

# JOURNEY Stories



*Indians Traveling*, watercolor by Seth Eastman, The W. Duncan MacMillan Foundation.

## UTAH'S JOURNEY STORIES

AN ESSAY BY GREGORY E. SMOAK



**Immigration and travel – over roads, rails, rivers, trails, and skyways – shaped American society.**

*Journey Stories* explores how migration and transportation built our nation, how it has changed us, and how our mobile world looked to travelers along the way. Our history is filled with stories of people leaving behind everything – families and possessions – to reach a new life in another state, across the continent, or even across an ocean. The reasons behind those decisions are myriad. Many chose to move, searching for something better in a new land. Others had no choice or, like Native Americans already here, were pushed aside by newcomers. American mobility has shaped our economy, our landscape, and our culture. From Native Americans to new American citizens and regardless of our background, everyone has a journey story to tell... **what's yours?**

***Journey Stories* has been made possible in Utah by the Utah Humanities Council.**

The exhibition is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.



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Presented in partnership with the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, and local exhibition hosts: Museum of Moab, Uintah County Western Heritage Museum, Utah Cultural Celebration Center, Granary Art Center & Snow College Library, and Brigham City Museum of Art & History.

Thanks for generous support from the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation, Richard K. and Shirley S. Hemingway Foundation, Zions Bank, Rocky Mountain Power Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, State of Utah, Utah Division of Arts & Museums, Utah Office of Tourism, Utah Division of State History, and Salt Lake County Zoo Arts & Parks. Media support is provided by KCPW, Utah Public Radio, KUER, and KBYU.



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GREGORY E. SMOAK

The Smithsonian Institution's touring exhibition *Journey Stories* explores the ways that immigration and travel have shaped American identity and life. It is premised on the notion that we are a "most mobile nation." This is perhaps nowhere truer than in Utah, where the state's dominant origin story is a "Journey Story." The overland trek of the Mormon pioneers celebrated every July 24<sup>th</sup> with parades and fireworks may be the most familiar, but there are many other *Journey Stories* in Utah's past. Some are unique to Utah, while others reflect national and even global trends. There is no way to tell all of Utah's *Journey Stories* here, so to get at their richness and diversity let us consider three broad questions: How did people make their journeys? What routes did they follow? And finally, by thinking about who the travelers were we can get at the question of why they made their journeys.

## THE TECHNOLOGY OF TRAVEL

How one travels is always to some extent a story of technology. In the seventeenth century, for example, horses were a new technology that revolutionized travel in Utah. It might seem odd to think of a living creature as technology, but consider what was necessary to care for and effectively utilize horses as well as how the animals transformed Native life. Horses first evolved in North America but were extinct on their native continent by the end of the Pleistocene. They were first domesticated on the steppes of western Asia perhaps four thousand years ago and in time many peoples adapted horses into their lifeways. When the Spanish brought horses back to the Americas at the beginning of the sixteenth century they also brought with them an elaborate equestrian culture that became the basis for much of Native American horse culture as well as modern "Western" style riding. Native peoples first acquired horses in small numbers from Indians who had lived among the Spanish and learned how to breed



Ute Indians, Uinta Valley, Utah, c. 1873, photo by J.K. Hillers of Powell Expedition, Smithsonian Office of Anthropology. Utah State Historical Society.

and care for them. The Pueblo revolt of 1680 drove the Spanish from New Mexico for a dozen years and turned the trickle of horses out of the settlements into a flood. The Utes (the *Nuche*, or "the people" in their



*Crossing the Plains – Journeying Zionward.* Utah State Historical Society.

own language) were living northwest of the Pueblos and became the principal conduit for the horse trade west of the Rockies.

The mobility afforded by horses changed Ute life forever. The possession of larger herds was a principal reason for the social and political distinction between Utes and Paiutes, who before Euro-American contact were culturally similar people. Some Ute bands ventured onto the Great Plains to hunt bison and developed a material culture that reflected that experience. Greater mobility also allowed Utes to build a lucrative economy based on raiding and trading. Horses, mules, and human captives all flowed from California and the Great Basin into the settlements of New Mexico. By the 1840s the Timpanogos Ute leader Walkara was the most renowned of the horse raiders and traders. At times he and his band made off with California horses numbering in the thousands.

The overland emigrants that began streaming to and through Utah that same decade relied on another technology – wagons. The heavy Conestoga wagons of myth and movies were actually rare on the overland trails. Instead, most emigrants used simple “straight wagons” that could be found on any farm. They were lightweight and could be adapted with covers and waterproofed for trail use without overburdening their teams. Most wagons were nine to twelve feet in length and about four feet wide with two-foot sideboards. Into that cramped space the emigrants had to pack everything for the journey as well as the necessities to sustain themselves during their first season at the end of the trail. Oxen were the best “engines” for overland travel. Horses made relatively poor long distance draft animals. Mules were better but expensive. While oxen were slower, they were also calmer, stronger, cheaper, and more dependable.

