

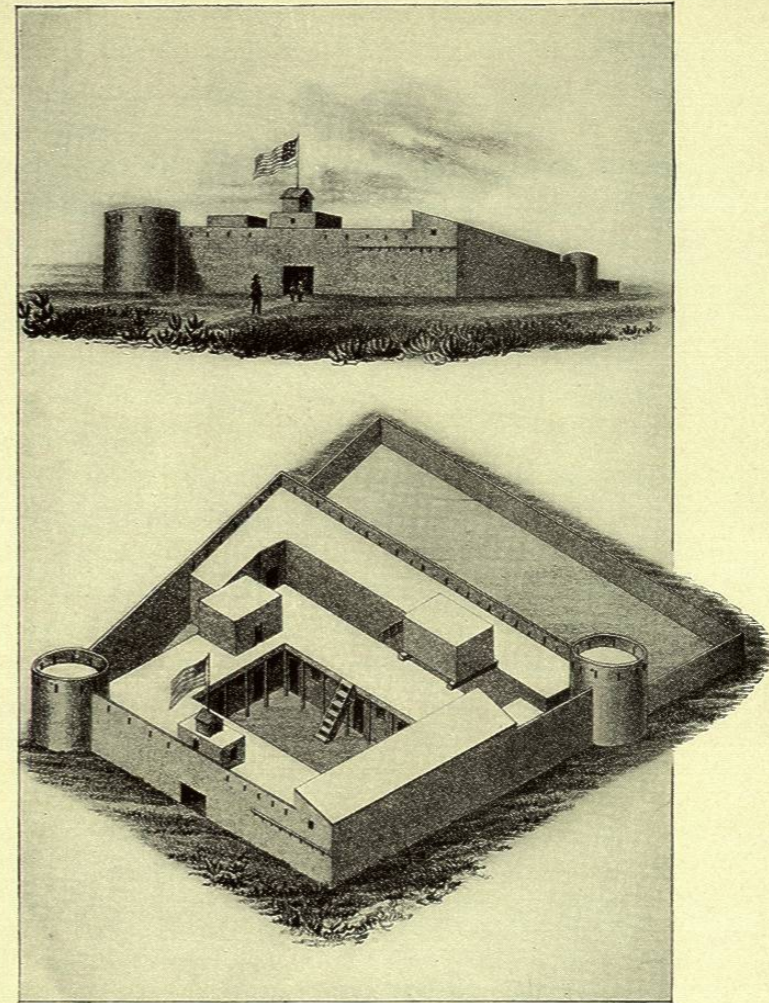
of every thing, even grass, the great reliever of the eye, and making it painful to the sight.

Saturday morning we saw in front of us and many miles distant, perhaps eighty, a mountain called I think James Peak.<sup>19</sup>

In the evening we came on some five miles ahead of the wagons, to where Messrs Davie, Harmony and Hickman<sup>20</sup> were encamped till we have permission

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Edwin James of Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, was the first American to make the ascent of Pike's Peak. This he did on July 13-14, 1820, and in honor of this achievement Major Long thought proper to call the peak by his name. While "James' Peak" appears on the early maps, the name was not acceptable to the mountain men, traders, and trappers, who traversed that country. They called it "Pike's Peak" after General Z. M. Pike, who visited it in November, 1806. On the map in Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairie*, the name is given as "Pike's Peak or James."

<sup>20</sup> James Prewitt Hickman was born in 1814 in Bourbon County, Kentucky, son of Thomas and Sarah (Prewitt) Hickman. At an early age his parents moved to Cooper County, Missouri. Upon reaching his maturity James P. Hickman located in Boonville, and subsequently became one of the leading merchants of central Missouri. His brick buildings were just above the landing of the river on Main street. Later he moved from Boonville to Independence, where he did an extensive business. During this time, as a member of the firm of Allen and Hickman, he also had stores in Fayette and Boonville. In the late forties he took a large stock of goods from Independence to old Franklin, which is now a part of El Paso, Texas. There he established a large store, but later sold all his goods to Santa Fé traders and merchants of Chihuahua. He made many other trips from Independence to Mexico. In time Mr. Hickman moved from Franklin to Chihuahua, Mexico, where he became the leading merchant and banker of that city. After living in Chihuahua for



BENT'S FORT

From Abert's "Journal from Bent's Fort to St. Louis in 1845."

to take a final start. Here we pitched our tent for the night and I believe for the forty-fifth time.

