

our breakfast in the morning and then we talked it over that each one would go in a different direction to see if we couldn't find Rob. I went into the tent to get something, I don't know what, just as I stepped out of the tent I heard a faint report of a gun and I grabbed my gun and I shot, stood there and listened for just a short time and then I heard two shots, then I answered him with two shots, he answered me back with three shots and I done the same. That way you know you ain't shooting at game. We didn't hear any more shooting and stood there and waited. Want but a little while before we saw him a coming. Rob hollered, "My God, Big, but I'm hungry." I says, Rob don't ever throw away your lunch until you get to camp." He got lost and before it comes night you stop and start gathering wood so that you can have a fire. He leaned up against a tree, I suppose for backing, and had his fire out in front of him.

I got lost down there. The boys had come in, two of them, and had killed a deer and hung it up and I knew pretty near where it was, knew that I could find it, so Rob says that we would go and get it. We had to go about a mile, such a matter, up a draw and then turn into another one, wouldn't have to go a great ways before we would be pretty near to were the deer was. Well, there was a fog came up and we couldn't see anything hardly, it was a heavy fog. We come to a place/where we thought we ought to turn, and we did, and we turned and kept a going. After a while the fog cleared up, the sun came out, and I says, "Rob, we're lost. I know the direction back to camp, I can get back to camp all right but darn the deer, I want to get that." Rob says, "Darn the deer, lets get back to camp." I says "Rob we are 7 or 8 miles north of the camp. I took my compass out of my pocket. I says, "That big tree down there a long ways down is right straight south of us." I got another line on a knoll south of us with my

*Rob
lost
116*

*Rob
lost
116*

OK

compass. I says "We'll hit a trail before a great while." Well, we probably walked a mile and we did and we was west of the camp, I knew that when we hit the trail. I says that we'll turn east here on this trail and that will take us into camp. He didn't dispute me but I knew he thought I was going tight wrong. We didn't go probably more than a mile before we run right into camp. The boys said that we had got lost a purpose so that we wouldn't have to carry that deer into camp, they had gone out and got the deer. Rob says, "Your darn fools, do you suppose we would walk 12 or 15 miles to keep from carrying that deer in two miles."

In the fall of 1863 my father and a man by the name of Thos.

Balley and Fred Schlegelmich made up their minds they would get an outfit together in the winter, all ox teams they were, no horses,

and start for Idaho in the spring. They was going to work in the mines during the summer and trap and hunt in the winter. They had

got two wagons, three yoke of cattle on one wagon and four yoke on the other, and two of the yokes of oxen was cows. They took the

cows to furnish milk on the way and they were more valuable than the oxen were when they got through to their destination. One of

the cows had a calf way out on the prairie and they gave it to an Indian and he put a string on it, there were sommany firelighters that

the Indian had learned the drivers words and he would give that little calf a jerk with the string and he would holler, "Gee, haw, God-

damn you" to make him go but he wouldn't do it so he soon threw it, tied its legs together, threw it over his pony and away he went.

They left here about the first of March 1863, early enough in the season so that there would be grass for the cattle when they got out

on the plains, there being no settlement after leaving Omaha. They took me along to carry the wood and water and be cook, I was 13 years

old then, and I had plenty to do to keep me busy. One of the wagons was loaded with twenty sacks of flour, 100 lbs, to the sack in those

days, drawn by four yoke of oxen, and the other was household goods, guns, ammunition, steel traps, and everything else needed. We expected

to have enough flour for the journey and have some to sell when we got through, it was selling for \$25.00 a sack in Virginia City, Mont.

when we got there, It was flour that was bought of Sherrard and made in the mill here. It was a cold, windy day when we left and we made

Hawley, now Blairsburg, the first night, about 18 miles, and that was about as long a day's trip as we made during the trip. The next night

*Wagon
load
days*

starting

*Omaha
to
Idaho*

1863

119. we got over onto the hill this side of Webster City, about 12 miles. The reason we went that way was to get across the Des Moines River, which was up high, and that was the only road out of here, there being no road south of here-just brush and swamps and the swamps full of ducks. ~~#####~~ Going to Webster City was a little out of our way but by going that way we could take hill roads, which were better than the ones on lower ground. We went south from Webster City to the Des Moines River and the road followed its banks on high ground where to going was good. About the first day out we heard of a ferry on the Des Moines River where we could get across without having to go clear to Des Moines, the city, to get across the river as we thought we would have to do when we left here for we knew of no ferries and there were no bridges across the river above Des Moines, called Fort Des Moines then. This ferry would save us several days trip, so when we got opposite of it we turned and went down to where it was. When we got to the ferry the road was cut around quite a bluff. The river was all over the bottom on our side and lacked about four feet of being over the banks on the other side and was nearly a half a mile across. The ferry would take one yoke of cattle and a wagon across at one trip and no railing around the boat so if the cattle would get to crowding they would go into the river, wagon and all. Father took in the situation and he says, "Boys, we will run one wagon on the boat and run it up as far as we can to the front end, then we'll run the other wagon on with the tongue under the first one, and throw the yokes and chains on the boat, and we'll swim the cattle across. We'll throw George onto one of the cattle and let him take the lead." I had one oxen that I had ridden around home here before and I could do anything with him that I wanted to. Father showed me about where I wanted to hit the shore

at Webster
camp
on
the River

120. one the other side if I could, if the current wasn't too swift.

