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Article Summary: The Harney Expedition set out to punish Sioux Indians who had attacked an army detachment and later the military escort of a mail party in 1854. Todd describes the route, the weather, and the health problems encountered by the troops.

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Photographs / Images: General William S Harney; “sketch of the Blue Water Creek embracing the field of action of the force under command of Brevet Brigadier General W S Harney in the attack of the 3rd of September 1855 on the Brulé band of the Indian Chief Little Thunder”; view of Ash Hollow Battlefield site, looking south; Captain John B S Todd

THE HARNEY EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SIOUX: THE JOURNAL OF CAPT. JOHN B. S. TODD

EDITED BY RAY H. MATTISON

THE Harney Expedition in 1855 was the first of a number of campaigns conducted by the Army against the Sioux Indians which were not to end until Wounded Knee in 1890. During the first four decades of the 19th century, the relations between the whites and the Plains Sioux had been comparatively peaceful. However, by the middle of the century these had undergone a marked change.

The Sioux had welcomed the traders who built trading houses in their domain which supplied them with the much-desired white man's goods. Nor did they resent deeply the occasional bands of white trappers who invaded their do-

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main and killed a few buffalo and other game for their own needs. The caravans of Oregon and California bound emigrants were a different breed. These white men coming in ever-increasing numbers as each year passed, brought their families, killed large amounts of game, established military posts, built permanent homes, and spread the dreaded cholera among them. For the first time, the Plains Sioux felt their security threatened.

In an effort to placate the red man and to settle the Indian question permanently, the Government made a treaty at Horse Creek near Fort Laramie in 1851 with several of the Plains tribes. By this treaty the Government defined the boundaries of a number of the Indian nations and guaranteed these lands against white aggression. The Indians in return recognized the right of the Government to establish roads and military posts in their respective territories and agreed not to commit depredations against travellers passing along the overland routes. For this concession the United States agreed to pay the Indians the sum of \$50,000 each year in annuities for a term of fifty years.¹

Then in 1853 several Indians were killed as the result of a ferry boat incident at Fort Laramie. Although a number of the Indians were eager for retaliation, there was little disposition for a general war.

In August 1854 three Sioux tribes, the Brule, Oglala, and Miniconjou, were encamped on the Platte River about 8 miles east of Fort Laramie waiting for their annuities. A Mormon wagon train, destined for Salt Lake City, passed through the vicinity and a Miniconjou killed a cow seemingly deserted by the wagon train. Killing the cow violated the treaty and the owner of the cow reported the incident to the Commanding Officer at Fort Laramie as well as to the Chief of the Brule. After discussing the matter with an Oglala Chief, Man Afraid of His Horses, who was sent to him as an ambassador, the Commanding Officer sent

¹ Charles J. Kappler, comp. & ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington, 1903), 440-442.

Lieutenant John L. Grattan and a detachment of 29 men to bring in the offending Indian. In attempting to execute his order, the brash young lieutenant and his entire command were wiped out by the Indians.²

When news of Grattan's fate reached the United States, the Army at once took steps to retaliate against the Indians. It immediately ordered two companies of infantry from Fort Riley to reinforce the garrison at Fort Laramie. General Winfield Scott, Commanding General of the Army, on October 26, 1854, informed Colonel William S. Harney,³ then in Paris, that he would be placed in command of an expedition against the Sioux. When he returned to the United States, he was directed to the western frontiers of Kansas and Nebraska to protect the emigrant routes from the Missouri River to the West and to establish a military post on the Upper Missouri.⁴

At the same time, the Army took steps to implement the proposed plan. It directed two companies of the 6th Infantry to proceed from Jefferson Barracks to Fort Riley,

² Lloyd E. McCann, "The Grattan Massacre," *Nebraska History*, Vol. 37 (March, 1956), 1-25.

³ William Selby Harney was born near Nashville, Tennessee, August 22, 1800. After receiving private instruction in navigation he was commissioned Second Lieutenant, First Infantry, February 18, 1818. He rose rapidly in the army. He was promoted to First Lieutenant, January 7, 1819; Captain, May 14, 1825; Major Paymaster, May 1, 1833; Lieutenant Colonel, Second Dragoons, August 15, 1836. He distinguished himself in Florida Everglades for which he received the honorary rank of Bvt. Colonel, December 7, 1840, for gallant and meritorious conduct. On June 30, 1846, he was commissioned Colonel, Second Dragoons. During the Mexican War, Harney again was distinguished in action for which he was Brevetted Brigadier-General, on August 8, 1847. Following the Sioux Expedition in 1855-1856, he was placed in command of the Department of the West and received the commission on June 14, 1858 of Brigadier-General. Because of his expansionist and anti-British activities, he was recalled. He was then placed in command of the Department of the West. Suspected of southern sympathies, Harney was deprived of his command and in 1863 was finally retired. He died in 1889. (Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* [Washington, 1903], I, 282; *Dictionary of American Biography* [New York, 1946], VIII, 280-281.)

⁴ Letter, S. Cooper to Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, March 22, 1855, Post Records of the War Department, Office of the Adjutant General, National Archives. Hereafter these will be abbreviated A.G.O.

Kansas, where they were to await further orders. Two companies of the Second Infantry, from Fort Riley, and four companies of the same regiment from Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, were ordered to go up the Missouri River and establish a post at or near the vicinity of Fort Pierre. The remaining four companies of the 6th Infantry, stationed at Jefferson Barracks, and the light battery of the 4th Artillery at Fort Laramie, were directed to reinforce the garrisons of Forts Kearny and Laramie. The four companies of Second Dragoons, under Philip St. George Cooke, were sent to protect emigrants along the Oregon and California trails and to guard the frontiers of Kansas and Nebraska until their services were needed by Harney.⁵

Four companies of the 6th Infantry and a detachment of 100 recruits left Fort Leavenworth on May 28, 1855. After traveling for 17 days they reached Fort Kearny. There they remained until August 20 when General Harney arrived at Fort Kearny and took command. Four days later the Sioux Expedition, comprising one company of 4th Artillery, two companies of 2nd Dragoons, five companies of 6th Infantry and one company of 10th Infantry, numbering 600 troops in all, set out for Fort Laramie. On September 3, near present-day Lewellen, Nebraska, the command engaged a large band of Brule Sioux, under Little Thunder, in the battle of Ash Hollow (also called Blue Water). The Expedition then proceeded to Fort Laramie where it arrived on September 15. After remaining at that post for 2 weeks, the command set out for Fort Pierre, on the Missouri River.

Commanding Company A of the 6th Infantry was Capt. John S. B. Todd, a cousin of the wife of Abraham Lincoln. Born in Kentucky in 1814, Todd was appointed to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point from which he was graduated in 1837. Upon graduation he was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry. He was pro-

⁵ Ralph P. Bieber, ed., *Frontier Life in the Army, 1854-1861* (Glendale, 1932), 29-30; Letter S. Cooper to W. S. Harney, March 22, 1855, A.G.O.

moted to First Lieutenant of the same regiment, December 25, 1837 and to Captain, November 22, 1843. He participated in the Mexican War and took part in the Battle of Cerro Gordo, April 17-18, 1847. Following the Mexican War, Captain Todd was on frontier duty at Fort Snelling and Gaines in 1849-1850 and at Ripley, Minnesota, 1850-1854. During 1854-1855 he was on garrison duty at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, when his company was ordered to depart for Fort Leavenworth to take part in the Sioux Expedition.⁶

The topographical notes and journal kept by Captain Todd, published below for the first time, contain an excellent account of the Expedition's march from Forts Leavenworth to Laramie *via* Fort Kearny and the journey from Fort Laramie to the Missouri River.

In the reproduction of the journal the original language, spelling and punctuation have been retained.

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND MAPS, MADE BY
J. B. S. TODD, THEN CAPTAIN IN REGULAR ARMY
ON TRIP FROM FORT LARAMIE TO FORT PIERRE,
IN SUMMER OF 1855.

1855 Monday 28 May 1st Day Left the camp near Fort Leavenworth about 11 o'clock, and halted a short time at Salt Creek for water. The command is composed of A. H. D. K. cos 6 infy and a detachment of recruits of about 100 men commanded by Lt. Carlin⁷ destined for Fort Laramie. And about six o'clock arrived at Oak Grove to Camp. Good water & wood on the right of the road. The march was

⁶ Bvt. Maj.-Gen., George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, New York* (Boston, 1891), I, 691-692; Doane Robinson's *Encyclopedia of South Dakota* (Pierre, 1925), 727-728; Norman Thomas, "John Blair Smith Todd," *South Dakota Historical Collection*, XXIV (1949), 178-180.

⁷ Lt. William Passmore Carlin was a familiar figure on the Plains. After graduating from West Point in 1850, he was commissioned a Bvt. Second Lieutenant; Second Lieutenant, 6th U. S. Infantry, 1851-1855; First Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1855-1861. He was retired from the army in 1893 as Colonel, 4th Infantry. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 421-423).

quite fatiguing, the day hot. Water from recent rains and at the houses on the road quite plenty. Distance, 15 miles.

Tuesday 29 May 2d Day Remained in camp today, in order to rearrange and repack our waggons. Major A. Cady^s is in command of the expedition. lost one recruit from cholera. Towards noon the clouds gathered and later had a little rain. Camp was very disagreeable and uncomfortable. As night closed the rain increased and continued all night. Two men were taken ill with the cholera and two of my Co deserted.

Wednesday 30 May 3d Day Morning dark and misty. Left camp at 7 o'clock. The route to day has run over a high, undulating prairie, water only to be had at one place 6 miles from our last camp, except a water hole here and there filled up by the recent rains. Some of the land looks very desirable, seems rich and is very pretty, but wood is very scarce. This I am told is included in the best part of Kansas. Two houses on the road only to the Grasshopper (1st branch) where we encamped. The *distance* 22 1/2 miles. Arrived at 3 o'clock. Plenty of wood and water, ground high & altogether a most desirable camp.

Thursday 31st May 1855 4th Day Left camp at 5.45. The day is dark and rainy. Reached 2d Branch of Grasshopper 5 1/2 miles at 7.40. Reached the 3d Branch in 1h 30m, 4 1/2 miles & dined. This branch is quite large. The footmen crossed it about 1/2 mile above the road. The rain ceased and the afternoon was pleasant. Arrived at camp at 12h.30. Some portions of the country is very beautiful. The road following the ridge, as yesterday. Had another case of cholera. To camp on main branch of Grasshopper, 8 miles. Total 20 miles.

Friday 1st June 5th Day The day bid fair to be clear, but shortly after leaving Camp it clouded up and began to rain. This did not continue long however. The morning was cold, with a strong wind most of the time in our faces. Today the route has been very circuitous, following as usual the ridge. On either side we saw the main & 4th Branch, of, Grasshopper about 1 1/2 miles off. As we approached oak point 8 miles from last camp, they converged and for the next 5 or six miles, ran nearly parallel, and from the

^s Albemarle Cady, a West Point graduate in 1829, served as Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1829-1836. During the Sioux Campaign he was Major, 6th Infantry. He was retired from active service, May 18, 1864 as Colonel, 8th Infantry. Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 437-438.)

road gently sloping down to each & about a mile from it—a few farms are being opened. Reached the crossing of the 4th Branch of Grasshopper at 1 o'clock distance 20 miles. Buried two of my men who died of cholera. One other case has proved fatal. There are several still. Yesterday met the mail from Laramie at Main Grasshopper. The Carrier reports that the mail party for Salt Lake, that left Leavenworth⁹ on 1st May have been cut off by the Indians (Soux, Cheyennes & Pancas), nothing having been heard of it at the time of his leaving Kearny,¹⁰ and that the Indians are robbing the emigrants of their stock in the neighborhood of Ash Hollow, about half way between Kearny & Laramie. Wood is found only on the streams. The Marching has been hard to me & I believe I am the only officer who has "*stuck it out*" to day. I think I shall ride a part of the day in future but have not yet fully decided. My pony is a very fine one in appearance with delightful paces.

Saturday 2d June 6th Day The day has been fine for Marching, clear with a bracing air. The road follows the ridge and is very circuitous. Arrived at the Big Nemaha at 10,20. The water is clear, but is said to be impregnated with Copper and is considered very deleterious. Few pass it & use it, who do not feel its effects. As this creek is approached, the soil becomes a little sandy and loses the richness hitherto observed. Distance 14 miles. After leaving the Nemaha the road, in following the ridge inclines greatly to the South & West, so much so as to make more than a semi circle between the crossing of the Nemaha and the water holes, in fact the head of Deer Creek. When we encamped half way between these two points, on the left there is wood & water near the road, say 1/2 mile. Distance to camp from Nemaha 13 miles. Total distance marched 27 miles. A great deal can be saved by taking the cut off, by footmen. I rode 13 miles to day. Two teamsters have died from cholera. (1 Recruit died this morning from cholera)

Sunday 3d June 7th Day Lost my drummer, Appleton, last night who was attacked last Monday night with cholera & buried him, before leaving camp. He leaves a wife and

⁹ Fort Leavenworth, established in 1827 on the right bank of the Missouri River, was the most important military post in the trans-Mississippi West. It is still an active establishment.

