

Discovering Laurel Hill and the Barlow Road

**A Self-Guided Tour
of
Laurel Hill
Devil's Half Acre
Barlow Pass
Pioneer Woman's Grave
Summit Meadows**

**annotated maps, driving and hiking instructions,
historical notes, explanations, pioneer diary entries**

by Jim Tompkins

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Discovering the Barlow Road

Wagons no longer roll across the Barlow Road. The roadbed is no longer maintained for ease of travel. Most of the right-of-way west of the Cascade summit has transferred to private ownership. Only an occasional sign points out what used to be the main arterial for emigrant traffic into the Willamette Valley.

Finding the remnants of the Barlow Road requires a unique knowledge of wagon types, draft animals and road construction. It also requires ideas on how nature, the weather and erosion have affected the land. In areas where man has altered the landscape it takes a good imagination to envision what the Barlow Road looked like.

One of the best places to find remains of the road and to think like a pioneer is a five mile segment of the trail from Devil's Half Acre to Summit Meadows. Using knowledge gained from this pamphlet and following the self-guided tour, any visitor can discover the Barlow Road.

19th Century Transportation

At one time or another a person sitting alongside the Barlow Road could have seen a prairie schooner, freight wagon or stagecoach pulled by teams of oxen, mules or horses. Reenactments in modern Oregon like to feature large Conestoga wagons pulled by beautiful draft horses. But not 150 years ago.

A prairie schooner is a relatively small covered wagon averaging 10-12 feet long and 4-5 feet wide. Most were converted farm wagons, although a few individuals such as freed slave Hiram Young and the Studebaker brothers made a living crafting wagons in Missouri for the Oregon Trail.

Older and larger Conestogas were built for the freight trade on the National Road or Santa Fe Trail. Some early pioneers tried these large wagons on the Oregon Trail but soon discovered they were too heavy for their teams to cross the Rockies.

Even larger freight wagons were developed for the later-day improved Oregon Trail pulled by extremely long teams (such as the 20 mule team Borax wagons). The first semi-trailers were double wagons pulled over the prairies. As mountain roads were improved with bridges and corduroy, freighters went over hilly regions such as Oregon's Blue Mountains. The Barlow Road saw few, if any, freighters, because by the last quarter of the 19th century steamboats plied the Columbia and Willamette Rivers carrying freight cheaper. Even the railroad portages at the Cascades and Willamette Falls eventually had locks.

A development in transportation that greatly affected the Barlow Road was the stagecoach. Pulled by teams of horses, having jointed tongues and leather strap suspension, stagecoaches made ease of the old wagon roads. This same technology also called for changes in road construction.

Trails and Roads

Pathways, whether they be narrow enough for foot and wild animal travel or wide enough for side by side wagon traffic are called trails if they simply evolved through use. Pathways are called roads if they were planned and constructed. A well used trail can be in better condition than a poorly conceived or maintained road.

The Oregon Trail was a wagon path that followed the routes of mountain men and fur traders, who followed paths used by Indians, who followed paths created by animals such as deer or buffalo who were looking for food or water.

The Barlow Road was created by an act of the Oregon Provisional Government passed in December of 1845. It was called the Mt. Hood Toll Road. The idea was Sam Barlow's. Barlow, Joel Palmer and others had followed Indian and animal trails and created a trail of their own over the south side of Mt. Hood that fall. They had arrived at The Dalles too late in a very busy year and found no transportation available down the Columbia River. They wintered at the Foster Farm in Eagle Creek and later in Oregon City. There the idea to build the road was conceived.

The road was constructed in the summer of 1846 with a small crew of men, tools, and \$4000 from Philip Foster. Barlow's road opened for the 1846 migration. It was improved each summer, and a toll was collected every year until 1918.

There were three more flurries of road building in Oregon: the stage roads of the 1850-60s, the first paved roads of the 1920s, and the freeway boom of the 1950-60s. On Laurel Hill it is possible to see at one place the Barlow Road, the Territorial Stage Road, the Mt. Hood Loop Highway (1925 original) and the modern US 26.

Early Road Construction

When Barlow and Foster built the original Mt. Hood Toll Road in 1846 a crew of men used axes, saws and fire to clear the route. They went around large obstacles. They did not cut or fill. They did not use shovels. The original cost was \$4000, but workers had to be paid on credit as this proved inadequate. The Barlow Road was not a money making venture.

Since wagons of that era did not have springs or suspension and were probably overloaded, they were subject to sideling - tipping over caused by leaning sideways. With its single long tongue and tall wheels that touch the wagon bed, a wagon could not take sharp turns. Hence road construction crews tried to stay along ridge lines (such as Devil's Backbone) or along river bottoms (such as the Sandy River), which required numerous river or creek crossings. When it was necessary to go up or down hill, the transit was straight up or down - no switchbacks.

Steep uphill required double or triple teaming, and steep downhill required lowering wagons by rope or cable. Remnants of the road are more visible on hills. Uphills show double or triple tracks as wagon trains slowed down and ascended hills side by side, and deep ruts are cut into hillsides caused by slipping wheels. Downhills are even more dramatic as sliding wagons, leaning on the brakes and dragging trees as anchors disrupted boulders, creating chutes. Lowering wagons left rope burns on tree trunks.

The Territorial Government authorized building stage roads across Oregon. One of the last to be completed was the link over Mt. Hood. The section of road that made the Barlow Road one-way was the last link - Laurel Hill. When the stage road over Laurel Hill was completed in 1866, the last of the infamous chutes was abandoned, and the Barlow became two-way.

Stagecoaches had leather straps for suspension connecting the coach to the frame, allowing for a relatively more comfortable ride and preventing sideling. Stagecoach tongues were jointed in the middle to prevent jackknifing. Since the animals did not have to be all going the same direction, they could take sharper corners. In addition road crews used TNT (an invention introduced from the California gold fields) to blast away rocks and horse-drawn shovels to remove debris (neither of which were used by Barlow). Roads were now cut into the sides of hills and frequent switchbacks made uphill travel less strenuous.

At Barlow Pass one can see ruts caused by wagons going straight downhill and cuts made for stagecoaches as they zig-zagged across the old wagon road.

