

Clues in the Landscape Oregon's 85th Heritage Tree Designation



Photo courtesy of National Register of Historic Places

A photo of the Young House circa 1888 shows the Bartlett Pear to the right.

In cultural landscapes, orchards and fruit trees are a living link to the ways people have used, changed, and interacted with their surroundings over time. When the built environment erodes, remaining fruit trees are often a clue to historians where a house may have stood.

Oregon's newly designated Heritage Trees at the John Quincy Adams (JQA) Young and Elizabeth Constable House in Cedar Mill, provide visitors with the unique opportunity to view a historic house that is still standing next to the remaining fruit trees on the property. An apple, a pear,

and a hickory tree are left from what was once an extensive orchard. What do these fruit trees convey about the people who planted them and the era they took root?

In 2007, Susan Dolan, historical landscape architect with the National Park Service, assessed the JQA Young property in preparation for nominating the house for the National Register of Historic Places. Her observations show how historians utilize fruit trees to build a narrative about the past.

Dolan identified the hickory on the southwest side of the house

as a Shellbark or Kingnut hickory, which is a relatively quick growing Midwestern tree. Dolan reported, "... the nuts are sweet and edible, but I suspect the tree reflects the residents' association with the Midwest or East. The tree was probably a familiar tree that was known to grow quickly, soak up a lot of water (help dry out wet soil conditions with a deep taproot) and create quick shade."

Regarding the pear, Dolan noted that the fruits appear to be of the Bartlett variety, which is naturally early-fruiting and a small-sized tree. The tree has an unusually tall trunk for the period in which it was first

grown, leading her to think that livestock or deer were permitted to graze under the young tree and browse off the young lateral limbs.

For the apple tree, Dolan's description says, "The limbs of the tree are massive." This alerts Dolan that it is a large-sized variety such as Newtown Pippin, Northern Spy or Baldwin. She notes the tree form is 19th-century, and the size of the tree indicates 100-120 years of age (as of 2007), adding "the tree is not low-headed, typical of the 20th-century, and does not have a 20th-century scaffold developed." She could tell the tree received little pruning in its early life. Like the pear, it had indications of animal browsing, possibly from deer, if not livestock.

Susan Dolan's assessment of the three fruit trees supports historical documentation about the JQA Young House. Built circa 1863, the house is consequential for its association with the early growth and community development of Cedar Mill in Washington County. The trees date to the period of significance of the house and are consistent with the types of trees that would be found on an early farm or residential property of the period.

A brief history of the JQA Young House: The Young family, Elam Young, wife Irene, and three sons (James, Daniel and John) came across the Oregon Trail in the late 1840s. The family was present at the Whitman Mission in October of 1847. James was killed in the Tragedy at Waiilatpu. The Young family then made their way to Oregon City and later the Tualatin Valley where Elam took up a claim near present-day Hillsboro.

In 1856 John Quincy Adams Young married Elizabeth Constable, a neighbor, who was a respected midwife in the area. Little more verifiable information has been found about Elizabeth Constable. John and Elizabeth stayed

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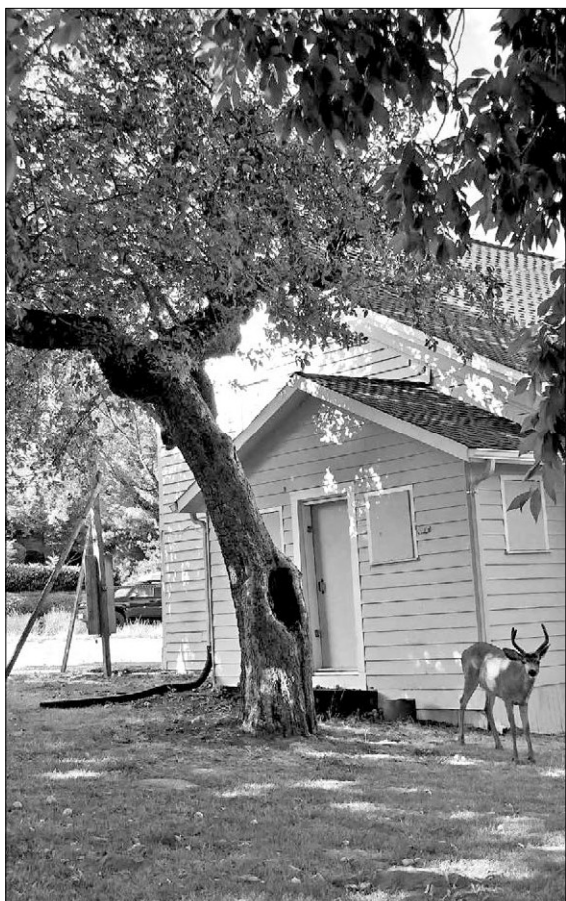
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The Work Behind the Words

