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TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 1917

JOHN BRATT TELLS OF PIONEER DAYS OF FRONTIERS

Fifty or more years ago, the writer, equipped with a gunny sack for a suit case containing a limited wardrobe—suit of underwear and an overshirt—when not in use, drove a six yoke ox team pulling a Murphy five hundred pounds of freight in an ox train of twenty-eight wagons, that left Nebraska City on the 20th of May, 1866, for Fourth Company Post, later named Fort Phil Kearney.

I was anxious to go to the Placer Diggins in the Gallatin Valley, Montana, and found Fourth Company post was the nearest point I could get to, so I hired out to Mr. Bass, (the nephew of his uncle) who owned the train, to take my discharge at destination, where I expected to join some other outfit to take me to the mines that had already created some excitement on account of their richness and easy working.

Outside the trouble from Indians our trip from Nebraska City to Fort Sedgewick, where we crossed the South Platte river—to which this article will take us—was without great incident. Every day's drive opened a new leaf in the book of nature, a new country that no one seemed to have explored but the Indian to feed his game on and slaughter it at will.

The route became more attractive after getting into the Platte river valley, with its broad river with banks and many islands dotted with timber and thick brush.

The work was new but I soon caught on. My fellow bullwhackers ranged in age from 45 down to 20 years. Some had driven ox teams over the Smoky Hill route.

They were no worse, nor better than those following similar work some drank nearly all gambled, chewed tobacco and said cuss words.

I was the son of a Methodist minister and tried to do right, even to making some resolutions that I would not drink, gamble, swear and other things that could be dispensed with.

Our fourth day from Nebraska City caught me saying "Dam you" to one of my work steers who stood on my toes, while trying to yoke him up at four o'clock in the morning.

For this I received some commendation from nearby bullwhackers who heard me. I again resolved not to swear, much to the disgust of the drivers behind me, who frankly told me I could not drive that team without swearing and that if I did not swear I would never help from them in case of a get stuck.

I had equipped myself with a bullwhacker's outfit as far as my limited means permitted, with Colt's army revolver, 100 cartridges, bowie knife, scabbard and cartridge belt, bull whip (12 foot lash, 3 foot stock), and buckskin for papers.

Mr. Bass in hiring me said we might have to go through some Indian country and that he would furnish us with a gun each and some ammunition when we got to Doby Town.

band of Sioux some 3000 strong then camped at Fort Laramie. Mr. Bass had made his boasts that he would make me sorry for asking for that gun and ammunition before he got through with me.

After leaving Doby Town where there were camped some few soldiers, we passed several road ranches, among which was the "Midway" owned, I believe, by Penniston and Miller. It had been raided by the Sioux and burned. A few chickens were running around apparently lost.

We also passed the Gillman Bros. ranch, then the E. P. Boyer ranch and store at Cottonwood Springs and just west of this was Fort Cottonwood where there was stationed two or more companies of soldiers under command of General Mitchell, or Major O'Brien.

Here Charles McDonald kept a well stocked store and road ranch. After stopping there once you wanted to stop again. Things were kept nice, the meals were good and wholesome. Louis Woodin kept the sutler's store.

At this time several citizens were living at or near this post among which may be mentioned the Shells, Ericksons, Burkes and others. It is said that our commander at this Fort stripped the roof of the Erickson house while Mrs. Erickson sick and their family of small children were in it and could not find other shelter.

Brave men. Both Mr. McDonald and Mr. Erickson are yet living, hale and hearty and highly respected by all who know them.

Before leaving Fort Cottonwood, later known as Fort McPherson, our arms and ammunition were inspected by a U. S. officer and receiving his O. K. we were allowed to proceed on our journey, passing the Fritchie and Ben Holiday ranch and stage station. The latter was located at the mouth of Box Elder canyon and later purchased by John Burke and taken in to the Fort McPherson reservation to protect his bridge approaches.

Mr. Burke had already built a road ranch just east of Moran canyon on the Oregon trail. This was raided and burned by the Indians and the family barely escaped with their lives.

