

# The Unfortunate Tale of the Donner Party: A Harrowing Journey to the West

The Donner Party, a group of American pioneers who set out for California in 1846, is known for their tragic ordeal in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The party of 87, which included men, women, and children, left Independence, Missouri, in May 1846, and planned to follow the Oregon Trail to California. However, a series of misfortunes, including getting lost, running low on supplies, and encountering harsh weather conditions, led to the party's demise.

## The Journey Begins

The Donner Party was led by George Donner, a prosperous farmer from Illinois. Donner had heard glowing reports of California, and he decided to lead a group of families to the promised land. The party consisted of 23 men, 12 women, and 40 children. They traveled in 20 wagons, and they brought along a large herd of cattle.



## Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party

by George R. Stewart

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 17645 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 418 pages
Lending	: Enabled



The Donner Party left Independence on May 13, 1846. They followed the Oregon Trail for about 1,000 miles, but then they decided to take a shortcut that would supposedly save them time. This shortcut, known as the Hastings Cutoff, proved to be a fatal mistake.

### **The Hastings Cutoff**

The Hastings Cutoff was a poorly marked trail that led through the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. The trail was difficult to travel, and the party's progress was slowed by frequent breakdowns and accidents. In addition, the party ran low on supplies, and they began to starve.

By the time the Donner Party reached the Sierra Nevada mountains, they were exhausted and starving. The snow was deep, and the party was forced to abandon their wagons and cattle. They continued on foot, but many of them died along the way. The survivors resorted to cannibalism in order to stay alive.

### **The Rescue**

In February 1847, a group of rescuers from California reached the Donner Party. Only 48 of the original 87 members of the party survived the ordeal. The survivors were taken to Sutter's Fort in California, where they were given food and shelter.

