

**"R. L. M."**

Letter

September 12

1849

Transcribed

June 2001

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[Written for the Citizen]  
**On the Road to California**

MR. EDITOR—

The following is an extract from a letter received from one of the Jackson company on the road to California.

NEAR FORT LARAMIE, July 7, 1849.

On the 8th of June, we arrived at Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river[sic]. Having bought our provisions, we crossed the Missouri on the 9th, and started for the plains. Before leaving Iowa, we exchanged our team of four horses for five yoke of oxen. On the morning of the 10th, we overtook our train, consisting of 29 men with 11 ox teams, all ready and willing to undergo any sacrifice for gold. The next day, when about 5 miles from the Horn river, which is a branch of the Platte, while we were passing through a valley, we suddenly encountered a band of some 300 Omaha warriors, decked with paint and feathers, and brandishing their warrior clubs most furiously. We instantly formed our line for defence[sic], and at the clicks of our rifles, the red skins galloped over the hills as fast as their horses could carry them.— Their object was probably to intimidate us, and oblige us to pay them a tribute for passing through their hunting grounds.

While we were crossing the Horn river, one of our men was taken with the cholera, and died in 4 hours after the attack. We buried his body on the banks of the river. It is not to be wondered at, that many persons returned to their homes from Independence, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs.— There has been more mortality among the emigrants, than has been reported generally. At the Horn we passed a large company of Mormons with 150 wagons, bound for the great city of Salt Lake, beyond the Pass of the Rocky Mountains. In crossing the Loup Fork of the Platte, we were two days wading up and down

the river, before we could find a fordable place for our wagons. The Loup has a quicksand bottom, and the channel changes as often as the sun rises and sets; consequently, every company is under the necessity of searching for a crossing. Dr. Graham of Adrian was drowned, while attempting to cross the river, the day before we arrived there.

We continued our course up the north side of the Platte, with no particular bad luck or accident. All the streams running into the Platte were very high, on account of the almost constant rains.— For the first 20 days' travel from Council Bluffs, we did not lie down in our tent a single night with dry clothes. But we found excellent feed for our teams, so that we were enabled to advance 20 or 25 miles a day. Our company have all good teams, and can travel much faster than the majority of emigrants. The whole line of the road on the north side of the Platte is marked by fresh graves of gold seekers. We understand that more have died along the south side than the north, probably because more emigrants took that route.— On some days we have passed from 15 to 20 new made graves, which would give one to a mile.— When a man dies, he is tumbled into a hastily dug grave, without any funeral ceremony, and his company goes on as if nothing had happened. Dr. K. and Mr. F. of Jackson are on the south side, a little ahead of our company. They pay \$80 for their passage through and found; which consists of tramping the whole distance on foot, and sleeping on the ground in a tent at night. There are four of us who have a team and tent by ourselves. We travel all day on foot of course, and drive oxen besides. But h[blot] are 482 miles from Council Bluffs. To-day [blot]e resting our cattle and washing our linens. In two days we shall be at Fort Laramie. The Jackson gold seekers are all in good health and feelings. Messrs. B., C., and M., are all well. We eat our

allowance of pork and flour regularly. We  
intend to be on the Sacramento by the 1st of  
October. This letter goes by the Mormon post.

Yours,

R. L. M.