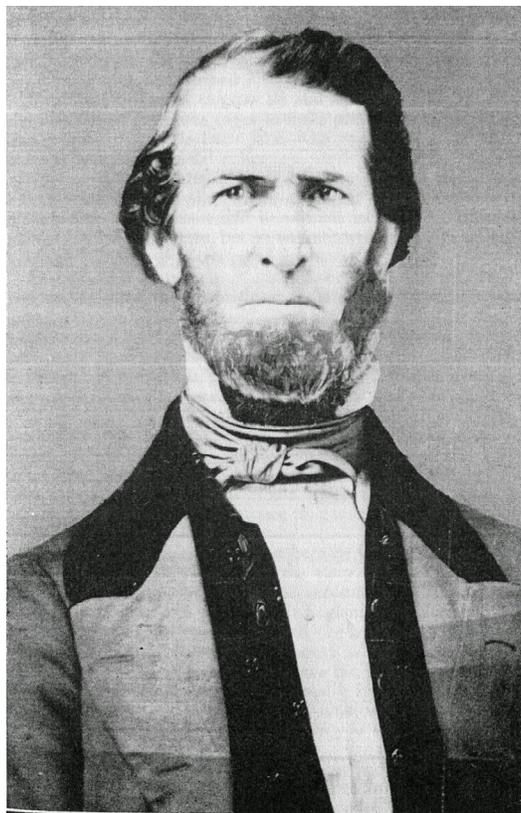


Lincoln's Springfield

Benjamin Robert Biddle

Abraham Lincoln's Tailor and Friend



BENJAMIN ROBERT BIDDLE
About 1860

SPRING CREEK SERIES

Richard E. Hart

Front Cover: Photograph of Benjamin Robert Biddle. From *And This is Our Heritage* by Esther Moreland Leithold, 1944.

Opposite Inside Front Cover: Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company Leaves For California: Article in the *Journal* on Tuesday, March 27, 1849.¹[SEP]

Inside Back Cover: Appointment of Benjamin Robert Biddle as Indian Agent, signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

Back Cover: Photograph of Maria Evans Biddle. From *And This is Our Heritage* by Esther Moreland Leithold, 1944.

I sometimes wonder at the swiftness with which time passes. It seems but a little while since I left home, yet a full year will soon have circled away—leaving only the memory of the past, its varied scenes and strange events. Many who started in this pilgrimage for gold have sickened and died; others who have reached this country will return poorer than they came; and some will go back to those they love blest with fortune. But these last will be few in number, and their story will be as sunny spots on the dark canvass that will picture forth this epoch in the history of our nation.

B. R. Biddle

During the last week, I have thought much of Springfield. As “Distance lends enchantment to the view,” so absence brings to mind, more vividly, the endearments of home. Few men would wander from family and friends, if they did but take a philosophic view of things. The partner in our joys and sorrows, the children of our love—the affection of the one, the innocence of the others, would keep us all at home, if we would but take things as they are and accommodate ourselves to the circumstances of our condition. But, as the world is, there is a necessity for gold. There are a thousand and one ways in which money may be used, and society compels us all to have it. Very many have sacrificed every ennobling quality upon the altar of Mammon. There are many men, on these plains, who have adopted a coarseness of manners and language, and who violate the common courtesies of life with an impunity that would indicate their birth and education to have been in a less favored land than the United States. The gold obtained is but a small portion of the history of such an expedition. There is much to be learned of the manner in which the characters of some men are developed by peculiar circumstances, and all may learn lessons of wisdom by the study of themselves.

B. R. Biddle

Benjamin Robert Biddle: Abraham Lincoln's Tailor and Friend
Spring Creek Series.

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¹ *Journal*, Tuesday, March 27, 1849, p. 2.

Lincoln's Springfield

Benjamin Robert Biddle

Abraham Lincoln's Tailor and Friend

Tuesday Evening, March 27, 1849.

The Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company.

Leave this city, for their destination, at two o'clock to-day. They seem to be well prepared for their arduous undertaking.

Our townsmen will see in this list many of our old city residents and valuable citizens. Others are from the county. Among them are farmers, mechanics and professional men. Our best wishes go with them. May they realize their hopes and return in safety to their families and friends.

There are two other companies formed here, which will leave soon.

NAMES OF THE MEMBERS.

B. A. Watson,	T. Billson,
C. E. White,	Lewis Johnson,
Albert Sattley,	John Redham,
Benj F. Taylor,	Richard Hodges,
E. Fuller,	Jacob Uhler,
Wm. B. Broadwell,	B. R. Biddle,
W. P. Smith,	J. B. Weber,
B. D. Reeves,	John B. Watson,
Wm. Odenheimer,	F. S. Dean,
Henry Dorand,	Thomas J. Whitehurst.
E. T. Cabaniss,	

SPRING CREEK SERIES

Richard E. Hart

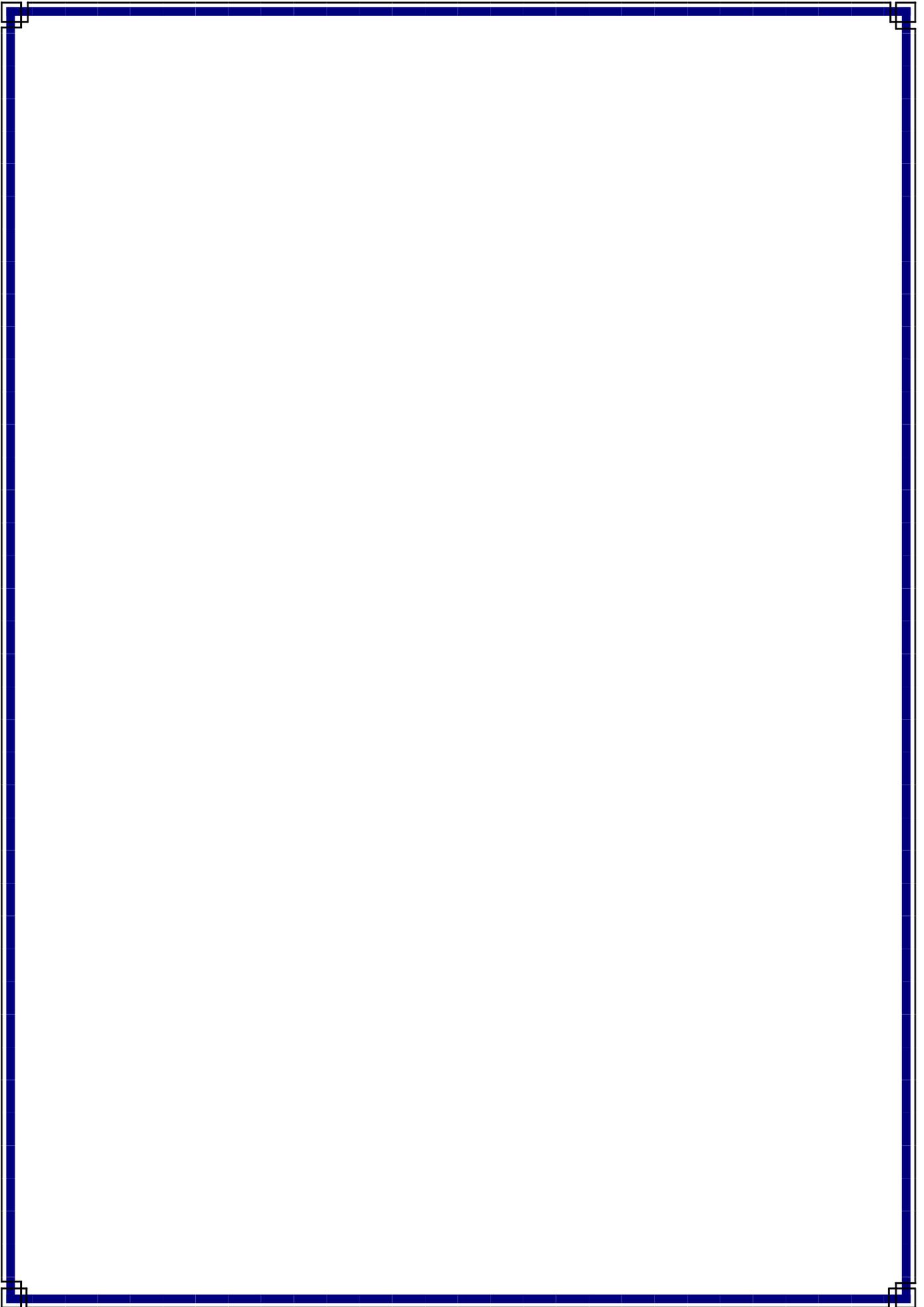


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California Dreamin’

California was the hip place for young people to gather and dream in the 1960s. In 1966, The Mamas & The Papas put *California Dreamin’* to words and music. But they were latecomers to the call of the California sirens.

In the 1840s and 1850s, a number of young men of Lincoln’s Springfield were lured by wanderlust, greed, and gold to leave home for a wild ride across the prairies and mountains to the California Pacific Coast. They were part of a wave of Americans drawn West by the same California dreams that lured thousands there in the days of the liberated 60s. They were all California Dreamin’.

The stories of their dreams of a new life in the West are ones that have received little note, yet collectively they are the story of a unique American experience that thousands shared in fulfilling America’s Manifest Destiny. They have been overshadowed by the bigger stories of well-known and studied historical figures.

These dreamers caught my eyes many times over the years of researching in the *Springfield Journal* and *Register* newspapers of that period. I would see articles and letters about Springfield overland expeditions to California and Oregon sent back to the Springfield newspapers and published. I began to collect these articles and letters and was amazed at what the total collection revealed.

I discovered that a number of Springfield’s California Dreamers had played major roles in the early history of California and Oregon. William L. Todd, Mary Lincoln’s nephew, designed the California Bear Flag, which is still California’s state flag. The first Governor of the California Bear Republic was William Ide, who was also a Springfield native. Stephen T. Logan’s son, David, became one of Oregon’s outstanding lawyers, served in the 1854 Territorial legislature and was Mayor of Portland from 1864 to 1868. Dr. Anson G. Henry left Springfield for Oregon in 1852, and was later appointed by President Lincoln as surveyor general for the Washington Territory.

The subject of this book, Benjamin Robert Biddle, made a significant impact on the West Coast after leaving his Springfield home in 1849. Benjamin Robert Biddle, known as “B. R.,” was born into an aristocratic Virginia family in 1808. His father inherited a substantial estate of plantations but by his bad management he lost them all. In the 1820s, B. R.’s family moved to Tennessee to begin a new life. Economics failure there made it necessary for B. R. to be the first member of his upper class family to become a tradesman. He entered into an apprenticeship to become a tailor. While traveling between his Tennessee home and the apprenticeship in Kentucky, he met, courted and later married Maria Evans. Maria was the daughter of a Tennessee innkeeper on the road through the Cumberland Gap.

In 1830, B. R.’s parents moved to Sangamon County, Illinois, again seeking to escape financial troubles and to find a new life elsewhere. B. R. followed them to Illinois after he completed his apprenticeship. In Springfield, he opened a tailor shop where he made a suit for young Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was opening an office in town and had no cash to pay. B. R. extended him credit.

The Biddles were Lincoln neighbors for about seven years in two separate locations. In 1834, B. R. purchased a small house on Fourth Street. From 1843 to 1844, Abraham and Mary Lincoln rented the house next door. They were neighbors here for over a year.

B. R. purchased a lot and built a house on Seventh Street and moved there with his family sometime in 1844. This was the same year Abraham bought a house at Eighth and Jackson, a block from B. R. and Maria. They were neighbors here for about six years. Maria had known Mary Todd slightly before she came to Springfield.

Esther Moreland Leithold wrote a history of B. R. and Maria and their family based upon her memories of stories and information shared with her by her grandparents. That part of the memories describing the conduct of Mary Lincoln while living on Fourth Street is unique and discrete. It is the only known description of the relationship and Mary's conduct for this time period and as such is important.

B. R. was successful as a tailor and real estate investor. He was active in community affairs. He served as trustee of the Springfield City School, a member of the temperance movement and a member and officer of the Mechanic's Union. He was an active member of the Whig Party.

News of the discovery of gold in California reached Springfield in early 1849, and the dreams of California prompted a number of Springfield men to go West. On Tuesday, March 27, 1849, B. R. and about 40 men left Springfield and travelled overland to California, not to dig for gold, but to sell supplies to the gold miners. Maria and their children were left at home.

During the journey to the West, B. R. kept a daily journal that was later edited and published by Springfield newspapers. It is one of the best records of an overland journey to the West. B. R. was observant and described the landscape, flora and fauna, and interesting encounters along the way with Native Americans. B. R. was quite literate and wrote in a simple declarative style that is engaging. His story described the journey experienced by thousands of other Americans. Much of his journal is included in this book.

Upon reaching California, the B. R. and his partners opened a trading post in the hills west of Redding and they did reasonably well. B. R. missed his family, but did not want to bring them to a mining camp. After a year, it was time for B. R. to return to Springfield and prepare his family to return with him to the West. His journey home took him through Oregon and he was smitten by this new land. This is where he wanted to bring his family.

Back in Springfield, the family prepared to make the move to the West taking the Oregon Trail. To be eligible for free land under the donation land law, they had to be in Oregon and file a claim before December 1853. They arrived in Benton County, Oregon by October 1852, in time to do so.

B. R. staked out a donation land claim on upper Oak Creek northwest of Corvallis. He prepared a small log cabin farm home for his wife Maria and their five children. Their last child, Alice Eudorah, was born at the Oak Creek claim in 1854.

B. R. soon found the Oak Creek cabin inadequate and isolated. In order to be closer to schools for the children and to his growing business in Corvallis, he moved into Corvallis where he opened a drug store. He bought four lots and built a house that still stands at 406 N.W. Sixth St. The house was described by one writer as "one of the show places of the pretty little town."

B. R. was a major player in the development and improvement of Corvallis. He served as Mayor of the town and was one of the founders and trustees of Corvallis College, later Oregon State University. He was a trustee and Secretary of the Corvallis Library Association. He invested

in many public works, including a company created to build a road from Corvallis to the sea and Yaquina Bay.

Prospects seemed good for the Biddles until tragedy struck in early 1858. Their two older sons, Henry and B. R. Jr., were in their early 20s and had opened a freight line from Portland to Corvallis. In January 1858, they became drenched in a storm and caught pneumonia. Henry died a few months later. Shocked by the loss of his brother, B. R. Jr. mourned. He went to work in the drug store, but he too became ill and succumbed to pneumonia. The family was devastated by the loss, but persevered.

In July 1861, President Lincoln appointed B. R. Indian Agent for Siletz Reservation in Benton, Oregon. In October 1862, he was charged and defended charges of malfeasance in office. He was found guilty and discharged from his position. He claimed to the last that he had found red tape, political jealousy and graft constantly interfering with the welfare of the Indians.

In 1870, Maria and B. R.'s daughter, Alice, became the first woman to graduate from Oregon Agricultural College (later Oregon State University). She married her professor, William Moreland. They lived with her parents at the Sixth Street house in Corvallis, and then moved to Healdsburg, California. Alice's daughter, Esther, became intimately acquainted with her grandparents, and from them learned stories and information that are often lost from one generation to the next. As stated previously, her stories about the Lincolns during the period when the Lincoln's lived on Fourth Street are unique.

In June 1875, a disastrous fire in Corvallis' business district destroyed B. R.'s drug store. This prompted Maria and B. R. to move to Healdsburg, California where B. R. pursued a real estate and insurance business. B. R. died there on September 18, 1882, at age 74. Maria then lived with her daughter Alice for 17 years until her death in September 1899.

From the family information Ester gathered, she later compiled and published a written family history under her married name, Esther Moreland Leithold. The book was titled *And This is Our Heritage*² and was privately printed in Woodland, California in 1944. The book is a colorful narrative based on the stories Esther grew up hearing from B. R. and Maria. Esther brings them and their world to life. Much of the material for this book comes from Esther's book.

B. R.'s journal and Esther's beautifully written remembrances make up a significant part of this book. They are to be given credit for preserving their stories. Without their written record, there would be no story to tell of the remarkable Biddle family--a family that is the Everyman of an American family seeking a better life in the American West.

Richard E. Hart
June 11, 2018

² From the online copy of *And This is Our Heritage*, Ester Moreland Leithold, Woodland, California, 1944, courtesy of the Hathi Trust Digital Library (original from University of Wisconsin. Accessed June 3, 2018. (Hereafter referred to as *And This is Our Heritage*.)

Foreword

MUCH OF MY CHILDHOOD was spent with my grandparents: and the stories they told me of their childhood, and of the customs of the people among whom they lived, were so vivid, they have made me feel that I too have been privileged to live (through them) in the America they knew so well and loved so much.

It was my desire to introduce these wonderful people, and their home-land, to my descendants, that prompted me to write this true, though inadequate, story of my grandparents, Robert and Maria Biddle: and I dedicate this book to my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren.

ESTHER MORELAND LEITHOLD
May, 1944.

The Foreword from "And This Is Our Heritage."



ESTHER MORELAND LEITHOLD

Biddle Family Tree

Robert Beedle -----Unknown
(___-1681)

Robert Bittle----- Judith Kirby
(___-1795)

Kirby Bittle-----Lucy Westbrook
(----1815)

Benjamin Bittle -----Mary "Polly" Capel
(1776-1848) (1782-___)

Benjamin Robert Biddle-----1834-----Maria Evans
(1808-1882) (1814-1899)

- (1) James Henry was born June 22, 1837, at Tazewell, Tennessee. He was fifteen years old when he "crossed the plains" with his family on their way to Oregon; and took a man's place in the caravan. He died at Corvallis, Oregon, on June 19, 1856, just one day before his 21st birthday, and shortly before he planned to be married.
- (2) Robert Evans was born December 20, 1838, at Springfield, Illinois and died at Corvallis, Oregon, on August 31, 1859.
- (5) Ellinorah Ruth was born October 26, 1840, in Macoupin County, Illinois and died at Springfield, Illinois, November 29, 1841.
- (4) Sarah Emma was born December 1, 1842, at Springfield, Illinois. She was married in September 1860, to William H. Spencer at Corvallis, Oregon. Died in 1868.
- (5) Matilda (Puggie) (1846-1927)-----1862-----Orville Tracy Porter
- (6) Edwin Weber (1849-1928)
- (7) Arthur Platte (1852-1852)
- (8) Alice Eudora (1854-1918)-----William Moreland

Benjamin's Sisters

Mary Ann Capels Bittle-----1829-----William Lee Cardwell
(1812-1894) (1811-1863)

Angeline C. Biddle -----Hendel Atkinson
(1826-___)

Harriet Biddle-----Hamilton Campbell

The Early Years in Virginia (1617-1820)

1617

Francis Beedle and Rupart (Robert) Beedle Come to York County, Virginia

B. R. Biddle's ancestor came to York County, Virginia, from the Virgin Islands in 1617. His name was Rupart (or Robert) Beedle and he came with a brother, Francis Beedle.

1720

Birth of Robert Bittle

(1720-1795)

The genealogy of the family for the years from 1617 to 1720 is not clear. In 1720, Robert Bittle was born to John and Elizabeth Bittle.

1744

Robert Bittle Marries Judith Kirby

About 1744, Robert Bittle, the son of John and Elizabeth Bittle, married Judith Kirby.

County of Southampton Created From Isle of Wight County

In 1749, the County of Southampton was created from a part of the County of Isle of Wight. Thereafter, the Bittle properties were described as located in Southampton County, a county located on the southern border of the Commonwealth of Virginia. North Carolina is to the south.



1895 Southampton County³ United States 1829
Virginia and North Carolina Counties

Birth of Kirby Bittle

(Circa 1752-circa 1809)

Kirby Bittle was born about 1752, the son of Robert and Judith Kirby Bittle.

³ Henry S. Tanner, United States of America (Philadelphia, 1829), in David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

1775**Marriage of Kirby Bittle and Lucy Westbrook**

On November 6, 1775, Kirby Bittle, the son of Robert and Judith Kirby Bittle, married Lucy Westbrook (1754-1816), daughter of Henry Westbrook.

1776**Birth of Benjamin Bittle**

(1776-1848)

On July 10, 1776, Benjamin Bittle was born in Southampton County, Virginia the son of Kirby and Lucy Westbrook Bittle.

1795**Death of Robert Bittle**

(1720-1795)

Robert Bittle, the husband of Judith Kirby, died and his will was probated on February 14, 1795. His son, Kirby Bittle, was mentioned in his will.

1797**Kirby Bittle Makes Gift to Son Benjamin**

On July 10, 1797, Benjamin Bittle turned 21. His father Kirby Bittle gave him a plantation, three slaves and two horses, four beds, other furniture, and thirteen head of cattle.

1799**Marriage of Benjamin Bittle and Mary Ann "Polly" Capell**

In February 1799, Benjamin Bittle married Mary Ann (called Polly) Capell (1782-??), the daughter of Sterling Capell. Polly's father gave them land and slaves. They lived on "Three Creeks" in St. Luke's Parish, Southampton County, Virginia. They were the parents of the subject of this book, Benjamin Robert Biddle. (Most often called "B. R.")

Both Benjamin and Polly were descended from some of the wealthiest and most aristocratic families of Colonial Virginia where their ancestors had lived for six generations and where they were related to most of the prominent families of two counties.

Benjamin was brought up to be a gentleman who knew of no practical way to make a living. Polly had been an only daughter in a large family of boys and had been humored and spoiled. She had always had several personal servants, or slaves, and every whim had been gratified as long as her father had lived. They were delightful people, but neither of them knew anything about managing a plantation. After their marriage, they continued to entertain as their parents had done. Their expenses always exceeded their income.

1808**Birth of Benjamin Robert “B. R.” Biddle**

(1808-1882)

Benjamin Robert Biddle was born on July 2, 1808, in Southampton County, Virginia,⁴ to Benjamin, age 32, and Mary Ann “Polly” Capell Biddle, age 26. He was known as B. R. throughout his life.

1812**Birth of Mary Ann Caples Biddle**

(1812–1894)

Mary Ann Caples Biddle was born on December 1, 1812, in Southampton County, Virginia, to Benjamin and Mary Ann “Polly” Capell Biddle. She married William Lee Cardwell on December 25, 1829, in Tennessee. She died at Portland, Oregon, in 1894.

1813**Move to Central Virginia: Benjamin Bittle Buys Land**

In about 1813, Benjamin and Polly decided to move to central Virginia. Benjamin sold his property in Southampton County, Virginia. Polly rented her land to one of her brothers. In January 1813, Benjamin Biddle bought land on Rough Creek, near Rustburg, Campbell County, Virginia and they lived there several years.

Benjamin soon had financial troubles that again prompted another move. They had been raised to think that ladies and gentlemen had to live up to certain standards, and they could never maintain those standards on the income from their properties—farms or plantations.

1814**Birth of Maria Evans**

(1814 - 1899)

On November 29, 1814, Maria Evans was born in Claiborne County in northeast Tennessee. Her parents, Elijah and Ruth (Holt) Evans, owned an inn on the south bank of the Clinch River on the route from North Carolina to Kentucky, via the Cumberland Gap.⁵ She was educated at home and at the Knoxville Female Academy. In 1834, Maria would marry B. R. Biddle.

1815**Benjamin Biddle Advertises For “Genteel” Boarders**

In July 1815, Benjamin “Bittle” advertised for 6 or 8 “genteel boarders” to board with the family by the month or year. He was living in Lynchburg, Virginia.

⁴ This was the place in 1831 of the Nat Turner Rebellion.

⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 12.

1820**Residence in Amherst County, Virginia**

In 1820, Benjamin and Mary “Polly” Ann Capell Biddle were living in Amherst County, Virginia.

1820-1826**Benjamin and Polly Biddle Face Economic Squeeze
Move From Amherst County, Virginia to Grainger County, Tennessee**

Benjamin and Polly Capell Biddle lost their property in Amherst County, Virginia and moved west to Grainger County, Tennessee sometime between 1820 and 1826. At this time the older boys were reaching manhood.⁶

Polly had a most buoyant nature, and insisted on having everything she thought she needed; for she always considered their poverty an accident which would be overcome when Benjamin made a fortune and established an estate for his family.

“You know my father Benjamin Biddle, was born a gentleman, in southeastern Virginia, and was never taught anything about earning a living. His people had always had large plantations and plenty of slaves to work them: but the land was beginning to wear out; and, with each generation, the plantations were divided into smaller farms. The younger sons no longer inherited enough to make a living, and they were quite helpless. If they had learned some trade they could have earned an honest living...”⁷

⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 26-27, 32, and 41. <http://ancestryisland.blogspot.com/2016/05/monday-is-for-mothers-maria-evans-1814.html>

⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 33-34.

The Tennessee Years (1820-1830)

1820-1826

Benjamin and Polly Biddle and Family Move From Amherst County, Virginia to Grainger County, Tennessee

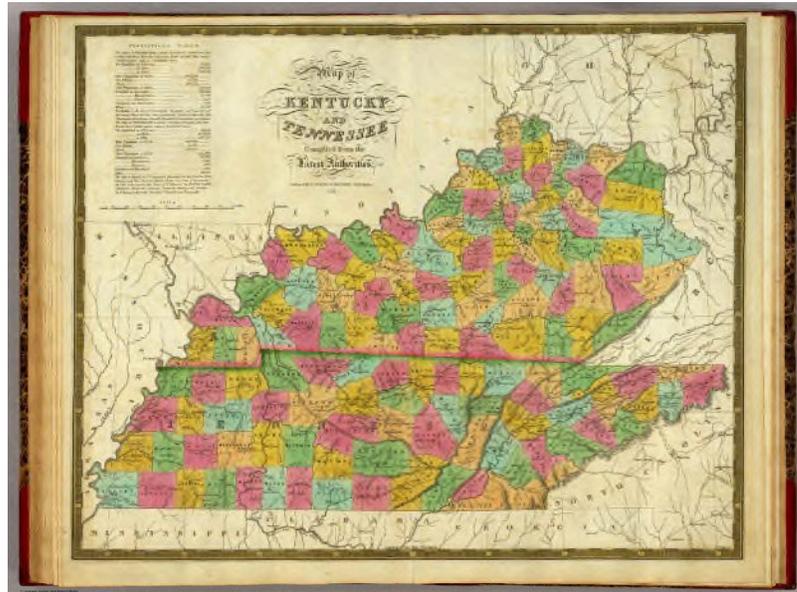
Sometime between 1820 and 1826, Benjamin and Polly Biddle and their family moved from Amherst County, Virginia to Grainger County, Tennessee.

They lacked the solid financial security of the best families of that section. Benjamin was seldom there, as his business took him away from home much of the time. But when he was at home he was the best looking and best-dressed man in the neighborhood.

Polly was always richly dressed in black silk, except in the hot summer months, when she wore white linen instead. She was the proverbial perfect lady in appearance, and was admired and waited on by every member of her family. The manners of the whole family were very elegant, and they had a certain polish that was unusual among the people of the frontier.⁸ Polly held herself aloof from most of the other women at quilting bees, and other social affairs of the community, which added to the unpopularity of the family.

The “Bittle” Name Changes

When Benjamin and Polly Biddle first came to Tennessee, their name had been spelled Bittle. In Tennessee they met members of the “Philadelphia Biddle” family, who convinced them that they all were descended from the same English family, and that the proper spelling of the name was B I D D L E. So the Tennessee branch of the Bittle family changed the spelling of their name to Biddle. People wondered what shady past had induced them to change their name.



1831 Map of Kentucky and Tennessee⁹

⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 27-28.

⁹ *Map of Kentucky and Tennessee Compiled from the Latest Authorities*, published by S. Augustus Mitchell Philadelphia, 1831, J.H. Young Sc. List No: 3884.010. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

Maria Evans First Meets B. R. Biddle

Maria Evans was a young girl visiting her relatives in Grainger County, Tennessee when she first met B. R. Biddle, her future husband. B. R. was about five years older than Maria.

1826

Birth of Angeline C. Biddle

(1826—____) Tennessee

Angeline C. Biddle was born in 1826 in Grainger County, Tennessee, to Benjamin and Mary “Polly” Ann Capell Biddle.

1828

B. R. Biddle Apprentices With Middlesboro, Kentucky Tailor

B. R.’s parents came from a privileged background and were very cultured and sophisticated, but they made little money for themselves. By the time B. R. and his brothers came of age, the family couldn’t afford the expense of a professional education. Benjamin determined that the boys had to be apprenticed to some craftsman to learn a trade and prepare them to make a living. As far as they knew, no one, on either side of their family, had ever been a tradesman. It was not easy for them to deliberately place their boys on a lower social level than their relatives in Virginia, who might be ashamed of them when they returned to their old home.¹⁰

B. R. Biddle apprenticed with a tailor (name unknown) in Middlesboro (now Middlesborough, Bell County, Kentucky) near the Cumberland Gap. B. R.’s brother John (called Jack) was apprenticed to a blacksmith. They learned quickly and by the time their apprenticeships were over, they had become real craftsmen in the trades they had chosen.

My brother and I decided that every man should have a trade so that he could be independent and useful. Our ancestors prided themselves on being ladies and gentlemen: and, as I was born into that kind of a family—with all of its ideals and traditions—I think that I too am a gentleman as long as I am worthy of that heritage. If I maintain certain social standards, am truthful and honest, am kind and considerate of others, and keep my own self respect, I shall consider myself a gentleman no matter what kind of menial work I may have to do to earn a living.

No man can be degraded by doing any honest work. I am sure that I am more of a gentleman than many of the rich farmers whose clothes I make.” Maria told him that, in her estimation, no one could be finer than he, and then he went on to tell her more of his plans, and he said: “I have thought it all over, and am afraid that our married life could not be happy if we lived here among all of your relatives, who are so opposed to me as your husband.”¹¹

B. R. Biddle Visits Maria Evans While Traveling

After B. R. apprenticed himself, he traveled between his apprenticeship in Middlesboro, Kentucky and his parents’ home in Grainger County, Tennessee. The route he took passed through Tazewell, Claiborne County, Tennessee, where he would stay at the inn operated by Maria Evans’

¹⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 29-30.

¹¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 30. *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 29-

father, Elijah. Here he visited and renewed his friendship and formed an attachment with his future wife, Maria Evans.¹²

Description of Biddle Family

They [Biddles] were all taller than the Evans family, and, while their eyes were blue, their eyebrows, eyelashes and hair were almost black; which made them seem very unusual to the people of that community. They were unusual too, for they were a strangely gifted family. They read more than the average family of Eastern Tennessee, and could recite verse after verse of their favorite poems. Polly Biddle was a rather grand looking woman who sang and played the zither. She also liked to play games with her children. The children too could play the zither or guitar (the only musical instruments they had), and sing the popular songs of the day, as well as the old songs their parents had learned when they were young in Virginia. The girls also made beautiful colored embroidery and hooked rugs from patterns they drew themselves.

B. R. Biddle was tall and slender, with blue eyes and dark brown hair that waved back from his forehead. He would have been exceptionally good looking if his nose had been different, but his nose, which was unusually long and narrow, with a decided hump on the bridge, spoiled the symmetry of his otherwise handsome face. Ordinarily, such a nose would have been considered a calamity; but to the family of B. R. Biddle, it was said to be an inheritance from a long line of distinguished ancestors; and was a mark of aristocratic distinction much to be desired.

Maria could not see anything desirable about such a nose, and she was sure that B. R. would have changed it if he could have done so. However he was different from the other men she knew, and she liked him so much, she soon thought that nothing, not even a different nose, could have added to his aristocratic appearance.

One day, when he was there for a few hours, he and Maria walked down to the town spring together. As they sat on the log beside the spring, he said, "Maria you are the prettiest and sweetest girl I have ever known, and when I get a tailor shop of my own, I want to marry you, if you could love me a little and wait for me. I don't want to marry until I can support a wife as well as her father does, but I will always be good to you if you will only wait for me."

Maria told him that she liked him better than any one else she knew, but she warned him not to say anything to her father, for she knew that he would not approve.

One of Aunt Mary's objections to B. R. was that the family had changed its name which might indicate that there was something unsavory in their past.

I (B. R. Biddle) persuaded father to change it at that time; and since then we have been known by the name of Biddle. Do you think we did anything wrong?" Maria assured him that she thought they had done perfectly right; and that it was a matter of small importance anyway. Then he went on to tell her about learning a trade.

Polly Biddle had never sold the old Capell home, which she had inherited from her father. She always planned to return there after they had made their fortune and were once more able to live as they had in the old days. The boys, however, had grown up in the west and cared more about making a comfortable living than they did about the social customs and ideas of people, in Virginia, whom they did not even remember.

¹² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 27.

Maria Evans's Parents Oppose Marriage to B. R. Biddle

B. R. continued to court Maria despite opposition to an engagement from Maria's family. They considered B. R. an undesirable mate because he was a tradesman with "parents who would always be a financial burden to him."¹³ The Evans's and their friends considered tradespeople so inferior to them that they had never met them on terms of social equality. To accept one into the family seemed impossible. Everything was done to discourage the friendship between Maria and B. R. Biddle.¹⁴

Maria Evans Makes Her Debut

In September of 1828, Maria Evans was almost fifteen years old and B. R. was 20. Maria's Aunt Mary Conway decided that it was time that Maria be a real young lady. She took her to Knoxville and bought her a new corset and beautiful materials to be made into dresses of the latest fashion by her own dressmaker.

When the dresses were finished, Aunt Mary gave a party and presented Maria to the guests who had come to visit them from the city. Everything was very gay at the Conway home for the next few weeks. There were fox hunts and other amusements, during the day, and games and dancing in the evening—where Maria and Aunt Eliza were always in the midst of the gayest and happiest groups. Old Mammy Jane dressed Maria's hair, and laced her corset so tight she could scarcely breathe—so that her figure would conform to the latest style. She was happy in the knowledge that she was always the belle of the party.¹⁵

1829

B. R. Biddle Completes Apprenticeship and Opens Tailor Shop in Tazewell, Tennessee

After finishing his apprenticeship and saving some money, B. R. opened a tailor shop in Tazewell, the county seat of Claiborne County, Tennessee.¹⁶

Marriage of Mary Ann Biddle and William Lee Cardwell and Move to Macoupin County, Illinois

In 1829, B. R. Biddle's sister, Mary Ann, married William Lee Cardwell (a cousin of Robert Lee of Virginia) in Tennessee. William was the son of Rev. Perrin Cardwell and Elizabeth Washburn. He was born in Virginia on December 8, 1811, and died at Portland, Oregon, on October 9, 1863. He was a cousin of Robert E. Lee. They lived at Jacksonville, Illinois until 1852, when they went to Oregon.¹⁷



Mary Ann Capel Biddle Cardwell

¹³ *Lynchburg Press*, Lynchburg, Amherst County, Virginia, [Thursday, July 27, 1815]p. 3, col 4 [from GenealogyBank] □

¹⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 26.

¹⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 30.

¹⁷ *Genealogy of the Evans' family, the "Virginia Biddles" and other related families*, Comp. by Esther M. Leithold, Woodland, California, 1944.

1830**Benjamin and Polly Biddle and Family Move to Sangamon County, Illinois From Grainger County, Tennessee**

In early 1830, Polly and Benjamin Biddle, together with their son Jack, their daughters, Harriett and three year old Angeline, moved from Grainger County, Tennessee to Sangamon County, Illinois. B. R. Biddle remained a tailor in Tazewell, Tennessee.

The Biddle family was typical of Southern Americans on the frontier moving several times during their lifetimes. Generally, they were seeking a better life in each instance but not always for the same specific reason. Most sought better land at a cheap price and purchased on an installment payment plan.

They were also somewhat typical of the pioneers who first settled in Sangamon County, Illinois, although they seem to have been from a more middle or upper middle class group than was true of most early Sangamon county settlers. Sangamon County had been surveyed by the Federal Government and placed on the market in 18___. So it was shortly after that that the Biddles moved north into Central Illinois, Sangamon County and the prairie.

The Illinois Years (1830-1849)

Benjamin and Polly Biddle and Family Move From Tazewell, Tennessee to Springfield, Illinois

In early 1830, Polly and Benjamin Biddle, together with their son Jack, their daughters, Harriett and three year old Angeline, moved from Grainger County, Tennessee to Sangamon County, Illinois. Polly was sure that Illinois land would produce their long-looked-for fortune.

Benjamin Biddle had never been a true pioneer. He had never been the kind of man who settled on Government land, built a primitive home for his family, and cleared his land for cultivation while he earned his living from fishing, hunting, trapping and trading, until crops could be raised.

He was more of a speculator, who went into a new country after the first pioneers had done the development work, become discouraged, and moved on to newer and better places further west. He watched the delinquent tax lists carefully; and was often able to buy fine, improved property at a sheriff's sale for the amount of the unpaid taxes. He and Polly both had the gift of homemaking. After living in a place for a short time, they were usually able to sell at a good profit.

In Eastern Tennessee the amount of good "bottom land" was very limited, but in Illinois there were thousands of acres of rich, level, prairie land for farming. There, for the first time, he was able to buy a large acreage of fine agricultural land, which he divided into small farms and sold to newcomers who were trying to farm without slaves.¹⁸

Mary Ann Biddle Cardwell and William Lee Cardwell Move to Macoupin County, Illinois

Shortly after Benjamin and Polly's move to Illinois, Mary and William Cardwell also moved to Illinois, in this case Macoupin County. Mary wrote glowing accounts of the new country.

1831-1832

Maria Evans' Education: Knoxville Female Academy

Maria Evans was sent to Knoxville Female Academy in 1831-1832, in an effort to distract her from her attraction to B. R. The school year was divided into two sessions. The winter session of five months began on November first and continued until March 31st; and the summer session started on the first of May and continued until September 30th. So Maria had vacation during the months of April and October, when she could visit her family and Aunt Mary Conway.

Her father [Elijah Evans] thought that the expense was too great for such an unnecessary thing as an advanced education for a girl; but Aunt Mary [Conway] was determined that Maria should go, and insisted on paying all of the expense herself, which was considered a large amount at that time. The tuition, alone, was ten dollars for each session. There was no charge for room rent, but the price of board, firewood, and candles amounted to one dollar and a half each week. Maria also took ornamental needlework, on lace and muslin, which was five dollars extra each session. All students had to recite, once a week, on the Sacred Scriptures; and Maria, who always stood at the head of that class, became so interested in Bible-study, she continued it through the rest of her life.

¹⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 33.

The first year, at the Academy, she studied Arithmetic, and Geography with the drawing of maps and “the solution of the problems of the terrestrial Globe”, Rhetoric, Astronomy, and the History of Natural Philosophy.

The second year she had the same studies with an advanced teacher, and additional five dollars tuition. Astronomy included “the solution of the problems of the Celestial Globe.” There were also lectures on “Good Manners and Proper Behavior in Polite Society.” Maria also took a course in Fancy Weaving and Rug Making.¹⁹

November 12th and 13th 1831 Falling Stars

Through the nights of November 12th and 13th, 1831, the heavens were lit up by myriads of shooting (or falling) stars, and the people of the South thought that the end of the world was at hand. Many persons at that time believed that the second coming of Christ and the Judgment Day might be looked for at any time. Any unusual disturbance was feared as the beginning of the end. However, it was only the most credulous and superstitious who were greatly affected by the sight of the “falling stars” of 1831.²⁰

Maria was at the Academy at Knoxville in 1831, and the students, like most of the people of the South were afraid that the end of the world was near. But their Astronomy teacher assured them that there had been many other times, in the history of the world, when people had been frightened by falling stars; but that astronomers knew that the stars did not really fall at all. Meteors occasionally crossed the Earth’s orbit, and looked like stars as they fell and glowed in upper space; but, for some reason, they usually exploded or disintegrated when they reached the Earth’s atmosphere and fell in the form of meteoric dust; so that there was probably nothing to fear.

1832

November 12th and 13th 1832 Falling Stars

On the nights of November 12th and 13th, 1832, the heavens were lit up by almost constant showers of “falling stars.” The people of the South were terrified as they thought that the end of time and the destruction of the world upon them. The churches were filled with penitent people who wept and prayed, and begged on their knees, that their sins might be forgiven before they, and all the world, were destroyed by the righteous anger of a vengeful God.

When the stars stopped falling, the slaves, and their masters as well, believed that their prayers had been answered, and their sins had been forgiven; and those two nights of terror were followed by days of rejoicing and thanksgiving. The churches then held great revivals, and although nearly every one was a member of some church, the people flocked to the mourner’s bench and humbled themselves and prayed for salvation; and Christ-like behavior became more popular and universal, during the next weeks that followed the falling of the stars, than ever before—when a temporarily regenerated people tried to follow His teachings in all of the acts of their daily lives.

When the Earth was not destroyed, in 1832, the people who had been so frightened, and had vowed (if they were spared) to devote their lives to serving the Lord, soon forgot all about their promises and went on living exactly as they had done before²¹

¹⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 37-41.

²⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 37.

²¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 37-41.

B. R. Biddle Visits Maria in Knoxville, Tennessee

Shortly before Maria finished her last year at the Academy, B. R. went to Knoxville, where they met and talked over their future plans. B. R. knew that he was not included in Aunt Mary's schemes for Maria's future, but he was not willing to give up his own dream of happiness if Maria cared for him.²²

They walked down by the road to the town spring, where they pretended they had to get some drinking water. However, they did not deceive anyone, for the family all knew that they wanted to be alone, so that they could talk together without the reserve young people naturally feel in the presence of others.

B. R. told Maria that he was going to take his mother and sister over to Granger County to visit his brother Charles, and would be back for her in four or five days; but, he said, he was first going to ask her father for permission to marry her. Maria was sure that her father would never consent to her marriage to B. R., but B. R. was determined to speak to him; for, he said, "No gentleman would take a girl away from her father's home without first trying to get his approval." Mrs. Evans invited Mrs. Biddle and B. R. to stay longer at her home, but they were anxious to be on their way; so they thanked Mrs. Evans for her hospitality and drove down the road that led to Evans' Toll Bridge and Granger County.

Maria told him that Jesse Hirst was just like one of her own brothers, and she could never think of marrying him, even though he was really no blood relation, and most of the other men he spoke of were almost as old as he, and she couldn't marry a man as old as her father. Even though most girls married men much older than they were, she was sure she would be happier with some one nearer her own age.

At last he said, "Well, Maria, my little one, you are past eighteen and can do as you please. I want to see you happy, and will never give my consent for you to marry B. R. Biddle, for I'm sure you'll be sorry if you do."

For the next few days Maria worked constantly all day, and far into the night, by candlelight, to finish a bedspread she was weaving, and to get her linen and bedding (that she had been making for years), packed into her chest, which, without her father's consent to her marriage, would be her only dowry.

Near the end of her school days in Knoxville Maria promised to marry her sweetheart and the couple were able to carry on a clandestine correspondence with the help of her older married sister Matilda Evans Garrett.²³

Benjamin Biddle Buys 50 Acres of Public Land in Sangamon County, Illinois

On November 20, 1832, Benjamin Biddle purchased 50 acres of farmland outside of Springfield, Illinois. He paid \$1.25 per acre.

1833

?

Early Spring

B. R. Biddle was an exceptionally good tailor and businessman. He did well while in the tailor business at Tazewell, Tennessee. He sent money regularly to his parents in Sangamon County, Illinois. By the spring of 1833, he sold his business in Tazewell and joined his parents in Illinois.

²² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 33.

²³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 41-42.

B. R. Biddle Moves to Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois

When B. R. Biddle reached Springfield in the early spring of 1833, he had enough money to open a tailor shop.²⁴

His father, brother, and brother-in-law had been living near Springfield for some time before he went to Illinois, and they introduced him to their friends and neighbors; but his own polished manners and pleasing personality were his greatest assets in building up a business among the type of people who were financially able to wear clothes of the latest cut and best materials.

B. R. Biddle Buys 80 Acre Farm on Lick Creek, Sangamon County, Illinois

B. R. Biddle bought an 80-acre farm on Lick Creek, near his father's place, where he expected to raise fine horses and other stock.

His business was good from the first, and it was only a short time before he had to hire an extra tailor to work for him and look after the business, when he was away, for he had bought an eighty acre farm on Lick Creek, near his fathers place, where he expected to raise fine horses and other stock.²⁵

B. R. Biddle on List of Letters

[L]
[SEP]

In the *Journal* of April 1, 1833, a list of letters waiting pick up at the local post office was printed. It included the name of B. R. Biddle.²⁶

November 12th 1833 Falling Stars

The Falling Stars started again on November 12, 1833. People suddenly realized how wicked they had been, and were more terrified than ever at what they considered a new manifestation of the anger of God. They were sure that He would show them no mercy this time, and yet they had His word that He was a God of love and mercy— and so they continued to pray. There were other reasons, besides that terrible spectacle of the falling stars, for believing that the end of the world was near; for many new and fanatical religious denominations had sprung up about that time, which stressed the necessity for immediate preparation for death.

As the time for the second coming of Christ was thought to be at hand. The Latter-Day-Saints, known as Mormons, preached of the fulfillment of time. While there were practically none of them in Tennessee, they were talked about and their doctrines influenced the religious thought of the times.

Maria explained, to her family what she had learned about “falling stars” at the Academy, and her father told them what he had read on the subject. He also retold the stories he had heard from travelers from many parts of the world, who had stopped at the Inn and whiled away the time by telling of strange things they had seen, or heard, in their travels. These stories were often exaggerated, and the truth was mixed with the superstitious ideas of the times and the imagination of the tellers; but unusual phenomena of the skies had been one of the main subjects of conversation, throughout the South, since the first shower of shooting stars fell in November, two years before. The result of these conversations had been to show that, no matter how terrifying all former displays in the heavens had been, they had passed harmlessly

²⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 40.

²⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 41.

²⁶ *Journal*, April 6, 1833, p. 3.

away; and there was nothing to fear; for God was everywhere and all was well with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

The night of November 12th and the day of the 13th passed very much as the same days had the year before. On the evening of the 13th the younger children were put to bed early. William and Amanda were the only ones who could sleep. They were two and four years old, and were too young to understand the nervous tension and terrifying fear that was felt by the people about them. The older children slept very little, if at all. About ten o'clock, when the meteors became as thick as the flakes of falling snow, the negroes, on the slope below the house, began to sing and moan and pray so loudly no one, but the babies, could even pretend to sleep any more. The children, who had gone to bed, were allowed to put on their clothes and wraps over their nightclothes and go out on the porch with the grown up members of the family. All were spell-bound as they watched the awe-inspiring sight of a hail of fire from heaven, that seemed to fall to earth all about them, and yet left them unhurt. They felt sure that the end was not far off; for, notwithstanding their thoughtful preparation for the event, and the assurance that no harm would come to them, the experience was so terrifying their only thought was to stay close together; so that they would not be separated in death.

Maria and her Mother went into the house and brought William and Amanda out in their arms, and held them close—while they slept in blissful ignorance of the tragedy of fear that gripped millions of Americans that night. The falling stars all seemed to come from one point in the heavens and as they came toward the Earth, phosphorescent lines seemed to follow along their course, and appeared to spread like ribs of fire of a great umbrella of moving stars that covered the earth. The smaller meteors fell like snowflakes of fire—leaving lines of light behind them, with occasional large fire-balls (some almost as large as the moon) darting forth and leaving luminous trails behind them that were visible for several minutes afterward.

Toward morning as the little group sat close together talking in whispers, so as not to waken the two sleeping children, Elijah said, "It is not likely that any one who has ever lived, has seen a more terrible, grand and inspiring sight than we have seen this night. It looked as though the stars all came from the center of the Universe, perhaps from the throne of God, from which He sends us this message of His Might and Power, together with the proof of his Goodness and Mercy; for while these meteors and balls of fire were showered from the Heavens, and could easily have destroyed all of the people of the Earth, they only surrounded us with a beauty and majesty beyond description. We never knew before, how true were the Psalmist's words when he said, "The Heavens declare the Glory of God." There was no secession of the meteoric display all night, until the brilliance of the rising sun gradually hid it from a relieved and repentant world."²⁷

1834

Maria Evans and B. R. Biddle Prepare For Marriage

Maria promised to be ready when B. R. came for her, but cautioned him not to tell anyone of their plans. B. R. easily disposed of his business before leaving Tazewell, and the family (especially Aunt Mary) thought that their plans for Maria's future were now safe. Ruth, who liked B. R., was not so sure that he would give up the girl of his choice so easily, but she said nothing, and Maria did not confide in her.

Matilda was the only one to whom she told her secret, and it was through her that Maria was able to carry on her correspondence with her sweetheart in Illinois. Knowing that her stay at home would not be very long, after she returned from school at Knoxville, Maria tried to accomplish all that she could in the year that followed. One thing she wanted to do was to get better acquainted with her new sister (Hamilton's wife) who had come into the family about the time she had gone away to school.

²⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 37-39.

Minerva: Her buoyant nature and cheerful friendliness, not only made her an ideal companion for her husband, but she was also a great asset to him as a hostess to the wives and daughters of the travelers who stopped at the Inn. Maria soon grew very fond of her, and always thought of her as though she were indeed her own sister. Hamilton and Minerva lived in the old Evans' home across the road from the Inn.

Maria also helped her mother manage the household and care for the five younger children, and insisted that her mother, who had been so closely confined at home by her large family, should go away to visit Grandmother Sarah Evans in Jefferson County, and Aunt Mary and Aunt Elizabeth at Chucky, while she (Maria) managed the household and cared for the children at home.

Before Maria returned to Tazewell, Aunt Mary called her into her up-stairs sitting room, and they had a long talk together. It was a very serious talk, and Aunt Mary told her that she must begin to think about getting married, for she was almost nineteen and would soon be considered an old maid. It would not be long before her sister Sarah would be old enough to be married, and it would be a great handicap to her to have an older, unmarried sister. But Maria said that she was happy staying at home with her mother for a while, after being away at school for such a long time. She added that, "No doubt later, she would have to marry some one," and that she could think about it then.²⁸

B. R. Biddle Travels to Tennessee to Marry Maria Evans

At the end of his first year in Springfield, B. R. felt that he was financially able to care for a wife and started making arrangements to go to Tazewell for Maria. His mother Polly had been homesick for some of her Tennessee friends, and was anxious to go with him to Granger County to visit her son Charles and see the grandchildren she had left behind when they moved to Illinois.

B. R. bought a new spring wagon, with a covered top for the trip. They carried food to eat along the way, and bedding, so that they could sleep in the wagon when necessary.

When everything was ready, he hitched up his fine span of horses, and with his mother and sister Angeline (who was then seven years old) on the seat beside him, they started for Tennessee. The roads were narrow and rough, consisting largely of parallel ruts across the prairie, and then, when they reached the mountains, they were narrow and steep, so they had to travel slowly most of the way—for B. R. always considered his horses and never tired them more than necessary.²⁹

After traveling for almost three weeks (except on Sunday when they, and their horses rested) they reached Tazewell. B. R. hitched his horses to the tree in front of the Evans' stone house. Maria saw him from one of the up-stairs windows, and quickly brushed her hair, and primped a little, before one of the servants came to tell her that he was there.

That night Elijah Evans asked Maria if she really planned to marry B. R. Biddle. When she told him that she did, he said, "Well, Maria, I reckon B. R. is a likely young man, and he has good manners; but you are a little mite of a girl, and should never have to lift and carry, like the Yankee women do. We've always had slaves to do all the hard work, and you've never even had to ready up your own room, lest you felt like it. I've heard tell that the Yankee women out there in Illinois even do their own washin' and ironin', and I don't like to think of you'r goin' there. The Biddles are great spenders too, and people like them are most always poor. You don't know what it's like to be poor, and I don't want you to have to find out. I only want you to be happy, and the Biddles aren't our kind of folks. So I calculate you'd be better off if you'd stay here amongst your own kin. We all'd like to see you marry Jesse Hirst. He's a fine young man and could give you a good home, near your own folks, but if you won't

²⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 34-35.

²⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 84.

have him, why can't you take one of the other men who've asked if they could court you? They're our kind of people, and any one of them would make you a good husband."³⁰

May 1834

Marriage of Benjamin Robert "B. R." Biddle and Maria Evans

Maria's father did not want his daughter to marry a tradesman. While father was away on a trip, Maria's aunts arranged the marriage to B. R.

On May 13, 1834, B. R. Biddle married Maria Evans, age 19, in Tazewell, Claiborne County, Tennessee. On that morning, B. R. came to Maria's home and she told him that she was ready to meet him as she had promised. She told her mother that she had something to take to Mrs. Regan, the minister's wife, and asked her to walk over there with her. They stopped at Matilda's and suggested that she walk up the hill with them too. When they arrived at Mr. Regan's home, B. R. was there, and they were married as they had planned. They had eight children:

1. James Henry was born June 22, 1837, at Tazewell, Tennessee. He was fifteen years old when he "crossed the plains" with his family on their way to Oregon; and took a man's place in the caravan. He died at Corvallis, Oregon, on June 19, 1856, just one day before his 21st birthday, and shortly before he planned to be married.
2. Matilda (Puggie)
3. B. R. Evans was born December 20, 1838 at Springfield, Illinois and died at Corvallis, Oregon, on August 31, 1859.
4. Edwin Weber
5. Ellinorah Ruth was born October 26, 1840, in Macoupin County, Illinois and died at Springfield, Illinois, November 29, 1841.
6. Arthur Platte
7. Sarah Emma was born December 1, 1842, at Springfield, Illinois. She was married in September 1860, to William H. Spencer at Corvallis, Oregon.
8. Alice Eudora

B. R. and Maria Evans Biddle Leave Tazewell, Tennessee for Springfield, Illinois

Maria went home with her mother, and as she was then a married woman, she covered her hair with a very becoming black lace cap, in accordance with the custom of the time.

Matilda and B. R. came down to dinner and they all tried to be very gay, but it was an effort to keep up good spirits when it came time to say good-bye. After loading the chest and other things belonging to Maria into the wagon, mother Evans insisted on giving them a feather bed and pillows. In fact she kept bringing things to them until the back of the wagon was almost filled before they were ready to go.

Maria went back into the house to tell one of the servants good-bye, and while there her mother handed her a little buckskin bag containing money, and told her that she must keep it for a "nest-egg" so that she would always have something for an emergency when she really needed it.

Mother Evans and Matilda both cried, for it seemed that Maria was going away forever, but B. R. told them that the roads were getting better all of the time, and that she would surely be able to come back to visit them every year.

Later that day the bride and groom set out for Springfield, Illinois and their new life together.³¹

B. R. and Maria Biddle Arrive in Springfield, Illinois

After living all of her life in the hills, the miles and miles of level prairie land in Illinois seemed very monotonous to Maria. But the grass was tall and green and made fine feed for their

³⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 40.

³¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/mem...>

horses. The wild flowers were beautiful too. The whole landscape was often colored by them, but Maria knew that she would always miss the hills.

She was very much disappointed in Springfield. At Tazewell they could always go out after a rain without getting their feet wet or muddy, for the rain made little rivulets of the wheel ruts in the streets and ran rapidly down the hill, leaving the rocky soil almost dry a few minutes after the storm was over. In Springfield, the water stood on the streets for days after each rain, and made them channels of mud and mire.

B. R. Biddle's Springfield Tailoring Shop

Maria and B. R. stayed at the same boarding house where B. R. had lived before they were married. It was conveniently near his shop, and was said to be the best place of its kind in the town. Would this have been the Globe Tavern on the north side of Adams between Third and Fourth Streets?

While they stayed there, Maria used to go to the back room of the shop to watch B. R. and his men at work. The most interesting thing there was B. R., himself, when he cut out the suits. First, he would stretch the cloth on the long tailor's table, and sponge it carefully so that it would shrink. Then he would pin the paper (on which he had written the measurements of the man whose suit he was to make) on the table beside the cloth. Next, with the aid of a tape-measure, a three-foot rule, a piece of string, and some white chalk, he would mark out the pattern on the cloth, then cut with his shears through the lines he had marked.³²

Maria Biddle Does the Buttonholes at Night

One day when he was cutting out a vest from a piece of silk brocade, B. R. said, "I'm afraid well have trouble with the buttonholes on this vest, for the silk is going to ravel and will be hard to work with. The buttons and buttonholes will be the making of the vest, if the buttonholes are perfect, but if they are not the vest will be ruined."

