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Thurs. 9th Mrs Murphy here this
morning pikes child all but dead
mitt at Murphys not able to get out
of bed Keyburg never gets up says
he is not able John went down to
day to bury Mrs Liddy & child heard
nothing from Graves for 2 or 3 days
Mrs Murphy just now going to
Graves fine morning wind S.E. fog
hard last night begins to thaw in
the Sun (beautiful morning
Wedn. 10th) Wind W. froze hard last
night, to day thawing in
the Sun Mitt Elliot died last night
at Murphys Shanty about 9 o'clock
P.M. Mr Reid went there this morning
to see after his effects, of Denton trying
to borrow meat for Graves had none
to give they have nothing but hides
all are entirely out of meat but a
little we have out ^{hides} we nearly all
eat up but with Gods help spring
will soon smile upon us.) W.
Thurs. 11th fine morning wind W.
froze hard last night some
clouds lying in the C. looks like thaw
John Denton here last night very
delicate John & Mrs Reid went to Graves
this morning

PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF PATRICK BREEN.

From the Manuscript in the Bancroft Collection.

Size of the original, 3 3/4 x 6 in.

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DIARY OF PATRICK BREEN
ONE OF THE DONNER PARTY

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The diary here printed came into the possession of the University of California in 1905 with the Bancroft Collection. It had been given to Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft, in 1871, by Dr. George McKinstry of San Diego, who made the following statement in regard to it:

The annexed Diary was kept by Patrick Breen, who with his family viz., Patrick Breen, Margret Breen, John Breen, Edward Breen, Patrick Breen, jr., Simon Breen, James Breen, Peter Breen, Isabella Breen,—were a part of what is called the “Donner Party” that was detained by snows on the Sierra Nevada the winter of 1846-47, an account of their sufferings was published by me in the “California Star,” May 22nd, 1847.

I am told Mr. Breen and family are at San Juan, Monterey County, Cala., Mr. Breen gave me his Diary, on his arrival at Capt. J. A. Sutter’s Fort, New Helvetia, Cala., for the purpose of making out my reports to Capt. Hall, U.S.N. Sloop of War “Warren,” Commander No[r]thern Disct. California 1847.

July, 1871.

GEO. MCKINSTRY,
San Diego, Cala.

George McKinstry, Jr., was sheriff of the Northern, or Sacramento district of California in 1847 and was actively interested in sending relief to the Donner party.

The author of the diary, Patrick Breen, was born in Ireland and came to the United States in 1828. With his wife and seven children he started on the overland trip from Keokuk, Iowa, on April 5, 1846. The entire family lived to reach the California settlements.

The diary was written upon eight small sheets of letter paper roughly trimmed and folded to make a book of thirty-two pages, $3\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 inches, of which twenty-nine pages were used and three remain blank. It was bound up with a title-page supplied by Mr. Bancroft.

In publishing the diary the editors of the *California Star* stated that “owing to its length” they had “omitted several

paragraphs of minor importance"; in addition to these omissions there are many variations from the original text in the printed form. The diary as published in the *California Star* has been frequently reprinted, notably in Edwin Bryant's *What I saw in California*, New York, 1848, and C. F. McGlashan's *History of the Donner Party*, Truckee, 1879. It is, consequently, for the first time that the complete diary, exactly as written, is now published.

F. J. T.

DIARY OF PATRICK BREEN.

Friday Nov. 20th 1846 Came to this place on the 31st of 1846
last month that it snowed we went on to the pass the snow so ^{Nov.}
deep we were unable to find the road, when within 3 miles of
the summit then turned back to this shanty on the Lake,
Stanton came one day after we arrived here we again took
our teams & waggons & made another unsuccessful attempt to
cross in company with Stanton we returned to the shanty it
continueing to snow all the time we were here we now have
killed most part of our cattle having to stay here untill next
spring & live on poor beef without bread or salt [2] it snowed
during the space of eight days with little intermission, after our
arrival here, the remainder of time up to this day was clear &
pleasant frezeing at night the snow nearly gone from the valleys.

Sat. 21st Fine morning wind N:W 22 of our com-
pany are about starting across the mountain this moring in-
cluding Stanton & his indians, some clouds flying thawed
to day wnd E.

