

The Gates of AURONA

ADVENTURE GUIDE:
CHAMPOEG
EXPEDITION

Traveling back to the days of the pioneers!

History can seem a little unreal like stories of heroes told around a campfire—fun, but insubstantial and perhaps a bit irrelevant. But sometimes we find places where the past lives more solidly than others, where people have worked to keep that memory alive and remind people how this unreal memory shaped the lives we have today—for better and worse.

Oregon is filled with places like these where volunteers, rangers, tour guides, museum workers, and archaeologists invite us in to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors—experience their clothing, their homes and food, sometimes even their very voices. From pioneer forts to re-enactment villages, these places can change our relationship with history. Put on a bonnet and try to imagine wearing one every day. Are you comfortable? Grind camas root with a mortar and pestle and try to imagine this task is you and your family's only path to food today. How does your tummy feel?



Walk a few feet on the burning sands of the Oregon trail. Now imagine you have another month of the trail to go. Exhausted yet?

Champoeg State Heritage Area is one of these places. When Hannah and Cameron go there, the stories their mother has told them become just that much more real; they understand the lives and struggles of their ancestors just that much more fully.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CREATE A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR YOUR OWN AREA, I would suggest starting with the Wikipedia entry: List of open-air and living history museums in the United States. It isn't complete, but another entry: List of National Historic Landmarks in [Your State] can help flesh out your list. Researching living history and re-enactment events can also lead you fun places—as can looking up tourist articles on ghost towns.

ADVENTURERS CAN WIN GATES GEAR

Send me a picture of yourself at your favorite historical site (with an explanation of why it is your favorite) and you will be entered to win GATES GEAR as part of the launch party for each new book in the series!

- OR -

Send me a digital copy of your Create Your Own Pioneer Town from the end of this guide! (Include a brief explanation of your town.) Send pictures to tonya@tonyamacalino.com. (All pictures received will be posted to www.tonyamacalino.com.)



The Champoeg State Heritage Area neighbors a few other important historical stops which we will include in this three-part tour. Climb into your time machine, pack plenty of snacks and water, and off we go!

The Champoeg Exploration

50-MINUTE DRIVE FROM HILLSBORO, 3-HOUR WALKING TOUR

That fateful night when the Troyers come to Champoeg to escape their family curse and to share the stories of their ancestors, they stay in cabin C3 of Champoeg State Park. Little do Hannah and Cameron realize that they have come to the heart of their family's story—not just the heart of the story of the Fànes, but also the heart of Oregon's story.

The exploration takes a brief detour at the Champoeg Visitor's Center and then heads straight to cabin C3 to retrace the Troyers' journey that night.

Our exploration begins at:

CHAMPOEG STATE PARK VISITORS CENTER
8239 Champoeg Rd NE
St Paul, OR 97137

A backpack with a water bottle and a light snack is a must for this exploration! Leave your car in the shade at the visitor's center parking lot and head on into the center for a day pass (leave it on the dashboard of your car), a map of the park, and a tour of the museum.

In the museum you will find a super helpful overview of the Native American peoples who first made Champoeg a meeting place for trade and of the fur trappers who came in the 1800s.

The displays of early pioneer life and the clever explanation of the motivations and opinions about the territory joining the United States are also fascinating.

The final piece of the exhibit tells the brief and tragic story of the town of Champoeg, including some of the artifacts found during archaeological digs at the site.



(Doing the armchair version of this tour? Here's a very brief overview of Champoeg and its history: No one is entirely sure where the name Champoeg came from as it appears to be a series of mispronunciations back and forth between the Ahanchuyuk Kalapuya and the French and English-speaking settlers—although some think it may have originated from the yampah flower/root which is native to the area. Champoeg was originally a Native American village, but as Native numbers declined and the fur trade also began to fail, Champoeg and the surrounding French Prairie slowly became home to trappers who could not bring their mixed-race families back to the East Coast to settle. Robert Newell (Joe Meek's trapper buddy) and Andre Longtain platted a town on the shore of the Willamette River here which we will explore in more detail further along the tour.)

