

JOURNAL OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN ON HIS FIRST TRIP
TO TEXAS, 1821.¹

On the 18th June 1821 started from New Orleans in the steam boat Beaver for the Province of Texas in company with Wilson late a Lieut. in U. S. army. J Beard a saddler from St. Louis, & Doctor Hewitson.

On the 20th took in — *Little* at the mouth of Red River one of my party—Arrived at Nachitoches on the 26th and found Joseph E. Seguin and Berrimandi and several other Spaniards from St. Antonio, who were waiting the arrival of my father to deliver him the confirmation of his grant from the Spanish Govt. Made an arrangement to go on with them. Purchased mules for the Trip, and other necessary articles—

On the 2d July Mr. Lovelace and par[t]y from Catahoula joined me, and on the 3d July the company all started from N. except Wilson the Spaniards and myself.

July 4, dined at Sibley; and in the evening attended a Ball.

July 5. was detained by one of the horses straying out of the way.

July 6 found the Horse that was missing and started, stayed at Capt Ivins Mo. [memorandum?] the Capt. & his man Fryday, being both drunk had a furious quarrel, and parted 11 o'clock at night—buried a dead Cat that Quin had in the chimney corner for a nosegay—(Item, *habit* even familiarises man to the smell of Carrion) Suped on half a cup miserable Coffee & 1 biscuit—Slept on the floor (a dirt floor)—

July 7 came to where the company were camped near McGuffins. & found that a mule had left them, in search of which Wilson had returned to Town[.] Spent this day in looking for the mules.

July 8 Wilson still out, Mr. John Lovelace very sick with fever—Wilson returned at night, no news of the mule—On the evening of the 8th heard of the runaway mule, & gave a Spaniard 2.50 to

¹This Journal is a part of the Austin Papers, which were bequeathed to the University of Texas by Colonel Guy M. Bryan. It has never before been published.

bring him in, which he did in a few hours & no doubt had him tied out for the purpose of getting the reward—Swapped away Wilsons Horse & an old Grey (both of whom had given out) for a mule, & exchanged a french saddle for a Spanish one—

July 9. In the morning had a race of about two miles to catch the runaway mule, who outrun us all hobbled, tied head & foot & with a long Cabrass & bell on—

Mr. John Lovelace was too sick to proceed, & left us to return home to Catahoula—accompanied by¹

About 10 o'clock the company started from McGuffins to wit—Edward Lovelace, Neel, Gasper—Bellew—Henry Holsten, from Catahoula—Wm. Wilson from District of Columbia late Leut. U. S. Army—James Beard from St. Louis—William Little from St. Louis—Doctor Hewitson————Irwin—and W. Smithers from Indian [Indiana?] and G. Bush from Nachitoches, the two last I employed as hunters for the company during the trip & agreed to furnish them with ammunition and let them come into the settlement on an equal footing with the other settlers—Bush furnished a horse for himself & Smithers Wilson mounted on the Black mule Beard on Bay horse, Little on brown mule, 3 mules for packs, I rode Little's horse—left Thomas at McGuffins—8 miles from McG. came to the first waters of Sabine—Smithers and Lovelace killed a deer, and we camped at Lanan creek 15 miles—

July 10—At day light this morning Mr. Barnum (one of my company who we left at Nachitoches) overtook us and communicated to me the sad tidings of my Fathers death— — —this melancholy news came to Nachitoches in a letter to Dr. Sibley & Barnum stated that Sibley had forwarded letters to me which would overtake me at Camp Ripley on Sabine—I started on with a heavy heart and stoped at Camp Ripley, the Company crossed the Sabine & camped in the Province of Texas—I stayed this night at Forsythes—

July 11. I found that *Bush* was a worthless fellow and discharged him—*Smithers* agreed to remain at Forsythes—engaged 2 bushels of cold flour, & 50 lbs bacon—spent the day at Forsythes settling some business relative to Richmond—

¹The names are omitted in the original.

July 12 not receiving the letters from Nachi—I determined to return after them & started back, got to Buckers—

July 13, went to Nachitoches to breakfast—and found that Dr. Sibly had forwarded the papers by Erasmo—

July 14 Started out again & overtook Don Erasmo & the other Spaniards 14 in number at the Lanan & camped with them—recd. letters from my friend Hawkins & one from Dr. Sibly and some newspapers. The unhappy intelligence of my Fathers death was confirmed beyond a doubt, he died on 10th June—

July 15—Arrived at Sabine—Stayed at Camp Ripley where Wilson was waiting for me.

Monday July 16 Started from Camp Ripley and entered the Province of Texas. Stayed at Amberson's (Boreg Creek) 8 miles, the first 4 miles fine timber & poor land—we then suddenly came to a open rolling country thinly Timbered soil about the color of Spanish Browne, & in some places redder—this red land is very productive and is covered with the most luxuriant growth of Grass I ever beheld in any country, almost any of it would produce as much hay as the best meddows. the country so far is well watered.

July 17 Tuesday Star[t]ed on in company with Wilson, Polly, & Marple, the two last overtook me at this place & joined me for the whole route, they produced satisfactory recommendations and I accepted of them as part of the Company—stoped at Englishes 17 miles for breakfast and turned off the road to J. H. Bells. the others continued on after the company. stayed at Bells this night—

Wednesday July 18.

