

## [Grant Co. in 1849]

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Silver City, N.M. [?]

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Grant Co. in'49

I first passed through this country with my father, Uncle Bob and John Shackleford, who afterward died on Duck Creek in the summer of '49. The caravan was mostly southerners.

We outfitted in Westom [Westorm?] Mo, and came up the Platte and to Denver, a city them then only in name and then then on to Santa Fe, where a part of our original party left us. We came out as far as Santa Fe without any mishap and with only one incident worthy of note. A professional gambler by the name of [Elliot?] was along with the train, and he lost no time in getting acquainted and after the first few week's had skinned the boy's pretty much out of their change and loose personal property. He soon became so unpopular that few of the men would speak to him, and no one asked him to eat in their mess.

There was a correspondent of the New Orleans Picayune along, by the name of Racy Burns. He was young rather pert and decidedly unpopular.

One day when we were camped on the Platte Blevins remarked that, "he did not believe there was a virtuous woman in the world." No one said a word for a moment, but all

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realized that something terrible was about to happen. It was in the air, and communicated from man to man like and an electric current.

Finally [Elliot?] who was sitting alone under a tree, got up and remarked that he had a “mother and sister back home”. He picked up a shot gun and beat young Bevins Blevins up so badly that he died next morning about daybreak.

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That morning we dug a shallow grave in the sands of the Platte, and not a single tear was shed, or prayer said, as we lay the young blasphemer away forever.

Elliot the gambler who we all despised from that time on was the hero of the hour. He was elected captain of the train before we broke camp, and it was considered an honor to have him dine at anyone mess more than one meal in succession.

Santa Fe was then in the zenith of her glory. Great freight teams were arriving and departing daily. It seemed to be general headquarters for the whole western country, and there was no end of it's gambling and wealth.

Our captain left us there. Thirty-nine of us came on down to Socorro where we made a slight halt to rest out our team. Under the guidance of some friendly Indians we came on across the country to the [?], and from there to Santa Rita, following an old Indian trail now known as Camp Villines. There were no Mexicans at Santa Rita, they having long since been driven out of the country by the Indians.

The old dumps still appear just about as they are today, but the kneeling nun was fully as high as the main cliff. From there we passed on down the Whitewater to Hudson's Springs where we camped for two week's. The country was literally full of wild horses and cattle, and antelope and deer could be seen in any direction. Hudson's Springs used to be called Ojo Toro, or bull spring, deriving its name from the large number of wild bulls that drank there daily.

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The warm springs now owned by Head and Hearst's were called Ojo Bernado, deer Deer springs, while the spring still further to the southwest was called Ojo Vaca, cow springs. A name which is retained to this day.

It seemed to me the water of Hudson Spring's was much warmer than it is today. I remember that we would kill and draw a rabbit, fill it with a little bacon and salt, shove it far down in the springs, and in an hour or so it was well cooke. The boy's never built a fire to make their coffee or tea—the water was warm enough for that.

Tens of thousands of quail and rabbits came in every evening to get water and you be bet we lived fat while we were there.

One fellow who was a sort of a wag suggested that when the country settled up we could come back and organize the "Toro Soup Co." He said it would be such an easy matter to throw in some cattle and pipe the soup out over the plains. Poor fellow he famished a few day's after that for water on the plains south of where Lordsburg now stands.

Our Indians would go no farther than Hudson, but put us on the trail to Ojo Vaca, but the country was so badly cut up by cattle trails that we missed the springs and for two and a half day's and two nights we traveled on and on without water. He who has not been there cannot imagine the extreme torture of thirst.

Well we finally arrived at Santa Dominga ranch, now known as Cloverdale. Two of our men and thirty-seven head of horses perished on the trip.

There was no one living there then, but there was the 4 remains of a corral and some peach trees. The Indians had driven the people away or killed them. We found the water

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by watching the wild cattle. Informant: Mr. H. Whitehall, 1st Sheriff of Grant Co. - as told to H. A. Bruce.