

# HISTORIC SOAP CREEK VALLEY



"Soap Creek Valley, Summer, 1989" View from Lewisburg Saddle

## AUTO TOUR

Oregon State University  
 Research Forests

Bob Zybach



**"COSTUME OF A CALLAPUYA INDIAN"**

*This man was sketched near present-day Monroe, Oregon by an artist with the Wilkes Expedition of 1841. Notice the Coast Range hills in the background. The Willamette Valley of that time was largely inhabited by a few hundred Kalapuyan-speaking people that regularly burned the areas in which they lived. This practice created a beautiful and productive landscape of grassy oak savannah and flowering prairie that was much favored by the first American settlers to arrive in Oregon. These pioneers found a sparsely inhabited country that featured ready pasturage for their livestock, cleared land for their crops, mild weather, abundant water, and thousands of scenic homesites that were free for the taking.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This historical tour has been made possible through the combined efforts of many people. It would not have been undertaken or completed at all without the authorization, direction, and encouragement of William Atkinson, Director of the OSU Research Forests. Key suggestions, information, and critical reviews were provided by John C. Jackson, Royal Jackson, and Kenneth Munford.*

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*Published works and personal conversations with John Eliot Allen, Ira S. Allison, Robert E. Buckman, Henry P. Hansen, and Richard K. Hermann were the principal sources of geological and ecological information contained in this guide, particularly as they related to historical plant succession and prehistoric man.*

*I would also like to acknowledge several other individuals who contributed to the creation of this tour, but there is insufficient space. Credit for any successes associated with this project must properly rest with the people and institutions who made it possible. Naturally, any problems with typography, interpretation, and organization must rest entirely with the author, as final decisions and approval were my own.*

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## HISTORIC SOAP CREEK VALLEY

### OSU RESEARCH FORESTS AUTO TOUR

**TOTAL MILEAGE:** The mileages listed below use the entrance to Peavy Arboretum as the tour starting point. Several miles of the designated route are over good gravel roads and walking trails, as depicted on the map. A shorter version of the tour, one that follows only paved roads, is listed under the column titled "Paved."

**TOTAL TIME:** 1-5 hours. Depending upon pace, route, and whether or not hiking trails are taken.

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**RETURN ROUTE:** Beginning at STOP #11, continue along the general route of travel, heading down the south side of the Lewisburg Saddle. From Sulphur Springs Road, bear left toward Lewisburg, as indicated on the back cover map. An early historical road to Corvallis can be followed by turning right on Highland Drive, before returning to Highway 99.

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6	"The Trapper's Last Shot" . . . . .	N. Orr & Co. [Victor, 1870: p.229]	1870
8	"Enroute to Oregon" . . . . .	N. Orr & Co. [Victor, 1870: p.476]	1870
10	"Farm Residence Of J. W. Writsman" . . .	James T. Pickett [Fagan, 1885: p. 424]	1885
12	"G. B. Smith, Corvallis, Or." . . . . .	(unknown) [courtesy of Oregon Historical Society]	c.1880
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24	"Wells Community Picnic" . . . . .	(unknown) [courtesy of Velma Carter Rawiel]	c.1920
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28	"Pine Forests Of Oregon" . . . . .	Joseph Drayton [Wilkes, 1845: Vol. V, p. 116]	1841
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Cover Photo and Tour Map . . . . . Bob Zybach  
Format Graphics . . . . . Paul Gorow  
Cartographics . . . . . Bob Edmond

## INTRODUCTION

You are about to take a journey through time.

Beginning with the arrival of the first people in the Willamette Valley - at least 10,000 years ago - and continuing until the present, the Soap Creek Valley has been the scene of a wide variety of human experiences and events. Elephants once roamed this valley, and humans may have hunted them. Indians traded obsidian here, and Mountain Men trapped beaver. The first pioneers in Benton County settled here in the 1840's, the first black child was born here before 1850, and confederate sympathizers met here at the outbreak of the Civil War.

The pioneering north-south trail that first connected California with the Pacific Northwest passed through this valley. Many figures familiar to Oregon history followed its course; cattlemen, school teachers, depression-era farmers and loggers, World War II soldiers and modern students and scientists have all had a hand in shaping the history of this valley. Today you will also be taking part in that history.