Now that your orientation is complete, head out the back door through the pioneer kitchen garden and the 1850s

apple orchard and over to the 1862 Donald & Felicite Manson barn.



Donald Manson was a Hudson Bay Company man from Scotland, who oversaw the building of the new Fort Vancouver and served as the Executive Officer of the District of New Caledonia (north central British Columbia.) Like many other trappers, his two sons John and Stephen had been boarding at the Whitman Mission, but luckily Nicholas Finley managed to slip them away during the famous massacre—though by historic accounts the boys suffered nightmares and other trauma for many years to come. Manson was well-read and respected by the men under his command, but never rose to the high positions due to issues with his temper. He moved to Champoeg in 1860 and after the flood purchased Robert Newell's donation land claim, reclaiming it from the destruction wrought by the river.

Felicite Manson was the daughter of Etienne Lucier (first European settler of the French Prairie as the land around Champoeg became known) and Josette Nouette, a Native American. Felicite's raising of their 9 children produced some of the area's most admired citizens.

If you get lucky and visit on a living history day, this little farmstead comes to life with carpenters, gardeners, black smiths, and barn raisers! The threshing barn itself is a constructed from wood the Mansons reclaimed for the flood disaster site. Be sure to step inside and feel how it channels the wind to help separate the wheat from the chaff. Take a look at the building itself and see how the Manson family managed to construct it with simple tools and very few nails.

Now off to cabin C3 to begin our tour! Take the farmstead path down the hill, cross the road, and take the sidewalk to the right around the disc golf course. Cross the small bridge over Champoeg Creek to the camping area. Turn left on the paved foot path that skirts the campground. (You will see the ranger station on your right.) The path will round behind the cabins. At the end of the fence behind the cabins you can enter the campground right next to cabin C3! (Apologies for the picture of C2! C3 was very occupied when we visited!)



These cabins are by reservation only, so we'll have to keep our visit short. Imagine Antonio sharing the legend of the Fànes in the light of the small campfire as Hannah, Cameron, and Bridget sip their spiced cider. Now the family rises, turns on their flashlights, and heads off to adventure!

Shall we join them?

Return back the way you came for the first stop on Bridget's tour of Champoeg. Turn right at the sign for the Kitty Newell Gravesite trail and onto a gravel path. At the fork in the path, turn left at the sign for the Kitty Newell Gravesite. Just a short way in you will find the stone that the Daughters of the American Revolution laid to mark her resting place. No one is sure why she was buried on the opposite side of the creek from her and Robert's original homestead, but some speculate that because the original road to Oregon City from Champoeg crossed the Newell land near this spot it was the best place for her to rest undisturbed by farm activities.

Kitty was married to Robert for around 12 years (1833) and was likely 13 or 14 at the time of the marriage, making her near the age of 26 (1845) when she died. She had five boys with Robert. Their life together was one of huge transitions. Her sister, Virginia, married Joe Meek shortly after and the four of them learned to work and live together as trappers, balancing Nez Perce and European ways of life. But then trapping ended. Kitty got a fast crash course on setting up a European-style household in Champoeg, all the while tending her children. Robert's political career in the fledgling Oregon government took off and Kitty often found herself alone, managing this new landscape. Fortunately for her, most of her neighbors were also trappers' Native American wives. Sadly, in December of 1845 Kitty became so ill that Robert had to excuse himself from his duties as Oregon's first Speaker of the House to attend to her. She passed shortly thereafter. Her sons were looked after under contract by a neighbor until Robert remarried.



Kitty has come to represent the forgotten memory of the Native American lineage of early Oregon, how that memory was forcibly erased by both the government, society, and families themselves for nearly 100 years. She has also become a symbol of the effort to reverse this travesty and embrace the land's native heritage as much as the record will allow.

Now retrace your steps to the main paved path and continue back to the bridge over Champoeg Creek. This time, instead of following the road toward the visitor's center around the disc golf course, we cut into the course along the trees, following the Willamette. Shortly after you cross the bridge, you will find a gap in the fencing

and a small brown sign announcing the Champoeg Townsite Trail. Follow this trail across the backside of the disc golf course and around the outside of a large open field.

