



Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party

By George R. Stewart

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The tragedy of the Donner party constitutes one of the most amazing stories of the American West. In 1846 eighty-seven people -- men, women, and children -- set out for California, persuaded to attempt a new overland route. After struggling across the desert, losing many oxen, and nearly dying of thirst, they reached the very summit of the Sierras, only to be trapped by blinding snow and bitter storms. Many perished; some survived by resorting to cannibalism; all were subjected to unbearable suffering. Incorporating the diaries of the survivors and other contemporary documents, George Stewart wrote the definitive history of that ill-fated band of pioneers; an astonishing account of what human beings may endure and achieve in the final press of circumstance.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Ordeal by Hunger* is compulsive reading -- a wonderful account, both scholarly and gripping, of a horrifying episode in the history of the west." --Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning author

"Excellent." --*New York Times*

"The tale comes to life in horror and tragedy. Stewart writes swiftly, surely, dramatically, and with impartial accuracy. Almost every member of the party is re-created with skill and sympathy." -- *Saturday Review*

"Expertly read by (audiobook narrator) Jeff Rigenbach, the tale retains its freshness and power 150 years later. Rigenbach reads the stark story with authority, clarity and richness." --*AudioFile*

"(Audiobook narrator) Rigenbach's professional, unvoiced presentation provides the appropriately serious reactions and allows the listener to deal with the facts with compassion. Although grisly, the account is sympathetic and not ghoulish. Carefully researched, it illustrates how unbelievably strong the will to survive is." --*Kliatt*

About the Author

George R. Stewart (1895-1980) taught for more than fifty years at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Pickett's Charge*, *Earth Abides*, and numerous other books of history, biography, and fiction.

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The Donner Party went west in 1846, relying on a shyster's faulty map. When they were trapped by early snow in the Sierra Nevadas, they turned to cannibalism to stay alive. Expertly read by Jeff Rigenbach, the tale retains its freshness and power 150 years later. Rigenbach reads the stark story with authority, clarity and richness. The production values are good; only an occasional, minor sound error can be heard. The book is easy to follow and, given its length, is surprisingly engaging. R.I.G. (c)AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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