Swimming Cattle

The other bank was three or four feet high and the water about 15 feet deep and the cattle couldn't get out except where they could get their hind feet on bottom. About a quarter of a mile below where the ferry hit was a ravine where the cattle could get out but below that was a big clay bank where the water swirled around and if any of the cattle got into that they would never get out. The cattle follow each other in ~~the~~ swimming but where there is a current they are not directly behind each other but each one has dropped a little down stream from the one in front of it. The place father showed me to try to hit was far enough up stream from where they could get out that he thought all of them would hit the bank above where they could get out and then they could drift along down with the current until they got out. They bunched the cattle all up at the edge of the water, throwed me onto my old ox, then they clubbed the cattle until they got them in the water, they didn't need to club mine because he would go where I told him to, and they all followed me. All I wore was my shirt and my hat and my shirt was tucked up under my arms. Cattle swimming swim very low, about all you can see of them is their head and sometimes their hips. I knew that the water was getting a little deeper all the time and the cattle was all lined up and following me in good shape and that when we stepped off ~~###~~ the bank into the main channel of the river my ox would go in kasouse, clear over his head, and I'd get wet. I got hold of each side of him, a good hold in his hair, and I was afraid that when the current struck him he would roll but if he did roll I would be on top half the time, but when he stepped off the bank he went clear under but I didn't get my shirt wet because I had it

121 rolled up under my arm, and when he came up and shook the water out
of his ears, then I did get my shirt wet. Well, I struck the bank
on the other side just about where father thought I ought to and
then I hawed him off down stream and made him go as slow as I could,
just let the current push him till I got the cattle all line up
lined up behind me, then I crowdèd him, made him swim as fast as he
could. I had to go around some of the trees going down, I didn't
want to get scratched off, but when I got down to where I could get
out there was no trees and then I shoved him into the bank then when
I struck the ravine where the cattle could get out they was all
lined up but one cow and she undertook to cut the corners a little
and the current took her down to where it swung her into the bank.
As soon as I struck land I slid off my ox and commenced to holler
"gee" to the cattle to get them to swing into the ravine. They all
minded first rate except one cow and the current took her into the
bank right near the ravine and the current was so swift she couldn't
make it back, so I run down and grabbed her by a horn and by me laying
down flat I could hold her there, but not pull her back, until some
of the men got there to pull her back. The ~~###~~ ice hadn't been out
of the river but two or three days and from my being in the water
swimming across the river and then lying on the bank in the cold air
without any clothes on I had gotten beyond the chilly stage and was
just plain numb but I had sense enough that if I couldn't hold onto
the cow to save here until the men came I would let her go before she
pulled me into the river. Pretty soon a man came down through the
brush just as tight as he could run with my clothes and he see the
predicament I was in and he laid down and grabbed the old cow by the
horns and I don't think he had to pull her more than ten feet before
she could hit bottom. Then he grabbed me up, put his arm right

Abraham

swimming
Cattle

122. around my waist and took me around on the opposite side of a knoll where the wind didn't blow and the sun was shining warm and he gave me a good rubbing and pounding and got my clothes on me, then I was so stiff and cold I couldn't stand up when he got me dressed he rolled me around in the grass a while until he got me so I could stand up all right and then within ten or fifteen minutes I felt as good as I ever did.

The ferry was, of course, an old fashioned one. There was a rope stretched across the river from a tree on one side to a big post set in the bank on the other side. There was a block and tackle at each end of the boat and both of the blocks was on the rope across the river, one at each end of the boat, and by lowering one end so that ~~####~~ the boat would be at an angle of about 45 degrees to the rope across the river and then when the current would strike the boat it would push it along to the other side of the river. Then when they wanted to go back they would pull that end back up to the rope and lower the other end and then the current would push it back. Then there was a smaller rope fastened on each side of the river and hung down where you could catch it from the boat and then by taking hold of it and pulling you could help the boat along faster.

Nothing further happened until we got to Council Bluffs and there where we were to meet two parties from Alden, I. G. Whitney and Hoel Sperry and two of his cousins from Connecticut. Whitney and Sperry each had outfits of their own. In Whitney's wagon he had nothing much except his camping outfit and supplies enough to carry him through. In the front of the wagon, next to the dash he had a keg of packed eggs on one side and a keg of whiskey on the other side, with just enough room between for his feet.

at
Council
Bluffs

see
Page
219

123. Sperry was carrying just enough stuff to get through on. We pulled out of Council Bluffs and crossed the Missouri on a regular ferry boat into Omaha, and not much of a town either Omaha was then. Omaha was the last town until we got to Virginia City, Montana.

