



Champoeg and French Prairie

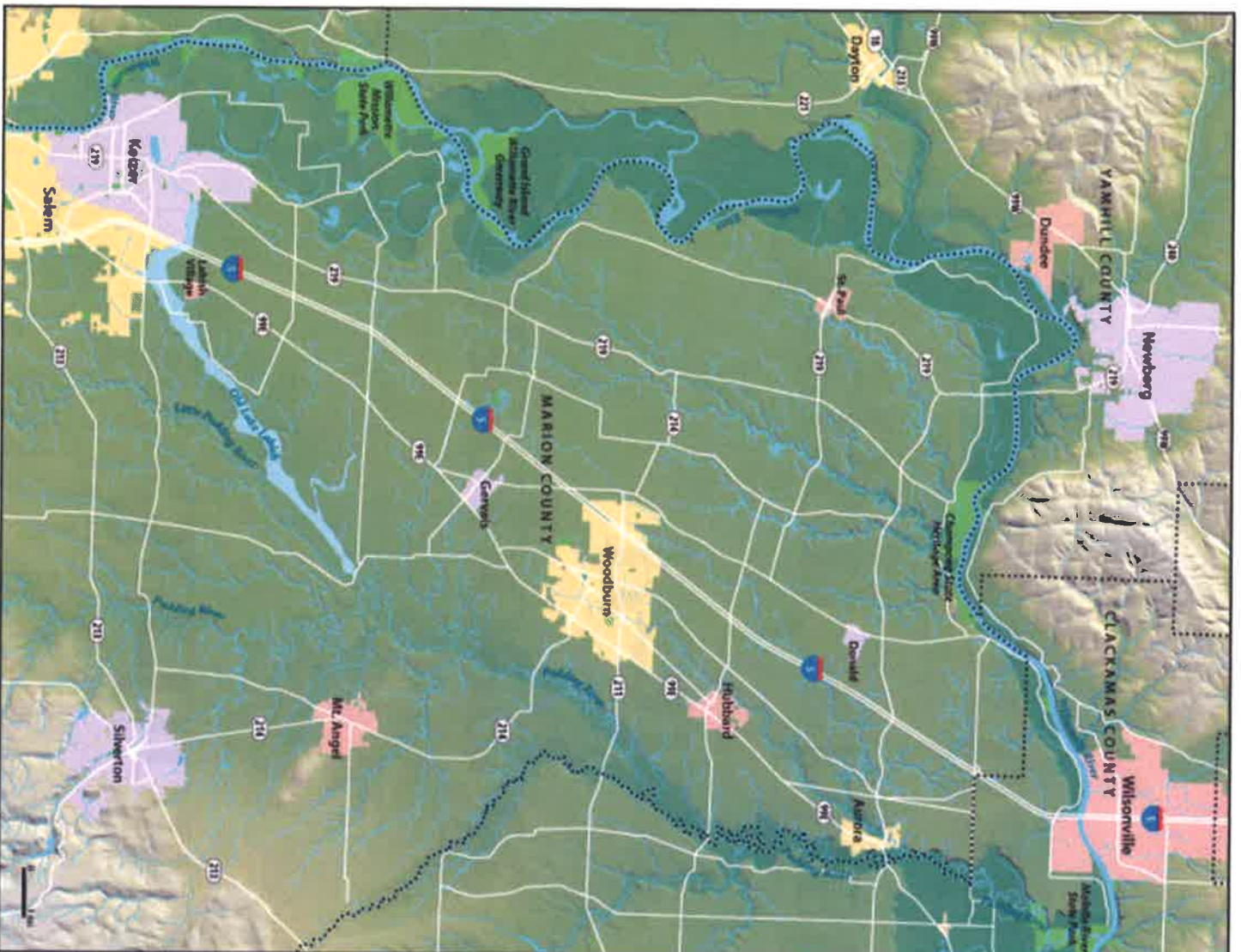


A historical and cultural survey
Prepared by Friends of French Prairie

Section 1

Champoeg & French Prairie:

Oregon's Historical Heartland



French Prairie as historically understood

*[Bounded on the north
and west by the
Willamette River, on the
east by the Pudding
River, and running south
to Lake Labish]*

CHAMPOEG Timeline

The First People

Pre-contact through the early 1700s

The human history of Champoeg spans over 7,000 years. Discover some of the key elements of Champoeg's story, outlined over the following six pages.

