

Extract of a Letter from C. W. Winstandley.

*Valley of the Platte River, 4 miles from and in sight of Fort Kearney,
May 10th, 1850.*

J. B. WINSTANDLEY: *Dear Brother* – I have seized the present time to write you a few lines. Although my fingers are stiff and cold, my hands sore, I will try to indite a few lines as intelligently as possible.

We started from the Missouri river 25th of April, and traveled in company with Beers as far as the Big Blue, where all the company except Beers, wished to rest a day. B. said others might do as they pleased, he was going on. We had traveled at such a rate up to that time that most of the men and boys as well as the oxen were almost worried to death. Beers, Williams, and McCullough's messes went on. Hooper, Wilson, Bullard, and our mess stopped at the Big Blue a day, where we found the best grass we had yet seen, our cattle got their fill, rested, snuffed the wind, and looked like themselves again. The men washed, shaved, shirted, and looked something like white men again. We have made about 20 miles per day since we started, laid by 2-1/2 days altogether, arrived at the Bluffs of the Platte at 2-1/2 o'clock day before yesterday, 8th inst., drove down to the river, waded over to the island for wood, and drove the cattle over to graze. An old gentleman, who came out last spring informs me that the spring is about three weeks later than last year. The grass we find on the island will keep the cattle alive, but will not do to travel on, our corn will last to-day and to-morrow. The weather is cold and disagreeable of nights and mornings, pleasant during the middle of the day. The boys are preparing to start, we intend to go twelve miles further up to day. We had a fine rain last night and if it will only turn warm the prospects will brighten. Old Buffalo was so slow, so poor, and such a pest to our team we set the old scamp at liberty the first day's drive this side of Big Blue. Big and Little Blue are beautiful streams. Wharton and myself caught fish enough in them for three messes. I had a very fair shot at a Buffalo the other day but could not or did not fetch him; plovers and ducks, abound all along this route thus far. Our cattle are in better condition than any I have seen except one company, who started fifteen days before we did, and reached the Platte valley three hours after we did. Squire Wilson stands the trip well, and is as lively as a Georgia Major. Major Leslie had a hard time of it for a while but now gets along fine.

Our company is now composed of four messes, McKay, Wilson, Leslie, Rodgers, Langford, Hooper, McGinness, Beeler, McWilliams, Shindler, Bullard, King, Davis, Dolson, Ashbrook, Willard, Wharton, Moore, and myself; all and every one of us (except Shindler) are well and hearty, and our only fear is that we will fall short in provisions. We have quite a pleasant time of it, and a good deal of fun in various ways; the Squire

offers us a good deal of life and merriment, he is good company on the route. You can have no adequate idea how chapped and sore our hands will get, if you could, you would excuse this awful scrawl. Ben Shindler's health is fast improving. He is well enough to walk with the wagons and prefers walking and will be as healthy as any of us in a few days. I will write to you again from Fort Laramie. Give my respects to all friends.

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