

BLACK SAND MINING IN EARLY DAYS.

Some Pioneer History of the Lower Coquille Country.

(We take the following from Orvil Dodge's Pioneer History of Coos and Curry counties.)

One of those who first penetrated the wilds of Coos County was A. H. Thrift. Mr. Thrift, when a mere boy, only sixteen years of age, accompanied the Marple and Harris Co. down the Middle Coquille and cast his lot with these heroic adventurers, known as the Coos Bay Co., and even followed the Florence excitement in 1862, at which place he and Joseph Perry helped at the obsequies of Perry B. Marple, who led the pilgrims into the wilds of Coos Bay. In 1866, while living at Port Orford, he started to Empire City to procure some flour, but stopped at Randolph and sent Joe Gurley on for the supplies. John Dame and A. H. Hinch, who were also at Randolph, accompanied

north of Whisky Run during the decade and a half following 1853.

Mr. Edward Faby, Sr., gives his reminiscences of the early days on this coast in the following:

"I arrived at Port Orford on the steamship Peytona in the spring of 1854. The captain having a number of passengers for Port Orford and as the sea was running very high he was compelled to choose between taking them to Portland or landing them at the imminent risk of their lives. He chose the latter alternative and ordered the second mate to take the passengers ashore. I stood near the mate at the time and heard him grit his teeth and in a tone not heard by the Capt. replied that he would take them ashore or take them to hell. Now in as much as I left the State of

We built the first mill on the lower Coquille river and practically the first merchant sawmill in the Coquille valley. Hamblock and myself run this mill about a year and although we received \$35 per M. feet delivered at the mines, we came out a little behind, owing to the poor way in which the old sash sawmill was constructed. John Hamblock, W. D. L. F. Smith and myself took the contract of sawing white cedar for exportation and before finishing the said cargo the two former partners withdrew and I shipped the cargo on my own account. This lumber was shipped on the Florence E. Walton, Capt. Kane, during the month of April, 1861. This vessel was the second one built at the North Bend ship yard. McDonald, a Canadian, was the architect, and it was built for Walton & Scudder, San Francisco. This was the first cargo of lumber shipped from the Coquille river. Walton and Scudder were the first to establish a salmon fishery at Rogue river.

During the winter of 1858 Christopher Long and myself bought the Coquille ferry, now Bandon, and I raised the finest crop of spuds in what is now the main street, that has ever been raised in Coos County. They were especially fine in the vicinity of where now stands the post-office and barber shop.

During the fall of this year Dr. Hermann came here by way of Roseburg where he met old John Yocum, who prevailed on him to come down here, where he bought the pre-emption right of H. H. Baldwin, the oldest living pioneer of Coos County.

After making arrangements for improving the place, John Hill brought the doctor down to have a look at the mouth of the river. After satisfying himself of the future of the river, they both returned to John Hamblock's residence where they were hospitably entertained, and after a day's rest I saddled my horses and took him to Empire City where he crossed the bay and went to the Umpqua, from whence he took shipping for San Francisco.

The following spring, May, 1859, the doctor and his party from Baltimore arrived at Port Orford, and from there by ox wagon to the Coquille. After camping out all night near the mouth of Two Mile creek they reached the ferry early next morning. Upon their arrival I enquired for Mrs. Hermann and on introducing myself invited herself and

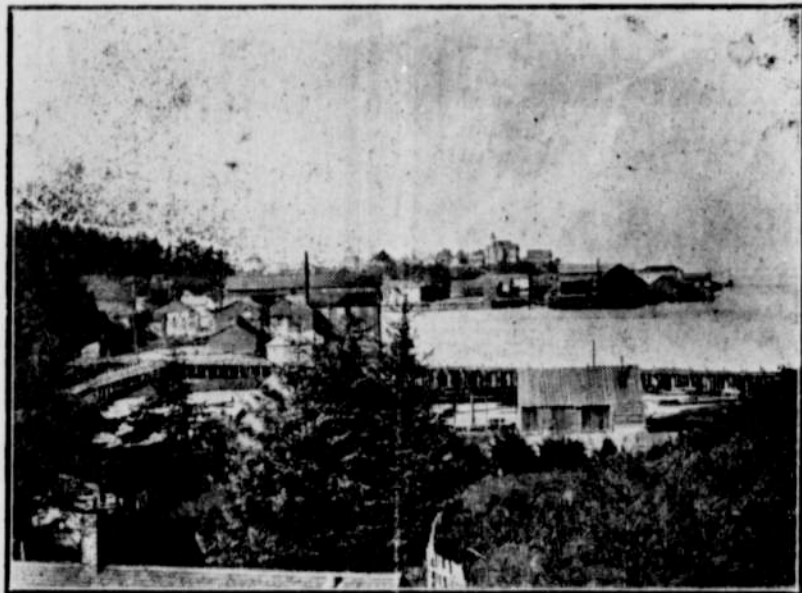
tation Old Uncle Tommy Lowe and myself started in our skiff to attend the celebration and got as far as Cunningham landing, now Coquille City, and encamped for the night where now stands the city wharf. Here we met the then embryo Congressman Binger Hermann, wearing a little round jacket and waiting for a chance to get up the river. We had plenty of provisions, and making a hearty meal, prepared to camp for the night. Uncle Tommy told stories of Mississippi keel boating and steam boating, Master Binger sang "Nellie Gray" and other ditties and I cracked a few jokes. Next morning, July 3, we pulled up as far as the ford above Myrtle Port and camped with David Holland. The next morning we wended our way to the picnic grounds where an oration was delivered by F. G. Lockhart and short addresses by one or two others. Presently John Hill announced dinner and, after doing ample justice to John's barbecue, all adjourned to the dance hall and kept it up right merrily until 7 o'clock next morning. This was the first celebration of Independence Day in Southern Coos County.

During the fall of 1861 or '62, have forgotten exactly which, John Flanagan started the first salmon fishery on the Coquille river. His camp was situated about half a mile from where now stands Prosper Mill.

During the summer of 1862, I purchased the machinery of the circular sawmill of Mr. Schroeder, which he brought from Baltimore, and in 1866 built the mill which I still own. The following year Pohl and Grab built the Myrtle Grove mill and the year after that Capt. Parker built the Parkersburg mill.

In 1866, Hinch discovered the celebrated black sand mine which he subsequently sold to John Pershbaker, Charlie Pershbaker and Joe Perry. They subsequently sold to S. B. Lane, who operated it for a number of years.

The first vessel to come to this river was a sloop from Crescent City in 1859, commanded by a little Irishman named Jimmie. The next was a schooner sent here by John W. Sutton of Port Orford with goods to establish a branch of his house and assigned to Henry Myers of Myersville, now Myrtle Point, and another branch of his house under the management of John Hamblock at Randolph. The next was Capt. Rackleff with the



MANUFACTURING DISTRICT, BANDON.

M. Thrift on a hunting expedition. Coming to a small stream Hinch stooped down to drink and saw gold mingled with the sand. Thrift purchased Dame's interest in the find and he and Hinch went to work and staked off claims and commenced preparing for operating the mine. As soon as their sluices were down Hinch was arrested for an alleged crime, but Thrift continued the work, keeping on the lead. Hinch was acquitted and returned to work. They took out \$66 per day with only one man shoveling, and using but one tom. These mines were finally sold to John Pershbaker. Thrift received \$11,000 and Hinch some more than that. John Pershbaker later sold out to Simon Lane for \$28,000 coin paid down. Thus we have the early history of the celebrated Lane Black Sand mine located inland from Whisky Run and six miles north of the mouth of the Coquille river. Mr. Thrift invested the proceeds of his mine in one of the best dairy and stock farms on Floras creek, where he and his family enjoy all the comforts of life. In 1889, Mr. Thrift laid off a town at the foot of the mountain that pushes its base out to a beautiful glen of timber on his farm, and gave it the name of Dairyville.

Mr. Thrift was at Randolph during its heyday of prosperity.

The first beach mining was done in such a crude way that but little of the precious metal was saved. Rough boards and blankets were the only means adopted until finally quicksilver and the tom were introduced by a man who became very wealthy. One man purchased the blowings, as the sand dump was called, and using quicksilver in working it over, acquired a large fortune. McNamara and McKey took out \$80,000 from 120 feet of beach about 200 yards south of Whisky Run. McNamara would fill a pond powder can with gold-dust and put a good supply into his pockets, go to Port Orford, imbibe freely, lay around with thousands of dollars in his pockets, but was never robbed. Mr. Thrift thinks that at least one million dollars in gold dust was taken out at Whisky Run and not less than ten million along the beach from Gold Beach to four miles

New York on account of the terrible heat, I had no desire to embark with the mate with the prospects of landing in a warmer latitude so I waited for the whaleboat from shore and when we touched terra firma I was requested to hand over eight dollars, which I did, and having just ten cents left I generously handed that over also stating at the same time that he had just sized my pile. Such was my introduction into Coos Co., Or., and, financially, I have just about held my own ever since.

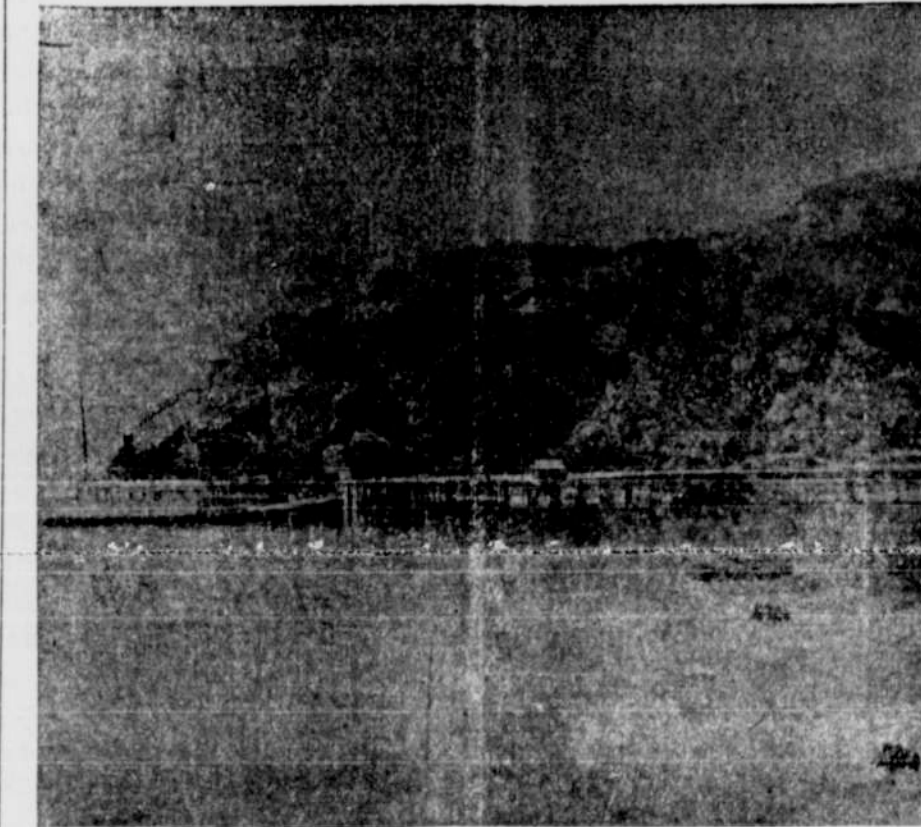
Having just come from the east I was not aware that every man was supposed to carry his bed along with him wherever he went, consequently when I got to Tichenors' mill I found my downy couch to consist of a puncheon floor and when I awoke next morning I shivered like a dog in a wet blanket.

The proprietors of the above mill, Neefus, and H. B. Tichenor, were good paymasters and paid very generous wages, from \$65 to \$150 per month.

Times passed pleasantly until the Indian war of 1856. About the 8th of February, 1856, John Hamblock and myself made a flying trip to the mouth of the Coquille river, and on our return we found abundant evidence of the hostilities intended by the Indians, and sure enough, on the night of the 22d of February hostilities commenced at Rogue river. The people at Port Orford erected a block house for the protection of their families and here all the people of the town gathered at night for better protection, not knowing when the place would be attacked. At the mill we also built a block fort around the boarding house and stood ready to defend the property of our employer and stayed by it until the close of hostilities.