Maria said, "Give me a piece of the silk and let me try to make a buttonhole in it; and then, if you think I can do it well enough, I'll take the vest home and work all of the buttonholes for you." When she showed them the sample buttonhole she had made, they agreed that it was perfect. That was how she happened (from that time on) to make most of the buttonholes that went out of the shop. It was very particular work, as each stitch had to be exactly right, and required perfect eyesight.

She was usually busy with other things during the day, and did most of that fine work at night by candlelight. B. R. would read aloud to her while she worked buttonholes in the dark suits that were fashionable at that time. Her back would often ache and her eyes would smart, long before she had finished and could go to bed. She never complained for she was happy in the knowledge that she could be such a help to her husband.³³

B. R. Biddle Makes Dress For Maria

B. R. was always thinking of Maria's happiness and bringing her presents. Once during the first years of their marriage, he bought material and made a beautiful silk dress for her. It was cut according to the latest European fashion and, when she wore it, she was the best-dressed woman in Springfield. A number of other women tried to get him to make dresses for them, but he would not do it. He said that he was a man's tailor and did not make women's clothes, except, once in a while, when he wanted to make a present for his wife or mother.

³² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 43-44.

³³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 43-44.

B. R. and Maria Biddle's Views on Debt and Saving

Maria did not tell B. R. about the money her mother had given her. She kept it carefully hidden away, and added a little to it from time to time. This so that she could always have something on hand in case of an emergency. She knew that the Biddle's lavish spending kept her somewhat anxious about the future, even though B. R. seemed to be a good businessman and usually made an ample profit on all of his investments. However he never kept much money on hand, for he said, "a man should keep his money circulating."

"Money," he said, "is only a medium of value, and is of no use except when it is in circulation." Maria could not understand that kind of reasoning (in fact she never did), for her family had had very different ideas. They always had enough currency hidden away to give them a feeling of comfortable security, at all times. Debt was something to be abhorred almost as much as death itself.

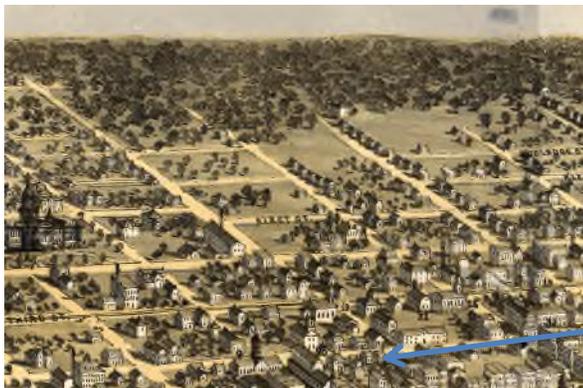
B. R. considered debt a necessary part of any expanding business. He would borrow money to buy property he could not use except to sell again at a profit. Maria was always afraid of his business theories and held tight to her "nest egg."

At this time, stock companies were being formed all over the United States for the purpose of building roads and canals, operating coal mines, and the general development of a great and new country. B. R. bought stock in companies formed for the development of the resources of Illinois. His judgment was usually good, and he sold most of his stock at a good profit or kept it for the expected dividends. His tailor shop always paid well too. So B. R. usually had money in his pockets—and when he did he spent it freely.³⁴

July 1834

B. R. Biddle Buys Home on Fourth Street

After B. R. and Maria had been married a few months (July 1834), B. R. bought a home on the east side of Fourth Street between Monroe and Adams. The lot had a 75-foot frontage on the south side of an alley, so that it was just like living on a corner. The lot was 180 feet deep, so they had ample room in the barnyard for their horses and chickens.



B. R. Biddle House
on 4th Street

B. R. Biddle Rescues Father's Farm From Foreclosure

B. R.'s father, Benjamin, was always in debt. He was about to lose his home through the foreclosure of a mortgage. B. R. had to buy the place and assume the mortgage, in order to save it.

³⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 44-45.

Maria was greatly worried, but they sold some other property a short time later and paid off the note and mortgage—much to her relief.

Advertisement for Stray Mare

ESTRAY Mare.--Taken up by B. R. Biddle one estray mare, supposed to be four years next spring, fourteen hands high, the near hind foot white, a small star in her forehead, some saddle marks, no other marks or brands perceivable; appraised to \$30 dollars, by Samuel Harlow and William Link, before me, January 1, 1834.

John Campbell, j.p.³⁵

1835

Maria Biddle's Flower Garden

The Evans's had always had a flower garden around their house in Tennessee, and it was not long before B. R. and Maria had a flower and vegetable garden in the front part of their lot. Maria loved flowers and knew just how to grow them; so every thing she planted seemed to respond to her loving care.

By Spring (1835), she had cabbage roses, pink and white Moss Roses, Ragged Sailors, Tea Roses, and the thorny yellow and pink single roses, that were so popular at that time, all blooming in her garden. Honeysuckle and ivy had started growing over the fences, and sunflowers, Hollyhocks and coxcomb grew high in front of the barnyard fence. They had scattered flower seeds all over their front yard; and, that first spring, the plants grew and blossomed among the grass. Every one who passed stopped to admire her garden.

It was Maria, and a few others like her, who got the people of Springfield interested in beautifying their homes, so that the city became known as "the City of Flowers."

B. R. Biddle Buys Land

On July 4, 1835, B. R. Biddle purchased ^[L]_[SEP]50 acres at \$1.25 per acre, in SWSW quarter, in Section 23, T. 14N., Range 07W.³⁶

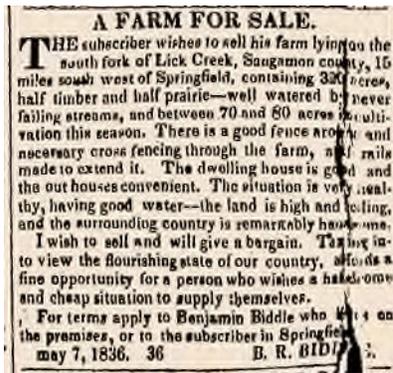
1836

Here are some examples of advertisements and notices that B. R. Biddle was involved in between 1836-1846:

B. R. Biddle Advertises 320 acre Farm on South Fork of Lick Creek

³⁵ *Journal*, January 24, 1835, p. 4.

³⁶ State of Illinois. *Illinois, Public Land Purchase Records, 1813-1909* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 1999, Vol. 068, p. 233, ID 108258.



Journal, Saturday, May 14, 1836.³⁷

A FARM FOR SALE

The subscriber wishes to sell his farm lying on the south fork of Lick Creek, Sangamon county, 15 miles south west of Springfield, containing 320 acres, half timber and half prairie--well watered by never failing streams, and between 70 and 80 acres in cultivation this season. There is a good fence around and necessary cross fencing through the farm, and rails made to extend it. The dwelling is good and the out house convenient. The situation is very healthy, having good water--the land is high and rolling, and the surrounding country is remarkably handsome.

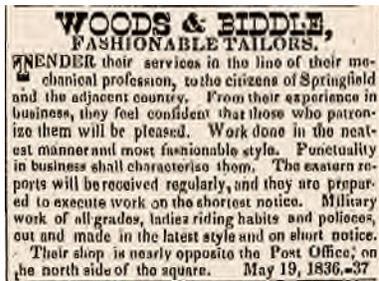
I wish to sell and will give a bargain. Taking into view the flourishing state of our country, affords a fine opportunity for a person who wishes a handsome and cheap situation to supply themselves.

For terms apply to Benjamin Biddle who is on the premises, or to the subscriber in Springfield.

Woods & Biddle Fashionable Tailors

In June of 1836, B. R. was a partner with a Mr. Woods in the tailoring business. They had a shop on the north side of the Public Square, nearly opposite the post office.

WOODS & BIDDLE,
FASHIONABLE TAILORS.



Journal, Saturday, June 4, 1836.³⁸

Tender their services in the line of their mechanical profession, to the citizens of Springfield and the adjacent country. From their experience in business, they feel confident that those who patronize them will be pleased. Work done in the neatest manner and most fashionable style. Punctuality in business shall characterise them. The eastern reports will be received regularly, and they are prepared to execute work on the shortest notice. Military work of all grades, ladies riding habits and pieces, cut and made in the latest style and on short notice.

Their shop is nearly opposite the Post Office, on the north side of the square.

May 19, 1836-37

Fall and Winter Reports of Fashion



Journal, Saturday, October 29, 1836.³⁹

1836 Financial Panic Impact on B. R. Biddle

1836 was the year of a financial panic, when business in Illinois and all over the nation for that matter was at a standstill. There was practically no money in circulation, and building improvements of all kinds were stopped. Fortunately there were men who had money laid by, who still came to B. R. to make their clothes. By living very carefully, he and Maria were able to save something each month (during those hard times). B. R. invested the savings in land that was sold for delinquent taxes.

³⁷ *Journal*, Saturday, May 14, 1836, p. 2.

³⁸ *Journal*, Saturday, June 4, 1836, p. 4.

³⁹ *Journal*, Saturday, October 29, 1836 p. 3

Fall 1836**Maria Biddle is Pregnant**

In the fall of 1836, more than two years after her marriage, Maria was delighted to discover that she was pregnant, and she suddenly had a great desire to go back to Tazewell where she could bask in the sunshine that radiated from her loving and understanding family.

B. R. Biddle Makes Suit For Abraham Lincoln

In 1836, B. R. came home one evening and told Maria about a strange young man who had stopped to see him about making him a suit of clothes. He was very tall and awkward looking, and did not have the money to buy the kind of a suit he needed (for a suit for a large man had to be made of good material). B. R. would not let a second grade suit go out of his shop.

The young man said that he was paying off a debt, of long standing, and could not buy a suit unless he could pay for it in service. On the other hand he was a lawyer and a member of the Legislature and should not go around looking like a back-woods farmer.

B. R. said that he had liked the awkward young man as soon as he had met him, for he seemed to be very honest and genuine. B. R. sometimes needed a lawyer to draw up papers and give advice, so they made an arrangement by which the young man could have the suit without being obligated to pay any money; and then he had said,

“I hope you’ll feel that you all have made a good bargain, and that I can be of real use to you; but youll be disappointed if you are like the man I met the other day, who said that a good lawyer had to be like a restless man in bed; who would lie on one side and then turn over and lie on the other side. I am not that kind of a lawyer. I have to believe in my client, and the lightness of my case, before I can do anything.”

B. R. said that Lincoln was in Springfield making arrangements to open an office with a friend some time in the near future, and he added: “When he comes back to have his suit fitted, I am going to invite him to have dinner with us. I think you will like him. He is rather rough and uncouth but he has high ideals and is a gentleman at heart.” When Maria asked the young man’s name, B. R. said, “Oh yes, his name—let me see—I think it was Lincoln— Abraham Lincoln. But he said that all of his friends called him “Abe.”⁴⁰ Abraham Lincoln became one of B. R. Biddle’s best friends.

1837**Springfield Named Capitol**

In 1837, Springfield was named the new state capitol of Illinois.

Springfield was very gay the first year after it became the Capital of the State: and B. R., with his gracious manners and Maria, with her wit and good humor, were general favorites wherever they went. Maria, with her blond daintiness, was just the type to wear Victorian dresses of the prevailing style. B. R. cut the patterns and a seamstress made her a complete outfit under his supervision. B. R. thought she looked lovelier than the Queen herself. He was very proud of her as he preceded her into the church, and stopped in the aisle, by their pew, while she stepped in before him and seated herself, demurely unconscious of the admiring glances cast in her direction.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 45-47.

⁴¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 57-58.

Biddles Friends of Abraham Lincoln

On April 15, 1837, Abraham Lincoln, age 28, moved from New Salem to Springfield, Illinois. B. R. often spoke of his friend Abraham Lincoln, who had opened his law office in Springfield in 1837. He would come to the Biddle home for supper several times each month. He stayed far into the night, while they discussed the political problems of the day. They would have long talks about American politics and conditions in Illinois (and Springfield) in particular. Lincoln was a member of the State Legislature and was one of the nine tall men (known as “the long nine,” with an average height of over six feet). They were responsible for getting the State Capital moved to Springfield. The Capital was to be moved as soon as the new capitol building was finished—and that might indicate that property in and around Springfield would advance in value, so B. R. was looking for good investments.

Abraham Lincoln B. R. Biddle Views on Slavery

Abraham and B. R. were each members of the new Whig Party, and while they had many of the Southerners’ views about slaves and their treatment, they both believed that slavery, as an institution, was wrong.

During one of their discussions, Lincoln said,

If the slaves were to be freed tomorrow, few of them would be as well off as they are today; but there should be laws to protect the negroes from unjust and cruel masters. As a boy I always took slavery as a matter of course, and never thought much about it, until the time I went to New Orleans when I was about nineteen years old; and there I saw slaves put on the auction block and sold to the highest bidder. I saw one girl who was as white as I am, and pretty too—sold to settle an estate. She was likely the daughter of the plantation owner, who had died. The family tried to bid her in, but she was too great a prize, and was bought by a terrible looking man from the East. I made up my mind right there that if I ever had a chance I would help to make laws that would protect the poor slaves from such abuses. Slavery is the greatest problem of our United States. In a free country (in a Democracy) there should be no slaves, but to give the slaves their freedom without preparing them for it would bring about graver problems than slavery itself. The abuses that result from slavery are bound to cause continual conflict, in this country, until slavery itself is eventually abolished; and I hope and pray that the conflict will be one of words and legislation only.

Comparison of Biddle and Evans Families

Maria’s people had all inherited, or acquired, the characteristics that made her grandfather, her father and her brothers, ideal innkeepers for three generations. They were genial, sympathetic, intelligent and considerate of others. While they were all well informed and had very definite opinions on most subjects, they were also good listeners. They followed others, who led the conversation, with interest and were ready with kindly and clever replies. They seemed to be always thinking of the comfort and happiness of those about them instead of being self-centered and selfish.

The Biddles had more elegant manners and were generally more gifted in the arts and social refinements of life. They were genial, quick witted and clever. But their wit often had a sharp edge, which left those they loved hurt and humiliated. One of their worst characteristics (from the standpoint of those who had to live with them) was their sensitiveness. They were very self-centered, and believed that their sensitiveness was the result of highly organized personalities that had developed through many generations of aristocratic ancestors. They rather prided themselves

on their superiority, instead of realizing that they had only developed a morbid mental condition that might have been cured like any other disease.

Maria's first experience with this peculiarity of the Biddle family came one day soon after she was married. B. R. made some remark about one of her Illinois relatives, and Maria said, "Oh no, he is not like that!" B. R. replied, "Do you mean to say that I do not tell the truth? You know that I don't say anything until I know what I am talking about."

Maria answered, "I know, B. R., you are always very careful to tell the truth, but this time you are mistaken." B. R. replied, as he left the room, "I am never mistaken."

That day he did not come home to dinner, and in the evening when he came he did not say a word. He sat down by the fire to read a book. Maria got his supper ready, and asked him if he was not going to eat. He replied that he did not feel well enough to eat. The next morning he went to work without his breakfast. Maria was crying when her father-in-law came in to see her later in the day.

He understood the situation immediately, and said, "Now daughter, don't cry. If you do, B. R. will have those spells oftener. He wants to show you how badly his feelings were hurt when you contradicted him. The only way for you to do is not to notice him when he has those spells. If he hasn't sense enough to eat, just let him get hungry. It won't hurt him. Indians often go for days without eating, and it seems to do them good. You will have to learn to take B. R. as he is. In most ways he is one of the finest men in the world, but he has this one fault, and can make you very unhappy unless you can just pretend not to notice it.

She did not take her father-in-law's advice. She knew that B. R.'s greatest pride was his belief in his own honesty and integrity. That pride was the foundation on which he had built the structure of his own self-respect. B. R. believed that he always spoke the truth, and from his point of view, he did. Maria knew that no one can ever know the exact (or whole) truth, so she decided that when she did not agree with what he said, she would simply keep quiet. If he ever had spells of being "hurt" or losing his appetite, she would pretend not to notice, and would do nothing about it. This course of action came nearer to curing him than anything else could have done.

Maria Biddle Wishes to Visit Tennessee Family

When B. R. and Maria were married, he told her family that she could go home to visit them once each year. But it was not as easy to leave their home in Illinois and travel such a long distance as he had thought it would be. It was nearly three years before Maria returned to her old home to visit her people. It had not been easy for her to adjust to live with and among the Biddles, for they were very different from the Evans's and their kinfolks with whom she had grown up.

Suddenly a strange fear seized her, and she could think of nothing but her people in Tennessee, and the necessity of seeing them as soon as possible—while they were still there. The trip could not, very well, be made before spring. B. R. always tried to do everything he could for Maria's comfort and happiness, so when he noticed signs of home-sickness, he started at once to arrange for the trip.⁴²

As he could not be away from his business as long as Maria would like to stay, he arranged for her father to meet her at Louisville, Kentucky, and take her the rest of the way to Tazewell.

May 1837

B. R. and Maria Biddle Meet Her Father at Louisville, Kentucky

⁴² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 47-48.

Early in May [1837], they started in the spring wagon, and drove as far as Carlinville the first day. They spent the night with B. R.'s sister Harriett, who had married Hamilton Campbell a couple of years before. They had a comfortable little home in the town that had been named for Maria's cousin, Thomas Carlin.

B. R.'s father and mother, with Angeline, were staying at the Campbell's. Harriett had a baby girl of her own who cried all night— so altogether, the house was much too crowded for any one to be comfortable. But the family would have been greatly hurt and disappointed if B. R. and Maria had not stayed over night with them.

Benjamin Biddle told his son B. R. about a farm, between there and Springfield, that (on account of the financial depression) could be bought for less than half of its value, and which (if he could buy it) would support him comfortably for the rest of his life. B. R. promised to look at the property on his return from Louisville.⁴³

Angeline was fast becoming a problem to her parents, Benjamin and Polly, who had never tried to manage her when she was small. Now they were getting old, and she had grown to be a beautiful headstrong girl of ten, with boundless energy and an unquestioning faith in her own judgment—and they were helpless in coping with her dominating personality.

Angeline had visited B. R. and Maria many times in Springfield. Maria had not found her difficult to manage, so Maria invited her to go with her to Tazewell.

It took them several days to reach Louisville, but when, at last, they drove up to the inn where Maria was to meet her father, they saw him standing in the street talking to a friend, while he waited their arrival. As they had stopped, he held up his arms to Maria to lift her from her high seat to the ground. As she fell into his arms, she kissed him and held on to him while she started to cry. Then she saw her brother Henry standing beside them, waiting to be noticed. Maria was excited and talkative all during the dinner at the Inn that followed their reunion.

B. R. Biddle Returns to Springfield From Louisville, Kentucky

B. R. left Maria and Angeline at Louisville and headed back to Springfield and their home.⁴⁴
Maria and Father Travel to Tazewell, Tennessee From Louisville, Kentucky

Maria sat between her father and Henry as they drove along the old Kentucky road. As her spirits rose, she laughed and sang and asked questions about all the family at home. They stopped one night at Uncle John's, and again at Uncle Edward's old home, as they passed through Kentucky.

Maria became more and more impatient as they neared Tazewell; for it seemed to her that horses never traveled so slowly before. Her father reminded her that they must not hurry the horses too much. They had many miles of rough, steep road to travel before they reached Tennessee. Horses, like people could not maintain top speed and hold out until the end of the journey.

At last they came to the Cumberland Gap and passed between the mountains into Tennessee—and the grass seemed greener, the flowers more colorful and the hills more beautiful than they had ever been before. They soon reached Powell River and stopped at Uncle Preston Holt's for dinner, where they were surrounded by members of her mother's family. Maria had many cousins in Illinois, whom she knew and admired; but they did not seem like the cousins she had grown up with in Tennessee. These cousins seemed more akin, and brought to her the realization of how much they had always meant to her.

⁴³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 49.

⁴⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 49.

While they stopped for dinner, Henry borrowed a horse and rode on to Tazewell to tell his mother that Maria would be there in time for supper. Then he went on to the inn to carry the news to Hamilton, and the rest of the family.

When Maria reached home, her mother and all of the Tazewell relatives were there to greet her. It was a wonderful homecoming! Even the slaves vied with each other in trying to please “Miss Maria.” The two persons who were most grateful to have her at home, were her mother and Old Black Liza, who cared for her when she was a baby and had always called herself “Maria’s old black Mammy.” Hamilton and Minerva rode over from the Inn; and Matilda, with Gray and little Henry, came to have supper with the family,— and Maria. The servants did everything they could to make the homecoming a happy event. The cook remembered the things that Maria liked best to eat. They had been planning, for days, just what to have for each meal, when “Miss Maria came home.” That first evening they had wild roast turkey with dressing, baked ham with sweet potatoes, fresh made hominy fried with smoked side meat, hot corn cones, apple butter and pickles. There were also jelly and other relishes on the table, which made quite a feast for supper—usually their scantiest meal. Hamilton and Minerva left for home soon after the meal was over for the air was cold and they had ten miles to ride. Then Matilda said that it was Henry’s bedtime, and she and Gray left for their home, further up the hill. Then Mother Evans reminded the younger children that it was their bedtime too; so they (with Angeline) went reluctantly up stairs. It was then that Maria realized, for the first time, that she was very tired; and, turning to her mother, she said: “Oh mother I wish that I could be a little girl once more...”⁴⁵

B. R. wrote often and his letters were so loving and so full of Springfield news, Maria looked forward to hearing from him every time mail came from Illinois. He told her that he had bought the farm his father had talked about, and had given his father a life interest in it. His father and mother would have a home of their own and feel more independent. He said that he had to borrow some money to buy the place, but hoped to sell other property soon and pay the debt.⁴⁶

Friends John and Sarah Weber

In his letters, B. R. also frequently mentioned John⁴⁷ and Sarah Weber, who were among their best friends in Springfield. They had spent their childhood, and were married, near B. R.’s old home in Virginia, and (as they were all about the same age) they seemed to have much in common. John had learned the trade of cabinet maker in Virginia, and had opened a shop in Springfield, where he made all kinds of fine woodwork and furniture. B. R. was invited to their home for supper, very often, while Maria was away, and nearly all of B. R.’s letters contained some message from Sarah Weber.⁴⁸

B. R. Biddle Travels to Tazewell, Tennessee to Take Maria Home

About the middle of May 1837, B. R. Biddle came to Tazewell prepared to stay in Tennessee until Maria was ready to go home.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 50.

⁴⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 52.

⁴⁷ *Power*, p. 760-761. John B. Weber, born April 7, 1810, in Shepherdstown, Virginia, was there married Sept. 23, 1832, to Sarah A. Woltz. She was born in Shepherdstown, March 20, 1812. They had two children in Virginia, and moved to Springfield, Illinois, arriving April 16, 1836, and had eight children in Sangamon county. John B. Weber was engaged in the manufacture of cabinet furniture in Springfield and at Howlett, now Riverton, from 1836 to 1841, when he lost his left hand by a buzz saw. He was appointed by the legislature of 1842 and ‘43 to copy the land records of the state in numerical order, which kept him employed until 1849. He then went to California, and returned in 1851. He was quartermaster in the last expedition of the Mormon war of 1846. He was clerk in the commissary department in raising the first six Illinois regiments for the suppression of the rebellion. He was elected sheriff and collector of Sangamon County, and served from 1854 to 1856.

⁴⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 52.

⁴⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 53.

Birth of James Henry Biddle (1837-1858)

On May 22, 1837, B. R. and Maria's first child, James Henry Biddle, was born at Claiborne, Tazewell County, Tennessee. B. R. and Maria had been married three years and were over-joyed to be the parents of a fine sturdy boy.

June 1837

It was nearly a month before B. R. thought that Maria and the baby should attempt the long ride back to Springfield. While he waited, he cut and fitted new suits for his father-in-law and his older brothers-in-law, and also for his own brother. There were few tailors who could give men's clothes the look of distinction that B. R. could by his cutting and fitting. In fact he could cut anything—even women's clothes—to look exactly like the fashion plates sent from Europe.

Angeline was well behaved and gave Ruth and Elijah no trouble; so, as she was anxious to stay with them, B. R. made arrangements for her to board with the family at Tazewell and finish school.⁵⁰

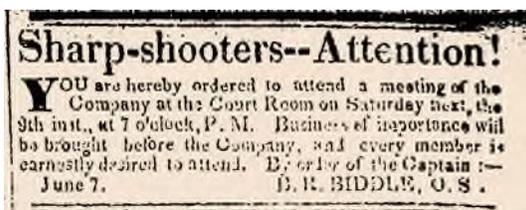
July 1837

Return to Springfield With Old Liza and James Henry, Their New Baby

Old black Liza was so delighted with "Miss Maria's baby" that she took nearly all of the care of it. When Maria started to pack for her journey home, Liza begged to go with her so that she could take care of little James Henry. Elijah told Maria that she could take Liza and keep her as long as she wanted to stay, for she had served them long and well, and he would like to send her to a state where she could have her freedom if she wanted it. One day in July [1837], B. R. and Maria (with old Liza and James Henry) started back to Springfield in their comfortable spring wagon, which was loaded with gifts from the relatives in Tennessee.⁵¹

1838

In June 1838, B. R. was in a military position and published a notice of a meeting of the Company of Sharp-shooters at the Court Room, on Saturday at 7 p.m.



ATTENTION SHARP-SHOOTERS

You are ordered to parade in front of the Court House on Wednesday, 4th July, at 6 o'clock A. M. in citizens dress, with arm, and 18 rounds blank cartridge. You will also parade at the same place at 9 o'clock A.M. in summer uniform, with 13 rounds cartridge. By order.

☐

June 29.☐B. R. Biddle, O. S.

Journal, Saturday, June 9, 1838.⁵²

B. R. Biddle Secretary of July 4, 1838 Celebration

FOURTH OF JULY.☐

At a meeting of the Committee appointed by the first Springfield Artillery, Springfield Sharp Shooters and the Mechanic's Institute, to make arrangements for the celebration of the approaching anniversary of American Independence, the Hon. Jesse B. Thomas was appointed to deliver an oration,

⁵⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 53-54.

⁵¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 53- 54.

⁵² *Journal*, Saturday, June 9, 1838, p. 2.

and Josephus Hewett, Esq. to read the Declaration of Independence. The following gentlemen were chosen as Marshals, to wit:

B. R. Allen, Grand Marshal; Simeon Francis, S. H. Treat, Assistants; Charles B. Francis, G. W. Spotswood, Hon. Thomas C. Browne, Elijah Iles, S. M. Sill, R. Radford, Richard F. Barrett.

The procession to form on the vacant lots nearly opposite the Methodist Church at ten o'clock A.M. in the following order--

Grand Marshal and Assistants; Orator and Reader; Clergy; Sharp Shooters; First Springfield Artillery; Mechanic's Institute; President and Board of Trustees; Members of the Bar; Members of the Medical Profession; Citizens and Strangers.

And move, under the direction of the Grand Marshal, through several of the principal streets to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The following to be the order of the exercises at the church: Music--Prayer--Music--Declaration of Independence read--Music--Oration--Music--Prayer--Music.

B. S. Clement, Ch'm of Com. Arrangements.

B. R. Biddle, Sec'ry.⁵³

Governor Carlin, Maria Biddle's Second Cousin

In 1838, Maria Biddle's second cousin, Thomas Carlin, was the incoming seventh Governor of Illinois, serving from 1838 to 1842. He was born in 1789 in Frankfort, Kentucky, and moved from Kentucky to Madison County, Illinois in 1812.⁵⁴



B. R. Biddle Considers Selling Tailor Shop, But Doesn't

It had always been a source of humiliation to Polly Biddle to have her favorite son earn his living as a tailor. Now that the Governor was his wife's cousin, Polly begged him to sell his shop and engage in some other business that would be more in keeping with their social position. B. R., however, continued his tailoring business.

B. R. was a good tailor and hesitated about giving up a prosperous business at that time, but he owned valuable real estate in and about Springfield and Carlinville, which required much of his time so he decided to sell his shop and devote his time to his investments.

Bringing the State Capitol and the State Payroll to Springfield had increased property values, and the future looked very bright, notwithstanding the general financial depression.⁵⁵

B. R. Biddle Aids in Transferring Document to New Capitol in Springfield

In 1837, Springfield became the Capital of Illinois and as soon as the vaults in the new Capitol building were finished, the state papers and the money from the State Treasury had to be moved from Vandalia (the old Capital) to Springfield. The distance was about 120 miles by the county roads.

B. R., who was a tireless rider, a crack shot and lover of adventure, was delighted when he was asked to go with the moving party to Vandalia. Wishing to make the transfer as secret as possible, the Governor and the State Treasurer led the party on horseback. Behind them came the covered wagon, drawn by four horses and loaded with boxes and barrels--while straggling along behind, rode the Sheriff and a few trusted relatives and friends.

⁵³ *Journal*, June 30, 1838, p. 2.^{SEP}

⁵⁴ <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/carfield-carlin.html> <http://history.ilgenweb.net/governors/carlin.html>

⁵⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 56.

They started before daylight, changing horses once on the way, and spent the night at Gov. Carlin's farm near Carrollton. After a good night's rest, they continued their way (with fresh horses) before sun-up the next morning. Three more times, before they reached Vandalia, they stopped to change horses. On their return, they could pick up fresh horses at regular intervals, and get over the road as rapidly as possible when they transported their valuable cargo.

When they reached the old capitol at Vandalia, the state papers and money were packed in boxes and barrels, which were loaded into the wagon after midnight. The stocks, bonds and paper currency were carefully packed in the saddle-bags of the horsemen. Long before daylight they were on their way, while, in the sleeping town, none but their helpers knew that they had gone. The horses that they had left to be picked up on their return trip, were fresh and eager to go. The cavalcade made good time and reached Gov. Carlin's farm late that night, well satisfied with themselves, but thoroughly exhausted from their long day's travel. They must have been too tired to think, for they rode up to the barn and threw their saddle-bags on the floor, unharnessed the horses, had them fed and bedded in the barn. They left the wagon, with its valuable contents, in the barnyard while they all went in to supper and to bed. No one thought of having a guard to watch the State's wealth while they slept. It is doubtful if any of them could have kept awake if they had been placed on guard duty. However, a guard had not been necessary, for the next morning they found everything exactly as they had left it the night before, and they continued on to Springfield where they delivered the State's precious papers—and other assets to the new Capitol where they were put into locked vaults that had been built to receive them.⁵⁶

Fall 1838

Missionary James Lee Seeks Missionaries for Oregon Territory Indian Mission

In the fall of 1838, Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary, returned from Oregon, and stopped at Springfield and Carlinville where he spoke. He spoke of the great Oregon Territory bordering on the Pacific Ocean and of his Indian Mission in the Willamette Valley, south of the Columbia River. Lee was a large, fine looking man about thirty-five years of age, with an unusual amount of personal magnetism, a pleasing voice and fanatical zeal for his missionary work.

Soon after he was called to the Ministry, in 1832, he heard of the Indians of the Northwest who wanted to know about the white man's God, and the Great Book that told of the true religion. As soon as he heard of those Indians who were seeking the Christian Religion, he knew that they needed him, and planned to go to them as soon as possible. However, it was not until April 1834, that he reached Independence, on the Missouri frontier, and started on horseback ... to cross the uncharted wilderness.

In the fall of 1834, he built a home and mission in the Willamette Valley. His mission prospered from the first, but more workers and money were so sorely needed he felt that he was called to leave his wife and assistant-superintendent in temporary charge while he went East to interest the proper people in the undertaking. At his meetings in Illinois, he said that men with families were needed to colonize the wonderful Northwest, and to develop its great natural resources. He was sure that they could teach the Indians better if colonists could develop a civilization that would be an example for the Indians to follow. With all of the power of a natural orator and crusader, he appealed to the people to listen to the voice of God, which was calling for volunteers and for money to help in this great work. B. R. and Maria heard Jason Lee when he spoke to a large gathering at Springfield.

When Lee went to Carlinville, B. R.'s sister, Harriett Campbell and her husband heard him address the crowd in front of the tavern where he stayed. He told them of his plan to charter

⁵⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 55.

a boat to take all of the missionaries, and colonists, who would go with him, when he returned to Oregon Territory. He said that while they needed teachers and doctors, they also needed carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, and artisans of all kinds. The families at the Methodist Mission in that fertile valley of Oregon would be the pioneers of a permanent civilization. He painted glowing word pictures of that Western Territory as he talked.⁵⁷

Harriet and Hamilton Campbell Plan Move to Oregon Territory

Harriet and Hamilton Campbell decided to go with Jason Lee when his boat sailed from New York for Fort Vancouver and his Indian Mission. ... The family tried to dissuade Harriett and her husband from going so far away from their home to an undeveloped country where they would have to live among savage Indians. They all admired Brother Lee and his life of self-sacrifice—his willingness to give all— even the lives of his wife and infant son (who had both died a few months before at the Oregon Mission)—for the salvation of a savage people. But they also knew of the hardships common to the lives of all pioneers—and of the treachery of Indians who were sometimes considered friendly.

Harriett laughed at the fears of her family and friends, and said: “Why should we be more afraid than our ancestors who all crossed the ocean in smaller and frailer boats than we are going to have. And any way, God will watch over us as well at sea as on land. He will surely care for those who are dedicating their lives to His service.” Such faith was an answer to all objections, and the Hamilton Campbells started to make their plans to join the Jason Lee party when it was ready to sail. They had nearly a year to wait, and did not sail until late in the summer of 1839.⁵⁸

Birth of Robert Evans Biddle

(1838-1859)

Maria and B. R.’s second son, Robert Evans Biddle, was born in Springfield on December 20th, 1838. His brother, James Henry, was only a year and a half old.

With the birth of their second son, B. R. and Maria began to consider themselves middle-aged people, although she was only twenty-four and he was thirty years of age. In conforming to the custom of the time Maria had always worn a black lace cap over her hair, since her marriage, which added to her apparent age. The black lace over her blond hair, and around her fair, rosy-cheeked face was very becoming.

B. R. had many worries which made him realize that age comes with the passing years. He felt his responsibility for the support of his parents and his sister Angeline, as well as for his own family, which kept him constantly planning to meet his obligations—for he was proud, and he wanted them all to have the best of everything. It was often discouraging for Maria too, for she was an excellent manager. Through thrift, they could easily have saved something each year to add to their capital, but B. R.’s father was forever getting into financial difficulties—and his mother and Angeline were always needing something new—which B. R. supplied. Charles and Jack Biddle might have helped with the support of the family, if they had been asked, but B. R. was so generous he always attended to their needs without mentioning it to any one. Other members of the family did not realize what he was doing.⁵⁹

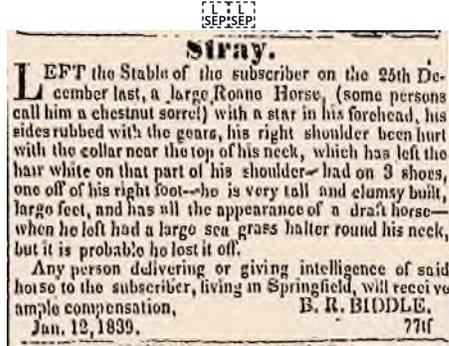
1839

⁵⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 57-58.

⁵⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 58-59.

B. R. Biddle Advertises For Stray Horse



Journal, Saturday, January 19, 1839.⁶⁰

Stray.

Left the Stable of the subscriber on the 25th December last, a large Roane Horse, (some persons call him a chestnut sorrel) with a star in his forehead, his sides rubbed with the gears, his right shoulder been hurt with the collar near the top of his neck, which has left the hair white on that part of his shoulder--had on 3 shoes, one off of his right foot--he is very tall and clumsy built, large feet, and has all the appearance of a draft horse--when he left he had a large sea grass halter round his neck, but it is probable he lost it off. Any person delivering or giving special intelligence of said horse to the subscriber, living in Springfield, will receive ample compensation.

B. R. Biddle, Jan. 12,

1839.

Maria Biddle's Friend, Mary Todd

In 1839, Mary Todd, a very charming girl from Lexington, Kentucky, came to Springfield to live with her sister Elizabeth Edwards. Elizabeth's husband, Ninian, was the son of former Governor Edwards and belonged to one of the most influential families of Illinois. Mary Todd's family were also people of wealth and social position in Kentucky. Mary was good-looking, highly educated and spoiled.

Mary was a first cousin of John T. Stuart, Abraham Lincoln's law partner. It was natural that Stuart arrange for Lincoln to meet his brilliant young cousin. It was also natural that this awkward, lonely man, who had had so few opportunities in life, should have been attracted to this vivacious, entertaining girl, who had had the best of everything in life as her birthright. And she had been drawn to him, at once, by the mystery of his personality.⁶¹

Mary was four years younger than Maria Biddle. They were each better educated than most of the women of their time and were more interested in world affairs and politics. It would have been quite natural for them to have been friends, but Maria was busy with her babies and her home, and they did not attend the same church. They seldom met except at some evening party or an occasional afternoon tea. At such times Mary's willfulness and cutting sarcasm kept other young women from being as cordial as they might otherwise have been.

Abraham Lincoln seldom visited the Biddles at their home at this period; except, in his loneliness, after a temporary dismissal from the Edwards' home by Mary. At such times he would seek companionship with his old friends. He would sit by the hour, discussing politics and spinning yarns. He was a great mimic and always told a story well; so he was an interesting talker, and a welcome guest wherever conversation was enjoyed.

When the Biddles would not see Abraham for a length of time, they would know that Mary Todd had forgiven his imaginary offenses and had summoned him to her again, and that his courtship was progressing satisfactorily--until her next out-burst of temper.⁶²

B. R. Biddle Prepares to Leave Springfield, But Doesn't

From the following series of ads and at the simultaneous preparation of Springfield folks to leave for the West, it would appear that the Biddles were also preparing to leave Springfield. Had

⁶⁰ Journal, Saturday, January 19, 1839, p. 3.

⁶¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 60-61.

⁶² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 61.

they planned on going west with the Campbell's and then backed out? In fact, the Biddles did not join the Campbell's, but the mystery remains as to why they were renting their house as of April 1, 1839. They remained at the Fourth Street house until 1842 or 1843, when they moved to Seventh Street.

B. R. Biddle Advertises His House For Rent

TO RENT.—I wish to rent the premises on which I now live. Possession given between the 1st and 15th of April. For particulars enquire of B. R. BIDDLE. march 22.

Journal, Saturday, March 23, 1839.⁶³

Pay your Tailor!
HAVING declined business, I wish those who know themselves to be indebted to me, to pay up immediately, as I am about leaving this place. I shall leave all unsettled business in a situation to be collected without my presence. B. R. BIDDLE. Springfield, March 22, 1839. 386-1f

Journal, Friday, April 12, 1839.⁶⁴

Pay your Tailor!

Having declined business, I wish those who I themselves to be indebted to me, to pay up immediately, as I am about leaving this place. I shall leave all my business in a situation to be collected without my presence.

B. R. Biddle.
 Springfield, March 22, 1839.

TAILORING.□

The subscribers inform the citizens of Springfield and of Sangamon county, that they have taken the shop formerly occupied by Mr. B. R. Biddle, on the north side of the public square, where they intend to carry on the Tailoring business. They have made arrangement to receive the Philadelphia Fashions and Tailor's Archetype, and have just received a Report of the Latest Fashions. They will do their work in the neatest and most fashionable manner, and will insure good fits of all the garments made by them. They hope to merit a share of public patronage.

□Thomas E. Lea(?) (Lek?)□Joseph Knotts.□
 □Springfield, March 20, 1839. □ □ □ □ □

GEORGE WOODS,
TAILOR,
HAS again returned to Springfield, and has taken his old stand north of the state house, occupied during his absence by B.R. Biddle, Tailor. He hopes by strict attention to business he will receive a share of the public patronage. He will endeavor to render perfect satisfaction to all persons who may honor him with a call. The quarterly reports of fashions received regularly. Ladies Habits and Pelisses made according to order, and military work according to law.
 Two or three apprentices wanted immediately.
 May 1, 1839. 592-1f

Journal, Friday, May 3, 1839.⁶⁵

Summer 1839

Harriett and Hamilton Campbell Leave For Voyage to Oregon as Missionaries

⁶³ Journal, Saturday, March 23, 1839, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Journal, Friday, April 12, 1839, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Journal, Friday, May 3, 1839 p. 2.

In the spring of 1839, Harriett and Hamilton Campbell were busy getting ready for their long trip to Oregon. They sold their home at Carlinville, and most of their furniture—saving only such things as could be carried to New York in their wagon, for shipment.

The last few weeks they spent with her father Benjamin and mother Polly on their Lick Creek farm. But Harriett spent some time with B. R. and Maria while they helped her make new clothes for the trip. It was late that summer when Harriett and Hamilton, with little Mary, started for New York in their covered wagon, which was loaded with household furniture, clothes, bedding, and a variety of other things to be used in their new home in Oregon. The family and friends told them a sad good-bye; for no one ever expected to see the little Campbell family again, on this earth; but Harriett was smiling through her tears, as she waved them a last good-bye as the horses trotted down the road.⁶⁶

Harriett Campbell's Letter From New York City

From New York City, on October 1, 1839, Harriett Campbell wrote:

“We reached here about ten days before time for the Lausanne (our boat) to sail; but we have been entertained royally by the members of the Greene Street Methodist church. These good people are taking care of all of the Oregon Missionaries from the time they reach New York until our boat leaves on October third. Brother Lee had raised \$42,000.00 for the expenses of the expedition; and nothing has been overlooked to make the trip a success. As he wanted only married men, with their wives and families, to go with him on the voyage, he decided that he should not be an exception to the rule, and is to be married before we start, to a very fine woman—a school teacher—who will be a great help to him at the Mission. Two of the McKay (Indian) boys are staying at a school in Massachusetts to be educated; but the third one is going back to Oregon with us. Dr. Richmond (a minister and physician), with his wife and four children, will be with our party. His little boy, whom they call Oregon, and our Mary, are to be baptized before we start. The next letter you get from us will be from our new home in Oregon, unless we can send letters from the Sandwich Islands. I believe we are to stop there on the way; but this is our last good-bye until we have sailed twenty thousand miles, over two great oceans, and reached our future home. I am already hoping that you too will want to join us there, when a safe road is built and you can come overland without danger. May God watch over you—as I am sure He will watch over all of us who have met here to follow His guiding hand to a new and unknown land. And I pray that we may all be true and faithful in following His Commandments; so that, if we meet no more on Earth, we may meet at last in Heaven, where parting is unknown.”

This letter did not sound like Harriett, for she had always been light-hearted and gay before she came under the influence of the Oregon Missionaries, through Jason Lee.

1840

In 1840, Benjamin Biddle was living in Macoupin County, Illinois. Nearby lived William Cardwell.⁶⁷

Spring

Maria and B. R. Biddle and Old Liza Visit Family in Tennessee

In the spring of 1840, Maria Biddle took her two boys for a short visit to see her parents in Tennessee.

⁶⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 59- 60.

⁶⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 32.

Liza also went along. She wanted to go back to the old home where she could see her children and grandchildren once more. Liza couldn't go back there as a free negro.

Maria had always intended to give Liza her freedom; so that she could not be sold, in case anything should happen to her or B. R.

Besides she did not want to be free as long as her folks (the Evanses) lived: for she had been born in that family and had always enjoyed the social distinction of being one of the "Evans' Niggers," who were all honest, industrious, God-fearing negroes; and were respected in the community in which they lived.⁶⁸

Maria and B. R. Biddle and Old Liza Return to Springfield

Liza was sick when B. R. and Maria were ready to start home to Springfield. They waited several days until she was able to go. She loved the boys and took excellent care of them, while she knitted and did the family mending. Sometimes she could do some of the cooking, when the children did not need her undivided attention. She was reliable and efficient, except for her infirmities; and Maria would have found it difficult to manage without her at that time.⁶⁹

Birth of Ellinorah Ruth Biddle

(1840–1841)_{SEP}

On October 26, 1840, Ellinorah Ruth Biddle, Maria and B. R.'s first daughter, was born.

Hamilton Campbell's Report on Life in Oregon Territory

I wish you could see this place where the mission is built! Oregon Territory seems like Paradise to us after our long ocean trip. We are surrounded by the most beautiful trees we have ever seen, with ferns and wild flowers and birds all about us. The woods are alive with all kinds of game and the rivers teem with fish. There are many fish with reddish-yellow meat, called salmon, which are very different from any fish we had at home, and they are most delicious. They tell us that, a little later, we will have an abundance of wild berries. I can not begin to tell you of all of the wonders of this great country, in one letter; but I hope that the overland roads will be finished before many years, and that you too will decide to come out here to live.

Hamilton is very busy building houses and furniture for the members of our mission family; and he is also teaching the Indians to help him;—and to learn to build houses for themselves—but as yet they seem to like their own primitive wigwams or dug-outs better.

Mary is very happy and has a number of playmates among the missionary children;—and some of the mission Indians also have children about her age. The Indian children play some games that are very much like "prisoner's base" and other games we used to play in Tennessee. We teach them our games and they teach our children theirs. Mary is learning their Jargon rapidly and can already make herself understood when she is with them.

Please write often and tell me all of the home news. All of your letters may not reach us, but I think we will get most of them; and we will write whenever we have a chance to send a letter Eastward. With much love to you all from

Your affectionate sister, Harriett.⁷⁰

Later Part of 1840

Millerite Revival in Springfield

⁶⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 62.

⁶⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 67.

There was a great religious revival in Springfield in the latter part of 1840 and the beginning of 1841. The followers of William Miller, called Second Adventists or Millerites, talked of the second coming of Christ and predicted that the end of the world was at hand.

Miller had even calculated (from references found in the Bible) that the destruction of the world would take place in the latter part of the year 1843. He urged all of people to repent of their sins and be saved before the wicked were utterly destroyed for the beginning of the millennium was at hand.

Maria's housekeeper, Mrs. Brown, was a Millerite and talked constantly about becoming sanctified so that she could ascend into heaven, on the last day, and join the saints in glory without having to meet death and the last judgment.

1841

Biddles Attend Church

Maria had been a member of the Methodist church in Tennessee. In Springfield, Maria and B. R. do not join the Springfield congregation of the Methodist Church, although they attended both the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and contributed something to the support of each.⁷¹

B. R. and Maria Biddle Join Second Presbyterian Church

In 1839, Rev. Albert Hale was called to minister the Second Presbyterian Church of Springfield (now Westminster Presbyterian Church). Rev. Hale was quite different from the average minister of his time, and made friends among the people of the town regardless of their religious affiliations. He also introduced the bass viola and the flute as instrumental aids to the singing of sacred songs. This was quite an innovation and was considered revolutionary by most of the older church members, who said that the use of musical instruments was sacrilegious. However, others liked the music, and many came to add their voices to the sacred songs and to listen to the sermons.

B. R. and Maria were among those who liked the music, and began attending the Second Presbyterian Church regularly.

On January 1, 1841, Rev. Hale invited a friend to come to Springfield to help him conduct a revival. The meetings were popular well attended with overflow crowds. In Springfield, there had never been such interest shown in church meetings. Religion became the subject of conversation on the street, in the stores and in the homes of the people. B. R. and Maria bought a new brass lantern, which they carried each night to light their path as they walked to and from the meetings (sometimes through mud and slush and snow), during the whole of January.

Before the meetings had concluded, one-hundred-and-twenty-one new members joined the Second Presbyterian Church alone—while other new converts united with the First Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Baptist Churches.

B. R. and Maria were among those who became members of Rev. Hale's congregation for B. R. was a great admirer of the minister. Maria believed that religious unity (especially when there were children in the home) was more important than any denominational preference she may have had so she too became a member of the Second Presbyterian Church at the close of the Revival Meetings.

After they joined the Church they became very active in the different branches of the its work. B. R. helped with the music and led an adult class in the Sunday School. Maria belonged to

⁷¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 68.

the Missionary Society and contributed food for the church suppers and socials. They had a large home and were always ready and willing to entertain visiting ministers, or other out-of-town church officials who came to Springfield.⁷²

B. R. Biddle Terminates Tailoring Business Partnership With G. W. Stipp

THE partnership between B. R. Biddle and G. W. Stipp in the Tailoring business, is dissolved by mutual consent.
June 15, 1841. 11;4w

The partnership between B. R. Biddle and G. W. Stipp in the Tailoring business, is dissolved by mutual consent.□

June 15, 1841

Journal, Friday, June 18, 1841.⁷³

B. R. Biddle Moves Tailoring Shop to South Side of Public Square

**B. R. BIDDLE,
T A I L O R,**
HAS removed his shop to the south side of the public square, next door to the sheriff's office where he will be thankful for a continuance of the patronage which the public has so generously bestowed.
He will be ready at all times to make clothing of every description at short notice and in a fashionable style, and workmanlike manner.
Produce or Lumber taken for work.
Two Apprentices wanted immediately--boys from 15 to 17 years of age, and of good moral habits.
Springfield. Aug. 27, 1841. 521

□B. R. Biddle□
Tailor

□Has removed his shop to the south side of the public square, next door to the sheriff's office where he will be thankful for a continuance of the patronage which the public has so generously bestowed.□

He will be ready at all times to make clothing of every description at short notice and in a fashionable style, and workmanlike manner.□

Journal, Friday, August 27, 1841.⁷⁴

Produce of Lumber taken for work.

Two apprentices wanted immediately--boys from 15 to 17 years of age, and of good moral habits.

Springfield, Aug. 27, 1841.

Fall and Winter Fashions.
B. R. BIDDLE,
TENDERS his thanks to the citizens of Springfield and surrounding country, for the patronage with which they have favored him, and solicits a continuance. He is furnished with additional facilities for doing all kinds of work in the Tailoring line, and of making up garments in the neatest and best manner, and in style not to be surpassed in this country. He has made arrangements to be furnished with every improvement connected with Tailoring--both cutting and making--and is determined not to be surpassed by any Tailoring establishment in the place.
He is prepared with force sufficient to make a full suit of clothes in twenty-four hours, that shall be equal in fit and make to any made in the city. All garments warranted to fit, or the price of the materials refunded.--Trimmings of the best quality always on hand; and from his knowledge of Cloths in the different establishments in this city, he can furnish information to any person where the best cloth and best bargains can be obtained.
Give us a call--and if for nothing else, to see the fashions.
Oct. 15, 1841:

Journal, Friday, October 29, 1841.⁷⁵

Tragic Accident Death of Ellinorah Ruth Biddle (1840-1841)^{SEP}

Ellinorah Ruth Biddle died on November 29, 1841, in Springfield, Illinois.

⁷² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 68-69.

⁷³ *Journal*, Friday, June 18, 1841 p. 3.

⁷⁴ *Journal*, Friday, August 27, 1841, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Journal*, Friday, October 29, 1841, p. 4.

On November 29, 1841, Maria learned that the church people were planning a birthday surprise party for her that evening; so she decided to wash out some linen she might want to use when they came. Little Ellinorah was sitting in her high chair and the boys were playing on the floor with their blocks, when Maria went to the yard to hang out her washing. Suddenly she heard a noise, like something heavy falling to the floor. When one of the boys screamed, she dropped the clothes and ran into the house to find little Ellinorah lying quietly on the floor, with blood oozing from a small, ragged cut on her head. James Henry was trying to lift her up, while his brother B. R. was crying softly and saying: "Ella no get up. Ella fall down, go sleep." She was unconscious, but breathing; and Maria gathered her in her arms and ran as fast as she could to the doctor's office several blocks away.

The child had evidently tried to get out of her high chair and tipped it over. As the chair fell, her head hit against the sharp corner of one of the children's blocks. The doctor examined her carefully, and said that there was nothing he could do but to keep her quiet. They took her home and laid her carefully in her little bed.

She never regained consciousness. As B. R. and Maria sat beside her bed, her pulse gradually became weaker. Once she opened her eyes and their heart beats quickened with hope, but their hopes were short-lived. An hour later her grief stricken parents were alone in the room with Death.

For many years, after that, Maria's birthday was no longer a day for congratulations and good cheer; for it had become the anniversary of the loss of their most precious possession. The baby's death was a great blow to B. R. and Maria, for they had almost worshiped her.

To B. R. and Maria, it seemed that the light had gone out of their lives; as they clung together, in their grief, and found relief in tears.

Maria believed that her carelessness, in leaving her darling tied in her high-chair, while she left the room, was responsible for the accident; and she could not forgive herself.

Gradually Maria overcame her grief in work for others, but she was never quite the same again. She had grown older, more thoughtful, more mature and more helpful to others who were suffering or in trouble.⁷⁶

Weber Family Experiences Tragedy Friend John Weber Cuts Hand Off

Sarah Weber was Maria's most sympathetic and understanding friend, and did all that she could to lighten the burden of Maria's grief. When tragedy came into the Weber home, Maria could forget her own suffering in compassion for her friend's misfortune.

John Weber had his hand cut off by a buzz saw, when he was making some furniture. Maria went over to the Weber's to help his wife care for him. Aside from the injury and the shock of losing his left hand, the Weber's were thoroughly discouraged. He could no longer expect to support his family by the trade in which he had been so successful. He would have to start all over again, and find a way to earn a living with only one hand. Fortunately he still had his right hand, a good education, and the good will of the whole community. He was also known to be an expert penman in a day when good penmen were rare.

1842

⁷⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 70.

February 1842**Maria Biddle Visits Family in Tennessee**

Maria devoted more time to church work, but she was not well. She had no appetite and at night, she would lie in bed, hour after hour, with her nerves tense and her eyes open until dawn. She would fall asleep and doze fitfully until the bright sunlight and the striking clock would tell her that it was time to start another day.

Dr. Anson Henry told B. R. that Maria needed a complete change of scene. He suggested that (as her parents had been urging her to bring the boys to visit them) he send Maria and the boys to Tazewell as soon as possible.

The roads were still very bad in early February, so B. R. decided to send them by boat—which would be a complete change for Maria and an interesting experience for the boys. They boarded one of the large Mississippi River boats at Alton and then changed at Cairo to a smaller boat, which took them up the Ohio to the mouth of the Tennessee River—and on to Knoxville, where they were to be met by one of Maria's brothers. There were many friendly people, on the boats, who became acquainted with Maria through their interest in her handsome, well-behaved boys; and they made her trip a pleasant one. She was almost happy again.⁷⁷

When, at last, she reached her old home, with her family all about her, her mother took her in her arms, and tears of happiness rolled down Maria's cheeks—with the consciousness of the steadfast love and understanding that lives in the heart of one's own family. As the days passed, with them all about her, she forgot herself and entered whole-heartedly into the family activities.

Her boys were petted and humored so much, she was afraid they would be badly spoiled—but they had been exceptionally well trained and humoring them did not seem to effect them at all. Elijah and Ruth were very happy to have their family all at home once more; and as they sat in their chairs, on either side of the fireplace, laughing at the young peoples jokes and banter, they were pictures of the contentment and happiness that middle age brings to those who have lived wisely and well. They had plenty of this world's goods for all of their needs: they had many loyal slaves who served them well—and took pride in their service: and they had a family of highly respected sons and daughters: and so their hearts were filled with happiness and thanksgiving.⁷⁸

Death of Elijah Evans

(1786-1842)

Maria's father, Elijah Evans, died in a fire at his house in Claiborne County, Tennessee.

A few days after Maria arrived, tragedy struck her father when the Elijah Evans old home, across the road from the Inn, suddenly burst into flames. There was no one in the house at the time, and Elijah rushed into the burning building to save a box, in which he kept several thousand dollars of paper currency. As he entered the burning building a falling timber hit him and he fell unconscious in the doorway.

He was carried across the road to the Inn and put to bed, while some one rode to Tazewell for one of his brothers-in-law who were both physicians. They both came and did everything

⁷⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 71.

