

# Beckham is author of many books

**TRAIL continued  
from front page**

Beckham's new article details the removal of the Umpqua people in January 1856 before the removal of the Rogue Valley people from Table Rock the next month. The diary account of Agent George Ambrose recounts the Rogue Indian removal to Grand Ronde and it is Beckham's presentation of Special Agent Robert Baylor Metcalfe's diary account of the Umpqua people that now adds depth to the time of Indian removals.

What set Metcalfe's diary account apart are the additional details provided by Special Sub-Agent Theophilus Macgruder's inventory of Indian belongings.

"This information always existed, it's just that before Dr. Beckham's work it was not available in this format," says Tribal Historic Preservation Office Manager David Harrelson.

Beckham is one of the foremost historians on Native American history in Oregon. He lives in Lake Oswego.

Beckham, who is the Dr. Robert B. Pamplin Jr. Professor of History at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, just authored an article about the removal of the Umpqua Valley Indians to Grand Ronde. The article, titled "The Trail of Tears of the Indians of the Umpqua Valley, 1856," will appear in the March edition of "The Umpqua Trapper," the quarterly publication of the Douglas County Historical Society. "The Umpqua Trapper" has been in publication continuously since 1965.

Beckham is best known for authoring books like "Requiem for a People: The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersman," "Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries" and "Many Faces: An Anthology of Oregon Autobiography."

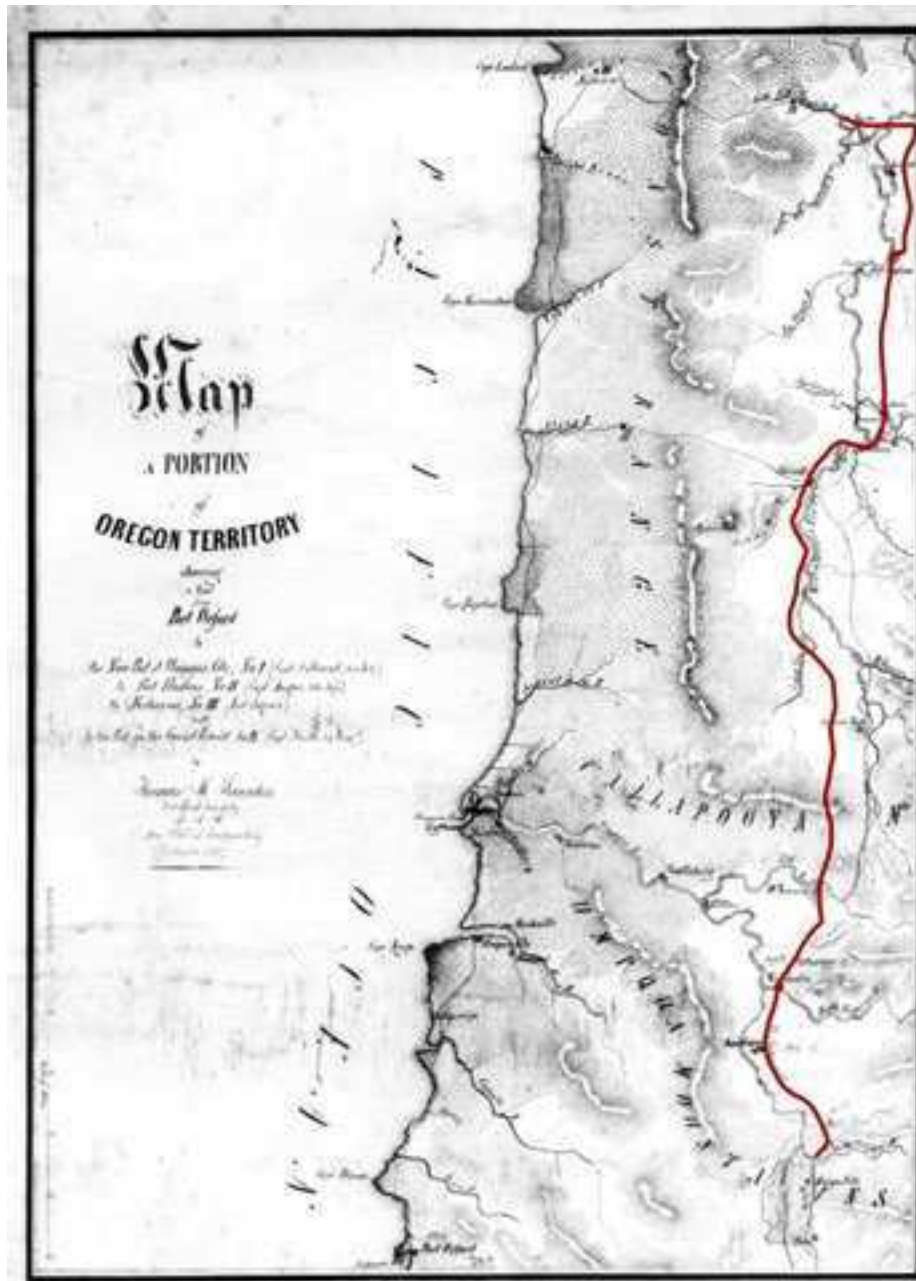
"Requiem for a People," which was published in 1971, is considered the only complete record of the region's Native Americans and it chronicles the loss of Native lifestyles in the 1850s.

