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Memoirs of Harriett F Switzer - 03 January, 1884

Harriet F. Switzer

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Feb. 1884 -

My Dear Family - Some nice new experiences, but I have had some nice new experiences, but several of them I do not wish to repeat. We have been hemoaning the rather unimpressive appearance of our "rig," & the necessary expense entailed if we have it painted & relined. In a thoughtless & reckless moment I said "Hub, if you will paint the body, I will reline the top & sides." "Done" said the inconsiderate fellow & to Orlando we went for supplies. I bought some good bottle green material & set to work & oh! what a dreadful piece of work it was! However, outside of wear & tear on temper & nerves the whole transaction will not have cost us more than four dollars. As to my vanity, it has had a tremendous boost because Russell told me that my part could not have looked better if it had come from the shop. I fear he drew a long bow, but the remark was satisfactory. Don't know how long it will be before my fingers get over the soreness, but the result of our efforts & the satisfaction of accomplishing a hard task, will compensate for all the trouble. You know we have been building the little homestead house; it is now finished, two rooms with porch back & front & a lean to. I have plans for "furnishing" with boxes, barrel chairs etc. We could not take every thing out at once so sent what was absolutely necessary, which included a cot & hammock for one of my dearest dreams for a long time has been to sleep in a hammock! Russell said "you'll be death-fired by worms," but I thought I knew better. They are out here with 6 or 8

men, Henry Daniels to do the cooking & he is a
fine cook. On our way here, when we came
to the Nekiva creek which we have to cross,
we found it much swollen & I was troubled
about crossing, but my orders were to "take
the basket on your lap, well put our feet
up on the dash board & win through without
getting wet." So our feet went up & my
skirts also. If Russell had not been such
a good driver I would not have consented
to try it. Blacklock & I were of the same
opinion as to not liking it. A very much,
especially when the water got higher and
higher & at last came into the buggy, but
that didn't last long & we soon pulled out &
onto the road without any damage done.

We found our workers on the ground & Henry
beginning operations for the evening meal. Our
cot was soon made up & the hammock swung
in the sitting room. Then we went on the
porch to watch the men. It was a picturesque
scene. They had built a large fire & were
squinting round it smoking & joking with
each other. While Henry with a very
intent face manipulated the "waster" upon
in which he was doing all sorts of things
& soon brought me a fine supper. Then
we retired to rest (?) Russ under a mosquito
bar, I in my hammock for a new experience,
& I got it. I had a piece of netting over
the hammock but it did not go to the floor.
Not being thin my flesh protruded between
each space in my bed & made most beautiful
& gettable spots for all the mosquitoes in
the vicinity. After twisting, turning & trying
every dodge to get away from the pests, and

dragging my quills in a hammock is no fun -
I at last gave up in despair, ~~to~~ my cheek-
I wrapped myself, head & all, in it & lay
on the floor, for there only one side could
be attacked, at a time, & I said emphatically,
"never again! one experience is enough!"
Very early I arose & went outside. The
dawn with all its exquisite colors was
breaking in the east & a faint haze gave
an air of mystery to the surroundings. In
the distance I caught the glint of water
between the pier & they - to my delight.
Coming up the little hill from the kitchen
lawn (- was a dove & jawn, such dainty
lovely creatures. Their curiosity drew
them almost to the house, when some-
thing startled them & with graceful leaps
& bounds they were soon out of sight.
I love it out here among the pines, there
is such a health giving air & it is a
regular holiday for me, (not any work
to speak of & three good meals a day
cooked for me. - I wish you could all
share the early dawn, the brilliant moon-
light nights, or - what is almost as beautiful
the star studded sky, the pine laden air &
listen to the wit & happiness of the workers.
Their merriment is very contagious. You expect
to be here for some time, making trips to Bonin
Island for supplies & the mail. One of the
men is off for Hitcher Park now, &
one to your dear ones, with love
Your justifying relative
Fannie.