

## **THE CLARK STORY**

### **Mrs. Jarvis Clark – Nampa, California**

Dear sons Guthrie and Richard:

It was my privilege to spend many gay and happy hours with two of your great aunts during their visit to our home in Berkeley in nineteen-hundred and thirty-four.

So many times during my younger years I had wished I had persuaded my grandparents to tell me of their early pioneer lives, but as one is prone to do, I put it off to a more convenient time, resulting in their passing on without me gaining the knowledge that I so desired. With that disappointment in mind I exerted every effort to get the story from these aunts of their early interesting lives; particularly that part of which concerned their long trek across the plains in the 60's.

Aunt Mildred and Aunt Julia came from their homes in Oregon and Washington respectively to help celebrate their eldest sister's one-hundredth birthday on August tenth, nineteen-hundred and thirty-four, that of Nancy Clark Warmoth at Corning in Tehema County. While in California they made the "rounds" with visits to each of the relatives that could be reached. It was, as you remember, our pleasure to have them in our home for several weeks.

At the time of their visit Aunt Mildred was 82 and Aunt Julia 80 years of age. Two gayer old gals one could not find anywhere. They were the life of the party wherever they went and were loved by all.

I sat on the balcony in the sunshine many mornings, forgetful of my many household and office duties and simply basked in the stories and reminiscent tales of their long journey from Grundy County, Missouri to Oregon over the old Oregon trail in 1865.

After thirteen years I am referring to the notes I jotted down at that time and will endeavor to bring them into some kind of order with the thoughts in mind of preserving for you the heritage that is yours in that courageous journey of long ago.

If in your appreciation you wish to dedicate this letter to any one let it be to your great aunts, Mildred Clark Swaggart and Julia Clark O'Hara. It is my desire that this chronicle of events as it relates to the Clark family be kept in our family museum along with other data and relics which we have collected as monument to those who have done their share in making our comfort and happiness possible.

I am giving you no biography nor history in this letter but simply a record of my investigations. I have carefully checked all dates and other important facts with any family records I could find and with historical records of the Oregon and California trails.

This record is to start with Orville Scott Clark, born January sixth 1810 at Lexington, Kentucky, and his wife, Cynthia Gooch Clark born January seventh 1811 at Lexington, Kentucky. Their marriage took place on January fourteenth (one record says 4<sup>th</sup>) 1830. Of this union there were born thirteen children.

John Grandison Clark born Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 1830  
Nicholas Schooler Clark born Nov 8<sup>th</sup> (9<sup>th</sup>) 1832  
Nancy Jane Clark born Aug 10<sup>th</sup> 1834  
Missouri Ann Clark born Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 1836  
Elizabeth Frances Clark born Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 1839  
Cassander Clard born Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 1841  
James Gideon Clark born Apr 4<sup>th</sup> 1843  
Cynthia Ellen Clark born July 12<sup>th</sup> 1845  
Orville Scott Clark, Jr. born Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 1848  
William Alexander Clark born Aug 11<sup>th</sup> 1850  
Mildred Josephine Clark born Aug 11<sup>th</sup> 1852  
Julianna Clark born Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> 1854  
Joseph Harrison Clark born Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 1857.

The Gideon in James' name was for grandfather Gideon Gooch.

As bride and groom Orvilly, as he was affectionately called, and Cynthia Clark moved to Trenton, Grundy County, Missouri where their entire family of thirteen children were born. I have no record of the exact date of their moving to Missouri but it was some time between January and December of 1830.

In 1860, this large family moved to Oregon City, Holt County, Missouri from Trenton and lived there for a short time at the beginning of the Civil War.

A very vivid picture in the minds of these aunts was when their older brother James left to join the confederate forces. They could see him in their memories eye coming to tell their mother and younger brothers and sisters goodbye, then riding across the field on his beautiful chestnut horse, stopping to open the gate without dismounting then on beyond the horizon in the late afternoon of some date in 1861.

While the Clark family as a unit was in sympathy with the North, James was forced to fight with the Confederate forces. A strange man had ridden into the field on horseback and talked with James for some time. As he rode away, James came to the house, from his loft bedroom, got a change of clothes, a blanket, his gun and after dropping his pistol into its holster, bid his family goodbye and rode away. Many tears were shed for they did not expect to see him again.

They remembered hearing their parents talk about one of the big issues of the war being the dispute over admission to the union of Missouri as a slave state. The northern part of the state was particularly in favor of the Union and it is known that the state furnished more than twice as many troupes to the Union forces, than to the Confederates. They spoke of families being divided on the question. Brothers fighting with opposing forces. Fathers against sons. One neighbor boy fighting with the Confederate forces returned home and shot to death a brother who had enlisted in the Union army. Neighbors broke lifelong friendships and became bitter enemies.