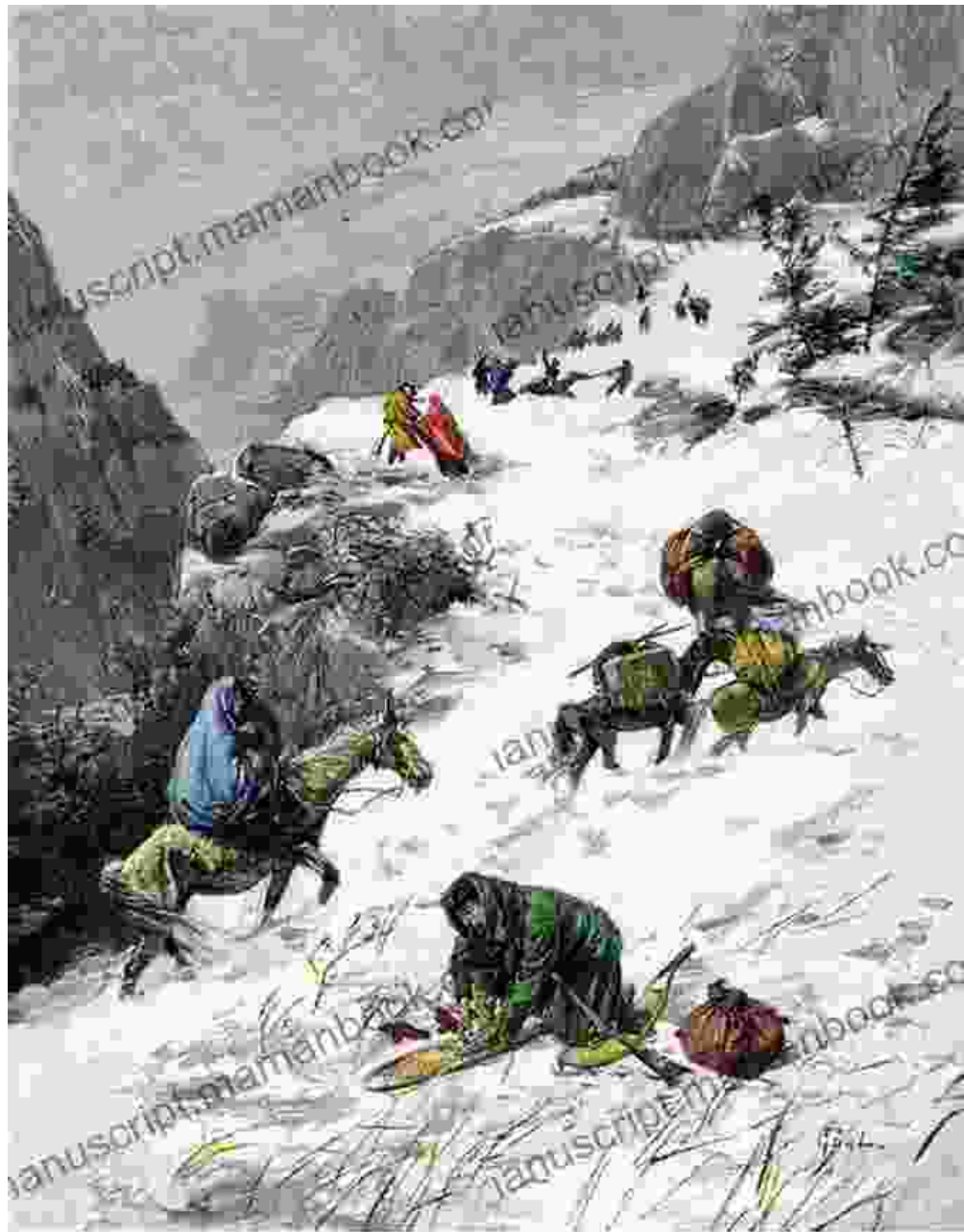
### **The Legacy of the Donner Party**

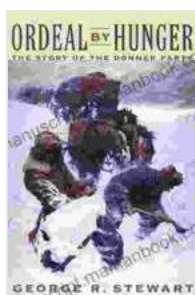
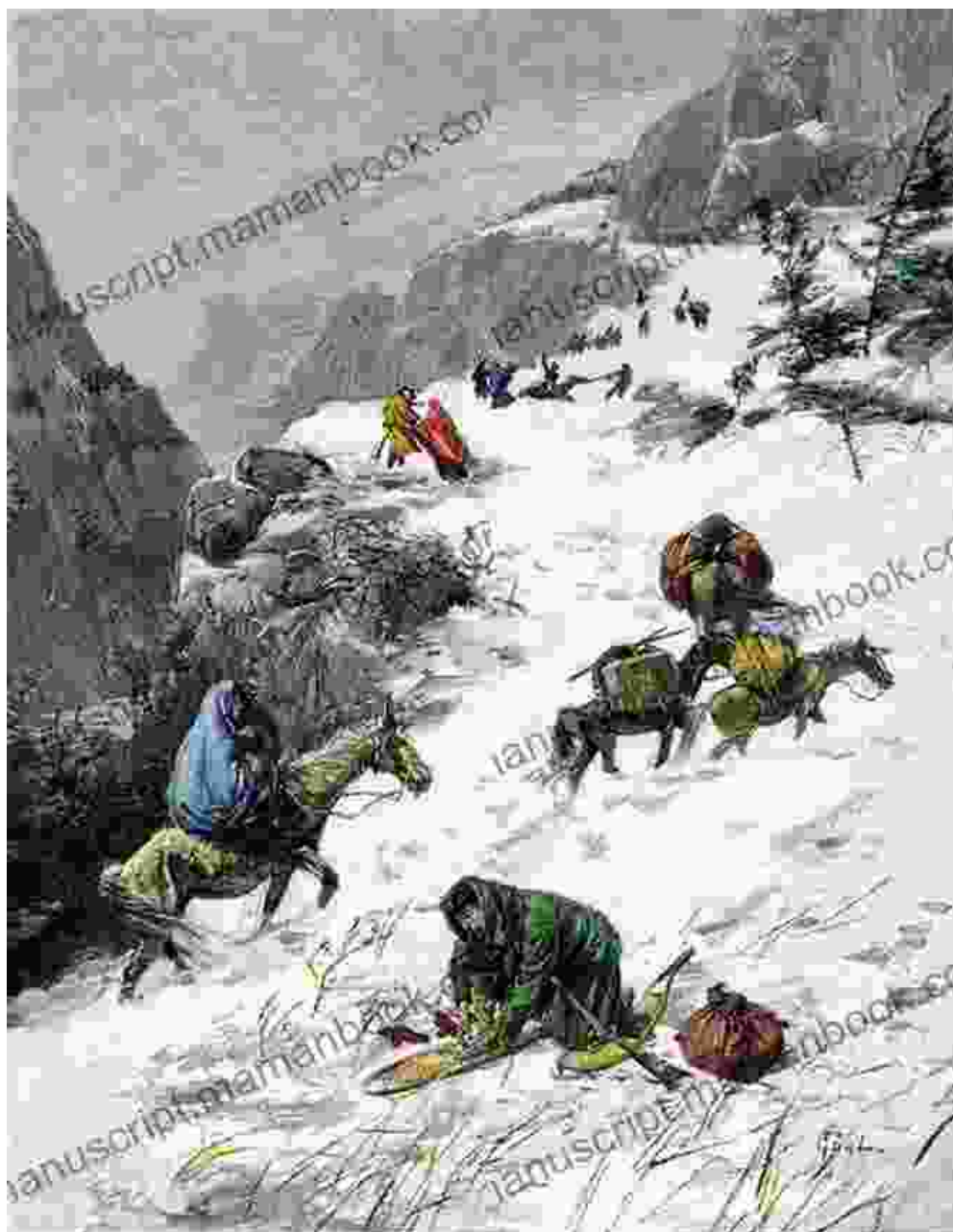
The Donner Party's story is a tragic reminder of the dangers that pioneers faced when they traveled west in the 19th century. The party's ordeal has

been the subject of numerous books, articles, and films. The story of the Donner Party is a powerful reminder of the human spirit's ability to endure even the most difficult circumstances.

## Image Gallery







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