

Oregon Trail attracted many pioneers

(Ed. note - This is the third in a series of eight essays on the topic, "Trails West," by student winners in the Colonel Frederick Hambright Chapter DAR essay contest. Kristen Ammay is a fifth grader at Grover School.)

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On May 22, 1843 the pioneers of Platte City set off for Oregon.

The Oregon Trail runs from Missouri to Oregon.

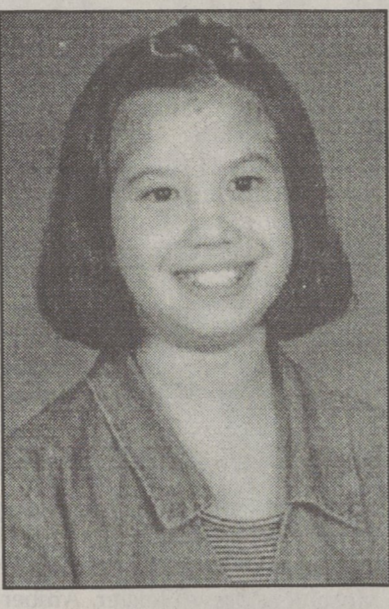
The trail was approximately 2,000 miles and runs through Kansas, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington. The Oregon Trail attracted many pioneers.

The pioneers probably went west in search of religious freedom and possibly more land. Early pioneers had spread the news of Oregon's mild weather in which farmers could farm year round its abundant supply of fish and games, its rich soil and pure water and its plentiful timber.

James Newsmith, a bachelor at the age of 22, was one of the pioneers who traveled west. He had little to pack since he was a bachelor, so he rode by horseback. He had his bedroll behind his saddle and his rifle in his scabbard. His saddlebag would hold his extra clothes and his books that he read continually to make his education better.

He had his friends carry his provisions in their wagon. It was important to travel together because no one knew when unexpected dangers would come.

Many wagons were lost or damaged when they turned over because of a steep hill, got stuck in the mud or when the settlers were trying to ford their wagons across a river when the water was too deep. Forging was best when the water was two feet deep or less. When they could not ford their wagon, they had to caulk it to float across the river. If they tried to caulk it when the water was two feet deep or shallower their



wagon would become stuck in the mud. Then they would have to double their oxen so the oxen would be strong enough to pull the wagon out of the mud. It was best to float your wagon when the water was three feet or deeper.

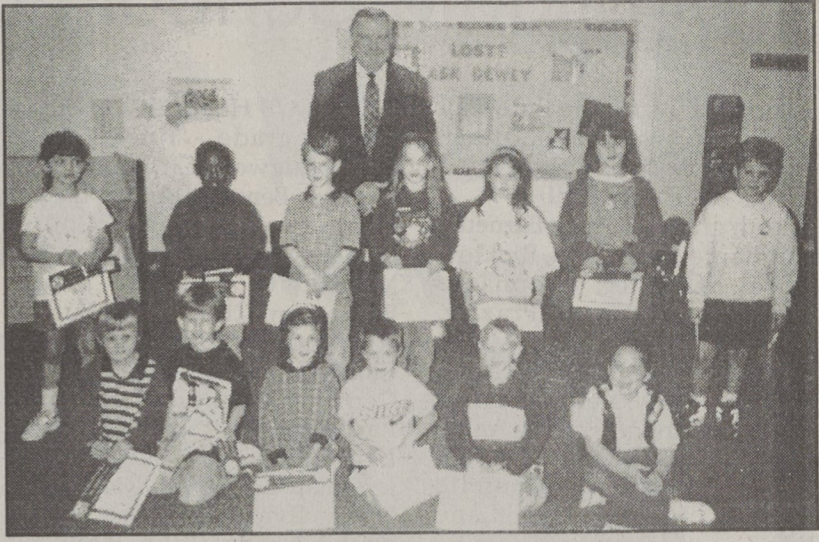
They needed a lot of food for the journey or else they would

starve. They would try to hunt food but they would soon run out of bullets. They also needed a good supply of water. Not only would they get thirsty if water became scarce but their oxen would get thirsty too.

The pioneers had to have very strong wagons because of storms. Some storms blew the canvas covers off the wagons. The pioneers had to take time out of their trip to repair the wagons. Wheels had to be bolted on instead of nailed.

On July 4, the pioneers celebrated. Even though they were on a long journey they still celebrated the 4th of July. It could be a celebration with lots of music. Many people were able to play music whether it was a banjo or flute.

On October 29, 1843, James Newsmith reached his destiny, Oregon City. After about six or seven months of traveling, he reached his destiny. He was still a bachelor but he got himself a job. He also settled in a cozy house in Oregon.



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Powers, Mike. "The 21st Century Entrepreneur: How to Start a Mail Order Business." (Avon Books, 1996).

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Ireland, Susan. "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Crafting the Perfect Resume" (Alpha Books, 1996).

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Yate, Martin. "Knock 'Em Dead, 1997" (Adams Media Corporation, 1997).

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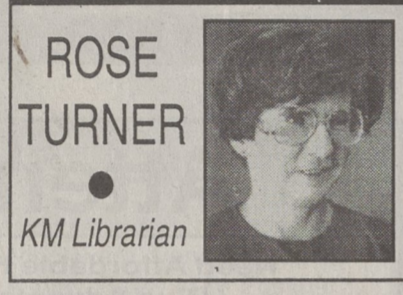
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Wagner, Ronald L. "McGraw Hill World Wide Web Training Manual" (McGraw Hill, 1996).

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