

How Did the Expedition **JOURNEY** Across The Great Plains?

2009 Translation by Nielsen/Williams

1. **8 GÖTALANDERS AND 22 NORTHMAN ON**
2. **ACQUISTION **JOURNEY** FROM**
3. **VINLAND FAR TO THE WEST. WE**
4. **HAD A CAMP BY 2 HUTS ONE**
5. **DAY'S **JOURNEY** NORTH FROM THIS STONE.**
6. **WE WERE OUT FISHING ONE DAY. AFTER**
7. **WE CAME HOME WE FOUND 10 MEN RED**
8. **FROM BLOOD AND DEATH. AVE VIRGO MARIA**
9. **SAVE FROM EVIL**
10. **THERE ARE 10 MEN BY THE INLAND SEA TO LOOK**
11. **AFTER OUR SHIPS 14 DAY'S **JOURNEY****
12. **FROM THIS PENINSULA YEAR 1362**

The Expedition needed to transport a significant amount of supplies and provisions overland from the south side of Lake Winnipeg to the Kensington Runestone discovery site and beyond, to their final destination. Also, on the return **JOURNEY** to Lake Winnipeg. Probably hundreds of pounds per man. Carrying them would be limited to about seventy-five pounds per man. If they are ill or injured and unable to walk, they cannot be abandoned and left behind. This was not a logical way of travel. The only possible way of transporting this amount of supplies was by using carts or wagons, transporting animals such as donkeys or mules with fodder and water, and shipping them across the open sea to Hudson's Bay. Then by boat up the Nelson River and across Lake Winnipeg is an impossibility. Also, any animal requires maintenance and is just not practical. How could they possibly transport hundreds of pounds of supplies per man to **JOURNEY** across the Great Plains? The only possible method is the use of **Handcarts**.





People have been using carts ever since the invention of the wheel. The fundamental form of carts has not changed since antiquity, whether they are drawn by horses, donkeys, or oxen. They are known as handcarts when they are pulled by people. Handcarts were utilized by cultures in North Africa, Asia, and Europe. being commonly used for transporting produce and goods from farms, marketplaces, and fields as well as people, goods, and merchandise in towns and cities.

WW1 French Refuges 1914



This reconstructed cart was found in a ruined house destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. in Pompeii, Italy. It has bronze and iron fitting. The wheel rims are made of iron. It could be pulled by a person with a slight design change. The basic design is the same. The handcarts used by the Expedition might resemble this 2000-year-old Roman cart.

The Expedition was the first to use handcarts to journey across the Great Plains, though it wasn't the last. It was also done by others about 500 years later. From 1856 to 1860, about 3,000 Mormons from Great Britain and Scandinavia, in ten expeditions, traveled the 1,300-mile, 65 days route from Iowa City, Iowa, across the Great Plains to Salt Lake City, Utah. They primarily used handcarts to transport their food, supplies, possessions, and people who couldn't walk. They are known as the Mormon Handcart Pioneers. (*Wikipedia: [Mormon Handcart Pioneers](#)*) Their journey is still celebrated today with reenactments by members of the Mormon Church.



(Photo's Courtesy of Church of Latter-Day Saints)

Custom Wagon Wheels of Lexington, Ohio makes the Mormon handcarts that are used in reenactments. Specifications for the handcart include its weight of 150 pounds and load capacity of 800 pounds. This is an estimate of the weight that the handcarts on the Expedition could transport.



(Photo's courtesy of Custom Wagon Wheels)

Using the specifications from *Custom Wagon Wheels*, a handcart can carry a load of 800 pounds. Two men could easily push and pull a handcart. That comes to 400 pounds of supplies per man. Any person that could no longer walk could easily be transported. A good chance it would have a canvas covering like many of the Mormon handcarts had and could be used as a shelter. At night, they could store their supplies under the cart protected from the elements and sleep on the cart's bed under the canvas, sort of a 14th-century camper.



All or part of the handcarts could be transported by boats up the Nelson River from Hudson's Bay. (Essay: [How Did the Expedition Journey on The Inland Waterways?](#)) & (Wikipedia: [York Boats](#)) At portages between watersheds, handcarts could facilitate in the land transportation of boats, canoes, provisions, and supplies, until the following navigable waterway is reached. They could have just transported the wheels and axles and built the rest of the cart from the local wood when they reached the south side of Lake Winnipeg. It would be reasonably easy to push and pull the handcarts on the grassland and fording shallow waterways on the Great Plains. The Expeditions method of transporting supplies and provisions was the use of handcarts. Five hundred years later, on the Great Plains, the Mormon Handcart Pioneers repeated this same method ten times.

The landscape of the Eastern Great Plains (*Wikipedia: [Oak Savanna](#)*) that the Expedition traveled across must have looked like the early photos below. An endless sea of thick grass, hills, lakes, and wetlands, with clusters of oak trees.



Railroad survey crew overlooking the new settlement of Glenwood in 1871, fourteen miles from Runestone Hill.

*(The original black and white photo courtesy of Pope County Historical Society.)
(Photo colorized for clarity by Wayne Gorian)*



The new settlement of Glenwood on Lake Minnewaska in 1869, fourteen miles from Runestone Hill.

*(The original black and white photo courtesy of Pope County Historical Society.)
(Photo colorized for clarity by Wayne Gorian)*

The essay "[What Is the Inland Sea?](#)" shows a "**DAYS JOURNEY**" that historically traveling by walking is between 20 to 25 miles per day. (*Wikipedia: [Day's Journey](#)*) The Expedition distance journeyed by walking with handcarts from the south side of Lake Winnipeg to Runestone Hill is **320 miles**. Divided by "**14 DAYS JOURNEY**" equals **22.8 miles per day**. Right in the middle of the historical 20 to 25 miles per day.

The Mormon Handcart Pioneers' journey from Iowa City to Salt Lake City is 1300 miles and would take an average of 65 days to travel. Subtracting the days of rest on Sabbath would total **56 "Day's Journey."** 1300 miles divided by **56 "Day's Journey"** equals **23.2 miles per day**. It is a historical record the Mormon Handcart Pioneers averaged **23.2 miles per day** with handcarts. The Expedition averaged **22.8 miles per day**, with handcarts from Lake Winnipeg to Runestone Hill. The distance traveled per day is basically the same. This is additional mathematical proof that the Expedition crossed the Great Plains using handcarts.



(United States Park Service)

How did The Expedition **JOURNEY** Across the Great Plains? **Walking With Handcarts**