

The attached document which is titled, MOUNTAIN MEN, depicts the truth – there were so few wildlife in the Great Basin the first mountain men and explorers entered the region they were forced to resort to eating their own animals in order to survive.

Think of it, these men, Jedediah Smith, Peter Skeen Ogden, Milton Sublette, John Work, Joe Meek, John Fremont, Charles Preuss, Captain J.H. Simpson, and Howard Egan, all of whom, kept logs and diaries of their travels as they criss-crossed over the West, on foot and on horseback, never mentioned sage grouse.

#4

MOUNTAIN MEN

Most historians believe Jedediah Smith was the first white man to cross through the Great Basin to the Coast of California. In 1826 with 14 men and 28 horses, Smith left Cache Valley (Utah) traveling South. He passed through the tip of today's Nevada, then followed the Majove River into Southern California.

Jedediah had agreed to meet his two trapping partners, David Jackson and William Sublette, the following June for a rendezvous in Cache Valley. So in June of 1827, Jedediah took two of his best men and set out up the American River of the Sierra Nevada's and across central Nevada to keep his commitment.

Later, in a letter to William Clark, Smith described the trip:

After traveling 22 days from the east side of Mount Joseph, (Sierra Nevada's) I struck the Southwest corner of the Great Salt Lake, traveling over a country completely barren and destitute of game. We frequently traveled without water, sometime for two days, over sandy deserts where there was no sign of vegetation and when we found water in some of the rocky hills we most generally found Indians who appeared the most miserable of the human race.

When we arrived at the Salt Lake, we had but one horse and one mule remaining, which were so feeble and poor that they could scarcely carry the little camp equipage which I had along. The balance of my horses I was compelled to eat. (1 P29)

The following year, 1828, Peter Skeen Ogden, representing the Hudson Bay Company, led a brigade of trappers South from Fort Nez Perce deep into Snake Country, Ogden is credited with being the first white man to discover the Humboldt River. Later he referred to it as the Marys River. In the book "The Humboldt" author Dale L. Morgan related what Ogden saw as he approached the river in the vicinity of today's Winnemucca, Nevada.

From clumps of sage on the hillsides, scrawny, brown-bodied men peered out upon their passage. Down in the Valley, now and again, the Indians scurried into the brush ahead of them. They were clothed, if at all, in twisted rabbit skins; They had no horses. They lived on seeds, and what wild fowl they could bring down. Ogden had never encountered a race of animals less entitled to the name of man. (3 P29)

That winter, 1828 & 29, Ogden was forced to lead his men North to today's Eastern Idaho, in order to survive the winter. There was no game on the Unknown River. The following Spring he returned to again trap the Marys River. Of that expedition he wrote:

The water of this river is very muddy, warm and in my opinion very unwholesome, for in all my travels in the Snake Country the camps have never been so sickly as in this stream. ...As regards animals although the hunters have for the last three days hunting on the mountain, only two antelope have they killed and report having seen eight as this is the season the animals resort to the rivers and as we have not seen one on it's banks I may consequently conclude they are very scarce, and woe to them who depend to them for support - in wild fowl, although the country is well adapted for them, not over numerous. (2 P48)

Milton Sublette was the next white man to lead a party of trappers to the Marys River (Humboldt). He left Pierre's Hole in the Rocky Mountains on July 23, 1832 with 45 men. After traveling down the Owyhee and reaching the Marys River the party split and Nathan Wyeth led 15 of the trappers Northwest into Oregon.

Sublette continued his way, trapping down Marys River, until his hunters finding no wild game, the party were forced to eat the flesh of the beavers they caught, the season was one of famine for these animals, which were forced in their hunger to subsist upon wild parsnips, which poisoned their flesh and made them unwholesome food for the trappers, many of whom were made ill from eating them. Because of this it became necessary to at once abandon the river, and strike across the country towards the North, where after being four days with almost no food, and several weeks in the state of famine they reached the Snake River above the fishing Falls, they were forced, as they passed through the country, to subsist upon ants, crickets, parched moccasins, and the pudding made from the blood, taking a pint at a time from their almost famished animals. (3 P46 and 4 P22 and 1 P29,30)

Joe Meek long remembered the expedition. He later recalled:

Holding his hands in an ant hill until they were covered with ants, then licking them greedily; he remembered crisping in the fire, and eating, the soles of his moccasins. Event he large black crickets infesting this country were welcome game. (3 P46)

Joe Walker, under the direction of Capt. Bonneville was the next man to take a party of men across today's Nevada into California. Walker traveled from the Salt Lake down the Marys River and over the Sierra somewhere near the Truckee River. Zenos Leonard served as clerk for the expedition. As they passed down the Marys River, Zenos wrote:

At this place, all the branches of this stream is collected from the mountains into the main channel, which forms quite a large stream; and to which we gave the name Barren River - a name which were thought would be quite appropriate, as the country,

Natives, and everything belonging to it, justly deserves the name. -you may travel for many days on the banks of this river without finding a stick large enough to make a walking cane. (2 P16)

Later as the party was descending the West side of the Sierras, Zenos Leonard wrote:

One man killed a deer, which he carried to camp on his back. The animal was dressed, cooked and eaten, ...in less time than a hungry wolf would devour a lamb. This was the first game larger than a rabbit that they had killed since leaving the Salt Lake two months ago. For fourteen days they had lived on nothing but horseflesh ...twenty four horses had died in crossing the mountain, and seventeen of these had been eaten. (3 P55)

The Great Basin was not the only part of the west where game and feed for animals could be hard to find. Mountain men and Indians throughout the west were accustomed to going many days without food. When Lewis and Clark met the Northern Shoshone in today's Northern Idaho in 1805, they were starving. The chief told the explorers they had "nothing but berries to eat". A year later, while the explorers were on their return trip, the same Indians offered them a horse for slaughter, for they had nothing else to offer. (9 P103)

During the winters of 1825 and 1826 Peter Skeen Ogden, with a large party of trappers criss-crossed over most of today's Oregon (all the country from the Cascades east) trying to find good beaver trapping country. Ogden's party nearly starved for lack of game, and the few beaver they caught could not support them. They were forced to subsist mostly on their own horses which were themselves thin from lack of grass. Only when they struck an eastern course along the Snake River and reached the area of the Stickly River (near today's Bliss, Idaho), did they find sufficient game to sustain their party.

Of the Indians they had encountered in Oregon, Ogden later remembered a sad story related by a Snake woman they had found camped on Malheur Lake.

The winter before had been so severe, she said, that her people had to resort to the bodies of relations and children. She had killed no one herself, but had fed on two of her children who died. (2 P32)

When John Fremont set out upon his second expedition into the western frontier in May of 1843, he assumed his hunters could furnish the party with sufficient meat to sustain them along the way, but by the time they had reached the Rocky Mountains, they were forced to backtrack south to Bents Fort in order to restock their larder. (8 P139)

After securing sufficient provisions and fresh horses and mules, Fremont again set out west through today's Southern Wyoming, but again ran short of food. After crossing through South Pass, Fremont sent Broken Han Fitzpatrick and some of the men on ahead to Fort Hall to purchase needed food while he and the others turned south to explore the Salt Lake.

While following down the Bear River, they made camp near a small party of Indians.

These people were very short of food, but were friendly and willing to share their supply of camas roots. Fremont traded goods for the roots, but his men didn't think much of this diet. ... (Two days later, even though) they saw great flights of ducks and geese, the men managed to shoot only a few. Fishing didn't pan out very well, and during one of the nights, a mess became desperate enough to eat a skunk for supper.

Finally, they worked their way down from the rough, high ground to the valley of the Malad River, they followed this stream toward the lake, and came to an Indian village where they hoped they might be able to trade for some food, but the Indians were on the brink of starvation. When Fremont saw some of the men pull back their robes to show their lean and bony bodies, he refused to allow his men to trade with these hungry people for what little food they might have stored away. (§ P148)

After exploring the Salt Lake, Fremont retraced his trail north and upon meeting Fitzpatrick and the rest of the men, feasted on flower, rice, dried meat, and even a little butter from Fort Hall.

From there, the Fremont Party traveled west along the Snake River where they found the Shoshone Indians fat from eating salmon. The Indians were in the process of catching and drying great quantities of fish for winter use.

Fremont's cartographer, Charles Preuss had noted the lack of grass to be found before reaching Fort Hall. (10 P92) But, when the party finally reached Fort Walla Walla and the Oregon County, Charles Preuss expressed even greater disappointment. On Oct. 25th he wrote:

Yesterday we passed the farm of D.W. Thomas, I was so disappointed after all that to-do about the Walla Walla Settlement...it is not much better than all the miserable country which we have crossed. There is so little timber along the river that the Indians have to drag up the firewood with pack horses... The horses have been driven four or five miles higher where there is some thin grass. (10 P95,96)

From Walla Walla, the Fremont Party followed along the Columbia River, making their way toward Fort Vancouver. From their description of the country, a person could easily conclude they were traveling down the Humboldt River in the heart of the Great Basin. Even the firewood

was hard to find, and at one point they bought some from Indians who had traveled from the river to get a supply, for the only firewood along the Columbia consisted of a few stunted willows and eternal sagebrush hanging on in the constant wind. (8 P168, 169)

At Fort Vancouver, Fremont purchased provisions for at least three months, including cattle for slaughter.

