

a jumpchain gauntlet by acheld, v1.0. Inspired by the game with some real life elements added.

It's Spring, 1848, in Indianapolis, Missouri, USA. You and your family have decided to take the opportunity to head overland, braving the 2,170 miles (3500 km) of the Oregon Trail to find your way to rich farmland on the west coast of the continent. The fact that much of this land is currently claimed by native peoples is not of much concern to the settlers around you. You can choose to make it your concern, should you wish. The details are up to you, jumper.

~~Here are **1000 CP** to help you on your way~~.

Actually, no, this is a gauntlet after all. You get zilch to begin. You'll have to consult the drawbacks later on if you want to buy any goodies.

As a gauntlet, you have none of your powers, enhancements, abilities, or features from your chain. You have no access to your warehouse or items either.

The sole exception to this is Body Mod, and that is limited to peak normal-Earth-human ability only. You may reallocate Body Mod points for the purposes of this gauntlet only (so that you can switch, e.g., from things that are beyond human or useless to things you can use). You may also convert any number of Body mod CP features to half as many CP in this gauntlet, for the purposes of this gauntlet only. You can do this in combination if desired.

The Goal: make it safely to the west coast within the year with your husband/wife and children, and establish a viable farm within two years. You and at least two others must make it. You can freely import companions into any of these roles (likewise without any powers or items), though I can't say how happy some of them will be to be children. You can choose to have between two and seven children to start. Companions that die in their role do not revive until the end of the gauntlet.

However, imported companions who survive until the end receive the benefits of all perks selected in this gauntlet, even if the perk does not specify so.

If you succeed, then you'll be rewarded. If you fail, then your chain does not end, but you do not retain any perks from this gauntlet, nor the unique reward at the end.

You begin with $1200 to outfit your journey. For context, the average historical family, with two children, spent around $1400.

Background

There are no background discounts here, this is just a matter of your character's history. Select your age and sex freely within bounds that make sense.
You can select any reasonably common trade, such as blacksmith, doctor, carpenter, or farmer, and begin with the skills that would be relevant. Hunter, or any profession involving a gun, is not a valid choice (see perks). You may also choose a more wealthy background, such as a banker, in which case you receive +$400 to start, but have no skills that will be of use on the trail.
If you are a wife, then this is your husband's background (sorry). Both wife and husband can be assumed to have at least some degree of farming knowledge.

Perks

Where it makes sense, all perks propagate weakly out to the entirety of any wagon train that you are traveling with. For instance, if you have the Wheels Keep On Turning perk, all the wheels of the wagon train you are with are at least a bit less likely to break.

Woman's Work (100 CP)
You as a wife, or your wife, has a profession in this world more typically limited to men. How this happened to be is up to you, but it adds an additional set of skills to your party from the background options. You/she might get odd looks, but no one outright stops you/her from doing your/her job here. In future jumps, you will not be judged negatively purely as a result of your sex or gender, nor denied access to a job or position as a result of such. This does not allow you to do things such as enter the women's restroom as a man without consequence.

The Endless Plains (100 CP)
They seem to drag on forever… it's almost maddening. With this perk, you will be practically immune to boredom or negative psychological effects that come with monotony and repetitive motion or tasks. You find ways to bring cheer and laughter to the dullest of situations, and raise the spirits of all in your party.

Wheels Keep On Turning (100 CP)
Your wagon(s) seem to be much more sturdy, rarely being damaged and almost never breaking down. In particular, your wheels and axles seem almost impervious. In future jumps, vehicles that you are either on or near do not wear and tear as a result of regular use, and have a modest increase in durability against attack.

Hunter (100 CP)
You are an excellent shot with a rifle. This is nothing supernatural, just the skill of a hunter who has shot a rifle on many, many occasions. You have some skill and experience at hunting and tracking wild game. In future jumps, your skill with firearms of all kinds is increased moderately.

Friendly Natives (100 CP)
The history of the Oregon Trail is one that contains both positive and negative interactions with Native Americans (whose land in many cases was being claimed without their say, after all). Settlers traded with the natives, hired them to help at times, and also had violent altercations. With this perk you're much more capable of cross-cultural communication, and you've received enough info from seasoned guides to have an idea of the things you need to be careful to do or not do. In future jumps, you will tend to luck into information on aspects of native culture that will allow you to interact with them much more positively, as long as you are respectful.

Fine Cook (100 CP)
Someone in your family is an amazing cook, able to take the most uninspired ingredients and whip them together into a truly delicious spread. Limited tools do not tend to be much of a hindrance either, with meals made over a campfire as easily as in a standard kitchen.

Like A Duck To Water (100 CP)
You have a particular knack for properly fording rivers and streams, and properly waterproofing your wagon in order to do so. You can help other settlers, and your wagon in particular will never even get a leak. You're also a natural-born swimmer with plenty of experience at it. In future jumps, any sort of vehicle will never have a leak from anything less than intentional combat damage. This applies to air in spaceships, and water in submarines, equally well.

