

Ping Yang on the Mohawk

A Driving Tour to Marcola Oregon

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The history of Asians in the Mohawk Valley of Lane County, Oregon has been largely forgotten. This self-guided tour can help you rediscover it. Marcola, Oregon is only about 15 miles Northeast from Eugene and the trip makes a lovely afternoon drive. You may want to read the articles on our web site about Ping Yang, Mabel and Shotgun Creek first.



First Stop: Ping Yang, now called Mohawk or Donna

Leaving Eugene go east on Hwy 105 to Springfield. Get off at the Mohawk Blvd exit and go left. The next stoplight will be Marcola Road. Turn right. You will stay on Marcola Road the entire journey. Just a few miles from Eugene is the place that, 100 years ago was called Ping Yang. Today the area is known as Mohawk or Donna and few remember that it was once named after the capital of Korea.

Turn left at Hill Road and Marcola Road. The Mohawk Community Church will be on your left. After making your turn you will see the historic Mohawk General Store, built in 1914. This is a great place to stop. The exact location of the old Ping Yang Schoolhouse is not known, but it was across the road from the Mohawk General Store near the church. The store, built in 1914 is owned by nice people who are very interested in preserving the history of the area. They also have beef jerky from local, free range beef. The land across the road from the store was owned by Reverend John Mulkey, who helped start the Ping Yang School. The farm on the hill behind the store was owned by Joe Huddleston who is believed to have bombed it. Between 1895 and 1901 the community was split in half by people in favor of the school and those against it. You can read this fascinating story on the web site.

Second Stop: The Japanese Colony at Shotgun Creek

Mabel and Shotgun Creek are just a few miles up Marcola Road. You will see the turn-off to the left for the BLM's Shotgun Creek Recreation Area. You would never guess it today, but 80 years ago, Mabel was a thriving community. It may have been one of the most diverse communities in Oregon. A large lumber mill here employed up to 50 Japanese immigrants along with many Italians and Greeks and even a few Punjab Sikhs. The mill was owned by the Robert Dollar Steamship Line which brought many of the new arrivals to America. As you drive to the parking area you will pass Dollar Road.

When you arrive at the Recreation Parking Area there is a \$3 per car fee (not per person). However, the small fee is well worth it. You can hike around beautiful trails and creeks. While nothing of the lumber mill or the Japanese's houses remains almost every place you walk is where they lived and worked. It is also where scenes in the 1960's movie Shenandoah were filmed. The Mohawk River is near the road.

Also, just 12 miles more up the road is the old town of Brownsville. It is very historic and has an excellent museum. The Stephen King movie Stand By Me was largely filmed around Brownsville. From here you can get on I-5 and return to Eugene or by driving back down Marcola Road.