Sunday 22nd Froze hard last night this a fine clear
morning, wind E.S.E no account from those on the
mountains.

Monday 23rd Same weather wind W the expe-
dition across the mountains returned after an unsuccesful at-
tempt. [3]

Tuesday 24th Fine in the morning towards eveng cloudy
& windy wind W looks like snow freezeing hard.

Wendsday 25th Wind about W N W Cloudy looks
like the eve of a snow storm our mountainers intend trying
to cross the mountain tomorrow if fair froze hard last night.

Thurssday the 26th Began to snow yesterday in the even-
ing now rains or sleet the mountaniers dont start to day
the wind about W. wet & muddy.

Friday 27 Continues to snow, the ground not covered,
wind W dull prospect for crossing the mountains.

1846 Saturday 28th Snowing fast now about 10 o'clock snow
 Nov. 8 or 10 inches deep soft wet snow, weather not cold
 wind W.

Sunday 29th Still snowing now about 3 feet deep, wind
 W killed my last oxen to day will skin them tomorrow
 gave another yoke to Fosters hard to get wood. [4]

Monday 30th Snowing fast wind W about 4 or 5
 feet deep, no drifts looks as likely to continue as when it
 commenced no living thing without wings can get about.

Dec. December 1st Tuesday Still snowing wind W snow
 about 5½ feet or 6 deep difficult to get wood no going from
 the house completely housed up looks as likely for snow as
 when it commenced, our cattle all killed but three or four them,
 the horses & Stantons mules gone & cattle suppose lost in the
 snow no hopes of finding them alive.

Wedns. 2nd. Continues to snow wind W sun shine-
 ing hazily thro the clouds dont snow quite as fast as it has
 done snow must be over six feet deep bad fire this morn-
 ing. [5]

Thursd. 3rd Snowed a little last night bright and
 cloudy at intervals all night, to day cloudy snows none
 wind S.W. warm but not enough so to thaw snow lying deep
 allround expecing it to thaw a little to day the forgoing
 written in the morning it immediately turned in to snow &
 continued to snow all day & likely to do so all night.

Friday 4th Cloudy that is flying clouds neither snow
 or rain this day it is a relief to have one fine day, wind
 E by N no sign of thaw freezing pretty hard snow
 deep.

Saturday 5th Fine clear day beautiful sunshine
 thawing a little looks delightful after the long snow storm.

Sund. 6th The morning fine & clear now some cloudy
 wind S-E not much in the sunshine, Stanton & Graves
 manufactureing snow shoes for another mountain scabble no
 account of mules. [6]

Mond. 7th Beautiful clear day wind E by S looks
 as if we might some fair weather no thaw.

Tues 8th Fine weather Clear & pleasant froze hard

last night wind S.E deep snow the people not stirring 1846
 round much hard work to wood sufficient to keep us warm Dec.
 & cook our beef.

Wedns. 9th Commenced snowing about 11 o'clock wind
 N:W snows fast took in Spitzer yesterday so weak that
 he cannot rise without help caused by starvation all in good
 health some having scant supply of beef Stanton trying to
 make a raise of some for his Indians & self not likely to get
 much. [7]

Thursd. 10th Snowed fast all night with heavy squalls of
 wind Continues still to snow the sun peeping through the
 clouds once in about three hours very difficult to get wood
 to day now about 2 o'clock looks likely to continue snowing
 dont know the debth of the snow may be 7 feet.

Friday 11th Snowing a little wind W sun vissible
 at times not freezeing.

Satd. 12th Continues to snow wind W weather mild
 freezeind little.

Sunday 13th Snows faster than any previous day wind
 N:W Stanton & Graves with several others makeing prep-
 erations to cross the mountains on snow shoes, snow 8 feet
 deep on the level dull.

Monday 14 Fine morning sunshine cleared off last
 night about 12 o'clock wind E:S:E dont thaw much but
 fair for a continueance of fair weather. [8]

Tuesday 15th Still continues fine wind W: S:W.

Wed'd 16th Fair & pleasant froeze hard last night
 so the company started on snow shoes to cross the mountains
 wind S.E looks pleasant.

