Sarah Plymale and her family arrived in Jacksonville in October 1852, traveling on the Applegate Trail. Within a few weeks of their arrival, Sarah's father and oldest brother died of typhoid fever. Two years later the 15-year-old Sarah married gold miner and local businessman Lewis Henry Zigler. Zigler also had arrived in Jacksonville in 1852 after crossing on the Oregon Trail.


Courtesy SOHS

In 1878, after moving to Roseburg, Sarah paid Peter Britt $1 for eight acres of mined-over land along Jackson Creek. The reason for Peter Britt's gift of a once valuable piece of land and the source of his irrigation water supply is a mystery. A fire at the Ziglers' hotel in Roseburg in 1884 claimed the life of Lewis as he was trying to rescue his guests. Sarah and their youngest son, Stell, were badly burned. Sarah died 22 years later in Roseburg at the age of 52.

Her granddaughter, Zelia Zigler Von Tress, and her great-grandson, Vernon Brown, donated the Sarah Zigler Woodland Park, bordering the Peter Britt Woods, in 1993 to the city of Jacksonville.

For more information, follow the numbered posts as you walk Sarah's namesake trail.

**1** The start of the trail is located on the grounds of the Peter Britt homesite and gardens. Born in Switzerland, Peter Britt (1818-1905) arrived in Southern Oregon in November, 1852. Britt built his home on this hillside overlooking the Rogue Valley. Face the kiosk and turn to your left. If you walk a short distance you will see the re-built foundation of his home, which by 1885 had evolved from his early log cabin into an elaborate two-story frame house. You can read more about the Britt family home on the plaque located near the homesite.

As a skilled horticulturist, Britt is credited with planting Southern Oregon's first peach tree. He also successfully grew apples and pears on this hillside.

Just downhill from the foundation you can stand on the spot where Britt took this vineyard photograph. The 15-acre vineyard was planted in 1854-55, the first commercial vineyard in Southern Oregon. By the 1880s some 3,000 gallons of wine a year were produced under Britt's "Valley View" label. Remnants of his old stone-lined wine cellar, originally part of a 3-story building, can be seen from the walkway where it joins Highway 238. A plaque detailing Peter Britt's life is also placed along the walkway.


Courtesy SOHS

**2** From the kiosk, on the right side of the trail, you will see what is believed to be Oregon's oldest living giant sequoia tree. This giant was planted by Peter Britt on March 22, 1862, the day his son, Emil, was born.

**3** English Ivy and Vinca, non-native or 'exotic' species, have periodically escaped the cultivated landscape of the Britt Gardens. It is hoped that on-going efforts to remove them will protect the native vegetation, such as the madrone trees you see here, and the area can be returned to a more natural environment.

**4** On the slope above you can see an overstory of Pacific madrone, white and black oaks, and Ponderosa pine. The understory may include poison oak. Touching the leaves, stems and fruits of this plant often causes itchy rashes on the skin. Remember: "If it has leaves of three, leave it be."

**5** Looking up the hill, the Douglas fir trees here are second-growth. This area was heavily logged in the 1850s to provide wood for the growing town of Jacksonville. The trail ahead to the left leads to the upper Britt parking lot.

**6** This level portion of the trail follows the route of the old Britt Water Ditch which ran from Jackson Creek to the orchards and gardens of the Britt home. Chinese laborers dug the first open ditch in the 1860s. In an effort to save water, Peter Britt had wooden pipe laid, which was eventually replaced with steel pipes. Many of these are visible along the trail.


Courtesy SOHS

**7** This north-facing slope has a unique micro-climate that is resulting in an ever-changing forest. Years of drought upset a fragile water cycle. Eventually the water-dependent Douglas firs may die, and young trees or brush may grow to create a different view. Meanwhile, if you look across the highway at the south-facing hillside, you will notice fewer tall trees. Less moisture is available to plants here because of the sun exposure. Jacksonville's annual precipitation averaged only 17.9 inches in the years 1985-1994, compared to the previous historic average of 30 inches.

**8** Another factor in the changing forest is beetle infestation. During the drought of the 1980s a massive infestation killed hundreds of trees in the Woodlands. Dead and dying trees and some underbrush are periodically removed to reduce fire danger. Insects and diseases are integral parts of the forest ecosystem. The end results are openings in the forest that allow for the growth of new trees or brush.

**9** Next to the trail here you can see exposed rock. Rock here is predominately made up of marine sediments and volcanics that were desposited in ocean basins. Decomposed granite is found in the area because granitic rocks were widely intruded into the marine sedimentary and volcanic rocks. These rocks were of interest to miners because they could indicate gold.

