WOMEN IN THE WEST

Among the thousands and thousands of people emigrating West were women and children. Some women eagerly traveled west, while others were forced to go along with husbands or families against their will. Life traveling west and life in the west were rough; consequently, the women who made the voyage and lived there had to be tough.

To get a better understanding of how these women felt about their travel and labor in the West, read through the corresponding diary entries and answer the questions below.

**WORKING**

1. Were women confined to one type of labor? If not, list the types of jobs women might have.

1. Did women’s labor in the west conform (comply with the rules) to traditional duties of women? Explain.

**COOKING**

1. What did women cook on the trails?
2. What make cooking particularly challenging?

**INFANTS AND LITTLE ONES**

1. What did women do with infants and small children on the road?

**WEATHER CONDITIONS**

1. What happened to people and their camps when it rained?

**RELIGION**

1. How was religion maintained during travel? How did it change?

**ATTIRE AND OTHER WOMEN**

1. Why did women stick together on trips west?

1. What did women wear?
2. Did appearances matter in the west? Explain why or why not.

**DANGERS ON THE TRAILS**

1. What were many women’s greatest fears on the trails?

1. How did they cope with their fears?

**OPTIMISM**

1. What allowed this woman to have such a rosy picture of life in the west?

1. Do you think that this perspective was common or rare? Why?