The goal of this manual is to assist teacher and student to better understand the history of the Oregon/California Trail before your visit to The National Oregon/California Trail Center, especially as this information relates to Idaho's western heritage.
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Web Site Resources:
www.oregontrailcenter.org - The National Oregon/California Trail Center
www.bearlake.org - Bear Lake Convention & Visitor's Bureau (accommodations)
www.bearlakechamber.org - Greater Bear Lake Valley Chamber of Commerce
www.bearlakecounty.info - County of Bear Lake, Idaho
www.montpelieridaho.info - Montpelier, Idaho
bearlake.lili.org - Bear Lake County Library
**Clover Creek Encampment**
The Center actually sits on the very spot used as the historic Clover Creek Encampment. Travelers would camp overnight and sometimes for days resting their animals, stocking up on food and water, and preparing for the next leg of the journey. The main floor exhibit area re-creates the encampment and takes you back to experiencing what it was like in the 1800’s on the Oregon/California Trail. Come view the fantastic sunset, nature’s intriguing sounds, and the colorful stories that are exchanged surrounding the camp fire. This is an experience you will not soon forget!

**Allinger Community Theatre**
This wonderful 99 seat community theater is patterned after an 1860’s style theater and is the jewel of the Center. Films and presentations will be broadcast in the theater through incredible sight and sound. As part of the Center tour, a short film presentation reflects the Idaho portion of the Oregon/California Trail. The theater can also be used for community events and concerts.

**Oregon/California Trail Art Gallery**
The art gallery has been designed to reflect artistic reflections of the Oregon/California Trail. Currently, the Center features the original artwork of Idaho’s own Gary Stone. These 44 paintings and several wood carvings were commissioned by J.R. Simplot who also assisted in the publication of “Stone by Stone on the Oregon Trail”, a magnificent book available for sale at the Peg Leg’s Trading Post inside the Center.
Rails and Trails Museum
Located in the ground floor of the Center, this exciting museum portrays local Bear Lake history that intertwines with the Union Pacific railroad era and the pioneer westward expansion. The museum displays artifacts and exhibits sponsored by the Bear Lake Historical Society and the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Admission for the Rails and Trails Museum is free to the public.

Mercantile and Gun Shop
These exhibits represent places the pioneer heading west needed to visit. The mercantile provided the foodstuffs and supplies one needed for the long difficult journey. It was not easy to choose and pack all that was necessary into a small wagon or handcart. Firearms were a necessity in protecting the pioneers as well as hunting for food. The gun shop explains the important role of firearms in taming the west.

Oregon Trail Marker
Gracing the entrance of the Center is an intriguing landmark. Due to the Oregon Trail's importance to Montpelier, Idaho, Ezra Meeker placed a marker in the early 1900's to recognize the trail's place in the local history books. The marker was moved in front of the Center so that more visitor's could see this historic landmark.

Peg Leg's Trading Post
You just can't leave the Center without taking part of the Center with you! The gift shop offers the best in souvenirs that represent the Oregon/California Trail and the western way of life.
Located in the top of the Rocky Mountains is Rendezvous Country, Land of the Sky Blue Water. High mountains mirrored in the turquoise waters of Bear Lake and valleys, traversed by the meandering Bear River, provide a striking physical setting for a historical heritage boasting of cowboys, Indians, mountain men and hearty pioneers.

Native Americans prized the Bear Lake valley as prime hunting ground as well as a meeting place. It was during such a gathering in 1819 that Donald McKenzie first saw and named the area for the abundance of black bears. Black Bears Lake, quickly shortened to Bear Lake, was the site of two fur trader-trapper Rendezvous held during the summers of 1826 and 1827. Such notables as Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger, William Ashley and Tom Fitzgerald were in attendance. The south end of the valley was described as a "lighted city" at one of these gatherings where fur traders, Indians and suppliers met to trade for traps, supplies and furs.

Pathfinders John C. Fremont and Captain Bonneville wrote of their findings in the Bear Lake valley. Fremont was responsible for naming mountain peaks, canyons and streams in the area. The Preuss Mountain range was named after his topographer. Bonneville wrote of the huge marsh located north of Bear Lake.

