

Journal of a Wagon Trip from Evansville Indiana to Prescott Arizona

April 8, 1867 - October 9, 1867

***Manuscript transcribed by the Sharlot Hall
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Barsinia Rogers French

Barsinia Rogers was the daughter of Prescott's first school master; Samuel Curtis Rogers. Barsinia was one of five children who traveled over 1700 miles in a covered wagon from Indiana to Prescott Arizona in 1867 walking the majority of the way. It was Barsinia's job to keep the daily diary of their journey, she was 12 years old.

'Samuel Curtis was Justice of Peace. Was owner of grocery store in Prescott and blacksmith shop. He bought quite a bit of property in pres. Mother's kin- Jessie, Barsinia, Sirkle Croesus, Luella, Millie.'

Narcissa Millie Rogers

April 8th

Father left Evansville with his family of himself, wife and five children we traveled with 4 mules & 6 Horses. It rained very hard in the afternoon & it rained all night. We started out early in the morning & after traveling about half a mile we had to stop & help build a bridge before we could cross the last branch of saunders creek.

April 17 Wednesday

We passed Mt. Vernon Ill. After we had left the city about 6 miles one of the wagons broke & we had to go back to the city to get it fixed & we only made 8 miles.

April 18 Thursday

One of the wagons broke again today in the same place.

April 22nd Monday

We passed Illinois town, crossed the Mississippi river & passed St. Louis on the other side. we traveled 21 miles.

April 28th Sunday

Remained in camp all day, Mother washed some clothes.

May 3rd Friday

One of Father's horse died the best one he had them we had to put in another that would not work very well and at noon another took sick but he doctored it & it got well. Made 12 miles & camped on the prairie.

May 10th Friday

Crossed the Kansas line.

May 12th Sunday

Hunted half the day for our horses and then started on the account of not having good enough water to wash with.

May 17th Friday

Passed council grove a 10 O'clock the last town we shall see until we cross the plains. Traveled 16 miles over took a train of spaniards.

June 1st Saturday

A nice bright clear day. Traveled 4 miles & camped at Fort Laramie. Hitched up & drove 2 miles from the fort in order to be arranged for our next morning drive.

June 4th Tuesday

Traveled 10 miles & Camped in site of fort Dodge.

Saturday June 8th

The roads were very Slippery but we made very good time.

Drove 15 miles.

June 14th Friday

Killed 4 antelopes- started at quarter past 2 o'clock in the morning. Passed pretty station where 2 weeks before there had been 1 man killed & one wounded. 2 miles-killed 2 more wounded in site of the station by Indians.

June 28th Friday

This morning an Indian came into camp and before night there were 7 indians in camp. Brought water 2 miles & a 1/2.

July 2nd Tuesday

Father returned in the evening & said that the gold mines were not very good.

July 3rd Wednesday-I gathered a nice handful of strawberries while father was fixing a bridge across a little hollow.

July 16 Tuesday

Traveled 20 miles & camped as there is no water on the road in 20 miles of here.

July 17 Wednesday

Filled our kegs & traveled.

Camped on salt creek. There is no water in 30 miles of here & we have to travel all night to make it in good time to water in the morning. Made 40 miles & the mules and horses were so near give out that we had to stop.

July 18 Thursday

This morning we gave our horses a little water & started on we drove about 20 miles & found some water & stopped for night.

July 21 Sunday

Passed Albuquerque & drove 4 miles below to the ferrie (sic) across the rio grand when we arrived there was about 20 Pueblo Indians waiting to go across. They seem to be industrious- they raise crops & build houses.

July 22 Monday

Calvary came to be crossed & the government must help herself first. the Indians got mad & packed up & left to cross below. we cannot cross today.

July 23 Tuesday

Father went back to the fort to try and procure help to cross the river. we cannot cross today but there is 3 men came this evening to help across in the morning.

July 23 Wednesday

This morning they came all here in good humor ready to help us over & by 7 O'clock we were all over but the 4 men who refused to stand guard of nights. 2 of the men went off yesterday. We leave the rio grande at 3 O'clock. we crossed the bottom land of the rio grande & then we begin ascending the sand hills. after we got to the top we rested our horses on some very good grass. We then hitched up & gave our horses a little water out of the keg that we had brought along for that purpose. We then started on. farther got in the wagon to rest & sleep so as when we got stopped he would watch the horses. while he was asleep Billy took the wrong road. the track run out & had to stop until daylight & we found that we're going straight east. Rested our horses on poor grass. Went 8 or 9 miles out of our way straight through 14 miles.