Thursd. 17th Pleasant sunshine to day wind about
 S.E Bill Murp returned from the mountain party last even-
 ing Bealis died night before last Milt. & Noah went to
 Donnos 8 days since not returned yet, thinks they got lost in
 the snow. J Denton here to day.

Frid'd. 18 Beautiful day sky clear it would be
 delightful were it not for the snow lying so deep thaws but
 little on the south side of shanty saw no strangers to day
 from any of the shantys. [9]

1846 Satd. 19 Snowd. last night commenced about 11 o clock.
 Dec. Squalls of wind with snow at intervals this morning thawing
 wind. N by W a little singular for a thaw may continue,
 it continues to snow sun shining cleared off towards evening.

Sund. 20 Night clear froze a little now clear &
 pleasant wind N W thawing a little Mrs Reid here,
 no account of Milt. yet Dutch Charley started for Donoghs
 turned back not able to proceed tough times, but not discour-
 aged our hopes are in God. Amen.

Mond. 21 Milt. got back last night from Donos camp sad
 news. Jake Donno Sam Shoemaker Rinehart, & Smith are dead
 the rest of them in a low situation Snowed all night with a
 strong S-W wind to day cloudy wind continues but not
 snowing, thawing sun shineing dimly in hopes it will
 clear off. [10]

Tuesd. 22nd Snowd. all last night Continued to snow
 all day with some few intermissions had a severe fit of
 the gravel yesterday I am well to day, Praise be to the God of
 Heaven.

Wend. 23rd Snowd. a little last night clear to day &
 thawing a little. Milt took some of his meat to day all
 well at their camp began this day to read the Thirty days
 prayer, may Almighty God grant the request of an unworthy
 sinner that I am. Amen.

Thursd. 24th Rained all night & still continues to rain
 poor prospect for any kind of comfort spiritual or temporal,
 wind S: may God help us to spend the Christmass as we ought
 considering circumstances. [11]

Friday 25th Began to snow yesterday about 12 o clock
 snowd. all night & snows yet rapidly wind about E by N
 Great difficulty in geting wood John & Edwd. has to get I
 am not able offerd. our prayers to God this Cherimass morn-
 ing the prospect is apalling but hope in God Amen.

Satd. 26th Cleared off in the night to day clear &
 pleasant Snowd. about 20 inches or two feet deep yesterday,
 the old snow was nearly run soft before it began to snow now
 it is all soft the top dry & the under wet wind S. E.

Sund. 27th Continues clear froze hard last night

Snow very deep say 9 feet thawing a little in the sun 1846
 scarce of wood to day chopt. a tree dow it sinks in the snow & ^{Dec.}
 is hard to be got. [12]

Monday 28th Snowd. last night cleared off this morn-
 ing snowd. a little now clear & pleasant.

Tuesday 29th Fine clear day froze hard last night.
 Charley sick. Keysburg has Wolfings Rifle gun.

Wedsd. 30th Fine clear morning froze hard last night
 Charley died last night about 10 o clock had with him in
 money \$1.50 two good loking silver watches one razor 3 boxes
 caps Keysburg tok them into his possession Spitzer took
 his coat & waistcoat Keysburg all his other little effects gold
 pin one shirt and tools for shaveing. [13]

Thursday 31st Last of the year, may we with Gods help
 spend the comeing year better than the past which we purpose
 to do if Almighty God will deliver us from our present dredful
 situation which is our prayer if the will of God sees it fiting
 for us Amen. morning fair now cloudy wind E by S
 for three days past freezeing hard every night looks like
 another snow storm Snow Storms are dredful to us snow
 very deep crust on the [under?]. [14]

Jany. 1st 1847 We pray the God of mercy to deliver us 1847
 from our present calamity if it be his Holy will Amen. Com- ^{Jan.}
 menced. snowing last night does not snow fast wind S:E
 sun peeps out at times provisions geting scant dug up a hide
 from under the snow yesterday for Milt. did not take it yet.

Sat. 2nd Fair & thawey snow got soft wind S-E
 looks thawey froze pretty hard last night.