While this time of year marks a time when Tribal members are remembering the suffering and displacement of their ancestors, Beckham's research is providing new information on the subject.

According to Beckham's article, Superintendent Joel Palmer planned to colonize the Umpqua and Rogue River Valley Indians, taken from their homelands, to become farmers in Grand Ronde. Beckham says Palmer thought there was only one way to bring peace to the area and that was by separating Native peoples from Euro-Americans.

Beckham's article provides details like diary accounts from Metcalfe, inventory lists of the personal belongings of the Indian people who were rounded up by the cavalry for the walk to Grand Ronde and the dollar amounts of that inventory.

Beckham's article also includes information about Macgruder, who provided an assessment of



**This map traces the "Trail of Tears" of the Umpqua Tribal people that occurred in January 1856.**

the value of the personal items left behind by the Natives. Macgruder routinely valued items like canoes at \$2 to \$3 each, tents for \$5 and axes for a \$1.

Beckham points out that although stark and somewhat cold, the assessments and diary accounts prove that the Natives were not a warring people at the time of forced relocations. They owned farms and grew crops, and they owned canoes, horses, rifles, axes, kettles and beads.

"To me the most interesting thing about this is the people take on an identity in that the Macgruder account they have names, they have property, they were already engaged in subsistence agriculture, they were producing grain and hay and they owned beads and dentalium shells and canoes and muskets and axes and kettles," says Beckham. "And all of that; all of those personal items were simply just left behind. They were forced to leave in such a hurry with only six wagons to move all those people including pregnant women, little children and the aged.

"It was an ill-conceived, poorly funded removal – just like the one Ambrose did from the Rogue Valley."

An excerpt from Metcalfe's diary reads business-like at best:

"Wednesday 23rd – Rained through the day, road very bad. Moved four (4) miles. Met an express from Supt. Office with funds.

"Thursday 24th – An Indian child died during the march and a woman of the Umpqua Band died after

we arrived in camp. Moved eight (8) miles.

"Friday 25th – I found it necessary to hire another wagon and team as our marches were getting much shorter and many of the Old and infirm were very late getting into camp. Moved about six (6) miles. Encamped near Corvallis."

"This removal was mostly Umpqua Calapooyia with about 40 Molalla and they picked up additional Willamette Valley Calapooyians along the way," says Beckham. "The exodus of the Indians of the Umpqua Valley was so hurried that most were forced to leave their possessions and walk to the reservation with only the clothes on their backs and what they could carry."

Beckham says that Palmer then ordered Macgruder to tour the former Indian settlements of the Umpqua to tally individual property losses. Macgruder had to cover

a lot of ground to inventory the belongings of so many people.

Macgruder "was out at Looking Glass, he was down at Winston, he was at Roseburg, he was up at Deer Creek, he was at Glide, he was at Yoncalla and Cole's Valley," says Beckham. "These people lived all over the valley in 1855. They lived widely distributed throughout the Willamette Valley and Macgruder had to travel for several days to track down all this property that belonged to the people that were removed to Grand Ronde."

Macgruder's inventory also seems cold and very stark:

"Gilbat (Ind.) has near Mr. Barker's 42 bushels wheat \$42.00 4 deer skins \$4.00 1 sack of Skins \$5.00 3 Axes \$3.00 1 Kettle \$1.00 \$55

"John Dickson (Ind.) has near Mr. James Dickson 16 bushels wheat \$16.00 1 Cast iron oven \$3.00 \$19

"Bocus (Bogus) (Ind.) has at James McKinneys 10 sacks or 20 Bushels wheat \$20.00."

But, stark as it may be, it is this inventory that Beckham says is the key to giving new life to Tribal ancestors more than a century and a half after it was compiled. It gives them names and showed they owned property.

Pioneer settlement began in the Umpqua Valley in 1849 and 1850. Macgruder's inventory account shows how unnecessary the Rogue River Indian Wars were.

"Within five years of settlement and the Native people of the Umpqua Valley are farmers to some extent," says Beckham. "Almost every one of them had grain – bags of grain that they had grown on their own farms. That to me shows a remarkable resilience and accommodation to a new life-way – these people were doing it on their own. They were engaged in subsistence agriculture prior to removal to the reservation. They had families."

Beckham reports that Metcalfe arrived in Grand Ronde on Saturday, Feb. 2, with 380 people. He then left Grand Ronde to join Ambrose for the removal of the Rogue Valley people to Grand Ronde that started on Feb. 23.

And despite the work done to tally a total figure for the benefit of the Umpqua people, there is no record of the federal government ever making restitution for the personal assets abandoned by the Indians of the Umpqua Valley. ■

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