Like pioneer wagons, the railroads that linked the Nation in the post-Civil War years also became icons in the American public imagination. Building the transcontinental railroad was indeed an impressive technological achievement. Still, it depended first and foremost on human and animal muscle power. After initial surveys and mapping, railroad engineers set to work designing the best route. Straight lines and mild grades made construction easy; mountains and canyons, with their requisite tunnels and bridges, slowed progress considerably. After work crews graded the bed, they set the ballast, ties, and steel rails in place by hand. As the Union and Central Pacific Railroads built into Utah they were in a desperate race to lay as many miles of track as possible before connecting to their rival. When Union Pacific (UP) crews put down eight miles of rails in a single day, Central Pacific (CP) workers (80% of whom were Chinese) responded with an even more astounding ten miles on April 28, 1869. Less than two weeks later, on May 10, the lines were officially linked at Utah’s Promontory Summit with the driving of the Golden Spike.

The famous photograph of that event illustrates a fundamental transformation in environmental and technological history of the United States. In the image, the Central Pacific’s locomotive Jupiter sits nose to nose with the Union Pacific’s No. 119. By today’s standards the engines were small and primitive. At the time they represented a century and a half of development in steam technology. In most regards they were similar machines, yet there is a notable difference. The Jupiter’s smokestack is flared and bulbous while the 119’s is narrow and straight. The reason was not aesthetic but related to the fuel each engine burned. Coming from the west the CP relied upon wood cut from the Sierra Nevada and the ranges of the Great Basin. As a result, the Jupiter’s stack contained spark arrestors to prevent



*Joining of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah, 10 May 1869.* Utah State Historical Society.



Second Powell Expedition putting in on the Green River, 1871, photo by E.O. Beaman. Utah State Historical Society.

flyaway embers from causing wild fires. The No. 119 on the other hand had a heavier firebox and burned coal that produced far fewer sparks. The UP turned to coal both out of necessity (the meager supply of wood on the Great Plains) and opportunity (the opening of coal mines along its route). Thus the No.119 embodied the transition from a reliance on organic energy sources such as wood to our modern dependence on fossil fuels.

Not all of Utah's nineteenth century travelers went overland. Two weeks after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a one-armed Civil War veteran and self-taught scientist from Illinois, along with a crew of nine, launched four small boats onto the Green River. Major John Wesley Powell had the boats specially made in Chicago and shipped west via the new Union Pacific. Three were of oak, but Powell's own craft, named for his wife Emma Dean, was made of pine to reduce its weight and measured only sixteen feet in length. All had watertight compartments fore and aft to carry the expedition's food and equipment. Heading into uncharted canyons in these tiny craft was by any estimation a bold endeavor. After wrecking one of the boats and losing one-third of the expedition's supplies early in the trip the crew lined them through larger rapids. During the three-month voyage the expedition was the first to float and to name the canyons of the Green and Colorado Rivers – Lodore, Split Mountain, Desolation, Gray, Labyrinth, Stillwater, Cataract, and the Grand Canyon. Powell led a second expedition down the river in 1871 and went on to a long and sometimes turbulent career as a federal scientist. It was

his 1869 voyage, however, that still captures the popular imagination. Each summer Utah river guides regale their passengers with tales of Powell's epic adventure. Of course, today's river runners enjoy the benefits of modern technology, following Powell's course in boats made of rubber, plastic, and aluminum.

More than any other transportation technology, automobiles helped to shape American society in the twentieth century. The first cars appeared in Utah around 1900 and within a few years Salt Lake City required owners to display an identification number on their vehicles. State legislation requiring vehicle registration came in May 1909. On February 24, 1910, the *Deseret News* published a complete listing of the 834 automobiles registered in the state (most in Wasatch Front cities and towns) and predicted there would be over 1,500 by the end of that summer. In time, vehicle ownership expanded to rural Utah where trucks began to replace wagons in agriculture. Moreover, as early as the 1910s southern Utah communities began to see the rise of automobile tourism that would, in some cases, grow to be their lifeblood. Utah also mirrored other National and Western trends. Post World War II suburban sprawl made car ownership indispensable for many. Today, around one million private automobiles are registered in Utah with total vehicle registrations exceeding two million. As the distance between home and workplace increased, especially in Western cities, the time Americans spent in their cars also grew. Commuting may lack the romance of the overland trail or a river voyage, but it is the most common journey that today's Utahns experience.

## FINDING A WAY THROUGH



The bridge crossing the Colorado River at Moab follows the same route as the historic Spanish Trail. Utah State Historical Society.

Utah's ruggedly beautiful landscape draws millions of tourists to the state each year, but it has also posed major obstacles to travel. In the distant past Native peoples pioneered the most forgiving paths through the jumbled landforms and arid deserts. As a consequence, these Native trails largely defined the journeys made by later travelers. When fur trappers like Jedediah Strong Smith, and government explorers such as John C. Frémont, "blazed" trails they were in reality following paths that had been trod by Native feet for centuries. Indeed, it was often Native peoples themselves who showed intrepid explorers and pioneers the way. While the journey stories of Utah's earliest peoples are not recorded in history, those people must be acknowledged as Utah's true "pathfinders."

The "Old Spanish Trail" illustrates the difficulties posed by Utah's landscape and the literal lengths that some would go to overcome them. In reality, the route was neither old nor Spanish. Parts of the track did date back to the Spanish era; in 1765 Juan Rivera pushed an expedition north from Santa Fe to the Dolores River, while Fathers Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante traversed portions of the later trail on their outbound journey in 1776. The entire route, however, was not linked until the region was part of a newly independent Mexico. By that time California was thriving and New Mexicans looked to

it as a source of horses and mules and as a market for their own woolen goods. Unforgiving terrain and chronic conflicts with Native peoples discouraged travel directly west from Santa Fe and so the resulting trail was long and circuitous. Antonio Armijo led a trading party to California and back in 1829-1830 following a route north of the Grand Canyon. The following year American "Taos Trappers" including William Wolfskill and George Yount completed the first full transit of the "Old Spanish Trail." The general route (there were many variations) followed the Dominguez-Escalante trail to the Dolores River, cut west and north crossing the Colorado River near modern Moab and the Green River where the town of the same name now stands. The trail then arced north of the San Rafael Swell and southwest via Castle Valley and the Sevier and Virgin Rivers to the Colorado before turning westward across the Mojave Desert and its ultimate destination, Los Angeles. For the next two decades traders led caravans of horses and mules (no wagons ever made the rugged trek) on annual journeys between the two Mexican cities.

While the Spanish Trail was in its heyday during the 1830s and 1840s the emigration along the Oregon and California Trail system began to build. The primary trail crossed the continental divide at South Pass in Wyoming but then veered north of modern day Utah to reach the Snake River plain where it split. Deep wagon ruts still visible today attest to decades of use. Such heavy traffic degraded resources, most importantly forage for the livestock that powered the emigration. The search for fresh pastures as well as easier and faster routes stimulated the development of a plethora of trail variations, known as "cutoffs."

In Utah history none was more important, or more infamous, than the Hastings Cutoff. Using John C. Frémont's overly optimistic descriptions of a new route to California via the Great Salt Lake, Lansford Hastings published *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California* in 1845. In it he promoted a trail he had never seen. One year later Hastings went to Fort Bridger to guide emigrant parties along this unproven route. Three groups departed with him in late July. The

wagon descent down the Weber River Canyon proved so difficult, however, that Hastings posted a message at the mouth of Echo Canyon warning later travelers to abandon that trail and turn southwest across the Wasatch Range. The Donner-Reed party left Fort Bridger last and took Hastings ill-conceived advice. Instead of finding an easier route they embarked on a brutal two-week trek, hacking their way through the mountains. Once clear of the Wasatch they still faced the salt flats, more delays, internal dissention, and the most famous ordeal in the annals of the overland emigration.

Despite its disastrous origins, the Hastings Cutoff became one of the most heavily used stretches of the Overland Trail due to the most important emigrant group in Utah history, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) – the Mormons. Brigham Young led the first wave of the emigration from Iowa in April 1847. They arrived at Fort Bridger in early July, less than one year after the Donner-Reed party, and followed the crude trail blazed by that ill-fated group to the Salt Lake Valley. From the Weber River, over Big and Little Mountains and down Emigration Canyon the nearly 150 men of the expedition felled trees, cleared brush, and moved rocks. Over the next two decades some 70,000 Mormon faithful would traverse this ever-improving trail. Journeys along the Mormon Trail, as well as the rest of the Oregon-California Trail system, declined precipitously after 1869 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

While the routes of the overland trails varied considerably, railroad lines were far more permanent. Because topography largely determined where a railroad could go and because earlier trails and wagon roads generally followed the paths of least resistance, in many places railroads represented a new layer of technology on top of well-established routes. With some notable exceptions, therefore, the first transcontinental line generally paralleled the Oregon-California Trail. Like California bound emigrants, the Central Pacific hugged the Humboldt River as it crossed Nevada. Entering Utah, however, the CP arced north of Great Salt Lake rather than south to avoid the salt flats. A trestle across the lake was considered but exceeded the engineering capabilities of the day. To the east the Union Pacific diverged from the Oregon Trail to follow the South Platte and then drove due west across Wyoming. The UP then followed Hasting's original line into Utah via Echo and Weber Canyons. The steep decent required extensive tunneling and grading, and in order to speed construction the railroad engaged Mormon workers to do much of this work before the track laying crews



Buffalo skull used by Brigham Young as a marker along the Mormon Trail, drawing by J.T. Harwood. Utah State Historical Society.

approached. Once out of the mountains the line wrapped around the north end of the lake to its final meeting with the Central Pacific.

