

Travel Guides and Descriptions of Traveling the Oregon Trail

Traveling the Oregon Trail as a Child

Excerpt from Lord, Elizabeth. *Reminiscences of Eastern Oregon*. Portland, OR; The Irwin-Hudson Co., 1903. Newberry Library call number: Graff 2534.

Not long after leaving Bear river we crossed the divide between that and the Snake river. In crossing we could see the high points of the Rocky Mountains and noticed the streams running west. We then felt we had some assurance that there was something beyond for us. It had looked for a long time as if we were blindly going away from everything with a grave uncertainty of anything to be gained, but the very streams, cool and clear, hurrying towards the Pacific, encouraged and helped us.

We found the road crossed by innumerable streams in some sections, and then again long stretches without water, and many times for days the grass was very poor. Sometimes we would drive several miles off the road and rest for a day to let the cattle graze. I think this has been mentioned before, but it became more necessary as the cattle became worn down and the feed scarcer.

About the middle of August we came to Fort Hall. This was an old Hudson Bay post, built of adobe on Pont Neuf River.

SNAKE INDIANS

On Snake river, we saw a great many Indians. The only thing we could get from them was fish. The regular Shoshones were quite fine looking, the Snakes less so, and the Diggers repulsive creatures, squatty, dark and greasy.

I have not said much about the dust, when in reality we suffered terribly from it. We traveled for days at a time through those alkali districts, where the soil was cut up into the finest dust from to or three to five or six inches deep, where it rose in clouds. Our hands and faces were rough and sore, and everybody was burned as black as a white person can get.

The latter part of the journey, we children had to go bare-footed (but that suited us), as our shoes of calf skin hardened, burned and shrunk until we could not get them on our feet, which chapped and crusted. This was fortunate for us, as we had to walk and drive the loose cattle that were not able to work in the team, so if our feet had been tender and soft it would have been impossible. As it was, our feet bore the travel better than the hoofs of the cattle. We had an occasional stone bruise and limped along for a day or two, or stepped on a prickly pear and got its needles in our feet.