

Places of Worship

Beit Emmanuel 592-3843
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 592-3661
 Immanuel United Methodist Church 592-3876
 First Baptist Church of Selma 597-4169
 Bridgeview Community Church 592-3923
 Good Shepherd Lutheran 592-2290
 Fountain of Life Assembly of God 592-3956
 St. Patrick of the Forest Catholic Church 592-3658
 St. Matthias Episcopal Church 592-2006
 Community Bible Church 592-3896
 Illinois Valley Baptist Church 592-3029
 Seventh-day Adventist Church 592-33218
 Valley Evangelical Free Church 592-6160
 Illinois Valley Praise Center 592-4872
 Takilma Bible Church 592-6774
 First Love Christian Fellowship 592-4775
 Illinois Valley Pentecostals 592-4716
 Baha'i Faith 592-5234

Tax rates per \$1,000 assessed valuation:

City of Cave Junction \$1.89
 Josephine County \$0.82
 Illinois Valley Fire District \$2.37
 Three Rivers School District \$4.38
 Rogue Community College \$0.51
 Southern Oregon ESD \$0.35
 4-H Extension \$0.0459
 Total: \$10.3659

BIGGG NUGGET

By ROGER BRANDT

The largest gold nugget in Oregon history was discovered in 1859 on Althouse Creek, located on the east side of Illinois Valley. Discovery of the nugget was welcomed, but not unexpected, because miners had been looking for gold along this creek since 1852. We can only imagine what it must have been like to discover a 17-pound nugget. And such a discovery makes it easy to understand why the town of Althouse quickly grew and assumed an importance almost equal to that of Jacksonville.

Althouse Creek was named for Philip Althouse, one of the first prospectors to find gold on this stream. In a very short time a large number of miners had arrived, and hundreds of claims were staked out on 10 miles of the creek bed. By 1853 it was estimated that nearly 1,000 men were mining there.

The town of Althouse was the main community, but others sprang up long the river including Browntown, Hogtown and Frenchtown. Browntown was one of the larger communities and was reported to have had from 300 to 500 inhabitants during the peak of the mining boom. Most of these towns were later abandoned and then destroyed as miners excavated the gravel under the buildings looking for gold. In essence, the entire history of the place was washed through a sluice box.

The largest mining operation on Althouse Creek was the Enterprise Mine, located 3 miles east of Browntown. Mining at this location began in 1860. But within seven years, the claim was abandoned. During this time, the mining company built a small, five-stamp mill at Browntown with water power to drive all the equipment.

At one time, miners attempted to completely drain Althouse Creek by diverting the water into Democrat Gulch near the present-day location of the Holland Store. The first drainage system was installed in 1871 and included a diversion ditch 4 feet wide by 4 feet deep; and a 1,200 foot tunnel that was declared to be the most noteworthy engineering accomplishment in Oregon at that time.

A second drainage system with a diversion ditch and tunnel was installed approximately half a mile above the other and also emptied into Democrat Gulch near Holland. The road to Althouse Creek is less than 10 miles from Cave Junction. To get there, follow Holland Loop to the historic Holland Store. Turn and drive past the store as if you are going to Foris Vineyards. When you get to the fork approximately half a mile past the store, stay to the left. The paved road will take you over a small hill and into Althouse Creek. The site of Browntown is some 4 miles above Holland.

Out Caves Hwy., just before starting the climb to Oregon Caves National Monument, sits a cedar guard station, built in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps at the former Camp Oregon Caves. It's now Chinquapin Campground, and group camping can be arranged through the forest service office in Cave Junction. The cedar structure, all that remains of the CCC camp, is one of the last of its type in the region. There is another at Store Gulch out Illinois River Road. (Photo by Bob Rodriguez)

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