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## Mormon Trail, The

William Hill

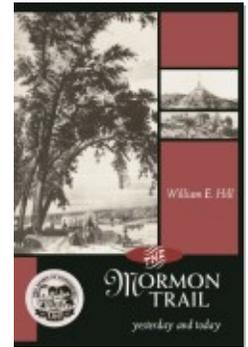
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## Diaries

WHILE MANY EMIGRANTS RECORDED THE EVENTS OF THEIR JOURNEYS IN their diaries, most did not. It is estimated that perhaps only one in 200 to 250 emigrants recorded the events of the trip. Our knowledge about what it was like traveling in a wagon company is based on those diarists, and most of them have not been published, nor are they available for the general population. Also, most of those diaries are rather short summaries from a few sentences to a paragraph, noting the mileage and perhaps a couple of events of daily travel. Only a few are truly detailed accounts of daily occurrences. One of the most detailed accounts was J. Goldsborough Bruff's 1849 diary of his wagon company's trip to California. In recent years, more diaries have been published for the general public.

In most respects Mormon emigrants were similar to non-Mormon emigrants. Most did not record their journey, and most of those who did seem to have written brief accounts. There appears to be no reason to explain the existence of detailed non-Mormon, or Gentile, diaries except for the individual desires of some emigrants. However, the Mormon companies, because of their more formal organization often specifically assigned one or more persons the responsibility for recording the progress and daily events of their journey. They may have been assigned to act either as the official clerk of the camp or as the clerk or diarist for one of the leaders of the company.

In this section there are excerpts from three diarists: William Clayton, 1847; Patty Sessions, 1847; and Frederick H. Piercy, 1853. All three are representative of emigrant diaries. Each describes the journey along the portion of the trail on the north side of the North Platte River across from the landmarks between Ash Hollow and Scotts Bluff. Step back in time as they tell you what their journey was like.

William Clayton served as the clerk of the camp that left Nauvoo in 1846. In 1847 he was assigned to assist Thomas Bullock, camp clerk, in recording the events of the Mormon Pioneer Company that led the departure from the Winter Quarters and first entered and settled in the Great Salt Lake Valley. He was also asked to serve as scribe for church leader Heber Kimball by keeping Kimball's diary along with his own. His personal diary, quoted here (Clayton, *William Clayton's Journal*), is the most comprehensive of the three and one of the best of the whole Mormon Trail period. He left Winter Quarters on April 14 and arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley on July 22.

**Diary Entries: Thursday, [May] 20th–  
Thursday, [May] 27th [1847]**

THURSDAY, 20TH. The morning fair, but cloudy, light wind from northwest and cold. At 7:45 we started out again but had not traveled over a quarter of a mile before the roadometer gave way on account of the rain yesterday having caused the wood to swell and stick fast. One of the cogs in the small wheel broke. We stopped about a half an hour and Appleton Harmon took it to pieces and put it up again without the small wheel. I had to count each mile after this. Three quarters of a mile from where we camped, we crossed a creek eight feet wide and two and a half feet deep. We then changed our course to about southwest a mile or so following the banks of the river, as the ground was wet and swampy nearer the bluffs. The river then winds around about three miles in a bend and then strikes a little north of west. The bluffs on the north appear to be about two miles from the river. We traveled till 11:15 and then halted to feed, having traveled seven and three quarters miles over tolerably good road, though at the commencement somewhat soft. On the opposite side the river, the bluffs project near its banks. They are rocky and almost perpendicular, beautified for miles by groves of cedar. Opposite to where we are halted, we can see a ravine running up the bluffs and at the foot, a flat bottom of about fifteen acres. At the farther side of this bottom is a grove of trees not yet in leaf. Brother Brown thinks they are ash and that the place is what is called Ash Hollow and on Fremont's map, Ash Creek. We all felt anxious to ascertain the fact whether this is Ash Hollow or not, for if it is, the Oregon Trail strikes the river at this place, and if it can be ascertained that such is the fact, we then have a better privilege of testing Fremont's distances to Laramie. We have already discovered that his map is not altogether correct in several respects, and particularly in showing the windings of the river and the distance of the bluffs from it. I suggested the propriety of some persons going over in the boat and Brother John Brown suggested it to President Young. The boat was

