

Independence, Missouri to Oregon City, Oregon

Independence Landing, Missouri



Many pioneers arrived by boat at Independence Landing on the Missouri River and began gathering supplies for their journey in the town of Independence, Missouri.

Jim Bridger's Grave, Independence, Missouri



Famous mountain man, James "Jim" Bridger, or "Old Gabe" as some called him, was a great explorer and fur trapper of the west. He founded
Ft. Bridger in southwestern Wyoming in 1843 to help pioneers on their journey. He could speak English,
French, Spanish, and could track any trail. However, he could not read or

write a word of any language. Bridger had once been shot in the back with two Indian arrows. One arrow was removed years later by Dr. Marcus Whitman.

Kansas Parks





Many towns have put up artwork, statues, or historical markers to commemorate the pioneers' journey West.

Scott Spring, Kansas



Some wagon swales (ground depressions) were visible at this park beside Scott Spring.



Pionger's Grave, Kansas



"Here lies an early traveler, N.G. Lust. His life in quest of riches in the west."

Alcove Spring - Blue Rapids, Kansas



Alcove Spring has never dried up, even in the most severe Kansas droughts.

Alcove Spring - Blue Rapids, Kansas



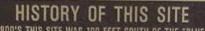
A pioneer scratched "Alcove Spring" into a large rock. Other names and dates are seen on nearby rocks.

Sarah Keyes Grave - Alcove Spring, Kansas



This is the grave of Sarah Keyes, the first member of the Donner party to die along the journey in 1846. Most of her party later froze to death in the Sierra Mountains of California later that winter.

Rope Ferry replica, Kansas



IN THE 1800'S THIS SITE WAS 100 FEET SOUTH OF THE "BLUE EARTH" OR BIG BLUE RIVER. THE RIVER FLOWED ONE QUARTER MILE SOUTHEAST OF HERE BEFORE LOOPING BACK WEST. THIS HORSESHOE SHAPED CHANNEL WAS CUT OFF IN THE 1930'S WHEN A NEW HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE WERE BUILT.

IN 1851 FRANCIS J. MARSHALL BUILT A GROUP OF CABINS NEAR HIS HOMESITE ON A KNOLL 700 FEET NORTHEAST OF HERE. HIS GENERAL STORE WAS AN INDIAN TRADING POST AND THE FIRST CIVILIAN POST OFFICE IN KANSAS TERRITORY. HE BUILT A BLACKSMITH SHOP, STABLES AND CORRALS. THE CITY OF MARYSVILLE GREW FROM THIS BEGINNING NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF MANY HISTORIC TRAILS.

TRAIL TRAFFIC OFTEN CROSSED A LOW WATER FORD NORTH OF THIS PARK BRINGING WESTBOUND TRAVELLERS THROUGH THIS VERY SPOT ON THE SOUTH BANK OF THE RIVER. MARSHALL'S ROPE FERRY OPERATED FURTHER UP RIVER. OFTEN HUNDREDS OF WAGONS WITH THOUSANDS OF PIDNEERS CAMPED FOR DAYS WAITING THEIR TURN TO CROSS. PIONEER DEATH FROM ILLNESS WAS COMMON AND DIARIES TELL OF MANY GRAVES NEAR THE CROSSINGS.

Ft. Kearny, Nebraska





The interior of Ft. Kearny (CAR-nee) and a replica Blacksmith Shop and wagons.

Ft. Kearny, Nebraska



Ft. Kearny's "Powder Magazine" was built into a hill. Ammunition and weapons were stored here.



Sod House – near Ogallala, Nebraska



A signed warned visitors to close the wagon wheel gate or nearby cows could get in and rub on the sod house, knocking it down. WINDLASS HILL PIONEER HOMESTEAD The stones surrounding this marker are the remains of the homestead dwelling of Reverend Dennis B Clary, a pioneer Methodist Minister, who received final patent for his homestead May 22, 1899. Mr. Clary was born September 1st, 1822, in Maryland and immigrated to Nebraska in 1865. Using a base down mark followed from youtbolk met middle

MARKER

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received final patent for his homesteau May 22, 1899. Mr. Clary was born September 1st, 1822, in Maryland and immigrated to Nebraska in 1885. Using a horse drawn cart fashioned from available materials, he hauled stone to this site for a two room house. For years this was a land mark in Ash Hollow and marked the location of Windlass Hill. It was a popular stopping place for settlers traveling from the North Platte Valley area to the railroad at Big Springs, some twenty miles to the south.

