

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Andrew Murphy

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SIX MONTHS TO GOLD: FROM PENNSYLVANIA TO CALIFORNIA IN 1849

by Andrew Murphy

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Map datasets courtesy of the United States Geological Survey in “[The National Map](#)”, and of the National Park Service in its [California National Historic Trail](#).

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Introduction

A great-great-grandson of Nancy Jane (Beale) Alter (1827-1890) one day loaned me a typewritten manuscript that had been handed down through the family. The manuscript was 12 sheets of loose leaf 8½ x 11 inch paper, folded into a trifold as if it were once in a #10 envelope, worn at the edges and through some of the folds, and stained with maybe coffee or maybe other liquids. The title of the manuscript was, simply, “DIARY”. Its author wrote no byline and no production date. The back of the last sheet had a single, underlined word penciled onto the middle fold in simple, clear cursive writing — “Sis”.¹

In March of 1849, two of Nancy’s older brothers and two other men left Freeport, Pennsylvania on an adventure. They met a fifth man in nearby Pittsburgh, and a couple days later began a steamboat journey that took them down the Ohio River, up the Mississippi River and Missouri River, and deposited them at the frontier of the United States. Across from Saint Joseph, Missouri at the beginning of May, their wagon train set off overland into the prairie, following what history would later call the California Trail. It would take them until September to reach their destination and to find gold.

This is the story of Alexander Beale, Thomas Beale, Thomas Galbraith, Matthew Miller, and James O. Wilson² on their 1849 journey from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to the South Yuba River area northeast of Sacramento, California. One of the party, likely Thomas Galbraith, wrote a diary along the way. Eventually, a typewritten copy found its way through the Beale and Alter family to today. I transcribed the typewritten copy and added illustrations, annotations and commentary to produce this work.

~ Andrew Murphy, November 2023.

1 “Sis” is a shortened form of “Sister”.

2 There are [WikiTree](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Beal-3294) profiles for Alexander Beale [<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Beal-3294>], Thomas Beale [<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Beale-2252>], and Thomas Galbraith [<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Galbraith-954>].

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

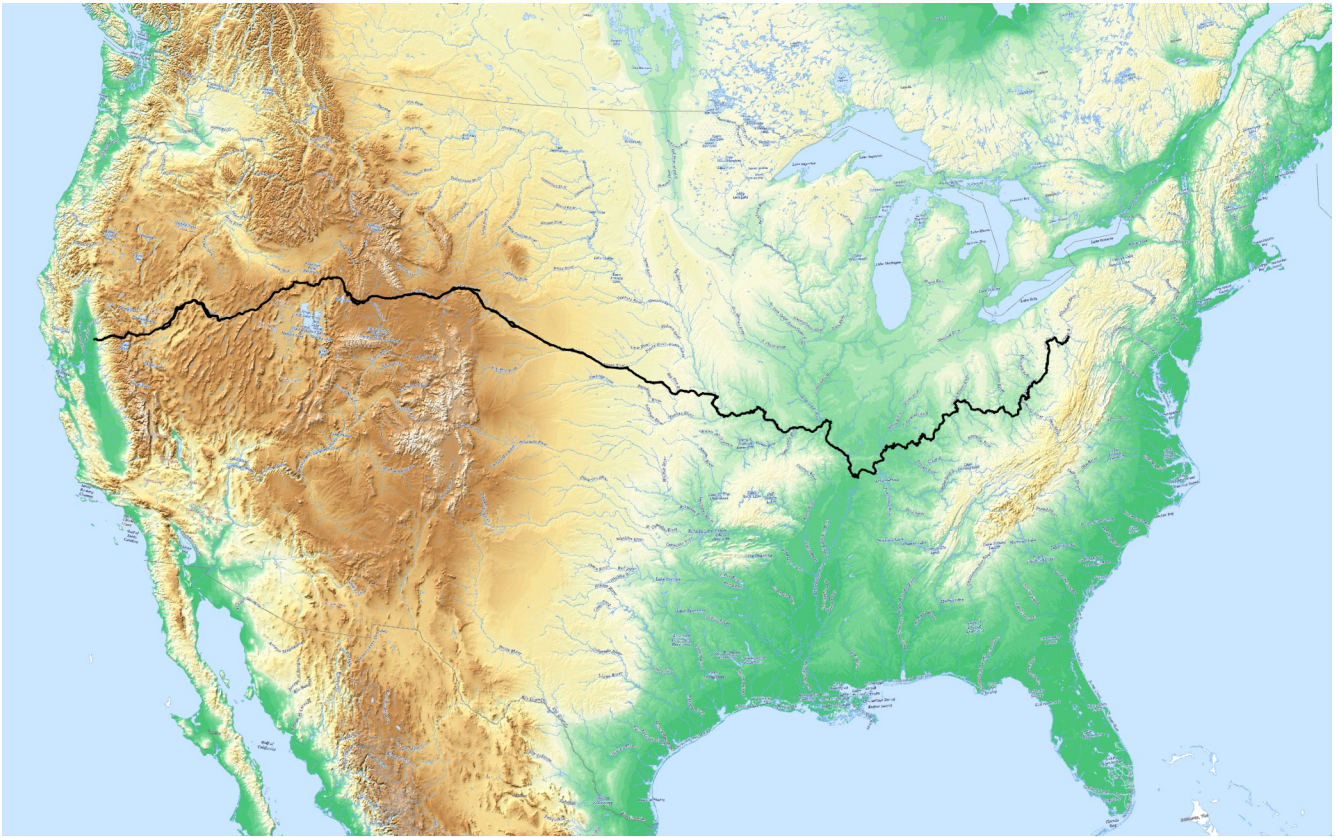


Figure 1: The 1849 travel route spanned from near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the east to the Sacramento River area in the west.

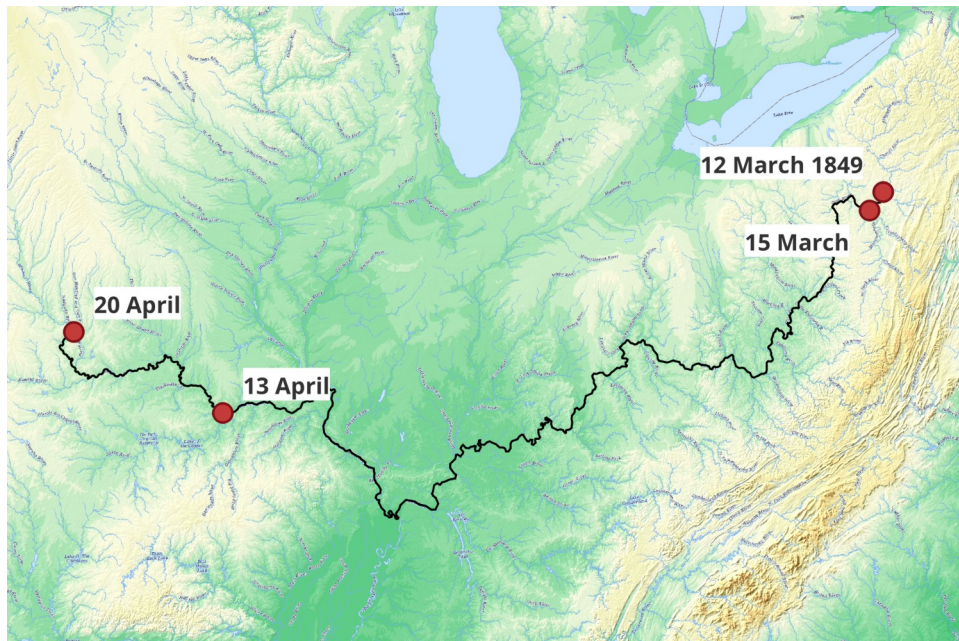


Figure 2: The river boat route included the Allegheny, Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers, and ended at Saint Joseph, Missouri.

Diary Transcript

DIARY

Left [Freeport, Armstrong Co., Pa.](#)³ on Monday the 12th of March 1849 in a [skiff](#), arrived in [Pittsburgh](#) the same day. Met Matthew Miller in Pittsburgh. Left Pittsburgh on board the [Steamer Consigner](#), on Thursday the 15th of March at 6:00 O'clock PM. The same night ran into and sunk the steamer [Caroline](#) from [Zanesville](#). Two persons supposed to be drowned.

James O. Wilson took sick on Monday the 22nd.⁴ below [Cincinnati](#) of [remittant](#)⁵ fever. Left the boat in company with T. Galbraith at [Jefferson City, Missouri](#) and died there on Friday the 13th day of April 1849.

T. Galbraith left Jefferson on Sabbath the 15th on board the steamer [Amelia](#) and joined the company at [St. Joseph](#) on Friday the 20th. Found Matthew Miller sick of [dysentery](#) of which he recovered in a few days. Left St. Joseph on Tuesday the 24th of April, crossed the [Missouri River](#) and encamped three miles West of that place on the border of the [prairie](#). Left that emcampment⁶ on Monday the 30th, traveled about 15 miles through hilly country and encamped by a stream (Mosquito Creek) of excellent water. Rested at our encampment the first of May. That night we had a heavy thunder storm.

Left the second of May traveled until about noon and came to Wolf River where we were detained by a large company from [Ohio](#) until near evening. During our detention several Indians came about, one of whom ran a race with one of our men for 50¢ and beat him. They belonged to the [Pottawatonik](#) - Lacs. Crossed the river in the evening with some difficulty and encamped on the other side.



Figure 3: From one of the areas west of Missouri River, the wagon train advanced to Mosquito Creek and Wolf River.

3 Armstrong County, Pennsylvania

4 22 March 1849 was a Thursday. Monday would have been either 19 March 1849 or 26 March 1849.