In 1862 the family moved back to Trenton, Grundy County, where they remained until they came west.

Grandfather, Orville Scott Clark, and eldest son John lured by the discovery of gold in California and the great opportunities in the Oregon Territory came across the plains in 1849. They visited both California and Oregon and after looking over the prospects of each for one year, grandfather returned to Missouri. He gave such glowing accounts of the great west country, the beautiful scenery, the wonderful climate and the opportunities for the family that Nicholas' feet began to itch to be on the big trail. Hunting buffalo and wolves and fighting Indians so fired him with adventure that he came to California in 1852 with friends who joined the big caravan of that year.

I have already given you an account of the '50 and '52 trains in a previous letter. I am concerned here only in mapping the course of the larger part of the family in 1965.

It was your great grandfathers plan to return to the west with his family but he fell ill and died August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1859 in Grundy County and was buried in Cyrus Cemetery in Trenton.

Elizabeth Frances and Missouri Ann both died before the father and are buried in the same cemetery.

With John and Nicholas on the Pacific Coast and James in the war, Orville Scott Jr. was the oldest son at home. He was not too happy about such an arrangement and begged his mother to let him go west to his older brothers. In 1864, having arrived at the age of sixteen and thinking himself old enough to combat the buffalo and Indians he hit the trail with the train of 1864, working his way across by helping with the stock and the wagons.

Great grandmother Clark with Nancy Jane and Cynthia Ellen and their families (Nancy was now married to Lafayette Warmoth and had six children. Cynthia Ellen was married to John Warmoth, brother of Lafayette.) With the four younger Clarks, William, Mildred, Julianna and Joseph left Trenton in May 1865 on their long journey to the land of sunshine and gold. James was still in the army. I have no record of when he joined the family. This is where the vital part of my story begins and I quote the aunts:

“For months we made great preparations for this trip which was estimated that it would take six months, with good luck, to reach our destination in Oregon where our three older

brothers now were. Our bedding was all made over and new warm comforters made. Sewing went on day after day to supply the family with good warm clothing.”

“The cooking and preparation of food was a gigantic task. Bacon was cured, likewise ham, fruit was canned and for days before starting the cooking went on day and night. Bread was baked, beans cooked and everything that could be prepared and kept without spoiling was done so, but the first articles of importance were bacon, ham, beans, flour, coffee, sugar and rice. Almost as important as these was to keep a “yeast starter”. Our estimate of food per person was 150 lbs. flour, 150 lbs bacon, 25 lbs coffee, 30 lbs. sugar, 50 to 75 lbs. rice, 1 keg of lard, crackers, dried peaches, salt and pepper. These estimates were furnished by the government to every person planning the journey.”

“At last the big “shove off” day arrived, when we set out, in a great state of excitement, from our Missouri home on May tenth, 1865. After traveling in a northwest direction, cutting off a good corner of Iowa we came to the Missouri River and crossed where the present city of Omaha now stands.”

“Before this city, which was on the west bank of the Missouri River from Kaneshville (Council Bluffs) was named Omaha, it was called Traders Point and during the years of '49 and '50 its only inhabitant was an old trader named “Sarpee”. Later the place grew to be quite a city and was the outfitting place for the trains of the '60's. It drew its name from the O-Maha Indian tribe.”

“Our trail took us for some distance along the north bank of the Platte to a point near Fort Kearney where we forded to the south bank trail then on to the junction of the South Platte and North Platte where we were held for about three weeks, until the parties arrived from different sections of the country to make up our party of one-hundred wagons which was the required number before our caravan was permitted to make the final take-off. When all were assembled there were two hundred fourteen wagons.”

“Our first night out I shall never forget, “ said Aunt Mildred. “Julia and I could not sleep in that covered wagon. Some were fast asleep, one could hear their deep even breathing. To we two girls, two years apart in age, everything was so thrilling we just could not settle down. Through the canvas flaps of the wagon we could see the dark sky, studded with stars. Somehow we finally fell asleep. In the morning all kinds of noises awakened us including the loud talk of the trail and of the fine farmland that lies at the end of it. Every one was in high spirits for the first exciting days of the journey.”

“There was not much room in which to dress in the wagon for there was so much of everything in it. Barrels of flour, food supplies, tools, clothing, bedding and even the china dogs that mother was so eager in taking to brother Nick.”

"I can still smell that first breakfast in the open air. The morning was crisp and cool and the bacon sizzling so cheerfully in the pan made me wonder why people talked of the hardships of the overland trail."