~~#####~~ We wanted to get to the Elkhorn River that night but it rained in the afternoon and that stopped us about three or four miles from the Elkhorn. That night it rained ~~###~~ under the tent and through the tent and all around it and got our bedding and everything else wet. Then the next day when we got down to the Elkhorn River we stayed there the rest of the day and spread our bedding all over the brush to get it dry. Up the river there was a band of Pawnees camped and they had a dance that night and we went up to the dance and stayed a while until we got tired of it and then went back and went to bed. It was a kind of a pow wow dance, mostly whooping and hollering. I guess they were celebrating something. The next day we got over on the Platte River. The two Sperry boys from Connecticut were kind of hot house flowers, I guess not very healthy. Pearl was the oldest one and Fred the youngest and Fred and myself usually went together and when we would come to where someone had camped we would always be looking around to see what we could find. The Indians had broke camp, that is their winter camp, and was scattered all along the river there and there was plenty of game in the hills for them and lots of ducks and geese and fish in the Platte River, and, Oh, every mile or two there would be from one to a dozen teepees camped. Well, Fred and myself was looking along one day and he picked up a piece of bacon, perhaps two or three pounds in it. It had got a little stale and somebody had throwed it away. He says, "George, I've got a scheme." We'll clean that bacon all up and the first bunch of

Wash

Elkhorn River

Sperry's

Indians

124. indians we come to I'll see if I can trade it for some moccasins."

Twasn't lang before we run into quite a camp, settlement, of indians.

He started out with his bacon and he was gone quite a little while but he came back with the bacon. He didn't know any more about the indians than a hog did about keeping hotel. Well, in a mile or two we run into quite a big gang, probalby about 15 or 20 tepees, so I took the bacon and started. I picked out the biggest tepee, threwed the flap of it to one side and walked in. Right by the door as I stepped in was an~~g~~ old indian sharpening knives and I didn't like the looks of that old fellow because my pants was awful thin and I was afraid he would tickle me up a little when I went out. There was probably ten or a dozen squaws in there, all making moccasins, all sitting in a circle. On the back side was 12 or 15 pittle papooses, some about my age, some older and some a little younger. The squaw nearst to me was an old squaw and a hard looker and she had quite a pile of moccasins in front of her and the pair on top of the pile I thought would fit me so I laid my meat down beside her and then reached over to get the pair of moccasins I wanted and she grabbed that piece of meat and throwed it as hard as she could thrown it, it struck the side of the tepee and it fell back into the dirt. I really didn't like the situation but I went and picked up my meat, brushed the dirt off the best I could, and she spoke to a litte squaw over amongst the young ones about my size and I knew then there was a trade on. I stepped right back to this pile of moccasins where the old squaw was and the little squaw came over to where I was and set down right beside me and took her moccasins off and handed them up to me and reached for my meat. I looked them over and see they was pretty well worn and I didn't want them. I took and wadded them all up

Wash

Trading
Bacon
for
Moccasins

125. together, then I threw them just as hard as I could on the other side and they struck the side of the tepee. I was watching the old squaw all the time, I saw a kind of a smile, quiver like, come over the old squaw's face, then I laid my meat down beside of her and picked up the pair that I wanted and I walked out. When I got to the opening I made quick time to get out because I was afraid of the old man with the butther knife. I got my moccasins and not a word was said in the trading. I knew enough to keep my mouth shut, they went a good deal by signs anyway, and I wasn't a darned bit afraid of them. When I got back to the wagons I got a good cussing for being gone so long but Irvé, That's Whitney, made the remark that if there was any indians around they was always my friends anyway. Fred was kinda beat because I got my moccasins.

I had two fishpoles tied under the wagon and during the day I would kill a blackbird, or some other bird, cutting the breast out and using half of it for a bait on one hook and the other half on the other hook. After I got my chors done then I would bait my hooks and set my poles and most every morning I would have something, generally a mud turtle or a catfish. ~~###~~ One morning when I went to get my pole I pulled on one and I thought it was caught fast to the bottom so I dropped it and went on to the other one to see what was on it. When I came back to the first one I pulled on it again and it started up stream and I got it turned around and started towards a sand bar where I could pull it out, It was all tired out for it had probably been flopping around all night. When I got it it was a fifteen pound catfish, the biggest one I caught on the trip. The lines I had was regular big white lines that the masons use in lining up their work, they cost me a nickle for 50 feet, and the poles I had were ironwood that I had cut in the

