

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 contruction 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

n 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 fued 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

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 dysentary as well as traditional means of removal saw their numbers decrease.

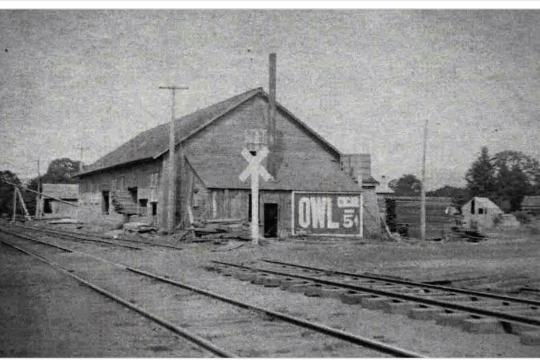
Old stories of the tribe note the belief that there was a particular tribal village near Bennett Creek just northwest of Cottage Grove.

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

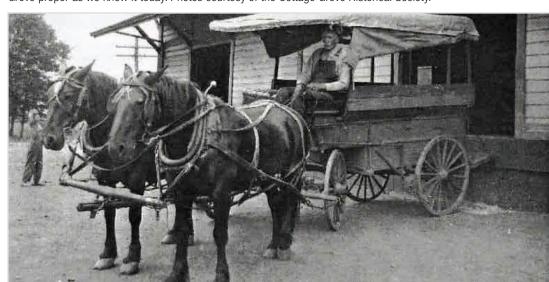
After growing weary of the conversational moniker "East Cottage Grove," the east side opted to go to Salem to try and have its name changed despite objections from the west side.

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 entreprenuers 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**

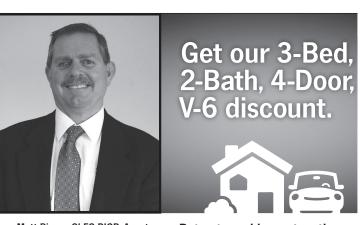
MONDAY, March 13: Cowboy Campfire Sew or Chicken Tetrazzini

TUESDAY, March 14: Chicken Lo Mein or Beef Chili w/Beans WEDNESDAY, March 15: Chicken Patty w/Gravy or Homestyle Pork Patty w/Gravy

Drain/Yoncalla area

Served at 400 Main St., Yoncalla.

(For Douglas County Meals on Wheels eligibility, call 541-440-



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



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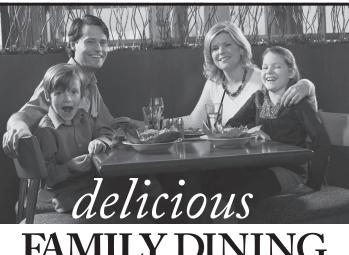
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