

Diary of a Trip from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros, Mexico

December 21, 1864—Jan. 4, 1865

This diary was written by an unidentified woman who traveled with three companions and a driver from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros, Mexico, where she joined her husband. She writes about the hardships of the journey, traveling conditions, rivers and towns that they traveled through, and people they met along the way. Toward the end of her trip, her frustration at the long journey begins to show.

About This Transcription

This transcription of the diary was prepared in 2005. The line breaks, page breaks, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, spacing, and characters used in this transcription reflect those in the actual diary.

Words that were too illegible to transcribe are noted with an underline and a question mark in parentheses. For example: (?)

Some words in the diary were transcribed as educated guesses. The transcriber had high confidence that the word is correct, but could not be 100% certain. These words are noted with a question mark in parentheses after it. For example: little(?)

The original writer used abbreviations throughout the diary. For clarification, the transcriber has expanded or explained these abbreviations in square brackets immediately after the abbreviation. For example: San A[ntonio].

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Wednesday 21st of Dec. 1864

Richard S. Perkins Susan K.P[erkins]. Eliza Adams & myself left Boerne at 10 ½ a.m. started at last to make the Brownsville trip. We were so packed up that we had quite a time getting seated at last we were in the good byes said to Mrs. Reed Sen.[senior] Mrs. Reed jun [junior]. Dr. Carter Horace Barter Bella the Baron (?) & All. The door shut & we are off. stopped at O'Grady's to say good bye she crying bitterly gave us a boiled chicken for our lunch good old soul. if ever we want friends in Texas I am sure that the warm hearted O'Grady's will do any thing for us. Sue made me laugh so -- & I was crying at the same time that I came near having a fit. off at last on the road to see my darling we found the roads a little(?) bumpy but not so bad as we expected as it had rained hard for two days before. a norther blowing hard all the time but we did not feel cold. we all felt very sea sick in a little while from

from (sic) the motion of the ambulance
We reached our first camping
ground at 4 ½ P.M. the San Pedro
Springs. here we had to all unload
& Charles our diver left us to go in
to San A[ntonio] and get two different mules
he did not like these – did not pull
well besides one was a horse &
he wanted a mule we made
our beds first thing as the sun was
nearly set & such a load of blankets
however we shall need them all. we
made tea. Eliza did, for I had a
sick head ache. for the first time
since I commenced the packing up
I have never had the head ache once
the heart-aches a good many times
I laid right away between my
blankets and was perfectly warm &
comfortable – took of my boots – & slept
well – although it was so cold the
water froze & and the frost was as
thick as snow on our blankets &
pillows. up at day light. Eliza &
Sue made the fire we had a
very good breakfast of poached
Eggs, cold turkey bread & butter tea &

coffee. We ate heartily & Richard really appeared better than he had before for months & had eaten with relish. he says he's "all right" now. the open aire makes him feel so much better – I am writing this in camp at San Pedro while we are waiting for Charles to bring along his mules. I trust he has not gone on a spree with the money we gave him to buy sausages & ham with & my bill he has to collect of Dr. Kingsbury of 61.50. I hope he will come soon – it is blowing a hard norther & our fire is poor. I am sitting on a pile of pillows with the robe – Grandma's old wolverine & a carpet & blanket under me – Eliza ought to sketch us but her fingers are too cold---Charles says we shall go through in eight days – but not if he dont make his appearance soon. oh Lem! I wonder why I have got no letter from you since you left(?) Gonzales! I feel very anxious indeed Gods grant you may be well! I shall write no more. Will on next camp. thursday 22nd

Thursday at 11 a.m.

Charles arrived
with the mules – a better team but
not so very extra. We packed up &
started. lost off a sack of corn – then
went back for it. Could not find it.
the chain that held our baggage on un-
hooked & dropped off Eliza's chest! &
mattresses. We fortunately found it
out as soon as it happened & lost
nothing – drove to the stable in town
got more corn -- letters to deliver
Charles baggage & bread & at 1 ½
are fairly off & camped on the
Salado. Next day rained.

Crossed the San A[ntonio] river & camped
near the rocky in rain, winds & misery
every thing wet – up at 5 & 6 every
morning and knee deep. we
all look pretty. never think of
washing in a rain! -- & so on
Sunday Christmas day it cleared
& we reached Oakville at 4 P.M.
Truly Texas in all its beauties!
at our camp the stage station
old uncle Ben Howell a free
negro amused us a great deal. he
was raised in N. Jersey – a board (?) boy
he says a million cows and no milk
he says oh if he could only have an apple
– So say I!

Monday. 11 a.m.

8 miles

from the Nueces. Camping to dry our
wet sour blankets. heavy roads
& bad weather. Christmas is past & gone
the anniversary of Richard's & Sue's wedding
is over & nothing. camping & mud
but thankful hearts for all God's
blessing. I have thought all day of
Lem. I wonder if he is thinking of
me. Oh. how I hoped we might be
together! we shan't camp tonight
till dark – we are 50 miles
from San Diego our next village
we were obliged to leave the
mattresses they were so heavy. - we
have dried every thing now – Eaten
lunch & are all ready for a
start. – **Tuesday.** last night we had
to camp without water for the first time
we had coffee – sausages – eggs shaved
beef & chili – but no water – an
old negro came by with a train &
came to our camp fire for a drink
of water I gave him a little coffee
& sausage. he offered us a water
keg & the second day from S. Anton[io]
we were so unfortunate as to lose

