

TREK OF THE SEVEN SISTERS

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TREK OF THE SEVEN SISTERS
DIARY OF SISTER MONICA CORRIGAN
AN ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY OF
THE FIRST SEVEN SISTERS OF
ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI TO TUCSON, ARIZONA
APRIL 20, 1870 TO MAY 26, 1870
36 DAYS

Rev. Mother and Dear Sisters:

Before leaving Carondelet, I promised to write a "Journal" of our trip to Arizona. It seems to me that the fulfillment of this promise is almost out of date. You know, we had scarcely time to brush off our habits before opening school; consequently I was obliged to defer writing the events of our trip until vacation; and I would not have courage even now to commence it, were it not that Sister Euphrasia is reminding me continually of it. I have time now, it is true, but not capacity for such a task; but, nevertheless, I shall do the best I can, relying on the kind indulgence of our good Sisters.

April 20, 1870 Leaving St. Louis

After bidding adieu to our good Sisters in Carondelet, we started on our long and perilous journey to Arizona. Our first two stations were St. Joseph's and St. Bridget's Asylums, in St. Louis, Mo., where we were cordially greeted by our good Sisters. We then wished them goodbye and repaired to the Pacific Railroad Depot, took the car at 6:00 p.m. direct to Kansas City. Puff, puff went the locomotive, and we were off, really indeed, on our way to Arizona. As the Sisters frequently travel this portion of our journey I shall not describe it; but it is certainly true that none of them ever went over it with the sad hearts we experienced on that ever memorable night. We were going, but not to return in vacation, to make our retreat with our dear Sisters. Mother Julia will not call on us when visiting her Province.

It is quite probable we may never again meet here below; and it is only when this thought occurs to me, that I know how deeply I love them. Oh! the incomprehensible beauty of our holy faith! How consoling to know with an infallible certainty that we are accomplishing the will of God with an assured hope of being reunited in our heavenly country, to those beloved ones we have left here below, for the love of Jesus and the salvation of souls. With these, and similar reflections, we passed the first night. We were then in Kansas City.

Thursday, April 21, 1870 On to Omaha

We were kindly welcomed by our good Sisters, and had the pleasure of meeting there Mother Agatha, who had been sick, but was better then. We spent the day quite pleasantly. It again became our duty to say goodbye; but we were much encouraged

on hearing that Rev. Mother St. John had concluded to ⁰⁰⁵accompany us as far as Omaha, Nebraska. We took the cars at 7:00 p.m. and were comfortably seated, as the cars were new and clean, and but moderately filled. We changed cars during the night — it was, indeed, a change in every respect, as the cars were filled with emigrants, crying children, etc. To conclude from the offensive atmosphere in the cars, they must have had any amount of spoiled chickens, eggs, cigars, etc. In this motley crowd we spent the remainder of our second night.

April 22, 1870 Happy to Miss Connections

In the morning we refreshed ourselves with a nice cup of coffee, then proceeded on our journey. The weather was cool and pleasant — an Indian boy played the violin for the entertainment of the passengers.

Reverend Mother treated us to apples and maple sugar, and presented us with little statues of Our Blessed Mother as souvenirs; but in spite of all there was a sad cloud overhanging us. It was not surprising, as we were to part from Rev. Mother in a few hours — and that, perhaps, forever in this world; but, as in similar difficulties, we had recourse to our good Father St. Joseph. We were detained about two hours after time, but yet we feared that the San Francisco train would wait for us, as we wished it gone, for then we could remain one day more with Reverend Mother. As we approached Omaha, some of us were crying and others praying, but all were looking eagerly to see if the train was there. We did not wait long as a messenger came with the welcome news that the train had just left. Thanks be to God! escaped from every lip, and was in every heart. We then went to the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, where we received the most cordial welcome from those good Sisters. We remained there until the next morning.

Saturday, April 23, 1870 Final Good-Bye

When we had had the consolation of hearing Mass, and receiving the Bishop's¹ blessing, we went to the depot. Reverend Mother procured our tickets, refreshments and other conveniences for the journey. The dreaded moment of parting had almost arrived. That moment we shall never forget! We were all seated in the cars when she came in with her little purchases, and at the same time to say "good-bye." We then lost all self-

¹ Bishop O'Gorman

control and wept bitterly after she left us, our eyes following until she entered the carriage and drove out of sight. The Arizona missionaries had made their first great sacrifice, in leaving their dear Mother! The same day we passed through the beautiful valley of La Platte; took supper at Clark's 121 miles from Omaha. Sister Ambrosia and I went out to purchase some tea. We received it as an alms and with it several mortifications. The cars were so densely crowded that night that we were unable to sleep.

