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In a broken voice he exclaimed: "My dear child, your leg is broken all to pieces!" The news soon spread along the train and a halt was called. A surgeon was found and the limb set; then we pushed on the same night to Laramie, where we arrived soon after dark. This accident confined me to the wagon the remainder of the long journey.

After Laramie we entered the great American desert, which was hard on the teams. Sickness became common. Father and the boys were all sick, and we were dependent for a driver on the Dutch doctor who set my leg. He offered his services and was employed, but though an excellent surgeon, he knew little about driving oxen. Some of them often had to rise from their sick beds to wade streams and get the oxen safely across. One day four buffalo ran between our wagon and the one behind. Though feeble, father seized his gun and gave chase to them. This imprudent act prostrated him again, and it soon became apparent that his days were numbered. He was fully conscious of the fact, but could not be reconciled to the thought of leaving his large and helpless family in such precarious circumstances. The evening before his death we crossed Green River and camped on the bank. Looking where I lay helpless, he said: "Poor child! What will become of you?"

Captain Shaw found him weeping bitterly. He said his last hour had come, and his heart was filled with anguish for his family. His wife was ill, the children small, and one likely to be a cripple. They had no relatives near, and a long journey lay before them. In piteous tones he begged the Captain to take charge of them and see them through. This he stoutly promised. Father was buried the next day on the banks of Green River. His coffin was made of two troughs dug out of the body of a tree, but next year emigrants found his bleaching bones, as the Indians had disinterred the remains.

Mother planned to get to Whitman's and winter there, but she was rapidly failing under her sorrows. The nights and mornings were very cold, and she took cold from the exposure unavoidably. With camp fever and a sore mouth, she fought bravely against fate for the sake of her children, but she was taken delirious soon after reaching Fort Bridger, and was bed-fast. Travelling in this condition over a road clouded with dust, she suffered intensely. She talked of her husband, addressing him as though present, beseeching him in piteous tones to relieve her sufferings, until at last she became unconscious. Her babe was cared for by the women of the train.

Those kind-hearted women would also come in at night and wash the dust from the mother's face and otherwise make her comfortable. We travelled a rough road the day she died, and she moaned fearfully all the time. At night one of the women came in as usual, but she made no reply to questions, so she thought her asleep, and washed her face, then took her hand and discovered the pulse was nearly gone. She lived but a few moments.....

Her name was cut on a headboard, and that was all that could be done. So in twenty-six days we became orphans. Seven children of us, the oldest fourteen and the youngest a babe. The baby was taken by a woman in the train, and all were literally adopted by the company. No one there but was ready to do us any possible favor. This was especially true of Captain Shaw and his wife. Their kindness will ever be cherished in grateful remembrance by us all.

Exploring the Oregon Trail

ACROSS THE PLAINS IN 1844 BY CATHERINE SAGER PRINGLE

First Hand account from a diary My father was one of the restless ones who are not content to remain in one place long at a time. Late in the fall of 1838 we emigrated from Ohio to Missouri. Our first halting place was on Green River, but the next year we took a farm in Platte County. He engaged in farming and blacksmithing, and had a wide reputation for ingenuity. Anything they needed, made or mended, sought his shop. In 1843, Dr. Whitman came to Missouri. The healthful climate induced my mother to favor moving to Oregon. Immigration was the theme all winter, and we decided to start for Oregon. Late in 1843 father sold his property and moved near St. Joseph, and in April, 1844, we started across the plains. The first encampments were a great pleasure to us children. We were five girls and two boys, ranging from the girl baby to be born on the way to the oldest boy, hardly old enough to be any help.

STARTING ON THE PLAINS We waited several days at the Missouri River. Many friends came that far to see the emigrants start on their long journey, and there was much sadness at the parting, and a sorrowful company crossed the Missouri that bright spring morning. The motion of the wagon made us all sick, and it was weeks before we got used to the seasick motion. Rain came down and required us to tie down the wagon covers, and so increased our sickness by confining the air we breathed.

