

Walker's Plunge

"The waters of the Humbolt river are of a milky cast, not clear, so one afternoon while camped on the said stream and being the first to strip, I started for the swimming hole and was just about to plunge in when I got a hunch that things were not as they should be and I had better investigate before taking a dive. I did so and found the water was about a foot and a half deep and the mud four, this condition being in the eddy. So I waded to where there was a current and found the water a little more than waist deep, no mud and good smooth bottom. In looking towards the camp I espied Joe Walker coming and he was jumping like a buck deer, and when he arrived at the brink he says to me: 'How is it?' 'Joe,' I replied 'it is just splendid.' With that he plunged head-first into that four and a half feet of blue mud.

Fearing trouble and not being interested in the subsequent proceedings, I made myself scarce by hiding in the brush on the opposite side and in so doing I ran into some rose brier bushes and scratched myself some, but I was so full of laughter I did not mind that. I peeped through the bushes just in time to see him extricate himself from the mud. He then washed the mud off as well as he could, returned to the tepee, put on his clothes, shot his rifle off, cleaned it, then reloaded it and hollered at me and said: 'Now show yourself and I'll drop a piece of lead into you,' which I failed to do as I did not want to be encumbered with any extra weight especially at that time. I was compelled to remain in hiding nearly the whole afternoon. Before sundown I was told to come into camp and get my supper and leave, that I could not travel any further with that party.

I was very glad of the permit for it was rather monotonous out there in the brush with nothing but a blanket around me and nobody to talk to and my pipe in camp. I soon dressed myself and then it was time to chew. Our company was divided into messes and each mess was provided with a dressed buffalo hide. It was spread on the ground and the grub placed upon it. When supper was announced we sat down. I sat opposite to Walker and in looking at him I discovered some of that blue mud of the Humbolt on each side of his nose and just below his eyelids and I could not help laughing. He addressed me in an abrupt manner and said: 'What the h--l are you laughing at.' I told him that gentlemen generally washed before eating. With that the others observed the mud and they too roared with laughter in which Walker joined, but he threatened if ever I played another such trick on him he would kill me as sure as my name was Craig."

This place on the Humbolt river was ever afterward called by the mountain men.
"Walker's Plunge," or "Hole."