⁷⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 71-72.

possible to save Elijah's life but their efforts were without success ...Elijah's death was so sudden and unexpected, Ruth was stunned...⁷⁹

From Elijah's estate, Maria was given land and currency and silver coin. Maria took her silver to Springfield, and had it made up by a silversmith, who engraved the initials B.M.B., for Benjamin and Maria Biddle. She was always very proud of her silver, and told her children that it had been made from silver coin that had belonged to their grandfather—and that they must always take care of it so that it would last as long as they lived.

Maria Biddle Returns to Springfield

When B. R. took Maria home, after her father's death, she found that the rooms of their house had been repapered and repainted and the furniture had been changed about. There was little left to remind her of the past—and of the little girl who was with them no more.

Angeline Biddle Atkinson Comes to Springfield

They had been home only a short time when B. R. received a letter from Angeline, saying that she would like to bring her baby to visit her family—if some one could meet her at Louisville, Kentucky. Her husband could bring her that far about the first of the next month, and she was anxious to see her father and mother—and wanted them to see her little boy. Angelina was then only fifteen, even though she was the mother of a child more than a year old and her letter sounded as though she were very homesick for her family in Illinois.

So B. R. arranged to meet her in Louisville and bring her home.

Several days after she reached Springfield, Angeline and Maria were sitting on the porch knitting while they watched the boys playing near by. Angeline leaned toward her sister-in-law and said: "I want to stay with you and B. R. always! You won't send me away, will you? I can't ever go back to Hendel Atkinson. B. R. was right. I should never have married him and I'm never going back to live with him again."

In 1842 respectable women did not leave their husbands: and Maria could not believe that she had heard correctly—so she said: "Does Hendel know that you're not goin' back to him?" Angeline replied: "No, I didn't dare tell him. He wouldn't have let me bring the baby." "But" said Maria, "he toted you all the way to Louisville, so as you could come home to see your folks. Not many men would have gone to all that trouble just to please their wives. He must be a likely husband, even if he is cross sometimes." And Angeline replied: "Oh Maria, you can't understand, 'cause you've never known a man like him! So here I am, and I hope that B. R. will be willing for me to stay."⁸⁰

Maria told her that she thought they could make a place for her and her little boy, in their home, and that she would talk to B. R. about it." When B. R. heard about Angeline's trouble, he not only offered her a home but he wrote a letter to Hendel Atkinson, telling him in plain English just what he thought of him.⁸¹

Soon after Angeline came to Springfield, Mother Polly Biddle came in to spend several days.⁸²

B. R. and Maria Biddle Purchase Lot on South Seventh Street near Jackson

⁷⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 73.

⁸⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 73.

⁸¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 74.

⁸² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 76.

On March 15, 1842, B. R. and Maria purchased the property known as Lot 10, Block Two of E. Iles Addition to Town of Springfield. The property was located on the west side of Seventh Street between Jackson and Capitol. The purchase was from Ninian W. and Elizabeth Edwards for the sum of \$500. On the same date, they gave a mortgage to Stephen T. Logan to secure a one-year note for \$250 to be paid with interest at 12%.⁸³

The price of \$500 would indicate that the property was most likely unimproved and it would have been necessary for B. R. to build a house for his family on that lot before they could move there. This would have taken a number of months and the earliest they would have moved would have been the fall of 1842.

However, if one examines the drawing below of the house on the Biddle lot it encroaches on the adjoining lot to the north. It was not until May 7, 1844, that B. R. and Maria Biddle paid \$100 to John and Nancy Dickey to purchase that adjoining land. It was 13 feet, 4 inches of the south side of lot 13, Block 2, of E. Iles Addition to the City of Springfield.⁸⁴

My speculation is that the Seventh Street house was not begun until the 13 foot adjoining strip was purchased. This would mean that at the earliest, the construction would have begun in the Spring of 1844 and would have taken the summer season to complete the house. If correct, the Biddles did not leave the Fourth Street location until the fall or early winter of 1844.

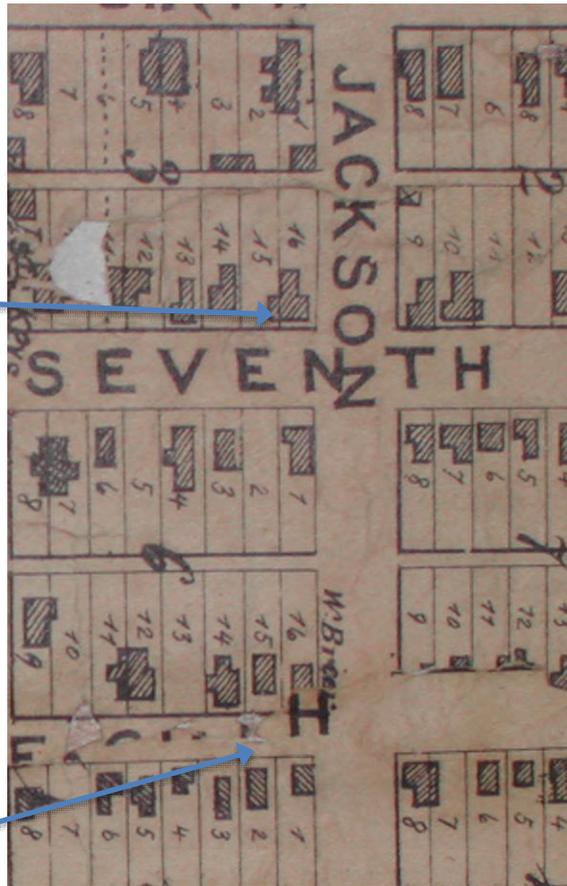
If the reminiscences of Esther Moreland Leithold about the interaction between the Lincolns and the Biddles on Fourth Street be true, the Biddles would have been present between 1843 and 1844 while the Lincolns occupied the Fourth Street house. This would mean that the Biddles did not move to the new Seventh Street house until the end of 1843 or later in 1844.

This validates Esther Moreland Leithold description in so far as the possibility of the events related to be possible.

⁸³ Sangamon County Deed Book, Book S, pp. 516-518.

⁸⁴ *Sangamon County Deed Book*, Book W, page 26. IRAD.

Biddle Home



Lincoln Home

In any event, the Biddle family did move to their new home on Seventh Street, one block west of the future home of Abraham Lincoln at Eighth and Jackson Streets. The house was a much larger and better place in the then suburbs of Springfield. In December 1851 B. R. advertised the house for sale and gave the following description.

OREGON!

The undersigned offers for sale the house and lot upon which he resides, situated in E. Iles' addition, on block 2, Lot 10, and the south 13 feet lot 4. The house contains five rooms, with well-house, smoke house and wood-house attached; a vegetable cave with a 12 feet square building erected over it, a good stable, cow shed and carriage shed—the yard is set with fruit and ornamental trees. The neighborhood I recommend as number 1.

B. R. Biddle



Birth of Sarah Emma Biddle (1842-1868)

On December 1, 1842, Sarah Emma Biddle was born to Maria and B. R. Biddle at their Fourth Street home in Springfield. She soon filled the place in their hearts made vacant by the death of Ellinorah.⁸⁵

1843-1844

The next two years were uneventful, happy, and busy ones for B. R. and Maria. Maria was busy with her church work and her home—which was always in order; and with a larder well stocked with food for her family—and the chance guests who frequently happened in at mealtime. Her little boys and Emma were never neglected. She cared little for her own appearance, but kept herself well dressed to please B. R. and the children.

Maria would be as pretty as she ever was if she would keep slim, and dress as nice as she did when she was first married. B. R. gave Maria a new silk dress at the same time as he gave me this one; but, instead of wearin' hers and lookin' nice all the time, as she should, she goes around in her old clothes and keeps her new dress put away in the chest."⁸⁶

B. R., like all of the members of his family, took great pride in his personal appearance. He was a conspicuous figure on the streets of Carlinville and Springfield, where his well tailored clothes, silk hat and polished boots—together with his quick step, and almost military bearing, made him a person of striking appearance.

Although he expected instant and unquestioning obedience from his children, he was a kind and indulgent parent. He read to them and told them stories of the thrilling experiences of the early American pioneers—always stressing the necessity for common sense and courage. Physical courage in the face of danger — and moral courage in the face of temptation. His stories often illustrated the fact that character meant truthfulness, honesty and justice (tempered by mercy). He impressed upon them the necessity for them to have all of these virtues if they expected to grow up to be ladies and gentlemen and Christians. He told them that to have good manners without character was to be like a fine red apple that was rotten at the core. He was very particular about their manners at table and taught them to use their spoons and knives and forks properly, as soon as they could sit up at the table.⁸⁷

Maria thought that he was unnecessarily strict about such matters. B. R. said that good manners were vital, for they were the surest and most conspicuous signs of good breeding.

As Maria believed that a good wife always cooperated with her husband, she left the disciplining of the children to him, and seconded all of his efforts. He insisted that the children always say “yes-mam,” “no-mam” (or sir) “please” and “thank you” at the proper times: so, under his strict training and kindly guidance, the children were models of good behavior—and B. R. was never so happy as when he could bring some of his friends home to meet his charming family. The key to his success was that he tried to be an example for them—and they all adored him. He was kind and considerate of others, did not use liquor or tobacco and never played games of chance—nor gambled. He never thought that his deals in stocks or real estate were a form of gambling. They were just investments—and there was an element of risk in everything—even in life itself. He considered it a civic duty to buy stocks and bonds in public utilities, such as railroads, canals, etc. that would improve communities, stimulate business and (theoretically) raise the price of land: but since the panic of 1837 there had been very little money in circulation, and all kinds of improvements were at a standstill; so stocks and bonds were a drag on the market.

⁸⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 77.

⁸⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 76.

⁸⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 78-79.

The income from Maria's inheritance bought some of the luxuries they enjoyed at this time. Maria and her sisters had always been advised (by their mother) to keep their property in their own names; and to use only the income, so that their principal could insure an independent old age—and could then be passed on to their children. B. R., unlike most men of that time, was willing for his wife to keep her property intact: and it was only when some of his investments failed temporarily, and Maria put some extra money in his pocket, that they realized that she had a separate income. B. R. was very generous (almost too generous) when his investments were successful. He would give Maria extra money for fine clothes for herself and the children or for other extravagances he thought she would enjoy. Maria spent money very carefully—and always had some left which she put away “for a rainy day.”

Maria had very definite ideas about the respect due a husband from his wife. She believed that a man should have the love, the respect and the obedience of all the members of his household. She was intelligent and well read, and had opinions of her own, which did not always agree with those of her husband: but she never questioned his statements before others—not even before their own children: for, from her point of view, she could not have done so without humiliating herself, as well as her husband, by such unladylike behavior.

While she had very definite opinions, which were usually the result of good judgment or experience, she seldom expressed her views about anything. It was not considered lady-like for women to have very decided views about anything, for they were supposed to be in accord with their husbands (or other male members of the family), who, legally, did the thinking for the entire family. Maria was always a lady. Marriage had changed her from a lighthearted, fun-loving girl to a serious-minded, self-effacing woman, except when she was with her own people in Tennessee—or with groups of women (such as quilting bees and sewing societies), where she would become her natural self again and be the life of the party. She had the gift of bringing out the best in the people about her; and was always a welcome guest at any gathering.⁸⁸

Marriage of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd

On Friday, November 4, 1842, Abraham Lincoln married Mary Todd in Springfield, Illinois at the home of Ninian W. Edwards and Elizabeth Edwards, Mary Todd's sister.⁸⁹

Abraham and Mary Lincoln Live at Globe Tavern

The newlywedded Abraham and Mary Lincoln rented a room in the Globe Tavern at 315 E. Adams St., from November 1842 until the fall of 1843. Their oldest son Robert was born there. In the fall of 1843, they moved to a three-room cottage at 214 South Fourth Street where they were neighbors of the Biddles.

⁸⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 79-80.

⁸⁹ *Journal*, November 11, 1842, p. 6. Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928, vol. 1, pp. 354-355.



The Globe Tavern on the North Side of Adams Street Between Third and Fourth Streets

1843

B. R. Biddle Makes Suit for Abraham Lincoln

In May 1843, while B. R. Biddle was working with John Irwin and Co., he made a suit for Abraham Lincoln. Abraham would have been living at the Globe Tavern.

Tuesday, May 16, 1843. Springfield, Illinois.

On May 16, 1843 his largest single day's purchase at Irwin's was made. The \$45.37 total included \$32.50 for cloth, \$3.87 for trimmings and \$9 to tailor Benjamin R. Biddle for making a suit for Mr. Lincoln. The suiting is described as two yards of superior black cloth at \$11 a yard, and three yards of cassimere, a medium-weight woolen cloth of soft texture, at \$3.50.⁹⁰

Wednesday, May 31, 1843. Taylorville, Illinois.

Lincoln buys toothbrush (25¢) and third-yard of serge (50¢) for his tailor Biddle, who is evidently making alterations.⁹¹

Birth of Robert Todd Lincoln

(1843-1926)

On August 1, 1843, Robert Todd Lincoln was born, the first child of Abraham and Mary Lincoln. He was born while the Lincolns lived at the Globe Tavern. The noisy, crowded conditions in the Globe did not make a homelike environment.

Soon after the birth, Mary's father, Robert Todd, came to Springfield to visit them. He gave Mary eighty acres of land near Springfield and arranged to pay Abraham \$120.00 a year for collecting claims from Illinois merchants, to whom he sold cotton goods. This made the Lincolns much more comfortable financially.

Fall 1843

Lincolns Move to Fourth Street

⁹⁰ Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, p. 66. <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/ISHS/ishs-1955spring/ishs-1955spring-065.pdf> *Irwin Ledger and Journal, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

⁹¹ *Irwin Ledger and Journal, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

In the fall of 1843, Abraham, Mary and Robert Lincoln moved to a three-room cottage at 214 South Fourth Street where they were neighbors of the Biddles.⁹²



The Lincoln's Rental Home on East Side of Fourth Street between Adams and Monroe

Maria had known Mary Lincoln slightly, for a number of years and Maria called on Mary as soon as the Lincolns moved into the neighborhood, but they were never intimate friends. B. R. and Abraham had been friends since Abraham first came to Springfield in 1837.

Maria Biddle Describes Relationship Between Mary and Abraham

Mary Lincoln...seemed to take a special delight in contradicting her husband, and humiliating him on every occasion. The Lincolns were very poor, at this time, and Mrs. Lincoln was not well: so, considering that she had her pride, her poverty and sickness to contend with, Maria tried to excuse her rudeness for the sake of her husband, who was all that could be desired as a neighbor. Mary Lincoln belonged to the Episcopal Church, at this time, and had no patience with the people who were responsible for all of this religious turmoil and it added greatly to her natural nervousness and irritability. After living in a home where all of the manual work was done by slaves, it was not easy for her to do her own housework and care for a little boy, so she always expected her husband to look after Robert (Bob) when he was not at the office or busy with his law practice or politics.

Abraham Lincoln and B. R. Biddle

Lincoln milked his cow and bedded his horse in the barn that was just on the other side of the fence from the Biddle's barn. This back fence, which was common to the two homes, was the usual meeting place where B. R. and Abraham would talk over the news of the day and where Abraham could find an attentive listener to his latest story—for he always had a story to illustrate everything they talked about—and he had a new one nearly every day.⁹³

Sometimes Abraham would walk home with B. R. and stop at the gate to finish their conversation. But Mary always seemed to be watching for him, and as soon as he stopped, would call impatiently: "Oh Abe! Abe! Come right home here and take Bob." Abraham would smile and say: "I reckon the little woman gets pretty lonesome, here at home all day." And off he would go to take Bob, who was usually looking out of the window and waiting for him. Abraham's homely face would light up with love and happiness at the sight of his son, and he would lift him up in his strong arms and carry him around the house and yard, where the child could see all sorts of wonderful and interesting things.⁹⁴

⁹² The photo above, from 1886, shows only a portion of the Globe; James T. Hickey established in 1963 that the building would have been significantly larger when the Lincolns lived there; read more in the Winter 1963 edition of the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (free registration required). The Globe was demolished in the 1890s.

⁹³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 80.

⁹⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 82.

Abraham Lincoln Buys Materials for His Tailor B. R. Biddle

Monday, December 18, 1843. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln's account is charged 70¢ for coat binding procured by his tailor Biddle for Lincoln's suit. He deposits \$35 cash, and takes home 70¢ worth of merchandise.⁹⁵

Saturday, December 30, 1843. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln's banker-merchant, Robert Irwin, credits him with \$15 paid in by "Watts," and \$10.50 for six months' interest on \$175. Irwin charges his account \$9.50 to pay for purchases of Biddle, tailor, in Lincoln's behalf.⁹⁶

1844**Lincolns Move to 8th and Jackson**

On January 16, 1844, Lincoln signed a contract to purchase Rev. Dresser's home on the northeast corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets for \$1,200 cash and a small lot worth \$300.

Tuesday, January 16, 1844. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln writes and signs a memorandum in which he agrees to purchase a house in Springfield from Charles Dresser, an Episcopal minister. Lincoln agrees to pay Dresser \$1,200, and to transfer to him the deed to a building that Lincoln co-owns with Stephen T. Logan. The Lincoln-Logan property is located "immediately West of the Public square."

Friday, May 3, 1844. Springfield, IL.

Rev. Charles Dresser gives Lincoln deed to residence. Lincoln and S. T. Logan file deed conveying "the east half of the west half of lot six in block fourteen" in Springfield to Dresser.

The Lincoln's home was just a block east of the Biddle's Seventh Street house. They remained neighbors until the Biddles left Illinois for the Pacific Coast in 1852.

B. R. and Maria Biddle Purchase Property Adjoining Their Home Property

On May 7, 1844, B. R. and Maria Biddle paid \$100 to John and Nancy Dickey to purchase land that adjoined the land where the Biddle house was located on South Seventh Street. It was 13 feet, 4 inches of the south side of lot 13, Block 2, of E. Iles Addition to the City of Springfield.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Irwin Ledger, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

⁹⁶ *Irwin Ledger, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

⁹⁷ *Sangamon County Deed Book, Book W, page 26. IRAD.*

Abraham Lincoln Buys Cloth for Biddle to Make a Coat

Tuesday, June 25, 1844. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln buys haberdashery: stock \$1.25; two-and-a-half yards tweed cloth for Biddle, tailor, and \$1.75 for coat trimming.⁹⁸

Thursday, December 26, 1844. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln's account is debited \$3.50 for money paid to Biddle, tailor.⁹⁹

Millerites Predict End of World

The "Millerites" were the followers of William Miller of New York, who had started preaching in 1831 about the second coming of Christ. He was not a well educated man; but claimed to be a great Bible student, who had studied the chronology of the Bible, and knew that the second coming of Christ and the end of time was at hand. He had followers from all over the States, and they were predicting that the faithful would ascend into Heaven; and the Earth, with the wicked, would be destroyed some time between March 12 and 23, 1844. Some of the Millerites decided that the exact date for the end of the world would be March 14, 1844, and the preparations were speeded for the great event.

Maria Biddle's housekeeper, Mrs. Brown, went about her work singing Hallelujahs and sacred songs, — stopping occasionally to pray, — or to weep for her friends who would not prepare themselves for the great day. She felt great sorrow when she thought of Maria and the children being numbered among the wicked, but Maria told her that God had His own way of saving those who loved Him; and she felt sure that, even though they were not of the same faith, they would all meet in Eternity.

On March the 13th, Mrs. Brown came, for the last time, to wash and iron and clean the house thoroughly; so that, on the last day, there should be nothing left undone for which she might be held accountable. Late in the afternoon, Mrs. Brown put on her ascension robe, to make sure that it was all properly finished and ready for the great occasion. The robes had been made to look like the robes artists painted on angels. They hung straight from the shoulders to the floor—and were long enough to cover their feet as they rose in the air. Mrs. Brown was rather stout to wear an angel's robe becomingly, but, all things considered, it seemed an appropriate costume for the occasion.

A heavy wind was blowing and Mrs. Brown was afraid that, as she ascended in the air, the wind might blow her robe about and expose her legs to the sinners watching below. Such an eventuality was unthinkable to the modest Mrs. Brown, so she decided to put a drawstring through the hem at the bottom of her robe, which she could pull tight, as she felt herself rising. There would be no possibility of exposing any part of her mortal body as she floated upward to immortality.

The next day she fasted and prayed, as she waited with other Millerites, in the cemetery where they would be near their dear ones who would be raised from their graves when Gabriel blew his trumpet and where they could all be gathered up and taken to heaven together. It was a strange day— There had been practically no business transacted for several days, and there was a decided religious revival in all of the churches, as the attention of the whole community was centered on the wickedness of man, the uncertainty of life, and the need of immediate and continual preparation for death.

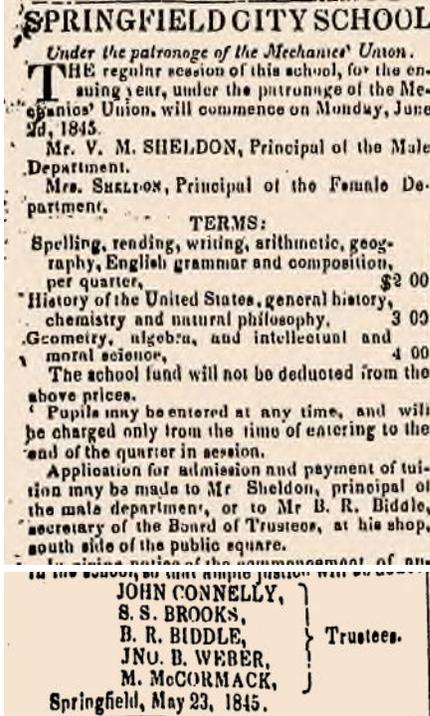
⁹⁸ *Irwin Ledger, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

⁹⁹ *Irwin Ledger, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

The Millerites waited long and patiently for the coming of the Lord, until, at last, they were driven home by cold and hunger— still believing that the hour was at hand, and expecting each day to be called.¹⁰⁰

1845

B. R. Biddle Secretary of Mechanics' Union City School



SPRINGFIELD CITY SCHOOL

Under the patronage of the Mechanic' Union.

The regular session of this school, for the ensuing year, under the patronage of the Mechanics' Union, will commence on Monday, Jun 2nd, 1845.

Mr. V. M SHELDON, Principal of the Male Department.
Mrs. SHELDON, Principal of the Female Department.

TERMS:

Spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar and composition, per quarter, \$2.00

History of the United States, general history, chemistry and natural philosophy, \$3.00

Geometry, algebra, and intellectual and moral science, \$4.00

The school fund will not be deducted from the above prices.

Pupils may be entered at any time, and will be charged only from the time of entering to the end of the quarter in session.

Journal, Thursday, May 29, 1845.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ And This Is Our Heritage, pp. 80-81.

¹⁰¹ Journal, Thursday, May 29, 1845, p. 3.

Application for admission and payment of tuition may be made to Mr. Sheldon, principal of the male department, or to Mr. B. R. Biddle, secretary of the Board of Trustees, at his shop south side of the public square.

In giving notice of the commencement of another year, the Trustees, embrace the opportunity of expressing their gratitude to the public, on behalf of the Mechanic's Union, for the very liberal patronage that has been extended to both departments of the school. The experiment of establishing a school, at such reduced rates of tuition as those adopted by the Union, having thus far proved successful, placing the means of instruction within the reach of all, or nearly all, who are disposed to extend the blessings of education to their children and wards, it is not doubted that the public will continue to appreciate the object, and freely contribute their influence to its permanency and usefulness.

It is not designed by the Mechanics' Union to make the school a source of revenue. The entire proceeds of the school will be appropriated to its support, reserving barely sufficient to meet the incidental expenses--such as fuel, repairing of rooms, &c. Five orphan children have had gratuitous instructions, during the past year, and of it is the intention of the Union to continue as large a number of that unfortunate class in the school as circumstances will permit.

As the impression prevails, to some extent, that the school is intended exclusively for the benefit of the children of the members of the Mechanics' Union, the Trustees take this occasion to say that no preference is given to any--the children of all enjoying equal privileges, and equal efforts being employed for the intellectual and moral instructions to all.

A sufficient number of competent teachers will be employed to assist the principals, in the tuition of any number of pupils that may be present in the school, so that ample justice will be done.

Trustees: John Connelly, S. S. Brooks, B. R. Biddle, Jno. B. Weber, M. McCormack
Springfield, May 23, 1845

B. R. Biddle Tailor for Abraham Lincoln

Monday, February 10, 1845. Springfield, Illinois.

Lincoln's account is charged \$3.12 for trimmings taken up by Biddle, Lincoln's tailor.¹⁰²

¹⁰² *Irwin Ledger, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

Wednesday, October 15, 1845

Lincoln's tailor, Biddle, buys cloak trimmings (\$2.38), charging to Lincoln's account.¹⁰³

Letters From Harriett Campbell in Oregon Territory

B. R. Biddle's sister, Harriett, who had married Hamilton Campbell, was living in Oregon Territory where they served as missionaries at the Jason Lee Indian Mission.

The Indian Mission, that they had gone to serve had met with reverses, and had been abandoned soon after the death of Jason Lee, in 1845. The Catholic Missionaries were mostly French, and understood the half-breeds and Indians better than the Methodists did, so when the Catholics founded a Mission on the north side of the Columbia River they took many converts from the Lee Mission and created much discontent among those who remained.

In 1845 Hamilton Campbell bought most of their livestock and moved them to his place in the Chehalem Valley where he expected to go into the stock raising business. Harriett then wrote long letters to her family in Illinois, telling of the wonders of the Willamette Valley in Oregon. She encouraged the Biddles to think about moving to where there were opportunities open to settlers in that Territory.

Slavery

Another subject that was being discussed throughout the Union was the subject of slavery. The people of Illinois were having continual trouble about the fugitive slaves that escaped from Missouri and Kentucky; and realized that something would have to be done about the matter before many years. B. R. and Maria understood the seriousness of the situation better than many of their friends; for they sometimes went by boat, to Knoxville, when they visited her family in Tennessee; and on those river boats, in Southern waters, they heard the slave-owners talk, and knew how bitterly they resented (what they called) Yankee interference in their affairs. They firmly believed that every State had a right to make its own laws for the management of its own internal affairs; and that the Federal Government had no right to interfere; and must limit its law making to matters relating to inter-state questions and foreign relations. B. R. and Maria had been raised in Slave States; but their families had never believed in slavery as an institution.

Since their marriage they had lived in Illinois, which had never been a Slave State, although there had been a few slaves there until about 1845: so they were able to view the subject with unprejudiced minds: and were sure that slavery would be abolished, sooner or later, over the whole nation. The logical way for this to be done was for the Federal Government to buy the slaves and give them their freedom. A large part of the wealth of the Southern States consisted of slaves, who furnished their owners with free labor on the plantations: or, if they were not needed at home, they could be hired out and the owner could collect their wages. Many of the slave-owners would have been willing to sell their slaves to the Government, and then hire them, as wage-earners, on their plantations: but they thought that the Yankee agitators, who tried to incite the slaves to insubordination, were a worse menace to peace than slavery itself. There were other Southerners who would never be willing to free their slaves for any compensation the Government might give. They had acquired their slaves (like other property) by purchase or inheritance, and, having always lived under the system of slavery, were quite sure that they could not live properly without the service no free people would give. They thought they had a moral right to keep their slaves; and quoted the Bible to those who questioned them. There were those, too, in many of the free States, who believed that slavery was so wrong, any slaveholder must be an evil person, who should not be compensated by the Government, if it took something from him that was morally wrong for him to own. These

¹⁰³ *Irwin Ledger and Journal, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.*

people were very numerous and out-spoken; and would do everything possible to keep the Members of the House of Representatives from appropriating money for the purchase of slaves from their owners— even if the Federal Government would be willing to settle the matter that way. There was even talk of war between the Slave States and the Federal Government. It did not seem possible that the grandchildren of the men who had fought to free America and establish the Union, could war among themselves and destroy that union; but men were hot-headed, and there were times when it seemed that such a thing might happen. Perhaps if war did come, just as Henry and Robert were reaching manhood, they would be called to carry arms against their own people, of the South.¹⁰⁴

It would be much better for them all to go West and leave this turmoil behind than to have their fine boys carried off to fight against their own flesh and blood. And so B. R. and Maria thought longingly of the home that could be founded in the West—far from the bitterness and political confusion that threatened to engulf them. Dr. Cardwell and Mary thought the same way about the matter. Father and Mother Biddle had grown too old to attempt the hazardous journey; and B. R. would not consider leaving them while they needed him and depended on him.¹⁰⁵

Maria, too, dreaded leaving her mother and all of her people who would be practically lost to her forever—if she went so far away.

1846

Birth of Matilda “Puggie” Biddle

(1846–1927)^[11]_[SEP]

Matilda “Puggie” Biddle was born to B. R. and Maria on February 23, 1846, in Springfield, Illinois.¹⁰⁶ Matilda resembled her father more than any of the other children. There seemed even a possibility of her developing the Biddle nose, which some of them considered a badge of aristocracy. Her Cousin James called her Puggie, and that is what she was always known as -- Puggie Biddle.

Birth of Edward Baker Lincoln

(1846-1850)

On March 10, 1846, Mary and Abraham Lincoln had another boy, and he was named Edward Baker, after Lincoln’s friend Edward Dickenson Baker.

Springfield Delegate for the State Temperance Convention

B. R. Biddle was listed among delegates from Springfield for the State Temperance Convention on February 23, 1845.¹⁰⁷^[11]_[SEP]

¹⁰⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁰⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁰⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.83 and 37.

¹⁰⁷ *Journal*, March 5, 1846, p. 2.

State Temperance Convention.
 The Bird-Archbishop of the Father of his Country, was signalled in this city on Monday of last week by the meeting of the State Temperance Society. On account of the inclemency of the weather, there was not so full a representation from all parts of the State as was desired; still some 120 delegates were present, and a large concourse of people attended their proceedings. The Addresses of Mr. Deamant on Monday morning and Tuesday evening were most excellent; and the addresses of Mr. Thomas of Fulton County, and Mr. Fairchild of this city, were well received. The singing by the Juvenile choir, under the direction of Professor Mason, and the performance upon the organ by Mr. Halling, added much to the pleasure of the occasion; nor should the need of protest be withheld from the Committee of Arrangements, whose prompt devotion to their duties, receive, as they deserve, high commendation. The following is the official record of the proceedings of the Society:

SPRINGFIELD, Feb. 23, 1845.

The Delegates appointed to attend the State Temperance Convention, assembled at the First Presbyterian Church, at 10 o'clock A. M., and were called to order by Mr. M. H. Deamant, on whose motion

Thomas Murray, Esq. was elected President, and E. F. Hines, appointed Secretary.

The credentials of the Delegates were then called for, when the following names were presented, to wit—

Springfield.—Rev. J. G. Bergen, Rev. C. Hebart, W. W. Watson, Thomas Moffatt, J. Divilbia, W. H. Perdon, Walter Davis, S. S. Brooks, Rev. Albert Hale, E. R. Wiley, Thomas Lewis, B. R. Biddle, Rev. J. F. Brooker, N. W. Baldwin, M. Brayman, Rev. Francis Springer, M. McCormick, John R. Binson, S. G. Jones, R. E. Canfield, J. B. Weber, A. R. Elder, W. D. Heindon, J. M. Bradford.

Journal, Thursday, March 5, 1846.¹⁰⁸

B. R. Biddle Advertises Shop for Rent on Public Square

¶To Tailors.¶

The subscriber has for rent, on the public square in this city, a shop with two rooms, put up expressly for a Tailor's shop, and is among the finest in the State, furnished and finished with every convenience for a Tailor to commence business there: and I have no hesitation in saying there is as fine an opening in this city at this time for a first rate Tailor, who is asty(?) and competent to do fashionable business, as here is in this state. Applications addressed to the subscriber immediately, will meet with favor.¶

¶B. R. Biddle¶Springfield, Ill., Aug. 25, '46.¹⁰⁹

B. R. Biddle Secretary of Sangamon County Temperance Union

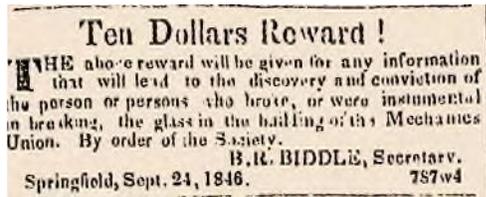
Sangamon Co. Temperance Union.
 In conformity with a recommendation of the last State Temperance Convention for the promotion of the cause of Temperance, a convention composed of delegates from several of the societies of Sangamon county, was held in the basement of the first Presbyterian Church in Springfield on the 2d of May, 1846. J. B. WARREN, Esq. was called to the Chair, and B. R. BIDDLE, appointed Secretary, and N. RIDGELY, as Assistant Secretary. On motion of Mr. Morse, a committee of one from each society represented in the convention, was appointed by the President to prepare business for his action.

Journal, Thursday, September 17, 1846.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Journal*, Thursday, March 5, 1846, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Journal*, Thursday, October 1, 1846, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ *Journal*, Thursday, September 17, 1846, p. 1.



Journal, Thursday, September 17, 1846.¹¹¹

¶Ten Dollars Reward¶

The above reward will be given for any information that will lead to the discovery and conviction of the person or persons who broke, or were instrumental in breaking, the glass in the building of the Mechanics Union. By order of the Society.¶

B. R. Biddle, Secretary.¶Springfield, Sept. 24, 1846.

Henry Yeakle at B. R. Biddle's Former Shop on East Side of State House



Journal, Thursday, October 22, 1846.¹¹²

By the fall of 1846, B. R. Biddle was no longer engaged in the tailoring business. Henry Yeakle was his successor

1847

B. R. Biddle President of Mechanics Union Solicits for School Teachers

¶¶To School Teachers.¶¶

A Gentleman and Lady, competent to teach a good common School and also, the higher branches usually taught in male and female Academies, can obtain a very desirable situation in this city, upon application to the undersigned, either personally or by letter, postage paid. The building of the "Springfield Mechanics' Union," will be leased for the term of one year or more, at a very reasonable annual rent; and it is believed that the situation is as eligible, and the prospect of a large and permanent School, in either department--as flattering, as at any other point in the State. The house central, being on the second block from the State House, (centre of the city,) and adjoining the first Presbyterian Church,--and contains two large rooms, one on the first and one on the second floor, capable of accommodating from eighty to one hundred pupils each, both well finished, well lighted, and furnished with stoves, desks, heats(or seats/neats?), &c., with a separate entrance to each room. Satisfactory references as to character and qualification, will be required, and such further information as may be desired, will promptly be given.

Address¶¶B. R. Biddle¶¶

President Mechanics' Union¶¶Springfield, Ill., Jan. 11, 1846.

¹¹¹ *Journal*, Thursday, September 17, 1846 p. 3.

¹¹² *Journal*, Thursday, October 22, 1846, p.1.

To School Teachers.

A GENTLEMAN and Lady, competent to teach a good common School and also, the higher branches usually taught in male and female Academies, can obtain a very desirable situation in this city, upon application to the undersigned, either personally or by letter, postage paid. The building of the "Springfield Mechanics' Union," will be leased for the term of one year or more, at a very reasonable annual rent: and it is believed that the situation is as eligible, and the prospect of a large and permanent School, in either department—as flattering, as at any other point in the State. The house central, being on the second block from the State House, (centre of the city,) and adjoining the first Presbyterian Church,—and contains two large rooms, one on the first and one on the second floor, capable of accommodating from eighty to one hundred pupils each, both well finished, well lighted, and furnished with stoves, desks, seats, &c., with a separate entrance to each room. Satisfactory references as to character and qualification, will be required, and such further information as may be desired, will be promptly given.

Address B. R. BIDDLE,
President Mechanic's Union.
Springfield, Ill., Jan. 11, 1846.

Journal, Thursday, February 4, 1847.¹¹³

¹¹³ *Journal*, Thursday, February 4, 1847, p.1.

B. R. Biddle Participates in Workingmen's Meeting at Mechanics Hall

WORKINGMEN'S MEETING.

Pursuant to a call, by many mechanics, a public meeting of working men was held, at the Mechanic's hall, in Springfield, on Saturday evening, the 27th inst.

E. D. Ruckel was called to the chair, and George R. Weber appointed Secretary.

On motion, a committee of six were appointed to draft resolutions, expressive of the sense of the meeting, consisting of Messrs. S. S. Brooks, A. Hickox, A. C. Harrover, B. R. Biddle, J. C. Planck, and C. C. Phelps.

The committee, after having retired some time.

Journal, Thursday, April 1, 1847.¹¹⁴

Henry Yeakle Operates Tailoring Business East of State House: Biddle Former Site

HENRY YEAKLE, continues the Tailoring business east of the State house, at the shop formerly occupied by Mr. Biddle. Prices as low as any in the city. Cutting done on the shortest notice. Oct. 1846.

Journal, Thursday, April 8, 1847.¹¹⁵

B. R. Biddle Member of the Whig Party^(SEP)

B. R. Biddle was mentioned as part of the Whigs who were trying to re-elect Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore.¹¹⁶

CANDIDATES.
We are authorized to announce RICHARD LATHAM Esq., of Logan County as a candidate for Delegate to the State Convention.
We are authorized to announce JOHN W. TAYLOR as candidate for delegate to the State Convention.
NOAH W. MATHENY is a candidate for Clerk of the County commissioner's Court of Sangamon County.
BENJAMIN TALBOTT is a candidate for County Recorder of Sangamon County.
We are, CONANT, HILTON, F. WICKEL, BLAD, A. R. ROBINSON, and P. DECHUS, are candidates for Committee for Springfield precinct.
THOMAS MOFFETT is a candidate for Probate Justice of the Peace for Sangamon county.
J. M. MOORE is a candidate for Assessor and Treasurer of Sangamon County.
JOHN B. WATSON is a candidate for County Surveyor.
ABRAHAM FOUTCH is a candidate for County Commissioner.
ISAC A. BRITTON is a candidate for School Commissioner of Sangamon county.
ELIZA M. MOORE is a candidate for Assessor and Treasurer of Sangamon County.
JESUCH MOORE is a candidate for Recorder of this County.
ZACHARIAH PETTEL is a candidate for Delegate to the State Convention.
JOSEPH INGLEBY is a candidate for Delegate to the State Convention.
THOMAS J. KINEX is a candidate for Assessor and Treasurer for this County.
We have been requested to publish the following:
"WORKING MEN'S TICKET."
E. R. BURNIS, "THOMAS LEWIS."

Journal, Thursday, April 8, 1847.¹¹⁷

1848

Death of Benjamin Biddle

(1776-1848)

Benjamin Biddle, B. R.'s father, died in 1848 in Macoupin County, Illinois

¹¹⁴ *Journal*, Thursday, April 1, 1847, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Journal*, Thursday, April 8, 1847, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ *Journal*, April 1, 1847, p. 2; also April 15, 1847, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ *Journal*, Thursday, April 8, 1847, p. 3.

B. R. Biddle Active Citizen of Springfield: Plans to Go to Oregon Territory

In 1848, Benjamin R. Biddle was a 40 year-old resident of Springfield, Illinois. By trade he was a tailor, but he no longer practiced that trade. He was active in community affairs, serving as President of the Mechanics' Union, trustee of the Springfield City School and being a member of the temperance movement. In politics, he was a Whig.

For some time, B. R. Biddle had talked of going west to the Oregon Territory where his sister and her husband lived. The death of his father pushed this dream to the forefront.¹¹⁸ He decided to go in the spring of 1849. He wanted to see for himself if the country was as beautiful and well adapted for home making as it was represented to be. He planned to take a load of merchandise with him, with which to pay the expenses of the trip. Then, if he could make the proper arrangements, he would return in the spring of 1851 for his family.

B. R. Biddle Advertises His House and Building on Square For Sale

FOR SALE.—The subscriber desirous of leaving Springfield, offers for sale his house and lot on which he resides. Also the building occupied by Yeakle & Coon, on the east side of the public square. Terms will be made accommodating. Application to be made soon. **R. R. BIDDLE.**
July 10, 1848. 4dw

Journal, Saturday, August 12, 1848.¹¹⁹

B. R. Biddle Raises Funds for Celebration

Arrangements for the Celebration.
At a meeting held last evening at the court house by the committee of arrangements, the following plan of operations was agreed upon:
All those desirous of participating in the Illumination are requested to have every thing in readiness to illuminate their edifices at 8 o'clock, at which time a signal of one gun will be fired. Also, that the lights be extinguished at the firing of the second signal gun at half-past 7 o'clock.
After the Illumination, at 8 o'clock a Torch Light Procession will be formed in front of the Market House, where every one desirous of joining in the celebration will be provided with torches. After the procession is disbanded, a series of fire works will be exhibited; due notice of the place will be given between this and the evening appointed for the celebration.
We are authorised to state that JAMES C. MAXCY, ROBERT COLLIS, B. R. BIDDLE and JOHN COOK, were appointed as a committee of four, for the purpose of raising funds to defray the necessary expenditures of this celebration.

Journal, Wednesday, November 15, 1848.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 84-85.

¹¹⁹ *Journal*, Saturday, August 12, 1848, p. 4

¹²⁰ *Journal*, Wednesday, November 15, 1848, p. 3.

1849**Lincoln Declines Offer For Appointment as Governor of Oregon Territory**

Oregon Territory was being rapidly settled, and the pioneers were expecting to have a Territorial Governor appointed by the next President. The friends of Abraham Lincoln were anxious for him to have the appointment, as he seemed to be especially qualified to govern a new territory. Some of his enemies were also anxious to see him sent away from the States; where he was becoming a person of importance, and those who disliked his ideas and rough manners feared his influence. But Lincoln, himself, had never asked for the position; and when it was offered to him he declined, and recommended a friend for the office. It was said that his wife refused to go to Oregon as she believed in his political future in the States.

**B. R. Biddle Changes Plans to Go to Oregon Territory
Plans to Go to California Where Gold Had Been Discovered**

In 1849, gold was discovered in California. As stories of the fabulous riches found along the Western streams reached the States, Oregon Territory was almost forgotten by the mad rush of gold seekers streaming westward to California.

Some started at once by boat, going "around the Horn" or across the Isthmus of Panama, in the hope of getting a boat on the Pacific side. Those going over-land could not start until the following spring. People forgot about the financial and political problems of the time in the intoxicating dreams of wealth and adventure that were stimulated by the stories (brought in by each western mail) of the fabulous riches to be found in the mountains and streams of California.

B. R. Biddle had initially planed on going to the Oregon Territory where his sister and brother-in-law were living. When he heard of the gold found in California, he decided to go there instead. In the few months before spring, he put his affairs in order, so that his family could live in comfort while he was away.

Biddle Weber and Company: Second Presbyterian Church Members

When the news of the discovery of gold in California reached Springfield, B. R. and John Weber decided to go to California together. Weber had finished his work of copying the Illinois State Records and was anxious to invest his savings in something that would bring quick and abundant returns. B. R. and Weber knew nothing about mining for gold, but they knew that all who went to California for gold would have to buy supplies. The first stores near the mines would reap a greater harvest than the miners themselves.

When their friends heard of their intention, they too wanted to join them. Before they started, three other members of the Second Presbyterian Church had arranged to become members of the Firm of Biddle, Weber and Company, to engage in the mercantile business in California. Other members of the Company were:

Augustus Eastman, a young man in his twenties, who had come with his parents to Illinois from Maine in 1836. He had youth, enthusiasm, and enough money to buy his outfit and pay for his portion of the goods to be transported.

Lewis Johnson, whose wife died a short time before. He longed for a change of scene and action. He too had money to invest and was well liked by the other members of the firm.

John B. Watson was the oldest man taken into the partnership. He was born in South Carolina in 1800, and was 49 years old. His business ability—and his experience while a surveyor and engineer of the Great Western Railroad, made him a valuable member of the expedition.

They delegated B. R. Biddle and John Weber to go to St. Louis to buy a stock of merchandise for a mining community. They were to have it sent by boat, around the Horn to San Francisco. They each filled a wagon with stock that they could take overland. They knew, by Harriett Campbell's letters, that flour, dried fruit, and other merchandise were shipped from Chili, Mexico and the Sandwich Islands, and could be bought at the wharfs in San Francisco.

Much property changed hands during the winter and early spring, in and about Springfield, as men sold or mortgaged their holdings, to raise money to finance their trips to the Western gold fields. They planned and worked feverishly so as to be ready to start as soon as the grass began to grow in the spring—for they had to have feed for their stock along the way.

Farm products had been very cheap for several years and the farmers along Lick Creek were much discouraged. Many of them were planning to join the party going to California so the subject of migrating to the West was discussed with even more interest than the ever-present problem of slavery.

Formation of the Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company

B. R. Biddle and a group of 20 citizens formed The Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company for the purpose of travelling to California on the overland trail and supplying the gold miners. Biddle acted as the secretary. They would open a trading post in the hills west of Redding.

B. R. Biddle's Financial Arrangements

It took all of B. R.'s available cash to buy his outfit and his share of the merchandise to be shipped to San Francisco.

He also had to insure his mother, Mary, a good home. His father had only a life interest in the farm on which they lived. So B. R. deeded his remainder interest to his mother and she, in turn, deeded it by contract to Thadius and Malvina Evans. In turn, the Evans' promised to provide his mother with a certain room and furniture, heat and food and to give her the best of care during her lifetime. In exchange for such services, Thadius and Malvina were to receive the whole farm at the death of Mary (Polly) Biddle.

After this agreement was drawn up, signed and recorded, B. R. knew that his mother would have the best of care as long as she lived. However, she did not want B. R. to leave her.

B. R. also made provisions for Maria and the four children who would remain in Springfield. They must be taken care of until he could send them money from the West.

He had to mortgage some of his property to get money to carry him until he became located in California.¹²¹ Maria, who always associated the word mortgage with disaster, could scarcely keep back her tears when she signed the papers. But she never questioned the wisdom of B. R.'s plans—after he had once made a decision. She tried to cooperate with him in every way, even though she felt that the world was slipping out from under her. B. R. was sure that she would have no financial worries while he was away for he would leave money for their immediate needs. He expected the

¹²¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 88-89.

rents from the farmlands and the notes that would fall due at regular intervals would keep them in comfort.¹²²

B. R. Biddle Buys a Diary and Telescope

B. R. bought a diary in which to keep a daily record of his journey and a telescope for scanning the country (for Indians, etc.) as they rode along the trail.

Preparations to Leave For California

As the time for leaving drew near, there were about forty men, and a few women and children, ready to join the party for California. Among them was a young man, named Sam, who was anxious to drive an ox team and work his way to the gold fields, so they took him with them to handle one of the teams and help care for the stock.

Their equipment was the best that could be obtained—with six oxen for each wagon and four extra oxen for emergencies. Each wagon carried four barrels of grain from which they could feed the stock, sparingly, until the grass was high enough to satisfy their hunger. The barrels were to be used later for carrying water when they crossed the Great Desert. They carried smoked, dried and salted meat, dried fruits and vegetables, pickles, flour, sugar, tea, coffee, and other food to last six or eight months. Maria and the other men's wives baked chickens, bread, pies and cakes for the men to eat on the first days of their journey. Maria also made two large fruit cakes, which would furnish a little luxury for them when they were far from home and the good things they were in the habit of having on their tables. She had also knitted socks and gloves and a nice warm scarf for B. R. In fact, she had done everything she could think of that might add to his comfort and safety: but, as the time drew near for them to leave, she worried more and more about the dangers of such an undertaking. She remembered the stories her parents and grand- parents had told her about pioneer hardships; and she was sure that she should have made a greater effort to have kept him at home: but she knew that nothing she could have done would have stopped him. So she kept her fears to herself and went about her work with a tranquility that surprised every one—including herself.

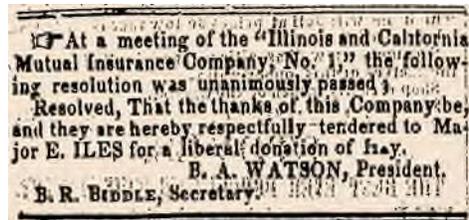
The day before he left, B. R. sat down to talk with the children and said: "Now children, Pa is going away, for a long time, and is expecting you to take care of Ma while he is gone. Aunt Angeline will be near you; and Uncle Will Cardwell, and Aunt Mary will come once in awhile; but you will be here all of the time, and you will be the ones to look after her every day. You are almost twelve, Henry, and Robert is ten—so it won't be long before you'll be grown up. I'll expect you to do the work I planned for you—and help Ma in every way you can. I want you to write to me often, to San Francisco; and tell me everything that happens at home. And Emma, a little girl six years old can help her mother too. You can wipe the dishes, and help keep the house clean—and watch Puggie, so's she won't get into mischief. Now I want you all to remember everything I've told you—and be good children while I'm gone—and mind Ma. I'll try to bring you all something nice when I come home. And remember, if you are very good, and do everything I've told you, you'll be very busy and the time won't seem long."¹²³

¹²² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 87.

¹²³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 89-90.

Elijah Iles Thanked For Donation of Hay

A meeting of the Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Companies No. 1 and 2 adopted a resolution thanking Major E. Iles for a liberal donation of hay.



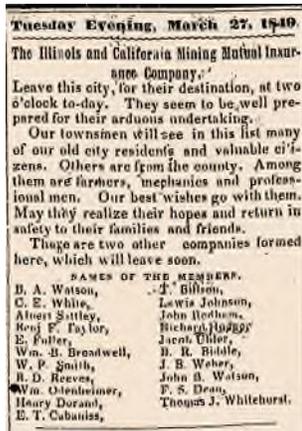
Journal, Tuesday, March 6, 1849.¹²⁴

Journal, Wednesday, March 28, 1849, p. 3

¹²⁴ *Journal*, Tuesday, March 6, 1849, p. 3.

The First Trip West (1849-1851)

Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company Leaves For California



Journal, Tuesday, March 27, 1849.¹²⁵ □ □

The Illinois and California Mining Mutual Insurance Company, Leave this city, for their destination, at two o'clock today. They seem to be well prepared for their arduous undertaking.

Our townsmen will see in this list many of our old city residents and valuable citizens. Others are from the county. Among them are farmers, mechanics and professional men. Our best wishes go with them. May they realized their hopes and return in safety to their families and friends.

There are two other companies formed here, which will leave soon.

NAMES OF THE MEMBERS: □ B. A. Watson, □ C. E. White, □ Albert Sattley, □ E. Fuller, Wm. B. Broadwell, □ W. P. Smith, □ B. D. Reeves, □ Wm. Odenheimer, □ Henry Dorand, □ E. T. Cabaniss, □ T. Billson, □ Lewis Johnson, □ John Redham, □ Richard Hodge(s?), □ Jacob Uhler, □ B. R. Biddle, □ J. B. Weber, □ John B. Watson, □ F. S. Dean, □ Thomas J. Whitehurst.

Sam and one of the other men left that morning, March 27, with two ox teams and the covered wagons. B. R. and John Weber waited to spend one more day and night with their families.

B. R. Biddle Leaves For California

On March 28, 1849, B. R. Biddle and John Weber set out from Springfield for California. They knew that by starting early that morning, they could catch up with the wagons before dark.

B. R. and John Weber rode horses so that they could be on the look out and study the trail over which they expected to return after they had made their fortunes. They did not expect the gold rush to last more than a year or two: but if the West Coast was all that it was represented to be, they hoped to take their families out there later.

Maria and Sarah Weber stood at the gate with their children. Through tear-dimmed eyes, they watched their husbands ride down the road on prancing steeds, like knights of old going forth to conquer the mysteries and dangers of an unknown world.¹²⁶

Maria decided that she would not need Mrs. Brown's help while B. R. was away. She then had all of the sewing, mending, knitting, weaving, house cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, and baking to do and had little time to think of herself and her loneliness.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *Journal*, Tuesday, March 27, 1849, p. 2.

¹²⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 88.

¹²⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 90.

Meeting of Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Companies No. 1 and 2 Held at Encampment^[SEP]

On the evening of March 28, 1849, the Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Companies No. 1 and 2 held a meeting at their encampment on the North Mauvaisterre, Jacksonville, Morgan, Illinois. They adopted a resolution thanking the citizens of Springfield for their help and good wishes expressed to those going west in the Company. B. R. Biddle was the secretary of the Company.¹²⁸

At a meeting of the Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Companies No. 1 and 2, held at their encampment on the North Mauvaisterre, on the evening of the 28th March, 1849, the following resolutions were adopted, viz:

Resolved, That the citizens of Springfield by their many acts of kindness towards us whilst preparing to start on our expedition to California, and for their good wishes so fully expressed from time to time, and especially when they gave us their parting hand as we left our homes, have merited from us some public expression of our gratitude and thanks.

Resolved, That we tender to them our heartfelt thanks for all their kindness towards us, and hereby pledge ourselves to them, that we will be careful not to do any thing whilst absent to render us unworthy of their kindness and confidence, or cause them to feel ashamed at any time of us as their fellow-citizens.

Resolved, That the editors of the Illinois Journal and the State Register be requested to publish these resolutions.

B. A. WATSON, Pres't.
B. R. BIDDLE, Sec'y.

Journal, Saturday, April 7, 1849.¹²⁹

B. R. Biddle Writes Newspaper From Pike County, Illinois

On April 2, 1849, Biddle and his company crossed the Illinois River at Naples, Illinois, about 90 miles west of Springfield. He wrote home about their progress. Barre, Pike County is likely Barry, Pike County, Illinois, which would have been about 90 miles from Springfield. They would have had to cross the Illinois River to get to Barry.

At a meeting of the Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Companies No. 1 and 2, held at their encampment on the North Mauvaisterre, on the evening of the 28th March, 1849, the following resolutions were adopted, viz:

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Resolved, That we tender to them our heartfelt thanks for all their kindness towards us, and hereby pledge ourselves to them, that we will be careful not to do any thing whilst absent to render us unworthy of their kindness and confidence, or cause them to feel ashamed at any time of us as their fellow-citizens.

Resolved, That the editors of the Illinois Journal and the State Register be requested to publish these resolutions.

B. A. Watson, Pres't. B. R. Biddle, Sec'y.

¹²⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 40.

¹²⁹ *Journal*, Saturday, April 7, 1849, p. 3.

Mr. B. R. BIDDLE, of one of the California Companies which have left this town, writes to us under date of "Barre, Pike County, April 2, 1849:"—
 "We have all got along well. Our men are cheerful. We crossed the Illinois river at Naples, and ferried four miles. Our waggons and teams are complimented. Our men have proved that they can work in water and out of it, and the remark was made at the river, after we had pulled the waggons out of the mud and water, that if any persons got to California, we would."

Journal, Saturday, April 7, 1849.¹³⁰

Arrival in St. Louis

When they arrived in St. Louis, they all went into the city together, where they met their partners, bought additional supplies, and started by boat, up the Missouri River to St. Joseph.¹³¹

Arrival in St. Joseph, Missouri

On April 27th, they arrived by boat in St. Joseph, Missouri, where they planned to disembark and meet their other Illinois friends who would be waiting to join their train for the two thousand mile trek across the wilderness to the "Promised Land." While waiting at St. Joseph, they bought more supplies and repacked their wagons.

ARRIVALS AT ST. JOSEPH FROM ILLINOIS.

The last St. Joseph's Gazette notices the arrival of several companies of California emigrants from this state.

The following persons, composing the Illinois and California Mutual Insurance Company, No. 1, arrived from Springfield on the 27th. of April, all in good health and condition:

Wm. B. Broadwell, B. A. Watson, W. P. Smith, Jacob Uhler, Wm. Odenheimer, E. Fuller, Henry Dorar, E. T. Cabaniss, T. Billson, Lewis Johnson, B. D. Reeves, John Rodham, Rich'd Hodge, Benj. Taylor, B. R. Biddle, J. B. Weber, J. B. Watson, F. S. Dean, Albert Saterly, Tho's Whitehurst.

The Springfield company No. 3, had arrived and left.