"That night we sat around the campfire and the hired man played on his fiddle and for some reason came out with "Home, home sweet sweet home, Be it ever so humble there is no place like home." That was too much for mother thinking of our Missouri home and the months ahead in a home on wheels. "Do play something cheerful please," she said, and he came out with "Oh! Susannah, Don't you cry for me, For I'm going to Oregon with my wash bowl on my knees."

Those first few days were not unpleasant in spite of the bad roads, the heat and sand. We romped and played, the older people sang and at night danced by the light of the fire and sang such songs as our hired man did in his gayer moods. Our serious moments came farther along on the trail.

It was at this crossing where our first real quarrel took place. Mother had hired a man to drive our wagon to Oregon and he was certainly doing a good job but brother Will, now fifteen years old, had begged all along the way to be permitted to drive. This, the hired man objected to but on his persistent coaxing mother finally gave Will permission to drive. In crossing the river at this point Will, being inexperienced about currents, sand and other hazards in crossing a stream turned the wagon over. The hired man became so angry that he cursed mother for her interference whereupon Will demonstrated his manliness by driving the man from the camp and himself drove the remainder of the distance to Oregon. It was as a result of this mishap that the two China dogs were broken. (For those who might to hear about the dogs you may tell them the Staffordshire dogs that sit on our mantel were bought by your grandfather, Nicholas Clark, in Trenton, Missouri, when he was sixteen years of age (in 1848) and left them at home with his mother when he took off for California in 1852. In 1865 his mother brought them across the plains. They were broken when the wagon turned over in crossing the Platte River. The pieces were carefully preserved and on arrival in Oregon were put together with home made mucilage. This mucilage is still holding the dogs together after eighty-six years (1865-1951). A precious family heirloom. Always cherish them as such.

Another requisite was four hundred men and boys who could shoot, as a protection from the Indians. (As I understand their story this final assemblage took place at the junction of the South Platte and the Platte River in Nebraska, called Platte River Station. This checks with historical records.)

It took ten days to ferry the entire troop across the South Platte. This was done by taking the wheels off the wagons and using the wagon box, which had been calked for that purpose as a

boat. The horses and other stock swam across which was quite a tedious trick, much of the stock being lost at this point. We were fortunate in not losing ours.

At this station a wedding took place. (It was now in June). A young girl by the name of Rhoda Payne came with a group from Missouri and met a dashing young man by the name of John Henry Collins. The whole train took time to celebrate with dancing and singing and even chivareeing them. Thinking that life would be easier for them at home they did not proceed with our train and after staying at the Platte River Station for a time returned to Missouri.

From this point the perilous part of our journey began. While the earlier trains had blazed a well defined trail we knew that ours was to be no path of roses. Although the way was a degree safer in many ways there were still the same hazards to be encountered the same precautions to be taken for ourselves and our stock which consisted of two cows, three yoke of oxen and one horse. Lafayette Warmoth (Nancy Jane's husband) had three span of mules and John Warmoth (Cynthia Ellen's husband) one team of horses. We were the only ones in the whole caravan with cows.

The trail was long and the traveling slow, covering about ten to fifteen miles per day, some days much less, owing to weather conditions and the terrain of the country. We carried all of our water for both family and stock for the water holes were few and far between.

Our route followed in main the old Oregon trail. In many places there were no roads and the men had to make their own. As in the case of nearly all of the trains some would get restless with the monotony of slow travel and thinking they could find a quicker route would break away from the caravan and were never heard of again. One lone man finally showed up and rejoined our party after being gone nearly three weeks. He had gotten lost and after wandering around finally located us, worn out and nearly starved.

Soldiers were stationed all along the route and were near us nearly every night as a protection against the Indians. While these soldiers were a protection against the Indians the younger women and girls were as afraid of them as of the Indians. On two occasions we can recall of a soldier being shot for molesting a young girl. (Aunt Julia said that no girl was safe unless she could run like a rabbit, climb a tree and shoot a gun.)

At night in making camp the wagons were lined up in a large circle and tied together. The stock, as were the family, were within this circle. The women and children slept in the wagons while the men slept on the ground. Guards were on duty all night, the men taking turns. The buffalo did not bother us much. Perhaps they had become accustomed to the foreigners invading their ageless territory by this time but the wolves and Indians were a constant peril. One incident standing out so vividly in our minds, was that of the Indians stealing a wagon wheel, wrapping it with dry grass, setting it on fire and turning it loose down hill toward the stock in hopes of

stampeding the animals and causing them to break away. We were delayed on two occasions by such as this until we could corral and calm our animals.

We usually carried a little kindling with us but many many times our only fuel was buffalo chips. (Aunt Julia said to be sure and make note of the fact that she had to gather her share of those chips. She sure was a cutie.)

