WESTWARD EXPANSION AND EXTENSION
OF THE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES
1830 - 1898

OVERLAND MIGRATIONS
WEST OF THE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER

THE NATIONAL SURVEY
OF HISTORIC SITES
AND BUILDINGS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Theme XV
Westward Expansion and the Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific 1830-1898

OVERLAND MIGRATIONS WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI

1959

United States Department of the Interior
Fred A. Seaton, Secretary
National Park Service
Conrad L. Wirth, Director
PREFACE

Under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Park Service in 1937 undertook the Historic Sites Survey. World War II forced the suspension of these studies. This Survey in 1957 was renewed as a part of the MISSION 66 program.

The Historic Sites Act authorized the United States to "make a survey of historic and archeologic sites, buildings, and other objects, for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States." In 1936, the Secretary of the Interior set up a code of procedure which directed the National Park Service to study and investigate historic and prehistoric sites and buildings throughout the United States and to describe, tabulate, classify and evaluate such sites for the purpose of developing a comprehensive, long-term plan for their use. The criteria used in evaluating such sites and buildings are listed on page 99 of this report.

The sites classified as of "exceptional value" in the Survey will assist the National Park Service in preparing a National Recreational Plan. It is planned that some of these classified sites may be administered by the National Park Service to fill in the gaps in the historical and archeological representation in the National Park System. The National Park Service will also recommend and encourage the various states and local governments in implementing their programs for historical and archeological site preservation.
The first section of this report gives a broad analysis of this subtheme itself. The second part is a discussion of the sites which are being considered. The historians who prepared this report made personal visits to the more important of these sites discussed.

This report is a joint undertaking. The history section of overland migrations was prepared by Dr. Robert W. Johannsen, Associate Professor of History, University of Kansas. Dr. Johannsen also contributed to the research on the individual sites. Historians Robert M. Utley, Region Three Office, Santa Fe, and William C. Everhart, Region Four Office, San Francisco, contributed the site materials for their respective regions. Historian Ray H. Mattison, Region Two Office, Omaha, coordinated this study and assembled the report.

After the completion, the study was presented to the Consulting Committee for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The Committee consists of Dr. Waldo Leland, American Historical Association; Dr. S. K. Stevens, American Association for State and Local History; Dr. Louis Wright, Folger Library; Mr. Earl H. Reed, American Institute of Architects; Dr. Richard Howland, National Trust for Historical Preservation; Mr. Eric Gugler, American Scenic and Historical Preservation Society; Dr. J. O. Brew, Committee for the Recovery of Archeological Remains; and Mr. Frederick Johnson, Robert S. Peabody Foundation for American Archeology.

The over-all Survey, as well as the theme study which follows, is under the general direction of John O. Littleton,
Chief, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, who works under the general supervision of Herbert E. Kahler, Chief Historian, Branch of History, and of Ronald F. Lee, Chief, Division of Interpretation of the National Park Service.

The work of the National Survey profits from the experience and knowledge of a considerable number of persons and organizations. Every effort is made to solicit the considered opinion of as many qualified persons as possible in reaching final selection of the most significant sites. Assistance in the preparation of this study from the following is acknowledged:

William D. Aeschbacher, Superintendent, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln; Clara S. Beatty, Director, and Colonel Thomas S. Miller, Chairman, Nevada State Historical Society, Reno; L. C. Bishop, Historic Sites Survey, Wyoming State Historical Society, Cheyenne; Andrew D. Bowles, A.I.A., Boise; Albert Culverwell, Historian, Washington State Park Commission, Olympia; Miss Lola M. Homsher, Director, Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, Cheyenne; Mr. Charles Kelly, retired Superintendent of Capitol Reef National Monument, Salt Lake City; Dr. A. R. Mortensen, Director, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City; Dr. Aubrey Neasham and Jack Dyson, History Section, California State Division of Beaches and Parks, Sacramento; Dr. William J. Peterson, Superintendent, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City; Marion D. Ross, American Institute of Architects, University of Oregon, Eugene; H. J. Swinney, Director, and Dr. Merle Wells, Historian, Idaho Historical Society, Boise; Thomas Vaughan, Director, Oregon Historical Society, Portland; Arthur Woodward, formerly
of the Los Angeles County Museum.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director
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INTRODUCTION: OVERLAND MIGRATION IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The history of the United States during the nineteenth century was the history of the discovery, exploration and settlement of a vast continental area. The movement of thousands of Americans across plain and mountain to the Far West was a feat unduplicated in the annals of any other nation. While they were but part of a continuous process of settlement that had been going on since early colonial days, the migrations overland from the Mississippi valley westward were considerably more dramatic than those that carried pioneers away from the Atlantic seaboard. Huge caravans and wagon trains were organized, and two thousand miles of land were traversed, including dry plains, rugged mountain ranges and waterless deserts, inhabited by wandering, often hostile Indians. The tenacity and energy of these pioneers have become almost legendary in the record of American achievements.

The middle decades of the nineteenth century witnessed three significant population movements to the West: the pioneer farmers moving overland to the fertile valleys of western Oregon or California; the harried members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints trekking to their new Zion in the Great Salt Lake basin; and the hordes of gold seekers rushing West in the hope of finding quick and easy riches at the trail's end. By means of these three movements, the West was peopled with unprecedented rapidity.

The fifth decade of the nineteenth century was America's most expansive period. Within the space of a few years, the
boundaries of the United States were pushed across half the continent. The most significant aspect of this expansionism was the overland movement of emigrants. The optimistic pioneer farmer, moving with his family to Oregon, the presevering Mormon, searching for a home in which he might live in peace, and the adventurous forty-niner, hurrying to the new El Dorado with visions of the wealth that awaited him there, all carried American civilization westward and built in the Great West the foundations for a new society.

Several circumstances combined to produce this expansion of population in the 1840's. The West was not unknown to Americans earlier in the century. Since Lewis and Clark's monumental journey to the Pacific and back between 1804 and 1806, American fur traders had ranged far and wide over the Western mountain ranges, the Santa Fe traders crossed the plains in their heavily laden freight wagons and the pioneer farmer established himself in the Mississippi valley. As they pushed toward the western boundary of Missouri, these farmers encountered two barriers to their westward progress. One was the myth of the Great American Desert, the idea that all between the Missouri and the Rockies was uninhabitable desert, which had its beginnings early in the century when explorers brought back discouraging reports of the vast grasslands lying in the center of the continent.\(^1\) The other barrier was the "permanent Indian frontier," the designation given to the lands west of Missouri by the United

\(^1\)See Ralph C. Morris, "The Notion of a Great American Desert East of the Rockies," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIII (Sept., 1926), 190-200.
States government. By removing the Indians from east of the Mississippi to these "desert" lands west of Missouri, the government thought to guarantee a perpetual separation of the two races.

Delayed and discouraged by these two barriers, the westward moving emigrant, when conditions seemed right, leaped over the "desert" and the Indian reserves, the Rocky Mountains and the Great Basin, and in two gigantic spearheads of movement, settled in Oregon and California. Other circumstances tended to produce the forty year lag between the first exploration and the beginning of settlement of the Far West. The fact that American title to the Oregon Country was uncertain and that distant California lay within Mexico deterred the movement of settlers to these areas; it was not until the expansive fever gripped the American public in the 1840's that the foreign flags which waved on the Pacific were ignored and considered no obstacle to the extension of American institutions.

Some individuals, such as Congressmen John Floyd of Virginia and Hall J. Kelley of Massachusetts, had kept alive an interest in the West in the 1820's and 1830's by trying to promote a movement of population to Oregon, but their efforts bore little fruit. Although unsuccessful, their voices kept the question of Oregon before the people during a period of

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official governmental indifference. But as fur traders became
more active in the Western mountains, Santa Fe traders engaged
in their lucrative trade with Mexico, ambitious New Englanders
sent their trading vessels around the Horn to California and
missionaries moved into the Pacific Northwest to carry the Gospel
to the heathen Indians, much of the ignorance of the West dispelled
and the United States government took a new interest in the area.
Exploring expeditions, such as those of William Slacum, Charles
Wilkes and John C. Fremont broadened the interest of Americans
in the West. This new governmental interest in westward ex-
pansion coincided with a similar expansive interest among the
pioneer farmers of the Middle West. In the seaport cities of
the Atlantic coast, a desire to expand American trade in the
Pacific led to a demand for ports and harbors along the West
coast of North America. "Manifest destiny," which reached its
peak of expression in the 1840's, may be considered, in part,
both cause and consequence of the new interest in American
expansion to the West.

The new interest of Americans in the Far West was also
stimulated by a disastrous economic depression in the Mississippi
valley during the years following 1837. These years of depression
were precisely those in which the "Oregon Fever" reached high ex-
pression and during which the first movements of pioneer farmers
to the Far West over the overland trails occurred. The economic
discontent, and the restlessness it promoted, combined with the
expansionist fervor of the period, provided the setting for the
overland migrations that eventually carried thousands upon thousands
of Americans to the new land of the West.\textsuperscript{3}

The movement of Americans to the West was the movement of an agrarian people, of established intelligent, able farmers. Their motives in moving were principally economic in character, although other desires were important. They did not seek a radical change in their social status but merely sought to continue their agricultural pursuits in circumstances they thought more ideal. Important to those Mississippi valley farmers who crossed the trails during the years of economic distress following 1837 was the desire for more and better markets for their agricultural products. The pacific coast, in its proximity to Asia, seemed to offer these markets. Linked with this conviction that these new opportunities for market made the Far West a promised land for farmers, was the desire for free land, a possibility made real by the appearance of new champions of the West in Congress, such as Senator Lewis F. Linn of Missouri,\textsuperscript{4} and their efforts to extend a free land policy to Oregon. Many left the Mississippi valley seeking a more healthful climate than that to which they had been exposed. Finally, the patriotic motive encouraged some of the emigration. The desire to save Oregon from British rule, to extend the institutions of American democracy to new areas, and to enhance the power of the United States on the continent, was

\textsuperscript{3}For a discussion of the Panic of 1837 as it related to the "Oregon Fever," see James Christy Bell, Opening a Highway to the Pacific, 1838-1846 (New York, 1921), Chapter VI.

frequently used to justify the move to the West. The westward migration of Americans to the shores of the Pacific thus resulted from a combination of circumstances and motives, but beneath all was the basic desire to improve one's position in the national economy.

The movement of pioneers to Oregon and California continued throughout the 1840's, at an ever increasing pace. Meanwhile other areas were attracting American settlers. In 1846 and 1847, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, harried and persecuted almost from the time of their organization, were driven from their homes once again. The movement of the Mormons to the valley of the Great Salt Lake was one of the most dramatic events in the history of American westward expansion. With the Mormon migrations, not only the motivation of westward movement shifted, but the character of the emigrant also changed. No longer were the migrations composed solely of an agrarian people, but shopkeepers, artisans, mechanics, and skilled persons of all types made the trek. The economic motive, so dominant among the earlier emigrants, gave way to the desire to worship in peace and to live in isolation from those who would deny this right.

In 1848, the discovery of gold in California added a new impetus to westward migration. The California gold rush resulted in a greater movement of Americans to the Far West than had been experienced to that time. Traffic along the Oregon and California Trail was swelled to flood proportions; new trails and new shortcuts on the old ones were blazed by impatient goldseekers.
In contrast to the family migrations on the Oregon and Mormon Trails earlier, the trails to the mines were crowded with adventurers, ruffians and single men out to win their fortunes. For each, a single motivation overshadowed all others—to get rich quick. The history of overland migrations, as one writer has pointed out, divides naturally at the year 1848. Before, the migrations possessed a high degree of homogeneity—agrarian families seeking permanent homes in the West—but after 1848, this homogeneous character is lost as new elements were injected into the story by the lure of gold. The forty-niners were for the most part not frontiersmen; their experiences on the trails often revealed an ignorance of frontier conditions and practices which frequently led to unfortunate results.

The American people continued to move westward over the trails in their wagons and carts, on horseback and on foot, for many years. The completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 diminished the movement but many homeseekers still preferred to cross the continent in their wagons. As the port cities on the Pacific developed, the sea routes to the West became more popular, but the numbers carried by the ships never matched those that chose the overland trails.

The overland migrations to the West during the middle decades of the nineteenth century were of tremendous significance to the history of the United States. Through these migrations the power and influence of the nation was extended to the Pacific shores.

New American communities were born on this far-flung frontier that were to have a profound impact on the economic and political development of the United States for many years to come. The nation became increasingly Western oriented. The achievement of a more liberal land policy and the development of a transcontinental rail network were to a large degree results of the settlement of the Far West. The movement of peoples across the great North American heartland brought Indian relations to a head and forced a re-examination of Indian policy on the government. Sectional antagonisms between the free North and the slaveholding South were intensified as both sections vied for the coveted prize that was the West. The political struggle that developed over the problems of slavery and expansion was finally reconciled only by a recourse to arms and warfare.

In the totality of American history, the migrations represent but a part of the continuing movement of American people westward; there is little doubt, however, that the extension of American civilization to the Far West by the thousands of emigrants who utilized the overland trails was by far the most dramatic and one of the most picturesque incidents in the story of nineteenth century expansion.
THE OREGON AND CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Historical Background.

The most significant, longest and most heavily traveled route of overland migration during the nineteenth century was that known as the Oregon and California Trail. It was the sole artery of overland travel to the Oregon Country and became the most important avenue to the gold fields of California. The trail was known by many names, the Emigrant Road, the Platte Trail, the Overland Trail and (to the Indians) the White-Topped Wagon Road, but by whatever name, it has become synonymous with the westward movement in the United States, and its drama and romance has added immeasurably to our cultural heritage.

Large portions of the trail were well known to Americans long before the covered wagons lumbered over them to the West. Fur traders and trappers and parties of missionaries had blazed the way for the pioneer farmers to follow, and even the fur traders, in many cases, followed established Indian trails. The first white men to traverse sections of the trail were members of Wilson Price Hunt's Astorian expedition in 1811 and 1812, sent out to implement John Jacob Astor's dream of establishing a great commercial center at the mouth of the Columbia River, based on the fur trade. As the fur trade developed in the Rocky Mountains, other sections of the trail were explored and publicized. The Hudson's Bay Company expeditions into the Snake

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6 A useful history of the Oregon Trail may be found in W. J. Ghent, The Road to Oregon: A Chronicle of the Great Emigrant Trail (London, 1929). The story of the migrations has been told in broader perspective by James C. Bell, Opening a Highway to the Pacific, 1838-1846 (New York, 1921)
River country and the Salt Lake Basin in the 1820's and the American trappers as they journeyed to their annual rendezvous increased the knowledge of the route. Such men as Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jedediah Smith, James Clyman, James Bridger, William Sublette and Caleb Greenwood gained an intimate knowledge of the trail through their explorations. Many of them later guided the emigrants' trains over the trails they had opened. The fur trade era not only witnessed the opening and exploration of the transcontinental trail but also resulted in the establishment of important posts that were to serve the emigrants later. Fort Hall was built on the Snake River in 1834 and in the same year Fort William, the predecessor of Fort Laramie, was being constructed near the North Platte.

Hard on the heels of the fur traders in the middle 1830's were the missionaries, who took a sudden interest in carrying the Gospel to the heathen tribes of the West. Jason Lee, for the Methodist Church, and Dr. Marcus Whitman, for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, each established mission stations in the Oregon Country. Each accompanied parties of fur traders on their journeys west. To Dr. Whitman goes the distinction of having taken the first wagon (or cart) as far west as Fort Hall.

Both Lee and Whitman did much to encourage the emigrations to Oregon. In 1838, Lee returned to the East seeking reinforcements for his mission station. Although he found a considerable interest throughout the Middle West in Oregon, he provided the immediate stimulus for the first emigrant party to make the long journey
westward. One of the many speeches he delivered in the East on the subject of Oregon was given in Peoria, Illinois. His address fired the local interest and resulted in the formation of the so-called Peoria Party, a group of Illinoisans which departed for Oregon the following year. Four years after Lee's trip, Whitman made his spectacular winter ride to the East to plead for the life of his mission before his superiors, incidentally fomenting a great deal of enthusiasm throughout the East for Oregon. He returned to his mission in 1843, at the head of the first sizeable number of emigrants to follow the trail to Oregon. Whitman's mission became a significant stopping point along the trail.

Only a few of the members of the Peoria Party eventually reached Oregon and some of these returned to the East in 1840, but the Peoria Party was a harbinger of things to come. In 1841, another small group, set out from western Missouri, with California, not Oregon, as its goal. This so-called Bartleson-Bidwell party later split, half continuing on to California, the others going to Oregon. John Bidwell was among the former; he and his companions constituted the first organized emigration over sections that later became popular as the California Trail. The emigration of 1841, though small, was the first bona fide wagon train to move westward from the Missouri River.

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8John Bidwell, A Journey to California, With Observations About The Country, Climate and the Route to this Country (San Francisco, 1937). The Migration to Oregon in 1841 has been reconstructed by Harvey E. Tobie, "From the Missouri to the Columbia, 1841," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXVIII (June, 1937), 135-159.
With the emigration of 1842, according to one writer, "the epic of the settlement of Oregon" really begins. The "Oregon Fever" continued to mount in intensity and the enthusiasm for Oregon became widespread. Emigrating societies had been organized throughout the country, for the purpose of disseminating information about the West and assisting families to make the long move. Over one hundred persons started west from Independence, Missouri, in 1842, bound for Oregon. In the following year, the emigration reached unprecedented numbers. Although subsequent migrations outnumbered it, the 1843 emigration has become known as the "Great Emigration," as almost 900 individuals made their way over the Oregon Trail.

The numbers of emigrants who followed the trail increased rapidly in the following years. In 1844, four independently organized parties, numbering over one thousand persons in total, left from various points in western Missouri. A year later, more than three thousand emigrants made the journey, by far the largest of the first five emigrations. Following this peak year, the numbers on the trail fluctuated.

Oregon received the great majority of these pioneers, but throughout the 1840's, small numbers traveled to California, opening and publicizing the California branch of the trail. Not all the publicity given to the migrations of these years was encouraging. In 1845, Stephen Meek attempted to lead a party of Oregon

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9 Ghent, Road to Oregon, 58.
emigrants over a new and unfamiliar "shortcut" from Fort Boise to the Willamette valley, across the deserts of eastern Oregon. After considerable aimless wandering and privation, the party reached the Dalles, on the Columbia, in a famished condition. The following year the tragedy of the Donner party marred an otherwise uneventful migration. Detained as they attempted to follow an unfamiliar cutoff through the Wasatch range and across the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Donners were caught by the winter snows in the high Sierras.

The year 1848 marked a turning point in the history of overland migrations over the Oregon and California Trails. Gold was discovered in January, 1848, on a branch of the American River in California, and the resulting rush to the gold fields considerably altered the pattern of emigration. Beginning in 1849, hordes of gold seekers moved westward to California; although no accurate figures are available, some estimates run as high as 45,000 traveling over the trail to California in 1849 alone. While emigration to Oregon continued, it was dwarfed in numbers by that to California. The trail from the Great Basin to the Sierra Nevada mountains became a well-worn highway; shortcuts were opened by forty-niners.

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who sought every possible means to hasten their trip. New routes and trails from the Mississippi valley were blazed, but the existing California Trail remained the heaviest traveled.

Throughout the 1840's, the United States government displayed little official interest in the route, in spite of the appeals of emigrants and politicians. Until 1846, the Oregon Country was disputed between the United States and Great Britain and the Government was reluctant to take any action that might anger the British. Some official exploration of areas traversed by the trail was authorized, notably that of John C. Fremont, but little was done to follow it up. In three expeditions, in 1842, 1843 and 1845-46, Fremont explored large portions of both the Oregon and California Trails; his reports were widely circulated and served as guide books for many of the later emigrants. Other government explorers followed Fremont in the West, but few of them were concerned with the Oregon Trail. In 1849, Captain Howard Stansbury followed the trail to Fort Bridger and Salt Lake City, before making his detailed explorations of the Great Salt Lake, and his report was a minute description of the trail in its eastern segments.

The establishment of military posts along the trail was recommended as early as 1839 by Congressional spokesmen. Although the early emigrations to Oregon and California passed without danger

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14 For a convenient abridgement of Fremont's narratives, see Allan Nevins, ed., Narratives of Exploration and Adventure, By John Charles Fremont (New York, 1956).

from Indian attack, there was strong fear that such good relations might not continue. In 1845, Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny road over the trail as far as South Pass with 250 dragoons and two howitzers, warning the Sioux and Arapahoe that the emigrants must not be disturbed. Early the next year, Congress passed an act providing for a regiment of mounted riflemen to establish military posts to Oregon. The outbreak of the Mexican War postponed the realization of this project. It was not until the spring of 1848 that construction work on Fort Kearny, on the Platte River, was begun. In 1849, the regiment of mounted riflemen road overland to Fort Vancouver, occupying Fort Laramie for the United States government, and establishing a post, Cantonment Loring, adjacent to Fort Hall. Of the three posts that eventually guarded the Oregon Trail, only Fort Kearny had been constructed by the United States government.

Emigration over the Oregon and California Trails continued to swell during the decade of the fifties. As the population on the Pacific coast increased, the demands for the improvement and protection of the overland route, the establishment of a regular mail service across the continent and the construction of a Pacific Railroad became louder and more insistent. The growing hostility between North and South over the expansion of slavery into the western territories postponed the fulfillment of these demands, although

17 Raymond W. Settle, ed., March of the Mounted Riflemen (Glendale, Calif., 1940).
some initial steps were taken. Mail service under government contract was opened in 1850 between Independence and Salt Lake City over the Oregon Trail, and in the following year, the mails were carried between Salt Lake City and California over parts of the California Trail.

With the completion of the transcontinental telegraph in 1861, the importance of the overland mail service was somewhat reduced, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, over a route that coincided with the trail in some places but deviated from it in others brought a final decline to the road that had carried hundreds of thousands of emigrants to new homes in the far west.

Westward to Oregon: The Route.

The emigrants' trail from the Missouri River to the Willamette valley, a distance of almost two thousand miles, started from any number of outfitting or jumping off points. The earliest, and most popular, were the Missouri towns of Independence and Westport, located on the south bank of the Missouri River just east of the "elbow" where the river turns abruptly north. As the migrations increased in size, and especially after the Forty-Niners joined the Oregon-bound emigrants, other towns became important as starting points for the trail. Moving up the Missouri River, many emigrants crossed at Weston, others at St. Joseph. In Iowa, the Mormon town of Kanesville became popular with emigrants who had traveled across Iowa in their wagons, while some crossed the Missouri River further south at what is now Nebraska City, the site of the original Fort Kearny. The overland trail, in its eastern section, resembled the roots of a tree, each root eventually

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joining the trunk on or near the Platte River.