With a looting team to Fort Cottonwood, Mr. Burke's energy and enterprise was without limit. He first took up a piece of land south of the Platte river some three miles west of Box Elder canyon. He cultivated this, built an irrigation ditch, taking the water out of the Platte river. Here he raised good crops which brought good prices from the immigrants, freighters, soldiers and others.

We next passed the "Alkali road" ranch and stage station later known as the home of Mr. McGee (who in leaving this city in his cups would send out a yell for "T. J. Foley and Alkali").

Our next important stop was at the Fort Sedgewick crossing of the South Platte river. Here good old honest Sam Watts was post master for a time. The post was a lively one and sometimes had as many as three companies who were kept constantly on the go protecting the stage coaches, freighters, immigrants and others from Indian attacks.

We had already run into some small herds of buffalo. Mr. Bass, good as his word, had paid me more or less attention and allowed me but few leisure moments. When he saw me reading that Harpers Monthly, which the kind storekeeper at Doby Town had given me, he would go into spasms.

Mr. Bass, out of courtesy of being the nephew of his uncle had been made captain of our wagon trains, his word was law and authority unquestioned, no matter whether right or wrong. It was near 5 p. m. when our train, which was in the lead pulled up to the ford at the south bank of the river. The sky had become dark with black rolling clouds and low rumbling thunder was heard in the distance, vivid flashes of lightning sent their sheets and forks above and around us, all indicating the storm's rapid approach.

The work cattle that were unyoked and turned over to the herders snuffed around and at the ranch, no doubt did this for Morrow's interest. Jack would often help the unfortunate. Among his employees at this time, hunters, interpreters, traders, etc., might be named Turgeon, Sharp, Alley, Gladden, Rowland and Black Jack.

Some of these men worked in our tie and wood camps and proved to be good men. In addition to these there were some 200 Indians, principally Sioux, I was offered a little boy, Ochscheila, about two years old, by his mother, for a plug of tobacco. The boy's full dress was a string of beads. Sorry I could not take him.

Morrow was a good social fellow, and always wore his big 10,000 diamond on his shirt front no matter how soiled the shirt was. Mrs. Morrow was rather a nice looking lady, refined and dressed nicely. I often wondered how she came to marry Jack. Perhaps to reform him. Not sure she succeeded.

In 1868 I got well acquainted with Morrow at Laramie City and Fort Sanders where we were filling wood and tie contracts for the government and U. P. R. Co.

One night at Laramie City before going into a poker game he handed me a roll of some \$1500.00 in green backs, requesting me to keep it for him until morning, which I did. When I handed him back his roll he showed me another of nearly equal amount that he had won from two very prominent men on a flying visit to the city.

It is claimed that Jack broke the bank and loaned these gentlemen money to go home on. Jack died in Omaha some years ago, almost penniless.

Platte City, now North Platte, at this time had a mixed population of some 400 to 500 people, contractors, guides, gamblers, tie makers, bridge builders, etc. To see a man hanging on a telegraph pole gave no cause for alarm. He died for a cause, sometimes a bad one.

The Cedar hotel standing where the Front street brick barn formerly stood was the Ben Ton and only hotel in the city until the Railroad hotel was built. The vigilance committee ran the city, firmly and economically when necessary.

With the advent of good Father Ryan and other good men representing other churches the moral side of the city began to improve so that when the writer returned in August, 1869, to fill a government hay contract of 3300 tons (Mr. McDonald put in 1,000 tons of this) there was a marked improvement and a man was safe to walk the streets if he carried a couple of revolvers and could use them quickly.

We resumed our journey westward over the now well worn Oregon trail in the early part of July, 1866, passing the Bishop ranch located where the Beer ranch stood later. We also passed the Baker and Bauvey ranches and stage stations located near the O'Fallon bluff. The Baker ranch has been noted for its cleanliness and good treatment. It was kept by Lou and Mrs. Baker, parents of the expert shot, Johnny Baker. It had a record of many fierce Indian attacks. Think good Mrs. Baker is still living.

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By the time all was ready large drops of rain began to fall. Mr. Bass had mindfully ordered me to take the point on the off side of the first team and I had thoughtfully taken off my clothing to my waist to accord me some dry ones after my trip across the river, which was bank full.