Kalapuya Indians live in the interior valleys between the Cascade Mountains and the Coast Range. They seasonally set fires in the Willamette Valley to create prairies and manage food supplies. Champoeg provides access between river and prairie, and is an important meeting place. Today, scholars believe the name "Champoeg" comes from the Kalapuya word for yampah, an edible root.



Source: Atlas of Oregon, University of Oregon Press, 2001

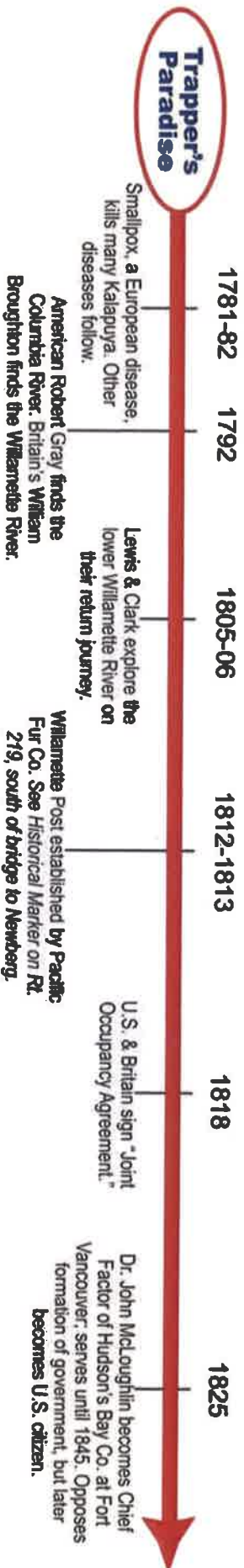


Source: Champoeg Heritage Park Guide



Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoeg Heritage Park Guide

Champoeg → French Prairie

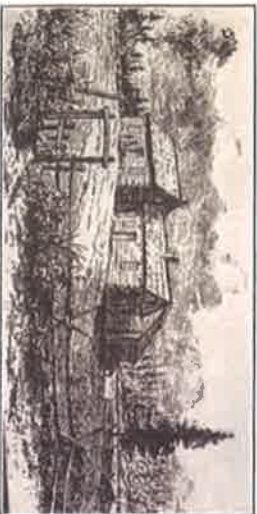


Lewis and Clark at Three Forks (Montana Historical Society)

Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoeg Heritage Park guide



Hudson's Bay Co. coat of arms and motto: "A Skin for a Skin."



JASON LEE'S MISSION—1834



Commercial & Political Center



Seal of the Provisional Government 1843-1849

1827-31 French Canadians begin the first farms in the Northwest near Champoeg. Local area known as "French Prairie."

1830-31 Malarna appears, reducing Kalapura numbers to a few hundred by the 1840s.

1833 John Ball establishes the first American farm in the Northwest within today's park boundary.

1834 Williamette Mission established by Methodist missionary Jason Lee. Visit Williamette Mission State Park to see the ghost structure.

1835 Webbley Haunhurst builds first grist mill in Williamette Valley at Champoeg.

1837 Ewing Young leads first cattle drive from California to Williamette Valley.

1839 Father Blanchet establishes first Catholic mission in St. Paul. See the 1946 church on the self-guided French Prairie Tour.

1841 Ewing Young's death causes settlers to meet and discuss probate matters. Hudson's Bay Co. warehouse built at Champoeg.

1841-43 Settlers—mostly retired American and French-Canadian trappers and mountian men—meet at various places to discuss organizing an Oregon government: the "Wolf Meetings" of 1843.



