
Patrick Breen Diary November 20, 1846 - March 1, 1847

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The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, California 94720-6000

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Patrick Breen Diary November 20, 1846 - March 1, 1847

BANC MSS C-E 176

The Bancroft Library



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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Patrick Breen Diary

Date: November 20, 1846 - March 1, 1847

Collection Number: BANC MSS C-E 176

Extent: The bound manuscript measures 17 x 12 cm. 32 digital objects

Author: Patrick Breen

Repository: The Bancroft Library. University of California, Berkeley.

Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Digital Version Available:

An online version of the Patrick Breen diary is available [here](#).

Languages Represented: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

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Digital Representations Available

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Acquisition Information

The Patrick Breen Diary was part of the original Hubert Howe Bancroft collection.

Biography

Patrick Breen was born in Ireland circa 1805. In 1828 he emigrated to Canada and some time thereafter moved to Iowa territory, where he became the owner of a farm. In about 1831 he married Margaret (maiden name unknown). Breen was naturalized in 1844. Patrick and Margaret had 7 seven children --John, Edward, Patrick, Simon, Peter, James and Isabella. In the Spring of 1846, the Breen family joined a party of emigres bound for California. The party's ill-fated journey across the Sierra Nevada Mountains was partially documented in the diary Breen kept while stranded in a mountain camp at Donner (then called Truckee) Lake. After their rescue, the family arrived at Sutter's Fort, New Helvetia, in March of 1847. The Breens then lived for a short time on the Consumnes River and then in San Jose. In February of 1848 they settled in San Juan Bautista --becoming it's first non-Spanish-speaking residents --where Breen would live as a rancher for the remainder of his life. Patrick Breen died in 1868.

Though of little formal education, Patrick Breen was able to read and write --abilities which were considered a mark of distinction for an Irishman of his time in this country --and thus could document one of the more tragic events of the nineteenth century overland journeys.

Scope and Content

The diary of Patrick Breen was recorded between November 20, 1846 and March 1, 1847, in what is presently the Donner Pass region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in Nevada County, California. At the time of the diary's composition, Breen and his family were part of a group of pioneers --which came to be known as the Donner Party --completing an overland journey from the Great Plains to California. After reaching Donner Lake (then Truckee Lake), the group met with relentless winter conditions which prohibited further travel. As these conditions persisted, food supplies were depleted and hunger and sickness came to prevail over the stranded party. For many, leather hides provided the only remaining sustenance. Several eventually died of starvation. Others, in desperation, resorted to consuming the flesh of those already dead. The survivors were finally rescued by a relief party led by James F. Reed --an original member of their party --and shortly thereafter reached their destination at Fort Sutter in New Helvetia. The diary begins during the early stages of the winter of 1846-47 --one of the harshest on record for the region --and proceeds to chronicle on a daily basis its increasing severity and the disastrous toll it took on the party. The last entry is recorded the day of the arrival of Reed's relief party.

The overall style displayed in Breen's diary is terse, prosaic, and, with respect to the actual conditions it records, understatedly matter-of-fact. The mood gradually develops from a mild anxiety concerning the weather in the early entries to a more exclamatory desperation as the crisis worsens. Topics recurrent throughout the diary are weather, health, food, deaths, visits, situations at nearby cabins, and the psychological states of various party members. The entries are brief and are characterized by erratic spelling, frequent abbreviations, and minimal punctuation. A few Irishisms --such as *shanty* (for "cabin"), *thim* ("them"), *Paddy* ("Patty"), and *Donno/Donnogh* ("Donner") --appear throughout the text, reflecting the diarist's national origins.

The diary was one of the few possessions Breen took with him after the arrival of Reed's relief party. Breen gave the manuscript to George McKinstry, who later (circa 1871) gave it to historian and publisher Hubert Howe Bancroft. The diary remained in Bancroft's collection and, as part of that collection, became property of the University of California in 1905.

Reprints of the diary date from May, 1847, when George McKinstry sent a declaredly verbatim copy of the diary to the *California Star* for publication. The McKinstry version, as well as others based on it, are considered to be corrupt for obvious reasons such as incompleteness, flagrant editorial alterations or deletions, or outright falsification of the record. Frederick J. Teggart's 1910 version (as volume 1, number 6 of the *Publications of the Academy of Pacific Coast History*) is the first complete scholarly edition of the diary. In 1946, The Book Club of California published *The Diary of Patrick Breen*, edited by George R. Stewart, which includes both a complete transcription and a facsimile reproduction of the diary.


