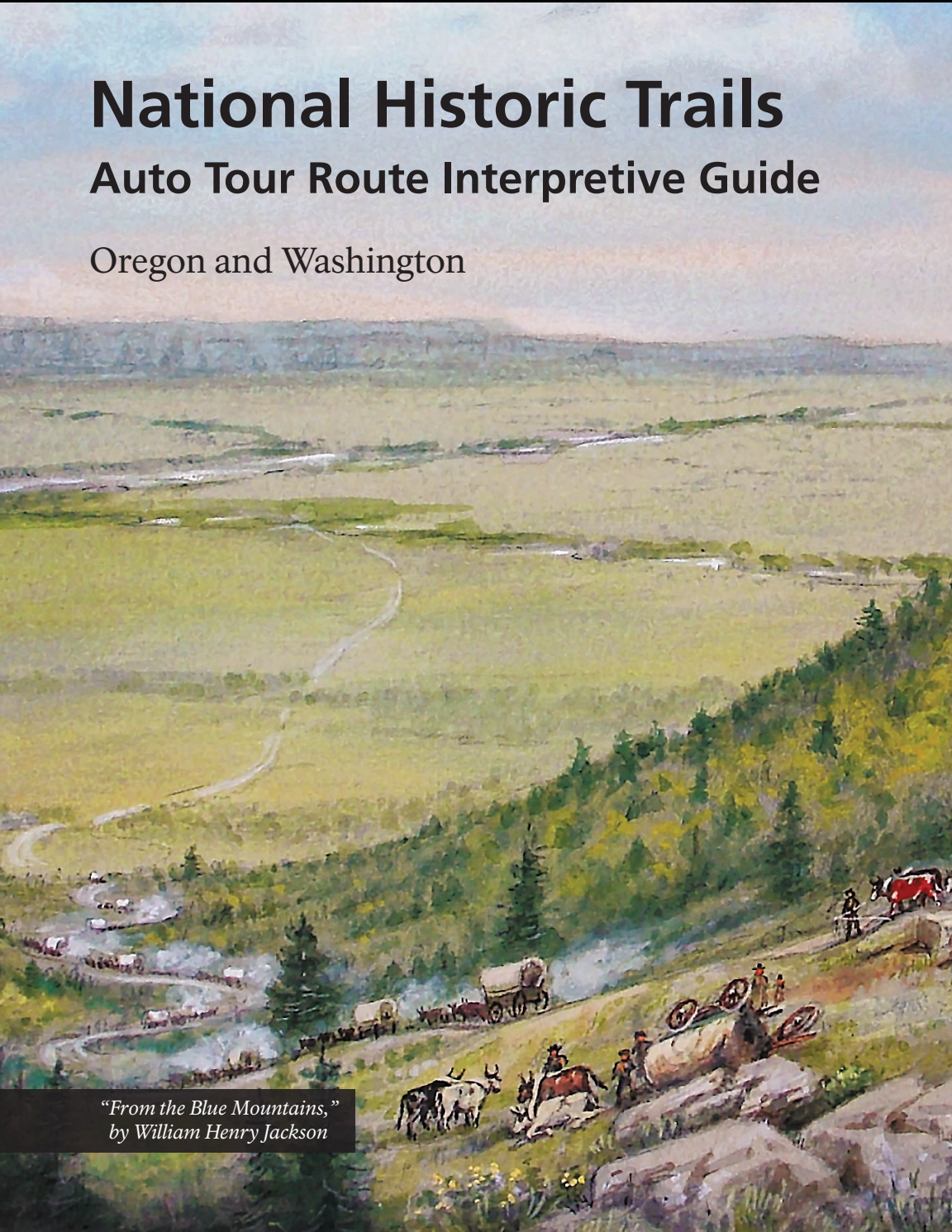
National Trails System
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

# National Historic Trails

## Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide

Oregon and Washington



*"From the Blue Mountains," by William Henry Jackson*

NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

# AUTO TOUR ROUTE INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

## Oregon and Washington on the Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Prepared by

National Park Service
National Trails

*www.nps.gov/CALI*
*www.nps.gov/OREG*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

June 2023

*Multnomah Falls, Oregon (1867), by Carleton E. Watkins.*

**CONTENTS**

Introduction .....1
Those Who Came First .....2
The Borning .....3
Big River Country .....7
Idaho to Burnt Canyon .....9
The Grand Ronde .....13
Over the Blues .....16
Weyíilet in the Cayuse Country .....18
The End of the Beginning .....23
Columbia River to The Dalles .....27
A Plateau Route to The Dalles .....30
Significance of The Dalles .....33
The Mighty Columbia: The Dalles to the Cascades .....36
The Barlow Toll Road .....43
Finding A Southern Route to Oregon .....49
Struggles on the Southern Route .....51
The Eagle at Trail's End .....59
African Americans on the Oregon Trail .....62
The Oregon Trail of the Indian Nations .....64
Understanding the Oregon Trail .....66
Sites and Points of Interest .....67

AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A: Idaho Border to Oregon City .....69
Excursion: Whitman Mission ..... 88
AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A (Continued) .....91
Excursion: Willow Creek and Four Mile Canyon to Arlington..... 94
Extended Excursion: John Day River Crossing (McDonald, OR)..... 96
AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A (Continued) .....98
AUTO TOUR SEGMENT B: 1846 Barlow Road, The Dalles to Oregon City .....114
Excursion: Devil's Backbone to Jonsrud Viewpoint..... 129
AUTO TOUR SEGMENT C: Applegate Trail, California Border to Dallas, Oregon .....136
For More Information .....160
Credits .....160

*Rogue River, southeast Oregon. Courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management.*

## INTRODUCTION


Many of the pioneer trails and other historic routes that are important in our nation's past have been designated by Congress as national historic trails. While most of those old wagon roads and routes are not open to motorized traffic, visitors can drive along modern highways that either retrace or parallel the original route. Those modern roads are designated as Auto Tour Routes and are marked with "Historic Route" highway signs. These signs show the official logo for each national historic trail that used the route. The signs and logos are kept consistent for the length of the trails to help today's travelers follow these historic routes of travel.

This booklet guides visitors along the Auto Tour Routes for the Oregon National Historic Trail, including the Barlow Road, as it crosses the state of Oregon from east to west, and the Applegate Trail portion of the California National Historic Trail running south to north from the California border. It starts with an interpretive overview of trail history, followed by site-by-site driving directions. A general map of the routes is tucked inside the back cover.

Individual Auto Tour Route guides are in preparation for each state that the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express trails pass through. In addition, National Park Service brochures for each of those national historic trails (NHT) are available upon request from ntir_information@nps.gov. Each NHT brochure includes a color map of the entire trail and overview information. Additional resources are available on each NHT's website. See page 160 for links.

*Columbia Gorge Discovery Center*

## THOSE WHO CAME FIRST

Some place names from the American Indian languages of the Pacific Northwest tell of things that happened there in the storied time, when the Spirit people were preparing the earth for human beings. These names remind native people that they are of and from the land, since time immemorial. Since the Beginning. Since Creation.

Many places are named for things found or done there: medicine plant, place where camas grows, willow sticks, bitter cherry, having salmon, "to make stone tools out of a hard rock." These names remind the people that their country is good, and that they have always used it and taken care of it. Some names tell of long-ago events at that place—a fight, a flood, a funny thing. Some are descriptive: a rock that looks like a hat, a spring that smells like a skunk, a place where the water roars. These names remind them of their ancestors, the things they saw and experienced.

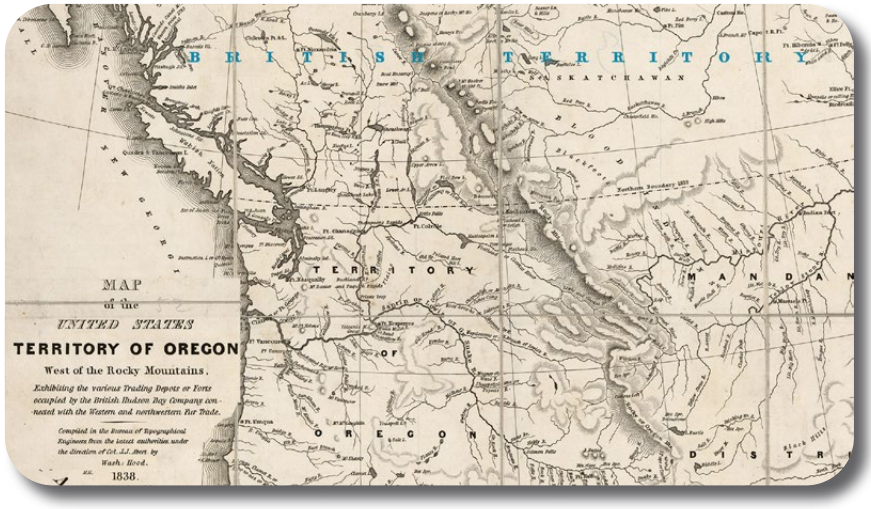
For traditional peoples, their landscape is much more than pretty scenery or an interesting place to take a walk. It is named, like a living being, and like a living being it speaks to them. Tells stories. Sometimes it might sing. The land tells them who they were and who they are and reminds them that, despite everything that has unfolded, they survive and they are strong.


*Dr. Whirlwind, Cayuse Indian, on horse (1900-1910), by Lee Moorhouse.*

## THE BORNING

Oregon was a child of tempest, born kicking and squalling among the political, religious, and racial thunderclouds that boiled over the United States in the mid-19th century.

When the first family wagon train headed west in 1841, the Oregon Country included all lands west of the Rocky Mountains, from Mexican California to Russian Alaska. The United States uneasily shared the region with Great Britain under an 1818 treaty that declared that territory to be "free and open...to the Vessels, Citizens, and Subjects of the Two Powers."




*1838 Map of Oregon Country. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

London-based Hudson's Bay Company, with its network of trade routes and forts along the major rivers, anchored Britain securely in the Oregon Country. The Company, as it was called, controlled the western fur trade and drove the region's economy. Its men traded with and often married into American Indian families, building strong economic and kinship ties in the country. In contrast, US interests in Oregon until the 1840s amounted to a few short-lived fur trade posts and some scattered Protestant missions, established to convert nearby native people and turn them into pliant plowmen.

The treaty between the "Two Powers" failed to mention the many independent American Indian nations who possessed the Oregon Country and ran their own affairs there, as they always had done. The villages, well-worn trails, and richly storied landscapes of indigenous people gave evidence to their deep history there. But by the nineteenth century, the peoples' grip on their homeland was slipping. Repeated waves of smallpox, measles, and other foreign diseases had drastically thinned their numbers, and in 1830 a new sickness, believed to be malaria, appeared among Hudson's Bay Company employees on the lower Columbia River.

The disease, if it was malaria, likely reached the Company's Fort Vancouver with an infected traveler aboard a Pacific trading ship. A species of mosquito capable of spreading the parasite was common in western Oregon at that time. Over the next five years the contagion prowled the lower Columbia, hitchhiked with traders up the Willamette Valley, and stalked south along interior drainages into California. It rampaged through indigenous populations, striking down its victims with fevers, sweats, and bone-rattling chills. The "cold sick," as Indian people named it, brought death to 80 to 95 percent of its native victims, destroying their communities and leaving survivors too weak to bury the dead. Among those afflicted were the Chinookan-speaking groups of the lower Columbia River and the Kalapuyan-speaking peoples of Oregon's Willamette River Valley. Before the epidemic, they numbered over 32,000. When it was over, only 2,100 survived, too few to resist resettlement of their homelands by foreigners.

Willamette (pronounced w'-LAM-et) Valley, where the cities of Portland, Salem, and Eugene exist today, is called after an Indian village named Wilamt. Before the emigration, the 150-mile-long valley was an open patchwork of oak savanna and camas prairie, a vast garden created and kept by the Kalapuyans' practice of burning out encroaching forest. To American farmers arriving after the epidemic, it seemed an empty Eden ripe for the plow. Willamette Valley became their initial destination. As it filled with farmsteads and towns, new arrivals spread into other promising areas as well.

Both the US and Britain recognized indigenous peoples' pre-existing

"Indian title" to their lands, but neither government was prepared to negotiate with those nations to open the Oregon Country to legal settlement. Britain focused on trade, not colonizing, and the US Congress needed to extinguish Indian title by treaty or conquest before allowing American citizens to take possession. The settlers themselves cared little for government process and rarely recognized Indian property rights. Some did negotiate directly with tribal leaders, but many settlers simply squatted on land they wanted. They would, they supposed, sort out any legal issues later.

American settlers' notions of private property made no sense to Indian people, who understood themselves as having been created in place, as being part of that place. Their country belonged to them by natural right of origin, descent, and use. The members of a community shared their ground in common, actively managing their wild crops, fisheries, and game to support their children's children; they did not divide their homeland with fences to keep others out, and they did not sell it. So, when Americans first began arriving along the Oregon Trail, Indian people naturally thought of themselves as landlords and hosts and expected the newcomers to behave like tenants and guests. They soon figured out what was really going on, what that wagon trail meant for them.

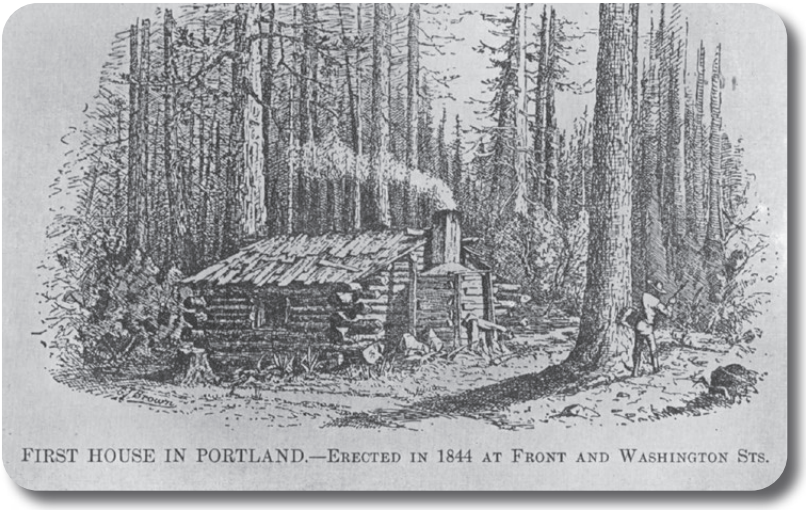



*Illustration (1911). Caption reads "First House In Portland- Erected in 1844 at Front and Washington Sts."*

With passage of the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850, Congress opened Oregon to American settlers to divide among themselves—without first mentioning the plan to the Indian nations whose lands would be taken up. The act legalized the original claims of Oregon's "old settlers" and granted new claims to white men and women and to persons of Indian and white parentage—a nod to fur trade families. Americans rushed along the Oregon Trail in numbers never seen before, to the astonishment and alarm of the Indian nations, who still held title to the land. Government officials scurried behind homesteaders and land speculators to settle with tribes.

Five named wars and various unnamed clashes flared across the Pacific Northwest in the 1850s as Indian people resisted conquest and removal to reservations. In the end, the settlers' legal issues indeed got sorted out. The tribes' issues got sorted out as well, to their sorrow and loss.

> *The Great Spirit, in placing men on earth, desired them to take good care of the ground and to do each other no harm.* —Young Chief (Táwatoy) of the Cayuse, 1855 Treaty Council

*Valley of the Willamette River (1845), by Dickinson & CO.*

## BIG RIVER COUNTRY

Visitors to the Pacific Northwest reveal themselves as outsiders by stiffly pronouncing the name of this state as ORY-gone, but people who live there say ORihgun, playing the syllables like a musical triplet, with three notes in the space of a single beat. No one knows for certain where the word comes from. It might derive from ooligan, a Chinook trade-jargon name for a fatty type of smelt, the eulachon, that is sometimes called candlefish. Northwest societies highly valued nutritious ooligan grease, and ooligan trade trails criss-crossed the region from the Pacific Coast to the northern Rocky Mountains. As a name for the region, ooligan, which some native speakers pronounced as "*oorigan*," signifies the wealth and commerce of Pacific Northwest Indian cultures.

To many today, the name Oregon evokes a mist-kissed land cloaked in lacy ferns and shaggy fir forests, bejeweled with sparkling streams and waterfalls, and veiled with soft, silver rains. But that popular image describes only the well-watered part of the state, west of the Cascade Range. Two-thirds of Oregon lies east of the Cascades, in the dry rain shadow of the mountains. Northeastern Oregon, where the original route of the Oregon Trail crosses, is a semi-arid, textured landscape of folds, flats, and rolling hills, possessing a beauty more golden than green. Tawny grass and dusty-green sagebrush shawl its contours, while fragrant pines and firs trim its high ridges. That broad, sun-splashed country is the lower Columbia River Plateau.

Dry east is linked to wet west by the Columbia River, called *Nch'i-Wána*, "The Big River," in several of the dialects of the Plateau. The river emerges from the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia and flows south through that Canadian province and the state of Washington. Just beyond its confluence with the Snake River, the Columbia bends sharply west and becomes the boundary between Washington and Oregon. As it flows west the river surges through a spectacular 80-mile gorge, cut over the course of two million years by running waters that sawed through the slowly uplifting Cascade Mountains. Until about 12,500 years ago, Ice Age megafloods with headwalls up to a thousand feet high periodically scoured the Columbia Gorge, shearing off the lower ends of tributaries and

leaving them to spout from high basalt cliffs. After rushing from the gorge on the west side of the Cascades, the Columbia flows past its confluence with the Willamette River and eventually, at the end of its 1,249-mile run, empties into the Pacific Ocean at scenically un-disappointing Cape Disappointment.

Today's visitors driving Interstate 84 in Oregon or Highway 14 in Washington see the lower Columbia as a scenic series of slack-water reservoirs, created by four massive hydroelectric dams that were built in the mid-1900s. People in Oregon Trail days, though, experienced that stretch as a wild river with rapids, waterfalls ("cascades"), eddies, boils, and sudden whirlpools, flowing between rugged cliffs and clefts of scabbed basalt.

Expert rivermen of the 1800s ran the Columbia in sturdy Indian canoes and big fur company *bateaux*—flat-bottomed boats 40 feet long, five feet wide, and three feet deep—but they usually took to shore and used ropes to wrangle their boats through the worst of the rapids. Inexperienced emigrants who tried floating the Columbia River with their families and wagons aboard hard-to-steer homemade rafts, as many did in the early years of the Oregon Trail, took a big risk that sometimes ended in catastrophe.

To reach the river, though, overland travelers of the 1840s through the 1860s first had to follow the Oregon Trail from Idaho across the lower Columbia Plateau, present-day northeastern Oregon.

*Indian Canoe on the Columbia River (1900-1910), by Lee Moorhouse.*

## IDAHO TO BURNT CANYON

Travelers endured weeks of extreme heat and lung-scalding alkali dust while following the Snake River across today's Idaho. They usually reached the present-day Oregon border in August or September, four to five months after "jumping off" onto the trail at the Missouri River. Now, entering the Columbia Plateau for the final 440-mile push to the Willamette Valley, they faced more of the same miseries plus some completely new ones.

Two routes of the Oregon Trail enter Oregon from Idaho. Travelers on the north side of the Snake River crossed today's state boundary as they ferried or forded the Snake at Fort Boise, a Hudson's Bay Company trading post located about five miles northwest of present-day Parma, Idaho. It was a major stream crossing and a challenge for those who could not swim, or whose teams were worn out from towing wagons through the sagebrush plains along the Snake River. Ferrying proved expensive, but driving a covered wagon across the river ford was risky. Travelers could avoid that crossing by keeping to an alternate route along the south side of the river. That route closely followed the Snake across Idaho and entered Oregon alongside the river, about nine miles south of the Fort Boise crossing.

The Utter and Van Ornum family wagon party of 44 men, women, and children chose to follow the south-side alternate across Idaho. On September 9-10, 1860, a band of Bannock and Shoshone men attacked the wagon party west of today's town of Grand View, Idaho. Over two days they killed 11 of the overlanders and began looting the wagons as other immigrants slipped away into the sagebrush. Most of the survivors, including 18 children, regrouped and moved on foot together along the Snake River. After struggling on a starvation diet for over 70 miles, they halted where the Owyhee River drains into the Snake near the present-day community of Nyssa, Oregon.

A band of Shoshone in the area for a time traded fish for the immigrants' clothing, but then they moved on and left the sad group to its fate. The stranded people ate whatever they could find—frogs, grass, moss, and, eventually, the bodies of those who had starved to death. In desperation, the Van Ornum parents, their five children, and

three others of the party set out to seek help.

Eventually receiving word of the attack, the US Army sent a relief expedition to look for survivors. On October 25, forty-five days after the attack, the detachment came upon 10 naked, skeletal survivors awaiting death at the Owyhee River starvation camp, and the soldiers wept at the sight of them. They clothed the victims with their own coats and blankets and tenderly carried them to medical care at Fort Walla Walla, in present-day Washington State. The fate of the Van Ornum group, the 10 children and adults who had gone in search of help, lies farther along the Oregon Trail.

> *[T]hose who were still alive were skeletons with life in them. Their frantic cries for food rang in our ears incessantly. Food was given them every hour in small quantities; but for days the cry was still kept up by the children.* —Capt. Frederick Dent, Report to Congress, 1860

A few miles beyond the state line, the two trail routes entering from Idaho merge into a single corridor, which temporarily leaves the Snake to cut directly across a big bend of the river. Along the way the trail crosses Keeney Pass, a dry divide between the Snake and Malheur rivers. Intermittent wagon ruts are visible along the drive, and a short section of trail can be hiked at the Bureau of Land Management interpretive site at the pass. The trail continues to the Malheur River and its hot springs at today's town of Vale.

Conditions on this stretch were as miserable as they had been back on the Snake River. Heavy sand clutched at hooves, boots, and wheels. Hot winds rattled the wagon covers and sandblasted exposed skin. White alkali dust plumed around the wagons, while overworked oxen dropped and died under the yoke, leaving the Oregon Trail choked with carcasses, flies, and stench.

> *The emigration is very large and the cattle is dying like rotton sheep they have opened some and their melts [spleens] is rotton some of them bleeds at the nose and dies in a few minutes after working through the day.* —George Belshaw, August 24, 1853

*Burial site of the Van Ornum family group that left starvation camp.*

> *nothing but hills and hollows and rocks  o dear.* —Agnes Stewart, September 8, 1853

From the Malheur River, the trail climbs another barren divide and then descends about four miles to touch the Snake one last time at Farewell Bend. There the river turns north as the Oregon Trail continues northwesterly, bidding the Snake "farewell." Emigrants liked to camp at the beautiful bend, where the river ran clear and calm, and Indian families often camped among the wagons to fish and trade.

From there the trail starts up another dry divide, where faint traces of the original track still can be spotted paralleling the highway. Two miles from Farewell Bend rest the mortal remains of the Van Ornum family group that walked away from the starvation camp.

Army searchers in 1860 discovered six arrow-pierced bodies lying in a deep, circular depression, now thought to be a meteor crater, and the soldiers buried them there. Missing, though, were the younger Van Ornum children, a boy and three girls. After two years of dogged searching, the children's Uncle Zacheus tracked down and recovered a 10-year-old boy he believed to be his nephew, Reuben. The Shoshone insisted that the child taken from them was not a white

captive but a mixed-race child of their own. Zacheus Van Ornum never found his three missing nieces.

Beyond the gravesite, the trail makes a five- to six-day wagon climb up steep, rocky Burnt River Canyon. In places it is more of a ravine than a canyon, just a creek in a crease between gumdrop hills. Steep slopes and thick brush and trees—shade at last!—in places forced the wagons into the rocky creek bed. Elsewhere, the trail ran directly across, not up, the hillsides, causing the high-centered wagons to lean sideways and sometimes topple. The hills, normally woolly with bunchgrass, often appeared burned, and occasionally they were ablaze when overlanders passed through. At those times, smoke hung in the canyon and flames cast a red glow over the night camps. Immigrants blamed Indians (here, likely Cayuse) for setting the fires to deprive their oxen of feed, but the true reason probably was innocent: native people customarily burned certain areas to promote growth of spring grasses for their pony herds and game. They were simply managing their land as they always had done. Unfenced did not mean untended.

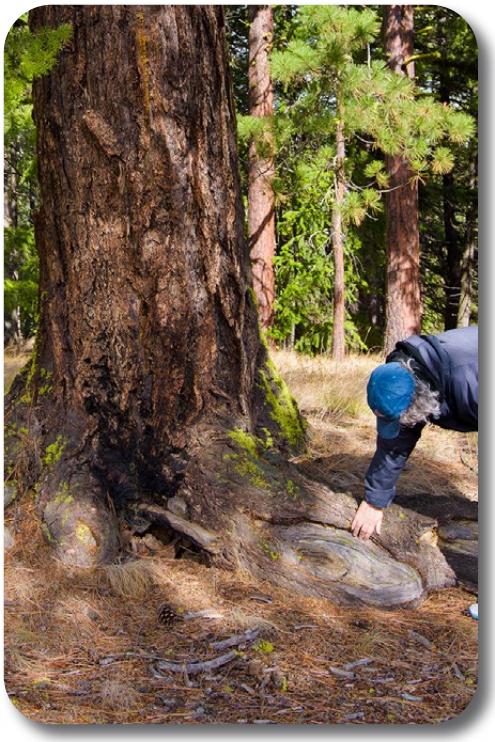
Some Oregon Trail diarists wrote of the beauty of the area, but Burnt Canyon was an ox-killer. The death of an ox might mean its owners had to discard precious belongings in order to lighten their wagon or might even force them to abandon the wagon altogether.

> *The fire in the mountains last night was truly grand. It went to the tops of them spreading far down their sides. . . . The fire extended for several miles, burning all night, throwing out great streamers of red against the night sky.* —Esther Belle Hanna, August 16, 1852

> *we are continually driving around the dead cattle, and shame on the man who has no pity for the poor dumb brutes that have to travel and toil month after month on this desolate road.* —Amelia Stewart Knight, August 12, 1853

## THE GRAND RONDE

Beyond Burnt Canyon, the Oregon Trail crosses Virtue Flat and then the toe of Flagstaff Hill to enter the broad Powder River Valley. Today the Bureau of Land Management's National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center perches atop Flagstaff Hill. From that height, faint wagon ruts can be seen for miles on their approach from the southeast. Immigrants emerging from the ravine on Flagstaff Hill, though, saw country that reminded them of the homes they had left behind, and so they called the well-watered valley Missouri Flat. On the western horizon, the daunting Blue Mountains dared them to come ahead.



*Living Douglas Fir along the Oregon Trail in Oregon's Blue Mountains. The scar is from wagon wheels when the emigrants passed by.*

After crossing the valley, the trail humps northerly over another plateau and drops down off steep, rocky Ladd Hill into a circular valley where the city of La Grande exists today. The valley, named Grand Ronde ("Great Circle") by French-Canadians of the fur trade, nestles between the Wallowa Mountains to the east and the Blue Mountains to the west.

The Blue Mountains and the Grand Ronde Valley were home to the Cayuse Indian nation, a horse culture that controlled most of present-day northeastern Oregon. East of the Wallowas, distant from the Oregon Trail, lay the lands of their close friends and allies, the Nez Perce (*Nimiipuu*). Farther north along the Columbia and its major tributaries lived the Walla Walla (*Walúulapam*) and Umatilla (*Imatalamláma*) people,

who structured their lives primarily around salmon runs and other river resources. Those four tribes and others of the southern Plateau gathered in the bountiful Grand Ronde each summer to hunt, fish, harvest, trade, and socialize. Wagon parties entering the valley found the place bustling, full of busy people, Indian lodges, and vast herds of fine, fat horses: the splendid, spotted Appaloosa of the Nez Perce and the famously fast and hardy Cayuse Indian pony. Many Americans traded cattle, shirts, or a rifle for one of those much-prized animals.

> *[Grand Ronde Valley] appeared to be the most beautiful valley I had ever looked upon. The hills dressed in green, with springs of water running from the sites, with groves of willows and cotton wood, and thousands of ponies grazing, and Indians driving in all directions.* —John Johnson, July 30, 1851

> *I am told that they average 400 [horses] to each person; and prettier ponies I have never seen. . . .The Indians never go on foot, but must ride; no matter how short a distance. They will go in a gallop all the time.* —Samuel Handsaker, September 12-13, 1853

The four tribes had long experience doing business with white men of the fur trade. Some Umatilla and Walla Walla women married and reared families with Hudson's Bay Company men at Frenchtown,

*View from Isqúulktpe Creek Overlook in the Blue Mountains.*

in the Walla Walla Valley of today's Washington State. Being used to foreigners, the Indian people camping at Grand Ronde initially were comfortable with American overlanders as guests and trade partners. Men and women alike galloped up to approaching wagons to begin the bartering, offering salmon and fresh vegetables in exchange for cattle and valuable knives, iron pots, firearms, and clothing. Diarists remarked on their hosts' command of English and their Christian religious practices, learned at Protestant and Catholic missions to the north. Some wrote of being corrected by devout Indian men for religious lapses such as playing cards or conducting trade on a Sunday.

Travelers found the grassy, well-watered, and sometimes cool and rainy Grand Ronde Valley to be a welcome relief after trudging through dust, wind, and heat for the past 600 miles. Some wrote poetically about the beauty of the valley, and many noted its potential for irrigation and the plow.

> *the valleys is very rich and fertile and would purduse [produce] grain in abundence if tilled but no one to til the soil here but indians and they will not do it.* —Absalom B. Harden, August 30, 1847

> *This is the best and most beautiful place we have seen on the whole road or, in fact, in our lives, and it is said to be a fair specimen of western Oregon.* —John Tully Kerns, Sept. 1, 1852

Of course, the native people who gathered there appreciated the beauty of the Grand Ronde, too, and they had no need to till its soil. Their lives were already rich with the natural bounty that their valley provided and the way of life it supported.

> *The Grand Ronde Valley was our Eden. Everything was there for the people. The Grand Ronde had everything.* —Átway Dan Motanic, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Now ahead on the Oregon Trail loomed the Blue Mountains. They would prove much more challenging than the South Pass of the Continental Divide.

## OVER THE BLUES

In the spring of 1843, some 900 Americans with 121 wagons, a thousand work oxen and horses, and another thousand head of loose livestock started west together from Independence, Missouri. Known as the Great Migration of 1843, this was the largest wagon train up to that time ever to attempt the Oregon Trail. When the train reached Fort Hall in eastern Idaho—by then split up in to smaller, more manageable groups—the Hudson's Bay Company traders there warned that the wagons would never get through the Blue Mountains. In previous years, travelers had heeded that warning, abandoned their valuable wagons at the fort, and packed the remaining miles with horses or mules.

The big 1843 wagon train, though, included Dr. Marcus Whitman, who was returning to his mission in the Oregon Country after a trip to the East on church-related business. Having crossed the Blue Mountains several times before, the physician knew the route and its hazards. He assured the immigrants that they could get their vehicles through to the Columbia River. Most decided to try. Whitman traveled with the wagons west from Fort Hall but had to leave the company at the Grand Ronde Valley after he received a message calling him away on a medical emergency. The doctor's trusted friend, a Cayuse headman named Ixtíxec, agreed to pilot the wagons through the Blue Mountains. Diarists wrote admiringly of their guide, whose name they pronounced as "Stickus," praising his skill at leading their wagons through the rugged, thickly forested country.

The 1843 pioneers cut a wagon trace through the Blues and later companies improved the route, but passage was always an ordeal, even so. The mountain crossing was not a simple up-and-over, and it took three to five days to travel. First came a long, steep climb out of the Grand Ronde Valley, followed by several miles of rolling country, and then a slide down to the Grand Ronde River at today's Hilgard Junction. Next were two more mean climbs and descents. Travelers who reached the Blue Mountains in late September or October also might encounter winter rains, hail, and snow, making travel more difficult. In dry weather, water and grass were scarce along the way, so unattended livestock drifted into the forest at night seeking to

graze and drink. People spent many dark morning hours looking for their cattle in the thick timber, hoping to find them before wolves or mountain lions found them first.