The Barlow Road was personally supervised by Sam Barlow and one or more of his sons for only a few years before they lost interest in the venture. Philip Foster kept an active interest until his \$4000 note was repaid. The toll concession was sold several times over the next 60 some years. The original toll gate at the Strickland Place on Gate Creek near Wamic on the eastern side was replaced by one at Francis Revenue's farm on the Sandy River in 1853. It was moved to the Summit House at Summit Meadows in 1866. It was then moved to Meeting Rock at Two-Mile Camp in 1871. In 1883 it was moved again, two miles down to the site just east of Rhododendron where a replica of that last toll gate is found today. Toll was collected until 1918.

The right-of-way was sold by the Barlow family in 1918 to Henry Wemme. His purpose was to promote Mt. Hood, and Summit Meadows in particular, as a summer recreation area. Wemme's death a year later transferred the property to the state of Oregon. When construction began of the Mt. Hood Loop Highway in 1920, the second paved highway in Oregon to complement the Columbia Gorge Highway, variances to Barlow's route made some changes to the map. The decision to have its terminus at Hood River vacated the old road in Wasco County for the US Forest Service. Use of the Brightwood Loop (opened by Barlow Roaders as the South Alternate in 1847) left Clackamas County with Barlow Trail Road (the name Barlow Road was already applied to a road in the town of Barlow, near Canby, where the Barlow family settled). The choice of the Cherryville route (from Sandy to Brightwood) cut off Devil's Backbone and the soon-to-be ghost town of Marmot.

Extensive use of dynamite and cutting and filling techniques left huge scars, gravel pits and rock fills. Later freeway building made the product of the technology of the 1920s look like bicycle paths.

The Barlow Road

Self-Guided Tours

- The self-guided tours start at Rhododendron on US 26.
- Take advantage of the drive up to Rhododendron to have someone read aloud the introductory pages of this pamphlet.
- Letters in brackets { } are keyed to the maps.

Getting to Mt. Hood

- Mt. Hood is located on US 26 about 1 hour east of Oregon City.
- The easiest route from Oregon City is to take I 205 north to exit 12 which is signed Clackamas, Estacada Hwy 212 & 224.
- Proceed east through Damascus and Boring until you pick up highway US 26.
- Proceed on US 26 through Sandy, Brightwood, Wemme, Welches, ZigZag and Rhododendron. (The US Forest Service and Mt. Hood Chamber of Commerce operate and maintain an information center in Brightwood that is worth the stop.)

Part I -- The Laurel Hill Segment

**** Use Map 1 - Laurel Hill ****

- Start in Rhododendron and drive .5 mile to the Tollgate Replica immediately after the Tollgate Campground entrance. It is marked with a small brown and white Oregon Trail Site road sign. Pull into the parking lot and look at the replica.

{A} - Tollgate #5

This was the fifth and final location of the Barlow Road tollgate. It was located here from 1883 to 1918. Emigrants had to pay a toll to use the Barlow Road. The original cost was \$5 a wagon, with lesser costs for smaller vehicles, foot traffic and animals. For a brief time it was lowered to \$2.50. In 1903 the first automobile passed this gate going up to Government Camp. It returned with 50 pounds of snow.

Notice - the three maple trees planted here in the 1880s by the gatekeeper. The two on the left, parallel to highway 26, framed the old toll house.

In the words of the pioneers - *"It looked like any farm gate ... but it was locked and there was no way around it. We paid the 25 cents to pass through."* Lottie Maybee Morris, 1900.

- Drive 3.4 miles to a gravel road on the right labeled Bridle Path (FS Trail 795).
- On the gravel road, less than .1 mile from the highway, the Bridle Path crosses the gravel road.

{B} - Tollgate #4 and Meeting Rocks

This is where the Stagecoach Road rejoined the original Barlow Road. This is the approximate site of tollgate #4. The area was known as Meeting Rocks. This is where wagon trains regrouped after coming down Laurel Hill. A log cabin called Mountain House was built here to accommodate the travelers.

In the words of the pioneers - *"... all of a sudden to the Toll Gate. Had a small store here for the accommodation of emigrants. Came on down into a little glade, where we found some grass and camped for dinner. Here we found the red-and-white clover, dandelion, dewberries, strawberries, all growing."* Frank Stevens, July 5, 1881.

The Bridle Path (FS Trail 795) continues east from this point and can be seen crossing US 26. It continues 2.6 miles over almost the entire length of Laurel Hill.

{C} - Territorial Stage Road

The early governments of Oregon, starting with the Provisional Government of Oregon City in 1844 and continuing through the Territorial and State governments, all passed vital legislation creating roads. Cities such as West Linn, Canby and Salem all have Territorial Roads. Existing roads such as Boone's Ferry Road and the Barlow Road were improved by Territorial government legislation, despite the fact that some were not completed until after statehood.

In 1866 the improvements to the Barlow Road were completed over Laurel Hill and the road opened for two-way travel over its entire 130 mile length. Diminishing numbers of covered wagons now competed with faster stagecoaches. (It should be noted that at least one wagon, as early as 1848, went east on the Barlow Road, actually going up Laurel Hill, as it returned to the United States - "go backs" as they were called.)

Despite its improvements Laurel Hill was still steep and rough going.

In the words of the pioneers - *"Can you imagine what the mountain is like. It is one mile long and that steep that we keep the hind wheels locked, and the mules holding back their best all the time. Heavy timber and quick turns to make with four mules. While descending this hill, or mountain, Grandma was sitting in the back seat of the buggy, she could not hold herself in but fell forward and struck the ground head first. She was hurt but little by the fall. We then put her in my wagon in the bottom of the box. Nooned at the Mountain House, just at the foot of Laurel Hill."* SB Eakin, August 19, 1866.

