

HISTORIC PACK TRAILS OF THE SISKIYOU

A Project of the KLAMATH-SISKIYOU TRAILFINDER

THE HAPPY CAMP TRAIL & EARLY BOTANIZING

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The old Waldo/Happy Camp Trail went from Happy Camp over the divide to Waldo in the Illinois Valley, crossing below the summit of Little Greyback Mountain (CA), where a fork in the trail leads down to Poker Flat (Big Meadows). February, 2012.

THE HISTORIC HAPPY CAMP TRAIL

*Friends in distant lands, mothers in far off homes, may still be wondering, often with a sigh,
what has become of loved sons who years ago sought their fortunes in the land of gold,
but who laid their bones on the banks of the Klamath and left no tidings behind.
Alas, how many a sad history is hidden in the neglected and forgotten graves
that are scattered among the wild mountains that face the Pacific!*

William Henry Brewer, Klamath River, 1863

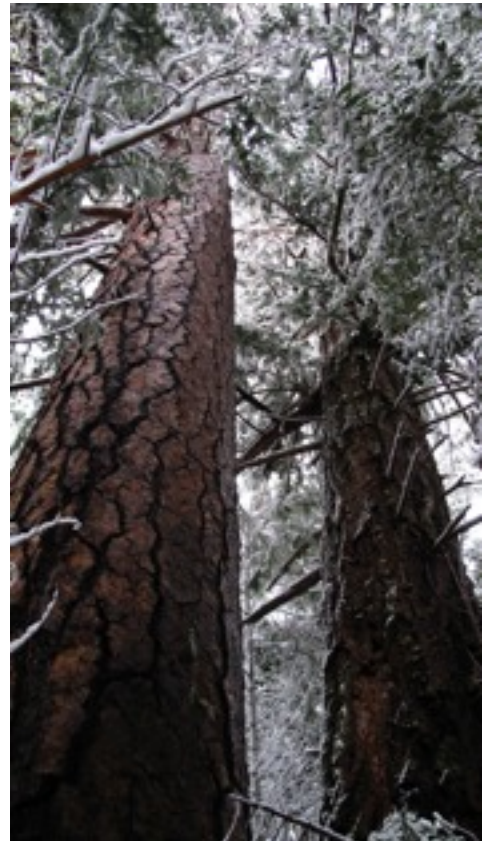
The Karuk, Takelma, and Illinois Valley bands pioneered trails across the Klamath mountains. These Native Americans traded goods and practiced seasonal foraging at places like the "Big Meadows" (Poker Flat), because they were close to the summit of the Siskiyou. Along the divide of the great Klamath and Illinois river watersheds, goods were more easily traded with neighboring tribes for thousands of years. Goods were exchanged up and down the coast. Some of the coastal tribes were at one time, among the wealthiest in California. One of these trails later became known as the Happy Camp Trail.

Skirts, basketry, and buckskin made by the Karuk were sought after by the Takelma. According to Molly Orton - one of the last members to recall the old Takelma culture - mortar hoppers, cooking and eating vessels, winnowing and parching trays, seed beaters, carrying baskets, storage baskets, and cradles were some of the forms made. "We used to buy them from Happy Camp (Karuk) people. They made the best ones! Arrows were carried at the side in quivers (Drucker 1937)."

In 1851, George Gibbs, for the expedition of Indian Agent Colonel Redick M'Kee, noted, "The Indians of the Illinois Valley are said to speak the language of this part of the Klamath (the Shaste'), and not that of the Rogue's river." Between the "Batinko", or Indian Creek, and the Illinois River, "the fact of a pretty intimate connection between the Indians on the upper part of both rivers, is clear."

It is well known that the Takelma, who lived along the Rogue

Happy Camp Trail



April, 2012



Exploring the old Happy Camp Trail. The trail has deep-wide indentations made long ago by pack mules.

River, traded with the Klamath, but there is little evidence they occupied the Illinois Valley year-round. The two cultures share many similarities, and certain bands of Takelma may have seasonally exploited resources there. Talsalsan is a place in the Illinois Valley, along the Illinois River (Dalsalsarn), where the Ti-wi-kh falls are, upriver. Takelmas would go there to buy dried salmon, play shinny (a ball game), and gamble at times when staples were running low (Gray 1987).

In southwest Oregon, “During the warmer months of the year, men wore merely a deerskin apron and one-piece moccasins. Women’s apparel consisted of a two-piece buckskin skirt (Drucker 1940), and a round basket-hat twined of white grass, which was generally imported from either the Shasta (Sapir 1907) or the Karok in California (Drucker 1940) .”

