

The Coquille Valley Sentinel

THE PAPER THAT'S LIKE A LETTER FROM HOME

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COQUILLE HISTORICAL SKETCH

Pioneer Citizens and Incidents in Early Life of the City as Related by Justice of the Peace J. J. Stanley.

Every one is presumed to cherish a secret ambition to write an autobiography for publication, but only prominent or notorious persons realize this ambition. It seems to me that next to writing an autobiography, a chronicle of the important and interesting events of one's home town should hold place; and I really felt highly flattered when I was asked to write for the anniversary edition of the SENTINEL this article about the people and the town of my adoption, where I have spent more than the average span of life and where I feel that I have so many good friends and around which cluster so many cherished memories.

It has been a very pleasant task, made more so by the kindly interest manifested by and information obtained from the earlier settlers; and if there is any special merit in these chronicles it is due entirely to the help thus received. I had thought that my years of residence here would entitle me to be classed with the old timers; but after talking with the real old timers, I was made to feel a newcomer and a tenderfoot.

There are so many important incidents to relate and so many interesting people to write about that it has been most difficult to decide what can be omitted with least injury to the story. Sufficient material might readily be obtained to fill a large book. There are many who took a prominent part in the early development of our city whose names have not been mentioned. The Collier family, many of the Neider and the Willard families, T. A. Walker, F. E. Drake and a host of others I might name, played a prominent part in shaping the destiny of the community, but time and space prohibit a more detailed account of their worthy exploits. Neither have I mentioned any of the comparatively recent events or settlers, as they are more or less familiar to most of us, and I deemed the earlier events of greater interest.

I have passed the three score and six and it seems a long, long trail back to my earliest recollections; yet somewhere back there, at least five years before I first saw the light of day, one of the brave pioneers who reclaimed the great Western Empire of our country, wended his way to the beautiful valley of the Coquille and there built the first white man's habitation on the banks of the river near what is now the business center of our prosperous city.

The exact date of his arrival here will probably never be known, but he built his cabin just across the street from our present magnificent new hotel building on the lot now occupied by the Leneve building and there started to carve a home from the wilderness. It is self-evident that he satisfied the requirements of Uncle Sam's settlement and good faith in making improvements, for on the 15th day of June, 1864, a patent was granted by the United States to Eow Cunningham for the northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter and Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter and the river lots numbered six and seven of section one in town ship twenty-eight south, Range three ten west, containing one hundred forty-nine acres and seventy hundredths of an acre.

But it is also self-evident that he did not live to leave that his patent had been issued to him, for the records show that he died July 6th, 1864 and the mail service of those days was not by airplane nor yet by rail. Nevertheless, he left engraved upon the immovable pages of history a record of his labor and courage; for he was the first white man to erect a residence within or even near our city. The east line of this claim runs north and south about thirty feet west of and parallel with the west line of what is now Henry street; the south line conforms to the low water mark on the Coquille river except for a short distance in the southeasterly part of the claim where the south line runs east from the river probably intersecting the residence of A. J. Sherwood; the west line of said claim con-

forms to the present west boundary of the city limits and the west end of Sprague street is on this line; the north line of this claim coincides with the north line of the Odd Fellows cemetery; the west line of Willard street bisects this original claim.

The records show that he left one son who was presumably the only child, yet on this subject the record is meager and indefinite. What ever became of this son, whether living or dead I have never been able to learn. Edward Cunningham, who now resides a short distance northwest of town, is a relative of this first settler.

The record discloses that the senior Cunningham was not a successful financier, whether from lack of ability or from unavoidable conditions. The petition of his administrator filed May 23d, 1865, recites that the deceased left indebtedness in excess of five thousand dollars; that his personal effects brought something over twenty-three hundred dollars, leaving his homestead, appraised at four hundred dollars, to satisfy the remaining indebtedness.

On January 2nd, 1866, this administrator, Henry Wyckoff by name, conveyed the homestead to Elizabeth Leneve, the mother of our ex-postmaster, John W. Leneve, Mrs. Annie Robinson, Mrs. Jennie Rose and Mrs. Marshall Way, all now residing here, besides several other sons and daughters, some of whom have passed on.

