

Lake Grove Historical Themes and Identity
Susanna Kuo, May 19, 2015

Boones Ferry Road is one of the oldest roads in the Willamette Valley. In 1846 Alphonso Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone and a widower with ten children, emigrated to Oregon and established a homestead on the banks of the Willamette River near Wilsonville. He and his son Jesse began operating a ferry on the Willamette. They also began clearing the road that eventually connected the ferry with Portland and Salem. The ferry carried travelers across the river for 107 years before it was replaced by the I-5 bridge in 1954. Interstate 5 closely parallels Boones Ferry Road.

Because of its long history, Boone's Ferry Road has been re-graded and repaved innumerable times. As Mary Goodall wrote in *Oregon's Iron Dream*, "a road supervisor was one of the early important officials." In the 1890s the County appointed three local farmers to supervise work on Boones Ferry Road. They were George Prosser, George Kruse, and C. C. Borland. Some of the gravel for roadwork probably came from the quarry in Waluga Park. Another quarry on Iron Mountain Boulevard may also have supplied gravel. Oswego roads were sometimes graded with slag from the iron furnace. Like Durham Street in Old Town, Boones Ferry may have a layer of slag under all its layers of asphalt, concrete, and gravel.

Other roads that bear the names of early settlers include Carman Drive, Kruse Way, Bryant Road, Knaus Road, and Dickinson Street. One way the memory of Lake Grove's early homesteaders could be honored is with interpretive signs that explain the significance of these street names. The Old Town Neighborhood Association used a Neighborhood Enhancement Grant to install signs that give background on its street names. The Lake Oswego Library has an excellent collection of historic photographs that includes images of the Bryant, Carman, and Kruse farms. Of special interest are photos of hay wagons, steam operated farm equipment, and cabbage fields on the Kruse farm. These images and historic maps could be used to create interpretive signs for key streets in Lake Grove.

Many communities commission public art that celebrates local history. Lake Grove's agricultural heritage might be a source of inspiration. Personally, I love the idea of a row of giant bronze cauliflowers or cabbages (in remembrance of the Kruse cabbage fields) as a buffer between the sidewalk and the street. The annual hop harvest was once a festive affair that

involved the whole community. There's a wonderful photo in the library collection of the hop harvest on the Bryant farm. A metal wall sculpture that evokes trellised hop vines would also be wonderful.

Another potential theme is transportation. The Red Electric train enabled development at the west end of the lake and was responsible for introducing the name of Lake Grove when one of the station names was changed from Lake View Park to Lake Grove. A refurbished Red Electric car would make a terrific visitors' information booth.

Another historical theme is the Native American presence. The Kalapuyans were the predominant tribe in the Lake Grove area. If the committee wants to explore ideas for honoring the first people, I would suggest contacting David Lewis who is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the former tribal historian. David is also an anthropologist and Chair of the Oregon Heritage Commission. His input would guarantee that whatever is done is authentic and sensitive to the traditions of the tribe.

This brings me to the name "Waluga," which has been widely embraced as the Native American name of the lake. I was surprised to discover that there appears to be no linguistic evidence supporting this or the claim that "waluga" means "wild swan." Some proof may yet come to light, but for now "Waluga" appears to be the romantic invention of people who felt that "Swan Lake" sounded better than "Sucker Lake," which was the official name of the lake until 1913. Unlike Waluga, "Sucker Lake" actually has some basis in Native American tradition. According to philologist Henry Zenk, who has written on Native American place names in the Willamette Valley, the Kalapuyan name for Oswego Creek was "sucker-place creek."

One final thought: the Native American presence in our area might be honored in the choice of landscaping materials along Boones Ferry Road. Among the indigenous plants important to the tribes, there may be some that are suitable for street plantings. Camas is one that comes to mind. Before the West Lake neighborhood was developed, a lot of camas grew along the south side of Melrose Street.

