

Argus - Oct 16 - 1858 - Dr James Mc Bride letter - with him set over Bailey
 Woods & McClure (letter called a "Eugene merchant" -
 Woods was a Mc Minnille attorney (Apposition Bancroft N) O II 479. note 27.
 (Aug 1858 James Mc Bride letter a
 second B B et - 26 men - month
 search - no result

A PROSPECTING TRIP UP THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE

WILLAMETTE
 (Diary of A. S. McClure, August 20 - September 26, 1858)

37 26 not early
 Argus Sept 1858
 Argus has "Russ & Yankel in
 party but Mc Bride letter
 demerit this - 16024

A Prospecting Tour up the Middle Fork of the Willamette, intending to Skirt the Des Chutes, Prospecting the West and East branches of the DesChutes. August 20th to September 26th, 1858.

August 20, 1858. (First day). Left Eugene City about eleven o'clock A.M., twenty-seven in number,

~~Mc~~ ^{Van Lan} ~~Thompson~~ - Dr. Thompson. Mc Green
 — Murphy — J. Roland Senior: Geo. S. Wood, Jason (?) Peters
 A. S. McClure, ^{James} Mc Bride, E. Daniels (?) — ^{Henry} ~~Henry~~
 travelling in detached bodies about fifteen miles apart, a portion of the company stopping near Mr. John Stoops, (or Sloops?), and the remainder scattered at different points above them.

James
 Russell
 with Garrison
 Mrs. Corral (?)
 Payne with Garrison 1853 (?)

August 21. (Second day). The company concentrated today. Travelled about twenty-eight miles to Big Prairie, crossing the river six times. Nothing worthy of remark occurred. Camped at dark about the middle of the prairie.

August 22. (Third day). Moved one mile today to head of the prairie. The majority considering it necessary, officers were elected today, consisting of McBride, captain and ^(James) Daniels (?) ord. sergeant. No ----- being deemed actually indispensable. This prairie is about

This group undoubtedly sought the "Blue Bucket" mine -
 Henry Harlow was in it

-----miles long, east and west, and about one-half -----wide in its widest part. The soil is gravelly and covered with bunch grass of a rich quality. It is situated on the right, or north, bank of the Willamette. The hills on the north look bald and give the appearance of good grass (bunch); those on the south are high, rugged and heavily timbered.

Monday, August 23. (Fourth day). Started at seven o'clock A.M. Travelled about sixteen miles, crossing the river twelve times. The bottom is narrow and heavily timbered. Cedar, fir and pine of gigantic growth. A little scrubby oak on the adjacent hills. Vine-maple and yew compose a part of the dense copses of undergrowth. Camped on the right bank of a stream at the foot of a bald hill, where our horses had but scanty subsistence.

Tuesday, August 24. (Fifth day). Today our way led up the north branch of the Middle Fork, crossing the river twice soon after starting. For six miles the way led through open pine ----- of red ----- . Twelve miles farther through heavy timber and thick ----- led us to the summit. The summit hill is long (?) and steep. Summit Prairie is not on the summit, as would seem from the name, but a distance of one, two or three miles. It is rather difficult while travelling to tell exactly when the culminating point is reached. The camp is two miles south of Diamond's Peak. Evening cool and comfortable.

Wednesday, August 25. (Sixth day.) The mountain scenery upon starting is beautiful and sublime beyond description. Diamond's Peak on the north and three other snowy peaks on the south forming an obtuse angled triangle, and the whole country interspersed with small lakes, present a subject which language, art and even imagination will scarcely do justice to. Five miles brought us in sight of a fine lake, lying east of Diamond's Peak and from northeast to southwest about five miles in

(Cressut Lake)

(2) - front
Emigrant
Gulch
Front (?)

near Pine openings

Pine openings (?)

