

Part 2. Historical Accounts

After constructing and ground-truthing the field maps so far as the landscape and documentary record allowed, it was important to test the maps for their potential historical and cultural value: Could understanding of the early historical time period of the study area be enhanced by a better interpretation of the routes, locations, and descriptions of early explorers and other journalists? Could such early written records be confidently matched to specific locations on modern maps and landscapes? Could a combination of modern maps, landscape locations, and historical records be used for a better understanding of the people, places, and ecology of late precontact time and early historical time? Could such understandings have current or future value for others, such as resource managers, teachers, students, and scientists?

The very earliest historical records for the study area provided an excellent test for the project map series, and a good beginning for answering questions regarding their potential research and educational value.

The first journalists to travel through the study area were Alexander McLeod, arriving from the north in 1826, and Harrison Rogers and Jedediah Smith, arriving from the south in 1828. Both parties had entered an area in which there were no maps, written records, eyewitness accounts, or other information they could use to guide their way. None of the men in these parties could speak the local languages or had access to an interpreter, so there were no named landmarks that could be referenced or any other method to obtain specific travel information. Further, Smith was traveling with more than 20 men and 300 horses and mules through country that had never been traveled by horseback before.

Both parties entered the area for entirely different reasons -- other than the common interest in acquiring beaver skins -- but both kept daily records that commented on campsite locations, trail conditions, encounters with local Indians, weather, food, and wildlife.

People have used these records in the past to try and locate the trails used by these journalists -- most notably Maloney (1940) regarding the specific campsite locations of the Smith Expedition, and Johansen (Davies 1961), Tveskov (2000), and Zybach and Wasson (2009) regarding the travel routes of McLeod -- but this has been the first attempt to pinpoint those locations with the aid of modern technology, or for the specific purpose of better understanding the culture and ecology of the land and people connected by these routes and locations over time.

Following the construction of the trail maps, the authors spent several days and hours at the Coquille Tribal Administration offices, attempting to match the written records of McLeod, Rogers, and Smith with the GIS-generated networks, annotated USGS field maps, and GLO maps and notes associated with this project; to see if patterns of human movements and encounters could be accurately located. Each day's record from the McLeod and Smith trips in 1826 through 1828 -- and many additional records from the early 1850s -- was carefully considered and discussed to achieve a general agreement regarding the likeliest locations and routes noted in those records. These agreements became the rationale for the Excel files and GIS layers from which the project field map series was made.

In general, a strong correlation could be made between what the men were describing and where they were at the time the description was being made. Sometimes exact locations could be pinpointed (such as mouths of streams or obvious landmarks), but other times descriptions were hazy, misleading, or difficult to interpret. Estimations of mileage varied by journalist and over time; McLeod's estimates seemingly became much more accurate the longer he stayed in the study area, and Smith and Rogers often disagreed as to how far they had traveled during the day since they left the Sacramento Valley.

What follows are brief descriptions of several events that occurred in the earliest days of European-American exploration and settlement in Oregon's south coast region, in addition to the travels of McLeod and Smith: events that set the stage for the future economic and commercial development of the region's natural resources by and for the interests of the United States government and its citizens. How and where those early explorations and developments occurred largely responded to the transportation networks that already existed: the overland trails and canoe routes of the Indians of the Coos and Coquille River country, and their Athapaskan-speaking neighbors to the south and to the east.

[Note: Each of the historical routes described in this Part of the report is also clearly depicted on Map 1 (frontispiece). Trail routes are also named and located in Vol. II, Part 1; Vol. II, Part 2.6; and Vol. II, Part 3.2.]

1. Alexander Roderick McLeod Expeditions: October 24, 1826 – February 4, 1827

Alexander Roderick McLeod was a Chief Trader for the Hudson's Bay Co (HBC). During the fall of 1826, McLeod was sent by John McLoughlin, from Fort Vancouver, to explore the southern Oregon coastal region as far south as the Rogue River: an area that had never been mapped or otherwise recorded in history. McLeod was provided with a group of beaver trappers, a few members of their families, a string of horses, packs, traps, trading goods, and supplies. His mission was one of exploration and trade -- by foot, canoe, and horseback -- with one objective: beaver.

During the fall and winter of 1826 - 1827 the Coos and Coquille Indians living in the region of present-day Coos County were visited on four occasions by McLeod's troupe of HBC servants, freemen, and their families (Davies 1961: 175-212; Hall 1995: 6-16; Tveskov 2000: 346-355; Zybach and Wasson 2009: 100-118). Part of McLeod's duty was to keep a daily journal of the "new" (to HBC officials) region to which he was assigned. McLeod's journal, thus, became the first land-based historical record of the people, wildlife, and terrain of the future Coos County, including the existing Indian travel routes and trails he relied on for his explorations.

McLeod's daily journal was first published in 1961 (Davies 1961), with his travels interpreted by Dorothy Johansen, working with USGS quadrangle maps from her office in Portland, Oregon. Vol. II, Part 1.1 of this report is a transcribed compilation of McLeod's journal entries, from Johansen, for the times of his historic visits to the Coos and Coquille river basins study area: October 24 to November 2, 1826; November 10 to December 16, 1826; December 25, 1826 to January 8, 1827; and January 14 to February 5, 1827. Vol. II, Part 2.5 is an alphabetized listing of the historical place names used in the following pages to describe McLeod's likely travel routes, and includes specific map references and legal descriptions for these locations.

In the spring of 1826, McLeod had taken an "exploring expedition" from Fort Vancouver down along the Oregon Coast to the Umpqua River. There he met an important "Umpqua" Indian named "Little Chief" (possibly due to his stature, rather than his position), who advised him to travel down the Willamette Valley, cross the Calapooia Mountains at a low elevation pass, and take the Umpqua River to its mouth the next time he came to the Coast -- this being an easier, more direct route. Little Chief also confirmed rumors of a Great River with many beaver a few days south of the Umpqua. On September 15, 1826, McLeod started a return trip to the Umpqua along the suggested route. His principal intents were to trap beaver in this previously unknown (by HBC) territory; to explore further southward in an attempt to find more lucrative beaver hunting grounds; and to establish good trade relations "with the Natives of the great river [Rogue River] in question."

McLeod began the expedition with 65 horses and mares, five men, "and an Indian," with the intent of delivering the animals to [John Baptiste Deputy dit McKay] "McKay's old Fort, where the remainder of our forces are to join us." McLeod was accompanied by David Douglas, the famous Scottish botanist, who was on a quest of sugar pine; previously unknown to science and evidenced in a seed pouch of an Indian man Douglas had met along the Columbia River. Douglas also kept a daily journal (Douglas 1904; 1905), which adds significantly to the observations of McLeod, but he did not personally visit Coos Bay or Coquille River.

By September 23, McLeod had assembled his “forces” near present-day Oregon City: “eleven Canadian Servants, five Owyhees [Hawaiians] & two Native Indians; one Interpreter and a Clerk.” Many of the men were also accompanied by wives, children, and personal slaves. By the 28th McLeod and his men had gathered up their horses, assembled the packs, and headed toward the Umpqua, following the route prescribed by Little Chief. On October 6, heading southward along the western margin of the Willamette Valley, they added two freemen (independent trappers; not HBC servants) to their ranks: Deputy dit McKay and “little Ignace,” an “Iroquois” whom McLeod personally enlisted “in hopes of finding a country to enable him to liquidate his heavy debt [to the HBC].” A third freeman, Jacques, also an Iroquois, joined the party the following day, on the 7th.

On October 16, the expedition reached the Umpqua River, near the present-day town of Elkton. During the day Douglas had identified and gathered samples of myrtle, near the northern-most extent of the range of this tree. By the 21st the troupe had moved to a camp near present-day Scottsburg “at the termination of the plains about a mile short of an Indian Village.” There they were reunited with Little Chief, as promised, who “informed us that he and his followers had a few skins which they would bring to trade.”

On the 22nd the “principal Chief with some followers arrived” at the HBC camp. This man appears in many accounts of that time, as “St. Arnoose,” “Centrenose,” and “old Chief.” Douglas also describes him as “the principal Chief,” and “chief of the tribe inhabiting the upper part of the Umptqua River” (Davies 1961: 183, 185, 187), which would indicate that he was a (perhaps “the”) leading member of the Athapaskan-speaking Etnemitane, who were said to be very familiar with the lands to the immediate north and east of the Coos and Coquille river basins at that time.

First visit: October 25th, 1826 – November 2nd, 1826

On October 23, after deploying most of his trappers throughout the new countryside, McLeod wrote: “Fine weather. In the course of the forenoon we startd. in a body, leaving Laframboise [Michel La Framboise, aka “Old Raspberry”] in Charge with an Assistant. All the families remained at the camp . . . With five men and two Indians in a canoe, accompanied by the old Chief and suite in another craft, continued descending the main [Umpqua] river till dark . . .”

On the 24th, McLeod wrote:

Fine weather. Proceeded about six miles and landed at a Village of two houses, where we were very hospitably treated and breakfasted on sturgeon and salmon, after satisfying our host with a few trinkets, we continued our progress . . . Put up our crafts in a secure place and proceeded along the beach with our baggage and some trading articles to secure a welcome reception, carried on mens backs in this manner, we drudged on three hours and came to a small river whose breadth does not exceed thirty yards, yet Indians find plentiful supply of salmon trout in it, as we were informed by a few that cast up at the moment we appeared, their habitations being in the neighborhood they observed our approach from a distance and came to us with extreme caution apparent dismay, which soon was dispelled

when notified of our friendly intentions, being the first people of a different colour to themselves they had ever seen, their eyes were fixed on us, our fire arms attracted particular notice, tho, they were aware of the use of them had never witnessed an instance of the effect. We lost an hour to allow the men to refresh themselves and went forward about nine miles and formed our camp near a small Lake, having receded from the beach since leaving the little river, yet walked on bare sand with now and then a clump of trees dispersed here and there, the sand is so loose as to leave the prints of a Bears feet very plain, yet we saw none, and but few tracks of deer; indeed there is no grass [these dunes have since been covered by exotic grasses introduced by the US Forest Service and others in the 20th century] to attract the latter. A messenger was dispatched ahead to notify the natives of our approach.

As near as can be determined, it appears that McLeod had traveled from the mouth of the Umpqua River, crossed Tenmile Creek, and traveled inland perhaps to Tenmile Lake. It is unclear how many people he had with him, or whether he had brought horses. On Wednesday the 25th, after spending a restless night in the rain, McLeod's party "continued our Journey about seven miles to a river or rather an inlet, the discharge of several rivers, the most noted is of no great magnitude." He had arrived at an inlet of Coos Bay, quite likely North Slough near present-day Hauser, which is about seven miles south of Tenmile Lakes.

McLeod also noted: "This being the season for the salmon trout to ascend the different streams, the natives had an abundant supply of which we obtained some for trinkets. The main land is lofty and covered with impenetrable wood, if we can judge from appearances," and, "After much difficulty in arranging for guides and a translator we got out of the reach of the majority of the Indians and past the night about three miles short of the Ocean, a short distance to the Southward of where we first made this river." Jordan Point is a short distance southward (particularly by canoe) from Hauser, about three miles inland from the Ocean, and sand dunes separate the locations:

The loose sand heaped by the violence of the wind, proved very fatiguing to the men who had burthens to carry. We hired a sizable canoe to take us forward our old Chief and suite declined to go further, he was left to his own will, still we had four natives, attached to us, seemingly well disposed to serve us, yet the new comers somewhat discomposed, tho they place every confidence in us, which alone I believe has influenced them to comply with our solicitations relying on our protecting for their safety. Our Guide informed us, that for expeditions sake, we ought to take advantage of the ebb tide, as we had a rocky point ahead [probably Fossil Point] to double, which at flood tide would be attended with danger.

On Thursday, October 26th, McLeod wrote:

Rained most part of the day very heavily. We took advantage of the ebb tide agreeable to our Guides desire. The obscurity of the night suggested the Idea of entrusting the management of our craft to our new Guests, who acquitted

themselves handsomely course three miles west then turned to the south, up an inlet where we found an Indian family lodged; being out of danger we waited day light then proceeded as before, 4 miles and secured our canoe with our baggage and things on the mens backs, we entered the woods in a westerly course, the distance of six miles and made the Ocean.

