

# RETHINKING KIT CARSON'S COMPLICATED HISTORY (PART 2)

*Klamath Falls wrestles with park's name and its past*

BY JOE SIESS

Klamath Falls Herald and News  
Don Gentry, chair of the Klamath Tribes, recalled being told of a single Modoc who snuck into John Frémont's camp and killed one of their companions, leading to the attack on the Klamath fishing village in retribution.

"The way I heard the story first, it was explained to me verbally," Gentry said. "I thought it was an individual Modoc and in retaliation, they raided the Klamath village."

Jeffrey Ostler, a professor at the University of Oregon who specializes in the history of the American West — particularly American Indian history — said people like Kit Carson and Frémont, his travel companion, wouldn't have bothered to figure out who exactly attacked them, an indication of how they viewed Indigenous people at the time.

"This perspective that an Indian is an Indian instead of an individual is just symbolic of what has happened here and in the nation," Gentry said.

The massacre at Dokdokwas in 1846 left a scar on the Klamath Tribes. And the fact that one of the first things one sees on the way into Klamath Falls is Kit Carson Park — a place named after a man who massacred a Klamath village — only brings the Basin's past traumas of colonialism and genocide to the surface.

**How the park got its name, and how it could change it**

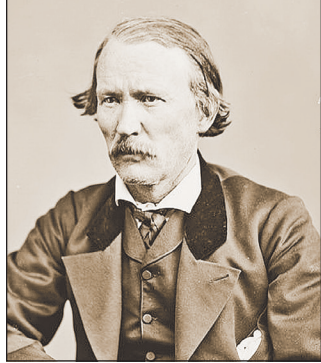
In 1930, 84 years after the raid on Frémont's camp and the subsequent massacre at Dokdokwas, the Daughters of the American Revolution donated a plaque along Highway 140 just west of town.

The plaque reads, "Here John C. Frémont camped on his second journey of exploration in May of 1846, was attacked by Indians and lost three men for one of whom he named the stream."



Arden Barnes/Report for America

Denny Creek Memorial along 140 in Klamath Falls on Sept. 14.



Library of Congress photo

**Christopher "Kit" Carson was born in Kentucky in 1809 and raised in Missouri before moving to New Mexico. At the time, Indigenous people held a great deal of power and presence in each place, Johnson said.**

The plaque is known as the Denny Creek Marker, in reference to the creek named after one of Frémont's companions who was killed in the ambush. There is no monument commemorating the massacre of the Klamath at Dokdokwas.

In 1948 a four-lane parkway was built in town to reduce traffic, and the editor of the Herald and News suggested naming it after Kit Carson. The highway was called Kit Carson Parkway, and Kit Carson Park was named after the road that ran alongside.

The Oregon Department of Transportation renamed Kit Carson Parkway to Crater Lake Parkway in the early 2000s after a local committee submitted a proposal to change the name. But Kit Carson Park remained.

Now, decades later, the equity task force has asked the city to

**Read Part 1 online**

This is the second of two parts about Kit Carson and his namesake park in Klamath Falls. Read the first part at [redmondspokesman.com/features](http://redmondspokesman.com/features)

change the name of the park, so as not to honor a man who killed countless Indigenous people during his expeditions into what is today Klamath County.

"From my perspective, it is hard to honor somebody who perpetrated such a terrible act," Gentry said. "Namely, honoring this individual by naming a park after them is not appropriate. It just reminds us of our tragic history. It is just a symbol of how we've been mistreated and marginalized over time."

Carol Westfall, the mayor of Klamath Falls, said she wants to get the community involved in deciding if, and how, to rename

a place like Kit Carson Park. She said focusing on why it should be done is imperative.

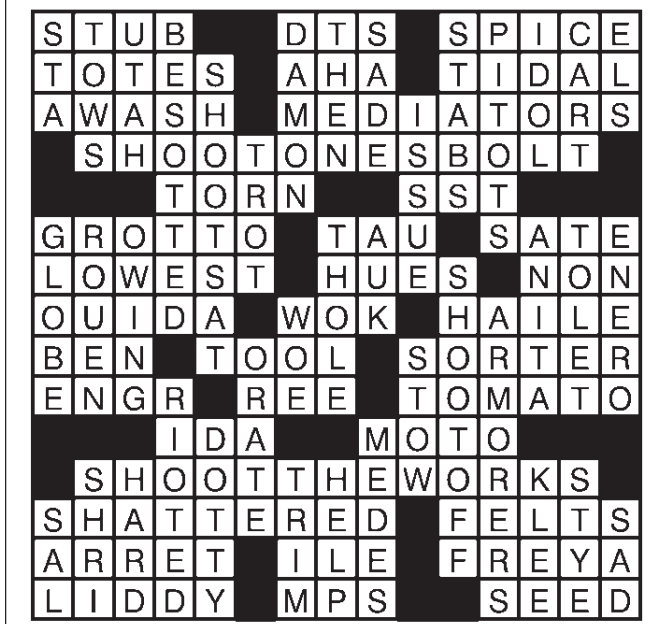
"It's very important for the city that we have buy-in, and I think once you explain it to people, you can get a lot of people on board," Westfall said. "Even before we started, one of the reasons we started the task force is that we saw (Kit Carson Park) needed to change. Part of our plan is to rename some of these things we now know weren't so great for our community."

Westfall added that the process of changing the park's name would start with the city Parks and Recreation Department. Then a Parks and Recreation committee, comprised of a group of citizens, would move forward from there if they choose.