Crossed the Atouyaque River about 25 yds wide high banks & fine bottoms—overtook the company 12 miles from Nacogdoches and found that Erasmo had captured a Caviard of mules & horses which some traders were taking in from the Comanches.

Thursday July 19. Arrived at Nacogdoches with the Caviard prisoners. The Inhabitants of the country collected to the number of 36 by request of the Spaniards to hear what the got. wished them to do—and Erasmo informed them that it was the wish of the Spanish Got. that they should all remove to the eastern part of the province which they agreed to do, & promised to go to St

Antonio to make the necessary arrangement for their removal in Novr. next.

July 20. This day the council was held with the Inhabitants and Mr Dill was appointed Commandant at Nacogdoches. I started in the evening, & went out 4 miles leaving the Spaniards at Nacogdoches, after dark I was informed by Mr Barnum that a party of Americans intended to attack the Caviard and take it from the Spaniards. on receiving this information I immediately returned to Nacogdoches to aid the Spaniards to guard the Caviard. No violence was attempted and the people declared next morning they had no intention of attacking it—

The general face of the country from within 5 miles of the Sabine to Nacogdoches is gently rolling and very much resembles the Barrens of Kentucky, except that the growth of timber is larger and not so bushy—Black jack and Black Hickory, Mulbery, is the principal timber, but it [is] all too low and scruby for Rails, or building, except on the Creeks where the timber is very good and lofty— the grass is more abundant and of a ranker and more luxuriant growth than I have ever seen before in any country and is indicative of a strong rich soil, the appearance of the Corn through the country proves to me beyond a doubt that the red soil is nearly if not quite as good as the black The soil generally is very red, the richest is a pure Spanish Brown—

This country is tolerably well watered—though springs are not so abundant as I could wish—the creeks are numerous and the water very pure and limpid—no appearance of Rock or Stone except a soft argillacious Rock at [Nacogdoches?].

Nacogdoches is now the ruins of a [once] flourishing little village. the church and Seven Houses are still standing entire one of them two story high built of soft Rock— it was the seat of the Indian trade and a great deal of business was formerly done here. the situation is a vally. a creek runs on each side of the town.

July 21 Started in Company with the Spaniards and came on 12 miles to a fine runing Creek, where two families had settled—this is the last habitation to Bexar this country this day was heavier timberd some pine, land more rolling and sandy—large rich bottoms on the banks and good pasturage on the upland.

July 22d. Started late. Don Erasmo was taken sick yester-

day with fever & complained very much this morning Seven miles passed a running Creek good bottoms two miles further crossed the Yauhaline River— this is a branch of the Naches and receives the Atouyaque & a number of other Creeks[.] the bottoms are wide, but overflow[.] three miles further came to a beautiful running Creek with wide rich bottoms well timbered where we overtook some of my men who I sent out in the morning to hunt. they had one deer at camp and wounded 4 [more] Don Erasmo was too unwell to go on and we camped for the day & turned out to hunt—but killed no deer

July 23 Started late Don Erasmo still unwell. stopped at Mount Prairie 9 miles— The country this day was very similar to that we passed yesterday, except that the timber is rather more scrubby, interspersed with handsome smooth Prairies, tolerably well watered with small creeks, and some fine Springs the soil generally 2nd rate, on the branches rich bottoms and heavy timber. Oak Hickory, Elm and some black walnut—very little undergrowth—

July 24 Don Erasmo very sick with fever, took an emetic, Barre and Beard also quite unwell— remained here the whole day the party washed their clothes and in the evening turned out to hunt. Killed one deer. The country for 4 miles round this place, which was as far as the hunters went was good some tracts of first rate and the balance good 2nd rate land. they found several good springs— this place takes the name of Mount Prairie from a mound which stands at the edge of it—

July 25. Started early—two miles came to the forks of the road— the right hand goes to the Comanches & a part of the company took the Comanche road by mistake & I sent a Spaniard after them, they went 4 miles on that road 2 Miles further came to the River *Naches*— This River is about 30 yds wide— It affords tolerable keel Boat navigation from the mouth of the Atouyaque down, & mouths in Sabine Bay. The bottoms on this River are generally liable to overflow, but it affords some large bodies of rich uplands the timber is generally good, after crossing the Naches passed a fine body of rich land for about 3 miles, after that the country became broken, poor pine ridges for 3 miles to a clear running Spring branch where there was a small body of

good land, after which pine ridges for about 5 miles, & the country then becomes level and very much resembled the barrens of Kentucky, interspersed with small level Prairies. timber very low and scrubby, soil generally 2d rate, water very scarce, 12 miles from the last Spring branch to the next water, a Small branch nearly dry, where we encamped for the night, came about 20 miles this day. Erasmo better. Barre & Beard both sick. Bellew took the Comanche road in company with the two Spaniards who also took it by mistake

July 26 Started late this morning owing to absence of Barnam's Horse & Don Ferdinand the Drs[.] came on 10 miles, to Creek where we found water standing in holes badly flavored & very warm— took dinner of dried Buffaloe meat & cold flour.

Met two parties from La Bahia who informed us that they saw three fresh corps on the road, one Spaniard & two Americans and saw where one more had been lately buried Supposed to have been killed by Indians— they also stated that the Indians came into the very Town of St Antonio and killed men & stole Horses & mules, and that the people were in a very distressed situation— there were two women within this party who Spoke English— Mr Lovelace went out a hunting & killed one Deer & a fawn

Started again at 2 oclock & came to the Trinity River, 13 miles were benighted and had some difficulty in getting through the bottom

The Spaniards and Mr Lovelace & party did not get to the River & encamped in a Prairie without water— I got over about 10 oclk at night with my packs and 13 men and encampd on the western bank in the edge of a large Prairie—

about 6 miles back a large trail came into the road and went on the same direction we were going, in consequence of which we began this night to watch, and herd the Horses,—we finished supper at 11 oclk, & I took the first watch untill 12— in Dr H's watch between 2 & 3 he saw several Indians & other alarming things, and soo roused the Camp. some of the party distinctly saw them mounted on White Horses, & the Dr and B presented arms to fire at one of them, but I stopped them, this alarm prevented our sleeping for the balance of the night—in the morning we discovered the Indians firmly fixed in the ground in the form

of a stump & some Roots of trees that had been blown up— at day light some of the party went hunting, others fishing, & I tried to make up some lost time in sleeping—

The Spaniards & Lovelace came up about 9 o'clk, no news of bellew and the other Spaniards, and we concluded to go on to the forks of the road about 5 miles ahead and wate for them— the Spaniards went on & I remained & took dinner of Turkey & venison soup and started about 12 oclk.

Fryday July 27.

The Trinity River is about 100 yds wide from the top of one bank to the top of the other. the banks are very steep & about 40 ft high—the water at this time is uncommonly low & is about 15 yds. wide 2 feet deep & a lively current— the bed of the River including sand bars is 40 yds. the water at this time is very clear, but a little brackish and unpalative—the bottom hard gravel the banks whitish Clay—Iron Pyrites in abundance with the gravil—& some detached masses of soft sand stone— the bottoms of this river are very wide and where we crossed there is a large smooth Prairie on each side, covered with the highest and thickest growth of grass I ever saw— the grass is coarse & very much resembles sugar cane the soil in the bottoms is deep & a jet black— This River rises at times from 55 to 60 feet and overflows all its bottoms & forms a sheet of water from Hill to Hill—more resembling a lake than a River— there is a large Prairie on west side extending about 2 miles to the high land where Col. Peros encamped. at this place there formerly was a Spanish Post. the situation is very beautiful and commanding on a smooth knoll which rises at the edge of the Prairie—Paros left a part of his men and 4 pieces of Artillery at this place when he went out against Long. At this old encampment the roads fork, the left goes to La Bahia, the right which we took to St Antonio, 2 miles further overtook the Spaniards who passed us while at dinner at Trinity and came on 2 miles further where finding water we stoped for the night, Barre & Beard being too sick to go in the hot sun which was very oppressive today—

The country from the low ground of the Trinity out so far is open—poor dry Barrens, covered with fine grass, and a good deal of low scrubby oak bushes— The Spaniards came on about 3 oclk & continued on to the next water.

Beard took an Emetic. Barre very sick with the fever and Wilson quite unwell with a headache and severe cold. in the afternoon several turned out to hunt, and Little found a Bee tree, which afforded about $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallons honey—heavy rain in night.

Saturday July 28. The sick were much better this morning, and we made a pretty good start and came on 12 miles where the Spaniards were camped and a heavy cloud appearing we stoped & pitched Tents—the rain was very heavy and we remained here the balance of the day— Mr Polly killed a fine Buck this morning and Little killed a small Buck in the evening so that we lived on fresh venison & Honey this day

The country these 12 miles is open Barrens and only wanted the lime stone to make it a perfect picture of the Barrens of Ky. the soil rather thin, of a dark colour mixed with sand badly watered & Timbered

Barnum & the Dr had a *Skirmish* about a ramrod

Sunday, July 29.

came on 6 miles to a Creek, water standing in holes—small Prairies.

10 miles further to the Navisot River a branch of Brassas, clear running water, well tasted—extensive swamps in bottoms with ponds. timber oak hickory Pecan. Item found a human Scull—camped at Navisot—

Monday July 30—Started early. Barnum & Neel went on ahead to hunt—they were cautioned not loose sight of the road, neither of them being good wood men— 6 miles came to a beautiful Creek of pure running water called Corpus Christi—fine bottoms covered with heavy timber a good deal of Cedar, very large—from Navisot to this place the country is principally prairie very beautiful. soil good, but a [bit] gravelly in places—

came on 8 miles further & stoped at a hole of water in the edge of the Prairie. Neel came in with a faun, & said that Barnum was within hearing of the Bells at camp soon after that we heard him shout and expected him in every moment.