**10** In 1851 gold was first discovered about a quarter mile to the south, on the other side of the high ridge, by a "Mr. Sykes". In February 1852, Sykes mentioned his find to two mule-packers, James Cluggage and James Pool, who were on their way to California. Cluggage and Pool struck gold on what is now Daisy Creek. The gold rush in "Rich Gulch" was on. Within a few months miners fanned out around the area claiming and excavating every creek bed, including Jackson Creek, below you on the north side of the trail. What started as a small tent camp, located between Daisy and Jackson Creeks, quickly grew into a bustling community of thousands. In 1884 writer A. G. Walling described it: "Soon the silent hills and gulches were touched as if by the wand of an enchanter and whitened with the tents of thousands of eager hunters...the town site itself burrowed and honey-combed with drifts and tunnels, and the oppressive silence of nature changed, in a few months, to a scene of restless activity."

**11** The cement structure in the creek bed below was once part of a pumping system used for watering Rogue Valley Railroad locomotives. A 3-mile spur line was built along the creek to haul out logs, bricks from a brick factory located about a half mile west, ore from mining and gravel from a quarry. It operated from 1891 to 1924.

**12** To your right you can see the remnants of old gravel piles, the result of hydraulic mining, which replaced the earlier placer mining operations in the 1870s and 1880s. Huge flume-fed "giants" were washing away Jacksonville's hillsides in search of ore. Jackson Creek's course has been changed many times in past decades, as the stream was diverted by the miners' cofferdams.

**13** Jackson Creek again hummed with mining activity in the early 1930s in the depths of the Great Depression. New open pit mines and 'glory holes' were dug all over Jacksonville and its surroundings. Look for evidence of glory hole mining from trails on the higher ridges. The origin of the inscription on the rock here is a mystery at this time.

**14** Lewis Henry Zigler, with the help of 12 Chinese men, washed out $1,200 worth of gold per day from this section of Jackson Creek. In the 1930s, Stell Zigler, the youngest of the 7 children, was the last member of the family to mine on Jackson Creek. The few cents of gold he panned out each day paid for his groceries.

**15** The slope to your left may be covered with wildflowers if you are here in the spring. Early-spring blooming plants include bittercress, trilliums and false Solomon's-seal. From the trails above this one in the oak woodlands, you may find fritillarii, including the rare endemic Gentner's. Please do not pick flowers as they may be endangered.


False Solomon's-seal
Smilacina racemosa
Photo: Jeanena White


Gentner Frittilaria
Fritillaria gentneri
Photo: Jeanena White

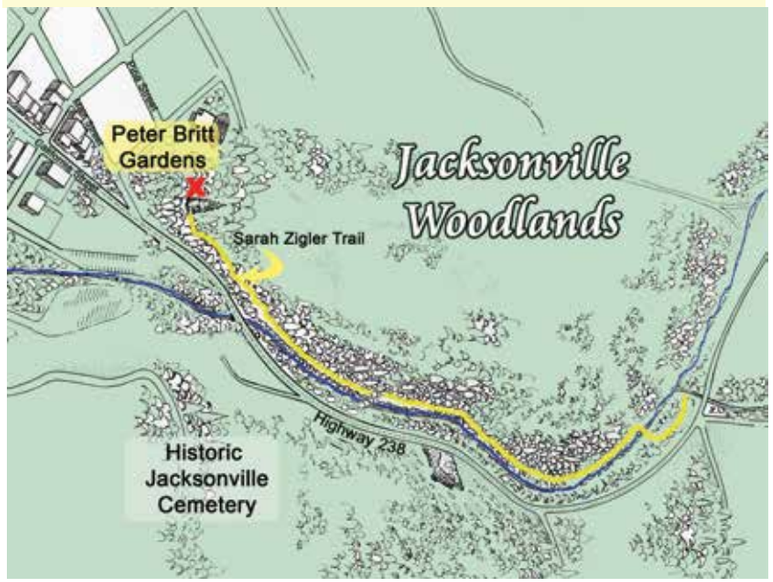
**16** As you descend closer to the creek you are entering a riparian zone. This area provides a home for hardwood deciduous trees such as big-leaf maple, mountain mahogany and Oregon ash. Even though Jackson Creek is a seasonal stream, water is usually present in this section. Continue your walk to the bridge.

**17** The trail ahead that forks off to your left is the Jackson Creek Trail, which will take you up to the Britt Ridge trail above. The Sarah Zigler trail continues across the bridge. The bridge was built in 2012 as a joint project of the City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Woodlands Association. It replaced one built in 1995 by the Applegate AmeriCorps. It was here that Peter Britt's gravel dam diverted creek water into his water ditch. After you cross the bridge, walk through the open stand of Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir to your next stop.

