he drove untill we stopped for diner--then eat his dinner with us before he went back--he took a queer way to eat his dinner--he would not set down with any one of us but just went from one lot

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3 Dunlap, Iowa, is approximately 10 miles from Dow City, Iowa.

4 Will Gilbreath is the son of Johny and Maggie Gilbreath. The Gilbreaths accompanied the Riddles until May 14, 1878.

5 Frank and Henry's last names cannot be determined. According to Ms. Griffith, Mr. and Mrs. Riddle had three adopted children for the journey, Frank, Henry, and Ada.
to another taking a piece from all—saying he must eat with all the last time—poor boy he felt so very bad to say the last good by's—oh it is heart breaking any way to be leaving so many dear dear friends—after dinner we drove on West—on our way fast leaving all seanes behind us—we passed through Logan⁶ and drove three miles out and camped from the night in a nice grove of timber—we made up a grate camp fire to cook our supper by—every body is visiting from camp to camp—as I sit writing by the camp fire light Johny keeps piling on sticks to see them burn—Henry⁷ is setting on a camp stool saying (oh dear I believe I'll die with joy) indeed we are all as happy as can be.

May 10, 1878, Friday

When we got up this morning we found everything covered with frost—it was very cold—there was ice froze in our water pails—every green thing was froze down to the ground we have traveled all day through such a lot of beautiful farms but all are blackened by the hard frost. Ada⁸ took the first ride on Nelly⁹ but she turned the saddle off and

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⁶Logan, Iowa, is approximately 35 miles from Dow City, Iowa.

⁷See note 5.

⁸See note 5.

⁹"Nelly" is a horse that is part of the Riddle's outfit.
Ada too—then Maggie tried to ride her—she turned the saddle off and her too—then I tried to ride her—she laid down and rolled me off. Then she was rid of us all for the day—we camped for dinner by a little country store—After noon we went on through Cressent City out by Terry's fine Nursery it is all black from the frost—we got into Council Bluffs about five o'clock—drove on out about a mile and camped for the night—got our water out of the rail road tank—we got supper early so the men could go back into town to see what they could see—Albian C. Smith come back with them making our camp lively for a while—later in the evening Billy Srader and his wife come out from the city to see us—she brought me a gallon of milk—she said she thought we would like a last taste of old Sally's milk as we had sold her to them back at the old home last fall.

May 11, 1878, Saturday

We got up early to cross the Missouria River—we crossed over on the cars—drove all the teams rite into closed cars and went over every one staying in there own wagon we then drove out two miles and a half from the river and camped to

10 See note 4.

11 Council Bluffs, Iowa, is approximately 55 miles from Dow City, Iowa. Council Bluffs was one of the jumping off spots for the Oregon Trail. See Mattes, The Great Platte River Road, pp. 121-129.
fix things in better shape for traveling (we are beginning to learn that we are not ready to travel) after dinner a lot of us went back into Omaha\textsuperscript{12} to do some trading--I bought some green onions for supper--in the evening Albian Smith come into camp again lively as ever--the young folks are having a dance on the grass. Mr. Smith joining with them all having a good time.

May 12, 1878, Sunday

We are in the same camp--we have more or less fixing to do--every one has something to do--I had to take off both our wagon covers and mend them the horses tore them all to pecies last night--Johny Gilbreath helped me mend them he and Maggie are still with us putting off the going back from day to day--dreading the parting--Nearly the whole day we have heard a fine band of music back in the grove--and after we got all our camp work done we went out to see what it was ment for--we come out in a Dutch Beer garden all drinking and dancing for dear life--this evening Louie Dewold come into our camp--Mr. Smith come and staid all night in camp--these are some of the old home friends still hanging on to us yet--Maggie and Johny have been with us all the way from home having a good time every hour.

\textsuperscript{12}Omaha, Nebraska. They have traveled approximately 70 miles.
May 13, 1878, Monday

We got up early to let Johny and Maggie get off for home on the morning train—but they were late and missed the train—this afternoon a lot of us went into the city to see things then in the afternoon hitched up and drove back into town and got our stoves and tents and a general outfit¹³ for camping out—then drove out on the old emigrant road¹⁴ and camped ready to start on our trip in earnest—here we found a family camped waiting for a company to travel with—he joined our train making nine wagons in our train—(this family was Mr. Sloops family¹⁵) in the evening a lot of us went back into town I bought me a watch and a revolver—Moses bought him a fiddle.

May 14, 1878, Tuesday

We got up early again to let Johny and Maggie get off on the morning train—then come the hardest parting of all—it was breaking the last link that bound us to home and friends Johny, Maggie and Louie Dewold all bid us good by and

¹³ For a good description of the outfitting needed for overland travel see Mattes, pp. 40-50.

¹⁴ The emigrant road north of the Platte River is the Council Bluffs Road. It is sometimes known as the Northern Route. In later years it became known as the Omaha-Denver Road or the Omaha-Fort Kearny Road. See Mattes, pp. 129-130.

¹⁵ Because this was a starting off point, it was not unusual for families to wait for other travelers. See May 10, 1878, entry.
started back home while we started on our way Westward. We now begin to realize that we are leaving home in earnest—up to now we have had no rain—the weather has been nice—it has been like some nice pleasure trip—but now we are on our way for certain—just one little company alone among strangers—we drove till noon and camped for dinner out in the open prairie—then drove on to Elkhorn river\(^\text{16}\) and camped for the night—we tried to catch some fish but it was too cold for them to bite—it has been very cold all day windy from the North.

May 15, 1878, Wednesday

We started at six o'clock from the Elkhorn River—in about a half an hour drive we come to the little stream where the boy was skinned alive some years ago for shooting an Indian\(^\text{17}\)—this part of the country is perfectly level—we can see for miles and miles around us—there is some very fine farms but no fencing farms lay open along the road just the same as the wild prairie—no timber but the groves that are set out on the farms which in time will make good timber and a grate wind brake which this country needs—we drove

\(^{16}\) The Elkhorn River was a wide stream; crossing it in the springtime could be quite a challenge to the pioneers. See Mattes, p. 131.

\(^{17}\) There is no source offered for the accuracy of this story. It does, however, begin a pattern of rumor and fear which continues throughout the diary.
through Fremont City\textsuperscript{18} about three o'clock--about three miles out of town we come up with Doctor Crappers\textsuperscript{19} train in camp--we stopped and eat our lunch with them--then we drove three miles the rain pouring on us all the way--we camped in a little grove near by a man's yard--the rain kept up a steady poor down--this is our first rain since we left home.

May 16, 1878, Thursday

We got up early the rain still pooring down--after we had our breakfast it stopped raining the mean all went fishing but got none--but Mike\textsuperscript{20} riddle he got one little one--George Sold\textsuperscript{21} found a duck nest he gave me three of the eggs I made a cake with them for dinner we started on after dinner--the country is perfectly level--we traveled along the rail road--we stopped at a farm to buy horse feed--I bought some pie plant for our supper--we are camped tonight by the side of the grate Platt River--it is a big muddy stream--nearly every body went fishing but got none all our

\textsuperscript{18}Fremont City, Nebraska, now called Fremont, is approximately 95 miles from Dow City, Iowa.

\textsuperscript{19}According to the records found at the Historical McHenry House in Denison, Iowa, Dr. Crappers was a physician in Denison, the county seat of Crawford County.

\textsuperscript{20}Mike Riddle, brother of Moses Riddle.

\textsuperscript{21}George Sold is a member of the train. Mrs. Sold appears in the July 17, 1878, entry.
camp are well and as happy as can be there is just 24 persons in our train.

May 17, 1878, Friday

We got up early and it was raining--it stopped about nine o'clock then we hitched up the teams and started--about eleven it began to rain again a fearfull poor down we saw all the beauty of a Nebraska storm--it rained and hailed and blowed--we could not find any kind of shelter out of the storm till about four o'clock we drove down into a farmer's grove and camped it makes pretty good shelter--this was a fearful storm--just one continual flash of lightning--there is no fencing all along our road--the farmers stake out their milk cows--I even saw a sheep staked out today. 22

May 18, 1878, Saturday

When we got up it was still raining--our bedding was all wet--but the whole camp was in good spirits considering the weather--we had fine fish for our breakfast for the first time--we are in eight miles of Columbus City 23--we spent the day in camp drying our bedding. Moses went into Columbus City to get oil to spear fish with tonight--I have been out

22 According to Webb, this was a great plains practice. The landscape was too open and unmarked to fence, so the livestock had to be "staked out." See Webb, pp. 316-317.

23 Now called Columbus, Nebraska. They have traveled approximately 130 miles.
a while to the lake to see them spear fish but I got tired of it—it's too windy and cold for me—the lake is a beautiful thing—just a deep Basin in the level prairie—there is a skiff on it to go out to spear fish—now its nine o'clock I'll go to bed—some of the women are in bed—some are out by the lake.

May 19, 1878, Sunday

When we got up it was fine—clear and warm—we hitched up and drove through Columbus City about a mile come up with Doctor Crappers company again in camp—they had passed by us some way by some other road—We went into camp with them and got our dinners—then spent the rest of the day visiting around the other camp getting aquainted with our new neighbors as they will join our train and travel together—we are now 17 wagons, six tents, 68 people all jolly as can be—Harve Dale came to our camp yesterday--he has come from the old home on the cars and overtook us—it come up a fearful black cloud this evening but didn't rain.

24 In making the journey across, trains would join together for protection primarily against the Indians, but also for enjoyment and companionship. However, as noted in the diary, the largeness of the group led to quarreling. See Schlissel, p. 89.

25 Apparently, Harve Dale is from Dow City, Iowa. He seems to be running from the law. See May 20 and 29 entries.
May 20, 1878, Monday

We all started in line--Moses drove out in the lead--the first thing was to cross the Loup River on a bridge a half mile long--we drove through the little town of Jackson at ten o'clock went five miles farther on and stopped for dinner, just as we were hitching up to start the sheriff of Platte County come into camp and arrested Harve Dale and started him back to old Crawford\textsuperscript{26} again he has tried awfully hard to get away from justice at home--he felt very bad to have to go back after trying so hard to get away--we drove on to Silver Creek\textsuperscript{27} there we got our first letters from home--what joy to get mail on our way--we got four letters and the Review oh what a treat\textsuperscript{28}--I got threwed off Nelly about four o'clock this afternoon I fear that I am hurt very bad--I can't stand on my feet at all--they had to lift me out of the wagon--I'll not give up unless I have to--the doctor says there is no bones broken.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26}Crawford County, Iowa.