soon hauled by the brethren to the river and Orson Pratt, Amasa Lyman, Luke Johnson and John Brown started to row over, but the current was so exceedingly strong the oars had no effect. John Brown then jumped into the river which was about two and a half feet deep and dragged the boat over, the others assisting with the oars. After some hard labor they arrived on the opposite shore and went to the hollow. They soon found the Oregon Trail and ascertained that this is Ash Hollow, Brother Brown having traveled on that road to near Laramie last season with the Mississippi company and knew the place perfectly well. They gathered some branches of wild cherry in full bloom, rambled over the place a little while and then returned to camp. About the same time the camp prepared to pursue their journey. The brethren arrived and made their report, and at 1:45 p.m. we proceeded onward. From the appearance of the bluffs ahead, our course this afternoon will be west and northwest. A light breeze from northwest. Soon after we started, one of the brethren killed a large rattlesnake within a rod of the road made by the wagons and on the side where the cows travel. He killed it to prevent its injuring the cows and threw it away from the road. In the river one and a quarter miles above Ash Hollow, there are several small islands on which grow many trees of cedar. One of these islands is perfectly green over with cedar and looks beautiful. The bluffs also on the south side the river continue to be lined with cedar apparently for two miles yet and are very high and almost perpendicular, running pretty close to the river. On this side the river, the bluffs seem to bear farther to the north, being apparently about three miles from the river, and a few miles farther west they are as much as five miles from the river. After traveling three and a quarter miles from the noon stop, we crossed a tributary stream running into the Platte, in a very crooked direction, being from four to eight rods wide and two and a half feet deep most of the way across, the bottom quick sand, current rapid and water of sandy color, like the Platte. Some had to double teams to get over, but all got over safely. We proceeded on about four miles farther and found that the river bends considerably to the north. The bluffs also bend to the south, so that the low bluffs in front almost reach the banks only barely leaving room for a road. We went a little farther and camped for the night at half past five, having traveled this afternoon eight miles, making fifteen and three quarters miles during the day. Elder Kimball and several others went forward on horses to pick out our road as usual. I have seen several kinds of herbs growing today which appear new to me. One looks like a penny royal, smells almost like it, but tastes hot and like the oil of cloves. Elder Kimball and others saw a very large wolf about half a mile west, and he appeared to be following them to camp. They turned and rode up to him and round him, struck their pistols at him, but they did not go off, being damp. He finally made his escape. The large stream

we crossed this afternoon is named Castle Creek from the bluffs on the opposite side which much resemble the rock on which Lancaster Castle is built. The bluffs are named Castle Bluffs. We had a light shower this afternoon, but the evening is fine though very cool.

FRIDAY, 21ST. The morning very fine and pleasant though tolerably cold. I put up a guide board at this place with the following inscriptions on it: 'From Winter Quarters 409 miles. From the junction of the North and South Forks, 93 1/4 miles. From Cedar Bluffs, south side the river, 36 1/2 miles. Ash Hollow, south side the river, 8 miles. Camp of the Pioneers May 21, 1847. According to Fremont, this place is 132 miles from Laramie. N.B. The bluffs opposite are named Castle Bluffs.' At 7:35 we continued our journey. We found the prairie tolerably wet, many ponds of water standing which must have been caused by a heavy fall of rain, much more heavy than we had back. However, it was not very bad traveling. We made a pretty straight road this morning at about the distance of a mile from the river. The bluffs on the north appear to be five miles or over from our road. At 11:15 we halted for dinner, having traveled nearly seven and three quarters miles, course north of northwest, very warm and no wind. Presidents Young and Kimball rode forward to pick the road, and near this place they saw a nest of wolves, caught and killed two with sticks. Four or five others escaped to their hole. At half past one we proceeded onward and found the prairie wet, and grass high of last year's growth. After traveling four and three quarters miles we arrived at a range of low bluffs projecting to the river, which at this place bends to the north. There is, however, a bottom of about a rod wide between the bluffs and the river, but as it is wet and soft, it was preferred to cross over the bluffs by bending a little more to the north. We traveled on the bluffs a little over a quarter of a mile and then turned on the bottom again. The bluffs are low and almost as level as the bottom. After we crossed the bluffs we found the road better. We saw about a mile this side of the foot of the bluffs, a very large bone almost petrified into stone. Most of the brethren believe it to be the shoulder bone of a mammoth, and is very large indeed. About this time a badger was brought to the wagons which Brother Woodruff had killed. As I was walking along and looking over the river, I heard a rattlesnake, and looking down saw that I had stepped within a foot of it. It rattled hard but seemed to make way. We threw it away from the track without killing it. At five o'clock Elder Kimball rode up and stopped the forward teams till the last ones got nearer saying that some Indians had come down from the bluffs to the brethren ahead. When the rest of the wagons came up we moved on a quarter of a mile farther and at half past five formed our encampment in a circle with the wagons close together as possible, having traveled seven and three quarters miles this afternoon, making fifteen and a half through the day. As the camp was forming two Indians came nearer,

being a man and his squaw. They represented by signs that they were Sioux and that a party of them are now on the bluffs north of us and not far distant. By the aid of glasses we could see several on the bluffs with their ponies, evidently watching our movements. This man was hunting when first seen and appeared afraid when he saw the brethren. The squaw fled for the bluffs as fast as her horse could go, but by the signs made to them they gathered courage and came up. President Young gave orders not to bring them into camp, and they soon rode off to the bluffs. The man has got a good cloth coat on and appears well dressed. The horses they rode are said to be work horses which makes us suspect they have stolen them from travelers. The day has been very warm and some of the teams gave out. We can see some timber on the bluffs on the other side of the river some miles ahead which is the first timber we have seen for more than a week, except some small cedar and timber in Ash Hollow, all on the south side of the river. We are nearly a mile from water and the brethren have to dig wells to obtain a supply for cooking. The feed here is very poor, not much but old grass. Our course this afternoon has been a little north of west. Lorenzo Young shot two very large ducks with one ball and brought them to camp. Elder Kimball proposed tonight that I should leave a number of pages for so much of his journal as I am behind in copying and start from the present and keep it up daily. He furnished me a candle and I wrote the journal of this day's travel by candle light in his journal, leaving fifty-six pages blank. The evening was very fine and pleasant. The latitude at noon halt  $41^{\circ} 24' 5''$ .

