

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

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## **The Gold Rush Journal of Thomas Evershed**

Engineer, Artist, and Rochesterian

### **Introduction**

Few peacetime events in American history equal the drama of the California gold rush of 1849. Before that year the vast territory west of the Missouri River was as yet sparsely populated and barely explored. "Californians" meant the Spanish-speaking inhabitants of the west coast who numbered no more than several thousand. An approximately equal number of foreigners, including United States citizens, shared that arid land which was thought mainly useful for ranching. California's isolation came to an abrupt end shortly after the "American conquest" of 1847. In January, 1848, a few days before the formal conclusion of the Mexican War, large amounts of placer gold were discovered in a stream bed near Sutter's Fort. Within twelve months news of the discovery, greatly exaggerated as to the amount of gold available and the ease with which it might be taken, was generally known in the East. With the prospect of sudden wealth as a lure, and also for the sheer adventure of the trip, thousands of men from every part of the United States set out overland from the boat landings at Independence, Kansas City, or St. Joseph. By the end of 1849 California's population swelled to more than 100,000, and

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the rapid rate of settlement generated petitions for immediate statehood.

Most of the gold-seekers were disappointed in the search for overnight riches, but many felt themselves partially repaid by the experience of the journey. More than a few, aware that they were participating in historic events, kept diaries or journals, often in the form of lengthy letters they intended to send home at the first opportunity. Among the journalists was Thomas Evershed, an observant and artistically-inclined engineer who traveled with a small company from Lockport, New York. The publication of his account, written in the form of a series of letters to a friend in Lockport, is an important addition to the literature of the gold rush.

Like most of the "emigrants," Evershed and his party experienced their share of hardships on the overland trail. Extreme weather, particularly the heat and cold of desert and mountain regions, competed with trail dust and the frequent lack of good water to tax the endurance of the travelers. "Good grass" was no less important than water, for mens' lives depended on the survival of horses, mules, and oxen. Like other Forty-niners, Evershed makes observations about the respective merits of these different animals as well as the differing speeds of wagon trains, packers, and men on foot. His descriptions are often embellished by a characteristic dry humor, and are never overdramatized. The vividness of some of Evershed's entries are unforgettable, as is the case with his eloquent description of what it was like to drink alkaline water for weeks at a time (July 30). Because Evershed's party turned away from the usual overland route (north of Great Salt Lake) to pass through Salt Lake City and along the eastern side of the Lake, his journal includes an interesting description of the Mormon city settled only two years before (July 4 and 5).

Thomas Evershed was an amateur artist of some ability and his renderings of western scenes contribute greatly to the value of his journal. A few tiny pencil sketches he drew in the leaves of his journal lack contrast and could not be reproduced well. Fortunately, four excellent watercolors and one pen and ink sketch of views along the trail, which Evershed executed after the trip, have survived and are

reproduced. The original watercolors vary slightly in size, averaging  $32.5 \times 21$  cm.; the captions are based on penciled notations on the reverse sides, apparently by Evershed. The pen and ink sketch of Chimney Rock, which carries no notation, is slightly reduced.

Limitation of space has forbidden extensive editorial comment on the text or the inclusion of a bibliography. Two works of thorough scholarship which readers might wish to consult are Georgia W. Read and Ruth Gaines, eds., *Gold Rush, The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff* (New York, 1944) and Thomas D. Clark, ed., *Gold Rush Diary, Being the Journal of Elisha Douglass Perkins on the Overland Trail in the Spring and Summer of 1849* (Lexington, Ky., 1967).

### **Note on the Text**

Thomas Evershed's journal consists of separate letters written on very small ( $8 \times 12.7$  cm.) notebooks with sewn bindings and without covers. The entries, all in pencil, are written in a small but fairly legible hand. However, Evershed rarely bothered with punctuation of any sort and his capitalizations are inconsistent. The major editorial alteration of the text was the creation of sentences and the addition of commas; in few cases did it seem there was ambiguity in Evershed's intended sentence structure. A few contractions are spelled out (e.g., "Independence" for "Indce"). Place names have sometimes been capitalized but Evershed's spellings are retained. All editorial clarification and comment appear in brackets, which Evershed never used.

### **Acknowledgements**

The publication of Thomas Evershed's journal was made possible by the gracious cooperation of several descendants. His granddaughter, Mrs. Howard T. Cumming of Rochester, made available a pen and ink copy of the journal written by Evershed's daughter, Mary Evershed Myers (which was compared against the original manuscript) along with other valuable Evershed memorabilia. Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Myers of Philadelphia made available the original journal. The watercolors were loaned by Mr. Evershed Heron of

Canada. Another family member, Mr. J. Hayward Madden of Livonia, New York, contributed his time in helping to assemble these materials besides writing the biographical sketch which follows.

Special thanks are owed to Mr. W. Stephen Thomas, Director Emeritus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, who proposed this publication project and who worked as its facilitator for several months.

J.W.B.

### Biographical Sketch

Thomas Evershed was a remarkable and yet unassuming man who made a distinctive contribution to his adopted land both professionally as a civil engineer and culturally as an artist. Orsamus Turner, editor of a Lockport newspaper and author of the *Pioneer History of the Holland Purchase of Western New York* and *History of the . . . Phelps and Gorham's Purchase . . .*, who knew him as a youthful assistant engineer in Lockport on the Erie Canal, said of him, "Mr. Evershed excelled as an artist, and might be said to be a young man of genius." Upon his death in 1890 at his home in Rochester, the civil engineers who gathered for the funeral in Rochester drafted a memorial published in the newspapers and sent to his family, reading, in part:

Mr. Evershed possessed many of the elements which, when united, always produce noble manhood, which was his. His kindly thoughtfulness for others, his modesty, benevolence, truthfulness, conscientiousness and transparent honesty were well known and honored by us all. With these qualities of head and heart were united great experience and other high qualifications as an engineer which made him a prudent and safe counselor to younger men in the same profession and rendered his professional services invaluable in the many responsible positions to which he was called during a long and useful life.<sup>1</sup>

### The State Engineer and Surveyor said of him:

He occupied the position of division engineer continuously for twelve years, and he also served the State in the capacity of assistant engineer and resident engineer. He was a man of large professional requirements, with a remarkable knowledge of the public works of the State of New York, of great strength of character and excellent engineering judgment. The State may well be congratulated that it was able to retain in its professional service a man of such ability for such an extended term of years.<sup>2</sup>

Evershed supervised the construction of both tiers of five combined locks of the Erie Canal at Lockport in the course of their enlargement between 1838 and 1842 and 1847 to 1849. The north tier may still be seen beside the two barge enlargement locks which have replaced the south tier. He also worked on the second Erie Canal aqueduct over the Genesee River at Rochester which is today supporting Broad Street Bridge. He surveyed the enlarged Erie Canal in the Western Division (Buffalo to the east line of Wayne County) and prepared maps, known as the Evershed Maps, completed 1875, which became the official reference source for State canal property lines and structures in the Division.

Evershed served as civil engineer for a number of railroads including two in what is now Ontario, Canada. In 1853-54 he built the Great Western Railway Bridge over the Credit River in Ontario. It was a high bridge and was widely known and acclaimed.

While employed by New York in 1842 he and another assistant engineer made a trigonometric survey of Niagara Falls for James Hall, State Geologist.<sup>3</sup> In 1884-85 he directed a survey for the state for a state reservation and park at Niagara Falls. While in Niagara Falls he met engineers and others whose object was the development of the water power of the falls. He made a proposal and joined with seven of these men as incorporators of the "Niagara River Hydraulic Tunnel, Power and Sewer Company" under an Act of the State Legislature passed March 31, 1886. With this done Evershed drew up a formal plan and estimate and presented it to the company on July 1, 1886. The plan was widely discussed and was very controversial, but it was eventually carried out by the Niagara Falls Power Company, a successor company of which he was also a director. He did not live to see his plan's completion nor its success and consequent revolutionary impact.

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1. Rochester Union and Advertiser, February 12, 1890.

2. Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor, 1890; New York Assembly Documents No. 66, pp. 43-44.

3. James Hall, Natural History of New York, Part IV, Vol. 4 of Geology of New York, (Albany, 1843), pp. 402-403.

In addition to these interests he acquired extensive knowledge of the rock salt bed underlying central and western New York and wrote a comprehensive article in 1883 for a Rochester newspaper. He made his findings available to investors and promoters of salt extraction as a guide to where the salt could be found.

Thomas Evershed was the second son in a family of nine children and was born February 20, 1817 at Pallingham Farm, Wisborough, Sussex, England. His father, Thomas Sr., was a yeoman farmer of good English stock and his mother was Mary Martin, daughter of a doctor. The older son, John, with his wife and two children came to Herkimer County, New York and to Irondequoit (then in Brighton) in 1834 or 1835. In 1832 Thomas, senior, came to America to buy land and with plans to bring his wife and children over later. Tragically, the father died on April 13, 1835 while she with Thomas Jr. and his sisters were en route. After the shock of learning of her husband's death when she arrived in Rochester, Mrs. Evershed stayed long enough to sell the farm he had bought and then returned to England in 1836, leaving her son Thomas here.

Evershed visited his relatives in England in 1842-43 and made many sketches of people and places he knew where his family lived in Sussex and Scotland. In 1844 the enterprising young man engaged in a sheep-raising venture, driving over 800 sheep to Illinois and being on the road for two months. The sheep business, however, did not prove successful.

The south tier of locks at Lockport were completed when Thomas and a group of friends from Lockport left in the spring of 1849 for California, spending almost three months on the trail. His diary gives a detailed account of the trip and contains pencil sketches made along the way. Evershed's watercolor paintings of western scenes were probably executed after he reached San Francisco and received the supplies he had shipped ahead. The exact date of his return to Lockport is not known, but it appears from letters to be later in 1850.

Thomas became a citizen on April 14, 1852 in Niagara County Court. He married Harriet F. Sherwood of Medina before October 13, 1852. Their only child was a daughter born in 1857 in Medina, New York.

