



Kanesville (Council Bluffs), Iowa, 1853

The starting point of the legendary Mormon Trail, sketched by British artist Frederick H. Piercy (1830-1891). Piercy, a Mormon convert, made a number of drawings for his *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, the account of his westward adventures published in England in 1855. Piercy's drawings are believed to be the earliest surviving visual record of the Mormon Trail.

TRAVELS AND TRAVAILS
Young Emigrants Endure Exceptional Burdens
on the Overland Trails

by
Molly Kizer

We resorted to eating anything that could
Be chewed, even bark and leaves of trees.
We youngsters ate the rawhide from our
boots. This seemed to sustain life.¹

John Oborn—age thirteen at the time of his journey

In 1849, J. Goldsborough Bruff, captain of a group of gold seekers and government appointees called “The Washington City and California Gold Mining Association,” departed on a government mission bound for Sacramento, California. By October 21 the party reached the western outpost of the Sierra Nevadas, barely thirty-five miles from the Sacramento River.

Facing poor roads and deep snow, Bruff sent his men ahead while he remained behind, guarding the wagons and government property until they could be retrieved. Here, at this ridge on the Lassen Trail, near today’s Tehama County, California, Bruff spent many weary weeks recording the condition of and providing relief for California-bound emigrants who passed through what became known as Bruff’s Camp. Bruff also recorded information about their condition, and one of his most memorable encounters was with a six-year-old boy named Billy. Billy told Bruff that he longed for his home in Burlington, Iowa. There, “we had as nice a house as you ever saw...we had a nice yard, and plum trees, and peaches, and gooseberries, and we could go a little ways and get blackberries and grapes and all them things....Oh, how I miss em!”

Molly Kizer holds a master’s degree in history from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Billy, along with his family, found a welcome reprieve at Bruff's Camp. But he did not look forward to the prospect of living in a tent with other gold-seekers at the diggings, and he hoped it would not be too long before his father collected enough gold for the family to return to Iowa.²

Less than a week after Billy's arrival at Bruff's Camp in November, late in the season for travel through the heavy pine timber country of the Sierra Nevadas, the beleaguered Ferguson and Alford families saw lights in the distance. Eleven-year-old Henry Ferguson described his father as "yelling like a western Indian" with pleasure as the family neared the relative safety of Bruff's Camp. After nearly seven months of demanding travel, Henry wrote that the teams of animals were "tired, poor and jaded," and the family "worn and discouraged," ready to return home.³

Thoughts of home also consumed the thoughts of eighteen-year-old Martha Hill throughout her 1853 journey to the Pacific Northwest. When her wagon train was only fifty miles from its destination of Oregon City, Martha overheard a man offer her father ten thousand dollars for the livestock he had driven to Oregon. Martha pleaded with her father to accept the money and take the family back home to Tennessee, "for I was so homesick that I would surely have started back that very night if father had been willing."⁴

For pioneer families, many of whom were farmers without plains or mountain experience, the road west was filled with hardships. Indeed, if these emigrants had known what lay ahead of them, many would never have begun the journey. Poor roads, harsh weather, stampedes, dangerous river crossings, hunger, thirst, accidents, sickness and death threatened emigrants of all ages. Despite warnings from parents, it was impossible to shelter children from the inevitable hazards of a rigorous overland journey.

If they survived months on the trail and stayed healthy, these young people could draw strength from their sufferings and use those experiences to better adjust to the hardships they inevitably faced in establishing new homes on the frontier. Instead of being mere observers of the westering process, children were vital participants, and their numbers were considerable. It has been estimated that during 1849 alone, over 1,500 children traveled with their parents to the California gold

fields. Similar numbers advanced northward to Oregon or joined in populating the Mormon settlements that radiated out of the Salt Lake Valley.⁵

The California, Oregon, and Mormon trails closely approximated each other's routes for more than half the trip west. Each followed the course of the Platte River, then turned southwest through South Pass at the bottom of Wyoming's Wind River Range, and struck out along the Sweetwater River. Until emigrants came to the Raft River, a tributary flowing south of the Snake River and the point at which they necessarily parted ways depending on their final destination, children on the California and Oregon trails shared common experiences and hardships. At that juncture, however, many of their stories became unique to the specific trail each followed.

For those going to California, crossing the Humboldt Desert and traversing the Sierra Nevada Mountains presented the most difficult challenges. Oregon-bound travelers remembered the threats posed by the treacherous rapids and falls of the Snake and Columbia rivers, or the difficult passage around Mount Hood in Oregon via the Barlow Road. Although Mormon emigrants benefited by their shorter trek, which ended in Utah, they, too, faced adversity when crossing the arid plains of southwestern Wyoming and descending the rugged Wasatch Mountains.

During the early 1840s, before gold was discovered in California and the land-fueled Oregon Fever gripped the nation, many prospective emigrants were already weighing the benefits of traveling west. They were naturally concerned about the kinds of conditions they would find along the relatively unimproved trails that launched them into *terra incognita*. Many potential overlanders looked to newspapers for reports on the feasibility of a cross-country journey, especially when it came to learning about road conditions. They were encouraged by articles such as one that appeared in the *Missouri Republican* on May 5, 1846 which reported that "a very good road was discovered and traveled by a small party of emigrants who left Missouri in 1844."⁶

This news reflected the activities of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party, which, just one year after the Applegate train opened the southern route into Oregon, proved that there was a viable wagon route into

California. Although this information was encouraging—these California-bound emigrants made it to the Sacramento Valley without a single death—the journey was by no means an easy one. The Stephens-Townsend-Murphy pioneers made excellent time across the plains of Nebraska, reaching Fort Laramie by June 20, 1844. But to maintain such a rapid pace, the sixteen children in the party endured many miles of walking over primitive roads that were, alternately, slippery and muddy or dry and dusty.⁷

From the beginning of their journey west, children and parents alike repeatedly referred to road conditions and weather as having a direct impact on each day's progress. The first leg of the trek, despite relatively flat terrain, was physically demanding. While traveling along the Platte River Valley in 1849, eighteen-year-old Joseph Henry Merrill wrote, "we could see nothing but one blue sky and the rolling plain, no tree, no shrub, no little streams, nothing... the roads today were quite heavy; to drive long drives as we have been forced to."⁸ Merrill's description reflected what many young emigrants must have felt once they crossed the Missouri River and "left civilization."

On the plains, road conditions were usually determined by the weather. If travel proceeded smoothly, animals fared better, food was served on time, children complained less, and families remained congenial. After heavy rains, however, roads frequently melted into a continual string of mud holes, requiring every possible hand to assist with moving the wagons. Travel was easier when conditions were dry, of course, unless it was windy. Jane Gould, an 1862 overlander and mother of two young boys, wrote of a hot, windy day in August when "the wind blew in our faces in the afternoon and nearly suffocated us with dust, the dust is worse than Indians, storms, mosquitoes, or even woodticks."⁹

Menacing winds affected travel when emigrants reached the drier regions of western Nebraska. "The roads today were as bad as yesterday—sand, sand, sand. Will we ever get through it? And the wind is blowing a perfect hurricane," wrote Flora Isabelle Bender, fifteen years old in 1863.¹⁰ Helen Carpenter was of a similar mindset when she noted, "the dust and wind made everyone's lips sore, causing them to ache, swell, crack open and bleed." Helen's sixteen-year-old sister, Emily, was

equally frustrated by the weather when her long skirt prevented free movement over wind-blown, dusty roads. To prevent her skirt from swirling about, she pinned rocks in the hem of the burdensome garment, only to be forced to contend with bruised shins.¹¹

Whether it was strong winds, intense heat, severe cold, or frequent thunderstorms, harsh weather produced high levels of anxiety and suffering for all overlanders. But for children, many of them thinly clothed and unprepared for sudden changes of temperature and violent storms, this was an especially taxing experience.

In March 1852, the family of thirteen-year-old Al Hawk left their Indiana home and headed for Oregon. During the first part of the journey they encountered extreme cold and snowstorms that made the roads icy and muddy. Before the end of their ordeal, the six Hawk boys and their mother were forced to walk for weeks in the grueling hot sun. This was difficult for the younger boys who had relinquished their space in the wagon for their sick father. Young Al admired his mother for not complaining, and the children were inspired to follow her example. In order to get some relief from the intolerable heat and blinding sun, Hawk recalled, "we would all get behind the wagon and hold on; the wagon cover would give us some protection from the hot sun."¹²

Bitter cold especially affected children's legs, feet and hands. In 1853, Joel Knight, his pregnant wife, Amelia, and their seven children sold their farm in Iowa and headed west for what they hoped would be a more prosperous life in Oregon. Not even a week passed before two-year-old Chatfield Knight suffered terribly from the pain of sore and cold feet. It was heart wrenching for his mother to hear him crying, and must have been a rude awakening for all members of the Knight family who were suddenly faced with the realization that this was only the beginning of the hardships that lay ahead. On April 14, in one of her first diary entries, Amelia despairingly wrote that these were "dreary times, wet and muddy, and crowded in the tent, cold and wet and uncomfortable in the wagon, no place for the poor children."¹³

If children trudged through mud and snow during daytime, their clothes became wet and often froze on their bodies at night. Because they began their journeys late in the season, many of the children who traveled

with the Mormon Handcart Companies of 1856 were particularly susceptible to exposure from the cold.

Traveling to Utah with the John Hunt Company, thirteen-year-old Mary Globe described the year as being “so cold that clumps of ice floated down the shallow Platte River.” While camped near the river, she set out for a nearby spring in an effort to secure fresh drinking water for her pregnant mother. Forced to wade through snow, Mary became confused, lost her way, and subsequently suffered excruciating pain in her legs and feet because of the cold. Some men from the company finally found her, but not before her feet and legs were frozen. The rescuers carried the youngster back to camp, rubbed her legs in snow, and placed her feet in a bucket of water. “The pain was terrible,” Mary remembered. “The frost came out of my legs and feet but not out of my toes.”¹⁴

Ten-year-old Ellen Purcell and her fourteen-year-old sister Maggie accompanied the Mormon Handcart Company of Edward Martin. They also suffered from badly frozen feet and legs. It was especially traumatic for these two girls since both their parents died during the journey. When, in November 1856, a relief party met the Martin Company, the girls were in desperate need of dry clothing. A member of the rescue party noted that, “when shoes and stockings were removed from the girls’ feet, the skin on their legs and feet came off. Maggie’s legs were frozen but salvageable, and her skin was scraped from the bones. Ellen’s legs, however, were so badly frozen that nothing could be done for her, requiring them to be amputated just below the knees.”¹⁵

Violent thunderstorms occurred without warning, and emigrants found little protection in their fragile tents or under wagon covers. Storms were frequent on the plains during spring and early summer, and when parents sensed threatening weather, they scrambled to find their children. “Unless you have been through it,” recalled Benjamin Franklin Bonney, “you have no idea of the confusion resulting from a storm on the plains.”¹⁶ For children who lived through the experience, it was one they never forgot.