SATURDAY, 22ND. Morning beautiful, no wind and warm. We have not been disturbed by the Indians; all is peace in the camp. At eight o'clock we continued our journey, making a more crooked road than usual, having to bend south to near the banks of the river. The prairie somewhat soft and a little uneven. After traveling five and a half miles we crossed a very shoal creek about twenty feet wide. The bluffs and river about a mile apart, but on the other side, the bluffs recede two miles back from the river and have lost their craggy and steep appearance, the ascent being gradual, while on this side they begin to be rocky, cragged and almost perpendicular though not very high. We traveled till half past eleven and then halted for noon, having traveled seven and a quarter miles, the road on this side the creek being better. Our course about west of northwest with a light breeze from the east. Elder Kimball and others ahead as usual. The creek above mentioned was named Crab Creek because some of the brethren saw a very large crab in it. A mile east of this creek is a dry creek, down which, from appearances, a heavy stream runs at some seasons of the year, perhaps during heavy storms. The water running from the bluffs swells it to a considerable height and it is certain there are tremendous storms here. A while after we halted, Porter Rockwell came in and said he had been

on the high bluff about a mile northwest of us and had seen the rock called Chimney Rock which appeared a long distance off. We have been in hopes to come in sight of it today and feel anxious in order to ascertain more certainly the correctness of Fremont's distance. In order to satisfy myself, although my feet were blistered and very sore, I determined to take my telescope and go on the bluff to ascertain for myself whether the noted rock could be seen or not. At half past twelve I started out alone. I found the distance to the foot of the bluff a good mile, the ascent gradual. From the foot the bluff looks very high and rough, many huge rocks having broken from the summit from time to time and rolled down a long distance. I found the ascent very steep and lengthy in comparison to its appearance from camp. When I arrived on the top I found a nice slightly arched surface of about a quarter of an acre in extent, but barren and very little grass on it. Huge comparatively smooth rocks peeped through the surface on one of which I wrote with red chalk: 'Wm. Clayton, May 22, 1847.' On the highest point I sat down and took a view of the surrounding country which is magnificent indeed. On the south side at a distance of two miles from the river, there is a range of cedar trees on the bluffs which very much resemble some of the parks and seats of gentry in England. East I could see where we camped last night, the high grass still burning. Northeast, north, and northwest, alternately, appeared high swelling bluffs and valleys as far as the eye could see or the glass magnify. West, the course of the Platte for ten or fifteen miles and at about four or five miles distance, a large bend to the north brings it in contact with the bluffs on this side. At the distance, I should judge of about twenty miles, I could see Chimney Rock very plainly with the naked eye, which from here very much resembles the large factory chimneys in England, although I could not see the form of its base. The rock lay about due west from here. After gratifying my curiosity, and seeing the men collecting their teams for a march, I descended on the west side of the bluff. The descent at this point looks more alarming than on the other. The side being very steep and all along huge rocks standing so critically, that to all appearance, a waft of wind would precipitate them to the prairie below with tremendous force. In one place in particular, a ponderous mass of rock appears to hang from the edge of the bluff without any visible means of being retained in its position, and by grazing at it a little while, it is easy to imagine you can see it move and ready to overwhelm you instantly. At a little distance from the base of the bluff, I turned to gaze on the romantic scenery above and was struck at the appearance of a large rock projecting from one corner, which very much resembled a frog's head of immense size with its mouth part open. The thought was, those bluffs ought to be named and what name more appropriate than Frog's Head Bluffs. After this reflection, I walked on to where I thought the wagons would come which started

out at half past one. After traveling three and a quarter miles we crossed a dry creek about six rods wide, and a quarter of a mile farther, another about five feet wide and a half a mile farther, still another about six rods wide on an average. These all appear to be the sources of heavy streams of water at some seasons of the year. Soon as we crossed this last one, I saw Elder Kimball wave his hat for the wagons to turn off to the north in order to cross the bluffs which struck the river a little farther. But a little to the west was a very high ridge and I concluded to walk on to it. Found it to be a perfect ridge of gravel, very high and rounding on the top, not more than four or five feet wide and from north to south about 150 feet long. Elder Pratt names this Cobble Hills, the gravel or cobbles varying in size of from fifty pounds in weight to the smallest pebble. At the north foot of this hill is what might be named a clay bank, being composed of a light colored kind of sandy clay and forms a kind of large table. A little distance farther, we crossed another dry creek about eight rods wide and then ascended the bluffs. The ascent is pretty steep for nearly half a mile, but hard and not difficult to travel. The wagon had to wind about some to keep around the foot of the bluffs, crossing the dry creek three times before we emerged from the bluffs to the banks of the river. We crossed another dry creek pretty steep on each side and then found ourselves once more on the prairie bottom. The bluffs are two and a quarter miles from the east to the west foot following our trail. The wind has blown from the southeast all day until lately, when a dead calm has succeeded. In the west a heavy thunder cloud has been gathering for two hours and vivid streaks of lightning observed in the distance. At twenty minutes to five the wind struck suddenly from the northwest, the blackest part of the cloud then lying in that direction. We had a few drops of rain only. Then it seemed to turn off to the east. The scenery after this was indeed sublime, the sun peering out from under the heavy clouds reflecting long rays upwards which were imitated in the east. The romantic bluffs on the north and the lightning playing in the southeast all tended to fill my mind with pleasant reflections, on the goodness and majesty of the Creator and Governor of the universe, and the beauty of the works of his hands. At 5:45 we formed our encampment in a circle within a quarter of a mile of the banks of the river, having traveled this afternoon, eight and a quarter miles and through the day fifteen and a half, making the distance from Winter Quarters 440 miles in five weeks and three and a half days. The feed on the lower bench of the prairie is tolerably good, while the higher land is quite bare. We have noticed today a great many petrified bones, some very large. All are turned into a solid, hard, stone, which proves that the atmosphere is pure and the country would doubtless be healthy, but is not adapted for farming purposes on account of the poor sandy soil and no timber at all on this side of the river. I have noticed a variety of shrubs, plants and flowers