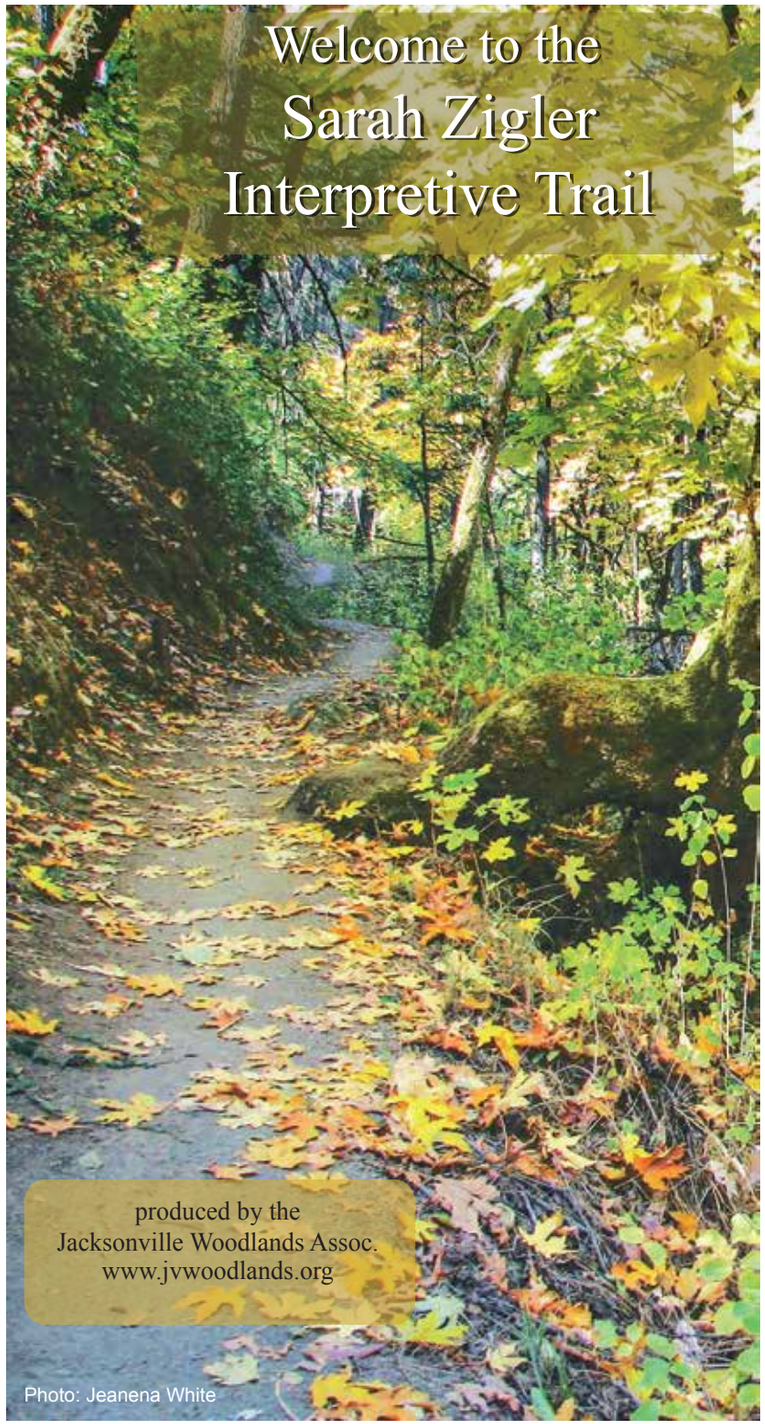
**18** A cement vault to your right marks the spot where the old city water supply line began its ascent to the Britt Reservoir. The reservoir, located about a mile from here at the headwaters of the North Fork of Jackson Creek, supplied Jacksonville's water for nearly 50 years, until 1953 when the city joined the Medford Water Commission.

**19** You are standing on the route of the old Rogue River Valley Railroad of the early 1900s. The rail here connected the old Jacksonville Brick Yard to Jacksonville. The brick yard site was located straight ahead, upstream, now covered with thick brush. It made bricks for Jacksonville and Medford from the 1850s to about 1920.

**20** This is the end of the interpretive guided portion of the hike. If you would like to continue hiking and return on another trail, continue to the next bridge. This will lead you on the Jackson Forks trail, up several switchbacks, to the top of the ridge, giving you access to more of the 16 miles of trails available in the Jacksonville Woodlands.




# Welcome to the Sarah Zigler Interpretive Trail



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