

Photographic Report of June 14, 2023 JSS Umpqua Memorial Field Trip

Bob Zybach, Chair, JSS Umpqua Memorial Committee

David Gould, Coos Bay Timber Operators

Dale Hanson, Pacific Memorials



Here is a rock wall in the Main Rock Quarry, North Bend, Coos County, Oregon. Note the layers of basalt that were formed by undersea volcanic eruptions 10 million or 40 million years ago. The two stones selected by David came from this quarry and were close to the base of this cliff when we met there.



David Gould with the winning rock. Both he and I lobbied heavily for the rock in the background -- partly because of its distinctive shape, but also so an inscription or plaque could be read standing up -- but three others voted for this stone, because "bigger is better" and more traditional (and easier) flat surfaces. Also, Dale said it was the better choice to work with.



Dale is checking out the sanding job David is doing on the rock and making suggestions for next steps.



The sanding is going good, and a determination is made that a 12" x 16" plaque, or similar dimension, will fit fine. Note the Main Rock truck in the background.

David has noted that it has small crystals, which makes it a poor choice for inscription. Dale has taken a small sample of the rock for further testing, primarily "hardness."



Dale standing by the current Oregon State Parks Highway 101 Jedediah Smith sign. This is the sign that JSS Board wants to improve the texts and graphics because of concerns about generic content, inaccuracies, and irrelevance. A formal application to update this sign is to be made in August. Current direction is to more accurately and completely describe the local natives, their lifestyles, and the state and national significance of their historic encounters with Smith's and the Hudson Bay Company's trappers in 1826-1828.

This is one of two(?) standard sign sizes authorized by State Parks for State Highways, and most (all?) are constructed by a single contractor using specified materials. I think that's pretty close, but the main point is that we want to use State standards -- and probably State contractors -- to construct the proposed Umpqua Memorial interpretive sign on Douglas County right-of-way.

Note the stone marker in the shade along the left margin, to the left of the large tree.



Dale standing next to the stone marker noted in the previous photo.

The following page shows his hand, for scale, next to the plaque. Note that it is inset, 90 years old, and along a major highway and never vandalized. After discussing all alternatives between the three of us, this was the best recommendation we came up with -- an inset, brass (or bronze?) plaque. The objective is to be respectful, with simplicity, large lettering, and elegance as guides. Also, permanence and low maintenance so much as possible.

At least two people suggested additional text, but that is probably best left for the nearby informational/interpretive sign. No need to list cause of death or draw any particular attention to Smith, other than his name as employer and as registered cemetery name.



Smith, Jackson & Sublette
“Free Trappers”

Thomas Daws
John Gaiter
John Hanna
Abraham Laplante
Joseph Lapointe
Emmanuel Lazarus
Toussaint Maréchal
Martin McCoy
Joseph Palmer
Peter Ranne
John Robaseu
Harrison Rogers
Charles Swift
Thomas Virgin

Died July 14, 1828

Dedicated October 28, 2023
Jedediah Smith Society



Here is Dale, standing at the spot that seems best situated for visibility, meeting County placement criteria, and being very near the 1856 map location of the killings and burials.



Here is the view west of the Umpqua River. Dales is standing near the spot we selected for the memorial rock, and my car is near where we think the proposed sign should be. We think it would be too cluttered if they were side-by-side, and maybe even further separation would be good, placing the sign near the log scaling shack, a short walk from the rock -- one a memorial, the other an historical marker.