

Wagon Foot Over THE Coos Bay Road

THREE DAYS DELIGHTFUL TRAMP OVER THE MOUNTAINS TO ROSEBURG

BY A. E. GUYTON.

MUCH has been said about the old Coos Bay Wagon Road, that highway in Southern Oregon which extends from Roseburg in Douglas County to Marshfield in Coos County, and over which the mails are carried from the railroad into Coos Bay. It is also one of the three overland passenger routes connecting that part of the coast with the railroad. On account of the slowness of the mails in the winter, the road has received the condemnation of the coast people and has been blamed for many shortcomings. But whatever may be said of it on that score it is certain that the Coos Bay wagon road as a route for anyone who enjoys a mountain tramp, offers as beautiful scenery and attractive variations as any part of the coast country.

The road is one which was built years ago and for the construction of which the Southern Oregon Company received large tracts of timber land. The stage line runs in summer, making daily trips from Roseburg and Coos Bay and carries passengers and mail. In winter the road is impassable for stage and the mail is carried on pack horses, often with much delay and accident.

Getting out of Coos Bay on foot might sound very inviting when it is considered that it is some 72 miles to a railroad, but this feat was undertaken by two Coos Bay men, one an Oregonian representative, and as a matter of sport and pleasure, and was easily accomplished in three days. A more enjoyable trip could scarcely be planned in this part of the country.

The starting point of the wagon road is at Sumner, an old settlement noted for its cheese factory, and located about 12 miles from Marshfield. From the latter city it is necessary to take the mail boat up Isthmus Inlet, leaving at 6 A. M. After leaving the boat there is a ride of a mile and a half on a handcar over a narrow gauge railroad, and you are landed at Sumner with the mail bags. The stage leaves with its passengers and Uncle Sam's mail pouches. The boat trip has cut off part of the distance, so there is just about 60 miles' walk into Roseburg ahead of the traveler.

Captain Harris, the pioneer cheese maker and old settler of Sumner, will give you a cheerful farewell as he smiles and thinks to himself what a fool you are to walk it. But never mind, there is lots of fun ahead.

If You Don't Hurry.

By this time it is 8:30 and the real walk begins. Properly to enjoy the trip one must not think of the 60 miles to be covered over the mountains, but just walk and feast the eyes on everything pleasing there is in the way of scenery. There should be no terrible and wearisome hurry. All that is necessary is to regulate speed sufficiently that a station will be reached at meal hours and bedtime. The meals and sleeping accommodations are first-class and the charge in each case is only 25 cents if one is there on time. Stage passengers are charged more, but that is because meals must be served at irregular hours.

Soon after leaving Sumner one plunges into the woods and in a very short time the road begins to go up and the walker discovers that he is tackling the first mountain. This should be taken easily. There are refreshing springs bubbling out of the rocks, graceful twists of the road each presenting a new scene and heavy timber and thick underbrush giving sufficient shade, so that it is not necessary to be too much under the rays of the sun. The chances are that Road Commissioner Norton will happen along on his saddle horse inspecting the highway and will entertain one for a mile or two.

In Fairview Valley.

The road keeps on winding up, the "corridor" is encountered which indicates a steep incline, but the summit is finally reached. There is a walk down the other side and the traveler suddenly emerging from the timber, finds himself in Fairview Valley. Here the space between mountains widens out and there is a considerable expanse of flat land occupied by ranchers. This is the case throughout the trip. While the mountain districts are as wild as could be desired, the valleys are dotted with farms which give a relieving variation. The number of newly established pioneer homes is surprising.

Fairview, a postoffice and stage station, is easily reached by noon, and a good dinner can be bought and after a rest the journey is continued with Dora, another postoffice and stage station, as the destination for the night.

The road from Fairview leads to a bridge across the North Fork of the Coquille River. The heat of the mid-day tramps the traveler to take a few minutes' wading, with the result that he is much refreshed, and is ready for the gradual uphill course before him. The road follows through more woods, over the top of a long flat mountain, and then dips down into another valley where is reached McKinley, consisting of a school, a house, a barn and a bridge.

By this time the walker is beginning to feel hot, and really hot. The cool weather of Coos Bay has been left behind, the ocean breeze do not reach so far inland, and the sun is a brisk one, the rays of the sun are felt. But the luxuriant foliage and peaceful quiet of the country is so enjoyable that the pleasure of simply being there is worth a degree or two of heat. Besides, there is no use hurrying. It is a pleasure trip, it must be remembered, and if one feels hot he can simply go it a little more easily.

Wild Fruit Along the Road.