From there you will enter a small patch of woods, take the left fork and you will emerge into a camping area/boat dock. Take the trail up to the restrooms and turn right. Follow the trail along the parking lot rail. You will come out into a vast open field—sometimes filled with green and wild flowers; sometimes golden and swaying. Either way, it is a good idea to have on jeans and leather shoes to keep your socks and legs covered. The plant life has an aggressive transportation technique for its seeds here and they are dang hard to get out of your sneakers and socks or other loosely woven fabric.

Halfway over this field, you will see on your left your first marker for the cross streets of the Champoeg townsite (1852)! This once thriving community had warehouses, stage coach offices, steamboat landings (Robert was also in the shipping business), churches, saloons, hotels, all the elements of happening pioneer town. (See the back of this guide for more info!) Robert Newell named the north/south streets with American names, Andre Longtain named the east/west streets in French. Use the



map in the back of this guide to see if you can find where all the different buildings were! (Sadly, not all the "streets" are mowed. Also, some of them extend into the adjacent picnic area.)

Once you emerge from the aforementioned picnic area, you will find a parking lot. Keep to the right on the pavement and follow it to gravel lane blocked by a gate. (You will pass a home that used to house the park ranger.) Skirt the gate and follow the lane to the Pioneer Memorial Building, Pavilion and Monument Plaza.



Stand in the plaza and soak up a bit of legend. Here is where the fateful meeting was held to decide whether Oregon come together and construct a provisional government and forego British rule. Here is where Joe Meek waved his hat and called for an end to the squabbling and demanded a final vote. The pavilion represents the Hudson Bay's Champoeg Livery and Grain Store. Notice that the monument itself stands a short distance away from the granary and represents the site of the meeting itself. The mountain men involved knew their conversations would not be popular with their former employer. Hence calling the gathering "wolf meetings," set up ostensibly to discuss the predator problem for these new farmers. Sneaky, eh?

Take a look at the monument itself and see if you can find any familiar names. "Doc" Robert Newell, Joe Meek, David Hill, Charles McKay, and so many more!



Now walk down the right side of the pavilion. Once you reach the main building, look up to the second floor. There you will find the water level marker for the 1861. Now there's some perspective! Now turn around and look down the stairs to the Willamette River. THAT's how the far the river rose. Absolutely mind boggling.



That much water lifted all those simple buildings off of their simple foundations and floated them down the river. Some of them made as far as the Willamette River—which at that point was a mere bump—and some are said to have made it as far as Astoria. The people of Champoeg became refugees at Robert Newell's house on the hill (he

had moved to higher ground after a previous flood) and nearly bankrupt him in the process.

The town that was the epicenter for early Oregon politics was gone.

Here is a lovely and thought-provoking place to enjoy your snack. To return to your car, walk back down to the parking lot. This time, instead of taking the Townsite Trail on your left, take the bike trail just to the right of it. This trail cuts straight through the townsite, a gorgeous walk if you have prepared properly for the sun.

Newell Pioneer Village Exploration

2 MINUTE DRIVE; 40 MINUTE TOUR

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) have preserved several early buildings for this park. Newell Pioneer Village lies just back up the road from the Champoeg visitor's center. When planning your exploration, be sure to check the museum schedule. They are officially open from March 1st to October 1st, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., but sometimes host private events. Now hop back in the car and drive a very short distance to:

NEWELL PIONEER VILLAGE
8089 Champoeg Rd NE
St Paul, OR 97137



Entry is a small fee (currently \$6 for adults and \$3 for children) which is paid inside The Pioneer Mothers



Memorial Cabin. This cabin was built in 1929 and was intended to be a monument along the Willamette River, but had to be moved due to erosion of the river bank. It is a nod to the George Aplin family's post-flood cabin. However, it is approximately 4 times the size of the original! It contains displays of pioneer era tools and furniture and tour staff are always on hand to help explain more about the treasures found within.





