

DIARY OF THOMAS SAUNDERS

[SEPTEMBER 1888]

Left Río Negro on Sept. 19th, 1888. Came to Laguna Liffapon -- about two leagues and very thick with monte. Could scarcely get the horses through.

Started again on the 20th. Came to Laguna Comenna, but found it dry and had to come on to Laguna Bandaro. Also very thick with monte.

Stopped all day on the 21st waiting on the sheep.

Went out to the camp to get beef and got it started again on the 22nd and got to the Laguna Cuero Caballo. Lost some mares and 4 horses that night.

Had to acampar all day on the 23rd and got lost, but found myself again, but not the lost animals:

so had to stop all day on the 24th and found the lost animals.

Started again on the 25th and came on to [... blank ...]. Passed 4 lagunas on the track; fine open camp; a distance of 6 leagues.

Stopped all day on the 26th for wet weather; splendid grass, but the petizo got off the sogá and Barnes' bitch Speedy got fucked.

27th: Started again for Laguna del Chancho. Passed 6 lagunas and came to the Chancho.

Stopped all day on the 28th.

Lost all the horses and beat about [on the] 29th.

Searched all day on the 30th and found them.

[OCTOBER 1888]

Started again on the 1st Oct. and came to the Laguna Huevo Frito.

Stopped all day on the 2nd and 3rd trying to catch beef, but only got one hare.

Had to stop all day on the 4th; wet all day.

Started again on the 5th and came to the last laguna. Stopped there one night.

Started again on the 6th for Valcheta, but could not reach it. Had to stop where there was no water, but it rained at night.

Had to stop all day on the 7th. Lost one tropilla of horses but found them again.

Started again on the 8th, and came on past Valcheta about one league. Could not get any stores at Valcheta.

Started again on the 9th, and came to Pajalta; and did not find very many stores there either, but got a little.

Stopped there on the 10th and 11th. Hamilton and McLean went to Valcheta; came back on the 12th.

The Sergeant came to inspect the horses on the 13th, and found one without the mark that should have been in the guía.

Stopped all day on the 15th but the sheep started with the horses.

On the 16th arrived at Carrizal [?]. Left and came to a large stream of water, but dry in the summer.

Stopped there all day on the 17th.

Started again on 18th and came to Corral Chico: very bad road with stones, but a very good camping place.

Stopped there all day on the 19th. Went out hunting and got one guanaco and one hare and 8 ostrich eggs.

Stopped there all day on the 20th to rest our animals.

21st: Started again and came to the small stream: very bad track, with stones. Stopped only one night.

22nd: Started and came to three big arroyos and stopped one night.

23rd: Started again and came to the Arroyo Ventana.

Stopped all day on the 24th and 25th and 26th and 27th.

[illegible]

Left again on the 28th and came to Arroyo Verde.

Stopped there all day on the 29th and 30th.

Started again on the 31st and came to the Sierra Colorada, and stopped there.

[NOVEMBER 1888]

Nov. 1st and 2nd: Went and got beef;

3rd dried the beef.

4th: Left and came to the last laguna, but not always to be depended upon for water, but passed a near spring. Our vacuno did not knapo [?] it, but the guide with the sheep stopped at it.

Started from the lagoon on the 5th and came to Pichalao to a nice spring of water, and camped there. One animal tired and had to be left, but went back and

got it to the rest of the troop.

Stopped there on the 6th to rest the animals.

Started again on the 7th, but had not gone far when the same animal gave in again: so we had to kill it. We arrived at Chathico the same night, a distance of 6 leagues, and found water, but not very good. Found better water in a small spring a little further down the stream.

Stopped there all the 8th to rest animals.

Started again on the 9th and came to Paso Baguales, but did not find much water, but found more about 500 yards further on. Went on about 2 leagues and had a look for water and found some on the edge of the travesía, but very little grass.

10th: Stopped all day at the zanjón. Went out hunting and got one ostrich and 20 eggs, all bad but one.

11th: Went on ahead to look for water. Found another zanjón close to Dos Pozos.

