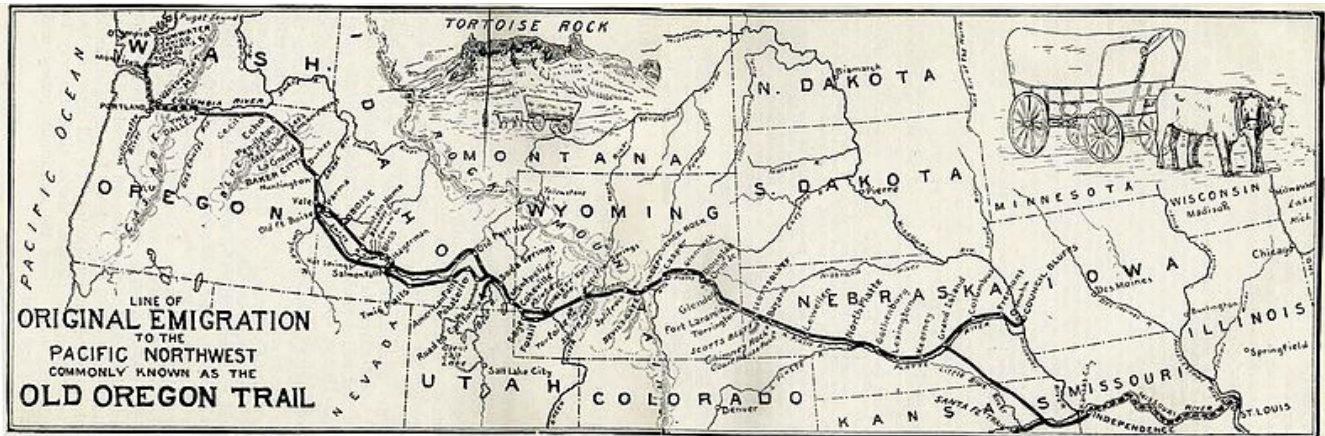




## Military & Supply Forts on the Oregon Trail



### Protecting the Trails

During the 1800's, the U.S. Government and other companies built forts along the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails to protect the emigrants traveling west and to also provide supplies for these wagon trains. Below is a list of some of these forts and outposts that were built along the Overland Trails in the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

### Fort Leavenworth Kansas

Fort Leavenworth was established by Col. Henry Leavenworth in 1827 and is the oldest army fort still in operation west of the Mississippi River. Due to its location on the Missouri River, Fort Leavenworth was the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails.

### Fort Sedgewick Colorado

Fort Sedgewick was established by Col. Christophor H. McNally in 1864. Originally called "Camp Rankin", the post was designated Fort Sedgewick in 1865 in honor of Major General John Sedgewick. Located on the right bank of the South Platte River near the town of Julesburg, Colorado, the fort was intended to protect the routes of travelers and settlers in the area. The fort was abandoned on May 31, 1871.

### Fort Childs, Fort Kearny Nebraska

Fort Childs was established on a site purchased from the Pawnee Indian tribe. It was unofficially name after Col. Thomas Childs, a famous soldier in the Mexican-American War. Fort Childs was located in central Nebraska near the spot where the Oregon Trail westward from Independence joined the trail westward from Omaha and Council Bluffs. Later, the War Department directed that the fort be called "Fort Kearny" in honor of Brigadier General Stephen W. Kearny and served as a Way Station, Supply Depot, Freight Station and Home Station of the Pony Express. Until the 1860s, there were no fortifications around the buildings and it was the last fort along the emigrant trails until Fort Laramie in Wyoming. The fort was abandoned in 1871 and is presently a Nebraska State Historical Park.



### Fort Grattan Nebraska

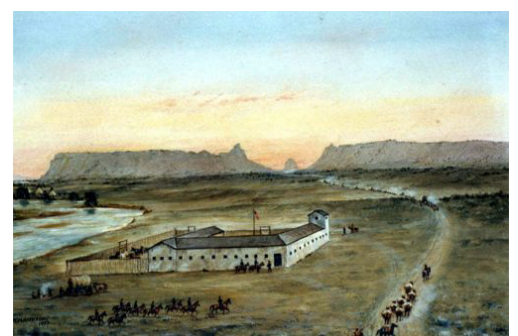
Fort Grattan was established on September 8, 1855 and named for Brevet Second Lieutenant John L. Grattan. It was erected by Col. William S. Harney immediately after his engagement with the Sioux in the battle of Blue Water. It was located on the Oregon Trail at the mouth of Ash Hollow, south of the North Platte River. The fort was almost immediately abandoned on October 1, 1855.

### Fort McPherson Nebraska

Fort McPherson was built in 1863 and was originally called "Cantonment McKean", but was popularly known as "Fort Cottonwood". It's name was changed to Fort McPherson in 1866 in honor of Major General James B. McPherson. It was located on the banks of the North Platte River, at the mouth of Cottonwood Canyon, a strategic location near the junction of the South and North Platte Rivers. It was abandoned in 1880.

### Fort Mitchell Nebraska

Fort Mitchell was first called "Camp Shuman" after Capt. J. S. Shuman. It was later named Fort Mitchell in honor of General Robert B. Mitchell who ordered the establishment of the post to protect traffic along the Great Platte River Road between Julesburg and South Pass. The fort was located just west of Scotts Bluff National Monument. Fort Mitchell was never officially designated as a fort and was abandoned after the Fort Laramie peace conference of 1867. Today, no trace of the sod structure remains.