- Proceed down the gravel road to the entrance of a large gravel pit used to construct the modern US 26. Turn around to go back. The gravel road goes another .5 mile beyond but driving the road is not recommended. A small meadow is at the base of chutes #4&5 and can be seen from US 26.
- Go back to US 26, turn right (east) and proceed east .5 mile. Stay in the right lane and pull off the road just past the deep cut. There is a wide area to pull off.
- Look straight ahead at the face of Laurel Hill. You will notice different colorings of green and brown. The large S shaped brown swath that goes from the top of the ridge all the way down to the highway is chute #4. Carefully get out of your vehicle and look over the guard rail. You can see a small green meadow at the base of chutes #4&5. It is on the road that goes beyond the Bridle Path and large gravel pit.

{D} - Chute #4

The descent over Laurel Hill was so steep and rugged that it destroyed the roadbed within a few years. Rocks were dislodged by wagon wheels with their brakes set and trees up to 100 feet tall (long) being dragged as anchors. Any soil left after the first year's use would be eroded by the next winter's rain and snow melt run-off. As a chute took on the appearance of a gravel pile, it became necessary to move on to a new location farther west.

Be it known - there are other theories about travel over Laurel Hill. One theory holds that this chute is the one and only chute used from 1846 to 1866. It claims that the chute well marked by the Forest Service (chute #3) is merely a gravel pit used by road crews in the 1920s. Suffice to say there is enough evidence (in trails along Camp Creek that would not be there if #4 was the only chute and chute #2 that is inconveniently located to be a gravel pit) to convince this author of the existence of multiple chutes.

- It is possible to pull off the road where chute #4 is cut by US 26, but be very careful as the highway is always dangerous. It is believed that chute #5 crossed in the creek bed left of chute #4 and used the same meadow as chute #4.
- Proceed about 1.5 miles east to the Oregon Heritage sign (on the right) for Laurel Hill. As you round the last turn before the sign the chute is visible on the hillside straight ahead.
- Park carefully and off the road next to the large wooden sign. Plan on a 30-60 minute stay.

{E} - The Laurel Hill Hiking Segment
**** Use Map 2 - Chute #3 ****

- Go up the steps (FS Trail 795a) to the 1925 Mt. Hood Loop Highway.
- Go right and walk about 100 feet east to the signs marking chute #3. Read the signage.
- Proceed another 400 feet east to the new hiking trail (FS Trail 795a) that will take you to the top of the chute. It is about an 8-15 minute hike and is well worth the effort.

{F} - Chute #3

Chute #3 was probably in use during the heaviest years of traffic along the Barlow Road, 1853-56. Only the top half of the chute remains due to 1920s road construction. Several interesting sites are visible along the new FS hiking trail.

Try to find - where the stagecoach road crosses the hiking trail. A switchback is visible within the first 100 feet of the trail. At the point where the hiking trail makes a sharp left turn a tree is marked with a small sign reading (incorrectly) "Original Wagon Road."

Try to find - the Barlow Road approaching the chute. It comes in from your right as you reach the highest point on the hiking trail. If you were to follow it east about a mile you would cross the old Loop Highway and eventually come to the new US 26.

Try to find - where the trail parallel to chute #3 starts down the side of Laurel Hill. It is blocked by a large rock as the Forest Service discourages its use as hazardous. (The Forest Service also discourages walking down the chute.) It is believed that as most of the men were lowering the wagons down the chute, by hand, the remainder of the party and the animals were going down this equally steep side trail.

Notice - as you walk down towards the top of chute #3 the absence of large, old trees. The pioneers cut down these trees and dragged them as anchors.

Notice - as you stand at the top of the chute (in amazement that anyone would push their wagon over that precipice) the dead stumps lining the sides of the chute. These stumps (and others that have long since been removed for museums and private collections) at one time proudly showed rope burns caused by wrapping ropes around these trees to lower wagons down the chute. Most ropes or chains used by pioneers were no longer than 100 feet in length. It was necessary to lower the wagons down in short segments, probably zigzagging the chute, leaving its uneven appearance. (The theory that says all you are looking at is a gravel pit claims the rope burns were caused by cables used to pull equipment up to the top of the pit.)

In the words of the pioneers - *"It is something more than half a mile long, very rocky, rocky all the way, quite steep, winding, sideling, deep down, slippery and muddy ... a very difficult place to drive, also dangerous .. smelling the carrion, I, as others, holding my nose."* Amelia Stewart Knight, 1853.

"This is a very rainy morning, the roads are very bad, but no time to be lost fearful of being caught in a snowstorm, started early, cleared up a little about noon, got down Laurel Hill about dark, this is the roughest and steepest hill on the road, got down all safe by cutting and chaining a tree behind the wagon 100 ft. long." Elizabeth Goltra, September 24, 1853.

When you return to the base of the chute, you are standing on the old Loop Highway. As it proceeds uphill towards Government Camp it makes a broad S across this section of Laurel Hill {see map 2}. Chute #2 is located entirely below the southern most section of the highway (about where you can best hear Yocum Falls). It is not visible from any highway and is time consuming and hazardous to find.

Chute #2

Chute #2 was probably used from 1849 to 1852. It is the steepest chute and the only one left intact as all road building efforts since 1852 were north of it.

In the words of the pioneers - *"Oh! what a hill."* Charles A. Brandt, September 22, 1851.

"Today we passed a number of trees that were cut down, leaving a stump thirty to thirty-five feet high, and wondered how the person ever managed to fell the tree and leave such a high stump. But all was made plain when we were told that the trees were cut down when the snow was on the ground." EW Conyers, September 20, 1852.

"Saw the clouds far below us this morning, which was something new as well as grand." John Tully Kerns, September 29, 1852.

"Today worse Road than we have had yet six Months to day we started" Rev. Jesse Moreland, September 30, 1852.

- Return to your vehicle and continue east on US 26.
- Drive about .5 mile to the deep cut. Either park off the side of the road or up at the Mirror Lake Sno-Park area and walk back down to where the modern highway cuts the old Highway.

{G} - Roads Crossing and Chute #1

At this location it is possible to see four roads in one place.

Notice - the Barlow Road (1849-1866) crossing at the highest point of the cut. There used to be a dip here but it was destroyed in 1959. The Barlow Road went straight across.

Notice - the 1925-59 Mt. Hood Loop Highway making a switchback towards you as it starts its descent of Laurel Hill.

