Capt. L. C. Easton's Report:

Fort Laramie to Fort Leavenworth
Via Republican River in 1849

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INTRODUCTION

Who first explored the length of the Republican River? Pike, Fremont, and quite possibly others traveled sections of the stream earlier, but it appears that the first known complete exploration of the main channel of Republican River was undertaken in 1849 by an expedition led by an officer of the Quartermaster Department of the United States Army. After assisting in the establishment of a new military station at Fort Laramie, outpost on the great Platte route to Oregon and California, Capt. L. C. Easton was assigned the task of exploring the Republican River as an alternate supply route between that post and Fort Leavenworth on the Kansas border, then the base for all military operations on the Plains.

The discovery of the Easton journal in the War Department Records of the National Archives was a coincidental by-product of two distinct historical research programs of the National Park Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. A national monument since 1938, Fort Laramie has long been the subject of intensive archival study by Service historians. In 1946 the Region Two office of the Service, in Omaha, began a systematic survey of historic sites in proposed Missouri river basin reservoir areas. Many of these water control projects are in the Republican river basin. The two lines of inquiry converged in the documentary records relating to early frontier military posts.

The tongue of land at the junction of the North Platte and Laramie rivers, in Goshen County, Wyoming, has been a concentration point for many significant events in the history of the trans-Mississippi frontier. There has been a "Fort Laramie" here ever since 1834. In that year the fur traders, William Sublette and Robert Campbell, erected a log-stockaded post dubbed by them Fort Wil...
liam, more commonly called by trappers, missionaries, and early travelers “the fort on the Laramie.” In 1841 this was replaced by an adobe-walled establishment of the American Fur Company christened Fort John, but still “Fort Laramie” to thousands of emigrants to Oregon and Utah, to the Donner party, to Francis Parkman, and finally to worried government officials.

Even before the gold fever, with increasing numbers of its citizens migrating westward across the hostile plains, it was perhaps inevitable that the federal government would set up a chain of military posts along the Great Platte route, and the idea had been broached at various times by such respected authorities as Fremont, Parkman, and Fitzpatrick. It was officially set in motion by President Polk in a message to congress in 1845, which resulted in the enactment, on May 19, 1846, of “an act to provide for raising a regiment of Mounted Riflemen, and for establishing military stations on the route to Oregon.” The Mexican War delayed action until 1848, when Fort Kearny, the first military post on the trail, was established on the Lower Platte. Then destiny pointed its finger at “Fort John on the Laramie.”

By order of Gen. D. E. Twiggs, dated April 9, Maj. W. F. Sanderson, mounted riflemen, was instructed to leave Fort Leavenworth by May 10 with Company E “to locate a post in the vicinity of the Laramie.” Hard on the heels of an army of covered wagon emigrants, the troops arrived at the scene on June 16. On the 26th of that month Lt. Daniel P. Woodbury successfully completed negotiations with “Bruce Husbands acting as agent and attorney for Pierre Choteau Jr. & Company” for the purchase of the post for $4,000. After a hasty inspection of the dilapidated adobe post and a reconnaissance of the countryside, Major Sanderson set the troop to erecting new quarters.

On July 28 the small garrison of 58 men and 5 officers was augmented by Company C, mounted riflemen, 2 officers and 60 men, under Capt. Benjamin S. Roberts. On August 12 Company G, 6th infantry, composed of 2 officers and 33 men, brought in a train of wagons from Fort Leavenworth. This completed the Fort Laramie garrison of 1849.

Accompanying this last contingent was Col. Aeneas Mackay, sent by headquarters to inspect the new post. In a report of July 31 to

2. J. D. Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (1905), v. 4, p. 396.
Thomas Jesup, quartermaster general, he describes the deplorable condition of the adobe works and the new building program, praises the hitherto unappreciated "advantages of this station," and then writes:

... having arrived at the Termination of our Route, to take all the advantage possible of our retrograde movement, I have ordered Captain Easton with a portion of our party to return to Ft. Leav by the way of the Republican Fork and Kansas River ... to make a critical examination of it. ... For myself I prefer to return by the way of Ft. Pierre and the Missouri River to Ft. Leavenworth.  

Analysis of the Easton journal, utilizing base maps of the U. S. Geological survey, reveals that the amateur explorer took a rather devious route to reach the headwaters of the Republican. Dropping southward from Fort Laramie to Lodgepole creek, at a point east of present Cheyenne, Wyo., Easton followed this directional stream only briefly before dropping southward again, crossing the South Platte near present Sterling, Colo., and then continuing south-easterly until bumping into the Arickaree fork of the North Republican. During the rest of the journey the party closely followed the main course of the Republican to its junction with the Smoky Hill.

Captain Easton's instructions were to make "an examination of the country with a view of establishing a better route from the Missouri River to Fort Laramie, or a more direct or a better one, for the emigrants to Oregon." He had the honesty to make two unequivocal admissions upon his return—first, he committed errors of judgment which unduly lengthened his journey; second, he discovered that the Republican river route offered no weighty advantages over the Platte route, while it did offer some great disadvantages. Either point was enough to deprive the captain of a reputation as a first-class explorer!

The Great Platte road was the inevitable route to Oregon, California, and Utah for one overwhelming reason. It went in exactly the right direction! Even after Colorado came into the emigrant picture in the late 1850's, and Missouri and Kansas communities were definitely interested in a more direct road westward, the Platte-South Platte remained a heavy favorite over the Republican or the Smoky Hill. These latter streams simply dried up and disappeared long before the traveler reached the mountains which were his destination. The Republican river not only disappeared too soon, requiring a long "dry run" overland to South Platte, it

5. "Fort Laramie Microfilm Document No. 11," War Department Records, National Archives. On his journey to Fort Pierre (opposite present Pierre, S. Dak.) Colonel Mackay was accompanied by an escort of ten riflemen commanded by Capt. Stewart Van Vliet.
was bent like an oxbow, making for a circuitous route. Although his destination was southeast of Fort Laramie, Captain Easton spent many days traveling in a northeasterly direction. His route, totaling over 800 miles, should not have been more than 700 miles.

A better case for the Republican might have been made if, instead of trying to negotiate its uppermost headwaters, Easton had combined the best directional features of the Republican and Platte, that is, descend the North Platte from Fort Laramie to Fort Kearny, and then cross overland to the Republican in the vicinity of Franklin county, Nebraska, a distance of merely 40 miles. Or an overland crossing could have been made almost anywhere along the stretch of over 100 miles that the two large rivers closely parallel each other. The fact remains, however, that this not unreasonable route was never used by emigrants of record. The strip between the Platte and Republican rivers was traversed frequently by military parties operating between Fort Riley and Fort Kearny during the 1850's, and patrolling out of Fort Kearny and Fort Cottonwood (McPherson) during the Indian wars of the 1860's, but these were local actions. The crossing between the two rivers as a factor in transcontinental travel never materialized.