Sunday, April 24, 1870 Entering Rocky Mountains

We breakfasted at Sydney, 414 miles from Omaha. From this place onward the scenery became very interesting, and the conversation of our fellow-travelers, amusing. In one car were four Protestant ministers and their ladies, who were on their way to China, to convert those benighted idolators. There were almost as many religious denominations represented, as there were persons in the car. Whether owing to our presence, or not, we do not know; but, however, religion was the principal topic of conversation throughout the entire journey. Everyone maintained his own opinion and proved it from the Bible, agreeing only in one point. An elderly respectable-looking gentleman came over to us, and handing one of the Sisters a five dollar bill, proffered his services to us as far as San Francisco, stating that he was not a Catholic; but nevertheless had great respect for Sisters, as he knew them to be "Angels of Mercy," and that he regarded it a great privilege to serve them when it was in his power. One of the Sisters gave him a small medal of the Blessed Virgin; he hung it on his watch chain, and said he would keep it as long as he lived. This afternoon we entered the Rocky Range, passed through Sherman, at an elevation of 8,242 feet, and the highest point crossed by the railroad. It is a frightful and desolate region; nothing to be seen but snow-clad mountains of rock, whose summits appear to touch the clouds. The cars pass over frightful chasms; the rails are laid on logs resting on pillars, whose only support are the craggy rocks beneath. Some of these chasms seem to be laid about the length of three city blocks; going over these places every person appeared to hold his breath; and it was only when safe on firm ground that conversation was resumed and commentations made on the terrors and perils of the place. I chanced to be sleeping when crossing one of these places. Sister Martha awoke me, telling me to "wake up and take note of this beautiful scenery." When I saw where we were,

sleep forsook me immediately. I was terrified. The Sister⁰⁰⁷ enjoyed the scenery very much. That night, like the preceding one, we passed with little sleep.

Monday, April 25, 1870 Reached Salt Lake

We took breakfast at Green River, 845 miles from Omaha. At Byrne we met Sister Andrew's brother Mr. Byrne, and delivered him the little messages of his sister. At 5 o'clock we passed the "Thousand-mile tree," so called from its being just 1,000 miles from Omaha. It stands at the entrance of the Devil's Gate, a very appropriately named place, with lofty mountains rising on each side of the tracks. The railroad winds through a narrow pass in the mountain, at the base of which the Weber River, an angry-looking stream, dashes along with frightful impetuosity. We crossed it eight times within the space of a quarter of an hour; it is probably from this difficulty in crossing that it has received its name. We changed at Ogden, a Mormon town of about 6,000 inhabitants. It lies between the Weber and Ogden rivers, 31 miles north of Salt Lake City, 1,032 miles from Omaha. Many of the Mormon houses are built like the tenement houses of the states; others are in groups of small houses in the same yard. They are a degraded-looking set of people; perhaps it is prejudice that makes me think so. Here we had the pleasure of meeting with kind friends in the person of Mr. Deobeck and lady of San Francisco, who did everything they could to make us comfortable. They tried to procure us beds but secured only one which Sister Hyacinth and I occupied. After sunset we passed Salt Lake as the railroad runs along its margin. The city is a beautiful place. On the left are flower gardens, shade and fruit trees covered with dense foliage, which relieves the scene on the right of barren mountains and bleak rocks, presenting in all a lovely prospect.

Tuesday, April 26, 1870 Obtained a Second Bed

Breakfast at Elko, 1,037 miles from Omaha; the morning was warm and pleasant. There were a great many Indians at the depot; we threw them candy and it was really amusing to see these poor old creatures grabbing for it in the dust. Mr. Deobeck occasionally sent us apples, oranges, candy, etc. At noon we stopped at Battle Mountain, where we met Rev. F. Kelly, pastor of Austin, Nev. He invited us to dinner, which, indeed we needed badly, but Mother was afraid to leave the carpetbags, etc., so he had dinner sent in. At supper Sister Martha was rather in-

disposed, and the good priest brought her supper to the car. He was extremely kind. That night a lady offered us her bed; we then had two, which enabled us to get a little rest. When we retired at night, the heat was as oppressive as that of a St. Louis July; the mornings as cold as a Canadian March. In several places the railroad is protected by sheds to prevent snow from blocking up the tracks.