The salmon berries growing along the road at this time of the year will cause some natural delay. The first bush encountered the walker strips of its fruit, but soon the bushes are found to be so many in number he will only delay to pick the most luscious and larger berries, which are within easy reach. When the big yellow salmon berries grow thimble there are wild blackberries, quite as good and equally plentiful.

A few wild berries, by the way, are a good thing to eat while walking if one craves a drink of water. They will quench the thirst to a degree until the next spring or well is reached.

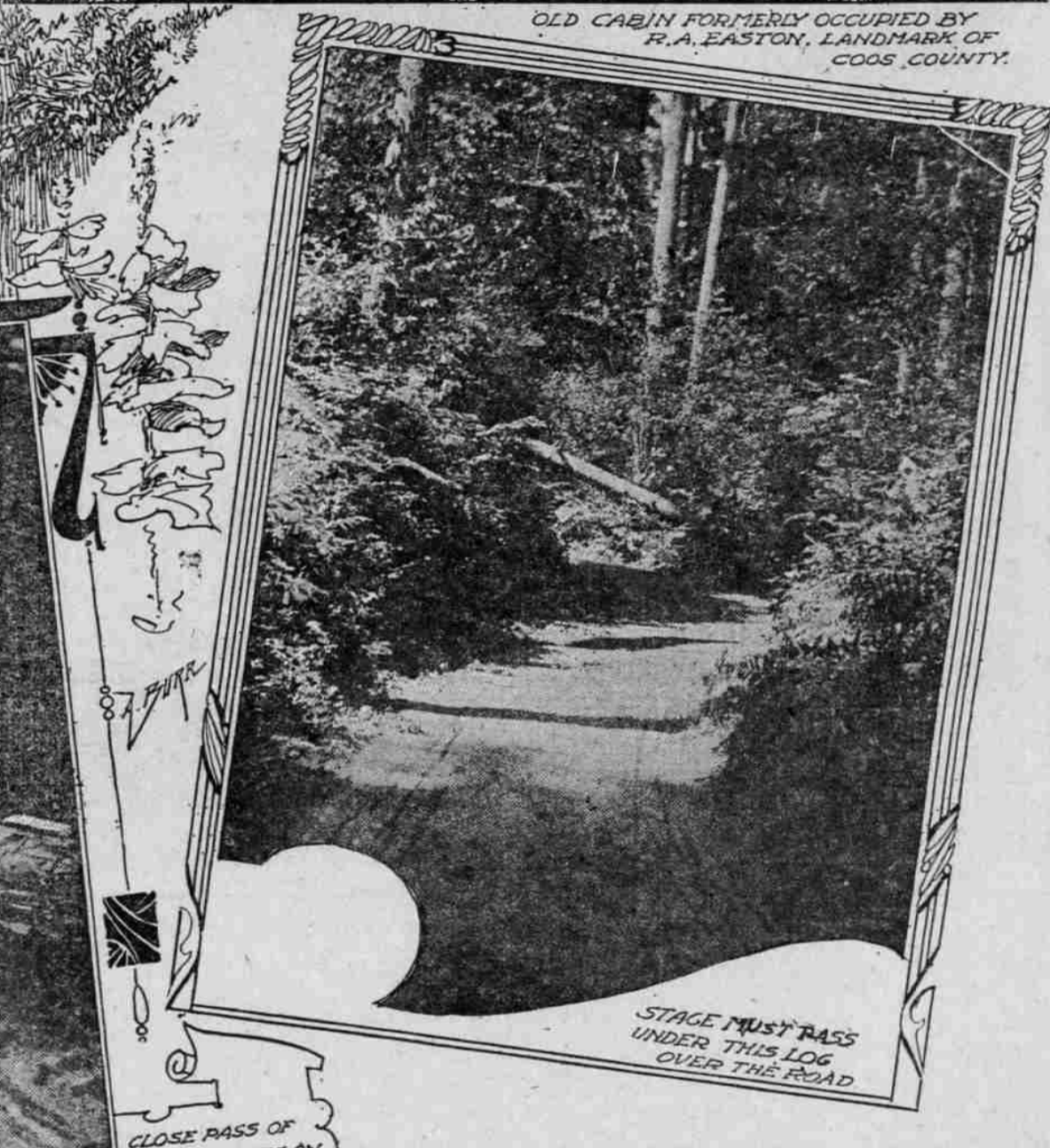
After leaving McKinley more ranches are passed. Many of these homes are new, and are located in such wild places, which are being cleared, illustrating vividly the pioneering that is being done in this part of Oregon. Through this territory there are many little brooks, in one of which another wade can be taken preparatory to the last dash for supper. This meal cannot be obtained without another climb. After a rest on the bank of one of the streams the walker goes up a steep mountain and down the other side to Dora. By this time, if one has not hurried too much, it is about 5 o'clock, and there is a chance for a general brushing and cleaning before eating the bountiful supper which is provided. After a smoke on the cozy, rock-covered front porch of the stage station, bedtime seems to come quickly. About 15 miles have been walked, and an early start must be made the next



