

<http://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/constitution/Pages/during-about-applegate.aspx>

### **Biographical Sketch of Jesse Applegate**

Born 1811, Died 1888 , Umpqua County delegate

Jesse Applegate was born on July 5, 1811, in Henry County, Kentucky. He moved to and was schooled in St. Louis, Missouri, where he learned surveying. In 1831 he married and took up a land claim in St. Clair County, Missouri and farmed, surveyed and kept a country store.

In 1843, Jesse along with his wife and many children and accompanied by two brothers and their families moved to Oregon. He served as member of the legislative committee of the provisional government in 1845. In 1846 he was involved in establishing an important southern route to Oregon, which was later known as the Applegate Trail.

He represented Umpqua County at the constitutional convention but withdrew when a resolution he proposed prohibiting the discussion of slavery was not adopted. "I have no doubt there is honesty and talent enough in this body to frame a constitution that will be approved by the people of Oregon without my assistance."

He served for a number of years both as justice of the peace and as postmaster of Yoncalla. In 1856, he acted as a guide for Major Kearney in a campaign against the Rogue River Indians. He died on April 22, 1888.

Applegate settled on a land claim in the Umpqua Valley in 1849 in a place he called Yoncalla after the local Indian tribe. There he farmed and raised cattle. A student and writer, Applegate maintained a large library in his house. He continued his influence over public issues and gained the title "Sage of Yoncalla" from his friends.

<https://www.accessgenealogy.com/oregon/biography-of-jesse-applegate.htm>

**JESSE APPLGATE** – The following brief obituary sketch of the late "Uncle" Jesse Applegate was written by General E.L. Applegate, than whom none is better fitted to perform the task, – unwelcome in the occasion of its necessity, yet grateful in the opportunity it offers to pay the well-earned tribute of respect and veneration to the wisdom, the worth and the influence of the "Sage of Yoncalla."

The subject of this sketch was born near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1810, and died in Yoncalla valley, Oregon, on the 23d of April 1888, being in his seventy-eighth year. He was the youngest son of Daniel Applegate, a revolutionary soldier who served in that memorable struggle for human liberty for seven years, and then volunteered to help Jackson beat the British at New Orleans, in which campaign he lost his eldest son, Elisha. His ancestors belonged among the charter proprietors who founded the province of Maryland and the city of Baltimore. Upon the close of the revolutionary war Daniel, along with the Boone's and others of their relations and acquaintances, pioneered his way into the wilderness of Kentucky. In 1819, he moved on with his large family, consisting of Milton, Lisbon, Lucy, Charles, Lindsay and Jesse, to the then territory of Missouri, and settled near St. Louis.

Jesse, while yet a boy, attracted the attention of leading men of St. Louis; and it was believed that he gave indications of uncommon abilities. He graduated in his eighteenth year at Rock Spring Seminary, an institution of learning founded by the celebrated Doctor Peck of St. Louis. By the kind offices of his friend Milburn, who was chief clerk in the surveyor-general's office, he was introduced to Edward Bates, who was then surveyor-general of the western territory, and

who appointed Jesse to be the draughtsman in his office. Being now situated in a good position the young man, before he was twenty, was married to Miss Cynthia Parker, and settled down to house-keeping and the prosecution of his work in the office, in which he displayed great thoroughness and proficiency, and at the time was regarded by men of learning as a prodigy in the mathematical sciences. But the monotony of office routine was too confining for his restless disposition; and, therefore, he soon took the field as a United States deputy surveyor, and prosecuted the work with such energy and success that in a few years he was regarded as a wealthy man.

In 1843 we find him located upon his magnificent home farm on the Osage River, within three miles of the town of Osceola, the county-seat of St. Clair County, Missouri, surrounded by all the comforts and then elegancies of life. His house was the open resort of the great people of the state and of the western territory. Such guests were frequently found at his hospitable board as Bates, Doctor Peck, Benton, Doctor Linn, Doctor Redman and Colonel Beal, the Bells, the Dodges, the Marmadukes, the Jackson's, the Hutchings, the Breckenridge's, the Waldos, the Sappingtons, the Austins, the Ashworths, the Mayos and the McKinzies. Here national affairs were discussed and among other matters the exceedingly captivating subject of the Oregon country.

