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Camp Lewis: Established in Montana Territory *(The Carroll Trail, Montana)*

**Letters and Journal of the 1874 Trip
from Fort Shaw to Camp Lewis**

**by
Captain Constant Williams
and
Company F of the 7th U.S. Infantry**

In April and May of 1874, Captain Constant Williams (commanding) and members of Company F of the 7th U.S. Infantry, traveled from Fort Shaw, via Helena, to establish a military post named Camp Lewis along the Carroll Trail. This military post was established for the protection of travelers of the Carroll Trail from Carroll Landing, on the Missouri River to Helena.

Acting-Assistant Surgeon C. H. Hart, who, in his monthly report from Camp Lewis, Montana Territory, for July, 1875, notes the deaths, on July 7, of 3 privates of the Seventh Infantry, from shot-wounds from hostile Indians.

Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the commencement of the Second Session of the Forty-Fourth Congress with the Reports of the Heads of Department and selections from accompanying documents. Papers accompanying the Division of Surgical Records. Edited by Ben: Perley Poore, clerk of printing records. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876.

**Edited and Produced
by
Steve F. Russell
Historic Trails Research
Ames, Iowa**

2015

Headquarters Camp Lewis, M.T.
October 17, 1874

Adjutant General
U.S. Army
Washington, D.C.

General,

I have the honor to submit the following report in accordance with Paragraph 716, Revised Army Regulations.

Camp Lewis established as a summer camp in obedience to Special Orders No. 73, dated Headquarters, Fort Shaw, M. T., April 7, 1874, was occupied by Company F, 7th Infantry, May 10, 1874.

It is situated on the Big Spring Fork of the Judith River, about 15 miles above the junction of the Big Spring and South Fork, and 2 ½ miles above the crossing of the road from Helena to Carroll, M.T. It is 116 miles westward from Camp Baker, 73 ½ miles southwest from Carroll, 90 miles southeast from Fort Benton, and 125 miles east from Fort Shaw. During the past summer and up to date the mail has been delivered by private messengers in the employ of merchants of Helena. This messenger procures the mail at Camp Baker, the nearest post office on the road.

Pine wood is procured in abundance on the foot hills of the Snowy, Judith, and Moccasin Mountains, but has to be hauled from three to five miles. There are a few scattering Cottonwood trees along the stream above the camp. The grazing is excellent in every direction for miles, and a sufficient quality of good hay for the public animals was easily obtained in a short time. The bottom of the stream is generally quite narrow, but for a distance of about seven miles in the vicinity of the camp it widens considerable being from one quarter to three quarters of a mile wide. The soil is very rich and deep in the bottom and easily cultivated. During the past season the following articles matured in a small garden planted by me, viz: peas, beans, radish, lettuce, parsley, and onions – Nothing else was planted. The soil on the bench-lands is also rich, and can be cultivated profitably if a little labor is expended in making irrigating ditches.

The buffalo, elk, white tailed deer, black tailed deer, antelope, mountain sheep, mallard, teal and other ducks, prairie chickens, mountain grouse and other game animals and birds abound. The streams in the vicinity afford fine trout fishing.

I am very respectfully
Your obedient servant
/Signed/ Constant Williams
Captain of Infantry -Comdg.

JOURNAL

of the march of

Company F 7th U.S. Infantry

commanded by

Captain Constant Williams, 7th Infy,

from Fort Shaw, M.T., to Camp Lewis, M.T.

pursuant to

S.O. No. 73 dated Hd Qrs. Fort Shaw, April 7th 1874

April and May, 1874.

