MY LIFE IN THE ARMY

by

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In the year 1857 when the Mormons in the Territory of Utah rebelled against the Government of the United States and Brigham Young then Governor of Utah openly proclaimed the Independence of Utah preaching hostility to the General Government, molesting Emigrants, and in many cases suffering Emigrants to be robbed and murdered, it became necessary to send an army to Utah to restore order and civil government.

I enlisted at Philadelphia on the 10th of June 1857 and was sent with others to fill up the ranks of the 10th Regt. of Infantry stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, under orders to march to Utah. We left Fort Leavenworth on route for Utah on the 10th of July in the following order: 10th Regt. of Infantry commanded by Capt. B. S. Alexander, 7th Regt. of Infantry under Command of Col. Morrison, 5th Regt. of Infantry under command of Col --, Second Regt. of Cavalry under command of Col. Howe, and two batteries of the 4th Regt. of Artillery under command of Capt. Phelps.

Our march was slow, tiresome, and weary across the plains for several weeks until we reached the Platte River near Fort Kearney where I saw the first genuine Indians, it being the whole tribe of Pawnees. The first thing they were up to was to "swap" anything for tobacco or whiskey, and some of the boys made excellent bargains getting nice buffalo robes for a large plug of tobacco, others getting fancy moccasins or buckskins.

Several days later we could see the prairie look black and the boys were glad to see a change of scenery for all thought we were nearing a timbered country but the idea was dispelled by an old timer who had been there before and who informed us that the imaginative timber was thousands of live buffalo. In about a week we reached them and from that time we had all the fresh meat we wanted to eat.

Every day several men from each company went out to get fresh meat and as a general rule they got it. An English Nobleman, whose name I could not learn, lost his horse encountering a buffalo and, only for our quartermaster, would have lost his life in the combat. Our quartermaster seeing the mad bull charge at the horse and ripping its bowels open, rode up and took the Englishman, who jumped out of the saddle before the horse fell, on his own horse with him and got away while the bull was going the horse.

Col. Canby, who was afterwards shot by a Modoc Indian, was leading our column. He was a gentleman in every respect and he was looked up to by every soldier of the Regiment as a father and a friend and I am sure that every one acquainted with him mourned his untimely and tragic death.

A march across the plains in those days was quite a serious undertaking. Some days we would get orders to fill our canteens with water and keep the same all day for coffee in the evening for it would happen quite often that we had to camp over night without water, and our fuel consisted for nearly two months of buffalo chips.

Our march along the Platte River was very pleasant up to the junction of the North and South Platte when we crossed over to Ash Hollow, noted for its battle with the Indians in the fall of 1854, where like in the Custer Massacre not a
man survived but one who lives just long enough to tell the tale.

From Ash Hollow to Fort Laramie, the same undulating plain, the road all along marked by graves, bones of cattle and horses bleaching in the sun and broken wagons not a house or settlement did we see from five miles west of Fort Leavenworth, a place called Grasshopper Creek, until we got to Fort Kearney and from Fort Kearney not a house or settlement of any kind was seen until we got within ten miles of Fort Laramie, where two French traders were settled, one by the name of Boreau about ten miles east of Fort Laramie, the other by the name of Beaurais about five miles from the Fort.

Both kept stores and had a gang of hard characters whom he hired to trade with the Indians. The next settlement we found was Laramie Bridge or rather two bridges. One bridge owner demanded five dollars toll for every wagon and one dollar for every man for crossing the bridge. We had over 1,000 wagons and about 6,000 men in all and this bargain would have amounted to a good deal of money; the new bridge was three miles further up the river and when our Quartermaster asked for his terms he said he would let the whole command across free providing the commanding officer would pitch the camp near his store and allow him to sell all the whiskey to the soldiers they wanted and not punish such as got drunk. This was agreed to and resulted in the greatest drunken spree I ever beheld in my life and the whole store of whiskey and everything else was cleaned out, for everybody had some money more or less and this was the first chance to buy anything.

From Platte Bridge, we went to Sweetwater. This is a barren alkali covered country and the little streams we crossed were so impregnated with alkali that we were warned not to drink any of it and cattle and horses that drank the water would invariably die. We struck Sweetwater at the first big mountains we came to and which we had seen for several weeks, their tops were covered with the everlasting snow. The place was called the three crossings from the fact that the Sweetwater River had to be crossed three times within a space of 1/4 of a mile owing to the immense rocks.