> *Here we began climbing the Blue mountains, and if they don't beat the devil.* —David Maynard, September 2, 1850

> *We went up one [hill] today and it took twenty-two head of cattle to haul up one wagon, and there was not much in the wagon either.* —Elizabeth Wood, September 9, 1851

The wagons finally crossed the Blue Mountains divide several miles east of present-day Meacham and continued toward Deadman Pass, so named in later years for the killing of a teamster in that vicinity. Beyond the modern rest area at the pass stretches a long, brake-burning highway grade to the Umatilla Valley. The highway is not the trail alignment, though: the historic trail heads northwesterly from Deadman Pass and crosses the bluff about three miles north of the freeway. George Belshaw of the 1853 emigration wrote that the descent from the bluff was "the longest hill [he] ever saw but not bad to go down." At the base of the mountains the Oregon Trail enters the Umatilla (yoo-ma-TILL-a) Valley within today's Umatilla Indian Reservation. Much like Grand Ronde, this valley was dotted with mat-covered lodges and vast herds of horses. Immigrants, assuming equal rights to the Cayuse pony pasture, complained that the thousands of grazing horses had left no grass for their livestock.

> *We halted [at the descent of the Blue Mountains] to view the beautiful valley of the Umatilla. It was beyond description.* —John Johnson, August 4, 1851

> *The valley and prairie for miles looked like grain fields ready for the sickle, as the grass was dry and yellow. I never enjoyed so rich a sight before!* —Esther Belle Hanna, August 25, 1852

The trail splits after entering Umatilla Valley, with one branch turning westerly along the Umatilla River and the other heading north toward Whitman Mission, located near today's Walla Walla, Washington. On one cold November day in 1847, events at the mission shocked the nation, ushered Oregon Territory officially into the United States, and brought on the fight for control of the Pacific Northwest.

## WEYÍILET IN THE CAYUSE COUNTRY

Presbyterian elder and physician Marcus Whitman, with his bride and mission partner, Narcissa, went west from upstate New York in 1836 to minister to the Indian nations of the Oregon Country. The two believed they were bringing a great and mutually desired good: they would save souls, educate Indian children, and show grateful converts how to trade their hunting and gathering tradition for a settled, farming way of life. But the couple lacked training in foreign mission work and had no grasp of local cultures, courtesies, politics, or languages. Their life experience in the East did not prepare them to live among the Indian nations of the West. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman— especially genteel Narcissa —did not know how to *be* in the place that they were going.

Cayuse headman Umtippe, curious about the new religion and perhaps expecting a church/trading post that would bring in manufactured goods, wanted the mission to be near his village where he could keep an eye on goings-on. He gave Whitman permission to build at a grassy bend of the Walla Walla River about seven miles west of the future site of the town of Walla Walla. The chosen site was a place called *Weyúlet* (Wy-EE-let), named for the tall, waving rye grass that grows there.

*Marcus and Narcissa Whitman.*

*Marcus Whitman (1859), by Paul Kane.*
*Narcissa Whitman, from "How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon" (1895), by Oliver W. Nixon.*

*Oregon Trail ruts near Baker City, Oregon.*

The Whitmans had traveled west along the Oregon Trail with another couple, Henry and Eliza Spalding, who established their own mission among the Nez Perce at Lapwai, in today's Idaho. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding were the first white women to travel overland beyond the Continental Divide. They rode much of the way sidesaddle, and Mrs. Whitman was pregnant with her first child during the trip. The two proved, as had countless Indian women before them, that ladies were not too delicate to cross the Rocky Mountains. Their achievement helped open the doors to family emigration to Oregon in the 1840s.

At Weyíilet, the Whitmans struggled to learn the dialect of the Nez Perce language spoken by the Cayuse. They built a mill to grind flour for the mission and the tribes. They offered classes and Sunday services, and some Cayuse worshiped with them and helped out around the mission. Many of the local people accepted seeds and plows, learned how to plant crops and garden produce, and with Dr. Whitman's help, started their own cattle herds. Indian visitors delighted to hold and play with little Alice Clarissa, the Whitman baby, calling her their "Cayuse girl" and teaching her words in Cayuse-Nez Perce. Still, relations grew rocky between the proud tribesmen and the stiff-necked missionaries. They began to collect grievances against each other.

Cayuse visitors expected to enter the Whitmans' home freely and to look into their windows from outside. Mrs. Whitman kept their personal rooms locked and covered the windows for privacy. Each thought the other rude. Narcissa wrote home that the Cayuse were "insolent, proud, domineering, arrogant, and ferocious." The Cayuse found Narcissa to be cold, haughty and "very proud," and they complained that she looked down upon them. The tribesmen grew furious with Dr. Whitman when a worker tainted some melons to discourage filching from the mission gardens, and when poisoned meat he had set out for the wolves ended up in a Cayuse cooking pot. Whitman, in turn, disapproved that the Cayuse abandoned their crops each spring to follow their traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering rounds, which took them away from church for much of the year. He severely rebuked his congregation for what he saw as their religious failures, and he dismissed Cayuse demands for gift-giving—an important social rite in many Indian cultures—as extortion. Other serious issues and divisive personalities added to the creeping tensions at Weyíilet. More troubles arrived in 1843.

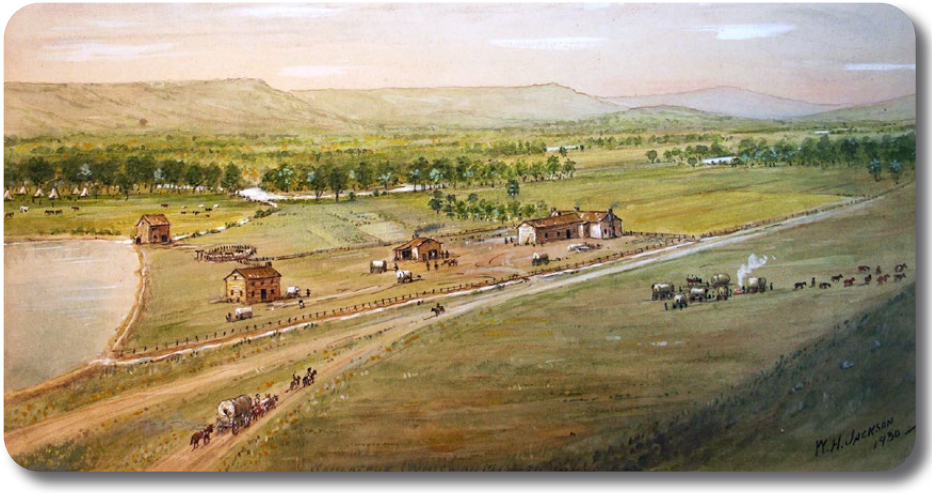
The Great Migration wagon train crossing the Plateau that year brought more people than belonged to the Cayuse and Walla Walla nations combined at that time. Whitman's ushering of immigrants through their country was not part of the tribe's understanding with him, and some Cayuse grew suspicious of his intentions. While the doctor went East on mission business over the winter of 1842-1843, rumors flew that he was gone to fetch back a powerful poison to use against them, or that he would return with American men to take over the Indians' country. They already had experienced his poisons. Now here came his Americans, nearly 1,000 strong, driving their wagons through the Cayuse heartland.

The newly opened wagon trail through the Blue Mountains carried another 1,500 overlanders into Oregon in 1844. Among them were the seven orphaned children of Henry and Naomi Sager, who had died of natural causes while traveling the Oregon Trail. The oldest child was a boy of 14 and the youngest, born on the trail, was a baby girl of five months. Left with the Whitmans by their wagon party, the Sager children settled into life at Weyíilet and learned to call their adoptive parents Mother and Father. These seven, in addition to

other youngsters taken in by the couple, brought the Whitman family to a total of 11 children. They seemed a comfort to Narcissa, whose little Alice Clarissa had drowned in the river behind the mission house five years earlier. The toddler's death had crushed Narcissa's spirit and broken a sympathetic bond with Umtippe's people.

Others, too, found hospitality at the mission. Many travelers stopped there for medical attention and provisions. Dozens of destitute immigrants stayed over each winter, sharing the family's rooms and dinner table. Overworked Narcissa objected to the crowds in her kitchen and the demands on her family's pantry. The Cayuse objected, as well. They resented that stray immigrants were taken in while they, whose land this was, were not welcome in the Whitman home; and they were angered that the mission was diverting immigrant trade that should have belonged to the tribes. But the doctor would not turn away sick, starving countrymen who came to his door. And they kept coming.

> *I have no doubt our greatest work is to be to aid the white settlement of this country…The Indians have in no case obeyed the command to multiply and replenish the earth, and they cannot stand in the way of others in doing so.* —Marcus Whitman, letter to Narcissa's parents, May 16, 1844




*"Whitman Mission" (1940), by William Henry Jackson.*


*"Cayuse Tribe" or "Cayuse Indian Children in Costume" (1897), by Lee Moorhouse.*

With Americans pouring into the Oregon Country in greater and greater numbers, officials at Hudson's Bay Company finally admitted defeat. In 1846, Great Britain and the United States agreed to a boundary at the 49th parallel, today's international border with Canada. Under the terms of that treaty, the US took the region south of the boundary and Britain kept the region to the north. Of course, the "Two Powers" really were only agreeing on separate areas of activity and influence. The land itself remained under Indian title.

In the early autumn of 1847, around 4,000 American settlers, the greatest number yet, started across Cayuse country. Some of them reported being menaced and robbed by Indians in the Blue Mountains. Marcus Whitman worried for the safety of his family and the 61 others living at the mission. Families in the nearby Cayuse village, now headed by Chief Tiloukaikt (Tílewkeyʔkt), worried about the immigrant invasion. A sense of danger clabbered the air.

The Plateau had become a powder keg. Measles lit the fuse.

> *The poor Indians are amazed at the overwhelming numbers of Americans coming into the country. They seem not to know what to make of it.* —Narcissa Whitman, letter to her parents, August 23, 1847

## THE END OF THE BEGINNING

Measles swept across the Oregon Country that summer, infecting both settlers and tribesmen, and the Indian people blamed the epidemic on the immigrants. Dr. Whitman treated all who asked for his help, but he lost nearly all of his Cayuse patients while only one of his white patients died. Native people had no natural immunity to diseases that originated in Europe, Asia, and Africa, although nobody understood that at the time. Many Cayuse parents grieved the loss of their children that summer, and some accused Whitman of being a *watáyi*, a corrupt doctor who uses his spiritual power to poison and kill his patients. Among Plateau cultures, such a doctor could be put to death. Whitman well knew of this practice. He had been warned and even threatened many times. His good friend Ixtíxec, "Stickus," warned him again not once but twice on November 28, 1847.

That night, several ill children died in the lodge of Chief Tiloukaikt.

> *Dr. Whitman many years ago made a long journey to the east to get a bottle of poison for us. He was gone about a year, and after he came back strong and terrible diseases broke out among us. . . . He had uncorked his bottle and all the air was poisoned.* —Smoholla, Wanapum prophet of the Dreamer religious movement

On the chill, foggy morning of November 29, two men from Tiloukaikt's village forced their way into the missionaries' home and struck down Marcus Whitman with a hatchet. About a dozen others outside began an assault across the mission complex. Over several days the faction killed nine more men, the two teenaged Sager brothers, and Narcissa Whitman, and took around 50 women and children hostage. Three children, including one of the little Sager sisters, died of measles while in captivity. Other Cayuse people, in their winter villages along the Umatilla River, remained unaware of unfolding events. When the news reached them, many were troubled. Some had regarded the missionaries as friends, some thought the violence was carried too far, and many feared that the actions of those few men might trigger a backlash against all Cayuse.

Peter Skene Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company official trusted by the Indian people, negotiated a ransom for the captives, and Company boatmen delivered the survivors to Fort Vancouver on January 2, 1848. Upon arrival, the four surviving Sager sisters, orphaned for a second time on the Oregon Trail, bid each other goodbye as new foster parents carried them off to different homes.

The eldest sister, Catherine, married at age 16 and took in two of her younger sisters, Elizabeth and Henrietta, to rear along with eight children of her own. She died at age 75 at Spokane, Washington, in 1910. Elizabeth married, brought up a family of nine children, and died in 1925 at age 88 in Portland, Oregon. Henrietta, the child born on the Oregon Trail, scandalized her family by leaving home at age 12 or 13 to join a traveling theater troupe in California. She died in 1870 at age 26 in Red Bluff, California, shot by an assailant who was aiming at her husband. Henrietta left no known descendants. Matilda provided two accounts of her childhood after the massacre, one recounting a hard but satisfactory life with her foster parents and the other describing severe abuse that drove her to escape that home by marrying at age 15. She had eight children and three marriages, widowed each time, and died at age 89 in Reseda, California, in 1928. Catherine, Elizabeth, and Matilda maintained a lifelong interest in the Whitman Mission site, where three members of their family

*Gravesite of the victims of the attack, including Marcus and Narcissa Whitman.*

*Catherine, Elizabeth, and Matilda Sager (1897) at the Weyíilet 50th Anniversary Commemoration.*

lay buried. They returned to Weyíilet as guests of honor at the 50th anniversary commemoration in 1897.

The attack at Weyíilet was not a senseless act of violence, as told in newspapers of the day, but a Cayuse retaking of control over their own lives and lands. As such, it brought about the end of the first phase of American settlement in the Oregon Country. The Oregon colonists, their sense of security shattered, sent a messenger to Washington, D.C., to demand protection. In August 1848, Congress established Oregon Territory, bringing the region (today's Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming) into the United States under federal protection. Meanwhile, settler militias scoured the Plateau to punish the Cayuse, any of them, all of them, and capture the attackers. The resulting skirmishes, known as the Cayuse War, were the first of the American wars for possession of the Pacific Northwest.

Two and a half years after the attack on the mission, five Cayuse men stood trial before a grand jury in Oregon City. They faced a single charge for the murder of Marcus Whitman. Cayuse leaders protested that the men were innocent, that the guilty parties were already dead. Further, their defense lawyers argued, the federal court had no

authority to charge and try these men. The Cayuse Nation had ceded nothing to the United States. Weyíilet lay in Cayuse country, Cayuse justice pertained there, and under their law the killing of the doctor was legal and justified. The defense also called Ixtíxec to testify that Whitman had ignored his warnings of danger, but being Indian, he was not allowed to speak. After a controversial four-day trial, on May 24, 1850, a jury found all of the accused guilty. Officials carried out the five hangings in Oregon City 10 days later.

The tribe has always held that the Cayuse Five—Tiloukaikt (Tílewkeyʔkt), Tomahas (Tamáx̣aš), Isiaasheluckas (ʔIcıyéeye šıléq̓ıš), Clockamas (łókomut), and Kiamasumkin (Koy̓amʔá šamqíın)—were innocent men who surrendered themselves in order to end the violence against their people. Their sacrifice is still recognized and honored by the Confederated Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

> *Did not your missionaries teach us that Christ died to save his people? So we die to save our people.* —Tiloukaikt, speaking from the gallows, June 3, 1850

Weyíilet, now known as Whitman Mission, today is a national historic site managed and interpreted by the National Park Service. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation interpret their history for visitors at Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, east of Pendleton.

*Celilo Falls, "The Narrows," (ca 1910 - 1912). From Columbia River Narrative History, #345-A, Lot 145.*

## COLUMBIA RIVER TO THE DALLES

In 1843 and 1844, many emigrants drove north from the Blue Mountains to Weyíilet. From there they could turn west along the Walla Walla River for 24 miles to reach the Hudson's Bay Company post called Fort Walla Walla. The post stood at the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers, near present-day Wallula, Washington. There travelers faced a choice. They could float the Columbia River in rented Hudson's Bay Company bateaux, Indian canoes, or homemade rafts; or they could continue along the south riverbank, traversing steep cliffs, rocky shorelines, and rushing tributaries that drained into the big river.

A nice, cool river float could look very attractive to someone who had just spent five to six months moving wagons and livestock over a dusty, difficult trail. Some immigrants camped near Fort Walla Walla while building rafts or making other arrangements for the next leg of their trip. Many hired expert river-runners to pilot their boats through the series of hazards that stretched between Fort Walla Walla and the settlement of The Dalles.

The Umatilla Rapids, near today's town of Umatilla, Oregon, growled over one and a half miles of boulder-choked river bottom. Beyond that lay some minor rough water and then two more heart-pounding rapids near the mouth of the John Day River, which enters the Columbia from the south. Farther downstream, basalt outcroppings, islands, and narrow channels shredded the current into foaming whitewater over an 11-mile stretch known as the dalles. *"Dalles"* (rhymes with "pals") was a term that *voyageurs*—French Canadians of the fur trade—used to refer to a rapids running through a narrow, gutter-like gorge.

At the head of the dalles stretch, the river narrowed and plunged 20 feet over horseshoe-shaped Celilo (seh-LIE-lo) Falls, the largest waterfall by volume in North America at that time. The torrent's roar could be heard for miles, giving the place its Sahaptin language name *Wayám*, "sound of water upon the rocks." River-travelers had to put ashore above the waterfall and portage around it. Below Celilo Falls thrashed a dangerous channel known as Tenmile Rapids, so named

because it lay 10 miles above the boat landing at the settlement of The Dalles. This stretch boiled with swells and whirlpools for about two miles. Beyond those rapids, a deep pool of slack-water formed where the river backed up behind a narrow constriction, or chute, that lay ahead.

At that chute, the thousand-foot-wide river necked down to 75 feet and forced the full volume of the Columbia to seethe for a mile and a half through a series of narrow basalt channels. Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery, passing this way in 1805, named this stretch the Long Narrows, but the French voyageurs called it *Les Grandes Dalles* and Oregon Trail travelers knew it as Fivemile Rapids. Most rivermen put ashore and portaged their boats around that hazard, but Lewis and Clark shot the Long Narrows with five canoes, to the amazement of Indian villagers watching from the bluffs. Upon exiting the Long Narrows, the river channel reopens. At this outlet, the water circles, as if dazed, in a broad, sweeping eddy more than 150 feet deep. A mile below the Big Eddy lay Threemile Rapids, which marks the end of the dalles reach of the river. Below these minor rapids, on the south bank of the Columbia River, sits the historic town of The Dalles.

Emigrants had been warned that this stretch of the river was dangerous. That's why Overton Johnson and William Winter, part of the Great Migration arriving at Fort Walla Walla in early October 1843, hired an Indian pilot for their canoe.

> *We soon found that [the river] was full of rocks, whirlpools, and dangerous rapids, to follow through which in safety required the greatest exertion, watchfulness and care. Our minds were constantly filled with anxiety and dread…* —Overton Johnson and William Winter, emigration of 1843, in an 1846 reminiscence

The pair witnessed a near tragedy when one of their party's canoes struck a submerged rock on the first day's travel below Fort Walla Walla, possibly in the boulder-littered Umatilla Rapids. Two passengers, dumped into the furious flow, managed to climb onto the rock and were rescued by the skillful pilot of Johnson and Winter's boat. Eventually, all reached safety at the Wascopam Methodist Mission at The Dalles, about 125 river miles below Fort Walla Walla.

*Submerged Celilo Falls of the Columbia River in Celilo Village Park.*

Others were less fortunate. Jesse, Charles, and Lindsay Applegate, three brothers traveling from Missouri with their families in 1843, built two boats out of driftwood and hired an experienced Indian riverman to pilot their little fleet down the Columbia. At first the float trip was pleasant, but on November 6, probably in the Tenmile Rapids below Celilo Falls, one of the boats slipped into the wrong channel. It spun into a whirlpool and bobbed back to the surface with one passenger missing. A second whirlpool immediately sucked the boat under again, but this time it did not emerge.

> *Presently there was a wail of anguish, a shriek, and a scene of confusion in our boat that no language can describe. The boat we were watching disappeared and we saw the men and boys struggling in the water.* —Jesse A. Applegate, emigration of 1843, age 8 at the time of the accident. He was the son of Lindsay and nephew to Jesse Applegate of Applegate Trail fame. Quote from Jesse A.'s 1914 reminiscence.

Three passengers managed to escape the torrent's pull and reach safety, but the river kept an older family friend and two nine-year-old cousins, sons of Jesse and Lindsay Applegate. Their bodies never were recovered. Autumn rains mourned over the Applegate families as they continued downriver.

## A PLATEAU ROUTE TO THE DALLES

In the summer of 1847, a few months before his death, Marcus Whitman opened a new wagon road that turned west from the foot of the Blue Mountains and cut directly across the Plateau toward The Dalles. Overlanders quickly adopted this more direct route, and most traffic abandoned the leg that went north to Whitman's mission.

After crossing the Umatilla River at today's Echo, Oregon, the Plateau route heads west toward Echo Meadows, where visitors can explore original wagon ruts on public lands. From there, travelers faced several more days of deep sand, sagebrush, and stiff winds. At this point many were sick, possibly from drinking dirty water and eating flyblown food that had been hauled in the hot wagons over half the continent. But they were lucky if they had anything to eat. Some families already had shaken the last of their flour from its cotton sacks and were rationing their remaining beans and moldy bacon. Wild game along the way was mostly hunted out. Finding little grass west of Echo Meadows, the oxen starved too, growing weaker day by day.

> *'Tis the long road that has no end.' And some of us are almost inclined to think that it is a long way to the end of this.* —Samuel Handsaker, September 20, 1853

The next trail milestone is McDonald Ford on the John Day River. The stream ran low in late summer and usually was easy to cross, but many travelers complained in their writings about the steep, difficult climb to the top of the bluff on the west side. From there the main route continues over the bluffs toward the Columbia River.

Approaching the future site of Biggs Junction, about 25 miles northwest of McDonald Ford, travelers took in a view of the Columbia below. Their first sight of the mighty river should have been cause for celebration, but most of those who bothered to mentioned it in their journals it seemed unimpressed. "Alas! What a disappointment," grumped Father Honore-Timothee Lempfrit, a Catholic missionary on his way to the Pacific Northwest, on September 22, 1848. Instead of a leafy paradise, his party found "a dry and arid land where there was not a piece of wood, not even a

*Oregon Trail Swales in Echo Meadows.*

stick, and where a violent wind carried clouds of dust with it. That was it," he concluded, "that was all we found there."

> *There was nothing attractive in the scene, not a tree, spear of grass, or vegeaton of any kind to be seen...* —Phoebe Hines, upon viewing the Columbia River, emigration 1853

Just ahead, the trail bent west and crawled along the south side of the Columbia. Nearly everyone wrote about the next challenge, the Deschutes River crossing. This tributary ran dangerously deep and swift as it flowed north to empty into the Big River. Wagon parties had to cross above its mouth in order to continue moving west toward The Dalles. In the 1840s, Indian workmen guided travelers over the Deschutes River ford or carried immigrants (and sometimes their wagons) in canoes across its rushing current, for payment in cash, shirts, and other goods. One settler recalled a terrified woman who clung to an Indian man as the horse they shared struggled in the Deschutes current. When she cried out in fear, the man turned and, in perfect English, coolly chided, "Wicked woman, put your faith in God!" Some say that man was Marcus Whitman's Cayuse friend, Ixtíxec.

In the 1850s, some Americans seized control of the profitable crossing and charged $5 per wagon for ferry service.

> *it was high rapid and dangerous  the water came clear to the top of the wagon beds* —Elizabeth Dixon Smith, October 24, 1847

> *if stock is not very stout they are liable of being washed down [the Deschutes] into the Columbia* —John McAllister, October 6, 1852

After the Deschutes crossing came a long pull up a bluff. Today's Old Moody Road closely approximates the route, and traces of the original wagon trail can still be glimpsed alongside of it. From here wagons continued 12 miles across the Plateau before descending, at last, to the settlement of The Dalles. It had been an exhausting trip. And it was not over yet.

> *When we arrived at The Dalles we were worn out, tiered [tired] out, starved out, and almost ready to give out.* —Charles Stevens, letter to friends in Illinois, Oct. 31, 1852

*View from the upper elevations of the Blue Mountains.*

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DALLES

Before the dams, seasonal runs of Chinook, sockeye, Coho, chum, and other salmon choked the Columbia in numbers so great that a person could, it was claimed, walk across the river on the backs of the fish. Biologists estimate the runs in the 1800s reached up to 16 million fish each year, compared to less than a million in modern times. Returning to their birthplaces to spawn, the salmon fought their way up the wild current, leaping and thrashing to the tops of waterfalls and rapids. They gathered to rest at the foot of the waterfalls and in eddies, where waiting fishermen handily scooped them up with dip-nets and spears. The dalles, the long reach of rapids between Celilo Falls/Wayám and the present town of The Dalles, is said to have been the greatest salmon fishery in the world, back when the river was free.

Indian people have fished the salmon runs in the Columbia Gorge for over 9,000 years, according to archeologists. Indigenous peoples' use of the area likely began even earlier. Tribal oral tradition describes river events that seem to reference an Ice Age megaflood, and an archeological site along the river system in Idaho dates to over 14,000 years old. For thousands upon thousands of spawning seasons, Indian fishermen balanced on spray-slickened rocks and platforms above Wayám/Celilo Falls and the Long Narrows, dipping their long-handled nets into the current and tossing flailing, silver fish to shore for the women to clean and dry. They received the salmon as a gift from the Creator, and they honored that gift with prayer, ceremony, and management of their harvest.

This fishery formed the hub of a great trading network. Up the Columbia Gorge from the west came dried smelt (ooligan), sea shells, dugout cedar canoes, and paddles; from the northwest came shells, cedar baskets, and smoked shellfish. Traders from the Plateau and Plains to the east brought pipestone, camas root, animal hides, and buffalo meat, while those from the Great Basin to the south brought enslaved Indian captives, obsidian, and basketry. Each summer, thousands of people from many tribes visited the Wasco, Wyam, Wishram, Tenino, Tygh, Klickitat, and Yakama villages along both banks of the rapids in order to trade, fish, gamble, socialize, dance,

and marry. Some travelers from the wagon trains visited the villages, too, to trade for food, horses, canoes, and guides. They viewed this stretch of river as just one more challenge on the final leg of their passage to Willamette Valley, but the river nations knew it as the very heart of their spiritual, economic, and social lives.

In 1838, Methodist missionaries Daniel Lee and Henry Perkins established Wascopam Mission near a Wasco Indian river village called Win-Quatt ("surrounded by rock cliffs"), below the dalles. When the Great Migration passed through in 1843, many of the immigrant families desperately needed food. Perkins wrote on Nov. 24, 1843, "Most of our wheat, potatoes and fat cattle we have parted with." The demand continued year after year and, as had happened at Weyíilet, the work of Wascopam shifted from converting the Indians to aiding the immigrants. Struggling with costs and management troubles, the Methodist mission board shut down and sold Wascopam to Marcus Whitman in September 1847. Whitman's death two months later derailed the sale and left the abandoned mission buildings to go to ruin. The US Army took over the site in 1850, establishing Fort Dalles to guard traffic along the Oregon Trail. A civilian settlement sprang up around the fort and continued to provide services for the passing traffic. Buildings and sites from those

*Passage of the Dalles (1882), by Carleton E. Watkins.*

later years can be visited at today's town of The Dalles.

Gone, though, are the busy villages, the babble of traders, and the spray and roar of the great river. In 1952 the US Army Corps of Engineers began building The Dalles Dam, 11 miles below Threemile Rapids, to provide hydroelectric power, flood control, and water storage for the region. On March 10, 1957, observers mourned, drummed, and chanted honor songs as the rising waters behind the dam silenced the Long Narrows, then Tenmile Rapids, and finally, the mighty Wayám, Celilo Falls itself. Recent sonar images made by the Army Corps of Engineers show that the rock outcrops and channels that formed Celilo Falls still exist in the depths of Lake Celilo, fueling dreams that Wayám one day will leap and roar once more.

> *There goes my life. My people will never be the same.* — Wyam Chief Tommy Kuni Thompson, at the drowning of Celilo Falls, 1957

Spawning salmon still migrate up the river, but their once incredible numbers are so reduced that fisheries biologists fear they are headed for extinction. Tribal people still toil from rocks and scaffolds above the current, netting fish as is their right by treaty. They, and others, pray for restoration of the salmon, and tribal biologists and other scientists are working to make that happen.

*Dipnetting for salmon in the Columbia River is a tradition still practiced today. Courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers.*

## THE MIGHTY COLUMBIA: THE DALLES TO THE CASCADES

> *the rolling roaring foaming dashing splashing rumbling tumbling smooth gentle Columbia...* —Isaac Pettijohn, August 27, 1847

At a town park in The Dalles stands a stone monument declaring that spot to be the "End of the Old Oregon Trail." However, the actual end of the overland portion of the Oregon wagon trail until 1846 was a few miles downriver at Crate's Point, where tall bluffs crowd the river and blocked further wagon passage. Until an inland wagon route opened in 1846, wagon parties had to take to the river there. Nothing about travel along the Columbia River was easy, and this last stretch of river proved no exception.

A final two-mile stretch of violent whitewater, variously called the Great Cascades of the Columbia, the Great Chutes, and the Great Falls, lay below The Dalles, west of the Cascade Mountains near today's Bonneville Dam. These rapids were created around 600 years ago after an enormous section of Table Mountain to the north broke away—the scar is obvious on the face of the mountain—and slid into the Columbia. Tribal oral tradition recalls that landslide event and the resulting "Bridge of the Gods," a natural dam that for a time

*Modern view of the Columbia River and the Columbia River Gorge.*

provided a dry crossing from one side of the river to the other. Water rose behind the dam to a depth of 100 feet, submerging forests as much as 36 miles upstream. Within a few months the river chewed a new channel around the southern toe of the blockage, draining the lake upstream and exposing the skeletons of drowned trees. Massive boulders partially choked the narrow, newly cut channel through the debris, creating an impassable stretch of dashing, crashing rapids.

In Oregon Trail days, travelers with money might hire a Hudson's Bay Company bateau or a sturdy Chinookan dugout canoe to carry their families, their possessions, and their disassembled wagons from The Dalles settlement to the upper end of the Great Cascades. Travelers put ashore on the north bank near the present-day town of Stevenson, Washington, and followed a portage trail six miles around the rapids. In the early years of the immigration, that trail was little more than a route over rocks and boulders—some claimed their wagon wheels never touched dirt the entire way. Because the Cascades were another rich fishery controlled by the Yakama and various Chinookan nations, Indian men often were present in this area and could be hired to carry belongings along the portage trail to the lower end of the rapids. There, travelers would wait to board a flatboat or steamboat and complete their river trip to Fort Vancouver.

Putting one's family in the hands of professionals this way was the easiest and safest option, but an expensive one. Operators charged as much as the market could bear: some recorded fares were $10 per passenger, $2 per pound of freight, and $16 per wagon. Those 1850 prices translate to roughly $330 per passenger, $66 per pound, and $525 per wagon in 2021 dollars. One Columbia River resident estimated that it cost $100—about $3,305 today—for a family with a loaded wagon to travel down the gorge by steamboat.

That is why many immigrants chose to build rafts, often shared by several families. Wagon parties arriving at The Dalles camped for days or weeks near Crate's Point, a sheltered harbor where Chenoweth Creek empties into the big river, while the men hiked up into the forests to cut trees. These they "bucked" into logs and rolled down the mountainside toward the river. The men next lashed the logs together with rope to create a raft, took apart their wagons,

and loaded the running gear, wagon boxes, and wheels, plus all of their other possessions, onto the heaving deck. Then they waited, sometimes for days, for a period of calm weather when they could safely launch.

The frequent strong headwinds roaring up through the gorge were known to push vessels upstream or batter them against the rocky bluffs at river's edge. (Today the windy stretch at Hood River is a premier windsurfing and kiteboarding destination.) When the winds finally fell back, the rafters hurriedly pushed off to catch the river currents. Meanwhile, some of the men and boys of the party would start the livestock down a cattle trail along the Columbia. In places they climbed over high, exposed bluffs where cattle had to walk single file through loose rock and mud. Some animals slipped and fell to their death. George Tribble, at age 14, helped drive his family's cattle along that trail in 1852. He recalled:

> *If an animal made the least misstep it would fall one hundred and fifty feet on a bar of the river. Hundreds had made that misstep. Consequently there was a pile of dead animals. . . .We camped about a quarter of a mile from that place. Oh horror of horrors such a hideous night. We had the piercing howl of the coyotes to the agonizing roar of the big timber wolves, black, gray, and yellow. The wolves had congregated from every quarter to eat on the carcasses of the dead cattle. We had to stand guard all night to keep the wolves from attacking us. We had to keep up a perfect fusillade to keep them out of camp.* —George Tribble, 1852

Back down on the river, the women and children huddled among their belongings inside the crowded wagon boxes as rain and spray pelted the weather-beaten canvas covers. The men and older boys and sometimes the women braved the cold and wet, standing with their paddles and poles on the slick, bobbing deck to steer the vessel clear of the rocks. If a wind arose while they were out on the water, the men paddled for shore in near panic, trying to reach safety before whitecaps flipped their raft—and they were lucky if they were not blown back upstream as far as their previous night's camp. They then had to wait, sometimes for a day or longer, for the wind to die down before they could try again. The 40-mile float from Crate's Point to

*Cascades of the Columbia (1882), by Carleton Watkins.*

the Cascades Rapids was a matter of fits and starts, taking from a couple of days to over two weeks to complete, depending on wind conditions.