Gold was first discovered in the Klamath region in 1848, by Major Pierson B. Reading. The find signaled a wave of miners, who slowly pushed up the Klamath from Trinidad and Humboldt bays, via the Trinidad Trail. A miner named Walter Van Dyke, who accompanied the first wave, said that, "In the summer of 1852 the miners pushed on up the Klamath a long distance above the mouth of the Salmon, and by fall a large number had gathered on a plateau at the mouth of a stream putting down from the northwest, which they named “Happy Camp (Dyke 1891).”

Described by Gibbs, October 18, 1851, “Happy Camp” is the station at Murderer’s bar where Indian Creek flows into the Klamath.

“Some seventy persons make this their head-quarters; a portion of them being, however, almost always absent, either in packing, or mining, and prospecting, at a distance. They were, at this time, living in tents, but preparations were making to erect log-houses for the winter.”





The old Waldo-Happy Camp Trail was arguably the fastest, easiest way over the Siskiyou summit, from Happy Camp to the Illinois Valley.

According to Dyke, “They worked on this stream, and over the divide on streams flowing northwesterly into Rogue River. The mines on these latter were quite rich, and attracted a rush of miners.” Dyke is referring to rich gold deposits found over the divide from Happy Camp, on streams flowing into the Illinois River, a tributary of the Rogue River.

The town of Waldo was founded around the

mines of Sailors Diggins, in the Illinois Valley, and the trail up Indian Creek from Happy Camp, would soon be improved and called the Waldo Trail (later the Happy Camp Trail). In A. G. Walling’s, *Josephine County History* of 1884, Walling describes the first discovery of gold in Oregon. “In 1851, several prospectors came north from the Klamath river, and passing over the divide into the valley of the Illinois, found gold to the west of that stream, in the sands of a creek which flows into the Illinois a few miles below Kirbyville.”

On an 1853 Map of Lower Oregon and Upper California (see map), the original Waldo or Happy Camp Trail, like so many of the old trails, appears to have pre-dated the miners. “The early Indians, of course, had trails and it seemed they picked the best and most practical route (McClendon 1980).” The earliest record of trails in the region comes from Jedidiah Smith, who in 1828, “walked or rode horses or mules following the uncertain trails used by the indians over mountains, across plains and valleys, or along the coast (Crescent City American 1964)...”

The miners from the Klamath, “were near to, and in some of them over, the Oregon line, and the distance to them from Trinidad or Humboldt Bay was so great that it became necessary, if possible, to find a nearer base of supplies. The roadstead and anchorage southeasterly of Point St. George was hit upon, and in the spring of 1853 a town was laid out there called Crescent City, from the crescent shape of the beach (Dyke 1891).”

CRESCENT CITY and the COLD SPRING MOUNTAIN TRAIL

By 1853, Crescent City was set to become a major supplier of goods to the Illinois Valley and interior mining camps. A pack trail was established linking Crescent City with the Illinois Valley and Jackson-

1853 MAP OF LOWER OREGON AND UPPER CALIFORNIA - THOMAS TENNETT



ville. This pack trail, called the Cold Spring Mountain Pack Trail, was originally an Indian trail. It was improved by a party of men from Sailors' Diggings, and by September 1852, the trail was good enough for packs animals. "On leaving Crescent City, this trail crossed Elk Valley, passed over Howland Hill, descended Mill Creek, crossed Smith River at Catching's Ferry (Bearss 1969)," and continued along the north bank of Smith River to present day Gasquet. From there, the trail climbed Elk Camp Ridge to Cold Spring Mountain, then north along the ridge to Oregon Mountain, over it and down to the Illinois Valley to Sailor Diggings (Ruffel 1995).

According to the *Gasquet Ranger District History*, "By 1854 there were the following "hotels" along the trail between what is now Gasquet and Sailors' Diggings. The Cold Spring House, was about a half mile this side of the top of Cold Spring Mountain, Patrick and Johnson was at Elk Camp, Cain's Ranch was at Cedar Trough Camp, Shelly's Ranch, later called Robin's Nest, was nicknamed Robber's Roost by the packers that used the trail." On November 1, 1854, The Crescent City Herald reported that there were 27,000 mule pack loads packed over the trail "in the past seven months (Ruffell 1995)."

Between 1852-1853, rich gold veins found in the Illinois Valley created a tremendous market for merchants eager to sell commodities such as tools, clothing, food, and liquor (Chase and Helms 1959). The new Cold Springs Mountain Trail attracted upwards of 500 mules per week out of Crescent City for the Illinois Valley. In June 1854 the Crescent City Herald announced, "Our present trail [to Oregon] needing some repairs in different places;" the sum of \$1,700 was subscribed by the citizens in a few hours, "to be applied to that purpose," and seven men were sent to repair the Cold Spring Mountain Trail (Bearss 1969).