The scenery here is grand and gigantic and I confess my disability to even attempt to describe it but the air is raw and it will snow here any month or anytime of the year. Sweetwater is the clearest water I ever have seen and you can distinguish the gravels in the bottom of 20 feet of its water. Mountain sheep were numerous also Eagles.

Our next prominent point was Green River and here our troubles began. Up to this time our march appeared like a pleasant trip. We would get up in the morning at three o'clock, get breakfast, pack up and strike tents and fall in line for march by four o'clock, march one hour and rest 20 minutes, march one hour and rest five minutes, march one hour and rest 15 minutes, after that we would march one hour and rest 10 minutes until we struck camp which would vary, as we had to locate our camps where wood and water was to be had. From 15 to 30 miles per day, twenty miles being considered the average, sometimes water could not be had and then we had to carry along enough to cook coffee for supper and breakfast, but these were exceptions.

When we arrived at Green River, we met the whole tribe of the Snake Indians perhaps three thousand in all. I never have seen any cleaner better looking and finer shaped Indians than these and I have seen a great many different tribes. We crossed Green River and encamped on the other side. How we crossed these rivers, I will tell later on.

I must state here that we had a great many supply trains with us "Bulltrains", some being sent on ahead of us and some following in the rear. We had a good
rest here for three days, washing up our clothes, mending and preparing for further marches as we were getting near the country of the enemy. The chief of the Snakes told our Colonel that he had seen a heap of Mormons trying to steal or destroy our trains, but they prevented them and a part of his tribe was watching the advance trains at present. Our Col. gave him a new Springfield rifle loaded and fired at a hill about a mile distant. We could see the dust fly up where the ball struck and the chief was enthusiastic over his present.

Our trains had to be divided all along the route on account of the feed as the cattle had no other feed but grass. On the third night we were quietly aroused at 1 o'clock to get ready for march at 2 o'clock. We were in line for march and by 3 o'clock we had made 20 miles and were reaching the corrals of our freight trains. We pitched tents and got breakfast. We had about an hour's rest when a teamster came galloping and reported that the Mormons were setting the prairies on fire and stampeding the cattle so we had to strike tents and go 10 miles further up the stream called Hams Fork. When we got there the whole world seemed to be on fire and we all turned out to put the fire out with gunny sacks of which we had plenty and we succeeded in saving the cattle. By 4 o'clock in the afternoon we came back hungry and tired, and had supper and prepared for a good night's rest when falling in at Retreat (sundown) we were ordered together with some Cavalry to march back to Green River. So we marched back to Green River and by 9 o'clock next morning we were on the hills bordering the Green River Valley. Just as the sun rose we looked down in the valley but what we saw was a sad sight. Our supply trains all burned up and the cattle stampeded; flour, bacon, medicines, feed, tools, clothing, every thing, 500 wagonloads, all burned or in such a state that the goods were useless. We saved five wagons which were of the old Independence Mo. Prairie Schooner style and our cavalry drove together about sixty yoke of cattle. We loaded these five wagons with what we thought was worth saving and all went back to the command at Hams Fork.

The weather now began to get cold, it would snow and altogether it was very disagreeable. Our aim was to get to Fort Bridges for winter but we had a sore time getting there. No more grass for horses and cattle to feed. The corn all burned up, horses, cattle, and mules died of starvation. I counted 120 horses and mules that died in one night at our company wagons just in our own regiment. I have seen steers get on their knees to drink water and the next morning their mouth was frozen solid in the ice. The artillery had to hitch oxen to the caisson and we advanced at the rate of about five miles a day. Finally on the 29th of October we reached Fort Kearney on the Black Fork and all we found there was plenty of good water and a big pile of stone called a fort and some cottonwood timber. The first thing we missed was salt and we did not have a grain of salt for the next nine months. Next ourhardtack gave out and we were reduced to eight ounces of flour a day and every fifteenth day half a pound of bacon.