The Country from Corpus to this place is very handsome, rolling Prairies, intersected by dreans in most of which water was standing in holes. timber rather scarce, but sufficient— after Dinner Barnum not coming in we concluded he must be lost, and

nearly the whole company turned out to hunt him— at night we all returned to camp. no news of Barnum— Bellew overtook us this day from the Comanche trail

Tuesday July 31 This day was spent in hunting Barnum. Lovelace & self took a tour to the South East and I killed a Buck & L—— a Buffaloe about 12 miles from camp— got back some time after night to camp no news of Barnum—

The country we travelled over this day is very good, rolling Prairie black soil, sufficiently timbered. runing water scarce, but abundance in the holes of branches—

Wednesday Augt. 1— Our water hole was exhausted & we were obliged to proceed & accordingly started and crossed the Brassos River and encamped on a beautifull eminence in the edge of an extensive Prairie, 2 miles from Brassos— The Country from last camp to this one is very good, rolling Prairie, sufficient timber—soil generally good—parts inclined to be gravelly— Brassos bottoms at this place 4 miles on the west side. overflows in extreem high water— a large dry Creek at beginning of bottom—land exactly like Red River same colour & texture & timber the River is about the size of Red River at Nachitoches— Banks very high the bottom smooth Rock. water about 4 feet deep and 80 yds wide—the land raises on the west side from the bank to the Prairie— water a little brackish tho much better than Red River. (Navigation.)

Thursday Augt. 2

I could not feel satisfied with myself without making another effort to find Barnum & accordingly this morning I went back in search of him, accompanied by Mr Wilson, Marple, Polly & 1 Spaniard we steared S. E & S. S E [.] after ten crossing the river—8 miles thence N. E & N—until night. country near the River very good. out 8 miles hilly Postoak—scarce of water—campd this night without water—mustangs good

Fryday July 3. started early steared N. N. W—and soon struck the large Prairies. stoped at a hole of water in Prairie & took breakfast— Buffaloe at a distance—Deer abundant—Steared N. W. & struck the road about 10 miles from the River & came on to camp at night where we found Barnum

He struck the River about 12 miles below the road, tied his

horse and came up on foot under the bank until he came to the road, eat nothing for 4 days—very much fatigued & his feet scratched & inflamed & blistered was lost 4 days— sent 2 Spds for horse

Saturday Augt. 4— This morning we started all together once more, the strays all up— 6 miles the Nunas a beautifull clear runing Creek of pure lyme stone water. 7 miles a clear runing Creek Angeline 6 miles another runing Creek ulmo 4 miles another Creek—Ailes The country on these Creeks is very good—rolling Prairie—sufficient timber. good water soil black & generally very rich—killed a Buffaloe. Higginbottom [*sic*].

Sunday Augt. 5th. Buffaloe was plenty & all hands turned out hunting, but the Spaniards run them off & we only killed a Bull. I killed a fat Buck—

Monday Augt. 6. came on to the Yagua, 6 miles R. W. land good 15 miles further to Agua Dulce land not so good, rolling, post oak.

Tuesday Augt 7 came to the Colorado River 10 miles. poor gravelly ridges and near the river heavy pine timber, grapes in immense quantities on low vines, red, large, & well flavored, good for Red wine The C. R is something less than the Brassos banks very high—generally clear of overflow—bottom and banks gravelly. water very clear and well tasted, current brisk the river very much resembles Cumberland River, except that there are no rocks & it is some larger—

The bottom where the road crosses is about 5 miles, mostly high prairie clear of overflow, land rich, timber Pecan, Ash, Oak, Cedar, abundance of fish.

There is a small hill 2 miles above the road out of which Dn Era [Don Erasmo] informed me smoke & sparks issued— there is a very rich silver mine up this River on the St Saber, also a gold dust mine on the Yana [Llano] the country up this river is very good but scarce of timber

Wednesday Augt. 8 came on to Cedar Creek 8 miles—country generally poor & gravelly. abundance of cedar on this creek very large good water—Post oak wood— 10 miles further to a Creek in the Barrens— no water, weather hot & we travelled until 10 oclk at night. country poor & gravelly

Thursday Augt 9 In the morning we found water in a hole 300 yds above the road where we took supper & breakfast together— came on about a mile & found plenty of water on the left of the road— the Spds were in the lead & took a mustang road & went 3 or 4 miles out of road came to St Marcus River 20 miles Country beautifully rolling, soil very black & rich not much sandy—very gravelly, round pebble & flint, no timber, Muskete bushes & grass 8 miles from St M. there is a Creek called Los Ulmos, between which & the River there is an extensive rich prairie and with some timber adjoining & on the Creek— the River very clear pure water, but 9 miles to the head of it, where it breaks out in 3 Springs and forms the river at once— fall very great. Current rapid— by taking out the water high up and leading it in cannals the up lands on both banks might be watered.

Fryday 10th. came on to the Guadalupe River—country the most beautiful I ever saw—rolling Prairies—soil very black and deep—mixed with flint pebbles—from the size of a hazlenut to a man's head, no timber but Muskete except on the branches & not much there—soft white lime stone rock, water scarce but very good— the soil cracks badly in many places where it is not sandy—is very stiff— The Guadalupe is a beautiful bold stream of perfectly clear lime stone water, banks very high. There was formerly a Stockade fort at this place and at St Marcus—

Saturday 11— came on to the Paredona Creek, 16 miles and camped, country the same as yesterday—except being more hilly. there is a high ridge near the Guadalupe which I was informed is well timbered— Guade. river has a very great fall and rapid Current also the St. Marcus—the latter fine for mills—

Sunday 12 This morning at daylight three men who had been dispatched from the Gal. [Guadalupe?] by Erasmo to St Ao. returned with others & brought the glorious news of the Independence of Mexico— the Spaniards hailed this news with acclamations of “viva Independencia” and every other demonstration of joy— Erasmo invited us to breakfast with him on various Spanish dishes sent out by their wives and started in high spirits and arrived at St. Antonio about 11 ock

Remd at Bexar untill the 21— purchased mustangs— mustang hunting &c— Indians killed 1. wounded 1 Sp.