Assuming that Fossil Point is the same as “rocky point,” then McLeod has turned south, down South Slough, and spent some time waiting for daylight with an Indian family, possibly in the Joe Ney Slough - Brown’s Cove area. He then continues south to the head of the slough at daylight, before taking a “westerly course” through Seven Devils and reaching the beach in six miles; likely near the Whiskey Run area. From there: “Continued our progress on the beach composed of sand hard and level. The close of the day brought us to a fine river about a hundred and twenty yards broad.” Here, McLeod and his troupe had reached the Coquille River. This was probably near present-day Bullards, where “except near the sea, it [the river] assumes the shape of a Bay.”

On the 27th, McLeod rented a canoe and took a trip up the Coquille “about 12 miles, visited several little villages from one to the other. The party of Indians following us increased as we ascended.” By the end of the day he had traded for “3 Sea Otters, 27 large and small beavers and 3 common Otters” and returned to camp. The following day he returned upstream, securing 45 more beavers in trade and putting up for the night “by an Indian dwelling containing two families.” This location may have been near Riverton, approaching the mouth of Beaver Slough, which is about 12 miles upstream from Bullards.

Sunday the 29th continued wet and stormy, so McLeod stayed in camp and traded for only “a small otter skin.” On Monday evening he wrote: “The rain having abated in the course of the night, we had an early start, still ascending the river, till about 10 A.M. having reached the limits of our Journey, we returned towards the sea, but had to put up for the night a few miles above the first village.” The “limits of the journey” may have put him at Cedar Point or Arago and, assuming the “first village” is near present-day Bullards, this campsite may have been at Randolph or Parkersburg.

On Tuesday the 31st, amid constant rain, McLeod determined to return to the Umpqua as quickly as possible in order to avoid damaging his furs. That evening he “Encamped where we disembarked the 26 Instant,” an apparent reference to the location on South Slough where he had transferred from canoes to foot travel. On November 1:

The rain continued unabated all night, of course, we had a restless night, having no other canopy but the heavens. As soon as we could see, we got afloat and directed our course forward till we reached the rocky point, noticed above, the tide flooding confirmed the story of our Guide, and we had to wait for the ebb before we dared venture, therefore we had to stop short of the villages for the night. Killed a couple of Bustards & a heron, an Elk was wounded, the hurry of the moment only prevented us from tasting his flesh.

Thursday 2nd. Fine weather. Early in the morning we were on board reached the

principal on the afternoon where we landed our Guide traded ten beaver and took our leave of these people and reached the little river [Tenmile Creek] where we formed our Camp for the night. When we past here few Indians were to be seen, now the number is pretty great; and in fact, they are so much dispersed at this season of the year, that an Idea of their number must be erroneous, to a person passing amongst them: for my part I dare not hazard an opinion certain not to come near the thing.

Second Visit: November 10th, 1826 – December 16th, 1826

After returning to the base camp near present-day Scottsburg on November 4th, McLeod reunited with David Douglas and his other expedition members. Men and women were given work schedules, two men (John Kennedy and Francois Piette, dit Faneant) were assigned to transport progress reports and furs back to Fort Vancouver “as soon as the rain subsides,” and McLeod began to make plans to return to the Coquille in order, this time, to find an overland route that could be used by horses to reach the Rogue River and the upper Umpqua.

To this point the expedition had accumulated 215 large beaver, 64 small beaver, 19 large river otters, nine small river otters, and the three sea otters he had obtained at Tenmile Creek on October 27. On November 9th, McLeod started back to the Coquille. On Friday the 10th he camped at his usual Tenmile Creek location, where “Indians supplied us with salmon trout for supper. Few ducks killed before leaving Camp.”

The next day, the 11th, McLeod wrote: “Fine weather, about midday encamped on the bank of an inlet connected with the main river, river Cahourz [Coos River], in this neighborhood the hopes of getting a few beaver suggest the propriety of making a stay.” This location may have been near present-day Hauser, or McLeod’s earlier location near Jordan Point. It seems likely to be on the same Tenmile-to-Coos Bay route he had already traveled twice.

On the 14th, following a few days trading in camp, outfitting the trappers, and hunting for game, McLeod: “Changed encampment, distance three miles men off to set their traps, three Beaver caught, some wild fowl killed.” Following his previous patterns of systematically moving across the landscape, looking for beaver and for new trading partners, it seems likely that McLeod has moved from the North Slough and Haynes Inlet locations of Hauser and Jordan Point, to a strategic location three miles east; perhaps as far as the mouth of Kentuck Slough.

On Friday the 17th, McLeod “removed to a more eligible situation distance a mile and half,” which could have been Pierce Point or Crawford Point, at or beyond the mouth of Willanch Slough. On the 18th McLeod “Sent a man and two Indians to the second village, who obtained a few Beaver by the way of trade, report states, those Indians have no more furs.” He also reported, “A party of trappers that were up the north branch, returned with two Beaver. That Stream [possibly Haynes Inlet] is of no extent, so they have relinquished that place.” On Sunday the 19th, “A party in four canoes started for the purpose of trapping on the rout we propose going, others arrived, brought six beavers more wild fowl killed, indeed our daily fare depends thereon.”

On Monday, November 20, McLeod reported “many Indians going backwards and forwards, some brought us berries, but we discountenance the same for various reasons.” On the 22nd he wrote:

In the evening two of our trappers arrived brought couple of beaver. The country is reported to be poor and unproductive, where ever our people have visited; their wish now is to proceed forward to where we discovered lately, as the appearances there more favorable.

“Where we discovered lately” is apparently McLeod’s reference to the Coquille River, judging by his subsequent actions. On the 23rd he sent a small party in advance, and then traveled south for nine miles “encamped late and some had to sleep on board their Canoes for want of a better place. Saw many Indians employed in fishing &c.” On the 24th he wrote:

Fine weather. Continued the same course as yesterday up an inlet to its termination at a portage half mile long, distance today ten miles. Our men being stationed at the south end of the portage came to us and returned with each a load of our things. Some Indians cast up who also assisted, however we had to stop for the night, at the north end. This little party since leaving the camp, caught 13 Beavers.

Isthmus Slough is about 10 miles in length, and at its southern-most extent is a portage about one mile in length to Beaver Slough, on the Coquille River. The north end of the portage would be near Green Acres or Overland. Here McLeod hired some canoes to move their supplies forward, however, the slough was so “encumbered with brush wood” that passage was difficult and he took two men and traveled separately through “the woods” to join the party at the main river. The juncture of Beaver Slough and the Coquille is the location of present-day Leneve.

McLeod had now traveled twice from Coos Bay to the Coquille River and by two different routes – from South Slough to Bullards by way of a beach trail; and from Isthmus Slough to Leneve by way of a short overland portage. The trail to Bullards was primarily by foot, whereas the trail to Leneve was primarily by canoe.

On November 27th McLeod noted: “canoes are not easily got here, as the Indians have resorted to the upper part of the river where fish is more abundant. It is moreover reported that the Indians grumble at our presumption in trapping without paying them tribute.” The following day he decided to move camp to a more “convenient place.” This latter location may have been Cedar Point or along the shore at what became Coquille City, according to mileage estimates McLeod gave at subsequent times.

The next several days were rainy, and McLeod stayed mostly in camp, trading with occasional Indian visitors, collecting beaver skins from the trappers, and helping the hunters with several elk they had killed. On December 2, McLeod referred to the river as “Shequits.” Zybach and Wasson (2009: 87) speculated that McLeod may have transcribed the second and third syllables of the word Mishikhwutmetunne, with Native emphasis on “shi-KHWUT” being reasonably heard by McLeod as “she-QUITS.” In that instance, the preliminary “Mi” may have been

mistaken as a simple grammatical referent, and the “metunne” being well understood as referring to “the people of” the Mishikhwut river.

On the same day McLeod reported that the land was heavily inundated with water as far upstream as “the forks,” due to the incessant rains. This is the first appearance of this name in the historical records, but it is commonly used to depict two or more locations on the Coquille and its tributaries: most commonly the juncture of the North Fork and South Fork at Myrtle Point, and the juncture of the South Fork with the Middle Fork at Hoffmans [nee Huffmans]. Subsequent entries make it appear likely that McLeod is referring to the North and South Forks at Myrtle Point at this time.

On Friday, December 8, McLeod wrote:

Weather fine, proceeded up the river which continues fine and of equal breadth. About midday met our people descending also returned with us, put up at sun set passed many Indian habitations, indifferently erected, and their owners poorly off gave them a share of our stores. The party who joined us today had little success, indeed since we are in this river, the weather has proved very unfavorable, and till the [water level?] falls, little success can be anticipated, consequently a loss of time must ensue. I design therefore to avail myself of the period to visit the country southward [South Fork of the Coquille River] some distance from the upper part of this stream and [if?] it is found practicable for horses, we shall endeavor to find a passage from thence to the Umpqua to bring over our horses and baggage; distance 15 miles.

This is McLeod’s first written discussion of opening a pack trail to the Umpqua Valley. His earlier concerns were exploring the country south of the Umpqua for beaver, and finding a route to Rogue River. At this point he has traveled between the Umpqua River and Coquille River three times, by differing routes, and come to the decision that none of these routes were suitable for pack horses.

On December 9 McLeod ascended the river “about five miles” and stopped to erect camp on the north bank. Assuming he had been camped at Cedar Point, then Johnson, 5 miles upstream at the mouth of Glen Aiken Creek, is the vicinity of McLeod’s next camp. Other possibilities include Arago, or even that he has just moved to Cedar Point for the first time. That evening McLeod “Made preparations to proceed southward to obtain a knowledge of the Country.”

On Sunday the 10th, McLeod headed south with three French Canadian trappers, two Hawaiian servants of the HBC, “and three natives.” They “proceeded by water about 11 miles, where the river is divided into two branches, one coming from the northward, and the other from the opposite direction at the confluence of the former, stands a small village, containing half dozen of men and families.” This description clearly fits “the forks” north of Myrtle Point, and if McLeod’s estimate of “11 miles” is accurate, then camp that morning would have been at or near Coquille City, about one mile upstream from Cedar Point -- however, McLeod’s estimates of mileage sometimes seem a little shaky, and often vary with known distances and with the estimates of other contemporary journalists, such as David Douglas, Peter Ogden, and John

Work.

At the juncture of the North Fork McLeod found a small village, with about a “half dozen of men and families.” Here he “Engaged a guide for the main Channel, where we found a foot path on the west bank of the south branch, which we followed and seasonably came to the river – past three small plains abounding with fine grass in full verdure.” McLeod then summarized: “After dusk we put for the night, distance by land 14 miles course southerly.” Is he saying that he traveled about 25 miles that day, 11 by canoe and 14 by land? Or that the total distance could be covered on horseback in only 14 miles? And with McLeod, the numbers 11 and 14 might not be that accurate to begin with. A reasonable estimate – beginning at the forks – would place McLeod’s camp in the area of Broadbent, or at the extreme, Gaylord.

On December 11 McLeod wrote:

Heavy rain all day. As soon as day light enabled us to see our way we moved forward, after passing a short belt of wood we opened into a fine plain at the extremity of which, we came to a village of five dwellings rather unexpectedly. Our sudden appearance amazed the inhabitants who had not observed us, till we reached their door their fear was soon dissipated, we obtained some dried salmon indifferently cured for which they got in return a few trinkets. My men took their breakfast and by means of canoes, we forded the river, about 50 yards wide – continued our Journey on the east bank about five miles and reached another village greater and more populous than the last. Here the river assumes a different aspect, it becomes rocky, with many cataracts, some perpendicular falls, that afford the means of spearing the salmon trout . . .

If these cataracts can be identified, then McLeod’s journey becomes clearer and his encounters with others becomes more meaningful. A common reading of these notes is that these fishing areas are just south of Rowland’s Prairie, and that McLeod may have turned back at that point; however, he went on to say:

We continued our Journey, passed the village about 4 miles, following the same track by which we came, and in this short space, had to ford the river three different times, on one occasion Laderoute proved unable to follow his companions, had to go to his assistance still we had not come to the worst part of the way, seeming difficulties increasing, without any advantage accruing from persevering further I deemed it advisable to trace our steps back, to examine the Indian route to the Umpqua, which if practicable for loaded horses at this period of the season, the length of the river, Shequits, no doubts exist . . . but we can get to the great river [Rogue River] by this rout after a few days fine weather as the water falls as rapidly as it rises. At dusk we formed our camp about a mile south of the last village we past.