126. timber down the river from here. I fastened the pole pretty solid
Went every night by pushing it clear in the bank as far as I could and
then if there was any stones around I would put them on top of it.
Lots of times I would had a cord or other line in my pocket and
if there was a bush close I would tie the pole to that instead of
staking it down. We followed the Platte River, making about 15 to
18 miles a day, One day we stopped for noon and there was quite a
lot of big cottonwood trees and Mr. Whitney says, "George," and
I says, "What is it?" and he says, "Here is one of your friends."
and there was a dead indian tied up in one of the trees. The indians
buried their dead up in trees out there whenever they could for it
would give their spirits a little advantage to get to their happy
hunting grounds a little quicker. I've been told that if a noted
warrior was going to die they would lead his pony up to him and
just as he was dying they would kill the pony so that ~~###~~ his spirit
could could ride it to the happy hunting ground but if they made a little
mistake mistake and killed the pony before the warrior died then they would
choke him to death so that there would be no delay in the trip to
the happy hunting ground. At Fort Berthol, on the Missouri River,
there was probably ten or fifteen acres in their burying ground
where the dead were all put up on little platforms tied onto poles
and then in the fall when the fire would run through the long grass
it would sometimes burn off some of the poles and let the bodies
down but that didn't make any difference for they never fixed them
up.

We followed the North Platte and then crossed a sandy country
to the Powder River. All along we had been meeting troops and
traders coming back from the western country and going back to
Council Bluffs for more loads. They told us ~~#####~~ that on the

127. west side of the Big Horn Mountains Jim Bridger's route was over-
run with emigrants and that the feed was getting short there and
that a man by the name of Bozeman had laid out a new route on the
east side of the mountains and we was hurrying up to get there to
go with him because he was going right through an indian country.
The night before we got to this cut-off, where we left the old
Utah Trail, the main line to Salt Lake City, I got my poles set and
as I turned around there stood an indian. He pointed to my pole
and took out an arrow from his quiver, which meant that he wanted
to trade his bow and one arrow for my fishline and pole, I had a
hook and line in my pocket which I took out and he stretched it all
out to see that it was all right, and then I would it up. Then I
kept bantering with him until I got his whole outfit, bow, ten or
a dozen arrows, and his quiver, in trade for the fishhook and line.
All he had on was a buffalo robe with a string tied around the
waist and around his neck to keep it from falling off his shoulders.
The string around the waist made a pocket of it where he could
carry things and he put the hook and line in there. He then gave
me shooting lessons with the bow and arrows and I couldn't hit a
weed or anything else but he could every time and father hollered
and wanted to know what in the devil I was doing out there with
that indian. The indian started right out picking up the arrows
that we had shot and he handed me the whole outfit and I shook my
head that I didn't want them cause I knew father wouldn't let me
have them. The indian looked downhearted, I watched him, and he
stuck his hand inside he buffalo robe to give the line back to me.
I put my hand on the outside of his robe and I shook my head that
I didn't want it and you ought to have seen the gring that come over

Wash

reading
with
book
me

128. that man's face. I never saw a man with such a big mouth for when he grinned the top of his head would have been an island if his ears hadn't stopped his mouth. I don't know whatever made me give that to the indian but I was glad I did as it developed later.

When we got there to that cut-off Mr. Bozeman had gone. We got there in the forenoon sometime and father says "We'll lay here until the sun get back of the mountains when it wouldn't be so warm." It was all sand from there to the Powder River practically, once in a while little puddles of alkali water, not hardly any vegetation, and about fifteen miles across. Father says "We'll hitch up and drive just as far as we can see the road." The sand road is a hard road to follow after dark. There were three frenchmen where we turned onto this trail and they advised us not to go until we had a bigger crowd. He said, "There is a big band of Indians over on the Powder River where you fellows have got to go. They came over and run off and stole a lot of our horses and three of us went over there (they were squaw men, these Frenchmen were, they all had squaws) told the indians we had come over after our horses and the indians said we've got your horses and we'll get you too, and I knew he meant just what he said and we turned and ran and it wasn't two minutes before the air was full of arrows and I looked back and saw one of my men go backwards from off his horse and the other fellow was leaning over front on his horse and hanging on with both hands. The indians didn't foller us and I brought the wounded man in and he is lying there in the house now, and you have got them indians to contend with when you hit Powder River." We all went in and saw the wounded Frenchman and I don't think there was a man in the crowd that cared whether he lived or died. So we hitched up and started out, just four wagons of us. We drove that night just as long as we could see

Book

Powder River

Frenchman

129. a wagon track and then we stopped there that night, never unhitched
the cattle at all. I took a blanket and rolled up under one of the
wagons and went to sleep. Just as quick as it begin to get light
we started out. We got over on Powder River in the middle of the
day and vegetation looked vine down there in the valley, green.
We drove down to within a few rods of the river and unhitched the
cattle and let them go into the river. We knew we couldn't do anything
with them on the wagons because they was so thirsty. Then we got them
out and hitched them on the wagons and went across and camped. Well,
father says, "We'll lay over here tomorrow, good feed for the cattle
and plenty of water. I didn't fishany that afternoon by the time we
got around it was late but the next morning after I got my work done
up I went out into the grass after grasshoppers and crickets, pinched
their heads and put them in my pockets. When I got to the river I
batted my hook and threw it out and it hadn't hardly struck the water
until a trout had it. Those mountain trout would weigh all the way
from a pound to three pounds that I caught, then I went to exploring
along the river where the indianx had camped. All along the river
there, probably a mile, there was little piles of ashes where the
indians had been and some of them was still burning. They had pulled
out that morning, the indians had, sometime during the forenoon.
Father didn't like the looks of the situation but we stayed there the
next day and let the cattle rest and we pulled out just as quick as
we could see the road in the morning the next day. When we left the
river for three or four miles there was a raise like, a little uphill,
and then a gradual slope down to a little creek. We drove late that
night to catch up with Bozeman and then turned out the cattle. The
men got up pretty early and I went to getting breakfast and they started
out after the cattle before breakfast and came back and couldn't find

