THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE JOURNAL

VOLUME 8 2014

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Publications Director
Angie Thomas

Editor Emeritus
Dr. Fred R. Gowans

Design and Production
Sommers Studio, Pinedale, Wyoming

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James C. Auld Dr. Jay H. Buckley John C. Jackson
Jill R. Ottman Paul M. Raczka

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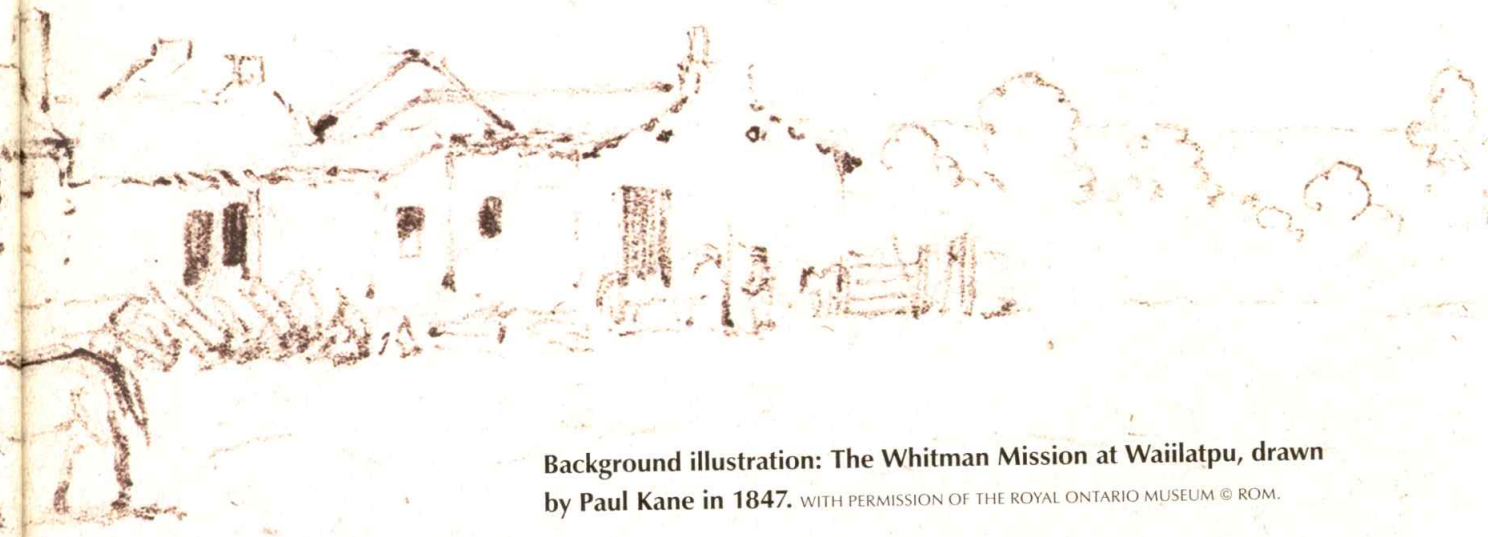


Background illustration: The Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu, drawn by Paul Kane in 1847. WITH PERMISSION OF THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM © ROM.

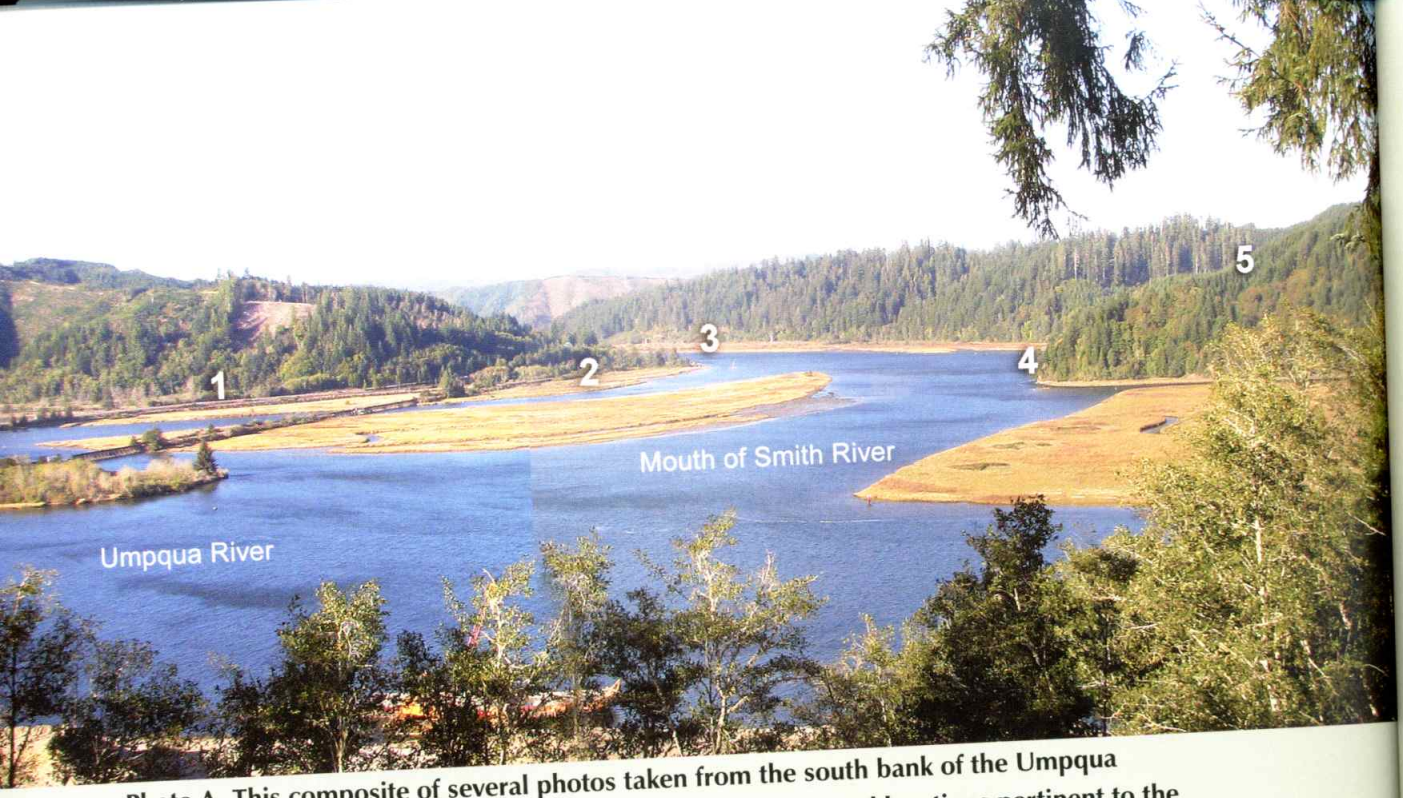
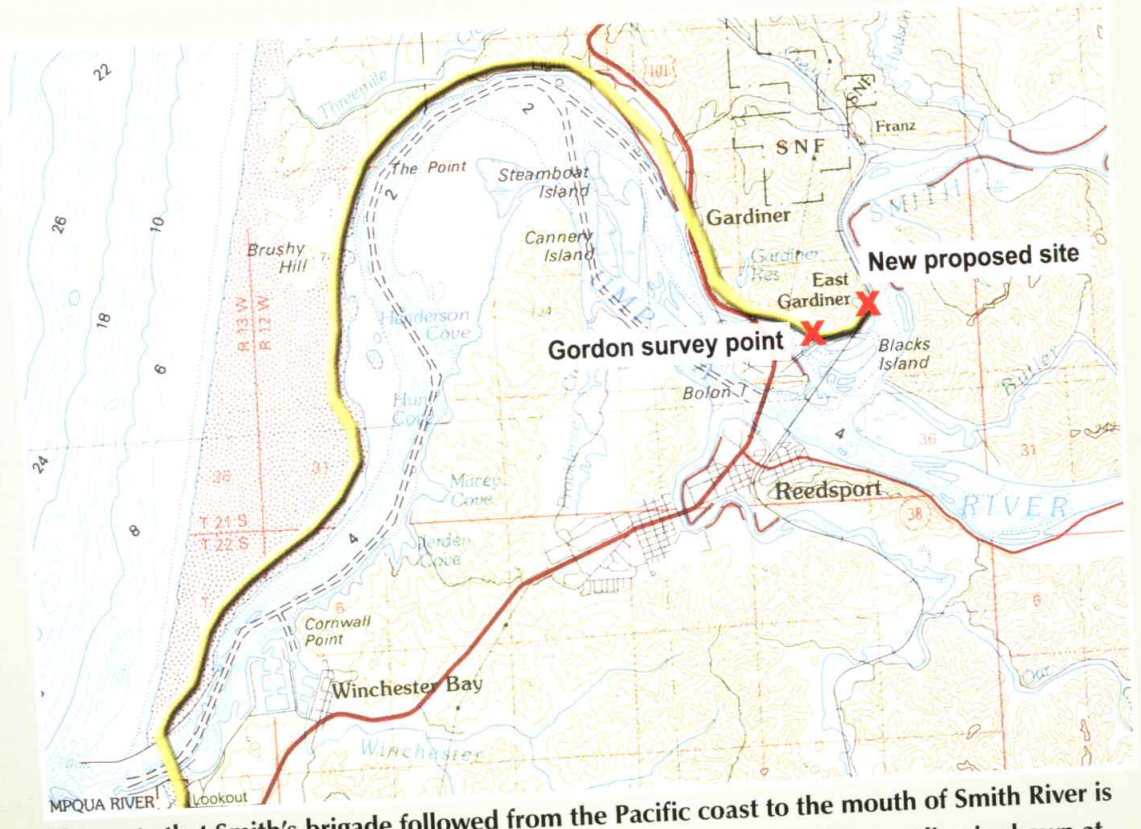


Photo A. This composite of several photos taken from the south bank of the Umpqua provides a view of the mouth of the Smith River, with numbered locations pertinent to the interpretation of the massacre site. JAMES C. AULD PHOTOS / ILLUSTRATION BY SOMMERS STUDIO

Key to numbered sites in Photo A: **1** – GPS location from Harvey Gordon survey. **2** – Auld's proposal for Smith campsite. **3** – Bend of Smith River from which Indians fired upon Smith's canoe. **4** – Shore to which Smith, Turner and Leland escaped. **5** – Hill that Smith climbed to view campsite.



The route that Smith's brigade followed from the Pacific coast to the mouth of Smith River is superimposed in yellow on a topographic map of the area. The Pacific coastline is shown at far left. CLINT GILCHRIST MAP BASED ON USGS TOPO MAP OF REEDSPORT, OREGON, 1980

Jedediah Smith's Disaster at Defeat River

by James C. Auld

The tragic demise of Jedediah Smith's Pacific Northwest Expedition of 1828 on the slippery banks of the Umpqua River resulted in the deaths of at least fifteen American trappers. This paper describes recent on-the-ground research, takes a fresh look at historical accounts, and re-evaluates the transcription of a primary historical document in order to establish a new, more credible location for Smith's final campsite where disaster struck.

In the written history of the American fur trade, this event has been called the Umpqua Massacre. The term comes from the location of the attack, not the tribal name of the group that fell upon the Americans. Hudson's Bay Company Governor George Simpson characterized the deadly encounter as a "melancholy catastrophe."[1] When William H. Goetzman wrote *Exploration and Empire* in 1966, he described the massacre as the "worst disaster in the history of the fur trade." This grim distinction compels further examination of the event.[2]

Research at the location suggests the brigade's last campsite was just inside the mouth of Smith River, on its west bank. Channels and several small islands occur here as the Smith River rushes south to join the larger Umpqua River, flowing west to the Pacific Ocean. Visiting the site and understanding the course the brigade took along the north shore of the Umpqua River led the author to review the original Harrison Rogers journal, instead of relying on published versions. This review turned up a previously unnoticed flaw in the transcription, and helped confirm the bridgade's location inside the Smith River's mouth.

On this small piece of grassy shoreline, washed by tides and floods, a vicious attack was committed on the American fur traders.

Prior interpretations

The earliest historical evidence, after primary fur trade documents, was supplied by Harvey Gordon, who in 1857-58 surveyed the area.[3] Gordon wrote in his field notes that he employed a party of Indians to assist him on the survey and his notes indicate the spot where the natives pointed out the location of the site. Considering the survey was done only thirty years after the battle, it is conceivable these Indians may have been present during the encounter and had legitimate information about the grisly incident.[4]

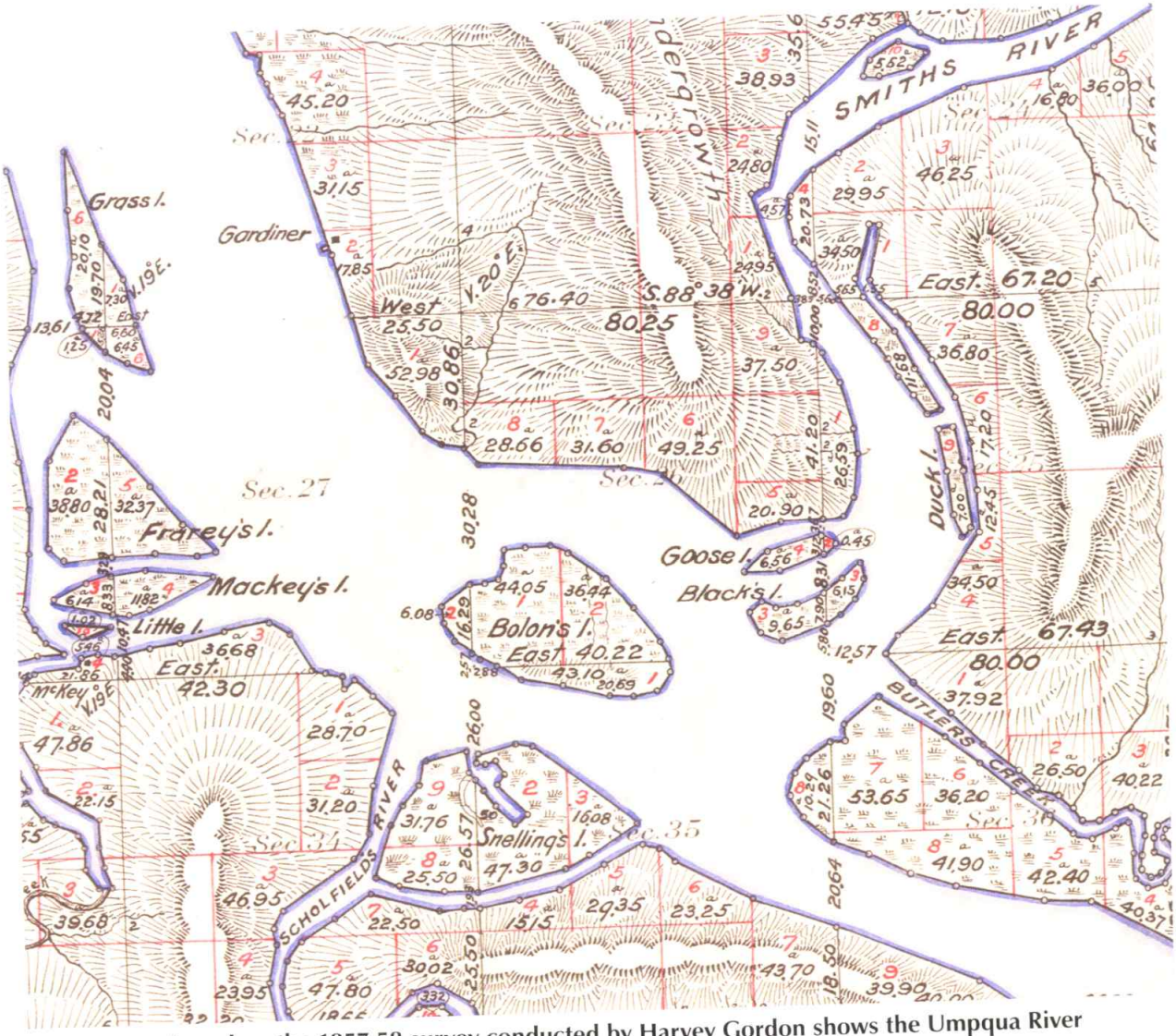
Historian Alice B. Maloney's "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith on the Oregon Coast" is based on research she completed in the 1930s.[5] Maloney concluded the campsite was on one of the islands at the mouth of Smith River, based on her interview with a tribal descendant:

> *On the hillside overlooking the mouth of Smith River lives a descendant of the Umpquas, Huldah Perry. When I asked her about the place of the massacre she said, "Well I was always told it was just here in front of me down on the flat opposite Jim Butler Creek."*[6]

Smith would have wrangled his herd of horses and mules up the Umpqua River, past the site of the present town of Gardiner, and around the bluff to the eastward to reach the island at the mouth of what has come to be known as Smith River.

The site was favorable enough for someone driving livestock. Maloney quoted Charles Perkins, whose father was the first settler in this region, as having said,

> *It was possible in early days to take cattle around this rocky cliff over which*



A map based on the 1857-58 survey conducted by Harvey Gordon shows the Umpqua River in great detail. Gordon's field notes, derived from Native accounts just thirty years after the event, indicate the massacre site was on the point of land just above the "e" in "Goose I."

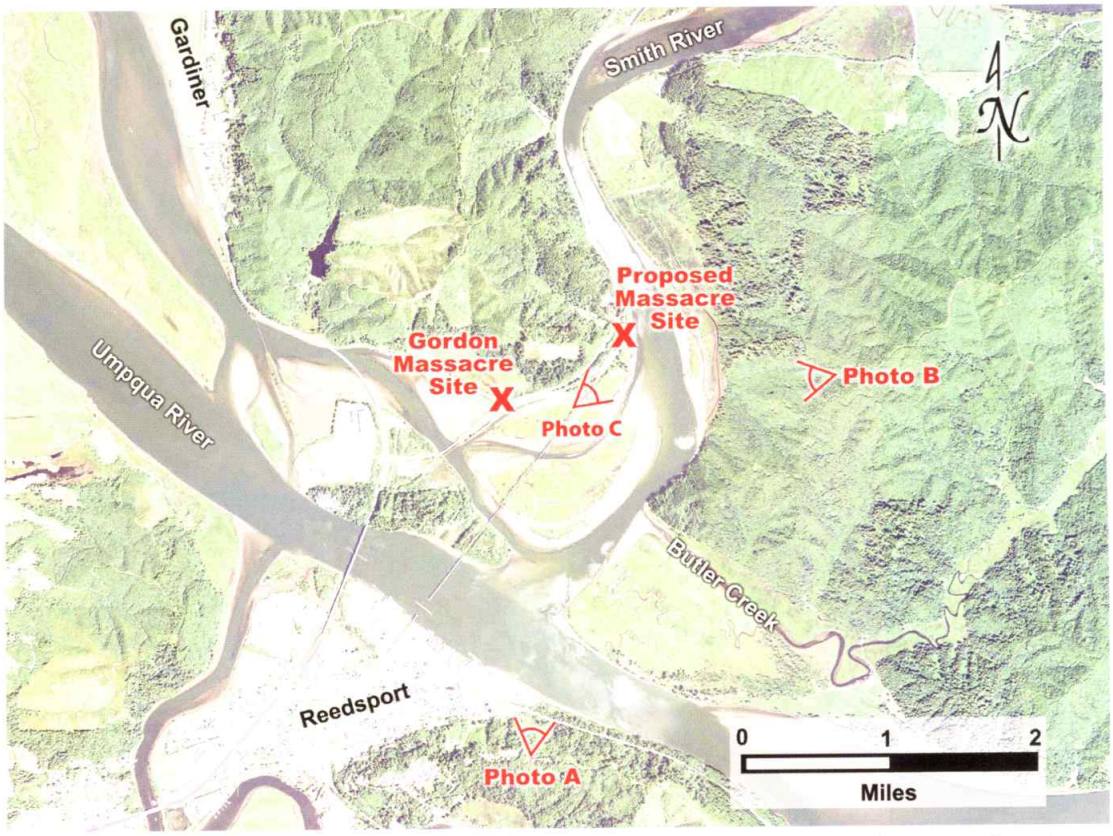
US DEPT OF INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, GENERAL LAND OFFICE RECORDS

there is no trail, by swimming them a short distance, in fact, he himself had done just this.[7]

On the other side of the bluff, the natural geography helped corral the animals.

In 2006, Jedediah Smith Society member Joe Molter used the 1857-58 Gordon survey map, first published in 1944 by Lancaster Pollard (see note 4), to calculate Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for a potential massacre site. The location, on the Lower Smith Road between Bolon Island and the town of East Gardiner, along the Smith River opposite Goose Island, correlates with Gordon's notes. Gordon places the site approximately eleven miles from the mouth of the Umpqua (see topo map). Railroad excavations, highway work and other soil disturbances have yet to report any remains that would definitely fix the spot where the eleven victims were allegedly buried.

A 2009 interview with a local relic hunter indicated several artifacts had been found on the smaller of the two islands, and this collector was convinced the items were



This aerial view is a key showing angles from which the photos in this article were taken. Note that water levels are much lower, and more land is exposed, than in the 1858 Gordon survey.

CLINT GILCHRIST MAP

related to the Smith encampment. The collector also reported a fellow treasure hunter had found numerous items that dated back to the early 1800s. Unfortunately, none of this information could be confirmed beyond doubt.

Interpreting the Rogers journal

On July 12, 1828, Harrison Rogers, second in command to brigade leader Jedediah Smith, wrote in his journal that the party crossed the Umpqua River, traveled three miles, then encamped. The next day it pushed on four more miles, a total of seven miles from the mouth of the Umpqua. Writers have unquestioningly accepted this mileage. The actual distance from the mouth of the Umpqua to the mouth of the Smith River is 12 miles. Thus, moving a total of 7 miles on July 12-13 leaves the party 5 miles short of what would be the massacre site at the mouth of the Smith River.