The core of the Oregon Historical Marker Program is maintaining the state's inventory of markers. Because they are constructed of wood, the maintenance cycle is constant.

There is an important benefit to a marker's limited lifespan. When a marker begins physically deteriorating, the Historical Marker Committee revisits the interpretive



Arborists have identified the remaining apple tree a Gravenstein.



The Nez Perce marker stands on OR 82 at the western city limits of Enterprise.

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How It's Made: Crafting an Oregon Historical Marker

In 1939, Oregon implemented the Historical Marker Program to chronicle the state's historic and geologic past. Rustic signs routed into Redwood were manufactured and installed by the Department of Transportation Highway Division throughout the 40s, 50s, and 60s. The original markers were a nod towards Oregon's forest industry, using large telephone pole legs.

When the TIC assumed administration of the Historical Marker Program in 1991, the program had been dormant for well over 20 years. Existing markers needed to be refurbished, and new construction techniques were necessary. The Salem town Historical Marker volunteers stepped up with their woodworking and construction skills to keep the underfunded program alive. The volunteers created a standardized marker format, swapped out the telephone poles for pressure treated legs, and turned to Port Orford cedar and later Western Red cedar, when Redwood became difficult to obtain.

This past year, TIC and the Salem town Historical Marker volunteers documented the process of creating a 1,200 lb. sign that stands 9 ft tall in the ground. If you've ever wondered how a rustic Oregon Historical Marker is made, we've condensed multiple layers of coordination between the volunteers, the TIC Sign Crew, and the ODOT Sign Shop, plus

80 hours of craftsmanship into a few key photos!

Many thanks to the Salem town Historical Marker volunteers who have honed every step of this process. We could not maintain the state's inventory of over 100 historical and geological markers, half of which are this rustic style, without their expertise!



1) Wood Prep: Four-inch thick, rough-cut lumber is dried onsite for a year. Planks are planed to consistent 8- and 10-inch widths. Salem town then sands and uses a jig to predrill holes.



2) Routing: Text and the iconic beaver are routed into the boards at the ODOT sign shop.

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on his father's land claim until circa 1863 when they relocated several miles east to Cedar Mill. The precise date of the construction of their house isn't known. We do know it served as the residence of JQA Young family from circa 1863-1874 and then as the first post office and a community store from 1874-1881. It is the oldest remaining historic resource in Cedar Mill and is significant for its associations with the community's development.

There are few remaining structures 150+ years old in the state. When you visit the JQA Young House, consider the proximity and relationship of the trees to the house. They are an example of early home management and food production.

Visit these trees at the JQA Young House located at 12050 NW Cornell Road in Beaverton. Parking is available at the church next door. The site can also be accessed via the Cedar Mill Creek Greenway that features the Sue Conger Boardwalk with views of the Cedar Mill Falls.