The artistic ability of Thomas Evershed seems very apparent in his sketchbooks and his watercolors. During his lifetime he won many commendations for his paintings. He was a member, although not a founder, of the Rochester Art Club and exhibited many watercolors in its exhibitions from 1880 through 1887. He was on the board of directors for two years, 1887 and 1888.

J. Hayward Madden

## THE JOURNAL

*May 21, 1849*

Thomas Evershed to his friend Joe Caldicott, greeting.

Well, I did not think, dear Joe, to find time to write to you this side of Fort Laramie, but I commenced this soon after striking the Platte which we did within a few miles of Fort Kearney at which place we found a company of dragoons and a company of artillery. But to commence at the beginning, I suppose I must give you a short description of our journey from Independence. We started on the 27th of April. Joe says he attributes our ill luck to starting on a Friday "although he is not at all superstitious." After traveling some 17 miles, commenced the first fruits of our Friday start, Mr. McNiel losing their two best mules, the finding of which cost us three days delay. In the mean time we procured corn &c in readiness to join a company for the main journey. After crossing the Kansas or Caw [Kaw] as they call it here, some ninety miles from Independence, and which I believe we reached and crossed without any further disaster, and after traveling one day without joining any company, made arrangements with a company of Missourians and Kentuckians, very clever fellows by the way, to travel with them. Passed through the lands on which the Potowatomies settled last year and where there is a French Catholic Mission and a goodly quantity of what we would call improvements going on in the way of preparing the lands, both prairie and openings for cultivation, the men of the nation being very busily engaged in plowing and hauling rails and many of them living in tolerable good log houses. The next day passed the Vermillion, the boundary between these Indians and the Pawnies. Although little danger is to

be apprehended for some fifty miles beyond, yet a strict guard is set as on the plains. Our company numbering 54, four reliefs of six men each nightly surrounds the animals which are picketed around the waggons with about 30 feet of rope each. This arrangement has however, been altered since, to distributing the waggons somewhat apart so that all the animals can be picketed in the same way within them, and the guard on the outside of the waggons. During the week after leaving the Vermillion we had a tolerable road with the exception of some very bad streams at some of which the waggons had to be let down with ropes to assist the locked wheels & animals in keeping back the vehicles. Our waggon, which was only intended to last us to Fort Hall, now begins to give way having been made of very green timber and in a very rough manner in Independence, but at this present date still holds together with the precaution of putting in extra spokes and lashing & will probably do so unless the roads should prove very bad until we reach Fort Laramie where we shall probably have to pack one animal each unless we can procure ponies of the Indians which is not very likely. The scenery during this week's travel was very fine especially in the valley of the Little Blue Earth River which we followed for 25 or 30 miles and after leaving which a tameness ensued until we reached the Platte which we did after passing through between hills of sand sparsely covered with vegetation and which border it as it gets sun on the south side. During all this travel you will probably like to know that with the exception of a few plover and three prairie wolves, no game was seen and now having arrived at the banks of the Platte on Saturday noon, May 19th (as the order to hitch up is given and must be attended to even if I have a broken collar-bone, I quit for the present).

*May 23.* You will probably like to know how I arrived at the desirable state of traveling on the prairies with a broken bone. Well, the smallest mule falling to my share as being the lightest person in the honorable body of the Lockport Mining Co., and withall, rather light o' the hind feet, (that is, the mule) he threw me over his head on the hard road when not aware of his kind intention, landing me on my left shoulder and fracturing the os\_\_\_\_\_ (please consult the medical



works for the precise word) about midway its length. Happily, McNiel and Colt have along a covered spring waggon and now after four days reclining on blankets expect to ride again on mule back, not on the same animal, however. He is destined to carry a pack & follow the waggon. The Ithaca Company had not started when we left Independence and would not for a week and as we have traveled 25 miles per day since leaving the Caw River, do not expect they will overtake us before we arrive at Fort Laramie some 680 miles on our way so shall probably wait for them at the place and travel with them afterwards. Now for our first fight with the Indians. About the time the animals were picketed on our first arrival on the banks of the Platte, May 19th, a body of about 60 or 70 Indians were discovered about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile off, making directly for the camp and such a scratching for mules, horses, and hurrying in the corral as ensued or at least that which came within the vista of the front of a covered waggon was amusing and then the raking for powder, caps & balls & discharging of guns & reloading, *to be sure of securing* a scalp at every discharge, as took place within the camp, could only be equalled or excelled except when a merchantman clears for action. In the mean time the enemy bore steadily on when a Santa Fe man or two went out and motioned them off, which not being obeyed, a ball or two was sent under their bows causing a general hauling in of sail, turning them in the direction of a single waggon about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile to the left which they immediately surrounded and commenced a furious onslaught on by requesting the owner to deliver up what provisions he had to give away. In the mean time a messenger was despatched from those said 60 or 70 to the main body consisting of nearly a thousand fighting men and which looked rather formidable, when coming over the prairie and were inclined, as we afterwards heard, to charge in real earnest on our camp, but one of the officers from the fort coming along about that time, explained to them that we had never seen Indians before & thought they were Pawnees which was the reason of our firing on them, advising us to make them a suitable present of provisions as they were Sioux & Chien [Cheyenne] returning from a war party against the Pawnees and as usual on such occasions not overburdened with edibles. So after a speech or two they

sat down on the grass and a black mail was levied on the waggons by the Captain & no basketfuls were gathered when they left. I ween for a more famished set of looking beings I never saw. Yet the most of them were fine looking fellows or at least such as I saw at the waggon, very fond of shaking hands and repeating their only word of English, "how" meaning "how do you do." They were mounted for the most part on miserably reduced ponies although some had good horses, & some mules and others had neither. Were for the most part clad in blankets, Indian dressed buffalo skins & br(shall I finish the word) cloths. The few squaws I saw in company were riding as English women rode in the 11th century and were adept in the use of short handled whips they all carry.

*June 1.* At Scotts Bluffs. Nothing material has happened since leaving the Fort and the fight. First as aforesaid crossed the south fork of the Platte and soon after (the next day) stopped a day to dry the wet things, some of the waggons getting into an unforeseen hole & wetting the box some 6 or 8 inches. Not much damage done. The crossing from one branch some twenty miles over a sterile region of high prairie terminating in a very handsome glen called Ash Hollow from a few ash trees growing there. After which we followed up the south side of the N. Fork to this place, passing the two objects shown as well as many others of similar formation some of which shown on the lower sketch. They are detached portions of the bluffs in the back ground and formed by being capped by a harder material than usual. The same cannot properly be called rock but indurated clay or something of the sort. My shoulder has deterred me from visiting any of them as I have to stay by the train.

*June 2.* Made about thirty miles. Pretty good work for teams. Have seen several small mule companies preparing to pack at a blacksmith shop established by a Frenchman in the valley in rear of Scotts Bluff & at the spring spoken of by Bryant [Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California* (New York, 1848), one of the guidebooks popular among the Forty-niners] whose description of this part of the route is very good except that as a general thing we have found good grass and roads bad from too much rain, whereas he found it dry and

deep sand. The country from the route presents a very desolate appearance, the bluffs bordering the river being washed down and without grass on them. To the south a level plain for 30 or 40 miles in width and bounded on the south by similar bluffs to those on the north side of the river.

*June 3.* Continued up side of river. Moved on a piece of ground originally wooded but now pretty well cleared by the emigrants.

*June 4.* Traveled eight miles to Fort Laramie, arrived at 9 o'clock. Bought 100 wt. of kiln dried corn meal or Panola for packing & having too much flour tried at the fort to dispose of it. Found they were giving 2½ dollars per 100 pounds. Inquired at the fort the price they were giving which was 2 dollars but by the time we had got it out & to the Fort the price was 1.50. Found quite a number of preparing to pack but having bought a good harness for our extra mules instead of our make shift affairs and our waggon bidding fair to hold together some 2 or 3 weeks longer, have concluded to go on with the train so have come to this place, a creek some twenty miles west of the Fort & found McNeil in a bad fix, one of the 6-mule waggons having raked one of his hind wheels & bent the axle tree besides springing the wheel breaking several spokes. The Fort is a rough affair belonging to the American Fur Co. about 150 or 175 ft square, with one main building in front containing the principal dwelling and sheds & warehouses next the outside walls leaving a small square in the center.

*June 5.* Traveled twenty miles, have had from some of the hills fine views of great extent. Laramie Peak, which has been in sight since leaving Scotts Bluff, is now at our left and has been cloud capped a part of the day which has closed with a thunder storm. But having cleared off & the boys having made a glorious pine fire, I write this by the light of it, after having baked 3 loaves of bread. By the bye, tell Mrs. Harwood that the effects her receipt for the same is the admiration of all the camp giving us the lightest kind of the stuff. The worst of it is that it keeps one all the time cooking it as nothing else will go down while it lasts. Our daily routine is this, are woke up by the last guard at day break or a little before to picket out the mules, get breakfast by sunrise, pack

away the tinwear & catch up, travel on till perhaps 10 or 11 & rest then until 2 P.M. then travel again until 5 or 6 o'clock when the mules are herded until dusk & then placed within the line of waggons for better security. In the meantime supper is eaten & should wood & water be plenty bread is baked and other cooking done for the morrow & succeeding days, leaving nothing to be done in the morning but to boil the coffee & that is sometimes done overnight leaving nothing to be done in the morning but heating the same & our throats. Should you wish to go to California to dig for the precious don't be foolish Joe & come this route. As every one seems crazy to get on we have passed probably 800 teams & there is yet some 3 to 400 ahead of us but there is no scarcity of grass and this is a late season & a wet one and now all we care about is to keep our place in the line of trains. I find that yet oxen travel very nearly as fast as mules one reason is the great plenty of grass this year, another that they are not so heavily laden, generally four or five yoke to 23 or 2400 pounds, another that the weather has been very cool so far with the exception of a few hot days — however, all have found that they started with too much load and it is amusing to witness the different articles of various kinds which are left at the camps, from stoves and gold washers to the smallest articles of comfort. We have seen more flour and bacon strewn along the road than would provision an army for a year. We have reduced our load from 1700 to about 1350. Joe says 1200 but I do not think it & now get along tolerably well except it comes rather hard on Wisner & myself to walk so much as we are obliged to do since leaving the Fort — in fact, Wisner complains a good deal of the hardship of the journey. I would remind him oftener of Mary Harwood's sofa but our medicine chest has no lock and still contains quite a phial of laudanum. We have been traveling over what is called the Black Hill road over high & very hilly prairie interspersed with small gullies with plenty of water and wood.