Register, Monday, May 14, 1849.¹³²

William B. Broadwell
 W. P. Smith
 William Odenheimer
 Henry Dorar
 T. Billson
 B. D. Reeves
 Richard Hodge
 B. R. Biddle
 J. B. Watson
 Albert Saterly

B. A. Watson
 Jacob Uhler
 E. Fuller
 E. T. Cabaniss
 Lewis Johnson
 John Rodham
 Benjamin Taylor
 J. B. Weber
 F. S. Dean
 Thomas Whitehurst

Second Presbyterian Church Members

Those who joined them at St. Joseph were friends from Illinois and were known to be substantial citizens. In fact they were nearly all members of the Second Presbyterian Church of Springfield, who were carrying their Christianity with them into the wild west. They were temperate men too, who used liquor for medicinal purposes only. They had little patience with the human derelicts they sometimes met along the way.

Leave St. Joseph, Missouri

When they were ready to start moving from St. Joseph, the party consisted of 35 or 40 men, five or six women and a few children. They traveled with twenty wagons and a number of men on

¹³⁰ *Journal*, Saturday, April 7, 1849, p. 2.

¹³¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 91.

¹³² *Register*, Monday, May 14, 1849, p. 2.

horseback and with packhorses and mules to carry their equipment. They were all equipped with the best outfits that money and careful planning could secure.

B. R. Chosen Captain of Party

B. R. with his partners and their guide formed the nucleus of the party, and B. R. was chosen Captain. Among them were many well-educated men and tradesmen—a doctor and dentist, a minister, a blacksmith, a wagon maker, and others who, having lived in a pioneer country, could turn their hands to any necessary or useful work.

Occasionally small parties would ask permission to stop overnight at their camp, or to travel with them for a day or two for the protection afforded by a large party. B. R. would not countenance any drinking. A drunken man was a dangerous man on the trail.

Occasionally, they met Indians who asked for food, guns and ammunition. They always gave them small quantities of food, but never gave or traded arms or ammunition. Their guide could speak the language of several of the Indian tribes and could talk to others by a common sign language. B. R. and John Weber had also known Indians when they were young. They understood them well enough to meet them in friendship. Most of the Indians would look into their wagons, examine their stock, ask for bacon or flour—and then go their way. B. R. always gave them something. In return, they gave him much valuable information about the country through which they were passing—and the trail ahead.

Once five or six Indians on horseback joined them and rode along with them all day. The trail wound through mountainous country, with huge rocks (behind which Indians could easily have been hiding) dotting the landscape on both sides of the road. Every one in the party was nervous and alert, but before sundown, the Indians turned off to the right, rode down a dry ravine and left them.

That night they feared an attack, and the usual guard was doubled. Those who slept kept loaded guns within reach—and the wagon containing ammunition was placed where it would be most accessible in case of trouble. However the Indians did not molest them. Perhaps their guests of the day had been friendly Indians, as they had claimed—or they may have decided that the company was too well armed and organized to fall an easy prey to an attack.¹³³

While B. R., and his party, treated the Indians with great kindness, they always gave the impression that they were not afraid, and were always ready, and able to defend themselves if necessary. Indians seldom made an attack unless they were reasonably sure of success.

B. R. Biddle's Journal: St. Joseph to Sacramento

B. R. Biddle kept a daily diary of the journey from St. Joseph to Sacramento. It begins on the prairies with two letters covering the period May 7th to May 19th. The main narrative describes the entire period from June 11th to September 19th. A short, supplementary series of articles, entitled “Winter Quarters”, is in sharp contrast to the trail journey as here Biddle confronts the “bleak winter”, closing on a subdued note at Christmas Eve, 1849.

To enliven the repetitive nature of the daily journal entries, B. R. Biddle comments on social issues, such as relations with other migrants (generally good), contacts with Indians (mostly peaceful), a US army commander (drunkard) and sundry residents along the route. Unexpected

¹³³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 91-92.

details, such as a baptism by immersion, and a migrant Daguerreotype Artist add interest to the narrative.¹³⁴

MAY 1849

Monday, May 7, 1849.—Received a delegation from a company from Dayton, Ohio, which desired to join us, and organize as one company— which was agreed to, and they were to come up with us on the march. We left camp at 10 A. M. at the sound of the bugle, and this day passed 128 ox teams—encamped on the prairie, having traveled 12 miles.

Tuesday, 8th.—Passed an Indian Mission; some improvements—horse mill, blacksmith shop, and farm, carried on by government, and a school, in which there were between 30 and 40 Indian children. It was evident the natives were making but slow progress in civilization, growing out of their repugnance to labor. Traveled 16 miles and encamped.

Wednesday, 9th.—Some rain; traveled 8 miles and encamped on a branch; had to pack our wood nearly a mile; 85 oxen and six mule teams passed us.

Thursday, 10th.—Some dark clouds hanging about the horizon. Started at 7 A. M.; groves of timber near, indicating water; camped at 5 P. M., on a fine creek; made 28 miles. The Ohio company having joined us, J. B. Watson was elected general superintendent, and an advisory committee appointed to assist him. We passed a very fine dog, which had given out.

Friday, 11th.—Signs of rain; started at 7 A. M.; showers of rain; crossed Nimehaw, a beautiful stream, with rocky bottom and timber on its margin. This is a great place for emigrants. Here we saw a fresh grave—of a man from St. Louis, who had been long in ill health. Every tree about had bits of paper fastened to them, written upon, informing emigrants and friends that the writers were well and had passed this point— traveled 23 miles and encamped.

Saturday, 12th. Some clouds, cold; started at 7 A. M.; passed a dead ox partly skinned; came to an encampment where many things had been left, and a wagon burnt up. We crossed three tributaries today. Our Ohio friends broke a wagon tongue by the running away of the cattle; no farther damage done. Timber on the creek elm, and had bad fires. Traveled 21 miles.

Sunday, 13th. The morning bright and beautiful. 28 wagons encamped with us last night.— The day has passed very pleasantly. 130 wagons have passed us today. We find that a majority of the teams travel on the Sabbath, what the result will be on their teams, the end will prove. There is a family of children in camp tonight; the little creatures are playful and happy.

There were a train of 34 wagons passed today in which were Mr. Leviston and lady and two children (formerly Miss Woodson of Springfield.) Their wagon was beautifully arranged, and as neat as a parlor. The lady looks well and appears as if at home. B. R. B.

P. S. **Tuesday 15th.** All well, and moving on well, we are eight miles above where the Independence road strikes ours, and 140 miles from St. Joseph.

FROM THE PLAINS

109 Miles West of St. Joseph,
May 13, 1849.

We are now on the great prairie—nothing to relieve the monotony of the view but a few small groves, indicating watering places. The prairies of Illinois are mere garden spots in magnitude compared to this great plain. This would be a beautiful county if timber was plenty. We have seen but few Indians. They have stolen some cattle, but they were all recovered. We keep a strong guard at night. No accident has yet happened to us, and we get along with as little difficulty as any other 20 men on the road.

¹³⁴ <http://donduncan.org/trails/biddle.htm> Web publisher Duncan S. Campbell. *Illinois State Journal*, Springfield retrieved from the Illinois Digital Newspaper Collection.

We expect in a few days to intersect the Independence road, when there will be a great rush. It is represented that there are great numbers ahead of us; but we suppose that the great body is behind. When we lay by—as we have today—many companies pass us—a hundred have gone by today. They all seem to be in a hurry, and it is thought they drive too fast. The grass is not very good generally; but the mules do well. Some of our men complain that our loads are too heavy, and probably we shall throw away our ovens and lids and surplus iron. As we advance we find a great many articles thrown away by emigrants.

We expected to find it lonesome on the plains, but it is not so; we have plenty of society, and that of the best men. We are either passing or in sight of teams the whole day, and we generally find out where each other are from, &c. Our encampment is near others, and time passes swiftly. I will resume my journal: [*We make brief extracts from it.*]

Monday, May 14.—Rained hard, with a high wind. Resumed our journey—came to the Big Blue, a rapid stream—passed a wagon which had broken down, and partly burnt. Here was a fresh grave, of a young man who had died of inflammation of the bowels. Traveled 23 miles to day, and passed 113 wagons.

Tuesday, 15th—Cloudy and cold; started at 7 A. M.; passed three new graves—one of the persons died of fever, one of a bowel complaint, and the other was killed by being run over by a wagon. Made 22 miles today.

Wednesday, 16th.—Cloudy and cool; started early; came to Walnut Creek, took in wood,—crossed over the creek, and crossed Sandy, a pretty stream; saw some antelope, but failed to secure any. B. A. Watson shot at one, but at too great distance to take effect. Made 23 miles—rained hard at sun-down.

Thursday, 17th.—Cloudy morning; started early; some excitement in consequence of two drivers mistreating a mule, but it ended in smoke; struck the Little Blue again, and ‘nooned’—encamped at night upon its bank; caught some fine fish; passed 95 teams to day; saw some abandoned Indian lodges; made 25 miles.

Friday, 18th.—Sun rose clear, caught fish and a turtle; traveled up the river all day; passed 59 wagons; road sandy and gravelly; made 23 miles.

Saturday, 19th.—There was a thunder storm last night; it frightened our mules; morning very windy; passed the Louisville Company, which had just buried one of their number, shot by accident. We made our camp at 11 A. M. Mules want rest, grass good and fine water.

Yours, B. R. B.

HEAD WATERS, LITTLE BLUE,

May 30, 1849.

Another week has passed since I wrote you. Nothing strange has occurred to our company since then. We all enjoy excellent health. The road is most excellent, and the country most beautiful. The streams have rapid currents, and the waters are as clear as crystal, with pebbly bottoms. Springs of great beauty are breaking out constantly; the air is pure, and there seems nothing wanting to make this country most desirable for the agriculturalist but timber. When the autumnal fires are kept out, timber will spring up and grow with rapidity. This may soon be—for game is becoming scarce, and the natives will have to leave the country.

We have seen a few buffalo and antelopes, but none of them have been shot. We are now in the Indian country. They are very shy of us—few of them having come into the camps. We keep a strong guard at night.

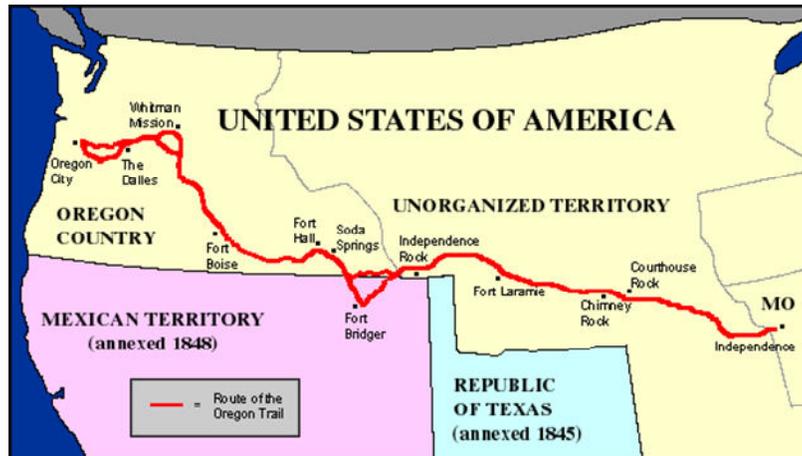
We are constantly passing notices from those who have preceded us,—written upon paper, elk horns and boards;—so that we are apprised of all that is going on ahead of us. The number of deaths known to me I have given in my journal.

The season is so backward that Flora has not put on her beautiful vestments here. I have seen but few flowers that I have not seen before. I send you a specimen of the wild pea, in the midst of a field of which is our encampment. The air is filled with its perfume. We have encamped to spend the Sabbath. Some of our company are now out hunting, while others, like myself, are engaged writing to friends far away. I have dated

this on Sunday, though in fact written on Saturday. We have an opportunity of sending letters by private express—which brings letters to us at 25 cents, and deposits ours in the nearest post office at one dollar.

Time passes away swiftly on these plains. We have an abundance of society—interesting, well educated persons—but we are absent from many we love.

I have given you the general features of the week, and now resume my journal:



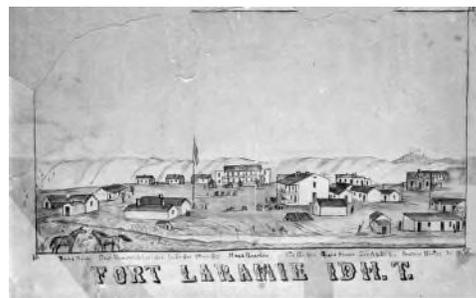
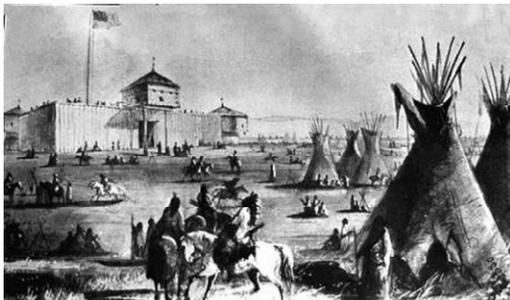
June 1849

Fort Laramie, Wyoming

By 1849, the flood of westbound emigrants motivated the government to take steps for their safety. A string of army posts along the trail could provide a sense of security, keep the trail open, and allow for reliable points of supply and repair. In April 1849, the Regiment of Mounted Rifles moved into the old adobe fort after the U.S. Army purchased it from the American Fur Company for four thousand dollars. The 41-year military period then began and what we now see and know as Fort Laramie was established.

The large and impressive Fort John was opened for business in 1841. It was built of thick adobe walls surrounding a central courtyard. It was the impressive structure seen at the south end of the present parade ground throughout the early years of overland migration. As such, many more travelers sketched this structure. It was the structure many of the early Oregon/California Trail emigrants associated with Fort Laramie. In addition to the Oregon and California Trails, were the Mormon Trail, Bozeman Trail, Pony Express Route, Transcontinental telegraph route, and the Deadwood and Cheyenne Stage Route.

The post were an important stopping off place for the increasing number of travelers along the trails to Oregon, California and Utah. Through most of the 1840s, it was the only permanent trading post for the 800-mile span between Fort Kearney in present Nebraska, and Fort Bridger in what's now southwest Wyoming.



Fort Laramie (Fort William) from an 1837 sketch by Alfred Jacob Miller. *Wyoming Tales and Trails.*

Monday, June 11th.—Pleasant morning. We moved off at five and a half o'clock, in advance of some sixty ox-teams. The road was fine indeed. Today, the timber was a little more abundant than we have seen it before on the Platte.— We saw nothing of Fort Bernard, as set down in the books, eight miles from Fort Laramie. About 5 p. m. we came to the Laramie Fork of the Platte and in sight of Fort John, which is now deserted — nothing remains but its mud walls. This branch of the Platte river is about 50 feet wide, with a very deep and rapid current. Encamped 7 p. m. Distance 22 miles.

Progress across the Great Plains with their ox-drawn wagons was slow, but steady. Fort Laramie was reached on June 11th, and South Pass crossed on June 28th. On later stages the going became rougher: although many other emigrants chose to abandon their wagons after reaching Fort Hall and proceed with mule trains, Biddle's group persevered with their loaded wagons, finally reaching Sacramento, California safely on September 13th. Their journey had taken twenty-four weeks.

Tuesday, June 12th.—This morning is cool. Started at half past five. Drew up to the fort I have described in a former letter. We found a great many encamped in the vicinity, all anxious to sell provisions and exchange heavy wagons for light ones. Some would sell a wagon at \$5; others, in preference to taking so low a price, burnt theirs or left them by the road-side. Bacon, beans, powder, lead, trunks, &c., were left upon the plains.— It seems very wrong to throw to the wolves what the poor Indians might use to advantage, but for the cupidity of the fur-traders—men who give them scarce a tithe of what their furs and skins are worth,—we have seen but few Indians on this part of the route. It is said the traders have told them they must keep away from the emigrants else they will give the cholera, small-pox and the like. After leaving the Fort, we commenced ascending the Black Hills. They have not appeared to us half so bad to get over as they have been described by writers. We passed the Warm Spring—a most delightful spot in the midst of desolation. The water is clear as crystal, and not so warm but that man and beast can drink freely of it as it flows in great abundance. The thermometer was thrust into the water, by which it was ascertained to be 10 deg. warmer than the surrounding atmosphere. We filled our casks; and encamped at 5 p. m. where there was good grass. Distance 15 miles.

Wednesday, 13th.—Morning cloudy. Started after an early breakfast. Passed over an undulating country. Crossed Butter creek, a very beautiful and limpid stream, dancing down from a mountain on our left, whose summit is covered with perpetual snow. The grass is getting scarce, and the timber gradually becoming more abundant. The wood is mostly pine, and has a fine appearance at a distance, on the hills around. This afternoon the road has been very rough. The snow-peak is still in view. Encamped at 5 p. m. Distance 23 miles.

Thursday, 14th.—Clear morning. Sold a little wagon we had bought at St. Joseph, so as to be able to rest two of our mules, in turn. After traveling one mile, we came to Heber spring and a creek; from which we began the ascent of a very steep bluff; traveled over a rough, hilly road; crossed La Bonte, a small but rapid river. Encamped at 6 p. m.—grass very poor. Distance 20 miles.

Friday, 15th.—The sun rose this morning with a threatening look, but cleared up without rain, so we had a pleasant day of it. Forded a creek and traveled along a valley, and entered a region bearing traces of volcanic eruption. The valley and hills looked red like brick. There was no vegetation except immense fields of wild sage. Amid these ruins arises a lonely pyramid, composed of loose fragments of rock, to an altitude of several hundred feet. I clambered to the summit. The alabaster, and red, grey and white sandstone, give to the whole of this picturesque country a singular appearance. The timber is small yellow-pine. There is but little grass. The road has been very crooked, today—following the winding of the ridges; but it is, certainly, the best natural road in the world. Crossed La Prele, said to be the largest tributary of the Platte above Laramie's Fork. Passed the dry bed of a creek. Encamped, at 6, on a hill—grass so scarce the mules did not have enough to eat—plenty of good water. Distance 21 miles.

Saturday, 16th.—Some appearance of rain— Moved off at 5. Roads broken and irregular.— Crossed Fouche Bois—too small to be called a river. Four miles from that, we came to the Platte, after having been away from it for eighty miles. Five miles further, we came to a fine fish-stream called Deer creek. The lack of an abundance of grass prevented us encamping there over Sunday. The wood and water were abundant, and

some had stopped and commenced washing. We came on, however, some five miles from the creek to the spot we occupy.

Sunday, 17th.—The sun rose in smiles. Nothing has occurred to distinguish this day particularly from the Sundays which have preceded it, save a little excitement, in camp, in consequence of three buffaloes descending the hills and threatening to take our fortress by storm; they, however, turned their course a little. Game is very plenty. This afternoon closes rain-like.

I have written this under the shade of a tree on the river-bank, surrounded by clusters of roses, while the birds are discoursing melody among the adjacent hills.

JOURNEY TO CALIFORNIA.

We have been favored with the Journal of Mr. B. R. BIDDLE, our townsman, written while on his route to California, and which abounds with interesting descriptions of the country, and incidents which occurred on the route. We shall copy from this Journal, from time to time, all matters which shall appear to possess a general interest. We have no doubt this Journal will be found as interesting to our readers as it has been to us. The first date is

“Sunday, June 17th, 1849—633 miles from St. Joseph, 96 miles from Fort Laramie, and 1026 miles west of Springfield, Illinois.”

I again embrace the opportunity which this day of rest affords, to continue my journal. The incidents of the last week have been of the most interesting character. Our road has led over hill and dale. The scenery was grand, the country sterile and barren, with, now and then, a mountain stream rushing on to mingle with the waters of the Platte—affording to the emigrant a cooling draught, amid the flying sand, which almost produces blindness. We have, today, encamped on the bank of the Platte, near a grove of large cotton wood, where there is a sufficiency of grass for our mules. We have been very lucky in getting good encampments on the Sabbath. While others are moving on—pleading necessity as a justification—we stop all day.

We reached this encampment on yesterday, at 3 p. m., which gave us an opportunity of doing some washing; as usual, it was done up in good style. Sattly and Doran went out with their guns and soon announced they had killed a buffalo, and asked for men and mules to bring it into camp. Volunteers turned out and, by 10 p. m., they came in, loaded with choice meat. The party pronounced buffalo plenty on the hills. Others went out fishing and caught some fish. The cooks were busily engaged preparing supper, which made the camp present a busy scene. Thus, you see, the hills furnish us meat, the streams afford us fish, and, today, the grove is vocal with the music of birds. The magpie, a bird not found at home, yields us considerable amusement by its tameness, eating out of our hands and chattering all the while. This bird can be learned to talk and is of considerable value.

This day finds us all well and in fine spirits. Our teams, I think, will take us through. We have nothing to fear, except the want of grass for our mules. The country here is very dry; but little rain has fallen; vegetation looks parched and dry. Some of those who are trying to get to the Promised Land, and think themselves endowed with the spirit of foretelling events, anticipate distress among the mountains; but we have no such forebodings. Our trip, thus far, has been of the most favorable character; and, by paying strict regard to the welfare of our mules, and taking our time, we shall succeed in getting over safe. There is a great rush, and some have injured their teams by traveling them too far. This part of the road is very gravelly and hard—a superior road to travel on with animals that are shod; but the oxen are getting sore feet; some have already been left.—The ferry across the Platte is between twenty and thirty miles from here, and they say is past fording. There is a great rush to make this point. There are twelve or fourteen hundred teams ahead of us. This will appear large to you. But admitting so many to be ahead of us, we are still in the first fourth of the whole number, as we thought, from the statement of others. The Platte, here, is a very insignificant stream, compared with what it appeared below; it has changed from a river of the plains to a mountain stream, rushing along with the sprightliness of an arrow. It is not more than a hundred feet wide at this point. We have seen some small deposits of gold in its sands; but not enough to tempt us to stop short of the great prize ahead. There is a rumor that gold, in quantities, has been discovered on Laramie’s Peak—a very high spur of the Rocky Mountains, and that some wagons from Illinois had turned aside to go to it.

It is said, a man went to see the mountain, was several days from his train, and brought of what he saw there, which was pronounced gold. This Peak is covered with perpetual snow. Fort Laramie is 4,470 feet above the level of the sea, and this mountain is 2000 feet higher. We are getting up quite high; we are rising near a thousand feet a week.

I sent you a long letter from Fort Laramie, but doubt whether you will receive it. I have no confidence in the men. They have established themselves to make money; and from the way they swindle emigrants, I am disposed to believe, when they have got their twenty-five cents from us for each letter, that they don't care much whether they go or not, after we are gone.

I will now commence my daily journal, and continue it until I have a chance of sending it to you.

Monday, June 18th.—The sun rose clear. We started at the usual time. All well. Our mules are lively and look well. We traveled up the river a few miles from our encampment. In descending a bad hill, we broke the 'hounds' of a wagon; but the united wisdom of the camp soon repaired it. The road is crowded with teams, all anxious to make the ferry so as to have their turn; but the ferry not being able to accommodate them in time, they have had recourse to rafting. We spent the noon near the lower ferry. The number of those waiting to cross is increasing very fast. It is five miles from this to the Mormon ferry— We found over a hundred teams before us. The ferry-boat consists of two rough canoes, lashed together, and a few rough pieces of timber laid across them for the wagons to run on. They take but one wagon at a time. They swim all the horses and cattle. Several men and horses were drowned in attempting to swim over, as the current is very swift. They are able to take over from fifty to sixty wagons per day, at the charge of \$3 per wagon. Six hands have charge of the ferry.— They have also a temporary black-smith shop, and charge \$4 for shoeing a horse, \$8 for an ox, and other work in that proportion. They have ferried over, in the three weeks preceding our arrival, seven hundred wagons; and, it is supposed, as many have crossed at other points—making the number, in advance some fourteen or fifteen hundred wagons; and, we suppose, we are in the first third of the emigration. Any one has the right to keep a ferry, or raft, and charge what he pleases. We encamped near the ferry at 5 p. m.— Distance, today, 16 miles.

Tuesday, 19th.—Cloudy morning. There being no grass in the vicinity, we had to take our mules some four miles, to the hills, to graze. Doran killed a mountain-goat—a very remarkable animal, with horns like our sheep, only a great deal larger. It is very strong, muscular and active. The flesh tastes like mutton. This day has been taken up pretty much in washing and cooking— Expect to cross the river, to-morrow. Our men are all well.

Wednesday, 20th.—Clear. Our wagons were moved up to the ferry, this morning, and our mules taken out to graze; we remained with them until 1 p. m., and then brought them in and swam them over without any accident. Our wagons were all got over safe, by 3 p. m.; when the government troops came up and took possession of the ferry, cutting off two wagons that had been in our company from St. Jo. This act, on the part of the commanding officer, was looked upon with indignation, and would have given rise to a conflict if our better judgment had not prevailed. Dividing a company by an officer of the government sent out to protect the emigrants, is an act too mean and contemptible for the meanest ox-driver on the plains to be guilty of. The Mormons, knowing how we had been treated by this government dignitary, determined to bring the two wagons over after night, and did so. By their kindness, we were re-united, about 10 o'clock at night. Preferring not to be in the neighborhood of the officers whose duty it was to protect us, we encamped, at 6 p. m., 3 miles from the ferry.

Thursday, 21st.—Very fine morning. Started early. At 9 a. m. we bade farewell to the Platte. We all felt glad upon leaving it, though we had derived much pleasure from the contemplation of its wild and romantic scenery. It is a remarkable stream, carrying, in its course to the Father of Waters, the great volume of water from the vast expanse of plain, and the melting of the snows of the Rocky Mountains, yet it is a perfect nullity as to all the purposes of navigation. We ascended the bluff, passed several lakes of bad, poisonous water, and, at 3 p. m., came to a mineral spring and a filthy looking pond near by. We drank cautiously of the spring, though men and mules were very thirsty. The waters of this whole region are so strongly impregnated with salt, alkali and sulphur that most of it is undrinkable. The cattle seem to suffer most from its effects. The road

is sandy and pulls very heavy. Encamped, at 5 p. m., between ranges of high hills, and opposite, on the left, to what is called the Buttes, composed of red sand stone; they look very pretty — Distance 21 miles.

Friday, 22d.—This morning is beautiful and bright. The mornings now are cool, but the days very warm. There has been but little rain here, and it is surprising how the vegetation has reached the maturity it has. Grass is scarce only in spots. Wild sage and a plant they call greasewood, dispute with each other the occupancy of the soil. They both burn freely, green or dry.— Water is scarce. Our course, this morning, lay between two ledges of rough, elevated piles of dirty looking rock; and, when we least expected it, we came to a spring of cold water, but not enough for our mules. Two and a half miles from that, we came to the celebrated Willow Spring—a feeble spring, but of good water, free from impurities. You can imagine how this beverage, given by a bountiful Providence to the weary traveler, was relished by us. We then ascended a long hill, from which we had a fine view of the surrounding country. At 4 p. m., we came to a pretty running brook, glittering like a serpent in the grass. At 5, we come to a creek of swift, pure water. Encamped 2 miles beyond it, at 7.— Gnats and mosquitoes very troublesome. Took our mules to the creek bottom to graze; and the guard took a tent down so as to watch them—Distance 24 miles.

Independence Rock



Saturday, 23d.— Fine morning. The atmosphere of this mountain region is of the most invigorating kind. All of us are in the enjoyment of excellent health. I have increased some eight or ten pounds. All the company have increased in weight. There are few instances of fifty men being associated together, and taking their chances of camp life, who have enjoyed such perfect health. The road is very sandy, this morning, which makes it hard work for men and mules. About 9, we arrived at Independence Rock on the Sweet Water—a tributary of the Platte. It is thirty yards wide, and good but not cold. Independence Rock is a conspicuous land-mark. It derived its name from some of the first emigrants having celebrated the 4th of July upon it. It is a pile of granite, and resembles a ship turned bottom up. It is about one hundred and twenty feet high, and near three quarters of a mile around the base. Upon the summit, I found written thousands of names; ranging in date from the first to the last party of emigrants. We crossed the Sweet Water, about two miles from the rock, at a ford twenty yards wide. Here we found the carcasses of four oxen which had died from having drunk poisonous water. Five miles from the rock is the Devil's Gate—a mountain gorge, between whose perpendicular walls of granite, four hundred feet high, the river, circumscribed in width to a few yards, dashes and foams over the rocks; having a fall of fifteen feet in three hundred yards. After traveling four miles, we encamped on the river-bank surrounded by the best grass and near one of the best springs we have found in this territory; the water is cold as ice. There is an abundance of wood on the bluff half a mile off. Distance, today, only 16 miles.

Sunday, 24th.—Morning bright and cheerful, promising a warm day. Our mules, in sight under the mountain, having gratified their appetite, are resting to the left. On the summit of a lofty peak, to the east, the snow is glistening in the brilliant sunshine. The Devil's Gate is full in view, while, to the west, the still higher points of the Rocky Mountains are inviting us onward — Surrounded by such scenery, and in the enjoyment of the bounties of nature in this wild region, we are thankful that no accident or misfortune has happened us since we started from home. These mountains deserve their name of Rocky. The primitive rock, piled in grand profusion, with a few straggling, stunted pines and cedars struggling for a hold, cause them to present a rugged and singular aspect. The hills and mountains we are accustomed to see, are pigmies compared to them. We are six thousand feet above Springfield and are yet to ascend four thousand more before we get to the Valley of the Sacramento. Next Sabbath, we expect to be on the Pacific side of the South Pass. There is nothing to mar our expectations of procuring the full reward of our toil. There will, however, be a great deal of suffering,

in many companies, before they reach their destination. There are many families among the emigrants—I pity them. There is a disposition to press on with the current—each one trying to get ahead of others, frequently urging the teams beyond their strength, all traveling farther, each day, than any emigration before them. Many press on regardless of the Sabbath, fearful, if they stop, that others will pass them; but we expect to be able to overtake them, by encamping over Sunday. The season has been favorable to emigrants; cool and rainy, affording abundance of water for the oxen.

Monday, 25th.—The morning clear. All reported well. Started at the usual time, and followed up the river. The road is of deep sand, which causes the wagons to run heavy. The scenery, along our route today, is very imposing. The Wind River Mountains, on our right, lift their hoary summits to the clouds, with a chain of granite hills between them and us. Several notches in the hills gave us fine views to the north. The snow lay in the valleys and hollows, on our left; which indicates that we are at a very great elevation. The boys engaged in snow-balling, this morning. The nights now are quite cold, and the days hot. The health of many emigrants has been injured by the water, the rarity of the atmosphere and the constant fatigue they undergo; but the general health is good. Though some of us have been affected, to some extent, by some of these causes, we are getting along very well. The animals seem to be more affected than the men. We passed five dead oxen and one mule, today. Encamped on the Sweet Water, at 5 p. m.—but little grass. Distance 25 miles.

Tuesday, 26th.—The morning pleasant. We started at sun-rise. From some high ridges, we had magnificent views of the snow-capped mountains. We left the river, and traveled ten miles on a very sandy road, when we came to the river again. We took the mules two miles up the river to graze at noon. Saw the carcasses, today, of six oxen and one mule. Here we took in water, as it is sixteen miles to the next watering place. Encamped, at 5 p. m., ten miles from the river. Distance 20 miles.

Wednesday, 27th.—Very pleasant morning. Had a fine rain last evening, which laid the dust and made it more pleasant traveling. A full view of splendid mountain scenery. After going six miles we came to the river where we spent the noon. Then left the river and ascended a long, high hill; traveled over a very barren and rocky piece of road, where there scarcely seemed to be any life in anything around. We descended from this scene of desolation among hollows, the hills surrounding us like walls. We stopped, for the night, near a hollow where there was ice three feet thick, the constant melting of which made a rivulet which afforded us good water. There was plenty of fine grass and the wild sage answered as fuel. We saw nine dead oxen today. Distance 23 miles.

Reach Continental Divide

At last they finished the long up-grade journey to the Continental Divide, and reached Pacific Springs—whose waters flowed down Pacific Creek to the Big Sandy River,—then to the Green River, and eventually into the Pacific Ocean. The emigrants were delighted to reach this spot, and felt that the worst of their journey was over; for the general slope of the road, from that point, would be down grade until they reached the last range of mountains, where the gold-bearing Sierras would have to be crossed.

Thursday, 28th.—Morning pleasant. Started at 5 a. m. Ascended a very gently sloping ridge, with beautiful little groves of willow, on the left, that seemed to receive their nourishment from a spring. Crossed a small creek and a short distance beyond came to a large one, and, beyond that, a few miles, came to the river, where the sparkling volume of water and gently sloping hills, on all sides, made a beautiful landscape. Here we left the Sweet Water for the last time. We were all sorry to part with it. We had often been benefitted by its refreshing waters, which had endeared the mountain stream to us. We had traveled upon its banks for more than a hundred miles—had followed it to its source in the mountains of snow. The snow is now lying in the hollows around us, notwithstanding the days are very warm. We now ascended an easily rising slope, which brought us to the far-famed South Pass—7470 feet above the level of the sea. We passed the summit about a mile before we were aware that we had arrived at the dividing point. There is nothing to distinguish the spot. The ascent and descent is so slight that few would think they had attained that lofty elevation which divides the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Oregon Territory

Immediately after passing this point, we entered the Oregon Territory, and, traveling two miles, arrived at the Pacific Spring, the water of which is very cold. We encamped near it, with many others who had arrived before. The grass is cropped very short. Stopped at 6 p. m., and took our mules to graze on the hills near by. Distance 26 miles.

Friday, 29th.—Morning cold—thermometer, at sun-rise, standing at 52 deg. We have had other mornings colder. Started at the usual time; the road leading over an undulating country, resembling our northern prairies more than the rugged wildness of the Rocky Mountains. We found the distance between streams of water, along here, rather far for the comfort of our animals. Crossed the Dry Sandy; it had but little water in the bed of the stream; we did not give any of it to our animals, fearing that it might not be good. The water, in all this neighborhood, is strongly impregnated with alkali; and many who have lost their oxen attribute it to the poisonous quality of the water they have drank. Notices are placed on boards, all along the road, cautioning the emigrant against the use of the water in the lakes and ponds. We next came to Little Sandy—a swift-running stream, about forty feet wide and almost too deep to ford. Passed twenty dead oxen. The valley we are now in stretches far off to the south, and presents a delightful appearance. Passed, today, the forks of the road where the Mormon trail leaves for Salt Lake, by the way of Fort Bridger. Many have taken this route, but the majority have taken the right hand road. Encamped, at 6 p. m., three miles from Big Sandy. Distance 20 miles.

Big Sandy

Saturday, 30th.—Clear, fine morning. Started early and reached the Big Sandy at 8. It is thirty yards wide—swift and deep. Here we held a meeting of the companies to decide whether we should go across the cut-off, which extends from this point to a distance of forty miles without water, or lay over until after 12 o'clock on Sunday night, and then starting make the drive in one day. It was decided we should lay over. This is Sublette's Cut-off. Encamped three miles above the ford, where we found good grass. There are many resting here to prepare their animals for the hard drive. Came only 6 miles, today.

July 1849

Sunday, July 1st.—The morning fine. This has been a refreshing day. Had preaching, at 9 a. m., by a Baptist minister, and at 4 p. m. by the Rev. Mr. Blakely, a gentleman who has traveled with us several hundred miles, and preached several times at our camp. A fine shower came down at 3 p. m. The crack of the ox-driver's whip is heard, at this hour, starting out on the long drive, taking the cool of the evening and night to make it in; calculating to arrive at the Green River by 10 a. m. We had another rain near night-fall. We have filled our casks with water to do us through the long drive.

Monday, 2d.—The night has been clear and bright, favoring our starting out early. The moon shone all night, so that we had everything ready for hitching up at 20 min. before 1 o'clock. Started quietly and in good order. At 6 a. m., we stopped to breakfast and gave grass to our mules. The road so far has been quite good. The landscape is undulating and presents a very barren appearance. We are traveling between ranges of mountains whose tops are covered with snow. We next came to several very steep hills; but our ascent or descent was attended with no accident. Halted again, at 12 m., to let our mules graze. Stopped two hours, and started afresh to complete the remainder of our journey to the river. Just before arriving at the river, we had a very steep bill to descend; we got down safe although it was in the dark. Encamped at 10 p. m. two miles this side of the river. But little grass. Distance 38 miles.

Green River

When they came to the ford of the Green River they found a man, by the name of Walsh, who was at work building a ferry. He agreed to carry them across if they would help him, for the rest of the day, while he finished his ferry. At times the river could be easily forded; but there had been an unusual amount of rain that Spring, which (while it made the feed more plentiful) had caused the rivers to be swollen and almost impossible to ford. Mr. Walsh said that he was going to charge five dollars for each wagon he ferried across; and, as it would take almost an hour to cross the river and return for another load, he hoped to make at least \$75.00 a day, while the river was high; and then later he would sell his ferry to the first person who would make him a good offer. He was sure that he could make as much, or more, than he could at gold mining;—and hoped to reach California by October or November. As they helped with the ferry, and then rested in the

shade on the banks of the Green River, they wished that they might risk their lives in boats on its clear waters instead of plodding slowly behind ox teams, through storm and dust and desert thirst. The rest at Green River refreshed their teams, and they were eager to press on.

Tuesday, 3d.—Clear but cold. Ice formed in the vessels of water. Started at the usual hour, and went down to the lower ferry, kept by several emigrants who bought the boat of some Mormons for five hundred dollars, and are now making two hundred dollars a day by the use of it. This Green River is three hundred feet wide, with a very rapid current, and flows directly from the mountains that surround us. To give you some idea how rapid it is, our mules when started in to swim had to go almost downstream, and came out on the opposite bank, three hundred yards below. Found several hundred wagons were waiting to cross, notwithstanding there are two other ferries—some charging ten dollars per wagon; we pay four at this one. We found no grass along the river, and were obliged to take our mules four miles out to the hills to graze. The government troops have come up with us again—a thing we did not desire, owing to the manner in which we had been treated by them on the Platte. Some of the men have been sick from diarrhoea, but are now better. I had a slight attack myself, but am convalescing. The distance from our last night's encampment is six miles. Encamped on the bank of the river, near the ferry, amid more dust and dirt than I ever saw before in my life. It gets into everything, and is so light that a breath will put it in motion. The sun beaming down upon us at the rate of 80 and 90 deg, accompanied by nights that freeze three quarters of an inch in still water, is rather a strange sort of climate.— Our elevation is between six and seven thousand feet above Springfield.

Wednesday, 4th.—Over-coats were in great demand this morning. The sick are all reported to be better; and, although there have been severe cases of diarrhoea, we entertain no fears of their not getting well. The atmosphere is much rarified from the elevation—the sun pouring such heat that it parches everything in a little while; a wet shirt will dry in 10 min. It also affects our breathing. It is impossible for a man to exert himself very much, particularly to run fast, without getting out of breath.

This is the glorious Fourth of July. We intended to have had a fine time of it, but the heat and dust are so annoying, and the bustle is so great that we do not enjoy it so well as we would otherwise. However, we had a good dinner. Among the dainties on the table was what the cooks called a black dog,—which needs an explanation — It consisted of dough rolled out thin and some stewed apples spread over it and then rolled up. Another was rolled out longer than the other and some dried cherries spread over it and rolled over the first roll; and so on. This was boiled and served up with sauce. All partook freely.

Many banners were floating in the breeze. The evening concluded with one of the greatest farces I ever witnessed. A murderer was arrested by the troop, and the emigrants were called upon to try him upon evidence. I was selected as one of the jury. We repaired to the Major's quarters and found him ready to receive us, but as drunk as Bacchus, together with his suite of officers.—

A man was appointed by the emigrants to preside; the troops being present to preserve order.— The prisoner chose, as counsel, a young Virginia lawyer; was brought in and the case opened by his denying that the emigrants had the right to try him. The Major and officers and men, being drunk, had a good deal to say. The Major insulted the lawyer, the officers insulted the Major. Each party swearing and calling the others hard names, and each threatening the other, with an arrest. One little moustached fellow struck the Major; the emigrants looking on and laughing. The whole thing broke up in a row. The prisoner escaped and thus ended the whole affair. Thus it is that these officers and men protect the interests of the emigrant by getting drunk.

There is now a great stir on the river made by swimming over the cattle.

Another murder was committed yesterday. The troops went out in pursuit, but did not succeed in taking the murderer. We had the pleasure of meeting our Springfield friends, Eli Cook, Joseph Condell, Cook Matheny and others, all well and hardy, but dirty as any of us. They brought me a letter dated the 7th of April. We are told that Mr. and Mrs. Maltby will arrive here this evening. My health is better today. The sun shines very hot.

Thursday, 5th.—The morning cool. The dust becoming almost intolerable. The sick are all safe we think; I am a great deal better. We expect, by a tight squeeze, to get our wagons over the river tonight. The moon

shines and we prefer it to the hot sun. We may have to lay here tomorrow. The mules are doing very well—so we shall be able to go ahead.

Friday, 6th.—Rose at 2 in the morning for the purpose of trying to cross over before the government troops moved up from their encampment to give us trouble, as they did on the occasion of our crossing the Platte. But this time they were more polite and did not interfere with us. The moon shone brightly and gave us much aid in our operations. We assisted others and they, in turn assisted us—for, be it remembered, that we had to do all the work and pay four dollars beside for the use of the ferry to pass over every wagon. We were all over by 8 o'clock. The mules swam like so many rats. We left the river at ten o'clock, and went over some rough road, 17 miles, to a creek, where was a mound. The creek was very rapid and we were obliged to cross it at two different points. After passing over some hills, we encamped, at sun-down, near a branch. The wild sage here was the largest I had ever seen, measuring, in height, from six to eight feet, and in diameter six to nine inches, near the root. The hills around look barren and dreary beyond description. Distance 18 miles.

Saturday, 7th.—Clear and dry. Started early. Passed several little streams which had their rise in the snow-banks in sight. Crossed a very high ridge, the gorges of which are filled with snow. Fir and aspen grow there, nurtured by the melting of snows. Here we crossed the dividing ridge between Green and Bear rivers. We had a fine view of the white-capped mountains near the Salt Lake. Snow is seen around us, dotting the hill-sides in a very pretty and fantastic manner. Among them, gush fine, cold springs of pure water. We here took a near cut which saved us several miles and enabled us to encamp on the bank of Ham's Fork of Green River—a beautiful, rapid stream, lined with excellent grass. Road quite rough all day. Traveled 20 miles. Distance from St. Joseph 968 miles. The distance has been calculated by ourselves, without any reference to books, or the estimated distances of traders.

Sunday, 8th.—This morning dawned brightly as that of an Italian sky. Our favorable location as to grass, sage and water promises a pleasant Sabbath. Those who were on our sick list are all nearly well. There are companies encamped near us who have preachers of the Gospel with them, pledged to preach for them every Sunday, yet they will have a sermon on Saturday night, so as to give them an opportunity to start early on Sunday morning. We are invariably left alone on the Sabbath. How it will be, as we advance, is past conjecture; we are resolved, however, to continue our observance of the rest-day.

Monday, 9th.—Started early. Men all well.— A heavy dew this morning; the first we have had for a considerable time. We ascended a long and steep hill—the road firm and good—grass very fine. The hollows of the mountains still contain snow; which nourishes handsome little groves of aspen and willow that were musical with the warbling of birds. Here we pass many springs, cold as ice and of crystal purity. On our left, were the far-off snow-covered ridges of Black's Fork of Green River. Today's drive carried us over the steepest hills we have met with in our journey. We drove eleven hours—which is more than usual. The grass has been fine all day. Encamped at a fine spring. The dust is almost beyond endurance—blowing and covering us so we look like an army of millers. Distance 20 miles.

Tuesday, 10th.—Got off at the regular hour.— We are now traveling down the bottom of Bear River, and have crossed what is called Thomas Fork—very rapid and rocky. We have found a few lodges of friendly Snake Indians, from whom we purchased some moccasins, at a dollar a pair. They are quite handsome and take great pains to adorn their persons. They are small in stature with short square features. In the start, the road was rough for half a mile, and then smooth until noon. We were obliged to make a great bend in our course so as to avoid marshy ground and sloughs in the vicinity. The hills are high and of red appearance. Wild rye and blue grass are found here. In one of the hollows, we found a grave, said to be that of a squaw who was thrown from her horse and killed, near this spot. There was a cross at the head of the grave. Encamped at 6 p. m. Distance 24 miles.

Wednesday, 11th.—Had an early start. Ascended a very steep hill, a mile long. Very rough and hilly for four or five miles, and descended the steepest hill we have had yet, more than a mile long. All got down safe, and then looked back and wondered how. Next came to the river at a trading point, kept by a man they called Peg-leg Smith. Fine river bottom land—covered with luxuriant grass. In the afternoon, we crossed a number of streamlets, bearing their tribute from the masses of snow to Bear River. Encamped, to the right of the road, on a branch. Fine grass—willows for fuel. Distance of today's travel, 24 miles.

Soda and Mineral Springs

One Sunday evening, after they had had their song service, and just before the evening prayer, B. R. addressed the gathering, and said:

We have come from the Mississippi River, and are now beyond the summit of the Rocky Mountains—over the longest part of our journey; but the worst of it is ahead of us. There will be little or no rain from now on: and much of our trail lies over the Great American Desert: but we must remember that others have passed this way before us, and they have left a trail that we can follow if we have good judgment, perseverance and faith—and trust in the Lord. There are two things that we must keep uppermost in our minds,—1st, each and all of us can, if we try, do anything that others have done before us; and 2nd, the Lord does not do much for those who do not try to help themselves—but He does give added strength to those who do their utmost. After Brother Walker has led us in prayer, we will go, at once, to bed; so that we can all be ready to start tomorrow morning at sun up.

They made a stop at Fort Bridges—then went on through the Bear Valley to Soda Springs, and to Fort Hall on the Snake River. Here friendly Indians gave them fresh and smoked salmon,—the first that any of them had ever tasted. After following the Snake River some distance they turned southwest,—and over a steep mountain trail to Humbolt Wells. They then followed the Humbolt River to Tule Swamp (near the present site of Winnemucca). From there they went almost due west to Goose Lake and the head waters of Rio Sacramento (now called Pitt River). The trail here ran through lands claimed by hostile Indians; and they had to be careful to follow instructions in their Guide Book, which told them, never to camp in the timber, if it could be avoided—never to let any Indians come among them—never to let Indians have any ammunition—never to neglect to keep the camp well guarded—never to fire a gun within five day's travel south of the Siskiew Mountains (this was the area between the Siskiyou Mountains and Mount Shasta)—to keep as close together as possible, while traveling through the brush;—never to scatter to hunt game, or make any other division of their party— and to always keep their guns in best fighting condition. They went down the Lassen Trail to Lassen's ranch on Deer Creek; where they learned more about the "California Diggins", which consisted of the Northern and Southern Mines. The Northern Mines, most of which had been discovered by Major Pearson Reading and his Indians, were considered the best.¹³⁵

Thursday, 12th—Started early. Continued down the river bottom, crossing many ravines, which made our road very rough. The dust was almost suffocating. Nooned at as fine and as cold a spring, bubbling out of the side of a hill, as I have ever seen. This is in the vicinity of the celebrated Soda and Mineral Springs. We occupied our noon-time in visiting a few of them. We went about a mile, to our right, to two white-looking mounds, which, on our approach, we found to be formations from these springs. They rise to an elevation of thirty or forty feet above the plain. On their summits, I counted twelve of these warm, sparkling fountains, boiling up and flowing down the sides of the mounds. I tasted the water, and found it to be very like our soda without the addition of any flavor. It was too warm, however, to be pleasant. We returned to camp, and traveled down the river. After crossing a small stream, we came to a very pretty cedar grove, where we found many encamped, enjoying the luxury of the shade. Not far from this, we visited what is called the Beer Spring; the water of a similar quality with the others, but much more limpid and abundant. I used some sugar with this and found it very good. Most of the company drank of it and pronounced it excellent soda. This spring throws out nearly ten barrels per minute. It effervesces and throws off so much gas that it is dangerous for a person to hold his head near it for even a minute, as it produces giddiness. A little below this is the greatest wonder of all— another spring denominated the Steamboat Spring. I am without words to describe justly this wonder of nature. In boiling up it produces a noise which has given it the name it bears. Very little water runs over the sides of a mound that has been formed by its overflow, but is thrown up in a jet, two or three feet, and falls back into the basin. Handkerchiefs were thrown into it and washed clean in a few moments. This whole country is volcanic, and presents all the remarkable characteristics of such regions in other countries. The quality of these springs is derived from mineral deposits in the surrounding hills. Bear River flows immediately by them; and, a few miles beyond, turns its course southward, leaving the trail and flowing toward the Great Salt Lake. — We have passed, this evening, many interesting vestiges of volcanic action. There were many chasms and huge openings in the earth, of frightful depth, lined with iron and cinder. This

¹³⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 92- 93.

is the point, on the route to Oregon, where the United States intend establishing a military post. If invalids could get from the States to this point and back again in the fall, it would, no doubt, become a place of great resort. The climate, altitude and scenery all would combine to render a residence here beneficial to the afflicted—especially to the consumptive. I regretted to leave the fine grassy bottoms of Bear River, for I never before saw such pasture, and our books gave us no account of grass, on our after route, that was encouraging. Distance 28 miles.

Friday, 13th.—Left camp at 5 a. m. Fifteen minutes after starting, we came to a good cold spring, crossed several boggy places, and, at 11, came to a sluggish stream, narrow and deep. We saw from thirty to forty Indians of the Snake tribe. In the afternoon, we traveled up the stream and, at 3 p. m., crossed it. The crossing was bad and the road bad from that until we encamped. — Passed several groves of dead cedar. Encamped at 6 p. m., on the left side of the road, where there was good grass, fuel and water. We are in the midst of high hills—the spurs of the dividing ridge between the waters of the Salt Lake and those of the Columbia river. Distance, today, 23 miles.

Saturday, 14th.—This morning, all is well. We passed the dividing ridge and came to the head waters of the Panack River. The road quite rough, with some steep places and fine springs.—

Fort Laramie was reached on June 11th, and South Pass crossed on June 28th. On later stages the going became rougher: although many other emigrants chose to abandon their wagons after reaching Fort Hall and proceed with mule trains, Biddle's group persevered with their loaded wagons, finally reaching Sacramento, California safely on September 13th. Their journey had taken twenty-four weeks.

We then descended into the valley of the Pont Neuf—a tributary of Lewis' Fork of the Columbia. Encamped on the bank of a stream. Have had a down hill road most of the day. The mosquitoes have tormented us very much, and, I am afraid, will interfere with our enjoyment of tomorrow. Distance, today, 20 miles. This place is 1107 miles from St. Joseph, and 1450 from Springfield.

Indians

Sunday, 15th.—Had a visit from a number of Indian families, this morning. Our men got a buffalo robe from them in exchange for a string of beads that cost seventy-five cents at home. We gave them something to eat, and they soon packed up and were on the move to some other point— They are very homely, and always hungry. When the craving of their appetite is temporarily satisfied, they leave, without further trouble. They are a roving people, and seldom remain long in one place, and never have any provision on hand. Their villages are off among the mountains, but how they manage to subsist is a mystery. Thermometer stood 94 deg. at noon, and, at 2 o'clock, at 100—the warmest day we have had. The mosquitoes were so bad, we had to build fires before the doors of our tents, towards the close of day. We retired, at night, with a perfect understanding that we desired nothing better than to leave this place in the undisturbed possession of the natives.

Fort Hall

Monday, 16th.—All hands up early. There were a few scattering clouds, which served to render the morning pleasant. The insects still keep nibbling, so we have to carry a brush, or tie up our faces to keep them off. We stopped, occasionally, and, setting fire to a sage bush, stood in the smoke; which was the only hint to leave the insects would take. Six mules from camp, crossed a branch of the Panack. Four miles further, we came to Fort Hall; passing, on our way, over low, boggy ground, in which we were nearly swamped. The Fort is on Lewis' Fork of the Columbia. I was somewhat disappointed in the location of this post. It is situated in a broad valley, having all the advantages of a trade from the waters of three rivers which flow near it—the Panack, a tributary of the Pont Neuf, and Lewis' Fork or Snake River, into which the Pont Neuf empties, a few miles below the Fort. Lewis' Fork runs immediately by the Fort, and is a bold, rapid river, containing nearly or quite as much water as the Illinois, but not navigable on account of the numerous rapids. It is, however, an important branch of the great river of Oregon. The Fort is built, as are all the forts along the line, of mud on sun-dried brick. There is no farm attached to any of the forts. There is a store belonging to this one, and a trade is kept up with the Indians for their furs. There are a few Indians encamped around the Fort; but they have little to sell. — It is seldom a horse can be bought from them, and for a good one, they ask from sixty to eighty and sometimes as high as a hundred and fifty dollars. Some of their horses are very fine. They manufacture fur moccasins and a raw-hide rope they call a *lariat*—which they throw with a great deal of skill.

The proprietors of this Fort treated us kindly. A Mormon had rented a room in the Fort, where he kept a sort of tavern, in which some of our men procured a meal of bread, butter and milk, for which they paid three bits. It was said here that all the men have left Oregon and gone to the mines. Towards evening, we crossed the Panack river—a swift and pretty stream and three miles further crossed the Pont Neuf, which we found deep enough to run into our wagon-beds, and about one handled yards in width. We ascended the bluff, and encamped nine miles from the Fort. Distance 19 miles.

Tuesday, 17th.—Atmosphere dry. Very dusty. Traveled down the river. Nooned at a spring near the junction of the three rivers. Passed the American Falls, on Lewis' River. The descent of the cataract, to a depth of thirty feet, is attended with a stunning noise, and presents a grand and impressive scene. From the boiling basin beneath, the spray ascends like a cloud. The road along here is very bad, and, in places, broken by precipices which we were obliged to descend by means of ropes. Encamped near a rapid. The men caught some fish. Here we saw, for the first time, a very fine yellow currant, and the cane-grass, which resembles the cane. Distance, today, 21 miles.

Wednesday, 18th.—Well, but rather tired. The journey has been a long one, and the weather is hot and the road dusty. The most of our men walk the greater part of the way—their feet get sore—and, now and then, they get to thinking of the distance they have yet to travel and grow somewhat despondent; but it soon wears off. Could we hear some encouraging news from the Gold Region, it would cure their lameness, and all would be right, once more. But we apprehend no difficulty in getting through—for, as our loads get lighter, our men can ride the more. We expect soon to stop, a few days, and, take a good rest. — We continue our way down the river, and find it rough, rocky and hilly. Have been obliged to use the ropes, occasionally, in going up and down some of the steeps. At noon, we crossed Fall creek. Here we discovered we had left a mule at last night's encampment; and I was selected to go back and bring him. I found him and caught up with the train before dusk. The train left Lewis' River, four miles beyond where we had nooned —ascended the bluff, and traveled five miles, to Raft River, and encamped near the forks of the Oregon road. Distance 18 miles.

Friday, 20th.—Pleasant morning. Passed up a gorge of the mountain, along the same stream, to its head spring. Road pretty good. We now begin to see signs of packing. Wagons are left along the road, without any respect to quality or cost—the best wagons only selling to those who desire to use them, for fifteen dollars apiece. Hundreds have been burnt and otherwise destroyed. Pack trains are passing us every day; but that has no influence upon us. We intend taking our wagons through, if we can. Crossed several marshy places; otherwise, the bottom is fine—with rugged and stupendous ranges of granite hills, on either side, towering up to the clouds, and assuming every possible form of the grand and wildly picturesque. In the midst of such scenery, and after passing over half a mile of very rocky road, that endangered our wagons, we encamped where there was an abundance of good grass and water. Here the rocks, jutting up in high peaks, are of a kind of marble, susceptible of a fine polish. Distance, today, 21 miles.