(Big marsh creek)

length and two in breadth. Five miles more brought us to a small stream of water, running northerly. Water poor for a mountain region, grass of a fair quality. Eight miles more over a poor, uneven country, crossing the above-named stream, brought us to a glade of prairie on same stream. Very good grass, water better. South of camp there is a ridge of black basaltic rock, lying from northeast to south west and giving evidence from the distance of having once been subjected to volcanic action. North of camp about one and one-half miles lies a huge pile of basaltic rock, seemingly of the above formation and strongly indicative of former volcanic action.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26. (Seventh day). Our trail today led us over a

part of the country exceedingly barren. Fine timber of large size. The soil, if soil it may be called, is composed of coarse, light-colored sand. Travelled about twenty-five miles down the stream (Fall River). There is some country along the stream which would do for cultivation, but it offers few inducements and it is confined to a narrow strip along the stream, which is very crooked. But little timber along the bottom. Willows the principal undergrowth. The stream seems to run high, being but a few feet below the bottom and the bottom but a few feet below the adjacent plain. Grass very good. Water tolerably good. Timber scrubby.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, (Eight day). Travelled about fifteen miles in

the vicinity of the river, which seems to have received some large tributaries from the west. This day's travel presents the only portion traveled over which presents any attraction to the settler. Much of today's travel has been through prairie land of a fair degree of fertility and it will, when all danger is removed, offer inducements to the enterprising pioneer. Soil of sandy formation and the grass, which is bunch grass, mostly of a luxuriant growth. Encamped in a large prairie on the east

(Black Rock Butte)

(Black Rock)

OSE

*Crater Ford on 1853 Road
Hammers Horstead
Klamath County*

(Beschutes)

(must be on south side here)

Inducements?
or hope?

bank of the river at a crossing much used by the travellers from California to The Dalles. This crossing is now too deep to ford and, consequently, must be so most of the year. There are three rafts here, which must have been made by some of the predecessors on the road to The Dalles. We do not cross the river here, but the trail is said to lead an easterly direction. The Three Sisters from this camp and ford lie about north eighty degrees west and are hid by the foothills of the Cascades. This prairie is about four miles long by two wide and offers inducements to settlers. The river seems large and deep enough to navigate with small steamers, ^(?) but is no doubt much narrower and more rapid below.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28. (Ninth day). Upon starting, our trail led a northeasterly direction, entering the pine woods. About three miles' ~~the~~ travel brought us into the vicinity of a huge mass of basaltic rock, or cinders rather, covering acres in extent and forming something like a semicircle around a butte about five hundred feet high. ^(Lava Butte) The butte is covered on the north side by pine and other species of timber and upon examination it was found to be the crater of a volcano. The masses of rock heretofore spoken of are no doubt the production of it. The diameter of the crater is about one hundred and fifty feet and the opening extends to a depth incalculable. Passing around the volcano, the trail leads in a northerly direction for about five miles, when it varies to the west and in about five miles more strikes ^(Neschutes) Fall River. The stream is about eighty yards wide here and of a moderately swift current. Looks to be fordable at this time. There is a short right-hand bend here, the river coming from the southwest and turning off in a northwesterly direction. The river bottom is narrow. West the narrow strip of grass is good, bounded by a pine opening, with mancinello, a little sage and greasewood, as undergrowth.

*Wanted
to walk this
would be best
summit
trail*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29. (Tenth day). We started today on a trail leading directly eastward at the start, but upon travelling some distance it bore more and more southerly until it had turned to a course of about south thirty degrees east. Having travelled about ten miles, we mostly all became dissatisfied with the course and agreed to turn through the sage and juniper. The first ten miles of today's travel were for about two miles through pine barrens with a little sage and greasewood; emerging from that we struck an open plain; three miles through this plain. The scenery here is very beautiful. The Three Sisters with their seven peaks, Mount Jefferson and Mount Hood appearing in sublime majesty above the Cascade range. On the south lay a range of lofty hills, which at this season are mostly destitute of water, judging from appearances.