Wednesday, April 27, 1870 **Entering California**

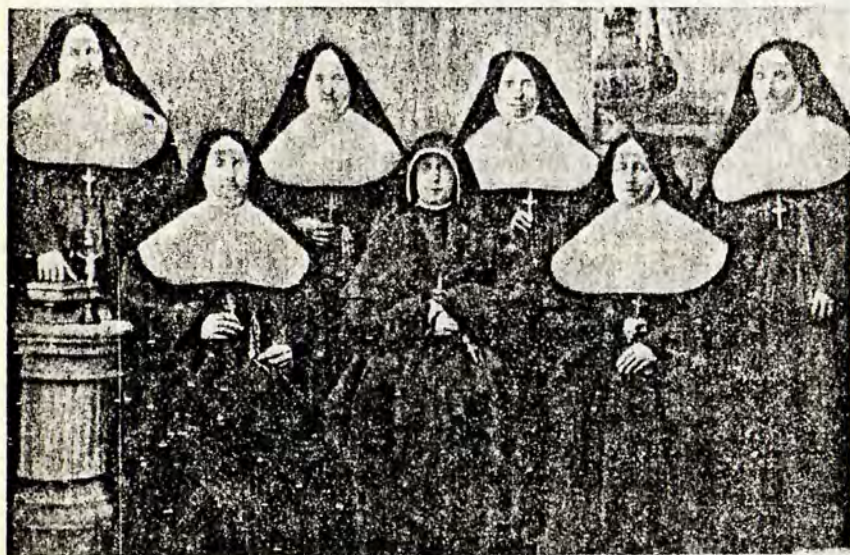
About 6:00 o'clock a.m. we passed a place called Cape Horn. It is an ugly, dreary place. The railroad track runs along the side of a mountain that rises on the right and left. About five or six feet from the track there is a precipice said to be 300 feet deep, which extends about a mile along the railroad. On the opposite side of this precipice are mountains from whose sides issue several streams flowing into the chasm beneath, where, uniting, they rush along with an awe-inspiring impetuosity. At 8:00 o'clock we reached the California gold diggings. They are subterranean, consequently we did not see them. We dined at Colfax with Rev. Father Kelly, who took a fatherly care of us. We then parted with him, and in bidding us farewell, he presented us with a five-dollar gold piece, with strict injunctions to telegraph him in case we needed any funds, as he would not fail to supply them. He gave us an introductory to Rev. H. Gallagher, San Francisco, who rendered us important services when there. Father Kelly said he would apply for a colony of our Sisters for Salt Lake City, were it not that he purposed leaving the mission to enter the Congregation of Lazarists. He is the first pastor of that mission and has been there 15 years.

1914 miles and 106 hours from Omaha

At 7:00 o'clock p.m., we presented a beautiful sight after our week's journey, without arranging our toilet, the distance from Omaha to San Francisco being 1,914 miles. At 7:00 o'clock p.m. we reached San Francisco. Mr. Deobeck saw us in the bus, and attended to our baggage, but owing to some mistake in the address, we did not reach the hospital until 9:00 o'clock p.m. We were received most cordially by the good Sisters of Mercy, who did all in their power to make us comfortable. We were sadly in need of rest, as we were completely dizzy from the motion of the cars.

Thursday, April 28, 1870 Kindness of the Sisters of Mercy⁰⁰⁹

Reverend Mother Gabriel took us to visit the Magdalen Asylum in the country. Mother was rather indisposed, and did not accompany us. Sister Martha remained with her. The Sisters at the asylum were extremely kind to us. They wished to load us with provisions for our journey, but as we were inexperienced in these matters, did not think we would need them, and accepted only a few knick-knacks, just to please them. We were heartily sorry, when hungry in the desert, of not accepting their offering. We shall ever feel grateful to those good Sisters, who proved to us "friends in need," and lavished so much kindness upon us — they are truly worthy of their calling.



First missionaries to Tucson — Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.
Standing left to right: Sister Emerentia Bonnefoy, Superior, Sister Euphrasia Suchet, Sister Monica Corrigan, Sister Hyacinth Blanc.
Seated: Sister Ambrosia Arnichaud, Sister Martha Peters, Sister Maxime Croisat.

Saturday, April 30 to Tuesday, May 3, Voyage to San Diego

The good Sisters sent us to the boat in their carriage. We took passage on the steamer "Arizona." Captain Johnson, with his officers, treated us with every mark of respect and kindness. Mother was quite sick, and scarcely able to keep up until Monday. In the afternoon Sisters Euphrasia and Martha were sea sick, but were quite well next day.

With the exception of those little occurrences, we had a pleasant trip to San Diego, where we arrived safely on Tuesday morning, May 3. We stopped at a boarding house until Saturday, May 7, when we left in a private conveyance for Fort Yuma.