AT THE FOOT OF THE COAST RANGE MOUNTAIN 12 MILES TO THE SUMMIT



OLD CABIN FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY R. A. EASTON, LANDMARK OF COOS COUNTY



CLOSE PASS OF MAIL STAGES ON EDGE OF STEEP GULCH

STAGE MUST PASS UNDER THIS LOG OVER THE ROAD

day, so it is not surprising that daylight will still be showing through the window when the traveler falls asleep.

Not Large, but Beautiful.

Dora is a postoffice. There is simply the one house there. The place is a ranch conducted by F. E. Schottel, who, with the assistance of several of the fairer sex of his family, sets an excellent meal, and provides comfortable rooms. Stage passengers are the usual boarders, but pedestrians are not uncommon as guests at the place. The house is a quaint little structure in a flower-laden yard, and offers just the kind of stopping place desired by one in the hurry of a man ought to be when taking a walking trip.

It may be hard to get up when called the next morning, but it is imperative. One look out of the window at the bright morning light encourages a stirring about as a prompt start must be made, as this will be the heavy day for walking. There are 27 miles to cover, and the major part of it over the big mountain. But a good breakfast at 7 o'clock, and the delight of being in the woodland road soon encountered, remove the worst kind of a grouching picture.

One of the first land marks after leaving Dora is the old cabin belonging to R. A. Easton. The owner has long since moved into a fine little cottage, but he still retains on his ranch the old cabin, a relic of his pioneer days. The deserted house is covered with vines rich in blossom, and is a most pleasing picture.

If the traveler has the good fortune to meet Mr. Easton himself he will learn all the details about the road, and also have a talk with one of the most wideawake of the old pioneer ranchers of that district.

This same sociability on the part of the owners throughout the trip, makes the traveler feel that he is welcome. The people he meets on the road stop and chat, and at the places where he stops he is made to feel at home.

In Brewster Canyon.

From the valley in which the Easton home is located, the road starts up a hill. There is climbing to do, but it is as though it were a preparation for the big one coming. The road winds around the side of the mountain. Be-

low, a hundred feet or more, runs the river, and on the other side of the road great rocks tower up, and in the background all around are mountains. This is Brewster Canyon. It is here one first obtains a view of Sugar Pine Mountain, which he must cross, and first feels the grand beauty of the coast range, and realizes that he is mountain-climbing.

There is nothing overtaxing on the strength before reaching Laird's. The road where it makes a turn at the bottom of a mountain passes Sitkum postoffice and leads on to Laird's station, which is a welcome dinner stop after making nine miles since breakfast. It is the last chance to eat or sleep indoors, unless the big mountain is crossed and the next station 17 miles distant is reached.

Laird's is a ranch located in the noted Brewster Valley, a favorite locality as a camping place for both Coos and Douglas County people, and is a district where oats grow as tall as a man and meadows produce several crops of hay. It is here that the stage horses and drivers change and meals are served, and it has the distinction of being probably the most isolated place in the state having a telegraph office. It is the only station on the telegraph line between Roseburg and Coos Bay, and in this little house at Laird's the traveler can be had direct telegraph connections with Portland.

Seventeen Miles to Supper.

In seating one's self at the Laird dinner table it must not be forgotten that this is the last chance to eat until the foot of the mountain can be had. Therefore wisely partake of everything, for supper is 17 miles and a good many hours away. Do not miss any of those fine pork and beans, new potatoes, meat, hot biscuits or coffee and do not turn down a second helping. By all means reach at least twice for that delicious lemon pie. Mrs. Laird is famous for her lemon pie, and there is always plenty of it.

Thus fortified, a good man feels equal to crossing the Rockies on foot, and the Coast Range seems as nothing. After leaving Laird's the "half-way house" is passed, and this is about the last of human habitations for a while. The old house was burned down and is being rebuilt. The Sitkum postoffice was formerly located here. Sitkum is

the Indian name for "half-way," and this house is exactly the midway point of the wagon road, but after the fire of the postoffice was moved a mile or two nearer the Coos Bay end. It is here one first obtains a view of Sugar Pine Mountain, which he must cross, and first feels the grand beauty of the coast range, and realizes that he is mountain-climbing.

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Amid Fine Mountain Scenery.