Fremont had learned a hard lesson in crossing the western half of the continent, and now that winter was upon them he had no intention of preceding south in search of the Marys Lake (Humboldt Sink) without adequate provisions.

On Dec. 1st, while traveling along the east side of the Cascade Mountains, Charles Preuss wrote:

Our Indian guides gave us to understand that we shall find no grass for two days. Unless that is a lie, I don't see how we can get our wretched animals through. We ourselves are well provided. Flower, peas, sugar, and coffee were purchased in large quantities at Vancouver, the beef cattle follow the caravan. (10 P100)

On Dec. 23rd Preuss wrote:

Grass is poor: God knows how the animals will get through. (10 P103)

On Dec. 31st they had reached the western edge of the Black Rock Desert in today's Nevada.

...They had found nothing but dry, shallow basins, their way "broken by gullies and impeded by sage, and sandy on the hills, where there is not a blade of grass." (3 P87)

Then on Jan. 5th Preuss wrote:

The animals are dying one after another. (10 P103)

The Indians the party encountered as they entered today's Nevada lived similarly to others throughout the Great Basin.

Eight or ten appeared to live together, under the same little shelter; and they seemed to have no other subsistence than the roots or seeds they might have stored up and the hares which live in the sage...their skins offered them little covering. (8 P189, 190)

After leaving the Black Rock Desert, the party saw mountain sheep bound across some high cliffs, too quickly for the men to get a shot. (8 P194) Other than the mention of seeing vast numbers of rabbits when in the area of Summer Lake, Oregon, these animals were the only game mentioned since

leaving Fort Vancouver. A day or so later they killed and slaughtered the last cattle they had purchased at Fort Vancouver. (§ P195)

Then, without expecting it, they found a great body of water which, after some examination Fremont named Pyramid Lake. At the southern end of the lake they met friendly Indian that called themselves Kuyuido Kudo or Fish Eaters. They lived in basket shaped dwellings made of willows and bundles of grass tied together.

...(these Pyramid Lake Paiutes,) shared their bountiful supply of large, cutthroat trout...and as the camp fires were started for supper, the hungry men found they were to be treated to a feast. ...to Charles Preuss, it was something to jot down in his journal, something to keep in his memory, as he ate so much trout he felt he would gag and become ill. (§ P196)

From Pyramid Lake, the party traveled south. Then near today's Topaz Lake, Fremont determined to reach California by crossing the Sierras in that vicinity. He tried in vain to persuade several Washoe Indians to guide them over the mountains. The Washoes could not stand to face the cold mountain.

...they were very nearly naked, and Fremont was astounded that they could stand such cold weather without heavy clothing. (§ P205)

Fremont was determined, He established a base camp at a lower elevation. Then after making wooded mallets, they took turns breaking trail by packing down the snow for the animals. Many days later and after eating many of their mules and the last of their dogs, they were able to reach the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada's and from there headed for Sutters Fort.

In 1859 Captain J. H. Simpson under authority of the Engineer Department, U.S. Army undertook finding a direct wagon-route from Camp Floyd, Salt Lake Valley to Genoa, Carson Valley, Nevada.

Initially the party followed the Egan Trail into today's Nevada. But when they reached Jacobs well in Huntington Valley, where the Egan Trail turned North toward Gravelly Ford, Simpson veered southwest pioneering a new route that two years later became the Pony Express trail and Overland Mail Route. Repeatedly throughout Captain Simpson's Journal, mention is made of the extremely harsh conditions in which the Goshutes, Shoshones and Paiutes existed.

Upon first encountering the Goshutes South of the Salt Lake he wrote:

Found some Root-Diggers here, one a very old woman, bent over with infirmities, very short in stature, and the most lean, wretched-looking object it has ever been my lot to see. These Indians appear worse in condition than the meanest of the animal creation. Their garment is only a rabbit-skin cape, like those already described, and the children go naked. It is refreshing, however, in all their degradation, to see the mother studiously careful of her little one, by causing it to nestle under her rabbit-skin mantle.

At first they were afraid to come near us, but bread having been given to the old woman, by signs and words she made the others in the distance understand that they had nothing to fear, and prompted them to accompany her to camp to get something to eat. Notwithstanding the old woman looked as if she was famished, it was very touching to see her deal out her bread, first to the little child at her side, and then, only after the others had come up and got their share, to take the small balance for herself. At camp, the feast we gave them made them fairly laugh for joy.