In 1858, the Crescent City Plank Road replaced the Cold Spring Mountain Trail. It was a corduroy road built with split redwood planks laid across its width. This road allowed stagecoaches and ox-drawn wagons to haul supplies from Crescent City to the Illinois Valley for the first time. This road is now called the McGrew Trail (Ruffell 1995). Today an 8.2 mile section of the original Cold Spring Mountain Trail, called the Elk Camp Ridge Trail, still exists today. The trail is located in the Six Rivers National Forest close to Gasquet, and still attracts visitors over 150 years later!

KELSEY TRAIL

Meanwhile, a military garrison stationed at Fort Jones in the Quartz Valley, needed a better and shorter way to replenish their base with supplies. The troops were from Fort Vancouver, Washington

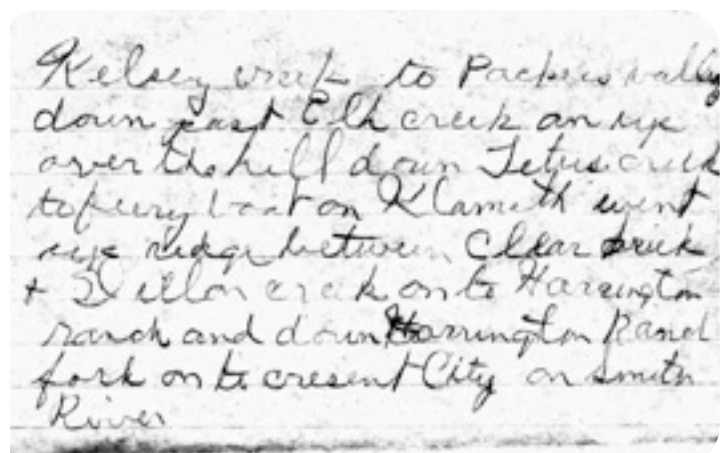
and they were bringing supplies in on the long pioneer road through Oregon. They needed a more direct route to the coast, so they organized a group of Indian scouts and soldiers to find their way to the coast. The trip took three weeks to scout and blaze a trail all the way to Crescent City, over 100 miles.

The U.S. War Department was contacted and asked for permission to build the trail. They agreed and allocated \$5,600 for the project. Ben Kelsey, a retired lieutenant colonel from the Engineers showed up and was offered the job. He left and returned with a large crew of Chinese workers. They followed the snow back into the mountains and had it built by the end of the season (McNeill 1969).

In 1855, Ben Kelsey completed construction of the long pack trail linking Crescent City with Happy Camp, Fort Jones (Quartz Valley) and Yreka. The Kelsey Trail would allow pack trains to transport gold from the interior mines to Crescent City, where it was shipped by sea to San Francisco (Ruffell 1995). The government made a deal with people that ran a store at ferry point, to build and operate a ferry on a contract basis. During the winter that year the government also contracted a bunch of Spanish pack trains, "to take on the job of supplying the soldiers at Fort Jones and wherever else the army has establishments in Siskiyou and Del Norte Counties. That continued on until the army finally moved away from Fort Jones and pulled their trains off the road," in 1858 (McNeill 1969). Still, pack trains continued use of the Kelsey trail to supply the Klamath region for over twenty-five years.

As mining settlements in the Illinois Valley grew, wagon roads were laid out from Grants Pass and Jacksonville, to better meet the needs of the valley. In Grants Pass, there was even talk of a railroad (finished many years later), that would ship supplies throughout the region. Right away, the miners from Indian Town and Happy Camp combined forces and constructed the Waldo and Holland pack trails over the Siskiyou. This slowed down traffic along the Kelsey Trail from the ferry at Ferry Point to Crescent City, as Indian Town and Happy Camp transferred most of their business to the Holland and Waldo trails. The Kelsey Trail was "still being used to carry all the flour, butter, cheese, bacon, corn pork - all the products of the valley - down into the mining country below Somes Bar (Six Rivers NF 1970)."

Robertson, an old packer on the Kelsey Trail, passed down to a friend these written directions from Quartz Valley: "Kelsey creek to



Packer's Valley down past Elk Creek - an eye over the hill down Titus creek to ferry boat on Klamath - went eye ridge between Clear creek & Dillon creek on to Harrington ranch and down Harrington Ranch fork on to Crescent City on Smith River (Silva)." The Kelsey pack trail and the Cold Springs Mountain Trail created a loop for pack trains, from the harbor at Crescent City through the rugged interior.



Pack train along the Kelsey Trail near Ferry's Point. Photo by Hazel J.