Sunday morning after getting the wagons up there and encamped, some fifteen miles from the fort, we came on ourselves.

Some four miles below the Fort we passed the soldiers encampment, another novel sight to me, perhaps there were fifty or more little tents stretched around in a ring with here and there a wagon, and a little shade made of tree limbs. The idle soldiers were stretched under these, others were out watering horses staked about the camp, some were drying clothes in the sun &c. &c.

At the outer edge of the encampment stood a sentinel, who with all the dignity and pomp, though by no means a Sampson in statue, of his office shouldered his musket marched up, and stoped us with the words "where go you"? We gave him our directions, he reported us to the sergeant at arms, and without farther ceremony we were permitted to pass on. In a little time we were in sight of the Fort<sup>21</sup> and soon after, were in it.

nearly a score of years he retired to San Antonio, Texas, where he reared his family and died in 1893. He was a very genial man, popular in society and quite a beau in his time. His son, James Prewitt Hickman, is still a resident of San Antonio.

<sup>21</sup> Bent's Fort, sometimes called "Fort William" in honor of William Bent, was an important fur-trading post in Colorado, and a base of supplies for the mountain trail to Santa Fé. It was begun in 1828, but was not completed until 1832. The fort was erected by the Bent brothers, William and Charles, and Ceran St. Vrain, a partnership being known as Bent and St.

And now for something of a description. Well the outside exactly fills my idea of an ancient castle. It is built of adobes, unburnt brick, and Mexican style so far. The walls are very high and very thick with rounding corners. There is but one entrance, this is to the East rather.

Inside is a large space some ninety or an hundred feet *square*, all around this and next the wall are rooms, some twenty-five in number. They have dirt floors—which are sprinkled with water several times during the day to prevent dust. Standing in the center of some of them is a large wooden post as a firmer prop to the ceiling which is made of logs. Some of these rooms are occupied by boarders as bed chambers. One is a dining-room—another a kitchen—a little store, a blacksmith's shop, a barber's do an ice house, which receives perhaps more customers than any other.

On the South side is an inclosure for stock in dangerous times and often at night. On one side of the Vrain. Built in the form of a rectangle about 100 by 150 feet, open in the center, of adobe construction, with walls six feet thick, it was absolutely proof against fire from the exterior. Quoting from Grinnell ("Bent's Old Fort and its builders"): "Over the main gate of the fort was a square watchtower, surmounted by a belfry. The watchtower contained a single room, furnished with a chair and a bed, and with windows on all sides. Here mounted on a pivot was an old-fashioned long telescope or spyglass; here certain members of the garrison relieving each other at stated intervals, were constantly on the lookout." In 1852 the Government attempted to purchase the fort, but William Bent, being dissatisfied with the terms offered, burnt the combustible portions and blew up the walls with gunpowder.

top wall are rooms built in the same manner as below. We are occupying one of these, but of that anon.

They have a well inside, and fine water it is—especially with ice. At present they have quite a number of boarders. The traders and soldiers chiefly, with a few *lofers* from the States, come out because they can't live at home.

There is no place on Earth I believe where man lives and gambling in some form or other is not carried on. Here in the Fort, and who could have supposed such a thing, they have a *regularly established billiard room!* They have a regular race track. And I hear the cackling of chickens at such a rate some times I shall not be surprised to hear of a cock-pit.

Now for our room; it is quite roomy. Like the others it has a dirt floor, which I keep sprinkling constantly during the day; we have two windows one looking out on the plain, the other is on the *patio* or yard. We have our own furniture, such as bed, chairs, wash basin, table furniture, and we eat in our own room. It is keeping house regularly, but I beg leave not to be allowed *that* privilege much longer.