During the severe winter of 1842-43 letters were received from Oregon from Robert Shortess, descriptive of the comparatively mild climate and, above all, the perpetually green hills of this wonderfully favored land. Carried away by the enthusiasm of romance and adventure, he, together with his brothers Charles and Lindsay, with Waldo, Looney and many others, resolved to rent out their farms, trade off their personal property for oxen, wagons and stock cattle, and roll out for the perpetually green and grassy hills and plains of the far-off Oregon. Accordingly by the middle of May, 1843, their trains were winding their way westward upon the broad plains beyond the western settlements. At the first encampment west of the Big Blue, Jess Applegate was chosen captain of the emigration, and held that office and discharged its arduous duties to the disbanding of the emigration on the Umatilla river at the western foot of the Blue Mountains, after the severe struggle of cutting the road through the forests of that mountain. It was understood that Lieutenant Fremont, a son-in-law of Senator Benton, being selected by him for that purpose, should go before, with a cannon, to look out the way, and awe off the Indians with his big gun. But, going too far up the South Platte, he fell behind, and never caught up with the emigration until he reached Soda Springs in Bear River valley. Then he found he could not "proceed in the advance," because his carriages were too light to break the sage; so he quietly followed along behind to the encampment on Grande Ronde river, about two miles north of where the city of La Grande now stands. Here Fremont crossed the river and struck through the mountain in a northwest course for the headwaters of the Walla Walla River, while the emigrant train pulled up the mountain where the city just mentioned now stands, on to the head of Rock creek; and from thence they cut their way through the forest.

From Umatilla, Jesse Applegate, his brothers and their immediate friends, proceeded northward by way of the Whitman Mission to Fort Walla Walla with the view of leaving their cattle for the winter under the protection of Captain Armitinger of the Hudson's Bay Company. Thus leaving their wagons and cattle, they proceeded down the river by water; but at Celilo Falls they met with a great calamity which cast a shadow over the whole company and over Jesse Applegate's whole life. Bringing with them a complete supply of a variety of tools, when these people arrived at Fort Walla Walla, located at a point on the river where the town

of Wallula now stands, they were prepared to readily work both wood and iron. Therefore, immediately erecting shops and saw-pits, in an incredible short time they had built and launched a sufficient number of well-constructed boats, some of them quite large, in which to navigate the waters of the Columbia. They had built, also, for light and contingent purposes, a couple of small skiffs. It was one of these that went over Celilo Falls. Among those of the families lost was his son Edward, named after his benefactor, Edward Bates. His first son he had named Milburn, to honor his friend Milburn of St. Louis. This son was burnt to death by his clothes catching fire when he was a mere child. He used to mournfully say: "Thus by the elements of fire and water have I lost the pledges of my gratitude for my early benefactors; and this I regard as a bad omen upon my life." This Columbia River calamity led to that most expensive and severe expedition to explore and open the south road in 1846, that a safer way for emigrants might be found to Oregon than by way of the Columbia cañon.

In the early days of Oregon, Jesse Applegate took an active part in the foundation of the Provisional government and the direction of public affairs. His house was resorted to by leading men and chiefs of tribes for council. He entertained, during the summer of 1845, the Envoy of the British Minister and his suit, when out to this country upon a trip of exploration and observation. In pursuance of his report, the claims of the British government were so modified that they were adopted by Polk's administration; and in a convention of the two powers held on the 15th of June, 1846, those long-pending and dangerous questions pertaining to Oregon were definitely settled by treaty.

The summer of 1846 was spent in the explorations for the southern route to Oregon. At that time the country from Pilot Rock eastward to the sink of the Humboldt was noted on the standard map of the United States as an unexplored region. Upon the desert the company came near perishing for want of water; and the captain of the expedition received such injuries from thirst and the heat of the sun that periodically it effected his mind ever after. The route was found and the way opened through the Siskiyou Mountains, the Grave creek hills, the Umpqua canon, and the Calopooia Mountains, altogether about eighty miles of forests being cut through. It cost very largely the responsible parties in the great undertaking; but for it all, including the escort sent out in 1847 to meet, pilot and defend the immigrants, including also beef cattle and other supplies sent to the immigrants, no Applegate ever received a quarter of a dollar by way of pay or assistance for all that effort and expense.