Near our camp I visited one of their dens or wick-e-ups. Like that already described, it was an inclosure, 3 feet high, of cedar-brush. The offal around, and in a few feet of it, was so offensive as to cause my stomach to retch, and cause a hasty retreat. (7 P56)

When the party reached the southern reaches of Ruby Valley, they found life for the Shoshones that lived there a little better. Some even had pole-lodges but "They have generally nothing but the brush-barrier or enclosed fence, summer and winter, like the Go-Shoots, to protect them from the weather." (7 P64)

Three days later on May 18th Simpson wrote:

The Digger Indians that have come into our camp call (this) Ko-bah, or Face Valley, a very good name. There are three of these Indians, who appear to be grandfather, son, and grandson. ...They say they have no chief, though they speak the Sho-sho-nee language; are clothed with the rabbit-skin

cap, similar to the Go-Shoots, and represent that they wear no leggings, even in the winter. This is scarcely credible, cold as the winter must be in this region, but it seems to be a fact. They are very talkative and lively. Eat rats, lizards, grass-seeds, &c., like the Go-shoots. The guide says he saw them, after throwing the rats in the fire, and thus roasting them, eat them, entrails and all, the children in particular being very fond of the juices, which they would lick in with their tongues and push into their mouths with their fingers. The old man represents that a number of his people died last winter from starvation and cold. (7 P71 & 72)

On May 21st, (In Wons-in-dam-me or Antelope Valley), Simpson mentioned seeing signs of sage-hen and Antelope, the first mentioned.

Fifteen or twenty diggers have come into camp. From them I have been enabled to get the names of some of the Mountain and Streams. They are the most lively, jocose Indians I have seen. Say two rats make a meal. Like rabbits better than rats, and antelope better than either, but cannot get the latter. Have no guns; use bow and arrow. (7 P75)

On following day May 22nd, they again sighted a number of antelope. (7 P76) On My 27th while camped at the North end of today's Smokey Valley, Simpson wrote:

An old Digger has visited our camp and represents that we are the first white persons he has ever seen. He says there is a large number of Indians living around, but they had run away from fear of us. I asked him why he had not been afraid. He said he was so old that it was of no consequence if he did die. ...He has been around eating at the different messes, and at length had so gorged himself as to be able to eat more until he had disgorged, when he went around again to renew the pleasure. ...I asked him if his country was a good one. He said it was. He liked it a good deal better than any other. (7 P77)

I asked him why. Because, he said it had a great many rats. I asked him if they ever quarreled about their rat country. He said they did...

On his return trip from Genoa, Captain Simpson traveled further to the south of his first passage. Somewhere east of the present town of Ely, Simpson wrote; "An elk was seen for the first time yesterday in Stevenson's Canon, and one today in Red Canon; also, a mountain sheep for the first time." It is interesting that they were the only historical sightings of elk ever mentioned within the territory that was to become the state of Nevada. Many old timers of the Ely area believe that whoever it was that made the sightings must have mistaken mule deer for elk because no one else has ever seen an elk in that area - that is until elk were planted in Duck Creek there in the 1930's. Even the old Indians never mentioned them.

As the earliest trappers and explorers pushed their way into the American West, rarely did they find an incidence where the trade of guns, knives, horses, and blankets had not preceded them. But such was not the case in the Great Basin. The people inhabiting the Great Basin were exceedingly poor. Obviously they had nothing to trade. With so few deer, antelope and mountain sheep in the area there were never enough hides even for such things as pole lodges, cradle boards and moccasins. It was not that they lacked knowledge of such things. They simply did not have the material or time to make them. What skins they were able to obtain were used for food storage.

Life could not have been harder, and when the White Man came to build towns and settle the valleys life for the Indian people began to improve. The Indian people could work at the ranches and the mines. Now there was money for food and clothing. They could buy canvas to rap around their lodges and wick-e-ups. Soon they had horses and buggies, and life was made better much better.

THE EGAN FAMILY

One of the most interesting history's written of experiences in Central Nevada during the 1850's and 60's was written by the Egan Family. Howard Egan Sr. was of the Mormon Religion. He had served as a Major in the Nauvoo Legion at the time of the Mormon Exodus in 1846. Major Egan was with Brigham Young and the first Mormon Pioneers to reach the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

Soon after his arrival, Major Egan engaged in the business of buying cattle for market in California. During winter months he would travel the Wasatch Front buying any excess cattle from the settlers. The following spring he would gather the animals for the long drive down the Humboldt and over the Sierra's to be marketed in Grass Valley, Placerville, Stockton and Sacramento.

