
Applegate Trail Story

Hugo is blessed with a rich heritage of historic roads, rough though they were. The *Trails Committee* was formed by the *Hugo Neighborhood* to bring together all those who want to learn more about the early transportation in the area, from the casual admirer to the dedicated researcher.^{1&2}



Oregon-California Trails Association Map

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the only non-native peoples in the Oregon Territory were explorers, fur trappers and missionaries. The Hudson Bay Company had a string of forts or trading posts along the Oregon Trail from Independence, Missouri west to Ft. Vancouver on the Columbia River. The Oregon Territory included all of the current states of Oregon and Washington, and parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana.

Story Continued

The trials and tribulations, which the emigrants experienced coming west on the Oregon Trail, are well documented. The three Applegate brothers, Jesse, Lindsay and Charles along with their extended families, came to the Willamette Valley in 1843 via the Oregon Trail. After traveling over 2,000 miles, they came to the last obstacle in their journey, the Columbia River.

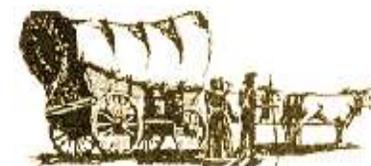
While rafting down this turbulent river, three lives were lost. Jesse and Lindsay Applegate both lost their 9 year old sons, Edward and Warren, respectively to this river when their raft capsized. Also killed was 70 year old Alexander Mac (Uncle Mac).

For many years, the new American arrivals to the Oregon Territory were suspicious of the British. The British and the American governments had proposed different northern boundaries for the Oregon Territory but nothing was as yet decided. Both entities co-occupied this region.

In 1846, it became apparent that a new non-British southern route out of the Oregon Territory was needed. The Applegate brothers were not only convinced that an escape route to the south was necessary in case war broke out with the British but they longed to find an alternative southern route which would avoid the life threatening Columbia River. Several expeditions were organized but were unsuccessful due to impassable rivers and creeks which forced the men to return to their homes.

More Information

On June 20, 1846, The South Road Company organized again to explore and find a trail from the Willamette Valley over the Cascade Mountains to near Ft. Hall on the Snake River, which was suitable for covered wagons. The South Road Company included Jesse and Lindsey Applegate, along with Levi Scott and others from previous expeditions. The plan was for the South Road Company to locate the best southern route and solicit the traveling emigrant trains to provide at least 30 good-outfitted men to build the road ahead of their wagon train.



On August 9, 1846, a large group of wagons set out west from Fort Hall to follow the new Applegate Trail for the first time to the Willamette Valley. By mid-October, 1846 the emigrants were traveling up the south rugged mountainous terrain on the Trappers' Trail toward the unnamed Mt. Sexton Pass.

In the year 1853 over 3,500 men, women and children took this route which today is the basis for the state's major transportation routes.

Want more information? Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood*, or a member of the *Trails Committee* on how you can learn about the community's immigrant trails.²

1. Hugo Neighborhood. 2005. Public Outreach & Educational Brochure Program: Hugo's Emigrant Trails. Hugo, OR.
2. Hugo Neighborhood. 2005. Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. Brochure Two. Hugo, OR.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

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APPLEGATE TRAIL: 1846



Brochure 11 in
Trapper's Trail Series



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**Hugo Neighborhood Association &
Historical Society**