(An interesting item I might relate here is that General W.F. Sherman remarked in a letter to Buffalo Bill, "As near as I can estimate there were in 1865 about 9 and ½ millions of buffaloes on the plains between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains and about 65,000 Pawnees, Sioux, Cheyennes, Kiowas and Arapahoes.)

From Platte Junction the next place we recall is the incident at Chimney Rock.

We do remember some of the country through that part of Nebraska, it being flat and dusty most of the way. The roads across this part of the plains would stretch out over an expanse of about fifty miles but when the mountains were reached they converged again to cross the narrow ravines. This great Platte Country was known as the Great American Desert. Often we had to change our route on account of the Indians but we never did get far off the real Oregon Trail. Those who did never got through. In main this western trail was one trail. By the 50's it became a road so deep and broad and obvious that it could easily be traced and was destined for two thousand miles to become the bravest highway in the world.

For many days we rode without seeing a tree or water, not even a bush, then again we would see the wild flowers – especially during the earlier part of our trip on the plains – which were beautiful. ( In speaking with the Aunts about these flowers they mentioned the liepin, a little pink flower spoken of as the wild pink, the verbena, honeysuckle and the sweet brier.)

"We loved the birds too; especially the hummingbirds and the meadow larks. The trees we remember most and of which our "elders" spoke were the hazelwood and the quivering asp. These are a few of the marks of the trail that made a definite imprint on our youthful minds. Never will we forget the cries of the Indians which we often mistook for those of the wild animals. While we considered the wolves a great peril they often did no more damage than gnaw the ropes by which the animals were tethered. One thing they did do that was horrible was to dig up the bodies of those who had died and had been buried along the way, of which there were many.

(Quoting Walter Prescott Webb in "The Great Plains":

"It was an army of peace which came to subdue the wilderness but its casualties were greater than those of many a battlefield. It has been estimated that for each mile of the two thousand mile course of the trail seventeen people per mile paid the price of the winning of the Oregon Country.")

All along the trail we saw many marks of graves such as piles of rocks, gates of wagons, buffalo skulls, wagon wheels and sometimes a piece of furniture. All of which spoke of deep sorrow and from us drew a prayer of thanks that we had thus far come in safety. It was not a glamour journey by any means. There were fleas and gray backs (lice) and dirt. Noise and quarrels all along the way.

The weather was bad a great portion of the time. When it was stormy, we tied the animals to the wagon wheels and lashed the wagons down with picket pins over the wheels to keep them from blowing over. Oh! How that wind could blow. Never will I ever forget it (said Aunt Mildred.)

(One writer relates: "It blows turable for a week or ten days and then it will take a change and blow like hell for a while.)

Often our only meat was buffalo meat which is coarser grain than beef but was quite tender and juicy, especially when we were fortunate enough to have a yearling calf. We used the knuckle bone for soup and many people used the marrow to spread over the bread because of the nourishment it contained. (Here, Aunt Mildred said she just could not like that.) Our bread was often baked in buffalo ashes. Doesn't sound good does it? But bread baked any way was mighty good when you were hungry as we were many times during that journey, not that there wasn't something to eat but we were growing children and were always hungry.

It was amazing to us that we could see such a distance on these plains. Mountains miles and miles away seemed so close. Some of the men (on a day of rest which was probably the Sabbath) decided to visit a huge rock which looked as though it was not more than five or six miles distant. This rock was Chimney Rock of which we had heard. It seemed so close they thought they could make it there and back by noon. Well – it was late at night when they returned. They had walked miles and miles.

Chimney Rock, as other land marks along the way did not interest our train so much from its picturesqueness as it did from the fact that on reaching it we had cut-off so many miles of our way to our future home and comfort.

(This rock is one of three great outstanding natural monuments and three equally noted forts on the Old Trail:

1. Chimney Rock, 40 miles south west of Scotts Bluff, Nebraska
2. The Red Buttes, fifteen miles south west of Casper, Wyoming, and
3. Independence Rock about fifty three miles south west of Casper.

These three stand as a perpetual reminder of that greatest of all world migration. Julia Altrocchi in her book entitled, "The Pageant of the Platte" speaks of the great old silhouettes as still impressive and the scenery weirdly beautiful.)



Our journey so far along the Platte had not been too bad. The roads along the South Bank were very good for several hundred miles. Here is where we found the greater abundance of wild flowers, the lupin, larkspur and the creeping hollyhock. At certain points it was very dangerous on account of sand. If the team stopped even to rest a minute it was buried in sand. This is where our Missouri mules showed their stubbornness. They just humped their backs and would not move and had to be whipped and often severely clubbed to make them go. (In checking this sand of the Platte I discovered it was called "The wide moving river of rapidly running sand." Washington Irving described the Platte as "the most magnificent and useless of streams.")