Read The Wind (100 CP)
When it comes to reading the weather, you're better than a walking farmer's almanac. You know when it's going to rain, and how much, at least eight hours in advance. Same for snow, and you can anticipate temperature drops just as easily. People tend to trust your proclamations about the weather as well.

Healthy Immune Systems (200 CP)
You are far more resilient and resistant to mundane diseases and infection. This is not immunity, but fatality rates decrease to one third as high, and symptoms and suffering are similarly decreased. This benefit carries across future jumps, and is also immediately received by all companions who you imported here.

Items

Mo' Money (50 CP)
You start with an additional $300. Can be chosen multiple times. No benefit in future settings.

Reliable Rifle (50 CP)
You can get an everyday rifle for perhaps $20, but this beauty is flawless. It's top of the line for the setting, will never misfire or require maintenance, and slightly increases your skill when using it.

Medicines (100 CP)
A collection of useful medicines and antiseptics for treating a variety of ailments and wounds, and excluding any of the snake oil often sold as medicine in these times. Enough to see four people through to Oregon, if used sparingly. Refills once per jump, and adapts to future settings.

Roomy Charm (100 CP)
This little charm, when placed on any vehicle, makes the inside twice as big, and the contents weigh half as much. Nobody else seems to notice.

Expenses

The appendix offers an outline with more details, but if you don't want to get into details, here are some price guidelines. For larger numbers of children you may end up having two wagons; this is accounted for in the prices.

Pauper ($600 for 2-3 children, $700 for 4-5 children, $800 for 6-7 children)
You really are not properly prepared for this trip. You've got enough food, barely, though no variety. You've got the one wagon and just enough oxen. Blankets are thin, and you are without luxuries. You have the bare minimum of various supplies, only the most essential of tools, but no replacements. If something goes wrong, you may be in big trouble. You have no money left over.

Low ($900 for 2-3 children, $1025 for 4-5 children, $1150 for 6-7 children)
You're at least properly prepared, though you have had to make due with low quality supplies in many cases. You've got maybe one ox to spare, a spare wagon part or two, and maybe a single deck of cards, or similar. You can't afford livestock beyond the oxen, and you only have the most basic of tools. You've got a tiny bit of money left over, just in case. (This leftover money is accounted for in the price given).

Middle ($1200 for 2-3 children, $1350 for 4-5 children, $1500 for 6-7 children)
You're an average wagon family, in terms of preparation. You've got enough food, including some dried fruits, coffee, and other variety. You've got solidly made tools, a few extra parts, and one change of clothes for everyone. Blankets are warm enough, and you've got perhaps a book or two, a harmonica, some cards, etc. You've got a couple oxen to spare, or perhaps you brought a cow or horse with you. You have enough left over that should some things go wrong, you'll be okay, as long as there aren't any complete disasters.

High ($1500 for 2-3 children, $1675 for 4-5 children, $1850 for 6-7 children)

You're very well equipped for the journey, with plenty of food, well made tools of all varieties, and three sets of clothes each. Blankets and tents are all very well made, you've got plenty of luxury items to keep you entertained, about half again as many oxen as you need, and a few cows or horses. You've got some money leftover, and should be able to recover from all but the worst of circumstances.

Luxury ($1800 for 2-3 children, $2000 for 4-5 children, $2200 for 6-7 children)

Your wagon is so well equipped that other settlers give you disbelieving and jealous stares. Elaborate dutch ovens, extra supply wagon, you're living the high life. Alternately, you have the same equipment as for "high", with more money left over.

Drawbacks

You can receive any amount of CP here.

The Trail To Oregon! (+100 CP)
You seem to have found yourself in a ridiculous, over-the-top musical. Singing and dancing occur at the drop of a hat, literally. While you are not mentally compelled to, participating in the musical at least a bit is now a victory condition; rhymes will find themselves in your head if you let them, and you'll be able to carry a tune even if you couldn't before. In addition to being annoying, this also causes a slight decrease in productivity, but a slight increase in morale.

Poor (+100 CP)
You don't really have enough money to be doing this. Reduce your starting funds to $700, and you can't choose a profession that gives extra starting money.

Useless Crap (+100 CP)
Normally wagons on the Oregon Trail stop to trade and resupply at various points, but whenever you try to do so you'll find that trading posts have either total crap, or useless ornamental things such as grandfather clocks. You can probably find some old flour, but that's about it.

It's an Heirloom! (+100 CP)
The history of the Oregon Trail shows that settlers often left furniture, that they had originally set out with, to rot on the side of the road, realising that they had no room for it. But somehow, you just can't bear to part with this. Some obnoxious piece of furniture, not particularly valuable, will take up at least a third of your wagon, and you'll always feel compelled to rescue it as top priority among your belongings.

Arcade-Style Hunting (+100 CP)
Hunting is an extremely frustrating experience for you, as it seems to take the form of a computer game. Bullets fly slowly through the air to hit oddly moving animals shaped like monochrome outlines. The process is difficult and tedious, regardless of how hard you find the actual computer game. You'll fail to find any game much more often than you are successful. Further, if you do not hunt yourself at least occasionally, events will conspire so that you have to.