5 remittent

6 encampment

Started early on the 3rd. of May, passed the [Indian agency](#)⁷ about nine o'clock, traveled till near night 25 miles. Encamped near a frog pond having found very little water during the day. It rained all night.

Next morning (4th) left the encampment before breakfast, traveled two miles and encamped by a stream of water, plenty of wood. Stayed there all day.

Next morning, Saturday the 5th. took an early start - traveled about 25 miles and encamped about 6:00 o'clock in the evening on the left of the road.

6th being Sabbath we rested.

Monday we left the encampment at 6:00 o'clock and traveled 15 miles crossing in the evening the big Mimahan.⁸ The crossing was rather difficult owing to the steepness of the banks. A. Beale and myself went fishing. We caught some bites but no fish. T. Beale tried them with a spear and was equally successful.

Tuesday, the 8th., we traveled about 20 miles, crossed the little Minneham⁹ and encamped on its banks.

Wednesday Miller and some others went hunting. They shot three wild ducks and a turkey. In the evening we crossed the [big Blu river](#), a stream about 30 yards wide - crossed without difficulty.

Thursday we left at 6:00 o'clock in the morning, rested about an hour about noon. In the afternoon crossed Snake Creek,¹⁰ a small stream, traveled till nearly ten o'clock. Encamped by a frog pond without wood. Men nearly all angry because the guide had pointed out a good camp ground about 6:00 o'clock.

Friday we rested and lightened our [wagons](#) by throwing away all our boxes and packing our bread in sacks, thus reducing (In the afternoon we passed a new made grave with a head stone on which was engraved B. F. Adams and a foot board on which was written with a pencil B. F. Adams, [Painesville](#), Ohio, died of inflammation of the bowels) our load to about 25 [cwt](#). Others of the company threw away trunks and boxes, chairs (or chains) and soap.

7 This would be the Great Nemaha Subagency, Bureau (also Office) of Indian Affairs. Morris W. Werner's "[Indian Agencies and Villages in Kansas](#)" [web page](#) (accessed 10 November 2023) placed the Great Nemaha Subagency in 1842 in log structures a half mile south of the [Iowa, Sac, and Fox Presbyterian Mission](#), which was just east of what is now [Highland](#), Doniphan County, Kansas. The web page said the agency's location was shown on the 1855 Kansas Territorial Land surveys, and also cited Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West, Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka, Kansas, USA: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), pages 321 and 444.

8 The road crossed the South Fork Big Nemaha River in what is now [Nemaha County](#), Kansas.

9 "Little Minneham" is unrecognized. The Little Nemaha River is north, in Nebraska. The road crossed Clear Creek in Nemaha County, and Robidoux Creek and North Elm Creek in what is now [Marshall County](#), Kansas. The Robidoux Creek crossing was about 20 miles from the South Fork Big Nemaha River crossing.

10 Snake Creek is unrecognized.

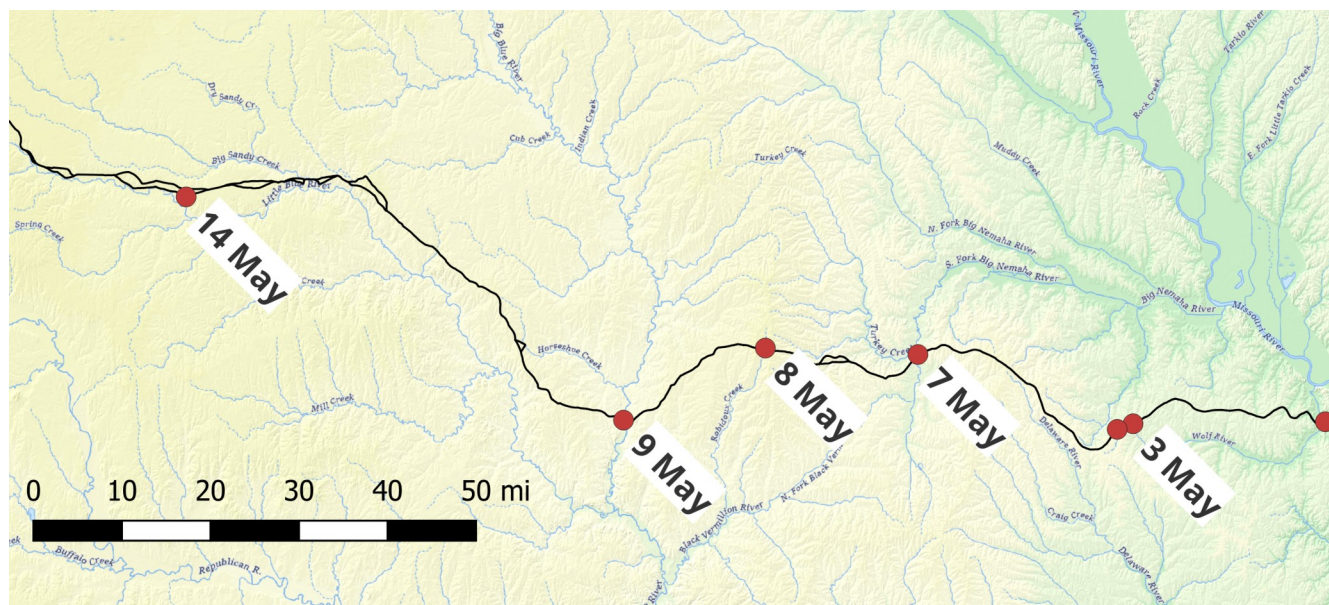


Figure 4: From Wolf River to Big Blue River, then up and along Little Blue River.

Saturday, the 12th, traveled about 20 miles and encamped at 5:00 PM near a small stream of good water. In the evening we had an election of a leader - Lt. Thornburg, resigned. Elected Captain Joseph W. Taylor of [Hollidaysburg](#).

Sabbath morning, the 13th, a majority of the men left with Lieut. Thornburg and the remainder of the men under Capt. Taylor started at 11:00 traveled 12 miles.

Monday we traveled up the valley of the [Little Blu](#) about 15 miles. The same distance the two succeeding days. Several sttempts¹¹ were made to take fish in the Little Blu but they were unsuccessful. No game taken as yet by any of our party.

Thursday we encamped at the point where the road leaves the Blu.

Friday took an early start, crossed over to the Nebraska¹² - 25 miles. During the night we had a trememduous¹³ thunder storm, the water standing in some of the tents to the depth of six inches. Ours were on higher ground and so escaped the inundation.

Saturday we traveled up the river 8 miles and encamped within 2 miles of [Fort Childs](#).¹⁴ We were over taken today by 300 [Sioux Indian](#) warriors returning from a fight with the [Pawnees](#). Their weapons were the bow and arrow, lances and a few muskets. They were all mounted on ponies and

11 attempts

12 In 1849, the group was traveling through the [remaining unorganized region](#) of what had been the [Missouri Territory](#). The formal [Nebraska Territory](#) would not exist until 1854. THIS "Nebraska" was a contemporary name for the Platte River.

13 tremendous

14 Fort Childs was renamed to Fort Kearny in 1848. See "[Fort Kearny](#)" at the Historical Marker Database, and "[Second Fort Kearny](#)" at Wikipedia.

mules and all our efforts to trade for either were in vain. We, however, traded for some moccasins and lariettes¹⁵ giving four cakes for the former and about the same for a lariette. They appeared to be nearly in a starving condition and were pressing rapidly up the river.

Sabbath, May 20th - we rested.

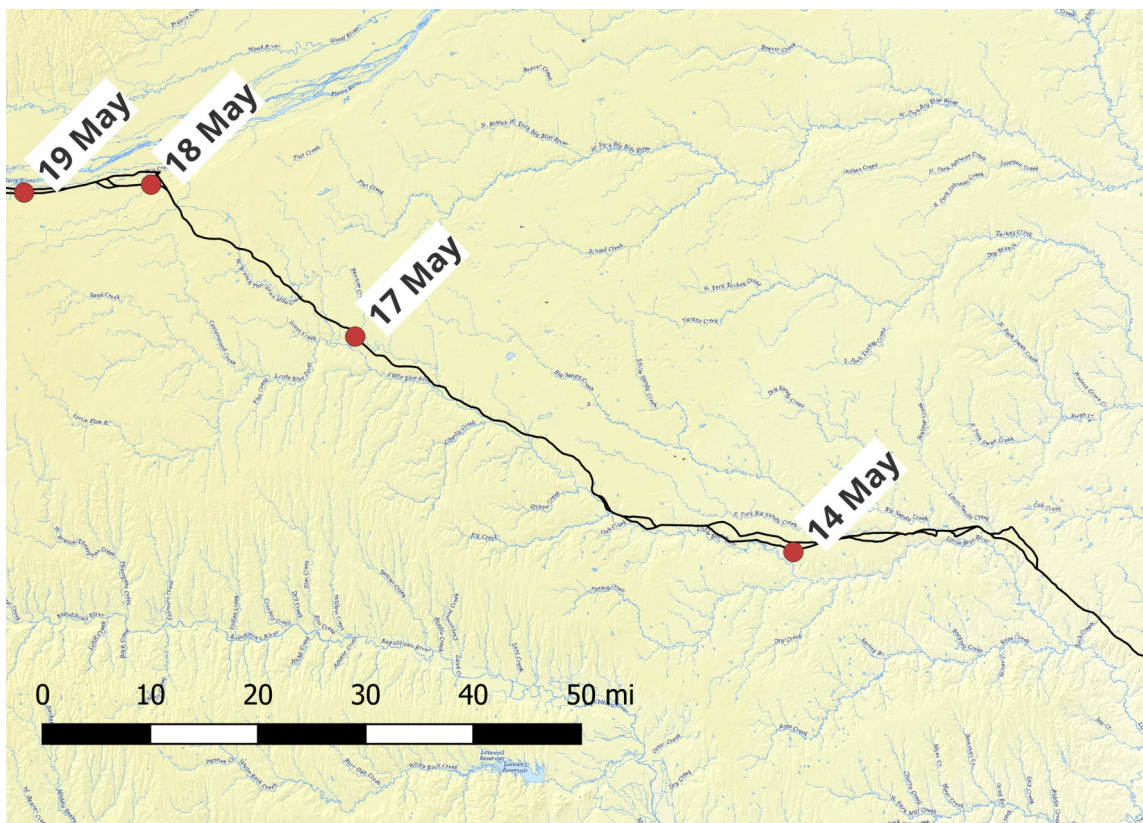


Figure 5: Following the Little Blue River and then crossing to the Nebraska River (Platte River).

