

Overland Journeys: Travels in the West, 1800-1880

Original primary sources highlight the trials and tribulations of settlers on their epic journeys to the west.

- Date Range: 1800-1880
- Content: 71,133 pages
- Source Library: Lost Cause Press

Explorers came and went. Soldiers came and went. Miners came and went. But the settlers came and stayed. For settlers, the ways of reaching a destination in the frontier country were either wretched ordeals or wondrous adventures.

At first, settlers travelled in covered wagons, steamboats and stagecoaches. The coming of railroads increased the speed of the journeys, but for the travelers there was little in the way of amenities. Fortunately, many of these men and women recorded daily events and their thoughts with such picturesque zest that some accounts of westward journeys have elements of great literature within them.

Selections within *Overland Journeys: Travels in the West, 1800-1880* are based on two respected bibliographies:

- The Plains and Rockies: A Critical Bibliography of Exploration, Adventure, and Travel in the American West, 1800–1865
- The Trail West: A Bibliography-Index to Western American Trails, 1841-1869

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Overland Journeys: Travels in the West, 1800-1880

Up to half a million settlers crossed the West on these trails from the earliest wagon trains to the building of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The 2,000-mile journey across overland trails took around seven months to complete. Most groups traveled at a pace of fifteen miles a day, and most settlers traveled with their families. Groups were usually led by “pilots” — fur trappers or mountain men who would guide them on the trails.

- The scarcity of water and fuel for fires was a common brutal challenge on the trip
- In many treeless areas, buffalo chips were the most common source of fuel
- Up to one-tenth of the settlers who attempted the crossing died during the trip, mostly from disease such as cholera
- Hostile confrontations with Native Americans defending their homelands, although often feared by the wagon trains, were actually comparatively rare

In-depth, wide-ranging coverage

More than 71,000 images contained in *Overland Journeys: Travels in the West, 1800-1880* covers topics such as:

- California gold rush
- Donner Party
- Economic development of Oregon and California
- Emigration to Texas
- Geographical and physical characteristics of overland trails
- Indian-white relations
- Kit Carson and western adventurers and mountain men
- Mormonism and development of Utah
- Mountain Meadows massacre
- Stagecoach lines in the southwest
- State boards of emigration and immigration
- The Mormon Brigade
- U.S. Army expeditions

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