

Oregon Trails Over the Blue Mountains, 1811-1852

Blue Mountains, Oregon

Between Grand Ronde and the Umatilla and Walla Walla Rivers

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Introduction

The Indian Tribes of southern Idaho and northeast Oregon had trails over the Blue Mountains that connected the two regions. When fur trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) of Canada and Britain came to the Pacific Northwest in the early 1800s, they began exploring the region for suitable Indian trails to connect their fur posts along the Columbia River as well as connecting to southern Idaho.

The 1818 fur post called Fort Nez Percés, at the mouth of the Walla Walla River, was connected to Snake Fort at the mouth of the Boise River (by the Walla Walla Trail) and, in turn, Snake Fort was eventually connected to Fort Hall, located on the Columbia River between Ross Fork and the Blackfoot River.

These early Indian trails, if they permitted passage by wagon, would become part of the network of trails that became the Oregon Trail. In places where the existing trails would not accommodate wagons, the Oregon Trail Pioneers built parallel trails that would. The Blue Mountains are a good example of the need to build parallel trails.

The 1818 Walla Walla Trail was suitable for horses but not for wagons. Portions of the trail were used by Nathaniel Wyeth in 1832 and he traveled the full trail in 1834. The Whitman Party followed it in 1836. Portions of it were used by Wilson Hunt in 1811, who followed the original Indian trails and not the exact 1818 trail used by the HBC.

A practical wagon road route over the Blue Mountains did not become available until 1843 when the 1840 route of Newell and Meeks was improved by a large volume of wagon traffic between the Grand Ronde and the Whitman Mission. Between 1843 and 1847, wagon traffic went on to Fort Nez Percés (old Fort Walla Walla) and then down the Columbia River. This long trail loop northward to Fort Nez Percés was abandoned after the Whitmans were murdered by Indians in 1847, and the Whitman Mission was closed. Resupply at the Mission was no longer possible for Oregon Trail travelers.

By 1848, a new Oregon Trail route was established that turned westward along the Umatilla River to Echo and then crossed the land south of the Columbia River and terminated at The Dalles. The Oregon Trail of 1852 (Meeks) became the well-established route through Oregon, from the mouth of the Boise River to The Dalles.

On a curious note, the routes proposed by the military, Fremont's 1843 route and the Harney route down the Umatilla River, were not used by pioneer wagons. It took practical reality, by actual Oregon pioneers, to create a practical wagon road across the Blue Mountains.

Historical Background

Lewis and Clark, 1805-1806. The first expedition and exploration of the country west of the Missouri River was the Corps of Discovery under the command of Lewis and Clark. They left St. Louis in 1804 and arrived in Oregon in the fall of 1805. President Jefferson's instructions were that they search for a water route to the Pacific Ocean so they did not explore an overland route. The closest they were to the Blue Mountains was to go down the Columbia River, passing both the Walla Walla River and the Umatilla River.

The expedition played an important roll in documenting some of the western lands and the Indian tribes that lived on them. However, they had no direct effect on the influx of early pioneers to what would become the state of Oregon.

Wilson Hunt and the Astorians 1811-1812. A few short years after Lewis and Clark, the fur trade was heating up in the Pacific Northwest. The Hudson's Bay Company from Canada and Britain was rapidly establishing far flung trading posts that were referred to as Fur Posts or Forts. In the United States, John Jacob Astor decided to invest in the fur trading business and commissioned an expedition to go west to the mouth of the Columbia River.

Hunt and the "Astorians" went up the Missouri River to the Arikara Villages in northern South Dakota and then traveled westward through South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon where they established a trading post called Fort Astoria, near the mouth of the Columbia River.

Hunt left the Grand Ronde on January 2, 1812, crossed the Blue Mountains, and reached the Umatilla River on the 8th of January (a total of 7 days). Here he camped for several days with tribes of Indians he called Sciatogas (Cayuse) and Toustchipas (Tushepaws, Salish).

Hunt's route is shown as purple line with a red centerline.

David Thompson 1811. The Hudson's Bay Company and their chief explorer and map maker, Thompson, were also exploring the Pacific Northwest very soon after Lewis and Clark. Thompson aided in the establishment of Fur Posts along the Columbia River. Starting at the mouth of the Columbia and going up-river, they were Fort George (Fort Astoria) (1813) Fort Vancouver (1824), Fort Nez Percés (1818), Spokane House (1810), and Fort Colville (1825).

Robert Stuart 1812-1813. Stuart led a party eastward from Fort Astoria, Oregon to Fort Osage, Missouri. He was also in the employ of John Jacob Astor and was returning overland to the east. Stuart traveled a route that would later become the bases for the Oregon Trail. However, Stuart had a circuitous route, in some places, made necessary to avoid hostile Indian raiding parties. Between Thomas Fork of the Bear River in Idaho, and the Sweetwater River in Wyoming, his route was not on what would become the Oregon Trail. Contrary to many references in the literature, Stuart did not cross the well-know South Pass of Oregon trail fame. Instead, he crossed the continental divide east of Little Sandy Creek about 21 miles northwest of "South Pass." Stuart left the Umatilla River on July 31, 1812, crossed the Blue Mountains, and reached the Grand Ronde on August 5 (a total of 5 days).

Stuart's route is shown as purple line with a yellow centerline.

NOTE: It is unknown if Hunt and Stuart used the same route across the Blue Mountains, but it would seem to be logical. Hunt's account of his route is very sketchy while Stuart provides a great amount of detail for his route. Some researchers speculate that they did use the same route. This researcher believes they used somewhat different routes based on backtracking Hunt's distances from the mouth of the Umatilla River to where he first reached it. It seems that Hunt (1811), Wyeth (1832), and Whitman (1836) followed a very similar route across the mountains. It is likely that this issue will never be resolved.

1814-1831. Exploratory travel in the Pacific Northwest continued on after Hunt and Stuart established overland routes. There is no credible evidence that anyone used Hunt's route in South Dakota and Wyoming but the route of Stuart was the most practical and was the one used in the 1830s by fur traders to go to the Green River Rendezvous.

In the Blue Mountains, the Walla Walla Trail over the Blue Mountains was established sometime between 1818 and 1834 to connect Fort Nez Percés with Snake Fort.

Walla Walla Trail 1818-1834. The Walla Walla trail connected two trading posts, Fort Nez Percés (also called Fort Walla Walla or Old Fort Walla Walla), located on the Columbia River at the mouth of the Walla Walla River in Washington and Snake Fort (also called Fort Boise or Old Fort Boise), located at the mouth of the Boise River in Idaho. The route of the Walla Walla Trail was followed by the Wyeth in 1834 and the Whitman Party in 1836, so the research results for these routes have been applied to the Walla Walla Trail.

Fort Nez Percés was first established in 1818 by the Hudson's Bay Company and continued operation until the treaty of 1846 between the United States and Britain gave the land rights to the United States. By treaty, the fort was allowed to operate until it was burned down in 1855, during the Yakima War.

Snake Fort was first established about 1813 by John Reed and others who came west with Wilson Hunt and the "Astorians" in 1811. It was called Reed's Fort but had to be abandoned because of Indian raids. Reed was reported murdered by Indians in early 1814 in the book, "Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals." Donald Mackenzie, representing the North West Company in fur trading, tried again to establish a trading post at the same location with the same result – It was also abandoned because of Indian raids. Finally, a third try to build a trading post was made in 1834, with the support of the Hudson's Bay Company. In her diary entry for August 4, 1836, Narcissa Whitman called it Snake Fort (then owned by Thomas McKay). It was known as Old Fort Boise after a military fort was built further east and also called Fort Boise.

The Walla Walla Trail route is shown as a yellow line with a red-dotted centerline.

Alexander McKenzie 1818. In the introduction to the book "Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals," the editors report that McKenzie crossed the Blue Mountains (eastward from Fort Nez Percés) in September 1818 with "55 men, 195 horses, 300 beaver traps, and a considerable stock of merchandise." He advanced eastward on the approximate route of Wilson Hunt (1811-1812) until he reached beaver country in the upper Snake and upper Green Rivers. McKenzie returned to Fort Nez Percés, presumably crossing the Blue Mountains again. No maps of this route have been found.

William Kittson 1819. Kittson crossed the Blue Mountains three times in 1819, but no maps of his route have been found. In the introduction to the book "Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals," the editors report the following:

"On May 15, 1819, the west-bound brigade of the North West Company reached Fort Nez Percés (old Fort Walla Walla) on its way to Fort George (Fort Astoria), bringing a party of fifteen men to go to the Snake Country (southern Idaho) to strengthen (Alexander) McKenzie. Ross added eleven more men and sent them to McKenzie under the direction of William Kittson, an apprentice clerk from Canada and a novice in the country. He reached McKenzie on the Skam-naugh (Boise River) after much difficulty, and delivered the horses, men and goods for his upcoming hunt. Thereupon Kittson took the furs collected by McKenzie and returned to Fort Nez Percés, arriving on July 7, 1819. He then turned back to the Snake Country and rejoined McKenzie."