¹⁰ Fort Kearny was established as Fort Childs in 1848 to protect emigrants on the Oregon Trail. It was on the right bank of the Platte River near the present town of Kearney. It was abandoned in 1871.

two children. The march to day has been short. Left camp at 6.30, road following the ridge as usual and gradually ascending, & reached the Vermillion at 10.30. Camped about half way, wood & water may be had near the road if necessary. The grass has not been as good as usual today. The soil is thinner and we find that there has been less rain here. The camp is a pretty one. The march has been made specially short on account of the sick and lame. I rode 3/4 of an hour, feet quite sore. The train for Laramie is camped on the opposite side of the creek. It lies by on Sunday & belongs to Russell & Major.¹¹ The creek is insignificant.

Monday 4th June 8th Day Left camp at 6.35. The morning was fair but after marching a short time it clouded up and threatened rain. About an hour after leaving camp the clouds broke, but the sun did not make its appearance. At 8.40 reached Little Elm creek 7 1/2 miles from Camp, being 2 hours & 5 minutes Marching, and reached camp on the west side of the Big Blue at 12.30. The valley of the stream as we see it here is very beautiful, bluffs on either side, the valley itself being about a mile wide. The Blue is about seventy feet wide and quite rapid, the banks not very steep. I am told that the valley has the same general characteristics to its mouth, near Fort Riley,¹² on the Kansas River. The soil is good and timber fine, but it is limited in quantity. Thier is good building stone in the bluffs. A town is laid out here called Marysville.¹³ This point has been occupied for some years as a trading post and is owned now by a Mr Marshall.

Tuesday June 5th 9th Day As the march was to be short to day did not start until 7 o'clock and without anything of interest occurring arrived at camp on Cotton wood Creek at 11 o'clock, where we had the pleasure of meeting Lieut Heath¹⁴ and Dr Henry Alexander on their way to Leavenworth. Heath confirms the reports brought by the mail carrier about the temper of the Indians—says that there is no doubt but that we shall have plenty to do this summer & fall. These gentlemen spent the day with us and

¹¹ Russell and Majors, later associated with the Pony Express, was a prominent freighting firm for the Army.

¹² Fort Riley was established in 1852 on the left bank of the Kansas River below the confluence of the Smoky Hill and Republican Forks. It is an existing military establishment.

¹³ Marysville, a station on the Oregon Trail, was on the site of present Marysville, Kansas.

¹⁴ Lieutenant Heath, not listed in Heitman or Cullum.

in the morning we separate. The soil and grass today has been thinner. We have had no new cases of sickness and hope that we are beyond the range of the epidemic. The Mail for Salt Lake will be here to night or early in the morning and we are looking for letters of course. Distance to Cottonwood from Blue 11 3/4 Miles. Send letters by Heath.

Wednesday 6 June 10th Day Heath and Alexander left us this morning for Leavenworth and we started on our upward course at 6:30. We have fairly reached the plains and are travelling over high rolling prairies with occasional patches of timber to be seen on either side of the road. The morning was cloudy & we had a slight rain after starting. It did not last long and towards noon cleared away and at 2:30 we reached our Camp on Turkey Creek distance 21 Miles. Saw the first antelope today.

Thursday 7 June 11th Day A lovely morning for marching. Left Camp at 7 o'clock Arrived at a small stream (9 miles) at 9:15, and at 10 o'clock reached camp on the Big Sandy. The Little Sandy is intermediate between this camp and the 1st creek above referred to and is a beautiful stream but small. Big Sandy is larger and is a fine stream compared with the others we have passed. The country is high & much broken with some pretty scenery. Distance 19 miles. The Salt Lake mail came up last night. No letters from home or late papers. Suppose we shall find them at Kearney on our arrival. This morning passed the mail wagons about a mile from camp with an axle broken.

Friday 8 June 12th Day The march to day has been exceedingly monotonous. Left camp at 6:45, and on rising from the valley Struck the prairie, high & flat, and without one object to relieve the eye, except one large Elevation 10 miles from Camp until we struck the Valley of the Little Blue. Three miles from the bluff encamped. Distance 20 1/4 Miles. The Little Blue is a swift and pretty stream about 40 feet across it.

Saturday 9 June 13th Day Left Camp at 5:45. Followed up the valley of the Blue, after Marching about 8 miles discovered Buffalo. Set off after them. Have just returned & are going out again. As soon as I return will enter my feelings in detail. Very exciting sport this, especially when spiced with *Indians*. Distance 17 1/2 Miles. Saturday continued. To day was a day of adventure, truly, to a Novice on the plains—to one familiar, from childhood,

with the prairies of Illinois and Missouri, it would seem that there would be but little difference on the plains, but it is different. Vast as the fertile prairies of these two States are, they sink into insignificance in the comparison—far as the eye can reach in these high regions, the only object to relieve it, is occasionally, a small patch of stunted trees bordering the ravines, indicating at long intervals the water courses, and until yesterday there was scarcely a living object to vary the monotony of the scene. Early after leaving our camp we came in sight of Buffalo & at once all was life and animation. After fairly getting in their neighborhood I started in company with Lieuts. Patterson¹⁵ & Mercer¹⁶ on our first Buffalo hunt, but all our attempts were fruitless. We were not prepared for chasing them and still hunting would hardly *fill* our sacks. Still we followed on hoping, until suddenly we discovered a party of six Indians bearing down upon us and immediately after that they were followed by a mounted party of some 15 or twenty, so considering “discretion the better part of valor,” in this our first essay we wisely beat a retreat, “*prompt but not hurried*” How far we were followed I cannot say, for after dipping over two or three hills we saw no more of them. I lost my spy glass out of its case in the retreat and as soon as I made this discovery we all turned back and strange to say found it again about half a mile back. I also lost my *R* A mark, a handsome agate I had recently had cut and set and which I valued highly for its beauty & workmanship. Reached camp early and made preparations for a grand chase in the afternoon. At 3:15 all being ready we sallied forth, four of us, Lieuts Carlin & Mercer, Mr Scott & myself all well mounted and proceeding nearly south from camp. After crossing the Little Blue, came in sight of the Buffalo. After a couple hours riding we maneuvered to get to the leeward of them so that the scent of us should not alarm them. A short ride gave the desired position, and a lot of six offering a good opportunity. After discharging my long range Rifle, we dashed at them, and

¹⁵ Robert E. Patterson, a graduate of West Point in 1851, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1851; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1853; resigned as Colonel of Volunteers, Dec. 2, 1862 and as Additional Paymaster, Dec. 23, 1862. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 462-463.)

¹⁶ John T. Mercer, a member of the graduating class at West Point in 1854, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant of Infantry, 1854; Second Lieutenant, 1st Dragoons, 1855; resigned, 1861; joined in the Rebellion against the United States; killed, April 19, 1864, in attack on Plymouth, North Carolina. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 599.)

then began the wildest, madest, most exciting chase I ever was engaged in, blind to everything but the prey, I followed up the herd with the pertinacity of the Slough hound, firing to the right and to the left, an on with my rifle and then with my revolver, now dashing with fiery head long speed right into the midst of them, thousands on either side, then holding up to breathe my horse and using my rifle, and so I ran for an hour and a half, in a *tornado* of excitement such as I have never experienced before, and when I finally drew rein I found myself far to the southward and westward and alone. We had all separated. In this [Ms. illegible—one word] I feel confident that I so disabled four that they could not have gone far besides wounding others. As the sun was just setting I thought it advisable to turn towards camp & Striking out north proceeded about four miles, where in crossing a small ravine I came suddenly & unexpectedly upon my companions, who had finished their chase earlier than I and most welcomingly were they greeted, for I had not expected to see them again until reaching camp. We proceeded on our course and just at dark crossed the deep ravine we had been following & continued on, but we were not destined to go far, for after travelling a mile further we came to another ravine, which in the darkness proved impassible and we had to turn back with the view of recrossing the first ravine and following it down to its junction with the Blue. After travelling an hour we made an attempt to cross. Mr. Scott succeeded in getting over but mired down on the opposite bank and it was only after great difficulty he succeeded in extricating his horse, with the loss of various articles, as girths, stirrups &c finally getting all righted again we determined to head this ravine and so travelled on till half past eleven o'clock & camped, with nothing but our saddle blankets, and no provisions. By turns we kept watch till morning.

Sunday 10 June 14 Day At the first dawn of day we were up and off and about six o'clock arrived at the ravine, where we had so fortunately met the evening before. From this to camp was about two hours ride and by day light easily accomplished. Just as we reached camp the last of the train was disappearing over the hills. We followed on slowly, over a high rolling prairie and at one o'clock arrived. Camp distance 14 miles.

Monday 11 June 15th Day Left the Little Blue & camped at 1st crossing of Elm Creek. After getting dinner Buffalo being very numerous—Lt Mercer, Mr. Blakely & myself

started again after them & after a beautiful ride and fine sport returned to camp about 9 o'clock. We killed five.

Tuesday 12 June 16th Day Started for Elm Creek at 5 o'clock. Shortly afterwards it clouded up & began to rain. Our course lay over a high rolling plain in the direction of the Platte. Met a party of Mormons bound for the States. 12 1/2 reached the sandhills bordering the valley of the Platte and after travelling until 3 1/2 o'clock camped on the river. The march has been very trying and monotonous over an exceedingly uninteresting country and we were very glad to see the river. Distance 27 miles.

Wednesday 13 June 17th Day Left camp at 7 o'clock and at 10 o'clock arrived at Fort Kearney. The march was up the valley and such as yesterday. Kearney is a dreary looking place. Distance 9 miles.

Thursday 14 June To day I was detailed to escort the mail on the road to Fort Laramie and shall leave in the morning with 20 men. The mail party and Major Burris¹⁷ party. The latter is the Surveyor General of Utah. I have had no opportunity of looking more closely at Kearney, but surely the exterior view is most uninviting. It is situated on a low level plain about 2 miles from the Platte & the same distance from the Sandhills & is an open work Comg officers quarters & hospital on one side a block of officers quarters on the right calculated for four and with the most miserable arrangements either for comfort or convenience being upstairs and down stairs for each two. On the third side is one block of Company quarters & on the fourth a guard house and sod store rooms. The quarters for the laundresses are built of adobes and sod, so are the stables. Take it altogether it is the most undesirable place I have ever seen in the army.

Friday 15 June Left Kearney with the mail at 8 o'clock M Col Hoffman¹⁸ and M Capt Lovell¹⁹ accompany me. About an hour after leaving the post came in sight of Buffalo and the number increased as we advanced. There were thou-

¹⁷ Major Burris, not listed in Heitman or Cullum.

¹⁸ William Hoffman, a graduate of West Point in 1829, was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1829; Captain, 6th Infantry, 1838; Major, 5th Infantry, 1851; transferred to 6th Infantry, 1852; retired from active service as Colonel, May 1, 1870. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 433-434.)

¹⁹ Charles Swain Lovell, Pvt. 2nd Artillery, 1830-1832; promoted to Captain, 6th Infantry, 1846-1861; retired as Colonel, 14th Infantry, Dec. 15, 1870. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 643.)

sands and thousands on each side of the road in the afternoon. At 12 o'clock stopped to noon & while in camp shot a large fat bull. I had previously shot a calf. After resting 2 1/2 hours proceeded on my way and at 6 o'clock camped on upper bend of Plum Creek. Distance 36 miles. The day has been excessively hot [-] our route lay up the south bank of and near the Platte river. Wrote home.

Saturday 16 June Left camp at 6 o'clock route the same as yesterday. Our camp was swarmed with Buffalo and as we travelled the eye grew heavy with the countless thousands that covered the plains on both sides of the road and river. I had intended not to chase until my return, but the temptation was too great and two very fine opportunities occurring I *pitched in*. On the first run I killed a fine young cow after a pretty run & was satisfied, on the 2d I thought I was to be followed up by some of the young men of Major Burrs party and so dashed in. I wounded two which I left for those behind me to finish and pushed at a superb cow and brought her down handsomely after a spirited chase of half an hour and as no one was near me I dismounted and took out the tongue myself. The after part of the day was very hot. The wind from the plains felt like sirocco upon ones cheek. Arrived at camp on the Platte River at 6 o'clock. Distance 38 miles.

