

**NON-SURVEYED APPLGATE TRAIL SITE:
EAST I-5 MANZANITA REST AREA MET VERIFIED**

Appendix D4. The Rogue Indian War and the Harris Homestead

I. INTRODUCTION

Appendix D4, *The Rogue Indian War and the Harris Homestead*, was compiled from selected quotes and information from Chapter 4 of the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History (Report No. 2011-002) with the same title.

University of Oregon. May 27, 2010. Subsurface Reconnaissance of the I-5 Chancellor Quarry Stockpile Project, and Metal Detector Survey Within the George and Mary Harris 1854 - 55 DLC (35JO246), Josephine County. Museum of Natural and Cultural History Report No. 2011-002. Chapter 4: The Rogue Indian War and the Harris Homestead (pps. 21 - 32). Eugene, OR.

Chapter 4 leaves little doubt about the fact that the Harris cabin was along the main wagon road (labeled the Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville on the 1856 GLO Map; and much later identified as the Applegate Trail). The Harris family was engaged in homesteading, having built a cabin and out buildings along the major thoroughfare through the Rogue Valley. This fact is supported by two 1855 professional surveys and numerous eyewitnesses.

1. A February 1855 GLO eyewitness survey records two houses close together: 1. the southern Harris cabin site, and a northern house erroneously identified as that of "Mr. Harris."
2. A 1856 GLO survey map corrected the error and recorded the southern cabin as the Harris house, along with fenced fields, and the "Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville" (Applegate Trail) passing through the land claim between the cabin and the cultivated fields.
3. A 1855 map prepared by Lts. H. L. Abbot and R.S. Williamson, US Army Topographical Engineers (November 2, 1855 eyewitness account), identified the Wagon Road next to the Harris Rancho (i.e., cabin).

Chapter 4 also makes it clear that the 1855 - 1856 Rogue Indian War was started by the white miners and settlers on October 8, 1855 when the Lupton Massacre occurred where half the dead were Native American women and children. This was the day before the Indians retaliated by attacking white settlers, including the Harris family.

II. JACKSONVILLE ROAD OF APPLGATE TRAIL

The Harris family arrived in the Willamette Valley in 1852 by wagon train from Missouri. In 1854 they moved to the **Applegate Trail (labeled the Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville on the 1856 GLO Map; Figure 4.1** [emphasis added; Map 9, Map EI-5Man - 1, & Map EI-5Man - 5¹] and settled on a 320-acre Donation Land Claim, which covered much of what was a prairie/meadow [Table 1; Figure 4.1]. The family included George Harris, Mary Ann Harris, their daughter Sophia, and son David (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 21).

The 1856 GLO survey map records the cabin and fenced fields, and the **“Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville” (Applegate Trail) passing through the land claim and between the cabin and the cultivated fields** [emphasis added; Figure 4.1; and Map 9, Map EI-5Man - 1, & Map EI-5Man - 5¹]. (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 21).

Some Indians went to Fort Lane, at Table Rock, for protection, but the rest fled downriver and along the **Oregon-California Road** [emphasis added] seeking vengeance (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24). The Wagner and Harris DLCs were about 2.5 miles apart. R.H. Dearborn’s report was from Deer Creek, the early name for Roseburg. The question arises as to which direction the postman was traveling. The October 11th report from Deer Creek suggest that he was traveling north, through the area that was under attack, **if he stuck to the road** [emphasis added], would have passed directly by both cabins (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

The vast majority of what is known about the Harris family is the story of the attack. However, they were **engaged in homesteading, having built a cabin and out buildings along the major thoroughfare through the Rogue Valley** [emphasis added]. The historic accounts of that homestead are very limited and sometimes conflicting (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

Later, Mary Harris may have returned and emptied the cabin and larger homestead of her surviving belongings, or the **homestead essentially abandoned and lying directly on the main wagon road** [emphasis added], may have been cleared by passerby (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 31).

1. The following three maps are part of the document entitled, *Non-surveyed Applegate Trail Site: East I-5 Manzanita Rest Area MET Verified*. This is the document that this appendix, “Appendix D4, The Rogue Indian War and the Harris Homestead,” supports.

Walker, Mike, Member, HETC. June 5, 2015. *Non-surveyed Applegate Trail Site: East I-5 Manzanita Rest Area MET Verified*. Hugo, OR.