*June 6.* As we camped last night almost without grass for the mules, started very early in order to give them more time to feed in the middle of the day. Are leaving Laramie Peak behind & to the left we see from this side plenty of snow on

the top of it. Am told it does not all disappear until August, if it does by that time. Camped at noon on the banks of a stream having passed the summit of the road & soon after passed close to the first rocky hill we have seen that is any thing to be called rock, all we have passed before being composed of indurated clay or clay & gravel. These are what geologists would call old red sandstone. The effect of the red color of the stone with the scanty herbage and other soil has a very pleasing effect in the landscape especially where there are a few trees to enliven the same. Have had a distant view of the N[orth] Branch of the Platte. The distance traveled over in going by the Black Hill road is about 80 miles so the same river is probably 16 or 18 miles off.

*June 7.* Reached the north branch of the Platte at night passing the Lapree[?] river [La Prele Creek?] about noon.

*June 8.* Took an early start and camped at 8 o'clock. Have seen within a few days any quantity of what were the parents of many of our garden flowers, the Lupin, China Aster, Larkspur, Phlox, & many others, some of them very handsome the seeds of which if late enough I would like to send. Game must have been very plenty before the emigration commenced. Some hares have been shot. They are about the size of the English hare, perhaps larger. Have seen some horns of the mountain sheep. If they are any criterion the animal itself must be larger than an ox for they are enormous. We are passing everything except a few mule trains. We have experienced a few of the prairie storms. Yesterday afternoon we had one which caused us to turn tail to and lay by and fear for our waggon covers, but all passed off well little hail & rain, but as we add 500 or 1000 dollars to our amount of dust for every stormy cold time and suffering we endure, I fear you will not see us back in Lockport very soon if we have many more such. The fact is we are very early for the mountain climate & see snow yet on almost all of the hills on our left. These hills seem to be from what I can see of them a range of sandstone raised by some convulsion still further to the left or west which has tipped them up to an angle of 30 degrees with the horizon as seen by the different strata at the distance we are traveling from them.

*June 9.* Having camped one mile from the ferry across the north fork of the Platte overnight, took an early start before any light in order to head other trains. This ferry has been established by the Mormons. The boat consists of a couple of dug-outs coupled together and two planks to receive the wheels. The charge, the moderate sum of 3 dollars per waggon & 50¢ for each person. We lay here all day awaiting the crossing of trains ahead of us. The different messes are very busy preparing food beforehand. Baking & stewing is the order of the day. A few who packed at the Fort have overtaken us and are heartily tired of the experiment. Although they pack but 85 to 100 pounds their mule backs are sore already. I am heartily glad we did not start with packs although Wisner is still in favor of them. Yet I think we shall have enough of them after we leave Fort Hall, as our waggon will fail by that time, I should think, notwithstanding it does not appear to have given away any since we put in the false spokes &c. Now having informed you of the state of our broken waggon, let me say a word as to the state of my broken bone. It has done well & I can now harness up my two mules as soon as either of the others. Although I yet abjure all heavy lifts and now and then give it a wrench that makes me fear breaking it again, I suppose in a day or two shall have to report myself ready for guard duty. Have had a good wash today for the first time and one who has traveled over these roads will appreciate the comfort I find from it. The Black Hills have receded from the Platte and a range of hills out-cropping to the north now bound the valley. They appear to be about 6 or 7 miles off. We have seen great plenty of the wild sage within the last few days which reminds me that a person passed through our camp bearing a sage hen or grouse, a very fine bird almost as large as a turkey, of a grey color. The breast was bare of feathers but whether it was from the season of incubation or not, I do not know. I remarked the feathers of the breast which remained were very stiff & harsh so it might have been the case. We have now traveled about 800 miles on our journey. I hear that a good many of the ox teams are turning back for want of grass yet I do not think it possible from the quantity we left behind. There are mule trains nine days ahead of us. The Ithaca Co. have not yet come up. Dr. Lupedge [?] & Co. have packed

some where on the road & have gone on. He was from Lodi Cayuga Co. Bryants Co. of pack mules are one day behind us I hear. I suppose I must close this very desultory epistle. It may amuse you in reading it as it has me in writing it. Please give my very best respects to all my Lockport friends. Please write a line to my brother John E. Rochester & inform him that you have heard from me from this place & believe me, dear Joe, Your friend

Thos. Evershed

*June 10th.*

Dear Joseph. Although I was disappointed in sending my last from the crossing of the north branch of the Platte, here goes for another which may be sent at the same time. We were set across very quickly by 11 o'clock this morning and have now struck across to the Sweetwater. I am now seated on a summit having an extensive view on all sides, back the valley of the Platte, and in front, goodness knows what valley, but a very fine view with the Sweetwater Mountains in the background.

*June 11.* Camped last night in fine grass at the mineral spring spoken of by Bryant. Yesterday at the ferry Wisner bought a pack horse & such a horse. A regular Comanche but so small one could carry it in ones arms were one of them not *disabled*. She is intended to carry the box of tools & will probably do so. Have had a very good road today. One of the men shot an antelope, another a hare & two or three started off after a buffalo but did not get him owing to his running over ground where their horses could not travel, quite a disappointment especially after the hard work for the teeth we have experienced in eating the only two yet killed in the company.

*June 12.* Camped last night by the road & sent the mules off some distance to grass. This morning continued on our downward route to the valley of the Sweetwater about 4 miles from which we saw several dry ponds the bottom of which are encrusted with saleratus in an impure state. However, in another pond I procured some very white which we intend to use for cooking. At 11 A.M. arrived at Independence Rock after having been very hard at work licking a sick mule along for the last half hour in hopes of arriving with him at the

camping ground, but did not succeed in doing so but had to take him out of gear at the Rock, the train stopping at the place from which the sketch is taken. The rock is of granite and differs somewhat from the surrounding hills being smoother. The river runs almost close to the right hand side as seen in the sketch leaving a small space through which the road passes. The view the other way or up the river is fine barren rocky scenery such as we may expect to find plenty of I suppose for the next few hundred miles, the hills or mountains being destitute of grass or foliage & composed of granite. Four or five miles up the valley there is a natural dam of rock through which the river makes its way through what is called the Devils Gate, a sketch from the upper side I have endeavored to give you. The channel is through a cleft in the mountain and through another the road passes, to the right in the drawing although the space is wider probably 8 or 10 rods in width in the narrowest place. After passing this place the valley widens out again 10 or 12 miles wide, the road in some places passing over the bluffs. Neither is the whole valley covered with grass but only one quarter or  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile next [to] the water, the rest being barren sand covered with clumps of the everlasting wild sage with now and then a clump of grass resembling as near as may be the way swampy meadow is represented on maps, thus [pencil sketch] all of which is just as enlivening to the eye as it is on paper especially after having traveled over such roads for a month or two. However, I will except from the general condemnation the flowers, many of which are very beautiful.

*June 13.* Forenoon the same roads & scenery as the afternoon of yesterday. Passed several small ponds covered with saleratus. Dragged our old mule all day & drugged him in the evening and the next day he was a drug on our hands. Managed to get him along about a mile by hand when he died. Wisner, McNiel & myself then started to overtake the train which we did just as they were starting out after nooning, our two waggons remaining behind for us to eat &c. Passed in the afternoon a small marsh from which we procured ice by digging under the sod about 15 inches. Oh for cream and lemons. The ice lays in flakes or layers about 6 inches thick & is perfectly clear & transparent. We have a



fine view of the Wind River Mountains covered with snow and as the atmosphere is at present blended beautifully with the clouds we shall have to take off 500 dollars for the view. Soon after leaving the ice spring saw some more saleratus lakes. On the Platte and Sweetwater the valleys are for the most part covered with an encrustation of the same resembling hoar frost and often  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick. Did not overtake the train at night but camped by ourselves. Saw their fires however afterwards about 3 miles ahead.

*June 15.* The next morning. Nothing was to be seen as we were rather late in starting owing to Wisners having shot an antelope which he did by using a red handkerchief flag as a decoy. Reached & forded the river again about 10 A.M. Crossing over very steep bluffs about 5 miles we reached the river again. To the right we have had partial views of a very extensive plain. In afternoon traveled about 3 miles & camped. Joe and Wisner employed in cutting off waggon bed and lightening load until 11 or 12 o'clock. Thus far I have seen no obstructions to making a rail road from the Missouri & presume there are none.

*June 16.* Left river over ridges of limestone and red(?) sandstone. The good luck of our "Friday Start" seems still to attend us as at noon we had another & our best mule taken sick. A person in another train however bled her & we procured a dose of slats and administered. Report says that the south branch of the Platte is not fordable and that there are 2000 teams there and that the oxen are dying off at the ferry of the north fork so if Madam [Dame Rumor] is to be believed we are not the only ones who "started on a Friday." In afternoon came in light of three butes (the three spoken of I suppose) to the left. With the exception of some sharp hills & the rocky ridges the road has been for the last two days superior to any McAdamized road I ever saw & composed of fine gravel hard & firm & altogether from the states I doubt if taking away the bridges there could be so good a road found of equal length. I find I am mistaken about the butes. There are more than three, quite a number extending as far as the eye can reach & in a north & south direction. Our luck still follows us. Another of the mules is taken in the same way. McNiel too, is threatened with a fever. I beg his pardon for

mentioning him *en dernier* of the mules. We arrived at the Sweetwater again in the evening and found Mr. Vasques of the firm of Bridger and Vasques of Bridgers fort with a drove of mules & horses for sale who says he shall stay here some 18 or 20 days so under the shadow of his wing we shall probably remain a few days here. We have been guarding our mules with the utmost care and he lets his run without a guard night & day without fear of having them stolen. However, there are some twenty odd head of mules and horses which were either run off or ran away from the next camp to ours last night & recovered again after following them 6 or 8 miles, so no great dependence can be placed at any rate by emigrants without a guard's being kept.

