

# Coquille Valley Sentinel

THE PAPER THAT'S LIKE A LETTER FROM HOME

COQUILLE, COOS COUNTY, OREGON, MONDAY, APRIL 25, 1921.

1c. Paid.  
Coquille, Ore.  
Permit No. 3

## THE FIRST HIGHWAY TO THE BAY

### Gus Bennett Tells the Story of Its Construction 36 Years Ago--Sooners Buck and Drane made the First Trip Over

The following interesting story of the building of the first wagon road between Coquille and Marshfield is from the pen of G. A. Bennett, one of the old timers at the Bay. It was first published in the Marshfield Daily News on April 20th:

Preparations are being made by the citizens of Coquille to celebrate the completion of the paved highway between Marshfield and that city. Numerous old-timers recall the opening of a wagon road between the two points, which, at the time it occurred, was a long step in advancement, as regards the settlement of the country and the beneficial results obtained. It is true that there was a trail between Empire, via the black sand mines at Randolph, to the mouth of the Coquille river. This trail was used in the '50's for pack trains between Empire and the beach mines at Whiskey Run, north of the mouth of the Coquille. H. P. Whitney, who did the principal butchering for the Coos Bay section, used this trail afterwards to bring cattle from the coast section to the bay, and it was also used to some extent by the few settlers who lived on the lower Coquille and on the coast. It was merely a trail, and a rough one at that, as the writer who rode over it numerous times can testify; and besides, it could only be used in the summer and early fall as the first heavy storm blocked it with fallen timber, and the reopening of it in the spring fell to the lot of H. P. Whitney, who had to open it at his own expense in order to bring cattle and sheep from the ranches down the coast.

This trail was of no benefit whatever to the settlers who lived on the middle and upper sections of the Coquille river. Their only means of communication with Empire, the principal town of the county and also the county seat, was by way of Beaver Slough; a tramway with a mule and cart owned by Judge Gilbert Hall across the isthmus, connecting Beaver Slough with the head of Isthmus Slough at Judge Hall's place which could only be reached at the service of the tide. In 1874 the Utter coal mine was opened in the vicinity of Coaledo, which the little village which sprang up near the head of Beaver Slough was called, and a narrow gauge railroad was built from the mine to Utter City on Isthmus Slough. The enterprise did not prove a paying investment, and after a few months, during which some cargoes of coal were shipped, the mine was closed; but the little railroad was kept in operation and was a great improvement over the old way, in the matter of passengers and freight traffic between the Coquille and Coos Bay. Beaver Slough, however, still remained as a barrier to any extensive traffic between the two sections of the county.

In the late '70's Coquille and Coos Bay people commenced talking county road from Coos Bay to Coquille City. The latter place was in its infancy and contained but comparatively few houses at this time, but gave encouraging signs of becoming a town of no mean importance in the not far distant future. Talk, however, was all that it amounted to for a number of years, as it was considered that the county was too thinly populated, and consequently too poor, to build such a road. It might be stated in passing that the population of Coos county in 1870 was 1644, and in 1880 it had increased to 4834. H. P. Whitney, who was very anxious to have the road built, not alone for business reasons, but who recognized the fact that it would prove a factor of no mean importance in inducing settlers to come to this new country, was not discouraged. He kept agitating the matter and finally succeeded, as we learned by looking over the files of the Coos Bay News, of which paper we were now and editor at the time.

Work was commenced on the road in 1883, and the first work done on bridges was the driving of piles across Coalbank Slough, half a mile from the Newport coal bunkers, west of Eastport. The piles were driven in March, 1883, under the orders of H.

P. Whitney, road supervisor. Work was also commenced under Whitney's orders on the bridge across Shinglehouse Slough, and this bridge was finished September 7, 1883. The bridge was 440 feet long and 11 feet from the ground in the center, and the work of building was in charge of J. P. Russell.

The contract for building the bridge across China Camp Creek was let to W. F. Hill and J. M. Siglin by R. W. Getty, acting for the county, at Coquille City, on August 24, 1883, at \$1.50 per running foot. This bridge, which was about 1500 feet long, was finished on March 5, 1884. The News stated at the time that it was estimated that \$500 would be required to put the road from there to Coquille City in good condition for teams.

In the middle of March, 1884, Fred Jarvis made a trip on horseback over the route, and the following month put a stage between Coquille City and Coaledo, connecting with the railroad across the isthmus and a steamer at Utter City on the Coos Bay side.

The portion of the road from Marshfield to a point on Isthmus Slough opposite Coos City was completed early in June, 1884. The bridges across Davis Slough, Pope and King sloughs were finished the following month.

The last spike in the 90-foot bridge, on the road between Southport and Wall's place on Isthmus Slough, was driven on Wednesday, June 24, 1885. The road was then completed and open for travel.

