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## Col. John C. Fremont: 1843

**1813** John Charles Fremont was born out of wedlock in Georgia in 1813. Charles Fremont, French dancing master, and John's mother had three children.<sup>1</sup>

**1838 - 1839** Through the influence of his friend and mentor, Joel R. Poinsett, Frémont secured an appointment to the Corps of Topographical Engineers, a group that assisted the army with mapping and surveying activities. In 1838-39, Frémont accompanied the French explorer, Joseph N. Nicollet, to the Missouri River area.<sup>1</sup>

**1841** Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri was his father-in-law because beautiful daughter Jessie and Fremont engaged in 1841. Because of John's background and current lowly status, Benton forbid the marriage, but John and Jessie secretly were married October 19, 1841 by a Catholic priest.<sup>1</sup>

**1842 First Expedition** Now Benton who was Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, and a big supporter of Westward expansion, accepted reality and became John's patron. On January 1, 1842 Fremont was given a command of an expedition to the Rockies. Under the guidance of Kit Carson, Frémont undertook mapping the Oregon Trail. The object of special attention on this journey was the thorough exploration of South Pass of the Continental Divide. They did reach the pass, and did measure its height as well as mapped the area for future travelers. In 1843, Congress printed 10,000 copies of John's report, complete with maps and a description of the country. This started John's reputation as "The Pathfinder".<sup>1</sup>

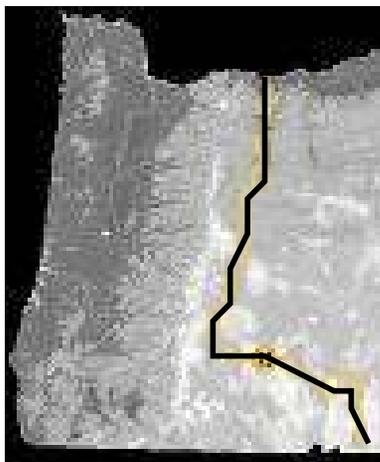
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## Mapping Oregon Trail

**1843 - 1844** A second expedition was launched in 1843 and 1844, guided by Thomas Fitzpatrick and Carson, in which the mapping of the Oregon Trail was completed to the Pacific. Also noteworthy were winter hardships when the party lived off the flesh of horses and mules, and the extensive exploration of the Great Salt Lake area. Mormon leaders in the East read Frémont's report and began entertaining ideas of settling in Utah.<sup>1</sup>

This expedition covered 3,500 miles and took 14 months. "It was the most important expedition since



*South From Dalles Through Oregon: 1843*

Lewis and Clark's nearly forty years before – an almost complete circuit of the West, from Missouri to the Great Salt Lake, into Oregon, across the Sierras in the dead of winter and into California (where they found temporary shelter at Sutter's Fort), then south round the southern flank of the Sierras, along the old Spanish Trail, across the Colorado Plateau, through the Rockies, and home again."<sup>1</sup>

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## Fremont: 1813 - 1890

Although the great "pathfinder" would merely follow the established route of the Oregon Trail, his reconnaissance of the Great Salt Lake and his ability to articulate the concept of the Great Basin provided important geographical information about a region that was largely unknown. Fremont's published reports and Charles Preuss' maps became widely used by western travelers and were even quoted by emigrants in their journals.<sup>2</sup>

**This expedition across central and southern Oregon and into the Great Basin and Sierra passes was his most significant contribution to western exploration.**

**1843** With the exception of his route taken over the Blue Mountains, Fremont followed the 1843 route of the Oregon Trail from Fort Boise to The Dalles. But at The Dalles, having completed his primary orders to connect his reconnaissance with the surveys of naval Commander Charles Wilkes, Fremont disregarded orders to return to the United States by way of the Oregon Trail. Instead, he explored south from The Dalles along the eastern side of the Cascade Range. This expedition across central and southern Oregon and into the Great Basin and Sierra passes was his most significant contribution to western exploration.<sup>2</sup>

**More Information.** Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood*.

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1. Ward, Geoffrey C. 1996. *The West, An Illustrated History*. Pages 98 - 101.

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2. The Oregon Historic Trails Fund. 2008. *John Fremont Route: 1843*. Oregon's Historic Trails. Salem, OR.

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## 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 of 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.

*Hugo Neighborhood Association*

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## COLONEL FREMONT: 1843



Brochure 8 in  
Trapper's Trail Series



*Col. Fremont*

May 25, 2008

**Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee**

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
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