

# Barlow Toll Road

Floating the Columbia was risky. Commercial ferrymen set up shop, but their prices were outlandishly high. One man particularly angry about high ferryboat prices was Sam Barlow. He devised a plan to build a road from The Dalles to the Willamette Valley, avoiding the Columbia River altogether. Just one thing stood in his way: Mt. Hood. But Barlow was determined--and in 1845 he and a few men began hacking and cutting their way through the forests of Mt. Hood. The thick pine and steep hills proved to be difficult obstacles, but Barlow was determined. By 1846, the Barlow Road was finished, complete with toll gates. It was an immediate success. Emigrants willingly endured the steep inclines and sheer descents.

Fees: \$5 per wagon, \$1 per person and 10¢ for every head of livestock. \$5 was about one week's wages, but consider the alternative -- floating down the Columbia River in boats or rafts cost nearly \$50.00! However, the road failed to become profitable because many who used it could not afford to pay or were allowed to pass by a tolerant keeper.



By 1863, tolls had changed to \$2.50 per wagon and team, 75¢ for horse and rider, and 10¢ for other livestock.

*Sarah Cummins wrote: "The traveling was slow and toilsome; slopes were almost impassible for man and beast. As night was coming on, it seemed we all must perish, but weak, faint and starving we went on. I could scarcely put one foot before the other. I weighed less than eighty pounds at the time. My own party had been 14 days with only nine biscuits and four small slices of bacon. "*