

(B-556-7d)

Diary of Col. Robert D. Clarke

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Tuesday, May 12, 1868.

The flowers of the country above Phil Kearney.

Wild roses very abundant & fragrant. A flower, white, resembling the hibiscus, somewhat like a lily, but not tubular, and scentless.

A rich pink flower, something like phlox, but the petals striated.

Thursday, June 4, 1868.

On a walk to the Bluff with ⁶⁶ Shirley, noticed the beautiful pea flower, sweet scented too, the blue bell, the wild cherry and current in blossom.

Friday, June 5, 1868.

Leaving camp on the mail station on the Chug at 7:10 A. M. The weather is very cold, an overcoat necessary and we close up the ambulance on the windward side. It rains as we are going into camp, about 12-25. It proves but a shower, and the temperature becomes warmer, as the sun comes out. It is very pleasant until evening, and we improve the time fishing. Catch chubs, humpbacks, silversides. No trout. Cast up the rolls of payment at Russell & Horse Creek. It begins raining again at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ P. M. A slight shower.

While at camp last evening and this morning, a frog in the marsh, utters a most singular noise. It consisted of 4 or 5 notes, and resembled the working of a pump.

Tuesday, June 9, 1868.

Leaving our camp at Little Cottonwood at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. The morning is heavy and misty until 9. Then the veil lifts and the sun shines out clear and warm. Mr. Layton loans me his horse, and I have a pleasant ride to Horse Shoe, which we reach at 11.

Here, although so early in Tuesday, we go into camp and have dinner and fiesta, the sun glaring upon our table. Towards evening a fine thunder shower, which we had observed advancing from Laramie Peak, breaks upon us. It is soon over, and the evening is fresh and delightful. The cavalry amuses themselves with acrobatic performances. The sun sets with a tonnage of saffron clouds. Laramie Peak bears off some 40 to 50 miles away to the S. W. It sits like a cloud of andige on the horizon. The box elders on the Horse Shoe are very picturesque.

Wednesday, June 10, 1868.

A fine thunder shower this afternoon while in camp.

Thursday, June 11, 1868.

Met near LaMonte, about 8 miles east, about 500 Arrapahoes going to ^{Laramie} Louisiana. It is about half of one village, and we are told we shall meet the other half tomorrow.

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Men, women, children, horses, tepee poles & skins, colts and dogs, of the usual lupine aspect. Several old men, very aged and grayheaded, are drawn upon the litters formed of ten poles. Some of the women and many of the children are borne in this way. They are all pretty well clad, a number of the men in some articles of army clothes. One woman has a dress made of a flour sack, with the brand, "Five Handily Horn" upon her back. Many of the women, as they passed, with that blessed modesty which the world over characterizes the sex, covered their faces with one hand.

When we get to a camp one of the men kills a deer, and all come. Sends us a steak.

Friday, June 12, 1868.

Laramie Peak about south from LaBonte. We proceed at 5:05 A. M. to Fetterman. The most desolate country I have ever seen from LaBonte. I ride on Lt. Shirley's horse in the hot sun from L.B. to the Springs, about half way.

Saturday, June 13, 1868.

Commence my payment about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9, and conclude in about 2 hours, with the 4 Cos. but occupied the whole day. Col. Step permits me to camp at the post.

Sunday, June 14, 1868.

We leave Fetterman at 7 A. M. but are detained at the ferry until 9. The road is over the same sands and desolate country as on the other side of Fetterman. We camp on Sage Creek, 16 miles, and find some water. The road gets away from the Platte some 10 miles or more, and perhaps 35 from the mts. We saw one antelope today, the only wild game. There has been but little rain or snow this spring and the whole country is barren. There is nothing for game to subsist on. There is nothing for game to subsist on. Passed today through a heavy patch of sand about 2 miles long.

Monday, June 15, 1868.

Today moved from Sage Creek at 6 A. M. and reached camp on South Cheyenne at 11 A. M., 16 miles. The spot a very favorable one for Indian attacks, and Capt. News lost his mules, 100, at this place. There is a fine grove of cottonwoods on the creek, and a sufficient supply of water, but not a running stream. A bull-whacker going down for water here once, says my driver. McBeever was scalped by the Indians. About 8 or 9 miles east, before ascending the high ridge from whence we see the Pumpkin Buttes, the sage bushes appear to me suddenly out, and the country is covered with grass. It is short everywhere, however, compared with what we found last fall. We found a little water near Browner's Springs, $\frac{1}{2}$ miles east. The day has been very windy & dusty. The sand flying everywhere. A heavy storm in the evening off to the northwest.