The wagon road used at that time is still visible nearby. The Oregon Trail passed here, and the area surrounding the house was used by early travelers to repair damages caused by the hazardous trip down Windlass fill

This site was used July 29-30, 1967, as the stage setting for the "Ash Hollow Centenniah Pageant" when a nearby sod house was reconstructed. Funds from this successful historical event provided this Marker.

Nebraska State Eleterical Society

Windlass Hill, Nebraska



"I cannot say at what angle we descend, but it is so great that some go so far as to say, 'the road hangs a little past the perpendicular."" Here, covered wagon travelers faced the most difficult terrain since their departure from Missouri. One man said:



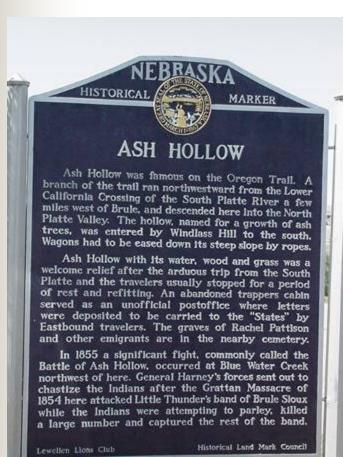
Orggon Trail Ruts on Windlass Hill







Ash Hollow, Nebraska



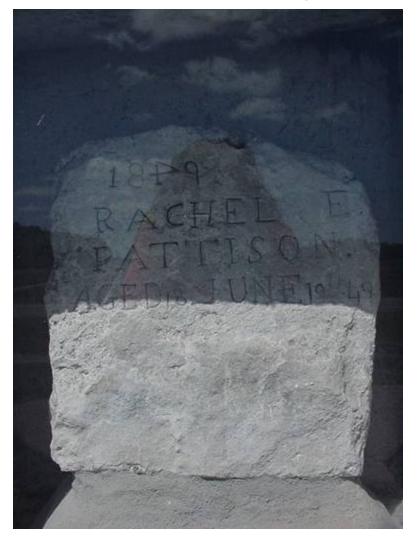
A nice resting spot for tired travelers after descending Windlass Hill.



Pionzer Grave – Ash Hollow Cemetery



Nathan Pattison, 23, and Rachel Pattison, 18, had only been married 2 months when Nathan wrote in his journal, "Rachel taken sick in the morning, died in the night." She died of cholera. Nathan never remarried and died at 67 years old.



Courthouse and Jail Rocks, Nebraska





COURTHOUSE AND JAIL ROCKS

HISTORICAL

MARKER

Courthouse and Jail Rocks are two of the most famous landmarks of westward migration. Nearby passed the Oregon-California Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Pony Express Trail, and the Sidney-Deadwood Trail. The rocks were vanguards of unforgettable scenic wonders that travelers would encounter farther west. including Chimney Rock's curious spire and the rugged heights of Scott's Bluffs.

Hundreds of overland emigrants mentioned Courthouse Rock in their diaries. Often called a "castle" or "solitary tower," the name Courthouse was first used in 1837. One 1845 traveler described the rock as "resembling the ruins of an old castle (which) rises abruptly from the plain.... It is difficult to look upon it and not believe that art had something to do with its construction. The voyagers have called it the Courthouse: but it looks infinitely more like the Capitol."

Courthouse and Jail Rocks, rising some 400 feet above the North Platte Valley, are erosional remnants composed of clay, sandstone, and volcanic ash. The rocks are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in the Nebraska Natural Areas Register.

Nebracka State Historical Society

Chimney Rock, Nebraska



The chimney is eroding over time. Several feet were knocked off the top by lightning in 1995.

CHIMNEY ROCK

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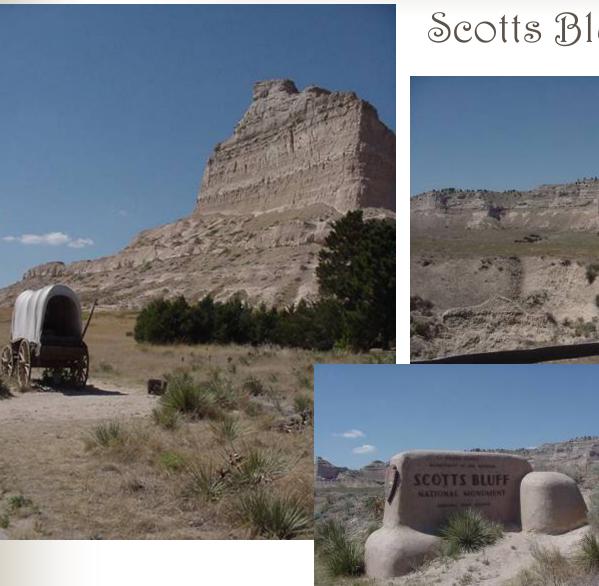
Rising 470 feet above the North Platte River Valley. Chimney Rock stands to the south as the most celebrated of all natural formations along the overland routes to California. Oregon, and Utah. Chimney Rock served as an early landmark for fur traders, trappers, and mountain men as they made their way from the Rockies to the Missouri River. To later emigrants, the solitary spire marked the end of plains travel and the beginning of the rugged mountain portion of their journey.

The tip of the formation is 325 feet above the base. Chimney Rock is composed of Brule Clay with interlayers of volcanic ash and Arickaree sandstone. Thousands of travelers carved their names in the soft base only to have these records disappear through the forces of nature. This eroded landmark is smaller than that which greeted early visitors to the area, but its presence for the generations of the near future is secure.

In 1941 the eighty acres containing the site were transferred to the Nebraska State Historical Society by the Roszel F. Durnal family. In 1956 Norman and Donna Brown deeded additional land to the Society. In that same year Chimney Rock was designated a National Historic Site by the federal government.

Nebrasha State Historical Society





Scotts Bluff, Nøbraska



Scotts Bluff, Nebraska

Views from the summit of Scotts Bluff – named in memory of Hiram Scott, employee of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.





Scott was deserted by his companions and left to die in 1828. His bleached bones were found a year later. He had crawled 60 miles before dying.

Fort Laramie, Wyoming



"Old Bedlam," the oldest military building in Wyoming, was built in 1849 and later restored. It housed unmarried officers who were stationed at Fort Laramie to protect the emigrants.

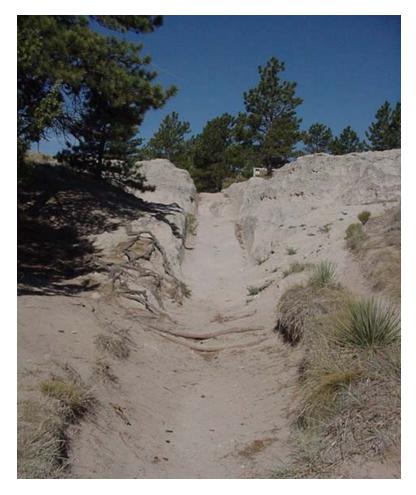
These ruins are the cavalry quarters for the soldiers who patrolled by horseback. Fort Laramie began as a log fort in 1834, built by William Sublette. It then became a fur trading post in 1836 until the army took over in the 1840s.



Deep Rut Hill - Guernsey, Wyoming



These wagon ruts were formed when wagons followed single file through this area, wearing away the soft rock.



Register Cliff - Guernsey, Wyoming

Many pioneers carved their names on Register Cliff as they passed by.

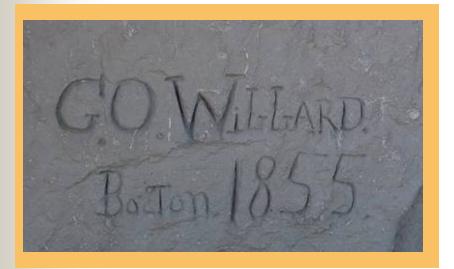


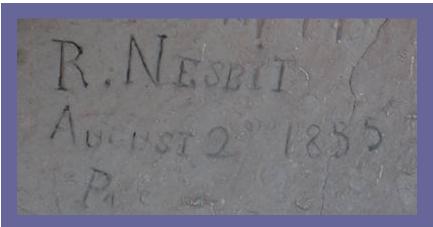
The swallows had built mud nests in the cracks of the cliff. There were many insects buzzing around for them to eat.