Mary Elizabeth Munkers celebrated her tenth birthday on April 8, 1846, the same day she departed Tennessee for Oregon with her parents

and eight brothers and sisters. Enduring fierce storms in which slashing winds blew the covers off the wagons and overturned tents was not easy. Recounted Mary, “the sky would be black as ink one moment, and then there would be a brilliant flash of lightning, which made it instantly seem like daylight.... The rain came down in bucketfuls, drenching us to the skin...there wasn’t a tent in camp that held against the terrific wind.”¹⁷ Even if one was fortunate enough to make it to a wagon during heavy rains, the wagon box was always crowded, and children were reduced to sleeping in wet beds, wearing wet clothes, and frequently going to bed hungry.

In 1853, fifteen-year-old Rachel Taylor stood at the opening of her tent when a fierce storm broke. On August 28 she wrote: “we did not have time to escape, but shared in the general overthrow and were rolled some distance enveloped in the folds of the tent before we could regain our footing.”¹⁸ Still, Rachel survived without injury.

Some of the members of the Ferguson and Alford families were less lucky. They were killed during a frightful storm that struck Bruff’s Camp on October 31, 1849. Eleven-year-old Henry Ferguson remembered that “about midnight, in gloomy darkness, the storm broke upon us in all its fury, and breaking off near the ground the great black oak tree under which our tents and the tents of our friend Alford were stretched. The body of the tree fell across our tent in which there were four young children, and the top of the tree fell on the Alford tent, killing the old man and his oldest son instantly, and fatally injuring his younger son and their hired man, a Mr. Cameron, who both died the next day.”¹⁹ For J. Goldsborough Bruff, who awakened when he heard screams, it was a shocking sight. The men raised the blood-stained tent and spent the remainder of the day attending to the injured and burying the dead. Bruff wrote that the women and children “stood, with clasped hands, choking sobs, and eyes upraised to Heaven, regardless of the bleak storm and rain.”²⁰

Storms also brought the likelihood of lightning, and nothing was more frightening for young emigrants than being in a flimsy wagon or tent when the sky exploded. No sooner had the westward-bound Saunders family crossed the Missouri River in 1847 than a violent storm

broke out over a densely forested area. A twelve-year-old boy in the company was struck by lightning and killed. According to Mary Saunders, this was viewed as an ominous omen for the travelers to bury someone so young, so soon into the journey.²¹

When sixteen-year-old William Colvig journeyed west in 1861, he, too, remembered one of the most frightening moments he experienced on the plains as being caused by lightning. A blinding bolt of lightning struck a wagon that contained a barrel of gunpowder, causing the wagon bed to explode instantly. The sound was deafening, and the contents of the wagon were spread across the prairie.²²

Likewise, Mary Ellen Todd, age nine in 1852, remembered the constant threat of storms, and was all too aware of the fact that she had no house for protection. One storm brought a torrential downfall of rain and hail, accompanied by rolling thunder and lightning that seemed to shake the ground. She and her companions stood in awe when a bolt of lightning suddenly struck the wheel of a wagon belonging to a family with whom the Todds were traveling, and swirled around for several seconds. For that short time, the wheel looked like a ball of fire, a sight that sent chills through the bodies of everyone who witnessed the extraordinary sight.²³

Lightning also caused draft animals to become panicky, and in some cases triggered one of the most feared and dangerous events of westward travel—the stampede. If the cry of stamped was heard in a company, every man was instantly on his feet, unhitching oxen and chaining them to the wagon wheels. Women and older children rushed, sometimes in vain, to gather smaller children and get them safely into wagons.

During the 1840s and early 1850s, vast buffalo herds roamed west of Fort Kearny. At their approach, oxen, mules, and horses sometimes stampeded while still in their harnesses. During a buffalo stampede every person or animal outside the protected area of encircled wagons was at risk. If there was time, the men tried to shoot the leader of the herd, hoping that the buffalo would divide and scatter.

Many young people spoke of horrifying scenes such as the one described by John Braly who was twelve when he traveled west in 1847, a year in which emigrants frequently reported seeing numerous buffalo on

the plains. Excitement prevailed among the emigrants in his company when, like a freight train, a herd of charging buffalo headed straight for his camp. He was not sure he would live through the experience, especially when one of the enormous animals came so close to his wagon that it jumped over the wagon tongue.²⁴ A year later, facing the ferocity of a charging herd of buffalo, a boy traveling with Margaret Hecox refused to be intimidated. Emboldened, he seized a whip and proceeded to lash a large bull in the face. His mother, according to Margaret, quickly rescued the child or his impetuosity would have most likely ended in disaster.²⁵

Inevitably, many close calls were accompanied by death. On August 3, 1862, the family of Albert Gould passed by a train that had just buried a young woman and her baby. Jane Gould, chronicler of their journey, was saddened to learn that the mother had been killed after being run over by cattle and wagons during a stampede the previous day. Gould wrote: "She gave birth to a child a short time before she died, the child was buried with her. She leaves a little two-year-old girl and a husband, they say he is nearly crazy with sorrow."²⁶

Although not as common as stampedes involving buffalo, there were also cases in which the livestock of a train went out of control. For 1857 overland traveler Sarah Maria Mousely, July 27 was the most painful day of her journey, "a wild scene." One moment the train's cattle were calm. The next instant they suddenly began moving all together. The fright that Sarah saw come over her father's face left an indelible memory. Men and women leaped from the wagons and children screamed, as team after team ran wild on the open prairie. Sarah watched two of her sisters, Nellie and Wilhelmina or "Willie," jump from their wagon, not knowing what else to do. Both girls suffered acute injuries. Willie's face and chest were trampled on during the chaos and "she was streaming with blood and crying for help," wrote Sarah.²⁷ The emigrants, filled with anxiety, were compelled to remain the day in camp, nursing the company's injured members. The following day they were visited by Sioux Indians who sympathized with their plight and remained through the night keeping a vigil for the sisters who were indeed fortunate to survive the catastrophe.²⁸

Tragedy and narrow escapes were unavoidable when emigrants crossed the western landscape's rivers and streams. The task of fording or ferrying wagons across rivers required patience and skill, and many farmer-emigrants quickly learned that they lacked such expertise. Older children might react quickly if they found themselves in a life-threatening situation during a river crossing, but younger children either depended on adults for safety, or were simply left to blind fate. The anticipation of possible disaster was almost worse than the actual crossing, according to eight-year-old Elizabeth Lord. Terror gripped the minds of overlanders, and the air was thick with reports of accidents that resulted from quicksand, undercurrents, upset wagons or drownings, all of which, the young girl sensed, made her father uneasy despite his continual pleas for others in the company not to panic.²⁹

If emigrants were willing to pay, wagons and sometimes cattle could be ferried across rivers in primitive flat-bottomed boats. Horses, however, had to be ridden or led across rivers and streams, and, in deep water, they frequently became frightened and disoriented. The boys and men performing this difficult task directed the horse across the river by using a willow stick and holding tightly to the mane. It was dangerous duty, and those who accepted the responsibility knew that they were at considerable risk.

In 1853, when he was nine, David Longmire and his family left Indiana for Washington Territory. For David, one of the journey's most threatening incidents occurred at a stream crossing on the plains. As a teenager named Van Ogle rode the lead horse across the water the animal suddenly reared up and threw him backwards. David was in awe of Van Ogle's rare presence of mind as he dived to the bottom of the stream to avoid contact with the panicked horse. To the relief of all, he reappeared safely on the surface. David's admiration for his friend and fellow traveler continued for the remainder of their lives.³⁰

The men not in charge of livestock usually swam alongside the wagons, steadying wagon beds and reassuring frightened members of the party. Though only five years old in 1848, Inez Parker recalled how serious her father looked while swimming alongside the wagon as they crossed the Platte River. He soberly warned her and the other children to

remain motionless in order to balance the wagon. It was a tall order for the children who screamed and covered their faces when the water rose to within a few inches of the edge of the wagons.³¹ After her train successfully crossed the Platte in 1856, Helen Carpenter wrote, "the water runs very swiftly and that together with the sand washing from under the wheels settling down into the quicksand, causing a shaking trembling sensation that was truly terrifying."³²

Most emigrants reached the opposite shores of the rivers and streams, but many drowned, and others barely escaped the traumatic ordeal. If a family got into trouble, it could generally count on other emigrants for help, but such was not the case with a family trying to cross the Platte the same day Josiah and Mary Variel did in 1851. The river was broad and shallow, and the men were advised to use blocks to build up their wagons so the contents would remain dry and women and children could ride in the wagon box. Mary remembered being dismayed that some of the men chose to use buffalo skulls for support rather than take the extra time to build up their wagons with blocks. She also thought her wagon was the last to cross that day until she heard a voice behind her calling out for help. Looking back, Mary saw a man, woman and two children in a two-horse, light wagon. One horse was struggling, and the owner screamed he would pay well for assistance. The captain of the Variel train, refusing the service of any oxen from his company to help the stranded family pull its wagon out of the river, left them to an uncertain fate. Mary never knew what became of the desperate family. The cries of the woman and children and the swearing of the man, as they disappeared in the current, haunted her for the rest of her life.³³

Incidents like the one witnessed by Mary Variel on the Platte also occurred when people crossed Wyoming's Green River, a river with a stronger current. Here, emigrants often balked at paying the exorbitant prices charged by ferry owners, or simply refused to wait in long lines for their turn. When families attempted to cross certain of the large rivers without assistance, the results were often catastrophic.