The wagon road in a general way follows a branch of the Coquille, having its source on the summit of the mountain. It flows over the rocks far below and keeps up a constant chatter, cooling to the heated traveler, and driving away any feeling of lonesomeness. Occasionally the stream is crossed by a bridge, which in one case is a peculiar structure made in the form of the letter S, necessarily because of the mountain formation. At the foot of the mountain can be had a stream and a swimming hole or wading place can be found. No end of streams and springs bubble out of the rocks, so there is no need to worry about drinking water. A little cabin, now deserted, but once the residence of a settler who has moved up on his homestead, is seen on one corner of a peak, and one thinks that the occupant must have been a real pioneer.

could excel. On the opposite side of the road the foliage is so thick the chasm is black and forbidding and one instinctively waits for the goblins to appear and be subdued by the water-calls, so suggestive is the fairy-land impression. One thinks of old Rip Van Winkle in the Catskills and little wonders that he slept for twenty years if Hendrick Hudson led him through such a place as this.

The road at one point takes quite a decline and one thinks that the summit is past. But not so; it is just a delusion. There is more to climb and lots of it. The trees increase in size before the divide is crossed and the traveler is at times in the midst of as fine specimens of Oregon fir as he could wish to see. The stately trees tower up over 200 feet from the ground and add a peculiar dignity to the surroundings.

About two miles from the top the

county line is crossed and finally the last incline is covered and the climber finds himself under the skies in a big cleared place. There are no more trees above and there is no higher to go. This is the summit, the highest point of that particular part of the Coast Range.

While a much-needed rest on the grass is being enjoyed the stage from Coos Bay will probably arrive. The stage has been easy to beat by the walker up the mountain, for the horses must go slow, but it will be different going down. Driver Sampson is an old-timer and he will not overtax his horses making the hard pull up the mountain, but when he starts down he goes.

The most delightful surprise of the trip is in store for the traveler when he makes the descent. For a short distance from the summit the road leads through thick timber and then turns

WHAT THE NEWSPAPER WITS SAY

- An Easy Word.**
Dundee Advertiser.
This is what happened to a Glasgow workman when he tried to make his wife's home life happy by reading the police news to her as contained in his evening paper. In due course he reached an interesting trial for assault, the report of which concluded as follows: "This case was held over until tomorrow, as the presiding magistrate said he found considerable difficulty in pronouncing sentence."
"Dear me," commented the reader's wife, "he canna be a man o' muckle education, surely, or he wadna ha' found any difficulty in pronouncing an easy wee word like that."
- In Lengthy Terms.**
Judge's Library.
In the suburbs of one of our great cities recently a new resident stopped in front of his neighbor's gate and inquired of the boy swinging thereon: "Is your pa home, sonny?" "No, sir," replied the lad. "He went up the road apiece."
"Gone afoot?"
"No; about a mile."
- For Slow Readers.**
Pearson's Weekly.
A restaurant keeper noticed that some of his customers annexed the current day's papers for a irritatingly long time. He hit on this little piece of sarcasm. Prominently displayed on the walls was the announcement: "Those learning to read are requested to use yesterday's newspapers."
- Botany to Rescue of Shipwrecked.**
New Orleans Times-Democrat.
There is no reason, save ignorance, why shipwrecked sailors die in their open boats of starvation."
"The speaker was a botanist."
"Let the shipwrecked include a light net in their luggage," he said, "and let them trail the net behind them as they
- man who pulls teeth. (Husband settles down to writing again.) Wife—My dear, you said this morning that linguist was derived from the Latin lingua, a tongue. Husband (crossly)—Yes, Wife—Well, dear, is a linguist a man who pulls tongues? Husband—No, madam, but I wish he did.
- In an Emergency.**
Wilkesbarre Times-Leader.
Stage manager—The star is cast for Beau Brummel, but he's got a three weeks' growth of beard and the curtain's about to rise.
Manager—Change the bill to "King Lear."
"We were overstocked with ladies' ties, but our boys was smart enough to work them off."
"How did he manage it?"
"Simply enough. Put 'em in the men's department."
- What Father Heard.**
Yonkers Statesman.
"I heard you in the parlor last night with that Mr. Huggins."
"But, father! We were very quiet."
"Yes; that's what I heard."
- Two Living Cheaper Than One.**
Kansas City Times.
"You don't believe, then, that two can live cheaper than one?"
"I do in some cases," replied Titewad. "Two ordinary women live cheaper than the one I married."
- Knew Girl Nature.**
"We were overstocked with ladies' ties, but our boys was smart enough to work them off."
"How did he manage it?"
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