our water cask off. the handle was
not strong – I suppose – the old man
said he would send the keg from
the creek where he was going to
camp back to us but we were
up this morning & off before
sunrise – this is Tuesday the 27th
one week tomorrow since we left
Boerne. tomorrow we get to San Diego
I never saw such a desolate
bleak barren country as this.
we meet no one – see nothing
but cotton wagons I trust our
provisions will last we brought
from S.A. about 12 pounds sausages
our eggs will hold out
oh I hope Lem will have
oranges ready for us and some oysters
that is the most in the eating
line I care for --- we ought to
get to Rio Grande City by thursday
night & to Brownsville Sunday
night New Years day! oh I long
to get there to see my dear
husband. oh I hope he is well &
thinking of me we are camping
now at noon – in a bleak desert

we expect to get within ten miles of San Diego tonight.

Thursday - we got within 6 miles of San Diego and camped late at dark. a mexican came to our camp and staid all the eving. we did not go to bed till late & up at 4 the next morning pitch dark. off at 6 ½ Charles makes coffee for us every day morning & eving & beats 3 eggs and _____(?) in all foamy & it is delicious (the reason I write this so badly is that I have burned my thumb very badly & can't hold my pencil except between my fingers) we stopped at San Diego a miserable devils hole where one man is trying to keep a store & _____(?) perfectly absurd for us - I paid 15 cts for 2 small onions 88 cts for one pound of ground coffee & bought 3 small boxes of _____(?) for which I paid 2.00

we are shown the road
& a new one it is about
50 miles shorter and less sand
than the old one so we can take
it as we are told it is the
proper one but god help us
if ever I believe another
word that is told to me in
Texas I hate it worse now
than I did when I came to it
& if I live I will live
any where but here – any
where but in this heathenish
land we leave San Diego
at 9 wednesday and rode
over the old desert until
5 p.m. when we camped
in a hole – cheerful job!
the wolves or coyotes howl
so one can hardly sleep
& the dew is _____(?) slight
Camping is all it is rep
resented to be. “C’est allez”
as the Frenchman said when
he _____(?) on a fox hunt
we eat well and sleep well
& Richard stands it

wonderfully & tonight
thursday we are camping
on Balwartes(?) Creek _____(?)
ridden through the sand
all days. – oh yes who has
dreamed of a desert
here and the realization
of your dreams – we
have no road nothing
but a trail and lost that
& got a Mexican to go
with us & assist us on the
road-----oh this is fearful!

A large wolf just came
up close to our camp
I have bought

Saturday a.m.

in camp at
Salado Rancho 45 miles from
Rancho Davis – we took another
guide Saturday to put us on
the road which after all
is only a trail They have sent
us on a new road – our luck,
oh how I hate anything new!
we had a tremendous day
yesterday hot as July and sand

very deep nearly to the hubbs
we were greatly fatigued & the
poor mules had to go without
water till night & were nearly
fagged out at 5 p.m. we
reached this miserable place
no wood & no grass – but
a good well about 8 as
we had just begun to get our
supper we heard the welcome
sound of an American voice
and Soon the stage drove along.
had lost the way & at last
followed our trail there was
one passenger a Major very
pleasant – a Missourian he
talked with us a long time about
his wife and all. he has been in the
Army three years lost his all
& health too soon there came
up the worst norther ever was
Sand blowing by the pail full
into our faces we made our
beds back of the ambulance &
trunks & froze all night
– oh – what a night! the mules
all ran off – the

stage mules – night before
last our mules all stampeded
& we lost our way – but in
the night they came back
here it is Saturday 10 a.m.
& no mules – oh dear! When
shall I get to Brownsville
& see my dear husband!
Charles has lost my carpet
oh, he is so careless! he loses
so much our ginger snaps
are great comforts we eat
them todos dias – this hateful
Texas I hate it! – here
we are in a desert and no
mules oh these lazy people.

We reached Rio Grande City or
Rancho Davis as it is called
Sunday Jan 1 1865 at 12n.
we caught up with the stage
at the well 4 miles from the
city the major said they looked
for us to camp with them
& was very sorry we could not
overtake them last night –
Rio Grande City – quite a
large place – as we were
obliged to camp without water
the night before & could have
no coffee we had all of us
bad head aches – we stayed
at Mr. Davis several hours
wrote some letters – saw Mr.
Evans – ate oranges & a good
dinner & left at 4 pm
& drove ten miles and camped
the wolves howl & yell here
fearfully – tomorrow we
shall get to Edinburgh 50
miles from here – we
shall soon be there oh
joy!

On Wednesday at 3 P.M. 4th of Jan
we arrived at Sharkey's hotel in
Brownsville – our 15th day from
Boerne & weary & worn & over
joyed were we. Dr. _____(?) met
us at the carriage door with
a message from Lem. he is well
but living in Matamoros So of
course he does not know of
our arrival – we unload
the carriage & I send a
note off to him the same
evening by Charles our driver
oh how I long to see my
darling! – we wash --!
& dress the first time for
3 weeks – the next morning
at 9 o'clk – Lem comes
looking so well & happy – he
has plumped his cheeks
he is in business - & making
his daily expenses – we all
pack up & go over the
river that afternoon
& my darling takes me to

my new home – and it is
a dear place to me for he
is there even though we have
no glass windows & only a
brick floor -- & rats &
mice by scores.