Lower Willamette Valley: from Champoeg: Place of Transition by J A Hussey

Wolf meeting—French Prairie 1843



Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoeg Heritage Park Guide



May 2, 1843 July 5, 1843

Organic Law adopted at Champoeg; establishes a simple government.

Meeting held at Champoeg; Joe Meek calls for a divide* (vote) to accept Provisional Government. Vote passes 52-50. See the *Géogour painting in the Visitor Center.*

1843



First large group of Americans (about 900, including significant numbers of women and children) come off the Oregon Trail in fall and settle in the Willamette Valley. Political power shifts to the newcomer Americans.

1845-61

Champoeg develops as an important commercial center along the Willamette River; Robert Newell is the chief promoter.

Donation Land Law enacted; settlers who arrived prior to 1850 entitled to free land.

1850



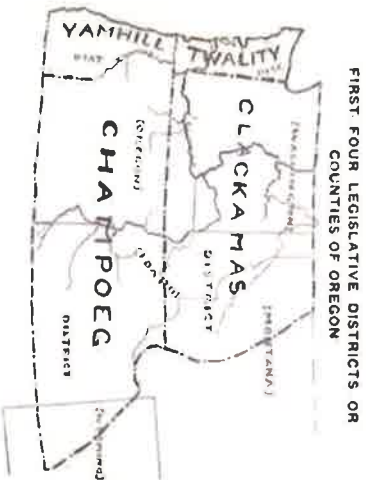
Champoeg and the Prairies Beyond

1851

A U.S. commission, meeting at Champoeg, signs treaties to buy native lands and move the people to reservations. The U.S. Senate refuses to ratify the treaties.



The Beginning of Oregon; courtesy Champoeg State Park



Home in Butteville, 1852



Champoeg and the Prairies Beyond and First Four Legislative Districts: from Champoeg; Place of Transition by J A Hussey

Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoeg Heritage Park Guide

Paddlewheeler at Champoeg, 1907



Zorn House and water tower

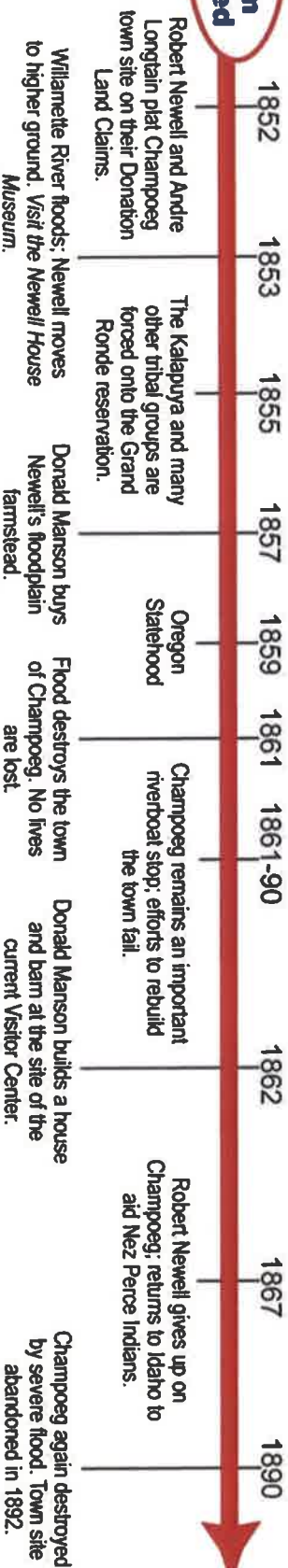


SEAL OF OREGON
TERRITORIAL
GOVERNMENT



OREGON STATE SEAL

A Dream Unfulfilled



Champoeg Town plat map



Manson House and Barn at Champoeg



Downtown Butteville, early 1900's



Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoeg Heritage Park guide

Dedication of Champoege memorial, 1901



Fargo Station, French Prairie



Champoege State Heritage Area



Newell House Museum



Champoege the Park

1900-01	Francis X. Matthieu locates site of 1843 vote. Monument is erected.	1912-13	Champoege Pioneer Memorial Building built for annual celebrations.	1918	Pioneer Mothers Cabin completed. Donald Manson house burns down.	1931	Champoege becomes an official State Park.	1943	Visitor Center constructed on site of Donald Manson's house.	1954	Federal Termination Act closes Grand Ronde Reservation.	1977	Nonprofit Friends of Historic Champoege formed to assist park.	1980	Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, which includes Kalapuya descendants, win back tribal rights.	1983	Donald Manson's 1862 barn restored.	1992-94	Heritage apple orchard & 1860s-style kitchen garden planted.	1999-2000	Champoege celebrates 100 years as a historical park.	2001	Oregon 150 celebration! Stay tuned for more ...	2009	
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Matthieu house, Butteville, 1901



Champoege Pioneer Memorial Building



Butteville Store today



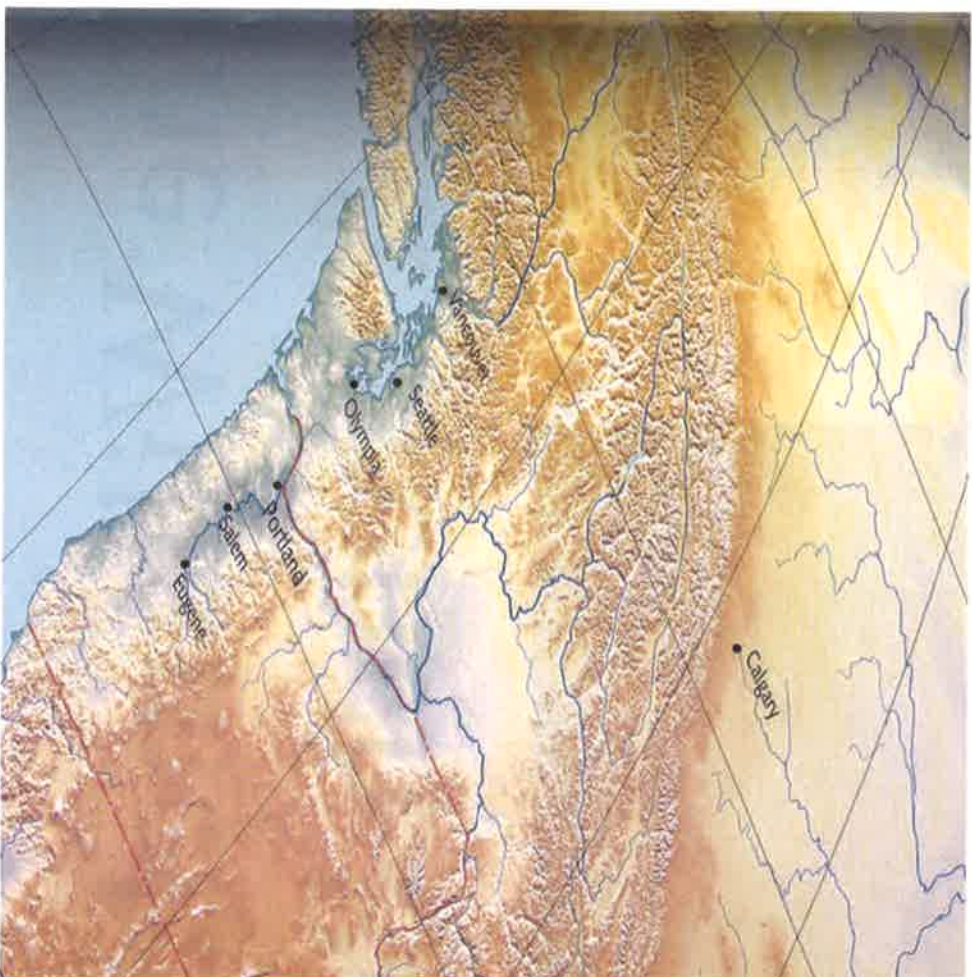
Time Line illustration courtesy of Champoege Heritage Park Guide