What cattle we had left could not be kept any longer alive so they were killed and parts of them smoked, other parts were put in a log house built for the purpose and there stored with ice around it. The best of it was very poor and not fit to eat yet we got so starved that we would fight for a bone we would go out hunting sometimes but there was no game but coyotes and not many of them. When the cattle were gone, we killed the mules that were left and even those did not hold out. One of my friends invited me to supper and after we all had our fill, told us he was out hunting and found a dead horse he cut a big piece from the hip, brought it home, cooked it and treated his friends, five in number, to a good supper. Our regimental surgeon, I forget his name, was about the meanest man I ever met in my life and I could tell horrid facts about him but fortunate for us Capt. Moore at present surgeon General arrived with the last of the command and proved himself a perfect gentleman and a friend to the suffering soldiers. Mountain fever, hunger typhus, and scurvy broke out and the suffering was terrible. Many died especially the big and stout when the on the 8th of June, next spring, the first two wagons with
provisions came, there were just 200 pounds of flour left for about 8,000 men.

A Mexican gambler came with a wagonload of provisions. He baked biscuits about the size of a silver dollar and not much thicker and sold them for 25¢ a piece. I have seen one man eat $5.00 worth and was not satisfied. Company I was guard over the supplies all winter and they managed to have enough on their small rations and also give a friend his fill once in a great while but all without salt. The bottom of Haddock barrels was sold for $5.00 a pound as long as it lasted but it did not last long.

Another incident occurred which turned out very serious. A full guard 24 privates, 2 corporals, and 1 sergeant being on guard took enough flour and bacon to cook them a meal during the night and were caught, arrested, tried by a general court martial and sentenced to be confined at hard labor with ball and chain attached to their left leg, the ball weighing 30 lbs., and the logchain 5 ft. long, for six months, have all pay and allowances that are or may be coming to them stopped, one half of their heads shaved, dishonorable discharge and drummed out of service. Everybody even the officers were in sympathy with these men and after our supplies arrived, they were offered pardons but not one accepted it, much of their sentence was however remitted.

Next our shoes and clothing gave out and we had nothing to replace them. We took the rawhides from cattle and horses and tied them around our feet. The supply of wood in our neighborhood was soon exhausted and then we had to go up the creek six eight and ten miles with a wagon and we had to haul the wagons ourselves as we had no animals to do it.

All this time we were continually bothered by mounted Mormons and therefore had to take our rifles along everytime we went from camp. Our Colonel, S. B. Alexander, who was not very much thought of and who kept a full supply of everything in his cook tent, had on several occasions reason to complain that his flour or his ham was stolen. On one of these occasions, he complained to Colonel C. F. Smith a man who was held in high esteem by all who knew him and told him that he had no such difficulties with the men for he did not draw any more than the men were allowed and they knew it.

Another incident occurred during this time: A sergeant and six men being tired of the miserable life attempted to get away without leave. They were gone about ten days when they returned, their hands and feet frozen, starved and more dead than alive. It was their intention to get to Salt Lake City but were unable to make their way through and were obliged to return or die. On their arrival they were arrested and in the course of time tried for desertion and theft. They were found guilty and the following horrible sentence pronounced and executed on all of them—to receive each fifty lashes on their bare back well laid on, confined to the guardhouse for six months with ball and chain attached to their left leg, the letter D.T. branded on their left hip, one half of their head shaved, all pay and allowances stopped that is or may be coming to them and dishonorably discharged.

The whipping was done in the following manner: Earley in the morning after reveille call the whole regiment was marched to the Parade or Drill ground where a line or square was formed in front of a stack of arms, the culprits were called out one by one by their names, their sentence read to them after which they were undressed bare to the waist, their hands tied up high in front of them in such a manner that the skin on the back was stretched tight. Five buglers or drummers were detailed to do the whipping each giving ten strokes, the officer of the day doing the counting and if a stroke was not well laid on he would not count it.
The counting was done loud so everybody could hear it; the regimental surgeon standing by as a matter of form and law, I presume. I have seen the flesh cut open at every stroke and curl over and the blood run to the ground at the first ten strokes. I never want to see such a sight again. It made my blood curl and I felt like I wanted to shoot everybody who had anything to do with it.

