



Toward the Setting Sun: Pioneer Girls Traveling the Overland Trails

Mary Barmeyer O'Brien

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Driven by the promise of prosperity, thousands of men and women traveled west in the mid-1800s. Accompanying them were their children, wide-eyed and excited about the adventures that awaited as they headed toward the setting sun. Little did they know how treacherous and grueling the trip would be. The perils of overland travel forced parents to depend on their children for survival. Girls were called upon to help cook, set up and break camp, supervise younger siblings, or drive the oxen. Even with the endless chores, many pioneer girls found time to record the details of their journeys. Tales of wild river crossings, laments for lost family and friends, and secrets of friendships made along the way complete their personal stories. These young women bring a unique perspective to the great American migration. Each girl's story is different. For some, such as Sallie Hester, the journey west led to new opportunities and a bright future. For others, such as Catherine Sager and her siblings, the trip brought disaster and grief that could never be forgotten. By focusing on the lives of pioneer girls, author Mary Barmeyer O'Brien provides a fascinating addition to the history of the West. Through diary excerpts and O'Brien's descriptive prose, you can join ten girls as they journey Toward the Setting Sun.

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