Monday the 21st. We traded wagons with an old Mormon living at the Fort. We got an old wagon but much lighter than the one we traded - we gave him an even grade.¹⁶ Today A. Beale got lost coming from the Mormon's tent to our wagons - distance about a mile and in sight on the level prairie. The road was full of teams passing along. He traveled backwards and forwards on the road (riding a mule, little Dick) for nearly 2 hours before he found us. This day we traveled 6 miles.

Tuesday we traveled 15 miles, road good.

Wednesday, the 23rd. traveled 18 miles - crossed Plum Creek.¹⁷ We passes¹⁸ two colonies of prairie dogs, none of them were visible.

15 lariats

16 possibly meant "an even trade"

17 Plum Creek crossed the road in the northeast corner of what is now [Gosper County](#), Nebraska.

18 passed

Thursday, May 24th - 15 miles. It commenced to rain about noon, rained all day and night accompanied by very high winds.

Friday we started at 10:00 o'clock, traveled 12 miles, encamped near a company of fur traders who were on their way to the States.¹⁹

Saturday the 26th. Mr. Miller and I went out among the bluffs to hunt. We saw plenty of antelope, wolves and a few deer and but one buffalo. We took no game.

Sabbath we attended preaching two miles above us. The preacher took his text from Deut. 5th.²⁰ - Ye shall keep all the commandments of the Lord your God.

Monday, 28th. - 20 miles. Graves our guide and Capt. Taylor went a hunting and next morning brought in a buffalo and an antelope. We used buffalo chips²¹ for cooking for the first time - it answered the purpose well.

Tuesday, 29th. - 15 miles. Crossed the [South Platte](#) - it is about 500 yards wide and about 2-1/2 feet deep. The team of Mafs 27²² was the only one which crossed²³ without assistance. Encamped on North Bank of Platte.²⁴ During the night a tremendous²⁵ thunder storm - our bed clothes were completely drenched. Water in some tents 3 or 4 inches deep.

Wednesday, May 30th. rained all day. Started at 10:00 o'clock. 5 miles.

May 31st. 11 miles up the north side of the South Fork. Mr. Miller started out to hunt on foot during the day. He lost his reckoning and wandered about till towards evening when he saw a herd of buffalo. He singled out one of the largest, fired at him at about 100 yards - he was shot through the heart. He was met by our guide who was pursuing. They cut out some of the choice steaks and pieces and came into camp.

Friday, June 1st. 5 miles then crossed over the Bluffs to the [North Fork](#) - 12 miles.

Saturday, June 2nd. We went up the river to the mouth of Ash Hollow²⁶ - 18 miles. We had to ascend a very steep and difficult hill in order to pass a bluff that came down to the river.

19 The United States in 1849 were generally to the east (across the Missouri River) or south (Texas).

20 [Book of Deuteronomy](#), chapter 5.

21 Buffalo chips were dry dung from buffalo or livestock.

22 The expense report at the end of the diary spelled this as "Mess 27".

23 crossed

24 The road crossed the South Platte River in what is now [Lincoln County](#), Nebraska. The group probably encamped on the north bank of the South Platte River, and not the north bank of the North Platte River, considering the 31 May comment, "11 miles up the north side of the South Fork", and the 1 June comment, "crossed over the Bluffs to the North Fork".

25 tremendous

26 See https://history.nebraska.gov/publications_section/ash-hollow/ and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Hollow_State_Historical_Park#Windlass_Hill .

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Sabbath, June 3rd. We rested until 12:00 o'clock then traveled 10 miles, the object being to obtain better pasture or²⁷ grazing.

Monday - 20 miles.

Tuesday, June 5th. We were harnessing our mules and were agreeably surprised to see our friend Mr. C. B. Gillespie. He was traveling with a company of men from Independence.²⁸ 18 miles.

Wednesday we passed what was called the [Court House or Church](#) - a tremendous remnant of a Bluff composed of sand and sandstone, very irregular²⁹ in form - length about 20 rods, height about 200 ft. In front the prairie is rolling, in back or rear it is level and traversed by a beautiful stream of water. Gillespie and myself ascended the Court House at the only accessible point the North side. Some places we could ascend without difficulty, at others we had to climb almost perpendicular ascents by means of holes cut in the solid sand.

Thursday, June 7th. passed [Chimney Rock](#) - 12 miles from Court House.

Friday passed [Scotts Bluff](#). Encamped near a fine spring - 17 miles.

Saturday we again reached the prairie - 16 miles. We crossed horse creek³⁰ in the evening and turned to the right a mile where we found an excellent spring and plenty of grass.

Sabbath we remained in camp all day.

Monday - 18 miles.

Tuesday at noon we encamped 5 miles below [Fort Laramie](#)³¹ in order to prepare for a more speedy way of travel. Some intending to pack some to lighten their wagons and loads. Here we left them and traveled on with the [Greensburg](#) men. We crossed the [Laramie river](#)³² in the evening. The stream was three feet deep. We blocked up our wagon beds and passed through without difficulty.

Wednesday, June 13th. Started at 6:00 o'clock - 20 miles. Passed the boiling spring in the afternoon.

Thursday - roads very rough, country hilly and sandy, grass scarce, camped on top of a hill nearly opposite [Laramie's peak](#). During the night our mules became very much frightened whether by wolves or Indians we could not tell, probably the latter as wolves usually howl as they approach.

27 for

28 possibly [Independence, Missouri](#)

29 irregular

30 Horse Creek would later figure as a treaty site (1851) and Pony Express station (~1860). See "[Finding the Horse Creek Treaty of 1851 Site](#)", and Pony Express "[Division Two: Stations between Fort Kearney and Horseshoe Creek](#)".

31 Fort Laramie

32 Laramie River

Friday we overtook the Government train³³ while going up a very steep and difficult hill. They detained us about 1/2 hour. We encamped in the bed of a dry stream and drove our mules up a ravine where the grass was middling good. Made 20 miles.

June 16th. road hilly but good, soil clayey. Camped by stream, wood and water but no grass. One of our men met a hunter who said he had killed a mountain sheep and that it was lying among the bluffs about five miles distant.³⁴ He and myself mounted mules and rode with all speed when practicable – at other times leading them up steep ascents and over rocky cliffs until dark when we came to the foot of the mountain on which the sheep lay. We then secured our mules by tying them to large rocks and ascended the mountain 200 yards to where the sheep lay. We quickly secured the hind quarters, carried them down on our shoulders, lashed them on the mule's back. We arrived at the camp at two the next morning having traveled at least 15 miles. Our ears were saluted on every side by the howling of wolves and other wild animals. I became so much fatigued I was for lying and waiting for daylight but the Dutchman would only consent to rest for half an hour, so we concluded to move on – our only guide the [North Star](#). Our delay alarmed our men to such a pitch that they built fires on the hills adjacent to our camp, but when we returned they were all quietly snoozing as though they had never been alarmed for our safety.

Sabbath, June 17th. Having no grass we thought best to travel on to Deer Creek, 18 miles. We encamped a mile and half up the stream where we found grass to be good. We came to the Platte about 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Monday, June 18th. We lay in camp about 1-1/2 miles up Deer Creek.

Tuesday we traveled 4 miles and came to where Capt. Taylor and Meridith were preparing to raft to cross the Platte. We joined our forces with theirs and all our five wagons were over by 10:00 o'clock.³⁵

On Wednesday we swam the mules across the stream. At 12:00 o'clock we continued our march on the north bank of the north fork of the Platte. The road is rough and sandy – we traveled 10. Good grass and water. We found a vein of very good coal.

Thursday, June 21st. we made about 15 miles over sand hills. About eight o'clock I was called to see a woman laboring under [dysentery](#). She was also pregnant – 7 months gone and had symptoms³⁶ of premature labor. I gave her an [anodyne](#) and recommended mild laxatives alternately. Dr. Dorsey of [Newark, N. J.](#) now came along. He approved of my treatment and left. I stayed with her a month?

33 See <https://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/mule-drawn-wagon-trains/> .

34 Stating the five miles distance allows us to conclude the party took the California Trail branch closer to the mountains, rather than the trail branch closer to the North Platte River, in the present day area near Interstate Highway 25 south of [Glendo](#), Wyoming.

35 This is when and where the party crossed to the north bank of the North Platte River.

36 symptoms

longer,³⁷ mounted my mule and left also. (I have since heard that she was that evening delivered of a living child, Sunday, June 24th.

We started at 6:00 o'clock in the morning, passed the mineral springs, the creek and arrived at Willow Spring³⁸ (without grazing) at 6:30 PM. - 25 miles.

Saturday made the [sweet water](#), three miles above [Independence Rock](#) 23 miles. We forded the river opposite the rock.

Sabbath, June 24th. We remained encamped all day.

Monday, June 25th. We passed two miles from Camp the [Devils Gate](#) a fissure in the mountain about 50 ft. wide through which passed the sweet water. The southern wall is about 300 ft. in height according to my estimate and rather hangs over the stream. The northern wall which is about the same height recedes somewhat towards the top. The breadth of the mountain here is about a quarter of a mile. (About the same distance south of the gate the mountain terminates at this point the road passes) We traveled today about 20 miles.