Augustus (Gus) Meamber spent the greater part of his life operating a pack train in Siskiyou County. For over thirty years he packed flour, hay, and other supplies from Scott Valley to settlements along the Klamath and Scott rivers. His grandson Fred Meamber writes that, "two or three times a season he (Gus) made a trip through the Marble Mountains over the old Kelsey Trail to Crescent City for a load of general merchandise. Another trip was up the old Waldo Trail from Happy Camp to Waldo to pick up flour which had come from Jacksonville."

George Smith, one of the last of the old timers to recall the Kelsey Trail, went to work for Gus at sixteen years of age. He describes a slightly different route than Robertson and there continues to be debate on the original route. More likely there were several connecting routes up Kelsey and Shackleford creeks, one for wintertime and another for summer travel. Perhaps one of the sections had to be abandoned at some point.

Smith traces the route of a 19 day pack trip to Crescent City and back. "The first night on the Kelsey



Packers along the original Kelsey Trail followed much of the same route as one being reconstructed today for backpackers. This section along Canthook Creek has recently been re-opened for hikers.

Trail they camped at the head of Shackleford Creek (Marble Mountain Wilderness). They camped where there was feed, and usually a day's trip covered 10 or 12 miles in seven or eight hours' time. The bell boy built a fire and got water heating for supper while the packers unloaded the mules. The cargoes and saddles were placed on the ground in a semi-circle, each cargo behind its own saddle. In the morning the mules, led by the bell mare, would take their places beside their perspective saddles. Packing was

a continuous performance. Gus Meamber's pack trains ran from twenty-five to seventy mules. The average load to a mule was 300 pounds.

Their day began at 3:00 or 3:30 in the morning when the packers rustled up the mules while their handyman, the bell boy, started breakfast. The second day on the Kelsey Trail took them out the divide, over the ridge from Elk Lake to Whisky Camp. The third day they continued on the divide over the Marble to Cuddihy Valley. A short drive continuing on the summit brought them to Haypress Meadows for the fourth night (Grass grew abundantly and there was an old hand hay press here for baling hay). The trail forked at Haypress... They took the right fork which came out at the Coon Creek Ford, one-half mile east of Cottage Grove." Then there was the excitement of swimming their mules across the Klamath river, the next morning.

About a mile this side of Cottage Grove the Kelsey Trail continued up the mountain past the head of Blue Creek to Bear Valley where they camped. On the seventh day they went around on the South Fork of the Smith River, and on the eighth down into Bald Hill, about 12 miles from Crescent City." Another source finds that from Bear Valley, packers would head to the William's Ranch (Gunbarrel Camp) for the night, on the next day they would head to Big Flat, on Hurdy Gurdy Creek. From Big Flat they would travel up to Murphy's (later the St. Charles Hotel), atop the Little Bald Hills. From there, it would take one more day to reach Crescent City (Six Rivers NF 1970).

Smith's version of events seems extraordinary, considering the steep topography and speed in which they reportedly traveled. "The ninth day they put up their loads for the return trip. They came back as far as the mouth of the South Fork of the Smith on the tenth day; and on the eleventh to Gasquet's near the North Fork of the Smith. Crossing the river they came along the coastal range to the Watering Box; then on to Mendes Place at the head of Illinois Valley; up through Waldo onto the old Waldo Trail, and to the foot of the Siskiyou on the fourteenth day; to the top of the Siskiyou; down to Happy Camp; to Grider's on the seventeenth day; the Woodpile (over the top of Scott Bar Mountain between Scott Bar and the Meamber Ranch); and finally home to the Meamber Ranch on the nineteenth day."



Old Waldo/ Happy Camp Trail, worn-down from years of pack mules.

According to Jim McNeill, an early Forest Service employee who documented the Kelsey Trail, “1909 ended the packing of gold from the Klamath River country and durable goods from Crescent City, so the old trail got practically no use until the early 30’s when the Forest Service decided it should be re-opened and maintained. They did a good job brushing out, regrading, and taking all the logs out of it and maintaining it for a number of years.” Pack animals were brought in to haul supplies to help fight fires and to get firefighters in and out of the fire camps quickly.

The trail eventually became overgrown again, eroded, and some sections were logged over. McNeill relented that, “For every mile of timber access road built, a few more pages are torn from the early day history of Siskiyou and Del Norte counties. For every turn of the logs the roaring D-8s haul across the old trail, a few hundred mule tracks are obliterated from the memory of men.”

During the development of the Redwood National Park general management plan, park planners expressed interest in using the old Kelsey Trail as a connecting route between Redwood National Park and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Today that dream is becoming a reality, thanks to resident Clarke Moore, Six Rivers National Forest, and the California Conservation Corps for their work building the Coast to Crest Trail. Moore stumbled upon a lost section of the old trail and got the idea to resurrect it for hikers and equestrians. Moore and Forest Service employees scrambled through dense brush and thickets that had overgrown the trail. Some stretches were too steep for backpackers and other sections were eroded from landslides, and needed to be rerouted (Livingston 2011).