Saturday, 21st.—This morning, we enjoy the luxury of a cloudy sky and a few drops of rain. Were I at home, I would be sure, from appearance we were about to have a fine rain; but, here, it is doubtful. We continued our route between ranges of hills. I clambered to the summit of one, from which a beautiful and extensive prospect spread around. Six miles beyond that, we came to the intersection of the Salt Lake road, and met some wagons having come that way. We suppose it to be about fifty miles farther than by Fort Hall. We wish we had come that way.— The road is described as being better, and extending, forty miles, through a settlement where we might have obtained plenty of milk, butter and cheese. We have lived on dry provisions so long that we often think of our tables at home covered, at this season, with every kind of vegetables, cherries and early apples. We all need a change of diet. Ascended a ridge, along the bank of a rivulet. Very rough road, with some steep pitches, where we had to use our ropes again. Descended to a branch, one and a half miles from Goose creek. Encamped near a spring. Grass tolerably good. Fixed one of our wheels that had given way coming over the hills. Dr. McKenzie encamped near us. Distance 16 miles.

Sunday, 22d—Pleasant morning; some clouds. We had a little conference meeting last evening— Mr. Blakeslee, Mr. J. B. Watson, Mr. Weber, myself, Mr. Eastman and Dr. McKenzie, (the latter gentlemen is from Ohio, and seems desirous of spending his Sabbaths with us,) for the purpose of having a religious conversation with Mr. Hodge, who has applied to Mr. Blakeslee to baptize him. We all enjoyed the meeting, and became satisfied that Mr. Hodge is a hopeful convert to the truth. We had preaching at 11 A. M. on the subject of the new birth; after which the ordinance of baptism was administered to Mr. Hodge by immersion.

It was a scene that drew tears from many eyes—an occurrence that seldom happens on these plains. It was a solemn appeal to the emigrant, showing that even here, away from the advantages of churches, the heart can be reached by religious truth. Mr. Hodge has endeared himself to us by this act, and we will stand by him, sustaining him as best we can; and what a thrill of joy will it send through the hearts of his family and friends? We have seen and know enough of the man to state that he is no hypocrite in any thing he resolves upon doing. We believe in his honor, his integrity, his purity; and we can assure his family of his usefulness and gentlemanly deportment, by which he has secured for himself the kindness and respect of the company. The story should be told, and it has taken wings with the wind, informing the emigrant that even in the swift pursuit of gold, the mind can be influenced to think of another state of the heart— as gold will not save the soul. — Thus ends another Sabbath,—one that many of us will long remember.

Monday, 23d.—The morning bright and beautiful. Soon after starting, we came to Goose creek—a small tributary of Lewis' Fork of the Columbia. Its water is rather warm to be palatable— being supplied from warm springs. We passed twenty miles up this stream, along which we found several hot springs—some hot enough to scald a hand plunged in the water. The road was good. The scenery more of the romantic and pleasing, than the abrupt and grand. The bottom furnishing good grass, we followed up a branch, through a gorge of the hills. Encamped in this gorge, between precipitous hills. Distance 23 miles.

Cross From Oregon Into California

Tuesday, 24th—Morning cool. Started early, and followed up the branch between high hills, covered with a kind of cinder—evidence of this whole region having been heated intensely. Passed over to another valley, and followed down it five miles to some cold springs impregnated with sulphur—passed round the point of a hill—crossed over a sand-ridge to another valley having good grass but no water, where we encamped—six miles from the springs at which we had filled our casks. During the afternoon, we passed lat. 42° north—the line dividing Oregon from California. We have traveled, in the Territory of Oregon, 414 miles—most of the way close to its southern line. Except on Bear River, and the neighborhood of Fort Hall, the country is not at all inviting to an Illinoisan, and passing over into California does not place you among olive groves and vineyards. Neither does it afford a genial atmosphere of Italian warmth. But the good is beyond this, as you will see by following me to the region of the dust. That will make the country everything desirable. Without this dust (which I hope may not prove as detrimental to our souls as this we now inhale is to our bodies,) the country, though it be an Eden, will seem a barren waste, and the adventurer will return from it sick with disappointment. Distance 25 miles.

Wednesday, 25th.—Cool morning. Cold nights and hot days seems to be the order of the weather in this region. Started at 7 a. m. Traveled down the valley. Water scarce and impregnated with salt and alkali—some pools being of strong sulphur, of course not very good to drink. The day is sultry and dusty. Passed several pools which, if they run at all, soon lose themselves in the bottom. They are perfectly clear and pure, and look inviting, but are not pleasant to the taste— some hot and some cold. Encamped, at an early hour, on the bank of a small stream of warm water, which invited Mr. Weber and myself to do up our washing. The water being of the right temperature, we got through in half of the usual time. Distance 16 miles.

Thursday, 26th.—Breakfasted before sun-rise. Soon after starting, we came to the source of the warm stream, where were a great number of boiling hot springs, smoking and throwing off clouds of vapor. We could not endure our hands in the water. It boiled and bubbled like a pot, which proved that the furnace which heated it could not be far beneath. Continued up the valley six miles. Then ascended a ridge and nooned; after which we descended a gentle declivity into another valley—passed several pools of water. Encamped. Water and grass very good. Distance, today, 20 miles.

Friday, 27th.—This morning we called to mind that we had been absent from home four months, and that still it would require another month to finish our journey, if good fortune continued with us. Last night, one of our best mules died, from the bite of a rattle-snake. This is our first bad luck. We passed up the valley—came to some pools of sulphur water, and others which contained quantities of alkali. Our animals drank freely, which made some, for awhile, quite sick.— Passed through a "kenyon." The ground around the springs, and in the bottom, showed strong signs of salaratus [*baking soda*, *Ed.*]. Crossed a ridge that opened into a fine large valley, that had a pleasant look after traveling among the hills so long. This valley is irrigated by

numerous streams which take their rise from springs in it. Encamped. Grass and water tolerably good. Distance 20 miles.

Saturday, 28th.—Started at the usual time. All fair. Three miles from camp, we came to what we supposed to be one of the sources of Mary's River. It was four or five yards wide where we came upon it, and increased in volume as we followed it down—receiving the tribute of many springs and branches. We stopped where there was abundance of good grass, as well as small willows, which answered admirably for cooking purposes. Being on what we called the river which here is eight or ten yards wide, we concluded to remain until Monday, so as to afford our men a chance to repair and tighten up our wagons. The water is rather too warm to drink, so we fill our casks with it and let it cool. Our men are all well at this time. Our mules have done their part so faithfully that we would like to give them a little more rest than usual; but, I think, by Monday, they will be recruited. We have but three or four mules that are not as good as when we started. Distance, today, only 12 miles.

We are now 1339 miles from St. Jo. and 1682 from Springfield.

Sunday, 29th.—Morning quite frosty. Ice three-fourths of an inch thick, in our vessels. Today has been rendered memorable by a feast of frogs. The men having, on Saturday afternoon, observed large numbers of this interesting quadruped hopping about in the vicinity of the camp, took it into their heads, to go a frogging. Accordingly, they turned out, caught a great many, tore off their hides, and, when served up, they were, unanimously, pronounced excellent—quite a delicacy in the desert. Pharaoh knew nothing about turning one of his plagues to so good an account.

Thus another week of toil is ended, and we enjoy the rest of the Sabbath. During the last week we have had but little cause to complain. Water has been abundant, which is, indeed, a luxury in this dusty country. On Sunday mornings, we perform our weekly round of shaving—which circumstance has gained for us some notoriety, as the greater part of the emigration permit their beards to grow, which makes it difficult to determine to which of the races they belong.

Monday, 30th.—Cool morning. Thermometer 26 deg. at sun-rise—noon 88 deg. There was some show of white frost, and ice was formed in our vessels. Made an early start. Men all well. Mules well rested. Our road led around the slope of a hill, along the river. Passed the confluence of Mary's with a stream, from the north, of equal size. Crossed a ridge. Encamped in the bottom on the river-bank. No. 1 Wagon, to which I belong, got some little out of repair, and prevented our going two or three miles further. Distance 22 miles.

Tuesday, 31st.—This morning was mild and pleasant. I rose with a bad head-ache which lasted all day, so that I was obliged to ride in the wagon. Passed the grave of a young man, from Finley, O., who is said to have died of consumption. Continued our course down the river.—Toward noon, we were delayed, a few hours, by the breaking of one of our wagons. Several of the men complain of costiveness [constipation]—the cold nights and hot days do not agree well with them. Passed some very hot springs. Encamped, at the foot of a ridge, near the river. Distance 15 miles.—Stopped early, as, we are told, it is now eighteen miles to the next water.

August 1849

Wednesday, August 1st. —Started as the first sun-rays gilded the hill-tops around. Commenced the ascent of a hill, passing through a "kenyon", and leaving the river to the left. Crossed the trail of the first emigrants three times, and saved about one-half their distance, they having been probably compelled, by high water, to take the route they did. About half way, we had the good fortune to discover three tolerably good springs, a short distance apart, from which we got a supply of water sufficient for mules and men. The road is very crooked, in consequence of its leading through the gorges of the hills. Encamped a short distance below where we came to the river. Distance 18 miles.

Thursday, 2d. —Rose very early; three o'clock a. m. being our usual time for a cook and teamster to rise, and that is early rising for men who are tired at night. This time, we had breakfast before it was fairly light. At this point, we left the river again, and climbing over a hill, passed along the windings of the hollows. Came to the river, in the afternoon, but found no grass; so we continued down the river and crossed it at a very pretty ford, water warm and gravel bottom. Encamped three miles beyond where we came to the river. Grass poor;

the mules seemed to prefer the young willows. Fears are entertained that grass will be poor along this river. Distance, today, 22 miles.

Friday, 3d.—Moved off at 5 a. m. down the river, in a north-west course. Crossed at 10 a. m. Grass very poor. Mules still seem fond of young willow, which is abundant. Scorching sun, and a stifling amount of dust. Very thirsty and the river water too warm to quench it entirely. We turned, in the afternoon, a south-west course, down a large, broad valley, which had, early in the season, afforded excellent pasture, but was now parched and sere; yet we managed to hit upon tolerable grass for the night—using the willow for wood. The hills, along here, present the most barren and sterile appearance of any we have yet seen. Nothing, on them, seems able to survive long. They are composed of volcanic rocks rising in a solid facade on either side of the valley. We are cautioned to beware of Indians along this route; but none, as yet, have made their appearance to molest us. Some few clouds are floating near the horizon; but rain cannot be expected, at this season of the year, in this climate. The men here went into the river to wash, and B. D. Reeves came near being drowned, but he was relieved soon and brought to consciousness by rubbing. This may operate as a caution to those who cannot swim well. After the alarm had subsided, everything moved on as before—the incident, as no harm was done, served to give an impulse to the conversation which all enjoyed. Distance 20 miles.

Saturday, 4th.—Our course still lay down the river, about sixteen miles, to the point of a mountain, around which we turned a north-westerly direction—leaving the river to make a great bend to the left. Had no grass or water for eight miles. Our fears were excited by seeing most of the vegetation dried up; but we succeeded in finding a grassy spot for our encampment. The sage predominates in this bottom and is of every stunted form and appearance. Two other valleys diverge into this—one coming in from the south-east, the other from the north. Encamped at 1 p. m. Distance 18 miles.

We are now on the north bank of Mary's River (or Humboldt's,) 1454 miles from St. Jo.—1797 from Springfield.

North Branch of Humbolt

Sunday, 5th.—The good Sabbath has come once more and another week of toil is ended. This day we enjoy very much. Contrary to expectation, we found a fine pasture in the bend of the river—discovered as it were by accident. Since we have started, we have never lacked good grazing, for our mules, on Sunday—enabling us to observe, scrupulously, that provision of our Constitution which has set this apart as a rest day.

This day is one to be remembered from the appearance among us of Cook Matheny, Reuben McDaniel and his nephew, each on a mule and leading one packed with a few necessaries. It gladdened our hearts to see them; but we were surprised they should be traveling in that mode and alone. There was a general burst of admiration for their daring. They acceded to our invitation to sojourn with us during the day, and their perils and troubles were related. Their adventures were of the kind encountered by most persons who get separated, voluntarily or otherwise, from their mess-mates. We learned from them that Gormley is alone, packing, and E. Cook, Johnson McDaniel the hatter, and J. Condell are together with a wagon. Several of our Springfield folks have got scared and taken the shoot to Oregon. What a history of a great movement, by our American people, will be written when, upon the record of the next two years, shall be revealed the signet, and all for? gold? For your gratification, I will collect some of the incidents that have befallen others, when I can command the leisure to do so, and the heat has somewhat abated so everything does not fizz when it is touched.

Monday, 6th.—All bright. We started early, and moved down the river until noon, which was very warm, thermometer standing at 98 deg. After which, we crossed a small hill, upon which we saw the grave of E. A. Bryson, aged 34, of Louisville, Ky., one of Bryant's company, who died July 15th, 1849. Traveled a north-west course. Encamped on the river. I am suffering from a bad cold. Distance 24 miles.

Tuesday, 7th.—This morning our road led to the north; then around a bend of the river, inclining southward, forming a half circle. In the afternoon, we crossed a sand-ridge, leaving the river and the old trail which is but little traveled this season. This road across the ridge was made by the advance portion of the emigration to avoid crossing the river which I presume was high. Encamped on the river. Distance 21 miles.

Wednesday, 8th.—Breakfasted before daylight. Left the encampment at sun-rise. Continued near the river during the forenoon. The afternoon, our road run south-westerly. There are indications of the grass having been good during the early part of the season, but it is now all withered. Passed a grave sacred to the memory of A. C. Baldwin. Size of the willow is diminishing. It is not here more than an inch in diameter, yet we depend upon it, principally, for fuel. The river has not increased in volume, perceptibly, but has a muddier tinge and moves more sluggishly. The bottom is full of sloughs in which the bulrush is apparently the sole tenant. Distance 22 miles.

Thursday, 9th.—Took up our line of march early. Wm. Broadwell bought a horse, saddle and bridle for \$45. We came on a sand-bluff, which wearied our mules very much. We crossed the river, leaving this abominable sand for a bottom road. Saw several wagons that had been left by the owners on the road-side after having packed what they most desired. Small parties of packers are coming up with us constantly, all of them wanting some article of provision. Continued on the same side of the river, the road being good.— Encamped on the bottom. Grass poor and only growing among the willows. Distance, today, 15 miles.

Friday, 10th.—All well. Continued on the same side of the river for two or three miles, and then crossed to the right bank. The fording was deep, Here we found a great quantity of a very fine, red berry, resembling the currant. Its name we could not learn. Immediately before us rose a lofty mountain, with a valley opening to the southwest and another to the south-east. Mr. Shepherd¹³⁶ the Daguerrean Artist, came up with us on packs. His company went ahead and he remained with us until noon the next day. In four miles, we came to the bluff up which the road went. A note was left here, for us, by Dr. McKenzie, of Cincinnati, informing us of the sand road ahead and there being neither grass nor water for fifteen miles, and but little grass for seventy-two miles. We called a counsel at 10 a. m. to decide upon the policy of commencing this journey today. Determined to wait, let our mules rest, and start tonight at the rising of the moon. Made 6 miles today.

Maria Biddle Back in Springfield, Illinois

Birth of Edwin Webber Biddle

(1849–1928)^{SEP}

On August 11(18), 1849, Maria Biddle gave birth to her third boy, and named him Edwin Weber Biddle. Sarah Weber, Dr. Henry and Angeline were with her. Her kind neighbors seemed to vie with each other in doing everything they could for her, until she was strong and well once more. Maria needed all the love and tenderness they gave her for she was very lonely and sick at heart.¹³⁷

Maria Biddle Pinched Financially

For the first time in her life, Maria was feeling the sting of poverty. The uncertainty of B. R.'s whereabouts kept her constantly worried and nervous. She was very busy throughout the day and found little time to think about herself and her troubles; but she could not sleep at night—

¹³⁶ Shepherd, Nicholas H. Born in May 1822, in New York State. 1843-1844 Census lists Shepherd as a “druggist” at 549 Grand Street, New York. “It is known that with their knowledge of chemicals many druggists went into the then new and exciting business of making daguerreotypes...” As early as 1845, Shepherd was taking pictures in various cities of Illinois. October 30, 1845 *Journal* advertisement: late of New York City; has taken rooms for a few days over the grocery store of J. Delany’s on Adams Street. “Listed as a daguerreian in Springfield, Ill., 1845-1848. Prior to recent discoveries, he was credited with taking the earliest daguerreotype of Abraham Lincoln, in 1846.” January 10, 1846 *Journal* advertisement: Daguerreotype Miniature Gallery Over the Drug Store of J. Brookie. “...he will remain at the above room until the 1st of February...” May 7, 1846 *Journal* report on visit of N. H. Shepherd, daguerreotype artist, to Decatur, Bloomington and places in northern part of State; May 28, 1846 *Register* advertisement: Springfield Daguerreotype Gallery, over the drug store of J. Bookie; “Lincoln’s earliest known photographic likeness, made probably in 1846, when at the age of thirty-seven he was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives. Original daguerreotype, believed to have been made by N. H. Shepherd, in Springfield, Illinois. Library of Congress.” January 1, 1847 *Register* advertisement: Springfield Daguerreotype Miniature Rooms, Northwest Corner Public Square, over the Drug Store of H. R. Pomeroy. 1848 Gibson Harris, a young law office clerk with the Lincoln and Herndon firm, had once roomed with Nicholas Shepherd at Springfield. Harris wrote that late in 1848 he had received from Albion, Illinois, a letter telling that his photographer friend and room-mate was about to start for California. Harris never heard from Shepherd again. He believed that perhaps Shepherd had lost his life on the Overland Trail. 1850 *Journal*, June 20, 1850: report from Sacramento City, California, stated that former Springfield residents in the area were well, some were looking for gold, and “Shepherd the daguerreotypist, was merchandising there...” Nicholas married Ann Williams on September 2, 1857, at Sacramento, California. 1860 Census for Sacramento City listed Shepherd as a “farmer.”

¹³⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 107.

or when she did sleep she would often wake herself by crying over some terrible dream. Then she would be in bed, trembling from shock and fright, after the terror of her dream.

She had no way of knowing if B. R. were alive and safe, or not: and she would think of the reports that had been brought back from the West—of the immigrants who had been murdered by Indians,—or had died from thirst or cholera. Her only solace was her faith in prayer—and she prayed fervently each day, that God, in his infinite goodness and mercy, would guide and protect B. R. (and the other Springfield travelers) on their perilous journey. ... The harvests were poor that year, and the rents and notes remained unpaid. There were many things needed for her little family, and money should be put away for taxes. B. R. had always attended to everything of that sort; and it worried her more than she would admit. Her own property was tied up so that she could not get anything from it; and she was unwilling to accept help from her family—who would have been glad to assist her if they had known of her plight. At last she decided to have some boarders, as well as roomers. She had her own vegetable garden, cow and chickens—and occasional meat from the farmers who could not pay their debt, to her, in cash: so she decided that a few boarders would almost pay her running expenses. With five children (and one of them a baby) this was no small undertaking: but “where there’s a will there’s a way”, and Maria took care of her family without any financial aid from others.¹³⁸

Saturday, 11th. —In compliance with our resolution of yesterday, we started a little before 1 o’clock this morning. Ascended the bluff, which was very hard pulling; after which we found some sand but the road generally proved better than we had expected. Got across the fifteen miles by 7 a. m. Took breakfast and grazed our mules— resting three hours. Then followed the river, which makes a considerable bend, turning first to the north and then inclining to the south. The bottom gradually enlarges. The first or low bottom, along which the road runs, is walled in by a bench or range of sand—the whirlwinds raising columns of dust in every direction, the mountains entirely bare of vegetation—the only thing to attract the attention being the smoke that rises from the camp or the signal fires of the Digger Indians. These Indians manage to keep at a respectful distance. Encamped on the river-bank—making 25 miles, today.

Near this point, is the fork of the Oregon road which was explored by Mr. Applegate, who conducted his emigration successfully along it to Oregon—making the head of the Willamette Valley in 1845. As I am writing this, I hear little else discussed around me but the merits and demerits of this new route. It leads into Oregon at or near the Willamette Valley, avoiding the Cascade Mts. near to Lewis’ Fork of the Columbia—crossing the Sierra Nevada at a very favorable pass. Bryant speaks, in his book, of having had a very unexpected though pleasant and cordial meeting on this river, with the Messrs. Applegates, who had been three months exploring this route. A portion of the emigration, this season, propose going this way, on account of there being more water and grass along it than on the usual route to Sutter’s Fort, and not increasing the distance to that point—a point in which we all feel a deep interest because of its furnishing us with provisions for the winter. This cut-off, as it is called, will take us from this, (nearly sixty miles from the “sink” of the river) almost due west to the head waters of Feather River, in the vicinity of the Gold Region (that was,) or to the head waters of the Sacramento which are not far from Feather River. It will not require more than seven or eight days to accomplish the journey. The Oregon route will be left, a few days after taking it, and a trail taken to the left which was traveled, last season, with thirteen wagons, by a man named Claerson, who has since settled on Feather River, and has given Messrs. McGee and Myers, two mountain traders, a description of the road, which induced them to take it, this morning, with eleven teams. Others are following them during the day. We are laying over and will take a vote, on Monday, as to whether we will take it or not. We have discouraging news about the grass on the old route; and our mules, to take us through, must have grass.— The cut-off is supposed to have plenty, as it has not been traveled this season. It also places us in what was last year the Gold Region, and, we presume that the operators still there will have facilities for procuring provisions.

We are on the west bank of Mary’s River, 1567 miles from St. Jo.—1910 miles from Springfield.

¹³⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 107.

Sunday, 12th.—Another Sabbath has smiled upon us, and, under the protection of Providence, we have reached this point of our journey in health and peace, with nothing to alarm or make us afraid that in three weeks, or less, we shall not be in the settlement of Sutter's Fort.

Monday, 13th.—This morning a council was called and a vote taken upon what course we should take, which resulted in our selecting the new route—Ayes 14, Nays 6. Those opposing were R. Hodge, E. T. Cabanis, B. F. Taylor, B. A. Watson, E. Fuller and T. Bilison. The remaining companies all following in our wake; but none of them agreeing unanimously to do so. In twelve miles, we came to a feeble spring and some grass. We dug holes and got nearly enough water for our mules. To this spring, we came nearly due west. Here we stayed three hours. At half past three, we started, and ascended and descended a mountain by gentle slopes. Passed through a bottom and up a gentle acclivity. Then descended into a "kenyon" and the road, which heretofore had been good, became rocky. The walls on either side were high, and it was night. Mr. J. B. Watson, and others, went forward in search of water and grass, until half past 10 o'clock at night, when, having met with no success, we encamped, tied our tired mules to the wagons, halted two hours for the moon to rise; and then, determined to find grass and water, all hands were called up at near one o'clock. We hitched up and were off in half an hour. Distance 28 miles.

Tuesday, 14th.—"O, Yes— all hands get up!" was heard as the moon rose above the hills surrounding our camp. All was stir, and in a little while, we were wheeled into the line of march. Our poor mules were hungry and thirsty, and remaining would not supply their wants. Our road soon took a north-westerly direction and continued so nearly all day. Sterility and volcanic desolation everywhere prevailed. The day was fine, but the warmth unfavorable to our thirsty mules. For fourteen miles, we traveled over the bed of a lake which is now dry. In the spring-time, it had been covered water. To our right, rose the black rocky point of a mountain, in the vicinity of which were several old craters. As we progressed, our mules began to show signs of fatigue. Passed several horses and cattle which had given out, and wagons that had been left in the desert while the owners went abroad, with the teams, in quest of water. At 2 p. m., when men and mules were almost exhausted, we found some water that was warm and hardly drinkable; and, some distance below, we discovered one of the largest and most remarkable boiling springs we had seen. Grass plenty. Traveled 13 hours. Distance 24 miles.

During the last two days, we have come fifty-two miles, and our teams are now more weary than they have been at any previous time. This is a hard place for stock to cross unless they be strong and in good order.

Wednesday, 15th.—Our mules had fared well, but we were obliged to move cautiously. The water being warm did not quench thirst as well as if it had been cold; and, here, all the water, both warm and cold, is strongly impregnated with salt, which renders it unpalatable. The men suffer from thirst. Nearly everything we eat or drink has salt in it, and nearly everything is hot. We put some boiling water into buckets at night, which cooled by morning so we could drink it, but it did not quench our thirst. The emigrants began to crowd in upon us with tired teams—many having come ahead, who returned to their trains with canteens filled with water. Mules and oxen were brought to drink, and taken back to the wagons at night. In justice to those who were behind us, we determined to leave this place and go to some springs that were a few miles ahead. In about three miles, we came to other springs so hot that some oxen, in their eagerness for water, rushed in and were badly scalded. Here there was grass, and some who were with us encamped.— Our company passed on three miles further and came to some water that was not so hot where there was fine grass. Close to our encampment, is a boiling spring, in which we boiled a large piece of bacon finely. For supper, we had peaches, rice, bacon and a pot of tea. Cut grass to take with us, determined our mules should not suffer again. We learn that we have to cross another desert of twenty miles, to-morrow. Distance, today, 6 miles.

Thursday, 16th.—Everything ready—grass for our mules and casks filled with water. All rose at one o'clock and moved off at half past two to cross what is called the Salt Plain. We found the road to be very sandy in spots; sage was abundant and the ground covered with an incrustation of salt. Made a halt at seven; breakfasted and gave our mules grass. We then had a very heavy sandy road for five miles, when we descended a bank into a bottom, at the head of which, after traveling a north-westerly course, we came to fine grass and water in great abundance. We next turned the point of a mountain, inclining our course westerly, the prospect of having food for the mules became encouraging. After crossing a desert of seventy-five miles, our mules seemed brisk and lively. We stopped to give them water and allow them to feed several times during the day.

There are only fourteen teams ahead of us, on this new route, and they serve to break the road and make it plain. Distance 23 miles.

Friday, 17th.— Two horses were reported to have been shot, last night. One of them was killed by a wound in the neck, caused by an arrow with a flint point. Missed one of our mules, this morning, and left a note requesting those behind to bring him up, if found. We started from camp with our road in full view, winding up a gentle acclivity, in a westerly direction. Near the summit, we came to an abrupt pitch where we had to use our big ropes to let down the wagons. This introduced us into a “kenyon” that opened into a pretty valley. After which, our road turned to the right and entered a very narrow defile, with walls rising, on either side, to the height of several hundred feet. Here we found grass and water. This place of gloom and shadows is a favorite resort of the Indians. A cavern yawned in the bold facade of high-piled rocks; and, from the indications, the savages had made it an asylum from the bleak winds and storms of winter. We passed beyond, about a mile, and encamped in a fine “kenyon,” where there was excellent water and a rich variety of clover. We have prepared ourselves against the Indians by having our guns put in order and loaded. There is no place, since we have been among the mountains, where we have had so much occasion to be in dread of an attack. Stopped at 2 p. m. Distance, today, 12 miles.

Saturday, 18th.—Morning is quite cool—ice made—overcoats in use. During the night, the encampment was roused from slumber by the report of a gun, which was understood to be the signal for others to give the alarm. The denouement was rather laughable. It turned out that Mr. J. B. Weber being on the watch, and a horse having passed the line without being seen by him, he heard the noise, hailed three times, and the horse not answering, he fired but missed. The fellows laughed and said that he fired so as to hit if it were an Indian and miss if it were a horse. So it passed off as a good joke, and, the remainder of the night, our rest was uninterrupted.

Our road led, this morning, through a narrow and exceedingly rocky defile. Here we broke an axle-tree, but, having a few on hand, our mechanics soon put in another. We next came to a beautiful meadow of fine grass and well watered. It was, indeed, a cheering sight. Here the hills began to assume a gentler form, and we could, once more, see daylight, which was pleasant after being shut up so long in dark defiles and mountain gorges piled with frowning rocks. There are striking features in the scenery of this country to be noted by every traveler. The last “kenyon” was so narrow as scarcely to admit a wagon; and this the only pass through these interminable hills towering everywhere far above us. To our surprise, in the midst of these rugged places, we found good grass and fountains of cold, sparkling water. A knowledge of this, to those who are behind us, would be priceless—such is the anxiety felt about it. The road, this evening, is smooth. Encamped at 4 p. m., in a fine patch of grass, surrounding an excellent spring. Distance 15 miles.

Sunday, 19th.—Once more, we look back upon another week of our journey ended—a week that will long be remembered by our company. For a time, our lives and the lives of our poor animals hung suspended in doubt. I hope, from this forward, we shall not lack grass or water. Our men are generally well, and, in their rustic teamster’s garb, it would be difficult for their old friends to recognize some of them.

During the last week, we made 103 miles. We are now in High Rock “Kenyon,” on Applegate’s route to Oregon—1675 miles from St. Jo. and 2018 from home.

Such has been our experience on the new route we have taken—a route of which we had but little knowledge, but which was preferred because a majority of us were convinced this would lead us to the Gold Region on the Sacramento or Feather River sooner than the route up Salmon Trout River, and across the Sierra Nevada at what is usually called the Bear River Pass, and thence down to Sutter’s Fort. The tide of emigration will, doubtless, flow in that channel; but the ultimate result alone can determine which is the better route.— We have had no reason to induce us to believe that we have come the wrong way. We had arrived near enough to the sink of Mary’s River and the fearful dangers of crossing the widely extended desert beyond, to warn us from that way if we could get grass and water on another route. In taking this course, we followed the lead of an experienced mountaineer, who by risking his own property gave us the best assurance that plenty could be found after two day’s travel. The road had been gone over by Oregon emigrants, but the grass had not been touched this season.

We have traveled through the wildest region the imagination can depict. Volcanic desolation covers everything; and, but for the green little meadows appearing in the midst of wildness and sterility, one might think a civilized being had never trodden these deserts. Solitude claims this region as its dominion; and rarely is it interrupted save by the degraded, half-starved Digger Indian, whose characteristic is stealth, and who would scorn to possess himself of anything save by theft. Never before have I been in a region so wild and drear and desolate, with not a tree to break the monotony of the view. We are now approaching the mountains, and, by the middle of next week, we hope to stand on the summit of the Great Sierra—from which we shall have a first glimpse of the Promised Land, whose tall trees, pure water, green valleys, and the consummation of our “golden hopes” will inspire our tired bodies and spirits with the vigor of new life. Our mules, too, will then have rest and food to recruit them after five long months of constant toil. You can hardly imagine with what interest we watch over them. When one shows any symptoms of fatigue, or sickness, the attention of the whole company is directed to his recovery. They have been our dependence to bring us through, and every mule has endeared himself to us until we feel towards them as friends.

During the last week, I have thought much of Springfield. As “Distance lends enchantment to the view,” so absence brings to mind, more vividly, the endearments of home. Few men would wander from family and friends, if they did but take a philosophic view of things. The partner in our joys and sorrows, the children of our love—the affection of the one, the innocence of the others, would keep us all at home, if we would but take things as they are and accommodate ourselves to the circumstances of our condition. But, as the world is, there is a necessity for gold. There are a thousand and one ways in which money may be used, and society compels us all to have it. Very many have sacrificed every ennobling quality upon the altar of Mammon. There are many men, on these plains, who have adopted a coarseness of manners and language, and who violate the common courtesies of life with an impunity that would indicate their birth and education to have been in a less favored land than the United States. The gold obtained is but a small portion of the history of such an expedition. There is much to be learned of the manner in which the characters of some men are developed by peculiar circumstances, and all may learn lessons of wisdom by the study of themselves.

Monday, 20th.—All reported well. Soon after starting out, we passed through a very rough, narrow “kenyon.” Doran and Hodge killed a fine antelope, which was welcome enough, for we were sadly in want of fresh meat. Soon after, Eastman and Moffat killed another, and others brought in some sage hens. After passing over a hill we saw, for the first time, proudly glittering afar, the snowy peaks of the Nevada. We now entered a valley whose principal vegetation is the sage—a shrub of whose sight we have grown weary; but, without it, in all probability, this vast extent of country could never be crossed. It has been our only fuel for hundreds of miles. At the end, a lake of salt water, we came upon very unexpectedly, as none of our guide-books mention it. We entered a mountain pass, and did not find a suitable place to encamp until after 8 p. m. The distance across the sage desert was sixteen miles, without water. We suffered some, in consequence of not having taken in a supply. Distance, today, 24 miles.

Tuesday, 21st.—Morning cool. Breakfasted on antelope steak. Continued up the pass until, once more, the Sierra Nevada burst upon our view.— Descended into a narrow grassy valley. The surrounding hills were decked with a few scattering cedars. Crossed a few rocky hills, and came to a hot spring where, as the grass was good, we encamped for the night. It is invariably the case, that the warmth of these springs cause them to be surrounded with luxuriant vegetation. We are in a large valley at the foot of a great mountain whose brow is veiled in clouds. Distance 14 miles.

Wednesday, 22d.—Our course is nearly north, this morning. Passed a smoking hot spring, from which issues a pretty stream. Crossed the bed of a lake, from which we had a good road to the base of the mountain—up which we traveled during the afternoon, passing some majestic pines and streams of pure, cold water. We nooned under a tree and enjoyed the shade. The first part of the mountain the ascent was moderate; but, the earth being mellow, it was hard pulling. Half a mile brought us to a pine grove, with grass and water in a gorge. Here the men built a big wood fire, which did up things brown. At this spot, we concluded to halt, and take the steepest of the ascent, in the morning, when all were well rested. On this mountain, we found the first large timber we have seen for many weary miles. It was refreshing to the vision to see the tall shafts rising proudly into the air, crowned with thick foliage which flung broad, grateful shadows along the steep mountain-side. Distance 17 miles.

Thursday, 23d.—Cloudy and every sign of rain. Course west. At 7 a. m., we doubled teams and commenced the ascent. A mile and a half from camp, we reached the summit; but the atmosphere was so smoky as to completely obstruct the grand view we had anticipated. By the time we had brought up *arriere*, the mules were much fatigued. When we got beyond the summit, the smoke cleared away and revealed the shaggy spurs covered with lofty pine and cedar, and a fertile bottom spreading beneath. An involuntary shout went up that made the welkin ring. We unanimously agreed that Hannibal and Napoleon—the regal conquerors of other times who scaled the Alps— might have boasted of such an achievement as that of scaling these American Alps. The descent was easy; and, at half past one, we encamped.— The hunters broke for tall timber and spent the evening in an unsuccessful search for game. We are all delighted with this side of the mountain. The air is softer, the climate milder, the vegetation of a deeper, brighter green. Distance 3 miles.

Friday, 24th.—Course north-west. Sprinkle of rain, last night. Air, this morning, pleasant. Traveled five miles down the valley. Crossed some low rocky hills, and again entered the forest, and descended a hill to Goose Lake. Encamped on a branch which pours its waters into the lake. The Oregon trail leaves this at the south end of the lake. Distance 18 miles.

Saturday, 25th.—Morning cool and autumnal.— Piercing east wind made it necessary to put on overcoats. Rose at dawn, and traveled down the valley, along the base of the mountain from which flows many pretty rivulets of the purest crystal. These little streams all take a southerly course, and we suppose them to be head springs of the Sacramento. At the lower end of the valley, we crossed over some low, rocky hills. Noon on the bank of a stream. Then crossed over some low hills and descended into a narrow valley with a brook into which the rivulets empty. This evening, we had some rough road. Timber rather scarce. Encamped in a bottom where there was good water. Distance 21 miles.

We are now 1773 miles from St. Jo. and 2116 from Springfield—on the western side of the Great Sierra Nevada.

Sunday, 26th.—This is the 22d Sabbath we have been from home. On the morrow, at 2 p. m. we will have been five months from home. Nor do we know how far we have yet to travel. We are wending our way south, and trust we shall arrive during the coming week to where we can hear something about gold. The distance has been greater than we supposed—consequently, it has taken longer to perform the journey; but, we are told, we shall get to the “diggings” early enough as it has been very sickly at the mines during the present season. We have met, on this route, some men with teams, in the employ of government, who have kindly given us considerable information.— Some of them knew Hamilton Campbell **/* and said he was down among the mines and had not yet left for home. These men commended our having come this route, and were pushing on to bring the Oregon troops this way. This encouraged us.— They thought there was no doubt of our succeeding in our enterprise, if we would manage properly and save what we got. Mr. Weber and myself have repaired to the shade to enjoy the quiet and write our letters; but I have been attacked with a severe head-ache which prevents my saying more.

**/ Hamilton Campbell is brother-in-law to Mr. Biddle, and long a resident of Oregon.*

Monday, 27th.—Morning quite cold. Rose before day-break—got our breakfast and were on the line of march by sun-rise. I was still afflicted with a head-ache, which became so violent that I was obliged to ride in the wagon, and that did not afford me much relief, for the road was very rough. Crossed some points of hills, continuing our way down the stream. Distance 21 miles.

Tuesday 28th.—Very foggy morning—were unable to get anything like a satisfactory view of surrounding things. Our little brook is enlarging and now yields us some fine fish. Cooks were up by half past three, and we had an early start. Went over some very stony road. Saw several well constructed fish-dams, which put the men in a great way about fishing. The Indians have dug a number of deep pits near their watering places to entrap the game. Crossed the river eight times today. My head is better, but the excessive pain of yesterday has made me quite stupid. Distance 15 miles.

Wednesday, 29th.—Ice in the vessels, this morning. Something different this from the climate of Illinois. The high altitude at which we have traveled has made it necessary for us to wear overcoats, at night, during summer, and sleep under blankets. A dog that we brought from Naples, Illinois, was shot, last night, by the

guard, in mistake for a wolf. The accident occasioned a general regret, for he was a good dog and we had hauled him a great deal in our wagons, to get him through to guard the camp. Our road during the forenoon was rough. Half past ten, we came to the much-desired Oregon road—the main trail leading from the head of the Willamette Valley to the Lower Valley of the Sacramento. Nooned two miles beyond, and caught a fine mess of fish. During the afternoon, we had a smooth road.— Encamped at the head of what Fremont calls the Round Valley. From this point, we have a view of Mt. Shasta and the tallest of the Sisters, both covered with snow. Mt. Shasta is 14000 feet high and is the highest peak on the Pacific coast. The Sisters are also high, and derive their names from standing near each other and, in a line, one above the other. The atmosphere is so filled with smoke that we can see but little that surrounds us. Distance 15 miles.



Mount Shasta, California

Thursday, 30th—This morning, fire felt comfortable. All well. Traveled down the valley, following the bend of the river. This valley seems to be very fertile and only wanting rain to develop its richness. Nooned 16 miles from our last encampment and near the lower end of the valley, in view of a steep acclivity, descending which we observed some packers who proved to be, as we had suspected, citizens of Oregon direct from the “diggings”. They gave us a great deal of information about the gold, the price of provisions, etc., and showed us some large lumps of gold. They assured us we could make \$30 per day, but gave us to understand that we were further from the Gold Region than we had supposed. Most of them knew Campbell—said he had been down in the mines, but was taken sick and had gone home by water about the time they were starting for home. They said it was twelve miles to the next water, so we concluded to wait until tomorrow. Distance 16 miles.

Friday, 31st.—Round Valley is seventeen miles long from north to south. In view of the road ahead being rocky, all the men of our company we could spare, with men from other companies which had encamped with us, went ahead to clear some of the worst stones from the road. The road led from the river across a great many hills. At 4 p. m. we came to a stream of refreshing water—the first we had since morning. Went about a mile farther and encamped where there was an abundance of good grass and water. About 35 wagons were encamped here for the night.

Today, a species of the oak has made its appearance among the pine, for the first time. We seem now to be fairly among the mountains, where it is more rocky than any place we have yet seen. Distance only 10 miles.

September 1849

Saturday, September 1st.—Rose before daylight. Started as the sun was rising, and began to ascend a mountain, some of our force having gone before to clear away obstructions. Some fine, scattering cedars were observed on the surrounding hill-sides. Atmosphere very smoky. Nooned in a narrow bottom, which afforded us but a scanty supply of grass for our mules. We next crossed a steep hill; and after passing a spring our road entered a forest of large pines mixed with spruce, cedar and fir. This was a kind of timber I had not been accustomed to see, and seeing it in its loftiest pride of growth excited my wonder. — Some of these trees measure six and eight feet in diameter. The bark being covered with a long yellow moss, gave to it a very

beautiful appearance. Just at dusk, we encamped in a small bottom, with but little grass and no water, and went to bed supperless and weary. Distance 20 miles.

Sunday, 2d.—Today, for the first time since we left home, we have been compelled to travel on the Sabbath. We started early in search of grass and water. Traveled over some exceedingly bad road in descending the mountain where we had passed the night. In five miles we came to a large bottom, where there was an abundance of good grass and pure, cold water. Cheered and animated by this good luck, we encamped for the day.

We are now 1870 miles from St. Jo. and 2213 from Springfield.

This Sabbath finds us in a place that I cannot better designate than by the name of the Camp among the Mountains. We are surrounded by mountains that seem to defy our escape. We have been struggling, for days, past, to escape from their rocky sides and summits without success, and now we are in the midst of them. Since we crossed the Sierra Nevada, the road is more rocky, and our wagons have been more endangered and injured than in all our previous progress. Our way has been impeded, and seemed to increase as we continued to advance. We have yet to travel eight or ten days before we arrive at the settlements. Yet we do not feel we have anything to regret in having selected this route; every body we meet confirms the wisdom of our choice.

Monday, 3d—All reported well. This morning was the coldest since we left home, decidedly. Thermometer stood at 22 at sunrise. Over-coats all on, and the cooks were crowded away from the fire by the men standing around. Started early. Road rough. Atmosphere smoky. Traveled thirteen miles before we came to water. Noon on the borders of a small lake, on whose banks flourished a new species of pine. This afternoon, we had a very rough road, but were obliged to travel fifteen miles and, to our disappointment, found little grass and no water. After a scant supper, we retired, intending to rise early and go in quest of grass and water. These long drives over bad roads with scant allowance for our mules, operates very hard upon them, but they are capable of great endurance. Distance 28 miles.

Tuesday, 4th.—Rose, breakfasted and were on our way before sun-rise. In five miles, we came to an excellent spring gushing from the hill-side, which forms, of itself, a considerable stream below, fretting itself into a fury and then rushing with a loud noise along its rocky bed. There being some grass here we concluded to stop for dinner. During the afternoon, we passed through the finest forest of pine, cedar and fir I ever beheld. — Many of the trees are one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty feet in height. We descended a long hill and came to a fine, large, grassy bottom well watered. This is six miles from where we nooned, and, finding everything favorable, we encamped at 3 p. m. Distance 12 miles.

Wednesday, 5th.—Fine morning. Caught a great number of small fish, last evening, which made us a capital breakfast. Followed the road down the bottom and beneath the shadow of the hills, upon whose sides grew lofty trees from among whose roots spouted many cooling springs. Came suddenly upon a precipice, down which we were obliged to lower our wagons with ropes. This introduced us to another valley; and, after fording a creek we came to the head of Feather River — a beautiful stream of the purest, clearest water I ever saw. The river is fed by large springs, and where we crossed, it was fifty yards wide and so deep that it came near running into our wagon beds. We crossed the bottom, and nooned at the foot of a ridge. During the afternoon, we scaled the ridge. Seven miles brought us to a tributary of Feather River, up which we traveled two miles and encamped in a small bottom of fine grass. The scenery here is picturesque and beautiful indeed. There is a wild loveliness in the view, environed as we are by snowy peaks, that I never saw exceeded. Game appeared to be abundant. Our hunters went out; but it was too near nightfall for them to be successful. Distance, today, 18 miles.

Thursday, 6th.—Had an early start. Doran killed a deer, which was a treat, for we all wanted a taste of fresh meat. Grisly bears are numerous about here, and all hands desire to have a chance at one, but they are too shy for that. Their footprints are, however, plenty along the road. We traveled up this branch until we arrived at a point that divided the waters, and immediately we were traveling down a stream that flowed directly the other way, bearing the tribute of its waters to Deer creek. Our road next led us round the point of a high mountain, changing our course from nearly north to due west. Road rocky. In about eight miles, we came to where a stream flowed in from the north-east, which we learned to be Deer creek, forming by its junction with the one down which we had come, a fine, large bottom, furnishing an abundance of nutritious grass. Here we

nooned, and found a large company of troops encamped—being an exploring expedition commanded by Capt. Warner, sent out to the Sierra Nevada to find a practicable route from the Sacramento to some pass in the Nevada Range. They had, for pilot, Peter Lawson, who claims to have brought the first wagons through this route. It savors rather of a wild speculation to talk of railroad through this part of the world; but they may do it. Uncle Sam can accomplish much. — The officers we found to be gentlemen, and they gave us much useful information. They had also shown their liberality and sympathy in furnishing provisions to many that were in distress. An expedition fitted out by the government with no other object, would have redounded more to her honor and credit, than all other exploring expeditions. Here I sold my little pony for \$100, and you would say that he was well sold; but the little fellow had grown and got fat, notwithstanding he had had some man on his back all the way out. —From this point, we came over a very hilly and rocky road. At our noon encampment we cut grass for our mules for one day,—as we had been told by Mr. Lawson that we were now entering upon the most difficult and scarcest part of our route. We reached a spring, but found very little grass. Encamped. Distance 18 miles.

Friday, 7th.—We rose early, and had our breakfast over by the time it was light. Our road this morning was any thing but good, very hilly and much rock; about five miles to a spring, but no grass. Here we filled our cask, and then proceeded on. The timber continues to be very large. Today we discovered a very fine kind of raspberry, which grew on low bushes. — The fruit was just ripe, and we ate abundantly.— Our road lead us to the verge of a very deep “kenyon”—the deepest and wildest we have seen—We nooned in the timber. The cones of the pine were very large, some measuring from 15 to 18 inches in length. In the afternoon we traveled on this ridge, which narrowed in places to near the width of our wagon track—the breaks in the ridge made steep hills to pull up and descend.— Between seven and eight miles from our place of nooning, we left the large timber and came to a barren ridge, with but a few trees to interrupt the desolate appearance of every thing around. This is strictly, in the language of the country, a “thrown up country”—and presents nothing but sterility and wildness—a fit haunt for the grisly bear and mountain goat. We had not got more than a mile into this region before we upset one of our wagons, which prevented us from reaching the place we designed for our encampment, called “Deep Hollow.” We encamped in the brush until morning. Giving our mules the last of the grass we cut on Deer Creek, tying them up all night, and without water; we now felt that our troubles had come. Our road increased in roughness. Our wagons were dry and we had no water to put on them. Our mules were, of necessity, growing weaker from the scantiness of their allowance. The men were wearied, being obliged to hold on to the wagons with ropes to keep them from upsetting and jolting to pieces. This of all others is the place to try men. But, let to-morrow tell its tale. Night when we encamped. Distance 19 miles.

Saturday, 8th.—Foggy morning. Rose early, and, before we breakfasted, the upset wagon was righted, and we started for the deep hollow where we expected to find water for our thirsty mules. In a mile and a half, we got to the top of the hill. The descent was very steep, but we reached the bottom in safety; and had to take our mules more than a mile for water. Here there was no grass. Breakfasted and hitched up, having to put fifteen mules to a wagon to pull it out of this bottom.— The ascent occupied nearly three hours, and was the hardest pull we have had anywhere since we left home. We all arrived at the top safe. Half a mile further, we found a bunch of dry grass, with which we fed the mules. From that, we came three miles over a road that exceeds any description that can be given of a rough road—therefore I must leave it to your imagination. We succeeded in getting over it without any material damage and encamped on the ridge, with no more room than is sufficient for our wagons to stand upon.— We found water, a mile to the left, in a deep gorge. The labor is great for the mules to get at it, or the men to bring it to camp. The grass market is decidedly inadequate to the demand. With all our toil and perplexity we only succeeded in making five miles today.

Sunday, 9th.—Pleasant morning this; and, if we could have been where we would have had what was necessary for us, we could have enjoyed the day even amidst the desolation around. But our mules were too much in want of grass for us to stay much as our men needed rest. It would have been our choice to have remained, but necessity compelled us to go on the doubtful quest of a better place. Such was the difficulty of obtaining water, at the encampment, that we did without our coffee at breakfast. Reluctantly, we started on our way, and had not proceeded far until one of the wheels of No. 1 wagon showed signs of giving away and we had to stop and fix it. Here we came to another body of troops under command of Col. Carey. They had stopped here to leave their wagons, intending to pack through. Not far from this, another wheel of No. 1 had to be repaired before going any further—the rest of the train being all in advance, except Mr. Walter’s wagon, which had also broken down. The team was taken to camp, three miles ahead, and the wagon left in my

charge. Mr. Weber came back very timely to my relief with some water. After this, Mr. Broadwell came with more water, and remained with the wagons—Mr. Weber, and myself, going to the camp for supper; after which we returned to B. with something to eat, and remained with him all night.

The encampment is in a hollow, within one mile of grass and water. This has been, with us, a day of troubles. On to-morrow, we hope to get through and make our escape from these everlasting hills and rocks. Distance 9 miles.

We are now 1970 miles from St. Jo.—2313 m. from Springfield.

Arrive at Sacramento

Monday, Sept. 10. At 8 A. M. after some repairs of our wagons, we proceeded onward. Weather warm. At 10 1-2 we entered the great and beautiful valley of the Sacramento. We stopped a moment and unfurled the Star Spangled Banner from wagon No. 1. At 12 we nooned at Deer Creek, where there was plenty of grass. Afternoon proceeded and at 3 p. m. halted within a mile of Mr. Lawson's settlement. This is the first settlement we have seen in California. He is a German—speaks English well—and is rapidly accumulating a fortune here. His stock are worth \$60,000.

We have some gentlemen from the mines in our camp. They speak encouragingly of the prospects for obtaining gold. We are now sixty miles from the mines.

Wm. B. Ide lives 25 miles from here. He is well known as a successful miner and is said to be worth \$100,000. Today we saw Indians. Mercury 61 at sunrise—92 at noon—70 at sun set.

Tuesday, 11th.—Left camp at 8 o'clock, and moved to the mouth of Deer Creek—a beautiful stream—a mile below the residence of Mr. Lawson. We find excellent wild grapes here. The country around is thickly timbered with heavy oaks of low growth. We exchanged a poor mule for a fat beef, on which we dined—after which the company which was formed on the Nebraska, by unanimous vote was dissolved—the object for remaining together no longer existing; previous to which a vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. J. B. Watson for the able and impartial manner in which he had discharged the duties of Superintendent during the journey. Our company subsequently decided to locate at Redding's diggings, near the Sacramento; and that two wagons be dispatched for Sacramento City—under the direction of Messrs. Biddle, Smith and Sattley.

The Indians here are friendly—wash our clothes, bring us grapes, and execute other jobs—and are delighted with the old clothes we give them for their services.

Redding, Shasta County, California

Redding, officially the City of Redding, is the county seat of Shasta County, California, in the northern part of the state. It lies along the Sacramento River, is 162 miles north of Sacramento, and 120 miles south of the Oregon border. Interstate 5 bisects the entire city, from the south to north before it approaches Shasta Lake, which is located 15 miles to the north. The 2010 population was 89,861. Redding is the largest city in the Shasta Cascade region, and it is the fourth-largest city in the Sacramento Valley, behind Sacramento, Elk Grove, and Roseville.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redding,_California



Thursday morning, 4 o'clock, Sept. 13th.— Messrs. Biddle and his company leave this morning for Sacramento City, to purchase provisions.

A few general remarks will now close this journal.

After traveling between five and six months, and passing over twenty two hundred and eighty nine miles, according to the time kept by our own company, which is one hundred miles shorter than some other companies make it, we reached this point in perfect health and fine spirits; having every reason to believe that our anticipations on leaving Springfield will be fully realised. No one of our company has been dangerously ill since leaving home, except Benjamin Taylor, who was soon restored to health and strength. The only loss we have sustained on the route is one mule, and that, we suppose, died from the bite of a rattle-snake. The kind treatment we have received from emigrants all along the road, prove that our company have acquired the respect and esteem of all that knew us; and we feel certain that no train has been more successful in getting through than ours. We would rejoice if we were certain that all would get through as safely as ourselves.

Mrs. B. R. Biddle,—residence on 7th street south. Mr. Biddle is now on his way to California,—belonging to the Springfield, Illinois, Mutual Insurance Company. The last accounts we have had of this company they were on the point of leaving Fort Laramie. We suppose that they are now near their place of their destination.

MRS. B. R. BIDDLE,—residence on 7th street, south. Mr. Biddle is now on his way to California,—belonging to the Springfield, Illinois, Mutual Insurance Company. The last accounts we have had of this company they were on the point of leaving Fort Laramie. We suppose that they are now near their place of their destination.

*Journal, Wednesday, September 12, 1849.*¹⁴⁰

BIDDLE'S CALIFORNIA JOURNAL.

[Received by the last arrival from San Francisco.]

Monday, September 10th, 1849.—If you have read the date corresponding with this, which I enclosed in another envelope, you will remember you left us in trouble—our wagon broke and almost without water and grass; and myself, Messrs. Weber and Broadwell with the broken wagon, three miles from camp. In the morning, we had some assistance to repair the wagon, and, a little after breakfast, we were in camp and all hands ready for a start. The train was soon on its winding way. We commenced the ascent of a steep hill, and, after traveling four miles along a rocky road, we came into the Valley of the Sacramento. The joy felt by all, I cannot describe.

¹⁴⁰ *Journal, Wednesday, September 12, 1849, p. 4.*

After we got fairly into the Valley, we formed a line, hoisted our little flag and gave three cheers for the victory we had achieved. It was evident we had not conquered without scars and broken bones. The men, with their long beards and dirty and ragged appearance, would have elicited the sympathy of our friends could they have taken a look at us. But we were all together—men, mules and wagons.

We regretted the smoky state of the atmosphere which obstructed our view of the surrounding scenery. After traveling four miles over a stony road, we came to Deer creek—which is here a fine, clear and beautiful stream. Crossed over, and two miles below encamped, at the distance of half a mile from Lawson's house. This is our first glimpse of civilization since we left Fort Hall. Distance 9 miles.

Tuesday, 11th.—This morning, at an early hour, we hitched up our teams and moved two miles lower down the creek, to where the grass was better. Here we resolved to stay, a few days, to get some fresh meat, do up washing, &c. We negotiated for a beef by giving a broken down mule in exchange. At this place, we were amused by the manner in which the Indians caught the cattle they desired to butcher. They would start after them, on horse-back, and, in a few minutes, bring them in, with a lasso wound around their horns and hind legs. In that condition, they would throw them and drag them in alive. The horses are well trained and draw by the horn of the saddle. The sport of lassoing is very exciting. We killed a beef and had a feast; after which a meeting was held and the union, which had, until then, subsisted among the different companies, was declared to be dissolved. A vote of thanks was tendered Mr. J. B. Watson for the impartial manner in which he had discharged the duties of Superintendent.

A meeting of our company was then called to determine which was our best course to pursue —when it was resolved that we should start two wagons down to Sacramento City, for provisions, forthwith, while the other wagons would pursue their course, up the Sacramento, to what is known as "Redding's Diggins;" and a committee was appointed to make out a report of what we wanted. At night, the report was handed in and accepted, and Messrs. Smith, Sattly and myself, were commissioned to accompany the wagons. It was determined we should start on Thursday morning. Accordingly, we set about making preparations.— I was glad to be one of the men chosen to go to the City, as I hoped it would be the means of enabling me, the sooner, to get letters from home. The distance to the City of Sacramento, which is at Sutter's Fort, is estimated at 130 miles. The point to which the other wagons are going is 65 m. distant.

Wednesday, 12th.—This morning it was announced that all who desired to write letters home must have them ready during the day. After breakfast, all retired, and most of the day was spent in writing letters. Our wagons were put in trim, the teams selected, &c.

Eastman's company started up to the mines, today. They were not ready to send below, at this time. A great many Indians have visited us, and some have been employed to do our washing—which they do badly. Around this rancho, there are some of the most degraded Indians we have seen since we left St. Jo. They are perfectly naked, without shame, and lazy and filthy—although they are large, muscular men and every way adapted to some useful employment. All these ranchos have a hundred or more Indians attached who lead lives as servile as the most abject slave.

The buildings of this country are composed of sun-dried brick and covered with boards, and are kept by men who have no families, who are principally engaged in raising horses and cattle—the prices of which have raised considerably since the discovery of gold.

