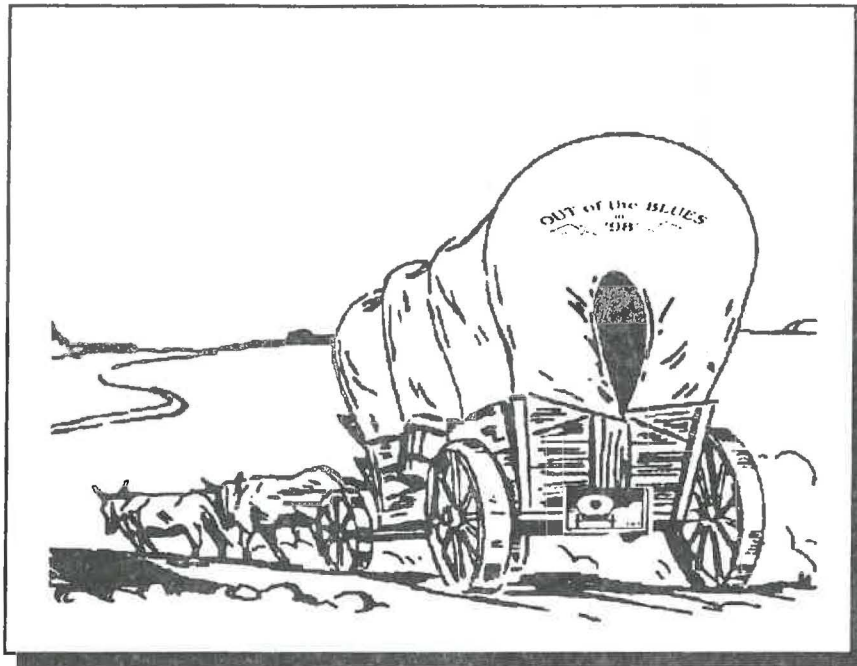


**Oregon-California Trails Association  
Northwest Chapter**



# **TOURS**

**Oregon Trail: Blue Mountains to Well Spring  
Whitman Mission  
Flagstaff Hill  
Out of the Blues Hike  
Boardman-Well Spring Hike**

**OCTA National Convention  
Pendleton, Oregon  
August 10-17, 1998**

## Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments .....	iii
1. Overview of Tours .....	1-1
2. Guide and Coach Assignments .....	2-1
3. General Instructions .....	3-1
4. Background Information .....	4-1
5. Tour A: Oregon Trail, Blue Mountains to Well Spring .....	5-1
6. Tour B: Whitman Mission .....	6-1
7. Tour C: Flagstaff Hill .....	7-1
8. Tour X: Out of the Blues .....	8-1
9. Tour Y: Boardman-Well Spring .....	9-1
Bibliography	

## Acknowledgments

This guide has been prepared by borrowing generously from the knowledge and writings of others. Dick Ackerman and Lowell Tiller introduced the editor to many of the places of interest and provided an initial tour outline. A chapter outing in the fall of 1997, which was organized by Lethene Parks, provided the basis for the Whitman Mission tour while the writings of Mary Oman for the 1993 Baker City tours are the basis for the tour to and from Baker City and Flagstaff Hill.

The U. S. Navy's "Cultural Resource Assessment and Evaluation of the Lower Well Spring Diversion" (principal author Greg Green) provided important new information and descriptive material on the Well Spring area. Other valuable inputs on trails in the Pendleton area were provided by Keith May, Jim Renner and Susan Badger Doyle.

Betty Wakelee, Marlea and Gary Shurtleff and Vic Bolon carefully reviewed the first draft for both content and editor-induced errors. Hopefully, I have not introduced too many new errors when implementing their suggestions. Maps were prepared with the help of Adam Welch and Wendy Welch assisted with the final text.

The published works of Jack Evans, Aubrey Haines and Greg Franzwa (see bibliography) provided both historical perspective and critical trail documentation. Mr. Franzwa's maps are the basis for most lines shown on the maps herein, although they only approximate his "Maps of the Oregon Trail." Finally, the emigrants themselves provided first hand testimonials that were summarized by Oregon historian Stephen Dow Beckham to give us the best pictures of the places to be visited and the emigrant perspective.

Much of the property to be visited is in private or tribal ownership. Special permission has been obtained for our visit. Our thanks to the owners for granting access and please remember that permission is required for future visits.

Dave Welch  
August 1998

## 1. Overview of Tours

### 1.1. Convention Tours

Bus tours (August 14 and 15)

Oregon Trail, Blue Mountains to Well Spring  
Whitman Mission \*  
Flagstaff Hill

Hiking trips (August 14 and 15)

Out of the Blues: The Blue Mountain Descent  
Boardman -Well Spring

\*The Whitman Mission tour is also offered on Tuesday, August 11.

### 1.2. Convention Tour Descriptions

This document describes the five convention tours. The area covered by the tours is shown in Figure 1-1.

#### Tour A: Oregon Trail, Blue Mountains-Well Spring

For those of you who attended the 1993 Baker City Convention, this tour will pick up where that convention left off. A short trip along Interstate 84 (I-84) going east will take us to the Blue Mountain Crossing Park. From that point we will follow the trail west as it crosses and descends the Blues, and then proceeds across the high plateau to Well Spring, about 40 miles west of Pendleton.

The Blue Mountain Crossing Park includes a short walk where interpretive panels explain the site and the crossing of the Blues. The Oregon Trail, and later wagon roads, are clearly evident. From the park we will get back on I-84 which at times parallels the trail while at other times lies on top of it. At the Mt. Emily Road exit we will view ruts and the memorial to OCTA member Burch Burchfield. Near Emigrant Springs we will leave the I-84 for old U. S. Highway 30 to view the Meeker Marker and other monuments along the trail in this area. Next we will visit the Squaw Canyon Overlook which gives an excellent perspective of both the Oregon Trail and the route probably used by the Whitmans and Spaldings in 1836.



**OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION  
1998 CONVENTION - PENDLETON, OREGON**

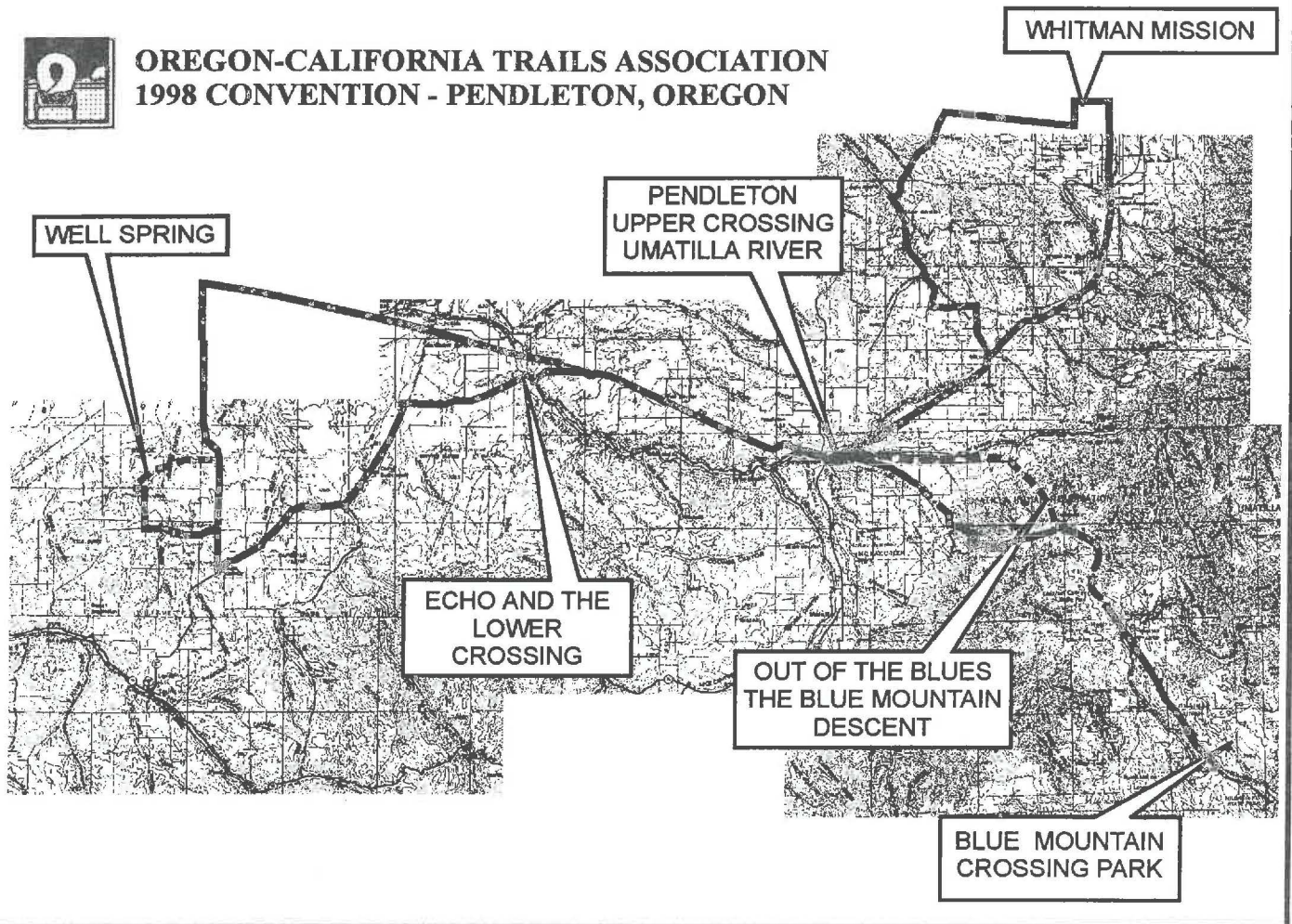


Figure 1-1. Area Covered by Convention Tours

From the Squaw Canyon Overlook we will proceed on Old Highway 30 to Deadman Pass. The park on the north side of the highway lies astride the trail and is a short distance from the top of the descent. Our descent from the Blues will be on Highway 30 which we will leave to visit the base of the primary Blue Mountain descent about a mile south of Cayuse. Most of the descent is visible from this location.

From the base of the Blue Mountains descent the trail will be followed into Pendleton as closely as major roads permit. We will stop for lunch at Raley Park in Pendleton near the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla River Crossing. As we leave town we will stop briefly at an historical marker that summarizes early routes and settlements in the area. Our first stop after lunch will be at the Fort Henrietta Park. In the vicinity are the Koontz grave and the Lower Crossing of the Umatilla River. From Ft. Henrietta the trail will be followed westward to Well Spring. From Well Spring we will backtrack on the trail before heading north where we will intersect the trail for a last time near where it enters the Boardman Bombing Range. We will return to Pendleton on I-84.

#### Tour B: Whitman Mission

In 1836 Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Henry and Eliza Spalding and William Gray crossed the "western desert" and established missions in what is now eastern Washington and western Idaho. The Whitman Mission, which was established in late 1836 near present Walla Walla, became an important supply point for early travelers on the trail who were short of supplies or who arrived too late (or too tired) to cross the Cascades. While the most direct route to The Dalles is west from the base of the Blues, many chose, up until 1848, to go north to the Whitman Mission and then west along the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers. This tour will explore routes to the Whitman Mission and visit the mission site.

The tour will begin with a brief visit to a viewpoint near the base of the Blue Mountain descent of the Oregon Trail and the route used by the Whitmans. From that point there are two routes to the mission area, one turning north and roughly paralleling Highway 11. The other proceeds northwest along a line to the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Walla Walla (also known as Fort Nez Perce). The latter is the route mostly likely used by the Whitmans since their goal in 1836 was the HBC post. Later emigrants going to the mission may have used this route or the route going more directly north to the mission. We will begin by following the direct route toward Fort Walla Walla.

This tour will cross the now cultivated area to the Butler Grade Overlook above the Walla Walla Valley. From here one can see the Columbia River to the west, the site of Fort Walla Walla, the Whitman Mission and present day Walla Walla. This magnificent site places the geography and history of this important area in perspective.

We will descend Butler Grade and proceed to the Whitman Mission. The Walla Walla Valley was an important Hudson's Bay Company farm and ranch. An extended stay at the mission will permit visits to all of the park's displays. Programs will be presented by the National Park Service.

From the mission we will proceed to Walla Walla to pick up Oregon Highway 11 for the return to Pendleton. We will be roughly following the second route to the mission from the base of the Blues to the mission area, although in the reverse direction (relative to the flow of emigrants). We will pause briefly in Milton Freewater to view the Meeker marker in that city.

### Tour C: Flagstaff Hill

The purpose of this tour is to provide an opportunity to visit (or revisit) the Flagstaff Hill Interpretive Center that was featured at the 1993 Convention. In addition, the tour will present highlights of the trail from Baker City to Pendleton.

The tour will begin with a non-narrated trip to Baker City. Interstate 84 roughly parallels the Trail, but the explanation will be given on the return trip when we are traveling in the same direction as the emigrants. The remainder of the morning will be spent at the Interpretive Center where exhibits and programs are available. Short hikes on the trail may also be taken in the vicinity of the Center. Lunch will be provided at a park in Baker City.

On the return trip, the location of the trail will be described as it traverses the Powder River and Grand Ronde Valleys. A stop will be made at the base of Ladd Hill where the steep descent into the Grande Ronde Valley can be observed. A short detour will be made through LaGrande to view the ascent into the Blues and one of Ezra Meeker's markers. Time permitting, there will be a short stop at Hilgard Park, an important emigrant camp site.

### Tour X: Out of the Blues, The Blue Mountain Descent

This tour will provide the unique experience of descending the Blues along the emigrant route. This walking route is not open to the public. Special permission has been obtained from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla and landowners in order to offer this special walking tour.

The tour will begin with a short visit to the Blue Mountain Crossing Park. The park offers both short and long walking loops with interpretive panels describing the site. Trail evidence is extensive. From the Blue Mountain Park we will travel via I-84 and

Highway 30 to the Squaw Canyon Overlook. From the Squaw Canyon Overlook we will follow Highway 30 to Deadman Pass where lunch will be served prior to beginning the walk down the Blues.

The walk down the Blues is approximately five miles. The descent is relatively gradual (a drop of about 2,000 feet in five miles), but it is through uneven grazing land and over rough ranch roads. The walk should be acceptable by persons in "good" physical condition. Walkers will re-board buses at the base of the hill and return to Pendleton via roads roughly paralleling the trail.

#### Tour Y: Boardman Range-Well Spring

Of the two walking (or hiking) tours, this is the more challenging, especially if the typical summer weather prevails. The buses will follow the trail to Echo for a brief stop at Fort Henrietta. The trail is followed westward to Echo Meadows, Butter Creek and the western entrance of the Oregon Trail to the Boardman Bombing Range. From there an eight mile westward walk will bring hikers to Upper Well Spring via the newly identified Lower Well Spring (Tub Spring). At Upper Well Spring, hikers will board buses for the return to Pendleton.

The Boardman walk is across dry sage-covered rolling terrain. The terrain is relatively flat, with short up and down hill segments. This hike permits one to fully experience the difficulties the emigrants encountered when crossing the eastern Oregon plateau. Prior to cultivation of the eastern Oregon plateau area, much of the trail was similar to that found now only in this segment.

Participants must be prepared for this hike. Water and shade are not available. Personal water supplies, broad brim hats and sun protection are required. Temperatures can exceed 100 degrees F in August. Access for emergency purposes is very limited. Members with medical problems should not take this tour. Hikers should be in "excellent" condition and have experience with the conditions to be encountered on this tour.

## 2. Guide and Coach Assignments

### 2.1. Tour for Tuesday, August 11

#### Tour B - Whitman Mission, 8:00 am

Bus Whitman: Jack and Pat Fletcher

### 2.2. Tours for Friday, August 14

#### Tour A - Oregon Trail (Blue Mountains to Well Spring), 7:45 am

Bus Ogden: Jack and Helen Holmes (Lead)  
Bus Jason Lee: Shirlee Evans and Nadine Long  
Bus Dorion: Susan Badger Doyle and Mary Cross

#### Tour B - Whitman Mission, 8:00 am

Bus Spalding: Jack and Pat Fletcher (Lead)  
Bus Whitman: Lethene Parks and Ella Mae Young

#### Tour C - Flagstaff Hill (Baker City-Pendleton), 8:00 am

Bus Stuart: Gene and Betty Comfort

#### Tour X - Out of the Blues, 8:30 am

Bus Fremont: Wendell and Lynn Baskins (Lead)  
Bus Smith: Roy Schapler and Wayne Burck  
John Bristow

#### Tour Y - Boardman/Well Spring, 7:30 am

Bus McKay: Vic Bolon, Keith May  
Jim Tompkins, Tom Laidlaw

### 2.3. Tours for Saturday, August 15

#### Tour A - Oregon Trail (Blue Mountains to Well Spring), 7:45 am

Bus Ogden: Jack and Helen Holmes (Lead)  
Bus Jason Lee: Shirlee Evans and Nadine Long

#### Tour B - Whitman Mission, 8:00 am

Bus Spalding: Jack and Pat Fletcher (Lead)  
Bus Whitman: Lethene Parks and Ella Mae Young

#### Tour C - Flagstaff Hill (Baker City-Pendleton), 8:00 am

Bus Stuart Gene and Betty Comfort

#### Tour X - Out of the Blues, 8:30 am

Bus Fremont: Wendell and Lynn Baskins (Lead)  
Bus Smith: Roy Schapler and Wayne Burck  
John Bristow

#### Tour Y - Boardman/Well Spring, 7:30 am

Bus McKay: Vic Bolon and Keith May  
Jim Tompkins

Alternates: Dick Pingrey, Glenn Harrison

### 2.4. Bus Identification

Each bus carries the name of a prominent leader, explorer or emigrant. Signs will be posted on each bus to assist passengers in locating their bus at each stop.

### 3. General Instructions

#### 3.1. Duties

Each coach will have a three-member team: the driver and two OCTA tour leaders. One OCTA tour leader is responsible for delivering the tour narrative. The second OCTA member is to coordinate navigation with the driver and assist passengers as required. The OCTA tour leaders are responsible for food service at breaks and lunch. Hiking tours have additional staff to guide the bus to the pick-up point and provide field support.

