

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

DECEMBER 2000 Vol. 2, No. 12

Today



MAN ON A MISSION

WHEN OGDEN EXPLORED THE ROGUE VALLEY

LINK TO A PRE-CHRISTIAN PAST

HOW MISTLETOE BECAME A HOLIDAY TRADITION

EIGHTEEN GUESTS FOR DINNER?

HOLIDAY TABLES ONCE GROANED WITH FLATWARE

The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society 



Christmas Comes Calling



Christmas came early to the Southern Oregon Historical Society. *Sprint* Account Executive Todd Gschwend was instrumental in securing key components of a reconditioned phone system equipped with voice mail as a major donation to the Society. Additional handsets and add-on components will be added to the system before its installation in January. *Sprint's* community-minded background and Gschwend's community spirit were a winning combination in bringing the Society such a generous gift during these financially challenging times. The Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board of Directors, and all Society staff wish to express sincere thanks to *Sprint* for its continued support.



Society Executive Director Brad Linder (2nd from right) thanks Sprint Account Executive Todd Gschwend for Sprint's donation while Society Public Relations Coordinator Darlene Turner and Sprint Communications Consultant Ryan Beckley look on.

Christmas with the Society

Enjoy Society Victorian Christmas activities in Jacksonville:

- MRS. CLAUS AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
- JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM
- HISTORY STORE...a wonderful shopping opportunity for everything on your list—gifts, books, historic reproductions, cards—and don't forget discounts for Society members!
- VISIT SANTA CLAUS IN DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE
- CATHOLIC RECTORY OPEN HOUSE
- CORNELIUS C. BEEKMAN OPEN HOUSE



SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE
TODAY

Editorial Guidelines

Feature articles average 3,000 to 4,000 (pre-edited) words. Other materials range from 500 to 1,000 words. Electronic submissions are accepted on 3-1/4-inch disks and should be accompanied by a hard-copy printout. Cite all sources and construct endnotes and cutlines using the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The author is responsible for verification of cited facts. A selection of professional, unscreened photographs and/or line art should accompany submission—black-and-white or color. The Southern Oregon Historical Society reserves the right to use Society images in place of submitted material. All material should be labeled with author's name, mailing address, and telephone number. Manuscripts will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope stamped with sufficient postage. Authors should provide a brief autobiographical note at the end of manuscripts.

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SOUTHERN OREGON
HERITAGE
Today

FEATURE:

Exploring "A Fine Country":
Peter Skene Ogden in the
Rogue Valley, 1827

by Jeff LaLande p. 8



PHOTO OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE
COLLECTIONS

Flatware for Every
Purpose

by Mary Ames Sheret

p. 4



Acc #B5482

ROOTED IN
HISTORY

Mistletoe

by Nan Hannon
and Donn L. Todt

p. 16

SOHS NEWS & NOTES

Exhibits, and Program
Updates and Calendar
p. 6

MEMBERS & DONORS

p. 15



PHOTO OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ON THE COVER

This profile of Peter Skene Ogden shows the Hudson's Bay Company explorer circa 1822, age thirty-two, five years before he led his trapping brigade through the Rogue Valley.

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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SINCE 1949

Flatware for Every Purpose

by Mary Ames Sheret



Victorian Christmas dinner menus were extensive, with anywhere from five to eighteen courses served at a formal dinner. Guests might dine on oysters, soup with celery and olives, fish and potatoes, roast goose, turkey or beef with three or four vegetables, a sherbet or punch, duck or squab, and a salad with cheese wafers followed by puddings, ice creams and cakes, fresh fruits, bonbons, cheese, crackers, nuts, and finally black coffee.

A proper hostess and guest needed to know which fork, knife, spoon, tongs, and other serving pieces to use with each dish. And it wasn't easy. Silver manufacturers tried to outdo each other in the variety of pieces they offered. In 1880, Reed & Barton's complete flatware line included fifty-seven distinct

items. By 1900, their service for eighteen had grown to 404 pieces and included such necessary items as an asparagus server, pea spoon, cheese scoop, duck knife, terrapin fork, and grape scissors.

This extravagant expansion of the number and variety of dining implements continued until 1926, when Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover recommended a program to simplify American industry. The Sterling Silverware Manufacturers Association agreed to a new standard. The maximum number of separate pieces to be made in any new pattern would be fifty-five. 🍴

Mary Ames Sheret is curator of collections and exhibits for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.



Top, cheese scoop (Acc #66.137.2.11.8). Middle, olive spoon (Acc # 85.3.116). Left to right, butter knife (Acc #59.14.14), nut pick (Acc #82.107), oyster fork (Acc #82.107), salt spoon (Acc #2172), mustard spoon (Acc #60.61.2.4), sugar shell (Acc #78.93.9), bonbon spoon (Acc #85.3.148), orange spoon (Acc #77.100.206.4), butter knife (Acc #65.36.8.5), fruit knife (Acc #77.100.204.5).



Top, berry spoon (Acc #83.8.3). Above middle, ice tongs (Acc #85.3.126). Left to right, napkin holder (Acc #3710.1), fish serving knife (Acc #78.93.1), pie server (Acc #85.3.124), pastry fork (Acc #78.31.11), fish serving set (Acc #59.14.13). Bottom, punch ladle (Acc #83.8.4.1).



Things To Do in December

PROGRAMS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
December Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Ornaments & Dreidels; free
Open House	Sat., Dec. 2, noon - 4pm Sun., Dec. 3, noon - 4pm	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Traditional Victorian Christmas; fee
Papermaking	Sat., Dec. 2, 1 - 4pm	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Handmade recycled paper; free w/ admission
Open House	Sat., Dec. 9, noon - 4pm Sun., Dec. 10, noon - 4pm	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Traditional Victorian Christmas; fee
Open House	Sat., Dec. 9, noon - 4pm Sun., Dec. 10, noon - 4pm	CATHOLIC RECTORY	Traditional Victorian Christmas; free
Stenciling Holiday Cards	Sat., Dec. 9, 1 - 4pm	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Create Holiday Card; free w/ admission
Open House	Sat., Dec. 16, noon - 4pm Sun., Dec. 17, noon - 4pm	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Traditional Victorian Christmas; fee
Printing Press Cards	Sat., Dec. 16, 1 - 4pm	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Old-fashioned Holiday Cards; free w/ admission
A Visit with Mrs. Claus	Sat., Dec. 16, 1 - 4pm Sun., Dec. 17, 1-4pm	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	free w/ admission
Gingerbread Houses	Wed., Dec. 20, 10 - 11am & 3:30 - 4:30pm	BEEKMAN HOUSE program space	Workshop; fee.

PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

DECEMBER CRAFT OF THE MONTH *Ornaments and Dreidels*

Families are invited to celebrate the holiday season by creating an ornament or dreidel to decorate the Children's Museum tree or their own homes. Free. Children's Museum.

BEEKMAN OPEN HOUSE

Experience a traditional Victorian Christmas at the Beekman house. Enjoy the sights and smells of holidays past as you tour the first floor of the Beekman family home. Interpreters will answer questions about holiday traditions and share fresh baked cookies from the woodstove. Fee: ages six and up, \$1.00; five and under, free; Society members free.

"A VISIT WITH MRS. CLAUS"

For families. Free with admission to the museums. Mrs. Claus has taken a break from her daily chores at the North Pole to join us at the Children's Museum. You are invited to an afternoon storytime before Mrs. Claus has to rush back to the North Pole.

CATHOLIC RECTORY: *Open House*

The Gold Diggers' Guild will host the Catholic Rectory open hours from noon to 4:00pm, Saturday, December 9, and Sunday,

December 10. The rectory, decorated in Victorian Christmas splendor, will be open in conjunction with Jacksonville's holiday celebration.

GINGERBREAD HOUSES

For ages 3-6. During this workshop you will use frosting and candy to decorate tasty gingerbread houses. Fee: \$3 Society members; \$4 non-members. Preregistration and prepayment required by December 15.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The History Center will be closed December 25 - January 15 for work on special projects.

The Jacksonville Museum and Children's Museum will be open December 27, 28, 29 and 30; then closed for exhibit changeouts until January 17.



DISCOVER THE TREASURES
OF CHRISTMAS PAST!

OPEN
WED - SAT 10AM - 5PM
SUN 11AM - 5PM

HISTORY STORE

HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE TOURS

December 9, NOON - 4PM

• C. Sweeney House, 2336 Table Rock, MEDFORD

December 11, 10AM - 2PM

• E. C. Kane House, 386 "B", ASHLAND

December 16, 1 - 5PM

• Eads House, 522 S. Oakdale, MEDFORD

December 17, NOON - 4PM

• L. Mann-Larison House, 832 Minnesota, MEDFORD

December 18, 9AM - 1PM

• H. Patton House, 245 Valley View, MEDFORD

December 18, NOON - 4PM

• Ashland Depot Hotel, 624 "A", ASHLAND

December 19, 11AM - 3PM

• Mary Rose House, 77 Sixth, ASHLAND

December 31, 1 - 5 PM

• Peter Steenstrup House, 109 Geneva, MEDFORD

GENEALOGY FAIR 2001

The Molecular Genealogy Research Group will present, "Molecular Genealogy--a DNA Approach," at 10 a.m., Sat., Feb. 3, at the Smullin Center, Medford.

Fair attendees may take part in this study by providing a blood sample and bringing a copy of their 4-generation pedigree charts (including birthplaces and dates).

Due to the nature of this program, and the fact that we need to ensure at least 100 participants, we are asking those interested in attending to preregister by calling 773-6536, now through January 19.

EXHIBITS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	LOCATION	MUSEUM HOURS
Century of Photography: 1856-1956 The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z Talent Historical Society	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9:00am - 5:00pm Mid-December
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Jacksonville: Boom Town to Home Town Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience Hannah Hall of Justice The Shape of Fashion: 1900-1925 Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibits	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00am - 5:00pm Sunday, noon - 5:00pm
Weaving & Spinning Demonstration	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00am - 5:00pm Sunday, noon - 5:00pm
	3RD ST. ARTISAN STUDIO	Saturday, 11:00am - 4:00pm Sunday, 11:00am - 4:00pm

EXHIBIT DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

CENTURY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1856-1956

Highlights the work of two area photographers, Peter Britt and James Verne Shangle, with cameras from the Society's collection.

THE HISTORY OF SOUTHERN OREGON FROM A TO Z

Do you know your ABC's of Southern Oregon history? Even local oldtimers might learn a thing or two as each letter of the alphabet tells a different story about the people, places, and events that have shaped the region we live in. Before Bigfoot there was "Reelfoot," the huge grizzly bear that wreaked havoc in the Rogue Valley in the late 1800s. After that, Bozo was clowning around in Jacksonville, and how about that guy named Fosbury whose big success at the 1968 Olympics was a real flop? By December 18, the newly remodeled History Center windows along Sixth and Central will feature plenty of artifacts, photographic images, and colorful handpainted illustrations that help tell the story of our past.

MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

Explores the development of the Rogue Valley and the impact the industrial revolution had on the settlement of Oregon.

THE SHAPE OF FASHION: 1900-1925

Women's fashion changed dramatically during the early years of the 20th century, reflecting the changing role of women in society. On display through December is a selection of daywear, evening gowns, and undergarments.

JACKSONVILLE: Boom Town to Home Town

Traces the development of Jacksonville.

POLITICS OF CULTURE: *Collecting the Native American Experience*

Cultural history of local tribes and discussion of contemporary collecting issues.

HALL OF JUSTICE

History of the former Jackson County Courthouse.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Explore home and occupational settings from the 1850s to the 1930s through "hands-on-history."

THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIO

Weavers and spinners will be demonstrating their crafts December 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, and 17. Many handcrafted holiday items will be for sale. The studio will be closed Dec. 18 through May.