It is possible that McLeod reached Powers Prairie, and even a little further south, before turning back. This interpretation more closely follows his mileage figures, but is discounted when considering the time of year he is traveling and the terrain he is going through. It seems fairly

certain, however, that he made it a few miles south of Rowlands Prairie at a minimum. Of additional interest is his intent “to examine the Indian route to the Umpqua,” which indicates his increasing knowledge of the local geography and his use of established trails in his explorations.

On the 12th, McLeod and his men got up early and “proceeded to the village,” where they were surprised that “the water had risen four feet perpendicular since we past yesterday.” Moving north to “the second village”:

. . . had some further conversation with the Indians on the subject of the resources of the country, their assertions tend to encourage us to persevere in our pursuit, several minor streams are pointed out to us said to contain beaver, but the great river in particular is frequently alluded to, as possessing beaver in great plenty; but these people like their neighbours are subject to exaggerate, so we can't rely on what they say. These people seemingly never molest those animals, I presume others either judging from appearances they never kill an animal and depend solely on the produce of the waters for subsistence, with roots that grow spontaneously in the vicinity, the same observation is applicable to the natives on the great river, who never trouble themselves about furs, and have little or no intercourse with strangers. At the second village, we hired two canoes; in which we embarked and proceeded before the current with uncommon velocity to its junction with the main river. It keeps the same breadth all long [sic?], bank in many places high and perpendicular. The bed of this river is of gravel in the present state of the water, no impediment exists to obstruct the progress from the upper village . . . At the forks we took our own crafts and before dusk reached our Camp, found every thing safe.

On Wednesday the 13th McLeod prepared for a trip to the Umpqua Valley, to find a practical method of bringing horses into the country “if possible.” Camp women, otherwise rarely mentioned in his journal, are kept busy drying skins, with the men helping. On the 14th, accompanied by the same men as had traveled down the South Fork, McLeod headed east, looking for a possible pack trail route from the Umpqua to the Coquille River. From camp (most likely Cedar Point, Coquille City, or Johnson), traveling in a canoe, McLeod and his men:

. . . ascended the river the length of the forks, left our craft, being provided with Indian guide, shaped our course southerly thro' a foot path leading along the west shore of the north branch about two miles up the river we found a small village containing half dozen of Indians situated at the foot of a steep rock, which obstructed our passage but by means of the only canoe these people had, we were enabled to pass the precipice, which otherwise might have caused much loss of time, thro' more than seventy yard in the direction we are going.

Ivy speculates this location to be a rock outcrop on the Middle Fork, about two miles from Hoffman's, that was blasted away during highway construction. Another important consideration is that McLeod has again hired an Indian guide, which means he will be following established trails and that his December 11 intent “to examine the Indian route to the Umpqua” is being quickly realized. After getting by the rock precipice, McLeod observed: “The country on both

sides of the river as much as we can see of it, is mountainous and broken and covered with much wood.” Depending on the trail their guide is taking them, it is possible McLeod has traveled via Gravelford on his way to Dora or Sitkum; or he traveled along the Middle Fork via Bridge to Remote. The route through Dora would be the most likely to encounter the winter villages in the sequence he describes, but the route to Remote best fits his pace and travel descriptions:

Heavy rain continues and in the evening came on snow. Continued our Journey and ascended the mountain nearly to its summit, passed two small villages collectively not exceeding twenty inhabitants of the masculine gender . . . We put up in the face of a steep hill, much exposed, having no other canopy than what our Blankets afforded. Saw elks tracks as we came along, we crossed four small streams running from west to east.

If, indeed, McLeod and his men, equipment, and bundles of furs are being taken to the Umpqua via the East Fork – which would make very good sense, so far as ruggedness of the terrain is concerned – then this last camping location would be somewhere east of Sitkum. The clue would seem to be the “four small streams running from west to east,” but that might be disorientation on McLeod’s part, or a typo on the part of the transcriptionist. Otherwise, that description might be for a north-south valley, with McLeod traveling the western side, which location has not been identified. If they are traveling the Middle Fork, this last camping location might be east of Remote, near the mouth of Rock Creek.

On December 16, McLeod and his men experienced “fine weather” and “in the course of the forenoon descend the mountain and entered a fine plain.” This may have been Reston or Fluornoy Valley by the East Fork, or Camas Valley by the Middle Fork. They “continue forward” and “after passing a short mountain covered with thick woods we again got into a plain country on the bank of a small river,” would most likely be Tenmile, Flournoy Valley, or Lookingglass Valley. They killed a grizzly bear sow and cub for dinner and that night “encamped in the open plain.”

Third Visit: December 25th, 1826 – January 10th, 1827

McLeod rendezvoused with “Depoty” [John Baptiste Depaty dit McKay] on the 17th, at his camp near present-day Roseburg. At that point he received mail, including a letter from John McLoughlin saying that reinforcements were being sent. From there he proceeded to “an old establishment” on the Umpqua, perhaps near present-day Hubbard Creek or Elkton, and met with several other HBC trappers under his command. Two of the men were ill, and McLeod considered sending them for “medical assistance.” On the 21st the two sick men, James Birnie, and five horses started out for Fort Vancouver “bearing dispatches” for McLoughlin and others. Four other trappers, under the command of LaFramboise, were sent north on a trading expedition along the Coast. On the 22nd, McLeod began a return trip to the Coquille, camping along Lookingglass Creek on the evening of the 24th. No mention is made of Christmas or Christmas eve.

Monday 25th. Weather fine. Having every thing ready, the same men, that accompanied me, now return, John Kennedy and Gobin being the only addition. Having light loads we went a good part of the mountain, whose ascent is very steep and the descent not so steep but very long at its base. Pass'd the first river flowing in from the west and encamped . . .

One interpretation of this is that they climbed to the ridgeline near Kenyon Mountain and followed Skull Ridge west, whose “descent is very long at its base,” camping perhaps at Rock Creek or Remote. Another possibility is that they had retraced their steps to the East Fork. On the evening of the 26th “we reached our camp and found every thing in good order and safe.” This is probably the camp of December 12, and earlier; likely located at Johnson or Coquille City.

While experiencing “fine weather,” McLeod assigned different groups of trappers to different locations during the next few days. Eight men, under the guidance of P. Charles, were sent to “a river southward” by going to the mouth of the Coquille with two local guides, and then heading south along the beach. On Monday January 1st, 1827, McLeod failed to note the New Year, reporting instead:

Fine weather, all the men out the whole day the close of which brought them home, with only 3 beavers a party of Indians visited us, among whom were many elderly men whom we interrogated on various subjects, but to little purpose as they can give us no satisfactory information or else they plead ignorance, it is obvious, fiction is a predominant failing with them.

On the following day, the 2nd, however, McLeod’s men brought the occasion to his attention: “Having but six men about me still they were not backward in observing the usual ceremony of the new year, a fathom of tobacco given them on the occasion.” Later that day he had them move camp “to a more eligible spot about seven miles nearer the Ocean.” Assuming McLeod’s base camp was at Coquille City this time – and assuming that his estimations of mileage had become refined with experience – then this move would have been close to present-day Riverton. Seven miles of travel by canoe from either Johnson or Cedar Point would have ended in locations quite likely to have been flooded at that time of year, or otherwise inconvenient for trading or skin storage purposes.

On January 4, McLeod got his first reports of the P. Charles trapping crew to the south and found himself at the center of a political situation involving rival tribes, kidnapping, and slavery:

Rained at intervals. The Indians who accompanied P. Charles and party arrived, reported no bright prospects little or no Beaver to be found, they brought the skins of two state that the party will soon be here, unless they find greater encouragement than they have thitherto experienced, the natives attribute the disappearance of the beaver to the hight [sic] of the water one beaver caught, an Umpqua Indian who ranks as a chief with this people [possibly St. Arnoose, the “old Chief”], voluntarily accompanied us since leaving said river and was one of those that accompanied the party to the southward on his return yesterday, passing

a village situated by this stream, some miles westward of us, took advantage of a favourable opportunity and seized on the person of a youth and succeeded in carrying him with impunity: no doubt this act of aggression will be imputed to us, as being committed by an individual attached to our party; therefore to do away with any bad impression, this act of cruelty might create, after reproving the old fellow sharply, in presence of many Indians, for his misconduct took the youth from him and returned him to his friends.

On January 5 McLeod “Sent two men to deliver the above mentioned youth to his Parents, who were grateful for our interference.” The same day: “Perre Charles & four of the party arrived, the others have stopped to lay their up a small river where some Beaver vestiges were seen, they have had no success: seventeen Beaver is all they caught.”

On Saturday the 6th McLeod “made preparations to proceed with a few men along the coast, the object in view is to reach, if possible, the great [Rogue] river, said to be some distance to the southward.” McLeod then “Settled two Indians to be of the party” and “gave instructions to the people remaining at the camp to continue trapping, turn about day after day, only half of them to absent themselves at once.” On the following day he left with six men in a canoe to the mouth of the Coquille and: “from hence afoot along the beach about 14 miles and sixteen by water, passed a small river by the natives (Chiste etudi) [possibly New River] formed our Camp near where our people were lately trapping, on the border of an extensive marsh or swamp.” The combined estimate of 30 miles by foot and canoe seems optimistic, but the “extensive marsh or swamp” could be about anywhere between the Coquille River and Flores Creek.

On January 8, McLeod continued south along the Coast in continued quest of “the Great River.” During the day he obtained a canoe and a guide from the Athapaskan-speaking Kwatami (“Sixes River Indians”), whom he characterizes as the “Got tam you” Tribe. There is some speculation that these people were simply repeating a curse they had heard from earlier contact with trappers, and were making an attempt at using McLeod’s own language with him; if so, there is no way to determine if it were delivered in humor, as an attempt to further communications, or a directed curse in its own right (Zybach and Wasson 2009: 94). Later that day they cross a river, likely the Sixes, which McLeod also refers to as the “Got tam you” River.

It is noteworthy that it was difficult for McLeod and his men to obtain wood. On the 8th he noted that: “no wood is to be found on the west shore [likely Floras Lake], which is composed of sand thrown up by the sea” and is separated from the “Kwatamis,” who had a village on the east shore and sent a canoe to get the men. Later in the day they encountered “a deserted village; for want of timber we were obliged to use the planks with which the natives form their huts to raft us over the river [possibly Elk River].”

Sometime on the 8th or 9th McLeod and his men exit the study area on their way to the Rogue River. It is difficult to tell by his notes where he has gone, where they camped, or how far they traveled; on the “Squits en” [Sixes?] river, for example, “the Indians who never saw a European face before, seemed to be alarmed, for we observed in the course of the day, several running from us.” Johansen (Davies 1961: 204) thinks this might be on Mussel Creek, near present-day Arizona Beach and the Prehistoric Gardens tourist stop, but then McLeod says they travel an

additional 17 miles and camped “on the border of a small lake, about a mile and a half long.” It is difficult to determine where this might be, particularly since he also passes “Quatachen,” “Henne-Chenni,” and “Ukejeh” rivers further south, before reaching the Rogue. A key in any interpretation of place or distance of these journal entries is that Garrison Lake [lagoon] at Port Orford is the last substantial “lake” going south along the coast, and that the “lake” at Mussel Creek is essentially a wetland pond. “Ukejeh,” however, might well be Euchre Creek.

Fourth Visit: January 15th, 1827 – February 5th, 1827

On January the 11th, McLeod finally reached the long-sought Rogue River, about four miles inland from the mouth, “called in the native dialect Toototenez,” and – in a typical McLeod criticism – “falls short of the description report has given it.” As with the Indians along the Coos and Coquille, McLeod discovered the Tututni had no prior interest in trapping beavers, “have not a skin amongst them . . . pleaded ignorance of the method of killing these animals . . . tho’ vestiges [of beaver] exist in every creek that we past,” and, “that when told that beaver was the object of our pursuit, they appeared amazed.”