The Coquille Herald, John Dean owner and editor, which made its first appearance in September, 1882, claimed that "R. E. Buck got away with the Coos Bayites, he having driven his team over the Coos Bay & Coquille wagon road first." We answered him in the Coos Bay News, stating that the road was not completed when Buck came through--two bridges still remained unfinished--and that he had to secure the assistance of some of the workmen to get his wagon across the gulches. When the last spike was driven in the bridge between Southport and Wall's place, a little before noon on June 24, 1885, John D. Garfield's team was the first to cross the bridge. Williams' mule team from Marshfield went through a few hours ahead, but the planks were not spiked down. County Judge Geo. M. Dyer and wife and Fred Schetter and wife made the trip to Coquille City the same day, and they were the first to make the through trip after the last spike was driven. Cy Goodman claims the honor of having brought the first wagon load of freight over the new road. He brought a load of chittim bark from Coquille City, using an ox team and took back a load of flour.

By July the road was in good shape, and an item in the News says that there was a great deal of travel between the two sections of the county. The average time made by buggies between Marshfield and Coquille was four hours. (In the Pioneer History of Coos and Curry counties it is stated that the road was built in 1884. This is a mistake.)

E. A. Anderson, who was owner of the livery stable at Marshfield, was among the first to drive a freight team over the road. The News in the first week of July stated that E. A. Anderson drove a team over the new road for the purpose of delivering 120 dozen of Hudson & Young's famed soda water at Coquille City. Besides the soda water there was a number of large bottles bearing labels of a Chicago brewing company. Dan Young, who accompanied Anderson, informed us that these bottles contained medicine for the horses which were liable to become afflicted by the heat on the river.

We are not disposed to argue the question of priority of passage over this road with a team and vehicle; but as to R. E. Buck's exploit in butting in and getting over the road by main strength and awkwardness we may add that he did not go it alone but was accompanied by P. E. Drane of this city.

During the construction of this first Coos Bay-Coquille Valley Highway in 1883 to 1885, Geo. M. Dyer

## Commission Is Coming Down

In its Sunday's report of Saturday's meeting of the State Highway Commission at Portland, the Oregonian seems to have got some slight glimmering of the fact that a celebration of the completion of the Coos Bay-Coquille Valley highway is to be held somewhere in this county some time the last of the week, but to still have no definite idea of its location.

It says in its summary that the "commission will visit Coos bay and eastern Oregon" and further along that,

"The Commission will depart for Coos Bay Thursday. The commission will arrive in Marshfield Friday, April 29, to attend the celebration of the completion of the hard-surfaced highway between Marshfield and Coquille."

"On this trip the commission will look over the road between Coquille and Myrtle Point and will carefully examine the possible location of the Roosevelt highway link between Coquille and Bandon. Then the commission will go down the coast to Port Orford, backtracking again, and then heading for the eastern Oregon tour. By the time they return it will be time for the May meeting."

## LOUISE RIDDLE TAKES MISS KALBUS' PLACE

The Sentinel is in receipt of advice from Mrs. McComb, leader of Home Demonstration work in this state, that Miss Louise Riddle has been appointed successor to Miss Minnie Kalbus as Home Demonstration Agent in Coos county, and the appointment has been approved by President Kerr.

It is stated that Miss Riddle is very highly recommended. She comes from Canyon county, Idaho, where she has been home demonstration agent since 1917, and has given splendid satisfaction.

She has been well trained for the work, having been a student at the Kansas Agricultural College at Manhattan; and also having spent two years at Pratt Institute and one year in post graduate work at the University of Washington.

Mrs. McComb plans to come to Coos county with Miss Riddle this week, reaching here Wednesday or Thursday.

Coos county has always been more than satisfied with our former county agent and present Bank Agriculturist, J. L. Smith, who was educated at Manhattan, and our people need have no misgivings in getting another student of the Kansas college to take Miss Kalbus' place.

## Pluvius Still Pelting Us

For the past three days the occasional showers the weather bureau promised to us have been coming very frequently and with such liberal downpours as to make us fear that autos will find it difficult to navigate the slough in front of the Sentinel office next Saturday even with pontoons.

Friday night gave us a sleet storm and Saturday gave us as kaleidoscopic changes from shower to sunshine and back again as the most typical April day. Last night and today, instead of the clearing weather we have been hoping and expecting to see come with northerly winds, for more than six months, we have had a continuation of the same monotonous south-west gale that has prevailed for nearly a year and rain enough to keep ducks, geese and other web-footed bipeds thriving and wood piles growing a fine crop of moss.

