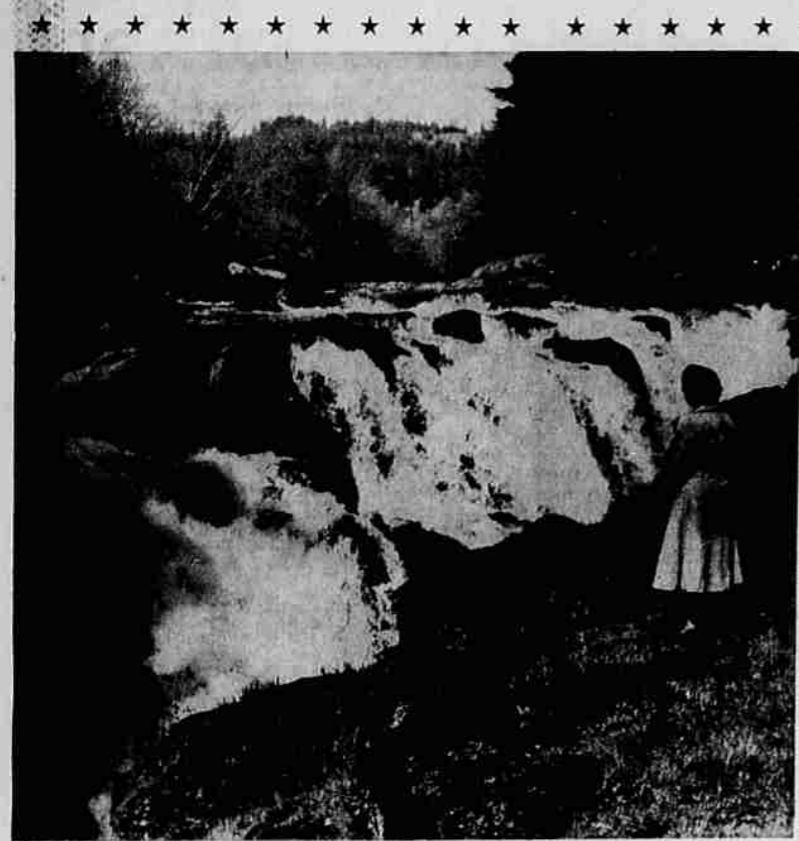


# Power From Little Luckiamute Once Vital to Falls City



## Lumbering, Agriculture Sustain Small Willamette Valley City



A typical lumbering community's business district is that of Falls City shown above. Falls City was incorporated in 1903 and has a present population of 800. At left is shown the falls on the Little Luckiamute which sug-

## Grist Mill, Hydro-Electric Plants Once Run By Stream; Potential Now Lies Dormant

By BEN MAXWELL  
Capital Journal Writer

It is a singular fact that water power of the Little Luckiamute, so quickly utilized by John Thorp and his son, Theodore, who constructed a grist mill on the site of Falls City in 1852, should now be neglected and unused.

State engineer's office has not computed the power potential of the Little Luckiamute at Falls City. But it was the power for Thorp's mill until he moved the plant in 1865 to a more central location at Rickreall.

For a number of years the stream was also power for the municipally owned hydro-electric plant. There are those now living in Falls City who believe the Little Luckiamute is a significant but undeveloped city asset offering industry a substantial seasonal power. Thorp's mill was a seasonal industry. A conservation dam impounding waters of the Little Luckiamute might also make the stream valuable for irrigation.

### TWO INDUSTRIES

Two industries now sustain Falls City — lumbering and agriculture. It is estimated that not less than 200 persons in the city's population of 800 are gainfully employed and that about 80 per cent of these are employed in local lumbering, at the Valsetz mill and elsewhere in regional production of forest products.

Atlas Lumber Co., owned by I. J. (Ike) Bartel and Walter Schmitke, is now the only lumber plant operating within the city. The firm employs 32 men and has a \$100,000 annual payroll.

Business district of Falls City consists of two grocery stores, four garages, a feed store, two cafes, an appliance store, a sporting goods store, variety store, drug store, two taverns and other interests offering the community goods and services.

At present Falls City is served

by no common passenger transit and the branch railroad passing through the city is concerned primarily with logs loaded at Black Rock some miles westward.