The original journal, which few seem to have examined, shows the "3 m" written over with another number, presumably by Rogers. This number, a transcription originally made by Harrison Dale, has been accepted as a "3" but it could be another number.[8] In order for the party to arrive at the mouth of the Smith River on July 13, the number of miles traveled on July 12 must be eight.[9] Though historians and writers agree that the final campsite was near the confluence of the Smith and Umpqua rivers, they have fallen short by misinterpreting the actual miles revealed in Roger's journal.

Before the massacre

One particularly disastrous element of the catastrophe was the amount of time, distance and energy expended from the genesis of the journey to its eventual outcome.

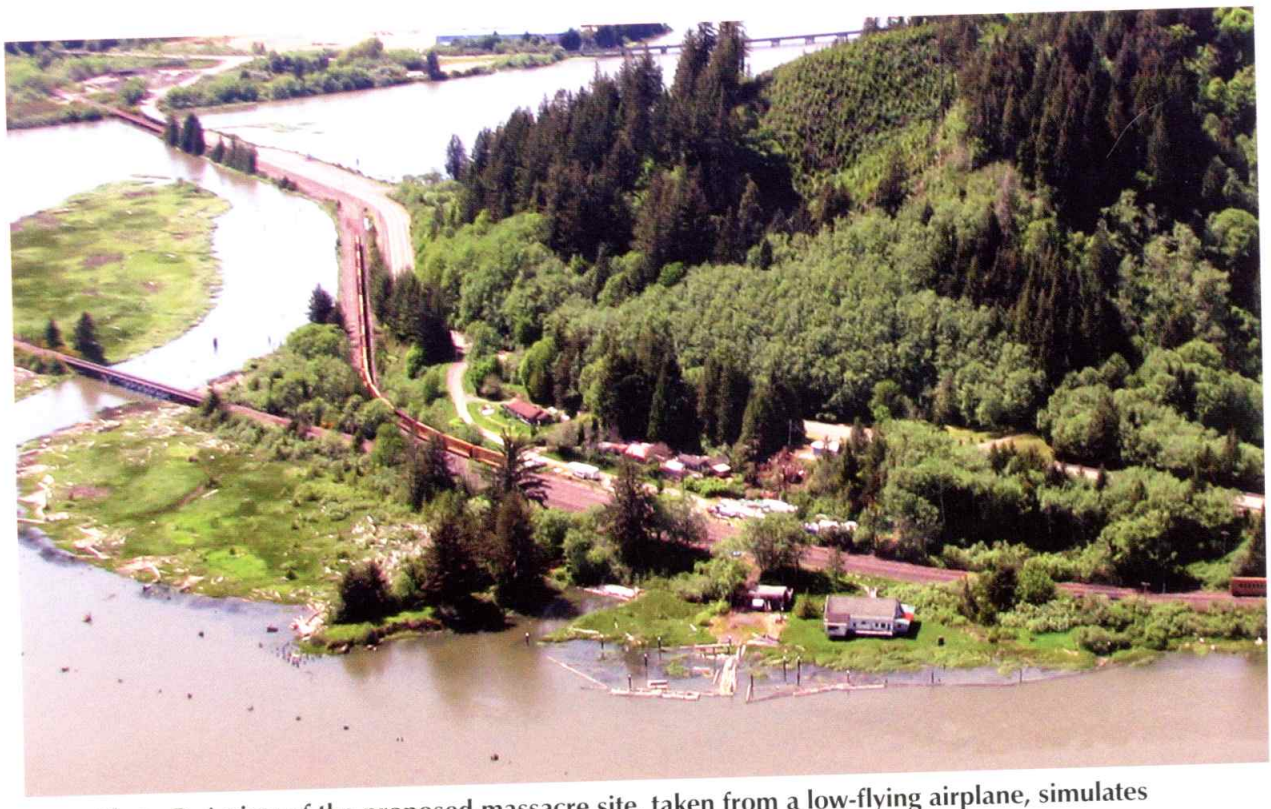


Photo B. A view of the proposed massacre site, taken from a low-flying airplane, simulates the view Smith would have had from the ridge to the east, on the opposite bank of the Smith River. COURTESY OF AERIAL IMAGING RESOURCES, REEDSPORT, OR

The intentions of Jedediah Smith, when he started westward in 1826, could not have predicted the course of events he and his men would endure for the next three years.

Smith had left the 1826 summer rendezvous with a brigade of trappers in the employ of the Smith, Jackson and Sublette Fur Company [see John C. Jackson article, this volume]. Crossing the Mojave Desert, these men became the first Americans to enter California by land. The well-documented journey through Lower California, and eventual traverse of the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin by Smith and two companions, brought them back to the Great Salt Lake in July 1827. After a ten-day rest at the Bear Lake Rendezvous, Smith returned West with a new brigade, planning to rejoin men he had left in California. On August 18, Smith's party was attacked by Indians on the Mojave River.[10] Smith and nine survivors then crossed the desert, reunited with the earlier group, and were in the San Francisco Bay area by September 1827.

The brigade left Mission San Jose around New Year's Day 1828, pushing hundreds of horses Smith hoped to sell in the mountains. The men trapped their way north, up the Sacramento River, with the eventual plan of returning to the Rockies in time for the summer rendezvous. In April, near today's Redding, California, with no visible pass through the Sierra Nevada Range to the east, Smith turned west and headed for the Pacific Ocean. The expected destination was now Fort Vancouver, on the north bank of the Columbia River. Their journey through this wild, unexplored region was especially troublesome. They were frequently punished by rough terrain and harassed by Indians for the next four months.

The exhausted band of trappers-turned-wranglers finally reached the Pacific at the mouth of Wilson Creek, near modern

Photo C. The proposed massacre site on the west bank of the Smith River is viewed at ground level from a nearby railroad trestle. JAMES C. AULD PHOTO

Requa, California, on June 12, 1828. The wild Oregon Coast from its southern extremity near present-day Brookings to the mouth of the Umpqua River, nearly 134 miles north, is a tangled landscape of rivers, canyons, coastline and hills. This topography is complicated by many ocean-flowing rivers with sandbars that twist and turn at the rivers' mouths. Tidal activity is a constant obstacle to travel and navigation.

Smith's movements after reaching the coast and traveling north would be unlike his previous treks across the western plains and the Rocky Mountains. He had never closely followed an ocean coastline. The group would cross rivers, wait for low tides, and use axes and shovels to clear rough spots in the trail. Smith had no other travelers' testimony from which to draw. Each local tribe he would encounter had a different approach to visitors and unique trading habits unknown to Smith.[11] The tribes he would meet had names that translated as "People of the Gravel," "People among the Rocks," and "People Close to the Mouth of the Stream."[12]

Through interviews with local tribal members and long-time Anglo residents, Maloney reconstructed the daily movements of Smith's brigade as it traveled through a world only recently exposed to such strange visitors. She chronicled twenty Oregon campsites over twenty-one days of Smith's travel. By her count, Smith would have encountered at least twelve different tribes.