## I. O. O. F. Celebration Tomorrow

We are requested by the committee in charge to notify every Odd Fellow and Rebekah in Coquille and vicinity that they are going to miss one of the biggest and best things ever put on by Coquille Lodge No. 53, if they fail to attend the doings at the hall tomorrow (Tuesday) evening. From the dinner at six o'clock until midnight there will be something doing every minute.

It is the celebration in honor of the one hundred and second anniversary of the founding of the order.

Calling Cards, 100 for \$1.50.

was county Judge, as stated in Mr. Bennett's article. In 1883 the county commissioners were S. C. Rogers and H. W. Holvertott; in 1885 they were Chas. E. Edwards and Thomas Norris.

## Gov. Olcott Is Expected Here

A. J. Sherwood received word from the State Highway Commission Friday night that they would be glad to accept Coquille's invitation to be present at the opening of the Coquille-Marshfield Highway next Saturday. They stated that Mr. Booth and Mr. Yeon would positively be here and that the third member, Mr. Barrett, would be also, unless imperative business called him to eastern Oregon.

C. J. Sherwood has not yet promised that he will be here, but the committee is counting on his first assurance that he knew of no reason why he couldn't come, and have advertised that he will be here.

State Engineer Nunn has also been invited to be present.

With this array of state officials and the mayors and councilmen of all the towns in the county expected to be present, and with all the other things planned, the only obstacle which can possibly interfere with the complete success of the celebration is the weather man.

The Coquille Commercial Club's official weather bureau says it will not rain next Saturday. If it does he will lose about 100 per cent of his reputation as a prognosticator.

## ROAD MEETING TO BE HELD TOMORROW

In deciding to go ahead with the building of a main trunk road in Coos county on a fifty-fifty basis with the county court, the State Highway commission has put it up to the officials and people of this county to do something and do it quickly.

The court does not see how it is possible to meet half the expense of the completion of the highway construction from the Douglas county line to Bandon without issuing bonds for additional funds. And it will be idle to sell a bond election to take care of that matter unless urgently needed funds in other portions of the county are provided for at the same time.

So the court has decided to call a meeting of representatives of the commercial bodies of the county for consultation, at Coquille at 2 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, April 26.

The reason that more time is not given for this call is that action must be taken at once if a bond election is to be called on the date of the special state election to be held June 7.

So the Commercial Clubs and Chambers of Commerce of the various cities of the county are urged to lose no time in providing for representation at the meeting here next Tuesday.

## May Have Base Ball Team

Base ball talk is becoming quite common on the street and it is altogether probable that Coquille will be represented in the Coos County League. Those most active in sporting matters have secured a lease from W. H. Lyons of his field in the north end of town, rent free, but with the condition that any agreement is subject to the sale of the property; or a base ball organization might be effected which could purchase six acres of the tract on liberal terms. The next consideration would be the erection of a grand stand. From the interest being shown it is a pretty safe bet that base ball will be one of this summer's recreations here.

## Legion Has List of Slackers

The local post of the American Legion has received a confidential list of the slackers who evaded the war draft, from Adjutant General White at Salem. There are over 600 in the state who are reported to have evaded their duty and the government has begun active prosecution against all who can be found.

The Legion is authorized to notify the Sheriff whenever an evader is known and cause his arrest. The list sent the post here contains about 20 names.

## Found Coast Road Good

E. F. Russell, who recently made a business trip to Eureka, California, in his own car, says that going down he found the roads along the coast in as good condition as at any time last summer. Indeed, in California, where more work is being done on this road than in Oregon, they were better. Coming back after it has set in raining again the trip was not as good a one.

## ROAD CELEBRATION NOTES

### Items of All Sorts About the Preparations Making Here and Elsewhere For Next Saturday's All-Day Program

#### Remember the Bridge Carnival

"Remember the Maine," proved many a time and oft a slogan to conjure with. And now Editor McDaniel, of the Coos Bay Harbor adjures the people of that city to "Remember the Bridge Carnival" and talks thus appreciatively and enthusiastically about the coming Coos Bay-Coquille Valley Highway Celebration next Saturday:

"Those of our residents who were here when the opening of the Coos Bay bridge was formally dedicated will recall that the people of Coquille, Myrtle Point, Powers and Bandon practically suspended business and attended the function. We were grateful then, and so expressed ourselves to those visitors for the fine spirit shown."

"On April 30th Coquille, our county seat town, will celebrate the opening of a road, second only in value to the Southern Pacific line which we welcomed. The people of that city will celebrate the opening of the fine paved road connecting the County Seat with the Bay. No better road exists, and while the people have waited long and patiently, the road is now completed and will be formally opened to traffic on the day set for the celebration."

"The celebration is not a money-making scheme for the merchants of Coquille--as business on that day will be suspended. The purpose is to draw together the people of Coos county, for it is hoped by so doing that the proper impression may be made upon the governor, members of the State Highway Commission, and other prominent state officials who have promised to be present. A demand will be made upon these officials for recognition, and if this demand is backed by six or eight thousand people in a public gathering it will have its weight."

