

James Akin Diary 1852

Researched and compiled by Milo (Mike) Booth

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Note: the following is an excerpt from a book compiled by Mike Booth on the Akin, Richey, Ingram, Booth families.

"Akin's notebook was quite small, one of those that would fit in the center pocket of bib-overalls. He wrote two entries on each page. From photographs appearing only in the 1919 edition, we are permitted to view just six pages of the original diary. We identify his notebook as a commercial design with rounded corners, vertical format, thread-sewn binding with faint traces of vertical lines as would appear in an account book. The cover may have been leather as it is dark with overlapping ends seen at top and bottom of picture. The black areas on each side of the picture are obviously black background for the purposes of the photograph. When the copy pictures were made, the cameraman used straight pins to keep the pages of the book flat. The six pages reproduced are July 12 and 13 on one page. July 14, 15 are on the adjoining sheet. August 1 and 2 on one page. Then appears August 3 and next entry is Wednesday, 04 July 1852. The "July" notation is the diarist's error. (The 2,000 year calendar verifies that Wednesday was August 4 1852.) As the next known pages to have been photographed skip to October 4, 5, 6 and 7th, we know not if young Akin continued the July entries in error for any number of days.

The diary has been edited and published several times over the years. In 1908 we find many hundreds of semi-colons. The 1919 and 1971 editions used dashes. Moore in 1974 followed the 1908 except she chose periods rather than semi-colons. In some entries it appears difficult to know where a sentence stops and a new sentence starts. Content in the various editions also varies as seen below."

June 28 (1908 edition)

Met six men and 16 mules packing through from California; passed considerable timber.

June 28 (1919/1971)

Met six men and 16 horses packing through from California passed considerable timber.

Stevens (no date)

Met 16 men and 16 mules packing through from California Pass. Considerable timber.

Across the Plains to Oregon in 1852

Left Salem, Henry County, Iowa. Thursday, April 15, 1852 - First day crossed Fish Creek, ¾ mile
mile; roads very good; water and wood plentiful.

Friday, April 16- Rained till noon; came on to Salem in the morning; left Salem at 3 o'clock; traveled 6
miles; plenty of wood.

Saturday, April 17- Start pretty soon; rains nearly all day; roads very muddy; travel 15 miles; camp; plenty of water and wood.

Sunday, April 18- Start at 9 o'clock; roads very bad; pass Birmingham and Winchester; camp at Libertyville; corn, 55 cents per bushel, hay 50 cents per cwt.. Good place to camp. *[The diarist wrote the names of these towns in wrong order, as the party would pass through Winchester before reaching Birmingham.]*

Monday, April 19-- Roads better; travel 15 miles; passed through agency; camp in a good place; plenty of wood; not much water.

Tuesday, April 20- Roads very good; travel 16 miles; passed Ottumwa; pretty cold day; camp in good place, and plenty of wood and water. Overtook Caleb. *[Caleb Richey had apparently started ahead of the rest of the party. So far the wagons have been proceeding due west as far as Winchester then turned to the northwest where they paralleled the Des Moines River.]*

Wednesday, April 21- Bad roads; travel 16 miles; cold weather; passed Eddyville about noon; bad place to camp; plenty wood and water.

Thursday, April 22, 1852 - Travel 15 miles; fine weather; crossed the Des Moines River in the evening; good place to camp on the bank of the river.

Friday, April 23, 1852 - Travel 3 miles and then stopped and stayed the balance of the day; cool cloudy weather; oats, 40 cents a bushel; corn 50 cents. Good place to camp.

Saturday, April 24, -- Traveled 12 miles; roads hilly and rough; cloudy weather; passed Knoxville; crossed White Breast Creek and camped on the bank; bought hay.

Sunday, April 25 - Laid by all-day; cloudy weather; herded the cattle all-day; good place to camp - plenty of wood and water.

Monday, April 26 - Traveled 12 miles; cool weather; passed Pleasantville; crossed South River and camped on the bank of the river; good place to camp.

Tuesday, April 27, -- Traveled 16 miles; very good prairie road; passed Palmyra and Indiolia; camp in the prairie; good place to camp - plenty of water; not much wood.

Wednesday, April 28 - Traveled 16 miles; very good roads; crossed Big Creek and camped on the bank of the same creek; good place to camp - plenty wood and water. *[At this point they are probably close to the line between Warren and Madison Counties. The designation "Big Creek" was probably a tributary of Middle River which they would cross the next day.]*

Thursday, April 29 - Traveled 7 miles; warm day, and good roads; crossed Middle River and camped on the north side in two and one-half miles of Winterset, good place to camp; stop at noon.

Friday, April 30 - Start at 9 o'clock and travel 3 miles and pass Winterset; roads very good; windy, cold day; stop and camp 1 mile west of Winterset; camp in a deep hollow; good place to camp; 47 wagons on the same ground.

Saturday, May 1, Start early; travel 20 miles; very good roads; camp in the prairie; plenty of water; *[had to]* carry wood three-quarters of a mile; herd cattle till 9 o'clock.

Sunday, May 2, - Very cold, windy morning; start about noon; travel 8 miles; camp in the prairie; had wood with us; not much grass; plenty of water; rains at night.

Monday, May 3, - Start early; travel 15 miles; cool weather; camp in the prairie; good place to camp; plenty wood and water; more grass than common; muddy branch or creek.

Tuesday, May 4, - Start early; travel 18 miles; pretty day; plenty of grass and water; camped on the prairie; drive the cattle a half of a mile to grass.

Wednesday, May 5, - Start early; travel 15 miles; good roads; warm day; rains at night; prairie-no timber; water and grass good; good camp ground.

Thursday, May 6, - Travel 16 miles; good roads, but muddy; rained part of the day; camp in a beautiful place on the bank of the creek; grass plentiful.

