

The Oregon Trail



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The Oregon Trail is a 2,200-mile historic east-west large wheeled wagon route and emigrant trail that connected the Missouri River to valleys in Oregon. The trail began as a footpath of the Indians and was later used by explorers, fur trappers and missionaries. Between 1841 - 1869 at least 350,000 people emigrated along the trail. The first significant wagon train of families moving west was in 1841 with just 32 people. 1843 was known as the Great Migration.

Fort Laramie



6 Forts Along the Oregon Trail

Six forts along the Oregon Trail are Fort Boise, Fort Laramie, Fort Walla Walla, Fort Kearny, Fort Bridger and Fort Hall. The forts were considered an oasis in the wilderness because of the hospitality provided, rest for weary travelers was possible and because the pioneers could replenish their supplies.



Fatal Diseases Along The Oregon Trail

There were many other things that the pioneers faced along the trail and one of them was the various fatal diseases that could strike any member of the wagon train. The fatal diseases were small pox, cholera, dysentery, mountain fever and typhoid.

Sacajawea

Sacajawea was a Shoshone Indian woman who married a French trapper, Toussaint Charbonneau. Carrying her small baby, Sacajawea accompanied Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Northwest. She was valuable as an interpreter and in making arrangements with the Shoshone people, whose country lay along the expedition's route. She died of a fever at Fort Manual in South Dakota in 1812. Some claim she lived until 1884.



Meriwether Lewis

Meriwether Lewis was co-commander of the first government-sponsored expedition that went all the way to the Pacific by an overland route. A former army officer, he was private secretary to President Thomas Jefferson from 1801 to 1803. By the end of the Louisiana Purchase, he had already made plans for the expedition. Soon after his triumphant return, he was appointed governor of the Louisiana Territory.



William Clark

William Clark, the brother of George Rogers Clark, was one of the captains of the Lewis and Clark expedition. He took on the responsibility for mapping the land they traveled. He also was in charge of maintaining military discipline. After their return, he arranged for publication of the records of their journey. In 1807 he was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs and helped shape the federal government's policy in the West. He was known as the "red haired" chief among the Indians.