### CITY OFFICIALS

City officials are: Vernon Murphy, mayor; Fay Wilson, recorder and municipal judge; Mildred Davis, treasurer; Darrell Williams, city attorney; Floyd Brown, fire chief; Loyal Porter, chief of police; D. L. Ferguson, Robert Hallemann, Willard Dunaway, Edwin A. Scott, Orlo Frank and Doyle Lorimer, councilmen. Falls City was incorporated in 1903. Death of William Ellis, 98, the town's first mayor, was reported from Woodburn, Nov. 8, 1956.

Falls City has a municipal water system with Teal creek as its

source. There are about 200 local users. The fire department, with Floyd Brown as chief, consists of two trucks and 25 volunteers serving both the city and the rural fire district.

Falls City high school, a six year school with pupils from the seventh through the 12th grade, has William McCammon as principal. Here there are seven teachers and 115 students. The elementary school with Herschel Bond as principal has seven teachers and 125 pupils from the primary through the sixth grade. The city has four churches.

### BOWMAN POSTMASTER

Richard M. Bowman is local postmaster with Joyce Murphy as his assistant in this third class office.

About 300 persons receive their mail here and there are five star routes operating from the office.

History of Falls City postoffice is somewhat involved. On Feb. 8, 1885, an office was established on Frank Hubbard's farm about a mile east of what is now Falls City.

This office was called Syracuse and mail was delivered twice each week. One source says the office was moved to Falls City on October 28, 1889; another gives the date as July 1891 when A. M. Bryant was postmaster.

After 1885 when Thorp moved his grist mill to Rickreall the site of Falls City, then known as Luckiamute Falls, was rendezvous for hunters and fishermen.

About 1890 promoters conceived the location as a resort site and the name was changed to Falls City by the Falls City Development Co.

This company recorded a plan for North Falls City on July 3, 1891. A few months earlier, on February 24, 1891, H. S. and Esther Montgomery had prepared a plat of South Falls City that was later recorded by Clerk C. G. Coad.

Both plats featured a Main street that survives to this day on each side of the Little Luckiamute.

First significant enterprise in the new town was a sawmill established on the south side by John Montgomery. Falls City forgot its origin and became a typical sawmill town.

During an interval there was a large mill within the town and 15 smaller mills nearby.

The larger mill was built by Bryan and Lucas in 1901 and sold to Cobbs and Mitchell in 1912. In 1922 the operation was moved to Valsetz and the idle plant at Falls City burned in 1933.

Population of Falls City in 1900 was 269. Come 1910 and it had increased to 969. In 1920, when the Cobbs and Mitchell was in operation, the population reached a peak of 994. A decade later it had slumped to 484.

In its heyday Falls City had a bank, a newspaper and a cannery. Oregon Almanac for 1915 gives Falls City a population of 1200, a bank with \$70,000 in deposits and a quarry that supplied building stone of excellent quality.

Lumbering over an interval of 60 years has given Falls City a

substantial payroll but an erratic one. Even now there is a busy season for the camps and mills followed by an interval of inactivity. Present demoralization of market for certain forest products is reflected upon the economy of Falls City.

There are those who believe that the property will continue with more efficient utilization of forest products.

Others see unutilized power of the Little Luckiamute sustaining a new industry, not necessarily associated with forest products.

They also foresee an agricultural potential for the region if water from the Little Luckiamute were first utilized for power and then diverted for irrigation.

They have not forgotten bygone times when C. J. Pugh's loganberry juice plant became the A. E. Rupert cannery that flourished un-

til 1928. When the timber is gone they view agriculture as their sustaining industry.

### Mayor



VERNON MURPHY

## Municipal Building



The Falls City Municipal building pictured above, houses the city's water office and library.

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## Tokyo Stock Mart Plunges

TOKYO (AP) — The Japanese stock market Wednesday plummeted in the wake of the Bank of Japan's hike of its interest rate.

The bank's interest for discounted domestic and import drafts rose from 7.565 to 8.295 per cent — a record Japanese high since 1900.

The Bank of Japan governor explained that the deflationary decision was made to "check the ever growing investment activities and also recent sharp increases in imports."

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## Jobs Increase 2,000 in Ore.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Employment in Oregon and Washington increased during the month of March, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said Tuesday.

Washington gained 13,600 jobs for a total of 775,000 and Oregon gained 2,000 to reach a total of 446,000, the bureau said.

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