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JOURNAL OF AN OVERLAND PARTY FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA TO THE
MOUNT ALEXANDER GOLD DIGGINGS IN VICTORIA.

Wednesday, February 11, 1852—We started from Cherry Gardens for the Diggings at about 11 o'clock, and about 7 at night camped at the head of the Meadows. A warm day.

Thursday, 12—Got four miles beyond Strathalbyn; and

Friday, 13—To Wellington about 6 o'clock. This was a hard day's work, caused by some sandy road. Two warm days.

Saturday, 14—Crossed the Murray about 9 o'clock, and camped about ¼ mile from Mr. Whewell. There baked our first damper.

Sunday, 15—A hot day. Part of the forenoon I spent with Mr. Whewell; in the afternoon he came to our camp. From this place I wrote to my father.

Monday, 16—A fine day. We had about four miles of heavy sand, and went about 20. Saw Flupham returning home from the diggings.

Tuesday, 17—A fine day. Went through the desert to McGrath's Flat, 25 miles, 18 through solid sand. Met with Messrs. Goss and Edgecombe. Our cakes lasted till tonight. Party all well.

Wednesday, 18—A cool day. Got to Wood Wells; bought from the blacks 38 fish for eight biscuits. I baked a damper while Isaac washed Jessy (a young mare, first shod and harnessed for this journey) began to limp.

Thursday, 19—A fine day. About 3 o'clock we passed Salt Creek. Here I left a letter, and we went on to Sheepskin Wells. The road was over a succession of stiff sand hills and black flats, from a quarter of a mile to a mile in length.

Friday, 20—A warm day. In the course of this day's journey there were eight carts, one dray, 16 horses, 12 bullocks, and between 20 and 30 men helping each other through a bog. We accomplished 27 miles notwithstanding, and camped not far from Tilley's Station.

Saturday, 21—A good road. We passed a great number of inscriptions on trees, and left one as follows: "L. Broadbent's party passed here 21st February. All well." Camped 11 or 12 miles up Tilley's Flat.

Sunday, 22 —A very hot day. We camped amidst such a collection of ants, flies, and mosquitos as I never saw before; one could not sit anywhere, but there seemed to be thousands of little ants. At night we had a prayer meeting.

Monday, 23—A German stockkeeper pulled a nail but of Jessy's shoe, and she

has not limped since. This has been the hottest day's journey we have encountered; made about 28 miles, two of which were very sandy.

Tuesday, 24—A very sultry day. Got within five miles of Mackinnon's; killed a large snake. We took up the packs of four men who were walking, the head of one of them was almost as white as my father's. A good road all day.

Wednesday, 25—A fine day. Got to Mosquito Plains. Saw this day 11 white women, two at a station and nine on the overland journey; passed many carts and came up with Mr. Thomas Hall, of Elizabeth-street, Adelaide. Isaac shot a large duck. We had some very hard road; went over 20 miles.

Thursday 26—Got to Mackintosh's about 11 o'clock; the finest place we have seen since we left Strathalbyn. Here James left a letter and bought 2 lbs. of cheese at 1s. 3d. per lb. Crossed the Boundary Line about 5 o'clock and camped about two miles within the Victoria territory. We had a good road all day.

Friday, 27—A fine day and good road; at night we camped among good feed. Baked a damper almost as large as a grindstone.

Saturday, 28—A fine day and good road; we went about 21 miles and camped at a place which we named Shea-oak Flat.

Sunday, 29—A fine day; dined on roast jay, roast duck, roast cockatoos, and roasted potatoes. In the evening we had a prayer meeting.

Monday, March 1—A warm day. Got to Mount Arapiles; a level road, but some of it very sandy. Isaac and I went to the tip-top of a rock which stands on about an acre of ground, 100 yards or more from any other hill, and is about 170 feet high. We could see, as I imagined, over 100 miles of distance; about four miles east of it we camped in middling feed and near to water. Baked two dampers.

Tuesday, 2—A hot day, and one among the many on which I found my veil very useful. Elijah and I had a bathe in the Wimmera. Travelled about 22 miles.

Wednesday, 3—An uncommonly hot day, and a great deal of what we call "Bay of Biscay" road; journeyed about 23 miles.

