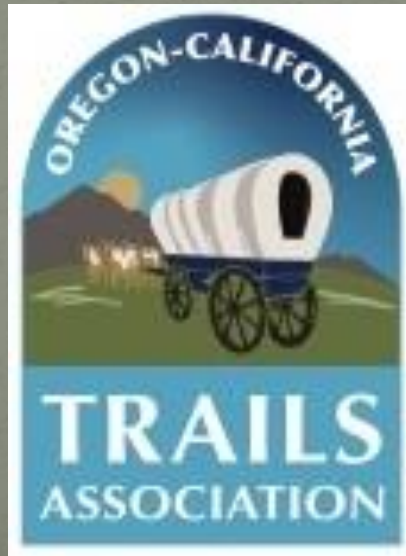


Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Oregon-California Trails Association



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

May 15. We started on our journey. We found the road in a terrible condition . . . We drove thirty-two miles this day.

*Mary Rockwood Powers
on the trail to California, 1856*

Oregon and California National Historic Trails

How far would you
walk for a better life?



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Would you walk over 2,000 miles?

Hundreds of thousands of people did before you!



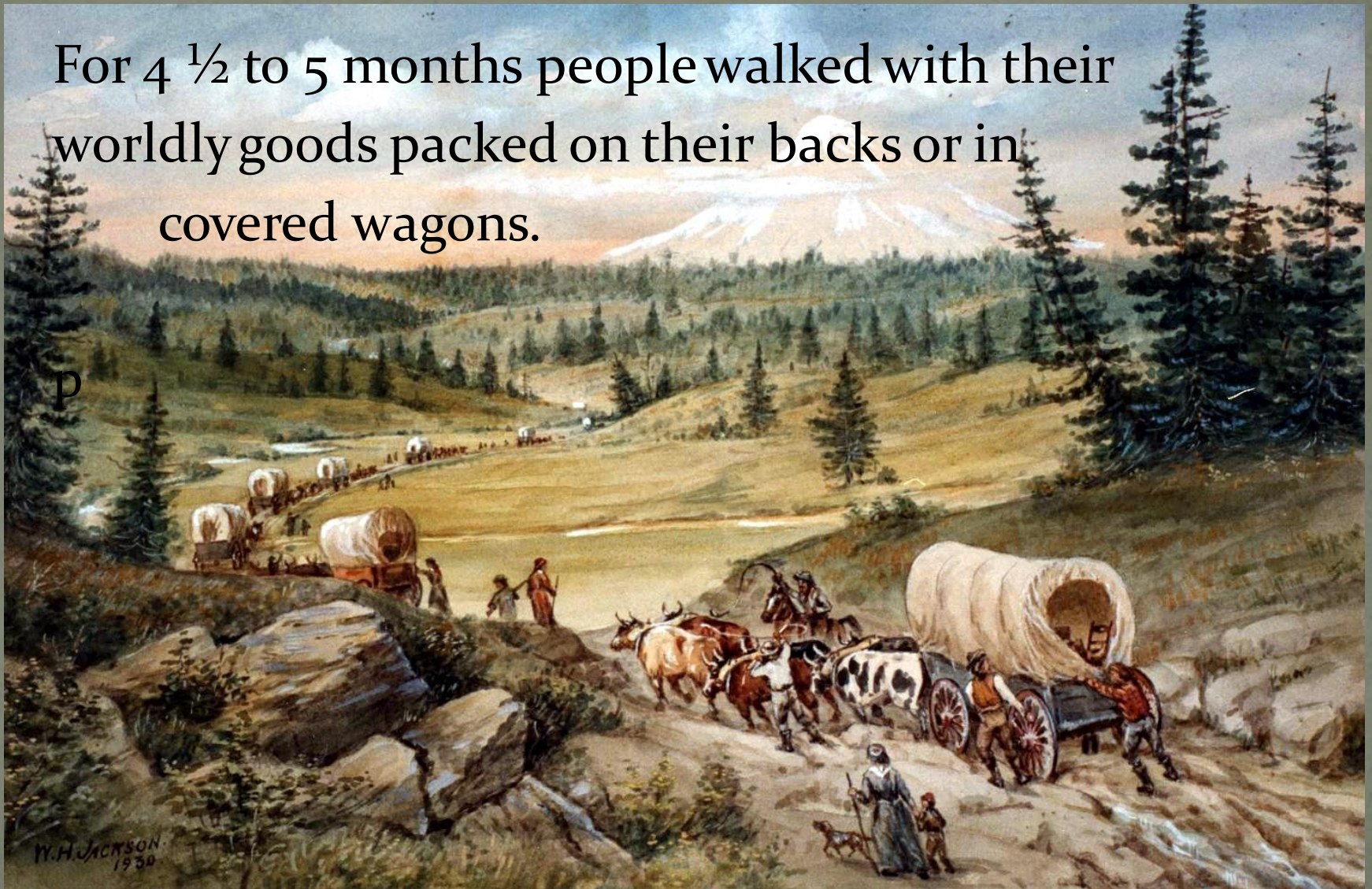
Oregon and California National Historic Trails