The accounts of pathfinders and fur traders led Oregon-bound emigrants into the Bear Lake valley by way of the Thomas Fork valley. U.S. Highway #30 North basically follows the old Oregon/California Trail. Many wagon trains stopped at Thomas L. "Peg Leg" Smith's trading post located near Dingle, Idaho for supplies and to trade stock. One traveler wrote of camping along the cottonwood-lined Bear River watching grass, tall as a man, wave in the wind.

Charles C. Rich led Mormon pioneers into the Bear Lake valley in September of 1863 and established the fledgling community of Paris, Idaho. Other communities were quickly established within the next few years. Accounts are told of hearty pioneers struggling with the harsh and diverse climate. The valley soon prospered as a farming and ranching area. Montpelier, Idaho, growing from the coming of the railroad, phosphate mining and other elements, became increasingly important in the economy of the valley.

The small farming communities around Bear Lake are giving way to recreational development. Summer home sites dot the hillsides around the lake. Recreational developments promise vacations accented by the sparkling waters of Bear Lake. Skiing, snowmobiling, sailing and swimming are offered to the recreationist. Prime hunting and fishing areas are located within the "Greater Bear Lake Valley", whether its trout fishing in the streams, ice fishing for "Cisco", hunting deer or seeking elk along the high mountain ridges. This scenic corner of Idaho and Utah offers outdoor recreation and historical interests away from crowds and high prices.
FACT: The trail passed through the following present-day states: Missouri, 18 miles; Kansas, 173; Nebraska, 427; Wyoming, 489; Idaho, 510; Oregon, 549 miles.

- 1803 - President Thomas Jefferson signs the Louisiana Purchase.
- 1811 - Joseph Miller, a member of the Wilson Price Hunt Expedition explored and named the Bear River as “Miller’s River”.
- 1818 - Michael Bourbon, a Hudson Bay Company trapper, renamed the river “Black Bear River”.
- 1818 - 1828 - Trappers visited the Bear Lake Valley.
- 1826 - Jedediah Smith traveled down Smith’s Fork from its head to its confluence with the Bear River near present-day Cokeville, Wyoming, and on down the Bear River, past present-day Montpelier, to the Great Salt Lake.
- 1827 - Rendezvous on Bear Lake - first wheeled vehicle, a cannon, was brought to Bear Lake.
- 1830 - Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette brought full-sized wagons as far as the Rocky Mountains.
- 1831 - Captain Benjamin de Bonneville took wagons to Green River. Nez Perce and Flathead Indians went to St. Louis asking “for someone to teach then to read the white man’s “Book to Heaven”.
- 1834 - Fort Hall was built by Nathaniel Wyeth. It later became an important trading post on the Oregon Trail. Also, the first party of missionaries led by Jason Lee headed to Oregon. Lee, a Methodist, preached the first Christian sermon in Idaho at Fort Hall. Dr. Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker traveled as far west as Green River.
- 1836 - The Whitman-Spalding party, bearing a supply of Bibles and a desire to teach Christianity to the native Americans, took a wagon as far as Fort Hall and a two wheeled cart to Fort Boise. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding, wives of Dr. Marcus Whitman and the Reverend Henry Spalding were the first white women to see the area that is today the State of Idaho.
- 1838 - Army Corps of Topographical Engineers began mapping the route. United States Government map of that date identifies Bear River as “White Mud River” and Bear Lake as “Trout Lake”.
- 1841 - First bona fide wagon train - Bidwell and Bartleson - traveled to Soda Springs, where they split, one going to California and one to Oregon.
- 1842 - John C. Fremont went through the area mapping and exploring.
- 1843 - Fremont went all the way to Oregon. This became known as the “Year of the Great Migration”.
- 1842 - 1844 - Sometime during this period, Peg Leg Smith started a trading post on Bear River near present-day Wardboro, Idaho. In 1855, he left this area for California because travel along the Oregon Trail was decreasing.
- 1844 - 1,750 travelers over the route.
- 1845 - 3,000 travelers over the route.
- 1847 - Brigham Young enters the Great Salt Lake valley and the Mormon migration began.
- 1849 - California Gold Rush.
- 1850 - 6,034 people registered through Fort Laramie on June 17, 1850 - biggest single day on record.
- 1852 - Ezra Meeker traveled from Indiana to Oregon over the Oregon Trail.
- 1863 - Charles C. Rich led Mormon settlers into Bear Lake to create the first settlement of Paris, Idaho. Originally the settlers thought they were still in Utah territory.
- 1864 - Brigham Young visited the Bear Lake valley and suggested the Clover Creek Settlement name be changed to Montpelier, a town in his native state of Vermont.
- 1888 - The beautiful Paris Tabernacle was completed.
- 1906 - Ezra Meeker made the reverse trip in a “prairie schooner” to mark the trail.
- 1907 - Oregon Trail marker placed at the intersection of Third and Washington Streets in Montpelier, Idaho with the words "Old Oregon Trail, 1854 - 1906". Marker now placed in front of The National Oregon/California Trail Center.
- 1914 - The last wagon headed for Oregon passed through Montpelier, Idaho.
- AND 1999 - The National Oregon/California Trail Center is dedicated in Montpelier, Idaho as a living history center depicting the trials and experiences of the historic travelers of Idaho's trails.
What Can I Take on the Trail?