#### 3.2. Coordination

Any problems or concerns should be reported to Dave Welch if they can not be resolved by the tour team. Each tour has an identified lead who is responsible for completion of the tour in a safe and timely manner. Communications will be available through CB radios, bus communications and cellular telephones. Emergency numbers are:

Umatilla County (Pendleton)	911
Boardman (City Police)	(541) 481-6071
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla	911
DoubleTree Hotel (Pendleton)	(541) 276-6111
Dave Welch (Personal cell phone)	(253) 209-0111

If contact is made on 911, you must give your exact location since there are four different 911 centers in the county.

Each morning Lowell Tiller has arranged for delivery of food and drinks to each coach at the loading point across from the DoubleTree Hotel.

#### 3.3. Safety

Professional emergency personnel should be called immediately to deal with a serious accident. The first concern is the welfare of the accident victim or victims; the second priority is to insure that we have done everything possible while limiting OCTA's liability. Do not move an injured person if there is a concern for broken bones or other internal injuries. If there is a question concerning the seriousness of the situation, seek assistance. Cellular phones and points of contact are provided.

### 3.4. Bus procedures and courtesy

The first two seats on the right hand or left hand side of the bus are reserved for the tour guides. The choice is dictated by the availability of a microphone. The right hand side is better for viewing, but the microphone may not reach that position. Make your choice before passengers begin boarding.

Tickets will be collected upon initial boarding. A list of passengers will be provided so that you can check them off as they board. Passenger counts should be made at each loading/unloading stop.

Past experience has shown that the unloading of buses is facilitated by alternating right and left sides as a group. Please be aware of any passengers with special needs for exiting or boarding the bus. Passengers usually remain in the same seats for the entire trip.

### 3.5. Disabled persons

OCTA's disability policy and guidance is:

**Policy.** It is the policy of the Oregon-California Trails Association to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act provisions which affect this organization. The Board of Directors asks that any questions or concern relating to accommodation matters or other issues under the Act be brought to its attention.

**Background information - general EEOC guidance concerning reasonable accommodation.** The EEOC looks at reasonable accommodations as a flexible, interactive process that involves both the individual and the entity (OCTA). It suggests that when an individual with a disability has requested a reasonable accommodation that the following steps occur:

1. A careful analysis of the activity and its purpose.
2. Consultation with the individual about any of his/her perceived limitations imposed by the disability and how these limitations could be overcome with reasonable accommodations.
3. "In consultation with the individual to be accommodated," the potential accommodations should be identified and their effectiveness assessed in providing the individual with the

opportunity to participate as fully as others.

4. Consider the preference of the individual to be accommodated and select and implement the accommodation that is most appropriate for both the individual and the entity (OCTA).

Adopted by board March 1997

OCTA's policy is to provide whatever services are required to assist those with special needs. If possible, seating near the front of the bus should be arranged for those who have difficulty navigating the bus aisle.

### **3.6. Maintaining the schedule**

It is absolutely necessary to maintain the schedule as presented on the first page of the section on each tour. Extra stops should not be made although a slow "drive-by" for viewing signs or markers is encouraged. The minimum time for everyone to get on and off the bus is about 20 minutes.

### **3.7. Entrance fees**

All entrance fees are included in the tour price. Tour guides should be prepared to pay entrance fees. Funds may be obtained from Lowell Tiller. Fees are:

Whitman Mission: Admission is \$2 per adult except Golden Age and Golden Eagle passes are free.

Blue Mountain Crossing: Free for bus tours.

Flagstaff Hill: \$3.50 per passenger. Golden Age/Golden Eagle passes are free. Museum in Baker City is \$2 per person.

### **3.8. Presentation techniques/suggestions**

The material that follows is not intended as a script. It is hoped that the material will provide specific details needed for the tour description; however, your presentation should be informal and incorporate your own knowledge and experiences. A version of this guidebook will be available for purchase at the convention and a map handout will be provided.

#### 4. Background Information

This section provides background information that may be useful in your presentation.

##### 4.1. Synopsis of Principal Travelers through Northeast Oregon

###### 1811 Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Astorian Party

On a mission to establish a northwest fur trade enterprise for John Jacob Astor, Hunt followed the Snake River to the Weiser/Payette area (north/east of Ontario). Part of the party made an unsuccessful attempt to follow the Snake River; they were turned back by Hells Canyon and retraced their route to Farewell Bend. Hunt learned of the route through Burnt River Canyon and over the Blue Mountains from Indians. He traveled up Burnt River, into the Powder and Grande Ronde valleys, thence over the Blues to Umatilla River valley.

###### 1812 Robert Stuart, Astorian

Returning east from Astoria (to which Stuart had traveled by sea), Stuart crossed the Blue Mountains, encountering the Grande Ronde at its upper reaches. He descended the river near Five Points Creek, then followed the river to the valley. Stuart passed Hot Lake and followed Pyles Canyon into the Powder Valley and then Burnt River to the Snake. Later in his eastward journey he discovered South Pass, the missing link in the Oregon Trail. His discovery was forgotten until Jedidiah Smith re-discovered the pass.

###### 1824-26 Peter Skene Ogden

The Hudson's Bay Company dispatched Ogden to trap Oregon east of the Cascades. He trapped throughout the Powder, Burnt River, Malheur River and Owyhee River country. Ogden kept excellent journals of his trips through these areas, providing information about the Indian people, the wildlife, and the geography.

###### 1832-34 Nathaniel Wyeth

Attempting to establish an American fur trade in the region in a manner similar to that tried by Astor, Wyeth made two expeditions into northeast Oregon. In 1832, Wyeth ascended the Burnt River and followed its canyon west from Durkee Valley. In 1834, accompanied by the missionaries Jason and Daniel Lee and naturalist John Townsend, Wyeth established Fort Hall on the Snake River in Idaho. That same year, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) built Fort Boise on the Snake to oppose Wyeth. The HBC succeeded and Wyeth sold Fort Hall to the HBC and returned east in 1836. As Wyeth and Townsend crossed the Burnt River to the Powder River, they lost the main

trail's track and wound up in the Powder River canyon before they found their way out at North Powder and crossed into Grande Ronde. There they met Captain Bonneville.

#### 1834 Captain Benjamin Bonneville

Looking for adventure and fur trade opportunities, Bonneville went west in 1832. He traveled down the Snake River to the mouth of the Powder River in January, 1834. From there he ascended a hill to arrive in Pine Valley (which Bonneville thought was the Grande Ronde). Not finding an easy route north from here, Bonneville returned to the Snake and attempted its descent. Finding the canyon impassable, he turned into the mountains. In the dead of winter, the horses slid down icy slopes and climbed over the Wallows to the Imnaha River valley. Meeting the Nez Perce Indians, Bonneville descended to Joseph Creek canyon and the Snake River. Bonneville proceeded to the Columbia at Fort Walla Walla, where the HBC would not sell him supplies. He returned to the Imnaha River, crossed the mountains again to the Snake. After returning to the Bear River rendezvous, Bonneville again traveled west, this time actually reaching the Grande Ronde Valley in August, 1834. Again refused supplies by the HBC, Bonneville went down the Columbia, up the John Day, and returned again to the Snake in October, 1834. Bonneville returned to the east in August 1835.

#### 1836 Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Henry and Eliza Spalding, W. H. Gray

This missionary group traveled with a fur brigade from the Missouri River west. They took two wagons, one abandoned on the Platte River and the second turned into a two wheel cart at Fort Hall and finally abandoned at Fort Boise. They went by horseback from Fort Boise to the Columbia River and then down to Fort Vancouver. The Whitmans returned to establish a mission up the Walla Walla River. By 1839 Whitmans were growing hundreds of bushels of corn, potatoes and other vegetables, as well as wheat, at the Mission. The mission was attacked by Cayuse Indians in November of 1847, and the Whitmans (and others) were killed.

#### 1843 Captain John C. Fremont

The first scientific descriptions and accurate mapping of northeast Oregon (and the Oregon Trail) were performed by Captain Fremont of the Army Topographical Engineers. His exploring expedition traveled two weeks behind the first emigrant wagon train of 1843. Details of temperature, soils composition, geology and topography, vegetation, travel routes and the Indian people are provided in his journal. The journal was edited by his wife, Jesse Benton Fremont, and published with maps in 1845. Fremont followed the main Oregon Trail route from Fort Boise to the Grande Ronde valley, but crossed the Blue Mountains on a different trail. He went to the north end of the Grande Ronde valley (to Elgin and northwest over the mountains to Tollgate and Milton Freewater). From there he crossed the Blues (to the Whitman Mission), 40 miles

north of where the emigrant Oregon Trail enters the Blues from the Grande Ronde.

#### **4.2. Eastern Oregon Environment**

The following is specific to the Well Spring area, but provides a synopsis of the geology and floods that shaped much of eastern Oregon and Washington. The material was extracted from the U. S. Navy study of Well Spring [8], Greg Green, principal author.

The Well Springs area is in the Umatilla Basin approximately 13 miles south of the Columbia River. The area is part of the Columbia Plateau, which was formed by massive basalt flows that were later covered by Columbia River flood deposits and aeolian loess.

One of the main features is Juniper Canyon, which drains north to the Columbia River. Well Spring Canyon is also a north-draining erosional feature. The contemporary environment is semi-arid with a shrub-steppe vegetation mosaic. Contemporary land forms in the region were shaped by a series of catastrophic floods from glacial Lake Missoula in western Montana at the end of the Pleistocene. Multiple floods swept across the Columbia Plateau as ice dams in the eastern portion of the Columbia River drainage melted between 18,000 and 11,250 years ago.

Flood water levels during the largest floods reached elevations above 1,100 feet as the fast-moving flood waters scoured areas in and adjacent to the main Columbia River drainage channel. Present day stream canyons such as Juniper Canyon and Well Spring Canyon were eroded during initial flood stages when water rushed through the area. Gravel and cobbles were deposited in bars on the east sides of canyons when the water flowed from east to west and overtopped the divides between canyons as the entire upland surface south of the Columbia River was submerged during the largest floods.

During later flood stages, water was impounded behind the narrow Columbia River drainage channel near The Dalles, forming Lake Condon between The Dalles and the Wallula Gap. Juniper Canyon and Well Spring Canyon were flooded by Lake Condon and sand, silt, and clay were deposited in the ponded water. There is a wide distribution of silt deposits in the region and winds formed sand dunes from unconsolidated sand deposits in the Boardman vicinity. Pleistocene vertebrate fossils are present in blowouts at elevations near 600 feet in the Boardman vicinity.

The flood lakes may have receded soon after initial flooding, perhaps in a matter of weeks, although some areas had lakes that were maintained for hundreds of years. During the end of the Pleistocene, the ice dams thinned, the elevation of glacial Lake Missoula lowered, and floods were progressively smaller. It is thought that the last flood occurred about 11,250 years ago.

## 5. Tour A: Oregon Trail, Blue Mountain Crossing-Well Spring

### 5.1. Tour Highlights

- Blue Mountain Crossing Park
- Mt. Emily Road
- Squaw Creek Overlook
- Descent of the Oregon Trail from the Blues
- Pendleton and the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla River
- Trail through the wheat fields from Pendleton
- Echo/Fort Henrietta/Lower Crossing of the Umatilla River
- Echo Meadows
- Butter Creek/Madison Farms
- Well Spring
- Oregon Trail crossing near Boardman
- Cayuse War Battlefield

### 5.2. Schedule

Depart DoubleTree Hotel; I-84 to Blue Mountain Park	7:45 am
Arrive lower Blue Mountain Crossing Park (coffee and restrooms)	8:30 am
Move to upper park area	9:00 am
Depart	9:30 am
Arrive Mt. Emily Road (quick stop)	9:45 am
Depart	10:00 am
Arrive Squaw Creek Overlook	10:20 am
Depart Squaw Creek Overlook	10:40 am
Arrive at base of descent from Blue Mountains	11:10 am
Depart	12:00 am
Arrive at Raley Park (Pendleton) for box lunch	12:20 pm
Depart	1:00 pm
Arrive Echo/Fort Henrietta Park	1:30 pm
Depart	2:00 pm
Arrive Butter Creek/Madison Farms	2:20 pm
Depart	2:40 pm
Arrive Well Spring	3:15 pm
Depart	4:00 pm
Return to Pendleton via I-84	5:00 pm

### 5.3. Tour Description (Tour A)

Figure 5-1 shows the route and scope of Tour A. The tour begins by backtracking on the trail via I-84 to the Blue Mountain Crossing Park. This was the western terminus of the 1993 Baker City convention tours.

#### Blue Mountain Crossing Park (Figure 5-2)

Directions: Leave I-84 at Exit 248, Spring Creek Road. Turn left at the bottom of the exit ramp and proceed under I-84. Road bends left going to Kamela. Follow the road back under I-84; proceed 0.6 miles to right turn on park entrance road. Proceed to lower area of the park for a coffee break and restrooms. Participants may walk or re-board the buses for the short trip to the main park area. Note that the bus's route from I-84 wanders back and forth under I-84. In this area the Oregon Trail remains on the north side of I-84. It is about 1.0 miles distant from Exit 248.

The Blue Mountain Crossing Park was opened in 1993, just in time for OCTA's Baker City convention. Today, budgets are threatening its continued operation. The park offers both short and long walking loops with interpretive panels. Both emigrant and later stage roads pass through the park.

The park is a good place to reflect upon the crossing of the Blues. Journal entries on the experience begin in 1834 with Jason Lee and continue throughout the emigrant period. The entries often reflect a conflict between the beauty of the forests and mountains and the difficulty of the trip.

John Tully Kerns wrote on September 3-4, 1852 of the departure from the Grand Ronde:

*Friday, September 3—Leaving the Grand Ronde valley, we ascended a very high mountain and traveled eight miles over a stony road, and then descended another steep, long hill to the Grand Ronde river where we nooned [Hilgard]. After dinner we ascended another high hill or mountain and traveled two miles and came to a good spring, where we camped for the night. This day's travel has been in the Blue mountains, and so far they have given us a rough passage.*

William T. Newby's 1843 diary describes the mountain traverse and the descent to the Umatilla:

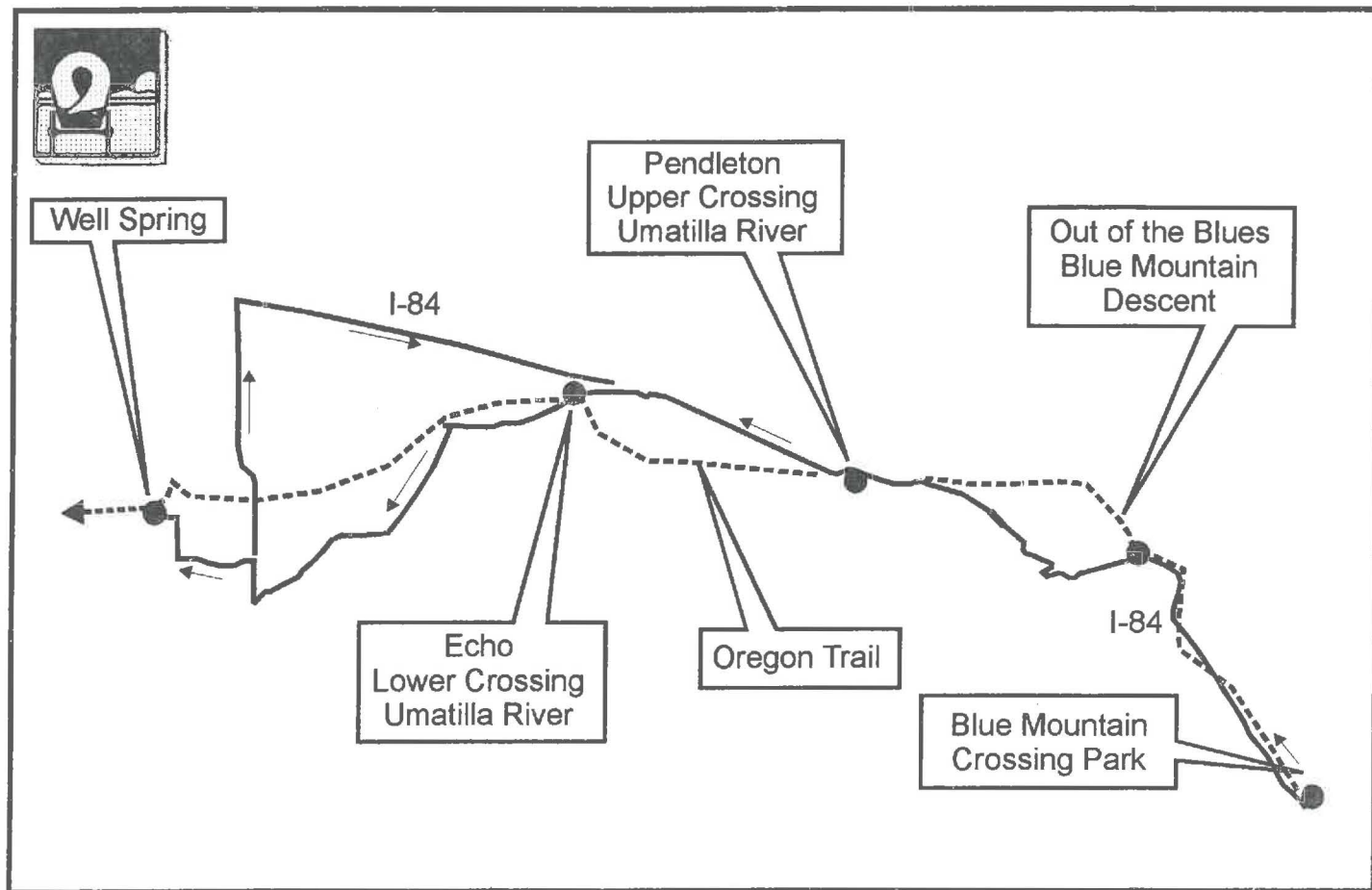


Figure 5-1. Tour A. Blue Mountain Crossing Park to Well Spring



*(October 4) We continued over the mountain, passing through heavy timber. The timber is so thick in many places that you could not see a man 10 steps. I believe that there is pine trees 200 feet high & not more than 2 foot through. We had a very bad road. We in camped on the mountain with out water. There was snow to day & at nite the ground froze & there was a frost cool enough. Distance 7 [miles].*

*(October 5) We continued over the mountain], bad road, timber thick, & in camped at a smawl branch. Grazing good. The difficulty is in finding cattle, the timber is so thick. Distance 9 [miles].*

*(October 6) We continued over, having 1 bad hill, then a good road, & in camped with out water. Grazing good. Distance 12 [miles]*

*(October 7) We got down the mountain in 4 miles. Good in campment at the foot of the hill. We fownt mild pleasant wether when we got down the mountain. Good in campment in 3 miles. Then we continued on & in camped at a smawl dry branch. Grazing good, watter indifferent. [Distance] 15 [miles]*

Definition: The Oregon Trail proceeds in a northwesterly direction as it traverses the Blue Mountains. For the purposes of discussion the trail's position relative to I-84 will be referred to as being either "north" of I-84 or "south" of I-84 when it is above or below I-84.