From the 1840s to 1860s, people walked from the Midwest to Oregon and California – crossing open prairies, waterless deserts and high mountain passes.



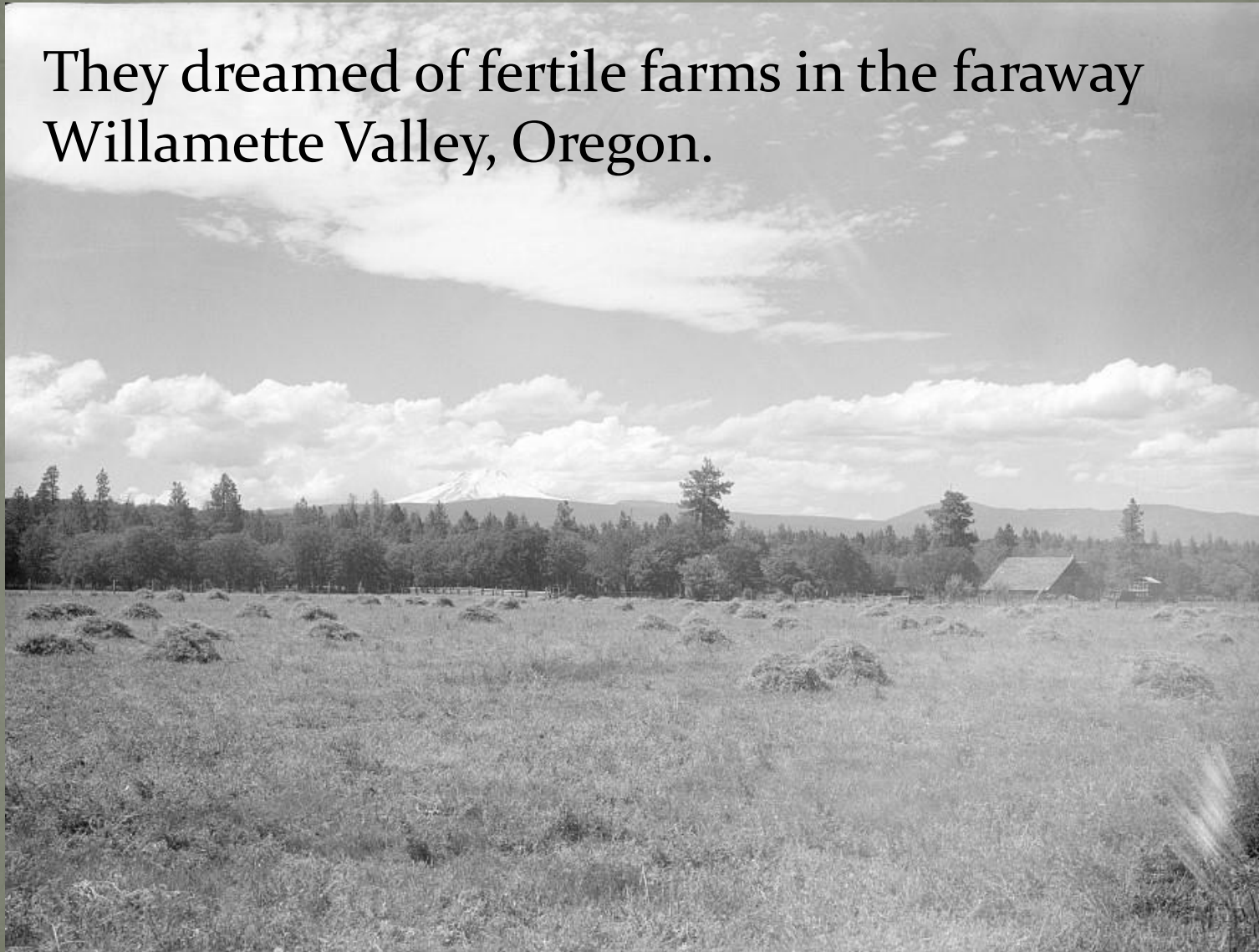
Oregon and California National Historic Trails

For 4 ½ to 5 months people walked with their worldly goods packed on their backs or in covered wagons.



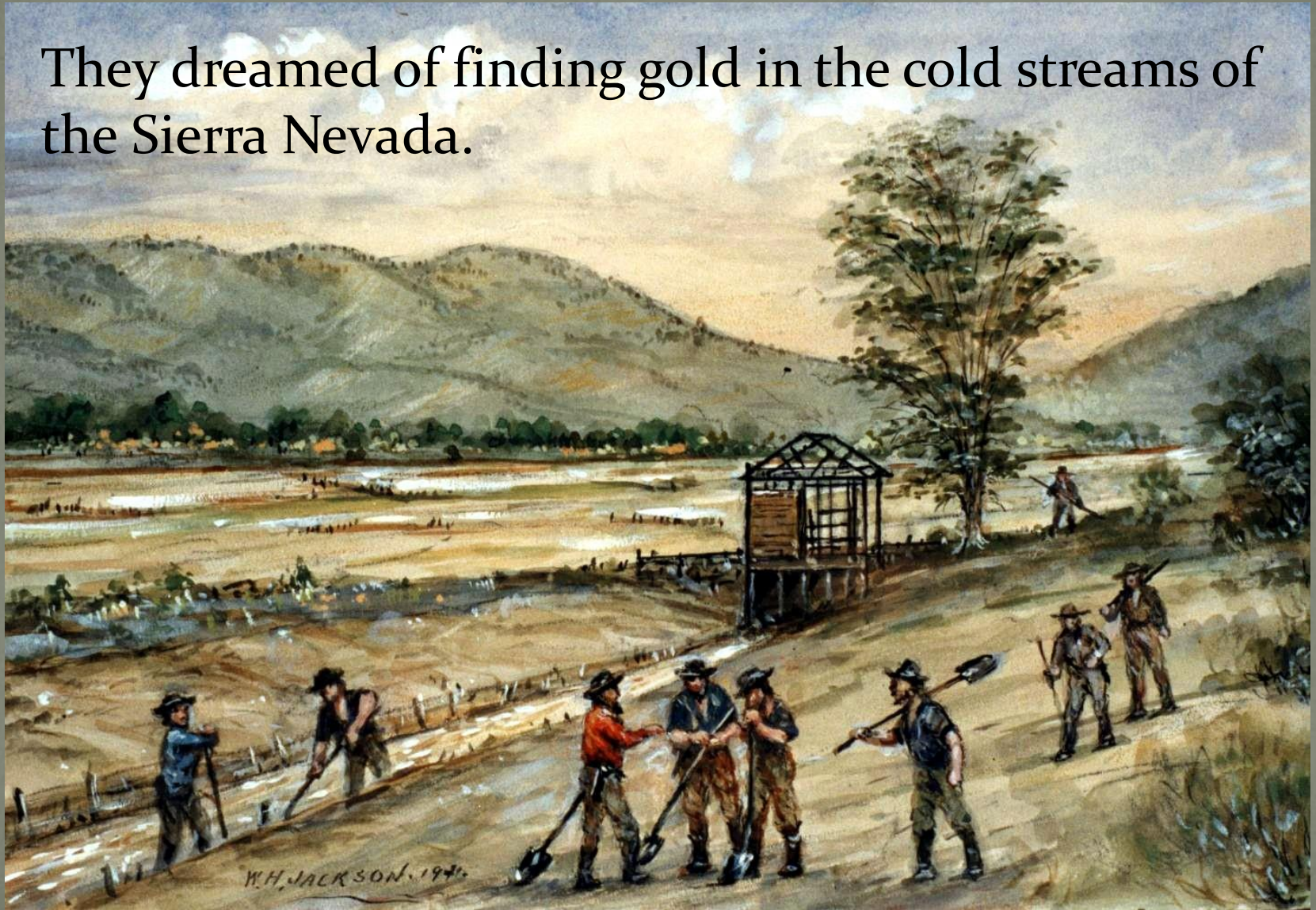
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They dreamed of fertile farms in the faraway
Willamette Valley, Oregon.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

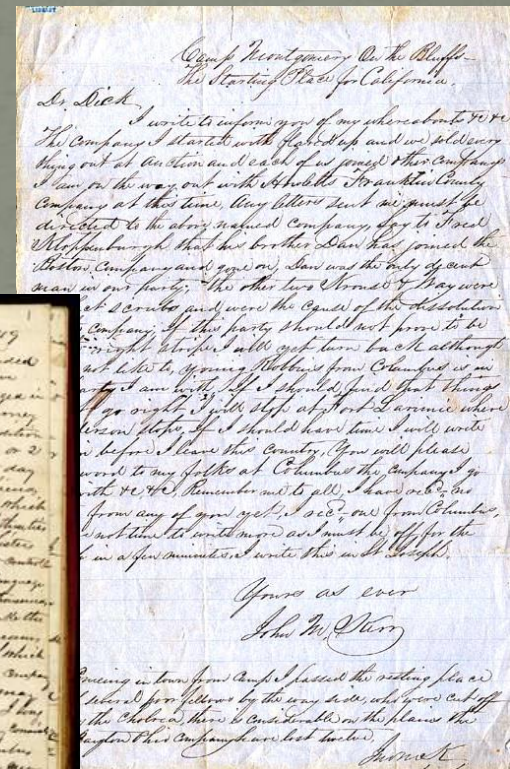
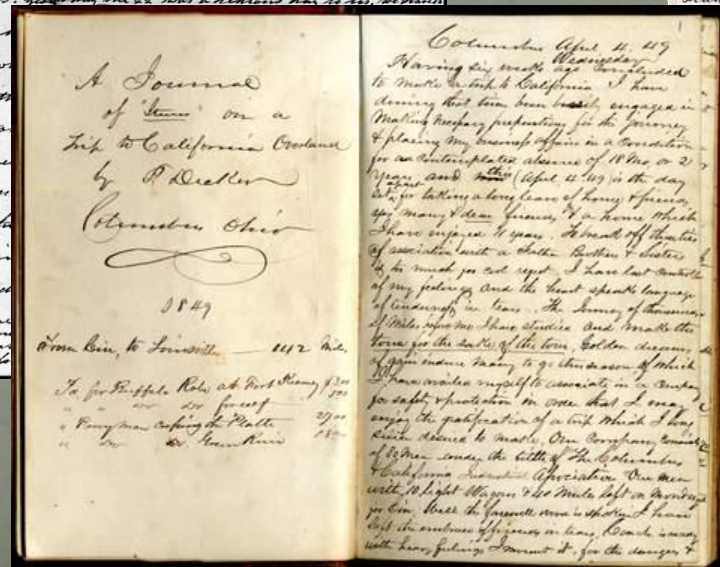
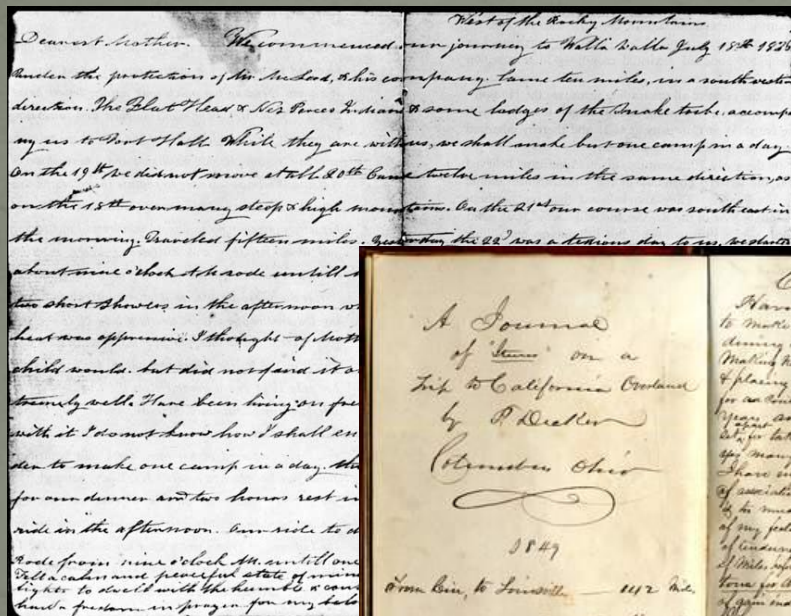
They dreamed of finding gold in the cold streams of the Sierra Nevada.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

They left evidence of their journeys in many ways.

They described their adventures in journals, diaries and letters.



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They painted their names with axle grease to mark their journey.



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They created ruts and swales in the earth as they passed with their oxen and heavy, loaded wagons.



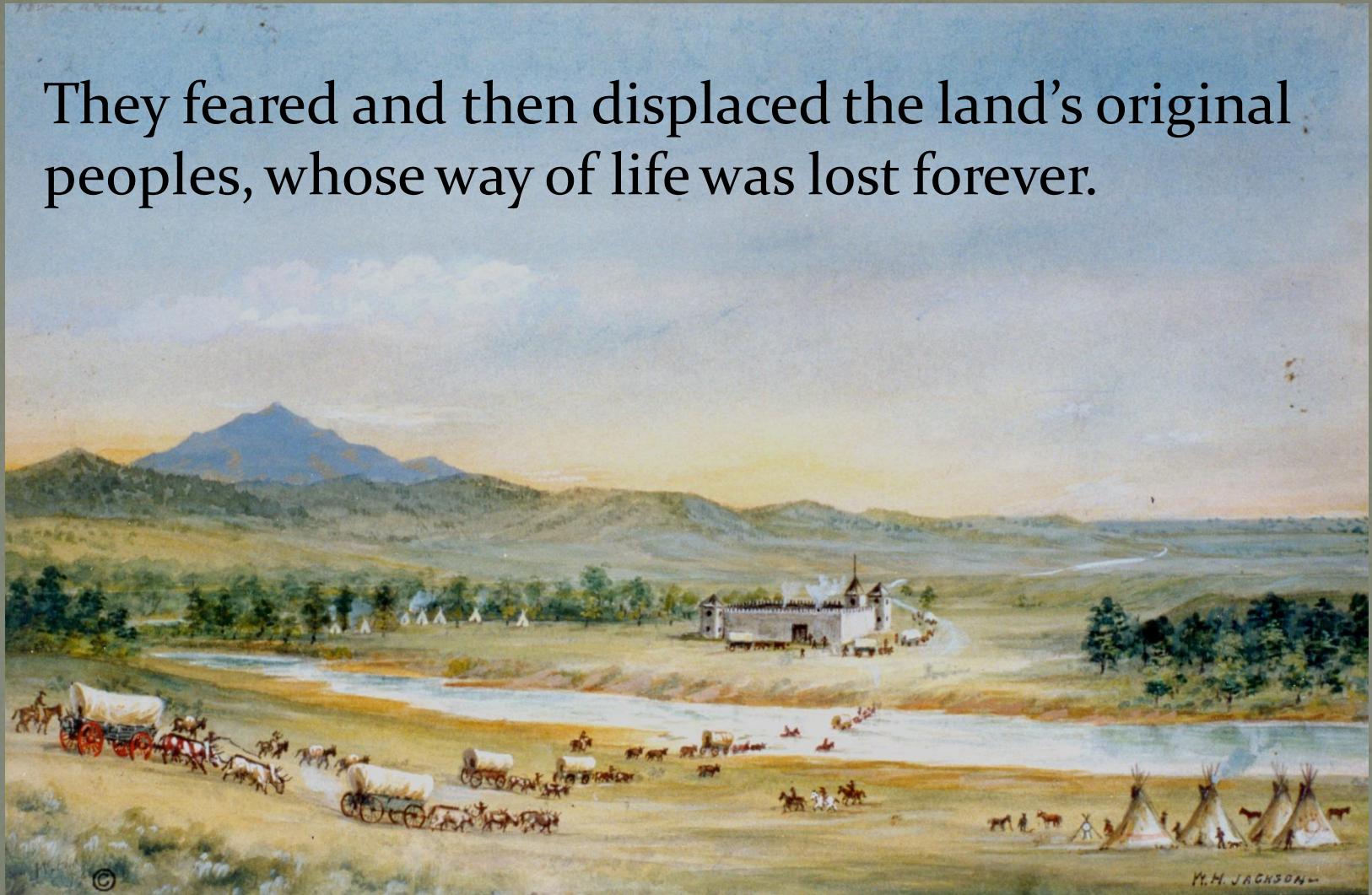
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They died of disease or accidents or in childbirth and were hastily buried alongside the trails.



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They feared and then displaced the land's original peoples, whose way of life was lost forever.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

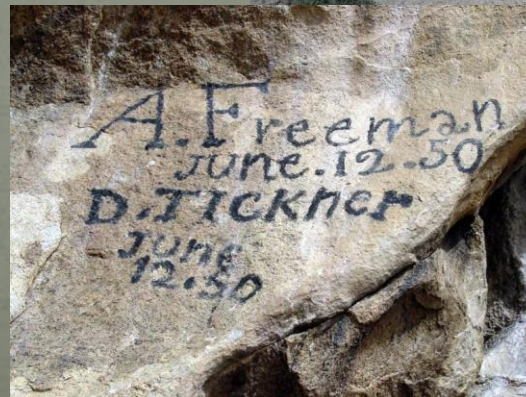
The legacy left by the overland emigrants is visible and touchable.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Today you can

- see trail landmarks
- walk in wagon ruts
- read emigrant names and dates



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

- learn that emigrant interactions with Indian tribes were more often personal and helpful than they were deadly.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

- join with others out on the trails to learn of emigrant strengths and joys, frailties and sorrows