Section 2

The Willamette Valley & French Prairie

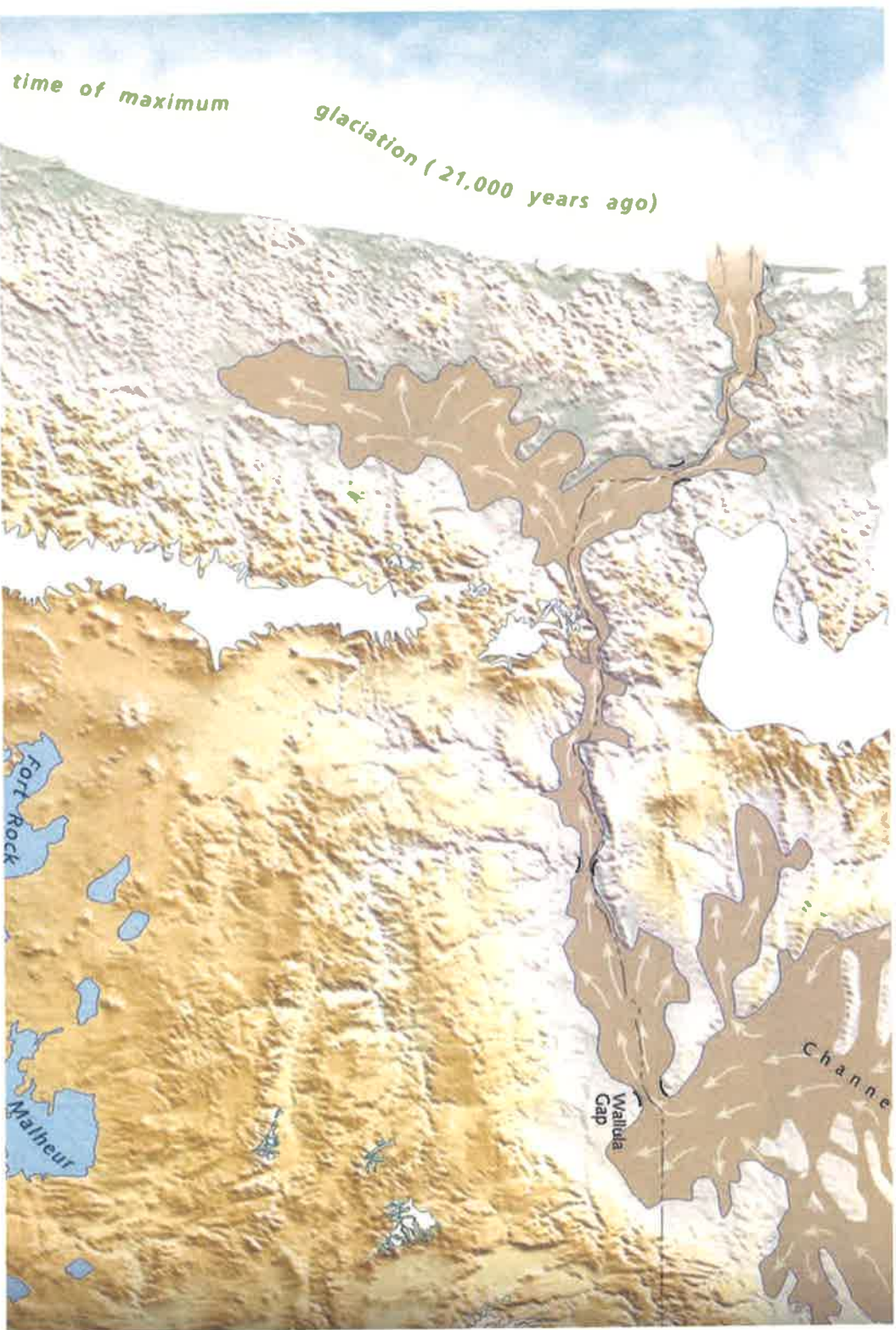


A historic assessment of a special agricultural resource



