

# ESAREY/ESREY – RHOADS FAMILIES OF THE 1800'S



Presentation for  
The Esarey Family Reunion  
August 7-8, 2010

Dan Esarey



## JESSE ESAREY & FAMILY

Jesse:

Born 1800 Meade Co. Ky. (Brandenburg area).

Wife: Hanna Forster

INDIANA: MOVED TO PERRY COUNTY IND. IN  
1810

ILLINOIS: MOVED TO ILLINOIS IN 1820

Member of Illinois Legislature in 1832

Changes spelling of name to Esrey

MISSOURI: MOVED TO RAY CO. IN 1840

50 miles Northeast of Kansas City, Mo.)

Member of Missouri Legislature in 1852

Changes spelling of name to Esry



CHILDREN OF JESSE & HANNAH:  
Total of 9 Children

Children moving to California in 1846:

Amanda	(Age 21)
James	(Age 20)
Justin	(Age 19)
Thomas	(Age 17)
Jonathan	(Age 15)

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Justin (Age 19)

Thomas (Age 17)

Jonathan (Age 15)



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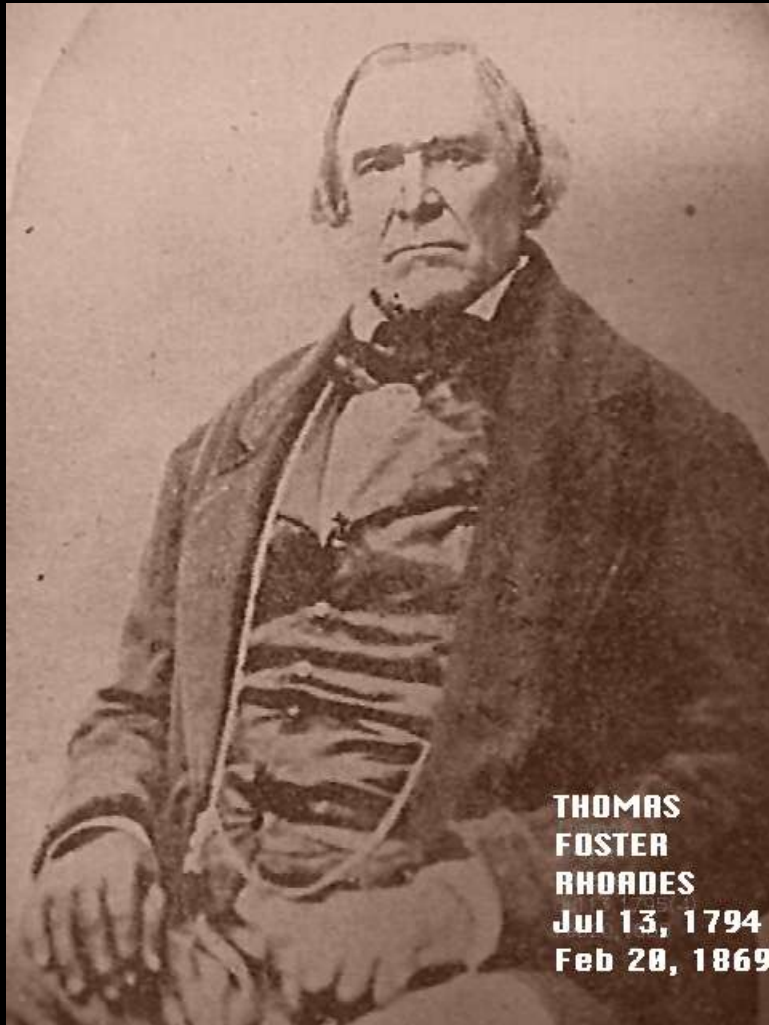
In 1849 John moved to California. (Age 21)

James returned to Missouri and fought in Civil War. He died of heat stroke during battle in Springfield Mo. and is buried there.

JESSE, HANNAH And OTHER CHILDREN  
REMAINED IN RAY COUNTY, MISSOURI.

JESSE DIED IN 1855





## **RHOADS (RHOADES) FAMILY**

**THOMAS FOSTER RHOADES**

Born: 1794 Died: 1869

Wife: Elizabeth

**RHOADES, ESREY & SHACKLEFORD  
FAMILIES MOVED FROM ILLINOIS TO  
MISSOURI & LIVED NEARBY.**

**1846: TRAVEL TO CALIFORNIA**

Thomas led the group totaling 46. (Half are  
Rhoads' family)

**INCLUDED THOMAS' 11**

**CHILDREN. Youngest son 12.**

**OTHER FAMILIES INCLUDED: Elder  
(3), Patterson (11), Fanning (2) & House (2)  
Families.**



THOMAS RHOADS, Son,

Daniel was married to  
Amanda Esrey, age 21 and  
pregnant.



LEFT ST. JOSEPH (NORTHWEST MISSOURI on Mo. River)  
Crossed Missouri River by Ferry April 7, 1846





No word of them until they reach Ft. Laramie, Wy. on June 15.

- . 700 miles traveled so far. Approx. 1300 more to go.

- . Amanda sends letter back to her folks in Missouri

- . Mentions having a tooth ache,

- . Indians stole cattle & oxen.

- . Daniel & Thomas got cattle replaced by Indian Agent

- . Indians ran off their horses and Rhoads, Patterson, and others gave chase.

