

Name _____ Date _____

Setting



The trip west was dangerous and difficult for many settlers. The following is how Calamity Jane, a famous adventurer, described her childhood trip to Montana.

My Trip West

from *Life and Adventures of Calamity Jane* by
Calamity Jane (Martha Cannary Burk)



I was born in Princeton, Missouri, May 1st, 1852. I had two brothers and three sisters, I being the oldest of the children. As a child I always had a fondness for adventure, out-door exercise, and horses, which I began to ride at an early age. I became an expert rider, being able to ride the most stubborn of horses.

In 1865 we emigrated from our homes in Missouri by the overland route to Virginia City, Montana, taking five months to make the journey. While on the way the greater portion of my time was spent in hunting along with the men and hunters of the party. I

was at all times with the men when there was excitement and adventures to be had.

I remember many occurrences on the journey from Missouri to Montana. Many times in crossing the mountains, the conditions of the trail were so bad that we frequently had to lower the wagons over ledges by hand with ropes, for they were so rough and rugged that horses were of no use. We also had many exciting times fording streams noted for quick-sands and boggy places, where, unless we were very careful, we would have lost horses and all. Then we had many dangers to encounter in the way of streams swelling on account of heavy rains. On occasions of that kind, the men would usually select the best places to cross the streams, myself on more than one occasion have mounted my pony and swam across the stream several times merely to amuse myself.

As the pioneers of those days had plenty of courage we overcame all obstacles and reached Virginia City in safety.