

Pioneer Miners In Coos Black Sands

By R. M. Harrison

(Continued from last week)

The voyage progressed very favorably during the evening and early part of the night but a rather stiff Souwester began to ruffle the waves to choppy swells, while the stars began to grow dim, with swiftly flying clouds across the lowering sky.

The watch at the helm, called the captain from his quarters and asked to be righted, as he felt that the ship was veering from the true course, and that she breeze was driving her too near the shore.

It was some time before the captain had got the course again and, by that time, the storm was lashing at the very heart of the little bark, as she creaked and moaned under the mighty strain that the storm king was wont to hurl against her.

Long before dawn, the storm had reached the fury of a hurricane, rolling huge billows across the deck of the struggling ship, while the crew, all on deck, were working frantically to save the gallant little bark from going on the rocks, which they felt they were very near.

In an occasional lull in the roar of the storm, the sound of crashing surf came out across the blackness of the night, while between the fitful gusts, Capt. Berg's voice could be heard, as he shouted through his megaphone that the ship was going on a reef and to prepare the life raft at once.

By this time the vessel had begun to wallow in the breakers and, striking a sunken rock, she bounded like a wounded deer, rolling over on her side; then the mighty waves began tearing away her rigging, which meant the last voyage for her and a watery grave among the treacherous rocks at Salt Point, near the mouth of Russian river.

The life raft, as if guided by some Divine hand, went clear of the rocks and was thrown high on the beach, by the mighty breaker on which it rode to safety.

Drenched to the skin and shivering with cold, the men left the raft, taking a line with them which they made fast and then began to look for those of the crew whom they knew to be missing by their absence from the landing party which was small, there being only six of them, out of a crew of eleven, which meant that five of their comrades were in trouble and were needing help. The dismal morning dawned at last, with the storm still lashing the sea into crashing billows, that would challenge the bravest heart. The ship was breaking up and much wreckage was being thrown ashore by the huge combers that broke high on the sand, while rafts of drift wood, which had been thrown out to sea from the near by river, was also being piled high along the tide lands, making search for the missing ones very difficult. Some of the crates of the cargo of supplies had been thrown high upon the beach and the receding tide was leaving them exposed but no trace of the missing men, of whom Captain Berg was one, could be found.

From cold, hunger and sheer exhaustion, the searchers were compelled to seek relief and, as the morning was well on, and some near by inhabitants, native Indians, seeing the ship pounding on the rocks and the men running along the shore, came down to offer their help and to give the stranded men food and shelter.

At that time, the tribes along the coast, in the Bodega Bay and Russian River region, were known as Tarheads and were of a very friendly disposition towards the Paleface and, while they spoke mostly in broken Spanish, the crew of the wrecked ship were able to understand what was said, as they, too, had been among the Spanish-speaking people while cruising in the South.

In the following few days, the bodies of their comrades were all recovered and, with the help of the natives and some of the wreckage that had come ashore, they were able

to give them a very decent burial. The storm had run its course and the warm and delightful sunshine soon brought cheer and warmth to the little band of heroes, who had washed ashore on the waves of that terrible night. After the burial of their comrades, which they had completed late in the day, they felt that their work was done and all stood by the little mounds of earth, with bowed heads, and while they breathed a silent prayer for their comrades, the evening sun was just beginning to sink into the great blue Pacific, throwing up its golden rays, to mingle with the blue and send its enchanting rays across the landscape, as if a token or promise to those who slept beneath the sod.

It was a balmy, late autumn morning when the six men gave the last, long and lingering look at the little mounds, under which slept their comrades and turned to wend their way back to civilization.

After some time of tramping and camping through the uncharted domain, they found themselves back at San Francisco Bay, where each of them took to his own way and scattered to the four winds.

Lieutenant Wingate soon found himself alone and wandered aimlessly about the "rag" town which was scattered about among the sand dunes, which no doubt at that time showed no signs of any future purpose, other than that of being a squatting place for roving humanity.

At that time, 1835, an Englishman by the name of Axy, had set up his tent, about on the present site of San Francisco, with the idea of making his home there, as the Old Mission and old Spanish military post were nearly a thing of the past, and this naturally began to draw others to follow suit and squat on land in that section.