Whilst I am about this I will mention two cases of our Regt surgeon whom I mentioned before. One young man an American who was hired by his captain to see to his wants on the march in unloading the cooking utensils from the captain's wagon pulled out a shot gun with the muzzle toward him. It went off and the charge went into his stomach. A friend of mine who sat up with the unfortunate man left him at 3 o'clock in the morning alive. We struck camp at four o'clock and I soon found out that the doctor had him buried before we started. I do not think it possible that the man could have lived but I think the hurry to bury him was uncalled for. The other case was a young German in the last stages of consumption. This same doctor one morning gave him a wine glass full of strong brandy and told him to drink it right down, the sick man did and it took away his breath quicker than if he was shot. He was buried the same day.

Our provisions finally came and to keep us from getting sick, we were held rather short for about two weeks after which time we got our full rations and also a little extra allowance of tea and sugar but many were crippled for life by scurvy and rheumatism. Next in order was our march into the land of the Mormons. Salt Lake City being about 120 miles west of Fort Bridger but here all the sand was taken out of us by President Buchanan sending the Peace Commissioners, one of whom was McCullough (I forgot the names of the other two) ahead of us and making a peaceable settlement with the Mormons and installing Governor Cummins who had been with us for some time into his gubernatorial functions.

The preparations and fortifications the Mormons had made to receive us were simply immense and if they had their way not a soul of us would have ever entered the city of the Latter Day Saints. Most prominent was Echo Canyon, a valley 30 miles long and so narrow at some places that there was just room for a wagon to pass through. Through this valley runs a small stream which was dammed up at the lower end of the valley nearly 100 feet high and must have formed a lake of considerable size and depth. On the right side were smooth perpendicular rocks from 500 to over 1000 feet high on top of these rocks at especially favorable places were rocks the size of an ordinary cottage and others weighing tons balanced on the edge so that a small force would throw them down on our heads every opportunity all through this 30 miles. If we had ever gotten into this trap not a soul would have gotten out.

The left side of the valley was not so steep but consisted of high hills more sloping. These hills were all cut up of sick sack running trenches and rifle pits so they could cover us with their rifles in most any position without being exposed themselves but owing to the Peace Commissioners we marched through this beautiful valley unmolested and we wondered at so much lost labor. Echo Canyon has the most perfect and beautiful echo, I believe in the world. I have heard the much renowned echo of the Loreley Rocks on the Rhine but I think the echo in the Echo Canyon is far ahead of it. Our regimental band played for some time there and everybody considered it the grandest display they ever witnessed.

Leaving Echo Canyon we had to climb a high mountain to get into Emigration Canyon not so wild and romantic as Echo Canyon, but still very formidable. Just as you come out of Emigration Canyon the Great Salt Lake City lays before you like
a picture. The change is so sudden after being in the wilderness for about a year and not seeing even a house in all that time that the sight is fairly overwhelming. We stopped at this point for nearly an hour and enjoyed the beautiful scene.

A few miles brought us into the city but we were sadly disappointed for every house was locked, windows and doors boarded up, and not a soul to be seen. Finally we met a straggler who told us that everybody took their valuables and went into the mountains to secret themselves. We pitched our tents just west of the city on the banks of the River Jordan. Here we stayed for two weeks and it was a sight to see the Mormons come back from the mountain caves, the covered wagons would string in from morning till night and they seemed very much surprised to find everything just as they had left it for they expected to find the whole city plundered, robbed, burned, and everything destroyed. The soldiers were not allowed to leave camp without a pass signed by the Commanding Officer and but a certain number was allowed that privilege.

Salt Lake City at that time was a beautiful city, the streets very wide and on each side of the street a stream of the clearest freshet water running from the neighboring mountains day and night. The building lots are large and every house is surrounded by a well kept garden. The houses were mostly built of adobe or sun-dried brick but they were nearly finished and look well and had the appearance of happy homes. The preliminaries having been settled and Governor Cummings being installed in his office, the troops were removed to Cedar Valley a desert about 5 miles wide and 13 miles long covered with sagebrush and fairly alive with rabbits. Near the head of the valley was a spring which furnished us with plenty of excellent water. This spring would form quite a creak for about two miles and then disappear again in the sand without leaving a trace. Our officers here put into practice some of their West Point knowledge and laid out Camp Floyd, then Secretary of War, and the soldiers were put to work making adobes like the children of Israel in Egypt. As fast as the adobes were made and dried others would dig the foundations to the solid ground about 15 to 18 inches deep lay an inch board down level and build a two feet wall of adobes on this foundation. Other gangs at the same time had to go to the mountains to cut timbers to lay across the adobe walls to build the roof on and by fall we all had comfortable quarters. At this place we camped two years going on detached service every now and then, the most notable of which was the trip to Mountain Meadow to bury 123 persons massacred by the Mormons we picked up all the bones and whatever we could find and buried them. Another expedition we made into the mountains, I will describe a little more fully than the Mountain Meadow as the latter is a matter of history and I could not do it justice.

