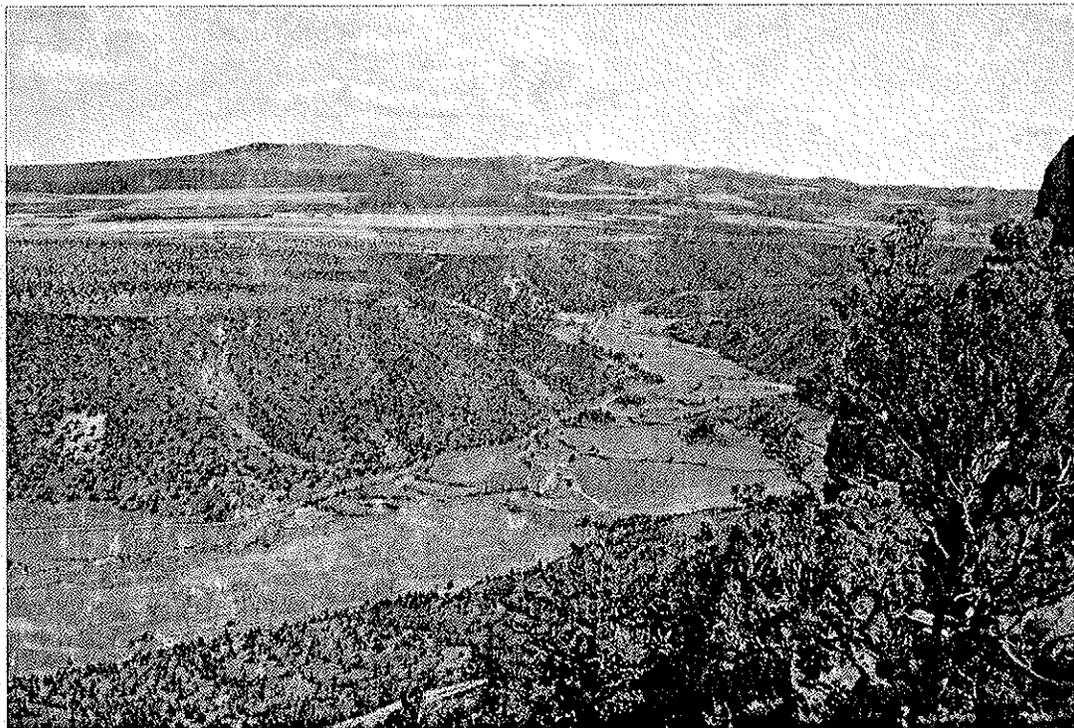
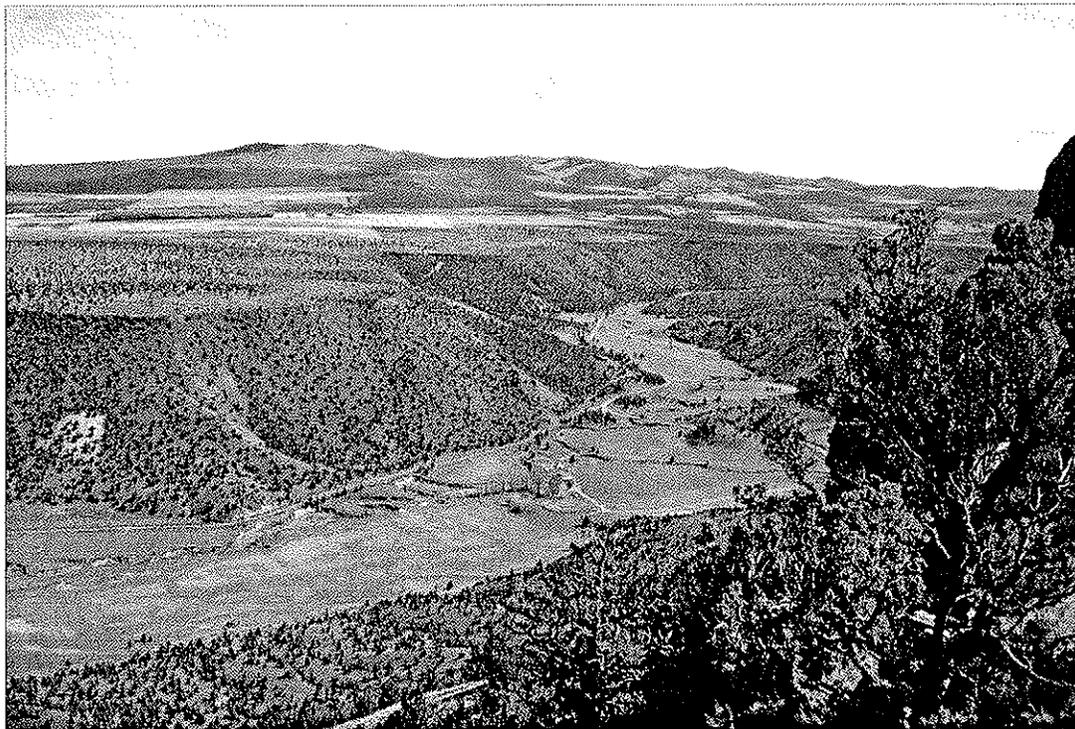


A  
HISTORICAL TOUR  
OF  
BEAR CREEK  
SOUTHERN CROOK COUNTY



SPONSORED BY CROOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Hosted by Bill and Donna McCormack  
September 23-24, 2000

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**Crook County Historical Society**  
246 North Main Street  
Prineville, Oregon 97754

September 23, 2000

Dear Members and friends:

Welcome to the fall 2000 field trip sponsored by the Crook County Historical Society. This trip will focus on the homesteads and historical sites in the Bear Creek area of southern Crook County. The tour will be in two parts with an overnight camp at the McCormack Ranch. Our hosts for the weekend are Bill and Donna McCormack.

The tour will begin at Pioneer Park in Prineville and will travel south to the Newsome Creek Road and over the Maury Mountains to Bear Creek and camp set up at the McCormack Ranch. We will eat lunch and look at the beautiful new home of the McCormack's and the renovated Castle Cabin which was the original ranch home at this site. After lunch we will take the first part of the tour which will start going north and west of the McCormack Ranch over to Little Bear Creek and up to the old town site of Roberts. We will then go down Salt Creek to Bear Creek and return to the McCormack Ranch visiting several homestead sites along the way. The evening will be spent at the McCormack Ranch.

Sunday morning after breakfast we will begin the second half of the tour and travel east from the ranch along the Bear Creek Road. We will pass several homestead sites and stop at the Barnes Cemetery. The final stop for the tour will be at Logan Butte. From this location parties can return to Prineville either down Camp Creek or over the Maury Mountains to the Paulina Highway.

This promises to be one of the more memorable tours and thanks to the graciousness of the McCormack's we will spend a pleasant evening along the banks of Bear Creek. The field trip planners have attempted to provide factual information. We realize there may be some mistakes, omissions or gaps in our information so if you have information that you would like to contribute please contact the A.R. Bowman Museum. The notes for this field trip were prepared and researched by Steve Lent and draws on information from previous Historical Society trips to the area.

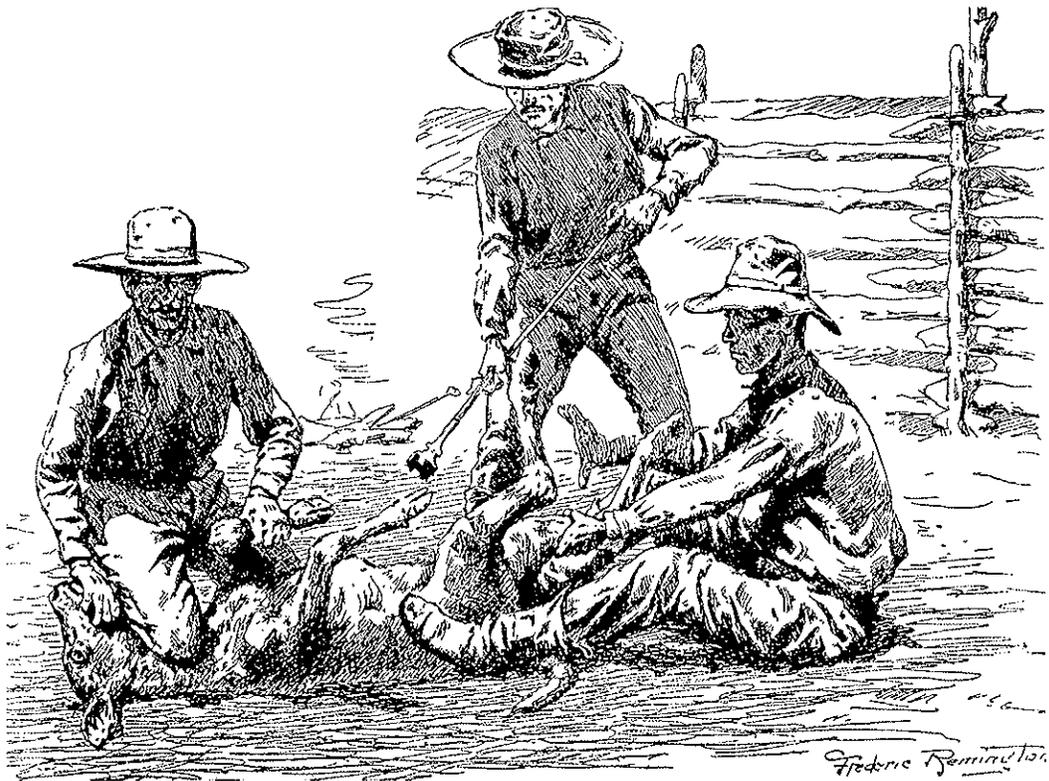
We thank you for coming and hope you enjoy our trip back into Crook County's past. We also hope to see you on future field trips.

Sincerely,

Steve Lent  
Bill McCormack  
Field Trip Organizers

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- II. The Tour Trail: Descriptive Remarks
- III. Supplemental Information
  - 1. Bear Creek Place Names
  - 2. Bear Creek Watershed Stories
- IV. Tour Map



# ABOUT OUR HOSTS

William K. McCormack first resided in Lake County and engaged in stock growing, both sheep and cattle. He sold his ranch there and moved to Crook County where he continued in the sheep business until his death in 1929. He married Frances Mary U'Ren, whose parents operated a general store in Prineville. The children of this couple were William U., Elizabeth, Frances, Thomas, and Charles.

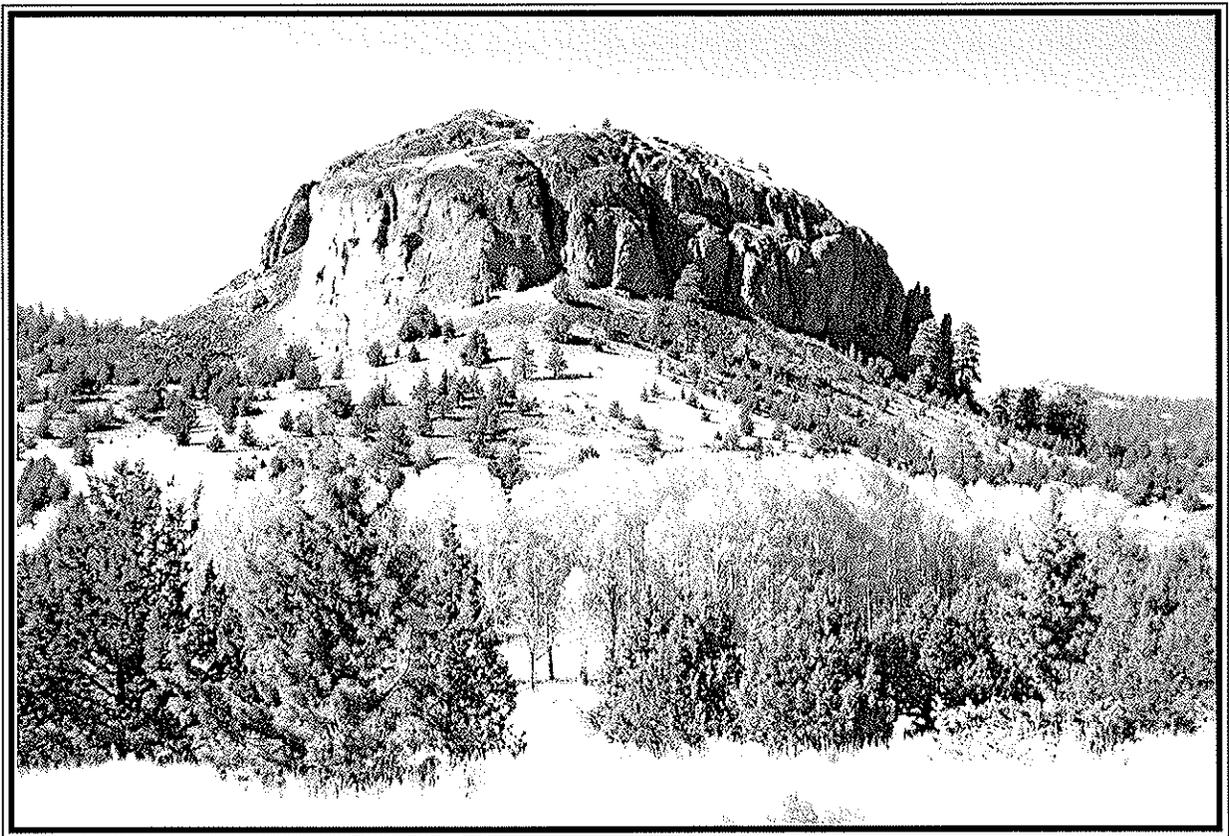
William U. McCormack married Ellen Dahl, who was raised in Norway. They met while attending Oregon Agriculture College. William operated a ranch at the upper end of Ochoco Reservoir and purchased the Columbus Johnson Ranch on Bear Creek in 1943. Bill was active in the Oregon Stock Growers Association and was a County Commissioner. Bill died in 1956 and Ellen moved to Prineville where she taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Crooked River Elementary. She retired from teaching in 1968 and was the initiator of the Outdoor School program for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Born to William U. and Ellen McCormack was William R. Bill attended schools in Crook County and graduated from Oregon State College.

