**Routes to Oregon**

There were basically three ways for pioneers to get to Oregon.

The most popular route was the Oregon Trail. It was 1,950 miles long and took about 6 months to travel. Travel back then was much different than today. There were no cities, planes, rest

stops or 7-11s. They had to pack everything they owned and everything they needed to eat on a large wagon and live out in the open for the next 6 months. This was a popular method of travel because it was cheap and most of the pioneers were very poor.

The second choice for getting to Oregon was to pay for passage on a sailing ship from Boston or New York. These passages were very expensive and not much more comfortable than travelling

by land. The quarters they lived in were cramped and the food was substandard. It also took them up to a year to travel by sea. The route around Cape Horn had terrible weather and proved to be very dangerous.

The third choice was a combination of sea and land travel. This route booked a sailing ship that carried the family and belongings to Panama. Here, they could hire a guide to travel by foot across the Isthmus. Next, they would catch another ship traveling north to Oregon. This route saved the passengers 3 months of travel time, but it ended up being very dangerous. Many people caught deadly fevers while others were robbed by bandits. It got to be so dangerous that many people chose a different route.

**Pros & Cons**

Reasons why pioneers chose to leave their homes and move to Oregon:

 Free Land! The Donation Land Act of 1850 allowed any

unmarried male to claim 160 acres of land in Oregon for

free. Married couples could claim 320 acres. The only

stipulation was that they had to live and farm the land

for 4 years.

 The Donation Land Act allowed women to have their

name on a piece of land if she was married. Oregon was

one of the first states in the United States to allow this.

 Any half-blood Native American was also allowed to claim

free land. This was another first for this day and time.

 In 1844, Oregon’s Provisional Government enacted

Oregon as a Slave-Free State. This meant slavery was

illegal and anyone who owned slaves must free them in 3

years. Although this sounds like it helped the slaves,

they were not allowed to live in Oregon past 18 years old.