Other features: The main line of the Union Pacific Railroad between Portland and Salt Lake City crosses the Blues in this area. Note that will we see the tracks of the UP often as we follow the trail, a testimony to the general validity of the route although the railroad follows a very different grade.

Flora: Ponderosa, lodge pole, white pine and firs. Fauna: Elk, deer, cougar, bear, grouse and other small game.

#### Mt. Emily Exit (Figure 5-2)

Directions: Return to I-84 and proceed westbound in the direction of Pendleton. Exit at Exit 243 (Mt. Emily) and proceed into the parking area. If time permits, a quick stop can be made; otherwise remain on the bus, but point out the trail and the monument.

At this point the Oregon Trail passes through the parking lot. In 1995 a trail marker was placed in honor of Northwest OCTA charter member M. "Burch" Burchfield. Note double ruts on both sides of the Mt. Emily Road. The Mt. Emily Road leads to the "Whitman Overlook" about 11 miles (22 min travel time). It is a good, un-paved road with a spectacular view of Meacham Creek Canyon. The Whitman route, which is generally thought to be about 10 miles north of the emigrant route, is marked and there are some interpretive panels. We will not visit the site due to time limitations.

#### Meacham and Lee's Encampment (Figure 5-2)

Directions: Return to I-84 and proceed toward Pendleton. Use Exit 238; turn right into Meacham. Follow highway through Meacham and on the Emigrant Springs.

The Oregon Trail remains close to I-84 from Mt. Emily "westward." It crosses I-84 about 1.5 miles west, around Mile Post (MP) 242 and 243. The trail re-crosses about 1 mile later (see maps) and remains on the north side of I-84 to Meacham. A sign in Meacham claims that it was originally known as "Lee's Encampment" after Maj A. G. Lee of the Oregon Mounted Rifleman. Most agree that "Lees Encampment" refers to Jason Lee, an 1834 missionary emigrant, and applies to Emigrant Springs (see later discussion).

Aubrey Haines notes that "evidence remains of a cemetery southwest of town and adjacent to the Oregon Trail route (which did not pass through Meacham, although the town site may have served as a camping place). Only one grave, dated June 16, 1895, can now be definitely identified... If the cemetery contained Oregon Trail burials, the knowledge seems to have been lost."

Just before entering Meacham the trail bends southwest and crosses I-84 near the overpass. It stays on the south side of I-84 until beyond Emigrant Springs.

Note that the railroad diverges at this point. It loops east and south before turning north along Meacham Creek which it follows out of the Blues to the Umatilla River. This "engineered" route was not practical for the emigrants due to the narrowness of the canyons and their steep walls. Conversely, the emigrant trail goes up and down hills that are impractical for railroads.

Near the entrance to Meacham there is a marker "In honor of those who died blazing the old Oregon Trail" placed by the Meacham Women's Community Club. A grave is nearby, but its relationship to the Oregon Trail is debatable.

Emigrant Springs (Figure 5-3)

Follow the old highway to the south side of I-84. According to Franzwa the trail is about one mile southwest of the exit ramp. Franzwa's map says ruts are apparent. We will rejoin the trail as we leave this area.

## Haines on the Emigrant Springs:

"These springs are at the head of Squaw Creek and are believed to have been discovered by the Oregon-bound missionary, Jason Lee. They were a source of water for emigrants. Highway and pipeline construction have destroyed most of the original spring area, but one small source does remain in the state park."

## Haines quotes a 1925 House Committee on Roads document:

"At Emigrant Springs, three miles from Meacham, at a historic spot long known as Lee's Encampment, because of the fact that Jason Lee, the first missionary to come to the Oregon country, had made camp there in 1834, and where thousands of home seekers camped in later years."

On the other hand, Haines notes that the basis for designating these springs "Lee's Encampment" is not apparent in the diary of Jason Lee. The crossing of the Blue Mountains is described, but without mention of any such camping place upon the summit.

The emigrant's trip from the vicinity of Hilgard Park to Emigrant Springs is described by Basil Longworth [1853]:

*[September] 5th. We crossed the river and ascended a long but not difficult hill. We traveled through a heavy forest of pine timber and many beautiful sites for splendid rural dwellings and rich farms. This day we traveled ten miles, much of the road being very rough with many short turns in order to avoid timber, and camped by the road side with a little water far down to our left in a deep hollow.*

*[September] 6th. We drove ten miles to Lee's encampment. This day the road was very stony and rough but not mountainous and in many places the ground was poor. For the last seven days' travel most of the land has a rich soil and in one day will be a densely populated community. I have not seen as much good timber since I left Ohio as I saw last week.*

On the opposite side of the highway from the park there is an Oregon Trail Monument dedicated by President Warren G. Harding on July 3, 1923. It reads:

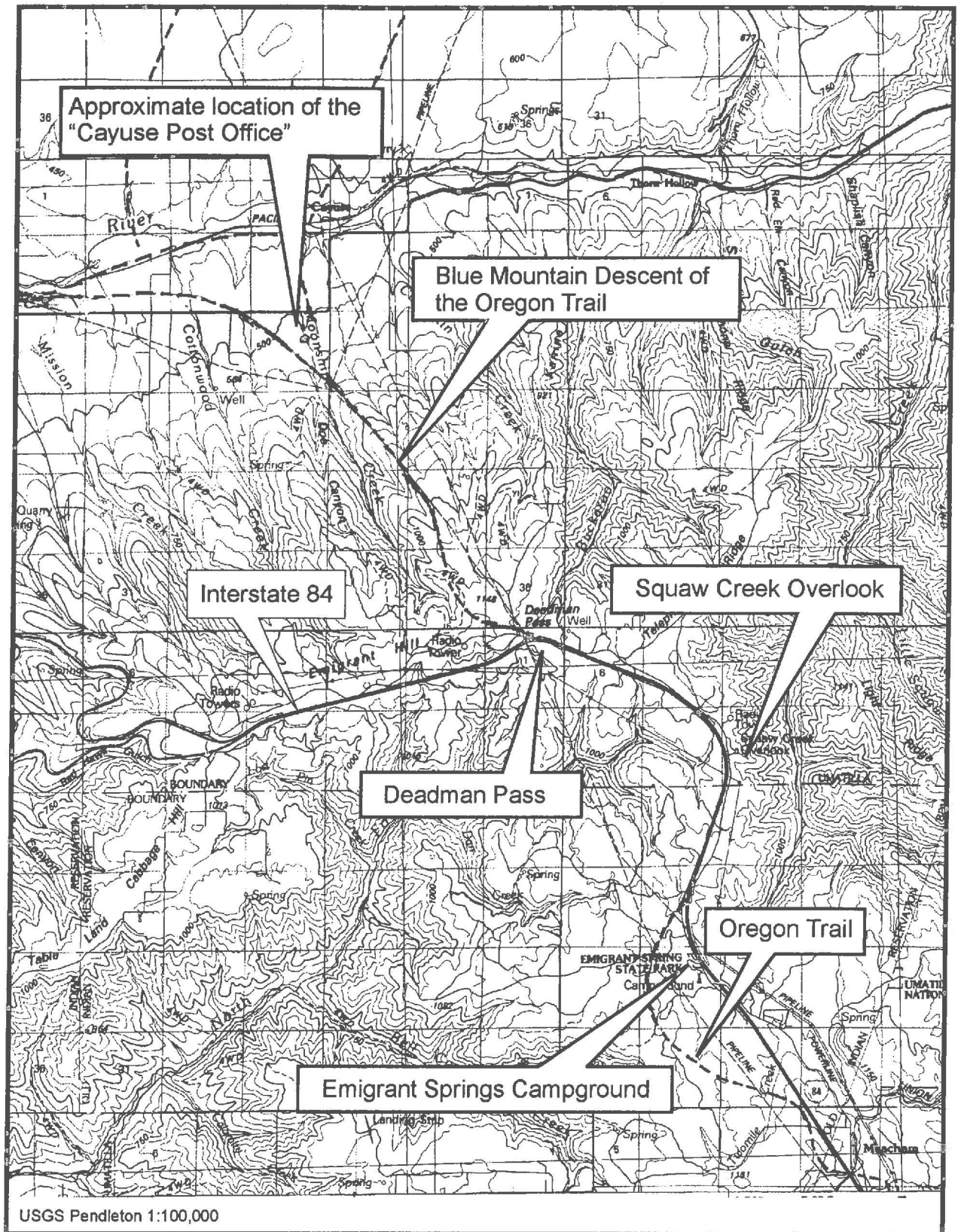


Figure 5-3. Emigrant Springs-Squaw Creek-Deadman Pass

"Dedicated to the Memory of the Intrepid Pioneers Who Came with the First Wagon Train in 1843 Over the Old Oregon Trail and Saved the Oregon Country to the United States. Erected by the Oregon Trail Association July 4, 1923.  
Dedicated by Warren G. Harding, President of the United States, July 3, 1923.

The Oregon Trail Association placed a second marker at that site the next day. Harding died August 2, 1923 in San Francisco. There is also a Meeker Marker about 50 yds east of the entrance to the campground. This marker was placed April 5, 1906.

#### Squaw Creek Overlook Figure 5-3)

Directions: From Emigrant Springs continue west on old Highway 30. Shortly after the overpass turn right onto the continuation of Highway 30 (do not get onto I-84). The turn-off to the Squaw Creek Overlook is about 2 miles from the I-84 overpass. A sign marks the turn. Turn right onto the gravel road and proceed to the parking area.

As we turn into the Squaw Creek Overlook, we are leaving the main Oregon Trail. However, the overlook gives a wonderful perspective of the Blue Mountains and how and why the emigrants crossed where they did. As you stand at the overlook you are about five miles east of the main descent of the trail to the Umatilla Valley. The descent is not visible from this location; it is around the corner to the left as you look down Squaw Creek. The view down the creek is almost due north.

When looking down the creek, Telephone Ridge is on the left and Gibbon Ridge is on the right. Looking back into the mountains along Gibbon Ridge leads you to Horseshoe Ridge. The route from Horseshoe Ridge to Gibbon Ridge and then down into Squaw Creek is the "generally accepted" route for the Whitmans in 1836.

Note the long, relatively clear ridge lines that facilitated travel for both the Whitmans and trail emigrants. The long, level ridges are the reason it was worthwhile to climb steep hills like those seen at LaGrande.

Deadman Pass (Figure 5-3)

Return to Old Hwy 30. Turn right onto the highway and proceed to Deadman Pass on the north side of I-84. The trail passes through the park area and descent begins about two miles to the northwest.

The pass, between Buckaroo and Deadman Pass Creeks, connects Telephone Ridge and Emigrant Hill. According to Haines, three separate instances of violent death, involving a total of seven men, occurred here. The specific incident leading to the naming is unknown. In any case, Deadman Pass had no name in Oregon Trail days.

One story about the naming says the colorful appellation developed out of common usage following the Bannock War of 1878. Haines quotes Larry Smitton's August 1972 manuscript for the Oregon State Parks Division that describes one of the events:

"During the Bannock War, a small raiding party of Indians gave themselves up and were placed in custody of the Umatilla Indian Agency... A small detachment of cavalry was stationed here at the time. The Bannocks became restive and decided to return to their homes in Idaho. They mounted horses and whooping it up started pell mell for home. Two men with an empty freight wagon and a four-horse team were approaching the pass from the east when they heard the Indians coming in their direction. One of the teamsters quickly cut a horse out of harness, rode bareback down into the timber and hid. The other teamster tried to unharness the remaining three horses to save them, but the Indians arrived and killed him, then resumed their headlong journey eastward.

When the escaping Indians took leave from the agency, the captain in charge of the cavalry troop hastily issued orders for the men to pursue the fleeing Indians, bring them back but not to kill them. The cavalry left . . . but the captain was not with them. He was big and fat and did not relish the thought of a lot of saddle sores. He quickly prevailed upon a local resident to hitch up his buckboard and accompanied also by a 14-year-old boy, started after the cavalry. When they arrived at Deadmans Pass, there was the empty wagon minus the team, the dead teamster lying in the road. They dragged the dead man off to the side and dug a shallow hole, for a temporary grave, then resumed their journey eastward. The Indians were captured and returned to the agency. Three days later the dead teamster was exhumed and reinterred in the newly laid out cemetery in Pendleton."

In 1855 the Walla Walla Treaty Council reserved much of the land across the Blue Mountains and into the Umatilla Valley as the reservation of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla. Subsequent allotment of land to individual Indians under the Dawes Act (1887) resulted in a checkerboard of tribal, individual and non-Indian lands that continues to today.

Descent from the Blue Mountains: "Out of the Blues" (Figure 5-4)

Directions: Turn right on to old Highway 30 when leaving the parking area. Follow the old highway through Deadman Pass Park then down the hill. The road progresses in a westerly direction while the emigrant trail descends in a northwesterly direction. Our separation will grow to about five miles at the base. A pull-out is available at the first switch back for a view of the farm lands and mountains if the day is clear and time permits.

The descent was one of the dramatic highlights of the emigrant's journey. It is reflected in most journals although details of the actual trip down are universally lacking. Oregon historian Stephen Dow Beckham noted:

"The passage over the Blue Mountains brought emigrants within sight of their goal as the Cascades rose on the western horizon. Many commented on seeing the mountains and they looked forward to the prospects of feed and water along the Umatilla. However, in the 1840's and 1850's the emigrants failed to see the potential of the land that lay at their feet. It was not until the 1860's that this region was developed into the great wheat belt of the Pacific Northwest."

In her journal, Narcissa Whitman wrote of her crossing and descent of the Blues:

*"Our ride this afternoon exceeded everything we have had yet, & what rendered it the most aggravating the path all the way was very stony resembling a newly McAdamized road. Our horses feet were very tender, all unshod, so that we could not make that progress we wished. The mountains in many places was covered with this black broken basalts. We were late in making camp tonight After ascending the mountain immediately after dinner, we kept upon the main divide until sunset, looking in vain for water and a camping place. While upon this elevation, we had a view of the valley of the Columbia river. It was beautiful. Just as we gained the highest elevation & began to descend the sun was dipping his disk behind the western horizon. Beyond the valley we could see two distant Mountains. Mount Hood & Mount St. Helens. These lofty peaks were of a conical form & separate from each other by a considerable distance. Behind the former the Sun was hiding part of his rays which gave us a more distinct view of this gigantic cone. The beauty of this extensive valley contrasted well with the rolling mountains behind us, & at this hour of twilight, was enchanting & quite diverting my mind from the fatigue under which I was labouring. We had vet to descend a hill as long but not as steep or stony as the others. By this [time] our horses were in haste to see camp as well as ourselves, & mine made such lengthy strides in descending that it shook my sides surprisingly. It was dark when we got into camp but the tent was ready for me, & tea also, for Mr. McLeod invited us to sup*

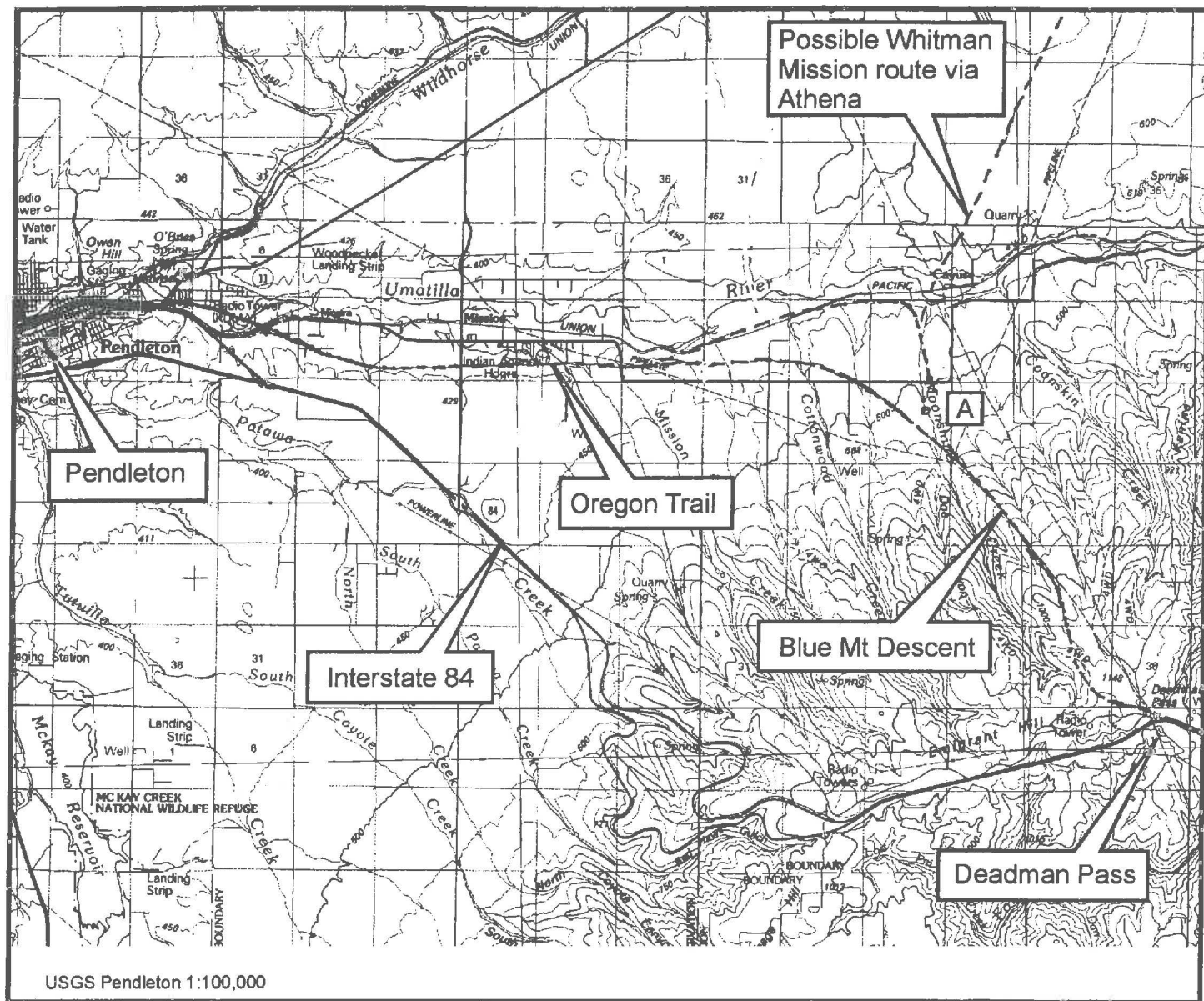


Figure 5-4. Blue Mountain Descent and Related Trails

*with him. We are now on the west side of the Blue Mountains, crossed them in a day & half."*

Narcissa (and others) probably saw Mt. Adams rather than Mt. St. Helens since the line-of-sight precludes seeing Mt. St. Helens without seeing the closer and taller Mt. Adams. The Whitmans probably descended the Blues on Gibbon Ridge on the other side of Squaw Creek, but the view west is nearly identical. The exact route of the Whitmans in 1836 has not been conclusively determined and remains controversial.