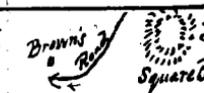
I think compass
direction is denoted
by small arrow along
the route

Creek flow also is
indicated with an arrow

Steve F. Russek
Aug 1988

Journal of the march of Company
 Captain Constant Williams' Infantry
 from Fort to Spring Creek No. 13 dated

3rd of 1st Reg. Infantry Commanded by
 James H. S. Van Hook, Major Genl. U.S.A.
 from Fort to Spring Creek No. 13 dated 1st 1874.
 Remarks

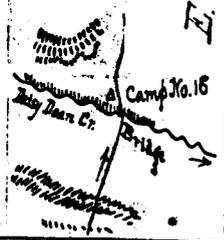
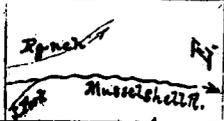
Date	Hour	Weather	Distance	Route	Remarks
1874.			Total, 45		
April 21	2 P.M. 6.50 A.M.	Clear in A.M. Blow in A.M. Blow after snow in P.M.	16		Good wood, water and grass.
April 20	10.00 P.M. 7. P.M.	Blow with snow. Blow after snow in evening.	9		Wood, water and grass.
April 19	12.45 P.M. 7.40 A.M.	Blow with snow. Blow after snow in evening.	9		Good water at spring, also grass. Wood in plenty on hillside.
	5	Clear.	6		No wood here: prairie food: a clear running stream of water, but hard to cross with loaded wagons.
April 18	2.20 1 P.M.		5		Good water at Brown's ranch: also grass, but no wood.

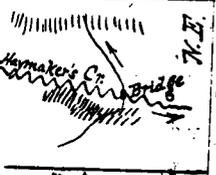
Date	Hour	Weather	Distance	Route	Remarks
			Total, 98		
April 25	2 P.M. 6.30 A.M.	Clear and pleasant.	18		<p>Good, water and grass. Route takes Boyeman Road about 3 miles from Helena.</p>
April 24	9.05 5.45 P.M.		8		<p>Good water and grass, but no wood. Helena distant three miles.</p>
April 23	10.50 6.55 P.M.		12		<p>The water in Silver Creek too muddy to use, caused by running above, but there is good, clear water in Three-mile Creek. Good grazing. Wood obtained from ravines in hill north of camp.</p>
April 22	1.45 P.M. 7.10 A.M.		Clear & pleasant.	15	
				45	

Date	Hours	Weather	Distance	Notes	Remarks
April 29	7:15 A.M.	Clear.	Total, 120 5		<p style="text-align: right;">Cement</p> <p>The road runs up Confederate Gulch to Cement Gulch (on the left) which better it follows to its head and then over divide into Buttes Gulch. Stopped at divide 2½ hours.</p>
April 28	6:40 A.M.		5		<p>The road through Confederate Gulch is very difficult, especially for trail wagons. Encamped one mile above Diamond City; wood and water, but grazing poor.</p>
	3:45 P.M.		4		<p>The camp is just at the mouth of Confederate Gulch. Wood, water and grass.</p>
April 27	6:40 A.M.			8	
April 26	—	Rain with clear in P.M.	0	Camp No. 8	Laid in camp this day.

Journal				Continued	
Date	Time	Weather	Mileage	Route	Remarks
May 3	1 P.M. 7.15 A.M.	Pleasant	12	 Deep Cr. to Camp No. 14 Deep Cr. to Camp No. 13	<p>The road keeps on S. of Deep Creek, crossing Willow Creek and 4-mile Creek (both running into Deep Creek from S.), the latter being a bad bottom on N. side after rain.</p> <p>Water and grass at camp. Wood in mountains $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S. of camp.</p>
May 2	1.45 P.M. 7 A.M.	Windy	17	 Deep Cr. to Camp No. 13	<p>Cross the North Fork of Deep Creek at this place. A good camp on South side. Wood, water and grass.</p>
May 1	—	Windy	0		Said in camp this day.
April 30	8 A.M.	Light shower in P.M.; after wind, pleasant	6	 Camp No. 12 Camp Baker	<p>Encamped just beyond Camp Baker. Water and grass. Wood from the Park.</p>
	3.50 P.M.	Pleasant	6	 Camp No. 11	<p>The road follows Benton Gulch down for 6 miles and then leaves it. I camped at leaving. Wood, water and grass.</p>

April 29. Cont'd.

