



The Great Medicine Road, Part 1: Narratives of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, 1840–1848 (The American Trails Series)

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Between 1841 and 1866, more than 500,000 people followed trails to Oregon, California, and the Salt Lake Valley in one of the greatest mass migrations in American history. This collection of travelers' accounts of their journeys in the 1840s, the first volume in a new series of trail narratives, comprises excerpts from pioneer and missionary letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs—many previously unpublished—accompanied by biographical information and historical background.

Beginning with Father Pierre-Jean de Smet's letters relating his encounters with Plains Indians, and ending with an account of a Mormon gold miner's journey from California to Salt Lake City, these narratives tell varied and vivid stories. Some travelers fled hard times: religious persecution, the collapse of the agricultural economy, illness, or unpredictable weather. Others looked ahead, attracted by California gold, the verdant Willamette Valley of Oregon, or the prospect of converting Native people to Christianity. Although many welcomed the adventure and adjusted to the rigors of trail life, others complained in their accounts of difficulty adapting.

Remembrances of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails have yielded some of the most iconic images in American history. This and forthcoming volumes in *The Great Medicine Road* series present the pioneer spirit of the original overlanders supported by the rich scholarship of the past century and a half.

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