The Bishop of Springville was wanted by the Civil authorities for a most heinous crime and our company selected to capture him so we went to Springville but the bird had flown to the mountains with a guide. We followed him up the Tampagnas River. This river is one of these wild mountain streams and in June when the snow on the tops of these mountains begins to melt they are terrible in their force. River Tampagnas has its source in the Uinta Mountains and finally works its way through the Wasatch Mountains and empties into Lake Utah near Provo City. Up this River about 60 miles from its mouth the valley which has been so far narrow and contracted, widens into a kettle shape, this kettle contains about 5,000 acres and was by an special Act of Congress given to Mayor Russell & Co. Government freight contractors to reimburse them for the loss of cattle and wagons at the Green River affair.

This tract of land is I think one of the most beautiful spots on God's green earth. On the south towers a rock perhaps 5,000 feet or more high nearly per-
pendicular, from near the top right under the everlasting snow a stream shot out like a stream from a hose and fell on a platform perhaps 1,000 feet below, then it would divide into two streams and fall on another platform perhaps another 1,000 feet and from here it would, both streams united, fall in a spray to other projecting rocks far below and finally join the waters in the Tempehous River.

When we arrived at this place about noon, our guide told us that we must lay over and make preparations to ford the river. The river at this place coming from the east runs along perpendicular rocks until it reaches the kettle when it turns at nearly a right angle and runs to the southern side of the valley, the rock described before with the cascade. There was no other way but to cross it and that we must and did. There were 63 men of us, 3 six mule wagons and the guide horseback. The river at the point crossing was about 60 feet wide, the water at its deepest 7 or 8 feet deep and as cold an snow and ice could make it. I said once before I would tell how we crossed these rivers and I will do so now.

Our guide tied several lariats together, fastened one end to the lead mules and carried the other end swimming his pony across the river, then more lariats were tied to the hind axletrees and about 20 of us stripped fastened our clothing on top of the wagon and took a good hold of the rope. The current was so swift that letting go of the rope would mean sure death. The word was given to get up, the guide kept his end of the rope on the other side of the river taunt to keep the mules from being swept away by the current and our captain yelled in a stentorian voice, "Boys stick to the rope." When we go into the current we were shipped around like a willow switch, but everyone stuck to the lariat and we landed safely on the other side although nearly frozen to death; we dressed in our dry clothes and had the fun of seeing the others go through the same ordeal. To make a long story short, we all landed safe and started after the bishop but we never found him and after being out about a month came to camp covered not with glory but with dirt and dust.

Soon after we came back from this expedition the genial editor of the New York Tribune and his friends made us a visit, among his companions was Richardson who was afterwards short by General Sickles.

I will tell here one incident which furnished us much sport and a good deal to eat. Whilst the parties who were getting out the timber for our quarters I with five others were detailed to watch this timber from getting stolen or burnt by the Mormons, it was about five miles from the camp where the quarters were being built. The feeling of hatred between the soldiers and the Mormons was intense and if one could do a mean thing or trick on the other, they were always ready to do it.

The Mormons had plenty of produce of all kinds, butter, potatoes, flour and vegetables of all kinds but no money. The soldiers had plenty of money not having a chance to buy anything until now so an exchange was welcome to both parties. The Mormons knew that we had lived on pork and beans for a long time. They also knew that we had plenty of good gold and they liked to have some of it so they brought wagonloads of potatoes, cabbage, flour and other produce and sold it to the soldiers. Occasionally a keg of whiskey would find its way into camp although strictly forbidden.