The most important jumping off towns, however, remained Independence and Westport. The former already had a reputation as an outfitting point for Western travel before the migrations to Oregon began. It was here that the Santa Fe traders gathered, purchased their goods and their wagons, and organized their caravans. From Independence the Rocky Mountain fur traders set out on their long pull to the Upper Missouri River country, and it was through Independence that they passed on their return to the "fur emporium," St. Louis. Since the first emigrants to cross the West depended heavily on the fur and Indian traders for guidance, it was natural that they should utilize the facilities and routes of the mountain men. The Missouri River formed a natural gateway to the West; by the early 1840's, the settlements along the River pointed, like an index finger, into the heart of the Indian country. In later years, the town of Westport, close by the western boundary of Missouri and a short distance south of the river, supplanted Independence as a rendezvous for the emigrant trains.

Emigrants made their way to these western Missouri towns by steamboat from St. Louis, or overland in their wagons. Francis Parkman, who traveled up the river in 1846, noticed parties of emigrants camped in their tents and wagons along the river bank as they moved toward Independence. On board the steamboat, he wrote, "were Santa Fe traders, gamblers, speculators, and adventurers of various descriptions, and her steerage was crowded with Oregon emigrants, 'mountain men,' negroes, and a party of Kansas Indians,
Westport Landing. A well-known outstanding point on the Oregon Trail.
A painting by William H. Jackson.
who had been on a visit to St. Louis. Independence bore as cosmopolitan a look as did the steamboat. Here the traveler was likely to encounter Santa Fe traders, Spaniards from the Southwest, French half-breed voyageurs, Indians from Mexico and from the high plains, uncouth and half-civilized mountain men, United States Army troops, freighters, emigrant families from all parts of the United States, missionaries preparing to carry the Gospel to savages, and finally those unscrupulous adventurers, found on every frontier, whose career it was to prey upon the weaknesses of frontier society. The town was bustling.

From Independence, the emigrant trains moved out in the spring of each year along the Santa Fe Trail. Within a few miles, the state boundary was crossed, civilization left behind, and the emigrants entered what had become known as the "permanent Indian frontier." On the outskirts of the present town of Gardner, Kansas, the trail forked; a simple sign bearing the words "Road to Oregon" pointed the way to the northwest. Crossing the rolling prairies of eastern Kansas and fording the deep-cut streams (often with extreme difficulty), the emigrants encountered their first major river, the Kansas or Kaw, at Papin's ferry (present day Topeka) or several miles to the West. Travel over this initial section of the Oregon Trail was usually slow. Many wagons waited for late-comers to catch up and the trains often halted to organize themselves for the long journey ahead. If the members of the train were driving large numbers of cattle with them (as most did)

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18 Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail, Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life (New York, 1912), 2, 3.
the train was usually divided into two parts: the wagons and the "cow column." Younger members of the group were usually assigned to the "cow column."\(^1\) Officers were elected and guards were chosen, along strict military lines. Some of the men were designated as scouts, to ride ahead of the train, keep an eye out for Indian activity and select the camping and watering places. Although no difficulty with Indians was met by the early migrations, the emigrants took precautions against attack. Each night they drew their wagons up into a corral, in the center of which the cattle and horses were often driven. The vigil was not relaxed until the emigrants neared their destination.

From the crossing of the Kaw, a realization of the enormity of the undertaking which the emigrants had assumed so enthusiastically began to take hold. The next objective was the broad Platte River, or the "coast of Nebraska" as it was often called, and the emigrants pushed on with heightening anticipation. Delays on the route during the early migrations were frequent, the travelers not yet having learned that speed was essential. Storms and torrential downpours of rain (characteristic of eastern Kansas in the spring of the year) slowed their progress, as the streams became swollen. Sickness was often made the excuse for a

\(^1\) A classic account of a typical day in the life of an emigrant attached to the column is Jesse Applegate's "A Day with the Cow Column," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, I (Dec., 1900), 371-383.
day's rest; delays were incurred to enable the women to wash or to air out and dry clothing and bedding or to allow the men to hunt game. The question of whether the trains should travel on Sunday became a hotly debated point. Some made it a practice to rest on the Sabbath, not out of religious conviction, but rather because it allowed the oxen to recover their strength and made possible longer drives during the week days.

After crossing the Big Blue River, near Marysville, Kansas, the trail struck the Little Blue, following its course into south central Nebraska. In the vicinity of the Big Blue crossing, the road from Independence joined the branch from St. Joseph and Weston, and the number of wagons on the route increased proportionately. The Oregon Trail reached the Platte near Lowell, Nebraska. After 1848, the travelers were greeted by the sight of Fort Kearny, some miles to the West, a military post constructed solely for the protection of the emigrant trains. Before that year, however, the travelers had to rest content with the sight of the broad, shallow stream that was to remain within their view for so many weeks ahead.

The journey up the Platte was without doubt one of the most tedious and monotonous sections of the trail. For days and days, the wagons rolled westward alongside the river. The hot summer sun, the clouds of dust, the monotony of the landscape contributed a boredom that whetted the emigrants' nerves to a razor sharpness. Quarrels among travelers were frequent, dissension became common, and the trains split up into smaller and smaller units as the members found it more difficult to
agree with one another. One pioneer of 1853 recalled the "sleepy dreaminess" with which the trains moved, as men, women and children sought refuge from the sun and dust inside the wagons, the drivers dozing on the wagon tongues, only the oxen displaying any movement as they plodded ahead in silence. This stage of the journey, however, was not without its diversions. Soon after they reached the Platte, the emigrants sighted their first buffalo, "thicker than . . . stars in the firmament." Hunting parties were organized, and the excitement of the buffalo chase was a welcome change in the daily routine. Even the women frequently took part in the fun.

For some of the later emigrants the long trip up the Platte was anything but a pleasant excursion. In the later years, especially in 1852, the deadly cholera swept the wagon trains; the large number of graves along the trail was testimony to the seriousness of the epidemics.

From the forks of the Platte, the trains followed the South Platte River to the "Lower California Crossing," near present-day Brule, Nebraska or continued westward to the "Upper California Crossing," just west of Julesburg, Colorado. The former remained the more popular. After crossing the South Platte, the landscape began to change. The wagons

20. George B. Currey, "Occasional Address," Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association, 1887, 37. Hereafter, this publication will be abbreviated OPAT.

Crossing of the Platte River near Julesburg, from a painting by William Henry Jackson.

Utah State Historical Society
encountered the deep and precipitous ravines that led down to Ash Hollow on the North Platte and passed the weird rock formations that so excited the emigrant's imagination. Court House Rock, Chimney Rock and Scott's Bluffs were viewed and described in succession. "The whole country," wrote one emigrant, "seems over-spread by the ruins of some of the loftiest and most magnificent palaces the imagination of man can reach in its most extravagant conceptions. Here lays the ruins of a lofty Pyramid, there a splendid castle. On one hand is a tremendous citidal, on the other the grand hall of legislation. . . . It is in vain to attempt a description of those enchanting wonders."22 From Scott's Bluffs, the emigrants often caught their first glimpse of the snow-capped peaks of the Laramie Range to the westward, often calling them the Black Hills.

As they passed the eroded bluffs and monuments along the Platte and viewed the snowy summits of the Laramie Range, the emigrants felt an additional sense of exhilaration, for they knew that they approached their first major goal, Fort Laramie. Located on the Laramie River near the Platte, the fort was a significant establishment of the American Fur Company until 1849, when it became a United States Army post. Some emigrants moved past the fort without halting, in their effort to make up time, but most stopped and spent several days, trading with the fur men, repairing their wagons and resting their teams.

22 Dr. E. A. Tompkins, quoted in Owen C. Coy, The Great Trek (Los Angeles, 1931), 135.
From Fort Laramie, the trains continued up the North Platte River. The river was crossed at numerous locations between the mouth of Deer Creek (near present day Glenrock, Wyoming) and the modern city of Casper. Enterprising individuals established ferries along this section of the river for the convenience of emigrants and, perhaps more importantly, for their own profit. The best known of these was the ferry operated by Mormons on the site of Casper, the upper crossing of the North Platte. At this point, the emigrants left the river they had followed for so many weeks, striking in a southwesterly direction toward the Sweetwater. The route took them over a relatively dry and barren desert, one of the first really difficult stretches encountered by the pioneers. The trail reached the Sweetwater River just east of Independence Rock.

The arrival at Independence Rock was usually the occasion for a brief rest, as young and old alike clambered over this isolated rock formation. Dubbed the "Register of the Desert" by Father De Smet, the rock became covered with the names of emigrants who passed by on the trail. Members of the wagon trains not only added their names to the roster, but searched the rock for the names of friends and relatives who had preceded them westward. From Independence Rock the trail followed the Sweetwater River, past the Devil's Gate and through the narrow gorge known as Three Crossings, to the almost imperceptible South Pass. At South Pass, the emigrants entered Oregon, for until 1859, the Continental Divide formed the eastern boundary of Oregon Territory. Just west of the Pass, the trains often paused to
taste their first westward flowing water at Pacific Springs. Although the arrival at South Pass was often a time for celebration by the travellers, it was little comfort to them, for they knew that their ultimate destination was still far distant and that the difficulties of the road ahead would exceed any encountered thus far. The long journey to the Pass over barren and rocky terrain, under the burning midsummer sun, had taken its toll on both the personnel and the equipment of the wagon trains. One pioneer of 1853 later recalled,

From the South Pass the nature of our journeying changed, and assumed the character of a retreat, a disastrous, ruinous retreat. Oxen and horses began to perish in large numbers . . . the heat-dried wagon, striking on rocks or banks, would fall to pieces. As the beasts of burden grew weaker, and the wagons more rickety, teams began to be doubled and wagons abandoned. . . . The road was strewn with dead cattle, abandoned wagons, discarded cooking utensils, ox-yokes, harness, chairs, mess chests, log chains, books, heirlooms, and family keepsakes.23

Crossing the Dry Sandy and the Little Sandy, the trail followed the Big Sandy River to the Green River. Between Pacific Springs and Green River, the road forked. Most of the emigrants eventually chose to follow a short-cut west to the Bear River, bypassing Fort Bridger, over what became known as Sublette's or Greenwood's Cutoff. The early travellers and many of the California emigrants, however, continued southwestward to Black's Fork and Fort Bridger. The crossing of the Green River often proved to be a treacherous one, costly both in lives and material. In later years, makeshift

23Currey, "Occasional Address," OPAT, 1837, 40.
ferries appeared, although judging from the diaries, the danger was hardly alleviated.

Fort Bridger, a second major resting place on the route, was long anticipated by the emigrants. Built solely to serve the wagon trains, the fort, in its shabby appearance, often proved disappointing to the travellers. Some trading was carried out, but most of all, the emigrants welcomed the opportunity to repair their wagons at Fort Bridger's blacksmith shop. From Fort Bridger the trail extended northwestward to the Bear River valley. During the later years of the migrations, the valley was the scene of considerable activity, as individuals constructed toll bridges over some of the streams and erected trading posts to serve the emigrants.

At Soda Springs, near the point at which the trail left the Bear River, the pioneers encountered one of the most famous natural wonders on the route. The bubbling springs, also known as Beer Springs, and the puffing Steamboat Spring provided the excuse for a general pause in the journey. Not a diarist fails to mention the time spent exploring the vicinity or fails to record his impressions of the water's taste.

Not far beyond Soda Springs, the Bear River turned abruptly to the South. The emigrants continued in their northwestern course to Fort Hall, on the Snake River, their third major stopping point. During the early heavy migration, Fort Hall was in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, and marked the first encounter between the emigrants and the British organization that had once held sway over the Oregon Country. The fort was important as a provisioning point for the trail.
Fort Bridger, in the southwestern corner of Wyoming, was built in 1843 at the division of the Oregon-Mormon California Trails. A painting by William H. Jackson.
Old Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail. Painting by Bethel Morris Farley, Pocatello artist.
ahead, although the amount of supplies available to the emigrant
there seemed never to fill the demand.

West of Fort Hall lay one of the more arduous sections
of the Oregon Trail. Following close by the Snake River, the
trail crossed the monotonous and barren sagebrush plains of
southern Idaho. Emigrants wrote of the burning sand, the
suffocating dust and the difficulty of negotiating the steep
banks and canyon walls of the river. By this time, the wagons
were travelling light. The emigrants had discarded all useless
articles, littering the trail with equipment of all types. At
Fort Hall, many of them left their wagons, transferring their
worldly goods to pack animals. The trail crossed to the
north bank of the Snake River near the present town of Glenns
Ferry, Idaho, then left the river as it struck northwestward to
the Boise River valley. Following the Boise River to its mouth,
the emigrants reached Fort Boise, a small Hudson's Bay Company
post located at the confluence of the Snake and Boise Rivers.
Added to the ardors of the trail along the Snake River was the
danger that food stocks would run out. Little food was avail-
able at Fort Hall and even less at Fort Boise. Game was almost
nonexistent. In many instances, the Indians came to the rescue,
trading and selling salmon to the hungry emigrants.

At Fort Boise, the emigrants left the Snake River once
again and, following the Burnt and Powder Rivers, climbed into the
Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon. Originally the trail curved
to the north, where it passed the Indian mission of Dr. Marcus
Whitman (just west of Walla Walla, Washington), reaching the
Columbia River at Fort Walla Walla, another Hudson's Bay
establishment. Dr. Whitman was ever ready to assist the emigrants
in any way possible and his mission station became a popular rest­
ing place for the earlier migrations. Some emigrants preferred
to bypass the mission, heading directly toward the Columbia River
and after the Whitman massacre in November, 1847, this route became
the most popular one. At Fort Walla Walla, many of the early
travellers transferred their belongings to crude boats or rafts
and continued down the Columbia River by water. Later migrations
paralleled the river along the south bank to the Methodist mission
at The Dalles, at which point the transfer to rafts was made.

The last segment of the long journey, the "home stretch,"
often proved the most difficult. Medorem Crawford, a pioneer of
1842, later recalled that the trip from Fort Walla Walla to the
Willamette valley "was the hardest part of the entire journey--what
with the drifting sands, rocky cliffs, and rapid streams along the
Columbia River, and the gorges, torrents, and thickets of the
Cascade mountains."24 Washington Smith Gilliam, who made the
journey in 1844, wrote that the trip from The Dalles to Fort
Vancouver by water was "the severest hardship that it was ever my
lot to endure."25 At The Dalles, the emigrants halted while

24 Medorem Crawford, "Occasional Address," OPAT, 1887, 40.
boats and rafts were constructed. In later years, boats were often sent up to that point by the residents of the Willamette valley, but they never were adequate to the numbers of emigrants who required transportation. The rafts, crude affairs in many instances, often proved unable to withstand the test of the Columbia River currents. Boats were upset, lives and material lost, and between the winter rains and the river storms, the emigrants were drenched to the skin for the entire trip. The cattle belonging to the wagon trains were driven along the river bank or over the Cascade range, but the season was usually so far advanced that many of them perished and others were left behind, to be recovered the following spring. In 1846, Samuel K. Barlow, who had reached Oregon the year before, opened a toll road over the Cascades from The Dalles, around the southern slopes of Mt. Hood, but its passage was never easy. Wagons frequently had to be lowered down precipitous mountain slopes by rope. Some found it easier to leave their loaded wagons in the mountains and ride down to the valley settlements on horseback. The Barlow Road never did completely supplant the Columbia River route and both continued to be widely used throughout the period of migration.

For most of the emigrants, Fort Vancouver was the end of the trail. Once they had reached this large Hudson's Bay Company headquarters, they felt their journey had come to a close. It only remained for them to move south into the "promised land" of the Willamette valley, select their land and establish their homes, an undertaking that was often accomplished through the generosity of the Hudson's Bay Company and its venerable chief factor, Dr. John McLoughlin. Standing on the north bank of the Columbia River,
not far from the mouth of the Willamette, Fort Vancouver had been
the hub of civilization on this frontier for many years. However
much the pioneers might have resented the sight of the British flag
in this far country, the arrival at Fort Vancouver and the reception
by the British officials was both a comfort and relief to them.
The long journey was over.
The California Trail

Both Oregon-bound and California-bound emigrants followed the same trail as far as the Great Basin. Once the Continental Divide had been successfully crossed and the Rocky Mountain chains left behind, the California travellers left the main line of march and made their way to the Pacific coast over a variety of routes. Some continued to Fort Hall before turning off the road to Oregon, others preferred shortcuts from Soda Springs west and southwest or rounded the north shore of the Great Salt Lake. Still others braved the Salt Desert directly west of Salt Lake City. All of these routes joined as they converged on the Humboldt River in northeastern Nevada. As the Mormons established themselves in Utah, some emigrants travelled south from Salt Lake City, through the small Mormon settlements, across the deserts into southern California.

The first organized emigration to California, the so-called Bartleson-Bidwell party, followed an uncertain and circuitous route as it groped its way westward from Soda Springs in 1841, but in several areas it traversed what later was to be the main line of travel. Other early parties left the Oregon Trail at various points along the Snake River. The first well-established route to California, and one which continued to receive heavy traffic through the years, was that which left the Snake River near the mouth of the Raft River, not far from present-day Yale,

26 See John Bidwell, A Journey to California, With Observations About the Country, Climate and The Route (San Francisco, 1937).
Idaho. By following this route, emigrants were able to utilize the facilities of Fort Hall before setting out on their long journey to California, the terrain seemed to be easier than the other approaches to the Humboldt and they had the advantage of following a well-marked and heavily travelled route further.

After leaving the Oregon Trail, the route followed the Raft River southward to the "City of Rocks," an area of unique rock formations located west of Almo, Idaho, and only a few miles north of the Utah border. From the "City of Rocks," the emigrants crossed the divide into the Goose Creek valley and followed this stream southwestward into what is now northeastern Nevada. Leaving Goose Creek, the trail entered the Thousand Springs valley, an area of hot spring activity, and reached Bishop's Fork of the Humboldt River just beyond. The approach to the Humboldt carried the emigrants over a dry, barren area, broken principally by the welcome oases in the Thousand Springs valley, and proved a fitting introduction to the long, four hundred mile trek down the arid valley of the Humboldt River to California. Travellers wearied very quickly of the journey, weakened animals died and were left where they fell, and the wagons were stripped of all unnecessary gear. Some abandoned their wagons altogether and continued on horseback. One forty-niner wrote that in the Goose Creek valley, "the dead animals were so thick we could not get out of the stench of decaying bodies."27

27Dr. E. A. Tompkins, quoted in Coy, The Great Trek, 177.
The long, winding Humboldt River (often called Marys River by the emigrants) had been anticipated for a long time, for the travellers knew that it would lead them within striking distance of the gold fields. As they labored down what one writer has called "the valley of the shadow," however, their reactions were mixed. For weeks, their only landmark would be the slow, meandering stream. The road was hot, dusty and rocky. The river bed provided some grass for the tiring oxen, but the herbage was usually found amidst treacherous bogs. Food supplies ran short and wild game was scarce; travellers were forced to beg food from wagon to wagon. John Wood described the Humboldt as the "king of rivers for desolation and destitution," and as "one of the most sickly streams on the earth."²⁹

From the valley of the Humboldt, the emigrants followed a variety of routes as they made their way into the mining districts of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In the north, Lassen's Cutoff, the first to be encountered by the emigrants, left the Humboldt at Lassen's Meadows, between the modern cities of Lovelock and Winnemucca.³⁰ Further to the South, were the more popular Truckee River and Carson Canyon routes. Both of these trails left the Humboldt at Humboldt Sink, where the river disappears into the sand south of Lovelock, Nevada, and each crossed a difficult desert stretch before entering the mountains. North

²⁸ Archer B. Hulbert, _Forty-Niners, The Chronicle of the California Trail_ (Boston, 1931), 213.
²⁹ Quoted in Coy, _The Great Trek_ , 180.
³⁰ See below, p. 31
of the sink was a broad meadow where the wagon trains customarily halted to cut grass for the oxen, fill water casks and cook food in preparation for the desert drive. Starting out in the early evening, the emigrants usually passed the sink early the next morning. Some continued on; others rested till the evening, in order to cross the desert in the coolness of night. The journey to the Truckee River was made as quickly as possible, often with only one stop at a group of hot springs where the travellers' water supply could be replenished. For the jaded oxen and the weary travellers, the desert was a scene of tragedy and destruction. Teams gave out and wagons were abandoned. Lucius Fairchild wrote in 1849, "The road from the sink to Truckee's River was lined with dead cattle, horses and mules with piles of provisions burned and whole wagons left for want of cattle to pull them through . . . That desert is truly the great Elephant of the route and God knows I never want to see it again." All along the desert road," wrote Bennett Clark, "from the very start even the way side was strewed with the dead bodies of oxen, mules and horses and the stench was horrible. All our travelling experience furnishes no parallel for all this." "It realizes all that such a mind as Dante's could imagine," Clark concluded.

Following the Truckee River, the trail climbed into the mountains, past Truckee Lake (later renamed Donner Lake for the ill-fated party that camped on its shores in 1846-47) and

31Joseph Schafer, ed., California Letters of Lucius Fairchild (Madison, 1931), 34.
32Bennett C. Clark, "Diary of a Journey from Missouri to California in 1849," Missouri Historical Review, XXIII (October, 1928), 40, 41.
over Truckee Pass (now Donner Pass). Once over the mountains, the emigrants had their choice of a number of roads leading to the various mining camps of the area.

The route by way of the Carson River was more popular with the forty-niners, probably because it led more directly to the center of mining activity around Hangtown, or Placerville. As in the case of the Truckee River route, the first forty miles or so from Humboldt Sink passed over a devastating, and to the emigrants, terrifying desert. Heavy sand made the going extremely difficult and slowed the progress of the wagons to a snail's pace. The destruction along the road was unimaginable. George Read observed, "There I witnessed the greatest voluntary destruction of property I ever did." He counted 25 abandoned wagons within one hundred yards. A. W. Harlan in 1850 estimated thirty abandoned wagons and one hundred dead animals to the mile for forty miles. Some attempt was made to alleviate the suffering by carrying water back from the Carson River to the thirsty travellers. Men would often leave their wagons and ride ahead for water, dispensing it among those who seemed to need it most. Others turned it into a tidy profit for themselves. Several diarists mention a "water depot" at the beginning of the worst sandy stretch, where water could be purchased for $1.00 a gallon.