The South Kelsey Trail today, over looking the Wild & Scenic South Fork Smith River, is perfect for backpacking.

This National Recreation Trail will soon be opened from Crescent City over the Little Bald Hills Trail to the South Fork Smith River, then upriver along newly constructed trail segments to the upper South Kelsey Trailhead. From here the scenic trail climbs up to Baldy Peak in the Siskiyou Wilderness, and then heads down the West Fork Clear Creek to the Clear Creek Trail, in the direction of Young’s Valley. The trail crosses the Siskiyou Wilderness to reach Poker Flat, where a new proposed trail will soon connect the Siskiyou and Red Buttes Wilderness areas,

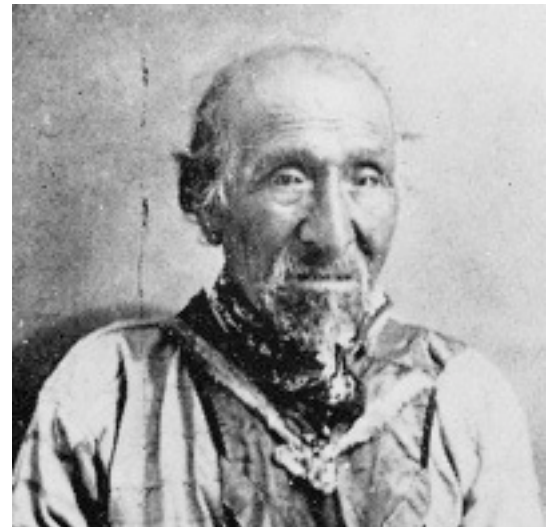
crossing over the old Happy Camp Trail near Little Greyback Mountain (CA). The trail then heads south through the Red Buttes to the Pacific Crest Trail using existing trail.

An even longer trail through the Klamath Mountains has been proposed by Michael Kauffmann, author of *Conifer Country*. The 400 mile-long Bigfoot Trail would pass 32 different species of conifers, crossing 6 Wilderness Areas, one National Park, and one State Park. The trail will begin near the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness and connect with the Pacific Crest and Coast to Crest trails.

A WAR FOR GOLD

By 1855, hostilities between miners and native americans reached a boiling point. On January 1855, miners along the Klamath, “began to desert their claims and rally on the camps for protection, while the Indians removed their women and children to the mountains.” In January 1855, miners held a meeting at Orleans Bar, where it was agreed upon, to “disarm the Indians and to take vigorous action against whites suspected or found guilty of selling arms to the redmen. Persons hereafter detected selling firearms to Indians were to have their heads shaved, receive 25 lashes, and be banished from the camps (Bearss 1969).” The creation of the Klamath River Reservation by executive order, and the reluctance of the government to send army troops, helped to relieve much of the tension.

In Oregon, tensions there led to full-scale warfare. After prolonged fighting, white residents of the Rogue and Illinois Valleys, demanded their removal. Under the leadership of Chief John of the Applegates, and Chief Limpy of the Illinois band, these “uncivilized natives” were able to hold out for months against the combined forces of the U.S. Army and the Territorial Militia. In 1856, the last vestiges of Indian resistance finally surrendered at Big Bend, along the lower Rogue River. After this decisive battle, the U.S. Army “declared it to be the hardest fought, and the price in dead and wounded the most costly, of any engagement ever fought on the Pacific Coast (Booth 1997).”



Tecumtum (“Elk Killer”), also known as Chief John, was one of the most skilled and cunning war strategists in Pacific Northwest history. He led a band of Applegates called Etch-ka-taw-wah.

The campaign to remove native people from the area, was not without controversy, as Sergeant Jones under Colonel Buchanan commented in his diary printed in Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, September 1856. “I can’t help thinking,” says the sergeant, “that if a few adventurers will go as far ahead of all civilization, and scatter themselves through the labyrinths of the mountain vastnesses, where the elk, the grizzly bear, and the Indians have retired to make

their last stand against the gold-hunting, bear shooting, and Indian-killing white men, that these said white men have no right to expect the government to send soldiers to war against such an awful country, and such well-wronged Indians.”

He went on to say, “I wish Uncle Sam would end the war by putting all the gold hunters on a reservation, and paying them roundly to stay there, leaving this God-forsaken country to the Indians (Booth 1997).”

The great Chief John, when asked why he “waged war” for so long under such impossible circumstances, replied that he had done so to save the lives of his people, that he had lost more of his warriors in one year of “peace” than he had in two years of war. The great chief John and his son were later sent to the infamous Alcatraz prison, but were later pardoned (Booth 1997). Southern Oregon tribes were marched to less desirable places further north, to the Siletz or Grande Ronde reservations.

