

Excepts from women's diaries written on the Overland Trail

Directions: In the column to the right of each entry, describe or explain briefly what this entry tells us about life on the Overland Trail. (*Answers for teacher provided.*)

June 2 Passed 7 graves . . . made 14 miles. June 26 Passed 8 graves. June 29 Passed 10 graves. June 30 Passed 10 graves . . . made 22 miles. July 1 Passed 8 graves . . . made 21 miles. July 2 One man of our company died. Passed 8 graves made 16 miles. July 4 Passed 2 graves . . . made 16 miles. July 5 Passed 9 graves ,made 18 miles. July 6 Passed 6 graves, made 9 miles. July 11 Passed 5 graves . . . made 15 miles. — <i>diary of Cecelia McMillen Adams, 1852</i>	<i>death; consider how travelers must have felt seeing all these graves day after day</i>
<i>In the entry below, what problem explains what the writer saw on June 9 and 16?</i> May 30 -- Saw several graves today one with inscription. . . . we counted 5 graves close together only one with inscription . . . June 1 Graves now are often partly dug up. June 9 -- Most graves look as if they were dug and finished in a hurry. June 16 -- It is common to see beds and clothing discarded by the road not to be used again. — <i>diary of Caroline Richardson, 1852</i>	<i>disease</i>
Saturday, September 10th It would be useless for me with my pencil to describe the awful road we have just passed over. . . . It is something more than half mile long very rocky all the way, quite steep, winding, sideling, deep down, slippery and muddy, made so by a spring running the entire length of the road, and this road is cut down so deep that at times the cattle and wagons are almost out of sight, with no room for the drivers except on the bank, a very difficult place to drive, also dangerous, and to make the matter worse, there was a slow poking train ahead of us, which kept stopping every few minutes Friday, September 17th In camp yet. Still raining. . . . A few days later my eighth child was born. After this we picked up and ferried across the Columbia River. . . taking three days to complete. — <i>diary of Amelia Stewart Knight, 1853</i>	<i>dangerous & women could be pregnant or even giving birth during treacherous parts of the trip</i>
<i>What does the entry below tell us about the jobs of men and women along the Trail?</i> To add to the horrors of the surroundings one man was bitten on the ankle by a venomous snake. Although every available remedy was tried upon the wound, his limb had to be amputated with the aid of a common handsaw. Fortunately, for him, he had a good, brave wife along who helped and cheered him into health and usefulness; for it was not long before much that he could do and was not considered a burden, although the woman had to do a man's work — Catherine Haun, 1849	<i>traditional gender roles still applied on the trail but were adaptable when conditions warranted</i>