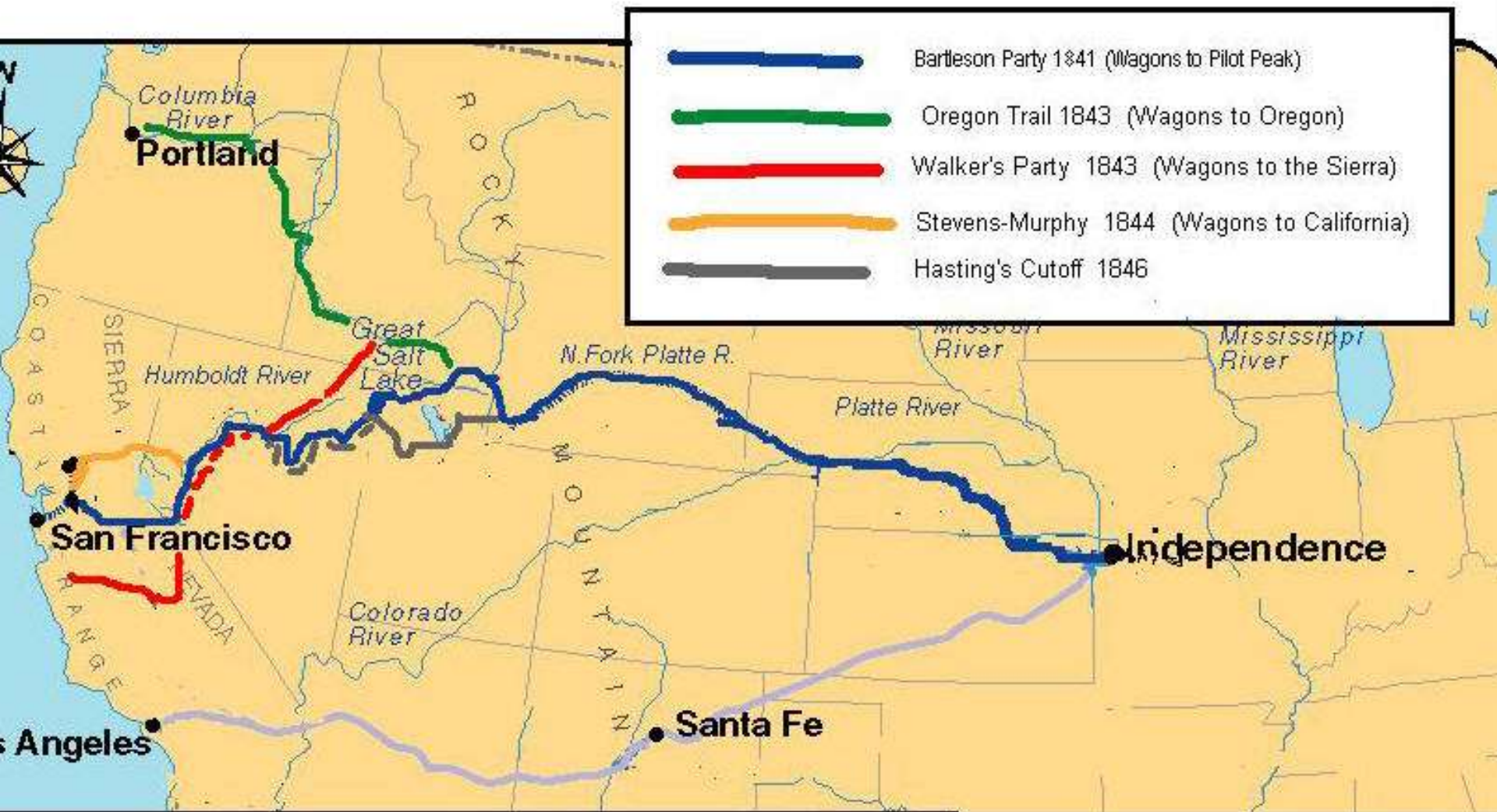
- . Lost total of 11 horses. Horses not of much use

- . Amanda says “*It is quite a pleasant trip so far*”.....???



Amanda says *"It is quite a pleasant trip so far".....???*

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL 1841-1846





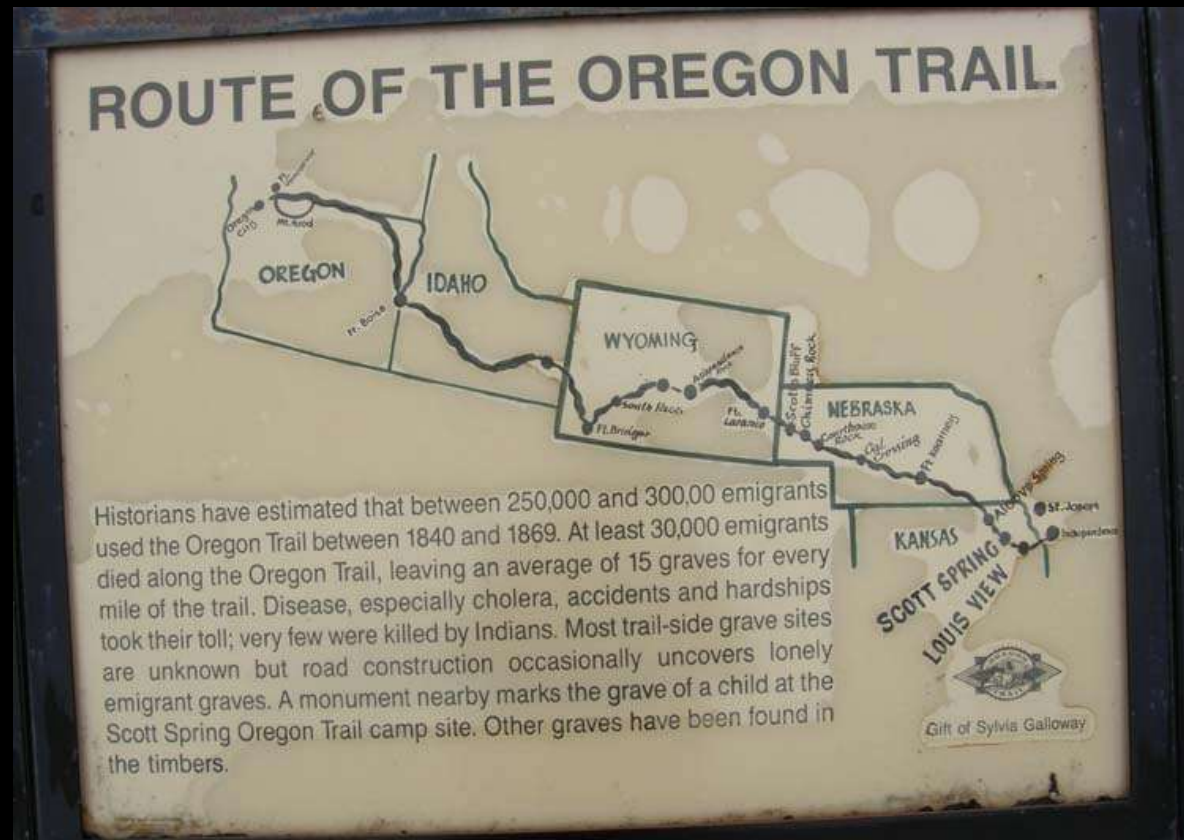
PLEASANT TRIP? 2,000 mile journey. Approx. 30,000 deaths That's 15 deaths per mile.

Amanda, in her letter, mentioned crossing the Kaw River (northwest Kansas) and the Blue River. This will be mentioned later in the Donner Party as they camped near the Blue when Sarah Keyes passed away. The first of the Donner Party to die.