In the winter of 1847, when the Whitman massacre occurred, Jesse Applegate was one of the foremost men in establishing a territorial credit by the formation of personal bonds by which supplies could be procured for the Oregon army, that the country might be defended from an uprising of the savages, the prisoners rescued from among the Indians, and the Cayuses chastised for their blood-thirsty outrage. During the same winter he made an attempt, at the head of a small company of brave men, to beat through the snow-drifts of the Siskiyou to California, to call upon the United States officers there, for help for Oregon in her emergency.

The early summer of 1849 was spent in explorations and road-building, with the Klamath commonwealth. This was a company organized among the leading spirits of the Yamhill country, mainly to locate somewhere in Southern Oregon or Northern California, where gold-mining, agriculture and manufacturing could all be carried on as a mutual operation, – in a word, to plant all the elements of civilization in the wilderness, and at the same time be strong enough to defend it against the hordes of savages then inhabiting that country. Upon the plain near where Jacksonville now stands, the company, consisting of about one hundred and twenty

men, with fifty wagons, formed their corral and proceeded to vote upon the question of location. One side maintained that within the circle of a few miles were to be found all the elements of success, – gold, soil and water-power. The other side admitted the elements, but urged that the climate would not do. A showing of snow had appeared on the 20th of May on the tops of the surrounding hills. It indicated too cold weather for the growth of domestic plants, – a country only fit for the abode of the wild man. In vain did the affirmative point to the splendid oak timber, the natural plum orchards and vineyards, and urge that wherever such growth is found domestic plants must succeed, and civilization always find a safe and successful home. Nevertheless the negative prevailed with a decisive majority; and the great enterprise was abandoned.

In the fall of 1849, uncle Jesse, as he was, by this time, universally called, gathered up his herds, and with his large family of boys and girls moved off from the Willamette valley, crossed the Calopooia Mountains, and settled down as a pioneer of Yoncalla valley, in the Umpqua country. Here he obtained his section of land, the reward of the Oregon pioneer promised to them by Benton and Linn before he left Missouri. Here he built up a fine home, embracing the comforts and elegancies of an advanced civilization. His house was open and resorted to by distinguished personages all up and down the coast, and, in fact, from one side of the continent to the other.

He was a member of the constitutional convention. He was opposed to the extension of slavery. He was in favor of internal improvements and the protection of American industry by the general government; and upon the outbreak of the rebellion he was loyal to the very core. But in the zenith of his influence and success in life, he trusts the unworthy, he is betrayed by the designing and treacherous and struck deep with the poisoned fang of ingratitude, – his property swept from him, his affairs and himself a ruin. Thus the mighty hath fallen! As the tall Pillar, or the grand Colossus, under the awful pressure of the hand of time, must crumble and fall, – must finally mingle its particles with the common kindred dust of the plain, – so we give him up, as we must all give up each other, to a fate that cannot be stayed, to a destiny which we cannot know. Then, farewell, Uncle Jess! Thou grand man, with thy great heart, with thy bright and wonderful intellect and universal knowledge, thou prince of lofty conversationalists, far thee well!

[https://books.google.com/books?id=C9QtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA611&lpg=PA611&dq=%22Jesse+Applegate%22+born+1835&source=bl&ots=XTcP\\_2OUUpB&sig=WnLMgPW5wOyexYzf6T41\\_dRxgHk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjWn-6QmMUAhVs5YMKHfcXDUEQ6AEIOjAG#v=onepage&q=%22Jesse%20Applegate%22%20born%201835&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=C9QtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA611&lpg=PA611&dq=%22Jesse+Applegate%22+born+1835&source=bl&ots=XTcP_2OUUpB&sig=WnLMgPW5wOyexYzf6T41_dRxgHk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjWn-6QmMUAhVs5YMKHfcXDUEQ6AEIOjAG#v=onepage&q=%22Jesse%20Applegate%22%20born%201835&f=false)

from History of the Willamette Valley

Jesse A. Applegate 1835-1919, son of Anthony Lindsay Applegate, nephew of Jesse M. Applegate and author of the book, *Recollections of My Boyhood*

Born in Missouri in 1835; came to Oregon with the world-famous party led by his relatives, Charles, Jesse and Lindsay Applegate, in 1843. Has lived at various points in the valley. Studied law with the firm of Wilson & Harding, at Salem, and was admitted to the bar in 1864. Was married in 1863 to Virginia Watson. Their children are – Glendower, McClellan and Erie. Mr. Applegate was superintendent of schools for Polk County in 1863-64, and member of the Legislature in 1865-66. Residence, Salem.