Notice - a portion of the 1866-1924 stagecoach road just below the edge of the eastern portion of the old Loop Highway.

Notice - about half way between the deep cut and Mirror Lake Sno-Park is the approximate location of chute #1. The very top of the chute is barely visible where the inside guard rail ends.

In the words of the pioneers - *We rolled down "like shot off a shovel."* William Barlow, 1845.

"We descended it in three benches the last is much the longest & most Dificult" Isom Cranfill, September 13, 1847.

"This is the worse hill on the road from the States to Oregon" Absolom Harden, September 20, 1847.

- Drive on 1 mile to the parking area for Ski Bowl West. Park on the far north side of the lot opposite the area with no buildings and a view of the Alpine Slide.
- Walk into the wooded area between the parking area and modern US 26.

{H} - Ski Bowl West

Oregon's largest night skiing area has become popular with the addition of the Alpine Slides, cross country bicycling and bungee jumping. The Barlow Road pioneers had to settle for crossing what would later be a parking lot and starting their descent down Laurel Hill (probably just as exciting). Since Laurel Hill is a pluton or shoulder of lava extending out from Mt. Hood, it is not necessary to ascend it before descending. The pioneers just drove out onto it and the only way out was down.

Try to find - the ruts of the trail in the space between the parking area and modern US 26.

- From Ski Bowl West, return to US 26 and turn right (east). Drive .2 mile and stop at the meadow that crosses the highway. The Barlow Road is coming down the hill toward you from the left. These are considered pristine ruts.
- Continue uphill on US 26 to the Summit Rest Area (on the left).

Part II -- Barlow Pass to Pioneer Woman's Grave

**** Use Map #4 - Barlow Pass to Summit Meadows ****

- Start at the Summit Rest Area on US 26 at Government Camp.
- Proceed on US 26 past Government Camp 2 miles.
- At the intersection of US 26 and OR 35 (marked Hood River / Bend exits), exit right onto OR 35 towards Hood River.

****If you have more than one vehicle:** Immediately after the state highway gravel pile, turn right onto FS 3531 (it's marked Pioneer Woman's Grave). Just past the Pioneer Woman's Grave marker is a small parking area. Leave one car. This will be the end of the walking segment. Proceed on FS 3531 uphill to the Barlow Pass parking area (2 miles). Just past the parking area is FS 3530 (large colored sign locating Barlow Road).

****If you have only one vehicle:** Stay on OR 35 up hill 2.5 miles to Barlow Pass SnoPark exit (FS 3531). Turn right on FS 3531 and proceed to FS 3530. A large colored sign locating Barlow Road is on your left (you see the back side first).

The Devil's Half Acre Segment

** Note{This is on a dirt and gravel road requiring front wheel drive or four wheel drive vehicles with good ground clearance. You may wish to go straight to the Grave Trail segment.}

- Drive 1 mile down FS 3530 to the large clearing.
- Continue on FS 3530 to the sign for Devil's Half Acre campground. Read the interpretive sign about how Barlow cleared the area. The road above and below this point is the Barlow Road.
- Drive up to Devil's Half Acre campground.

{I} - Devil's Half Acre

The clearing across the road from the campground was created by fire by the Barlow sons. Either the Devils's Half Acre Meadow or the Deadening was probably the site of Fort Deposit. At this point in 1845 the Barlow party ran out of Indian trails to follow. Joel Palmer was dispatched to the snowfield on Mt. Hood that bears his name today to survey a route to the Willamette Valley. He saw the Sandy River route but from his vantage point could not see the steepness of Laurel Hill. When Palmer returned from his mountain climbing, it was determined that it was too late to try to send wagons on to the valley that year as the route needed to be blazed and cut. Most emigrant wagons were sent back to The Dalles, three men blazed the trail and the remaining supplies were left here at Fort Deposit to be guarded by two boys.

Try to find - the ruts created by the Barlow Road as it cuts across the wildflower-filled upper meadow. The Barlow Road follows the hiking trail leading out of the meadow.

In the words of the pioneers - "*these Kaskade Mountains is a good place to loose cattle in.*" Benjamin Cleaver, September 11, 1848.

"This morning 8 of our cattle were gone, one of ours and 7 of Mr. Swick's, found all except one." Elizabeth Goltra, September 22, 1853.

- Drive back up FS 3530 towards Barlow Pass .8 miles from intersection with Devil's Half Acre Campground road.
- Stop 750 feet below Barlow Pass where the hiking trail crosses.

{J} - Devil's Climb

The hiking trail following the Barlow Road can be seen crossing the FS road. This is the stagecoach road crossing diagonally.

Notice - the switchback of the stagecoach road just below the FS road.

Notice - straight ahead where the FS road has cut the stagecoach road on the uphill side.

Try to find - where the wagon road may have cut the FS road as it climbed out of Barlow Creek. It is probably a little lower than the stagecoach road or possibly destroyed by the stagecoach road.

In the words of the pioneers - "*Desperate bad beyond Discription.*" Isom Cranfill, 1847.

The Grave Trail Segment.

- Start at Barlow Pass and proceed down to Pioneer Woman's Grave.

*** If you left a car at the Pioneer Woman's Grave then continue on to the walking segment*

*** If you have a driver who doesn't wish to walk have him/her drive down FS 3531 to Pioneer Woman's Grave parking area and meet the walkers in approx 30-45 minutes.*

*** If all participants are walkers you have two options:*

- all participants walk to Pioneer Woman's Grave and send one walker back for the car.
- walk about 100 feet down to view wagon ruts {**K**}. Return to your car and drive to Pioneer Woman's Grave. Walk up from Pioneer Woman's Grave to a rock wall just past the creek {**L, M, N**}.

- Walk the Grave Trail from Barlow Pass to Pioneer Woman's Grave.

{**K**} - Barlow Pass and Grave Trail

This is the highest point on the Barlow Road. It is the county line between Wasco County and Clackamas County. The area is used in the winter as a SnoPark and head of a cross country ski trail.

Notice - where the Barlow Road crosses FS Road 3531 (the old Highway 35). The Pacific Crest Trail follows the crest of the summit here and can be seen just a few feet east of the parking lot.