Map 9.	Hugo’s Applegate Trails: Map II of IV
Map EI-5Man - 1	1855 Applegate Trail GLO Surveyed Sites JA-4 - JA-8 & Non-Surveyed Applegate Trail Site: East I-5 Manzanita Rest Area
Map EI-5Man - 5	Early Settlers Along Quarry Section Of Applegate Trail

III. THE ROGUE INDIAN WAR

The tragedy that was the Rogue Indian War was just one of a number of “Indian wars” which continued in the west throughout the 19th century, as white settlers in the form of trappers, prospectors, and homesteaders encroached on the lands, and therefore the lifeways of the Native populations. The narrative of “manifest destiny” successfully painted that westward migration as heroic progress to such an extent that the status of Native Americans as victims rather than perpetrators (e.g. Beckham 1971; Schwartz 1997), is not thought to have been generally expressed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, some settlers did recognize the inequity of the treatment of the native peoples. Colvig, a militiaman in the Rogue War, in his 1904 summary of the “Indian Wars of Southern Oregon” (Colvig 1903: 234) stated that Lupton’s Butte Creek Massacre which began the 1855-56 Rogue Indian War led to the Harris cabin attack “. . . has been much criticized by the people of southern Oregon, many of them believing it was unjustifiable and cowardly.” This inequity was suggest as early as an October 27, 1855, Oregon Statesman newspaper’s note (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, pps. 21 & 23):

“A southern correspondent mentions the fact that heretofore the Indians of that section have in no instance molested or harmed women or children, and attributed their doing so on the 9th to the massacre of Indian women and children on the day previous, near Table Rock.” (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 23)

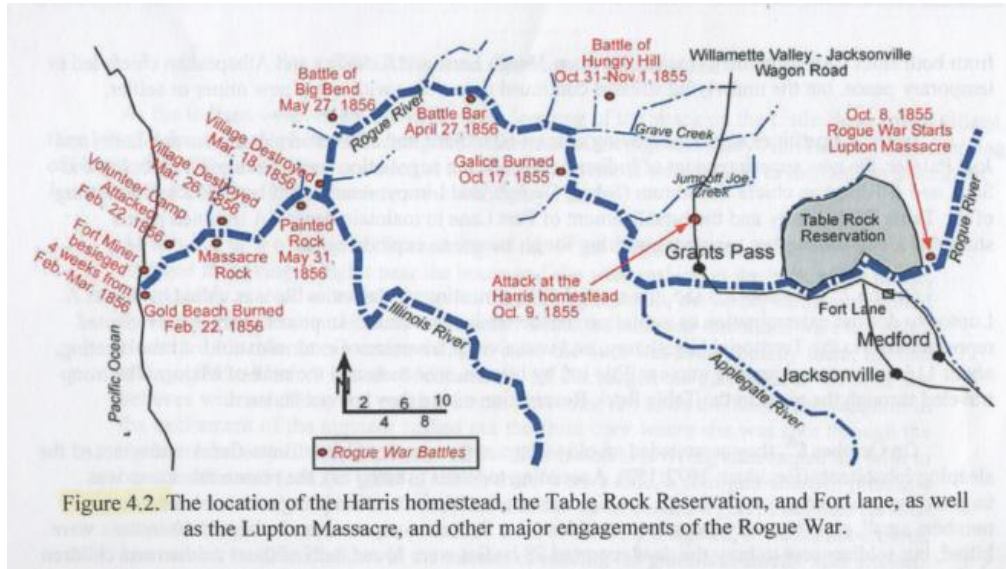


Figure 4.2. The location of the Harris homestead, the Table Rock Reservation, and Fort Lane, as well as the Lupton Massacre, and other major engagements of the Rogue War (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 23).

Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, said that the war had been forced on people, “by a set of reckless vagabonds, for pecuniary and political objects, and sanctioned by a numerous population who regard the treasury of the United States as a legitimate subject of plunder” (Schwartz 1997: 100). Clearly, while the narrative of manifest destiny was of progress, it was not without costs. The pendulum of the tragedy that was Indian-White relations swung both ways, but while the truth of the “unjustifiable and cowardly” Lupton massacre was not widely publicized, the story of the “unjustifiable and cowardly” retaliatory slaughter of Rogue Valley settlers became part of that narrative. Francis Fuller Victor was commissioned by the State of Oregon to write the official history of “The Early Indian Wars of Oregon” (Victor 1894) and produced a document firmly in support of manifest destiny. It is within the larger narrative that the attack on the Harris Homestead has been told and retold (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 23).

Hostilities between settlers and Indians had been volatile since the 1851 influx of miners and settlers following the discovery of gold. The newcomers brought diseases, actively destroyed many traditional food resources through their mining and farming practices, and aggressively competed for the most favorable resources and lands, leaving the tribes with few options. Violence was often the response from both sides. An agreement reached between Joseph Lane and Takelma and Athapaskan chiefs led to temporary peace, but the underlying stresses continued to increase with every new miner or settler (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, pps. 23 - 24).