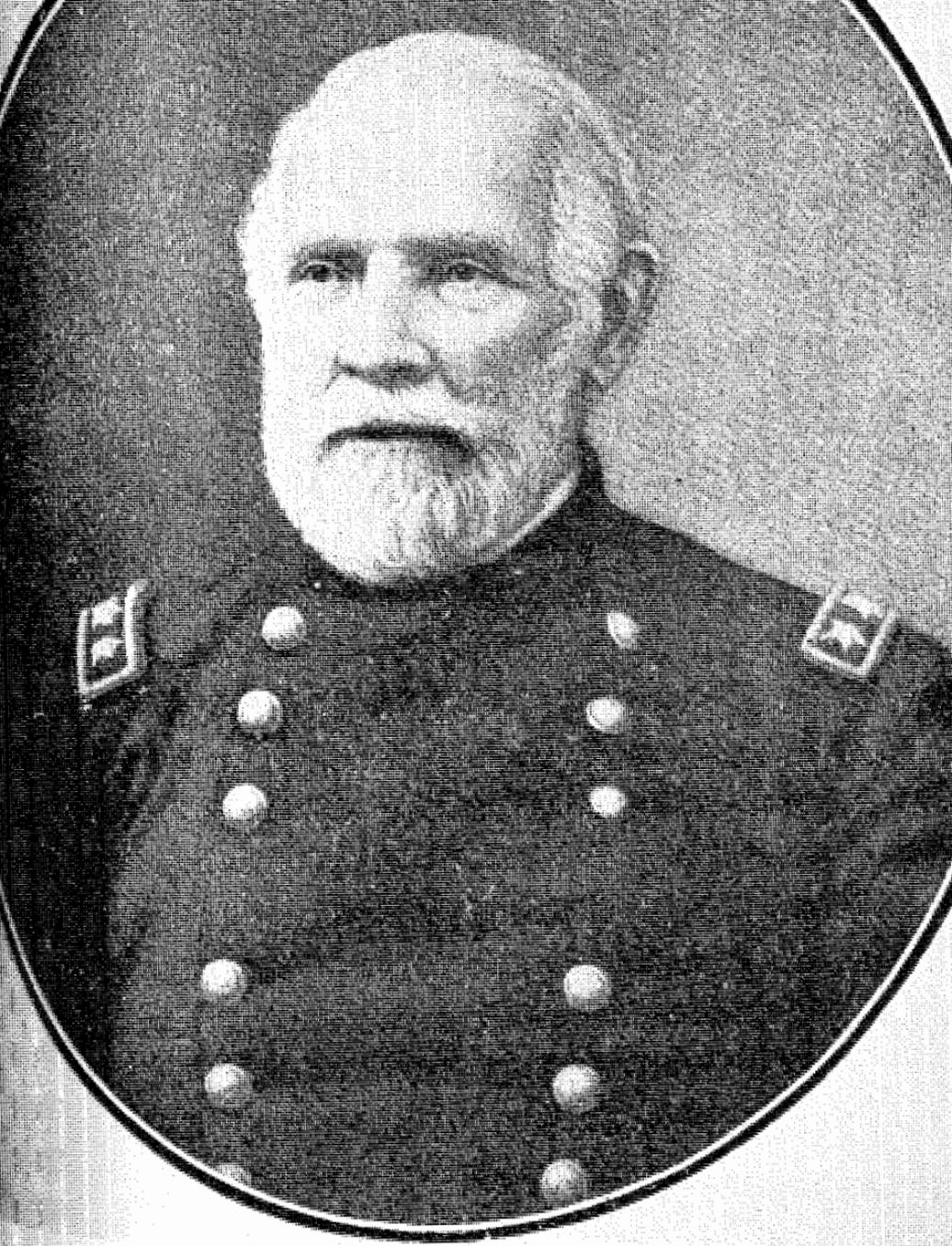
Sunday 17 June Left camp at 5:15. The Buffalo have disappeared. Not one to be seen. Arrived at Cottonwood Spring at 10 o'clock. This is a large clear spring on the right of the road of very fine cold water, and the stream running from it is quite large. Nooned about 2 miles above Box Elder Creek on the river. After leaving Box elder the road approaches the bluffs and the spurs of the hills running well down into the Valley cuts up the surface of the ground with sharp and frequent ravines, making the road very uneven. There is to the right of the road and quite near it a fine spring branch, which rising near O Fallons bluff runs nearly to box elder creek and except in very dry weather, water can be had any where along it, and always near its source. At 6 o'clock camped on this stream. Distance 36 miles. Before I was able to have the tents all pitched had a fine thunder storm accompanied with hail and in sufficient quantity to greatly refresh us after the excessive heat of the day. The Buffalo made their appearance again in the afternoon but not in large numbers & were very wild. The North bank of the Platte was literally alive with them.

Monday 18 June Started from camp at 5 o'clock. Cool pleasant morning after the rain. Had not travelled more than 10 miles when we came in sight of a train camped under O Fallons bluff, at a point where the road, river & bluff approach each other very close & soon after we discovered it to be the downward mail. It was escorted down by Lieut. Sargent²⁰ & twenty men, Col. Hoffman with him, who expected to meet his family and was not disappointed. After spending a couple of hours pleasantly together the two parties returned to their posts. We camped at Cottonwood Spring at 6 o'clock.

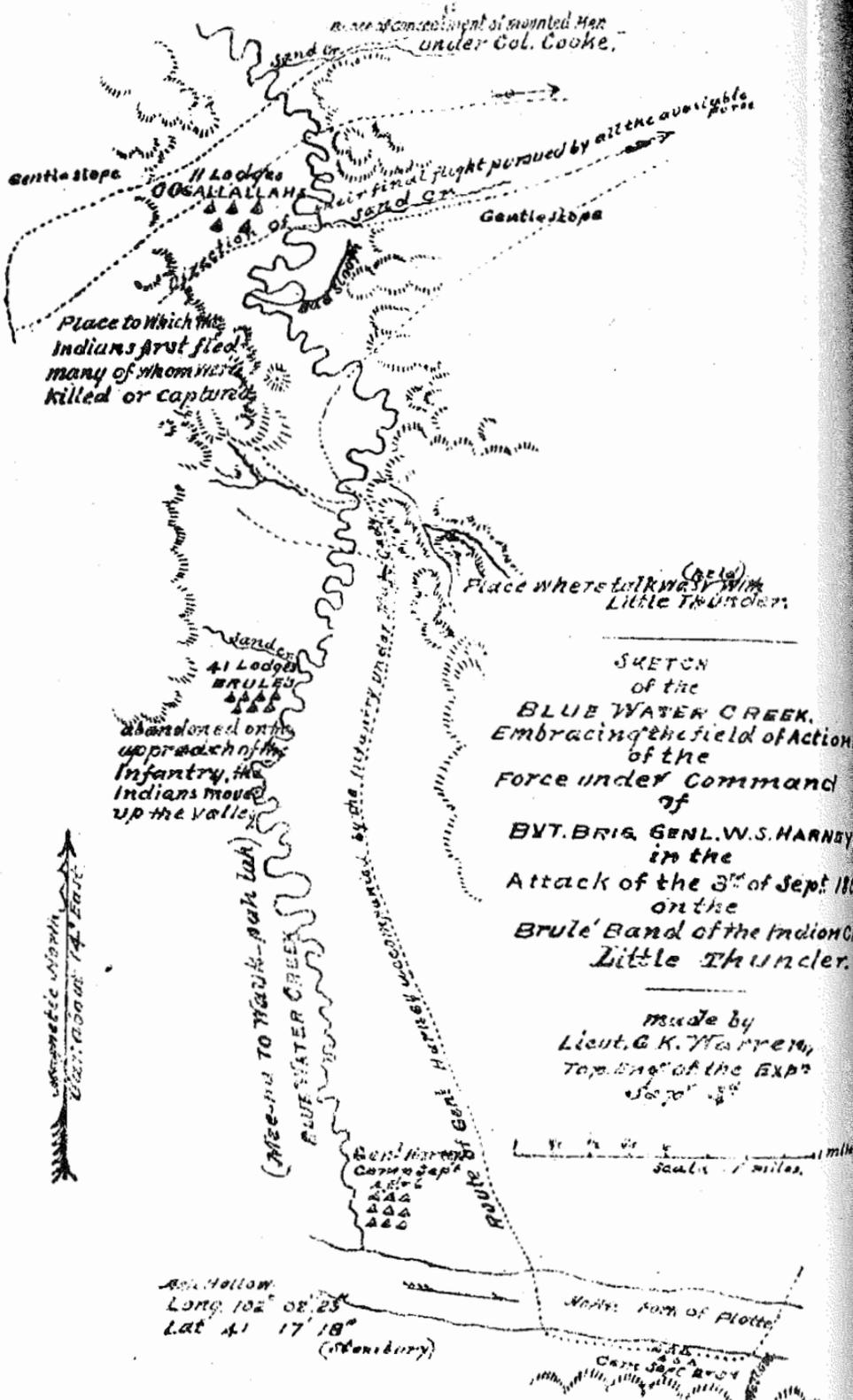
Tuesday 19 June Left camp at 5:15 and after travelling about four hours discovered Buffalo and as we moved down the numbers increased until the plains were truly covered. Never had I seen such a sight and had I not witnessed it myself, should have been incredulous of any story that approximated towards the truth. Far in the distance across the Platte the same was seen. We travelled 25 miles right through large herds. At noon the conductor of the mail & myself took our rifles and moving down the river about a mile found a watering hole towards which vast quantities were coming. We took up a position behind a bank and before a great while a bunch of from 20 to 30 came within short rifle range and then we began firing. Strange to say they stood perfectly still & we continued to load and fire with the utmost rapidity. I was too much excited for accurate shooting and only got two, but I could distinctly see my balls strike and witnessed some curious girations performed by those monsters of the plains as the balls would crash through them. Four were shot down and we took what meat we wanted for all hands. After nooning the train started & I mounted my horse and with my revolver got two of the number that had previously been wounded and afterwards ran down & captured a calf with my halter strap. During the whole afternoon the plains were alive with countless numbers. At 6 o'clock camped on a slough of Platte. Distance 45 miles. I enjoyed a fine supper of marrow bones and hump steaks.

Wednesday 20 June Left camp at 5:30. The number of Buffalo was as great as on yesterday but we drove along without giving much heed to them. At Plum bend they

²⁰ Alden Sargent, a graduate of West Point in 1850, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant of Infantry 1850; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1851; First Lieutenant, 9th Infantry, 1855; resigned, June 7, 1856. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 432.)



General William S. Harney



A note of concealment of mounted Men under Col. Cooke.