Sund. 3rd Continues fair in day time freezeing at
 night wind about E Mrs. Reid talks of crossing the moun-
 tains with her children provisions scarce. [15]

Mond. 4th Fine morning looks like spring thawing
 now about 12 o clock wind S:E Mrs. Reid Milt. Virginia
 & Eliza started about 1/2 hour ago with prospect of crossing the
 mountain may God of Mercy help them left ther children
 here Tom's with us Pat with Keysburg & Jas with Graveses's
 folks, it was difficult for Mrs Reid to get away from the children.

Tuesd. 5th Beautiful day thawing some in the sun

1847 wind S-E snow not settleing much we are in hopes of
 the rainy time ending.

Jan.

Weds. 6th Fine day clear not a cloud froze very hard
 last night wind S:E Eliza came back from the mountain
 yesterday evening not able to proceed, to day went to Graves,
 the others kept ahead.

Thursd. 7th Continues fine freezeing hard at night
 very cold this morning wind S.S.E dont think we will
 have much more snow snow not thawing much not much
 dimeinished in debph. [16]

Friday 8th Fine morning wind E froze hard last
 night very cold this morning Mrs. Reid & company came
 back this moring could not find their way on the other side of
 the mountain they have nothing but hides to live on
 Martha is to stay here Milt. & Eliza going to Donos Mrs.
 Reid & the 2 boys going to their own shanty & Virginia pros-
 pects dull may God relieve us all from this difficulty if it
 is his Holy will Amen.

Satd 9th Continues fine freezeing hard at night this
 a beatiful morning wind about S.S.E Mrs. Reid here
 Virginias toes frozen a little snow settleing none to be
 perceivd.

Sund. 10 Began to snow last night still continues wind
 W N W. [17]

Mond. 11th Still continues to snow fast, looks gloomy
 Mrs Reid at Keysburgs Virg. with us wood scarce difficult
 to get any more wind W.

Tuesd 12th Snows fast yet new snow about 3 feet
 deep wind S:W no sign of clearing off.

Wens. 13th Snowing fast wind N.W snow higher
 than the shanty must be 13 feet deep dont know how to get
 wood this morning it is dredful to look at.

Thursd. 14th New moon Cleard. off yesterday evening
 snowd. a little during first part of night Calm but a little
 air from the North very pleasant to day sun shineing
 brilliantly renovates our spirits prais be to God, Amen.

Frid. 15th Fine clear day wind N W Mrs. Murphy
 blind Lanth. not able to get wood has but one axe betwixt

him & Keysburg, he moved to Murphys yesterday looks like another storm expecting some account from Siuters soon. [18] 1847
Jan.

Satd. 16th Wind blew hard all night from the W. abated a little did not freeze much this is clear & pleasant wind a little S of W no telling what the weather will do.

Sund. 17th Fine morning sun shineing clear wind S.S.E Eliza came here this morning, sent her back again to Graves Lanthrom crazy last night so Bill says, Keyburg sent Bill to get hides off his shanty & carry thim home this morning, provisions scarce hides are the only article we depend on, we have a little meat yet, may God send us help.

Mond. 18th Fine day clear & pleasant wind W, thawing in the sun Mrs. Murphy here to day very hard to get wood.

Tuesd. 19th Clear & pleasant thawing a little in the sun wind S.W Peggy & Edward sick last night by eating some meat that Dolan threw his tobacco on, pretty well to day (praise God for his blessings,) Lanthrom very low in danger if relief dont soon come hides are all the go, not much of any other in camp. [19]

Wed. 20th Fine morning wind N froze hard last night. Expecting some person across the mountain this week.

Thursd. 21 Fine morning wind W did not freze quite so hard last night as it has done, John Battice & Denton came this morning with Eliza she wont eat hides Mrs Reid sent her back to live or die on them. Milt. got his toes froze the Donoghs are all well.

Frid. 22nd Began to snow a little after sunrise likely to snow a good dale wind W came up very suddenly, now 10 oclock.

Satd. 23rd Blew hard & snowd. all night the most severe storm we experienced this winter wind W sun now 12 oclock peeps out.

Sund. 24th Some cloudy this morning ceased snowing yesterday about 2 oclock. Wind about S. E all in good health thanks be to God for his mercies endureth for ever, heard nothing from Murphys camp since the storm expet to hear they sufferd some. [20]

1847 Mod 25th Began to snow yesterday evening & still continues wind W.

Jan.