William R. McCormack, our host, took over management of the ranch after his father's death in 1956. In 1957 he married Donna C. U'Ren who was born and raised in The Dalles. Donna graduated from Oregon State College in 1955 and came to teach at Crook County High School. Bill has been active in the Crook County Stock Growers, Bureau of Land Management Advisory Board, Public Lands Council, the Crook county Historical Society and other organizations related to the cattle industry. Bill and Donna have three children, William D., Jeffrey, and Kelley. William D. and Jeff returned to the ranch after attending college and Kelley attended Pacific University and is a physical therapist in Portland.

Bill and Donna have purchased adjoining ranches on Bear Creek including the Sumner Houston Ranch, Henry Carlin Ranch, and part of the Settlemier Ranch south of Brothers. In 1982 Bill and Donna entered the Partnership of McCormack and Sons with Bill and Jeff. In 1991 Bill, Jeff, and Jeff's wife Runinda purchased part of the Ray Rickman Ranch. Bill Jr., Jeff, and Runinda have been active in the Stock Growers Association and Farm Bureau. Runinda currently heads the Watershed Educational program for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. Bill's wife, Jeri, is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at Cecil Sly School in Prineville. Jeff and Runinda's children are Holli (12) and Tyler (10). Bill and Jeri's children are Kurt (16), Christopher (15), Janey (14), and Cindy (12). Daughter Kelly and Steve McHugh have two daughters, Allison (2 ½) and Megan (1 month)

In 1993 McCormack and Sons Ranch was awarded the "Chiefs Award" by F.Dale Robinson, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service in Washington D.C., for their grazing practices on the Maury Mountains of the Ochoco National Forest. They continue to be progressive in riparian management and rangeland improvement.

THE TOUR TRAIL:  
DESCRIPTIVE REMARKS



Sheep Rock on Little Bear Creek

The Tour Trail: Descriptive Remarks

Leaving Prineville

The tour will begin at Pioneer Park in Prineville. We will head south east and go up to Combs Flat before heading down to the Crooked River. There are several interesting places that we will pas but which are not on the Bear Creek tour. Be looking out for sites along the route which we will describe for you in our narrative.

Combs Flat

This flat is on top of the grade south east of Prineville and is named for James Parker Combs who owned property that extended from Ochoco Creek up to this flat. James was born in Ohio in 1822. He married Jane Dyer in Illinois in 1847. They came to Oregon by wagon train in 1852 and settled. The family moved to Central Oregon in 1870 and engaged

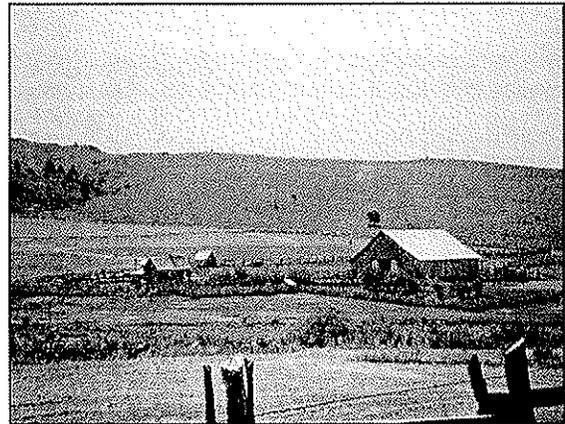


James and Jane Combs and daughter

in farming on Ochoco Creek.

Webdell Hill

As we descend down toward Crooked River from Combs Flat we will be on what is known by old timers as Webdell Hill. It is named for Anthony B. Webdell who had established a ranch at the bottom of the grade on Eagle Creek. A.B. was born in 1832 and was among the first settlers in the Ochoco country having come in 1868. He operated his ranch for several years and eventually sold his holdings to Ralph Porfily.



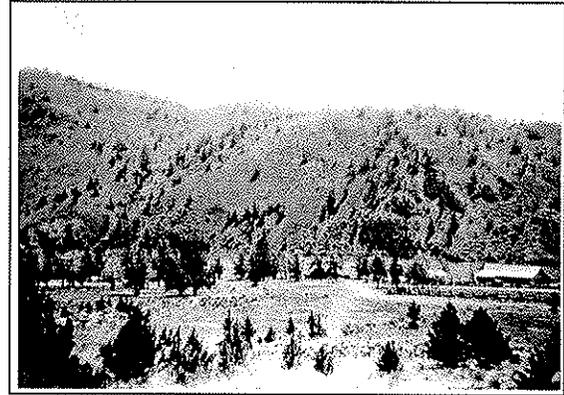
A.B. Webdell Ranch on Eagle Creek 1900

Eagle Rock

As we descend down Webdell Hill we will pass Eagle Rock on the right side of the road. It is an interesting geologic feature. It was an eagle roosting site during the early settlement period and was named for the many sittings of eagles in the area.



Eagle Rock 1915



Shorty Davis Ranch 1900

### Shorty Davis Ranch

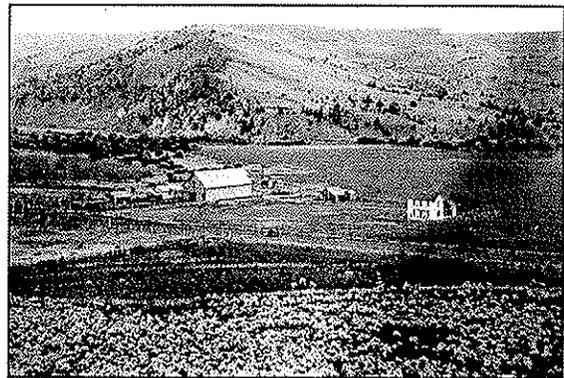
Shortly after we come to the Crooked River we will pass the site of the old Shorty Davis Ranch. It was later known as the Porfily Ranch. The ranch belonged to Elias Davis who came to Central Oregon in 1881. He worked on ranches until he made enough money to purchase his own land in 1889. He developed a sheep ranch at this location and became prosperous. It was during this period that the sheep and cattle wars were at their peak. In 1900 Shorty disappeared. Searches failed to find him and he was believed to have been murdered. The fate of Shorty has never been determined.

### Riverside Ranch

As we follow Crooked River we come to the Riverside Ranch on the left side of the road. The ranch was originally settled by Thomas Curl in 1902 and was later owned by James N. Williamson, a former congressman from Central Oregon. It is interesting to note that one group of the Lost Meek Wagon Train of 1845 left the Crooked River at this point and traveled up Wickiup Creek from where the ranch site is now located to the North and over to Ochoco Creek.

### Bonnieview Ranch

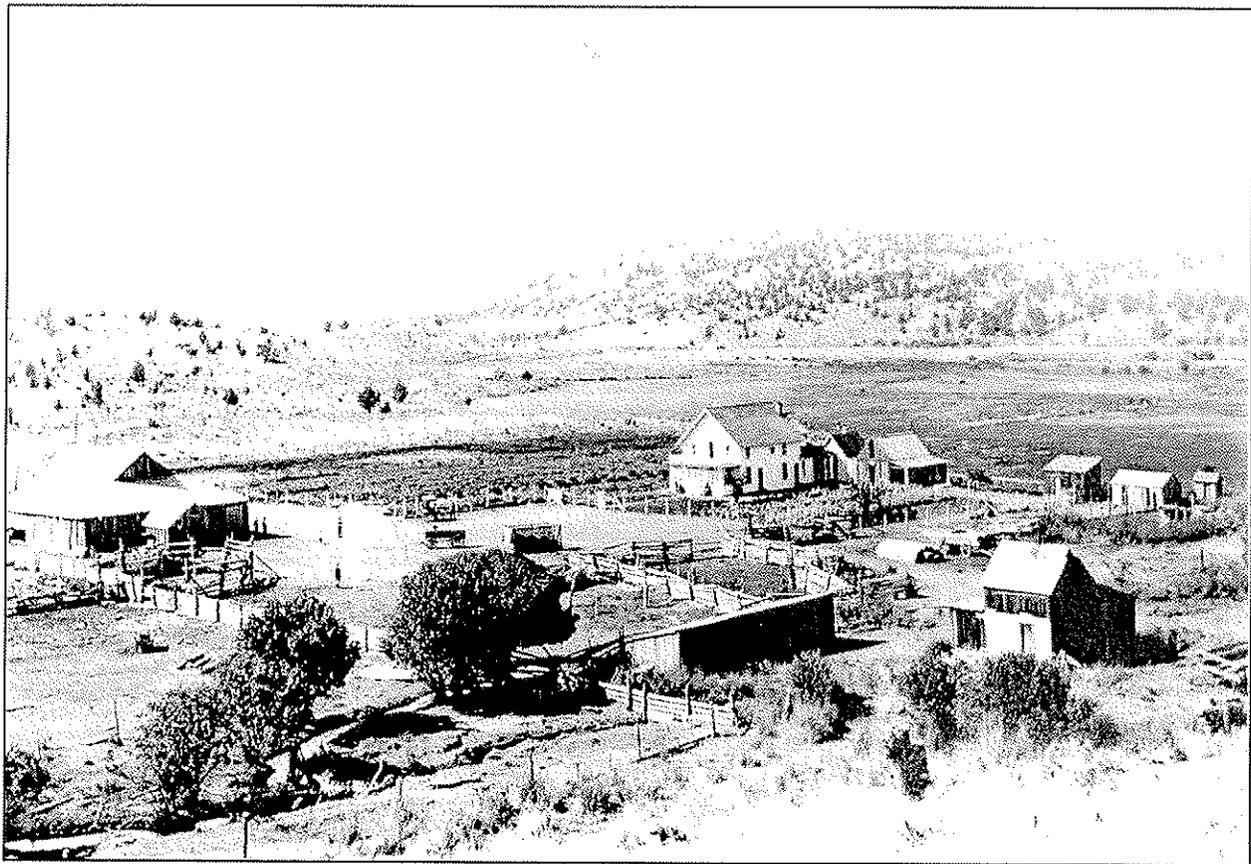
This ranch is located along Crooked River near the sharp curve in the highway. This ranch was first operated by Colonel Michael C. Nye He came to Central Oregon in 1883 and established a ranch at his site. He later sold his operation to John Henry Gray who enlarged the ranch and named it Bonney View since he was of Scotch ancestry.



Bonnieview Ranch 1905

### Post

One mile from the Bonnieview Ranch is the community of Post. Just prior to arriving at



Wallace Post Ranch

Post there is a field to the right that has a fence post that identifies a marker that marks the exact geographic center of Oregon. The original Post Office of Post was established in 1889 with Walter Post the first Postmaster. Walter and his brother Wallace were early settlers in the area.

### Maury Mountain

We will turn south just past Post and follow the Newsome Creek Road to Sherwood Creek then up and over the summit of the Maury Mountains. This ponderosa pine covered mountain was named for Colonel Reuben Maury who was in command of the Oregon First Calvary and had troops in the field

during the Civil War to protect wagon roads from marauding native Americans. We will follow down the south slope of the Maury Mountains and along Klootchman Creek and pass by Klootchman Reservoir that was built by Ray Rickman for irrigation storage about 1946. We will shortly come to Bear Creek Road and turn right and arrive at the McCormack Ranch. The McCormack's have set up one of their fields as a camp site for tour guests. Please be gentle with the land.



Colonel Reuben Maury

### McCormack Ranch

It is believed that Jack and Ida Shaddock were the original settlers of this ranch in the early 1870's. Lem and Katie Castle later operated the ranch when they came to the area in 1882. The Castle log house has been restored and is still utilized on the ranch. There was a series of owners after the Castle's including Alex Rickman and Tom Houston. Columbus Johnson purchased the ranch then Percy Blackstone later purchased the ranch and it was sold to William U. McCormack in 1943.

This is the official start of the Bear Creek Tour. After setting up camp and visiting the structures on the McCormack Ranch we will start the first part of the tour.

## Day One: The Loop Tour

### 1. Charles Houston Place

The Charles Houston upper ranch is located on the left side of the road as we head north from the McCormack Ranch. There is only ruins left of the old house as it was once a two story structure. Charles was one of several Houston family members to come to the Bear Creek area. James Charles Houston and his wife Sarah came from North Carolina to the Bear Creek area in 1888. There were twelve children in the Houston family.



Sarah and Charles Houston

It is interesting to note that two of their sons, Elam and Arthur, are buried in graves across the creek and over a small ridge to the east of the home site. Elam and Arthur, aged 16 and 14, were tending sheep alone at a camp on the Little Deschutes River south of present Crescent. Charles was notified that Elam had become ill so he went to the sheep camp and brought Elam home for care and left Arthur at the camp to watch the sheep. Elam grew

steadily worse and died on September 13, 1910 and was buried on the hillside near the home ranch. Unknown to Charles and Sarah their other son Arthur also became quite ill and died on September 10, 1910—three days before his brother. An account of the event was Printed in the Prineville Review on September 15, 1910:

*The shepherd in charge of the camp, Ben Bixby, started with the little corpse on his horse for the Bear Creek Ranch but was intercepted fifteen miles from Crescent by word from Dr. S.S. Edwards which told of diphtheria in the family. There the little fellow's body was buried.*

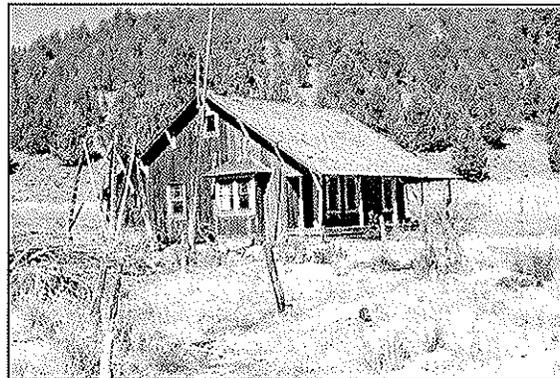
Several years later Mrs. Houston hired a local undertaker to go to the site and disinter the body and bring it to the Bear Creek Ranch to bury beside his brother Elam.