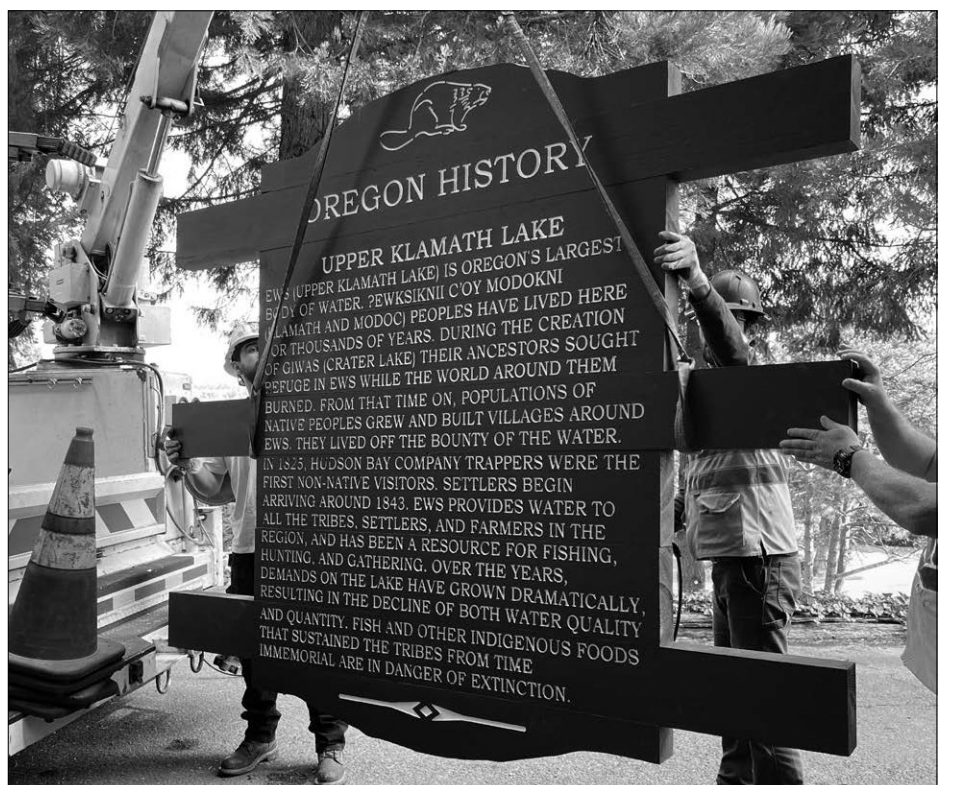
3) Painting: The wood returns to the Salem town shop where volunteers apply 6-8 layers of white paint in the letters and later roll-on Oxford brown paint.



4) Spline Joints: Volunteers place splines between each board to reduce warping as the wood weathers in the elements.



5) Assembly: All 9 boards get cinched together like a puzzle, then fastened with all thread rods.



6) Transport: The TIC Sign Crew picks up the final product from Salem town and assembles the legs during installation.

I Brake for Heritage!

If you're a history lover, you may be able to relate. You're driving one of Oregon's rural highways, enjoying the scenery, perhaps even appreciating a sunny day after a few months

of rain. You see a "Historical Marker Ahead" sign. But where? Which side of the highway? At 65 miles an hour, even with warning, a 9ft tall, 1,200 lb. "beaver board" can pass in a blur.

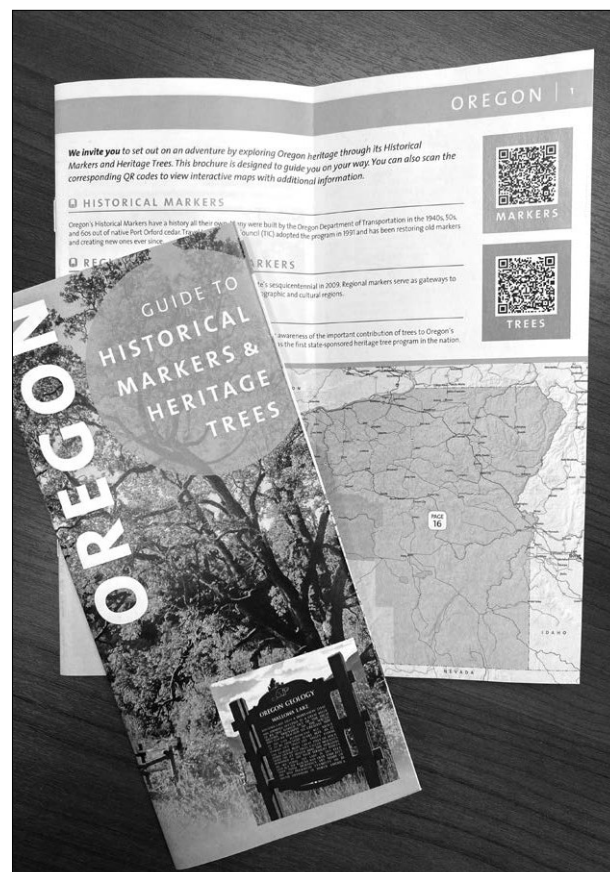
Or perhaps you're a tree lover, excited to see a beautiful natural specimen that also tells a story of Oregon's past. But which trail should you take from the parking lot?