Friday, May 7, - Start early and travel two and a half miles to the creek and wait 4 hours to cross, and the boat sank; good roads; camp in the prairie; plenty water and grass no wood.

Saturday, May 8, - Travel 15 miles; good roads; camp in Kanessville; bad place to camp; plenty wood and water, but no grass; beautiful day; great many teams camped around.

Sunday, May 9, - Travel 3 miles and camp on the bank of the Missouri River; beautiful day; good place to camp; plenty wood and grass.

Monday, May 10, - Camped in the same place; corn 20c per bushel; new ferry boat started; fine day; many Indians in the camp.

Tuesday, May 11, - Beautiful day; ferry boat upset, one man drowned, herd the cattle; plenty grass; flour \$16 per bbl *[barrel]*.

Wednesday, May 12, - Camped in the same place; rains in the evening; a man killed by a wagon running over him; teams coming in all the time. *[They are nearing Council Bluffs, one of the great gathering places along the Missouri River where wagon trains made up and the diarist makes note of "teams coming in all the time". Due to the heavy traffic in the rain-soaked ground, accidents were probably common.]*

Thursday, May 13, - Camped in the same place; beautiful day; a great many teams on the ground; not much grass; river rose a little.

Friday, May 14, - Camped in the same place; boat sunk; bought flour at \$16 per barrel; beautiful day; packed up the wagons.

Saturday, May 15 - Start early *[and]* travel 14 miles up the river to Council Bluffs; camped within 2 miles of the ferry; warm day; rain at night; plenty wood and grass.

Sunday, May 16, - Camp in the same place; windy day; good place to camp; plenty wood and grass; great many teams pass.

Monday, May 17, - Start early and go to the river, but could not get to cross; camp here and drive the cattle back about 2 miles to grass.

Tuesday, May 18, - *[1908 version]*: Commence crossing in the morning and cross nearly all day; very windy; cross till midnight; get all the cattle across except 10 yoke . *[Stevens version]* Commence crossing in the evening and cross all night; we rented the boat to cross the river with *[neither the 1908 nor the 1919 version mentions renting a boat]*

Wednesday, May 19, - Ferry the other 2 loads in the morning; start at 9 o'clock and travel 12 miles; camp in a good place.

Thursday, May 20, - Travel 15 miles; cross Elkhorn River; wagons \$2 apiece; camp in a good place.

Friday, May 21 - Start early; travel 10 miles; camp at 2 o'clock on Platte River; rains all day; *[1908 and 1919 version added]* "got scared at nothing and went back a mile for company" *[Apparently young Akin was riding "point" ahead of the main group. The caravan is now approaching Indian country.]*

Saturday, May 22 - Travel 16 miles; warm; travel up Platte River bottom; smallpox in the camp, so we moved on to another good place to camp.

Sunday, May 23 - Travel 15 miles up Platte River bottom; bad roads; saw 30 Indians with their ponies loaded with buffalo skins; good place to camp.

Monday, May 24 - Traveled 18 miles to Loup Fork ferry; then up the river 6 miles to camp in a very good place; plenty wood water and grass.

[In the next entry, Stevens copied that the caravan traveled another 19 miles to the ferry then crossed the river. The 1908 and the 1919 states the distance was 13 miles. Regardless of the distance covered on the 26th, these entries seem in conflict with the mention of "18 miles to Loup Fork Ferry apparently already driven on the 24th]

Tuesday, May 25 - Start early; travel 19 miles up Loup Fork to the ferry; cross river; camp near Loup Fork; bad place to camp. *[The party is in Nance County, apparently between Genoa and Fullerton]*

Wednesday, May 26 - Travel 10 miles; bad roads; warm day; cross Loup Fork in the evening; deep fording with quicksand bottom; good place to camp.

Thursday, May 27, -- Laid by all day; pretty good grass; water and wood plenty; camp near Loup Fork; good place to camp; no Indians; *[we have about]* come to the Sioux Indians.

Friday, May 28, -- Start early; travel 18 miles; come to the buffalo range; sandy roads; camp in the prairie; no wood; water scarce.

Saturday, May 29, -- Start early; travel 18 miles; prairie roads; some bad places to cross; saw the first antelope; camp here - no wood.

Sunday, May 30, -- Travel 16 miles; very good roads; pass no timber; crossed one small creek; camp near Wood River; plenty of wood; grass short-- much water. *[The 1908 and 1919 printings state not much water. The Wood River and the Platte River are nearly parallel and less than five miles apart in this area. In the spring of the year the rivers are quite full.]*

Monday, May 31, -- Travel 15 miles; very good roads; travel *[with]* in a mile and a half- of Platte River all day; camp in a good place; drive cattle to Platte River to water.

Tuesday, June 1, -- Start early; travel 17 miles; very good roads; water the cattle at noon in Platte River; camp in good place-plenty water and grass, no wood.

Wednesday, June 2 - Travel 20 miles; very got, calm day; roads very dusty; cross Elm and Buffalo Creeks; camp; not much grass; drive cattle two miles to water; rainy, windy night. Grand Island. *[The "grand island" is undoubtedly the island in the Platte River that is as long as 50 miles but location could not then or now be precisely determined because it is constantly being redefined by the flow of the river. It should not be confused with city of Grand Island. At the time of the diary there were few people there as a town was not officially founded until 1857. In 1866 the Union Pacific Railroad relocated the city to its present site.]*

Thursday, June 3, --Travel 18 miles; muddy road; cool day; came to Platte River again; saw 5 graves; camp near Platte; no wood - some buffalo chips; *[have]* come to alkali.

