



Trail of Thread: A Woman's Westward Journey

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Taste the dust of the road and feel the wind in your face as you travel with a Kentucky family by wagon trail to the new territory of Kansas in 1854.

In the form of letters she wrote on the journey, Deborah Pieratt describes the scenery, the everyday events on the trail, and the task of taking care of her family. Stories of humor and despair, along with her ongoing remarks about camping, cooking, and quilting make you feel as if you pulled up stakes and are traveling with the Pieratts, too.

Trail of Thread: A Woman's Westward Journey Details

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Author : Linda K. Hubalek

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Joyce says

I have read several books by Linda Hubalek about pioneer families in Kansas. This one focused on the trip a family made from eastern Kentucky to northeast Kansas to settle a homestead in the 1850's. Although the book is fiction, it is based on letters and journals written by the author's great-great-great grandmother, Deborah Goodpaster Pieratt, who is the main character in this book. The book is written in the form of letters written by Deborah to the beloved stepmother she left behind in Kentucky. The book gives so much detail on what it was like for the women on these trips. It gives such a vivid portrayal of the hardships they endured. I love her books!

Jan Stanton says

I really liked this short book. It is a fictional story about the author's great-grandmother's journey from Kentucky to Kansas in the 1800's. I thought it gave a realistic version of times through a woman's eyes. I do plan to read the other two books in the series.

Julia A. McDonald says

A brave story of American history

since I live in KY this story had special meaning for me. I have always been in awe of those courageous folk who crossed the country in covered wagons, this journal made it very real. The descriptions of the wagons, food, weather appeared to be accurate and inspired me even more. I would recommend this to anyone who is interested in this chapter of American history. Well told.

Misty says

I'm almost done with this book. I checked it out of my quilting guild library, and may not have picked it up otherwise. It's supposed to be about quilting. But the narrator barely mentions quilting. It's a pretty straightforward "this is what pioneer daily life was like" sort of story, told through some letters home.

Cathy Cole says

It is amazing how much detail Hubalek packs in her narrative, and this wealth paints a clear picture of what travel was like at the time. Deborah Pieratt had no voice in the decision to move from Kentucky to Kansas; it was a "done deal" when the menfolk in her family told her what was going to happen. In her letters back

home to family members, Deborah tells us how difficult it was to pack the wagons for the journey, how heartbreaking it sometimes was to make one choice after another: should it stay or can it go?

She tells of the hazards of crossing rivers and streams, of how fraught with danger stopping in towns along the way could be when the question of slavery was already in the process of ripping the country apart. If any reader has romantic notions of traveling in a covered wagon, Deborah Pieratt dispels them in her letters-- especially when talking about trying to get clothes clean and personal hygiene. Never-ending dirt and danger, uncooperative weather, trying to get meals cooked, sick children cared for, and waves of homesickness and longing for family and friends whom she would never see again-- all these things and many more comprise Deborah's journey west. Once in Kansas and finding the land they would call home, Deborah and her family have no time to rest. They immediately have to build some sort of shelter and get crops planted so they will be able to eat.

Trail of Thread is a fascinating little volume that sheds so much light on this period of expansion in America. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in pioneer life and women's history, and I'll be keeping an eye peeled for other books in the series.

Helen says

True pioneer accounts are a particular interest of mine. Somehow I just didn't feel connected to the characters in this book. It just didn't feel authentic to me, even though it is based on a real family's migration from Kentucky to Kansas. I did appreciate the research, however.

Brenda says

A few of what I would call editing errors, but since it is a diary of letters perhaps those can be chalked up to Deborah's lack of education, which she mentioned herself.

I cannot imagine walking 750 miles alongside a covered wagon to homestead in a new territory. Somehow Deborah managed to find humor along the way. Either they were truly blessed, or she glossed over the hardships so as not to worry Betsy back in Kentucky. Quilters will enjoy the references to that craft.

Arlene says

This is a book written in the form of letters from a mother whose life is uprooted when her husband and his brothers decide that Kansas is the promised land. They load belongings on wagons and leave in the spring of 1854 from Kentucky. She shared quilt patterns along the way with other travelers and settlers. Traveling 750 miles in 66 days, they walked the trails and thru various settlements along the way. Imagine crossing all those rivers on unstable rafts and boats. Waiting near Westport landing (modern day Kansas City) for her husband to return from a scouting trip into Kansas, she is in a large camp of wagons when a cyclone storm hits. Having lived through a tornado as a child in that area I can't imagine what it would have been like without any shelter except wagons which were so easy to tip over by a wind like that. Scary!

This book is a fictionalized version of the real trip to Kansas by the author's great-great-great grandmother in

1854. I loved this little book borrowed from my quilt guild.

Chaplain Stanleigh Chapin says

Very enjoyable

having Great grandparents and grandparents along with other family relatives make similar trips from Pennsylvania and South Carolina to homestead further west in Kansas there were some similarities to stories I heard as a child

Cherei says

I only meant to skim this book to get the flavor of it.. and then put it on my TBR pile. Much to my surprise.. I finished it in nothing flat. It reminded me so much of the Laura Ingall books that I loved as a little girl. It literally could be read from Ma Ingall's point of view as they headed to the Little House on the Prairie.

The trials and tribulations of every river crossing was just heartbreaking. To the "helpful" folks who would sell them cheese.. and then find out later down the road that the cheese was actually rotten. Most of all.. how they clinged to each other as a family.. while missing all of the rest of their family behind. Knowing that the last time they saw one another would truly probably be.. the last time they ever saw one another again.

This story will quickly work it's way into your heart. To think.. all who grew up in the West.. came from stock such as this! :)

Becky says

Narrative of a pioneer woman's journey west from KY to KS, written in letters to her step mother. Deborah had no say in moving west but she was an obedient wife of the time and when her husband John said get ready, she did. Since I am Midwestern born and raised, the descriptions of the land and rivers as they traveled west were recognizable to me, making the story come to life as I read. But I'm not really sure these were the actual letters written or if they were embellished by the author, they seemed more than a bit contrived. Who, after a long, exhausting day on the trail with all those children to look after, meals to cook, etc., would have the time or inclination to write such long descriptive letters?

Jessica says

A book that links genealogy and quilting and historical fiction - that sounds like me kind of book. Linda Hubalek was a horticulturalist before she began writing historical fiction. Her writing reminds me of Anna Lee Waldo, the author of Sacajawea. Waldo was an organic chemist before she started writing. I'll admit that the with both authors the writing is sometimes not quite seamless but both authors bring an astute eye to historical fiction - an eye that captures fun nerdy details like water soaked wagon wheels and the value of bugs in a chicken's diet. I enjoyed the book and will definitely look for Hubalek's other books in the series.

Billie says

This takes place around 1854....land in Kansas was selling for \$1/acre and families were traveling in droves. These are letters written during one family's journey to other family members in Kentucky.

Really had little to do with quilting. In those days the men made the decisions and the wives were to be supportive regardless. In this case the decision was made to leave close and extended family for the journey to Kansas which meant they'd probably never see each other again,

Very interesting to learn the preparations...what was packed into two wagons, the reason behind taking each item and how everything was utilized. As they journeyed they also learned tricks from other travelers from other parts of the country.

Really in insight into what it was like to travel back in those days and the courage it took to uproot your whole family for parts unknown

Georgiann Hennelly says

A historical fiction type of book set in 1854. The story is told through letters a Mother writes when her life is uprooted, when her Husband and his brothers decide to move to Kansas the promised land. Along the way she shares quilt patterns with other settlers and travelers. It took them 66 days to travel 750 miles. while waiting near Westport landing for her husband to return from a scouting trip to Kansas, she is in a large group of wagons when a cyclone hits. I can imagine how scared she was/ The book is a fictional version of the real trip the authors Great-Great-Great Grandmother took to Kansas in 1854. I truly enjoyed this book

Arlene says

I love "diary" books. Especially about the women who followed their husbands' dream, and possibly theirs, out West. This book was a wonderful way to appreciate what they went through. Though not as detailed as some I have read, I found this book put into practice on the trail things I had read about before.
