

**THE GOLD RUSH DIARY OF
ELEAZER WHELOCK STOCKER**

1864

E.W. Stocker traveled from Benton Co., Iowa to Montana and Idaho. During the trip he kept this diary.

The original is in the possession of the family of Wheelock Wilson.

April 12th, 1864

Left home seven o'clock this morning enroute for Idaho, and after shipping our loading at Buckeye Station for Colo. we drove to Salt Creek and Nooned. After noon drove to Toledo Station and camped over night.

14th

Drove 25 miles and camped 5 miles west of Marshalltown got hay and bed cost .75

15th

Traveled over the prairie to Colo. got our loading and drove on 7 miles and stayed with Jed Ely had stable and hay \$.50

16th

Drove 20 miles crossed the Skunk River and staid with Mr. Justine 8 miles from Des Moines had hay and corn over Sunday cost 2.50

17th

Sunday laid over

18th

Drove into Des Moines got a break put onto the wagon got old scoop shovel and I wrote to Bettie went out 5 miles and camped on a creek running into the East fork of the Rackoon and paid for hay and corn 1.75

19th

Drove 25 miles and camped 5 miles west of Adel county seat of Dalias County on a small creek. wood plenty.

20th

Drove 30 miles and camped on a small creek 1 mile west of Delmaluttie no hay and very cold

21st

Drove 25 miles and camped on a small creek 6 miles west of Grove City and 66 miles from Omaha paid for corn \$.50 per bushel camped in the timber looks like rain

22nd

Came 18 miles and camped on a small stream 2 miles west of Lewis had good roads, and bot corn for \$.50 and hay for 1.00 per hundred. Bot bread for the first time since we left home. No rain today, but looked

very much like it to-night.

23rd

Started this morning 6 o'clock and drove 18 miles and camped on the West fork of the Nishney Bottany 29 miles from Omaha. Good camp for wood.

24th

Left camp at noon drove 8 miles and camped near Whore Camp. Wood and water plenty had eggs for supper with ham.

25

Left camp this morning at 7 o'clock drove 8 miles and arrived at Council Bluffs at 6 o'clock got corn for 95 cents shelled hay was 1.00 per 100 pounds

26th

Bought our provisions and crossed the Missouri drove to Omaha 4 miles and camped for the night.

27

Drove to Elkhorn 23 miles and camped on the west side, put one horse in the stable to-day paid 1.00

28

Came to-day 20 miles camped on the Vermont ... distance from Elkhorn time 2 o'clock ... traveling very hard had our horses stabled

29

From the Vermont House we drove to Shell Creek Ranch—distance 19 miles. Got there about noon and had our horses stabled ...

30

Came 21 miles and camped at noon on the Loup Fork at Colombus ... but could not cross.

May 1

Crosses Loup Fork and got over the first time tho some of the teams got stuck in the quick sand ... came 11 miles and put up at a ranch ... cooked in the house. Bought corn at 1.00.

2

Drove 28 miles. Camped on the ... Platte. Had to go ...

3

Drove 28 miles and camped at a ranch 44 miles from Kearney. Had to pay ... per pound for hay. Corn is worth ... per bushel. Has been very windy.

4

Drove 22 miles and camped at Mo(?) Ranch. Turned horses out to grass for the first time—stampeded and ran back 2 miles.

5

Drove 4 miles past Kearney and camped on the Platte. Got wood. It had rained all the afternoon Stand guard for the first to-night.

6

Left camp and nooned in Elm Creek—distance 21 miles. Afternoon drove 8 miles and camped on Buffalo Creek. ... Buffalo and antelope have been seen to-day and shot at by some of the boys but none killed. They are very wild and poor, that is the buffalo.

7

Came in to camp after traveling 28 miles at 6 o'clock. had a real awful Platte thunderstorm last night. Started after 1 o'clock and lasted until 4 o'clock ... on the Platte.

8

To-day has been warm—road very bad. Came 4 miles and camped on the Platte. Put our horses on an island to graze on old grass. Came into camp at 10:30 a.m.

9

Came 23 miles and camped at a big spring on the left of the road 95 miles above Kearney. The warmest day since we left home. Road bad—sand and sloughs. No wood to-night. Grass poor. Looks like rain. I stood guard last night for the first time.

10

Drove 29 miles and camped on North Platte opposite the old California Crossing on the South Platte River. Have had very hard road sand and mud ... snowdrifts. Had a severe windstorm last night with a freeze. This is the place where 10 years ago, in company with Snow and some, mi??ic boys we killed a buffalo,

packed it over to the South Fork and jerked it with buffalo chips.