Notice - about 100 feet west of the parking lot on what is called the Grave Trail the ruts of the original wagon road proceeding straight downhill as the trail follows the stagecoach road to the left. The wagon route is marked.

Continuing down the stagecoach road you come to the first two switchbacks.

Notice - the wagon road crosses between the two and is marked, if you look back uphill.

Notice - scars on trees at the switchbacks caused by stagecoach wheels hitting trees at the turns. They are at ground level.

Notice - scars on trees caused by blazes made to mark the trail. They are diamond shaped made by one cut down and one cut up. They are usually about 5-6 feet above ground.

In the words of the pioneers - *"The road is very rough today over roots and rocks winding its way through dense timber, passed the summit of the mountains today and camped on a fine creek."* Elizabeth Goltra, September 22, 1853.

{**L**} - Rock Wall

Just after the wagon road rejoins the stage road and just before the Grave Trail crosses a creek is a rock wall. It was created by pioneers, probably children, moving rocks that had rolled into the path onto the side of the trail.

Notice - scars and blazes on the nearby trees in the vicinity of the rock wall.

{M} - Deep Swale

When the hiking trail crosses the creek it leaves the old path and parallels it to the north. The trail is particularly visible in the next 100 feet but can be traced all the way into the next meadow.

Notice - the deep swale, up to five feet deep, caused by runoff from the creek during high water. (A swale is a rut that has been enhanced or deepened by weather.)

Notice - as you enter the meadow you are crossing the ruts.

{N} - Pioneer Woman's Meadow

Alpine meadows along the Barlow Road (Palmateer, Devil's Half Acre, Pioneer Woman's, Summit, etc.) all share an interesting characteristic. The trail itself will stick to the northern edge because it is the sunny, dry side. The meadow itself is too valuable for grass and wild strawberries for the trail to cross it, and any graves will be found on the south side. This is true for the Pioneer Woman's Meadow.

Try to find - the trail as it skirts the north edge of the meadow.

Notice - the grave was discovered on the south edge of the meadow.

In the words of the pioneers - *"To make wild strawberry dumplings. Wet up some light dough and roll it out with a bottle. Spread the berries over it and roll it up in a cloth and boil it. Make a cup full of sauce with the juice of the berries and a little sugar and nutmeg. Serve the sauce over the dumplings."* Mary Powers, 1856.

- Read the signage at the Pioneer Woman's Grave.
- Walk west down road FS 3531 approx. 1000 feet.
- Cross the Salmon River and immediately take a small trail off the right side of the road to view the river crossing ruts.

{O} - Salmon River Crossing

River crossings, even rivers as small as a creek, take on a particular personality. Since wagons slide down and are dragged up hills they leave heavier ruts. Since going up hill is a slow process, wagons will go side by side whenever possible.

Try to find - the ruts leading down into the river, they are usually only visible during dry weather and in early morning or evening shadows. There is a spring running down one rut.

Notice - the extremely steep uphill climb and rock wall in the ruts closest to the highway.

Try to find - the two other parallel set of ruts to the north.

- Retrieve your vehicles.

The Summit Meadows Segment

- Drive down FS 3531 .3 mile to OR 35.
- Turn left (west) on OR 35.
- Drive through the intersection onto US 26 .
- Proceed 1.5 miles (use left lane at top of hill) to Trillium Lake exit .
- Turn left (south) onto FS 2656 (Trillium Lake Road).
- Proceed .5 mile to FS 131 (road to Still Creek campground).
- Turn right (west) on FS 131.
- Proceed .5 mile to Summit Meadows graves parking

{P} - Summit Meadows

Sometimes called Summit Prairie because of its size, Summit Meadows has a beautiful view of Mt. Hood. Pioneers usually spent a rest day here because of the abundant grass and the need to prepare for the descent of Laurel Hill coming up in the next day or two.

The trail crosses to the far north of the largest meadow. In later years the trail crossed the meadow here on a corduroy road.

Notice - the graves in the small graveyard. The one on the left is unidentified. The one in the middle used to read P. Vickers (Perry Vickers was the toll gate keeper from 1866 to 1870). The one on the right is Baby Barclay and the stone carver was obviously inexperienced.

Try to find - the grave of Baby Morgan. It is about 50 feet west of the others. There is a memorial on a large rock explaining her demise. Her mother's grave can be found at Independence Rock in Wyoming.

In the words of the pioneers - *"Reached Summit Prairie about 9 o'clock and camped for the day, found good grass 1 1/2 miles from the road {probably what is now Trillium Lake}" Elizabeth Goltra, September 23, 1853.*

"We had left one wagon and team, and my two mares on the summit prairie, where there was what seemed good grass, with two boys to bring them on when the rain ceased, but on the summit the rain turned to snow, and our two mares and our entire stock left there perished." Rev. Neil Johnson, September, 1851.

"Boil an antiquated ham bone. Add to the liquid the few scrapings from the dough pan in which you mixed the biscuit from your last measure of flour, which by now will be musty and sour. If you have no bone, thicken some water from flour shaken from a remaining flour sack" Abigail Jane Scott (Duniway), 1852.

- Walk about 500 feet west on Perry Vickers Road (FS 131), pass Chimney Rock Road and observe rocks with graffiti on the right.

{Q} - Summit House, Rock Work and Graffiti

When Perry Vickers was gate keeper at Summit Meadows his cabin was the toll house. The trail crosses from northeast to southwest at this point. Later when the area became a popular summer recreation area a large wooden teepee called Summit House was constructed here for the tourists.

Notice - that almost every large rock near the road has graffiti carved into it, mostly from the early 1900s, including one hidden under the branches of a huge fir tree.

Try to find - the rock carved J. Pawson 48-9-50-1-2-3-. It is the road commissioners rock as Mr. Pawson led the crew that improved the road from 1848 to 1853.

Try to find - the ruts of the Barlow Road as it crosses just east of the graffiti rocks. Find the rock that was scarred by metal wagon wheels (closest to the FS road).

Try to find - the circular impression of the large wooden teepee in the middle of the large clearing.

Try to find - the rectangular rock outline of Perry Vickers toll house.