WILLIAM HENRY BREWER



Brewer Party of 1864 - James T. Gardiner, Richard Cotter, William H. Brewer (sitting), and Clarence King. *Up and Down California in 1860-1864; The Journal of William H. Brewer.*

The gold and glory began to elude the large numbers of miners, and by the 1860's and 70's it became harder and harder to find gold. Because gold strikes became sporadic and strikes were made in far off places - miners slowly returned from the hills.

In 1863, William Henry Brewer of the California State Geological Survey, traveled the Klamath river country and noted, "The population has not entirely left this portion of the river, however. Here and there may be seen a white man, and industrious Chinamen patiently ply with rockers for the yellow dust." He found many native people had survived the initial onslaught and accompanying disease.

Brewer heard many a sad tale from white miners along the way. "These histories I so often run against here sadden me and make me pity the poor wretch

who makes his grand end and aim of life the acquisition of gold, and who is under the influence of the insane desire to grow suddenly rich.”

Brewer traveled from Fort Jones, downstream along the Klamath to find, "Happy Camp is a group or village of miners, with hotel, saloon, etc., but the place looks on its decline. We merely passed through it, left the river here, and struck north up Indian Creek for twelve miles. There were no houses until we reached Indian-town, where we spent the night. There is some mining here, but not what there once was, the place like all the rest is falling into piteous dilapidation. We stopped at a miserable hole, once a "hotel." Our horses had no hay so they gnawed their ropes and the wooden posts. We fared a little better--we got some salt pork and biscuit.”



Take the old Happy Camp Trail from the Illinois Valley to the crest of the Siskiyou, below Little Greyback Mtn. (CA).



South facing slopes help keep the trail clear of snow.

On October 27th 1863, Brewer traveled from the Klamath over the Happy Camp Trail (Waldo Trail), to the Illinois Valley. From Indian-town "we crossed the Siskiyou Mountains to Sailor Diggings, just over the line in Oregon. Our trail led up a hill some three thousand feet or more above our starting point in the morning and stopping place at night--a tremendous hill. The views were very fine. The stupendous canyons--those of Klamath River and its tributaries--the snowy form of Mount Shasta in the distance, the rugged peaks of the Siskiyou, some of them spotted with snow, the view far into Oregon--all were beautiful. We struck the head of Illinois River and followed it down to Sailor Diggings...Waldo, as it is officially called, is a mining town in Josephine County, Oregon, but so near the state line that for a time it voted in California.”

EARLY BOTANY EXPEDITIONS



Very few people have ever heard of the old Happy Camp Trail, let alone hiked it. Yet, this trail holds an important place in the history of this region.

Ironically, Brewer did not find or recognize a new species of spruce endemic to the area, *Picea breweriana* (Brewer Spruce), that would later bear his name. In 1862, he reportedly received a branch of the weeping spruce from Josiah Whitney, who found it growing near the Castle Crags. Brewer found it near Mt. Shasta the following year and collected a branchlet, but without any cones, Sereno Watson, co-author with Brewer on the *Botany of California* (1876-1880), could not describe this new species.

Brewer Spruce, like much of the area's flora; escaped submersion, glaciation,

and volcanism in a relatively stable environment for at least 100 million years (Whittaker, 1961; Irwin, 1966). Around 3,500 plants live in the Klamath-Siskiyou region, 280 of them are endemic (Villa-Lobos, 2003). This mountain range is a refuge in that it harbors species at the northern limit of their range with other species at their southern limit and species from the Cascades and Sierra Nevada (Whittaker, 1960).

THOMAS JEFFERSON HOWELL

Thomas Jefferson Howell, Oregon's early pioneer botanist, was hiking along the Happy Camp trail in 1884 when he correctly identified the rare Weeping Spruce as a new species. Sereno Watson, describing Howell's specimen, named it after Brewer to "complement" him for his "especial interest in the trees of the coast, rather than its discoverer (Ornduff 2008)."

It was along this same Happy Camp trail that Howell collected two new species for his groundbreaking book, *A Flora of Northwest America: containing brief descriptions of all the known indigenous and naturalized plants growing without cultivation north of california, west of utah, and south of British Columbia*. This remarkable achievement described 3,150 species, of which 89 were newly described by Howell. The book contains two notable entries regarding the Happy Camp Trail. One of the speci-

es, Deer oak (*Quercus sadleriana* R.Br. Campst.) was found, "In moist places... on top of the Siskiyou Mountains near the Happy Camp trail."

The other, Howell's pussytoes (*Howellii* Greene), he discovered growing, "On top of the Siskiyou Mountains along the Happy Camp trail in California perhaps in Oregon farther east." The Illinois Valley contains many unique species of plants discovered by Howell.

