



My America: Westward to Home: Joshua's Oregon Trail Diary, Book One

By Patricia Hermes

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Now in paperback, Patricia Hermes tells the story of Joshua McCullough's experiences ahead West in a wagon train in Book One of his diary of life on the Oregon Trail..

It is 1848 when Joshua McCullough and his family leave their home in St. Joseph, Missouri, and set off for Oregon on a wagon train. Though many of the other families on the trail suffer devastating losses during their long journey, Joshua's is spared. However, Joshua must conquer his fear of water during one dramatic crossing, when he heroically dives into a rushing river to save his younger sister Becky. The battered wagon train finally reaches Oregon after traveling over two thousand miles.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Patricia Hermes was born in 1936 in Brooklyn, New York. An avid reader, she had time to practice both reading and writing when she came down with rheumatic fever, which left her stuck in bed for months. Hermes majored in speech and English at St. John's University, and taught junior high school English and social studies before taking time off to raise her five children. Returning to teaching after a number of years, she found it less satisfying than she'd remembered, and decided to try her hand at writing for publication. She took a class in writing nonfiction for adults; the teacher, Russell Freedman, would go on to win the Newbery Medal.

After publishing some articles, Hermes found the niche she'd been looking for: her first novel for young readers, *What If They Knew?*, was published in 1980. Hermes gave the main character in the book epilepsy, a problem she had dealt with herself as a child. Readers responded well to the believable situation, and over the years Hermes has continued to write stories featuring youngsters in difficult situations, so that readers can turn to her books knowing they are not alone. She has written more than 20 books for children and young adults.

Patricia Hermes lives in Connecticut, where she spends four hours of the day writing and the rest editing her work and answering letters. When she is not writing, she enjoys reading, running, music, traveling, horseback riding, and playing the piano.

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James Marcotte:

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