

## Interesting Intelligence from Walker's Pass.

"Interesting Intelligence from Walker's Pass." Placerville Herald August 27, 1853: p. 1, col. 3.

Mr. HARRY EDWARDS, acting Indian Agent in the absence of Lieut. Beale, reached this city yesterday morning, six days from Walker's Pass. He left the neighborhood of the Pass on the 1st of August, at which time Lieut. Beale and his party had not arrived, and traveled post hast to Stockton. We gather from him the following interesting particulars concerning the various passes through the mountains, about which so much interest is at present felt, and the character of the country below the Four creeks and the Tulare lakes, heretofore little known.

Mr. Edwards left Fort Miller, on the Upper San Joaquin, on the 15th of June, and pushed rapidly down south in the expectation of meeting Superintendent Beale, about the 1st of July, at Walker's Pass. On his arrival there, he found no traces of the travelers, and spent several days in examining the surrounding country. The Pass is a gap in the Sierra Nevada, leading from the Tulare valley to the desert beyond, known as the Great Basin. It is about ten miles through from plain to plain, and so gently sloping that one is scarcely conscious of the rise. After getting through the main chain, a hill of some size presents itself, but there is no difficulty in making an easy wagon road through— in fact there is no steeper ascent to be overcome than upon the high road from Stockton to Mariposa. The hills on either side are low, but they gradually rise until they merge into the snow capped summits of the Sierra Nevada. The traveler in his journey through, proceeds up the banks of Kern river, which heads near the pass, until he comes to the rise. Following this upon a gentle ascent for about ten miles, he comes out upon the eastern side of the Sierra, in full view of the boundless desert that stretches far away to the east towards the Mohave and the Colorado. The level of the desert is considerably higher than that of the Tulare valley, on the western side of the Sierra,—the descent, therefore, from the Pass is much less than the rise from this side. The desert is an unbroken sandy plain, extending as far as the eye can reach without sign of vegetation, save here and there tall columns or convoluted masses of the cactus. From the summit of the Pass, far to the southeast, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, may be seen

tance of one hundred and fifty miles, may be seen the Black mountain, which the famous mountaineer, Godey, informed Mr. Edwards marked the line of the Mohave. Godey had once attempted to cross the desert from the Pass to the river, but not a blade of grass nor a drop of water could be found on the route, and he was compelled to turn back and strike for the eastern slope of the mountain again, to save himself from perishing. No spurs shoot out from the Sierra into the desert, although to the southeast, far out upon the plain, may be seen isolated Buttes, and occasionally a short mountain, called by the travelers the Lost Mountain. From the commanding point at the Pass, the eye could discover no sign of water or timber, north, east or south. In the Pass itself is to be found the best granite, and upon the hills on each side, the finest pine and oak for building, in case the Pacific Railroad should ever come through this point. There is plenty of good water and grass within a mile of the Pass. Mr. Edwards has reason to believe there are three or four other good passes in the Sierra between Walker's and the Tejon. One of the wild Indians living in the vicinity, informed him there was one, much better than Walker's, up the bed of a small stream a few miles south of Kern's river, which could be passed without any trouble whatever. It was lower, and besides avoided the hills which exists at the further side of Walker's.—Godey, whom Mr. Edwards left behind to await the arrival of Beale, intended to explore it.

After visiting the Pass, Mr. Edwards returned to Kern's river on the 6th of July. Here he took Alexander Godey, the celebrated mountaineer, who had accompanied Fremont in many of his expeditions, and went back into the mountains high up on Kern's river. He returned again to Loso creek, a stream about six miles north of Kern's river, where he camped two or three days. Here he met Capt. Aubrey, with his party of twenty men, and about thirty splendid mules in fine condition. Aubrey camped for eight hours to interrogate Godey about the route which he intended to pursue. Mr. Edwards, with a party of Indians, assisted him across Kern's river, which was high and rapid. His supplies were carried over in a tule boat made by Godey. At this point he bade his friends good bye and struck down through the Tejon Pass, which leads from the Tulare valley into Los Angeles. It was his intention to travel down a short distance south of the Tejon, and then strike across the Sierra, due east to the Colorado and the Rio Grande. A few

his intention to travel down a short distance south of the Tejon, and then strike across the Sierra, due east to the Colorado and the Rio Grande. A few days after Aubrey departed, Mr. Edwards went down to the Tejon. The Indians there were giving a grand feast, and Mr. Edwards induced them to go into the mountains and invite the wild Diggers residing near Walker's Pass, to come in. The Diggers came in cautiously. They appeared as wild as deer, and ran like antelopes when they first saw Edwards and Godéy. Even at the feast they wore a startled expression, and at the least motion would jump like rabbits. Edwards engaged them to keep a sharp lookout for Beale, and to keep a large fire constantly burning on the summit of the mountain near Walker's Pass, to guide him. The Indians at the Tejon Pass are about three hundred in number, and among them are many Mission Indians.— They are the most civilized in the country, supporting themselves by regular farming, in which they are largely engaged. They inhabit a beautiful country, about twelve miles long by four wide, just in the lower corner of the Tulare Valley, where the coast range meets the Sierra Nevada. Their country is watered by clear and sparkling streams, running out of the mountains in every direction, and so located that every foot of their land can be irrigated without any trouble. They turn these streams at will from one patch to another. When Mr. Edwards saw them, they had splendid crops of wheat, barley, Indian corn, watermelons, etc.— They are peaceable and live well. One of them, in fact, has a large adobe house. After staying among them eight or ten days, and interesting them in keeping a lookout for Beale, Mr. Edwards returned back to Poso creek. He met the U. S. surveying party, under Capt. Stoneman and Lieut. Williamson, at the Four creeks, on their way to explore the passes and the desert.

The wild Indian in the mountains about Walker's Pass, live like the rest of their race, on acorns and grass. Mr. Edwards, during his travels, got out of provisions, and was obliged to subsist for several days on their food. He says grass seed steeped in water makes a refreshing drink.— As a great delicacy they cooked him a dish of elder berries and acorns. He learned from them, that the Indians who have for years been in the habit of stealing horses in Los Angeles and Tulare valley, reside on the east side of the Sierra Nevada, near Walker's lake. They are represented as great robbers, and make up horse stealing parties at stated intervals, come down through Walker's pass, carry off droves of animals from the ranches, and hurry back to the other side of the mountains. They are said to have great numbers of horses in their possession.—  
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