They have one large room as a parlor; there are no chairs but a cushion next the wall on two sides, so the company set all round in a circle. There is no other furniture than a table on which stands a bucket of water, free to all. Any water that may be left in the cup after drinking is unceremoniously tossed onto the floor.

When we came last evening, while they were fixing our room, I sat in the parlour with *las señoritas* [the

ladies], the wife of Mr. George Bent<sup>22</sup> and some others. One of them sat and combed her hair all the while notwithstanding the presence of Mr. Lightendoffer,<sup>23</sup> whose lady (a Mexican) was present. After the combing she paid her devoirs to a crock of oil or greese of some kind, and it is not exaggeration to say it almost *driped* from her hair to the floor. If I had

<sup>22</sup> George Bent was the son of Silas Bent and Martha (Kerr) Bent, and brother of the famous Bent brothers, Charles, William, and Robert, of Bent's Fort. He was born in St. Louis April 15, 1814. In 1841 he married a Mexican lady; two children were born of this marriage, a son, Robert, and a daughter. George Bent was greatly esteemed, and possessed unbounded influence with the various Indian tribes with which he traded for many years. He died at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, October 23, 1847.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Eugene Leitensdorfer, his brother, Thomas Leitensdorfer, and his brother-in-law, Norris Colburn, were engaged in the Santa Fé trade for a great many years. The style of the firm was E. Leitensdorfer and Company, under which name they conducted a store at Santa Fé. Dr. Leitensdorfer married in Santa Fé, December, 1845, Doña Solidad Abreu, daughter of Santiago Abreu, one of the governors of New Mexico. Dr. Leitensdorfer traveled to Missouri for supplies in the spring of 1846, returning in June of the same year. He was appointed Auditor of Public Accounts for the territory of New Mexico by General Kearny in September, 1846.

Thomas Leitensdorfer married, in Carondelet, Missouri, May 14, 1845, Eliza Michaud. The Leitensdorfer brothers were sons of Gerrasio Probasco Santuario, an Italian soldier of fortune, who fought in many wars; while a prisoner at Milan he escaped to Switzerland, where to avoid detection he changed his name to John Eugene Leitensdorfer. He went to Carondelet, Missouri, in 1811, where in 1812 he married Euphrosine Gamache, who was the mother of Eugene and Thomas.

not seen her at it, I never would have believed it greese, but that she had been washing her head.

We had Cpt. Moore,<sup>24</sup> of the U. S. dragoons, to call this P. M.; he promises me double protection, as an American citizen, and as a Kentuckian; he is from that noble state himself, and even claims a kinship! Both yesterday and this evening we have taken a walk up the River, such as we used to take last winter in N. Y. from Spring to Wall Street.

*Tuesday 28th.* The Dctr. has just left and I shall endeavour to write a little before dinner. I've been busy all the morning. Wrote a long letter to Mama, which Cpt. Moore says I can send by the Government express. The army affords me one convenience in this. Though I cannot hear from home, it is a gratification to know that I can send letters to those who will take pleasure in reading them.

Dctr. Mesure brought me more medicine, and advises *mi alma* to travel me through Europ. The advice is rather better to take than the medicine, anything

<sup>24</sup> Captain Benjamin Davis Moore, born at Paris, Bourbon County, Kentucky, September 10, 1810; married Martha M. Hughes, daughter of Judge M. M. Hughes, of Platte County, Missouri. He was appointed from Illinois, February 2, 1829, a midshipman in the United States Naval Academy, and resigned January 2, 1832. Entered the army as first lieutenant of Mounted Rangers, November 6, 1832; transferred to First Dragoons September 19, 1833, and promoted to the rank of captain June 15, 1837. Captain Moore was killed in the battle of San Pasqual, California. In the cemetery at Platte City, Missouri, stands a monument erected to his memory and that of his brother-in-law, Thomas Clark Hammond, who also fell in the battle of San Pasqual.

though to restore my health. I never should have consented to take the trip on the plains had it not been with that view and a hope that it would prove beneficial; but so far my hopes have been blasted, for I am rather going down hill than up, and it is so bad to be sick and under a physician all the time. But cease my rebellious heart! How prone human nature is to grumble and to think his lot harder than any one of his fellow creatures, many of whom are an hundred times more diseased and poor in earthly assistance and still they endure all, and would endure more.