Saturday, May 7, 1870 Leaving San Diego

The wagon was too small for all to ride inside, consequently one was obliged to ride outside with the driver. Sister Ambrosia volunteered to make the great act of mortification and humility. It is beyond description what she suffered in riding two hundred miles like this, without protection from the rays of a tropical sun. Yet poor Sister did this.

About 10:00 o'clock we passed a white post that marks the southwest boundary of the United States. We dropped a few tears at the sight of it, then entered Lower California. At noon we halted and took lunch in a stable 12 miles from San Diego.

Sister Maxime and I went in search of gold; seeing quantities of it, we proposed getting a sack and filling it. Just think, a sack of gold! — but we soon learned from experience that "all is not gold that glitters."

We camped, about sunset, at the foot of a mountain; made some tea, and took our supper off a rock. All were cheerful. We wished Rev. Mother could see us at supper. After offering thanks to the Giver of all good, we retired to rest — Mother, Sisters Euphrasia and Martha under the wagon, others inside where there was room only for two to lie down.

Sisters Euphrasia (?) and I sat in a corner and tried to sleep. We had scarcely closed our eyes when the wolves began to howl about us. We were terribly frightened and recommended ourselves to the safe-keeping of Him who guides the weary traveler on his way. We feared they would consume our little store of provisions and thus let us perish in the wilderness, but the driver told us not to fear. During the night Sister Euphrasia was startled from her sleep by one of the horses licking her face. She screamed fearfully, and we concluded she was a prey of the wolves.

Next morning, May 8, feast of the Patronage of our Holy Father St. Joseph, we were determined to celebrate it the best way we could. After offering up our prayers, we formed a procession, going in advance of the wagon — Mother walking in front, bearing a Spanish lily in her hand. We followed in solemn order and imagined ourselves in Egypt with St. Joseph as leader.

Ranchers Propose Marriage

At noon we came to a cool, shady place in which we rested. The ranch-man (a person who keeps refreshments, stable feed, etc., on the western plains), invited us to dinner. He offered us a good meal of all we could desire. There were several ranchmen there from the neighboring stations, but no women. There are few women in this country. After dinner they became very sociable. We retired to the stable, where our driver and only protector was, and they followed. Some of them proposed marriage to us, saying we would do better by accepting the offer than by going to Tucson, for we would all be massacred by the Indians. The simplicity and earnestness with which they spoke put indignation out of the question, as it was evident they meant no insult, but our good. They were all native Americans. For that afternoon we had amusement enough.

We then resumed our journey. That evening we camped in a very damp place, made some tea, the only beverage we had. We then offered up our evening prayers and retired to rest. Mother, Sisters Ambrosia, Maxime and I mounted a rock; the other three went to the wagon. The night was very cold. I think there was frost.

We had only one blanket between seven of us. Sister Martha and I had only light summer shawls; the others brought their winter ones along. Yet, we all kept up good spirits, being convinced that we were doing the divine will. We were much fatigued, and though hard the bed, and cold the night, we soon fell asleep.

Terror in the night

Between 2:00 and 3:00 o'clock in the morning we were startled from our sleep by an unearthly yell from Sister Martha, and one from the driver. We hastened to learn the matter. The Sisters in the wagon feeling cold concluded to kindle a fire to warm themselves. Although very dark, they set out in search of fuel, etc., to make it with, and finally succeeded in getting a few sticks and some dry leaves, and started out for more; but this time they had the advantage of a light from the fire. Sister Martha thought she saw a fine, large stick amongst the dry leaves, and eagerly grabbed it, and commenced pulling it towards the fire; when the leaves fell off, she perceived it was a man she had by the leg. She then yelled and he screamed, but only in mischief. It was the driver who was resting himself amongst the dry leaves.

All were frightened, but none hurt. It was well that they did wake up, for we were almost stiff with the cold. After warming ourselves a little, we made some tea to refresh ourselves. We then recommended ourselves to our Heavenly Father and our dear Mother Mary and set out singing the "Ave Marie Stella" and other hymns, as we went along.

Monday, May 9, 1870 **Abomination of Desolation**

We spent the day in climbing up and down hills. In the evening we reached the ever-memorable place, "Mountain Springs," the entrance of the American desert. For several miles the road is up and down mountains. At the highest point it is said to be 4,000 feet above the level of the sea. We were compelled to stop here to breathe. Some of the Sisters lay down on the road side, being unable to proceed further. Besides this terrible fatigue, we suffered still more from thirst.