In 1852, a man decided to ford the Green River with his two daughters rather than pay for the ferry. The current was so strong that the wagon floated off its wheels. One of the daughters, age twelve at the

time, saved herself and her two-year-old sister by gripping the bow of the wagon and holding the younger girl above water until they were rescued more than a mile downstream.³⁴ Although only four years old in 1857, Nancy Lowell Campbell vividly remembered a similar event when a member of her company could not be bothered to build up his wagon in preparation for crossing the Green. Midstream, the wagon floated boat-like off its wheels and was swept away by the current. Fortunately, fellow travelers' heroic efforts saved the lives of the panicked family.³⁵

Equally challenged were members of the Mormon handcart expeditions of the 1850s who had the added burden of pulling and pushing their carts across the rivers and streams. Women and older children were crucial to the success of these companies, and in many cases they muscled their handcarts to Salt Lake City without any adult male assistance. When Edward Martin's handcart company crossed the Platte River, they were still seven hundred miles from Salt Lake City. Josiah Rogerson, Sr., a member of the 1856 company wrote that "never was a more soul-stirring sight that the party and passage of this company over that river. Several of the carts were drawn entirely by women, yet their hearts were glad and full of hope."³⁶ After their father had died in September that year, eighteen-year-old Patience Loader and her sisters nearly drowned while pulling their cart across the Platte's freezing waters. As their mother watched in horror while her daughters struggled for survival, Patience heard her screaming from the bank, "For God's sake some of you men help my poor girls!"³⁷

Both the Martin and Willie handcart companies unwisely started their journeys late in the season, and these emigrants were already in deplorable condition even before they attempted to cross the Platte. All of them had to roll up their trousers and skirts to wade the cold river, often slipping off boulders and stones into deeper water. In many places, the water was nearly waist deep, and blocks of snow and ice had to be avoided with each step. Psychological pressures mounted, and some of the Saints who anticipated soon reaching their wilderness Zion wondered if Brigham Young's relief parties would arrive before the entire party perished.³⁸

Earlier in the journey, Edward Martin issued an order for emigrants

to reduce the weight of their handcarts. Because of this advice, blankets, bedding and warm clothing needed after the frigid river crossings were gone, contributing further to the company's death toll. Parents struggled with their handcarts until their strength was drained. The young children of Aaron Jackson saw their debilitated father collapse mid-stream while pulling his handcart. During the night he died, and the children helped their mother wrap his frozen body in a blanket for burial in the snow.³⁹

For overlanders traveling northwest to Oregon, the canyon of the Snake River and the dangerous one hundred fourteen mile float down the Columbia River presented more hardships than any other part of the route to the Willamette Valley. After nearly five months on the road, emigrants were exhausted, their oxen weakened, and their seemingly limitless patience tested by the rugged hills and valleys of Idaho and Oregon. It took every ounce of their remaining energy to complete the final leg of the journey.

When emigrants arrived at Three-Island-Crossing on the Snake River, they had a choice. They could cross there and travel south around its bend, which added considerable distance to the journey. Or they could caulk and cover their wagon beds and float down the Snake for two hundred miles to Fort Boise while driving their teams along the river's bank.

The water route was tempting for tired travelers who mistakenly thought it would be a relief from the dusty roads. Initially, the Snake's current moved slowly and the going seemed pleasant. But those who chose the voyage by river often lost every possession, and some lost their lives. Indians and other settlers warned emigrants not to attempt negotiating the Snake by water because of rapids and treacherous falls further down the canyon. Edward J. Allen, who operated a ferry across the river at Fort Boise, wrote that emigrants could expect to encounter "a series of rapids and falls which shot the craft along at breath-taking speed...the rude crafts were catapulted over the cascades without warning, missing rocks by inches."⁴⁰ When Allen made his first trip down the Snake, he traveled with another man, his wife and two small children, who, he wrote, "narrowly missed death many times."⁴¹

Still, many emigrant families opted to take what they erroneously

thought was the fastest and shortest route. "What a glorious change it would be, and the idea was hailed with delight, we bit like fish," recounted Al Hawk, thirteen years old in 1852.⁴² His parents and five brothers, the youngest less than two years old, and two other families traveling with them agreed on the water route. They felt they made the right decision until the river began to narrow and the current swelled.

"All hands were at the mercy of angry water," noted Al, "it didn't give us time to realize the danger we were in."⁴³ When the travelers reached calmer water, the families decided that the women and children should walk along the river bank. Following that path they experienced an eerie feeling as they passed the graves of emigrants who lost their lives in the river. In many places, older boys were required to help the men empty boats, let the vessels down the rapids with ropes and carry them around dangerous obstacles. Although they lost valuable time, the Hawk family made it to the fort and continued their journey to Portland. Sadly, however, Al Hawk's mother, who endured the hardships of the journey better than anyone according to her son, died less than a year after the family settled in Oregon. He would always attribute her death to a fall she suffered while on the treacherous Snake River.⁴⁴

When the family of Alfred and Mary Jane Washburn, pioneers of 1851, reached the Snake River, Alfred told his fourteen-year-old son Henry, a capable horseman and swimmer, to take the stock across the river where there was better pasture. The horse Henry rode became frightened in the deep water's swift current. He tried desperately to guide his horse into shallow water, but the distraught animal reared up, threw him off, and Henry suffered a fatal blow to his head.

Along with their parents and other families in the party, the thirteen siblings of Henry Washburn remained at the site for two days searching for his body. When their efforts failed, Mary Jane Washburn wrote a note which she fastened to a board beside the road asking anyone who might find her son's body to bury it and notify her in Portland. Henry's thirteen-year-old sister Marilla remembered how much at peace her mother was when she received a letter the following spring from another emigrant who said he had found the boy's body and buried it. In the letter was included a small horseshoe that a friend had given Henry in Chicago for

good luck shortly before his departure.⁴⁵

After Oregon emigrants left the Snake River, their goal was to make it over the Blue Mountains before getting bogged down by winter snows, and into the valley of the Grande Ronde, where they enjoyed a slight reprieve before undertaking the last and most difficult part of their journey. Before 1846, all travelers rafted down the treacherous Columbia River to the Dalles. After 1846, emigrants had the choice of traveling the water route or following the newly-established Barlow Road, a land route around Mount Hood blazed by Samuel Barlow and Joel Palmer. Or they could approach Oregon from the south on a trail opened by Jesse Applegate in 1845.

The Barlow Road was difficult, especially at Laurel Hill—referred to by emigrants as the “chute”—on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains. Wagons had to be lowered down the steep grade by ropes. Emigrants who chose Applegate’s route traveled to Fort Hall, then into Nevada along the Humboldt River, and subsequently northwest into Oregon. The southern route, however, was hot and dry, and overlanders on the Applegate Trail reported frequent problems with Indians. Despite what was considered an exorbitant toll of five dollars per wagon and ten cents per animal most emigrants considered the Barlow Road safer than a desert crossing or rafting down the Columbia.⁴⁶

The Applegate brothers, Charles, Lindsay, and Jesse, opened up the southern route into the Willamette Valley so emigrants could bring their wagons and cattle all the way to Oregon City. They were motivated, in part, by memories of their own tragic experience in descending the Columbia River in boats.

Lindsay Applegate named his third son after his highly esteemed brother Jesse. The younger Jesse was not yet seven years old when the families departed Missouri for their long, precedent-setting march to Oregon in 1843. Prior to their trip down the Columbia, the men and boys spent two weeks at Fort Walla Walla building small boats, which they referred to as “skiffs,” large enough to carry eight to ten persons. The wagons and cattle were left under the protection of the Hudson’s Bay Company until the men could return and retrieve their possessions. It was at this point that an Indian pilot was hired to navigate the families safely

down the river.⁴⁷

The children were excited to commence their voyage on the great river and, in the beginning, all enjoyed the ride, especially the pleasant rocking motion of the boat. But as the families proceeded further, their boats began sweeping along at a rapid pace, and the waves became treacherous. At this dangerous part of the river, all were expected to follow the boat piloted by their Indian guide. But in an instant of confusion, one of the boats disappeared, and the men and boys in it were soon seen struggling in the water.

Lindsay and the older Jesse Applegate watched, frenzied, as their sons, Elisha, aged eleven, and Warren and Edward Applegate, both aged nine, fought for their lives. The men made a desperate attempt to save them and others, but were convinced by their wives that the effort would only result in the loss of more lives. "The words of that frantic appeal," recalled young Jesse, "saved our boat and two families from speedy and certain destruction."⁴⁸

Elisha Applegate swam to safety, but the two younger boys, along with seventy-year-old Andrew McClellan, perished in the disaster and were never found. Jesse's uncle was quick to blame the Indian pilot for the deaths of his family members. The pilot, sensing revenge, quickly disappeared after the boats landed. The Applegate families mourned their dead, then continued their dangerous river journey to the Dalles and went on to play important roles in the early history of Oregon.⁴⁹

Over the course of the overland migration, drownings occurred at virtually every difficult river and stream crossing along the entire length of the Oregon and California trails. They also took place when emigrants going for a swim underestimated the depth or current in a river or pond.

Such was the case with seventeen-year-old Hiram Malick, one of the six children of Abigail and George Malick, Oregon emigrants of 1848. Together with some friends, Hiram went swimming in the Platte River on a pleasant summer afternoon. The current was swifter than any of the boys realized and Hiram began experiencing leg cramps. A companion tried to push a pole out to midstream to facilitate a rescue, but the water ran so fast the rescuer had to return to shore. Friends urged Hiram to hold on and swim harder, but the seventeen-year-old was doomed; he went

down seven or eight times before drowning. Some party members who witnessed his tragic death later remembered Hiram Malick's last distressing words: "Oh my God, Oh Lord Jesus receive my soul for I am no more."⁵⁰ His family was devastated and it took his mother over a year to write about the tragic event. She could not imagine that in such a short time after their departure from Illinois death came to one of her children, one she believed was a seasoned and experienced traveler.⁵¹

Numerous children spoke of fatal or near-fatal drownings like the one that claimed Hiram Malick's life. After crossing the Sweetwater, the company with which ten-year-old Barnet Simpson and eleven-year-old John Anderson traveled laid over for three days to wash clothes, repair wagons, and dry out supplies soaked by the river crossing. The boys decided to go swimming. But they ventured too far and discovered that the water was not as shallow as they anticipated.

John Anderson suddenly stepped into a deep hole and screamed to Barnet for help, but both were swept downstream in the current. Finding himself washed up on a sandbar, Barnet, from a distance, saw John crawl out of the river to return to the train alone. When the two boys discovered one another at camp and realized that they were both alive, they celebrated their good fortune and, at the same time, made a solemn pact not to tell their parents about their narrow escape until they reached the Willamette Valley.⁵²

All emigrants soon learned to anticipate possible troubles at river crossings, but they could hardly anticipate the frequent accidents that were endemic to the overland trails. After disease, accidents were the leading killers of children traveling west. Incidents of being crushed by moving wagons or from handling draft animals were especially common

Despite continuous warnings from parents to be careful around wagons, children of all ages were vulnerable to these types of accidents because they generally walked alongside the moving wagons in order to lighten the load, and because the springless, cushionless wagon seats made riding uncomfortable. A sudden veering of the wagon's course or the approach of another wagon along the flanks of a family's wagon often meant potential disaster. Other children simply fell from the wagon boxes because of a sudden jolt or an untimely shifting of their position.