A vivid account of the trip from The Dalles and around the Great Cascades is handed down by Elizabeth Dixon Smith, who rafted the Columbia with her family in November 1847. Elizabeth, her husband Cornelius, and their eight children left their Indiana home on April 27 and reached Crates Point on October 27, after six months on the trail. Cornelius spent several days building a raft with Russell Welch and Adam Polk, the other two men of the three-family party. As Welch and two of the Smith boys started along the riverside livestock trail with their cattle, the families waited in camp for the wind to subside. Elizabeth's story continues in her own words:

> *November 2 We took off our wagon wheels, laid them on the raft, placed the wagon beds on them and started. There are three families of us. . .on twelve logs eighteen inches through and forty feet long. The water runs three inches over our raft.* —Elizabeth Smith, 1847

The families waited three days below Crates Point, shivering in the wagon boxes atop their partially submerged, moored raft "while the wind blew and the waves rolled beneath." Adam Polk turned

desperately ill on November 5, leaving Cornelius as the only able-bodied adult man on the raft.

> *November 7 Put out in rough water. Moved a few miles. The water became so rough that we were forced to land. No one to man the raft but my husband and my oldest boy, sixteen years old. . .Here we are lying [by a campfire], smoking our eyes, burning our clothes and trying to keep warm. . . .* —Elizabeth Smith, 1847

> *November 8 We are still lying at anchor, waiting for the wind to fall. We have but one day's provisions ahead of us here. We can see snow on the tops of the mountains whose rocky heights reach to the clouds at times. . . .Cold weather – my hands are so cold I can hardly write.* —Elizabeth Smith, 1847

> *November 9 Finds us still in trouble. Waves dashing over our raft and we already stinting ourselves in provisions. My husband started this morning to hunt provisions. Left no man with us except our oldest boy. It is very cold. The icicles are hanging from our wagon beds to the water. . . .* —Elizabeth Smith, 1847

Cornelius hiked out, bought 50 pounds of beef from another company camped along the river, and carried the meat 12 miles on his back to reach camp the following afternoon. In his absence Adam Polk died, leaving a widow with three small children. They carried his body on board the raft and shoved off into the current.

> *November 10 My husband and boy were an hour and a half after dark getting the raft landed and made fast while the water ran knee-deep over our raft, the wind blew and it was freezing cold. We women and children didn't attempt to get out of the wagons [to camp] to-night.* —Elizabeth Smith, 1847

On November 11 the rafting party put ashore in the vicinity of Hood River, on the south bank of the Columbia, where Elizabeth and Cornelius met their sons and Russell Welch with the cattle. Livestock had to cross the Columbia there because steep bluffs ahead blocked further passage along the south side. The following day the party paid a ferryman to shuttle their livestock over while they paused to

lay Adam Polk in a riverside grave. The drovers then pushed the herd west along Indian trails above the river while the cold, miserable families abandoned their waterlogged raft and hired the ferryman to carry them, with their wagons and belongings, downstream to the head of the Great Cascades portage. They landed there on November 13 and waited for the boys with the cattle to catch up. On the fourth day of the wait, Cornelius started ahead down the portage trail with the bereaved, fatherless Polk family. At dawn on the fifth day, Elizabeth began walking the portage trail with her younger children while her older sons continued with the livestock and wrestled the rebuilt family wagons along the soupy, rocky trail.

> *November 18 It rains and snows. We start around the falls this morning with our wagons. We have five miles to go. I carry my babe and lead, or rather carry another, through snow, mud, and water almost to my knees. It is the worst road a team could possibly travel. . . . My children gave out with cold and fatigue and could not travel, and the boys had to unhitch the oxen and bring them and carry the children on to camp. I was so cold and numb that I could not tell by the feeling that I had any feet. We started this morning at sunrise and did not camp until after dark, and there was not one dry thread on one of us – not even on the babe. . . . I had carried my babe and I was so fatigued that I could scarcely speak or step. . . . I have not told half we suffered. I am not adequate to the task. . . .* — Elizabeth Smith, 1847

Upon finally reaching the end of the portage in the vicinity of today's North Bonneville, Washington, Elizabeth discovered Cornelius lying in a wagon sickbed, from which he never would recover. She did not name his malady in her writings, but malnutrition, overwork, and exposure must have figured in his condition. The family camped there with hundreds of other travelers for nine days, in the rain, waiting to board a flatboat to continue downriver. They arrived penniless in Portland on November 29, 1847, seven months after leaving their Indiana home and, coincidentally, the same day Marcus and Narcissa Whitman died at Weyíilet. Elizabeth found lodging in a leaking, mud-floored lean-to shared with the Polks, the Welches, and a third family, and there nursed her husband until his death on February 1. Two years later she wed Joseph Geer, who had immigrated to Oregon

*Columbia River today between The Dalles and the Cascades.*

the same year as Elizabeth. The combined family ultimately consisted of the eight Smith offspring, 10 Geer children from Joseph's prior marriage, and three babes they had together. Elizabeth died in 1855.

Beginning in 1848, several steamboats began operations between The Dalles and the upper end of the Cascades of the Columbia. In the 1850s, business-minded men constructed tramways—mule-powered carts running on wooden rails—to haul freight and passengers around the falls along both sides of the Columbia River. In 1862, a small "pufferbelly" steam locomotive called the Oregon Pony, the first locomotive to operate in the Pacific Northwest, began running a south-bank portage on wooden rails. Like the trams, it mostly hauled freight from the steamboats up the river, but passengers could ride, too. That operation shut down after just a year and another railroad, this one with iron rails, took over on the Washington side of the river in 1863. An interpretive trail at Fort Cascades Historic Site at North Bonneville, Washington, follows the bed of that portage railroad.

Those able to afford steamboat passage and a tram or railroad ride along the portage could avoid much of the Smith family's Columbia River experience. Beyond the Cascades to the Willamette Valley, river travel was typically uneventful aside from the usual struggles with heavy winds.

## THE BARLOW TOLL ROAD

Back in the storied time, the Klickitat tell, Wy'East was a proud and handsome man until the Creator turned him into a mountain for fighting with his brother over a woman. For thousands of years the Molalla, Cascades, Kalapuya, Clackamas, Klickitat, Wasco, and others hunted this mountain's slopes, fished its streams, and named its hallowed places. Their paths etched the mountainsides long before 1792, when a British explorer renamed the peak after Admiral Samuel Hood.

Few Americans had ever seen anything like the majestic, snow-robed volcano they knew as Mt. Hood. It was a peak of remarkable beauty, an Oregon Trail icon, and the final challenge to reaching journey's end. Although a well-known Indian path, the Lolo Pass Trail, skirted the northwest flank of Mt. Hood, it was too narrow and rugged for covered wagons. Some overlanders drove their cattle that way to the Willamette Valley, but the forest grew so thick on the mountainsides that, in places, a cow could barely squeeze between the trees. Early immigrants who wanted to take their wagons to the valley had to float the Columbia River from The Dalles.

Samuel Barlow's wagon company rolled into The Dalles in late September 1845, and the situation he found there did not suit the wagon master at all. Some 60 families were already waiting for two small boats to arrive, on no particular schedule, to carry them downriver. Barlow's newly arrived party would have to wait at least 10 days for a turn in the boats, and the fare would cost them dearly. He decided, instead, to cut a new wagon road around Mt. Hood to Oregon City.

"God never made a mountain that he had not made a place for some man to go over it or around it. I am going to hunt for that place," Barlow declared, heedless of the warnings from local men who knew the mountain. Other immigrant families decided to follow him.

The company's seven wagons, 19 adults, and several children rolled out of The Dalles on September 24, heading south along a well-used Indian and cattle trail (today's US-197). Those 35 miles to Tygh

Valley were tame enough. The small wagon train made camp near a Tygh Indian village while Barlow and several others hiked into the mountain wilds to scout a route through. More men followed them with dull axes and rusty saws, clearing a wagon-width passage through thick timber, huge fallen trees, and a dense understory of "laurel," or rhododendrons. Meanwhile, Joel Palmer's 23-wagon company of overlanders arrived unexpectedly from The Dalles to join the effort.

As the road-builders labored into mid-October, Palmer and a companion scouted ahead, backtracked, and circled in search of a way to take wagons through a maze of ridges and canyons. Several days of bushwhacking, trying Indian trails, and testing river bottoms left the men bewildered. Overhead, heavy, dirty-wool clouds settled above the treetops, threatening rain and snow. "I began for the first time to falter," Palmer remembered, "and was at a stand to know what course to pursue." He could advise his wagon party to return to The Dalles, and suffer their anger and blame; or he could lead them deeper into the mountains and risk them getting trapped between rising rivers. Then he had another idea.

Upon returning to camp, Palmer proposed to stash wagons and belongings on the mountain and pack to the settlements. The men hurriedly built a log cabin, "Fort Deposit," to store their possessions until they could return to retrieve them. Several men started ahead to buy provisions, while one family turned back to The Dalles. The others bundled their remaining food and bedding onto the backs of their livestock and struck out, some of them barefoot and all of them hungry, through curtains of winter drizzle, cold as iron.

After packing along an Indian path on the south flank of Mt. Hood, the overlanders started across the Pacific-facing slope of the mountain, the side that catches the rain. It was then that "the real simon-pure hard times commenced," recalled William Barlow, Samuel's son, some 62 years later.

Part of the difficulty was the weather, with rain, snow, and wind. Part was the terrain, with its rocky slopes and canyons, its old growth forest and tangled deadfalls, its mud and marshes that mired the

heavily laden pack animals. And part of the problem was the worn-out condition of the travelers. Only the weakest of the women and children were permitted to ride on the backs of horses and oxen; everyone else had to walk through the mud, wade the icy mountain streams, and pick their way through the marshes. They trudged onward, three to five miles each day.

Upon reaching the crest of Laurel Hill, the divide between Camp Creek and the Zigzag River, the immigrants gawked at an impossibly long, steep descent before them, 2,000 feet from top to bottom. Having no way to go but forward, they gritted their teeth and stepped onto the slope, skidding down "like shot off a shovel," remembered William Barlow in 1902. The party next trudged over Devil's Backbone, a long, narrow ridgetop that provided barely enough room for future wagons to pass in single file, with deep canyons on either side.

> *[Devil's Backbone] was a long divide between two streams, but very narrow, with just room for wagons and teams to pass . . . . The sight was a grand one, but the road you must keep or plunge headlong with self, family, wagon and team down, down towards the regions below.* —Charles Howard Crawford, 1851 emigration

*"Barlow Cutoff" (1930), by William Henry Jackson.*

The Barlow-Palmer party descended at last to the comfort of Philip Foster's farm at Eagle Creek, Oregon, on December 23. Oregon City was just an easy few days' drive to the west. Despite their difficulties, not one member of the wagon company died during the ordeal.

With a government-issued charter and financial backing from Philip Foster, Sam Barlow hired a crew in spring 1846 to cut a road from Foster's to Fort Deposit, where he had left his wagons. He began charging a $5 toll per wagon plus 10 cents per head of livestock, as authorized by his charter, to recoup the costs of his labor and supplies. A thousand emigrants, 152 wagons, nearly 1,600 head of mules, horses, and cattle, and 1,300 sheep reached the settlements by the new road in mid-September. The toll was expensive but still much cheaper than boat passage on the Columbia River. Yet immigrants felt outraged, accusing Barlow of trying to extort their last nickel at journey's end. Some angrily refused to pay, holding up traffic until they were allowed to pass. Some had no money but signed promissory notes or offered tattered, trail-worn clothing from their wagons. Some managed to duck around the tollgates or "ran like a turkey" from the gatekeeper, as described in a later toll book. Having collected only enough to cover half of his expenses, Barlow eventually abandoned the project and allowed others to take up the toll road charter.

*Rhododendron Tollgate (replica) along the Barlow Road.*

*We… encamped near the 'Gate' which is nothing more than a tent with two men sitting at the 'rceipt of custom' to take from the way worn emigrint his last red cent under the authority of a 'Democratic' Charter.* —Abigail Scott, age 17, September 20, 1852

Various owners through the years collected the tolls, made improvements, and maintained the road—or didn't. Every big windstorm knocked down huge trees. Snowmelt and rain tore wagon ruts into gullies. Underbrush constantly crowded the trail. Some operators left the never-ending upkeep to the immigrants, who would have to clear the way themselves if they wanted to reach the settlements. Travelers often complained about the road's condition, accusing gatekeepers of "charging the dead" by making everybody pay at the east end of the road when many, they argued, would die before coming out the west end. They had a point. Some travelers did die along the Barlow Road, just heartbreaking hours from trail's end. One such was a pioneer woman, her name unknown today, who lies in a lonely grave below Barlow Pass.

The dread Laurel Hill slide remained a challenge. Immigrants yoked their oxen to brace and hold the wagon back as it rolled forward, and they chained up the wheels to prevent them from turning. They cut and attached trees, top-first with branches projecting forward, behind or under the wagons to create drag. Then, tying one end of a rope to the rear axle and snubbing the other end around a tree stump, they slowly let down the wagon, hand over hand. The skidding wheels, branches, and iron-shod hooves loosened the dirt and rocks, which winter rains washed away to create long, scree-lined troughs, or chutes. Repeated use gouged the chutes—there were at least five through the years—as much as seven feet deep. Because it was impossible to pull wagons up Laurel Hill, the Barlow Road was necessarily a one-way, east-to-west route until 1861, when road-builders opened a better route that went around the obstacle.

*We had to chain the wagon wheels and slide the wagons down the rutty, rocky road. My aunt Martha lost one of her remaining shoes, it rolled down the mountainside. I can hear her now as she called out in her despair, 'Oh, me shoe, me shoe! How can I ever*

*get along?' So she wore one shoe and one moccasin the rest of the journey.* —Harriet Scott Palmer, reminiscence, emigration of 1851

*While descending this hill, or mountain, Grandma was sitting in the back seat of the buggy, she could not hold herself in but fell forward and struck the ground head first. She was hurt but little by the fall.* —Stewart B. Eakin, August 19, 1866

Upon entering the valley at last, overlanders discovered Philip Foster's end-of-the-road farm to be a most welcome oasis. Foster shrewdly turned his homestead into a tidy, welcoming inn for arriving wagon parties. His little store sold provisions, he offered meals and rooms as well as cabins for lengthier stays, and he provided pasture and feed for his customers' livestock. Today a local historical society interprets his farm for visitors.

Despite complaints about the cost and conditions, an estimated three-quarters of the continuing Oregon immigration chose to travel the Barlow Road instead of risking their lives on the river. In good weather, with dry ground, and taking advantage of alignment changes to avoid hills and stream crossings, travelers could expect to spend about six days crossing country that occupied the Barlow and Palmer companies for three months.

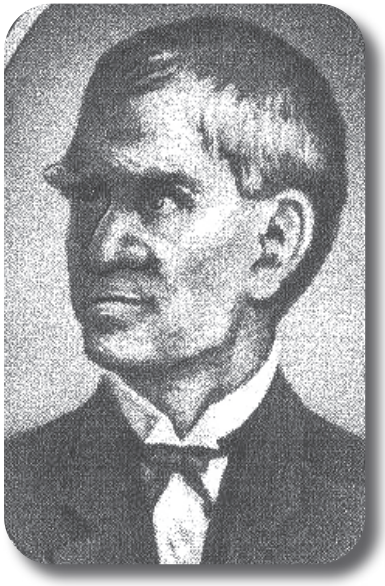
Samuel Barlow lived quietly on his Oregon land claim at the present-day town of Barlow until his death in 1867. Joel Palmer led another wagon train to Oregon in 1847. He wrote a popular Oregon Trail emigration guide, made himself a name in Oregon politics, served with distinction as Superintendent of Indian Affairs and Indian agent, and died at age 71 in 1881. Philip Foster maintained and operated the toll road for a time after Barlow's departure and ran his successful farm-store-inn business until his death at home in 1884. Young Abigail Scott, who complained of the tollgate in 1852, wed Benjamin Duniway in 1853 and six years later penned the first novel, about traveling to Oregon in a covered wagon, to be written in the Pacific Northwest. She later emerged as a leading figure in the fight for women's voting rights. When Oregon passed women's suffrage in 1912, Abigail became the first Oregon woman to register for the vote.

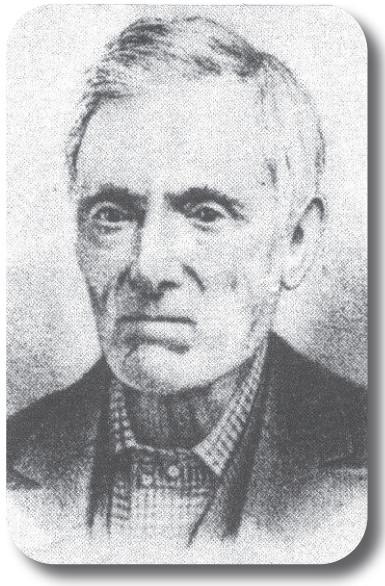
## FINDING A SOUTHERN ROUTE TO OREGON

In 1846, three years after the deaths of their little sons in the river's chill currents, Jesse and Lindsay Applegate volunteered to spearhead the opening of a new overland wagon trail to the Willamette Valley. The Applegates' intended route would enter Oregon from California, carrying traffic into the south end of the valley and bypassing the Columbia altogether.

A 15-man expedition with Jesse Applegate as its captain set out from the vicinity of Dallas, Oregon, on June 22, 1846. With the help of a Hudson's Bay Company map, the road-finders worked south along existing Indian and fur trade paths to the Rogue River, then threaded east through the Siskiyou Mountains. The expedition next crossed the Black Rock Desert, a crusty landscape of boiling springs and volcanic formations, and struck the California Trail at the Humboldt River near today's Rye Patch Reservoir in western Nevada. The scouting took about a month.

Now the expedition had a route but not a trail. About 30 well-equipped men from the oncoming wagon trains would be needed to open the way. While most of the exploring party eased themselves





*Jesse Applegate and Levi Scott.*

*Courtesy of Salem Public Library.*

eastward along the California Trail, Jesse Applegate and several other men rode ahead toward Fort Hall in eastern Idaho. They persuaded travelers they met along the way to try their new Southern Route to Oregon. It would be, the captain wildly overestimated, 200 miles shorter than the established Oregon Trail, with plenty of grass and water along the way. Around 500 immigrants with 100 wagons turned off the proven Oregon Trail to meet up with the rest of the Applegate party waiting near the Humboldt River.

> *The idea of shortening a long journey caused us to yield to [Applegate's] advice. Our sufferings from that time no tongue could tell.* —Tabitha Brown, 1854 letter about her trail experiences

*Tabitha Brown, from "The Centennial History of Oregon, 1811-1912."*

Few of the overlanders cared to help clear trail, though. Only about 20 men, including the two Applegate brothers and most of the exploring expedition, left camp on September 6 to prepare the new Southern Route for the wagons. While doing that labor, those men also had to hunt for food, dodge arrows, and guard their horses night and day. Indian people along the route, having recently suffered violence at the hands of strangers, discouraged trespass in their country.

Jesse soon decided to leave the road crew and ride ahead to gather supplies to send back to the immigrants. He reached his home at Yoncalla Valley on Sept. 26. Believing (as Lindsay later wrote) that "the greatest difficulties in the way of immigrants had been removed," the rest of the road-builders split up, too, dribbling into the settlements throughout October. They had opened a Southern Route to Oregon and the first wagons should be arriving within weeks. Jesse had left a good man, Levi Scott, in charge of the greenhorns. They were in safe hands.

## STRUGGLES ON THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

After a death-dealing passage through Nevada's Black Rock Desert, Levi Scott's wagon train clipped the northeast corner of California and crossed into Oregon near present-day Malin. The lead divisions, totaling about 50 wagons, camped at Stone Bridge, a slightly submerged sandstone ledge that creates a natural bridge across the Lost River. The eastbound-Applegate expedition had been directed to the crossing, the only fordable spot for miles, by a Modoc man.

Ignoring Scott's orders, the immigrants failed to set a guard the night of September 29. They awoke the next morning to discover that Indians, under cover of darkness, had noiselessly driven 10 head of working oxen across the Stone Bridge and into the sagebrush. Outriders sent to recover the animals found where seven of them had been butchered with stone tools about 15 miles from camp. The men tracked the remaining oxen to Tule Lake, there spotting five reed huts which they promptly sacked, burning all the baskets of seeds stored inside. As the patrol rode away, 20 to 30 Modoc villagers sprang out of the reeds and fled toward the lake, where they stopped to gesture and yell threats. The outriders continued back to the wagon camp, satisfied they had taught the thieves a hard lesson.

> *Everything that we met with [in the huts] was destroyed—pots, kettles, mats, baskets, and in fact, everything that we supposed would be of any use whatsoever.* —Tolbert Carter, reminiscence of 1846 emigration on the Southern Route

But the Modoc knew how to instruct, too. The next day, warriors stalked the wagon train and took the


*Map of the Applegate Trail.*

life of an immigrant man who lagged behind. Many more lessons would be exchanged in the years to come, giving a nearby landmark the name "Bloody Point."

From the Stone Bridge, the route loops south into California around Lower Klamath Lake—still in Modoc country—and re-enters Oregon with today's US 97. The trail continues northwesterly to cross the Klamath River near today's community of Keno. The lead wagons reached this crossing on October 3, having traveled 730 miles from Fort Hall, back on the Snake River in eastern Idaho. If they had kept to the known Oregon Trail, the travelers already would have reached their destination. As things stood, they faced 300 miles more.

Ahead lay the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountains, a knot of peaks, ridges, and gorges, with east/west-trending drainages that hampered north/south travel. The region is considered one of the most inaccessible areas of the continental US. This corner of southwestern Oregon was home to many independent village-nations of Takelma, Shasta, Chasta Costa, Rogue River Athapaskan, and Umpqua Indians. Their previous experiences with Americans had often been negative, sometimes violent.

Following Applegate's route west into the heavily forested Siskiyou Mountains, Levi Scott's wagon train met an unpleasant surprise. Until this point, the road-builders had rolled big rocks off the trail and smoothed rough spots for wagon passage. In the mountains, though, they had only blazed a route, skinning strips of bark off trees to mark a way. Following the blazes, Scott and men from the foremost wagons spent four days clearing trail through some 30 miles of steep terrain, thick timber, and deadfall. The draft animals, finding no forage in the forest, starved for days while hauling the heavy wagons along the rough mountain track.

The lead divisions emerged on the west side of the Siskiyous near present-day Ashland, Oregon, on October 11. From there the wagons continued northwesterly toward the Rogue River, an area long known for clashes between white travelers and Takelma Indians. Scott cautioned the immigrants to raise their guard, and this time they listened. Native men still managed to pick off several cattle and one

day vanished an entire flock of sheep while the shepherd was at his lunch—a toll for passing uninvited through their territory.

As the company jolted single file over Sexton Mountain on October 18, 16-year-old Martha Crowley died of a fever while lying in the bed of her family's wagon. Her distressed parents halted their oxen, blocking the lineup behind them while the forward wagons rolled on, unaware of the drama unfolding to their rear. Indian guards, monitoring the wagon train from the trailside underbrush, rained arrows upon the confused immigrants and livestock milling behind the Crowley wagon, but no one was injured. The next morning, the wagon train stopped to bury Martha at a place that is still known as Grave Creek, south of today's town of Sunny Valley. Martha was the second of the Crowley family to die along the Oregon Trail. Five more would perish before reaching the settlements.

Several days later, two men from the settlements met the lead divisions of the wagon train with a couple of fat steers and some flour. The men also brought word that wagons would not be able to pass through rugged Umpqua Canyon, now named Canyon Creek Canyon, about six miles ahead. Their wagons and possessions would have to be left behind. The stunned overlanders stopped and sat down in the dirt.

*Four Hills Cemetery from Emigrant Lake Park.*

*The middle, tall tree marks the Applegate Trail's route through Sexton Mountain Pass.*

By now people were eating the oxen that dropped dead under the yoke. The small amount of food brought from the valley would not last long. The way forward seemed hopeless. Some 50 years later, overlander Dan Toole recalled angry men in camp swearing vengeance against the Applegates and even threatening their own faithful Levi Scott. "Had they killed him," Toole observed, "we would all have perished in the mountains. A more patient persevering man in trouble I never knew."

Scott coaxed and railed, but the lead parties would drag themselves no more than a couple miles each day toward the dread defile. At last they halted at the foot of Umpqua Mountain, near present-day Azalea, Oregon, and refused to budge. Worried about the coming winter rains, Scott begged and badgered the men to help him clear trail over Canyon Creek Pass and down through the gorge, but they sat defeated. Out of patience at last, he threatened to quit and ride home. "I will not stay idly here and see you all perish because you will not put forth an effort to help yourselves!" Scott warned them.

At last, on October 20, a few men reluctantly agreed to join him in opening a way through for the wagons. The terrain, the weather, and the overlanders' already desperate condition combined to make this the most terrible 16 miles of their ordeal.

Grubbing a trail up Umpqua Mountain was hard work, but the real nightmare, the awful gorge, lay on the descent side of the pass. There, the wagons would have to roll down the tortuous, narrow, boulder-strewn bed of Canyon Creek, hub-deep or higher in rushing water. While their families waited in camp with the wagons, the starving men labored for days in the icy current, building ramps of logs and earth to help the wagons clamber over creek-bed boulders and ease down the drop-offs. The lead wagons started creeping up Umpqua Mountain toward Canyon Creek Pass on October 25. Two days later, raindrops tapped at the canvas wagon covers, announcing the arrival of the Pacific Northwest winter monsoons.

> *There is great loss of property and suffering, no bread, live altogether on beef.* —Virgil Pringle, November 22, 1846

By the time the lagging rear wagons reached the pass under steady rain in early November, Canyon Creek gushed high and wild. The earthen ramps and other improvements by then had washed out, and the force of the current and the slick, rounded rocks underfoot caused oxen to fall and wagons to overturn. Wagons lurched in single file down the creek as it twisted through dense brush and between high rock walls. Each difficulty brought the wagon lineup behind it to a standstill. Some of the men formed a committee to inspect each wagon's contents and throw away every ounce of surplus weight, hoping to prevent delays that might be caused by overloading. Lucy Ann Henderson, who was 11 at the time, many years later recalled a fellow named Smith who did not want to give up his rolling pin.

> *I shall never forget how that big man stood there with tears streaming down his face as he said, 'Do I have to throw this away? It was my mother's. I remember she always used it to roll out her biscuits, and they were awful good biscuits"… And they christened him 'Rolling Pin Smith,' a name he carried to the day of his death.* —Lucy Ann Henderson, 1846

While the forward parties groaned down the canyon in five days, those in the rear struggled for 10 days or longer. Many wagons were wrecked or abandoned, and five immigrants died from exposure or accident along the way.

> *Some of the emigrants had lost their wagons; some their team; some half they possessed; and some every thing. . .All looked lean, thin, pale, and hungry as wolves.* —Jesse Quinn Thornton, November 5, 1846

Finally realizing that the tardy Southern Route wagon train must be in serious trouble, the Willamette settlements sent multiple relief parties to meet the immigrants and help them into the valley. However, some of the fatigued and starving travelers ground to a halt in Umpqua Valley after emerging from Canyon Creek. The Cornwall family built a log cabin near present-day Oakland and stayed through the winter, becoming close friends with their Umpqua Indian neighbors. Others crafted shelters from their wagons or stayed with homesteaders until rescuers arrived to help them over the remaining miles. A few punched through on their own. One such, John Luce, remembered a "Wallamet" Indian man who found Luce and a companion starving along the trail. The man invited them to his home, where his wife and daughter prepared a big meal for the pair. Their host then asked them to stay and rest over the Sabbath. Preparing to leave on Monday morning, Luce asked what he owed for the hospitality he had received. The good man answered him, "Why you pay nothing, you was hungry, and I had plenty to eat."

Rescuers delivered most of the stranded immigrants to safety around Christmas. The Cornwalls gave their cabin to an Umpqua Indian friend and started their final leg to the settlements in April, being the last of the 1846 Southern Route wagon train to roll in. Finger-pointing in the newspapers was well underway by then. Loud critics of Jesse Applegate dubbed his Southern Route the "Applegate Trail," and they did not mean it as praise. People took sides in the argument. People take sides to this day.

The Southern Route/Applegate Trail became an important regional trail in 1848-1849 when some 10,000 Oregonians abandoned their homesteads and stampeded south to reach the California gold fields. Oregon-bound immigration along the Southern Route increased in the 1850s, with around 2,000 immigrants reaching the valley that way. The trail, however, crossed the territories of at least a half-dozen Indian nations who, more fiercely than ever, resisted intrusion:

*Rogue River in southeastern Oregon. Courtesy of Bureau of Land Management.*

Modoc, Pit River, Umpqua, Northern Paiute, Chasta-Costa, and Klamath Indians, as well as the Takelma and Athapaskan-speaking groups of the upper Rogue River country. Their ferocity was due in part to California gold-seekers who backwashed north along the trail to prospect in southwestern Oregon. Violence committed by lawless miners, including the mass murder of Indian women and children in their night camps, drove native men to deal out their own justice. That, in turn, inspired more vengeance.

"Exterminate!" screamed the rabble-rousers, and volunteers flocked to do the job, eager to claim federal rations and payment for their militia service. Oregonians who did not take part largely accepted the violence against Indian people as necessary to make Oregon safe for American settlement. The tribes waged a desperate, on-and-off, five-year resistance known as the Rogue River War, which claimed 600 lives, mostly Indian.

> *This is my country; I was in it when those trees were very small, not higher than my head. . . .I will not lay down my arms and go with you on the reserve. I will fight. Good-by.* —Tecumtum, of the Etch-ka-taw-wah band of Rogue River Indians, May 20, 1856

The last holdouts, brilliantly led by Tecumtum (Elk Killer, also called Chief John), surrendered in July 1856. Meanwhile, the previous

winter, soldiers had forced captured Takelma and Chasta-Costa families on a February march north along the Applegate Trail—originally their own path, now become their Trail of Tears. The families went to a temporary holding camp from which they and other Oregon tribes were assigned to shared reservations.

As the Rogue River War raged, Jesse Applegate and his brothers shared their land claim with the family of Chief Halo of the Yoncalla and intervened with a government agent to prevent their forced removal. However, a legal judgment in 1883 took Jesse's land and home, all he had worked for through the years. A broken man, he suffered a collapse and spent a year recovering in a state hospital. Applegate died at age 73 in 1888 at his son's home in Yoncalla, Oregon. Levi Scott, savior of the 1846 wagon train, later served in the Oregon Territorial Legislature and founded the city of Scottburg. He died at age 93 in 1890.

Tecumtum marched with his defeated band of fighters to the new Grand Ronde Reservation about 65 miles southwest of Portland (not the Grand Ronde at the foot of the Blue Mountains). In 1858 the Indian agent there cast him and his son Adam into irons for trying to incite an outbreak. Believing they were to be hanged, the pair briefly took control of the steamboat *Columbia* as it carried them to prison in San Francisco, but they were subdued. Tecumtum remained under guard for about five years until his release for good behavior. This fierce protector of his people returned to the Grand Ronde Reservation, where he continued resisting, with words instead of weapons, to the end of his days. He died in 1864, age unknown, at Fort Yamhill on the reservation.

*Portrait of Chief John (Tecumtum) of the Rouge River Indians. Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society.*

## THE EAGLE AT TRAIL'S END

For the first few years of the Oregon emigration, trail's end lay on the north side of the Columbia River at Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver.

Many immigrants in those years arrived there at the beginning of the rainy season with no food, no shelter, and no money. In the 1840s, more than a few owed their survival that first winter to the irritable, kindly, explosive, benevolent, formidable, compassionate, and utterly honorable Dr. John McLoughlin, the Company's chief factor at Fort Vancouver. As the man in charge, his word was law, and no one doubted his ability to enforce it. He stood six feet, four inches tall at a time when most men topped out around five feet, six inches. He was broad-shouldered with arms like oaks, and his temper was legendary. Daguerreotype portraits of the trader in his later years show a stern man with a downturned mouth, a stiff white mane, and a crystal-eyed glare that could freeze a bird in flight. George Simpson, who governed the Company's North American operations, met the newly hired McLoughlin in 1824 and described him as "such a figure as I should not like to meet in a dark Night" in some London alley. Indians around the fort called the chief factor White-Headed Eagle.