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

- walk, hike or bike where emigrants camped or labored



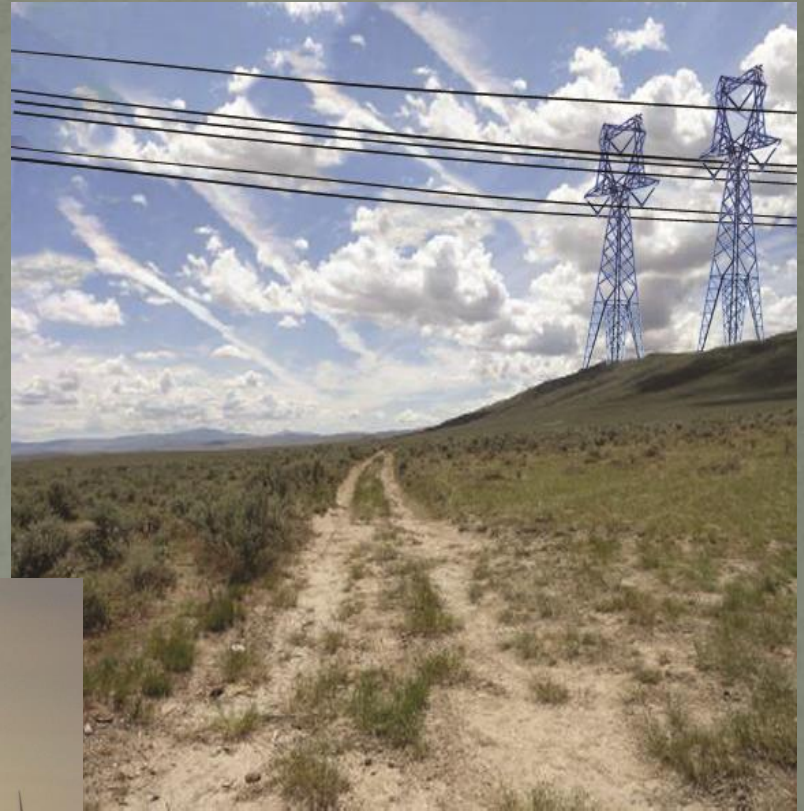
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- help find and protect the trails on public lands through monitoring, archeology, mapping, marking, education or advocacy
- join the national effort to protect the trails



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Many trail sites are threatened by mining, real estate, and energy development throughout the West.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Join the Oregon-California Trails Association!



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

OCTA's mission is to protect the Historic Emigrant Trails legacy by promoting research, education, preservation activities and public awareness of the trails and to work with others to promote these causes.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Learn more about the National Trails System,
established by Congress in 1968.



Oregon and California National Historic Trails

And only you know –
how far would you walk
for a better life?



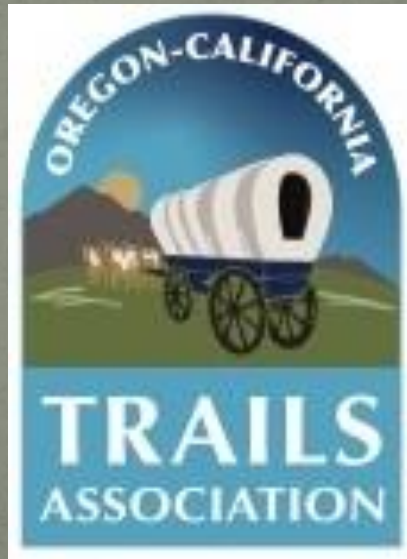
Oregon and California National Historic Trails

Oregon-California Trails
Association

www.octa-trails.org

National Trails System

[www.nps.gov/subjects/
nationaltrailssystem/](http://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/)



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Text credit:

Powers, Mary Rockwood. A Woman's Overland Journal to California. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1985

Photo credits:

California State Library, Signed letter of John M. Kerr to Dick [Ellis]

Library of Congress

Arthur Rothstein, US Farm Security Administration

Carol M. Highsmith Archive

National Oregon/California Trail Center, Montpelier, Idaho

National Park Service

City of Rocks National Reserve

National Trails Intermountain Region

National Trails System

Scotts Bluff National Monument, William Henry Jackson Collection

Whitman Mission National Historic Site

Oregon California Trails Association

Society of California Pioneers, Peter Decker Diary

US Forest Service, Plumas National Forest, Passport in Time