

## Stopping in Denver

## Fiction

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The wagon train left this morning, and I told my friends goodbye. I would be staying here in Denver, because I had abandoned the journey. We had been traveling for months on a quest for a new life. It was June when we left St. Louis, and it was October now. I would not stay with the wagon train, as I was exhausted and frustrated.

When we left St. Louis, we were very excited because we were going to be pioneers. We were going all the way to the ocean, and at the completion of our journey, we would be in California, a place everyone said was wonderful.

Then we had our first problem. The first day a wheel came off our wagon. It was cracked. We could not fix it. It was not far from St. Louis. So John rode back there on his horse. He came back with another wheel. But that took a day. The other families waited.

Then we had another problem. There was a big rainstorm. There was so much mud the oxen that were pulling our wagons could not get them to move. We had to wait for the rain to stop and the mud to dry. We lost two more days; I was discouraged, and so were the other travelers.

We were tired and it had been just two weeks. We kept on traveling. Then we had to stop because the Brown family got sick. We waited a few days for their recovery. They gave up, feeling that they could not continue to meet the constant challenges. They turned back. Mrs. Brown said, "Back to civilization."

It was hard work every day, and each day brought challenges. We persisted and kept going, but by the time we arrived at Denver it was too much. We were going to leave the wagon train. That night we told the wagon master.

He asked us to change our minds. He said, "The worst is over now." But I knew it would not be easier. The mountains we had just crossed were just the beginning. It had been such hard work to get where we were now. We had been determined to stay the course, but now we were determined to leave the group. It would be even harder to reach the ocean, so I decided that we would stay here in Denver.

Today I have gone to look for a job. There are many jobs in the mines, and I will take one of them. We will get a permanent home here. Living in a tent next to the covered wagon is over. We will have a place where we can live securely without concern about the weather and other obstacles. I will miss my friends, but I will not miss all the troubles.