Signatures on Register Cliff

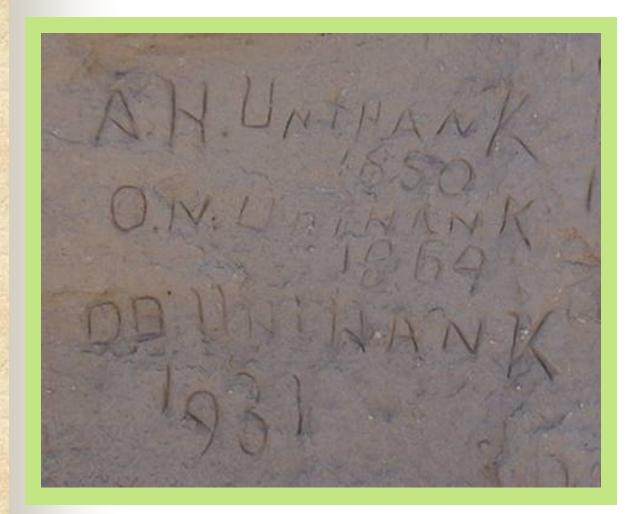








Signatures on Register Cliff



Three generations of the Unthank family passed by the cliff. A.H. Unthank is buried 50 miles down the trail where he died of cholera.

Independence Rock, Wyoming

Independence Rock was usually reached around the 4th of July. Emigrants would picnic, celebrate, and carve their names here. The rock takes up over 24 acres of land!

INDEPENDENCE ROCK

Thousands who traveled the Oregon Trail in central Wyoming were unaware that they were the beneficiaries of a long series of geological events. The granite peaks around you are mountains that rose, sank and then were buried in sand and ashy sediments. Erosion exposed their summits and created the Sweetwater Valley, part of an east-west passageway through the Rockies. The route was used by game animals. Native Americans and fur trappers, followed at mid-century by wagon train and handcart emigrants, stagecoach passenger and Pony Express riders. For some this was the halfway point in a 2000-mile trek from the Missouri River to the west Coast. Arriving here early in July, emigrants celebrated Independence Day. In July, 1841, desuit missionary Pierre dean De Smet wrote of this granite landmark: "The first rock which we saw, and which truly deserves the name, was the famous independence Rock. It is of the same nature as the Rocky Mountains. At first I was led to believe that it had received this pompous name from its isolated situation and the solidity of its base; but I was afterward told that it was called so because the first travelers who thought of glving it a name arrived at it on the very day when the people of the United States celebrate the anniversary of their emancipation from Great Britain. Lest It might be save duat that we passed this lofty monument of the desert with indifference, we cut our names on the south side of the rock under initials (I.H.S.) which we would wish to see engraved everywhere, and along with a great number of others, some of which perhaps ought not be found anywhere. On account of all these names, and of the dates that accompany them, as well as of the hieroglyphics of Indian warriors. I called this rock on my first journey 'The Great Record of the Desert."

Independence Rock, Wyoming

William Sublette named Independence Rock on July 4, 1830.

> Nicknamed "The Register of the Desert."

State Passs And

Ezra Meeker traveled the Oregon Trail as a child, then returned as an adult to help save the trail. He carved and painted the words above, "Old Oregon Trail."

Devil's Gate, Wyoming



The Sweetwater River cut this path through the rock at Devil's Gate.

The "gate" is 400 feet wide at the top, but only 30 feet wide at the bottom.



Split Rock, Wyoming



Split Rock is named for the notch at the top that resembles a gun sight. SPLIT ROCK A FAMOUS NATURAL LANDMARK USED BY INDIANS, TRAPPERS, AND EMIGRANTS ON THE OREGON TRAIL. SITE OF SPLIT ROCK PONY EXPRESS 1860–1861, STAØE, AND TELEGRAPH STATION IS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE SWEETWATER. SPLIT ROCK CAN BE SEEN AS A CLEFT IN THE TOP OF THE RATTLESNAKE RANGE

The Continental Divide





This sign told about South Pass, where pioneers were able to easily cross the Continental Divide.

SOUTH PASS

The South Pass, in which you are now located, is perhaps the most significant transportation gateway through the Rocky Mountains. Indians, mountain men. Oregon Trail emigrants. Pony Express riders, and miners all recognized the value of this passageway straddling the Continental Divide. Bounded by the Wind River Range on the north and the Antelope Hills on the south, the pass offered overland travelers a broad, relatively level corridor between the Atlantic and Pacific watersheds.

Mining plays a fundamental role in the history of the South Pass region. Gold may have been discovered as early as 1842, but gold fever did not strike until 1867 when a sample of South Pass ore arrived in Salt Lake City. News of the discovery spread swiftly and hordes of expectant millionaires descended on the new towns of South Pass City. Atlantic City, and Miner's Delight. The boom played out quickly. The easily obtained placer gold was rapidly exhausted and miners began leaving the area in the early 1870s.