The diary was made from 8 sheets of note paper which were folded and trimmed to make a 32 page booklet. The diary was written in ink. Breen's entries fill the first 29 pages of the manuscript. The remainder of the pages are blank with the exception of the word "journal" written

by Breen in the upper left corner of the last page. The pages measure approximately 16 by 10 cm. Needle holes in the pages indicate that the diary was at one point sewn together. On the 25th page of the original diary, in the lower right corner, is an embossed logo for Southworth Co.

The original booklet has been rebound in half calf and marbled paper with four covering sheets. On the fourth front covering page there is a hand-written title. Tipped in between pages 30 and 31 of the original diary is a short hand-written letter by George McKinstry describing the origin of the diary and his acquisition of it from Patrick Breen. Both of the above texts are reproduced in the container listing.

The transcription provided in the present container listing is based on Stewart's 1946 version, but omits the various editorial corrections and insertions --provided for clarity --found therein. Page breaks in the original diary are indicated in the present transcription by bracketed page numbers inserted before the text of each item entry.

:1 [Title page] **Diary / of / Patrick Breen / one of the / Donner Party / 1846-7. / Presented by Dr. Geo McKinstry / to / Bancroft Library**  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf7g5011t8>

:2 [Page 1] **Friday Nov. 20th 1846 came to this place on the 31st of last month that it snowed we went on to the pass the snow so 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 arriveed here we again took our teams & waggons & made another unsuccessfull 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** 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf2n39p1js>

:3 [Page 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 company are about starting across the mountain this moring including 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 expedition across the mountains returned after an unsuccessfull attempt  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6t1nb7wq>


:4 [Page 3] **tuesday 24th fine in the morning towards eveng Cloudy & windy wind W looks like snow freezeing hard**

wednesday 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 evening now rains or sleet the mountainers 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

Saturday 28th Snowing fast now about 10 o clock snow 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 today will skin them tomorrow gave another yoke to Fosters hard to get wood  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6199p3qn>

:5 [Page 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


December 1st Tuesday Still snowing wind W snow about 5 1/2 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 & Stanton's mules gone & cattle suppose lost in the Snow no hopes of finding them alive

wedns. 2nd. Continues to snow wind W sun shineing hazily thro the clouds dont snow quite as fast as it has done snow must be over six feet deep bad fire this morning 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf5m3nb72p>

:6 [Page 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 manufacturing snow shoes for another mountain scabble no account of mules 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf2199p0d9>

:7 [Page 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 stiring round much hard work to wood sufficient to keep us warm & 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 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf587009ws>

:8 [Page 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 today 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 freezind little

Sunday 13th Snows faster than any previous day wind N:W Stanton & Graves with several others making preparations 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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6x0nb84g>

:9 [Page 8] Tuesday 15th Still continues fine wind W:S:W

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

Thursd. 17th Pleasant sunshine today wind about S.E bill Murp returned from the mountain party last evening 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 today from any of the shantys 🗨️

<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf3g501004>

:10 [Page 9] Satd. 19 Snowed last night commenced about 11 o'clock. 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 NW thawing a little Mrs Reid here. no account of Milt. Yet Dutch Charley started for Donnghs turned back not able to proceed tough times, but not discouraged 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 🗨️

<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf5q2nb7f1>

:11 [Page 10] Tuesd. 22 Snowed 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 Snowed 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 🗨️

<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf209nb4s7>

:12 [Page 11] Friday 25th began to snow yesterday about 12 o'clock snowed all night & snows yet rapidly wind about E by N Great difficulty in getting wood John & Edwd. has to get I am not able offered our prayers to God this Cherimass morning the prospect is apalling but hope in God Amen

Satd. 26th Cleared off in the night to day clear & pleasant Snowed 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


Sun 27 Continues clear froze hard last night Snow very deep say 9 feet thawing a little in the sun scarce of wood to day chopt a tree dow it sinks in the snow & is hard to be got 🗨️

<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf238nb421>

:13 [Page 12] Monday 28th Snowed last night cleared off this morning snowed 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 shaving  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf65801134>

:14 [Page 13] Thursday 31st last of the year, may we with Gods help spend the coming 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 fitting 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 snow  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6k4011k0>