DANIEL RHOADS ...Letter back to Jesse Esrey in Missouri 1847  
describing the trip:

- . Made the trip safely with only one death: Jonathan Patterson
- . Roads were good until reaching Truckee River, 350 miles from California. Crossed Truckee River 27 times in one day. The rocks in the river were the size of wash bowls.
- . Travel up the Cascade, 4 miles took 3 days.
- . “The oxen could be trailed from bottom to top by blood....”





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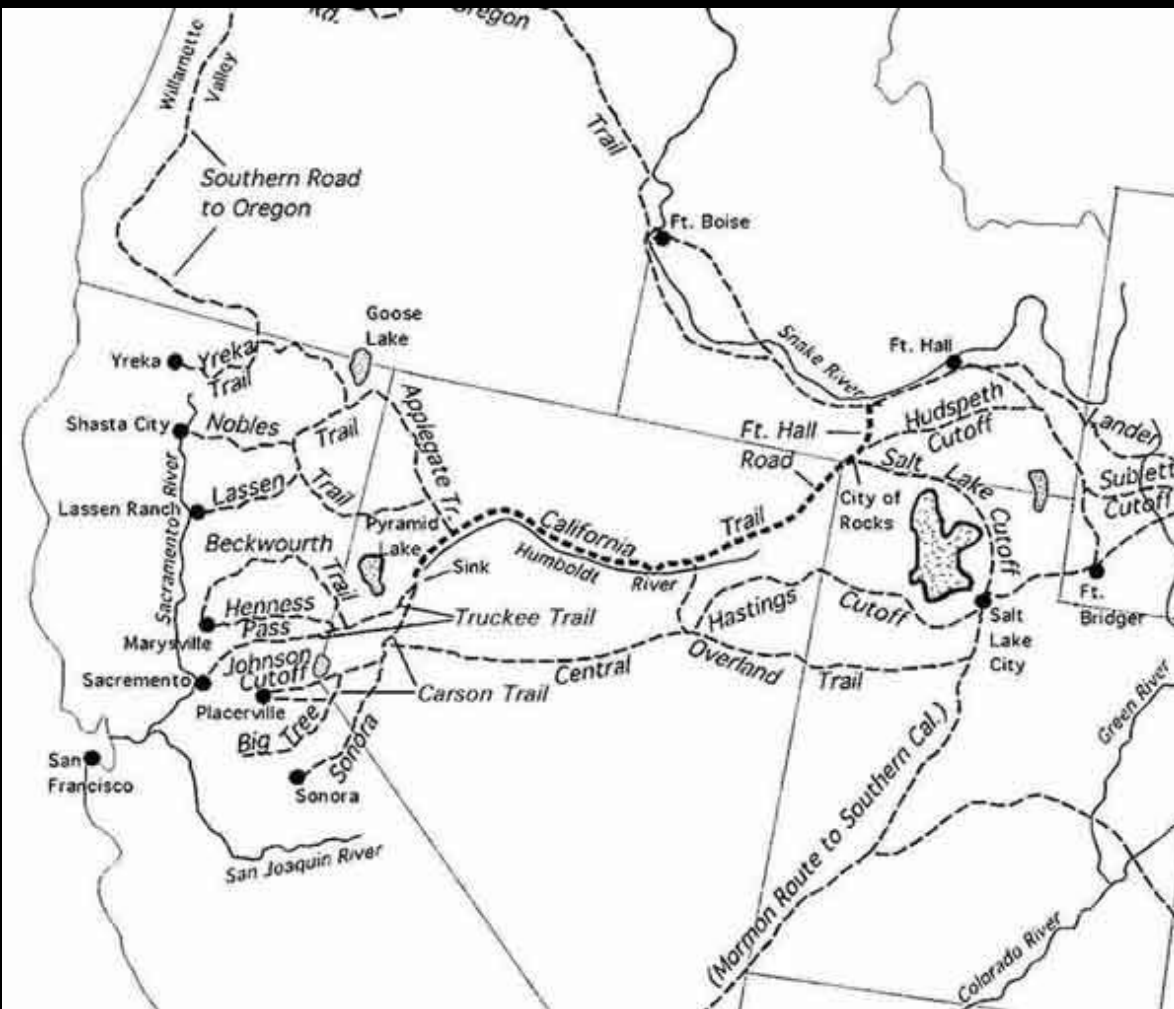
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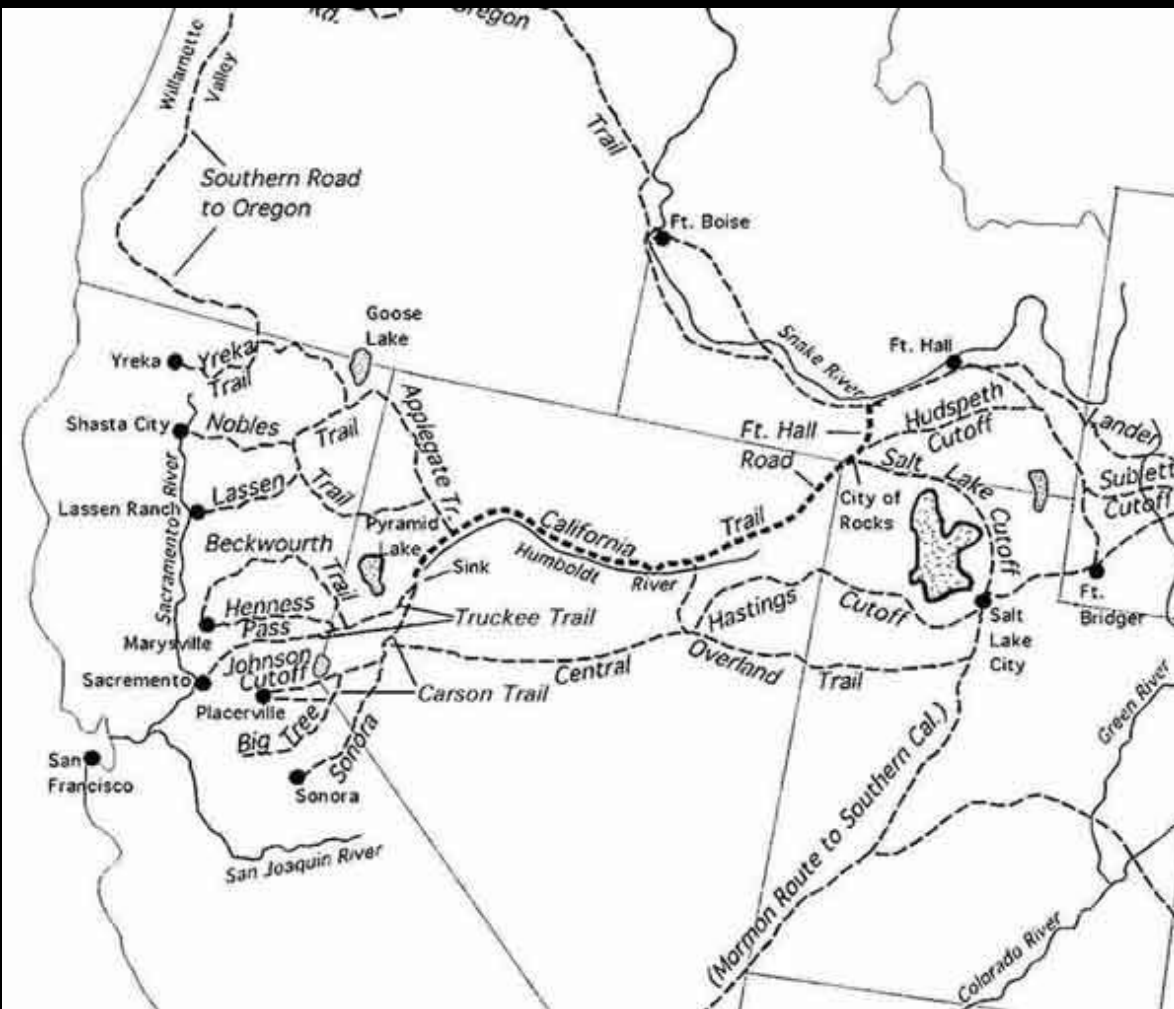