This tour has been designed so that you may visit the sites and view the scenes in which many events significant to local, state, and national history have taken place. Each stop is associated with a theme to help relate these influences of the past to our current lives and undertakings.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

**DRIVING SAFETY:** *These roads are often used by many commercial logging and road-building trucks. Give commercial vehicles plenty of room along straight stretches, and use extreme caution when rounding curves.*



### "THE TRAPPER'S LAST SHOT"

Beaver trappers and traders began entering the Coffin Butte area in the early part of the nineteenth century. By the late 1820's, the seasonal crossings along Berry and Soap Creeks had formed an important link in the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) "California Trail." This commercial pack trail connected the Columbia River (Fort Vancouver and Astoria) to the Umpqua Valley, Sacramento River, and San Francisco, much as I-5 still does today.

### STOP #1 BERRY CREEK [Trapping]

David Douglas was a Scottish botanist who spent several years in the Pacific Northwest. During his first visit to the Willamette Valley in August, 1825, he noted that most of it had been trapped clean of beaver. Traders based in Astoria had been operating in the area since 1811, encouraging the local Indians to exchange native foods and animal skins for blue beads, guns, blankets, horses and alcohol. Beaver pelts, the principal article of trade, were in great demand by European hatmakers.

The advent of trade goods, metal traps, and flintlocks quickly created a difference in valley wildlife populations. White-tail deer, grizzly bears, and beaver soon became scarce. Elk, wolves, and black-tail deer became wary and more difficult to kill. The impact of new diseases in the 1830's had a similar effect on local human populations. Whole families and communities of Kalapuyans were destroyed in a few short years, and soon forgotten.

Berry Creek (which you will be crossing on your way to the next stop), like Soap Creek and other Willamette Valley streams, had been heavily impounded by beaver dams. As beaver populations were decimated, these streams became free-flowing and choked with brush and trees. The elimination of beaver ponds also resulted in a reduction of certain animal populations, such as mosquitos and ducks, due to the loss of habitat. Not all species suffered by these changes. The demise of the beaver dams removed migration barriers to anadromous fish and left behind "flats" of rich soil for invading plant species.

Thus, international trade, based upon a hat style, had forever changed a wilderness.

**PARKING:** So far as possible, adequate parking has been provided at each of the eleven designated stops along this tour. Please lock your car if you leave it. Always park so as to not create a hazard or inconvenience for others.



**"GOVERNOR LANE AND MARSHAL MEEK  
ENROUTE TO OREGON"**

*After first surviving buffalo stampedes, disease and hostile Indian attacks, Oregon Trail pioneers were faced with the difficult and deadly Columbia River "Cascades" near The Dalles. Construction of the Applegate and Barlow Trails during 1845 and 1846 avoided these dangerous rapids and provided American emigrants with a safer and cheaper passage to their new homes in the Willamette Valley. This stop is along an 1853 stretch of the "Applegate Trail" that connected "rainy season" crossings of Berry and Soap Creeks.*

## STOP #2 SMITH PEAK [Trails]

By facing to the east from this stop, you can see the crest of the hill called "Smith Peak" by the government land surveyor in 1853. Called "Smith Hill" today and "Oak Hill" at other times, this early barrier to north-south wagon traffic was known to local farmers for its nests of rattlesnakes and patches of poison oak.

In the fall of 1826, while David Douglas and HBC brigade leader Alexander McLeod were blazing the first horse trail from the Columbia River to southwest Oregon, Kalapuyans were burning most of the prairies throughout the Willamette Valley. The road builders were forced to follow these coastal hills to the west in order to find both forage for their animals as well as food for themselves. By 1841, a United States Exploring Expedition under the direction of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes was able to follow the well-established "California Trail" from Oregon City to San Francisco.

Five years later, in 1846, when Jesse Applegate, Moses "Black" Harris, Levi Scott and a dozen other men were establishing the "Applegate Trail" for American pioneers, they followed the same course taken by Douglas and the Wilkes Expedition. But in addition to necessary food and forage, these men also had to consider the traversing of streams, muddy bogs, and steep hillsides with metal-wheeled wagons.

The Gold Rush to California in 1848 further defined the route for the stage coaches and produce wagons of the 1850's. Today, over 160 years later, we are still following almost exactly the same road that was first pioneered by a Scottish botanist and a beaver hunter.