*June 17.* Laid over in the valley of the Sweetwater near Vasques camp doctoring McNiel & our mules all of which are more or less affected with the same disease. Rather a lazy set of fellows we are I assure you. Sold our preserved meats at cost to Mr. V. to eke out our scanty funds. I tell you Joe, that one must make one such trip to understand how few things he does want & as I knew before we started. We have the remains of the snow drifts in all directions around us & I undertook to bathe in the river this afternoon but I believe if I was in it I would never get out again, it is so cold. Perfect ice water.

*June 18.* McNiel having sold his waggon for 2 horses we take his load in our old waggon as far as it will last or to the ferry across Green River or Bridgers fort or the Mormon city or wherever we think best and then pack what we can & sell the rest for what we can get. Traded our poorest mule off to Mr. V. for a California pony & started for the pass  $9\frac{3}{4}$  miles putting McNiel's team & ours before the waggon. Hurrah for California. I write this from the dividing ridge the summit!! The south pass but I am sorry I can give you no description of rocks, perpendicular cliffs over hanging the road and ready to crush the traveler in their fall and block up the narrow channel, or of scenery worthy of Claude Lorraine, for it is very different. I was in anticipation of a sketch but it will not even pay for that. Just imagine yourself on a furze common in England with a McAdamized road leading across it with some hills ahead not equal to the downs and a distant view of

mountains on the right and you have the south pass. Several light waggons have passed on an eight mile gait since I have sat here. Ours is a mile ahead. Sam riding by just now looking very happy on horse back would be superlatively so if he had a bridle to the new purchase & had not to drive a couple of loose mules which are rather refractory & will eat on the road. I guess they think this is a Parmalees or Jim Lewis's by the way they put in. [\*] By the way, a glass of Gidding's ale would not go bad now & then. Joe says so.

*June 18.* [sic] Ice this morning  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick in the bucket but who cares, the water was from the Pacific Spring. I write this at sunrise wrapped in a blanket & out tending mules. This not very connected communication is generally written when the train is behind, when your humble servant has outwalked it so do not complain. I tell you what it is, although no wise discouraged or disenheartened, I think if I had had any idea of walking more than half the way to California without a good horse by the halter, I should have "taken Mammy's advise" & gone the other way. *Mais n'importe*. Hurray for California! Am I not seated on a peak of the Rocky Mountains Arcadian like watching my flocks & herds of sheep. No, that word makes me sick & I do not think mules were invented in those far off days. And have I not a very extensive view of the next weeks travel, perhaps fortnight in the shape of a very extensive plain with now & then a mound looking like an Egyptian pyramid or a mole hill in a five acre lot. Below me is plenty of life & bustle in the shape of emigrants catching up & hunting up their animals but I see Colt coming up the grassy slope. The bunches of "bunch grass" are about 2 feet apart, very convenient. However as each bunch makes a pretty good mouthful for a mule & is withal very nutritious, the animals preferring [prefer] this kind of picking to that of the bottoms next the creeks where the ground may be covered with other grasses. And now I will away to break my fast which I find has been very severe and when I shall probably drink four pint cups of coffee. This is owing to the extreme rarity of the atmosphere not to any

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[\*L. Parmalee appears under "refectories" in the Lockport section of *The Western Business Directory for 1842-43* (New York, 1842), James G. Lewis is listed as a grocer in the *Lockport Directory for 1856-57 and 1859-60.*]

natural propensity to indulge in immoderate quantities of the decoctions of tea or coffee as I believe five cups of tea was the outside at "home." Ask Mrs. Ralston for the exact quantity. The sliding scale must be on the decline as we are past the summit and the perfection has been arrived at gradually. And as for eating, do not think that in that I am behind the drinking part. Camped at noon on dry picking both for selves & mules. We are rounding the mountains, keeping them at a respectful distance to the right & have come in sight of others ahead. Traded our small pony for an old horse with sore back which the owner could not ride but with care will be well enough to pack twice as much as the pony. Rumor speaks of a fight between two trains in Ash Hollow in which some 12 or 15 were killed but do not suppose it true although stranger things might happen. Snowstorms in the mountains this afternoon, very cold still. I shall be glad when we have moved out of their neighborhood a little more.

*June 19.* Arrived at noon at the ferry kept by the Mormons over Green River. Traded our waggon & harness for a horse. Intend to pack. Was sick with fever all day.

*June 20.* Somewhat better. Wisner sick of the same complaint. Ferried across our things.

*June 21 to 25.* Busy getting well again & getting ready to pack.

*June 25 in evening.* Made out to start off with our pack animals with the usual luck of running away & turning of saddles but made a start. So far so good. Everything packs pretty well except the odd & end pack kettles &c. &c. Must do as the old hands do, go with a tin cup & frying pan for cook dishes.

*June 26.* We leave this cursed Green River today striking Hams Fork &c. By the bye, the captain of the ferry a very clever fellow for a Mormon, Lamereau by name, is from Toronto. If you see Gibson, ask him if he knew him. I nooned at Blacks Fork 20 miles. Came across a boy, a Green Mountain boy who has made his 30 miles per day since leaving the South Fork of the Platte afoot. He has kept up all the forenoon. While nooning a pack mule company passed us. He informed us that he had stayed with that pack company & that they did not noon. Rather funny to be

informed of what pack mule companies are coming by a boy afoot. This morning we had a specimen of mountain thunder storm & wind & of the beauties of packing. However, we have got along very well for the first whole day. The U.S. mail waggon passed us today. Evening. Colt taken sick with the same mountain fever. Two or three days more delay before us I suppose.

*June 27.* Laid at Blacks Fork, first rate feed for our mules. Had much rather be going ahead but the sick man must be attended to. The mail is to run to Salt Lake 6 times a year the city being the distributing office for California and Oregon (Olcot and Chalmers). Caught several small trout during the day, rather dull fishing. However have had a fine day for shaving, cutting hair &c. &c. We have now four mules loaded 150 to 175 pounds & 3 California horses such as in the States (Lockport) would bring \$125 to \$150. I find a little difficulty in carrying all the traps around my neck, otherwise get along very well with my sore collar bone.

*June 28.* Started about 9 o'clock A.M. Passed water about 12 miles then had to keep on until sundown for another stream. This is owing to the streams being high so that we take another road than that laid down in the Mormon guide book which book, by the way, is very correct in every particular, the distances having been measured with a roadometer as they call it. We are now in sight of Fort Bridger.

*June 29.* Fort Bridger is a small picket fort containing a small court on the inside. Is situated in the middle of a very large and rich (for this country) bottom, with several streams running through it. The principal one is Black Fork a tributary of Green River I believe. We did not go to it, merely passed it "en route." It was quite enlivening to see so fine a bottom with trees in every part bordering the streams and the hills around covered with dwarf cedars, after having traveled over barren naked plains so long, the largest shrub on which is the wild sage. Traveled about 25 miles over a country much improved as regards vegetation. Are still on streams running into Green river or Colorado. Lost our Green Mountain boy this evening. Suppose he is tired of our slow traveling and gone ahead. Joe sick this evening,

suppose he has got the fever now and another stay is to be made. "Oh that Friday start!"

*June 30.* Joe able to ride. We went on to Bear River, a stream which runs into Salt Lake. Found the stream considerably swollen nearly half way up the sides of a horse so packed our plunder over  $\frac{1}{2}$  load at a time & proceeded on our winding way to Yellow Creek & are now camped under some very rough conglomerate bluffs as perfect a map of concrete as I ever saw. Generally smallish stone or pebbles cemented with lime & fine gravel. Stopped rather earlier than usual on account of a thunder shower, got it, & now I am enjoying one of the finest sunsets in this township and some of the largest mosquitoes. Tonawanda mosquitoes are a flea bite to them in fact I find they grow to great size & strength all through this region. We are passing through a country improving very much in fertility. Some of the creek bottoms we have passed today had as thick & as fine pasture as I ever saw, scarcely equalled in England, & a good deal of the upland had good grazing. I forgot to say that we were visited at one of our camps by a dozen or two of Snake Indians whom we treated to the cold victuals in camp and sent off about their business by telling them that Colt had the smallpox of which they are very much afraid. In fact the traders have imposed on them through their fear of it to do all of the trading with the emigrants this year.

*July 1.* Traveled the greater part of the day down a small & very pretty creek, elegant bottom at the head where we struck it and the vegetation continually improving as we went down it. Saw wild roses the first I had ever seen in blossom also a cactus in flower, pale yellow and handsome flower. Camped in evening at the red [sic] fork [of the?] Weber River. The water is high so do not know but we may have to lay here some time. The creek we have traveled on all day we have crossed some 13 or 14 times and in the present state of the road, wet from showers, we have had some grand specimens of mules keeping their feet under trying circumstances equal to some of our acquaintances in business. The valley is bounded on the north side in particular by very high bluffs of the same conglomerate stone sometimes giving a very fine echo from which the creek takes its name (Echo Creek).

*July 2.* Went on four miles to ferry. Were delayed by high water but finally went across pulling our things in waggons. Made 8 miles.