## CALIFORNIA ARRIVAL:

“Johnson’s Ranch” located near  
Sacramento California.

Early October. (Records  
indicate Oct. 1, 4 & 6th.)



About the same time the Rhoades group arrived, the Mexican War started. Important, as California needed to be part of the U. S., not Mexico. Most of the men joined the military. Daniel stayed and worked.

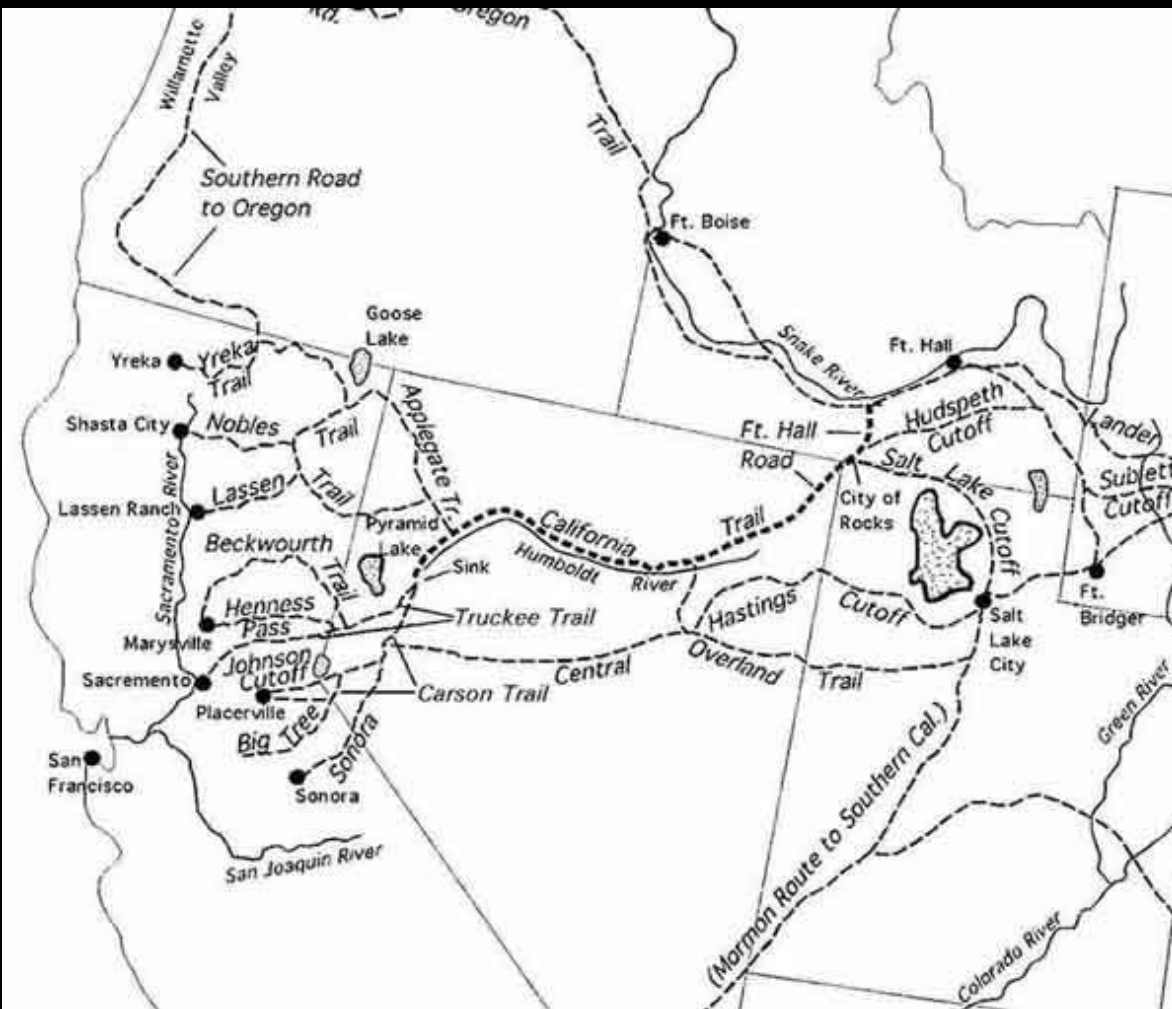
Word came in on Jan. 15 of the Donner Party being trapped. (Group of 18 souls started out, 5 men and 2 men made it.)



Many felt it would be a suicide mission, but Daniel was quoted as saying “We may die trying, but we can’t live with ourselves if we don’t try”.

Took 2 weeks to decide & prepare for rescue party. One guy had seen snow shoes. Made jerky and other food, gathered supplies and headed out.

15 men started on horseback. After about 15 miles snow too deep to proceed, so went on foot. 8 men turned back and only 7 continued with backpacks of food, including Daniel and Jonathan Rhoads.