Despite the brief duration of the boom, mining activity did not cease. In 1884, an enterprising Frenchman named Emile Granier began organizing the construction of a hydraulic gold mining system which employed many local residents over a ten year period. The Fisher Dredge Company recovered considerable gold ore from the bed of Rock Creek during the 1930s. More recently, the United States Steel iron ore mine operated near Atlantic City from the early 1960s until 1983. Hard rock mines also reopen periodically and some are presently operating. Until the next boom arrives, travelers can experience the flavor of a Rocky Mountain mining town by visiting nearby South Pass City, which has been restored by the State of Wyoming.

Many pronghorn antelope can be seen in Wyoming.

Parting of the Ways, Wyoming



This marker tells of the "Parting of the Ways," where travelers chose to go to California or Oregon. Some say that those who could read, went right to Oregon. Those who could not, went left to California.



Fort Bridger, Wyoming



In 1843, mountain man Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez established Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. This model shows what it looked like back then. It had a small blacksmith shop and other supplies they sold at high prices.

Fort Bridger, Wyoming

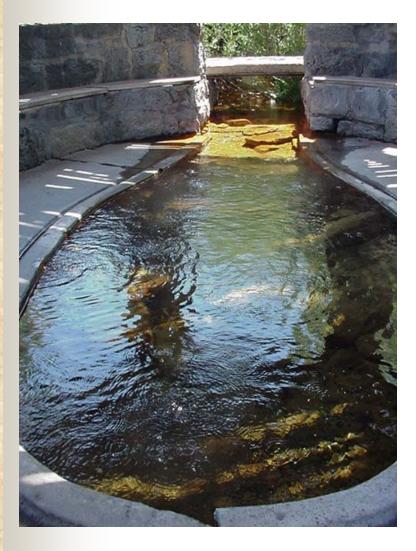




This replica shows Fort Bridger today. Bridger sold it to the Mormons in 1858. The military took over the fort from 1858-1890.



Soda Springs, Idaho



Hooper Spring (left) and Octagon Spring (below) are two springs that bubble with naturally carbonated water from the ground. Pioneers enjoyed a tasty drink by sweetening it with sugar!



Fort Hall, Idaho







Ft. Hall along the Snake River was a welcome sight to many travelers.

Fort Hall, Idaho





Just outside Ft. Hall is a small zoo of animals. Pioneers would have seen wild buffalo, elk, and deer in that area during the time of the Oregon Trail journeys.



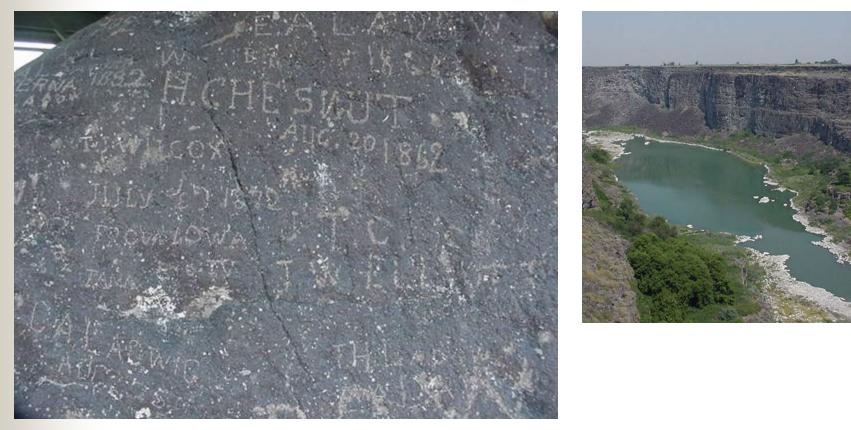
Massacre Rocks, Idaho





In 1862, a band of Shoshone Indians resisted the wagon train traffic though their territory and killed several pioneers. Future emigrants regarded this small canyon along the Snake River as their most dangerous exposure to Indians. They named it Massacre Rocks.

Register Rock, Idaho



Register Rock, near the Snake River canyon, was one more place for pioneers to carve their names into rocks.

Near Register Rock



When his wagon train passed by around 1866, 7 year old J.J. Hansen carved a preacher and an Indian on this rock. In Oregon, he became a sculptor when he grew up. Hansen returned in 1906 to sign and date his carving again.

