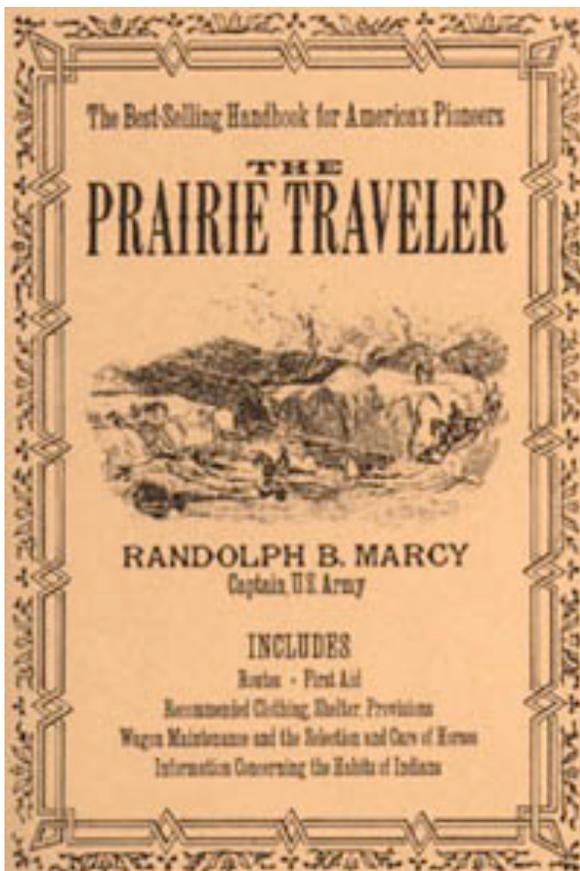


CAPTAIN MARCY'S ADVICE

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Excerpted from *The Prairie Traveler*
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When the captain [of the wagon train] has once been chosen, he should be sustained in all his decisions unless he commit some manifest outrage, when a majority of the company can always remove him and put a more competent man in his place.



Wagons should be of the simplest possible construction - strong, light, and made of well seasoned timber, especially the wheels, as the atmosphere, in the elevated and arid region over which they have to pass, is so exceedingly dry during the summer months that, unless the wood-work thoroughly seasoned, they will require constant repairs to prevent them from falling to pieces.

Upon good firm roads in a populated country, where grain can be procured, I should unquestionably give the preference to mules, as they travel faster, and endure the heat of summer much better than oxen; and if the journey be not over 1000 miles, and the grass abundant, even without grain, I think mules would be preferable. But when the march is to extend to 1500 or 2,000 miles, or over rough sandy or muddy road, I believe young oxen will endure better than mules: they will, if properly managed, keep in better condition, and perform the journey in an equally brief space of time.

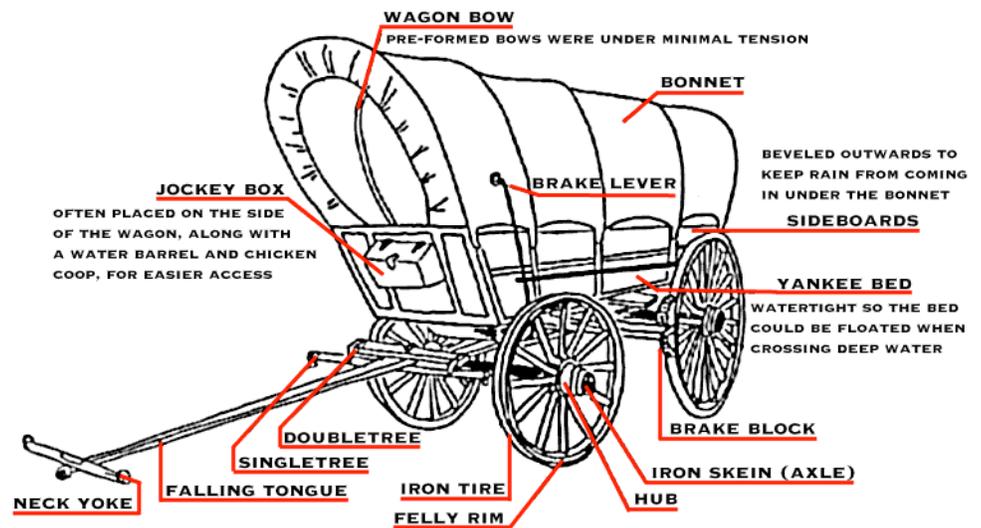
Cows will be found very useful upon long journeys when the rate of travel is slow, as they will furnish milk, and in emergencies they may be worked in wagons. It has been by no means an unusual thing for emigrant travelers to work cows in their teams.

The allowance of provisions for each grown person, to make the journey from the Missouri River to Oregon, should suffice for 110 days. The following is deemed requisite, viz.: 150 lbs. of flour, or its equivalent in hard bread; 25 lbs. of bacon or salted pork, and enough fresh beef to be driven on the hoof to make up the meat component of the ration; 15 lbs. of coffee, and 25 lbs. of sugar; also a quantity of saleratus [baking soda] or yeast powders for making bread and salt and pepper.

A suitable dress for prairie traveling is of great importance to health and comfort. Wool being a non-conductor, is the best material, and should always be adopted for the plains. The coat should be short and stout, the shirt of red or blue flannel; this, in warm weather answers for an outside garment. The pants should be of thick and soft woolen material, and it is well to have them reinforced on the inside where they come in contact with the saddle. Woolen socks and stout boots, coming up well at the knees, and made large, so as to admit the pants will be found the best for horsemen, and they guard against rattlesnake bites. The following list of articles is deemed a sufficient outfit for one man upon a three months expedition, viz.: 2 blue or red flannel overshirts...2 woolen undershirts... 2 pair woolen trousers...2 pairs thick cotton drawers...4 pairs woolen socks...2 pair cotton socks...4 colored silk handkerchiefs...2 pairs of stout shoes for footmen...1 pair boots, for horsemen...1 pair shoes for horsemen...3 towels...1 gutta percha [Gutta percha is like rubberized cloth so it will be waterproof] poncho...1 broad-brimmed hat of soft felt...1 comb and brush...2 tooth brushes...1 pound Castile soap...3 pounds bar soap for washing clothes...1 belt knife and small whetstone [a whetstone sharpens the knife]...Stout linen thread, large needles, a bit of beeswax, a few buttons, paper of pins, and a thimble, all contained in a small buckskin or stout cloth bag. The foregoing articles, with the coat and overcoat, complete the wardrobe.

The bedding for each person should consist of two blankets, a comforter, and a pillow, and a gutta percha or painted canvas cloth to spread beneath the bed upon the ground.

Every family will require a wrought iron camp kettle, a coffee pot and cups of heavy tin, tin plates, bake pans of wrought iron, a mess pan for mixing, knives, forks, spoons, an extra camp kettle, tin bucket for water, an ax, hatchet, and spade will also be needed, with a mallet for driving picket pins. Matches should be carried in bottles and corked tight. A little blue mass, quinine, opium, and some cathartic medicine will suffice for the medicine chest.



WAGON DESIGN COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Each ox wagon should be provided with an extra tar bucket, two bows extra, six S's, and six open links for repairing chains. Every set of six wagons should have a tongue, coupling pole, king-bolt, and a pair of hounds [A "hound" is part of the wagon suspension - it is NOT a dog.] extra. Two lariats [ropes] will be needed for every horse and mule, as one generally wears out before reaching the end of a long journey. One of the most indispensable articles to the outfit is buckskin. For repair and other daily purposes, the awl and buckskin will be in constant use. Every man who goes into Indian country should be armed with a rifle and revolver.