



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State

Oregon History

Fur trappers with the Hudson Bay Company were the first non-Native American settlers in Oregon in 1829, followed by Congregational, Methodist, and Catholic missionaries in the 1840s. Encouraged by the missionaries, between 1840 and 1860, nearly 53,000 settlers, mostly from Mississippi, Missouri, and the Ohio River valleys made the trek to Oregon.

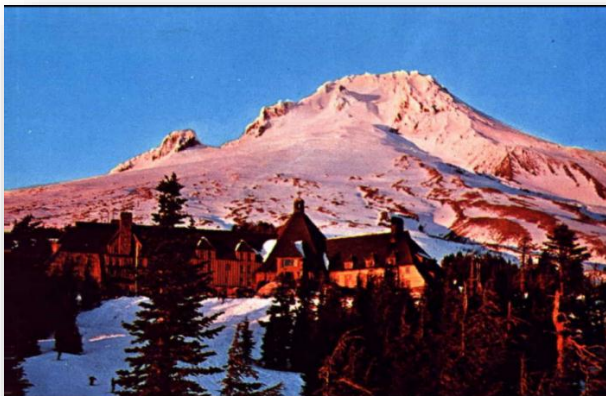
Native American tribes in Oregon included the Northern Paiute, Sahaptin, Cayuse, Nez Perce, Shoshone, and Klamath Modoc, Tillamook, Clatskanie, Takelma, Latgawa, Coquille, Umpqua, Shasta Costa, Chetco, Tolowa, Dakubetede, Siuslaw, Coos, Molalla, Chinook, Alsea, Yaquina, and Kalapulyan. Multiple wars between the original inhabitants of the area and new settlers took place in the 1800's resulting often in the relocation of Native Americans to Indian reservations.

In 1844, Oregon City was the first incorporated city west of the Rocky Mountains and was the capital until 1851 when it was moved to Salem. In 1855, the capital briefly moved to Corvallis, but returned to Salem within the same year.

The Oregon Territory was first established in 1848 and included what are now the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and parts of Montana and Idaho. In 1853, the Territory was split into the Washington and Oregon Territories. The Washington Territory was comprised of the current state of Washington and the parts of Idaho and Montana; the Oregon Territory was current day Oregon and parts of Idaho and Washington. When Oregon became a state in 1859, the rest of the Oregon Territory became part of the Washington Territory.

Oregon is the 9th largest state in terms of area and 27th in population. Its highest point is Mount Hood at 11,249 feet. The state has deserts, forests, prairies, steppes and meadows and multiple mountain ranges.

The Oregon Trail which began in Independence, Missouri and stretched 2,000 miles to Oregon was first traveled by trappers in the early 1800s.



Timberline Lodge, Mount Hood, Oregon



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State



Significant Dates (through 1945)

1543 – Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo was the first known European explorer on the southern Oregon Coast.

1592 – Juan de Fuca created detailed mappings and ocean current studies for the Oregon area.

1579 – Sir Francis Drake visited Oregon.

1764 – The earliest known use of the name Oregon (actually Ouragon) was in a petition from Major Robert Rogers to Great Britain.

1774 – As part of the Spanish expeditions to the Pacific Northwest, Oregon was explored often becoming a valuable trading route to Asia.

1778 – British Captain James Cook explored the Oregon Coast; Ouragon became Oregon.

1792 – Robert Gray traveled and named the Columbia River.

1805 – Lewis and Clark built their winter fort in Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia River as part of the search for a Northwest Passage.

1811 – The Pacific Fur Company established a western outpost, Fort Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River financed by John Jacob Astor.

1812 – The British gained control of the Pacific Fur Company posts.

1818 – Americans and British declared joint occupancy of land west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in the Treaty of 1818.

1819 – Spain and the United States established the southern boundary of Oregon by treaty.

1820s-1830s – Hudson Bay Company dominated the Pacific Northwest.

1829 – Willamette Falls, later renamed Oregon City was established by John McLoughlin, the chief broker of the Hudson Bay Company.

1834 – Methodist missionaries helped settle the Willamette Valley in Marion County.

1836 – Under the leadership of Marcus Whitman, the Presbyterians established churches in Walla Walla, then part of the Oregon Territory, now part of Washington.