Three Island Crossing Glenns Ferry, Idaho



You can still see the wagon ruts where the pioneers came down to the Snake River to cross. Three small islands in the river provided a safer crossing. To stay on the south side of the river was a harder route for travelers.

Three Island Crossing

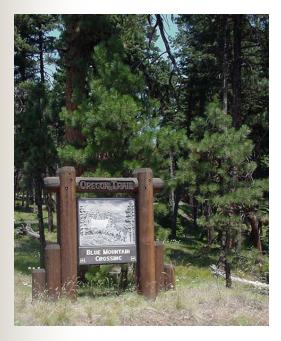






These oxen, horses, and wagon teams were practicing for a yearly reenactment of the pioneers fording the river at Three Island Crossing. Even today, river crossings can be dangerous.

Blue Mountain Crossing, Oregon









The wooded Blue Mountains were the last mountain crossing pioneers had to endure. You can still see a wagon swale (above right) from the Oregon Trail.

By Land or By Water?

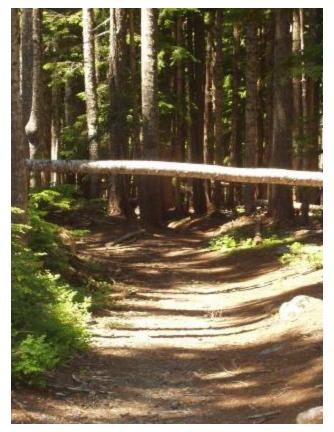


Soon, pioneers had to make a choice. Continue overland and go around Mt. Hood on the difficult Barlow Road, or raft down the dangerous Columbia River with all of their belongings.

Barlow Road



About two out of three pioneer families trying to reach Oregon City chose to take the Barlow Road, even though they had to pay a toll to travel it.



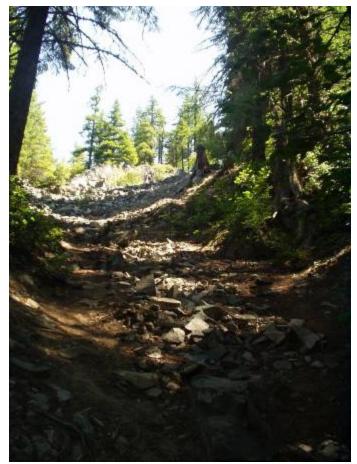


The toll was \$5 per wagon and 10¢ per animal.

Laurel Hill

The most difficult part of the Barlow Road was descending Laurel Hill.





The tree stump in the center-right is probably what is left of a "snag" tree. Pioneers used to secure ropes to these trees like pulleys in order to lower the wagon down the hill slowly. This view only shows from the middle of the hill up to the top.

Rock Wall



This wall of rocks was made by emigrants after crossing the Salmon River. As they came out of the riverbed, they tossed the rocks aside so the path was clear for the oxen and wagon. These rocks gradually built up into a rock wall.

Graves of Barlow Road



Pioneer Woman's Grave

Baby Morgan's Grave





A grave marked with a wagon tongue.

A small pioneer cemetery.



West Tollgate



This is a replica of the last tollgate along the Barlow Road. The tollgate keeper would live in a house by the gate and collect the tolls as the wagons came by.

Foster Farm Near Oregon City



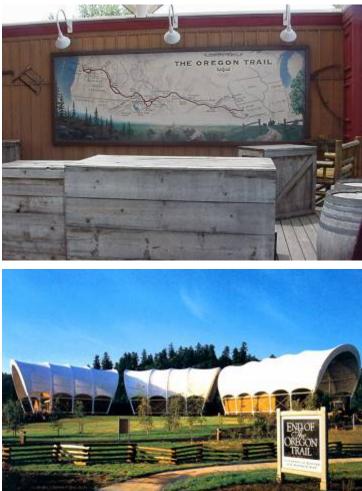
This lilac was brought to Oregon by Mrs. Foster when she and her husband sailed around Cape Horn to reach the northwest territory. The lilac has continued to grow since 1843. Phillip Foster was the first provisional governor of Oregon. He was a partner of Sam Barlow and helped fund and build the Barlow Road.



Orggon City, Orggon



A plaque in stone marks the official End of the Oregon Trail at Abernethy Green in Oregon City. These large covered wagons are 3 learning centers you can visit.







Maybe one day you, too, can explore the Oregon Trail!

The End