**POISON OAK:** *The Soap Creek Valley contains some of the highest concentrations of poison oak in Oregon. Become familiar with this highly toxic plant and avoid it whenever possible. Treat immediately with soap and water if accidentally contacted. Additional medical treatment may be required for particularly sensitive individuals.*

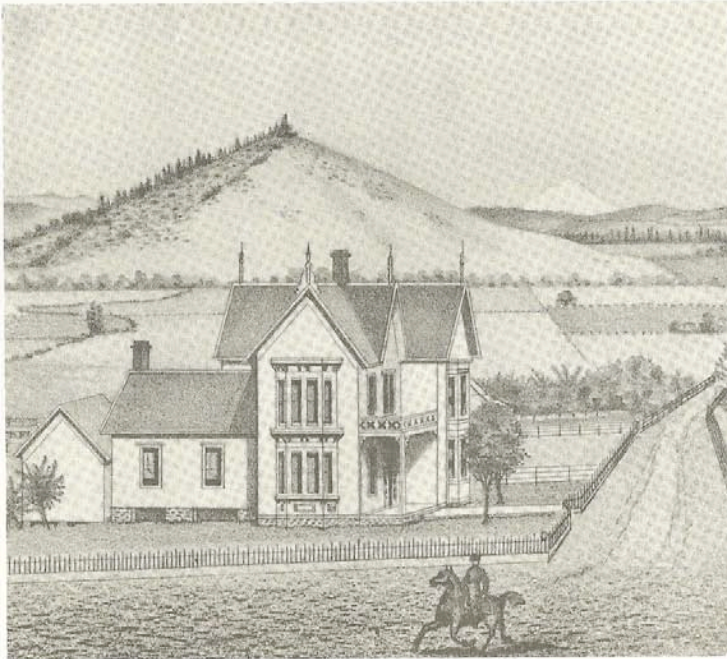
### STOP #3 COFFIN BUTTE [Pioneers]

The view of Coffin Butte from this stop is very similar to the one used for the illustration on the left. Notice the location of the road intersection to the rear of the horseman, and of the vegetation pattern on the north side of the butte. How does this compare to what we see today? During World War II Coffin Butte was quarried for road building rock. Today, solid waste from local communities is restoring its former contours.

By the time Oregon became a U.S. Territory in 1849, most of the surrounding farmland had been claimed by emigrant families that had arrived overland along the Oregon Trail. Many of the pioneers associated with the establishment and construction of the Barlow and Applegate Trails settled near here.

David "Uncle Davey" Carson, the Irish Mountain Man, guided families through a snowy pass south of Mount Hood during the fall of 1845. That winter William Berry guarded a cache of goods along the same trail - which became known as the "Barlow Toll Road" when it was completed the following spring. Morgan Savage and Tolbert Carter, whose original cabin sites you passed along the eastern base of Coffin Butte and the northern base of Smith Peak, helped construct the Applegate Trail from Fort Hall in Idaho to the Willamette Valley in 1846. The following year, David D. Davis brought his family to the Soap Creek Valley along the same route.

Within a two-year period, the prime bottom lands of the Soap Creek Valley and the adjacent prairies had all been claimed by American pioneers. Two years later, in 1849, Oregon became a Territory of the United States.



#### "FARM RESIDENCE OF J. W. WRITSMAN"

*Mount Jefferson appears in the background of this drawing of Coffin Butte, published in 1885. The Writsmans were early settlers along Soap Creek. Their property included one of the first cabins to be constructed in Benton County, and was maintained for several decades as a reminder of their "Humble Beginnings."*

**DRIVING COURTESY:** *Many local residents, businesses, and OSU students use the roads over which this tour is routed. Please be aware of those that may be in a greater hurry than yourself, and allow them to pass at every safe opportunity*



**"G. B. SMITH, CORVALLIS, OR."**

*Green Berry Smith was the most powerful and influential landowner in the Soap Creek neighborhood in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Often involved in litigation with his neighbors, he was reputed to own about 10,000 acres of land in Benton and Polk Counties during the later years of his life.*

## STOP #4 SOAP CREEK [Settlers]

As you traveled Airlie Road during the first part of this tour, did you notice the shape of the hills to the south? Could you see how Coffin Butte came to be named? This landmark was used by HBC beaver hunters in the 1830's, by pioneer road builders in the 1840's, and by subsistence farmers in the 1920's to guide their way to the Soap Creek Valley.

The Writsmans weren't the first family to homestead their claim. They had purchased their cabin and an unregistered land claim from surveyor George Stump. This was not unusual.