Professor Susan Johnson said since the 1970s there have been calls to change the name of parks and monuments named for Kit Carson after people began to realize the truth about the man behind the myth.

"A lot of those naming of places for Carson took place in the late 19th century and the earlier 20th century, and that was an era that saw a rising tide of white supremacy," Johnson said. "I don't think anything needs to be named after Kit Carson. But I do think that the conversations about it are always clouded by this confusion of the historical person — Kit Carson — and the dime novel hero."

■ Reporter Joe Siess can be reached at 541-885-4481 or [jsiess@heraldandnews.com](mailto:jsiess@heraldandnews.com).



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In the Matter of the Estate of GLORIA J. RIGGS, Deceased. Case No. 21PB08026 **NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS** NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT CHRIS M. STAATS has been appointed personal representative of the ESTATE OF GLORIA J. RIGGS in the above proceeding. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative at c/o Heather O. Gilmore, P.C. 1855 Fairgrounds Road NE, Salem, OR 97301, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the personal representative, or the attorney for the personal representative, Heather O. Gilmore, P.C. 1855 Fairgrounds Road NE, Salem, OR 97301.

Date of First Publication: September 29, 2021  
Personal Representative: s/ DONNA ADAMS SMALL  
Attorney for Personal Representative: JAMES A. KRUEGER  
Address for Mailing or Service: VANDEBERG JOHNSON & GANDARA, PS  
Attorneys for Personal Representative  
1201 Pacific Avenue, Suite 1900  
Tacoma, WA 98402-4391  
Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Pierce County Superior Court  
Cause Number: 21-4-01989-6

## New Redmond Airport welcome desk greets Central Oregon visitors

Bulletin staff report

Visitors coming to the region through the Redmond Airport will now be greeted by Central Oregon's birds, flowers and favorite things to do.

Visit Central Oregon, the region's tourism agency, has set up a new in-terminal visitor information center and welcome desk for inbound passengers at the airport. The booth, staffed part time by Visit Central Oregon representatives, is stocked with information about places to eat, stay and play across the region, according to the agency.

It also prominently features the work of two local artists, Katie Daisy and Karen Eland, with a mural featuring the region's natural beauty and wishing visitors "greetings from Central Oregon."

"It's a chance to steer visitors

in directions and toward activities they might not be aware of otherwise, such as some of our outlying partners and communities, or the regional mural trail which is featured prominently at the desk," said Visit Central Oregon CEO Julia Theisen in a press release.

According to Theisen, the new booth offers a first stop for visitors who might not plan to visit the organization's Sunriver welcome center.

"With anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 passenger arrivals each month, the Redmond Airport is a critical regional gateway and we now have the opportunity to engage with visitors, answer questions, and provide additional inspiration before they disperse throughout Central Oregon," Theisen said.

### PET OF THE WEEK



Adoptable dog Subie enjoys the sunshine! Subie is about 13 years old and looking for a retirement home. She's got a nice temperament and would really fit in well in most homes. She's done well around other dogs but might not appreciate super rambunctious dogs. She's very friendly and easy going. She is mostly, or totally, deaf. But otherwise she is as chipper as she was 10 years ago! Come meet her at BrightSide Animal Center at 541-923-0882.

## WORSHIP DIRECTORY

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<p><b>Highland Baptist Church</b> 3100 SW Highland Ave., Redmond 541-548-4161 Barry Campbell, Lead Pastor</p> <p><b>Sunday Gathering Times:</b></p> <p>Worship Center 8 AM Blended 9 AM Blended 10:30 AM Contemporary</p> <p>Family Entrance 10:30AM hbc Español 6PM Acoustic</p> <p>Wednesday Family Night 5:30PM Free meal &amp; classes for all ages (See website for list of classes)</p> <p>How can hbc pray for you? <a href="mailto:prayer@hbcrcdmond.org">prayer@hbcrcdmond.org</a></p> <p>For more information and online services visit us at <a href="http://www.hbcrcdmond.org">www.hbcrcdmond.org</a></p>	<p><b>St Thomas Roman Catholic Church</b> 1720 NW 19th Street Redmond, Oregon 97756 541-923-3390</p> <p>Father Todd Unger, Pastor</p> <p><b>Mass Schedule:</b> Weekdays 8:00 am (Except Wednesdays) Wednesday 6:00 pm</p> <p>Saturday Vigil 5:00 pm First Saturday 8:00 am (English)</p> <p>Sunday 8:00 am, 10:00 am (English) 12:00 noon (Spanish)</p> <p>Confessions on Wednesdays From 5:00 to 5:45 pm and on Saturdays From 3:00 to 4:30 pm</p>
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## DEATH NOTICES

**Rose Ann Langdon** of Bend, OR  
July 6, 1942 - July 30, 2021

**Arrangements:** Autumn Funerals. Rose Ann Langdon, 79, passed July 30. Ms. Langdon resided at 464 NE Kearney Ave. Rose was born July 6, 1942, in Bend to William & Helen Curtis. She remained in Bend most of her life. Rose is survived by 3 children, Bill, Lisa Michelle, & Tony. Also 7 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. Rose had a love for her family, gardening, music, photography, and sports.

**Lisa Anne Grisaffi** of Bend, OR  
February 23, 1967 - September 10, 2021

**Services:** Rosary and Mass @ Old Historic St. Francis Catholic Church, October 9 @ 9am, 599 NW Lava Rd, Bend, Burial following @ Terrebonne Pioneer Cemetery, 1340 NE Smith Rock Way, Terrebonne. Contributions may be made to: Central Oregon Special Olympics

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