THOMAS H. DOUGLAS

In a 1893 botany report titled, *Woodland: THE WEEPING SPRUCE*, by Thomas H. Douglas, he reports taking the Happy Camp Trail to "visit the group of Weeping Spruce *Picea Breweriana* growing on the summit of the Siskiyou Mountains..." The Indian Creek Brewer Spruce Botanical Area was later created to protect Brewer Spruce growing in this area.

Douglas describes, "Owing to heavy rains we did not reach Waldo until about four o'clock next day, where we engaged a guide, saddle-horses and pack-animals, and left for the trees early the morning after, reaching the "Big Meadows", on the summit of the Siskiyou...The trail over which we came was made by a Spanish packer for the transportation of provisions from Waldo, Oregon to Happy



Waldo, Sailors Diggins, Illinois Valley, 1890.

Camp, a mining town in California. It is a fair trail for such a rough country, but it is not macadamized road.

The beauty of the trees far surpassed my expectations. They have the true Spruce form, tall and symmetrical with horizontal branches and a beautiful green color. They have a stately grace in calm weather, but their characteristic impressiveness is only seen when the long flexible branches are undulating in a light breeze or streaming before a gale. The bark of this Spruce is thin, smooth, and reddish in colour; the wood is white and very tough.

"My father left for San Francisco on the second day, but as the trees were seeding heavily, I remained ten days longer and collected 800 lbs of cones, out of which we will get some 20 lbs of fine clean seed, the first, I believe, ever collected. ...the trees were growing on the north side of the highest peaks, where the snow lies 15 feet or 20 feet deep, as the mail carriers signs show, and I can therefore believe the Weeping Spruce will be hardy in most parts of the east (Douglas, 1893)."

WILLIS LINN JEPSON



Willis Jepson with his plant press. The Jepson Herbarium, University of California, Berkeley.

Willis Jepson collected plants along the Happy Camp trail during his epic 1907 Siskiyou Expedition. Jepson described the trail in one of his entries, Waldo to Upper Spring, HAPPY CAMP TRAIL. "From Waldo you take the trail to the left of the general store straight up the hill. One soon runs into the road running to the Queena Brown mine. Cross the river (ford) and take the main road, turning sharply to right. Follow until past a gate with a roof cover and ford the river by a bathhouse. Keep on, until roads fork at buildings, take left, cross river by bridge and keep all left hand roads and trails which takes me straight to the summit of the Siskiyou. By the Happy Camp trail where one passes the Brewer Spruce in its original locality (Jepson 1907)".

Jepson wrote this description of Waldo, "Waldo is a village of a hotel, general store and post office, blacksmith shop, half a dozen shacks or houses. It is hopelessly crude and rough. The surrounding country to the very village is pretty. If on they

would lay out an orderly place and keep the trails of cattle off it-and pigs. In other words such villages in this region are too barnyardy".

Jepson exclaims, "On the Happy Camp trail from Waldo, going towards Happy Camp, above Happy Camp we ran into a hailstorm-the hail stones as big as quail eggs. Our mules at once took shelter under Incense Cedar trees, like Indians! for it is said lightning never strikes *Libocedrus decurrens*".



Many of the older trees, like this Incense Cedar along the Happy Camp Trail, have fire-scars.

In the *Memoirs of the University of California: The Silva of California 1910*, Jepson describes Weeping Spruce he found at the "Head of Indian Creek, Happy Camp Trail across the Siskiyou. The Weeping Spruce was first collected on the headwaters of the east fork of the Illinois River, northern slopes of the Siskiyou Mountains, northern California, just south of Waldo, Oregon, by Thos. Howell, the pioneer botanist of Oregon."

AL HOBART

For over 40 years, Al Hobart lived near the Happy Camp Trail, at a place called Packer's Gulch. Hobart roamed the wild mountain trails and studied botany, beginning in 1931. In the 1960's he wrote a weekly column in the Illinois Valley News, called *Winding Trails*, in which he writes, "Six miles up the old Happy Camp trail, high on the side of Little Greyback and near the top of the divide, is the long-abandoned Porter Cabin. This is one of the places where fairy crosses had been found, according to my informant, and where I optimistically decided to do a bit of prospecting.



This is likely the long abandoned Porter Cabin, described by Hobart.

Fairy crosses, I am told, are metallic crystals that take the form of a cross-not the familiar crucifix, but more the shape of the well-known iron cross, or a plus mark. I later learned they are formed by "twining" of large crystals of combined iron, alumi-

num, and silica (quartz or sand). Sometimes the hexagonal rods, an inch or two long, join in the form of a right-angle cross, sometimes in an X shape.