We saw the going in and getting out place. Mr. Bass was in much evidence and had changed his customary mule for one of the night herders horses. Six bullwhackers were ordered in with the first wagon which was one of the heaviest wagons in the train and had the most perishable freight, sugar, coffee, salt, beans, flour, etc.

We coupled eight yoke of cattle to the wagon piloted by Mr. Bass and three bullwhackers on the upper side and assistant wagon master, Green, mounted and three bullwhackers on the lower side. The water at the going in place was between three and four feet deep with a swift current.

We came to a stop about 150 feet from the river bank, put on four more yoke of cattle and after hard work breasting against swashing waves of the river and pounded by rain that was coming down in sheets, causing the work cattle to mill we got a gee pull and two of our chains broke.

We doubled these when some of our work cattle got down and to save one yoke of cattle from drowning we pulled the bow lines and dropped that yoke and chain in the river. We succeeded in getting another pull and the tongue came out of the wagon.

The storm was now at its full force and in order to save the cattle we dropped the hooks out of the yokes, some few chains we wrapped around the yokes but many were dragged by the cattle. It was soon dark. Several yoke of cattle went across the river. The others came back on this side.

The last I saw of the wagon the water was going over the top of the end gate and the wagon still settling in the quick sand. Mr. Bass had some revenge on me, but more in cursing his bad luck. Nearly all the bullwhackers and some of the night herders went to the Fort that night and had a great time drinking and dancing. Outside of Mr. Bass I was the only sober man in our camp.

Mr. Bass kindly woke me at 3:30 telling me to get on that mule and fetch those work cattle from the other side the river. I found 4 yoke and after several unsuccessful attempts to drown me and himself we all arrived at camp glad we were living.

A short time ago the two yokes and chain were dug out of the river at the Sedgewick crossing and are now in my possession at my office on Front street. They were obtained from Mr. McKinster, a banker at Sedgewick.

Our crossing of this river the following two days is told in my autobiography which I hope to publish when I have a little more spare time. It will tell of my experience with my friend Mr. Bass and how he returned to good old Missouri with part of the lobe of his left ear missing.

Respectfully, JOHN BRATT.

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DR. HAROLD A. FENNER Osteopath.

Belton Building Office hours 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. 7 p. m. to 8 p. m. Phones Office Black 1020 Res. Black 513

Notice Catherine McClees will take notice that on the 24th day of May, 1917, P. H. Sullivan, a justice of the peace, in and for Lincoln County, Nebraska, issued an Order of Attachment for the sum of \$73.00 in an action pending before him, wherein Helen M. Rittner is plaintiff and Catherine McClees, defendant, that property consisting of one Suit Case, one Traveling Bag and their contents, together with a miscellaneous lot of wearing apparel, toilet and other articles, has been attached under said order.

Said cause was continued to the 11th day of July, 1917, at ten o'clock, a. m. Dated North Platte, Nebraska, June 1st, 1917. HELEN M. RITNER, Plaintiff.

Hospital Phone Black 633. Home House Black 633. W. T. PRITCHARD, Graduate Veterinarian.

Eight years a Government Veterinarian. Hospital 218 south Locust St., one-half block southwest of the Court House.

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Quality in Cigars has been our aim since we began making cigars in North Platte over thirty years ago.

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Remember the Nurse Brown Memorial Homeopathic Hospital

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Omaha, Nebraska.

DERRYBERRY & FORBES, Licensed Embalmers

Undertakers and Funeral Directors Day Phone 234. Night Phone Black 638.

SHERIFF'S SALE By virtue of an order of sale issued from the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, upon a decree of foreclosure rendered in said Court wherein The Welpton Investment Company, a Corporation, its plaintiff and Clarence C. McGee et al are defendants, and to me directed, will on the 13th day of July, 1917, at 2 o'clock P. M. at the east front door of the Court House in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, to satisfy said decree, interest and cost, the following described property, to-wit:

Lot Number One (1), Two (2), Three (3), Four (4), Five (5), Six (6), Seven (7) and Twenty-two (22) of McGee's subdivision of Lot Number Six (6) and also Lots Number Two (2) and Three (3) of McGee's subdivision of Lot Number Five (5) all of Bear's subdivision of a part of the North East Quarter (NE 1/4) and the South Half (S 1/2) of Section Twenty-nine (29), in Township Fourteen (14), North of Range Thirty-three (33), West of the 6th P. M., in Nebraska, being a part of the Village of Sutherland, Lincoln County, Nebraska, according to the record of said land and also a piece, strip or parcel of land described as beginning at a point on the south line of Lot Number Six (6) and extending to the north line of Lot Number (17) of Clarksons' subdivision of the North West Quarter (NW 1/4) of Section Fourteen (14), North of Range Thirty-three (33), West of the 6th P. M., being a part of the Village of Sutherland, Nebraska, a distance of one hundred and fifteen (15) feet westerly from the south East (SE) corner of said Lot Seventeen (17), running North and South on a line parallel with the north line of said Lot a distance of Two Hundred and eight-tenths (208.8) feet, thence west along the north line of said Lot a distance of One Hundred and Twenty and Sixty-Five Hundredths (120.65) feet, thence in a southerly direction on a line parallel with the east line of said Lot a distance of Two Hundred and Thirteen (213) feet, thence in an easterly direction along the south line of the said lot a distance of One Hundred and Twenty (120) feet to the place of beginning.

Dated North Platte, Nebraska, this 11th day of June, 1917. A. J. SALISBURY, Sheriff.

NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate No. 1437 of Herman A. Erb, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such, which have been set for hearing before said court on July 6, 1917, at 9 o'clock a. m., when you may appear and contest the same. Dated June 6, 1917. GEO. E. FRENCH, County Judge.

PARTITION SALE By virtue of an order directing the referee to make a sale, which order was issued from the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, upon a decree of partition and the confirmation of the referee's report rendered in said court, wherein Lillie M. Dean, Rosa Eshon and Blufford Anway are plaintiffs and Thomas Anway and Ethel Anway, his wife, Lewis Anway and Goldie Anway, his wife, James Grimes and James Grimes, his husband, Ann E. Donaldson, Benjamin Anway and Annie Anway, his wife, Joseph Harris, single, and Harris and Harris, his wife, whose first and real names are to your said plaintiffs unknown, Bruce Eshon, husband of Rosa Eshon, Ruth M. Dean, husband of Lillie M. Dean, George Anway, an incompetent and W. E. East, superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane of Nebraska, in whose custody and care George Anway is at the present time; Ella Anway, an incompetent, and Dr. D. Griffith, superintendent of the Nebraska Institution for Feeble Minded Youth at Beatrice, in whose custody and care Ella Anway is at the present time; John W. Fowler and Bertha L. Fowler, his wife, parties in possession of said lands, and George O. Fowler and Dollie M. Fowler, his wife, parties in possession of said lands, and to me directed I will on the 3rd day of July, 1917, at two o'clock P. M. at the East Front Door of the Court House in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash the following described real estate, to-wit: All of Section Five (5), in Township Twelve (12), North of Range Thirty-one (31), West of the 6th P. M.; the South Half (S 1/2) of the Northeast Quarter (NE 1/4) and Lots One and Two (1 & 2), all in Section Six (6), in Township Twelve (12), North of Range Thirty-one (31), West of the 6th P. M.; and the South Half (S 1/2) of Section Thirteen (13), North of Range Thirty-one (31), West of the 6th P. M. all of said lands being located in Lincoln County, Nebraska.

Dated this 4th day of June, 1917. O. E. ELDER, Referee.

NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate of Patrick Ruddy, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such, which have been set for hearing before said court on July 9, 1917, at 9 o'clock a. m., when you may appear and contest the same. Dated June 11, 1917. GEO. E. FRENCH, County Judge.

NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate No. 1478 of Joseph M. Wilson, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such, which have been set for hearing before said court on July 9, 1917, at 9 o'clock a. m., when you may appear and contest the same. Dated June 11, 1917. GEO. E. FRENCH, County Judge.

NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate of Elmhurst W. Crane, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

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NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate No. 1438 of Emma Zimmer, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such, which have been set for hearing before said court on June 29, 1917, at 9 o'clock a. m., and on January 6, 1918, at 9 o'clock a. m. to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed. GEO. E. FRENCH, County Judge.

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