Many homesteads in Oregon were bought, sold, and traded before the enactment of the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850. Although this Act provided free land to white adult emigrants to the new territory, many arrivals were content to purchase the developed claims of their predecessors. An unusual feature of the Act is that it allowed a man's wife to claim, and in her own name, an amount of land identical in size to her husband's claim. Before long the legal age of marriage for women in the new Territory was twelve.

In this manner, William Berry sold his claim near Oregon City and moved to the Soap Creek area in 1849. Following David Carson's death in 1853, his wife Letitia (a former Kentucky slave) had to sue the executor of her husband's estate for the money from the sale of her own farm. Not only was slavery illegal in Oregon at that time - so was being black. George Roberts "proved up" on his claim, and then quickly sold parts of it to his neighbors Green Berry Smith, David D. Davis, and others in the mid-1850's. The town of Tampico was partially constructed on a portion of the Robert's claim.

As was the case in many areas of the Willamette Valley, the people who first "pioneered" the Soap Creek Valley area were not always the same as the ones who ultimately settled here.

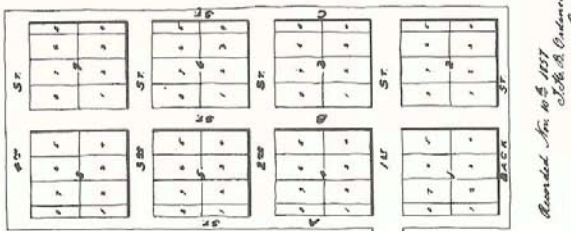
**RESEARCH:** For those interested in learning more of the history of Oregon and of the Soap Creek area, a preliminary list of references is given on page 31 of this guide.



*Plot of the Town of Tampico,  
Benton County, O.*

*Area of the Survey of the Town of Tampico,  
Benton County, O.*

*Block 1 and 2 are 5' wide Blocks numbered  
1-24 and 25-48 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 49 and 50 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 51 and 52 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 53 and 54 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 55 and 56 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 57 and 58 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 59 and 60 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 61 and 62 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 63 and 64 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 65 and 66 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 67 and 68 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 69 and 70 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 71 and 72 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 73 and 74 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 75 and 76 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 77 and 78 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 79 and 80 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 81 and 82 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 83 and 84 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 85 and 86 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 87 and 88 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 89 and 90 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 91 and 92 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 93 and 94 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 95 and 96 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 97 and 98 are 5' wide by 25' long  
Block 99 and 100 are 5' wide by 25' long*



*Block of Oregon (Benton County) O. d. d.*

*On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 1860 before the undersigned Justice of the Peace for Benton County, Oregon, Green Berry Smith, the person pur-  
porter of the within named town of Tampico, and  
acknowledges and declares that he is the owner of  
the within town of Tampico and that the same  
shall be hereby cancelled and annulled; he the  
Justice considered a town. From B. Smith  
Acknowledged and declared before me the under-  
signed Justice of the Peace for Benton County,  
Oregon, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 1860.  
James B. Ordway  
Justice of Benton County*

*BZ 5/29/89  
NE 1/4, SE 1/4, Sec. 24  
T3P. 10 S., R10 W., SW.*

*Warrant for William J. Crouch  
October 27<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1857*

*By J. Williams*

**"PLOT OF THE TOWN OF TAMPICO"**

Tampico was platted October 27, 1857 by William J. Crouch and shut down on January 23, 1860 by Green Berry Smith, who had purchased it earlier in the day. One tradition has it that Smith was attempting to remove a source of corruption to local residents.