\textsuperscript{27}Silver Creek, Nebraska. They have traveled approximately 150 miles.

\textsuperscript{28}The Pony Express delivered the mail to the emigrants. See Mattes, pp. 471-73. The Review is now called The Denison Bulletin.

\textsuperscript{29}The accident was a bad one for Mrs. Riddle. The accident confined her to the wagon. I speculate that this was more than a physical injury; Mrs. Riddle is also suffering psychologically. She states, "I'll not give up until I have to." This statement reflects more than physical damage; mentally, this was a hard journey for all the emigrants.
May 21, 1878, Tuesday

We started at ten o'clock this morning— it rained all the forenoon on us—we eat our dinner right in the open prairie in the pooring rain—but it stopped raining before night—we are camped out on the open prarie to night—I think likly it will be open prarie from now on westward—I am very lame and soar I can't stand or move only as Moses lifts me—I have suffered more today then tongue can tell—just terrible—Ada has a bad sore finger to make things worse for us—it is hard to get our work done—but Frank helps all he can Henry and him can do lots of it—we find no wood along now only every chip or cob we see we pick up to do our cooking with—Henry finds lots of chips and trash along the rail road—he don't let one thing pass him.

30 It is a problem for the Riddle wagon since both women are hurt. The women were responsible for the "household" duties of such things as cooking, washing, collecting fuel, and even driving the oxen. See Schlissel, pp. 35-36.

31 The Council Bluffs Road was notoriously known of being void of timber. Buffalo chips, corn cobs, trash, anything that could be found was used for fuel. See Mattes, p. 47, pp. 133-134.

32 By 1878 the Pacific Railroad was also a means of travel for the migration west, yet wagons were still the primary mode of travel. See Schlissel, pp. 132-135.
May 22, 1878, Wednesday

This morning the Crappers train drove out in the lead--our part of the train is in the rear--we drove through Grand Island--here Doctor Crappers sold his monkey it made them to much trouble in camp--Mrs. Crappers could not get her work done for the bother of the children around her tent playing with it--it has been fearful hot today by spells--and hard rain showers by spells--how I do suffer riding and jolting--I have to lay down in the wagon all the time Moses lifts me out and in the wagon we are camped near by the little town of Chatman 33 it is threatning a hard storm.

May 23, 1878, Thursday

When we got up this morning we were wet from top to toe--the storm last night was terrible hard--it blew all through the tents and wagons Frank and Henry got soaked all through--they sleep in one of our wagons and it blew rite through the cover--we drove till noon and stopped and tried to dry our bedding--we are camped tonight in two miles of Harny Junction on the rail road--we are still travling over perfectly level country--not a brush of timber--or hardly a

33 Chapman, Nebraska. They have traveled approximately 180 miles.
bite of grass for our teams—they buy hay when ever they can get it.\textsuperscript{34}

May 24, 1878, Friday

We drove into Harney Junction and camped for the day—Moses got both our teams shoed and Nelly too—I am very lame and very weak can hardly bear my pain.

May 25, 1878, Saturday

We started out early drove 16 miles and stopped for dinner drove all afternoon over fearful rough roads—I have suffered awfully this afternoon I can't stand alone yet—the captain (Mike Riddle) of the train will not stop and let me get better—he wanted this morning to leave me at Harney Junction till I'm better then take the train and catch up with them—I will not be left behind alone if I die then they can leave me behind some of our train want to stop till I do get better and some will not stop—Moses would stop with me but the captain of the train will not let him—they say they must stay together so for fear of the Indians—We do hear frightful news about the Indians on farther west. I think our crowd is a little mad and devided tonight they elected another captain (Dr. Crapper) this morning—now we have two captains both are a little mad tonight—water is

\textsuperscript{34}See note 31.
very hard to get along here now--with water so hard to get
and two captains everybody feel mad--one captain wants to
drive fast the other wants to drive slow--so tonight Mr.
Sold's folks and Charley Bowens and Mike Riddle's folks are
camped a mile ahead of us we don't know what they mean by it
till we catch up with them--if we ever do.35

May 26, 1878, Sunday

We didn't catch the fast crowd until noon--we eat our
lunch and drove on ten miles and camped by a school
house--there is a little settlement here around--we saw our
first Jack Rabits36 to day as we come along--the mean are
out hunting them now--one come runing into our camp just a
spell ago--the dogs ran it in--it is used to runing under
the school house but the children and the dogs made it
pretty lively for it. I can only set in the tent door and
look out--I can't stand alone yet--I wrote a letter this
evening to send back home.

35 There was much tension within the train. The biggest
problem with each wagon was its ability to keep pace, and as
a result, fights/splits within the train were not uncommon.
See Mattes, pp. 54-55.

36 A jack rabbit is a distinctive animal of the Great
Plains. They have characteristics which make them adapt to
Plains life: long ears like that of a burro, keen sense of
hearing, and highly developed legs for running fast. A jack
rabbit is a true hare, not a rabbit. See Webb, pp. 36-38.
May 27, 1878, Monday

Now they have made it the rule to drive in the lead by turns one man one day then the next day that one will drop back behind the train and so on until all have had lead a day--We stopped to eat our dinner by a rail road station--and to night are camped on the Platte River this makes our third camp on the same River--we are traveling near along it for several days--they tried fishing but got none--we have seen strange and wonderful things all day it is well worth the trouble of traveling to see the strange and new things--Henry got me some beutiful flowers to day--he rode off on the pony and got them--the pony is a grate comfort to the children to ride for a change37--(if she did nearly kill me she was not to blame) they have the side sadle or Henry's sadle on her every day--sometimes change the sadle two or three times a day.

May 28, 1878, Tuesday

We have traveled all day close along by the Platte River--the road has been perfectly level--the River on our left hand--the high strong Bluffs off on our rite to day we have seen our first sand--we have expected to find sand on our way before this--the grate sandy plains we have heard

37 The pony provided transportation for the children. It was common for the children to either travel in the wagon or on an additional mule or horse. See Schlissel, pp. 170-171.
about is nothing to dread\(^38\)--or at least we don't find it so--We camped by a school hours got water out of the well--we sometimes now find it hard to get good camping places--for water and grass is scarce.

May 29, 1878, Wednesday

We got up early and just as we were starting an Antelope\(^39\) come near by our camp nearly every man got his gun and began to shoot at it--the bullets flew after it like hail--but no one hit it they kept up the shooting until it was a mile off poor little thing it was scared to death--it was the first Antelope we have seen--we stopped to eat our dinner to day by the rail road--We used water out of a hole by the side of the track made by grading the road--it was just a pudle hole of dirty water--but it was all we could get--we camped at night by an antelope station. Just before we stopped for night Henry was off from the road a ways on Nelly he catched a little young antelope--its a little

\(^{38}\)The Platte River Valley was known as a "desert" to the pioneers. The valley was "destitute of vegetation" and this lack of life was a constant fear to the pioneers. See Mattes, pp. 161-62.

\(^{39}\)The antelope is described as a cross between a sheep and a deer and is native to the Great Plains. The emigrants admired the antelope because of their swiftness and the fact that they did not pose. Mattes explains that the antelope was difficult to shoot: "It was rare that a hunter could kill an antelope by rifleshot at long range...." See Mattes, p. 252; see also Webb, p. 35.
beauty—about four o'clock this afternoon as the cars was
passing by us Harve Dale⁴⁰ stood out on the platform—waved
his hand and went on—-we found him at the station waiting
for us—he got away from the sheriff in some way.

May 30, 1878, Thursday

We started out early—Henry give the little Antelope to
the woman at the station we could not keep it for want of
milk or we would have carried it along for a pet—-we
traveled 16 miles by noon drove off the road quite a way to
get water and get our dinner. Just after we got back onto
the road Charley Colwell kiled an antelope it set our men
wild⁴¹—-about a half dozen of them took their guns and went
hunting and got behind so they had to walk ten miles to get
catched up which they did after we had went into camp. We
are having more or less quarling now every day—-some want to
drive fast and some want to drive slow⁴²—-I am sure we are
driving far to many miles in a day for the good of our teams
when feed is so scarce—-and the water so poor—-hardly fit to
give the horses—or to cook with—-we are still following the
grate Platte River valley—-the road is very level and smooth

⁴⁰See entries May 19 and May 20.

⁴¹It was highly desirous to kill an antelope because
they were difficult to shoot. See Mattes, p. 252.

⁴²Note that the quarreling has begun in earnest - group
tension is apparent.
now—we are also following rite along the railroad—the railroad is a fine place to walk on when they get tired of the wagons—sometimes there is as many as twenty people out walking at a time—I am getting better now every day—I can begin to stand and walk—we are camped by the railroad—there is not a stick of timber in sight no where we just pick up what we can find along—every old cob where teams have been fed we pick up every chip and every big stalky week—them that rustless most gets the most stuff to cook with—we have always had enough yet to do well enough.

May 31, 1878, Friday

We have traveled 28 miles—the road perfectly level—we have seen Antelope all day on every side of us—we camped by the railroad—the roads are getting very dry—we are getting some tired too.

June 1, 1878, Saturday

We have traveled very hard to day—the road was very dusty—not a brush or tree any where to make a shade—nothing but sage brush and Prickly Pare’s43 we see enough

43The plant life of the Great Plains consisted largely of the desert type of vegetation. The prickly pear is a species of cactus which is often prickly and sometimes bears an edible fruit. See Webb, pp. 30-31. Sage brush is a common plant having a bitter juice and an odor resembling sage and covering vast tracts of the alkaline plains in the western United States.
Prickly Pare's now each day to pave all the streets of Denison--the sage brush helps us out gratefully in our wood--we can cook quite well with it--it is something like a weed more like a woody brush shrub--it will burn green by cutting it up fine--just before we stopped to camp for dinner Mike Riddle killed an antelope--Moses drove a mile off the road to get it for him--then we drove a half mile off from the road to get water to get our dinner--we had some of Mike's antelope for dinner--then we drove back onto the road and on through Julesburg44 and two miles farther on to a railroad station so we could get water out of their tank--this Saturday night we will stay in camp over Sunday and rest for we need it so do the teams--we are in Colorado territory now.