Many other railroads shaped Utah's *Journey Stories*. Less than a year after the Golden Spike, the Utah Central Railroad connected Salt Lake City and the transcontinental line at Ogden. It was the first of the so-called "Mormon Roads" built to serve the Utah settlements and connect them to larger economic networks. Southern and western lines followed. A little over a decade later the Denver and Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) linked the Wasatch Front with southeastern Utah and Colorado. The D&RGW later offered passenger service across the Rockies from Denver to Salt Lake City, a trip that travelers can still experience on Amtrak's modern iteration of the line. This popular passenger line notwithstanding, the D&RGW's real impact in Utah was in the development of mining. The company built numerous spur line spurs to access coal deposits such as those at Seigo in the Book Cliffs, and for decades held a virtual monopoly on the transportation of coal out of Utah. Dozens of other spurs served coal and hard rock mining districts. The Uintah Railway was one of the independent lines. Built shortly after the turn of the twentieth century its sole purpose was to move gilsonite (a form of asphalt) from mines near Dragon, Utah, to the D&RGW line. Perhaps the most unique of all the small lines was Salt Lake, Garfield and Western that transported bathers from Salt Lake City to Saltair Resort on the south shore of the Lake beginning in the early 1890s.

Ultimately, rails were more than a means for travelers or goods to get from one point to another; they were also the arteries that kept small communities alive. Often they were the reason that towns existed in the first place and without them many towns withered and died. When the

Central Pacific and Union Pacific struck a deal to move the shared terminus of the lines to Ogden in 1870, the short lived boom town of Promontory began fading into memory. Like Promontory, Kelton, Utah, a tiny community in Box Elder County on the northwest shore of Great Salt Lake, sprang into existence in 1869 as one of many water and refueling stops along the transcontinental line. Kelton's population was never large, but the town endured even after the Southern Pacific built the Lucin Cutoff, a redwood trestle and earthen causeway across the lake in 1904. The town could not survive, however, the decision to remove the tracks entirely in 1942. Today a remote and decaying cemetery is the most visible reminder of Kelton. Dragon suffered a similar fate in 1939 when the Uintah Railway ceased operations.

In the early twentieth century states and local communities vied to capture new automobile routes as fervently as they had railroad lines just a few years earlier. Utah's experience with the Lincoln Highway provides a telling example. Dedicated in 1913, before federal and state numbering systems, and stretching from New York to San Francisco, it was the first transcontinental "highway" in American history. The original route entailed no new construction, but rather was a designation attached by a private organization, the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA), to a collection of existing gravel roadways that were anything but modern. Mud and cavernous potholes greeted intrepid travelers along much of the way. In 1919 the United States Army sent a convoy across the continent to test the route's feasibility. Along for the ride was Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who thirty-seven years later as President of the United States remembered that taxing journey when he signed the *Interstate Highway Act* into law. While the first paved section of the highway opened in 1914, it was not until after World War I that the LHA

pursued a general paving program by encouraging the construction of "seedling miles" of concrete roadway. Gravel sections of the route remained as late as 1938.

In Utah the original Lincoln Highway essentially followed the path of modern Interstates 80 and 84 from Wyoming to the Wasatch front. It then headed south to Salt Lake City, west to Skull Valley, and then south to Dugway where it intersected and then followed the course of the old Pony Express Trail into Nevada. Utah officials did not care for the route. They preferred the Arrowhead Trail, a north-south roadway that kept travelers, and their dollars, in Utah longer as they made their way from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles following the general course of today's I-15. When the Goodyear Tire Company partially funded a new route for the Lincoln Highway in 1919 that would take it through Tooele Valley and then due west from Dugway, Utah officials balked. The state government threw its support behind the competing "Victory Highway" that ran from Skull Valley across the salt flats to Wendover. This northerly route appealed to travelers headed to San Francisco, but effectively forced those bound for southern California to take the Arrowhead Trail. With the Federal Highway Act of 1921 the State of Utah designated the Wendover route as the only federal highway west of Salt Lake City, bringing it funding and dooming the "Goodyear Cutoff." The Lincoln Highway Association had no choice but to give in and adopt the stretch as its own.

The interstate highway system begun during the Eisenhower administration revolutionized travel for Americans. Divided, limited-access highways shortened travel times and made long distance journeys easier. Some interstates replicate well-established patterns of movement. In Utah, Interstates 80 and 15 generally follow historical routes – overland trails and the original transcontinental railroad line. Interstate 70 is another story entirely. It reflected the growing ability to put roads in previously impossible places. While I-70 parallels sections of the Spanish Trail it cannot be said to follow that route. And unlike the State's two other interstate highways it was not built on top of preexisting roads. Its course due west from Green River through the San Rafael Swell was only conceivable with modern equipment and the liberal use of explosives. Digging and blasting had long been part of railroad and highway construction, but rarely before on this scale. It took decades to complete all four lanes of the highway though the swell and this 110-mile stretch (Green River to Salina) remains the longest portion of any interstate highway without traveler services.



Setting guide post along the Parleys Canyon section of the Lincoln Highway, 10 July 1918, photo by Harry Shipler. Utah State Historical Society.



## PEOPLES IN MOTION



Japanese Americans arrive at Tanforan Race Track in California before relocation to internment camps like the one at Topaz, near Delta, Utah, 1942. Utah State Historical Society.

