

Copy of a Diary Written in 1861

Name of the writer . . . . . H. D. L. Morse

Name of the present owner . . . . . Mrs. Irene L. Benedict

(ca. 1940)

Address of the owner . . . . . Illinois Avenue, Fountain

Date of the diary . . . . . 1861

Dimensions of the diary . . . . . 2 3/4 x 4 3/4"

Description:

Written on a trip from Wisconsin to Colorado by ox-team

The following are verbatim entries according to dates:

April 16

Started for Pikes Peak. Traveled through Token Creek and Camped Out for the first time.

April 17

Went through Madison did not see anything worth mentioning.

April 18

Went through a little city Saw a windgrist mill on the top of a great mill oh I forgot that little City was Middleton

April 19

Blue Mound Traveled up hill and down over and under around side wise end wise and made out to get through Polk town or some kind of pole.

April 20

Morning went into a mud hole and out again then into Dodge Vile through Mineral Point Saw verry rich lead ore and lots of pretty gals.

April 21

Started and crossed Picatonic Creek twice went through Cottage In Kishford (?) and camped by a house where there were lots of pretty gals.

April 22

Went through Elkhorn Grove and Fair Play or Hog Holler and camped within two miles of Dubuque and Dunleith

April 23

Went through Dunleith crossed the river to Dubuque on the ferry commenced raining like h-l drove three miles and camped for the day

April 24

Traveled most all day on the prairie wind blew like hell in the afternoon went through Whitewater and Cascade

April 25

Went through Pine Ville Monticello Anomosa crossed the Creek Macaquota (?) and the Wapsipinicon (?) and camped

April 26

Went through Fair Sight Springville Marion traveled 28 miles and camped Bought hay and corn of Shelby Charles's brother

April 27

last night it rained like sixty got up this morning drove to Cedar rapids crossed the river and toll bridge

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drove 1 mile and camped for the day Henry and me went back saw 70 soldiers fighting for the south

April 28

Traveled all day on the prairie over a hole then through a mud hole or ravine once in ten rods then camped on the prairie 40 miles from anywhere.

April 29

Traveled 7 miles crossed the Iowa river to Marengo traveled 14 miles and camped on the prairie

April 30

in the forenoon went through nice limb went through Brooklin found Claud Skinner there went with us the afternoon and camped with us on the prairie 10 miles from the timber.

May 1

traveled 7 miles on the prairie Chase went with us to a town, Grinnell traveled 16 miles on the prairie crossed one branch of the Skunk river.

May 2

Went through Newton crossed another branch of the Skunk river and camped on a large prairie

May 3

killed prairie hen before breakfast. traveled on the prairie in the afternoon wind blew like hell went through Rising Sun camped within half a mile of Des Moines

May 4

Went through Des moines crossed the river on toll bridge at noon killed a blue racer Saw in the afternoon about 200 horses bound for California

May 5

Rained most all day wind blew like hell did not travel played poker made a gun sheath.

May 6

Squaley wind blue hard traveled 11 miles to Adell camped went up to the mill. got a load of flour. Camped by North Coon river.

May 7

Done much of nothing went up town twice. run one hundred and four balls. didled around the rest of the time.

May 8

Watched cattle some fished some did not catch any killed two blue racers. hunted for Duke and raleigh did not find them.

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May 9

hunted after the oxen the forenoon. man drove them home in the afternoon braded a whip lash sixteen feet long. played poker some raining

May 10

watched cattle thought I had lost two waded across the river 4 times was mistaken, killed 4 blue racers. helped pack the wagons.

May 11

watched cattle spell went up town saw a man try to climb a pole but could not. and that is all I done.

May 12

rained steady all day stayed in the tent and played poker some of the time.

May 13

done much of nothing only a little poker made a clothes sack

May 14

went up town and back. killed a blue racer. in the afternoon hitched up and drove over to Davenport.

May 15

went into a mud hole and got Sot. traveled on the prarie except when we crossed a stream. wind blew hard. went through Grish town.

May 16

went through Morrisburg traveled on the prarie all day. nice day. shot at prarie hens 6 times killed 1

May 17

went through a large village. two houses and a store. Hydalpoopy traveled on the prarie all day. wind blew some.

May 18

rained this morning drove 3 miles and camped for the day fell in love with a gal bound for California.

May 19

rained all night last night all day today untill night then froze up. played cards half day.

May 10

cold cloudy weather roads bad helped Elk and Henry do nothing all day 17 wagons camped here tonight

May 21

nice day. saw a man from Walworth Co. knew Aunt Salestia. washed my clothes and ironed went to bed and dreamed of geting robed and murdered.

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May 22

windy and cool did not start waiting for rain. in the evening heard two ladies and gents play on brass instruments nice music

May 23

cloudy and warm improved my time as well as I could adoining nothing all day.