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITES

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HISTORY CENTER

106 N. Central, Medford
Mon - Fri, 9:00am to 5:00pm

RESEARCH LIBRARY

106 N. Central, Medford
Tues - Fri, 1:00 to 5:00pm

JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C, Jacksonville
Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm
Sun, noon to 5:00pm

U.S. HOTEL

3rd and California, Jacksonville
Upstairs room available for rent.

JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE

Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm
Sun, 11:00am to 5:00pm

THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIO

3rd and California, Jacksonville
Sat, 11:00am to 4:00pm

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville

CATHOLIC RECTORY

4th & C streets, Jacksonville

HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road
(open by special appointment)
(541) 773-2675.

Mystery Object of the Month

September's Mystery Object was a train whistle.

Congratulations to Shawn McFall of Grants Pass, for answering correctly!



September's
Mystery Object:
train whistle



December Mystery Object:

This item is 12 inches and made of cast iron. It played a crucial role in early gold mining. Hint: see our History Center window exhibit, "The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z"-under "Q" for the answer. Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address, and phone number to: News & Notes Mystery Object, SOHS, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501, or by email to info@sohs.org

EXPLORING "A FINE COUNTRY":

PETER SKENE OGDEN IN THE ROGUE VALLEY, 1827



by Jeff LaLande

This coat-of-arms has long been the symbol of the Hudson's Bay Company, chartered in 1670.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY FUR TRADER PETER OGDEN and his trappers rested their exhausted horses at the summit of Siskiyou Pass in the early February afternoon. Having urged their weakened mounts for the past two days up a "truly villainous [sic] ... not only hilly but muddy" trail along the Klamath River tributary of Cottonwood Creek, the group was relieved to find the summit covered with less snow than feared. After a respite at the pass, Ogden's "Third Snake Country Brigade" could descend northward into the unknown valley below.¹

Tireless Peter Skene Ogden (known to his admiring Company superiors as someone "not sparing of his personal labors") evidently tried to use this brief halt at the 4,500-foot-high pass to good advantage. The HBC chief trader, who would turn thirty-seven years old in four days, steadily made his way on foot up the slope of a "high hill" that rose above this important pass between two separate river systems. He hoped to obtain a better view to the north,

where his Shasta Indian guides claimed a beaver-rich river flowed.²

No doubt the burly Ogden perspired in the crisp winter air from the exertion of climbing nearly 1,000 feet higher. In places his feet likely "postholed" down through the crusty snow during the ascent from Siskiyou Pass (i.e., the same place shown as "Toll Road Gap" on the present 7.5' U.S. Geological Survey "Siskiyou Pass" Quadrangle topographic map). But at least the weather was comparatively balmy on this day of February 8, 1827, making his scramble far more endurable than it would have been in some of the driving snowstorms the brigade had experienced the preceding two months, while in the upper Klamath River basin near the big lake. Unfortunately, his tiring climb yielded no clear view of a river to the north. Nevertheless, Ogden could see a large valley extending to the northwest, and somewhere in that distance lay the river he sought.

Descending to his waiting trappers, Chief Trader Ogden would have issued commands in French, remounted his horse, and ridden with the party downhill through a forest of firs and pines into the valley. There, along lower Hill Creek, or Carter Creek, the brigade camped among large oak trees “nearly double the size of any” Ogden had seen previously. Writing in his journal by that evening’s campfire, Ogden marveled at the area’s mild weather and plentiful green grass “four inches in length.” The next day, while descending the stream course to the valley floor, he concluded that “this is certainly a fine Country and probably no Climate in any Country equal to it.” The brigade’s Shasta guides claimed that “the winter is now over,” and Ogden wrote that he was “almost inclined to believe them” due to “the singing of Birds of all kinds.”³ The late winter beauty and mildness of the Rogue Valley had cast its spell over the region’s first Euro-American visitor.

* * *

FROM THE OAK AND PINE GROVES of lower Emigrant Creek, Ogden pushed the brigade steadily down into the Rogue Valley along cottonwood-lined Bear Creek as many of his men fanned out in small groups to trap the foothill streams. Camped in the vicinity of present-day Ashland and serenaded by loud (and what he considered to be unseasonably early) “croaking of Frogs,” Ogden remarked on the plentiful Bear Creek raccoons taken in the party’s beaver traps, and he noted the bare slopes of Grizzly Peak and neighboring ridges: “the Highest Hills are without Snow.” Somewhere near present-day Talent one trapper saw a “domesticated Cat.” Ogden surmised it had been traded inland from “the Coast ... where the[re] are in almost every village a dozen of them” — the result of several decades’ sea-otter trade with British and American sailing vessels.⁴

The Bear Creek band of Shasta Indians, “bold and stout looking men,” proved friendly and helpful to the trappers. One native man, who had been severely wounded in battle three years before, particularly impressed the chief trader. The one-armed visitor related through signs how he had amputated his own gangrenous limb “with his Knife ... and his Axe made of flint stone [i.e., likely obsidian]” and successfully treated the wound with medicinal roots: “This, if it were related amongst the wise men in distant Countries, would subject the word of the narrative to be doubted as almost incredible.” “But,” Ogden asked rhetorically, “how many wonderful cures do the Indians not perform that are little known to the World?”⁵

Persuaded by his trappers’ success in the Rogue Valley’s streams, Ogden encamped for several days near the mouth of Wagner Creek. During the lull in travel, he wrote that it was “a pleasure to observe the Ladys [sic] of the Camp vieing [sic] with each other who will produce on their return to Fort Vancouver the cleanest and best dress’d Beaver” pelts.



PHOTO COURTESY OHS

Peter Skene Ogden paid his early trapping exploring dues with the North West Company, which merged with the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1821, the year before Ogden had this likeness made. In February 1827, Ogden’s brigade of trappers likely saw a view very much like this one above Ashland as they descended into the Rogue Basin over Siskiyou Pass.