In 1853, hostilities exploded leaving at least 60 Indians and 120 settlers dead. Joseph Lane, and Joel Palmer, the new superintendent of Indian Affairs, began negotiations with Tekelma Chiefs Joe and Sam, and Athapaskan chiefs Tecumtum (John), George, and Limpy, resulting in late 1853 in the signing of the Table Rock Treaty and the establishment of Fort Lane to maintain peace. A troubled peace stumbled along for another two years, waiting for an excuse to explode again (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

On the 7th of October, 1855, the second of two meetings in Jacksonville was called by James A. Lupton to discuss extermination as a solution for the "Indian problem." Lupton was the newly elected representative to the Territorial Legislature, and was a vocal advocate of extermination. At the meeting, about 115 men were organized into a militia lead by Lupton, who assumed the rank of Major. The troop traveled through the night to the Table Rock Reservation where they arrived at dawn (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

On October 8th, they surrounded an old village at the mouth of Little Butte Creek and attacked the sleeping inhabitants (Beckham: 152). According to Wells (1889: 373), the reason this camp was targeted "appears a mystery, although the circumstances of their location being accessible and their numbers small, possibly were the ruling considerations." A newspaper account claimed 40 Indians were killed, but soldiers sent to bury the dead reported 28 bodies were found, half of them women and children (Schwartz 1997: 85). A later report said that the Indian men had gone ahead to the reservation and expected the elderly, women, and children to arrive the next day (Schwartz 1997: 86). During the attack two whites were killed and ten wounded. Lupton was killed (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

The US Army refused to aid the militia, but neither did they stop them. All day on the 9th the militia hunted down the Indians who remained in the area. One volunteer reported that "It hurt my feelings, but the understanding was that all were to be killed. So we did the work" (Schwartz 1997: 86). In characterizing the Lupton massacre of Indians at Butte Creek, O'Donnel (1991: 60) says simply, "The Rogue River War are begun." (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

Some Indians went to Fort Lane, at Table Rock, for protection, but the rest fled downriver and along the Oregon-California Road seeking vengeance. "A company of volunteers lead by Captain Rinearson, hastily came from Cow Creek and scoured the country about Grave Creek and vicinity, finding quite a number of bodies of murdered men" (Wells 1889: 376). Riddle (1920: 60) reported that over 30 white people were killed on October 9th, about the same number as the Butte Creek dead (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

The war continued for seven months more, until the Battle of Big Bend in late May, 1856, where the Indians suffered a final, serious defeat. The surviving Indian leaders, their bands decimated by war and starvation, began to surrender and congregate at Big Bend (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

Over the course of the eight months-long Rogue Rive War, hundreds of Indians and perhaps 50 settlers and miners had been killed. Indian refugees were scattered in the hills and mountains, unprepared for winter, with their homes destroyed and their tools left behind (Bechham 1971: 167) (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

Joel Palmer, Federal Superintendent for Indian Affairs, was convinced by the continued hostilities to institute a new federal reservation policy. He ordered the removal of most western Oregon Indians to reservations in the less settled Coast Range. The Coast of Siletz Reservation was established in 1855 and the Grand Ronde Reservation in 1857. Removals began in 1856 and continued until 1859 (Bechham 1971:

181 - 183). On June 20, 1856, 600 Indians were removed by ship to the newly created Coast Reservation. The ship being full, other Indians were required to walk the 125 miles up the coast (Bechham 1971: 188 - 189) (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 24).

IV. THE ATTACK ON THE HARRIS HOMESTEAD

Less than a month after the attack, however, the cabin was reportedly still standing. Lieutenants R. S. Williamson and Henry L. Abbott of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, leading a US exploration and survey expedition dispatched by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to scout a railroad route from California to the Columbia River, and on into Washington, were passing through the area. They spent the night of November 2, 1855, at the abandoned Harris cabin (Figure 4.3) (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 25).