May 24

Started again on our journey. traveled on the prairie went through Grove City traveled 18 miles and camped on Turkey Creek 2 m. from Lewis

May 25

last night rained. then thundered showers. bad roads wet the things in the wagons took them out to dry. today very warm.

May 26

wind blows like two hells started out went through Lewis crossed the Nishabatang river Indian river traveled all day on the prairie until night came to a grove.

May 27

Nice and warm traveled all day on the prairie crossed the west branch of the Nishabatang and camped on silver Creek.

May 28

cold and rainy traveled 5 miles and camped at night . 136 head of cattle and 40 head of horses came with us bound for California.

May 29

went to council bluffs bought 6 lbs of tobacco Eli bought some things loaded up and drove across to the Missouri river and camped.

May 30

Crossed the river Missouri to Omaha on the ferry boat traveled on the prairie crossed the small Papalio and camped on the Great papalio. followed the telegraph

May 31

in the morning rainy hitched up and drove across the papalio about 5 oclock hove in sight of Elkhorn and the Platte river 15 m ahead drove across Elkhorn and camped.

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June 1

in the morning commenced raining did not travel went to see some squaws. and at 5 oclock night commenced raining and rained untill morning.

June 2

pleasant laid over went in swimming. at night there was 70 wagons camped here 60 mormon wagons. at night went to a mormon meeting.

June 3

started on our journey nice day roads very bad on the flat got sot took 6 yoke of oxen to draw the wagon out camped near Platt river crossed the rawhide went through Fremont.

June 4

very warm roads level and soft **Struck** the Platte river at the North bind drove three miles and camped.

June 5

nice day roads rather bad crossed shell Creek camped 2 miles from the river.

June 6

drove to the ferry crossed at Shins ferry one branch with the boat then forded one then crossed the main branch drove 6 m bad roads

June 7

in the forenoon drove 6 miles to clear Creek bad roads, in the afternoon very warm good roads drove 7 miles

June 8

good roads cool and cloudy drove 21 miles camped near Pawnee village where there had been 5000 Indians killed in one day 56 horses

June 9

did not travel nor do any thing else much went up on the hills saw lots of graves found beeds teeth ribs and C very windy

June 10

good weather and roads drove 20 miles saw a sage rabbit met 40 freight wagons with about 300 oxen

June 11

Saw 3 antelope chased them  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile shot at them 2 times but to no effect after we camped shot a jackas rabbit.

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June 12

very windy good road saw a buffalo calf at night as hard a thunder shower as I ever saw with some hail waded the river for wood

June 13

laid over in the forenoon in the afternoon drove 10 miles bad roads waded into the slue got willows for wood windy as the d-1

June 14

bad roads windy drove through ft. Kearney drove to Kearney City and camped. 15 mules stolen here last night 4 found 11 missing.

June 15

good roads went through Kearney City drove 17 miles waded across four branches of the Platte for wood

June 16

windy laid by went in swimming done much of nothing else all day at night showery

June 17

good road windy in the forenoon afternoon warm went in swimming crossed the Plum Creek

June 18

started out at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oclock traveled 12 miles camped near 14 sou wigwams saw 4 antelope started  $5\frac{1}{2}$  oclock drove 4 hours

June 19

very warm went in swimming traveled 20 miles in the night we had a platte river hail storm

June 20

drove 7 miles and camped for the day. got our wood for the plains

June 21

drove passed cotton wood springs where there were 40 Indian wigwams. afternoon met 500 indians passed about 75 more huts

June 22

passed Freemonts Slough met about 30 Indians drove 21 miles camped at Ocollins Bluffs

June 23

Sunday lay over did not do anything worth mentioning

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June 24

saw an antelope drove 20 miles

June 25

shot at an antelope broke the tube to my gun. camped near 5 or 6 Indian huts

June 26

passed more wigwams drove 12 miles before breakfast passed the Old California crossing drove 11 miles after 2 o'clock very windy all day

June 27

roads very sandy in some places drove 15 miles passed 12 Shian huts killed a rattlesnake

June 28

sandy roads the most of the time passed 144 freight wagons drove 15 miles

June 29

bad roads drove 18 miles passed Lillian springs. passed 300 hogs bound for denver in one drove

June 30

laid over. some of the time Slept and some of the time did not do anything else all day

July 1

bad roads drove 19 miles and camped near where a little girl got run over by a wagon and killed.