As for the Butteville Academy, it was purchased by DAR in the 1950's and moved to the village for preservation. Alongside of it stands the 1949 Butteville Jail. It is said that one of the residents of this fine building was a man who let his pig run loose through the middle of town. Whoops! The jail was also moved to the village in the 1950's.

And now onward to the crown jewel of the village: The Newell House!

Next on the tour is the Butteville Academy (building on the right.) A lovely little 1859 schoolhouse, it also contained the "teacherage" (pictured below) where the instructor and his family lived in very close quarters. The split classroom layout allowed the girls in their full-skirted dresses to sit away from the dangers of the fire.



This was the Newell's second house in Champoeg, built on higher ground after an earlier flood. It is a gorgeous two-story pioneer home. The Newells were quite well-to-do prior to the 1861 flood. Note the position of the door handle (the dark circle below the lock). The Newells also had over ten children and an outhouse!

Many of Champoeg's kids were in a classroom similar to this when the waters of the Willamette began to rise alarmingly. Wisely, the teacher sent them home immediately!



The DAR has even put together a book with ladies modeling the gowns which is available in the gift shop.

Now that you've gotten a glimpse of what life was like before Champog was swept away, it is time for food!

The house was built in 1852 and was purchased by DAR a hundred years later in 1952 and underwent extensive remodeling as it was in very bad repair. The rooms have been beautiful decorated with era-appropriate furnishings. Upstairs contains three exhibits: a textiles and quilts collection, First Ladies of Oregon Gown collection, and Native American artifact collection. The gowns are housed in what served as a meeting room for Oregon's first Speaker of the House. The gown collection in particular is a fascinating look back through history.



Butteville Exploration

6 MINUTES DRIVING, 20 MINUTE TOUR

Back into the car we go for a quick 6-minute drive! Turn left on Champoeg Rd and then left again on Butteville Rd. Turn left again at Butte Rd and you will arrive at:

BUTTEVILLE GENERAL STORE

10767 Butte St NE
Aurora, OR 97002



Butteville was established in 1843 and had its heyday during the era of the sternwheelers. As you enter the General Store, you are entering a truly unique piece of Oregon history. Established in 1863, this is the oldest continuously operating business in the state. Inside you will find bits of history all over the walls, especially homages to the sternwheelers of the Willamette and to the folks who kept the store running over the years—especially the Ryan family who were the longest running owners of the shop (1887-1943.) While you are perusing pictures and artifacts, be sure to enjoy a generous scoop of ice cream, a sandwich, or a slice of pie.



Leave your car here for a moment. Walk down the road toward the river. Now imagine yourself in a lovely hat or a fine coat, preparing to board the sternwheeler parked at the dock below! At the time of our visit, the restoration project had just begun. The original roadbed had been dug up and the cement foundations of the landing cleared



out. Perhaps by the time of your visit the restoration will be complete with a lovely park where you can enjoy your treats from the General Store.

Butteville takes its name from the French “La Butte,” recognizing the landmark from the river of the hills as a meeting place. Butteville was also famous for its founder, François "Francis" Xavier Matthieu, the last living member of the Champoeg Wolf Meetings and one of two French Canadians tipping the tied vote which decided in favor of forming a provisional government and foregoing British rule. He passed in 1914 at the age of 95.

Now return to your car. Before driving back home or where ever you are headed next, turn left to Butteville Rd (also 2nd Street) and drive to where it ends on Union Street (also Arndt Road). In front of you, you will see:

If you need more adventure, the gorgeous historic town of Aurora is a right turn down Arndt Road and then another right on Airport Rd. The town has a museum, tons of gorgeous old homes and shops, and is famous for its eclectic antique shops!

Happy explorations, fellow adventurers!



THE JOSEPH J. RYAN HOUSE
10791 Union St NE
Aurora, OR

The Ryans were not only the longest running owners of the Butteville General Store (JJ and Marie’s son Josie owned the saloon next door until the Prohibition—where the grassy eating area is now—and then later took over the store), but they were also instrumental in promoting the French Prairie as hops-growing country and the Butteville steamboat port shipped these crops into Weinhard Brewery in Portland. Butteville was a major competitor with Champoeg for steamboat business before the flood.