A quarter mile below the old cabin, where a new road is being built, I heard one of the workers holler a warning, and seconds later a heavy blast went off. As bits of debris began falling down through the trees I dashed for the shelter of a big Douglas-fir. For a short distance I sprinted neck and neck with an old doe, who shot past me like the devil was after her and disappeared in the canyon below (Hobart 1967)."

In another column Hobart writes about a "scowling, bristling Strawberry Mountain," the unofficial name given to the "shape of the bulbous ridge-end as seen from the old Happy Camp Trail. This "ridge-end" forms a "great horseshoe of high ridges and peaks, the closed end of the horseshoe, between Little Greyback and Lookout Mountain, being a portion of the backbone of the Siskiyou (Hobart 1967)."

Hobart would often use the old Happy Camp trail to access Poker Flat. The old trail weaves along south facing slopes and is clear of snow sooner than the old Happy Camp road. "Poker Flat lies in northern Siskiyou County California, five miles or so from the Oregon border. It is a large and beautiful mountain meadow, nearly a mile above sea level, entirely surrounded by rocky wooded ridges and having the appearance of a flattish bowl with a wide dry rim and more or less boggy center. It is a natural wildplant garden with an amazing variety of flowers, some species of which spring bloom immediately after the snow melts and gives them access to the early spring sunshine."

"One of these early bloomers is a miniature bleeding-heart, called steer's head because of the blossom's striking resemblance to the long-horned, long faced head of a retired gentleman cow. The wee plant is only one or two inches high, bearing a single flower, and with a spreading leaf or two that are divided into several short, rather wide segments. It is an oddly fascinating little plant, very rare in our area and a real feast for the eyes of anyone who is at all botany minded. In Poker Flat, the only place I know where it grows, it occupies only a very small area on the edge of the meadow and is so inconspicuous that it is easily overlooked. My attention was first directed to the



Steer's Head Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra uniflora*) at Poker Flat. Photo by Michael Kauffmann.

shy little floral gem by an eagle-eyed fellow enthusiast after I had passed within a few feet of it.”

“When I first saw the little steer's head bleeding heart the snow had mostly gone from Poker Flat and the plants' flowers had already matured and faded. The following year I went much earlier, but was still too late to get a picture of the tiny dwarf in fresh full bloom. Twice, in the early spring of '62 and '63, I tried to slip up on the wary little plant's blind side by hiking in to the (Poker) Flat from my Cabin over the old Happy Camp trail, a round trip of over twenty miles, but without success (Hobart 1964).”

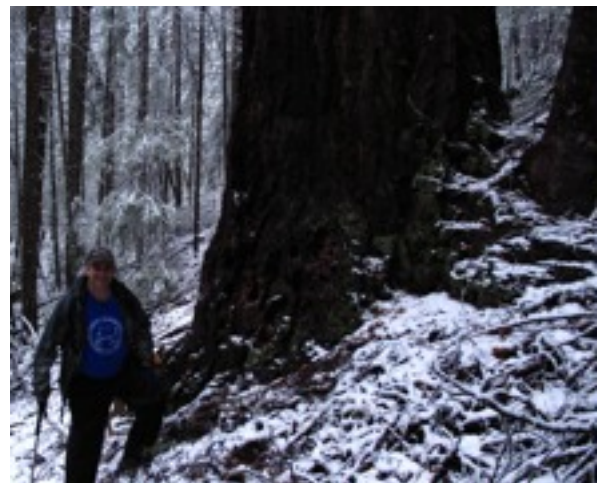
HAPPY CAMP TRAIL TODAY

The trail today is difficult to find and confusing to follow. Please respect private property, etc. The large numbers of mule trains that came through here can still be evidenced by the deep-wide indentations along the trail. The old trail is impressively well designed, following the contours and crossing over small springs that bubble out of the ground year-round.



An enamel trail sign and old cuts on the trees suggest it was maintained by the Civilian Conservation Corps or early Forest Service crews at one time. On the Klamath side of the divide, the old Happy Camp road replaced much of the trail. On the Illinois Valley side logging roads in the mid 1960's destroyed several sections of trail and made it difficult and confusing to follow. Despite the passing of years, this old historical trail remains relatively intact and hike-able. Massive old-growth Incense Cedars and Douglas-firs; alive when the first miners came through, continue to tower over the trail. There are steep sections, logs to get over, and many other obstacles awaiting the weary hiker.

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Greg Walter, local Illinois Valley historian, inspects a large fir along the old Happy Camp Trail.



Massive old growth trees tower over the trail, which helps keep it clear from competing brush.

RELEVANT HISTORICAL MAPS:

1942 Klamath National Forest
 1937 Siskiyou National Forest
 1922 Preston Peak Topographic
 1915 Klamath NF
 1853 Map of Lower Oregon and Upper
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