Before proceeding further, I shall give you a brief description of the place. We were going south. Before us lay the American desert, 40 miles long — 800 feet below sea level. It is said to have once formed a portion of the ocean. It has every appearance of having been covered with water. On the right lies a great salt lake, supposed to have been a part of the ocean, which, hemmed in by mountains, could not recede with the other waters. On the left rise ugly mountains of volcanic rock and red sand. I wished Sister Euphrasia to make a sketch of it, but she said it was not necessary as she would never forget its appearance.

After a few moments rest we commenced to descend. We were so much fatigued that it seemed as if our limbs were dislocated. We had yet two miles to descend on foot, the greater part being very steep. We joined hands, two by two, and ran as well as we could. It was certainly a novel sight to see the Sisters alone, on foot, crossing that lonely mountain in the wilderness. The sides of the road were covered with teams of horses, oxen and cattle that had dropped dead trying to ascend. At one place we counted 14 oxen, which had apparently died at the same time. When Mother beheld so many dead animals, she wept, fearful we might share their fate.

We re-assembled at the foot of the mountain, and paused a few moments to breathe; everyone had something to remark about the place we had just passed. Sister Maxime said it was the "Abomination of Desolation." The carriage overtook us

there, but we continued on foot, as it was yet too dangerous to ride, though we had quite a distance to go before we could take to the conveyance. We traveled as fast as we were able, in order to reach the ranch, for we were almost dead of thirst.

We expected nothing but a drink of water, and we were not disappointed. After refreshing ourselves with a drink of cold water, we retired to the stable-yard, where we had left our carriage, in which we had spent the previous night. The wind was so high that the driver had to use means to prevent the carriage from being blown over. There were upward of 20 men there, some of whom were intoxicated. They annoyed us very much; some offering to shake hands with us, others trying to keep them off; and all swearing, etc.

We were not only tired, but hungry, as we had scarcely anything to eat that day. We placed ourselves under the merciful protection of our Heavenly Father, our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, as we were exposed to fearful dangers in that ugly place. We will never be able to tell our dear Sisters all the mortifications and humiliations we had to endure there. It was 9:00 o'clock before we could get a chance to make some tea; in the meantime, we remained near our carriage — it was our only home. Mother felt much discouraged. She said, "If Reverend Mother knew where we were, she would not go to bed this night."

Four of us slept in a shanty; the cook brought us a blanket, and, after picking some "grey backs" off it, presented it to us. The men were coming in and going out all night. We asked the cook what it all meant. He replied in a somewhat embarrassed manner that "ladies seldom pass this way, and when they do, the men wish to enjoy their society." Mother, Sisters Ambrosia and Maxime remained in the carriage. The driver stayed with them as a protector. The cook was our guardian. He seemed to be a very nice young man and well educated.

We started this morning at 5:00 o'clock, and entered the desert. It is a vast bed of sand. Traveling over it is rendered dangerous on account of the sand storms. We were told that about a month previous to our crossing it, they found a government wagon loaded with firearms, which had been forwarded several months before, and a stagecoach with seven passengers all buried in the sand. As sand is a good conductor, consequently the heat is extreme. When the sun is at meridian height the sand is hot enough to blister.

In one place we passed a drove of horned cattle, said to contain 1,000 head; every one died of heat the same day. Another place we passed the remains of 1,500 sheep, smothered in a sand storm. In several places the sand is so deep that we were obliged to walk. We could get water only in one place and when we did get it, it was not only hot, but so full of minerals that we suffered more after taking it than before.

We traveled until noon, rested until 4:00 o'clock p.m. Made some tea, which refreshed us. Recommending our journey to our Heavenly Father, we traveled until midnight. It was then cool and pleasant. The moon shone brightly; we walked and rode alternately. As we walked along we chanted a hymn. It was, indeed, a beautiful sight to see the Sisters at the lonely hour of midnight, crossing the frightful desert, singing hymns.

We sang all the time, and imagined St. Joseph in our company, protecting us, as he did the Infant Jesus and his Blessed Mother, through the Egyptian desert; thus we felt no fear. At midnight we reached a ranch. We would not have refused some refreshments, but for us there was none. We lay down in the corner of the stable and rested until 4:00 o'clock a.m.

We resumed our journey until 9:30 a.m., when we came to a ranch. The proprietor showed us great kindness; we were at once accommodated with water to wash, refreshment we sorely needed, as we had not washed since we left San Diego. You may imagine our condition after our weary trip. One of the Sisters wore low shoes, her feet and ankles were very painful; and it was with difficulty that she removed her stockings, as they stuck to the flesh with the blood which had congealed there. After getting them off, she found 22 bleeding sores, produced by the cactus plants, with which the desert abounds. She advises all the Sisters coming to Arizona, to be sure to provide themselves with very high boots, in order to avoid the like disaster. At 6:00 o'clock p.m., we resumed our journey and traveled until 3:00 o'clock in the morning.