PHOTO BY DANA L. HEDRICK

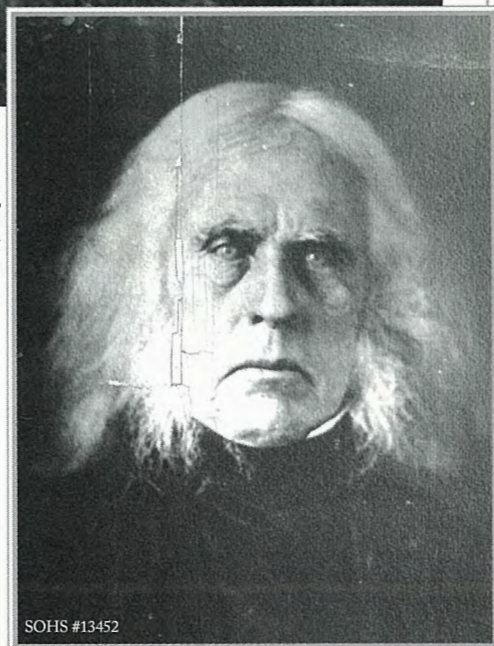


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Aerial view northward of Ogden's likely February crossing point at Siskiyou Pass. The pass is the low point, center right, threaded by Interstate 5 at the Mount Ashland Exit. The snow-dusted hill (center, left) is probably the one Ogden climbed for a better view to the north. On the horizon is Mount McLoughlin, which Ogden named "Mount Sastise" on February 14, 1827. (The road cut visible across the south face of the hill is the Mount Ashland ski area access road.)



Trade beads from the Society's collection.



SOHS #13452

Dr. John McLoughlin was "chief factor" in command of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver-based Columbia Department during the years of Ogden's Snake River brigades, and gave Ogden his orders.

Cooking, tending camp, and skinning beaver, the trappers' busy Indian and "meti," or "mixed blood," wives proved crucial to the brigade's progress. Ogden's Nez Perce wife of the past eight years, Julia, was almost certainly among them on this trip (but, as was typical for Ogden, he never mentioned her in his company journal). Worrisome to the chief trader at this point were his Shasta guides' warnings that the next tribe to the north (the Upland Takelma), whose territory they would soon enter, were unfriendly. As if to underscore the admonition, February 13 brought a nighttime attack on the brigade's horses; one of the animals died from arrow wounds.

On the morning of February 14, a day of "Fine clear weather," the brigade hurriedly broke camp and traveled northward along the east bank of Bear Creek (past the sites of present-day Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point). By late afternoon the party reached the banks of a "large River equal in size to the Willimatte [sic]." This "fine looking Stream, well wooded with Poplar" Ogden named "Sastise River," after the Shasta Indians he had been among for nearly two weeks. Likewise, a "mount equal in height to Mount Hood," which was clearly visible from his riverside camp, he dubbed "Mount Sastise." Ogden had reached the Rogue River. East of him, the snow-capped mountain now known as Mount McLoughlin rose on the horizon.⁶

* * *

OGDEN'S THIRD SNAKE COUNTRY BRIGADE had departed from the gates of Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia River in September 1826. The expedition headed upriver through the wind-swept Columbia River Gorge to near the Dalles before turning south. The party then trapped its way through much of Central and Eastern Oregon during the next three months. The brigade included about forty men (trappers, hunters, and others), along with an unknown number of women and even a few children. With a large number of horses (and probably at least a few dogs to help guard camp at night), the brigade had moved across the forbidding landscape of Oregon's high desert like a mobile village of Indians — but it was a journey through unknown country, and in the dead of winter.

Continuing south from the headwaters of the Deschutes River, Ogden and his trappers finally arrived at the eastern shore of Upper Klamath Lake in mid-December. They had just been faced with the difficult decision of either slaughtering some of their horses for food or going hungry, and

so the trappers traded eagerly with the Klamath Indians for dogs, which soon found their way into the brigade's kettles. Subsequently, after days wandering the lava-studded wastes south of Tule Lake in a fruitless quest for beaver, the brigade had backtracked and turned west to reach the bank of the "Clammitte [Klamath] River," crossing to the opposite side between Upper and Lower Klamath lakes (i.e., within present-day Klamath Falls) on January 16, 1827. Ogden, led part of the way by Klamath or Modoc guides, then followed the rugged canyon of the Klamath downstream to Cottonwood Creek, near present-day Hornbrook, California, where the Shasta (or "Sastise") inhabitants persuaded him to turn the party north and cross Siskiyou Pass.

The chief trader could not have presented a starker contrast to the brigade's illiterate and often unruly trappers. Ogden met the criteria of a "gentleman" in the class-conscious British society of his era. How had this well-born and educated young man come to find himself on the farthest frontier of the North American fur trade? The son of prominent New Jersey "Loyalists," who had seen their estate confiscated by the rebels and then been forced to flee behind British lines during the American Revolution, Ogden was born in Quebec City in 1790. He grew up in Montreal, where his father, a judge, had provided Ogden with the beginnings of a legal education. However, at Montreal's waterfront young Peter witnessed the annual arrival of the North West Company's voyageurs, dressed in colorful finery, paddling their huge fur-laden canoes in unison to the beat of French *chansons*. The allure of the fur trade far beyond the Great Lakes pulled him away from the safe path of a legal career. Ogden gained a clerkship with the North West Company in 1810, and headed into the forest-and-lake country of what is now northern Saskatchewan.

