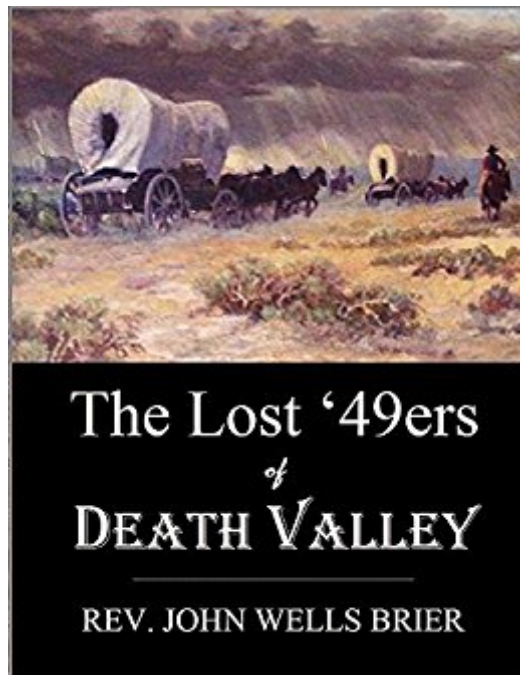




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The Lost 49ers Of Death Valley: A Survivor's True Story



Synopsis

Rev John Wells Brier (1843 - 1914) was a "49er" who traveled to California in 1849. On the 4th of 1903, a rather wonderful little reunion was held at Lodi, Cal. There three old people, who had not seen one another for 53 years, met to celebrate the anniversary of the day when they and their comrades, the pitiful, starving remnants of the Jayhawkers of the historic Death Valley party, staggered forth from the last defile of the grisly desert on which they had wandered lost for months, and were safe in "God's Country." It was Feb. 4, 1850, that the 16-year-old scout, sent ahead by the despairing and perishing immigrants, found at last a human habitation, and brought them to the noble hospitality of the San Francisquito rancho, where they were tenderly nursed back to life. The ruins of the old adobe ranch-house can still be traced near where the Southern California village of Newhall, and the railroad station of Saugus, are today. The boy scout in 1903 was a gaunt and grizzled veteran - Capt. J. B. Colton, of Kansas City. He had been record-keeper of the Jayhawkers ever since; and had filled a stack of bulky scrapbooks with all sorts of matter concerning, and relating to, that famous journey. With the single exception of the "Donner party," it was the most fearful overland trip in our history. Much concerning it will presently find place in these pages. Thanks to Capt. Colton, too, the survivors of that heroic episode have been kept in touch. This Lodi meeting was the 31st reunion he has held of the dwindling and far scattered survivors on the anniversary of their great deliverance. In 1903, only seven of the 36 original Jayhawkers were still living; but every year Capt. Colton got to the remote home of some one of them : and perhaps one or two others are able to come from afar; and the rest send letters. The Lodi meeting was at the home of Mrs. J. H. Brier, that wonderful little woman who, with her husband, and three little boys, the oldest nine, the youngest only four years old, shared the indescribable horrors of that wandering ; thanks to her magnificent pluck, and to the manly devotion of the Jayhawkers " who admitted the Briers to their party when the big caravan broke up soon after leaving Salt Lake. The husband " who preached the first Protestant sermon in Los Angeles, soon after their miraculous escape, and was for years a famous Methodist pioneer missionary in California " died several years before 1903. Mrs. Brier, at almost 90, in 1903 was still active and alert. The six-year old boy who trudged beside her that deadly way, and rested on her heroic breast, is now Rev. J. W. Brier, who wrote, in 1902, the following reminiscences of what was so sharply burned in upon his childish mind. HIS is a record of such events of an awful four months, journey from the Mormon village at Salt Lake to the Spanish pueblo at Los Angeles as stamped themselves so deeply on the memory of a six-year-old lad that they stand out clear and vivid after more than half a century. This book originally published in 1903 has been reformatted for the kindle and may contain an

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