When Americans began arriving and asking for help at Fort Vancouver, Simpson ordered McLoughlin to turn them away. Instead, the chief factor provided them blankets and food, took their sick and injured into the fort hospital, extended them desperately needed credit at the fort store, loaned them milk cows and farming equipment, and allowed them to exchange their worn-out oxen for healthy ones at the fort. More than once, he shipped supplies to immigrants stranded at The Dalles and brought them downriver in Company bateaux. If newly arrived immigrants had no means to support themselves the winter after their arrival, he gave them jobs at the fort. McLoughlin did all these things in part because he judged it wise policy to foster good relations between the Hudson's Bay Company and Americans, but also because, as a devoutly religious man, he believed in charity and kindness. The Company, on the other hand, believed in profit. For this and other bitter differences, Simpson forced McLoughlin to resign from his position in January 1846.

McLoughlin moved his family from Fort Vancouver to a stately, two-story house he built near the foot of Willamette Falls in Oregon City, on land assumed from the Clackamas and Kalapuya Indians. The trader also owned a gristmill and two sawmills, as well as other businesses in the vicinity. Americans began building there, as well.

Because of the malaria epidemic of the 1830s, the Indian nations had not the strength to resist ongoing development of Willamette Falls, an important intertribal fishery and trading locale like Celilo Falls on the Columbia. McLoughlin soon found himself in a similar predicament after the US and Britain signed the 1846 boundary agreement. Because McLoughlin was a British subject—his US citizenship was pending—some Americans aggressively took over his long-established land claims in that choice area. And because he was Roman Catholic, husband of a beloved mixed-blood wife, and a successful rival businessman, American Oregonians found plenty to criticize about the former Company man.

*Dr. John McLoughlin Portrait (ca 1850). Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society.*

His politically connected enemies managed to insert a clause into the Donation Land Act of 1850 that seized title to most of McLoughlin's property. Believing the clause unjust, however, Oregon officials refused to take possession of his land. They allowed him to continue operating his businesses and remain in his home, where McLoughlin, by then an American citizen, died embittered in 1857. Five years later, the state returned title of the old trader's property to his heirs, and on the 100th anniversary of his death the Oregon Legislature proclaimed John McLoughlin to be the Father of Oregon.

By the time McLoughlin left Fort Vancouver, most immigrant traffic was bypassing the fort, anyway. The doctor allowed some newly arrived settlers to stay at his Oregon City home, but the majority fended for themselves their first winter in Oregon. Those fortunate

enough to have friends or relatives already in the area stayed with them in a cramped but warm, dry cabin while pioneering a claim of their own. People with money could buy a house and farm from an earlier settler who was moving on. New arrivals with no money took shelter in a shack or shed, working odd jobs to cover their food and rent. Some families camped out of their wagon and survived on acorns while building a log cabin under teary skies. Some packed up and moved south to sunny California, and some, pining for home, headed east at first opportunity. Others found that they were home, in Oregon, to stay.

*I would advise [young men] to bring a wife along, as ladies are… very scarce. And if you have any maiden ladies about dying in despair, just fit up their teeth well, & send them to Oregon.* —Tallmadge B. Wood, letter home to Milton, New York, 1844

*Do not like Oregon yet, so far.* —Elizabeth Goltra, emigration of 1853

*Give me Oregon for I love the climate, I love the people, I love the little children, I love every thing but the taxes and morgages…* —Anna Green, emigration of 1847

*My most vivid recollection of that first winter in Oregon is of the weeping skies and of Mother and me also weeping.* —Marilla Washburn Baily, emigration of 1852

*Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.*

## AFRICAN AMERICANS ON THE OREGON TRAIL

African Americans, too, crossed the trail to Oregon in the early years of the emigration, some coming willingly as free men and women but others forced to travel as the property of slaveholders. But Oregon did not welcome them. Most American settlers in the Oregon Country opposed slavery but did not want free Black people as neighbors, either. In 1844, recently arrived overlanders formed an extralegal "provisional" government that banned slavery and barred the entry of Black people to the Oregon Country. They wanted an all-white society. This law also forced slaveholders to free any enslaved people they had brought to Oregon, and it banished the recently freed individuals—who lacked means to leave—from the country. Any free Blacks who remained in Oregon would receive 20 to 39 lashes every six months for refusing to "quit and leave the country." Voters changed the harsh "lash law" before it was ever enforced, imposing forced labor instead of whipping for the crime of living in Oregon. Although short-lived, that racial exclusion law impacted at least one African American immigrant family.

George Bush, a freeborn African American man and former Hudson's Bay Company trapper, headed to the Oregon Country in 1844 with his white wife and their five sons. Hoping to escape the racial difficulties they faced in Missouri, they formed a wagon party with four white families—neighbors who respected Bush as a friend and an equal. A prosperous farmer and a kind man, George Bush provided wagons and supplies to the needy families of the party and bought food for them along the trail. However, as the settlers neared The Dalles, they learned of Oregon's new lash law. The Bush and Michael Simmons families, close friends, changed course to Hudson's Bay Company-controlled territory north of the Columbia River, out of reach of the Americans' racial exclusion laws.

They settled in the lower Puget Sound area of today's state of Washington, where the Bush family built a flourishing farm and befriended their Nisqually Indian neighbors. However, when the United States and Great Britain formally divided the Oregon Country in 1846, the US took over the Puget Sound region and Bush found himself again subject to unfriendly Oregon laws.

The situation worsened when Congress passed the Donation Land Act of 1850, which extended Oregon land claim privileges only to whites and people of white/Indian descent. Bush now stood to lose his farm to any eligible man dishonorable enough to claim it. His friends and neighbors fought through legal channels to protect him, persuading Congress to pass a special act in 1855 to validate George Bush's land claim. By 1860 the Bush family was operating a modern, mechanized farm of 880 acres. The area they farmed near Tumwater, Washington, is still known as Bush Prairie.

Other African Americans were less fortunate. In 1849 Oregon outlawed Black settlement but allowed African Americans who were already there to stay. Ten years later Oregon entered statehood with a new constitution that prohibited further Black in-migration and barred those already present from owning property, entering contracts, or using the court system. Other western states and territories passed similar laws.

> *Even in the so-called free territory of Oregon, the colored American citizen. . .is driven out like a beast in the forest, made to sacrifice every interest dear to him, and forbidden the privilege to take the portion of the soil which the government says every citizen shall enjoy.* —Abner Hunt Francis, Black immigrant to Oregon, letter to Frederick Douglass, October 1851

Rubbing salt in the wound, the Homestead Act of 1862 opened public lands across the West to be claimed by men and women of any race, so long as they were American citizens. But free people of African descent were denied US citizenship until passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868. Once they were able to homestead, many Black settlers chose destinations other than Oregon. Although it was voided by the 15th Amendment, the state constitution's exclusion clause remained until voters repealed it in 1926.

Because Black people of that era often were denied the opportunity to learn to read and write, today we have very few written accounts of their travel on the Oregon Trail. However, many of their stories were passed down through their families by word of mouth. For more on the African American experience in the West, visit www.nps.gov/oreg/learn/historyculture/research.htm.

## THE OREGON TRAIL OF THE INDIAN NATIONS

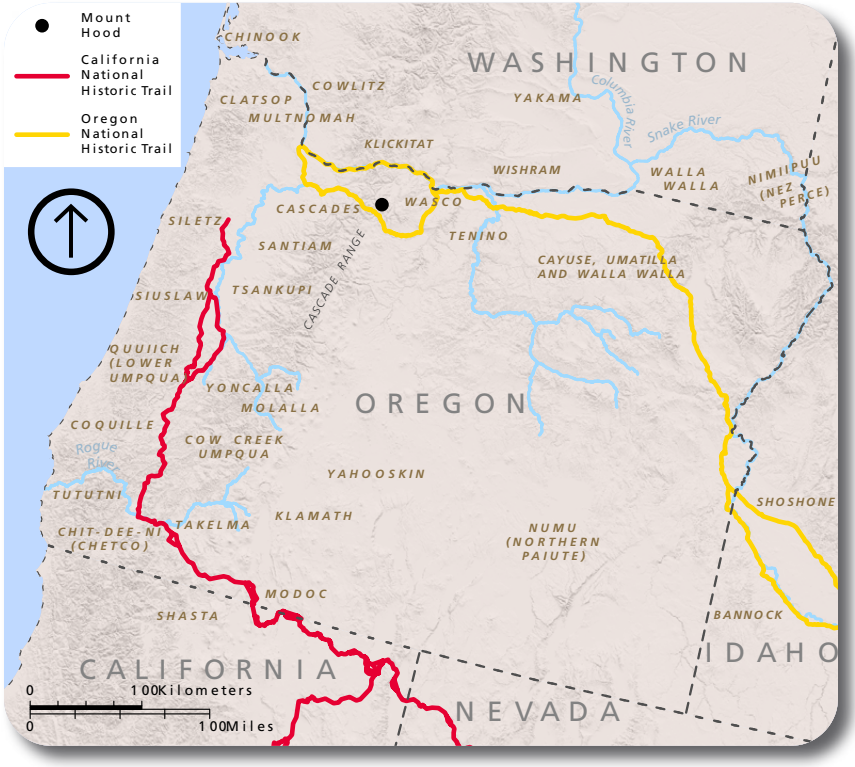
The Oregon Trail belongs as much to America's indigenous peoples as to the covered wagon pioneers. It followed Indian trade and seasonal rounds paths, led to their springs, wound through their camping grounds, and passed by their fishing stands and winter villages. It renamed their landmarks, their streams, and their holy places. It took their firewood, grass, and game, and attempted to take their self-determination. It brought them trading partners, firearms, cattle, cloth shirts, good iron pots, sickness, conflict, and loss. They met and interacted daily with white travelers along the trail, often offering them guidance and directions, sometimes fighting them, usually trading with them, and frequently helping them to survive. The Oregon Trail is their story, too.

But the Oregon Trail reached far beyond those villagers and tribes who lived along the wagon routes described in this guide. The trail was living, dynamic. It grew spurs and alternates and branches that carried wagons into the far reaches of the country. Waves from the American presence rippled across all of the Indian nations of the West, not just those who lived immediately along the Oregon Trail. By the late 1850s, the indigenous peoples of the old Oregon Country stood dispossessed of most or all of their ancestral lands.

Resilient, they survive. In Oregon and Washington, many today are confederated tribes, groups that were historically individual

*Camp at Cayuse Station, Umatilla Indian Reservation (1909), by Lee Moorhouse.*

nations brought together onto a shared reservation and unified by a single tribal government. The Nez Perce have a reservation with headquarters in Lapwai, Idaho, which includes the grounds of the mission established by Henry and Eliza Spalding in 1836. Many other indigenous peoples of the region have reservations in Idaho and Montana. The tribal peoples of Old Oregon hold knowledge of the ancestral lands they were forced to give up, and they go there to hunt, fish, and gather wild foods, as is their right by treaty. Some tend those lands as they did in ages past, maintaining a deep, traditional relationship with the named landscapes that are part of their heritage. Many tribes are experiencing cultural renewal, teaching their children the traditional languages, songs, and stories, and reestablishing their ceremonies and arts. Some have built museums and cultural centers in their communities, where they instruct their children and welcome visitors to join in learning about their history, traditions, and values.




*Homelands of tribes often encountered by immigrants traveling through the Oregon Country.*

## UNDERSTANDING THE OREGON TRAIL

> *Myth is the meaning we attach to the past, to teach ourselves about ourselves.*

The Oregon Trail is one of America's foundational myths, but it can mean different things to different people. For some it is a muscular, triumphal story of brave men and women who tamed a wilderness and built a great nation from sea to sea. For others it is a tradition of wisdom, strength, perseverance, and courage in the face of grave injustice. A myth is not strictly factual and it does not tell the whole story. That doesn't make it bad, or a lie. Accuracy and nuance are not a myth's purpose. Its purpose is to offer a higher truth that we can aspire to live up to and to deserve, and the myth of the Oregon Trail does that.

The whole story, the factual story, the historical story of the Oregon Trail is much messier than the myth, more textured and more thought-provoking. Throughout, the story of the Oregon Trail intertwines the history of emigrants with the history of American Indian people, always to the lasting disadvantage of those whose ancestors had been there, in their own words, since time immemorial. It is a story of nation-building, conflict, death, and survival, written in paragraphs and pages of individual, flesh-and-blood lives—lives of mountain men and of missionaries, of Indians and of emigrants, and even of the oxen that pulled the wagons. It has heroes and villains and people who were a bit of both or who, like the oxen, were neither one nor the other but simply did what was required of them. Fascination with the Oregon Trail persists because we can connect their lives to our own lives today.

When we're leaving everyone and everything we know to start over in an unfamiliar place, that's the Oregon Trail. When we're deciding what to say and how to act toward strangers whose ways we don't understand, that's the Oregon Trail. When we're struggling to take our next step but keep going because someone we love depends on us, that's the Oregon Trail. And when we're standing at life's crossroads and must decide whether to stay on the safe, known way

or chance a new direction that could bring either reward or ruin, that's the Oregon Trail, too.

The myth of the Oregon Trail inspires us to reach toward courage, strength, and optimism. The history of the Oregon Trail instructs us to be good to each other, to respect our differences, to value justice, and to understand that no matter how the pages of our individual lives unfold, we each are part of a greater story.

## SITES AND POINTS OF INTEREST

This driving tour of the Oregon and California national historic trails through Oregon has three components.

**Segment A, the primary route**, generally follows I-84 (with side-trips to original trail sites) west from the Idaho border to Oregon City, south of Portland. This tour approximates the original route of the Oregon Trail across northeastern Oregon and along the Columbia River.

**Segment B, the Barlow Road** route of the Oregon Trail, turns south from The Dalles and skirts the flank of Mount Hood to end at Philip Foster Farm in Eagle Creek, southeast of Portland. This rugged toll road became a popular alternative to the hazardous trip down the Columbia River.

**Segment C, the Applegate Trail**, branches off the primary California Trail in Nevada and enters Oregon at the community of Malin. From Malin, this tour heads west across the Cascade Mountains and turns north along I-5 to end at Dallas, Oregon. The sufferings of the immigrants who took the first wagons over this torturous route in 1846 have become an Oregon Trail saga.

In addition to this driving guide, consult the separate National Park Service "Map and Guide" brochures to the Oregon and California national historic trails. The brochures are available from many trail

venues along this auto tour and can be requested free from the National Park Service by emailing ntir_information@nps.gov. A state road map and a GPS device or smartphone are also useful.

> ***Please note:*** *if planning to travel through Pendleton during the second week in September, make hotel and camping reservations well in advance. The annual Pendleton Roundup, a major rodeo that occurs that time of year, attracts some 50,000 visitors, leaving lodgings in short supply.*

Facility hours and admission prices shown here are subject to change without notice. For the latest information, consult the organization's website. Road names, alignments, and signs can also change.
Do not drive in historic wagon ruts and swales. It destroys them.

**Artifacts are objects made by people of the past. They can be prehistoric or historical objects—for example, an arrowhead, potsherd, medicine bottle, or button. Unauthorized metal detecting, excavation, or removal of artifacts is illegal on both public and private lands in Oregon. Tribal people also remind visitors that objects left behind by their ancestors are not lost or abandoned, but are part of the tribes' ongoing cultural and spiritual heritage. Please leave them undisturbed.**

*Philip Foster Farm in Oregon City, Oregon.*

## AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A: IDAHO BORDER TO OREGON CITY

There are three ways to start your tour from the Oregon/Idaho state boundary. One way follows I-84 from Ontario, Oregon, and joins the historic Oregon Trail alignment at Farewell Bend Recreation Area. The other two routes start at the state boundary 15 and 25 miles south of the interstate, respectively, following state and local highways along original alignments of the Oregon Trail. These two routes merge west of Nyssa to cross Keeney Pass, then continue through the town of Vale, and join the I-84 tour at Ontario, OR

*Oregon State Welcome Center.*

To drive west on I-84, begin this tour at the state welcome center on the Oregon/Idaho border [GPS 44.01629 -116.94396]. There you will find restrooms, free coffee, maps and guides, an exhibit of trail artifacts, and the first of a series of roadside Oregon Trail interpretive kiosks. Look for these at rest areas all along I-84. After your visit to the welcome center, continue west on the freeway to meet the historic trail and join the auto tour at Farewell Bend State Recreation Area, entry A-8.

*Oregon State Welcome Center kiosk.*

To follow the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail, the route of the Van Ornum party, begin at Homedale, Idaho, and drive northwesterly on ID-19 to Oregon. At the state line, the road becomes OR-201. After crossing Succor Creek, OR-201 begins a broad sweep north to meet and follow the Snake River toward the community of Adrian. The highway is on the old trail alignment as it follows the river. About 9.5 miles beyond the border, watch for

the intersection of Roswell Road and prepare to pull over to the right at stop A-1.

To follow the primary Oregon Trail route from Fort Boise, Idaho, begin your tour at Nyssa, Oregon, and follow the directions below to stop A-3, the west bank of the Snake River crossing from Old Fort Boise.

*South Alternate exhibit.*

**A-1. Oregon Trail Overview, South Alternate (Adrian, OR) [GPS 43.73310 -11707415].** This roadside exhibit offers an overview of historic sites along the Oregon Trail.

**Directions:** The kiosk is located approximately 0.25 mile south of Adrian at the intersection of OR-201 and Roswell Road (the first intersection south of town) at a pullout on the east side of the highway.

*Continue north on OR-201 through the community of Adrian to Owyhee.*

The verdant, irrigated farmlands along this drive were dryland barrens in 1860, when survivors from the Utter-Van Ornum wagon train stumbled toward their death camp at the confluence of the Snake and Owyhee rivers.

*Starvation Camp pullout.*

**A-2. Starvation Camp Interpretive Pullout, South Alternate (Owyhee, OR) [GPS 43.80021 -117.05531].** An informational sign tells of the Utter-Van Ornum Party survivors who were stranded here after fleeing an attack on their wagons in Idaho. Stand facing the sign, looking east and slightly to the right toward the Owyhee River. The

group camped on the opposite side of the river, now private property. Please view from this public right of way.

**Directions:** From Owyhee Junction (where the grocery store is located), continue north out of town on OR-201 for 0.3 miles, watching on the right for a bladed area with stacks of irrigation pipe. Look for a low, green electrical post near the highway with a wood rail enclosure behind it. The informational sign is within the enclosure.

*Snake River crossing at Old Fort Boise.*

**A-3. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Old Fort Boise and the Snake River Crossing, Primary Route (Nyssa, OR) [GPS 43.82545 -117.03710].** This is the west side of the Snake River crossing from Old Fort Boise. Interpretive signs in the kiosk tell of the fort, situated on the opposite side of the Snake River in present-day Idaho, and the difficulties and dangers of fording the stream.

**Directions:** This stop is south of Nyssa on OR-201. If you are proceeding from stop A-2, the Starvation Camp pullout, continue along OR-201 as it jogs east, crosses a canal, and then turns north again toward Nyssa. Just beyond the second curve, approximately 2.7 miles from stop A-2, watch for a large pullout and kiosk on the left. If you are joining the tour at Nyssa, navigate to the junction of OR-201/Adrian Boulevard and US 26/Central Oregon Highway, a big three-way intersection in front of Nyssa Elementary School. Head southwest on OR-201/ Adrian Boulevard past the high school. Just beyond the high school tennis courts the highway turns west. In another mile the road splits; bear left to stay on the highway as it heads south. The kiosk is on the right, approximately 1.8 miles past that second curve.

*Now the primary route and the south alternate Oregon Trail out of Idaho merge into a single corridor. After your visit to stop A-3, drive north on OR-201 toward Nyssa for approximately 1.9 miles. The road splits and the highway jogs right (east), but instead of*

*turning, continue straight ahead to the stop sign. Turn left onto Enterprise Avenue and drive 4.0 miles west. Turn right (north) onto Lytle Boulevard toward Keeney Pass. The road soon curves northwesterly and enters desert country. Watch on both sides of the road for original wagon swales, which appear as linear depressions in the earth. Concrete posts and brown trail markers show the location of the Oregon Trail as it crisscrosses the modern road alignment.*

*Keeney Pass Historic Site.*

**A-4. Keeney Pass Oregon Trail Historic Site (south of Vale, OR) [GPS 43.90959 -117.17642].** This Bureau of Land Management site offers a 0.7-mile roundtrip hike along a section of original Oregon Trail swale through countryside that looks much as it did throughout the emigration era. Please stay on the path in order to protect the historic wagon ruts. Interpretive signs near the trailhead tell of the overland experience and the native peoples of the area. Allow 30 minutes. Restrooms and water are not available.

**Directions:** About 5 miles after turning onto Lytle, a large sign will indicate the entrance to a paved, circular turnout on the left.

*Upon leaving this site, note your odometer reading. Turn left and continue toward Vale on Lytle Boulevard, watching for marked trail on both sides of the road.*

*Keeney Pass view.*

**A-5. John D. Henderson Grave (south of Vale) [GPS 43.97257 -117.23595].** Near the Malheur River lies an immigrant who died of "black measles" in 1852. **Park** at the interpretive exhibit to read the story. To visit the grave, **walk** around the edge of the green gate—**do not** drive past the gate. An older plaque at the concrete monument suggests that

Henderson died of thirst just yards from the river, but a local historian has traced this fable to a Vale third grader who made up the story for a class essay. The boulder beneath the plaque was Henderson's original gravestone, inscribed by the companion who buried him. This privately owned site is open for public visitation by consent of the landowner, who can revoke permission at any time. Please treat the property with respect, and **do not** drive beyond the gate. Turn around and exit the same way you entered the site.

*Marker for John Henderson Grave.*

**Directions:** Approximately 5.5 miles after leaving the Keeney Pass parking area, look for an "Oregon Trail Henderson Grave" sign on the right side of Lytle Boulevard, directly opposite Sand Hollow Road and the entrance to the gravesite. Turn left onto Sand Hollow and immediately bear right onto the gravel road and continue to a small parking area. The interpretive sign is ahead. Park and walk around the gate to view the grave, inscribed boulder, and historical plaque.

*Continue north across the river into Vale and watch for murals celebrating the town's Oregon Trail history.*


*Malheur River Oregon Trail Kiosk.*

**A-6. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Malheur River and Hot Springs (Short St. N and Washington, Vale) [GPS 43.98292 -117.23586].** Interpretive exhibits at this small park tell of the Malheur River, nearby hot springs, and the legend of the Blue Bucket gold. This area also was an important gathering place for Northern Paiute Indian people, who fished salmon from the river.

**Directions:** In town, Lytle Boulevard becomes Glenn Street. Cross the eastbound and westbound lanes of US 20/US 26 and

turn right at the next street, Harrison Street. Drive 2 blocks, and turn right onto Short St. The kiosk is at the end of the block.

**Also of Interest: Backcountry Oregon Trail Segment**
From the Malheur Hot Springs, which are just a short distance ahead, the original Oregon Trail continues north. Today's travelers can follow a 22-mile stretch of unpaved public road, which includes about 12 miles of the Oregon Trail, across federal and private lands. The trail has been marked by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Oregon-California Trails Association. Call BLM's Vale District at 541-473-3144 or visit its office at 100 Oregon St. in Vale for maps, precautions, and information about road conditions.

**Directions:** This auto tour does not follow this backcountry stretch of the historic trail but instead turns east from Vale.

*Oregon Trail backcountry.*

*From the kiosk at stop A-6, turn around and return to the eastbound lanes of US 20/US26/Central Oregon Highway. Turn left onto the highway and cross the Malheur River bridge. Immediately look for a traffic island on the left [GPS 43.98268 -117.23281], where visitors can pull in to view an informational sign about cutoffs on the Oregon Trail.*

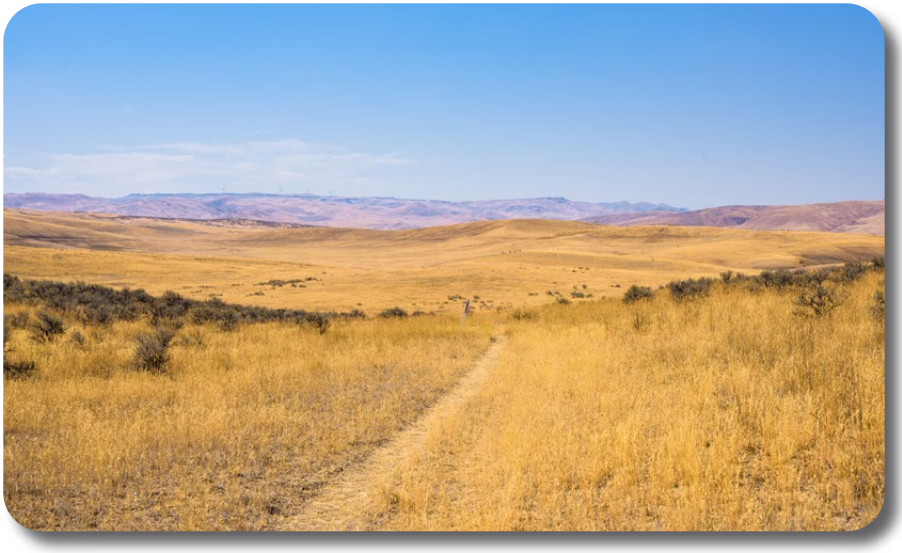
Continuing east beyond the traffic island, sometimes on the left rising steam can be seen from the Malheur Hot Springs, which immigrants used for cooking, bathing, and doing laundry. Today the area is the site of a vacant food processing plant. **Do not slow down or stop on the highway. The site is private property; do not trespass.**

*The highway becomes US 20 and then Thunderegg Boulevard. Follow it approximately 11.5 miles to its junction with OR-201. Turn left (north) and continue 5 miles around the west side of Ontario, following directional signs onto westbound I-84/US 30.*

*Drive north on I-84 for about 22 miles and take Exit 353 toward Huntington. Where the ramp splits, keep left (the right lane enters a state weigh station). For a 1.5-mile, off-highway drive to original trail swales along Birch Creek, follow further directions to stop A-7; otherwise, skip to A-8, Farewell Bend.*

*Birch Creek Trail Site.*

**A-7. Birch Creek Trail Site (south of Farewell Bend, OR) [GPS 44.27299 -117.21948].** Hike a short, scenic section of original Oregon Trail as it approaches Farewell Bend on the Snake River. The 1.5-mile off-highway drive to the site, when dry, is passable for passenger sedans, but there are a couple short, steep stretches and the road may at times be washboard. This is open range: cattle may be on the road and at the site. Visitors can walk 375 yards of wagon ruts to a barbed wire fence dividing grazing allotments on public land. From the fence, the ruts continue a short distance before disappearing in the grass.



*Birch Creek Trail Site. NPS / Bryan Petrtyl.*

**Directions:** At the end of Exit 353, turn left and cross beneath the freeway. The road makes a 90-degree turn to the left, becomes graveled, and heads up a grade, paralleling the freeway. About 0.7-mile from the turn the road splits: bear right, following the brown directional sign, to stay on the main road as it curves broadly to the right (east). About 0.8-mile from the split is a graveled parking area on the left. Park and explore the wagon swale and view the interpretive exhibit located on the opposite side of the road. Afterward, return to the end of I-84 Exit 353 at the weigh station and turn left onto US 30 to Farewell Bend.

*Farewell Bend State Recreation Area.*

**A-8. Farewell Bend State Recreation Area (south of Huntington, OR) [GPS 44.30348 -117.22740].** After following the Snake River for over 300 miles, immigrants camped along its banks for the last time at this place. Exhibits at an Oregon Trail kiosk tell the story. Today's state park offers year-round day use, camping, and boating. Nominal parking fee for day use; Oregon state park passes, available for purchase online and at most major parks, are also accepted. Federal passes are not accepted at this state facility.

**Directions:** From the end of Exit 353, continue straight ahead onto US 30. Less than a mile ahead on the right, a rustic sign and covered wagon show the entrance to the park. Modern trail travelers who entered Oregon from Idaho on I-84 join the historic Oregon Trail here.

*Leaving the park, note your mileage and turn right to continue north on US 30. The highway closely approximates the original trail route for the next seven miles through Huntington to I-84.*

**A-9. Van Ornum Grave Site (Huntington, OR) [GPS 44.33388 -117.24567].** In this hollow, an US army search party in 1860 discovered the remains of six missing members of the Utter-Van Ornum party. A state historical sign, which says that the gravesite

is 0.75 mile away, has been moved here from another location and so is incorrect in that particular. This site is privately owned. Please confine your visit to the crater area and do not approach livestock that may be in the area.

*Van Ornum Grave Site.*

**Directions:** Two miles from Farewell Bend, US 30 curves gently to the left and begins descending the divide. A large, semi-circular depression will come into view on the left. Slow down and look within the depression for a wooden enclosure with a large state historical sign that reads "Van Ornum Massacre." Park at the unsigned pullout on the right shoulder. Look and listen for traffic crossing the road—vehicles approach at highway speeds and cannot be seen until cresting the hill—and locate the pedestrian opening in the fence to access the site.

*Continue northwest through Huntington. As the highway curves north and starts to leave town, look on the left for a stone Oregon Trail monument erected by pioneer Ezra Meeker. Follow the signs to westbound I-84, which overlies the wagon trail through much of the Burnt River Canyon. Some immigrants, already exhausted and ill as they started into the rugged canyon, never emerged from it.*

As the freeway runs northwesterly it parallels the Oregon Trail, which lies east of the interstate.


*Burnt Canyon Rest Area.*

**A-10. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Burnt Canyon (Weatherby Rest Area, south of Durkee, OR) [GPS 44.49517 -117.36573].** Interpretive exhibits at this one-time immigrant campground tell of the arduous journey through Burnt Canyon and interactions between Indians

and immigrants. A historic stone fountain that resembles a castle tower marks the location of Rattlesnake Springs. No trail remnants are visible at this location. From here the Oregon Trail heads north, leaving the canyon for a few miles to rejoin the highway corridor about 5.0 miles ahead.

**Directions:** Take I-84 Exit 335.

*Hillsides near Burnt Canyon.*

*Continue on westbound I-84 to Baker City; or, to follow the route of the Oregon Trail around Gold Hill, follow the gravel road (Sisley Creek Road, which initially parallels the freeway on-ramp) out of the rest area for 2.0 miles to Plano Road, which enters from the left. Turn left onto Plano and drive up the divide. In about 2 miles, stop at the summit to view the deep swales descending to the valley. Continue along Plano Road to rejoin the freeway at interchange 330 and enter westbound I-84 to Baker City.*

**A-11. National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (22267 Oregon 86, Baker City, OR) [GPS 44.81451 -117.72830].**
This BLM trail center offers excellent exhibits, summer programs, children's activities, living history, genealogy assistance, films, group tours, and miles of footpaths and Oregon Trail ruts to explore. It is a particularly fine stop for families with kids. Allow several hours for your visit. Note- the visitor center may be closed for major renovation. However, the outdoor exhibits and ruts will be available to visit. Please call ahead at 541-523-1843 for additional information.

*National Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.*

**Directions:** Take I-84 Exit 302, note your odometer reading, and turn right onto OR-86. The center is the white structure on the bluffs 5.0 miles ahead. At 3.1 miles,

approaching the overhead transmission lines, look on the left for a pullout and state historical sign about the "lone tree," a trail landmark. At 3.6 miles, near the top of the ridge, is a pullout on the right with an obelisk that commemorates the Oregon Trail. A pullout on the left at 4.2 miles provides access to an interpreted segment of original wagon swale that you can walk in. Continue up the highway to the site entrance on the left. Where the drive splits, keep right. Be prepared to stop at the entrance station.

About 13 miles of Oregon Trail as it approaches from the southeast can be seen from the center hilltop. Inquire at the center about driving the Virtue Flat trail segment of original Oregon Trail across Bureau of Land Management lands. Do not take motorhomes or trailers on that route.

*Return to the Exit 302 interchange and enter westbound I-84.*

**A-12. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Baker Valley (Baker Valley Rest Area, Baker City) [GPS 44.91380 -117.81919].** Here are interpretive signs about the famous Lone Tree, travel, trade, and settlement in Baker Valley, and the first view of the Blue Mountains ahead.

*Baker Valley Rest Area.*

**Directions:** The I-84 rest area is 7.5 miles north of Baker City.

From here almost to La Grande, the freeway closely approximates the trail alignment.