There is some confusion when identifying the name of the hill used by the Oregon Trail descent. It is often referred to as "Emigrant Hill" and sometimes "Cabbage Hill," but the correct description is Kanine Ridge and Poker Jim Hill. Both split off from Emigrant Hill at the crest. Cabbage Hill is to the south of the current highway and may have been used by later routes, but it was not the route of the early emigrant trail.

Note the character of the descent. There are long, slowly descending fingers of basalt. The country is open. The descent was direct and not too difficult. Diaries talk about being on top and their arrival at the bottom, not the trip down.

The geology is Columbia River basalts overlaid with the soils of Eastern Washington from the Lake Missoula floods. See "General Information" for more about the geology. The view to the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and Washington is about 150 miles.

Continue down the hill past St. Andrews Mission. St. Andrew's Mission was found in Mission in 1847 and is the oldest Catholic mission in Eastern Oregon. The mission was moved to its present site in 1884, but it no longer functions as a mission.

#### Blue Mountains Descent (Figure 5-4)

Directions: Turn right on Cayuse Road. The trail is on the left at this point but we are going in the opposite direction. We will talk about it when we come back this way after viewing the down spout. Unload buses at the turn of Burke Road (Point A in Figure 5-4). Walk up the road a short distance but set a time limit of 20 minutes.

Power lines and scars from the pipeline show the approximate location of the trail. The trail crosses Cayuse Road about 0.1 miles west of this intersection according to Franzwa. The farm road in the field is the approximate trail location, although there were probably many routes through this area.

The Cayuse Post Office was a trading post located on Moonshine Creek at a fork of the Oregon Trail where the right branch went northwest to the Whitman Mission and the other turned left down the Umatilla River. The post was avoided during the Cayuse

War (1848-1850) by staying higher on the ridge rather than descending to the river. Foundation logs were found about 1952.

The Indians the emigrants encountered as they came down off the Blue Mountains were the Cayuse tribe. The emigrants had varying opinions of these Indians, but many mention the large herds of horses belonging to the Indians. Many also mention that the Indians cultivated fields and grew potatoes, corn, pumpkins and squash, etc., and that they were anxious to trade with the emigrants, principally for items of clothing. From the emigrant diaries:

*"the Indians in this country were the Kiuse, who had many horses and some cattle, and the grass was scarce. The Indians were friendly and even sociable and brought late vegetables from their gardens to trade for clothes and trinkets, scraps of iron and probably ammunition. There were pumpkins and potatoes; the latter I call to mind with feelings of special gratitude. They had no price on anything, but would take all they could get, and one Indian wanted much more. he had a yellow pumpkin not larger than a man's head, which first one and then another made a bid for, until the Indian's head was completely turned as to the value of his vegetable. After refusing a new suit of clothes worth twenty-five dollars, he went away with the pumpkin under his arm." [Jesse Applegate (1843), "A Day With the Cow Column"]*

*"Nearly three hundred head of horses, best kind of stock are grazing here. I never saw such a lot of horses. They are owned by the Indians and I suppose there are thousands of them. These Indians are getting cattle in abundance, of the finest kind of stock and will soon be rich. They have small lots of land fenced and raise corn, potatoes, pumpkins, etc., on a small scale. They live in small wigwams, or lodges as they call them, but have no houses except a meeting house or 'missionary house,' as they call it..." [Rev. Edward Evens Parrish (1844)]*

*"This is a very fertile country, and the Indians raise a quantity of corn, wheat, peas, and the finest potatoes you have ever seen. They have thousands of horses, which are always very fat..." [The Shivery Guide (1846)]*

By 1847 the Indians could see clearly that they were witnessing a full-scale invasion of the whites. Their resentment rapidly increased and was reflected in the journals of several emigrants who recognized unmistakable signs of hostility:

*"31st [September] Sabbath. We remained in camp, and paid a visit to an Indian, who had a letter written by H. H. Spalding, advising the emigrants to travel in large companies the rest of the journey, because the Indians were dangerous..."*

*Oct 1 At this camp the Indians were very impudent. They had however large bands of horses which were very fat. Also great numbers of cattle which were in very fine order indeed. I saw here the fattest cattle I ever saw. [James O. Raynor (1847)]*

In 1847 the emigrants brought with them black measles and dysentery, "a sore trial to the emigrants," says Evans in Powerful Rockey, "but not necessarily fatal." To the Indians, who contracted it immediately, it was devastating. Within a few weeks the Cayuse tribe had been reduced from about 400 persons to less than half that number. "Whitman tried to help them," says Evans, "but there was little he could do." His failure may have contributed to his death due to the Indian custom of holding the "doctor" accountable for the patients demise.

#### Blue Mountain Descent to Pendleton (Figure 5-4)

Directions: Re-board buses and return to Pendleton via Cayuse Road. The main Oregon Trail is about 0.2 miles north of Cayuse Road along, but above, the Umatilla River. Turn left on Mission Road to Pendleton. The trail crosses the road shortly after we turn onto Mission Road. We will pass the Tribal Center and the Umatilla Agency of the BIA. The trail is behind both complexes.

The road we are traveling is heading west. One branch of the trail stays to our south through Mission and on into Pendleton. It crosses the road near the entrance to town and then stays below Court Avenue to the Upper Umatilla Crossing in what is now Pendleton.

The route we are following is generally considered to be the early route of the trail, but there is some uncertainty. Apparently, another route stayed higher on the ridge line and passes through Pendleton just south of I-84. In fact the road in front of the DoubleTree hotel may be coincident with the old trail. This road had one variant that descended along Tutuilla Creek to a river crossing near the junction with the Umatilla. Another variant climbed the ridge west of Tutuilla Creek and then descended along this ridge line to McKay's trading post on his donation land claim and a crossing in this area.

#### Pendleton: Upper Crossing of the Umatilla River (Figure 5-5)

Directions: We will pass through central Pendleton on Court Avenue. Proceed to SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The park is on the right; the park entrance is in the intersection (a diagonal at the corner). Turn right into the park and proceed to the picnic area.

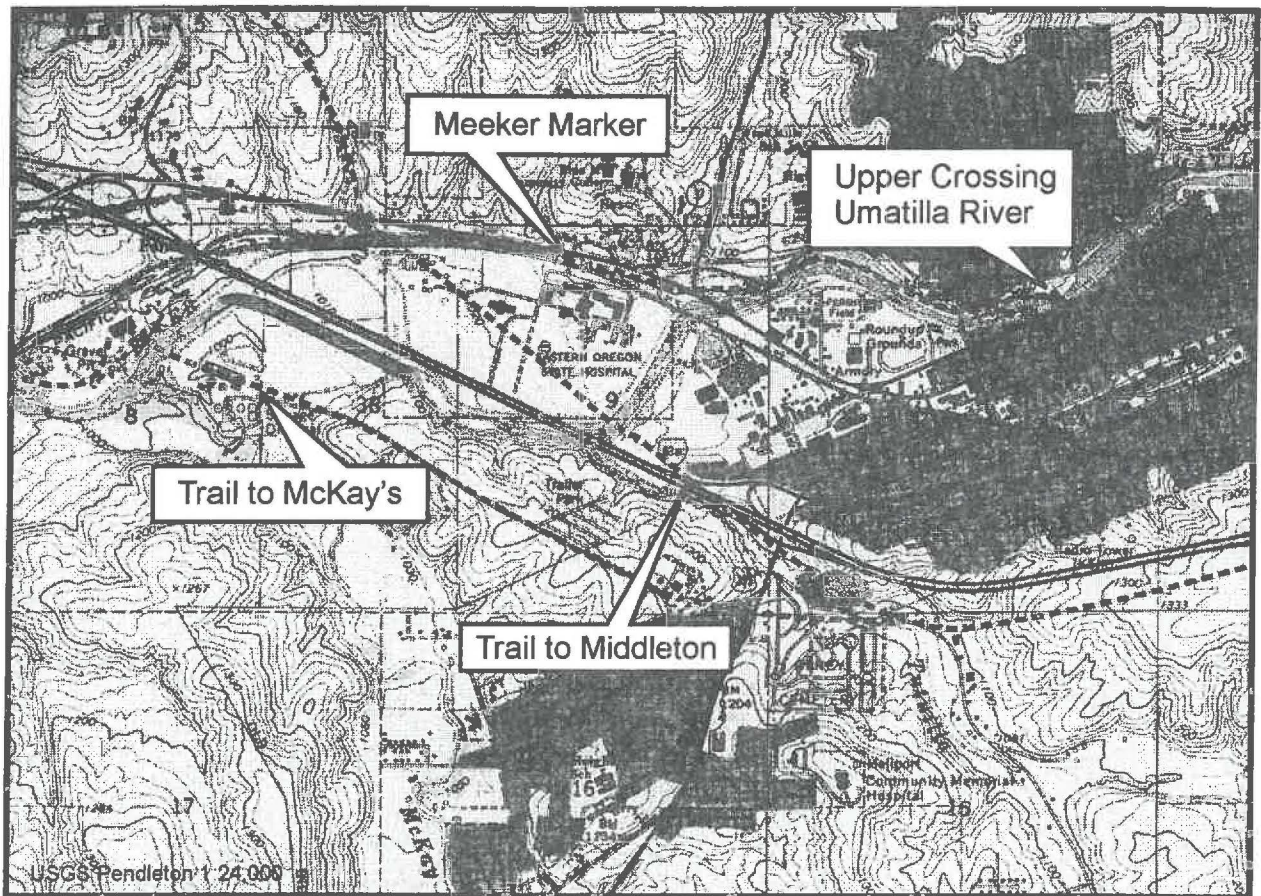


Figure 5-5. Upper Crossing of the Umatilla River (Pendleton)

The first settler in the area was William McKay, son of Thomas McKay, who established a trading post 1851 and later a donation land claim. Pendleton itself began as two competing trading posts that were established in the 1860s. Prior to that time there was an Indian village and a ford of the Umatilla at the site. From the base of the Blues the site of Pendleton lies in the natural path for those emigrants who chose not to go north to the Whitman Mission. After 1847, when the mission was destroyed, it became the main route to The Dalles. The route along the Columbia from the Whitman Mission had always been difficult so an alternative was readily accepted.

Franzwa places the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla River near the foot of SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street; others place it closer to SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street near the bridge at the rear of the park. In the 1860s and 1870s as Pendleton developed other crossings and routes developed. Stage, freight and emigrant roads criss-crossed the Pendleton area. Emigrant diaries refer to many camping places along the river between the base of the Blues and present day Pendleton. The area afforded many opportunities for rest and recruitment before proceeding onto the dry plains to the west.

John S. Zieber wrote on September 22-24, 1851;

*Monday, September 22—This day we left the Blue Mountains and really they proved the pleasantest part of our journey. The last descent was a very long one and at the foot we came to a dry creek from which there was a gradual descent to the Umatillah River, about 2 miles distance and on the banks of which we camped, in the immediate neighborhood of a Nez Perce village and trading post, where there was a little flour at \$18 per 100 lbs. and fresh beef at 10 cts. per lb. The distance traveled was 13 1/4 miles.*

*Tuesday, September 23—This day we traveled 14 miles and reached another and more general trading post. Flour here sold at \$20 per 100 lbs. and beef at 13c. Dry goods suited for Indians in quantity. Indians came to trade peas, a little corn and a very few potatoes. The Nez Percés had sent a war party among the Black Feet, and the party was very successful, having secured 32 scalps and lost only 4 of their number. The scalps were in an Indian lodge at the trading post and they were paraded on poles, and the fair and delicate squaws of the tribe stabbed at them with knives, while the men sang the war song. The celebration has been going on two weeks. At night to a late hour they lay and sat in and about an open lodge, beating a kind of tambourine drum and a time keeps to their queer song, which had frequent turns, taking place at a signal from several setting up a kind of barking like a wolf.*

*Not being able longer to get the use of oxen to draw the buggy, I concluded here to sell it, which I had an opportunity to do. I also procured the use of a pony as far as The Dalles, so that we now get along nearly as well as heretofore.*

E. W. Conyers wrote of the Upper and Lower Crossings in September, 1852:

*September 2 Thursday. We started at 7 a. m. and traveled nine miles to the crossing of the Umatilla River. Here we stopped for lunch, but no grass for our cattle. After lunch we took on a good supply of wood and water, as there is a seventeen-mile stretch ahead of us today without either wood or water. After lunch we came three miles before we left the river, and then six miles and camped. We found a little bunch grass, and a few twigs of greasewood, but no water. Am not feeling any better tonight.*

*September 3— Friday.— We started at 7 a.m. and traveled fourteen miles. Here we found a good spring on the right-hand side, and about twenty steps from the road, and here we stopped for lunch. No grass. After lunch we traveled five miles and camped on the bottom of the Umatilla River. Good water, but standing in pools. Good grass and plenty of good wood. Am feeling better tonight.*

#### Pendleton to Echo (Figure 5-6)

Directions: Proceed on old Highway 30 to the west I-84 interchange. Follow I-84 west to Exit 193 (Echo Road). The trail is about 3.5 miles south at this point. It crosses present day wheat fields as it heads for the Umatilla River. After intersecting the river it proceeds northwest along the Umatilla to present day Echo. We will enter Echo from the east and after a zig zag (right turn, left turn to Lexington), we will cross the UP tracks and pass by Fort Henrietta.

In this segment we will travel from the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla near SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Pendleton to the Lower Crossing in Echo. As we exit Pendleton the trail is approximately coincident with the road. There is a Meeker Marker near the west side of the sign noting the entrance to the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. This marker was placed by Ezra Meeker in 1906 at Stover's Livery near the west end of Emigrant Avenue.

As we enter I-84 one branch of the trail has gone through the area of the interchange. About 0.8 miles east of our entrance point (Exit 202), the trail crosses the highway to the north side and goes up the hill. Ruts are visible. The trail re-crosses to the south side about two miles later. We will not follow the trail as it traverses southwest, but we will pick it up in Echo at the Lower Umatilla Crossing.

Two other exits from the Pendleton area are known. One climbed the hills near Old Airport Road to rejoin the trail west of the airport. The other ascends from the Umatilla downstream of the crossing from McKay's claim. Additional research is needed to determine these routes with certainty.

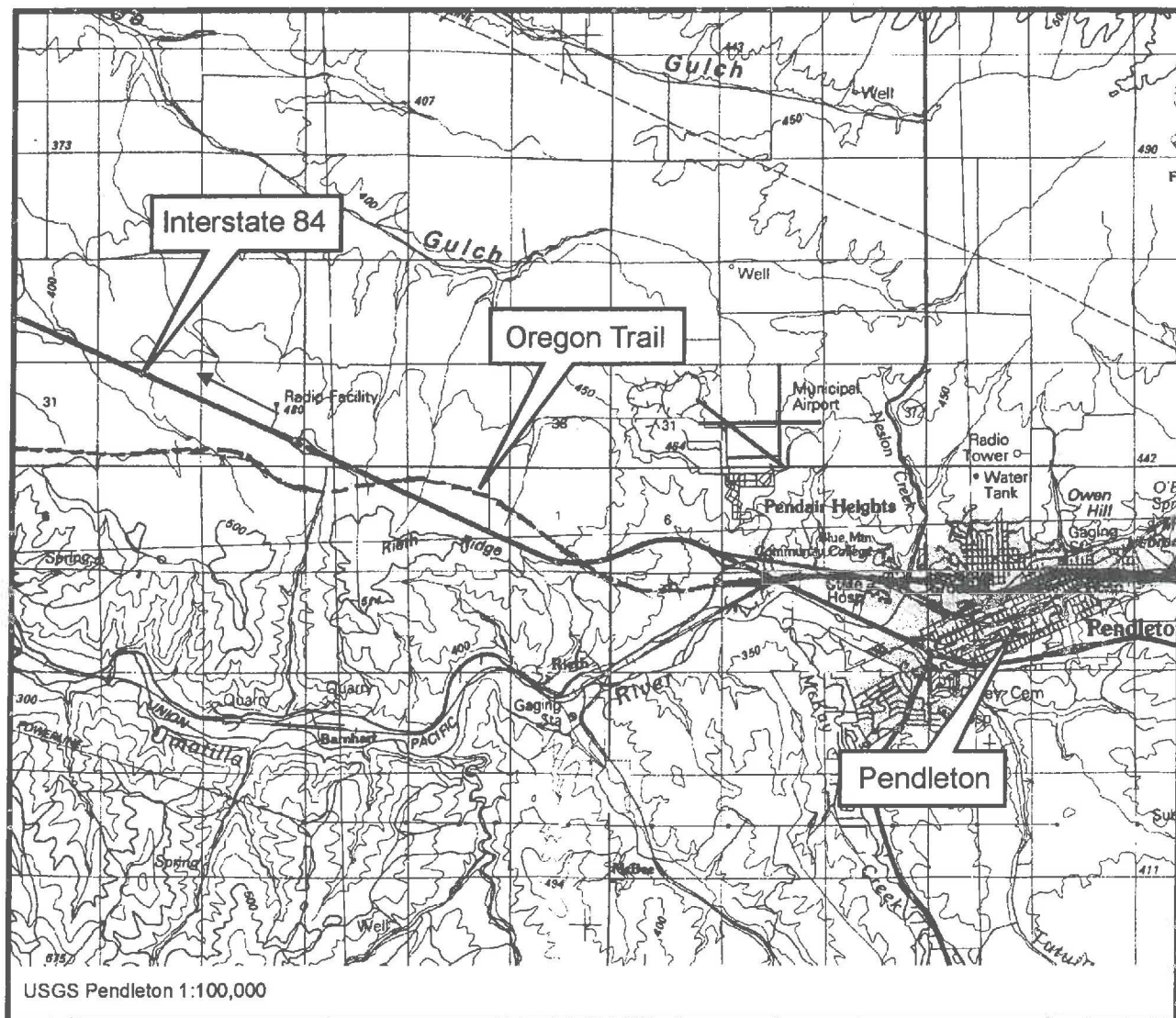


Figure 5-6. Pendleton West

The David Koontz grave is three-tenths of a mile south of the intersection where the road from Pendleton enters Echo. The OCTA marker reads in part:

David R. Koontz was born in Gallia County, Ohio, in 1830 and was buried here in 1852... the Koontz family was originally from Virginia. From there they moved to Ohio and in 1841 to Wapello County, Iowa. The urge to move further west came in 1852... F. M. Koontz later wrote, "When we came to Oregon it was like a tribal migration. There were 24 wagons in our train, all members of the train being related."

