
This typed version is an Appendix in Ernest John Sweetland and His Fifty Years of Inventing, by Dale Z. Kirby.

Louisa Marie Chubbuck Crosses The Plains

In the year 1863, George W. Chubbuck and family, and his aged mother, left Placerville, Wisconsin, May 1st 1863, destination California. The route consisted of a covered wagon and six males. The wagon train started at Council Bluffs and consisted of about fifty wagons. Mr. Kendall was appointed captain of the train. We left Council Bluffs about the 8th of May. A son was born to mother as we were camped on the Platte River. We finally started on with a great many happenings all along the road. The son that was born at the camp on Platte River died a few months later in Placerville. These are a great many things I can hardly remember, as I was not quite ten years old, however, I will mention a few that I can well remember.

One that impressed me, in fact we all felt badly over the death of a little child, and to think it had to be buried way out on the Plains. We were so far from civilization there was no way of getting a little coffin or getting material to make one, so my uncle being along and very handy with tools said if each one would help by what material they would spare, some pieces of wood, nails and material for the lid, he would do the best he could, so he made the little coffin. Each one gave gladly the best that they had, and the dear little one was laid to rest with the help of the kind people in the train, the little mound was covered with rocks to keep the wild animals from digging it up, which would have been done without this protection, and we left the little grave with tears and sympathy for the ones that had to part with their dear one way out on the lonely desert. The coffin was made of sixty pieces of wood that different ones gave, and I think thirty pieces of material of different kinds to line the little coffin. All was given gladly and the best each one had. It seems that no matter where we are or what the circumstances are, there is some way of doing good and helping each other in times of trouble and sorrow.

We had several thrilling experiences with the Indians. At one place we camped, a band of Indians came to our camp. One of the young men in the party was anxious to try and see how he could shoot with a bow and arrow, so one of the Indians gave him the bow and arrow to see what he could do by shooting with it. It did not take very long for us to find out, and nearly to our sorrow, as the arrow came down, instead of hitting the mark it struck the Indian in the back. It was all excitement for awhile, and the old Chief got a lot of his men together and we all thought we would be massacred. I well remember how we all felt. My grandmother (father's mother), went in the emigrant wagon and there she prayed for the good Lord to spare our lives. My sister Lizzie and I were crying. The old Chief got on his horse and so did the other Indians get on horses, and were about to start for more Indians. What to do was a problem, finally we made peace with them by giving them all the tobacco and molasses we had in our train (emigrant train). My father was the one who thought of the tobacco and a man in the train had some. We were not going to give them but one large piece of it. Then they talked between themselves a long time and the old Chief came to my father and held up two of his fingers and said, "Two to whack, no kill," and you may believe that was settled and we left in a hurry. It was dark and we thought if we said there they might return and make trouble. We all knew the arrow hurt the Indian, for when it was pulled out of his back (the arrow), the blood began to trickle down his back. At the time it happened we had just finished eating. Mother had made some nice biscuits, and when the Indians asked for
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way out on the plains. We found some of the rivers were beds of quicksand, and I remember how they crossed those rivers. They would hitch all the oxen, horses and oxen on one wagon, and horses alone on the other, and when they would take one wagon at a time and cross as quickly as possible. If they stopped the wagon and animals would quickly sink down in the quicksand. No doubt a great many lives had been lost in those quicksand beds. So we went on the way and landed safely on the other side of the river. Little did we children realize the danger there was in traveling at that time.

One place we were traveling, Father lost the tire off one of the wheels of his wagon when we were driving one night, and had to go back thirty miles to find it. He did not miss the tire until next day, and I guess I did not write about the men going in swimming or bathing in Salt Lake. When they came out the water their clothes were perfectly white and stiff, as the water was so strong with salt. Another thing I did not mention, when we were camped some Indians came up and had a blanket and began to shake it so the horses became frightened and all stampeded and went over the hills as fast as they could go and the Indians after them. The men got the best of them and brought the horses back to camp again. All the women and children were left alone while the men went after the animals, and we did not know if the Indians would have us all murdered when my Father and the men came back or not. The animals were getting pretty tired, so we camped in a place called Ruby Valley, that was in the Eastern part of Nevada. There was just two teams of oxen left then, and the name of the team was Ruby Valley. We got near Four Corners, we got separated, then each took a separate road. We camped in Empire, a few days, then we came on, went up over the Wasatch grade and stopped at Mud Springs a few days (it is called El Dorado now). We went on to Silver Springs the 8th of Aug. 1865. From there we went to Placerville and settled down for several years, then later returned East. Before going East, we went to Dayton. My Father had a large piece of wood land in the Comstock Mountains. He had men cutting wood in the mountains and several large teams hauling the wood to Virginia to the mines. After staying there in Dayton for about three years we returned to a city called Virginia, New Jersey, about half way between Phipps and Cape May. We went East on about the first train that crossed the continent after the gold strike was made. We are going to write all that we have on new paper. For our beds we bought sort of ticks stuffed with hay, and turned the seats towards each other, and had them with the right length to put these ticks on, and that was our bed. One place the place the bed on the car did not hold very well, and it was down grade. The cars started to go at a great speed and went quite a distance before they could be stopped. Luckily we did not meet another train or there would have been a collision. No doubt a lot of the passengers would have been killed. We certainly had a lot of narrow escapes coming and going. We saw great herds of buffalo and some of the men would shoot out of the car windows at them. The stations were a great distance apart, and the men at the stations had tried Buffalo meat to sell.

I hope you will excuse all the mistakes, and the children will enjoy hearing you read my trip.

MOTHER

[Louisa Marie Chubbuck Sweetland]

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