Had Capt. Waldo,<sup>25</sup> of the Mo. Volunteers to call

<sup>25</sup> David Waldo, son of Jedediah and Polly (Porter) Waldo, was born April 30, 1802, at Clarksburg, Harrison County, Virginia. Emigrating to Missouri in 1820 he settled in Gasconade County. A few years later he went into the pineries on the Gasconade River and engaged in cutting and hauling pine logs with his own hands. He had the same sawed into lumber, and when he had accumulated enough to form a raft of considerable size, floated it down the Gasconade and into the Missouri to St. Louis, where he sold his logs for \$500. With this capital he went to Lexington, Kentucky, and attended the Medical Department of Transylvania University.

In 1821 he served as sheriff of Gasconade County, Missouri, and thereafter filled the offices of clerk of the County Court, justice of the peace, acting coroner and county treasurer, respectively. He also acted as postmaster; held a commission as major of militia, and from 1827 was a practicing physician. The duties of all these offices he attended to personally and discharged with ability. The county of Gasconade comprised at that time a large territory. On that account it was called by many of the inhabitants "State of Gasconade, David Waldo, Governor." Everyone saluted him as Dave.

Removing to western Missouri in 1831, he formed a partner-

this P. M. *Mi alma* is paving his way to "protection" and polite treatment from all the chief men &c.

*Wednesday 29th.* The same routine today as yesterday, several gentlemen, among the traders and officers called and paid their respects to the "Madam." My health, though not good, is drank by them all, and some times a complimentary toast is ingeniously slipped in. The Fort is not such a bad place after all. There are some good people in and about it as well as in other places. I am not very much displeased with Col. Kearny for sending us here, but he has arrived himself this P. M. and gives the command to leave in three days. The idea of getting onto those rough, jolting roads, and they say this is rather worse, if anything, than the one we have passed, is truly sickening.

I have concluded that the Plains are not very beneficial with David Jackson and embarked in the Santa Fé trade. His connection with this trade as merchant, freighter, and mail contractor, extended over a period of thirty years. In this business he amassed a fortune and was estimated to be one of the wealthy men of western Missouri.

During the Mexican War he was captain of a company from Jackson County, Missouri, attached to Doniphan's command. Being a fine Spanish scholar he translated the laws of the United States into Spanish, and what was called the "Kearny Code." He also rendered valuable service in the translation of documents captured from the Mexicans by the Americans. Upon his return to Independence, he married Miss Eliza Jane, daughter of Edward and Margaret (Glasgow) Norris; the wedding taking place March 27, 1849. He died in May, 1878, at Independence, where he had lived nearly fifty years. "His fine qualities, his keen wit in social life in the days before his powers were broken by ill health will be remembered by his friends like the sunlight, but cannot be easily described." (Waldo manuscripts.)

ficial to my health so far; for I am thinner by a good many lbs. than when I came out. The dear knows what is the cause!

*Thursday July 30th.* Well this is my nineteenth birthday! And what? Why I feel rather strange, not surprised at its coming, nor to think that I am growing rather older, for that is the way of the human family, but this is it, I am sick! strange sensations in my head, my back, and hips. I am obliged to lie down most of the time, and when I get up to hold my hand over my eyes.

There is the greatest possible noise in the *patio* [yard]. The shoeing of horses, neighing, and braying of mules, the crying of children, the scolding and fighting of men, are all enough to turn my head. And to add to the scene, like some of our neighbours we have our own private troubles. The servants are all quarrelling and fighting among themselves, running to us to settle their difficulties; they are gambling off their cloths till some of them are next to nudity, and though each of them are in debt to *mi alma* for advancement of their wages, they are coming to him to get them out of their scrapes.