**A-13. Clover Creek Ruts (La Grande, OR).** Original Oregon Trail trace is visible going up the ridge from this stop.

**Directions:** About 7 miles north of North Powder, take Exit 278 toward Clover Creek. Turn left at the end of the ramp, cross the freeway, and continue onto the unpaved, red cinder frontage road only if it is dry. The road immediately curves sharply right (north) to parallel the freeway. Drive 2.1 miles and

as the road begins a gradual curve, watch on the left in the fence line for a brown T-shaped rail marker. Faint swales are visible heading up the hill across private property. Please do not trespass. Return to the freeway after your visit.

*Ladd Hill.*

About 2.7 miles north of the Clover Creek interchange, the freeway begins a sweeping curve to the right. Where it bends left again, the trail corridor crosses the freeway. The Oregon Trail bears north across the uplands while the freeway continues northwesterly to descend into Ladd Canyon. Freeway and trail converge but don't quite meet up ahead at Charles Reynolds Rest Area.

**A-14. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Grande Ronde Valley (Charles Reynolds Rest Area, La Grande, OR) [GPS 45.23546 -118.01235].** Interpretive exhibits tell of the immigrant experience in the Grande Ronde Valley and friendly encounters with native people there. Look back to the southeast (left side of the freeway when facing the westbound lanes of I-84) to see if you can find a trace of the "powerful rockey" 1,300-foot wagon descent of Ladd Hill to the Grande Ronde Valley. It may be easier to spot in winter when vegetation is dormant.

**Directions:** The I-84 rest area is 9 miles southeast of La Grande.

*Charles Reynolds Rest Area.*

*Return to westbound I-84. Up ahead the trail splits, with the original route, used in dry years, keeping east of the interstate. A later alternative, used in wet years, swings west to the base of the foothills, staying above Ladd Marsh. This guide has stops on both routes.*

**A-15. Meeker Marker at Hot Lake (La Grande, OR)** Oregon pioneer Ezra Meeker, who traveled by ox-wagon to Oregon in 1852, spent his later years marking and commemorating the old Oregon Trail. In 1906 Meeker dedicated one of his trail monuments here, but it "went missing" about 100 years ago. A trails researcher discovered the stone in a private yard in 2017, purchased it, and donated it to the Baker City interpretive center. This US Fish and Wildlife Service site exhibits a replica of that marker, as well as some historical signs and a covered wagon wheel that rolled across the trail in the 1800s. This site is on the older "dry route" of the trail across the valley bottoms.

*Meeker Marker.*

**Directions:** Leave I-84 at Exit 268 to Foothill Road. At the end of the exit turn right (east) onto Foothill and drive 0.1 mile to the T intersection. Turn right (south) onto Pierce Road. In 0.1 mile, turn left onto Hot Lake Lane. The site is on the left in 0.1 mile.

**A-16. Oregon Trail to Birnie Park (La Grande) [GPS 45.31405 -118.09292].** Follow the "wet route" of the Oregon Trail (now a paved country road) as it winds along the hillsides above Ladd Marsh and through verdant farmlands, ending at a community park that was an immigrant campground. An overlook at the Ladd Marsh Game Management Area along the way provides a good view back toward the descent of Ladd Hill. During the immigrant era, the land between the viewpoint and the hill often was marshy, forcing wagons to keep to the high ground along the foothills. The drive ends at Birnie Park, a trail-themed playground with interpretive exhibits and artwork.

*Ladd Marsh.*

**Directions:** From stop A-15, turn around, turn right, and then turn left (west) onto Foothill road. At the freeway ramp note your mileage and continue west to cross over I-84. At mile 2, turn right into the Ladd Marsh Game Management Area and follow the drive to an overlook. Afterward, continue north on Foothill toward La Grande. At about mile 6, Foothills enters 20th Street and turns north into La Grande. At the first stop sign turn left (west) on to Gekeler Lane and drive through residential developments for about 0.75 mile to B Avenue. There the road splits around Birnie Park, with B Avenue branching off to the left. Stay right to parking at the playground.

*Trail themed playground at Birnie Park.*

If you drive west along B Avenue for about 0.5 mile to Walnut Street, you can see another of Ezra Meeker's Oregon Trail monuments. It stands at the edge of a private yard on southwest corner of the intersection. Researchers believe it marks the earliest route up the hill. From there the trail continued northwesterly into the Blue Mountains.

*After your visit, turn around and follow Gekeler Lane east for 1.3 miles to US 30/Adams Avenue. There turn right and drive 1.9 miles to enter westbound I-84 toward Pendleton.*

*Grande Ronde River, Hilgard Junction Park.*

From La Grande the freeway arcs to the west, following the course of the Grande Ronde River. The Oregon Trail, about 1.5 miles off to the south, continues across the plateau to intersect the freeway at Hilgard Junction, where wagons forded the river before starting up the next ridge.

**A-17. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Hilgard Junction State Park (Hilgard Junction, OR) [GPS 45.34186 -118.2347].** This state park, with its sparkling stream and fragrant forest, was once an Oregon Trail campground. The spot offered many travelers from the Midwest their first encounter with a forest. Here travelers faced the first difficult descent of their Blue Mountains crossing. Interpretive exhibits tell the story. Open free for day use year-round. Campsites available mid-April – mid-October; contact park to ask about camping fees.

**Directions:** About 8 miles northwest of La Grande, take I-84 Ukiah Exit 252 and follow the signs to Hilgard Junction State Park. The interpretive kiosk is on the left just beyond the entrance.

*Turn right out of the park to re-enter westbound I-84. The trail runs along the ridge to the right, about 0.5 mile from the freeway.*

*Oregon Trail Park at Blue Mountain Crossing.*

**A-18. Blue Mountain Crossing Interpretive Park (Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, 10.5 miles northwest of La Grande) [GPS 45.39800 -118.31574].** This 600-acre US Forest Service site offers a 0.5 mile, wheelchair-accessible interpretive loop, walking paths along historic wagon and stagecoach swales, and occasional living history programs. Bicycle use allowed; no motorized off-road vehicles permitted. This is a great place for kids to stretch their legs as well as their minds. Open Memorial Day – Labor Day weekend, day use only. Modest admission; federal access passes accepted. Picnic areas, restrooms, and potable water are available. No camping. **Advisory!** The forest access road crosses the freeway through an underpass with 12'9" clearance.

**Directions:** Take I-84 Kamela/Spring Creek Road

*Oregon Trail swale, Blue Mountain Crossing.*

Exit 248. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Old Emigrant Hill Scenic Frontage Road (US 30), which crosses beneath the freeway to the west side of I-84. About 0.3 mile beyond the freeway, turn right onto Forest Road 1843, which winds through the forest to cross again to the east side of I-84 via an underpass (12'9" clearance) to the east side and starts up the mountain. About 2.0 miles beyond the underpass, parking for a picnic area and hiking trails is on the left. Continue 0.5 mile to a spacious parking loop at the end of the road. Paths lead to original Oregon Trail remnants, about 200 yards northeast of the parking area.

*Return to westbound I-84. At Meacham, the Oregon Trail crosses the freeway alignment and continues along the west side of I-84.*

*Emigrant Springs State Heritage Area.*

**A-19. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Emigrant Springs State Heritage Area (Meacham, OR) [GPS 45.54182 -118.46251].** The wagon trail ran along the top of the ridge above this park, but some immigrants climbed down to the springs to water their animals and enjoy their noontime meal. Kiosk exhibits tell of the pioneer experience in this area and of the work of immigrant Ezra Meeker to mark and commemorate the Oregon Trail. An original stone monument or "Meeker Marker" is located to the left of the park entrance near the road, but the park plans to move it to a more accessible and visible location. Today's Emigrant Springs is a sylvan state park with picnicking, camping, horse camping, and rental cabins. Open free for day use year-round. Open for camping May–Oct.; limited camping and rental cabins available in winter. Call 1-800-551-6949 to inquire.

**Directions:** Take I-84 Exit 234 to Emigrant Springs State Park. At the end of the short ramp, turn left onto Old US 30 and cross to the west side of the freeway. The road curves right; park entrance is ahead on the left.

*Leaving the park, turn left and follow the frontage road as it curves to the north. In about 3/4 mile, the road crosses over I-84, turns north, and becomes a ramp that splits into two lanes. If you wish to re-enter I-84 and skip to entry A-20 for Deadman Pass Rest Area, keep left at the split. Otherwise, bear right and continue along Old US 30, which closely approximates the trail alignment.*

The old highway overlies the Oregon Trail for the next 5 miles, then briefly dips to the west side of the freeway and re-crosses at today's Deadman Pass interchange.

*Oregon Trail Swales Near Deadman Pass.*

**A-20. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Deadman Pass Rest Area [GPS 45.59856 -118.50480].** Tradition holds that at least one man died along the trail here during the 1870s conflicts between white and native people, giving this place its name. Exhibits at the interpretive kiosk tell the story and describe the descent of the Oregon Trail from the Blue Mountains.

**Directions:** From westbound I-84 take Exit 228 .

Now the Oregon Trail heads north-northwest to descend Poker Jim Ridge to the Umatilla Valley.

*Deadman Pass Rest Area and Trail Kiosk.*

*Return to westbound I-84. At Exit 224, the freeway begins a gentle S-curve as it approaches the descent to Umatilla Valley. On the right, watch for the blue "View Point" directional sign to a valley overlook with a grand view of more than 100 square miles.*

*Arrving in the valley, the wagon trail split. The older, original route heads north to Whitman Mission at Walla Walla, while the later, more heavily used route turns west to follow the Umatilla River toward present-day Pendleton, where I-84 rejoins the trail corridor.*

**A-21. Tamástslikt Cultural Institute (Wildhorse Resort, 72789 Hwy. 331, Pendleton, OR) [GPS 45.65413 -118.66361].** This child-friendly museum and research facility is the only American Indian owned and operated interpretive center on the Oregon Trail. "Tamástslikt" (tuh-MUST-slickt) is from the Walla Walla Indian language, meaning "interpreting our own story." The institute's permanent exhibits explore the past, present, and future of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people (the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) and tell the Oregon Trail story as they experienced it. Temporary exhibits explore a variety of other subjects, and during summer months the institute offers a living culture village where visitors can learn how to pitch a teepee or use an atlatl (spear-thrower). Allow several hours for your visit. Maps and audio guides for the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Homeland Heritage Corridor are available here, too. In the audio guide, tribal elders tell about their culture and the old ways. Tamástslikt Cultural Institute is certified by the National Park Service as a partner site on the Oregon National Historic Trail. Hours vary seasonally; visit the center's website for current hours and admission information. Free admission for all on the first Friday of the month.

*Tamástslikt Cultural Institute.*

**Directions:** Take I-84 Exit 216 and turn right onto OR-331/S. Market Road. In 0.7 mile, turn right onto Wildhorse Boulevard and continue past the casino and agricultural fields for 1.2 miles to the institute.

*To continue west on Tour Segment A toward Oregon City after your visit, return to the intersection of Wildhorse Boulevard and OR-331 and turn left. In 0.7 mile, turn right to enter westbound I-84. Take Exit 210 into Pendleton and turn right (north) onto OR-11 toward the Pendleton city center. Skip to entry A-22, Oregon Trail Information Center and Umatilla Museum.*

**— OR —**

*To visit Whitman Mission National Historic Site at Walla Walla, Washington, turn right onto OR-331 and consult further directions for the Excursion: Whitman Mission, below. From there, visitors can backtrack to Pendleton and rejoin the auto tour at stop A-22, Oregon Trail Information Center and Umatilla Museum (about 80 miles round-trip) or follow the Columbia River to meet I-84 at Boardman and continue the tour from there.*

**Also of Interest: Nez Perce National Historic Park – Spalding Mission Site and Visitor Center (39063 US Hwy 95, Lapwai, ID.)**
Nez Perce National Historic Park consists of 38 individual sites across Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. This particular site, 5 miles north of Lapwai, Idaho, is where Henry and Eliza Spalding established their mission among the Nez Perce people in 1836. The site includes a visitor center (with a movie, *náqc timíne wisíx: Of One Heart*), museum, trails, and remnants of the mission and the cemetery where the Spaldings and many Nez Perce people are buried. Ranger programs are presented throughout the day from mid-June – Labor Day. Admission to the visitor center is free and hours vary seasonally; visit the park website or call 208-843-7009 for current information. For a list of other sites related to the Nez Perce story, go to www.nps.gov/nepe and click on Places to Go. Also visit fs.usda.gov/npnht/ to learn about the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

**Directions:** This park is about a 2-hour, 15-minute drive from Whitman Mission. Navigate to US 12 and follow it east approximately 104 miles to Clarkston, Washington. Turn left (north) onto WA-128 and cross the Snake River. On the north side of the river turn right (east), entering Idaho, and drive 1.8 miles to North Lewiston. Turn left onto US 12, which becomes US 95. In about 10 miles watch on the left side of the highway for the entrance sign to the park.

## Excursion: Whitman Mission

- **Whitman Mission National Historic Site (328 Whitman Mission Road, Walla Walla, WA)**, near present-day Walla Walla, is where the Weyiílet mission stood. Here, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman met their fate and the Cayuse War was unleashed. This National Park Service site includes over a mile of paved paths and interpretive exhibits at the original mission site, the graves of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and others, a commemorative obelisk, and a visitor center with a small museum. None of the original mission buildings remain, but their known locations are marked. Ranger programs are presented throughout the day from mid-June – Labor Day. The visitor center also offers a movie, *A Prophecy Fulfilled: The Cayuse & the Whitmans at Wailatpu*. Allow 1–2 hours for your visit. Admission is free. Hours for the park and visitor center vary seasonally; call 509-529-2761 or visit www.nps.gov/whmi for current information.

  **Directions:** Drive north from Wildhorse Boulevard on OR-331 for 3.7 miles and turn right (northeast) on OR-11. In about 23 miles the highway enters the town of Milton-Freewater, where it forks. Bear right to stay on OR-11, following the green highway sign toward Walla Walla. In about 4.6 miles OR-11 meets the state border at a major, controlled intersection with Stateline Road. Turn left (west) onto Stateline, drive 2.3 miles to the tiny community of Calhounville, Washington, and turn right (north) onto Valley Chapel Road. Continue 1.5 miles to a T intersection and turn left (west) on Frog Hollow Road. In 0.5 mile take the next right (north) onto Last Chance Road and drive about 0.7 mile to Stovall Road, just before Last Chance crosses the Walla Walla River. Turn left (west) there. Follow Stovall for about 1.2 miles as it winds west and north to meet Sweagle Road. Turn right (north) on Sweagle and drive 0.5 mile; turn right (east) onto Whitman

*Whitman Mission Visitor Center.*

Mission Road and follow the signs to the site.

*To resume the Segment A tour where you left off, return by the same route but follow OR-11 into Pendleton. Entering the city, OR-11 crosses the Umatilla River and passes beneath a railroad bridge. Keep right. The highway becomes OR-11/SE Court Ave. About a 0.5-mile beyond the river crossing the highway crosses another bridge and reaches a traffic light at 10th Street. Continue straight (west) on Court for 0.6 mile. Turn left (south) onto SW 2nd Street and drive 3 blocks to the stop A-22, Oregon Trail Information Center and Umatilla Museum.*

**— OR —**

*To follow the route of the early 1840s pioneers who continued west from Whitman Mission (skipping stops A-22 through A-25), return to Sweagle Road and turn right (north). In about 0.5 mile, Sweagle ends at an intersection with Old US 12. Turn left (west). In about 2 miles, watch on the right for an entrance to Frenchtown Historic Site, a fur trade settlement where French-Canadian trappers lived with their Indian wives and Métis families beginning in 1823. This site is also where Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Yakama warriors fought a four-day battle against Oregon militiamen in 1855. Continue west on Old US 12 for another 0.4 mile to its intersection with US 12. Turn left (west) and drive 20 miles to US 730 at Wallula Junction. Historically, a permanent Walla Walla Indian fishing village stood here, and Cayuse and Nez Perce came to camp with them in the summers. About 1.5 miles west, beneath Lake Wallula, lies the site of the Hudson's Bay Company post originally known as Fort Nez Percés and later as Old Fort Walla Walla, where some early 1840s immigrants put into the big river.*

- **Twin Sisters, or Wáatpatukaykas, "Standing for the Spirits Place" Pillars (US 730 South)** is accessed from a pullout off of US 730. A

*Graves of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman.*

hiking trail (a mile roundtrip) leads up to the formation, a pair of basalt pillers. A sign tells the Cayuse story of the sisters.

**Directions:** At Wallula Junction, bear left (south) onto US 730. As the highway curves south along the river bend, watch on the left for a pullout.

*Continue driving on US 730 for 25 miles, crossing into Oregon, to the town of Umatilla, originally a Umatilla Indian village site.*

- During the emigration era, long before modern dams tamed the Columbia, the river was narrower, faster, and rougher. The rapids provided prime fishing, and Indian villages, seasonal camps, and fishing sites dotted both banks. Along the drive is **Hat Rock State Park** (*Líickwpa*, in Cayuse-Nez Perce), named for a distinctive basalt formation that resembles the "basket hat" worn by Plateau Indian women. Lewis and Clark also noted the landmark during their travels in 1805.
- Consider a stop at Umatilla to visit **McNary Dam's Pacific Salmon Visitor Center**, where visitors can learn about salmon and, during the migrations, watch them climb the fish ladder. To visit, just after passing the town of McNary on US 730, turn right onto Devore Road and follow the signs to the dam.

*To continue Segment A of the trail tour, stay on US 730 another 15 miles to enter westbound I-84 near Boardman. There you rejoin the Oregon Trail as it approaches the Columbia River. Skip to entry A-26, First View of Columbia River.*

*Whitman Mission National Historic Site.*

## AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A (Continued)

*Heritage Station Museum, Pendleton, Oregon.*

**A-22. Oregon Trail Information Center and Heritage Station Museum (108 SW Frazer, Pendleton).** Interpretive panels at the information center tell of peaceful interactions between emigrants and the native residents of the valley who raised vegetables and cattle for trade, and of the killings at Whitman Mission. Several of the panels share accounts of the trail that have been handed down among Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla families. The museum's inside exhibits concern the history of white settlement of the area; Oregon Trail-related exhibits are limited. Nominal admission charged. Call ahead for hours: 541-276-0012.

**Directions:** After entering OR-11 from the interstate exit 210, turn left at the next intersection onto Isaac Avenue. Take the third right (north) onto Main Street and cross a series of railroad tracks and Frazer Avenue, a one-way street for westbound traffic. At the next intersection, turn left onto Emigrant Street. Drive west for 2 blocks and turn left onto SW 2nd Street. The museum is a block ahead at the vintage train depot.

*Now exit the parking lot from the front of the depot and turn right (east) on to Frazer Avenue. Take the first right (south) onto Main Street, cross the tracks, and turn left (east) at the second intersection onto Isaac Avenue. Drive 0.2 mile and turn right (south) onto OR-11. Enter westbound I-84 and continue 17 miles to Exit 193 toward Echo.*

*Koontz Grave.*

**A-23. David Koontz Grave (Theissen Road/County Road 1300, Echo, OR)** Nothing is known of Oregon immigrant

David Koontz except that he died of unknown causes along the trail in 1852.

**Directions:** From I-84, take exit 193. Turn left at the end of the ramp and follow the frontage road (which becomes Gerome Street) about 4.5 miles into Echo. Gerome Street ends at an intersection. Turn left (south) onto Theissen Road/County Road 1300 toward Reith and drive approximately 0.30 mile. A lone tree stands at the roadside on the left; a few yards before it and on the right lies the Koontz grave, protected by a rail fence.

**A-24. Echo Meadows Interpretive Site (west of Echo) [GPS 45.72021 -119.30926].** A 0.5-mile paved pathway leads to a mile-long stretch of deep wagon swales. Exhibits at BLM's interpretive kiosk tell of the trail and native peoples of this area. Open year-round for day use only. No water or restrooms are available. If walking the swales, stop at the property line; do not trespass on adjacent farms.

*Echo Meadows.*

**Directions:** This visit entails a 1-mile roundtrip drive on a gravel road. From David Koontz Grave, turn around and drive northwesterly to Main Street in Echo and turn left (west) to cross the river. Note your odometer reading at the bridge, where the street becomes Oregon Trail Rd./Lexington Hwy 320. Continue 5.8 miles, passing Whitehouse and Rosenberg roads, and watch on the right for a farm with a row of tall poplars. Just before the farm, a brown Oregon National Historic Trail sign **[GPS 45.71165 -119.31077]** indicates the turnoff to the right onto an unpaved road heading north. From the turn, drive approximately 0.5 mile to a large "Echo Meadows" sign. Bear right (northeast) at the sign and continue to the interpretive kiosk and trailhead directly ahead.

**A-25. Butter Creek Memorial Marker (west of Echo) [GPS 45.72573 -119.35073].** This pullout commemorates the Butter Creek campground, crossing, and burial grounds located on private

property several miles to the southwest. An informational sign tells the story, but the trail is not visible from this stop.

**Directions:** From Echo Meadows, return to Oregon Trail Road/Highway 320 and turn right (west). Drive 2.2 miles to OR-207/Hermiston Highway. Although the Oregon National Historic Trail directional sign indicates a left turn, turn right instead. In about a mile, watch for a pullout on the left, marked by a brown Oregon Trail sign.

*Butter Creek Memorial Marker.*

*Continue north, leaving the Columbia Plateau Route of Oregon Trail, for another 4.3 miles and enter westbound I-84. In 18 miles the freeway meets the Columbia River at Boardman, where the Oregon Trail joins the route of Lewis and Clark. Pick up a Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail brochure at participating visitor facilities or go to www.nps.gov/lecl for more information.*

Here you have a choice:

*To avoid driving unpaved roads and proceed more directly to the trail's end, stay on I-84 and skip ahead to entry A-26, First view of the Columbia River.*

**— OR —**

*To drive along the historic trail corridor on pavement and well-maintained, unpaved county roads before proceeding to stop A-26 at Biggs Junction, get off I-84 at Exit 147 and take the Willow Creek excursion and John Day River Ford extended excursion described below.*

**Advisory!** Services are not available along these excursion routes. Refuel before leaving the freeway, and carry water and a fully functional spare tire. Cell phone service may be intermittent. Expect to see wind turbines operating on and near the Oregon Trail along most of the length of these drives.

## Excursion: Willow Creek and Four Mile Canyon to Arlington

- **Willow Creek Campground Pullout (Cecil, OR) [GPS 45.62197 -120.04396].** This pretty spot, with its clear stream and lush native ryegrass, was a prime camping and "recruiting" location. It was a prime burial site, too: immigrants noted 18 graves in this vicinity. A sign tells the story.

  **Directions:** From I-84 Exit 147 (Iona/Heppner), turn left (south) onto OR-74/Heppner Highway. In 13 miles, look for a large pullout on the left. After your visit, continue south on OR-74/Heppner Highway for another 0.8 mile and turn right into the village of Cecil. The street soon ends at Fairview Lane. Across the street and to the left stands the old Cecil Store, which served trail visitors from 1862 to 1974.

*To continue the tour, note your mileage at the intersection and turn right (north) onto Fairview Lane (called Cecil Road on some mapping applications), which approximates the trail alignment. In about 0.3 mile, the road curves west and enters a draw.*

*Willow Creek Pullout.*

Look for white trail posts that mark wagon swales on either side of the road. (This is private land: please view from the public right-of-way.) At the west end of the draw the Oregon Trail swings to the south, running about 0.3 mile to the left of the road.

*About 1.7 miles from Cecil, Fairview Lane emerges onto a ridge and jogs south, then west. You are still in the Oregon Trail corridor. At 2.5 miles the road angles northwest between residences and farm buildings and then splits. Bear left with the pavement, which ends just ahead. At 4.5 miles, Fairview ends at a T intersection. Turn right onto Fourmile Canyon Road [GPS 45.61525 -120.03308] and watch for trail swale and markers to the left.*

- **Four Mile Canyon Kiosk and Swales (west of Cecil) [GPS 45.62204 -120.04413].** Deep swales mark the wagon climb out of the canyon, one of many challenges along the Columbia Plateau Route of the Oregon Trail. Exhibits at the interpretive kiosk, which the BLM constructed in partnership with the people of Gilliam County, tell the story. To walk the trail on these public lands, carry water, watch for snakes, and turn around at the top of the hill where the Oregon Trail enters private property. No water or restrooms are available here.

  **Directions:** A short distance after the turn onto Fourmile Canyon Road, the road crosses a cattle guard and enters BLM lands. An interpretive kiosk and a large sign for "Four Mile Historic Site" are about 0.3-mile ahead on the left. The trail crosses the road south of the pullout and continues westerly.

*Four Mile Canyon Swales.*

*After your visit continue northwest along Fourmile Road for 2.5 miles, where there is another cattle guard and a good gravel road, Eightmile Road, entering from the left.*

Here you have a choice:

*To return to I-84 from here and continue the tour along the Columbia River, continue straight (northwest) on Fourmile Road for about 7.5 miles to the T intersection with OR-19/John Day Highway. Turn right onto the highway and drive north about three miles to Arlington. Enter westbound I-84 and skip ahead to stop A-26, First View of Columbia River at Biggs Junction, where the Oregon Trail completes its traverse of the Plateau and meets the Columbia River.*

**— OR —**

*To visit the John Day River Crossing before proceeding to Biggs, turn left onto Eightmile Road and consult* ***Extended Excursion: John Day River Crossing****, on the following pages.*

## Extended Excursion: John Day River Crossing (McDonald, OR)

**Advisory!** This segment entails an almost 60-mile rural drive from the turnoff onto Eightmile Road to McDonald Ford and back to the main tour route along I-84. Part of the drive is on well maintained, unpaved county roads. The final short approach to the John Day River is a single-lane, pot-holed road that is adequate for most highway vehicles with ordinary ground clearance. Read ahead over the directions before deciding to go this way.

*After turning onto Eightmile Road, drive southwest for 1.5 miles to Montague Lane/Oregon Trail. A ranch operation is located at the intersection. Turn right and follow Montague Lane, which overlies the Oregon Trail, for approximately 4 miles to its T intersection with OR-19/John Day Highway.*

- A short detour here takes visitors to the **Weatherford Monument**, which commemorates an 1844 pioneer who developed a successful ranch near here.

  **Directions:** To see it, turn left onto the highway and drive south 0.3 mile. The pullout is on the right. After your visit, turn around and drive north approximately 0.8 miles and take the next left onto Cedar Springs Lane. The Oregon Trail comes off the hill to the left and runs along the base of the hills, parallel to the road. Continue 7.6 miles to Cedar Springs Ranch, on the right. Park at the gravel pullout in front of the ranch headquarters house.

*Weatherford Monument.*

- **Cedar Springs Ranch. Note,** *this is private property and entry beyond the fence is not allowed*. The small shed to the right of the house is on the original Cedar Springs, a popular waterhole and camping spot for travelers on the Oregon

Trail. The Oregon-California Trails Association, in cooperation with the wind energy company and private landowner, erected an interpretive sign with diary entries from women and men who came this way from 1848 to 1852.

*Just ahead the trail forks; this tour follows the left fork to Rock Creek. Continue south on the paved road for 2.4 miles to Rock Creek School, a red-roofed building on the left. Just beyond the school, turn right on Lower Rock Creek Lane, a poorly maintained but passable single-lane gravel road, and follow it 6.5 miles to the John day River. Approaching the river, the road forks and Lower Rock Creek Lane makes a sharp turn to the left. Instead, bear right (northwest) onto McDonalds Ferry Road, a good unpaved road, and drive about 0.3 miles to a split. Take the road to the left, which drops away from the hill and down toward the bank of the river. In just short of a mile, an opening on the left is the east access to McDonalds Ford. Park along the road above the east access.*

**Do not attempt to walk or drive across this river!** The John Day is a National Wild and Scenic River for its full length, with no flow control of any kind, and is subject to sudden and unexpected changes in volume and height—just as it was when wagons crossed here.

*Plateau near John Day Crossing.*

- **McDonalds Ford.** Walk to the edge of the river. The ford along this bank runs about 850 feet along a curving rock ledge that leads to the west side of McDonalds Ford, upstream from the east access. Follow it visually to the left to see where wagons left the river on the opposite side. Raise your eyes to the big bluff beyond the riverbank. This is the steep climb described in trail journals: the wagon route climbs to a bench where the bluff becomes steep and then goes around to the right to reach the plateau on top. From the east access, walk a short distance north along the road to see an old stone commemorative marker within a fenced enclosure on the right

side of the road. View it from the road. The adjacent property is privately owned and off limits. Please do not trespass, enter ranch roads or equipment yards/staging areas, or approach buildings or residents.

Drive or walk north along the road for about 0.4 mile to a river access road entering from the left. Stop at the entrance and look ahead, uphill and to the right, to see markers showing the route of the trail approaching down the draw. The road beyond this point is not public, not maintained for highway vehicles, and there is no place ahead to turn around. Do not enter. Instead, turn left into the BLM interpretive site and fishermen's landing, where you will find a pit toilet and plenty of room to turn around.

*After your visit, return to Rock Creek School on Lower Rock Creek Lane. Turn left onto Cedar Springs Lane to retrace your route to the Y intersection at 2.2 miles, shortly before Cedar Springs Ranch. Turn left onto Blalock Canyon Road and follow it 9.3 miles to I-84. It is paved all the way. The tour continues with the next stop,* ***A-26 First View of the Columbia River****, in this guide.*

## AUTO TOUR SEGMENT A (Continued)

**A-26. First View of Columbia River (Biggs Junction, OR) [GPS 45.665574 -120.844543].** Travelers following Whitman's Cutoff across the Columbia Plateau caught their first glimpse of the Columbia River as they approached the area of present-day Biggs Junction. No post or settlement existed here in Oregon Trail days, but today food, fuel, and visitor services are available.

**Directions:** From westbound I-84, take Exit 104 at Biggs Junction. Turn left (south) at the end of the ramp and drive to the traffic light at Biggs. Turn

*First view of Columbia River.*

right (following the sign to Deschutes State Park) onto Old US 30/Celilo-Wasco/Biggs-Rufus Highway. About 0.5-mile from the turn, look for a pullout on the right **[GPS 45.665574 -120.844543]** where a stone monument commemorates the immigrants' first view of the Columbia River. West of Biggs the tour route enters the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which stretches east to the community of Troutdale.

*Continuing toward stop A-27, watch on the left for a rare, short remnant of the original riverside trail, now a utilities service road on private property (do not trespass), as it climbs the bluffs. About 1.0 mile downriver it descends back to the highway. The remnant's meandering path is visible on satellite imagery.*

*Deschutes River Crossing.*

**A-27. Oregon Trail Kiosk: Deschutes River State Recreation Area [GPS 45.63195 -120.90875].** The original crossing at the Deschutes River confluence lies submerged beneath Lake Celilo, but wagon scars are still visible on the hill-climb on the opposite side of the Deschutes. Exhibits at the interpretive kiosk here tell the story. Camping, hiking, picnicking, drinking water, and public showers and restrooms are available. Free day use.

**Directions:** About 3.5 miles beyond the "first view" pullout, follow the Oregon Trail sign left into the Deschutes River State Recreation Area. The interpretive kiosk is on the left beyond the first campground loop.

*Leaving the park, turn left onto Old US 30. On the left just ahead is a turnout where a state historical sign and monument [GPS 45.63414*


*Deschutes River Oregon Trail Kiosk.*

*-120.91190] further commemorate the historic crossing of the Deschutes River.*

From the west side of the Deschutes ford, wagons climbed to the top of the bluffs on the left and continued overland for about 12 miles to The Dalles. Some immigrants floating the Columbia from Old Fort Walla Walla put ashore here and portaged around Celilo Falls and a series of dangerous rapids between here and The Dalles. Others, though, employed Indian men to clamber along river's edge while using ropes to lower and guide their boats through this section.

*Continuing west along Old US 30, just beyond the Deschutes River bridge look on the left for a deep nick in the road-cut above the highway. It is eroded swale where wagons on the Columbia Plateau Route ascended the bluffs. Drive west, following the river for about 7.0 miles to Celilo Village.*

*Celilo Village Park.*

**A-28. Columbia River Drive: The Dalles of the Columbia.** For at least 9,000 years before the arrival of Lewis and Clark, American Indian people harvested salmon migrating up this stretch of the Columbia River. This important fishery became an intercultural center of trade that one writer has dubbed "the Wall Street of the West." Construction of The Dalles Dam in 1957 submerged Celilo Falls. Today, Celilo Village, an unincorporated American Indian community of about a dozen homes, overlooks the site.