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33George W. Read, A Pioneer of 1850 (Boston, 1927), 87.
On the banks of the Carson River, the travellers encountered an extensive trading establishment. From tents and wagons, traders from Sacramento dispersed food, hay and other articles at prices some emigrants thought extravagant. Even eating houses had been set up where one could purchase a cooked meal for five dollars. From this point, called "ragtown" by the emigrants, traders and trading posts were encountered in increasing numbers. During the emigration season, business men in California sent out agents to serve the travellers on this last lap of the journey. The trail followed the Carson River westward, passed the Mormon Station at Genoa, Nevada, and crossed the Sierra Nevada range over Kit Carson Pass. Only a short distance beyond lay Hangtown (Placerville) and the long-anticipated riches of the new Eldorado.

Sublette's Cutoff.

Sublette's or Greenwood's Cutoff enabled the emigrants to bypass Fort Bridger, thus avoiding the southerly swing of the Oregon Trail in southwestern Wyoming, and saving, according to some guide books, five days' travel. The route left the main trail west of South Pass and about five miles east of the Little Sandy River. Heading almost due west, the cutoff reached

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Sutter's Fort, New Helvetia - in 1846. Sketch from "A Tour of Duty in California" by Revere.
the main trail again on the Bear River, near Cokeville, Wyoming. The route was named for William Sublette, who may have led fur traders in the vicinity as early as 1826; in 1844, Caleb Greenwood, a mountain man, was supposed to have led the first wagons westward over the route, and many preferred to call the cutoff after him.33

Although cutting off mileage and travel time, the cutoff crossed a forty mile waterless desert between the Big Sandy and the Green River. In spite of this, it became heavily traveled, as most travellers preferred it to the Fort Bridger Route.

Hudspeth's Cutoff.

Hudspeth's Cutoff, often referred to also as Myers' Cutoff and Emigrants' Cutoff, was used by forty-niners to bypass Fort Hall and was intended to save mileage between the Bear River and the Humboldt River. Leaving the main trail about four miles west of Soda Springs, the cutoff struck westward across the Portneuf River and several ranges of mountains to the Raft River, where it rejoined the California Trail. The cutoff was opened in July, 1849, by James Hudspeth and J. J. Myers, while leading a Missouri company to California. The two guides intended to move from the Bear River to the headwaters of the Humboldt, thus saving a considerable distance over the main road, but instead intersected the California Trail far north.

of that point. As a result, Hudspeth's Cutoff was, in the words of one emigrant, "no cut-off at all."\textsuperscript{39}

The Salt Lake Cutoff.

Many of the California emigrants preferred to remain on the main trail to Fort Bridger, travelling thence to Salt Lake City over the Mormon Road. As the number of emigrants on the trail increased, the three supply points, Forts Laramie, Bridger and Hall, proved inadequate to the needs of the travellers. Consequently, many thought it advisable to stop at the Mormon community in Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake Cutoff was the most popular route from the Mormon capital back to the California Trail.\textsuperscript{40} It ran northward from Salt Lake City along the eastern edge of the lake, turning westward from the Bear River, which was crossed at its mouth, passing north of the Raft River Mountains, and rejoining the main California road at the "City of Rocks."

Hastings Cutoff.

The Hastings Cutoff, connecting Salt Lake City with the valley of the Humboldt by way of the Great Salt Lake Desert, was perhaps the most forbidding and terrifying trail followed by emigrants. Made famous by the Donner party in 1846, the trail, inspite of its difficulties, was used extensively by

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., I, 528.

forty-niners. First explored by Fremont in 1845, the route was popularized by Lansford W. Hastings, an 1842 emigrant to Oregon who travelled eastward over it in the spring of 1846. Although he minimized the dangers and hardships of the route, he attracted large numbers of emigrants to the cutoff in that year, including the ill-fated Donner group. It was heavily traveled in subsequent years, especially by gold-seekers.

From the last springs, in Skull Valley, the route crossed a waterless stretch of eighty miles, to Pilot Peak, including the famous Salt Desert. Here many of the emigrants found themselves travelling over the thin saline crust or mired deep in the sticky mud that covers the desert during much of the year. Valuable time was lost, and many hardships were encountered. Nearly all who took the trail advised later emigrations to avoid it.

From Pilot Peak, the cutoff crossed Silver Zone Pass, moved southwestward to the Ruby Valley, and circled the southern edge of the Ruby Mountains. The main California road was rejoined on the Humboldt west of Elko, Nevada.

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42 The route of the Donner party over the Salt Desert has been traced in detail by David E. Miller, "The Donner Road through the Great Salt Lake Desert," Pacific Historical Review, XXVII (February, 1958), 39-44.
Applegate's Cutoff.

The Applegate Road was opened in the spring of 1846 by Jesse and Lindsay Applegate, who had decided to blaze a new trail from Fort Hall into southern Oregon. The distance to the settlements in the upper Willamette valley, they reasoned, would be shortened and the dangerous passage down the Columbia River would be avoided. The route utilized the existing California road along the Humboldt River as far as Humboldt, or Lassen's, meadows, about half-way between Lovelock and Winnemucca, Nevada. From this point, the cutoff headed west and northwest, crossing forbidding desert country to Fandango Pass, in the Sierra Nevadas. West of the pass, the road dipped around the southern end of Goose Lake and followed roughly the present boundary between Oregon and California. Paralleling the modern state highway 66, the road passed near the cities of Ashland and Medford, crossed the Rogue River near Grants Pass, and extended northward into the Umpqua valley of southern Oregon.

Applegate's Cutoff was never popular with Oregon-bound emigrants, although a large portion of it was later used by forty-niners bound for California.

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43 See Lindsay Applegate, "Notes and Reminiscences of Laying Out and Establishing the Old Emigrant Road into Southern Oregon in the Year 1846," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXII (March, 1921), 12-45; and Buena Cobb Stone, "Southern Route into Oregon: Notes and a New Map," ibid., XLVII (June, 1946), 135-154. Jesse Applegate's way bill has been reprinted in Read and Gaines, eds., Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff, II, 1213-1217.
Lassen Trail.

Peter Lassen, a native of Denmark, had travelled to Oregon from Missouri in 1839, shortly afterward moving to California, where he received a grant of about 100,000 acres on Deer Creek in present Tehama County. Lassen's Ranch was the first civilized habitation north of Marysville, California. In 1847, he returned to Missouri and the following year piloted a party of emigrants to California by what he called a "new road."

The route taken by Lassen's party followed the main California road down the Humboldt and Applegate's Cutoff from the river to Goose Lake. Lassen's Trail was technically only that portion between Goose Lake and Lassen's Ranch, although the name was frequently applied to the entire road from the Humboldt westward. From Goose Lake, it followed the Pit River, traversed the rough, mountainous country east of Lassen Peak to the sources of the Feather River, and dropped, by a series of abrupt descents, to the Sacramento River at Lassen's Ranch.

The route was a difficult one. It was neither shorter nor easier than the other established routes, and some of those who travelled over it maintained that its chief advantage was to Lassen himself, whose Ranch was the first settlement reached in California. The road fell into disrepute after 1849 and was not extensively used after that.

\[4^{4}\] This was the route followed by J. Goldsborough Bruff, and consequently was described in detail in his journals. See also Coy, The Great Trek, 185-186.
Noble's Road.

Noble's Road, opened in 1852, came into use too late for the main rush of forty-niners, but was used extensively by California emigrants bound for the gold fields of the Shasta and Trinity Mountains country. In 1851, William H. Noble located a new, easy pass over the Sierra Nevada range north of Lassen's Peak. Merchants and residents of the town of Shasta (west of Redding) subsidized him to build a wagon road through the mountains to their community that would replace the difficult and dangerous route blazed by Lassen.

Noble brought his road from the same point on the Humboldt used by Lassen and Applegate, but soon left their lines of march. Passing south of the Black Rock Desert, and north of the Smoke Creek Desert, the road reached the Susan River about three miles from Honey Lake. From this point it followed the north bank of the river past the present Hog Flat Reservoir to Lassen's Road, with which it coincided for a few miles. Passing north of Lassen's Peak over Noble's Pass, the road descended to Fort Reading (Redding) and the town of Shasta.

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THE MORMON TRAIL

Simultaneous with the movement of thousands of emigrants westward over the Oregon and California trails was what one writer has described as the "greatest mass movement under a single direction in all United States history," the exodus of Mormons from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Great Salt Lake basin. The Mormon migration differed from other westward movements of the nineteenth century in both purpose and organization. The movement was not solely a voluntary quest for new and better economic conditions but was strongly motivated by religious considerations. Harried and persecuted by their non-Mormon neighbors for years, the members of the church became convinced by 1846 that their only hope for safety and freedom lay in the West, where they might live in isolation from their opponents. Their exodus to the Salt Lake basin was the climax of many years of struggle that dated from the founding of the church itself.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, more popularly called the Mormon Church, was founded by Joseph Smith in upstate New York, amidst the religious reform and excitement that characterized the early Jacksonian period. The new church grew rapidly during its first months. The unorthodox character of the Mormon theology, as well as the events that surrounded the church's beginning, soon aroused the hostility of

Smith's neighbors. In order to escape the persecution of non-Mormons, Smith determined to lead his small band of adherents to new homes in the West.

In early 1831, Smith removed the church to the town of Kirtland, Ohio, located in the northern part of the state in the Western Reserve. Here the organization of the church was completed. Continued harassment from non-Mormons in the vicinity, intensified by the hard times that followed the Panic of 1837, necessitated a second move. Soon after his arrival in Ohio, Joseph Smith designated the area around Independence, Missouri, as the site of the future city of Zion. At Independence, the Mormons were to assemble to await the coming of the Messiah, building in the meantime the New Jerusalem. They soon aroused the angry opposition of Missourians who feared that the Mormons, through their increasing numbers and with the Indians as allies, would drive them from their homes. Mob violence increased until the Mormons were expelled from their homes in Jackson county in 1833 and 1834. In spite of the persecutions that had been suffered in Missouri, it was to this state that Joseph Smith led the members of the church in 1838 after their continued presence in Kirtland became unadvisable.

The town of Far West, located in the thinly populated Caldwell county in northwestern Missouri, became the new home of the church. Thousands of Mormons moved into the area, homes were built and the construction of a temple was begun. By the end of 1838, over twelve thousand Mormons lived in Missouri.
The presence of such large numbers of Mormons in their midst aroused all of the old fears and animosities of the Missourians. Persecutions and acts of violence against the members of the church began almost immediately and increased in intensity during the succeeding months. Outlying Mormon farms were destroyed, towns were besieged and the people driven into the larger population centers. On October 27, 1838, Governor Lilburn Boggs, who as lieutenant-governor had assisted in the expulsion of Mormons from Independence and Jackson county five years before, issued his famous "extermination order." He ordered the Missouri militia to march against the Mormons; in his instructions to the militia commander he stated that the Mormons, as enemies of the state, "must be exterminated or driven from Missouri."47

Once again, the Mormons concluded that their only alternative was to flee Missouri and seek new homes elsewhere. Between November, 1838, and April, 1839, the Mormon exodus from Missouri continued. Caravans were organized in Missouri and arrangements were made for the settlement of the Mormons in eastern Illinois. By April, the emigration had been completed.

Soon after the arrival of Smith in Illinois, negotiations were begun for the purchase of land on which the Mormons might build their community. The site chosen lay on both sides of the

Mississippi River about fifty miles above Quincy. Land was purchased in and around the small village of Commerce, in Hancock county, Illinois, and across the river in Lee county, Iowa Territory. In 1840, the name of Commerce was changed to Nauvoo. The town prospered from the start. Two hundred and fifty houses were built in the first year alone. By the middle of 1841 Nauvoo had a population of three thousand and by the end of that year it had swelled to ten thousand. It was soon to become the largest city in the state of Illinois. An imposing temple was constructed on a hill overlooking both the city and the river.

Within its remarkable and prosperous development, however, lay the seeds of Nauvoo's destruction. The economic leadership of Nauvoo and its liberal city charter soon aroused the hostility and jealousy of neighboring communities. Rumors spread through the countryside that Joseph Smith intended to establish a Mormon kingdom at Nauvoo. Missouri authorities continued to seek the extradition of the Mormon leaders to stand trial for alleged crimes committed while the Mormons lived in Missouri. As with any such large, close-knit group, the Mormons became a political issue in Illinois. Each party vied with the other for the Mormon votes; as their numbers increased many Illinoisans feared that they would become a dominant force in state politics. No action of the Mormons, however, aroused so much hostility among the non-Mormons as did Joseph Smith's sanction of polygamous marriage. The expulsion of the Mormons from Illinois cannot be ascribed solely to the revelation that
polygamy was being practiced by church leaders; nevertheless, many friends were lost and the warm sympathy of neighboring communities was turned to outright anger when the reports were confirmed. Annoyed by the unorthodox elements in Mormon belief, non-Mormons came to consider the Mormons as law-breakers and outlaws.

Matters came to a head in 1844 when Smith ordered the destruction of an opposition newspaper that had been founded in Nauvoo by a group of apostate Mormons. Loud cries were raised by neighboring newspapers against what they interpreted as a blow to freedom of the press. The owners of the paper went to nearby Carthage, Illinois, where they swore out warrants for the arrest of Smith and several other church leaders. The situation that followed was much confused. Smith and his colleagues were finally persuaded to surrender themselves, and were housed for safe keeping in the Carthage jail. Shortly afterward, a mob attacked the jail in which Smith was housed, and the Church leader was murdered.

Out of the confusion in the church that followed Smith's death emerged the figure of Brigham Young. The violence that had resulted in Smith's death and the continued hostility of the countryside convinced Young that the Mormons once again must move their city. In October, 1845, Young formally agreed, after a consultation with state leaders, to lead the church out of Illinois during the following spring.

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Preparations for the departure were made throughout the winter months, as wagons were built, animals procured and household goods packed. In February, 1846, rumors that an attempt would be made to arrest Young impelled the first movement of Mormons out of Nauvoo, across the frozen Mississippi, into Iowa Territory. Over a thousand persons made up this advance party. A committee had been appointed in Nauvoo to dispose of the church property and to organize the remaining Mormons into migrating companies.

The destination of the Mormons lay to the west. Before his death, Joseph Smith had prophesied that the Rocky Mountains would be the last place of refuge for the church. Young and other church leaders had read and studied the reports of the explorer John C. Fremont, and Lansford W. Hastings' popular guide book, The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California. Both accounts described the isolation of the Salt Lake basin in some detail. No definite destination for the exodus, however, had been decided upon by the time the first advance units of the migration crossed the Mississippi.

The Mormon citizens of Nauvoo continued to leave their homes throughout the remainder of the year, their departure hurried by a renewal of depredations against their property. By the fall the last of the Saints had crossed the river into Iowa.

The organization of such a large migration for the long trip westward into an unknown land required all the ingenuity the Mormon leaders could muster. The first encampment of the refugees was on the banks of Sugar Creek, some nine miles west
of Nauvoo. This became the rendezvous and starting-point for the long trip that lay ahead. The advance party pitched their tents on the frozen and snow-covered ground and awaited the orders of the church leaders. After two weeks of preparation, the migration began. The emigrants were divided into "hundred," "fifties," and "tens," each group under the command of a responsible officer whose task it was to keep order, settle disputes and supervise the daily marches and nightly encampments. Each company had its own commissary, the whole commanded by a Commissary General. Grain, provisions and other necessary items were distributed equitably among the various groups. Strict rules of behavior were imposed on the emigrants and amusement and recreation were encouraged to divert the minds of the people from their troubles, both past and present. A brass band gave frequent concerts in an attempt to lift the spirits of the groups. Each encampment of Young and the ruling body of the church became known as the Camp of Israel.

It was Young's purpose to establish temporary camps at various spots along the trail across Iowa. At each camp certain members of the migration would remain behind, to plant crops and assist those who would follow the advance party. Thus, Young hoped, the meager provisions of the emigration would be augmented. Three such camps were established in the first stage of the journey, at Richardson's Point, on the Fox River; on the Chariton River, east of present-day Centerville; and on Locust
or Shoal Creek, in southwest Wayne county. From Wayne county west the emigration entered lands that had been set aside for the Pottawatomie Indians; roads were non-existent and no further white settlements were encountered. More permanent stations were set up at Garden Grove, on the site of the present town of Garden Grove in Decatur county, and at Mount Pisgah, in Union county west of the town of Thayer. At these two locations, buildings were erected and fields were cleared and cultivated.

By mid-June, the advance party had reached the Missouri River at Council Bluffs. After resting a short while, the emigrants ferried themselves across the river where they established their main encampment, Winter Quarters. Winter Quarters, known to at least one Mormon emigrant as the "Valley Forge of Mormondom," was founded on the west bank of the Missouri River at the present site of Omaha, Nebraska, to house the thousands of church members who had been expelled from their homes in Nauvoo, while final preparations should be made for the last stages of the journey to the Rocky Mountains. By the fall of 1846, the population of Winter Quarters numbered several thousand people.

By the following spring, preparations for the trek westward had been completed. In mid-April the first groups left Winter Quarters, part of a "Pioneer Band" containing 143 men and

49The exact location of these temporary camps in southeastern Iowa remains uncertain. See Jacob Van der Zee, "The Mormon Trails in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XII (January, 1914), 3-16.

50John R. Young, Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer, 1847 (Salt Lake City, 1920), 41.
A Mormon emigrant train, by an unknown artist.

Utah State Historical Society
a small number of women and children. Other emigrants in similarly organized caravans were to follow at regular intervals. The same type of organization as that employed in the march across Iowa was adopted. The emigrants were to be divided into "tens," "fifties" and "hundreds." Blacksmiths, mechanics and carpenters were included, to repair wagons, build bridges and boats. A rigid schedule on the trail was observed. At five o'clock in the morning, the emigrants would be aroused by the sound of a bugle. After assembling for prayers, feeding the teams and having breakfast, the caravans would begin the day's march at seven. The day's end was also signaled by a bugle. At 8:30 the emigrants retired to their wagons for prayers, and at nine o'clock, all but the sentries were asleep. At the end of the day's march, the wagons were formed into a corral, as was the custom on the trail, and the stock driven into the enclosure. The Sabbath was strictly observed on the trail. The wagons halted for the day and church services were held regularly.

William Clayton was designated historian of the migration; his careful and detailed journal has become the best contemporary account of the Mormon migration. Clayton set up signs at regular intervals along the trail, indicating the mileage covered.

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51 William Clayton, William Clayton's Journal: A Daily Record of the Journey of the Original Company of "Mormon" Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (Salt Lake City, 1921). William Clayton was also the author of the best guide book for the Mormon Trail, used not only by Mormon emigrants, but also by many California gold hunters who followed the trail, The Latter-Day Saints' Emigrants' Guide ... from Council Bluffs, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (St. Louis), 1848.
and estimating the distance to the next important landmark.

With the aid of Appleton Milo Harmon, he constructed a "roadometer," a piece of apparatus attached to one of the wheels of his wagon that measured the distance covered by the wagon.

Observing this tight organization, the Mormons traveled swiftly and efficiently. Moving west from Winter Quarters, they crossed the Elk Horn River on ferries and reached the Platte River shortly afterward. Throughout their journey, the Mormons carefully avoided contact with other emigrants, hoping thereby to minimize the possibility of conflict on the trail. Consequently, they blazed a new route north of the Platte River. Although they experienced some of the same monotony and boredom as did the Oregon emigrants south of the Platte, there were a few moments of excitement. Some of the tributaries of the Platte proved to be treacherous, especially the Loup Fork with its quicksand bottom. Pawnee Indians were encountered in large numbers, but no serious difficulty with them was experienced; as they approached Fort Laramie, bands of Sioux visited their wagons. The buffalo herds aroused so much enthusiasm among the hunters that Brigham Young himself was forced to utilize his authority in restraining them.

At Fort Laramie, the Mormon emigrants were received hospitably by James Bordeaux, the fur trader in charge of the post. According to one of the travelers, Bordeaux judged the Mormons

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52 For a detailed description of the roadometer, see Clayton, William Clayton's Journal, 152.
"the best behaved company that had come that way."53 After resting a few days at the fort, the emigrants resumed their journey, following the well-established Oregon Trail along the south bank of the North Platte. At the crossing of the North Platte, on the present site of Casper, Wyoming, ferryboats were constructed to convey the party across the river. A train of Oregon-bound emigrants arrived at the crossing at the same time and were assisted by the Mormon ferry operators. At this point, Young designated several members of the party to remain behind to operate the ferry for the Mormon caravans that followed. The Mormon ferry at the North Platte crossing eventually became one of the significant developments on the overland trail, rendering assistance to Mormon and non-Mormon alike.

Following the Oregon Trail, the Mormons reached the Sweetwater River, explored Independence Rock and Devil's Gate and crossed South Pass. By this time Young had determined upon the Great Salt Lake basin as the destination of the migration. Having once made up his mind, he was not dissuaded by some of the discouraging reports that reached his ears. Just west of South Pass, Moses Harris, a well-known trapper who had guided parties to Oregon, described the barren character of the area around Salt Lake and advised the Mormons to seek a different home, preferably in the Cache valley to the north of Salt Lake. Harris' suggestion was repeated by Thomas L. "Peg-leg" Smith, another veteran

53 Whitney, History of Utah, I, 312.
mountaineer, whom the Mormons met shortly afterward. Jim Bridger later offered a thousand dollars for the first ear of corn to be grown in the valley of the Salt Lake. At the crossing of the Green River, the Mormon train was met by Samuel Brannan, an elder in the church, who had led a party of New York Mormons by sea to California. Brannan was convinced that the new Zion lay in California, but his arguments had little effect on the Mormon leader.

After halting for a time at Fort Bridger, the Mormon caravan followed Hastings Cut-Off westward, down the narrow and precipitous Echo Canyon, and over the Wasatch mountains, from which they descended to the floor of the valley down a ravine, since known as Emigration Canyon. Members of the company greeted the sight of the valley with mixed reactions. Most, out of deference to Young, expressed themselves as pleased with the prospect, but some of the women were heart-sick at the sight of what was to be their new home.

Little time was wasted in developing the area, erecting buildings and planting crops, so as to be prepared for the large numbers of emigrants who were following the trail. Several acres of the desert soil were plowed almost immediately and potatoes and grain were planted. The first buildings were erected out of adobes in the form of forts, to be used if necessary for the protection of the settlers. By the end of 1847 over three thousand people lived in the city of Salt Lake. The trails and hardships of the first years were soon offset by a period of economic prosperity.
Engraving showing Brigham Young, in Wilford Woodruff's wagon, entering the Great Salt Lake Valley. Pioneer Monument is now located at this place. Emigration Canyon in background. Inset is Brigham Young.