Americans understandably link travel with freedom. They celebrate the ability to go where they please when they please. But as *Journey Stories* reminds us, the reality of mobility in American life has been far more complex. While some Americans enjoyed complete autonomy in their movements, others faced circumstances that impelled their journeys. Still others had no choice at all. The experiences of Africans wrenched from their homes and transported across the Atlantic into slavery or of American Indian Nations removed from their homelands illustrate that un-free migrations have been an all too common part of our National story. By looking at who traveled and exploring their various motivations, we can better understand the human sorrows and joys of Utah's *Journey Stories*.

In the mid-nineteenth century federal Indian policy shifted from Indian Removal toward the reservation system. Still, the result for many Native groups was effectively the same; they were forcibly removed from familiar and productive homes to start new lives on remote and often marginal lands. The Timpanogos Utes had lived for centuries in Utah Valley relying upon the fisheries at the mouth of the Provo River. They viewed the initial Mormon settlements to the north as a trading opportunity, but as their new neighbors expanded relations began to sour. Mormon settlers moved into Utah Valley in 1849 and over the next decade and a half three increasing violent conflicts followed. As Mormon settlements grew, the Ute population of Utah Valley and Central Utah spiraled downward. When an 1861

survey party reported that the Uinta Basin was “one vast contiguity of waste, and measurably valueless, except for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together,” Brigham Young scrapped plans to send Mormon settlers into the area and instead viewed it as the logical location for a Ute reservation. Shortly thereafter Abraham Lincoln created the Uintah Reservation by executive order. Utes had always hunted and traversed the basin but its resources were meager compared to the Utah or Sanpete valleys that sustained the Timpanogos and other Ute bands of central Utah. It was not until the longest and bloodiest of Utah’s Indian conflicts, the Black Hawk War, erupted in April of 1865 that time ran out. In June 1865 the Ute bands accepted the provisions of the Treaty of Spanish Fork and began their journey to the basin. A decade and a half later their kinspeople, the White River and Uncompaghere Utes, joined them on what became the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, after being forced from their homes in Colorado.



Iosepa residents picking up goods at a train station, 16 miles north of the settlement, c. 1910. Utah State Historical Society.

Tragically, stories of forced journeys are not limited to Utah’s distant past. Two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued *Executive Order 9066* mandating the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry, regardless of their citizenship, from the Pacific coast. Ultimately 117,000 Japanese Americans, two thirds of them native-born citizens, faced removal to ten hastily constructed concentration camps, deemed “relocation centers,” scattered across the interior West. Topaz Relocation Center was built fifteen miles west of Delta, Utah, and opened in September 1942. For the next three years

it was home for up to 8,000 internees. The first arrivals found an unfinished camp. Yoshiko Uchida remembered that her family shivered without heat during their first month at Topaz. And initially their movements were closely watched. After armed guards shot a man to death at Topaz for standing near the fence in April 1943 restrictions were eased. Some were permitted to leave for jobs or schools outside the Pacific Coast (Uchida went off to graduate school in Massachusetts). Over one hundred young men from Topaz volunteered to serve in the American military, a pattern common to all the camps. Most internees went about life the best they could; the children attended school while adults worked around the camp. Topaz closed with the end of the war and most of its residents returned home to rebuild their lives, while a few remained in Utah to start a new life here.

Most of the people who have traveled to or through Utah made their journeys by choice. Overland emigrants to Oregon and California, Mormon pioneers, industrial immigrants seeking work in the mines, factories, and fields, and even modern vacationers exploring the National Parks, made their journeys in search of a better life for their families and themselves. In Utah, and in the United States more broadly, religious and economic motivations underlay most of these journey stories.

The LDS migration that began in 1847 and continues even today has, more than any other journey story, shaped Utah’s history and culture. The belief that there was no future for the church in the East motivated the exodus. But unlike the Timpanogos Utes and the interned Japanese Americans, church leaders could, and did, choose their ultimate destination. Once established in Utah, the church founded the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company (PEF) first to sustain the emigration from Nauvoo, Illinois, and then to assist the thousands of new converts seeking to join the “gathering in Zion.” Most early converts were of northern European stock and their descendants still dominant in Utah’s ethnic composition. By 1856 the stream of emigrants from Europe had nearly exhausted the fund and the church adopted a new strategy: have the mostly poor emigrants walk to Utah pulling their belongings in handcars. All told, about 3,000 men, women, and children trekked west in ten handcart companies. During the first year of the experiment the final two companies to depart became trapped by early blizzards in Wyoming. Over two hundred people, one fifth of the travelers, perished in the disasters. The handcart

program ended after 1860 but the immigration of Mormon converts to Utah continued.