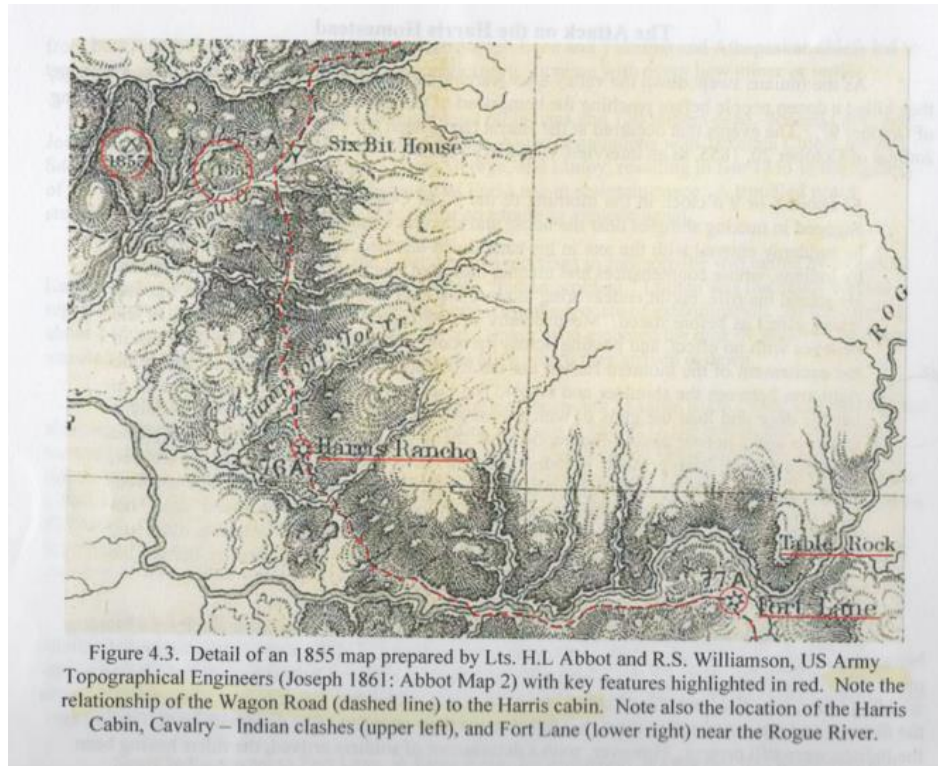


Figure 4.3. Detail of an 1855 map prepared by Lts. H.L. Abbot and R.S. Williamson, US Army Topographical Engineers (Joseph 1861; Abbot Map 2) with key features highlighted in red. Note the relationship of the Wagon Road (dashed line) to the Harris cabin. Note also the location of the Harris Cabin, Cavalry - Indian clashes (upper left), and Fort Lane (lower right) near the Rogue River (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 26).

The rancho had belonged to a man named Harris . . . his wife made so gallant a defense by firing through their improvised loop holes that the Indians were held at bay until a party of First Dragoons, under major Fitzeral, on a scout from Fort Lane, routed the savages and saved the lives of the mother and daughter (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

The Wagner and Harris DLCs were about 2.5 miles apart. R.H. Dearborn's report was from Deer Creek, the early name for Roseburg. The question arises as to which direction the postman was traveling. The October 11th report from Deer Creek suggest that he was traveling north, through the area that was under

attack, if he stuck to the road, would have passed directly by both cabins (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

V. THE HARRIS HOMESTEAD BEYOND THE ATTACK

The vast majority of what is known about the Harris family is the story of the attack. However, they were engaged in homesteading, having built a cabin and out buildings along the major thoroughfare through the Rogue Valley. The historic accounts of that homestead are very limited and sometimes conflicting (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

The first confusion in the Harris story began months before the attack. The 1856 GLO notes two houses (Figure 4.5 [Map 9, Map EI-5Man - 1, & Map EI-5Man - 5]¹), (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27). However the surveyor's notes, from May - June 1855, mark the northern house as that of "Mr. Harris." This placed the location of the Harris cabin in question and prompted the Hugo Neighborhood Association, a local historical society, to reestablish the 1855 survey stations and re-shoot the locations noted by the 1855 surveyors. Their measurement showed that the first notation – "a House from N25°E" – was at the location noted on the 1856 GLO as the location of the Harris cabin. Their measurements placed the exact location within a few meters of a cobble pile in the southwest corner of Section 13. This mistake, clearly corrected by the General Land Office survey office prior to publication, would have remained corrected, but in the 1920s Mary Harris's great, great granddaughters were interviewed about the attack (Sutton and Sutton 1969: 148) (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).

Alice and Claire Hanley visited the Harris DLC and, in relocating the cabin site, placed it north of Harris Ctreak, closer to the northern cabin location mistakenly attributed to "Mr. Harris" in the original GLO survey notes. A photo taken at the time makes that locality easily relocated today (Figures 4.6 and 4.7). While the GLO map and the Hugo Neighborhood re-survey support the southern location, this interview again threw the cabin location in question (MNCH Report No. 2011-002, p. 27).