Utah State Historical Society
Utah artist George M. Ottinger depicted the first Mormons entering the Salt Lake Valley from Emigration Canyon.

Utah State Historical Society
Gold was discovered in California in early 1848, and the valley of the Salt Lake lay athwart the route to the gold fields. The migrations of the forty-niners utilized Salt Lake City as an important halting-place on the trek to California. By the early fifties an attractive city of broad thoroughfares and neat frame houses had been built at the foot of the Wasatch mountains, on the border of Salt Lake. The desert had literally been made to bloom.

The migrations of Mormons overland to Salt Lake City continued through the next decade. A continuous stream of emigrants, organized in the fashion of the first groups, crossed the Mormon Trail, reaping the crops sowed by their predecessors as they marched across Iowa, and assisted by their brethren at the rendezvous at Winter Quarters and later Kanesville. Relief parties were sent east from Salt Lake City to meet the emigrants, with additional stocks of food and supplies. Missionaries began to roam over European countries and foreign-born Mormons were arriving in the Salt Lake valley in ever increasing numbers. A perpetual Emigrating Fund had been organized to aid in their movement to new homes.

One of the significant developments of the later years of emigration, was Brigham Young's decision to walk the emigrants across the plains to Salt Lake City as a means for moving larger numbers at smaller cost. Carpenters were dispatched to several points in the Middle West to purchase and construct handcarts. Iowa City, Iowa, was chosen as the rendezvous point for the handcart brigades. In 1856, the first groups started out for Salt Lake City. Three of the parties reached their destination by early October,
having outdistanced the wagon trains along the trail and confirming the church leaders in the wisdom of the decision. Two other parties, starting as late as August, experienced considerably more difficulty. Running short of food, the group expected to replenish their stocks at Fort Laramie, an expectation that was doomed to disappointment. Continuing on in a weakened state, losing members daily through death, the handcart emigrants were caught on the Sweetwater River east of South Pass by early snows. Their progress was halted by the deep drifts. When relief parties sent out by Young arrived at their encampment, they found that almost a quarter of the thousand emigrants in the two parties had perished.

Undaunted by such tragedies, the Saints continued to cross the plains to their new Zion. The population of Salt Lake City increased rapidly during the 1850's on the basis of which Young and the church leaders were able to build a flourishing and self-contained community. From Salt Lake City, colonies were sent out to other parts of Utah, and new towns were established. At last, the Mormons had found a haven in which they could live in peace.

While most of the emigrants to the California mining regions traveled over the great central highway to the West, the Oregon and California Trail, large numbers utilized other trails to the south and southwest. Eager gold hunters, anxious to arrive in California as quickly as possible, were easily persuaded to depart from the older, well established routes in favor of newer ones. During the early days of the gold rush, the southern trails received little publicity. The great majority of the travelers used the central route or the sea route by way of the Isthmus of Panama. As the great expense of travelling by sea became quickly known, many gold seekers began to look for other, cheaper means for moving West. Veterans of the Mexican War returned to the States with stories extolling the advantages of southern routes through Texas and New Mexico. The climatic advantage of these routes was publicized; as winter snows blocked the trails to the North, the all-year round character of the southern trails became a subject for serious consideration. Newspapers in the east and south advertised the advantages of the southern trails. The frontier states of Texas and Arkansas took up the campaign to convince the argonauts of the desirability of following routes that originated in those areas. The campaign proved effective, as the southern routes became well known; thousands of emigrants were attracted to them by the publicity

55 Ralph P. Bieber, "The Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XII (December, 1925), 347.
and the routes were soon recognized as major arteries of travel to California. The attractiveness of the southern routes, however, never out-weighed the desirability of travelling over the more northerly trails. Hubert Howe Bancroft has estimated that five-eighths of the overland travelers to the California gold fields followed the traditional route over the Oregon and California Trail, while approximately one-fifth arrived in California by way of the Santa Fe-Gila Trail. 56

The Salt Lake-Los Angeles Route.

One of the most popular of the southerwestern trails to the gold fields was the trail that led south and southwest from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles. 57 Actually, the Salt Lake-Los Angeles might be considered a branch of the California Trail, since the emigrants who utilized it traveled over the traditional route from the Missouri River, up the Platte River, across South Pass, to Salt Lake City. Many eager gold hunters found that they had arrived in Salt Lake City too late in the season to make the remainder of the journey across the Nevada deserts and the Sierra Nevada Mountains with safety.

Such late arrivals had the choice of two alternatives. They could winter in Salt Lake City, or they could continue their trip over a more southerly route, on which the winter climate would be no problem. Many chose the former alternative, some even joining the Mormon Church and remaining in Utah. One Mormon historian has described others whom he calls "Winter Mormons," individuals who

56 Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California (San Francisco, 1884-1890) 7 vols., VI, 139.
57 The Salt Lake-Los Angeles Trail roughly paralleled the modern highway, U. S. 91.
remained long enough to marry a Mormon girl, be cared for by her parents during the winter, only to depart for the gold fields the following spring, leaving wife and family behind. For most of the anxious gold seekers, however, time was of the essence. After a short stay in Salt Lake City, they pressed on over the new route to the South.

The first wagons over the route were taken by gold hunters in the fall of 1849, although the trail had been known and utilized previously. Various Mormon groups had traveled south of Salt Lake City on their way to southern California, blazing a trail into what is now southwestern Utah. A few miles north of the present town of Parowan, their trail merged with the Old Spanish Trail, a long-known and much-used overland connection between Santa Fe and Los Angeles.

The first group of forty-niners to follow the route south and southwest from Salt Lake City was guided by a Mormon, Jefferson Hunt, who had followed the trail the winter before with members of the Mormon Battalion. This and subsequent parties over the trail moved south from Salt Lake City to the newly-established Fort Utah and the settlement along the Provo River, east of Utah Lake. There, final preparations for the journey ahead were made. The trail led

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58 Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah (Salt Lake City, 1892) 4 vols. 401.

59 The historical background of the route has been traced in LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, eds., Journals of Forty-Niners: Salt Lake to Los Angeles (Glendale, Calif., 1954), 15-46. See also John W. Caughely, "Southwest from Salt Lake in 1849," Pacific Historical Review, VI (June, 1937), 143-164.
southwestward into the southern part of Utah state, the trip over this segment usually being accomplished without incident. In later years, the area was built up with Mormon settlements, so that this portion of the journey was made with ease and convenience. By 1853, when Thomas Flint followed this route, Parowan, in present Iron County, was the most southerly of the Mormon communities.

Near the present town of Paragonah, north of Parowan, the trail merged with the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe, and from this point westward, the emigrants passed over a well-defined route. Skirting the Escalante Desert and climbing into the highlands of southwestern Utah, the Great Basin Rim, the travelers reached Mountain Meadows, a favorite camping and resting place, made notorious in 1857 when a group of emigrants was massacred here by Mormons and Indians. Many of the early travelers were hopeful that a shorter route than the Old Spanish Trail could be found to the mines of California. Some wagons left the trail near Mountain Meadows, seeking a more direct route to the West, only to suffer great hardship in the deserts of Death Valley. These trials ended any hope for a shorter quicker trail to California, and the Old Spanish Trail remained the principal route through the next decade.

From Mountain Meadows to Cajon Pass, in southern California, the trail crossed bleak and inhospitable desert country. A welcome oasis in the desert was encountered at Las Vegas, a large meadow with natural springs, which had long been a stopping point on the

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60 Thomas Flint, Diary ... California to Maine and Return, 1851-1855 (Los Angeles, 1923), 55.
trail, and where the Mormons in the middle fifties attempted to establish a colony. Passing south of Death Valley and crossing the Mojave Desert, the trail reached the Mojave River just west of the present city of Barstow, California. After following the river for a short stretch, the route climbed up to Cajon Pass, the gateway to California.

Descending the slopes of Cajon Pass, the emigrants left behind them the trails and ardors of desert travel, and entered the beautiful San Bernardino Valley, dotted with ranches. Among the first settlements to be encountered was the Cucamonga Rancho, owned by a French resident of Los Angeles. Several miles further, the party reached the Rancho del Chino, owned by Isaac Williams, a former American fur hunter, whose rancho served as a rendezvous for American emigrants arriving over the trails from Salt Lake City and Santa Fe. A few miles beyond stood the Mission San Gabriel and the Pueblo of Los Angeles.

The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Route.

The first segments of the southern route to the California mines carried the emigrants from Texas and Arkansas to the valley of the Rio Grande River in New Mexico, from which a variety of trails led to the Pacific. From San Antonio, two roads, known as the Upper and Lower Emigrant Roads, stretched across the Lone Star state to the Mexican town of El Paso del Norte, on the Rio Grande. To the north, Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Santa Fe were connected by a road that followed the Canadian River through almost its entire distance.
The Fort Smith-Santa Fe route, known also as the Arkansas or Canadian River route, was more widely advertised than the other southern trails and probably attracted the greater number of travellers. Over eight hundred miles long, the route traversed the Indian Territory and crossed the Texas panhandle, skirting the dread Llano Estacado, before reaching the Mexican settlements of the Rio Grande valley. In early 1849, the Arkansas state legislature memorialized Congress to establish a national road from Fort Smith to Santa Fe, a move initially instigated by Fort Smith citizens. Although the committee to which the memorial was referred in Congress ruled favorably on it, no action followed. Arkansas' Senator Solon G. Borland, in lieu of formal action, applied for a military escort to accompany the forty-niners over the trail, thereby hoping to bring the advantages of the route more forcibly to the attention of the government. As a result, the War Department ordered Captain Randolph B. Marcy to command an escort and assigned an engineering officer to make a thorough reconnaissance of the route.

The principal points of departure for the trail were the towns of Van Buren and Fort Smith, the latter lying at the head of navigation on the Arkansas River. Each day during the spring and summer of 1849 witnessed the arrival of river boats, transporting hundreds of emigrants to the outfitting points.

The first emigrants to depart from Fort Smith left in

March, 1849, but it was not until early April that Captain Marcy's military escort got under way. From Fort Smith, the travellers entered Indian Territory almost immediately, and for the first days of their trip, they passed through an area of Indian communities and cultivated fields. Some chose to follow existing Indian and traders' trails north of the Canadian River as far as Chouteau's Trading Post, but most followed Marcy on the new road south of the river. Choctaw Agency, only a few miles from Fort Smith, and North Fork Town, located near the mouth of the North Fork of the Canadian River, both Indian communities, served as rendezvous and organization points for the wagon trains. The Indians, although totally unprepared for the numbers of emigrants that suddenly descended upon them, rendered what assistance they could.

At Edwards' trading house on the Little River, just above its confluence with the Canadian, the emigrants bade farewell to civilization. The post represented the last opportunity to stock up on much needed supplies; the next civilized habitations were in New Mexico. Most of the forty-niners remained at Edwards' for several days, recruiting their stock and making repairs to their equipment. Companies were reorganized and again some travellers substituted pack mules for their wagons. The trading post became one of the most popular halting places along the road to California. West of Edwards' post, the trail followed the south bank of the Canadian to a point near the present town of Purcell, Oklahoma, where the north bank trail joined it. Nearby were the ruins of Chouteau's trading post, long since abandoned. Although emigrants
were unable to secure any supplies at this point, the ruins constituted an important landmark on the trail, and, judging from the diaries, one that was anticipated for days. The area of Chouteau's post was considered the dividing line between the friendly Indians to the east and the more hostile Plains Indians to the west. From this point on to the western boundary of present Oklahoma, the trail followed the divide between the Canadian and Washita Rivers.

Soon after leaving the ruins of Chouteau's post, the emigrants encountered the "Cross Timbers," a strip of woodland that extended northward from Texas into Oklahoma. The landscape changed; the rolling prairie land was left behind and the travellers emerged onto the Great Plains. Running approximately north and south at this point along the ninety-eighth meridian, the woodland had long been considered as the boundary between the habitable prairie and the uninhabitable plain. Beyond the "Cross Timbers" the journey became more monotonous; the few hills stood out above the plain and became important landmarks along the trail. Rock Mary, the most prominent of a cluster of low mounds, and the Antelope, or Boundary hills, located on the Texas-Oklahoma border, were seen for days by the travellers before they were reached. The emigrants had entered the Great American Desert.

After struggling over the miry roads of eastern Oklahoma, 62

62 Lt. J. H. Simpson, the topographical engineer accompanying Marcy's escort, described the Antelope hills as "six in number. Their height, probably from 120 to 150 feet above the plain below, has caused them to be seen for the past two days--they having constantly appeared as if they were near at hand," quoted in ibid., 219.
the flat, level plain west of the "Cross Timbers" seemed a relief to many of the emigrants. Chamberlin noted that "the road is so much better than that we have been traveling over for the last five weeks, that we scarcely know when to stop. We are now fairly launched upon the plains, and if 'wind and tide' favor us, we will 'probably live' to see the end of our journey." The analogy between the plains and the ocean was not unique to Chamberlin's record; to many of the emigrants, it seemed as if they were crossing a vast and trackless sea. Prairie dog villages attracted the attention of the travellers, and as they approached the Oklahoma border, the first herds of buffalo were sighted.

After paralleling the bluffs that marked the northern limit of the famous Llano Estacado, or "staked plains;" the trail ascended the table land and for a distance of about thirty miles crossed this barren wasteland. Its appearance challenged the credulity of the emigrants. "What the Creator designed this barren portion of the world for," wrote Chamberlin, "is more than I can imagine, unless, like the deserts of Africa, it was thrown in 'to fill up.'" Emigrants were happy to get through and past the Llano Estacado; to them it represented the Great American Desert in its most awesome proportions.

As the road entered New Mexico, Tucumcari Mountain loomed...
on the horizon ahead, a "most conspicuous landmark" according to Marcy. Not far beyond, the Canadian River turned to the north and for the first time since leaving Fort Smith, the emigrant road left that stream. After a short journey, the forty-niners reached the Pecos River, which they crossed at the Mexican town of Anton Chico. Anton Chico, with its five hundred inhabitants, was the first settlement encountered by the travellers since leaving Edwards' trading house on Little River. The valley of the Pecos River presented a delightful contrast to the dreary plains to the east. Climbing a height bordering on the valley, Marcy looked down on a "magnificent carpet of cultivated fields of wheat, corn and other grains . . . with the beautiful little river winding quietly and gracefully through the centre." At Anton Chico, the emigrants found a wagon road leading to Santa Fe. A few miles further, up the Pecos, they reached San Miguel and the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, "better than any macadamized road I ever saw in the states, being broad, smooth and solid," according to Chamberlin.

Once arrived in the Rio Grande valley, preparations had to be made for the second, and longer, leg of their journey to California. Supplies and provisions had to be purchased, wagons traded for pack mules, repairs made to their equipment, and their stock recruited. In the meantime, discussions were held in many of the companies regarding the most practicable and advisable route

\[65\] Quoted in ibid., 246-247.
\[66\] Bloom, ed., "From Lewisburg to California in 1849," New Mexico Historical Review, XX, 50.
west of Santa Fe. Although the forty-niners could well feel a relief at having arrived in Santa Fe safely, their journey was by no means over. In fact, for many of them, the worst was yet to come.


Many forty-niners chose to outfit and depart for the California gold mines from points in Texas. Although the routes originating in Texas did not prove as popular as other, more northerly trails, they offered several advantages to the gold seekers. The mildness of the climate enabled the Texas routes to be utilized throughout the year and the emigrants could start their journeys earlier, a time saving that was of great importance to them. In addition, the proximity of the Texas trails to the Gulf of Mexico made it possible for many eastern argonauts to begin their journeys by sea, sailing to New Orleans or to such Texas coastal points as Port Lavaca on Matagorda Bay, Corpus Christi or Brownsville. Some gold seekers plunged directly westward from Texas across Mexico, following routes that had been used in part, at least, by the United States Army in the Mexican War.

The heaviest traveled Texas trails were those which led from San Antonio and Austin to El Paso del Norte, on the Rio Grande. Unlike the Mexican routes, they were, having been explored originally with a view to encouraging a commercial connection

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67 A brief summary of these routes may be found in Bieber, "Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XII, 350-351. Some personal experiences along these Mexican routes are reviewed in Glenn S. Dunke, "Across Mexico in '49," Pacific Historical Review, XVIII (February, 1949), 33-44.
with northern Mexico and the lands recently acquired by the United States as a result of the Mexican War. As early as August 1848, an exploring expedition had been sent out by citizens of San Antonio to locate a wagon road to El Paso. This initial venture was not successful, but it was soon followed up by other groups. The United States government, in late 1848, became interested in opening a road "for military and commercial purposes" between the Gulf of Mexico and El Paso; in February 1849, two Army lieutenants, W. H. C. Whiting and W. F. Smith, under orders from the War Department, left San Antonio to explore such a route. At the same time, a second exploring party, backed partly by the citizens of Austin, Texas, left that city for El Paso, led by Major Robert S. Neighbors, an Indian agent, and Dr. John Ford, a prominent Austin citizen. Both parties reached their destination safely and both returned with recommendations that their return routes would make excellent wagon roads. 68

Both trails soon became well-traveled and marked highways, the Whiting-Smith route as the Lower Emigrant Road and the Neighbors-Ford route as the Upper Emigrant Route. The latter was the first to be used by California gold hunters, and during the early period, received the heaviest travel. Roads from both San Antonio and Austin joined at the German town of Fredericksburg, north of San Antonio in present Gillespie county, the last settlement to be encountered before El Paso. From Fredericksburg, the trail continued northward,

68 Bieber, "Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XII, 353-354. See also Mabelle E. Martin, "California Emigrant Roads through Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVIII (April 1925), 297-301; and A. E. Bender, "Opening Routes across West Texas, 1848-1850," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (October 1933), 116-135
crossing the Llano River near the present boundary of Mason and Llano counties, to the San Saba River. Turning westward, it followed the San Saba River past the present town of Menard before shifting northwestward to the main branch of the Concho River.

The journey over the first stretches of the Upper Emigrant Road was usually unvaried and without incident. The trail led through groves of oak, through country "generally undulating and rich." After leaving the San Saba River, the emigrants entered the open plains, water became more scarce, and the absence of trees was noted. Some antelopes were sighted and numerous prairie dog towns attracted the attention of the travellers. From the Concho River, the road led across a seventy mile desert waste to the Horsehead crossing of the Pecos River, near the present crossing of U. S. Highway 67. One of the early government explorers reported no permanent water to be found in this distance. To Cox, the country was "a perfect waste."

After crossing the Pecos River, the road led northwestward along the west bank of the river to a point just south of the New Mexico border. The journey was hot and dusty, the road sandy. Leaving the Pecos, the road followed Delaware Creek into the Guadalupe Mountains, crossed Guadalupe Pass, and skirted the New Mexican border, past the Hueco Tanks, before finally reaching El Paso del Norte. The destination lay on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande; the El Paso of the forty-niners is the modern Ciudad

Juarez. No extensive settlement had yet appeared on the east bank of the river. Once in El Paso, the forty-niners lost little time in making preparations for the next and last leg of the journey to California. Most of the companies disbanded in El Paso and formed new organizations before proceeding further.

The Lower Emigrant Road was not used by forty-niners until the summer of 1849, when the first companies, made up largely of settlers of southeast Texas, left San Antonio. The road headed directly west from San Antonio, passing through an area settled by German immigrants, of which Castroville was the principal community, and crossing the Medina, Sabinal, Frio and Nueces Rivers. The Devils River was reached and crossed a few miles above its confluence with the Rio Grande. For the next several days, the emigrants paralleled the Devils River in a northerly direction.

The Pecos River was crossed at approximately the point where U. S. Highway 290 today crosses that stream, and after following the Pecos upstream to within thirty miles of the Horsehead Crossing, the trail once again struck westward. From the Pecos the trail ran through or near the modern communities of Fort Stockton, Fort Davis and Van Horn, before striking the Rio Grande. From the Pecos to the Rio Grande, the emigrants suffered greatly for lack of water. Eastland, camped on the Rio Grande, wrote that he had traveled 113 miles from the last permanent water, and added "but for the rains we would have lost all our Animals and perhaps been famished ourselves--this is a shameful route, and I have no doubt
the government will so pronounce it." Passing down the Rio Grande, the forty-niners encountered a fertile and productive region; fruit, such as grapes, peaches and apples, was purchased from the Mexican and Indian inhabitants and eagerly devoured. The Lower Emigrant Road did not achieve the popularity among the forty-niners which the Upper Road enjoyed. Some who passed over the former recommended that future emigrants follow the Upper Road.

Both of the emigrant highways were utilized in later years. The Butterfield Overland Mail utilized certain portions of the Upper Road. In spite of its early popularity, however, it soon fell into disuse. The Lower Road was chosen as the military road to the Rio Grande valley and Forts Clark, Lancaster and Davis were erected along its route in the early 1850's. With the assurance of protection and the frequent passage of government trains, the Lower Road soon became the dominant route to the West. The forts erected along the trail, however, were too late to serve the bulk of the California emigration. Later in the decade, the road became the route of the first successful transcontinental mail, the San Antonio-San Diego express. The heavy year-round use of the road reinforced Texas' claim to the Pacific Railroad.

The Gila River Trail.

The principal southern routes through Texas and the Indian Territory carried emigrants into the valley of the Rio Grande, to

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Santa Fe or to the Mexican town of El Paso del Norte. From these points, the gold seekers continued their journeys to the West over a variety of trails. Some traveled to the northwest to Salt Lake City, following the Old Spanish Trail or utilizing a trail over the Rockies west of present-day Greeley, Colorado, that had been blazed by Fremont in 1844. From Salt Lake City, most followed the familiar California Trail down the Humboldt, while others traveled to the southwestward to Los Angeles. By far the larger number, however, took the trails to the west and southwest of El Paso and Santa Fe, converging on the Gila River and continuing westward into southern California. Most popular was the wagon road opened by Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, when he led the Mormon Battalion to California during the Mexican War, between November, 1846, and January, 1847; Cooke's journal was widely used as a guide book. Other routes were used to a lesser degree: from El Paso westward through the Mexican towns of Janos and Corralites, either joining Cooke's road near Guadelupe Pass or continuing southwestward to the Mexican port town of Mazatlan; from the Rio Grande directly westward to the Gila River, joining Cooke's road at the Pima villages, a route used by early fur traders and by General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West during the Mexican War; and finally, from Albuquerque westward to the Zuni villages, thence southwest to the

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71 The Old Spanish Trail, long used by Spanish and American traders, was a mule trail. Emigrants who chose this route generally disposed of their wagons before leaving Santa Fe, completing their journey by pack train. Ralph P. Bieber, "The Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XII (December, 1925), 366.
Cooke's wagon road, which, with some variation, became familiarly known as the Gila River Trail, left the Rio Grande River near the present town of Rincon, New Mexico. For those who journeyed northward up the river from El Paso, the small town of Dona Ana represented the last settled community before reaching Cooke's road. Dona Ana was, in 1849, an important frontier outpost for the United States, located, so it was thought, close by the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Two companies of Army troops were stationed here, and the emigrants were supplied from the government stores. North of Dona Ana, the trail crossed the Rio Grande and joined Cooke's road. Adjacent to the crossing, Fort Thorn was established in later years, named after a young Army lieutenant who was drowned in the Colorado River while travelling to California over the Gila River trail in 1849.

From the Rio Grande, the emigrant trail, now following Cooke's road, traversed the southwest corner of New Mexico. Few difficulties were encountered during the first stages of the journey. The Mimbres River, where one emigrant drank "the best water I had tasted since I left home," was crossed near the northern boundary

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of Luna County, and a short distance beyond, the travelers reached Ojo de la Vaca, or Cow Springs. At this well-known watering site, the trail intersected the old Spanish road from Janos, in Chihuahua, to the Santa Rita copper mines, north of Cooke's road near present-day Silver City. From Ojo de la Vaca, the trail struck southwestward, past Playas Lake (called "Dry Lake" by Cooke) to Guadelupe Pass.

The first difficulties on the road from the Rio Grande to California were met at Guadelupe Pass, located near the point where the boundaries of Arizona and New Mexico meet on the Mexican border. The rugged and steep character of the pass necessitated much exertion on the part of the emigrants, as wagons were let down by ropes. West of Guadelupe Pass, the road, running south of the present international boundary, passed through an area of deserted ranches. The San Bernardino valley had been occupied by the Spanish during the eighteenth century, but repeated depredations by the Apache Indians had forced the abandonment of the settlements not long before the forty-niners passed through the area. Emigrants added fruit from the deserted orchards to their supply of provisions and many of the parties feasted on wild beef. When the ranches were abandoned, the herds of cattle had been turned loose; the wild offspring furnished many a meal for the emigrants. It was not unusual for wagon trains to remain over in this area for several days while the men hunted beef and cured meat for the trip ahead.

Many of the travelers stayed over in Santa Cruz for

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74 Martin, ed., "From Texas to California in 1849," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIX, 140.
several days as they purchased much needed food supplies, breadstuffs, vegetables, fruit, and eggs, from the local inhabitants. The Mexican population, however, without any warning of the rush of emigrants, was unprepared for such large numbers; while some travelers, like Cox, were able to secure ample provisions, which, he commented, "we are enjoying with an Epicurean taste," others arrived too late to replenish their stocks. John Durivage complained in May, 1849, that earlier emigrant companies had cleaned the town out, leaving nothing for later comers. From Santa Cruz, the trail led northward down the fertile Santa Cruz valley, passing many deserted ranches and missions. The abandoned missions of Tumacacori and San Xavier del Bac excited considerable comment and description in the travelers' diaries.

Beyond San Xavier del Bac, lay the Mexican frontier town of Tucson. Since leaving the Rio Grande, the forty-niners had been passing through Mexican territory, their trail traversing the area later to be included in the Gadsden Purchase. Although much of the territory had been abandoned earlier by the Mexican inhabitants in the face of Indian raids and depredations, the emigrant trains seem to have remained on amicable terms with the Indians. The Apaches, who disliked the Mexican intensely, were said to have treated the Americans with considerable respect. Small units of Mexican soldiers were encountered in Santa Cruz and Tucson.

76 The section of the trail from Guadelupe Pass through Santa Cruz remains today in Mexican territory.
Beyond Tucson, the northern most Mexican outpost, the emigrants entered one of the most difficult sections of their journey. From Tucson to the Pima Indian villages on the Gila, the trail crossed a dry, desert country, known to the emigrants as the "first jornada." During periods of rainfall the travelers found water lying in holes along the trail, but for most of the gold seekers, the trip to the Gila was an extremely trying experience marked by an absence of water and by excessive heat. The sufferings of the journey inspired heights of descriptive comment by those who experienced them. "Oh! the torments of thirst!" wrote one forty-niner, "there is nothing on earth that can produce so deep a pang as thirst; a man will endure anything, suffer anything, sacrifice any, yes, every thing, to allay the tormenting and distressing, distracting pains of thirst."

But this "first jornada" was to prove only the first of several such desert barriers.

Some relief from the suffering was afforded by the hospitality of the Pima Indians, whose villages were situated along the Gila River. The Pima Indians made a fine impression on the emigrants, and the descriptions of them are uniformly complimentary. With the prospect of hot, dry deserts ahead of them, all of the way to California, many forty-niners lightened their loads by trading their property with the Indians for food. Others discarded it along the trail. The road from Pima villages crossed a second dry stretch westward to the Gila River near present Gila Bend, Arizona. Passing

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south of the Estrella mountains, the trail cut off a long "elbow" in the river, rejoining it some forty-five or fifty miles to the West. The rigors of the desert began to take its toll. Oxen died and the road was littered with discarded articles. From Gila Bend to the Colorado River, the trail followed close by the Gila River. Eccleston referred to the river in his journal as the "beautiful Gila," but to most of the forty-niners, the stream had no charm. Cox was certain "that no sane man will ever travel this route a second time— it is certainly the most disagreeable, uninteresting and monotonous Country under the sun."79

The Gila route tested the endurance and strength of both men and animals almost to the breaking point—in some cases beyond. Wagons fell to pieces and were abandoned, the gaunt oxen, weakened by the scarcity of grass and by the hot sun, fell by the side of the road, and many of the companies split up into small groups, each to make its way to California as best it could. Emigrants, whose fortitude had been taxed beyond the limit, died and were buried along the road. As the emigrants neared the Colorado River, the road passed over deep sand, which all but bogged the wagons down.

Added to the difficulties presented by the climate and the nature of the terrain was an increasing threat of Indian attack. After the early years of the rush, the Apache Indians lost their respect for the Americans and periodically raided the emigrant trains.

as they moved down the Gila. Such attacks were isolated before 1854, but after that year they increased in frequency. One of the most famous incidents along the Gila River trail was the Oatman Massacre in 1851, when Apaches attacked an emigrant family just below the bend of the Gila. Six members of the Oatman family were killed, both the parents and four of the children. A fifth child was wounded and survived to tell the tale. Two other children, daughters aged sixteen and ten, were carried off by the Indians. The younger girl died shortly afterward, but the older, Olive Oatman, remained a slave of the Apaches until 1857 when she was ransomed by the government. Her experience was widely publicized and her captivity became one of the best known incidents of westward migration.

The crossing of the Colorado River was made near the present site of Yuma, Arizona, not far from the mouth of the Gila. Although some emigrants provided their own means for crossing the river, most took advantage of the ferries that had been established there. Durivage described the stream at the crossing as over one hundred and fifty yards wide, over twenty feet deep and running at the rate of seven miles an hour. During the latter part of 1849, emigrants found a ferry operated on an alternating basis by Mexican and American soldiers, who were attached to the Boundary Commission. The Yuma Indians also undertook to carry the travelers and their property

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80 Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888 (San Francisco, 1889), 434.
across the river, in exchange for goods of various types.

In 1850, the ferry fell into the hands of a lawless group of Americans under the leadership of John Glanton. Glanton and his men had been hired by the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora to kill Apaches, for each of which they received a bounty. Moving to the Colorado crossing of the emigrant trail, they established a ferry and secured a monopoly, by killing rival operators and destroying the boats used by the Indians. For several months, they plundered and robbed the emigrants. Having survived the deserts to the East, the travelers faced the villainy of Glanton and his men on the Colorado. Glanton's enterprise was, fortunately, short-lived; it was brought to a sudden end when the Yuma Indians, unable to take the intimidation any longer, massacred the group. The importance of the Colorado crossing to the trail, as well as the complaints against Glanton, led to the establishment by the United States Army of Fort Yuma in November, 1850.

With the crossing of the Colorado, the emigrant trail left the Mexican territory and passed briefly into the state of California. The hardships of the journey, however, were by no means lessened, for the gold seekers still faced one of the most formidable barriers of their trip—the so-called "Great Desert," ninety miles of barren desert country, stretching from the Colorado to the mountains and valleys behind San Diego. Before leaving the Colorado, the emigrants

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82 Coy, The Great Trek, 255-256.
secured large stocks of mesquite beans, which they fed their mules and cattle as well as themselves, and filled every available container with water. For the first part of the journey, the road passed just south of the present international boundary, entering the United States in the vicinity of Calexico. The weary travelers, somewhat inured to the rigors of the desert by this time, nevertheless found the "Great Desert" worse than anything they had experienced.

The sufferings of the journey were partially alleviated by the presence of water in certain isolated spots. Two wells, noted by Cooke in his journal, were utilized by the gold-seekers—the first known as Cooke's Wells and the second, Alamo Mocho. The bodies of dead mules lying in the water did not apparently, deter the later comers from drinking it. Further on, the wagon trains reached New River, where emigrants during the summer and fall of 1849 discovered an abundance of water and grass. The New River was one of several streams, or bodies of water, in the desert that appeared only during periods of heavy rainfall. At other times, the stream all but disappeared completely. Cooke's journal made no mention of the river, and its discovery was a great surprise to most of the travelers. The campsite on its banks was christened "Camp Salvation."

Beyond the New River, the trail continued across the desert in a northwesterly direction to Vallecito, "the first town on the other side of the desert." Consisting, according to one emigrant, of a "few Indian wigwams," Vallecito was the "first place where grass and vegetation greet the eyes of the traveller who
has crossed the dreary Desert." From Vallecito it was only a short distance to Warner's Ranch, located near the present town of Warner Springs. At this ranch, owned and operated by an American, the emigrants rested and recuperated from their long and trying journey. Many arrived at the ranch destitute and in a starving condition. Supplies were acquired by the travelers, and preparations were made to push on to the mines. From Warner's Ranch, the emigrants had the choice of traveling to the southwest to San Diego, from which point a ship's passage to San Francisco could be procured, or of continuing to Los Angeles. For those who continued to Los Angeles, Isaac Williams' Rancho del Chino, an important step on the Salt Lake to Los Angeles route, was the next resting place. After the ardors of the trip from the Rio Grande, most emigrants had had their fill of overland travel. These made their way to San Diego, a very small but busy port town, where they awaited the next boat for the north.

The Gila River Trail proved a hard one for most of the emigrants. Those fortunate enough to cross during the rainy season had little difficulty compared to those who followed in the dry seasons. From Tucson to Warner's Ranch, the emigrant crossed an almost unbroken desert area and suffering on the route was great. This did not, however, deter the gold seekers from using the route nor did it discourage the promoters of the road in the East. It has been estimated that about nine thousand forty-niners reached the California mines by way

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83 Doctor Candee, quoted in ibid., 330; Ralph P. Bieber, ed., Exploring Southwestern Trails, 1846-1854 (Glendale, Calif., 1938), 219.
of the southwestern trails, of which the Gila River route was the most prominent and heavily travelled. During the decade of the fifties, the route continued in use. By the end of the decade, the trail, with some modification, had become an important artery of transportation and communication between East and West. Portions of the trail were utilized by the first overland stage to the Pacific coast. 84

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Van der Zee, Jacob, "The Mormon Trails in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XII (Jan., 1914), 3-16. Highly useful for tracing the route of the Mormons across Iowa.

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ANALYSIS OF SITES

The sites associated with the overland migrations are fairly well distributed over the central and southeastern and northwestern sections of the Trans-Mississippi West. However, most of these are merely sites rather than actual physical remains. Outfitting and jumping-off points such as Independence and St. Joseph, Missouri and Kanesville, Iowa and Winter Quarters in Nebraska are now modern cities. Forts Kearney, Laramie, Bridger, Hall, Boise, Walla Walla, Lee and Vancouver have disappeared or have been replaced by buildings of a later vintage.

Many of the landmarks of the Oregon-California Mormon Trails have survived. Formations such as Courthouse, Jail and Chimney Rocks in Nebraska and Independence Rock, Devil's Gate and Register Cliff in Wyoming, and City of Rocks in Idaho are little altered. There are springs such as Pacific Springs in Wyoming, Soda Springs in Idaho and Boiling Springs in Nevada. In addition there are the mountain passes over which the emigrants crossed.

Both the states and the federal government have evinced an interest in preserving overland migration sites. National Park Service areas associated with this theme are Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Fort Laramie National Monument, Death Valley National Monument, Lassen Volcanic National Park, McLoughlin House National Historic Site, and Whitman and Fort Vancouver National Monuments. Administered by states is the site of Fort Kearney by Nebraska; Fort Bridger and portions of Register Cliff and Independence Rock by Wyoming; the Pioneer Monument by Utah;
Mormon Station and Fort Churchill by Nevada; Sutter's Fort and the Donner Camp by California; the Spalding Mission by Idaho. Fort Yuma is being used as the headquarters of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, owns and administers Temple Square in Salt Lake City, the "Times and Seasons" Building, the John Taylor House and the site of the Mormon Temple in Nauvoo, Illinois. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints owns and administers both the Joseph Smith Homestead and the Joseph Smith Mansion in Nauvoo. The Catholic Church administers the Cataldo Mission in Idaho.

Original Oregon Trail remains are in evidence over large segments of the route. While they have largely disappeared in the farming and irrigated sections of Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Wyoming, ruts are very apparent in the arid sections of Wyoming, the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, along the Snake River of Idaho, and on the Barlow Road in Oregon. The remains of Noble's Road in Lassen Volcanic National Park are quite clear.

This subtheme overlaps with the theme of transportation. The subject of the Pony Express and the Overland Stage have been excluded. Since the contributions of the missions, particularly the Protestant, have been in the field of overland migrations, we have considered them in this subtheme.

This study of the overland migrations has not been an exhaustive study. No attempt has been made in it to trace in detail the route of the overland route and inventory the minor sites. Only those of primary and secondary significance have been listed in this report. To treat the Oregon and California
Trails as a unified site, as perhaps it should be, would require the cooperative effort of both the federal government and the states through which these trails passed.
CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION

OF SITES AND BUILDINGS

The National Park Service has established criteria by which it evaluates historic sites and buildings. In order to be designated as possessing "exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States," site must meet one or more of the following criteria.

1. Structures or sites in which the broad cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the Nation is best exemplified, and from which the visitor may grasp the larger patterns of our American heritage. Such sites are naturally the points or bases from which the broad aspects of prehistoric and historic American life can best be presented.

2. Structures or sites associated importantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.

3. Structures or sites associated with important events which are symbolic of some great idea or ideal of the American people.

4. Structures which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius reflected his age.

5. Archeological sites which have produced information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have produced or which may reasonably be expected to produce data which have affected theories, concepts, and ideas to a major degree.

6. All historical and archeological sites and structures in order to meet the standards of exceptional importance should have integrity, that is, there should not be doubts as to whether it is the original site or building, original material, or workmanship, and original location. Intangible elements of feeling and association, although difficult to describe,
also may be factors in weighing the integrity of a site or structure.

7. Structures of sites of recent historical importance, relating to events or persons within 50 years, will not, as a rule, be eligible for consideration.
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SITES OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

Apache Pass

Location. Cochise County, Arizona, 15 miles south of Bowie.

Ownership. A few patches of patented land are surrounded by public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and leased for grazing use.

Significance. Although this site has already been declared exceptionally valuable as a strategic point on the Butterfield Overland Mail route, 1858-1861, and as the location of Fort Bowie, 1862-1894, its role in the story of overland migration entitles it to consideration in this study also. Through Apache Pass lay the most difficult and dangerous stretch of road on one of the southern overland routes to California.

The Cooke Wagon Road proved to be the most popular route from Paso del Norte to San Diego. But immigrants soon discovered a cutoff that, although lying across waterless stretches of desert, considerably reduced the mileage. This route left the Cooke Road at a point near present Lordsburg, New Mexico, pointed directly west, and rejoined it at Tucson. One of the few water holes on the route was in Apache Pass, and the road thus crossed the Chiricahua Mountains at this point.

First to use the cutoff was a party styling itself the Fremonters, who reached Apache Pass late in October 1849. Robert Eccleston described the pass in his journal:

We followed the bed of a dry arroya where there was scarcely room for the waggon wheels, let alone
room for the driver. This road was overshadowed by handsome trees, among which I noticed the pecan, the ash, oak, willow, &c. After leaving this part of the road we came to a more open country, very hilly, many of which were very steep. Many slopes which we ascended and descended were as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 & 2 to 1. We, however, came safely through & camped with the mule train at a little stream, or spring, gently flowing from the rocks or mountains.

We have excellent water here & the best grama grass is found on the hills, wood plenty & handy.

Leaving the springs the first 2 miles of the road was very bad, and like the other parts of the pass and many times we were obliged to lock our wheels. However, after getting on the plains the road was beautiful.

Thousands of emigrants subsequently used this road, as did the Butterfield Overland Mail. Domain of the Chiricahua Apaches under Cochise, Apache Pass was the scene of an occasional attack on a wagon train or stagecoach, and in 1862 the Army built Fort Bowie near the eastern entrance to the pass. The fort thenceforth provided a welcome way-station for travelers. The route continued to be used until the railroad reached Arizona in 1881.

Condition of Site. Apache Pass today remains much as Eccleston described it. The emigrant trail, deepened by Butterfield coaches and subsequent military traffic, may be followed from the eastern end for about two-thirds of the distance through the pass. In places it evidences very fine remains. The ruins of Fort Bowie stand in a mountain glen south of the trail. They overlook the spring, still in use by cattlemen, that dictated

the route of the trail.


Donner Camp

Location. Nevada County, California.

Ownership. State of California.

Significance. The story of the Donner Party, which endured terrors few other frontier groups in history were faced with, is perhaps the most tragic story in the annals of overland migration. Caught by winter in the Sierra Nevada, the party displayed such qualities of heroism, unselfishness and raw courage as to add a new epic to the annals of the American frontier.

The monument erected on the site of their winter camp stands as a memorial to the sufferings and privations experienced by almost every party of emigrants bound for Oregon or California.

In the spring of 1846 a well-supplied party of emigrants, led by Jacob and George Donner, set out from Illinois for California. They were joined by other pioneers en route. Although advised by experienced travelers to remain on the established route, 89 members under Captain George Donner, turned off the Oregon Trail near the Little Sandy River east of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, determined to save time by following the
Hastings cutoff.

Following the instructions of Lansford Hastings, the party encountered immediate difficulties in attempting to use Hasting's path through the Wasatch Mountains, but after 30 days struggled down into the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Both men and animals were much reduced in strength, and autumn was at hand before the company began the fearful crossing of the desert. Through misfortune and inefficiency both, cattle were lost and wagon after wagon had to be left behind. Women and children were compelled to walk. The caravan, almost exhausted, then faced the crossing of the Sierra Nevada.

On October 23, dangerously late in the season, the party began the cruelly difficult climb up the narrow canyon of the Truckee River. When at Donner Lake only a single day's journey from the crest, a storm blocked the passes. The attempt to push ahead was futile, and the next day a new storm blew in, lasting for several days. When it finally subsided, the animals were gone, and the Donner party was hopelessly trapped.

The ordeal which followed was a terrible one. In crude shelters built of wagon canvas and brush, the survivors huddled against the cold. The snows deepened with successive storms; the scant food stores were quickly exhausted. By December they were reduced to eating leather and the bark of trees. Four men had died and one was insane. At that point 15 of the bravest set out to seek help. Caught in a storm, many died; the living subsisted on the flesh of the dead.

But seven of the "Forlorn Hope" finally reached aid

National Park Service Photograph
Donner Lake. A view of the rugged terrain in which the Donner party was caught by winter snows. View is from Donner Pass; the campsite was near Donner Lake.

National Park Service Photograph
and on February 19 the first of several relief parties reached the stranded wagon train. The sufferings of those who remained behind rivaled those of the Forlorn Hope, and they too had been reduced to eating the flesh of the dead. Of the 89 who turned off from the Oregon Trail to test the "shortcut," only 45 survived.

**Condition of Site.** Dominating Donner Memorial State Park at Donner Lake on U. S. Highway 40 is the Monument to the Pioneers. Atop a lofty stone base, whose height of 22 feet represents the depth of snow at the original camp, are the heroic size figures of a pioneer father, wife and child. There are no remains except for a granite boulder which served as the rear of the fireplace in one of the huts. The California Division of Beaches and Parks is planning for the preservation of a section of the Emigrant Trail which leads from the park to the crest of the Sierra at Donner Pass.


**Sutter's Fort**

**Location.** Sacramento, California.

**Ownership.** State of California.

**Significance.** Sutter's Fort epitomized California for the large majority of the overland emigrants, beginning with the forty-niners. Although Sutter's activities at "New Helvetia" were in almost every conceivable field, the unbounded hospitality which American settlers arriving in California experienced at Sutter's
Fort, was perhaps Sutter's greatest contribution to the westward movement. His fortified settlement was a focal point and terminus for forty-niners, a goal, way station and supply depot for countless wagon trains following the California section of the Oregon Trail. Most of the important figures of the period came to visit the "hospitable, visionary, improvident land baron of the Sacramento."

John A. Sutter, one of the earliest and most influential American settlers in California, was Swiss born, had traveled widely in America beginning in 1834, before obtaining a liberal land grant from the Mexican governor of California. In 1839 he arrived at the present site of Sacramento with three small vessels, prepared to found a colony. With him were Californians, Indians, and a group of Kanakas, obtained on his trading voyage from Sitka, Alaska, to the Hawaiian Islands.

On a knoll near the river Sutter began construction of a fort of adobe brick, christening his colony "New Helvetia," and soon establishing a ranch. The following year he became a Mexican citizen. In 1841 he purchased the equipment, horses and cattle of the defunct Russian settlements at Bodega and Fort Ross, and included among the vast amount of equipment and materials were more than 40 cannons which he mounted on the fort. Sutter's activities gradually expanded as he engaged in fur trapping and trading, grazed large herds of cattle and horses, constructed an irrigation system for agricultural purposes, a distillery, a mill and a tannery, and ran a launch regularly for freight and passengers between his fort and San Francisco Bay. He was authorized to administer justice as an official of the provincial government.
in his district and he became a veritable frontier feudal baron in the Sacramento Valley. His hospitality and kindness to travelers was greatly reminiscent of that of Dr. McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver, and he made his colony the nucleus of all activity, whether political or economic, in what was then the only settled portion of interior California.

Sutter's Fort, as it soon came to be known, was far more than a fort. Perhaps the greatest contribution of Sutter however was his aid to the American settlement of California. Cleland declares that, "Few people today realize how large a part this hospitable, visionary, improvident land baron of the Sacramento played in the American advance to California. His fort occupied the most strategic position in all northern California, so far as the overland trails were concerned, and became the natural objective for parties crossing the Sierras, by the central and northern routes, or coming into the province by way of Oregon.

"At Sutter's, these immigrants, exhausted and half-starved as many of them were, found shelter, food and clothing .... More than one company [including the Donner party], caught in the mountain snows, was saved from destruction by a rescue party sent from Sutter's Fort. The situation of the latter also made it impossible for the California authorities, had they been so inclined, to check or turn aside the stream of overland migration. The passes and trails of the northern Sierras lay open to American frontiersmen so long as Sutter maintained his position on the Sacramento."*

The discovery of gold on January 24, 1848, in the

millrace of the sawmill which Sutter was building at Coloma,
touched off the California gold rush. During the early period
of the rush, merchants and others rented space at Sutter's Fort
for stores, blacksmith shops, and lodging for the miners. Sutter's
son surveyed the town of Sacramento, some 2 miles away, late in
1848, and business quickly moved there. After 1850 the fort fell
into other hands, Sutter moved away, and the buildings began to
deteriorate. Only a last minute effort saved the remaining structures
in 1889 when the city of Sacramento expanded beyond the fort.

Condition of Site. The fort was restored by the State
of California in 1891-1893, using the remaining original adobe
bricks as far as possible in the reconstruction. The fort was
restored to its original form, with shops, storerooms and
barracks reconstructed around the original two-story central
building of adobe and oak. The whole was inclosed with a recon­
structed adobe wall 18 feet high. The cannons purchased from the
Russians at Fort Ross still guard the fort walls.

The fort is now a State Historical Monument, occupying
two and one-half city blocks in central Sacramento. (The State
Indian Museum is located with the park.) Displayed in the fort
are a considerable number of valuable relics of the pioneer days.

References: Cleland, Robert G., History of California, The
American Period (New York, 1922); Dana, Julian, Sutter of
California (New York, 1939); Sutter, John A., New Helvetia Diary
(San Francisco, 1939).
Sutter's Fort. A modern view of the famous California landmark, now a State Historical Monument.

Courtesy, California Division of Beaches and Parks
Warner's Ranch

Location. San Diego County, California.

Ownership. San Diego Water Company.

Significance. Warner's Ranch, one of the most famous landmarks of early California history, was to emigrants entering California over the southern route what Sutter's Fort was to those emigrants who reached California by way of the Oregon Trail. Warner lived on a lavish scale, dispensing the same liberal hospitality on his great estate that John Sutter provided at New Helvetia.

The site is located in a serene valley, about 75 miles northeast of San Diego. Located in the valley, near the ranch headquarters are the famous hot sulphur springs, called Aqua Caliente, now the center of a resort. The springs still produce 200,000 gallons of water a day at 140 degrees, and these springs attracted Indians who had established a rancheria there long before the coming of the white man. The 50,000 acres of land surrounding the springs were originally under the control of missions San Diego and San Luis Rey, until the secularization of the California missions. In 1844 Warner applied for the grant.

Jonathan Trumbull Warner was a Connecticut Yankee who changed his name to Juan Jose after residing in the Mexican province. Warner had been a mountain man who arrived in California via his future ranch site in 1831 with the David E. Jackson party. He trapped beaver throughout much of the region before becoming one of the first Americans to have extensive land holdings in California. Warner received two grants, totaling "ten square leagues," which became the nucleus of the sprawling
establishment still known as Warner's Ranch. As his ranch prospered, Warner enjoyed an almost feudal existence. He raised horses and cattle which thrived in the valley's pasturage. His kitchen stood ready to provide fresh beef, milk, butter, eggs, fruit and vegetables for the wayfarer.

The Emigrant Trail which passed through Warner's Ranch had been opened by Pedro Fages in 1782. California-bound wagon trains of the fifties and sixties, could follow three main routes into California: the well-known Platte River route, the so-called Beale route from Taos by way of Cajon Pass, and route adopted by the Butterfield Overland Mail Company, running from St. Louis by way of El Paso, Tucson, Warner's Ranch and Los Angeles. According to Cleland, the southern route through Warner's Ranch was the "most popular of the three."

The Emigrant Trail by Warner's formed a part of the Southern Overland Trail, and was a much-traveled road. From Warner's Ranch the trail proceeded northwest to Mission San Gabriel and Los Angeles. Another branch of the Emigrant trail passed from Warner's by way of Pala Chapel to Mission San Luis Rey. Still another branch, the one followed by Kearny in 1846 led from Warner's to San Diego.

Warner's principal activity was cattle ranching. But as word of his lavish hospitality spread, almost everyone who used the Emigrant Trail route found excuse to stop for a time at Warner's Ranch. During the march of the Mormon Battalion overland

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*Cleland, Cattle on a Thousand Hills, 223.
to California, the soldiers camped at Warner's Ranch. The Army of the West, under command of Stephen Kearny arrived at Warner's Ranch in December, 1846, nearly exhausted by the desert crossing. Kearny camped a few hundred yards from the ranch house, remaining for several days rest and receiving large food supplies from Warner, before pushing on. In 1858, Warner's Ranch became a regular station of the Butterfield mail.

**Condition of Site.** Warner's Valley is now the property of the San Diego Water Company. A part of the old ranch has been covered by Lake Henshaw. Most of the remaining land is leased to private cattle raisers. At the ranch headquarters are the remains of two original buildings. These adobe structures have been partially covered over or have been added to, and still serve as ranch buildings.


**Cataldo Mission**

**Location.** Kootchal County, Idaho.

**Ownership.** Boise Diocese of the Catholic Church.

**Significance.** Deep in the wilderness of the Oregon country, the Jesuit missionary fathers in 1848 began construction of the Old Mission of the Sacred Heart, a structure which has since been termed an "almost miraculous engineering achievement." Built with primitive tools by Indian labor under the direction of an Italian-born priest, Cataldo Mission on the frontier revealed the influence
Warner's Ranch. Adobe walls of the original ranch buildings remain, covered by recent improvements.

National Park Service Photograph
of the Greek Revival in architecture then in favor in the East. Of outstanding architectural significance, the mission is also an important symbol of the Jesuit contribution to the settling of the Northwest. Completed in 1853, Cataldo Mission is the oldest building in Idaho.

The Flathead and Nez Perce delegation to St. Louis in 1831, which launched the Protestant missionary movement in Oregon, was followed by other delegations asking for "black robes" to teach them. The Indians had learned of prayer and the black-robed priests from the Catholic Iroquois living among them. The Bishop of St. Louis sent the now famous Father Peter DeSmet, who traveled west with the fur caravan in 1840. In succeeding years he selected sites and built several missions, during which time he was the first Jesuit to make contact with Idaho Indians. The first site of the Cataldo Mission was destroyed by floods. During a visit to the Coeur d'Alene Indians, Father DeSmet chose the present site of the Mission of the Sacred Heart.

In 1846 a temporary chapel of bark was erected on the hill site selected for the permanent mission. On this hill, in 1848, Father Anthony Ravalli began construction of the mission building; the church was in use by 1849, and was formally opened in 1852 or 1853. The construction of the edifice was a feat of great skill and ingenuity by Father Ravalli, who had been born in Ferrara, Italy.

Apart from several broadaxes, an auger, some rope and pullies, and a pocket knife, there were no tools, nor any draft animals to haul in building materials. For workmen Father Ravalli
had two Brothers and a band of untutored Indians. He drew plans for a church some ninety feet long, forty feet wide and thirty feet high, and the plan was followed faithfully.

Sawing of trees was done with an improvised whip saw. Crude trucks were made to which the Indians were harnessed and in this fashion rocks for the foundation and logs for uprights and rafters were obtained. Wooden pegs fitted into auger holes served as nails. Willow saplings were used to lace beams together, and these were closely interwoven with rope made from twisted wild grass. Over the whole was spread adobe mud from the river bank, making the walls about eight inches thick. Three altars and a baptismal font were built inside. Statues were carved from logs and Indian dyes were used for decoration. Two paintings, one representing heaven and the other representing hell, have survived. The building was unaltered until its restoration in 1928, except for the lining of the walls with clapboards in 1865.

The Jesuits labored at the Sacred Heart Mission from 1846 to 1877. During this time the mission Fathers revolutionized the life of the Indians. Originally organized in small, nomadic bands which had acquired horses, they did not hesitate to hunt buffalo on Plains territory held by the hostile Blackfeet. Under the tutelage of the Jesuits, many of the Indians settled near the mission and became farmers, although some Coeur d'Alenes joined the foray against Colonel Steptoe in 1858. Probably the peaceful teachings of the Jesuits were partly responsible for the refusal of the Coeur d'Alenes to join Chief Joseph during the Nez Perce War of 1877.
During the Indian hostilities preceding the construction of the Mullan Road, which passed by the mission, Mullan urged the Jesuits not to abandon the mission, which he believed served as a strong and beneficial influence on the Indians. The mission was used as a base camp by labor crews during construction of the road, and travelers on the Mullan Road used the mission as a rest point. In 1877 the Indians were removed to a reservation and the mission was moved to DeSmet, Idaho.

Condition of Site. Over the years the outbuildings disappeared and the church fell into disrepair, until 1928 when through the combined efforts of service clubs in Kellogg, Coeur d'Alene, and Spokane the mission church was repaired and restored as nearly as possible to its original condition. The work was completed in 1830. Today the mission, located on U. S. Highway 10 about 20 miles east of Coeur d'Alene, is in excellent condition, and provides a remarkable example both of the primitive methods used in construction and also the superbly handsome architectural results which were obtained by mission Fathers, working in the wilderness to erect a place of worship for the Indians. The building is administered by the Boise Diocese of the Catholic Church. A caretaker's residence adjoins the mission, and the caretaker opens the church for the inspection of visitors. Once each year the Mass is celebrated at Cataldo Mission.

Exterior view of Cataldo Mission, built by the Jesuits in the Idaho wilderness in 1848.

National Park Service Photograph
Interior of Cataldo Mission, restored in 1928. Most of the building is original.

National Park Service Photograph
Fort Hall

Location. Bingham County, Idaho.

Ownership. U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Significance. Fort Hall occupied one of the most strategic sites in the West. Here the Oregon Trail divided, one branch leading on to Oregon, the other leading to California. Fort Hall was an important center of the Rocky Mountain fur trade, both British and American, one of the most famous of all the stations on the Oregon Trail, a military post during the period of Indian hostilities, and a key road junction of the overland stage and freight routes to the pioneer settlements and gold camps of the Northwest. It was an invaluable center for the Indian trade, and for the rest and refitting of emigrant parties along the Oregon Trail. This vital site must be considered of outstanding significance in the history of Westward Expansion.

Here many a hard-pressed "mountain man" found shelter from the warring Blackfeet, here Jesse Applegate rested on a journey over the Oregon Trail, which he immortalized in his "A Day with the Cow Column," and here a hundred thousand Americans moving westward viewed the cool white walls of the Hudson's Bay Company post which was for them a milestone and a supply point.

Nathaniel Wyeth, who built Fort Hall, was a successful Cambridge business man who saw in Oregon one of the few remaining possibilities of exploiting the wilderness and who believed himself eminently qualified for the task. This ambition was to develop and exploit the Oregon country by supplying it overland. In 1832, enlisting a company of men, he made an unsuccessful trip overland
to Fort Vancouver. In 1834 he set out again, having contracted with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to deliver supplies to the annual rendezvous. Betrayed by his competitors, and with no takers for his large stock of goods, he established Fort Hall as a trading post to store and dispose of his stock, and to revenge himself on his rivals by rolling "a stone into their garden which they would never be able to get out."

Osborne Russell, a famous fur trapper and one of the original party which built Fort Hall, describes the beginnings of the fort: "On the 18th of July, 1834 we commenced the Fort which was a stockade 80 feet square built of Cotton wood trees set on end sunk 2½ feet in the ground and standing 15 feet above with two bastions 8 feet square at the opposite angles. On the 4th of August the Fort was completed."*

Fort Hall, named in honor of one of Wyeth's backers, was located on the great bend of the Snake River near the mouth of the Portneuf. Wyeth had little chance of making a success of Fort Hall, and in 1837 he sold his post to the Hudson's Bay Company. Acquisition of Fort Hall (and establishment of Fort Boise) resulted in a major change in Hudson's Bay Company policy in the Snake River country, and enhanced the company's trade in a region hitherto reached by brigades only. When the Idaho region passed into the control of the United States by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company to this and other

posts were guaranteed, and the Company operated Fort Hall until 1855.

Fort Hall became one of the two or three most important stations on the Oregon Trail. Although migration over the trail had begun several years before, the "Great Migration" of 1843 proved a turning point in the history of Oregon country. About 1,000 persons set out from Independence that spring, reaching Fort Hall by a well-marked route. Beyond lay a mere pack trail, but guided by Marcus Whitman, a skilled frontiersman as well as missionary, the train reached the Willamette safely, and in succeeding years the tide of migration rapidly increased, 25,000 coming by way of the Oregon Trail route in the great Gold Rush year of 1849.

Fort Hall was a key objective of every Oregon-bound party, from the days of the first missionary parties. The Wyeth expedition in 1834, which established Fort Hall, followed the first group of Americans to use the Oregon Trail by only two years; the Spalding-Whitman party was the first to take wagons west of Fort Hall; the Jesuit, Father DeSmet, rested at Fort Hall in 1841 en route to establish his mission to the Flatheads; Fremont, a frequent visitor to the fort, believed its location so important he recommended establishment of an American military post, which would be of extraordinary value to the emigrants. (Fremont considered Hudson's Bay Company possession of the fort to make it a "foreign" trading post.)

Until 1849, almost all emigrants to either California as well as Oregon followed the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall, beyond
which the California contingent left the main trail to follow the Humboldt River route through Nevada to California. In 1849, impatient to reach the gold fields, a party led by James Hudspeth established the "Hudspeth's Cut-Off," and from that time, most California-bound pioneers by-passed Fort Hall. Those heading for Oregon continued, however, by way of Fort Hall.

With the decline of the fur trade, and due in part to Indian hostilities, Fort Hall was abandoned in 1855, the crumbling buildings being occupied only by "itinerant half-breed traders" for the next several years. But the Indian menace to overland emigrants during the fifties and sixties led to the garrisoning of Fort Hall by regular troops and by Oregon volunteers. In 1863 a company of the latter camped near Fort Hall when a treaty was made with Chief Pocatello.

A final, colorful era in Fort Hall history opened in 1864 with the purchase of the Central Overland from Russell, Majors and Waddell by the outstanding figure of overland freighting-Ben Holladay. Obtaining a mail contract, the legendary Holladay established a tri-weekly service from Salt Lake City to the mining towns of the Northwest by way of Fort Hall. At Fort Hall there were branch connections for Boise, Walla Walla and Oregon.

During the gold rush and pioneer era of Montana and Idaho, Fort Hall again became an important junction of freight routes. All of the communities of the Inland Empire had to be served and supplied from three great depots—St. Louis, the Sacramento Valley and Portland. Long wagon trains of supplies followed the Oregon-California Trail in reverse from Oregon and
California to Fort Hall, where a road ran northward to serve Virginia City, Bannack City and other mining camps. From Fort Hall a road extended south to Salt Lake City, through which much traffic passed, especially after completion of the Central Pacific.

In the 1906 survey of the Oregon Trail by Ezra Meeker, he was not able to determine the precise site of Fort Hall, the buildings having long since disappeared, probably under the flood waters of the Snake, before construction of the American Fall Reservoir. Some 10 years later the site was identified by artifacts taken from the ground at the site. The only remains today, if the site is correctly marked, is a group of low mounds forming a rough enclosure, about 125 feet in diameter.

The site of Fort Hall, as described above, has been recently examined and mapped by Aubrey L. Haines. (A copy of his report was supplied Region Two.) He is "convinced it is the true location." He further concludes: "It is my opinion that the Fort Hall site is nearly untouched, and that it contains an invaluable record of fur trade and emigration days."

Condition of Site. The site is marked by a small monument and it lies about 50 yards from the Snake River. It occupies a position in the Fort Hall "bottoms," a low, flat expanse of marsh and thick grass along the south bank of the Snake, in the Fort Hall Indian reservation. It is reached by an increasingly faint dirt road which begins at Evans' Trading Post at Fort Hall reservation headquarters on U. S. Highway 91-191, and winds along the Snake 11 miles to the fort site.

Fort Hall Site. A small marker on the site of the famous way station of the Oregon Trail. Only low mounds remain.

National Park Service Photograph
Spalding Mission

Location. In Lapwai, Idaho.


Significance. The activities of the American missionaries in Oregon were in large part responsible for the early attraction of American settlers to and the settlement of the Oregon country. The Protestant missions, unlike those of the Catholics, failed to achieve great success among the Indians of the Northwest. But they demonstrated the agricultural potentialities of the area and in so doing stimulated the tide of emigration to the Oregon country. The Spalding mission at Lapwai was not in an area of American occupation, and therefore success (which it did not achieve) depended upon its labors with the Indians, while other missions, such as Jason Lee's Methodist agency in the Willamette Valley became the nucleus of American settlement and influence.

The Lapwai mission to the Nez Perce was established on Lapwai Creek, where that stream enters the Clearwater River (above present Lewiston, Idaho) in 1836 by the Rev. & Mrs. Henry Harmon Spalding. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (composed of several Protestant denominations) was stirred to action in Oregon by the success of the Methodists in the Willamette Valley, and in 1835 sent Parker and Whitman to survey the Oregon field. In the spring of 1836, Whitman and Spalding, accompanied by their wives, joined the American Fur Company's caravan on the Oregon Trail. Spalding's light wagon, reduced to a two-wheel cart, was taken through to Fort Boise, the first vehicle to travel this far on the overland trail. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding were the first white
women to cross the continent, the party reaching Fort Vancouver in September. The Whitmans began their mission at Waiilatpu, the Spaldings located on the small prairie at Lapwai Creek.

Located among the Nez Perce, who were probably the most likely group to accept the Christian doctrine, the Spaldings were able to make some little initial progress. Spalding, a skilled teacher with remarkable physical energy, was strongly convinced that the spiritual salvation of the Nez Perce, as well as their survival, depended upon abandoning the traditional hunting economy and becoming settled farmers. He established the first white home, church, school, flour mill, sawmill, blacksmith shop and loom in what is now Idaho. The first printing press in Oregon, with type, furniture, and paper was purchased by the native church in Honolulu (where it had been used by the mission there) and sent to the mainland as a donation to the Oregon Mission, arriving by horseback at Lapwai in 1839. This press printed the first books in the Nez Perce tongue, and was the first printing press in the Northwest. (It is now in the museum of the Oregon Historical Society.)

The early growth of the mission was jeopardized by a severe clash of personalities between Spalding (a rejected suitor of Whitman's wife) and Whitman, and Spalding's emphasis upon the secular side of mission work was criticized by his fellow workers who believed in the traditional missionary formula of Christian preaching and teaching. Spalding was thin-skinned, defensively critical, and jealous of the more aggressive Whitman. The internal dissension in the Whitman and Spalding missions, and the red men's lack of concern for their souls (they suggested a good supply of
tobacco would make Christianity much more attractive) convinced the American Board in 1842 that the missions should be closed. Whitman's dramatic trip East in the winter of 1842-43 saved the missions and the order was rescinded.

But in succeeding years the Indians grew more surly and resentful. Immigrants in large numbers were entering the Oregon country by way of the Oregon Trail, taking the Indian's land and bringing epidemics of measles which threatened to wipe out the native population. This unrest exploded in 1847 when the Whitmans and many of their followers were massacred. Following the Whitman tragedy, Spalding closed the Lapwai mission and withdrew. In later years he farmed, taught school and served as Lapwai Indian agent until 1871, when he returned to Lapwai and preached to the Indians until his death in 1874.

Spalding Memorial Park, a state park of some 15 acres commemorating the Spalding Mission, covers the heart of the mission site and is located on the south bank of the Clearwater River, at the junction of U. S. Highway 95 and State Highway 9. The south entrance to the bridge over the Clearwater, which provides a crossing for U. S. Highway 95, is within the park. Included in the park, which is operated primarily as a recreation area, chiefly for picnicking, are the foundation and hearthstones of the Spalding home, the site of the grist and sawmill and traces of the millrace. There are no other physical remains.

Nauvoo, Illinois

Location. On the east bank of the Mississippi River in Hancock County, Illinois.

Ownership. Largely private.

Significance. Nauvoo, Illinois was the principal town and headquarters of the Mormons prior to the "Exodus." It was also at this town on the east bank of the Mississippi that the great migration began which took the Latter Day Saint's to Utah. This journey of the Mormons to the Salt Lake Basin was one of the most significant mass movements in the advance of white settlement to the Pacific.

Beginning in May 1839, land was purchased by Mormons in and around the small town of Commerce, in an area of western Illinois that had demonstrated some sympathy for the trials of the church. The following year, the name of the community was officially changed to Nauvoo, a word meaning beautiful site or habitation. The original plan of the Mormons was to establish two new communities, one at Nauvoo and the other on the west bank of the Mississippi at Montrose, Iowa Territory. The latter town was the site of Brigham Young's first home in this area. Later, because of difficulties in proving land titles, the Mormons on the Iowa side were compelled to abandon their property and move into Nauvoo.

Located on a hill sloping down to the river, and bordered by the river on three sides, Nauvoo very soon became an imposing city. During the first year of the Mormon occupancy about two hundred and fifty houses were constructed. A malaria epidemic, resulting from the swampy character of the lowlands in the vicinity, swept the
community during the first year, but in the end proved no deterrent to its growth. The city was laid out in a regular fashion, with broad streets intersecting one another at right angles. Homes of frame, brick and stone were constructed, each with its garden and orchard plot. In 1841, the cornerstones of the temple were laid on an eminence which commanded a view of the city.

The population of Nauvoo grew very rapidly, augmented by converts from Europe and the United States. By the end of 1841, the population approached 10,000 and Nauvoo was soon to become the largest city in Illinois. The lowlands were drained and the city assumed a more healthful aspect. Industries were founded which contributed immeasurably to the economic prosperity of the community. The Illinois state legislature granted a liberal city charter to Smith which made Nauvoo virtually a self-governing entity.

Nauvoo continued to flourish until 1845, when mob outbreaks against the Mormons, the martyrdom of Smith the year before, and the growing hostility of the state authorities forced the Mormons to consider another move. The following year, the city was abandoned, as the Saints began their long trek to the Salt Lake basin.