Beyond the 20-foot drop of Celilo Falls lay a series of rapids collectively known to immigrants as The Narrows or the dalles. Along this stretch several members of the Applegate party drowned in 1843 when their boat was sucked into a whirlpool. Here the wagon trail left the river, cutting across a bend to rejoin the Columbia at the town of The Dalles. This tour, though, stays with the river along I-84.

*Re-enter westbound I-84 at Celilo Village. Continuing toward town of The Dalles, imagine the broad Columbia as it was 150 years ago: a river "turned on its edge" as its constricted flow rushed between basalt walls only 150 feet apart.*

*Columbia River View from Moody Road.*

Upon approaching The Dalles, choose one of the following options:

*Go directly to the Barlow Road Tour around Mt. Hood to end at Oregon City. Take Exit 87, turn left to pass over the freeway and railroad tracks, and skip ahead to Auto Tour Segment B.*

**— OR —**

*Visit historic The Dalles before continuing along the Columbia River to Oregon City. Take Exit 87 and turn left to pass over the freeway and railroad tracks. Turn right at the stop sign onto Old US 30 and drive past the industrial area and train yards. At the traffic circle, approximately 1.6 miles from the stop sign, take the first exit to continue west. The highway becomes East 2nd Street as it enters downtown. Proceed to entry A-29.*

**A-29. The Dalles Complex (The Dalles, OR).** This place in the gorge was known historically as Win-Quatt, meaning "surrounded by rock cliff," and a Wascopam (now called Wasco) Indian fishing/trading village stood here when Lewis and Clark passed through in 1805-1806. In 1838, Methodist missionaries arrived and built Wascopam Mission, and in 1849 the US Army moved in and established Camp Drum and Fort Dalles. By the mid-1850s the place was a thriving river port with stores, eateries, and hotels. Overlanders paused here to purchase supplies and sometimes to overwinter before continuing their trip either by river or overland via the Barlow Toll Road. In 1855, the Wasco and Walla Walla signed a treaty with the US beneath a massive tree later known as the Treaty Oak, resulting in their forced removal to the Warm Springs Reservation. (Although the tree is gone, the Warm Springs tribal council still uses a gavel

made from its wood.) Much of the original townsite was destroyed by repeated floods and fires, and some by rising water levels as a result of the Columbia River dams; however, several sites within the town commemorate the community's history.

*Pulpit Rock.*

- **End of the Old Oregon Trail Monument (Union St.) [GPS 45.59988 -121.1868].** At the foot of the park entrance stairs stands a stone monument that declares this location to be the end of the Old Oregon Trail.

  **Directions:** On East 2nd Street, continue straight through intersections controlled by traffic lights at Laughlin and Washington Streets. At the third light turn left onto Union Street and drive 3.5 blocks to End of the Oregon Trail Park, on the right.

- **Pulpit Rock (East 12th and Court) [GPS 45.59556 -121.1890336].** Local lore holds that Methodist missionaries stood or sat in the split of this 12-foot-high rock and preached to their Indian congregation, seated below. A plaque tells the story.

  **Directions:** From the park, continue southwest for five blocks and turn left on East 10th Street. Drive 2 blocks to a T intersection; turn right onto Washington Street. The Methodist church to the left stands on the site once occupied by the Wascopam Mission established in 1838. Drive past the school and turn right on East 12th Street. Park and walk to the large rock in the middle of the intersection of East 12th and Court streets.

*Rorick House.*

- **Rorick House (300 West 13th St.) [GPS 45.59656 -121.193438].** This cottage was built by an army sergeant around 1850.

Today the home is owned by the Wasco County Historical Society but is not regularly open to the public.

**Directions:** Continuing up East 12th, drive past Pulpit Rock and turn left on Union Street. In 1 block turn right on West 13th Street. Drive 2 blocks, crossing Lincoln Street. Rorick House is on the corner to the left.

- **Fort Dalles Museum and Surgeon's Quarters (500 West 15th and Garrison) [GPS 45.596105 -121.195995].** This frame house was built in 1856 for the post surgeon; today it is all that remains of old Fort Dalles. The house has served as a museum since 1905. Exhibits on the grounds include farm buildings from the late 1800s and a collection of horse-drawn and motor vehicles. Closed winters. A modest admission is charged.

  **Directions:** From Rorick House, continue northwest up West 13th Street for 2 blocks and turn left on Garrison Street. Drive 2 blocks father. The park is on the right, between West 15th and 16th streets.

*Fort Dalles Museum.*

**Also of Interest: Columbia Hills State Park and "She Who Watches."** Columbia Hills State Park, on the north side of the Columbia River in Washington, is home to some remarkable petroglyphs and pictographs ("rock art") created by American Indian people who lived, fished, and traded along the river before and during Oregon Trail days. Some images were collected from elsewhere and brought here for safekeeping; to view these, take a self-guided tour at the Temani Pesh-Wa display, open during daylight hours from April – Oct. Most notable among the resources in the park is the magnificent, staring visage named Tsagaglalal, or "She Who Watches" in the Wasco-Wishram Indian language. Tsagaglalal watched over her own people for centuries and later witnessed the passage of the Oregon immigration along the Columbia River. To see her, visitors must join a guided tour—unaccompanied entry is not permitted—for a 0.5-mile roundtrip

hike along a narrow, uneven trail to the panel. To reserve a place on a tour, register online well in advance at: parks.state.wa.us/Activities/Activity/Detail/Columbia-Hills-Tour-2. Tours are limited to 20 people and they fill up fast. The tours are free, but there is a parking fee. Day passes can be purchased at Horsethief Lake, or at the automated pay station at nearby Horsethief Butte, or visitors can display an annual Washington State Parks Pass. Federal passes are not accepted.

*"She Who Watches," photo by L. Moorhouse.*

**Directions:** To reach the park from The Dalles, drive north across the river on US 197 (accessible from I-84 exit 104). In 5.3 miles, turn right onto WA-14 and continue 2.6 miles to the park at Horsethief Lake. Drive past the camping area and park at the trailhead.

Now visitors have another choice, just as the pioneers did. Both options lead to the official "end of the Oregon Trail" at Oregon City.

*To follow the Barlow Road, return to US 197: From Fort Dalles Museum, turn right onto Garrison Street and then turn right onto West 16th Street. Drive 1 block. Turn right on Trevitt Street. Drive northeast for about 10 full blocks, just past West 6th, to the end of Trevitt. Turn right (east) onto West 3rd Place. At the next stop sign continue straight; the road immediately curves right. At the next intersection, in front of a historic brick church, continue straight onto West 3rd Street/US 30, one-way for eastbound traffic. Along this stretch are opportunities to refuel your vehicle. In 9 blocks the street begins a curve to the left: move to the right lane. Enter the traffic circle and take the second exit to stay on Old US 30/ East Second Street, which follows above the train yards. Continue east toward the edge of town. Ahead where the*


*End of the Oregon Trail, Oregon City.*

*road splits, bear right (southeast) and enter US 197 toward Dufur. Now skip ahead in this booklet to Auto Tour Segment B to join the Barlow Road tour.*

**— OR —**

*Columbia Gorge Discovery Center.*

*To continue along the Columbia River, from Rorick House turn go right turn right on Garrison to the next corner and turn right onto West 16th Street. Drive 1 block and turn right (northeast) on Trevitt Street. Drive for about 10 full blocks, just past West 6th, to the end of the street. Turn left (northwest) onto West 6th Street, which becomes Old US 30 as it leaves town. This beautiful stretch of historic road was built between 1913 and 1922, and it is enjoyed by bicyclists as well as by motor tourists. Traffic is slow and parking areas are congested. If your schedule does not allow for a leisurely scenic drive, follow signs from West 6th to westbound I-84 and continue to stop A-30, Discovery Center and Historical Museum.*

**A-30. Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Wasco County Historical Museum (5000 Discovery Drive, The Dalles) [GPS 45.653646 -121.210481].** There is much for visitors of all ages to see and do at this interpretive center for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Exhibits include interactive exhibits about the volcanos and floods that created the gorge; Ice Age animals, including a full-size Columbian mammoth; the Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery; Indian peoples of the area; and a life-size exhibit featuring a wagon-raft braving the wild current. Allow several hours for your visit. Open daily. For current hours and admission information, visit the center's website or call ahead at 541-296-8600.

**Directions:** The center and museum are 4 miles west of The Dalles on Old US 30. Turn right on Discovery Drive and follow signs to the center.

*From the Discovery Center, either return to westbound I-84 or turn right to continue the scenic drive along historic and scenic US 30. Approximately 5 miles ahead, just beyond the community*

*of Rowena (the last place immigrants could launch their rafts into the river), US 30 begins a twisting, exposed climb to the high bluffs overlooking the river. If traveling I-84, take Exit 76 at Rowena to make this climb and see the spectacular views. Follow directions to stop A-31 at Rowena Crest.*

**Also of Interest: Memaloose State Park and Rest Area (off I-84 at Mosier, OR).** Visitors who prefer to avoid the climb can continue west from Rowena on I-84 and then follow signs to Memaloose State Park and Rest Area to view 12 interpretive panels about Oregon history. From there skip to entry **A-32 Oregon Pony**, to rejoin the Segment A auto tour.

*Rowena Crest Viewpoint- eastern view.*

*Rowena Crest Viewpoint- western view.*

**A-31. Rowena Crest Viewpoint (Old US 30 west of Rowena, OR) [GPS 45.68237 -121.299321].** This overlook in Mayer State Park offers stunning views of the Columbia River Gorge, interpretive exhibits, and hiking trails through a nature preserve. The drive up the bluff has exposed views from heights.

**Directions:** Continue through Rowena on Old US 30 and follow it around five horseshoe curves to the top of the bluff. Turn left into the viewpoint/interpretive area. Park and explore.

*After your visit, from the entrance road turn left onto Old US 30 and continue about 6.5 miles to Mosier, where the historic roadway ends. Follow signs to enter westbound I-84 and drive about 32 miles to Cascade Locks. Driving west along the gorge through the Cascade Mountains, notice how the landscape transitions from dry inland plateau to mountain pine forests*

*(which immigrants harvested to make their river rafts) and finally to the lush fir forests of the western slopes.*

**A-32. The Oregon Pony at Cascade Locks Marine Park and Historical Museum (355 Wa Na Pa St., Cascade Locks, OR) [GPS 45.665583 -121.89625].** The Cascades rapids (also called the Great Rapids of the Columbia River) were an important salmon fishery and an obstruction to river travel. Here immigrants had to put ashore on either side of the river and portage 6 miles around, often paying local Indian men to carry their boats and belongings. The restored Oregon Pony, the first steam locomotive in the Pacific Northwest, is displayed in an outdoor exhibit near the Cascade Locks Historical Museum. The museum (nominal admission charged) focuses on local history. Visit www.cascadelocksmuseum.org for hours. Walk across the pedestrian bridge over the locks to find wayside exhibits in the wooded area.

**Directions:** Large recreational vehicles may be unable to negotiate the narrow underpass ahead. From westbound I-84, take Exit 44 to Cascade Locks and continue straight onto Wa Na Pa Street. Drive through town and turn right at the park entrance, which is marked with a brown Oregon Trail sign and a sternwheeler sign. Pass beneath the railroad tracks via a narrow underpass. The museum and Oregon Pony exhibit are to the left.

*Cascade Locks Marine Park.*

**Also of Interest: Historical Exhibits (461 NW Wa Na Pa St., Cascade Locks).** To visit informational exhibits about the creation of the Cascades and river transportation history, return to Wa Na Pa Street and turn right, drive about 0.25-mile, and turn right into the parking area just past the post office.

**Also of Interest: Fort Cascades National Historic Site (North Bonneville, Washington).** To walk a section of the old Cascades portage tramway and railroad, continue through Cascade Locks on

Wa Na Pa Street/US 30. Turn left onto Toll House Park, following signs to Bridge of the Gods. Stop at the toll booth to pay the $2 auto toll (subject to change; cash, credit, debit card payment accepted). Cross the Columbia River into Washington, turn left (south) onto westbound WA-14/Evergreen Highway, and drive 3.2 miles. Turn left onto Dam Access Road and then turn right onto Fort Cascades Drive. In 0.3 miles turn left and follow the road through the forest to parking. Follow the self-guided tour to explore the portage trail through the forest. Allow about 45 minutes at the site. Afterward, re-cross the Bridge of the Gods (another toll) and resume your tour on the Oregon side along the Historic Columbia Highway or I-84.

Continuing west from Cascade Locks you have another choice:

*To drive west along the Historic Columbia Highway, continue through town on Wa Na Pa Street/US 30, which merges onto I-84 W. Take Dodson/Ainsworth Exit 35 from the freeway, consult entry A-33, Historic Columbia River Highway, and allow several hours for a leisurely scenic drive;*

**— OR —**

*Re-enter I-84 and skip ahead to entry A-34, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Washington.*

*Historical exhibits at Cascade Locks.*

**A-33. Historic Columbia River Highway Segment, Dodson to Corbett, OR.** This scenic byway curves past gushing waterfalls that spout from the basalt walls of the Columbia Gorge. Visitors can drive through on the old highway without stopping, but you'll need a $2 permit if you wish to park and explore, and a separate permit is required for stopping at stunning Multnomah Falls. To purchase the permits, go to www.recreation.gov (or install the phone app) and search "Multnomah Falls and Waterfall Corridor Timed Use Permits."

- **Ainsworth State Park.** This 40-acre Oregon park claims to have the "world's highest concentration of waterfalls." It also offers day-use areas, hiking and biking, camping, wildlife viewing, and

more. Nominal parking fee for day use. Open mid-March through October; closed winters. Watch for the turnout on the left about 0.6 mile after exiting the highway.

*Horsetail Falls.*

- **Horsetail Falls.** The US Forest Service maintains a short hiking trail to this 175-foot waterfall. Look for a parking area about 0.4-mile past the state park entrance.

- **Multnomah Falls** (also accessible from I-84 Exit 31. Requires permit). Stunning Multnomah Falls, a tiered 620-foot waterfall, is the most popular stop on the highway. Look for a place to park and then hike the US Forest Service trail to the graceful historic footbridge above the lower cascade or continue all the way to the top for a view of the gorge. At the foot of the falls nestles a rustic lodge with restaurant, gift shop, and restrooms.

- **Bridal Veil Falls State Scenic Viewpoint** (also accessible from I-84 Exit 28). The historic highway passes directly over the falls on a bridge. The state park is open year-round for day use (hiking and picnicking). Free.

*Continue westerly along the scenic highway, which descends the promontory and passes through farmlands, for 2.7 miles. Follow the directional sign to I-84 to the right, onto NE Corbett Hill Road. In 1.4 miles the twisting road joins I-84. Enter the westbound lanes and in 12 miles take Exit 9 onto I-205 north toward Seattle. The next tour stop is in Vancouver, Washington. See further directions for entry A-34. Rush-hour traffic in this area is heavy, and at times there may be delays as the bridge is raised to allow for passing marine traffic on the Columbia River.*

*Multnomah Falls.*

**A-34. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (1501 E. 5th Street, Vancouver, WA.) [GPS 45.626366 -122.656355]** Fort Vancouver was a supply depot and Columbia District headquarters for Hudson's Bay Company, a British corporate monopoly of the fur trade era. Although the Company hoped to secure the Oregon Country for Britain, the post's chief factor, Dr. John McLoughlin, often aided American immigrants and encouraged them to settle south of the Columbia River. After stopping at the Visitor Center for orientation and exhibits, walk or drive to reconstructed Fort Vancouver, within the park, to explore the grounds and enjoy interpretive programs, special events, and historic weapons demonstrations—fun for kids as well as adults. Allow at least a half-day to a day for your visit. Hours vary for the visitor center and fort. A moderate entrance fee is charged for the fort. Check the park website at www.nps.gov/fova or call 360-816-6230 for information.

*Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.*

**Directions:** After crossing the Columbia River on I-205, move immediately to the right lane and follow Exit 27 onto WA-14 to City Center. In 5.5 miles move to the right lane and bear right at the split to merge onto I-5 North toward Seattle. In 0.6 mile take the first exit, Exit 1C. At the end of the ramp turn right (east) onto E. Mill Plain Boulevard and stay in the right lane. Take the first right to enter Fort Vancouver Way. At the traffic circle, take the third exit onto Evergreen Boulevard, heading east, and follow signs to the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center.

*Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.*

**A-35. McLoughlin House Site, a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (713 Center Street, Oregon City) [GPS 45.357224 -122.605611].** Following his forced retirement from

the company, John McLoughlin moved his family into this house, originally located next to the river at Willamette Falls. It eventually became derelict and was slated for demolition in 1909, until local preservationists purchased the fragile old building and, with logs and one horse, inched it along a narrow roadcut to its present location at the top of the bluff. McLoughlin and his wife, Marguerite, are buried nearby. Grounds are open to visitors and tours meet next door at historic Barclay House on Fri.-Sat. Free. For current operating hours call 503-656-5151.

**Directions:** Leaving the visitor center, turn right (east) onto E. Evergreen Boulevard. Turn left (northeast) at the first intersection on to E. Reserve Street and drive 0.2 mile. Turn left (northwest) onto E. Mill Plain Boulevard, cross under the freeway, and merge onto I-5 South toward Portland. Stay in the right lane and take the first exit, 1A, onto eastbound WA-14. Continue 5.8 miles and take Exit 6 to merge onto southbound I-205 toward Salem, Oregon.

*McLoughlin House.*

Drive approximately 17.5 miles and take Exit 9 (look for brown directional sign to McLoughlin House Nat. Historic Site) toward Oregon City. Move into the left lane and at the end of the ramp turn left onto southbound OR-99E/McLoughlin Boulevard. In 0.6 mile turn left (southeast) onto 10th Street, which crosses tracks, curves right, and becomes Singer Hill Road. The road climbs a hill and curves sharply to the left in front of city hall. Bear left there and take the first left (northeast) onto Center Street. The house is on the left; look for curbside parking.

*To bypass stop A-36, the Museum of the Oregon Territory, and go directly to the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, continue northeast up Center Street and take the first right onto 8th Street. Drive 1 block and turn left onto Washington Street. Drive 0.7 mile and turn right, into the park. See entry A-37.*

**A-36. Museum of the Oregon Territory and Willamette Falls View (211 Tumwater Drive, Oregon City) [GPS 45.351946 -122.613359].** This county-operated museum boasts the first covered wagon that crossed the West to reach Oregon, as well as extensive collections of American Indian objects from Oregon. For business hours, call 503-655-5574. Allow 1-2 hours for the visit. Free-will donations accepted. The museum also offers a view of Willamette Falls, one of the most powerful waterfalls in the US. Before the site became industrialized with the addition of sawmills, a woolen mill, and paper mills in the 1800s, the falls were a key fishing and trading center—a "little Celilo"— managed by the Clackamas Chinook people and used (with permission) by many tribes. The Clackamas lived in villages on both banks of the Willamette River, including a village named Walamt, from which comes the river's name. A Willamette Falls Legacy Project with a river walk and other amenities are in planning, including public access along the river.

*Willamette Falls.*

**Directions:** If parked on the right side of the street at McLoughlin House, turn around and head southwest on Center Street. Cross 7th Street and drive 8 more blocks, past 2nd Street, and continue to South 2nd Street. Turn right and drive 2 blocks. Turn right onto Tumwater Drive and enter the museum parking lot on the left.

**A-37/B-18. End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (1726 Washington St., Oregon City) [GPS 45.364443 -122.595866].** Explore the grounds and gardens before visiting exhibits inside. A series of outdoor exhibits tell the stories of the trail, the Tumwater and Clackamas Indian people, and the settlement of the Willamette Valley. Follow the sidewalk to a garden where stand two monuments marking the designated end of the Oregon Trail. Allow at least 90 minutes for your visit. Open daily except major holidays. Moderate admission fee; children under age three and active military admitted free. For information, call 503-657-9336.

**Directions:** From the Museum of the Oregon Territory parking lot, turn right onto Tumwater Drive. At the stop sign turn right onto South 2nd Street. At the next intersection turn right onto McLoughlin Boulevard, pass beneath a railroad trestle, and follow the highway along the Willamette River. Turn right onto 14th Street. At the third intersection turn left onto Washington Street. Drive 0.4 mile and turn right into the park.

*Entrance to the Interpretive Center.*

**Also of Interest: Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center (8720 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR)**
This tribal museum/center shares the history and traditions of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. This community comprises over 30 tribes and bands from western Oregon, southwestern Washington, and northern California, including the Kalapuya, Molalla, Shasta/Chasta, Umpqua, Rogue River, and Tillamook people—the original settlers of this area and lands south along the Applegate Trail. Learn how they lived before the opening of the overland wagon trails. See the Chachalu website for hours and more information. To reach it, use a road map or phone app to navigate to 8720 Grand Ronde Road at Grand Ronde. Expect the drive from End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center to take about 90 minutes.

**Also of Interest: Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (Siletz, OR)**
The Confederated Tribes of Siletz, made up of 27 bands originating from Northern California to Southern Washington, do not currently have a museum or cultural center open for visitors, but the tribes' website provides a wealth of information about their heritage and history. Type "Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians" into your web browser and then click on "Our Heritage."

**This ends the Segment A tour of the Oregon Trail.**

## AUTO TOUR SEGMENT B: 1846 BARLOW ROAD, THE DALLES TO OREGON CITY

This tour of the Barlow Road is one of the most scenic drives along the Oregon Trail. It offers some short, optional side-trips on unpaved roads suitable for passenger cars, as well as hiking, exploration, and camping opportunities in Mt. Hood National Forest. To explore the trail further on foot or by four-wheel-drive, order Mt. Hood National Forest maps online or purchase them at the US Forest Service ranger station in Dufur, Oregon (stop B-1).

**Advisory!** Few roadside services are available between The Dalles and Government Camp. Some of the optional stops and hiking opportunities in Mt. Hood National Forest require recreation passes or day-use permits that are not available at campgrounds and trailheads, but must be purchased in advance. Day-use permits are available at the US Forest Service ranger station in Dufur. America the Beautiful and Federal Recreational Lands passes (the Interagency Annual Pass, the free Military Annual Pass, the lifetime Senior Pass, and the free Access Pass for people with permanent disabilities) also are accepted at the national forest and at more than 2,000 other federal recreation sites. They can be purchased at the Dufur ranger station, most national parks, and many other federal recreation sites, as well as online from the US Geological Survey at store.usgs.gov/pass. Visitors who do not wish to buy passes can skip tour stops within federal fee areas and continue to the next site.

**Begin this tour of the Barlow Road at the junction of US 197 and I-84 east of The Dalles.**

If approaching from eastbound US 30 after taking The Dalles Complex tour, bear right (southeast) onto US 197 toward Dufur.

If approaching directly from I-84 at Exit 87, cross the freeway and proceed up the hill to the stop sign. Reset your trip odometer and turn left (southeast) onto US 197. A brown Oregon Trail sign at the intersection indicates that the highway through Wasco County follows the general route of the Barlow Road for approximately 45 miles.

In about 2.5 miles, as the highway tops the hill and begins curving right, Old Dufur Road enters on the right and an unmarked roadside pullout is immediately ahead on the left. Old Dufur Road is the route of the original Barlow Road leading out of The Dalles. The wagon road climbed from the valley to a point near this location and then turned south, following an American Indian trail toward Tygh Valley.


*Dufur Ranger Station.*

*Continue southbound on US 197 to the town of Dufur, about 12 miles from The Dalles.*

**B-1. Mt. Hood National Forest, Dufur Ranger Station (780 NE Court Street, Dufur, OR) [GPS 45.45629 -121.12549].** This US Forest Service ranger station offers a selection of Forest maps, information about local road conditions, public restrooms, and an exhibit of historical photographs and documents related to the Barlow Road. The Barlow Ranger District and Zigzag Ranger District maps, in particular, could be helpful. Also available here are day-use permits and interagency passes for federal fee areas. For more information, call 541-467-2291. Open year-round, weekdays, 7:45 am–4:30 pm.

**Directions:** Exit US 197 approaching Dufur and follow the "Forest Info" and Barlow Road tour signs into town. The Dufur Ranger Station is on the left as you enter town. Look for the flagpole.

*Dufur Historical Society Museum.*

**B-2. Dufur Historical Society Living History Museum (46 N. Main Street, Dufur, OR) [GPS 45.45159 -121.13118].** See an authentic Oregon log cabin and exhibits related to local history. Beyond the last building, near the creek, a large interpretive sign describes the significance

of this location to overland immigrants on the Barlow Road. Visiting hours are subject to change; call 541-467-2205 for current information. Free-will donations accepted.

**Directions:** From the ranger station, continue south on Court Street for 2 blocks and turn right (west) onto 5th Street. Drive 5 blocks and turn left onto Main, which was the Barlow Road through the town. Continue 4 blocks and watch on the left for the Dufur Historical Society Living History Museum, next to the post office.

*Continue south down Main Street and out of town. Where the road splits, bear left toward US 197. A Barlow Road sign indicates the way. At the stop sign, take note of your trip mileage, then turn right (south) onto the highway and start up Tygh Ridge. Ahead, a brown Oregon Trail sign indicates that the Barlow Road route continues for 31 miles through Wasco County. About 1.8 miles from the stop sign, the general route of the original wagon road turns away from US 197 and heads southwest, crossing the low hills to the right. The highway continues south over Tygh Ridge and then descends Butler Canyon for 4.5 miles, curving southwesterly to rejoin the Barlow Road near the mouth of the canyon.*

*Watch for the brown signs marking the route.*

**B-3. Barlow Road Orientation (US 197, approaching Tygh Valley, OR) [GPS 45.26471 -121.19070].**

At the bottom of Butler Canyon, watch for a gravel stockpile area on the right side of the highway. Nearby are several places to pull over safely along the highway for a few minutes. From your vehicle, look to the slope behind the gravel stockpile: the wagons descended this hill and then spread out across the floor of Tygh Valley. Immigrants camped near a Tygh Indian village, traded with the villagers, and pastured their livestock on the last abundant grass they would find before reaching the Willamette Valley. Now, look forward (south) across the valley to the distant bluff. Two road cuts slice across the face of that landform: the upper one is a modern highway followed

by this tour, but the lower one is the remnant of an 1860s stagecoach road that ran between The Dalles and Baker City.

*Tygh Valley.*

*Continue south about 1.3 miles to an intersection controlled by a flashing light. To the left is* OR-216, *the west end of a cutoff that split away from the main trail a short distance west of the John Day River ford. This cutoff bypassed The Dalles, crossing the Deschutes River at Sherar's Bridge to join the Barlow Road here at Tygh Valley. Turn right at that intersection onto Tygh Valley Road and drive toward the community of Tygh Valley. At the first* Y *intersection, just past the river, bear left to keep to the main road; at the next intersection, bear slightly to the right (south), following the brown Oregon Trail tour sign, onto Wamic Market Road. About halfway through town, the road begins a broad sweep to the right, then curves left and begins climbing the bluff above the valley.*

**B-4. Interpretive Pullout and Viewpoint (Wamic Market Road) [GPS 45.25249 -121.17458].** This site is on the upper road cut that could be seen from stop B-3: look over the edge of the pullout to see the 1860s stage road below. Next, examine the nearby Barlow Road interpretive sign, which shows wagons descending a steep hill to enter the valley and join the immigrant camps along Tygh Creek. Now look back across Tygh Valley, toward US 197 as it emerges from Butler Canyon, to view the landscape depicted on the sign. The wagons in the drawing are coming down the big hill on the left side of today's highway, but in reality, that route would have entailed an unnecessary climb and descent. Historically, wagon traffic came down the ridge behind that hill and

*Tygh Valley interpretive pullout.*

entered Tygh Valley near the gravel pile along US 197. Finally, look below and on the left to view the wooded ravine where immigrant wagons climbed onto the plateau to continue the journey toward Mt. Hood.

**Directions:** About a mile from the town of Tygh Valley, watch on the right for a large parking area with an interpretive sign.

**B-5. Barlow Road CCC Sign Replica (Wamic, OR) [GPS 45.22769 -121.26948].** In the community of Wamic stands a fiberglass replica of a 1930s wooden sign that was carved by Civilian Conservation Corps workers to mark the location of a Barlow Road tollgate. However, according to a modern sign next to the replica, this is not the tollgate location.


*Barlow Road CCC Sign Replica.*

**Directions:** From stop B-4, continue west on Wamic Market Road. In about 3.2 miles, bear left to stay on the main road, which then drops to cross Threemile Creek and splits once more as it enters Wamic. Follow the main road to the left, as indicated by the brown Oregon Trail tour sign. The CCC replica sign is on the left, 2 blocks beyond the curve.

*Continue out of town on Wamic Market Road. The road climbs a hill, curves right, and becomes a straightway called Rock Creek Dam Road. After 4 miles heading due west, the road enters Mt. Hood National Forest, crosses a cattle guard, and becomes Forest Road 48 (paved). Admission to the Forest is free, but some tour stops ahead are located in fee areas that require day-use permits or federal recreation passes.*

**Stop B-6**, located 0.8 mile beyond the cattle guard, requires a federal recreation pass or day use permit. To bypass this stop, reset your trip odometer at the entrance to the day-use area and continue on Forest Road 48 as it curves southwesterly past Rock Creek Reservoir. Then skip to the directions following entry B-6. to continue further on the auto tour route.

**B-6. Rock Creek Reservoir Day-Use Area [GPS 45.22149 -121.38216].** Interpretive signs tell of the establishment and use of the Barlow Road and show general maps of its route. Pit toilets are available here.

*Sign for Rock Creek Reservoir Day-Use Area.*

**Directions:** About 0.8 mile after crossing the cattle guard, Forest Road 48 begins a curve to the left. Continue along the curve on Forest Road 48. After the curve, turn right onto Forest Road 4820/Rock Creek Reservoir Dike Road and then turn right onto White River Road, following signs to the day-use parking area. Afterward, return to the junction and **reset your trip odometer** before turning right onto Forest Road 48.

*Continue south on Forest Road 48 across Rock Creek, which drains into the reservoir. Now the road heads south-southwest and, at about odometer-mile 2.5, crosses Gate Creek and curves northwest. At about 2.8 miles stands a sign on the right that indicates a left turn to the Barlow Road 1 mile ahead. This driving tour bypasses that turnoff, as it is a primitive road that is suitable only in dry weather for high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles. Vehicles that attempt that road may sustain paint and body damage from encroaching vegetation.*

*Rock Creek Reservoir Day-Use Area.*

*Continue westerly along Forest Road 48/Lost Creek Rd. On the left at mile 10.8 stands a sign for Forest Creek Campground. A federal recreation pass or day-use permit is not required to visit this site. The campground access road is generally suitable for passenger cars; however, it is not recommended for motorhomes and trailers. Watch out for damage to the deck of the creek bridge.*

**B-7. Forest Creek Campground [GPS 45.18384 -121.54138].** This six-site campground for modern-day travelers once was a watering and resting place for pioneers on the Barlow Road. Some immigrants camped here, one of the few places where they could spread out into a relatively flat space on the climb toward Mount Hood. An interpretive sign tells the story. The historic Barlow Road, today a jeep road that passes through the campground, can be explored on foot and with four-wheel-drive vehicles, but it is not recommended for passenger cars. A camping fee is charged for overnight stays; maximum vehicle size allowed is 16 feet. Open summers.

**Directions:** At the Forest Creek Campground sign, turn left onto Forest Road 4885, which curves southeasterly (to the left), and drive 1.5 miles, staying with the best road at all times, to a four-way junction. Turn left and continue 0.2 mile. The campground is on the left.

*Forest Creek Campground turnoff.*

*After your visit, return to Forest Road 48 and turn left toward Mt. Hood. In about 2 miles is another sign for access to the Old Barlow Road, but this tour bypasses the turnoff because the road is not suitable for two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles. Continue on Forest Road 48, which here trends northwesterly. In another mile, the road turns directly toward Mt. Hood and the view is framed by Douglas fir trees.*

*When the road begins descending to the White River, watch for a sign on the right indicating the junction with Forest Road 43/Cedar Burn Road. At the junction, reset your trip odometer, drive 4.4 miles, and turn left onto Forest Road 43/Cedar Burn Road and cross over the White River.*

**B-8. Fort Deposit on the Historic Barlow Road [GPS 45.21475 -121.61173].** Members of the Barlow and Palmer immigrant parties cached their wagons in this vicinity over the winter of 1845-

1846 while they made their way toward the Willamette Valley. An interpretive sign tells the story.

**Directions:** After crossing the river on Forest Road 43/Cedar Burn, drive 0.6 mile to the junction with Forest Road 3530, the historical Barlow Road. Pull over and park at a safe place on the right (north) side of the intersection to visit the interpretive sign.