## 2. Sumner Houston Ranch

This site was originally the home site of John and Juletta Houston, the parents of Charles Houston. They followed their son from North Carolina to Bear Creek. The house they originally built burned down. Their grandson, Sumner, later operated this ranch. Sumner was born in 1899 and was the son of Charles and Sarah Houston. When he was a young man Sumner lost an arm in a haying accident. He did not let it hinder his life and became an expert horseman and rancher. In 1923 when he was 24 years old Sumner won a Pony Express rider race that started in Bend and ended in The Dalles. The race took seven changes of horses for each rider. Sumner died in 1983.

## 3. Ferguson Creek

Up the draw to the right are a number of homesteads which were settled by Tom Ferguson, Lester Ferguson, Lloyd Baker, and Joe Bryson. Some of the structures are still standing but difficult to drive to. This creek is named for Thomas J. Ferguson, who took up a homestead along the creek and patented a claim on March 30, 1891.



Ferguson house

## 4. Hinton Place (Stop)

This was the homestead site of Benjamin and Mary Hinton. They had come to the area with the Milliorn family in 1880 and settled at the base of Sugarloaf Butte. Benjamin died in 1900 and Mary died in 1913. Benjamin was a school teacher in the Willamette Valley and after moving to the Bear Creek area he and his brother-in-law Milliorn built a school on their property which became known as Hinton School. The school was located just east of the home site and was completed in 1887. The log cabin of the Hinton's was used as a stage stop and the Post Office known as Crook was operated from the Hinton house. The



Looking east from Milliorn Hill with Sugarloaf Butte and Houston Butte in background

Post Office was established on June 16, 1886 with Nancy Hinton the first postmaster. The office closed in 1908. The creek flowing down the draw is Cow Creek. Pat Rambow operated a ranch further up Cow Creek to the north.

#### 5. Milliorn Place

William H. Milliorn crossed the plains to Oregon in 1852 and settled in Lane County. He and his wife Sarah moved to the Bear Creek area in 1880 with their relatives the Hinton's. The Post Office of Crook was alternately in the Milliorn and Hinton family homes. William died in 1916 and Sarah died

in 1927.

#### 6. Milliorn Hill (Stop)

This grade up from the Milliorn place is known as Milliorn Hill. We will stop at the top of the grade to view Sugarloaf Butte and the scenic country side of the homesteads. We also have a good view to the west. Some other homesteaders in the vicinity were Frank Gutermuth and Pete Jordan.

#### 7. Carl Fischer Homestead

The barn and old house in the bottom of the draw to our left is the homestead of Carl and

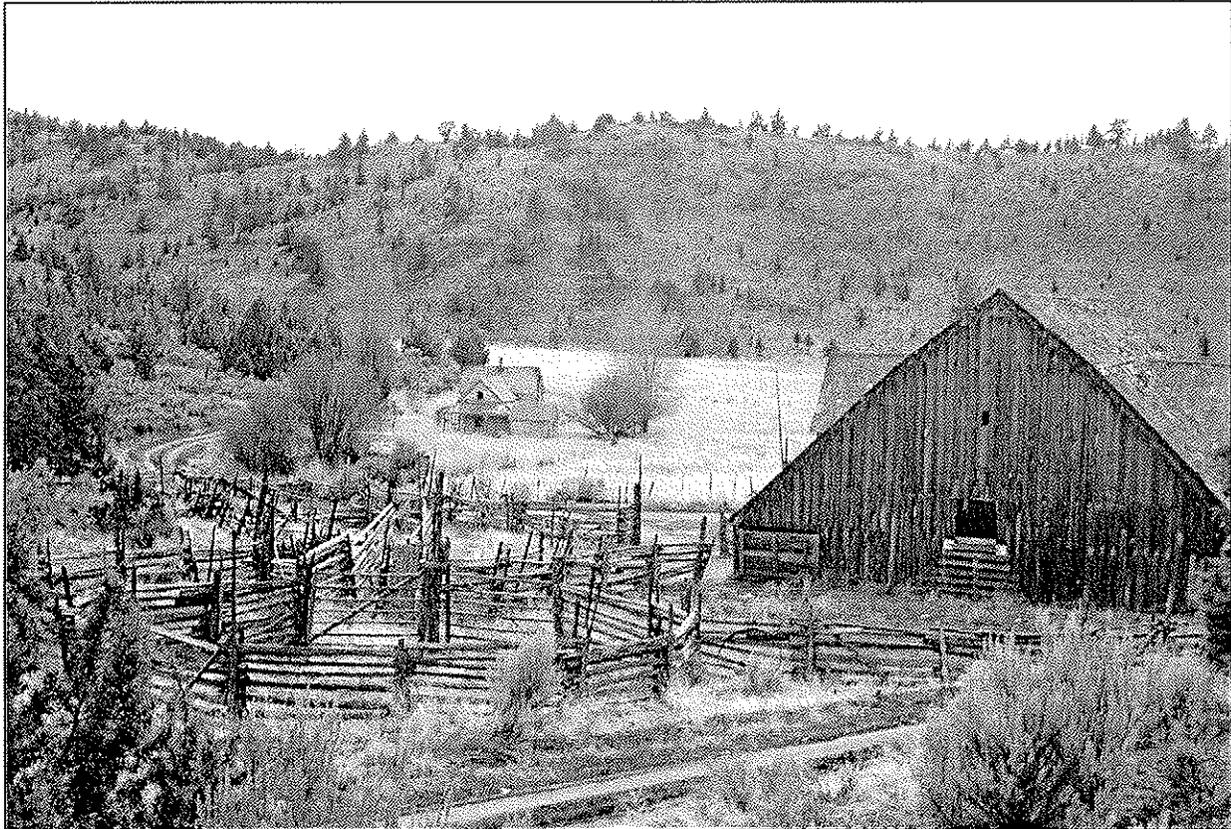


Carl and Wilda Fischer homestead

Wilda Fischer. Carl was the son of Amelia and Louis Fischer who homesteaded nearby. Carl was born in Denmark in 1891. He married the daughter of Manford Nye, a nearby rancher. Wilda taught school for a while at Sheep Rock School. Carl served as a county commissioner for a few years. They sold their homestead in 1918 and moved to the Powell Butte area.

8. Coffelt Barn /Sheep Rock (Stop)  
We will stop at the big barn known as the Coffelt Barn. This was the original homestead site of Louis and Ellen Hodges who along with his brother Silas were among the first

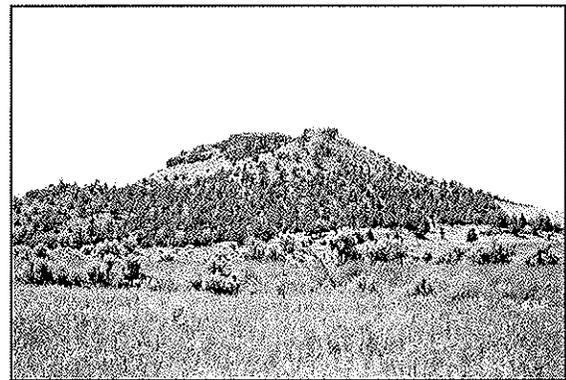
settlers in the area. The nearby creek is Little Bear Creek. You can get a picturesque view of Sheep Rock a short distance east of the barn. Louis Hodges was the son of Monroe Hodges, who plotted the town site of Prineville. The Hodge's operated a stage stop for several years. They sold the ranch to Granville Nye in 1900. In 1935 James J. Coffelt and his wife Mary purchased the ranch. The two story Nye/Coffelt house was torn down in the early 1980's and only the barn and a storage shed are still standing. This is a great photo opportunity for both the barn and Sheep Rock



Coffelt Barn and house

### 9. Hodges Knoll/Ferguson Place

As we reach the top of the grade coming up the road from the Coffelt Barn we arrive at a cleared area with a small rocky butte to our left. The rocky butte is known as Hodges Knoll and is named for Louis and Ellen Hodges. The Ferguson family also settled in this area.



Hodges Knoll

### 10. Salt Creek Ranch

Charles Houston bought this ranch from John Knox in 1910. The ranch was later bought by Frank Houston and then Lawrence and Billie

Russell. Richard Nelson now owns the ranch. The lumber for the house was pre-cut and the pieces moved to the site and put together as

the pieces were numbered. The house was built in 1915.

### 11. Campbell Place/Alkali Butte

As we come to Roberts/Salt Creek Road we will turn right. Near the road junction is the site of the Ed Campbell homestead. Ed was the father of Eddie and Evelyn Campbell. Eddie later became a military pilot and electronics repairman in Prineville. Eddie stated that when he was a child he had gone horseback riding and stopped for lunch under a juniper tree. He noticed a depression in the ground and moved some twigs and juniper needles and discovered a small grave with a piece of paper inside a bottle. His father told him that he had probably found a grave of a child that had died on the Lost Meek Wagon Train of 1845 which had come down Alkali Flat to Bear Creek.

If you look to the right at this junction you will see Alkali Butte. The Meek Train is believed to have come down the butte to Alkali Flat and then over the rim above the old Dunham Place and down to Bear Creek. An Indian was said to have taken scouts to Alkali Butte and pointed the way to The Dalles.

### 12. Warner Place

The Jabe Warner homestead is just west of the Ed Campbell homestead across the Roberts Road. There were three children in the Warner family and one son, Floyd is believed to have been briefly married to Kate Rockwell, better known as Klondike Kate. She had homesteaded in the Brothers area and Floyd became enamored with her and

persisted in attempting to marry her with a short lived success. Klondike Kate was a favorite of the Klondike Gold Rush crowd as she was a dance hall girl. She later operated a donut and waffle shop in Prineville.

### 13. Roberts/Roberts Cemetery (Stop)

The town site of Roberts was named for Joseph and Sophronia Roberts who were early settlers in the area. The Roberts family moved to Newsome Creek area in 1887 and later moved to the Arthur Johnson ranch on Alkali Flat in 1888. A Post Office was established at the are in 1910 and was named in honor of Joseph with the first postmaster being John Hume. The Roberts family donated land for a school and a cemetery. A stage stop was located at Roberts and was a stopping point on the Prineville-Fife -Burns Stage. The Roberts Ranch was sold in 1939. Sophronia died in 1933 and Joseph in 1943. The Post Office was discontinued in 1940.



Joseph and Sophronia Roberts

Roberts Cemetery was established in 1888 and is not deeded. There are twenty one graves with two unidentified. Seven graves are those



Roberts stage stop 1908

of the Roberts family. The oldest marked grave is that of Phoebe Elizabeth Roberts, 1888. We will spend some time visiting the Roberts Cemetery site. From the cemetery we get a very picturesque view.

#### 14. Scott Place/Sage Hollow Ranch

We will travel down Salt Creek Road to highway 27 and head south to Bear Creek Road and turn left. Off to our right is the old Scott Place. It was operated by Frank and Blanche Scott for several years. Frank was a log truck driver for the Shevlin-Hixson Mill in Bend in his early years and later bought this ranch. It is now known as the Sage Hollow

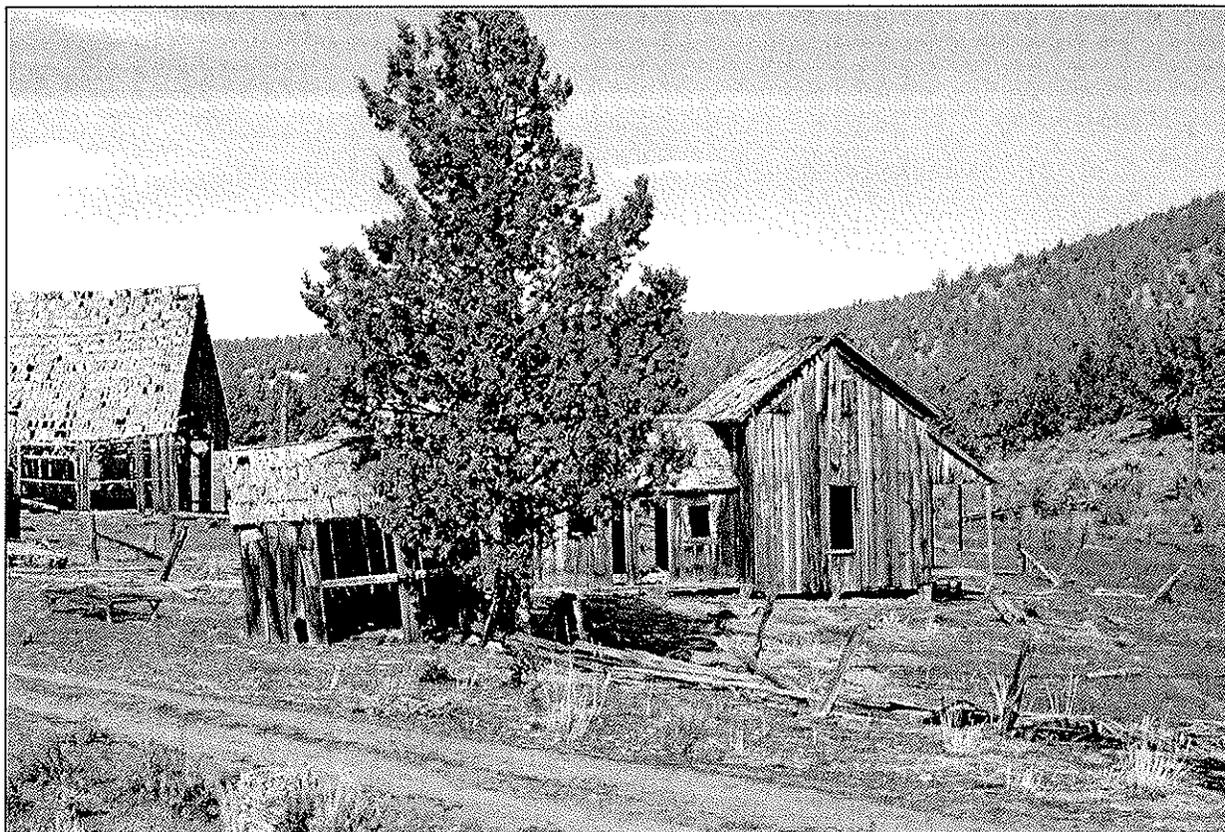
Ranch.

#### 15. Carlin Place/Grave Hollow (Stop)

We will stop at Grave Hollow. From this point we can see the Henry Carlin homestead. It is a very good photo opportunity for a rustic homestead. The fenced grave site with the small headstone is that of Roy Jones. He died in 1894. The draw above the grave is called Grave Hollow or sometimes Long Hollow.