**STOP #5 TAMPICO [Towns]**

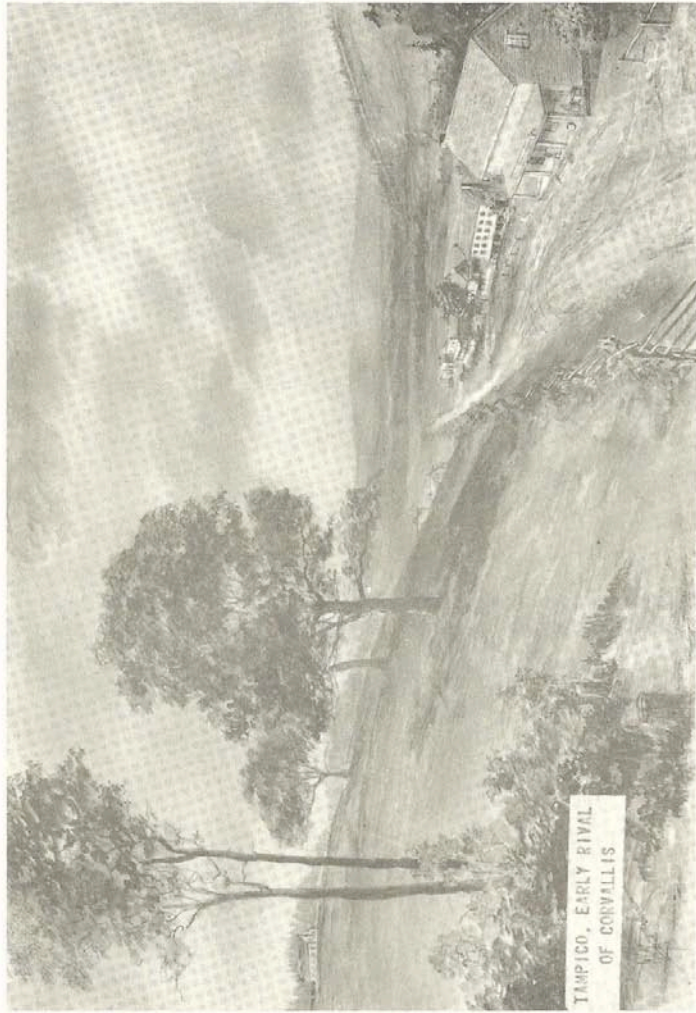
It is hard to imagine that an entire town was once located in this quiet valley. Tampico was officially a town for less than three years. Yet, despite its short existence, tales of rowdiness and general lawlessness have survived to this day.

Perhaps it was the proximity of Fort Hoskins and the newly-formed Siletz Indian Reservation; or else the character of the local settlers; or maybe just the condition of pre-statehood Oregon in general; but for whatever reason, Tampico seems to hold a particular degree of infamy in the memories of its citizens and their descendents.

Colorful tales of fist fights, gambling, stagecoach robberies, murder, horse racing, tent revivals, drunken sprees, and hangings persisted in the stories of former residents and neighbors until the land was finally purchased by the U.S. Army during World War II. Modern research seems to place a certain amount of credibility in these stories.

This is not to say that the area was completely lawless; most residents were honest and hardworking citizens who supported healthy and productive families. Many held prominent positions in local government, taught school, or otherwise figured positively in the affairs of their community. Perhaps it was the nostalgia of these people, passing away hours in the comfort of one another's company, that most encouraged and nourished the tales of long-ago Tampico.

**TRESPASSING:** Several of the landmarks on this tour are private property, or are dedicated to research and educational programs. Trespassing is illegal. Please don't leave designated trails, parking areas, or public roadways without prior permission.



**"TAMPICO, EARLY RIVAL OF CORVALLIS"**

*This watercolor, painted under the direction of historian John Horner in 1925, attempts to depict Tampico about the time of the Civil War. The view is from the south, with Tampico School on the hill to the west (left) and Coffin Butte to the northeast (right).*

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**"THE ARCADE SALOON, 1904"**

*By 1885, Tampico had become a "ghost town." Only the local tavern and several colorful stories remained.*

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#### "CARSON'S SPRING ELEPHANT TOOTH"

William Glender proudly displays a 15 pound elephant tooth that was excavated from his family's stock watering spring in the early 1920's. Other elephant fossils were also removed from the same spring at that time, and again during the mid-1930's.

#### STOP #6 ELEPHANT TOOTH [Early People]

If you look across the field lying to the north of this stop you will see a transformer on a telephone pole. It is located next to a spring on the old David and Letitia Carson homestead. While making improvements to this spring almost 70 years ago, William and Charles Glender discovered an elephant tooth about 15 feet below ground, in gravel that scientists say originated in Canada or Idaho.

How did the gravel get here? Near the end of the last ice age, between 12,800 and 15,000 years ago, a warming climate caused at least a hundred huge floods (called the "Bretz Floods") to course down the Columbia River. These cataclysmic occurrences filled the entire Willamette Valley with hundreds of feet of water, mud, and gravel. If humans lived here at that time they must have been crushed or drowned, before being buried with sediments. That is probably what happened to the Glender's elephant.

How long have people lived in the Soap Creek Valley? Recent archeological findings indicate a period of at least 10,000 years - time enough to have contributed to the extinction of a number of large ice age mammals, but not long enough to have been directly affected by the gargantuan floods that forever leveled the valley's floor with silt and gravel. Some evidence indicates that humans may have first entered the Willamette Valley as many as 60,000 years ago.