[Buffalo chips, dried dung from buffalo, make excellent fuel not just for trail side cooking but for use as fuel in stoves after earlier pioneers had exhausted the wood supply. In the very arid regions where there were no trees, chips were the only fuel source. Chips make an intensely hot fire in a hurry, which was handy for early morning coffee when there was no wood, or no time to make a wood fueled fire. Dale, writing in a footnote in the 1919 edition, said he had seen a pioneer farmer driving slowly across the prairie while his children gathered cow chips, which they threw in the wagon. These were stored for winter fuel. Thoroughly dried-baked in hot summer sun-chips have no odor. In 1987 during the convention of the Oregon and California Trail association it was mentioned that some wags played "Frisbee" with chips.]

Friday, June 4, -- Travel 16 miles; good roads; saw 5 buffalo in the morning; passed 1 grave; camp near Platte; good place to camp.

Saturday, June 5, -- Travel 16 miles; good roads, but sandy; crossed over a low, sandy bluff, extending to the river; rain and wind in the evening; camp in a good place; near Platte.

Sunday, June 6, -- Travel 20 miles; sandy roads; crossed Skunk Creek *[According to Kimball, this creek was about six feet wide when Clayton recorded it just four years earlier];* three died with the cholera along the road *[these deaths were not part of the Akin train];* camp on Carrion Creek; no timber.

Monday, June 7, -- Travel 14 miles; crossed Carrion Creek; passed the last timber for 200 miles; took a buffalo hunt and wounded one; camp in a good place, near thePlatte river; *[used]* buffalo chips to cook with.

Tuesday, June 8 - Laid by all day; 13 of the boys went hunting and killed one antelope; good grass and buffalo chips; a good many wagons passing all the time. *[Now west of the forks in the Platte River]*

Wednesday, June 9 - Travel 19 miles; road ascends the bluff; very sandy roads; cross North Bluff fork and Bluff Creek; camp in a good place; plenty of grass and chips; water scarce.

Thursday, June 10 - Travel 25 miles; cool day and sandy roads; Platte River very high; *[There are]* springs along the road; camp in a good place; plenty grass, water and chips.

Friday, June 11 - Travel 18 miles over very sandy bluffs; very warm day; camp in a bad place--no grass, not much water; great many campers in sight.

Saturday, June 12 - Travel 12 miles until noon, then stop and stay the remainder of the day in a good place; a good spring and plenty of grass; some trees. *[The Stevens hand written copy of the original diary is very clear, it lists "some trees." There were three. Morrison notes in the Moore transcription that it was a lone tree mentioned in many diaries. The site of these trees was three miles east of present day Lewellen]*

Sunday, June 13, -- Start early and travel 16 miles; good roads and warm day; rains in the evening; good place to camp; plenty of grass and water.

Monday, June 14, -- Travel 14 miles; sandy roads; cool day; come in sight of Chimney rock; hard storm in the evening; good place to camp; water, grass and chips.

Tuesday, June 15, -- Laid by all day on account of *[Louisa's]* sickness; not much grass; Caleb Richey and his company overtook us; plenty of water, not much chips.

Wednesday, June 16 - Louisa, wife of Stuart Richey died at 2 o'clock in the morning *[she was 29 and according to family history she died of cholera]*; traveled 15 miles; good roads; pleasant weather; camp on *[North]* Platte; plenty of grass.

Thursday, June 17 - Travel 18 miles; very good roads; passed Chimney rock; drive the cattle 2 miles to the river to water at noon; camp near Platte; plenty of grass.

Friday, June 18 - Travel 16 miles; excellent roads; warm day; passed Scott's Bluff, camp near the creek; good spring *[nearby]*, burnt up one old wagon.

Saturday, June 19 - Travel 16 miles; good roads, good grass; camp close to Platte River *[in a]* good place; plenty of everything. *[Only the Stevens copy uses the sentence "Plenty of everything"]*.

Sunday, June 20 - Travel 14 miles; sandy and dusty roads; drive the cattle into the river at noon to water; camp near the Platte river; plenty grass and water.

Monday, June 21 - Travel 5 miles; camp miles of Fort Laramie. *[The 1908 and 1919 editions read :camp within one and one-half miles of camp]*; camp close to Platte River; considerable sickness in company; good place to camp.

Tuesday, June 22 - Travel 20 miles over the Black Hills; found no water until 2 o'clock; camp in good place; plenty of pine and cedar wood, but no water.

Wednesday, June 23 - Travel 12 miles; bad roads and very hilly; pine and cedar bluffs; cloudy, rainy weather: Elva Ingram, child of James and Ritta Ann Ingram died; camp in a cool place; plenty wood - no water.

Thursday, June 24 - Travel 15 miles; good roads but hilly; very cold, rainy day: some sickness in company; camp in a good place; plenty wood and grass; not much water.

Friday, June 25 -- Travel 18 miles; good roads; road returns to the river, warm weather, camp near Platte River; plenty wood and water; not much grass.

Saturday, June 26 - Travel 16 miles; bad roads and broken country; Platte River very small; not much grass any place; camp near the Platte river; not much wood.

Sunday, June 27, -- Travel 17 miles; level sandy road; warm day; passed no timber; camp near Platte River; drive the cattle 2 miles to grass; not much wood.

Monday, June 28 - Travel 18 miles; sandy roads; met 6 men and 16 mules packing through from California; passed considerable timber; camp near the river; plenty of grass.

Tuesday, June 29 - Travel 18 miles; sandy roads and windy day; get to the upper ferry; camp near the river; good place to camp; plenty of wood and water; drive the cattle three miles to grass.

[The upper ferry was also known as emigrant ford or as the Mormon Ferry. Pioneers easily walked across the river when shallow in late summer but earlier in the year with high water some kind of boating was far safer. Mormons installed a toll ferry of two 30-foot-long dugout canoes lashed together and then added planks to make a bed onto which a yoke of oxen, still attached to a wagon, could be coaxed aboard then rowed across the river. The ferry operated between 1847 and 1851. It was a money maker for the owners who charged anywhere from \$3 to \$5 per wagon to cross the river. Many emigrants could not afford the toll so they took their chances in the river even though the ferry reduced the risk to those who used it and certainly saved a lot of time. Akin remarks on the next day that they used the ferry then continued on their way. The apparently unmarked site of the ferry can be found near Brianstock Trail and East K Street in north Casper. Natrona County Historical Preservation Commission, Casper, publishes one of the few maps on which the ferry appears. There is a "Mormon Ferry Monument" near Fort Casper but Haines suggests this marker was placed before the actual site of the ferry was determined.]

Wednesday, June 30 - Left the upper ferry on Platte and travel 18 miles without water; good roads; camp near a spring *[The Spring was undoubtedly Willow Spring about which Wm. Clayton wrote in 1848, "Water cold and good."]*; good grass; the cattle got scattered very badly.

Thursday, July 1 - Travel 12 miles; good roads, but dusty; camp near Tish horn pass; no timber; not much grass; drive cattle three miles to grass.

[Tish horn Pass appears only in the hand copied Stevens edition. The 1908 edition reads "camp near pass", the 1919 edition states "camp near Platte River Pass no timbers." The Moore transcript copies the 1908 version. Such a place defies identification in the usually authoritative books. Noting the party is more or less 30 miles west of Mormon Ferry would place them about Prospect Hill, also known as Ryans Hill. Here the trail climbs 400 feet between two draws on a grade of 7.5 percent. Akin may have believed this to be a mountain pass.]

Friday, July 2, -- Travel 18 miles; sandy and dusty roads; pass Independence rock; cross Sweet Water; this river is about 100 feet wide; Rattle Snake Mountain on north side; pass Devil's Gate; camp near Sweet Water; not much grass.

[Akin's section of this caravan probably did not stop at Independence Rock or maybe it did and in his demonstrated lack of detail he didn't write it down. But Ingram's company did stop. James Ingram, then 14, was there long enough to scratch his name on the rock. The inscription is on the southeast face about eye level and in 1987 was overgrown with scale. The North Platte River makes an abrupt turn here as it originates to the south. Pioneers left the Platte and followed the Sweetwater River after leaving Independence Rock. Immediately west, 6 miles, is the awesome Devil's Gate. This earthquake caused split is occupied only by the Sweetwater. Its near perpendicular sides are 400 feet high. The pioneer road, as does today's highway, passes to the south. Once on higher ground west of the Gate, there is a scenic viewpoint where one can hike to look at the river as it approaches the cleft in the rock from the west.]

Saturday, July 3 - Travel 18 miles up Sweet Water; Snake Indians camp here; not much grass

Sunday, July 4 - Remained in camp all day and let cattle rest; cold, windy but bright day; not much grass; plenty sage brush for fuel [The other transcriptions record "plenty of sage brush for use-but leave no suggestion to what the use the sage brush might be]; many teams pass us *[Akin does not indicate if some of the other "companies" either parked for the day or were among the "other teams" that passed by. Of significance is his next line]* wrote a letter. *[Young Akin was apparently so busy doing his man-size job along the trail he had little time for the luxury of writing letters. This is only remark about writing a letter even though he also wrote a letter on June 19. That letter is in the appendix of the book Mike Booth wrote.]*

Monday, July 5 - Travel 17 miles; sandy roads; windy and cold; cross Sweet Water 4 times; bad to cross; camp near the river on the south side; some grass and sagebrush.

[The Sweetwater is a rambling river. Most authorities identify the several crossings in this area as "Three Crossings." The caravan is now at 6,390 feet elevation, is slowly ascending to the crest of the Continental Divide.]

Tuesday, July 6 - Stayed in camp all day; good grass; sage brush, great many Indians come and camp within two miles of us; trade some with us.

Wednesday, July 7 - Travel 17 miles and without water; Indians go with us; Joseph Mace overtook us; not much grass near; Indians camp one mile above us.

Thursday, July 8 - Travel 15 miles; drive the cattle 2 ½ miles to grass in the morning before starting out; rough roads; Indians plenty; camp [with] in 2 miles of river; good grass near the river.

Friday, July 9 - Travel 15 miles; rough, rocky roads; cross north fork of Sweet Water; passed some snow; camp on south fork of Sweet Water; good grass at camp.

Saturday, July 10 - Travel 13 miles; good roads; crossed Sweet Water for the last time; passed over the summit of the Rocky Mountains; Camp at Pacific Springs; pleasant day.

[The Continental Divide is 7,550 feet elevation here, and is named South Pass. The trail to the summit from the east is over 100 miles long and such gradual ascent most travelers, even on today's highway,

don't notice it. The "pass" is nearly 30 miles wide and totally without any narrow, perpendicular canyons as many expect of a mountain pass. The pass is often windy. The trail on the "west" side is quite steep. Of significance to the pioneers is their arrival at South Pass found them half way to "Oregon". The Continental Divide was the "back-bone of the Continent". per James A. Pritchard as quoted in Haines. There is a Wyoming Highway Safety Rest Area four miles west of the pass. Pacific Springs and creek gets its name as these are the first waters viewed by the pioneers that flowed west eventually to the Pacific Ocean. The trail is to the south of the highway along which are stone monuments placed by Ezra Meeker in 1906 for the Oregon Trail and by Captain Nickerson in 1916 commemorating the first women to cross the pass in 1836, Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding. These markers are not visible from the highway. Access to them is difficult. A 4-wheel vehicle is recommended.]

Sunday, July 11 - Travel 20 miles; very good roads; camp on Little Sandy [river]; 2 miles to grass; poor place to camp; plenty of wood.

Monday, July 12 - Start about noon and travel six miles to Big Sandy [river]; camp 1 1/2 miles above the ford; drive the cattle 6 miles to grass; good place to camp.

Tuesday, July 13 - Camp in the same place and let the cattle rest; no more water for 40 miles ahead.

[The party is now on Sublette Cutoff having left the Oregon Trail at Y in the trail known as Parting of the Ways. The Y was within distance covered on July 11 as Little Sandy River is west of the junction. Today's visitor will find a marker on Highway 28 noting "Parting of the Ways" but this is a major historical error now acknowledged by all authorities. As Franzwa stated in his "The Oregon Trail Revisited, "Somebody goofed" (p.278). The true Y is west about 3 1/2 miles north of the highway.]

Wednesday, July 14, -- Start at 10 o'clock; and travel until night; stop for supper; travel on until midnight; stop for hour and travel on again until daylight; grass plenty.

Thursday, July 15, -- Travel until noon and reach Green River; Green River quite low; camp 1 mile below the ford; take the cattle on an island and let them stay without guarding.

Friday, July 16, -- Remain in camp all day; not much grass; warm weather; Green River low; plenty of wood and water.

Saturday, July 17 - Ford Green River; good ford but swift current, two feet deep; travel 10 miles to Bear River [or creek]; good place to camp; plenty grass, water and wood.

Sunday, July 18, -- Lay by all day; good grass near camp; sold an ox and bought a cow of the Teattoes (?) and an ox of Gilliams; left the company; some rain and hail up the creek [Bear Creek]. *[The Stevenshand copy is very clear that the purchases of animals were from two people: Teattoes (?) and Gilliams. The 1908 and 1919 versions read slightly differently and different punctuation.]*

Monday, July 19 - Travel 20 miles; very hilly roads and broken country; windy day; camp on small creek; good grass; plenty wood and water; rains at night.

Tuesday, July 20 - Travel 12 miles; very hilly, bad roads; pass some Quaking Aspin Trees and graves; wood and water; camp on Ham's Ford of Bear River; *[Akin errs here as Hamms Fork is not a tributary of the Bear but joins Black Fork north of Fort Bridger then flows into the Green River. The company is now nearing the Idaho line.]*; very good grass, wood and water.

Wednesday, July 21 - Travel 18 miles; very hilly bad roads; pass over summit of Bear River Mountains; camp near a good spring; good grass.

Thursday, July 22 - Travel 14 miles; good roads on Bear River; camp near Bear River; very dusty; very good grass on the island; plenty wood; mosquitoes very bad. *[A few miles from here Sublette Cutoff, which the party has been following, rejoins the main Oregon Trail.]*

Friday, July 23, -- Travel 16 miles; very good roads; cross Thomas Ford on a bridge; paid *[toll of]* \$1.00 per wagon *[Dales notes in the 1919 edition corrects Akin claiming the proper name for this waterway is Thompson's Fork. However, Dale apparently stands alone in his assertion];* camp on Bear River; good grass; mosquitoes bad; overtook Caleb Richey and his company.

Saturday, July 24, -- Travel 10 miles; very good roads, but dusty; crossed several small creeks; camp near a good spring; plenty good grass and water.

[Akin's penchant for short statements does not allow a reader to appreciate additional insight into some items that he mentions. We have seen several remarks about "dust". He goes so far as to state "very dusty". One might like to see how Jane Gould discussed loudest in her diary of 1862. "The dust is even worse than Indians, storms, or winds, or mosquitoes. Or even wood ticks! DUST! If I could just have a bath!]

Sunday, July 25, -- Travel 10 miles; stop at 10 o'clock; stay until night; very good grass; plenty wood and water; nice place to camp.

Monday, July 26, -- Travel 16 miles; very dusty roads, but good; passed Soda and Steamboat Springs; camp on Bear River; very bad.....watering cattle; grass plenty .

[The caravan is now at the present city of Soda Springs, Idaho on Highway 30. There are over 100 springs in the area and many with fairly warm water. The majority of these springs are now under Soda Point Reservoir. Steamboat Springs got its name from the sound of its puffing "like a steamboat". Franzwa noted, "Not even 40 feet of water (depth of the reservoir) could stop old Steamboat Spring, still puffing away on the bottom of Soda Point Reservoir." His photography, which appears in "The Oregon Trail Revisited", shows steaming, bubbling at a certain place on top of the lake.]

Tuesday, July 27, -- Left Bear River; travel 18 miles; very good but dusty roads, passed the forks of Oregon and California roads; plenty of water; good place to camp.

[At this point, 6 miles west of Soda Springs is the start of the Applegate Trail to Southern Oregon via the Humbolt River through Nevada northwest through Black Rock Desert to vicinity of Klamath Falls. Also called the California Trail, which it is from Winnemucca west, as the '49ers left the Oregon Trail via this route to get to the gold country in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.]

Wednesday, July 28, -- Travel 7 miles; stop at 11 o'clock; stay the remainder of the day on account of sickness; Powekee *[Ponca/Porneuf]* Indians plenty; camp on Deep Creek; good grass.

Thursday, July 29, -- Travel 18 miles; rough roads; pass many springs; camp on a small creek; very good grass; plenty of wood, water and service berries. *[These wild berries apparently the first fresh produce they had in over a thousand miles.]*

Friday, July 30, -- Travel 17 miles; roads very rough and dusty; [rain] shower in the evening; camp on the creek; plenty grass wood and water; no wagons in sight today.

Saturday, July 31, -- Laid by all day; good grass; Miranda Jane Richey, small child of Caleb and Alice Richey, died and was buried near camp; rained some in the evening; wood and water plentiful.

Sunday, August 1, -- Travel 16 miles; sandy and muddy roads; considerable rain; passed Fort Hall; camp on a fork of Snake River; plenty of water; wood scarce. *[Fort Hall was on the left bank of the Snake about 9 miles above the confluence with Portneuf River. Today's town of Fort Hall is in a different location.]*

Monday, August 2, -- Take an Indian cutoff and travel 10 miles to the other road; then travel 7 on further; cross Snake River; camp; grass plenty. *[Akin apparently crossed some stream as the party, all of it) stayed on the same side, left bank, of the Snake]*

Tuesday, August 3, -- Travel 18 miles; very rough roads; passed the American Falls of Snake River; camp on Birch Creek; grass very scarce; wood plenty. *[A gigantic reclamation project and reservoir now covers a long section of the Oregon Trail here.]*

Wednesday, July (sic) 4, -- Travel 12 miles; *[Diarist should have written "August". All of the published versions of the diary, including the hand-copied Stevens, show this as "August" not acknowledging the error in the original. The distance traveled, "12", also appears in the original (as photographed) and in the 1908 and in "the Stevens as in the 1974 Moore. The University of Oklahoma, 1919 and the 1971 reprint elsewhere reads "10".];* stop at 10 o'clock and give the cattle grass; rained considerable; camp on Raft river at the forks of the Oregon and California road; good grass.

[Massacre Rocks State Park, as well as City of Rocks Park are not far from here. The former is named for an Indian massacre of a wagon train that passed nearby in 1862. The best accounts of this incident appear in the Oregon & California Trail Diary of Jane Gould in 1862 and in Oregon Trail Emigrant Massacre of 1862 and Port-Neuf Muzzle Loaders Rendezvous Massacre Rocks, Idaho]

Thursday, August 5, -- Travel 15 miles without water; very rocky, rough roads; camp on Marsh Creek; drove cattle 2 miles to grass.

Friday, August 6, -- Travel 18 miles; good roads; passed a great many dead cattle; camped on Goose Creek; good grass; plenty woodr.

Saturday, August 7, -- Travel 25 miles, the last 13 without water; very dusty roads; camp an hour after dark on Dry Creek; water scarce; grass plenty.

Sunday, August 8, -- Lay by all-day; very good grass; great many camped around; water very scarce; great many dead cattle on creek.

Monday, August 9, -- Travel 8 miles; camp at 2 o'clock; very good road but dusty; camp on 2nd Rock Creek, very good grass; plentiful supply of water.

Tuesday, August 10, -- Travel 12 miles; very rough and dusty roads; grass scarce; camp on 2nd Rock Creek; wood and water plentiful; mother *[Mrs. James Akin, sister of Caleb and Stuart Richey]* taken sick in the evening.

Wednesday, August 11, -- Travel 16 miles; start very early; very bad watering place at noon in Snake River; stop at 4 o'clock and take cattle to grass; start at dark and travel 6 miles to water.

Thursday, August 12, -- Travel 3 miles; stop and camp on banks of the Snake River; lay by the remainder of the day; good grass 3 miles away; wood and water plenty.

Friday, August 13, -- Start at dark and travel until 1 o'clock in the morning; lay by all day [*apparently on account of sickness*]; wood and grass plentiful.

Saturday, August 14, -- Start out and travel 12 miles reaching Salmon Falls; emigrants crossing the river; Indians fishing; wood and water plentiful; traded salt and tea for salmon [*the first taste of fresh salmon for these folks*].

Sunday, August 15, -- Laid by until sundown then start and travel until 2 o'clock in the morning; stop and sleep until daylight.

Monday, August 16, -- Travel until breakfast; stop on good grass and then start again and leave the road and go to the river; very bad place to water; lay by until noon then start out again and travel until 1 o'clock.

Tuesday, August 17, -- Start at daylight [*probably about 4:30*]; travel six miles to the crossing of the Snake River; lay by the rest of the day; emigrants ferrying down the river in wagon beds. [*The driving at night is obviously preferred due to the 100-degree temperatures in this area in mid August*]

Wednesday, August 18, -- Lay by all day at same place; very bad place to camp; preparing to cross the river. [*The party is at Three Island Crossing, the present site of Idaho State Park and near the city of Glenns Ferry*]

Thursday, August 19, -- Tried all day to get the cattle across the river but could not.

Friday, August 20, -- Tow the cattle across the river behind wagon beds; ferry the wagons over in the evening. James Nicholson starts [*to float*] down the river in a wagon bed. [*Dale suggests in the 1919 edition that Nicholson was probably worn out from having to drive uncooperative oxen during these hot, sticky days and chose to abandon the team and drift in his wagon on the river.*]

Saturday, August 21,-- All cross the river except E. Cole [*The 1908 and 1919 editions mention this slightly differently "All cross the river except two and gone after them."*]; cool weather.

Sunday, August 22 -- Mother taken worse in the morning and died about 9 o'clock in the evening [*Eliza Richey Akin, wife of James Akin and sister of Caleb and Stuart Richey. She was 38. Family records claim she died of typhoid fever*]. We are now 30 miles below Salmon Falls on the north side of the Snake River.

Monday, August 23, -- Mother was buried about 10 o'clock in the morning about 200 yards above the crossing of the river. Travel eight miles to a spring. [*It might be noted there are no diary entries with religious overtones about any of the deaths along the way even for the diarist's mother.*]

Tuesday, August 24 - Laid by until noon; Moses Rhoades died in the morning. Travel 7 miles; good roads; camp on Dry Creek; water scarce; grass plenty.

Wednesday, August 25 - Travel 15 miles; good roads, but hilly; passed boiling hot *spring* [about 7 miles of city of Mountain Home]; camp on a beautiful creek. plenty wood and water and grass.

Thursday, August 26 - Travel 14 miles [along] very rock creek; nooned at Charlotte Creek camp; no water for cattle; grass and wood plenty.

Friday, August 27 - Travel 15 miles; roads hilly but good; grass plentiful all the way; camp on White Horse Creek; plenty [of] wood and water..

Saturday, August 28, -- Travel 20 miles without water; good roads and cool day; camp on Boise river; this is a beautiful stream [with] wood and grass plentiful. [*Akin is now in or near city of Boise*]

Sunday, August, 29 - Travel 12 miles down Salmon River; good grass all the time; camp at 2 o'clock; good grass, wood and water; hares or rabbits plentiful; got some fish of the Indians; traded salt and tea for salmon.

Monday, August 30, -- Travel 18 miles down Salmon River; good roads, cool day; camp on Salmon River; excellent grass, wood and water.

[The diarist errs in identifying the river as the Salmon for, as he earlier wrote it is the Boise River. He lists this as the Salmon in the next two entries. Their route is down the Boise River, which flows in a westerly direction eventually entering the Snake near the site of old Fort Boise. Akin may have been so intrigued with the great numbers of salmon in the river he just called the river the "salmon". The fish were probably summer-run Steelhead.]

Tuesday, August 31, -- Travel 15 miles down Salmon River; cross the river; good grass, wood and water plentiful.

Wednesday, September 1, -- Travel 8 miles to Fort Boise; cross Snake River in the evening; pay \$2.50 per wagon; good grass on the north side of the river. [*On crossing the Snake, the caravan is now in Oregon-proper as the Snake River is the state boundary with Idaho.*]

Thursday, September 2, -- Travel 15 miles to a large creek; good grass; camp at 10 o'clock in the night; very dusty roads. [*The "large creek" was the Malheur River. They are in the vicinity of the city of Vale, Oregon. It is on the southern outskirts of town where visitors see the monument to John D. Henderson. Henderson and a companion were afoot carrying their possessions as their team had died. On the 20 mile hike between the Snake and the Malheur River, Henderson died of thirst, two years earlier, within a few feet of the Malheur not knowing he was that close to the river.*]

Friday, September 3, -- Travel 2 ½ miles down the creek to a spring; good grass and water; wood scarce.

Saturday, September 4, -- Start at 2 o'clock in the morning; travel 12 miles to Sulphur Springs by 8 o'clock a.m. [*This is 2 miles per hour, about the average for travel on the trail. Note that with healthy animals at the start of the trip, this train was making twice the distance.*]; travel 12 miles further to Birch Creek; not much grass; plenty water and wood.

Sunday, September 5, -- Travel 10 miles to Burnt River; camp at 1 o'clock; not much grass; herd cattle on willows; wood plentiful.

Monday, September 6, -- Travel 11 miles; stop at noon and remain here rest of the day; windy, cold night; considerable sickness in the company; willows, wood and water plenty.

Tuesday, September, 7 - Travel 18 miles; leave Burnt River; very rough and hilly roads; camp on a branch of Burnt River, no grass; plenty wood and water.

Wednesday, September 8 - Travel 11 miles; rough roads; camp at noon on Burnt River; grass, wood and water plentiful.

Thursday, September 9 -- Lay by all day on account of sickness; company all moved except Uncle Stewart and Caleb Richey and their families and drivers; not much grass; wood and water plentiful; Eliza Ann Richey [*age 6*], child of Stuart Richey died at 9 o'clock p.m.

Friday, September 10, -- Start at noon and travel 9 miles; good road; camp on a small creek; not much grass; wood and water plentiful.

Saturday, September 11, -- Travel 23 miles; very dusty roads; camp on dry branch; not much water; camp at 9 o'clock; grass pretty good.

Sunday, September 12, -- Travel 12 miles; good roads; fine shower in the afternoon; camped on branch of Powder River; plenty grass, wood and water.

Monday, September 13, -- Travel 12 miles; good roads and cool day; noon at Powder River; plenty grass, wood and water.

Tuesday, September 14, -- Travel 16 miles to the west side of Grand Ronde Valley [*should be Grande Ronde*]; bought some beef at 20 cents per pound; excellent grass and water; some wood. [*The several versions do not agree on the wood. "1908 states "fine wood" and 1919 "pine wood"*]

Wednesday, September 15 - Lay by all day; great many camped here on account of sickness and to recruit [*rest*] their teams; plenty of Kioose [*Cayuse*] Indians here with vegetables to sell or trade to the emigrants. Abe Gilliam died.

Thursday, September 16, -- Lost 9 head of our cattle; hunt for them all day and find them just at sunset; considerable sickness in our company.

Friday, September 17, -- Travel 15 miles; cross Blue Mountains and Grand Ronde River; roughest road we have every had; travel through pine timber all-day; camp.

Saturday, September 18, -- Travel 13 miles through thick timber and rough roads without water; camp on a creek; [*have*] water and wood; tie cattle at night. [*to avoid strays as happened two nights earlier*]

[The caravan has stopped many times due to illness and deaths in the party. Here, a major rest is required for the animals which will have a long, hard pull through the Blue Mountains. Young Akin does not detail any of the tribulations encountered in these mountains.]

Sunday, September 19, -- Start at 10 o'clock; travel five miles through the timber; roads better; camp in the timber; some grass, not much water.

Monday, September 20, -- Travel 10 miles; good roads to Umatilla River; pass a Kaioose Indian village; camp on the bank of the Umatilla river; grass scarce. *[The 1919 and 1971 versions continue: "The Cayuse was holding a war dance when we passed them They was in war custom." Probably "war costume." Dale estimated the caravan is near present Pendleton.]*

Tuesday, September 21, -- Travel 12 miles down the Umatilla river; good roads; rains in the morning; camp at night on river bank; no grass but wood and water plentiful.

Wednesday, September 22, -- Lay by till noon; travel 11 miles; dry camp; plenty grass; no wood or water.

Thursday, September 23, -- Travel 7 miles *[back]* to Umatilla; camp at noon; lay by the rest of the day; plenty wood, water, and grass.

Friday, September, 24, -- Travel 12 miles to Butter Creek and cross Umatilla River; camp on a creek; pass [Umatilla Indian; good grass, wood and water. *[Butter Creek is a tributary of the Umatilla River which the old pioneer road crossed west of the town of Echo.]*

[An early emigrant road followed the Umatilla down to the Columbia River a distance of about 45 miles. This party was on the recognized route of the Oregon Trail that continued west on what Haines identifies as the Fremont-Whitman-Harney dry benchland route which was a firmer road but parched, especially in mi- summer with 100 degree temperatures. This was about 40 miles of barren land.]

Saturday, September 25 - Lay by all day; plenty of Wild-woody *[Walla Walla]* Indians about camp all night; plenty of grass, wood and water.

Sunday, September, 26 - Start at noon; travel 10 miles; dry camp; no wood; no water; grass plentiful.

Monday, September, 27 - Travel 12 miles to a muddy springs; water scarce and not good; travel 6 miles further; dry camp; not much grass.

Tuesday, September, 28 - Start at 3 o'clock a.m.; travel 9 miles to Willow Creek; water scarce; not much grass.

Wednesday, September, 29 - Start at noon; travel 10 miles; hilly roads; very windy day; camp; no wood, water, or grass.

Thursday, September, 30 - Start at daylight; travel 18 miles; good roads; camp on John Day River; plenty wood and water.

Friday, October 1, -- Travel 12 miles; cross John Day River; camp 6 miles from the John Day River; no water; good grass, good roads.

Saturday, October 2, -- Start at midnight; travel 12 miles by sunrise; get breakfast and travel 5 miles further to Columbia River; camp on the Deschutes River.

Sunday, October 3, -- Cross Deschutes River before breakfast; start at noon and travel 6 miles; camp on a creek; not much wood; plenty of grass and water.

Monday, October 4, -- Travel 10 miles; good roads; camp on a small creek; plenty wood, water and grass; *[with]* in two miles of the Dalles.

Tuesday, October 5, -- Travel 10 miles down the Columbia River; pass the Dalles; flour 35 cents per lb; camp on the Columbia River bottom; wood, water, grass.

Wednesday, October 6, -- Travel 2 miles; camp and go to preparing to raft down the river; haul some pine logs to the river; grass plentiful. *[They are about 16 miles west of the Deschutes River where excellent timber grows.]*

Thursday, October 7, -- Cut logs and caulk wagon beds water tight all day; very windy evening and night; plenty wood, grass and water; many boats and canoes running up and down the river.

Friday, October 8, -- Very windy; cold day; haul logs all day; no boats running *[on the river]* today; cattle doing very well.

Saturday, October 9, -- Still preparing our raft to go down the river; blustery, cool weather.

Sunday, October 10, -- James Nicholson, John R. Stewart and John Akin start *[on the trail]* with the cattle. *[This head start with the stock is necessary as the float down the river was expected to be much faster. The plodding cattle will need more time.]*

Monday, October 11, -- Calm day; take our raft to pieces; put it together again.

Tuesday, October 12, -- Start down the river about 10 o'clock; travel about 6 miles; *[stopped due to extreme]* upstream wind.

Wednesday, October 13, -- Travel 5 miles; high wind upstream; camp in willow thicket; plenty of wood.

Thursday, October 14, -- Travel 6 miles; all leave the raft and go down the river in an Indian canoe except Uncle Stewart and W. A. Colter. *[Indians along the river made a profitable business providing canoe service for the emigrants.]*

[October 14 is the final entry by James Akin Jr. The last entry is by his cousin, Edgar Richey]

Friday, October 15, -- Reach Cascades *[of the Columbia]* about 2 o'clock p.m. everyone sick. There were small stores there at the little settlement where flour was 35 cts a pound. *[The "everyone sick" may have been why James Akin Jr did not write further]* Stayed until my father and Coulter came with the raft and the cattle came then we went to the lower Cascades and camped there until the Steam Boat came from Portland. This is my remembrance-Edgar Richey *[The suggestion is that Edgar wrote this some years later but not in the hand-copied version by Stevens]*

[The following note appears at the end of the 1908 and 1919 editions. It was written by Frances Akin Rowe at a later date.]

"Mrs. Nancy Hanson tells me that we paid the Indians who brought us down in the canoe twenty dollars in money and our big tent. Our little sister, Mary Ann Akin *[age 2+]*, died at the lower Cascades and was buried there *[while]* we were at the Cascades about a week waiting for the steamboat to bring us down to Portland. Our father died two weeks after we reached Portland."

Edgar Richey later recalled:

"John Akin went one or two days *[on the trail with cattle]* and gets sick and is taken in the canoe and I take his place with the cattle. We stayed in Portland that winter and then moved out to the *ranch [in Pleasant Valley east of Portland]* Flour 40 dollars per bbl, potatoes 5 dollars per bushel and every thing at the same rate. We paid common cows one hundred dollars. One yoke oxen \$250, on hog twenty dollars."

Dale added this note in his 1919 edition:

"Stuart Richey took the Akin children to live with him on his homestead in Pleasant Valley, since their father and mother were both dead. Stuart Richey lived there until his death and his daughter still lives there (1919). All of the older members of the party are dead but some children who made the journey are still living. "

There were eleven deaths in this company. From numerous sources, reasonably reliable, information has been secured which indicates that probably not less than five thousand persons died on the plains in the year 1852, principally from cholera--George H. Himes, Secretary