On return trips, the Major would often scout the country South of the Humboldt hoping to find a more direct route to California. In the years that followed Major Egan and his oldest sons, Howard, and Erastas and William played a major part in pioneering the Overland (Pony Express) route across Nevada. At an early age Howard, the oldest of the boys determined he was going to learn the Goshute language. And since many of the Goshutes were working for his father cutting Juniper for construction of Stage stops, young Howard would visit the Indian camps at nite listening and learning the language. At the age of 16, Howard drove the first mail coach from Salt Lake City to Placerville California, camping along the way.

Lots of coyotes

Written accounts by the Egan Family indicate that the coyote population was very high during the 1850's and 60's.

Deep Creek served as their headquarters where, most of the grain and meat was raised for supplying the Overland Route. They had a lot of trouble with coyotes there. Just at dusk one evening before the door on the log chicken house was closed for the nite, Major Egan noticed a coyote go into the chicken house. He quickly shut the door, and killed the coyote.

Not long after, one of the men that slept in the bunkhouse went outside and left the door open. No sooner than he had left than a fellow bunkie saw a coyote come into the room. Staying quite until his friend came back, the fellow hollered "Close the door quick! There's a coyote in here." Sure enough they found him under the bed. He had apparently came in looking for something to eat.

Another dark evening one of the men was passing along by the hog pen with a lantern. He heard the old sow making a terrible fuss, swinging the lantern over into the pen, he could see the old sow backed up in the corner with her young pigs behind her. In the opposite corner crouched a large coyote, who was either after the young pigs or a supper out of the hog trough. (5 P223 & 224)

Another experience that Howard had that illustrated how thick and hungry the coyotes were at that time, occurred while on a trip to Carson City for supplies. There were four wagons with three yoke of oxen each plus more wagons pulled by six mules.

The first nite out, Howard and his men camped at Antelope Springs. After watering and taking care of the animals they went about getting supper. Missing the usual cream they had at Deep Creek for their coffee, one of the boys mentioned that butter was good in coffee. No sooner than he had mentioned it than someone cut a good size chunk and stirred it in the large coffee pot.

After supper was over the plates, cups, knives and forks were all pushed back and everyone being tired went to bed without taken time to clean up. The first one out the next morning found a whole lot of the utensils missing. They soon found a tin plate, then a spoon and a cup. One of the boys that had gone about a hundred yards from camp, yelled out he found one of the thieves. A coyote had his head in the coffee pot with the bail caught behind his head and was still trying to get away.

After taking care of the coyote they finished their search, but never did find all the forks and spoons. The next day the coyote pelt was tacked to one of the wagon beds. (5 P233 & 234) The pioneers made no bones about killing every coyote and predator they could. They knew how destructive predators were, not only to the farm animals they raised but also to wildlife.

Killing predators was thought of as preforming a duty, not only for the good of your family but for everyone and everything in general. At that time with only black powder guns and traps, predators were extremely hard to control. For a good illustration of the effect large numbers of coyotes were having on wildlife at that time consider the following story told by Howard of his experience catching antelope.

I had sent word to the old chief (White Horse) that I would make him a visit in a few days, and to make it interesting to me he planned an antelope catch. For a few days before I came the squaws and bucks were busy repairing and extending the flanking arms of the old corral, or trap pen, which was located near the north end of antelope valley and about twenty miles northwest of Deep Creek. ...

This valley has a good many hills or knolls along the base of the mountains and a few of them scattered more to the center of the level ground in the middle of the valley. An antelope, when started up, will always run directly for one of the these, that lay opposite from where he gets his scare from, and they run from hill to hill. They see no one ahead of them but the party behind being constantly increased, and if they undertake to pass around the drivers a buck or squaw is sure to raise to his feet, and that sends them off tot he center again.

Thus it goes till they come to the line between the outer ends of the arms, which, there, are about four miles apart, but gradually closing in as they get nearer the pen. The arms or leads are started at the extreme ends by simply prying or pulling up a large sagebrush and standing it roots up on the top of another brush, thus making a tall, black object visible for miles. The standing of these brush were

at some ten to twenty feet apart, but were placed more and more near together the nearer towards the pen and when the two lines came to about one hundred yards apart they were built so the butts of the brush were as close as the tops would allow them to be joined and by this time both wings had swung to the east side of the valley, where there were many ravines to cross and plenty of cedar and pine to use for fencing.

There were many turns to the lane thus formed, but was getting narrower and stronger till finally, around a sharp turn through a large, thick bunch of cedars, the game were in the corral, which was about two hundred feet in diameter and built strong and high enough to withstand the charges of a herd of buffalo. The pine and cedar trees had not been removed from the inside of the pen, and not many from the runway, for a mile back.