June 2, 1878, Sunday

Sunday night--now of all the bad storms that I ever seen last night beat them all--just at evening the great black cloud began to draw nearer over us it had been laying off in the west all afternoon--every body began to fix things up for a hard wind storm--Frank and Henry would keep fixing our tent a little better as the storm gathered and come closer over--looking more fearful each minute--just as the dark come on so did the storm--I never seen such hail and

44 Julesburg, Colorado.
wind--its very noise was enough to scare us and our hours to death--Frank and Henry held down one of the tent posts Ada and I held down the other one--how we cried and screamed I'll not try to tell--even the boys cried--We did not care so much for the storm as we did to know that Moses and John Church was out in the dark and storm in this wild strange country--they had gone out late at evening to hunt a while we was sure that the Indians had got them--after the storm was over they come in very badly beaten up with the hail--when we got out around to see how the storm had done for the camp every tent had blowed down but Doctor Crapper's and ours--every body was wet and cold--the horses was nearly scared to death--it was all the mean could do to manage them--there is not one bit of grass left standing--we have spent the day drying our things and mending what the wind tore up last night.

June 3, 1878, Monday

We started early this morning and here we left the grate Platte valey we turned northward travled all day up a small stream called pole creek--the road is still level--only the valey is not so wide as the Plat River Valey--the hills are closer to us now they are stone hills--they are pretty to look at--our spy glasses come in good play every idle minute--all around the camp want to take a turn at
looking\textsuperscript{45}--we can't deny any for it is a great pleasure
sure,\textsuperscript{46} we have traveled out of the track of the hail--but
there is no grass to amount to anything now there is just as
much feed on one hundred acres as there is on one in Iowa.

June 4, 1878, Tuesday

We heard this morning that Mr. Adams' crowd is only one
day ahead of us--we drove very hard, passed through
Sidney\textsuperscript{47}--bought horse feed, then drove on, made a very
short morning--we are getting very tired--and some are mad
as fury at the fast driving--just before we stopped at night
Moses killed an antelope, one will not make a mess for the
while camp now there is fifteen teams of us now, we are
camped on Pole creek--we are very scared of the Indians now
all the time--we corell the wagons every night and keep a
guard out--two men stay up at a time--half the night at a
time--we have 21 men in camp\textsuperscript{48}--we have the company of a pet

\textsuperscript{45} The emigrants see a definite change in landscape; they
are out of the plains and into the Bluffs region. See
Mattes, p. 455.

\textsuperscript{46} The spy glasses are probably one of the few luxuries
the Riddles had. The usual fare consisted of only the most
basic kitchen ware, gun and gun supplies, food, and the most
absolute necessities. See Schlissel, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{47} Sidney, Nebraska. They have traveled approximately
449 miles.

\textsuperscript{48} Note the fear of the Indians is becoming much more
real, the train is taking defense tactics.
antelope in camp to night--it is fine fun for the children to play with--it's real tame and real pretty.

June 5, 1878, Wednesday

We got up early--it was raining--our pet antelope was still in camp--it belongs to a house near by--we traveled on in the rain, cleared off by noon, we are camped on Pole Creek again only we had to drive a little off the road to get to it for water--the Prickly Pears are very thick all around--the sharp stickers go through thin shoes--the poor little bare foot children suffer awful in them--some went fishing and some went hunting--an awful storm came up late at evening--we tied our tents down solid--it all had to be done in five minutes for the storm come up so quick--Moses had gone out hunting again but when the storm come up he hurried back to camp--he had not forgot Julesburg. 49

June 6, 1878, Thursday

We drove ten miles and stopped for lunch--we can see Jack Rabbits on all sides of us--and antelope are very plenty every where--we drove ten miles after dinner and camped on the same littel creek, I don't know why they call it Pole Creek for I'm sure there is not a pole on it large

49 Reference to Julesburg, Colorado. Julesburg is approximately 50 miles from Sidney. The reason for this reference is unknown.
enough to pole one hill of lima beans tho there might have been one day a brush or two on it--I'm sure it is the longest little stream I ever saw.

June 7, 1878, Friday

We travled 28 miles up this same little stream--we drove without our dinner--we camped at an old camping ground--there was lots camped here when we came up--we camped near them--some of our own crowd have not come up at all they are so very mad about the hard driving--in fact it seems that we are driving hard enough to kill our teams--and the people too--we are getting very tired--I am getting most well now I can walk when I want to.

June 8, 1878, Saturday

We got up very early--drove into Sheyenne--stopped about four hours to buy feed and our provisions--here we had lots of trouble--so many are mad at the fast driving--there is great danger of a general out break in camp--Mike came around to our camp saying he will not go any farther with such a crowd but after a lot of talking and fussing they drove on till night together each captain agreeing to take

50 The rate of speed at which the train is going is causing more rivalry and tension.

51 Cheyenne, Wyoming. They have traveled approximately 560 miles.
day about bossing the train\textsuperscript{52}--we camped here where five teams are already in camp.

June 9, 1878, Sunday

We staid in camp all day resting--we surely need rest--we have a nice camping ground--the country is wild and beautiful nice to look at--but to wild ever to be of any use to mortals only for wild beasts to roam over\textsuperscript{53}--a good many done out washing to day--I didn't do any.

June 10, 1878, Monday

We started out early--the five teams joining us--now we are 20 teams in our company--we began to come into the mountains\textsuperscript{54} about ten o'clock--the mountains are the most beautiful sights that we have seen yet on our trip--the grate rocks are piled up in all shapes and ways--one grate pile of rocks was piled in such a way that it looked as though a man might, with one hand push them over--but not so--for they have withstood the hard winds and storms for

\textsuperscript{52}At this point the group decides to take turns leading. Most trains determine this fact at the beginning of their journey. Webb states, "Within a wagon train there was some semblance of order imposed by the wagonmaster . . . every well-regulated train had a democratic system whereby the lead position was rotated among members" (54).

\textsuperscript{53}There is a definite landscape shift for Mrs. Riddle; she sees the land as being an uninhabitable place.

\textsuperscript{54}The Rocky Mountains.
years and years and will I suppose for ages yet to come--

nearly every woman and child--yes and even the men was out

walking, geathering flowers--new kinds that we have never

seen the like--everything strange and new--the little wild

flowers are the most beautiful that I ever seen--all the

brush and trees are new and strange not one thing that I

have ever seen before--the nicest thing of all to me is the

spice smelling goosberry bush that is just in bloom--its all

covered with little pink sweet smelling flowers--what a

grand place to have a picnic--many was the bunches of

flowers that was picked to put in letters to send back to

the friends at home--we stoped at noon by a little farm rite

between two high mountains of stone--the small pine trees

seem to just grow rite out of the rocks--they come out of

every crack and hole--where ever a seed could find a lodging

place for there is not one bit of dirt or ground to be seen

on these rocks--every body went out over the rocks after

dinner to see the strange sights that is so fine a change

after passing over so much wide level dry plains--things are

really pretty, the flowers sure are nice--the prettiest that

I ever seen sure--we passed tons and tons of snow it looks

so cool and pretty--we camped all night by a grate bed of

snow--the young folks have played at snow ball to their

hearts content--we have a roaring big camp fire for the

second time since we left home, the pine wood burns very
nice—it seems so good to have a good camp fire—it looks
good besides, it is good for it is real cold—too cool for
comfort—it is raining some too—some of the men climbed up
on the mountain—so high that to look at them they looked
like small boys—every one is hunting for something new and
strange.

June 11, 1878, Tuesday

We got up early and as we went up higher into the
mountains we passed snow on all sides—snow from one foot to
six foot deep—the snow water running everywhere making it
very muddy and slipery (very very muddy!) we got to the
summit of the mountains about ten o’clock—nearly everyone
got out to walk to see if it made any change in the walking
in the light mountain air—but none could but a little way
until all out of breath—there is no mistake—there is a
little difference in the air—even the teams felt the
change—they could go only a little way until they had to
stop and rest—we then came out on to a higher level plains
then began to go down hills again the western slope is much
shorter than the east side and not so much rock or trees—in
fact the trees were all behind us at noon—we got down the
mountains and into Larinie City55 about one o’clock—we got
our dinner and bought provisions and horse feed—we bought

55 See footnote on next page.
water kegs for now we are getting into the Alklie\textsuperscript{56} country where the water is bad—we can smell the alklie as we pass along—they tell us that we will have to haul water along now for a while till we get through this belt of alklie country—while the men bought food and things a lot of us went out to the Territorial Prison\textsuperscript{57} which was near by our camp—it’s a sad sight to see so many men in prison—shut off from liberty and sunshine—there is some as nice looking men in there as any of our lawyers or doctors or editors—what a shame that men can’t do what is right and there would be no need of these places—there is 78 in the prison—some black negroes—and there is seven women in it too.

June 12, 1878, Wednesday

I will have to write a little more about yesterdays travel—we drove 20 miles yesterday afternoon after we left

\textsuperscript{55}Laramie, Wyoming. For the emigrants, Fort Laramie marked the end of the High Plains and marked the beginning of the journey up the Rocky Mountains. Since this was the last trading post for 800 miles, the emigrants used Fort Laramie as a trading post.

\textsuperscript{56}Alkali is a soluble mineral salt, or a mixture of soluble salts, occurring in soils, etc., usually to the damage of crops.

\textsuperscript{57}Fort Laramie was a military reservation and held the responsibility of maintaining law and order; however, it cannot be determined as how long or why the prisoners are in jail. See Webb, pp. 485-87.
Larimie City—we did not go into camp till none o'clock at night—some awful mad about the late hard driving—there come very near being a real rebellion in camp—some declare they will not travel so hard—killing the teams and the people too—we can’t certainly stand this kind of travel long—this morning they all got together and talked it over—all concluded that it is best to try to keep together—for more protection from the Indians for which we are hearing so much about now all the time—\(^5\) we did not get started very early for it took so long to make peace in camp—the morning was clear and real cool for we are so near the snowy mountains—we traveled all day up a high level plain—the great Larimie plains we have heard so much about—I have read and heard about the great Larimie plains ever since I can remember—it is all alklie on every side—the snow covered mountains are on our rite and left hand—we are traveling to the northwest between them—it is cool even where the sun shines out bright and clear—we camped at four o'clock there was such a fearful looking cloud coming up—but it passed among the mountains range and only rained on us a little—the men went out hunting—they killed four antelope and three Jack Rabbits—we see them

\(^5\) Note that both fears—group tension and fear of the Indians—are intertwined. See June 30 entry.
thick every day on all sides of us--their meat makes a nice change in our eating.\textsuperscript{59}

June 13, 1878, Thursday

The first this morning after starting was to cross the worse mud hole of our whole trip--it was a deep hole of alkie mud so sticky that our teams could hardly get through--the whole day was muddy roads--till just about night we come out on a piece of rocky road--such a rough road I never seen--in some places our wagons would jump down nearly two foot at a time--it was awful--I thought that I was about over my hurt but I felt this afternoons drive very badly--just before camping we had to cross a deep ugly stream it was real dangerous it was so deep and swift--and the rocks so bad and high in the bottom--we just drove up on the bank and made our camp it rained a little all day--and such a wind as it has been--once we had to turn our wagons all around with the back ends to the wind to keep from upsetting our wagons--the teams don't like such storms they are hard to manage when the wind blows so hard--they killed one antelope today--its fearful cold tonight the gards have

\textsuperscript{59} The typical diet for the emigrant was the "bread-bacon-coffee" formula. Webb describes a typical menu: "...for breakfast, coffee, bacon, dry or pilot bread; for dinner, coffee, cold beans, bacon or buffalo meat; for supper, tea, boiled rice, and dried beef or codfish" (48). See also Webb, pp. 46-47.
their over coats on--this is the worst camping place we have had yet--we had to clear off the sage brush to get a place to set our tent on--the sage brush smells so bad when we are brushing around in it.