The next place we came to that we remember quite well was Fort Laramie in Wyoming. Here we had to register, as did all emigrants, so that the government could have a record of how many crossed the plains in that year. I am sure the record could not have been very accurate if as many in previous trains failed to register as did in ours.

(Fort Laramie, originally a fur trading post, was changed into a military post by the government in 1849 and for forty one thrilling years simply bulged with early western history in the making. It was here that the Donner Party celebrated the Fourth of July and it was here that Mrs. Spaulding of the Spaulding-Whitman party wrote in her diary on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1836 on leaving Fort Laramie, "This day we leave this post. Only He, who knows all things, knows whether this dilapidated form will survive the undertaking. His will, not mine, be done.")

From Fort Laramie we soon came to another of our great landmarks and trail boosters, Independence Rock or Register Cliffs, whichever you wish to call it. Here thousands of emigrants carved their names or initials. We along with the others.

(This rock is located on the north bank of the Sweetwater River in central Wyoming. No diary of importance concerning the winning of the Oregon and California Country has failed to mention this all important landmark. The name of the rock is thought to have been given and engraved thereon by the first white travelers who traversed the famous South Pass. The name of, "The Register of the Desert" or "The Great Record of the Desert" is accredited to Father De Smet, a Catholic missionary in the early 40's. It was here on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1862 about twenty Masons on their way to Oregon found a shallow recess in the rock and held lodge – the first recorded Masonic meeting in Wyoming.)

From here we soon entered the Black Hills Country where we found the roads very bad. Here we left the buffalo chips and used greasewood for fuel. We were not sorry to give up our job of gathering those everlasting chips. Within a few days we came to what was called the South Pass. (History records this as being discovered by John Charles Fremont in 1842 at which time he recorded complete data and impressions for the future overland trail which our families traveled. I also read that Etienne Provot, a trapper, is usually named by the best authorities as having been the actual discoverer of this Pass. One can take their choice of information.

However it was General Fremont who gave us the official data. This was called and still is so named the backbone of the American Continent. The summit is marked by a stake. On one side the rain that fell would run toward the Pacific, on the other side toward the Atlantic.) It appears like a mesa or huge plateau. Mountains on all sides. The mountains to the west of us were our attraction and fear because we had to find our way over or through them before reaching our new home. Narcissa Whitman, wife of Marcus Whitman, is said to be the first woman to cross South Pass.

Another fort of which we remember, the name was Fort Bridger in Wyoming which should follow next or about here in our journey through the Wind Mountains. Our party arrived here some time in July.

(They were on schedule time as history records most of the trains arrived in the Wind Mountains in July. I don't know why our train went to Fort Bridger unless the California bound part of the party thought they would like to go through Utah and would make Fort Bridger their parting place. If that were true they changed their minds after arriving at the fort for their separation point was further along in Idaho.)

The owners or men who ran these trading posts were hard looking characters and were just as hard as they looked for their lives were rugged, having to fight the Indians and trap for food and fur. They likely made their own clothes for their pants were of buckskin. These men were usually large broad shouldered fellows with long hair and beards.

As we approached the large mountains the going was more perilous and steep. In many places the wagons had to be lowered over the cliffs by ropes. Also the stock. In other places not quite so steep we had to get down the best way we could, often getting badly bruised and injured. In many places the road was almost entirely obliterated but the mountains were the same that looked down upon the Whitman train of 1850.

Fort Bridger was our first separation point. From here some of the wagons took a south trail on to Salt Lake City but our entire family kept with the Oregon group and took the northwest trail (the old Oregon Trail) out of Fort Bridger.

We found the Mormons we encountered near the separation point very friendly. We thought the reason they were so nice was to persuade some of our men folk to stay and become Mormons. They were offering very attractive inducements, such as a home, furniture, plenty of food and the opportunity to build themselves a business, but we were headed for Oregon and nothing could change our minds. Our dreams of all that good land awaiting us in Oregon could not be blotted out by such inducements.

It was at Fort Bridger that the Donner party made its first mistake by quarrelling over which trail to take. As a consequence the party split, one part going the northern trail, the other

being influenced by Jim Bridger, the trader at the fort, took the ill fated Hastings cut-off into Utah. The northern route party reached California safely.

There were various reasons why people “took off” to this great west country. Some dreamed of acres of nice rich soil, others of gold, thinking they were going to get rich over night. Many middle aged and older people were seeking a better climate in which to improve their health, some just for the adventure, some to escape debts and others just “To show ‘em back home.”

