

The "forty-niners" went by boat, crossing Panama by foot, and by the Santa Fe trail through the southwest desert lands, all risking hunger and death; but the great bulk of the gold rush was by the Oregon trail in covered wagons, the longest trail in history. They depended for guidance entirely upon the letters of those who had gone before and arrived, or upon the reports by word of those who had come back.

In April, 1849, 20,000 persons were camped along the Missouri river. With the earliest signs of spring, wagons began moving toward Independence, Missouri, the jumping-off place from the boats. The rush over the plains, with sometimes whole families, began in May. The first "forty-niners" made little preparation for the trip across the mountains to the Pacific coast, as all fared well until they passed beyond the Platte valley in Nebraska. Soon stories began to come from over the Rocky mountains of starvation, of plagues, especially cholera, of broken wagons and other disasters. Letters from those arriving in California, or by word of mouth reports from those returning, told of harrowing experiences.

The 110 day journey from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean demanded careful planning with food supplies of first importance. Contrasting the time required for this journey one hundred years ago, a citizen of Maryville, Missouri, traveled by auto recently from South Gate, California, a distance of about 2,000 miles, in forty hours, his wife taking her turn at the wheel.—Lillian Keegan Farrar, in the *Axtell Standard*, Kansas, July 8, 1948.

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Dr. Howard K. Beale of the department of History of the University of North Carolina has resigned, effective September 1, 1948, and is coming west to occupy a position as professor of history at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Beale has made several visits to Iowa in research work at the State University of Iowa and at the State Department of History and Archives at Des Moines.

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