On July 12, 1850, Mary Ann Maughan dressed her three-year-old son Peter in white and made him a coffin out of a dry goods box in preparation for his burial. Earlier that day, Peter sat in the front of the wagon between his brother and sister when he leaned forward to look at an ox with one horn. He lost his balance and fell in front of the wagon's wheels. The first wheel passed over him, but the second wheel stopped on Peter's back and crushed him. He lived barely an hour, and the Maughans, with everyone in their company gathered around them for comfort, left their child in a grave on a hill overlooking the Platte River.⁵³

Three years before Peter Maughan died, five-year-old Robert Gardner was buried on the banks of the Platte. Robert was standing by the oxen of his family's wagon when one of the animals suddenly kicked him and bolted forward knocking him under the wagon. By that afternoon Robert seemed to have recovered. Trying to allay his family's fears, he proceeded to play and run alongside the wagon. Later in the day, however, Robert crawled into the wagon, never to get up again without help. His injuries were internal, and his suffering increased each day. Robert's parents did what they could to relieve their son's pain, his father holding him for days while driving the wagon. With three other small children to care for, Robert's mother watched in agony as her small son's condition deteriorated. "He lived until he was nothing but skin and bones," wrote Robert's uncle, "then death mercifully ended all."⁵⁴

In 1846, Nicholas Carriger was traveling with a nine-year-old boy who fell under the wheels of a moving wagon. The youngster suffered a crushed ankle in one leg and a broken bone in the thigh of his other leg. Inexplicably, his family laid him in the wagon without dressing the wound. The child suffered for nine days while gangrene set in and a decision had to be made whether or not to amputate his leg.⁵⁵ The company sent for Edwin Bryant, a newspaperman who had studied medicine and was traveling behind the Carriger train. Although not a licensed doctor, Bryant reported helping many 1846 emigrants in need of medical assistance.

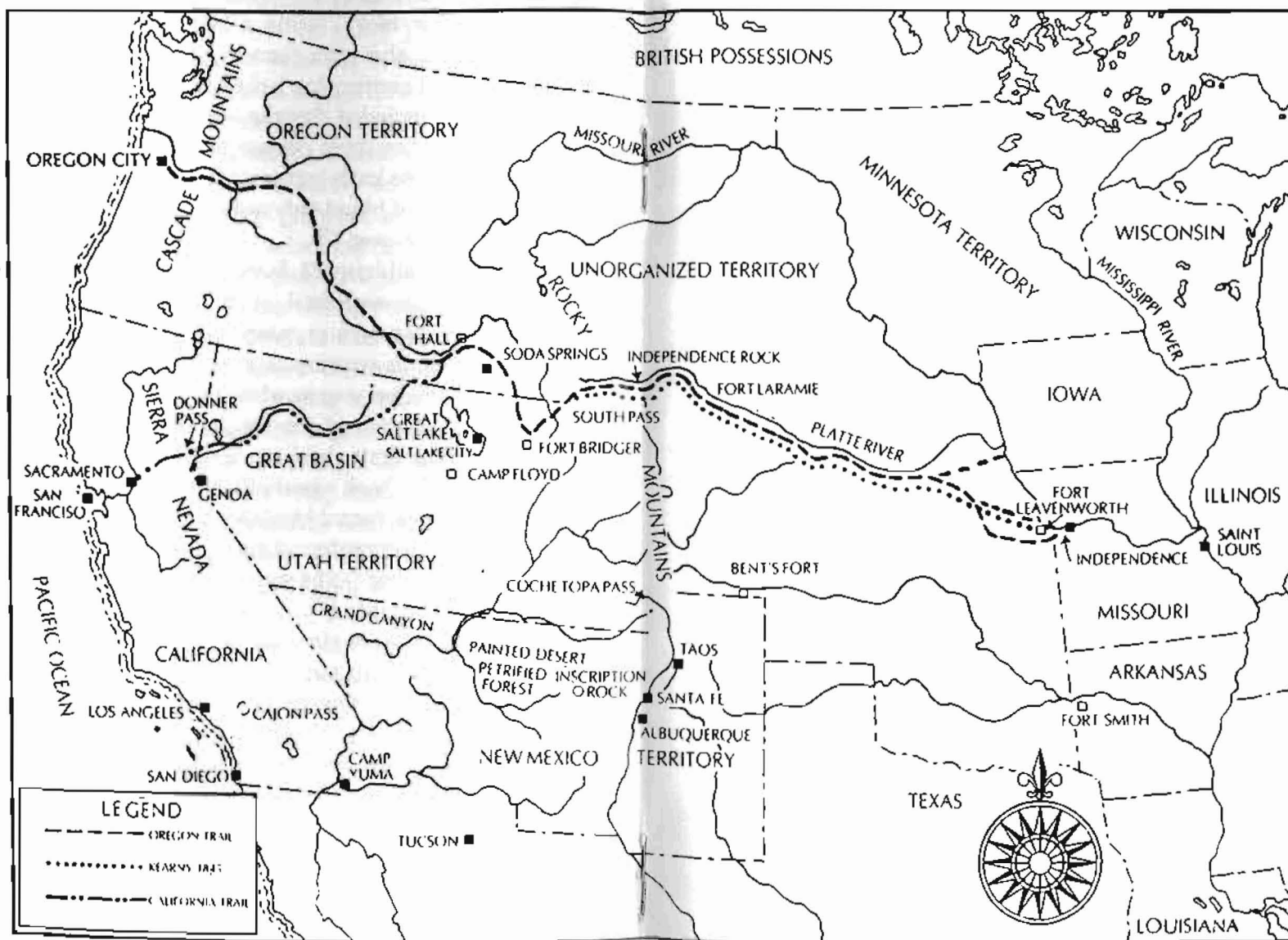
The boy's limb was "swarming with maggots" and Bryant advised his mother that any attempt to save the child would only increase his already intolerable pain. But the boy's mother insisted on an amputation,

and allowed a man who proclaimed he was a surgeon's assistant to perform this task. Using a butcher knife and a crude handsaw for instruments, the man "made an incision just below the knee and commenced sawing; but before he had completed the amputation of the bone, he concluded that the operation should be performed above the knee.... During these demonstrations, the boy never uttered a groan or complaint...the knife and saw were then applied and the limb amputated. A few drops of blood only oozed from the stump; the child was dead his miseries were over."⁵⁶

Many children fell from wagons while traveling west, but not all such accidents were fatal. If the ground was soft or sandy, a child might be fortunate enough to escape with bruises or broken bones and live to tell about it, as was the case with Elizabeth Lord. The eight-year-old jumped from her wagon while the team of oxen was moving. Her skirt caught on the pin of the wagon wheel and she was drawn under the wheels. The first wheel ran across her face, stripping the skin off one side, while the back wheel rolled over her abdomen. She was badly hurt, and her parents feared her dead, but "the dust was so deep," remembered Elizabeth, "that it softened the weight and lightened the load, all of which were in my favor." She was up and walking in about a week but carried the scar on her face.⁵⁷

Children were also injured or killed in a myriad of other accidents that added to the hazards of cross-country travel. When Mary Furlong's family traveled to Oregon in 1843 she was too young to remember much of her journey west. Yet she clearly recalled how the adults worried about running out of provisions when the company left the buffalo country. The men traded more often with the Indians, who provided dried meat and fish in exchange for clothing and other items. Mary remembered that during one of the bartering sessions "we had a large bonfire and while they were trading the horses got frightened and started to run. He got the rope around me and threw me into the fire. Although I was taken out quickly, I was badly burned."⁵⁸

Jerry Carter Perkins was not as lucky. Like Mary Furlong, he became caught in a rope with which he was playing, fell into the evening's campfire, knocked over a large kettle of boiling water and was



The Oregon Trail

This map is from an essay by Kit Collings in *Pioneer Trails West* edited by Donald Worcester. Permission to reprint granted by Caxton Press, Caldwell Idaho.

sealed to death.⁵⁹ Susan Westfall received a severe scalding when she stumbled into one of the famous boiling Steamboat Springs in Utah Territory during her 1857 journey. These springs were spoken about by hundreds of emigrants. In 1852, seventeen-year-old Eliza Ann McAuley described them as “boiling up in the middle of the valley forming a large stream, with a temperature of at least 170 degrees, and a nauseous and sickening smell.”⁶⁰ Susan experienced awful pain after the accident and was not expected to live, according to fellow traveler Arthur Menefee, yet he did not mention a subsequent death or burial.⁶¹

No doubt carelessness helped cause such accidents, but many were difficult to prevent since parents were busy and fatigued, and unable to watch their children at all times.

More commonplace, however, were mishaps caused by draft animals, or by careless gun-handling. In such instances, children were as much at risk as adults, even if they did not carry a weapon. In 1852, Susan Angell traveled to Oregon with a company that experienced only two fatalities during the entire journey, both the results of accidents. One involved a child, a small boy who became entangled in a rope attached to a horse. Onlookers were horrified as the horse became frightened and bolted. The child was dragged behind the run-away and died before he could be cut loose. Somberly, the Angell company buried the boy near Fort Kearny, and his family, like so many others who buried loved ones on the way west, had no choice but to stay on schedule and push on in grief.⁶²

Overlanders, by and large, carried a vast amount of firearms on their journeys and they generally seemed more afraid of gun-handlers in their own trains than of hostile Indians. Their fears were certainly justified, as evidenced by the steady stream of emigrants who were treated for bullet wounds at Fort Kearny and Fort Laramie hospitals, and also by grave markers alongside the trail that revealed a cause of death.⁶³ Children were both victims of gunshot accidents or witnesses to such fatalities.

Typical was the wounding of a young German girl who, in 1850, was struck in the neck and breast by a gun that went off in a wagon in front of her as it suddenly jolted on the rocky trail.⁶⁴ Although she endured days of painful jostling, she survived. But others were not so fortunate. The

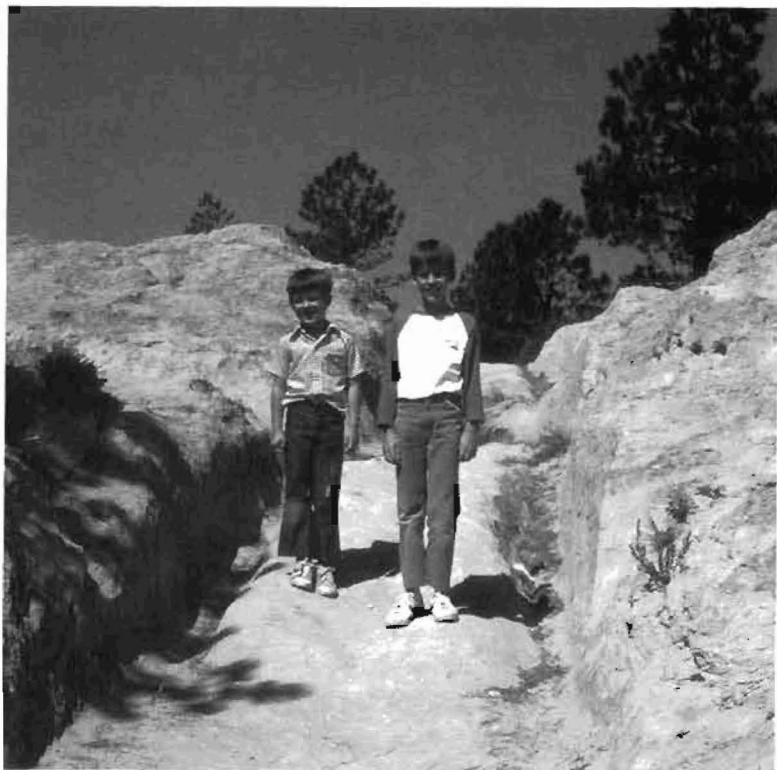
trek to California made by the Ringo family in 1864 was marked by tragedy when patriarch Martin Ringo accidentally shot himself in the face and died. It was "the saddest record of my life...my little children are crying all the time," wrote Mary Ringo, who, along with her five children under the age of fourteen, buried her husband.⁶⁵

When seventeen-year-old Eliza Ann McAuley's train arrived at Boiling Springs while traveling the California Trail in Nevada on an August day in 1852, two young boys from a previous train were waiting at the site. One was critically injured and in a great deal of pain. Eliza Ann learned that the youths were brothers who had been out hunting when they heard what they thought was a gunshot from across the stream. Thinking the gun had been fired by Indians, one of the boys jumped to his feet. He tripped on his gun which was lying on the ground. The firearm went off and the bullet ripped into his lungs.

