

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE TRIP FROM ILLINOIS TO OREGONWRITTEN BY JOHN LUPER, BROTHER OF MY GREAT GRANDFATHER

On April 4th 1853 Martin Luper, wife and four children in company with two brother, John and Jasper Luper, started from near Virgil, Fulton Co., Illinois to cross the plains bound for Oregon Territory.

- April 4th Camped at Uncle Isaac Butler's farm about 12 miles from our old home.
- " 5th Camped 15 miles West of Greenbush.
- " 6th Camped 2 miles West of Burlington.
- " 7th Camped at Mount Pleasant.
- " 8th Crossed Smoke River at 10 A. M. and camped 15 miles West of Mount Pleasant.
- " 9th Camped 4 miles West of Fairfield.
- " 10th Camped 15 miles West of Fairfield.
- " 11th Camped at Fremont.
- " 12th Camped 4 miles West of Fremont.
- " 13th Laid by on account of snow and wet.
- " 14th Camped 7 miles West of Oskaloosa.
- " 15th Camped at the Des Moines River.
- " 16th Camped at Knoxville.
- " 17th Camped at Knoxville for high water.
- " 18th Camped at Pleasantville.
- " 19th Camped 10 miles West of Pleasantville.
- " 20th Camped 1 mile North West of Indian Creek.
- " 21st Camped 29 Miles N.W. of Indian Creek.
- " 22nd Camped at Winterset Meadows.

- April 23rd Drove $\frac{1}{2}$ miles North of Winterset by 5 P. M. in wind and rain and mud.
- " 28th Camped at Winterset in a prairie.
- " 29th Camped 36 miles West of Winterset river.
- " 30th Camped $\frac{1}{2}$ miles West of Camp Grove.
- May 1st Camped at Nimitenic River. Indian town at river.
- " 2nd Camped 13 miles west of Indian town.
- " 3rd Camped at National River, 11 o'clock on the bridge.
- " 4th Camped 2 miles West of Silver Creek.
- " 5th Crossed the Missouri River at Canesville, there loaded in provisions enough to last us the rest of the journey.
(Council Bluffs, Grant,)
- " 6th Stop 1 mile West of the Missouri River. (Omaha)
- " 7th Camped 12 miles West of Missouri River.
- " 8th At Elk Horn, tributary of the Platte River.
- " 9th Ferried Elk Horn in our Wagon Box.
- " 10th Stopped 16 miles West of Elk Horn.
- " 11th Camped on Platte River at Shell Creek. There frost was 1 inch thick.
- " 12th On Loup Fork River. There we met teams going to their old homes.
- " 13th Camped at first bend of Loup Fork.
- " 14th Camped 10 miles West of Sandy Bluff.
- " 15th Camped 20 miles West of Sandy Bluff.
- " 16th Camped on account of high winds, half day.
- " 17th Camped at Prairie Creek.

- May 18th Camped at Wood Rat at noon; at night at Beaver Creek.
- " 19th Camped on a slough on Platte River called Ellen Creek.
- " 20th Camped at Platte River bend.
- " 21st Camped at Platte River again.
- " 22nd Camped on Platte River on Sandy; laid by half day to wash. Here Bub fell in Sandy and came near drowning
- " 23rd Camped 3 miles West of Platte River.
- " 24th Camped on Platte River again.
- " 25th Camped West of river.
- " 26th Camped on a slough near river.
- " 27th Camped 12 miles West of Ancient Bluff. At a distance these bluffs resemble Ancient Castles or Fortifications.
- " 28th Camped opposite Chimney Rock. It is on the south of the Platte.
- " 29th Still close to this Rock. It resembles a high chimney at a distance, and is 400 feet high.
- " 29th Camped opposite Camel Hill by Coal and Scotts Bluff. These at a distance look like a city or a fortification, and was at a distance 36 miles but looks a short way from us.
- " 30th Camped at Blue Rock. From here we get the first view of Laramie Peak and mountains. Black Hills 100 miles away and is 6500 feet above sea level and covered with snow.
- " 31st 6 miles off Rawhide Creek.
- June 1st Passed Ft. Laramie and camped 18 miles West of Ft. Laramie
- " 2nd Camped near Devils Creek.
- " 3rd Camped on Platte River.
- " 4th Camped on Platte River again.