June 14, 1878, Friday

When we got up this morning it was clear bright and cold--our breakfast steamed on the table like a winter morning at home--we could see the horses breathe all over camp we are rite along the sides of the great Elk Mountain--its a grate bank of white snow--at noon we camped for dinner down in a little narrow valley--there was a lot of dry brush--we made a grate campfire then hung up quilts to shelter us off from the cold winds--it was very cold--we realy suffered with cold--the afternoon was warmer but very muddy--the snow water running every where souping up the alkalie mud--I never seen such sticky mud--several teams got stuck in the mud through the day--we crossed the Medicine Bow River and some of the men was behind hunting and when they come up to it they had to wade it--the water was deep cold and swift.

June 15, 1878, Saturday

We drove untill noon on quite level ground--it got some warmer by noon--we have seen antelope on all sides to day--we traveled 24 miles to day--the road as more or less
muddy—we are camped on a little stream near the Platt
River—we could have drove on farther but the ferry man said
if we would wait until tomorrow he would put us across the
Platt for a half dollar less on each team—thats worth
waiting for—we are very tired anyway—we are driving awful
hard every other day—our captain drives fast when it is his
day—and the other drives slow.

June 16, 1878, Sunday

We got up early and begin to cross over the river it
took five hours to put us all across—we paid 2.50 each
team—the man said he had run the ferry eight years and that
one of Moses' horses (teams) was the largest horses he had
ever put over the river—Fort Steet is right on the west bank
off the Platt River—here is lots of soldier stationed to
protect the country from the Indians—our two teams got put
across nearly the first so we had a good time watching the
soldier drill and train—when all was across (it only took
one team at a time) we drove one mile out of town and camped
the rest of the day—we had lots of visitors out from the
Fort our big team seemed to be a great wonder to them
all—the young folks have been having a happy day—they are
happy or seem to be—for all have been gathered in groups
making things ring with their singing—well let them be as
happy as they can—for us old ones have to bear their
burdens—one man went back into Fort Stiet and sold his team
and wagon so he can go on the cars--he is afraid of the Indians--but so are we all for that matter.

June 17, 1878, Monday

We drove to Rollins and stopped to eat our dinner here we heard bad news about the Indians--we were in their country now--we drove hard all afternoon there was a fearful wind storm come up--we had to turn the teams square around, to save our wagons from tipping over we are camped down between two high mountains the waer is very bad--alkalie--we could only let the horses have a half pail apiece--its poison--they have tried up all the horses to keep them from drinking and killing themselves--there is scarly any grass any way--our teams are having it hard--with the hard driving and bad water and scarce feed--they are failing.

June 18, 1878, Tuesday

We drove 28 miles without stopping for dinner--it is enough to kill all the teams--and people too this way, we crossed the summit of the Rocky Mountains today--now we begin our downward course toward the Pacific slope--camped at night by the grate Sulphur Springs this little creek is

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60 See June 15 entry. The average rate for the emigrants was 22 miles a day.

61 Sulphur Springs, Wyoming. They have traveled approximately 820 miles.
called mud creek—the water is very bad—O dear what I would give for a good drink out of the old pump at home (this is awful)

June 19, 1878, Wednesday

We got up early to start on but there was several sick in camp—we are rite in the mountain fever range the doctor said there was seven people very sick—Henry is sick a little but not very bad—Charley Colewell's baby is very sick the doctor says it will die—a lot of folks went to Sulphur Springs to get some of the water to drink—the doctor advised them to—at these springs there has been some kind of a battle fought—in the years gone bye—there is a wall of rocks built up and ditch cut down to the water so to get the water without being seen—we don't know what has happened here at some bye gone day—there is graves where the dead are buried. O I hope none of our camp will have

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62 Mountain fever was very common—it killed more emigrants than the Indians did. Mountain fever is associated with cholera—the "Destroyer of the great migration." Webb lists the symptoms as sore throat, vomiting, and bowel discharge. Although less virulent than cholera, it could be fatal. See also Unruh, The Plains Across, p. 409.

63 Webb states, "...graves did become the highway markers of the Great Platte River Road" (81). Also see Webb, pp. 82-86. Schlissel also notes, "The fact lumined large for the woman, and felt death to be a personal catastrophe...No one who reads the diaries of women on the Overland Trail can escape feeling the intensity which women regarded loss of life. Cholera, illness, accident—these were central facts in the minds of the women..." (154).
to be left on the road side—we see graves all along the road—this is my birthday—23 years ago I was traveling from Illinois to Iowa now it is from Iowa to Oregon or some other place—then I was young and as happy as the happiest of young folks, not a care on my mind to bother me—my poor mother had all the care on her shoulders the same as I have it now while my children are happy and carefree—Mrs. Colewell’s baby is very sick.

June 20, 1878, Thursday

All the sick are getting better now. I set all last night with Mrs. Colewell in her wagon to help her with her baby—we watched every minute for it to die all the most part of the night but as the morning came on—we could see a change for the better and by the time the camp begun to make a stir it was shurly better, so we had lots of hope for it—and when the doctor came around—he said it was all rite and safe—so we begun to get ready to travel again—P.S. I believe this indicates that she is using her diary as discourse; she does have an audience in mind.
June 22, 1878, Friday

Now I did not write last night for the very reason I could not we drove on and on hoping to find water after driving 40 miles and until 11 o'clock at night we had to camp down without water and supper—very sad and sick by daylight this morning we begun to get out on the road again in hopes of finding water. At 10 o'clock we come to a little stream called bitter creek it was very bad alkalie water—we tried to use some of it to make tea and bread—but we could not eat our bread after it was made. We drank a little tea made very strong—we had some fresh elk meat that Moses had killed back in our mud Creek Camp we all fried some of that and eat it with our tea—They give the horses a half pail a piece a full pail would have killed them we drove on after dinner and about two o'clock we met a herd of Oregon poneys on their way East for sale—the men told where we could get water ahead by driving two miles off the road—we drove on the eight miles then off the two miles—we was all willing now to drive fast for once to reach the water we got to it about five o'clock there that got to it first came running back along the line of wagons with water for the rest—as they come along up—no one knows how to

66 This is the most miles traveled in one day by the train. Their search for water is beginning to cause anxiety and tension.
enjoy a drink of water till they want it as we did—the weather is hot and the dust so blinding the poor teams suffered more than the people did—this spring is the nicest water I ever seen the children played and paddled in the little stream that ran off from the spring—they are shurly happy in it—even the horses are standing around in it as tho they are afraid to leave it for fear of the same old thing happening to them—

June 23, 1878, Saturday

We drove back on to the road again—and traveled 12 miles and stopped for dinner on a little stream of pretty good water—afternoon we drove 15 miles and camped for the night all tired out and as mad as Hornets—we did not get into camp till dark—there is some very mad people in camp to night—we cant live this way long—we could hardly get our supper in the dark—I do pity the poor tired women—that has a lot of small children67—I will not complain for myself for I have it so much easier than lots of them—this afternoon we met a train of people on their way back from Oregon—they tell us such hard tales about that country it is enough to scare us out and turn us on the backward

67 Schlissel states, "The journey was hardest of all for women who were pregnant, and for those who traveled with very small children" (51). Many of Schlissel’s diary entries include stories of children falling off the wagons, getting lost, dying, and general child care.
track—but we have got to far to go back now and they tell us some fearful bad Indian news—it is bad—we are really afraid to go on—we may have trouble yet with the Indians before we get through our journey we are all tired and out of heart—and nearly sick after these last few days of hard traveling in the heat and dust and bad water—all the afternoon we traveled down between two high mountains—we passed by a large cave under the mountain of rock—some one has lived in it for years and years by the signs of the place—there is hundreds of names written in it on all sides and up over head—it looks like a den of robbers that we read about in Novels (it is robber den maybe) it looks like they might have lived there 20 years—I would just like to know who did live there—Henry rode Nelly rite into it and wrote his name as high as he could sitting on her back—this little valey is so narrow and the mountains so high on each side that it makes it quite dark along the road—there is just barley room for the road in the bottom of the valey—a little stream runs down it—we have crossed it 20 times I think—the road was very bad at night we came out to where the valey is a little wider we camped by a house here and a little patch of garden this looks nice after so long traveling over rocks, sand, mud, and snow and dust—the man here is a cattle man—he keeps his cattle in these mountains on the lunch grass the spring of water here is nice—a
little stone house is made around it and the little stream that runs off from it makes all the stalk water that is needed—here we met a family coming back from Union County Oregon they don’t like any of Oregon they gave it a hard name—they would discourage us if they could—but we will go on now and see for ourselves then we’ll know.