After travelling about ten miles on this trail, we turned our course to about north ten degrees west towards the canon on ^(Crossed River) East Fall River. Fifteen miles over a sage and juniper plain ^(the name of this?) brought us to the river again, running through a wide canon, steep and rocky. Our horses slid, crept and managed to get down about two hundred feet into the narrow valley. Some of the grass is good. The principal plant, however, is a coarse water grass about waist high, which might be made valuable as hay. Stream ^{Crossed R. (Michigan note)} about ten yards wide, sluggish and the water warm. A strip of willows along the bank is the only wood. ^{South Prineville} The canon is about a half mile wide here and the height of the cliffs on either side nearly equal. The stream drags a serpentine course through the canon, and its crooked course is plainly marked by the green willows on its banks, which present a striking contrast with the black rock-bound banks and parched vegetation. From this camp the northerly of the Twin Sisters is distinctly visible. We are now about ten miles from yesterday's camp and are in the land of gold upon which so large a portion of our company rest their most sanguine expectations. The noted bluffs of the followers of Meek are about five miles below here. We shall move to them tomorrow. Gold may be

found here, but there are no striking indications of gold. That some have been the honest dupes of other men more designing, I have no doubt. Be that as it may, we will prospect this part of the stream and then move up to a point about twenty miles above here, which is noted by the stories of a Mr. Hening, who was here in 1845 on his way to the Willamette valley. There is some disappointment, as prospecting tours generally terminate, but to me no disappointment is incurred.

MONDAY, AUGUST 30. (Eleventh day). The bluffs of rocks below excited the curiosity of some of the crowd and Mr. Peters more particularly, who came through with Meeks in 1845. Travelled about three miles down the river, where we found the river entering the bottom of a narrow canon. The canon is about one hundred and fifty feet deep and generally not more than sufficient to admit the stream when it is swollen by the winter floods. One mile down the canon we came to the upper end of the rocky bluff, which will in the future serve as a valuable landmark to the early traveller on these plains. The bluff is irregular in form, a semicircle with a diameter of about one and one-half miles, the river running immediately at its foot. The growth in this region is sage and a little greasewood, which extends to the brink of the canon and give the appearance of an unbroken plain. We travelled about three miles down the canon, where, from reasons unknown to me and after which I have not inquired, we turned about and proceeded up the river, crossing at the head of the canon. During the afternoon we took a due easterly ~~course~~ ^{(Crooked R.) McLean note} across the sandy hills on the north side of the stream, struck the stream late in the evening, travelled up it a short distance and encamped one-half mile above a high table rock on the north side of the stream and about four miles above last night's camp. Willows on the stream. Stream sluggish and full of small fish resembling the chub of

(Actually McLean doesn't say Hening was with them but Peters he does say was)

the western states. While on the hills this evening we saw willows before us and on the left, indicating a stream of water and was told by some of the knowing ones that it was produced by a spring. *Crooked River*

TUESDAY, AUGUST 31. (Twelfth day). We were delayed in starting this morning until a late hour by an unruly horse, which broke loose last night, and it was with much trouble that we were able to obtain him again. We took a snack before starting, with the intention of driving until night. Upon travelling about six miles, we arrived at the forks of the river, which produced some hesitation. We concluded to camp and examine the rivers and look for Meek's trail, which was found upon travelling the east about six miles. We travelled on the north side of the river today. A narrow strip of grass along the stream, which is fertile. The borders of the valley are sage plains, composed in many places of sand so loose that a person will sink to shoe tops in the sand. There is some fertile land in the forks of the stream, but there is but little. The bluffs on the south are high and precipitous in many places, presenting features pleasing and sublime. From the valley here Mount Jefferson's snow-capped peak may be seen peering above the high hills between here and there. Camped here about one o'clock P.M. and some of the men have been out looking for the trail. Upon close examination it was found that the main stream comes from the south. The river is supposed to make a large bend above this.

