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## Oregon & California (O&C) Railroad: 1866 - 1883

**1866 Railroad Grant** In 1866 Congress authorized granting the O&C Railroad about 4 million acres to help finance construction of a railroad from Portland, Oregon to the California border.<sup>1-3</sup>

**1896 Railroad Patents** For a variety of reasons the final patents to the railroad for railroad construction were issued much later than the work was completed. On March 17, 1896 the O & C Railroad Company was issued a railroad grant Patent No. 38 for 109,827.83 acres.<sup>1-3</sup> It would sell/grant to the PVCA 40 acres of that patent three years later on July 5, 1899.



**Hypothesis** By 1872 the railroad was completed to Roseburg. Research underway is testing the hypothesis that the O&C Railroad was using the 40 acres as a cemetery during the 1872 - 1883 period when railroad construction was stalled in northern Josephine County.<sup>1-3</sup> Concepts potentially supporting this theory follow.

- O&C Railroad Construction Stalled 1872 - 1883
- High Road To Tunnel No. 9
- Railroad Construction Caused Numerous Deaths
- Many Railroad Workers Were Chinese
- Interim Interment Site For Chinese
- Early Memories Of Wooden Stakes
- Adjacent Private Cemeteries
- Death Dates
- Vacant Land At Entrance To PVC

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## Pleasant Valley Cemetery (PVC): 1870s?

**Railroad Construction** It is a fact that railroad construction was stalled from Roseburg to Grants Pass, Oregon from 1872 - 1883.<sup>1</sup>

**High Road To Tunnel No. 9** The concept of an early High Road is supported by old-timers Orville Dingler and Mary Ritchie, early maps, present roads, and physical traces, found by the Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee as well as early homesteading and cash entries along the road.<sup>3</sup>

**Railroad Deaths** It is a fact that railroad building through rough terrain was especially hazardous and railroad deaths were common.

**Chinese Laborers** provided much of the back breaking toil to make the cuts for the O&C Railroad as it inched southward through the Umpqua Mountains to the Rogue River Valley.<sup>4</sup> There were reported to have been five hundred whites and one thousand Chinese laborers carrying out railroad tasks of constructing trestles, tunnels, and bridges in 1882 - 1883.<sup>5</sup> Most Chinese who came to this country for work on the railroad would be buried in their homeland. Individuals who were buried in temporary graves were regularly disinterred and the remains shipped back to the their native Chinese villages.

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1. Hugo Neighborhood, Josephine County Historical Society, & Rogue Advocates. 2007. *O & C Railroad*. Hugo, OR.

2. Hugo Neighborhood, Josephine County Historical Society, & Rogue Advocates. 2007. *Applegate Trail & Pleasant Valley Cemetery*. Hugo, OR.

3. Hugo Neighborhood, Josephine County Historical Society, & Rogue Advocates. 2007. *Pleasant Valley Cemetery's Beginnings*. Hugo, OR.

4. Oregon Blue Book. 2007. *Oregon History: Chinese-Americans*. Web.

5. McLane, Larry. 1995. *First There Was Twogood*. page 83. Sunny Valley, OR.

6. Hugo Neighborhood, Josephine County Historical Society, & Rogue Advocates. 2007. *Neely & Trimble Cemeteries*. Hugo, OR.

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## PVC Association (PVCA)

**Interim Interment Site For Chinese** Local anecdotal information is that the O&C Railroad had first used the land that would become the PVC cemetery as an interim interment site for Chinese railroad workers.<sup>3</sup>

**Early Memories Of Wooden Stakes** Old-timers, now passed away, had remembered that in the past the lower, flat, western part of the PVC had many wooden stakes.<sup>3</sup>

**Private Cemeteries** Two private platted cemeteries adjacent to the PCV have two tombstone death dates between 1870 - 1877 and six tombstones within the PVC have death dates between 1881 and 1887.<sup>6</sup>

**Death Dates** Death dates on four tombstones in the PVC and in adjacent private cemeteries are from 1869 - 1878.<sup>3</sup>

**Vacant Land At Entrance To PVC** The Applegate Trail was the main road through northern Josephine County from 1846 - 1895, and possibly as late as ca., 1910. It is logical that the PVC's land which would have first been used was that which was the most accessible to the trail. Why the large amount of vacant land in the PVC at its western entrance closest to the Applegate Trail?

**Want more information?** Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood* on how you can become involved in your community's history and land use.

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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. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

Email: [hugo@jeffnet.org](mailto:hugo@jeffnet.org)

Web Page: <http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

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## PLEASANT VALLEY CEMETERY: 1870s?

Brochure 62 in Hugo's Pioneers  
Brochure Series



*Part of the 1.5 mile Applegate Trail nomination to  
Federal Register of Historic Places*



*Chinese Railroad Workers*

**May 13, 2008**

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society  
Josephine County Historical Society  
Rogue Advocates**

Brochure 62 in Hugo's Pioneers Brochure Series

HNA & HS 2008 - 62

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