

1000 Miles Episode 1 Transcript

Robin Monteith: Welcome to “1000 Miles of Desert and Mountains” Brought to you by the University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno and the Washoe County Libraries. This project brings to life pages from the diaries of George and Josephine Scott — pages that documented their 1000-mile prospecting adventure across Nevada deserts and mountains in 1914\). The diaries, which are housed in Special Collections and University Archives at the University Libraries, are a wonderful primary source and give us insights into what life was like at the time while connecting us to George and Josephine — along with their burros who are also main characters in the story. As we join George and Josephine today, they have set out on their adventure. The date is Wednesday, March 4th, 1914. They have just spent the night in their first dry camp and are endeavoring to make their way to Byron, Nevada.

Jeremiah G. Nelson: Wednesday, March 4th. My dear father's birthday: Andrew Jackson Scott, Bethlem, Pennsylvania, 1828\). Sunshiny all day. I was up early missing cyclone who had hung around close to the wagon all night. I looked behind one or two mesquite bushes where he might be standing, and when I did not find him concluded he had gone back for water. Just then I heard a bray on the back trail, the only musical bray I ever heard, and here came cyclone in a hurry. In making up our bed we found about a dishpan full of rocks underneath. Broke camp at 9:30, and in about half an hour passed a team going toward Moapa. I was walking and driving Chino ahead for I had caught cyclone and he was pulling with Tucson. There were two men in the wagon and I said to them "we have a cat." And one of them answered, "what's that?" And I said, "you think you've seen the whole outfit; but you have not, we have a cat in the wagon." They laughed heartily, but I forgot to ask the distance to Byron. By keeping the loose burro ahead, the others pulled better. An hour passed and no station. Josephine would not use any of the drinking water. Two hours passed then three hours and four hours. Up to this time it had been all up grade, then we were on top of a mesa and at 2 o'clock had come to a station. I went over to find Paulino's wife but there was not a soul in the place but a blanket man who had just come up the track. I asked him what station it was as there was no name in sight, and he told me it was Crystal, which Herman Wood says is twenty five miles from the Muddy River. Anyway, we had passed Byron a long way back. Thank heaven there was plenty of water, the burros were soon filled up. We were able to turn out of the road a few feet and picketed Cyclone to the wagon. The others were allowed to run and browse till evening, then they were picketed to greasewood. The calf of my left leg ached so badly that I was unable to sleep, but Josephine gave it treatment and the pain was soon gone. Chino coughed pretty steadily until we gave him treatment and soon helped him. Gypsum has been in evidence all the way. Josephine drove the entire trip and I walked. Water is free at all railroad stations on the desert in Nevada. The section crew came in about five o'clock, a foreman and two men. We have passed some of the ruggedest mountains that we have ever seen. We had supper and turned down early.

Thursday, March 5th. Sunshine all day. Slept fairly well last night, fewer rocks. Heard some coyotes this morning. Cyclone's rope came untied but I soon caught him and fastened him to another bush. I washed and shaved yesterday and washed again this morning. Josephine cut my hair. Broke camp at 12 o'clock with Josephine at the helm driving Chino and Cyclone, while I kept the others on the trail in advance.

Robin: Thank you for listening with us today, and please join us next time when George and Josephine head to Las Vegas where they discover the Seven Saloons and Jack gets loose. Special thanks to Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Nevada, Reno for making the diaries available, and to our reader, Jeremiah G. Nelson for bringing George and Josephine's words to life. Big thanks to the 1000 Miles project team: Kim Anderson, Katherine Dirk, Emily Dunster, Nathan Gerth, Chrissy Klenke, Laura Rocke and Luka Starmer, along with me, your host, Robin Monteith. Episode music provided by Thomas Jones Chase, Tim Torrance and Per-Anders Nilsson, courtesy of Universal Production Music. You can explore more of the 1000 Miles project at library.unr.edu/1000-miles and you'll also find the link in the show notes. Thanks for joining us!