Tuesday, June 16, 1868.

The wind had been blowing almost a full gale all day, and while the black cloud in the direction of Reno, alive with electric fires, was breaking then, another of similar appearance was hanging over the mountains to the S.W. It burst upon us after retiring, about 9 o'clock, in rain, hail, thunder & lightning, and the uproar continued till midnight.

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This morning the face of the country appears much refreshed. I rode Lt. Shirley's horse from our camp at South Cheyenne to Humphreyville's camp, where there is plenty of good water. We rose at 4 and got off at 5 1/2 A. M. A heavy mist lasts some time, but soon gave way to the bright sun and pleasant breeze. We camped at 11 1/2 A. M. at Wind River, first fork. Have good grass, and get water by digging holes. The wind blows almost a gale during the P. M.

Saturday, June 20, 1868.

On account of weekly reports and illness of Lt. Neff, concluded to remain over today.

Sunday, June 21, 1868.

Leave Reno this morning about 6. Travel slowly, having taken on fresh forage. After leaving the Dry Fork, about 10 miles from Reno, the country soon begins to improve. The sage ceases almost entirely, as well as the prickly pear, and the gentle undulating sun face is everywhere. Comes with grass. We found water at the Dry Fork. The Crazywoman is quite full, though not embarrassing in the transit. We camp in full view of the Big Horn Mountains. The highest of the whole mountain range from Cheyenne to Ft. Smith. Van Land estimates their height at 4,000 feet above the plains. They are distant about 30 miles from Reno, and about 6 or 8 from our camp. This a bad locality for Indians. Lt. having been killed here while looking for a camp. The timber is heavy growth of cottonwood, though sparse.

Monday, June 22, 1868.

Leave camp at Crazywoman at 5 A. M. and reach Buffalo Wallow, 10 miles by 9. There is more water here now than last fall. Though we travel all the time in the direction of the Big Horn, it still seems to recede, and when at 1 p.m. we get into camp on the Clear Fork of Powder River, it is off to our south still some 20 miles, the snowy tops. The scenery where we camp is unsurpassed. The creek, a wild mountain torrent, helluoid & cold, rushes down with a roar which fills the air. The Bluffs to the east & north, are of a mountain red color. A rich growth of grass compass the valley of the Clear Fork. The Big Horn towers up to the clouds, covered with snow. Six Cheyennes ride up to our camp in the afternoon and create some little excitement.

Saturday, June 27, 1868.

Leave Ft. Phil Kearney this morning at 7, and proceed by the new road to Ft. Smith. Reach Little Horse Creek at 10 A. M. and go into camp. Saw a solitary buffalo near the mountains a short distance before reaching the creek. This one of the most beautiful spots on the road. The mountain scenery very fine, and the plains a plateau of verdure spreading for miles away. Goose Creek winding its sculpturative course through it, fringed with cottonwoods & boulders & c. Take the height of the mountain by a proportion and estimate of the distance. Find it about 3,000 feet above the general level.

Sunday, June 28, 1868.

Arose this morning at 4, and having breakfast, broke up camp at 5, and got under way. Passed Big ^orade, a fine large & swift stream of clear cold, delicious

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water, at 10 o'clock. Then we pass Wolf Creek, also a fine stream, about 4 miles, and 3 miles further Little Tongue River, and at 4 miles further reach Big Tongue River, whole distance today 23 miles. Have seen no Indians. Met the mail carrier, Mr. Harwood, from Ft. Smith, which he left last evening, soon after crossing Goose Creek. 2 buffalo were seen today. The beauty of the valleys of all these Sherman today. Very striking, particularly at Big Goose and Little Tongue. The heavy timber on Big Tongue. The mountains carrying bold & fine. Some of the men caught trout in the streams.

Saturday, July 4, 1868.