Thursday, 13th —We had the luxury of a cloudy morning. Looking around camp, at an early hour, it was discovered that two of our men were missing. They had absconded, during the night, taking with them all their valuables. Their names are Odenheimer and Jacob Uhler. They were sent out by Mr. Thomas Campbell, with Mr Weber as agent. They may come back, but we think not. When the thing is fully ascertained, I will say more about it.

At 8 a. m., the wagons were ready to start—so we bade farewell, and were soon on the road.— Traveled eight miles and nooned. In the afternoon, we followed the bottom—crossed the dry beds of several creeks—came to Potter's creek, upon the bank of which Mr. Potter and his family reside. The interior of the house presented a much better appearance than any we had seen, for a long time. Near this dwelling is an Indian village, called

a Rancho-ree, comprising a population of one hundred. I saw here some very fine hogs. Encamped one mile from the house, under an ample oak, where there was an abundance of good grass.— Distance 21 miles.

Feather River

Friday, 14th.—Still cloudy. Started a little after sunrise. Passed through a belt of sparse, scattering timber. In five miles, we came to a brook, where were many vines filled with rich clusters of grapes. Five miles further, we crossed Butter creek—a stream forty feet wide, and rushing on its course with arrowy swiftness. Down this, we traveled two miles and came to Neal's rancho, where were five main buildings, in the midst of a thick grove. Mr. Neal has a fine looking family, and a great many Indians about him. We then emerged from the timber, and passed along a fertile prairie. Nooned ten miles from Neal's. Then traversed an undulating prairie with soil of a reddish cast; and next entered a forest, extending two miles to Feather River, and encamped beneath the branches of a large oak. These trees are not very tall, but many of them spread out so as to cover a surface of more than a hundred feet, some of the branches reaching to the ground. Grass good. The noise of the water aided us in making a good night's rest. Distance 30 miles.

Saturday, 15th.—Remains cloudy. Our road led us down the river six miles, when we came to two ranchoes. The tenements consisted of holes dug in the ground and covered with dirt, in the same manner as our vegetable houses. The door is so small that a person is obliged to get on his knees to enter; and a hole in the clay roof permits the smoke to escape in winter. They had in store cribs of acorns for their sustenance in winter.— Most of these Indians were naked. Two miles from this, we came to the crossing of the river, which is hereabout three hundred yards wide.— Two miles down the river, we came to Rother's rancho—a rather poor thing, attached to which is a ranchoree. Five miles beyond, we came to Burch's house. Here there is a bend in the river, and the road leaves it, for some distance, making towards Juba River, [pronounced Uba.] Passed two miles through timber, then eight miles over prairie, with, here and there a tree and no grass. This brought us to the Juba—a pretty stream, one hundred yards wide. Crossed over and encamped, where we found excellent grass. Within view is a rancho of good appearance, where provisions are kept for sale. Distance 25 miles.

Sunday, 16th. We lay over here, today, and our mules are faring well. The wolves disturbed our rest, last night, by their barking and prowling about the camp. This morning, when we came to look, we found no meat for breakfast—the wolves had walked off with it, bag and all.— We breakfasted on coffee and crackers, and devoted most of the day to writing.

I am now fairly in the Valley of the Sacramento, and bound for Sacramento City—though not with my wash-bowl on my knee.

We are now 2067 miles from St. Jo., and 2410 m. from Springfield.

Monday, 17th.—Cool morning. Traveled down the bottom until we came to Feather River, which seems to have increased in size since we left it.— After traveling sixteen miles, we came to Bear River, which might, more properly, be called a branch, it being only six feet wide at the ford.— The banks are, however, very steep and it may contain a great deal of water in the spring-time. Four miles further, we came to Nichol's rancho. Mr. N. is putting up a very good two story house. Here we struck an extensive prairie; over which we went four miles to a pool of water. Two miles beyond this, we came to water again. We left the main road and encamped, about three-quarters of a mile to the right, near a pool. Distance, today, 26 miles.

The grass being far from good, we started early and proceeded across the prairie, finding no grass until we reached the timber bordering along the American Fork, at which we arrived at 2 p. m. This being but three miles from the City, and the pasture good, we concluded to encamp and stay here while we went in to make purchases. Very many are encamped around us.

B. R. Biddle on Way to California

MRS. B. R. BIDDLE,—residence on 7th street south. Mr. Biddle is now on his way to California,—belonging to the Springfield, Illinois, Mutual Insurance Company. The last accounts we have had of this company they were on the point of leaving Fort Laramie. We suppose that they are now near their place of their destination.

Journal, Wednesday, September 5, 1849.¹⁴¹

Biddle's California Journal, Concluded.

Wednesday, 19th.—After breakfast, Mr. Smith and myself started, for the City, on foot. Two miles from camp, we came to the American Fork, pulled our boots off and waded it. It is a limpid, pretty stream, one hundred yards wide at this point, which is a mile above its confluence with the Sacramento, and but a little distance above where the business of the place is now done.

Sacramento, California

In the Sacramento bottom, we came to the City. It is perfectly new and presents a singular appearance. There are but few frame houses put up as yet, except the light frames brought from Yankee Land. Many are, however, in the course of rapid construction. Large business establishments, selling their thousands monthly, are built of a few posts set in the ground and covered, sides and roof, with common muslin. These white tent-houses, scattered among green, over-hanging trees, make up a scene beautiful and romantic. There are some tolerably good houses, but none over a story and a half high. Lumber is scarce and commands a heavy price. Mills in the neighboring pineries are much needed. The Sacramento, at this point, is broad and deep, the tide running several miles above. Frigates, schooners and barques are lying here. Property is very high. Everything is selling at the top of the market. We learned the prices of some articles; and, to give you a general idea of the state of affairs, I will mention them— Bread 50c. per loaf, pickled pork 25c. per lb., fresh beef 30c. per lb., bacon hams 60c., sides 45 to 50c., cheese 60 to 65c., butter \$1 per lb. when sold by the keg; flour \$16 per bbl., pork \$40 per bbl., molasses 75c. per gal., sugar 16c. per lb., tea \$1 to 1,50 per lb., black tea ditto, crackers 20c. per lb., two-gallon tin pans \$3,50 to 4 apiece, canteens \$2, picks \$4 to 6, shovels \$ 2,50, small crow-bars \$4, hay \$45 to \$60 per ton. Mules are worth from \$100 to 200—accordingly as they are fat or poor; oxen are selling from \$50 to 100 per yoke; wagons are in little demand, as the emigrants are selling off a great amount of their stuff; horse-hire comes to \$10 per day. A common laboring man commands \$10 per day—mechanics something more, but how much I did not learn. Boarding can be had for \$3 or 4 per day.

The companies have nearly all dissolved and sold whatever they owned as common stock— Those big companies from the East, with large capital, which brought everything with them, have had the most to sell; but the prices have made the transportation of their articles a handsome business. Experience demonstrates that large companies do not hang well together. Very many, when they arrive here, do not feel disposed to go into the mines and dig, but there are so many ways of making money out of those who do go, that many are tempted to remain here. In preference to working in the mines, some resort to keeping eating houses, others open coffee houses, gambling hells, livery stables, &c., &c.

Today, I saw Wm. Todd, the Doctor's son, who has been here some time. He looks well and tells me he has enjoyed good health; and, from what I see and hear of him, he has done well.— He tells me that James F. Reed is living and doing well. Key's brother is in Monterey, working at his trade. Cook Matheny and Reuben McDaniel are here, and are not engaged at anything now, but have a prospect of business in a few days. Capt. B. R.'s is here and making money by buying and selling mules. Young Swizler is with him. Mr. Cook and David Eaton are here. They have been trading and have done well. Mr. E. is spending this evening with us at the camp. Mr. Nourse is here, engaged in buying and selling. John S. Bradford is fifty miles below this, in

¹⁴¹ *Journal*, Wednesday, September 5, 1849, p. 2.

company with Mr. Semple. Henry Spotswood started down to the Bay, today. I sent my Journal up to the 10th instanter, by him, to be mailed.

I find no letters here for myself or any of our company, and have requested Mr. S. to have our letters forwarded to this point. Not receiving any intelligence from home, after so long an absence, was, you may be sure, a severe disappointment. I feel encouraged, and, I think, with ordinary luck, we will have something to send home, in the spring. The mines are averaging, to every digger, an ounce a day—which is \$16.

The prices of the articles I have given you, are those of the City, and are doubled in the mines. Bacon, flour, coffee and sugar are often \$1 per lb. tobacco \$2,50 per lb., and boots, shoes and implements to work with, are put at an extravagant rate. Driving team is good business. I asked some teamsters what they would charge to haul goods to where we are going, which is two hundred miles, and learned they would not go for less than fifty dollars per hundred miles. Wages are regulated by what a man can make in the mines. Time, here, is more emphatically money, than any other place I ever saw.

I bought a newspaper, today, for 25c., in the hope that it might contain some news from the States. For five long months, we are entirely ignorant of everything which has transpired at home.

[At this date, the Journal closes, for the present. A bird's-eye glimpse of the movements of Mr. B. is given in the following letter.]

San Francisco, California

City of SAN FRANCISCO , U. C., [Upper California]

October 29th, 1849.

In company with David Logan,¹⁴² who stood in Irwin's store, I find myself in the Alcalde's office, scribbling this letter, with the utmost possible expedition. I came down, yesterday morning, in a sloop, for no other purpose than to get messages from home, for myself and the other members of the company. We have been treated very badly. There has not been a mail here, from the States, for four months. We have no intelligence from Illinois, whatever, save that contained in a letter to Augustus Eastman.¹⁴³ The mail steamer, with the back mails, is expected, daily; but it is impossible for me to wait, as two of our teams are now awaiting my return to Sacramento City, to load on provisions to take to the mines. This, you will observe, is my second trip. When I returned to the company, from Sacramento, in September, I found that most of the men had been sick—so it devolved upon me to return, to the City, for two more loads. When I arrived at Sacramento, finding neither letters nor papers had been forwarded, I judged it would be acting for the best interests of the company to come to this post-office—accordingly, I am here. Mr. Hodge and B. F. Taylor are with the wagons. I find here David Logan, Mr. Grey, John Clifton and Mr. Hickox; and, I am told John Dermody is in town.

This is a place full of novelty, where everything is done on a large scale. Grey has made a fortune. If I had had the capital to operate, during the last ten days, I could have made thousands on pork and flour. Pork is worth \$45, flour \$24 per bbl., and sugar from 20 to 22c, per lb.— There is great scarcity of boots and shoes.

¹⁴² David Logan (1824-1874), born on April 15, 1824, near Springfield, Illinois, was the son of Judge Stephen T. Logan, once a law partner of Abraham Lincoln. David married in 1862 to Mary Porter Waldo, no children. He was a lawyer, Republican party leader and served in the 1854 Territorial legislature and as Mayor of Portland (1864-1868). He died near McMinnville, Yamhill Co., Oregon on March 27, 1874. age 49 y's 11 m's 22 d's and is buried Salem Pioneer Cemetery, Salem, Marion County, Oregon. David came to Oregon in 1850, and began law practice at Lafayette, but moved to Portland, Oregon. He achieved great distinction as a criminal lawyer and retired from practice in 1871. In 1869, he ran for Congress three times as Republican nominee, but was defeated each time.

¹⁴³ Thomas Eastman was born on December 5, 1771 in Kingston New Hampshire. He was married in 1792 in Augusta Me to Sarah Cummings They had nine children born in Maine Mr Eastman was captain of a cavalry company in the war of 181 2 and was posted between the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers to carry dispatches back and forth Maine being a district of Massachusetts he represented that district in the Legislature of Massachusetts four or five times When Maine became a State he was elected one of its Senators He was also a Judge of the Court of Sessions in Waldo county where he lived Mrs Sarah Eastman died Sept 3 1827 and Thomas Eastman was married in October 1828 in Boston, Massachussets to Susan Frothingharn a native of that city. They had one child in Maine and moved to Auburn, Illinois in 1836. Of his children only six came to Sangamon county namely DAVID born October 20, 1794 was married January 1, 1817 in Maine to Salinda Wood a native of Winthrop in the same State. They had four children and came to Auburn Sangamon county Ill in 1836 or 7. Of their children Augusta born in Maine went from Sangamon county to California and died there.

Flour, pork, molasses and blankets are in demand. I am of opinion that every article will be run up to the highest figure, before the people of the mines will be entirely supplied. We have enough to do us, during the winter and spring; and, if winter does not come too hard upon us, there is no danger of harm to us. But we will be shut out from any news from home until spring.

Fortunes are being made here fast, by the lucky ones. A city is being built up, in a few months. There are people here from almost every clime—but the most curious are the Chinese. There are a great many Chileans mixed in with this floating population. The streets are crowded with people and there is a great show of business. The harbor is crowded with the vessels of every nation, with their national colors flying from the masthead. From the circumjacent hills, the view of the shipping, lying at rest in the harbor, is surpassingly beautiful.

I see but few ladies—and those, I think, had better remained at home.

There is but one church in the city—and that Baptist. Other denominations preach, but they do it in tents.

Weber, Taylor and myself, are the only persons who have escaped being sick, in our company. We have not done much yet but hope we may during the winter. I think, we are not discouraged. The gold is in the streams and hills—and we mean to get it out. If I find it is going to be sickly in the mines, during next summer, I shall go to Oregon, and come down again in the fall, so as to operate a few months before starting for home. I must say, in short, that I hope and believe our expedition will not prove unsuccessful.

Odenheimer and Uhler did not come back. * *

B. R. BIDDLE.

N. B. —Sold a lump of gold, today, for the company, for \$300. It weighed twenty-seven ounces but contained some rock. It was bought as a specimen. Mr. Fuller found it. B. R. B.

November 1849

B. R. Biddle's Letter to Maria: November 1849

In a letter, written early in November, 1849, B. R. said that they were having rain and that many people were leaving, for fear of a flood; but that the idea of a flood was ridiculous, as they were on high ground and the water drained off almost as fast as it fell: and that Mr. Reading (who had lived there several years) said that rains in November never lasted long—and that it would be six weeks before the real winter started.

Letter of Cook Matheny Journey to California

□From California□

□

—I saw **Biddle** today; he was well. Of the rest of the Springfield folks we hear nothing. We fear for them. Several companies have started from this place to their assistance. Dick Oglesby is up in the mines and doing well; he has a store and digs gold. I am now engaged in business with Wm. Todd, that I think will pay well.□ □ □

I would never think of making this country my home.□ □Money can be made here yet. All a man wants here is energy, perseverance and economy. Yet I would advise all who are doing well at home to stay there; and especially do not come across the country. Washer after washer of the dirt did we clean out, and found but small particles of gold. Bradford is selling goods at Benicia; Mr. Eaton is sending goods up to the mines. Capt. B. R.s is still trading in mules and horses. Maltby and his wife are keeping a boarding house.

November 2, 1849 Rain Begins

Biddle, Weber and Co. had most of the roof on their building when the rains started on the second day of November; and the rest of the building was all but finished. They had also started their log cabin across the street. The sidewalls were up and the rafters were in place; so they stretched a tent canvas over the top, and had very comfortable living quarters for temporary use. They had expected to finish it properly before winter set in; but the rain did not stop long enough for them to accomplish anything until the winter was almost over.

When the creeks and rivers continued to rise the miners all had to give up work; and soon the town became crowded with the drenched, homeless men, seeking food and shelter for the winter. It was soon impossible for wagons and ox-teams to make the trip to Sacramento, and return with merchandise. When the people realized how far they were from the source of supplies—with the possibility of being flood-bound in that canyon all winter—many of them became panic stricken and decided to leave while they could still get out on horseback. They offered to sell everything they had, which could not be carried out on their horses, for whatever anyone would pay.

R. J. Walsh, who had built the ferry at Green River, early in the summer, had made money rapidly, and then sold out at an exorbitant price. When he arrived at Reading Springs he got a lot next to Biddle, Weber and Co., where he also started a trading post; and having more ready money than any one else in the village, he was able to buy large quantities of supplies from the panic stricken miners, who wanted to get to Sacramento or San Francisco before the entire low-lands were flooded. He bought their flour for 20 and 25 cents a pound, which had cost (in freight alone from Sacramento) 50 cents a pound: and that winter it sold for \$2.50 a pound at Reading Springs.

Biddle and Weber's wagons of merchandise were the last to get through from Sacramento: so, while they did not get as much from the unfortunate miners, they were well supplied with goods when the floods started to close in on them: and were able to make an enormous profit during the long, wet winter. Considering that the settlement was new, and so poorly prepared for living through three months of continual rain, it was remarkable that there was so little real suffering.

Dr. Benjamin Shurtheff, a physician from Massachusetts (who had bought the corner of the R. J. Walsh claim next to Biddle, Weber & Co.) took care of the few who were sick and needed attention. James Mackley took up the claim north-west of Biddle, Weber W Co., on which he built the St. Charles Hotel; which, at that time, was the best hotel between Oregon City and Sacramento. February brought sunshine and a recession of the flood waters that had held them prisoners for so long; and soon the little village was again a beehive of activity.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *Journal*, November 26, 1849, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 91-95.

Biddle's Journal, Winter Quarters.

Camp-Hill Springs
December 20th, 1849.

I address you from a point with which I have but little acquaintance—having arrived here but a fortnight ago.

Since we have reached the Valley of the Sacramento—having surmounted the difficulties and perils of the Plains and Mountains, and attained that goal in our journey where we could look around, and rest a few days from our weariness, and contemplate, with something of exultation, the distance we had come and the thousand things that rose in the mind as we reviewed the route— since then, I have not noted every thing which transpired, day by day, but only such events as I thought would be most interesting.

I have been to Sacramento City twice, and to San Francisco once. When at the Bay, I obtained letters for myself, the Webers and Watsons, and one for Henry Doran; but no papers for any of us. I purchased two Tribunes at a dollar a number, and a few California papers, the columns of which comprise the sum total of our information concerning the affairs of the world in general.

The bleak winter is now upon us with all its vigor and fierceness—whistling its shrilly music along the tops of the lofty pines, and howling hoarsely among the gorges of the jagged hills— while many trees that were the pride of the forest are bowed and broken beneath their burden of snow, and the mountain-torrents are sweeping impetuously to the valleys.

The course of trade being stopped, I will have leisure to devote to that other more pleasing department of duty—the retrieving myself from any charge that might be made against me of negligence to the claims of friendship.

I will now give you some items in relation to my return from the Bay to the Sacramento city and from thence to our camp at this place. On the morning of the date of my last letter to you I purchased some few articles for the company and got on board a schooner at 11 o'clock A. M. bound for "New York of the Pacific," [*Pittsburg, Ed.*] a new place at the mouths of the San Joaquin river and the Sacramento, at the head of Suisun bay, distance from San Francisco 60 or 70 miles. Great efforts are making to bring this place into note— Its natural advantages I have not made myself acquainted with. There are but three or four houses there at present.

Benicia, California Founding

Fifty miles from the city of San Francisco, is the flourishing little town of Benicia, which lies on the strait of that name, and at the foot of Suisun Bay. These straits are four or five miles long, and introduce you into the Pueblo Bay, a sheet of water equal to that of the Suisun. Benicia was laid out by Dr. Semple, brother-in-law to Mr. J. S. Bradford, of Springfield, Illinois, but who is now at this place, in partnership with Dr. S. in the forwarding end commission business. The place is rapidly improving, and will continue to grow. They are making strong efforts to have it made a port of entry. Two or three miles above the town, at a very commanding point, the U. S. have established a navy yard, with the advantages of a harbor, superior to that of San Francisco. The government is erecting suitable buildings, with all possible dispatch practicable. Crossing in my downward passage the bay of Pueblo [*San Pablo, Ed.*], we entered the bay of St. Francisco. Thus we cross three bays in going from Sacramento city to the city of San Francisco.

Arriving at New York, after a very pleasant sail of about six hours, with a fair wind, we exchanged our schooner for a pretension of a steam boat, making our way up the Sacramento to the city. Traveling all night, we reached the city at 8 A. M. It had rained all night, and the boat was so crowded that we got no sleep. On my arrival, I found Philip Weber, Eastman, Parkinson, and all the members of No. 2 Company, having left the mines above, to winter in a more hospitable clime at the mines South. They were all well. They have since gone up the American Fork of the Sacramento river. Since then I have heard nothing from them. I here learned that Hodge and Taylor had not got back from their trip up to Weavertown. On Thursday, however they returned—having been gone nine days. We lay by on Friday, and bought articles to complete our loads for the company. I will now proceed to give you a history of the troubles and mishaps which afterwards befell us.

That night it rained steadily, the wind blew wildly, and it remained quite cold and chilly. In the morning, we put in our loads and left the City for the upper mines. We crossed the American Fork, which was deep fording, and encamped 4m. on our way.

On Sunday morning, we rose early, and went in quest of our mules. One lay helpless on the ground; in the course of the day it died. The rain setting in, the loss of this mule, and the straying away of the others, were the beginnings of a series of troubles, disappointments, and exposures, to which we had, until then been strangers. We searched all day for the mules, without seeing or hearing of them.

On Monday it rained most of the time; we were nevertheless abroad in hunt of our mules; but returned fatigued, and without them. Search enough had been made to convince us our animals had been stolen or had strayed beyond our ability to walk after them.

On Tuesday it still rained. It was then resolved Hodge and Taylor should go to town and buy a mule with which to hunt our mules; and that, if we were then unsuccessful, Taylor should be sent to the company to inform them of our situation and bring other mules to our relief; and that I should then write a letter to the company giving the history of our affairs. Next day, the letter was written; and the mule bought for \$100. Mr. Hodge went out in search of, and some ten or fifteen miles from the wagons, found five of them. We now had mules to ride; so the following morning Taylor started to the camp with the news.— The mud is now so deep that to haul our full loads would be impossible; accordingly we sent forward what provisions and other necessaries we could by H.

Along with Hodge, I started after more of the mules. We rode all day, found none, and returned to camp late at night. Next morning, (Friday) I took a fresh mule, went out alone, and found two more of them; when I brought them in, I found Taylor had come back; the Sacramento was high, and he was afraid to swim his mule alongside the boat. I felt much disappointed at his return.

On Saturday, it rained hard all day; we could do nothing, and so we determined to sell the heavy articles of our loads, and try to make our way back with only about 7 cwt. to the wagon. Another of our mules died today—and we know not to what cause to attribute it, unless it be to the chilling rains that have fallen during the last week. On the next forenoon the rain continued; in the afternoon Taylor was dispatched to a herding rancho some miles ahead, so as to be prepared for an early start, on Monday morning, in quest of the remainder of our mules. He brought in three more; but one remained to be found. I sold our flour today at \$32 per bbl., pork at \$45 per bbl., and one hundred pounds of hard bread at 18c. per lb. On the sale of these articles I made a clear profit of \$150. We delivered the property, and arranged to leave in the morning. Tuesday came, and with it rain all day. We learned that we could not get along on this side of the river—so we had of necessity to cross the American Fork, which now had to be ferried, go again through the City, cross the Sacramento, and try to get up on the other side. We had to wait our turn to cross the American Fork in the rain, and did not succeed in getting over, and reaching the City, until long after nightfall. When we arrived, we were wet to the skin and cold as we could be. We put our mules to hay for the night; then took supper with Mrs. Maltby.

The streets of Sacramento are covered with water. I repaired to my bed in the wagon; but, together with wet clothes and cold feet, you may be assured I slept but little; and the next morning I arose with a violent cold. The day was spent in crossing the Sacramento, at a cost of \$8 per wagon for ferriage. Eight miles from the city we encamped, where there was but little grass.

The next day we moved about ten miles through great difficulty, the mud being deep, and the mules being unable to draw the wagons.— We encamped, and had good grass for our mules. The next morning I was taken with a violent headache, and remained in bed in the wagon for the whole day, Mr. Hodge driving the team, in an incessant soaking rain, to Fremont, a small place at the junction of the Sacramento and Feather rivers. This was on Friday; and we came to the conclusion, on consultation, that it would be folly to attempt to get up to camp, even with empty wagons. Whereupon we sold out the remaining portions of our load at this place, left one wagon in the care of a resident, branded our mules, and turned them out to grass till spring, reserving two of them to pack a few things and ride up to the camp. Here Hodge and Taylor determined to go back to the city, in order to obtain work for the winter. I was resolved to reach the camp of the company, and make my report to them of the whole affair. I gave them some money, and on Tuesday we parted.

I came 12 miles and camped alone. It rained all night and until noon the next day. This was my first trial alone, with two mules, and the rain had set in, rendering the traveling very laborious and difficult. Next day I only went six miles through the rain, came to a rancho, and was permitted to store my baggage under shelter. — Turning out my mules, and furnishing my own bedding, which is the custom of the country, I lay on the floor before a large log fire. These were comfortable accommodations compared with those I had the night before. Here I met with persons from the up-country, who used every possible argument to dissuade me from undertaking so perilous, toilsome and difficult a journey; but I could not give it up until I had made a trial. The difficulty consisted in high waters and bottoms or low lands bordering the streams, “whose bottoms (as they expressed it) had dropped out—a horse or an ox miring down.”

I shall not attempt to take you through every mud-hole where I mired and had to unpack my mules, even to their saddles. I crossed creeks, sloughs and swamps with great difficulty, and at the risk of life and the property I had with me. As the details of all these trials and disasters would fill several sheets, I will sum all up to my arrival within twelve miles from camp, by saying, that so far as regards myself, I had better taken the advice of those persons who came from above. I exposed my person very much; was taken sick with a chill; lay by one day, when I very promptly broke it up with medicine; and in two weeks from my starting from Fremont, reached camp. The sufferings and toils I underwent in these two weeks, and indeed, during the whole trip, will be indelibly stamped upon my memory.

Twelve miles from this place, I met with B. A. Watson, F. S. Dean, Thomas Bilson, and Thomas Whitehurst, on their way to Sacramento City, and from them I learned that the company had separated; that the property in their possession had been sold and the avails distributed among the members, and that a spirit of dissatisfaction prevailed among them. I encamped with them that night, and the next morning made my way up to camp on foot, having left my two mules at the herding post, to be kept for us.

When I arrived I found no one at home but Mr. Rodham, who was not well. The others were out mining. They came in about dark—J. B. Watson, Fuller, Weber and Johnson. These compose one mess, and occupy one end of a double cabin two messes had built for the winter. Sattly, Doran, Broadwell, Smith and Reeves, had built a cabin to themselves about 200 yards off. The other end of this double cabin had been occupied by those who had gone away. I had been set apart with that mess, and had the control of the room alone. They all appeared glad to see me. I made a report of my trip; and although those who could work had done tolerably well, Fuller determined to go below for the winter. I then proposed to take his place in the mess, bought out his interest in the mess things, and in this way was enabled to avoid the necessity of keeping Bachelor’s Hall. E. T. Cabanis had associated himself with some Oregon men, for the purpose of operating, leaving his connection with the Springfield Company entirely. Mr. Fuller started to go below on the 6th of December. From this point I will resume my journal.

December 1849

Thursday, December 6th—This morning I went over to Olney’s creek, some six miles from the cabin, in company with Watson, Johnson and Weber. Mr. Weber and myself operated together. This is my first day in the mines;—and, of course, I could not reasonably expect to be very successful. We breakfasted before day-break, walked six miles before sunrise, and made but little by our labor.

Sunday, 9th—This is our 37th Sabbath; and as serene and beautiful as any that have preceded it. The mess are all well, and seemingly cheerful in each other’s society. I am now recovering from the effects of my upward trip . . . I was, indeed, almost entirely broken down. This morning, we resolved to have prayers at night, and to hold religious exercises every Sunday morning. This will be to us an additional bond of brotherhood.

Thursday, 13th—It is raining and snowing alternately. Some of us were employed making buck-skin purses to hold our gold. It would make you laugh to see how large we have made those intended for use next summer.

We intend going next spring to Trinity—a river west of us some fifty miles, across the Coast Range, as the chain of mountains bordering the Pacific is called. This river empties into Trinidad Bay; the region through which it flows is but little known, but is rumored to be rich in gold. — It is a wild country to adventure in, but every obstacle must yield to the search for the yellow metal. We intend finding a passage along the Trinity to

the Bay, and from the Bay to the Ocean before we leave California; and, it may so happen, we will secure to ourselves a favorable location for future speculation.

Friday, 14th—Still it rains. Nothing can be done out of doors in the way of digging. We find amusement in darning socks.

Saturday, 15th—Ceased raining this morning. Went to work, though it was cloudy and threatening. About noon it commenced snowing, which made our labor decidedly unpleasant.

Sunday, 16th—This is our 38th Sunday from home. It rained and then snowed all night. The snow is now eleven inches deep around the cabins, and much deeper on the adjacent hills. Every thing looks bleak and desolate; but the cold is nothing like so intense as the winters of Illinois. We have spent the day pretty much in reading and writing; our little library affords ample food for the mind. Some of the back-logs in the fireplace measure two feet in diameter. As we look upon the merry blaze, and feel the generous warmth, we cannot help spending a thought upon those of our company who have gone to the Lower Country. If they did not reach the City before this weather set in, I apprehend they will encounter serious hardships.

Wednesday, 19th—The committee appointed to settle the business of the company sold the remainder of the mules I had left below, all the wagons and harness, and all the surplus property of the company. Weber and myself bought three of the finest mules in the lot, and two wagons and the harness. The sales amount to two thousand dollars.

The snow is from twelve to sixteen inches deep. Been snowing and raining all day; and the streams, from the mountain-side, dash onward in their pride of foam, as though wild with savage joy.

Thursday, 20th—The Genii of the Snow and Rain, among these mountains, seem to be twin spirits, forever holding alternate or blended control of the weather, as the shifting winds decide. Operations in the mines are almost entirely suspended.

Mr. W. has begun making a cradle in which to rock our favorite. He has studied the science of cradles until he can make one that will nearly rock itself. This cradle rocking we will be perfect adepts in—for it's rock rock-a-way, from morning until night.

Doran and Sattley intend going down to the City. The young men seem all to be taken with a fever for going below, to live cheap during the winter. In the Spring, before going over to Trinity, I will probably go to the City myself to purchase provisions.

Friday, 21st—Still stormy. We have completed what work we could in-doors; and have now only to turn to the enjoyment of our books and fire. I speak of these the more, because these hills never, until now, witnessed a scene like that presented by the interior of our cabin. Many of the most ancient ranches of the neighborhood are not so well provided; and the Indians, in their squalor and nakedness, never dreamed of such a thing as comfort. —

Saturday, 22d—This morning was misty, and had the appearance of a spring-thaw in Illinois. In the evening it commenced raining. The snow inflow melting away very rapidly.

Sunday, 23d—After being veiled from our view so many days, the sun shone out brilliant as ever. Sattley, Doran and Reeves are preparing to go to the City in a big canoe. Their departure will leave John B. Watson, Lewis Johnson, John B. Weber, John Rodham and myself in a mess by ourselves: and we intend operating together during the next season. The other members of the company will be scattered to all points of the compass; and we cannot hope all to meet together in this world. The next summer may work sadly upon some; but upon whom the deeper shades of destiny will settle is with the months that are to come to decide. I trust many of those who have endured so much to get here, will be compensated (so far as wealth can compensate) for the toil and privations to which they have, in this voluntary exile from home, subjected themselves. In regard to the abundance of gold there is—there can be—but one opinion.

Monday, 24th—This morning was ushered in with smiles, with scarce a cloud to dim its clearness. Spring seems to have come to cheer us after the gloomy hours of the rainy season.

Mr. Johnson, in the capacity of cook, is now actively engaged in preparing a good dinner. It is true, we do not have here all the nice things at home, but we have quite enough to get up a tolerable entertainment, considering all the circumstances. Our bill of fare comprises the best quality of light bread, sweet-cake, beans, rice, coffee, venison, peach-pie and dried peaches.

I wish I could be with you all today. I know I shall be remembered when you gather around the Christmas board, and the wish expressed that I could be with you, and the desire to know where I am and how I am faring so far away.

I sometimes wonder at the swiftness with which time passes. It seems but a little while since I left home, yet a full year will soon have circled away—leaving only the memory of the past, its varied scenes and strange events. Many who started in this pilgrimage for gold have sickened and died; others who have reached this country will return poorer than they came; and some will go back to those they love blest with fortune. But these last will be few in number, and their story will be as sunny spots on the dark canvass that will picture forth this epoch in the history of our nation.

B. R. BIDDLE.

Reading Springs, California

Most of the Illinois emigrants decided to try their luck at Reading Springs:— which was described as a beautiful place, with plenty of fine spring water, about three miles from the Sacramento River and near a number of gold-bearing streams. They forded the Sacramento River near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, and drove north parallel with the river until they came to Reading Springs. The place, and its location, had not been overestimated by those who had described it to them.

Merchandise Store at Reading Springs, California

Aside from the fact that there was no level ground, the place was ideally located for a mining town: and the few people, who had come from Oregon, had pitched their tents on the hill sides, and were delighted at the prospect of having a General Merchandise Store in their village. There was a road (or trail) running along the west side of the creek that divided the hills and formed a narrow valley, or gulch. It was little wider than a ravine; so the houses, on either side had to be built on an incline. Those pioneers named this narrow road “Main Street”, and took up claims on either side for business houses and residences.

The firm of Biddle, Weber and Co., which consisted of B. R. Biddle, John B. Weber, John B. Watson, Lewis Johnson and Augustus Johnson, took up one claim, 62 by 250 feet on the west side of Main Street; and another 35 by 120 feet on the east side of the street. They put their wagons containing merchandise on the large lot on the west side of the street, where they started to put up their store building; and pitched their tents on the east side, where they planned to build their living quarters. One or two of the men slept in the wagons, to watch over and protect their property.

There were a large number of miners panning gold from the creeks north and west of Reading Springs and their business was good from the start. They needed the goods they had shipped from St. Louis to San Francisco.¹⁴⁶

First Trip to San Francisco

B. R. and John Weber (who were also anxious to get mail from home) volunteered to take

¹⁴⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 93-94.

the wagons, and extra drivers with the ox teams, to the “City” for their supplies, while the other partners stayed at Reading Springs to finish their store building.

A friendly Indian went with B. R. and John Weber, to act as guide; and a number of men, on horse back with pack animals, wanted to accompany them as far as Sacramento; for they felt safer from hostile Indians if a number of men traveled together. However most of the Sacramento Valley Indians were Digger Indians, who were great cowards and usually friendly to the whites.

From Reading Springs they followed the western bank of the Sacramento River, through uninhabited country, until they came to the town of Freeport. It was a flourishing little village opposite the mouth of the Yuba River, which many of the pioneers considered the future metropolis of the Sacramento Valley.

Twenty miles further on, below the mouth of the American River, could be seen the tents and houses that made up the town of Sacramento. They crossed the ferry at that point, and B. R. arranged for their drivers to care for the oxen and wagons while he and John Weber went, by boat, to San Francisco.

San Francisco was the chief city of the Pacific Coast; and was always referred to as “The City”; so B. R. had always pictured it, in his mind, as a neat and orderly town, of well constructed business buildings and comfortable homes—with graded streets and board sidewalks. In reality the town had been built on rolling hills of deep and shifting sand. The streets seemed to run in several directions, instead of being parallel—in two directions— and making right-angle crossings at each intersection—as B. R. was sure they should in any well planned town. “The City” had a population of about 1500 people, many of whom were living in tents. The buildings had been poorly and hastily constructed of freshly sawed lumber. However, some new, and better, buildings were then being built of imported lumber and bricks.

As ships in the harbor unloaded, the goods and produce were thrown on the ground near the wharfs, where they waited to be claimed, or sold, or carted to shelter. There were a couple of warehouses near the water front; but they were entirely inadequate for the great ship loads of merchandise being brought into port. It was almost impossible to get carpenters or mechanics to work in “The City”; for when they heard of the fabulous riches that were found in the mines, they left their work, without notice, to go to the “dig- gins.”

B. R.’s first impression of San Francisco was that it was a cold, bleak, shabby place filled with dust, disorder and confusion. As he started to walk up Kearney Street, toward the Plaza, he met a Mr. Ware he had known in Illinois: but he was on his way to the post office; and was so anxious for letters from home, he could not stop to talk to any one.¹⁴⁷

Mr. Ware and Trip to Post Office

Mr. Ware turned around and walked up the hill with him; and told him all about his experiences in California. He and Mrs. Ware had lived on Lick Creek, near Springfield; and had traveled by boat, and the Isthmus of Panama, to California. They started soon after B. R. and his party had left in March.

When they reached San Francisco they were able to buy out a man who had built a small hotel, or boarding house. Mr. Ware and his wife, with the help of a Chinese boy, had fixed the place up and made it as homelike as possible; and their home-cooked-meals proved such a novelty they could not handle all the people who applied to them for board: but, he continued, they could always make room for old friends like B. R. and John Weber, whenever they came to The City.

¹⁴⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 94-95.

When they reached the post office, and received their mail, they had so many letters and papers, their pockets would not hold all of them; so B. R. had to stuff some of them into his carpet-bag before they went back, down the hill, with Mr. Ware, to the boarding house they had been hearing about. He gave them a small room that had just been vacated, where B. R. and John Weber arranged their mail in chronological order, and began to read. At noon they went downstairs to the best dinner they had eaten since they left Springfield—and met more Illinois friends at the table: but they could not stop to talk very long until after they had read all of their precious letters—

These letters were the first news of their families they had had since they left home, more than six months before. The friends they met at dinner understood, for they too were far from their homes and those they loved most.

The boys, Henry and B. R. Jr., wrote about their school and the games they played with the neighborhood boys—and about the horse and cow and chickens—and the chores they did for Ma, and all the childish family gossip:—but never a word about anything that might worry him or cause him to fear that all was not well in his home at Springfield.

In the last letter he read, B. R. Jr. told him about little Puggie falling onto the cistern; but, he added: “Ma pulled her out right soon, so she is all right. Ma felt kind of sick afterwards and Mrs. Weber took Puggie over to her house for a visit. Emma is visiting Aunt Angeline.”

The letters from Maria told about their relatives and friends, the affairs of the church, and the incidents of her home life with the children, in a manner to lead him to believe that all was well at home. There was no letter from Maria written after little Puggie’s accident; and he was sure they were not telling him everything; for their sixth child had been expected in August; and he knew that Puggie’s accident must have been a great shock to her mother.

One of the steamers from Panama was several days overdue; so it was possible for him to get more letters before he returned to Sacramento. In the meantime he tried to make arrangements to have mail sent to Reading Springs.¹⁴⁸

Visit With Illinois Friends

That night he visited with his old Illinois friends at the boarding house. Many of them had newspapers from home; and they were read with eagerness, although the latest news was three or four months old. The friends were all enthusiastic about the West, and agreed that a man who was sober and industrious could not fail to make money; but most of them believed that the prosperity was only temporary; and were planning to return to the States before the supply of gold, in the hills, was exhausted.

Some believed that many of the best class of emigrants would remain; and that San Francisco, with its fine harbor, would grow to be a great city—and those men were putting all of their available money into town lots. Some had already made fortunes buying and selling lots; but the lots were as high as they were in Springfield, where a fine city was already established and B. R., who had always been a speculator in land, said that he would not take one of those sand lots for a gift.¹⁴⁹

The next morning he went down to the waterfront to buy merchandise; and spent the entire day selecting goods to meet the needs of the miners who packed out from Reading Springs. He also laid in a meager supply of luxuries for the people of the village. Besides the boxes of freight he had sent from St. Louis; he bought coffee from Brazil; blankets, flour, and dried peaches from Chili; tea and rice from China; cocanuts and yams from the Sandwich Islands; and dried apples, smoked meats, drugs, medicines, boots, shoes, mining equipment,

¹⁴⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁴⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 96-97.

hardware, ammunition; and a vast assortment of other things that would be needed in a rapidly growing mining community. As he made his purchases he arranged to have them loaded on the boat that was starting up the river, for Sacramento, the next morning. When he started back to the boarding house he noticed that people were all looking toward the top of the hill above the city, where some men were waving flags,—and some one said: “They are signaling to tell us that a boat is just coming into the bay, and will dock at the wharf before sundown.”

That night they went again to the post office and got the mail that came in on the boat. Among the letters was one from Maria— written while she was still in bed after the birth of their son, whom she had decided to name Edwin Weber Biddle—if that name met with B. R.’s approval. They also got mail for all of the other members of their firm; and for the rest of their overland party who were living at, or near, Reading Springs; for all of their letters had been sent to San Francisco, to await permanent addresses from the emigrants when they reached California. They had been told that the winters in California were very mild; and planned for members of their firm to go to San Francisco frequently to buy goods; but plans are not always carried out.

The purchases they made, on this trip, filled their wagons; and they were glad that they had brought their six-ox-teams to haul it over the rough roads.

Business was so good, it was only a short time before two other members of their firm made a trip to San Francisco for more stock; but before their return, rain had been falling for almost a week and the streams were so swollen, and the roads so slippery, they had great trouble getting back at all. However business continued to be excellent, for new miners kept coming in to try their luck at the “diggings”; and had to be outfitted before they went into the mountains in search of the gold-bearing streams. A number of Chinamen, who were panning gold along the creeks that ran into the Trinity River, bought enough rice to last all winter. Reading Springs was the only trading post north of Freemont; and soon pack trains were starting from there for Weaverville and Southern Oregon—as well as to the numerous mining claims in Northern California.¹⁵⁰

Money Sent Back to Illinois Home

The firm of Biddle, Weber & Co. had a large amount of gold on hand and decided to declare a dividend, of several hundred dollars each, to be sent home to their families: so, even before the roads could be traveled by their teams, B. R. and John Weber started south, on horseback, with a train of pack mules. They expected to buy emergency supplies in Sacramento, which could be sent back immediately with an Indian driver, while they went on to San Francisco. There they could change their gold dust into negotiable paper, buy their merchandise directly from the ships, and send money to their families in Springfield by Adams and Co.’s Express.¹⁵¹

When they went to the boarding house, in San Francisco, they met an old friend from Springfield who was sailing that afternoon, and offered to take letters for them to their families in Springfield: so, instead of sending their letters and packages by mail or express, they intrusted them to their friend for safer and more prompt delivery. As the Panama Liner, carrying their friend with their precious letters and packages, turned around the bend of the bay, a freighter from China was tying up at the wharf; and they went aboard to buy rice and other commodities for their store. As they were leaving the vessel they stopped to watch a Chinese merchant who was examining silks he was buying for his San Francisco store. Among the things imported were a number of beautiful, silk embroidered shawls. One of them was especially handsome—pure white, and embroidered so perfectly one could not tell which was the right— and which was the wrong side. The merchant held it up and said: “There is a shawl fit for a queen”. B. R. thought of Maria, his queen—and how beautiful she would look in a

¹⁵⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 97-98.

¹⁵¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.98-99.

shawl like that. His Maria, who was living so far away with her infant son—and his four other children, and carrying the burden of their care alone. As he saw her, in imagination, with her plucky smile and undaunted courage, he wanted to do something special for her; and that shawl—fit for a queen, was a fitting gift for her. The shawls had been brought from China to sell for \$100.00 each, and the white one was the handsomest of them all. As the merchant held it up for them to see, B. R. took out his little buckskin bag of gold dust and his scales, weighed out \$100.00 of the dust, and told the Chinaman to do up the shawl for shipment to the States. Then he remembered that there were others at home who would like presents from San Francisco; so he bought two small shawls for his little girls, and two very small lacquered boxes. Into the lacquered boxes he put gold nuggets, in nests of cotton, for his boys. The gifts were then all packed in a handsome lacquered box, wrapped in waterproof cloth, and taken to Adams & Co. Express office for safe shipment to Springfield. Benjamin B. R. Biddle, and his party, left home in March, and it was Christmas before any of their families knew that they had reached California—and where they had located. Then letters came telling of the beautiful spot they had chosen for their new home. They told of the building claims they were taking up on either side of the main trail which led to the Trinity River mines. They said that their location was in the very center of the gold-bearing section of Northern California. They told of the beautiful snow covered mountains to the east; which they had passed after leaving the Oregon trail. The trail had taken them through dense forests and lava beds, infested by hostile Indians: but they had passed through without harm. Parts of the letters were published in the Springfield papers, and proved to be of great interest; for the people were interested in the adventures of their towns-people, who wrote from the California Eldorado.¹⁵²

1850

Maria Biddle's Life in Springfield

While the Springfield men were seeking their fortunes in the Far West, their wives in Springfield were drawn together by their common solicitude for their adventurous husbands. They helped each other, gossiped together, and exchanged every scrap of news that came from the West Coast.

Henry Biddle took his responsibilities as the head of the family very seriously; and, with the help of B. R. Jr., fed and curried the horses, kept the wood-boxes filled, made the fires, milked the cow, took care of the chickens; and attended to all of the “men’s work” at their home. Twice each week, one of the boys churned the cream and helped his mother make the butter.

The Biddle home was in the center of a large lot in the suburbs of Springfield where they had a fine vegetable garden—and where the neighborhood children played in adjacent vacant lots. The Merryman children, who lived near by, and their cousins from Lick Creek, were about the same age as the Biddle children and they formed the nucleus around which others gathered to join in their games. Bob Lincoln, who was always running away from home, played out there with the younger children every time he had a chance.¹⁵³

B. R.’s November 1849 letter reached Maria in February 1850. She, nor any of the other women, had any word from their husbands again until the first of May. There was no way of knowing that the men were flood-bound; so they imagined that all kinds of terrible things had happened to them. They talked about their fears to each other, and that made matters worse. They imagined that Indians from the north-east had gone on the warpath and massacred them all while they slept—or that their camp had been wiped out by an epidemic of cholera—or that they might have been drowned in the flood, which some one had written about from San Francisco.

¹⁵² *And This Is Our Heritage*, 99-108.

¹⁵³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 105

Maria kept on worrying, and her fears affected her health. She had great confidence in B. R.'s judgment, in face of danger. In her calmer moments, she was sure that he would take care of himself, and would write to her and the boys whenever he could. There was always the possibility that letters had been lost or miscarried. They might have been given to irresponsible people to mail— and boats, carrying mail, had been reported lost at sea—and so she tried to reason with herself and put aside her misgivings.

During the winter the boys had colds and Puggie and Eddie had attacks of croup—which she treated with the simple remedies at hand. Her Uncle, Dr. Preston Holt, had given Maria a medical book soon after her marriage. It listed the symptoms of ordinary diseases and the treatments to be used. It was well indexed and worn by constant use. Next to the Bible and the Almanac, it was read more than any other book in the house. She had referred to it so often she knew the symptoms of most of the ordinary diseases of children, and the remedies used for their cure. In fact her knowledge of medicine, and the art of healing, were so well known to her friends, she was frequently called on for advice when any of the neighbors were ill. Most of them had more confidence in her judgment than in that of the local doctors, who had often had less experience than she; but, with all of her skill, the hours of nursing and the worry of caring for sick children were “the straws that broke the camel’s back”.

Taking care of five children, keeping her house in order and cooking for boarders, was hard work when every one was well and the older children could help: but when sickness came and the little ones had to be watched over at night, as well as during the day, it was more than Maria could endure. When Angeline found her feverish and ill, she sent for a doctor. Maria was ordered to bed. Angeline and Sarah Weber took charge of her home; and, with the help of neighbors who were anxious to serve one who had given so much of herself to them, she was given efficient and loving care while she recovered her health and strength. The doctor warned her that she must quit worrying, get more rest, and take better care of herself if she wanted to keep well and live to raise her children.¹⁵⁴

May 1850

Maria Biddle Receives a Letter From B. R. Biddle

It was the first of May, just as she was recovering from this illness, that a letter came from B. R., telling her of the hard winter he had just passed through; and saying that he was sending her a draft for \$300.00 by a friend who was starting for the States that day, and would be apt to reach Springfield before his letter. He said that his business was prospering; and that, as the floods were over and the roads were open once more he would write often and send money frequently.

B. R.'s letter, containing such good news, acted like a tonic. Maria's health improved rapidly, but as day after day passed and the draft, or the man who was to bring it, did not reach Springfield, Maria began to worry again. She was no longer able to keep boarders and, unless she received the money B. R. had sent, she did not see how she could live without asking for help from her family in Tennessee.

One day, a package came from San Francisco. She thought that B. R. had changed his mind and had sent the draft in a box with something else. There was great excitement in their home as the children gathered 'round to watch her unwrap the package, which contained a beautifully decorated (lacquered) box— unlike anything they had ever seen before. When the box was opened they unwrapped three lovely embroidered shawls that had been made in far off China. The girls were delighted with their white silk shawls, embroidered in delicately colored flowers and edged with heavy white silk fringe. The boys were all excited too when they saw their nuggets of pure gold that Pa had sent from far off California—but when Maria unfolded her shawl—her lips trembled and her eyes filled with tears. She had never seen any

¹⁵⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 108-109.

needlework that could compare with the fine embroidery on that shawl: and, as she unfolded it and tried it on, it was so large the fringe dragged on the floor as she walked across the room. It was only fit for a tall and stately woman who could show its beauty to advantage.

As the children ran out to show their gifts to their friends, Maria fell across the bed and sobbed as though her heart would break. She was not strong—and she needed money so desperately! She had expected, each day, to receive the draft B. R. had sent: and the expectation had been a stimulant to her, after the months of hard work and worry she had just passed through; but now, instead of the much needed money this beautiful, useless present had come. It must have cost enough to have outfitted the whole family! As she grew calmer she realized that B. R. did not know of her financial difficulties; and that it was his love for her, and his desire to make her happy, that had prompted him to buy such a handsome present. He would never think that it might be too large for her. As she thought of his kindness she smiled through her tears, and wrapped the shawl carefully in oiled tissue and put it away, thinking that perhaps one of their daughters might grow to be tall, like B. R.'s family, and would be able to wear it with pride and distinction. All well-dressed women wore shawls, at that time (even men wore heavy woolen ones when it was cold) and Maria had several handsome ones that were suitable for various occasions; and this one was, by far, the most beautiful of them all: but she never wore it as long as she lived. Her daughters too were short women so the gift that B. R. hoped would give her such pleasure lay folded away for sixty years until it fell into the hands of a granddaughter who wore it and loved it, because it had been a gift from the dearest companion of her childhood to the grandmother she adored.¹⁵⁵

Maria Biddle Runs Short of Money

Time passed rapidly, but everything did not work out as B. R. had planned. Since he was not there to attend to his business, the men who had bought his property failed to make their payments as they had promised and Maria soon found herself running short of money to meet her household expenses. She had to economize in every way. The tuition for the boy's schooling was a real problem; but she wanted them to get as much education as possible while they were in Springfield: for, if they went to the Western Territories when their father returned, they might never have another opportunity to attend such good schools. However, as money grew scarcer, she was afraid that she could not pay their tuition much longer—and yet she could not consider sending them to the free schools that had been established for the children of the poor. People of any standing would not accept charity, even to the extent of allowing the government (which meant their neighbors and other taxpayers) to educate their children. Angeline suggested that the boys might sleep in the trundle bed in their mother's room: and then their room, and the spare room, could be rented for enough to pay for their schooling—until the overdue interest was paid, or B. R. could reach California and send money from there.

Maria, who was determined not to add anything to her husband's indebtedness, welcomed the idea of taking roomers; and her front rooms were soon rented to members of the legislature and their wives. B. R., and his friends, had written often and given their letters to men returning from the west, or left them along the way where they could be picked up by hunters, trappers or returning immigrants: and it was remarkable that so few of those letters failed to reach their destination. As the party went further west the letters were necessarily fewer and further apart. Maria and the boys wrote something each week, which they planned to combine into one long letter, and send in time to reach San Francisco before their father would get there. They also saved newspapers and clippings to send at regular intervals.

Puggie Falls Into Cistern

¹⁵⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 109-110.

Like most well-to-do people of that time, the Biddles drew their drinking water from their own well, which was about twenty feet deep. The well was just a few steps from the kitchen door, at the side of the back porch: and was lined with brick, and boarded up several feet above the ground. The top was covered by wooden doors that were opened only when the wooden buckets were let down into the well to draw up the water. On the other side of the porch was a cistern for storing rain water, which was about four feet deep and five feet in diameter. It was also lined with bricks and boarded over the top, except for a wooden door which was kept locked, and was opened only when rain water was needed. Maria always washed her clothes in rain water and one day, when Puggie was playing at a neighbor's, and the other children were at school, Maria started her washing; when suddenly the neighbor's little boy came screaming in to the house: "Oh Miss Biddle, come quick! Puggie's in the cistern! Come quick! Puggie's all wet." Maria's heart almost stopped beating; but she did not lose her presence of mind, and as she ran toward the cistern she called to the boy: "Run as fast as you can to Dr. Henry's and tell him to come here quick! Tell him that Puggie'll die if he can't come quick!"; and, as the child ran down the street, Maria got poor little Puggie out of the cistern, and began working with her,—trying to bring back the spark of life in the, apparently, dead child. Dr. Henry was there in a few minutes and did everything he could to revive her. He felt, from the first, that his efforts would be useless; but he stayed nearly an hour before he told Maria that there was nothing more he could do; but Maria pleaded so piteously with him to stay, he remained almost an hour longer; and applied every means he knew for resuscitating the drowned child: but at last he gave up what he considered a hopeless effort, and went to see another sick patient who needed attention. Maria did not blame him for going; but she could not give up her little girl, and kept on working over her with almost superhuman strength. She forced air into the child's lungs and then expelled it—again and again—until at last her efforts were re-warded and little Puggie began to breathe naturally.

In the mean time, a number of neighbors had gathered at her house; and they took little Puggie from her exhausted mother and put her to bed. Then they took Maria in hand, and insisted that she too go to bed by the side of the child she had resurrected from the dead. Those kind neighbors finished Maria's washing, and looked after her home while she recovered from the shock of her harrowing experience.¹⁵⁶

Maria Biddle Receives Money From California

A short time later Maria received the long-looked-for draft—and from that time on, her financial difficulties were at an end. She continued to receive letters and remittances from B. R. quite regularly. His business in California was all that could be desired; but he was getting very anxious to see his family; and, even though they were prospering financially, he and John Weber were planning to sell out and return to Springfield. They thought that the mines would hold out for another year or two; and they planned to make their profit until the spring of 1851, when the business should be at its height; and then they hoped to sell out for a good price.

He said that a California mining town was not a proper place to bring up a family: but that the state had a great future in agriculture. There were few heavy storms during the winter of 1850-51; and mail came through regularly from the men at Shasta. Maria felt like her old self again—happy and contented—and she sang as she went about her work. She no longer kept any boarders—although she still rented one room, which gave her enough extra money to hire Mrs. Brown to do her washing and ironing. The children too were exceptionally well, all during the winter; and toward spring they began to talk about the things they would do "when Pa comes home."¹⁵⁷

1850 Census

¹⁵⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 105-106.

¹⁵⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 110-111.

In the 1850 U.S. Census, Maria Biddle was listed as the head of the household and Angeline (Biddle) Atkinson and her son Henry were staying with them. B. R. was still in California, having traveled overland to the gold fields in 1849 with several partners in order to open a store selling goods to the miners.¹⁵⁸

In 1850, B. R. was living in what is called “Old Shasta”, Shasta, California, with John B. Watson, John B. Webber, Lewis Johnson, Augustus Eastham, and Wm. P. Smith. All are merchants except Smith, who is a miner.¹⁵⁹

Buildings of Biddle, Weber & Co. Completed

The buildings of Biddle, Weber & Co and the St. Charles Hotel were the first buildings finished; but log and frame houses sprang up all over the hill sides: and there were even some houses that had been built in sections and shipped around The Horn, from the States, all ready to put together upon their arrival. Gold seemed plentiful, and new strikes were made along the numerous creeks, as prospectors and strangers, from all parts of the world, flooded the community. Slow moving ox teams were constantly on the road, bringing fresh supplies from San Francisco and Sacramento. As there were no roads beyond Reading Springs, pack trains, of mules, were used to carry supplies from these, over the mountain trails, to the Trinity, Salmon, Scott and upper Sacramento mines—and as far north as Oregon. Almost overnight the village, that so many miners had forsaken the winter before, became the great wholesale and retail distributing center of northern California. ... a goodly number of its first inhabitants were recruited from that band of honest, self-respecting, church-going Christians from central Illinois, who had brought their Christianity and their ideas of law and order with them while the town contained a large number of professional gamblers, and the saloons ran wide open, it also had several churches that were well attended. Although Sunday was the day when miners came to town to drink and gossip and buy their supplies, Biddle, Weber & Co. never sold or delivered goods on that day. However the quality of their merchandise, and their reputation for courtesy, honesty and reliability, insured them the cream of the business. Although the town was an outpost of the early California settlements, law and order prevailed from the beginning.