Bexar

From Bexar

Tuesday Augt. 21— Started from Bexar, came to St. Juan, sand—valley—missions—cannibals—River—Springs—irrigating—Bn. de Br. [Baron de Bastrop]—Govr. his Lt. & Ch. Erasmo & Lt Berrimindi—cooking—kings cavalliard

Wednesday 22. came to ranchos de las arrochas a Creek, not runing but good water in a hole—country rolling, land generally rich, rather more sandy than near Bexar— in the afternoon the hunters turned out hunting, but killed nothing, and as we got no meat at St. Ao. we had but bread and coffee—

In the evening the head chief of the Tankawas and 3 other chiefs and 4 men and 10 squaws came to camp on their way to Bexar, the chief was called Gocoso— I had a talk with him, smoked and gave him some tobacco, informed him of my intended settlement which pleased him, & he sent on two of his sons next day with me to his town to inform his nation who we were and our objects &c—

Thursday 23 came on about 12 miles and turned out of the road about 1 mile and encamped on the River, banks 50 feet high country beautifully rolling less brush—no gravel, and more sandy—

Fryday 24 started very early, about 7 oclk we were met by the chief from Tankawa village (which was about 4 miles to the left of road) and a number of Indians—they are great beggars, & wanted Tobacco. I gave the chief a piece, and moved on, which displeased him very much, as he wanted me to halt the company and smoke with them they dogged us on ten miles begging
stoped at St Bartolimy a large runing creek of good water, on which the Indians live—land very good no Timber started again at 3 and came on to alamito 12 miles making about 25 miles for this days journey

Saturday 25. made an early start, passed a fine stream of runing water. came on to Cabeza a Creek of runing water, about 20 miles—and within 6 miles of labaddie— the country is more beautiful than near Bexar—the land generally first rate but very sandy in places not to much muskite & under brush—~~water~~ scarce—had an alarm in the night with Horses—the land adjoining the river is very rich and lays beautifully—

Sunday 26 Arrived at La Bahia.

This place is beautifully situated on an eminence, immediately on the bank of the St Antonio River. the surrounding country is rolling prairie, land rather sandy but produces well, might all be watered from the River— Town in a state of ruin, owing to the Shock it recd in the revolution and subsequent Indian depredations— the Inhabitants have a few cattle and horses & raise some corn. there is however a very considerable trade through this town from Nachitoches to the coast and money is tolerably plenty—

The Spaniards live poorly, have but little furniture or rather none at all in their houses— no knives, eat with forks & spoons and their fingers—

Monday 27. presented my letters to the alcalde from the Govr. which contained an order to furnish me with *guides* to explore the country, in the evening I was informed that the only guides to be relied on were Two Soldiers and they could not be had without an order from the Govr— this made it necessary to send to Bexar to the Govr. and it being so important to have guides I concluded to wate the return of the express which the Alcalde dispatched immediately.

Tuesday 28. because acquainted with Senr. Jose Valdes and curé of the Parish a very gentlemanly and liberal minded man and a great friend of the Americans. he expressed a wish to be appointed the Curé of my new settlement The father at St Antonio had expressed the same wish,

Wednesday 29. I concluded to send in the loose horses and mules belonging to the Company amounting to upwards of 60 and accordingly selected 6 of the Company to return with them. I spent this day in writing to the U. S.

Thursday 30. This day I also spent in writing and fitting off the company for Nachitoches,

Fryday 31. This morning the company for Nachitoches started The mail also arrived from Bexar and I recd an official letter from the Govr appointing me Civil Commandant of the new settlement—I also recd a letter from the Baron de Bastrop—

Saturday Sepr. 1— In the evening the courier arrived from Bexar, and the Govr wrote to the alcalde that he could not spare

any soldiers I then concluded to take the Spd. who the Alcalde had selected

Sunday Sept. 2d. This [day] I started all the company, and remained myself to come out with the Spad— in the evening engaged three Indians of the Haranames tribe as pilots—these Indians were collected at an old mission half a mile out of town and placed under the care of a Priest whose consent it was necessary to obtain before they cd. be had—

Monday 3d. owing to the delay of the Spad in getting of[f] did not start until near the middle of day—had to pay him \$10 in advance & promise a Dollar a day— came out 4 miles to a Creek where the company encamped—clear runing water, land good but rather sandy— in the afternoon came on 12 miles to the Colato Creek a large bold stream of clear runing water land generally good, in some places too sandy, considerable quantity of oak timber— heavy rain in the evening & night