It's TIC's mission to help and inform travelers. The heritage maps previously available on TIC's website were good, but we knew they could be better. Staff have worked hard over the last year to create Google Maps that are easy to use on navigation devices and will guide you directly to the GPS coordinates of the asset. Additional information about the landmark can be found by expanding the map content.

Google Maps of Oregon Heritage Trees and of Historical Markers can be found on TIC's website. Or open the 2025 brochure for an easy scan!



Visit www.oregontic.com to access updated heritage maps.



To request copies of this free publication, email: contact.tic@tic.oregon.gov



Craig Leech of Salem, 2025 Heritage Tree Hero Award Winner.

Heritage Tree Award Winner

The Heritage Tree Hero of the Year Award recognizes individuals and groups who are engaging communities through education about the importance of trees and raising awareness about Oregon's history told through trees and forests.

Congratulations to **Craig Leech** of Salem for receiving a 2025 Heritage Tree Hero of the Year Award!

Craig recently retired from a 40+ year career as a forester, during which he represented Oregon Parks and Recreation Department on the Oregon Heritage Tree Committee for 15 years. Craig stands out for his recent leadership that created a maintenance plan for the Grove of the States, an official state designated Oregon Heritage Grove at the southbound French Prairie Rest Area near Wilsonville. The Grove is the oldest arboretum of state trees in the U.S. with a tree from all 50 states.

From 2022- 2024, Craig volunteered his expertise as a certified arborist to complete a tree condition list, identify missing trees, plant new trees, coordinate structural pruning with the Department of Forestry, re-map the grove, evaluate signage needs, create landscape rings around each asset, and compile historic documents. Craig's efforts culminated in a plan that outlines a roadmap for non-arborists to maintain the health of this historic arboretum, the first in the nation, where visitors can view all 50 official state trees.

Thank you, Craig, for promoting the appreciation of trees and educating the public about the value of heritage trees!

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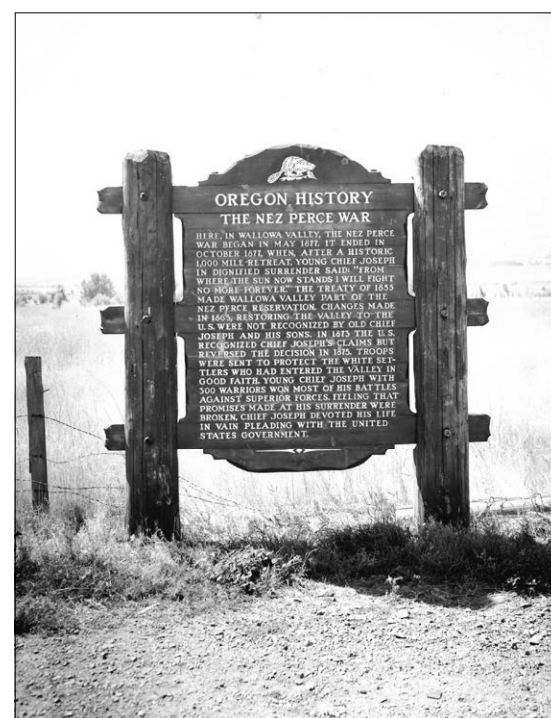
text, seeks emerging research on the topic, and brings in new perspectives to help tell the story. Cultural humility and accuracy are key values of the committee. While prioritizing fact-based narratives, the committee recognizes that dominant culture has long silenced different viewpoints. During the replacement process, the committee consults with tribes, statewide cultural history groups, experts, and local historians to tell a more complete story.