On the 12th McLeod recorded “9 Bustards killed of larger size than any I have seen in this quarter; their colour dark, and under their wings deep brown.” It is unknown at this point whether “Bustards” is referring to geese or buzzards; if the latter, then perhaps these may be California condors. Bustards are actually long-legged, long-necked, round-bodied birds native to Africa, Australia, and Eurasia, but is a name apparently used by French Canadians (“Iroquois”) for geese. On the 13th, having reached the Rogue River and having met and stated his intentions with several people there, McLeod began a return trip to the Coquille.

On January 15th McLeod writes: “High northerly wind with frequent showers of hail and snow continued our progress passed the river Ukejeh had an interview with the Indians, passed the river Hene Chenni at dusk we put up in the face of a steep hill.” Johansen (Davies 1961: 204) thinks these may be the Elk River and one of its forks, but it seems too far south for that to be accurate. They seem to be making good time, but on the 16th he and his men “continued our rout and encamped at the last woods south of river Got tom ye,” which seems to be the Sixes River, or perhaps Floras Creek. Because the Sixes and Elk rivers are only a few miles apart, one of these interpretations must be wrong. If the January 15 campsite was near Lookout Rock, then the “Ukejeh” was likely Euchre Creek (McArthur 1982: 262 says George Davidson, on page 373 of the 1889 “Coast Pilot,” calls Euchre Creek “Ukah Creek”), and the Hene Chenni could have been Mussel Creek or Myrtle Creek. The campsite of the 16th, then, would be inland along the mainstem of the Sixes River, perhaps just south of the town of Sixes.

On January 17th McLeod returned to his camp on the Coquille River; probably the same one he left on January 2. While gone to the Rogue, the hunters and trappers had had little success although “everyone acknowledges there are plenty of signs of both beaver and elk.” The principal problem was considered to be the weather, which had caused rapid changes in river depths, making trapping difficult. Trading was also difficult “in consequence of the high value the Indians put on the few furs they possessed.” On Sunday the 21st McLeod decided to put an end to the trapping because of “unfavorable weather” and poor results, and return to Fort Vancouver.

On Monday, January 22 McLeod wrote:

Same weather as yesterday, issued orders for all the traps to be taken up, in doing which two beaver were found in them. Women employed in scraping skins settled with the little Chief Kitty yeahun and Neaze [unsure of the identity of these men, or their Tribal affiliation] who return to their respective homes along the coast. Made some preparations for starting tomorrow should the weather permit. As the navigation of the Umpqua is very dangerous at this season of the year, suggests the other rout by the north east branch of this river, as the surest way, as we can by means of canoes reach the foot of the mountain from thence men can easily in three days carry our property over to McKays [Depaty's] camp, at least where we last left them in a fine plain at the base of the mountain, southward from hence. Some of the party having traps above were allowed to start to recover them.

McLeod's decision to take "the other rout by the north east branch of this river," shows his increased understanding of the geography and river conditions of the Coquille and Umpqua rivers. On the 23rd he noted "about midday the remainder of the party and self proceeded a few miles up the river, the heavy rain made us put sooner than we otherwise would have done." This campsite was likely one used earlier – perhaps Leneve, which is only a few miles upstream from Riverton. On the 24th, "Ignace cast up, with a sick child of his, whose indisposition suggested the idea of coming to us to obtain medical assistance. The childs case is not dangerous, tho' the father alarmed." The following day, as Ignace departed to rejoin the other trappers in his group on Coos Bay, McLeod "admonished him to make all haste and join the others, in fifteen days he expects to reach the old fort at the Umpqua, the appointed place of rendezvous."

On the 26th McLeod "proceeded to the first fork distance about 9 miles." It is difficult to figure out what McLeod meant by "first fork"; it seems to be a different location than "the forks." Fishtrap Creek enters the Coquille about nine miles upstream from Leneve; Arago (Hall Creek) is about nine miles from Cedar Point; and Johnson is about nine miles from Myrtle Point. The following day heavy rains forced the men to remain in camp, rather than risk getting their cargo of 200 furs wet. Three elk were killed during the day and "three Indians stopped with us, on their way down stream, with a cargo of camass, their chief subsistence at present, fish having long ago almost entirely failed in this river which made the majority of the Indians to resort to other places."

On Sunday, January 28 the rain began to let up and McLeod and his men "succeeded by the close of day to enter the N east branch, about a mile, where we landed." Three more elk were killed and the next two days were spent visiting with Indians whose "dwellings are on the banks of this river, a short distance above, drying meat, and preparing the elk skins as "wrappers" for the furs.

The following day, January 30, he was able to write: "Heavy rain: however having our furs wrapped in elk skins with the hair on we ventured to proceed with part of our baggage." The group had a chain of rapids to ascend, but "the distance we came to day [does] not exceed two miles this part of the river is rapidous yet not dangerous, water falling fast, the apparent continuation of bad weather leaves us no hopes of making much progress." Their new campsite

may have been near Elk Creek, and McLeod, knowing he would likely be late for the appointed rendezvous, decided to send a runner ahead to inform those waiting for him. He was forced to send a teen-aged Indian boy on the mission alone as, “the Indians about us are ill clad, that they can’t venture any distance in such weather, besides the mountains over which we must pass, are covered with snow and no compensation that we can offer will tempt any of the natives to accompany our messenger.”

On February 1 the rain lightened and McLeod was able to make better progress, and his group traveled until dusk, possibly camping that night in the Dora area. The following day they:

Continued our rout, and put up near an Indian village situated on an eminence in a plain of some extent, to our surprise the messenger we sent forward, did pass the spot and we met him close by on his return, the awful aspect of the mountains intimidated him, or rather some acquaintance of his residing here attracted his attention, and dissuaded him from going to join his master J.B. Deputy, being one of his household I expected he would shown more determination.

On Sunday the 4th McLeod and his men poled the furs upstream, possibly the entire length of Sitkum Valley to the mouth of Camas Creek, where they encamped. The following day was also “rainy”:

. . . yet we continued our Journey till night precluded a possibility of going further, in lieu of going over the mountain as on former occasion we took another track, following its base now and then touching the river expecting it to be more advantageous than the former one, in this idea we were sadly mistaken. We past a small village at the extremity of the mountain but had no conversation with the few people in it. Much snow as we got near the mountain.

Monday 5th. Light rain, as soon as the day dawned, we were glad to avail ourselves of it to leave a disagreeable berth, having past the night exposed to snow and rain –shortly after sun rose, we entered the open country, having got out of the mountain . . .

Aftermath

“Little Ignace,” the Iroquois freeman trapper encouraged by McLeod to join the expedition in early October in hopes of clearing his “heavy debt,” and who was so worried about the health of his child on January 24, became the first known person to have died in Coos territory, when he was killed shortly after leaving McLeod’s troupe on the 25th.

McLeod learned of the news on February 7, when he wrote: “in the course of the evening another Indian messenger cast up, with intelligence of a disconsolate nature, purporting the death of Ignace and an Indian at the River Cahouse, the report is variously related which leaves hope of its being ill founded . . . so many reports are in circulation founded on fiction that little reliance can be put on any and I wish this one may prove as ill founded as the others.”

On February 13, after arriving at the “Scottsburg” base camp, McLeod wrote:

Aubitchon, Joudoin, Torrowaheni arrived and corroborated the report relative to the fate of Ignace, who was killed by natives of river Cahouse in retaliation for an Indian of that tribe who was shot by the accidental going off of a gun, lying in the bow of a canoe, as the Indian was in the act of hauling the craft, on the beach, in the usual way, having hold of the bow or stern, the gun went off, and he fell lifeless on th beach. This accident happened before the deceased Ignace had found the others and they alarmed by the event, made all haste forward to get out of the reach of the Indians, before they got intimation of the circumstance, trusting the fate of Ignace to chance, who not aware of what had happened, fell an easy sacrifice to the irritated natives that supposed the death of their relative a willful deed, it can scarcely be expected of them otherwise. This is the manner the men state the case, of the death of the Indian as above narrated, to the fate of Ignace, we are indebted to Indian Information; and no doubt exists of its correctness. Want of resolution on the part of these three men prompted them to act in the manner they did, if time permitted I would do away at least with the idea of our being the aggressors entertained by these people; the hasty departure of the men tends to confirm them in that opinion, but must be deferred to a future period, indeed even if we went now we cannot expect to see the culprits for they have had time to effect their escape; two weeks have elapsed since the misfortune happened . . .

2. Jedediah Smith Expedition: June 30 – July 10, 1828

Jedediah Smith did not bring the first horses into the study area, but he probably established the first pack trail through the region when he moved more than 300 horses and mules from northern California to the Umpqua River along the Oregon Coast in the early summer of 1828. Like McLeod, he had a single objective: but Smith's was not beaver (although he collected skins via trade and trapping as they progressed along their route); it was to get his horses to market via the Willamette Valley, Fort Vancouver, and the Rocky Mountains.

McLeod's purpose had been to explore travel routes, find beaver, and to possibly set up long-term trade arrangements. Good relations were critical to his mission. Smith just wanted to get to Fort Vancouver as quickly and safely as possible. Indians, for the most part, were seen as impediments in western Oregon, particularly when they shot his horses and mules with arrows. There had even been instances where members of Smith's party had killed local Indians along the route, in an effort to keep them at a distance until the livestock could get through.

In 1940, Alice Bay Maloney wrote an article detailing Smith's campsites along the Oregon Coast, which she numbered chronologically, from south to north, beginning with "Oregon Camp No. 1" (Maloney 1940: 306). We retain her numbering system in this report, where Smith enters the study area and camps to the north of Humbug Mountain (Oregon Camp #8), and leaves the study area after crossing Coos Bay and camping on July 10 (Oregon Camp #17).

Smith had been caught and jailed twice for illegally entering the country of Mexico (now present-day California) with an expedition of Americans, for the purpose of trapping beaver. On the second occasion he was suspected of trying to help the US lay claim to Mexican lands by way of exploration and commercial development. After a fellow American, a resident of Monterey, posted a bond and a voucher, Smith was released from confinement and given two months to leave California (Sullivan 1934: 36-44). By late December 1827, Smith had hired seventeen men and began to journey up the Sacramento River Valley with a herd of 330 California horses and mules he planned to sell once they returned to the Rocky Mountains (*ibid.*: 46-53). Smith and his employees illegally trapped beaver as they slowly ascended the flooded Valley, looking for safe passage east across the Sierra Nevadas. When they reached present-day Red Bluff on April 10, 1828, Smith made the decision to turn west toward the Pacific, and then head north to Oregon and HBC Fort Vancouver; which was well-traveled from that point to the Rockies (*ibid.*: 53-79). Smith's expedition included the first white people, black man, horses, and mules known to enter the redwoods. After a few conflicts with local Indians, they reached the ocean on June 8 and headed north toward Oregon along the coast (*ibid.*: 97).

Smith reached Oregon on June 23, camping on the north side of Winchuck River. The expedition's subsequent daily travels and campsites north along the Pacific Coast are fairly well documented by a number of reliable sources (e.g. Dale 1918: 267-274; Sullivan 1934: 104-111; Maloney 1940; Morgan 1964: 256-267; Hall 1995: 16-17; Douthit 1999; Tveskov 2000: 355-358). On June 30, Smith reached the project study area, skirting Humbug Mountain along Brush Creek and then setting camp either at the mouth of Brush Creek (according to several sources) or the mouth of Gold Run Creek (as appears more likely at this point), near present-day Battle Rock (Vol. II, Part 2.2). Rogers says "took a steep point of mountain, keeping the same course, and

travelled over it and along the beach 6 miles more, and encamped,” which would be Gold Run Creek if the “steep Point of mountain” is Humbug. Smith writes: “From a high hill I had an opportunity to view the country which Eastward was high rough hills and mountains generally timbered & north long the coast apparently Low with some prairae [sic],” which would also be the appearance of the country from the hilltops around Gold Run Creek.