**Condition of Site.** Although some of the buildings, including the temple, were destroyed by the mobs who entered Nauvoo on the heels of the Mormons, the city was largely preserved. Today, the town of Nauvoo has a population of only a couple thousand, but many of the dwellings erected by the Mormons still stand and are still occupied as homes. Among the surviving structures associated
with the Mormons are: (1) the Joseph Smith Homestead, occupied by Joseph Smith after coming to Nauvoo in 1839; (2) the Mansion House, second home of Joseph Smith; (3) the Brigham Young Home; (4) Heber C. Kimball Home, one of the most beautiful of the century old homes in Nauvoo; (5) the Nauvoo Masonic Temple; (6) the Wilford Woodruff Home; (7) the Sidney Rigdon Home; (8) "Time and Seasons" Building; (9) John Taylor House; (10) Old Mormon Arsenal. The first two of these are being preserved by the Reorganized Church. The "Times and Seasons" Buildings and John Taylor House are maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City.


Robidoux Pass

Location. Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska.

Ownership. Private ownership.

Significance. Robidoux Pass, located about eight miles southwest of Scotts Bluff National Monument, was a significant landmark on the Oregon and California Trails before 1850 when the wagon trains generally crossed Mitchell Pass. The pass was across a range of hills of which Scotts Bluff was a part. It was here that an Indian trader named Robidoux established a trading post which became synonymous to the pass which took his name. The post, established in 1848, was the first habitation the travelers encountered leaving Fort Kearny. The emigrants also found at the pass the first good supply of wood for campfires and for wagon
The Mansion House, Nauvoo, Illinois. This building served as the residence for the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, from August 1843 until his death the following year.

National Park Service Photograph, June 1959
The Erasmus Snow Home at Nauvoo, Illinois. Snow was one of the first Mormons to migrate to Salt Lake City.

National Park Service Photograph, June 1959
repairs since their departure from Ash Hollow. At this place, also, they found springs which made it a favorite campsite. From the summit of the pass, the travelers had their first view of the distant Laramie Peak which they regarded as the Rocky Mountains.

Comments on the quality and utility of Robidoux's post varied with the emigrants. Captain Stansbury described the post as a log shanty, with a blacksmith's forge on one end and a grog shop on the other. After several weeks of constant travel, most of the emigrants had need of Robidoux's smithy, either to effect minor repairs on their wagons or to shoe their horses, mules, or oxen. With the wagons coming through the pass in increasing numbers, Robidoux often found it more convenient to rent his facilities to those who had need of them. Stansbury reported having waited two hours for a turn at the forge. The rental price at that time was seventy-five cents an hour. Stansbury expressed a veiled contempt for Robidoux's commercial practices. The trader, he wrote, stocked his establishment with goods purchased from those emigrants who, by this time, were anxious to lighten their loads and were willing to part with their belongings for little or nothing. He then sold the articles to subsequent wagon trains, reaping a large profit in the transaction.*

Later, Robidoux moved his main post several miles off the road, but during the emigration season seems to have maintained an establishment on the first site.

*Stansbury, Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, 52.
When the bulk of the overland travel shifted to the Mitchell Pass route, Robidoux lost much of his business, and his post was abandoned not long afterward.

**Condition of Site.** The site is relatively unspoiled and free from intrusions. The ruts of the trail are very much in evidence. A granite monument marks the site of the trading post and blacksmith shop.

**References:** Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, 52; Merrill J. Mattes, "Robidoux's Trading Post at 'Scott's Bluffs,' and the California Gold Rush," *Nebraska History*, XXX, 95-138 (June 1949)

**Pioneer Monument**

**Location.** Salt Lake County, east edge of Salt Lake City.

**Ownership.** State of Utah; State Park and Recreation Commission.

**Significance.** Prior to 1846 California-bound emigrants followed the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall, then turned southwest to the Humboldt north of the Great Salt Lake. In 1846, however, Lansford W. Hastings publicized the Hastings Cutoff, which shortened this route by pointing southwest from Fort Bridger through the Wasatch Mountains, passing south of Great Salt Lake, crossing the salt flats, and joining the other road on the Humboldt. The Donner party used this route, lost valuable time in the Wasatch Mountains and on the Salt Lake Desert, and failed to cross the Sierras before the onset of winter. The tragedy that resulted is well known. Mormon migrants also used this route to reach the Salt Lake Valley. Last barrier before reaching the valley was Emigration Canyon, a rugged gorge in the Wasatch Mountains.
Just north of the mouth of Emigration Canyon lies a high bench of land overlooking the valley. Here stands the Pioneer Monument, Utah's memorial to the trappers, explorers, and immigrants who opened the Great Basin. The site of the monument is especially appropriate, for there the Donners, the Mormons, and later emigrants ended the long arduous struggle to work their wagons through the canyons of the Wasatch range and beheld the valley of the Great Salt Lake spread for miles beneth them.

The shelf of land at the mouth of the canyon, surmounted by Pioneer Monument, primarily illustrates the Mormon migration of 1847, which took the first contingent of Saints, under Brigham Young, across the plains to the site of the future Zion in Great Salt Lake Valley. From Big Mountain, near the head of Emigration Canyon, Orson Pratt and the advance party on July 19 first glimpsed the valley. From here on July 23 Brigham Young, ill with fever, first saw the valley. "When on its summit," he is reported as saying, "I directed Elder Woodruff, who kindly tendered me the use of his carriage, to turn the same half way around, so that I could have a view of a portion of Salt Lake Valley. The spirit of Light rested upon me, and hovered over the valley, and I felt there the Saints would find protection and relief."*

*The History of Brigham Young (Ms.), quoted in Leland H. Creer, The Founding of an Empire (Salt Lake City, 1947), 297. This history was recorded daily by church historians during the Presidency of Young. From this incident probably grew the legend that moved the location to the mouth of Emigration Canyon and had Young say "This is the place, drive on." The legend originated with Wilford Woodruff, in whose carriage Young rode. Woodruff told the story in 1880, but there is no other evidence, not even Woodruff's journal, to support its authenticity.
From Big Mountain the Mormons, in two groups, descended Mountain Dell Canyon, crossed Little Mountain, and dropped into Emigration Canyon. They followed it to its mouth where, spread out before them, was the panorama of Salt Lake Valley. Not only was the vista impressive to the weary Mormons, but the moment was one of the most significant in Mormon history. The long trek from Illinois had ended. Although Brigham Young probably never uttered the words, this was indeed the place.

The route through Emigration Canyon came to be known as the Mormon Trail, and until 1850 was the principal entry to the Great Salt Lake Valley for successive waves of Mormons arriving to swell the population of Zion. California-bound emigrants, especially in the gold rush years, also used the trail, continuing west on the Hastings Cutoff across the Salt Lake Desert. In 1850, however, Parley Pratt pioneered a road up Parley's Canyon, south of Emigration Canyon, which became known as the Golden Pass Trail. Thereafter Mormons used this route instead of the rougher Emigration Canyon route. At the same time, travel to California over the Hastings Cutoff almost entirely disappeared.

Condition of Site. Pioneer Monument, dedicated in 1947 and recently designated a Utah State Park, stands as a memorial to the Mormons who here entered the valley, and also, appropriately, to earlier Utah pioneers. Of native stone quarried in Little Cottonwood Canyon, the 60-foot center pylon is surmounted by bronze figures of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Wilford Woodruff. Around the 86-foot base are bas-relief plaques depicting various
scenes on the Mormon exodus sculptured by Mahroni M. Young.
Also depicted in bronze are such diverse contributors to pioneer
history as Fathers Dominguez and Escalante, trappers William H.
Ashley, Jim Bridger, Jed Smith, and Etienne Provost, Father DeSmet,
John C. Fremont, Capt. B. L. M. Bonneville, and Chief Washakie.
Textual plaques explain in detail the last days before the first
Mormons arrived in the valley. An adjacent visitor center contains
a large, well-conceived and executed mural portraying episodes of
the trek from Missouri to the Salt Lake Valley.

State Highway 65 leads up Emigration Canyon, today in
many places virtually unimpaired, crosses Little Mountain, and
ascends Big Mountain to the summit from which the Mormons first
glimpsed the Salt Lake Valley. It thus closely follows the Mormon
Trail. A plaque at the summit of Big Mountain explains the
historical significance of this place, where emigrants, the Pony
Express, and the Overland Mail coaches began their descent of the
Wasatch slope into the Great Salt Lake Valley.

References: Leland H. Creer, The Founding of an Empire: the
Exploration and Colonization of Utah, 1776-1856 (Salt Lake City,
1947); Ray B. West, Kingdom of the Saints: The Story of Brigham
Young and the Mormons (New York, 1957); J. Roderic Korns, West
From Fort Bridger, Vol. XIX of Utah Historical Quarterly (Salt
Lake City, 1951); Charles W. Porter, Preliminary Report on the
Proposed Emigration Canyon National Monument . . . . (Ms. Report,
National Park Service, June 21, 1943).

Temple Square

Location. Salt Lake City.

Ownership. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
From the summit of Big Mountain the Mormons first glimpsed the Salt Lake Valley in the distance. Crossing Little Mountain (center of picture), they descended Emigration Canyon to its mouth, partially concealed in the photograph by Little Mountain.
Pioneer Monument stands on a shelf of land at the mouth of Emigration Canyon. From here the Mormons saw the Salt Lake Valley spread out beneath them.

National Park Service Photograph
Significance. The modern metropolis of Salt Lake City is an imposing monument to the determination and industry of the Mormons following their arrival in the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Of the many historic sites and buildings in Salt Lake City, Temple Square best captures the essence of the Mormon achievement in building a kingdom on the Utah desert. It illustrates, for Mormons and non-Mormons alike, the migration to Great Salt Lake Valley and the formative years of the civilization there erected. Today Temple Square not only dominates the architecture but also the daily life of Salt Lake City.

Such was Brigham Young's intent when in 1847 he approved the plat of the city. Punching his cane into the ground, he said, "Here will be the Temple of our God." Forty acres, later reduced to ten, were staked out, and from the southeast corner of the square Orson Pratt surveyed and laid out the streets of the city.

Temple Square began to take shape in the early 1850's. By 1855 a 15-foot adobe and sandstone wall surrounded the square. In 1853 ground-breaking ceremonies launched construction of Brigham Young's "Temple of our God." The general plan was Young's, conceived before the exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois, and the details were worked out by Church architect Truman O. Angell. The walls rose slowly as great granite blocks, quarried in Little Cottonwood Canyon, were hauled by ox-team 20 miles to the building site. A railroad later hastened the process, but not until April 6, 1892, did thousands gather to watch the capstone placed on the towering edifice. Less slow of completion was the Tabernacle, then as now an architectural
and engineering marvel. Conceived by Young as meeting place for the General Conference of the Church, it was begun in 1862 and finished in 1867. By 1870 the great Tabernacle organ—27 pedals, 2,638 pipes, and 35 stops—had been installed. The third historic building, completed in 1882, was the Assembly Hall, designed as a non-sectarian place of worship. Other buildings and monuments added in later years filled in the present pattern of Temple Square.

Condition of Site: The three historic structures are still standing, basically unaltered, in Temple Square. Dominant feature is the six-spired, buttressed Temple. Of gray granite construction, it is $186\frac{1}{3}$ feet long and 99 feet wide. The walls rise $167\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the highest spire 210 feet. Atop this spire stands a copper, gold-leafed statue of the angel Moroni. Symbolic decorations and inscriptions dot the exterior, and heavy oaken doors with symbolic carvings give access at either end. The ornate interior of the Temple, accessible only to Mormons, is described by James Talmage and D. M. McAllister in books cited below. An iron fence surrounds the Temple, preventing no closer approach than 20 to 30 feet. Except on ceremonial occasions, Mormons enter the Temple through the Temple Annex, a limestone Moorish-type building on the north side.

The huge dome-like Tabernacle, seating 8,000 people, stands on the west side of the square. This architecturally unique structure, according to the Director of the Church Information Service, is "an immense auditorium 250 feet long, 150 feet wide, 80 feet high, elliptical in shape, and topped by a massive roof resting like a great inverted bowl on forty-four pillars or buttresses."
Of cut sandstone masonry, these supports are each nine feet from the outside to the inside of the building, three feet in thickness and from fourteen to twenty feet high. . . . The roof, a marvel of engineering for the period in which it was conceived, is a ten-foot-thick span of wooden lattice truss construction, the maze of timbers fastened together by wooden pegs or dowels and rawhide bindings. In recent years the exterior shingles have been replaced by a metal covering."* The Tabernacle houses the world-renowned Tabernacle Choir and organ.

The Assembly Hall, in the southwest corner of the square, is a gray granite structure surmounted by white wooden spires. Seating 2,000 people, it is devoted to non-sectarian religious, social, and intellectual uses.

In addition to these major structures, Temple Square is also the location of the Church Bureau of Information and Museum, which displays exhibits depicting the migration and early years of Salt Lake City; the oldest house in Salt Lake City, a log cabin moved from its original location near present Pioneer Park; the Seagull Monument, commemorating the gulls that saved the first crops from destruction by crickets in 1848; and statues of the Three Witnesses (who testified to the authenticity of Joseph Smith's golden plates), of Brigham Young, and of pioneer photographer Charles R. Savage. The wall built in the 1850's still encloses

Dominated by the Great Temple, Temple Square possesses important architectural values and stands as a monument to Mormon industry and determination in the Salt Lake Valley.

National Park Service Photograph
the square.


Independence Rock

Location. Natrona County, Wyoming, adjacent to State Highway No. 220.

Ownership. Largely private; a very small portion is in State ownership.

Significance: Independence Rock was a famous landmark along the trail. After crossing the North Platte at the site of the Upper Platte ferries, the emigrants left the river, traveling southwestward across a generally waterless desert to the banks of the Sweetwater. Independence Rock was located a short distance from the point where the trains first encountered the river; consequently, it became a general resting and camping place for the emigrants. Most emigrants looked forward to the Rock with great anticipation. Major Cross wrote that it had been "the theme of conversation with us since leaving Fort Laramie. It was a spot often spoken of by those who had passed before us, known as a great resting place."*

A large, oblong mass of rock, over 1,900 feet long and 850 feet wide, it stands isolated on the plain, looking, according to one traveler, "like some huge monster rising from the ground."**

*Settle, ed., March of the Mounted Riflemen (Glendale, Calif., 1940) 122.

**Ibid., 123
The rock received its name from a party of fur traders who were reputed to have celebrated the Fourth of July there early in the history of the penetration of the West. It was a well-known landmark long before the emigrations of the 1840's. Because of its association with the anniversary of the nation's independence, many wagon trains made conscious efforts to reach the rock on July 4th.

The greatest attraction of Independence Rock was in the thousands of names carved or painted on its rock faces. Perhaps the trappers who gave it its name were the first to place an inscription on the rock, for some of the earliest travellers noted the word "Independence" carved on it. By 1840, the rock was so covered with names that Father Peter DeSmet dubbed it "the great registry of the desert." Two years later, Rufus Sage wrote that the "surface is covered with the names of travellers, traders, trappers, and emigrants engraven upon it in almost every practicable part, for the distance of many feet above its base."* Wagon trains halted here, while its members clambered over the rock, reading the names, perhaps looking for those of friends who had preceded them to the West, and adding their own to the collection. "Some of these names," wrote E. W. Conyers, in 1852, "were written with white or red chalk; some were cut in the rock with a cold chisel, whilst others were written with tar--and, in fact, were written in every conceivable manner. From the numerous names found written

upon this rock, one would naturally suppose that every man, woman, and child that ever passed this way had so succeeded in writing or having their names written on this rock."*

Some emigrants, like Rufus Sage, either had no time to spend on the rock or turned away in disgust at the sight of all the names. Sage, having intended to add his name to the catalog, changed his mind when "having glanced over the strange medley, I became disgusted, and, turning away, resolved, 'If there remains no other mode of immortalizing myself, I will be content to descend to the grave "unhonored and unsung."'"**

Condition of Site. Independence Rock, as well as its historical setting, is little changed from what it was over a century ago when the Oregon and California Trails ran past the Rock.


** LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Rufus B. Sage: His Letters and Papers, 1836-1847, with an Annotated Reprint of His "Scenes in the Rocky Mountains and in Oregon, California, New Mexico, Texas and the Grand Prairies" (2 vols., Glendale, 1956), I, 324.


South Pass

Location. In Fremont County, Wyoming.

Ownership. Largely private.

Significance. South Pass marked the long looked-for crossing of the Continental Divide and the Rocky Mountains. To the
Independence Rock, one of the most significant sites on the Oregon-California Trails.

National Park Service Photograph, July 1959
emigrants of the forties and fifties it also signified their entrance into the Oregon Country. Although many miles of hard traveling lay ahead, many of the pioneers felt encouraged that their destination was indeed growing closer once South Pass was crossed. Joel Palmer interrupted the table of distances in his account with the words, "Here Hail Oregon!"*

Located to the South of the Wind River range, in the sight of which the emigrants had traveled for many days, South Pass was both deceiving and disappointing to the travelers. Although its elevation exceeds 7500 feet above sea level, it did not conform to the emigrant's picture of a Rocky Mountain pass. Some crossed it without realizing it. Elizabeth Wood thought the road on the summit to be as level as the streets of Peoria, her home town. William T. Newby expressed some disappointment. "If you dident now it was the mountian," he wrote in 1843, "you woldent now it from aney outher plane."**

Condition of Site. The historical setting is little changed. At a number of places about the pass the remains of the Oregon and California Trails are very evident.

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*Palmer, Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains,

South Pass, located on the Continental Divide in Wyoming. To the emigrants of the 1840's and 1850's, it signified their entrance into the Oregon country.

National Park Service Photograph, October, 1958
AREAS ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
RELATING TO OVERLAND MIGRATIONS WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Death Valley National Monument, California

Although the emigrant story in Death Valley is a relatively minor phase of this outstanding desert area, the drama of a wagon train of emigrants stranded in the valley in 1849 has achieved great fame. The half-starved pioneers, who had deserted their guide, were lost and stranded in the wide, salt floor of the valley. The train split into seven groups, each suffering agonizing hardships before escaping from Death Valley. Although a number of lives were lost en route to the settlements, only one of the party died in Death Valley.

Lassen Volcanic National Park, California

The Emigrant Trail or Noble's Road, in Lassen Volcanic National Park is plainly visible today. This route, one of the so-called cutoffs used by emigrants entering California north of the main route, which was surveyed by Noble in 1852, terminated at Shasta. Travelers using Noble's route followed the Applegate-Lassen Trail, before turning off to pass through the present park, by way of Emigrant Pass and Noble Pass, and touching Manzanita Lake.

Scott's Bluff National Monument, Nebraska

Scott's Bluff, located a short distance west of Gering, Nebraska was the last of the peculiar rock formations passed on the Oregon and California Trails along the north Platte River. Like the rocks to the east, the Bluffs inspired considerable comment in the diaries and journals of the emigrants. This formation was named for the fur trader Hiram Scott, who, according to tradition, was abandoned by his companions to die in the vicinity in 1828.

Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Nebraska

Chimney Rock was the most famous and best known landmark along the eastern segment of the Oregon and California Trail. Located about 31/2 miles southwest of Bayard, Nebraska, on the south side of the north Platte River, this rock formation was described by practically every diarist along the trail. For about two days the emigrants travelled within site of Chimney Rock. Its vicinity became a favorite camping place to travelers on the trail.

McLoughlin House National Historic Site, Oregon

The McLoughlin House, built in 1845-46, is one of the few remaining pioneer dwellings in the region once known as the Oregon
Scotts Bluff, on the Oregon-California Trails. The building in the right foreground is the Visitor Center, administered by the National Park Service.

National Park Service Photograph, August 1919
Chimney Rock, one of the many unusual formations seen by the Oregon and California emigrants.

National Park Service Photograph, August 1949
country. McLoughlin, who wielded enormous influence upon American migration, resigned from his post of Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver in 1845, and came to Oregon City to spend the remainder of his life. One of McLoughlin's great contributions was his encouragement of the settlement of Oregon by Americans. The well-preserved house, furnished with some original McLoughlin items, is jointly administered by the McLoughlin Memorial Association, the Municipality of Oregon City, and the National Park Service.

Whitman National Monument, Washington

The contribution of the Whitman's at the protestant mission founded in 1836 was twofold: they brought Christianity to the Indians and taught the natives the rudiments of agriculture, and they furnished hospitality to weary travelers on the Oregon Trail. Additionally, the combined work of the missionaries in the Oregon country served to popularize the area as a place of settlement for Americans. Before more direct routes were established, the Oregon Trail passed directly through the mission grounds. The Whitmans were noted for their generous hospitality, needy emigrants were provided with supplies, and the mission served as a trail depot. The massacre of the Whitmans in 1847 ended protestant missionary activities in Oregon. The monument is located near Walla Walla.

Fort Vancouver National Monument, Washington

Headquarters and depot for all activities of the Hudson's Bay Company west of the Rocky Mountains, Fort Vancouver was the economic, political, and social hub of the entire Oregon country. When American missionaries and settlers began to arrive in Oregon, Fort Vancouver was of necessity a major goal. Oregon Trail emigrants reached the end of the road at the Dalles, from here they ferried down the Columbia and reached Fort Vancouver. Here were the only adequate supplies of food, seed, and farm implements in the Northwest. Dr. McLoughlin's generous treatment of the pioneers did much to foster the growth of the American population in the region. The fort site is located across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon.

Fort Laramie National Monument, Wyoming

Fort Laramie was one of the most significant landmarks along the Oregon Trail. Well known, it was the first objective of the emigrants after they left the settlements in the Missouri Valley. The progress of their journey was usually measured in terms of the distance from Fort Laramie. The original fort, built in 1834, was called Fort William, for William Sublette, who established it a short distance from the confluence of the Laramie with the North Platte River. In 1841, the post was rebuilt of adobe and the name changed to Fort John. However, the post became widely known as Fort Laramie. Beginning in 1841, the character of the post
began to change as it emerged as an important point on the Oregon Trail. The emigrants regarded Fort Laramie as a place of recuperation, a supply point at which they could purchase necessary equipment and provisions, and as a spot at which repairs could be made on their wagons. In 1849, Fort Laramie came to an end as a trading post when the United States purchased it as a military station, part of a larger plan to garrison the Oregon Trail. The fort's usefulness to the emigrant continued unbroken until travel came to an end on the overland route.