Gentle slope

11 Lodges OSALLALLAH

near final flight pursued by all the available force

Gentle slope

Place to which the Indians first fled many of whom were killed or captured

Place where talk was had with Little Thunder

11 Lodges BRULE

abandoned on the approach of the Infantry, the Indians moved up the valley

SKETCH of the BLUE WATER CREEK. Embracing the field of Action of the Force under Command of BYT. BRIG. GENL. W.S. HARNEY in the Attack of the 3rd of Sept. 1864 on the Brule Band of the Indian on Little Thunder.

made by Lieut. G.K. Warren, Top Eng of the EXP

Magnetic North
14° East

(See map to Wash. - path lat)

BLUE WATER CREEK

by the Infantry under Genl. Harney

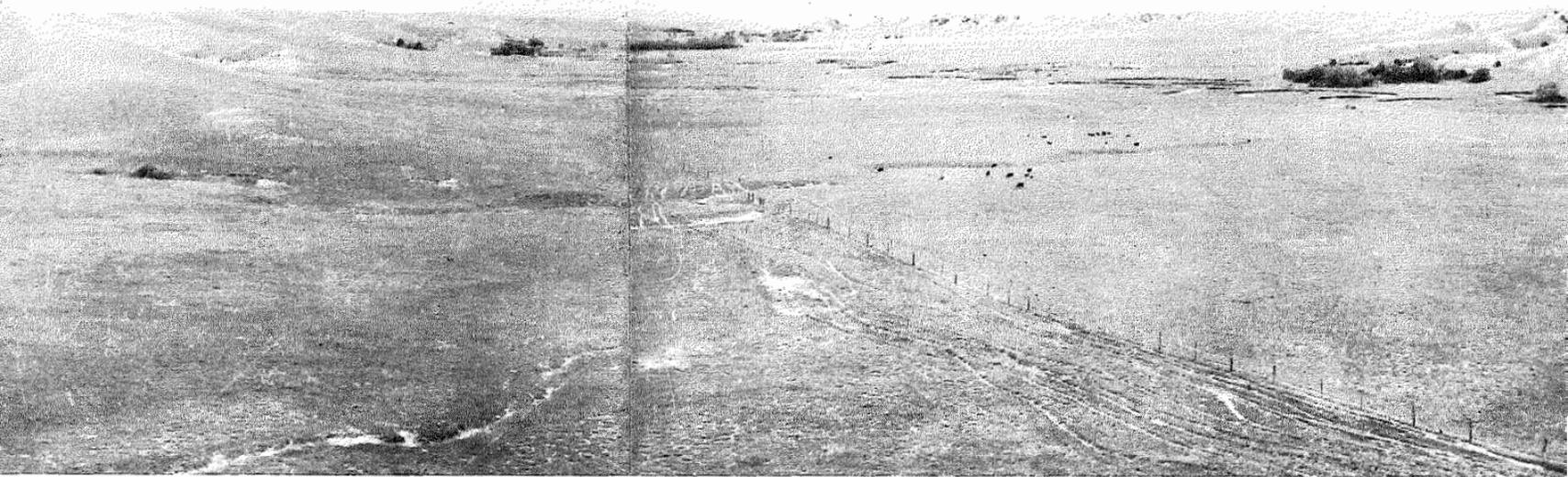
Camp A1
A2
A3
A4
A5

Scale 1 mile

As follows
Long. 102° 08.25"
Lat. 41° 17' 18"
(Boundary)

Notes: South of Platte

Camp A1 to A20



View of Ash Hollow Battlefield Site, Looking South
(National Park Service Photo, 1961)



Captain John B. S. Todd
(Courtesy, Minnesota Historical Society)

seemed to be thickest & while watering I tried to creep up on a small bunch of bulls but failed to get one. Nooned at 17 mile point from Kearney. After dinner I mounted my horse and brought down a fine bull at the first shot, but he soon recovered from the shock of the ball and jumped up and ran off, I after him. He died very hard requiring eleven shot before I finally succeeded in getting him. Arrived at Kearney early. No news. Wrote home.

Thursday 21 Friday 22 Capt. Foote²¹ arrived No letters

Saturday 23 June Col. Cooke²² with four companies of Dragoons arrived yesterday en route for Ash Hollow, to which point he had been ordered from St. Louis to give protection to the emigration and trains by *removing* 3000 Indians said to be there. Within the last eight days the Salt Lake mail came down, escorted by 20 men & returned. No Indians to be seen. The probability is there will be nothing done with the Indians this summer or fall and that another year will elapse before they are punished for their depredations.

Sunday 24 June The Dragoons left today for Ash Hollow. A dozen Buffalo making their appearance close to my tent I jumped upon Lt. Marshalls²³ magnificent horse and in a few minutes a huge fellow was laying upon the ground. Pleasonton²⁴ & Blakely each got one also.

Monday 25 June To day Capt Foote & Lieuts Carlin &

²¹ Rensselaer W. Foote was a cadet at West Point from 1834-1835; commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1838; Captain, 1853; Bvt. Major in 1862, for gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of Gaines Mill, Virginia where he was killed June 27, 1862. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 428.)

²² Philip St. George Cooke, a graduate of West Point in 1827, was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, 1827; Colonel, 2nd Dragoons, 1853; Brig.-General, U. S. Army, 1861; Bvt. Major-General, U. S. Army, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services during the Rebellion. He retired October 29, 1873. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 397-398; for an account of this particular expedition, see Otis E. Young's *The West of Philip St. George Cooke* (Glendale, 1955.)

²³ Elisha Gaylord Marshall, a graduate of West Point in 1850, was promoted to Bvt. Second Lieutenant of Infantry, July 1, 1850; First Lieutenant 6th Infantry, March 26, 1855. He retired from active service, Sept. 11, 1867, as colonel; died, August 3, 1883. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, 426-427.)

²⁴ Alfred Pleasonton, a graduate of West Point in 1844, was promoted to Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 1st Dragoons, July 1, 1844; Captain, 2d Dragoons, March 3, 1855. He retired October 23, 1888, as Major. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 196-197.)

Kelton²⁵ started for Fort Laramie and Lt Mercer leaves in a few minutes for Leavenworth to join his regiment, 1st Dragoons, in New Mexico. Wrote home.

Tuesday June 26 to Saturday June 30 Capt Hendrickson²⁶ has arrived from below. No letters. On Wednesday Capt Pleasanter [Pleasanton] & I killed a Buffalo. Credit due to him, as it was his men, having first discovered him. He was alone & ran well. He required a dozen balls.

Sunday 1 July to Wednesday 4 July Yesterday (3) we had a visit from a large party of Cheyennes, a portion of whom were on a war party against the Pawnees. These Indians of the plains are larger and more robust than those nearer the whites & more under their influence. In other respects they are all Indians alike. They professed a great deal of friendship for the whites as usual with all of them when begging but the scamps did not fail to levy black mail from the trains both above and below the Post. Each was mounted and armed, mostly with bows and arrows & the lance, while behind him he led his *war horse*. He is only used in battle or the chase, and cannot be bought. Their *toilet* is only most elaborately finished, when a *Streamer*, dangling from the scalplock and ornamented with large silver plates, sweeps the ground after them. These plates are eighteen in number and beaten out of Mexican dollars, this being about the only use for money that they as yet know. Oh happy and blissful ignorance, that knows not the use of the almighty dollar! These fellows have a wonderfully "sweet-tooth." Two cups full of sugar will purchase a Buffalo robe and five or six a horse. They left us today. This has been the dullest Fourth I have ever seen. Nothing to remind us of the day but a salute at noon, and that so awkwardly & lazily done as to admit of a *gentle nap* between the intervals. I forwarded my Journal to 30th June,

²⁵ John C. Kelton, a graduate of the Military Academy in 1851, received a commission of Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1851; served as First Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, May 9, 1855 to May 11, 1861; Brig.-General, Staff-Adjutant-General, June 7, 1889. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 459-460.)

²⁶ Thomas Hendrickson served as a Private, 4th Battalion Corps Artillery, Dec. 13, 1819 to July 18, 1821; promoted to Captain, Jan. 27, 1853; Major, 3rd Infantry, June 27, 1862. He retired August 31, 1863; died October 24, 1878. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 523.)

and also wrote to my wife (No. 10) & each of my daughters, & Mr Dougherty²⁷ of Liberty, Missouri.—2d July

Thursday 5th to 9 July Lieuts Sargent, Shaaff²⁸ and Fleming²⁹ arrived on the 6th from Fort Laramie and left again on the 7th for the States via Fort Riley to join their Regt (the new) to which they have been recently transferred. They brought no news from this side of Laramie, every thing quiet. This of course was to be expected as Col. Cook with four cos of Dragoons was passing up and down the road. Beyond Laramie the Sioux have committed some depredations, killing a few persons and robbing some of the trains. These gentlemen left on the 7th. To day we received the mail from the States. Had five letters from Kate, the first I have had since the week preceding my departure from Fort Leavenworth.

Tuesday 10 to Saturday 21 July To day the mail left for Fort Leavenworth, escorted by Capt Hendrickson with 20 men. The mail of yesterday brought us instructions to make preparations for building three sets of quarters for three Cos of Infry and to cut hay and wood for two additional cos of Dragoons for the winter. It also brought instructions to Col. Cooke not to proceed further East than this Post. This was a great disappointment to him, for his command had all thier wagons packed and were in the saddle ready to leave when he received his orders. All these instructions and the whole manner of our proceedings induces the belief that there will be no campaign this fall but will be deferred until next spring. Large supplies of every kind are being thrown into this post and Laramie and I suppose the same is being done on the Missouri. Troops are

²⁷ John Dougherty (1791-1868), served as Indian agent of the Missouri Tribes from 1827 to 1839. In the company of Robert and William Campbell, he was in the sutler and freighting business on the Plains from 1839 to 1855. (Stella M. Drumm, ed., *Journal of a Fur Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813, by John C. Luttig* (St. Louis, 1920), 151-153.)

²⁸ John T. Shaaff, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in 1851, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1851; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, June 9, 1853; transferred, March 3, 1855 to 2d Cavalry; First Lieutenant, 2d Cavalry, May 1, 1856; resigned, Feb. 22, 1861 and joined the Rebellion against the United States; died, July 2, 1877. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 469.)

²⁹ Hugh B. Fleming, a graduate of West Point in 1852, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1852; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, June 9, 1853; Second Lieutenant, 9th Infantry, March 3, 1855; Major, 19th Infantry, July 28, 1866; unassigned, June 9, 1869; retired, Dec. 15, 1870. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 498-499.)

assembling and will continue to do so we hear as fast as the new Regts are filled up. We also hear that the 6 cos of the 2d Drags in Texas are on their way out to join either at Riley or Leavenworth. On Sunday (15) was strongly tempted to mount my horse and chase Buffalo, the first that had made thier appearance for some time, but I resisted. The next day (Monday 16) however they again made thier appearance in larger numbers & I mounted soon after and was among them without much delay. The herd was large and getting a good start I quickly ran in and selecting a fine young cow gave her one charge which took good effect, but did not drop her. Tom was very much excited as he had had no run for over two weeks and my second shot was the signal to him to run off with me. Diagonally through the herd he charged, with me tugging and sawing upon his mouth without effect. I determined not to be carried, John Gilpin like, against my will, without availing myself of any oppportunity that offerred itself to plunge in a random shot. Tom in the meantime seemed to have his own views and without consulting me had singled out for his own especial pleasure, I suppose, a superb young four year old bull, and side by side we held our fiery way for a few strides, when, horrors, a slough perpindicular to our course interposed, as if to cut me off from my prey and from the luxuriencie of its grass threatened serious consequences. But it was too late to avoid it and, bracing myself for the leap we took it, horse, rider, and bull, and fortunately the bottom was firm. As we rose the opposite bank, I fired and the bull measured his length, but Tom was off with more determination than ever and I had nothing to do than to indulge the bent of his inclination and thus he ran a half mile further with me until I finally succeeded in mastering him. Upon examination I found the curb chain had been replaced by one of leather. I tightened it as much as possible, and commenced my second run, and soon had the pleasure of dropping a fine young bull. He attempted to avoid me by running in a circle *but I circumvented him* by suddenly turning and running the other way, and by this means effected a capital shot. In returning home I surprised an old bull and so complete was it, that he stood at bay without attempting to escape and a couple of shots brought him down. I took the tails of both as trophies & intend to have them manufactured into a brush.

Tuesday 17 July This afternoon, a large herd of Buffalo making its appearance on the plains about a mile from camp, I dashed in and soon shot a very fine young cow.

Wednesday 18 July Capt Pleasonton, Lieut Buford³⁰ and myself went out still hunting with the long range rifle. Buford & I each killed one. On Friday Major Howe³¹ 2d Drags arrived from Leavenworth with a small detachment of troops. No mail or letters. I am preparing for the Salt Lake mail expected hourly.

Monday 23 July Col Cooke left today for Ash Hollow with two companies of Dragoons. The Salt Lake mail has not arrived yet.

Wednesday 25 July Col Cooke returned yesterday with two companies of Dragoons. Capt Steele³² & Lt Robertson,³³ Capt. S. had been all the way to Fort Laramie. Lt. R. only to Ash Hollow. They bring more pacific news, that the Sioux are quarrelling among themselves, and are more likely to have a flare up between their own bands than to unite against us. This is the present phase of affairs. The next arrival will probably change the whole & it will be decidedly beligerent. The Salt Lake mail is expected in tomorrow. It arrived on Thursday at 11 o clock.

Thursday 26 July The Salt Lake mail arrived at 11 o clock. Wrote home to my daughters and sent Journal No. 11. p. accts. 26 July wrote also to Col. Grimsley³⁴ St. Louis.

³⁰ John Buford, a graduate of West Point in 1848, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 1st Dragoons, July 1, 1848; First Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, July 9, 1853; Major-General, U. S. Volunteers, Dec. 16, 1863; died, Dec. 16, 1863. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 353-354.)

³¹ Marshall Saxe Howe, a cadet at West Point from 1823 to 1827, was commissioned First Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, June 11, 1836; Captain, Jan. 1, 1839; Major, July 13, 1848; Lieutenant Colonel, June 14, 1858; transferred to 2d Cavalry, August 3, 1861; Colonel, 3rd Cavalry, Sept. 28, 1861; retired, August 31, 1866; died, December 8, 1878. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 547-548.)