Although nearly overcome with fatigue, everyone was cheerful and full of courage. We then arrived at a ranch. The man offered us the barroom to sleep in; but we said we preferred the stable. He replied, "There are 40 men in the stable." Six of them gave us their places, and in the twinkling of an eye we were fast asleep, and did not wake until 7:00 o'clock a.m. We then saw the strange place we were in — 40 men, sure enough! and as many Indians. Nevertheless, they all treated us with the

greatest kindness and respect. The weather was extremely hot and we were so sorely fatigued that the driver advised us to remain until evening.

After breakfast he carpeted the stable with a wagon cover; then brought in some rocks and feed sacks for seats; thus we were very comfortably seated. There was a man there whose life I had been instrumental in saving. From the manner in which he spoke, I think he recognized me. He was extremely kind to us, procured for us such delicacies as the place afforded. He gave us some fresh eggs for our journey. We left there at 6:00 o'clock p.m., and traveled until 8:00 o'clock — only two hours. We wished to go on, but the driver insisted on our remaining where we were. Of course, we had to submit. Sister Euphrasia and I remained in the wagon, and the other Sisters rested themselves on a pile of straw. At midnight we resumed our journey.

Friday, May 13, 1870

About 7:00 o'clock we left Lower California, and entered Arizona; we crossed the Colorado River about 9:00 o'clock, on what they term here, a towboat, which however, is nothing but a raft. We were obliged to go over in the carriage as they did not wish to cross over a second time; having two spirited horses, two men held them by the bridle; and, as there was nothing on the opposite side to which the rope could be fastened, two men stood on the opposite bank, holding the ropes.

As the horses sprang forward the raft floated back. At this, one of the horses fell on the raft, which is the only thing that saved us from a watery grave. The weight of the horse prevented the carriage from rolling into the river. There stood the carriage, with the Sisters, hanging over a depth of 17 feet of water. I saw the danger before it happened and jumped from the carriage. We merely escaped being drowned and ending our mission, and finishing our crown before reaching Arizona.

But our Lord did not wish it — we must labor longer, and assist in cultivating this barren portion of His vineyard. At 10:00 o'clock we reached Arizona City or Fort Yuma, where we received a most cordial welcome from good Father Francisco, V.G. of Tucson¹. We remained here three days, and had the inexpressible consolation of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice and re-

¹ Father Francisco Jouveaneau was sent by Bishop Salpointe to meet the Sisters as soon as he received Reverend Mother's delayed letter. This delay accounts for the Sisters not having been met in San Diego.

ceiving our dear Lord in Holy Communion, which infused us with renewed strength and courage for the remainder of our journey. We had the pleasure of hearing a Spanish sermon for the first time. We were lodged with a good Mexican family.

As some of our Sisters may be going there at some future day, a brief description of the place may not prove uninteresting. It is located at the junction of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, being much more conveniently situated than Tucson. It is said to be the hottest place in the United States, but has the advantage of having plenty of fresh water. Sand storms are frequent occurrences. The population consisting of Mexicans and Americans, number about 4,000; the latter having the majority.

No schools have yet been established. They offered \$200.00 per month if two of the Sisters would remain for a year, but were told by Father Francisco to first build a convent. The majority of the buildings are of adobe (sundried bricks). Lumber is very scarce and difficult to procure. There is but one Catholic Church. The first pastor, who was one of the priests who accompanied the bishop to Carondelet, was appointed last year (1869). The soil is fertile; but owing to the continual drought, agriculture is confined to those parts where irrigation is practicable. There is an almost inexhaustible supply of firewood. The Indians in the vicinity are peaceable.

We left this place at sunrise and traveled until noon. The remainder of our journey was quite pleasant, having a comfortable covered carriage, good Father Francisco to guard us, a plentiful supply of provisions, etc., and a cook to prepare our meals. From this time forward we had our regular meals — very good ones — far better than we expected in such a wilderness. We had a tent to sleep under, but as it was rather small, some of us slept in the wagon on the seats. We traveled until 10:00 o'clock p.m.

We started early in the morning and stopped at noon, on the banks of the Gila. We traveled 20 miles along this stream and took supper at a ranch where we remained during the night.