On July 1st Smith “Encamped on a river 60 yards wide” after traveling about 12 miles, by Rogers’ estimate. Smith estimates they traveled only nine miles, which would take them to the Sixes River from Gold Run Creek, after crossing Cape Blanco. On July 2 Smith says they traveled 12 miles north “principally along the shore,” and passed a small lake at about six miles. If Smith’s figures are accurate, then the “small lake” would be Floras Lake. Smith also describes the hills they passed as being three or four miles from the shore with “the intermediate space being interspersed with grassy pairae [sic] brush, sand hills & low Pines.” This also describes the Floras Lake area. Rogers agrees with Smith, saying the party traveled “pretty much along the beach and over small sand hills; the timber, small pine; the grass not so plenty nor so good as it has been some days past,” and also for a distance of 12 miles. That evening they camped about two miles south of the Coquille River, which would be somewhere near Bradley Lake.

On the 3rd of July Smith made his final journal entry, as the expedition reached the Coquille River:

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 [two] some indians moving 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 & 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 in pieces.

Whether Smith simply stopped making journal entries at this point, or whether future entries were lost, is unknown. Rogers reports that they used the canoe obtained by Smith to cross the Coquille, and then traveled five miles more before setting up camp, which would place them near Whiskey Run. Given the theft of an Indian boy near the mouth of the Coquille by one of the men with Alexander McLeod less than two years earlier (January 4, 1827), Rogers’ entry has an interesting note: “Marishall caught a boy about 10 years old and brought him to camp. I give him some beads and dried meat; he appears well and satisfied, and makes signs that the Inds. have all fled in their canoes and left him.”

The first American 4th of July on the Oregon Coast was observed (if at all) at Cape Arago, which Rogers describes as “a long point” [of land]. On the 5th camp was moved 1 ½ miles to find better grass for the horses and mules. Here: “Two Inds., who speak Chinook, came to our camp; they tell us we are ten days travell from Catapos on the wel Hamett, which is pleasing news to us.” Rogers is saying that they have been told by reliable sources that they are nearing their journey’s end from California, when they reach the friendly Kalapuyan tribes in the Willamette Valley.

On July 6 the expedition traveled two more miles to a location likely near present-day Yoakam Point, Here they stayed for two days, resting their horses and preparing the meat from two elk killed by hunters. On the 7th “about 100” Indians came to the camp with fish and mussels for sale. Here Rogers noted that one of the Indians had a gun and all had knives and “tomahawks.” One person also had a blanket and several pieces of cloth – additional indicators of trade with the HBC.

On July 8, the trappers moved two more miles and camped near a large Indian town at present-day Charleston, where eight animals were shot with arrows, killing three mules and one horse. The following day camp seems to have been moved to present-day Empire, or possibly further north to Pony Slough (“another river”), although Rogers says they only travelled about two miles after crossing South Slough:

We made an early start again this morning, and crossed the 1st fork of the river, which is 400 or 500 yards wide, and got all our things safe across about 9 o.c. A.M., then packed up and started along the beach along the river N., and travelled about 2 miles, and struck another river and enc. We crossed in Ind. canoes; a great many Inds. live along the river bank; there houses built after the fashion of a shed. A great many Inds. in camp with fish and berris for sale; the men bought them as fast as they brought them. We talked with the chiefs about those Inds. shooting our horses, but could get but little satisfaction as they say that they were not accessory to it, and we, finding them so numerous and the travelling so bad, we thought it advisable to let it pass at present without notice. We bought a number of beaver, land, and sea otter skins from them in the course of the day.

On July 10 the expedition crossed Coos Bay in the morning, with Smith crossing in a canoe with a mule swimming alongside “where the swells was running pretty high.” Two more horses died of their wounds before crossing. From somewhere near the crossing point Rogers observed: “The river we crossed to-day unites with the one we crossed yesterday and makes an extensive bay that runs back into the hills; it runs N. and S., or rather heads N.E. and enters the ocean S.W., at the entrance into the ocean its about 1 ½ miles wide.” Finding good grass nearby, they decided to camp another day before heading north along the coast toward the Umpqua.

3. T'Vault, Casey, Kautz & Evans Expeditions Eastward: 1851 - 1856

In the early 1850s there were two expeditions that took place within the study area that have each been associated with mystery for more than 150 years. Both trails begin at Port Orford and both reach the South Fork of the Coquille. Both expeditions may have used nearly the same route between those locations, although probably not.

The first mystery concerns the route taken by William T'Vault, under orders from William Tichenor, in an effort to connect a trade route between Port Orford and the portion of the "Oregon Trail" route approximated by the location of I-5 through Douglas County today. T'Vault's expedition began with him getting lost and losing most of his horses, equipment, and men before being attacked by Indians on the mainstem Coquille River; in which five of his companions were killed. T'Vault and one survivor, Gilbert Brush, traveled south by foot to Port Orford. The two other survivors, Loren Williams and Cyrus Hedden, made their way north to the Umpqua River and safety.

A few months later, Lt. Col. Casey was sent to the Coquille River and killed a number of Indians near present-day Hoffmans, in large part as retribution for the T'Vault attack. He also established an official Army camp at the mouth of the Coquille River, helped establish Fort Orford, and improved the pack trail from the new Fort to the new camp into a "military road" capable of transporting heavy equipment and river boats (Vol. II, Part 1.3).

Five years later, near the conclusion of the Rogue River Indian Wars, Dr. John Evans followed an established military trail that may have closely followed T'Vault's route. The mystery with Evans is not where he may have gone (that question has been carefully researched for nearly 80 years), however, but what he found during his travels – supposedly, a massive meteorite on "Bald Mountain" said to be worth tens of thousands or millions of dollars (Peterson and Powers 1952: 504-505).

Where T'Vault went, and where Evan's meteorite (if it actually exists) is located, remain mysteries to this time. Records surrounding Casey's well documented expedition may contain clues to both. The story, though, begins with the "Battle Rock Massacre" in which an estimated 25 Indian men were killed, just a few months before the beginnings of first T'Vault's, and then Casey's, expeditions from the same Battle Rock location.

Battle Rock Massacre (June 10 – July 2, 1851)

On June 9, 1851, William Tichenor landed his ship at present-day Port Orford, staying just long enough to establish a Donation Land Claim (said to be the first in Curry County) and to leave a crew of nine men behind, with promises of returning in 14 days with additional men and supplies (Dodge 1898: 22-24). The men camped out on a large rock with a single trail access to the beach. They had a supply of arms and ammunition and a cannon that they loaded and aimed down the trail. The following day the cannon was discharged into a group of local Indians headed up the trail, instantly killing a large number of them. Others were shot with guns. None of the crew were killed and only two were injured, but they decided to leave the rock and head north for safety when Tichenor had not returned as planned, 14 days later.

The ship “Columbia” landed at Port Orford in advance of Tichenor, but after the men had left, and it was assumed that they had been killed by the local Indians. This news was carried to San Francisco and Portland (Dodge 1898: 23). Instead, the men had safely worked their way north to the Coquille River, then Coos Bay, and ending at the white settlements on the Umpqua. The story of the men’s encounter and escape has been widely reported – most notably by John M. Kirkpatrick, the leader of the crew (Dodge 1898: 33-50) – and the scene of their “battle” has been named Battle Rock since that time (Victor 1894: 280-282; Beckham and Minor 1980: 120-121; McArthur 1982: 45; Hall 1995: 17-18; Schwartz 1997: 33-36; Tveskov 2000: 388-391; Zybach 2012: 65-68).

The story of the men’s travels from Battle Rock to Coos Bay in June 1851 is the first historical account of the use of that route since Jedediah Smith and Harrison Rogers had crossed the same landscape in July 1828 – 23 years earlier. The very next account would only be a few months later, in September, when a naked William T’Vault and his severely wounded companion traveled from the Coquille River to Port Orford, and their two fellow surviving expedition members traveled from the same location on the Coquille, north to Coos Bay.

William T’Vault Expedition (July 26 – November 4, 1851)

After helping establish “Fort Point,” upon his return to Port Orford, William Tichenor sailed to Portland, Oregon, where he filed a Donation Land Claim on his new Port Orford holdings in Oregon City, and enlisted several men to help develop his new land holding. He also “purchased six horses, some swine, and engaged a Mr. T’Vault who had been recommended highly to me by Col. Phil. Kearney” (Dodge 1898: 24). Tichenor then returned to Port Orford, along with additional military personnel and supplies. In his account of subsequent events, he wrote:

A party under T’Vault had been sent with the horses to view out and cut a trail from Port Orford connecting with the Oregon trail; another under Nolan for a similar purpose. The latter had been instructed by me to ascend to the south of the Sugar Loaf Peak (“Humbug Mountain”) on the southwest of the roadstead, believing that to be the terminus of the great dividing range of mountains leading to the far interior, which has since proved to be such (Dodge 1898: 25).

Nolan soon returned to Port Orford, unable to find his way. T’Vault ended up getting famously lost during his assignment, losing his horses, several of his men and most of his clothing and supplies before ending up in a canoe with some Indians and the remainder of his men, heading downstream on the Coquille River. On September 14, 1851, somewhere between present-day Coquille (according to Casey: November 9) and present-day Bandon (most other sources), T’Vault and his men were attacked, with five men being killed. T’Vault and Gilbert Brush (who was partially scalped) escaped safely back to Port Orford, while Loren L. Williams and Cyrus Hedden escaped northward to the Umpqua River (Victor 1994: 282-285; Dodge 1898: 25-28; Beckham and Minor 1980: 121, 140, 223; Hall 1995: 18-21; Schwartz 1997: 40-41; Tveskov 2000: 391-406). Hedden was also a participant and survivor of the Battle Rock massacre, but it is Williams’ account that has carried through to the present time.

Dodge (1898: 88) claimed to have an extended account of Williams' experiences with T'Vault on this expedition, "but owing to its length we have deemed it advisable to reserve that brilliant and romantic story for the second volume of this history." A second volume was never compiled by Dodge, but a copy of Williams' account apparently was published elsewhere, nearly 100 years later (Mark Tveskov, personal correspondence: 2011). Schwarz (1997: 41) references both men, but only provides a citation for Williams (*ibid.*: 277), which may be the same as referenced by Dodge: Ms. P-A 77, Bancroft Library, at UC Berkeley. Schwarz (1997: 277) also cites three "Alta California" editions of August 26, September 18, and December 14, 1851 as providing additional information regarding this event. Copies of these articles should also be found at Bancroft Library and/or may be available online. [Note: It is possible that Loren L. Williams later became a GLO Surveyor who worked – and probably lived – in the study area (e.g., Vol. II, Part 2.7: Flint & Williams 1871; Flint & Williams 1872). If so, that would add credibility to his written statements regarding numbers and geographical locations.]

Tichenor later wrote of T'Vault's route (Dodge 1898: 25):

Little of mountaineer skill was ever used or exhibited in their devious wandering. Mountain ridges were not followed or regarded. Immense gorges were plunged into without apparent hesitation. All the animals had to be abandoned, everything was disposed of as far as possible to enable them to travel or wander.

Tichenor also claimed that during the following year, 1852, Lieut. Stoneman (who served under Col. Casey) "with his party of explorers, traced their [T'Vault expedition's] trail, as shown by the cuttings, and found more evidence of insanity than rationality" (Dodge 1898: 25) -- if so, then perhaps a record of Stoneman's report on his findings may still exist and help place a clearer light on T'Vault's travels.

In addition, and also according to Tichenor, T'Vault "finally reached a point on the South Fork of the Coquille river, near which camp a depot was established the following spring [1853?], by Company C., First Dragoons, under Col. A.[ndrew] J.[ackson] Smith" (Dodge 1898: 25). Again, if this location has been mapped, or is otherwise described in an official report, correspondence, or a journal, then additional insight may be gained regarding T'Vault's wanderings with the discovery and use of such information.

Lt. Col. Silas Casey Expedition (October 22 – November 22, 1851)

Lt. Col. Silas Casey of the US Army was assigned to punish the Coquille Indians responsible for the killings of T'Vault's men, and arrived in Port Orford on October 22, 1851 to undertake this mission (Vol. II, Part 1.3). He and his men relocated to the Coquille River, setting up two camps, and on November 22, 1851 attacked and killed an estimated 15 Indians at the confluence of the Middle Fork and South Fork of the river. They also destroyed numerous canoes, homes, and several tons of salmon during this attack.