FEBRUARY 5, 1847:

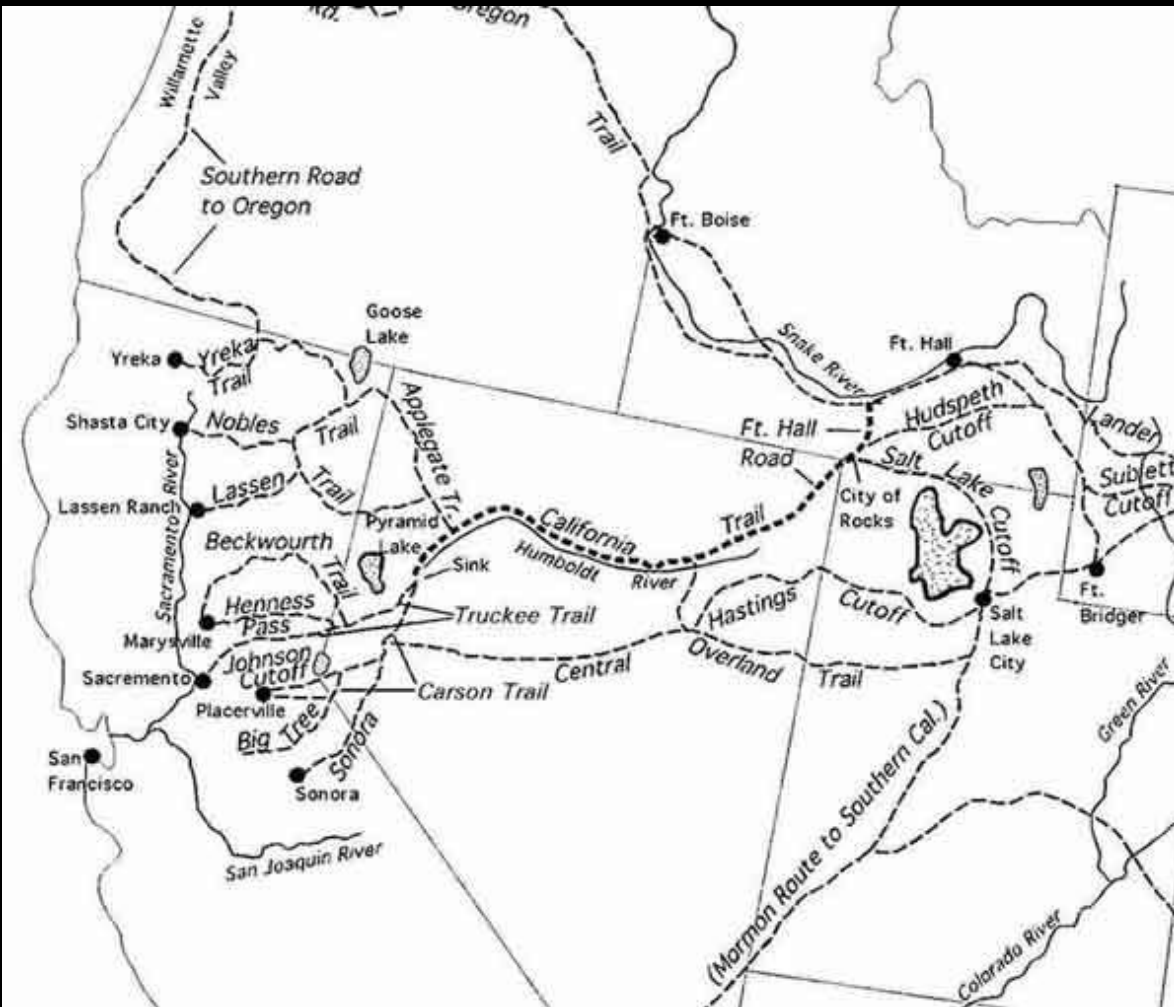
First Relief left Johnson's Ranch.

Traveled 4 to 10 miles per day for approx. 75 miles.

Hung caches of food in trees each day along the way for return.

Cut down tree-tops to mark pathway and burned for camp fires each evening.

Snow was 10 to 25 feet deep.



FEBRUARY 19:



Near sundown reached first cabins. Daniel account indicates: “On sunset on the 16th day we crossed Truckee Lake on the ice and came to the spot where we had been told we would find the immigrants....

We raised a loud “halloo” and then we saw a woman emerge from a hole in the snow. She spoke in a hollow voice “*are you men from California or did you come from heaven*”...

FEB. 22:

Left for California with 23 souls. 2 children were carried. One by Daniel Rhoades.

Along the return journey, they learned their caches of food were gone as it snowed more, wolves and bears got to their food.

Eventually, they were boiling their leather boot laces in water to make broth for nourishment.







MARCH 7:

Arrived back at  
Johnson's Ranch.

30 DAYS IN  
RECOVERY.

RESCUE PARTY WAS  
PAID \$5  
PER DAY.

**THERE WERE THREE  
MORE RESCUE  
PARTIES AFTER THIS  
ONE.**

**The fourth included  
Jonathan, Daniel's  
brother.**

**80 in original Donner  
Party. 44 Survived. 28  
men and 8 women  
perished.**

Years later they could still  
see the trees cut off at a line  
about 25 feet above the  
ground; showing how deep  
the snow was as the relief  
party traveled thru the  
snow.







## **DONNER PARTY EVENTS:**

**Left Springfield Ill. April  
14 or 15, 1846**

**Left Independence Mo.  
(suburb to east of Kansas  
City) May 12.**

**A full two weeks later  
than recommended.**



**Arrived Alcove Springs,  
Ks. (Northeastern  
Kansas) May 26.**

**Waited three days for  
swollen Blue River to go  
down.**

**May 29, Mrs. Sarah Keys  
(Mother of Mrs. Reed)  
died.**

**With burial, and building  
raft, it was May 31 before  
Blue River was crossed.  
(lost 5 days)**





**July 4,  
rested. Celebrated, and  
toasted family/friends to  
the East.**

**Rested again from their  
“celebration” on Sunday,  
July 5.  
(Lost 2 days)**

**Hastings Cutoff: Were  
warned three separate  
times to take standard  
route.**

**Taking Hastings “Cutoff”  
added 70 miles and at  
least 4 days longer, as well  
as wear and tear on oxen,  
equipment and travelers.**

Trapped: November 1

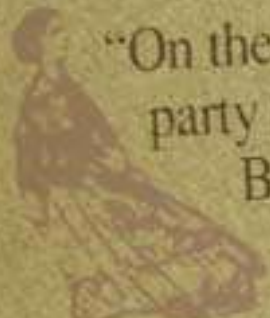
One more day and they would have been over the top of the mountain,  
and on their way the last 75 miles.





*Virginia Reed Murphy, aged 13 in 1846:*

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 "On the evening of February 19th, 1847, the first relief party reached our cabins, where all were starving....