Remember, your wagon is all you have to carry your provisions for 2,000 miles. . . . and you have to walk 'cause there is no room in the wagon! So what do you need to make the trek west?

- A strong wagon, fit for the journey
- Draft animals, preferably oxen (4 head, but 6 is better)
- Foodstuffs include: Flour, Bacon, Beans, Coffee, sugar, lard, vinegar, salt, pepper, rice, yeast powder, hardtack, and saleratus (baking soda or powder).
- Clothing (2 sets per person)
- Bedding and Tent
- Tools, Leather, Nails
- Candles, Matches
- Pots, Pans, Cups, Plates, Utensils
- Tub, Buckets
- Butter Churn
- Rope, Axe, Whetstone
- Plow, Hand Tools
- Milk Cow, Chickens
- Shotgun, Rifle, Ammunition, gunpowder
- Axle Grease

How Much Will This Trip Cost?

According to a cookbook called "A Taste of Oregon" by the Jr. League of Eugene, p175 (c1980), the following comprised the possible expenses for an 1850’s family to move to the Oregon Territory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 sacks flour</td>
<td>$36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 pounds bacon</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 pounds coffee</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeast Powder</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 pounds salt</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pounds pepper</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bushels beans</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 gallons vinegar</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 pounds lard</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 pounds sugar</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bushels dried apples</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bushel dried peaches</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 pounds rice</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 feet rope</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 axes</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand tools</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>covered wagon</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 pounds candles</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 gross matches</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 coffee mill</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 coffee pots</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 tin cups and plates</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 frying pans</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 butcher knives</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 knives, forks and spoons</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 kettles</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bread pans</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tent</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 gallon water tub</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 water buckets</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 small tin pail</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whetstone</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 pounds nails</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oxen</td>
<td>$225.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Estimated Cost of Trip to Oregon Territory = $539.60
Montpelier had the first bank in southeastern Idaho. G.C. Gray established the Bank of Montpelier in 1891. It was chartered No. 1 of all Idaho banks when that step became necessary. According to Matt Warner in his biography, Cassidy robbed the Montpelier bank in an effort to get money to bail Warner out of jail. That has never been proven, but for a certainty Cassidy, Elza Lay and Bob Meeks robbed the bank, August 13, 1896. After a casual drink or two, they reached the bank just before closing time and tied up their horses at the hitching rack across the street from the bank. Cashier G.C. Gray had seen the men ride up, but paid little attention. He was standing on the steps of the bank talking with a friend, Ed Hoover. Cassidy and Lay left Meeks to tend the horses as they stepped across the street and ushered the surprised banker and his friend into the bank. There they forced the pay teller, A.N. Mackintosh and a girl stenographer up against the wall. Lay leaned across the writing desk and trained guns on the personnel while Cassidy quickly moved around scooping the money into a gunny sac. Mackintosh, with his face to the wall, was still able to look out of the window where he noticed the third man, Meeks, standing by the horses. He made an accurate mental note of the man just before he was struck across the face by Lay in an attempt to get him to tell where other moneys were located. It was his description that later resulted in the arrest and conviction of Meeks. Cassidy left the bank first with the money. He walked nonchalantly across the street, got on his horse and rode slowly away. Meeks moved across the street with the remaining horses and left Lay’s horse standing in front of the bank as he rode away. Finally Lay left the bank in haste. As soon as Lay cleared the bank, pandemonium erupted as the alarm spread. Deputy Fred Cruikshank, first on a bicycle and then on his horse gave chase along with Attorney Bagley. Minutes later, Sheriff Jefferson Davis and a posse took up the chase. For a week the posse followed but gave up the chase near Snyder Basin. No one really knows what happened to the money or for that matter exactly where the men went. After his arrest later, Meeks swore that he never got a penny of the loot. Meeks was the only one ever arrested. Cassidy and Lay were never brought to trial. Mackintosh stated: The 13th was the cause of it all. He noted it was the 13th day of the month; it occurred after the 13th deposit had been made that day at a sum of $13.00 and occurred at 13 minutes after the hour of 3:00 pm.
Factoids

