

OREGON TRAIL ROUTE PATTERNS

Number 1035

October 1993

Whenever they crossed flat enough country to spread their wagons out over a wide terrain, emigrants preferred to make their roads at least eight lanes wide going west. They had no need for eastbound lanes, but by using many columns of wagons they could avoid a lot of miserable dust. Some arid parts of Idaho created terrible dust problems, while other stretches were less offensive.

In quite a few places, however, rocky cliffs or other natural obstacles forced all emigrant wagons to converge into a single track. Ruts in those places often got very deep. Both varieties of trail--shallow multiple lanes and deep single lanes--are visible between Bonneville Point and Boise. Tracks from many wide multiple lane areas have vanished because they did not get deep enough to last very long. But deep cuts and steep descents continue to show where emigrant wagons wound through difficult country.

(This information has not been edited.)