all new to me today, many of which have a pleasant smell and in some places the air appears impregnated with the rich odors arising from them. Among the rest are numerous beds of the southern wood. There are also vast beds of flinty pebbles of various colors, some as white as alabaster. About 6:30 I observed a group of brethren standing together inside the camp. I went up and saw a young eagle which had been taken out of its nest on one of these high bluffs by George R. Grant and Orson Whitney. Although it is very young and its feathers have scarcely commenced growing, it measures from the tips of its wings when stretched, forty-six inches. Its head is nearly the size of my fist and looks ferocious. After this I went with John Pack and Horace Whitney to the bluffs. On our way we saw a large wolf about as large as the largest dog in camp. He was within a quarter of a mile from camp. After traveling about a mile we arrived at the foot of a stupendous mass of rocks almost perpendicular, with only one place where it was possible to ascend. We went up with difficulty and by using our hands and knees, gained the top. We had to walk over a little space which was only about three feet wide and on the east side a perpendicular fall of about sixty feet. Although from the camp this peak looks only large enough for a man to stand upon we found it large enough to seat comfortably about twenty persons. The top is composed of large rocks and very uneven. The prairie below looks a long distance under foot from this peak. Descending we viewed the surrounding scenery which looks more like the ruins of an ancient city with its castles, towers, fortifications, etc., on all sides, and a dry stream coming through the center. We proceeded to the next high rock and found it very difficult of ascent. The top is nearly level and very pleasant. We discovered several other varieties of shrubbery, all smelling pleasant and strong. We saw that a horse has sometimes stood on the top, but how he got there, we could not easily determine. At the east end there is a cedar tree flat on the top and on the underside almost like an umbrella. We made a calculation of the height of this bluff as well as we could and concluded it must be at least 200 feet higher than the river. The surrounding country can be seen for many miles from its summit, and Chimney Rock shows very plainly. We descended at the east end and arrived in camp at dark well satisfied with our journey. Some of the brethren have discovered a cave in one of these bluffs, and one went into it a little distance, but it being very dark and having no torch, he did not venture far. Elder Pratt reports that he saw on the top of one of the bluffs, a hole in a rock 15 inches in diameter and a foot deep with five inches of very cold good water in it. He supposed it to be a spring. Between the bluffs they also discovered a spring of pure cold water of a very good taste. Dr. Richards names these bluffs "Bluff Ruins" from their appearance being that of the ruins of castles, cities, etc. A little to the left is a small perpendicular rock much resembling Chimney Rock but smaller.

The whole of the scenery around is one of romantic beauty which cannot be described with either pen or tongue. Last night a large black dog, half wolf, supposed to belong to the Indians, came to camp. He has kept within two hundred yards of the wagons all day, and has followed us to this place. There have been many rattlesnakes seen today and six or seven killed. In fact, this place seems to abound with them. The evening was spent very joyfully by most of the brethren, it being very pleasant and moonlight. A number danced till the bugle sounded for bed time at nine o'clock. A mock trial was also prosecuted in the case of the camp vs. James Davenport for blockading the highway and turning ladies out of their course. Jackson Redding acted as the presiding judge. Elder Whipple attorney for defendant and Luke Johnson attorney for the people. We have many such trials in the camp which are amusing enough and tend among other things to pass away the time cheerfully during leisure moments. It was remarked this evening that we have one man in camp who is entitled to the credit of being more even tempered than any of the others, and that is Father Chamberlain. He is invariably cross and quarrelsome, but the brethren all take it as a joke and he makes considerable amusement for the camp. Opposite the encampment there are quite a number of small islands, but no timber on any of them.

SUNDAY, 23RD. The morning very fine and pleasant. Brother Egan commenced washing very early on the banks of the river. He kindly volunteered to wash my dirty clothing which I accepted as a favor. After breakfast President Young, Elders Kimball, Richards, Pratt, Woodruff, Smith and Benson and Lyman walked out to view Bluff Ruins and returned at half past eleven. A while ago I went out a little distance to view an adder which George Billings had discovered. It was a dark brown color about 18 inches long and three quarters of an inch thick through the body. They are represented as very poisonous. About eleven o'clock Nathaniel Fairbanks came into camp having been bitten in the leg by a rattlesnake. He went on the bluffs with Aaron Farr and Brother Rolf and as they jumped off from the bluff, the snake bit him, the others having jumped over him farther. He said that in two minutes after he was bitten his tongue began to prick and feel numb. When he got to camp his tongue and hands pricked and felt numb as a person feels their feet sometimes when they are said to be asleep. The brethren immediately applied some tobacco juice and leaves, also turpentine, and bound tobacco on his leg which was considerably swollen. We laid hands on him and Luke Johnson administered a dose of lobelia in number six after he had taken a strong drink of alcohol and water. The lobelia soon vomitted him powerfully. He complains much of sickness at his stomach and dimness in his eyes. He appears to be in much pain. While the brethren of the quorum of the twelve were on one of the high detached bluffs they found the skeleton of a buffalo's head.