By the time the McAuley train reached the springs, nearly two hours after the accident, the boy was rapidly failing. The newly arrived company gave the two brothers all the fresh water that they had, which was all they could do to help until the youngsters' own train could rescue them. When Eliza Ann's wagon pulled out, the injured boy was still alive, but she did not expect he had much of a chance of survival.⁶⁶

Children were especially prone to the nearly unimaginable fear of becoming lost and disoriented in a strange land. This happened to many young girls and boys who went off in search of lost cattle, or to hunt, gather firewood, retrieve fresh water, or those who simply left their trains on a sight-seeing adventure. The plains posed special problems because often there were no identifiable landmarks visible, and the mountain and canyon country obscured the line of sight for lost children and potential rescuers alike.

Some lost children found their way back to their trains or were rescued by members of their own or other companies. In 1854, near the fork of the Sweetwater River, twelve-year-old Lizzie Hunt left her camp to look for firewood and completely lost her bearings. After finding the road, she walked five miles before she was fortunate enough to find another company of emigrants. Two of them volunteered to return the exhausted girl to her family. When Lizzie and her rescuers rode into her



Two modern day young travelers on the Oregon Trail at the deep wagon ruts in eastern Wyoming. Photo courtesy Julie Johnson.

camp at eleven o'clock that night her mother was "nearly beside herself," wrote Lizzie's older sister, Naney Hunt.⁶⁷

During their 1853 journeys, both Maria Belshaw and Amelia Knight described similar agonizing experiences. Maria Belshaw recorded that her nephew, William Belshaw, and his seven-year-old traveling companion, Charles Martin, left camp during dinner to retrieve a horse. William returned safely, but Charles, who could not see the wagons, took a wrong turn and became lost. He was missed within a half-hour of leaving camp and thirty to forty fellow emigrants searched for the missing child until sunset, but failed to find him. "What agony did his parents endure during this time," wrote Maria Belshaw, "and what anxiety did his friends have until a man came to our wagon at sunset with the news that the child was safe." After following the Platte River near Laramie Peak for half a mile, Charles found another company of wagons whose members treated him kindly, and they returned him unharmed to his grateful parents.⁶⁸

Amelia Knight was also grateful for the return of her daughter, eight-year-old Lucy, who was unintentionally left behind on the banks of the Malheur River when her wagon train moved out and began the twenty-two mile journey that they would cover that day. Lucy became distracted while watching other wagons cross the river, and was apparently unaware that her own party was leaving. "Not a soul had missed her," wrote her mother, until another train pulled up hours later with the frightened child. Her parents and siblings had assumed that she was in another wagon.⁶⁹

Like Lucy Knight, not a soul missed Hatty Jones after her company inadvertently departed without her after stopping for lunch near the Snake River, according to her rescuer, John Lawrence Johnson, who, along with his parents and nine brothers and sisters, traveled to the Willamette Valley in 1851. Worn out from walking all morning on a July day in 1851, nineteen-year-old John fell asleep under some willows near the river. He awoke to discover that his train had left and realized he would have to catch up on foot by following their tracks.

Preparing to leave, John noticed a riderless horse near the river which he recognized as the one Hatty Jones, a child in his train, had been riding for the past month. He immediately assumed Indians had taken

her and that it would only be a matter of time before they would return for the horse. Although alone, John was determined to rescue Hatty or die in the attempt. To his relief, John found the young girl asleep not far from her horse. He woke her up and hoisted her onto the horse. But instead of following the wagons, John decided to take a shorter route, hoping to reach the campsite ahead of his train.

This proved to be an unwise decision. There were deep ravines and steep hills to cross and John found himself disoriented at several points. The ever-present fear of encountering Snake Indians, one of the tribes overlanders feared most, consumed his thoughts. His fear was realized when a band of Indians intercepted him and Hatty. However, instead of harming the two lone emigrants, these Snake men simply rode off and left them to complete their journey. It was not until after dark and the Johnson train had made camp that anyone realized John and Hatty were missing. "The camp was quite excited and anxious when we came into camp," wrote John, "and mother declared she would never again leave camp until all the children were rounded up."⁷⁰

Although some children who became lost or separated from their companies found their way back to their camps or were rescued, others either died from the elements or were never found.

On June 3, 1850, two young boys traveling with the company of Solomon Osterhault went on a hunt and failed to show up in the evening. A twenty-man team searched for the boys for a day until, deciding their efforts were futile, they gave up. After wandering along for over two days, the boys luckily found their way back to camp.⁷¹

Others, however, were not so fortunate. Seventeen-year-old Caroline Reeder left her camp to find some sagebrush for fuel for the evening campfire, but she never returned. Traveling with the 1856 Mormon handcart company of James Willie, Caroline took off her apron, gathered sagebrush, and tied it up in a bundle in preparation for her return to camp. Already exhausted from the day's journey, she sat down to rest for a short time. It was October, late in the year for overland travel, and the weather was unusually severe. When she did not return, some of the men of the company went to look for her.

They found the teenaged girl leaning on her bundle of sagebrush,

chilled and unconscious. Her rescuers carried Caroline back to camp, where she died. She was buried with others who died the same day in an unmarked grave near the Sweetwater. There was no time for mourning since colder weather threatened the lives of the rest of the party and they immediately pressed on to Salt Lake City.⁷²

Along with the fear of being lost in an unknown land came the fear of being at the mercy of wild animals, especially wolves whose disturbing howls could be heard all night. Helen Marnie Stewart, who traveled to Oregon with her family in 1853, wrote about how difficult it was to sleep: "We was afraid to go to sleep and we had a notion to read all night, but we thought that the light might attract attention...I fancied I heard wolves howling and Indians screaming and all sorts of noises."⁷³

Although attacks by wolves on the trails were rare, they did occur. During his overland trip, Lorenzo Waugh and one of his three young sons narrowly escaped a pack of wolves. But it was the story of a German lad and his sister traveling with the Waughs that made a lasting impression on this 1852 pioneer.

While preparing to depart for an ordinary day's journey, Waugh and others from his company heard more than the usual howling of wolves, coupled with human screams. A group of more than twenty men immediately mounted their horses and rode in the direction of the sounds which became fainter. After an intense search, they discovered a two-year-old boy who, according to Lorenzo Waugh, was "nothing but bare bones...not a shred of his flesh being left."⁷⁴ His sister was alive and dazed, sitting next to what was left of her brother. The pair had camped some distance from the rest of their company while searching for grass for their oxen. Waugh and the others buried the boy and returned his sister to camp, but no words could console her about the disturbing experience.⁷⁵

A similar fate befell a man and an unidentified girl between nine and twelve years of age who traveled with the 1856 Edward Martin handcart company. Jonathan Stone lagged behind his company after passing Fort Kearny, despite pleas from companions urging him to keep pace with the group. Late in the day, with storm clouds hanging low, the company planned to push on after crossing the Platte. But Stone did not heed other

emigrants' advice and by nightfall he had still not reached camp.

Later, it was learned that he found his way into the camp of Captain John Hunt's Mormon group traveling approximately ten miles east of the Martin Company. Stone appeared leading a young girl by the hand he found alone on the plains. Jonathan Stone and the child departed camp immediately after dark, and neither he nor the girl were ever again seen alive.

Captain Edward Martin recrossed the Platte River in an effort to find him. After traveling a few miles he found both bodies. Members of the Martin Company never learned the girl's name, but it was apparent that she and Stone, like the young German boy in Lorenzo Waugh's train, had met a violent death "upon which the Platte wolves had feasted the night before."⁷⁶

Insects, snakes and small predators were ever-present throughout the cross-country journey. They were not as deadly as wolves or other larger animals, but irritants nonetheless. Mosquitoes were especially thick near rivers and in the lower valleys of the plains. Margaret Hecox described insects that were at least one inch long with sharp claws and legs, and recalled nights when her children cried and could not sleep because of these threats.⁷⁷

Near the Sweetwater, Elisha Brooks remembered grasshoppers being "so thick as to dim the light of the sun, making us shield our faces at time with handkerchiefs or veils."⁷⁸ Likewise, Clarence Bagley spoke about scorpions as a constant threat. Care had to be taken before putting on shoes or clothing every morning, and Clarenee became especially cautious after seeing his mother shake a particularly large scorpion out of her stocking.⁷⁹ While climbing Independence Rock in 1847, an adventurous young girl who accidentally placed her hand in a crevice was struck by a snake. She was given large doses of whiskey to neutralize the venom and survived the ordeal.⁸⁰ Countless such incidents were recorded or remembered by children of the westward migration, and these small afflictions impacted their daily lives with greater frequency than the more hazardous challenges.

Even though most emigrants packed what guidebooks recommended as enough food and provisions to last the entire journey, hunger and thirst

affected nearly all overlanders at one time or another. Forty-niner William Manly wrote that "people who have always been well fed, and have never suffered from thirst until every drop of moisture seemed gone from the body, so that they dare not open their mouth lest they dry up and cease to breathe, can never understand, nor is there language to convey the horrors of such a situation."⁸¹

Children found it increasingly difficult to endure days when food and water were rationed. During the last leg of each journey many companies were compelled to depend on other emigrants for help, or send members ahead for provisions. In 1849, while crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert, directly west of the Great Salt Lake, Sarah Royce and her company took in a couple of young men "scarcely beyond boyhood," who were traveling with only a horse and a mule. The unfortunates pleaded for flour, and, in return, promised to hunt for the group. Wrote Sarah, "we kept on sharing and hoping for the best...their efforts at hunting fruitless as they usually were."⁸²

Fourteen-year-old Octavius M. Pringle remembered that a food shortage precipitated the most dangerous time in his family's overland trip. With starvation threatening them barely 300 miles from their Oregon destination, it was decided Octavius should take the only horse and travel with a group of men headed for the Willamette Valley. He hoped to secure provisions at a relief station 125 miles away, and then meet up with others who promised to return to his family with food. Unfortunately, the teenager soon discovered he was the only person who planned to return and he would have to travel back through the wild country alone. Octavius courageously completed his mission, motivated by thoughts of his parents, sisters and brothers who depended on him for their survival.⁸³

The reverse was true for seventeen-year-old Moses Schallenberger, member of the 1844 Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party. He and two other men, Joseph Foster and Allen Montgomery, were left behind in the Sierra Nevadas at what is now known as Donner's Lake with six wagons, while other members forged on to Sutter's Fort. It was late in November and the three quickly set about building a rude cabin which they thought they would need for only a short time. Game seemed to be abundant and

their party left behind two cows, and food was not considered a problem.