*July 3.* Traveled up on Canyon Creek, a beautiful valley for a part of the distance. I speak comparatively. High hills on both sides with timber now & then on the banks of the creek which we crossed some 15 or 16 times, generally more than knee deep to a horse. Thence we went up a very narrow valley with a small stream running through it & having a very great ascent, then down the steepest & longest hill I ever saw with a waggon track on it into the valley of Browns Creek making 25 miles before dinner time. Saw some signs of civilization in the shape of saw logs about 20 miles from the settlement of the Mormons laying on the side of the road ready to be hauled. Passed over "last ridge" from Browns Creek to "last creek." Down that five miles to the great valley of the Salt Lake & which is about as desolate a looking scene as one would wish to look at from the mouth of the small valley or canyon as they call it here, there being nothing in sight in the shape of trees or houses as we expected to see but a large basin like valley surrounded by mountains and at the extreme right the lake some thirty miles off.

*July 4.* Is not this a funny place to be spending the 4th of July, in an isolated settlement of fanatics of the 19th century persecuted pilgrims. I write this at sunrise in sight of the City of the Great Salt Lake which has rather a straggling appearance from this, the houses being scattered in the field, instead of gardens, so that they are farther apart than those of Lockport even. The fields are irrigated from water brought from the canyons which I suppose is sufficient for that purpose. The crops look green, that is the most I can say for them but more anon. I must eat a piece of cheese now & as the only one awake take the picketed horse & hunt up the others. Have just discovered that I am watching my long-eared herd just above the city burying ground judging from the mounds and stakes. I find now that I have another view that the extent of country under fence is much greater than I had supposed although it would puzzle a person to know where all the lumber came from for the fences & log houses, did one not acquire the knowledge by traveling down the canyon as

there are not more than a dozen trees in sight & those in the heart of the city.

*July 4th, 1849.*

Dear Joe. Now for a description of the city after having taken a stroll through the same. It is situated on the east side of the valley about five miles below the mouth of "Emigration Canyon" and about 2 miles from the outlet of Utah Lake which same loses itself in the sand between this & Salt Lake which is about 25 miles to the north and which I have endeavored to give you a sketch of with the islands in it which are as high & rocky almost as the surrounding mountains and which afford excellent pasture for cattle, & first rate food for hogs in the shape of a root resembling an onion called by the Indians sago or sager. The city proper contains 17 wards each containing 9 blocks each of which contains 8 lots of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres each. However, at present only the wards are enclosed so that many of the houses have the appearance [of] standing in the middle of the lots. These same houses are of various kinds from the merest log shanty eked out with waggon beds set on the ground or tents, to most comfortable looking adobe cottages. The wards are not as a general thing all filled up or drawn for, but the inhabitants have clubbed together to do the fencing and occupy the whole for cultivation. They have all manner of garden stuffs & for the most part looking extremely well. Corn is about 2 feet high & tolerably wide in the leaf. They have had plenty of rain until within two weeks. They are now very busily employed irrigating the crops which is done by carrying the water from the creeks from the canyons in small trenches made for the most part with the plough along the tops of the slight ridges letting it off on both sides, each man having the use of it for a certain number of hours according to the amount of land to be watered or the quantity of water. So that just at present it is a night & day job to attend to it, especially as they have not everything in exact shape in all cases as the whole city has been put under fence this spring & the inhabitants had rather a busy time of it, the earliest built houses having been begun last fall & finished last spring. In fact there are but a few finished entirely at this time. There are a great many very neat looking adobe houses. The color is



very pleasing. They are generally plastered on the outside with the same materials they are composed of (mixed with sand) that being the top soil of the valley & almost as good as lime having a goodly proportion of saleratus in it. The fences are generally made of post & rails or rather poles & bespeak hurry in the building. They speak of board fences as most economical when the blocks are divided off next year. There are 4 saw mills in operation in different canyons and more under weigh. Three grist mills. You will be surprised at the number of the latter perhaps but there are from 12 to 15 thousand inhabitants and the farming country extends up the valley about 14 or 15 miles & 16 or 17 miles north besides a small settlement about 40 miles off called Browns settlement. There is also a settlement of about 50 families in the Utah valley some 55 miles south of this. The country close by the city is divided off into 5 and 10 acre lots and a man may take either quantity as he pleases or has hands in his family to work it. Wheat is sown as usual and the land afterwards plowed with furrows about the width for swinging a cradle and watered by merely stopping the water as it flows in the furrows with a board or other convenient method, every rod or so. I write this under the stone-cutter's shed at the new council house, a building 45 feet square now going up for the transaction of public business. It is to be two stories high containing four rooms in each story. It is composed of reddish sandstone of pretty good quality procured about 6 miles to the southeast. It is situated near the "temple lot" which is 10 square acres but when that is to be commenced this deponent knoweth not. These buildings are put up by each man contributing one-tenth of his time in labor or money. The society is governed by a president of the whole church and each ward in the city & settlement in the country has a bishop over it who meet for the transaction of business and who are again headed by a "head bishop." The streets of the city are 8 rods wide & I have discovered two neat frame bridges over the largest creek & that the streets where on side[of] hill are graded &c. The inhabitants are in extacies about their crops this year. Last year the crickets almost ruined everything in the shape of vegetation. These crickets are about the size of ones little finger and of a dark brown color & seem to be thick enough this year but they say these

are none compared to last year. Gulls from the lake devour large numbers and what is strange, old mountaineers say that no gulls were ever seen until last year. They are also increasing their stock of poultry which thrive uncommonly well on them. I have seen some pieces of wheat which will yield from 30 to 40 bushels to the acre. The people here feel rather sore towards the U.S. for not protecting them at Nauvoo, did not keep the 4th but intend to keep the 24 July the anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers who, you must know, started in April '47 and cutting their road from Fort Bridger located the city & commenced 3 forts, the most of which, since the people have moved into their houses, have been torn down. They were built of logs &c. with a square in the middle, the shanties facing inwards. They apprehend no danger from the Indians. Last winter some of the Utah Indians stole some cattle but on representation of the same to the old chief he told them that they had disobeyed his orders & had separated from his band and gave the Mormons directions to shoot the thieves which was done & the horses recovered. They have organized 5 companies of horse which drill in a few days. They number about 75 to 125 in a company. The uniform is to be of buckskin when they are rich enough to spare the same. The fact is, the good people here are poor in the necessities of life & think they are coming off [?] nicely over a man if they buy anything & can pay him in cash. I never was in a place where men refused cash if they could get barter. The gold dust they have is deposited and receipts given for it which paper money passes. Men may say what they please about the Mormons but I think they are a first rate set of men mostly from the eastern states and I am sure the amount of work they have done since they have been here is very great. There must have been fault on both sides in Illinois & I should think they were full as much sinned against as sinning.

*July 5.* Got our horses shod, the slight charge of a \$1 per foot being all or \$4 per animal. But they are willing to pay large prices for anything they get. Flour is worth \$20 per cwt, sugar 50¢ & other things in proportion. They are to have a press established soon & I suppose a paper equal to the L[ockport] Courier. By the bye, this city has very much the appearance that town L. had a few years ago.

July 6. Getting ready for a fresh start. Made our pack bags &c. so as to be more expeditious in starting of a morning although I am greatly afraid that the real difficulty lays in sleeping too long. I believe I have not told you that this basin is surrounded on all sides by high mountains which are at all times covered with snow. At the foot of these mountains there are generally benches or steps one, two, & sometimes more extending out two or three miles from the mountains proper, then the valley slopes gradually to the center or at least to the river Jordan on the east side. There are many creeks making down which are perpetual on account of the melting of the snow and are more or less used for irrigation, those near the city entirely consumed. It is also talked of to bring the water of the Utah outlet in canals on both sides of the valley & make it useful but that is to be done when more of the righteous are gathered together. The Utah Indians are very anxious I am told to procure cows and oxen. They say that the white man lives better than they do & they are anxious to have someone show them how to take care of their cows &c. Well, Joseph, as we start on & this mail starts back on the 10th I must close this *very connected* epistle and bid you good bye. I believe if I was a little longer on this trip I should forget how to spell. Please to recollect in reading this that a great part of it was written when walking ahead of the train or lagging behind & the information in regards to the Mormons &c. as gathered in conversation with some of them, and as to the color of the paper that I could not now do as I did last winter, make a map 9 ft. by 3 ft. and scarcely use rubber on it when finished. My first letter which you will see was intended to be sent from the N. branch of the Platte was not sent at that time so goes with this in U. Sam's mail bag. Give my very best respects to my friends in Lockport, the Ransoms, Harwoods. Tell Mrs. Harwood that I often think of that last turkey I ate at her house. Although we dined on beef steak & green peas yesterday, yet I thought of it. Mrs. Nelson too I would be remembered to. Tell her to remember her promise. And last & not least remember me to Mrs. and Miss Porter — particularly the latter. And in fact you know anybody that inquires for the fellow Tom Evershed tell them that he desires to be remembered by them. I will deliver this safely into the hands of P.M. Haywood & you must trust to

luck as to getting another. It will be from San Francisco by the bye. I care less & less every day about getting on to the diggings for gold & expect when I get to the same diggings that I shall be too lazy to work at all. The thing is not mentioned among us once a week scarcely. Tell Fred to be careful of his health & not drink too much and let the girls alone, & Tom too, he must be careful. Its lucky he does not injure himself these moonlight nights. He certainly would if he had such nights as we have in this part of the world. Goodbye dear Joe, I will write again from San Francisco & endeavor to give you a description of the diggings. In the meantime believe me your sincere friend,

Thos. Evershed

If you should see Neal, a Mormon living on the ridge, tell him I saw Stephen Taylor from B[?]at[Batavia?] who was well & at work on the council house.