July 2

passed the drove of hogs again. drove 18 miles and camped within 3 miles of Beaver Creek 1 mile of the Junction

July 3

crossed Beaver Creek saw 4 antelopes and a few trees. traveled 18 miles or more

July 4

traveled 12 miles saw 20 antelopes 1 of the company shot one antelope. broke a wagon ex. went across the river saw the rock mountains over 100 miles off

July 5

traveled 15 miles passed Freemonts Orchard bad roads some of the way saw 29 antelope

July 6

Sandy road traveled 13 miles saw 21 antelopes



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- July 7  
lay over untill half passed 3 hitched up drove  $7\frac{1}{2}$   
miles Saw 2 antelopes
- July 8  
drove 12 miles saw about 25 antelopes killed one some  
of the company killed two more
- July 9  
passed ft saint Vrains ft Sebastian and upper town  
drove 17 miles saw 16 antelopes
- July 10  
traveled 15 miles camped within 9 miles of Denver City.
- July 11  
drove to Denver stayed there untill next night left  
our company drove out 3 miles and camped hard shower at  
night
- July 12  
drove 19 miles crossed cherry creek in denver today  
crossed dry creek drove up hill most all day
- July 13  
morning drove to Plum Creek followed it passed Castle  
Rock crossed it creek passed 2 saw mills
- July 14  
crossed the creek drove 4 miles crossed a branch cross-  
ed the divide between Platte and Arkansas rivers camped  
on Monument Creek
- July 15  
crossed Monument Creek drove 8 miles to Camp Creek  
crossed it at noon. Drove to Colorado folowed Fontain  
Qui Bouille camped on Monument Creek
- July 16  
Saw 12 antelope drove 12 miles crossed the Fon Tain  
Qui Bouille drove 4 miles camped in Badger Valley on  
little Fon Tain Qui Bouille
- July 17  
went with Eli and Henry hunted up their farm corners  
and made me a claim saw 1 deer
- July 18  
Worked for Eli driving breaking team
- July 19  
broke untill 3 o'clock rained played eucher with Henry
- July 20  
draged most all day out a few poles

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July 21

Wrote three letters

July 22

Went up to Colorado and got my claim recorded

July 23

Broke one acre of land on my farm all day

July 24

Chopped poles stakes and crotches all day

July 25

done the same thing only a little more so

July 26

Eli and me went up to the Pinery and got a load of poles saw 8 red deer.

July 27

went to the Pinery alone got a load of poles broke a wagon tire

July 28

Worked at my trade shoemaking a little

July 29

Henry and me went to Colorado after house logs drove part way home and left them.

July 30

Went back and got our loads

July 31

drawed poles for fence

August 1

drawed poles and stakes and crotches in the afternoon made fence

August 2

dug up post holes for a fence

August 3

made fence

August 4

went a hunting saw a rabbit and killed it

August 5

in the forenoon mowed in the afternoon doubled it up for Eli

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August 6

done the same

August 7

mowed in the forenoon in the afternoon helped draw  
hay

August 8

drawed hay

August 9

mowed all day

August 10

helped build stack yard fence

August 11

mended my shirt and pants

August 12

made fence in the afternoon mowed.

August 13

mowed hay

August 14

mowed in the forenoon in the afternoon rainey

August 15

made hay

August 16

helped draw hay

August 17

helped make bars

August 18

read all day

August 19

Started for Election went three miles came back in  
the afternoon worked a little

August 20

did not do anything read a little

August 21

rainy did not work patched my pants with antelope  
skin.

August 22

hunted for old grey all day.

August 23

Started after grey. traveled 3 miles found her.

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August 24

Went to the pinery helped get out house logs

August 25

read some went over to Henrys some

August 26

Went to the pinery helped get 3 loads of house logs

August 27

drawed hay (Mrs. Irene Benedict was born on this day  
in the covered wagon. No house yet built)

August 28

Drawed Humbats house and made a hen roost

August 29

dug a cellar in the forenoon in the afternoon didled  
at 2 or 3 kinds of work

August 30

helped make house went a pluming

August 31

went to the pinery with Eli got poles to cover his  
house.

September 1

got a paper from Horace read most all day

September 2

worked at Eli's house

September 3

worked at the house

September 4

done the same

September 5

Just the same thing

September 6

Went to the pinery

September 7

worked at the house

September 8

went after the doctor for Melvina

September 9

Stayed at Henrys helped make a chimney

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September 10  
went to Colorado got Mrs. Bowsby

September 11  
went after Sam B's wife

September 12  
helped Henry's folks

September 13  
took Sam's wife home

September 14  
Stayed at Henrys

September 15  
Stayed at Henrys

September 16  
Morning Melvina Died went over to Sams, and up to  
Willises and got a coffin made

September 17  
stayed at Henrys while the rest went to Colorado and  
buried Melvina

September 18  
in the afternoon mowed hay for Eli

For the rest of the fall he fenced some "pulled" corn  
"picked" corn and "husked" corn went after wood occasionally,  
and threshed buckwheat oats, wheat, and barley hunted a  
little, butchered a hog and a "beef critter" On Christmas  
"played ball a little went to a ball took the nicest gal  
in town". Several days "done much of nothing" On Dec. 15  
"run some pistol balls" and from then till Christmas worked  
several days on a dam and a ditch

December 31  
played ball in the evening went to a ball

January 1  
played ball in the evening went to another party.  
Played ball the rest of the week.