Some are in high spirits this evening, expecting in one day more to find the shining ore. Others say that the point looked for is some fifty miles off. Time will determine and may disappoint them both. The weather since we have been on this stream has been beautifully clear, the nights cool, the days warm. The soil is very loose and dust flies at a very disagreeable rate. The hills on the north are rather pretty, rising

gradually, and although poor, pretty to look at. Some little old signs of Indians here. They most likely only give this country a passing visit occasionally, there being little to induce any division of the human species. Wild rye here in considerable abundance and our horses are feasting on fine grass and wild pea vines. We see alkali here, the first on this trip.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1. (Thirteenth day). Today our route really lay up the river, which comes from a southerly direction, but upon starting the company became divided, which was considered by all to be ^(smart?) short (?) but such was the nature of the country that we became so separated that we have not met yet. We were about equally divided, there being thir- ^(vaughns?) teen men in this part of the company and fourteen men in the other. Upon starting, we crossed the stream upon which we were encamped and proceeded to ascend the table land upon the south, as it is called. But it is nothing more than a succession of hills in a large bend in the East Branch of the Fall River, passing through a low gap in the dividing ridge. Our course was changed from a southeast to a south course and, ^{near} passing down a deep ravine, we found several weak springs under a high rock on the right. The rock is about a hundred feet high and is in a leaning posture, so that it will some day as a result of the wear and tear of the weather fall. ^{GI Ranch Co} ^{NW 20}

The country changes its appearance. The rotten quartz and slate assume the appearance of gold. Travelled down the ravine about two miles and came to what we suppose to be the east branch of the Fall River. (McClellan note: "Little Bear".) Encamped about one o'clock and have remained in waiting for the remainder of the company. High mountains on each side. Travelled a circuitous route of about twelve miles, which might be called about eight miles on an air line. Cool night. Frost last night. The grass along these living streams is generally good.

The coarse grass is from two to five feet high. The bunch grass is of a nutritious quality. The hills are high here and close in upon the stream in high hills and precipitous bluffs. Crystallized quartz in considerable quantities.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2. (Fourteenth day.) Cool weather here during the nights and warm during the days. Froze ice one-fourth inch thick. Some prospecting done. Quartz found in considerable quantities. Some slate. No gold found. Waited until nine o'clock for the remainder of the company. Travelled about five miles and unpacked about eleven o'clock ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to wait for our comrades. They arrived about one o'clock P.M., having crossed the dividing ridge lower than we did and then, having turned to the right, struck the river about seven miles below our camp, where they camped for the day and prospected, find small prospects. Started at half past two o'clock, all together and travelled about six miles, making about eleven miles for our portion of the company. After crossing a high point in a left-hand bend of the river, we camped on the north bank of the river. No wood but willows on the flat. Cedar in the mountains. The stream is sluggish and the water poor. The stream is so variable that its width cannot be stated with accuracy. Today the hills have receded from the stream and the country appears to open out, with hills somewhat inducive to the miner. Opposite to camp there comes in a small stream from the south out of the timbered mountains. Doubtless a good hunting ground. The hills are red here and by miners from some localities would be called a gold region. Some of the men have been prospecting and they got a few small particles, but not sufficient to pay.

*no
the
Creek?
El*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3. (Fifteenth day.) Frost last night. Travelled about six miles and lost Vaughn's Trail, to which we had paid considerable attention. After some deliberation, we decided to proceed up the