The brigade started its journey northward along the Pacific Coast. For the next two weeks, Smith's journal was peppered with descriptions of

> *places rough with thickets and rock ... thick timber and brush and swamps which so much obstructed my progress*

that I was obliged to retrace my steps and encamp ... the high ridge on which I was traveling extremely rocky.[13]

By June 23, they crossed what would later become the California-Oregon state line. They had been on the trail for six months since leaving Mission San Jose.[14]

On June 25, he sent out two men to search for lost mules "but they soon returned as the Indians at a village close at hand did not appear friendly."[15] Rogers described the incident with more detail. Encamped at the mouth of Thoglas Creek, after crossing the Chetcoe River at low tide, he wrote,

The 2 men that was sent back to hunt the mule, returned to camp a little after night and say the Inds sallied out from their village with bows and arrows and made after them, yelling and screaming, and tried to surround them; they retreated on horseback and swam a small creek and the Inds. gave up the chase.[16]

The Americans were about to enter a territory occupied by the Umpqua River tribes of the Southern Oregon Coast. On June 27, as Smith made camp on the south side of the Rogue River, Maloney relates that "upon the approach of the strangers, all inhabitants fled, the women not even stopping to carry off their baskets."[17]

Three American Indian groups are connected to this encounter: the Kalapuya, the Umpqua and the Kalawatset. The Kalapuya lived high up on the Umpqua River, near the headwaters of the Willamette and the Umpqua, near today's Roseburg, Oregon. The Umpqua settled inland from the coast, along the upper and middle reaches of the eponymous river. The Kalawatset tribe was essentially a lower Umpqua River variation of these groups, living principally near the mouth of the river and southward.

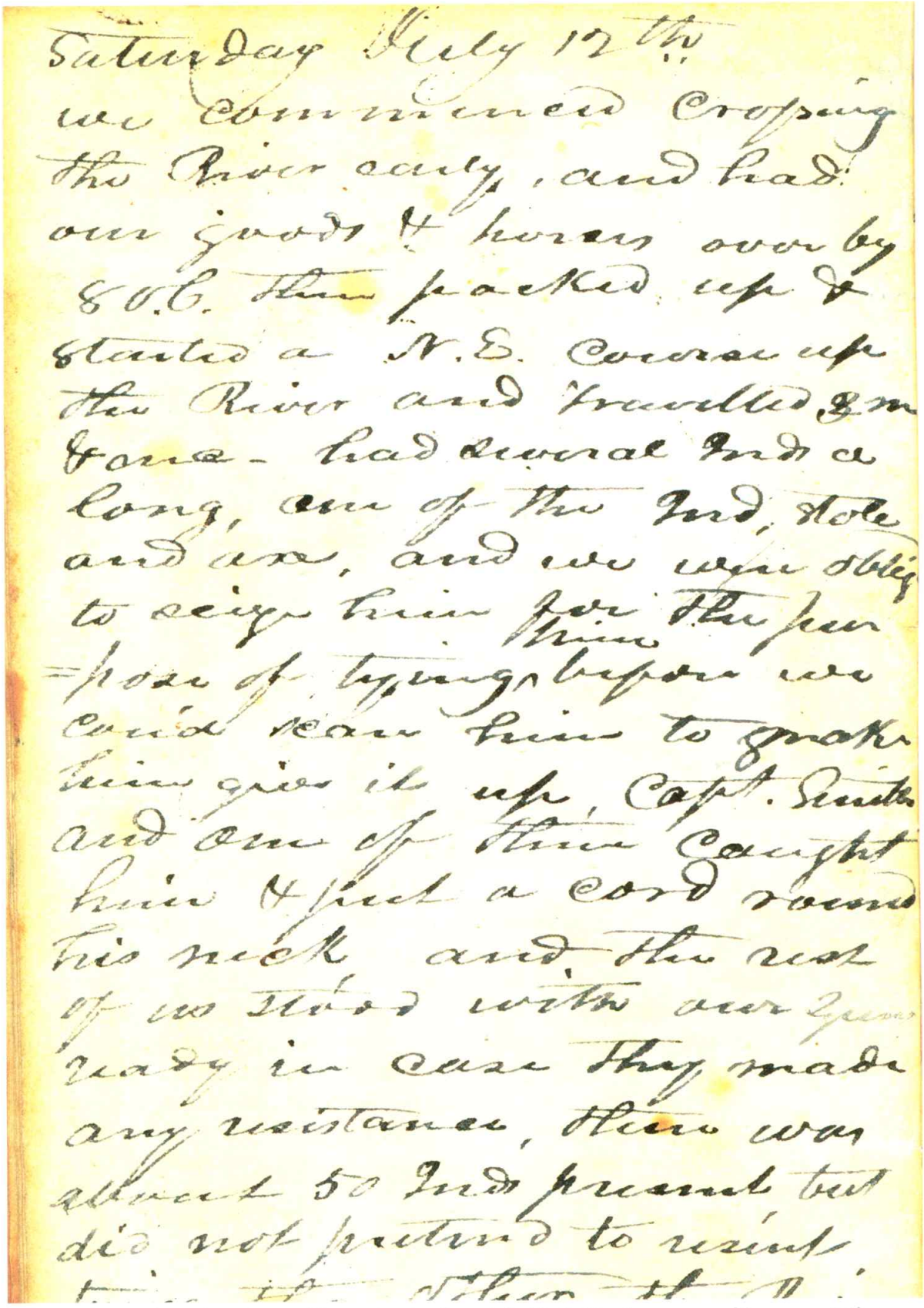
On June 28, 1828, Smith's journal entry mentioned a dozen or more animals had drowned, making a total of 23 horses or mules lost over the past three days. On Wednesday, July 2, Harrison Rogers noted an area near modern Coos Bay, Oregon, that "appears to leave the effects of earth quakes at some period past, as it is quite cut to pieces in places and very broken."[18] On this same day, Smith re-engaged the men who had signed on a year earlier at the Bear Lake rendezvous. They were offered "one dollar per day, untill he reaches the place of deposit," meaning the next rendezvous.[19]

Smith's last journal entry on this expedition was July 3, 1828. The brigade had made camp near the Coquille River, close to modern Bandon, Oregon.

At 2 miles from camp I came to a river 200 yards wide which although the tide was low was deep and apparently a considerable river. On first arriving in sight I discovered some [two] Indians mounting as fast as possible up the river in a canoe. I ran my horse to get above them in order to stop them. When I got opposite to them and they discovered they could not make their escape, they put ashore and drawing their canoe up the bank they fell to work with all their might to split it into pieces.[20]

Unpredictable reactions to Smith's brigade would become the norm over the next two weeks. Some local tribes traded eagerly; others fled or made piecemeal attacks on animals and men.