*July 9th, 1849*

Dear Caldicot,

    Laboring under the supposition that you have safely received my other communication from the City of the G.S.L. I continue my journal to you. On the 7th we started somewhat after noon and went on to a Mr. Session's farm 8½ miles and on the 8th traveled 32 miles to a small fort built by an Indian trader Goodyear who last year sold out to a Mormon by name of Brown. Our day's travel having been parallel to the lake & on the east side and about 10 miles from it (have not been to the same as there are but few places by which it can be approached on account of marshes). In evening we struck the Weber River and followed the banks of it down to the ford opposite the fort spoken of & crossing which, stopped on the flat beyond and were almost eaten up during the night with mosquitoes which exceed everything yet in the way of numbers if not in size. About two miles beyond this fort is the largest stream I have seen from any canyon and the flat between the mountains & the river is much finer soil than any I have seen in the valley. The cattle are all in high condition than [this?] I have seen except perhaps a few in the city where the great numbers eat the grass off entirely making the travel for good feed some 4 or 5 miles. Have seen several flocks of sheep between the city &

Browns all looking well. Think I will drive my next flock to this valley. And at Brown's a flock of 50 or 60 goats. I write this in the morning before starting so must give you an account of the days travel after this: our route continued up the east side of the Lake. At the foot of the mountains about 10 miles from Browns there is a large saline warm spring, the flats for several miles around being covered with saline & other matter, the water being covered with a reddish scum. Twenty miles from Browns we passed Box Elder Creek and 44 miles travel brought night upon us & us to the banks of Bear River on which the Mormons have established a ferry. As it was where we crossed it above it is much swollen from the snows of the mountains & swims a horse from bank to bank.

*July 10.* Our party procured the ferrying of the packs at an early hour & the animals breasted the current bravely so that we have been able to make a fair days travel 23 miles to a warm spring passing around the north end of the lake but back of hills from it & catching a sight of it but once during the days drive. We passed three miles from Bear river a very bad creek narrow & deep called the Malade, a good name, in which some of our mules got mired & others slipped tumbled head over heels but luckily no damage done to the packs. I had been feverish from drinking too much water yesterday and finding this water very much like congress water, partook of it freely. In fact I thought if it had but ice in it it would be full as good but as it was it did not quench thirst very much although I think it will cure me up.

*July 11.* Feel well, all owing to the medicinal qualities of the spring? Caught a sight of the lake twice or three times in the forenoon, traveled a little south of west, nooned at deep creek and at night stayed at a spring on the plain affording good water but very poor grass for our mules. Passed an encampment of 6 or 7 lodges of Snake or Soshonies who were very anxious to have us trade with them or swap as they call it, tobacco for skins &c. They are rather a fine looking set of fellows although not so tall as the Sioux. Distance 34 miles. Have seen wild wheat the last few days, also a number of sand hill cranes & sage hens. Have a stew of the latter this evening.

*July 12.* Left our camp at the spring  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7, no very early start & filling our canteens nooned at a small grove of cedars where good grass could be procured. Suppose we have had our last view of G.S. Lake this morning. It is too bad to leave [sic] traveled half way around it and not to have visited it and bathed in its waters. The ferry man at Bear River informs me that the waters of the Jordan do not lose themselves in the sand but flow like those of Bear River & Weber River into it by numerous mouths or rather the ground is so flat that it spreads off over it, & that along the east shore which receives the waters of these streams it is almost entirely fresh for a good distance out. In afternoon struck across the end of the third large valley running N and S, viz the Malade, Deep creek & Cajeaux. Very similar except that in the two first mentioned the waters run south into the lake and this one, the latter, north, goodness knows where. Keeping the mountains on our left, we found beautiful snow streams running from them & arrived at our camping place just at sun down where the creek, making a turn, comes into the head of the large valley from the southwest.

*July 13.* Followed up the Cajeaux 9 miles, then over a ridge to the old road making some 370 miles of travel since we left it on the other side of Green River. An intelligent fellow with an ox train we have seen says that the distance by the other route is about 350 miles by Subletts [Sublette's] cut off. However, there is 52 miles of desert by that road which we avoided. After making the old road we struck over a low place in the mountains to the right and on ascending the top of the ridge could see our next weeks scene of operations & mark the road by the sun's striking the dust raised by the trains in progress ahead. The scene resembled the pictures of the moon as seen through a telescope more than anything else, consisting of a large plain nearly level but deeply gullied out, the gullies occupying  $\frac{2}{3}$  the space leaving the tops of the hills level and of all shapes as far as the eye could reach, only in our place was the view bounded by mountains. One hill just below us looked like the ruins of a Roman amphitheater so regular was its circular shape and so even its top with openings through the sides for entrances &c. &c. Passing down the hill we entered the Valley of Goose Creek. Distance 26 miles.

*July 14.* Followed up the valley of Goose Creek 22 miles and across the hills to Hot Spring valley. Got there after dark, camped in the sage bushes & turned our horses loose to seek their own feed, nothing especial in the camp. McNiel troubled with sore eyes. Tom Boynton's old veil comes very handy as a shade for them. Forgot to say that in the neighbourhood of the Cajaux we saw white marble in the hills, and the prickly pear is now in full bloom, sometimes 50 to 100 blossoms in a patch not exceeding 3 feet square mostly the red variety although there are yellow & orange colored but not so plenty or such large bunches. Now we are on the old road again & some 150 to 200 miles farther back among the trains than when we left it. It seems as though all the U.S. is on the way to California. The mule travelers have, a great many of them, like ourselves packed at Fort Hall or elsewhere & the road is full of them. The oxen trains are jogging on as usual, the animals are looking extremely well, not many of them foot sore but the loads are mightily lightened since they first started. I see a great many men on horse back with their stock of provisions behind them & no pack animal at all except the poor thing they ride & all making their 30 miles a day. We find our pack mules stand it a good deal better than our horses, but have not much fear but that they will stand us through especially if we lay by one day in the week as we do today.

*July 15.* Not a very good place certainly for ourselves but our mules and horses have done finely. The weather has been uncommonly hot since we left the Salt Lake but today we have had a very nice thunder storm and, what is better, it seems to have extended a good ways on our road so that at least for one days ride we may not be troubled with dust which has almost choked us, this fine clay dust white almost as chalk. The beauties of packing are not very great. Yesterday one of our mules got himself in a slough wetting his pack and among the rest my saddle bags got a ducking, wetting clothes, the rest of these books. No great loss perhaps you may say but if not too much damaged I shall probably trouble you with them when filled as I should like to have something to look at afterwards if they can be preserved. Distance traveled yesterday 35 miles.

*July 16.* Traveled up the valley of the hot spring. Our watered road did but last us  $\frac{1}{2}$  the day. Camped at night on the hot spring brook rather late. Turned our horses loose until after dark, shortly after which a portion of them came into camp 3 being missing. Supposing they were caught by the sage bushes by the lariat we started to find them but soon found their neighing was getting more & more faint so saddled a couple of horses. McNiel & Wisner & [I] went back on the road we came and pressed the gents so hard that they had to leave the horses in the road or rather two horses & a mule. Luckily for us they had made a bad selection in getting our youngest horses both of which can hardly be got ahead of the rest & the mule one of McNiel's old span & very much attached to his mate. Poor devils, how they must have sweat in larruping them along. We were just saying that our animals were pretty safe as we were 200 miles from Fort Hall where the packing fever ran high until we get some 150 or 200 miles of the diggings. Distance about 27 miles. Our New England boy even took the horse fever at Salt Lake & leaving us between two days taking a pair of blankets from us and a circingle was seen the next day (by inquiry of the trains) to make some sixty miles on the road but arriving at the ferry at Bear River & trying to swim his horse across was disappointed in that and on going to the ferry was caught & the horse taken from him, the man knowing the horse and that he was one of the finest in the settlement & which the owner would not part with for \$200, so we recovered our blankets.

*July 17.* Proceeded up the Hot Spring valley. Passed the Hot Spring about four miles from where the road turns out of it. The water is so hot that the hand cannot be held in it and within 10 rods is a spring of very cold water. There is no perceptible difference in the levels of the two springs. Passed over hills & camped at night in the bottom of another valley. Distance traveled about 27 or 28 miles. The general direction of Hot Spring valley southwest. Snow-capped mountains on the left.

*July 18.* Passed down the valley, saw at noon a small species of red clover seed ripe. McNiel, I believe, has saved some for home planting. Our road differs from the guide book procured at the Salt Lake but we suppose trees seen ahead to



be on the banks of Mary River [Mary's River: the Humboldt]. Our route thus far from the Lake has been very similar to that on the east side as regards vegetation the same being mostly sage bushes except around the springs and in the bottom of the valleys in the immediate vicinity of the streams where the grass is good as a general thing although a great deal of it is coarse & sedgy & wild wheat which when thick looks exactly like a field of winter killed thin wheat at "home." About 3 o'clock P.M. reached Marys River a stream at this about 20 ft. wide.

*July 19.* Proceeded down the valley of Marys river, nothing of importance, distance 30 miles.

*July 20.* The same. Passed over some high hills cutting off some distance and avoiding a kanyon, camped early in the day on account of high hills seen ahead. Distance 25 miles.

*July 21.* Passed over the hills 20 miles to the Marys river again. Very poor grass. The dust is now very deep, 6 & 8 inches in fact. Joe, you never saw dusty roads. We can see trains from the hills for 20 or 25 miles by the clouds of dust they raise and the road is in many places gouged out a foot in depth & the material blown off in the shape of dust as much resembling Pierces Cement in looks as may be and you may be sure that we poor fellows are a dusty set at night after riding after a set of pack mules all day and at noon too. Instead of calling the ostler and having your horse put out you unsaddle your riding beast and then unpack and throw on the ground the materials composing the mules pack, take a drink of blood-hot water from the canteen around your neck & perhaps mix some pinola, material composed of parched corn meal & a small quantity of sugar & then throw a blanket over the first bush and take a nap for an hour then  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour spent in packing & saddling sends you on the road again, to say nothing of catching up the mules & horses which may have strayed off a mile or so while the owner was taking his nap, especially if feed is scarce. Then at night, after unpacking, sage bushes are pulled or dry willows procured and a fire started, water boiled and meat fried and "dobies" baked in the fat of the meat which by the bye is getting rather scarce in the bacon. It is suet for these hot days & what is more it goes through the bottom of the pack. The

fact is, it is getting rather tedious, this journey, but I suppose it will have an end at some time or another. In two weeks from this, I hope, although it will be pretty good work to do it. And then our cooking is so very clean, the dust getting over everything. Distance 27 miles.

