



The Sawmill & Tribal Trail can be accessed from many points around town, so check out as much of it as you have time and energy for. We hope you will enjoy learning more about the colorful past of the Coos Bay and North Bend area.

MAIN ACCESS POINTS:

Directions to Ferry Road Park:

Go N. on Hwy 101 through North Bend - turn right on Ferry Rd. and continue 0.2 miles to park on left.

Directions to Pony Village Mall:

From Hwy 101 - go 0.5 mile west on Virginia Ave. to Pony Village Mall on your left. Park at the mall and walk out of the parking lot on Vermont to pick up the trail on Pony Creek Rd.

Directions to John Topits Park:

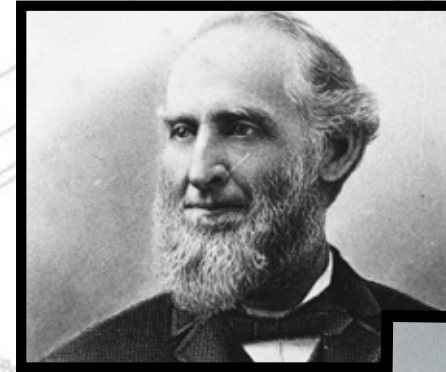
From Hwy 101 - go 1.9 miles west on Newmark Avenue then turn right onto Hull Street. Follow signs to John Topits Park.

Directions to Empire Docks:

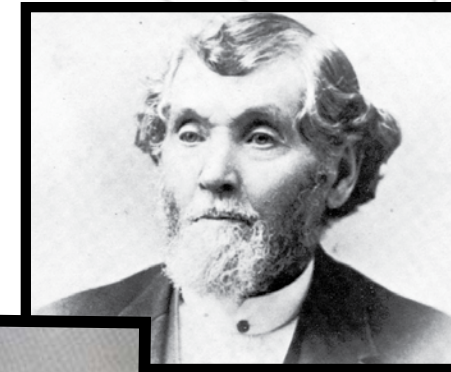
From Hwy 101 - go 2.9 miles west on Newmark Avenue then turn left onto Arago Hwy. Take your first right onto Michigan Ave and continue to docks.

NOTICE: The Sawmill & Tribal Trail is an urban trail utilizing existing sidewalks and sometimes the shoulder of local streets. Use protected crosswalks whenever possible, stay on sidewalks or the left side of the road and always watch for traffic. Do not walk after dark and, if you can, find a walking buddy.

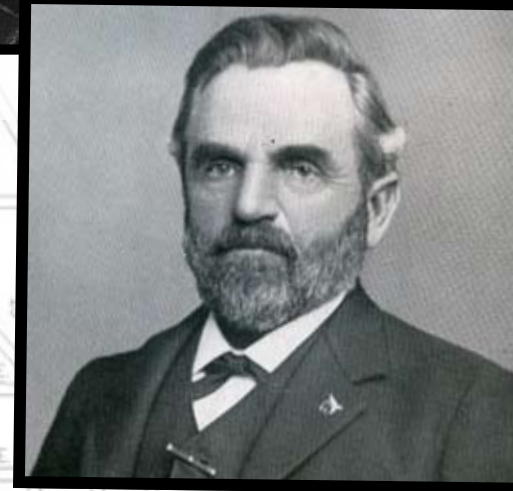
- Walking Route** 
- Point of Interest** 
- Auto / Cycling Detour** 
- Walking Route Option** 
- Alternate Return Route** 
- Trail Information** 
- Public Parking** 
- Restrooms** 