At the California State Library in a diary of one of the 49ers we found this entry: “I am going so I can be independent of the ----- fools back home that feel themselves above me because I am a poor cuss, ---- their stinking hides.”

Our people I am sure did not come with any feeling like that. They were people of the soil and Oregon offered each man 640 acres, 320 acres to each wife and 160 acres to every child. To them it was truly a land of promise.

So far as I can determine they did not use Sublette’s cut-off, for, as they remember they went into Fort Bridger which necessitated them crossing the Green River near Lombard Ferry. I am inclined to believe they did not use the ferry because of the charge, but forded a few miles north of the ferry as many other trains did.

Out of Fort Bridger our course took us northward, crossing the Little Muddy River and met another trail (the Sublette cut-off) near the present cite of Cokeville, Wyoming, then across the line into Idaho about where the present town of Border is located, then along on to Fort Hall and Pocatello, Not many days travel after leaving Pocatello brought us to the parting of the trails on Snake River at the junction of the Raft. The parting of our family came at this junction. One group going to California, the other to Oregon. Here we were met by Brother John who had come from California to join brothers Nick and Scott at Fort Boise whose plans were to meet us at the Raft River junction but Scott took sick and Nick stayed to care for him. John came on alone and after missing our train once met us at the junction. Well do we remember that happy meeting with brother John whom we had not seen since 1849.

The Oregon group consisted of mother and we children, Nancy Jane and her husband, Lafayette, and their family and Will Frazier, brother-in-law of Lafayette.

The California party was made up of brother John who came from California to meet us at this point, sister Cynthia Ellen and her husband, John Warmoth, a man by the name of Dugan and Henry Warmoth.

(The Aunts spoke much of how badly the mother felt on telling Cynthia Ellen goodbye for she never expected to see her again. It turned out that she did see her a couple of times after that, once when she came to California with Nicholas in 1883 and again later at a family reunion

in Weston, Oregon. After this sad parting the trains proceeded on their respective routes. First I shall map the course of the Oregon party which was no path of roses as expressed by the Aunts.)

That part of our trip (so say the Aunts) from the separation point to Fort Boise was crowded with uncomfortable experiences. The things that stand foremost in my mind, so says Aunt Mildred, were the mosquitos and flies. There were millions and millions of them and they were as big as mice. Many people became sick from so many bites and we were told that one man died. (In another diary the mosquitos in Idaho were quoted as being smaller than hummingbirds but much larger than crickets. Many diaries spoke of them as being their greatest discomfort in the entire trip. One diarist spoke thusly, "All other vices subsided as the years went by but the mosquitos went on forever.")

Here is where we encountered the Digger Indians said to be the filthiest people on earth. They were not so much for fighting as for stealing. They would come right into camp and steal anything they could get their hands on. They would steal animals, cats, dogs, horses – any kind – and cook them whole and eat everything. A whole boiled rat was a great delicacy for them. We could always tell where a Digger Indian camp had been from the filth.

From this junction we proceeded on a northwesterly direction through Twin Falls on to Fort Boise, on the Snake River. We had followed this river with its gorgeous waterfalls and crystal clear water from Fort Hall. Here at this fort we met brothers Nick and Scott and enjoyed another happy reunion. Nick was working for a man by the name of Cy Mulkey and stayed on in Fort Boise for another year before joining the family in Oregon.

Scott, having recovered sufficiently to travel, came on into Oregon with us. These brothers whom we had not seen for so long were a great attraction to we children and we simply hovered around them every minute, constantly sparring for our turn to hold their hands. Mother just sat and looked at them with tears streaming down her cheeks. It was such a happy occasion.

From Fort Boise our trail took us on a northwest direction crossing the Snake River twice near Farewell Bend, on northwest crossing the Powder River, through a small town called Kamela, on to Pendleton and finally to our home cite on a farm near what is now the town of Weston in Umitilla County about October first 1865. Here we "settled down" to make our home and till our soil. Oh! How good it was to know we did not have to travel any more. We were a tired, dirty family and no credit at all to the Territory of Oregon when we arrived but we were an industrious family and did not lose much time in establishing ourselves and "digging in our roots" into the state where we have lived ever since. We made of ourselves good neighbors too, sharing our farm equipment, such as it was with those who did not have any. Nancy's husband, Lafayette Warmoth gave Taylor Green the mule to plow the ground to plant the first corn in Umitilla County.

We still had Indian trouble here and the boys did not dare get far from home after dark. On several occasions they were chased by the Indians but were never injured. We girls never got out of sight of the house during the day and never out of the house after dark.