"One member of the committee who was here to personally extend an invitation to North Bend said: 'We hope the people of North Bend will come, that they will have a municipal float in the parade, as well as floats of other classes, that they will come and accept of our hospitality, that we may prove to the people of North Bend that we are neighbors of the most friendly sort.'"

"We now have a fine opportunity to show in return for the favors received at the Bridge Carnival, our appreciation of having with us the people of Coquille. The drive will be a pleasant one, and the entertainment afforded will be well worth seeing. The city administration will go, a move is on foot to have a float in the parade, and hundreds of citizens will take a day off and with their families enjoy life in the beautiful park in the County Seat."

"And of course every car will be tagged 'North Bend.'"

#### The Floats From the Bay

The following Marshfield firms have agreed to have business floats in the Highway Celebration parade here Saturday: Allen & Lewis, Martin Candy Co., Going & Harvey Co., Hale Music Co., Noble Theatre, John J. Bateman, Marshfield Auto Co., Kerr Gifford & Co., Coos Bay Iron Works and Lyons & Rooney Garage.

Besides these the following individuals promise to have decorated cars in line on that day:

E. H. Merlin, R. T. Kaufman, The Hub, W. J. Conrad, Thos. B. James, Robert Marsden, Jr., John J. Bateman, Gordon's Inc., Geo. W. Shelly, Isaac R. Tower, Marshfield Auto Co., and Joe Williams.

Judging from present indications the Times thinks that Marshfield will make nearly as big a showing in the celebration as if that event had been staged in that city.

E. R. Peterson, who was a couple of years ago the very popular leader of industrial club work in this county, has completed his college work at O. A. C. and has bought a part of the Peterson ranch on Haynes Inlet, which has about 25 acres of tide lands that lie in excellent shape for tillage, and is doing some strenuous work on the place now.

#### Parade After Noon

At a meeting of the general celebration committee Saturday afternoon, consisting of the executive committee and the chairmen of the various sub-committees it was decided that the parade next Saturday should be held at one o'clock instead of in the morning as originally planned. This was done in response to a request from Marshfield for a later hour.

The float committee over there phoned to the committee here that Marshfield would be represented by three or four dozen floats and decorated cars if the pageant was held in the afternoon, but that they couldn't get over for a parade at ten o'clock.

This necessitated a change in the hour of holding the speaking and musical program in the grove, and this event is now scheduled for 10:30 Saturday morning.

#### Big Band Saturday

The Music committee for the Celebration have made arrangements to have one of the best bands which ever represented Coquille for that occasion. Besides the local musicians, seven or eight players from the Bay have been engaged and a band of 21 or 22 pieces is assured.

Jno. E. Ross, chairman of the committee, has ordered quite a repertoire of new music and we will have something different next Saturday. Practice has been the order of the day with the members.

It is the present intention to have the band give a concert in the morning before the program of speaking and music in the park. They will also participate in the parade at one o'clock and will give another concert that evening. The program for the concerts will be published later.

#### Cleaning Up Myrtle Wood Grove

Practically all business was suspended here Friday afternoon and a working force of 60 to 75 men turned out at the Myrtle Grove and spent five hours cleaning up, grubbing out brush and carting off trash. None of the new seats nor the speakers' stand were built that day, however, and that is something that must be done this week. Everyone is busy getting ready for the biggest celebration Coquille has ever had, but there are a good many men in town who have not done anything in the grove yet. Let's all take a turn and not expect a few to do it all.

#### Decoration Committees

The Street and Decoration committees have ordered about \$100 worth of new flags which, with those belonging to the American Legion and the Commercial Club will make a very fine display. The decorator who was here last week wanted \$2 for every flag put up which would have run this item away up out of reason. The committees have a very nice plan worked out for decorating the streets and the myrtle grove, which they will execute themselves, with assistance of others.

#### Two Orchestras Saturday

Through misinformation we stated last Friday that Hegdahl's Orchestra had been engaged for the open air dance here on the day of the celebration. This was incorrect as Wm. Zinner and Tracy Leach have each been appointed to secure an orchestra of home musicians who will render the music for the dances. In case it rains the Coquille Club dance hall and Goulds' Hall will be the scenes of the largest dances ever held in the city.

#### Just Back From the Islands

Dr. W. V. Glaisyer, county herd inspector, is enjoying a visit from his father, Herbert Glaisyer, of Forest Grove, in this state, who came in Friday afternoon. The elder Glaisyer has been visiting the Hawaiian Islands since the first of the year and came up from San Francisco on his homeward trip. Yesterday the Doctor and his father went down to Bandon for the week end, but they will return tomorrow morning.