³² William Steele, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in 1840, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, July 1, 1840; Captain, 2d Dragoons, Nov. 10, 1851; resigned, May 30, 1861 to join in the Rebellion against the United States; died, Jan. 12, 1885. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 52-53.)

³³ Beverly H. Robertson, a graduate of West Point in 1849, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, July 1, 1849; Second Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, July 25, 1850; First Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, March 3, 1855; Captain, 2d Dragoons, March 3, 1861; dismissed, Aug. 8, 1861, joined in Rebellion against the U. S. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 389-390.)

³⁴ Col. Grimsley, not listed in Heitman or Cullum.

Wednesday 1 August On Monday 30 July Major Woods³⁵ from Fort Riley arrived with his company, giving us to understand that thier was to be an immediate expedition against the Sioux and on Tuesday the 31st an express arrived from Genl Harney directing Major Cady with four companies at this post to hold himself in readiness to take the field at a moments notice. The Genl himself was to leave Fort Leavenworth to day and expects to be out about the 15th inst. Received a note from Hoffman to day. To morrow morning an express starts for Leavenworth. I am writing home No 12—to Mrs. Todd & my daughters. 15th August.

Sunday 20 August To day Genl Harney arrived escorted by Capt Howe's Co. G 4 art and Capt Hick's³⁶ Co E 10 Infy, mounted, and brings confirmation of the death of the whole family of my old friend & class mate Major S. Woods, 6th Infy. It consisted of his wife, two children and one servant. All died at Fort Riley on the 3d August of cholera and within twenty four hours of each other. How terrible a blow this is to Woods no one can tell but he who with his deep feelings and home attachments has felt the same grievous loss.

Thursday 23 August To day our express returned from Fort Leavenworth and with it a mail. I received letters from home. Tomorrow the "Sioux expedition" has a be-gining in earnest. Wrote to Mrs. Todd No. 14.

Friday 24th August Left Fort Kearney to day for Fort Laramie with the expedition destined to punish the Sioux for their various depredations committed for years against our people, but especially for the Massacre of Lt. Grattan and party in August 1854 and the party of the Great Salt Lake Mail in the following November. The command con-

³⁵ Samuel Woods, a graduate of West Point in 1837, was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1837; Major, 15th Infantry, April 9, 1847; reinstated as Captain, 6th Infantry, Feb. 27, 1843; Colonel, Staff-Asst. Paymaster-General, June 8, 1880; retired from active service, Jan. 24, 1881; died, Sept. 22, 1887. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 690-691.)

³⁶ The commander of Co. E, 10th Infantry was Henry Heth, a graduate of the Military Academy, who was promoted to Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 1st Infantry, July 1, 1847; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, Sept. 22, 1847; First Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, June 9, 1853; Captain, 10th Infantry, March 3, 1855; resigned, April 25, 1861 and joined in Rebellion against the United States. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 342-343.)

sists of the Genl & staff, Major Winship³⁷ asst adjt Genl, Capt Van Vlut³⁸ a qm Lieut Polk³⁹ adc, Col Andrews,⁴⁰ paymaster, Lt Warren,⁴¹ top engs, Lt Batch,⁴² ordnance officer, Dr. Ridgely⁴³ asst surgeon & the only one with the command, Col P St G Cooke comdg cavalry force consisting of G & K cos 2 Drags G Co 4 art E co 10th Infy mounted, and Major A Cady 6th Infy comdg Infantry force consisting of A, E, H, I, & K cos 6th Inf the whole numbering about 500 effective men. Camped at the bend of the Platte 11 miles distant. On Saturday 25th several of us had some pretty Buffalo chasing. I killed from my pony a fine cow. As I have been over the road once before I will not enter the events of each days march unless something occurs of interest until after I pass O Fallons Bluff to which point I escorted the mail in June last. I wrote to Mrs Todd on 26th by Mr. Hith No 15, on 30th by express No 16. On the afternoon of the 30th arrived at camp on long island 5 miles from O Fallons Bluff. Just before reaching this point I killed a Buffalo Bull in a chase. On arriving at camp I had another chase. The first two I wounded and left there thinking as so many persons saw them that certainly some

³⁷ Oscar F. Winship, a graduate of West Point in 1840, was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, July 1, 1840; Captain, 2d Dragoons, June 30, 1851; died, Dec. 13, 1855. (Cullum, *op. cit.* II, 47.)

³⁸ Stewart Van Vliet, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in 1840, was promoted to Second Lieutenant, 3d Artillery, July 1, 1840; Captain, Staff-Asst. Quartermaster, June 4, 1847; Colonel, Staff-Asst. Quartermaster-General, June 6, 1872; retired Jan. 22, 1881. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 30-31.)

³⁹ Marshall T. Polk, a graduate of West Point in 1852, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, 2d Infantry, July 1, 1852; Second Lieutenant, 2d Infantry, Jan. 8, 1853; resigned, April 10, 1856; died, Feb. 29, 1884. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 493-494.)

⁴⁰ Timothy P. Andrews was commissioned Major Paymaster, May 22, 1822; Colonel Voltigeurs, Feb. 16, 1847 to July 20, 1848; Lieutenant Colonel Deputy Paymaster, Dec. 17, 1851; Colonel, Paymaster General, Sept. 6, 1862; retired Nov. 29, 1864; Bvt. Brig.-General, Sept. 13, 1847, for gallant and meritorious conduct in the Battle of Chapultepec, Mexico; died March 11, 1868. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 167.)

⁴¹ Gouverneur K. Warren, a graduate of West Point in 1850, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, Top. Engineers, July 1, 1850; Second Lieutenant, Top. Engineers, Sept. 1, 1854; Lieutenant-Colonel, Corps of Engineers, March 4, 1879; died, August 8, 1882. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 401-404.)

⁴² George Thatcher Balch, a graduate of West Point in 1847, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, Ordnance, July 1, 1851; First Lieutenant, July 1 1854; Captain, Nov. 1, 1861; resigned December 1, 1865. (Heitman, I, 185.)

⁴³ Aquila T. Ridgely, was appointed Asst. Surgeon, June 30, 1851; resigned, June 23, 1861. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 830.)

one would take the trouble to finish while I followed the third. This finally got away from me from want of ammunition, although I had repeatedly brought him to bay and he was bleeding freely from the mouth but I had already gone too far from camp and was obliged to leave him to die without my getting him.

Friday 31 August After muster we left camp, continuing the march up the south fork of Platte River and march 19 miles. The early part of the day dreary fog & mist, the after part very warm. Last night we had one of the heaviest thunder storms I ever knew.

Saturday 1st September The march as yesterday, except that it was very hot all day. Marched 20 1/2 miles.

Sunday 2 September To day after marching six miles reached the crossing of the South Platte. The river is about one mile wide and is now very shallow. After crossing, continued the march to the North Platte & camped at the gorge of Ash Hollow. This noted point is a deep ravine connecting the high table lands between the two rivers and the valley of the North Platte. As we descended the hollow we could distinctly see the camp of a band of Brules. These people sent word to Genl Harney that if he wanted peace he could have it, or if he wanted war that he could have that. The chief also sent word that he would come in and see him. The bearer of this message was Mr. Vasquez⁴⁴ who has for some time been attached to Sir Geo Gore's⁴⁵ hunting party as chief guide. He is an old mountain man & Trader. He also informed us that some of the young men had amused themselves the morning before by kicking over the coffee cups of the teamsters attached to Russels train. We reached the bank of the river after a fatiguing march of 16 miles between the rivers, without water & very hot. After a council with the Battalion Commanders, it was determined by the Genl to open the campaign by chastising

⁴⁴ Pierre Louis Vasquez (1798 - ?), prominent fur trader and mountain man on the Plains. However, Todd was in error on this point as James Bridger was the guide of the Sir George Gore Expedition.

⁴⁵ Sir George Gore, an Irish nobleman and sportsman made a hunting trip to the Powder River and Northern Plains region from 1854 to 1857. He purportedly slaughtered so much game that the Indians became resentful. (J. Cecil Alter, *James Bridger* [Columbus, 1951], 264-278.)

this band of Brules, whose chief is Little Thunder,⁴⁶ and who have made themselves conspicuous in the depredations that have been committed from time to time upon the emigrants and trains passing up & down the valley of the Platte, and the hostility they manifest towards the troops. Accordingly, it was arranged that the Cavalry should cross the river at 2 o'clock A.M. and making a detour to the right take up a position in rear of the Indians, while the Infantry were to cross at 4 o'clock A.M. and marching straight down upon them, open the engagement, the first sound of our rifles being the signal to the Cavalry, to shew themselves, unless they should be discovered previously to our getting into position, when they were to begin without waiting for us. The order was soon promulgated, and as soon as our cartridge boxes were refilled, we were ready. The usual hour for sleeping found us in bed. Distance travelled to day 24 miles.

Monday 3d Sept This has been a busy and exciting day for us but a bloody and disastrous one to the Sioux. As prearranged, before daybreak we were all in full march for their camp. The Infantry, under the immediate command of Major A. Cady, 6th Infy consisting of A E H I and K companies, respectively commanded by Capt Todd, Bvt Major Woods, Lt McClearey⁴⁷ Capt Wharton⁴⁸ and Lt Patterson, crossing the Platte about a mile above its camp, moved directly down upon the village, while the cavalry under the command of Lieut Col Cooke consisting of E & K companies 2d Dragoons commanded by Lieut B. H. Robertson and Capt Steele, sight Co G 4 arty, Capt Howe & company E 10th Infy commanded by Capt Heth, who started two hours before us. Made a detour to the right, under cover of the sand hills, to take up a favorable position on the rear or on the flank. As we approached their camp, about 3 miles

⁴⁶ Little Thunder, a Brule Sioux Chief in the mid 19th century, was present at the Grattan Massacre near Fort Laramie in 1854. He assumed command when Chief Singing Bear was killed. He continued chief until his death. (Frederick W. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* [New York, 1959], I, 771.)

⁴⁷ John McCleary, a graduate of the Military Academy in 1854, was commissioned Bvt. Second Lieutenant, July 1, 1854; Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, March 26, 1855; First Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, June 5, 1860; Captain, 6th Infantry, May 17, 1861; died, Feb. 25, 1868. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 603.)

⁴⁸ Henry W. Wharton was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, Oct. 31, 1837; Captain, Feb. 16, 1847; Major, 9th Infantry, Sept. 9, 1861; resigned, Oct. 6, 1862; retired, Dec. 1, 1863; died, March 23, 1868. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 1022.)

from it, a party of 8 or 10 shewed themselves on the hills to our right, and made some signals, which were disregarded. At this time company "a" was ordered to the front, and was soon in position, the first platoon deployed as skirmishers to the right and front of the second platoon, which moved over its own ground compactly and ready to deploy to the left, thus covering the head of the column, the whole moving steadily and rapidly forward. As we neared the camp we could distinctly see the Indians mounted and moving slowly off towards the right. This compelled a change in the line of direction of the skirmishers, who obliquing to the right rapidly approached them with every step. When we were near enough to distinguish every thing clearly the interpreter rode forward, but returned unnoticed. On the second attempt to hold communication with them, he was met by the chief Little Thunder, who was told that he had sent word to the Genl that he wanted to see him, and he was then to hear what he had to say. One or two messages passed back and forward, when we halted, and the Indians on the other side of the creek intervening us did the same. The Genl dismounted and advancing to the front of the skirmishers awaited the approach of the chief, who in a few minutes came down on horseback at full speed to meet him, and when within 30 or 40 feet stopped, and the "talk" began. This lasted over 30 minutes, probably nearly an hour. Time passed with me very rapidly. The Genl reproached him with the murder of Lieut Grattan and his party, the mail party in Nov following, and generally, of the depredations committed upon the emigrants, the chief pleading that he could not control his young men, that he himself was friendly and finally that he did not want to fight. During this interview the troops were drawn up on our side and the Indians ranging from 400 to 1000 distant, on the other side of the "*Blue Water*". Nothing satisfactory could be obtained from the chief. He either would not or could not give up the murderers, and at the same time protested that he was friendly and did not want to fight. How far this peaceable and friendly disposition was begotten by the presence of the troops before him, burning to avenge their murdered comrades, cannot be known, but a smaller party, doubtless, would have met with a different reception. Once during the "talk" he desired to shake hands with the Genl, who refused the proffered courtesy, telling him he could not take the hand of a man whom he expected to fight in a few minutes, unless they came to some definite conclusion. The chief toward