A Mormon with a wagonload of stuff found his way to our little camp, a little Irishman by the name of Welsh saw him and was making calculations how to get the best of him. I told him to buy what we needed and pay for it. He started off as I thought with honest intentions two more men went with him, pretty soon they all three came lugging as much as they could carry. They deposited their
loads and went back again, when I saw that everything was not all right so I called Welsh back for an explanation. "Well," says he, "I bought about $3 worth of stuff and I gave him a twenty dollar gold piece in his hand when he went to make the change he laid the twenty dollar gold piece right in front of me and whilst he was counting out the change I could not resist the temptation of picking up the $20 gold piece, I also discovered a keg of whiskey and if you say so I bring it here." I told him to leave the whiskey where it was and send the man home so, Mr. Welsh buckles on his Colt Revolver goes to the man who was lamenting the loss of his money, rolls the keg of whiskey out of its hiding place and tells the man if he can't clear out in a minute he will confiscate his wagon and team of oxen and arrest him for bringing whiskey in the government limits. The man was very glad to get away so easy.

Every soldier considered it a sacred duty to make out of the Mormons all they could because they had to suffer so much on account of the Mormons burning our supply trains. The old saying that Uncle Sam has been cheated ever since he was a little boy was verified here also.

Mayor and Russell were the freight contractors and received 23 cents a pound to deliver supplies in Utah. This would bring flour at $3 a hundred to $26 per hundred weight. Our quartermaster contracted from a firm in Utah to furnish all the flour for about 6,000 men for over two years at $5.00 for 100 lbs. and charged the government the modest sum of $26 for 100 lbs. This Utah Expedition cost the government thirty million dollars, twenty-nine million of which I think was bumbled. The life of the soldier whilst at Camp Floyd was very agreeable and if a soldier conducts himself like a gentleman, minds his own business, and makes up his mind that he must submit to military discipline, he has no particular cause for complaint but the drunkards, toughs and unruly characters have rather a hard time of it and they are the ones who give our regular army the bad reputation.

If a man is a blacksmith, harnessmaker, carpenter, painter or most any mechanic, he will be put on extra duty and receive from 25 to 40 cents extra pay per day besides being excused from all other duties if he is a good scholar or even a good penman, his services will be in demand in the Adjutant's Office or in the Commissary department or if he seeks promotion a place will always be open for him. A contrary sloven character will not make any friends anywhere.

In the fall of 1859 a number of the members of the regimental band were discharged on account of expiration of service. I, having a fair theoretical knowledge of music, was asked if I would not like to join the band and upon my consent was transferred to the band at once. I had previously refused promotion on several occasions, but I have never regretted up to this day my connection with the regimental band. The band is the pet of the regiment. They are favored by officers and men alike and have their own mess, no guard duty, no fatigue, and $2 per month more pay than a private besides they can dress cleaner and keep their clothing more neat and in better shape. In the spring of 1860, we received orders to break up camp in Utah, the civil government being considered established firm enough to take care of itself. Our regimental headquarters being ordered to Fort Laramie, then Nebraska Territory, now Wyoming, here we were right in among the Sioux Indians and the Chiefs Snake Redcloud Sitting Bull, Friday and many others were quite familiar faces. Many of our boys learned the Sioux language and all of us learned more or less of their gibberish. We also learned many of their religious rites and original usages. I got acquainted with a white man who told me he had lived with a squaw and moving with the tribe (being the Ogalalla branch of the Sioux) from the year 1840. They were very interesting people but unless you can understand their language you cannot find out much about them. Our interpreter a highly educated Frenchman who spoke all the different dialects of the Sioux and adjoining tribes, gave me many explanations about their customs and usage.
The greatest sight is the great sun dance which lasts from sunrise till sunset also the War dance and other ceremonies. Their dead are wrapped in blankets embalmed I presume, and laid on branches in the trees. I have seen trees with as many as 15 corpses on them. They are securely fastened and do not smell the least bit. These Sioux are great beggars and many of them could steal. They live in polygamy and I found them very unclean.

A special feature of Fort Laramie is or has been for the last fifty years Ordinance Sargent Schneider, a Swiss who in the year 1846, I believe, saved the whole fort and its inmates and stores from destruction by the Indians who were on the warpath then and determined to kill every paleface. The government appears to be under great obligations to him for he appears to be more independent than the general in chief of the army. He will take care of about a gallon of whiskey a day and never was known to quarrel with anybody nor to have an enemy. Sulter Bullock who has kept the store there always has the bottle ready for old Schneider and anybody in trouble will always find a sympathizing friend in Schneider. Last I heard of him was last year, he was still able to make away with his whiskey.

