



#### **Prairie Schooner**

Covered Wagon







#### **History:**

- The prairie schooner, or covered wagon, was the mode of transportation for emigrants traveling to the American West in the 1800s.
- The name prairie schooner comes from the white canvas covers which looked like the sails of ships, called schooners, on the ocean.
- Most people walked alongside the wagon because the bumpy trail made a ride in the schooner uncomfortable
- Over 250,000 people traveled the California Trail, traveling with prairie schooners 2,000 miles west to reach California.





### **Prairie Schooner**

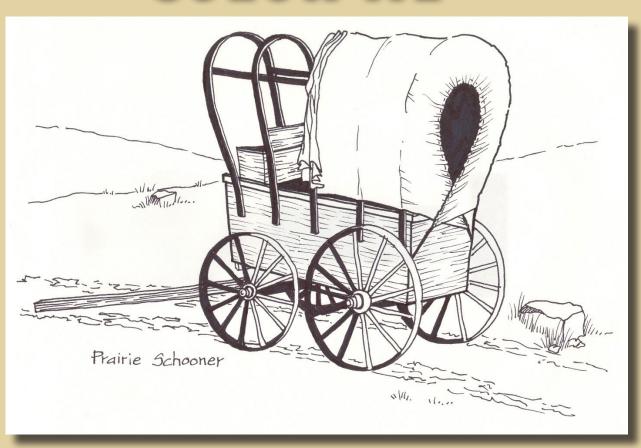
**Covered Wagon** 



#### Significance in Idaho

- People moving west on the Oregon and California Trails used prairie schooners to travel through Idaho.
- Idaho marked the split between the California and Oregon Trails. The trails diverged near where the Raft River and the Snake River meet in the southeast part of the state.
- Emigrants following the California Trail came through what is today City of Rocks
   National Reserve. Many people wrote their names on rocks, and these signatures are still
   visible today!









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#### **Fun Facts!**

- The front wheels of a prairie schooner are smaller than the back wheels to help with turning.
- The main frame of the wagon was about 4 feet wide and 10 feet long and all a family's belongings were stored inside. This meant no space for beds inside, so families slept under the wagon or camped right next to it at night.
- To waterproof the cover, emigrants would paint or oil the canvas.

## ACTIVITY TIME

1. Compare how you migh prepared for a move west	•	•	<b>-</b>
do you think emigrants " plies do you need versus t journey?	researched"	for their trip?	What sort of sup-

Question 2 on the next page!





## **Single Leaf Pinyon Pine**

(Pinus Monophylla)



ound the prairie schoone in the box below!								

# VOCABULARY

- **Emigrant:** a person who leaves their own country or region to settle permanently in another
- Gold rush: a rapid movement of people to a newly discovered goldfield
- Manifest destiny: the belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout America was both justified and inevitable
- Oxen: domesticated cattle trained as draft animals
- Native Americans: the indigenous peoples of the United States, who
  lived here before European colonists arrived and continue to live here
  today