*July 22.* Laid over, it being Sunday we believe. Joe has got very thin and has quite a Californian look as well as the whole of us, both about the face & in the clothes line. Tis the fashion among mountaineers to have their pants open at the bottom on the outside but unfortunately mine are open on the inside and well fringed at that. Caught some very nice salmon trout which was a very great treat.

*July 23.* Passed through another range of mountains & crossed a large plain about 12 or 14 miles made by the valley of the Marys & another valley crossing each other. Distance 35 miles.

*July 24.* Wisner's mare having given out Joe having the leading of her did not come to camp last night but we do not feel very anxious as there are trains both ahead and back of us & if he has passed us will fall in with one or the other, and the Indians hereaway (the Diggers) like the Crows & others are *non comatibus in swampo*. We often see their old lairs in the willows bordering the streams. They have been in the habit of shooting the cattle of the emigrants with poisoned arrows but this year no guard is kept & we even picket our animals around us and go to sleep as unconcerned as we would at home. The only fear we have is from the emigrants stealing our animals. However we generally are in company with two or three others who camp in the neighbourhood. Found Joe had passed us in the night and camped with an ox train. He waited for us by the riverside. Packed the mare with a light load and Wisner rides a mule. Our mules stand it much better than our horses. They have much lighter loads except we walk some & ease them in that way. Passed a grave of a person attached to Bryant's Company by name Bryson. This is the first grave we have seen for a long time. It is rather astonishing how few deaths there has been on the road. The feed is now so poor and poorer ahead I fear for those who are two & three weeks behind us & apprehend there will be a great deal of suffering. The dust too, they say, is killing the

oxen, although there is dust enough here and I see no actual failures among them or but few. Have seen two horses & as many oxen that seem to be without masters and in a condition to be without them viewing their ribs and hips. Everybody says ours are the finest lot of mules they have seen on the road & so they ought to be for the time we have laid by. Distance 25 miles.

*July 25.* Still traveling in this said valley of Marys River. The water is getting to be very like the Missouri, muddy enough and warm. Were tantalized today with seeing snow on distant mountains and thought of the kanyon creeks we had passed. This valley is as a general thing about 4 to 8 miles wide from hill to hill. The general direction of the valley southwest by south. The general direction of the stream every point of the compass and as many more were they on the card. The grass does not extend any great distance from the banks and is generally scarce. Traded horses today for one that will pack more than the reduced one Wisner was riding. Distance 22 miles.

*July 26.* Still the same. Distance 33.

*July 27.* Distance 30 miles.

*July 28.* The same.

*July 29.* Nooned at a slough about fifteen miles from the sink of Marys River (Ogden's or Humbolts River for it goes by all three names). Came across a Shoshonie Indian who says he is going to California to dig gold. He is afoot. He was explaining to the members of a mule train that they must take the left hand road at the sink and mapping the country off in the sand on the old road. There is a hot spring at 25 miles from the sink and Trucky [Truckee] River at 20 miles farther. He was making motions how thirsty they would be & what time it would take to go through by the old & new routes by pointing to the sun in different parts of the heavens. We are told that there is no grass at the sink or place at which the river disappears in the sand and that this is the nearest feed, making by the old route some 65 miles without feed and 45 without water except the bad water of the hot spring. The new route is somewhat nearer probably 30 or 35 from the sink. This is the worst place we have on the whole route. Now comes the tug of war. We have noticed since coming among

the mountains a great number of small whirlwinds raising clouds of dust, exact counterparts many of them to water spouts at sea. They have a fine chance when passing over the road for dust in any quantity, hope we shall have as good when we reach the diggings! Have perhaps seen a hundred on each of the last three days owing I suppose to the mountains having been detached from each other & not in chains. I know no other reason for their prevalence.

*July 30.* "Paved our way" to the "Sink" or Humbolts lake. Traveled about 9 miles, came in sight of the lake, a beautiful sheet of water seemingly about a mile across it with the reflection of the mountains in it, the waggons passing through it, but the beauty of it was that they raised a dust so we concluded the sink was not yet and that it was a mirage, the first we had seen. Soon it disappeared "leaving not a trace behind" except the carcass of an old ox who I suppose had rushed with desperate haste into the empty space & died of disappointed hope. Soon after we came to the veritable sink, a marsh the water of which is brackish & full of alkalie, too much so for cattle, but we found some wells dug 7 or 8 feet deep quite brackish at which we watered. The sink is some 4 miles long & spreading over nearly the whole valley which extends on about the same as usual as though the river might have gone on as usual if the bottom had not fallen out. Oh! For a drink of good ice water! Little do you think when you go to Jims to buy a cigar of the blessing you enjoy when you turn out a glass of the iced beverage from Lyman's & leave the tumbler for Jim to wash. Or when you throw down your three cents for Drapers compound of villainous drugs how much better drink stands untasted on the counter in the pitcher (think if I ever write another journal I will bring a copy of Dr. Johnson). If you think you do not sufficiently appreciate the same just mix a tablespoonful of salt and a tea spoon full of saleratus in every pint of water & use no other for a week or two as we have done for the last week or so.

*July 31.* Thank goodness we are across the desert safely! We started in yesterday evening at sun down with a moon to last until about 1 o'clock. When about 10 miles begun to see dead animals on the side of the road. At about 17 saw a train of waggons left, the teams having been sent on to the river 25

miles after having lost 14 head on the 17 miles. About this time one of our own horses began to fail and about sunrise we had to leave him. Carcasses thickened from this to the river. Waggons & every description of goods strewed the road. We pressed on as fast as our animals could bear, and reached the river about 11 A.M. today, having been almost broke down ourselves in driving the mules who were very hungry, and it was almost impossible to get them along when we struck a very small quantity of dry grass. However, we were relieved partially by sending McNiel on his best mule for water & his meeting us about a mile or so from the river. Never saw the difference between mules & horses tested thoroughly before but now we had difficulty in getting our horses along at all but the mules were comparatively fresh although they were packed & the horses had but their saddles on. This was the short route said to be but 25 miles across but we found it at least 35 to 38 & the longest & slowest moving miles I ever saw on account of the deep sand especially the last 10 or 12 miles. Altogether we had extraordinary good luck owing to our mules being in such good plight. One man, who started through with three, left his packs intending to go back for them, lost everyone of the animals & had some difficulty in getting through himself. All this is not owing so much to the length of the drive itself but to the scarcity of feed & good water on the other side and to the stock being reduced so much in strength. If such is the case now, what will it be in two or three weeks. Tis really dreadful to think on the amount of suffering there will be on the road from the Marys River on. Strong hearty men can go through on foot but families will be badly off indeed. Probably not one-third of the emigrants are across yet.

Yours, T. Evershed

*August 1st, 1849*

Dear Joe

Having crossed the desert safely in my last I will remark that it is mostly encrusted with salt, forming a hard crust sufficiently so in many places to bear a horse. No vegetation of any kind over half the distance. We had the best of grass after getting across for our mules and this afternoon came on

about 4 miles to some more up to my hips causing great rejoicing.

*August 2.* Went on across a bend in the river about 17 miles, nooned & pressed on over another of about 18 or 19 which took us to 11 P.M. This must be Salmon Trout River I imagine instead of Trucky as I had supposed. It is a stream about 4 rods wide and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, at this time the water rather brackish. We have what we have not seen since having the Salt Lake Valley viz large cotton wood trees and plenty of them. Passed in the bends [of the] aforesaid dry valleys without outlets where the water had settled and left the bottoms quite smooth & hard forming a splendid road. Have seen several Digger lodges formed of rushes instead of skins, miserable affairs, but the Diggers are nowhere. I find this river to be what Fremont calls Trucky and the Mormons Salmon Trout, but I suppose the proper Salmon Trout empties itself into Salmon Trout Lake further to the west of this and this must, like the Mary's river, lose itself in the great basin. Distance 37 miles.

*August 3.* Traveled up the river 8 miles & nooned, afternoon. Afternoon passed over another stretch & reached the river again. Distance twenty miles.

*August 4.* Passed through a small valley cutting of a bend & on striking the river again came on a wide flat about 24 miles long & 14 or 15 wide covered with most excellent grass as good as I have seen on the whole route. We are now traveling alongside of the mountains & have passed several kanyon creeks containing very good snow water not so good as that at Salt Lake but a great improvement on the river. Saw a number of hot springs which rose at the foot of the mountains & again several larger cold ones which rose in similar situations & around which the grass was actually laying on the ground in its very luxuriance. If this does not make the poor starved oxen behind laugh, then oxen are not capable of enjoying that pleasing diversion. That and swearing are the only two diversions most of the emigrants have on this trip if I except quarreling with their mess mates & with themselves for having started by this route! This is a better valley than Salt Lake, I should think, if not too cold in winter. We have a very good road now being on a new one

made by the Mormons on their discharge from the service and on their way to Salt Lake[\*], & not being the main one is just enough traveled to be comparatively pleasant. Tonight we stop close under the mountains on the west side of the valley near a small creek of pure water. The mountains for the last days travel are covered with pitch pine trees some of them very large on a near approach although when seen from a distance they looked like shrubs & were taken by us for dwarf cedars such as we had seen for a few days back.