Tuesd 26 Cleared up yesterday to day fine & pleasant, wind S. in hopes we are done with snow storms, those that went to Suitors not yet returned provisions getting very scant people getting weak liveing on short allowance of hides.

Weds 27th Began to snow yesterday & still continues to sleet thawing a little wind W Mrs. Keyber here this morning Lewis Suitor she says died three days ago Keysburg sick & Lanthrom lying in bed the whole of his time dont have fire enough to cook their hides. Bill & Sim. Murphy sick.

Thursd. 28th Full moon cleared off last night & froze some to day fine & warm wind S.E looks some like spring weather birds chirping quite lively full moon today.

Frid 29th Fine morning began to thaw in the sun early. wind S.W froze hard last night there will be a crust soon God send Amen. [21]

Satd. 30th Fine pleasant morning wind W beginning to thaw in the sun John & Edwd. went to Graves this morning the Graves seized on Mrs Reids goods untill they would be paid also took the hides that she & family had to live on, she got two peices of hides from there & the ballance they have taken you may know from these proceedings what our fare is in camp there is nothing to be got by hunting yet perhaps there soon will. God send it Amen.

Sund. 31st. The sun dont shine out brilliant this morning froze prtty hard last night wind N.W. Lantron Murphy died last night about 1 o clock, Mrs. Reid & John went to Graves this morning to look after her goods.

Feb. Mond. February the 1st Froze very hard last night cold to day & cloudy wind N W. sun shines dimly the snow has not settled much John is unwell to day with the help of God & he will be well by night Amen. [22]

Tuesday 2nd Began to snow this morning & continued to snow untill night now clear wind during the storm S. W.

Wend. 3rd Cloudy looks like more snow not cold, froze a little last night wind S.S W. it was clear all last night sun shines out at times.

Thurd. 4th Snowd. hard all night & still continues with a strong S: W. wind untill now abated looks as if it would snow all day snowd. about 2 feet deep now. 1847
Feb.

Frid. 5th Snowd. hard all untill 12 o'clock at night wind still continud to blow hard from the S. W: to day pretty clear a few clouds only Peggy very uneasy for fear we shall all perrish with hunger we have but a little meat left & only part of 3 hides has to support Mrs. Reid she has nothing left but one hide & it is on Graves shanty Milt is livig there & likely will keep that hide Eddys child died last night. [23]

Satd. 6th It snowd. faster last night & to day than it has done this winter & still continues without an intermission wind S. W Murphys folks or Keysburgs say they cant eat hides I wish we had enough of them Mrs Eddy very weak.

Sund. 7th Ceasd. to snow last after one of the most severe storms we experienced this winter the snow fell about 4 feet deep. I had to shovel the snow off our shanty this morning it thawd so fast & thawd. during the whole storm. to day it is quite pleasant wind S. W. Milt here to day says Mrs Reid has to get a hide from Mrs. Murphy & McCutchins child died 2nd of this month.

Mond. 8th Fine clear morning wind S. W. froze hard last. Spitzer died last night about 3 o'clock to we will bury him in the snow Mrs Eddy died on the night of the 7th. [24]

Tuesd. 9th. Mrs. Murphy here this morning Pikes child all but dead Milt at Murphys not able to get out of bed Keyburg never gets up says he is not able. John went down to day to bury Mrs Eddy & child heard nothing from Graves for 2 or 3 days Mrs Murphy just now going to Graves fine moring wind S. E. froze hard last night begins to thaw in the sun.

Wednsd. 10th Beautiful morning wind W: froze hard last night, to day thawing in the sun Milt Elliot died las night at Murphys shanty about 9 o'clock P: M: Mrs Reid went there this morning to see after his effects. J Denton trying to borrow meat for Graves had none to give they

1847 have nothing but hides all are entirely out of meat but a
 little we have our hides are nearly all eat up but with Gods
 Feb. help spring will soon smile upon us.

Thursd 11th Fine morning wind W. froze hard
 last night some clouds lying in the E: looks like thaw John
 Denton here last night very delicate. John & Mrs Reid went
 to Graves this morning. [25]

Frid. 12th A warm thawey morning wind S. E. we
 hope with the assistance of Almighty God to be able to live to
 see the bare surface of the earth once more. O God of Mercy
 grant it if it be thy holy will Amen.