When we were about to resume our journey, Mother started in advance of us for a walk. On coming to a place where the roads crossed, she took the wrong direction. After a short interval, not perceiving any traces of her we became alarmed for her safety. Father and Sister Ambrosia immediately started in pursuit. When the driver discovered her in the distance, he ran as

fast as possible in order to overtake her and she, on perceiving a man running after her, and not recognizing him, ran too, with all her might.

After her return, Father put her in penance, by making her ride in the carriage. Sister Martha accompanied her. At 6:00 o'clock a.m. we resumed our journey and May 20 we came to a ranch about noon. The proprietor treated us very kindly, and presented us with some canned fruit and a new towel for our journey, which we resumed until 7:00 o'clock p.m. when we camped for the night, suffering from cold.

We started on our way at 4:00 o'clock a.m., and passed many recently made graves of persons who had been killed by the Indians. One of these, we were informed, contained the remains of a father, mother and five children.

These burial places looked so sadly neglected; the wolves had even made holes in them. The desolate, lonely places in which these poor creatures were laid to rest, and still more, their melancholy and frightful death, cast a damper over our spirits, as we had no certainty of not meeting the same fate. And yet, why should we be sad? Did we not risk our lives for the love of Jesus? And would it not be glorious to have the happiness of dying for Him? But poor nature is weak, and although in spirit we coveted the privilege of so glorious an end, yet our frail, earthly bodies shrank from so trying an ordeal.

We passed at night the Indians' place of worship. It is a natural construction of huge, immovable rocks, on which they cut the figures of their gods. There were various planets, different animals of the forest and even reptiles. The figures appear to be well made, and are quite interesting to look at. Oh! how my heart burned to make known to them the true and only God! We camped about 8:00 o'clock and took our supper by brush light as usual.

We had a lamb this morning for breakfast; we called it our Passover. After offering up our prayers and placing ourselves with renewed confidence under the protection of Heaven, we resumed our journey at rather an advanced hour of the day under the rays of a scorching sun, the average heat in the shade being 125 degrees. We reached a ranch at noon and were accommodated with a room where we enjoyed the luxury of a "good wash and change of clothing," a refreshment of which we were sorely in need.

We dined at 3:00 o'clock and after getting a supply of fresh water for our journey we started at 6:00 o'clock p.m. We entered the Arizona desert, traveled all night, and were so much fatigued, that almost everyone fell asleep, the driver permitting the horses to go at will. Father and his driver slept so soundly that Sister Martha was obliged to drive nearly all night.

At 8:00 o'clock a.m. we refreshed ourselves with a cup of coffee, and traveled on until 2:30 p.m. when we were out of the desert. We took dinner at 5:00 o'clock p.m. and lodged at the house of a generous-hearted Irishman, Mr. Cosgrove. Whenever we had the good fortune to come across Irish or Mexicans, we were sure of meeting with a cordial reception, and of finding in them all the characteristics of true friends.

We started early, entering upon the most dangerous portion of our journey, as we were in danger of being attacked and massacred by the savages at any moment; but placing ourselves in the hands of Providence, to whom we had consecrated our lives, we courageously advanced, feeling assured that His all-seeing eye would protect His chosen ones from danger; at all events, that whatever might befall us would be in accordance with His most holy will.

When we stopped at noon, there was no room for us in the inn, so that we had not even a tree to shelter us from the burning rays of a tropical sun. The ruins of some old buildings were near; Mother went there to rest, and fell asleep. A troop of nude Indians came in the meantime, who are peaceable. They had the consideration to be quiet and let her sleep. Sister Martha was resting on an old cowhide. A noble warrior perceiving her, stole softly up and sat down beside her as her guardian angel.

The remainder of the Sisters were in the wagon, while I employed myself in washing our stockings and handkerchiefs, and amused myself by taking notes for my "Journal." Father and the boy prepared dinner, after which we resumed our journey. About 4:00 o'clock p.m., we passed through the valley of the Pima Indians. Their dwellings are constructed of straw, and are shaped like a bird's nest in an inverted position; they vary from four to five feet in height, and have a small hole as a place of entrance.

Their costume consists of two pieces of calico or flannel, extending to the knees, one piece hanging in front, the other behind. The young squaws are clothed with the inner bark of

trees, in the same manner. The "old ladies" are not so modestly attired; they dress their hair with a mixture of mud and water, which has the double effect of destroying the vermin and keeping the hair in its place. They are a brave-looking tribe; very unlike the poor, timid Indian of the frontier.