11

Drove 15 miles. Roads very bad most of the way over deep sand bluffs and camped on Bluff Creek, at 2 o'clock.

12

To-day the road followed 'round the bluffs, interspersed with sand swamps about small creeks and very little grass and we came 22 miles. Camped on Rattlesnake Creek. Fine growing weather.

13

Came 16 miles. Had a good deal of heavy sand. Crossed several creeks and camped on Wolf Creek where it empties into the Platte. A ranch of Indians (Sioux) about 100 yards up the creek.

14

Came 20 miles. Passed Asp Hollow and Castle Bluffs and camped on Sand Hill Creek about 1/2 mile from the Platte. Saw any amount of Indians. Had good roads with the exception of a couple hours in the morning which was over sand ridges. Looks like rain.

15

Came 22 miles and camped on the Platte. Our wood was plentiful ... saw Indians on the south side of river. Passed Indian village to our left. Think we can see Chimney Rock.

16

Drove 26 miles and camped opposite Court House Rock. Had a good deal of heavy sand. Today has been very windy—looked like a Platte storm. We have been in sight of Chimney Rock all day and it is still 15 miles from us. It has just commenced raining—7 o'clock.

17

Drove 25 miles and camped on the Platte 10 miles west of Chimney Rock. Road good had a light shower of rain last night, and it had been cloudy and windy all day. Grass not very good-, say Indians today

18

Drove 25 miles past Scott's Bluff's

and Spring Creek Roads good- Rained this morning so that we did not leave camp till 8 o'clock-, came through an Indian village this afternoon-, had a fight in camp last night-, no one killed tho bowey knife and ax were used-, one man came off with a black eye.

19

Came 23 miles and camped on Rawhide Creek, road in the afternoon sandy- good in the forenoon-, had plenty of wood to cook with for the first time since we left Buffalo Creek.

20

Made 10 miles past Laramie-, went over to the post office expecting to get letters from home but was disappointed have not heard from anyone since I left-, had a hail storm lasted about an hour

21

Drove 28 miles and camped at Alder Plains in the Black Hills Poor road in the forenoon passable in the afternoon- had good grass and wood

22

Stood guard last night- drove 18 miles to-day and camped on the Platte- roads good grass just middling

23

Drove 21 miles and camped on the Platte afternoon road heavy with sand and hills. Grass good. wood plenty.

24

Drove 20 miles and camped on the Platte. grass good first seven miles hilly. the balance of the way low wet land and some sand.

25

Came 18 miles camped on a slough close to the Platte 6 miles above the mouth of Deer Creek. Grass just middling- wood plenty. Finished the butter we brought from home.

26

Came 20 miles past both bridges and camped on the Platte 2 miles above the upper bridge- snow in the hills to our left. past about 1000 Rapaho where they had 150 lodges.

27

Came 8 miles, camped at the Red Brathy

28

Laid by at Red Buttes

29

Still at Red Buttes

30

Drove 4 miles. Then took Bridger's Road to Bannack by the way of Big Horn Mountains came on Bridgers Road 10 miles and camped on Sage Creek- Grass and water poor wood sage brush, road good travel today with Jacob's Train consisting of 65 waggons and 215 men

31

Cross Sage Creek 3 miles from our camp last night. water and grass plenty. From crossing of Sage to Lost Creek 19 miles grass poor water down mean wood Sage brush Roads over rolling prairie, good rained last night nearly all night. been cloudy and cold- snow in sight to our left- prairie covered with low sage brush

June 1st 1864

Drove 18 miles and camped on a dry creek no water for stock made out to get enough for cooking- grass just middling sage brush plenty road been good- Joe Appell killed an antelope this morning, 2 buffalo killed this afternoon- I brought in camp

2

Drove 15 miles and camped on dry fork of Wind River grass and water scarce- sage brush poor- Joe killed a buffalo calf, roads good we can see snow on 3 sides of us

3

Drove 9 miles and crossed a small creek- wood and water plenty road good, after crossing creek drove 5 miles and camped on a creek running into dry fork of Wind River from the north- wood plenty, grass poor road hilly

4

Drove 6 miles and camped on A sa??? Creed 6 miles from summit- grass good willows and sage brush

... roads hilly- we are now between A
sper of Bighorn Powder River
Mountains- the low hills on both
sides have a burnt reddish
appearance

5

Pass Creek at noon and drove over
the hills 8 miles and camped on the
same creek near its head- road bad
grass good and plenty of dry willows
for fuel. Prospected on the creek
and found nary spec

6

Crossed the divide and struck the
head of a small creek and followed it
down 9 miles and camped in the
sage brush. Grass poor - forenoon
almighty hilly and craggy. Afternoon
some better. So I heard a buffalo
this evening any number of antelope
in sight all day.