Host

Powder
River

Fishing

130: the cattle. That was something very unusual for the cattle to
stray a great ways. After breakfast they had been gone just a
short while and I went to cleaning up and taking care of my things
and two squaws came to the camp and set down by the fire and pointed
to the frying pan that I hadn't taken care of with a little meat in it.
I had a little batter left, so I ~~###~~ divided the batter up and made
each one of them a pancake. I put it in this frying pan with the meat
and set it down between them and they would pull off a chunk of pancake,
sop it around in the grease and down it, and I gave them what coffee
I had made and when they got through they had my frying pan clean.
Every time I looked at them they'd drop their eyes and when I wasn't
looking at them they was watching me. Well, I got my things all packed
away, I thought I'd set down and have a little chat with them squaws.
Just about that time we heard the men coming with the cattle. Just
the moment they heard the men coming they jumped up and went into the
brush and that was the last I ever did see of them. Well, that night
we caught up with Mr. Bozeman. I was taking a loaf of bread out of
a little sheet iron stove. Mr. Whitney says, "You've got company."
I says, "Where?" He says, "Setting up there in the grass." I
redognized him as the indian I had given the hook and line to four
or five days before. He motioned for me to come. I sys, "Father,
that indian wants to see me and I am going to see what he wants."
Mrs. Bozeman's wagons were drawn by cattle and horses and when they
stopped at night they would corral their wagons and then drive their
stock in there for the night. They would leave a wagon out of the
coral so as to make a gate, then they would take hold of the wagon
by hand and run it in and stop the hole. They bunched thier horses
and mules together and the cattle together and run them in opposite
directions when they were feeding before puting them into the coral

131: so they wouldn't get mixed up. The horses and mules were down a little ways from where we were camped. Just the moment that indian saw me he started for that flock of horses. We got down in amongst them, he took his bow and snapped it at a roan pony there was amongst them just as much as to say that that pony had been shot with an arrow. He walked up to him, a white man couldn't get up to the pony without a lot of trouble, and threw his mane over and there was a scar on his neck about a couple of inches long where he had been shot with an arrow. He threw the mane back and patted it down, walked right through the horses and over the hill and that's the last time I ever saw that indian. The man that was herding the horses was there when the indian was showing me the scar and that night he told Mr. Bozeman about it and Mr. Bozeman come to our camp and he says to me, "What about you and that indian?" I says, "Nothing much. Away back here two or three days drive I give him a hook and line." He says, "That pony he went up to one of my men had traded with the indians for it and probably it was stole from that indian and the pony really belongs to the boy (that's me) but it wont do to take it away from the other fellow that traded for it." I tokd him about the squaws coming to the came when the men was out after the cattle. I kinda hated to tell him how I treated them squaws 'cause I knew I would get a cussin'. He says, "Young man, you did an awful good job when you gave that indian that hook and line. Coming through that country it just saved your damned necks." New, the next night a man came to our camp. He was hungry and tired. He was with a train of twenty-five wagons that pulled into the Powder River the morning after we left there, drawn by horses and mules, and they laid over there one day. They pulled out in the morning and got onto the divide between the Powder River and the little creek where they couldn't get to any

West

Indian

Pony

refugee

132. water the indians jumped onto them and they fought them all day.

at night That night this man at our camp see that there was no hope for them so him and another fellow crawled out in the night and they got separated in the ark and he knew the direction he wanted to go but he was near enough to the wagons to hear a few shots and he knew if there was any indians in the country they would be there with them, so he found the road and he came to our wagons because they was the first ones he got to. Early in the morning after he had crawled out from his wagons he saw smoke from them so he knew that the indians had taken the train and was burning it up. We never knew what became of that train but always thought the indians took them and burned them up and that was the last of them.

