

**COMMON
CORE**

1776 **AMERICAN
MILESTONES**

Wagons Ho! Pioneers' Path to the West!

The Oregon Trail



1841  1869

By Carole Marsh



A Timeline of Events



1804 President Thomas Jefferson assigns Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the West.



1805 Lewis and Clark arrive in Oregon at the end of their long exploration.



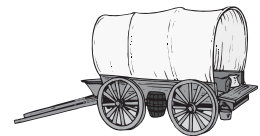
1829 The American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory is organized.



1836 Marcus and Narcissa Whitman are the first white settlers in Oregon.



1843 The year of the "Great Migration." Large numbers of settlers begin traveling west. Also known as the "Wagon Train of 1843."



1848 The "Oregon Country" becomes a United States territory.



1849 Gold is discovered in California. Many "Forty Niners" head west to make a fortune.



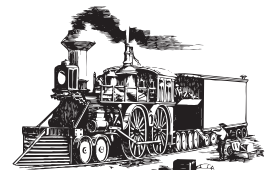
1850 The Oregon Donation Land Act is created. It offers free land to settlers who travel west.



1859 Congress welcomes Oregon as the 33rd state.



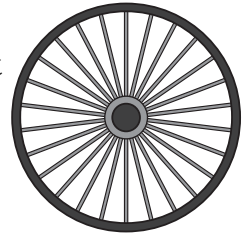
1869 The Union and Pacific railroads are connected at Promontory Summit, Utah. The railroads connect the East and West, and provide an easier way to travel.



Let's Get Ready to Roll!

Before the pioneers set foot in Independence, Missouri, they had lots of preparation to do. Sure, they had to pack the wagon, feed the oxen, and buy food. But the pioneers also had to plan which way they were going to travel—there weren't too many maps back then!

The pioneers needed to make sure they left Independence during the spring so they wouldn't get caught in the cold winter snow. They had to think about important questions like: What dangerous rivers were they going to cross? What would they do if a wagon wheel broke? What would they do if someone got sick? What would happen once they got to Oregon?



It took a LOT of work to prepare for life on the Oregon Trail!

Moving On!

Independence, Missouri marked the beginning of the Oregon Trail. But many pioneers traveled a long way just to get to Independence! Using the map, answer the questions below.

1. If Pioneer John was traveling from New York to Independence, Missouri, through how many states would he travel? (including New York) _____
2. From Independence, Missouri, how many states would a pioneer have to travel through on the Oregon Trail to get to Oregon City, Oregon? _____
3. How many states did Pioneer John have to travel through to get from New York City, New York to Oregon City, Oregon? _____



Manifest Destiny

In the 1840s, America was growing quickly. The original 13 colonies were filling up with people. American leaders knew they had to find more land for their growing country.

At that time, many believed it was America's mission to travel west and discover new land. Some wanted to bring democracy, America's form of government, to the Indians in the West. Others wanted to bring their religion to the Indians. Many wanted the United States to have more land.

American leaders used the term "Manifest Destiny" to talk about the growth of America. They believed that it was America's destiny to explore the West. In the 1840s, Manifest Destiny was a popular topic in political speeches and newspaper articles all over the country.

Learn About It!

Look up and write the definitions for the words below. Then, put the definitions together to help you better understand the meaning of Manifest Destiny.

manifest:

destiny:

Read the list of reasons someone might want to travel west below. Write MD next to each one that describes why someone who believed in Manifest Destiny, or expanding west, would want to go west.

1. _____ To hunt buffalo
2. _____ To spread religion to the Indians
3. _____ To have a party
4. _____ To make friends with the Indians
5. _____ To find more land for America
6. _____ To spread democracy to the Indians
7. _____ To find a nice place for a vacation
8. _____ To start a new life

