



Cottage Grove: A Look Back

The current population of Cottage Grove stands at 9,795. Once the city hits 10,000, a slew of changes must be made to accommodate the new population as mandated by state law. Our water system will be updated, our trash collection will change and our neighborhoods will grow just a bit more. But before we officially reach that magic number of 10,000, let's take a look back at how we got here. Over the next year, The Sentinel will feature this column once a month examining the milestones that made Cottage Grove the vibrant, historical town it is today. With the help of the local historical society and the stories of those before us, we will visit the decisions, construction and consequences of the city's growth. From its beginnings as Slabtown to the mining craze, to the impact of particular local families and their contributions, to the installation of Interstate 5, local chain stores and the construction and housing crash. In 30 years, Cottage Grove has developed its own style and voice but in the days before we find ourselves stretching towards the future again, let's take a look back at how we became Cottage Grove: The city on the verge of 10,000.

By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

In the beginning, there was Slabtown and Lemati. The settlements were on opposite sides of the Willamette River and a number of other things. The railroad was on one side, the post office on the other and compromise nowhere in between.

From 1893 to 1899, the city we now know as Cottage Grove was split into two distinct entities: Slabtown and Lemati. Slabtown formed on the west side of the Coast Fork of the river and enjoyed fir planks as sidewalks which also served as the originator of its name. Lemati did not enjoy such luxuries and was a muddy mess of flooding where today's Main St. is located. That is, until the railroad came to town.

Now the proud owners of the newest technology in transportation, Lemati now had access to travelers more readily than their rivals in Slabtown. The east side group, however, had the post office. That is, until it was hoisted up and stolen to cross the border and settle in Lemati.

The feud between the two towns grew to a fever pitch as development continued. The west side piped in its water but refused the east side to develop a water service of its own.

All of this, of course, was in the shadow of the original clearing of the land that came to be known as Slabtown and Lemati.

Before settlers began fighting over water and post offices in the mid-1800s, there was an existing community in the pre-slab roads of Cottage Grove.

The Kalapuya Tribe of the Pacific Northwest was living in the area along the shores of the Coast Fork, Silk Creek, Row River and the Willamette.

While history dubs the Kalapuya as a "passive" tribe that adopted settlers customs, diseases such as measles and dysentery as well as traditional means of removal saw their numbers decrease.

Old stories of the tribe note the belief that there was a particular tribal village near Bennett Creek just northwest of Cottage Grove.

While the tribes met a familiar fate, the feud between Slabtown and Lemati fueled local lore and provided yarns as colorful as more famous western family disputes.

After growing weary of the conversational moniker "East Cottage Grove," the east side opted to go to Salem to try and have its name changed despite objections from the west side.

Eventually, the two towns came together to form what we now know as Cottage Grove.

Stay tuned next week for a deep dive into the city's introduction to the railroad and the mining days that followed, allowing for Cottage Grove's first entrepreneurs to spring up; some of their earnings still seen in Cottage Grove today.



Before it was Cottage Grove, it was two divided towns with a feud that was worthy of Hollywood. Slabtown and Lemati fought over water, the railroad and the postal services before eventually coming together to form Cottage Grove proper as we know it today. Photos courtesy of the Cottage Grove Historical Society.



SENIOR MEALS

Week of March 6 to March 11

SENIOR MEALS PROGRAMS

Offering Meals on Wheels and Cafe 60 at the following locations:
Anyone age 60 and older is served, regardless of income, suggested donation is \$3.
Guests under age 60 are welcome to attend for \$8 per meal.

Cottage Grove Riverview Terrace
925 W. Main St., Cottage Grove
Noon: Tues., Wed., Thurs.

Creswell Cresview Villa
350 S. 2nd St., Creswell
Noon: Mon., Wed., Fri.

THURSDAY, March 9: Roast Turkey w/Gravy or Salisbury Steak

FRIDAY, March 10: Broccoli Cheese Omelet Bake or Chicken Pastina

MONDAY, March 13: Cowboy Campfire Sew or Chicken Tetrazzini

TUESDAY, March 14: Chicken Lo Mein or Beef Chili w/Beans

WEDNESDAY, March 15: Chicken Patty w/Gravy or Home-style Pork Patty w/Gravy

Drain/Yoncalla area

Served at 400 Main St., Yoncalla.
(For Douglas County Meals on Wheels eligibility, call 541-440-3677.)

Suggested donation \$3.00

THURSDAY, March 9: Beef Chili with Beans
FRIDAY, March 10: Macaroni and Cheese
TUESDAY, March 14: Breaded Baked Fish w/Tartar Sauce or Italian Herb Chicken

NEWSPAPERS BRING LEARNING TO LIFE!



Find Local Businesses.

Introducing the newest way to find the businesses that mean the most to you.

www.shoppelocal.biz

Find GREAT MONEY SAVING COUPONS from local businesses



Shoppe™ is a trademark of News Media Corp.

Grab a BITE of Cottage Grove

Restaurant GUIDE

FIESTA CANTINA SPECIALS
M-MARGARITA MONDAYS
T-TACO TUESDAYS W/FRESH MADE TORTILLAS
W-WELLS DOWN CALLS UP
TH-TRIVIA NIGHT
FRI. & SAT. DJ & DANCING
SUN FOOTBALL PRO SPECIALS, GIANT TV

EL TAPATIO 725 Gibbs • Cottage Grove
 Mexican Restaurant & Cantina (541) 767-0457



delicious FAMILY DINING

We'll make you feel right at home with great food and friendly service!

Daily Specials 20% off for Active Military & Vets. Tuesday Night is Senior Night 4-8 pm. **OPEN DAILY** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner 6am-10pm Sun-Thur 6am-10pm Fri & Sat.



1590 Gateway Blvd. • Cottage Grove 541-942-7144



Get our 3-Bed, 2-Bath, 4-Door, V-6 discount.



Matt Bjornn ChFC RICP, Agent
1481 Gateway Blvd
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Bus: 541-942-2623
www.bjornninsurance.com

Put auto and home together for hundreds in savings. When you have a State Farm® car and a State Farm home, get ready to drive around with a big, money-saving State Farm smile. **GET TO A BETTER STATE.™ CALL ME TODAY.**



1103161.1 State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, State Farm Indemnity Company, Bloomington, IL