By the spring of 1850, Reading Springs was lighted at night by oil lanterns hung at intervals along the Main Street that was crowded night and day with freighters and pack animals. Sometimes, at midday, the confusion was so great it was not considered safe for women to cross the street without help. At a public meeting held on June 8th, 1850, in front of R. J. Walsh’s store, the name of the town was changed from Reading Springs to Shasta.¹⁶⁰ Among the early comers to Shasta were Mr. and

California had now become a State.¹⁶¹

In September representative men met in front of the St. Charles Hotel and nominated John B. Watson, of Biddle, Weber & Co., for the State Assembly. He was a typical southern gentleman (born in South Carolina) who was well educated and had moved west to Illinois while he was still young enough to learn to work.

¹⁵⁸ “United States Census, 1850,” database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M859-2M7> : accessed 9 November 2015), Matilda Biddle in household of Mariah Riddle, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois, United States; citing family 714, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

Monday Is for Mothers: Matilda Biddle (1847 - 1927) As Esther Moreland Leithold (1872-1959) wrote in “And this is our heritage,” a recounting of the family stories she heard from her grandparents Benjamin R. and Maria (Evans) Biddle, this paternal great great grandmother was always known as “Puggie,” a nickname bestowed on her as an infant.

¹⁵⁹ 1850; Census Place: Shasta, Shasta, California; Roll: M432_35; Page: 333A; Image: 648. Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 100

¹⁶¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 100-101.

He first taught school in Springfield, then later he was elected County Surveyor and was one of the engineers selected to build the Great Western Railroad. He would have been an ideal member of the California Legislature.

However, a few days later, a tall, lean, long-legged young man on a small, thin mule—with his feet almost touching the ground, rode up in front of a saloon, dismounted, tied his mule to a post, and turning to the gathering crowd said: “I understand you all had a meetin’ in town and nominated a candidate fo’ th’sembly.” Some one spoke up and said: “Yes we nominated Mr. Watson”. Whereupon the stranger said: “Well Boys, my name’s A. Z. McCandless, and I’m a candidate fo’ th’sembly; and whiskey’s my platform;— and whisky’s goin’ to win this here fight! Let’s all go in and have a drink.” They all joined him, without a dissenting voice, and the McCandless boom was on. He stuck to his platform and was triumphantly elected: for whiskey won over brains, character and personality, in that first election in Shasta County, in the new state of California.

In September 1850, the people of Shasta experienced a real Eastern thunderstorm, accompanied by a heavy rain that lasted all night so the grass started to grow and there was soon plenty of fresh feed for the stock.

The fall and winter were mild. The roads had been improved, the riverboats brought freight as far as Freeport and the ox teams were on the road, all winter, and carrying supplies to Shasta for the northern mines.

1851

B. R. Biddle’s Letter From San Francisco: January 1, 1851

As they were expecting a large shipment of goods on the Steamer Panama, which was due on December 20, 1850, B. R. went to “The City” to personally check and reload the merchandise. For some reason the steamer did not arrive on time, so he waited—hoping to get word of the missing boat. On the first of January, he bought some stationery on one side of which was printed a picture of San Francisco. He went back to his boarding house and wrote the following letter:

“San Francisco, January 1st, 1851, My dear Maria: As I was passing from my boarding house to the Shipping, I met very unexpectedly Wm. Taylor, Mr. Ware and Sam, who lived on Lick Creek; and as they are going immediately to Springfield, I send you a few lines. There has nothing occurred of interest since I last wrote, except that the weather had been as beautiful as Spring. On our table today we have lettuce of large size, and radishes. There are no public displays today—except the semi-annual meeting of the Pioneers of California, but every person looks glad—greeting their friends with a Happy New Year. There are many things got up for the day. As the steamer Columbus leaves today at 3 o’clock P.M. the sheet upon which I am writing was issued this morning, and they are taken as fast as they are struck off, to send home to friends. It gives some idea of what this place is. I have several other views which I will send as I find matter to write. As I wrote before, I shall remain here a week, and shall address you again—also the boys. The Mail Steamer Panama, due at this port 10 days ago, has not arrived and much anxiety prevails about her probable fate. My delay here is in part owing to my wish to get letters. I feel sure you have written— together with my boys. As I stand on the wharf and see the faces that are made bright at the prospect of soon reaching their homes, my thoughts are carried with them and I anticipate the joy of my return. I am afraid it makes you feel sad that so many are coming and leaving me behind. I don’t know of any others from Springfield who will reach home before

me. I remitted by Adams and Co. Express on yesterday, a package containing \$703.00, upon which freight and insurance was paid to Springfield, Ills., directed in the care of James L. Lamb. You will pay it over as marked on the several packages. Mr. Starr informed me a few days ago that there had been some neglect about the first draft I sent you for \$300.00, on the part of his brother. I hope all is set right. The draft is good. I have but a few minutes left to conclude this letter. I will close by wishing you all a Happy New Year—That it may bring in its train the richest blessings of life,—that we may meet in love and the enjoyments of home,— that the children may be good children,—growing up in intelligence and virtue—rewarding our hearts and making us glad. Accept this sheet as a small token of love and regard—cherishing it for having been sent on the first day of the year 1851, from the City of San Francisco, State of California. It represents this, the greatest City of the Pacific Coast as it is today. Keep this profile and contrast it, if we live, with what it will be in 1852. Present my New Years Compliments to all the friends,—to Angeline and the Jacksonville folks. To the children I say—I have thought of them often today. I hope they have been merry today—and I wish a very happy New Year. As ever I remain yours in affection and Love, Ever—Farewell—B. R. Biddle.”¹⁶²

He took the letter down to the steamer and watched his friends start on their homeward journey. His heart was sad for he longed to be with his loved ones. But he must first go back to Shasta with his merchandise. Then he could settle up his business affairs and make his plans for going home. But he wanted to pay a short visit to his sister in Oregon before returning to the States.

He was fully convinced that the West offered the best opportunities for young people. He wanted to bring his boys to a place where land was fertile and cheap and where they could grow up in a new country and help with its development. He thought that the gold in the hills and streams of California would be exhausted in a few years and that the great potential wealth of California was in agriculture.

John Weber was also anxious to get back to his family in Illinois. While he was delighted with the results of his business venture in Shasta, he had decided to return permanently to his home in Springfield. His trip across the plains, and that first hard winter in California, when every man had to work under stress of storm or flood or desert heat—had shown him again and again that the loss of his hand was a serious handicap in a new country. He was sure that he could make a living and be much more comfortable in his hometown than in a pioneer country.

A friend, by the name of James Deigh, wished to buy out their interest in their business, and, as he would make an acceptable partner to the other members of the firm, the transfer was arranged at once.

¹⁶² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 102-103.

Trip Home and Return to Oregon (1851-1852)

B. R. Biddle Visits Sister Harriett Campbell in Salem, Oregon

When the Shasta property was disposed of, B. R. prepared to accompany one of the Oregon pack trains and made the trip to Salem without any unusual difficulty. As he rode over the country, he was impressed by the grandeur of the scenery and the apparent fertility of the soil. He found his sister Harriett Campbell and her family well and happy—and over-joyed to see him again after the lapse of twelve years.

Her husband, Hamilton Campbell, had taken up land in the Willamette Valley. When the Jason Lee Mission had been abandoned in 1844, Hamilton purchased their stock, so he had a well-equipped farm where he spent much of his time. Harriett lived in town where the children could go to school. She was a much handsomer woman at 34 than she had been when she left home at 22. Her four girls were as fine looking children as B. R. had ever seen.

Hamilton Campbell House



In 1851, Hamilton Campbell built a house located at 13600 Jefferson Highway 99E, SE, near Jefferson, Oregon. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. R. Biddle Decides to Move Family to Oregon

B. R. was delighted with Oregon—with its snow-capped mountains, beautiful forests and fertile valleys. Everything that was planted seemed to grow luxuriantly. B. R. decided that that was the place to establish his family. The government was offering 320 acres of land to every man and wife (160 acres to each) who would settle in Oregon Territory. This was B. R.'s inducement to bring his family as soon as possible.

The early missionaries and their friends who had gone to Oregon to carry Christianity to the Indians and to build an American colony in the far west, had been a very different class of people from those who had rushed into California when gold was discovered. B. R. liked that environment better for his growing family. Good schools and churches were already established in the towns of the Willamette Valley. The Indians furnished cheap and satisfactory labor, and living conditions seemed to be ideal.

B. R. and his brother-in-law spent a couple of weeks riding over the country, looking at land and planning for the future. They decided that the greatest need for that part of Oregon

Territory was a nursery where the settlers could buy fruit trees and berry vines to plant around the new homes that were being built.¹⁶³

B. R. Biddle Leaves Oregon on Trip Back to Springfield June 20, 1851

B. R. planned to return to Illinois to take his wife and five children to the Willamette Valley in the Oregon Territory where his sister Harriett and her husband Hamilton Campbell had settled some years earlier. B. R. Biddle would come home on horseback as that would take less time than it did going West with the ox-teams.

On June 19th, B. R. Biddle wrote that he and a couple of his friends were starting, overland to Springfield, in a few days. Two of B. R.'s old Springfield friends who had gone to Oregon to learn about the country at first hand, met him at Oregon City and they started home together on June 20, 1851—full of enthusiastic plans for the homes they planned to build for their families in the Far West.¹⁶⁴

Late in July they received a letter from “Pa,” telling about his visit with his sister in Oregon Territory. He was delighted with that country, and the opportunities offered by the Government, to married men and their wives who would settle there before 1854. He told Maria that he would soon be home, to sell the rest of his property and settle up his affairs so that he could take his family back there to make a permanent home.

He wrote that he was bringing something that the children would all like. There was great excitement over the news, and the children wondered what their father could be bringing to them from Oregon. They did not expect him home before the middle of October for even horses cannot travel very fast on a two thousand mile trip over roads like the Overland Trail.

B. R. said that he and his friends had returned by the Snake River route, but he considered the trail through Northern California and Central Oregon much better and safer. When they reached the Platte River, on the way home, they met a party of eight men traveling with packhorses from California who joined them and traveled with them all the way to St. Joseph.

They met occasional bands of Indians, but had no trouble with any of them. On their trip home they met 685 wagons, 379 families and 2962 head of stock going to Oregon—which showed how fast the West was filling up. As they passed parties on the road, they always stopped to talk—to exchange ideas and news of the road. They usually nooned and stopped over night with some of the west bound wagon trains who were glad to meet people coming from the West. They could give them reliable information about the roads they would have to travel.

It took B. R. and his friends just 83 days to make the trip from Oregon City to St. Joseph. They laid by seven days on the way: so, as they looked back, it did not seem a very hard trip.

B. R. wrote that, like other men of the West, he was wearing a beard. The children wondered if they would know him. In fact he had been away so long, the little girls seemed to have forgotten just how he looked. They studied his old daguerreotypes and talked about his eyes and his smile, and the curl in his hair. The boys remembered, especially, how straight he stood, how fast he walked, and how searchingly he looked at them—straight in the eyes—as though he could see their very thoughts—and they remembered, most of all, how kind he was!¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁶⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 104.

¹⁶⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 112.

B. R. Biddle Arrives Home in Springfield



*Journal, Friday, September 26, 1851.*¹⁶⁶

One mid September evening as Maria and Sarah Weber sat on the porch with their knitting, watching the children playing Prisoner's Base in the vacant lot next door, they saw Henry suddenly stop the game and run excitedly down the street, calling: "Ma! Oh Ma! Look quick! Here comes Pa! Here comes Pa!" . . . All of the children ran down the street to meet him. It was a very happy reunion; and Maria felt an exhilaration of spirit—like the return of her lost youth—as the burden of her family cares slipped from her shoulders, when B. R. entered the house.

As he unpacked the horses he said to the children: "See this little horse? It is a Cayuse pony. I got it from an Indian in northwestern Oregon, to bring home to you. It's very strong and easy to ride. The Indians ride without any saddle or bridle. I can show you how to ride the pony that way. If you will give him a little sugar, once in awhile, he will follow you all around the place and be a regular pet."¹⁶⁷

After Pa had eaten his supper, the younger children were put to bed. Henry and B. R. Jr. were allowed to stay up late to listen to their father tell of his adventures in the wonderland where they were all going to make their home. B. R. was a fluent and convincing talker, so, by the time they had to go to bed, the boys had a mental picture of their new home in the West that was almost as vivid as if they had seen the place with their own eyes.

In telling of his experiences B. R. said: "I think that if I had been willing to stay away from my family, I could have made a fortune at Shasta City before the mines gave out. But a mining town is no place to take Maria and the children—and I couldn't stay away from them another year for all of the gold of the West. The Willamette Valley in Oregon is a much better place to live. The soil is fertile; the climate ideal, and good schools have already been established. To encourage families to settle in Oregon, the Government is offering 320 acres of land to every man and wife who will go there to live."

B. R. told of the home and family of his sister—and of the advantages a new country offered to young and energetic men. His enthusiasm was contagious and, before their first evening together was over, they were all planning to start west in the early spring. B. R. said: "Anything will grow in that soil out there; and the climate is so mild fruits and berries of all kinds do well. I figure to take out enough young fruit trees and berry vines to plant the land I have located when we reach there next fall."

James Cardwell, who had always been a student, was very much interested in fruit growing—even though he had studied Medicine and had also taken courses in Dentistry and Pharmacy. He said: "Uncle B. R., if so many people are going to Oregon, and fruit trees grow so well

¹⁶⁶ *Journal, Friday, September 26, 1851, p. 3.*

¹⁶⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage, pp. 111-112.*

there, why wouldn't it be a good idea to take out a whole wagon load of fruit trees and start a nursery?" Maria said: "I can start some rose slips this fall, and get some other plants and seeds to take along, and we can have flower gardens around our homes there just as we have here."

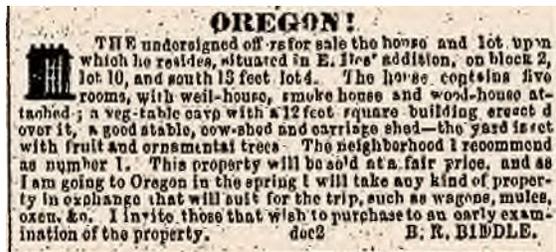
They talked all the rest of the day—and far into the second night—eagerly planning for their new homes in the wonderful territory of Oregon—far from the social and political problems of "The States."¹⁶⁸

B. R. Biddle Advertises House For Sale

OREGON!

The undersigned offers for sale the house and lot upon which he resides, situated in E. Hies' addition, on block 2, Lot 10, and the south 13 feet lot 4. The house contains five rooms, with well-house, smoke house and wood-house attached; a vegetable cave with a 12 feet square building erected over it, a good stable, cow shed and carriage shed—the yard is set with fruit and ornamental trees. The neighborhood I recommend as number 1. This property will be sold at a fair price, and as I am going to Oregon in the spring I will take any kind of property in exchange that will suit for the trip, such as wagons, mules, oxen, etc. I invite those that wish to purchase to an early examination of the property.

B. R. Biddle



Journal, Monday, December 22, 1851.¹⁶⁹

1852

B. R. and Maria Biddle Sell Springfield Home

On March 17, 1852, Maria and B. R. Biddle sold their Springfield home on Seventh Street to Henry P. Cone for \$950.¹⁷⁰

April

B. R. Biddle Family Visits Family in Tennessee

¹⁶⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 113.

¹⁶⁹ *Journal*, Monday, December 22, 1851, p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ *Sangamon County Deed Book*, Book II, p. 56. IRAD.

Maria was willing to go to Oregon if she could see her family in Tennessee once more before leaving "The States." She and B. R. and the children started almost immediately, so as to be back before the winter storms. The roads had been greatly improved since they first drove over them on their wedding journey. Most of her relatives who had lived on the Main Kentucky road were no longer there and she missed them.

They stopped at the homes of her great Uncles where some of the younger generation still lived. But it seemed like the old people had taken much of the charm of their homes with them, when they had gone. Maria did not care to stay. As they went down the Main Street of Tazewell, half of the people they met were related to Maria by blood or marriage; and they were so friendly and so glad to see her and her fine children she felt that she would like to stay among them always. Their old home where their large family had been so happy together was still known as the Evans House, but it was being used as a boarding house and looked "run down" and uninviting.

B. R. and Maria, with their family, made their headquarters with his sister Harriet and her husband Hamilton Campbell—where they could be with her mother, who made her home with her oldest son. From there they made short visits to other members of the family.

...as she met them all again, and noted the many changes that had taken place, life seemed very uncertain; and she felt that she could not go so far away and leave them, as she had planned; for she might never see any of them again: and she loved them all so much she wanted to be near them always.¹⁷¹ Maria's mother, and all the rest of the family, tried to dissuade her and B. R. from going so far away.

"I (B. R.) feel sure, if our plans are successful, that we will come back to visit you in two or three years. That will not seem long; for time flies when we are busy." B. R. talked convincingly, but Maria had neither his optimism nor his imagination; and, like her mother, feared that she would never be able to return to her old home again: but she pretended to agree with her husband, and spoke of the time when they would return and put their boys in College at Jacksonville or Knoxville if the slavery problem was settled by that time.¹⁷²

The Slavery Problem

The slavery problem was ever before them. Every newspaper contained notices of runaway slaves—with descriptions of them and of the reward offered for their return. Yankees were traveling through the South, stirring up trouble among the slaves and abusing their owners. The Evans family all agreed that slavery, as an institution, was wrong: but they believed that it was a matter that could, and should, be regulated by the States themselves, and was no concern of the Federal Government. They believed that the Tennessee laws should be changed, so that the negroes could buy their freedom and continue to live in their home State. Some of the slaves were allowed to keep part of the money they earned, when they "worked out"; so that they could buy their freedom, as soon as the State law would make it possible. Each slave's money was kept in a separate package, in a tin box, that fitted behind a brick in the storehouse wall. The slaves, themselves, did not seem very anxious to be free—and planned to stay on and work for the family just as they always had done; but there would be one advantage—and that was that they could never be sold to a Yankee—or other bad man, if their owners should die or become financially involved. The American ancestors of the Evans's had always believed that each State had a right to make its own laws and settle its own problems: and their Tennessee descendants held the same opinion.

¹⁷¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁷² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 115-116.

B. R. and Maria had adopted another point of view after living in the Free State of Illinois for twelve years: where fugitive slaves, from Missouri and the South, were always causing trouble and misunderstandings between the peace-officers of the States they had left, and the sympathetic people of Illinois, would have liked to help the miserable, hunted wretches—who asked nothing but to be saved from an avenging, and sometimes brutal, master. They thought that the only way to settle the question was by an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and an appropriation of money to reimburse the slave owners for their loss.

B. R. was the one who expressed these ideas. Although Maria agreed with all he said, she did not take part in the discussions. She listened attentively, and as the arguments became heated her right foot patted the floor, like a musician beating time to the rhythm of a dance. Then as the discussion grew fiercer, the rhythmic beating of her foot grew faster, as though it sought to keep time with the wild beating of her heart, which was in accord with the fierce (though controlled) emotions of those about her. That night, when they went to their room, she said to B. R.: "I'm sure we'll be happy in Oregon, where we'll not hear any more about slavery, and State's Rights, and Constitutional Amendments, until these problems have been settled for good."

B. R. and Maria Biddle and Family Leave for Oregon

On April 6, 1852, the Biddles left Springfield for their long journey. They were leaving their old friends, their homes and relatives—perhaps forever. Maria was six months pregnant.

For the West.—Dr. A. G. Henry¹⁷³ and family, Mr. Biddle and family, Isaac Constant and family, Wm. Merryman and family, and Charles Halsted, left here yesterday morning for Oregon, and Messrs George Eastman and Hiram Bristol for California—all valuable citizens.

Register, April 7, 1852.¹⁷⁴

We omitted to state on Wednesday, that B. R. Biddle and family were among the emigrants who left this place on the day preceding for Oregon. His brother-in-law, Mr. Cardwell, and family, of Jacksonville, joined them at that place.

Journal, April 10, 1852.¹⁷⁵

It took about six months to make the trip with ox teams taking the Oregon Trail. They had to consider getting food and water for the animals along the way. They could buy some grain and hay, which could be used, for a short time after leaving Independence, but, from there on, they had to depend on the small amount of grain they could carry and the grass that grew near the trail. Very little grass was high enough for grazing before the first of April—and yet, if they waited too long, other trains would go before them and take the best of the feed. They also had to remember that, near the end of their journey, high mountains had to be crossed before the snows (which sometimes came in October and November) would close the trails.¹⁷⁶

To be eligible for free land under the donation land law, they had to be in Oregon and file a claim before December 1853.

¹⁷³ 1852 was the year of the greatest migration west, and it was also the year when cholera was most severe on the Oregon trail. Thousands of people died. Strangely enough, Doctor Henry's diary has no mention of his treating anyone on the journey west. *Dr. Anson G. Henry Physician, Politician, Friend of Abraham Lincoln*, Harry C. Blair, M.D. PORTLAND, OREGON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Western Orthopedic Association, Portland, Oregon. October 2, 3, 4, 1950. Dr. Anson Gordon Henry was born in 1804, in Richfield, New York. After graduating from medical school, he moved to Springfield, Illinois to begin a medical practice and soon became acquainted with Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln. In 1852, Henry and his family moved to Oregon and he was eventually appointed by President Lincoln as the surveyor general for the Washington Territory. He was in Washington, D.C. attempting to secure another political appointment when the assassination of Lincoln occurred. While traveling back to the Washington Territory, Henry drowned in the shipwreck of the steamer "Brother Jonathan."

¹⁷⁴ *Register*, April 7, 1852, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Journal*, April 10, 1852, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 13 and 114.

June 1852

Birth of Arthur Platte Biddle

(1852-1852)^[1]_[SEP]

In June 1852, Arthur Platte Biddle was born to Maria and B. R. Biddle at Ash Hollow, a camp on the west side of the Platte River in the Nebraska Territory. His parents were crossing the plains on their way to Oregon. He died at Albany, Oregon, on November 29, 1852.

Corvallis, Oregon (1852-1875)

October

By October 1852, the Biddles and the rest of their party arrived at their Oregon destination in the Willamette Valley, eighty miles from **Portland** and fifty miles from the Oregon Coast.

The Willamette Valley was the 'Eden' at the end of the **Oregon** Trail for thousands of Americans who migrated to this region in the mid-nineteenth century. ... Originally named Marysville, **Corvallis** was renamed in 1853 to avoid confusion with Marysville, California.¹⁷⁷

Settling Northwest of Corvallis, Oregon Territory

B. R. staked out a donation land claim of 320 acres on Upper Oak Creek northwest of Corvallis on land located in what is now the Oregon State University's McDonald Forest. B. R., his wife Maria and their five children lived there in a small log farm home.

Death of Arthur Platte Biddle

(1852–1852)⁽¹¹⁾_(SEP)

Arthur Platte Biddle, the infant son of Maria and B. R. Biddle, died on November 29, 1852, at Albany, Oregon Territory.

1853

We learn by letter that B. R. Biddle and family arrived safe in Oregon. He however lost his youngest child after arriving there. Charles Clark, son of Edward Clark, Esq., of this county, who went out with Mr. Biddle, is dead.

Journal, January 26, 1853.¹⁷⁸

Corvallis Seminary

The early settlers of Benton County who had children to educate were anxious to have a school for higher education organized in Corvallis. B. R. Biddle and William F. Dixon helped incorporate Corvallis Academy in January 1853 as a school for the community. B. R. and William F. Dixon were named as two of the Board of Directors. Lack of funds and other complications, made it impossible for the Seminary to be started at that time.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ <https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/corvallis/#.Wxfbk2U4mu4>

¹⁷⁸ *Journal*, January 26, 1853, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ Over a period of 12 years beginning in 1983, local historian Ken Munford wrote 561 columns for the *Gazette-Times*. The newspaper is publishing a selection of these columns each Saturday. This one was originally printed on July 3, 1995.



1854

Birth of Alice Eudorah Biddle

(1854–1918)¹⁸⁰

Alice Eudorah Biddle was born on February 2, 1854 in the Biddle log cabin at the Upper Oak Creek farm, near Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon Territory, the daughter of Maria and B. R. Biddle.

Purchase of Town Lots in Corvallis

Soon after they reached Oregon Territory, Maria invested the money she brought with her (sewed up in her feather mattress), in Corvallis town lots. She later sold them for business property—for twice as much as she had paid for them. As Pa's investments had also been successful, she did not spend any of her own "capital," but reinvested it carefully, with the idea of having an independent income—to be used if they were, ever again, caught in financial difficulties—like the panic of 1837—and her poverty of 1849 to 1850.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 140-141.

1854 Census of Benton County, Oregon Territory

ENUMERATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF BENTON COUNTY OREGON TERRITORY AS TAKERN BY CHARLES WELLS ASSESSORFOR THE YEAR1854

Number of legal voters	640
No of Males 21 years & upward	643
“ “ “ under 21 & over 10	239
“ “ “ “ 10	367
Total No. of males	1247
“ “ females of 18 upward	377
“ “ “ under 18 & over 10	180
“ “ “ 10	370
Total No. of females	927
Total No Inhabitants	2176

I do solemnly swear that the above enumeration roll of the inhabitants of Benton County Oregon Territory- is a full true and correct list as taken by me in the year 1854 Charles Wells Assessor Benton Co. Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of October 1854 B. R. Biddle Auditor

B. R. Biddle Opens Drug Store

B. R. Biddle opened a drug store on Second Street in Corvallis. Fire twice burned him out of the store.

1855

B. R. Biddle Participates in Whig Convention

On April 18, 1855, B. R. is mentioned in an article in the *Oregonian* about the Whig Convention held in Corvallis. ^[1]_[SEP]

1856

B. R. Biddle Builds House in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon Territory (The Benjamin Biddle House) ^[2]

In about 1856, B. R. Biddle bought four lots from W. F. Dixon and built a house at 406 N. W. Sixth Street (between 6th and 7th on Harrison Ave.) in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon Territory. When the new home was finished, it was one of the most attractive houses in the town. In fact it was considered quite grand. It was described by one writer as “one of the show places of the pretty little town.”

There were four bedrooms on the upper floor, while down stairs were the parlor, sitting room, bedroom, dining room, kitchen, pantry, store room and hall. The well was about thirty feet deep, brick lined and sealed in under the kitchen floor; so the water could be brought up into the house by a hand pump near the wooden kitchen sink. There was a wide porch across the front of the house, with a veranda above, supported by four heavy pillars. The house stood back about fifty feet from the street, and was painted white.

The parlor was especially grand, with its green and red carpet, its green and black window drapes, its hand carved, walnut parlor set upholstered in black horse-hair;—and its new piano which he had bought to replace the one they had shipped from Springfield, and which had been lost in transit (with most of their other furniture) near Cape Horn.

The sitting-room looked more comfortable, although it was not as handsomely furnished: but it was there that Maria had her sewing- cabinet and her wonderful sewing-machine.

Maria loved flowers. She and B. R. were expert gardeners. The house was soon surrounded by a beautiful garden of choice shrubs and flowers.



The Biddle home at Corvallis, Oregon
B. R. BIDDLE, MARIA E. BIDDLE, EDWIN (EDDIE) W. BIDDLE
and ALICE BIDDLE

B. R. bought the furniture for their new house in Portland; and had it brought to Corvallis in his own freight wagons. It was arranged in the house while Maria was still out at the Claim; and then he brought her in to see her newly furnished home. As she went about admiring everything, she noticed an I. M. Singer Sewing Machine, which was a special surprise gift from B. R. It was one of the first sewing machines brought to Oregon; but Maria had read about them, and had often wished that she might have one, if they were really as good as they were said to be—However she had never dreamed that she would ever own one herself. She was very proud of her new home, and of the handsome things B. R. had bought.

As soon as they were settled in their new home, all of their friends, and many people they had never met before, came to call. Maria always kept cakes and hot water ready so that she could serve tea to her afternoon callers—from the silver tea service she had brought from Springfield.¹⁸¹

The family still spent much of its time at the claim, where the young fruit trees were beginning to bear; and berries and vegetables were plentiful. The Indian caretakers also raised hay and grain, kept the fences mended, and looked after the stock so that the place was self-supporting.

With their fine, new home in town, and their children developing so satisfactorily, B. R. and Maria were very happy indeed, and were glad that they had had the courage to come to this new country. They almost worshipped their boys, who were fast growing into manhood. They were lively boys—always playing pranks on each other; but they were also kind and considerate.

Henry was a fine looking young man who “took after the Biddles”, and was almost as tall as his father. When he finished his course at the Institute, he was anxious to get into some kind of business; for he had become interested in one of the Institute girls, and hoped to be ready to marry her as soon as he was twenty-one. B. R. gave him one of his freight wagons and a four mule team; and hoped that, by hauling freight, he could build up a business that would eventually lead to something better: for men, in the West were making fortunes handling freight.

Young Robert was finishing his last year at the Institute; and was like his mother—modest and unassuming, but quick witted and clever; so that, wherever he happened to be, he was a welcome member of any group.

Emma was growing rapidly, and was the pride of the whole family. She was considered quite a musician; and could sew, embroider, knit and crochet as well as her mother did, at the same age. Although she was still little more than a child, young men, as well as boys of her own age, were paying her special attention.

¹⁸¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 139.

B. R. and Maria still kept up their correspondence with friends and relatives in Illinois and Tennessee—and they received a weekly paper from Springfield; but most of the news was about social and political unrest.

1857

Maria Receives News From Her Sister Back East

Maria had a letter from her sister, Matilda, in November 1857, telling of the death of her second husband, Benjamin Dickinson; and of the last illness of their sister Lucy Jane Epps. The news from the States was all depressing. The slavery question was far from settled. The Yankees were growing more troublesome throughout the South; and talk of war was growing more serious as time went by. When Maria thought of her fine boys who were rapidly reaching manhood, she was truly thankful that she lived so far from the center of conflict. She could not bear to think of her boys being caught in the turmoil and strife of civil war.¹⁸²

Sewing Machine Extravagance

She knew that most of her visitors were more interested in her new house, and its contents, than they were in her. But she understood human nature; and, although she soon knew that the sewing-machine was the real attraction, she was always courteous to her inquisitive guests, and showed it again and again—and demonstrated its use to each and all who came. They hardly believed their eyes when they saw the beautiful, even stitches, that were made so rapidly; but, when they realized that it took twice as much thread to sew, on the machine, as it did to do the same work by hand, they decided that a sewing-machine was such an extravagance it could never be popular. People were much more truthful then than they are today; and the women made poor, economical Maria quite uncomfortable by their discussion of the sin of extravagance. Maria, who firmly believed that “wilful waste brings woeful want”—and who tried to teach her children prudence and economy, felt that B. R. had been extravagant in buying her such a gift—but she loved him for his generosity, and never offered any criticism. When he heard what the women of the community had been saying, he said: “Now Ma, you mustn’t pay any attention to what a lot of women have to say. Remember Aesop’s fable about the Man, his Son and the Donkey, and you will realize that there is nothing that any one can do that will not cause some criticism. I think that a sewing-machine is a good investment: for it will save you time and energy—and eye strain. Any woman who has a large family, and sews as many hours a day (and night) as you do, should have any kind of machine that will make her work easier. You have always used your eyes too much at night, when the light on your work was poor; and now you should be able to do your sewing in half the time, and quit sewing at night altogether.”¹⁸³

Biddle Family Very Musical

The members of the Biddle family were all musical. B. R. and his sisters—and all of their children, could sing; and most of them could play one or two musical instruments. Henry and young B. R. played the violin and flute. Emma had a sweet singing voice and accompanied herself with the guitar. She and Puggie were also learning to play the piano. Even little Eddie showed marked musical talent; for he could pick out tunes and play any simple melody on the piano, by ear. He had also learned to play on an old fife (that had belonged to his father)—which he blew on almost constantly, to the exasperation of the other members of the family. Maria had learned to play on the pianoforte at the Female Academy at Knoxville, before her marriage; but she had neglected her music for many years, and contented herself by adding a good alto voice to the singing. B. R. seemed to be able to play any instrument he tried; but, as a member of their home orchestra, he usually played the bass-viol.

¹⁸² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.141-142.

¹⁸³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 138-139.

Having such a large family of brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts and cousins (who all had so much in common), it was very easy for the family to become self-satisfied and self-centered. They had such good times at home, they seldom cared to go other places for amusement: but they had hosts of friends who visited them and whom they enjoyed at their own home.

1858

Founding of Corvallis College: B. R. Biddle on Board of Trustees

As the population increased, the need for a college became more urgent. In January 1858, the Legislature passed an act that provided for the organization of Corvallis College. The Methodist Episcopal Church South became interested, and in 1858, William F. Dixon, J. C. Avery and others founded Corvallis College. They built a two-story building on Sixth Street. B. R. Biddle joined the board of trustees and for years served as its secretary. Will Cardwell was named one of the Trustees.

As much preliminary work had to be done and most of the money for financing the College had to be raised in Benton County it was not until 1865 that the college was ready to serve the people of the community.

Tragedy in Biddle Family Brothers Henry and B. R. Biddle Grow Sick From Cold Rain

Prospects seemed good for the Biddles until tragedy struck. The two elder sons, Henry and B. R. Jr., in their early 20s opened a freight line from Portland to Corvallis. In January 1858, Henry and his brother B. R. were hauling freight from Portland to Corvallis when a terrible storm blew up in the afternoon. Maria worried about her boys who were out in the wind and sleet and cold. They were always home before dark, if possible; but that night they were late.

When they arrived home, the boys were chilled and their clothes were wet to the skin. While they changed their wet clothes for the warm night garments Maria had ready for them, she got their mustard footbaths ready. They sat in the warm kitchen with their feet in the hot mustard baths, while they ate hot broth, and a light supper, before getting into their warm beds.

The treatment seemed to be just what B. R. needed--he suffered no ill effects from his experience. But Henry was chilly all night, and he had a severe headache the next morning. His cheeks were flushed, his forehead hot, and his throat so sore he could scarcely swallow. Maria treated him with simple home remedies, and sent for Uncle Will Cardwell. Dr. Cardwell did not want to alarm Maria, but he knew that Henry was a very sick young man. Cardwell had not practiced medicine for a number of years, and he advised them to send for another physician at once.

The doctor agreed with Dr. Cardwell, that Henry was suffering from a severe case of pneumonia. Although he had every care that medical skill and good nursing could give, it was several weeks before he was able to leave his bed. It was not until the warm spring weather brought out the wildflowers, and birds were nesting in the rosebush by his window, that he was able to walk out of doors again.

He still looked frail, and his cough hung on, but he insisted on going back to work. Maria tried to persuade him to wait until he was stronger and had stopped coughing. Henry, who was almost twenty-one, and was planning to be married before Christmas, counted each day of idleness a financial loss. He was sure that he would be happier, and would get well quicker, if he were working... Henry went back to hauling freight. His brother, and one of his cousins,

helped him, so he had no heavy lifting to do. Because he was happy, he seemed to improve rapidly, but his cough hung on.

One night a few weeks later, young B. R. came down stairs, and called his mother to tell her that Henry had been talking incoherently. He seemed so strange; he thought she should go up to see him. He added that his brother had not been feeling well for some time, but did not want anyone to know, for fear he would have to quit work.

It was a relapse of his earlier trouble; but he no longer had his normal resistance. However, he did improve, and was again able to be up and around the house. He even sat in his chair, by the side of the piano, and played obligations on his violin, while Emma sang and played her own piano accompaniment. He loved music, and after his bed was moved downstairs, the other members of the family would play their orchestra numbers, each evening, while he lay there listening, until he dropped off to sleep.

The weather was quite warm during the first part of June 1858. Henry seemed to improve so much they planned to invite his fiancée and some of his cousins to the house to help him celebrate his 21st birthday on June the 22nd.¹⁸⁴

Death of James Henry Biddle

(1837–1858)^{SEP}

On June 9, 1858, Henry was able to sit on the porch most of the day, but late in the afternoon he complained of being tired, and went to bed early. About midnight Maria went to his room to see if he was covered. She listened to see if he were asleep, and she could not hear him breathe; and when she put her hand on his forehead, it was cold.

James Henry Biddle died on June 10, 1858 at Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon Territory at age 21. Henry had been their first-born and most wanted child. He was the apple of his father B. R.'s eye. He had always been a model boy and young man. He had been prominently connected with the business, social, musical and church activities of his hometown.

B. R. was stunned—and sat in his chair with his head buried in his hands—heedless of the others—bewildered and brooding over his grief—until little Alice climbed on his knee, and took his hand in hers and said: “Don’t feel so bad, Pa, I’m here with you. Please don’t feel so bad, Pa—cause you’ve got me, and little Alice loves Pa more than anybody.” Baby Alice, whom he adored, was the only one who could comfort B. R. in his great grief.¹⁸⁵

1859

Summer 1859

During the summer of 1859 Maria’s hair grew noticeably grayer and her eyes failed so rapidly she could no longer do fine needle work (in which she had always taken such pride), even with the aid of glasses; but she was still able to read, and tried to keep informed about the world in which she lived. Some said, that grief after the death of Henry, had caused her hair to lose its luster; and that much weeping had dimmed her eyesight: but no one ever saw Maria give way to any emotion. She went on each day, attending to her household tasks—doing her part of the church work, and helping with the suppers for “The Sons of Temperance”. She believed that “a woman’s place is in her home”, and that homemaking was an all time job, if it was properly done. Home was the place for every member of the

¹⁸⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 143.

¹⁸⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 144.

family to find love and comfort and understanding— a place where each could seek advice and inspiration.

B. R. was still “as straight as an arrow”, but had lost some of the elasticity from his step, his hair was thinning near his temples, and his beard was turning grey.

Shocked by the loss of his brother, B. R. Evans Biddle mourned. He went to work in the drug store, but he too became ill and succumbed to pneumonia.

Young B. R. was well qualified for his work at the drug store, and seemed to enjoy it. He learned rapidly, was well liked by the people of the community, and was delighted and flattered by the increase in the business; but his enthusiasm was greater than his physical endurance. After working twelve hours a day, he would go home at night exhausted. Maria thought he was overworking, but he laughed at the idea. ... He went to the store to help his son whenever he thought he could be useful; but young Robert wanted to do everything himself—until one evening in July, he went home with a bad cold. His father looked after the store until he felt well enough to return to work. He must have gone back to the store too soon; for it was only a few days before he was ill again—and the doctor said he had pneumonia. He only lived a few days after that.¹⁸⁶

Time went on; but nothing seemed the same without Henry. Young B. R., who was only eighteen months younger than Henry, and had been his constant companion during his whole life, seemed to lose some of his Zest for lire, with the passing of his brother. He continued to do everything he could to please his parents; and tried to make up to them (if that were possible) for the loss of his brother; but he could never quite forget his own loneliness and grief.

One day, several weeks later, he said to his mother: “You know, Ma, I still wake up at night and I think I hear Henry coughing—or calling to me; and then—although I know it is just my imagination (or a dream), I lay there awake, for hours; and wait for him to call again.”

Maria said: “I wake up at night, too, and think that I can hear him, and sometimes, even during the day, I think I can hear him cough—but we know that if Henry were really near, he would not be coughing; for there can be no sickness after death. And young B. R. replied: “I try to reason that way too; but Henry didn’t want to leave us; and I have a feeling that he is still near, all of the time; and because we can’t see him, and he can’t talk to us—he wants us to come to him, so that we can be together again. Sometimes, when I am almost asleep—just half way between consciousness and deep sleep—it seems to me that I can see him smiling and holding out his hands to reach me.” “You mustn’t imagine such terrible things, my dear; for you know how much we all need you here. Think of Pa and me—and Emma and all the rest of the family! Ever since you and Henry were babies, Pa has dreamed of the men you were going to be— gentlemen of intelligence and character, who would carry the Biddle name and ideals on to other generations. It is a sort of immortality on Earth to live on through ones children and grandchildren, and so on, through the countless ages to come. Besides loving you so much and being so proud of you, (now that Henry is gone) all of his ambition for the future is centered in you; and, if he should lose you, I am afraid it would kill him. You and I must forget our grief—or at least we must hide it for the sake of the others. Emma is being brave; and we must live to make the others happy,” said Maria, with tears in her eyes. For weeks, after Henry’s death, his father seemed to live in a daze. He could not sleep or eat or interest himself in anything about him. Maria cooked the foods he always liked best, and tried, in every way to ‘rouse him from his lethargy—until she was at her wit’s end; and said one day, to his sister Mary Cardwell: “If we could only get him away from here for awhile it might help!” They talked to Uncle Will about their problem; and he went over to the Biddle’s home, the next evening and announced that he and his family were going over to

¹⁸⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 149.

Yaquina Bay to camp for a month, and that he had come over to see if the Biddles would like to go with them.¹⁸⁷

Biddle Family Camps at Yaquina Bay

The children were all eager to go; and B. R., who loved the out-of-doors, agreed that it was just what he wanted to do. After talking the matter over that evening, they started, the next morning, to get ready for their trip. There was no wagon road from Corvallis to Yaquina Bay; but there was an old Indian trail, that had been used by the pioneers, and was safe for pack trains and horse-back-riders: so they all had to go on horse-back and take their equipment on pack animals. Small boats stopped at the bay; so they could get flour and a few necessities at the small store near where they planned to stay. When they reached the bay the men built a shelter of drift-wood and lumber, that had been washed ashore—and covered it with canvas, under which they made a long bed—long enough for them all to sleep in one long row—with the women and girls sleeping at one end, and the men and boys at the other end of their long, comfortable, fern lined bed. Fish, clams, wild game and berries were plentiful; while milk and fresh vegetables could be had from a near by farm. Their days were filled by the simple tasks of simple living—gathering wood, caring for the stock, picking berries, hunting, fishing, cooking, washing, cleaning and visiting. Then, when the day's work was over, they would build a camp-fire on the beach; and, as they sat on logs facing the fire and enjoying its heat, they would sing familiar songs;—and the older people would tell stories of their past adventures, or of the experiences of their ancestors “back in the States”, in the days of long ago. The farmer who lived near by, and the fisherman who lived in the shack near the Point, often joined them and added their stories to the evening's entertainment. Just before bed-time Maria would take hot light-rolls out of the Dutch ovens, and B. R. would rake baked potatoes from the ashes, and Uncle Will would take the bucket of steamed mussels from the tripod over the fire; and these, added to the nuts and apples donated by the farmer, made a banquet fit for a king. Later they would all go to bed and be lulled to sleep by the rhythmic pounding of the surf below—and the murmur of the night winds in the trees above. Some Indians, who lived on the other side of the bay, came to see them and were very friendly. B. R. and the children talked to them in the Chinook jargon; and Maria showed her good will by giving them some fried corn-pones: so they loaned the campers their canoes, and told them where to find the best wild berries and hazel nuts.

The camping trip was a great success; and the whole family returned to Corvallis about the first of September, feeling refreshed in body and spirit. ... B. R. tried to interest himself in his Real Estate and Insurance business; but he kept thinking about Yaquina Bay—its beauty and its delightful climate. To one who had always lived inland, far from any large body of water, it seemed the most delightful place in the world. Boats of considerable size could land there; and it was an ideal place for a thriving town, if the bay could be connected with the Willamette Valley by a good wagon road; and he believed that the time was ripe for the building of such a road. Whenever B. R. became convinced that a place was going to be “opened up” and developed, he was anxious to “get in on the ground floor” and buy property before it became valuable: so he set about getting land at Yaquina Bay; which he planned to use for a camp site for his family; and later sell in subdivisions when it became valuable.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 145-146.

¹⁸⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 145-146.

Death of Robert Evans Biddle (1838–1859)^[SEP]

Robert Evans Biddle died on^[SEP] August 31, 1859, in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon, less than four months before his twenty-first birthday. The grief-stricken parents had to carry on as best they could for their four remaining children.¹⁸⁹

B. R. and Maria never became reconciled to the deaths of their first-born children. They had come of a hardy race, and should have had long lives like most of the other members of their family.

Maria often wondered if the trip across the plains—the months of hardship as they plodded wearily through the sand and dust—the poor food they had sometimes been forced to eat—and their sufferings from thirst and heat and cold, might not have done something to them that shortened their lives: but if they had stayed in Springfield the boys would have been in the Union Army, and would have been pitted against their own kin in the South. Then they might have died on the battlefield—or in prison as some of her nephews had done. It was better far, to have been with their families, at home; and to have had a Christian burial on the hill near the Claim.

Maria had been so far away from the conflict between the North and the South, she could never quite understand the bitterness that most of the members of her family felt toward her, because she “had become a Yankee.” She (nor B. R. either) could never be Yankees: but she could not understand—or forgive, her family’s disloyalty to the country their ancestors had fought to establish—and which they had all been taught to love with a loyalty and passion that was almost fanatical. She grieved over their losses of their sons, their homes and their slaves—and over the poverty that gripped them after the war was over: but they did not want her sympathy—and she no longer received letters of friendship from her family whom she had always loved so dearly.¹⁹⁰

Alice was a beautiful child of five, with a charm of manner that made her a general favorite. Her father adored her, and never tired of telling of her perfections. He would say: “She is so bright and obedient and kind, she has never had to be punished.”

Young Robert started to work in the drug store for his cousin James Cardwell, who was planning to move to Portland, as soon as he could satisfactorily dispose of his property. His drug store was the first in the Willamette Valley; and James Cardwell had taken great pride in building up the business. As he was anxious for it to remain in the family, B. R. agreed to buy it if his son Robert should become sufficiently interested in its management.

Emma, now almost sixteen, was considered a beautiful and accomplished young lady. She played the organ, piano and guitar, and sang with a soprano voice of exceptional quality, which was in constant demand by church choirs and musical entertainments of all kinds. She sewed well and made her own and her sisters dresses.¹⁹¹

Puggie was a tall, fair complexioned girl of twelve who was devoted to her father; and accompanied him on most of his horseback trips about the country. She was not as domestically inclined as Emma, although she did her share of the housework without complaint. She liked to read, or be out of doors; and was never so happy as when she could spend a few days—or weeks—out on the Claim, where she could take her horse and dog, and go exploring in the near by hills.

¹⁸⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 150.

¹⁹⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 161-162.

¹⁹¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 148.

Eddie was a fair-haired boy of nine, with large blue eyes and unusual musical talent—who went whistling about the house, and making a great amount of noise playing (by ear) all of the musical instruments that belonged to the other members of the family. He was clever and quick witted, like his mother; and full of nervous energy, high-strung, head-strong, and quick to take offence like the Biddles—all of which made him a very capable and delightful person, as long as he had his own way.

As B. R. always had all of the children under perfect control, Eddie's faults were not glaring; and he always seemed to be his mother's favorite.¹⁹²

1860

Grieving For Death of Sons

B. R. had always prided himself on his self-control—on his ability to be pleasant to those about him, under any circumstances: and he had tried to teach his children one of his rules of life by a simple verse, they could easily remember—“For every evil under the sun There is a remedy or there is none. If there be one—try and find it. If there be none—never mind it.” Since he had been a child he had been able to follow the precepts of this philosophy: but the death of his adored sons had taught him that he could not always overcome the effects of an evil for which there was no remedy.

It was Emma's need for support that saved him from a mental break down. The shock had affected her so greatly; he and Maria almost forgot their own grief in their solicitude for her. Emma had almost worshiped her older brothers. She had preferred them to any of her numerous admirers. They had practiced their music together—had the same friends; and had been almost inseparable since they were small children: so it seemed to her that life was not worth living without them. B. R. and Maria did everything they could to take her mind from her grief: and Mr. Spencer (a young friend of the family), who had watched her grow up, helped the others try to interest her in something that would take her mind away from her sorrow. He bought her the latest.¹⁹³

September 1860

Marriage of Emma Biddle and William Spencer

In September 1860, Emma Biddle married William Spencer.¹⁹⁴

Fall 1860

In the fall of 1860, B. R. and Maria Biddle had been in Oregon eight years and they still kept in touch with their friends and relatives in Tennessee and Illinois.

December 1860

Letter From Abraham Lincoln

In December 1860, B. R. Biddle received a long letter from Abraham Lincoln, in which he told all of the latest gossip of their mutual Springfield friends, and gave a personal account of his campaign and election to the presidency. He also enclosed a small picture of himself, mounted on a piece of blue calico, which had been one of his campaign badges—and had been worn pinned on

¹⁹² *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.148-149.

¹⁹³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 151.

¹⁹⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 153-154.

the lapel of the coat of a political follower. Many thousands of them had been worn in the North, before the election; but it was the first one B. R. had seen.

As transplants from the South - her father from Virginia, her mother a Tennessee native - Alice's parents fit well into the culture of Corvallis, influenced as the town was by the many settlers who had come over the Oregon Trail from states bordering the Deep South and who were potentially in sympathy with the cause of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

The Biddle family members were different as they were members of the Union Party. For another, they were personal friends of Abraham Lincoln. As a young lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, the future president was their next-door neighbor! Not for a few months, but for over 15 years.

B. R. Biddle Applies for Position as Indian Agent

In 1860, William H. Barnhart (the husband of B. R.'s niece, Mary Campbell) was appointed Indian Agent for Umitilla. For many years he had been secretary to James W. Nesmith, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon.

The Biddles had always wished that they could help to improve the condition of the Indians. When Barnhart told them of the deplorable condition of the Indians of the Siletz Agency (between Corvallis and Yaquina Bay), B. R. was sure that he could better their condition if he had the proper authority. He applied for the position of Indian Agent for Siletz.

1861

B. R. Biddle Appointed Indian Agent for Siletz Reservation

On July 16, 1861, Abraham Lincoln appointed B. R. Biddle Indian Agent for Siletz Reservation, Benton, Oregon, for a term of 4 years.

Being a personal friend of the president was, no doubt, a factor in his securing the appointment, as there were a number of other applicants for the position. B. R. was a natural Crusader, and looked forward to making useful, Christian men and women from a conglomeration of Indians—many of whom were from the most savage and unruly tribes of Western Oregon. It was the first time he had ever worked for the Government; and he was strangely ignorant of politics, as they affected appointees for Government jobs. He had to select several persons to work at the Agency; and there were ten or twelve applicants for each position. He tried to secure reliable, hard-working men who would manage their several departments efficiently. It did not occur to him that political influence should be considered a qualification for a job; and the most influential politicians among the applicants were rejected as being unfit for the work:—and they immediately became his enemies, and started making trouble for him before his real work, at the agency had started.

He took charge on October first, 1861, just after the beginning of the Civil War, when the merchants of the West were afraid to sell goods to the Government on credit and when all kinds of rumors about the war, and its effect on the United States Government, were in circulation.

The physician and the blacksmith B. R. appointed proved to be very unsatisfactory. When he tried to make them attend to their duties properly, they grew angry and tried to stir up trouble with the Indians by telling them that the Government at Washington had been destroyed. That they would never get any more annuities, and that they had better leave the

reservation and return to their former homes, where they could start war on the settlements if any one bothered them.¹⁹⁵

When B. R. found what had been going on, he dismissed the doctor, the blacksmith and the mule train driver. He appointed other, and better men, to take their places; but not until after they had caused a great amount of trouble. He then called all of the Chiefs, and other “head men” of the Indian tribes, together and had a “big talk” with them. Most of their grievances were purely imaginary; but some were well founded and real. Among the latter was the nonfulfillment of treaty stipulations by the Government. The Indians said that they had entered into treaties with the Government, years ago; and that they had been promised, from one year to another, that those treaties would be ratified by the Great Council at Washington; and that they had waited patiently—but their patience was exhausted, and they had made up their minds to go back to their own country. They also said that some white men had told them that, if they would leave the reservation and kill a few white men, the Government would hurry to ratify their treaties and carry out their agreements. B. R. told the Indians that the United States Government was all powerful and would punish any Indians (or white men either) who rebelled against its authority; and that it would also reward those who were faithful and true in their allegiance. He assured them that, if they stayed on the Reservation, and behaved themselves properly, their treaties would soon be ratified—and to prove to them that the Government had their welfare at heart, he distributed presents of blankets, clothes and food (from the Agency store) to the Chiefs, and the most destitute of the Indians. This seemed to satisfy them, and they were willing to go to work with harvesting the potatoes, repairing the buildings, and getting ready for the winter. But after they got started they only had three weeks of good weather before heavy rains set in—which continued until almost Christmas. Then, before the ground was dry enough to work, it started to snow—and the ground froze, and remained frozen until the first of March. It was the coldest winter ever experienced since Oregon had been settled by white people. All potatoes, that had not been harvested, froze in the ground: the pack-trains could not get their supplies across the mountains; and the employees at the Agency would have been without food if they had not been allowed to buy small amounts from the Agency Store, which the Government stocked for the use of the Indians only. A careful account was kept of the supplies bought by the employees; and the money they paid was used to replenish the stock at the store as soon as the roads were passable and new supplies could be brought in.¹⁹⁶

When B. R. went out to the reservation, on October 1, he planned to send for Maria as soon as the Agent’s house had been repaired: but the rains started before the work was finished; and B. R. had to stay there all winter, away from his family, with inexperienced help—and three or four thousand Indians to look after.

About the first of December the Blacksmith shop burned down, destroying most of their tools and some of the farming machinery. It looked like an incendiary fire; and the blacksmith was suspected: but no real proof was ever discovered. As soon as the trails were open, in the Spring, B. R. went down to Corvallis—and over to Salem to see Mr. Rector, to tell him about the difficulties they had to contend with during the winter: but he got no constructive advice from Mr. Rector.

Maria went with B. R. when he returned to the Agency: and her quiet efficiency and kindness made her a favorite at once. She cooked good food for B. R.; and her very presence soothed his nerves, so that usual irritations went by unnoticed. Maria also showed the Indian women how to sew and make their dresses. She took a bright Indian boy into their house and taught him to cook and keep house like she did; so that B. R. could enjoy some of the conveniences of home when she had to return to Corvallis—for Emma was needing her and she could not stay long at the reservation. During her short stay at the Agency she had helped B. R. by

¹⁹⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 154-155.

¹⁹⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 156.

making him more comfortable; and she had made friends of the Indians, and their faith in the Government had been stimulated by her unquestioning loyalty and patriotism.

When the Superintendent of Farming, and his wife, went down to Corvallis to get supplies, Maria rode down with them; and then they took Puggie back with them when they returned to Siletz; so that she could visit her father until Maria could go back in June or July.

1862

The year 1862 was a very trying one for Maria Biddle. She wanted to be with Emma as much as possible. B. R. wrote long letters telling of his loneliness and need of her—and Eddie and Alice needed her most of all—especially since their father was away and they were going to school.¹⁹⁷

Birth of Harold Spencer

(1862-1863)

On May 6, 1862, Emma Biddle Spencer's son, Harold, was born. He was B. R. and Maria's first grandchild.

Puggie Biddle Marries Orville Tracy Porter

A local teacher named Orville Tracy Porter (1837 - 1916) began to court 16-year-old Puggie Biddle. On the morning of August 26, 1862, Oliver drove up to Puggie's house in a buggy. Puggie went out carrying a hatbox to join him. She did not tell anyone where she was going, but, before the day was over, the secret had leaked out.