- June 5th Camped on Platte River again.
- " 6th Laid by to wash.
- " 7th Camped on River near old ford.
- " 8th Camped up the River near the ford. No more water for 26 miles.
- " 9th Camped near Pine Bluff.
- " 10th Camped at Sage Springs Creek.
- " 11th Camped at Sweetwater at Independence Rock. This grand rock is 125 feet long and on it may be seen the names of thousands of travellers.
- " 12th Camped at Devils Gate, the greatest curiosity on the route; being a great canyon in the mountains in which a river flows with amazing rapidity; perpendicular walls 100 to 400 feet high.
- " 13th Camped on Sage Creek.
- " 14th Camped 4 miles west, and good feed on Sweetwater.
- " 15th No water nor grass.
- " 16th 3 miles west on Pacific Springs. First water of the Pacific Ocean. (Pacific Springs to Pacific River to Sandy River to Green River to Colorado River to Gulf of California to Pacific Ocean.)
(Grant)
To the junction of Ft. Hall and Salt Lake road
(12 miles.)
- June 16th Camped 2 miles west of Little Sandy.
- " 17th Stopped to wash, one half day, on Big Sandy.
- " 18th Crossed Big Sandy desert.

- June 19th To the River, a distance of 50 miles no grass or vegetation except sage. Camped near Sulphur Springs on Green River.
- " 20th Many persons used wagons for ferry: This stream is most dangerous on the route either to ford or ferry: much property and many lives lost here.
- " 21st Camped on a branch of Green River. (Here is where I got my big scare at the old Indian that wanted to look in the wagon. Jane)
- " 22nd Camped on branch of Green River. Ice half inch thick in the morning.
- " 23rd Laid by on this branch.
- " 24th Camped on a creek 8 miles west of mountains.
- " 25th Camped on Hams Fork of Green River.
- " 26th Camped 2 miles west of Balsam Fir and there laid by.
- " 27th Camped on Bear Valley Falls.
- " 28th Snow 6 inches deep.
- " 29th Camped on Willow Springs.
- " 30th Camped at Soda Springs, 6 miles to junction, and Subletts Hall Road. 5 miles from here you will find true guide to Oregon.
- July 1st Cross Neut Port* River.
- " 2nd Camped 7 miles west Neut Port River.
- " 3rd Camped on a spur of Hollowet Springs.
- " 4th Camped opposite Fort Hall.

(*Port Neuf, Grant)

- July 5th Mountains to right and American Falls on Snake
 " 6th River.
 " 7th Seems to be left blank, all asleep.
 " 8th Camped on a creek, had to ford on rocks.
 " 9th The road passes between the rocks.
 " 10th There had to camp at ford. No more grass for 25 miles
 to creek, water but no grass. We come to Snake River
 again and camp 2 miles below to Salmon Creek. Cross
 Snake River, plenty of grass and water, but no road on
 south side.
 " 11th Camped at Salmon Falls.
 " 12th Camped at Shoot Creek and ferried in our wagon beds.
 Stream rapid and difficult to cross.
 " 13th Camped on a creek.
 " 14th Camped at the same creek.
 " 15th Left Snake River. No more water for 18 miles.
 " 16th
 " 17th 10 miles off Raft River.
 " 18th Omitted (Grant)
 " 19th On a marsh.
 " 20th On a creek of the marsh.
 " 21st Camped on a creek, no name given.
 " 22nd Camped on a river, no name given.
 " 23rd & 24th On Goose Creek.