But because of unrelenting snowfall their situation became desperate almost immediately. Sensing little cause for hope, Foster and Montgomery made three pairs of snowshoes out of the wagons' hickory bows and used strands of rawhide for the webbing. The trio slowly worked their way up to the summit, but the makeshift snowshoes did not fit properly and incessant snowfall brought them to a state of exhaustion. Schallenberger collapsed several times from severe leg cramps. His fatigue was so great that he decided to return to the cabin, settle in for the winter and live on the quarter of beef that remained.

For the remainder of the winter, Moses Schallenberger lived alone, anxiously wondering if there would be a coyote or fox in the trap he set the night before. He later recorded, "My life was more miserable than I can describe. The daily struggle for life, and the uncertainty under which I labored were very wearing."⁸⁴

In late February 1845 the boy was rescued at the Truckee Lake camp by Dennis Martin who promised Elizabeth Townsend, wife of Dr. John Townsend and older sister of Moses Schallenberger that if her younger brother was alive he would return him safely to Sutter's Fort. Martin found Moses thin and weak from this meager diet, but still in fairly good condition. He made Schallenberger a new pair of snowshoes and taught him how to use them properly.

They then proceeded across the summit and down the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas, rejoining the main rescue party at Bear River. The Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party arrived safely at Sutter's Fort, although there was no mention about the fate of Foster and Montgomery.⁸⁵ Ironically the small cabin built by Schallenberger, Foster and Montgomery was used by Patriek Breen's family during their winter of entrapment with other members of the infamous Donner-Reed party in 1846.⁸⁶

At age seventeen, Schallenberger survived the isolated and challenging winter of 1845. For hundreds of children of the Mormon handcart companies, however, hunger and thirst were daily realities. In 1856 alone, there were more women than men in these poor but resolute companies, and more children under fifteen than either women or men.⁸⁷

Along with their parents, many of these Mormon children moved from a crowded immigrant ship to the end of the Rock Island Railroad Line in Iowa where they attempted to embark on a journey for which they lacked even the most basic survival skills. Most had never pitched a tent, slept on the ground, built a campfire or cooked outdoors. Thus, the children who participated in the handcart expeditions related some of the most compelling and heartbreaking stories of starvation and catastrophic destitution on the trails.

John Stettler Stucki, nine-year-old son of Samuel and Magdalena Stettler Stueki, traveled with the Oscar Stoddard handcart company of 1860. Despite his youth, John was expected to help his father push the family's handcart to Salt Lake City. Without enough food, it was difficult for the frail boy to find the strength he needed to get through each day. When one of the teamsters traveling with his company shot a buffalo, the meat was divided among the group. The small piece that John's father received was placed in the back of the handcart to be used for Sunday dinner, which was still days away. As John remembered, "I was so very hungry all the time, and the meat smelled so good to me while pushing the handcart, and having a little pocketknife, I could not resist but to cut off a piece or two each half day. Although I was afraid of getting a severe whipping after cutting a little the first few times, I could not resist taking a little each half day. I would chew it so long it got tasteless."⁸⁸ When Samuel Stucki learned what his son had done he did not say a word. Instead of scolding or whipping his son, the beleaguered emigrant wiped tears from his eyes.⁸⁹

Margaret Ann Griffiths was a member of the Edward Martin company. She was barely a teenager in 1856 when her family journeyed to Salt Lake City. When the snow and freezing weather arrived after the company passed through Devil's Gate, Martin reduced food rations to four ounces of flour a day per person. Consequently, young Margaret saw many members of her company die along the way, including her twelve-year-old brother, John, and her six-year-old brother, Herbert. The frozen ground and a lack of proper equipment for digging graves made it difficult for the men to bury these boys and the others who succumbed to the harsh conditions.

Even before her brothers died, the children witnessed their starved and enfeebled father desperately trying to keep up with the group by taking hold of the rod of the last wagon's endgate. This forbidden action enraged the teamster who immediately slashed the elder Griffiths with his whip. The sickly man fell to the ground, unable to get up. Although her feet ached, Margaret retraced the trail for three miles but failed to find her father who she feared was dead. After discovering the tracks of another wagon in the snow, John Griffiths, weak from the lashing, crawled on his hands and knees and found another emigrant camp. Two men generously returned him to his own company, much to the relief of his anxious family.⁹⁰

Often, water was not readily available. While traveling west in 1852, thirteen-year-old Mary Jane Long remembered how distressing it was to hear other children beg for water. She was touched by the empathy displayed by her mother when a sick young girl in the company became so dehydrated that she started sucking on the wagon cover after a rare rainfall. Her face was black from the dirt on the wagon cover, and the pathetic scene prompted Mary Jane's mother to give the child some water. Recounted Mary Jane, "mother gave her a tablespoonful of water just as if it were medicine." Other siblings of the frail child soon died, and young Mary Jane attributed the girl's survival to the assistance given her by her mother.⁹¹

Young people often resorted to placing themselves at extreme risk if they were thirsty enough and the prospect for finding water seemed promising. Such was the case with eighteen-year-old Martha Hill and her younger sisters. As her company neared the Rocky Mountains in 1852, Martha remembered that she and her sisters knew their supply of water was low.

Walking ahead of the wagons, the hot and thirsty girls sighted what they thought were willows, which meant water was not far away. After walking at least four miles, longer than they anticipated, the girls discovered a beautiful stream. But because Indians were drying fish on the banks of stream, they hesitated to indulge themselves. Fearing for their safety, Martha pleaded with her sisters not to continue, but they screamed back to their older sisters that they would rather be killed by

Indians than die of thirst. Martha knew they were too far from the wagons for any help, and so she decided to join her sisters and drink from the stream.

One of the Indian men advanced toward the girls, but the others seemed undecided about what to do and held him back. They simply watched the girls drinking, but did nothing to harm them. "It may have been the first white girls that they had ever seen," Martha remembered thinking, "we took our lives in our hands that day, for no one knew where we were, and if the Indians had taken us captives, then God help us."⁹²

Lack of water was most common during the desert crossings which both Oregon-bound and California-bound emigrants faced. It was difficult for emigrants to provide enough water for their fatigued animals, and many oxen perished during desert crossings due to overwork and alkali poisoning. Lack of draft animals meant that many emigrants were compelled to abandon their wagons or, at the very least, lighten their loads by discarding valuable items not essential for survival. It has been estimated that in 1850 alone as many as a thousand wagons were abandoned on the forty-mile desert crossing in Nevada approaching the Truckee River.⁹³

As a child traveling west that year, Margaret White remembered the most unpleasant part of the journey was the crossing of the alkali district: "It was white as far as you could see. In some places a thick crust or scum was on top of the earth."⁹⁴ Sixteen-year-old Fanny Fry recalled that walking over alkali country caused her feet to swell and become so sore that she never put on a pair of shoes for the remainder of her journey.⁹⁵

During his 1853 overland journey, Orson Stearns remembered that the men in his company labored constantly to keep their cattle away from alkali pools because drinking the water was almost always fatal to the animals. "Sometimes it seemed as we were seldom out of reach of the stench of these dead animals in all stages of decomposition," recalled Orson.⁹⁶

In 1846, the family of Luey Ann Henderson chose the dry, barren Applegate Cut-Off into Oregon. After crossing the Humboldt River, the Hendersons headed north across the desert. When they approached the Boiling Springs in Nevada, the eleven-year-old remembered there was no

stopping the cattle once they smelled water. Lucy was riding in the wagon when the family's oxen picked up the scent of water. They "ran as hard as they could go, our wagon bouncing along and nearly bouncing us out."⁹⁷

Traveling to Oregon as a young child in 1850, John Roger James recounted unyoking cattle near the Green River after a long, hot day of travel. The animals charged down the bluffs to the river, stood in water up to their knees, and drank until their sides were swollen. To John, it looked as though they would kill themselves, but he was reassured by a fellow traveler that the thirst-crazed oxen would survive as long as they remained standing on all four feet.⁹⁸

By the 1850s, some overlanders who completed their trips organized "water wagons" to make desert crossings more tolerable for new emigrants and to garner money for themselves. Nearly crazy with thirst, families often spent outrageous sums of money for this water. Beyond the Humboldt Sink, five dollars was offered for a single drink of water, and five gallons of water sold for fifty dollars in 1850.⁹⁹

Although not as common as insufficient amounts of food or water, one of the most stressful experiences for young overlanders was confronting the harsh system of justice sometimes meted out on the trail. If a child was compelled to witness the punishment of a fellow traveler it could be unsettling. But if a family member was disciplined or condemned it was especially terrifying.

When a family traveled with an organized train, members were subject to the mandates of the company. If laws were violated, punishment was swift and certain. Judicial power was usually entrusted to the most respected men of the emigrating company who attempted to weigh the facts of a case and determine penalties for travelers accused of a crime. Whipping, abandonment or, less frequently, execution were punishments overlanders faced if the group's laws were broken.

Even for highly organized trains, it was difficult for those in authority to sort out the circumstances surrounding a criminal act. But if a company was small, unorganized, or under extreme pressure to keep moving, it was nearly impossible. In those cases, emigrants might take justice into their own hands and decide a man's fate in a matter of hours.

Some overlanders, directly affected by crime and the system of justice during their journeys, were haunted by the experience for the rest of their lives. The ease of James Reed of the Donner-Reed Party is notable.

During her 1846 journey to California, twelve-year-old Virginia Reed watched as her father, James, was banished from his company after killing John Snyder, a teamster and friend, in a fit of rage. According to Virginia, a vehement argument ensued between her father and John Snyder on October 6 over Snyder's abuse of his oxen. Reed warned Snyder to refrain from whipping the animals, but Snyder became more enraged and slashed Reed with the butt of his whip. When Margaret Reed approached the two men and tried to make peace, Snyder struck her over the head, drawing blood. James Reed lashed out with his knife and killed Snyder.¹⁰⁰

Other witnesses interpreted the event differently. Most agreed that Milton Elliot, driver of the heavy Reed Palace Car, attempted to overtake the Graves wagon driven by Snyder on a narrow sandy hill. When the teams became entangled, Snyder began whipping his oxen. Reed asked him to refrain from hitting the animals and settle the dispute after they reached the top of the hill. But Snyder, unable to control his anger, turned the lash on Reed and his wife, Margaret.

