

Hood River County History

Hood River County has been populated for thousands of years. Native tribes such as the Wasco and Klickitat fished the rivers and hunted for game in the forests that covered what is now known as Hood River County. Huckleberries, camas, cedar bark and other food and fiber were gathered for use and bartered with other tribes that gathered at nearby Celilo Falls.

Under the Treaty of 1855, tribal members were relocated to reservations but retained the rights to hunt, fish and gather in their usual and accustomed places. Members of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (CTWS) currently harvest spring Chinook salmon from the West Fork Hood River at Punchbowl Falls during the spring and early summer. The CTWS establishes and monitors the fishery. There are also huckleberry fields around Mt. Hood that are reserved for tribal use.

Although Lewis and Clark traveled by Hood River in the early 1800s, the area was not settled until the mid-1850s. Nathaniel Coe was the first European settler and he brought the first fruit trees with him. Logging was an early and important industry; the land cleared



Child rides the tractor as father sprays orchard in Hood River County c. 1930 ~Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society

In the late 1890s, Finnish settlers from North and South Dakota began relocating to the Hood River Valley. They were followed by Japanese immigrants in the early 20th century and Mexican immigrants, beginning in the mid-1930s.

Originally part of Wasco County, Hood River County was established in 1908. The Columbia River Highway was completed in 1922, improving access between Hood River and Portland, as well as points east. Highway 35 (the state's most recently designated National Scenic Byway) was paved in mid-1900s; however wagon trains carrying settlers to the Oregon Territory traveled parts of it as early as the mid-1800s.

Visit the Hood River County History Museum for more information about our county's heritage.

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*Crating apples in Hood River County c. 1910-1919
Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society*

was then planted to crops, primarily apple trees and strawberries. After a devastating freeze in 1919 killed most of the apple trees, farmers started planting the pear trees for which the area is now known.

Resources

Aakki-Daakki to Zoomorphic: An Encyclopedia About Hood River County. J. Patricia Krussow, Editor. 1994

Hood River County History Museum
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