Tuesday, May 24, 1870 Soldiers Appear

We camped at 9:00 o'clock. Whilst partaking of our evening refecton, sixteen soldiers rode up and informed us that they had been sent to escort some travelers, they knew not whom, and supposed we were the persons, as they saw no others. We conjectured that our good Father, St. Joseph, had sent them to our assistance; although at the time we were not aware of how much we stood in need of their escort. We might, in all probability, have been massacred by the savages, had they not been our safeguard. The Indians are afraid to appear when they hear the soldiers, unless they are sufficiently strong in number to fight them. They continued with us for the remaining seventy-five miles of our journey.

Whilst at breakfast this morning, three of the citizens of Tucson, who were a portion of the number appointed to meet us (the others having remained at the next station) rode up. We resumed our journey at 5:00 o'clock p.m. Some miners joined us, in order to share our protection. The soldiers followed close in the rear; they had two mules to carry their baggage — one carried the blankets; the other the cooking utensils. We titled them respectively, the "chambermaid and cook." The latter looked quite amusing with her pots and pans hanging from her side.

At noon we reached the station where the remainder of the escort from Tucson was awaiting us — sixty-five miles from the city. There was great rejoicing among them; but as they could not speak either French or English, we did not understand them.

At 5:00 o'clock p.m., we set out again. Everyone was in fine spirits; especially the citizens. All passed off pleasantly until midnight, when a serious turn of mind and manner seemed to take possession of each and every one. We were then approaching Picacho Peak, where the Apaches are accustomed to attack travelers. A fearful massacre had been perpetrated there, only a week previous.

Apaches Attack

The road winds through a narrow pass in the mountain, where the Indians conceal themselves, and throw out their poi-

soned arrows at the passers-by. The place is literally filled with graves — sorrowful monuments of savage barbarity. Each one prepared his firearms; even good Father Francisco. The citizens pressed around our carriage. The soldiers rode about like bloodhounds in search of prey. In passing through the peak, the horses began to neigh, which is a sure indication of the close proximity of the savages. "The Indians! The Indians!" was echoed from every mouth. Whip and spurs were given to the horses — we went like lightning — the men yelling like so many fiends, in order to frighten the savages. The novelty of the scene kept us from being afraid. We traveled in this manner until 4:00 o'clock a.m.

Ascension Thursday, May 26, 1870

When having passed, unharmed, through the most dangerous portion of our route, we returned fervent, heartfelt thanks to our good God, for our preservation. After refreshing ourselves with a cup of coffee, we continued until within fifteen miles of Tucson, when we stopped for a short rest.

The citizens desired us to remain there all night, as they wished us to enter Tucson in daylight, where a grand reception was in preparation. After considerable reasoning, they became very enthusiastic over the matter, but Father finally succeeded in obtaining their consent for us to enter that night. Four men went in advance, with the joyful tidings of our arrival. We were expected about 6:00 o'clock p.m. and were afterwards informed that the ladies and children had stationed themselves on the housetops, being too modest to mix in the crowd with men.

At about three miles from the town we were met by the procession which was headed by four priests on horseback; but as we came in sight, they dismounted, and ran rather than walked to meet us; the crowd, in the meantime, discharging firearms.

Before we reached the city, their number had increased to about three thousand; some discharging firearms, others bearing lighted torches; all walking in order, and heads uncovered. The city was illuminated — fireworks in full play. Balls of combustible matter were thrown in the streets through which we passed; at each explosion Sister Euphrasia made the sign of the Cross.

All the bells in the city were pealing forth their merriest strains. On reaching the convent we found our good Bishop in company of several ladies and gentlemen, awaiting our arrival.

We feel truly grateful to these good people for their kind reception, as it is a convincing testimony of their reverence of our holy faith. The Bishop conducted us to our dormitory; one of the priests brought us some water and, after arranging our toilet, the ladies ushered us into the refectory where a nice supper was prepared for us.

Return Prayerful Thanks

When we had finished our repast, they departed, leaving us in quiet possession of our new home: "St. Joseph's Convent, Tucson, Arizona." Our first act was to return thanks to our



May 26, 1870 the First Seven Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet entered Picacho Pass here shortly after midnight, eighteen hours from Tucson, Arizona.
—Western Ways Photo

merciful Lord, to our dear Mother, Mary, and likewise to our glorious Patriarch, St. Joseph, for preserving us from the many and great dangers to which we were exposed for the love of Jesus and the salvation of souls.

Now, that we are settled in our new home, we trust our good Sisters will continue to pray for us, recommending the success of

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our missions, our schools and our own spiritual welfare, to our dear Lord, to the end that we may labor earnestly to promote His greater glory, and have this, alone, in view, in all our undertakings.

Dear Rev. Mother and Sisters in Christ.
Sister Monica of the Sacred Heart