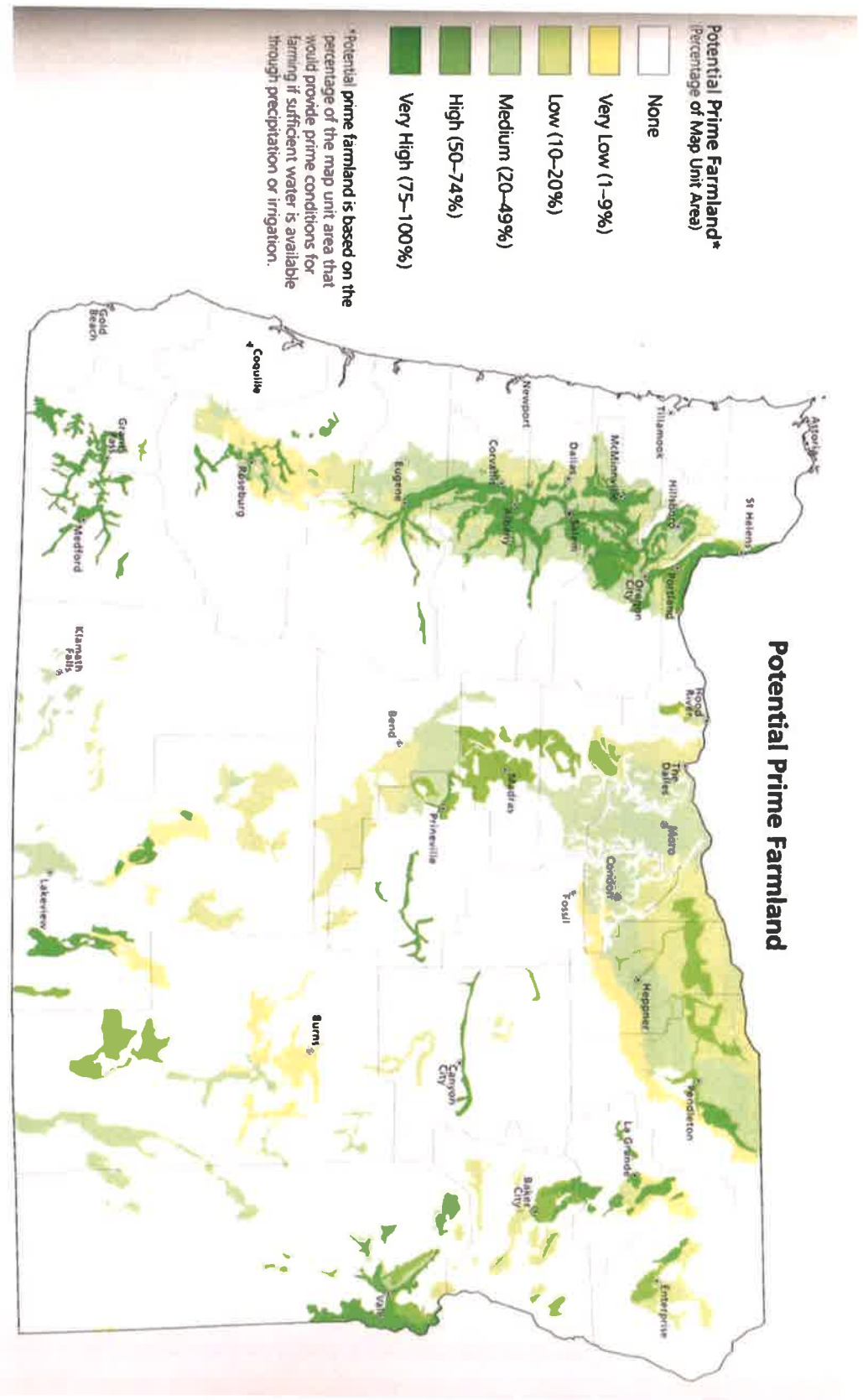
In spite of the perceptions of the Pacific Northwest as a verdant paradise, there is precious little arable land for farming.