Recreate the Champoeg Townsite

HISTORICAL EXPLORATION GUIDE

What did Champoeg look like before the flood? Use the number key below to match houses and business with their locations in the town map on the next page. (Squares on the map equal city blocks, so you may have to paste some of your icons elsewhere on the map and draw a line to show where the building stood.) Then cut out and paste the buildings onto the map or draw you own versions in!

(Do you think you can use your map to find the building locations at the actual Champoeg Townsite during your visit?)

Businesses Residences



1. Hudson's Bay Company Warehouse



8. Andre Longtain's House



14. Dupuis' Stagecoach Office



20. Bowling Alley



2. Pettygrove's Warehouse



9. Robert Newell's First House



15. Champoeg-Salem Road



21. Masonic Hall



3. Robert Newell & John Crawford's Store



10. Dr Bailey's House



16. Champoeg-Oregon City Road



4. Edward Dupois' Store



11. Ebbert's Cabin



17. Champoeg-Deguire's Ferry Road



5. Weston's Blacksmith Shop

Transport

Community Buildings



6. Champoeg Hotel



12. Ferry Crossings



18. School



7. Higley's Store



13. Steamboat Landings



19. Episcopal Church

Champoeg Town Site

LAYFAYETTE STREET

ORLEANS STREET

WILLOW STREET

ALDER STREET

MONTCALM STREET

DEGRASSE STREET

15

--

--

8 LASALLE STREET

10

MAPLE STREET

2

LONGTAIN STREET

--

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11

--

NAPOLEON STREET

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7

--

20

6

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JEFFERSON STREET

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MADISON STREET

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--

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MONROE STREET

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JACKSON STREET

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16

18

19

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JOHN STREET

5

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1

WILLAMETTE RIVER

Create Your Own Pioneer Town

HISTORICAL EXPLORATION GUIDE

Now it's your turn to plan your own pioneer town! Which businesses would you include? Where would the business owners live? Where would people grow food? How would they receive supplies from the outside world—railroad, steamboats, wagons? What would make people want to move there? Don't forget to name your town!



Businesses Residences

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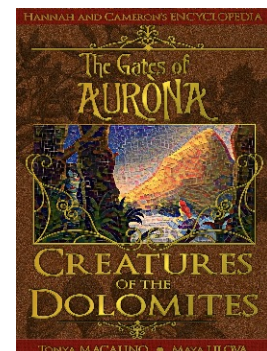
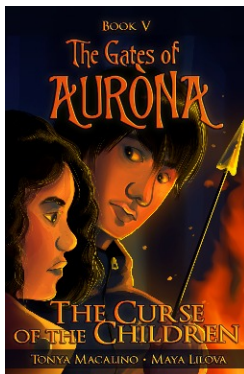
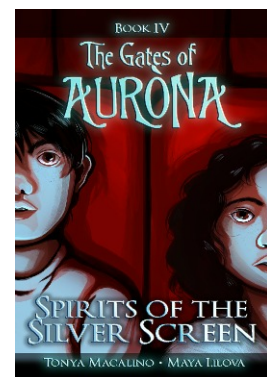
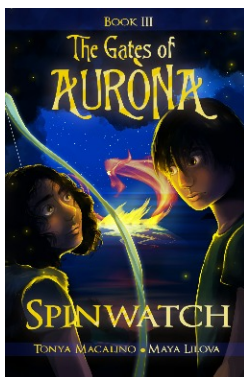
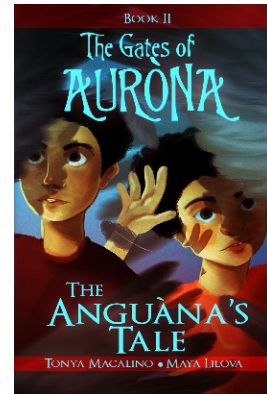
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THE GATES OF AURÓNA ADVENTURE GUIDE: CHAMPOEG EXPLORATION

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Cover and Illustrations:

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Photographs:

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For information, address Crystal Mosaic Books, PO Box 1276 Hillsboro, OR 97213
or tonya@tonyamacalino.com