
Livestock Drives

Hudson Bay Company trappers are credited with the first explorations of the Rogue River Valley in the early 1820s.¹ In 1827, Peter Skene Ogden, a fur trader and explorer for the Hudson Bay Company, following loosely connected Indian trails², made the first documented exploration through the terrain that would be southern Oregon, including Hugo. He described the country as wild and the rivers too rushing and rocky to have good beaver hunting.³

1834 Ewing Young Ogden's sparsely used trail was called the Trapper's Trail. It witnessed three livestock drives, the first one beginning in 1834 when a herd of 130 horses and mules was driven north from San Jose by Ewing Young and sixteen men.³ They passed through the Grants Pass area, following Peter Ogden's Trapper's Trail route of seven years earlier.

"There are many humorous things in the world: among them, the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages." Mark Twain

Ewing Young started with seven men and about 50 horses. Before leaving California they met 14 men also heading north, driving 77 horses and mules. They joined Young's group. Unfortunately they turned out to be an unscrupulous collection of naval deserters and marauders. After wrongly killing several Indians the party found Indians stalking them, killing seven of their horses before leaving the Indians behind.

Ewing Young³

By the time the party arrived at the Rogue River, some of the men had fallen ill with malaria. They camped on an island in the middle of the river to keep the horses from running off and perhaps also insure against their being stolen by Indians. Two Indians did arrive to visit. Young feared if the Indians left and told others of the illness and resulting weakness in their camp's defenses, the Indians would attack. He killed the two Indians. How much thought was given the decision or possible alternatives that may or may not have existed wasn't discussed. It brings to mind Mark Twain's sometimes biting wit and wisdom:

"There are many humorous things in the world: among them, the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages."

From the time the other Indians found the bodies, the Rogue Indians sought revenge against white men. Young reached Fort Vancouver, to learn word had preceded him by Hudson Bay ship that horses in possession of the second group were stolen. The Hudson Bay Company held Young responsible and excluded him from doing business with them.

While ostracized from doing business with the Hudson Bay Company because of the theft charges, Young started to build a still. The missionary colony heard of his doing and called a meeting of the Oregon Temperance Society. Young said he was building the still out of financial necessity. He was eventually exonerated by the Governor of Mexican California.

More Information

1837 Willamette Cattle Company During the 1830s, the Lees' mission served as a magnet for other Americans who also settled in the Willamette Valley. In 1835, President Andrew Jackson sent William Slacum, a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, to report on the situation in Oregon. Slacum arrived in Oregon in 1836. When he discovered that the Hudson's Bay Company held a monopoly on cattle in Oregon, he persuaded the American settlers to join together to buy cattle in California and bring them back to Oregon. In January 1837 the Willamette Cattle Company was formed for this purpose. Both Jason Lee and John McLoughlin were shareholders. That same year some 600 head of cattle were brought back to Oregon. The success of this venture gave American settlers a growing sense of independence from the Hudson's Bay Company.

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

1. Sutton, Jack. 1966. 110 Years With Josephine County, The History OF Josephine County: 1856 - 1966

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 2005. *Hugo's Indian Trail*. Hugo, OR.

3. The Daily Courier. January 31, 2005. Mondays Make History. Presented by the Josephine County Historical Society. *Wilderness Beginnings: 1820 - 1846, Part I*. By Gary Fixsen. Grants Pass, OR.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer.

Hugo Neighborhood Association

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LIVESTOCK DRIVES: 1830s



Brochure 5 in
Trapper's Trail Series



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Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee

Hugo Neighborhood Association &
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