:15 [Page 14] Jany. 1st 1847 we pray the God of mercy to deliver us from our present Calamity if it be his Holy will Amen. Commenced snowing last night does not snow fast wind S:E sun peeps out at times provisions getting 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 mountains with her children provisions scarce  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf2290088r>

:16 [Page 15] Mond. 4th fine morning looks like spring thaw ing 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 with us Pat with Keysburg & Jas with Graveses folks, it was difficult for Mrs. Reid to get away from the Children

Tuesd. 5th Beautiful day thawing some in the sun wind S-E snow not settleing much we are in hopes of the rainy time ending

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 freezing 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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf4s2009zs>

:17 [Page 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 prospects Dull may God relieve us all from this difficulty if it is his Holy will Amen

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

Sund. 10 began to snow last night still continues wind W N W.  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf1q2nb4vj>

:18 [Page 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

Wends. 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 Cleared off yesterday evening snowed 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 NW 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 <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf0h4nb3f7>

:19 [Page 18] 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. 17 th 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 and 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 <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf3q2nb69v>

:20 [Page 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 freeze 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 O clock

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


Sund. 24th some clondy this morning ceased snowing yesterday about 2 O clock. 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 suffered some <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6f59p5h4>

:21 [Page 20] Mod 25th began to snow yesterday evening & still continues wind W

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 to day

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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf20000811>

:22 [Page 21] Satd. 30th fine pleasant morning wind W beginning to thaw in the sun John & Edw went to Graves this morning the Graves Seize d on Mrs Reids goods until 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 form 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 die Murphy died last night about 1 O clock, Mrs. Reid & John went to Graves this Morning to look after her goods.

Mond. February the 1st froze very hard last night cold to day & cloudy wind NW. sun shines dimly the snow has not settled much John is unwell today with the help of God & he will be well by night amen  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf496nb5zw>

:23 [Page 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.SW it was clear all last night sun shines out at times

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

Frid. 5th snowed hard all untill 12 O'clock at night wind still continued to blow hard from the S.W: to day pretty clear a few clouds only Peggy very uneasy for fear we shall all perish 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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf9p3013kj>


:24 [Page 23] Satd. 6th it snowed 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 Ceased 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 thawed so fast & thawed 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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf8199p5pg>

:25 [Page 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 morning 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 Oclock 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 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 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 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf3z09p3hh>

:26 [Page 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 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 snowed a little & continued cloudy all night. cleared off about day light. wind about S:W Mrs Reid has headache the rest in health

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

Mond. 15 moring Cloudy untill 9 Oclock then Cleared off wam & sunshine wind W. Mrs Graves refused 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  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf3d5nb57c>

:27 [Page 26] Tuesd. 16th Commenced to rain yesterday Evening turned to Snow during the night & continud untill after daylight 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 runing 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

Thursd 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 California yesterday with som provisions but left the greater part on the way to day clear & warm for this region some of the men are gone to day to Donnoss Camp will start back on Monday  <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf558009xn>

:28 [Page 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 Keysburg started & left Keysburg here unable to go I burried pikes Child this moring in the snow it died 2 days ago. Paddy Reid & Thos. came back Messrs Grover & 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 today & 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. Commenced thawing there has not any more returned from those who started to cross the Mts. 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf787011dr>

:29 [Page 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 to day 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 apetite. 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 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf2489p1zq>

:30 [Page 29] Satd 27th beautiful morning sun shineing brilliantly, wind about S.W. the snow has fell in debth about 5 feet but no thaw but the sun in day time it freezing hard every night heard some geese fly over last night saw none

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 resembling Onions in shape taste some like a sweet potato, all full of little tough fibers

Mond. March the 1st to 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 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf600010x9>

:31 [Letter by George McKinstry, tipped into original diary, page 1] The annexed Diary was kept by Patrick Breen, who with his family viz., Patrick Breen, Margret Breen, John Breen, Edward Breen, Patrick Breen, jr., -- were part of what is called the "Donner Party" that was detained by snows on the Serrer Nevada the winter of 1846-47, an account of their sufferings was published by me in the "California Star," May 22d, 1847.

I am told Mr. Breen and family are at San Juan, Monterey County, Cala., Mr. Breen gave 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf9c6012h2>

:32 [Letter, page 2] 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. Hull, U.S. N. Sloop of War "Warren," Commander Nothern Disc. California 1847.

Geo. McKinstry
 San Diego, Cala.

July 1871 
<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf5q2nb7gj>