Brother Woodruff wrote the names of all the quorum of the twelve present and set it upon the southwest corner of the bluff. John Brown also wrote his name on it. Elder Pratt took the altitude of the bluff and found it to be 235 feet above the surface of the river. He did not calculate the height above the sea, owing to the state of the atmosphere. He, however, predicted wind from the same cause. At twelve o'clock the camp was called together for meeting, and after singing and praying we were addressed by Elder Snow, followed by President Young. The latter said there were many items of doctrine which he often felt like teaching to the brethren, but as to administering sealing ordinances, etc., this is no time or place for them, they belong to the house of God and when we get located we shall have an opportunity to build a house, etc. He expressed himself satisfied with the conduct of the camp in general. He is pleased to see so much union and disposition to obey council among the brethren and hoped and prayed that it may continue and increase. He wants the brethren to seek after knowledge and be faithful to acknowledge God in all things but never take his name in vain nor use profane language. If all the knowledge in this camp were put together and brother Joseph were here in our midst, he could comprehend the whole of it and wind it around his little finger. And then think of the knowledge of angels, and above that, the knowledge of the Lord. There is much for us to learn and a faithful man who desires eternal glory will seek after knowledge all the time and his ideas never suffered to rust but are always bright. He will not throw away the knowledge of small things because they are familiar, but grasp all he can and keep doing so and by retaining many small things he will thus gain a large pile, etc. He expressed his feelings warmly towards all the brethren and prayed them to be faithful, diligent and upright, for we are now sowing seed, the fruit of which will be plucked in after days whether good or bad. G.A. Smith made a few remarks, also several others of the brethren. The president then stated that on Sunday next he wants the brethren to understand that there will be meeting at eleven o'clock and the sacrament administered, and he wants the brethren to attend, all that can, and not ramble off and fatigue themselves but use the Sabbath as a day of rest. He enjoined it upon Bishops T. Lewis, S. Roundy, J.S. Higbee and A. Everett to see that the proper necessities were prepared for the sacrament. The meeting was then dismissed. A while after meeting I walked out with Elder Kimball a piece from the camp. We sat down and I read to him, my journal of the last four days with which he seemed well pleased. We then knelt down together and poured out our souls to God for ourselves, the camp and our dear families in Winter Quarters. While we were engaging in prayer the wind rose suddenly from the northwest, a heavy cloud having been gathering from the west all the afternoon. A sudden gust struck Elder Kimball's hat and carried it off. After we got through, his hat was nowhere in sight, but following

the direction of the wind we soon saw it at a distance on the bottom of the prairie still flying swiftly. We both ran and chased it about three quarters of a mile and caught it a little from the river. While we were out together I remarked that the buffalo gnat had bitten us very severely. Elder Kimball said they bit him very badly last evening. Their bite is very poisonous, and although they are extremely small, they punish a person very much with an itching, aching pain like a mosquito bite. About five o'clock the wind blew a perfect gale and continued till seven when it commenced to rain very heavily, large drops descending, accompanied with hail, which however, did not continue very long but the wind continued nearly all night. The lightning and thunder continued some time but not very severe. We saw the necessity of having good stout bows to our wagons, and the covers well fastened down, for the very stoutest seemed in danger of being torn to pieces and the wagons blown over. When the wind commenced blowing so strongly it turned very cold and long before dark I went to bed to keep warm. Brother Fairbanks seems considerably better. This evening President Young, Kimball and Benson laid hands on him and he seemed much better afterwards.

MONDAY, 24TH. The morning very cold indeed, strong wind from northwest. At 8:25 we continued our journey and traveled over level prairie ten miles, then halted to feed at 12:45. The bluffs on the north about two miles from us and the river one mile. About noon the weather began to moderate and grow warmer. While we were resting two Indians came to camp, their object evidently being to get the dog which has followed us to this place. They tarried a little while and then went away taking the dog with them. At 3:00 p.m. we again proceeded and traveled till 6:00 p.m., distance six and a half miles, during the day 16 1/2. Several of the horse teams gave out and they are evidently failing but the oxen are gaining daily. The mules stand the journey well and in fact, all the teams considering the scarcity of grass. About 5:30 we discovered a party of Indians on the opposite side of the river moving west. When we formed our encampment they crossed over the river. Some of the brethren went to meet them carrying a white flag with them. When the Indians saw the flag, some of them began to sing, and their chief held up a U.S. flag. It was soon ascertained that their object was to obtain something to eat. A number of them came to the camp and were conducted around by Colonels Markham and Rockwood. They were shown a six and fifteen shooter also the cannon and the gunners went through the evolutions a number of times which seemed to please them much. They are all well dressed and very noble looking, some having good clean blankets, others nice robes artfully ornamented with beads and paintings. All had many ornaments on their clothing and ears, some had nice painted shells suspended from the ear. All appeared to be well armed with muskets. Their moccasins