Also on July 3, Rogers revealed that Tousaint Marishall caught "a boy about 10 years old and brought him to camp." He was from the Willamette Valley and had been a slave in the band frightened by Smith on the Coquille. The men named the youth Marion.[21] The trappers fed the lad and gave him some beads before he informed them through "signs that the Inds. have all fled in their canoes and left him."[22] Though no reference was made to Marion speaking English, the


Saturday July 12th
we Commenced Crossing
the River early, and had
our goods & horses over by
8 O.C. then packed up &
started a N.E. Course up
the River and travelled 8m
& one - had several Ind a
long, one of the Ind. stole
and ax, and we were oblig
to seize him for the pur
=pose of tying, before we
could scarce him to make
him give it up, Capt. Smith
and one of them caught
him & put a cord round
his neck and the rest
of us stood with our guns
ready in case they made
any resistance, there was
about 50 Ind around but
did not pretend to resist

An excerpt of Harrison Rogers' journal entry from July 12, 1828, shows an ambiguous notation for miles traveled on that day; see the seventh line from the top. MISSOURI HISTORY MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS, MO

boy could converse freely with local Indians. He communicated using a mixture of Chinook Jargon and a limited vocabulary of Indian, English, and French words learned through trade between whites and Indians.[23] Within a few days, the brigade was joined by an "Indian guide who spoke Chinook."[24] Marion was likely able to communicate with this guide and pass information between Smith's party, the guide and other Indians encountered as they moved up the coast.[25]

The brigade camped near present Charleston, Oregon, on Tuesday, July 8, about 33 miles south of the Umpqua River. Rogers reported that arrows had been shot into eight of their animals. An Indian interpreter told Rogers that "one Indian got mad on account of a trade he made and killed the mules and horses." The next day, Rogers noted "Captain Smith was somewhat of the opinion that the Indians had a mind to attack him from their behavior." Within a week, this was sadly the outcome for most of Smith's party.[26]

On Saturday, July 12, the brigade crossed the Umpqua River at 8 o'clock in the morning and probably traveled eight miles along the west and north shore. After setting up camp, someone in the brigade discovered that an axe was missing from their meager tool kit. Rogers stated the Americans were

> *obliged to seize [the thief] before we could scare him to make him give it up. Captain Smith and one of them caught him and put a cord around his neck.*

They later found the ax buried in the sand nearby and the thief was released.[27]

The stolen axe incident was certainly related to the events that followed and the level of hostility existing between the two groups may have been underestimated by both Rogers and Smith. Tragically, Smith had little choice regarding what to do about it. His horses had been trampling over tribal grounds for weeks as he moved up the coast and his trade goods were running thin. He had not acquired any supplies in the last ten months, since the fall of 1827. Having humiliated an Indian to locate the stolen axe, Smith was now faced with an outnumbering tribe of restive Kalawatsets, perhaps feigning friendliness for their own advantage.

Roger's journal entry for Sunday, July 13, their last day of this long journey, read in part: "The traveling quite mirery in places; we got a number of our pack horses mired and had to bridge several places."[28] Despite these difficulties, the brigade pushed on another four miles and by Sunday night was encamped along the water's edge on the west bank of the Smith River.[29] The incident of the day before seemingly forgotten, fifty or sixty Indians came into camp to trade. At least two historians have suggested that Smith and his party were thrown off guard by the apparent good will of the Indians.[30]

This was a singular moment for Smith and his fur trapping brigade. They were in great danger and far from any protection. Most of the men were sick and malnourished. Disheartening thunderstorms rumbled overhead throughout the day and into the night. The options available to Smith as a leader were essentially limited to keeping the horses secured, getting the men to clean and prepare their firearms for defense, and attempting to stay dry and alert. His thoughts that Sunday night must have been focused on getting the whole expedition moved out as soon as possible.

Rogers' July 13 journal entry poignantly noted that the party had nearly reached its longed-for goal:

> *Those Inds. Tell us after we get up this River 15 or 20 miles we will have good traveling to the Wel Hammett or Multenomah – where the Callipoo Inds live.*[31]

The Kalapuya Indians lived to the east, near the headwaters of the Umpqua River

and the drainages that flowed north into the Willamette River.[32] This was where Smith and his small brigade would have been aiming when they departed their current camp.

Traveling would be difficult, especially with the *caballada* of 228 horses and mules, all that remained of the livestock purchased in the San Francisco Bay area with the proceeds from the beaver trapping that had occurred in Smith's absence.[33]

The horse herd would have to be driven across the Smith River the next morning in order to continue moving inland to reach the north side of the Umpqua. Then that waterway would have to be forded to the south side where the principal Umpqua River Trail had been established.

Clues from accounts of the massacre

One of the few undisputed facts of the massacre is its date – Monday, July 14, 1828. A reliable version of the day's activities states that Smith, after informing Rogers to keep the Indians out of camp, left in a canoe with two men (probably Richard Leland and John Turner) and an Indian to scout a way to cross the Smith River with men and horses.[34] They paddled up the river an unspecified distance, either looking for a way to cross, or viewing a route suggested by their guide.[35]

The men had been away from camp about three hours and were returning when two Indians fired on the canoe from bushes near the campsite. Smith and his companions escaped to the opposite shore and ascended the nearest high hill north of today's Butler Creek. Seeing the camp empty, they set off upriver in a northerly direction, in search of a safe escape, most likely re-crossing the Smith River within a mile or so of its mouth.

In his report, HBC Chief Factor John McLoughlin stated that

> *While looking about to see where his people could be, an Indian from the shore spoke to an Indian with him ... at the same time natives that were hid in the bushes fired on Mr. Smith and his two men, who escaped by paddling to the opposite bank ... After proceeding a few miles [up the Smith River] returned & when within sight of his camp seeing none of his people at the place, it struck him with surprise.*[36]

> *... Smith ascended a hill from whence he could see his camp distinctly, but seeing none of his people & from none of them coming forward when he was fired on though within reach, he naturally concluded they were all cutt off.*[37]

Regarding the massacre site, two hints come from McLoughlin's report. In order for the men to have heard Indian voices from shore, the canoe must have been relatively close to shore; and the camp's location was visible from a canoe on the river.

From an account not usually quoted comes a narrative of the attack. Peter Skene Ogden, who had met Jedediah Smith in 1824 in the Rocky Mountains and later at Fort Vancouver in 1828, conveyed Smith's version of events at the mouth of the river:

> *Finding myself among Indians, whom, from their possessing many articles of European merchandize, and frequently naming you [Ogden] and several other gentlemen, I began to consider no longer as enemies, I relaxed my usual vigilance. Having prolonged my stay for two days, to recruit the worn-down animals I had purchased at St. Gabriel, on the third morning I directed Mr. Rogers, my assistant, to have everything in readiness, desiring the men also to clean their rifles, preparatory to start on the morrow. I then, accompanied by two men, embarked in a canoe, and proceeded in search of a suitable crossing-place, the banks opposite our encampment being too steep for the horses to surmount.*

> *On my return, after an absence of three hours, when within half a mile of the tents, I observed a number of Indians running towards us along the bank, yelling most fearfully. Immediately suspecting what happened, we crossed over, and secreted ourselves in the bushes, the Indians discharging their guns at us without effect. Anxious to ascertain the fate of my party, I then ascended an eminence, from whence I could plainly perceive that the camp was destroyed, and not a vestige of man, horse, or mule to be seen.*
>
> *Though conscious that the wretches would not dare to pursue us, in a country so thickly wooded, I yet considered it to be most prudent to be concealed during the day, and to travel only under cover of the night. On the second day, we perceived some of the Company's servants, who conducted us safely to Vancouver.*[38]

Accounts generally agree that after Smith left camp, and prior to the attack, a high-ranking Kalawatset chief had mounted a horse and ridden it around the camp. When Arthur Black ordered him off the horse, the chief was offended. Moreover, Harrison Rogers was accused of trying to lure a young Kalawatset woman into his tent, causing a scene that resulted in retribution from her brother. At a given signal, the melee ensued.[39]

Black later told McLoughlin he had been cleaning his rifle when attacked, but managed to run into the nearby woods and escape.[40] Of all the men left in camp that morning, only Black found his way to the ocean and safety.[41] The remaining members of the party either disappeared or were killed, including the young boy Marion.