**POT HUNTING:** Disturbing or removing cultural artifacts is called "pot hunting." In addition to compromising the experiences of other visitors, valuable information is lost or destroyed by these practices. Please Don't Touch! Take a photograph and record the location instead. Leave things as you find them. If you believe you have discovered something of value, report your find to the OSU Research Forests office at Peavy Arboretum.



**"SAM H. MOORE ON 'BILLY BOWLEGS'"**

*The Moore's were a prominent Soap Creek Valley farming family at the turn of the century, raising cattle, sheep, and hogs.. Sam Moore's father, James, donated the land upon which the Soap Creek Schoolhouse is located. Notice Coffin Butte in the left background, the developing fir and oak forest on the right, and the fencing. The view is from "Sheep Hill," on the old Alfred Writsman Homestead. It can be approximated today from Moss Rock Drive, about 3 miles southwest of this spot.*

**STOP #7 BEEF BARNES [Agriculture]**

The first cattle brought into the Willamette Valley were a wild and untamed herd imported from Mexican California by Ewing Young in 1837. Fences were put up around pioneer homesteads and fields to keep the cattle out, not in. Children were often chased or threatened on their way to school. One of the first fenced wheat fields in Benton County, dating to the 1840's, is believed to be located near this stop, about 1/4 mile northeast of here.

With the discovery of gold in the 1840's, '50's, and '60's - first in California, then in southern Oregon, and finally in eastern Oregon and Idaho - the butchering and selling of beef and hogs to hopeful miners formed a lucrative portion of many Soap Creek farmers' incomes. Gradually, however, the smaller farms were consolidated into larger holdings and, by 1900, sheep and tillable crops had replaced cattle raising for most local landowners.

The shift from grazing to tilling had the effect of concentrating agricultural activities onto the flatter areas of the valley, allowing surrounding forests to seed abandoned pastures and hayfields along the hillsides. By World War I, many families had become more dependent upon the timber industry than upon farming for their income. Depression-era subsistence farming saw several families with a few milk cows, but most unable to afford to raise or eat beef.

Following the creation of Camp Adair during World War II, the local farmers were bought out by the Army and their pastures turned into training grounds and rifle ranges. Today, the trend has come full circle, and the OSU College of Agriculture is once again raising cattle on these lands.

**CAMP ADAIR:** *In August, 1941, the U.S. Army announced plans for a military training camp to be located in north Benton County. On December 12, just a few days after Pearl Harbor, Camp Adair was established to handle 33,000 men. The site of the new camp, transformed from family farms to army base in just a few months, encompassed most of the land you have been driving through today.*



**"THE SECOND SCHOOL"**

*This picture, taken in 1900, is of the new Soap Creek schoolhouse. It may have actually been the third, fourth, or fifth building to serve the district since its inception, sometime after 1845. The previous school, also constructed in 1899 and used for just a few months, was simply hauled to the rear of the new building and converted to a woodshed. The small structure in the background is not the woodshed.*

### **STOP #8 SOAP CREEK SCHOOL [Education]**

The Soap Creek School District is reputed to be the oldest in Benton County, with some authorities placing its beginning in a log structure erected during the fall of 1847. It was finally closed in the spring of 1946 and the remaining children transferred to Mountain View School the following school year.

During the century of their mutual existences, the Soap Creek and Tampico schools were occasionally one and the same. The location of the school varied from the intersection of Tampico and Sulphur Springs Roads [Stop #5] and this stop, with at least 2 additional locations in between. Generally the location depended upon the sizes of the local families and the ages of their children. When conditions warranted, both schools would operate simultaneously, as occurred between 1924 and 1941.

This particular building was first used in 1932. The Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation is preserving and restoring the school and its grounds as an historic site. During "open houses" scheduled in May, July, and October, visitors may read collected local histories, see early Soap Creek Valley photographs, and observe the books, equipment, and furnishings typical of a depression-era "country" school.