After three and a half years service at Port Orford mill, John Hamblock and myself moved to Randolph, where we have continued to reside ever since.

As a sample of the cost of living in those early pioneer days flour, including the cost of packing from Port Orford, cost us from 10 to 14 cents per pound, sugar from 14 to 16 cents and bacon hams from 24 to 27 cents per pound.



PORT ORFORD HEADS AND WHARF.

friends to the hospitalities of the best that bachelor's hall could afford.

As the morning advanced, boats were gotten ready and the whole party taken to Hamblock's residence where they were most hospitably entertained. On the way up the river, Mr. Schroeder's son, Willie fell overboard and though Binger Hermann, then a youth, plunged into the river to rescue him, the boy was drowned. The body was subsequently recovered.

During the following month, July, the new settlers sent word to the coast that a celebration and barbecue would be held at the residence of John Hill. In response to this invi-

schooner Twin Sisters, in 1859 I believe. The next was the schooner Florence E. Walton, already mentioned. All subsequent ones such as Capt. Generous, Capt. Brown of the old Mose etc., are all more or less familiar.

The raising of cranberries is an industry that in the near future will be the source of considerable revenue for Coos county. The berries raised are of good quality and there is a splendid market. The industry is in its infancy but there is much land in the county suitable for their cultivation.

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2 lots in Cartridge add. to Bandon, \$ 400	35 acres, ¼ mile river front adjoining Bandon, and 11 lots 2,500
7 lots in Woolen Mill addition 350	2 lots with house, in Bandon 800
9 lots in one block Woodland addition 35-50	280 acres woodland and grazing land, house and barn, 5 miles from Bandon, a snap 1,000
30 acres near Fair Grounds, good house and well, 100,000 ft timber 600	8 lots in Woodland Addition 1,000
320 acres, good house, barn and other outbuildings, part cash and part time, price 2300	129 acres fine valley land all in grass, with buildings, 24 head of sheep, 3 cows and 6 other cattle 2,000
160 acre dairy ranch in Curry Co. with 126 bearing fruit trees 1600	32 Timber claims, Cedar and Fir and Tan Bark timber, each 800 to 1,000
18 lots Portland addition, each 5.50	2 one acre tracts outside of town limits of Bandon 300
19 lots Portland addition, each 11.00	1 Lot with two story business building on 1st St 1,500
160 acres farm, grazing and timber land 1600	1 New dwelling house and lot in Bandon 1,200
150 acres with immense outrange 750	1 tract with good 1000 feet river frontage, good new house wharf and fish house and other buildings 1,800
400 acres farm and timber land, over 300 acres bottom land 3500	And many other tracts too numerous to mention.
261 acres bench, timber and bottom land near Bandon, a fine dairy ranch 4000	
1 lot 50x80, house, barn and other buildings, Port Orford 600	
176 acres coal land, ¼ mile river front, 14½ acres tide land 2650	
5 lots with house, fenced, Bandon 1500	
2 lots with house and barn, Woodland addition 1200	
1 large business building, best location in town 4500	
1 house, 2 lots, fine water and creek 700	
8½ acres, half bottom, house and small barn 1400	
317 acres, 140 acres in grass, house barn and outbuildings 2500	
160 acres 3 miles from Bandon, good house, barn and other buildings, fine garden and lots of matchwood 1600	
262 acres good hill ranch, farm and grazing land, house, near Langlois 3200	
900 acres, 200 a bottom land, 7 room house, hay sheds and barn, cuts 100 tons of hay, large sawmill frame up, 20 cows, right on county road on Elk river, five miles from Port Orford 15000	
1 lot in South Bandon 50.00	
160 acres, 40 acres of timber, about 1,000,000 ft. cedar and fir, Bandon, grazing land 550	
900 acres fine grazing and farm land, partly improved and mostly all in grass, a bargain \$6.50 per acre 3340	
1463 acres of fine timber and grazing land 19,025	
33¼ acres of dyked, 21 acres river bottom land, balance timber, lot No. 1 5,178	

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