After twenty-six days of persistent travel, Jedediah Smith, Richard Leland and John Turner arrived at the gates of Fort Vancouver on August 10, 1828. This was barely two days after Arthur Black had stumbled in, unable at first to speak. Within a month, McLoughlin had organized a recovery party of about 44 men, including Smith, Black, Leland and Turner, to return to the massacre site and salvage any merchandise still in the area. This large brigade was led by Alexander McLeod, who had returned from that same region just three months earlier.[42]

The Recovery Mission

The recovery expedition left Fort Vancouver on Saturday, September 6. There is ample evidence that Smith wanted to reprimand the perpetrators if possible, having told McLoughlin,

> *Should you think it necessary for the benefit of your Company to punish these Indians you would confer a favour on your humble Servant to allow him and his Men to assist.*[43]

McLoughlin sent a letter to McLeod advising caution and directing McLeod to recover as much of Smith's property as possible while restoring law and order to the British domain. McLoughlin did not order McLeod to make war on any of the tribes responsible, but gave him leeway to take proper action if needed.[44]

McLeod's journal over the next two months offers valuable information about the events leading up to the massacre, as well as current news circulating in the area. On October 10, a rumor "purporting that four of Mr. Smith's Men are in the custody of Cahoose Indians" fueled hope that some of Smith's men had survived, but nothing resulted from this report.[45]

The next day, the Umpqua chief and a dozen tribal members arrived at McLeod's camp. A conversation between McLeod, Smith and the Umpqua Chief resulted in the chief's testimony regarding the causes of the attack.[46] He had just come from the "Kellywasats" and gave their version:

> *[The Kalawatsets] were much influenced by the Assertions of the other Party [Americans], telling them that they were a different people from us, and would soon monopolize the trade, and turn us [HBC] out of the Country.*[47]

The old chief was surprised that the HBC would aid and assist people that "evinced evil intentions" towards them. He had been informed that the Americans boasted about territorial claims and that "they would soon possess themselves of the Country." When Smith was informed of this, he told McLeod

> *he did not doubt of it, but it was without his knowledge and must have been intimated to the Indians through the Medium of a Slave boy attached to his party.*[48]

For the next two weeks, this cheerless expedition gathered Smith's horses, furs and personal property from Indians they met scattered along both sides of the Umpqua, frequently weathering heavy wind-blown rains, common along the Oregon coast in autumn. They managed to gather a few firearms, 139 large and 24 small beaver skins, some 44 otter pelts and miscellaneous clothing, supplies and camp gear.[49] As articles and animals were returned, HBC men aiding Smith took them upriver for safe keeping among the Kalapuya. Perhaps most importantly, they managed to recover some of the expedition's journals.[50] It is believed this is where Roger's journal was recovered, after having been in the hands of local Indians for almost four months.

On October 28, the party drifted down the Umpqua to the sea, stopping

> *at the entrance to the North Branch [Smith River], where Mr. Smith's party were destroyed, and a Sad Spectacle of Indian barbarity presented itself to our View. The skeletons of eleven of those Miserabl Sufferers lying bleaching in the Sun, after paying the last Service to their remains we continued forward and made the coast.*[51]

It is not clear whether this "last Service" included burial or only a prayer of some kind. Nor is it sure where the service was held; it may have been on the site of the attack or where the bodies were interred.[52]

By November 12, the recovery brigade had returned up the Umpqua River, re-tracing the route of Smith's brigade from July 12 and 13. The party camped on the island at the entrance of the Smith River, which the men were now calling "Defeat River." Smith then moved the collected horses and mules up the same route he had investigated on the day of the massacre. Using Indians as guides, Smith asked McLeod for men to assist him in driving the horses. Smith and six men accomplished this task then reunited with McLeod five days later on the Umpqua. Within a week, the party was on the return trail to the Columbia.[53]

By December 10, Smith and the HBC recovery party had returned to Fort Vancouver without incident.[54] Coincidentally, HBC Governor George Simpson was touring the post as part of a 5,000 mile grand tour of HBC trading establishments. By December 29, Simpson and Smith had agreed on a price for the recovered furs and the horses that Smith, lacking manpower, could no longer manage [see pages 94-95 in this volume for an image of the pertinent ledger entries]. HBC archives show the amount to be 550 pounds 2 shillings sixpence, payable "30 days after sight." Perhaps Smith was willing to take a discount if the payment would be available sooner, because on March 9, 1829, three days before he left Fort Vancouver, he accepted 541 pounds sixpence, payable "at sight."[55]

On March 12, 1829, Jedediah Smith and Arthur Black joined an HBC supply boat going up the Columbia River with stops at Fort Walla Walla, Fort Okanogan, and Fort Colvile. From there, Smith and Black

proceeded on passing the Flathead trading post on the Flathead river, until he joined one of his partners (D. E. Jackson) in the Colanais country.[56]

No one benefited from this tragic encounter. The Kalawatset, Umpqua, and Kalapuya lost trading status with the Hudson's Bay Company in the years that followed. Wracked by disease and intertribal warfare, they never regained the populations of earlier times.[57] Trouble accelerated, especially for the Kalawatset, who were described ten years later as "the fiercest, most intractable and vindictive of all the Lower Columbia tribes."[58] After 1828, their reputation as violent, untrustworthy traders diminished their influence along the Oregon Coast.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century and as a result of the Northwest coastal fur trade, exploration, and settlement, native populations fluctuated and declined.[59] There are no estimates of village populations in the Smith or Rogers journals to use for comparisons of earlier tribal size, although one study of epidemic diseases assumed that the "pre-contact" populations for Oregon Coast tribes had been "seriously affected by smallpox in the 1770s."[60]

Jedediah Smith and his brigade suffered greatly from the loss of lives and property. Instead of an uneventful three-week journey up the Umpqua and down the Willamette to Fort Vancouver, where the brigade would have re-supplied, the enterprise was stalled by a four-month recovery expedition, followed by a three-month travel delay at Fort Vancouver, before the eventual reunion of Smith with his partners in Pierre's Hole in August, 1829.

Even the HBC suffered losses from this event. The recovery expedition was a drag on its resources and caused a re-evaluation of trading practices with Indians on the Southern Oregon Coast. The Company benefitted from interviews with Smith about the geography of California, but by 1843 had lost its influence in the Oregon country to American settlement.

The ten-year-old slave boy, Marion, would never know how right he was when he told the Kalawatsets that the Americans had boasted about territorial claims, and that "they would soon possess themselves of the Country."

A new interpretation

This new proposed site for the Umpqua Massacre fits the criteria well. The flat at the east end of the peninsula at the west bank of Smith River, near what is now East Gardiner, is bordered on the east by the river and on the west by a steep hillside. This topography would have made a convenient place to corral the herd. The men would have had to guard only a relatively small access; by setting camp in that gap, they could easily keep an eye on the animals.

The site is across the Smith River from Butler Creek, which accords with a tribal ancestor's report. It can be seen from the hill directly to the east, whereas other suggested sites are not visible from the hill. Further, a canoeist paddling down the Smith River could have heard men speaking or calling out from this location and would have a clear view of tents set up on the site. It is twelve miles from the mouth of the Umpqua, correlating better with journal entries than the spot indicated by the Gordon survey notes.

This new research may affect future archaeological activity and better interpret the disaster at Defeat River.