SITES CONSIDERED

Lee's Ferry, Arizona

For half a century the bulk of travel between Utah and Arizona forded the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry in Marble Canyon. The crossing took its name from John D. Lee, Mormon leader seeking refuge from the law for his part in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. He operated a ferry here from 1871 to 1874. Beginning in 1873 Lee's Ferry was used by Mormon colonizers migrating to the Little Colorado River Valley in northern Arizona. It continued to be the principal crossing of the Colorado after Lee's trial and execution. One of his widows operated it for several years, then sold it to the Mormon Church, which in 1909 sold out to a cattle company. In 1916 Coconino County acquired the property and operated the ferry until completion of Navajo Bridge in 1929.

A small log cabin in which Lee lived is still standing. The site is in the canyon six miles north of Navajo Bridge.

Yuma Crossing, Arizona

Strategically located at the mouth of the Gila River, the Yuma Crossing was the only feasible crossing of the Colorado River in the southern desert region. Prehistoric Indian trails converged at the mouth of the Gila, foreshadowing the converging of emigrant trails that came into use following discovery of gold in California in 1848. Argonauts hurrying west over numerous trails that crossed Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico followed either the Kearny Trail or Cooke Wagon Road across Arizona. Kearny's Army of the West had crossed at Yuma in November 1846, Cooke's Mormon Battalion in January 1847. The trails named after these officers therefore also crossed at Yuma. From 1850 until the Southern Pacific Railroad bridged the Colorado in 1877, Louis Yager operated a ferry at the Crossing. Coaches of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company ferried the river at Yuma from 1858 to 1861. Fort Yuma (1849-1885), on the California shore, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot (1854-1885), the Arizona Territorial
Prison (1876-1909), and the town of Yuma, on the Arizona shore, grew up at the crossing. It became an important river boat terminus for traffic from the Pacific Coast via the Gulf of California and the Lower Colorado River.

Yuma Crossing is located between the old and new highway bridges at a point where two small islands stand in the river. Development on both shores and power lines crossing at this point impair the natural setting. The Territorial Prison, in partial ruins, the Quartermaster Depot, and Fort Yuma, greatly altered, are still standing.

**Bloody Point, California**

One of the most terrible of all emigrant disasters was the massacre at Bloody Point on Tule Lake, a few miles south of the California-Oregon line. A wagon train of some 75 men, women, and children, passing over the Oregon Trail, were attacked by Modoc Indians. Only one man escaped. A favorite ambush location, it was the scene of a number of Indian attacks.

**Box Canyon, California**

Through the bottom of the wash at Box Canyon passed the California-Sonora Trail of the Mexican era, the route of the Mormon Battalion, the forty-niners, and the Butterfield coaches. Plainly visible in the narrow defile are the ax marks made when the Mormon Battalion chopped away rock to permit passage of the wagons. Box Canyon is located in Anza Borrego Desert State Park.

**Kit Carson Pass, California**

Site of the first passage of the Sierra in midwinter, by the Fremont party in 1844. A bronze memorial plaque marks the pass used by a great number of emigrant trains entering California during the fifties and sixties. Traffic was so heavy over the Carson Emigrant Road in the 1850's, a chain of wayside stations was established between Mormon Station (Genoa), Nevada, and Hangtown (Placerville).

**Cressler and Bonner Trading Post, California**

Among the few log buildings which were built in Surprise Valley by early settlers is the Cressler and Bonner Trading Post. The oldest structure in Modoc County, it was built in 1865, and as a trading post it carried on a thriving trade with emigrants en route to California and Oregon and with early settlers. The restored building now stands in a park in Cedarville.
Box Canyon. Ax marks, plainly visible in the rock of the narrow chasm, are the work of the Mormon Battalion, whose men enlarged the opening to permit wagons to be lifted through.

National Park Service Photograph
Fort Yuma, California

Established in 1850, Fort Yuma commanded one of the most strategic locations in the Southwest—the Yuma Crossing of the Colorado River. This was the entrance way into southern California from the earliest Spanish days. Because of the savage hostility of the Yuma Indians, the ferry crossing at Yuma, used by countless miners and settlers, needed constant protection. A considerable number of the original fort buildings are being used for the headquarters of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation.

Lassen's Ranch, California

A figure of considerable prominence in the early days of American settlement in California, Peter Lassen, a Danish blacksmith, in 1848 blazed the trail into California which bears his name. Lassen's Ranch was the terminus of the Lassen Trail, never very popular with emigrants because it proved to be a long, dangerous "cut-off." Fremont stayed a month at Lassen's Ranch in 1848, just before returning to take part in the Bear Flag Revolt.

San Gabriel Mission, California

San Gabriel Mission was located at the end of the only all-year route into California from the East, the route used by the Butterfield Stage. Now within Los Angeles the mission was then an important stop for explorers and settlers who had successfully reached the Pacific.

Kanesville, Iowa

Kanesville was a town located on the east side of the Missouri River above the mouth of the Platte River. It was founded by the Mormons in 1847 as an outpost on the Mormon Trail primarily to assist them on their journey to Salt Lake City. Kanesville principally catered to the emigrant wagons which crossed Iowa to the Missouri. It never did the business of Independence and St. Joseph. Kanesville officially changed its name to Council Bluffs in 1853. No structures in present-day Council Bluffs are identified with the overland migrations.

Mount Pisgah, Iowa

Mount Pisgah, located about 7 miles southwest of present-day Lorimor, Iowa, was the second of the important supply depots established by the Mormons in their trek from Nauvoo, Illinois to Winter Quarters. It was larger and more important than Garden Grove. At Mount Pisgah the Mormons planted about 1,500 acres with crops. A spring in the hillside supplied water for a mill which ground the wheat and corn into breadstuffs for the emigrants. A tabernacle was erected. Carpenters and blacksmith shops were also
San Gabriel Mission. The end of the trail for many emigrants entering California on the southern route.

National Park Service Photograph
Monument at the site of Mount Pisgah, Iowa. This place was the site of a large Mormon settlement during the great migration of that sect.

National Park Service Photograph, June 1959
set up here to assist the migrating members. A cemetery was laid out and several hundred Mormons were buried here. Nothing remains of this settlement. A limestone obelisk commemorates this supply depot and the Mormon emigrants buried there.

Alcove Springs, Kansas

Alcove Springs located about 10 miles south of Marysville, Kansas and near Independence Crossing of the Big Blue River, was an important landmark on the Oregon Trail between the Kansas and the Platte Rivers. The Springs still run except in dry seasons. The ruts of the Oregon Trail are in evidence near the place.

Ash Hollow, Nebraska

Ash Hollow was the first major resting place after leaving Fort Kearney and the first important camp after leaving "Lower California Crossing" on the South Platte River. This landmark was located at the foot of a ravine on the North Platte River south of Lewellen. This camping place had an abundance of wood, scattered ash trees, dwarf cedars and good water. The steep descent into Ash Hollow was noted by the travellers. Wagons were lowered by ropes down Windlass Hill. Both Ash Hollow and Windlass Hill are noted on markers on U. S. Highway No. 26. The scars on Windlass Hill made by the wagons are still in evidence.

Court House Rock, Nebraska

Court House Rock located several miles south of Bridgeport, Nebraska, was the first of many unique rock formations which the emigrants encountered while passing up the North Platte Valley. This formation probably derived its name from the court house in St. Louis which it is said to have resembled. Many of the early travellers commented on this rock in their journals.

Fort Kearney, Nebraska

Fort Kearney, built in 1848, on the south side of the Platte River several miles southeast of present-day Kearney, Nebraska, was a significant landmark and military post on the Oregon and California Trails. It succeeded an earlier post by the same name which was established two years earlier at Nebraska City. Fort Kearney was the only post built by the government solely for the protection of wagon trains. This post was completed just in time for the flood of 40'ers which poured across the plains soon after its construction. The emigrant trains usually stopped at the fort a day or so to shoe the horses or oxen, repair wagons and send letters home. The site of the fort is now a state park.
Winter Quarters, Nebraska

Winter Quarters located at what was later known as Florence, Nebraska was the most important point on the Mormon Trail between Nauvoo and Salt Lake City. It was here that the advanced party of the Mormons, under Brigham Young, in June 1846 halted until the following spring until the remainder of the Mormons caught up with them. At one time this encampment numbered several thousand people. Winter Quarters was laid out in the form of a town. In 1847 Winter Quarters was abandoned. Those who remained moved across the river to Kanesville to assist the oncoming migrations. Winter Quarters has since been absorbed by the City of Omaha. All that remains is the Mormon Cemetery where several hundred Mormons are buried. A beautiful monument has since been erected in the cemetery.

Black Rock Desert, Nevada

Emigrant trains, fearing the crossing of the Humboldt Sink, turned off the main trail to California at Lassen's Meadow, and followed the route used by Lassen and Applegate, which crossed the Black Rock Desert of northwestern Nevada. Wagon ruts are today clearly visible in the Black Rock Desert route, which proved far more difficult than the main trail.

Boiling Springs, Nevada

California-bound emigrants reached Boiling Springs after crossing the desolate expanse of the Humboldt Sink. Trenches were dug and the boiling water turned into the ditches to cool, after which the barrels and jugs were filled for the next leg of the journey. Now known as Springer's Hot Springs, they are located near Reno.

Fort Churchill, Nevada

This army post was built in 1860 on the Carson River as a result of Indian attacks on emigrants passing along the Carson and Humboldt Rivers. There was little Indian hostility after establishment of the fort, and it was abandoned in 1869. The adobe buildings were restored as a C.C.C. project in the 1930's, but only sections of walls now remain. Fort Churchill, located about 40 miles east of Carson City, is a State Park.

Mormon Station (Genoa), Nevada

A frontier settlement near Carson City, Mormon Station was also a trading post, located at the fort of the Sierra, which supplied food to emigrants. The original building has been reconstructed as a State Park.
Black Rock Desert. The Applegate Trail is plainly visible passing from the center foreground toward the top of this aerial photograph.

Lowell Sumner Photograph
Crossing Forty-niner Lake, Nevada. The Applegate Trail remains are the tracks at left, heading for the center of the lake bed.

Lowell Summer Photograph
Barlow Road, Oregon

It is estimated three quarters of the early immigrants into the Willamette Valley came by way of the Barlow Road, the first route for wagons over the Cascade Mountains. A corduroy toll road, opened in 1846, took emigrants halted at the Dalles over the slope of Mount Hood into Oregon City. Much of the original road, which crosses the Mount Hood Highway, can still be seen.

Cartwright House, Oregon

An early settler's home, built in 1853 a few miles south of Eugene, the structure is a splendid architectural type, and is well preserved.

Dalles Mission, Oregon

At the Dalles, an historic trail center where the Columbia River bursts through a chasm in the Cascade Mountains, the Oregon Trail ended for the early emigrants, until the opening of the Barlow Road in 1846. Without a road to follow, they were forced to use rude ferries to continue down the Columbia. Daniel Lee established a Methodist mission here in 1838, on a site which has been covered by development of the city. Fort Lee was established in 1849, after the abandoning of the mission, to protect emigrants from Indian hostilities.

Grande Ronde Valley, Oregon

In the 1840's this fertile valley was one immense field of redtop, a welcome respite for both men and animals before facing the crossing of the Blue Mountains. It was customary for emigrants to camp twice in the valley, just after descending into the valley and again on the Grande Ronde River before starting up the mountains.

Meacham Trail Road, Oregon

The Blue Mountains of Oregon were a substantial obstacle to emigrant trains on the Oregon Trail. From the early sixties almost all traffic came by way of this corduroy road, parts of which are still plainly visible along U. S. Highway 30 in northeastern Oregon.

Fort Davis, Texas

Fort Davis was erected along the Lower Emigrant Road in 1854 and guarded the stretch of road west to Paso del Norte. Troops from the post campaigned against the Comanches and Apaches and patrolled the overland road. Extensive ruins still stand,
Grande Ronde Valley. A view of the fertile valley on the Oregon Trail from near site where it was first seen by emigrants.

National Park Service Photograph
although representing the post-Civil War fort, in Jeff Davis County.*

Hueco Tanks, Texas

Located about 30 miles east of El Paso, the Hueco Tanks are large natural cisterns formed by depressions in limestone and capable of holding large supplies of water. The Emigrant Road to Paso del Norte and California went by the tanks in the 1840's and 1850's. Butterfield Overland Mail coaches utilized the road from 1858 to 1861, and built a stage station at the tanks. Here travelers found the only reliable water supply between the Pecos River and Rio Grande. Wagon and stagecoach ruts may still be seen in the desert near Hueco Tanks.

Fort Clark, Texas

Way-station on the Lower Emigrant Road, Fort Clark was built in 1852, after this route was selected as the principal military road to the Rio Grande and the west. It played an important part in protecting traffic on the road from hostile Indians and border bandits. Fort Clark continued as a military installation until after World War II, and is today a private guest ranch. Many buildings dating from the 1850's and 1880's are still standing and are used as guest quarters. The post is located at Bracketville, Texas.

Fort Lancaster, Texas

Established in 1854, this post was located on the east bank of the Pecos River near the crossing of the Lower Emigrant Road. Together with Forts Stockton and Davis, it represented a military arm projecting west along the Emigrant Road from the line of forts that defined the Texas frontier, and furnished patrols to protect the road from depredations of hostile Comanches and Mescalero Apaches. The fort was abandoned in 1861 and today only its ruins remain. The buildings have been reduced to rubble and only the chimneys stand. Nearby the ruts of the trail may still be seen.

Mountain Meadows, Utah

This site, located at the head of the Santa Clara Branch of the Virgin River in southwestern Utah, was a favorite camping and resting place for the early caravans using the Old Spanish Trail. California-bound emigrants on the Salt Lake-Los

*Fort Davis was recommended for classification as exceptionally valuable in the study Military and Indian Affairs (1959) and will be likewise recommended in the study, not yet completed, Transportation and Communication (sub-theme of Theme XV).
Angeles route likewise stopped here on their journey. Addison Pratt in 1849 described the meadow as "a beautiful valley covered with a dense growth of good grass." * It was near this point that a group of wagons left the main trail in 1849, determined to seek a shortcut to the West, only to undergo great suffering and hardship in Death Valley. **

The Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred here on September 7, 1857. Paiute and Mormon allies, under the leadership of John D. Lee and others, massacred a party of 140 Arkansas emigrants bound for California. Johnson's army was then en route to Utah, and the Mormons were particularly hostile to Gentiles. Lee's Mormons instigated a Paiute attack on the emigrant camp. This failing, the Mormons persuaded the emigrants to surrender their arms, and promised to conduct them to safety. When the emigrants complied, they were slaughtered, only a few children being spared.

Although the valley of Mountain Meadows has been somewhat changed in appearance by overgrazing and consequent erosion and growth of scrub timber, it is otherwise unimpaired. A cairn of rocks marks the mass grave of the victims of the massacre. It is reached by a dirt road leading west one mile from State Highway 18 at a point five miles north of Central, Utah. The U. S. Forest Service has placed a directional marker at the road junction.

** Hole-in-the-Rock Crossing, Utah

This crossing of the Colorado River, in Glen Canyon five miles north of the mouth of the San Juan, was blazed by a party of 250 Mormon settlers en route to the "four corners" area of southeastern Utah to found a colony. The group set out from Escalante in October 1879 and, upon reaching Glen Canyon late in November, spent six weeks blasting a wagon road through the narrow slit in the canyon wall known as "Hole-in-the-Rock." East of the river the settlers carved a road from the solid sandstone cliffs and buttes, and eventually reached their destination. The new road was so difficult to traverse that it was abandoned early in 1881, after discovery of Hall's Crossing led to construction of a wagon road across the river at that point.

Most of the old Mormon wagon road is still visible. Hole-in-the-Rock, however, will be inundated when Glen Canyon Dam is completed.


** The party eventually split up into several small groups, one of which became known as the "Jayhawkers." Some made it to the California coastal settlements safely, while others of those who struggled through the barren wastes of Death Valley were later rescued and conducted safely into California. The chronicler of this effort was William L. Manly, Death Valley in 1879 (Chicago, 1927).
California Trail Ruts, Utah

The Hastings Cutoff, widely publicized as a time-saving route to California, turned south from the main Oregon-California Trail at Fort Bridger, crossed the Wasatch Mountains and Great Salt Lake Desert south of the lake, and rejoined the California Trail on the Humboldt. During the 1846 season this route was used by the Russell-Bryant, Harlan-Young, and Donner parties, the last two of which had wagons. The fatal delay of the Donner party in reaching the Sierras was largely due to the loss of time on the desert and in the Wasatch Mountains. The Hastings Cutoff also bore heavy traffic in 1849 and 1850 as gold-seekers sought every possible route that offered hope of saving time. Wagon trains that crossed the desert endured unbelievable hardships and lost animals and equipment that remained to mark the trail for many decades.

West of Salt Lake City, in part adjacent to U. S. Highway 40, are well-defined wagon tracks cut in the surface of the desert. They may be followed across Skull Valley, which separates the Stansbury and Cedar Mountains, to the salt flats, and, most prominently, across the flats to Pilot Peak, in Nevada, a distance of about 120 miles. These ruts are best viewed from the air. As the Hastings Cutoff fell into disuse after the 1850 migration, the ruts are authentic remains of the 1846, 1849, and 1850 migrations to California. The Utah State Park and Recreation Commission plans an interpretive development at a point on U. S. 40 where the tracks may be viewed from the highway.

Register Cliff, Wyoming

On the south side of the North Platte River near Guernsey, Wyoming is Register Cliff. This place was a noted landmark on both the Oregon and Mormon Trails. Thousands of emigrants stopped at this place to carve their names on the chalkstone cliffs. At the foot of the cliff was Sand Point, the first stopping place for emigrants west of Fort Laramie. A portion of this cliff is preserved by the State of Wyoming.

Mormon Ferry, Wyoming

Mormon Ferry, which operated on the North Platte River at present-day city of Casper, Wyoming was a recognized point on the Oregon and Mormon Trails. Prior to 1847, travellers either forded the river when and where conditions permitted or ferried across it in their wagon beds. In 1847, Brigham Young detailed nine men to remain at the crossing to operate a ferry for the benefit of the Mormons who might follow and for the Oregon and California emigrants. With the erection of a bridge across the river in 1853, ferrying operations came to an end.

Fort Bridger, Wyoming

Fort Bridger, a major landmark on the Oregon Trail, was the second great stopping place on the route and the first point beyond Fort Laramie where emigrants might procure provisions and
Oregon Trail remains. Idaho Highway Department marker, on U. S. Highway 30, a few miles east of Boise.

Oregon Trail remains. Idaho Highway Department marker, on U. S. Highway 30, a few miles east of Boise.

National Park Service Photograph
make repairs for the journey ahead. This post, located at Black's Fork in southwestern Wyoming, was erected in 1843 by Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez primarily for the convenience of travelers. The route followed by the few emigrants who preceded the founding of the post originally passed north of the area. In 1843 and afterwards, it dipped to the south, touching Fort Bridger. In the following year, the first wagon trains took what became later known as Sublette's Cutoff to the north and by-passed Fort Bridger. In spite of the fact that the cutoff became the more popular of the two routes, Bridger's post remained a significant point on the trail, serving not only the Oregon emigrants who chose the older trail, but also the increasing tide of emigration to California over the Salt Lake road.

The site of the original Fort Bridger, associated with the early history of the Oregon Trail, has not been identified.* The later military post by that name, which is now a state historic site administered by Wyoming, was erected after the great overland migrations had generally passed.

**City of Rocks, Idaho**

This site, an important landmark of the Oregon Trail, received its name from the striking rock formations scattered over the valley of Circle Creek, which received names such as Twin Sisters, the Sphinx, and Pyramid Circle. It was a favorite campsite for wagon trains and many of the rocks served as registers on which a few names can still be found. The countless wagons passing through the City of Rocks have left a cut in the land. Located south of Burley near the Utah border in Sawtooth National Forest, the area is difficult to reach and is unspoiled.

**Site of Old Fort Boise, Idaho**

With Fort Hall, this Hudson's Bay Company fur trade post became famous for its hospitality to American travelers on the Oregon Trail. The fort was later destroyed by floods and the site, at the junction of the Snake and Boise Rivers, is presumed to be under water.

**Soda Springs, Idaho**

A well-known landmark of the Oregon Trail, and a natural curiosity which excited the interest of most emigrants, Soda Springs was the general name given to a number of springs, most of them cold and charged with carbonic acid, that gushed in the vicinity of the present town of Soda Springs. Most of the springs, including probably the one best known to emigrants—Steamboat Springs—have been inundated by waters of the Bear River dam. Mounds formed by deposits are visible in the town, where one spring has been capped and is turned on periodically to give a geyser effect.

*Fort Bridger will be considered in Theme XVIII, "Travel and Communication."
Soda Springs. This mound in the center of the town has been capped, and the flow is turned on once a day.

National Park Service Photograph
Devil's Gate, familiar landmark to the California and Oregon Trail emigrants.

National Park Service Photograph, October 1958
Marker at the site of the fork of the Oregon and California Trails. The remains of the trails are very much in evidence at this place.

National Park Service Photograph, October 1958
City of Rocks. A portion of the jumbled mass of rocks which formed a favorite campsite for emigrants on the Oregon Trail.

National Park Service Photograph
SITES ALSO NOTED

Arizona
Pima Villages
San Bernardino Ranch

California
Emigrant Gap
Fandango (Lassen's) Pass
Hangtown
Hope Valley
Luther's Pass
Noble's Pass
Sonora Pass

Idaho
Fourth of July Canyon
Pilot Knob
Rock Creek Camp
Three Island Ford
Walters Ferry
Ward Massacre Site

Iowa
Garden Grove
Locust Creek
Richardson's Point
Sugar Creek

Kansas
Papin's Ferry
Potawatomi Indian Mission
Shawnee Mission
Westport

Missouri
Westport Landing

Nebraska
"Ancient Bluff Ruins"
Lower California Crossing
Pawnee Mission and Buildings
Summer Quarters

Nevada
Emigrant Springs
Great Meadow of the Humboldt

New Mexico
Anton Chico
Cooke's Spring and Peak
Mesilla

Oklahoma
Chouteau's Trading Post
Edwards' Trading Post
Rock Mary
Skullyville

Oregon
Barlow Pass
Emigrant Spring
Willamette Mission

Texas
Adobe Walls
Horsehead Crossing

Utah
Fort Utah

Washington
Cowlitz Mission
Old Fort Walla Walla
St. Francis Mission
St. Joseph's Mission

Wyoming
Church Buttes
Fort Bernard
Fort Platte
Green River Ferry
Ice Springs
Pacific Springs
Tar and Oil Springs