Tuesday, June 26th. We came in sight of snow capped mountains of the [wind river mountains](#) – the days are exceeding warm and the nights cold. 25 miles made today.

37 Typewritten text says “month?longer”.

38 See <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/willow-spring> and <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=95592> .

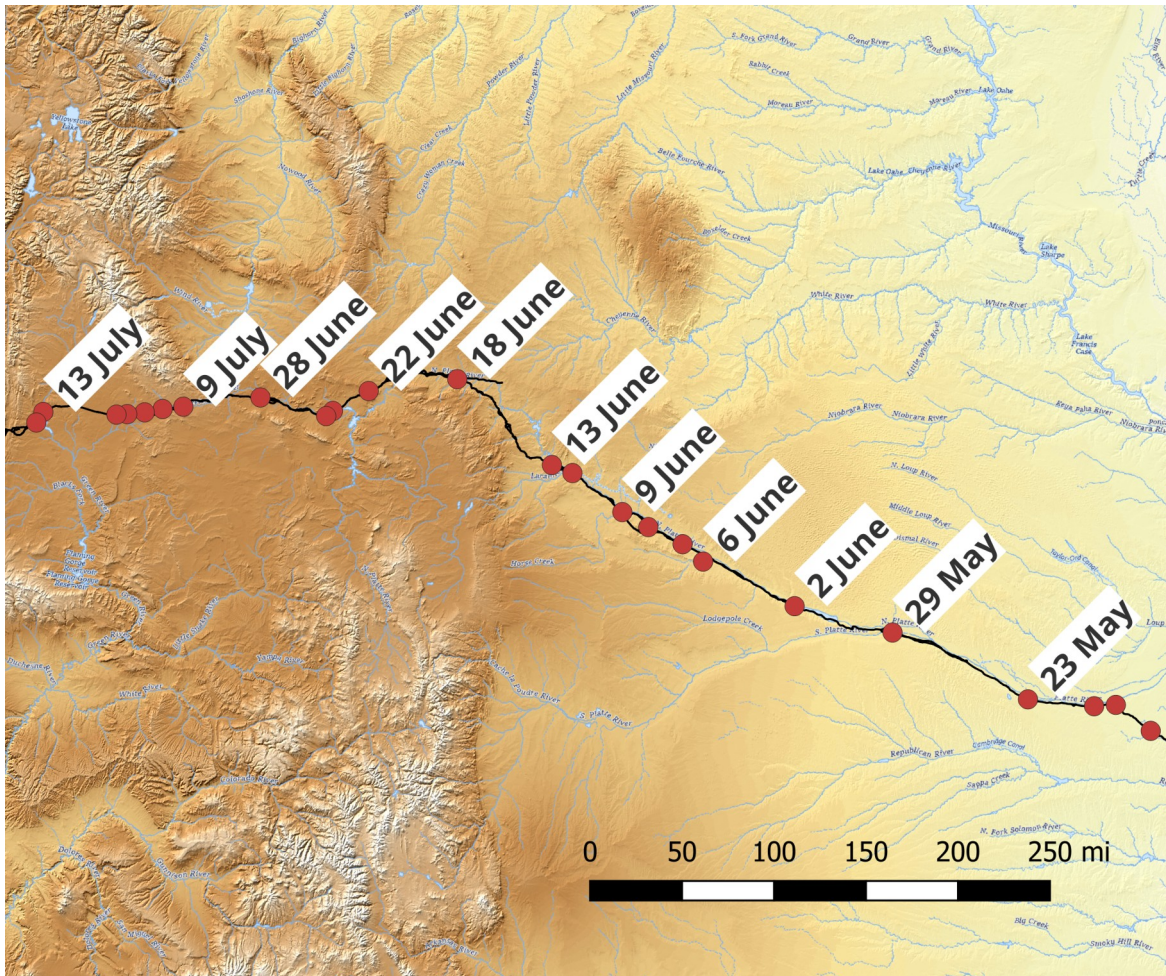


Figure 6: Platte River, Sweetwater River, and to the Green River.

Thursday, June 28th. Our train left the river to pass over the Bluffs. I took my gun and went on a hunting excursion along with our guide, Graves. We hunted without success until about noon. When coming in to where the train had stopped to graze we saw Mr. Millervcoming³⁹ towards us on horse back urging the animal to its utmost speed. When he came within hailing distance he called to me to come on that Alex Beale was shot. I immediately mounted the guide's horse and rode into camp. I found him lying with a wound in the right knee immediately below and a little to the right of the patella. On examining with the probe I found that the ball (a 1/2 oz. one) had passed between the head of the tibia and the condyles of the femur shattering both bones very much. The synovial was escaping from the wound and in a short time hemorrhages supervened which could with great difficulty be controlled. Under these circumstances, believing that amputation was absolutely necessary I thought best to send for the Army Surgeon, who was but a short distance behind. He came up shortly and after a minute examination found the ball near the posterior part of the leg, behind the joint lodged in a

³⁹ Mr. Miller coming

portion of the femur which it had broken off and carried with it. He wished to cut down and remove the ball. I objected for the reason that I considered amputation necessary. I should have stated, however, that he was not certain at that time that he had found the ball yet the result proved the accuracy of the diagnosis. His opinion as expressed to me was that there was a possibility of saving the limb. He accordingly dressed it and left and as we had very little grass and no wood where we were we found it necessary to proceed four miles further. We made as comfortable a place as possible for him and drove slowly, yet he suffered considerably. The manner in which he received the injury as near as I could gather was as follows: Capt. Taylor rode forward and selected, as usual, a grazing spot. He laid his loaded State Rifle on a sage hillock about two rods to the right of the spot on which Alex Beale drove our wagon which was foremost of the train. Mr. Miller ungearred the wheel mules. Alex was in the act of un gearing one of the middle mules when the right wheel mule started off at full speed in the direction of the loaded rifle. After she had passed it her trail rope caught the cock of the gun, raised it up and discharged it, the ball passing through two large hillocks glanced upwards and entered the knee joint as before stated.

Friday, June 29th. This morning Dr. Dorsey of Newark, N. J. came along - whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making on the morning after we crossed the North Fork of the Platte. I gave him a history of the case as correctly as I could and the answer he made to me was, that no Surgeon of standing in the United States would risk his reputation by attempting to save the limb even at home where every convenience could be procured. I then requested him to remain and assist in the operation which he consented to do, and sent immediately for the Army Surgeon, Dr. Edgar, who came about two PM. We had everything in readiness for him by the time he came with his amputating instruments. After consulting for a few minutes it was agreed that the operation was necessary in order to save the life of the patient. It was also agreed that Dr. Edgar should operate while Dr. Dorsey would take charge of the tourniquet and I should administer the chloroform which was kindly furnished by Dr. Edgar, and retract the flaps. Dr. Edgar performed the operation very well. Alex was insensible to the operation, consciousness returned immediately after the operation. After the wound was dressed he was put into the best bed we could afford, viz: a gun blanket spread on the ground in the tent and over this two flannel blankets folded double with a sack of clothing for a pillow. He suffered considerable pain after the operation but not as much as before we made use of the cold water dressing. Saturday and Sabbath he did as well as could be expected.

Monday, July 2nd. I dressed the wound for the first time. Suppuration⁴⁰ had commenced and it looked very well. Made use of tepid water dressing. Today we made a mattress of dried grass on which he laid much easier.

Tuesday, July 3rd. Since we came here the grass is so scarce that we are compelled to take our mules about two miles every day to graze. We have seen hundreds of dead oxen on the way within a hundred miles of here and scarcely a grain⁴¹ stays here over night without losing some. Their death is

40 suppuration

41 (wagon) train

supposed to be caused by drinking the alkali water which abounds in this vicinity. We have passed several lake beds where the water being all evaporated a hard alkaline salt resembling [sulphate of soda](#) covered the ground resembling in appearance lakes covered with ice.

Wednesday, July 4th. This morning we had ice an inch in thickness frozen in our water buckets. We passed the day in making trail ropes for our mules from the hide of an ox that died near us last night, our grass roped⁴² being nearly worn out. Alex appears to do very well. Miller and Thomas are very anxious to leave on Friday or Saturday. I am opposed to moving until Alex is out of danger.

Saturday, July 7th. We commenced making a cot swing in the wagon for Alex. His stump pains him more than usual.

Sabbath - Stump still painful - some degree of inflammation.

Monday, July 9th. The wound is less painful today. We finished our cot and placed Alex on it in the wagon and left our encampment about 2:00 o'clock. We made 4-1/2 miles to Sweetwater which we crossed for the last time and encamped on its banks, grass scarce. Alex stood the ride much better than I had anticipated.

Tuesday, July 10th. We started early and grazed at the Pacific Springs.⁴³ It rises in the middle of a swamp in almost any part of which ice could be found by digging to the depth of two feet. The water of the spring is clear and cold. We traveled on in the evening five miles farther and encamped on a hill 3/4 of a mile from water, having made 18 miles.

Wednesday, July 11th. We traveled 10 miles today. Sandy⁴⁴ which proved to be wet sandy for it was a running stream. We watered our mules from it, passed on and crossed the little Sandy,⁴⁵ 10 miles - then to [Big Sandy](#), 6 miles, without grazing. Alex was somewhat fatigued. The only grass we could find was wild rye and barley and we had to drive our mules two miles for this. Wild grain is an excellent substitute for grass at this season of the year as it is just now past the blossom. We lay encamped on this stream all night and until 2:00 o'clock PM on Thursday.

July 12th. When after taking on board 13 gallons of water we took up our line of march across the [desert](#). Rested 1-1/2 hours, grazed our mules, took some supper and resumed our march at dark - traveled all night.

