

BENTON COUNTY CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY 1983



INVENTORY NUMBER 474

AREA: South Benton/Bellfountain  
 T 14S R 6W SECTION 11  
 TAX LOT # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Dawson Rd., near Foster Rd. junction

Owner: Benton County

Historic Name: Bellfountain Park

Theme: Recreation

Construction Date: ca. 1850

Type/Use: Park

Style: Rustic

Recorded by: R. Clark  
 Date: May 5, 1983  
 Rating: 1

Condition/ 7  
 Excel (10), Fair (5), deteriorated (1)

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Roll DD # 5A south side

Story \_\_\_\_\_ Frame \_\_\_\_\_

Roof \_\_\_\_\_ Eaves \_\_\_\_\_ Frieze \_\_\_\_\_

Basic shape \_\_\_\_\_ Additions \_\_\_\_\_

Interior Chimney \_\_\_\_\_ Exterior Chimney \_\_\_\_\_

Dormers \_\_\_\_\_ Bays \_\_\_\_\_

Siding \_\_\_\_\_ Cornerboards \_\_\_\_\_

Typical Windows \_\_\_\_\_

Porch Roof \_\_\_\_\_ Posts \_\_\_\_\_ Placement \_\_\_\_\_

Foundation \_\_\_\_\_ Other Structures \_\_\_\_\_

Notable Elements Table cut from one log, it is 114 feet long, 40 inches wide, it is perhaps the longest table in the U.S. cut from one continuous piece of wood.

Alterations \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Historic Significance Possibly the first park established in the county  
 Re: Harold McCallum

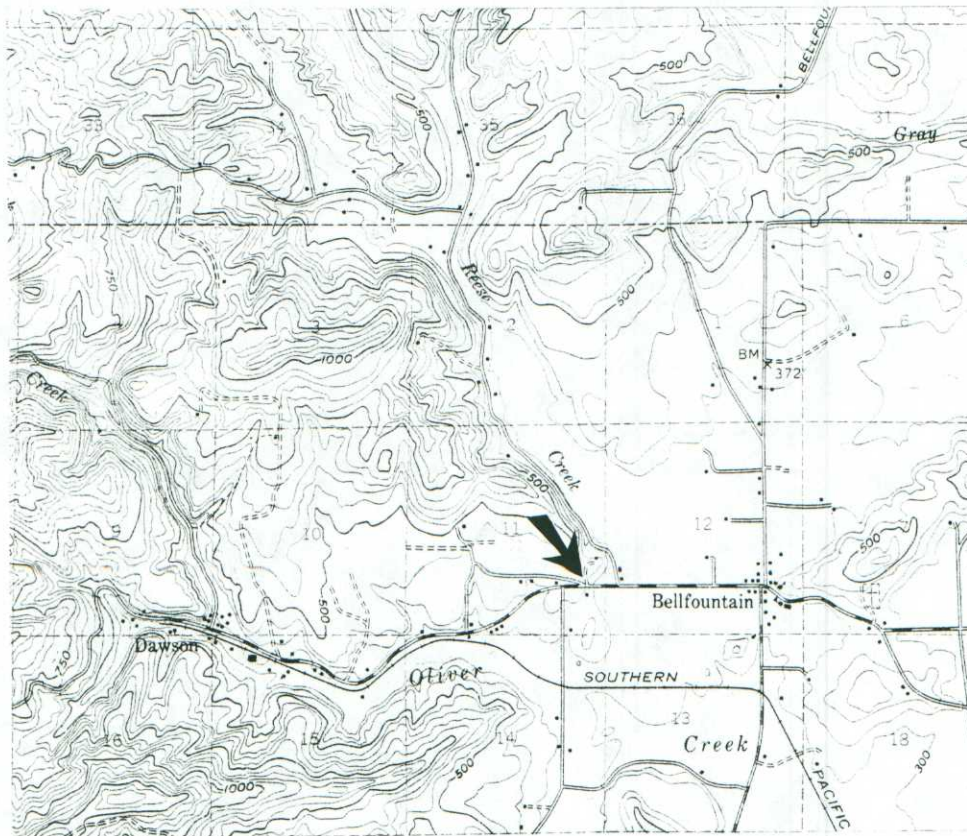
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*more info. in 1986 inventory*



Photo No. NN2

View to north



MONROE QUADRANGLE

T 14 R 6 S 11



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Bellfountain Park is significant as Benton County's oldest "park." As the location of religious camp meetings in the 19th century, the park was a focal point in the religious and social life of the Belknap Community.

Early settlers of the Belknap Community voted to have a Methodist Camp meeting in 1851. Apparently, the camp meeting was an established tradition for many members of the Belknap Community prior to emigrating to Oregon. A committee was selected to choose a site for the meeting. The site chosen was located on the Orin Belknap Donation Land Claim. The site was chosen because of a large spring of cold water and a natural amphitheater in this location.

From 1851 until the turn of the century, camp meetings were held in this location each year during the week between the last Sunday in June and the first Sunday in July (between haying and harvesting). The wide, level, space above the "amphitheater" slope, provided a place to set up tents and room for the horses to be stabled. In addition to the religious function of the camp meetings, the meetings were a time to renew old acquaintances. The meetings also included baptism and marriage ceremonies. When the Orin Belknap land was sold, the Methodist Church trustees decided to purchase the land. On November 8, 1871, the site was purchased from George and Cynthia Humphrey for \$250.00. Camp meetings were discontinued in 1904. At this time, trustees of the Simpson Chapel of the Methodist Church transferred the land to the trustees of the Bellfountain Park Association and their successors. Original trustees included J.M. Edwards, J.R. Buckingham, George W. Humphrey, S.C. Starr, and J.P. Gragg. Since that time, the land has been used as a public park. For many years it was the site of reunions for the descendants of the pioneer families of the area. In 1961, the Bellfountain Park Association leased the park to the Benton County Park and Recreation District and in 1970 the deed to this land was transferred to the county. Religious revival meetings are still held in the park occasionally.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

Benton County Deed Registry.

Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, June 10, 1959.

Hull, Ralph, Personal Communication, Jan. 30, 1985.

Mc Callum, Vernetta, "Notes on the History of Bellfountain Park," Manuscript, n.d.

Mintoyne, Edna, They Laughed Too, Naylor Co., San Antonio, Texas, 1968.

Teal, Marion, "Diary Tells of 1851 Camp," in Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, April 30, 1952.

Recorded by: Mary Kathryn Weber  
Kathy Schutt

Date: Dec. 13, 1984

BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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Photo No. DD5

View to \_\_\_\_\_

Longest picnic table in the United States cut from one continuous piece of wood.