In any case, the episode divided members of the train between those who wanted Reed hanged immediately and those who rejected a death sentence. As a compromise, Reed was exiled from the train; almost certainly because those who opposed his death were more heavily armed than the others.¹⁰¹

Virginia believed her father's sentence was cruel because she perceived him as acting in self-defense. She also believed he regretted the act, and she remembered how he mournfully knelt over the dead body of Snyder, whom he considered his friend, and offered boards from his own wagon from which to construct a coffin. Despite his desire to ignore his sentence and remain with his family, Virginia's mother, Margaret, urged her husband to try to reach California and then return to his family with provisions. She knew it would be difficult to continue without her husband, but she felt that if he remained he would suffer at the hands of his enemies.¹⁰²

So James Reed set out alone into an unknown wilderness. Virginia, who was an accomplished rider in her own right, followed him into the night with his rifle, ammunition and some food: "I had determined to stay with him, and begged him to let me stay, but he would listen to no argument....I realized that I must be strong and help mama bear her sorrows."¹⁰³

It was October when James Reed was banished without provisions or arms, and slow starvation or death from the elements seemed his likely fate. Every day, Virginia looked for evidence that her father was still alive, hoping to see a letter by the road, scattered bird feathers, or a split stick. But there was no trace of James Reed, and Virginia did not learn of his fate until March 1847 when he returned from Sutter's Fort to Donner Lake to help rescue his destitute and famished children.¹⁰⁴

Despite Virginia's unequivocal defense of her father, James Reed was forever disturbed by the violent act. Self-defense or not, he could not speak of it for decades, thereby contributing to a legacy of discord for future descendants of the Donner-Reed Party. One hundred fifty years after the incident, the truth about the Snyder killing remained elusive, as evidenced by a dispute which erupted among some descendants of the company who gathered for a California Trail Days Reunion in 1996. Reed's defenders still consider him a man wrongfully punished while others see him as a coward who killed a man for little reason. "After fifteen decades, the anger will still burn. The facts will still be clouded," wrote Frank J. Mullen, Jr.¹⁰⁵

Four children who traveled with Ezra Meeker in 1852 were, like Virginia Reed, forced to come to terms with the hasty manner in which justice was carried out on the trails in a case involving their father. Meeker recounted the incident, which occurred near the Sweetwater and involved a murder committed during a robbery. A council of twelve men quickly determined that the suspect, the children's father, was guilty.

Yet there was disagreement as to what his fate should be since he was traveling with his wife and small children. Public sentiment favored sparing his life in order not to endanger the lives of his family. But, after debate and deliberation, the council voted in favor of death, and the man was hanged in his family's presence. Before the execution was carried

out, the council made the necessary provisions to insure the safety of his wife and children, which included providing them with a driver for the remainder of the journey. Still, it must have been traumatic for young children to learn that their father had murdered another man, and then see him hang before their own eyes.¹⁰⁶

The inability to sort out evidence properly after a criminal act affected older children who were sometimes subject to the same retribution as adults for comparable offenses. The cases of two teenage boys who hoped to find a company with which to travel west at Council Bluffs in 1853 and that of fifteen-year-old George Washington Bean were examples of this reality.

After the death of his father in Nauvoo, George Bean joined the Mormon exodus of 1847. He was the main support for his sister Sarah Ann, whose husband was away fighting with the Mormon Battalion, and her small baby. After leaving Fort Laramie, travel became slow and tedious, and George Bean grew increasingly impatient with the pace of travel. In an effort to gain the coveted first position in the line of wagons, he cracked his ox whip on the head of a jealous driver behind him who angrily lashed at Bean's oxen. The teenager was required to appear before a Mormon court which would make a determination about his possible punishment.

Sarah Ann was not allowed to be present at the hearing of her brother or to testify on his behalf. "My conscience was clear as I won my place," remembered George, but, "as the accusations of insubordination mounted, I never felt more alone."¹⁰⁷ Jedediah Grant, captain of the company, defended George Bean for an honest effort to hasten the pace of the group, and because of this support, the youth was subsequently acquitted. Sarah Ann was overjoyed that George was released, and she shed tears of joy knowing that she would be secure for the duration of the journey into the Salt Lake Valley.¹⁰⁸

Overlander Henry Allyn was disturbed by an event that occurred while he was in Council Bluffs waiting with his company for a ferry to cross the Missouri River. In May of 1853, two young boys, James Samuels and Waltenberg Muir, both barely seventeen, traveled from St. Joseph together with the intention of gaining passage with an emigrant

train bound for California. They found a company with which to travel and were immediately assigned the duty of guarding the camp and stock.

After their first night's watch, emigrants in the town were horrified to wake up and see that one of the boys, James Samuels, was dead. His chest and neck were gashed, and the ax with which the murder was committed was lying near his body. Muir sat on a stump nearby, unable to escape the scene of the crime since the horse he stole for that purpose had been retrieved by the owner. The youth blamed the event on Indians, and pointed to a scar on his own head.

But the hastily-formed jury was unanimous in its verdict of guilt. The teenager, proclaiming his innocence until the end, was hanged on the limb of a basswood tree near the site of the murder. "To all appearances he was not over seventeen," wrote Henry Allyn, "thus, a blooming youth, that might have been a blessing to society and his country, was called to expiate his crimes."¹⁰⁹

The Samuels-Muir murder case was evidence that emigrants could expect little judicial protection from newly established governments. In January 1853, Kanessville was given the name Council Bluffs and a charter was created incorporating it as a city. In April, city officers were elected and by law it was their right to administer justice. But the government in Council Bluffs was weak and virtually nonexistent for two years. After Samuels was murdered, Muir was placed in the hands of the sheriff who attempted to have him tried by an organized county jury. But the unruly mob of California emigrants were intolerant of this slow system of justice and demanded a quicker method of trial and punishment. So, Waltenberg Muir, like other pioneers who ventured beyond securely established governments, found himself at the mercy of what became known as "Judge Lynch's Court" and the matter was resolved within a day.¹¹⁰

Added to the cases involving family members and older children were those in which young emigrants were mere observers of the system of justice adopted by some companies. Traveling to Oregon in 1862, thirteen-year-old Michael Speelman said he witnessed the trial and execution of a man found guilty of murdering his traveling companion; it was one of the most vivid memories of his months on the trail.

Both murderer and victim were traveling in the company ahead of the Speelmans' train near the Sweetwater River. The captain of a wagon train traveling behind the Speelmans, whose name was Kennedy, found, and subsequently buried the body. Despite pleas to turn the guilty youth over to a military party near the scene, Kennedy instead took the law into his own hands. He appointed a jury which found the man guilty, and offered the condemned man the choice of death by hanging or shooting. After choosing the latter, the murderer was blindfolded and a grave was dug. Kennedy gave the order to fire and shots rang out.

"I was present and observed everything that occurred," remembered the thirteen-year-old who also clearly recalled that after the disturbing incident Kennedy's company of over three hundred emigrants resented how their captain handled the episode. As a result, the large wagon train broke up into smaller parties. In a short time, the discontented smaller units fell far behind the Speelmans for the remainder of the journey to Oregon.¹¹¹

In the end, every journey west was a history of hardship, and the many hardships that young emigrants encountered during their travel over plains, rivers and mountains revealed their resilience and adaptability. The experiences better prepared them for their new lives in a frontier setting.

When J. Goldsborough Bruff lingered at his Sierra Nevada camp and chronicled the condition of the successive waves of the 1849 emigration, he noted that it was the children who seemed to be better suited to withstanding the hardships and exposure.¹¹² And, because of their valuable contributions, the children who journeyed west should be recognized for the hardships and mortal dangers they endured as emigrants.

With good cause, all overlanders were filled with a sense of relief and accomplishment when they reached their destinations. After his family completed a successful journey to Oregon, Henry Garrison, fifteen years old in 1846, recounted: "Our journey is ended, our toils are over, but I have not tried to portray the terrible conditions we were placed in. No tongue can tell, nor pen describe the heartrending scenes through which we passed."¹¹³

NOTES

1. "John Oborn," *Heart Throbs of the West*, volume 6, compiled by Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1945), 366.
2. J. Goldsborough Bruff, *Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings and Other Papers of J Goldsborough Bruff*, eds. Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 244-45.
3. Henry O. Ferguson, "The Moving of W. W. Ferguson and Family from Owen County, Indiana to Iowa Territory in 1844," typescript, University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, 7-8.
4. Martha Hill Gillette, *Overland to Oregon and in the Indian Wars of 1853* (Ashland, Oregon: Lewis Osborne, 1971), 57-58.
5. Georgia Willis Read, "Women and Children on the Oregon-California Trail in the Gold Rush Years," *Missouri Historical Review*, 39 (October 1944): 6.
6. E.A. Farwell, letter printed in Introduction in *Overland in 1846: Diaries and Letters of the California-Oregon Trail*, volume 1, ed. by Dale Morgan (Georgetown, California: Talisman Press, 1963), 19.
7. James J. Rose, "Saga of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party of 1844: First Pioneer Wagons Over the Sierra Nevada," *Nevada County Historical Society Bulletin*, 48 (July 1994): 19.
8. Joseph Henry Merrill, "A Trip to California With His Father When He Was About Eighteen-Years-Old," typescript, Merrill Mattes Collection, The National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, Missouri, 3.
9. Jane A. Gould, *Jane A. Gould: Her Journal* (Massaere Rocks, Idaho: Friends of Massaere Rocks, 1986), 27.
10. Flora Isabelle Bender, "A Journey Across the Plains in 1863," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 1 (1958): 149.
11. Helen Carpenter, "A Trip Across the Plains in an Ox Wagon, 1857," in *Ho for California! Women's Overland Diaries from the Huntington Library*, ed. and annot. Sandra L. Myres (San Marino: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1980), 112, 130.
12. Al R. Hawk, "Down Snake River by Boat: Strange Adventures of the Hawk Family in Crossing the Plains in 1852," *Told by the Pioneers*, volume 1 (Washington Pioneer Project, 1937), 165.
13. Amelia Knight, "Iowa to the Columbia River," *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1840-1890*, volume 6, ed. Kenneth L. Holmes (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1986), 37-40.
14. "Mary Goble," *I Walked in Zion: True Stories of Young Pioneers on the Mormon Trail*, ed. Susan Arrington Madsen (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1994), 95.
15. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion. The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856-1860* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clarke Co., 1960), 138.

