

# From Missouri to Oregon

Parts of the Oregon Trail had been blazed by Canadian explorers and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Later, mountain men like Jim Bridger contributed their knowledge of the route and often acted as guides for groups heading west.

The Oregon Trail was the route pioneers took from Independence, Missouri, to the Columbia River in Oregon. At first, Oregon City was their destination. Later, settlers continued south to the fertile land of the Willamette Valley.

Part of the route followed the Platte River for about 540 miles through Nebraska to Fort Laramie. The trail continued along the North Platte and Sweetwater Rivers to South Pass.

From there, settlers traveled south to Fort Bridger, Wyoming, before turning into the Bear River Valley. There they headed north to Fort Hall in Idaho.

Once in Oregon, settlers passed through the Rhonda River Valley, crossed another mountain range, and then continued on to the Columbia River.

## Did You Know?

In 1852, at the age of 23, Ezra Meeker made his first wagon journey on the Oregon Trail. In 1906, at the age of 76, Meeker loaded up a wagon, hitched two oxen, and made the trip again. Meeker enjoyed the trip so much that he did it again in 1910, and by automobile in 1916. In 1924, he flew over the trail in an open-cockpit army plane!