were indeed clean and beautiful. One had a pair of moccasins of a clear white, ornamented with beads, etc. They fit very tight to the foot. For cleanness and neatness, they will vie with the most tasteful whites. They are thirty-five in number, about half squaws and children. They are Sioux and have two recommends certifying as to their friendship, etc. The brethren contributed something to eat which was sent to them. Our course today has been nearly west, with a cool wind. The evening fine but cold enough to freeze clothing stiff when laid on the grass to dry. Elder Kimball has been quite unwell all day and mostly kept to his wagon. Opposite the camp on the south side the river is a very large rock very much resembling a castle of four stories high, but in a state of ruin. A little to the east a rock stands which looks like a fragment of a very thick wall. A few miles to the west Chimney Rock appears in full view. The scenery around is pleasant and romantic. After the Indians had viewed the camp, they returned to their horses and the rest of the party who have camped on the banks of the river about a quarter of a mile west of us. Elder Sherwood returned with them and soon after came back accompanied by the chief and his squaw who signified a wish to abide with our camp tonight. The brethren fixed up a tent for them to sleep under; Porter Rockwell made them some coffee, and they were furnished with some victuals. The old chief amused himself very much by looking at the moon through a telescope for as much as twenty minutes. Brother Fairbanks is much better this evening. Last night Luke Johnson discovered a very large petrified bone in the neighborhood of the bluffs as much as two feet wide, but he could not ascertain the length of it. After laboring sometime ineffectually to dig it up, he broke off two pieces and brought them to camp. They are very white and hard. It is now eleven o'clock. I have been writing in Elder Kimball's journal since dark, and have but little chance to write as much as I want in my own and his both, but I feel determined to do all I can to keep a journal of this expedition which will be interesting to my children in after days, and perhaps to many of the Saints. The evening is very fine but cool and I retire to rest with the feeling: 'God bless my dear family.'

TUESDAY, 25TH. The morning fine and very pleasant. Most of the Indians, men, women and children came early to camp on their ponies and marched around mostly trying to obtain something to eat. Several little barbers were made with them for moccasins, skins, etc. John S. Higbee traded ponies with one of them. They have some good ponies and some inferior ones, but both males and females are neatly dressed and very tidy. They look cheerful and pleased to witness the camp, etc. At 8:20 we proceeded onward. After we started, the Indians left us and went over the river. One mile from where we started, we began to ascend a low range of bluffs to avoid a large, high sandy ridge which projects to the river. We traveled three quarters of a mile and

descended again to the level prairie. At 9:40 we halted to let the cattle and teams graze, the feed being good and plentiful, having traveled two and a half miles, mostly northwest around a bend of the river. The sun is very hot, the roads sandy and hard teaming. The river is probably three quarters of a mile wide here and on this side there are many small islands. At 11:15 continued our journey and traveled till half past one, distance four and three quarters miles over a very soft, wet, level prairie. We then halted to feed and rest our teams, as they have been hard drawn nearly all day. We have seen no game for several days except for a few antelope and hares. The buffalo appear to have left this region and in fact there are little signs of many having been here. The feed is poor, mostly last year's growth and very short. One of the hunters killed an antelope, which was brought to camp and divided to the captains of tens. At 3:00 p.m. we started again and traveled till a quarter to six, distance four and three quarters miles, and during the day twelve miles. For three miles of the first of this afternoon we had a good road, but the last part has been very wet and soft, numerous ponds of water standing all around caused by heavy rains. We have camped on a very wet spot, but feed being poor where it was drier, it was decided to stay for the benefit of the teams. Our course has been about northwest, very little wind and the day very warm. Chimney Rock shows very plain and appears not more than two miles distance but is no doubt five miles distance or over. Another antelope has been killed and brought in by the hunters. Elder Orson Pratt is taking an observation to ascertain the height of Chimney Rock. The evening was very pleasant and the brethren passed away their time till after nine o'clock dancing. Porter Rockwell shot the two antelope spoken of above. He also shot two wolves. Latitude six and a quarter miles back, 41° 41' 46".

WEDNESDAY, 26TH. The morning very fine and pleasant. I have spent the morning working on Dr. Richards' map. At eight o'clock continued on our journey. Elder Pratt taking observations to tell the distance our road lies from Chimney Rock. Yesterday morning Stephen Markham traded a mule which was foundered and unable to work to one of the Indians for a pony. They put him in the harness a little towards evening and again this morning. When crossing a very soft place the whipple tree unhitched and struck against his heels. He ran full gallop towards the head teams and twice through the line of wagons causing several teams, horses and oxen both, to spring from the road and run some distance before the men could stop them. After running nearly a mile some of the brethren caught the pony brought him back and put him to the wagon again without any accident, except a little injury to the harness. After traveling four and five-eighths miles, we arrived at a point directly north of Chimney Rock which we ascertained by the compass, having traveled since it was first discovered 41 1/2 miles. We proceeded till twelve o'clock and halted to feed, having

traveled seven and a quarter miles, a northwest course, the road very straight and hard excepting a few spots where the water stands caused by late heavy rains. We turned south a little to get grass as the higher prairie is barren, and scarcely any grass on it. Porter Rockwell has killed two antelope and John Brown one which were brought into camp and are being divided amongst the companies as usual. Elder Pratt found that Chimney Rock is 260 feet high from its base to its summit and the distance from our road at the nearest point three miles. The latitude at noon halt  $41^{\circ} 45' 58''$ . At 2:25 resumed our journey making our road nearer the river than this morning. The road somewhat crooked but good traveling. After traveling five miles, turning directly south to avoid a bad slough and went a quarter of a mile and then formed our encampment at five o'clock on the banks of the river. The last quarter of a mile was not reckoned in the day's travel which exclusive of that is  $12 \frac{1}{4}$  miles, course north of northwest. The feed here is good and sufficient to fill our teams well. Joseph Hancock killed an antelope which was brought into camp and distributed. Soon after we camped, walked out to the bank of the river with Presidents Young and Kimball to read to them some of the minutes of the old council. We were joined by Dr. Richards and tarried till seven o'clock, at which time a heavy black cloud was fast approaching from the west and was soon followed by a strong wind and a little rain which lasted only a short time. The evening afterwards warm and pleasant though somewhat cloudy. Carloss Murray has been trying to rear the young eagle caught on Saturday. After stopping tonight, he put it under a wagon and a while afterwards the men ran the wagon back, one of the wheels ran over its head and killed it. I wrote in Heber's journal till half past ten and then went to rest.