Peter Skene Ogden 1825. Ogden and his fur brigade crossed the Blue Mountains westward in the fall of 1825. On October 22, 1825, the brigade was camped at Snake Fort (Reed's Fort, Old Fort Boise) at the mouth of the Boise River. They went southeast up the Boise River and then went north and west to the mouth of the Payette River. After crossing the Snake River north of Payette,

they went northwest up the Burnt River. The journal entries end on October 30, while they were still on the Burnt River. The journal entries for the Blue Mountain Crossing appear to be lost. Also, Kittson's journal ends in August of 1825 so we do not have his account of the crossing. However, we can speculate that they followed the Walla Walla Trail back to Fort Nez Percés. Kittson made a map of Ogden's route but I have not found a copy of it.

Nathaniel Wyeth 1832. Wyeth traveled to Oregon Territory twice in the time period 1832-1834. He crossed the Blue Mountains in 1832 and 1834. In 1832, he used the Walla Walla Trail between the Umatilla River and the Grand Ronde, but he used a route further west when he went from Fort Nez Percé to the Umatilla River.

Wyeth's route for 1832 is shown as a solid yellow line.

Captain Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville 1832. Bonneville crossed the Blue Mountains westward in late August 1832. His entire party crossed on the Walla Walla Trail, but upon arriving at the Umatilla River, he sent some men to Fort Nez Percé for supplies. Bonneville and the main party continued westward to the mouth of the Umatilla and then down the Columbia River.

Bonneville's routes are not shown separately on the map set.

Nathaniel Wyeth 1834. Wyeth reported that he was following the Walla Walla Trail across the mountains so we know the route was being given a name because of the commercial connections between Fort Nez Percés and Snake Fort (these are explained elsewhere). Although his journal entries are very sparse, they can be cross-referenced with other journals to estimate the route he followed. The Whitman party of 1836, and Hunt in 1811, also followed portions of this trail.

Wyeth's route for 1834 is shown as a yellow line with a red-dotted centerline.

Whitman 1836. In August of 1836, a missionary group consisting of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Henry and Eliza Spalding, Thomas McKay, and others, followed the Walla Walla Trail between Snake Fort and Fort Nez Percés. McKay was the leader and guide and had been with the party since it arrived at the Green River Rendezvous. The diaries of Wyeth and Narcissa Whitman were instrumental in locating this route.

Whitman's route for 1836 is shown as a yellow line with a red-dotted centerline.

The Whitman party used the same route as Frémont between Fort Nez Percés and the Whitman Mission.

1840. There are numerous reports that a party led by Robert Newell and Joseph L. Meek in August 1840, reached Fort Walla Walla with three wagons. If so, it is very likely that they are the first to cross the Blue Mountains with wagons. However, the evidence supporting this is very thin. Apparently, neither Newell or Meek kept a diary of the trip. No sources have been found to corroborate this accomplishment although diaries of people at Fort Nez Percés or the Whitman Mission may contain that information, if they can be found. A letter of unknown date, said to have been written by Newell is the only source of information on this event. Here is that reference.

In the "History of Oregon," written by Clinton A. Snowden and published in 1909, we have the following account of a letter by Robert Newell that claims that their party was able to get wagons over the Blue Mountains and to the Whitman Mission. However, the letter is confusing in

that Newell first said they threw away their wagon beds and then later, he talks about the Indians at Whitman Mission calling them 'horse canoes.' The following is an excerpt from "History of Oregon."

Dr. Newell, in a letter to Elwood Evans, gave this account of their experience on the journey:

"At the time I took the wagons, I had no idea of undertaking to bring them into the country. I exchanged fat horses to the missionaries for their animals; and, after they had been gone a month or more for Willamette, and the American Fur Company had abandoned the country for good, I concluded to hitch up and try the much-dreaded job of taking a wagon to Oregon. I sold one of those wagons to Mr. Ermatinger, at Fort Hall.

On the 15th of August, 1840, we put out with three wagons; Joseph L. Meek drove my wagon. In a few days, we began to realize the difficult task before us, and found that the continued crashing of sage under our wagons, which was in many places higher than the mules' backs, was no joke.

Seeing our animals begin to fail, we began to lighten up, finally threw away our wagon beds, and were quite sorry we had undertaken the job. All the consolation we had was that we broke the first sage on the road, and were too proud to eat anything but dried salmon skins after our provisions had become exhausted.

In a rather rough and reduced state, we arrived at Dr. Whitman's mission station, in the Walla Walla valley, where we were met by that hospitable man, and kindly made welcome, and feasted accordingly.

On hearing me regret that I had undertaken to bring the wagons, the Doctor said: 'Oh, you will never regret it; you have broken the ice and when others see that wagons have passed, they too, will pass and in a few years the valley will be full of our people.'

The Doctor shook me heartily by the hand. Mrs. Whitman, too, welcomed us; and the Indians walked around the wagons, or what they called 'horse-canoes,' and seemed to give it up.

We spent a day or so with the Doctor and then went to Fort Walla Walla, where we were kindly received by Mr. P. C. Pambrun, chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, and superintendent of that post. On the 1st of October, we took leave of those kind people, leaving our wagons, and taking the river trail; but we proceeded slowly.

Our party consisted of Joseph L. Meek and myself, also our families, and a Snake Indian, whom I brought to Oregon, where he died a year after our arrival. The party did not arrive at the Willamette Falls (Oregon City) till December, subsisting for weeks upon dried salmon, and upon several occasions were compelled to swim their stock across the Columbia and Willamette."

The route of Newell and Meeks is likely the same one that was improved in 1843 when hundreds of people crossed the Blue Mountains and, in reality, became the first real emigration route to Oregon. In this monograph, this route is documented as Oregon Trail 1852.

Fremont 1843. A military reconnaissance survey party, led by Capt. Charles Frémont, traveled the Oregon Trail route from Westport, Missouri to Fort Nez Percés in 1842-43. This survey established an "official" government route for the Oregon Trail. Landmarks along this route are: Westport, Kansas River, Big Blue River, Little Blue River, Platte River, Grand Island, Forks of the Platte, Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff, Fort Laramie, Red Buttes, Sweetwater River, Rock Independence, Devil's Gate, South Pass, Green River, Black's Fork, Muddy Fork, Fort Bridger, Bear River, Thomas' Fork, Beer Spring (Soda Springs), Portneuf River, Fort Hall, Snake River,

American Falls, Upper Salmon Falls, Boise River, Snake Fort, Burnt River, Baker, Powder River, Grand Ronde, Blue Mountains, Walla Walla River, Whitman Mission, and Fort Nez Percés (Fort Wallah Wallah).

Frémont's expedition crossed the Blue Mountains October 18-25, 1843, and arrived at Fort Wallah Wallah on October 25, 1843. The route was unique over the mountains and did not parallel any of the previous routes, which were unsuitable for wagons. However it seems that few, or no, wagons followed Frémont's route either.

Frémont's route for 1843 is shown as a purple line with a red-dotted centerline.

Oregon Trail 1843-1847. When 1843 came, and hundreds of people wanted to emigrate to Oregon, a practical wagon road route over the Blue Mountains was sorely needed. We have to speculate that the 1840 route of Newell and Meeks was used and improved to make this more practical road. The wagons traveled from Grand Ronde to the Whitman Mission (resupply), then from the Mission to Fort Nez Perce (resupply), and finally down the Columbia River and up the Willamette River to Oregon City and beyond.

Perhaps, the most feared segment of the journey was the portage of monster rapids and falls (such as Celilo Falls). In addition, the rapids below The Dalles were so feared that the Barlow Toll Road built by Sam Barlow and Philip Foster became was chosen by many emigrants to get to Oregon City without going down the Columbia River. The Applegate brothers, Jesse and Lindsay, were instrumental in the development of the Southern Road to Oregon which bypassed all the Snake and Columbia River hazards. The southern route swung clear down into Nevada and the northern tip of California. This extra distance was deemed acceptable to insure a safer route but water and grass were scarce so it also had its hardships.

Whitman Mission Road 1843-47. In 1843, settlers cut a wagon road over the Blue Mountains, making it acceptably practical for use for the first time by wagons. The trail followed the 1840 route by Meek and Newell and then went to the Whitman Mission east of Fort Nez Percés in Washington. At Fort Nez Percés, rafts and boats were used to travel down the Columbia River to The Dalles.

The road to the Mission left the 1843 route at Moonshine Creek, on the south side of the Umatilla River. The route shown in this monograph was established using information from diaries and the other routes established in the area. The final route location was determined by topographical features and GLO plat maps. It is unknown if any other documentation exists. It appears that some of the road was incorporated into the Boise and Walla Walla stage road.

The route of the Mission road for 1847 is shown as a yellow line with a green centerline.

Oregon Trail 1852. This is the route that received, by far, the heaviest use by wagons headed for Oregon. It is also the route recognized by the National Park Service as the "official" Oregon National Historic Trail. Sometime around 1843, this route was established as a "cutoff" to avoid the long loop north to reach Fort Nez Percés or the Whitman Mission. It also avoided crossing so much of the Indian land used to feed thousands of horses.

Initially, this route research was based on the information that Ezra Meeker gave in his map and book. Later on, diaries, old maps, and GLO Plats were used increase accuracy and detail. It has been difficult to pinpoint exactly when this route began to be used for wagons, but 1848 seems a likely date.

1859. An 1859 Map of the State of Oregon and Washington Territory by the Department of Oregon, Bureau of Topographical Engineers, shows the 1843 Fremont route and a route labeled as "Route proposed by General Harney." In this instance, the Harney route is shown as branching off the Fremont route at the headwaters of the Umatilla River and following the River all the way down to its confluence with the Columbia River. There is no evidence that this route was ever used. This map conflicts with the 1863 map showing Harney's Cut Off as being the Oregon Trail of 1852. It is very curious that the other trails across Blue Mountains, even the 1852 Oregon Trail are not are shown.