Perhaps the longest and most unlikely of these journeys was that of over two hundred Hawaiians from their tropical homes to the arid desert south of Great Salt Lake. Missionary efforts in Hawaii and other Polynesian islands had led by the late 1880s to a small community of island converts in Salt Lake City. Facing prejudice in the capital, the Hawaiians and white church leaders looked for a new “gathering” place. In August of 1889, forty-six Hawaiians settled on ranch lands at the north end of Skull Valley. They named their new colony Iosepa (Hawaiian for Joseph). For nearly three decades the community grew slowly with new arrivals from Hawaii along with a handful of other Pacific Islanders. In the harsh environment of Skull Valley, Iosepa never became self-sustaining. When the Mormon Church began building a temple in Hawaii the residents decided to return to the islands and by 1917 Iosepa was a ghost town. The islanders’ desert sojourn is now remembered every Memorial Day by Utah’s Polynesian community, which maintains the cemetery and a community center at the site.

More often than religious faith, the desire for better economic circumstances has motivated Americans to move. The cheap and productive agricultural lands of Oregon and California were the prime attraction for pre-Gold Rush emigrants such as the Donner-Reed party. They traveled generally as family units. They were most likely to hail from the Midwest or the upper south and



Bennet, Leah, and Gabriel Mangone in Castle Gate, Utah, c. 1920. Utah State Historical Society.



Greek immigrants Joseph Saretakis and John Psarodakis at the Castle Gate Mine, 1924. They lost their lives soon after this photo was taken in an explosion that killed 172 workers and left 417 dependents. Utah State Historical Society.

had already moved at least once in their lifetimes. The “forty-niners” who flocked west after the discovery of gold were even more clearly seeking pecuniary gain. Single men and men traveling without their families dominated this group. They moved faster and lighter in small groups. The majority of gold seekers, like the agricultural emigrants, stuck to the main trail that kept them north of Utah, but about a third chose to follow the Mormon Trail into Utah seeking supplies or fresh stock.

The industrial immigration that began in the 1870s and peaked in the first two decades of the twentieth century came mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe. It transformed the Nation’s ethnic make-up and brought lasting change to Utah. Most of the newcomers did not intend to stay, but rather to work hard, save their money, and make a return trip to a better life at home. Yet the majority ended up staying. By 1900 immigrants and their American-born children were the majority in America’s largest cities. In Utah and the West, railroads literally carried diversity with them. Ogden’s African American community began with porters employed by the Union Pacific. Jobs in coal and hard rock mining were the greatest draw for the new immigrants. First to arrive were the Welsh and Cornish, who came from a long mining tradition. Finns and other Scandinavians were also early arrivals. By the late 1880s the ethnic diversity of the mines increased as Chinese, Italians, Greeks, Slavs, and Japanese workers moved in. The presence of immigrants contributed to the ethnic diversity of Utah, particularly in Carbon and Salt Lake Counties. The Salt Lake Valley’s Eastern Orthodox churches and popular



Waiters and porters on the Union Pacific Railroad. Utah State Historical Society.

Greek Festival are just some of living legacies of the industrial immigration to Utah.

While what is now Utah was once part of the Spanish empire and then Mexico, the journey of Latino immigrants to the state is a relatively recent story. In the nineteenth century a small Latino population with deep roots in New Mexico and southern Colorado settled around Monticello in San Juan County. It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century, however, that, pushed by the chaos of the Mexican Revolution and pulled by the promise of jobs in agriculture and mining, a substantial Latino population developed in Utah. Mexican and Mexican-American laborers first came to the mines as strikebreakers in 1912. America's entry into World War I created labor shortages and more opportunities. By 1920 Latinos made up a growing segment of the mining workforce while many others worked in the growing sugar beet industry. Immigration from Mexico remained strong during the 1920s but the onset of the Great Depression led to deportations and a radical reduction of Utah's Latino population. Latino immigration to Utah began again in earnest with World

War II and has remained strong ever since. In addition to Mexicans and Mexican Americans an increasing number of immigrants now come from Central and South America. Today, Latinos are Utah's single largest minority, constituting over 13% of the state's population.

Utah continues to be a destination for new immigrants. Most of the newcomers are from Latin America and Asia. And while the search for a better life still motivates the majority, one in ten is a refugee. In the 1970s those seeking asylum came from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, while in the early twenty-first century they were more likely to be from the horn of Africa, the Middle East, or the former Yugoslavia. The effects of the LDS Church's missionary efforts also continue to shape Utah's immigrant population and diversity in unique ways. For example, Pacific Islanders may make up only one percent of Utah's population, but that is five times the national average.

The United States is indeed a most mobile nation. Americans cherish their homes, but they also prize the liberty inherent in travel. They are raised with a sense of possibility that is so often linked to the freedom of

movement. These ideals, of course, have not always held true for every American. Like all states, Utah has its own journey stories. The industrial immigration of the late nineteenth century and many others tie Utah to national and global narratives. Others, like the voyage of Hawaiian Islanders to the windswept desert of Skull Valley, could only have happened here.

This essay just scratches the surface of Utah's *Journey Stories*. From American Indian emergence and migration narratives to John C. Frémont's expeditions to the Jewish settlers of Clarion to the Hole-in-the-Rock to military and commercial aviation there are countless other passages in Utah history to explore. Where you go from here is up to you.



Armenian women in Utah. Utah State Historical Society.