- Drive on Perry Vickers Road (FS 131) through Still Creek campground.
- At the last campsite (#27, camp host) turn left and start back down.
- Stop at the information panel on the right side (day use only use area) opposite the campsite #1.

{R} - Still Creek Campground

The current Forest Service campground straddles the Barlow Road. The trail exits the campground at camp site #1. There are several interesting sites here. The hiking and cross country ski trail that starts here and proceeds to Government Camp is the Barlow Road. About 50 feet north of the Barlow Road is the remains of Swim, a 1920s era swimming pool fed by warm springs on Still Creek.

Notice - the Barlow Road as it goes west of campsite #1 to Government Camp.

Notice - the foundation of the old lodge at Swim and the cement walls of the old pool at Swim.

Try to find - the wagon tongue grave marker attached to a tree between the lodge remains and the pool.

- Circle the camp ground and exit to US 26.
- Turn left (west) on US 26 and proceed into Government Camp.
- Exit at the Summit Rest Area.

Government Camp

**** Use Map 3 - Government Camp**

- Drive down the old Loop Highway.
- Government Camp offers a number of visitor and tourist services.
- Stop at the Government Camp Oregon Trail kiosk (uphill from Huckleberry Inn) and adjoining plaques honoring Sam and Suzannah Barlow.

Kiwanis Camp Road

- Drive to the very bottom of Laurel Hill (opposite the Bridle Path at site {B}) to Kiwanis Camp Road 39 (FS 2639).
- Exit right and drive 2.2 miles to the end of the road. There is a large gravel pit used to construct the road and the trailhead for the trail to Little Zigzag Falls (a beautiful .5 mile walk).
- Return to US 26 and home.

Kiwanis Camp Road

This road is a remnant of the Mt. Hood Loop Highway which opened in 1925. The large gravel pit is evidence of the road building techniques of the day. Modern environmental laws require such sources of gravel be hidden from view. If you were to follow the old roadbed beyond the barriers, you would join the modern US 26 just across from the Oregon Heritage sign {E}.

Notice - the bridge construction, switchbacks and former public camping areas typical of the old 1920s Mt. Hood Loop Highway.

In the words of the pioneers - *“About the middle of the afternoon the Captain rides to head of train and orders to turn out and camp at the first place available. We soon find a suitable place, camp and another is added to our number. Mrs. Hutchinson has a fine boy.”* George Miller West, 1853.

“Do not like Oregon yet, so far.” Elizabeth Goltra, September 28, 1853.

Return Trip To Oregon City

- If you wish to return to Oregon City the way you came up the mountain then proceed to US 26, turn right (west or downhill) and drive through Rhododendron, Welches and Sandy.
- In Sandy a scenic detour includes the Jonsrud Viewpoint. At the west end of Sandy the brown and white Oregon Trail markers guide you to Bluff Road. Turn right and proceed to Jonsrud Viewpoint where you can see Devil's Backbone and the Sandy River Crossing. Read the signage.
- West of Sandy look for the exit to Oregon City labeled Boring - Oregon City. (Not a description of Oregon City but the name of a town.)
- Stay on Hwy 212 through Boring and Damascus to I-205 then proceed south to Oregon City or north to Portland.

In the words of the pioneers - *“Rations grew shorter and shorter. One meal was prepared by boiling an antiquated ham bone and adding to the liquid in which it was boiled the few scrapings from the dough pan in which the biscuit from our last measure of flour - which, by the way, was both musty and sour - had been mixed. We still had coffee and by making a huge pot of this fragrant beverage, we gathered round the crackling campfire - our last in the Cascade Mountains - and, sipping the nectar from rusty cups and eating salal berries gathered during the day, pitied folks who had no coffee.”* Catherine Amanda (Kit) Scott, age 13, 1852.

Alternate Return Trip Following the Barlow Road

- If you wish to follow the route of the Oregon Trail on into Oregon City, it is marked with brown and white “Route of the Oregon Trail - Barlow Road Route” signs.
- The first sign is in Rhododendron and steers you right onto Arlie Mitchell Road and Mountain Drive. Mountain Drive is a rutted dirt road and can be by-passed by continuing on US 26 to Zigzag and turning right onto Lolo Pass Road. You will see the Oregon Trail sign where Mountain drive rejoins. Just past Mountain Drive is what looks like a driveway approaching from the right. This is the Barlow Road descending to the Sandy River Crossing on your left. About .5 mile ahead turn left on Barlow Trail Road.
- Drive on Barlow Trail Road 5+ miles past Brightwood Bridge, to where it joins with Marmot Road. This is the north original Barlow Road.
- Drive all of Marmot Road. You will pass a large rock. This is the location of Rock Corral. The large yellow house on the hill used to be a hotel halfway between Portland and Summit Meadows. Just as you reach the top of the ridge, you pass through an area lined by poplar trees and a red Hawthorne (and a sign that says Audubon). This is the site of the ghost town of Marmot. The ridge is Devil’s Backbone.
- Marmot Road joins Ten Eyck Road just before crossing the Sandy River. The site of the second tollgate at Francis Revenue’s was just down stream from here and the steep climb into Sandy was Sandy Ridge, a triple team climb.
- Follow Highway 211 from Sandy to Eagle Creek where Philip Foster’s farm is recreated. Follow the signs back into Oregon City.