16. Benjamin Franklin Bonney, "Recollections of Benjamin Franklin Bonnet," ed. Fred Lockley, *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 24 (March 1923), 38.
17. "Mary Elizabeth Munkers Estes," *Conversations With Pioneer Women*, collected by Fred Lockley, ed. Mike Helm (Eugene, Oregon: Rainy Day Press, 1993), 76.
18. Rachel Taylor, "Overland Trip Across the Plains," in Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women*, volume 6, 176.
19. Henry O. Ferguson, "The Moving of W. W. Ferguson," 8.
20. J. Goldsborough Bruff, in Read and Gaines, eds., *Gold Rush*, 224.
21. Mary Saunders, *The Whitman Massacre: A True Story of a Survivor of This Terrible Tragedy Which Took Place in Oregon in 1847* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1997), 7.
22. "Judge William M. Colvig, Medford, Oregon," *Conversations with Pioneer Men* collected by Fred Lockley, ed. Mike Helm (Eugene, Oregon: Rainy Day Press, 1996), 163.
23. Adrietta Applegate Hixon. *On to Oregon: A True Story of a Young Girl's Journey Into the West* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1973), 62.
24. John Hyde Braly, *Memory Pictures: An Autobiography* (Los Angeles: Neuner Company, 1912), 55-56.
25. Margaret M. Hecox, *California Caravan: The 1846 Memoir of Margaret M. Hecox*, ed. Richard Dillon (San Jose, California: Harlan-Young Press, 1996), 35.
26. Jane A. Gould, *Jane A. Gould Journal*, 27.
27. Sarah Maria Mousley. "Delaware to Utah, 1857," in Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women*, volume 6, 178.
28. *Ibid.*, 179.
29. Elizabeth Loughlin Lord, *Reminiscences of Eastern Oregon* (Portland: Irwon Hodson Co., 1903), 55-56.
30. David Longmire, "First Immigrants to Cross the Cascades," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 8 (1917): 25.
31. Inez Eugenia Adams Parker, "Early Recollections of Pioneer Life," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (1928), 17.
32. Helen Carpenter, *Ho for California!*, 113.
33. Mary Alexander Variel, "A Romance of the Plains," *Grizzly Bear* (July 1907): 74.
34. "Old California," *The Argonaut* 86 (April 1925): 3.
35. Nancy Lowell Campbell, "Across the Plains in '57," typescript, Merrill Mattes Collection, The National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, Missouri, 3.
36. Josiah Rogerson, Sr., "Strong Men, Brave Women and Sturdy Children Crossed the Wilderness Afoot," *Salt Lake City Tribune*, January 4, 1914.
37. Robert S. Clark and Stewart E. Glazier, eds. *Journal of the Trail* (Salt Lake City, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1997), 54.
38. John Oborn, in Carter, ed., *Heart Throbs of the West*, volume 6, 366.
39. Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: Story of the Mormon Trail* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 248.

40. Blanche Billings Mahlberg, "Edward J. Allen, Pioneer and Roadbuilder," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 44 (1953), 158.
41. *Ibid.*, 158.
42. Al R. Hawk, *Told by the Pioneers*, volume 1, 163-164.
43. *Ibid.*, 165.
44. *Ibid.*, 166.
45. Marilla R. Washburn Bailey, in Helm, ed., *Conversations with Pioneer Women*, 113-115.
46. William E. Hill, *The Oregon Trail: Yesterday and Today, A Brief History and Pictorial Journey Along the Wagon Tracks of Pioneers* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1994), 19.
47. Jesse A. Applegate, *Recollections of My Boyhood* (Roseburg, Oregon: Press of Review Publishing Co., 1914), 41.
48. *Ibid.*, 121.
49. *Ibid.*, 122-129.
50. Lillian Schissel, "The Malick Family in Oregon Territory, 1848-1867," *Far From Home: Families of the Westward Journey* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 10.
51. *Ibid.*, 10.
52. "Barnet Simpson, Pioneer of 1846, Portland, Oregon," in Helm, ed., *Conversations with Pioneer Men*, 35.
53. Mary Ann Weston Maughan, "Diary of Mary Ann Weston Maughan," *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 2 (1959): 376-377.
54. Archibald Gardner, *The Life of Archibald Gardner: Utah Pioneer of 1847* (Salt Lake City: Alpine Publishing Co., 1939), 38-39.
55. "Diary of Nicholas Carriger," in Morgan, ed., *Overland in 1846*, volume 1, 152.
56. Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California: Being the Journal of a Tour by the Emigrant Route and South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, Across the Continent of North America, the Great Desert Basin, and through California, in the Years 1846, 1847* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 86-88.
57. Elizabeth Loughlin Lord, *Reminiscences of Eastern Oregon*, 63-64.
58. Mary Furlong, "When I Crossed the Plains to Oregon," typescript, Merrill Mattes Collection, The National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, Missouri, 1.
59. "Emma Perkins Hembree," in Helm, ed., *Conversations with Pioneer Women*, 4.
60. Eliza Ann McAuley, "Iowa to the Land of Gold," in Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women*, volume 4, 71.
61. Arthur Menefee, "Travels Across the Plains, 1857," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, ed. Mrs. Andy Welliver, 1 (Spring 1996): 26.
62. Susan P. Angell, "Sketch of Mrs. Susan P. Angell, Pioneer of 1852," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (1928): 55.
63. John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 229-230.
64. John T. Williams, "Journal of John T. Williams," ed. William O. Lynch, Charles

Martin Collection, Omaha, Nebraska, 408.

65. Mary Ringo, "The 1864 Journal," *Covered Wagon Women* volume 8, ed. Kenneth L. Holmes (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1989), 217-218.
66. Eliza Ann McCauley, in Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women*, volume 4, 71.
67. Nancy A. Hunt, "By Ox-Team to California," *Overland Monthly* 67 (1916): 325.
68. Maria Parsons Belshaw, "Crossing the Plains to Oregon in 1853," ed. Michael L. Tate, *Overland Journal* 14 (Summer 1996): 20.
69. Amelia Knight, in Holmes ed., *Covered Wagon Women*, volume 6, 63.
70. John Lawrence Johnson, "Diary, 1851," unpublished manuscript, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, 76-78.
71. Solomon Osterhaut, "Ox Train Diary," *Polo Tri-County Press* (March, 1961), 2:2.
72. "Robert Reeder," in Madsen, ed., *I Walked to Zion*, 65.
73. Helen Marnie Stewart, 1853 *Diary of Helen Marnie Stewart* (Eugene, Oregon: Lance County Pioneer-Historical Society, 1961), 11.
74. Lorenzo Waugh, *Autobiography of Lorenzo Waugh* (Oakland: Pacific Press, 1883), 187-188.
75. *Ibid.*, 187-188.
76. Josiah Rogerson, Sr., *Salt Lake City Tribune*, January 4, 1914.
77. Margaret M. Hecox, *California Caravan: The 1846 Trail Memoir of Margaret M. Hecox*, ed. by Richard Dillon (San Jose: Harlan-Young Press, 1966), 27-28.
78. Elisha Brooks, *A Pioneer Mother of California* (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Co., 1922), 26.
79. Clarence Bagley, "Crossing the Plains," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 3 (July, 1922), 26.
80. H.S. Lyman, "Reminiscences of Hugh Cosgrove," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 1 (1900), 263.
81. J. Goldsborough Bruff, in Read and Gaines, eds. *Gold Rush* xlvi.
82. Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California*, ed. by Ralph Henry Gabriel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 35.
83. Octavius M Pringle, *Magic River Deschutes: Experiences of an Emigrant Boy in 1846* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1970), 2.
84. Moses Sehallenberger, *Winter Alone at Truckey's Lake, 1844-45* (Chilcoot, California: 19th Century Publications), 12-20.
85. James J. Rose, "Saga of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party of 1844," 25-26.
86. Kristin Johnson, *Unfortunate Emigrants: Narratives of the Donner Party* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 1996), 44n62.
87. William W. Slaughter, and Michael Landon, *Trail of Hope: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1997), 118.
88. "John Stettler Stucki," in Madsen, ed., *I Walked to Zion*, 54.
89. *Ibid.*, 54.
90. "Margaret Griffiths," in Carter, ed., *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 6, 369-370.

91. Mary Jane Long, *A True Story: Crossing the Plains in the Year of 1852 with Ox Teams* (McMinnville, Oregon: n.p., 1915), 3.
92. Martha Hill Gillette, *Overland to Oregon*, 45-47.
93. John T. Williams. "Journal of John T. Williams," 407.
94. Margaret White Chambers, "Reminiscences," typescript, Merrill Mattes Collection, The National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, Missouri, 17.
95. "Fanny Fry Simons." in Madsen, ed., *I Walked to Zion*, 77.
96. Velina A. Willimas, "Diary of a Trip Across the Plains in 1853," supplemented by the recollections of O.A. Stearns, *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (1919), 209.
97. Lucy Ann Henderson, "Young Adventure," ed. and annot. By Ronald Thomas Strong. *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 16 (1973), 89.
98. John Roger James, "Autobiography of John Roger James," in *Told by the Pioneers*, vol. 2 (Washington Pioneer Project, 1937), 69.
99. John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across*, 149.
100. Virginia Reed Murphy, *Across the Plains in the Donner Party, 1846-47: A Personal Narrative of the Overland Trip to California* (Olympia Valley, California: Outbooks, 1977), 17-19.
101. Frank Mullen, Jr., *The Donner Party Chronicles: A Day-by-Day Account of a Doomed Wagon Train, 1846-1847* (Reno: Halcyon Imprint of the Nevada Humanities Committee, 1997), 168-169.
102. Ibid., 169.
103. Virginia Reed Murphy, *Across the Plains in the Donner Party*, 18.
104. Ibid., 30-31.
105. Frank Mullen, Jr., *The Donner Party Chronicles*, 168.
106. Ezra Meeker. *The Busy Life of Eighty-Five Years of Ezra Meeker: Ventures and Adventures* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford Press, 1916), 29-30.
107. George Washington Bean, *Autobiography of George Washington Bean- A Utah Pioneer of 1847*, compiled by Flora Diana Bean Horne (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1945), 34.
108. Ibid., 35.
109. Henry Allyn, "Journal of Henry Allyn," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (1921), 383-384.
110. *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1883), 98-102.
111. Michael R. Spelman, "Pioneer of 1862 Recalls Trek Across Plains by Wagon Train," *Baker (Oregon) Democrat-Herald*, October, 17, 1930.
112. J. Goldsborough Bruff, in Read, and Gaines, eds., *Gold Rush*, 237.
113. Henry Garrison, "The Reminiscences of Henry Garrison - 1846," *Oregon Trail Histories*, vol. 9, United States Department of the Interior, (Portland: Oregon/Washington State Office, Bureau of Land Management, 1993), 49.