D. R. Koontz carved his name on Names Rock near La Barge, Wyoming on July 7, 1852. There is no record of how David died. Boy Scouts found the grave in 1915, built a fence and erected a headstone.

#### Echo and the Lower Umatilla River Crossing (Figure 5-7)

The area just south of Fort Henrietta is the location of the Lower Umatilla River Crossing. The crossing was not a single point, but a stretch of the river extending for perhaps 500 feet. Aubrey Haines describes the area around the crossing:

"The old Umatilla Indian Agency was established on the east bank in 1851 within the southwest edge of the present town of Echo, and it was burned in 1855 by the Cayuse Indians at the beginning of the Yakima War. Fort Henrietta, a post established by a detachment of the 1st Oregon Mounted Rifles on November 18, 1855, was located on the west bank about 300 feet southwest of the emigrant crossing (NEQ of SWQ, Sec. 16). It consisted of a stockade with two bastions, and was named for the wife of Maj. Granville O. Haller, 4th U.S. Infantry. The post was abandoned in 1856. There are no visible remnants of either the agency or the fort.

The significance of this crossing was that it put emigrants on the Fremont-Whitman-Harney cutoff, which stayed south of the Columbia River on the dry bench land which gave them a firmer road — but an arid one. The track westward along the Columbia was a sandy one. Some followed the Umatilla all the way down to the "River of the West" in 1844. The cutoff was an Indian route of long standing, but it has been variously identified with John C. Fremont (who used it), Marcus Whitman (who encouraged the emigrants to use it), and Gen. William S. Harney (who had it drawn on the military maps of the area)."

William D. Stillwell noted that he profited from Whitman's advice in 1847 by "... going west to the Umatilla R. above where Pendleton now is. We crossed the Umatilla at this place, going down on the west side of Butter Creek. Whitman sent an Indian to pilot us thru this place to Well Spring then to Willow Creek..."

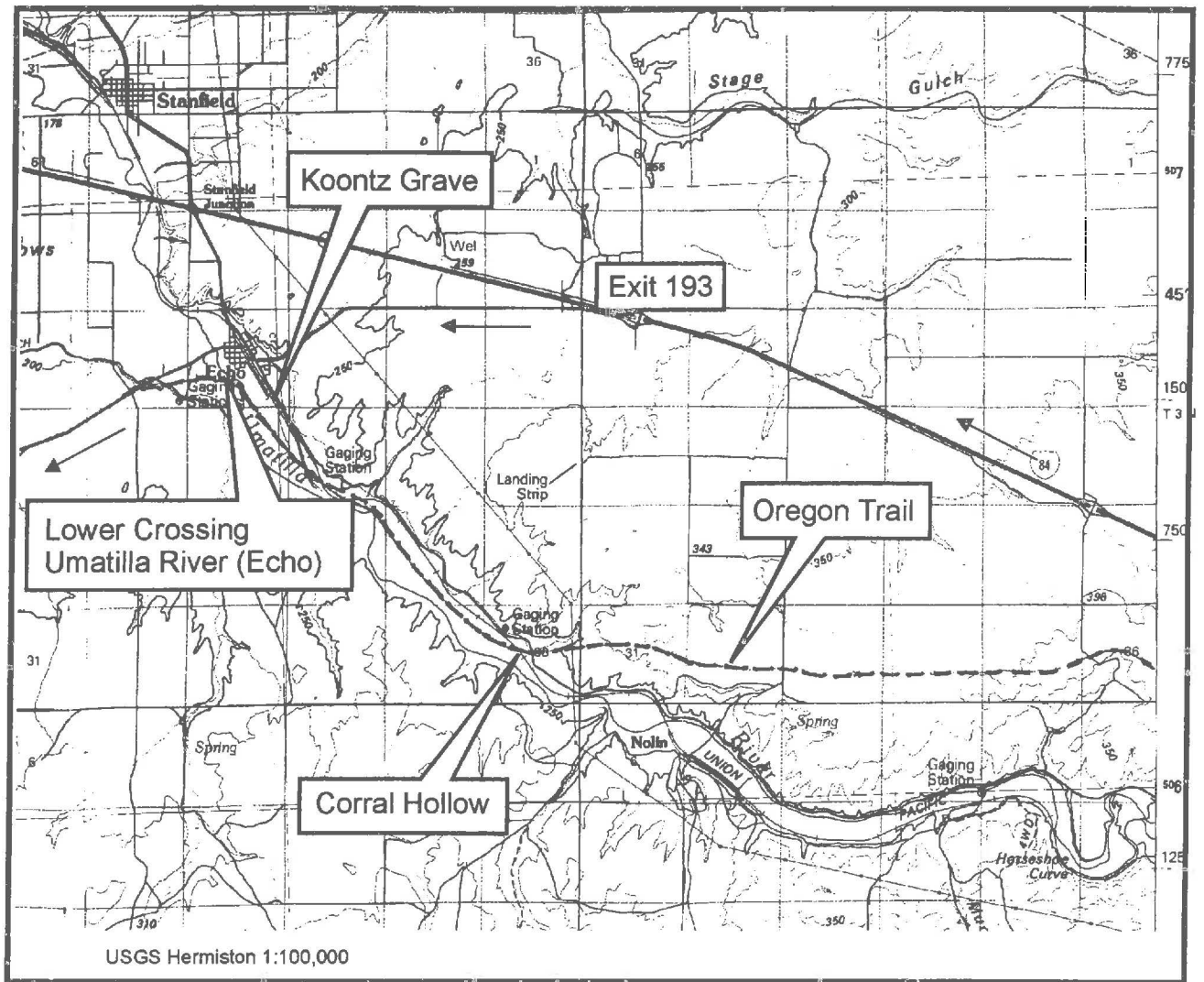


Figure 5-7. Lower Crossing, Umatilla River (Echo)

Fort Henrietta was built during the Indian Wars of 1855 and was destroyed by its builders (the Oregon Mounted Volunteers) the following year. The blockhouse that you see is a replica of a "typical" blockhouse. The fort actually stood on the other side of the river.

The crossing was an important campsite. It afforded reliable water, wood (cottonwoods as today), and rye grass to six feet. The frame building of the Indian Agency was mentioned by many emigrants since it was the first frame house they encountered since leaving the Missouri.

*September 7<sup>th</sup>. Quite pleasant still, road more sandy. Passed the Indian Agency this morning near the crossing of the Umatilla, the first frame building we have seen since we left Council Bluffs City. It is about 30 ft long, 12 or 16 wide, porch in front, it is white washed on one side and both ends... a pleasant situation, timber on the east side of it. 10 miles from here we came to Butter Creek its waters made by springs. Camped at the spring left of road 1 mile from the crossing. Willow wood. Saw 2 graves, 3 dead cattle. The sick is a little better. [Maria A. Belshaw, September 5-7, 1853]*

#### Echo Meadows (Figure 5-8)

Directions: Proceed on the highway west from Echo. The turn-off to the BLM Echo Meadows site is marked, but we will not visit it due to time limitations. Continue west to the intersection with State Route 207.

The trail is approximately coincident with the road as we climb out of the Umatilla River bottom. It crosses the road heading northwest just before Whitehouse Road and enters the area known as Echo Meadows.

The orderly fields that now encompass Echo Meadows are a dubious monument to what might have been. In his "Maps of the Oregon Trail" Gregory Franzwa notes that there "couldn't be a more meaningful presentation of the case for education about the Oregon Trail than can be found in Echo Meadows. A few years ago this rut segment... was absolutely pristine. It has since been plowed and is now in grain. In the early spring and at maturity, just prior to harvest, the swale of the Oregon Trail is barely discernible. Would the farmer have reacted favorably had he been asked to donate a hiking easement through his land? Had he been offered a modest sum for this purpose? Greater efforts must be made toward preservation while there is still something left to preserve."

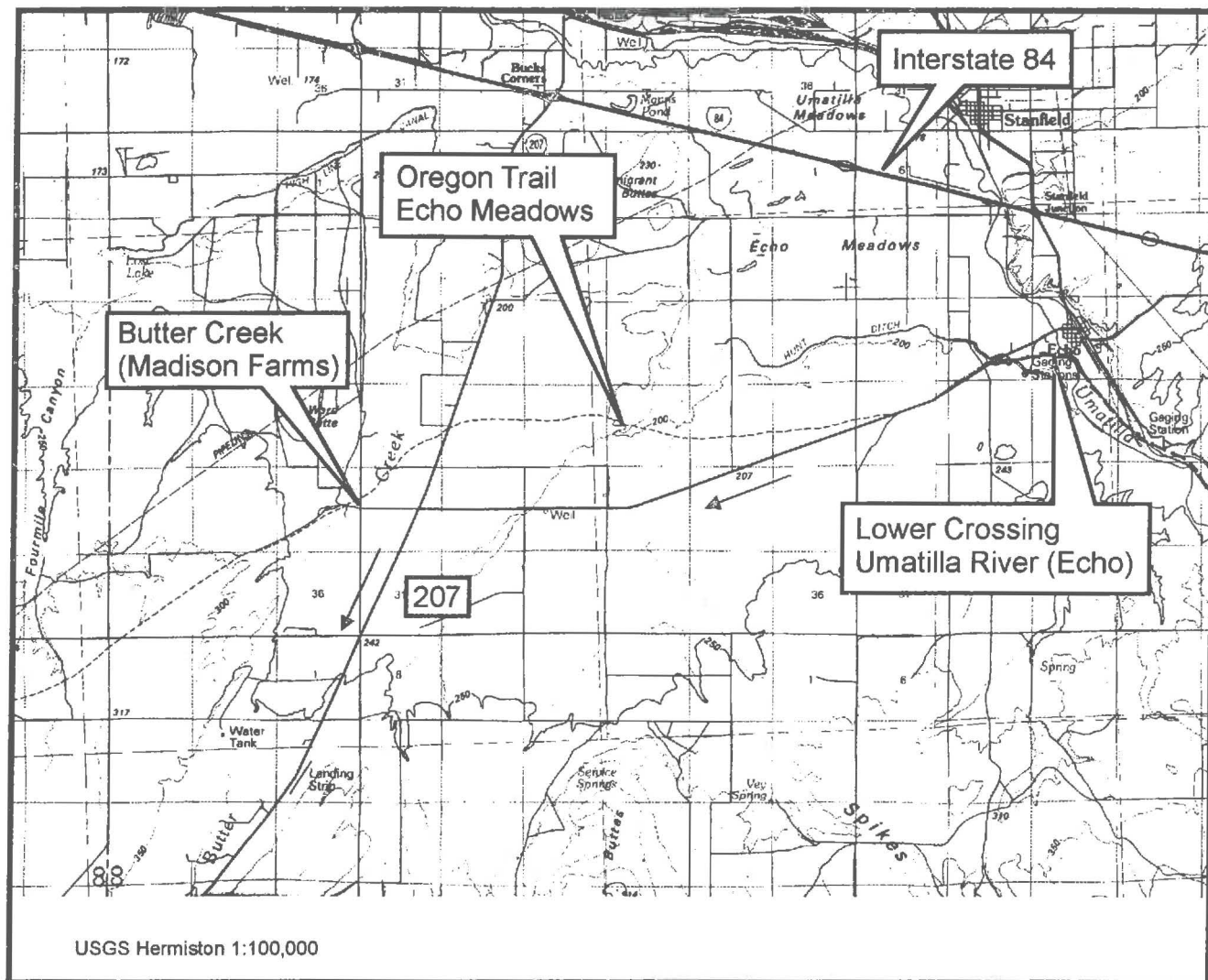


Figure 5-8. Echo-Echo Meadows-Butter Creek

Madison Farms/Butter Creek (Figure 5-8)

Directions: At the intersection with State Route (SR) 207, go straight on Madison Road to the crossing of Butter Creek. At the fork in the road, bear left. Ruts are on the left beginning their ascent of the hills.

Shortly after the crossing of Butter Creek, there are ruts extending for about one-half mile. More extensive ruts were destroyed a number of years ago by a peeved farmer. What is there was saved by his grandson, the current operator of the farm. Permission is needed to enter this area.

Butter Creek Junction to Well Spring (Figure 5-9)

Directions: Turn around and return to SR 207. Saylor Road is closer to the trail but there is nothing to be seen.

We will make a long loop southwest through Butter Creek Junction and Sand Hallow and then north to stay on paved roads. At Boardman Junction we will turn right onto Bombing Range Road. There is a large, solitary grain elevator marking the junction.

At about 2.5 miles turn left on Little Juniper Lane just this side of a Quonset hut farm building. It is marked as the "tour route" by the State of Oregon. Follow Little Juniper Road 4.8 miles to Well Spring Road. Turn right on Well Spring Road and then left onto Emigrant Road. Both are gravel roads.

The trail has many routes in the Butter Creek area. Some routes went over the hills and then turned west. Others followed Butter Creek for longer periods before going over the hills. The road we are on is going in a southwesterly direction while the trail heads west.

Well Spring (Figure 5-10)

The naming of the springs in this area has been a source of confusion for many years. A comprehensive 1997 study by the U. S. Navy (see "Cultural Resource Assessment and Evaluation of the Lower Well Springs Diversion of the Boardman Section of the Oregon Trail") provides clarification and new insights into the use of the area. Figure 5-10 shows details of the Well Spring area.

Some trail researchers place both Upper and Lower Well Spring close to Emigrant Road on the southern boundary of the Boardman Range. A third spring, Tub Spring,