the close evidently became quite uneasy, but the Genl assured him that he had nothing to fear, as he would allow him to rejoin his people before he attacked. Finally he told him to go and tell his young men that a battle had to settle their differences and to come out and fight, and if he, himself, did not want to be hurt to get out of the way as quickly as possible. He had previously dismounted after several invitations from the Genl. He required no second permission to go, but mounting his horse, took but a few minutes to regaining the position he occupied before the parley. A few minutes before the close, the Genl asked me if I was ready, and when the chief had joined his people, the order to advance was given. A few minutes after on being asked if I could reach them, and replying in the affirmative, the order was given to open. The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the rattle of the rifles of my company was heard, and the "Sioux Campaign" initiated in earnest. Company H was immediately deployed on the left. At first the Indians took it very coolly not dreaming that we could reach them at the distance we were from them, but very soon they were awakened from their apparent apathy by the searching proximity of the leaden messengers sent among them, and forthwith there was a wonderful display of fast riding, accelerated as much as possible by the free use of raw hide and spurs. The troops followed, rapidly firing, driving them towards the high hills immediately in their rear. About this time a warrior dashed out from the crowd, and approaching us, rode down the line at full speed parallel to it, and distant about 300 yards. Poor fellow! What hope of escape for him, what chance to come off scatheless from the Hundred Minnies levelled upon him, as furiously he dashed along this fiery gauntlet, his scalp lock and *streamers* trailing in the wind, now hanging close upon the neck of his horse & now proudly erect, shouting his cry of defiance, down they go, this daring fellow and his horse, now up again, then dips beyond the crest and disappears. How curious! Did he die? *Quien Sabe!* During this little episode, the Indians dispersing, sought cover among the deep ravines of the hills, while a part turning a sharp projecting Butte, hoped to find protection and thus effect their escape, but, vain expectation, they only avoided one, to encounter a more formidable foe. The opening of the fire of the Infantry was the signal for the Dragoons to shew themselves, and as we drove them over the hills, before us, the Cavalry made its appearance directly in front of them. They turned and attempted to escape by the only avenue

now left open to them, a ravine in front & to my right. As they passed, from a high commanding point (Marked on the sketch) we poured a plunging fire upon them with our long range rifles, knocking them out of thier saddles, right and left. The party was large and compact, and as thier people fell, others jumped from thier horses and picking them up, replaced and carried them off. A few moments after, the cavalry came down, and our work ceased. With our last gun, three hearty shouts went up to cheer them on. Over the hill the Indians rushed closely followed, and as they passed the crest of it, upon a gently sloping plain, our horsemen closed upon them, and for five miles the fight continued, a perfect melee. The number of killed cannot be known, as the field of battle extended over so great a space, in the attack and pursuit, but we know of 86 being killed and 60 prisoners taken women & children, but *no warriors*. This band was most implicated in the depredations that have been committed, and most signally and fearfully have they been punished. Thier camp was full of *plunder*. For miles the ground was strewed with lodges, robes, dressed skins, and dried Buffalo meat, in any quantity, laid in for the winter, ponies, mules, Saddles, packs, in fact they barely got away with their lives, abandoning everything as they fled. One of the officers, cut from the *ornament* of one warrior, three tresses of different colors, the scalps of white women murdered upon the plains, and there were a dozen still left. Never for years has there been such an utter rout and disorganization of a band of Indians. Whether it will have the effect to exasperate or intimidate them remains to be seen. Among other things taken from them, more letters, papers, journals & accounts belonging to the murdered mail party, and on one U. S. Post Office account [ms. illegible—two words] was a painting by the Indians of the mail party. Our loss was 4 killed and five wounded.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In his official report, General Harney described the place of the army encampment at Blue Water at six miles northwest of Ash Hollow and four miles from the left bank of the North Platte. He lists the Indian casualties as 86 killed, 5 wounded, about 70 women and children captured, 50 mules and horses taken. White casualties were 4 killed, 4 severely wounded, 3 slightly wounded and one missing. (*Senate Ex. Doc. No. 1, 34th Cong., 1st Session, Part II, 49-51*; See also Harney to Maj. O. F. Winship, Sept. 5, 1855; Harney to Lieutenant Colonel L. Thomas, Sept. 5, 1855, A.G.O.). See also, General Richard C. Drum, "Reminiscences of the Indian Fight at Ash Hollow." *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications, XVI, 143-150.*

Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 Sept. The Infantry have been very busy throwing up a small sod work, in which Capt Wharton with his Company (I) and the wounded, prisoners and plunder, are to be left. A great quantity of the latter, consisting of Buffalo meat Robes &c has been brought to camp by the wagons, while quite as much, probably, has been destroyed upon the field. The fort was finished this evening and will be known as Fort Grattan. Tomorrow we take up the line of march for Fort Laramie. Have seen or heard nothing of the Indians since the 3d inst.

Sunday 9 Sept. Today we left our camp on the left bank of the North Platte taking up the line of march for Fort Laramie. This followed the old emigrant road, on the north side. The march has been without interest. The country low & flat and not unlike that below the junction of the two rivers. Distance 22 miles.

Monday 10 September After marching 8 miles came to a clear beautiful stream of cold water from the sand hills. Very refreshing after the turbid water of the river. 7 miles further the road passes over a spur of hills jutting down to the river, and cut up into deep ravines. The soil is an indurated clay intermixed with a small portion of sand. Four miles further we encamped on the river. Distance 19 miles.

Tuesday 11 Sept For 8 or 10 miles to day the road has been sandy and heavy, the hills on both sides of the river more towering and picturesque and for the first time saw the court house and chimney rocks, which are on the south side of the river. On our side saw a number of fantastic objects, such as chimneys, spires tables &c cut from the hills by the rains and torrents. With these exceptions the march has been totally devoid of interest. Encamped on the river. Day cool. Distance 20 miles.

Wednesday 12 Sept The march to day much as yesterday. 16 miles over a level plain without water. Distance 25 miles. Grass good.

Thursday 13 Sept The march as yesterday. Encamped on a spring branch running nearly parallel to the road. We have travelled for three days with the chimney rock in sight, but left it to day. Killed six blue wing teal. Distance 17 1/2 miles.

Friday 14 Sept The day has been very hot, the march the same as the two preceding ones. Encamped on a beautiful spring branch about 200 yards from the road. Killed 5 ducks. Distance 19 miles.

Saturday 15 Sept. To day has been a very hot, hard march, the road heavy. 16 miles to Bordeau's.⁵⁰ From this point there is no grass or water until you get to the Platte about 1 1/2 miles from Fort Laramie. Crossed to the South side and encamped. About sunset Col Hoffman and Major Johnson⁵¹ from the Fort came down to camp to see us. Although belonging to the same regiment I had not met either of them since our return from Mexico. Distance 25 miles. (The country to day is utterly worthless, the whole surface being covered with the dwarf cactus & sand burrs. Soil sandy.)

Sunday 16 Sept To day moved camp to within a half mile of the Fort encamping upon the Laramie River.

Monday 17 to Friday 28 Sept Fort Laramie is an old trading establishment used for a great many years by the fur company and was sold to the government at the beginning of the Mexican War. It is situated about 1 1/2 miles above the junction of the Laramie with the Platte River. The site is peculiar inasmuch as the plateau on which it is built is represented by a section of a cone, near the base, and seems to stand up, as if intended especially for the purpose for which it is now used. The present site covers the whole plateau embracing the old adobe buildings. On the 18th a Genl Court Martial assembled for the trial of Capt Howe⁵² 4 arty &c of which I was a member. On the 26th

⁵⁰ "Bordeaux's" was a trading house, located about eight miles east of Fort Laramie and operated by James Bordeaux, acting bourgeois at Fort Laramie during Francis Parkman's visit to that place. It was near Bordeaux's trading post that the Grattan Massacre occurred in 1854.

⁵¹ Edward Johnson, a graduate of West Point in 1838, was promoted to Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1838; First Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, October 9, 1839; Captain, 6th Infantry, April 15, 1851; resigned, June 10, 1861 and took part in the Rebellion against the United States. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 722.)

⁵² Albion P. Howe, a graduate of the Military Academy in 1841, was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 4th Artillery, July 1, 1841; Captain, 4th Artillery, March 2, 1855; Colonel, 4th Artillery, April 19, 1882; retired, June 30, 1882. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, II, 71-73.) In a letter written on January 11, 1856, General Harney stated that he relieved Major Howe from his command and had placed him under arrest for neglecting both his animals and men. (Harney to Lt. Col. L. Thomas, January 11, 1856, A.G.O.)

inst. Col Cooke of the 2d Dragoons with the Regimental staff, and Col Andrews pay dept left for the states. Wrote home. We have had various rumors concerning the Indians, some representing them as quite ready to conclude peace, others that a large portion, of the young men especially, are hostile and determined to try their Mettle against ours. The Ogallallah's, a band of the Sioux, have had a council with the Genl, and express a desire to comply with his demands as far as possible. They say that the murderers are not with them and that they may not be able to get hold of them, but they will deliver up all stolen property and promise for the future not to molest travelers upon the roads. Capt. Heth 10th Infy with his Company and a detachment of 15 men from our comand has been ordered to escort the different trains at this point, up the Platte as far as the Devil's Gate. Tomorrow we start for Fort Pierre⁵³ on the Missouri.

Saturday 29 Sept 1855 Left our camp on the Laramie River about 11 o'clock to day, en route to Fort Pierre, on the Missouri River. Two companies of Infantry (Ketchum's⁵⁴ & Foote's) have been added to the command, while one mounted company (Heth's) has been detached and will not join us again this winter. It is not certainly known whether we go directly to Fort Pierre or sweep around by the Black hills, this depending, of course, upon the intelligence received of the whereabouts and intentions of the Indians. We have along with us also some 25 Mountain Men, who go out as hunters, spies &c. We crossed the Platte at the same place we did on coming up, and struck across the prairie E.N.E. in the direction of Fort Pierre. The prairie is high & rolling, the grass indifferent the soil poor. Camped at the spring, water not good. Distance 12 miles.

Sunday 30 Sept. Our course to day was the same as yesterday, the prairie the same also—high, rolling, and poor. To our left we observed the line of the Black Hills, and behind us Laramie Peak towering above the surrounding hills.

⁵³ Fort Pierre, established in 1832 by the American Fur Company, was an important fur trading post on the Missouri River. It was acquired by the United States in 1855. Part of the Harney Expedition wintered at this post.

⁵⁴ William Scott Ketchum, a graduate from West Point in 1834, was promoted to Evt. Second Lieutenant, 6th Infantry, July 1, 1834; Captain, 6th Infantry, Feb. 10, 1842; Brig.-General, U. S. Volunteers, Feb. 3, 1862; Colonel, 11th Infantry, May 6, 1864; retired from active service, Dec. 15, 1870; died, June 28, 1871. (Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 583-585.)

The wind has been high and cold. Camped upon the Raw Hide, a small stream. The water very fine clear & cold. Distance 8 miles, 5 miles from our camp of last night came to spring run & 3 miles further to our camp of today.

Monday 1 Oct. Course to day more to the East. The prairie the same as yesterday, only more broken & sterile as we approached the L'eau qui Court. To the North saw the hazy out line of the Black Hills, with here and there a bold, black peak shewing itself above the rest. To the south several quite curious looking hills. The scenery has been interesting and an imaginative mind could have indulged in many rare & beautiful pictures. Beyond mere beauty there is not a single redeeming feature, high, arid and cold. Saw a few Buffalo and after a short chase, brought down one with my first shot. I was barely mounted. Encamped on the L'Eau qui Court [Niobrara River]. Small clear running stream. No wood. Distance 24 miles.

Tuesday 2 Oct. After leaving our camp of last night a short distance, commenced the ascent from the valley of the river, winding through and around the hills, on an easy slope, reached the top in four and a half miles, and stretched across a beautiful level plateau, covered with thick Buffalo grass, 3 miles and began the descent to the White Earth River 4 1/2 miles further. The approaches to both rivers are abrupt, especially those of the latter. After striking the river followed it down a short distance and encamped. It is a small but pretty spring branch. Caught a few small speckled trout. Wood and grass plenty and good. Distance 12 miles.

Wednesday 3 Oct. To day travelled down the river. The wood increases and the [ms. illegible—one word]. The road is difficult for teams on account of the hills, and the frequent crossings of the river, having made eleven to day. In descending the hills on each side grow higher and as we approached camp were covered with Norway pine. From the base of the hills the country greatly slopes to the banks of the river, and often precipitous. Between these banks, or rather *benches*, there is a narrow valley, through which the river runs. The distance from base to base of the hills, ranges from a few hundred yards to a mile. We encamped on a pretty tongue of land lying at the base of, and surrounded to the West and North by high hills covered with pine, while down the river the view is beautiful. The hill on the eastern side of the camp is 800 or a 1000 feet high,

presenting a singularly castellated appearance, with its towers & domes. (The day is delightful.) Saw two elk, but they were too far to shoot. Reached camp at 2 1/2 o'clock. Distance 7 1/2 miles.