James C. Auld is an author and independent scholar of early nineteenth-century Western American fur trade history and a frequent contributor to the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal. *In 2005, Auld researched and appeared in the History Channel film, "Taming the Wild West: The Legend of Jedediah Smith." He served for 8 years on the Board of Directors of the Jedediah Smith Society. He is the executive director of the Three Worlds*

Meet project, headed to Scotland and Northern Ireland in September 2014. For more information, visit www.threeworldsmeet.org.

NOTES

1 The phrase, "melancholy catastrophe," is often found in British literature. This instance comes from a letter Simpson wrote to Jedediah Smith, dated December, 26, 1828, found in George Simpson, *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal, 1824-1825*, edited by Frederick Merk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 303.

2 William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1966), 138.

3 V. J. Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 2 – Jedediah Smith," *The Umpqua Trapper* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 8.

4 Lancaster Pollard, "Site of the Smith Massacre on July 14, 1828," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (June, 1944): 133-137. See also, Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 2," 6-12.

5 Alice B. Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith on the Oregon Coast," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (September 1940): 304-323.

6 Ibid., 321.

7 Ibid.

8 Harrison C. Dale, ed., *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific 1822-1829 with the Original Journals* (Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1918), 274.

9 A photocopy of this page from Roger's Journal was obtained from "Ashley Papers, Harrison G. Rogers Journal," May 10-July 13, 1828, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO.

10 Barton H. Barbour, *Jedediah Smith, No Ordinary Mountain Man* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 163.

11 Nathan Douthit, *A Guide to Oregon South Coast History* (Corvalis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1999), 39-41.

12 Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith," 304-323.

13 Maurice S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith* (Santa Ana, CA: The Fine Arts Press, 1934), 99-105.

14 Ibid., 99.

15 Ibid., 99-102.

16 Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 266.

17 Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith," 310.

18 Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 269.

19 Ibid., 269-270.

20 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 105.

21 Ibid., 107. See also Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 270.

22 Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 270.

23 Douthit, *Oregon South Coast History*, 116. See also Barbour, *Jedediah Smith*, 219, which says that Russian was also a part of the Chinook Jargon.

24 Barbour, *Jedediah Smith*, 220.

25 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 125. Alexander McLeod said that Marion could "converse freely" with the Indians.

26 Dale Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953), 266. Morgan described these as "Coastal Indians." See also, Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith," 317-318.

27 Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 274-275.

28 Harrison G. Roger's Second Journal, from Harrison Clifford Dale, *The Explorations of William H. Ashley and Jedediah Smith, 1822-1829* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 275.

29 Four months later, today's Smith River was named "the North Branch," and later renamed "Defeat River"; Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 131, 179n177; Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 278. The 1839 map of the United States by David H. Burr showed "Defeat River." See Dale L. Morgan and Carl I. Wheat, *Jedediah Smith and his Maps of the American West* (San Francisco, CA: California Historical Society, 1954), copy of map laid in.

30 Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 2," 10; Dale, *Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 280.

31 Quotation from Roger's Journal. See "Ashley Papers, Harrison G. Rogers Journal", May 10-July 13, 1828.

32 That river flowed northerly about 150 miles to the Columbia River, where the HBC had recently relocated to new headquarters at Fort Vancouver, on the north side of the Columbia, near present-day Portland, Oregon.

33 *Caballada* is Spanish for a "drove of horses." The dwindling number of horses comes from V. J. Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 3 – Jedediah Smith Returns to the Umpqua," *The Umpqua Trapper* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1965): 8. Smith left California with 250 horses and mules, and had an additional 65 horses with him from earlier purchases. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 252-257; Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 38, 170.

34 John McLoughlin, "Copy of a Document Found among the Private Papers of the late Dr. John McLoughlin," in Samuel A. Clarke, *Pioneer Days in Oregon History*, 2 vols. (Stockbridge, MA: Hard Press Publishing, 1905), 1: 216. Barbour

erroneously states that Smith went up the Umpqua; Barbour, *Jedediah Smith*, 222. The local geography is today (and would then have been) very confusing. Yet apparently Smith knew that the main eastbound trail up the Umpqua was on its south shore. Smith needed to find a way across the Smith River to connect with a trail that led to a fording spot upriver on the Umpqua, where he could cross with the brigade and animals. Thus, it was the Smith River, and not the Umpqua, that Smith traveled up in search of a place to cross.

35 E. E. Rich, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson Esq. March 1, 1829 Continued and Completed March 24 and June 5, 1829* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1947), 39-60.

36 Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 2," 11.

37 John McLoughlin to Hudson's Bay Company, August 10, 1828, Oregon Historical Society Library 971 H886 v1-68-70, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR, found online at: http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/upload/24556_1.pdf.

38 Peter Skene Ogden, *Traits of American Indian Life and Character by a Fur Trader* (1853; San Francisco, CA: The Grabhorn Press, 1933), 8. The author is listed as "A Fur Trader" but has been identified as Ogden. Ogden returned to Fort Vancouver from his fourth trip to the Snake Country on July 22, 1828. Smith arrived there August 9, 1828. Ogden left with his next brigade in mid-September, so there would have been ample time for Ogden and Smith to discuss the events on the Umpqua. Smith had met Ogden at Flathead Post in 1824. Archie Binns, *Peter Skene Ogden Fur Trader* (Portland, OR: Binfords and Mort, Publishers, 1967), 218.

39 For Rogers luring a woman to his tent, see Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 148. For a chief getting on a horse, see Ibid., 123.

40 Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith," 320.

41 There are conflicting opinions regarding Turner's presence in the canoe with Smith on the morning of the attack. Reports are unclear whether Smith went with two of his companions plus an Indian, or whether the Indian was one of his two companions. According to McLoughlin, there were four individuals in the canoe. There is published testimony (from John McLoughlin, in two instances) that described Smith with only two others. The question is: who were these others? All sources agree that one was Richard Leland ("Leyland" in some accounts), whom Smith had hired in California because of his skill with horses. Smith might be expected to want his "horse expert" with him when he was scouting a route for horses. One account said the Indian in the vessel grabbed Smith's rifle and dove into the river, implying that one person in the canoe was an Indian. Sometimes the Indian guide is not counted as a "man." Sometimes it is expressed as "two men and an Indian" or "accompanied by two others" but "three others" does not make the record. Whatever the case, Smith, Leland and Turner were together when they arrived at Fort Vancouver later in August. See Francis Fuller Victor, *The River of the West: The Adventures of Joe Meek* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 1983), 1:35.

42 Douthit, *Oregon South Coast History*, 32, gives the number of men in the expedition as "nearly 44." Anderson, "Fur Trade on the Umpqua; Part 3," 8, reported McLeod had been among the Umpquas only three months earlier.

43 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 109.

44 Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 274.

45 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 122.

46 Ibid., 123. The chief is named as both "St. Arnoose" and "Starnoose" in McLeod's journal.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 124-125.

49 Ibid., 128.

50 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 131.

51 Ibid., 128-129.

52 Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 278, simply said "after burying the remains." Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 129, indicated McLeod wrote, "Paying the last service," while Barbour, *Jedediah Smith*, 230, called it a "brief funeral ceremony." It seems likely that the bodies were moved to a less exposed site, perhaps west of the island, for burial. If this occurred, there are doubts about the accuracy of the information Gordon received thirty years later.

53 Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 133.

54 Ibid., 135.

55 "Bills on Canada," Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Reference: B223/d/21a G-3d.4 (bottom half of page).

56 Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 290.

57 Nathan Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2002), 6.

58 Ibid., 35.

59 Ibid., 6.

60 Ibid., 195.