1859. A map of the routes between Fort Dalles and the Great Salt Lake by Brevet 2nd Lieut. Joseph Dixon, under the orders of Brig. General W. S. Harney, commanding the Department of Oregon. This map shows the Fremont route and appears to show the route of the Oregon Trail of 1852. It also shows the Whitman Mission Road.

1863. The two trails or wagon roads across the Blue Mountains are the 1843 Fremont route between Grand Ronde and the Whitman Mission and "Harney's Cut Off" which is the route that we document in this monograph as the 1852 Oregon Trail. It is doubtful that Harney should be credited as having any part whatsoever in creating this route.

Difficult Passes for Wagons on the 1852 Oregon Trail

The Blue Mountains had the reputation as a difficult crossing that created hardships but there were other hardships equal to, or greater than, the Blue Mountains passes. The Bear River Divide was a hard crossing and Big Hill west of Thomas Fork damaged wagons. Floating the Columbia River was hazardous, especially below the Dalles, which prompted Sam Barlow and Philip Foster to build a wagon road around the south side of Mt. Hood, and Jesse and Lindsay Applegate to pioneer the Southern Trail To Oregon.

The following are some high elevation points on route(s) from Snake Fort to the Umatilla River with comparisons to other high points. Elevation profiles for the 1818 and 1852 two trails over the Blue Mountains are included in with the maps in this monograph

Burnt River Pass (4507 ft. Elev.). From Farewell Bend to the pass between Burnt River and Powder River, a distance of 40 miles, the Oregon Trail gained almost a half-mile (2400 ft) in elevation. The nearest modern landmark for the pass is Pleasant Valley, 2.9 miles southwestward at a bearing of 204° TN.

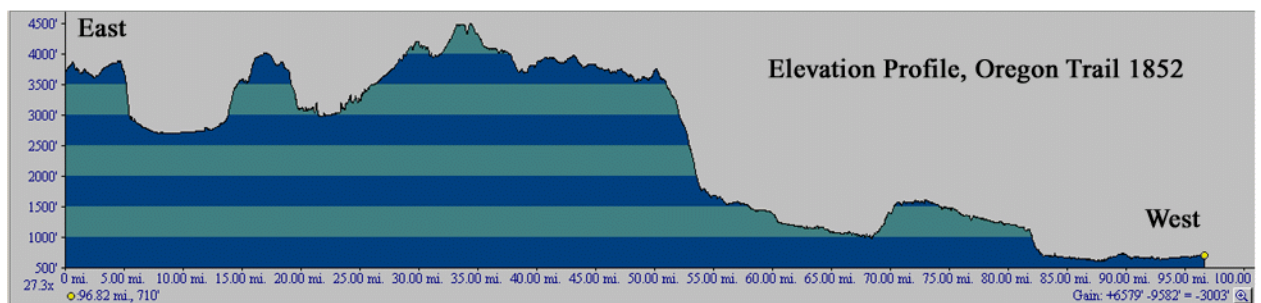
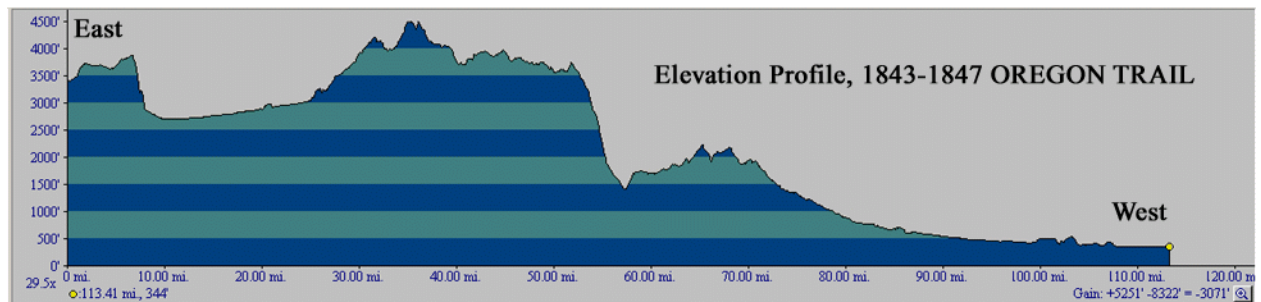
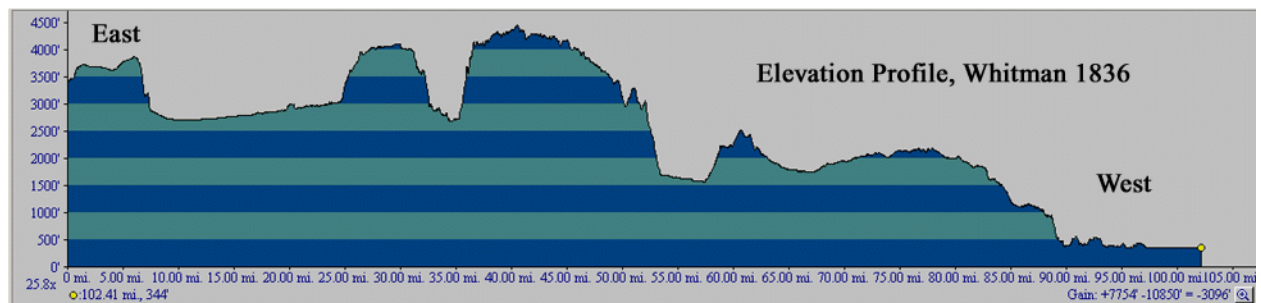
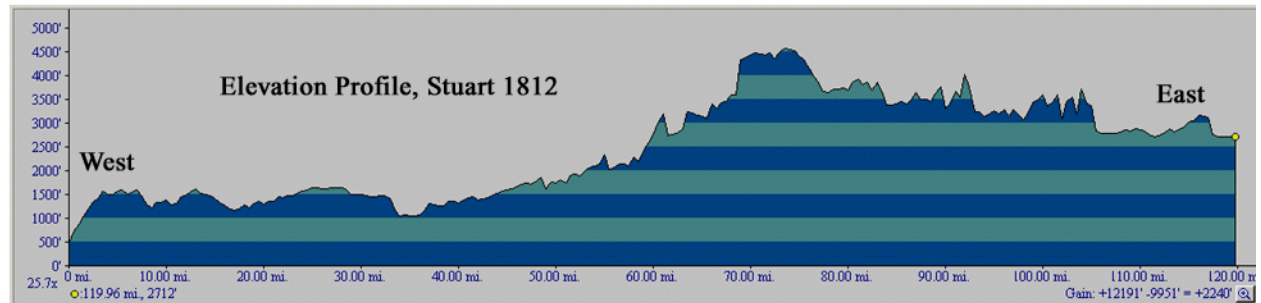
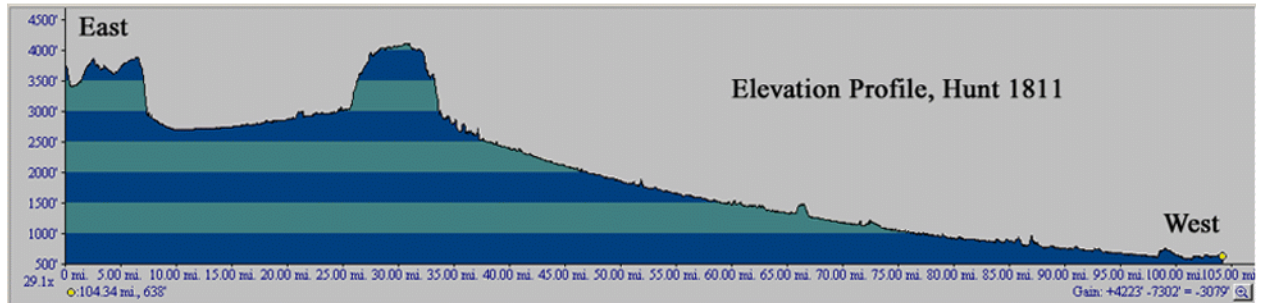
Grand Ronde (2705 ft). After descending into the Grand Ronde, the Oregon Trail reached an elevation of 2705 feet, a drop of 1800 feet.

Pass over Blue Mountains (4490 ft). In a distance of 25 miles, the Trail gained 1785 feet. All things considered, this was a very gradual incline for wagon roads. The nearest modern landmark for the pass is Meacham, 4.4 miles northward at a bearing of 430° TN.