Crossing the Big Horn Nothing but about the same routine every day, thousands of buffalo over the country, till we got to the Big Horn River and it was up and booming, the river was. A common wagon the water would run into the wagon box and get everything wet, so the men raised the wagon box up to within about two inches of the top of the stakes and tied the front bolster down so that wouldn't come up with the water. Then a party on the other side of the river had a long rope and a small rope attached to it and they'd pull the big rope across with the little one and fasten it to the lead cattle's ring and we would start across the river, the men on the other side hold of the rope. The water would come up pretty near belly deep on the cattle and very swift but they had to go cause there was plenty of men on the other side of the river hold of the rope. That's the way we crossed the Big Horn River. We got through all right but lighter wagons, a good many of them, tipped over, but with the men hold of the rope the wagon had to come. After the wagon was across they would untie the rope from it and send the lighter rope back to the next wagon to come

133. across. The lighter wagons all had their covers tied down tight so

Whitney shooting a buffalo

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if they did tip over their stuff would stay inside, a part of the time anyways. We was going along a nice little valley, quite a little raise off to our left, and there was a flock of buffalo coming on this raise, probably 50 or 75 buffalo, perhaps 20 or 25 rods from our wagons and going the same direction we were going. Pearl Sperry says, "I am going to shoot a buffalo" so Pearl started with his gun and I and Mr. Whitney went along with Pearl and probably we got up withing a hundred feet of the trail of the buffalo and then we laid down in the grass. Mr. Whitney says, "Give me that gun Pearl, and I'll kill the biggest buffalo in the outfit." The buffalo was all lined up one after the other loping along, going to water. They looked the herd over and Mr. Whitney says that the hind animal is the biggest one in the whole flock and he was an old bull. As he came along Whitney took a shot at him and we heard the bullet hit him ka-spat. He stopped and throwed up his head and it was a question in our minds which way he was going, our way or the other way, but the bull turned off in the opposite direction and then we fellers felt better and there was a man over on the other side, he was a very tall man, over 6 ft. in his stocking feet, and ov course the bull saw him and the man thought that the bull was after him. There was a dry ravine where the rains had washed out quite a gully. The man jumped that but the bull was so near dead he couldn't jump it but fell in it and died. Mr. Whitney says, "Let's go over and see where I hit him." This fellow says, "That was a pretty narrow escape I had with that bull. I shot him three times, twice in the head and once in the body." So Mr. Whitney says, "Let me see your gun." So he pulled out his little six inché barrel revolver, 22 caliber. Mr. Whitney says, "Where is your hat?" and he put his hand up on his

134. head and said "I don't know where it is." Well, in the race he had lost his hat and one of his shoes. We all got hold of the buffalo and felled him over. We saw where Mr. Whitney's bullet had hit the animal on the side and that was all the bullet marks there was about the animal. Mr. Whitney says, "I want some tallow to grease my wagon." So we cut him open and took out one of his kidneys and it was covered with tallow. Mr. Whitney picked it up and turned to this fellow and says "There's your damned buffalo, do as you're a mind to with it now." That herd ran quite a ways, perhaps a half a mile and then turned to the crick and there they stopped part of the wagons and let others go on so the buffaloes could go between, they wouldn't stop for anything when the once got started. When the buffalo crossed the road many of the men got their guns out and killed quite a number. I saw seven dead ones just a few feet apart lay there on the ground, not a pound of meat taken out of any of them.

Nothing more exciting happened until it was getting along towards the Fourth of July. So the evening of the second of July Mr. Bozeman came to our camp and says, "I want some of you fellows to come to my tent tonight and see if we lay over the Fourth and celebrate." So every fellow wanted to celebrate the Fourth. Now Mr. Bozeman says "I want one man out of each camp to hunt the Third and fetch the meat all in and put it in a pile by itself, so the next day the hunters started out in all directions and they fetched the meat in and put it in a pile and everybody helped himself to what he wanted. We had eighteen or twenty different kinds of meat but buffalo, antelope and deer, elk and moose was the main meat but the prairie dogs and badgers and one or two bears, I forgot what all we did have, had some birds too. So the morning of the Fourth they went to work, the men did, and cleaned a spot of ground off for a dance hall or pavilion and they commenced

135. dancing in the fornoon- and I guess danced all night for they were still dancing when I went to sleep, some 25 or 30 women in the outfit and all the rest were men, probably between four and five hundred men. There were about a hundred wagons in the train then and they averaged about five men to a wagon. Nothing more happeded that I can think of until we got over on the Yellowstone, were getting out of the indian country then, and we laid over there, our four wagons did, for four or five days. The party I was with was looking for a trapping ground more than anything else. I tended to my fishing. I came up with a bunch of trout to our camp one time. Mr. Whitney says to me, "I've got an empty keg on my wagon. We'll fill that full of tout, I've got some salt. We'll gut 'em and salt 'em." Twasn't but a little while before I had the keg full of fish, it was a 10-gallon keg. So Mr. Whitney put some sticks across and a flat stone on those sticks to keep the fish under the brine. ~~We pulled out over the mountains.~~ We got over on the Gallatin Valley and it looked good to my people for trapping. Mr. Bozeman laid out a town there and I carried the pegs where he was running it out, it was a kind of a preliminary survey, but he called it Bozeman any how and gave me a town lot. We divided up there, our party went to Virginia City, it was getting along towards September, and we turned down the valley. It was a great beaver country and that is what my party wanted. It was getting along in the fall and they made up their minds they would stay there all winter and trap. We got down to about twelve miles of the junction of the three rivers, Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson, and it was the Missouri River from there down. It was early fall and the fur wasn't good and we had fourteen head of cattle and they thought they would put up a little hay for winter, they didn't expect to use much of it for they expected the stock to live all winter without the hay. A feller came along one