For more information, please refer to page 31 of this guide.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY:** *The Soap Creek Schoolhouse is private property and should be treated with respect. Visitors are reminded that there are no public toilet or water facilities and are asked not to use fire, camp, or pick the wildflowers that grow about the school.*



### "WELLS COMMUNITY PICNIC"

*This picture of a Wells Community Picnic was taken at Sulphur Springs around 1920. The community was originally named "Wells Station" when it developed as a railroad town in the 1880's and became known as "Wellsdale" until it was purchased by the government at the outset of World War II. The Wellsdale site, originally pioneered by Tolbert Carter by 1849, became part of Camp Adair in 1941.*

### STOP #9 SULPHUR SPRINGS [Recreation]

Sulphur Springs has been a destination for many Benton County recreationists for over 100 years. A two story hotel was constructed on this spot sometime around 1870 or 1880. It remained standing until about 1920, when it was burned down by an arsonist. The hotel had probably not operated for at least twenty years by that time, however.

In addition to playing ball, camping, hunting, and picnicking, people came to drink the water, which was considered very healthful. A wooden floor with benches was constructed around the spring and a concrete fountain about two feet in height served those wishing to enjoy the benefits that the water had to offer.

In the 1890's many Corvallis residents took part in the new fad of bicycling by taking a trip to Sulphur Springs. By 1915 the fad had changed to automobiling, but the destination remained the same. A CCC camp based at Peavy Arboretum constructed benches and tables at the site in the 1930's, but the advent of World War II put an end to further development.

A shot from a hunter's rifle shattered the concrete fountain, nature and vandals have erased the traces of wooden structures, and trees have covered the field where the old hotel once stood. Today all that remains to remind the visitor of what used to be is a concrete slab marked "Sulphur Spring" where the slightly acrid water trickles from the earth.

**DESIGNATED TRAILS:** Please stay on designated trails. The unwanted trampling of delicate vegetation and the encountering of hazardous and unsafe conditions are two common results of leaving marked trails. In addition to getting lost, other potential problems include poison oak, steep embankments, and swollen creeks.



#### "SOAP CREEK LOGGING CAMP"

*This mill operated during the Great Depression in the vicinity of the Soap Creek Schoolhouse. Logging and milling operations provided employment for Soap Creek residents before World War II, but the work was irregular and the pay was scanty.*

#### STOP #10 LEWISBURG SADDLE [Logging]

The view before you has changed little during the past 100 years. Early pioneers from the United States found a landscape that had more clearings, ponds, and oak, and fewer conifers than today. This was mostly because of floods, beaver, and Indian fires. Grazing animals belonging to early settlers also had the tendency to suppress new forest growth.

As fire protection became stronger and grazing practices changed, young fir trees began to spread outward from pockets of old-growth, protected by rugged terrain or shielded by fire-resistant oak groves. At the turn of the century local builders, previously dependent upon logging and milling operations to the west in Kings Valley, began to realize the potential for a more localized industry. By World War I, logging and milling were firmly established in the Soap Creek Valley. The picture to the left is of a logging camp that was home to several families during the depression. Two tramroads [planked roadways with metal rails] connected the camp to the rest of the Soap Creek community.

A Pacific Northwest logging tradition that includes splash dams, teams of oxen, flumes, and railroads was largely precluded from the history of Soap Creek due to the differing conditions noted above. Today this area continues to support the forest products industry, as it has for the past 70 or 80 years.

**OSU RESEARCH FORESTS:** *The OSU Research Forests have been owned and managed by OSU's world-renowned College of Forestry for over sixty years. These lands have been acquired by donation and purchase for the purpose of strengthening the research and educational programs of the College. Over the years they have been the site of many pioneering research studies and have been used for training thousands of young foresters.*

*Today the Research Forests are valuable for production of timber and clean water, as well as hiking, biking, horseback riding and other recreational pursuits. Management is aimed at demonstrating that all forest values can co-exist together.*



### "PINE FORESTS OF OREGON"

Although these old-growth trees are titled "pines," it appears that they are a stand of Douglas-fir and Hemlock, possibly in the vicinity of Astoria. The sailors making the measurement were members of Charles Wilkes' 1838-1842 "United States Exploring Expedition." Pictures such as this, first published in 1845, gave rise to Oregon's reputation as a land of giant evergreen trees.

### STOP #11 OLD-GROWTH TRAIL [Ecology]

The Old-Growth Trail was constructed by OSU College of Forestry students in order to provide a variety of forest-related environments to the hiker. A clearcut and research plantation, numerous species of native wildflowers, shrubs and trees are all encountered along its route. And, of course, some of the largest and oldest trees to be found in the Soap Creek Valley are also represented.

This is one of ten stands of old-growth trees that have been identified and set aside from logging by the OSU Research Forests. Many of these trees are approaching 300 years of age.