Thursday, 4—A fine day. Eat our last biscuit this day, and went about 24 miles; camped at a place which we named Tolmer's Flat.

Friday, 5—A very cold day; went through a tremendous forest of trees, about 18 miles.

Saturday 6—A cool day. I shall not forget this day; Francis, the before-mentioned stockkeeper, had £9 10s. stolen from him last night. They allowed a wayfaring stranger to sleep in their wurley, and this morning the above sum,

all Francis had, except a few shillings, was gone. About 4 o'clock to-day we met the Adelaide Escort, travelled about 20 miles.

Sunday, 7—A cool day. We called the place of this day's encampment, Wattle Flat. Had a prayer-meeting at night.

Monday, 8—A fine day; went about 24 miles; camped in good feed.

Tuesday, 9—A fine day. Met many returning to Adelaide; we got to the Lodden; here the cart stopped, whilst Isaac and I went forward to the diggings. We got there about 5 o'clock, lay under a cart, but got very little sleep.

Wednesday, 10—Found Messrs. Hill's party this morning. I also saw Peter, lately belonging to the cutter Breeze, went back to the cart and we all got to the diggings about 5 o'clock, and pitched our tent. There are temporary habitations innumerable, hundreds of tents, and thousands of men.

Thursday, 11—A warm day; the horses earned £1 12s. Mr. Hill came to see us at night.

Friday, 12—A cloudy day; the horses earned £2 7s. 6d. We have obtained licenses which everyone is required to have; Jas. and Elijah have commenced the work of search by opening their first hole.

JOHN BROADBENT.

N.B.—The journal was accompanied by the following letter to the writer's wife.

Dear Eliza—We arrived at the most wonderful place in the world (the Mount Alexander diggings) on the 10th of March, all well, and without breaking "a stick or a strand," or the loss of anything in our list, save a pencil, a pen-holder, and a fork. We were exactly one calendar month on the road. You will see by our log-book [journal] how many days we rested and how many days we travelled. The horses did not flinch at one inch of their ground all the way. We met many parties on their way back, who, by their sad reports, would have daunted lions; but the diggings we were determined to see, if the Lord gave us health; and the diggings we have seen. Now, Eliza, take no notice of what you may hear said, but listen to what I now tell you:—Though we have come at a wrong time, there is no fear of our starving for want; we have plenty to eat and drink. One thing I can tell you, I would rather return and live with you at home on bread and water than have brought you overland to this place. If we do not succeed tolerably well, we shall soon be at home again. Isaac excepted: he is for stopping, unless he alters his mind; but, mind you, we intend giving it a trial, and, good luck or bad luck, we mean to be back by seed time, God willing. Tell those who may ask my advice as to coming that, if I were at home and knew what I know now, I would not come, at least till spring, because if it

does not rain soon (and from what I know of the summer of 1837, it may hold off three, if not four months yet), gold-washing at Mount Alexander, or at any other place, as far as I can learn, will be little better than growing corn and potatoes surrounded by the comforts of home. James and Elijah are both well, and would have written; but as time is precious, we thought one letter would do for all. The Post Office is 6 miles distant from us. Lest I should forget it, I now tell you that if any one writes to us they must address to the Upper Loddon. Tell the — — that letters have been sent both by sea and land; their husbands, and all with whom they are connected, are well. We have not heard of Henry yet, but William is gone to Bendigo Creek. There are some here making their fortunes, and scores wishing they had never heard of the diggings. It is now 15 minutes to 9, and while writing the word just above, four guns were fired off at once, which made my pen recoil. There are scores of guns fired off every night. Flour is from £3 10s. to £4 per bag; oats, from 15s. to 20s. per bushel; bran, 8s. per ditto; sugar, 4d. per lb. by the bag—5d. retail; ham, 2s. per lb.; bacon, 2s. 6d. per lb.; dates, 1s. per lb.; tea, 2s. by the box, and from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per lb. retail. Mutton, 2s. the fore quarter, 2s. 6d. the hind quarter; and potatoes 5d. per lb. Carriage from Melbourne to the diggings, £20 per ton.

I am, dear Eliza, Your affectionate husband,
Friday, March 12, 1852.

JOHN BROADBENT.