*Fort Deposit wayside.*

**Also of Interest: The Museum at Warm Springs (2189 US 26, Warm Springs, OR)** Warm Springs, Wasco, and Northern Paiute were among the native groups who historically made their homes in the region around Mt. Hood. Along its slopes they hunted and fished, gathered berries and roots, and harvested bear grass for weaving their baskets. Today, many of their descendants are members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, who share their history and traditions at the Museum at Warm Springs. Call 541-553-3331 or check museum website for current hours and entrance fee.

**Directions:** Expect this drive to take 75 minutes one-way. From the Fort Deposit stop, continue southwesterly on Forest Road 43/Cedar Burn for about 5 miles to its junction with US 26/ Warm Springs Highway. Turn left (southeast) and drive 36 miles. The museum is at the east end of Warm Springs, on the south side of the highway opposite the casino. To return to the Barlow Road tour, turn left onto US 26 from the museum and drive approximately 50 miles to Government Camp. Skip to entry B-22.

*From stop B-8 at Fort Deposit, return to Forest Road 48, turn left (north) on that road, and drive 8.9 miles to the end of the road at its junction with OR-35. Turn left and drive 2 miles to Barlow Pass (milepost 60). Immediately ahead and to the left is a junction with Forest Road 3531/Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway. The junction is marked with an Oregon Trail National Historic logo sign, a green*

*"Summit Barlow Pass" sign, and brown signs for "Sno-Park" and for the Barlow Road and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.*

To continue on the route, choose one of the following options:

*To hike a segment of the Barlow Road between the trailhead and the Pioneer Woman's Grave, turn left and enter Forest Road 3531/ Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway. Further directions to the trailhead are provided under entry B-9, below. This hiking and equestrian trail is in a US Forest Service fee area: users must have a federal recreation pass or a Mt. Hood day-use permit to park at the upper trailhead and to walk or ride the trail.*

**— OR —**

*To drive directly to the Pioneer Woman's Grave, continue straight (westerly) past the junction on OR-35 for 1.8 miles. After passing a green highway sign for US 26 ahead, watch on the left for a turnoff with a brown sign for Pioneer Woman's Grave. Turn left onto the paved road (Forest Road 3531/Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway), drive 0.3 mile to the grave site, and park at the pullout. A federal pass or day-use permit is not required for the visit. Skip to entry B-10 for information about the grave site.*

**B-9. Barlow Pass to Pioneer Woman's Grave Hike [Trailhead GPS 45.27267 -121.68532].** This trail winds through conifer forest for about 1.2 miles from its upper trailhead at Barlow Pass (4,160' elev., the highest point on the Barlow Road) to the Pioneer Woman's Grave (3,720' elev.). The path cuts across a broad, northerly bend in OR-35, following the territorial stage route across Barlow Pass and intersects portions of the original Barlow Road along the way. About 0.8 mile from the upper trailhead, the forest opens to a spectacular, unobstructed view of the south face of Mount Hood, with the Palmer and White River glaciers fully visible.

**Directions:** After turning onto Forest Road 3531/Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway at Barlow Pass, drive 0.3 mile

*Trail to Pioneer Woman's Grave.*

to a replica Civilian Conservation Corps sign that marks the junction of the Barlow Road /Forest Road 3530, on the left. Just beyond the sign and junction is a fee parking lot and portable toilet (in season). The Barlow Road crosses the parking lot. Through the opening of the trees on the uphill side of the lot, the Barlow Road segment of the Oregon National Historic Trail intersects the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, a long-distance hiking trail extending between Canada and Mexico. To reach the trailhead to the Pioneer Woman's Grave, turn toward the downhill side of the lot and walk through a large opening in the trees. A sign shows the way. **Remember, permits are required for use of this parking area and the trail.**

*Sign marking trail to grave.*

*Visitors can park and hike roundtrip (2.4 miles total), or a driver can drop hikers at the trailhead, continue with the vehicle down Forest Road 3531/Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway, and meet the hikers at the grave site.*

**Drivers:** Forest Road 3531 follows a 2.3-mile segment of the original "old" Mt. Hood Loop Highway, built in the mid-1920s. One of the first paved roads in Oregon, this historic road is narrow and its surface is the original macadam. It is suitable for passenger cars, but motorhomes and vehicles pulling trailers should return to OR-35 and proceed to the Pioneer Woman's Grave without attempting to drive this historic road. For those who proceed down Forest Road 3531, about 0.5 mile from the parking lot is a pullout with a historic stone water fountain (not safe to drink from), a stone sculpture of a beaver, two interpretive signs, and a scenic view of Mt. Hood. Continue to the Pioneer Woman's Grave and park at the pullout on the left side of the road to wait for hikers.

**Hikers:** The trail down to the Pioneer Woman's Grave loses 440 feet in elevation, mostly in the first 0.5 mile of the hike. The path may be blocked by fallen logs in the spring, before trail

crews arrive to remove them. No other regular maintenance is performed on this trail. The ground can be muddy in places at any time of year. The trail ends at pavement near the grave site, which is marked by a large boulder with a plaque.

**B-10. Pioneer Woman's Grave and Trail Remnants [GPS 45.28208 -121.70000].** Engineers constructing the Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway found this forgotten trailside grave, hidden by vegetation, in 1924. An interpretive exhibit tells the story and a boulder with a plaque commemorates the unknown woman who died near here, just 50 miles from the Willamette Valley. The "grave trail" down from Barlow Pass approaches from the opposite side of the road. A short walk into the forest along the trail leads to a place where traces of the original stage and immigrant wagon road divert around a large tree, marked by a small wooden sign bolted to the tree. Return to the road, walk over the culvert, and then turn right onto a path that leads about 65 feet (20 m) into the woods. The wheels of countless wagons and stagecoaches gouged deep, trough-like swales and cuts in the banks where they crossed the stream. Look for two older crossing points that have caved in and one closer to the road that remains in excellent condition. More historic road remnants can be found a short distance farther into the forest. While exploring, please be very careful not to disturb this fragile site: stay off the edges of the old road features, especially the cuts and swales.

*Pioneer Woman's Grave.*

*After your visit, return to* OR-35 *and turn left onto the highway. Those driving from the Barlow Pass trailhead will pass the turnoff to the Pioneer Woman's Grave about 1.8 miles after reentering* OR-35. *At the highway interchange ahead, bear right, following the sign for westbound* US 26 *toward Portland and Government Camp. About 2.2 miles beyond the interchange on* US 26 *is a sign and turnoff for Timberline Lodge, which was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The building appeared in the film "The Shining" as the fictional Overlook Hotel;*

*today it is a National Historic Landmark. Immediately past this turnoff, look for the sign for the Mt. Hood Cultural Center and Museum at Government Camp, a year-round, full-service resort town.*

*Government Camp.*

**B-11. Barlow Road Kiosk and Cultural Center (88900 Government Camp Loop, Government Camp, OR) [GPS 45.30382 -121.75294].** Several interpretive signs at an Oregon Trail kiosk tell of the incidental establishment of "government camp" in 1849 and the immigration experience on this "Desperate bad" road. Nearby is a boulder monument with dedication plaques. Across the street is the Mt. Hood Cultural Center and Museum/Information Center, which offers maps and guides, an art gallery, and exhibits about Mt. Hood's geology, winter sports, pioneering and settlement, and US Forest Service history. Open daily.

**Directions:** Turn right at the junction to Government Camp/Ski Bowl East. A rest area with public restrooms is on the right. To continue to the kiosk and center, turn left (west) onto Government Camp Loop Road, parallel to the highway. The kiosk is on the right, 0.4 mile from the highway junction. The cultural center is on the left, across from the kiosk.

**Advisory!** The next stop, an informational sign and 1-mile roundtrip interpretive walk with a view of the precipitous Laurel Hill "chute" descent, is located at small pullout several miles ahead on the left. Because the pullout is accessible only from the eastbound lanes of US 26, reaching that site from Government Camp requires driving west past it for over a mile, turning around, and backtracking up the mountain. Leaving the site, visitors must continue east to Government Camp in order to turn around again and resume the westbound tour. Motorhomes and trailers should skip this stop altogether for safety reasons and because parking space at the pullout may be inadequate for large vehicles.

*To bypass the Laurel Hill interpretive pullout, continue west through Government Camp and merge onto westbound US 26, then skip ahead to entry B-13.*

**— OR —**

*To visit to the Laurel Hill interpretive pullout, continue west through Government Camp and merge onto westbound US 26, then see further directions for entry B-12.*


*Sign marking the Laurel Hill Trailhead.*

**B-12. Laurel Hill Chute Descent (GPS 45.31134 -121.80125).** For the descent of Laurel Hill, immigrants locked their wagon wheels and dragged huge logs under their wagons to slow their slide down the 60-percent grade. The repeated scraping of wheels and logs down the mountainside created a rocky "chute" that gradually grew impassable with use, forcing immigrants to find another place to lower their wagons. Several chutes were created in this area.

**Directions:** About a mile after merging onto US 26 from Government Camp, the highway enters an S-curve, then straightens for a short distance before beginning another bend to the left. There, watch on the left for the pullout where you will stop on your way back. US 26 next passes a road cut on the right, while on the left the field of view opens. Make note of the runaway truck ramp just ahead on the right, as it will be a cue on the return drive. Beyond the truck ramp the highway curves sharply right and then enters a gentler curve to the left before bending right again through a deep road cut with rock exposures on both sides of the highway. At the next curve to the left, a wide shoulder opens on the right side of the highway. Signal and begin to slow but do not turn in until you reach the end of the shoulder, where

*Laurel Hill Trail.*

Kiwanis Camp Road/Forest Road 39 enters from the right. Turn left from the shoulder onto Kiwanis Camp Road so that you are facing the highway, and carefully enter the eastbound lanes of US 26 heading back up the mountain. Move to the right lane. At the truck ramp to the left, note your mileage. At 0.7 mile beyond the ramp, signal and begin slowing for the small, graveled parking pullout just 0.1 mile ahead, at the end of the guardrail on the right. At present there is no highway sign for the pullout. Park well off the highway, leaving room for other vehicles.

*Laurel Hill Chute.*

Now begin your visit at the large wooden informational sign at the north end of the pullout. A path (Trail 795A) climbs about 60 stone steps through the woods and up the hill to another segment of the historic Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway. At the top of the steps, turn right and walk along the macadam about 100 yards to the interpretive sign on your left. Here you are standing at the midpoint of a possible wagon descent chute. Above you the chute is heavily eroded. Now turn and look below the road. The original chute continued down to the flat area at the tree line. From the edge of the road, the descent is about as steep as any other route down the face of Laurel Hill would have been in covered-wagon days. (Visitors are advised against using the narrow, steep trail next to the chute.) About another 100 yards past the chute, a footpath (Trail 795A) climbs 150 feet up a series of switchbacks to the top of the wagon chute, where visitors will find another interpretive sign and an impressive view of the descent. Retrace your steps back down to the pullout after your visit.

*When leaving the Laurel Hill interpretive site, turn right onto US 26 and drive east up the hill for about 1.7 miles. The nearest safe places to turn around are at Ski Bowl West and Government Camp. From there, resume the tour westbound on US 26.*

**B-13. Rhododendron Tollgate (Rhododendron, OR) [GPS 45.31987 -121.90375].** Financed by businessman Philip Foster, Sam Barlow hired a road crew to improve his trail, which opened as a one-way toll road in 1846. The fifth and final tollgate on the turnpike operated here from 1883 to 1915. Interpretive signs tell the story. Nearby, a replica gate stands between two maple trees, which are believed to have been planted by one of the last tollgate keepers.

**Directions:** The site is about 5 miles west of the Laurel Hill pullout. A brown sign for Tollgate Campground is approximately 0.5 mile east of the site. The entrance to the small parking lot is on the left, opposite a blue "Travel Info" sign, and a US Forest Service sign for the Pioneer Bridle Trailhead is in front of the turnout.

*Rhododendron Tollgate trail and signs.*

**Also of Interest: Zigzag Forest Service Ranger Station.** Continue on US 26 through the town of Rhododendron. At the end of town, on the right, is a plaque mounted to a boulder in 1916 by the Daughters of the American Revolution to memorialize the Barlow Road as a segment of the Oregon Trail. Stay on US 26 for about 2 miles more and enter the community of Zigzag. On the left is a US Forest Service Ranger Station. Here visitors can get maps and information, and eastbound travelers can purchase federal recreation passes and day-use permits for stops in Mt. Hood National Forest fee areas. The station is closed 12-1 pm. This is the last restroom break before Sandy.


*Zigzag Ranger Station, Mt Hood Nat. Forest.*

**Directions:** From the town of Rhododendron, continue northwesterly on US 26 for about 2.0 miles to the community of Zigzag. Upon entering the community, look for the US Forest Service ranger station on the left.

## Excursion: Devil's Backbone to Jonsrud Viewpoint

From Zigzag you have a choice:

*Meinig Park.*

*To stay on the highway and skip to Meinig Park, continue westbound on US 26 to Sandy. In town, turn left on Meinig Avenue and continue straight at the traffic light, following the sign onto OR-211. Almost immediately after crossing the intersection, make a left turn into the unsigned park entrance. (If you reach the bridge, you have gone too far.) The parking lot can accommodate motor homes and trailers, and the park's facilities are wheelchair-accessible. Now see entry B-15.*

**— OR —**

*To take a 22-mile, hour-long drive along paved country roads that approximate the old Barlow Road route over Devil's Backbone, refer to Excursion: Devil's Backbone Route to Jonsrud Viewpoint, below. It is an alternate drive in the same direction as the highway tour, and the two rejoin at Jonsrud Viewpoint.*

**Advisory!** Roads are narrow, generally lack shoulders, and can be steep and twisting in places. Gravel trucks may be encountered on weekdays. Along some stretches, trees grow close to road's edge and in places overhang the lane of travel. This drive is not recommended for motorhomes, campers, or vehicles with trailers.

*From the Zigzag Ranger Station, turn left (west) onto US 26. Immediately ahead, just before the Zig Zag Mountain Café, turn right (north) onto Lolo Pass Road and zero your vehicle's odometer. Cross the Zigzag River.*

- **About at 0.3 mile** look for Mountain Drive entering from the right: it is the approximate location of the original Barlow Road. The trail alignment passes through the small housing

development to the left and then crosses the Sandy River, which is visible through the trees. Continue north on Lolo Pass Road, crossing the Sandy River.

- At **about 1.2 miles** turn left onto **East Barlow Trail Road**, the first road to the left. East Barlow Trail Road doubles back to the south and then gradually turns westerly. At mile 6, look for the Brightwood Bridge to your left. Beginning in about 1847, the Barlow Road route was on the south side of the Zigzag and the Sandy rivers. It rejoined the original route near this location. All later immigrants followed the same route that you will be following for this tour.
- At **about 6.8 miles** and again at mile 7.3 are rest areas with pit toilets.
- **At mile 7.8**, turn right onto **East Marmot Road**. The turn comes immediately before a second bridge across the Sandy River.

*Rock Corral.*

- Ahead **at mile 8.9**, look on the right for an Oregon Trail sign for **"Rock Corral,"** which is clearly visible as several large rocks at the left side of the road. (The sign actually stands beyond the rocks.) The property is privately owned, but you can park on the right near the sign and walk over to view the site from the public right of way. Local lore holds that early immigrants camped or rested here before beginning the climb up Devil's Backbone; later travelers are said to have built the corral by piling wood or laying rails between the rocks. However, no evidence of such a structure has been identified and over 30 known Barlow Road immigrant diaries do not mention this site. Although listed on the National Register of Historic Places, its actual historical significance is uncertain.
- At **about mile 11** the road begins a stretch of sharp turns, climbs, and drops, and then it begins to **ascend Devil's**

**Backbone**, passing through the one-time town site of Marmot at mile 12.5.

*Devil's Backbone.*

This area was settled in 1883 by Adolph Aschoff, who built a large hotel for travelers on the Barlow Road. Aschoff noticed many burrows in the area, and local people told him they were made by marmots. He eventually determined that mountain beavers (a large, burrowing rodent that looks like an oversized hamster) created the burrows, but when the post office opened, he decided to call the place Marmot, anyway. In the 1920s a new highway to Mount Hood began carrying most of the traffic, and Aschoff's tourist trade dwindled. Nothing remains of the old settlement today. The original wagon trail passes through the farms to the right, although traces are not visible. Beyond Marmot, at about mile 12.6 to 12.8, the ridge narrows, with a steep drop (not visible through the trees and brush) to the Sandy River on the left. There you are driving a short distance on the original Barlow Road alignment.

- **At mile 17.3** is a sharp, downhill turn to the left. **Stay on SE Marmot Road**; do not enter Shipley Road. At mile 17.6 is a sharp, downhill hairpin turn to the right. The road arrives at a stop sign at mile 19, where SE Marmot intersects with Ten Eyck Road—the end of Devil's Backbone. Cross the intersection and continue straight onto SE Ten Eyck Road.

- Just ahead **at mile 19.2** is **"Revenue Bridge" over the Sandy River**. In this vicinity, settler Francis Revenue built the first bridge over the Sandy. Before there was any bridge, though, wagons forded the river. You can pull over on the right hand side of the road at Bacon Creek Lane, within sight of the bridge, and then walk in the bike lane for a view of the river. The original Barlow Road river ford was probably at about the large gravel bar on the right side of the river.

- **At mile 19.8**, stop at the wide area on the right side of the road near a string of mailboxes. Walk back alongside the road about 130 yards to where the road begins a downhill, right curve. The green fields below were part of Francis Revenue's land claim. He operated Samuel Barlow's second tollgate near here from 1853 to 1865. Look directly across the fields to the steep bluff in the distance with several homes atop it. That is the location of Jonsrud Viewpoint (stop B-14). Later, when you reach the viewpoint, you can look back and see these green fields, the Devil's Backbone, and Mt. Hood.

*Sandy River.*

- **At mile 20.5, Ten Eyck Road** makes a hairpin uphill turn to the right (northwest). Continue to US 26 in the town of Sandy (mile 21.1). Turn right onto westbound US 26/Proctor Boulevard and continue about 10 blocks to the traffic signal at Bluff Road (mile 21.9). Turn right on Bluff Road to Jonsrud Viewpoint (mile 22.7) on the right.

**Advisory!** Due to the small size of the parking lot, stop B-14 at Jonsrud Viewpoint is not recommended for motorhomes and trailers. At the town of Sandy, the highway divides into one-way streets. Motorhomes and trailers following this tour need to move immediately to the left lane and turn left (southwest) at the first traffic light onto Meinig Avenue/OR-211, toward Estacada and Molalla. For further directions, skip to entry B-15 for Meinig Memorial Park. Passenger vehicles, though, can continue

*Ten Eyck Road.*

straight through the intersection, following the brown Oregon Trail sign for Jonsrud Viewpoint.

**B-14. Jonsrud Viewpoint (Bluff Road, Sandy, OR) [GPS 45.41035 -122.27350].** Here is a view up the canyon of the Sandy River and over the ridge called Devil's Backbone, a commonly mentioned feature in immigrant diaries. At the viewpoint are three interpretive signs and a free telescope.

**Directions:** From westbound US 26 in Sandy, cross OR-211 and continue straight ahead in the right lane through six intersections (about 0.5 miles). Between the 6th and 7th blocks, the one-way streets begin to converge. Enter the right turn lane, and at the traffic signal turn onto Bluff Road. Drive 0.8 mile to Jonsrud Viewpoint. The narrow entrance is on the right, just past a blue Oregon Scenic Byway sign at the end of the guardrail. Turn right into the small parking lot and follow the sidewalk north to the viewpoint.

*Mt. Hood as seen from Jonsrud Viewpoint.*

*Return on Bluff Road to US 26/Pioneer Boulevard. Turn left onto the highway, drive east six blocks to the next traffic light and turn right (south) onto Meinig Avenue/OR-211. Almost immediately make a left turn into the unsigned park entrance. (If you reach the bridge, you have gone too far.) The parking lot can accommodate motor homes and trailers, and the park's facilities are wheelchair-accessible.*

**B-15. Meinig Memorial Park (17670 Meinig Avenue, Sandy, OR) [GPS 45.39534 -122.25915].** This wooded city park offers an interpretive sign telling of the rigors of the Barlow Road through this area. Public restrooms and covered picnic shelters are available.

**Directions:** Park at the lot on the left. and walk up the main path to the bridge. Turn left and cross the bridge to visit the interpretive sign.

*Meinig Memorial Park.*

*From Meinig Park, turn left onto southbound OR- 211. In about 4.5 miles the speed limit slows to 35 mph as the road drops and bends sharply to the right and then to the left. You will pass Jackknife Road and Eagle Nest Lane entering from the left. Turn left at the next intersection, just past the feed and garden store, onto Eagle Creek Road, following a sign for the post office (and temporarily disregarding the Oregon Trail/Barlow Road signs pointing straight ahead). See further directions below.*

**B-16. Philip Foster Farm (29912 SE Eagle Creek Rd, Eagle Creek, OR) [GPS 45.35776 -122.353923].** Foster's was the first house seen by many immigrants since they left Missouri so many months earlier. A replica of the store is built on the original foundation, and a lilac from the family's earliest homesteading days still grows in the yard. Open summer only. For visiting hours and information about tours, special events, the annual living history camp for children, and more, go to https://philipfosterfarm.com or call 503-627-6324. Modest admission charged.

**Directions:** From stop B-15, turn onto Eagle Creek Road and drive 0.1 mile. Turn right at the entrance to Philip Foster Farm.

*Philip Foster Farm.*

*After your visit, turn left out of the farm onto Eagle Creek Road and then turn left onto OR-211. At the next intersection, turn right onto OR-224 west toward Oregon City.*

**Advisory!** Tour stop B-17 is not recommended for motorhomes and trailers due to narrow roadways, tight turns, and steep grades. To go directly to the official End of the Oregon Trail,

continue 10 miles on OR-224 to I-205 at Clackamas. Cross over the freeway and turn left onto southbound I-205. In 2 miles, take Exit 10. Stay in the right lane and cross over the freeway. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Washington Street. At about 0.6 mile, the End of the Oregon Trail Historic Site is on the left. Skip ahead to entry B-18. Passenger vehicles, too, can follow the directions above to skip stop B-17 and end the tour at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City. Otherwise, to continue to the Baker Cabin, proceed to stop B-17 as directed below.

*Baker Cabin Historical Site.*

**B-17. Baker Cabin Historical Site (18005 S. Gronlund Road, Oregon City) [GPS 45.38864 -122.51756].** Immigrants settled here in 1846 and built this cabin 10 years later. Nearby grows a lilac bush that originated as a cutting from a plant carried west in Philip Foster's covered wagon. Interpretive signs tell the story. This is also a Daughters of the American Revolution commemorative site. Free.

**Directions:** From the turn onto OR-224, drive 3.3 miles to Barton, an unincorporated community. Turn left on Bakers Ferry Road, following the signs toward Barton Park and Logan. An Oregon Trail tour sign is around the corner. At 0.2 mile, bear right at the split and do not enter Barton Park. Bakers Ferry road winds through a verdant patchwork of farms and forests for about 4 miles to end at Springwater Road. Turn right, as directed by an Oregon Trail tour sign, and drive about 1.3 miles to a four-way intersection where the Carver Park Boat Launch is on the right and Carver Bridge is straight ahead. Turn left there onto Hattan Road. The Baker Cabin Historical Site is 0.2 mile on the right, as indicated by a brown Oregon Trail sign.

*Just beyond the Baker Cabin parking area, turn right on Gronlund Road, where you will see another brown Oregon Trail tour sign. From this point, the road becomes narrower and steeper. In about a mile, Gronlund ends at Bradley Road. Turn left. In another 1.1*

*miles, watch for a small, rural school or daycare on the left and turn right there, following the Oregon Trail tour sign onto Holcomb Road. In 2 miles, the family farms end and a sign welcomes visitor to Historic Oregon City. Continue on Holcomb Boulevard for 1.5 miles where road crosses Cascade Highway and the speed limit drops to 15 mph. The road makes a sharp right bend and traffic broadens into three lanes approaching the intersection just ahead. Move to the center lane and continues straight ahead at the traffic signal, to cross Redland Road.*

*Stay in the center lane and continue straight as the road becomes Abernethy Road. Drive 0.5 mile to the traffic signal and turn right onto Washington Street. The End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is on the right.*

*Baker Cabin Historical Site.*

**B-18/A-37. End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (1726 Washington Street, Oregon City) [GPS 45.364443 -122.595866].** Explore the grounds and gardens before visiting exhibits inside. Outdoor exhibits tell the stories of the trail, the Tumwater and Clackamas Indian people, and the settlement of the Willamette Valley. Follow the sidewalk to a garden where stand two monuments marking the designated end of the Oregon Trail. Allow at least 90 minutes for your visit. Open daily except major holidays. Moderate admission charged; children under age three and active military personnel admitted free. Call 503-657-9336 for current information.

This ends the Barlow Road segment of the Oregon National Historic Trail. To explore the Applegate Trail segment of the California National Historic Trail, refer to Segment C of this tour guide.

## AUTO TOUR SEGMENT C: APPLEGATE TRAIL, CALIFORNIA BORDER TO DALLAS, OREGON

Although overlanders knew the Applegate Trail as the "Southern Route to Oregon," it also carried gold rush traffic north and south between the Willamette Valley and Northern California. (For that reason it is designated as part of the California National Historic Trail.) Before the gold rush it was a livestock and trading route known as the Oregon-California Trail, but the route originated in antiquity as a migration, hunting, and trading path developed by native people of the region. This driving route follows from south to north, continuing the Applegate Trail tour from Nevada and across the northeastern corner of California. It enters Oregon near Merrill and ends at the town of Dallas. The southern portion of the route crosses scenic Oregon countryside with numerous trail sites and vistas of historic interest; the northern portion crosses more populated areas where visitors will mostly find roadside interpretive turnouts, museums, and trail centers.

*Grave Creek Bridge (stop C-12).*

To join this tour, start at the intersection of CA-139 and CA-299 at Canby, California., heading northbound on CA-139. Before reaching the Oregon border, you have a choice:

*To stay on the direct main highway, continue on CA-139 northbound through Newell and Tulelake, past Lava Beds National Monument. Upon crossing to Oregon, the highway becomes OR-39 and turns west toward Merrill. Begin your tour with entry C-1, below.*

**— OR —**

*To follow the historic route of the Applegate Trail more closely, head northbound on CA-139 from Canby. In about 30 miles, CA-139 crosses over railroad tracks on an overpass. In another 10 miles the highway begins a gentle curve to the left, heading northwest, and a transmission line comes into view. As you enter the curve, slow*

*down in order to turn right onto County Road 114/Old Alturas Highway If you cross beneath the transmission lines you've missed the turn.*

*Campt Marker, near Tulelake, CA by Douglass Halvorsen. Courtesy of HMdb.org.*

About 6 miles after the turn, the historic route of the Applegate Trail enters from the east and then approximates the county highway alignment into Oregon. This area would become a place of conflict between immigrants and the Modoc Indians, whose homeland it is. The first documented attack on a wagon train occurred along this stretch of trail in 1852 at a place known as Bloody Point, where traffic was constricted between a bluff and the lakeshore.

*Upon crossing the state border, County Road 114 becomes Hwy 50. Continue to follow the trail corridor along Hwy 50 for about 12 miles to Malin. Stay on the highway as it jogs right and then left through town. The highway and the Applegate Trail then strikes west through farmland for about 7.3 miles to merge onto OR-39 toward Merrill. Continue your tour into Oregon with entry C-1.*

**C-1. Stone Bridge (southeast of Merrill, OR) [GPS 42.01071 -121.56117].** A natural bridge at this location provided a wagon crossing of the otherwise unfordable Lost River. The span was 10–15 feet wide, with water flowing six inches to two feet deep over it. In 1927, the Bureau of Reclamation built a small dam on top, covering the sandstone ledge from view. The 1846 immigrants lost 10 oxen to the Modoc in this vicinity and in revenge burned five of the Indians' tule reed houses, together with their winter food supply. Immigrants and native people skirmished in this vicinity several times over the following years.

**Directions:** From the junction of OR-39 and Hwy 50 (about 2 miles east of Merrill), continue west for about a 0.5 mile to the next intersection and turn left (south) onto Malone Road. Drive 0.9 mile to the Lost River. The turnout is on the right, before the bridge.

*From Stone Bridge, the wagon trail angled southwest across today's irrigated croplands, where this tour cannot follow. Instead, continue south on Malone Road and turn right (west) at the next intersection onto County Road 161/Stateline Road. About 0.5 miles west of that turn onto Stateline, the original Applegate Trail crosses the highway into California, to loop south around Lower Klamath Lake (today, Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge). On that stretch of trail, Modocs killed a member of the 1846 wagon train, possibly in retaliation for the burning of their huts and belongings.*

*Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.*

**C-2. Klamath Basin Vista Point (Oregon-California border west of Merrill, OR) [41.99690 -121.72323].** At a roadside turnout with a view into Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, learn about the natural history of this extensive marshland area. The immigrants did not pass by here but instead traveled along the south shore of Klamath Lake.

**Directions:** From the turn onto County Road 161/Stateline Road, drive about 8.4 miles. The Klamath Lake mudflats and wetlands vista point is a turnout on the left, where the road begins to curve south into California.

*After your visit, continue west on County Road 161/Stateline Road to its junction with US 97 (still in California). At this intersection, the Applegate Trail approaches from the south, crosses the highway junction, and continues north around Lake Miller. North of the lake, the trail splits into 1846 and 1847 variants, which head northwest about a mile apart. This tour joins the 1846 variant toward present-day Keno. Turn right (north) onto US 97 and prepare for the next stop a short distance ahead.*

**C-3. Landrum Historical Wayside (US 97, north of the California border) [GPS 42.00363 -121.88912].** Interpretive exhibits here tell about international boundaries, the struggle between Great Britain and the United States for control of the Pacific Northwest, and the

role the Applegate Trail may have played in that struggle. Picnicking, toilet available. Free.

**Directions:** After turning right (north) onto US 97, drive about 0.25 mile and turn left into the wayside. Park at the south end of the lot and follow the sidewalk toward the flagpoles and exhibits beyond the picnic area.

*Now continue north on US 97 for 2.5 miles. Turn left (west) onto Keno-Worden Road. After crossing the railroad tracks, the road turns north and parallels the highway, then curves northwesterly toward Keno, a total distance of about 7.5 miles. At Keno, the highway curves sharply to the right toward the river. At the end of that curve and before the river, turn left (west) onto OR-66/Green Springs Highway.*

The 1846 route of the Applegate wagon train continued northwest and crossed the Klamath River before turning west again. This tour, however, goes west to pick up the 1847 route.

**C-4. Klamath River Crossing (John C. Boyle Reservoir, west of Keno) [GPS 42.13650 -122.02897].** The immigrants of 1847 forded the Klamath River about 0.5 miles north of this place. Their crossing became the main ford on the river until a ferry was established here in 1866. A state historical sign is near the entrance; to visit wayside exhibits, follow the road to the left toward the river. Swimming, fishing, hiking and camping are permitted at this public recreational site. Free.

**Directions:** After turning onto OR-66/Green Springs Highway at Keno, drive about 5.8 miles to the Klamath River. Before entering the bridge, turn right into the recreation area. The sign is on the right.

*Klamath River Crossing.*

*The two variants of the Applegate Trail/Southern Route merge about a mile north of the reservoir. Now follow the Green Springs Highway along a twisting*

*ascent into the rocky, rugged Siskiyou Mountains, with the trail meandering 0.5-2.0 miles north of the highway.*

The Applegate Trail meets and begins to approximate the highway alignment at the community of Lincoln [GPS 42.109972 -122.394172], 22-23 miles from the Klamath River crossing. Watch for cyclists and wildlife in the roadway and expect some exposed vistas without guardrails along the way.