Late Start (+200 CP)
The other wagoneers got on the trail in April, May and June. You, for some foolish reason, waited until the start of July. Better make rapid time if you don't want to go through the Rocky Mountains in winter…

Brat (+200 CP)
One of your kids is an absolute brat. Whiney, stubborn, and won't listen to simple directions. You'll receive plenty of suggestions to "tan his(her) hide" from other settlers, but that won't do much either. This kid, at least, has to be alive at the end of the gauntlet, or you fail.

Dysentery! (+300 CP)
Your entire party is prone to extensive bouts of Dysentery. If you have Healthy Immune Systems (strongly recommended), then it reduces the fatality rate as usual, but does nothing to stop the very unpleasant symptoms. Expect to have to squat by the side of the road on a regular basis. While a hilarious image in some ways, this can also be very fatal, especially if not taken seriously.

Dipshits (+300 CP)
You are traveling with a large party of other settlers. At least a few of them are absolute dipshits in interactions with natives and other potential guides, which will lead to many unnecessary, and possibly deadly, fights and missed opportunities. You must take the side of the dipshits in any altercation, and must remain with the party. The dipshits will not learn from past mistakes. If you fail to meet these conditions, or if all of the dipshits die, then you fail the gauntlet.

Donner Party (+400 CP; cannot be combined with Late Start or Dipshits)
You are traveling with a large party of other settlers, led by the Donner family. It's 1846 and you're traveling to California, not Oregon. Regardless of what you do, if you don't die before then you and your party will end up trapped for the winter in the Sierra Nevada mountains, where many will succumb to starvation and the cold. A few will even resort to eating the bodies of the dead in order to make it through. You'll have to survive this winter, and settle in California come the spring. Killing another member of your party, as anything less than an absolute last resort or self-defense, is a failure condition.

Reward

So, you completed the challenge before you, well done. You are welcome to live out a life here, with drawbacks removed, until you die or choose to move on.

In future jumps, you will find that whatever setting you go to, there is always some frontier to settle. If you endure an arduous journey, you will find rich property that will be yours by law. In this case, there will be no native peoples to worry about displacing.

The size of property will depend on the entourage that travels there. If it's just you and a few others, then it may be a generous parcel of farming land. If it's a spaceship full of a million followers, it may be an entire planet.

In a given jump, if such a contrivance is not possible in the setting, or if you just don't feel like it, you can have the farmstead that you established here instead.

You also receive, complimentary, a copy of every version of the Oregon Trail game ever released, one per person who participated in this gauntlet. Also includes a modified computer that will play all the versions of Oregon Trail, and only those.

Appendix: Provisions & Purchases

So, you've got $1000 to spend (or more, or less, depending on decisions). This is to give you a rough idea as to how far that money can go.

A covered wagon runs from $100 to $250 depending on size and quality. Those on the smaller/cheaper end, covered farm wagons, carry up to a ton of weight.

Oxen run around $30 a piece, and you're going to need 4-6 of them for a standard wagon, though having spares would be very wise.

Food, mainly beans, bread and bacon, ran around $40-$50 per adult for the journey; less for children. The main difficulty of food, however, would be weight. A typical family of four would load their wagon with 2100 pounds of food for the journey. If you have more than five people, you will probably need a second wagon, or a larger wagon, or plan to buy/hunt a lot of food along the way. Purchasing food at trading stations along the way is also possible, but notably more expensive.

Tools and implements, such as cooking equipment, varied in quality. For $50-60 you can probably assume you have a basic spread of cooking tools, farming tools, and carpentry tools needed to repair things along the way, as well as build a house when you arrive. For a bit more you can get a dutch oven, or other improvements.

A shotgun is $10, a rifle $15, and a colt revolver $25. Powder and shot was around $5 per pound. A pound or two per gun is likely sufficient for light hunting.

Tents and blankets might run around $10 per person together. Clothing could be anywhere from $10 to $40 per person. Another $10-$15 went to shoes for each adult or older child along the journey, as they walked the whole way and went through several pairs.

This does not account for any number of luxury items, like cards, harmonicas or books. Nor does it account for expenses along the way, such as tolls and having some money to spare when you arrive. Plan on saving *at least* a hundred dollars in reserve for spare parts, and unexpected expenses.

Some further information:

http://www.cyberbee.com/wwho/wwHOpricelist.pdf

https://historicoregoncity.org/2019/04/03/outfitting-for-the-journey/

https://spartacus-educational.com/WWwagontrain.htm

Appendix: Map



Notes

Special thanks to PlotVitalNPC for multiple great ideas. Several other anons and discordites also contributed thoughts.

v1.1: starting money raised to $1200, Poor drawback changed from $600 to $700, banker bonus reduced to +$400. Allowed jumper to convert body mod points they can't use. Several grammar/clarity fixes.