#### 16. Sontag Place

This homestead was that of Otto Sontag. Mr. Sontag patented a homestead at this site in 1911. He was born in Germany in 1875 and



Thomas Mulholland homestead on Spring Creek (Later the Dick Mulholland Place)

became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1916. He operated a saloon in Prineville for a few years. The McCormack Ranch purchased this ranch and Jeff McCormack now lives along Bear Creek at this site.

#### 17. Wirtz Place

This was the homestead site of Ira W. Wirtz. He was believed to have been a doctor. He only lived in the area a short while then moved on. The Millican family also had a homestead in the area.

#### 18. Parker Place

This was the homestead site of the Parker

family. Part of the old barn is still visible below the haystack yard to the right of the Bear Creek Road. The McCormack's have fenced their hay storage areas to keep out elk.

#### 19. Spring Creek

Up the draw to the left at this site is a road that goes a few miles to the old Mulholland Place. It was originally the Thomas Mulholland homestead and later purchased by his brother Richard Mulholland. A barn and small two story house are still standing at the site. There is a well developed spring located at the homestead site and it is the source of the creek.

## 20. Bear Creek School site

This is the site of the Bear Creek School. The original school is said to have burned down and then rebuilt. Early students went to the Hinton school up Cow Creek. The rebuilt school was along the Bear Creek Road for several years. The McCormack's moved the school to the Parker Place and use it as a granary.



Bear Creek school before it burned

To the right along Bear Creek you will notice the creek fenced and the McCormack's are attempting to manage the riparian area to bring it back to a functioning natural system. This is a demonstration of private landowners trying to bring back stream side channels.

## 21. Bryson Place

This was the Elam Faught residence and was later operated by Joe Bryson who married Elam Faught's daughter, Grace. Walt Bolton later purchased the ranch and operated for a

few years. The McCormack's now own the property. Up the draw from the Bryson Place was located the homestead sites of Gus Grill and the Trappe family. The Bryson Place was recently rejuvenated by the McCormack's for ranch hand use.

## 22. Cow Creek/ Mulholland Place

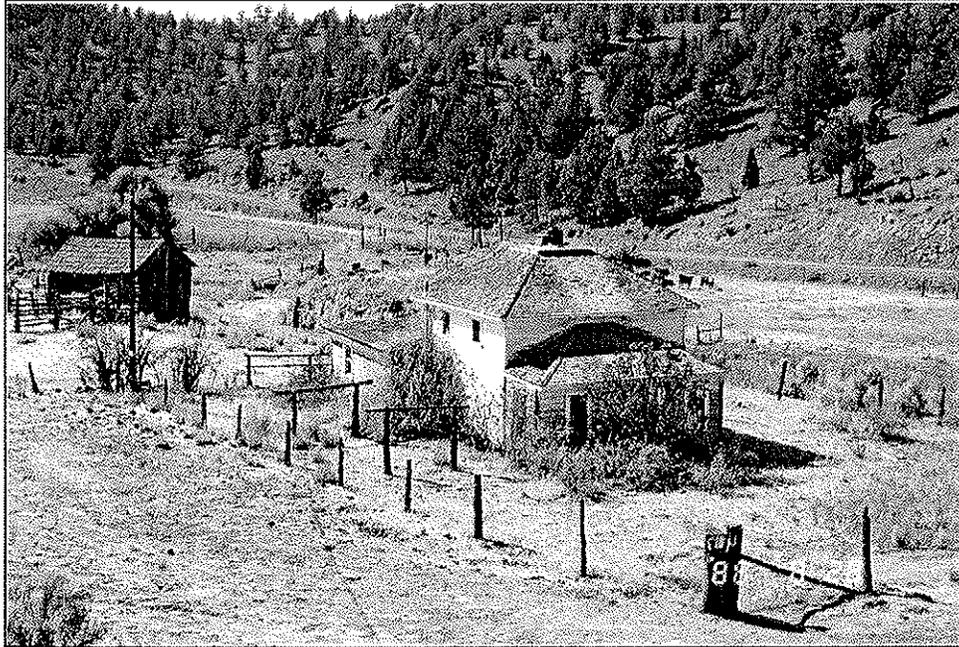
Up the draw to our left is Cow Creek and the Dick Mulholland Place. It once was a unique homestead but has recently been destroyed. Frank Richard "Dick" Mulholland was born in 1866 and married Eugenia Milliorn. He had lived in the area for several years. He died in 1941.

## 23. Elbert Houston Homestead (Stop)

Elbert Houston was one of the four Houston brothers to come to Central Oregon to settle in the Bear Creek area. There were eight children in the Houston family. One son, Elmer, served during World War I, and was drowned when the ship Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine in 1917. The barn at this site was moved from the Mulholland Place on Cow Creek.

## 24. Cox Place

Up the hill to our right is an Aspen Grove which was the homestead site of Charlie Cox. The spring at the site is now the source for younger Bill McCormack's house. This is the final point on the day one tour. We will now return to the McCormack Ranch for dinner and evening festivities.



Bryson Place



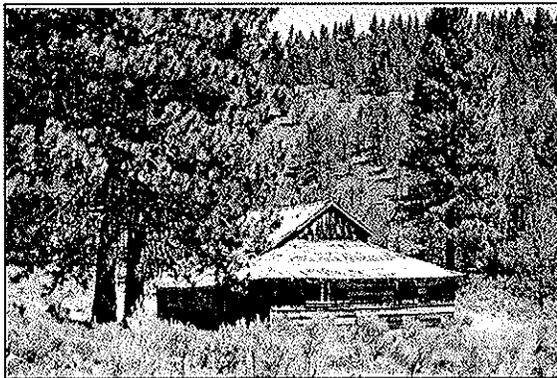
Richard Mulholland Place on Cow Creek

## Day Two: Eastward

September 24, 2000

### 1. Taylor & Wilson Homesteads

Jim and Nell Taylor had a homestead on Bear Creek up the creek from this point. The house is still standing but is very difficult to get to. Jim Taylor was in the same Pony Express race from Bend to The Dalles and came in second in the race to Sumner Houston. There were four children in the Taylor family. Also living up Bear Creek was John and Eva Wilson. Eva was the daughter of Elbert Houston.



Taylor Place on Bear Creek

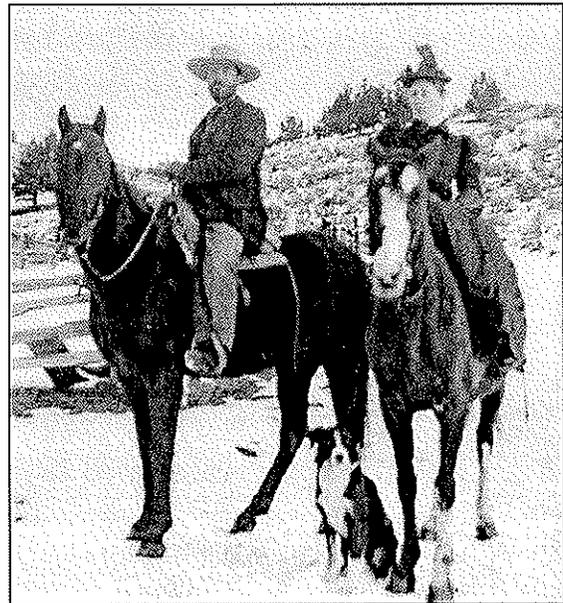
### 2. Riparian Restoration Area (Stop)

This is a site at which the McCormack's have done riparian area restoration. Cattle have been fenced from the area to protect the fragile riparian zone along the creek. There was a big head cut just up the drainage that they have placed rock in and the area is making a

remarkable recovery. This is an outstanding example of private landowners taking the initiative to protect the environment and still have an economical livestock operation. Bill will discuss what the ranch has done in this area.

### 3. Cabe Place

The Cabe Place was on our left. Little is known about this family.



Floyd and Alva Houston

### 4. Floyd Houston Place

The County road maintenance buildings are located along Bear Creek road at this point. The county no longer has a road crew living at this site. Up the draw to our left about one half mile is the site of the Floyd Houston homestead. Floyd was the first of the Houston family to come to Oregon and settle on Bear

Creek. In 1894 he returned to North Carolina to visit his family and while there he married Alva Allen. They returned to Bear Creek and raised their family of son Wayne and daughter Clista. They lived on the homestead most of their lives. Son Wayne attended Oregon Agricultural College and returned to operate the ranch. He married Lucille Livingston, one of the Bear Creek school teachers. Some of the teachers at Held school boarded at the Houston ranch. Floyd was nicknamed "Friday" and Friday Creek on Maury Mountain is named for him.

#### 5. Graybower Place/Held School

Off the road to our right is the site of Martin Grawbower's homestead. There are a few remnant of the site visible from the road. Martin was from Germany and was a bachelor. He subsidized his income by making moonshine and selling it locally. A short distance up the drainage from this homestead site among the rock pile was the site of the Held School. Held School was first in the Burchtorf homestead in 1915. A school was later built at this site. The class room was equipped with a large wood stove in the front of the room. The men of the community cut and stacked wood for the winter. It was a small white building with a spacious school yard and it was fenced on three sides. Windows were along one side of the building and provided light to the classroom. There was a long blackboard on the other side of the room and across the back were racks of maps for studying geography. One teacher taught eight grades There was one large room for classes and a space for coats. Children would take lunch to school but when it was really cold neighbor ladies would bring in a pot of

hot soup for the students. The school closed in 1943 due to a lack of students. Bill McCormack moved the school to the Sontag Place further down Bear Creek and now uses it as a granary.



Paul Held

#### 6. Held (Stop)

This is the homestead site of Paul Held. He was born in Switzerland and came to the Bear Creek area to homestead on Soldier Creek. He purchased nearby homesteads. A Post Office was established at his home on May 1, 1909 and it was named Held since he was the first Postmaster. His wife Eva was a sister of Alex Ammons, another local homesteader and



Ammons Sawmill on Indian Creek

mill operator. The Held's operated a grocery store and their place was a stage stop for the stage from Prineville to Fife. The Held's moved to Ashland, Oregon in 1916 because of his wife's failing health. The Held Post Office was discontinued in 1919. Richard Ammons bought the Held property. Del and Blanche Davis later owned the Held property.

There were several homesteads located in the immediate vicinity to the south including the Percy Blackstone family, Warren Libby, and Frank Ramsey.

#### 7. Ammons, Evans, and Burchtorf Homesteads

Alex Ammons first homesteaded south of the road at this site. He was born in Highlands, North Carolina. He came to Central Oregon near the turn of the century and worked for the Hawkins Brothers mill on Duncan Creek. He married Nora Bell Birdsong in 1904. He and his father-in-law, William Birdsong, operated saw mills first on Wolf Creek and then on Maury Mountain near Old Mill Spring. He later bought out William and moved the mill to Indian Creek on the south side of Maury Mountain. He sold lumber to local

homesteaders. His first homestead was on Camp Creek and later in this area before he purchased Paul Held's property. Nora died in 1919. Alex and family lived in the area for several years before he sold the ranch and moved to Redmond. He died in 1952.

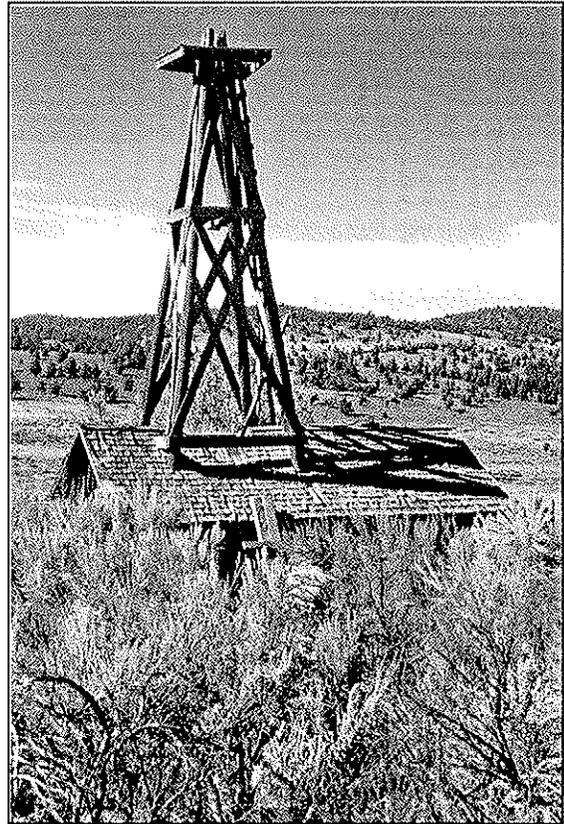
On the north side of the road was located the Evans and Burchtorf homesteads. The Harry Evans family had a house that is still standing. Henry Burchtorf lived near the stage road and his son Ben and wife Hattie lived further toward the butte on our left. Hattie was a sister of Floyd, Charles, Tom, and Elbert Houston.

#### 8. Rickman Ranch

This ranch site was settled by Tom Rickman. He was the first of his family to come to Central Oregon from North Carolina in 1906. His wife Nettie was a sister of Alex Ammons. Tom had black lung disease and hoped to recover in the dry desert air. He worked for his brother-in-law Alex at the Indian Creek mill or for his other brother-in-law Paul Held when he was not making improvements on his homestead. Tom and Nettie had two children that survived and Nettie died in 1913. He later married Lucy Kennedy Nieman in 1914. Lucy's sister, Cora, married Tom's brother Alec. They had five children besides the two daughters from his first marriage. Tom increased his holding by purchasing the homesteads of neighbors. Tom and Lucy moved to the Dayville area in 1959 and son Ray operated the ranch for several years. Tom died in 1917 and Lucy in 1979. Ray sold the ranch and moved to the Mitchell area but later received the ranch back. He died in 1990.

#### 9. Finley Place

Just past the Rickman Ranch is the location of the Finley homestead. Little is known about the Finley family.