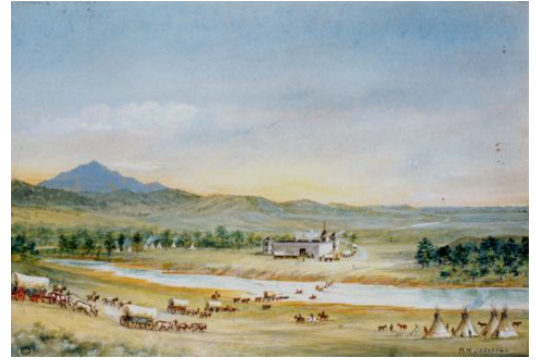


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**Fort Benard Wyoming** Fort Benard was established in 1848 and was located eight miles southeast of Fort Laramie. It was operated by the American Fur Trading Company. The fort burned down sometime during the summer of 1866.

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**Fort William, Fort John, Fort Laramie Wyoming** The first Fort Laramie, officially named “Fort William”, was constructed in 1834. It was established to capitalize on the buffalo robe trade with the Northern Plains tribes. In 1841, the deteriorating old log fort was replaced by a new larger adobe structure named “Fort John”, named after John B. Sarpy. Fort John was purchased by the Government in 1849 and renamed Fort Laramie. Fort Laramie grew to become the largest and most important military post on the Northern Plains. It served emigrants as post office, resupply point and protection on the trail. Fort Laramie is now a NPS National Historic Site.



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**Fort Platte Wyoming** Fort Platte was active between 1840 and 1846 and competed with Fort Laramie, which was one mile away. In 1845, the operations of the fort was moved to Fort Benard to capture the travelers west on the Oregon Trail. It was abandoned in the late 1840's.

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**Fort Caspar Wyoming** Fort Caspar was established in 1858 as a military encampment known as the “Mormon Ferry Post”. After a bridge was built across the river, the post was known as “The Platte River Bridge Station”; but its final name was Fort Caspar, named after Lt. Caspar Collins. The fort was abandoned in 1867, and the garrison moved to Fort Fetterman. It is currently a Wyoming State Park in Casper, Wyoming.

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**Fort Fetterman Wyoming** Fort Fetterman was established in 1867 and named in honor of Capt. William J. Fetterman, and is located 11 miles northwest of present day Douglas, Wyoming. The fort became the northernmost military post in eastern Wyoming. When this fort was completed, Fort Caspar was abandoned. Some of the buildings of the old fort are still standing.

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**Fort Bridger Wyoming** Fort Bridger was established in 1842 by Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez to capitalize on the overland trail traffic. It served as a supply depot for the U. S. Army and for wagon trains on the Oregon Trail. The fort was abandoned in 1890 and is currently a Wyoming State Park.

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**Camp Conner Idaho** Camp Conner was established in 1863 by Capt. David Black, and named after Brigadier General Patrick E. Conner. It was located east of what is now Soda Springs, Idaho on the north bank of the Bear River. It was abandoned in 1865.

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**Fort Hall Idaho** Fort Hall was established in 1834 by Nathaniel Wyeth and later sold to the Hudson Bay Company. It was abandoned in 1856, but emigrants used it for camping until 1863 when floods swept away all remains of the fort. A new fort was built in 1870.



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**Fort Boise Idaho** Fort Boise was established in 1834 and operated by the Hudson Bay Company. It fell into disrepair and a new fort was built by the Oregon volunteers in 1863 to protect emigrants along the trail. The U.S. Army took over the fort after the Civil War and it became a base of operations for General Cook. It is now the site of the VA Hospital in Boise, Idaho.

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**Fort Drum, Fort Dalles Oregon** Camp Drum was established in 1850 under the supervision of Major Tucker. At that time, it was the only U. S. Army Fort on the Oregon Trail between Fort Laramie and Fort Vancouver. In April 1853, Camp Drum became Fort Drum, and in July 1853 it was designated as Fort Dalles. Located on the Columbia River at the present site of The Dalles, Oregon, the fort marked the point where wagon trains left the trail and used the river, until 1846 when the Barlow Road was opened. Protecting The Dalles was vital to the operation of the Oregon Trail and the supply of other military posts. It was abandoned in 1867 and sold by the Army in 1877. Some of the buildings still exist.

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**Fort Walla Walla Washington** The first Fort Walla Walla was built in 1818 and was originally called Fort Nez Perce. The early name was “Fort Steptoe”, then named for the Walla Walla Valley. The second Fort Walla Walla was a temporary structure built in 1856 on the north side of Mill Creek. The third Fort Walla Walla was built in 1857 and was more extensive than the previous two. Fort Walla Walla was deactivated in 1890 and abandoned in 1911. Fifteen of the fort-era buildings still exist today.

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**Fort Astor Washington** An American outpost established by John Astor’s Pacific Fur Company, it was here for the first time since Missouri, that emigrants ate at a table and slept beneath a roof.

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**Fort Vancouver Washington** Fort Vancouver was established in 1824 by the Hudson Bay Company following the abandonment of Fort Astor. For emigrants taking the Columbia River from The Dalles, it was the last fort on their journey. From here they started making their way south along the Willamette River to Oregon City and the rich lands beyond that had drawn them from their homes back east.

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