(Now Uncle's diary carries us back to the 13th where
 we pass several creeks, he says)

"14th Camp on dry creek and ascend steep hill then
 descend to Horse Creek and to hot boiling springs,
 then went on to Fort Boise and there laid by.

(Here dates are left out for several days. I remember
 crossing Snake River near Ft. Boise on some kind of
 a boat and swimming the cattle. Jane)

- July 26th Arrived on Malheur River.
- " 27th Laid by on Malheur River.
- " 28th Came on Birch Creek here is the last we see of Snake River.
- " 29th At second ford of Birch Creek.
- " 31st Camped at Burnt River.
- Aug. 1st At Grand Ronde Valley, most beautiful in Oregon, covered with clover.
- " 2nd At the foot of the Blue Mountains.
- " 3rd At Grand Ronde River.
- " 4th At Dry Creek.
- " 5th Camped at Muscay River.
- " 6th At foot of Blue Mountains. (West slope, Grant.)
- " 7th & 8th On Umatilla River.
- " 9th Camped 3 miles below the ford.
- " 10th On Umatilla River again.
- " 11th Camped on Butter Creek.
- " 12th Laid by on Butter Creek.
- " 13th Camped on Butter Creek.
- " 14th Laid by on Willow Creek (came to Rock Creek in the night but no grass.)
- " 15th Came to John Day River crossing.
- " 16th Came to John Day and laid by at Columbia River.
- " 17th That night laid by at Columbia River.
- " 18th At the Des Chutes River ferry, at Olneys.
- " 19th Camped at a Creek.
- " 20th Leaving the Creek and camped at Oak Hollow, the first Oaks we have seen since leaving the States.

- Aug. 22nd Camped at Indian town on Batchelors Creek.
- " 23rd At the Gate of the Cascade Mountains and laid by.
- " 24th Camped on the Des Chutes River; little or no grass there thru the mountains, here we cut grass and carried it to the stock.
- " 25th Near the Summit.
- " 26th On Zig Zag River.
- " 27th At the Devils Backbone.
- " 28th Over the Mountains and camp at Posters, at the foot of the Mountains. 1st farm in the Valley. Here the Emigrants can get what they want for themselves or their stock, all of which is needed after climbing the awful hills to Oregon City, here we saw the first apples and had a taste.

Dear Traveller:

I bid you adieu, hoping you have had a good journey across the "Plains."

Mules and horses stand the journey, with care. Many kill their teams hard driving and running the Buffalo. Oxen stand the journey well; are a little slower than horses.

Take nothing but best of stock and wagon; from 4 to 6 yoke on a wagon, with a light two horse wagon, well made, with good lock chains and plenty of provisions, 300 lbs to the man; also plenty of warm clothing and bedding. Not more than 1200 lbs. to the wagon.

The most troublesome Indians are the Omahas and the Pawnees. After crossing the Missouri they will beg every thing you have, if given. They will tell you they will protect you, but they are a theiving set. Listen to none. Never lay up on Platte River, but give stock time to eat.

Many drive hard on the start and break down their teams, before coming to the worst road. Poorest feed and worst road are last of the route, where teams are much exhausted.

With these few remarks, I bid you
Farewell,

John Luper

Memories of the Trip "Across The Plains."

By

Sarah Jane Luper Douglas.

Now as Uncle John Luper has crossed "The Plains," I will see what I can think of, or see if I can freshen up my memory of those childhood days out on The Plains where we saw Indians, Buffalo, Rocky Mountain Sheep, Sage, Hens, and Rabbits.

It was in the Spring of 1853 that I remember well of leaving the Old Home Place in McDonough Co., Illinois for Oregon.

My father had three large wagons loaded with provisions and clothing, besides a large spring wagon that Ma and we children rode in. This wagon was drawn by a span of large mares, and the large loaded wagons were drawn by oxen. We had several cows that were broke to yoke and hitched to wagons the same as the oxen, but I don't remember of seeing the cows put into the teams with the oxen.