Windmill at Pothook Place

#### 10. Pothook Ranch (Stop)

There are still some outbuildings of this ranch standing including a windmill building. This was part of the John Hampton Ranch and later Frank Hampton. John Hampton was with the 1845 Meek Wagon train and came back to this area to settle. Grant Mayes later owned the ranch. He died in 1919. Charles Brown then purchased the ranch. It received its name

from the original brand used by the ranch which was a pothook. The Wigle family also lived nearby. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Wigle was the daughter of early missionary Henry Spaulding, a contemporary of Marcus Whitman.

### 11. Moore Place

There used to be a log house located at this site. Elbert and Nat Houston first lived in the log cabin when they came to the area in 1904. Charles Parrish later lived in the log cabin during the winter so his children could go to school. He built the house that is still standing. It was later owned by the Moore family.

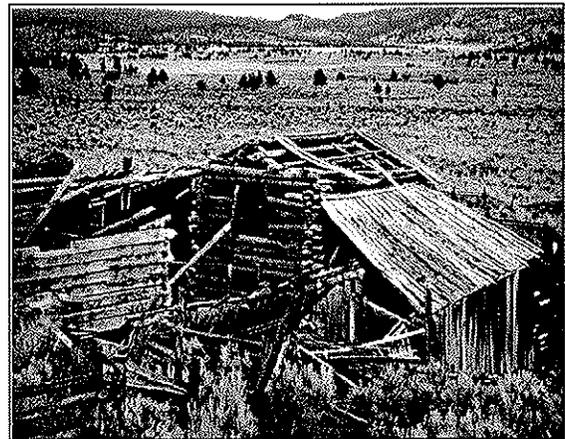


Moore Place

### 12. Saunders Place

This site is still identified on some maps. Harley and Effie Saunders took up a homestead here in 1910. Harley was born on September 23, 1885 and lived in the Highlands, North Carolina area. He married

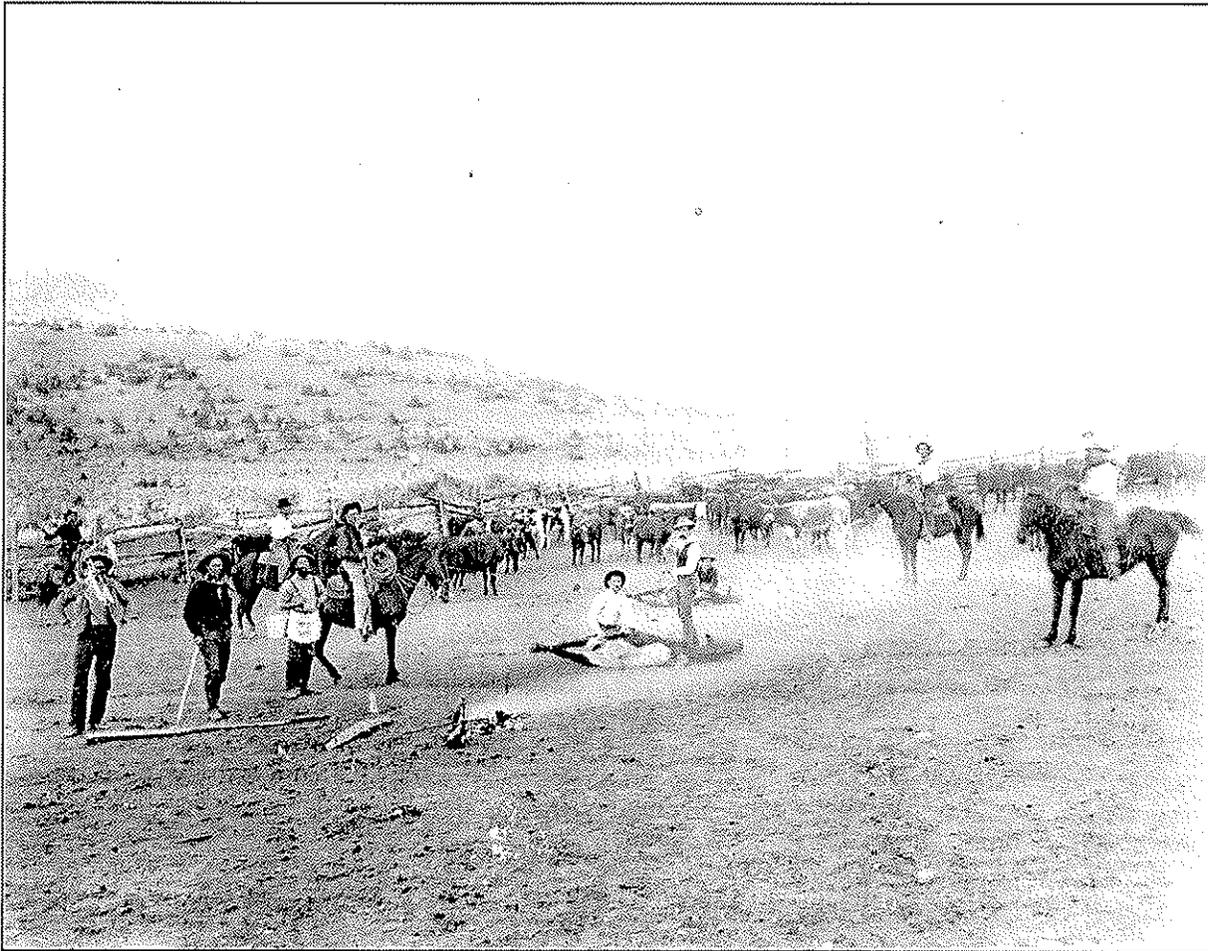
Effie Houston (born on October 29, 1880) and they moved to the Central Oregon area in 1907. They followed Effie's brothers to the area. Harley died in a flu epidemic in February 1920. After his death Effie leased the ranch and moved to Prineville. She died in December 1953. The ranch was later owned by the colorful Dorothy Hackleman Houston



Q Ranch

### 13. Q Ranch

The old Q Ranch was located just over the bank at this site along the road. A log barn was still partially standing at the site until 1991 when it was torn down. The ranch was operated by Abram Hackleman who settled in the Camp Creek area in 1870. Abram was married to Eleanor Davis and had a son, Frank A. Hackleman, who was born in Albany, Oregon on March 14, 1864. Abram bought homesteads near the Q Ranch and Jagi. He died in 1905. Frank continued operating the ranch. He married Martha Stroud, who later passed away, then he married Lena Cox Jeffries in 1900. They had four children, one of which was Frank Abram "Abe" Hackleman,



Branding at the Q Ranch 1885

who later operated the ranch and expanded the holdings. The ranch was named for the brand used by the Hackleman's. The Q Ranch was a stage stop on the Prineville-Burns road. Frank died on August 27, 1936.

#### 14. Barnes Cemetery (Stop)

This cemetery is located on Camp Creek near the old Barnes school house just north of Logan Butte. It is an undeeded cemetery that has about eight graves of which only two are identified. The cemetery is sometimes called

the Camp Creek Cemetery. The oldest grave is that of A.V. Litton, 1890. The cemetery was established in 1888.

#### 15. Bates Homestead

The Arthur E. Bates homestead was located at this site. The old Bates house was still standing until 1991 when it was knocked down. The Bates home was once a stage stop and the Barnes Post Office was in their home for a while with Arthur the Postmaster in 1914. Arthur patented his claim on April 27,



Bates homestead and Logan Butte

1913. He is listed as a Justice of the Peace for the Barnes Precinct in 1914.

found at this site. Fossilized remains of the small North American horse, the oredont have been found.

16. Barnes School/Logan Butte  
(Stop)

This is the last stop of our tour. The final Barnes School was located at this site below Logan Butte. This school site was last used in 1922-23. A new Barnes School was built in 1923 but at a different site. The school was also known as Camp Creek School. The school was moved in the late 1980's and was destroyed.

Logan Butte is located to the south. Numerous plant and animal fossils have been



Barnes or Camp Creek School

## Return Trip to Prineville

Although the tour ends at this point there are some interesting sites along the return trip to Prineville that will be briefly identified if you are taking the Camp Creek route back to town. Not all sites will be described since they are the subject of other tours.

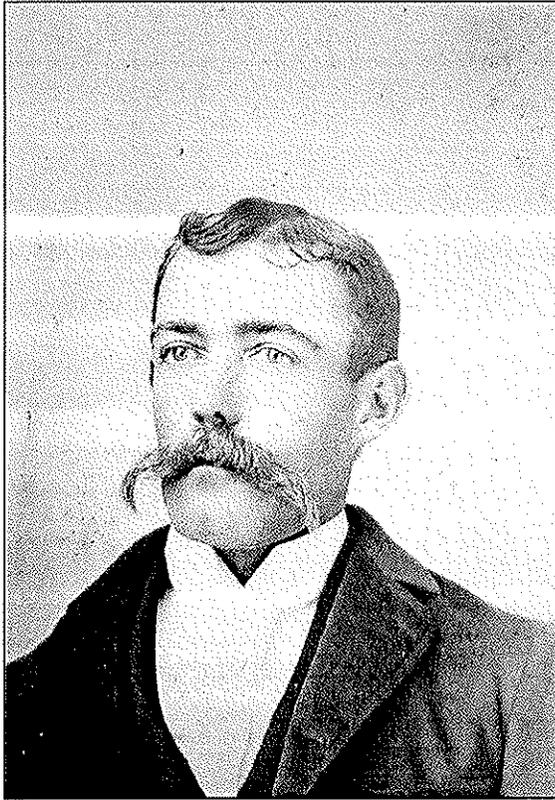
### Barnes/Weaver Ranch

After leaving Barnes school you will pass the

old Harry Barnes homestead site that is now the ranch operation of the Weaver family. Barnes was a Post Office which was established in May 1909 at the Harry Barnes Ranch and Mr. Barnes was the first Postmaster. The office was discontinued in July 1923 and mail was then handled through the Roberts Post Office. The Weaver family developed bentonite mining on their property and the large buildings are a processing plant for making kitty litter.

### Steens Ridge

This ridge is to the east after driving by the GI Ranch Road. The 1845 Meek Wagon Train came down off the ridge to Camp Creek at this point. Later in 1860 Major Enoch Steen



Harry Barnes

passed this way attempting to find a military wagon road to the Harney Basin.

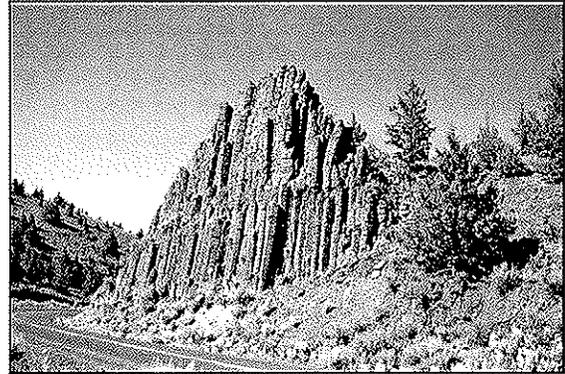
### Pipe Organ Rock

This unique rock outcropping is just off to the right side of the road. The columnar rock formation is a picturesque site you may want to stop to take a picture of.

### The Glenn Place

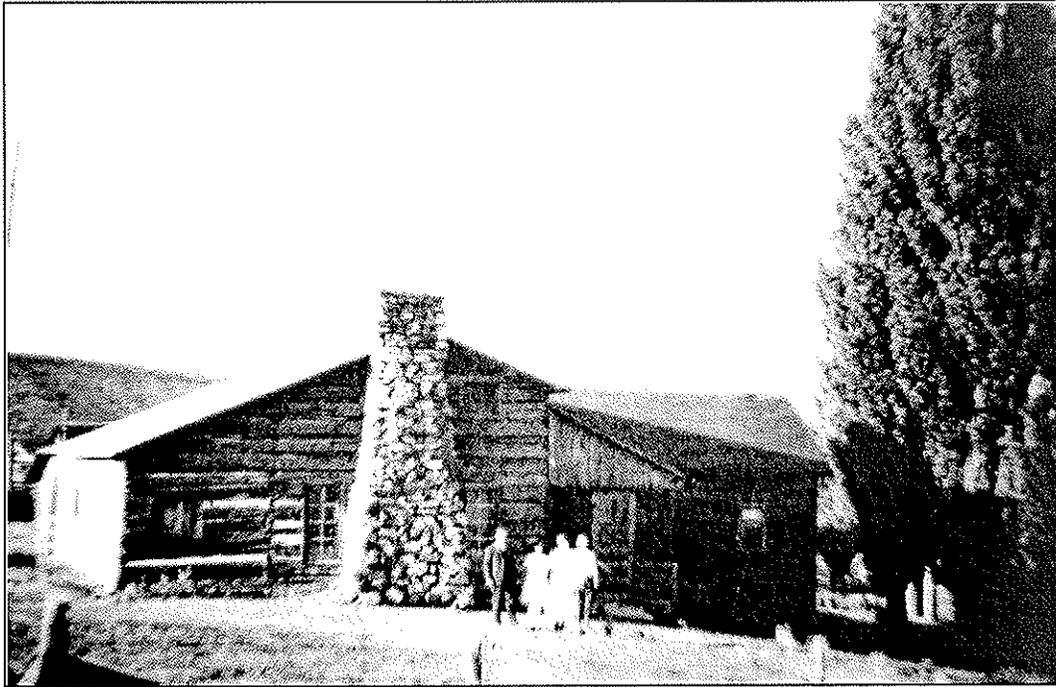
This old log cabin was once the home of the Mark Carson Family and later the George Glenn Family. It was a Post Office and a stage stop.

### Maury Cemetery



Pipe Organ Rock

Approximately one mile west of the Glenn Place and on the left side of the highway is the old Maury Cemetery. Ruts from the 1845 Meek Wagon Train can still be faintly seen coming off of the ridge above the cemetery. This cemetery was first used in 1885 with the oldest grave being that of Lela Stewart, infant, 1885. The cemetery was purchased in 1935 by the Maury Cemetery Association from the Oregon and Western Colonization Company. It was deeded to the Crook County Cemetery District in 1961. There are thirty seven plus graves located on one acre.