June 24, 1878, Sunday

We staid in camp all day resting—some done out some washing and some baking—I wrote letters nearly the whole day—there must of been one hundred letters written in camp today—the young folks had a dance in the house today—the two young men herders that live here was so pleased to see some young people here in the mountains—they just sat by and looked on and smiled—I do believe they thought out young girls was prettier—(then cattle) they could not be persuaded to take a dance with them—this evening Mrs. Daisey Crapper and me climbed the highest mountain that was near us—we got up about three hundred feet high—it is just grand to get up so high and look back down on our camp wagons and teams look small from so high it was quite level

68 This is a confusing misspelling by Mrs. Riddle. "Stalk" should be "stock."

69 Baking was extremely difficult for the emigrant. Schlissel does point out however that "the emigrant women displayed an astonishing versatility" (81).
after we got up on top--there was lots of shelly rocks and great cracks in the rocks--it was well worth our trouble climbing to see the grant sight off down the valey--

June 25, 1878

We got up and started out again--the roads were rough and full of ditches--and some spots of sand--I had no idea that sand was so hard to travel in--it tires the poor horses so to walk in it--it gives way under their feet and they get very tired when we pass over the sand patches--we drove very hard and late--a good many are swearing like sailors so mad at the hard drive--just about every other day we make a long killing drive--one captain is fast and one is slow--it is killing on us in this dry dusty weather--we are all getting very tired--Mose and Frank don't get into any of their squables--they just take it as it comes--Moses is sure that his two teams can stand it as long as any teams in the crowd--he can go fast or slow just as the train is a mind to go but he would rather go slow on account of the people getting so tired by hard and late driving--

June 26, 1878

We drove all day till four o'clock without stopping for dinner--this is not so hard on the old folks but the little children suffer so for so long a drive without stopping--the poor mothers too has it so hard to keep them still in the
wagons—we are camped one mile out from Green River City—the men went into town and bought provisions—a delivery wagon brought the stuff out—there is a fearful fuss in camp tonight—I'm so tired of such fussing and quarling all the time—but as long as Mose and I keep out of it we can bare it—we have to any way we have not had a word in any of the quarrles yet and we hope not to—Frank is a good boy too—he keeps out of it all he can for our sakes—there is not one particle of grass on the ground now—we have to buy hay for the teams—we are rite on the bank of Green River we will cross over in the morning—

June 27, 1878

We crossed the river this morning and drove out five miles and camped for dinner—the road is right along by such stacks of rocks them are pretty to look at—we make out to see the beauty of the seanry as we pass for all we are so tired—we drove ten miles after noon and found a fine camping ground by a good clean stream of water—but we are all tired out and such a lot of mad ones tonight—I fear we will have a real rebellion in camp soon—the train is likely to brake up and divide at any time—

70 Green River, Wyoming.

71 Note that the Riddle family is staying out of the group quarrel, but they are still affected by them.
June 28, 1878

We traveled very hard today--it has been very warm the road is very dusty it raised up and settles all over us in the wagons so we are all covered with it so when we move it will pore off our clothes--it is a funny sight to see each one all covered with dust the women have nice gray mustach all the same as the mens (made of dust) and all the hollow sunken cheeks are loaded with it--if things keep on this way we will all be hollow sunken cheeks so we will all carry an even share--it is enough to sink the cheeks and hearts and spirits of all and the horses are having it very bad--we hope for something to better our troubles before it comes to a real brake up--

June 29, 1878

We drive hard and stopped for dinner down in a little valley found some wood and made a fire it was real cold--here some of the croud dropped behind they have rebelled at last now we are a small train only three teams more than we started from home with the other captain has

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72 There is a real connection with the landscape and group tension in this entry. It is evident that the train has been under pressure and that the foreignness of the "dismal" surroundings does not make matters better for the emigrants. See May 25 for a similar entry.
the big crowd—\textsuperscript{73} we camped at night down in a little ravine. It is very cold—we have found wood and have a camp fire we had to carry water three quarters of a mile—after we were in camp the other part of the crowd came up and passed by us and went on two miles and camped—

June 30, 1878

When we got up this morning we was the coldest that we had been on the road—ice was froze in our water pails half an inch thick we was all real cold—really suffering we was so cold—we started out and passed the other part of—(us) before they was ready to start—we got to Eveston—\textsuperscript{74} and across Bear River and stopped to eat our dinner—then the other part of the crowd came up and passed by us all mad as fury its to bad that we have got such trouble in our journey its bad enough at best—we only drove about three miles and camped for the day—both trains camped within one hundred yards of each other they are all afraid of the Indians so

\textsuperscript{73} The wagon train has finally divided, and Webb states that these divisions were not unusual: "Big trains were reduced to the speed of their slowest members; impatience became epidemic, ... the process of dividing and subdividing started..." (36). It is interesting to note however, that even though the trains were divided they remained within sight of each other as a safeguard against the Indians; they still need each other for protection! For more discussion on this see Webb, pp. 35-36, and Schlissel, pp. 25-27, 174.

\textsuperscript{74} Eveston, Wyoming. They have traveled approximately 870 miles.
they are afraid to get to far apart--but too awful contrary to keep together--75

July 1, 1878

We let the other crowd get started out of camp first but by nine o'clock we passed them by again--it is too bad to hear them swear at each other--we made a hard drive it was very windy--Doctor Crappers carriage blew over and broke the top all to pieces--this morning some of the young folks were out walking on the rail road and they didn't see that our road was leaving the rail road they walked on thinking that the road would soon come back to the rail road--they walked on so did we travel on and when we stopped for noon they had not come up yet--we come back to the rail road just at noon--we stopped but no young folks was in sight yet--Moses and Frank started back along the road and met them a mile or two back--they were nearly give out the girls was just about gone--Moses took Ada and nearly carried her she was nearly ready to faint down when he got to her--the boys was helping the girls along the best they could when he met them--Moses took one arm of Ada and Frank the other and nearly carried her along--her feet is nearly one solid blister--we camped for night at the head of the great Echo Cannon76 we have

75 See June 29 entry.

76 Echo Canyon.
passed some very pretty scenery all day but are too tired to enjoy the sights as we pass them but it is grand and strange and we are all excitement about one separation—it is a bad thing and will do neither party any good—

July 2, 1878

We stayed in camp all day to let the other crowd get one days travel ahead of us to save trouble—its too bad to have to pass and repass them when all are so mad—they cant pass without saying some disagreeable things to each other some find out just as we are passing that their teams need swearing at—they want others to know they can swear if need be and some swear when I cant see the need of it—Moses and Jake Solds went hunting—killed three deer—this is a wild and rocky country grand and awful looking—we rite by the rail road station there is only one family living here—we are in Utah territory—here we have seen the first of polygany among the Mormans—a little way down in the valley we went to buy some milk and butter—he keeps a lot of cows and makes butter and cheese to sell to the movers that pass—he lives in a great long house one room joined on to each other each wife and her children live in separate

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Anti-Morman rhetoric is not unusual. The emigrant had heard stories of the Mormons and often complained about the religion. It is very clear what Mrs. Riddle thinks about the Mormon practices. See entry July 4. See also Unruh's discussion, pp. 324-26.
from each other--each have a front door coming out to the same yard--it reminds me of our hog pens back home where we build a row of pens and put a old hog and her pigs in each pen--and really the family didn't seem to be much more than mere hogs they don't seem to be bright or intelligent but of course they have no chance here to know much the man seemed to be all rite and has some education but the women and children don't know nothing that they ought to know--they say each wife has her own room but all eat and work together--he had three wives here and two on another ranch such a way of living is not human or swilised and had ought to be stopped intirely--

July 4, 1878

Now we let the crowd get 2 days ahead of us so this morning when we got up we talked it over where we would go to spend our 4th (either to Denison or Dow City this time) but we come to the conclusion that either was too far away--so we started on down Echo Cannon--it seemed to look ahead down the cannon that it would not have room to go through--the mountains come right down together at the bottom with a small stream of water running along the narrow bottom--the railroad and wagon road and little stream go winding down crossing and recrossing at every turn--the wind blew a gale right down the cannon whirling dust and fine sand over we--so we could not see the teams ahead of us at
times--This day's travel has been a wonderful day to see strange and odd things--such piles of green looking rocks--this road itself is a wonder the rail road wagon-ground--and little stream--I wish I had counted how many turns they crossed each other we passed the mouth of the tunnel where the railroad goes under the mountain--some of the crowd walked through it--the mountain seemed to be right straight up on our right and left--some places the road is made right through solid rocks--just blasted off enough of the side of the mountain to make the road the little bottom is so narrow there is barely room for the roads--if it had not been so fearful hot and dust flying so bad we would of had a grand day's travel--the sights have been fine and wonderful at times--we passed by what they call the (Devils slide)\(^78\) there is two rows of rocks--they seem to be about 10 or 12 foot apart--rocks set up edge ways and end ways in two strait rows up the mountain side--making a great ditch--at night we came out where the bottom is a little wider--here there is some little patches of garden growing the stuff looks rank and fine--there is a railroad station here and a few houses and some stores--Everybody seem to be happy--they had been having a 4th of July celebration--just before we camped for the night we passed John Pickett hoeing

\(^78\) Devil's Slide, Utah. They have traveled approximately 1,000 miles.
potatoes by the roadside—he had stopped to earn some money to go on with—he started a month before we did—he come and his wife out to our camp and spent the evening they was very glad to see some one from the old home—here we see some more of mormonism—I went to a house to get some milk—there was two sisters living in one house the wives of one man—they had 11 children none looked to be more than 9 or 10 years old—they had just come in from the picnic—they were dressed well and seemed to be just as happy as could be—(God forbid such a way of living) Mrs. Bowen went in where there was 5 wives and a whole house full of small children—they seemed to be doing well in here—they are all dressed well and seem to be intelligent enough in this settlement—

July 5, 1878

We had a wonderful days travel all through—every day things are getting more wonderful grand and nice—we are not so tired and worried as we have been—we forgot the past weeks of hard ships—when we are looking on such strange and beautiful sights79—we just enjoy it all as we pass—we are out into Weber cannon tonight—things are far more fine and wonderful to look at than in Echo Cannon—which we got out

79 These "strange and beautiful sights" now cause Mrs. Riddle happiness. Again, note that the change in landscape also influences Mrs. Riddle's emotional outlook.
of early this morning--everyone is amazed at the rock and mountains and the river and the road--this road is a great piece of work to make it through solid rock in places--one place the road was just wide enough to drive along with only 2 foot to spare--right along the high mountain side 300 ft. above our heads--on our left hand is the Weber river down below about 50 foot the water rushing down over the rocks--so swift that it is dashing into white foam I never seen a stream that went down the hill so fast--it has a great fall to every yard of it--we have just wound along the bank of it for 10 miles nearly every yard of the road dangerous to drive over--we come out of the valey onto a high open prairie--just a little down hill for 5 miles--then down into a valley and come out to Ogden City\textsuperscript{80} and here we come up to our other crowd--they had camped just outside the city--we are camped in town on a vacant lot--we stopped about 4 o'clock we had not stopped for dinner at all I got 6 litters here what a joy to get our mail along the trip--this is a fine town and the country around is a splendid farming country--the crops are fine they raise every thing by irrigation--it dont rain here in summer such fine fruit orchards--I think I would like to live here if we had a

\textsuperscript{80} Ogden, Utah. They have traveled approximately 1,040 miles.
farm—we heard bad Indian news—it seems dangerous to go on—O I wish I was back home again.81

