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Valley. For the next three years this was the route to John Sutter's fort, although the tragic ordeal of the Donner party during the winter of

Unruh

1846-47 did nothing to endear it to subsequent travelers.

A similar congeries of route improvements, proliferating cutoffs,

and expeditions to retrieve beleaguered travelers characterized

In 1848 a party of Mormons departing from

the intra-state competition for overland emigrants on the

California for Salt Lake City, carved out an alternate

California end of the trail. There had been no California

trail along the Carson River. It was immediately altered, also in 1848, by the Joseph Chiles party. Chiles,

Trail until 1844, when the Stevens-Murphy party

already a venerable trail follower, was crossing the

succeeded in taking emigrant wagons across the Sierra

plains for the fifth time in eight years. There was

Nevada into California. Crossing the forty-mile desert beyond

relatively little difference between the Truckee and

the Sink of the Humboldt, these resolute pioneers followed

Carson trails into the California settlements. In

the Truckee River to what would become known as

length they were virtually identical, although the

Donner Lake, struggled across rugged Donner Pass to the

Carson route was slightly less difficult. The Carson

Bear Valley, and then trailed down into the Sacra-

Trail soon became, however, the preferred route.

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...Thus the "great migration" of 1843 not only departed from

Independence, thereby providing the town fathers with impressive

advertising arguments for future years.

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