Two other exploring expeditions involving the Upper Republican, falling within a seven year radius of 1849, will stand brief comparison.

On his westward journey of 1843 Captain Fremont started to ascend the Republican but became impatient with its northerly course. From "Big Timber," roughly at the bend near present Concordia, he chose to head directly westward, following for a while the Solomon and the North fork of the Solomon. Rather than descend into the valley of the Republican, he kept up the parallel valleys of Prairie Dog, Sappa, and Beaver creeks, then crossed the Republican near present Benkelman, at the junction of the North and South forks. From this point he veered in a west-northwest course to reach the South Platte near present Fort Morgan, proceeding then to Fort St. Vrain, not far from present Greeley, Colo. Fremont's slower supply train, under the veteran guide Thomas


Fitzpatrick, appears to have approximated this same course. Thus, Fremont, though first to the headwaters, in no way robbed Easton of the hitherto unp publication of being first to explore the length of the Republican.

In 1856 Lt. Francis T. Bryan, Corps of Topographical Engineers, followed down the course of the Republican practically in Captain Easton's footsteps, except for the approach to the headwaters. Bryan headed an expedition to survey a practical route from "Fort Riley to Bridger's Pass." The party proceeded up the Republican to the bend just across the present Nebraska line, then went overland to Fort Kearny on the Platte, thence up the Platte, the South Platte, Lodgepole creek, and across the Medicine Bow Range to their objective. The return journey was via the Cache la Poudre and the South Platte to a point near present Fort Morgan, thence southwesterly to "Rock Creek, a tributary of the Arickaree fork of the Republican," actually, it seems, the North fork, near Wray, Colo. Bryan followed the south or right bank of the Republican to a point near present McCook, Neb., then crossed over to the left bank, rejoining his outgoing trail near present Superior, Neb. Like Easton, Bryan felt that the valley of the Republican had the advantage of virgin grass and timber, but everything considered, "the route followed on the outward journey was the most advantageous." 10

There is no evidence, however, that Lieutenant Bryan of the Topographical Engineers was in any way acquainted with the earlier expedition of the Quartermaster Department.

There remains a brief biographical examination of our explorer and his associates. Langdon C. Easton, a native Missourian, ranked 22d in the West Point graduating class of 1838. He served in the Florida War of 1838-1842, and was stationed at Fort Towson, Indian territory, until 1846. He was on quartermaster duty at Fort Leavenworth from 1847 to 1849, and became chief quartermaster, Department of New Mexico, in 1850. In 1852 he returned to duty at Fort Leavenworth, becoming a member of the board of officers who selected the site of Fort Riley in 1852. He returned to New Mexico until 1858. During the rebellion of the seceding states, as staff major, he was successively in charge of the quartermaster depot


10. W. Torrence Jackson, "The Army Engineers as Road Surveyors and Builders in Kansas and Nebraska, 1854-1858," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 17 (February, 1949), pp. 44-51; G. K. Warren, "Memoir to Accompany the Map of the Territory of the United States From the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean," v. 11, Reports of Explorations and Surveys, "for a Railroad From the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean (Washington, 1861), p. 84.
My party for this expedition consisted of Lieut. N. G. Evans 1st Dragoons¹⁵ and of ten Dragoons, as an Escort, Dr. Parks of Boston (whose curiosity to see the Country induced him to accompany the expedition), your Son Thomas, 13 years of Age (who accompanied me for the benefit of his mind and body), Joseph Hunoit as Guide, ten Teamsters and Extra hands employed in the Quartermaster's Department, and two Servants.

The means of transportation (which was more than the party required, being return teams to Leavenworth, which it was thought necessary for me to conduct back) consisted of four six-mule Teams, and one light Waggon drawn by four Mules— The Dragoons were mounted on indifferent Horses, being the same they had ridden from Fort Leavenworth, and on leaving Laramie they were low in flesh, and in a weak condition— The whole party was well armed. We left Fort Laramie on the 2nd of August 1849, with 45 Days rations—

I shall in making this report copy from my Journal, such portions of it as relate to, or has any bearing on, the object in view; believing that such a course will better enable you to judge of the nature of the Country.

AUGUST 2nd In our first day's march we crossed the Laramie River immediately at Fort Laramie, travelling from it 9 Miles in E. S. E. course, to a grove of Cherry Bushes, on a small spring branch, called by our Guide "Cherry Creek."¹⁶ Our road to day has been a very good one over a rolling Prairie— Grass poor and no Wood until we reached Cherry Creek, where we found a few scattering Trees— On examination I found, that the Rifle Cartridges I had obtained at Laramie were damaged and I sent a man back to the Fort to procure a better supply— These Cartridges were damaged in the manufacture, by having too much oil on the Cloth or Patching which covers the Ball, damaging one-fourth of the Powder of each Cartridge—

AUGUST 3rd Left Camp late this Morning, being detained awaiting the arrival of our Messenger dispatched for Cartridges— Direction to day E. S. E. 15 Miles, to a small spring branch, called by

¹⁵. The "United States Regiment of Dragoons" was organized by the act of congress approved March 2, 1853, becoming the "First Regiment of Dragoons" when the Second dragoons were raised in 1869. Its designation was changed to "First Regiment of Cavalry" by the Act of August 3, 1881.—Theo. F. Rodenbourgh and Wm. L. Haskin, editors, The Army of the United States, 1789-1896 (New York, 1896), p. 153.

¹⁶. This same Cherry creek is identified on a map of Goshen county, Wyoming, issued by the Wyoming State Highway Department, 1940. Easton's given compass courses are frequently inexplicable. In this instance an "SSW" course would have taken him downstream along the North Platte. Actually, he appears to have gone SSE.
at Fort Leavenworth, chief quartermaster of the Army of the Cumberland in the field, and chief quartermaster of the armies commanded by General Sherman. In September, 1864, he was brevetted brigadier general "for distinguished . . . services in the . . . campaign of Atlanta, Ga."; on March 13, 1865, he became brevet major general "for meritorious services during the rebellion." After many more years of service, during which he attained the rank of full colonel and assistant quartermaster general, Easton retired in 1881. He died in New York City, April 29, 1884, aged 70.11

Lt. N. George Evans, who accompanied Captain Easton on this journey, ranked 36th in the West Point class of 1848. After "frontier duty at Ft. Leavenworth" and an "expedition to the Rocky Mountains" in 1849, Evans campaigned extensively in the Southwest, attaining the rank of captain with the 2d cavalry before resigning, February 27, 1861, to join in the rebellion against the United States.12

Col. Aeneas Mackay, who launched Easton on his eastward journey, was not a West Point graduate, but he had a real army career. After valiant service in the War of 1812 as 1st lieutenant of ordnance, he remained with the regular army, rising to the rank of colonel in the quartermaster corps on May 30, 1848, "for meritorious service in performing his duties in prosecuting the war with Mexico." He died May 23, 1850, just a few months after dispatching Easton homeward and himself making a simultaneous journey to Fort Pierre.13

CAPTAIN EASTON'S REPORT

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE
FORT LEAVENWORTH
12TH OCTOBER 1849.

