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## SQUAW CREEK TRAIL IN KITTITAS

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The trail that is known as the old Squaw Creek trail, extended from the east side of the Yakima River in Yakima county, north into Kittitas, almost due north, to the mouth of the Wenatchee river.

That part of the trail east of Ellensburg, passed thru and across the creek..Whiskey Dick<sup>k</sup> and the Wiskey Dick<sup>h</sup> country, and thus was often called the Whiskey Dick Trail--but it was the original Squaw Creek Trail. About where the Highway 11 is, The North Central Highway....there was a branch trail turned east to the Columbia River...crossed the river at Vantage and continued farther east.

From the junction..where the trail to Vantage went to the east.. the part of the Squaw Creek Trail, continued over the mountains northward... and this was the Colockum Trail.

Both the Vantage trail and the Coluckum trail were part of the Squaw Creek.. which name, Squaw Creek, should have been given to only that part of the trail from Yakima, north across Selah canyon, and along Squaw Creek.

In the southeastern part of Kittitas, another branch trail led west to the Indian Council ground in Kittitas..This Council ground, for all the Indians in Washington was located on the west side of Craig Hill in Ellensburg and is now the site of the Ellensburg Rodeo Field.

This trail.. to the Council Ground, passed the Trading Post of John D. Olmstead--this old trading post was once a pioneer postoffice and was named KETTETE(note spelling.) From the trading post, the trail continued northwest to the Council Ground.

The junction of the north branch of the Menastash Creek with the Yakima river...(the Menastash Creek is divided into two creeks near the Yakima river) was the site of the well known ford in Kittitas... Here the river could be forded almost the year thru....also here was the first ferry in Kittitas.. the J.D. Olmstead Ferry, also the site of the Catholic Mission.. and the site of the Hald-Meigs Trading Post. Also here it was that the U.S.soldiers were camped

during the Indian war 1855. And here it was that McClellan's guides, surveyors and soldiers were camped while he was seeking a pass thru the mountains for the railroad. Probably the most historic site in Kittitas is this old Yakima River ford.

At the Yakima River ford, the Indian trail from the Council Ground crossed the river and thus joined the Indian Trail west of the Yakima, called the Shushuskin was built into a so called wagon road--the ~~Durr~~ Durr road-- and used for freighting and a stage road connecting with Yakima and The Dalles, Ore.

The ~~Sushuskin~~ Shushuskin Trail, continued north, passed the Taenum home of Charles A. Splawn and Mortimer Thorp, but from the Taenum, to Puget Sound was called the Snoqualmie Trail.

Highway 97. The Squaw Creek branch leading from the Council Ground (in Ellensburg) led south from Ellensburg, turned southwest about Capital Ave. (the local highway to Kittitas becomes Capital Ave. in the city limits of Ellensburg) and crossed highway 97 where the road to the Yakima River bridge turns southwest.

This road to the bridge turns southwest from highway 97, a short distance south of the junction with the Kittitas highway with 97, and is just south of the service station and motel.

The Squaw Creek Trail in Kittitas, after leaving the Olmstead Trading Post, passed very near the Walter A. Bull ranch, then it divided and one part went almost due west to the Yakima River Ford. Thus to join the Shushuskin Trail.. the other part went northwest.. crossed the southwest corner of the Samuel B. Olmstead Place. ~~at~~ thence west passing the farms of James Watson, Henry Clerf, then north to the site of the Council Ground.

This Council Ground is not the Che-loh-an, mentioned by Splawn in his KIMIAKIN. Che-loh-ah is northwest of Ellensburg along the Colockum Trail.

In KIMIAKIN, Splawn tells of seeing men approaching his trading post from the trail to the "lower Yakima." This was the trail leading from the council ground (now the rodeo field) to the Yakima River ford.. and is that part of the trail connecting now with highway 97.



Thus, it is plain that the Squaw Creek Trail was a many branched Indian road leading to river crossings, camp grounds, and places that the Indians visited. It may have been that Olmstead built his trading post along the trail so that he could trade with the Indians. The white men, mostly miners, going to the mines at Wenatfhee used the trail, thus Splawn built his first store in Ellensburg along the Indian trail to the river ford. Some early settlers in Kittitas say that the Indian trail was right in front of Splawn's store, and if that is true Third Street in Ellensburg was a part of this original Indian trail, one of the many side trails of the Squaw Creek Trail in Kittitas.

#### A FEW NOTES.....

Yakima River Ford---Indian Peter had a canoe here and earned a good living carrying people across the river.. later a white man, Jake Somers, had a canoe and carried a few people over the river. The river widens at this place and was a safe and easy ford. Then Olmstead had the ferry for a few years. The first bridge was built in 1884 by Frederick Leonard, and at ~~this~~ this time, the lower river Bridge is sometimes called the Leonard Bridge.

Squaw Creek Trail route was the same as the road later used by those freighters who traveled east of the Yakima river. Olmstead rebuilt it in some places and it was "improved" in various ways. There was a small station at Selah and during the winter 1880-1, George Montgomery and Jack McFadden, were there. This was right on the Squaw Creek trail.

Colockum Trail or road... a continuation northward of the Squaw Creek trail. From Ellensburg to Wenatchee, it was 53 miles over this trail. The Original trail crossed the Columbia River just south of Malaga.. passed up Moses Coulee and again crossed the Columbia at Bridgeport. This was the trail used by the Indians of Chief Moses.

Hald and Meigs had their trading post at the Menastash-Yakima ford in ~~1852~~ 1854.

Snoqualmie Trail... From this old trail, there was another branched off east and went to Wenatchee and Okanogan. It followed closely the route of the Blewett Highway.

The Indians of Central Washington did not always follow these trails of course, especially in Kittitas. The valley was level and it was easy to travel any place without a bit of trouble. so there were many of these cross trails. Many, of them, like those I have mentioned, were a part of the one Squaw Creek Trail.

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