July 6, 1878

We got started about 9 o'clock we had to buy feed and provisions the other crowd got started first and passed us in camp—but when we got up into the main part of town there we passed by them again—I do wish that them (or us) was off the road it is so disheartning to see such trouble and contrairness (I say real meanness) its a shame for men to act as they do—we travled nearly straight north untill noon—passed some very fine farms stopped in a lane for dinner—this seems more like civilization again we had new potatoes for dinner—the other crowd came up and passed by us while eating at dinner—we then started on and passed them at their dinners—(this is terrible) this afternoon we have passed by some fine Mormon homes—some farms look like a small town so many houses to deep so many wives in—we passed by an artificial fish pond it had been scraped out and filled with water from a small stream—it was a grand sight the water was so clear we could see fish only an inch long in it—we passed over a little stream coming down from the foot of a great mountain about 20 rods off on our right

81 Until Mrs. Riddle writes of "Indian news" her outlook on the journey is a positive one; with the mention of the Indians, she immediately wishes she were home again.
hand the stream was hot so our teams would hardly go over it--the spring at its head is boiling hot--we camped for night in our open prairie--in between two farms not one speck of grass--we have to carry our water 2 miles its bad salty stuff when we do get it we are going around the great Salt Lake now we can see it all the time off on our left and we can smell it to--

July 7, 1878

We started out early its Sunday too but we had no good camping place to lay over so we had to travel--we got into Cearimn at 9 o'clock--here we found a lot of folks come in from the country all scared in by the Indians--we didn't know what to do some were scared to bad to talk about--they realy was too scared to talk some thought we might get on to Lelton82 all safe and then stop if need to if it was not safe to go on--but we drove on 10 miles and stopped for dinner--we went strait west along the railroad and along side of Salt Lake we stopped at the foot of a grate high mountain--we could not get a drop of water no where--there was plenty of grass but it was all shining with salt the grass was in one spot of a few acres--all the rest of the surrounding country was just one grate white plain of

82Layton, Utah. They have traveled approximately 1,060 miles.
alkaline and salt—there was nice clean salt laying on the ground—a nice clear stream of water running by but it was pure brine we could not use it or give it to the horses—we camped for night a half mile from a cattle ranch—we have passed by all the farming country now—the water is very bad but we can make out to use it—the grass is pretty good—

July 8, 1878

We have traveled hard all day—the whole day has been over white plains of alkaline and salt beds—I gathered up some pure clear slat nice enough to use I went to send it home in a letter—one place we had four miles in one strait string of alkaline mud—the worst—I ever saw—team after team got stuck and had to be helped out—we drove till dark before we could find any water that we dare use—all are tired this night—

July 9, 1878

We drove into Kilton by noon but we had another Indian scare Its enough to turn one grey headed to hear the stories they tell us—some of our train wanted to stop some wanted to go one road and some another road—some wanted to sell our teams and go on the cars but we heard that there was some other emigrants camped out and was waiting for some other train to come up so they travel on with them—we bought provisions and drove on out to them in the
afternoon—just before we stopped we saw our other train coming up but they stopped in camp\textsuperscript{83} behind us—we camped with the train that was already in camp—it is a beautiful camping ground—there was eight teams of the movers and six teams of freighters in camp here—

July 10, 1878

We stayed in camp all day—we are all very glad to rest and have good water which is fine such a nice spring—the other crowd came up about 9 o’clock and camped right near by—all use water out of the same spring—us women meet and visit as friendly as we used to do—we never had any trouble with the women part of the crowd—we always speak and smile act they are passing for we all know its pure contrariness to act so—\textsuperscript{84}

July 11, 1878

We started on four of the freight teams joining us—we drove hard all day and didn’t stop to get any dinner and camped at night down in between two high mountains—we have good weed here to make campfire they have put out extra

\textsuperscript{83}This is a classic example of the emigrant traveling community; a successful journey was the result of interaction with other teams on the trail. See Unruh, pp. 387-389.

\textsuperscript{84}This is the first time Mrs. Riddle separates herself from her family and the reader knows what the women think about the groups quarreling.
gards tonight--I am more afraid to night than I ever have been it really looks scary--more so than any camp we have made--its quite cool down in here tonight--

July 12, 1878

We traveled hard all day over bad roads and very rough and very hot and dusty we stopped for dinner a few minutes not over 20 minutes--here the other crowd passed us again--this is getting to be perfectly rediculous--foolish--silly--simple--(no sence at all) in the afternoon we had to pass down through a deep narrow cannon--the freight men said that this place was the most dangerous part of the road for Indians--they were seen here last week watching this part of the road--here we was scared in earnest--the cannon was so deep and narrow--there was just room at the bottom for the wagon road--on each side was steep brushy mountains--the men walked before and behind each wagon with their guns in their hands--the women driving the teams--not a word was spoken--nor hardly breathing while we were passing through--but we saw no Indians--(very glad of it too) we come out on a level open prairie and camp--by a little stream of good water but no grass at all--our other crowd was here in camp before us--there is a kind of fort made here\textsuperscript{85}--its made of sods

\textsuperscript{85}It was common along the Oregon Trail to find forts/homes/shacks that previous emigrants had made for protection.
and sage brush—the wall is 3 ft. thick and 6 ft. high and 100 ft. square—we did not camp in it—some of the men took the horses up to the foot of the mountains to herd them on the grass—but the poor horses seemed to be scared half to death and could not be made to stay there—they came running back into camp frightened till they was just wild—they staid around camp and done without feed—they must of seen or smelled Indians up there—

July 13, 1878

We started out at eleven O'clock—the four teams stopping behind again—so we went on with our own small train—we are such a small crowd now that we are realy afraid to go on alone—we drove 18 miles and camped for the night by a fine spring of water—but no grass—there was a few teams camped here when we come up—this is a wild looking country all along—

July 14, 1878

We got up early this morning before the sun rose—just a little way off from our camp we saw 21 teams in camp they had come up in the night and camped Henry went out by the camp and came running back telling us that Mr. Adams folks was in that train—sure enough Mr. Adams that had started a week before us from home was there in a crowd behind us—we
started early\textsuperscript{86}--some of that train joining us--now we are a larger train we are not so afraid--I got into Mr. Adams wagon and rode all day visiting--this day was the worst dust of the whole trip so far--every body was covered with dust--I never seen the like of it--we drove hard all day without dinner--this is no good way to get fat--or even take comfort--we camped on Rock Creek--there is 30 teams in camp tonight--they were here when we came up--

July 15, 1878

We got started by daylight--all in a hurry to get across the river our mad train was ahead of us here--they are just swearing mad--a new trouble had come up--they declaring that they would beat us across Snake River\textsuperscript{87} or kill all their horses--so they did beat us across--but I fail to see any thing smart in it--any way (we was not in Oregon as soon as we was over the river the men made a great cheering for Oregon as we came over)--one little boy stuck his head out and said--Ah where is Oregon I cant see it--the little fellow heard so much about Oregon he thought it some thing different--we crossed at noon just stopped a few minutes for

\textsuperscript{86}Note that the Riddle train is moving at a high pace; they have caught up to a train that started a week before them.

\textsuperscript{87}The Snake River borders Idaho and Oregon. The group is not in Oregon, they have simply crossed a major obstacle.
dinner and drove on to the Malad River\textsuperscript{88} and camped for the night--here we came up with our mad crowd again--all camped near together--we are traveling through dangerous ground--we have seen all day the houses with windows taken out and walled in with stones--for safety against the Indians--at noon while we were crossing the river--two teams came up loaded with goods that had gone out together up where the Indians had killed the freighters and scattered the goods--\textsuperscript{89}

July 16, 1878

We got up early was afraid to go on and afraid to stay where we was--but we made a hard drive--and at noon got to a stage station the stations have little stone forts made to go in in case of need we got on to another station at night and camped--after we had camped our other crowd came up and camped near by us--they had a little boy dead in their trains--he had died about 3 o'clock poor little fellow he had been sick all the way--I went to see him this morning before we left camp--I didn’t think he would die today--but it is best for him--0 dear if we was only off this fearful trip--here at this stage station the Indians took the stage

\textsuperscript{88}Malad River is in Oregon.

\textsuperscript{89}It seems that Mrs. Riddle is referring to an Indian massacre that had happened to previous emigrants.
horses all away from the men—only 3 weeks ago and distroyed all his garden stuff and took all his provisions away from him—he hid himself—while they done it—there is no women at any of these stations nor at the few farms that we pass by—

July 17, 1878

We got up very early before sunrise—Mrs. Sold, Mary Bowen and I sat up last night with the dead boy—but no one can begin to tell the awful drearinous of setting up with the corpse in a tent out in a wild country—it is so sad and lonesome—to set and hear the silent guards—keep up their steady tramp around about the camp—it is nothing that I would like to do again if I could help it—the men made a grave—and just after the sun come up—they buried him—then started on—God help the poor mother that had to go on and leave him there alone in that wild spot by the roadside we have traveled very hard over rough stirry roads—we passed by one stage station and camped at night by a little ranch—here is just one lone man staying he has a little stone fort made for safety—

July 18, 1878

We have had a fearful bad day of dust—sometimes we couldnt see our horses heads for dust its about 6 inches deep—we didn't stop for dinner camped for night by a small
ranch one man staid here alone--here is another little stone fort here we hear more bad Indian news its enough to make one crazy with fear--

July 19, 1878

We started early our other crowd was ahead of us they said they would beat us into Boise City\textsuperscript{90} or bust--but we passed by them--while they was yet in camp--they just hollered good bye--as we passed said now they would give it up--we drove hard and got into Boise City--we drove through to the north side of town and camped--the others came up and camped on the south side--we staid in camp the rest of the day--we hear more bad news of the Indians--we are afraid to go on--there is lots of soldiers here--

July 20, 1878

We drove 3 miles out of town where we could get water and feed for the teams--here we found a lot of teams camped waiting for better times to go on this is such a nice place--water is fine the grass is good--

July 21, 1878

We staid in camp all day--its very hot here we cut brush and made a shade cover our tent and in front of it--it made us more cool and comfortable--this is such a nice resting

\textsuperscript{90}Boise, Idaho.
place—we are taking comfort shure—I wrote several letters home—some done out washing—

July 22, 1878

We are still in camp some of the men went into Boise City to hear the news—it is no more favorable now than when we stopped—we are enjoying this place we are getting rested—there was no teams came into camp today—

