

My America: Joshua's Oregon Trail Diary #1: Westward to Home

Erica Sonzogni

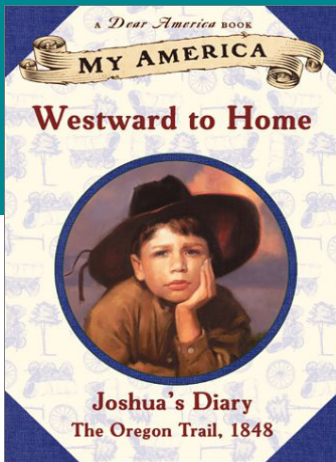
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Book Review

My America: Joshua's Oregon Trail Diary #1: Westward to Home

Author

Patricia Hermes

Illustrator

Reviewer

Erica Sonzogni

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

Pages

105

Year

2001

Publisher

Scholastic, Inc.

ISBN

9780439112093

President Polk entices families to move out west and expand the nation from ocean to ocean. Joshua's family decides to join a group that is heading to Oregon, in hopes of more land and a farm of their own. During the six month journey, Joshua experiences hardships that he was not prepared for. One of the men in the group gets run over by a wagon, babies frequently pass away after being born, and men who go hunting are shot by Native Americans. The group faces bad weather, lack of food, and dangerous terrain. After the long trek, the group finally makes it to their destination, but they do not forget the many people who did not make it along the way.

Westward to Home is action-packed; there are challenges and excitement on every page. The diary format of the novel makes it a quick read. Each entry is short yet keeps the reader wanting to find out what happens on the next day of Joshua's journey. Some of the events could be difficult for a child to process, especially since death of a variety of ages is present throughout. At the very end, the author writes a short description of the historical events and includes drawings from the time period. There is also a sequel that children are likely to want to read immediately. Readers will be on the edge of their seat, wanting to know if Joshua and his family make it to their new home.