Asa Simpson
CHMM 009-16.1



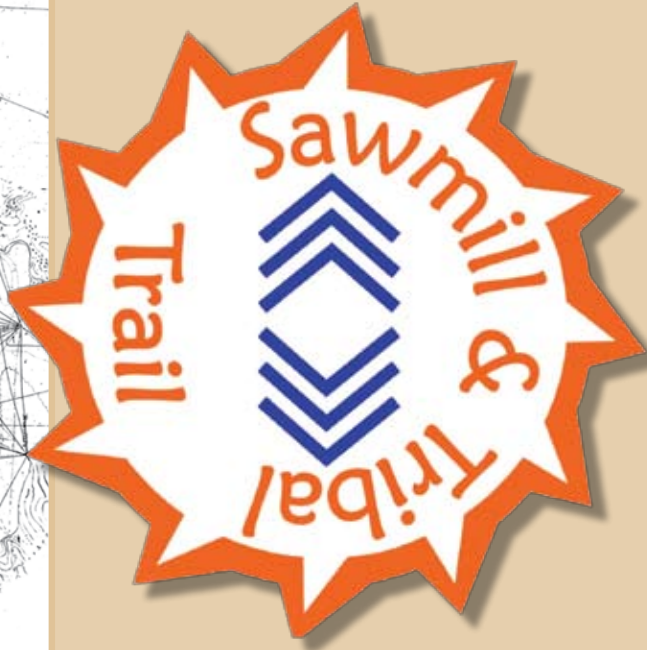
Henry H. Luse
CHMM



Charles Merchant
CHMM



1863 Coast Survey showing trail from
Empire City to North Bend Saw Mill

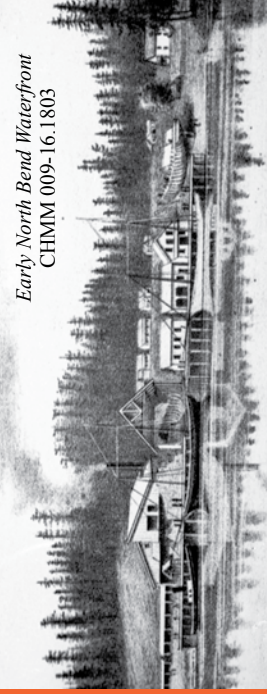


“The Bay Area” through Historical Journey A

A North Bend Points of Historic Significance

* This section can be accessed either from Ferry Road Park or Pony Village Mall and walked as either a 4.2 mile or 4.8 mile loop using the green return routes.

1. Site of Simpson's sawmill and the original North Bend company town. (See signs)
2. Site of 1922 - 36 ferry service between North Bend and Glasgow (see sign.) At low tide walk north to a pebble beach for another view.
3. Plaque honoring Gahakkich - one of many Coos Tribal villages that dotted the bay area for thousands of years.
4. Ferry Road Park ball field, site of North Bend's 1902 pavilion - the town's community center for two decades.
5. Unusual view (from below) of McCullough Bridge. Built as Coos Bay Bridge in 1936, renamed in 1947. At 5,888 feet long, largest bridge on the Oregon Coast when constructed.
6. (no post) The Coos Historical and Maritime Museum – book and gift shop.
7. Oregon's "Merci" boxcar. After WW2, the grateful French sent each state a boxcar filled with gifts.
8. North Bend's original (1903) baseball park. Other towns each fielded a team and competition was fierce.
9. Landmark Church opened in 1910 as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. The oldest original church in North Bend.
10. Pony Slough mudflats. Twice daily underwater but platted (by 1906) as the Steamboat Addition to North Bend and sold to unsuspecting buyers.
11. Remnant pilings from 1907 wooden bridge that connected North Bend to Bangor and the Reynolds Lumber Company sawmill.
12. Sixteenth Street (Pony Slough) Bridge. North Bend's worst early auto accident (1914) killed 5 when an auto, avoiding a small child, crashed through the railing to the tidewater and mud.
13. Old country road, established in 1859, used 16th Street in what is now North Bend and much of what is now Lakeshore Drive in Empire.
14. In the first half of the 20th century two cranberry bogs were located a short distance southwest of here. Three more cranberry bogs were situated further to the north and north-west.