SIR:

In obedience to your instructions received at Fort Laramie on the 1st of August last, to proceed from that Post to Fort Leavenworth by way of the Republican Fork14 and the Kansas Rivers, making an examination of the Country with a view of establishing a better route from the Missouri River to Fort Laramie, or a more direct or a better one, for the Emigrants to Oregon. I have the honor to submit the following report.

12. Ibid., v. 2, pp. 365, 366.
our Guide "Box Elder Creek"— An abundance of this Wood on
the branch and good Grass for our Animals— Two miles from our
last Camp we passed over a high ridge, and descended again into
a dry sandy valley— This ridge runs off to the right as far as the
eye could reach, and connects on the West side of our road with a
range of Bluffs, composed of Marl and earthy Limestone— This
Bluff continued on our right the balance of our march to day, at a
distance of from 3 to 5 Miles from the road— Road good— No
Wood and very poor Grass, from Cherry Creek to this encamp-
ment—

August 4th Course as yesterday E. S. E. marched 33 Miles and
encamped at Horse Creek; 18 which at the point we crossed it is a
fine little Stream six or seven feet wide, with excellent Grass in its
valley and an abundance of Wood— The Bluffs referred to yester-
day, continue and run nearly parrelled to our road to day for 7
Miles from Camp, when they sweep around and run off to the East,
and appear to terminate on Horse Creek— We crossed these
Bluffs by a narrow gap near where they change their direction
East— The Arc, formed by the ridge and bluffs referred to yester-
day and to day, encloses a basin which has received the name of
"Godion's Hollow," [?] as our Guide informs us— We found a cool
spring branch a few miles before entering the Gap, and another
four Miles on this side of it (which runs into Horse Creek) 19.—
On the latter we found a large Sioux Village, Whirlwind their
principal Chief, with a number of his people who came out to meet
us, were anxious that we should understand that they were our
friends 20— Some of the Indians, to impress us more fully with the
belief, even assisted our men in getting out of the Creek, a Waggon
that had stalled in it. I regretted to learn that the Cholera was
raging in this village, and had carried off a large number of the
Tribe— Road good Except a steep hill ascending the Bluffs—
Wood and Grass, good and plentiful on the Creeks, but not found
in the intervals during the days march—

17. The name of this Creek appears also on a modern county road map. It differs a
junction with Cherry creek before flowing into North Platte river opposite present Torrington,
Wyo. This camp would be below the junction, near present Veteran, Wyo.
18. Horse Creek is a more sizable tributary of the North Platte. At its mouth in 1851
was held the famous Fort Laramie Treaty Council, engineered by Father DeSmet.
19. This camp and crossing of Horse creek was apparently at present LaGrange, Wyo.
The two walls of the gap referred to are identified today as Bear Mountain and 66 Mountain.
The enclosed basin and present Godion county are named for an obscure French trapper
named "Coche," a companion of Jacques La Ramie, who was reputedly in this area in the
1820's.—Grant L. Shumway, The History of Western Nebraska (Lincoln, 1921).
20. Whirlwind figured in Francis Parkman's wanderings of 1846 in the Fort Laramie
neighborhood. See Mason Wade, editor, The Journals of Francis Parkman (New York,
1947), v. 2, pp. 897, et seq.
AUGUST 5TH—Sunday.—In consequence of the fatigued condition of our Animals, from the long march of yesterday, we marched but 3 Miles in a S. W. course, for the purpose of a change of Grass, and encamped on a branch of the same Creek. Three miles from to day’s Camp, East, are several very fine Springs, of which I noticed one particularly of very fine Water. Immediately on these Spring branches is a narrow strip of good Grass but no Wood. Road good.—One of the Teamsters to day was thrown from his Saddle Mule and badly hurt—Private Covey [?] of the Dragoons, after cutting a Rattle snake in two pieces with his Sabre, very foolishly picked up the head part about nine inches in length, and while examining it was bitten on the Thumb. Having, unfortunately, no Ammonia among our Medicines, we resorted to our Guide’s prescription—Gun powder which was applied in the following manner—The Thumb was scarified about the wound with a pocket knife, and the wound then covered with as much powder as would lie on it, which was exploded with a coal of fire. Covey [?] was ill for 12 Hours, constantly vomiting, and his Arm had swollen to the Shoulder, after which time, he became better and in 10 days was again on duty.

AUGUST 6TH Marched to day 23 Miles S. S. W. and encamped on Pole Creek. Three Miles from last Camp we found a similar spring to the one we saw yesterday, with good Grass in the little valley through which it runs.—Ascending from this valley we had an elevated road of dry table land, uninterrupted until we reached Pole Creek.—No good Grass to day; on the plain is a growth of indifferent Buffalo grass—Good Grass on this Creek but no Wood seen during the day—Road remarkably good—On this Creek the Water made it’s appearance at intervals then sinking and disappearing beneath it’s sandy bottom and again becoming visible for a few hundred yards.—While marching on the elevated plain, the Black Hills, white with Snow, could be seen very distinctly in the distance, to our right.

AUGUST 7TH From Fort Laramie to Pole Creek we had travelled on a indistinct Waggon trail, made by some Traders. From

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21. Bear creek?
22. Lodgepole creek. Like Horse creek, it heads in the Medicine Bow Mountains. Lodgepole parallels U. S. Highway 30 and the Union Pacific railroad. This camp was approximately 20 miles east of present Cheyenne.
23. Frequent reference to the “Black Hills” in Western journals, i.e., Parkman’s Oregon Trail, confuses those who know only of the Black Hills, in present South Dakota. The term was applied in early days to Laramie Peak, west of Fort Laramie, and apparently also, as in this instance, to the Medicine Bow Mountains.
24. For many years prior to 1849 there was commercial intercourse between Fort Laramie, the several trading posts on the Upper South Platte, and Bent’s Fort on the Arkansas.
this point I had determined to take the most direct and shortest route (S. E.) for the Republican Fork, but the Guide insisted that to follow Pole Creek, was the best and nearest route to the South Fork of the Platte, which we, of course, had to cross, and as he also represented that we might suffer for want of Water, by crossing from one Stream to the other, I concluded to follow the Creek to the Platte, provided it should take a course near that I wished to pursue—. Pursuant to this determination, we continued down Pole Creek, 22 Miles due East, again pitching our Tents on it's banks. The Grass on the whole of our march to day has been very fine and the road excellent— Fourteen Miles from our last Camp we came to a high Bluff of soft earthy Limestone, where a fork of the Creek comes in from the S. W. 23— At the foot of this Bluff is a good Spring— A great plenty of Wood in the Bluffs but we have seen none other on to day's March.