But with the joy, sorrow was strangely blended.

There were tears in other eyes than those of children; strong men sat down and wept. For the dead were lying about on the snow, some even unburied, since the living had not the strength to bury their dead....

"Out of th 83 persons who were snowed in at Donner Lake, 42 perished, and of the 31 emigrants who left Springfield, Illinois, that spring morning, only 18 lived to reach California."

*George McKinstry (1847):*

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 "On the 20th..."

## **RHOADES & ESREY'S AFTER RESCUE:**

Summer of 47 & 48: Daniel amassed \$8,000 in gold

Bought ranch and cattle near Sacramento.

1850 Daniel and Amanda traveled back to Ray Co., Mo.

Traveled to San Francisco and boarded a ship

Sailed to Panama and rode wagon across narrow part

Boarded ship from Panama to New Orleans

Took steamboat up Mississippi to St. Louis

Took steamboat up Missouri River to Ray Co.

Rode some 10 miles in wagon from river to Jesse

Esrey's farm near Hardin, Mo. (Ray County)



## **RHOADES & ESREY'S AFTER RESCUE:**

Late 1850 Daniel and Amanda returned to California, again near Sacramento.

Living there in Feb. of 1852 when Brother Jonathan came with children and word that his wife has passed away.

Daniel and Amanda raised four of Jonathan's children as their own. Thus the name "Uncle Dan" that he lived with.

Drought in the area caused Daniel, Jonathan Esrey and Justin Esrey to look elsewhere for land to raise cattle.

Jonathan & Justin have been mining for Gold at the time.

1857: Moved from near Sacramento south to near Fresno (present day Lemoore, California. Had a large cattle farm there.

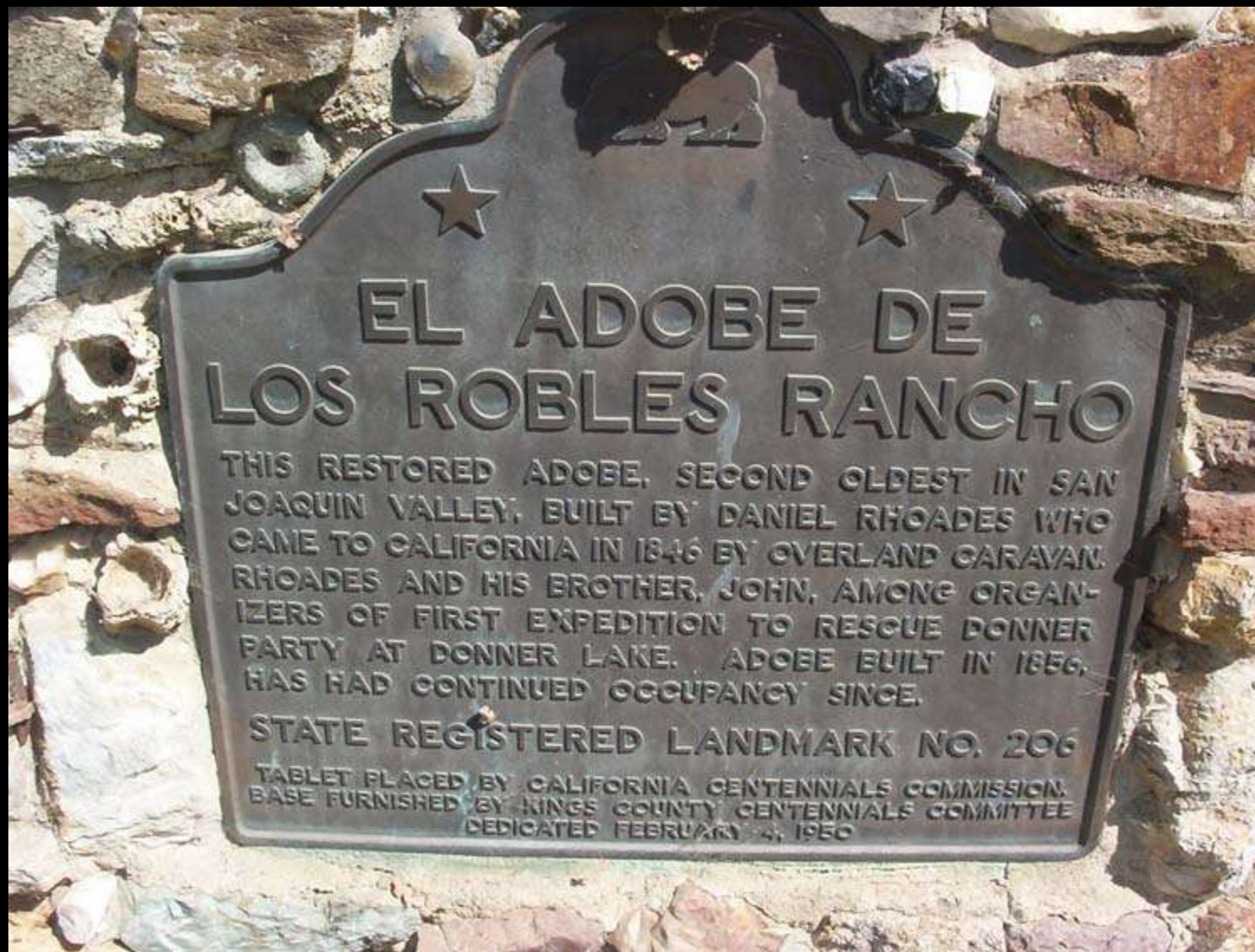
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During visit to Adobe in 2004, the interior was just as it was left when they moved.

