

View from the Oregon Trail



Photo: Mountain Visions

Into the Valley of Trees

Emigrants on the Oregon Trail got their first glimpse of the Boise Valley near Bonneville Point (several miles east of here), where the Boise District BLM now maintains an interpretive site. After weeks of crossing the southern Idaho desert with barely a tree in sight, they were overjoyed when they saw the lush Boise Valley ahead.

**Joel Palmer, *Journal of Travels*
August 29, 1845**

"We traveled about eighteen miles, which brought us Bois river, a stream of forty or fifty yards in width, and abounding with salmon. Its banks are lined with Balm of Gilead [*Populus balsamifera*, a.k.a. balsam poplar or black poplar] timber. The bottoms here are two or three miles wide, and covered with grass."

August 30, 1845

"We traveled about eleven miles. The road is sometimes on the bottom, at others on the bluff. The Indians are very numerous along this stream; they have a large number of horses; clothing is in much demand; for articles of clothing costing in the States ten or twelve

dollars, a very good horse can be obtained."

**Winfield S. Ebey
August 20, 1854**

"It was getting late when I reached the top of the Big Hill...Below, thousands of feet below, were seen the water of this beautiful river winding there tranquil course & gleaming like a thread of silver in the rays of the setting sun...the stream is marked by a line of green timber, which gave rise to its name among the early trappers—"Boisse" or the "Wooded River"—This green strip of vegetation winding its way through the desert sage plain, gave a more cheerful prospect to the view... never can the recollection of the grandeur of that scene be blotted from memory—the sunset from the Big Hill

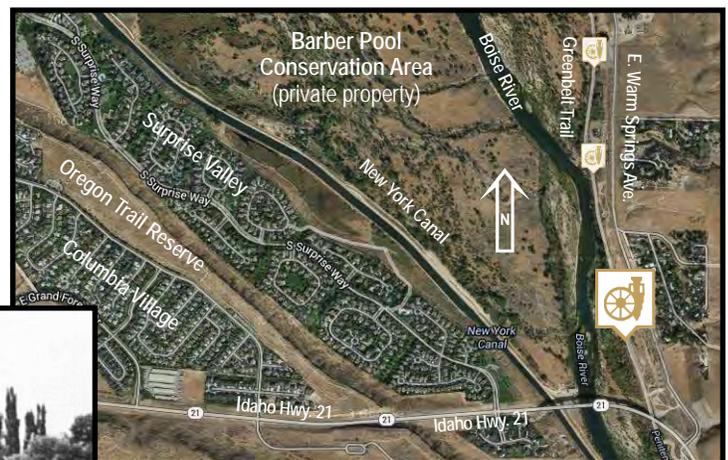


Photo: Oregon Trail emigrants camp on Boise River, 1864.

Oregon Trail journal quotes from : "Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho," BLM and Idaho State Historical Society, 1993, pages 43-44.