August 8th After travelling down the Creek 10 Miles, finding it's course continued East, I determined to leave it and strike S. E. (pursuing which course for (?) miles we reached the South (?) fork of Platte) 26 After leaving Pole Creek we marched 7 Miles and encamped on a small pond of bad water, with but poor grass for our Animals, indeed it has been but indifferent since leaving the superior grass on the stream— Saw to day a small herd of Buffalo, our Guide killed a young Bull, also an Antelope, this is the first Game we have killed since leaving Larmie. Game has hitherto been scarce.

August 9th Our direction to day was S. E.— After marching 17 Miles over a high, arid plain, we descended by a long steep hill, into a large valley, the plain from which we had just descended, continuing on our right into a long point which terminates with a high Bluff of Stone— Under this Bluff we were fortunate in finding a Spring, as our Animals were suffering for want of Water— Continuing our March over a level plain for 8 Miles through the Valley, we encamped on a little Creek running East, the water of which had the muddy appearance of the Platte River 27— Looking back from our Camp, we could see that the valley we came over to day, was formed by the Hills on the North side of the Creek, taking a

23. This would be the bluffs which gave their name to present Pine Bluffs, Wyo., opposite the mouth of Muddy creek. Just east of here is the present Nebraska boundary.
26. Easton should have followed the advice of his guide, to follow “Pole Creek” to its junction with the Platte. This would have ensured a much more direct route to his destination.
27. Probably Rush creek, a tributary of the South Platte in the northeast corner of Weld county, Colorado.
large circuit from it and returning again some 8 or 10 Miles below—
Rising from the plain of this valley, were several hills of an oblong
shape, o'er which were tumbled in great confusion, as if by some
strange freak of nature, large blocks of Stone of quite regular shape,
and which gave the Hills quite a singular and striking appearance—
This Evening a party of 18 Cheyennes came to our Camp— As this
tribe had annoyed us on our March from Kearny to Laramie, by
following and hanging about our Waggons and Tents, seeking an
opportunity to steal; we determined not to let more than two of
them come into our Camp at one time— The party accordingly
was halted 50 yards from our Camp, and the Guide sent to invite
two of them in, which invitation they accepted, and remained with
us some time— This arrangement, not exactly suiting their views,
depriving them as it did of all opportunity of enriching themselves
at our expense, (for which purpose they had in all probability paid
us a visit from their village about 8 Miles distant,) two of their
party attempted to force their way by our Sentinel.— Being pre-
pared for, and anticipating, something of this kind, Lieut Evans
very promptly drew our party up in line, and intimated to the
Indians the propriety of their immediate absence; adopting the sage
suggestion, the whole party (with one exception) mounted their
horses and forthwith left us.— One of the Indians who had been
frustrated in his attempt to pass the Guard, chose to remain about
some fifty yards from our encampment, long after the others had
left, I presume as an evidence that he was not alarmed.

We have found patches of good Grass during our march through
the valley and have an excellent quality of Grass at this Camp, but
there is none fit for grazing on the high plain we passed over—
Road fine but no Wood during the whole day's march.

August 10. We continued our S. E. course to day 25 Miles, over
a high and dry plain, at the termination of which distance, we came
to the South Fork of Platte, which we crossed; and encamped on
the South side of it 28— There is no Timber growing on the Platte
where we crossed it, but we found an abundance of drift Wood,
and superior Grass— We had neither Wood or Water and but
miserable Grass from our last encampment to the South Fork.—

August 11th— Taking an E. S. E course 22 Miles, we encamped
to day on a small pond, with wretched Water and bad Grass— For
five Miles after leaving our Camp this morning we had a heavy
road over hills of deep sand, after which we ascended to an elevated,

28. In the vicinity of present Sterling, Colo.
level, barren plain, which continued until we encamped— With the exception of the 5 miles referred to, our road was most excellent, but no wood, no Grass, and no water on the whole route.

**August 12th**— I had intended to keep an E S. E direction, after leaving the Platte River, until I reached the Republican Fork, but the plain on which we were travelling was a high dry one, and so destitute of everything save miserable Buffalo grass, that I was fearful our Animals might suffer for the want of water and Grass.— I therefore determined on leaving Camp this morning to change our course to S. E. which I believed to be the most direct one to the Republican Fork 29— We marched in this direction 17 Miles over the same barren plain of yesterday, when we were much gratified to reach a very large pond, or lake, of good water, around which our poor Animals, which had had but little to eat the night before, found excellent grazing— To the West of our encampment were several of these ponds, or small lakes, our guide spoke of many of them between the mouth of Pole Creek and the Republican, and Col Fremont mentions several ponds of this description, on his route from the latter stream to the Platte 30.— I am induced to believe that there are a number of these lakes of good water between the two Rivers, and that by winding the road from the one to the other, an abundance of Water can be procured at convenient distances.— Around these Lakes is fine Grass— Our road to day was good— No Wood

**August 13th** Course to day 27 Miles S. E.— Encampment on a Pond, in which we found but very little muddy water, remaining in the tracks made by Buffalo in passing through— We were agreeably surprised in discovering fine Grass in some low ground, near the Camp— No water on our March except in one small hole, some 15 Miles from last encampment— Fine road today, but no wood or Grass between our last Camp and this.

**August 14th** Continued our march S. E. 20 Miles over the same dry, barren plain as on the 12th and 13th when we came to a hill overlooking the fine broad valley of the Republican Fork,31 with the River meandering through it, near a cluster of Trees, which afforded us the prospect of an abundance of Wood—

We had been four days without seeing a Stream of Water or a

29. Here Easton made another mistake. His original course would have brought him onto the headwaters of Frenchman’s fork, or, missing that, the head of the North fork of the Republican near present Wray, Colo. Instead, by dropping south he encountered no sizable stream until he came to the Arickaree fork, which required that he then detour northeastward.