Photos hanging on the wall

Furniture in place

Daniel's cane leaning against the Fireplace



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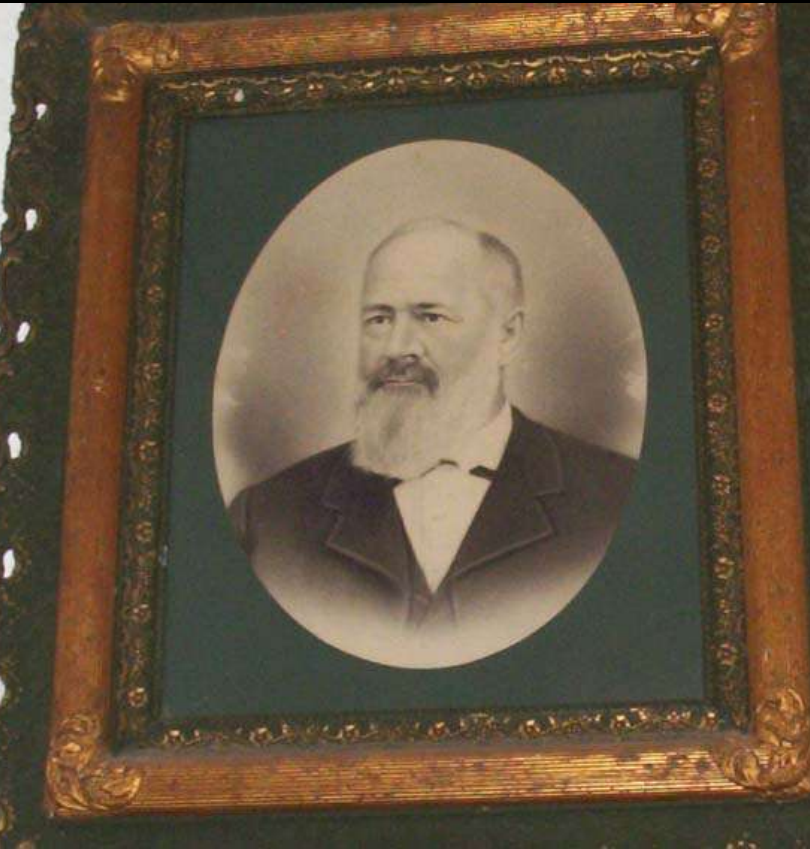


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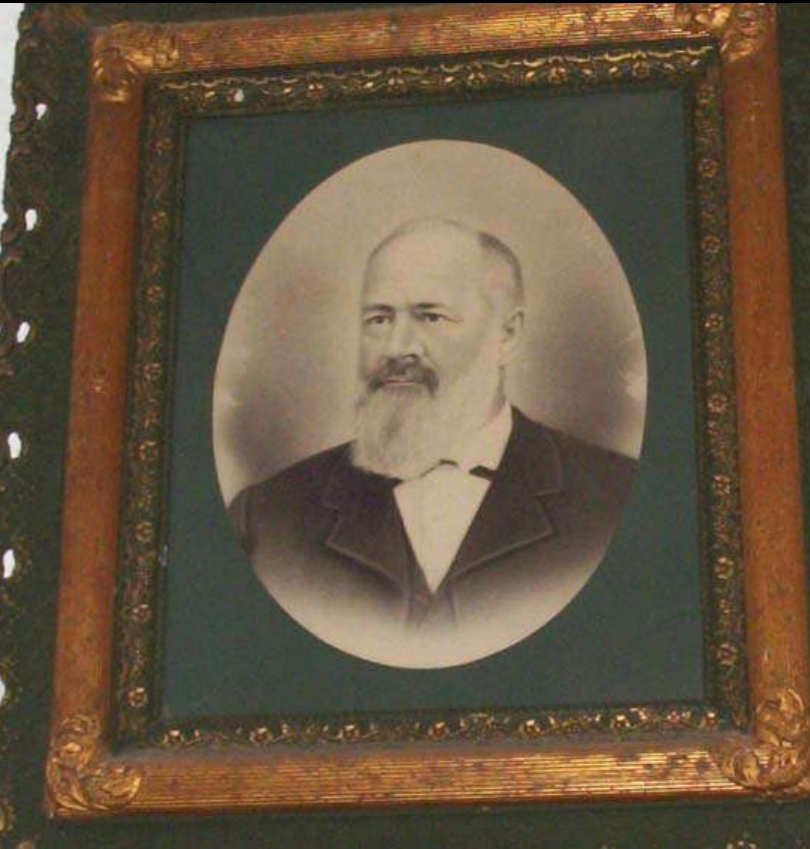


Daniel was president of bank of Lemoore and Vice President of bank of Hanford.

Well respected for his contributions to the area.

DANIEL RHOADS DIED 1896, AGE 76

AMANDA DIED TEN YEARS LATER, 1906 AT AGE 81





Jonathan and Justin moved to the area as well and bought land to raise cattle. They donated the land and funds to build first school in Lemoore.

### FAMILY CEMETERY:

- . Fell into disrepair, and restored in 2002
- . Daniel & Amanda buried in mausoleum
- . About 20 graves in center of farm field
- . Justin buried there when he died in 1900



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FAST FORWARD TO CURRENT DAY.

2004: Samantha and family moved to Lemoore.

We visited and found “The Adobe” and Family Cemetery.



# KINGS COUNTY CALIF. HISTORIC HOME VISIT

Director busy until I told her my name.

Then, “I can you meet me there in 30 minutes”.





Learned about history of the area, including the respect of the names Esrey and Rhoads.

Visited Historical Home and saw records of the family as well as quilt made in 1886 showing names of significant residents of Lemoore at that time. Names include:





## 8 Esrey's:

- . **Jesse Esrey**
- . **Nannie Esrey**
- . **Jesse Esrey Jr.**
- . **Thomas Esrey**
- . **Kate Esrey**
- . **Mrs. Thomas Esrey**
- . **Jonathan Esrey**
- . **Justin Esrey**