Well, White Horse and myself rode the only two horses in the drive and we went to about half the distance to the ends of the arms and were soon back as fast as possible on the outside to take advantage of the bends and turns and to try and keep abreast of the drivers, who were all on a fast run, yelling like a pack of coyotes. The drive came to an end with a rush and everyone working desperately closing up the entrance, a few small children appearing on the wall at different points around the pen. By the time we had tied our horses and climbed to the top of the wall the entrance had been closed.

Then began the killing of as many as were wanted that day, the killing was done with arrow and seldom missed piercing the heart. The catch was about twenty-five, mostly all bucks or does, there being only five or six yearlings in the bunch. There were five or six bucks killed that day and one of which had tried to jump the fence. Bit got entangled in the fence and was killed by having his throat cut with a knife.. The reason they were not all killed in one day was to give the squaws time to cut up in thin strips the flesh and dry it on a rack built over a small fire, thus curing it so it would keep for a long time if kept dry. ...

The Indians told me that the last drive, before this one at this place, was nearly twelve years ago and the old men never expected to see another at this place, for it would take many years for the animal to increase in sufficient numbers to make it pay to drive. These drives are mostly in the desert valley, where the poor horseless natives live.

Twenty four antelope every 12 years indicates extremely low production compared to studies done in Southern Oregon during the 1950's when effective predator control was in place and fawn/doe ratio counts were indicating an average of one hundred eleven fawns for every one hundred does.

Indian Cricket Drive

I was on a three days' horseback trip in the wilderness and had for a companion the Indian called "Egan Jack," a trusty, intelligent buck of about thirty years of age. We were on a prospecting or exploring trip to the northwest of Deep Creek, or Ibapah as the Indians called it. At one place as we came out of a canyon onto the bench land, we saw quite a number of Indians that were quite busy, some digging trenches and some gathering arms full of the tall wheat grass that grew on the flat in the bottom of the canyon. I asked Jack what they were doing. He said, "Catching crickets for bread." "Well, they had dug quite a number of trenches about a foot wide and a foot deep and about thirty or forty feet long, and around like a new moon with the horns uphill.

They had been a number of days at the work, but were now ready for their cricket drive, having five or six of the trenches strung across the bench, the end of each trench joined, or was very close to the end of another. They covered these with a thin layer of stiff wheat grass straw....

The Indians, men, women and children, divided into two parties, one going to the north end and the other to the south end, all carrying a bunch of grass in each hand. They went single file towards the foothills, and making the distance between the parties wider than the length of the trenches. When they had gone what they thought far enough, as judged by the scarcity of grass left by the black insects, the party closed in and walking back and forth swinging their grass bunches they gradually worked down toward the trenches.

We followed them on horseback and I noticed that there were but very few crickets left behind. As they went down, the line of crickets grew thicker and thicker till the ground ahead of the drivers was a black as coal with the excited, tumbling mass of crickets. ...

Well, as we neared the trenches I noticed the Indians were going down slower. Jack said this was to give the crickets time to crawl through the grass into the trenches.

When all had been driven in the Indians set fire to the grass they had in their hands and scattered it along on top of that they had over the trenches, causing a big blaze and smoke, which soon left the crickets powerless to crawl out, if any were left alive when the grass had all burned up, which did not take many minutes. ...

The squaws were busy gathering up the game. They had large conical shaped baskets; some of them would hold over two bushels. These the women carry on their backs, held in place by a flat band either over their foreheads or about the shoulders. Now here is what I saw a squaw doing that had a small baby strapped to a board or a willow frame, which she carried on her back with a strap over her forehead:

When at work she would stand or lay the game, and kid where she could see it at any time. She soon had a large basket as full as she could crowd with crickets. Laying it down near the kid, she

took a smaller basket and filled it. I should judge she had over four bushels of the catch. ...

Having seen enough there we rode on across a narrow valley, and in the foothills came to a large camp of Indians, the chief of whom I was well acquainted with, and we decided to stay all night with them. ... We had no provisions of our own left, except a couple of rabbits I had killed on the way. ...

Jack took one of the rabbits and put it to roast on the fire, the other he gave to the chief. When the rabbit was done to his liking, Jack asked the chief if he had any bread; he nodded and called in a low voice the name of his squaw, who came into the tent at once. When told to bring some bread she went out, but returned immediately with a cake of black bread about two inches thick and ten inches in diameter, which she handed to me. ... Holding the bread in one hand and pointing to it with the other, I asked her if there was pine nuts in it. "Yes, she said unconcernedly, "is there crickets in it?" "Yes, yes," smilingly. "sure." Well, I handed the cake to Jack to divide and told the squaw that I would like some pine nuts. She soon brought in some that were all mashed up. These I refused and asked for the "whole" pine nuts. These were soon brought in and I commenced my supper. ...