Puggie's family learned that they had gone to Albany, Oregon to be married and there they remained for a two-day honeymoon at the St. Charles Hotel. B. R. and Maria were surprised and hurt when the news reached them. They could hardly believe that their shy, well-behaved, little Puggie would "run away" from home and be married without their knowledge or consent.¹⁹⁸

Maria, always philosophical, said that "what can't be cured must be endured"; and went home at once to see that her "wayward daughter" had proper clothes for a bride, and linen for the home she must establish:—for no self-respecting mother could let her daughter go empty-handed to a husband. Every girl furnished the linen and bedding for her home when she married, and many girls furnished much more.

Oregon Indian Agent Controversy

B. R. continued to have trouble at the reservation even though many improvements had been made and the Indians were in much better condition than they had been when he took over the Agency. B. R. had made an enemy of Mr. Rector, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the State of Oregon. Rector with the aid of incompetent employees B. R. had discharged, made trouble for him continually. He sent reports to Washington urging that he be recalled from service.

In return, B. R. submitted sworn statements from reliable witnesses, disproving the charges against him; and, in turn accusing the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of serious irregularities and dishonesty in the discharge of his duties. B. R.'s problem was that he was a born aristocrat and individualist—a man of imagination and

¹⁹⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.156-157.

¹⁹⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.157-158.

ability. He could not work successfully with politicians. He wanted to get results. If the Rules and Regulations of the Indian Department retarded his work, he simply disregarded them. He was sure that he was doing right: and, no doubt, he was if the welfare of the Indians was the important issue—but that was not the way to hold a political office in 1862.¹⁹⁹

Office Supt Indian Affairs
Portland Oregon June 7th 1862
Sir

I have just returned from a visit to Siletz Reservation, under charge of Agent B. R. Biddle. My object, as expressed in my letter to you of 17th [inst], was to inspect the condition of this Agency and investigate the official conduct of Agent Biddle. I regret very much to inform you that the management of said Agency is far from being satisfactory to this office. I found a large portion of the Indians subsisting on potatoes, which had remained in the ground during the entire winter, and were frozen, rotten and loathsome. There was not less than *Six Thousand Bushels of potatoes* suffered to go to waste in this manner, whereas if they had been properly harvested and taken care of the Indians would now have abundance of good and wholesome food. This neglect of duty, and loss of property occurred on the Agency farm under the immediate supervision of Agent Biddle. The lower farm (eight miles from the Agency farm) under charge of Mr. Megginson, produced a fine crop of potatoes & oats, all of which was harvested and secured in due time. The result of this was that Mr. Megginson has furnished Mr. Biddle for Seed on the Agency farm, some Three Thousand bushels of Potatoes. During the month of October 1861 I dispatched the Sloop "Fanny" to Siletz Agency with Thirty five Tons of assorted Merchandise, among which was fifteen Thousand choice fruit trees, designed for the use and benefit of the Indians on that Reservation.

The entire cargo was delivered in good order and condition to Agent Biddle on the 19th of Nov 1861 as per receipted bill of lading accompanying Vouch 12 Abstract K of my account 4th Qr 1861. Early in January Agent Biddle personally informed me in this office, that the entire cargo had been transported to the Agency, and his abstract of Liabilities for the 4th Qr shows the sums of \$1023.27 due B. F. Cooper for transportation: Seven hundred Dollars of this amount due for transporting the entire cargo (35 Tons) at \$20 per Ton. I was surprised to find that nearly all the cargo had been packed from the Depot to the Agency (a distance of Six Miles) by the Indian women: and that Agent Biddle in consideration of their Services paid them *one pint of flour per day* and reporting the amount as issued to Indians.

The fruit trees referred to above were suffered to remain at Aquina Bay, exposed to the severities of the Winter in the original packages in which they were Shipped without any care or attention whatever, until late in the Month of March and then transported by the Indian women, at the same rate of compensation per diem as the other articles.

My own discovery that the cargo including the fruit trees, were transported in this manner, together with the Sworn Statement of B. F. Cooper, herewith accompanying, will show how much reliance can be placed in Mr. Biddle's representations. I found the fruit trees intrenched horizontally in packages of twenty-five each, about two thirds dead, and the remainder, so stunted and crippled in their growth, that they will scarcely be worth cultivating. Shortly after Mr. Biddle assumed the duties of his office, he requested permission from this office to purchase two mules, for the purpose of thrashing using them on the machine: Stating that there was nothing on the Agency except oxen and they were not adapted. I gave him permission to make the purchase.

Instead of Making the purchase, for the purpose Stated, he purchased of Jeremiah Lilly *Two* Mules and C. P. Blair one, paying Mr. Lilly at the time the purchase was made and giving Mr. Blair his [illegible] note for the amount due him. These Mules were not used on the Thrashing Machine, in fact never thrashed a grain, but were used by Mr. Biddle in packing his own private property he charging the cost thereof to Government at the rate of \$80 to 100 per ton, and after the packing was done turning two of the Mules over to government at 30 percent above original cost, reserving the third animal as his own private property, acquired in the operation.

Nearly if not quite all of the goods packed from Corvallis were his own private property, which was sold to employees, and to persons mining on the beach for Gold. His Abstract of disbursements 4th of 1861 for current expenses shows \$125 paid Dick Johnson for interpreting. My investigations show no such Indian on the Reservation, or ever having been there: and further that no actual payment for

¹⁹⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 158.

interpreting has been made to any one. In view of these facts, I have deemed it advisable to submit for your consideration the accompanying Affidavits and papers relating to Mr. Biddles official acts and would recomend his removal from office. Should you concur with me in the opinion, that he is not the proper person for the position, I hope you will make the facts known to the President, and have his successor appointed and commissioned at once. Until I can be advised of your action in the Matter, I will make all necessary purchases for that agency myself, instead of turning the funds over to him. In conclusion I would respectfully solicit prompt action, so that his successor may take charge at an early day. I would recomend Maxwell Ramsby of Clackamas Co Oregon as a Suitable man for the place.

I am Sir

Very Respectfully

Your obt Servt

Wm H Rector

Supt Ind Affairs

Hon W.P. Dole

Commissioner &c;

October 23rd 1862

Sir:

This is to inform you, that I have been relieved of my duties as Indian Agent, at Siletz Agency, by James B. Condon, Indian Agent, in pursuance of Orders from Wm H Rector Supt. Indian Affairs. On the 11th inst, I transfered the property &c to Agent Condon, and am ordered premtorily by Supt to close up my account with the Department by the 13th of next month. This is purely an arbitrary act on the part of the Superintendent, and is done more to satiate private revenge, than for any good Official reason. Mr. Rector has not informed me officially why he has suspended me, and I am left only to conjecture the cause. I understand through Senator Nesmith that Supt. Rector has prefered charges against me to the Department - this he has denied to me often, and said the charges had not, and would not be forwarded, before he would give me due notice.

I would respectfully request that I be furnished a copy of the charges in detail as early as possible. I think I will be able to Satisfy the Department that any charges derogatory to my Official integrity are false. Very Respectfully &c

B. R. Biddle

U. S. Indian Agent Hon. Wm P. Dole²⁰⁰

Charges Made Against Benjamin Robert Biddle U. S. Indian Agent for Malfeasance in Office

On October 11, 1862, B. R. Biddle, who had been accused of corruption, was removed as Indian Agent by order of Wm. H. Rector Supt. Indian Affairs.

Answer in Explanation to charges prefered against Benj. R. Biddle U. S. Indian Agent for Malfeasance in Office by Wm H Rector Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon - viz; 1st Charge.

“By contracting with one Frank Cooper for the necessary transportation at Siletz Agency, at certain stipulated prices therefor, with a complete and full understanding that he, Biddle Should receive One half of the proceeds arising therefrom.” Answer

“Agent Biddle” in answer to the above charge says, that the same is not true in fact - that he never made any contract with “any Frank Cooper,” for transportation at any stipulated price whatever, except for monthly wages on private account - and that said Frank Cooper was not to receive any portion whatever of the proceeds arising therefrom; and no

²⁰⁰ Biddle to Dole, 23 October 1862, in United States, Office of Indian Affairs, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880*, National Archives Microcopy 234, Roll 613, NADP Document D75.555 [Page 1] Corvallis P.O. Oregon.

other sum except monthly wages referred to. For proof of Answer to this charge see 1st part in Wm H Spencer's Affidavit hereunto affixed. Explanation.

Agent Biddle begs leave to explain as follows the reason why he purchased a pack team, and employed a man to pack. In private account viz; (He quotes in part from his Annual Report when he took charge of the Siletz Agency, the Government was without [illegible], and the absence of ready means to make such purchases of articles required for immediate use, was a source of great embarrassment, in consequence of this state of Affairs "Agent Biddle" had to use his own private means, or give his individual obligations for such purchases as were made at Corvallis and Vicinity; And the Department having no pack Animals, and no other means of transportation from the Settlements; - And on account of the great demand for Pack trains in the northern mines, no contracts for packing to the Agency, could be made except at exorbitant rates - necessity and a desire to economise compelled him to purchase mules and horses on his private account - which were used to pack supplies for Self and Employees - as well as Department Goods - both from Corvallis & Yaquina Bay. The rates of charges made by Agent Biddle for what was packed for the Indian Department, was not greater than had previously been allowed [...] [Page 2] [...] We never used any false representation to Frank Cooper for any purpose whatever. Frank Cooper was by Agent Biddle's order paid in full for his services for packing, and said Cooper Signed the vouchers after they were filled up knowingly and understandingly; And further; said Cooper signed a separate receipt in full for all his services. For further & confirmatory proof, see Wm H Spencer's Affidavit 3rd part; also C. P. Blairs Affidavit hereunto annexed. Cooper acknowledges to Blair that he has been paid in full for packing, by Agent Biddle & c. [illegible].

The foregoing charges & perhaps a portion of the following charges were founded upon the Affidavit of Frank Cooper, and one Doctor Swigget - so Agent Biddle presumes.

Touching the veracity of said Cooper, Agent Biddle says, that Frank Cooper has the reputation of being a common liar, and is not believed under Oath when he is an interested party. In proof of this statement, see the Affidavits of J. L. Lilly, S. N. Lilly, and James Miller, herewith annexed - all which they and truthful citizens and neighbors of Cooper. Fifty other Affidavits could be produced to the same effect - but the foregoing is deemed sufficient to establish the *unenviable* character of the men upon whose Affidavits, Supt Rector presumes to bring charges against Agent Biddle.

Touching the Character and veracity of Doctor Swigget, Agent Biddle refers the Department to Senator Nesmith & Harding.

All the Affidavits upon which Supt. Rector bases charges against Agent Biddle are from disaffected persons, and the testimony is entirely *ex parte*.

2nd Charge.

"With making false representations to Alfred Flickinger in order to induce him to sign, or witness the mark of Dick Johnson to a voucher for his salary as Interpreter during the 4th Qr 1861."

Answer.

Agent Biddle for Answer says the above charge is false that he never made false representations to Flickinger nor to any other person to get him or them to witness “Dick Johnson’s mark” - nor any persons mark. Agent Biddle chalanges his accuser to show proof of this Charge. any interest whatever in contracts. This Agent Biddle is willing to concede - but he begs leave to plead as an excuse for so doing; that the necessities of the case compelled him, (though very reluctantly) to purchase a pack train, and to an interested party in the transportation of merchandise to the Siletz Agency: But that any fraud against the Govt, was thereby committed, he says is not true.□ Precedents.

Admitting that the transaction was “irregular,” and contrary to the regulations of the Indian Department as a general thing - Agent Biddle must further plead, that he had many precedents of a similar character to warrant him in making the contract referred to period. Agents Metcalfe and Newcomb both owned or had an interest in the pack trains, transporting merchandise to the Siletz Agency; this is a fact known to everyone in the vicinity - and must have been known at Supt’s office. - again; by reference to Supt. Rector’s Abstract of Disbursement for 4th Qr 1861, on account of the “Removal of Indians from Rogue River to Grand Ronde Agency”, One Martin Newcomb is purported to have been paid the sum of _____ Dollars for use of Pack Train for said purpose of the rate of \$2 per day for each mule & expenses besides - which statement of Disbursement is not wholly. It is a well known fact that said Martin Newcomb did not receive but half of the sum called for in the voucher. Who received the other half may be properly asked? The question is easily answered: Martin Newcomb had a partner - that Partner’s name is Rector, and that - Rector received the money. Also a well known fact that the Original Contract with Martin Newcomb was at the rate of \$1 per day for each mule and how the sum happened to grow to \$2 per day for each mule, is a question that Supt. Rector best answer himself. “Agent Biddle” does not make this statement with a view as bringing it as a charge against Supt. Rector, but merely to show that he had a plain example and precedent for being interested in the transportation of Merchandise to Siletz Agency: with the difference however: Agent Biddle was the real owner of the pack train, actually performed the services, and at reasonable rates - while the contract in which Rector was interested does not possess that one virtue or excuse. He was not the owner of the train and had no property whatever in Martin Newcombs mules. Biddle’s interest and claim is honest and just.²⁰¹

1863

B. R. Biddle Back Home in Corvallis

Maria was glad when his year at the Agency was over, and they could all be together, once more, at their home in Corvallis where the children had to attend school. B. R. too was glad to leave the Reservation where he found red tape, political jealousy and graft constantly interfering with the welfare of the Indians and those who were supposed to minister to them. He had also missed taking part in some of the most interesting developments of Western Oregon during the year he had been at Siletz.

In October 1861, the first telegraph line was finished from the East to Sacramento and San Francisco: and news from other parts of the Union (Civil War news was most important at that time) could reach Central California almost instantly. But it took sixteen days by stage or horseback to travel from Sacramento to Portland—and Oregonians were also anxious to have quick communication with the rest of the world. A California telegraph line was started in the winter of 1861 to connect Sacramento with Yreka, near the Oregon line: so a number of Oregonians (among

²⁰¹ California State University, San Marcos Native American Document Project Source: <http://public.csusm.edu/nadp/d70.htm#2>; Biddle to Dole, 14 November 1862, in United States, Office of Indian Affairs, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1880*, National Archives Microcopy 234, Roll 613 (excerpt), NADP Document D70 [Page 1]

whom were B. R. and Hamilton Campbell) organized a company to finance a telegraph line from Yreka to Portland and by-stations in the Willamette Valley.

Besides buying stock in the company and stimulating interest in the project,²⁰² B. R. had little to do with the telegraph line that was built the next year from Yreka to Portland,—which brought Western Oregon two weeks nearer to the National News Centers. He was always interested in anything that would benefit the people of his community. At that time, the thought of the road he had advocated between Corvallis and Yaquina Bay was foremost in his mind.²⁰³

Road From Corvallis to the Sea Contemplated

His experience at the Siletz Indian Agency during the long wet winter of 1861, when the trails were impassable, and supplies could not be carried to the Reservation, had demonstrated the necessity for such a road. As it could not be built by county funds, it would have to be constructed, as a toll road, by private capital: and he was sure there would be enough travel between Corvallis and a tide water village to make such an investment worth while: so,

Enter William W. Moreland

About this time Dr. W. A. Finley, president of the Corvallis College, sent for his wife's cousin, William W. Moreland (who had recently graduated from the Pacific Methodist College of California), to take charge of the Primary Department of the College.

During the school's vacation, William Moreland went to Salem as a legislative secretary and while there, discovered some old documents which referred to an old Federal Grant of 9000 acres of land, in the Territory of Oregon, which had been set aside for the maintenance of an Agricultural and Mechanical College— provided it be organized and equipped before a certain specified date.

Moreland brought the matter before the Legislature; and as the time limit had almost expired, it was necessary to act at once or the immense tract of land would revert to the Federal Government and the State of Oregon would lose it forever. The land was all covered with virgin forest, and had never yielded a penny of income that could be used to build or equip a college. The only possible way for the state to obtain the grant, was to take over some institution of learning that was already functioning, and make it into a college that would meet the necessary requirements. After some investigation, Corvallis College was selected, by the Legislature, to become the State Agricultural College; and Corvallis was made one of the leading educational centers of the North West.

Benjamin Robert Biddle Elected Mayor of Corvallis

Benjamin Robert Biddle was elected Mayor of Corvallis.

1863

Toll Road Company Incorporated

Early in the year 1863, B. R. Biddle, Dr. J. R. Bailey and T. B. Odeneal incorporated the "Toll Road Company" for the purpose of building a wagon road (which would in general follow

²⁰² *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 159.

²⁰³ [web.archive.org/web/20070827005321/http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=268&Itemid=222](http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=268&Itemid=222)

the old Indian trail) from Corvallis, through the mountain gap to the coast. Building a wagon road (with the equipment then available) through the mountains for that distance proved to be a greater undertaking than any of them had anticipated.

Death of Harold Spencer

Early in September 1863, Emma Spencer sent for her mother Maria to come to see little Harold, who was feverish, and refused to eat. In that day of large families, Emma and Mr. Spencer had only one child—and they both adored him. Everything that medical skill and good nursing could do was done for their child; but a few nights later, when he seemed to be better, he passed away in his sleep. Emma was overwhelmed by the tragedy. She seemed dazed, and never really recovered from the shock of her child's death. Mr. Spencer almost forgot his own grief in his solicitude for her; and did everything that a loving husband, with wealth at his command, could do to divert her mind from her sorrow, and stimulate her interest in other things. He even tried to persuade Puggie to let them adopt her oldest child, Tracy, to whom Emma was greatly attached. Her sister, Alice, twelve years her junior, spent most of her time with them and did much, with her happy disposition and keen sense of humor, to make their home more normal. Emma and Mr. Spencer were both devoted to Alice, and helped her with her school work and music. They took her to Portland and bought her expensive clothes, and petted her and spoiled her; but Emma could not forget little Harold; and continued to grieve for him when she was alone.²⁰⁴

1865

The Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Road Company, Incorporated

In 1865, the number of stockholders was enlarged and the name of their corporation was changed to "The Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Road Company, Incorporated."

1866

Road From Corvallis to Yaquina Bay Not Progressing

The toll road to Yaquina Bay was not progressing very rapidly. The work had been much more difficult than the members of the road company had anticipated. On January 5, 1866, their friend, Senator J. W. Nesmith, introduced a bill in the United States Senate granting aid to the State of Oregon for the construction of a military road from Corvallis to Yaquina Bay. The work was to be done by the Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Wagon Road Co., Inc.

After the bill was passed the stockholders of the road company were sure that, at last, their dream was about to be realized, and that the village on Yaquina Bay had a great future. Dr. Bailey and Samuel Case immediately erected a large hotel near the Bay; and B. R. built a fine residence for himself and family.²⁰⁵

July 4, 1866

At five o'clock in the morning, on July 4, 1866, the steamer Pioneer left her moorings at Pioneer City with about seventy-five passengers, and proceeded down the bay. It stopped at different points to take on waiting excursionists until at last they reached North Beach, where they were loudly cheered by the assembled crowd of about 400 persons. At eleven o'clock the people gathered at the speakers stand, that had been built in a spruce grove near the "Oregon House", and a prayer by Rev. Clark opened the exercises. Then there was singing, which interspersed the

²⁰⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 161.

²⁰⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 163.

speeches by Messrs. Bailey, Biddle, Clark and Dodge. The addresses were said to have teemed with eloquent expressions of loyalty and patriotism.

As a climax to the program, B. R. Biddle, as a representative of the women of Corvallis, presented a flag, which they had made for the people of Yaquina. The gift was gratefully accepted and was raised to the top of the flagpole that had been made ready to receive it:—and, as the banner floated out on the breeze, the voices of the people rose, in harmony, as they sang “The Star Spangled Banner”. Besides the patriotic program there were lunches, games, and races and contests of all kinds, for those who attended the celebration.

1867

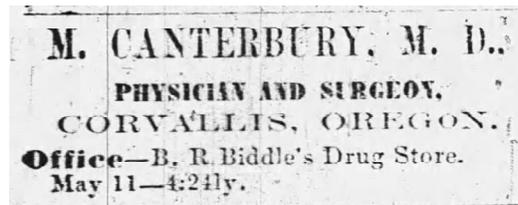
B. R. Biddle’s Drug Store Income

While B. R. was always actively interested in all public improvements, he was careful not to neglect his drug business, which was his chief source of income at that time. He planned to turn the store over to Eddie, as soon as he could handle it properly.

DRUG STORE.
B. R. BIDDLE
HAVING PURCHASED THE
 Drug Store at the old stand of J. W. Murray & Co., on Main St., opposite the City Hotel, has on hand, and will keep a full assortment of
DRUGS, MEDICINES,
CHEMICALS,
PAINTS, OILS,
GLASS, DYE-STUFFS,
PERFUMERY,
 And in fact, everything necessary to constitute a complete assortment in the Drug business.
 Also always on hand
Dr. James' Family Medicines,
Kennedy's Preparations,
Sarsaparillas, of
Various Brands,
Thayer's Fid. Extracts,
Pain Killer,
Salves,
Ointments
 and finally the celebrated
“Cephalic Pills,”
 a sovereign remedy for **HEADACHE!**
 —ALSO—
STATIONERY & SCHOOL BOOKS,
SLATES, PENCILS, Etc. Etc.
 Physician's prescriptions filled promptly.
 Will sell-low for cash.
B. R. BIDDLE.
 May 18, 1867.

*Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon) Saturday, May 18, 1867*²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ *Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, May 18, 1867, p. 3.*



*Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, June 29, 1867*²⁰⁷

Maria Biddle at Home

While B. R. was busy with his road project and other business interests, Maria was usually at home, but never idle. She was an excellent cook and always kept the pantry and storehouse filled with food—the “spare room” immaculately clean; and everything ready for the unexpected guests B. R. liked to entertain.

Eddie, who was sixteen years old, had gone to McMinnville to school. Alice was attending the Primary Department of the Corvallis College—a school that had been recently established as a Methodist Institution of Higher Education.



Maria Biddle

Alice grew prettier each year; and her father, who idolized her, could deny her nothing that was in his power to provide. She was such a happy child, and had such pleasant manners; she was like a ray of sunshine in the home that had been desolated by the loss of her two older brothers a few years before. Members of the family were growing accustomed to living without Henry and young B. R. New interests had come into their home, and once more, the future seemed to hold much that was worthwhile.²⁰⁸

B. R. and Maria had always been noted for their “southern hospitality”; and, after he became Mayor of Corvallis he considered it his duty to entertain any, and all, notable persons visiting their community. He enjoyed playing the part of a host, and was proud of his home, his wife and his family.

Maria was an ideal hostess. She had a charming personality. Her house was tastily furnished and in perfect order; the meals were ample and delicious and served in good style. They had fine linen, china and silver.²⁰⁹

William Moreland at B. R. and Maria Biddle’s Home

B. R. and Maria often entertained members of the faculty and their families (Dr. and Mrs. Finley, Mr. and Mrs. Emery and William Moreland) in their home.

William Moreland, who was only twenty-two, enjoyed being one of them and soon became a frequent and regular visitor. He was a quiet young man with a college education, a retentive mind that was a veritable storehouse of information, and an unusual amount of natural intelligence. He thoroughly enjoyed being with the young people and taking part in their foolishness and fun. It was soon apparent that he worshiped at the shrine of lovely little Alice, who, though still a child, teased him and made life miserable for him generally, while she adored him in secret.

²⁰⁷ *Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, June 29, 1867, p. 1.*

²⁰⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage, pp. 159-160.*

²⁰⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage, p.162.*

The family liked him and he asked them to call him Willie—which they did in their own home; although it would have been highly improper to have called a college professor by his first name in public—and the Biddles were always very careful to do everything properly.²¹⁰

1868

Death of Sarah Emma Biddle Spencer

(1842–1868)^(L)_(SEP)

Sarah Emma Biddle Spencer remained a semi-invalid for more than two years, and became bed-ridden early in 1868. Her cousin William B. Cardwell, a brilliant young physician who had just returned from two years of study and training at the Bellevue Hospital in New York, came to Corvallis and gave all of his time and skill, in an effort to save the life of his favorite cousin. But her will to live was not strong enough to overcome her strange malady. During the last few weeks of her life, there were times when she spoke to little Harold as though he were waiting, near by, to take her away. She seemed anxious to go where she could be with her beloved brothers and her little son. There were other times, when she recognized her husband and other members of her family, that she wanted to stay with them—but she was very tired and wanted to rest—where there would be no more grief or parting from those she loved. She died on May 26, 1868 in Corvallis, Oregon.

SARAH EMMA, wife of W. H. Spence and daughter of B. R. and Maria Biddle was born in Springfield, Illinois, Dec. 1 1842. Came with her parents to Oregon in 1852; was married in Sept. 1860. She was confined to her bed thirteen weeks by her late illness. During the last two weeks of her life, her mind wandered from its orbit—at times reveling in the society of her angel boy Harold, and her two brothers, Henry and Robert, who had preceded her to the spirit land. Her friends, and kind physician, kept by her bedside, watching every symptom, and attending every want—but the tyrant Death, had marked her for his own, and no human skill could baffle his purpose. She yielded—but with a strong hope and an abiding faith—that robbed Death of his sting. She was a fond and dutiful child, a loving, devoted and faithful wife. To know her—was to love her. CON.

Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, May 30, 1868²¹¹

²¹⁰ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 164-165

²¹¹ *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, May 30, 1868, p. 3.

B. R. BIDDLE,
Chemist and Druggist,
Main-Street, . . . Corvallis,
Oregon.

RETURNS THANKS TO THE CITIZENS of Corvallis and surrounding country for their very **liberal patronage** the past year, and hopes to merit a continuance of their good-will and custom. His stock of

Drugs and Medicines are full, and carefully selected for the peculiar demands of this market—consisting, in part, of the leading reasonable remedies for

COLDS, COUGHS, RHEUMATISM, and the various complaints incident to the season, viz:

Abolition Oil,
Mrs. Sippy's Balsam,
Dr. James' Expecterant,
Ayers' Agree Cure,
Hall's Balsam,
Kendall's Medical Discovery, and
Brown's Bronchial Troches.

Also—
Sesodant,
Hall's Hair Renewer,
Eartha Washington Hair Restorer,
TOILET PERFUMERY,
and various other remedies, too numerous to mention. Also constantly on hand a full supply of

Coal Oil and Lamp Stocks,
Lard Oil,
Kerosene Oil,
Fish Oil,
Sperm Oil,
Sweet Oil,
Castor Oil,
Raw & Refined Oil,
Turpentine, White Lead, Small colors,
Putty, Window Glass, etc. Also a complete assortment of

STATIONERY & SCHOOL BOOKS on hand. A supply of the above named stock, together with all other things usually kept in a

First Class Drug Store, constantly on hand and sold at the lowest possible prices.

He has secured the services of M. N. North, an experienced Druggist, who will be found at the store every day to attend to all demands for medicines. Prescriptions of every grade and character, compounded with care.

Agent for the sale of Dr. J. W. Murray's Magic Oil and Lungs Balsam, Benton county.
B. R. BIDDLE,
1869/5y.

Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, July 25, 1868.²¹²

Eddie Biddle Not Good at Drug Business

In 1868 when Eddie came home from college at Forest Grove, he did not seem to be at all interested in the drug business. He was not temperamentally inclined to cater to the public, as a successful merchant must.

1869

Fire Destroys B. R. Biddle's Business

In July 1869, a large part of the business section of Corvallis was destroyed by fire. As B. R. watched the flames moving relentlessly toward his place of business, he realized that his store was doomed. With his usual foresight and energy, he immediately rented a vacant store in the Masonic Building, opposite the City Hall. He had most of his stock moved before the fire reached it—so his business continued the next morning, as usual, in his new location.²¹³

1869-1875

B. R. Biddle Serves on Board of Trustees of Corvallis College

"B.R." served on the Corvallis College Board of Trustees from 1869 to 1875 and helped solicit private donations to purchase the "college farm" mandated by the Morrill Act of 1862. The college farm site later was the location of Benton Hall, the "Pathway," and other historic campus

²¹² *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, Corvallis, Oregon, Saturday, July 25, 1868, p. 3.

²¹³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 165-166.

landmarks. B. R. was a personal friend to Corvallis College president William Finley and was an early and frequent donor to the cause of the young school.

1870

Eddie Biddle in San Francisco: Dental Apprentice

In 1870 when Mr. Spencer established himself in San Francisco, he sent for Eddie to come down there. Business opportunities were more numerous there, and he might find an opening there more to his liking. Spencer secured several positions for him, but Eddie was never happy doing the work entailed. After a discussion of the subject, Mr. Spencer contacted the dental firm of Huston and B. R.s (considered the best in San Francisco) and persuaded them to take his brother-in-law into their office as an apprentice where he could study and get the practical experience, which would enable him to pass the State Dental Examination.



EDWIN WEBER BIDDLE
1870

Alice Biddle: First Female Graduate of Oregon State University

In 1870, Alice Eudorah Biddle, born in Corvallis, Oregon in 1854, was the first woman graduate of Oregon State University, completing her four-year curriculum and Bachelor of Science degree in the liberal arts degree in just over three years. She was class valedictorian of the first class to graduate from the Oregon State Agricultural College with perfect grades and perfect attendance. She graduated at age 16 and was known as Corvallis' most intelligent young woman.

But she was mature way beyond her years and is remembered as one of the most energetic and enthusiastic young ladies to have enrolled at Corvallis College in the early period. She was very active socially and was a talented musician.



Alice Biddle, age 16, with fellow graduates Currin and Veach (not sure who is who), from the first graduating class in 1870 of Oregon Agricultural College (later Oregon State University).]

Her statue sits today just to the east of the Memorial Union and is a favorite meeting and resting spot for students and faculty at Oregon State University.²¹⁴

Alice Biddle Marries William Moreland

On December 8, 1870, Alice Biddle married William Walter Moreland, age 25, a professor and one of the town's most eligible bachelors. B. R. gave them a lot in Corvallis, where he hoped they could soon build their own home.²¹⁵

Moreland ... played a pivotal role in helping shape the early history of agriculture at Oregon State University. While acting as clerk in the legislature in 1868, he discovered that the state was about to forfeit its opportunity to be awarded a land-grant school under the provisions of the Morrill Act. If he hadn't acted quickly, the deadline would have passed and the chance to get federal funding for an agricultural college would have been lost.

Alice's future husband was able to use his clerk's position to advantage in the political struggle that followed, in which Southern Democrats from Benton and Linn counties managed to outmaneuver a group from Salem pushing for Willamette University to be the state's new agriculture school. According to legend, after finding the document, Moreland fixed things so that when it came time to write on the document the name of the winning school, the words "Willamette University" were erased at the last second and replaced by the words "Corvallis College." Whether true or not, it's a great story.



Valedictorian of the first class to graduate from the Oregon State Agricultural College¹

Alice and William Moreland Live with B. R. and Maria Biddle

B. R. and Maria were living all alone in their big house and would be lonely without their "Baby Alice." So they asked the young people to live with them until they were ready to build. They did for the year 1871. When Will passed the Bar Examination, he learned of a better opening in Oregon City, so they went there to live early in 1872.

1871

Birth of Esther Moreland

(1871-1959)

On November 30, 1871, Alice and William Moreland's first child was born and named Esther. Fortunately, they were still living with the Biddles in Corvallis where Maria could take care of the child. Alice was very young and inexperienced, and the baby was seriously ill with whooping cough when she was only a few weeks old. She would surely have died if her grandmother had not been there to care for her.

Alice had always disliked red hair, and would not even play with red-headed children when she was a child; so her horror and disappointment were great when she first saw her little red

²¹⁴ For more biographical information, see <http://www.osualum.com/s/359/index.aspx?sid=359&gid=1&pgid=545> East of Student Union.

²¹⁵ Chapter Six: *A Biography of Alice Biddle*, OSU's First Alumna, George Edmonston Jr. and Tom Bennett.

baby and realized that it had red hair; but Maria took the baby to her heart and mothered her as only a devoted grandmother can. It was unbelievable that an unattractive child could be born into a family that was famous for its good looks.²¹⁶

B. R. Biddle Involved in Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Wagon Road Co.

The Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Wagon Road Co. continued to have serious difficulties; for no sooner was one section of the mountain road finished, than a storm would cause a wash-out or land-slide; and the work would have to be done all over again. The expense was enormous; and B. R. was not the only one of the stockholders who was running short of money.

To add to his other difficulties, he had reached the age when men were subject to rheumatism; and he could no longer ride, in the saddle, all day, and sleep out in the open at night, without suffering from fatigue and exposure—and, if the work on the road was to be done properly and economically, it was necessary for some one to check up on the overseer quite frequently. B. R. had done this for several years; but he realized that, in the future, such work would have to be done by a younger man.

Maria was anxious for him to sell his interest in the road company. She had never been willing to put any of her own money into the development companies B. R. was always helping to organize and finance. While she believed in the projects themselves, she had always noticed that the original promoters seldom benefitted financially. They were usually overly optimistic and ran short of funds to complete their undertakings— or they lacked an administrator with the necessary technical knowledge for the success of the venture. Maria was a very practical, conservative person, who measured the success or failure of any project, by the effect it had on her home.

B. R. had more imagination—one might call it vision—and was always urging new developments and improvements in and about the community in which he lived: and was willing, in his enthusiasm, to use everything he had to secure results. Naturally he expected his investments to bring some financial satisfaction: but it was not so much the hope of financial success, as the urge to achieve something worth while, that spurred him on.

From childhood he had helped his entire family. He was always doing for others; but never expected any one to do anything for him —and felt greatly indebted for any small favor. He also felt a sincere gratitude to the Supreme Being for giving him life; for he thought that life was a great privilege—and a responsibility. Possibly it was the urge to make his life worth while that spurred him on to undertake projects he was not financially able to complete. In his enthusiasm, he underestimated the difficulties to be encountered; and overestimated his physical and financial strength.

With an unusual amount of nervous energy, that seemed to be a driving power behind his muscles, he had always been able to accomplish as much as two ordinary men in a day's work: but he had reached a time when he could no longer depend on that nervous energy: for he found that he needed rest and sleep and proper food at regular intervals. He developed strange pains between his shoulders and in his stomach; and his hands trembled, so that he could scarcely write or handle delicate tools. Dr. Bailey told him that he would have to slow up if he wanted to live out his natural life.

The other stockholders in the Corvallis and Yaquina Bay Wagon Road Co. were also running short of money and were discouraged: so, when Col. T. E. Hogg, a promoter from San Francisco, offered to buy their land and franchise, they were all glad to sell. The transaction was completed on May 30, 1871: and, at last, B. R. was able to relax and adjust himself to a more simple life.

²¹⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 166-167.

He and Maria had considerable property in and near Corvallis. They also had stocks and bonds (many of them worthless) in mining and other development companies of California and Oregon: but it was the Drug Store, and his Real Estate and Insurance Business that brought in regular incomes. He had houses to rent; but often rented them to his friends, from whom he would not collect any rent if he knew they were needing money for other necessities. In fact he sometimes refused to accept their rent money even when they insisted on paying—and, if they sent him a few glasses of jelly, or a pumpkin pie, B. R. would feel that he was under such great obligation to them, he would not charge them any rent at all. He had been brought up with those ideas of neighborliness, hospitality and generosity (common in the old South) that made it almost impossible for him to accept money from any one for food or shelter. Even in the store, if B. R. were there, he would seldom accept money from any of his relatives or close friends, for anything they purchased.²¹⁷

1872

Alice and William Moreland Move to Oregon City, Oregon

Soon after, the Moreland's left Corvallis. William's short stint clerking for the legislature had given him the bug for politics and the law, and he began to study for the bar on the side. In 1872, he passed the Bar Examination and was admitted to the state bar. In 1872, he learned of a better opening in Oregon City, so they went there to live and Will started private practice.

Eddie Biddle Dentist in Corvallis, Oregon

In 1872 Eddie Biddle finished his two years apprenticeship with Dr. Roberts, in San Francisco and returned to Corvallis a full-fledged dentist. Dr. Roberts had been very proud of him and had offered to make him a partner in his office, but Eddie wanted to have his own office in Corvallis, in the building next to his father's store.

At first he was very glad to be back where everybody knew him. From the start, he did well professionally, but during the long wet winter he found himself frequently homesick for sunny California.

Will Moreland, with Alice and little Esther, were occasional visitors from Oregon City, where Will was doing quite well with his law practice—which was necessarily small to begin with.

1873

Severe Cold Prompts William Moreland's Move to Healdsburg, California

In 1873 Will Moreland was elected Superintendent of Schools for Clackamas County—which increased his income materially—so he and Alice were very happy in their little home on the bluff—high above the town and river. But Will had lived in California ten years and could not accustom himself to the cold, damp winters of Oregon.²¹⁸

In the fall of 1873, Will Moreland had a severe cold—and continued to cough until the warm days of late spring 1874—when at last the sunshine made the atmosphere warm again, and people could enjoy the out-of- doors in comfort.

Dr. and Mrs. Finley had returned to California, where he had been appointed President of the Pacific Methodist College at Santa Rosa. They kept writing about the beautiful weather, and

²¹⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.167-168.

²¹⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 169-168.

urged Will to come to Sonoma County where there was a good opening for a young lawyer.

Maria, who was inclined to worry any way—and who had been very unhappy when she thought of losing her two youngest children, was greatly discouraged.

1874

William Moreland Moves to Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California.

In the fall of 1874, Will Moreland developed another cough and decided to go to Sonoma County, California for a few months to see if he could better his condition. B. R. and Maria dreaded having Alice go so far away and insisted that she and little Esther stay with them until Will had tried the winter in California. He could decide, definitely if it would be best for them to make the change.

Just before Will was ready to start, Eddie (who had always had a secret desire to return to California) decided that he would go too.

William Moreland Opens Law Office

In the fall of 1874, the two young men opened offices in Healdsburg, sixteen miles north of Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County. William opened a small law firm. B. R. and Maria Biddle joined them later and lived out the rest of their lives there.

1875

B. R. Biddle Elected to the Board of Directors of Corvallis Library Association

On February 8, 1875, B. R. Biddle of Corvallis, Oregon, was elected to the Board of Directors at a meeting of the stockholders of the Corvallis Library Association. He was named Secretary and Librarian.²¹⁹

Fire in Corvallis Business District

In June 1875, a disastrous fire swept the Corvallis business district. B. R.'s Drug Store was burned and nothing could be saved. The loss was complete, except for the insurance collected.

B. R. and Maria Sell Residence in Corvallis, Oregon

In June 1875, B. R. Biddle sold his family residence and six adjoining lots in Corvallis, Oregon for \$1,500.

²¹⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, p. 66.

REAL ESTATE SALES.—Very recently J. S. Palmer sold his residence, in this city, to Mr. J. C. Polly, for \$1,500. Within the past week J. R. K. Irvin sold his property on Front street to W. H. Goldson, for \$1200, and bought property of W. B. Hamilton for \$900. B. R. Biddle sold his family residence and adjoining property, six lots, for \$1,500.

Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Friday, June 4, 1875.²²⁰

November 1875

B. R. and Maria Move From Corvallis, Oregon to Healdsburg, California

B. R., true to his philosophy of finding a remedy for every evil under the sun, adjusted himself to the inevitable, and went home smiling the next day, and said: "Perhaps that fire was a blessing in disguise. The more I think of it, the more it seems like the hand of Providence is shaping our affairs, so that we too can go to California. Do you think we could get ready before Thanksgiving?"

Maria put down her sewing and looked at her husband in astonishment, as she said: "My land, Pa, what are you talking about? You surely don't think we could just pick up, and leave everything here, and go to California to live! I don't see how we could do that."

B. R. replied: "Well, I've been thinking about it for several days—in fact ever since the fire and I've decided that we can. I think that I'm too old to start all over again with a new store and right now we can sell all of our property at a fair price. People are coming to Corvallis to educate their children and they want to buy homes. Our children are all grown and there's no reason for us to stay here if they're not going to be here any more. There's much less rain in California than we have here and a drier climate might be better for my rheumatism.

Eddie says that Healdsburg is in a fertile valley, between the hills—just the kind of place you always liked—and that the town is growing rapidly. The newspaper he sent me, told about the new houses that are being built there now and I have an idea that it would be a good place for us to live—and then we could be near Eddie and Alice and little Esther.

Alice, who had come into the room in time to hear most of the conversation, said: "Oh Pa, I'd be so glad if you and Ma would go to California! I wouldn't mind going at all if you were going too. I want to go to be with Will; but it would be terrible to be so far away I couldn't see you any more. Oh, I do hope you'll go!"

Maria said: "We must remember that we're leaving Puggie and her family here—even though we seldom see them any more. Puggie wrote, some time ago, that they were thinking of making a change, so her husband might decide to go to California too. I am sure that I would like to go there for awhile and if we found that we didn't like it we could come back to Corvallis."

B. R. replied: "I have already arranged to sell most of our property here; and Will says that we can get a higher rate of interest in California than we can here: so I think we ought to try it for awhile any way. We should go with the expectation of staying; but with the intention of returning for a visit, before long—or we can come back to stay if we are disappointed in California." When he arranged to sell their home, with most of their furniture, it was with

²²⁰ *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, Corvallis, Oregon, Friday, June 4, 1875, p. 3.

the understanding that they could buy it back for the purchase price if they returned to Corvallis within five years.²²¹

Maria Biddle Plants Flowers at Cemetery Before Move

Before they left Corvallis, Maria took some of her hardier plants and a basket full of bulbs out to the cemetery and planted them on the lot where their boys and Emma and little Harold were buried.



Mrs. W. W. Moreland started for Oregon City yesterday, where she will spend a few days among visiting to friends. Mrs. B. R. Biddle, her mother, will leave for Portland next Tuesday. They intend to take the next Steamer for California. Squire Biddle will accompany them as far as Portland.

Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, Friday, July 16, 1875.²²²

²²¹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 169-170.

²²² *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, Corvallis, Oregon, Friday, July 16, 1875, p. 3.

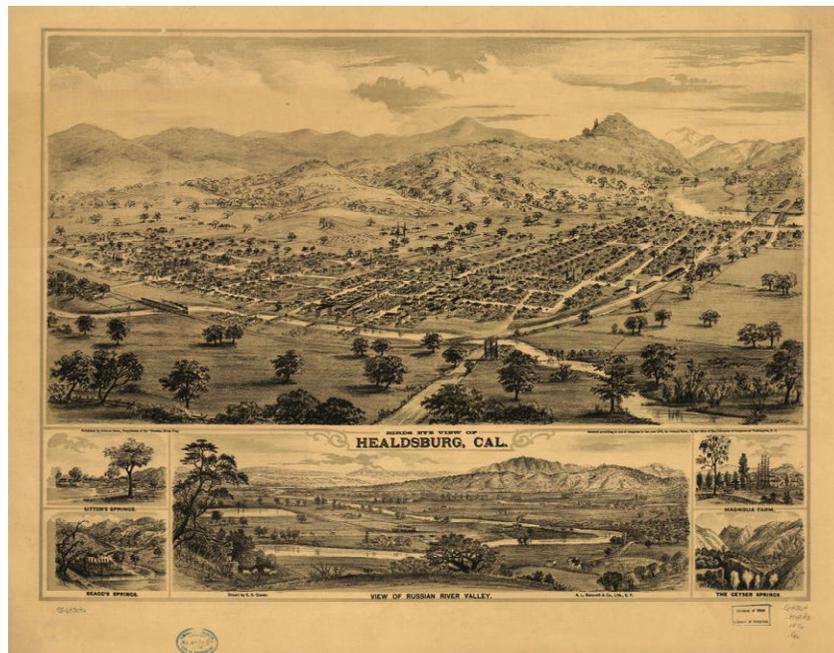
Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California (1875-1896)

Early November 1875

B. R. and Maria Biddle Move to Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California

In early November 1875, B. R. and Maria Biddle ages 67 and 61—moved to Healdsburg, California. “My Grandmother, my mother, and I, came to San Francisco, from Oregon on a boat. I have no recollection of seeing my grandfather on the boat and think he must have driven down from Oregon with his team and spring wagon.”²²³

B. R. had rented a house in Healdsburg for temporary use. I am sure that it was a very poorly built house for it had no railing around the second story opening for the steep stairs that went up from a dark, closet like hall on the first floor.²²⁴

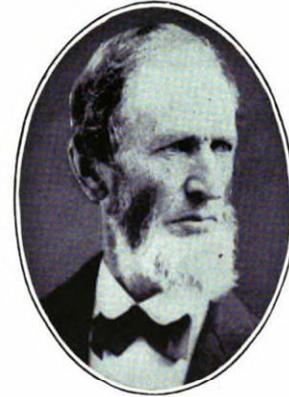


²²³ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp.

²²⁴ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 170-171.

B. R. was in the Real Estate and Insurance Business at this time and had a desk in my father's law office. He was also elected, a short time later, Justice of the Peace. His business did not seem to keep him away from home many hours of the day for my recollection of him is that he was always busy improving the place where we lived.²²⁵

B. R. sold their home and bought a large brick house with two fireplaces, and a pump in the kitchen by the wooden sink. The house was on a corner lot 200 feet square, with a large barn on the back by the alley. In one side of the barn, next to the carriage-shed, B. R. had his shop, with a work bench and all kinds of carpenter tools. He also had a small forge where he could mend (and sometimes make) his garden tools. It seemed that he could do everything. He made cabinets, cupboards, wardrobes and other furniture for the house. He kept everything about the place in perfect repair.



BENJAMIN ROBERT BIDDLE

Maria Biddle worked in her garden and had the finest flowers in the town. She studied Vick's Catalogue to find the best and newest varieties of flowers. She had the knack (or intelligence) to make everything grow. She had boxes of sand, loam and fine manure, from which she mixed soil suited for each plant.

B. R. started to develop the artistic ability he thought he had discovered; and he and I would sit on the porch and draw pictures of the things we saw about us. We started drawing pictures of the barn, for it was easy to do. Then we tried the house across the street—a near-by church, etc., etc. Grandfather was not an artist; but he was one of those persons who seemed able to do anything he attempted; and, because he thought I had some talent he planned “sketching trips” with me whenever he had time; and we would have contests to see who could make the best picture.²²⁶

B. R. must have been a poet at heart for he loved Nature in all of her phases. He often told short stories in rhyme. B. R. loved the woods and the mountains. He knew the names of all the trees and flowers—the wild animals and birds, we saw on those excursions. He called my attention to all the lovely colors that God used to make the World so beautiful. Even the snakes we found near the streams were spotted and striped in gorgeous designs! by the sun and stars—by the growth of certain plants and trees, by the shadows and the running water—and by the general contour of the country.

B. R. was a natural teacher. He never tired of answering questions and made his code of ethics, and social ideals living things, by his own behavior and example. He stressed the difference between Character and Reputation—and said that Character was what a person really was, while Reputation was what other people thought he was—that Truth was the foundation for Character—that people were untruthful because they were afraid of something—so the untruthful person was a coward and a cheat, and could never be trusted. I remember his saying: “A fine Character is more to be desired than learning or riches; for, without character, you can never have any self-respect. It would be terrible to have to live with some one you could not respect; for you could never be happy with such a person: and remember child, you have to live with yourself always. If you want to grow up to be a lady, and be a credit to your parents and grandparents, and your great-grandparents, you must always be honest and truthful and kind. Every summer we went to the mountains for a camping trip —when the men of the family hunted and fished for a few weeks: and we all slept on the ground, and cooked over an open fire.

²²⁵ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 172-173.

²²⁶ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 173-174.

Maria Biddle kept the Dutch ovens hot, trying to bake enough huckleberry-pies to satisfy “our family”. My grandparents seemed to know all about everything that grew, or lived, in the mountains. We fed the birds and small animals; we gathered nutmegs from the tree near our tent: we dug soap- root that lathered when we washed our hands in the brook: we found wild lettuce and many varieties of greens, to cook with bacon for our meals—in fact, they seemed to know how to live off the wild things that they found near our camp. After supper we would sit around the campfire; and the grown- ups would talk about the things they had seen and done during the day; or, sometimes, Grandfather would tell us stories of the early days when he lived in Virginia and Tennessee. He had lived in the pioneer days of South-western Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, California and Oregon; so he had an endless variety of stories, of real adventures, to tell us²²⁷

1876

B. R. Biddle Resigns From State Agricultural College

On June 26, 1876, at the annual meeting of the Board of Regents of the State Agricultural College, at Corvallis, Oregon, the board named a replacement to “fill the vacancy caused by the resignation and removal of B. R. Biddle.”

1878

B. R. Biddle Injured in Accident

Accident to Dr. Biddle.—We learn from the Healdsburg *Flag* that Dr. B. R. Biddle, of Healdsburg, met with an accident, which came near being fatal, last Friday evening. As he and his daughter, Mrs. W. W. Moreland, were on their way to Mr. West’s, after dark, at the entrance of a narrow alley he was knocked down and run over by a passing wagon and team. A wheel passed twice over his spine, and the shock to his nervous system was very great, as he is nearly seventy years of age. We are glad to learn that he is considered now out of danger.

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1882

Death of Benjamin Robert (B. R.) Biddle (1808-1882)

Benjamin Robert (B. R.) Biddle died on September 18, 1882, in Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California at age 74. He was born on July 2, 1808, in Virginia. He was buried in Oak Mound Cemetery, Healdsburg, California.



1885

Maria Biddle Lives with Daughter

We were living at Sacramento at that time, and I saw little of Maria Biddle, my grandmother, until we returned to Healdsburg in 1885, when Grandmother came to live at our home. She also had a room at “Uncle Eddie’s” and spent part of her time with his family.

²²⁷ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 175-178.

As my mother had been the youngest in her family, and had married at sixteen, my grandmother had taken it upon herself to care for me when I was a baby; and had continued to look after me until I was old enough to go away to boarding school: so she always seemed, to me, like my mother; and my own mother was more like a glamorous older sister but scolded and found fault with my childish imperfections: and was secretly humiliated to be the mother of a child who lacked the good looks of the other members of her family.

Grandmother, on the other hand, liked to have me with her and never seemed conscious of my physical imperfections. She always seemed to understand me, and responded to my inquiring interest in the world about me, by answering my questions and teaching me the things she knew. Callers would have been disappointed if she had not been in the room, and been included in the conversation, when they were there.

She often wanted to go out to sermons or lectures in the evening; and she had a little brass lantern she always carried on such occasions. I usually went with her; but she always insisted on carrying the lantern herself.

Maria had several houses that she rented. She collected her rents and attended to all of her business affairs herself. When she had to go some place, she would put on her black hat (to shade her eyes), over her lace cap and tie it tightly, with the ribbons, under her chin: then she would start down the street, walking so fast we would have to quicken our usual gait in order to keep up with her.

In 1896, when she was eighty-two (or three) years old, one of her tenants cheated her. She felt so badly about it she decided to sell her property so that she would not have to deal with dishonest people any more.²²⁸

1894

Death of Mary Ann Capels Biddle Cardwell

(1812-1894)

In 1894, Mary Ann Capels Biddle Cardwell died in Portland, Oregon.

1899

Death of Maria Evans Biddle

(1814-1899)

In September 1899, Maria Biddle had a stroke and was confined to her bed. She lost her eyesight entirely and her hearing was very bad. Her memory was also poor, and much of the time, she did not recognize her friends or members of her family. Her periods of consciousness became shorter with longer intervals of sleep between. In one last interval of semi-consciousness, she opened her sightless eyes and said: "Oh, the Light! The Glory!"—and that was all.²²⁹



MARIA EVANS BIDDLE
At Eighty

(1814-1899)

²²⁸ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 178-179.

²²⁹ *And This Is Our Heritage*, pp. 179-180.

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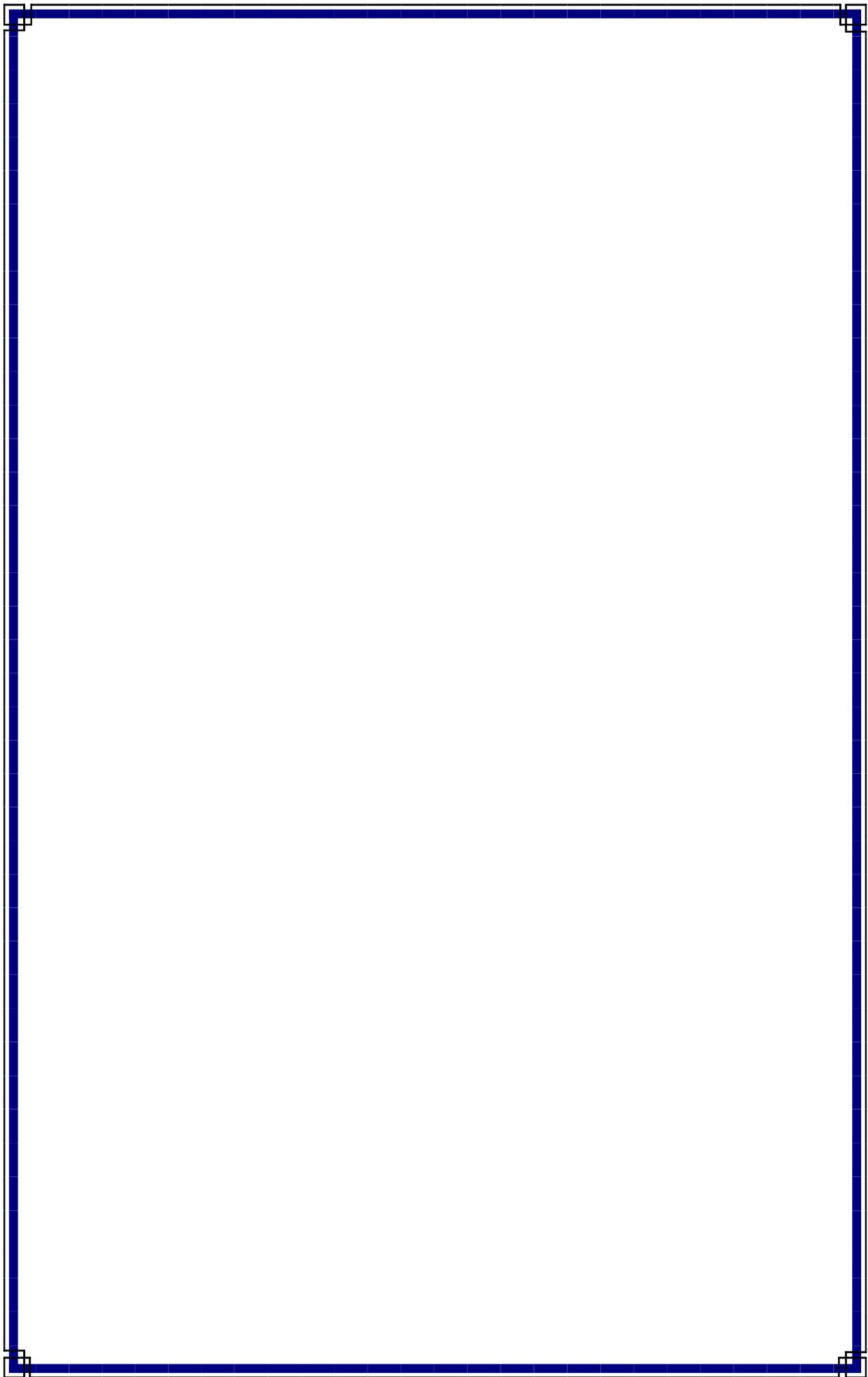
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Abraham Lincoln

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, GREETING:

KNOW YE, That, reposing special trust and confidence in the integrity, diligence, and discretion of Benjamin R. Piddle, of Oregon, I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, DO APPOINT HIM

to be
Indian Agent in the State of Oregon,

and do authorize and empower him to execute and fulfil the duties of that office according to law: And to Have and to Hold the said Office, with all the rights and emoluments thereunto legally appertaining, unto him the said Benjamin R. Piddle, during the term of four years from the 16th July, 1861, unless this commission be sooner revoked by the President of the United States for the time being.

In testimony whereof, I have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR OF THE UNITED STATES to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND at the City of Washington, the

Seventeenth day of July
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and
Sixty-one, and of the Independence of the
United States of America the eightieth
Abraham Lincoln

BY THE PRESIDENT:

Caleb B. Smith

Secretary of the Interior.

Lincoln's Springfield

Benjamin Robert Biddle

Abraham Lincoln's Tailor and Friend



Maria Evans Biddis
About 1860

SPRING CREEK SERIES

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