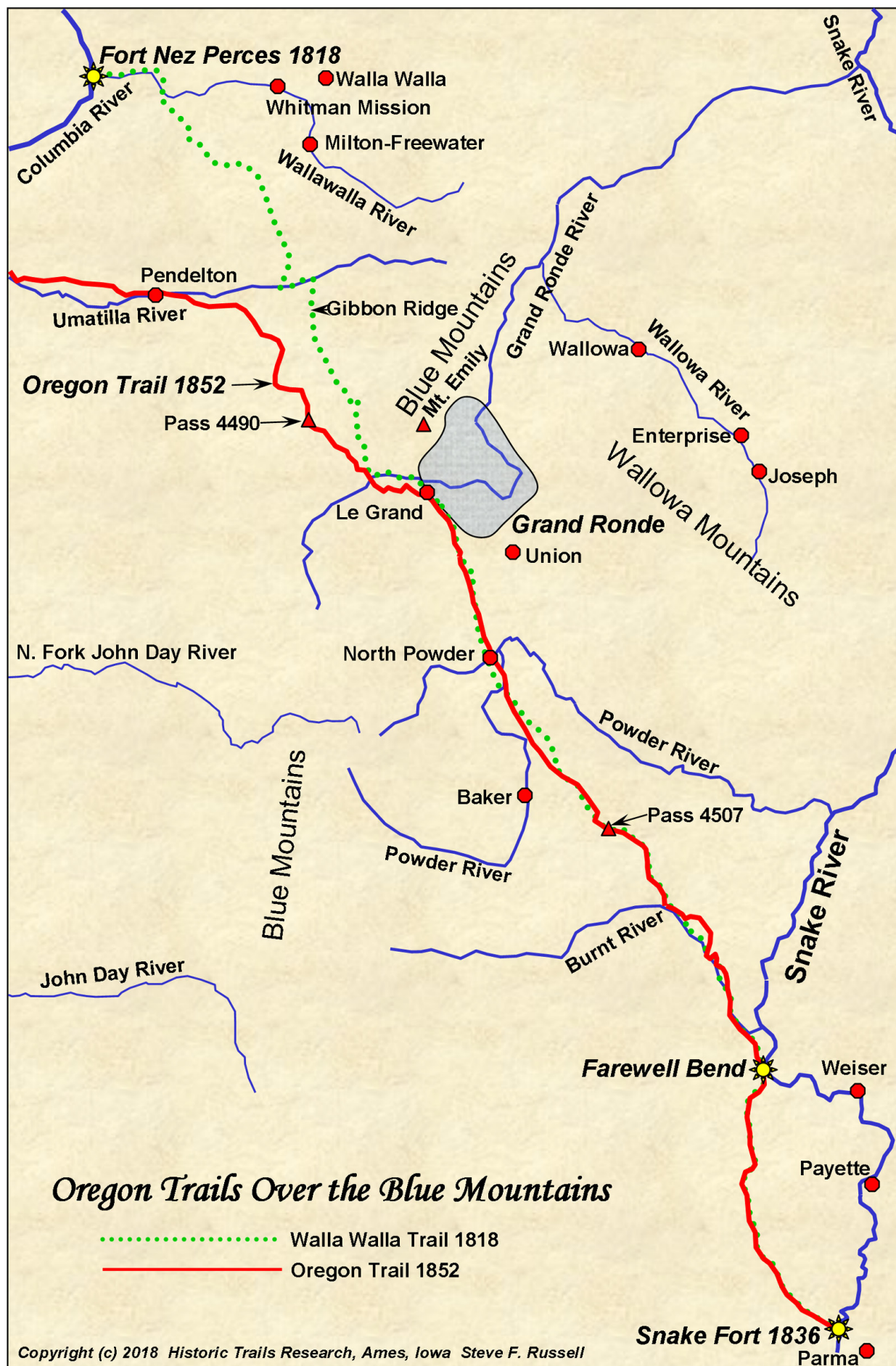
Umatilla River (1110 feet). After descending to the Umatilla River at Pendleton, the Oregon Trail reached an elevation of 1110 feet, a drop of 3380 feet in a distance of 30 miles.

As comparisons, South Pass in Wyoming has an elevation of 7417 feet but the change in elevation over the Oregon Trail is so gradual that it does not seem like a 'real' pass. The 1852 route reaches 7277 feet just west of Kemmerer, Wyoming but it too, is very gradual. The Bear River Divide on the 1843 Oregon Trail route of Capt. Charles Fremont is 8050 feet.

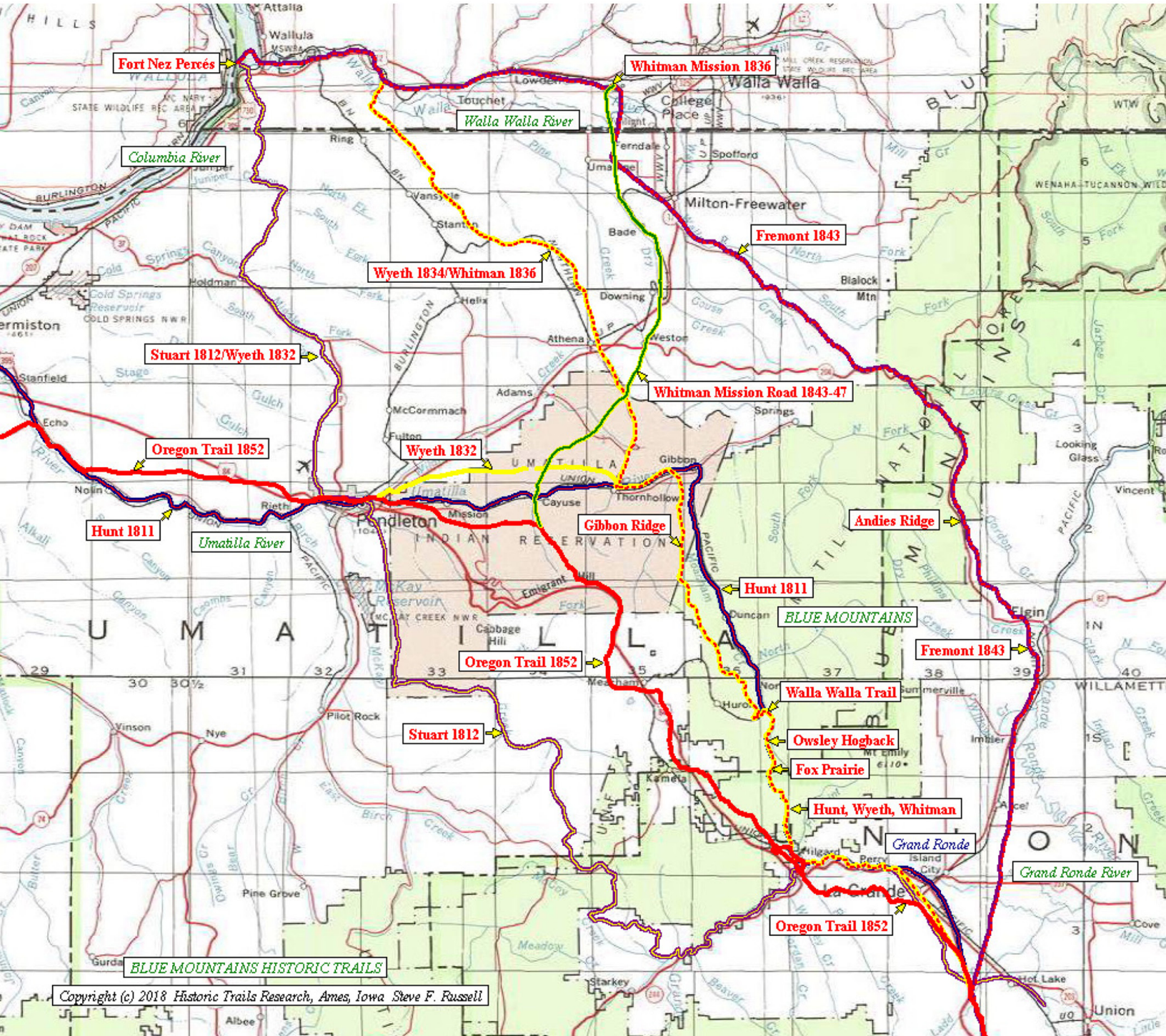
Elevation Profiles for Oregon Trails Over the Blue Mountains, 1818-1852



Composite Overview Map of the Trails (Simplified)

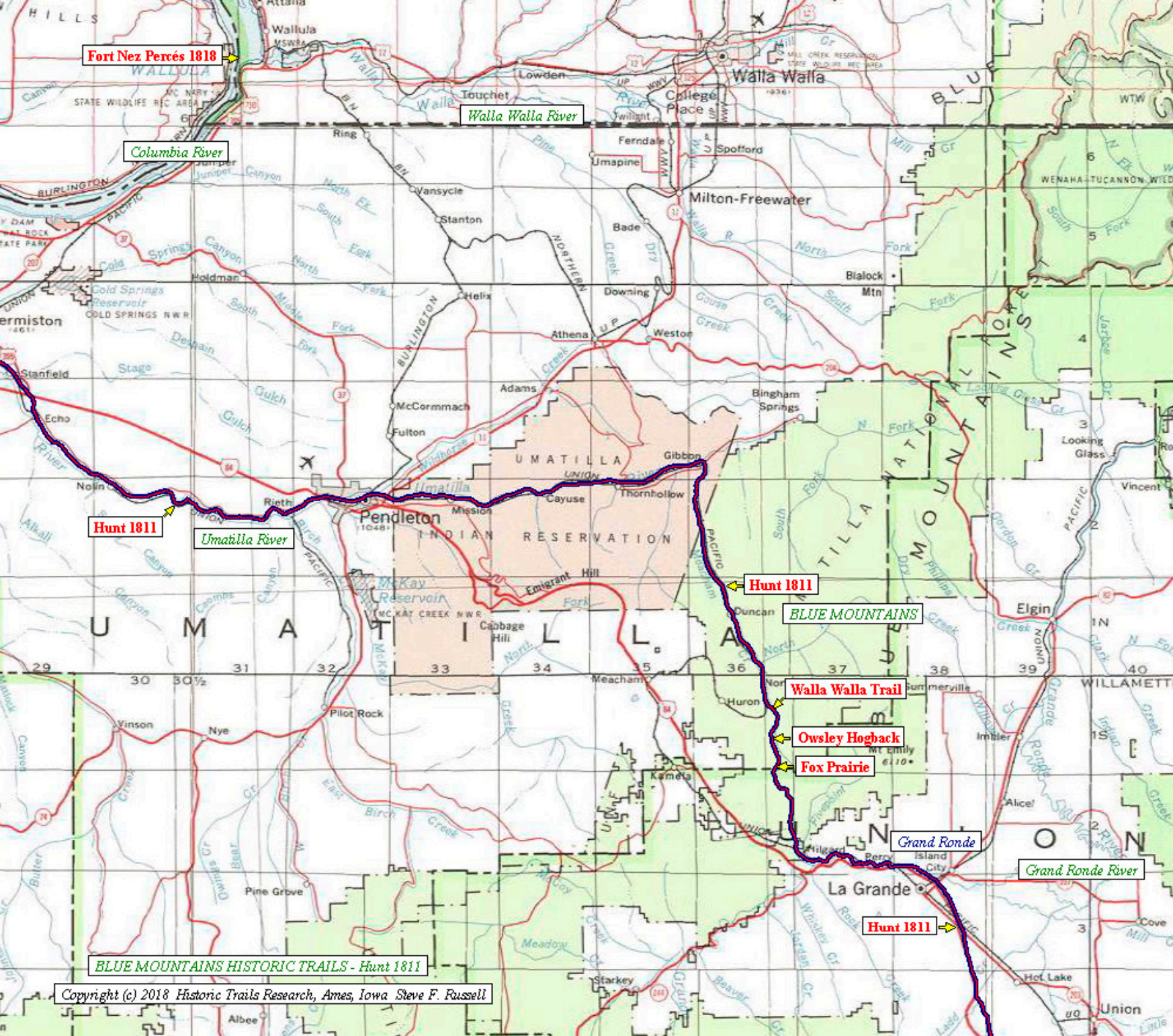


Large Scale Map of the Blue Mountains Area



Individual Maps for the Blue Mountains Trails

1811 Hunt
1812 Stuart
1818 Walla Walla Trail (Kittson, Ogden, Wyeth, Whitman)
1832/1834 Wyeth
1840 Newell and Meek
1843 Fremont
1843-1847 Whitman Mission Road
1843-1847 Oregon Trail
1852 Oregon Trail



Fort Nez Percés 1818

Walla Walla River

Columbia River

Hunt 1811

Umatilla River

Hunt 1811

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Walla Walla Trail

Owsley Hogback

Fox Prairie

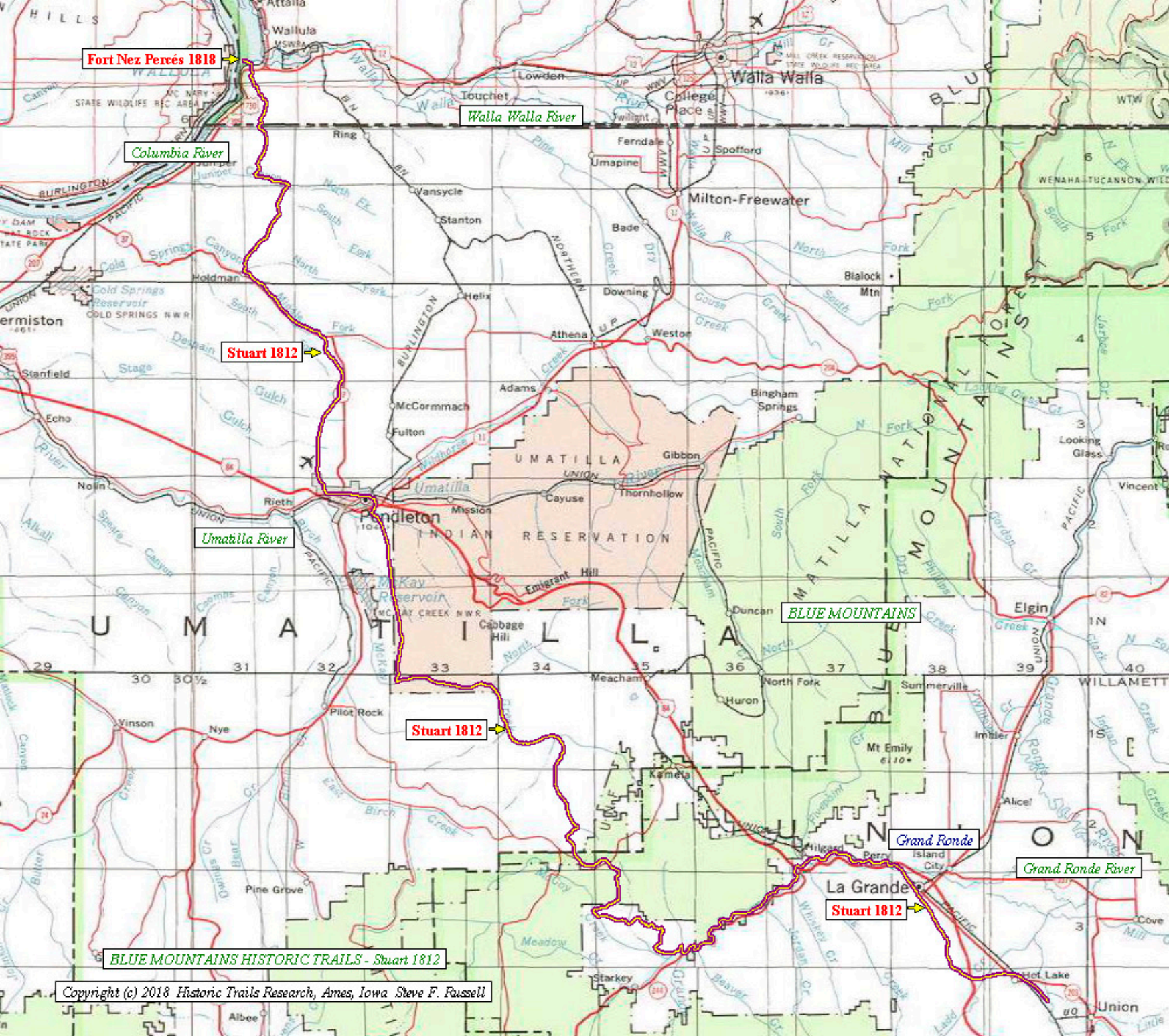
Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

Hunt 1811

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Hunt 1811

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Fort Nez Percés 1818

Columbia River

Walla Walla River

Stuart 1812

Umatilla River

Stuart 1812

BLUE MOUNTAINS

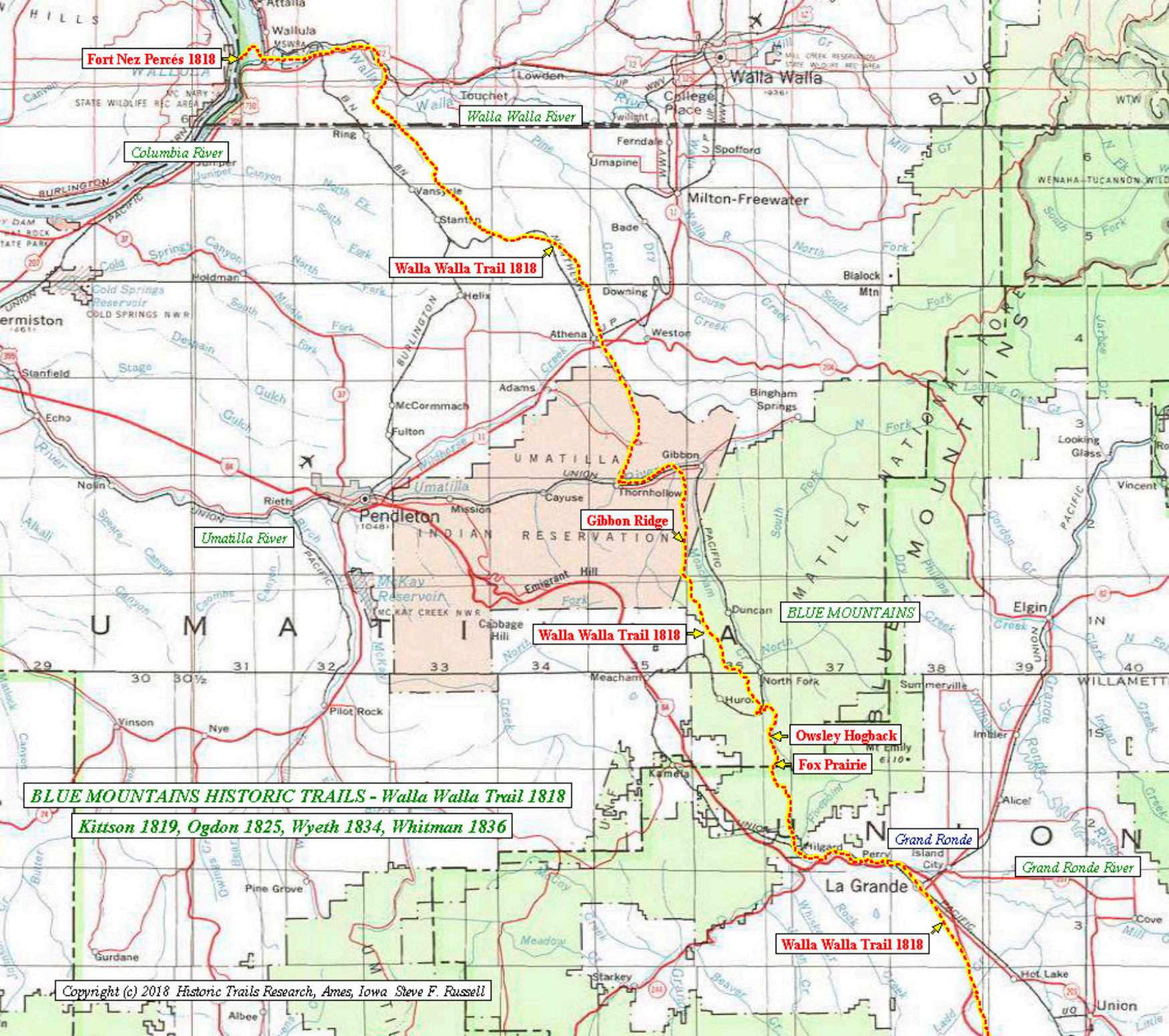
Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

Stuart 1812

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Stuart 1812

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Fort Nez Percés 1818

Columbia River

Walla Walla River

Walla Walla Trail 1818

Umatilla River

Gibbon Ridge

Walla Walla Trail 1818

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Owsley Hogback

Fox Prairie

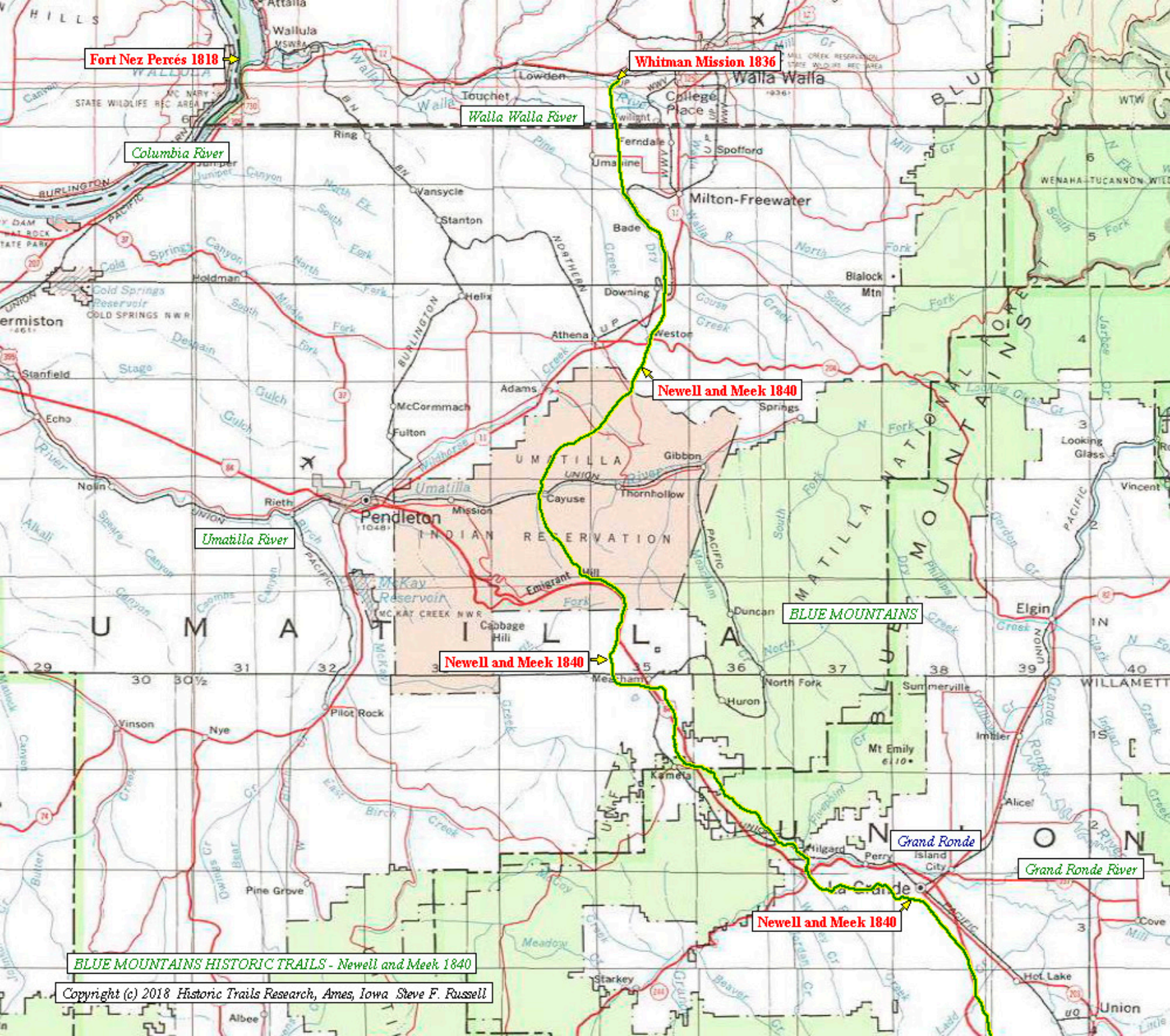
Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

Walla Walla Trail 1818

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Walla Walla Trail 1818

Kittson 1819, Ogdon 1825, Wyeth 1834, Whitman 1836



Fort Nez Percés 1818

Whitman Mission 1836

Walla Walla River

Columbia River

Newell and Meek 1840

Umatilla River

Newell and Meek 1840

BLUE MOUNTAINS

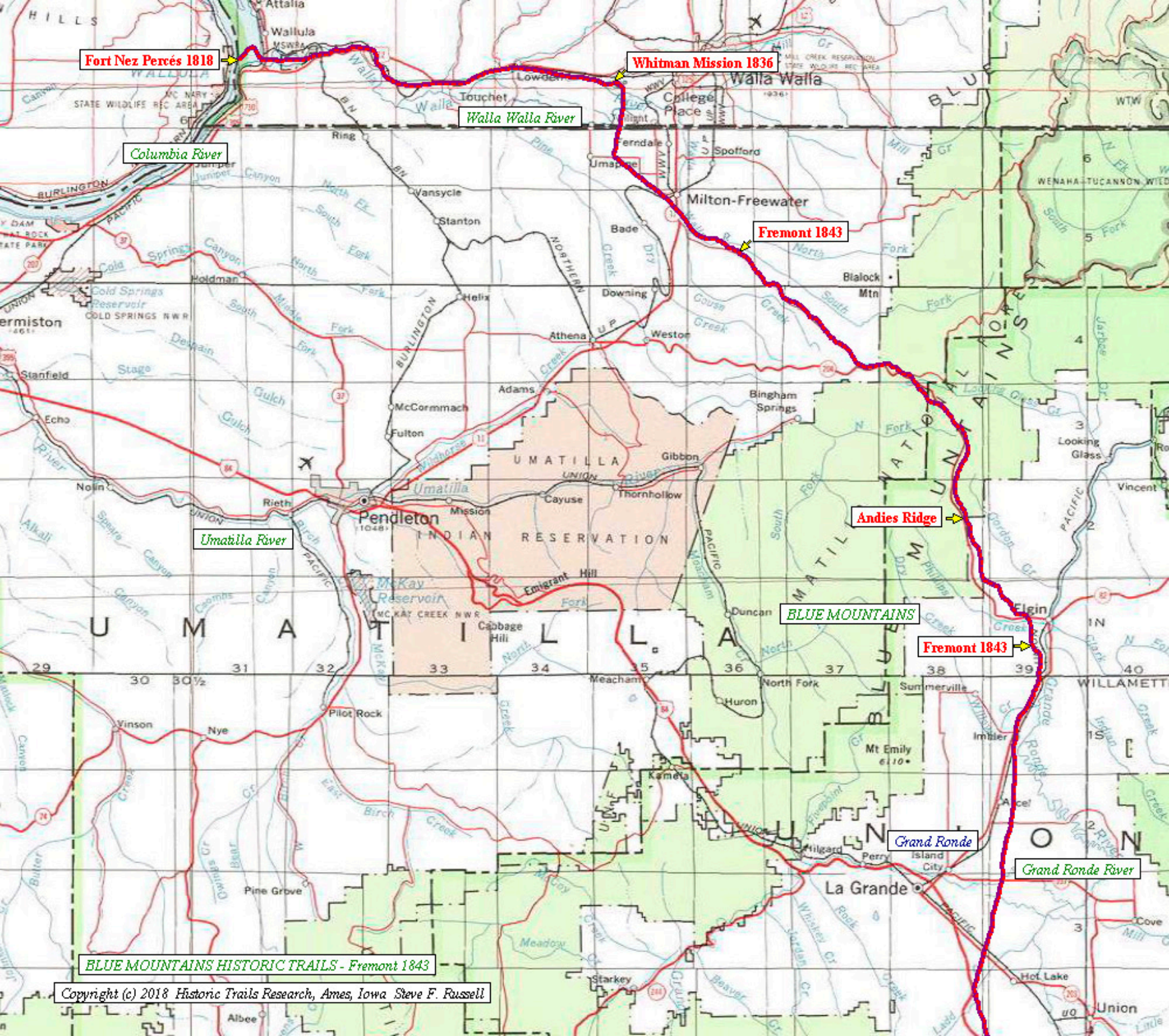
Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

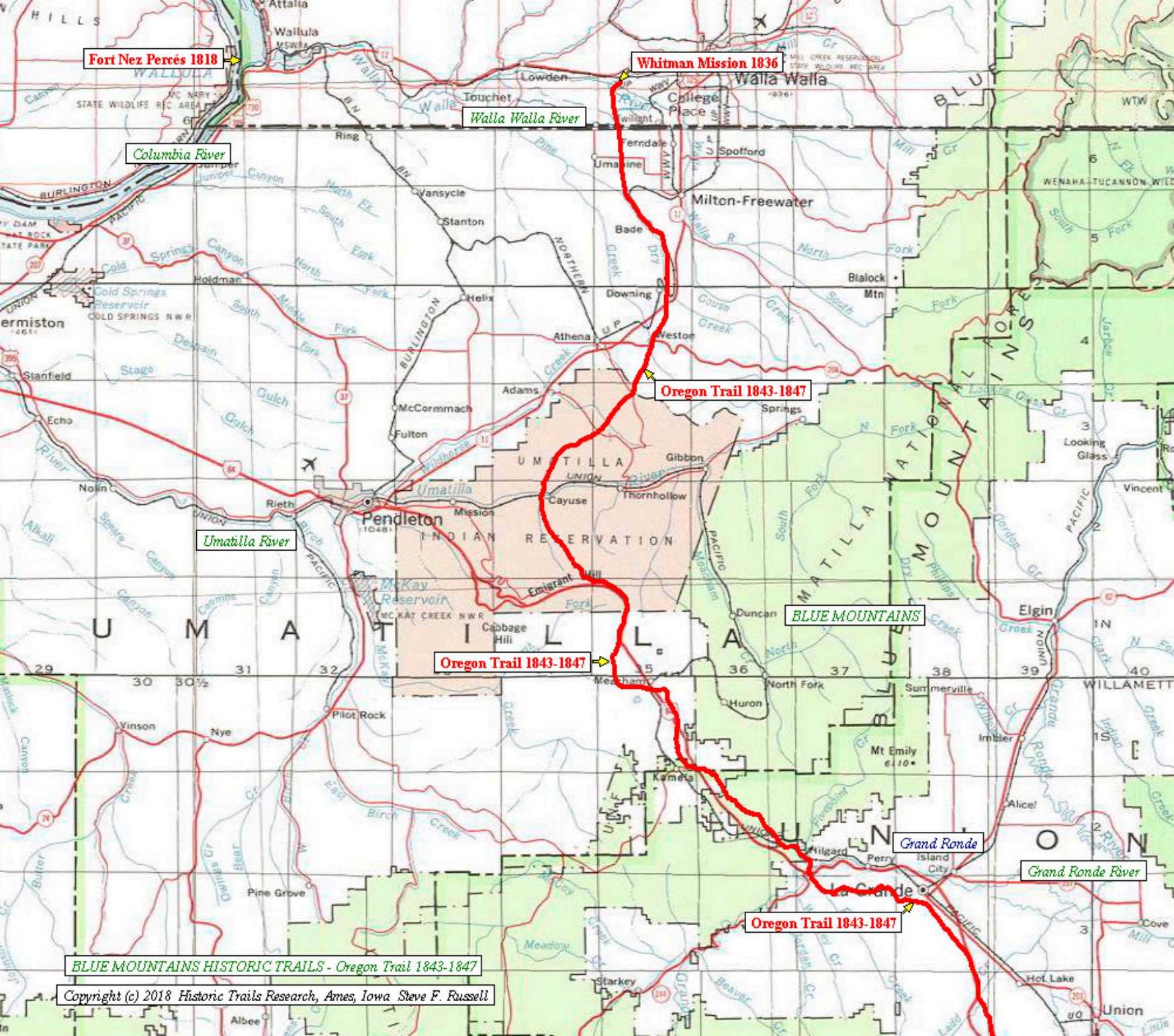
Newell and Meek 1840

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Newell and Meek 1840

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Fort Nez Percés 1818

Whitman Mission 1836

Walla Walla River

Columbia River

Oregon Trail 1843-1847

Umatilla River

Oregon Trail 1843-1847

BLUE MOUNTAINS

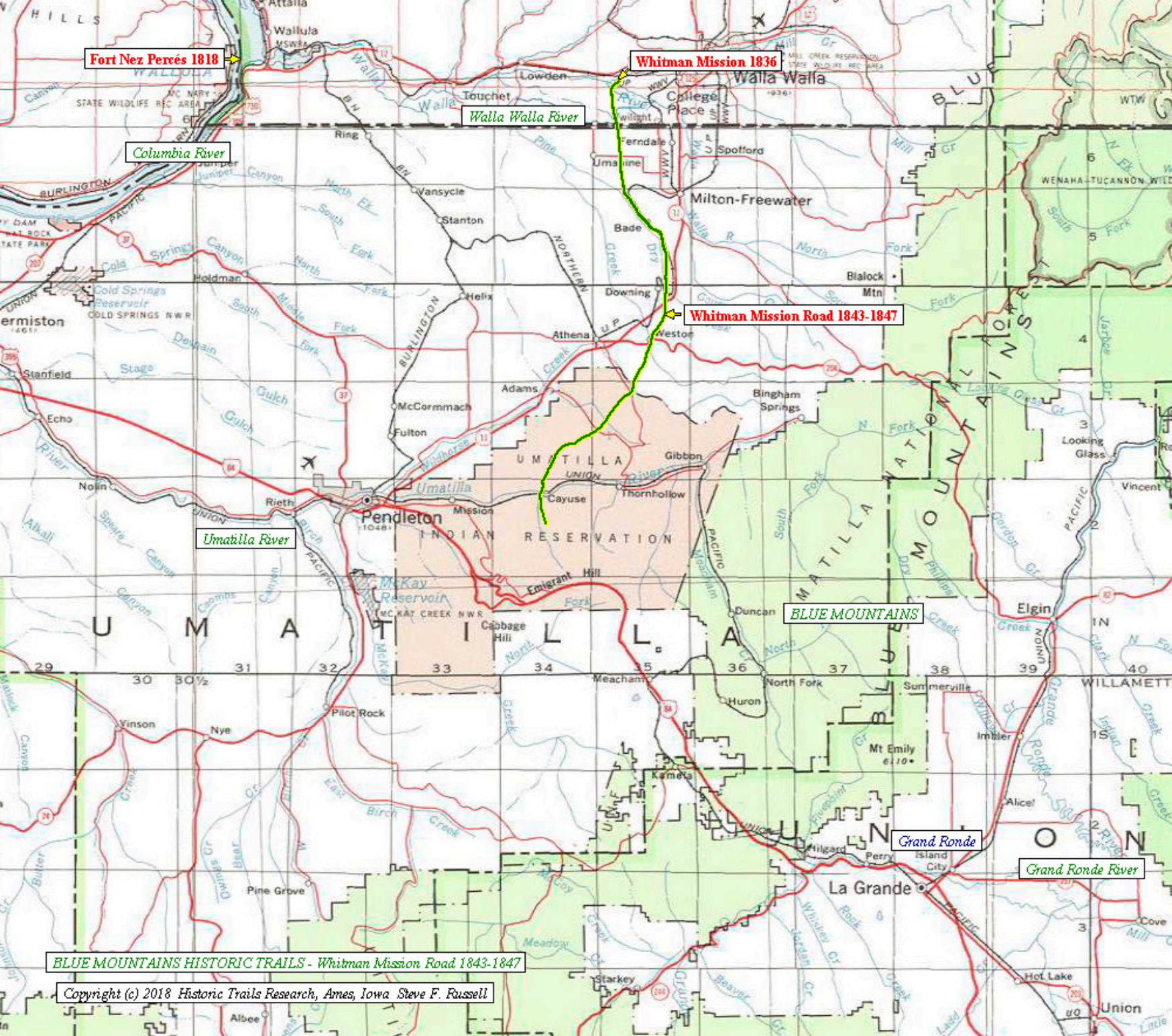
Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

