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word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Nicolai [ni•kɔʊ•lai]

noun

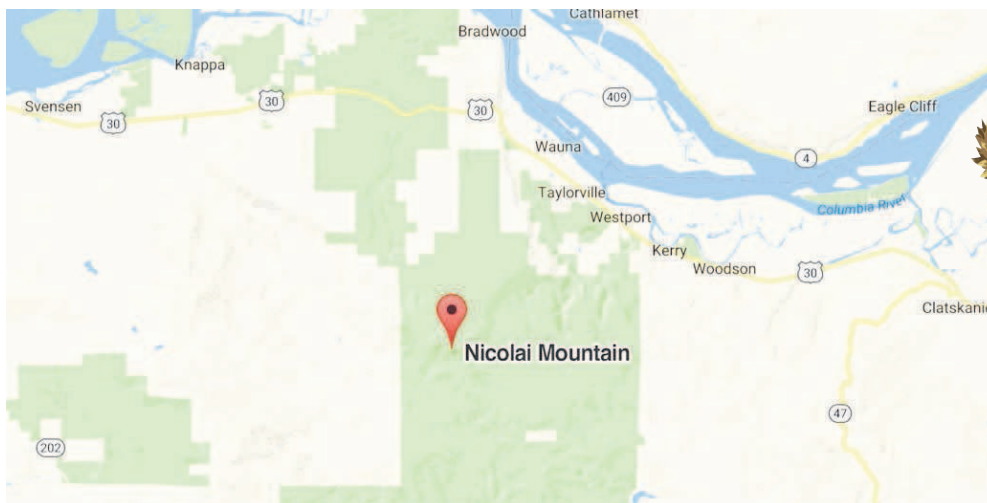
1. *Nicolai Ridge*: Part of the hill range known as the Clatsop Crest, this erosion-produced basalt ridge sits high above the Columbia River near Wauna

2. *Nicolai Mountain*: a 2,970-foot-tall mountain peak that rises off of Nicolai Ridge that was once home to an Oregon Department of Forestry fire lookout tower. In 2010, the Oregon Depart-

ment of Forestry opened 30 miles of forested trails on the mountain, which has since become popular with the off-highway vehicle community. The recreation area also has four campsites and is accessible through the Shingle Mill staging area and parking lot

Origin:

The mountain and the ridge were officially named by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1980 in honor of Louis and Theodore Nicolai, a pair of German-born entrepreneurs who moved west to Oregon from Detroit, Michigan, in 1868 and opened a business. The mountain is near a mill the brothers once owned. The Nicolai Brothers Company opened



GOOGLE MAPS

in Portland as a lumber mill but soon expanded into the production of doors and many other ventures. Louis Nicolai also served as the president of the Portland Cracker Company.

Nicolai is a Northern German variant of the Italian name, *Nicolaio*. All variants, including the English form, *Nicholas*, trace their way back to the Greek, *Νικόλαος*, or *Nikolaos*, which combines

Νικό, or *Niko* (*Nike* — the Greek goddess of victory) with *λαος*, or *laos* (the Greek word for “people”) to literally mean “victory for the people” or “people’s champion.”

“The Nicolai Brothers are natives of Germany, and accompanied their parents from the fatherland to America in 1853, coming direct to Detroit, Michigan. Theodore, at that time, was but 3 years of age, while Louis was 13. They were reared and

educated in Wayne county, near Detroit, where they continued to reside until they came to the Pacific coast in 1868.”

—Rev. Harvey Kimball Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon*, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago: 1893, P. 388

“Motorsports clubs are calling all off-road enthusiasts to Nicolai Mountain to perform trail maintenance.”

—“Off-road clubs tackle trails on Nicolai Mountain, east of Astoria,” *The Daily Astorian*, Monday, Nov. 14, 2016



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The name “Nicolai” and all variants, including “Nicholas,” stem from the Greek word “Nike,” the Greek goddess of victory, combined with “laos,” the Greek word for “people,” to literally mean “victory for the people” or “people’s champion.”

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