The senior Mrs. Leneve, a Grandmother Leneve, as she was better known to all her friends, on October 26th, 1866, conveyed this land to Titus B. Willard, better known as "Uncle Titus." On April 14th, 1873, Uncle Titus laid out the first town site generally designated as the original plat of Coquille City—and by the way,



COQUILLE'S MODERN, FIREPROOF, \$50,000 HOTEL

Uncle Titus spelled it "Coquel." This plat was surveyed by S. B. Cathcart, who is now living in Marshfield. One row of lots in the plat fronted up the river from the Busy Corner to the Coast Auto Lines repair shop and on the north side from where the Masonic hall formerly stood, east along Second street nearly to the City Hall. This embraced the entire plat. A gate shaped piece was afterward added along the north and east in order to make Second street and Hall street on the east and west and north and south to conform to the streets of Elinor's addition which was platted October 8, 1875.

In 1872, Titman W. Vowell, then a young man sixteen years of age and a cousin of our well known citizen, James T. Neider, built the first store which stood back of where J. A. Lamb's hardware store now stands, but old timers believe the actual ground upon which this building stood has been washed off and caved into the river. Uncle Titus Willard was the first postmaster, appointed in 1872 and Till Vowell was his deputy. M. W. Neider, the father of Mrs. James T. Neider, built the first hotel about where Fehman's drug store now stands. This he named the Eik-horn Hotel and over the front door there hung for many years a magnificent pair of elk horns. Mrs. Neider says that it was through her father's

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STATE HIGHWAYS VIA COQUILLE

Coquille, the county seat of Coos county, is ideally located to reap the greatest possible benefits from the construction of state highways. Both the Roosevelt highway, which runs close to the Oregon coast all the way from Astoria to California, and the highway that connects Roseburg with Coos Bay through the Coquille Valley and the Middle Fork of the same stream, through Camas Valley and over Camas mountain, merge here and run over the same paved highway between Coquille and Coos Bay.

The big steel drawbridge that spans the Coquille river here, was built about four years ago and its construction rendered it certain that the Roosevelt road would leave the sea, only ten miles away, long enough to make Coquille a way station on this great scenic route, which will, when completed, stand unrivalled on either coast. This beautiful panoramic highway after entering the county south of Reedsport winds among a beautiful chain of lakes and from Hauser down to Coos Bay is already surfaced with gravel. It runs just inside the sandy cliffs that rise from the ocean beach, and within hearing of the din of its surf.

The road, itself, thanks to the ferry boat Roosevelt, takes the salt water route when it reaches the Bay and runs beside salt water along its shores all the way through and past the thriving ports of North Bend and Marshfield; and on beside the tidal flow of Isthmus Inlet, until it crosses the low divide at Coaledo and begins to wind its serpentine way up the wide valley and along the foothills of the Coquille to Coos county's hub at the county seat.

From North Bend to Coquille the road is a concrete highway, thanks to the foresight of our legislators in having it named for that sort of con-

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POSTAL RECEIPTS OVER \$11,000

The Coquille postoffice annual report for the year 1924 shows an increase of nearly \$1,000 in business over that done in 1923. The following shows the gross business done for the past five years:

1920	\$ 9,012.53
1921	9,139.88
1922	8,636.12
1923	10,095.31
1924	11,017.57

The above does not take the postal insurance or money order business into account; but is simply the total sales of stamps, and stamped envelopes, box rent, etc.

Last year there was over \$93,000 worth of money orders issued from the local office.

Under the laws and rules governing the matter Coquille has been for the past year entitled to free city delivery. The houses and buildings in town are practically all numbered, and street signs posted, but the business men have not felt that the time was yet ripe to ask for the free delivery service.



COQUILLE CITY HALL, BUILT IN 1912

Coquille Bank Deposits \$630,000

The two Coquille banks, the First National and the Farmers & Merchants, are as sound financial institutions as it is possible to find in the state of Oregon, and their total resources compare very favorably with those of any city in the state—of equal size.

During the past year their deposits reached high peak during the first half and in common with all other banks in this section showed a slight falling off at the year's end, but even then the total was \$630,000.

