



CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI

TOWN OF LIBERTY

The town of Liberty, Missouri developed in 1822, five years before the creation of Independence, Missouri to the south. Nonetheless, Liberty did not begin to grow by leaps and bounds until 1827, at the time of the establishment of Fort Leavenworth farther up the Missouri River. Transportation between the fort and Liberty was by boat and by wagon. The Liberty to Leavenworth Road developed rather quickly for use by the military. Obviously others used that road too. John Barber White, in the 1919 book *The Missouri Merchant One Hundred Years Ago*, says regular Liberty Landing steamer service did not begin until 1826. Further, White states that steamboat service would have begun in late March or early April in the early years. In the 1830s into the 1860s, Liberty was an active river port for steamers, but the coming of the railroads dramatically reduced the traffic. Due to a change in the Missouri River, Liberty now does not touch the river. Nonetheless, if one looks for the current short road named “Liberty Landing Road”, a person has found the vicinity of the original Liberty Landing.

Mary Ringo

1864 May 18

“May 18, Wednesday. Left [my Liberty, Missouri home and] my family and started on my long trip across the plains, went 20 miles, had some trouble with the oxen and camped for the night and here I took my first lesson in camp life, cooked my supper and went to bed but couldn’t sleep until after the chickens crowed for the day and after a short nap I awoke.”

*****A Liberty family decided to go to California. Since the Ringo family reached Leavenworth the next day, the family likely traveled the Liberty to Leavenworth Road. Mary Ringo kept a diary all the way to California, and she never once mentioned her pregnancy. She was expecting her sixth child. **Source:** “The 1864 Journal: Mary Ringo”, 191-231, quote on p. 204, in Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1862-1865*, Vol. 8. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1999 [reprint of 1989 edition].