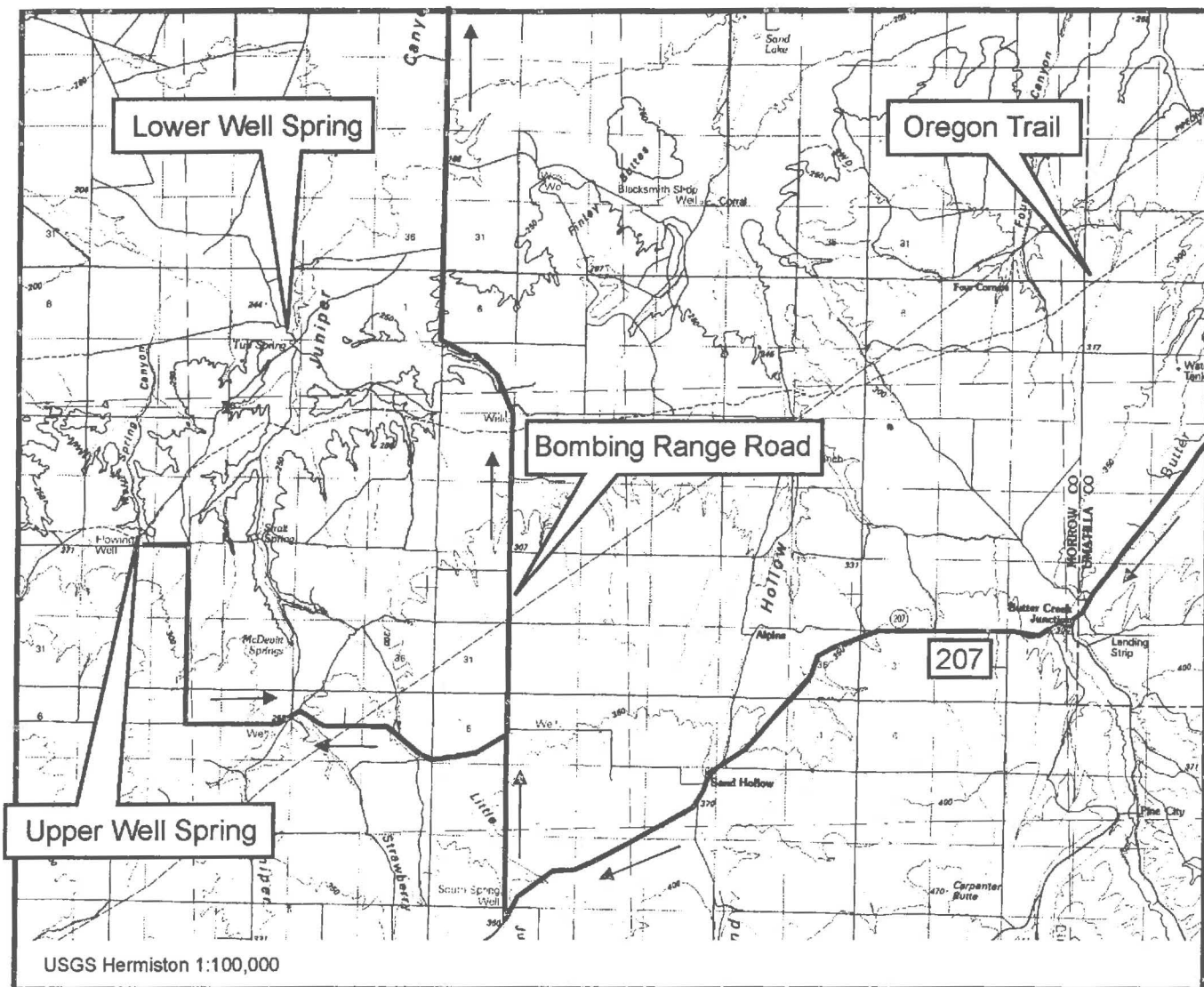


Figure 5-9. Butter Creek-Sand Hollow-Well Spring

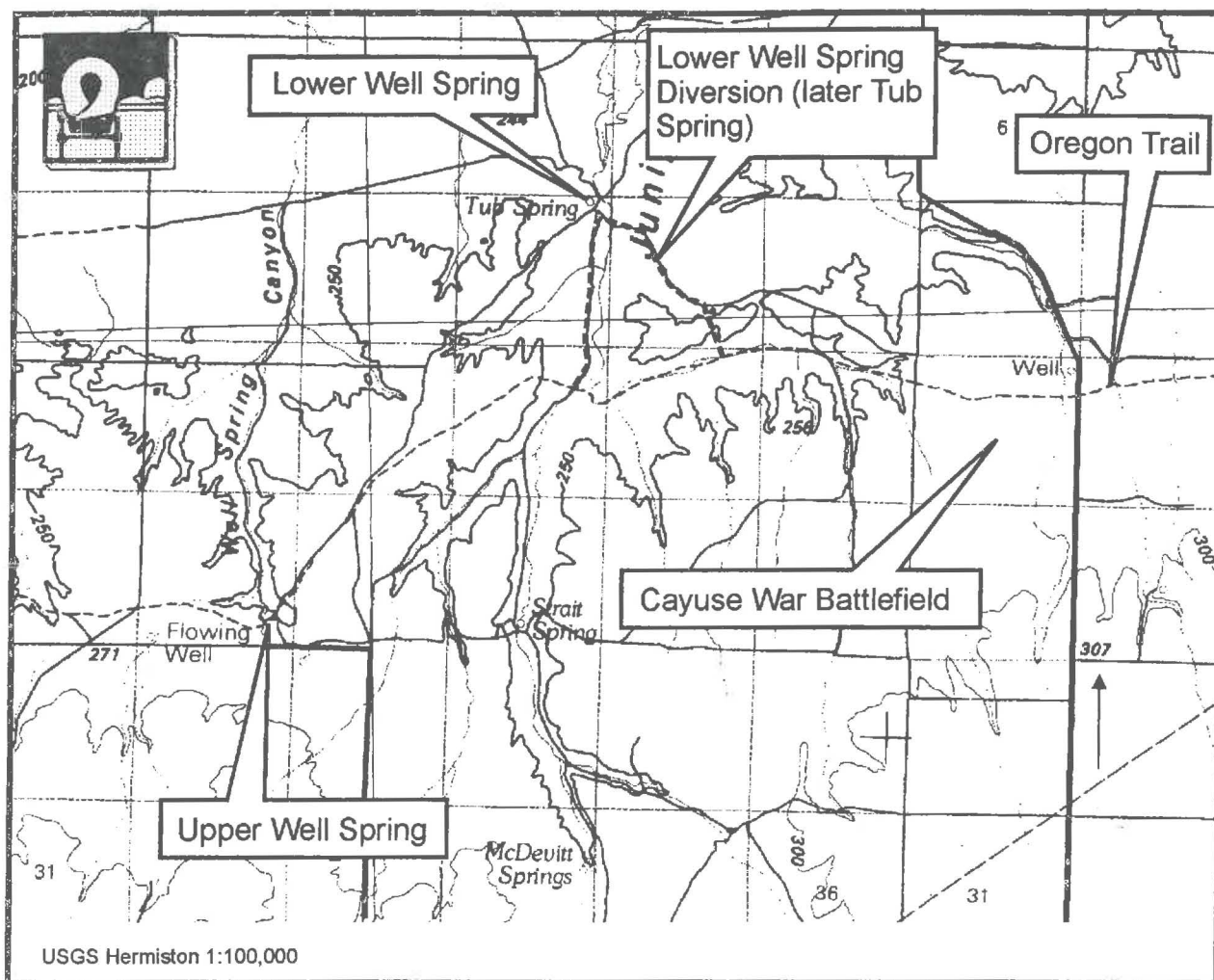


Figure 5-10. Well Spring Area

was known to be an emigrant stopping point, but it was not identified as one of the "Well Springs." A careful reading of emigrant documents and study of early maps, as done in the Navy study, clearly points to Tub Springs being Lower Well Spring while the two springs on the southern boundary constitute Upper Well Spring. The route of the Oregon Trail through the area consists of a primary route generally moving in a slightly southwest direction from the entry point on the Boardman Range to the Upper Well Spring area. The second route is a loop to the north to Tub Springs and back. Tub Springs is the site of the Swaggart and Carty homestead that was active from the late 1800's to the 1940's.

Haines accurately describes the area:

"The principal Well Spring (there were two) is in the head of Well Spring Canyon, which is a shallow basin of powdery soil serving as an underground reservoir. The spring has been developed for stock-watering purposes. The lower spring (now Tub Spring), also used by emigrants, is 3 ½ miles northeast, in Juniper Canyon. These springs provided the water which made the route across the dry benches between Butter and Willow creeks usable by emigrants."

Further evidence of the location of Lower Well Spring is provided by John Mullan's 1858 military map. It shows the distinctive loop for the diversion to Lower Well Spring. A survey of emigrant documents in the Navy study did not reveal any emigrant references to "Tub Springs," a name that first appears near the time the Swaggart-Carty homestead was established.

The National Park Service's "Comprehensive Management and Use Plan, Oregon National Historic Trail, Appendix III, [1981]" misidentifies the spring, but otherwise accurately describes the area around Upper Well Spring near the Morrow County kiosks.

"Lower (sic) Well Spring, located half-way across the Boardman Segment (Sec 20, T2N, R25E, Well Spring map sheet 306, Morrow County), was a water source which made travel across this dry stretch of the Oregon Trail possible. The spring was always a meager source of water, but one which was eagerly sought by the emigrants, since this portion of the trail was usually traveled in late August or early September when all the intermittent streams were normally dry. The spring has been seriously impacted throughout the years, particularly by attempts to improve its water supply for the benefit of livestock. The spring is now virtually dry, due to deep well drilling in the vicinity for irrigation purposes.

Next to the spring is the site of an old stage station. Remains of that station consist of a stone and cement foundation and scattered lumber and metal... Three-tenths of a mile west of Well Spring is a graveyard which dates back to Oregon Trail days. Although most of the burials in the graveyard are unmarked, there is a monument to the memory of Robert Evan Williams who died in 1852,

and another to Colonel Cornelius Gilliam of the Oregon Volunteers, who was killed during the Cayuse War of 1848."

In the 1860's John A. Bradburn, Sr. established an inn near Well Spring which was used as a stage stop on the Castle Rock-Ella-Heppner route. A 1993 Morrow County Historical Society document by Jean Nelson states:

"About the time of WW I John Harbke built a three story house on a rise just south of lower [sic] Well Springs. A well was dug at the site of lower [sic] Well Springs. It was lined with rock and was 12 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep. This well can still be seen at the site. As with all other shallow wells in the area, they have all been dry since the 1960's when deep well irrigation drilling drained their resources. Just northeast of the house site can still be seen the foundation of a barn that was used at the time. Some families that lived in the house and raised wheat and tended livestock included the Roes, the Wilsons and the Straits. After that it was used by the Padbergs in 1932, the Bushkes 1933-36 and the Dulans in 1937. The house was destroyed in about 1940 when the land was taken over by the U. S. Army Air Corps."

Across the road and a half-mile to the west of the kiosk is an Oregon Trail cemetery. It contains an undetermined number of emigrant graves. There are Oregon Trail ruts north of the cemetery, and remains of a stage station (foundations and well) are in the southeast and northwest quarters of Section 20.

Elizabeth Pixon Smith noted the rigors of the dusty route west of the Umatilla River on October 17, 1847:

*"Oct 17 cold and windy we made a fire of a little wood that we carried all day yesterday made a bite to eat our cattle ran off in search of water which hindered us till late made 4 miles camped without wood except a small shrub called greece wood It burns like greeced weeds I used to wonder why It was said man must be dressed in buckskin to come to this country but now I know. everything we travel through is thorny and rough there is no chance of saving your cloths here we found a great hole of water 12 or 15 feet a croos had to water a hundred and fifty head of cattle with palls had to stand out all night in the rain to keep the cattle from drownding each other after water in this hole."*

The danger of the spring to cattle is often noted. Apparently it was such that if the cattle entered it they would not be able to extract themselves. This is in contrast to comments in later years that noted the meager amount of water available.

*Maria P. Beishaw, September 8, 1853. "Came to the Springs. [water] proceeds from a mound dug out in the middle plenty of water but not very good . . ."*

*Amelia Stuart Knight [1853]. "Sixteen dusty miles from the last water source at Butter Creek. Fifteen miles from the next at Willow Creek, it was essential to the survival of both emigrants and livestock."*

#### Cayuse War (Figure 5-10)

Directions: Back track to Bombing Range Road. Turn left (North).

The trail crosses Bombing Range Road about four miles after entering the road. Ruts are visible on the left opposite the marker located at the pivot of the circular irrigation system. The ruts lead into the vineyard on the hill. The area is the site of the first battle of the Cayuse War (1848-1850).

The causes of the war were complex but typical of the unhappy interactions between the emigrants and the native peoples. The 1997 Navy Study [8] summarized the history:

"The Whitmans were one of a group of missionaries that inspired the westward movement of settlers along the Oregon Trail. The wagon trains brought people, goods, livestock, and cash into the lands of the Umatilla and the Cayuse, providing opportunities for trade, employment as temporary guides or herdsman. The Umatilla and Cayuse were also hired to retrieve livestock that strayed from the emigrant trains. Some of the Indians raided the emigrants' herds for food and sometimes resale to unsuspecting travelers, a traditional pursuit previously practiced with neighboring tribes. The Cayuse sold the emigrants fresh vegetables from their gardens and also provided labor at portages. The combination of trespass by trains of emigrants on Indian lands, the merciless spread of measles among their people, and distrust of Dr. Whitman's ability to cure their sick, induced the Cayuse to kill the Whitmans and several of their associates in the 1847 Whitman tragedy. The Governor of Oregon Territory then assembled a volunteer army to punish the Cayuse for their actions (Ruby and Brown 1972:116). In response, the Cayuse and some of the Umatilla and other neighboring groups engaged in a conflict with the soldiers that they hoped would soon be joined by larger groups, such as the Yakima and Spokane. While in pursuit of the Cayuse and their Umatilla supporters in February 1848, the soldiers camped at Upper Well Springs and the next day fought them approximately five miles east of Upper Well Springs in the Battle of Sand Hollow, the first engagement of the Cayuse War. The Cayuse War continued for two years until discussions with the United States about treaties and reservations began in 1850, finally culminating in the 1855 Treaty signed with the Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Umatilla at the Walla Walla Treaty Council. The Treaty was ratified by the United States Congress in 1859, creating the Umatilla Indian Reservation." (U. S. Navy, Green, Lewarch, et. al., 1997)."

Ironically, a few months later Col. Cornelius Gilliam, who survived the battle, died nearby when a rope caught the trigger of a gun when he was removing the rope from a wagon. He was killed instantly. A plaque in the cemetery near Upper Well Spring states:

"In Memory Of / Col. Cornelius Gilliam / Killed At This Spot In Indian War / March 24, 1848/ and the Pioneers Buried Here / Presented By / Sarah Childress Polk Chapter No. 6 / DAR Of Polk County Ore., and another on the north side is marked, "In Memory Of Robert Evan Williams / Buried Sept. 1852 / and Other Emigrants Who Lie Here / Placed By The / Wasco County Pioneers."

One might conclude from the wording that Col. Gilliam was killed heroically in battle with Indians, rather than by his own hand.

#### Return to Pendleton

Directions: North on Bombing Range Road to I-84. East on I-84 to Pendleton. The trip back to Pendleton is 42 miles.

The Boardman Bombing Range was established during World War II by the Army Air Corps. In 1960 the Navy took it over from the Air Force. Its last use was as an electronic bombing range for EA-6s from Whidbey Island and elsewhere.

Portland General Electric (Enron) generating plant is in the distance. Coal from Wyoming is used to generate electricity in the shadow of the Columbia River dams. This is an illustration of the long and continuing competition between public and private power.

Columbia River Dams upstream from Portland are Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day and McNary. McNary can be glimpsed from I-84. The tree farms are hybrid poplar. They are harvested every ten years for use in making paper.

## 6. Tour B: Whitman Mission

### 6.1. Tour Highlights

- Descent from the Blues
- Overview of trails to Fort Walla Walla and the Whitman Mission
- Butler Grade Overlook of Walla Walla River Valley
- Whitman Mission
- Milton-Freewater Meeker Marker
- Frazier Homestead
- Return to Pendleton (possible 1843-1847 route)

### 6.2. Schedule

Depart DoubleTree	8:00 am
Arrive at OSU/USDA Agricultural Station (view of descent route)	8:30 am
Depart	9:00 am
Arrive Butler Grade Overlook (coffee and rest stop)	9:50 am
Depart	10:20 am
Arrive HBC Farm Marker	10:40 am
Depart	11:00 am
Arrive Whitman Mission	11:40 am
Lunch at Whitman Mission	12:30 pm
Depart	2:00 pm
Arrive Milton-Freewater/Meeker Marker	2:30 pm
Arrive Frazier Homestead	3:00 pm
Arrive Pendleton	4:00 pm

### 6.3. Tour Description (Tour B)

The area of the Whitman Mission tour is shown in Figure 6-1. The "main" Oregon Trail proceeds east to west at the bottom of the diagram. However, many pre-1848 emigrants visited the Whitman Mission for supplies. Later, emigrants heading for Washington Territory took the northwesterly route to Fort Walla Walla to cross the Columbia at that point.

Figure 6-2 summarizes (and simplifies) the fur trade, explorer and emigrant routes in the Pendleton and Walla Walla areas. These routes probably all began as Indian trails and evolved into emigrant trails and trade routes. We will focus on their use by fur traders, explorers and the emigrants.

The routes are best explained by considering the four exit points from the Blue Mountains. From an American perspective, the earliest entry point is via McKay Creek to what became the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla (Point A). This route was used by Wilson Price Hunt and Robert Stuart. Point B is thought to be the exit point for the Whitman group in 1836. They apparently exited the Blues via Squaw Creek at the foot of Gibbon Ridge. Point C is the exit point of Captain John C. Fremont in 1843. Since he brought a cartographer, his route near the Walla Walla River is well known. Point D, the main exit point Oregon Trail emigrants, is at the base of Poker Jim Hill.

When the Whitman-Spalding Group arrived in 1836, their objective was the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Walla Walla (Point F). The "direct" path from the base of the Blues to the fort (B to F) proceeds across the rolling hills to Vansycle Canyon. Fort Walla Walla may be reached by continuing down the ridge above Vansycle Canyon or by descending Butler Grade (or other similar descents) to the Walla Walla Valley.

Most researchers do not think that any emigrants used the Whitman route across the Blues due to the difficulty of crossing Meacham Creek; some do not think the Whitmans used the route either. The emigrants crossed on ridges to the south and some researchers believe the Whitmans also traveled on these ridges.

When the emigrants began arriving in large numbers in 1843, they had three main route choices from their exit point at D: (1) to the Whitman Mission (or Fort Walla Walla) via Vansycle Canyon or Butler Grade (DJGHE or DJGF), (2) to the Whitman Mission (and Fort Walla Walla) via a route to the north through what is now Athena and south of Milton Freewater (DLCEF), and (3) to the Upper Umatilla Crossing (Pendleton) bypassing the Whitman Mission (D to A).

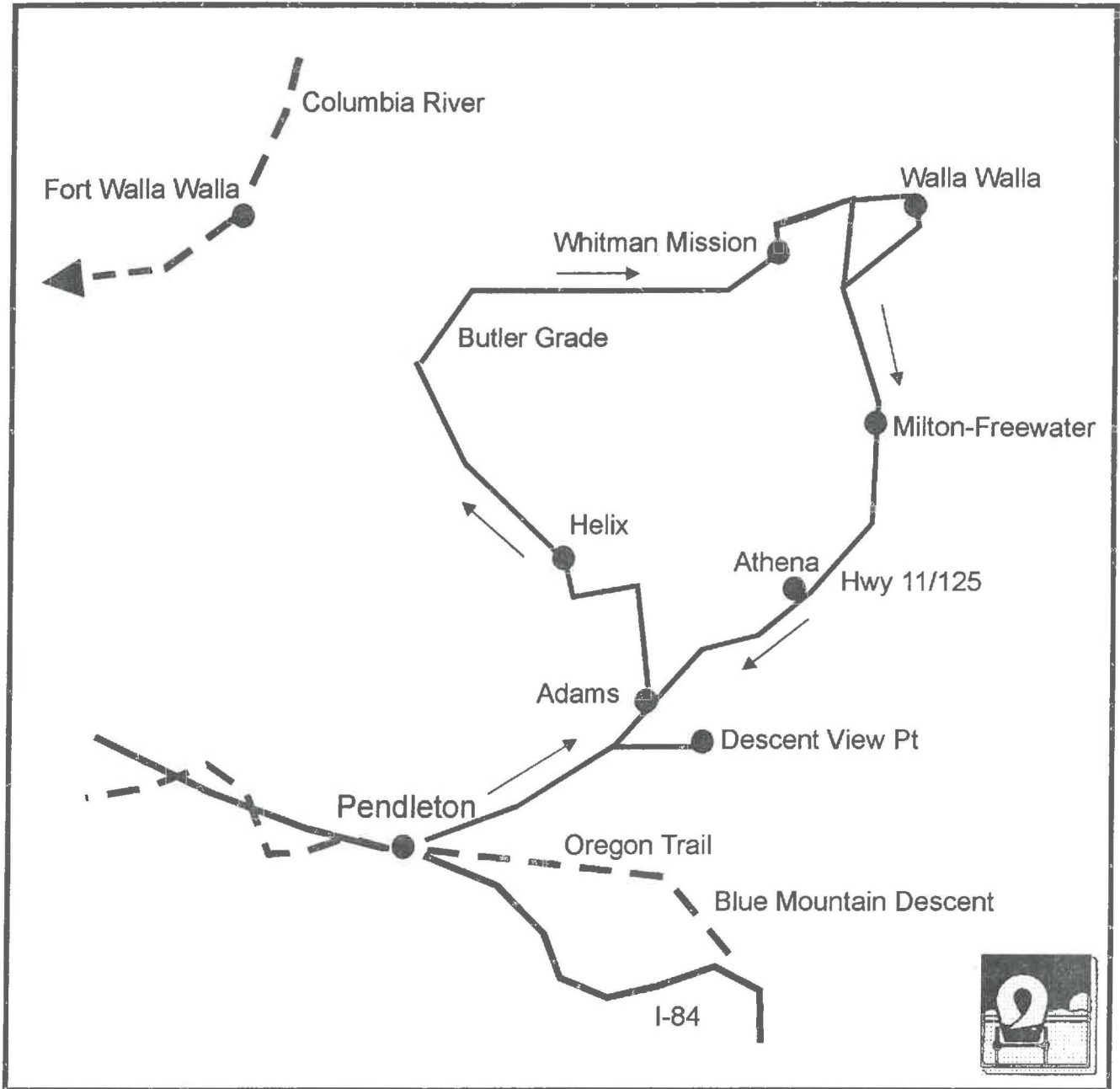


Figure 6-1 Tour B Overview (Whitman Mission)

