

## Oregon Trail

*The Oregon Trail was one of the main overland migration routes in the United States of America, leading from locations on the Missouri River to the Oregon Territory. Between 1841 and 1869 the Oregon Trail was used by settlers, ranchers, farmers, miners and business men migrating to the Pacific Northwest. This patch is designed to help girls understand and appreciate the history of the Oregon Trail and the pioneers that travelled it.*

**To complete this Interest Project, complete SEVEN activities. Must include two skill builders, four activities from any section and one SMART goal you develop and complete.**

### Skill Builders

1. Build a toy that may have been played with by a pioneer child. Give the toy to a child you know and share with them the history about the toy
2. Make a meal that people in covered wagons may have eaten and share it with others.
3. Try your hand at a skill the early settler women may have had to know about (i.e. spinning, weaving, quilting, soap making, making candles, hand sewing, etc.) or attend a presentation offered by a local guild in one of these areas. Check your local newspaper for these events. These could include a quilt show, Mission Mills' annual Sheep to Shawl event in Salem or a spinning or weaving guild display. Teach the skills that you learn to a younger troop.

### Other Activities

1. Visit a historical site or museum on the Oregon Trail, such as:
  - The end of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
  - Fort Vancouver
  - Oregon City
  - Whitman Mission
  - High Desert Museum
  - Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
2. Trace your family tree. With your parents help trace back your family 4 generations - you, your parents, your grandparents, and your great grandparents.
3. Write a short biographical sketch about your parents' or grandparents' life, or make a recording with your parents or grandparents talking about their lives.
4. Find out about your community. When was it settled? Who, if anyone, lived there before the pioneers moved into the area? Visit a historic place in your community and learn about conservation efforts to preserve that location.
5. Find out about the Native Americans that inhabited the area before the pioneers settled. Were they nomads? What did their homes look like? What did they eat? Attend a Pow Wow and

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practice a Native American craft.

6. Read a book or story about pioneer life. Would you have liked to live during that time period? Write down your thoughts. What things were different? What kinds of chores were the children expected to do?
7. Take a field trip and follow part of the Oregon Trail. There are places not far from the Willamette Valley where the actual ruts from wagons are visible. A trip from Prineville to Oregon City might be an example. Hike for two miles along the Oregon Trail. How does it feel walking that distance? How do you think the pioneers felt with the distances they covered?
8. What entertainment did the pioneers participate in both along the trail and in the established settlements? How is it different than today's entertainment? If possible, participate in some form of entertainment they might have enjoyed.
  - Music: What types? What instruments?
  - Drama: Melodrama. Vaudeville type?
  - Dance: Square or live dance. Waltz.
9. What kinds of work did the pioneers do before they came and after they got here? Was it the same or different? Can you identify what kind of work all of these people did?

Farrier	Copper	Mercantile	Seamstress	Wrangler
Blacksmith	Cobbler	Apothecary	Wagon Master	Midwife
Tin Smith	Haberdasher	Milliner	Tailor	Cow Poke

10. What might a trip to the doctor have been like? What kinds of medicines were used? How has medicine changed?
11. Play through the Oregon Trail computer game and reflect on the experiences and skills needed to make the trip.
12. Contact the National Park Service or Bureau of Land Management and find out about conservation projects supporting the Oregon Trail.

## Resources

National Park Service Oregon Trail website: <http://www.nps.gov/oreg/index.htm>

Bureau of Land Management – Oregon Trail Interpretive Center website: <http://www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail/>