It is not clear if Vaughn is with them or separate - I suspect

There was a John W. Vaughn in LWT 1653 + article on his trip says his party must search

valley, now crossing the low land and now crossing some high spur of the adjacent hills. The hills continued to lower for most of the day's travel. At length, passing over a ridge, we came in sight of the noted canon, for which we had looked so long. Passing upon the south side of the stream, we saw several variagated hills on the northeast and north side of the river. Some looked red, others blue and others white, or of a light-lead color. On the north side of the river I noticed a streak of white seeming to issue from a high hill of red color. Some of the men pronounced it salt, some saleratus or alkali. After crossing the creek, the trail led to the left of a small mound and thence the trail of '54 leads over the hills north of the canon, while Meek's trail passes through. This canon is about four hundred yards long and the hill on the south side rises to the height of four hundred feet. Width, I suppose, from a passing view, to be one hundred feet at the narrowest place. I should have spoken of some sulphur springs about eight miles below the canon. These springs contain sulphur enough to make the water valuable and they may become a future resort for ----- Encamped just above the canon in the forks of the stream in a small cove. Fine grass. Water rather poor, but sufficient for camping purposes. Coarse grass, waist high, on the bottom land. Willows on the streams, small branch putting in from the mountains on the north. Some prospecting. No gold found. The most sanguine say that the gold is fifteen miles distant. Tomorrow will determine. Wild flax is found in considerable quantities along this stream and upon a cursory trial the lint seems to be tolerably good. Travelled about fourteen miles.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6. (Sixteenth day). Upon starting this morning, our trail led up the river about two miles, when it turned short to the right and ascended a steep hill, leaving the emigrant trail of 1854. Then for a short distance the country assumed the appearance of tableland.

But a travel of a short distance brought us among a succession of regular shaped hills and buttes, which look rather picturesque. Twelve miles' travel brought us to the point so long sought, the famous dry creek which Mr. Henning and others have rendered so remarkable in their journals of travel as containing the precious metal. Encamped in a cove-like opening, with the western bluff refreshed by several springs of good water. Grass tolerably good. Coarse grass high enough to mow. Wild flax, bunch grass and wild rye. This stream, upon first approaching it from the north, seems to flow to the south, but upon close investigation it is found to flow northerly and, I suppose, through a canon into East Fall River. The water stands in pools here, the little rivulets from the streams being the only running water. I have seen a few small willows along the creek and a few scrubby juniper on the hills. The hills present a bold front and come peering, as it were, into the small valley, as if anxious to keep a vigilant watch over their sister. A high butte on the north with a rugged, rocky face. Most of the men have been prospecting, Some returned without the color of gold.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5. (Seventeenth day). Not being satisfied at this camp, a majority were in favor of moving up the valley to the point where Meeks first struck this stream. Travelling up ^{three miles (the same route)} this ~~is~~, the valley widens and presents quite a wide flat, covered by luxuriant grass. Here the company was divided again for a short time. Those in the lead, irrespective of the guides, or the men in advance, kept around the base of the hill on the right and followed up the valley. The remainder and those in the rear halted seeing the men who were ahead hunting the trail on the base of the hills on the left. All concentrated and the trail was found to ascend a steep hill on the east about four miles from the point where it strikes it. The water in this creek stands in pools and looks bad, but there are springs innumerable, bursting from the adjacent hills?

CAMP CREEK
20/1990

Encamped opposite where Meeks first struck this valley, in a cove or inlet in the high hills on the west. Grass good. Water good. Small willows for fuel. Juniper on the mountains. This valley bears but little appearance of a gold-bearing country. Nothing encouraging, not even an attainable bedrock in many hiding places. Much discouragement in the company today. Six men went ahead today and, from the landmarks, pronounced this to be the long looked-for creek, beyond a doubt. The color has not been raised yet, which acts most discouragingly upon some of the most sanguine of the party. The grass in some places in this valley is a high, coarse, grass, which would make good hay. In many places it produces a nutritious bunch grass, upon which our horses are now feasting. The benches adjacent to the first bottom are covered with sage and greasewood. Alkali present in many places. This valley widens from a canon on the north to one mile in width at camp and extends in a southwesterly direction, but how far I know not. Wind has been high today, sufficiently to be uncomfortable. It commenced to blow yesterday evening and has continued to blow unabatedly. A fire by some means occurred yesterday, which filled the atmosphere with smoke and shut out the sun. It occurred possibly from our fires or from those of Mr. Vaughn, but most likely was caused by the Indians. (There are but few Indians in these desolate regions and they are shy, savage and treacherous, dragging out an existence even more miserable than their associates, the cayotes.) The men who went prospecting have returned. Nothing found. Some have become discouraged. CRL