Glenn Place 1895



Claude and Mary Dunham Family



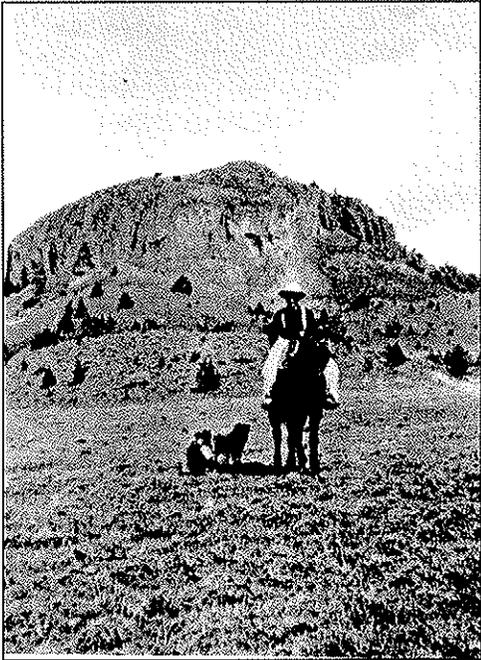
Adell, Wilda, and Manford Nye



Cliff Dunham, Lucille Houston, Wayne Houston and the Houston girls



William Tackman



Manford Nye at Sheep Rock

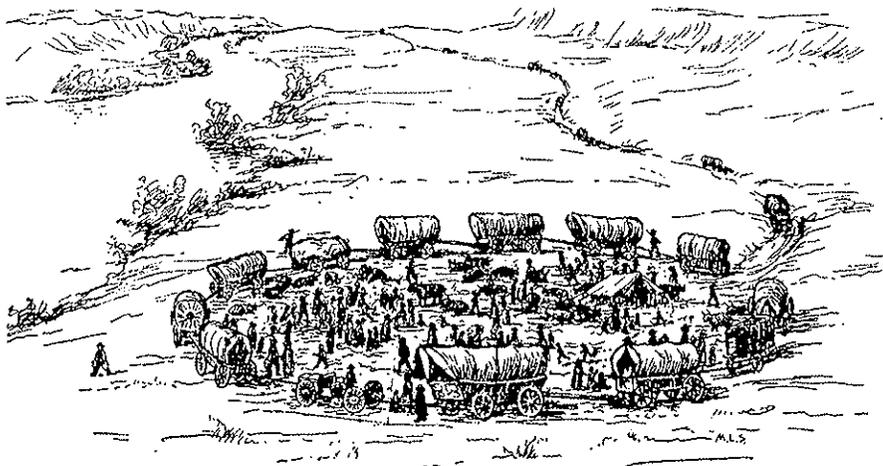
# SUPPLEMENTAL

# INFORMATION

## 1. Bear Creek Place Names

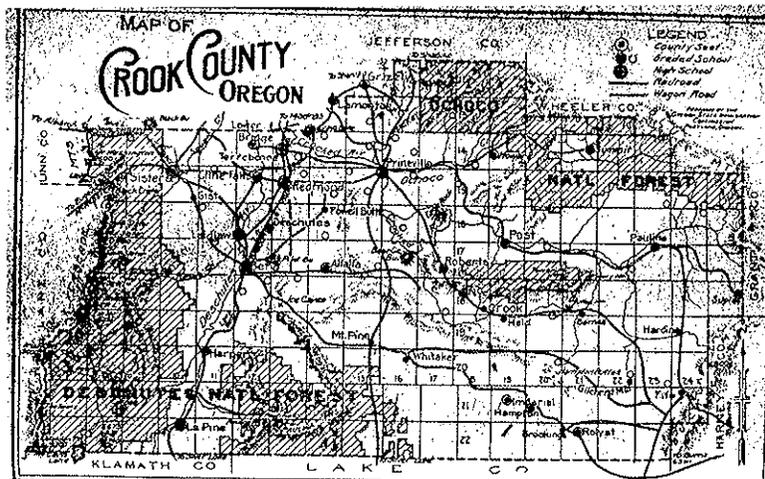
These are taken from the soon to be published  
Crook County Place Names book by Steve Lent

## 2. Bear Creek Watershed Stories



# PLACE NAMES OF BEAR CREEK

From the forthcoming book on Crook County Place Names  
by  
Steve Lent



# Bear Creek Place Names

## **Alkali Butte**

*T17S R18E Sec. 30*

This butte is on the west end of the Maury Mountains 11 miles southwest of Post. The butte has an elevation of 5546 feet. It is believed that the Tetherow branch of the Lost Meek Wagon Train of 1845 passed near the butte in September 1845. It is referenced in some of the memoirs of the Tetherow group that a friendly Indian led the leaders of the train to this butte to point the way to The Dalles. The name was applied to the butte, a nearby flat, and a creek during the early settlement period. It is in reference to the soils in the area being alkaline--a mixture of soluble salts in the soil that was detrimental to agriculture, particularly dryland farming. There is a spectacular view of the Cascades, Crooked River and Prineville Reservoir areas from the summit.

## **Ammons Butte**

*19S R20E Sec. 22*

This butte is located in the Camp Creek area just east of the 96 Ranch. The butte is named Smokey Butte on current U.S.G.S. topographic maps, but it is identified on other maps and is locally known as Ammons Butte. It was named for Richard Alexander Ammons. Ammons was born at Highlands, North Carolina in November 1879. He came to Central Oregon in 1900 and worked for the Hawkins Brothers sawmill on Duncan Creek skidding logs by ox team. He married Nora Bell Birdsong in 1904. Mr. Ammons became a partner with his father-in-law Henry Birdsong and operated a mill near Wiley Flat on Maury Mountain and later moved it to Indian Creek. He sold lumber to homesteaders in the Brothers, Hampton, and Millican areas. Alex, as he was commonly known, established a homestead on Camp Creek and later bought a cattle ranch from Paul Held. Ammons had three sisters in Crook County who all came from North Carolina--Sally (Mrs. Tom Houston), Eva (Mrs. Paul Held), and Nettie (Mrs. Tom Rickman). Mrs. Ammons passed away in 1919 and Richard died in Redmond in 1952. (Source HCC)

## **Antelope Reservoir**

*T18S R19E Sec. 13*

This landmark is located at the western end of Antelope Flat on the southern slopes of Maury Mountain. A dam was placed on Bear Creek at a narrow draw by rancher William McCormack in 1962 to provide a water source for farming the lower reaches of Bear Creek. The reservoir is named for its location on Antelope Flat. The Ochoco National Forest established a campground at the reservoir in the early 1970's and the area is popular for camping and fishing.

## **Belknap Spring**

*T18S R18E Sec. 12*

This spring is located on the southwest side of Maury Mountain and 11 miles south of Post. It is named for Elbert Belknap. He was a teacher at the Bear Creek (Hinton) school in the 1890's and homesteaded in the area.. Elbert was the younger brother of Dr. Horace P. Belknap, a pioneer doctor in Prineville. The spring is incorrectly spelled Belnap on some maps. (Source: CCHSTN)

## **Blackstone Ridge**

*T18S R19E Sec. 32*

This ridge is just southeast of the McCormack Ranch on Bear Creek. It is named for Percy Blackstone, who came to Central Oregon with his wife, Mabel, in 1915. He was born in Washburn, Maine in 1892 and married Mabel Parker in 1913. They lived on various places in Central Oregon and bought the Columbus Johnson place on Bear Creek in 1931. Percy also bought the Charles Cox place giving him over 15,000 acres. After the family left the home ranch Percy sold to William McCormack Sr. in 1941. Percy died in Prineville in 1958 and Mabel died in 1983. (Source: EOD)

## **Brown Spring**

*T21S R21E Sec. 8*

This spring is located six miles north of Hampton near the Crook/Deschutes county line. It is named for Charles T. Brown who settled in the area and operated a ranch. Mr. Brown also had significant land holdings on the West Fork of Camp Creek. (Source: CCCR)

## **Bryson Point**

*T19S R18E Sec. 14*

This point is located four miles southwest of the

McCormack Ranch and just east of Ant Creek. The point is named for Joseph T. Bryson and his wife Grace Faught Bryson, who lived in the big house, now abandoned, at the confluence of Bear Creek and Ant Creek. Joseph was born in North Carolina about 1889. *(Source: CCC1910, CCCR)*

**Burchtorf Butte** *T18SR19E Sec. 35*

This butte is north of the Rickman Ranch and three miles southwest of Antelope Reservoir. It was named for William Henry Burchtorf. He was born in Indiana in 1846. He was one of the first settlers in the Upper Bear Creek country and built a log cabin in the area. His brother Fred also lived in the Bear Creek area. He died in August 1914. His heirs patented his homestead claim on November 3, 1916. Fred Burchtorf was born on July 15, 1850 and lived in the area for several years. *(Source: Ontko, HCO. Obil.)*

**Castle Canyon** *T18SR20E Sec. 29*

This canyon is two miles northwest of Logan Butte near the head of the West Fork of Camp Creek. It is named for Lem Castle. He and his brother Ike settled in the area in the 1880's and later operated the Bear Creek ranch now known as the McCormack Ranch. He and his wife Kaite lived on the Bear Creek Ranch for several years. Lem patented a homestead claim at this location on April 12, 1890. *(Source: CCCR, CCHSTN)*

**China Creek** *T18SR19E Sec. 19*

This creek is located just northeast of the McCormack Ranch and west of Klootchman Reservoir. It is a tributary to Bear Creek. It is reported that this creek received its name in the following manner: An old Chinaman had a good fast saddle horse and at some type of celebration in Burns had defeated several Indian horses in a race. He knew the Indians would be after his horse and try to steal it. He left for Prineville and camped the first day at an aspen grove at the head of a little creek in the Maury Mountains. The Indians evidently followed him and encircled the area. At daylight they killed the Chinaman and took the horse back to Burns. *(Source: CH)*

**Crook**

This Post Office was located in 1915 just south of the west end of Maury Mountain and just west of

Cow Creek. The office moved occasionally as the person who was Postmaster operated from their home. The name Crook is from the County (see Crook County). Crook Post Office was established June 16, 1886, with Nancy Hinton the first Postmaster. The office was finally closed in November 1908. *(Source: OGN)*

**Double Cabin Creek** *T18SR20E Sec. 10*

This creek, spring, and a pond are located on the south side of Maury Mountains four miles northeast of Antelope Reservoir. The creek is a tributary to Indian Creek and the pond is a popular fishing spot. It has been reported that the landmarks were named for a double log cabin built with one roof over both of them that was near the creek in the early homestead era. The pond is located just south of Forest Road 16 and was built primarily as a fishing reservoir. *(Source: CH)*

**Faught Creek** *T18SR19E Sec. 19*

This creek is located on the south side of Maury Mountain. It is a short stream that usually runs water year round. It heads just below Pine Creek Saddle and flows south into Bear Creek one mile west of Antelope Reservoir. According to Hutchinson and Anderson this creek was named for Elam Faught. However, his parents were early settlers in the area. His father, James Faught, was born in 1834 in Indiana. He married Mary Stewart (born in 1844) in 1860 and moved to Trout Creek in Central Oregon in 1877. He was engaged in the sheep business there until 1884 when he moved to a ranch he purchased on Bear Creek. The ranch on Bear Creek served as his headquarters for sheep business until 1895. At that time he sold his stock and purchased a ranch ten miles from Prineville. Four children were born to the Faught's, William, Cora, Elmer and Elam. James died in January 1917 and Mary died in 1916. Elmer and Elam also raised stock in the Bear Creek area and Elam became recognized as an expert horseman and range rider. Elam Faught married Etta McFarland on January 5, 1896. Elam patented a homestead claim near this location on July 11, 1892. He was granted water rights on Bear Creek and Cow Creek on September 24, 1914. *(Source: CH, JOFA, HCO, CCCR)*

**Ferguson Creek** *T18SR18E Sec. 24*

This creek is located on the southeast side of Maury Mountain. It heads at Ferguson Spring one mile southwest of West Maury and flows south four miles and joins Bear Creek at the McCormack Ranch. It is named for Thomas J. Ferguson, who took up a homestead along the creek and patented a claim on March 30, 1891. Mr. Ferguson was born on May 18, 1862 in Monroe County, Oregon. According to Hutchinson the creek was originally named Belknap Creek and was changed by the Forest Service. He died on September 23, 1923. (Source: CCCR, OGN, CH)

**Fischer Canyon** *T19SR18E Sec. 6*

This canyon is located north of Bear Creek and five miles southeast of the junction of Bear Creek Road and State Highway 27. The canyon is named for Carl and Wilda Fischer. Carl was the son of Amelia Fischer who homesteaded near Milliorn Hill. He was born in Hershom, Denmark on November 30, 1891. On November 26, 1913 Carl married Mildred Florence "Wilda" Nye, daughter of Manford and Adell Nye who operated the Nye Ranch on Little Bear Creek. Wilda was born on November 6, 1892 in Sweet Home, Oregon. After their marriage they worked on their homestead and Wilda taught school at the Sheep Rock school. They sold their homestead in 1918 and moved to the Powell Butte area where they lived for several years. Carl served as a Crook County Commissioner for a while. He died in 1977 and is buried in Powell Butte Cemetery. Wilda was a Crook County Pioneer Queen in 1965 and later married Giles Palmer. She died on May 10, 1992. (Source: CCP2, CCHSTN, C.O.)

**Fischer Ridge** *T18SR18E Sec. 29*

This ridge is located between Little Bear Creek and Bear Creek and just west of Spring Creek. The ridge is named for Louis Fischer and his mother Amelia Fischer who homesteaded just west of Milliorn Hill. Amelia was born in Jutland, Denmark on February 5, 1865. She came to the United States with her husband Louis in 1893 and settled in Pennsylvania. Louis, her son, was born in Greenville, Pennsylvania on December 18, 1894. They came from Pennsylvania to the Oregon area after the death of his father in 1898. The family settled on a

homestead on Little Bear Creek in 1911. He patented his homestead claim on June 27, 1922. Louis later worked on other ranches, including the Stearns Ranch. Amelda moved to Prineville in 1937 and died there on February 25, 1942. Louis died on March 16, 1975. (Source: CCHSTN, CCPQ, C.O.)

