

Winter 2-2-1991

## University Theatre Newsletter- February 1, 1991

UTN Staff

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# UNIVERSITY THEATRE NEWSLETTER

Winter

February 1991

The characters of PIONEER WOMEN are real; they were living women during the middle of the last century. This play is a compilation of letter and excerpts from diaries of women who, during the 1840's, took the overland trail to the Oregon territory. Their stories are somewhat different from the adventure tales in fictionalized wagon train stories.

The real world of the pioneer women was a world of sorrow, suffering and drudgery, that included collecting buffalo dung for fuel, cooking with meager equipment, keeping themselves and their children clean when water was scarce, and giving birth--sometimes in a moving wagon--with the obvious absence of medical supplies and personnel. It was these women who kept the record of the trail. They recorded births and deaths. They arranged for the safekeeping of children who were orphaned along the way. They kept a record of food consumption that could be used by those who followed as they made their plans, and they kept the diaries that were to become the historical records of the movement of a nation across a continent.

To tell this story, three women are used. MARIE ORTIZ plays the submissive but undaunted Mrs Stanton, a Pennsylvania mother of three who dreads leaving the familiarity of her home for the unknown Oregon territory. Nevertheless, leave she must because it is demanded by her husband.

CHRISTI DEBRAUWERE plays Mrs Thorne, a 16 year old bride who unlike Mrs. Stanton, looks forward to the excitement and adventure of the westward journey. Along with her new husband, Edward, and a large number of Edward's relatives, young Mrs. Thorne meets the challenges of the trail as well as those of married life with the enthusiasm and imagination we expect from one so young and inexperienced.

KARYL GOGOLA plays the pregnant Lydia Rudd who covers each mile from the Missouri River to the Oregon territory with the anxiety one might expect from one who fears she might go into labor on the trail. Nevertheless, pregnancy and her love for her husband does not stop her from demanding that one-half of the homestead they claim in Oregon will be registered in her name.

To help tell the story of the trek across the plains of the Nebraska and Dakota territories and across the mountains of Idaho and Oregon, a team of three narrators are used. CARMELLA CHRISTOPHER opens and closes the narrative. DONNA DURAJ and JENNIFER WELK keep us posted as the wagon trains weave westward.

The script has been prepared by James and Fern Barushok, and Dr. Barushok directs the production. Admission to all performances is FREE.

## PERFORMANCE DATES:

Friday, February 22	7:30 pm
Saturday, February 23	7:30 pm
Tuesday, February 26	1:45 pm
Thursday, February 28	7:30 pm
Friday, March 1	7:30 pm
Saturday, March 2	7:30 pm

All performances in The Stage Center in the F Wing. Latecomers will not be seated.