1838 – Two Catholic priests arrived from Quebec establishing a mission at St. Paul, north of Salem.

1843 – Autonomous government was formed in Oregon County; nine hundred new settlers arrived in Oregon traveling on the Oregon Trail.

1844 – Portland was started in 1844 when sixteen blocks were plotted out along the Willamette River.

1844-1857 – Land records for the Oregon Territory were kept with Territory records.

1846 – The Oregon Treaty between Britain and the United States established a border at the 49th parallel and prevented another war between the two countries.

1847 – The first permanent Episcopalian minister, Rev. St. Michael Fackler, arrived in Oregon City. The Whitman massacre, also known as the Walla Walla massacre, occurred when 13 Oregon missionaries were killed by the Cayuse and Umatilla tribes. From 1847 to 1855 the Cayuse people battled local settlers, the first of several wars between the original inhabitants and Euro-American settlers that led to the creation of Indian reservations and the relocation of Native Americans.

1848 – Oregon Territory was established including what is now Washington, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming; the first Exclusion law was passed making it illegal for any Negro or anyone of mixed ethnic heritage to reside in the territory.



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State



1850 – Gold was discovered in the Rogue River Valley. The Native population in the Territory was forced onto Indian reservations in Oregon as settlements increased from the Donation Land Claim Act which provided between 160 to 320 acres of free land to white male settlers. Wives could receive an additional 160 to 320 acres in their own right; the Quakers arrived in Oregon and established the first Friends Sunday School in Ashland.

1852 – Jacksonville was established in the Rogue River Valley in response to the gold discovery two years earlier; Roseburg was established as way station on the California-Oregon trail.

1853 – The Oregon Territory was split into the Washington and Oregon Territories. The Washington Territory included present-day Washington and parts of Idaho and Montana.

1854 – Oregon's Exclusion law was repealed.

1855 – Early settlers who were in Oregon by 1855 were given grants under the Donation Land Claims act; Oregon City opened a Public Land office until 1905; Winchester opened a Public land office until 1859.

1857 – Mormon missionaries first arrived in Oregon meeting with great opposition. They postponed missionary work until later in the century.

1858 – Oregon's first Jewish synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel was established in Portland.

1859 – Oregon became the 33rd state on February 14, 1859; parts of Idaho and Wyoming that were part of the Oregon Territory became part of the Washington Territory.

1860 – Roseburg opened a Public Land Office.

1861-1865 – Volunteer cavalry from California were sent north to Oregon to keep the peace. The First Oregon Cavalry served the Union until 1865.

1862 – Under the five-year Homestead Act, Congress gave up to 160 acres of land to people who would settle and cultivate the land for 5 years; adopted a law requiring blacks, Chinese, mulattos and Hawaiians pay a \$5 a year tax

1862-1865 – Gold mining in Baker and Grant counties brought prosperity to the region.

1866 – Oregon citizens do not pass the 14th amendment giving citizenships to blacks. Interracial marriages are banned preventing white from marrying anyone who is ½ or more Chinese or Hawaiian and ½ or more Native American.

1867 – Le Grande opened a Public Land Office which operated until 1925.

1870s – Portland became a major port.

1870 – The 15th Amendment which gave black men the right to vote is added to the US Constitution. This law superseded a clause in the Oregon constitution banning black men from voting.

1872 – The Modoc War, also known as the Lava Bed War, was fought in southern Oregon and northern California.

1873 – Great fire in Portland destroyed most of the town; Linkville opened a Public Land Office which operated until 1877.

1875 – The Dalles opened a Public Land Office.

1877 – The Nez Perce Indian War was fought between June and October of 1877 when several bands of the Nez Perce refused to give up their ancestral lands. This forced removal was in violation of the 1855 Treaty of Walla Walla; Lakeview opened a Public Land Office.