Reminiscing now on this journey the main points of interest to us were Omaha and crossing the river at that point, Fort Kearney, crossing the South Platte, Fort Laramie and registering there, Independence Rock, Fort Bridger, the parting of the way at the Raft River junction and meeting brother John; those darn mosquitos in Idaho, Fort Boise and the reunion with Nick and Scott, our arrival at Pendleton and the last and most glorious of all, our first home in the west in Umitilla County.

The Oregon and California trails were identical for 1200 miles, from Independence and other starting points on the Missouri River to Burley, Idaho. A complete continuous marking of this trail should be made, as a monument to that human courage which brought our East and West together especially should those markings be made through those gorges where the wagons went over the identical wheel marks digging trenches three to five feet deep and are still to be seen at this late date. The present Lincoln Highway follows in certain sections the old path of the 49ers but there is still no visible continuous marking. The Oregon Trail Association, I understand, is working on such a program. I do sincerely hope they will be successful in remarking this great trail and that it will always be a pathway of free men.

Going back to the parting of the ways at the junction of the Raft and Snake Rivers we will now accompany the other half of the family to California, praying each minute that we will all be lucky enough to arrive in that land of gold, me in the writing of, they in the actual culmination of their trip. Proceeding on a south west trail the party soon joined a group from Salt Lake City who had come on a north west trail to join the north caravan at the junction near the Nevada, Idaho border. This was one of the significant events of the journey west. Sixteen miles from this junction the trail led over Granite Mountain and down to the Big Goose Creek. This descent into Big Goose Creek was one of the worst of the journey and they found the remaining third of the overland trail by far the most dangerous and uncomfortable. Bad water, no feed, dust and heat by day and extreme cold at night. Here is where they again had to chain all the wheels to hold the wagon back down a five mile decline then on to a steep mountain called "The Devil's Grave".

One can just about tell where the going was the toughest by such names as "Dead Man's Pass", "Hell's Half Acre", "Three Crossings", "Massacre Rock", "Devil's Gate", "Hell Upset", "Point of Rocks" and "Echo Canyon", this is where, again, the wagons were lowered with ropes. It is described as worse than all the bad places, they had previously encountered, put together – having perpendicular stretches of twenty to thirty feet at a place. In spite of their efforts to save their wagons, one went tail over tongue to the first landing, losing many of the provisions. John

who was driving at that time fell off the seat and over the rest of the team onto the head mules, which brought tears from Aunt Ellen (Ed Warmoth's mother) thinking her brother would surely be killed. The wagons seemed to stand on end during this descent. (How welcome the modern tanks and jeeps would have been at points such as this.)

This train also encountered the Ute and Shoshokoe Indians through Utah and Nevada. The Utes were described as very cruel, the Shoshokoes as peaceful, wanting only food. However they were a filthy tribe and would roast a whole horse and just gorge themselves. They never got enough to eat. Owls, lizards, crickets and grasshoppers were all plentiful and on their daily menu. In order to catch the crickets and grasshoppers the squaws would often set fire to the grass and burn their legs so they could be easily caught. They often dug deep holes and a large circle of Indians was formed and thousands of crickets were driven into the hole by the gradually narrowing ring of flailing Indians. In some cases they added hot rocks which partially cooked them then ate them at once. At other times they allowed the insects to dry and ground them into a coarse meal for cakes. (How would you like to drop in for hors d'oeuvres?) While these Shoshokoes were rather peaceful they were a menace in that they would shoot arrows into the stock until they would have to be killed, then as the caravan moved on they moved in and gulped down the animals, entrails and all. If any cattle were driven away it could be laid to the Utes. They were the thieves.

Never have I been so engrossed in listening to tales as I have been in the telling of these by members of the family and in reading letters relating to experiences of others who were in this train.

This open flat of Little Goose has been described as a place looking like Hell Upset. The rocks and boulders were so thick and so large that the wagons had to drive right over them, the wheels slipping between the boulders, the animals falling and every one shaken to a jelly. Here was a good chance for the ever watchful Utes to attack. The rocky passageway through the Records Bluff actually dripped with blood. This tribe did not scalp, they liked best to take as many horses as they could, not dead or wounded. This necessitated a very alert guard day and night, especially at night for that is when they operated most effectively. They would stalk a train all day to get a chance at the stock at night.

We spoke of the '65 trail through Idaho being no bed of roses. The family, California bound, spoke of their trek through Nevada as "plain hell".

The journey continued on toward the south west through Thousand Springs Valley, Rock Springs (the waters of which were warm and safe to the emigrant) I say safe for on several occasions both for our train and others encountered poison springs. Earlier trains were the ones who paid the greater price for a drink from these springs. Afterward they were marked so were passed by, by many a thirsty traveler. Their greater trouble being to keep the stock safely away

from them for when the stock smelled water they bolted for it and there wasn't a thing that could be done until they had drunk their fill and dropped dead soon after.

