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## United States Exploring Expedition: 1838 - 1842 - Part I of III

**1838** Plans for a maritime exploring expedition to chart the Pacific Ocean began in May, 1836, when Congress appropriated \$300,000 to be used by the Navy Department for the purposes of exploration. Command of the expedition was first given to Captain Thomas and Catesby Jones but was passed to Lt. Charles Wilkes in 1838 when Captain Jones became ill and resigned his position. The six ships of the expedition finally sailed from Massachusetts in August of 1838 on a voyage which lasted three years and ten months. The purpose of the expedition was to explore and chart the Pacific Ocean in order to increase the safety of whalers, sealers, fishermen, and other commercial vessels, and to add to the scientific knowledge of the flora and fauna of the Pacific. Among the accomplishments of the Expedition were the charting of the Fiji Islands, the discovery that Antarctica was of continental size, the mapping of the Columbia River region, and the charting of the Paumotu Group of the coral atolls. The expedition also visited the Samoan and Sandwich Islands and surveyed others.

**From 1838-1842**, Captain Charles Wilkes and six ships circumnavigated the globe.<sup>1</sup> In the process, they sailed up the Columbia and its tributaries, and explored the Mary's River (Corvallis area), collecting specimens along the journey, as well as rendering great assistance to American settlers in their negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company. Wilkes' Oregon observations are recorded in volume 4 and 5 of the expedition's report.

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## Lt. Wilkes' Oregon Observations: 1841

**1841** A. G. Walling, in his history of 1884, calls the river by the Indian name "Tootootutnus." He describes the expedition of Charles Wilkes which passed through the valley in 1841, and camped on the banks of the Rogue, and says, "They had now reached the country of the Klamet Indians, better known as Rogues or Rascals, which name they obtained from many acts of villainy they have practiced." (Quoted from U.S. Explorers Expeditions, Vol 5.).

**The actual 1841 journey from the Columbia River to the Sacramento River, including passage through the Rogue River Valley, was led by Lieutenant Emmons.**

Members of the United States Exploring Expedition, led by Lt. Charles Wilkes, created the first map in 1841 during a four-year government funded mission to explore the geographic region known as the Oregon Country.

However, the actual 1841 journey from the Columbia River to the Sacramento River, including passage through the Rogue River Valley, was led by Lieutenant Emmons.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Wilkes, Charles. 1845. *Narrative of the United States exploring expedition. During the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842.* With illustrations and maps. In five volumes ... Publisher: Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard. The U.S. Congress sent an exploring expedition to the Pacific Ocean and South Seas from 1838-1842 to enhance the country's commerce and science, and to compete with famous British and French explorers. NOAA Central Library Call Number: Q115 .U48 1845, 5 vol.

2. Biobooks. 1958. *Columbia River to the Sacramento By Charles Wilkes, U.S.N. Commander United States Exploring Expedition 1839 - 1842.* Oakland 10, CA.

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## Lt. Emmons To Rogue River Valley

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**More Information.** Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood.*

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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.

*Hugo Neighborhood Association*

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## UNITED STATES EXPLORING EXPEDITION: 1838 - 1842

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May 25, 2008

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