July 25 Thursday

This morning we set out over the prairie without any road. Set out west to try & make it to water as quick as possible. After a little while we came to the rio Puerco, a little nasty river. After

a little while a Mexican came along & told us that we were 2 miles above the road this evening we drove down to the road.

July 26 Friday

Camped for noon at Sheep springs. at first we could not find any water but mother went up the canyon & she found some water & then father went & found some pools of water at night we camped at a little pond of water where there were some very good grass.

July 27 Saturday

We passed El rito & also Laguna Indian town.

July 28 Sunday

Today we passed up the cannion (sic) & it was filled with fields of corn that was the M Indian fields.

August 7 Wednesday

Today we traveled 22 miles. Camped at pascado springs. We are almost west of the pueblo Indians & everything else but the wild & savage apaches until we get to Prescott.

August 8 Thursday

Made 11 miles. Passed the town of rumi & we had a very bad road on the account of a very hard rain & hail. We camped at night on the sand hills & down in a hollow. I picked up a handful of hail stones. The herds are scared of evening. coming in one after another.

August 9 Friday

This morning there were several rumi Indians. Went with us a good piece for guides. After awhile they left us but 1 went on until Father told him we did not need him. We shook hands with the last pueblo Indian & now comes the wild apaches. Made 14 miles.

August 10 Saturday

Started on & camped for noon at Jacob's Well & the water was so mean that we could hardly use it. At night we camped at Navajo springs. Good artisan water. made 19 miles.

August 11 Sunday

Today we made 13 miles. Burnt sage brush & drank red mud for coffee.

August 12 Monday

Traveled 14 miles & had to dig for water. We camped on very good grass.

August 13 Tuesday

Traveled 17 miles & camped on Colorado river.

August 14 Wednesday

Traveled 5 miles & came in site of a log house at which there were 6 men camped that were coming from Prescott & they give a very bad recommendation of that part of Arizona & just at dark another party of Major Coffins came up & camped all night- their party gives a very different account of Prescott. Major Coffin gave father an offer for a house rent free.

Aug 18 Sunday

After traveling for some time we came to a swampy leggune & after we crossed it we ascended up a narrow canon (sic) & of it no water in site. We traveled on in hopes of finding some water. Traveled till dark & found no water. Brother A Dion got on a mule & went ahead to look for water. He found some rain water & brought some to drink. Made 20 miles.

Aug 19 Monday

We drove on to the rain water place but it had all dried up & we drove on till we came to the river & there we camped for evening. Made ? miles.

Aug 20 Tuesday

We drove on to the last place on the river & 6 men with one wagon came in the evening & from Prescott & they say that we cannot go to Prescott & we have to turn back to fort wingate. made 5 miles.

Aug 21 Wednesday

This morning 4 other men came in camp & they were 4 disguised soldiers. One of the first 4 men drove fathers team to let him rest himself. We made 20 miles & camped at Thompsons spring.

August 27 Tuesday

Drove 8 miles & camped at the old log house n the river. We caught 36 fish here.

Aug 28 Wednesday

Traveled 5 miles & camped at the last place on the river. rained today.

Aug 29 Thursday

Today we had very bad roads & we got mired today. It took us 2 hours to get out of the mire. Only made about 12 miles.

Aug 31 Saturday

Father killed a rabbit today. Made 14 miles & camped at Navajo springs.

Sep 1st Sunday

Today we lay in camp on account of our horses not being able to travel a few miles a day & father went out over the hills to see if he could find some game & he saw nothing. Some prairie squirrels & they are not fit to eat & crows in abundance & that is about all the game that there is out in this wild country of bare prairie & sage hills & deep sand & the snakes dig their houses in the deep sand & that is about all that lives here & all the way they can live.

Mother was takng her turn of standing guard at nite. She took 4 hours. My brother Jesse 4 hours. The horses were staked. The Indians crept up in the dark and jumped up suddenly, the horses broke the stake ropes and the Indians ran them up a

canyon, got all of them but one. A fine Stallion. They left him, but shot him full of poison arrows, so we had not one left.

“These were severe trying times. This is where Jim Baker came to us, yoked up some of his cows and took us thru to Prescott Ariz. Mr. Washington French was one of the party, and later on when Barsinia was 17 or 18, they were married.”

**Narcissa Millie Rogers
Youngest child and sister of Barsinia**