California National Historic Trail
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon-California Trails Association
Shell
Alliance for Historic Wyoming
Ultra Resources, Inc.
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service

"A Cold Supper Was Eaten This Evening in Silence"

Think about the planning you went through to arrive at this place. What provisions did you carry in your car? Now imagine you are traveling this route with all of your worldly possessions.

How would you feel as you arrived here after weeks on a dusty road, crossing rivers, suffering through storms, enduring sickness, and witnessing the death of loved ones?

"Crossing the plains is one of the best methods ever thought of to find out the disposition of a man or woman; if there is anything good in them it will crop out, and if they are mean you will find that out sure."

George W. Manville 1863, wagon train captain on the Lander Road in 1862

Life Goes On

Henry Hitchings, Album of sketches from an 1859 expedition to the West, with 68 drawings, Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Elisabeth Hitchings Rothschild and daughters Anne DeVlunin and Christina Sekaer

Those traveling the westward emigrant trails developed mobile societies within which life continued, despite the difficulties of overland travel.

Dust in the Wind

William Henry Jackson, Desert Crossing at Night, 1867

"The wind blew in our faces in the afternoon and nearly suffocated us with dust, the dust is worse than Indians, storms or winds or mosquitoes, or even wood-ticks."

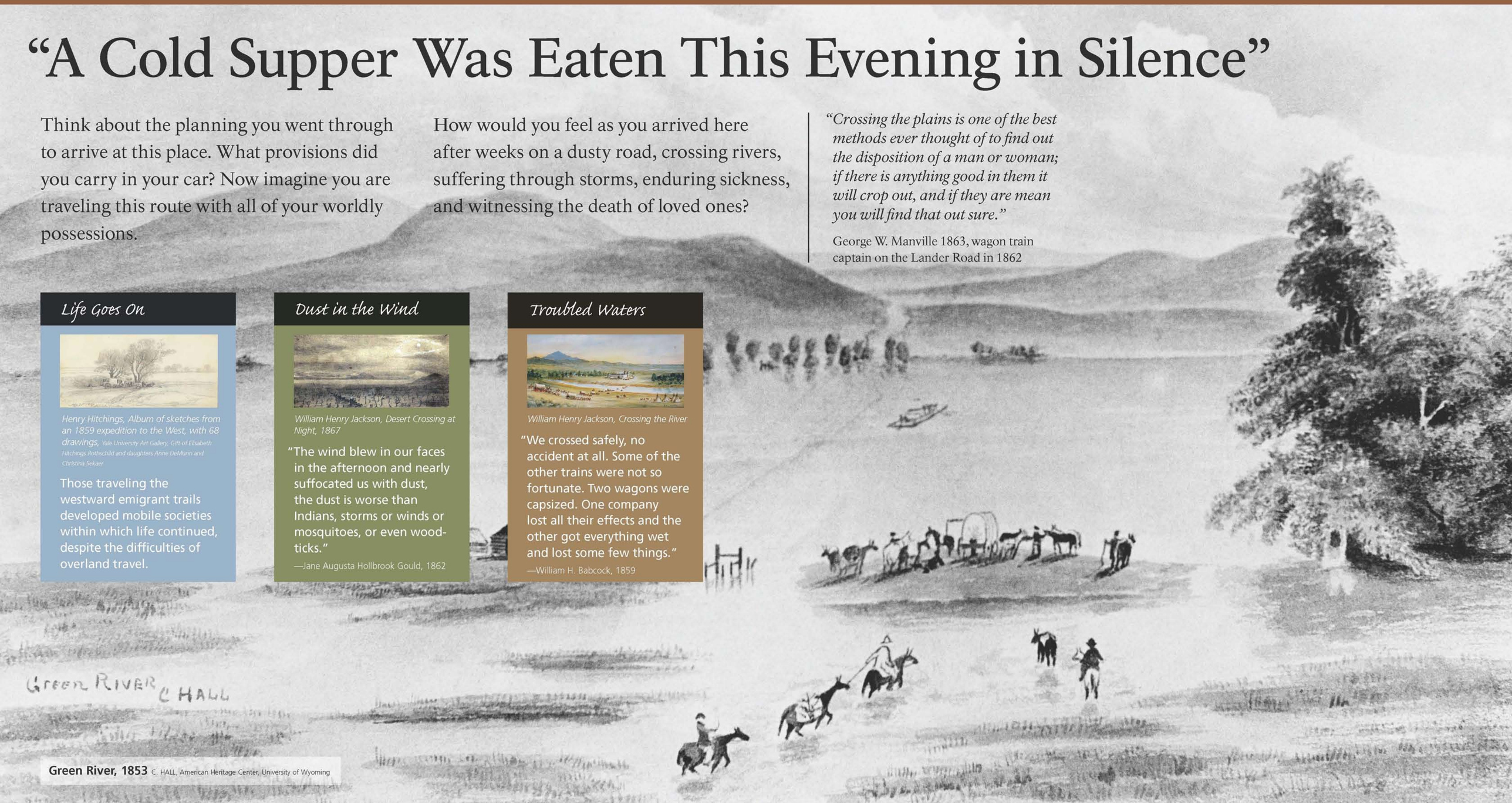
—Jane Augusta Hollbrook Gould, 1862

Troubled Waters

William Henry Jackson, Crossing the River

"We crossed safely, no accident at all. Some of the other trains were not so fortunate. Two wagons were capsized. One company lost all their effects and the other got everything wet and lost some few things."

—William H. Babcock, 1859



Green River, 1853 C. HALL, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming