

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Amanda's Trail's Signs

**Directions:** Review the signs at Amanda's Trail and consider ways to help others who are unfamiliar with the story and history to better understand the point of view of any of the individuals who were forcibly removed, not just Amanda. Consider how historical signs might be adapted to assist in others knowing about the Miluk and Hanis speaking people today.

# Amanda's Trail of Sorrow

Indians ran away from the Coast Reservation on a regular basis, longing for their home and fleeing starvation and abuse by Indian Agents. The military was called upon to round up these run-away Indians and return them to the reservation. Lieutenant Louis Herzer of Company D, Fourth California Infantry, led a detachment to Coos Bay in the spring of 1864 to retrieve runaways.

Sub-Agent Amos Harvey accompanied the Lieutenant and his men in order to "arrest the Indians" that for a long time had been "infesting the settlement of Coos Bay." Stealth was a required element for successfully catching their "game—squaws, bucks, and half breeds born out of wedlock."

Corporal Royal Bensell was on that mission. He kept a detailed journal relating the story of Amanda De-Cuys, a blind Coos woman living with a white settler. Excerpts from his journal tell a compelling story.

### May 1, 1864

... Up Coos River 25 miles to-day after some Indians. Find at the head of tide water a small ranch owned by one De-Cuys. He had a pretty little girl, some 8 years old. We got two Squaws and a Buck. After getting in the boat I was surprised to hear one of the Squaws (old and blind) ask me, "Nika ika namage nika tenas Julia [Let me see my little Julia]." I complied with this parental demand and was shocked to see this little girl throw her arms about old Amanda De-Cuys neck and cry "clihime Ma Ma [dear mama]." De-Cuys refused to marry Amanda, which would have saved her from internment. He promised Bensell to school Julia.

### May 3, 1864

We have taken among the rest several infirm Squaws which the Agent proposes leaving behind to die because he says, "it will cost so far to transportation." Lieutenant Herzer informed the Agent if the Squaws were left he [Herzer] would report him.



Lower Umpqua Artist Pam Stoehler's portrayal of Amanda and other Indians being forcibly marched back to the sub-reservation north of Yachats

### May 5, 1864

Break camp and strike directly across the sand hills. One Squaw, (Polly) carries all her "ickus [belongings]" and two children. Harvey furnishes one horse when we need four. This horse packs [two] old Squaws. By 4 o'clock the advance reached Winchester Bay and from that time 'till dark they came in by twos & threes, the rear guard bringing in Old Fatty and Amanda.

### May 7, 1864

Only made ten miles today. The whole days travel reminded me of a funeral procession, so slow and solemn did we go. First one old "Lama [old woman]" would curl up in the sand, then another, then a general halt, during which

the mothers would suckle their children ... Finally out of patience, I would cry "Hyac, clatwa [hurry, go]." It generally took twenty minutes to get started. Some of the Guard, more irritable than me, swore terrifically.

### May 10, 1864

This coast along our route today seems volcanic, rough ragged, burnt rock, here and there a light rock which I called pumice-stone. Amanda, who is blind, tore her feet horribly over these ragged rock, leaving blood sufficient to track her by. One of the Boys led her around the dangerous places. I cursed Indian Agents generally, Harvey particularly. By 12 we reached the Agency. The great gate swung open, and I counted the Indians as they filed in, turned them over to the Agent, and, God Knows, we all left relieved.

During the first twelve years of the fifteen years of the Alsea Sub-Agency's existence half of the native population died of starvation, exposure, disease, and abuse. The Alsea Sub-Agency was closed in 1875.

No further information is known about Amanda or if she ever was able to be with her daughter, Julia, again.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[www.yachats-trails.com](http://www.yachats-trails.com)



The first statue at the grotto was washed away in a landslide. The current statue, created at the same time by artist Sy Meadow, was generously donated

**Options to update or supplement the sign:**

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# Broken Promises; Forced Internment

The story of Amanda is part of a larger saga of stolen lands, broken promises, inhumane treatment, and forced internment under severe conditions.

In 1855 Central and Southern Oregon Coast tribes signed a treaty ceding their lands in exchange for what they thought would be a peaceful life on a reservation if the treaty was ratified.

In April of 1855, General Joel Palmer, superintendent of Indian affairs for the Oregon Territory, wrote a letter urging the creation of a reservation on the coast of the Oregon Territory to inter Native Americans. In November of 1855 President Franklin Pierce created, by executive order, the Coast Reservation. The new reservation was 1.1 million acres bounded by Siltcoos in the south, Cape Lookout in the north, and the Pacific Ocean to a ridge 20 miles to the east. This rugged land was considered of no value to settlers.

Three agencies were created to manage the Indians who were held there: the Siletz and Grand Ronde agencies (1856) in the north and the Alsea Sub-Agency (1859) in the south located in present-day Yachats near the Adobe Resort. The reservations prevented the Indians from re-establishing their villages on that land.

Coos and Lower Umpqua Tribes were forcibly marched to the Alsea Sub-agency in 1860, and the Alsea Tribe from the immediate north was forced from their homeland in 1865 when the reservation land was cut in half to allow for non-Indian homesteading.

The treaty was never ratified by Congress, which meant that the lands were never legally ceded, and funds for supplies and resources promised for this displaced population were not appropriated. Genocidal policies\* were carried out resulting in the death of many from the imposed harsh



Lottie Evanoff (l), Coos, born in 1868; Umpqua man's reservation photo (r)

treatment and conditions. Since the tribes were denied the weapons needed to hunt, they were forced to survive by farming the wind-swept salty coastal environment. Crops failed, and tribal members starved.

In 1872, tribal members were able to return to their more traditional hunting and gathering practices and successfully farm several miles up the Yachats River. When the U.S. Government found that the Yachats area was fertile for farming, it violated federal law, forcibly removing tribal members to remaining agencies. Many Coos and Lower Umpqua travelled south staying with their Siuslaw cousins or back to the Coos Bay area where they found their villages gone and became refugees in their own homeland.



Alsea Indians on Alsea Bay



Tar Heel, Miluk-Coos born about 1810

**THANK YOU TO:** Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians; Three Rivers Foundation; City of Yachats; View the Future; family and friends of Ben Christensen; Angell Job Corps

\*GENOCIDE: a coordinated plan of different actions aimed at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.

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