30. In present northern Yuma county, Colorado.

31. Actually, Arickaree fork.
FORT LARAMIE (WYOMING) IN 1849
From Howard Stansbury’s An Expedition to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah
(Philadelphia, 1852)
tance below our Camp, is a large quantity of Timber— Our di-
rection to day has been East—

AUGUST 18TH & 19TH Continued our March down the valley, and
encamped on the 19th on a small Island in the River, on which was
a flourishing growth of large Cotton Wood Timber— On this
Island we found a log pen, supposed to have been built by some
tribe of Indians for defence.34— On our route 7 Miles below our
Camp of the 17th is a small stream of fine, clear water, entering
the River from the N. W. on which we found large quantities of
delicious plums— The grass during these two days march has been
indifferent generally, in consequence of this portion of the valley
being much frequented by immense herds of Buffalo, which have
eaten it out or trampled it down, from which causes the grazing
is not good— Nevertheless there was no difficulty in finding suf-
ficient good grass for our Animals— Wood in abundance these
two days— Our direction has been East by North over a good road.

AUGUST 20TH Course E by N, 24 Miles down the valley to day—
We pitched our Tents on the River Bank 35— Twelve Miles from
our last Camp a little Creek enters the River from the North and
near this Camp another small stream joins it from the South side—
An abundant supply of Wood and good road and Grass to day

AUGUST 21ST Followed the Stream 18 Miles and encamped on a
small Spring branch— Four Miles above this evening’s camp, a
large tributary flows into the river from the N. W.36— Our Guide
informs me that this Stream leads [?] within 45 Miles of the Platte,
and that Lakes are to be found between it’s source and that River—
This would make another good crossing from the Republican to
the Platte River— As I shall not probably hereafter mention Wood
or Grass, I will here state that there was an abundance of the for-
mer, both on this and the Kanzas Rivers, without an interval of more
than half-a-mile, from hence to the Missouri— And of the latter
we found the greatest abundance of an excellent quality, back in
the valley of the Republican, and the vallies of all the small tribu-
taries we crossed, during the whole of our march from this point
until we arrived at Fort Leavenworth.

The Republican here has grown to be a stream, 30 Yards wide

34. This camp would be just west of present Trenton, Neb., near new Culbertson Dam.
35. At approximately this same site appears “Big Timbers, Site of Military Post,” on the General
36. Lund Office survey map of 1872, Sec. 4, T 2 N. R 33 W, 8th P. M. This post was related
to the Indian wars of the late 1860’s. “Big Timbers” here is not to be confused with
Frement’s “Big Timber” near present Concordia, Kan., or the “Big Timbers” of the
Santa Fe trail.
35. In the neighborhood of present McCook, Neb. Frenchman (earlier “Whiteman”) creek comes in from the northwest, Driftwood creek from the south.
36. Red Willow creek.
and four feet deep— Hence to the Mouth of the Republican Fork there are such as large number of small branches emptying into it, I shall mention only the principal ones, referring you to the accompanying Map for information relative to the position of the others— Course to day E by N— Road good.

AUGUST 22ND Continuing our Course in the River valley, E by N, 15 Miles, we halted at a small Creek much swollen by recent heavy rains— As the water was falling rapidly we did not attempt to cross it but encamped on it’s banks 37— Creeks having now become numerous, and our progress consequently, very slow, I was almost induced to leave the River, and take the ridges some 8 or 10 Miles from it, in order to head many of the Creeks and cross the others near their sources— But as little was known relative to the Republican Fork, and as it is laid down on existing Maps, merely by an imaginary line, I was anxious to examine it practically and fix it’s direction—

Our detention in crossing the Small Creeks was caused by the necessity of cutting the Banks down— The bottoms generally are hard and with little labor a fine road can be made.

AUGUST 23RD Marched down the valley of the River 14 Miles, direction E by N— We crossed a stream to day on which there was a number of Elm Trees 38— Saw Three Elk to day— Passed a Grove of Plum Trees, from which our party gathered large quantities of the finest wild fruit I ever saw— The only difficulties on the road, were the crossings of some small Streams— the Banks of these streams generally, are not very high and are soon cut down, many of them we crossed without labor except cutting the brush out of the way— With but few exceptions the only difficulties on our road from this point to Fort Leavenworth were these crossings, the road between them being very fine— And I shall not in future be so particular in mentioning the condition of the road each day.

AUGUST 24TH Continued down the River, which runs East 18 Miles and encamped on it— To day the valley was well timbered with very large sized Cotton Wood suitable for Building purposes— The Hills for a short distance contained Stone— The Soil in the vicinity of the heavy timber was very good, and I have little doubt would produce grain very readily— Should there ever be necessity for a Post in this Neighborhood, this will be a suitable point

37. Medicine creek, at present Cambridge, Neb. Although the time and place of crossing is not clear, Easton was obviously now traveling on the north or left bank of the Republican. In recent years the creek was noted for its sudden flash floods, which are now curbed by the new Medicine creek dam.

38. Muddy creek or Elk creek, both debouching near present Arapahoe, Neb.
for it. Killed three Grouse this evening, this Bird is found in
great numbers from this point to the Missouri River.

AUGUST 25TH In consequence of rain and the detention in crossing
streams, we were unable to march over 10 Miles— Our direction
was East, down the valley of the River.— Guide killed a large fat
Buck Elk— Saw a herd of 82 Elk.

AUGUST 26TH Course to day E. S. E. still down the valley. Here
we leave the Buffalo range, and meet with smaller game, Deer
Antelope, Turkies and Grouse—

Met to day a small party of Pawnees on a Stealing expedition,
against the Cheyennes, whom they expected to find near the head
waters of the Republican— Besides their Arms each Man carried
his Lariat and Whip, without which an outfit is considered in-
complete on such a campaign— Our Guide and a Dragoon, who
were a Mile behind us, having stopped to butcher a Buffalo, were
met by this party, and at their request the Guide dismounted and
gave them some meat; for their act of Kindness one of the Indians
threw his Arms around and tenderly embraced him— Shortly after,
Hunoi wishing to use his knife, found to his mortification, that the
affectionate Pawnee had stolen it from his Scabbard (which was on
his belt behind him) whilst evincing his gratitude, in the manner
above described— Carrying their duplicity yet further, whilst the
Knife was changing owners, an Indian feigned to remove the Bridle
from the Dragoon’s Horse’s Head, attracting the Soldier’s attention
to this act, whilst another Pawnee cut off a choice piece of Buffalo
meat, which was tied behind his Saddle— I merely mention this
circumstances to give you an idea of the skill and ingenuity of the
Pawnees in such matters.

AUGUST 27TH Continued down the Republican 22 Miles, and en-
camped on it, our course being East— We found great quanti-
ties of fine plums and an abundance of good summer grapes, on to
day’s march— Great care was taken in selecting our Camp, and in
picketing our Animals as close as possible, as we expected a visit
from the Pawnees we met yesterday— But after a very cold night
(all complaining of having slept cold) in the morning we found all
our Animals present.