Lieut. Wingate was becoming weary of being stranded in that uninviting place and was getting homesick for his native town, Rockland, on the coast of Maine, where he had spent his boyhood days, watching men build ships and, too, it was there that he had learned from his father and older brothers, the love for "a life on the ocean wave," which made him what he was, a sea rover.

Owing to the uncertainty of the weather, at that time of the year, and to the difficulty of getting into the Golden Gate, there had been some slow down in the number of vessels making that port and more especially those ships that were making the eastern seaboard, via Cape Horn, which fact was giving Lieut. Wingate some concern, as he was looking for a chance to get out of that place by shipping as a man before the mast, on the first thing that floated out for around the Horn and, in his anxiety, he would go each day and station himself at the old fort lookout and scan the sea for hours in the hope of seeing something that would give him some faint hope. One clear, pleasant morning, as he sat, gazing blankly across the broad and unbroken expanse of the Pacific ocean, his eye caught the sight of the great white sails of a schooner as she was tacking along down the coast from the north and, from what he could see of her, she appeared to be a whaler and was heading for the Golden Gate.

The watching mariner's hopes bounded to the highest degree, as he fastened his gaze on the approaching ship, which by this time he was sure was coming in and that he would soon know his fate, as to whether he would be able to make her out and he held great hopes that he would. Eagerly he watched the ship as she approached and later in the day saw her scoot in through the Golden Gate on the evening tide to her place in the roadstead, where she dropped anchor and folded her great white wings to be at rest for the night.

As the ship swung into the bay, Lieut. Wingate could see the name, Ajax, on her bow and just under-

neath in smaller letters, he could make out the words, Portland, Maine. The following morning, Lieut. Wingate met the skipper of the whaler, who by the way was also an old Sea Dog from down East, and it didn't take long for them to get together on a deal and Wingate was soon in his quarters aboard ship, with rank of third officer.

The following morning, the Ajax weighed anchor and, on the outgoing tide, she slipped out through the Golden Gate onto the broad blue Pacific and once more spread her great white wings, homeward bound. Lieutenant Wingate's heart was heavy as he stood on the upper deck of the whaler, glasses in hand, looking to the north where his long-time companion, Capt. Berg, was resting and where the blue and the gold would come at sunset. (To be continued.)

Townsend Club No. 1

Coquille Townsend Club, No. 1, met Tuesday evening in regular session. Business of the club was conducted and plans for the "Caravan of Clubs" were talked over. Robert Adams, Townsend representative of Oregon, is to be here Sunday, Oct. 24, to speak at the Caravan meeting at the W. O. W. hall. Pot luck lunch at noon. Be sure and plan to attend.

Tuesday evening, October 26, a Halloween party is to be held, so come all "dressed" up for the fun. Lunch will be served after the party is over. We were glad to have the Deyoes with us again.

Door prize was won by Archie Hatcher.

See you next Tuesday evening at the party; be sure and bring your pumpkin pie.—Press Cor.

It will pay you to look at Bergen's before you buy.

Calling cards, 50 for \$1.00.

Mrs. R. B. Cummins Buried In Portland

Mrs. R. B. Cummins passed away at Knife Hospital Monday afternoon, after a three months illness.

Born Eva Margaret Crowe, near Eugene, Oregon, of pioneer parents, all her young girlhood was spent in this state and in 1887 she was married to E. E. Pierce. From this union the following children survive: Mrs. Louise Wheelon, Mrs. Lillian Johnson, both of Oakland, Calif.; L. A. Pierce, of Seattle, Wash., and L. G. Pierce, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Mr. Pierce was drowned and his widow later married Robert B. Cummins, who survives her. Their surviving children are: Mrs. W. L. Keyser, of India; T. F. Cummins, of Portland, and M. M. Cummins, of Albany, Ore. Two children preceded her in death. Also surviving are twelve grandchildren and three great grandchildren, three sisters and one brother.

Services were held from the Gano Funeral Home Wednesday at 2:00 p. m. and the body was sent to Portland for interment at Lincoln Memorial Park.

Pallbearers were Herman Plaep, R. B. Knife, Darrell Cox, and Elmer Holverson.

Mr. and Mrs. Cummins have managed the Knife Apartments the past twelve years. She was a member of the Baptist Church and an active worker there till ill health prevented.

Probate Court items

A petition for administration of the \$2000 estate left by Thomas Cooper, also known as Alexander Thomas Cooper, who died October 12, was filed by J. B. Bedingfield in probate court yesterday.

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