Oregon Trail 1843-1847

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Oregon Trail 1843-1847

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Fort Nez Percés 1818

Whitman Mission 1836

Walla Walla River

Columbia River

Whitman Mission Road 1843-1847

Umatilla River

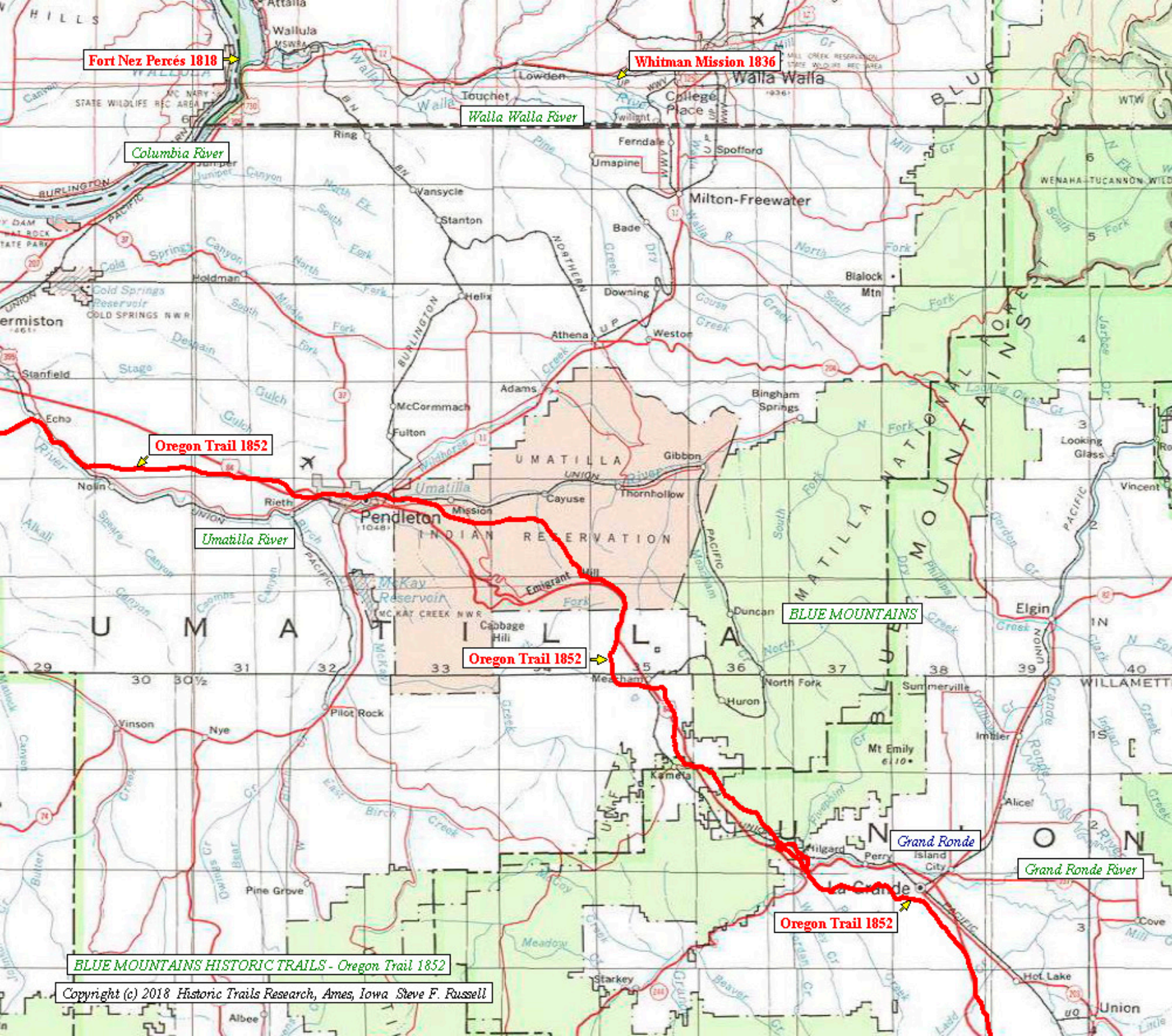
BLUE MOUNTAINS

Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Whitman Mission Road 1843-1847

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Fort Nez Percés 1818

Whitman Mission 1836

Walla Walla River

Columbia River

Oregon Trail 1852

Umatilla River

Oregon Trail 1852

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Grand Ronde

Grand Ronde River

Oregon Trail 1852

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORIC TRAILS - Oregon Trail 1852

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Highly Detailed, Research-Quality Topograph Map (PDF)

Comments and Instructions

The following page contains a very large map in PDF format. This map give a very high resolution to the trails and geographic landmarks of the Blue Mountains.

The maps can be scrolled within the PDF viewer but the trails and landmarks can also be accessed using the “bookmarks panel” on the left side of the page.

Any section of this large map can be printed with the PDF viewer by selecting the following options:

1. Set PDF page scaling. The scales 100%, 125%, 150%, and 200% are the best options.
2. On the print menu, select the following; Print Range: “current view” and Page Scaling: “Fit to Printable Area”

INDEX FOR BOOKMARKS PANEL
Trail Locations and Geographic Locations

A map for all these locations may be accessed through the Bookmarks Panel

COVER PAGE

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- Historical Background
- Difficult Oregon Trail Passes
- Elevation Profiles for Blue Mountains Passes
- Composite Overview Map
- Large Scale Map

Individual Blue Mountain Trails Map Sheets

- 1811 Hunt TOPO!map
- 1812 Stuart TOPO!map
- 1818 Walla Walla Trail, Kitson, Ogdon, Wyeth, Whitman TOPO!map
- 1832 Wyeth TOPO!map
- 1840 Newell and Meek TOPO!map
- 1843 Fremont TOPO!map
- 1843 -1847 Oregon Trail TOPO!map
- 1843-1847 Whitman Mission Road TOPO!map
- 1852 Oregon Trail TOPO!map

Oregon Trails over the Blue Mountains 1811-1852 (Large Map)

Map Title Block

1811 Hunt

- Clover Creek
- LaGrande, Oregon
- Five Points Creek
- North Fork Meacham Creek
- Umatilla River
- Moonshine Creek
- Pendleton, Oregon
- Horseshoe Curve, Mud Spring Canyon
- Echo, Oregon, Umatilla River

1812 Stuart

- Fort Nez Perces and Fort Walla Walla, HBC
- Wallula Junction
- North Fork, Juniper Canyon
- Middle Fork, Cold Springs Canyon
- Cold Springs Canyon
- Pendleton, Oregon
- Spring Hollow
- McKay Creek
- Johnson Creek

Mcintyre Creek
Red Bridge State Park
Hilgard Junction State Park
LaGrande, Oregon
Clover Creek

1818 Walla Walla Trail

Clover Creek
Ladd Canyon
Grande Ronde River
Nunemaker Spring
East Meacham Creek
Horseshoe Ridge
Gibbon Ridge
Umatilla River & Thorn Hollow Creek
Athena, Oregon
La Marr Gulch
Warm Springs Canyon
Walla Walla River
Fort Nez Percés & Fort Walla Walla HBC

1832 Wyeth

Clover Creek
LaGrande Municipal Airport
Grande Ronde River
Five Points Creek
Owsley Creek
Horseshoe Ridge
Gibbon Ridge
Umatilla River
Wildhorse Creek
South Fork of Cold Springs Canyon
Middle Fork of Cold Springs Canyon
Juniper Canyon
Wallula Junction
Fort Nez Percés, Fort Walla Walla HBC

1834 Wyeth

Clover Creek & Ladd Canyon
LaGrande, Oregon
Five Points Creek
Owsley Creek
Gibbon Ridge
Umatilla River
Athena, Oregon
Pine Creek
Walla Walla River, Warm Springs Canyon
Fort Nez Percés, Fort Walla Walla HBC

1836 Whitman

Clover Creek & Ladd Canyon
LaGrande, Oregon
Five Points Creek
Owsley Creek
Horseshoe Ridge
Gibbon Ridge
Umatilla River
Athena, Oregon
Pine Creek
Walla Walla River, Warm Springs Canyon

1843-47 Oregon Trail

Clover Creek
Grande Ronde River
California Gulch
Sheep Creek
Meacham
Emigrant Spring
Moonshine Creek
Hollow Creek
Dry Creek
Mud Creek
Whitman Mission 1836
Walla Walla River
Zanger Junction
Fort Nez Percés, Fort Walla Walla HBC

1843-47 Whitman Mission Road

Moonshine Creek
Wildhorse Creek
Weston, Oregon
Milton-Freewater, Oregon
Whitman Mission 1836

1843 Fremont

Clover Creek
Grande Ronde River
Elgin, Oregon
Andies Ridge
Lookingglass Creek
Linton Mountain, Big Saddle
Milton-Freewater, Oregon
Whitman Mission 1836
Tonchet
Wallula
Fort Nez Percés
Fort Walla Walla HBC

1852 Oregon Trail

Clover Creek
LaGrand Municipal Airport
LaGrand, Oregon
La Grand River, Railroad Canyon
California Gulch
Blue Mountain Forest Wayside
Emigrant Spring State Park
Deadman Pass
Moonshine Creek
Pendleton, Oregon
Yonkum Road
Echo, Oregon

HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

Fort Nez Perces
Fort Walla Walla HBC
Columbia River
Walla Walla River Valley
Walla Walla, Washington
Whitman Mission 1836
Umatilla River
Pendleton, Oregon
Milton-Freewater, Oregon
Moonshine Creek
Emigrant Hill
Deadman Pass
Emigrant Spring State Park
Meacham, Oregon
Hilgard Junction State Park
McKay Creek
Johnson Creek
Flat Spring
Red Bridge State Park
LaGrande, Oregon
Island City, Oregon
Grande Ronde
Ladd Creek
Imbler, Oregon
Elgin, Oregon
Andies Ridge
Woodland Park Campground
Tollgate, Looking Glass Creek
Big Saddle, Basket Mountain
Blue Mountains
Blue Mountains
Blue Mountains



Oregon Trails Over the Blue Mountains 1811-1852

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2018

Scale
0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 km