

CAMP POLK MEADOW: A HISTORICAL CROSSROADS

Camp Polk Meadow has been a historical crossroads for thousands of years. First the meadow supplied plentiful food and water for generations of Native American tribes. Then, it became a hub when explorers, soldiers, entrepreneurs, and settlers moved West to build the community we see today.

Who lived here over the years? Where did they come from?



THE HISTORY OF CAMP POLK MEADOW

The timeline which follows highlights some of the amazing history of Camp Polk Meadow. You can learn more by reading Martin Winch's book **Biography of a Place**, by walking the short loop through the meadow, and by joining the Land Trust on a guided hike.

**7,000-10,000
BEFORE PRESENT**

Native Americans on their seasonal rounds camped in this meadow of plentiful food and water. Wasco people may have referred to the creek and meadow here as "Why-chus" ("a place to cross water"), and Paiute people referred to the area as "Sic-se-qua" ("tall rye grass").

Sahaptin woman and man outside tipi covered with woven tule mats. Photo courtesy of Deschutes County Historical Society.

1843–1846

Westward migration began along the Oregon Trail. In 1846, the U.S. acquired "The Oregon Country" from Britain (present-day Oregon, Washington and parts of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming). Oregon became a state in 1859.



1862–1864

Samuel and Jane Hindman ("Hineman") left Omaha to go west on the Oregon Trail. The Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Military Wagon Road Company surveyed a route suitable for wagons between Albany and the Deschutes River. This route, known as the Santiam Wagon Road, passed through Camp Polk Meadow.



SAMUEL HINDMAN, C. 1880.
BOWMAN MUSEUM

1865–1866

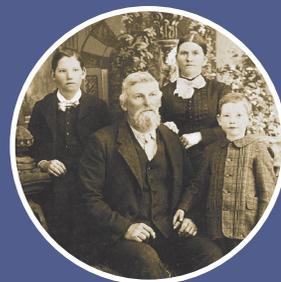
Forty-two soldiers were sent to protect commerce along the new wagon road, a narrow wagon track over the mid-Cascades. The soldiers built eight log structures at Camp Polk Meadow and over-wintered September–May. They named their camp for Polk County—home to most of the soldiers and to their Captain.



PVT. JONAS BELKNAP. COURTESY
OF JEFF DYBERT COLLECTION

1868

Hindman family (Samuel, Jane, and children Charley, Daniel, and Sarah) settled at Camp Polk between 1868-1870. The Hindmans maintained the Santiam Wagon Road and managed Hindman Station—a store, post office, and stopping place for travelers. Until 1885, maps named only three Central Oregon settlements: Prineville, Warm Springs, and Camp Polk.



HINDMAN FAMILY C. 1870
COURTESY OF JOYCE HINDMAN

1878

Wagon road travel from the Willamette Valley began to cross Whychus Creek at the future site of Sisters, instead of the Camp Polk route. By 1885, Camp Polk was largely bypassed by travelers for a more direct route over the Deschutes. By 1888, the Camp Polk post office was moved to Sisters and the Hindman Station era ended.

1883

The Fryrear family homesteaded the northern portion of Camp Polk Meadow. They dug irrigation ditches to grow grass, clover, oats, rye, wheat and barley.



BOWMAN MUSEUM

1902

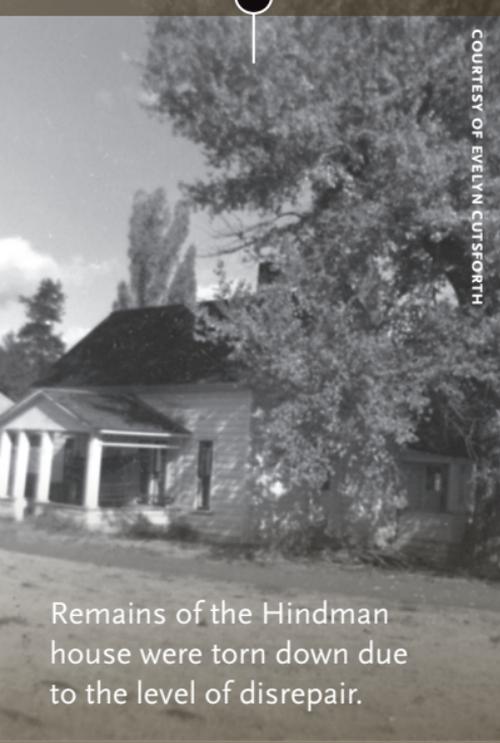
Martha Taylor Cobb married Charley Hindman, son of Samuel and Jane Hindman. Martha crossed the Cascades with her family in 1880. She ran a roadhouse east of Sisters until she married Charley, and ran a ranch at the old Hindman Station until her death in 1940. Martha is buried at the nearby Camp Polk Cemetery.



COURTESY OF JAN HODPERS

CHARLEY HINDMAN AND MARTHA TAYLOR COBB (TO THE RIGHT OF THE CAR) C. 1918.

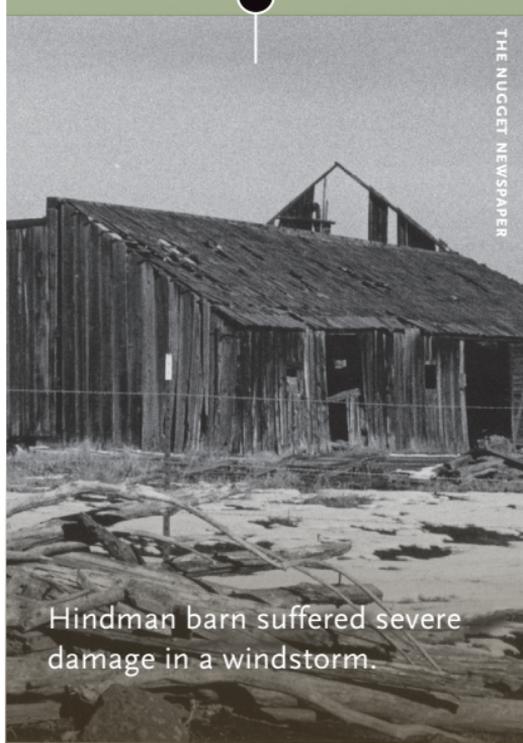
1960



COURTESY OF EVELYN CUTSFORTH

Remains of the Hindman house were torn down due to the level of disrepair.

1970



THE NUCCET NEWSPAPER

Hindman barn suffered severe damage in a windstorm.

2000

The Deschutes Land Trust created Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, forever protecting this important historical and natural crossroad.



KRIS KRISTOVICH

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