AUGUST 28TH Our course as yesterday East 18 Miles down the
River, where we encamped on its banks— Care was again taken

39. Near present Oxford, Neb. Fort Kearny on the Oregon trail was only about 45
miles to the northwest of this point.
40. Past the mouth of Beaver creek to the vicinity of present Alma, Neb.
41. This day’s journey was through the present large Harlan county reservoir area.
Prairie Dog creek, passed this day, was named in 1843 by Fremont.
in selecting our position, the Sentinels cautioned particularly against Pawnees, and all necessary precautions taken to provide against our Animals being stolen, as we still expected a visit from the Indians, presuming that they would follow us for several days—Notwithstanding all our precautions to provide against such an event, Lieut Evans’ favorite Poney which was picketed within 20 Yards of the Sentinel’s Post, was stolen during the night—

Plums and Grape particularly the latter we found in fine perfection on nearly all the Creeks we crossed—We passed to day through the remains of a large Pawnee Village, and we were glad to find that they had left it a few days before, for their permanent village on the Platte, otherwise we might have lost a few more Animals. Before leaving Camp this morning Lieut Evans caught a good horse branded “US”—It was wounded in the neck with an Arrow, but soon recovered from it—This Animal probably had strayed from Fort Kearny.

August 29th—Marched down the River E by N. 13 Miles, where our Guide having killed three fat Buffalo Cows, and as we were leaving the range of these Animals, and desirous of laying in a supply of Meat, I concluded to stop and give the Men an opportunity of jerking the meat from these Cows—The Buffalo were killed near the River and each within 10 Steps of the others—We pitched our Tents within 50 Yards of them a few hours afterwards both sides of each Waggon was covered with slices of Meat, strung on Cords for the purpose of drying.

August 30th—Still on the Banks of the Republican, having to day marched down the valley 16 Miles, East by N.42—One of the Dragoon Horses gave out to day and we were compelled to abandon him—Grouse in great numbers—

August 31st—Marched 14 Miles in an Easterly direction and encamped on the river—Our march was short to day, in consequence of our having been detained in crossing a number of Streams—Our Mules commenced giving out, for which we could not account, they having had fine grass, short marches and ample time and opportunity to graze—We reduced our teams to five mules each and turned loose the sixth to follow the Waggon and rest—When a Mule gave out in a Team, one of the loose ones supplied it’s place, and the tired Animal was released to follow and rest. By this means I returned to this Post with every Animal I took from it, (except one that was left on the road out, with the glanders) after a journey of over 1400 Miles—

42. Today’s camp was near present Red Cloud, Neb.
Dr. Park's servant whilst bringing wood into Camp this Evening trod on a Rattlesnake which bit him on the side of his leg above the Boot— The same remedies (Knife & gunpowder) resorted to as in the case of Private Covey, and with equal success— The patient was similarly affected and recovered in about the same length of time—

**September 1st** Marched E. S. E. 7 Miles and encamped on the River— A well beaten trail crossed our road to day, leading in the direction of the Platte (N. N. E.) it crosses the Republican and is I presume used by the Pawnees in travelling from the Platte to Smoky Hill Fork, and the Arkansas Rivers 43— While Oak made it's appearance to day on the Creeks, which is the first Oak we have seen since we left Laramie—

**September 2d Sunday** In consequence of the fatigued condition of our Animals and in order that the Men might have an opportunity to wash their Clothes, I did not march to day.

**September 3rd** Before starting this morning a small party of Pawnees came into our Camp, they informed us that they were returning from the Arkansas to their village on the Platte— Marched down the River 22 Miles and encamped on it. 44— Saw a drove of Turkies to day, on a small Creek; from this Creek to the Missouri River we found this game in great abundance, particularly on all the small Streams that we crossed until we reached Union Town.

**September 4th** We followed the River to day by travelling 9 Miles South and 10 Miles South East, when we encamped. 45— Two well beaten trails cross the River on our route to day in a direction N. N. E. they had recently been travelled over by large numbers of Indians, probably Pawnees returning to the Platte.

**September 5th** By following the River to day our course has been 7 Miles N. E. and 10 Miles E— We made preparation last night and the night before for a visit from the Pawnees, whom we saw on the 3rd Inst.; but they either did not follow us or had no opportunity of stealing any of our Animals, as we lost none— Saw a large herd of 80 or 90 Elk to day on the South side of the River. 46

43. The Pawnee road between the Platte and the Arkansas rivers is mentioned also by Fremont, p. 109, and is indicated on Lieutenant Warren's map. The crossing would be in the vicinity of "the true location of the Republican Pawnee Indian Village where on September 29, 1806, Lieut. Z. M. Pike ordered down the Spanish flag and saw the Star and Stripes rise in its stead...in Nebraska, between the towns of Guide Rock and Red Cloud, on the south side of the Republican river."—A. E. Sheldon, editor, *Nebraska History Magazine*, Lincoln, v. 10 (July-September, 1927), pp. 250-238. Kansas has officially taken the view that the "true site" is near Republic, Kan., about eight miles southeast of Hardy, Neb.

44. This camp may have been just inside the state of Kansas, below present Superior, Neb.

45. Near present Republic, Kan.

46. Here is the first clear-cut evidence in the text that the expedition followed the left or north side of the Republican. The given directions here, however, are obviously in error.
September 6th & 7th  By reason of the difficulty of crossing two Creeks, at one of which we were compelled to unload our Waggon and draw them over by hand, we have been unable to march over 18 Miles these two days 47— Our course has been 8 Miles E. and 10 Miles S. E.—  The Streams now tributary to the Republican are well timbered with Oak, Walnut and Elm, and they continue to be so the balance of our march, with the addition of Hickory as we get a little further down the River.

The difficulty of crossing the two Streams to day was owing to the necessity of making a bridge over one of them that had a very miry bottom, the steep banks of the other were composed of Stone which we could not cut down with our Pick-Axe and Spades.