Sat. 13th Fine morning clouded up yesterday evening
 snowd a little & continued cloudy all night, cleared off about
 day light wind about S: W Mrs Reid has headacke the
 rest in health.

Sund 14th Fine morning but cold before the sun got up,
 now thawing in the sun wind S E Ellen Graves here
 this morning John Denton not well froze hard last night
 John & Edwd. E burried Milt. this morning in the snow.

Mond. 15. Moring cloudy untill 9 o clock then cleared off
 wam & sunshine wind W. Mrs Graves refusd. to give
 Mrs Reid any hides put Suitors pack hides on her shanty would
 not let her have them says if I say it will thaw it then will not,
 she is a case. [26]

Tuesd. 16th Commenced. to rain yesterday evening
 turned to snow during the night & continud untill after day-
 light this morning it is now sun shine & light showers of
 hail at times wind N.W by W. we all feel very weakly
 to day snow not geting much less in quantity.

Wedsd. 17th Froze hard last night with heavy clouds run-
 ing from the N. W. & light showers of hail at times to day
 same kind of weather wind N. W. very cold & cloudy
 no sign of much thaw.

Thrsd 18th Froze hard last night to day clear &
 warm in the sun cold in the shanty or in the shade wind
 S. E all in good health Thanks be to Almighty God Amen.

Frid. 19th Froze hard last night 7 men arrived from
 Colifornia yesterday evening with som provisions but left the

greater part on the way to day clear & warm for this region 1847
 some of the men are gone to day to Donnos Camp will start Feb.
 back on Monday. [27]

Saturd. 20th Pleasant weather.

Sund 21st Thawey warm day.

Mond 22nd The Californians started this morning 24 in
 number some in a very weak state fine morning wind
 S. W. for the 3 last days Mrs Keyburg started & left Keys-
 burg here unable to go I burried Pikes child this moring
 in the snow it died 2 days ago, Paddy Reid & Thos. came
 back Messrs[?] Graves & Mutry[?].

Tuesd. 23 Froze hard last night to day fine & thawey
 has the appearance of spring all but the deep snow wind
 S:S.E. shot Towser to day & dressed his flesh Mrs Graves
 came here this morning to borrow meat dog or ox they think I
 have meat to spare but I know to the contrary they have plenty
 hides I live principally on the same.

Wend. 24th Froze hard last night to day cloudy
 looks like a storm wind blows hard from the W. Com-
 menced thawing there has not any more returned from those
 who started to cross the mts. [28]

Thursd. 25th Froze hard last night fine & sunshiny
 to day wind W. Mrs Murphy says the wolves are about
 to dig up the dead bodies at her shanty, the nights are too cold
 to watch them, we hear them howl.

Frid 26th Froze hard last night today clear & warm
 Wind S: E: blowing briskly Marthas jaw swelled with the
 toothache; hungry times in camp, plenty hides but the folks
 will not eat them we eat them with a tolerable good apeteite.
 Thanks be to Almighty God. Amen Mrs Murphy said here
 yesterday that thought she would commence on Milt. & eat him.
 I dont that she has done so yet, it is distressing The Donnos
 told the California folks that they commence to eat the dead
 people 4 days ago, if they did not succeed that day or next in
 finding their cattle then under ten or twelve feet of snow &
 did not know the spot or near it, I suppose they have done so
 ere this time. [29]

Satd. 27th Beautiful morning sun shineing brilliantly,

1847 wind about S. W. the snow has fell in debth about 5 feet
 but no thaw but the sun in day time it freezeing hard every
 night, heard some geese fly over last night saw none.

Feb.

Sund. 28th Froze hard last night to day fair & sunshine
 wind S.E. 1 solitary Indian passed by yesterday come from
 the lake had a heavy pack on his back gave me 5 or 6 roots
 resembleing onions in shape taste some like a sweet potatoe, all
 full of little tough fibres.

Mar. Mond. March the 1st So fine & pleasant froze hard last
 night there has 10 men arrived this morning from Bear
 Valley with provisions we are to start in two or three days
 & cash our goods here there is amongst them some old they
 say the snow will be here untill June.



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