**Gregory E. Smoak** is the consulting state scholar for the Utah tour of *Journey Stories*. As Director of the American West Center and Associate Professor of History at the University of Utah, Smoak specializes in American Indian, American Western, Environmental, and Public History.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).

Forrest Cuch, ed., *A History of Utah's American Indians* (Utah Division of Indian Affairs, 1996). Journey stories of each of Utah's six main tribes, most of them written by tribal members. Readable online at [history.utah.gov/publications](http://history.utah.gov/publications).

Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Harvard University Press, 2010).

LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

Michael W. Holmer, ed., *On the Way to Somewhere Else: European Sojourners in the Mormon West* (University of Utah Press, 2010).

Mathew Kester, *Remembering Iosepa: History, Place, and Religion in the American West* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Helen Z. Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah* (Utah State Historical Society, 1976). A classic book with chapters on British, Black, Scandinavian, Jewish, Continental European, Chinese, Canadian, Italian, Japanese, Yugoslav, Middle Eastern, Greek, and Spanish-speaking immigrants. Readable online at [history.utah.gov/publications](http://history.utah.gov/publications).

John Wesley Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons* (Simon & Brown, 2013).

Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (University of Washington Press, 1982).

Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (W.W. Norton, 2010).

## FIND MORE UTAH JOURNEY STORIES ONLINE

To explore some of Utah's amazing journey stories, visit [www.history.utah.gov/publications](http://www.history.utah.gov/publications) where you can search and browse through 86 years of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, as well as dozens of other publications. Here are some fascinating places to start:

["A Bicyclist Challenges the Great Salt Lake Desert,"](#) *History Blazer*. The 100-mile ride of Bill Rishel and Charlie Emise from Terrace (north of the Great Salt Lake) to Grantsville (south of the lake) in 22 hours in the summer of 1896.

["The Book of the Pioneers,"](#) by Linda Thatcher, *Beehive History* 22. Short interesting descriptions of their journeys written by pioneers who came to Utah during 1847.

["The Comings and Goings of 1847,"](#) by Lyndia McDowell Carter, *Beehive History* 22. Journeys the Mormon pioneers made both within the Great Basin and to and from Nebraska during 1847.

["Early Roadside Motels and Motor Courts of St. George,"](#) by Lisa Michele Church, and ["St. George: Early Years of Tourism,"](#) by Lisa Michele Church and Lynne Clark, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 80:1 (Winter 2012). Story and photos about tourist journeys to Utah's Dixie.

["The Elsinore House: A Drummer's Home Away from Home,"](#) by Wilhelmina Gunn, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 34:1 (January 1966). The experiences of a daughter who helped her parents run a hotel for traveling salesmen.

["Families,"](#) *Beehive History* 25. Stories of diverse groups who traveled to Utah: a Jewish back-to-the land colony, Russian Molokans looking for an isolated place to practice their customs, Tongans celebrating a wedding, an Italian widow after the 1924 Castle Dale explosion, Latino families, and Japanese Americans interned at Topaz.

["Father Escalante and the Utah Indians,"](#) *Utah Historical Quarterly* 2:1 (January 1929). Excerpts from the diary of Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante as the Spanish exploring party traveled through Utah in 1776.

["Fiddle & Darbukee,"](#) by Kristen Rogers, *Beehive History* 24. A journey from Lebanon to Utah and from Salt Lake City to the Uinta Basin, and the music the travelers carried with them.

["The German-Speaking Immigrants of Utah,"](#) *Utah Historical Quarterly* 52:4 (Fall 1984). Essays and firsthand accounts.

["A Great Adventure on Great Salt Lake: A True Story,"](#) by Kate Y. Noble, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 33:3 (July 1965). Stories of men who explored the Great Salt Lake and visited Fremont Island, as well as the fascinating story of a family who journeyed to the island in 1862 and lived there for five years.

["The Gypsies Are Coming! The Gypsies Are Coming!"](#) by David A. Hales, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53:4 (Fall 1985). Spicy memories of the travelling gypsies who showed up in small Utah towns around the turn of the 19th century.

["Harry Aleson and the Place No One Knew,"](#) by Gary Topping. *Utah Historical Quarterly* 52:2 (April 1984). An early Colorado River guide who took guests on unforgettable journeys and explored the river and its side canyons – including a 60-mile journey down the river in a life-preserver. He tells that story in his own words in ["Adventure on the Colorado,"](#) by Harry L. Aleson, in *Beehive History* 7.

[LoveHistory.utah.gov](http://LoveHistory.utah.gov), a site for young people, has information on native peoples, explorers, and many kinds of immigrants to Utah.

["Life 'On the Road': Reminiscences of a Drummer,"](#) by Dorothy J. Buchanan, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 34:1 (January 1966). The carefree life of a young man who traveled around Utah as a grocery and dry-goods salesman. He describes roads and travel, friendships, towns, hotels and livery stables – and, especially, food!

["Nancy Kelsey, the First White Woman to Cross Utah,"](#) *History Blazer*. A journey into the unknown, from Missouri to California, in 1841, passing through Cache Valley and along the northern end of the Great Salt Lake.