This past year, the program installed the third iteration of the Nez Perce marker in Enterprise. Originally created in 1955, the marker's text evolved in 1999 when descendants from the Joseph Band shifted the narrative away from the Nez Perce War and recentered on the Wallowa Valley as the long-inhabited summer homeland of the Joseph Band. The 1999 iteration of the marker identified increased White settlement due to the discovery of gold in the region as the

impetus for the U.S. government reducing the size the Nez Perce Reservation.

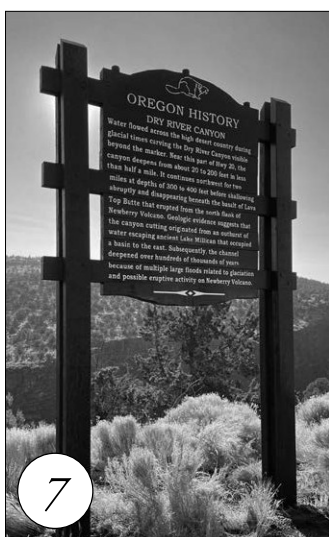
In 2024, a new version of the marker expands on these adjustments to add greater visual representation to this history. The new marker acknowledges the traditional territory of the Joseph Band encompasses much of northeastern Oregon, and a map now shows the dramatic 90% reduction in the size of the Nez Perce Reservation from the Treaty of 1855 to the Treaty of 1863. Joseph and the other chiefs whose land was outside the 1863 boundary never signed the treaty. Importantly, the wording that Chief Joseph "surrendered" has been changed to "negotiated a truce."

Many thanks to Joseph Band elder Charlie Moses who led communications with the board of the Wallowa Homelands, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and Colville Tribes.



Original Nez Perce marker circa 1955.

2024 Heritage Programs Yearbook



1. Mandy Cole, Linn County Museum, Craig Leech, Oregon Heritage Tree Committee & Stacy Whaley, Linn County Parks & Rec address the crowd at the Moyer House Linden/Wisteria Heritage Tree dedication in Brownsville.
2. Heritage Tree Committee Chair Craig Leech speaks with reporter in front of Moyer House Linden/ Wisteria Heritage Tree
3. Giana Bernardini accepts a Heritage Tree Hero Award in Philomath
4. Oregon Heritage Committee Members and Department of Forestry staff attend the Northrup Creek Horse Camp Big Tree Trail Dedication

5. Nancy Broshot accepts a Heritage Tree Hero Award in Oregon City
6. TIC Sign Crew installs new Jesse Applegate historical marker in Yoncalla
7. Updated Dry River Canyon geological marker installed southeast of Bend
8. Heritage Tree Committee Member Nancy Appling-Salucci presents a Heritage Tree Hero Award to Mike Oxendine of Talent
9. Phyllis Reynolds of Portland receives a Maynard Dawson Memorial Award for extraordinary work promoting heritage trees over time.

Heritage Committees

Historical Marker Members:

- Katie Bush
- Kelly Cannon-Miller
- Nancy DeSouza
- Robert Garcia
- Kimberly Gorman
- David-Paul Hedberg
- Sarah Jalving
- Robert Olguin
- Amy Platt
- David Porter (Chair)

Heritage Tree Members:

- Nancy Appling
- John Hamilton
- David-Paul Hedberg (Chair)
- Jennifer Karps
- Kristine McConnell
- Molly McKnight
- Arne Nyberg
- Brittany Oxford
- Kristin Ramstad
- Al Tocchini
- Samantha Wolf

Salemtowne Volunteers:

- (Historical Marker Maintenance)
- Alan Avery (foreman)
- James Childers
- Donald Conrad Jr.
- Jeff Daggioberg
- Richard DuBois
- Stan Gregory
- John Mangini
- Herman Mitzel
- Howard Long

TIC Heritage Program Staff

- Beth Dehn, Heritage and Community Assets Manager
- Jessica Carbone, Executive Assistant
- Deep Roots is published annually. For additional copies, please call 503-378-4508.

The Oregon Historical Marker and Oregon Heritage Tree Programs are administered by the Travel Information Council.

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