Ogden proved an eager and loyal North West Company partisan during the intermittent 1811-1818 skirmishes between that aggressive Montreal firm and the older, London-based Hudson's Bay Company. As the two rivals battled for supremacy over the Canadian fur trade, Ogden's hot temper led his NWCo employers to transfer him to one of the company's farthest trading posts, in the upper Columbia River region, to escape possible arrest. Nevertheless, Ogden's experience and family connections enabled him to continue his career after the NWCo and HBC consolidated in 1821. Except for short visits to Montreal and to England, Ogden spent the remainder of

his life beyond the Rocky Mountains.⁷

In the HBC's "Columbia Department" (the same area that Americans, who also claimed ownership of it, called "the Oregon Country") Ogden learned various Indian languages, rose in the company hierarchy, and met Julia Rivet, the meti daughter of a French-Canadian trapper and a Nez Perce woman. They married *au façon du Nord* ("in the fashion of the North," i.e., without benefit of clergy), and eventually had six children — at least one of whom likely was along on the 1826-27 trip. Julia had traveled with her husband on his First Snake Country Brigade, in 1824-25, into present-day northern Utah. Here, far from any HBC posts and shouldering sole responsibility for the brigade's success, Ogden was threatened with personal violence during an encounter with angry American trappers. Calamitously, many of Ogden's own men deserted to the competing party, taking their furs with them. Julia saved the day when, under threat of being shot by one blustering Yankee, she brazenly retrieved some of the brigade's horses that had been "confiscated" by the Americans.⁸

Despite the financial failure of Ogden's first brigade, Chief Factor John McLoughlin considered him by far the hardest and most reliable leader the Company had in the field. By the time of his third brigade, Ogden's success in the field had redeemed his superior's faith in him. McLoughlin charged Ogden with two main tasks in 1826: Continue to make the Snake Country into a "fur desert" — its streams stripped of beaver — so as to discourage American trappers from penetrating the Company's southern and southeastern periphery; and search that unexplored land for the great Buonaventura River (which was erroneously believed to drain all the way from present-day central Utah to the Pacific Ocean). The 1826-27 trip was thus to be both a relentless hunt for beaver and an expedition of geographic inquiry.

* * *

OGDEN'S TREK into the "Clammitte" Lake country and beyond took him where no HBC man, or any other Euro-American, had traveled before. Although he failed to find the rumored (and entirely mythical) Buonaventura, Ogden was satisfied with the number of beaver taken (approx. 470) from his "Sastise" River (i.e., the Rogue, which he incorrectly surmised must join the Klamath somewhere well downstream on its way to the ocean). Camping on the Rogue's south bank for nearly a week (probably within view of

the Table Rocks), Ogden made peace with the initially hostile Takelmas "at the expense of two Dozen Buttons" in HBC trade goods. He wrote that, after these negotiations had concluded, the visiting natives "amused the Camp with a dance; in this they acquitted themselves as well as Indians ever did." Ogden's men reported that the Takelmas already possessed a few items of Euro-American manufacture: an iron "Sickle and two China Bowls," which apparently had come from "the Coast ... procured from some Ships passing by." On February 22, Ogden led the brigade upriver for several days, and a few of his trappers may have ascended the Rogue nearly as far as present-day Prospect. But overnight the Rogue Valley's initial promise of spring weather turned sour: A

two-foot-deep snowfall forced them to retreat back downstream. They eventually arrived near present-day Grants Pass, where the group crossed to the Rogue's north bank.

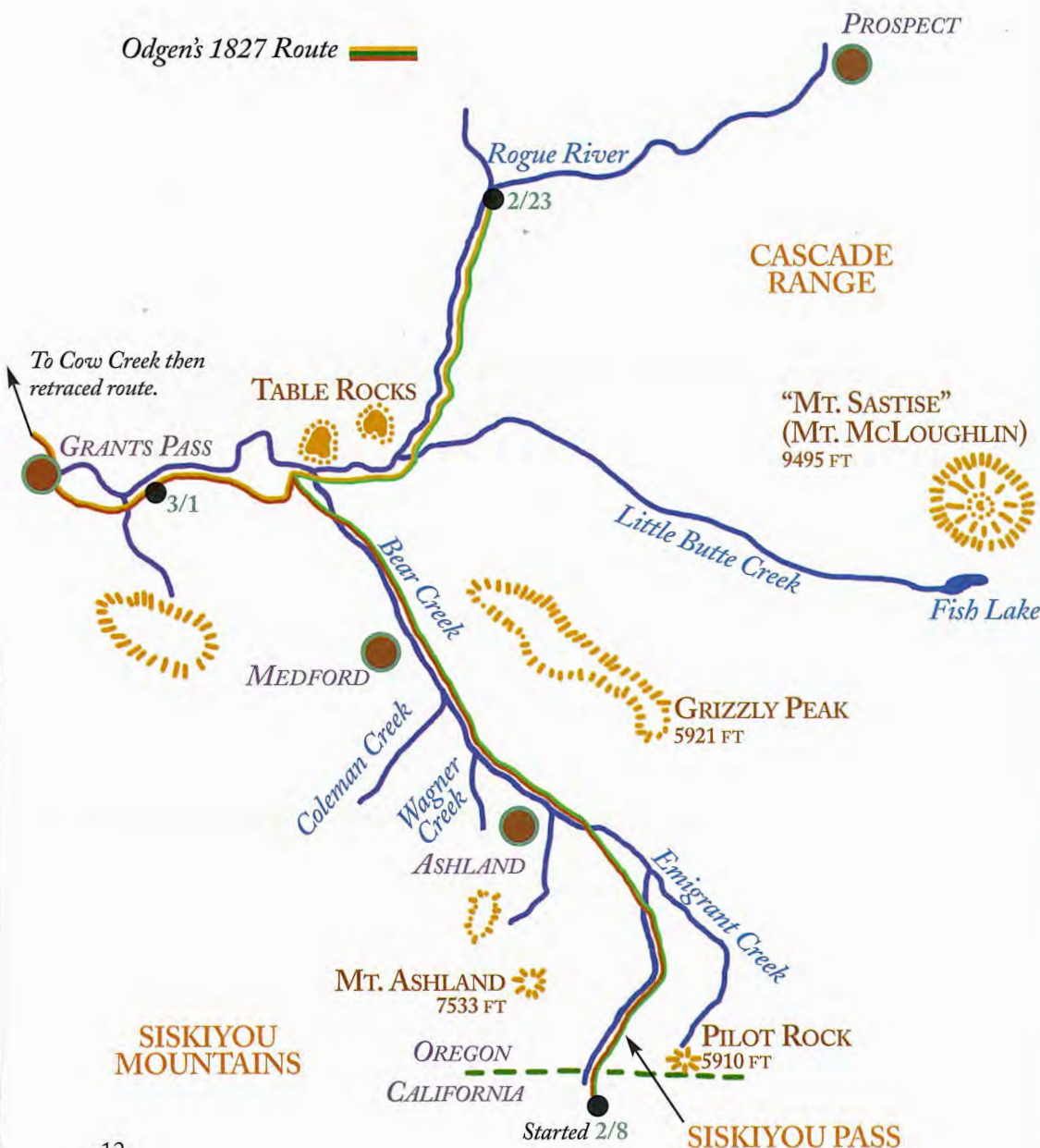
By this time the months of toil and responsibility had begun to wear on the chief trader. Although renowned among HBC colleagues not only for his strength and bravery but for his sense of humor and fondness for practical jokes, Ogden often expressed a dour, cynical, and at times even brutal outlook in the February-March 1827 pages of his journal. In addition to harsh weather conditions and the threat of Indian attack, the stresses on Ogden were several: Some brigade members, afflicted with severe hunger, fell seriously ill (one woman became so sick