Soon after starting, Indians raided our camp one night and drove off a number of cattle. They were pursued, but never recovered.

Soon everything went smooth and our train made steady headway. The weather was fine and we enjoyed the journey pleasantly. There were several musical instruments among the emigrants, and these sounded clearly on the evening air when camp was made and merry talk and laughter resounded from almost every campfire.

Reaching the buffalo country, our father would get someone to drive his team and start on the hunt, for he was enthusiastic in his love of such sport. He not only killed the great bison, but often brought home on his shoulder the timid antelope that had fallen at his unerring aim

Soon after crossing South Platte the unwieldy oxen ran on a bank and overturned the wagon, greatly injuring our mother. She lay long insensible in the tent put up for the occasion.

August 1st we nooned in a beautiful grove on the north side of the Platte. We had by this time got used to climbing in and out of the wagon when in motion. When performing this feat that afternoon my dress caught on an axle helve and I was thrown under the wagon wheel, which passed over and badly crushed my limb before father could stop the team. He picked me up and saw the extent of the injury when the injured limb hung dangling in the air.

They learned to get along with their fellow emigrants, to agree on rules they would all follow on the journey, and to set up and break camp every night and morning. They learned to spread out in several columns so that they raised less dust and fewer of them had to breathe the choking air. They rotated positions in the line in a spirit of fairness.

They learned to travel six out of seven days as experienced voices told them that some of the most difficult sections to travel would come at the end when they would have to cross mountains before the winter snows.

Water - and grass for livestock - became more scarce. The drier air caused wooden wheels to shrink and the iron tires that held the wheels together loosened or rolled off. Buffalo herds on which the emigrants had depended for fresh meat to supplement their staples became increasingly hard to find the farther west they went.

Cooking fuel, whether wood or buffalo chips, was also harder to find. To lighten their wagons, the emigrants left treasured pieces of furniture and other personal belongings by the wayside. Surviving the trip had become of paramount importance; food and tools were vital, heirlooms were not. From Fort Laramie to Fort Bridger, on the western edge of present-day Wyoming, the Mormon Trail flowed with the Oregon and California trails.

Loading the Wagon

Wagons usually measured 4 feet wide by 12 feet long. Into these 48 square feet were put supplies for traveling the trail and the wherewithal for beginning a new life. The emphasis was on tools and food, but a few family treasures and heirlooms were also carried. A typical load is shown above. Using the wagon as shelter was almost an afterthought.

Trail's End

Footsore, weary, and exhausted traveler and beast alike faced the final third and the most difficult part of the trail. Yet speed was of the essence, for winter snows could close mountain passes or trap unprepared and tired groups of emigrants as they crossed both the Blue Mountains in eastern Oregon and the Cascades to the west. Once the United States and Great Britain agreed on an international boundary and the Hudson's Bay Company moved its post at Fort Vancouver to Vancouver Island, Americans settled in present-day Washington as well.

The 1850 census showed that 12,093 people lived in Oregon. Ten years later, when Oregon had been a state for one year, 52,495 were counted. Small towns were on the verge of becoming cities. Frame houses replaced log cabins. Orchards grew to maturity. The land was acquiring the look of civilization that the emigrants had left behind.

Background- Fugitive Slave Act- 1850

The Fugitive Slave Act was part of the group of laws referred to as the "Compromise of 1850." In this compromise, the antislavery advocates gained the admission of California as a free state, and the prohibition of slave-trading in the District of Columbia. Passage of this law was so hated by abolitionists, however, that its existence played a role in the end of slavery a little more than a dozen years later. This law also spurred the continued operation of the fabled Underground Railroad, a network of over 3,000 homes and other "stations" that helped escaping slaves travel from the southern slave-holding states to the northern states and Canada.