September 8th  Our course to day was S. E. down the River— Owing to the River running close to the Bluffs on the North side we were compelled to take to Hills, which gave us a road over long hills and deep ravines for about 6 Miles— The balance of our day’s march was in the valley over a good road. Distance travelled to day was 17 Miles.—

September 9th  Owing to the fatigued condition of our Animals, we made a late start this morning, and only marched 8 Miles in a S. E. direction— We were again compelled to take to the Hills, having the River in sight, when we found a good road, and encamped in the evening on a Creek, with good Grass 48— Saw to day a large number of Deer, Turkies and Antelope—

September 10th  We continued our march over the Hills to day in a S. E. direction 18 Miles where we turned into the River and encamped— We found the River at this point double the size and differing in some other respects from the River where we encamped on it last— This fact convinced me that the Smoky Hill Fork, had joined the Republican, between these two points, but we did not see the Junction, having deviated our road some two Miles from the River— Several Mules gave out to day and would not move, until taken out of Harness.— We found a large quantity of Sea Vines on the River at our present encampment, and our Animals appeared to enjoy them exceedingly.  This Vine is plentiful on all the Creeks, from this point to Fort Leavenworth— It is a fine food for Horses & Mules—

September 11th  I determined to return up the River this morining, and look for the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican Forks; in order to do this I directed the Train to proceed down the

47. Camp near present Concordia.
River, and encamp on the first Stream, that required any work on it to enable us to cross— And accompanied by Lieut Evans and one Dragoon, I started up the River in search of the Forks, and to make any examination of the Country in the vicinity of them— We rode only 3 Miles up the River, when we discovered from a high Hill, the junction of the two Forks, these join in a beautiful valley, from 3 to 4 Miles broad, and which is composed of a very fine rich soil & well timbered, with almost all the varieties, of fine timber that is found in the Western States— The hills which bound the vallies were very high and rolling, from the summits of which is a fine view both up and down the vallies of the rivers, and the scenery from where we stood was beautiful 49— After spending some time in examining the Country, I returned to the Train, which had made but little progress, in consequence of the Difficulty in crossing a Creek— And we encamped at a Creek which it was necessary to bridge, and which was only 4 Miles from our last Camp 50.— Our direction with the Waggon was E. N. E.—

September 12th Marched to day E. N. E., 11 Miles, where we came to a high ridge, a spur making out to the South from the main Bluffs and terminated to all appearance, abruptly on the Kanzas River— In ascending this spur the hill was very long and steep, and we found it necessary to double our Teams, to enable us to get our Waggon over. When we arrived at the top of this Spur, we were much gratified to find, that it terminated on the Blue River (instead of the Kanzas) which with its blue water and Sandy bed passed immediately under us, and then winding it's way to the Kanzas, about one and a half miles distant, which winds off to the South side of the valley, before the Blue enters it.— We descended the Spur on the East side and then entered the valley of the Blue.— We continued up the River about one and a half Miles, when we found a ford, than [sic] enabled us to cross, and encamped on the West bank of the River

September 13th Crossed the Blue this morning, which had a hard sandy bottom; the depth of the Water was such that it required our smallest Mules to swim about 10 Paces; not withstanding we crossed without the slightest accident. The timber just below the Mouth of the Blue, extends out from the Kanzas on the Hills for some distance, to avoid this and to obtain a better road, we took a N. E. direction, and after marching 10 Miles crossed the Big

49. This would soon become the site of Fort Riley, actually established in 1853. In 1852 Easton was one of a group of officers designated to select the site.

50. Wildcat creek, at present Manhattan.
Vermillion, a stream which flows where we crossed it, rapidly over a rocky bottom— Continued our march 4 Miles and encamped on a branch of the Big Vermillion 51

September 14th Left Camp this morning taking E. N. E. course; one and a half miles from Camp, we were highly gratified to find ourselves once more in a Waggon road which was the broad road leading from Independence Mo. to the South Pass 52— Our Animals appeared to cheer up at such a prospect and travelled much freer and faster than they did when they had to break a road for themselves— We followed this road 23 Miles and encamped on the head of a little Creek that enters into the Kanzas

September 15th Continued our March on the road until within 3 Miles of the Ferry at Uniontown, 53 when I directed the Waggon to turn off, and take an East direction, until they came into the Waggon road leading from Uniontown to St Joseph Mo, and to encamp at the first point where there was water and good grass— On leaving the Waggon I proceeded to Uniontown, with a few men to obtain provisions, as our rations were out tonight. Uniontown is situated a mile from the Kanzas on the South side, there are a few dwellings and four or five Stores, which contain Indian Goods and a variety of such Articles an Emigrants would probably require at that point— I obtained without difficulty such articles as I wanted, and at a very reasonable price, and recrossed the River and took the St Joseph road to Camp, which I found about 5 Miles from the Ferry, on a Slough of the Kanzas, and near the Farm of a Pottowatomie, who furnished us with almost every variety of farm produce Butter, Eggs, Potatoes, Corn, Milk, Chickens &c in exchange for Mess Pork, which he preferred to Silver or Gold— Our Mess owing to bad management had been out of everything for some time past, save miserable bread and meat and Coffee once a day, and we had quite an appetite for the fine supper of vegetables &c that was set before us this Evening— Total distance travelled by the Train 14 Miles—

September 16th Followed the St. Joseph road to day, which runs East 8 Miles and then crosses Soldier Creek where we obtained some Corn for our Animals, from a Frenchman who lives on that Creek— After crossing the Creek the road runs N. E. and we

51. At present Belvue.
52. Over this road (the Oregon trail or the California road) some 25,000 souls (including Captain Emmons and the dragoons) had passed westward the preceding season. The best current description of the route is to be found in Irene D. Faden’s The Wake of the Prairie Schooner (New York, 1943).
53. Uniontown, Union Village, or Unionville was opposite present Rossville.
travelled on it 18 Miles more and encamped on the Grasshopper Creek which is a fine Stream of clear water, with a rocky bottom, an abundance of Pea Vines on it, and the valley well timbered—Soldier Creek is also well timbered, and near its banks was fine Grass.

**September 17th** Followed the Saint Joseph road 7 Miles traveling N. E. where we left it and travelled an indistinct Waggon trail, which turns off to Fort Leavenworth,54 marched 15 Miles farther and pitched our Tents on the Stranger, the Mules being too much fatigued to go into Leavenworth to day—Our direction since we left the St Joseph Trace has been E. N. E.—After resting my riding Mule I mounted and Started for Leavenworth, rode E. N. E. 2 Miles and came into the road leading to Fort Kearny, when I followed that road into this Post a distance of 9 Miles—

The distance from Fort Leavenworth to Union Town by the road I travelled is 64 Miles over a fine road, with abundance of Grass, Wood and Water; and from Uniontown to Council Grove is 45 Miles, which I am told is an equally good road—The distance from this Post to Council Grove by the road that our trains now travel is 160 Miles, making a difference in the distance of the two routes of 51 Miles in favor of the Uniontown route—All that is necessary to make the route from here to Uniontown a fine road for our heavy trains is to cut timber out sufficiently wide for Wagons, on the Stranger, Grasshopper and Soldier Creeks, and to dig the Banks down on the Stranger and Grasshopper, the former requires but little work—I have not travelled on the road from Uniontown to Council Grove, but I am informed on good authority that very little labor will make it an excellent road—I respectfully recommend that this route be opened and used hereafter by our trains intended for Santa Fe!—I have drawn a rough Map which accompanies this report, and which will give you a more correct idea of the new route I propose, and also of the route and country I have travelled over.