The prosequence of previous arrangements, we make a picknick at the Little Canon of the Big Horn Mountains. Maj. & Mrs. Bush, Capt. & Mrs. Hishart, Lieut & Mrs. Miller, Lieut. Matson, Mr. Smith and Mr. Sharrow with 3 ambulances and cavalry escort. We find a cavern, very ~~convenient~~ for our purpose, under the bluff, and a little above the trail down to the stream. We have quite a pleasant celebration of the day. I rode a horseback, with Lt. Matson, who shot with a Springfield gun at 500 yds. the finest antelope I have ever seen. His weight about 160.

The day is very beautiful, and we get back at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$, having visited with Capt. Hishart, the post cemetery, a stone wall enclosure with an iron gate, and grass plot, and monument. Lt. Jeff continues without such change, and very weak.

Thursday, July 9, 1868.

Leave Fort C. F. Smith this morning for our return. Lt. Jeff of the cavalry escort having died suddenly. Capt. Shirley was appointed, on my application, to take charge of the escort and attend near my scheme. We get off at 7 A. M. and travel until 6 P. M. when we get into camp at Grass Lodge. The grass somewhat dried since we went up, but the views of the country magnificent. The red sandstone crops out in picturesque bluffs in the Big Horn Mountains, and the most beautiful coppice runs up the little valleys of the streams and mountain brooks. Saw only one buffalo today.

The remains of Lt. Jeff are with us in charge of Capt. Shirley.

Friday, July 10, 1868.

Leave Grass Lodge Creek at 6 A. M. having been delayed by McKinzie's horse escaping. It rains on the Big Horn from an early hour, and the rainbow appears occasionally in the sun rise. The rain reaches us about 9 A. M. while at the Little Horse. It is cool enough to have my over coat over my shoulders until we reach camp at Tongue River. Mr. Leighton and Mr. Sharrow each catch a fine string of fish. Salmon, trout and mack? Our hunters get a grisly bear this P. M. We saw several buffalo, but failed to get any.

Wednesday, July 15, 1868.

Leave Fort Phil Kearney at 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. and reach Clear Creek at 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ P. M. A beautiful day & most pleasant weather. The snow lies on the tops of the Big Horn the whole day along.

Meet Lieut. McCalla with Co. C. 27th Wefy. at the camp at Clear Creek, and pay it.

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Thursday, July 16, 1868.

At Crazywoman at 1 P. M. having left Clear Creek at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. It rains a little about 3 P. M. Have a heavy shower of rain in the evening and at night, with the most beautiful, vivid & extra fine displays of electricity. Little wind.

Friday, July 17, 1868.

Make the post of Ft. Reno by 1 P. M. Make up the rolls and pay the troops this evening.

Saturday, July 18, 1868.

Transacking miscellaneous business today.

Sunday, July 19, 1868.

Just as we are ready to pack the wagons, and move from Reno, we have an alarm of Indians. Capt. Shirley is talking with men at the time, and starts for his command. I take position on the N.W. bastions with my glass. The Indians, mounted, seem to come over every bluff, and from every grain. They are pursued by the cavalry, without much regard to order, to the bluff. There it is found that they are numerous, and the cavalry retreat before them. I counted 40 Indians on horses, and the number was probably twice as many. The cavalry again made a stand some half a mile from the post, and the Indians by degrees again retire. Peach, one of our best men, is killed. His body is afterwards recovered, horribly mutilated. The head scalped and cut off, and arrows sticking in him. Another man is shot with an arrow through the flesh of the shoulder, and rides to the post with it sticking in him.

Tuesday, July 21, 1868.

Leave camp near Antelope Springs at $\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 A. M. and rest at Humphreyville's Springs. Hence to Brown's Springs, 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles in all. McKeever's story of the massacre here July 3rd, 1866. There were 75 wagons and a number of emigrant families. Capt. Lloyd was the leader. Ten men out of the 12 who went to fight the 1 Indians were killed. The old Cheyenne, with broken back. Three different storms in sight today. Excessively warm in the middle of the day, but cool in the evening. See the Big Horn, the P. Buttes and Laramie Peak all at once today.

Pass a train bound up of 30 wagons at Sage Creek. Arrive at Fetterman at 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock P. M. and camped on the parade ground. My escort is sent by Col. Dye on an order from Gen. R. Egan, with Lt. Gregg & Goodwins Co. after a thieving Indian party at Sweetwater. This belongs to Wednesday.

Thursday, July 23, 1868.

Lying at the post today, making up the rolls.