When the crickets are dried the squaws grind them, feathers and all, on the same mill they grind the pine nuts or grass seed, making a fine flour that will keep a long time, if kept dry. Jack says the crickets make the bread good, the same as sugar used by the white woman in her cakes. ... (5 P230,231, & 232)

Eating Ants

When I lived at Deep Creek I had occasion to send some men and teams to what we called "Fifteen Miles Canyon" to get some saw logs down to the loading place. They were to stay there till Saturday, then come home with a couple loads. When they had been gone a couple of days I thought I would go up and see how they were getting along. I got there just before dinner time, while the rest were piling the logs that had been brought out of the canyon.

There were five or six Squaws sitting around, and when I unsaddled my pony I noticed that there was a great many very large ant-hills all around the place. I had heard that the Indians often eat them, so I thought I would see for myself. So, pointing to a large hill, I asked one of the Squaws if Indians eat them. She said "Yes." "Are they good?" "Yes." "Well I am very hungry. Hurry up and get some and cook them just the same as Indians like them. Hurry up."

She gave her Papoose to another Squaw and, taking a large flat basket arrangement, pushed the top of the hill to one side and then scooped up about a peek of ants, gravel, dirt and all. Taking it to one side she spread on the ground a piece of flour sack, then taking the pan or basket in her hands, gave it an up and down motion at the side opposite from her. You ought to see these ants roll over the side and fall on the cloth! But not a bit of gravel or speck of dirt went with them. I have often seen the Squaws

cleaning grass seed or wheat the same way, only the wheat or seed was left on the pan, and the chaff and dirt went over the edge.

After she had gone to the hill two or three times, she had collected about a quart of ants and eggs, and as I acted like I was very hungry, she asked for a kettle to cook them in. I asked the boys for the loan of their wash bucket. She took the bucket and went to the creek, got what water she wanted, piled the ants in and put it on the fire.

Then she asked me for some salt. I said, "Indians don't use salt." She said, "No, but they like it but don't have it." I gave her a handful of salt, as I did not care how she seasoned the mess. She would put in a little, stir it up well with a stick, then taste, put in a little more, then taste, and so on till she was satisfied that the right amount was used, then she brought the balance of the salt to me. I told her to keep it, pleasing her very much.

Then she asked me for a little flour. I asked her if Indians used flour when they cooked ants. She smiled and said they would if they had it, but she was cooking for a "Boss White Man" and wanted it to taste good. She got about one-half pint of flour. After that was all stirred in, she asked me for some of that black stuff the white men shake on their food. That was pepper, of course. I gave her a small amount, and when that was added she gave it a final stir, set it off the fire and said, "Now you can eat."

I got a tin plate and tablespoon and told her to put some on that. She did so. "Now, let me see you eat it," I said. She laughed, so did the rest of them. Just then the cook said dinner. I told the woman that they might eat it all, as my dinner was ready. Well, they soon cleaned up the whole mess, besides some bread and potatoes we had to spare. (5 P228 & 229)

A Rabbit Drive

One afternoon, while visiting the Indians, I heard them talking of rabbits and, asking them what it was all about, the chief said a rabbit hunt. I said I would like to go along to see how they done it. He seemed pleased at me taking so much interest and said, "Good! ..."

About the middle of the forenoon next day I was at their camp. Most of the hunters had already started. Going about three or four miles, we came to the place selected for the drive—a piece of sage and rabbit brush land about a mile in diameter. The party I was with stopped, when we saw a fire about a half mile to our right and soon another about the same distance to the left, and then we could see the smoke rising a mile ahead of us. My party soon had their torches at work and the drive was on.

Working all around the circle and towards the center was a continuous ring of fire and smoke, which was gradually closing in and the rabbits were being crowded together thicker and thicker. Each Indian, squaw and papoose had a stick about four feet long, the only weapon they carried. A small boy or girl was just as good

as a man, and oh, the fun of it-all laughing a hollering and making as much noise as possible. The rabbits got so dazed by the fire, smoke and tumult that they simply could not run. They would jump a few jumps and sit up trying to see a way out. I saw dozens of them stop within reach of the sticks and many of them were picked up that had not been hit. When a rabbit was seen to pass out of the human ring, someone would follow him in the smoke and put his body in one of the piles of rabbits they had made as they proceeded towards the center, for they could not carry much of the game and do their work at the same time.

When the drive was over the field was a black, fire-swept, but still smoking patch of ground. Talk about rabbits, I am sure there were more caught on that drive than could be packed in a large wagon bed. ...