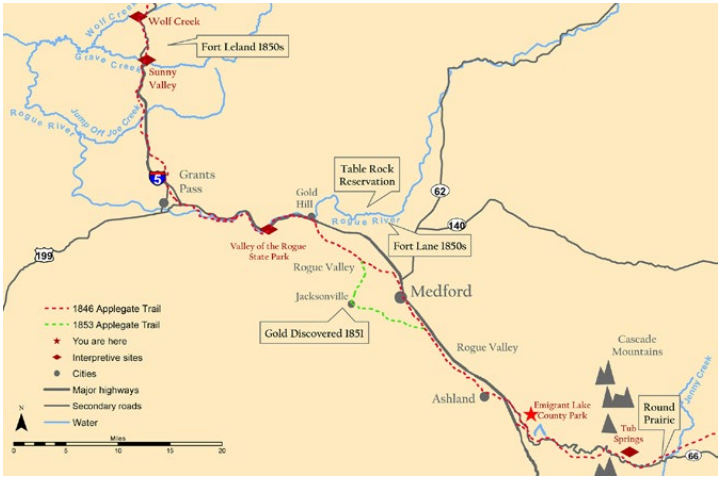
**C-5. Tub Springs State Wayside (Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument) [GPS 42.11568 -122.44216].** The immigrants of 1846 struggled to cut a track for their oxen and wagons through this dense forest. Wayside exhibits at this state park tell the story. A later stage and freight road, the Southern Oregon Wagon Road, joined the Applegate Trail near here; follow the wagon swale past the picnic tables to find the junction. Near the road stand two spring-fed, masonry "tubs," which give the spot its name. The basins were built in the 1930s to serve motorists on the state highway. Today's visitors will find clear, clean drinking water at the spring, a vault toilet, and picnic tables here.

*Tub Springs State Wayside.*


*The "tubs" of Tub Springs State Wayside.*

**Directions:** This wayside is on the right (north) side of the highway, approximately 24.5 miles west of stop C-4 and about 2 miles west of Lincoln.

**C-6. Green Springs Inn and Information Station (Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument) [GPS 42.12294 -122.46440].** The information center provides maps and brochures about the 62,000-acre Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Hiking trails (including




*Auto Tour Route as it follows the Applegate Trail through the Rogue Valley.*

the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail) and campgrounds are available nearby.

**Directions:** From Tub Springs, continue west on OR-66 for about 1.5 miles. The inn and information center are on the left.

*Continue west on OR-66. In about 0.8 mile, the highway approaches Keene Creek Reservoir. Today's road continues up and around the reservoir, but the immigrants turned and lowered their wagons with ropes into Keene Creek canyon just south of today's dam.*

*View of the Applegate Trail from OR-66.*

**C-7. Green Springs Summit and Wagon Slide (Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument) [GPS 42.12994 -122.48280].** Approaching the north end of Keene Creek Reservoir, watch on the right for a "Welcome to Green Springs" sign. Westbound wagons descended Chinquapin Mountain from that direction on a steep section of trail known as the Keene Creek Wagon Slide, where overlanders used ropes to lower their wagons. At Keene Creek (now Keene Reservoir, on the left), they turned south down the creek for a short distance. Continue driving around the reservoir to Green Springs Summit

turnout. The trail leaves the creek and continues southwesterly from about this location. Travelers on the Applegate Trail paused near here to prepare their wagons for the descent of Green Springs Mountain to Tyler Creek. Unfortunately, reservoir construction, logging operations, and other activities have mostly obliterated visible trace of the trail in this area. Today's visitors can take a walk along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), which crosses the highway here. (Please stay on the hiking trail, as adjacent lands are privately owned.)

**Directions:** Drive OR-66/Green Springs Highway around the reservoir. Green signs on the right will advise of the scenic trail crossing and Green Springs Summit. A large turnout with an informational kiosk is on the left side of the road.

*After your visit, continue westerly along* OR-66. *For a good view of the descent, drive about* 0.8 *mile, watching for the left shoulder of the highway to widen into a mail stop. At the end of the turnout is Tyler Creek Road, an all-weather gravel road.*

*Applegate Trail across Green Spring Summit.*

Here, visitors have a choice:

*To stay on pavement and drive directly to Ashland, continue west along* OR-66/*Green Springs Highway for* 12.7 *miles to stop* C-8, *Emigrant Lake County Recreation Area.*

**— OR —**

*For a brief stop to view the area of the wagon descent, turn left onto Tyler Creek Road, drive about* 0.25 *miles into the creek valley, and look back toward the pass. After your visit, either return to the highway and continue to stop* C-8, *or choose the next option, below.*

*Applegate Trail seen from Tyler Creek Road.*

**— OR —**

*Emigrant Lake Recreation Area waysides.*

*For a leisurely, 6 mile drive along the historic route of the Applegate Trail and the Southern Oregon Wagon Road before rejoining OR-66/ Green Springs Highway, note your odometer reading and turn left onto Tyler Creek Road. In about 1.2 miles, you will pass Schoolhouse Ranch [GPS 42.120137 -122.4955805], where the modern road and wagon trail merge. Here, immigrants stopped to rest and graze their livestock. (This is private property, so please stay on the county road.) In another 1.5 miles (total 2.7 miles from the turn onto Tyler Creek Road), watch along the left side of the road for a yellow, T-shaped trail marker constructed of railroad rail. From there the modern road closely approximates the original trail. Continue along the main road, which soon curves north, crosses Schoolhouse Creek, and turns sharply west again to follow the drainage to Emigrant Creek. Tyler Creek Road merges into Buckhorn Springs Road and winds northwesterly along the creek, passing several ranches, for another 2 miles before rejoining OR-66/Green Springs Highway. Turn left onto the highway and continue 3.8 miles to stop C-8.*

*Emigrant Lake Recreation Area.*

**C-8. Jackson County Emigrant Lake Recreation Area and Dunn Hill Cemetery (Ashland, OR).** This stop offers restrooms, wheelchair-accessible parking, three interpretive exhibits, and an 1850s cemetery to explore. The cemetery is not at the recreation area entrance but lies nearby.

**Directions:** Green Springs Highway/Hwy 66 runs along the south shore of Emigrant Lake and then begins curving northerly along the west side of the lake. You will pass two unsigned lake access roads and then a large pullout parking area on the right.

Turn right at the next gravel road, following the brown "Oregon Trail Pioneer Cemetery" sign. If you pass a brown highway sign for the Emigrant Lake Recreation Area turnoff, you've gone too far. Continue 0.25 mile to the cemetery parking area. The wayside exhibits are at the edge of the parking lot overlooking the lake.

*After your visit, return to Green Springs Highway and resume driving toward Ashland. At the eastern edge of Ashland, enter northbound I-5. Drive past Medford toward Gold Hill.*

**C-9. Valley of the Rogue State Park (Gold Hill, OR) [GPS 42.41171 -123.12815].** Immigrants began settling and mining in the Rogue River country in 1852, despite resistance from the so-called "rogue" Indians—some 15 to 20 bands and tribes of indigenous people—who had occupied southwestern Oregon for countless generations. Taking matters into their own hands, miners and settlers massacred the men, women, and children of several villages along the Rogue River in 1853 and 1854, provoking the Rogue River War of 1855-1856. Wayside exhibits here tell the story.

*Valley of the Rogue State Park.*

**Directions:** About 4 miles west of Gold Hill, I-5 crosses the Rogue River. Immediately after the bridge take Exit 45B, which is marked with a brown sign for Valley of the Rogue State Park. At the end of the ramp turn right, cross under the freeway, and enter the park. Following the lane markings, drive to the south end of the park and turn left into the large parking lot. The interpretive kiosk is near the curb on the right side of the lot.

*This tour continues along northbound I-5 to the Manzanita Rest Area, 25 miles ahead. However, the historic route of the Applegate Trail runs along the south side of the Rogue River, about where OR-99 is today.*

Visitors who would like to drive that route and then return to the freeway, enter southbound I-5 and cross back over the river, then take Exit 43 toward Gold Hill. At the end of the ramp turn left, cross over the freeway to the river, and turn left onto OR-99. In 1.7 miles after turning onto OR-99, directly across the river from Valley of the Rogue State Park, watch for a bridge over Birdseye Creek. Immediately ahead on the left is the David Birdseye House, a replica of an 1856 log house that was used as a fort during the Rogue River Wars. (The original burned down in 1990.) A Daughters of the American Revolution monument and a rail marker are just to the right of the driveway. Continue along the highway through the town of Rogue River to Grants Pass and follow the signs to rejoin northbound I-5. Continue on the freeway to Manzanita Rest Area.

*Manzanita Rest Area wayside exhibits.*

**C-10. Manzanita Rest Area.** Three upright exhibits at the parking area tell the story of Indian tribes, emigrants, and miners during Oregon Territory settlement and the ensuing Rogue River Wars.

**Directions:** Take the first northbound rest area exit, about 4 miles beyond Grants Pass.

**C-11. Applegate Wagon Trail Interpretive Center (500 Sunny Valley Loop, Wolf Creek, OR) [GPS 42.63391 -123.37754].** This privately operated, local museum offers exhibits, films, sounds of the trail, a well-stocked bookstore, and knowledgeable guides with a provocative interpretation of the origin and purpose of the Applegate Trail. Hours vary seasonally, usually opens mid-morning. Closed winters. Modest admission charged. Call 541-479-

*Wagons at Applegate Wagon Trail Center.*

0253 or 541-291-1225 or visit www.rogueweb.com/interpretive/ for information, or just stop in.

**Directions:** From northbound I-5 take Exit 71 to Sunny Valley. At the end of the ramp turn left onto Sunny Valley Loop, following the brown Applegate Trail signs. Watch for covered wagons, which indicate the center's entrance on the right.

**C-12. Martha Crowley Grave (Sunny Valley Loop, Sunny Valley) [GPS 42.63696 -123.37731].** In 1846, teenager Martha Crowley died in her parents' wagon and was buried the next morning north of the stream now called Grave Creek. Today her roadside resting place is lovingly tended.

*Martha Crowley Grave.*

**Directions:** From the trail center, turn right onto Sunny Valley Loop Road. Park in the gravel lot on the left to and walk toward the bridge, where you can read about Martha, the Rogue River War, and other aspects of the area's history. Then cross the one-lane bridge. The well-marked grave is ahead on the right, between the pavement and the fence.

*Return to northbound I-5.*

**Also of Interest: Wolf Creek Inn State Heritage Site (100 Front Street, Wolf Creek, OR) [GPS 42.69514 -122.39594].** This historic hotel was built long after the passage of the first immigrants on the Applegate Trail, but it served later travelers along the busy California-Oregon Stage Road. Today it is a state park and an operating inn, with rooms and dining available for today's travelers. Visitors can stop in and look around at no charge, and interpretive wayside exhibits outside tell about the trail through this area. Call 541-866-2474 or check www.wolfcreekinn.com for hours and other information.

**Directions:** From northbound I-5, take Exit 76 to Wolf Creek. At the end of the ramp, turn left and cross under the freeway. Turn right onto Old Highway 99 and drive about 0.3 mile. Wolf Creek Inn is on the left at the edge of town.


*Wolf Creek Inn.*

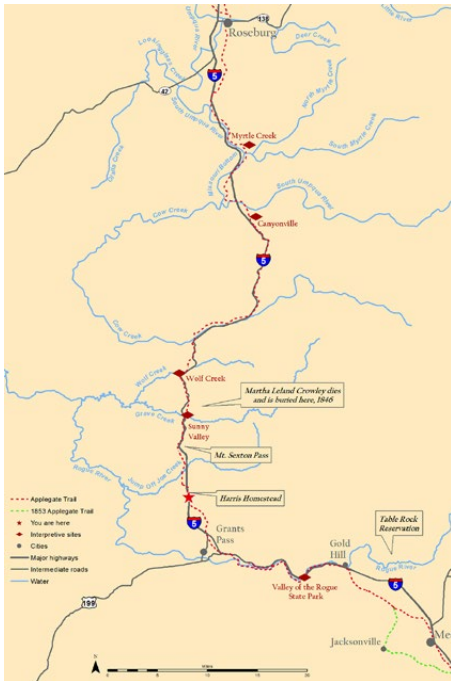
Ahead lies the "Dreaded Kanyon" of Canyon Creek, also known as Umpqua Canyon. The 1846 immigrants, discouraged and half-starved, camped for several days near the future town site of Azalea while some of the men roughed out a 12-mile wagon trail up the mountain, over Canyon Creek Pass, and down Canyon Creek gorge to the South Umpqua Valley. In about 15 minutes, today's travelers on I-5 can drive—safe, dry, and warm—a 12-mile passage that took the 1846 pioneers up to a week to negotiate. Today I-5 is the only highway through the canyon, but there are driving options along the approach to Azalea.

Before departing Wolf Creek, choose one of the following:

*To continue directly via the interstate highway, turn left from Wolf Creek Inn onto Old Highway 99, cross under the freeway and enter the northbound lanes of I-5. Drive past Azalea to Exit 95 and continue as directed in entry C-13.*

**— OR —**

*For a leisurely drive that more closely approximates the original Applegate Trail route to Azalea, turn left from Wolf Creek Inn onto Old Highway 99, cross under the freeway, and enter the northbound lanes of I-5. Take Exit 80 toward Glendale and cross beneath the freeway. At the next intersection, which is controlled*




*Route through Canyon Creek Canyon.*

*by a stop sign and a blinking light, continue straight onto Junction Road. In 0.5 mile the road splits: bear right (east) toward Azalea and merge onto Azalea Glen Road. This road winds through the countryside to rejoin I-5 about 7 miles ahead. From there, continue to Exit 95 and follow directions for entry C-13.*

*Canyon Creek Historical Turnout.*

**C-13. Canyon Creek State Historical Turnout (Canyon Creek Road, off I-5 near Canyon Creek, OR) [GPS 42.89827 -123.24769].** Here is an opportunity to pull off the freeway and look around the canyon at your leisure. A state historical sign explores more of the gorge's history as a travel corridor. There are no facilities at this turnout.

**Directions:** Take Exit 95 and turn left (north) onto the frontage road. Drive 0.7 mile and turn into the pullout on the right. After your visit, continue northbound along the frontage road, which re-enters I-5 just ahead.

**C-14. Pioneer-Indian Museum (421 SW 5th Street, Canyonville, OR) [GPS 42.92406 -123.28021].** Exhibits here highlight the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Indians and include displays of artifacts used by European Americans who settled in the South Umpqua Valley in the 19th century. Outside is an Umpqua cedar house a garden of medicinal and food plants, a wheelwright shop, and a blacksmith shop and wagons. Agricultural equipment and old vehicles are also on display. Free. Closed mid-Dec.–mid-Feb. For hours, call 541-839-4845.

**Directions:** From I-5, take Exit 98 at Canyonville and turn left to pass beneath the freeway. Bear right at the split, then immediately turn left onto 5th Street. Turn left to museum parking.

*To rejoin the freeway and skip to stop C-19, turn right out of the museum driveway, cross under the freeway, and turn left on the frontage road, which becomes the ramp to northbound I-5. Otherwise, proceed to stop C-15.*

**C-15. Canyon Creek View (Main Street, Canyonville) [GPS 42.92492 -123.27710].** Wagons descended Canyon Creek in single file, hemmed in by steep terrain, big trees, and a snarl of underbrush that gripped the stream banks. When one wagon broke down, those behind had to wait until the wreckage was cleared, because passing was impossible. From the bridge in Canyonville, look up the creek and imagine wrestling a covered wagon down that streambed while ill, weak with hunger, and waist-deep in icy water.

**Directions:** From the museum, turn right out of the driveway, cross back under the freeway, and turn left onto the frontage road. Almost immediately, turn right onto SW 5th Street. Turn right (south) at the stop sign to enter Main Street, and park in a diagonal public parking space near the end of the block before crossing the bridge. Walk onto the bridge over Canyon Creek and look upstream.

**C-16. Pioneer Park (421 SW 5th Street, Canyonville) [GPS 42.92593 -123.27666].** Near here, the Applegate Trail emerged from Canyon Creek into the meadows of South Umpqua Valley. Some of the 1846 immigrants stopped to repair their wagons and rest their suffering oxen—those that still survived. Now the members of the wagon train, wrote immigrant Jesse Quinn Thornton, were like a "defeated and retreating army," struggling forward individually or in small groups, some with wagons and others packing their belongings on mules, oxen, and cows. Wayside exhibits here tell of pioneer experience and of the impacts of white settlers on the Cow Creek Indian people who lived here. Free. Picnicking and restroom facilities are available at the park.

**Directions:** From the bridge over Canyon Creek, safely turn around and return to the intersection of Main and SW 5th Street. Turn right (east) onto 5th Street. An interpretive kiosk is located at the end of the block, and behind it flows Canyon Creek.

**C-17. Seven Feathers/Jordan Creek Rest Area and Information Center (Myrtle Creek, OR) [GPS 42.94276 -123.29358].** A state historical sign ("beaver board") is near the end of the parking lot, and an exhibit about the culture and history of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians can be found in the shelter near the restrooms.

**Directions:** From Pioneer Park, return to Main Street and turn right (northwest). Drive through town on Main, which approximates the route of the trail. In about a mile, just beyond the Cow Creek Band's Seven Feathers Casino Resort, the street turns to cross under the freeway. The road then curves right, passes a freeway exit ramp, and curves to the left. At the split ahead, bear right into the rest area.

*Return to northbound I-5. As the freeway leaves Canyonville, it crosses the South Umpqua River at the original Applegate Trail wagon ford. The trail forded the river twice more within the next mile and then wound along the base of the foothills to the east.*

*Applegate Trail swale at Myrtle Creek.*

**C-18. Myrtle Creek Ruts (Dole Rd., Myrtle Creek).** Here is an impressive segment of original Applegate Trail ruts that you can walk and explore on city-owned land. On the rock exposure at the parking area is a historical sign that describes the site's history; nearby, look for a brown T-marker made of railroad rail.

*Myrtle Creek Ruts.*

**Directions:** Take Exit 108 from northbound I-5. At the end of the exit turn right, crossing the river, and drive 0.2 miles to Dole Road, which enters from the left on a curve. Turn left on Dole, heading uphill, and drive 0.1 mile, passing NW B Street. As the road begins a gentle curve to the right, watch for another driveway/pullout area on the right, at the base of some exposed bedrock. Pull in there, taking care not to block the driveway. Follow the edge of the bedrock left toward the road and look ahead between the rock and the

road: the linear depression you see is an original remnant of the Applegate Trail.

*View from Myrtle Creek.*

*Continue northwesterly on Dole Road, which overlies the Applegate Trail along this stretch. In 4.6 miles Dole Road passes beneath I-5. About 0.1 mile beyond the underpass is the place where rescuer Thomas Holt found and camped with five struggling families, the very last of the 1846 Applegate immigration, before leading them to safety. Now follow the highway signs to enter northbound I-5 at interchange 112, just ahead. About a mile beyond exit 113, the river turns sharply west and the view on the left opens to well-named Round Prairie, an immigrant campground. Next the highway and trail alignment climb Roberts Mountain and continue toward Roseburg.*

**C-19. Douglas County Museum (123 Museum Drive, Roseburg, OR) [GPS 43.19413 -123.36113].** Exhibits here explore the natural and cultural history of this area, with particular focus on the Indian tribes of the region, their interactions with Oregon settlers and miners, and the Rogue River War of 1855-1856. This museum, which is certified by the National Park Service as a partner site on the California National Historic Trail, boasts the state's largest natural history and historical artifact collections, as well as extensive documentary and historic photo archives for researchers. Kids' programs for tour groups are available with advance arrangement. Moderate admission charged for adults; nominal entrance fee for students. For hours call 541-957-7007.

**Directions:** From I-5, take Exit 123 for the Douglas County Fairgrounds and Museum. At the end of the ramp, turn right (east) onto Portland Avenue. Take the first right onto Frear Street, following signs toward the fairgrounds and Umpqua Park and museum. Drive alongside the fairgrounds and turn right onto Museum Drive, which is marked with a green "Museum" sign, and continue to the museum.

At Roseburg the freeway continues north, but the historic Applegate Trail curves westerly, following the river. Your next auto tour stop depends on which one on you choose to follow.

*To follow the direct freeway route, re-enter northbound I-5 and follow directions to stop C-20.*

**— OR —**

*To approximately follow the Applegate Trail on a leisurely drive, re-enter I5 and take Exit 125 in central Roseburg. Turn right (east) onto Garden Valley Boulevard. Cross the railroad tracks and at the third traffic light, turn left (north) onto Old Highway 99/NE Stephens St. At the town of Sutherlin, turn right on Central Avenue and left at the next intersection to continue north on N. State Street/Hwy 99. Continue to Oakland, where the highway becomes Front Street. Stop C-20 is at the small park on the left as you enter town. Leave your vehicle there and explore the historic town.*

*Historic Oakland City Park.*

**C-20. Historic Oakland (Locust Street, Oakland, OR) [GPS 43.42167 -123.29938].** Oakland's charming historic district dates to the 1890s. However, decades before the town was established, several of the 1846 immigrant families overwintered in this vicinity. Interpretive signs at the town park recount the story, and the nearby Oakland Museum (free, open daily, afternoons only, just a short walk up Locust Street) explores the community's history.


*Historic Oakland, Oregon.*

**Directions:** From I-5, take Exit 138 and follow Stearns Lane 2 miles east through the countryside to town. Cross the railroad tracks and at the stop sign turn left onto Old Highway 99/1st Street. Park on the left side of the street in front

of the barn and explore the town. Historic signs are in the park near the barn.

*Oakland City Hall in Oakland, Oregon.*

**C-21. Cornwall Cabin Monument (Oakland-Shady Highway, Oakland, OR) [GPS 43.43499 -123.31023].** J. A. Cornwall lost eight yoke of oxen and his saddle horse to the difficult Canyon Creek passage. Now his family of eight would have to abandon their belongings and trudge through the mud to the Willamette Valley. But the Presbyterian minister disliked that option and (the story goes) could not bear to leave behind his beloved books—so he stopped near here and built a snug log cabin where his children and his library could spend the winter, dry and safe. The following April, friends in the valley sent out a wagon to carry the Cornwall family to the settlements. A roadside marker commemorates the cabin site, but the cabin itself is gone.

**Directions:** Continue north on Old Highway 99/1st Street out of Oakland and across the railroad tracks and Sutherlin Creek. Drive 1.1 miles. Where the lanes separate, a stone monument stands in the pullout on the right. After your visit, continue north; the highway merges onto northbound I-5.


*Jesse Applegate Homestead Claim.*

**C-22. Jesse Applegate Homestead Claim (Yoncalla, OR) [GPS 43.59467 -123.28830].** Jesse Applegate established a land claim at Yoncalla in 1849 and died here 40 years later. His grave is on a hillside on his claim.

**Directions:** Drive 11 miles from stop C-21 and take Exit 150. Enter Old Highway 99/Long John Road, which crosses the freeway and becomes Eagle Valley Road, and drive north through Yoncalla. (This is the route of the Oregon Territorial

Highway, built in 1851 for commercial and military traffic.) Continue north from Yoncalla for about 2 miles and look on the left for a "beaver board" sign about Jesse Applegate. After your visit, turn around and drive south on Eagle Valley Road/OR-99 toward Yoncalla.

**C-23. Charles and Melinda Applegate Pioneer House (Old Applegate Road, Yoncalla, OR) [43.61061 -123.27224].** This beautifully maintained, Classical Revival-style home has remained in family ownership since it was built between 1852 and 1856 by Charles (Jesse and Lindsay's older brother) and Melinda Applegate. The home, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a private residence and is not usually open to the public, but it can be viewed from the nearby road, where there is a small turnout with a sign that tells of its history.

**Directions:** From the Jesse Applegate beaver board, drive 2 miles back toward Yoncalla and turn left at the commercial storage facility onto Halo Trail (which may appear as Dougherty Road on some GPS units). In about 0.5 mile, take the first left to enter Old Applegate Road. Follow it 0.4 mile to the end of the pavement. The turnout is on the left. Please view from the road; do not trespass or disturb the residents.

*Charles & Melinda Applegate Pioneer House.*

*From the Applegate House, return down Halo Trail, turn right on Eagle Valley Road, then and turn left (south) on Old Highway 99 through Yoncalla. After crossing Main Street, take the next left and drive east on Elkhead Road. Follow it 3.3 miles to I-5. Cross beneath the freeway and follow signs to northbound I-5.*

This is Scotts Valley, named for Levi Scott, who stuck with the immigrants through their long ordeal, and for his sons, John and William. Each took a claim in this area. The 1846 immigrants crossed the valley and then cleared a wagon trail, in mud and

snow, over the Calapooya Mountains to the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

*Applegate Pioneer House in 1934. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

**C-24. Veteran Park (Main Street and River Road, Cottage Grove, OR) [GPS 43.79757 -123.06467].** Having crossed the Calapooya Mountains, the famished immigrants at last entered the Willamette Valley and were soon met by relief wagons carrying provisions. Now, instead of scouting and cutting their own track, they could follow a trail to the settlements. A series of five wayside exhibits explains how the Applegate Trail has evolved since 1846.

**Directions:** In about 20 miles, take I-5 Exit 174 toward Cottage Grove. At the next intersection bear right and continue on E. Cottage Grove toward the city center. The street curves south and merges with OR-99; continue following signs to city center. At the traffic signal turn right onto Woodson, following the Applegate Trail sign. After crossing the Woodson Bridge, turn left (southwest) onto North River Road. Drive 0.5 mile along the Coast Fork Willamette River. Veteran Park is on the left at North River Road and Main Street. Parking is available in the residential neighborhood, along Main Street, or across Main Street on South River Road. The wayside exhibits are along the river next to the Centennial covered footbridge.

*Over the final 95 miles of the tour there are only four stops: a replica cabin and city viewpoint at Eugene; a wayside exhibit south of Dallas; a sign marking the end of the Applegate Trail at Dallas; and a county historical museum at Dallas.*

*To return to northbound I-5, turn around where permitted and retrace your route back to northbound I-5.*

**C-25. Skinner's Replica Cabin and Skinner Butte Viewpoint (Skinner Butte Park, Eugene, OR) [GPS 44.05792 -123.09236].** When immigrants arrived in 1846, Eugene Skinner's cabin was the first residential cabin they had seen in nearly 2,000 miles. A wayside exhibit tells the story. Restrooms, picnicking, playgrounds. Free.

**Directions:** At Eugene, take I-5 Exit 194B to OR-126/I-105 West, toward Eugene. The roadway loops and crosses over I-5, heading west. Then take Exit 2 and bear left at the split, toward the University of Oregon. The road becomes S. Coburn Road, which continues past Autzen Stadium and crosses the Willamette River. Immediately after crossing the river, keep right onto E. 3rd Avenue. At the second stop sign, turn right (north) onto High Street. In about 0.4 mile High Street curves left and becomes Cheshire Avenue. Continue 0.5 mile to a replica of the Skinner Cabin, at the crosswalk and on the right.

**Also of Interest: Willamette Valley View.** A viewpoint at the top of Skinner Butte provides a panaramic overview of Willamette Valley.

**Directions:** After your visit, turn around, drive past the buildings on your right, and turn right onto Skinners Butte Loop, a narrow, paved lane. Follow the road all the way to the top of the butte for views of the Willamette Valley.

*Skinner's Replica Cabin.*

**Directions** to Stop C-26

- **Part 1: Lincoln Street to Junction City.**
  *After your visit, turn around and start back down. About halfway down on the right is a parking lot with a trailhead and step. Make a hairpin turn left onto Lincoln Street and drive south. After crossing the railroad tracks, drive 3 blocks to W 5th Street. Turn left, drive one block, and turn right onto Charnelton Street. At the stoplight, turn right (west) onto 6th Street/* OR-99. *Just ahead, the highway splits: keep to the left lanes, continuing straight on* OR-99. *Drive 14.5 miles to Junction City.*

- **Part 2: Junction City to Adair Village.**
  *North of Junction City is a major, traffic light-controlled intersection: turn left (north) toward Corvallis on OR-99W. Continue about 25 miles, passing through Monroe to Corvallis, and continue north on OR-99/NW 3rd St/Pacific Highway West through Adair Village.*

- **Part 3: Adair Village to Guthrie Park.**
  *At Adair Village, pass Vandenberg Avenue, then Arnold Avenue, and then turn left (west) on Tampico Road, which overlies the trail. In about 5.5 miles, Tampico becomes Berry Creek Road, which ends in about a mile at its intersection with Airlie Road. Turn left (northwest) and drive 11.4 miles through farmland to a stop sign at the intersection with OR-223/Kings Valley Highway. Turn right (northeast) onto OR-233/Kings Valley Highway toward Dallas and continue 3.6 miles to Guthrie Park.*

*View from the top of Skinner Butte.*

**C-26. Guthrie Park (south of Dallas, OR) [GPS 44.87160 -123.33841].** A wayside exhibit at this park, right on the Applegate Trail, tells the story of an 1846 immigrant and his sweetheart who died en route.

**Directions:** From OR-223/Kings Valley Highway, watch for a brown Applegate Trail Interpretive Center sign on the right just before Guthrie Road enters from the left. Turn right into Guthrie Park.

*Ahead is the end of the Applegate Trail.*

**C-27. End of the Applegate Trail (Dallas, OR)** Here stands a sign signifying the end of the Applegate Trail.

**Directions:** From Guthrie Park, continue north on OR-223 to Dallas. After crossing Clay Street, the road reaches a stop sign and curves sharply to the right. Drive three blocks and turn left at the traffic light onto SW Levens St. (The street is unsigned, but there is a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building

on the corner.) Drive 0.4 mile to SW Brandvold Drive (this street name might not appear on your GPS device—look for tennis courts on the left) and turn left, following the brown sign, into Dallas City Park. After entering the park, leave your vehicle by the tennis courts and walk south toward Rickreall Creek. Turn left and walk 100 feet east to the small historical sign on the left. The sign signifies the end of the trail.

*Dallas City Park. Courtesy Doug Kerr.*

**C-28. Polk County Historical Society Museum (560 S. Pacific Highway, Rickreall, OR)** To complete your Applegate Trail experience, drive 10 minutes more to visit Polk County Historical Society Museum at the county fairgrounds in nearby Rickreall, OR This museum holds an extensive research collection and artifacts related to the Applegate Trail and early settlement, including information about the home and land claim of Nathaniel Ford. Ford brought a family of three as slaves to Oregon in 1844 and refused to free them despite his promise to do so. They sued in 1853 and won their freedom and the restoration of their children. Nearby is an interpretive kiosk with information about the Kalapooya Indians whose homeland this is, and more. Modest admission charged. Call ahead for hours and other information at 503-623-6251.

**Directions:** Continue north on SW Levens Street to its junction with OR-223/Ellendale Road. Turn right (east), and drive approximately 3.5 miles. At the split, stay right to enter Rickreall Road. Continue east about 0.9 mile and turn south on US 99 W, then drive about a mile to Derry. Turn right (south) onto OR-99 W/S Pacific Highway. In about 0.2 mile, just after crossing over Rickreall Creek, look on the left for a historical pullout. The Museum is on the left, in the county fairgrounds, a short distance beyond the turnout.

This concludes the tour of the Applegate Trail route of the California National Historic Trail through Oregon.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**National Trails**
ntir_information@nps.gov

**California NHT**
www.nps.gov/cali
www.facebook.com/CaliforniaTrailNPS

**Oregon NHT**
www.nps.gov/oreg
www.facebook.com/OregonTrailNPS

**Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA)**
octa-trails.org

**Northwest OCTA Chapter**
octa-trails.org/regional-chapters/northwest-chapter/

**Oregon Tourism**
traveloregon.com/

## CREDITS

**Research & Text:** Lee Kreutzer, Cultural Resources Specialist, National Trails.

**Layout, Graphics, & Design:** National Trails Interpretive Specialists

**Graphic Images:** All photo images used throughout this document are National Park Service except for the following: pages iv &34 - The Met Collection; pages vi, 57 & 97 - The Bureau of Land Management; pages 2, 8, 22, 63 & 104 - University of Oregon Libraries Special Collections; page 18 - Paul Kane 1850 Wikimedia; pages 26 & 39 - The Columbia River Narrative History; page 35 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; page 49 - Salem Public Library Historic Photo Collection; page 50 - Wikimedia Commons; pages 58 & 60 - Oregon State Historical Society; page 67 - R. Washburne; page 81 - C. Nowak; pages 104, 113, 115-122, 124-126, 128-129, 131, 134-136 - Stafford Hazelett; pages 130 & 132 - Henry Pittock; page 138 - Douglass Halvorsen from HMDB.org, pages 146, 151 & 155 - Leta Neiderheiser; pages - 153, 155 & 157 - Visitor7 from Wikimedia; page 154 - Ian Poellet from Wikimedia; page 156 - the Library of Congress; page 158 - Lauram12345.

INSTRUCTIONS ONLY!

This space is for a small pocket and a folded map. The pocket is to be glued to the inside back cover in this location. The map is to be folded to fit within this pocket with approximately 1/2 inch of it extending above the opening of the pocket.

National Trails System
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION