

This memoir was written by my great-great-grandfather, William Luther Powers (1841-1926). His son, Albert Clifford Powers (1887-1968), my great-grandfather, was still living when I was a child and I remember him. Albert's son was my grandfather, Treval Clifford Powers (1900-1997), and his son was my father, William T. Powers (1926-2013). I am Denison Powers, and I was born in 1957.

This story was transcribed by Treval Powers from the original that was written by hand when William Luther Powers was an adult. It describes his family's travels from Illinois to Oregon when he was a boy in 1852. The spelling and punctuation was kept as original as possible with a few notes for clarity.

"Some of The Experiences of A Man who crossed The Planes With Oxteams In the year 1852
From Pike county Illinois To The Wilamette Valey

We crossed the planes in the year 1852

My Father, mother 6 Brothers and one sister I was the youngest I was 11 years old July 26 that year

We My mother was thretened by the Indians whoo had taken possesion of a Pole bridge built by the Emigrants across a small stream in a wet brushy boton [bottom] the indians were Demanding toll for crossing the Bridge just at the time we got there the Emigrants had concluded They would not pay Toll the Indians said must so the Emigrants armed Themselves and started on The Indians armed and painted were Peaking through the brush every where but made no Fight Every thing went on smoothly until we got out onto the Planes when the Colery [cholera] broke out awful bad. My mother died of the Disease on the 10 of June where She was buried there was 152 graves the oldes[t] only 4 days old We went on from there all right only the feed was becoming short that the Stock was starving. My Father went a hed off the road to hunt camping Place where we could get grass and water in that way we saved all of ower stock while a great maney others lost about all of Theirs

We traveled on until we come to Salmon Falls on Snake River that was where they start out on the 80-mile desert. When we got the Falls there was 3 families corking [caulking] their wagon boxes and Ferrying across to make a cutoff and miss the Desert one family got Discouraged and was ferrying back Said they could find no road way out through the Rocks which resembled a great Field of Hay Shocks almost touching each other My Father went across and looked the mater over came back and told my older Brothers to get the wagons reddy while he hunted away out

The Family that was ferrying back tipped a wagon Box over and drowned one Boy 12 years old. I remember a young Indian wadeing and jumping from Rock to Rock on the Brake [break] of the Falls to try to save the Boy but could not find Him.

We got across the River all right and found away through the rocks had abundance of grass and water but some Rough country to go through One place we had put the hind wheels of the wagons on the lower sid[e] front wheels on the uper sid and atach Ropes to the wagons Some of the men above holding on the Ropes and others below pushing up against the wagons with Snake River below runing like a mill Tale We got back to the Road allright just at the time those that Ferried back got there Our stock was in good Shape wile those that crossed the Desert could hardly walk

Everything went on Smoothly from that time except that grass was so short it was very hard to get feed for our Stock

All the first part of the jounry I rod a little mule and drove loos Stock finally my mules Back

got sore We traded him to an Indian for a horse. Finally the horse's back got sore by this time we had got to Grandround [Grande Ronde] coming up out of the Grandround Valley there was an Indian with Horses to trade for Emigrant cows My Father told me If I could trade my horse for another with a well back allright so I made the trade allright and come on over to the Umatilla [Umatilla River] where there was a big Indian village The Indians were having a big time beating Drums and Singing I rode down among them to see what was going on the way back to wagons I met an Indian coming as fast as His Horse could run I turned to ride around Him He dodged [dodged?] in a herd of me and jumped off of His Horse and caught my Horse by the bridle He yelled or to [two] and the Indians come Swarming out of the village There was an interpreter among them He Said this Indian had taken Horses over to Grandround to trade for Emigrant cows had traded part of them and left some over there and come back for more and another Stolen those He had left and was trading them off to get some of his own The Indians said if they could find my Horse that I traded they would sell Him and send me the money but we never got any money and I lost the horse

We moved along the best we could on the short feed until we got to the Dalles [The Dalles] it was then too late to get over the mountains so my Father made arrangements to go down the river in one of the Hudsonbay CO Barges and my Brothers drove the Stock down the Old Peak[?] Trail It was just 6 months to a day from the time we crossed the Missouri River until we landed at the mouth of Sandy on the Columbia River

From the mouth of Sandy we went up the valley to the forks of the Willamette My Father and 4 oldest Brothers located Donation claims there a little North and East of where the Town of Springfield Now Stands. This was long before Springfield was located."