

The Difficult Journey

The wagon train departed bright and early this morning. I was disappointed that I had to tell my friends goodbye, but I had chosen to remain here in Denver. By that point, we had already been traveling for several long months. I was sorry to leave St. Louis, but I heard there was gold in California. It was June when we had first left St. Louis and it was October when we got to Denver. I had made the difficult decision that I would not be continuing onward with the rest of the families on the wagon train.

When we left St. Louis, we were extremely excited, because we were planning on traveling all the way to the ocean. We would journey to California. But that was not to be for my family.

Almost immediately, we stumbled upon the first major problem of our trip. Our very first day on the road, a wheel flew right off of our wagon. The wheel was badly cracked, which meant we were unable to repair the damage ourselves. Since we were not terribly far from St. Louis at that point, John rode all the way back there on his horse. He returned to the wagon train with a brand new wheel; however, that took nearly an entire day while the other families waited.

After that, we struggled with yet another problem. There was an awful rainstorm, and with it came so much mud that the oxen pulling our wagons were unable to get the wagons moving again. We had to wait for the rain to stop completely and for the mud to dry before we could continue onward. Because of this, we lost an additional two days.

We were unbelievably exhausted and it had been a mere two weeks, but we kept on traveling. Unfortunately, we then had to stop once more because the Brown family fell ill. We waited a few days for them to recover, but they eventually gave up and turned back.

Every single day, we faced very difficult work, but we still persevered. Nevertheless, by the time we arrived in Denver it was just too much to handle. We had decided then that we were going to leave the wagon train. That night, we informed the wagon master of our plans.

The wagon master asked us to change our minds, and told us, "We've overcome the worst, now." However, I knew our trip would certainly not be getting any easier. The mountains we had just crossed were only the beginning. It had already been such hard work to get where we were now, and I knew it would be even more difficult to reach the ocean in California. That is when we decided the best option was to remain here in Denver.

Today, I have gone off to hunt for a new job. There are several jobs in the mines, and I hope to fill one of the positions. Then, we will be able to get our own home. I am extremely thankful that living in a tent beside the covered wagon is over. Instead, we will have a permanent place where we can live.

Although I will greatly miss my friends, I will not miss all the troubles and hardships we endured. I wrote a letter to a friend I made on the trip. I wanted him to know we are doing well although I miss him.

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

These are questions you can ask and answer about any story. Write your answers on another page.

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story? Why?