Early North Bend Waterfront
CHMM 009-16.1803

SAWMILL & TRIBAL TRAIL

The Sawmill & Tribal Trail is 5.6 miles one way and can be walked, bicycled or driven. Just look for the trail logo on numbered cedar post or on streets or sidewalks.

The trail is divided into three sections...

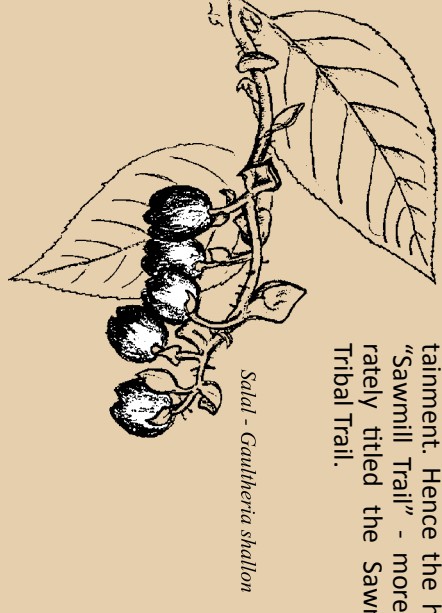
A) North Bend B) John Topits Park C) Empire

BACKGROUND

The Sawmill & Tribal Trail honors paths developed by Coos tribal ancestors that connected their bayside villages and hunting grounds. Later, settlers also used these trails.

Empire City, established 1853 among several tribal villages, became the population center with hotels, saloons, courthouse, school, brewery, general stores, 30 houses (1855) and a post office (1861). Henry H. Luse (Empire City, 1856) then Asa M. Simpson (North Bend, 1857) built sawmills on the bay. Simpson created the first shipyard (1858) also near tribal village sites.

In 1859 Coos County approved a North Bend - Empire City road. The route undoubtedly utilized some tribal paths. Teetotaler Charles Merchant refused to sell alcohol at Simpson's North Bend store so thirsty loggers, mill and shipyard workers went to Empire for saloons and entertainment. Hence the historic "Sawmill Trail" - more accurately titled the Sawmill & Tribal Trail.



Salal - *Gaultheria shallon*



JS

Evergreen Huckleberry
Vaccinium Ovatum

across bay for water transport.

35. Capt. James Magee House (1873). Victorian style. Capt. Magee, master ocean and bar pilot, had observation tower on bluff behind house. He'd spot a ship approaching Coos Bay bar, take a tugboat and offer service as pilot – for a fee.

C Empire Points of Historic Significance

28. To your right is Brown's Hill (elevation 97 feet). "Pilot's Lookout," likely used by Capt. James Magee (1880s). From a tree, he spied incoming ships beyond the North Spit dunes (see also #35).
28. (also) Directly ahead is the Southern Oregon Company's waterfront sawmill site, 1884. The "Big Mill" was 400-foot long, built on 364 Port Orford cedar pilings. Vacant years before Louis Simpson purchased it (1927). 1930s Menasha owned, leasing to others. Cape Arago Lumber Co. final occupant. Razed 1980.
29. Coos Indian village – Intesich - site. Then Henry H. Luse's sawmill (1856-1883) site. Luse dominated Empire's economy over 25 years with mill, shipyard, store and vast timber holdings.
30. Major Morton Tower House (1869, expanded 1892). As customs collector (1902-14) he reportedly used the parlor for unofficial customhouse.
31. Empire schools (1866-1959) site. The 1866 school burned 1919. Replaced by Empire Grade School (renamed Market Street School), torn down 1969.
32. Old Tower House, built 1872 in Gothic Revival style, by Dr. Charles W. Tower, brother of Maj. Morton Tower. Tower houses are on National Register of Historic Places.
33. Legendary site of "Hanging Tree." Indian Pete, unjustly accused of murder, was lynched here or nearby in a large cherry tree (1854); fort and blockhouse here during Rogue River Indian War (1856); location of Coos County Courthouse & Jail (1872-1896).
34. Hollering Place Wayside - views of bay and North Spit sand dunes. See 1852 Captain Lincoln shipwreck marker. Coos Indian village, Hanisich, in vicinity. Hollering Place on North Spit where tribal members, then settlers, would yell across bay for water transport.