After bidding all the friends and relatives good bye, we drove up to Uncle Isaac Butler's to stay that night and after supper there, we went over to my Grandfather Robinson's and there ate another supper. Though my supper there consisted mostly of biscuit, My! I can almost taste them yet.

Well, after bidding those relatives good bye in the morning, we started on and it seemed to me to be only two or three days until we reached the Mississippi River that we crossed at Burlington; there we stopped for a while. I remember that Ma went into the store and did some shopping, and I sat there in the wagon and watched the fashionably dresses women. It seemed to me that I never saw so many pretty women. I am surprised now, that our men did not stop there.

According to my childish fancy, they were something grand. Then on we travelled thru the state of Iowa, thru storm and mud. When almost that state we saw the first Indians out in their war paint. Great tall strapping big fellows, that made us children crawl back into the wagons and cover up our heads.

The Indians came out to meet the emigrants holding out their hands begging for money.

Before we reached the Missouri River we stopped at Council Bluffs to load in provisions which had been shipped on ahead from some point near our Old Home, I think Canton.

After Pa and the man had loaded in their freight, we drove on, and, I believe, crossed the Missouri River that afternoon late.

There on the Steamer that ferried us over, I saw the first Negro that I ever saw, and that scared me almost cold, for as he pulled our hack on deck I tho't he was going to pull us into the river. We were all cold that night for we had to crawl off to bed with just crackers and "hard tack" for our supper. I remember of complaining over that night's lodging too.

The river was rising fast and the men had to get some teams together and haul the wagons uproot of the river bottom into the woods that was higher land, and there tied their teams to the trees until morning.

There is the spot where Omaha now stands. Then after driving out into the open prairie, a pretty spot I tho't, they made a fire and cooked our breakfast.

I don't remember anything of importance for a long distance, only the long tedious journey. It was travel all day; stop and camp, cook and eat. The next day the same thing over, and so on to the end.

I can look back now and see so many little things that are only "memories", and I don't wonder that the men got too lazy to wash their faces when we struck camp even refused to wash before they ate. I remember one evening that Pa told them there was no supper for them unless they washed and cleaned up a little, and just think of the dust and heat, but we were all there, and had to keep moving, if it was tiresome and so it was.

I remember crossing Green River, a rough rocky stream, but the water was so low that we forded, and after crossing safely, I got the worst scare that I encountered on the whole trip, with an old Indian.

I was riding in Uncle John's wagon and an Indian came sneaking up along beside the wagon (as we were waiting for the other teams to come on) and the off ox, Old Buck, that would not let any of us children come near him, was so very kind that he let the old Indian come forward between him, and the wheel and look in and see what was inside of the wagon. Of course he saw a rifle strapped on each side of the wagons bows. Well, maybe I did not let out a yell, loud enough to raise the dead, on these Plains, and I gave Uncle John a scolding besides.

To this day I have no love for an Indian nor do I like to read "Indian Stories."

Well do I remember old Fort Larimie where Pa came near turing one of his men away for taking something that did not belong to him.

I wrote my name on the Independence Rock that Uncle John mentions in his diary, and I tried to do what I saw others do, except plunge into some stream and try to swim.

I also remember a big snow storm on Bear River, on the Fourth of July, I also remember the Hot Springs and crossing a small stream

where the water was hot enough to wash clothes in. One spring they called "Humbolt" which was huge like a great boiling kettle.

On the Platte River I saw a herd of Buffalo, plunge into the river and swim across to the other side. We heard thunder storms in that country that were hard to beat, so along in that country thunder storms and Indians.

One time as soon as our cattle were turned loose they swam across a stream and into the woods. They went seemingly on an island. I know I rode there day after day reading the Guide Books to see where would be our next camping place.

Those books would tell the names of streams and mention the camping places, if there was grass there or not.

Pa made it his business to walk on ahead towards evening to hunt up a camping place where there was water and grass, and wood if to be had.

