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## United States Exploring Expedition: 1838 - 1842 - Part II of III

**1841** From 1838-1842, Captain Charles Wilkes and six ships circumnavigated the globe.<sup>1</sup> The 1841 journey under Captain Wilkes from the Columbia River to the Sacramento River, including passage through the Rogue River Valley, was led by Lieutenant Emmons.<sup>2</sup> This is probably the first published account of what became U.S. Highway 99, the north-south track of the Southern Pacific Railroad. It had been in use by the Hudson Bay fur trappers and later would be heavily used by emigrants, the gold

rushers and the Concord stages.



**Captain Wilkes**

Page 284<sup>3</sup> “Wilkes issued orders for Lieutenant George Emmons to head the Siskiyou Trail expedition to California on September 1, 1841.”

Page 111<sup>2</sup>. “They reached the Champooing on the 3d, where they disembarked. In the morning they were taken to the house of Thomas M’Kay. . . On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the party made

their final move, and after traveling only six miles, encamped near Turner’s known as the mission butcher. He owns a farm, in the acceptance of the word in Oregon, having a log-hut, an Indian woman to reside in it, and an undefined quantity of land..”

Thomas McKay had been an early Hudson Bay Company fur trapper.<sup>4</sup>

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## Lieutenant George Emmons' Oregon Observations: 1841

Page 290<sup>3</sup> “The Overland Expedition really got under way with a good day’s march on September 9, 1841. . . The air was full of smoke from Indian-set grassfires which shut out any view of the countryside and prevented Emmons from getting an altitude at noon with his instruments. He had to follow a compass course, south-south-west . . . All vegetation, save trees, was destroyed by the fires of the Indians intent on making root digging easier.”

Page 292<sup>3</sup> September 11 “Smoke and fog made celestial sightings impossible.”

**The Lieutenant found Fort Umpqua to be a picketed miniature Fort Vancouver, measuring 200 by 150 feet**

Page 114<sup>2</sup>. “On the 16<sup>th</sup>, they encamped on the Elk river.” Page 295<sup>3</sup> “Eld could see little of his surroundings for the smoke, but managed to shoot the sun at meridian to get the latitude.”

Page 296<sup>3</sup> “The Lieutenant found Fort Umpqua to be a picketed miniature Fort Vancouver, measuring 200 by 150 feet.”

Page 119<sup>2</sup>. “On the 19<sup>th</sup>, . . . About noon they reached the north fork of the Umpqua, . . . On the Umpqua, the first grisly bears were seen, here also the white-tailed deer was lost sight of, and the black-tailed species met with. Elk were seen in great numbers.”

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## Siskiyou Trail Expedition To California

Page 300<sup>3</sup> “The north fork was low, barely two feet deep but rushing fast over a slippery, cobbly bed.”

Page 120<sup>2</sup>. “On the 22d, they began their route across the Umpqua Mountains. The ascent was at first



**1841 Exploratory Expedition Map Of Oregon Territory**

gradual and easy; the path was quite narrow, and lined with dense underbrush, through which they were at times obliged to cut their way. The party was obliged to

follow each other, and formed a line of nearly a mile in length.”

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

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1. Wilkes, Charles. 1845. *Narrative of the United States exploring expedition. During the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842.* With illustrations and maps. In five volumes ... Publisher: Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard. The U.S. Congress sent an exploring expedition to the Pacific Ocean and South Seas from 1838-1842 to enhance the country's commerce and science, and to compete with famous British and French explorers. NOAA Central Library Call Number: Q115 .U48 1845, 5 vol.

2. Biobooks. 1958. *Columbia River to the Sacramento* By Charles Wilkes, U.S.N. Commander United States Exploring Expedition 1839 - 1842. Oakland 10, CA.

3. Dillon, Richard. 1975. *Siskiyou Trail, The Hudson's Bay Company Route to California.* McGraw-Hill Book Company.

4. Hugo Neighborhood. 2008. *Hudson Bay Company Personalities.* Hugo, OR.

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## 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 of 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*

Email: [hugo@jeffnet.org](mailto:hugo@jeffnet.org)

Edited by Jacque Hardwick, Karen Rose, & Mike Walker

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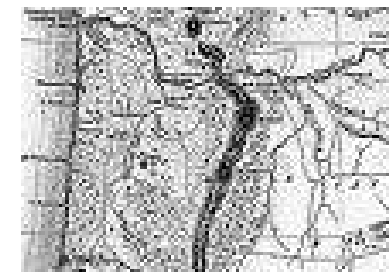
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# UNITED STATES EXPLORING EXPEDITION THROUGH SOUTHERN OREGON: 1841

II of III



Brochure 7B in  
Trapper's Trail Series



*1841 Exploratory Expedition Map  
Of Oregon Territory*

May 25, 2008

**Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee**

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society**