THE OREGON TRAIL

The Oregon Trail was much more than a pathway to the state of Oregon; it was the only practical corridor to the entire western United States. The places we now know as Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah would probably not be a part of the United States today were it not for the Oregon Trail. That's because the Trail was the only feasible way for settlers to get across the mountains.

The journey west on the Oregon Trail was exceptionally difficult by today's standards. One in 10 died along the way; many walked the entire two-thousand miles barefoot. The common misperception is that Native Americans were the emigrant's biggest problem en route. Quite the contrary, most native tribes were quite helpful to the emigrants. The real enemies of the pioneers were cholera, poor sanitation and--surprisingly--accidental gunshots.

The first emigrants to go to Oregon in a covered wagon were Marcus and Narcissa Whitman who made the trip in 1836. But the big wave of western migration did not start until 1843, when about a thousand pioneers made the journey.

That 1843 wagon train, dubbed "the great migration" kicked off a massive move west on the Oregon Trail. Over the next 25 years more than a half million people went west on the Trail.

Actual wagon ruts from the Oregon Trail still exist today in many parts of the American West; and many groups are working hard to preserve this national historic treasure.

For many years, cholera ravaged emigrants along the Oregon Trail. Whoever caught it was dead--no cure or treatment existed. Usually, the infected emigrant died in 24 hours or less.

If an entire wagon train stopped for an elaborate funeral, it would slow their progress.

Guidebooks in book or pamphlet form were soon available for emigrants. Some provided good solid reliable information. Others contributed to the "Oregon Fever" that swept the country in the 1840s describing the land in almost Biblical terms.

Each part of the journey had its difficulties. For the first third of the way, the emigrants got used to the routine and work of travel. They learned to hitch and unhitch their livestock, to keep the wagons in good running order, and to make sure that their animals got the water and food they needed to survive.

CARROLL FAMILY MIGRATES FROM IRELAND TO MARYLAND ACROSS THE OREGON TRAIL

The Carroll Family came to the United States from Ireland in 1846. They are distant relatives of the Carroll's of Maryland. They are Catholic.

WHY THEY CAME FROM IRELAND



By 1841, there were 8,175,000 people in Ireland. Most Irish landlords were Protestants, simply because the law prohibited Catholics from owning land. The Irish peasants themselves, who were both Protestant and Catholic, ate potatoes almost exclusively, since land was scarce and potatoes were an intensive crop. However, in 1845 a fungal disease called 'phytophthora infestans', or 'potato blight' struck and wiped out a third of the potato crop in Ireland. This was a disaster to the peasants who relied upon it.

By 1846, potato supplies had sold out and many people began to slowly starve. The British government stepped in and imported £100,000 worth of maize from America to feed the starving, and this helped prevent mass death for the first year of the Famine. However, the crop of 1846 also failed and this time wiped out almost all the potatoes in Ireland. Thousands of people simply starved, particularly in rural areas. Many also died from typhus, scurvy and dysentery.

The British set up soup-kitchens and workhouses for the poor but they drastically underestimated the scale of the disaster, and many people did not receive any aid at all. The problem was compounded by landlords who evicted Peasants who could not pay the rent because they had no potatoes to sell

Many thousands of Irish decided to cut their losses and set sail on emigration boats to America. This is the origin of about half of what is now referred to as 'Irish America'. Hundreds of Irish died on the ships which were so overcrowded that they became known as 'coffin ships'.

In 1846 Thomas Carroll their distant relative in a rich landowner in Maryland invited them to move in with his own family on his plantation. Thomas Carroll family owned many slaves. Slavery is against all the beliefs of the Irish Carroll's. They migrated to America because the Irish had been made slaves on their own land by the English and because of the famine.

The Irish Carroll's were called Abolitionists. And to maintain peace they chose to join the westward expansion to Oregon. There they would take possession of free land and not live under the rule of a country that permitted slavery - a country that was moving closer and closer to civil war