Well, finally we drifted on over the Cascade Mountains into Oregon, or better yet, into the Willamette Valley, and on into Linn County, where Pa bought out Avery Smith's "Donation Claim." Paid him \$500.00 in gold, yes, in \$50.00 "Gold Slugs" that I never forgot.

There we were in a house again and how to have an earthen plate to eat on once more. Now you know all the rest, so good bye until we reach the other country.

Glenada, Lane County, Oregon
Dec. 16th, 1911

MY FAMILY

On my side my great, great, great grandfather was Joseph McMurtry of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He played the fife for the recruiting officers at Erie, Pennsylvania in 1812. He made a wagon jacket in 1779 and had two pocket knives, all of which I have in my possession. My sister, Katie, has a spinning wheel in her possession which was used at that time.

My great grandfather, James Martin Luper, born in 1817, married Margaret Robinson in 1841 and he died in 1903. Sarah Jane Luper, a daughter of James Luper, was born in 1843. She married James Sanders Douglas in 1860. He was born in 1833 in Switzerland County, Indiana and they crossed the plains in 1853. He entered ministry in 1859 at Gray's Harbor and was a local preacher until his death in 1914. They had three children, one of which was my mother, Lillian Douglas, and she was born September 22, 1862 at Centralia, Washington. She married Charles E. Russell on October 29, 1884 by Reverend T. L. Jones at Loraine, Oregon. They bore eight children: Lula, born November 18, 1885, at Loraine, Oregon; Clyde Douglas, born May 14, 1887 at Loraine, Oregon; Darius Ralph, born October 3, 1891 at Loraine, Oregon; Arthur Forrest, born March 29, 1893 at Loraine, Oregon; Katie (NMI) (Baby), born September 20, 1895 at Loraine, Oregon; Inez Bessie, born February 7, 1898 at Loraine, Oregon; James William, born June 27, 1901 at Eugene, Oregon; Eva (NMI), born March 27, 1903 at Thurston, Oregon.

My great grandfather, Banister Wade Douglas, was born in Richmond, Virginia. He was named after Virginia's first governor. He married in 1831, Sarah Sheets. Their son, James Sanders Douglas, was the husband of Sarah Jane Luper.

My father's side dates back to 1811 when Davis Bates Cartwright was born. He was a major in the Civil War. He married Nancy Matilda McCalister. Their son, James Westly, was killed in an Indian raid in 1855 on his way to Oregon. Catherine Nancy, one of eleven children, born September 16, 1837, married William Ralph Russell. He was born in September 11, 1827 in Jamesville, Ohio and died in 1900. He came to Oregon in 1848. They had five children, one of which is my father, Charles E. Russell, born August 14, 1860, at Salem, Oregon, who married Lillian Douglas, my mother. They were active pioneers. My mother died in 1921 and my father died in 1936.

Catherine Nancy Russell, my grandmother, crossed the plains with her parents to Lane County, Oregon in 1853 where she married William Russell. Mrs. Russell was an early pioneer, having crossed the plains in 1852 in an ox cart at the age of 16. Her brother, James Cartwright, was the pioneer who was killed by the Rogue River Indians in Cow Creek Canyon by a poisoned arrow in 1852. His father, D. B. Cartwright, founded the Cartwright stage station on the Suislaw River near Loraine when stages traveled from Portland to Roseburg on the old mountain route.

She and William Russell came to Medford in 1898. She is a cousin of Peter Cartwright, the famous pioneer Methodist minister of Illinois. She was one of the first telegraph operators between Sacramento and Portland in the days of stages and took the message of the assassination of President Lincoln off the wire, which message her children have.

I married Elizabeth Gradwohl (born July 3, 1901 at Walla Walla, Washington) on February 25, 1921 at Vancouver, Washington and we have three children: LeRoy, born December 23, 1922 at Eugene, Oregon; and twind, Loren and Raymond, born March 16, 1933 at Walla Walla, Washington.