Source: *Atlas of Oregon*, University of Oregon Press, 2001



Source: *Atlas of Oregon*, University of Oregon Press, 2001

The source of the high quality soils in the Willamette Valley is the deposits from the Missoula Floods (12-18,000 years ago)



Source: *Atlas of Oregon*, University of Oregon Press, 2001

Concentration of Prime Farmland in the Willamette Valley

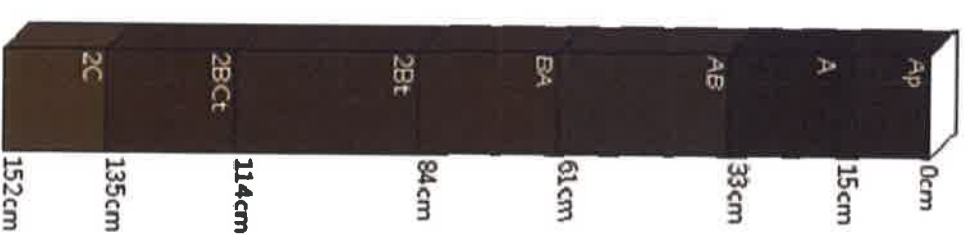
What makes French Prairie a truly unique agricultural resource?

- Outstanding **soils**—some of best in country
- Mild **climate**—long growing season, limited severe weather
- Mostly adequate **water** for irrigated crops
- Excellent **transportation** corridor and **markets**
- **History** and **culture** of farming for past 150 years
 - Experience
 - Creativity, Ingenuity
 - Infrastructure
 - Agriculture resources for educational, technical, financial support—a network to support success

Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

Willamette Valley Soils

- Willamette Silt Loam—our most common valley soil
 - About one-half of the soils in FP are Willamette silt loams
 - Deep, well-drained, highly productive, dark with lots of organic matter
 - Formed when Missoula Floods occurred 10,000 years ago and deposited sediments



Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

Willamette Valley Climate

- Average about 165 frost free days per year
- Adequate moisture with ~ 40" of rain per year
- Mild temperatures—no great extremes; about a dozen days over 90 degrees annually



Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

Willamette Valley Water

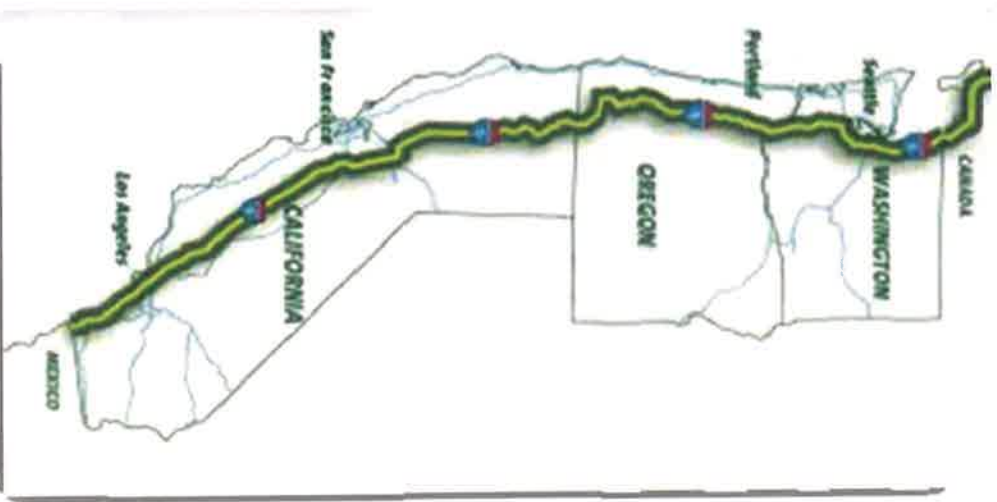


- Over 650MM gallons of water needed daily for crops in irrigation season—nearly 80% of all water used in state goes to agriculture
- Water availability becoming more limited—no new permits
- Higher efficiency systems becoming more popular

Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

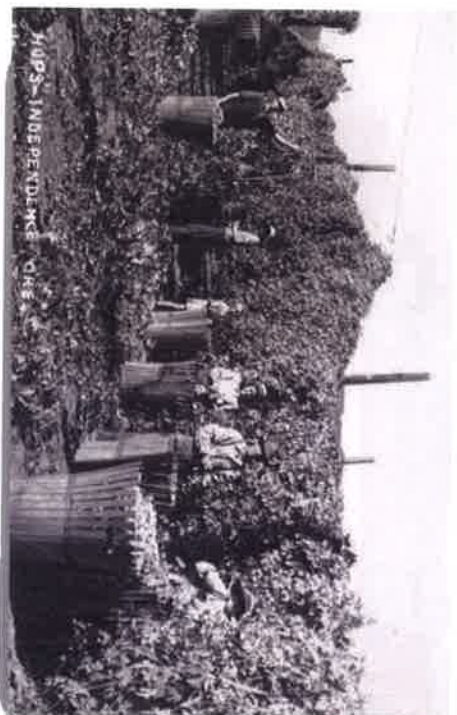
Willamette Valley Transportation/Markets

- Location, location, location
- I-5 transportation corridor
- Port of Portland
- Linking people and products



Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

Willamette Valley History and Culture of Agriculture



Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

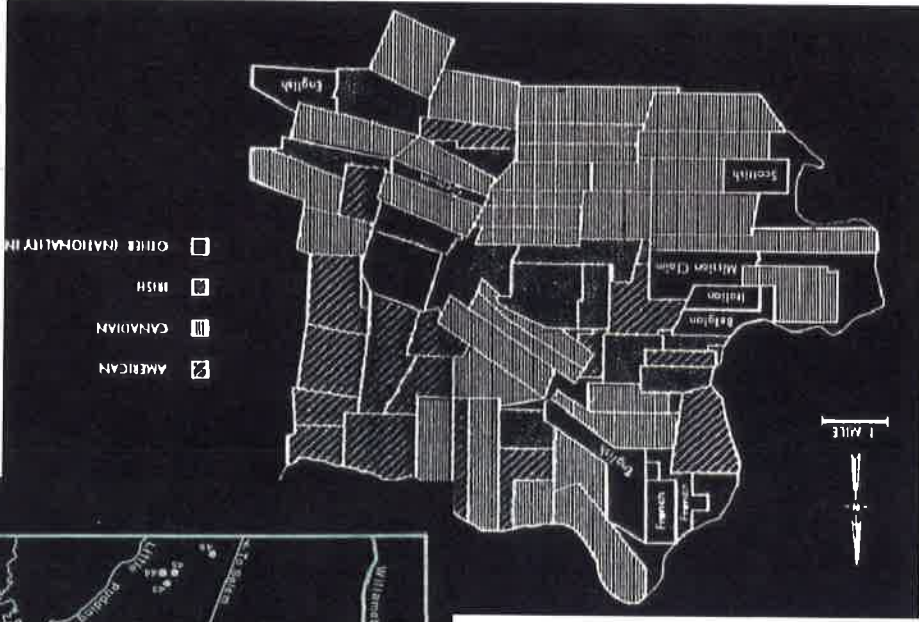
French Prairie's Important Crops

- Nursery (field and greenhouse)
- Fresh and Processed Vegetables
- Vegetable and Flower Seed
- Berries (strawberries, canberries and blueberries)
- Christmas Trees
- Hazelnuts
- Livestock (cattle, dairy, poultry)
- Hops
- Grapes
- Grasses and Legumes
- Grains and Hay
- Pasture

Slide courtesy Mike Bondi, NWREC

NOTES

Platted farms in French Prairie—1843



French Prairie is possibly the most historic piece of real estate in the entire Northwest, and it must be protected

David Brauner, PhD, Professor of Archeology
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