## 7 Rhoads:

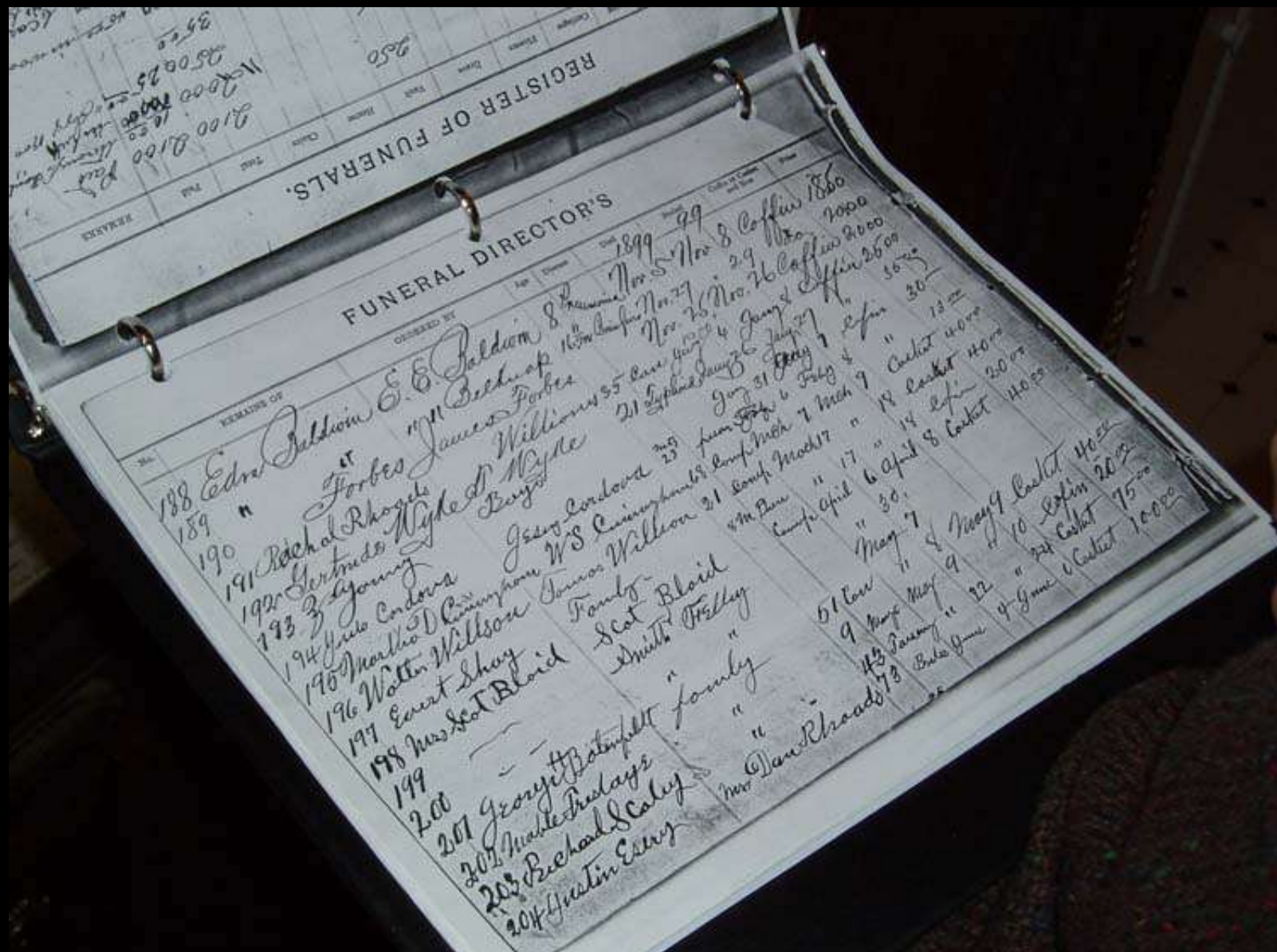
- . Amanda Rhoads
- . Elvira Rhoads
- . E. B. Rhoads
- . John W. Rhoads
- . Lu Lu Rhoads
- . Mary Rhoads
- . Rosa Rhoads

ONLY MADE IN 1936 BY MISS G. W. POLLETT		
names are on top		
Anderson, Mrs. E.	Buckner, L.H.	Evans, Jesse, Jr.
Allen, W. E.	Buckner, Andy	Evans, Jessie (Ma)
Armstrong, W.	Burns, Mrs. Anne	Evans, Jonathan
Ashford, Mrs. E.	Cady, J. A.	Evans, Josiah
Atkinson, Joe	Edick, C. J.	Evans, Mrs. Nancy
Beale, Mr. E.	Edick, A. C.	Evans, T.
Barnes, Charlie	Evans, B. W.	Evans, Mrs. T.
Barr, James, Jr.	Evans, L. H.	Feld, J. T.
Beaver, Mr. H.	Evans, Oliver A.	Hamm, J. R.
Beaver, Mrs. A.	Evans, Rosina A.	Hicks, H. W.
Beaver, Mrs. J. A.	Garfield, M.	Jewell, A. H.
Beaver, Mr. J. W.	Garlin, Clarence	Kim, Emma
Beaver, Mrs. Kate	Grampson, Mr. A. C.	Kiss, Isaac
Beaver, Mrs. J. W.	Grampson, Mrs. Georgia	Kiss, J. H.
Berke, W. A.	Grampson, Robert	Kiss, Frank
Berke, C. H.	Gunn, Bert	Kiss, Frank E.
Bert, Ralph	Gunn, Clara	Kiss, Joel A.
Beth, Mr. H.	Gunn, D. L.	Kiss, Julius A.
Beth, Mrs. H.	Harley, T. J.	Kiss, Sarah G.
Benton, Mrs. John	Hopeland, C. W.	Kiss, Mrs. J. H.
Brown, O. C.	Hopeland, J.	Pratt, Edith
Brown, Frank	Hopeland, Nellie	Reinhart, R. W.
Brown, Mrs. E. J.	Hopeland, James	Renshaw, G. W.
Burn, Mr. A.	Owen, Frank	Renshaw, Mrs. C.
Bowman, J. A.	Quay, Mrs. R.	Renshaw, Lulu
Brownson, A.	Quay, Mrs. E.	Garrett, James
Brownson, Louis	Quinnigan, W. J.	Garrett, Maria
Brownson, Mabel	Ruggery, F. B.	Garrett, W. J.
Brownson, Minnie	Sadoun, Mrs. Lou	Gillis, J.
Brownson, Lillie	Sadoun, M. J.	Giss, Mrs. M.
Brownson, Mr. D.	Sadoun, A.	Giss, A. W.
Brownson, Mrs. D.	Sadoun, S. P. M.D.	Giss, Ida
Brownson, Mrs. Sam	Sadoun, Mrs. S. P.	Giss, William
(Child)	Sadoun, S. C.	Giss, Edna
Brownson, Olive	Sadoun, Mrs. Aggie	Giss, Mabel
Brownson, Lillian	Sadoun, Jesse	Giss, Mrs. J.

[illegible]

# HAND WRITTEN FUNERAL DIRECTOR NOTEBOOK

Name of Justin Esrey. Died June 4, 1900



# VISIT TO RAY COUNTY MISSOURI:

August 2007 visited Richmond, Mo. (County seat of Ray County) and the Lavelock Cemetery, where Esreys & Rhoads are buried.





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# VISIT TO RAY COUNTY MISSOURI:

One of the windows of  
the chapel donated by  
Niles Esrey



FUTURE:

CONTINUE TO DO MORE RESEARCH, AND SEE WHAT WE  
ENCOUNTER.

OCTOBER, 2010 SAMANTHA AND I ARE HEADING WEST,  
FOLLOWING THE OREGON TRAIL AS FAR AS WE CAN ON OUR WAY  
TO SEATTLE.

WE PLAN TO STOP AT FT. LARAMIE TO SEE WHERE AMANDA AND  
DANIEL RHOADS STOPPED ON THEIR WAY OUT WEST.





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