Thursday 4 Oct. This morning on getting up, found the ground covered with snow about 3 inches deep. Quite wintry. Marched four miles and encamped at the mouth of Dead Man's Creek. Just after leaving camp crossed the river for the 12th time. Our camp is well sheltered, with plenty of grass and wood. Pitched my lodge and found it comfortable although small. Killed 6 ducks. Quite cold.

Friday 5 Oct. The day has been very cold with strong wind. Reached white Clay Creek in 2 1/2 hours. 9 miles and the 13th Crossing in 9 months. Our route lay along the south bank of the river. The scenery was beautiful. High precipitous hills of indurated clay walls up both banks of the river and bounds the valley, which enlarges as we descend. The river is well wooded and at the last crossing has become quite large. Killed 2 ducks. Encamped about 1/2 mile below the ford. Distance 18 miles.

Saturday 6 Oct. Today have travelled over high rolling prairies. Soil poor & covered mostly with buffalo grass. Reached Sandy in 9 miles. Found it dry. Encamped on the river. Distance 17 miles. My company[']s fire spread, and with such rapidity that it was with much difficulty that it could be mastered. The General, coming up about the same time, did not manifest the most amiable disposition. The camp is a very fine one and is known as Jewett's.

Sunday 7 Oct Had a little ice last night as well as the three preceeding mornings. The country has been interesting, high rolling prairies, with hills approaching & receding from the river. We have crossed a number of small streams running into White River. Most of them dry & pretty well wooded. We are approaching the Mauvaise Terre (Bad Lands) noted for its petrifications &c. Have found a few good ones today, especially of gypsum, the crystals being very pure. One of my men discovered it in large quantities about 4 miles North of the road. Distance 18 miles.

Monday 8 Oct. The country in no wise differs from that of yesterday. The valley of the river grows wider & the timber better. Crossed a number of dry streams, with holes of water occasionally, but indifferent. The road runs at

some distance from the river. Encamped on the river in a deep bend under the 2d bench. Distance 16 1/2 miles.

Tuesday 9 Oct. To day's march and the country much the same as that of yesterday. The dry streams in wet weather must be difficult to cross. Water impregnated with various salts. Reached the *Middle Crossing* & encamped. 16 miles.

Wednesday 10 Oct. For the last three days we have been passing along the edge of the Mauvaise Terre, occasionally crossing spurs of them, and some good geological specimens have been picked up by various persons of the command. It is very curious to see the country for miles covered with vitrifications of various forms, and every shade of color with here and there a few sprigs of shrivelled grass or stunted sage. The road down White River, particularly after making the 13 Crossing, down to the middle crossing, (our camp of last night) must be almost impassable, in wet seasons. The soil is of a light, sifting, whitish clay and when wet, becomes soft and at the same time very tough. The wagons cut through and the spaces between the hubs, spokes and felloes soon fill up, and the wheel becomes a mass of mud. In many places the wheels must sink to the hubs and render locomotion impracticable. Immediately after leaving camp this morning we struck a spur of the Bad Lands running nearly North and South. The hills unprecipitous indurated clay, without vegetation and covered with immense quantities of vitrious matter, lying scattered, in confusion, in every direction. It is frequently found running in layers, vertical to the surface and varying in thickness from a half to an inch and a half. This continued for nearly a mile when we ascended to the plateau by a long & steep hill, from this point to the *lower* and *last crossing* of the river the plain is gently descending. In front, & to the right and left, the towering masses and deep ravines of the Bad Lands stare us fully in the face, and tomorrow we shall be among them. Many of us are anticipating great pleasure from our promised explorations and the new wonders that will be opened up to us. These examinations must necessarily be hurried and superficial and therefore unsatisfactory; since we are obligated to keep in the neighborhood of the troops and to camp with them. The Infantry crossed the river and encamped on the North side, while the headquarters and Cavalry remained on the south. Distance 7 miles.

Thursday 11 Oct. To day Capts Kitchum and Foote 6th Infantry and Capt Howe 4th artillery took up the return march for Fort Laramie at which post they are to winter, while the balance of the command continue on to Fort Pierre. One Indian was seen yesterday by one of the guides who said that there was a small band some miles further down the river, but that they were going over to the sand buttes south of the L'Eau qui Court. Beyond this nothing has been seen or heard of the Sioux. The supposition is that they have retired to the Black Hills, beyond the Cheyenne River, and will use every exertion to avoid us. The season is so far advanced, that it is not considered advisable to penetrate this country now, and the command will move by easy marches to Fort Pierre, being governed by circumstances and events as they arise. We left our camp at the usual hour, a little after 7 o'clock and after a short distance began the entrance to the Bad Lands. The march has been made between two abrupt ranges of hills, thrown together in the wildest confusion. Piles on piles are heaped upon each other mountains high, regular, irregular and fantastic, of every color & shade yellow, white, red and Blue, their bold and sterile peaks crowned here and there with a few dwarfish pines and cedars, while their sides "grey in creations early dawn", deeply fissured by the rains and storms of ages, open wide their yawning mouths, to drink with thirsty eagerness the falling showers and pouring them like mountain torrents, fierce and irresistible upon the arid plains below, which, ingrate as they are, yield in return neither fruits or flowers, herbs or living tree, save the harsh bitter grass, the sand burr and the dwarf cactus of the plains. Far as the eye can reach, "chaos has come again," and silence, eloquent as night, reigns in solitary grandeur over this wide spread desolation, broken only by the tramping of our horsemen and the rumbling of our wagons.

Twelve miles from the river came to a small mountain stream called Sandy. The water standing in holes and greatly impregnated with salts of various kinds. Impossible to drink it. Before reaching this stream I had left the road and began my explorations to the North of it, following up the ravine, winding around the base of one hill and then another, then over, and so on. Found various specimens of petrified teeth, bones, & wood, and made a good collection of voitriduals, [vitriols] selecting the smaller ones for convenience of transportation. The colors from the faintest amber to deep crimson & in form perfect. In many

places that I passed over the surface was covered with them. After leaving Sandy (where we lunched on boiled beaver and found it very fine) moved on to Ash Grove Spring six miles further, passing through the same kind of country as in the morning until within a short distance of camp, where it became along the road, more level, with tolerable grass, and on reaching the spring found good water & grass with a sufficiency of wood, although not in great quantity. It is said that tomorrow will be the most interesting day in passing through the Mauvaise Terre, as we will reach a section richer in variety. Distance 18 miles.

Friday 12 Oct This morning every one who could be spared and felt any curiosity started out with the hope of adding something new to the collections already made. After leaving camp, we continued to ascend the gentle slope upon which it had been pitched, for nearly a mile, and on reaching the crest, the most superbly grand and beautiful sight burst upon our view, that my eye ever rested upon. Down for a thousand feet and more, the road abruptly wound into the valley below; while far away, on all sides, spread this magnificent panorama of mountain precipice and vale—solitary, grand, chaotic, as it came from the hands of Him “who doeth all things well”. What a scene for the painter, what a wonderous field for the Naturalist!

On descending into the valley, some dozen or more of us, officers and hunters, left the road, and sweeping over a circuit of several miles, passed through much such a country as yesterday. The torrents from the hills have cut deep channels, with perpendicular banks, in every possible direction; often sweeping out large areas, leaving here and there, columns and mounds of indurated clay and sand stone. Everywhere, all over and through, these hills and ravines, were strewn the remains of turtle, petrified, of all sizes, shattered and perfect, some not larger than the crown of a hat, others of huge proportions—one very fine specimen now in the possession of Genl H[arney] I pointed out to Capt. Van V[liet]; it consists of two petrified turtles, one about two & a half feet in diameter, the smaller about 12 inches, united by a small strip of stone. The larger is not perfect, but the smallest is. After riding six or seven miles, we crossed the south of the road & striking Bear Creek, skirted it down to our camp. Distance 14 miles. On the North side of the Creek found a spring of good water, in a small grove on the side of the hill. The water

in the creek was in holes and could not be used for cooking or drinking purposes.

Saturday 13 Oct Left camp at 6 1/2 o'clock and ascended to a high rolling prairie by a very long and steep hill, pursuing a N N E direction. The road follows this ridge of prairie, and descends to Sage Creek by a long steep hill. Distance 9 miles. On leaving camp I struck off to the South, unaccompanied, and after proceeding a couple of miles, was diverted from my direction by the ravines running into Sage Creek and the broken nature of the country; the hills were short and sharp, covered with a light crust of clay, that pulverized under my horses feet, and he would sink to the fetlock. Bending into the road I struck it again on the descent to the creek. I found nothing of interest until reaching it, except our very fine specimen of smoked cornelian, beautifully clouded. On reaching the bottom of the hill, I again left the road and following down the bed of the creek found some very rare specimens of ferns, shells, and turtles, the latter very large. I soon joined Lieut. B[alch] of the ordnance, and together continued our researches, until the train and troops had quite passed us. We were well rewarded for our trouble, and only regretted that we could not devote more time to this very interesting locality. On cracking one of the boulders, I obtained the posterior of a very fine Nautilus. The rocks and banks of the creek were covered with a thick saline deposit, of a particularly acrid taste. A mile further came to the Eastern branch of this creek and ascending from it by a long hill, pushed on for Bull Creek, over high rolling prairies, 12 miles further. Distance 21 miles.

Sunday 14 Oct The march of yesterday brought us through the Mauvaise Terre, an exceeding interesting, but certainly a very sterile, portion of the earth. The roads must be very bad in wet weather. The water in holes & brackish. This is the character of all the streams on this part of the route. Around every hole deposits of saline matter are to be found. After leaving Bull Creek we ascend to high rolling prairie. The roads good, in rainy weather bad. Pine Springs are on the right of the road, a short distance from it and *ten miles* from camp. Pushed on to the headwaters of the Little Missouri [Bad], 7 1/2 miles further and camped. Passed the heads of several branches running into and forming the Little Missouri. The country is without special interest. The soil grows better but wood is very scarce. Distance 17 1/2 miles.

Monday 15 Oct Started at the usual hour. Road runs over high rolling prairies, covered with Buffalo and Gamma grass. Passed the heads of several small streams running into the Little Missouri the Cheyenne. Distance about 20 miles, is on our left or North. Encamped on Grindstone Creek. Water in holes, good, grass tolerable. Wood scarce and scorched. Distance 18 miles.

Tuesday 16 Oct. Left camp at 7.15. Our route, as yesterday, ran over high rolling prairie, and turning more to the Eastward, 9 miles from camp came to Big Cottonwood Creek, and five miles further came to Mitchells creek and encamped. Wood scarce. Water good. Grass tolerable. Distance 14 miles.

Wednesday 17 Oct Our road runs still over high prairie and evidently follows the dividing ridge between the Cheyenne and Little Missouri Rivers, skirting the heads of the small streams running into the latter. 4 1/2 miles from camp crossed a small creek. And 3 1/2 miles further came to Ree Creek. 8 miles still further crossed the 1st branch of the Chepaille creek and camped 3 miles further on, the 3d branch of Chepaille creek. Today have passed large prairie dog towns. They have been frequent during the trip. This one was very large, and in passing through my horse narrowly escaped being bitten by a large Rattlesnake. The only wonder is that there have not been more accidents from this cause in so large a body of men and animals, where so many of these reptiles are found. They have been frequent since we left Fort Kearney. Passed several small streams south of the road while hunting. No want of wood or water by leaving the road for a short distance. Distance 19 miles.

Thursday 18 Oct The march of today in no wise differs from that of yesterday. The character of the country precisely the same. The valley of the Little Missouri south of the road has a rather pretty appearance. The ground gently slopes to it and is well covered with grass, but wood is scarce. 8 miles from camp crossed a small stream and 8 miles further came to and encamped on Willow Creek 2d. Grass good but wood scarce. Distance 16 miles.