Rested 2 hours at daylight July 13th where we had an abundance of wild rye for our mules. Again resumed our march and reached the ferry of [Green River](#)⁴⁶ about 4:00 PM on Friday, July 13th. five miles below the old crossings. The road at midnight was very hilly and rough but we were favored with the light of the moon. The distance as measured by a [roadometer](#) was 25 miles. We crossed the

42 ropes

43 See <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/pacific-springs> , <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=96660> , and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Creek_\(Sweetwater_County%2C_Wyoming\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Creek_(Sweetwater_County%2C_Wyoming)) .

44 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emigrant_Trail_in_Wyoming#Sandy_River .

45 See <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=96697> and <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/crossing-little-sandy-creek> .

46 See <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/green-river-basin-natural-history> .

Green River this evening at a ferry of which there are several, and encamped on its western shore. The ferry boat could only take on board our wagon so we were compelled to swim our mules. The fare for one wagon was \$4.00. The passengers are compelled to haul the boat up the river and work the oars into the bargain. There is no grass on the Green River bottom near the Ferry at any time.

Saturday, July 14th. We traveled 6 miles over a very hilly country and encamped on a small branch of Green River where we found the grass pretty good.

Sabbath, July 15th. We traveled about 18 miles from Green River to [Bear River](#) which we reached on Tuesday at noon. The road is very rough and hilly.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we made about 20 miles each day.

Thursday, July 19th. We traveled 26 miles down Bear River Valley. We got Alex out of the wagon at noon for an hour. The wound has nearly healed but one of the ligatures has come away, two remain. The only application has been simplewater,⁴⁷ tepid, after suppuration⁴⁸ commenced and when painful.

Friday, July 20th. We passed the mineral springs - they resembled, in taste, those of Saratoga⁴⁹. We traveled 10 miles in the forenoon then 7 to where the road leaves Bear River. Here instead of following the route by [Fort Hall](#), viz: turning northward up the plain, we struck across to the mountains on the West of the plain, passed over them and encamped in a valley by a spring, stream of clear, very cold water. The distance from the fork of the road to this valley being 13-1/2 miles. We did not reach the water until after dark - no water between Bear River and this valley.

Saturday, July 21st. We left at 9:00 in the morning, passed over a hill 4 miles to a fine stream of water, then 3 miles to a larger stream into which the former flows where we encamped at 3:00 PM. In the evening T. Beale and myself caught each a very large trout on which we regaled ourselves.

Sabbath, July 22nd. We remained in camp all day. We had a visit from a party of [Snake Indians](#) - they were very civil, had good horses.

Monday, July 23rd. We traveled 8 miles and came to a crossing of a stream of water that was not very good. Six or eight miles further we passed another small stream and encamped on the top of the next hill without water, having traveled 21 miles. The grass hitherto on this cut-off has been excellent.

Tuesday, July 24th. We found a small stream of excellent water about 3 miles from our encampment. We passed down the stream 4 or 5 miles to a spring on the left of the road. After leaving the spring we passed over a mountain (on the side of which we grazed without water) through a deep ravine. The ascent was very gradual but the western side was the steepest we have descended yet. We,

47 simple water

48 suppuration

49 possibly what is now [Saratoga](#), Wyoming — or [Saratoga Springs](#), New York, with which Thomas Galbraith could have been familiar in his youth

however, passed down safely into the valley. Here we were disappointed - we expected to find water and intended to encamp as it was then 5:00 o'clock but we learned there was no water within 10 miles as men had explored the surrounding country without finding any. We passed on down the valley 5 or 6 miles then turned to the right, crossed another mountain - not very steep on either side, passed⁵⁰ down into and crossed a valley to the foot of the opposite Bluff where we found a spring of good water, having made 33 miles- the last 25 without water. We reached the spring at 10:00 o'clock PM.

Wednesday, July 25th. We left the spring at noon and ascended the mountain. At 7 miles there is a spring up a ravine on the left road - we passed it and encamped 2-1/2 miles beyond, within 300 yards of the top of the mountain. Here by digging down 2 feet I found sufficient water for our mules, it was on the left of the road in a little valley. Made 9-1/2 miles.

Thursday, July 26th. made 25 miles. In passing through a small stream a wagon with us from Ohio broke a wheel, but all was set right in a few minutes as there had been a pair of wheels left in the vicinity - these we substituted and we rolled on. We found water one mile from our encampment then in 3 after which we followed a stream for several miles. This stream sinks a short distance above the crossing. We crossed the bed of the stream, then crossed a plain covered with sage, destitute of water. The distance across this to a stream on which we encamped is about 12 miles. Here we came in sight of the Fort Hall road. Made 25-3/4 miles.

Friday, July 27th. We reached the Fort Hall road about 10:00 o'clock 6-1/4 miles from our camp - we passed on having made today 12-3/4 miles. The whole distance through Meyers cut-off being according to a roadometer, 112 miles.

Saturday, July 28th. We made 21 miles, encamped in a valley where we had difficulty in finding water.

Sabbath, July 29th. This day we made [Goose Creek](#) - 14 miles. We passed over some very rough road.

Monday, July 30th. Today we passed up the valley of Goose Creek - 17 miles - grass good.

Tuesday, July 31st. Today we made 21 miles. After we left Goose Creek we passed up a small ravine through which flows a small stream. After passing up 1-1/2 miles we struck across a ridge 13 miles to a spring on the right of the road. Three miles further on we encamped without water. PS - Some of our men found a good spring in the evening after we had encamped behind some Bluffs.

Wednesday, August 1st. We traveled along through the valley, passed into another which appeared to be the bed of a lake. About three miles from where we entered this valley we found several pools of water on the left of the road into some of which I put down a stick to the depth of 4 feet without finding bottom. We encamped at the end of 22 miles near an excellent spring on the left of the road. The grass was very good.

50 side, passed

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Thursday, Aug. 2nd. We made 27-1/2 miles and encamped near the base of a mountain whose top was covered with snow. We have seen snow on the mountains nearly every day since we came in sight of Wind River Mountains which are north of the [South Pass](#). We passed about 3 miles from our camp a very large boiling spring. The valley in which we were encamped seemed like a bed of a lake. Near our well is a natural well not more than 18 inches in diameter at the surface but whose bottom could not be reached with a 10 foot pole.

Friday, August 3rd. Today we made 22-1/2 miles and encamped on a branch of the [Humboldt or Mary's River](#). Grass very good. Our course most of the day was down the valley of the stream above mentioned. The mountains on our left presented a beautiful appearance. There is, however, very little timber upon them. Their summits covered with snow.

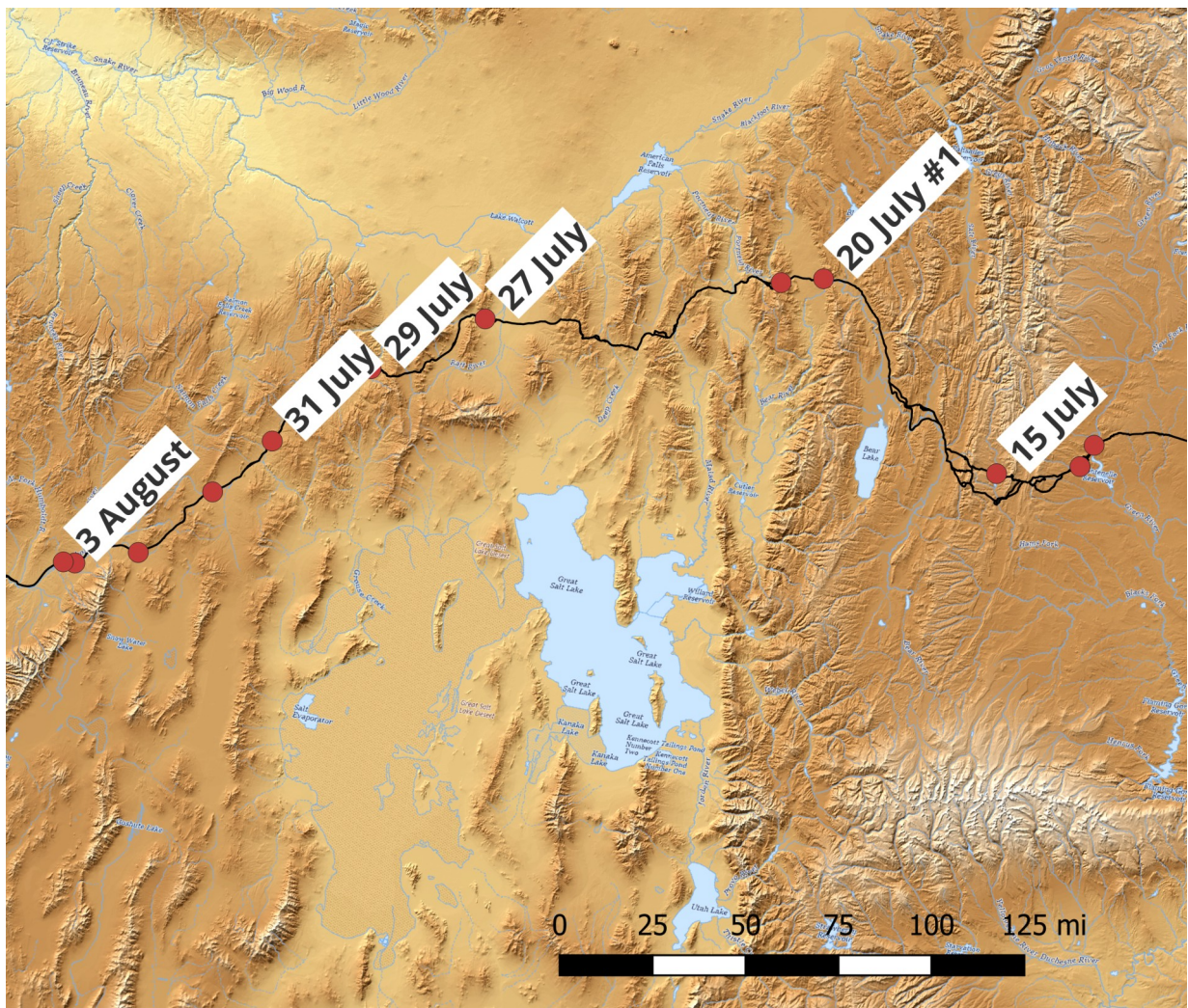


Figure 7: From Green River to follow Bear River to north of Great Salt Lake, then crossing to Goose Creek, Mary's River and Humboldt River.