There are many reasons for attempting to preserve these stands. For most visitors, large trees have an intrinsic quality that gives them value in and of themselves. This value may be spiritual, one of awe, or simply a sense of history; these plants have been around a long time. David Douglas may have rested beneath one of these trees, or Jedediah Smith may have watched a grizzly bear escape into their confines.

Another reason is their value to science. Why did these plants survive so long? Which of them parented the younger stands that have reforested the surrounding hills and draws? How will these trees respond to global warming? To acid rain? Do they provide a unique or necessary environment for other plants and animals?

As you walk this trail, try and taste the air. Look closely at the leaves and blossoms. How does this make you feel? Are you learning anything? Try and compare these thoughts and sensations with other experiences you have had today. That is why this trail was built.

**WILD FLOWERS:** Many visitors to the OSU Research Forests are interested in the wide variety of wild flowers that grow here. Please do not pick or otherwise disturb the flowers and other plants you find growing along roads and trails. They are for the enjoyment and benefit of everyone.



## EPILOGUE

In the space of a few hours we have traveled from the ice age to the present. The Willamette Valley has been filled to the brim with muddy waters - called Lake Allison by geologists - and receded time and again. The sediments from these floods have leveled whole canyons and left a landscape dominated by swamps and prairies covered with annual grasses and flowers. These prairies, in turn, were browsed by giant beavers, camels and elephants, and then quickly inhabited by people.

People at first had no metals or domestic livestock; only fire, stone, and ingenuity with which to make a living. Using these tools they changed the landscape again. Some plants were favored over others, prairies were carved from forests, and certain animals were driven to extinction. New people began arriving from other areas of the planet, bringing metals, new plants, new animals, and deadly diseases with them. The landscape changed again. Humans and their tamed herds and flocks quickly became the most numerous inhabitants.

Today, grasses are grown in geometrically shaped areas and cut to specific heights. Prairies and savannahs are being replaced with forests. Synthetic surfaces cover soils and new gases are breathed in with the air. These changes are neither good nor bad - only inevitable. They are one reason why we study history. If we can understand and anticipate change, then we can better guide our common destinies. But mostly we study history for another reason - because it is fun and brings pleasure and enjoyment into our lives.

We hope you have enjoyed your journey through time.

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Much of the information used to assemble this tour guide was derived from the following sources:

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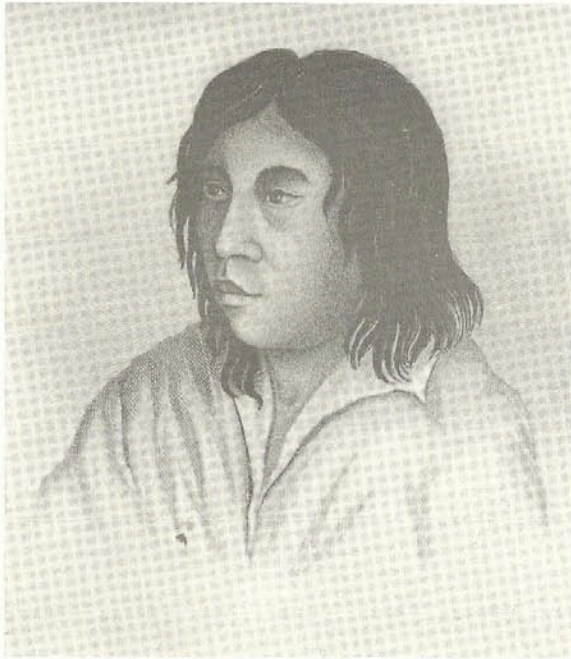
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Visitors to the OSU Research Forests interested in finding out more about the history and culture of this area may also wish to visit the Oregon Historical Society Library in Portland, the Oregon State Library in Salem, the Kerr Library and Horner Museum on the OSU campus, the Benton County Museum in Philomath, or contact the Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation by writing to 37465 Soap Creek Rd., Corvallis, Oregon 97330.



**"A KALAPUYA LAD"**

*This drawing of a Kalapuyan boy was made in the Willamette Valley by Alfred T. Agate in 1841, although it was first printed 10 years later in Charles Pickering's The Races Of Men And Their Geographical Distribution. Notice the rounded forehead, which was considered unusual for western Oregon Indians of that era. In 1856 most Kalapuyans were moved to the Grand Ronde reservation, near Sheridan, in Polk County, where they were forced to spend the remainder of their lives.*