*August 5.* Passed up the valley 7 or 8 miles then struck by a canyon very steep & rocky. Now the waggons suffered instead of the animals. Poor McAdam would have wept to see such a road. Stone in it 3 & 4 feet square & in many places the whole road composed of such. Nooned in a small valley at the head of the canyon 5 miles from the foot of it. Saw some Mormons with their families at the last camping place on the river. They showed us gold in pieces, the largest said to be worth 53.30. Certainly looked very nice. They say that there is plenty of provisions in the diggings, which was quite consoling, especially as we are on our last piece of bacon & reduced to that consolation the packer's pinola flour having absquatulated some week or more. Caught some very nice speckled trout while nooning & I had quite a treat in a small plot of strawberries. In afternoon we passed up the valley in the mountains to its head at which place it contains a small lake and a puzzle as to the way we were to get out but that was solved by our following the road almost perpendicularly for about 1/3 of a mile over the dividing ridge & now are in California I suppose and some 9000 ft. above the sea at that. We came down on this side not quite so steep a road but quite enough so into another valley containing also a small lake. As we can see by the noon light, for we now travel into the first hours of the night.

*August 6.* Passed over the highest ridge after 5 miles of 1 to 1 slope, to use a professional phrase & from the top of which we had a splendid view of barren mountain scenery with several canyons in sight. In descending passed through pine groves of such timber if in Niagara County would make

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[\*Evershed's reference here is to the "Mormon Battalion," a company of U.S. soldiers enlisted in Iowa Territory which served in the Mexican War (1846-1848).]

Mack and Van Valkenburg laugh or "Wm P. himself rub his fat sides against them and purr." This has been a *splendid* road again but not quite so formidable as the kanyon we ascended. In ascending the high ridge our road led us over snow banks or rather we followed over them in preference to the miry road formed by their melting. We had the pleasure of snow-balling one another on the 6th of August, a privilege not granted to everyone I ween. The air felt cold & we had quite a frost last night. We can hardly believe that we are the same fellows who traveled over the desert panting for water & oppressed with heat.

*August 7.* Traveled down the ridge towards the scene of our future labors. No grass so pressed on to a small valley off the road 2 miles making 30 miles without stopping. From this on I suppose there is no grass to Sutters Fort & but little there some 65 miles ahead.

*August 8.* Cut grass to carry for our mules. Saw yesterday the largest white cedars I ever did, some of them 4 & 5 ft through & pines larger than ever, measured some 210 ft long, also some fair sized oaks. In afternoon started again and 15 miles travel brought us to Pleasant Valley, the seat, or rather it was the seat, of the first gold diggings to the eastward. This is indeed a pleasant valley wanting nothing but the grass to be a pattern of sylvan beauty and of that there must have been plenty but now not a vestige remains. These diggings are abandoned for the present owing to the want of water.

*August 9.* Continued to Sutters. In afternoon turned off main road to a creek to the left 6 or 8 miles for water & grass & diggings but found neither except the first.

*August 10.* Continued down the creek to a store belonging to 2 Indian traders. Found one of them sick & the other selling flour at the rate of 80 dollars per cwt. Here was good grass so stayed the rest of the day. Passed on our way many dry diggings. In fact every creek or ravine had been dug & scraped, literally scraped for the way seems to be to dig off the top covering & lay bare the rock and then scrape the crevices & wash only such parts as appear to yield gold.

*August 11.* Continued on our road to Sutters. Camped on banks of Macausnice River if it deserves the name of river.



*August 12.* Do. camped within 6 miles of Sacramento City as far as good grass continued.

*August 13.* Kept camp while W. and J. went to the city!!

*August 14.* Paid a visit to the said place of canvass and bough shelters for most of the houses are mere light frames & covered with cotton factory, only a few of the largest firms having frame stores. There are two or three fair sized ones the rest are small affairs. That does not argue, however, that there is no business doing for there is plenty of that going on. Goods are principally stored in the open air not having the fear of showers upon them. Their owners lay them around even on the *side walks* which makes me think that the city fathers, the babes, are not very strict. The wharves too are very handy, vessels of 300 tons laying up with the rigging among the boughs of the oaks which skirt the banks of the Sacramento, the water being deep enough to allow them to lay close to the shore with spar staging only for a gangway. Provisions are cheaper than I had expected to find them: sugar 12½ cents, coffee 16 to 25, flour (Chili) \$8.50 per 100#, pork 22 to 25¢, cheese 80 cents, butter (Oregon) 1.50, fresh beef 25¢. oxen are worth \$100, good oxen \$200 a yoke. We sold two of our best mules for \$300 or just twice what they cost us in the States but the rest, should we wish to sell, would not probably fetch as much. But we keep the rest to pack our provisions to the mines. In coming out of town in the evening rather after dark I was guilty of losing myself, a thing I seldom do in cities. This was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the corner of K and 3rd streets but there not being any signs on the trees & bushes, cannot tell the exact locality. The gas lights too, were not very brilliant that evening. One fond of shade trees in the streets would be exactly suited with Sacramento City. It is [a] very sickly place just now at which I do not wonder considering how the inhabitants live & sleep and the water they drink, for the water in the river is very bad at this season of the year and although there are wells they are scarce and the water in them not very plenty or good at the best. On our way we passed Sutters Fort, rather a dilapidated affair just now. Part of it is used for hospitals and the rest as drinking & gambling & boarding houses. In fact quite a little town in

itself. I see a large warehouse on the outside of the walls is converted into a hospital or at least so a very large sign on the outside would seem to imply. Capt. Sutter is living at a rancho at some distance feeling perfectly secure. I suppose now the country is in the hands of "los Americanos" without residing in the fort. Col. Fremont was up in the mines in the spring but is now at Monterey with his lady. Report says he carred away 70 lbs. of the dust. The ranchos or at least such as I have seen bear little resemblance to the American farm house in point of comfort being poor adobe houses the chief adjunct to which is a large coral for the cattle. The country is such that it is only on the river bottoms there is any feed in any quantity & therefore the ranchos are few and far between. I am disappointed as far as I have seen (that has been but little however). The land is not so good as I had imagined or the grass so fine, yet the cattle look well and are certainly superior for beef to any except the imported breeds in the United States. They show their Spanish origin about the head and horns. We have seen that often-described wonder, a Mexican cart, with its oxen with their yokes strapped to their horns and have also seen that the Mexican teamsters have so far acknowledged their inferiority as in many cases to have replaced them with others made in a more Christian manner & made by Yankee mechanics. Teaming to the mines has heretofore been the best business, better even than digging the precious but the influx of waggons &c. across the plains will soon bring that down & provisions, instead of being three times the prices I have given above, will be some what more reasonable. We intend taking up 6 weeks provisions & when we settle on winter quarters to come down & take up a winter's supply, if we conclude to continue mining through the wet season. We start tomorrow for the diggings. Trowbridge in making his purchases very luckily and by the merest chance met with Benj. Horton & we had an hour's pleasant chat together. He has been up to the mines (tell Laura Porter he says he has enough of his own digging to give the girls). He leaves tomorrow for San Francisco, there what to do I do not know but he seems determined to disappoint Mr. Porter in his prediction, please tell him so. He is looking very well and is in good spirits. The company, as I suppose you have heard, has

broken up as has that which went out in the Edward Everett from Boston about which there was so much fuss made at the starting. All these large companies have broken up, one from Pittsburg 300 strong has broken to pieces as also one from Cincinnati. In fact we are constantly hearing of the same in other companies from all parts. We find that there are seldom more than two or three who work together in the mines. In my opinion the cream has already been skimmed. Those who come down say that they seldom make more than an ounce per day (1 oz.). Blacksmiths & carpenters get from 16 to 25 dollars per day. Had I a trade how well I could do here, but being nothing but a poor engineer suppose must content myself with mining. Do not know, however, but I may go to San Francisco when I am sure my instruments are around and erect a canvass office on my own hook. Shall try the mines & my luck for a few weeks at any rate. I hear that a good many of the ranchos are being surveyed but not from very good authority & shall make further inquiries, if so the business may be good *nous venons*. These Californians seem to have no regard for horse flesh, always ride at a hard gallop or on a walk, no jogging along on a trot & it is surprising how soon Americans adopt the same method, ride like fury for a few miles and then get off and lay in the shade of some wide spreading oak for an hour or so. This might be well when horses were worth but 5 or 6 dollars but now they are worth 150 to 200. I must say they are rather extravagant. They (the Californians) should recollect that this harvest will not last for ever. It must have been rather a pleasant change for the gents who heretofore had to sell the hides & tallow of a hundred oxen to get themselves a decent suit of broad cloth, to have an ox or two pay for the same. They will undoubtedly look back to these days at some future period and wonder where the cash has all gone to. We passed the rancho of an English or Irish man who had harvested & cut for horse feed some 200 acres of wheat. An example I imagine for other rancheros or at least I have seen no such fields. This bottom, at the junction of the Sacramento with the American fork, seems to be quite extensive, from this our present camping. It presents quite a park-like appearance having noble wide-spreading oaks scattered over it, some of them, the one in whose shade I am reclining for instance, 5 or 6 ft. through at

the foot but very soon branching out most beautifully to the artist if not to the utilitarian. Have just heard by a traveler who stopped to rest under our tree, Carrol by name, of Col. Jewett. It seems he was 65 days in getting from Pan[ama] to San Francisco & with McCollum & Bradley have been mining on the Tuallame [Tuolumne] River without much success. When my informant left he was about starting for San Francisco. Trowbridge gets no definite news of his brother George except that he met with a particular friend of his from St. Louis now staying in Sacramento City who has not seen him in that place. Joe says he shall write home as soon as we get settled in the diggings. Excuse the dirty appearance of these leaves. The fact is, if you were to see the writer you would only wonder how he kept them so clean. Give my best respects to all inquirers & believe me your affectionate & sincere friend.

Thos. Evershed

Sac City Aug 16th/49



*CHIMNEY ROCK 1849 Thomas Evershed*



RED BUTTE ON THE REPUBLICAN RIVER 1849 Thomas Evershed







VIEW ON THE HUMBOLDT RIVER ON THE TRAIL TO CALIFORNIA 1849 Thomas Everett



VALLEY OF THE WILLAMETTE RIVER, OREGON 1849 Thomas Evershad