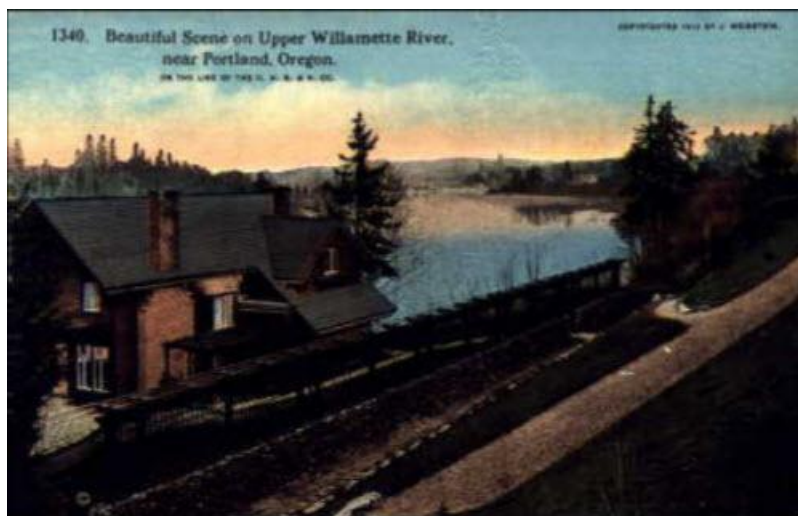


Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State

1878 – The Bannock War was fought from June to September when about 500 warriors faced the 21st Infantry Regiment and militias from nearby states. After the war, the Bannock moved onto the Fort Hall Indian Reservation with the Northern Shoshone and eventually the tribes merged.

1880 – A tornado hit Portland in a storm called the Storm King on January 9th.



At least 100 structures were damaged by 70 mph gusts of wind.

1883 – Transcontinental Railroad completed in Oregon.

1885 – Nez Perce tribes relocated to Colville Reservation located in the north-central part of Washington.

1886 – City militias activated to quell Anti-Chinese violence

1899 – Burns opened a Public Land Office that operated until 1925.

1902 – Based on a movement that began in 1898, Oregon established a system of government where citizens could propose direct legislation through initiatives and referenda.

1903 – Oregon began recording birth and deaths in July of 1903.

1905 – Portland opened a Public Land Office which operated until 1925.

1906 – Oregon begins recording marriages in 1906.

1909 – Portland to Seattle Railroad completed when the line was opened from Spokane to Pasco.

1911 – Oregon first U.S state to hold primary elections.

1912 – The residency requirements for the Homestead Act were reduced to 3 years.

1915 – Dalles-Celilo Canal opened after 10 years of construction connecting Oregon and Washington along the Celilo Falls. The Canal was closed in 1945.

1925 – Divorce certificates were recorded at the state level.

1933 – Tillamook Burn, a series of forest fires in the northern coastal area of Oregon, destroyed over 240,000 acres of forest.

1935 – The state capitol building is destroyed by fire.

1936 – Fire in Bandon killed eleven and destroyed the town.

1937 – Bonneville Dam hydroelectric project on the Columbia River was completed.

1939 – Tillamook Burn destroyed 190,000 acres of forest. The state capitol was rebuilt.

1942 – Fort Steves was shelled by a Japanese submarine; Siskiyou National Forest was firebombed by the Japanese.



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State

Oregon Censuses

Federal census records for Oregon began in 1850 and continue every 10 years.

Territorial and state census records reflect the rapid growth of the Oregon country. These census enumerations were taken in 1842, 1843, 1845, 1849, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895, and 1905, though only portions of these enumerations have survived. Most of these censuses include only the name of the head of household, although the 1895 and 1905 censuses include some information on all members of the household.

Ancestry.com has these specific Oregon census records:

- [Oregon, Compiled Census Index, 1841-1890](#)
- [Marion County, Oregon, Census, 1895](#)
- [Oregon Territory Census, 1850](#)
- [United States census of Douglas County, Oregon, 1870](#)
- [United States census of Jackson County, Oregon, 1860](#)
- [1860 Columbia County, Oregon census](#)

The following census rolls are on file at the Oregon State Library, the Oregon Historical Society, the University of Oregon Library, and the Family History Library:

- 1845: Champoeg, Clackamas, Clatsop, Tuality (now Washington County), Yamhill
- 1849: Benton, Champoeg (now Marion), Clackamas, Lewis (now in Washington State), Linn, Polk, Tualatin (now Washington County), Vancouver (now in Washington State), Yamhill
- 1853: Marion, Polk, Umpqua (now Douglas), Washington, Bento
- 1854: Clatsop, Jackson
- 1855: Coos, Jackson
- 1856: Clackamas, Curry, Jackson, Polk, Washington
- 1857: Clackamas, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Tillamook, Umpqua (now Douglas), Washington
- 1858: Clatsop, Coos, Curry, Umpqua (now Douglas)
- 1859: Clatsop, Umpqua (now Douglas)
- 1895: Marion
- 1905: Baker, Linn, Lane, Marion

<i>Population</i>	
1850	12,093
1860	52,465
1870	90,923
1880	174,768
1890	317,704
1900	413,536
1910	672,765
1920	783,389
1930	953,786
1940	1,089,684
1950	1,521,341
1960	1,768,687
1970	2,091,533
1980	2,633,156
1990	2,842,321
2000	3,421,399
2010	3,831,074



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State



Oregon Vital Records

Oregon began recording births and deaths in 1903 and marriages in 1906. The Oregon State Archives in Salem has vital records from 15 of the 36 counties. These include Benton, Clackamas, Columbia, Douglas, Jackson, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah (and Portland), Polk, Tillamook, Umatilla, Wasco, Washington, and Yamhill.

Ancestry.com has these specific Oregon vital records:

- [Oregon, Marriage Indexes, 1906-1924, 1946-2008](#)
- [Oregon, Death Index, 1898-2008](#)
- [Web: Oregon, Find A Grave Index, 1819-2012](#)
- [Oregon, Select Births and Christenings, 1868-1929](#)
- [Oregon, Church and Cemetery Records, 1840-1965](#)

You can find more information about Oregon Vital Records:

- [Oregon Center for Health Statistics – Vital Records](#): Holds records of births and deaths from July, 1903; marriages from 1906; and divorce certificates from 1925.
- [Oregon State Archives – Vital Records](#): The Archives holds birth, marriage, divorce, and death registers and records for selected counties, and will provide copies to researchers. A list of available holdings and search fees is provided. The [searchable Oregon Historical Records Index](#) offers a surname search of selected records, including vital records.
- [Western States marriage index \(BYU Idaho\) special collections](#): a searchable index to marriages in several western states, including Oregon. See the web site for specific counties and years included in the index.

Oregon Military Records on Ancestry.com

- [U.S., Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865](#)
- [Oregon Volunteers, Spanish American War and Philippine Insurrection](#)
- [The official records of the Oregon volunteers in the Spanish War and Philippine Insurrection](#)



Oregon Resources

Family History Sources in The Beaver State



Special Collections

City Directories

Use the browse box in the upper right corner to determine what directories are available for your ancestor's area. If they lived in a rural area, check to see if that area was included with a larger city in the vicinity.

Other Resources

- [Oregon State Archives genealogy records](#): Research guides are provided for the extensive research resources at the Archives.
- [Oregon State Library](#): see the Genealogy link for a description of resources.
- [Oregon Historical Society](#)
- [Genealogical Forum of Oregon \(GFO\)](#): In addition to an on-site genealogy library located in Portland, the GFO's web site provides searchable indexes to marriages, deaths, cemetery, military, probate, and yearbook records.
- [Genealogical Council of Oregon, Inc.](#): Maintains a list of Oregon genealogical societies.
- [Oregon GenWeb](#)
- [Southern Oregon University Digital Archives \(SODA\)](#): Includes collections on Oregon history and First Nations.
- [The National Archives at Seattle](#): This facility maintains records from Federal agencies and courts in Oregon, including census, military, court naturalization, and immigration records.
- [Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\) General Land Office Records](#): The BLM administers Federal Land for public land states including Oregon, and maintains records of land patents which granted land from the Federal Government to individuals. Use the Land Patent Search to locate land grants by name. Many record images are available on the web site. See the FAQ for more information on how to locate and use land patents.
- [Oregon-California Trails Organization](#): Focuses on the 19th century migration on the Oregon, California, Santa Fe and Mormon Trails.

Help and Advice

- [Oregon Family History Research](#)
- [Counties of Oregon](#)
- [Track Down Your Western Trails Travelers](#)
- [New England's Migration Fever: The Expansion of America](#)

[View all Oregon collections on Ancestry.com](#)