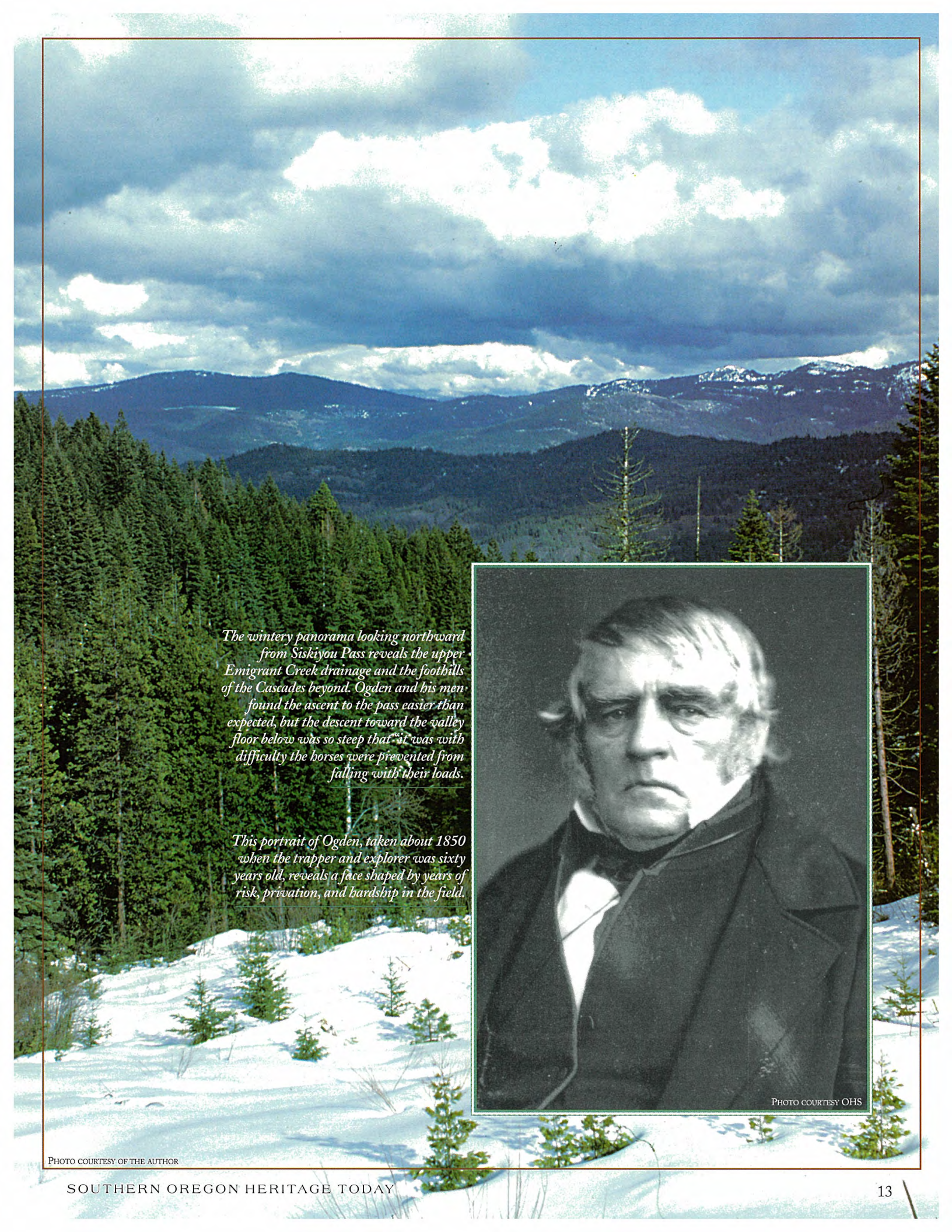
she had to be tied to her horse during travel); the mounting toll of lost and stolen traps threatened the expedition's financial success; and a faction of grumbling, possibly mutinous trappers questioned Ogden's decisions at nearly every turn. Huddled on the north side of the Rogue in a sudden mid-March snow-and-rainstorm, Ogden wrote morosely that, should "God grant ... I would most willingly steer my Course from whence I came." Ogden soon found reason to do so, although it would be five more months before he actually returned to the comforts of Fort Vancouver.

As the brigade proceeded north from the Rogue into the canyons of Cow Creek and the South Umpqua River, Ogden's scouts reported finding the footprints of

horses and other recent evidence of a previous trapping party. Ogden knew that they must have encountered the trail of the HBC's 1826-27 coastal "Umpqua Brigade," commanded by Chief Trader Alexander Roderick McLeod. Ogden realized that he was now merely a few days' travel from the well-known Willamette Valley, and then an easy trek northward to home. But this choice would have resulted in Ogden taking few or no more beaver, and finding no more heretofore-unknown rivers. He therefore turned his party around and retraced his path south — with a brief detour into the Applegate Valley — through the Rogue Valley and back over Siskiyou Pass to the Klamath River.