July 23, 1878

Still in camp we cant go on yet the news is no better—some of our crowd has got tired of doing nothing so they have gone to quarreling (making good the old saying that Satan can find something for idle hands to do) our own little home camp are very happy and resting more every day—

July 24, 1878

Still in camp some men went back to the city today again—to hear what news there is there is nothing new so they have made up their minds to go on so all have something to do to pick up things and get ready to move again—

July 25, 1878

We got up early the whole camp was called in council to see who was willing to go on and who were not or would rather stay in camp yet awhile the larger number was in favor of going on—then they elected another captain—an old
frontier man who had been over the road before (P.S. this was old Mr. Barrows) so we got started on again to the relief of many—we started out with thirty five teams—we drove hard all day—and camped at night at the little town of Middleton here some more teams come up and joined us this valey is a good farming country the crops are nice--

July 26, 1878

We drove 15 miles and stopped for dinner—afternoon we drove 8 miles and camped at a stage station here some more teams came up now we are 44 teams quite a good army if it was not for the women and children—all things go on smoothly under the rule of our new captain--

July 27, 1878

We traveled hard started early the road was over a dry dusty sage brush plain—we camped the Fayette River\textsuperscript{91} and soon camped for our lunch—the river was deep but we founded its water ran into our wagons—we left a man behind—in the morning hunting for his horse—he did not come up by dinner time so we waited for him untill it was to late to go on any farther the stage drier came up he told such frightful Indian stories that we are scared to death—they have run the wagons into a stronger correl that common and put out an

\textsuperscript{91}Payett River. This river borders Idaho and Oregon.
extra number of guards to watch—Moses and Frank are both out tonight for the first watch—every tent is stretched inside the corral of wagons but ours and Mr. Sloaps—the horses are always tied on the inside I am more afraid of the horses if anything should scare them—to make them break loose—our tent is right by the wheels of our wagon so we can run into the corral if need be—

July 28, 1878

We have been afraid all day—we drove hard without stopping for dinner we camped for night by a stage station there is lots of soldiers here to keep the Indians from crossing over the Snake River—the scouts came in this evening—and say that they had seen the Indians over on the other side of the river—we took our glass and could see the streak of dust from them where they were going south—about 15 miles off—but the river is between them and us and the soldiers are here—but all are so excited and afraid—a lot of men took the horses all out to the foot of the mountains to keep them there all night they will heard them out there away from camp—

July 29, 1878

We got up and found all alive and well—for all the great scare last night—we drove out a little way and come to another squad of soldiers watching a crossing on the
Snake River to keep the Indians from crossing we drove very hard and come to the ferry across the Snake River about 10 o'clock begin crossing and about 2 o'clock all was over then we was in Oregon--the wonderful land (Oregon) that we had been traveling and traveling over long weary miles of sand and dust--sand dust mud--stony roads--rain hail and winds--heat and cold--to reach just as we got over there was an eclipse over the sun that cast a shade over all for a few minutes--there had been so much talk of Oregon--Oregon--Oregon--all the while that when the men began to yell out Oregon little Mike Riddle sticks his head out side the wagon cover and said (Ma where is Oregon I can't see it) we camped between two high mountains--a beautiful place--the water is so nice the grass is good. Our poor teams need it--

July 30, 1878

We have traveled hard all day--our road has been a little down hill all day--very high mountains on our right and left the cannon is deep and narrow at the bottom we eat our dinner in the hottest place I ever seen the mountains so high and rocky the sun beating down not a breath of wind--we camped at night at a stage station in 25 miles of the whole Indian army its getting a little than I like its fearful scarey--I am getting very tired but I have it so much better than many others in camp I ought not to complain
July 31, 1878

We have drove hard today--didn't stop to eat any dinner--we was awful afraid all day--and to make it worse Mr. Adams team began to give--Moses took nearly all his load into our wagon to lighten his load--and took all his family to ride with us--so it possible he might keep up with the train--We camped at night by the virtue mines--7 miles from Baker City\textsuperscript{92} rite in the open prairie--a very rough hilly country--

August 1, 1878

We got up early got breakfast then called all together in council--to see who of them wanted to go by Baker City and who wanted to go straight to union town--All decided to go on to Union town\textsuperscript{93} all but 6 teams--Our two teams Mikes two Mr. Adams and Jake Solds here was the final separation of our fellow travelers so the train will be broken up at different campe now--for they will be stopping off to seek for each ones self which place they like best each will choose his (Best place and stop) I see very plainly that what will suit one will not be the best place for another--all cant see alike--but they are in Oregon they

\textsuperscript{92}Baker, Oregon.

\textsuperscript{93}Union, Oregon is approximately 25 miles from Baker. This split signifies the final split of the group.
will be in to stop and look about for something—we drove on to Baker City got there at 10 o'clock we stopped outside of town to see if John Fillet might be in town—we found him in Baker so we drove out to his place 3 1/2 miles west of Baker City. We got out and camped by noon—here is the end of our journey for the present—and I am very glad of rest after 3 months of hard travel—

August 5, 1878

Now we have begin spending our time far different for the last few days—from what we have been doing for the last three months—the first thing was a dance at Fillets—then visiting—resting looking around over the country Mrs. Fillet and I took a long ride over the country day before yesterday—to see what we could see—we rode our ponys and what miles and miles out through the farms it is so strange to me to see nothing but wheat growing—no gardens—but wheat as far as one can see Mrs. Fillet tells me that there is but two or three gardens in the valey it never rains here in summer—they have to irrigate every thing—the soil is just a bed of alkalie dust where it is not irrigated—when I looked over the country and got back to camp I never did in all my life feel so bad and home-sick—we are all badly disappointed in the country—our men folks have got so
interested in gold mines\textsuperscript{94} that they are spending their time more pleasantly than us women. Time begins to drag along with us--we are camped in Filets yard--we are in the house or in our tents just as we like--but it's not good to be idle some begin to get cross again--they had another dance last night at Filets--we have been in camp now 5 days--I'm getting very tired of the heat and dust--the wind blows hard every day--

August 6, 1878

A man came into our camp last evening and wanted some one to go out to his farm and do a little work--so Moses hitched up and drove out to his place and camped in a narrow lane by his house--now this morning another man came along and wanted work done too--he offered better wages and a longer job of work--we hitched up our teams and drove to his place 12 miles and camped near by his place--right in the sage brush and dust--next morning we drove back through his field down to the Powder River and camped on the bank under some willows--this is the nicest camping ground we have seen on the whole trop--all went to work--Moses and Frank, Jim Macomber and Henry--leaving Ada and me alone from early morning till late at night--we had music all night all

\textsuperscript{94}Mrs. Riddle is referring to the interest of gold in California.
around us with coyotes—so time wore on till the last of September when we moved back to Fillets place again—but our Willow camp had been a very pleasant one while we were staying in it—we had lost of company while we stayed there one Sunday some movers traveling from Kansas comes to our camp they knew my uncle Richard West in Kansas was right from there—they told me many things about uncle we camped at Fillets again while our men went out thrashing for awhile—95—we made up our minds to go west of the Cascades to winter—but we had to rest our teams a little while for they had been working very hard since we had stopped then when we were about ready to go on one of our mules got sick—so that put a stop to that part of our arrangements—for the time—we then moved up in the mountains and in the house with an old gold miner—here we was settled for the winter—Moses and Frank went on with the thrashers till the middle of October—then come home and settled down for the winter—Jim Macomber went to hearing sheep for a man out in the mountains—the men chopped and hauled cord-wood into Baker City for the winter—but the greater part of the time they done nothing—Frank Curns went into Baker and worked some—so time work on till spring May came then Moses had

95 This should not be seen as a change in plans for the Riddle family. The emigrants did any job that they could to earn a living.
made up his mind to go into the gold mines for the summer--
and send me and the children down into Washington territory
to my Father—so on the eighth of May just even one year
from the time we left our old home in Iowa, we started to
travel again in the same old style with team and wagon--Mr.
Furgison took us in this freight wagons as he was going to
Umatila after a load of freight for the store keeper in
Baker City--We were very sorry not have Moses go rite on
with us then we started out and got down to the lower end of
Powder River valey--we camped at night at the foot of a low
range of hills that separate the Powder River valey from the
grand round valey--we made a fire and made our coffee in
real emigrant style again--here another frieght team joined
us in camp--

May 9, 1879

We got up very early and started on--Mr. Furgison was in
a hurry to get on his way--we traveled about 3 miles up a
gradual slope of small mountains then down a long deep
cannon into the grand Round valey--here we see many signs of
spring then in Powder River valey--Peach trees are in
bloom--we got into Union Town about 11 o'clock--we met Dr.
Crapper in the streets he would have us to dinner with

96 This is the first mention of Mrs. Riddle's father. It
does not seem as if he was the Riddle's motivation for
coming to Oregon.
him--our time was very short to talk over our old times of last summer very much--but we put in good time what time we had together--they are settled here for the present--the road was very muddy all afternoon down the valey--we camped at night by a great large farm--a very large farm too for he owns a large tract of good farming land in one body--it is raining--

May 10, 1879

It rained all night hard--but we kept warm and dry in our big wagon its nearly as good as a house--it is high enough for us to stand straight under the cover after we got in for the night Mr. Furgison comes and puts in the hind end gate--and then we are shut in as safe as a house--we use the back end of the wagon to get in and out of--Ada nor I got out of the wagon for breakfast it was too wet--Henry made some coffee--we eat in the wagon it cleared off bright and warm by 9 o'clock--we soon drove out where it had not rained a drop last night--we passed Legrand and Oridell both are nice little towns at Oridell we began to go into the Blue mountains--the road is very rough--it runs rite along the Grand Round River--we went up along the river till

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97 La Grand, Oregon.
98 Oridell, Oregon.
99 Grande Ronde River.
noon stopped for noon by the old bridge all afternoon our road was very rough and rocky—we come out at night onto a high open spot nearly a prairie just a few scattering trees—we camped and made a great fire its cool—

May 11

We got up very early it was very cool hard frost—the sun come up warm—and bright—things looked beautiful through the mountains we got to the summit of the mountains—about eleven—we passed lots of snow—we got down to the tole gate\textsuperscript{100} and stopped to eat our dinner—about two O’clock we met John Laddy and Bob Boyd stuck in the mud with their heavy freight teams—they was too heavy loaded for the muddy roads—Mr. Furgison hitched on his team and pulled them out and up the hill it was raining now and made the road worse—we camped at night in the heavy woods—made a great fire again—

