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## Trapper's Trail & Hudson Bay Company

Southern Oregon's mountainous terrain limited early transportation to walking, horseback, and pack animals. Hudson Bay Company trappers under Thomas McKay and Finan McDonald followed Indian trails through the Rogue River valley in 1825.<sup>1</sup>

In 1827, Peter Skene Ogden, a fur trader and explorer for the Hudson Bay Company, following loosely connected Indian trails<sup>2</sup>, made the first documented exploration through the terrain that would be southern Oregon, including Hugo. He described the country as wild and the rivers too rushing and rocky to have good beaver hunting.<sup>3</sup>

*In 1827, Peter Skene Ogden, a fur trader and explorer for the Hudson Bay Company, following loosely connected Indian trails, made the first documented exploration through the terrain that would be southern Oregon, including Hugo.*

He also noted encountering Takelma Indians with knives and axes of the type used by Hudson Bay trappers. Indians related they had traded for them during the early 1820s from previous Hudson Bay trappers exploring the area. Another Hudson Bay Company fur brigade crossed the Rogue River near Grants Pass in 1828 under Alexander Roderic McLeod from Fort Vancouver.<sup>1</sup>

The sparsely used Trapper's Trail, as it would be called, witnessed three livestock drives beginning in 1834.

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## Applegate Trail, Donation Land Claimers, & Military Road

In 1841 Lt. Emmons, an officer of the Exploring Squadron of Charles Wilkes, led an expedition through the Rogue Valley enroute to Yerba Buena (San Francisco).<sup>1</sup> By 1844 California settlers, led by Stephen Meeks, followed the Hudson Bay Company's trail north to the Willamette Valley.<sup>1</sup>

The trail was marginally improved and with a few detours eventually became the Applegate Trail of 1846.<sup>4</sup> Peter Burnett with 150 men (Burnett's Ragged Regiment) passed through the valley enroute to the California gold fields in 1848.<sup>1</sup> Further improvements were made to the Applegate Trail in 1853 by Major B. Alvord. The *Hugo Neighborhood's* Trapper's Trail series includes 18 brochures.

- Trapper's Trail Brochure Program
- Hugo's Indian Trail
- Hudson Bay Company Trappers: 1820s - 1840s
- Peter Ogden's 1826 Journey Through Northern Josephine County
- Livestock Drives: 1830s
- Naming of Jumpoff Joe Creek: ca., 1839
- United States Exploring Expedition: 1841
- Col. Fremont: 1843
- Meeks Settlers: 1844
- Applegate Trail of 1846 (Web Links)
- Burnette's Ragged Regiment: 1848
- Donation Land Claimers: 1853 - 1855
- 1853 Military Road
- Rogue River Indian Wars: 1853 - 1856
- Pacific Railroad Survey: 1855
- David Sexton: Indian Fighter
- General Land Office maps of 1856
- Military Warrants

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## Cattle Drives, Indian Wars, & Stagecoach Road

It was during the 1850s that donation land claimers settled in Hugo: Hiram and Caroline Niday, Walker brothers, Augustus and Wesley, and George and Mary Ann Harris. In 1856 the wagon road was recorded on the Oregon General Land Office map as the "Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville".

Lastly, it became the stagecoach road which connected Seattle with San Francisco from 1860 until completion of the railroad to Grants Pass in 1883. Afterward, stage service rapidly faded away before dropping into extinction around 1889. The Concorde stage service through Southern Oregon was the last in the nation and closed the book on a historic and colorful era of American frontier history.

Exact tracks of the Trapper's Trail and the subsequent wagon trail have been lost in antiquity. However, the wagon trail through the mountainous terrain of Hugo, Oregon was believed to be remarkably stable as dictated by terrain and forests.<sup>5</sup>

**Want more information?** Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood* on how you can become involved.

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1. Sutton, Jack. 1966. 110 Years With Josephine County, The History OF Josephine County: 1856 - 1966

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 2005. *Hugo's Indian Trail*. Hugo, OR.

3. The Daily Courier. January 31, 2005. Mondays Make History. Presented by the Josephine County Historical Society. *Wilderness Beginnings: 1820 - 1846, Part I*. Grants Pass, OR.

4. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 2005. *Applegate Trail*. Brochure 6 in Emigrant Trail Series. Hugo, OR.

5. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 2005. *Guidelines For Locating Wagon Trails*. Brochure 12 in Emigrant Trail Series. Hugo, OR.

6. Military Bounty Land Act of March 3, 1855, Roseburg, Oregon.. May 9, 1861 Military Warrant #92568 in the name of Rice Benson has this day been located by Anson Turner.

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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. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer.

Web Page: <http://jeffnet.org/~hugo/>  
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# TRAPPER'S TRAIL BROCHURE PROGRAM



Brochure 1 in Trapper's Trail Series



May 24, 2008

**Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee**

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society**

Brochure 1 in Trapper's Trail Brochure Series -  
HNA&HS 2008 - 95  
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