

**Notable Oregonians: Joseph Lane - Governor**  
(<http://bluebook.state.or.us/notable/notlane.htm>)



**Joseph Lane, 1801-1881**

Joseph Lane was born in North Carolina on December 14, 1801 to John and Elizabeth Street Lane. Nine years later the family moved to Kentucky. After reaching adulthood, Lane relocated to Indiana and served in both houses of the legislature from 1822 to 1846. With the beginning of the Mexican War in 1846, he received the commission of colonel in the 2nd Indiana Volunteers. He attained the rank of major-general in 1847 before his discharge in 1848.

President James K. Polk appointed Lane to be governor of the new Oregon Territory in 1848. After a hazardous midwinter journey, he arrived at Oregon City in March 1849 to begin his duties. These duties included traveling to Walla Walla country to secure the surrender of five Cayuse Indians accused in

relation to the Whitman Massacre. The Indians were later convicted and hanged. Lane served as governor until June 1850 after which he served as delegate to Congress until Oregon became a state in 1859. He served as first Oregon senator from 1859 to 1861 and ran as a Democratic candidate for vice president on the unsuccessful Breckenridge ticket in 1860. Lane's pro-slavery Southern sympathies limited his political career in the 1860s. He spent the rest of his life on his land claim in the Umpqua Valley where he took no active part in politics.

One of his sons, Lafayette Lane served in Congress from 1875 to 1877; and a grandson, Dr. Harry Lane, was a U.S. Senator from 1913 to 1917, dying in office.

Lane County, Oregon is named for Joseph Lane.