Tuesday 4. Turned off the road. came on to the Guadalupe river. 12 miles. Prairie gently rolling land generally good, near the river very good, wide bottoms heavy timber of oak, Pecan, &c stoped in the edge of the Prairie on the East side of the River & took dinner—cloudy & windy— In the afternoon I directed the Pilots to steer for the old mission on the lake that the Guadalupe and St Antonio Rivers empty into—and accordingly we left the road and took a S S E course encamped on the Bank of the Guadalupe 3 miles from the road and Deer being plenty some of the party went a hunting & some a fishing. The hunters brought in a fat Buck & the fishermen two fine soft shell turtles & one fish— the Turtles, were very fat and made good soup with no other seasoning but salt & pepper— the water of the river is very clear and pure, and well tasted—fish appear plenty tho we caught but one—

the land is good and lays beautifully after leaving the river bottom there is a rise of about 50 feet, after which is level smooth Prairie as far as the eye can reach—

Wednesday Sept. 5. continued on a SSE direction down the river, and immediately on the bluff which is from 40 to 50 feet high— the bottoms are very wide, and heavy timber—land rich, back from the bluff level smooth Prairie as far as the eye could

reach—Deer very & mustang horses very plenty saw at least 400 of the former & 150 of the latter, one mustang colt that got seperated from the gang came on with us, some of the Horses are very good and would sell from [\$]100 to [\$]200 in La. stoped on a pond in the river bottom took dinner, water a little brackish Alligators plenty,—& very mirey

In the afternoon came on about 8 miles to a Spring branch of very good water, tho there was not much of it, barely creeping through the grass here we encamped for the night. Land & country the same—

Thursday 6—came on about 5 miles and struck a large lake in the River bottom of good sweet water, high banks, and hard bottom. found an old Karanqua encampment on the bank of the lake apparently a month old— this lake is about 4 miles long & $\frac{1}{2}$ wide. two miles below is another lake longer than the first which are connected by a narrow channel—on this lake we stoped for dinner at a large Karanqua encampment, about 3 weeks old— In the afternoon at the bottom of this lake we came to the head of Matagorda Bay, & the mouths of the Guadalupe & St Antonio rivers— The Bay has a beautifull appearance—on the east side the land is high, say 25 feet above the water and form an immense prairie as far as the eye could reach—on the west side there is a strip of high timber, just discernable— the Guadalupe & St Antonio rivers empty into this Bay

The head of the Bay on the east side is a beautiful situation for a Town, the land is all first rate, but too level, there is no timber except on the river, there is an extensive Cypress Swamp on the river, and heavy pecan & oak timber

found another Karanqua encamp at which was a small Anchor & a quantity of large iron spikes, and seven [?] Alligator heads and the skins of Alligator Gars These Indians live principally on fish and eat *all kinds*, Alligators &c&c—

Fryday 7. This morning I directed the guide to steer the nearest course to old La Badee, he struck due east, after traveling about 15 miles on this course over level prairie we came to the sea coast, which run N.E. followed it about 5 miles and came to an inlet which we headed about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles round and struck a fresh Indian trail apparently one day old, followed it & near sun down

came to a small hole of stagnant water, which tho very bad and offensive to taste and smell we drank with avidity, it being the first we had met with during the day we camped here for the night and one of the Indians went to the sea there distant one mile & brought up a plank, apparently part of a Kentucky boat which had drifted from the mouth of Mississippi—with which we made a little fire to cook with, there being no timber or even twigs growing in the Prairie—the Indian reported that he saw fresh mockasin tracks on the shore I thought it best to tie up our horses and guard them

Saturday 8th Started early without breakfast and struck the Sea Shore in about 2 miles at a Karanqua encampment found an old copper Stew pan— followed the coast about 2 miles and came to an inlet which was impassable, followed it to its head near 6 miles due west, from this steared north to gain the high prairie and soon came to another inlet which we steared west to head. by this time I found that our guide knew no more of the country than we did & therefore continued due north to gain the high Prairies once more, struck 3 more inlets which took us to the west and about 2 oclk came to a fine hole of fresh water at the head of one of the inlets, the first we had met with this day. halted here for breakfast & Dinner, & encamped for the night, the country a dead level—and after leaving the sea Shore about 4 miles the land a Stiff black soil very sticky and mirey in wet weather and hard in dry—cracks badly.

Sunday 9 came on due north abt. 8 miles and struck another inlet which took us 2 miles to the west to head—good runing water at the head of it—4 miles further another Creek of runing water where we stoped for dinner— in the afternoon struck N.W and encamped on a Creek which run into the Bay on which old Labaddie formerly stood— showery

Monday 10 In the morning sent out the men hunting and I went with the Spaniard and one man to examine the site of old Labaddie— came to the bay 2 miles from Camp at the mouth of the Creek we were encamped on & found that the old town was still further to the East

The Bay had a very handsome appearance, and I think was about 5 miles wide. it bore to the S. W. towards the sea— at

the head of this Bay which turned East a large Creek of good water puts in on which was established old Labaddie on the Creek there is good timber tho not plenty— This harbour is said to be the best on the Coast tho it is exposed owing to the bank being so low—the depth of water is stated to be 11 to 12 feet over the bar & . . . in the bay— the banks are about 20 feet high on the bay where I was & come bluff to the water— the head of this Bay is fresh water like the head of Matagorda Bay, where the old town was the Spaniard informed me the banks were a little higher—