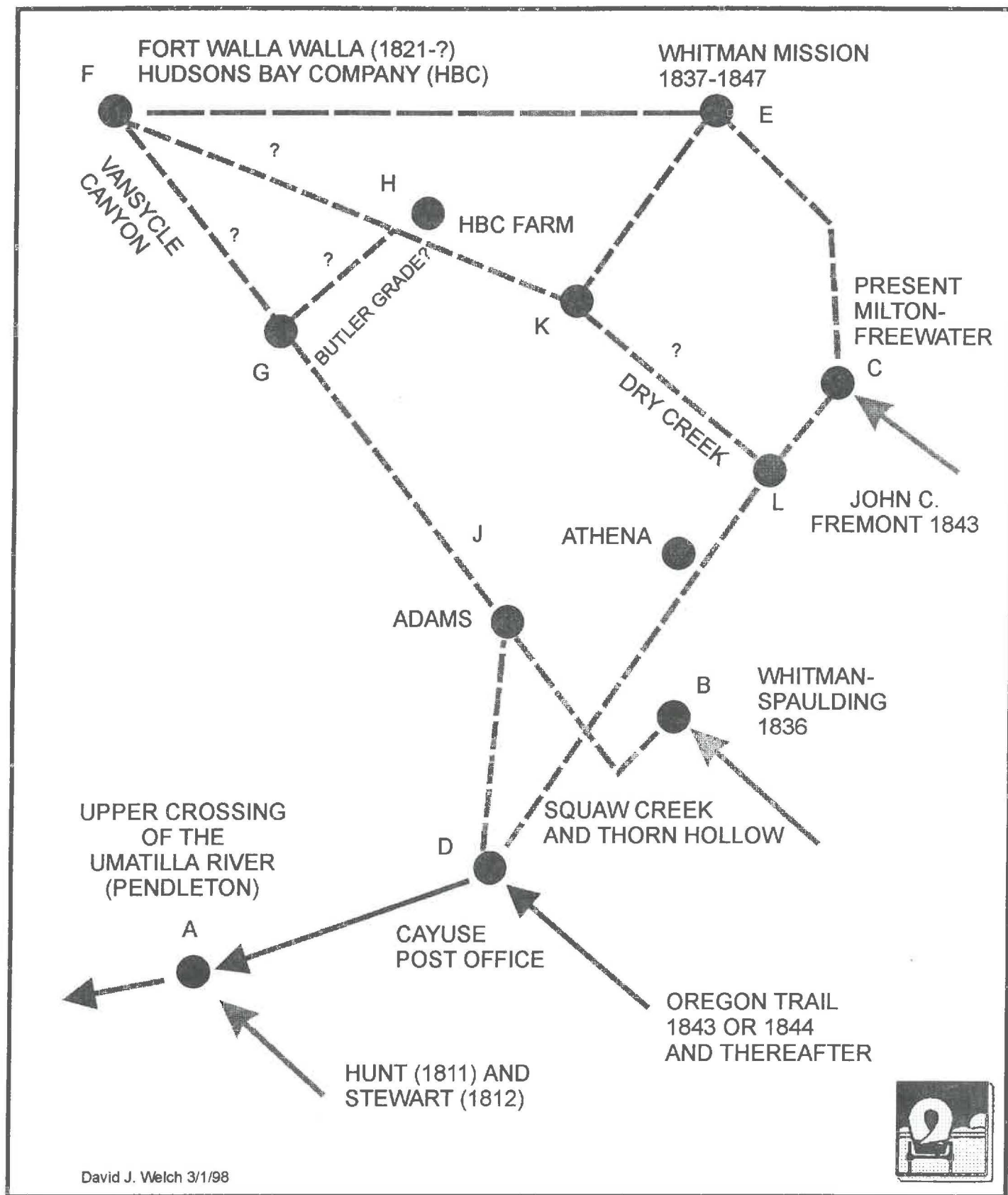


Figure 6-2. Possible Emigrant Routes in the Umatilla and Walla Walla Valleys

Another route appears to have developed along the southern edge of the Walla Walla Valley (Points DLKHF) allowing emigrants to by-pass the Whitman Mission site after 1848. In fact, after 1847 the route to the Upper Crossing of the Umatilla (DA) became the primary route.

The tour will sample portions of all of routes. We will complete a loop through Vansycle Canyon to Butler Grade and the Walla Walla Valley with a return through Milton-Freewater and Athena. We will begin by following the route probably used by the earliest travelers, including the Whitmans.

#### Blue Mountain Descent (Figure 6-3)

Directions: Depart Pendleton via the old highway eastbound turning north on Highway 11 toward Walla Walla. About six miles from the junction turn right on Tubbs Ranch Road to the USDA/Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station. Turn into the first driveway just past the line of trees. Turn right in front of the small building, jog right, then left, then right to complete the loop to the east side of the buildings. Passengers may disembark for a view of the Blue Mountain descent in the distance.

The Blue Mountain descent via Poker Jim Ridge is visible to the Southeast. The scarring that can be seen on the hillside is a pipeline, power lines and jeep roads. At the base, three routes diverge, two passing to the east closer to the base of the mountains and one to the south leading to present day Pendleton.

There are few diary mentions of travel through this area. Most diaries describe in some detail the passage across the Blue Mountains, the steep hills and large trees, and coming into camp on the Umatilla River at the foot of the mountains. However, they ignore the next piece of their trip by mentioning only their arrival at Dr. Whitman's. Sometimes there are more detailed descriptions of the Whitman's mission, and if the party went on to Fort Walla Walla, that fort is described in more detail.

Today, much of the land has been cultivated so there are not many traces of the trails left on the ground. Thus none of the routes used by the emigrants is known with certainty. The probable routes are based on what very few traces are left, on the meager detail in diary entries, and on inferences drawn from the lay of the land. In the 1940s there were some small plane flights over the area, which at that time picked up some traces of trail ruts; subsequently some artifacts were found along this route. To



further complicate the picture, the land in most of this area is now either Indian reservation, Forest Service land, or privately owned. Much is inaccessible.

Here are some quotes about the route from emigrant diaries. From William T. Newby (1843):

*"[October 7] We got down the mountain in 4 miles. Good in campment at the foot of the hill. We fownt mild plesant wether when we got down the mountain. Good incampment in 3 miles. then we continued on & in camped at a smawl dry branch. Grazing good, water indifferent. 15 [miles]*

*[October 8] We had 1 bad hill to clime & struck a smawl creek & in camp. Grazing good. Dist 13 [miles].*

*[October 9] We lay buy within 3 miles of Doct Whitmans, a mishionary astablishment, to git provision. The Dr. had gon to Spaldings Mishion & left evything in charge of Mr. Giger; & the emigrants was much disapointed, as the Dr. had got them to come much out of there way with promices of provisions cheep & was surprised by high prices that we had to pay for all we got: bef 10 cts, pork 15 cts, potatoes \$1.00, flour without bolting 7 cts.*

The Newby group "lay buy" until October 15 when they moved eight miles to a camp on the Walla Walla River. The next day they proceeded to Fort Walla Walla.

Peter H. Burnett (1843):

*"On the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th, [of October] we passed through the Blue Mountains, arriving at their foot on the 6th and encamping upon a beautiful stream of water.... Our camp was about three miles from the Indian village, and from the Indians we purchased Indian corn, peas, and Irish potatoes, in any desired quantity, I have never tasted a greater luxury than the potatoes we ate on this occasion. We had been so long without fresh vegetables that we were almost famished, and consequently we feasted this day excessively....*

*On the 10th of October we arrived within three miles of Doctor Whitman's mission and remained in camp until the 14th.*

*...I remember that while we were at the mission of Doctor Whitman, who has performed such hard labor for us, and was deserving of our warmest gratitude, he was most ungenerously accused by some of our people of selfish motives in conducting us past his establishment, where we could procure fresh supplies of flour and potatoes...they thought the prices demanded by the doctor amounted to something like extortion, not reflecting that that he had to pay at least twice as much for his own supplies of merchandise, and could not afford to sell his products as low as they did theirs at home....So obstinate were some of our people that they would not purchase of the doctor....an intimate friend of mine, whose supplies of food were nearly exhausted, refused to purchase. though urged to do so by me, until the wheat was all sold. The consequence was that I had to divide provisions with him before we reached the end of our journey.*

James Clyman (1844)

*"[September] 30 ...the western desert of the Mountain is much more easy & gradual than the eastern so far I have seen but little land that would be called fit for cultivation in any of the Western States although there are a few spots that would bar cultivation Made 25 miles & encamped on a small brook or rather spring to the right of the trail & close to the foot of the mountain.*

*Tuesday Oct 1st A beautiful morning & fine clear nights I neglected to mention yesterday that this valley was nearly covered with horses when we came down the mountain but no Indians came to our camp this as well as the grand round valley being one of the great stopping places of the Kyuse tribe of Indians & from them we obtained some Potatoes Corn Peas & Squashes of their own raising they likewise are very anxious to obtain cows & other cattle for which they exchange horses of which they have great quantities. There is no climate finer than this if dry weather constitutes a fine climate & indeed the days remind one of Byron's description of Italy not a cloud to be seen neither day nor night for months together*

*Left our encampment & proceeded on the Trail 2 or 3 miles when we came to a Kyuse farm Krailed [corralled] in with willows and planted with corn beans potatoes &c &c here we left wagon trail which turns to the right & goes to Dr Whitman's said to be 40 or 50 miles further than the route we took which goes down the Uilla I here observed that the wild Bunch*

*grass of this country was intirely eat out near the Indian farms and does not seem to grow again Traded some potatoes of the Kyuse Women & proceeded on down the Utila a fine mill-stream made 16 miles & camped on the creek at the head of a Kenyon through which the creek passes during the day saw several large roads leading in different directions"*

Rev. Edward Parrish (1844):

*"Friday, Oct. 18.--A clear morning. Hope we will get out of this mountain to-day. We got out of the Mountain and camped on the Utila River. The Last twenty miles of the Blue Mountains was pretty good for mountain roads. A very long hill to come down off the mountains. Here at this camp we met many Indians and horses without number. The Indians are of the Kiucy nation. Here we got potatoes, pumpkins and horses. I gave 'Buck and Ball' for a large bay horse.*

*Saturday, Oct. 19.--The rain continued moderately through the night and it is cloudy and rainy this morning. This company is going to separate this morning. The families who go on toward The Dalles are: Hoover, Welch and Nelson. Parrish Cave and Hawley are going to Dr. Whitman's to winter and try it agin in the spring. We are twenty miles down the river and have to go back again to the forks of the road twenty miles up the river. This I hate. If the packers who went after flour had returned and met us at the forks of the road it would have saved us forty miles travel. We drove back and camped in the narrows between the bluff and the Utila River.*

*Monday, Oct. 21.--The rain ceased during the night and this morning it is cloudy. Glad we escaped the Blue Mountains as they are white with snow. Crossed the Utila River about twelve o'clock and camped on the open prairie with neither wood nor water except what we had in the wagons.*

*Tuesday, Oct. 22.-'We had a storm of wind and rain last night. All in good health escept Rev. Mr. Cave's son William. Having a little wood and water left, we got breakfast. Drove on and camped where we have grass, wood and water. Our cattle are almost overdone and Mr. Hawley has gone to the Doctor's to engage houses and accomodations for himself, Mr. Cave and I. He is expected to return this evening. Here is the best of bottomland and good grass. Nearly three hundred head of fine horses, best kind of stock, are grazing here....This is a fine growing country, though a little too near the Blue Mountains.*

*Wednesday, Oct. 23.--...Mr. Hawley did not return as expected last night, so we drove on and soon met him. We drove hard and reached the Doctor's at night, Mr. Cave and Mr. Hawley got a room together and I remained in a tent.*

Joel Palmer (1845)

*"September 15 This day we traveled about nine miles, over the main ridge of the Blue Mountains....We halted for the night at Lee's encampment.*

*September 16 We traveled about sixteen miles this day, which brought us to Umatiuo river. Here is an Indian town, the residence of the principal chief of the Caaguas [Cayuse]....*

*September 17 At eight o'clock this morning, the men who had left us at Grand Round for Dr. Whitman's station, rejoined us, accompanied by the doctor and his lady. They came in a two horse wagon, bringing with them a plentiful supply of flour, meal and potatoes. After our party had taken some refreshment, the march was resumed; our visitors accompanying us to our camp four miles down the river. Our present location affords but little grazing. The doctor and lady remained with us during the day; he took occasion to inform us of the many incidents that marked his ten years' sojourn in this wilderness region, of a highly interesting character....*

*September 18 This morning, after breakfast, our worthy guests left us and we took up our line of march traveling down the Umatillo valley for some twelve miles, crossing the stream twice. The road then takes up the bluff to the right, over a high grassy plain. Our encampment was pitched on the bluff on the left of the road. The water required at camp, was packed about one and a half miles, being procured at the base of the bluffs, up which we had to climb. The country is very rolling, covered with dry grass; it is mostly prairie. From this point two snowy peaks appear in view, as also the great valley of the Columbia;..."*

Trail to Fort Walla Walla and Whitman Mission (Figure 6-4)

Directions: Return to Highway 11 and turn right. Head north for about 5.5 miles. Turn left off of Highway 11 at Adams Junction near the McGregor commercial complex. Turn left again at the Adams sign before the grain elevator, then right on Main Street and drive through the small town of Adams.

Continue north out of Adams on Sand Hollow Road. After about 3 miles, turn left on Athena-Holdman Road, then turn right on Havana-Helix Road (no signage) into the small town of Helix. A trail route is probably on top of this ridge after the turn on Havana-Helix Road.

Turn left on Columbia (the first street), right on Harrison Street and drive through Helix; Harrison becomes Vansycle Canyon Road and continues north. The Trail probably followed the ridge to the right of the road.

In about 9 miles turn right on Butler Grade Road (sign) just short of MP15; this is a gravel road. After a few turnings the road goes up hill. At the top of the hill turn right and steeply uphill on a dirt track to a small parking area.

The route described above follows the trail as closely as possible on paved roads from the base of the Blues to the ridge above Butler Grade. Figure 6-4 shows the trail route postulated by Jack Mitchell (NPS Whitman Mission) and others. Above Butler Grade the trail splits with one branch proceeding northwest to Fort Walla Walla and the other doubling back to go to the mission and, perhaps, the HBC farm.

A direct route from the base of the Blues to Fort Walla Walla would have stayed on the ridge just above the Butler Grade Overlook. The route is approximately perpendicular to the road descending the grade, heading northwest. Figure 6-5 shows a possible route and its descent. A recent aerial survey revealed farm roads and old traces that align with this postulated route. The route descends to the Walla Walla River near Zanger Junction and proceeds west to the site of Fort Walla Walla. The descent at Butler Grade makes most sense if a traveler is going to the Whitman Mission or the HBC farm near the base.

Butler Grade Overlook (Figure 6-4).

From here there is a spectacular view of the Walla Walla Valley below. This is a good opportunity to talk about the history of the Walla Walla Valley area including the pre-