**Gold Butte** *T18SR18E Sec. 12*

This butte is located four miles northwest of the McCormack Ranch near Ferguson Creek. The butte is named for W.B. Gould, who homesteaded in the area near the turn of the century. Gold is a misspelling of Gould. (Source: Ontko, CCHSTN, CCC1900)

**Grill Ridge** *T19SR19E Sec. 19*

This ridge is five miles south of the McCormack Ranch and nine miles northeast of Brothers. The ridge is named for Gust Grill who homesteaded in the area. He was born in Bavaria, Germany on April 21, 1877 and immigrated to the United States in 1907. Mr. Grill became a naturalized U.S. citizen on October 10, 1921. He patented his homestead claim near this site on January 19, 1922. (Source: CCCR)

**Hodges Knoll** *T18SR18E Sec. 18*

This butte is located two miles southeast of Sheep Rock and near the old Coffelt Ranch on Little Bear Creek. It is named for Lewis Marion Hodges who originally settled near the butte. Lewis was born on December 24, 1856 in Benton County, Oregon. He came to the Prineville area in the early 1870's with his parents Monroe and Rhoda Hodges. His father purchased Barney Prine's blacksmith shop and later plotted the town of Prineville. Lewis married Ellen Jane Baldwin (born in 1861) in 1882. He homesteaded near his cousin, Silas, on Little Bear Creek. A stage stop was operated by the Hodges for several years at their ranch location. Mrs. Hodges was well known for her skill as a cook and their home was a popular resting area for travelers.. Elections were also held at the Hodges home. The family sold the ranch to Granville Nye, brother of Manford Nye, in 1900. The family moved to Prineville and Ellen died in August 1935 and Lewis died later that year on November 5. They are both buried in Juniper Haven Cemetery in

Prineville. (Source: HCC, CCCR, Obit.)

**Houston Butte** *T18SR18E Sec. 25*

This butte is located south of Maury Mountain and approximately two miles north of the McCormack Ranch. McArthur claims that the butte is named for John William Houston. John was the father of several Houston's who homesteaded in the Bear Creek area. He was born in North Carolina on March 28, 1834. His wife Juletta Melinda Miller. was born on September 14, 1838. Mr. Houston came to the Central Oregon area from North Carolina after his sons had already homesteaded in the area. Mr. Houston died in 1919 and his wife in 1925. (Source: OGN, HCC)

**Houston Spring** *T18SR19E Sec. 7*

This spring/pumper chance is located on the Maury Mountains three miles south of Sherwood Saddle on the Ochoco National Forest. It is named for the Houston family who homesteaded two miles south of the spring site. James Charles Houston and his wife Sarah Evelyn Gregory Houston came from North Carolina to the Bear Creek area in 1888 and settled near Ferguson Creek. Charles was born in 1871. His father John Houston and his wife Juletta later moved nearby and homesteaded. Several of the Houston family settled in various places in the Bear Creek country. Sumner Houston (born 1899), son of Charles, later operated the John Houston Ranch. John died in 1919 (See Houston Butte) and Charles died in 1952. Sumner died in 1983. (Source: HCC)

**Libby Saddle** *T19SR19E Sec. 10*

This saddle is located two miles south of the old Held School site and eleven miles northeast of Brothers. The saddle is named for Warren G. Libby who settled in the area near the turn of the century. He was born about 1867 in Oregon. He patented his homestead claim near this site on February 27, 1914 and later purchased other land nearby. (Source: CCCR, CCC1910)

**Mays Canyon** *T19SR20E Sec. 32*

This canyon is located two miles west of Logan Butte in the Camp Creek area. The Canyon is named for Grant Mays. He was born in Oregon

about 1866 and his parents were early settlers in The Dalles area. Mr. Mays and his wife Vesta purchased the homestead of Frank Hampton, which was known as the Pothook Place. Both he and Vesta filed additional homestead claims and patented one near this site on November 5, 1908.. (Source: WCC1880, CCHSTN)

**Mulholland Ridge** *T18SR18E Sec. 14*

This ridge is approximately one and one half miles northwest of Sugarloaf Butte. The ridge is named for Frank Richard "Dick" Mulholland who homesteaded in the area. He was born in 1866 and married Eugenia Milliorn, a member of a Bear Creek pioneer family, on May 23, 1901. Dick lived in the area several years and received a patent on his claim on November 17, 1917. On October 1, 1914 he was granted water rights on Cow Creek. Mr. Mulholland died on February 19, 1941 and Eugenia remarried after his death. Richard's brother Thomas B. Mulholland was also an early settler in the area patenting a claim on August 8, 1889. Thomas sold his property to H. M. Milliorn in September 1889. (Source: Obit.)

**Nye Ranch** *T18SR18E Sec. 8*

This ranch is located near Sheep Rock on the southwest end of Maury Mountain and along Little Bear Creek. This ranch site was originally settled by Silas Hodges, who was the son of Alexander Hodges, a pioneer in Prineville Valley in 1870. Silas was born in Lane County, Oregon in 1859. He settled on Little Bear Creek and lived there until 1895 and sold the ranch to Manford D. Nye. Manford Nye was born in Linn County, Oregon on April 11, 1863. He came to Central Oregon in the 1880's and worked in the Paulina area and later worked for Lem Castle on Bear Creek. In 1892 Manford married Adell Yancey, a daughter of an early Central Oregon pioneer. After purchasing the Silas Hodges Ranch he gradually increased his holdings by buying up homesteads and built up a large ranch. Manford and Adell had one daughter, Wilda. Adell later died and Manford married Margaret Wiltse Patterson in later years. He spent over 50 years on the Little Bear Creek Ranch. He passed away in Prineville on July 3, 1956 and is buried in Powell Butte Cemetery. Margaret and long time hired hands George and Johnnie Pearce, continued to

operate the ranch and continued to live at the ranch after it was sold. Margaret died in October 1977. (Source: *Obit.HCC*)

### **Q Ranch**

*T18SR20E Sec. 26*

This former ranch is located south of Maury Mountain near the confluence of Camp Creek and Double Cabin Creek. It is two miles north of Logan Butte and just north of the Bear Creek-Camp Creek Road. A log barn was still partially standing at the site until 1991 when it was torn down. The ranch was operated by Abram Hackleman who settled in the Camp Creek area in 1870. Abram was married to Eleanor Davis and had a son, Frank A. Hackleman, who was born in Albany, Oregon on March 14, 1864. Abram bought homesteads near the Q Ranch and Jagi. He died in 1905. Frank continued operating the ranch. He married Martha Stroud, who later passed away, then he married Lena Cox Jeffries in 1900. They had four children, one of which was Frank Abram "Abe" Hackleman, who later operated the ranch and expanded the holdings. The ranch was named for the brand used by the Hackleman's. The Q Ranch was a stage stop on the Prineville-Burns road. Frank died on August 27, 1936. (Source: *HCC, CCCR*)

### **Rambow Spring**

*T18SR18E Sec. 11*

This spring is located on the southwest end of Maury Mountain and 11 miles south of Post. It is a developed spring with a metal trough and is on the Ochoco National Forest. It is named for Pat Oswald Rambow who lived near the boundary of the Ochoco National Forest on Cow Creek. The name is misspelled on U.S.G.S. maps as Rambo Springs. Pat was born on August 4, 1876. His wife Mabel Young was born on April 17, 1883 in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania. Mable and Pat were married in York, Pennsylvania on November 16, 1916. They came to Crook County to ranch shortly after their marriage. Pat patented his claim on December 1, 1917. Mable died on March 28, 1939 and Pat died in October 1961. (Source: *CCCR, Obit.*)

### **Ramsey Ridge/Well**

*T19SR19E Sec. 7*

This ridge and a well nearby in section 18 is located ten miles northeast of Brothers and three miles south of Bear Creek. The ridge and well are

named for Frank Louis Ramsey who settled in the area with his wife Elnora near the turn of the century. He was born in Essex County, England on March 5, 1882. On September 9, 1918 he became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Mr. Ramsey patented his homestead claim on March 17, 1920. (Source: *CCAR, CCCR*)

### **Roberts**

*T17SR17E Sec. 22*

This site is located three miles south of Prineville Reservoir on Alkali Flat. This one time Post Office site was named for Joseph Eggleston "Gede" Roberts. He was born on August 3, 1861 in Old Town, Virginia. The family moved to Brownsville, Oregon during the Civil War. J.E. married Sophronia Rice (born November 11, 1861) in 1886. The Roberts family moved to Central Oregon in 1887 and settled on Hammer Creek and later moved to Newsome Creek. In 1894 they moved to the Arthur Johnson Ranch on Alkali Flat. He raised horses, cattle, and some sheep. A Post Office was established in the area on May 6, 1910 and was named in honor of Joseph. The first Postmaster was Frank Hume. The Roberts area began to boom in the early 1900's when the homesteader era began. The Roberts family donated land for a school and a cemetery. There was a stage stop located at Roberts. The Post Office was discontinued on February 29, 1940. The Roberts Ranch was sold in 1939. Sophronia died at Roberts in 1933. After the ranch was sold the family moved to Prineville. J.E. died in 1943. Both J.E. and Sophronia are buried in Roberts Cemetery. (Source: *HCC, OPO*)

### **Roberts Cemetery**

*T17SR17E Sec. 22*

This cemetery is located south of Prineville Reservoir near the abandoned townsite of Roberts. It was established in 1888 and is not deeded. There are twenty one graves with two unidentified. Seven graves are those of the J.E. Roberts family. The oldest marked grave is that of Phoebe Elizabeth Roberts, 1888. (See Roberts) (Source: *HCC, OCS*)

### **Rodman Rim**

*T19SR17E Several sections*

This rim is one of two in the County with the same name. It is located 35 miles south of Prineville and south of the Bear Creek drainage.

This rim is named for William Rodman. He and his sons, Seth and George, homesteaded near the east end of the rim in the 1880's. They raised sheep in the area. William was very active in early government and is reported to have been active in the Vigilantes. He patented his claim in this area on April 9, 1892. William sold his interests in the Bear Creek area to J.M. Anderson in 1891 and moved to Lamonta. Seth later ranched on the South Fork of Crooked River. (Source: OGN, JCR, CCCR)

**Saunders Place** *T18SR20E Sec. 26*  
This site is still identified on some maps. It is located south of Maury Mountain near the confluence of West Fork Camp Creek, Jackson Creek, and Indian Creek. Harley and Effie Saunders took up a homestead here in 1910. Harley was born on September 23, 1885 and lived in the Highlands, North Carolina area. He married Effie Houston (born on October 29 1880) and they moved to the Central Oregon area in 1907. They followed Effie's brothers to the area. Harley died in a flu epidemic in February 1920. After his death Effie leased the ranch and moved to Prineville. She died in December 1953. (Source: HCC, Obit.)

**Sheep Rock** *T18SR18E Sec. 8*  
This is one of two Sheep Rocks in Crook County. It is located near the Nye Ranch on Little Bear Creek on the southwest side of Maury Mountain. It is a unique rock feature. The rock is first identified on 1865 military maps and is mentioned as Sheep Rock in military journals of the period. This was prior to the stockmen being active in the area and suggests that the name might have been for the native rimrock sheep that lived in the area prior to early settlement. It is believed that the Tetherow group of the Lost Meek Train passed near this site in 1845. (Source: Drake Journal)

**Soldier Creek** *T19SR19E Sec. 33*  
This creek is located one mile east of the McCormack Ranch and is a tributary to Bear Creek flowing from the south. During the Bannock Indian uprising in 1878 soldiers were dispatched to protect settlers in the Bear Creek area. A detachment of soldiers made their camp near this small stream and it later became known

as Soldier Creek. (Source: CH)

**Sontag Ridge** *T19SR17E Sec. 12*  
This ridge is located four miles southeast of the junction of highway 27 and Bear Creek Road south of Prineville Reservoir. The ridge is named for Otto Sontag who homesteaded nearby and patented a claim on April 11, 1919. Mr. Sontag was born in Johns Dorf, Germany on September 5, 1875 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen on September 28, 1916. He operated a saloon in Prineville for a few years. He died on November 6, 1940. (Source: CCCR)

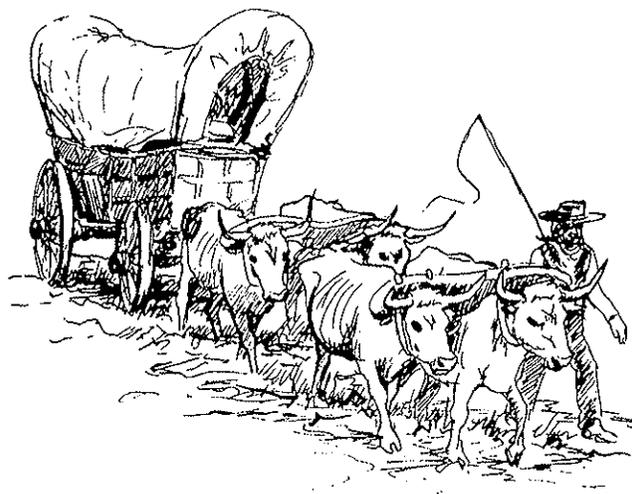
**Tackman Ranch** *T18SR20E Sec. 23*  
This ranch is located on the south slope of Maury Mountain four miles south of Tower Point and along Indian Creek. The area was first settled by Thomas LaFollette in the 1870's and Hiram "Hi" Gibson operated at this site later. Dr. William Tackman bought the ranch from Gibson. He was born in April 1857 in Iowa. Dr. Tackman was a dentist and practiced in The Dalles until he bought the ranch around 1912. Dr. Tackman later operated a dentist office in Prineville and later in John Day. He married Albertina Hollister (Born in July 1855) in Iowa in 1882. They had two children, Marjora and George. Mr. Tackman died following an automobile accident near Condon, Oregon in May 1923. Albertina lived in Prineville with her daughter for several years and passed away in Bend at the age of 103 in May 1960. George Tackman operated the ranch after his parents moved into Prineville. George was born in June 1892. George married Harriet Bixby (Born in February 1892) in 1915 and they lived on the ranch for several years raising cattle and sheep. They had four children. The ranch was sold in their later years and they moved to Burns. George died in November 1965 and Harriet died in December 1989. (Source: HCC, CO)

# Bear Creek Watershed Stories

Interviews with “Old Time” residents of Bear Creek

Compiled by

M.B. Rollins



## Interview with Mrs. John Sherry February 1972

Eugenia or Jen was born in Bear Creek on September 15, 1882. Her parents were William and Pleasant Milliorn. Her folks homesteaded in Bear Creek. They lived on Calf Creek and the Crook Post Office was at their home at various times. The family lived in the area for 25 years. Jen and her first husband, Dick Mulholland, lived on Spring Creek.