May 12

It was raining when we got up but soon stopped—we got our breakfast and started on right down through the mud—the mud is so bad where it is thawed out—it began to rain soon—then about one o’clock we stopped and camped—here is three dead horses laying around where the Indians killed

\textsuperscript{100}The tollgate is located in Umatilla National Forest.
them last summer to stop the teams—they killed three men
too and wounded one more—by some mean one man was left here
on the ground—they did not take him away now they're in pole
pen built over the bare bones—Ada and I found some of the
bones outside of the pen—we put them back in the pen—it
stopped raining but we stayed in camp it is Sunday Henry,
Ada and me took our spy glasses and went up on a high hill
to look over the country—it is a grand sight—we could see
for miles off over a level valley to the town of Walla
Walla—This is the most beautiful country I have ever seen
in my life—in the afternoon Frank Kerns and Mr. Lance and
passed by with a heavy loaded freight wagons—they drove on
three miles and camped—Frank come back and stayed all night
with us—we are meeting heavy loaded freight wagons now all
the time—much too heavy loaded for the heavy loads—it is
worse on the western slope of the mountains—the snow is
melting and running all over—

May 13

We got up early—Frank went back to his team—we soon
began to go down hill very fast—they call it (the long
hill) I think its rightly named—for it is four miles
down—down—down—Mr. Furgerson locked all wheels on both
wagons while we went down—we passed the Kyuse station—this
station the Indians burned all up last year—they have just
got up a stage barn and a house for the men to camp in—we
stopped for lunch by an Indian tent—a great large tent big enough for 20 or 30 Indians to lie in—Ada and me went into the tent awhile—Ada thought she don't like Indians or their style of living either—we got into Pendleton at evening we went to the Post Office to mail some cards—at the office we heard of some of our old Iowa neighbors—they were living about three miles out of town this is a level looking country but the Indians owns it and about here—this is their reservation (the Uamtillas)—

May 14

Rained hard all last night—the wind blew a gale—the sun come up right and warm this morning—Mr. Furgerson got up very early to get an early start—but when he went to get up his horses off the grass he found some of them had started back toward home—he had a hard job to over take them and get them back it made us very late in starting—it soon began to rain and poured down all day—we went 18 miles without stopping for dinner—we stopped about 4 o'clock at an old watering place—we got dinner and supper all in one—Henry made our coffee Ada and I did not get out of the wagon—the wind was blowing a fearful gale no women could stand up in it any way—this watering place is some wells dry on a high level plain one man lives here alone and sells

101Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon.
water to the freight teams and every body that passes by--I do think it is a lonely way to live--but he makes a lot of money--

May 15

We started early but I never seen such windy day in all my life--that is to take the whole day through--we stopped to eat our dinner along side the Umatilla River--we tried to be out awhile to rest--but were glad to get back into the wagon out of the wind and flying sand--the sand kept up a perfect while to blind one--we got to the Umatilla Landing about four o'clock in the evening--such a sand and as it is all about--Umatilla--I see sand drifting up on the poarches of some houses two feet deep--now here we are at the end of our journey in the old freight wagon--but we have been very comfortable in it Mr. Furgison has took the best of care of us all the way--we all went to supper at the Hotel--then went on board the steamer Harvest Queen to be ready to start down the river early in the morning. Mrs. Furgison helped us get all our goods on the steamer--then later in the evening he come on board to say good bye--now our traveling will be in a different style here after--
May 16

We started down the river\textsuperscript{102} at 3 o'clock in the morning--the children got up to see the boat start--its their first ride on the steamboat we was on the boat about four hours--then landed at Chelilo then got on the cars--it took 3 hours to unload the boat and put the things on the cars again then we started on down it took till 4 o'clock to get to the Dell's\textsuperscript{103}--we went right aboard the boat and got our rooms for the night this was a big fine steamer the wide west--we got into Portland\textsuperscript{104} and went to a hotel and staid all the next day and early next morning we got on a small steamer and went up the Lewis river--to La Center in Washington Territory--we got off the steamer and I rushed about untill I found a man that said that he would haul us out to fathers for three dollars--(7 miles) he took us about four miles out of the way left us at a house for the night--he said he would not go any further over the muddy roads--where he left us was a friend of fathers--so we had a pleasant evening--next morning when we got up it was raining hard. But Ada and I started and walked out to fathers three miles--I never seen such muddy roads in all my life we waded

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Columbia River.}
\textsuperscript{103}\textit{The Dalles.}
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{Portland, Oregon.}
in mud and water clear over the tops of our shoes in many places—but we found father and mother very glad to see us after so long a time so we began to feel a little at home here—about the first of June Ada took sick she laid for five weeks under the doctors care—She laid so very low part of the time that I begun to think her days were numbered that she would never get well but she got better and slowly came back to life—and began to move about the house a little by me or Henry holding her up—then all of a sudden one morning Henry was not able to get up—then he laid for three weeks right in bed not able to raise his head—but he never got so low as Ada did at any time—the whole surrounding country was sick at once—the same doctor tended on 34 sick ones all the time he went day and night—they all had diptheria—now I never knew I could bare so many hardships as I had to go through (but as the old saying is) where thers a will thers a way I got through it some I had a little help to tend on Ada—there was not so many sick at first—but I tended Henry day and night alone three weeks—I was among strangers and so many sick all had lots to do to help tend to their friends that they knew—the doctor came every day no one knew me so I had to bear it through the best I could—so we got along—and Ada was quite well and strong again and Henry was getting stronger fast—we got a letter telling us that Moses was coming home from the gold
mines--Me and the children went to meet him at La Center.
Henry was not able to do it but just would go too--so we
just let him walk as slow as he could and rest along--he
knew that he could ride back on our pony that Moses was
fetching down with him now (this walk was 7 miles) Making 14
miles of a walk when Moses got rested a little he began to
look around for us a home--he looked the country over for
miles around--he done many miles of hard walking about
trying to find something to suit him on either of the Louis
Rivers so in the latter part of August him and me got on the
steamer went down the Columbia river into Clatsop county
Oregon--he looked about that country awhile but did not like
it very well--but took a claim on a piece any way--then we
went back to Portland--then on up to Vancouver in Washington
then back to Clark county again he then went to look over
Clark county again trying to find something he would
like--he hunted about a month to get suited and could not
like it--so about the last of September he went back down to
Columbia to look at that place again--he looked over that
place again and concluded to take it--he then came back and
began to get ready to go on the claim in Clatsy county and
try to make a home of it--on the 18th of October he went
back taking Henry with him to build a house ready for
us--Ada and I stayed where we was--we had a room fixed up in
father wood shed we had a fireplace to sit by of nights--so
we would set up evenings wishing that they would soon send
for us—Henry had never been away from me before—On
December 13th Ada and me started down to them we had a
terrible rainy muddy day to get to La Center—I got a man to
move us down to the steamer to go down the Louis River and
out across the Columbia to St. Helens to catch the down
river steamer—we got over just in time (to be left) by the
down river steamer we had to wait then for the next
steamer—the steamer "West Point" came along in the
afternoon—we got on it and went down as far as West Port
and sayed all night on the steamer—early next morning we
went on to Knapp got there about nine o'clock in the
morning—stayed in the Hotel till afternoon—when Moses came
out after us—we went out about amile to Mrs. Vandusesn—we
rode out on a sled—the mud was nearly over the sled in some
places—the next day was Sunday—we stayed with Mrs.
Vandusesn—went to church and went to visit Hetty Bagly
awile—Monday Andrew Vandusen took us out (into the
wilderness as every one calls it) the mud was fearful
deep—it was so hard for the teams that Ada and I got out of
the wagon and walked on out to Mr. Solds place—we got all
wet and muddy—we waded over the tops of our shoes—we sayed
all night with Mr. Solds folks—the next day December 18th
we moved into the house with Mr. Barrows after we got moved
in there was such a crowded little house seen before—on the
22nd we went back out to Mrs. Vandusesn to a little party--then come back into the woods to pass the winter the best we could in our circumstances--but we spent the winter quite pleasantly--the men was busy making the road out to our claim 2 miles away--in March (1880) we began to clear a little place on Mr. Barrows place to make some garden and plant some potatoes by the last of April we got our little patch ready to plant--the last of May we began to move out onto our place--our new we called it--we had a hard time to move out--we had to pack nearly everything out as the road was only a mere trail--we did make out to haul our stove out on a sled with Nelly--the road was so rough that the sled broke all up so we carried everything else out on our backs--we only got out what we had to have to get along with for the time--now we had got up to the 8th of May (1880) when we took our last load out and got ready to stay on the place for good (or bad) it was just two years since we left our old home in Iowa until we got our new one--now we began a new life--like nothing we had ever seen before--it was only just kind of camping yet--as we had so few things to do with--and that was very few for we three didn't need much--Ada stayed out with Hetty all spring--so we three was out in the weeds--a wilderness it was indeed--the men put in all their time slashing and chopping down trees--never did they work harder--on the 4th of July Ada came out into the
woods for the first time—she had never seen her new home before—it was her birthday she was 15 years old when she began her new (life in the wilderness) about the Middle of August we had to move off out of slashing so it could be burned over—we moved back about smile into Andrew Vandusens little house—such a little mite of a thing it was—not room for anything just could be called a house that's all—but we made out to live in it until we burned our slashing then made us another house—for ours burned with the slashing—we now every one of us went to work in real earnest to a place to make another house—we come out every day—early and late diging and burning stuff—we had a little shed made to go under when it rained to hard for us—we worked in a good lot of rain any way—we were all working for a house—about the middle of October we got our house up good enough to go into—so we would not have to walk so far—Ada and I worked every day with them—rain or shine it made no difference—but we had but very little shine all the time we worked—we could just camp in our house but it was not near finished—but we could now get in more time—we now named our new home Foveal House—and a forest home indeed it is now who ever reads these pages in future years will see just what it is to pull up from a good home and move around and hunt up and make a new one they will see that it takes up a lot of time and a lot of hard work—and a lot of trouble and vexation to
bear--but now that we are settled in our new home--it would take a good deal to get me to start out and do it all over again--when we first came out here we thought that we would be left our for neighbors--but we had not got barely settled in our new home untill Moses had to go and help a new comer make a house near by us--so by Christmas they got the house done and moved into--I think Mr. Hills moved in on Christmas day--there was snow all over everything that I remember very plainly. Next our nearest neighbor was Mr. Fisher, a mile and a half away and no reaod there, only the poorest kind of trail. And now this is the end of our 2 years wandering about, trying to get into the best place. I do pitty the worst.

Written by Mrs. Mary E. Riddle

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