Another prominent feature of Fort Laramie is the bedbugs. You can see them run about any time of the day and I have seen them even outdoors. About 20 miles up the Laramie River, the Government built a sawmill and the men who worked there say the pitch pine timber is just full of bedbugs and they grow right in the wood and I pity the poor men who have to put up with them.

Fort Laramie is one of the oldest frontier posts in the country. I have eaten bacon there that was shipped there with other supplies at the close of the Florida War in 1850. Fort Laramie has seen a great many Indian troubles, it being at the Overland Mail Route to California. A great many Emigrants stopped there to receive letters at the Postoffice or to mail some to their friends left behind.

A great sight was to see the Mormons, mostly Proselytes, emigrating to the promised land. They nearly all came with handcarts and string along for miles.

In 1861 when the Civil War broke out, there was quite a confusion among our officers. General Albert Sidney Johnson who had been Commander-in-Chief all through the Utah expedition left at once. Captain B, a native of South Carolina, stepped in front of his company and made a splendid speech in which he said that the conflict between the south and the north was very painful to him, that he had long and earnestly considered the situation but that he had come to the conclusion that his place was with the South with his friends and his home. He spoke for over an hour and his emotion overcame him sometimes. He shook hands with every man in the company and took the next stage coach for Missouri. Another James H. Hill, adjutant, who was born in the state of New York and educated at West Point, left like a thief in the night to join the south. He was one of those overbearing aristocratic northerners, never had a friend among the soldiers, a regular drunk and debaucher. Everybody was glad he was gone. The celebrated cavalry General J.E.B. Stuart was also of our command and made his mark in the confederate army. As J. Johnson and Capt. Bess were reported killed in the first battle. Our Colonel B. A. Alexander, being a native of Kentucky, was undecided for a long time which side to choose until the soldiers helped him to decide. It was this way.

The Col. had a boy about 14 years old who was very fond of horses and spent a good deal of his time at the cavalry stables. One day a cavalryman said the boy: "Will your father join the rebels or will he stay with the old flag?" The boy said his father did not know yet. Well, said the cavalryman, if your father don't know what to do he should resign his commission and let a man fill his place who knows that to do. The boy went straight home and told his father and the consequence was that night at Dress parade a proclamation was read that the Colonel
was going to stand by the old flag. The Proclamation was full of patriotism and was greeted with loud cheers. Other officers who were on the balance decided also in favor of the north and that question was soon settled. Soon two Regiments of Kansas volunteers arrived under General Abernathy, also one regiment of cavalry from Colorado. These and part of our command were ordered to Fort Craig, New Mexico where Kid Carson with two regiments of greasers joined them and they had a lively time with the Texas Rangers at the Vel Verde and my former company who came there with 66 men came our with 17 men fit for duty.

A friend of mine together with a young American from Philadelphia obtained leave of absence on the march to New Mexico for the purpose of hunting. The guide told them which direction the column would take so they could find the camp in the evening. They went for a range of hills not expecting any trouble whatever and shot some small game and had a good time until they noticed the sun was nearly down when they thought to go to camp. They missed the direction, however, and wandered about for days until they became satisfied they were lost. They kept on traveling nevertheless and the man from Philadelphia whose name was Jim would sit down every little while. Charles who was always ahead then had to return and make him get up. After several days travel this way without water they reached a range of hills where they came to the conclusion to divide, one to go to the right and the other to the left around the hills and whoever should find water first to return to the parting place and wait for the other. Charles found water the next day and drank his fill and he said he took off his clothes and rolled in it, picked him some berries and then returned to the place agreed on but his partner was not there, then he went around the other side of the hills to find him always returning to the spot where they parted. He stayed that way a whole week and fired off all his ammunition but never found a trace or track of his partner. He discovered however the track the command had taken and as they were too much ahead of him concluded to go back to Fort Laramie. His cartridges being all gone he left his rifle and after 10 days weary travel through the prairies reached the Fort, his feet being so full of cactus prickers that he was hardly able to walk. He told his story to the Colonel who sent out a number of Indians who knew every foot of the country. They were gone several weeks when they returned they had found the rifle of both and the bones of Jim who it is supposed laid down to rest and sleep and was devoured by the wolves. Our duties at Fort Laramie were not very exciting.