Of some interest is Casey's awareness that his actions had more purpose than simple retribution. On November 9, 1851, reporting from the mouth of the Coquille River, he observed: "Inasmuch as there is an extensive farming country in the vicinity of Port Orford, extending to, and up this

river, which if an adequate protection was afforded, would I think speedily settle.” On November 11, and from the same location, he added to that thought: “I consider it expedient to make a reservation at once, for by the Oregon land bill, some person would be sure to lay their claim.”

Lt. Kautz’ Military Expedition (October 8 – October 31, 1855)

In early October, probably the 8th or 10th, 1855, Lt. August V. Kautz set out from Fort Orford to make an examination of a proposed route for a military wagon road from that place to a juncture with the Oregon Trail, at some point in the vicinity of Fort Lane and Jacksonville. When he reached Big Bend on the Rogue River, he found the immigrant settlers in much alarm at a threatened attack from Indians on Applegate River, and he returned to the fort for a larger supply of arms and ammunition, to better prepare himself in case of an hostile attack.

According to Dr. Rodney Glisan, who assumed Kautz’ command at Fort Orford in Kautz’ absence:

Lieutenant August Valentine Kautz, Fourth Infantry, who left here with ten men about eight days ago, to survey a road between this place and Fort Lane, returned last night about twelve o’clock to get arms and ammunition for his party. He reports that on reaching the big bend of Rogue River, forty-five miles from Fort Orford, he found the settlers making port-holes in their houses, preparatory to an attack from the Indians of upper Rogue River valley. He learned from them that being advised by some friendly Indians to leave the place, as the tribes above there were hostile, but not believing the reports they started up the river to ascertain the truth of the matter. On arriving in sight of a trader’s establishment they saw the building in flames, and the Indians in a war dance around it and that they were further told by friendly Indians that all the tribes in upper Rogue River valley had united in war against the whites. This report, together with those received from Jacksonville last mail of the disaffection of the Indians in that region in consequence of the hanging of several of their head men at Yreka for murder, indicates that trouble is brewing in lower Oregon also. These Indians had been arrested by the United States troops at Fort Lane, and turned over to the civil authorities of California, who, it is presumed, gave them a fair trial. (Zybach 2012: 84).

When Kautz returned to his reconnaissance project, he was attacked by Indians near Grave Creek, from where he and his men escaped to Fort Lane and reported on the location of the attack. Army and Volunteer forces were then assembled and a major assault made upon the Indians over a two-day period on Hungry Hill, above Grave Creek, with seven fatalities among the US troupes on October 31. Captain Thomas Cram, who had been stationed at Fort Lane, then reported to Congress (Zybach 2012: 85):

From my own reconnaissance in this district of Southern Oregon, and other sources of information, I think the best system of roads that can be opened in order to bring the Rogue river, the Coquille, and the Umpqua valleys into communication with a sea-port would be --

1. To open a road in direct route seen on map No. 10, from Port Orford to the Oregon trail.
2. To open one from Cape Blanco to the navigable part of the Coquille; also one from the head of the navigable part of this river, following the middle fork, to the Umpqua valley.

With such a system well executed these secluded valleys could avail themselves of Port Orford, as there is already by nature a good wagon road from this to Cape Blanco.

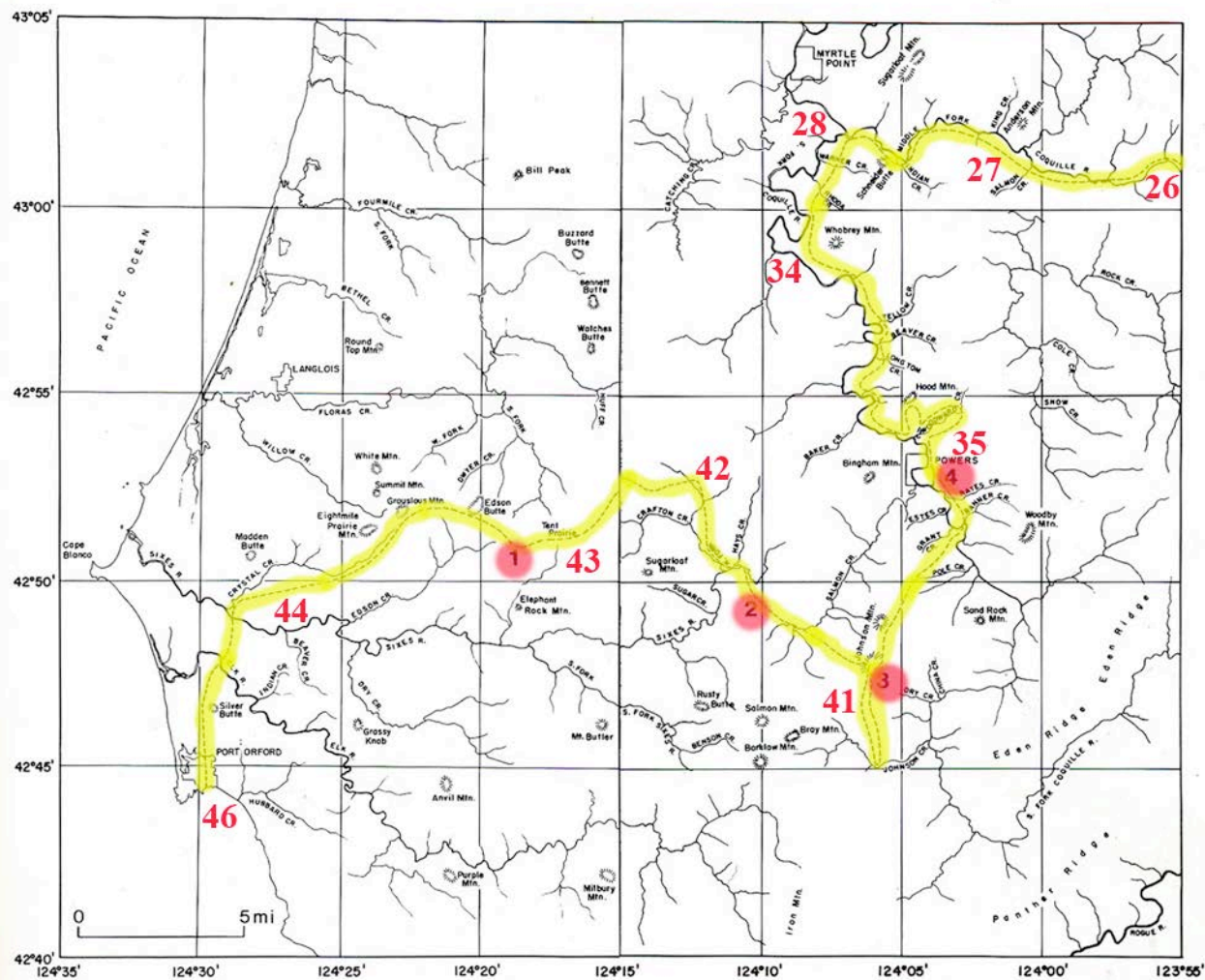
Dr. Evans' Geological Expedition (July 14 – July 23, 1856)

Dr. John Evans, United States Geologist for Oregon, arrived in Port Orford by ship on July 14, 1856 for the purpose of conducting a “geological examination of the vicinity” (Glisan 1874: 351). Fig. 9 shows the route of his travels eastward, during which he claimed to have discovered a giant, incredibly valuable meteorite, stuck in the ground near the summit of “Bald Mountain.”

Beginning on July 18, 1856, Evans began a one-week trip over the established pack trails from Port Orford to Johnson Mountain; from there, south to the mines on Johnson Creek; and then to the Umpqua Valley by way of Enchanted Prairie and Camas Valley (Beckham and Minor 1980: 221-222). The USGS quadrangle numbers given on Fig. 6 (26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46) are individually described in Vol. II, Part 2.2, and the landmark names are listed in Vol. II, Part 2.5.

Evans maintained a journal of his travels, including detailed descriptions of his route and campsites, but there is no mention of a meteorite in those pages. A few years later, though, while in Washington, DC for the purpose of lobbying Congress to obtain funding for a return venture to Oregon, he claimed to have found a massive meteorite in the vicinity of Johnson Mountain: his description of which has been estimated at various times to potentially be worth tens of thousands – or even millions – of dollars (Peterson and Powers 1952: 504-505).

Evans died suddenly at the outbreak of the Civil War, before funding could be obtained to finance a return visit to the site of his supposed discovery. News of the discovery, however, when later coupled with the availability of Evans' journal from the Smithsonian Institute archives, caused numerous search parties to form over the next 150 years in attempt to follow Evan's route and rediscover the so-called “Port Orford Meteorite.” Subsequent research strongly suggested that Evan's was perpetrating a hoax with the meteorite story due to a need to pay pressing debts -- yet efforts to both prove and discredit his story have led directly to detailed field and documentary analysis of his claims, route, and campsite locations (including maps) that were subsequently published in professional and academic journals (Clarke 1993; Henderson and Dole 1964: 113-130; Plotkin 1993: 1-24; Zybach 2012: 231-250).



00 = USGS Coquille Tribe Field Map Index

FIGURE 1-3.—E.P. Henderson's and Hollis M. Dole's reconstruction of Evans' route from Port Orford across the Rogue River Mountains in 1856 is shown by the dashed line. Numbers indicate locations of camp sites for the nights of ① 18 July, ② 19 and 20 July, ③ 21 July, ④ 22 July. Revised from *The Ore Bin*, July 1964.

Fig. 9. Dr. Evans' Journal: Port Orford Trail Research, 1934 and 1992.

5. The Randolph Trail & Seven Devils: 1853 - 1856

At nearly the same time the Coos Bay Company was colonizing the Empire area to the north, miners discovered a rich lode of “black sand” gold along Whiskey Run Creek, on the coast between the Coquille and Coos Rivers. The discovery of gold led to the formation of the boom town of Randolph (Walling 1884: 492; McArthur 1982: 614), adjacent to Whiskey Run Creek, and the development of a “road” to the newly formed port of Empire City (Beckham and Minor 1980: 122; 141; 147; 152-166; 170-171; 187). While gold was being mined at Whiskey Run, members of the Coos Bay Company were discovering rich veins of coal near Empire, North Bend, and Coalbank Slough, a short distance away (Dodge 133-134).

The principal difference between the two groups is that coal mining was dominated by wealthy businessmen and local landowners, whereas gold mining was almost exclusively American and European single men, footloose and willing to follow any promising rumor; followed closely by Chinese miners – also almost exclusively single men, or men who had left their wives and families back in China – when the rumors had any truth to them.

The tendency of the miners was to brutally confront local Indians, whom were frequently beaten, raped, robbed, and murdered, as there was little consequence to these actions. Miners often banded together to attack and murder Indians they saw as threatening or bothersome for other reasons. Formal law did not punish such crimes when perpetrated by whites on either Indians or Chinese during times of gold rush, and the miners themselves rarely stayed in one place for any length of time so as to avoid any possible revenge or vigilante actions.

“The Randolph Trail” ran directly from the black sand gold mines of Randolph to the newly-formed seaport of Empire City: there were also direct beach and overland trails between Randolph and the Indian villages near the mouth of the Coquille River.

Nasomah Massacre (January 27 - 29, 1854)

On February 5, 1854, Indian Agent F. M. Smith, based in Port Orford, filed a report to the US Department of Interior containing the following information:

A most horrid massacre, or rather an out-and-out barbarous mass murder, was perpetrated upon a portion of the Nah-so-mah band residing at the mouth of the Coquille River on the morning of January 28 by a party of 40 miners . . . At dawn . . . led by one Abbott, the ferry party and the 20 miners, about 40 in all, formed three detachments, marched upon the Indian ranches and “consummated a most inhuman slaughter,” which the attackers termed a *fight*. The Indians were aroused from sleep to meet their deaths with but a feeble show of resistance; shot down as they were attempting to escape from their houses. Fifteen men and one squaw were killed, two squaws badly wounded. On the part of the white men, not even the slightest wound was received. The houses of the Indians, with but one exception, were fired and entirely destroyed. Thus was committed a massacre too inhuman to be readily believed (Peterson and Powers 1952: 89-90).