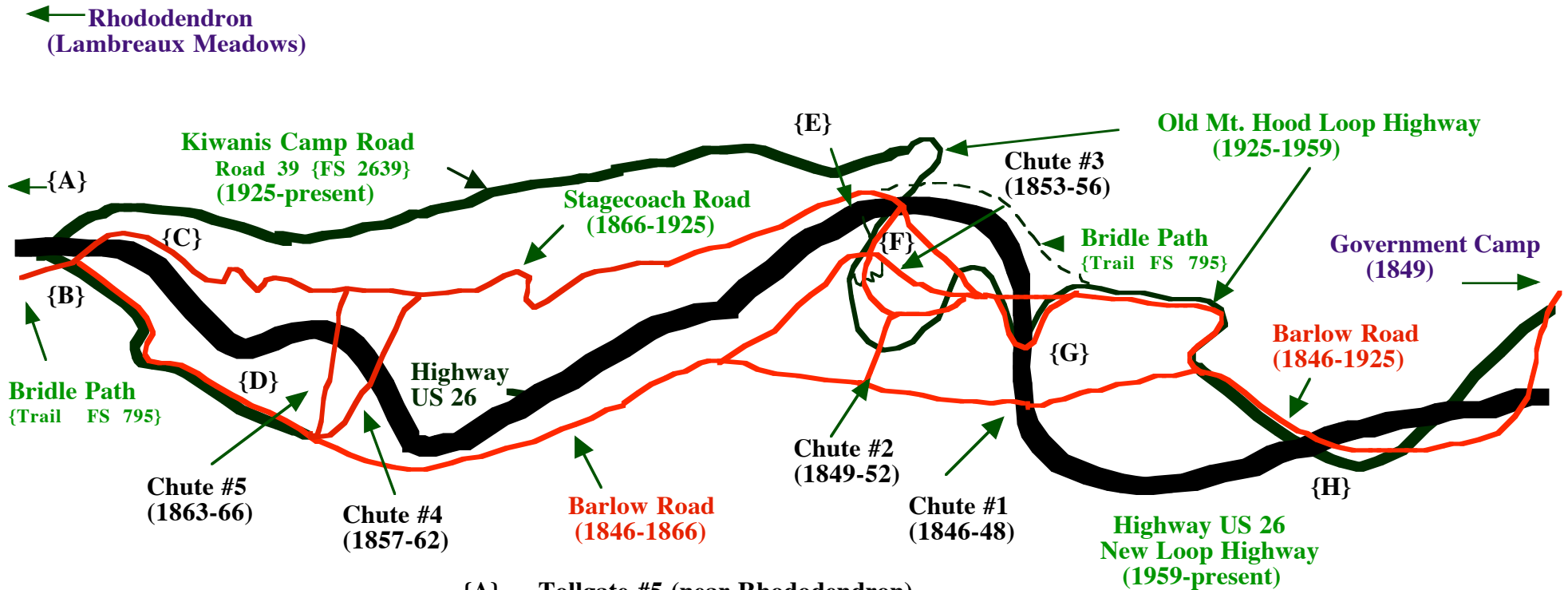
Jim Tompkins was a junior high school teacher for the Gresham-Barlow School District and is a part time instructor for Clackamas Community College. He has advanced degrees in Oregon History and was named the 1990 Oregon DAR History Teacher of the Year. He is an Oregon Trail Foundation Trustee. He is active with the Oregon-California Trails Association as a preservation officer for the Barlow Road and was historian to the Oregon Trail Pageant. He has written other four books of the Oregon Trail and Oregon City, a junior high school textbook about the Oregon Trail, a history of Oregon City, as well as professional journal articles about the Oregon Trail and the system of Land Claims in Oregon. His article “Law of the Land” won the *Overland Journal* award for best article of 2002.

Guided tours of the Barlow Road are available by the author.
He may be contacted at <tompkins@bctonline.com>

Map 1 - Laurel Hill

Showing Locations A - H

Showing the locations of the five chutes
Dates of chutes are educated approximations