We formed a club to raise fifty dollars per month or about 25¢ a piece to pay the telegraph operator to give us all the War News and by that means we kept well posted in regard to the affairs of the war. Every morning at ten o'clock, we would get the news from Chicago, it being a curious fact that we received despatches dated at Chicago 10 o'clock when it was not quite 10 o'clock in Laramie, the difference being in the distance west from Chicago. The Pony Express being the next fast means of communication arrived daily at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and the regular stagecoach at any time day or night whenever it got ready. We had several tame bears, a deer, and dogs, I guess a half dozen to every man. They would start a chase after coyotes sometime at night and then there would be fun. The hills around Fort Laramie were just full of coyotes and sometime if a horse would die they would poison the carcass and haul it out of the Fort. The next morning you could count the dead wolves by the dozens. A party from Cache le poudre came with a wagon load of potatoes which we bought in the spring of 1862 for $1.50 a bushel. We had a fine garden and thought potatoes at that price were too precious to each so we planted nearly all of them. They came up nicely and when they were nearly ready to bear new potatoes we had to leave the Fort to join the Army of the Potomac, there being some big swearing done about that time.

Laramie River is full of fine fish; Pike, Catfish, Pickerel, and Sturgeon, also any amount of suckers and red horse. Up the river I examined closely the beaver dams
and lodges and our interpreter who was a professional trapper gave me a great deal of information about beavers and their habits which did not all correspond with the books you read about them. He also made me a present of a newly caught beaver and we had a great feast out of him. Beaver meat is good, better than bear, buffalo or even domestic beef and we all relished it very much. The baker of the Post roasted it for us in the bakeoven and it was delicious.

I have seen beaver dams where there was not any wood within two miles; in 1861 the Government sent orders to teach the Indians agriculture. Accordingly our colonel called on a number of men who could handle the 2mx plow and put them on extra duty to break about 260 acres of sod in the fertile valley of the Laramie. They planted a lot of potatoes and the balance in corn and vegetables but the Indians went there at night and dug out most of the seed potatoes. The corn grew splendidly and made a big crop. They will eat anything when they are hungry and cook their fish without removing the inwards. I could tell a great deal of good and bad about them, mostly the latter but I got disgusted at their filthy habits.

On the first of June our regiment started for the seat of war. My time being up on the 10th of June the Adjutant gave me the privilege of taking my discharge then or go with the command for ten days longer. I took my discharge and Charles Bell who made that unfortunate Hunting Expedition procured a boat and floated down the Platte River. We had plenty of Provisions, flour, crackers, hams and one dozen Buffalo tongues dried. This was very pleasant for a few days. We started at sunrise and kept going until sunset when we would haul the boat ashore and do our cooking for the next day and this we kept up for about 7--miles. It was a risky and dangerous undertaking and I often wonder now how we two all alone could make up our minds to undertake such a doubtful and perilous journey. We shot wild ducks any number of them, a few geese, one beaver, several antelopes and had a shot at a pair of cougars or mountain lions but they did not drop.

We saw Indians on several occasions but not near enough to attract their attention andBuffaloes were quite scarce near the traveled highway. The worst feature about our trip was the 2mx thunderstorms at night. We would get soaked clear thru every night and would shiver with the cold early in the morning and during the day the sun would burn terribly hot but we could stand that better than the wet and cold. Near Atchison we came to a settlement where we sold our boat and rifles for one dollar and a meal. It was all the money the man had. Then we marched into Atchison. The first railroad depot we struck we took tickets for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where we got our papers cashed and then bought nice suits of citizen clothes and gave away our uniform clothes. We were both tired of them. We had a bath got our hair cut, and shaved, and then took tickets for Chicago.

Many were the inducements made me to reenlist, but I was tired of army life and did not want any more of it. Counting the bombardment of Fort Sumpter on the 12th of April 1861 as the beginning of the war, I served one year and two months all but two days in the Civil War.