The First National, capitalized at \$50,000, showed in their report to the comptroller of the currency, Jan. 1, \$405,975.45. The Farmers & Merchants, with \$25,000 capitalization reported to the state bank examiner at the same time, \$223,502.42.

Both these institutions are doing their part in the development of the Coquille valley and the upbuilding of Coquille by assisting in every way consistent with sound banking rules,

THE COQUILLE CITY SCHOOLS

Short Sketch of High School Activities-- 809 Children in the District and Both Buildings Crowded to Capacity

By John Francis Cramer, Principal of Coquille High School

Coquille schools have attracted the attention of the state and county several times during the past twelve months. As in most communities, the school system is a source of almost continual financial stress and problems, but it is also a source of pride to the city. Coquille schools rate very well with the rest of the state in instruction, teachers, and results attained.

At the County fair at Myrtle Point last fall, the first prize in school exhibits went to Coquille, in spite of some very close competition from several other schools. The Junior Chamber of Commerce of the High School tries to co-operate with the city, council and Chamber of Commerce, and with the Women's Club. It was the Junior Chamber which took the lead in the building of the

Glee Clubs, under the direction of Miss Nissen, will present an operetta, the "Gypsy Rover."

Coquille High School has been a standard four year high school for a number of years, and an effort is being made to raise still higher the type of school work done. Strict rules for eligibility are in effect, and students who represent the school, not only in athletics, but in plays, debate, oratory and music, must be doing satisfactory work in their subjects. A start has been made at a system of student control, which means putting more responsibility on the students as a training for citizenship.

Heading the school system is Superintendent Lynn A. Parr, who has been here five years. Previous to coming to Coquille, Mr. Parr taught in a Portland High School and was in Washington school work. The head of the High School is Principal John Francis Cramer, who holds a Master's degree in Chemistry from Willamette University. Mr. Cramer was formerly in the McLoughlin High School of Milton-Freewater and La Grande High School.

Keith Leslie, coach, is an ex-Oregon football star and is responsible for the championship football team. This is his second year here. Miss Gertrude Ellis, O. A. C., the Home Economics teacher, has a couple of English classes, and coaches Girls' basketball and debate. An excellent debate squad is training for the county debate, Feb. 13. Miss Ruth Nissen, State University of Iowa, handles all the mathematics, which is a full-time job in itself, and in addition coaches plays, handles the glee clubs and orchestra, teaches students who have never played to play the violin well enough to take orchestra parts, and directs the operetta.

Miss Bertha Atkinson is in charge of upperclass English. She is also interested in coaching the girl's basketball team, and is adviser for the high school paper, which is published twice a month. When it was started it was the only high school paper in the county, and is still the largest. Miss Atkinson is a graduate of the University of Oregon. In charge of science work, including Botany, Biology and three classes of General Science, is Miss Mary Druley, also a graduate of the University of Oregon. She is also adviser for the Senior class.

In the commercial department is Miss Jennie Carlson, O. A. C., who is class adviser for the Juniors. Miss Esther Roeder, who teaches six classes in history and allied subjects, is the Sophomore adviser. Miss Carolyn Wilson teaches English and Latin, and is adviser for the Freshmen. Both Miss Roeder and Miss

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Johnson Mill Cut 16,500,000 Feet

E. E. Johnson says that the mill here has excellent prospects of running full time throughout the year. He has plenty of logs, the lumber market is active and upward and although he has not contracts for a year's run, the outlook encourages the belief expressed.

A large percentage of the logs which came down the North and East Forks during the November and December freshets (some of them had been waiting two years to come out), either belong to Mr. Johnson or have been contracted for by him.

There were from 65 to 70 million feet in those two forks—about a million dollar's worth. Approximately a third of them have come out into the main river and are being held in booms. The remainder will be brought down as rapidly as they can be handled.

In 1924, the mill here cut 16,500,000 feet of lumber and manufactured four million laths, the cash volume of the business done being around \$300,000.

E. E. Johnson was recently re-elected president of the corporation at the annual meeting of the stockholders; C. McC. Johnson, of Marshfield and Reedsport, vice president; and Philip E. Johnson, secretary-treasurer.



COQUILLE'S \$75,000 HIGH SCHOOL