The brigade ascended and re-crossed the Klamath (as before, at present-day Klamath Falls), and then reentered the inhospitable Tule Lake country, passing well east of the huge mountain that Ogden had previously first seen and mentioned briefly in his journal on Christmas Day 1826 (but, ironically, it was a mountain — today's Mount Shasta — to which he did not apply a name).⁹ The brigade pushed on across the desolate volcanic terrain south-eastward, where it finally came to a good-sized stream with beaver sign. Ogden





The wintery panorama looking northward from Siskiyou Pass reveals the upper Emigrant Creek drainage and the foothills of the Cascades beyond. Ogden and his men found the ascent to the pass easier than expected, but the descent toward the valley floor below was so steep that "it was with difficulty the horses were prevented from falling with their loads."

This portrait of Ogden, taken about 1850 when the trapper and explorer was sixty years old, reveals a face shaped by years of risk, privation, and hardship in the field.



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named it "Pit River," for the deep traps the local Indians had excavated along its banks to take deer and elk. Three of the party's horses fell into these pits; one of them, impaled on the sharp stakes, perished. Following this headwater stream of the Sacramento River to its source near Goose Lake on the present Oregon-California border, the brigade steadily made its way across the sagebrush desert of Eastern Oregon to the Snake River, and then to its confluence with the Columbia and the HBC supply post at Fort Nez Perce in mid-July. Leaving most of his brigade there to rest and recuperate, Ogden descended the Columbia, probably in a stout HBC "York boat," to arrive at the welcoming gates of Fort Vancouver.

* * *

DESPITE HIS OVERALL FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS of the country, the wide-ranging Ogden never returned to the Rogue Valley. The nearest he came was in 1830: During his sixth and final Snake Country Brigade, Ogden revisited the upper Klamath basin on his way back north from a nearly 2,000-mile exploration. (This exhausting foray included following the lower Colorado River almost to the Gulf of California, and then crossing the Mojave Desert into California's great Central Valley.)

Ogden rose to greater responsibilities with the Hudson's Bay Company. His duties ranged from "showing the Union Jack" in the Russian/British-contested waters of what is today Alaska's panhandle to serving as chief factor at Fort Vancouver after McLoughlin's retirement. In 1847 an aging Ogden earned fame and favor among citizens of the United States' new Oregon Territory when he personally negotiated the rescue of American women and children taken captive by Cayuse Indians during the bloody Whitman Massacre. Ogden retired to Oregon City. However, he never applied for American citizenship; perhaps the old family stories of ill treatment at the hands of the American rebels remained too strong in his memory. He died at Oregon City in September 1854, attended by Julia, his wife of thirty-five years.

* * *

DURING HIS SIX YEARS IN CHARGE of the Snake Country brigades, the restless chief trader chalked up an unrivaled record of "firsts" in the exploration of the intermountain West. In 1825-26 and 1827-28 Ogden became the first person to map Eastern Oregon's Malheur River country and the numerous lake basins of

the northern Great Basin. In 1828-29 he discovered and traced Nevada's Humboldt (his "Unknown") River, which became the main route of overland travel west to California. In 1826-27 Ogden became the first Euro-American to marvel at the wide expanse of Upper and Lower Klamath lakes, to follow the headwaters of the Sacramento to the river's source, and to chart the 14,100-foot-high volcano that only later came to bear the name Mount Shasta. Equally and perhaps even more important, his 1827 exploration of the Rogue River country filled in the last large blank spot on the map between the by-then relatively well-known areas to the north and south. Ogden's journey through the terra incognita of the Rogue Valley region thus blazed a trail that helped connect Oregon's Willamette Valley and California's Central Valley.

While doing so, Ogden penned the first description of a region that most readers of this essay call home. Even after the snow and rain that bedeviled his progress along the Rogue River in late February and early March, Ogden retained his initial favorable impression:

*"Oaks & Pines of different kinds...well stock'd with Black Tail Deer and no doubt in the Mountains Red Deer [i.e., elk]. ... In a word it [the Rogue] is a bold Stream containing a few scattered beaver; a fine Country, rich in Timber and Animals, good pasture for Horses; Climate rather too moist [original emphasis], and natives, so far as we can judge from appearances, at least at this season, not very numerous, and the few there are, very wild."*¹⁰

Ogden's 1827 travel route, although slightly modified over the years, has continued to be of great importance—from the subsequent eras of wagon travel and the railroad to that of four-lane Interstate 5 today. And the most strategic discovery that Ogden made that year (a discovery directly aided, of course, by a willing native guide who knew the country well) was Siskiyou Pass. In crossing formidable Siskiyou Pass and expressing pleasure at what he found in the lovely valley on the northern side, Peter Skene Ogden was simply the first of many newcomers who have done likewise. ■

Jeff LaLande is an archaeologist and historian living in Ashland; he first came to the Rogue Valley in 1967, having crossed Siskiyou Pass in the cramped quarters of a Greyhound bus.

ENDNOTES

- Ogden's journal is published, verbatim, in: K.G. Davies and Dorothy O. Johansen, eds., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961). However, much of editor

Johansen's geographic interpretation for the December 1826-April 1827 portion, of Ogden's route is in error. For a detailed explanation and an interpretation that is reflected in this essay, see: Jeff LaLande, *First Over the Siskiyou: Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Journey Through the Oregon-California Borderlands*, (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1987).

- For a brief biographical sketch of Ogden, see: Jeff LaLande, "Peter Skene Ogden," in: John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography*, Vol. 5, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 635-636.