Saturday, August 4th. Today we traveled 25-1/2 miles down the valley of [Mary's River](#). The roads in the afternoon were rough, hilly and very dusty.

Sabbath, August 5th. We remained in camp all day. In the afternoon we had a pleasant shower of rain - the first I have seen for near two months.

Monday, August 6th. We made 25-1/2 miles today. In the afternoon we passed through⁵¹ the narrows, a canyon of considerable length. Crossing the river several times a road takes off to the right passing over the bluff a short distance above the narrows - we encamped in the meadow below. Grass good.

Tuesday we passed down the valley four miles, when we came to a bluff over which we passed 14 miles - road very rough and hilly, then 2 miles in the valley below, making 20 miles where we encamped without grass by the rivers bank. Today I undertook the onerous and responsible duty of cook which I shall endeavor to discharge with fidelity. Miller commenced driving the mules - he makes a very respectable⁵² M.D.⁵³ particularly when he is mounted on a mule, goggles on eyes.

Wednesday, August 8th. Today we made 11-1/2 miles, crossed the river twice.

Thursday, August 9th. We made 21-1/2 miles.

Friday made 20 miles. Grass, but not very good.

Saturday, 23-1/2 miles.

Sabbath, August 12th. Today we rested. During this week we traveled about 90 miles and arrived at the slough on Saturday evening the 18th. where we found good grass about six miles to the left of the road. We passed an excellent spring in the bottom of a ravine a few rods to the right of the road, 2 miles from the road and 4 miles from the grass. Today we made downstream 2 miles on account of difficulty in getting our mules through the mud and water to grass.

Monday, August 13th. Today we cut and prepared about 1 cwt. of grass for our mules which we bundled and put in the wagon.

Tuesday we moved down 6 miles and encamped on the last grass for 50 miles.

Wednesday the 15th we started early, passed the sink and the wells below, which were 15 miles from our last encampment (bad water) and encamped 6 miles further on, on the right hand road, 3 miles beyond the forks.

Thursday we reached the Boiling Springs at 11:00 o'clock A.M. - cooled water for our animals and traveled on till 11:00 o'clock P.M. having made 26 miles.

51 through

52 respectable

53 "M.D." is "mule driver" or "medical doctor"? Could be some humor, here.

Friday we started at 10:00 o'clock A.M. and reached the river at 9 A. M. - 9 miles, making the distance across the desert from the sink 41 miles. In the evening we took the old road, the right hand one crossed the river and passed up 2 miles where we encamped.

Saturday, August 18th. We passed up the river about 16 miles, crossing it 13 times.

Sabbath, August 19th. Today we rested.

I have made a mistake in my calculations. In coming down the Humboldt I lost a week entirely. Sabbath, August 12th. should have read Sabbath, August 19th. Sabbath, August 19th. should have read August 26th.

After this the roads were so rough and difficult, and our team so worn down that any man ought to be called crazy who would attempt to keep a journal. Let it suffice to say that we crossed [Truckies river](#) 27 times in all before crossing the first mountain, after which we crossed it once or twice. We found plenty of timber after the second days travel up that stream.

On Friday, August 31st., about 11:00 o'clock we crossed the principal [Sierra Nevada](#) mountain. It is very steep for about 200 yards. The descent is not very difficult.

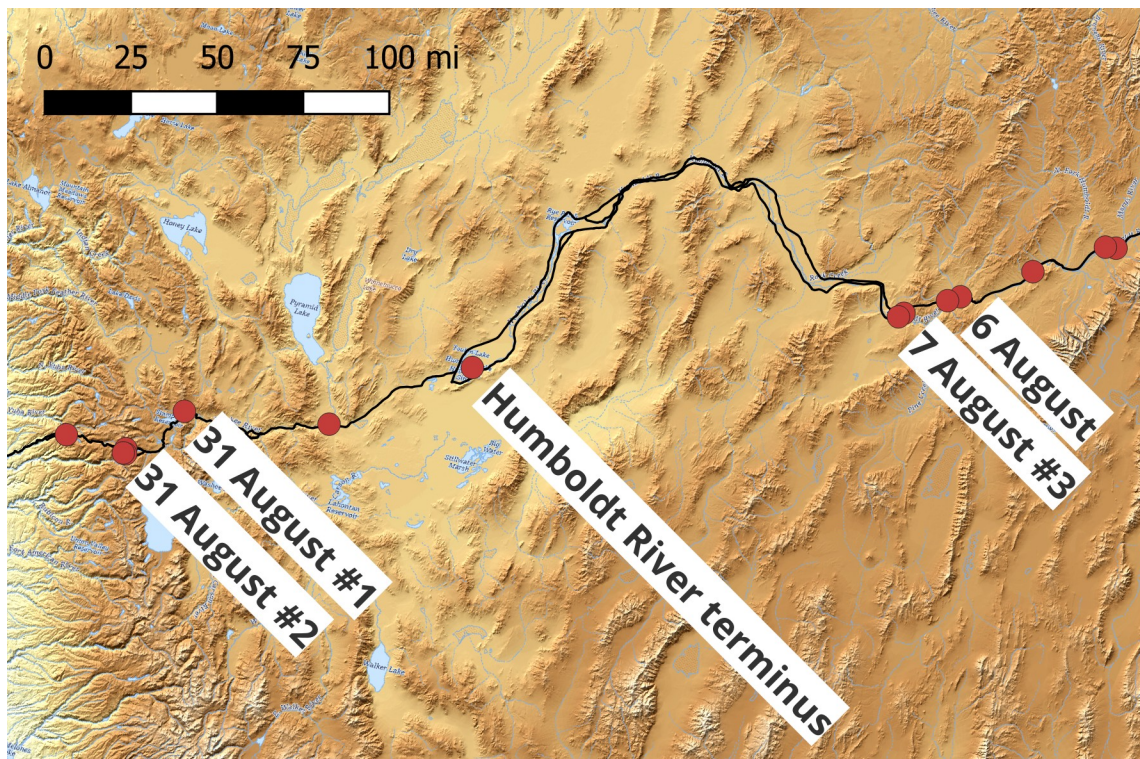


Figure 8: Humboldt River, Truckee River, and into the Sierra Nevada.

We reached deep hollow on Bear River on Wednesday the 5th. of September where we found several mining companies digging the precious metal.⁵⁴ We also found here several of the Pg. Co. (Should have stated we over-turned our wagon coming down the mountain⁵⁵ into the deep valley of Bear River.)

(From Salt Lake⁵⁶ to gold mines 866miles)

Several of the Pg. Co the Woodwards and ⁵⁷ from [Armstrong](#) and [Indiana](#) Counties. We passed on the same day to the North Fork of Bear River.

The next day we set about making a [cradle for washing gold](#) which we completed in 2 days and bolted helter skelter into the mines where we labored some days without success owing, undoubtedly, to our ignorance.

We left this stream on Tuesday, September 11th and reached the [South Fork](#) of the [Yuba](#) on Wednesday (Yueba or Tuba river) distance 13 miles.

Then we prospected round without success till Friday evening when, by an accident more than by skill in selecting, we struck upon a [bar](#) which upon examination we pronounced good.⁵⁸ There we set immediately to work, arranged our washer and in an hour and a half we had home with us nearly ?⁵⁹ of the dust.

James O. Wilson
Alexander Beale
Thomas Beale
Thomas Galbreath XX

54 an allusion to gold

55 This mishap *might* have occurred near what is now called [Emigrant Gap](#) in [Placer County](#), California.

56 [Great Salt Lake](#) or the early years of [Salt Lake City](#) settlement

57 (Three blank spaces are in the typewritten document, as if the typist knew there should have been a name, here.)

58 According to a William Swain letter of 6 January 1850 from the [South Fork of Feather River](#) (present day California), "Gold is found in the most rocky and rough places, and the streams and bars that are rich are formed of huge rocks and stones." See J. S. Holliday (based on the diary of William Swain), *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience* (New York, New York, USA: Simon and Schuster, 1981), page 319. [Image at Internet Archive](#). Note: Swain travelled over some of the same overland route and only a few weeks behind our adventurers.

59 The question mark was hand written by pencil into a space at the end of the typewritten line, as if indicating a missing word or two.