Miners who actually participated in the attack, including William Packwood, H. R. Scott, J. B. O’Meally, and A. F. Soap, presented the occurrence in a more favorable light (Dodge 1898: 89-94). Victor (1894: 323-328) is the primary source of documentation for Dodge’s account. Hall (1995: 21-22) and Tveskov (2000: 430-432) provide contemporary accounts of the attack, and place it in context to other historical events of that time.

Harper’s Magazine Writer’s Visit (October 1855 – January 1856)

Journalist William V. Wells visited the Port Orford, Coquille River, and Coos Bay area from October 1855 through January 1856 (McArthur 1982: 614; Hall 1995: 41). He subsequently reported on his travels and impressions in the popular Harper’s New Monthly Magazine in a heavily illustrated article titled “Wildlife in Oregon” (Fig. 2; Wells 1856).

Wells’ observations were sometimes sensationalistic and even exaggerated, no doubt in order to engage and entertain his intended audience (Hall 1995: 41), but they also contained a significant amount of detail regarding the people and places he visited. Such accounts included his travel along the Oregon Coast, a description of the dying boom town of Randolph, his difficulties in traversing the Seven Devils (“Randolph”) trail, and the inhabitants of Empire City, where he stayed for much of his visit. Wells also describes local Indian communities and their activities at a time when the Rogue River Indian Wars were still taking place, and immediately prior to the removal of most of them to reservations later that year – yet fails to even mention the atrocities then taking place (Wells 1856). Despite the limitations and excesses of its written styling, this article has significant historical and cultural value.

Randolph Abandoned (1855 – August 1855)

The black sand claims at Randolph were abruptly covered by a winter storm, and the town quickly dissolved thereafter (Wells 1856: 588-608). In August 1857, the GLO surveyors described Randolph in the General Description of Tsp. 27 S., Rng 14 W. as (Murphy and Murphy 1857: 34):

Randolph in the S. W. Cor. Of the Tsp. contains 18 houses all of which are deserted. On the beach of the ocean on the S.W. Cor. Of the township are 18 miners at work digging gold. 2 Americans and 16 Chinamen. There is only one settler in the township.

The bust at Randolph was accelerated by a major strike by “Coarse Gold” Johnson near the headwaters of the South Fork Coquille, and the filing of subsequent claims along the South Fork of the Sixes River (Wooldridge 1971: 271-274). Similarly, additional findings of coal were made at the headwaters of Isthmus Slough and at Eckley. Diller (1903) provides a geological summary of the locations and quality of the area’s gold and coalmines in the Coquille River basin. Beckham (1995) provides a detailed history of the area’s coalmines. The result of all the new and sudden mining activities was the creation of a sudden and all-new transportation network of prospecting trails, pack trails, wagon roads, and even railroads. Most of these appeared to be built on a primary network of existing foot trails and canoe routes, but spurs led in all sorts of new directions – wherever gold or coal was discovered.

5. The Coose Bay Commercial Company, May 1853 – 1875

American immigration to the study area had three basic facets: businessmen and their families, miners, and farmers. Of these groups, business and farm families and coal miners were all drawn by free land being offered by the US government. The gold miners had different interests.

After Congress passed the Oregon Donation Land Claims (DLC) act in 1850, DLCs of 320 acres of surveyed public lands became available to white US citizens over the age of 18 throughout the Oregon Territory. DLCs established before December 1, 1850 could be as many as 640 acres in size; 320 acres for "white settler" or "American half-breed" citizens at least 18 years of age (Carey 1971: 253), and the same amount for his wife, "to be held by her in her own right" (ibid.: 482). This is one of the first federal laws extending equal rights to married women who, by Oregon law at that time, could be as young as 12 years old. From December 2, 1850 until 1855, a man and wife could claim 320 acres and a single person (men and widows older than 18) 160 acres. The lands were free to those who claimed them, and then stayed to live upon them. During the five-year period the law was in effect, nearly 9,000 persons filed claim to approximately 2.5 million acres of Oregon (Carey 1971: 253), mostly within the Willamette and Umpqua valleys.

The first Donation Land Claim made in the study area was by William Tichenor at Port Orford, and coincidental with his landing at that location with a crew of men on June 9, 1851 (Gurley, et al.: 1962: 16). Subsequent claims were made in the Coos Bay area by settlements of businessmen in present-day Empire and coal mine developers near present-day Libby in 1853 and 1854; ranchers and farmers in Camas Valley and along the South Fork Coquille in 1854 and 1855; and scattered along the Pacific Coast and along the mainstem Coquille during the same years for a variety of reasons (Map 1), including agriculture, townsite development, and mining (e.g., Dodge 1898: 131-135; Gurley, et al.: 1962; Wooldridge 1971: 216, 351; Beckham and Minor 1980: 122; 136-138; 141-143; 176; 235-236).

This law created severe problems throughout the Pacific Northwest between white settlers and Indian residents; who were watching their ancestral homelands being systematically occupied by strangers, and without explanation or compensation. Glisan noted this disparity on April 29, 1856, while station at Fort Orford during the latter stages of the Rogue River Indian Wars (Glisan 1874: 3-17-318):

Whilst acts of brutality, between the two races, are usually the proximate cause of most of the disturbances, yet there are predisposing agents behind all of these. Such, for instance, on the northwest coast, as the donation land laws of Congress, giving away to white settlers – half breed Indians included – all of the most valuable lands in the Territories of Washington and Oregon, without first extinguishing by treaty the possessory rights of the aborigines

Coos Bay Company (May, 1853 – February 14, 1859)

The Coos Bay Company had its roots in a presentation made in Jackson County in May 1853 by Perry B. Marple, extolling the wonders of Coos Bay and its surrounding area. A company of 40

men was quickly organized to view the new area for possible settlement, and left within a few days of Marple's presentation (Dodge 1898: 126). The men became lost between Camas Valley and the Coos Bay, however, and it took them six days to reach a large Indian fishery at the confluence of the Middle Fork and South Fork Coquille, where Casey had led his attack less than 18 months earlier. Here, many of the men decided to return to Jacksonville, and the remaining 19 formally created "The Coose Bay Commercial Company" and continued onward.

William H., Harris, a Captain in the US Army stationed in Tampico during the Mexican War, became one of the most successful members of this emigrant party, and a knowledgeable local resident for many years. Following in the footsteps and pack trails of McLeod in 1826 and 1827, the group made a leisurely trip down the Coquille River, camping among the Indian families and villages at Myrtle Point, Arago, Leneve, present-day Randolph, Bullards (possibly), and old-town Bandon for eight days (Dodge 1898: 128-131).

By that point in time it must have been early June. From there the new business venture traveled to Whiskey Run where there was no mention of any successful mining taking place, even though company members were actively searching for coal and gold the entire route. From Whiskey Run the group seems to have followed the path of Jedediah Smith closer than that of McLeod as they made their way to Coos Bay.

The history of this company is well told by three of its participants, Russell C. Dement (Wooldridge 1971: 224-247) -- who was a child at the time, but among the first settlers to arrive, with his family, in the initial Coos Bay Company settlement of Empire City -- Esther M. Lockhart (Peterson and Powers 1952: 42-48), and William H. Harris (Dodge 1898: 126-136). Many members of this organization prospered and formed the business, coal mining, logging, milling, and dairy farming foundation of Coos Bay and Coos County. Both Harris and Dement specifically mention several prominent members of this group, including Harris and Marple, Rollin S. Belknap, Solomon Bowermeister, Dr. D. W. Coffin, John and Mart Davis, A. B. DeCuis, William Dike, John H. Foster, A. P. Gaskell, Charles K. Haskill, William H. Jackson, Joseph Lane, Mathias M. Leam, F. G. and Esther M. Lockhart, James and John McVay, Samuel Moore, Curtis Noble, Dr. A. B. Overbeck, Charles Pearce, A. J. Pence, Jesse Roberts, David Rohrer, Benjamin Rohvin, Billy Romanes, Frank Ross, Henry A. Stark, S. K. Temple, Alex Thrift, J. C. Toleman, and George L. Weeks, and Presley G. Wilhite (Dodge 1898: 132-133; Peterson and Powers 1952: 48; Wooldridge 1971: 228;)

Baltimore Colony Settlement (May – July 4, 1859)

The Baltimore Colony arrived in Coos County in 1859, several years after the end of the Donation Land Claim Act -- and found large tracts of excellent farming and ranching lands available at reasonable prices. The story of this group is probably best summarized in Peterson and Powers (1952: 48-53), although detail of the lives and history of the people who formed this organization are woven -- and well referenced -- throughout the history of Coos County and the State of Oregon. The following account is summarized from Peterson and Powers (1952), with brief biographical additions from Wooldridge (1972):

The leader of the Baltimore Colony was Dr. Henry Hermann, who was born and educated in

Germany, but emigrated to the United States in the 1830s, locating in Baltimore, Maryland. After a 20-year career as a physician in Baltimore, Hermann decided to migrate to a healthier climate in 1858; particularly along the Pacific Coast. He was joined by his friends and associates, the August Bender family, Harry Pagels, Osterhans, James Burke, H. Finkelda, and Coleman (Peterson and Powers 1952: 48). Hermann met John Yoakam, another early Coos County settler, while on a visit to Roseburg and was taken on a tour of Camas valley, the Middle Fork Coquille, and to Yoakam's place on the South Fork. Enthused by what he had seen, he returned to Baltimore in 1859, where he published an account of his travels and findings.

Hermann then gathered together a party of successful tradesmen, including a shoemaker, tinsmith, miner, music teacher, cabinetmaker, piano maker, locksmith, ships carpenter, carpenter, farmers, and laborers, with himself as the group's doctor – but no one with outdoor experience! No hunting, fishing, or even camping skills. The colony included Hermann and his family (including his subsequently famous son, Binger, who served in Congress for 16 years), Henry Schroeder and family, the William Volkmar family, the August Bender family, David Stauff and family, Mrs. Edward Pagels and her three children, Mr. Wilde and family, William Leake, Julius Pohl, and (later) George Stauff and family, and a Mr. Victimier.

The colony selected land near the mouth of the South Fork of the Coquille, between Myrtle Point and Broadbent. They were joined by a few more families the following Spring, and a few families left for California at about the same time. The remaining families have contributed significantly to the history and culture of Coos County, and now have descendants several generations removed still living here.

6. The Coos Bay Military Wagon Road, 1869 - 1875

The “Coos Bay Military Wagon Road” (Walling 1884: 486-487; Dodge 1898: 447; Peterson and Powers 1952: 54-55, 74-78, 121-122, 138, 239, 476-477, 482-483; Beckham 1997; Douthit 1986: 94-100; Zybach and Wasson 2009), or as it was more generally known, the Coos Bay Wagon Road (CBWR) was created by an Act of Congress on March 3, 1869, for the purpose of getting farm and manufacturing products from Roseburg and the Umpqua Valley to the deepwater port at Coos Bay. Its route, for most of its length, followed the East Fork of the Coquille; the same approximate route taken by McLeod when he traveled from the Coquille River to Umpqua Valley in February 1827. No Donation Land Claims were established in the East Fork Valley, although a few settlers tried to establish farms in the Fairview area in the early 1860s. These farms were unsuccessful, though, and during much of the 1850s and 1860s the area was populated by Indian families trying to avoid being killed or sent to a reservation by the new immigrants. Among the first historical accounts of anyone using this route after McLeod was the Josh Wright expedition in May 1867, more than 40 years later.

Among the CBWR Bill’s six sections were: 2) the lands could be disposed of for no other purpose than road construction, and the finished road would be a public highway, free from tolls or other charges for its use; 3) the road would be constructed to such width, grade, and with such bridges to State standards needed to permit regular wagon transport; and 6) the surveyor general of Oregon was instructed to survey the lands at “the earliest practical period” so that the legislation could be carried forward (Beckham 1997: 5-6).