at night

Gallatin
Keeg
sawing
trout

see page 165

Hay

136. day. He says, "Hay in Virginia City is a good price." So one day the men started father and myself to Virginia City with two loads of hay, they had made a hayrack to haul it on. We went to Virginia City, it took about two days to get us there, and we went back home, back to camp, and when we got back to camp father pulled his bucks in purse out. He says, "There, boys, is the hay money, \$140.00. I sold it at \$70.00 a load, called it a ton." And that started the ball to rolling for more hay. Everything was ~~###~~ paid in gold there, gold dust, which was weighed out. The scales wouldn't weigh anything less than fifty cents for everything cost fifty cents or up. Clothing was about as cheap there as it was at home for it came from California and Salt Lake City. We made a crude hay press to bale the hay for it was a lot easier to handle it when baled than when loose. We didn't have wire to bind the bales with but that winter there were a lot of cattle dying in the valley and we would skin them and cut the hide in strips and tie the strips around the hay. As the hide dried out it would shrink and hold the hay tighter.

One morning old Ranger Jones, our neighbor who lived about a mile from us, came over and wanted father to get him some groceries and we did and when we came back we drove around by his place. He says, "Bigelow, let George stay with me tonight and I'll yoke his cattle up in the morning." I wanted to stay. We unyoked my cattle and turned them out and father went over to our place. Right near this man Jones's house was a little crick. The old man and I visited there quite a while in the evening and he says, "You're younger than I am, you get up in the upper bunk. There was a man taken out of that bunk you're going to sleep in last winter and taken out and hung to a big cottonwood tree." I said, "Did they have a cause for hanging him?" Yes, he says, "He stole a hundred dollars and a horse." "Well,"

George Jones
Indian
leave

137. I says, "If they hung him he can't hurt me." I was just getting into my bunk when I heard a shot. They was a freighting outfit of 15 to 20 wagons, four mules on a wagon, herding mules just a little ways from this cabin I was in, Jones's. They would come down and leave their teams and take a fresh outfit of mules and Charley was the herder there, all alone. T'wasn't but a minute before there was shooting and hollering there to beat the band. The old man says to me, "George, the indians is stampeding the mules. They's no damned indian going to catch me in this house tonight. Now get your bedding and we'll sleep in the brush tonight." So we went way back in the woods, laid our bedding down and he says, "Now come with me." We went down to this little crick and crossed it on a log. Now, he says, "the crick makes a sharp bend there and wore out quite a hole in the bank in high water. Now you get down in there and you stay there till it gets light so you can see in the morning, then you start for town, Virginia City, but keep off from the road. You know all the peaks and you know enough to get to the crossing of Gallatin River, that is if you don't hear anything from me." So I crawled into the hole. I was fraider of a rattlesnake than I was of the indians but they didn't happen to be any in the hole. Well, every now and then I'd peek out to see if it wasn't daylight. Every now and then I could hear an indian going up and down the crick there. T'wasn't but a little while before I heard the old man holler "Come on, George." Gee, but I was tickled to hear that. I asked him what was the matter and he said the freighters had come in and it was a dark night and they couldn't see Charley's tent so one of them shot his revolver off and hollered and Charley stepped out of his tent and they was almost on top of him but they couldn't see him and then they began to holler

Wash

*Indian
Scare
Freighters*

138 and yell and shoot. That's one indian scrape ## I was in. Then we
Went went back and got our blankets and went to bed in the cabin. The
Jones' Bunks bunks were made one above the other by boring # holes in the logs
in the wall and then taking a stick about four feet long and sharpening
it at one end and sticking them in the holes so they would stick out
away from the wall. Then they would take some larger sticks to be
used for uprights and fasten the ends of the sticks sticking out from
the wall to the sticks used as uprights. This made the frame of the
bunks and they were usually made wide enough so that two men could
sleep in each bunk. Then other, and smaller, sticks were put
lengthways of the bunks and across the sticks sticking out from the
walls, then your blankets were put on these sticks and you were
ready for bed. These sticks ^{with the knots cut off} were the springs of the bed and they
went lengthwise of your backbone instead of across it. You got into
the upper bunk by crawling into the lower one and then on up to the
upper one. It wasn't much of a trick to get into one or get out of
it either.

(my grandson just came in with a pocket full of frogs and is
going fishing tomorrow.)