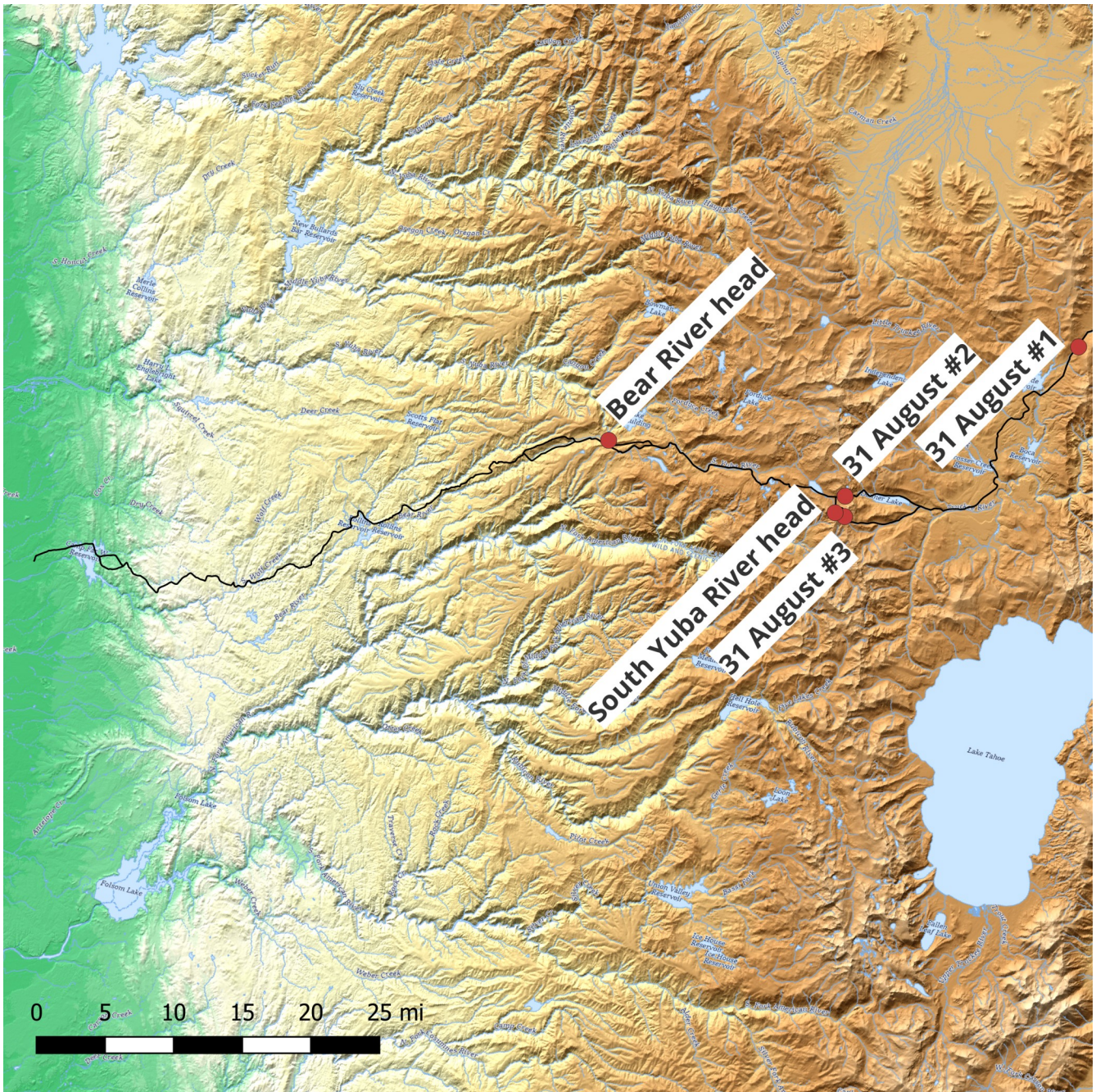


Figure 9: Destination area of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with the Yuba River, Bear River, and to the west the Feather River and Sacramento River valleys.

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Money laid out on acct. of Mess 27 Pg. Co. after Miller left by Tho. Galbraith,

Oct. 3rd. 1849 -			
Bread in <i>Sac City</i> - 3 loaves	\$.75		
Molasses, 6 gallons	8.00		
<i>Saleratus</i> , 2 lbs.	2.00	Bill of Barney & Brewster	\$203.15
Tea, 2 lbs.	2.00	Paid over for Miller	80.00
Mustard - 1 bottle	1.00		
Pork - 1/2 <i>bbl.</i>	30.00	Dec. 9, 1849 -	
Flour - 1 <i>bbl.</i>	12.00	Bread at Slough	1.87½
Peaches 1 Cake	1.37	" in town	1.00
Salt, 20 lbs.	2.00	Tin dipper	2.00
Vinegar, 5 qts	1.25	Letters	3.25
Hard bread, 57 lbs.	8.00	Mending wagon bolt	.50
		Apples	3.00
{paper missing, possible year}		Corn Meal	11.00
{paper missing}	.50	Books, paper & almanac	3.00
Nu{paper missing}	1.00	Barney Brewster & Co's bill	54.25
Sp{paper missing}	.87		
Co{paper missing}	.60	1850 -	
Alum	.50	May Cash \$34.80	37.80
Cheese	2.25		
Glass Jar	.50	x paid in dust	
Muslin	8.00		
Pepper	.50		
Steel Bar	7.00		
Raisins	2.25		
Bread	1.25		

Research Notes

1. The diary writing is detailed enough that we can conclude a member of the party wrote its entries during the journey. So, we can discover the diarist through elimination. The party included Alexander Beale, Thomas Beale, Thomas Galbraith, Matthew Miller, and James O. Wilson. James Wilson died early in the journey, so he could not have written the diary. For the others, we can look at the “I” pronoun (or “myself”) appearances. A 26 May entry reads, “Mr. Miller and I went out ...” A 4 July entry reads, “I am opposed to moving until Alex is out of danger.” A 21 July entry reads, “In the evening T. Beale and myself caught each a very large trout ...” The “I” and “myself” words appear in more entries, too, but this is sufficient to eliminate all but Thomas Galbraith as the diary’s author. We conclude that Thomas Galbraith wrote this diary.
 1. Even though the diarist wrote Galbraith’s name in the third person at the beginning of the diary (see 13 April and 15 April), and in the party list at the end of the diary, and in the subsequent expense report, Galbraith’s name in the third person never appeared near the first person pronoun “I” throughout the diary.
 2. Additionally, the end-of-diary party list has an “XX” mark next to Thomas Galbreath’s name, possibly an indirect indication of the author. (“Galbreath” appears this one time, instead of “Galbraith”.)
 3. Lastly, Thomas Galbraith compiled the expense report at the diary’s end, supporting the idea that Galbraith kept party records.
2. In its 29 May entry, the diary says, “The team of Mafs 27 was the only one which corsed without assistance.” Then, in its final expense report, the diary says, “Money laid out on acct. of Mess 27 Pg. Co. after Miller left by Tho. Galbraith,” (Spelling throughout both sentences is preserved from the typewritten manuscript.) From this, we believe that our group of adventurers, or maybe their wagon, had a designation along the lines of “Mess 27 Pittsburgh Company”.
 1. An article, “The Western Wagon Train: Part-Two, Life on the Trail” by Dave Rodgers on 17 March 2021 at [<https://www.frontieramericanillustratednews.com/post/the-western-wagon-train-part-two-life-on-the-trail>], summarizes wagon train planning and organization: “Although wagon trains varied in size, they broke down into '*platoons*' or '*divisions*' of four wagons each. A '*mess*' would be the complement of a single wagon which was typically 3-4 men or a small family group.” Citing contemporary guide books, the article gave several recommendations for company sizes: 6–8 wagons, or 25–30 men, or 50–70 men.
 2. In “My Impressions” by E. H. N. Patterson at [<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~bbunce77/genealogy/1849GoldRush.html>], we see “mess”

used in the Friday, 29 March 1850 entry: “Jacob Babcock’s mess is encamped near us this evening.” In its Saturday 20 April 1850 entry: “Some Companies are breaking up; others forming; messes are swapping places ...” And in its Monday 22 April 1850 entry: “After our grain gives out, the plan most likely to be adopted to secure expedition will be for two messes to unite both teams on one wagon, and change teams in harness at noon—this will give us fresh teams every day.”

3. Travel guides and maps existed at the time of our 1849 adventure.
 1. John Calvin Smith, *The Illustrated Hand-Book, A New Guide for Travelers through the United States of America* (New York, New York, USA: Sherman & Smith, 1847). Pages 222–227, for instance, list steamboat routes on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers.
 2. Joseph E. Ware, *The Emigrants’ Guide to California* (St. Louis, Missouri, USA: J. Halsall, 1849). The guide has a route map; directions for forming a camp with wagons; details of many rivers and landmarks; and tests for gold.
 3. William Clayton, *The Latter-Day Saints’ Emigrants’ Guide* (St. Louis, Missouri, USA: Missouri Republican Steam Power Press—Chambers & Knapp, 1848). [A Wikipedia article](#) describes and comments on the guide.
 4. Charles Preuss, compiler, “from the field notes and journal of Capt. J. C. Fremont”, *Topographical Map of the Road from Missouri to Oregon* (Baltimore, Maryland, USA: E. Weber & Co. by order of the Senate of the United States, 1846), in seven sections. I used this map especially when analyzing the diary entries.
4. The “[Emigrant Trail in Wyoming](#)” article in Wikipedia describes the California trail, Mormon trail, and Oregon trail in that area, including portions of North Platte River, Fort Laramie, Sweetwater River, and Sandy River. The article includes an [1872 Wyoming Territory map](#) showing the emigrant road.
5. A later [map of the Pony Express](#) by William Henry Jackson nicely illustrates much of the route taken by our adventurers from St. Joseph to Green River. The “[Route of the Mormon pioneers from Nauvoo to Great Salt Lake](#)”, by Millroy & Hayes in 1899, illustrates and dates their progress along the route.
6. The Wikipedia “[Westward Expansion Trails](#)” article summarizes the emigrant trails leading westward from the United States of the early 1800s. Wikipedia’s “[California Trail](#)” then goes into great detail about the route our adventurers took.
7. The Wikipedia “[California Gold Rush](#)” article gives background to this adventure.
8. The United States’ National Park Service has a [California National Historic Trail](#) web landing page. Resources here, especially the maps and data set, were key to analyzing the diary.

