

there were no trails but those of the buffalo. The trappers and hunters followed the streams, while the Indians may be said to have wandered aimlessly over the face of the earth.

Following the handcarts of the Mormons came the ox teams of Russell, Majors and Company, taking supplies to the army in Utah. And it used to take them from twenty to thirty days to drag the wagons from the river to Fort Kearney, three hundred miles.

A few years later the Overland Mail Company transferred their post coaches from the southern to this the central route, and then the dust began to fly. The stage coaches soon overhauled the pilgrims and the stage driver, and station hands, one writer tells us, began to make trouble for the Mormons by marrying "off wheelers," "nigh leaders," and "swing girls" out of the handcart teams.

After "roughing it" across the continent in one of these rock-a-bye wagons, Mark Twain wrote:

"How the frantic animals did scamper! It was a fierce and furious gallop, and the gait never altered for a moment till we reeled off ten or twelve miles and swept up to the next collection of little station huts and stables.

"At 4 P. M. we crossed a branch of the river, and at 5 P. M. we crossed the Platte itself and landed at Kearney, fifty-six hours from St. Joe, *three hundred miles.*"

Looking back at the bull team, that was simply flying.

A few years later an enthusiast who crossed the