

CIRCULAR.

TO THE OREGON EMIGRANTS.

GENTLEMEN :

It being made my duty, as Superintendent of Indian affairs, by an Act passed by the Legislature of Oregon, "to give such instructions and directions to Emigrants to this Territory, in regard to their conduct towards the natives, by the observance of which, they will be most likely to maintain and promote peace and friendship between them and the Indian tribes through which they may pass," allow me to say in the first place, that the Indians on the old road to this country, are friendly to the whites. They should be treated with kindness on all occasions. As Indians are inclined to steal, keep them out of your camps. If one or two are admitted, watch them closely. Notwithstanding the Indians are friendly, it is best to keep in good sized companies while passing through their country. Small parties of two or three are sometimes stripped of their property while on their way to this Territory, perhaps because a preceding party promised to pay the Indians for something had of them, and failed to fulfil their promise. This will show you the necessity of keeping your word with them in all cases.

There is another subject upon which I would say a few words. A number of the emigrants of 1845 took a cut off, as it is called, to shorten the route, leaving the old road; the consequence was, they were later getting in, lost their property, and many lost their lives. Some of those who reached the settlements, were so broken down by sickness, that it was some months before they recovered sufficient strength to labor.

A portion of the emigrants of 1845 took a new route, called the southern route. This proved very disastrous to all those who took it. Some of the emigrants that kept on the old road, reached this place as early as the 13th of September, with their wagons, and all got in, in good season, with their wagons and property, I believe, except a few of the last party. While those that took the southern route, were very late in reaching the settlements—they all lost more or less of their property—many of them losing all they had and barely getting in with their lives; a few families were obliged to winter in the Umpqua mountains, not being able to reach the settlements.

I would therefore recommend you to keep the old road. A better way may be found, but it is not best for men with wagons and families to try the experiment.

My remarks are brief, but I hope may prove beneficial to you.

Dated at Oregon City, this 22d of April, 1847.

GEO. ABERNETHY,

GOVERNOR OF OREGON TERRITORY AND }
SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS. }

CIRCULAR

TO THE OREGON EMIGRANTS.

GENTLEMEN:

It being made my duty, as a representative of Indian Affairs, by an Act passed by the Legislature of Oregon, "to give such instructions and directions to Emigrants to this Territory, in regard to their conduct towards the natives, by the observance of which, they will be most likely to maintain and promote peace and friendship between them and the Indian tribes, through which they may pass," allow me to say in the first place, that the Indians of the old road to this country, are friendly to the whites. They should be treated with kindness on all occasions. As Indians are inclined to steal, keep them out of your camp. If one or two are admitted, watch them closely. Notwithstanding the Indians are friendly, it is better to keep in good sized companies while passing through their country. Be all of one or two or three are sometimes stripped of their property while on their way to the Territory, perhaps because a preceding party promised to pay the Indians for carrying part of them, and failed to fulfil their promise. This will show you the necessity of keeping your word with them in all cases.

There is another subject upon which I would say a few words. A number of the emigrants of 1817 took a route, as it is called, through the mountains, and many lost their lives. Some of those who reached the southern route were taken down by sickness, that it was so much better than the route which they had taken. A portion of the emigrants of 1817 took a new route, called the southern route. This proved very disastrous to all those who took it. Some of the emigrants that kept on the old road, reached the place as early as the 13th of September, with their wives and all got in, in good season, with their wives and property. I believe, except a few of the last party. While those that took the southern route were very late in reaching the settlements—they all lost more or less of their property—many of them losing all they had and barely getting in with their lives; a few families were obliged to winter in the Umpqua mountains, not being able to reach the settlements. I would therefore recommend you to keep the old road. A better way may be found, but it is not best for men with wives and families to try the experiment. My remarks are brief, but I hope they will prove beneficial to you.

Dated at Oregon City, this 27th of April, 1817.

GEN. ASBETHY,
GOVERNOR OF OREGON TERRITORY AND
SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

My Dear Mr. Belknap