7

Continued down the creek 15 miles
and camped on the Bighorn River
just below the mouth of the Wind
River- grass good and wood plenty-
found a flat boat hawled up on the
west bank of the river and buried in
the sand by Bridger's Company who
left here on Saturday last.

8

Commenced crossing the Bighorn at
5 o'clock in the morning. Crossed
the whole train consisting of 67
waggons- swam through the mules
and horses and got through at 4
o'clock. The Bighorn is at this place
120 yards in width.

9

Followed down the river 14 miles and
camped on the bluffs. Drove stock
down in a bend in the river- road
been over the bluffs most of the day
and rough and hilly. The river runs
here a little North of East.

10

The road today has been down the
Bighorn valley and very good. grass
poor sage and grease brush plenty.
Some cottonwood trees along the
river bank, came 10 miles and
camped at noon, laid by this
afternoon account of a little girl who
is sick. Don't think she will live.

11

Laid by on account of Mrs.
Needham's little girl being sick. She
died this afternoon and will be buried
in the morning at 5 o'clock. Orrle A.
Needhams was 4 years and six
months old. Her mother takes her
death very hard.

12

Started at 5 o'clock buried little Orril
about 1/2 mile from camp at the site
of the main road. Drove 25 miles
and camped on the Big Horn again
grass good, wood plenty.

13

Drove down the river 3 miles then
struck off through the bluffs to Gray
Bull (a stream about 10 rods wide
emptying into the Big Horn) Got to
the river crossed and camped on the
north bank at 2 and 1/2 P.M.
Distanct taveied today, in ail, 20
miles. Today in Louise birthday she
is three years old. Oh! How I would
like to see her.

14

Followed up the north bend of the
Gray Bull 16 miles and camped at
the point where the road leaves the
river and takes across the country to
Clarke Fork of the Yellowstone.
Wood and grass plenty, water good.
At noon we saw a herd of buffalo and
that is the last we saw of them.

15

Left camp this morning at 7 o'clock
and drove 28 miles over a ruff and
barren country without water or
grass. And camped on Stinking
River with wood aplenty, but no grass
at all. Saw any amount of buffalo.
One man in hunting them got
throwed from his horse. The horse
took in ater the buffalo and that is
the last we saw of him.

16

Started at daylight this morning
drove 4 miles and turned our stock
out to grass on the bluffs. Where
there was plenty of bunch grass.
Remained there untill 2 o'clock P M
then drove six miles down the river
and camped in the timber grass
poor. Saw some of Bridger's
company. They are incamped about
2 miles from us down the river and
some ...

17

Drove 2 miles crossed the Stinking
River. Very bad place to ford. One
man lost an ox in crossing. Camped
at as soon as we got over the river,
Bridgers Company are in camp 80
rods from us down the river. A man
by the name of Greene from Missouri
died this afternoon and was buried.

18

Remained in camp all day A
company of 100 waggons caught up
with us today

19

Left Stinking River this morning at 9
o'clock and struck across the hills.
Camped on a small mountain stream
heading in Pryors Gap. Distance
today 15 miles. grass poor, no wood
water good. 40 men left our
company this morning to go and
prospect the Big Horn Mountains and
then meet us in Yellowstone in 10
days. They were joined by 60 men
out of Bridgers Company and some
30 men out of a company that
came in yesterday making in all a
130 men.

20

Drove up the creek 7 miles and
camped for the day on good grass.
Some of the boys went into the hills
prospecting, dont think they will find
anything. Antelope and Elk they
maybe a bear.

21

Followed up the creek 7 miles.
Stoperd and got dinner and a man
crossed through Pryors Gap to
Clarkes Fork of Yellowstone
distrance 11 miles and camped for
the next night with plenty of grass
and wood. Water good. Our train
was thrown into confusion today, with
the report of an Indian fight we met
about 300 Flathead Indians on a
buffalo hunt. We had to let them
hunt.

22

Been in camp all day. One of our
company caught a young elk we
prospected on the side of the river
top gravel found color in every pan.