12th: Came on with the animals to the zanjón.

Stopped there all day on the 13th. Lost one tropilla of manchados.

14th Came to Dos Pozos. Only stopped there one night, as there is not much feed for horses.

Started on the travesía on the 15th. Travelled all that day and rounded the horses at night.

Got to the River Chubut early on the 16th. Found a good place for the animals. Heard that same day that McRae and Hope had left Río Chico just a day or two before we arrived at Chubut.

All day on the 17th doing nothing but looking after the animals. William Hope came to our tent the same night. Sheep still at Río Chico. Had a letter from McRae to get some mares that were lost.

18th: Hope left for Río Chico to start the sheep. Went with him to the pozo, then came back to look after the horses.

[JANUARY 1889]

From Chubut South

Left Chubut on Jan. 6th. Came to the campamento.

Stopped there one day to get some mares and one horse belonging to Hope.

Left the campamento on the 8th. Came across the travesía to the tan [?] hills. Passed the pozos: not much water.

Landed at the Río Chico on the morning of the 9th: 6 leagues.

10th,11th:

Travelled across a point of the Río Chico on the 12th and 13th, 14th, 15th.

Started again on the 16th to cross another point: 4 leagues. Track running along the foot of the ridge.

17th: Travelled up the riverside, and crossed a point about 8 leagues to Sauce Solo.

Rested there on the 18th, 19th, 20th.

Started again on the 21st and came up the riverside about 7 leagues. Passed the Frenchman on the track.

Stopped there 22nd, 23rd.

Started again on the 24th and travelled about 3 leagues.

McLean being [sick, we] had to stop for him [the] 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th.

29th: McLean better. Travelled again and passed the Frenchman and camped about 1 league further up the river.

30th: Started in front of the Frenchman and [kept] it up until we camped at midday; then he passed us about half a mile and camped.

31st: Started behind the Frenchman and passed him after travelling about 2 leagues; and kept in front of him until we camped at midday. Then he passed us and camped on the other side of the laguna.

[FEBRUARY 1889]

We rested there and [were] nearly eaten up with sand flies on 1st February.

February 2 1889: Started again and passed the Frenchman and [went] about 1½ leagues further up.

3rd: Started again and went to the cut-off for Port Desire. Camped alongside the zanjón. The Frenchman was camped on the other side; very good place to camp for a day or two.

4th: Rested. Went to the Lago Colhué Huapi; about 3 leagues.

5th: Doing nothing but looking after the horses, [and] for water ahead.

6th: Went out with the Frenchman to help him to get beef, and got it.

7th: Doing nothing but looking after the horses.

Feb. 8th: Started from the Río Chico and came about 9 leagues to a spring of water in the valley. Entrance to the valley [has] white cliffs on the one side and 2 hills on the other.

9th: Stopped at the spring and went hunting, but found nothing.

10th: Started again and came along the level ground for about 8 leagues and found plenty of water all along the valley underneath. Stopped at a place called Tres Arroyos. A cut in the ridge on the one side and 4 hills with flat tops on the other.

11th: Stopped there one day.

Feby. 12th: Started from the Tres Arroyos and followed the level camp until we came to the point of the ridge. Then we entered a deep valley. Followed the valley until it branched in two, then made straight for a sharp point on the ridge, and found a large laguna underneath and camped there: distance 9 leagues.

13th: Left the laguna for the Deseado. Made a short-cut and reached the river in a short t[ime], making straight for a sharp point of hills on the other side of the river: distance 6 leagues.

Feby 14th: Resting the animals. Jamieson and I went away to look for a pass, but did not find one. Caught some ducks and came back to the encampment.

15th: Went out to get beef and got it and came home again.

16th: Went away to look for a pass but did not find one; but found where McRae and Hope came to the river, but went down. We caught some ducks and came home again.

17th: Mending clothes and mending gear and eating plenty to make up for the mixed foray.

18th: Went out hunting and got one ostrich and 2 hares.

Feby. 19th: Started again to go down the river to the pass: about 3 leagues.