José, our principal Mexican about the camp, and my maid Jane, have had a cat and dog difficulty, he says he can't stand it and she puts on airs, does her business when and how she pleases, leaving a part of it for *me* to do, and here we have it, in addition to all this the Dctr. comes to tell how his men have treated him, therefore we have our own and our neighbours trials to encounter.

The Fort is crowded to overflowing. Col. Kearny has arrived and it seems the world is coming with him. Volunteers are under his command now only as he, on his arrival dispatched them under Capt. Moore ahead, for the purpose of repairing fifteen miles of the road called the Raton, a bed of rocks impassable for wagons, of which there are a goodly No. to pass.

Three Indian warriors came in today; they belong to a large war party of the Arrapaho Indians who are they say some sixty miles off. They are believed by the company to be spies, though they come rather with the appearance of trading.

With the intention of awing them a little Mr. Bent and others are about taking them down to the soldiers' encampment. They hesitate rather saying they have "two hearts on the subject; one of which says go! and the other says don't go"! They are cunning people, and no doubt 'twould be a rich treat to hear, on their returning to their tribe, their graphic account of the American Army "the white faced Warriors."

*August. 1846. Thursday 6.* The mysteries of a new world have been shown to me since last Thursday! In a few short months I should have been a happy mother and made the heart of a father glad, but the ruling hand of a mighty Providence has interposed and by an abortion deprived us of the hope, the fond hope of mortals! But with the affliction he does not leave us comfortless!

We have permission to "come unto him when our burden is grievous and heavy to be borne; we have permission to pray for more submission and reliance

on his goodness, and in that petition we have an intercessor with the Father, Jesus Christ, who himself came into the world an infant, after the manner of man.

*Friday morning 31st of July.* My pains commenced and continued till 12 o'clock at night, when after much agony and severest of pains, which were relieved a little at times by medicine given by Dctr. Measure, *all was over.* I sunk off into a kind of lethargy, in *mi alma's* arms. Since that time I have been in my bed till yesterday a little while, and a part of today.

My situation was very different from that of an Indian woman in the room below me. She gave birth to a fine healthy baby, about the same time, *and in half an hour after she went to the River and bathed herself and it,* and this she has continued each day since. Never could I have believed such a thing, if I had not been here, and *mi alma's* own eyes had not seen her coming from the River. And some gentleman here tells him, he has often seen them immediately after the birth of a child go to the water and *break the ice* to bathe themselves!

It is truly astonishing to see what customs will do. No doubt many ladies in civilized life are ruined by too careful treatments during child-birth, for this custom of the hethen is not known to be disadvantageous, but it is a "*hethenish custom.*"

In the meantime things have been going on prosperously without, so I have been daily informed by my attendants. The troops *en mass* left about 10 o'clock Sunday morning, and made rather a grand show, at

least *in numbers.* Till their departure the court yard, *el patio,* was thronged. I was not able to look out, but the massive sound that filled my ear the while was quite a sufficient criterion to judge by. Although it was the Sabbath, necessity compelled them to be busily employed. The clang of the blacksmith's hammer was constant. The trumpet sounded oft and loud; swords rattled in their sheaths, while the tinkling spur served as an echo. Ever and anon some military command was heard issuing, and doubtless promptly answered.

Though forbidden to rise from my bed, I was free to meditate, on the follies and wickedness of man! Of a creature formed for nobler and higher purposes, sinking himself to the level of beasts, waging warfare with his fellow man, even as the dumb brute. And by his example teaching nothing good, striving for wealth, honour and fame to the ruining of his soul, and loosing a brighter crown in higher realms. — —

All of the Traders followed on after the troops the next three days.

The Fort is quite desolate. Most who are here now of the soldiers are sick. Two have died, and have been buried in the sand hills, the common fate of man. One must have great faith in their Creator, great reliance on his goodness, not to feel sad and uneasy to see such things passing around them,—their fellow creatures snatched off in a moment without warning almost—and they are themselves lying on a bed of sickness. It requires much prayer for submission, for tranquility, &c.