The whole country round this Bay is a dead level Prairie, not a bush growing, soil a deep black & in wet weather will mire a horse almost any where. in dry weather cracks open so that a horses foot would go into them, it is however very much cut up with dreans & Creeks of good running water. the marks of the Surf was about 5 feet below the top of the bank, tho the Spaniard informed me it sometimes broke entirely over it and drowned the Prairie— If the country was rolling & timbered this Bay could afford a most beautifull site for a commercial town finding that neither the Spaniard or Indians knew anything of the Country, and our provisions being short and no game to be found I determined to strike for the road and discharge all the guides. two of the Indians preferred going strait in and steard for the Guadalupe—the other Indian & Spaniard started with us

We steared up the Creek encamped nearly due west, & were obliged to follow it to its head before we cd cross, so steep were the banks & mirey bottom, after crossing it steared N. W. to the head of a branch of the same Creek, at this Creek the Spaniard & Indian fell behind & left me without saying a word of their intention to do so— we continued N. N. W to the head of another branch of the same Creek and encamped for the night— when we stoped there was no appearance of rain & we did not pitch our tents for which we paid dearly in the night, for it rained pritty steady all night and we were completely soaked & passed a sleepless night—

Tuesday 12 [*sic*] Started very early before breakfast (there being nothing but a little willow where we were and steared N. N. W. about 12 miles and struck a large Creek well timbered where

deer were plenty Stopped and dried our blankets &c. and turned out a hunting, in the evening the hunters returned with 5 Deer, which we put to drying

The country from *Runaway* Creek (where the Sp. & In. left us) to this place is much like the rest of it on the Coast—the first part black stiff soil very deep, near the big Creek (which I presume is the one called Garcia) the Prairie becomes rolling & very sandy in places too much so for cultivation—the water in all the Creeks is very clear and good

Wednesday 12 Spent the morning in drying our meat. Mr. Lovelace killed a fat Buck—and we spent the day in drying meat and laid in a stock sufficient for 10 days—marked my name & date on a tree, and named the Creek *Benado* from the great quantity of deer—

This is a beautiful Creek of as good water as ever ran from the Earth, and sufficiently large for mills

The land on [it] is pritty good tho rather sandy. Timber plenty—

Thursday 13. Started early from Benado Creek, and continued a due north course, passed several branches of the same Creek, post oak timber—Prairie only good in some places—becomes more rolling— about 12 ock struck the road 5 miles from the Garcia Creek—

The Garcia is bold runing stream of clear good water, sandy bottoms abundance of Post oak—land adjoining rather sandy and in places very poor being a perfect sand bank. Stopped for dinner

In the afternoon went on 4 miles to a large bold runing Creek very clear & good water land between the two Creeks nearly all first rate, & plenty of timber—

Memo. at the mouth of the Garcia the old town of Labaddie was established. this is the place I spent so many days in trying to find

Fryday 14. came on to the Baca a large clear creek— about 7 miles— land sandy— plenty of post oak¹ . . .

Saturday 15 came on to the Colorado River— land is better & con[tinued along] the River . . . 8 miles— all first rate

¹From this point the Journal is in many places illegible. Omissions from such cause will be thus indicated by leaders.

[land] the Colorado bottoms are very wide— rich Prairie & timbered land, timber very heavy— Pecan oak Cotton woods black . . . On our arrival at the [ri]ver it was dark . . . could not get over without getting wet & as it was too late to look for a new ford we encamped on the beach . . .

Sunday 16 in the [morning found] a new ford little below and got over [While] crossing 4 Bedi [?] Indians from the River Trinity came up from whom [we] got some fresh dried Buffalo meat Irwin was too unwell to start— the whole [party thought it?] more prudent to send him in directly to the settlements and accordingly started him and Jeff [?] Polly Stopped at a little Creek at the edge of the Prairie for dinner & then struck down the river a S S E & S E direction— the land on this side the river is very good and just below the road the Prairie goes bluff to the River— The Timber is all good and abundance of it— Continued on down the river just out side the timber about 10 miles and struck a large lake in the bottom— turned to the left and encamped on a small Creek that runs into the head of the Lake— The land so far is all first rate and lays beautifully and is well timbered—

As we were going round the lake we heard something on the opposite side which very much resembled the bark of dogs & we also saw 3 Horses running at a distance ahead of us which we suspected from the manner in which they went off were not mustangs tho' the distance was too great to distinguish whether men were on them or not— these circumstances induced us to tie up our Horses close round us and keep watch

Monday 17 started early and continued a S. E. course along the Lake— at the lower end the Indian war whoop was raised from . . . and I immediately . . . descried an Indian coming towards me, who beckoned me to [stop] & made signs of Friendship [He] advanced towards me into [the] Prairie and was followed at a short distance by 14 warriors [I] advanced about 20 yds ahead of [my] company directing them to be prepared for battle if necessary . . . Chief asked me in Spanish [where I] was from and where going [I informed] him, . . . he said they were Coacos . . . who I knew lived with the Karankawas . . . this induced me to watch them closely and

refused to go to their camp or to permit them to go up to the men, untill one of the chiefs laid down his arms and five squaws and a Boy came up to me from their camp— this satisfied me they believed us to be too strong for them and therefore that they wd. not attack us (of their disposition to do so I had no doubt, if they thought they cd. have succeeded) some of the warriors then went up to the [men] and appeared friendly, I gave the chief some Tobacco and a frying Pan that we did not want and parted apparently good friends— there was 15 warriors in the group . . . the chief informed me that they were going to encamp on the road to trade with the Spaniards & Americans— he said we cd. not reach the mouth of the river with Horses owing to the thickets he also said that there was a large body of Karanquas at the mouth