1. One of its inside pages is a [maps page](#), showing an interactive online map, a map overlay, and a link to another GIS interactive map. I followed the GIS interactive map viewer link, and eventually found the National Park Service's "[California NHT](#)" data set.
2. Another National Park Service web page lists a series of [California Trail interpretive guide booklets available online](#).
3. Also see a "[California National Historic Trail](#)" article page.
9. Miners and business persons in 1849 California would have needed banks. See Lynne Pierson Doti, "[Banking in the Western U.S.](#)", EH.net Encyclopedia, Economic History Association (10 June 2003). See also Jonathan Tiemann, editor Christopher McKenna, "[Discounting gold: Money and banking in Gold Rush California](#)", *Global History of Capitalism Project*, Oxford Centre for Global History, University of Oxford (April 2021, Case Study #22): 13 pages.
10. From this diary, we see that our adventurers were on the Bear River in early September 1849, and on the South Yuba River in mid September 1849. The expense report at the end of the diary places the group in the general Sacramento and Sierra Nevada area in October 1849 and December 1849, and probably also in May 1850.
11. A Pennsylvania newspaper article in January 1851 named Alex Beale and Thomas Beale as Pittsburghers at Dry Creek in California in November 1850. (See "[Pittsburghers in California](#)", article in *The Daily Morning Post* newspaper, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, Friday morning 3 January 1851 issue, page 2, column 1. [Image at NewspaperArchive.com](#).) [Dry Creek](#), in present day [Amador County](#), California (which was split from [Calaveras County](#) in 1854), flows from the [Sierra Nevada](#) into the [Mokelumne River](#) south of [Sacramento](#) and north of [Stockton](#). The Dry Creek area is south of Bear River and South Yuba River.
12. The 1850 United States Census recorded Alexander Beal as being a rancher on 13 September 1850 in Calaveras County, California, among a sheet full of miners. Alexander's neighbor was Samuel Adams, who was also named in the "[Pittsburghers in California](#)" newspaper article. (See Alexander Beal household, 1850 United States Census, Calaveras County, California, population schedule, Calaveras District, enumerated 13 September 1850, handwritten page 109, stamped page 55, dwelling number 204, visited family number 204; NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 33, page 55a.)
13. [Thomas Galbraith](#) had begun medical studies with [Dr. David Alter](#) before the 1849 adventure, and completed his studies after returning to Pennsylvania in 1852. See "Thomas Galbraith, M. D., Tarentum" in Thomas Cushing, *History of Allegheny County Pennsylvania* (Chicago, Illinois, USA: A. Warner & Co., 1889), [Part II, page 406](#). This passage supports our conclusion that Thomas Galbraith was the diarist.
 1. Dr. David Alter was a grandson of the great-grandfather of Nancy Jane (Beale) Alter's [husband](#).

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

14. Joseph W. Taylor, captain of the adventurers' wagon train, *may* have stayed in California, to appear later in the 1900 United States Census at Placer, California.

Waypoints

I overlaid the National Park Service’s California Trail data set onto a mapping service where I could measure distances and see river names. Doing several passes through the diary, I constructed a set of waypoints — first for locations I could identify with higher confidence, and then for additional locations that depended on those higher confidence locations. I added some key locations that were not waypoints themselves but helped constrain the basic route our adventurers took.

It’s important to note that this set of waypoints for our adventurers, and the California Trail data set as well, are *approximations only*. We cannot tell exactly where our adventurers camped, stopped, or travelled in 1849. However, we can claim these waypoints are a pretty good fit with their diary.

Waypoints table.

Sequence	Coordinates	Label	Description
1	40.671335, -79.685148	12 March 1849	“Left Freeport, Armstrong Co., Pa. on Monday the 12th of March 1849 in a skiff arrived in Pittsburgh the same day.”
2	40.449961, -79.993587	15 March	“Left Pittsburgh on board the Steamer Consigner, on Thursday the 15th of March at 6:00 O’clock PM.”
3	38.580692, -92.173694	13 April	James O. Wilson died at Jefferson City, Missouri.
4	39.762805, -94.851224	20 April	Thomas Galbraith caught up at Saint Joseph, Missouri.
5	39.782532, -94.935078	24 April 1849	Possible encampment site 3 miles west of Missouri River until 30 April.
6	39.756521, -94.918894	24 April 1849	Possible encampment site 3 miles west of Missouri River until 30 April.
7	39.837610, -95.100185	30 April	Mosquito Creek.
8	39.840841, -95.170989	2 May	Wolf River.
9	39.839663, -95.579184	3 May	About 25 miles from Wolf River.
10	39.830776, -95.612926	4 May	About 2 miles from possible 3 May stop point.
11	39.951571, -96.036067	7 May	This South Fork Nemaha River might be the “big Mimahan” mentioned in the diary.
12	39.961408, -96.360546	8 May	Roughly 20 miles from South Fork Nemaha River.
13	39.844452, -96.661216	9 May	Big Blue River.
14	40.194543, -97.597798	14 May	“Monday we traveled up the valley of the Little Blu about 15 miles.”

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Sequence	Coordinates	Label	Description
15	40.467397, -98.376042	17 May	“Thursday we encamped at the point where the road leaves the Blu.”
16	40.660995, -98.743180	18 May	About 25 miles from the Little Blue River.
17	40.645493, -98.966907	19 May	Two miles from Fort Kearney (Fort Childs).
18	40.680860, -99.653113	23 May	Plum Creek.
19	41.149009, -101.087807	29 May	South Platte River crossing.
20	41.307853, -102.122329	2 June	Mouth of Ash Hollow.
21	41.603021, -103.109326	6 June	Passed Courthouse Rock.
22	41.724956, -103.337277	7 June	Passed Chimney Rock.
23	41.836093, -103.710055	8 June	Passed Scotts Bluff.
24	41.934955, -103.996148	9 June	Horse Creek.
25	42.202367, -104.555588	12 June	Laramie River crossing.
26	42.250007, -104.779631	13 June	Possible boiling spring area passed “in the afternoon”.
27	42.840239, -105.868485	18 June	Camp about 1½ miles up Deer Creek.
28	42.674400, -106.793100	22 June	Willow Spring.
29	42.488917, -107.145769	23 June	Forded Sweetwater River opposite Independence Rock.
30	42.443386, -107.210684	25 June	Passed Devil’s Gate.
31	42.524948, -107.926880	28 June	“Our train left the river to pass over the Bluffs.”
32	42.376626, -108.724939	9 July	Last crossing of the Sweetwater River.
33	42.337380, -108.938204	10 July	Grazed at Pacific Springs.
34	42.292853, -109.121735	11 July #1	“Sandy which proved to be wet sandy for it was a running stream.”
35	42.260288, -109.301454	11 July #2	“crossed the little Sandy, 10 miles”

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Sequence	Coordinates	Label	Description
36	42.244660, -109.413996	11 July #3	“then to Big Sandy, 6 miles”
37	42.182685, -110.182743	13 July	Green River. Multiple potential ferry sites.
38	42.093835, -110.239077	14 July	A small branch of the Green River.
39	42.018532, -110.664081	15 July	(May have thought this was the Bear River.)
40	42.651518, -111.721818	20 July #1	“... the road leaves Bear River. Here instead of following the route by Fort Hall, viz: turning northward up the plain, we struck across to the mountains on the West of the plain”
41	42.609925, -111.938915	20 July #2	Encamped in valley by a spring, 13.5 miles from fork of the road.
42	42.274330, -113.436168	27 July	“We reached the Fort Hall road ... The whole distance through Meyers cut-off being according to a roadometer, 112 miles.”
43	42.005003, -113.973910	29 July	“This day we made Goose Creek.”
44	41.857265, -114.188417	30 July	17 miles up the valley of Goose Creek.
45	41.660698, -114.407317	31 July	“Today we made 21 miles.”
46	41.425057, -114.659295	1 August	“We encamped at the end of 22 miles near an excellent spring on the left of the road.”
47	41.141104, -114.974246	2 August	“We made 27-1/2 miles and encamped near the base of a mountain whose top was covered with snow.”
48	41.053227, -115.283500	Confluence of Humboldt and Mary’s Rivers	Confluence of Mary’s River and Humboldt River. From here, the Humboldt flows westward.
49	41.048489, -115.342764	3 August	“Today we made 22-1/2 miles and encamped on a branch of the Humboldt or Mary’s River.”
50	40.888121, -115.708856	4 August	“Today we traveled 25-1/2 miles down the valley of Mary’s River.”
51	40.724338, -116.071574	6 August	“We made 25-1/2 miles today. In the afternoon we passed through the narrows, a canyon of considerable length.”
52	40.697257, -116.137574	7 August #1	4 miles since last point.
53	40.608306, -116.357842	7 August #2	14 miles since last point.
54	40.588984, -116.383683	7 August #3	2 miles since last point.
55	39.989972, -118.603516	Humboldt River terminus	The diarist last mentions the Humboldt River in a note after 19 August.

Six Months to Gold: from Pennsylvania to California in 1849

Sequence	Coordinates	Label	Description
56	39.621255, -119.289022	Truckee River first crossing	“Let it suffice to say that we crossed Truckies river 27 times in all before crossing the first mountain, after which we crossed it once or twice.” (undated, between 26 and 31 August)
57	39.525395, -120.069229	31 August #1	“On Friday, August 31st., about 11:00 o'clock we crossed the principal Sierra Nevada mountain. It is very steep for about 200 yards. The descent is not very difficult.”
58	39.314657, -120.326006	31 August #2	“On Friday, August 31st., about 11:00 o'clock we crossed the principal Sierra Nevada mountain. It is very steep for about 200 yards. The descent is not very difficult.”
59	39.293959, -120.319747	31 August #3	“On Friday, August 31st., about 11:00 o'clock we crossed the principal Sierra Nevada mountain. It is very steep for about 200 yards. The descent is not very difficult.”
60	39.308038, -120.656746	Bear River head	Head of the Bear River, in present day Placer County, California.
61	39.295276, -120.333562	South Yuba River head	Head of the South Yuba River, in present day Nevada County, California.

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