

Report on the donner party disaster

[History](#)



The paper "The Donner Party Disaster" is a thrilling example of a case study on history. The Donner Party Disaster is one which raises several questions and issues because of the surrounding circumstances and mistakes which happened on the journey. While there were several which may have been responsible for the damage, it should also be noted that there were several unknown circumstances which arose and which many couldn't respond to. Defining the events, circumstances and the effects which occurred can also create a deeper understanding of what occurred and how the matter should be looked into. This will help to justify the tragedy and create an understanding of the dangers that come with traveling to California.

The Donner Party disaster began in 1846 with 500 wagons that decided to move west for independence and to be a part of the growth in California. This was based on the ideology of creating a large Catholic community and with the concept of Manifest Destiny as a part of the application. The proposal of the route was defined first by George Donner, who was going west to help with rebuilding a life in which Catholic beliefs could easily be practiced. It was also associated with James Reed who was interested in helping with his wife's recovery, who was suffering from tuberculosis. The leader of the group through Wyoming was William Russell who set the route for all 500 wagons. This created the first problem, which was a delay because of an uprising in the river and which caused many to reconsider the approach needed to cross the river (McGlashan, p. 16). This first problem which arose was one of circumstance but what is led to the final outcome of the event.

The initial problem with the route was defined when Hastings sent letters to emigrants interested in starting a new wife. The experience which Hastings had also created a recommendation to start a new route and to travel in large groups. However, this explanation didn't provide information on what the new route should be with most of the territory being unexplored. This was followed by the leaders who tried to work on the trailer, including Donner, Bryant and Jim Bridger. The approach which was taken was to avoid hostile Indians and to take an approach based on an easier route than Hastings took. Similar to the first problem, the decision made by all leaders was based on finding a simpler route and looking for solutions to the main problem. From this perspective, none can be blamed over the unknown circumstances which were faced. Hastings was also riding ahead with the new trail, specifically to assist with the difficulties; however, the objective of getting over the mountain passes led most with the need to continue to move through the journey. It was the leadership that was based on a difficult journey that led to mishaps and difficulties during the travels (Rarick, p. 11).

The last consideration to make was when the families began to split on the journey. This is key to the outcome of the tragedy, specifically beginning with the distrust between Reed, Donner and the Eddys. The first problem was circumstantial, specifically because the families had to try to move before the snow fell. The decision to disperse instead of the ride together because of the growing distrust was the largest mistake made. This was followed by the families getting stuck in a blizzard, which was also circumstantial and led to the desperation of those in the mountains to eating each other's flesh. When looking at the diaries and other pieces of evidence, <https://assignbuster.com/report-on-the-donner-party-disaster/>

each points to the blizzard as the main problem, which led to the lack of a crew coming to save the emigrants and a lack of capabilities in trying to move forward (Stewart, p. 21).

When looking at the circumstances, it can be seen that there was no fault that took place among those who were trying to make it to the west. The circumstances of weather, taking in a new path and trying to find easier routes for travel were all situations which could not be helped. Holding the Donners or others responsible for the unknown then becomes problematic. This is combined with the misunderstandings of the lack of safety that took place. At the same time, there are too many unknown events of why the families split and were held back from making it over the mountain in time. This could have been circumstantial or could have been because of human error; however, no one can explain what happened. The references available don't help in creating a deeper understanding of what occurred and those who have survived can't clearly define blame.

The problems which arose with the travels to the west by the Donners Party can easily be defined as a tragedy. This not only comes from the hardships which occurred with the journey but also because of the lack of assistance and problems which arose. However, there isn't enough conclusive evidence to place blame on anyone traveling. Most of the situation was circumstantial, including traveling to the unknown parts of the west without guidance and having to move around the paths which had not been created. Combining this with the circumstances of the weather and several drawbacks can also be attributed to the problems which arose. The leaders of the party, while coming to some disagreements, were only trying to assist in the travels and

to reach the destiny desired. In this instance, no one can be found at fault for the tragedy which occurred.