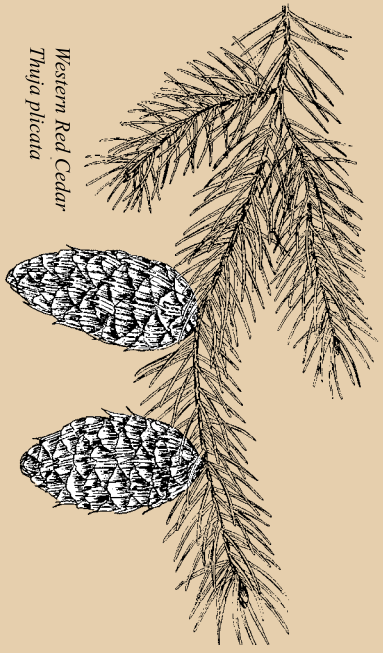
Brought to you by: The Coos Historical and Maritime Museum and the Sawmill & Tribal Trail Advisory Team.

Members of the Advisory Team: Tom Gaskill, Jennifer Groth, Howard Graham, Kim Griffin, Rick Keating, Stephanie Kramer, Don Luce, David Petrie, Frank Walsh and Wanda Williford with Tom Greaves (Empire) & Dick Wagner (North Bend) co-chairs.

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Jennie Sperling contributed all plant drawings.



Western Red Cedar
Thuja plicata

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B John Topits Park - A Sampler of Native

Plants & Trees: Coos, first peoples', food, clothing, etc.

This section of trail through John Topits park can be walked separately as a nature walk and to learn about how Coos first people lived and utilized the resources of this area.

15. Near Empire Lakes (June 1914) masked men, rifles pointed, stopped and held up five autos taking valuables. Lyle Chappell recognized the voices of bandits, Claude Allen and Ed Wilson.
16. Pacific Rhododendron - roots carved into shinny balls for a native game similar to field hockey.
17. Cattails - leaves and stems for basketry, pounded stems used as diapers. Roots eaten, cooked or raw.
18. Ocean Spray - straight, strong wood for arrow shafts and other tools, especially digging sticks. Seasonal blooms indicated elk fat, time to hunt.
19. Labrador Tea - Leaves were picked and used, fresh or dry, to make aromatic tea. Thought good for kidneys.
20. Willow - shoots for baskets and inner bark sometimes used in weaving. Seasonal fishing aid - when willow blooms, herring run.
21. Shore Pine - for pitch. Tree sap warmed, mixed with seal oil, patched canoes. Pitch for handles and wrappings. Roots tie bundles of dried salmon.
22. Douglas Fir - spear fishing, fish weirs, meat-drying racks, backboards for cradle boards. Branches, wetted, used in funeral cleansing rituals.
23. Berries - huckleberry (evergreen and red), salmonberry, blackberry, thimbleberry, salal. All berries enjoyed fresh, many dried and pounded into cakes for winter. Blackberry leaves for tea. Evergreen huckleberry roots carved into shinny balls for native game resembling field hockey.
24. Western Red Cedar - very important. Provided housing, canoes, baskets and clothing. Whole trees carved for canoes. Planks, carved with elk horn, split from fallen or live trees. (Two or three planks came from a mature tree without killing it.)
25. Sedge, slough - grows along water, common at low elevations, used for skirts and berry baskets.
26. Western Hemlock - bark made dark dye for cedar and maple. Fishnets were dyed making them tough for fish to see. Hemlock for fish weirs, the heavy wood stayed put.
27. Sitka Spruce - wood light and strong, roots for baskets and lashings, occasionally for canoes.