Date	Hour	Weather	Distance	Route	Remarks	
			222.190			
	3.50	Clear	5		After leaving the ranch the road begins to cross foot-hills and the country presents an arid appearance. There is no wood on Daisy Deer Creek, but the water and grass are both good. A good bridge crosses the stream.	
	1.30		1		The ranch is the last house to be found on the road until Davis' Trading Post is reached.	
	1 P.M.		8		Crossing of the North Fork of Musculahell: it is about one mile above the mouth of the S. Fork (or Flathead Creek). Fort Harris is one mile from the lower end of the cañon. Water is pass after leaving cañon, but not much wood. The road leaves the Musculahell bottom here and leads to the left.	
May 5	7:15 A.M.		20 M.	15		The road enters the cañon of the North Fork of the Musculahell two miles beyond Hopfropolis Creek. Hopfropolis, Cheek's hard and Shagstaff Creeks are all bridged. Good water and grass all through the cañon.
May 4	7 A.M.			161		

Date	Time	Weather	Distance	Route	Remarks
May 7	8.15	Warm	4		Elk Creek (so-called) is a dry water course. No wood.
	6.55 A.M.		10		This large ravine is called Hopley's (or Hoppy's) Hole. There is no running water in it, unless it may be higher up toward the mountains than where the road crosses. Water was obtained by digging springs in a side ravine next the camp. Grass good and wood plentiful on the East side of the ravine. The East side is precipitous and the road difficult.
May 6	9.00	Pleasant.	2		The road goes down a very steep hill to Haymakers' Creek. The stream is bridged. Water & grass are good, but there is no wood.
	8.00		2		At this point the road crosses a water-course which is very oily, but a good crossing can be found above, as indicated by the dotted lines.

10

Willis?
Cauler?

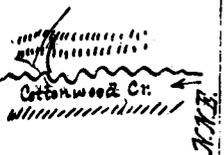
Date	Time	Miles	Altitude	Route	Remarks
			Total, 222		
	4.30 P.M.		9		<p>Ross' Fork is a clear running stream and the pass in its bottom is excellent. There is no wood, however. The banks are low and the food is good.</p>
	12. M.		1		<p>The road passes around the East end of the Little Belt Mountains into the Judith Gap (which lies between the mountains named and the Snowy Mountains) and thence into the Judith Basin.</p>
	11.45		4		<p>Red Spring Creek has water in holes, in some places good, but in others alkaline. Water can also be obtained by digging in the bed of the stream. Grass, but no wood. This creek is also called Meadow Branch.</p>
			208		Stevens Creek.

Warm.

May 7, cont'd

Date	Time	Remarks	Miles	Route	Remarks
May 9	—	Cold rain storm.	Total, 239		Said in camp this day in consequence of stormy weather.
	4.10 P.M.	Rain in evening and night.	10		The road goes over a rolling country and finally into the deep valley of Beaver Creek, which flows N.W. Good water and grass at crossing but wood is about 2 miles up the stream in mountains.
	12. M.	Clear until evening.	3½		After leaving Buffalo Creek the road passes over many hills and becomes more difficult. Front Creek is a small stream, with good grass in bottom, but no wood: it empties into Ross' Fork.
May 8	6.55 A.M.	Clear until evening.	3½		A small stream running into Ross' Fork. No wood, but water & grass. Easy grades on road up here.
			222		

Continued
Res. 1149

<i>Date</i>	<i>Hour</i>	<i>Summit</i>	<i>Markings</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>May 10</i>	<i>8.15 A.M.</i>	<i>Good solar.</i>	<i>2527, 248</i>	<p data-bbox="502 648 534 683"><i>6</i></p> 
	<i>9.30</i>		<p data-bbox="502 918 534 952"><i>3</i></p> 	
<i>1.00 P.M.</i>				

After leaving Cottonwood Creek the road forks: take the right hand road for Camp Lewis after passing which it rejoins the main road in valley of Big Spring Fork of the Judith Mts. Big Spring Fork is a fine stream of water running through a wide valley. Wood in abundance & scrub above camp.

Cottonwood Creek has a wide deep valley. Plenty of wood water and grass.