These Indians were well formed and apparently very active and athletic men, their Bows were about $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 ft long, their arrows 2 to 3 well pointed with Iron or Steel [Some] of the young squaws were handsome & one of them quite pretty— they had Panther skins around their waist painted, which extended down to the knee & calf of the leg— above the waist tho. they were naked— their breasts were marked or tatooed in circles of black beginning with a small circle at the nipple and enlarging as the breast swelled

These Indians and the Karanquas may be called universal enemies to man—they killed of all nations that came in their power, and frequently feast on the bodies of their victims— the [approach of] an American population will be the signal of their extermination for there will be no way of subduing them but extermination . . .

After leaving these savages we continued on our course S. E. down the River 10 miles and stoped at a hole of water in the Prairie— the land from the Lake down was not so good Prairie very level & sandy— ahead of us in sight was a very thick timber intersecting the river timber nearly at right angles and extending out in . . .

Tuesday 18 made an early start . . . four miles . . . timber oak Pecan . . . 5 miles further a very large bold running Creek . . . land first rate . . . miles further

crossed another Creek, heavy timber— rich black soil— good water—and encamped on a small branch at a [hole] of water— this branch appeared [to] run into a la[rge creek which] lay in front of us and appeared to run W. S. South [*sic*], land all the richest kind of black soil very deep. Yellow Clay found . . . Saw three gangs of mustangs in one of which was 2 mules— the timber on these Creeks is very good and in abundance

Wednesday 19 Mr Lovelace [went hunting] & killed the fat-test Buck I ever saw in my life and we started about 9 oclock continued a north course along the large body of timber which lay to our right, and which from its extent we began to think was the Brassos River— Prairies of the richest kind of black sandy land, intersected by branches and Creeks of excellent water— heavily timbered, beautifully rolling— in the afternoon stoped at a small Pond in the edge of the bottom and one of the men went in to the River which proved to be the Brassos

The bottom about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide— very heavy timbered— no appearance of overflow.

Thursday 20 Started from the Pond & came on about 4 miles and struck the Tuscasite or oppelou[sas] road, turned along it to the River & we concluded to divide the company. Mr Lovelace and 3 others went up on the west side & I crossed with 4 others to examine the country on the east side, agreeing to meet at the Labaddie road.

The Prairie comes bluff to the river just below the Tuscasite road, and affords a most beautifull situation for a Town or settlement— The bluff is about 60 feet high—

The country back of this place and below for about 15 miles (as far as we went) is as good in every respect as man could wish for, Land all first rate, plenty of timber, fine water—beautifully rolling— we calculated that we were within 12 or 15 miles of the Coast.

The river was humming[?] & raising fast we therefore built a raft, loaded our things and one of the company who could not swim on it, and swam over pushing the raft before us, in this way all crossed safely, took dinner [on] the bank and entered the bottom. The trace was a very old and blind one, the bottom (which was about 6 miles through) most of the way a heavy cane break,

we therefore had great difficulty in following the road and getting through Caves & vines & did not reach the Prairie before night— just before dark after we had almost despaired of getting through that day struck the Prairie at a delightful clear running spring Creek where we encamped for the night—

Fryday 21, made an early start & continued on a north course, the land adjoining the river bottom is rolling Prairie, intersected by small streams of runing water, land of the first kind of black sandy soil. In about 3 miles the land became rather more sandy though very good and abundantly watered & timbered up to the road, which we struck about 4 oclck and encamped on a clear running spring branch about 4 miles from the river— to the east of where we struck the Prairie there is a large Creek, distant about six miles from the river heavy timbered & good land— saw abundance of mustang signs.

3 or 4 miles below the labaddie road there are two small traces which probably go to Oppelousas— *Saturday 22d.* About 11 o'clk Mr Lovelace and his party came up, they had to swim the river— they reported that the Country they came over was superior to any thing they had seen before in the Province, they found two fine springs that broke out from under a sand rock, crossed a number of fine runing Creeks all good water and many of them large enough for mills, abundance of timber, and land all first rate and very rolling— the River bottom about 2 miles wide heavy timbered no overflow— the range of rich land on the west side is about 150 miles in length and generally extends from one river to the other, on the St. Antonio it is the same, 25 miles above one of our company (Higginbottom) had been through & he said it was the same & two of the company H— & Barr had crossed it at the Wacoe village 60 or 70 miles further up and it was the same there only rather more rolling & plenty of mill seats—saw several Bear and plenty of sign—near the mouth of Brassos there are plenty of wild cattle. we saw abundance of cattle.¹

¹Here the Journal breaks off. Austin returned to Louisiana and made immediate preparation to establish a colony in Texas. He reached Texas again with his first small party of immigrants in December, 1821.—E. C. B.