

EXCHANGE FOND

LETTERS WRITTEN

TO

EDWARD L. VAIL

BY

WALTER L. VAIL, NATHAN VAIL, H. R. MISLOP & TRACE VAIL.

DURING THE

YEARS ° 1875-1876-1877.



COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL.
Tucson, Arizona.
November 23rd, 1875.

Dear Ned:

I reached this place three days ago pretty well tired out, but considering the trip I think I was in pretty good condition when I reached Tucson. I have been trying ever since I came here to hire horses for a trip through the country but have not been able to do anything until this morning which was to buy a mule which is just the thing I need. I tried to hire either a mule or a horse that would take me a trip of 400 miles through the part of the country that I am anxious to see but have been unable to find anything that I thought would be safe for me to take as they are all in such miserable condition that it was very risky to take them on such a trip and even if I did they would charge me from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day which would amount to considerable in a short time. The mule I bought I paid \$100.00 for in green backs, and the Governor says if I am not able to sell her at a profit he will give me the same as I paid for her when I get through traveling, which will suit me very well, the great trouble in buying horses here is in the titles, there are so many run over the line from Mexico lately on account of the war that if a man is not careful what kind of a title he has some fellow will jump him and claim his nag which is not very pleasant when you are a hundred miles from home, but the one I have bought has been owned by the same party for three years.

Tucson is a very rough looking town, with only one brick house all the rest are built of mud, which are not very handsome, but are very comfortable to live in, the town has from three to four thousand inhabitants who are mostly all Mexicans but I have no doubt that before long there ^{will} be more whites than Mexicans which would make it a much

pleasanter place to live.

I was very much disappointed after I got here to find that it is impossible to buy any land unless you find a man who has been on his ground for three years, his title is of no account and as the country is all new on account of the Indian trouble such places are very hard to find (I mean places with a good title) I can go out anywhere and settle on 160 acres and then I can homestead 160 more which if it was situated on water would command a large range of fine grazing country and might in time be worth a great deal of money and then again it might be just as easy to pick up land three years from this before the railroad gets through as it is at the present time, I feel positive from all I hear that there is as fine grass land in this territory as there is in the World, I have been very much disappointed in the young man who started with me but he hasn't much grit, as soon as he struck Tucson he was willing to give up which would be a very great pity after spending so much money to cross 500 miles of desert to turn back, just as we get in the good country, which will not cost very much more to see than it will to stay in this place and know as little of Arizona as we did when we left California. I think myself that it is destined to be one of the richest States in the Union, it will never be a very good farming country but when they get capital enough to work the mines, then will be the time when things will pick up and everything will take a start.

The first day I arrived here the Governor showed me some silver rock which was taken out of a mine which belongs to him, he said he knew it was very rich but did not know exactly what it was worth, this morning when I met him he told me that he had just received a telegram from Frisco saying that some of the same rock had panned out over \$3000.00 per ton, which will pay very handsomely, the Governor thinks

that this country is going to be one of the richest mining countries in the world and if it is as good as they all think it of course will bring a great deal of money into the country, but as far as the the mines are concerned I would never put the first red cent in one, either in money or work, for I have seen enough to disgust me with all such operations in a new country. If I had known as much about the country before I left California as I do now I don't think I would have spent either the time or money, not but that I think the country just as fine as it has been represented, but the trouble is getting titles, but since I am here I am going to see some of the place then I can tell whether it will ever be worth coming back too, if don't stay now. It is a terrible trip from San Diego to this place most all the way is desert, which is very hot in the day and very cold at night, some places we had to drive fifty miles without water, which is very hard on horses but not with - standing the hard work they would run away when ever they got a chance, one night Mc Cartney and I both burst the curtains open and jumped out while the horses were on a dead run, which was a foolish thing to do under any circumstances, the way we came to make such a move was on account of our both being asleep and when the bumping about in the stage awakened us we thought the driver had jumped off and we knew that the brake had given out so we concluded to make the best of our legs which we did without any accident, but I would't like to say how many times I turned over when I struck the ground, the only thing that stopped the horses was that one of them fool horses stepped in a badger hole which threw him and as it happened to be a pretty rough place the other three could not drag the stage and the horse that was down with his hind feet in the front wheel. The boarders in the hotel where I am stopping which is the only one in the place, spend all of their time from morning till night in gambling, which of course don't help the place much.

Gambling, Indians and drinking is the ruination of the country.

I wish I had you here with me, I think we might make money, but as things are at present, I would not advise any one's coming to this country, although I think there will be chances to make money here if the railroad goes through and the Indians are kept down, but for the present I would not advise anyone to come from New York to this place.

I wish you would tell Theo. Brown and Will Smith that I will write to them both as soon as I come back from my trip in the country. I wrote Theo. Brown sometime ago, but as I have not heard from him I suppose it never reached him.

I have been moving about so much lately that I can't remember who I owe and who owes me letters, but will try and keep you posted at home, so that you may know where I am and what I am doing, after I see some of the country, if I conclude not to stay here I will go right to Los Angeles or Virginia where I can at least make a living. I hope that the mail will bring me some letters in the morning as I have not heard anything from home since I left home, so I of course feel anxious to hear how you all are at home. It is getting late and as I want to write to Maggie before the mail is closed I shall have to stop this scribbling.

Give my love to all at home and tell Prescott to write me when he can.

Your affectionate brother,

Walter L. Vail.

P. S.

I am afraid you will not be able to make out half of this scrawl.

W.