THURSDAY, 27TH. The morning very fine. We have seen a number of romantic spots on our journey, but I consider our view this morning more sublime than any other. Chimney Rock lies southeast, opposite detached bluffs of various shapes and sizes. To the southwest, Scott's Bluffs look majestic and sublime. The prairie over which our route lies is very level and green as far as we can see. The bluffs on the north low, and about three miles distant. The scenery is truly delightful beyond imagination. I have finished making Dr. Richards' map to Chimney Rock. Elder Pratt has measured the width of the river at this place by the sextant and found it to be exactly 792 yards. At ten minutes to eight we continued our journey and traveled near the banks of the river till 11:45, being eight miles. The route very good, hard and good traveling, although a little crooked. Porter Rockwell has killed two antelope and Amasa Lyman one, which were brought to the wagons and distributed. There are some heavy thunder clouds in the south and west and a nice breeze from northeast. At two o'clock we continued our journey over the same kind of dry level prairie, keeping not far

distant from the banks of the river and making a straight road. At the distance of four and an eighth miles passed the meridian of the northernmost peak of Scott's Bluffs being  $19 \frac{3}{4}$  miles from the meridian of Chimney Rock. These bluffs are very high, steep, and broken like many others, resembling ancient ruins. They are probably two miles from north to south extremity, but not very wide. We traveled till 4:45 and formed our encampment in a circle near the banks of the river which from this place seems to bend for some distance to the north, having traveled this afternoon five and three quarters miles and during the day thirteen and three quarters, mostly northwest. Elders Kimball and Woodruff pointed out the road this forenoon. Afternoon Elder Kimball rode with me in Johnson's wagon while I read some of his journal to him. The evening is very cold, wind northeast, and raining some. Feed is good and the camp generally well. Another antelope was brought in by the hunters. The latitude of the northernmost peak of Scott's Bluff  $41^{\circ} 50' 52''$ .

Patty Bartlett Sessions's brief entries record the events of the second company that left Winter Quarters on June 5, 1847 and arrived in Salt Lake on September 24. She is well known as the "Mother of Mormon Midwifery." One of the nearly four thousand births she assisted with during her life is recorded in this diary excerpt.

**Diary Entries: Monday, [July] 26–  
Sunday, August 1 [1847]**

Monday 26 start 7 o'clock go 20 miles at noon water and bait [feeding the animals during a break] a grove of cedar on the other side saw the Indians on the other side they stopped unloaded their ponies in the cedars we passed over the hardest sand hill we have found I drove my team was not well went a foot until I could scarce stand crossed many small creeks camp on large one two rods wide. Br Spencer is a head he started last night went five miles Br Rich came up

Tuesday 27 start 7 o'clock go 18 miles in the forenoon Indians came some we have not seen before a big chief among them when we stopped to bait they came like bees their logs were across the river I drove into a mudhole got stuck put on more team came out camp near the river kill a rattlesnake close to the wagon thunders and lightens hard rains some

Wednesday 28 go 18 miles cross many water places muddy holes passed over ground that was overflowed by the rain last night but little rain where we were at noon baited on the last grass we found till night in the afternoon came up a dreadful wind thunder lightning a very little rain where we were on the other side of the river the ground was all aflood we passed over sand

bluffs in the wind the sand and gravel flew in our eyes so we could not see at times we had to hold our waggon covers to keep them from blowing off this is ruin bluffs we camp on the Pioneers camp ground

Thursday 29 go 20 miles at noon bait and water at the river good feed we are in sight of chimney rock bluff of sand looking like a tower on the other side the river or an old courthouse go over the bluffs camp on the river go and lay hands on Mary Jane Tomson we have traveled to day behind Br Spencer we came up with him last night

Friday 30 go 20 miles pass the chimney rock many places that looked like ancient buildings camp on the river find good feed kill a rattle snake save the gall and grease

Saturday 31 - go 15 miles camp on the river no wood and poor feed the bluff on the other side looks like the temple last night Brown & others went over the river on to the bluff killed 3 antalopes a very curious looking place the bluffs look like ancient edifices some have gone over to night we met Br Devenport this morning from the Pioneers it gladden my heart to see him he was in co with men that had been to Oregon two women with them

Sunday August 1 I was cald to sister Covington I went back 5 miles she came back with me I put her to bed this evening with a daughter P G Mary & Martha went over on the Bluffs got 6 quarts of black curant two catle died to day by eating a unfit substance that lay on the ground

Frederick Piercy was hired as an artist by the Mormons in England to record his journey to Salt Lake City. Today his work would probably be considered to be part of a media or publicity campaign. His journal and art work with extensive notes by James Linforth, made his book, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, an instant success for Mormons seeking their Zion. Much of his art work is used in the following pictorial section. He left Liverpool, England, on February 5, 1853, but his journey across the plains did not start until Thursday, June 9, from near the Winter Quarters. He arrived in Salt Lake City on August 9.