With regard to obtaining a better route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Laramie, by way of the Republican Fork of the Kanzas, than the one now travelled, I have to report that I have been particular in examining and comparing the two routes, and decidedly recommend that the Department use the one now in use for all purposes—Independent of the great distance in favor of the Platte

you will see from the foregoing journal that the nature of the Country from the Republican Fork to Fort Laramie forbids the idea of changing the present route.

The Republican Fork differs very materially in character from the Platte River—It is a deeper stream, in proportion to it's size the water not spreading over so great a surface—It is much better timbered, there being a continuous strip of timber along it's banks, without any interval of consequence, as far West as 100° of longitude, and from that degree as far West as it would be necessary to travel on it, there is Wood at convenient distances—All the little Streams emptying into it on the N and S sides, are well timbered—The Platte has but a few Creeks, flowing into it, while the Republican has an almost innumerable number—The soil for purposes of cultivation in the Valley of the Republican is far superior to that on the Platte—The Grass along it's valley and also on its innumerable small tributaries, is far superior to that found on the Platte—It has also a greater variety of Game and a greater quantity of it—Buffalo on this River between the points indicated on the Map literally cover the Country, Elk, Antelope, Turkies and Grouse are in great numbers—Nearly all the little tributaries are well shaded, and the water in them is cool and pleasant to drink—A good road can be made with little labor on either side of this River, either in the valley or farther back from it over the Hills—

As to whether or not this is a better route for Emigrants to take from Independence to the South Pass, is a question which I cannot, of course, fully answer, as I have never been West either of Fort Laramie or St Vrain's Fort, and consequently cannot compare the routes, leading from those two places to the South Pass which is a very important consideration—

I can only then compare the route up the Platte as far as Fort Laramie with the route up the Republican Fork as far as St Vrain's Fort—So far as Wood Water and Grass are concerned, I give the latter route a decided preference—With regard to the road, I doubt if as good an one could be obtained, as the one leading up the Platte, that road being almost unexceptionable—Yet a fine road can be made on the Republican route.

Should the Republican route be taken by Emigrants, from Independence to the South Pass, I would recommend that the Santa Fe road be followed from the former place for about 70 Miles, when the route should turn off from that road and cross the Smoky Hill Fork near its Mouth; from this point it should take a course NW.
10° West, until it strikes the Republican, in order to avoid the circuitous route of that River— By taking this course the tributaries of the Republican or Solomons Fork, which are at short intervals, will furnish Wood Water and Grass— On reaching the Republican Fork, the road should follow up the River to the North Fork, and then up that Fork to its head— The only possible difficulty than [sic] can exist will be the want of Water in crossing from the head waters of this Fork, to the Platte, which I do not think can be over 50 Miles— And I also feel confident that large ponds or lakes can be found that will furnish an abundant supply of Water— After leaving the head of the North Fork of the Republican, a W. N. W course should be taken, until reaching the Waggon road leading up the South Fork of the Platte, and thence up that road to the mouth of the Cache a la Poudre [?], and from this point it would be necessary to take Col Fremont's route in 1843 up the Cache a la Poudre, on to the Laramie Plains (if that road be practicable for Waggons). I have traced the route I propose on the enclosed Map which will give you a better idea of it than my description— The route up the South Fork of the Platte, from the point at which this proposed route will strike it, to the Mouth of the Cache a la Poudre is represented as very good, with fine Grass and a sufficiency of Wood.

The source of the North Fork of the Republican was not ascertained definitely by me— But the size of the Stream, the direction it takes as far as I could see from the Mouth the nature of the Country, and the fact that I did not strike it coming down from the Platte to the Republican, convinces me that it must bend near where it is represented on the enclosed Map.

With a hope that this Report will give you some idea of the Country passed over by me, and that my exertions to give you satisfaction on my late expedition may meet with your approbation, I have the honor to be, Sir,

Very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

L. C. Easton
Capt. A. Q. M.

To

Col. A. Mackay
Dy. Qr Master Genl US Army
Saint Louis. Mo
## Table of Distances from Fort Laramie to Fort Leavenworth, via Republican Fork of the Kanzas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date 1849</th>
<th>Distance travelled each day</th>
<th>Distance from Ft. Laramie</th>
<th>Localities</th>
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<td>S. Fork of Platte</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>668</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>3 Miles below mouth of Smoky Hill Fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>690</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>701</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>715</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>738</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>752</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>Ft. Leavenworth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fort Leavenworth in 1849

From an original drawing in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
stick of Timber, and suddenly coming on both, put the whole party
in good spirits, heightened by a burst of laughter at the irresistible
expression of an Irishman, who with evident earnestness and great
joy exclaimed "Be Jesus we're in sight of land again."— We en-
camped on excellent grass near the Timber on the Bank of the
Stream— From this point to the Platte, the route we travelled is
86 Miles, on which there is no Timber, no running Water, and no
Grass except at the Lakes, abefore described— From one bank to
the other the Republican at this point is about 50 feet wide, it is
very low and but a small stream of water was winding it's way along
it's sandy bed—

August 15 Route down the valley of the Republican Fork E. N.
E. 18 Miles, and we encamped on it's Banks— Twelve Miles from
our last Camp we crossed a small Creek running into the River, on
the North side and which was well timbered so far as we could see
up it— Abundance of Wood, fine Grass, and an excellent Road
during the whole route.32

August 16 Continued down the valley 12 Miles N. E. and 7
Miles East and encamped on the South side of the River— At the
point where the River changes it's direction East, on the day's
march, it forms a junction with a stream equal in size to itself, com-
ing from the N. W. and which for convenience of reference, I shall
call the North Fork of the Republican— If this route should be
travelled to the South Pass the road should follow this fork to it's
head before crossing to the Platte 33—

A good supply of drift Wood to day, grass and road remarkably
fine— To day we entered the Buffalo range, which extends from
the Mouth of the North Fork, 160 Miles down the Republican—
The Country on either side of the River was literally covered with
these Animals— During our march of Seven days we were never
out of sight of them, except when the darkness of Night, veiled
them from our view, and even then we were constantly reminded
of their close proximity, and vast numbers, by the continued bel-
lowing of the Bulls—

August 17th Encamped on the Banks of the stream, having
marched 19 Miles down it's valley— No Wood to day, but a fine
road, and a super abundance of nutritious grass— On a small
tributary Creek from the S. W, which joins the River a short dis-

32. Camp on Arickaree fork near the present Kansas state boundary. En route, Easton
passed the site of the future (1868) Beecher IslandBattle.

33. This was the true North fork. Easton here recognizes his directional mistake. The
camp near present Haysler, Neb., was reached after crossing the extreme northeastern corner
of Kansas.