Mrs. Sherry said "they didn't put up much hay". The hills had lots of grass and lots of snow in the winter time. There are many junipers now but not many in the early days. She didn't know where all the junipers came from. They could see all around Milliorn Hill, but now junipers block your vision.

She didn't know of any early day fires. Only a few Indians were around then. They camped in Bear Creek and hunted deer there and tanned hides. The early settlers lived on venison. There were lots of deer.

Jen emphasized that the hills had lots of grass and cattle came in fat. Her father didn't have more than 10 acres fenced for hay. There were not many fences. Open grazing was the practice, but small hay fields were fenced. Her father had 12 head of milk cows and about 20 head of range cows. Her mother made butter and sold it. Most families were like them. They had small herds, but herds built up in number as the years passed. William Milliorn had 100 head before they left Bear Creek.

This began overgrazing. Junipers were on many of the hills, alright, but they weren't thick in most places in those days. The Milliorn's sold their property to Pat Rambo somewhere between 1910 and 1915. Jen named the following early residents: Alec Rickman, Grace Bryson, Edmond Parker.

## Interview with Frank Scott February 1972

He said that Pat Rambo came to Bear Creek in 1907. Pat bought 160 acres from Mulholland. Rambo had about 600 head of cattle when Frank knew and worked for him. Rambo never fed them in earlier days. Frank said that Rambo never shipped more than two car loads of steers in a season while he knew him.

Ranchers in the bear Creek area when Frank came in 1928 were: Mike Mayfield, cattle, where Prineville Reservoir is now; Manford Nye, cattle, Claude Dunham, sheep; Joseph Roberts, sheep; and Charlie Houston, sheep and horses.

The gully by the Scott home was about five feet deep and about 27 feet wide in 1920. They drove across the gully (with no bridge) when they first came here. It is now 20 feet deep and 45 feet wide. A bridge is now necessary to cross the gully.

The Scott Ranch is an example of the transition from "The Homesteaders" to present day ranching. This ranch of 2,760 acres of deeded land was once 11 homesteads. Frank had 50 head of Hereford cows at the time of the interview.

## Interview with Ray Rickman February 1972

Ray was born in 1918 at the Rickman Ranch in Bear Creek. At the time of the interview Ray said the range was better the past 10 years than it was when he was younger. "It's coming back, but juniper is a big problem. Needs thinning in patches."

He said that Pat Rambo had about 700 head of cattle when his herds were at their peak. They roamed Bear Creek and the High Desert from the Maury's all the way to Klamath Falls. There were lots of horses in Bear Creek in the late 1920's. They were owned by Bill Brown, Charlie Houston, and also by Frank and Sumner Houston. Manford Nye had about 300 cows.

## Interview with George Pierce March 13, 1972

He confirmed much of Jen Sherry's story of the early days in Bear Creek. There was not much hay grown. Cattle stayed out all winter. He reminisced about the freedom of the "good old days". He didn't like fences. He said Pat Rambo had 700-800 head of cows and didn't feed them. Mayfield had 1,00-1,500 head. His ranch was at Prineville Reservoir and his cattle grazed into Bear Creek.

George said that early residents (after the turn of the century) drove their wagons across Little Bear Creek where it is now a deep gully. The gully now averages about 20 feet wide and 15 feet deep.

## Interview with Claude Coffelt March 1972

Claude came into Bear Creek in 1928. He moved away in 1944 to the South Fork of the Crooked river. He says Rambo had 700-800 head of cattle. There were a lot of cattle in Bear Creek in the 20's. He said that there was a large increase in junipers. He said Jen Mulholland left Bear Creek probably in the mid 30's.

## Interview with Sumner Houston

### March 30, 1972

Sumner was born in Bear Creek on March 21, 1899. He lived on Ferguson Creek as a young man and operated the old Sontag Place. His father was Charlie Houston, who came to Bear Creek in 1887.

He remembered lots of snow and the density of junipers much more now than in the early days. "You could see all over, now you can't see for the trees. The trees take the moisture away, making it hard for the grass to grow." He didn't know why junipers have increased in numbers and he didn't remember many fires. Sumner said that the livestock numbers were the greatest about 1930. Rambo had about 600 cows and he never fed them. Bryson had about 300, Mulholland about 300. Mike Mayfield had cattle in Lapine area and Bear Creek.

Columbus Johnson owned Bill McCormack's ranch. He told Sumner that water ran on top of the ground where the creeks are cut deep now. Cutting downward started later. Sumner was a buckaroo boss for Bill Brown. Horses came onto Bear Creek some, but they mostly roamed the desert. Sumner used to brand 125-150 head of colts a day. Charlie Houston had 300 head of horses. They roamed on the desert and in Bear Creek. In 1920 Sumner helped ship 2,000 head of Brown's horses for chicken feed. Sumner said that Irish sheep herds ruined the country. They never owned a foot of land but ran their sheep everywhere.

Sumner won the Pony Express race from Bend to The Dalles. His time was 9 hours and 54 minutes. He rode 169 miles. He first saw his wife while riding in this race. She was a spectator.

He said that Jen Mulholland left Bear Creek in 1940 after Taylor Grazing was formed. Sold to Tom Rickman. He knew a lot of section corners in Bear Creek. He helped survey much of it. He said "It would help a lot to cut those junipers, the grass would come back."

Sumner and his wife left Bear Creek in 1957. They said "They don't like living in town".

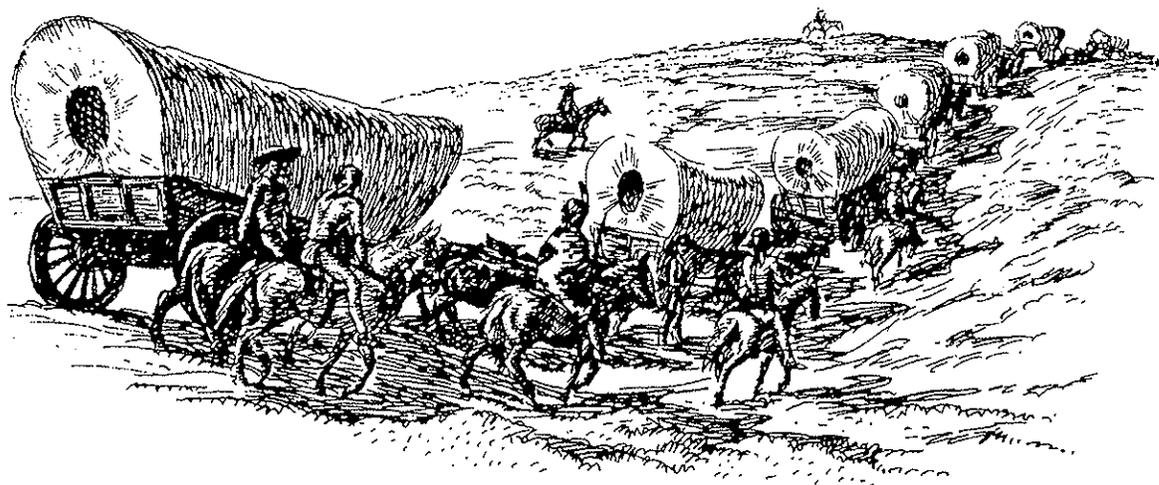
## Interview with Wayne Houston

### April 11, 1972

Wayne was born in Bear Creek in 1906. He left there in 1946. He told the same story about the junipers as the other interviewees. He said there were not many juniper trees in the Bear Creek country in the early days. It was a lot like the Suplee country is now with scattered stands of trees. When the land was over-grazed the junipers came in as did the sagebrush. There were lots of horses and sheep there in 1920 and this is when the livestock numbers were at their peak. He said that horses did the most damage while other residents blamed large numbers of cattle as the cause of overgrazing.

# BEAR CREEK HISTORICAL TOUR

# TOUR MAP



# MAP LEGEND

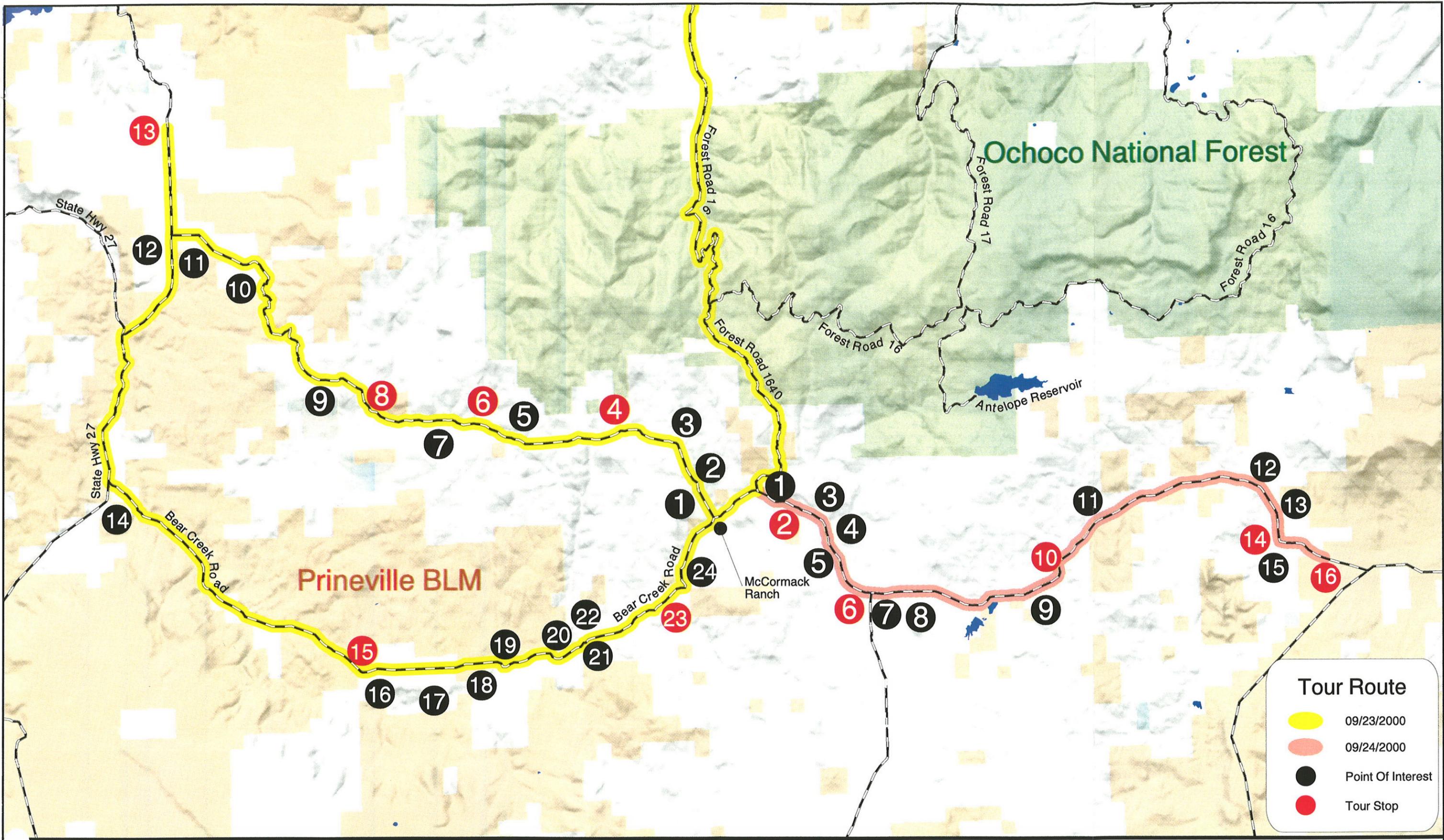
Day One September 23, 2000

- |     |                                |     |                                 |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 1.  | Charlie Houston Homestead      | 13. | Roberts/Roberts Cemetery (Stop) |
| 2.  | Sumner Houston Place           | 14. | Scott Place/Sage Hollow         |
| 3.  | Ferguson Creek                 | 15. | Carlin Place/Grave Hollow(Stop) |
| 4.  | Hinton Place (Stop)            | 16. | Sontag Place                    |
| 5.  | Milliorn Place                 | 17. | Wirtz Place                     |
| 6.  | Milliorn Hill (Stop)           | 18. | Parker Place                    |
| 7.  | Carl Fischer Homestead         | 19. | Spring Creek                    |
| 8.  | Coffelt Barn/Sheep Rock (Stop) | 20. | Bear Creek School Site          |
| 9.  | Hodges Knoll                   | 21. | Bryson Place                    |
| 10. | Salt Creek Ranch               | 22. | Cow Creek/Mulholland Place      |
| 11. | Ed Campbell Homestead          | 23. | Elbert Houston Homestead (Stop) |
| 12. | Jabe Warner Place              | 24. | Cox Place                       |

Day Two September 24, 2000

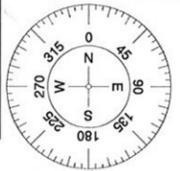
- |    |  |     |                                  |
|----|--|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Taylor and Wilson Homesteads             | 9.  | Finley Place                     |
| 2. | Riparian Restoration Area (Stop)         | 10. | Pothook Ranch (Stop)             |
| 3. | Cabe Place                               | 11. | Moore Place                      |
| 4. | Floyd Houston Place                      | 12. | Saunders Place                   |
| 5. | Graybower Place/Held School              | 13. | Q Ranch                          |
| 6. | Held (Stop)                              | 14. | Barnes Cemetery (Stop)           |
| 7. | Ammons, Evans, & Burchtorf<br>Homesteads | 15. | Bates Homestead                  |
| 8. | Rickman Ranch                            | 16. | Barnes School/Logan Butte (Stop) |





**Tour Route**

- 09/23/2000
- 09/24/2000
- Point Of Interest
- Tour Stop



# Bear Creek Historical Tour

Sponsored by:  
Crook County Historical Society  
Bowman Museum

