"From Kansas to Oklahoma" Diary of E. W. Osburn

Monday, April 22, 1889
"Camp Gertrude. All hands anxious and ready for the move. Boomer wagons are clicking all around. Trains of six to twenty wagons are moving west just south of us. Some wagons are camped south, some are moving back north. Beautiful morning. The men are now making a crossing at the little stream, ready for the move in case we are not ordered back. We all expect a race. Left out camp for the drive at 11:50 A.M. Such a pel mel race. We reached the main trail ahead of the main rank. Signal had been given by firing of guns along the line. When we had reached the top of the ridge, standing on the top of Mr. Boon’s wagon I saw probably 2,000 wagons - trains five to eight miles in length, hundreds of horsemen in a dead run. Carts, buggies, light wagons. Everything at break neck speed. Drove some eighteen miles in one hour and fifty minutes. One buggy and a few horsemen passed up [sic] - when we reached Ephraim, corralled the horses and the crowd broke for the Cimarron bottoms. Four secured claims. I stayed with the wagons. In less than one hour seventy-one (railroad) cars crowded passed from the north. On the platforms, coal tender, on top of cars. Men jumped from the train and said “my claim.” Although first from the line we found the best claims taken. Cowboys, etc., were hid and came up like boys from a spring board. Some dared [sic] they made the trip in 15 or 20 minutes. One man was found on a claim who had a wagon, cow and calf, colt etc. ready to plant corn who stated that he made the trip in 20 minutes from the line - 18 miles. The racing continued all day - the air was fogged with dirt. Started back to Camp Gertrude at sundown but did not get in until one the next morning having lost our way on the prairie. The country traversed is mostly high or broken ground. There is much firm, rich land. Splendid scenery."

Saturday, April 27, 1889
"Took fair start just before noon. One wheel of our cart broke smake in twain [sic]. Then we tried to get wire off the passers by but failed. One man had six cows leading - one to each horse - one on each side of the wagon - 2? We finally walked up to the wire fence [sic]. Oklahoma and Cherokee line - got some wire - patched up and on we came. One of us had to walk. Camped on Skelton (River). This all a barren waste, sure. Passed one old ranch which had been standing 25 or 30 years - built of longs two rows deep standing on end."

Sunday, April 28, 1889
"Our camp is a bad one, cold and little grass. Concluded to move on to Pond Creek. I walked most of the way - twenty-one miles. At the Salt Fork we saw one of the hardest crowds - two wagons, one had hitched to it five cows, two bulls, one steer, big hay racks for beds and loaded with all sorts of plunder. Camped a little after noon on Pond Creek. Fine place."

Monday, April 29, 1889
“Pond Creek. Last night had heavy wind and rain storm. Had to get up in the night and dress. Started for Caldwell, Kansas. Commenced raining soon after starting, walked most of the way. Got drenching wet and cold, put up at a livery stable. Slept in the hay mow. Went to the Rock Island lumber yard. Poured the water out of our boots, dried our clothes. Had the cart wheel welded. Heavy storm - rain, wind. 26 miles from Pond Creek to Caldwell.”

Tuesday, April 30, 1889
“Went directly north from Caldwell until we reached the Chikaskia. Then west to Milan. The north to Ninnescah, where we had to go five miles east to cross the river. Camped 7½ miles from crossing of Ninnescah.”

Wednesday, May 1, 1889
“Made trip of fifty some miles and reached home 10:30 P.M.”

Source: Oklahoma Historical Society.