23

We crossed Clarkes Fork and drove
down the river 6 miles and camped

with the intention of staying until the boys got back from prospecting grass is good here is where the road leaves the river to start for Yellowstone.

24

Laid in camp all day waiting for the prospectors.

25

Still in camp

26

Not left our camp yet on Clarks Fork yet.

27

Moved camp down the river 1/2 a mile. Still waiting for the boys.

28

Still in camp no prospectors yet.

29

Struck camp this morning at 7 o'clock drove 10 miles and camped for noon on a divide creek emptying into Clarks Fork where one half of the company left us (consisting of 38 waggons) and went on. Afternoon drove 3 miles up the creek and camped with they determination to wait for the boys. Had trout for supper.

30

Laid over again today. Had a rain stromed this afternoon. The prospectors came in from Big Horn Mountains this afternoon. They had been living on fresh meat without bread or salt for the last three days they found gold but not in pay quantity so tomorrow we shall start for Yellowstone if nothing happens. A grizzely bear ran through camp and was killed.

July 1

Drove up Divide Creek 15 miles and camped for noon. Plenty of wood and grass all the way. Afternoon drove over the Divide 10 miles and camped on a small creek running into the Yellowstone. Grass good.

2

Drove 3 miles to Grass Creek. Crossed above the fork from there to Yellowstone 12 miles where we nooned. Afternoon drove 15 miles

and camped in a canyon running into Yellowstone after following it down about 3 miles.

3

Drove down the canyon 7 miles to the valley of the Yellowstone. then up the valley 6 miles and camped for noon on a small grove of cottonwood on the bank of the river. Afternoon continued up the valley 12 miles and camped on the west bank of the Nezperce 1 mile from where it empties into the Yellowstone.

4th of July

Followed up the Yellowstone 12 miles and crossed to the north side. Drove 1 mile and camped on a small creek. Saw a lot of Crow Indians.

5

Left the Yellowstone for 10 miles and traveled over very rough road through the hills. Camped on the river for dinner. and then left the Bridger Road with Bridger 6 miles ahead of us. and struck off in company with 12 waggons on a new route with John Jacobs for a guide. Drove 2 miles on new route and camped 100 yards of creek. Had trout for supper and got enough for breakfast- wish I could send a mess of them home to Bettie and Louise

6

Drove 10 miles over rough and rugged road. Came down 1 hill that was most damnable the worst hill to run a wagon down I ever saw. Camped on 25 yard Creek. 3 miles from Yellowstone. Had a heavy snowstorm in the mountains last night. Stayed morning I should think by the looks that the snow must have been 3 or 4 inches in depth. good grass and water ...

7

Continued up 25 yard Creek 12 miles then crossed a divide and nooned on the headwaters of the Gallatin River. Afternoon took over another road over rough and rugged road 10 miles. and camped on the east fork of the Gallatin- grass first rate- we have had to make our own road for the last two days.

9

Left camp at sunrise drove 35 miles

and camped on a small creek within 7 miles of Virginia City- the road has been hilly but with that exception has been hilly.

August 10th

Witnessed an Indian battle between the Boma and the Flatheads at the junction of the roads leading from Salt Lake to Bannock and Virginia City

Dutchoven
 Shovel
 Honey
 Rice
 Pint and 2 quart
 Masur
 Turpentine
 Tumblers
 Salt
 Soap
 Matches
 Paper and ink
 Powder and lead
 Crackers
 Castor oil
 4 sacks Flour 3.00
 15 lb. Coffee 93
 10 lb Dried Fruit 12 1/2
 5 lb Tea 1.75
 25 lb sugar .22
 150 lb Bacon 12 1/2
 4 saleratus
 2 Acid
 1/4 bush. Beans
 150 feet ropes 28
 Tent
 Corn
 3# Almonds
 10 gal. Kegg
 2 pans
 1 Camp Kettle

20 lbs Flour	4.00
3 Coffee	1.95
1/2 Tea	1.00
10 boxes yeast	1.80
6 lb peaches	3.90
11 lb Bacon	4.95
9 lb crackers	2.40
2 lb Blackberry	5.77
4 lb sugar	<u>2.00</u>
	\$23.80

August 20

1 lb Butter	1.00
28 rice 12	6.00
20 lb Bacon	10.00
40 lb Cornmeal	10.00
? Flour	6.40
? Beans	7.50

July 24th paid for milk 80 cents
 July 29th Milk 2.50

It is assumed that a James Waton, 37 Park Row, accompanied Stocker on this trip. Figures indicate that costs of the trip were divided into three parts.