

## General Land Office (GLO) Survey Plats

Among the most useful and readily available documentary resources for western emigrant trails are the GLO survey plats produced from the 1850's through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1&2</sup> These are the original federal township surveys, now available in the western states on film at BLM state and district offices (both the plats and surveyor notebooks). Although most GLO plats were the result of conscientious surveys by competent surveyors, some of the plats are not trustworthy. There are historical records of large-scale fraudulent surveys and smaller-scale, so called "hotel room surveys" where no actual field survey was ever conducted. The researcher must compare what is seen on these old plats with other sources.

In Hugo's area of interest, GLO surveys in the 1850s were conducted by surveyors Ives, Lake, and Hyde. History has proven that they were honest and competent and their surveys can be trusted.

**As a general rule, on GLO plats accuracy will exist only where the trail intersects a section line.**

Even the most competent GLO surveyors only recorded features along section lines within a township. A section is one mile square, with 36 sections in a township. Surveyors were required only to walk along section lines and record in their survey books what features they encountered along the section line. Thus, in most cases, field surveyors did not record features within the sections when surveying along section lines.

## Hugo's GLO Applegate Trail Field Survey Notes

The *Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee* has transcribed the field notes for the GLO's 1856 Map for T. 34 S., R. 6 W., Section 27, Willamette Meridian (General Surveyor Office of Oregon)<sup>3</sup> and tested them on the 1998 USGS Merlin Quadrangle to be accurate. The following are examples of the transcribed field notes.

### SUBDIVISION LINES, T. 34 S., R. 6 W. Surveyed March 31, 1856

**Page 620** - Subdivisions of T. 34 S., R. 6 W. - S 89° 41' West on True Line Between Sections 28 & 33

#### Chains

10.25	a Branch 2 Lks wide c.S.60°W
"	Above branch nearly dry
27.20	a branch 2 Lks wide c South (dry)
39.80½	Set In Sec Pos on Branch 4 Lks. w. c S.W
	from which
	an Ash 6 in dia bears S35°W 32 Lks
	a Skunk wood 5 in " " N33°E 29 "
43.70	Dry bed of branch 2 Lks wide c South
48.10	Indian trail c. South
49.20	Dry bed of Branch ?? c S10E
79.61	To Section Corner
	Surface gently rolling. Pine, Fir, & Oak openings. Soil 2 <sup>nd</sup> rate.

**Page 589** - Subdivisions of T. 34 S., R. 6 W. - North Between Sections 34 & 35

70.50	Spring branch 2 Lks wide. And enter prairie
79.20	Road to Jacksonville Enter openings
80.00	Widow Niday's house. Surface nearly level. Pine & Oak timber. Some greasewood & Manzanita. Soil 2 <sup>nd</sup> rate Sandy Loam

**Page 609** - Subdivisions of T. 34 S., R. 6 W. - North Between Secs 27 & 28

47.25	Indian Trail
56.35	Branch 3 Lks wide c S.W.
69.80	a Ridge c S.W.

## 1850s GLO Surveyor's Ives, Lake, & Hyde

When completed, a surveyor's field notes were sent to a draftsman who then transposed the recorded features from the survey notes to the plat, but could only estimate where the trail was located between section lines. Therefore, unless the surveyor either followed a trail between section lines or could see it clearly (and provided that information in his survey notes), the trail route drawn between section lines may be inaccurate.



This is usually not a problem in areas where the trail is coursing through sections of flat terrain in a relatively straight line. But the possibility of inaccuracies should be considered when judging the reliability of a trail route appearing between section lines in mountainous and forested terrain. As a general rule, on GLO plats accuracy will exist only where the trail intersects a section line.

**Want more information?** Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood*, or a member of the *Trails Committee* on how you can become involved in this trail project.

1. Hugo Neighborhood. 2005. Public Outreach & Educational Brochure Program: Hugo's Emigrant Trails. Hugo, OR.

2. Office of National Trails Preservation & Oregon-California Trails Association (P.O. box 1019, Independence, MO. 64051-0519, 816-252-2276, octa@indepmo.org). July 2002, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. *Mapping Emigrants Trails MET Field Manual*.

3. General Surveyor Office of Oregon. Subdivision Lines For 1856 Map (T.34., R. 6. W., Willamette Meridian). Field Notes. Surveyor Luke G Hyde. Contract February 19, 1855; Surveyed March 31, 1856.

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## Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee

Hugo is blessed with a rich heritage of historic roads, rough though they were. The *Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee* was formed to bring together all those who want to learn more about the early transportation in the area, from the casual admirer to the dedicated researcher. Its aim is to collect and record information about Hugo's emigrant trails, especially its two historic 1850s General Land Office mapped roads of the Applegate Trail, and to share this information (e.g., through *Hugo History Day*, talks, hikes, group visits, training exercises, workshops, publications, web sites, etc.).

Karen Rose, Co-Project Leader  
Mike Walker, Co-Project Leader

### *Diaries, Journals & Reminiscences SubCommittee*

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### *General Land Office Field Survey SubCommittee*

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## Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

### Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area. Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings.

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## HUGO'S APPLGATE TRAIL FIELD NOTES

Brochure 10A in  
Emigrant Trails Series



On February 26, 1836 Burt's solar compass  
was issued patent number 9428X.

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**General Land Office Field Survey  
Sub-Committee,  
*Hugo's Emigrant Trails Committee***

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society**