On to Emigrant Springs and Bishop Canyon. Our wagons crossed Bishop Creek eight or nine times and finding it as rough as Little Goose Canyon. On to the valley of Humboldt Wells where the train rested and nursed their bruises and the sick had a chance to recover. Here our train met other trains that had circled the hills to avoid the canyon. While they avoided the rough going they ran into the poison springs which was worse than the boulders.

Along the banks of the Humboldt River and the hot sands of Nevada many animals died of thirst.

The grassy marshes were encountered around Winnemucca, Rye Patch and Lovelock. The actual illness occurred in the last seventy five miles of the Humboldt River by increasing alkali and filth content of the water. The lower valley of the Humboldt was one long sequence of calamity. The trains traveled its banks for over three hundred miles. Its waters sink in the hot sands of the state and is truly a river whose course appears contrary to all laws of nature it is one of the very few long rivers of the world flowing westward parallel to the equator. All along its path the Digger Indians were a perpetual pest. This river had the distinction of being named by General Fremont in honor of the noted traveler Baron Humboldt.

The trains of '49, when Grandfather Clark and Uncle John made their first trip, encountered much trouble with the Indians through this strip of country. Their train would many times find much of their stock missing in the morning and the men would have to go looking for them. On one occasion when three of the men, whose duty it was for the day went in search of two horses, they never returned, leaving their wives and family stranded. One woman had six children who had to be scattered over several trains, wherever they could be squeezed in Indians were everywhere. Aunt Ellen's husband, John Warmoth, spoke of them as, "Those dirty, thieven, stinkun sons-a-guns."

This '49 train of which Grandfather and Uncle John were a part came well supplied with food and, so far as I could find out, got through to California with a small supply on hand.

The family train of '65, when the Indians were more treacherous were afraid to do much hunting or fishing and at night did not dare build fires to keep warm and had to crawl from one animal to the other in utter darkness to be sure they were still there. Their trail led them through the muddy country of the Humboldt where earlier trains had lost hundreds of animals in the mud. On to Elko and the canyon of the South Fork – the same unfriendly gorge traveled by the ill-fated Donnor party. Most of the trains became so weary and discouraged, for here is where they parted with so much that was left of what they started with from Missouri. Our family having good guide books and Uncle John having been over the trail some years earlier came through Greenhorse cut-off to Emigrant Pass without much trouble. They felt that their suffering with the

dust was greater than all of their other discomforts combined. Even those mosquitos in Idaho and Wyoming.

Profiting by the mistakes of other trains, our train kept to the north side from Humboldt Wells to the Great Desert from Emigrant Springs down a steep hill to Gravelly Fort, noted for its many scraps with the Ute Indians. This spot was also the scene of that fateful event in the history of the Donner party when James Reed and John Snyder quarreled. Snyder was killed and James Reed was expelled from the party thus settling the fate of the entire party. (Any account written on the Donner party will give details on this disagreement.)

On past Battle Mountain to Winnemucca. A few miles past Winnemucca the trail branches, one that would lead through Susanville in California, the other north of Alturas and down the Pitt River. These two alternate routes were not very popular on account of them being infested with Indians. The Clark train, in so far as I can determine took neither route, choosing the safer but sandier route down the Truckee River to Truckee, Donner Lake, down Bear River to its junction with the Feather River then north to Chico and Corning. In and about these towns our families settled and devoted the greater part of their lives to farming. Many of the younger generations still live there. (The Bankheads and Brunks, descendants of Aunt Nancy Clark Warmoth, in and near Corning. The Robert Mitchells, (Bell Warmoth), at Paskenta and Harry Clark, Uncle John Clark's son at Chico.)

This story is a record of the "Oregon Trail" and "California Trail" parties of the Clark family, a record of an invisible trail as it still lived in the minds and on the lips of those dear aunts and others who traveled the way of its colorful past.

I have found in my investigations that most of it is authentic. I have also found that parts are delightful reminiscent tales as told to them by their elders. My position can be described best by that quotation from the "Last Minstrel",

"I cannot say how the  
truth may be  
I say the tale as t'was told  
To me."

In grateful salute to those who made our great west country possible for us.  
With my love to my boys always,  
Mother

### **OUT WHERE THE WEST BEGINS**

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,



Out where the smile dwells a little longer,  
That's where the West begins;  
Out where the sun is a little brighter,  
Where the snows that fall are a little whiter,  
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a little bluer,  
Out where friendship's a little truer,  
That's where the West begins;  
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,  
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,  
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,  
Where fewer hearts with despair are aching,  
That's where the West begins;  
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,  
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,  
And a man makes friends without half trying,  
That's where the West begins.