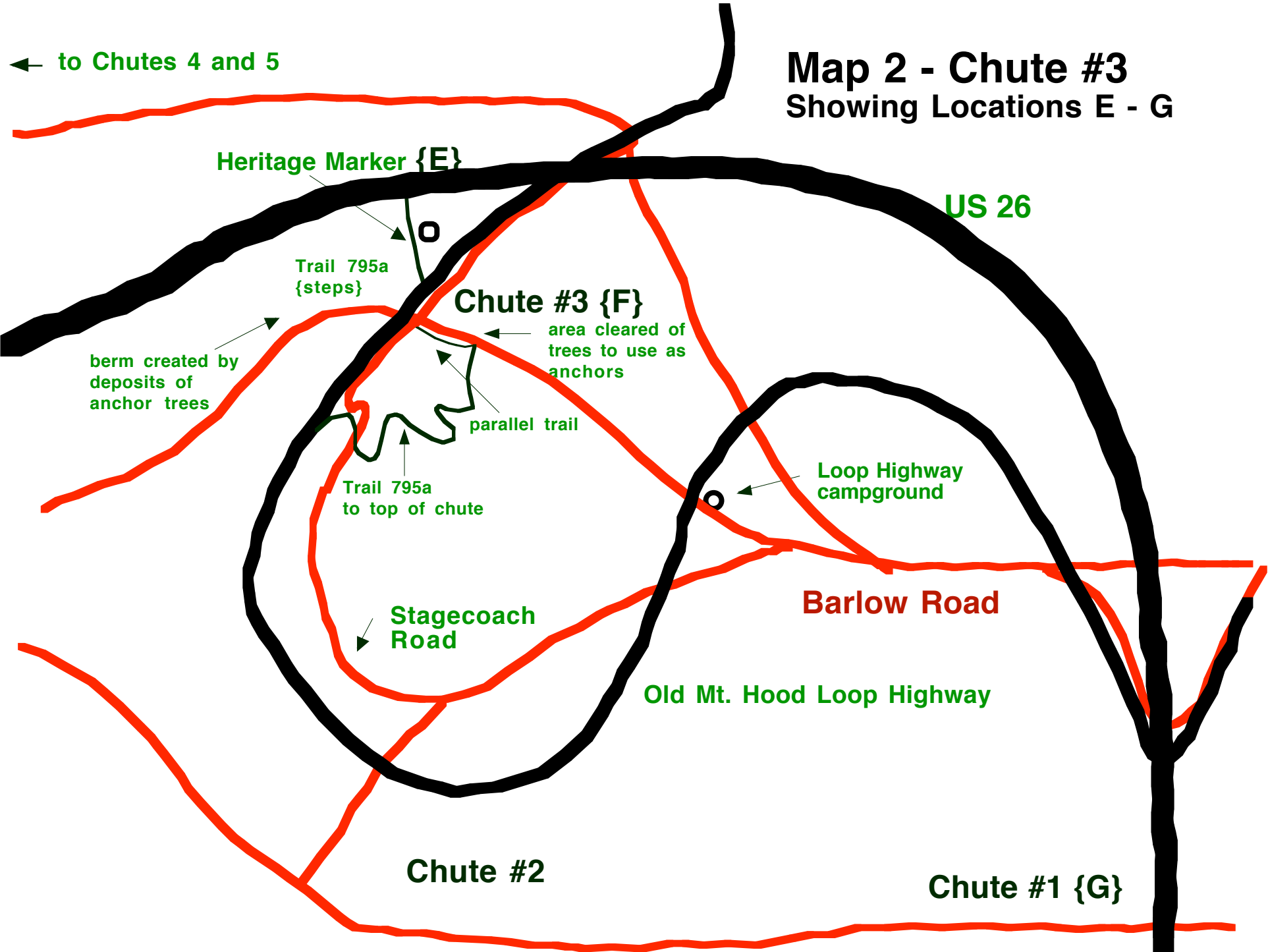


- {A} - Tollgate #5 (near Rhododendron)
- {B} - Bridle Path
- {C} - Stagecoach Road
- {D} - View of Chute #4
- {E} - Oregon Heritage Marker
- {F} - Top of Chute #3
- {G} - View of Roads Crossing
- {H} - Ski Bowl West

Map 2 - Chute #3

Showing Locations E - G

← to Chutes 4 and 5



Heritage Marker {E}

Trail 795a {steps}

Chute #3 {F}

area cleared of trees to use as anchors

berm created by deposits of anchor trees

parallel trail

Trail 795a to top of chute

Loop Highway campground

Stagecoach Road

Barlow Road

Old Mt. Hood Loop Highway

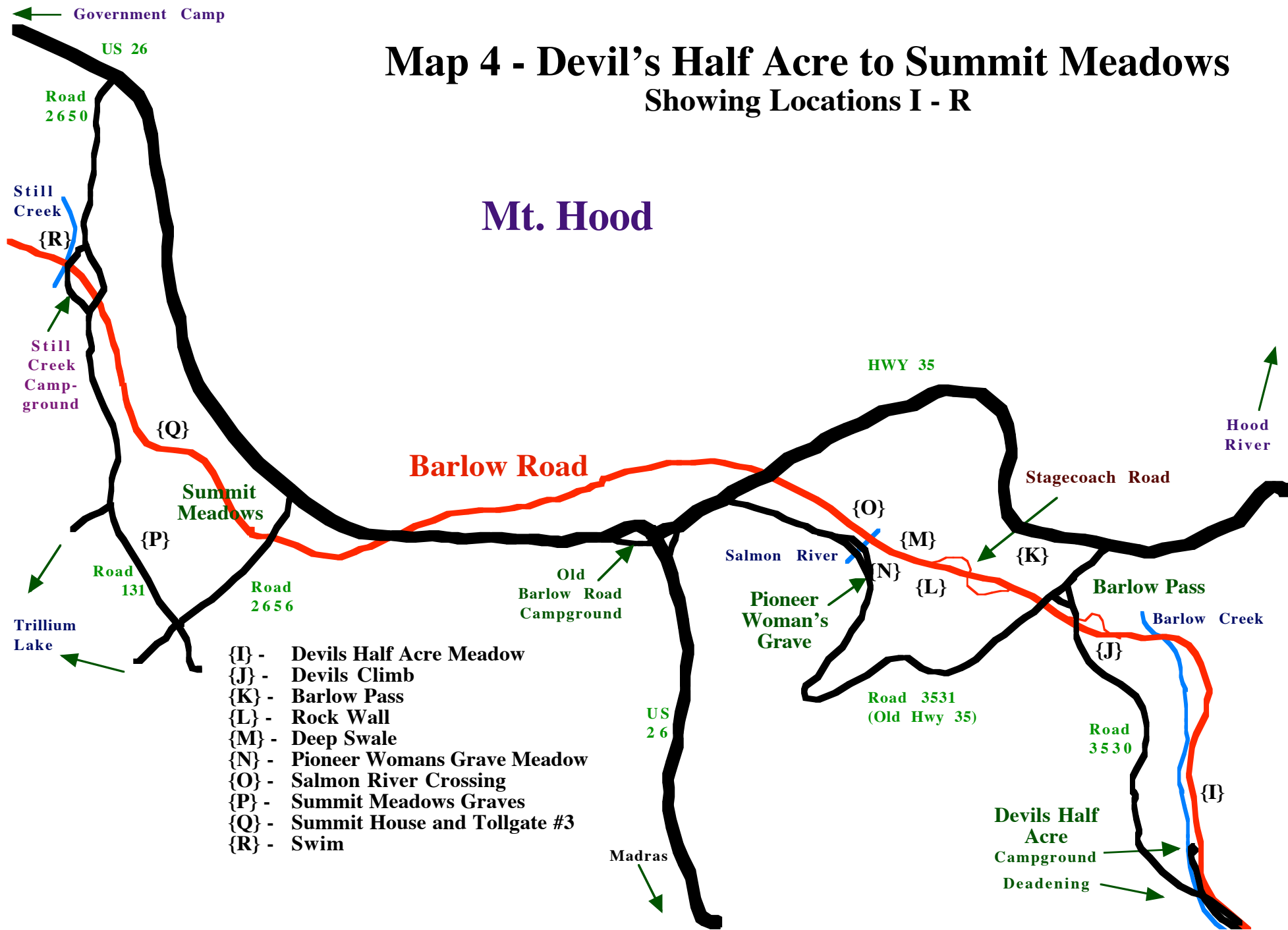
Chute #2

Chute #1 {G}

Map 4 - Devil's Half Acre to Summit Meadows

Showing Locations I - R

Mt. Hood



- {I} - Devils Half Acre Meadow
- {J} - Devils Climb
- {K} - Barlow Pass
- {L} - Rock Wall
- {M} - Deep Swale
- {N} - Pioneer Womans Grave Meadow
- {O} - Salmon River Crossing
- {P} - Summit Meadows Graves
- {Q} - Summit House and Tollgate #3
- {R} - Swim