I have seen black-tailed rabbits in bands so thick they could not all get in the shade of the sagebrush and I have seen coyotes where they seemed to be dozens and dozens of them in the middle of the day, standing and sitting or laying down, and when approached too close, moving off just fast enough to keep at a safe distance, all of them with full bellies and acted very sleepy. I asked Jack what they were about, he said, "Them coyotes had a rabbit drive last night and now they are resting up and sleeping." ...

(5 P235,236 & 237)

Mountain Rat, Food for Indians

On one of my days out I came across an old Indian going home with his day's catch of rats. He had a large sheet iron camp kettle nearly filled with them. They had all been caught the night before by dead falls, as we call them, which consists of two sticks about three and a half or four inches long fastened together at their centers by a string that will allow them to spread apart about four or five inches in the shape of the letter "H." One of these, with any convenient flat rock heavy enough to smash and kill a rat, is one dead fall. This Indian had over a hundred of the triggers that he hadn't used, but said he had set the most of them.

His plan was to go up one side of the canyon, setting the traps wherever he saw the sign of rats, and the same down the other side. The next day, taking the same route, gathering the catch and resetting the traps. The rats the Indian had were six to eight inches long, two and half inches wide and half an inch thick. They were packed as close as he could pack them in the kettle and were quite heavy for the old man to pack to camp, so I carried them for him. At his camp was where I first saw the squaws making rabbit skin robes. This is how it was done:

They had a lot of twine, that had been made of some fibrous bark or grass, and a pile of rabbit skins that had been dried and then rubbed pliable. But it must have been done with care, for a rabbit skin is very tender. These squaws were not making a new robe, but patching up and making an old one larger. The robes are of length to reach from the neck to about the middle of the thighs, say about three or four feet long, and wide enough to reach around

the body at the shoulders.

One of the squaws was twisting the strips of skin around a twine that was stretched to two stakes, placed a little past the length of the robe, and as she proceeded the other was following her up and tying that fir rope thus made and laid alongside the previous one close together at about every four inches. They worked back and forth in this fashion till the skins were used up. There was a strip about two feet wide of new robe attached to the old one. ... (5 P237 & 238)

Old Man Left to Die

There is a little spring of very brackish and warm water about a mile north of Fish Spring Station and a few rods below the road. Between this spring and the road the Indians had selected as the place to leave a very old man to die. He was totally blind and very poor, hardly any flesh on his bones. He was clad with only a very old and small strip of rabbit skin robe hung over his neck.

...

Father heard of this from one of the Stage Drivers and the first time he passed that way was prepared to supply the old man with food and blankets. He told the driver to drive out of the road to the old man's camp. ... (They) gave him enough food to last several days, also a gallon can of water, placed a good new blanket around him and left the old man eating very sparingly of the food, as if to make it last as long as possible. (P251 & 252)

Father went on his way west, but left word with the stage driver to bring food for him after that every time he passed that way. Father was planning to have the old man moved near the Station, where he could be fed at regular times and provided with shelter and clothing and means of having a fire when necessary, as the weather was getting quite cold.

Too late, for on his next trip out he learned that the old Indian had been taken away and everything that had been given him and even the small semi-circle of (brush) wind-break had been burned. Father's generosity had not been appreciated by the old man's relatives, or the band of Indians that he belonged to so they made it impossible for him to prolong the life of the old man, who ought to die, and would very soon if left alone. (5 P251 & 252)

Old woman

John Fremont related a very similar experience. The year was 1845, he and his men were camped in the foothills of the Toiyobe Mountains in central Nevada. They had just finished their supper of fresh antelope and some were enjoying a smoke:

Carson who was lying on his back with his pipe in his mouth, his hands under his head and his feet to the fire, "Good God! look there!" In a blaze of the fire, peering over her skinny,

crooked hands, which shaded her eyes from the glare, was standing an old woman apparently eighty years of age, nearly naked, her grizzled hair hanging down over her face and shoulders. She had thought it a camp of her people and had already begun to talk and gesticulate, when her open mouth was paralyzed with fright, as she saw the faces of the whites. She turned to escape, but the men had gathered about her and brought her around to the fire. Hunger and cold soon dispelled fear and she made us understand that she had been left by her people at the spring to die, because she was very old and could gather no more seeds and was no longer good for anything. She told us she had nothing to eat and was very hungry. We gave her immediately about a quarter of the antelope, thinking she would roast it by our fire, but no sooner did she get it in her hand and she darted off into the darkness. Some one ran after her with a brand of fire, but calling after her brought no answer. In the morning, her fresh tracks at the spring showed that she had been there for water during the night. Starvation had driven her to us, but her natural fear had drove her away as quickly, so soon as she had secured something to eat. Before we started we left for her at the spring a little supply from what food we had.