• The Oregon Trail stretches 510 miles across the southern half of the great state of Idaho. For most of the trek across Idaho, the trail follows the Bear or the Snake Rivers.

• The Goodale, Lander and Hudspeth Cutoffs allows the traveler access to adjacent country and shortcuts to other trails and settlements.

• The California Trail heads southwest and passes through the unique City of Rocks, an area of majestic rock outcroppings popular with climbers.

• The National Oregon/California Trail Center in Montpelier honors the history of westward expansion through the state of Idaho. The Center provides a living history experience of this largest voluntary migration of people in history.

Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne (center) cuts the official Grand Opening ribbon held by then Center VP Allen Harrison (left) and Center President Lewis Pope (right). Photograph courtesy of The News-Examiner, a copyrighted weekly newspaper in Montpelier, Idaho (July 1999).
# Bibliography of Oregon Trail Books

We are so fortunate to have the National Oregon/California Trail Center in Idaho. It is an awesome place. Be sure to visit sometime.

After your visit, you may want to read further about the Oregon and California Trails. These books may be available at your local library. If not, ask your librarian about interlibrary loan.

This bibliography has been assembled by the Bear Lake County Library. For more info, visit bearlake.lili.org.

The wagon graphic is used with permission of the Baltimore County Public Library.

## Oregon Trail books for kids:

## Oregon Trail books for adults:
Bibliography of Oregon Trail Books
(continued)

- Meeker, Ezra. The busy life of eighty-five years of Ezra Meeker: Ventures and adventures sixty-three years of pioneer life in the old Oregon country; an account of the author=s trip across the plains with an ox team, 1952; return trip, 1906-1907. Seattle, WA: [1916].
Oregon Trail Timeline
Crossword Puzzle

Name_______________________
Date_________________

Use the clues on the next page to find each of the following words:
All answers to this crossword puzzle are found in the Teacher's Manual.
Oregon Trail Timeline
Word Search Puzzle

Name_______________________
Date_________________

Find each of the following words.

Montpelier  Saleratus  Wolf  California
Idaho  Wagon  Emigrant  Center
Independence  Oxen  Pioneer  Meeker
Bison  Gold  Oregon  Horse
Trail  Migration  Ruts

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Bison  Gold  Oregon  Horse
Trail  Migration  Ruts

TM R N N A P D T O C I E D M W E I N N E C E
E I G R N E L A E A G G N A A O E I R E L I R
R G O L D T O I D I C E N T E R O N U M G M I
M A I O O A N E O M I U W I D F E S G T E O
O T I N R I M E E O N E O D A T P E R O A I
N I E G E L D L K A F E P L A R G E A A X L C
T O L A G F I G E I A R M F H R L I N N N E W R
P N O N O I C N R T O I L O O A E D L T N A R
E N E S N A E H O W R D D N R O E E W B E G C
L R G L O P I O N E E R A S D N D N A I L O N
I S A L E R A T U S T L A A O A E M C R S O N N
E O E A I C A L I F O R N I A G I E O O I R
R E E N B E G G N M R G C 1 I D G R I N C I W
I N N E I N G O L O O R R N A E D D R H I M T
T E N R I A L E L E A M N A A N O U S N S I R
## Oregon Trail Timeline

### Word Search Puzzle

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<th>California Center</th>
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