Friday 19 Oct Left cam at the usual hour today. Genl H left the command and went on to Fort Pierre. We made a short march, and go in tomorrow. Our road has run over a high prairie. We encamped on Willow Creek 1st at a point known as the big hole, on the left of the road and

about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from it. The water is good, grass the same. Wood plenty. The road from the head waters of the Little Missouri may be considered well watered and with wood sufficient for ordinary camping purposes. In some very dry seasons, it would be necessary to turn off the road, possibly a mile or two. Distance $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Saturday 20 Oct To day's march has been the most trying one that we have had upon the whole trip. Since leaving White River the weather has been all that could be desired, and more than was expected at this late season of the year but during the last night it changed, and this morning we began the march in a cold driving rain and soon after the wind increased and the rain was mingled with snow & slight hail storm. On reaching Willow Creek 1st 8 miles every body was thoroughly soaked through and nearly frozen. The march became exceedingly tiresome to men and animals, for the rain & snow soaking into the clay adhered to the feet and to the wagon wheels with a tenacity I had never seen before, and we began to realize how very fortunate we had been in not having more rain than we have. The descent to the creek is long and steep. So also is the ascent from it on the East side, and we found it doubly so from the slippriness of the road and the great weight of the clay clogging up the weels. After swing[?] the wagons up we moved on for the fort, every one as he best could, and a dreadful march it was through rain and snow & cold. Distance 17 miles.

Sunday 21 Oct to Wednesday 31 Oct During this period nothing of special interest occurred while at Fort Pierre. Twice I have been ordered to hold myself in readiness to proceed to the L'Eau qui Court River, and each time the order has been countermanded. Whoever has to go down should be on the way, so as to be able to house the troops before winter closes in.

Thursday Nov 1 to Nov 16 Received orders on the 2d to proceed to the L'Eau Qui Court and on being ready proceeded to report to Genl Harney who changed my destination and instructed me to proceed up the Missouri River 13 miles to some suitable point and select a place for a winter cantonment. This I did and in fourteen days had my battalion well housed for the winter, having built two large rooms 210 x 20 feet and a fine kitchen & mess room. On the 15th tried my chimneys, and found the draught fine. Tomorrow I leave on furlough for the States.

Notes of a Trip from Fort Pierre to Sioux City, Iowa

Saturday 17 Nov 1855 Left the crossing of the Missouri six miles above Fort Pierre for the States on furlough. The party consists of Majors Gaines,⁵⁵ pay dept, S. Woods, 6th Infty, L. P. Graham⁵⁶ 2d Dragoons and Capts Davidson⁵⁷ and Lovell of the 2d Infty, myself and a small party of soldiers and discharged men. We travelled down the left bank of the river until nearly opposite to Fort Pierre, when we ascended by a very long, rough, and steep hill to the plains, these in no wise different from those on the west side of the Missouri, unless it is that they are not quite so broken. Our route has been over high rolling prairie. There are about two inches of snow on the ground. At this late season we are apprehensive of being caught in the storms, which are very severe, rendering travelling impossible. Reached camp on Medicine Creek at dark. Distance 22 miles.

Sunday 18 Nov Left camp at 7 1/2 o'clock, and reached La Chapelle Cr. at 12 M—the first five miles of the way was over a high hilly country and our mules not being shod we met with much difficulty from thier slipping on the sides of the hills, the last seven miles over high prairie. The morning was cold but the afternoon turned out very pleasant. Our camp is a delightful one, plenty of wood, water & grass. *distance 12 miles.*

Monday 19 Nov The weather changed during the night and this morning the wind is high & cold. Left camp at 7 1/2 o'clock. Travelled 15 miles and reached La Chene du Roche creek, a small insignificant stream. No wood except a few scorched plum trees at the crossing. A short distance

⁵⁵ Augustus W. Gaines, additional Paymaster, Volunteers, July 20, 1846; Major Paymaster, U. S. Army, March 2, 1849; died, Feb. 19, 1860. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 442.)

⁵⁶ Lawrence P. Graham was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 2d Dragoons, Oct. 13, 1837; First Lieutenant, Jan. 1, 1839; Captain, Aug. 31, 1843; Major, June 14, 1858; Second Cavalry, Aug. 3, 1861; Lieutenant Colonel, 5th Cavalry, Oct. 1, 1861; Brig.-General Volunteers, Aug. 31, 1861; honorably mustered out of Volunteer Service, Aug. 24, 1865; Colonel, 4th Cavalry, May 9, 1864; retired, Dec. 15, 1870; Bvt. Major, May 9, 1846, for gallant conduct in the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca-de-la-Palmo, Texas and Brig.-General, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services during the war. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 468.)

⁵⁷ Delozier Davidson was commissioned Second Lieutenant, 2d Infantry, July 31, 1838; Captain, Jan. 1, 1849; Major, 4th Infantry, Nov. 1, 1861; resigned, March 9, 1863; died, July 17, 1888. (Heitman, *op. cit.*, I, 355.)

below there is sufficient for camping in ordinary weather, it is said. Went on six miles further and encamped under the hill in a deep ravine. The wind has been very strong and the day cold. Distance 21 miles.

Tuesday 20 Nov The wind has changed to the North, and is very high and cold. Snowing slightly and drifting. Have been compelled to Remain in camp to day. At noon it cleared off, in some measure, but not sufficiently to warrant our leaving camp. The day has been very long.

Wednesday 21 Nov It was very cold during the night. Left camp at 8 1/2 o'clock. Clear & very cold. The road ran over high rolling prairie and was very fine. After travelling 16 miles descended to the valley of the Missouri, and 4 miles further came to Crow Creek and encamped at 2 1/2 P.M. Campbells trading post is on the creek below us. The weather has moderated and we greatly enjoy our camp fire. Capt Van Vliet encamped at the same place on his way down & had bridged this stream. Distance 20 miles.

Thursday 22 Nov The weather changed during the night and this morning it is cloudy and threatens rain. Shortly after we left camp it began, and after travelling 4 miles we stopped and pitched our tents on the banks of a small creek. After remaining an hour or two we started again, and travelled 6 miles further to another small creek. It was so threatening that we encamped in a well sheltered spot. The afternoon cleared off beautifully. While enjoying the warmth of our camp fire and after due deliberation and consultation, we have decided, in consequence of the weather changeableness and the great danger attending the march of tomorrow & next day without wood or water, should we be caught by a storm, on the upper or James River route, to keep closer to the Missouri River. Camp delightful. Distance 10 miles.

Friday 23 Nov The day was as fine and beautiful as we could desire. Striking out upon the prairie to the south and east we arrived at Crow Creek in about an hour. No wood where we crossed A little above & plenty below. This stream with those of yesterday & the one of the day before all empty into & form one. Along them there is some very good land, but limited in quantity. The wood is very good, mostly hard, & in quantities sufficient for small settlements. After crossing Crow Creek soon came in sight of the Buttes Bijoux, and travelled directly for the most eastern point, over high rolling prairie and without a road or

track. Reached the Buttes (hills) at Sun down. In a ravine close up to the base, found wood, still higher there is plenty of it. The water is down the same ravine nearly a half mile & in a pond. I find that my pony is getting tender footed. Distance 35 miles.

Saturday 24 Nov The day has been quite cold and cloudy. Our route was over the open prairie & the same direction S.E. as yesterday. Nothing of special interest occurred on the march. Encamped on the Du Vache, a small but pretty stream, with good wood, water, and grass. We are very anxious to get to Cottonwood on account of our animals. The grass has become quite dry and cottonwood bark is nearly as good as grain. My poney is so much worn down and footsore that I fear I must abandon him tomorrow. Distance 15 miles.

Sunday 25 Nov The morning was cold and cloudy with high wind, and continued so until sundown, when it lulled and became clear. Our route was the same as yesterday. At 12 M crossed a creek 18 miles from camp. One large cotton wood near the road. 7 miles further came to another stream and encamped. Wood. This morning I had my pony *shod* as well as I could with buffalo hide, but he is so lame & stiff and worn down that I shall abandon him at this camp. We are only 2 or 3 miles from the Missouri & he will easily find his way down there. The prairies have been burnt & we have but little grass to night & a few cottonwoods. Fed grain. Snow is deeper here than it is higher up. Distance 25 miles.

Monday 26 Nov The day has been lovely. Soon after leaving camp passed Lake Potato. Yesterday and today have been following an Indian trail. The direction today nearly east. I was obliged to abandon my poney this morning. Have occupied a seat for several days in the ambulance of Major Gaines, which he was kind enough to put at my service. Encamped on the Nawese River. 25 miles.

Tuesday 27 Nov Left camp at 7 1/2 o'clock. Travelled over high rolling prairie. At 12 M reached the Wananri River. 12 miles. No wood. Continued our route as in the morning and at 2 1/2 o'clock turned into and encamped on the Missouri River. Day pleasant. Distance 23 miles.

Wednesday 28 Nov Returned to our direct route and at 12 o'clock reached the Yancton village on the Missouri River, and 2 miles below it encamped. The road for 4 or 5

miles from the village was much broken, with one or two quite steep hills. Distance 12 miles.

Thursday 29 Nov Left camp at 6 1/2 o'clock and reached James River at 12 M. After striking the river travelled down it about 3 miles. Found the ice strong enough to bear our wagons. The banks were steep and being obliged to cross them by hand, in consequence, we were delayed some time. In summer it would be an impracticable crossing for wagons, being very miry. Met the mail about 2 miles below & turned back & encamped on the river. Heard of the fall of Sebastopol.⁵⁸ Day very fine. Distance 14 miles.

Friday 30 Nov Left camp at 6 1/2 o'clock & travelling down the valley of the Missouri reached the Vermillion at 12 M. 18 miles. The creek is small but difficult to cross. The timber good. Land good. Found an old bridge near the mouth, & after a little work, got over. After leaving the creek continued still down the Missouri Valley for 6 miles and encamped at the first house in the settlements. Fine day. Distance 24 miles.

Saturday 1 December Left camp at 6 1/2 o'clock. Travelled down the valley of the Missouri. Soon after leaving our camp, with the big Sioux River on our left, and at 2 o'clock crossed it. The wind high to day and quite raw, but as night approached it became warmer. The country from the Yancton village to the Big Sioux is very fine along the Missouri. The valley to the bluffs varying from 5 to 20 miles in width. The only wood is on the Missouri, with a little on the Sioux, Vermillion & James rs We have left Minnesota and are in Iowa. The Indian title has not been extinguished North of the Big Sioux River.⁵⁹ Distance 26 miles.

Sunday 2 Dec Left camp at 7 1/2 o'clock after travelling 6 miles arrived at Sioux City, a small place, but I think destined to be one of some importance. Tomorrow take the stage for Council Bluffs. 110 miles. Distance from Pierre to Sioux City 290.

Meanwhile, in July of 1855, Companies G, A, and I, of the Second Infantry and the Regimental Commander and staff had arrived at Fort Pierre which the Government had

⁵⁸ The author refers to the fall of Sebastopol, in the Crimean War, which was abandoned by the Russians, September 11, 1855.

⁵⁹ The Sioux River was then the boundary line of the Yankton Sioux Reservation. This reserve was reduced by treaty on April 19, 1858.

purchased at an exorbitant sum from Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and Company, a subsidiary of the American Fur Company. Companies B and C of that regiment joined them at Fort Pierre in August.

On October 20 Harney arrived at Fort Pierre and went into winter quarters. In the following March, he held a council with the Sioux chiefs and an agreement was reached. The chiefs promised to surrender all Indians who had committed murders and other outrages on the whites, to restore all stolen property, and to cease molesting persons traveling through their territories. In return, the Government agreed to protect the Sioux against the whites and to restore their annuities. This agreement brought a temporary peace to the frontier and ended the expedition against the Sioux. Several months later the Army established Fort Randall, near the present Nebraska-South Dakota State line, the first of the permanent military posts on the Upper Missouri.⁶⁰

During the winter following the Harney Expedition, Todd remained at Fort Pierre. In September of 1856 he resigned from the Army and in company with Captain D. S. Frost, of St. Louis, became sutler of the newly-established Fort Randall. Todd took an active part in Dakota politics and became one of the territory's leading business men. He promoted the establishment of Dakota Territory and of Yankton as its first capital, serving as territorial delegate in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1861-1865. From September 19, 1861, to July 17, 1862, after the outbreak of the Civil War, he was Brigadier-General of the U. S. Volunteers. From 1867 to 1869 he was Speaker of the House of Representatives in Dakota Territory. He served as Governor of the Territory from 1869-1871. Todd died in 1872 at the age of 57.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *South Dakota Historical Collections*, I (1902), 381-429; Bieber, *op. cit.*, 37-39; Conditions Imposed on the Sioux Nation by the President of the United States by A. Pleasonton, March 9, 1856, A.G.O.

⁶¹ Cullum, *op. cit.*, I, 691-692; Robinson, *op. cit.*, 727-728; Thomas, *op. cit.*, 181-219.