The actual point where Ogden crossed the nearly mile-wide low divide now known generally as Siskiyou Pass is open to some question. Historic-trails researcher Richard Silva's recent research into the route of the later California-Oregon Trail places the post-1830s pack trail and a post-1848 section of the wagon road over Siskiyou Pass a short (approx. 0.3 mile) distance east of Toll Road Gap; I believe, however, that Ogden would have reached the pass at Toll Road Gap (i.e., the place where Colestin Road meets the Mount Ashland Access Road, directly above Southern Pacific Railroad's Tunnel No. 13), and then, based on Ogden's own description of the steep descent, went directly downslope into the headwaters drainage of Hill Creek.

As is reflected by the descriptive opening paragraphs of this essay, the "high hill" Ogden climbed most likely is the 5,800' granitic mountain rising immediately to the west of Siskiyou Pass, in Sections 17, 18, 19, and 20, T40S, R2E, W.M.

- Davies and Johansen, *Ogden's Journal*, 69-70. Unless otherwise cited, all remaining quotes are from Davies and Johansen, *Ogden's Journal*, pp. 70-94. See also LaLande, *First Over the Siskiyou*, pp. 57-120.
- Ibid.*, pp. 70-76.
- Ibid.*, p. 74.
- The complicated place-name history that has followed Ogden's initial naming of "Mount Sastise" (i.e., the peak we now know as Mount McLoughlin) is a tangled skein. The transposition of the names "Mount Sastise/Shasty" and "Pit Mountain" (a name that was given to present-day Mount Shasta in 1834 by English cartographers, based on Ogden's naming of the nearby Pit River) evidently occurred in stages between 1829 and 1841, with the name "Mount Pitt" some time later being applied (erroneously) to present-day Mount McLoughlin for many years. For more discussion of this question, see: William C. Miesse, *Mount Shasta: An Annotated Bibliography*, (Weed, Calif.: College of the Siskiyou, 1993), as well as the various research materials compiled by Richard Silva.
- For a detailed biography of Ogden, see: Gloria Griffen Cline, *Peter Skene Ogden and the Hudson's Bay Company*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).
- See Cline, *Peter Skene Ogden*, pp. 46-47.
- As discussed in a previous note, the first mapped name for present-day Mount Shasta was "Pit Mountain," due to its proximity to Ogden's Pit River. It is certainly possible that Ogden may have later suggested this name for the peak; his journal and subsequent sketch maps of the 1826-27 trek were made available to London cartographer John Arrowsmith. See LaLande, *First Over the Siskiyou*, pp. 124-128.
- Davies and Johansen, *Ogden's Journal*, p. 89.



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Mistletoe

by Nan Hannon and Donn L. Todt

How did mistletoe come to be a Christmas plant?

In pre-Christian Europe, mistletoe, like any plant that remained green and growing through the long, dark, cold winters, seemed magical. Thus mistletoe figures prominently in the myths and plant magic of Scandinavia and the British Isles.

A woman wishing to conceive might wear a bit of mistletoe. Farm families often placed a globe of interwoven hawthorn and mistletoe in their homes for luck. Around the time of the New

Year, they replaced it with a fresh globe, and the old globe was carried through the fields or burned in them to ensure the land's fertility in the coming year.

As Christianity spread through Europe, people often grafted ancient folk customs to Christian beliefs. Thus, the winter evergreen bough brought into the house became the Christmas tree. Christ's birth and passion became associated with the qualities of "The Holly and the Ivy," plants revered by Celtic Druids.¹ But mistletoe was one plant that did not find a place in Christian ritual, probably because of its role as a fertility symbol. In fact, until well into the twentieth century, some English parishes banned mistletoe from floral decorations for the church, while decking the sanctuary with boughs of holly, ivy, and fir for the Christmas season.² Mistletoe remained a secular symbol.

The medieval European custom of kissing under the mistletoe was revived in early eighteenth century England, with a romantic resurgence of interest in Druidic customs. Mistletoe became so sought after that country folk carefully planted mistletoe seeds on the bark of their trees, to develop a crop to sell to city-dwellers when the plants matured.

In Southern Oregon, mistletoe grows so abundantly that no one resorts to deliberately growing it for the Christmas plant trade. Greg Williams, whose family has operated the Ashland Flower Shop for three generations, simply harvests enough for sale to

customers each year from oak trees growing behind the family's greenhouse.³

The European mistletoe belongs to a different genus than the mistletoes found in Southern Oregon, but they look similar and have the same careers as partial parasites. While a mistletoe's green leaves photosynthesize some of its own food, the plant also steals water and nutrients from the host tree upon which it grows.

In Southern Oregon, mistletoe produces its sticky white berries from October to December. Robins, cedar waxwings, and other birds relish these berries. They spread mistletoe by excreting the sticky seeds while perched on trees. Seeds lodged on branches send structures called haustoria deep into the tree's tissues.

Mistletoe grows slowly, but may eventually form huge clumps. A healthy tree can support a small mistletoe infestation, but an expanding mistletoe infestation causes branches to die and weakens the tree's resistance to stresses such as drought. A heavy mistletoe infestation can eventually cause a tree's death. Southern Oregon neighbors sometimes pool resources to hire an arborist to remove clumps of mistletoe from neighborhood trees, thus easing stress on their trees and minimizing sources of future infestation.

Locally, oak mistletoe is especially noticeable on leafless oak trees during winter. Broadleaf mistletoe parasitizes many other deciduous trees, including ash, alder, birch, walnut, cottonwood, and maples. Dwarf mistletoes, the *Arceuthobium* genus, infest conifers.⁴

European mistletoes have some uses in folk medicine, but the species that grow in Southern Oregon are poisonous to humans, so care must be taken that mistletoe used as a cheerful Christmas decoration is kept away from children who might eat the leaves or berries. ❧

Anthropologist Nan Hannon and ethnobotanist Donn L. Todt garden in Ashland.

ENDNOTES

1. Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1948), pp. 179-181.
2. Richard Mabey, *Flora Britannica*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1996), pp. 239-244.
3. Greg Williams, personal communication, 30 January 2000.
4. E. J. Perry, *Broadleaf Mistletoe in Landscape Trees*, University of California Cooperative Extension, Marin County, HortScript No. 14.



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