20th: Going to make a bridge, but long [?] of making a start. McLean went to see where the Frenchman had passed and did not come back for a long time and kept us waiting. McLean came back and we started to make a bridge and passed the sheep that night.

21st: Started and passed the horses and went about 2 leagues and camped.

22nd: Started again and came down the river about 6 leagues.

23rd: Stopped for the sheep to come up. Went and looked for the track. Sheep passed us about midday.

24th. Feby: Started again and came in about 5 leagues and stopped with the sheep that night.

25th: Found 3 sheep killed with lions this morning but did not see the lion. Started the march again and made about 4 leagues and stopped with the sheep that night.

26th: Rested all day.

27th: Started again and came about 5 leagues and stopped, as the guide is a thick-head and cannot remember where the cut-off is: has to go and look for tracks.

28th: Started again to go to the first water, but the guide lost himself and could not find the horses again, but the men with the horses did not lose the water.

[MARCH 1889]

1st Mar: Came to the first water and camped.

2nd: Came on to a spring, Cañón Verde, 9 leagues from the Río Deseado, and camped: very good place to camp for a day or two.

3rd: Still in Cañón Verde. Went out hunting and caught one guanaco. Hamilton sick; guide not come back.

4th: Could not start as the guide has not come back yet. Came back in the forenoon, but too late for a start.

5th: Started and came about 4 leagues and camped for the night; track running through the valley and up on to the hard camp; two or three little hills on the left hand and two lagunas in sight on the other. Passed on over a piece of flat camp, and up a hill with a spring at the foot, and over the hill. Came in sight of a laguna on the right-hand. Passed the end of the laguna and entered a valley and camped for the night: not a very good place to camp.

6th: Start again and come on following the valley up and over the hill, and go straight through the flat camp to a gap in the ridge, and camp for the night; the place is called lean gap. [?]

7th: Started again to cross the travesía. Supposed to do it in one day. but took 2 days. Camped one night in a valley about half-way, but the water is not to be depended upon.

Stopped there on the 8th.

Started again on the 9th and came to the Tres Arroyos to a spring and camped.

Stopped there on the 10th: doing nothing but eating.

11th: Started again from Tres Arroyos. Came on to the high ground and then got the arroyos right in and our back. Travelling until we came in sight of a range of hills and cut straight for the point and came to the 2 springs: very good place to camp for a day or two.

Stopped there on the 12th: rain most of the day.

Started again on the 13th and came about 3 leagues. Cut straight across the valley, leaving the laguna on our right hand, and entered another valley and camped for the night.

Started again on the 14th and came along the high camp, making straight for the center [?] hill, then held down a little to the left hand and found a very good place to camp for a night. Guide lost himself again, but found us further on.

15th: Started again but the guide does not know in what direction the track is, so we had to go around a good long way to get past the stones. Got past and found a small spring and some pasture and stopped there. The guide does not know where he is yet: he is fairly at sea and lost.

16th: I had to go on and leave the rest camped at the small spring. Went ahead about 15 leagues and found plenty of water and grass all along.

17th: Returned in the afternoon and found the rest ready to march, so we started and came about 4 leagues to a place called Guanaco Gordo: very good place to camp for any length of time.

Stopped there all day on the 18th.

[19th:] Started again and came on about 6 leagues to a spring, called Bagual Spring, and camped: very good place to camp for any length of time.

Started on the 20th to look for San Julián: did not find it that day, but camped in the bajo.

21st: Foggy, but cleared up about 10 o'clock. Then I started again and saw a fire to the northward. Followed the smoke and found a naturalist party going north. Stopped with them all night, and

started again on the 22nd. Found San Julián. Came on to rain and fog: had to stop there that night and

all the day of the 23rd for bad weather.

Started again to find the troop on the 24th, but it came on fog again and I got lost, so I had to camp for the rest of the day and night.

25th: Travelled all day to the place where I left the troop and found that they had started, so I had to camp there that night.

26th: Started again and came up with the troop about 6 leagues from San Julián. Just in the place where I was going to stop them - finished.

For John Rudd
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