Packing up Jacks Now, a few days later we were in town and there was quite a
number of little pack trains there, jacks. They were packing things
up into the mines where the wagons couldn't get and right near where
we left our hay there was a packing house. The men would take their
goods there to be made into packs to be taken up the mountains. The
man that was running that house would notify the parties having these
Jacks and they would come there in the morning and load up and by the
time the last Jack was packed the first one would be lying down then
it would take about three men to get the little fellows onto their

139. feet, one on each side of the Jack and a man a hold of the Jack's
Went tail. The man would give it a little boost with the toe of his
boot and they'd lift him up, get him on his feet, then he was all
ready to travel. The little Jacks bothered our hay some. Father
says, "I know where I can buy an ox team and a wagon cheap and
there's a german that wants to go down on the valley (I think the
German was from Dubuque, he was from Iowa anyway). I'll go and
buy that outfit and he can drive my team down and I'll go to hauling
poles and make a yard around our hay, then I'll come on down in a
day or two when I get the yard built." So one morning we started out,
the dutchman was ahead and I followed, and father started for the
Dutchman mountains for posts. I wanted to make Gallatin River that night and
just before we got to the river, perhaps a half a mile, we was going
rain
storm down through a deep canyon and a little storm came up. It rained and
hailed and the wind blowed. I hollered to Mr. Meyers, "Turn out of
the road, out into this little meadow here." And he did and went to
unyoking his cattle. I hollered to him, "Don't unyoke your cattle
for the storm will drive them until they can get out of the wind around
some crag." I stood right in front of my cattle with my whip but they
kept a crowding me, the rain and hail they didn't like, but it didn't
last but a few minutes. Then Mr Myeres unyoked his cattle, one yoke
was all he had left, the other's was gone, and then he came and unyoked
mine. Then he went down the canyon after the cattle he had turned
loose. After a while he came back with them. All the bedding I had
was an elk skin tanned with the hair on. I had our grub in a little
box with that robe throwed over them. The robe kept our grub dry.
Mr. Meyers grabbed an axe and went up on the side hill and went to
cutting dead red cedars and throwing them down, rolling them down,
I says, "Mr. Meyers, you've got enough, all we'll burn tonight."

140. We got some of the dry cedar and split it up fine. We had a good
stack fire in a very short time. I made some coffee, fried some meat and
supper was ready. It got pretty chilly, the wind came down through
that canyon, and I hadn't a dry thread on me. I says, "Mr. Meyers,
I wish I had a few sticks about four feet long." He says, "All right."
I took them and drove them in the ground just a few feet from the
we
used fire, then I took my elk skin and throwed it over them stakes for a
windbreak. He had his blankets all done up in a rubber blanket so
they didn't get wet. We set there and visited and piled on wood and
the wind couldn't hit us. He says, "I believe I'll go to bed." He
went and unrolled his blankts, spread them out under the wagon,
crawled in and went to sleep. All the bedding I had was that elk skin.
If I hadn't got it wet I'd laid it down on the ground and crawled
on to it and throwed the other half over me, half under me and half
over me, and that made me a good bed. If I was a little particular
I would take the stones under it out of the way. I put in the night
by keeping fire and getting what little sleep I could get. When the
fire would die down I'd get cold and then I'd put on more wood. The
next morning bright and early we pulled out. We got down on the valley
twelve or fifteen miles from our place I saw way off to our left quite
a lot of horses and a man herding them. It wasn't long before I saw
another outfit and I recognized it was an indian herding those horses.
big
band
of
indians I says, "Mr. Meyers, we've got company." He says, "Who?" I says,
"Indians." Well he was fraider of an indian than I was of a rattle-
snake. We got down to our camp, turned out our cattle, I was expecting
to find two of our men there at our camp but they wasn't there, nobody
was there. All the house we had was a wagon box on the ground. Our
neighbor, Ranger Jones, came into camp and says, "George, we've got
company. A band of indians camped up here just a little ways. There

141. was a squaw over to my place and stole my dutch oven. I've been up
West to their camp and told them I'd kill every damned squaw they had if
they didn't bring my dutch oven back. Don't you think I'd have quite
a job on my hands? I don't know how many squaws they've got, there's
fifteen hundred of them all together and two thousand horses. #####
They're going off east buffalo hunting. You're just as safe here as
you would be over to my place." He said goodby and rode off. I
didn't know but what there would be a squaw around our camp that night
so I fixed myself so I could see around the camp. I picked up several
sticks and laid them on the back endgate of the wagon with one end
down in the box and the other end up on the endgate, slanting, then
I threw my elkskin on that and by lying down about half down and
half up I could look over the camp and the first thing I knew when I
got all comfortably located the sun was shining right in my face. I
staying
"on ground" was all quirked up in a heap. My partner, Mr. Meyers, says, "I
don't stay here. I take my blankets and go off in the grass." It was
a good scheme too. So the next morning I got up and got the fire to
going and the coffee on. I knew the direction he went but he hadn't
come back, so I started out to find him. I went zig-zag back and
forth and at last found him. I walked up careful to him, he was
sound asleep, I let a yell out of me and I jumped right onto him,
and if a man ever got up quick and run he did and I started after
him a hollering to him. After a little bit he recognized my voice
and he stopped and he picked up a club you could knock a cow down
with and he was going to lick me. He was swearing in dutch and
english and everything else and I couldn't understand him. Pretty
soon he calmed down. He says, "By chimney, you scared me." That
afternoon old Mr. Jones came into camp. He says "A couple of white
men have been with the indians and they have traded whiskey to one