["Through Utah and the Western Parks: Thomas Wolfe's Farewell to America,"](#) by Richard H. Cracroft, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 37:3, July 1969. Utah through the eyes of the famous novelist as he made a two-week journey around the West – only three months before his unexpected, early death.

["Toil and Rage in the New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah,"](#) by Helen Papanikolas, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 38:2 (April 1970). A beautifully written account of the lives of Greeks forced to leave their homeland and start anew, in order to survive.

["A Young Man Goes West: The 1879 Letters of Leonard Herbert Swett,"](#) by Dove Menkes, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 75:3 (Summer 2007). Delightful letters home by a 21-year-old Chicagoan on the USGS survey describing his journey between Salt Lake City and Kanab, with details about travel of the day, landscapes and communities, and the people he met.



The Utah Division of State History collects and preserves historical documents and makes them available in the Utah History Research Center and online. State History is interested in the journey stories of all peoples who have lived in or passed through Utah, and accepts donations of manuscripts, books, journals, maps, or photos that will enhance the State's collections. Learn more at [www.history.utah.gov](http://www.history.utah.gov)

Ancient trade routes are traced through chemical signatures in precious obsidian mined from Beaver

### a most mobile nation!

County's Wildhorse Canyon. Franciscan friars Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Dominguez led a party of Spanish explorers through Utah in 1776 on a quest to reach California. In 1845, "The Emigrant's Guide to Oregon & California" directed overland travelers through

### a mobile people in a vast land

Utah's roasty west desert via the Hastings Cutoff. Three slaves – Green Flake, Hark Lay, and Oscar Crosby – came West with the first Mormon pioneer company that arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Following the 1863 Bear River Massacre, surviving members of the Northwestern Band of Shoshone settled Washakie on the Utah-Idaho border. In the winter of 1865, seven men headed out from Panguitch, negotiating the deep mountain snows by walking across their quilts all the way to Parowan. John Wesley Powell's 1869 exploration of Utah's river country turned into a harrowing journey through brutal and beautiful terrain. In May 1869 the nation's first transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory, a feat that would have been impossible without the efforts of Chinese immigrant laborers. Expecting a six-week journey, the 236-member Hole-in-the-Rock expedition took six months to flog their way through some of Utah's most forbidding desert before establishing the Mormon outpost of Bluff in 1880. Ute leader Chipeta was forced, along with other Uncompahgre and White River Utes, from her homeland in Colorado to a reservation in the Uinta Basin in 1880. Thirteen-year-old Park City boy Bobby Donohue ran away to

### some of us were here already

the Philippines to fight in the 1898 Spanish-American War and returned a hero. In 1899, Ramon and Guadalupe Gonzalez left New Mexico to settle in Monticello, and became one of San Juan County's pioneering Hispanic families. At the turn of the 20th Century, Carbon County was Utah's Ellis Island – attracted by jobs and the chance for social mobility, immigrants from Italy, Greece, and Eastern Europe to work in railroad and mining industries. As part of the "Back

movement, twelve Jewish families left their urban lives back East and arrived in Gunnison in 1911 to establish an agricultural colony called Clarion. Utah aviator Russell Maughan made history in 1924 by piloting the first transcontinental flight across the United States in a single day. Vagabond artist

southwest Escalante

### and all of us are still in motion

opera singer Marian Anderson made a Salt Lake concert stop in 1937, she was refused a hotel room because she was African American. In 1940, Boulder residents celebrated the completion of the first all-weather road connecting their tiny town to the rest of the state. Grace Oshita and her family were among the thousands of Japanese Americans detained in 1941 and forcibly relocated to Delta's Topaz Internment Camp. Fred and Ruth Linden fled Nazi Germany to Shanghai and then to San Francisco before finding safe haven and a new life in Salt Lake in 1947. Brigham City's Intermountain Indian School opened its doors in 1950 to Navajo students who bussed 500 miles from the reservation to obtain an education.

Since 1988, more than 46,154 refugees – mostly women and children – have resettled in Utah.

## UTAH JOURNEY Stories

### How did immigration and travel shape Utah?

### some of us came hoping for a better life

### some of us came in chains

came Utah's to Soil"

Everett Ruess travelled by foot throughout the country in 1934. When internationally celebrated

### we all have journey stories... what's yours?



Listen to Utah journey stories on *The Beehive Archive* at [www.utahhumanities.org/stories](http://www.utahhumanities.org/stories)



Join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/groups/UtahJourneyStories](http://www.facebook.com/groups/UtahJourneyStories)



Learn about the Utah tour of *Journey Stories* at [www.utahhumanities.org/journeystories.htm](http://www.utahhumanities.org/journeystories.htm)



**EVERYONE HAS A JOURNEY STORY... WHAT'S YOURS?**



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**[www.utahhumanities.org](http://www.utahhumanities.org)**

The Utah Humanities Council empowers Utahns to improve their communities through active engagement in the humanities.

Historical images of Utahns courtesy Utah State History.