Construction of the road began in April 1870, and was completed by 1874. The politics, construction schedule, investment history, and other details regarding the social and economic development of the CBWR are covered in the texts already cited – most notably Beckham (1997) and Peterson and Powers (1952). The general construction, use, and decline of the history of the CBWR can be roughly approximated in the history of the post offices for the small communities that came into being during its development: post offices were established at Fairview on May 7, 1873; Sitkum, May 9, 1873; Coos City, June 25, 1873; Dora, August 10, 1874; and Sumner, September 18, 1874; Reston, August 25, 1890; and McKinley, July 27, 1897. These same post offices were closed during the following years: Coos City, 1884; Fairview, 1913; Reston, 1934; Dora, 1939; McKinley, 1954; Sumner, 1955; and Sitkum, 1963 (McArthur 1982).

Joshua Wright Expedition (May 21-30, 1867)

During the course of research, Scott Byram came across a letter published in a Roseburg newspaper in 1867 by Joshua Wright (Wright 1867). Wright’s letter, titled “Road to Coos Bay,” was published in the *Roseburg Ensign* on June 18, and detailed a trip with Alva Harry (perhaps the troupe’s leader, Dodge 1898: 172-173), Horace Brewster, and three other men, that began on May 21, 1867. This trip followed Brewster’s earlier unsuccessful effort to find an overland passage between Coos Bay and Roseburg by traveling from west to east (e.g., Dodge 1898: 170). The expedition began its journey at Weekly’s Mill (present-day Reston). They then proceeded “around a high peak,” which may have been Kenyon Mountain -- aka “Signal Tree” or “Weekly Mountain” (Beckham 1997: 17) -- until they reached “a low gap in the Coast range” before heading west “down a long ridge, on which we soon struck a dim Indian trail.” This is quite

possibly the same ridgeline “Trail” between Camas Creek and East Fork Coquille shown on the 1875 GLO map of Tsp. 28 S., Rng. 9 W. (Zybach and Wasson 2009: 24-25).

Here we found a timbered valley about five miles long by from a half to a mile in width, and discovered six Indian houses. The occupants had evidently left them in a hurry, no doubt alarmed at our approach, and had taken most of their plunder with them, leaving among other things a very nice dress, several bed ticks and quilts (Wright 1867).

The expedition then followed the East Fork to the west for about two miles “when we came to extensive bottom lands of the most fertile quality.” They then traveled about four more miles “through the bottom” and set up camp. Wright noted that the bottomlands were “covered with maple and myrtle timber with some small clumps of hazel.” The camp must have been near present-day Dora, because Wright notes that the river changed course to the southwest from their location, and that one of their party followed it down “some three miles” and that “the bottoms extended still further down, probably to the main river” (Zybach and Wasson 2009: 25). Wright also reported that: “We found more Indian houses and a grindstone.”

The next day the group traveled west “across a range of low hills” to “one of the tributaries” [probably Middle Creek, near present-day McKinley] of the North Fork Coquille, where “we found good bottom land, and a large band of wild cattle” that Wright estimated to be “at least 200 head.” Continuing west over “another low divide,” they came to:

Burton’s prairie [present-day Fairview], an extensive glade of several miles. Here we found more Indian sign. In one of the old houses built by Henry Pohl we found some 2500 pounds of dried salmon, done up in baskets and baled ready for the packing. To the north-east there appears to be a vast body of low land, and to the South-west there are trails to Mr. Perry’s on the Coquille river and to the Isthmus slough at the head of tide water. The distance to the first is seven and the latter nine miles (Wright 1875).

North Carolina Settlement (1872-1874)

The North Carolina Settlement was established in the Salmon and Johnson Creek valleys at the head of the South Fork Coquille, near present-day Powers, in 1872 by David Wagener (also spelled Wagner and Wagoner), his two sons, David, Jr. and John L., “Squire” T. C. Land, Henry Wygant, and the John Hayes family (Dodge 1898: 185-187; 266-267). The settlement got its name because all but Land (who arrive in 1871) were from North Carolina. Other families who settled in the area at that time were the Bakers, Bingham, Arnolds, Gants, and Woodbys. At that time there were also a number of Chinese goldminers living at China Flat (Peterson and Powers 1952: 127).

In 1873, after establishing his land claim, David Wagener returned to North Carolina to get his family. While there, he convinced more than 60 other North Carolinians to migrate to Oregon as well. Some of these individuals, such as the Reuben Mast family, were among the first to use the newly constructed Coos Bay Wagon Road. The Masts, and others, settled in the Lee Valley area,

where descendants continue to live to the present time (Peterson and Powers 1952: 54-55; Lynae Queen, personal communication, 2011).

Several towns soon sprang up along the new road, which was used exclusively for market and local residential purposes, rather than military use. Each of these communities had a school and regular postal delivery, as well as wheeled access to the farms of the Umpqua Valley and the seaports of Coos Bay.

Coos City

Coos City (Walling 1884: 495; Peterson and Powers 1952: 138; McArthur 1982: 175; Douthit 1986: 94; Beckham 1997: 68-69) was the western terminus of the CBWR, located on Isthmus Slough. Its post office was the first to open along the new route (June 25, 1873), and it provided travelers from the east an option to continue by trail to Empire City, or by boat to Coos Bay. The town was not a success, however: the post office closed in 1884 and only the Coos City Bridge remains at this time.

Sumner

Sumner (Walling 1884: 495; McArthur 1982: 707-708; Douthit 1986: 94-95; Beckham 1997: 66-67) is located on Catching Inlet. It was founded by John S. Dulley, who relocated there in 1870 and became the town's first postmaster on September 18, 1874. By the time of the 1880 census, Dulley's Indian wife, Amelia, and their daughter Fanny, had "vanished" and been replaced by his 19-year old white wife (and their three children!), Henrietta (Beckham 1997: 66). In 1874, Ephraim Catching purchased land next to Dulley's, and moved there with his four children. His Coquelle wife, Francis, may have died by that time, and her death had been greatly mourned throughout the community (Wooldridge 1971: 35). In 1884, Walling (1884: 495) described the community as: "Sumner stands at the head of Catching Slough, a quiet and diminutive hamlet of no distinguishing peculiarities." The post office closed in 1955.

Fairview

Fairview (McArthur 1982: 267; Douthit 1986: 95-96; Beckham 1997: 64-66) is located adjacent to Burton's Prairie on the North Fork Coquille. This area became permanently settled by white immigrants beginning with Francis Braden in 1868 after earlier attempts by Pohl and others had failed (Wright 1867). Braden was one of the initial stage drivers on the CBWR. Other prominent early families were the Hatchers and a man named Brockman, who operated a livery and the Hillside Hotel in Fairview for many years. Fairview post office was opened on May 7, 1873, and closed in 1913.

McKinley

McKinley (McArthur 1982: 485; Douthit 1986: 96; Beckham 1997: 63-64) was the last post office established on the CBWR, on July 27, 1897, 13 years after the closing of the Coos City post office. The area was named for William McKinley, president of the U.S. at that time, by Homer Shepherd, the first postmaster. Local families included the Buels, Masts, Palmers, and

Ebys. The post office remained in operation for nearly 57 years, before closing in 1954. Will Wildman, a Conscientious Objector stationed at the McKinley Camp during WW II, wrote the following note to his father in July 1943:

McKinley camp is four miles from McKinley which consists of a post office in a farmhouse. We are eight miles from the nearest gas station and store and 19 miles from anything larger than that. It's a great life. We are just at the end of the Smith River Burn, the 28,000 acre fire I told you about earlier (Beckham 1997: 64).

Dora

Dora (Walling 1884: 486-487; McArthur 1982: 231; Douthit 1986: 96-97; Beckham 1997: 61-62) is said to have gotten its name from Dora Roach, the daughter of the postmaster when the post office first opened on August 10, 1874. Roach had bought the claim from John Silverly, who had settled there in 1869, and sold it to Francis Scolfield in 1876, who then built a new house there that served as a store and hotel. By 1884 the area boasted a schoolhouse and a sawmill. Perhaps one of the best known and most successful families in the area were the Abernethys, who settled in Dora in 1891. William Abernathy was the son of George Abernathy, first provisional governor of Oregon (1845-1849), and father of Edwin Abernathy, who married a local Laird girl (Ethel, from Sitkum) and built a sawmill and planer in 1903 that he used to build a landmark home in which he and his wife lived the rest of their lives. The post office closed in 1939, Edwin Abernathy died in 1958, and Ethel Abernathy lived in their old home until 1979, when she died at age 94.

Sitkum

Sitkum (Walling 1884: 486; Dodge 1898: 173-175; Krewson 1955; Wooldridge 1971: 163; McArthur 1982: 677; Douthit 1986: 96-99; Beckham 1997: 56-60) is a Chinuk wawa term meaning "half-way," so-named because it was about half-way between Roseburg and Coos Bay on the CBWR. It has perhaps the most colorful history of the CBWR communities. Sitkum got its start around 1870, when Alva Harry, who had been part of the exploring party that first entered the valley three years earlier (Wright 1867), became the first homesteader in Brewster Valley when he moved there with his family from Myrtle Point. Harry had married his wife, Chloe Cook, in the Willamette Valley when she was 15 years old, and then moved with her to the Coquille River sometime around 1858, where they had five children. The Harry's built a tavern as a way station, which they named the Halfway House, to service travelers along the new CBWR in the early 1870s. When the local post office opened on May 9, 1873, Harry gave it the Chinook jargon name "Sitkum," after the tavern. Dodge (1898: 173) reports:

Alva Harry was truly a leader of pioneers. His trusty rifle never failed him. He was highly respected and became known as one of nature's noblemen. He judged men's religion by their example, and his demise in June 1874 was a loss to the country.

The following year, in 1875, Chloe Harry married a local divorced man, James Laird, with six

children of his own. Together they expanded the Halfway House to a well-known landmark hotel, and had four more children. To complicate family relations a bit more, one of the Laird boys married one of the Harry girls in 1881, and had nine more children of their own, including Ethel, who married Edwin Abernethy of nearby Dora. Despite being married to Laird for the remaining 34 years of his life, Chloe Laird remained known as Mrs. Harry until her own death at Sitkum, in 1929. The post office closed in 1963.

Aftermath

The CBWR land grant became an issue of great bitterness as early as 1881, when the remaining unclaimed lands were sold to a monopoly and removed from sale to settlers, in direct violation of their original charter. Further, the designated lands were claimed and transferred as many as eight miles from the road, when they were supposed to be no more than six miles distance, and some settlers were not given title to lands they had resided on and improved (driving at least one of them to madness and suicide, according to reports). Grievances were filed at all levels of state and federal government concerning these injustices, but only served to ultimately transfer ownership of the lands back to the federal government, rather than re-open them to settlement as initially legislated and intended. In addition, settlers who had lost their land claims to the monopoly were never able to get clear title or compensation for their homes (see Dodge 1898: 447; Peterson and Powers 1952: 482-483).

On February 14, 1908 the federal government sued the Southern Oregon Company to forfeit the grant it held on CBWR Lands to the United States. On June 24, 1918 the U.S House of Representatives on Public Lands received a major report on the grant that accompanied H. R. 8625. The summary history included the information that the Coos Bay Wagon Road Company had secured patent to 105,120 acres by June 18, 1874; that they had sold 7,500 acres by 1887; that by December 14, 1887 the Southern Oregon Company had acquired about 97,620 acres of the grant; and by 1918 the Southern Oregon Company had sold about 4,500 acres of the grant, but still retained 93,000 acres (Beckham 1997: 70-73). In reporting on the road's history, George M. Brown, the Attorney-General, made the following observations (ibid.: 73):

It is my conviction from information given by old settlers who were over the road soon after its construction, that it was a good mountain road. For some years freight was transported over the same from the tidal waters of Coos bay to Roseburg. This could not have been carried over a range of mountains such as the Coast Range at the point where the old Coos Bay wagon road crossed, unless a fairly good road had been built . . . Nearly 20 years after its construction the State of Oregon and the counties of Douglas and Coos built another road leading from Roseburg to Myrtle Point in Coos County by way of Camas Valley, and in recent years this last-mentioned road has been the chief thoroughfare . . . Thereafter the Coos Bay wagon road, from Brewster Valley, situated in Coos County, over the Coast Range Mountains into Douglas County, became out of repair.

On February 16, 1919, Congress re-vested the CBWR Lands and began administering them through the US Forest Service and the General Land Office. By 1937, timber sales were being made from those lands by the GLO (Beckham 1997: 74).