### **Diary Entries: Wednesday, July the 13th to Friday, July 22**

Wednesday, the 13th.—In the guides there is a notice of a “Lone Tree.” All through the journey the lone tree had been in my imagination until at last I had associated an interest, a sort of romantic idea, with it, which became quite exciting. I pictured to myself an old, weather-beaten, time-worn tree, standing in mournful solitude on a wide-spreading prairie, having to encounter alone the attacks of the elements, with no companion to share the storm, or help to break its fury.

I could imagine it on a cold winter's night with its arms bare of foliage, tossing them in sorrow in the wind, being desolate and alone. Even sunshine and refreshing showers must be melancholy pleasures to a lone tree, for do not they prolong its dreary isolation! I started off ahead of the company with the intention of making a complimentary and therefore careful sketch of this tree, but I could not find it. Some unpoetical and ruthless hand had cut it down, so my hopes were blighted and my occupation was gone. We passed Ash Hollow, which is on the south side of the Platte, where we could see an immense herd of buffalo, which good judges said could not number less than 10,000. Travelled about 18 miles and camped near Calm Creek.

Thursday, the 14th.—Travelled along the Platte bottom, over a heavy road, then by the edge of bluffs to Crab Creek, a distance of 17 miles. Camped amongst arrow grass, bad for sheep, and very disagreeable to every body having sensation.

Friday, the 15th.—Travelled over a pretty good road to Ancient Bluff Ruins, which are curious natural formations, resembling ruins, as their name implies. They are fit abodes for Indian ghosts and goblins. Camped where the road joins the river, about 20 miles from Crab Creek.

Saturday, the 16th.—Travelled 13 miles and camped on the Platte. Chimney Rock in sight all day, and Scott's Bluffs in the evening. Chimney Rock is on the south side of the Platte, and on my journey home I made the accompanying sketch of it, engraved on steel, which is a view taken nearer by three miles than could be obtained from the north side. During the day I made a sketch of it from the west, represented by the wood-cut below. To the right of the rock the wagons are in corral, which is the order in which they are arranged while camping. When danger is suddenly apprehended from Indians, the cattle are driven inside the corral, but as the slightest noise from a dog, a wolf, and at times unaccountable circumstances, often cause a stampede, in which the cattle break down the wagons and rush madly from the camp, endangering the lives of the emigrants, frequently running until they are lost to their owners or fall dead, it is much the best way to tie them up to the wagons outside the corral and picket them. In the latter method the cattle are safely guarded, and should Indians approach to drive them off or cause a stampede, they would be within range of a rifle shot all round.

Sunday, the 17th.—Travelled 6 miles, and camped on the bank of the Platte. Rain in the afternoon.

Monday, the 18th.—In the morning met 27 Elders from G.S.L. Valley on missions. They informed us that they had had a quick and an agreeable trip so far. We spent half an hour with them, and then separated, they to the rising and we to the setting of the sun. Scott's Bluffs were in view all day. They were certainly the most remarkable sight I had seen since I left England. Viewed from the distance at which I

sketched them the shadows were of an intense blue, while the rock illuminated by the setting sun partook of its gold, making a beautiful harmony of colour. They present a very singular appearance, resembling ruined palaces, castellated towers, temples and monuments. In the foreground of the engraving are seen some emigrants hunting the buffalo.

Tuesday, the 19th.—Stopped to noon at Scott's Bluffs, and travelled about 4 miles to Spring Creek, making about 46 miles during the last 4 days.

Wednesday, the 20th.—Travelled over a pretty good road somewhat sandy in places. About 5 miles beyond is what is named Blue Rock. It is slightly grey, but by no means what may be called blue. Camped near the river.

Thursday, the 21st.—Saw Laramie's Peak this morning, which, by Elder Miller's account, was distant 75 miles to the south-west of camp ground. We travelled over a very sandy and difficult road. Visited a trading post kept by two Frenchmen, a few miles east of Raw Hide Creek. As the affair was made up of Frenchmen, Indians, squaws, horses, mules, oxen, dogs, trees, a shady bower, a sheep pen, a wagon, and a tent, it was most picturesque. Cattle in by no means good condition were from 90 to 100 dollars per yoke. I noticed that nearly all these trading posts were kept by Frenchmen, who were mostly married to Indian women. Camped on the bank of the Platte, 3 miles west of Raw Hide Creek. Travelled yesterday and to-day about 37 miles.

Friday, the 22nd.—Travelled about 9 miles over a good road to Laramie, and sketched what little I could see of it, but not having time to cross the river, I was unable to obtain a complete view of it until my return, when I made that which is used in this work. Travelled about 6 miles further, over a pretty good road, through rather a hilly country, quite different in character to that east of Laramie. Camped on the summit of a high bluff on the west side of a dry creek. I sketched Laramie's Peak, of which an engraving is given. Although its top was free from snow when I saw it, it is said to be generally covered with it, and that it 'acts the part of a condenser upon the vapour of the atmosphere which comes within its vicinity, generating clouds, which are precipitated in showers upon the surrounding country.'