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6. (Eighteenth day). Quite cold last night. Froze ice one-half inch thick, with frost. Three men, Dr. Thompson, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Green, started for home this morning. Four men went to search for Mr. Vaughn or the trail. By cutting across the mountain, they expected to shorten the distance. Some of the men went down to the canon,

along the creek, to prospect. Nothing found. Mr. Peters started a hole on the flat near camp, but did not get to the bedrock. Nothing found. Some discouragement in camp this evening. The golden dreams have vanished before the dawn of truth. What will be our next move, cannot be foretold. Did not move camp today. Horses are feasting on excellent grass. Beaver in considerable numbers on this stream. Rats, mice, snakes, and scorpions claim a residence in this abandoned land. No game of any consequence here. No deer to be seen. No elk. No antelope. Here and there a rabbit and a sage-hen.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7. (Nineteenth day). Lay in camp today. No prospecting done today. All seem satisfied with yesterday's passing examination. Weather beautifully clear and warm. Nights cool. Froze ice last night. The four men who went to look for Mr. Vaughn and company returned after dark. They travelled about thirty miles in a westerly direction. Report favorable for gold. Think that diggings might be discovered to pay moderate wages.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8. (Twentieth day). The general opinion this morning was, forward. Started about seven o'clock and, ascending a high hill and travelling about fourteen miles over a sage plain, we came to *SOUTH FORK CROOKED RIVER* East Fall River. We found it running through a low alkali plain nearly level and it seems to rise from a lake, or lakes, above. Water impregnated with alkali. Ground covered and white with it. The river here is about twelve feet wide and runs with a sluggish current. This plain, from slight observation, I judge to be about twenty-five miles long from east to west and about twelve miles wide from north to south. From this end of the plain the river seems to come from a south-easterly direction and enters the hills from the northwest corner of the plain, giving a canon-like appearance. Camped on the river against the foot of the hill,

Gilcrest Valley

on the west side of the river. On the east side of the river, opposite camp, is a high ridge. Arrived here at half-past twelve o'clock. Stopped to graze. Much discussion ensued. Some wished to go south to the vicinity of Dry Hollow; others wished to return to yesterday's camp. The alkali seems to cover the whole plain, wherever it is visible above the sage and greasewood. The water in the river tastes of alkali and the grass, no doubt, receives it as an ingredient.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9. (Twenty-first day). Much dissatisfaction arose this morning, owing to the choice of some of the men, who wished to prospect the mountains to the south of this plain. This notion prevailed, and, striking a southwesterly direction, in five miles crossed a wagon trail, which we supposed to be the trail broke in 1853. Commencing the same course, we came to a deep ravine. We descended to the stream, which we found to be dry, and travelling up the ravine some distance, we came to an Indian ranch. The ranch was deserted. Some water rising out of the ground. Some distance further we stopped at a spring, or rather a series of seeps out of the hill. It took some time to water our horses, which was done by digging holes and collecting the water from them. From there we bore to the right, ascended a dividing ridge and, turning still further to the right, we came to a series of deep ravines. In one we found water, where a part of us camped. The others were before us and passed the ravine, regardless of a messenger who was sent down the ravine for the very purpose of looking for water. Good water, bunch grass and wood. Travelled about sixteen miles.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10. (Twenty-second day). Weather more moderate last night. No ice. Upon starting, we took a northerly course, directing our course towards the highest peak of the timber covered mountains on the north. After travelling about two miles, we struck a level plain, and one mile further brought us to the trail of 1853, bearing here a