

## Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868

### Source of Trail Excerpt:

Stoddard, David Kerr, Autobiographical sketch.

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We lived here [St. Louis] untill the spring of 1851, and then we organized a company of ten to cross the plains to Salt Lake City

John Easton was appointed captain of the ten. and the names of the members of the company are as follows. John Easton and family, James Easton and family, Robert Easton and family, Alexander Easton and family, Mrs. Easton, their mother, and two unmarried sons George and Matthew Easton, James Williamson and family, Sandy Kear [Kerr] and family, Sandy [David] Mustgared [Mustard] and daughter, John and Andrew Burt, Joseph Horn, James, Robert and David Bullock, James Berner, John Stoddard, my father, my mother, John Stoddard, my brother and I David Stoddard.

We left St. Louis in April and were six weeks on the road to Winter Quarters. We were compelled to stop here a long time, it seemed, because the rivers had overthrown their banks and it seemed impos[s]ible to take the old road up the Platte River or that of the old Mexican Trail. So we were compelled to send out scouts to locate a route which would be posible to use in safety.

After a delay of several weeks we were organised into a company of with a train of 50 wagons so as to be strong enough to insure our safety. This company was captioned [captioned] by Captain [Alfred] Cardon [Cordon]. Or known as Captain Cardon's Company.

After a week[']s travel we were discouraged as so much time was wasted. Captain [John] Easton called us all into council and laid before us the condition of affairs, ask[ed] if we were willing to travel alone as a company of ten and leave the others. We all agreed to do this as near as I can remember. About the fifth day of our trek, we saw a great cloud of dust in the east, we judged about one mile away. Captain Easton called a halt, we thought it was a band of Indians and we would surely be destroyed. To our surprise we found it to be a large herd of buffalo which we estimated to be around five thousand. The herd we judged to be one mile long and one fo[u]rth of a mile wide. We had all we could do to save our wagons from being turned up side down. Another day we came in sight of a large Indian camp, we passed by in peace and camped about three miles from them. We had just made fires and were preparing our suppers, when suddenly the camp was surrounded by about two hundred indians. We gave them all the camp could spare in eatables and soon they went away whooping in their Indian fashion. I could tell volumns [volumes] of incidents which happened during this trek but time will not permit. But will say that after a great many days of travel and hardship we reached Salt Lake City on Friday October 5th 1851, with Captain Cardon's Company.

[Variant version of text also in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 20 vols. (1958-77), 13:391]