Kalapuyan people

For information about local tribes see:

David G. Lewis, Ph.D.
Adjunct, Chemeketa Community College
<https://chemeketa.academia.edu/DavidLewis>

See also:

<http://www.tualatinoregon.gov/recreation/afalati-park>
<http://www.washingtoncountymuseum.org/home/exhibits/kalapuya/>

Unpublished text for proposed interpretive sign in George Rogers Park by David Lewis and Susanna Kuo:

THE CLACKAMAS AND THE KALAPUYA

When Euro-Americans arrived in Oregon, the homelands of two tribes covered the vicinity of Lake Oswego. The area near the river was occupied by the Clowewalla band of the Clackamas Chinook Indians. Explorers marveled at their custom of head flattening, a mark of status that permanently distinguished high-born Chinooks from slaves. The Clackamas were a river people who relied on fishing and trading at sites such as Willamette Falls. Chinook Wawa (incorporating Chinook, French, and English and other native languages) was the trade language for the entire Northwest. The nearest Clowewalla village was located across from the entrance to the Clackamas River and was called Walamt (the origin of the word Willamette). In addition to salmon, the Clowewallas caught suckers and eels with fixed basket traps at the mouth of Oswego Creek.

The land west of the lake was the homeland of the Tualatin band of the Kalapuya people. They were seasonal hunters and gatherers who practiced controlled burning of the valleys. Their staple foods were camas and wapato bulbs. According to early settlers, the Indians called Sucker Lake "Waluga," after the wild swans that wintered there. Linguists have been unable to trace this word to local native dialects. The name of Sucker Creek, however, may have an Indian origin. The Kalapuyans referred to the creek as "tch'aká mámpit ueihépet" which means "sucker-place creek."

The Willamette Valley region

The region was principally the territory of the Kalapuyan tribes. The neighboring Molalla had some territory in the valley along the Cascade Range foothills. The Kalapuyan tribes were a group of about 19 tribes roughly divided into three regions: upper, middle, and southern. The valley was wide and clear of dense forest. Kalapuyan tribes were in the practice of semi-annually burning sections of the valley. This kept it clear of most pines and firs and became a perfect location for development of oak savannas. Camas and

acorns were principal foods of the Kalapuya. Camas was very plentiful throughout the valley, likely being the main trade commodity with other tribes. Kalapuyans built stone ovens to cook the camas where it was then stored away for the winter. Marriages outside of the tribe were common, and the Kalapuya tribes sought marriages with Chinookan people to help secure trading rights.

Lake Grove History

BOOKS:

Colver, Marylou. *Lake Oswego Vignettes: Illiterate Cows to College-Educated Cabbage*. Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2012.

Foster, Laura O. *Images of America: Lake Oswego*. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Fulton, Ann. *Iron, Wood & Water: An Illustrated History of Lake Oswego*. San Antonio, □ Texas: Historical Publishing Network and the Oswego Heritage Council, 2002.

Goodall, Mary. *Oregon's Iron Dream: A Story of Old Oswego and the Proposed Iron □ Empire of the West*. Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1958.

Kellogg, Claire and Susanna Campbell Kuo, Eds. *The Diary of Will Pomeroy: A Boy's Life in 1883 Oswego, Oregon*. Lake Oswego: Lake Oswego Public Library, 2009.

Lake Oswego Public Library staff and Volunteers, Eds. *In Their Own Words: A Collection □ of Reminiscences of Early Oswego, Oregon*. 2nd edition. Lake Oswego, Oregon: Lake Oswego □ Public Library, 2010.

ONLINE INFORMATION:

Lake Oswego Preservation Society:

<http://lakeoswegopreservationsociety.org/>

<http://lakeoswegopreservationsociety.org/neighborhood-histories/>

<http://lakeoswegopreservationsociety.org/personal-histories/>

Lake Oswego Public Library, Historical Photo Database:

<http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/tools/library/photos/>

City of Lake Oswego, Online historical maps:

<http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/maps/historic>