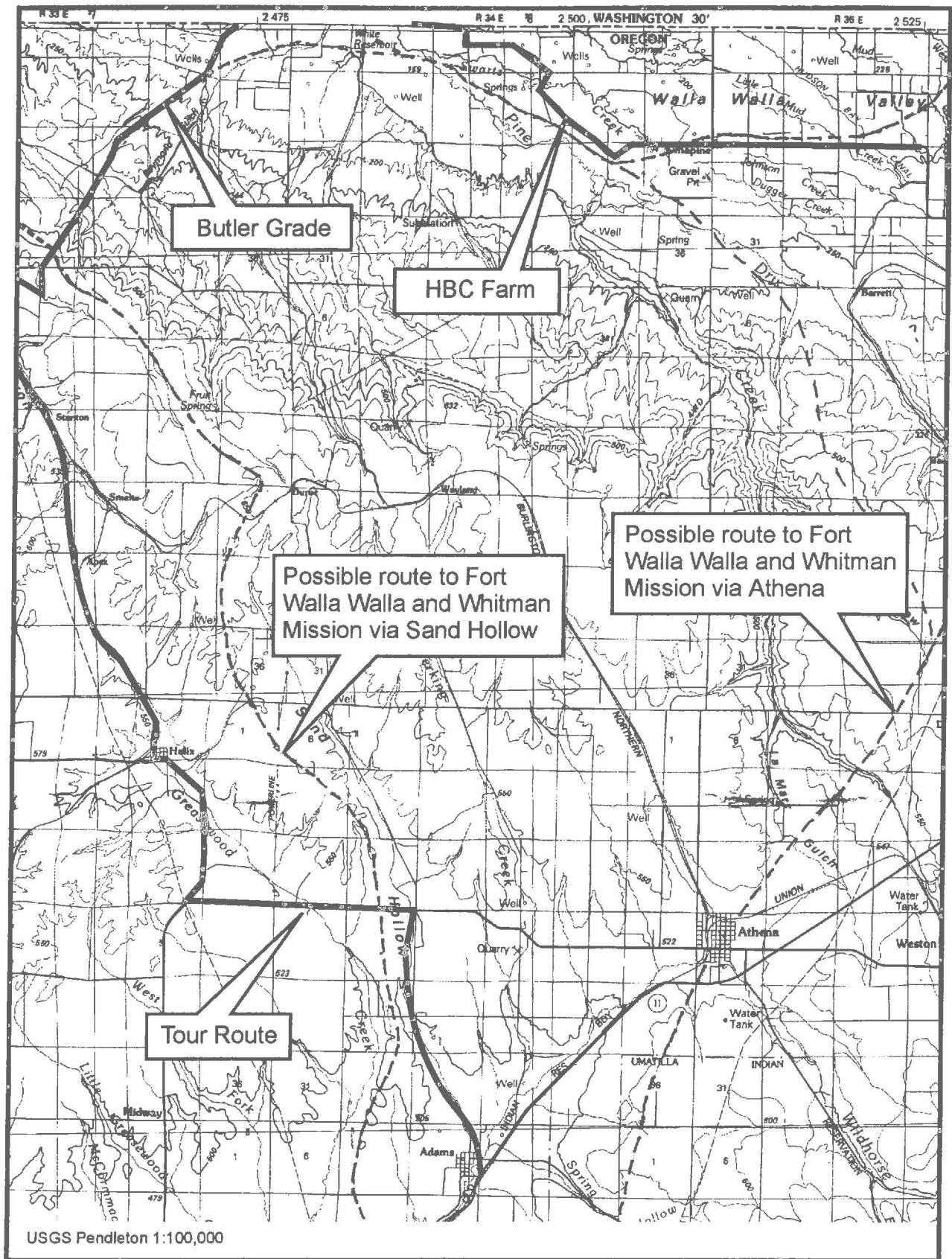


Figure 6-4. Routes to Fort Walla Walla and the Whitman Mission

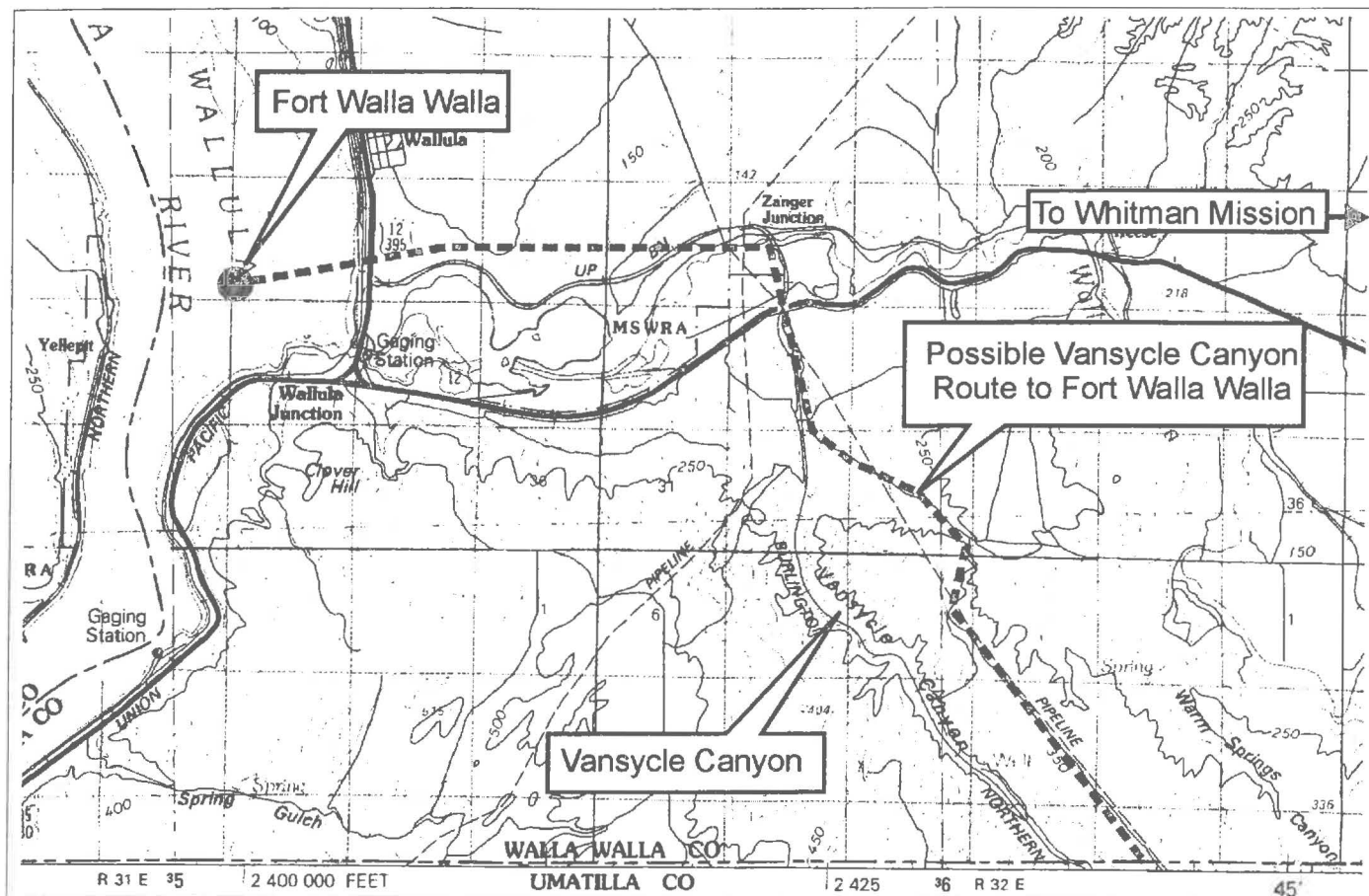


Figure 6-5. Possible Route to Fort Walla Walla (Nez Perce). The dashed line shows the general course of the trail, not the exact route.

trail settlements. Some key events to help place things in perspective are:

- 1805 Lewis and Clark descend the Snake River to the junction with the Columbia
- 1818 Fort Nez Perce (Fort Walla Walla) established by the Northwest Co.
- 1821 Acquisition of the Northwest Company by Hudson's Bay Company
- 1832 Nathaniel Wyeth expedition
- 1836 Arrival of Whitman, Spalding and Gray at Fort Walla Walla
- 1842 First emigration to Oregon; wagons abandoned at Fort Hall
- 1843 First large emigrant train
- 1846 US-Canadian boundary established at 49<sup>th</sup> parallel; Oregon Terr. defined
- 1847 Death of the Whitmans and others at Wailatpu; hostages ransomed by Ogden
- 1853 Washington Territory established
- 1856 US Army builds new Fort Walla Walla in present Walla Walla
- 1858 Indian Wars

If it is a clear day, you may be able to spot the Whitman Mission in the distance, several miles northeast. The Trail heading for the mission came down the hill a little to the right of this spot. Some parties may have followed this route, but not headed to the mission; instead they went west to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Walla Walla. The site of Fort Walla Walla can be indicated in the distance along with the bend of the Columbia River. If fortunate, the volcanoes of the Cascades may be visible.

#### Route to HBC Farm (Figure 6-4)

Directions: Proceed down Butler Grade Road, a very steep hill, to the valley below. The road jogs right, then left; jog right on to State Line Road, driving east. State Line Road jogs left, then right and right again at the feed lot, then left and becomes Umapine Road. At the corner where State Line Road turns into Umapine Road there is a marker for the Hudson's Bay Company horse ranch and farms.

We will not be visiting the site of the original Fort Walla Walla since there is little to see. The site is beneath the reservoir behind McNary Dam on the Columbia River. However, the fort is extremely important historically since it was the objective of the first travelers over the trail. Many descended the Columbia from this site (including the Whitmans). Just north of the site of Fort Walla Walla is the junction of the Snake River with the Columbia. Here, Lewis and Clark entered the Columbia in 1805. On the eastward journey in 1806 they traversed the area south of the Snake to the mouth of the Clearwater.

There have been two Fort Walla Walla, the Hudson's Bay Company post at the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers and the 1858 U.S. Army post at the western outskirts of the present city of Walla Walla. The present Fort Walla Walla Museum is located on the grounds of the later fort.

The earlier Fort Walla Walla, originally called Fort Nez Perce, was built in 1818 by the Northwest Company and taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company when the two merged in 1821. The first fort was destroyed by floods in the early 1840s, rebuilt of adobe and finally abandoned in 1855. Emigrants describe the early fort:

*"...arrived at Fort Walla Walla on October 18...the fort was built of upright timbers set in the ground. The timbers were some fifteen or eighteen feet high. A small stockade, with the stations or bastions at the corners for lookouts...." [John Ball (1832)]*

*"...the fort is of no strength merely sufficient to frighten Indians mounting 2 small cannon having two bastions at the opposite corners of a square enclosure there were 6 whites here." [Nathaniel J. Wyeth (1832)]*

*"It is situated at the mouth of the Walla Walla River, from which it takes its name. It commands a view of the Columbia River, otherways the prospect is dreary. Above and below are high bluffs, while near to the fort are sand banks...and at the fort there is not a tree in sight on either side of the Columbia River...at the fort we could procure no eatables. Could only get a little tobacco,...We went two miles below the fort, where we found a little grass and encamped there for the purpose of waiting until Monday to trade." [James W. Nesmith (1843)]*

*"At this place on the Columbia was another Hudson Bay post, Fort Walla Walla. It was built mainly of sun-dried bricks, and the plan was about the same as of the Hudson Bay forts we had passed on our journey....Mr. McKinley was in charge of the post...and was very kind and accommodating to the emigrants. There were many Indians here,...and these were often visitors at our camp... [Jesse A. Applegate (1843)]*

The Walla Walla Valley was the site of a large HBC farming and ranching operation from 1821 to 1856. The "farm" is described on the sign as extending from the Snake to Umatilla and the Blue Mountains to the Columbia. Such farms are typical of the HBC's self-sufficient operations.

Route to the Whitman Mission (Figure 6-6)

Directions: Continue on Umapine Road through the town of Umapine. Continue through intersection with stop sign. At this point the trail was on the north (left) and about parallel to the road. At Triangle Station Road turn left. There is a sign for Walla Walla. The trail crossed the road here.

Proceed to a "T" intersection. Turn right on Sunquist Road. It jogs left then right (east). The trail stayed south of the little bluff. The road jogs left and becomes Winesap Road. The trail was maybe to the right.

Turn right on State Line Road and left at the stop sign. There is a sign "Oregon Thanks You." Where the road bends right go straight ahead to the stop sign and turn left on Spring Dale.

At the next stop sign, turn right (not sharp right) on Beet Road. This is about where the trail came across the Walla Walla River.

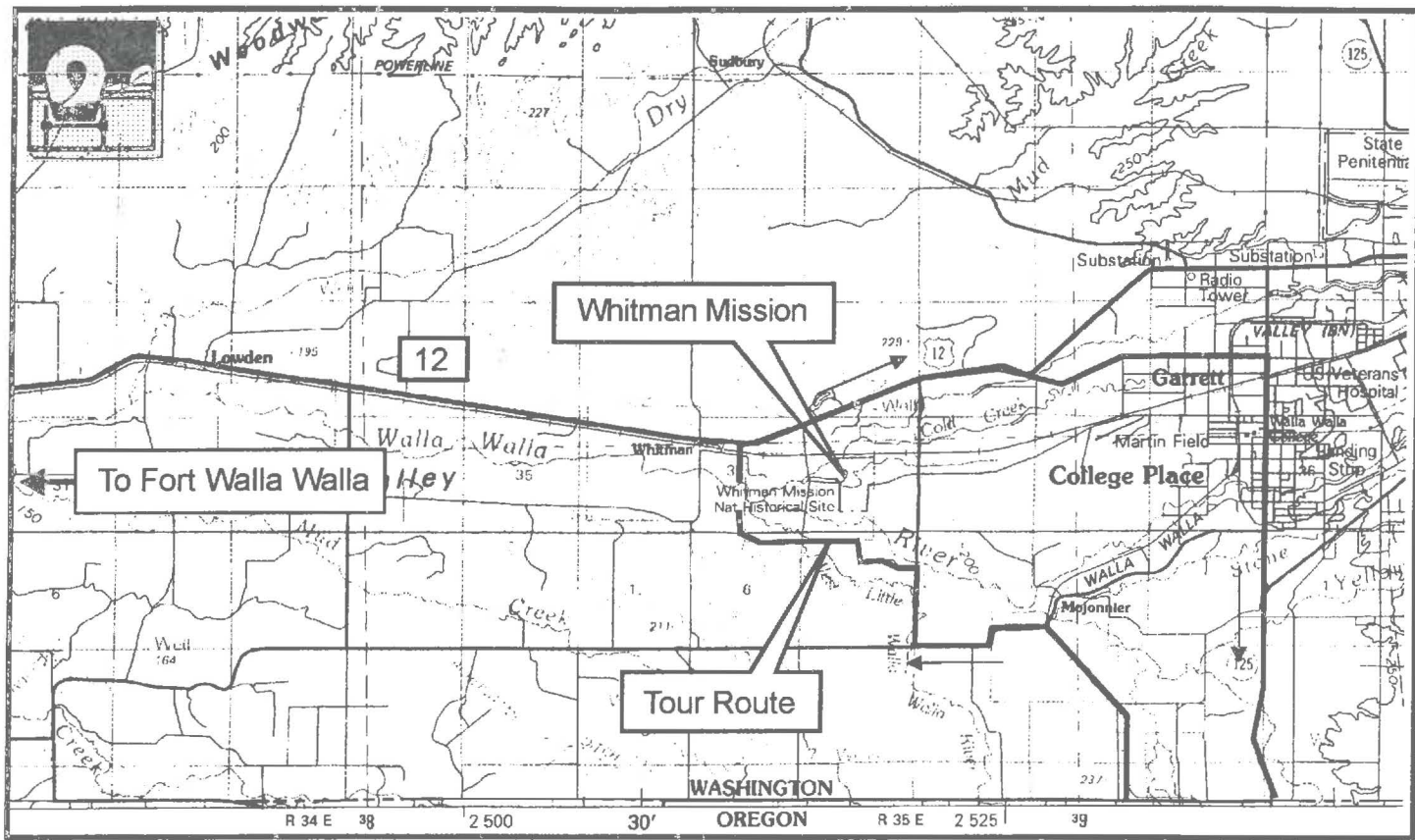
Go to a "Y" junction and turn left on Mission Road; it bends right, then left. The trail was a little left; it went around the hill and into the mission.

Turn right on Last Chance Road, left on Stovall Road, right at the "Y" and right into the mission.

The story of the Whitmans and the Mission is best told by the exhibits at the interpretive center. Take plenty of time to visit the exhibits in the Visitor Center and to walk around the partially restored mission grounds. Climb the hill to the monument for a view of the Blue Mountains. Supposedly the Whitmans could look from the mission and see the emigrant wagons coming down from the Blues. Take a look from the monument hill and see if you can spot Butler Grade or the hill in the direction of Milton-Freewater.

John D. Unruh, Jr., in "The Plains Across" says of the Whitman Mission:

"Despite the extra miles required to travel to Whitman's off-trail mission, it figured more prominently as a source of supply and relief than the more strategically located Methodist mission at The Dalles... At Waiilatpu, though the reception accorded needy overlanders was invariably hospitable--so hospitable, in fact, that in 1844 long-suffering Narcissa Whitman began complaining openly about her husband's policy of providing wintering overlanders with the best



USGS Walla Walla 1:100,000

Figure 6-6. Whitman Mission Area

portions of the meager mission fare. Some 1843 emigrants did charge Whitman with deception, claiming that he had induced them to travel out of their way with promises of cheap provisions that he instead sold at exorbitant rates. But setting prices high enough to cover the expenses of raising or freighting the merchandise in question was standard practice at all Oregon missions. Moreover, whenever emigrants claimed to be without funds Whitman provided them with free foodstuffs, even when his mission colleagues were convinced the overlanders were lying. A competent physician, Whitman also provided medical services at his station for the sick and injured and for pregnant emigrant women lingering at Waiilatpu until their babies were born.

But Waiilatpu was probably most important as a winter oasis for those arriving too late in the travel year to complete their journey safely--or those too sick to do so. Year after year the Whitmans struggled to furnish sufficient provender for the needy families descending upon them and for the trail-orphaned children accepted at the mission. In 1843, for example, a large number of destitute emigrants prevailed upon the Whitmans' magnanimity. The next year Marcus and Narcissa adopted seven emigrant children whose parents had died enroute. In 1846 six trail-weary families and eight young men wintered at the mission. By late November of 1847, fifty-four of that fall's emigrants had already joined the mission personnel for the winter when Cayuse Indians suddenly murdered the Whitmans, three of their adopted children, an assistant missionary, and seven wintering overlanders. An additional forty-seven emigrants and mission residents were held hostage for several weeks before being ransomed by Hudson's Bay Company employees."

Emigrants describe the mission:

"...Arrived at Doct. Whitman's after crossing 4 creeks...Many of the emigrants here...little provisions at Whitman's... [John Boardman (1843)]

"When we parted with you, we took our journey for Oregon, and had a very pleasant trip, but traveled very slowly. When we reached the Umatilly river we turned and went to Dr. Whitman's, where we spent the winter. We had a very pleasant winter. On the first of March, 1846, we started for the Wallamette Valley, and in thirteen days we had completed our boat, and then started down the Columbia, and arrived at Oregon city on the 24th of April..." [Josiah Osborne (1845)].

In 1847 Osborne returned to the mission to build some mills. He and his family were there, some of them sick with the measles, when the Indians attacked. He and his family escaped by hiding under some floorboards and, when things quieted down, leaving the mission and walking to Fort Walla Walla for help.

#### Walla Walla (Figure 6-6)

Directions: Upon leaving the Mission we will proceed to the main highway to Walla Walla, Highway 12. Turn right when leaving the mission entrance road and then right on Highway 12 toward Walla Walla. Turn right on Wallula Road and right on North College Avenue.

At the state line there is an intersection with a blinker light. About 300 yards east of this intersection (behind a nursery business) a road turns north across the Walla Walla River; this is the site of Peppers Crossing. Just south from this crossing is a low rut swale, which may be the Oregon Trail, or perhaps The Dalles Military Road.

#### Milton-Freewater (Figure 6-7)

Directions: From Highway 11 entering Milton-Freewater, turn right on Broadway, left on Elizabeth, and left on Main Street. Park in Oregon National Guard parking lot for a photo stop.

The concrete marker in front of the office is at the spot where Ezra Meeker placed a monument on May 14, 1910. His original monument was a pipe filled with rocks, and with rocks heaped around the base to hold it in place. Local school children brought rocks to help install the monument. When landscaping his office property, Dr. Garston found remnants of the original monument. The present concrete monument has a carving of the original monument on it.

Ezra Meeker. In October 1851 Ezra Meeker and his bride of six months left their home near Indianapolis, Indiana, and traveled to Iowa in an ox-drawn covered wagon. In the spring of 1852 the young couple, now with a baby, started from Council Bluffs to join other emigrants traveling the Oregon Trail. They reached Portland in October 1852.

The next spring they traveled north to the Puget Sound area, where they first settled on McNeil Island, then in the Puyallup Valley, where Meeker built a log cabin. Here he