

Pioneer Trails of Coos and Curry

BY EMIL R. PETERSON

One of the first and surely one of the most-traveled routes by land into Coos county was by way of the ocean beach from the Umpqua river to Coos bay. It was the first route designated as a public road by the county board.

From the "County Archives" quote: "The first entry in the county court records concerning roads was on July 3, 1854, when it was 'Ordered by the Board, That a county road be established from Empire City, to a stream known at ten mile creek. . . And further ordered by the Board that C. G. Abby, Herrick G. Ferns and M. M. Learn be and are hereby appointed commissioners to locate said Road and erect or cause to be erected, suitable monuments, to guide travelers and prevent accidents from quick sands on said road."

It will be noted that this "county road" ended at "ten mile creek." Presumably, the court had no authority to go beyond that point, for it would be out of bounds of Coos county. It seems quite likely that is as much as the boundary between Coos county and Umpqua county was not definitely established, the boards of the two counties got together and agreed on Ten Mile creek as the division point for road purposes.

Perhaps there is not another public road in Coos or any other county that has cost the public less for construction and maintenance. The construction consisted of setting up "monuments to indicate spots of quick-sand, or to mark places to turn in from the beach, to cross the spit to the bay. And the "monuments" consisted of posts picked from the piles of drift-wood along the seavall.

This first county road continued to be the main entry by land into the Coos Bay country for twenty years, from 1853 to 1873.

The latter date marks the opening of the Coos Bay Wagon road from Roseburg. But this did not end the use of the beach route until nearly half a century later. The Coos Bay Wagon road from Roseburg was often closed by snow during winter months and by mud when the snow was melting. The ocean beach road never was affected by snow or mud. It was only with the coming of the S. P. rail road in 1916 that this road from the Umpqua to Coos bay ceased to be a main route of travel.

For many years the Cornwall stage and boat line operated between Marshfield in Coos county, and Drain in Douglas county. The last several years of its operation, the boat Gasco carried the passengers from Marshfield to Jarvis Landing. The boat's captain,

Dave Holden, is well remembered to this day.

From Jarvis Landing the passengers were taken by a four-horse stage to the Umpqua, a distance of twenty miles, to be transferred to the steamer Eva, captained by the deaf "Jimmy" Graham. It is said that "Jimmy" had one answer to all questions—"Seven dollars and a half." That was the amount of the fare from Marshfield to Drain, and it was all collected by "Jimmy" from the passengers going either way.

Sometimes the Eva stopped overnight at Gardiner, leaving early in the morning to connect with the stage at Scottsburg for the twenty-mile ride to Drain. The entire trip from Marshfield to Drain required two days—and sometimes they were long days, often starting as early as two o'clock in the morning to make the beach run at low tide.

A decidedly new mode of travel became effective on the beach route in 1914, to end only two years later with the coming of the railroad. Vern Gorst and some of his associates had visions of serving the public, of making a profit for themselves, and having a dickens of a lot of fun at the same time. The automobile was still an innovation. Vern Gorst, not yet forty, had already become a dyed-in-the-wool sourdough by seven years of experience in the far north, from 1896 to 1903; had devoted a number of years to boating on Puget Sound; had established the first motor-bus in Oregon, from Medford to Jacksonville, a distance of six miles. In 1912, along with Charles King, he came to Coos Bay and started the Gorst & King line of buses, which is still in operation between North Bend and what was then Marshfield. Later he organized the Pacific Air Transport and secured the first airmail contract, a distance of eleven hundred miles, from Seattle to Los Angeles. Hold everything! We're getting off the trail.

Let us return to the beach route in 1914. Gorst and his associates did not enter into competition with the Cornwall line. They merely entered into an agreement with Cornwall to handle the beach portion of the route—twenty miles. Later it was extended to the Siuslaw, an additional twenty miles. In the quick-sands and creek-crossings, Gorst and his associates lost three or four heavy cars, such as the Cadillac and other similar types before they learned that the Model T Ford was best suited to their purpose. They had some difficulties, but it was all a part of the game. They provided service to the traveling pub-

lic, they made a profit for themselves and they had a lot of fun. I'd like to tell you more about this venture, but the trail is already too long. I just want to add that Vern Gorst is still having fun as he approaches age 74, and is making his fun pay its own way. This time he is developing the best methods of propagating and marketing trout and catfish. Vern is one of the real trail blazers of our times.

4-H News Notes From All Over Coos

By WALTER G. SCHROEDER
County Extension Agent, (4-H)

Enrollments received in the county 4-H office show that 55 clubs have been organized with a total of 621 projects. The total enrollment is 484 different members. The reason for the difference between the projects and the number enrolled is because some members have more than one project.

Cooker clubs lead with 160 enrollments. Clothing is a close second with 158 enrollments.

A number of enrollment blanks for clubs already formed have not yet come into the office. Please send them in as soon as possible. Report cards telling that you have begun your project should be sent in as soon as possible.

A date to corcle on your calendar is February 22. That is the date for an all day 4-H leader training meeting here in the county. "Doc" Allen and Miss Ester Taskerud of the State 4-H office will be in the county to help leaders with their questions.

It is not too early to start getting ready for demonstrations. If your club has a demonstration team please let us know. A number of local organizations would like to have 4-Hers present demonstrations at their meetings. It's good practice too for county and state fairs.

This past week we in the 4-H office really got a load off our



Kathryn Grayson introduces her singing truck-driver friend, Mario Lanza, to musical conductor Jose Hurbi—with unexpected results for all three in M-G-M's new Technicolor musical, "That Midnight Kiss." Ethel Barrymore and Keenan Wynn are also prominently cast in the tuneful romance, opening this week at the Roxy Theatre, Sun., Mon. and Tuesday.

minds. We spent almost the entire week addressing envelopes, sorting record books and getting pins and cards ready to go out. As a result we sent out all of the record books and pins and cards to members, first year pins to leaders, and 100 per cent achievement certificates to 40 clubs. If you do not receive your pin or card in a week or two, or receive the wrong one notify us and we'll correct the mistake.

The annual Junior Jersey sales has been set for February 25 in Hillsboro. Bidding is limited to 4-H and FFA members for the 25 or so animals, ranging from young calves to cows in production.

A sheep shearing school for club members and leaders is scheduled for February 20, 21, and 22 and again on February 23 and 24. Instruction on tagging, crutching, and handling, grading and marketing of wool and perhaps a trip to the woolen mills in Salem will be included in the program.

Coos County now boasts 26 new 4-H clothing clubs with 26

members.

Mrs. Floyd W. Bain is the leader of the "Merry Sewers Clothing" club down Bandon way. Mrs. G. E. Logan is the assistant leader of the club which has 12 members. Nadine Bain was elected president; Darlene Allen, vice-president; and Beverly Allen, secretary. Other members are Shirley Allen, vice-president; and Beverly Allen, secretary. Other members are Shirley Allen, Margaret Bain, Karen Bowman, Mary Bowman, Janette Cook, Shirley Floyd, Arlene Houghtaling, Carma Logan, and Caroly Moody.

The "Pattern Pets Clothing 1A and B" club of Eastside is being led by Bernice Paukratz. Georgina Eckles was elected president; Louise James, vice-president; and Rosalie Systma, secretary. Other members of the club are Carol Bannister, Janice Bannister, Gladys Eckles, Carleen Erickson, May Holman, Patty Kibbee, Mae Knowlton, Jacqueline Little, Kathleen Little, Hazel Moore, and Patricia Wright.

Sentinel

COQUILLE, OREGON.

JANUARY 26, 1954.

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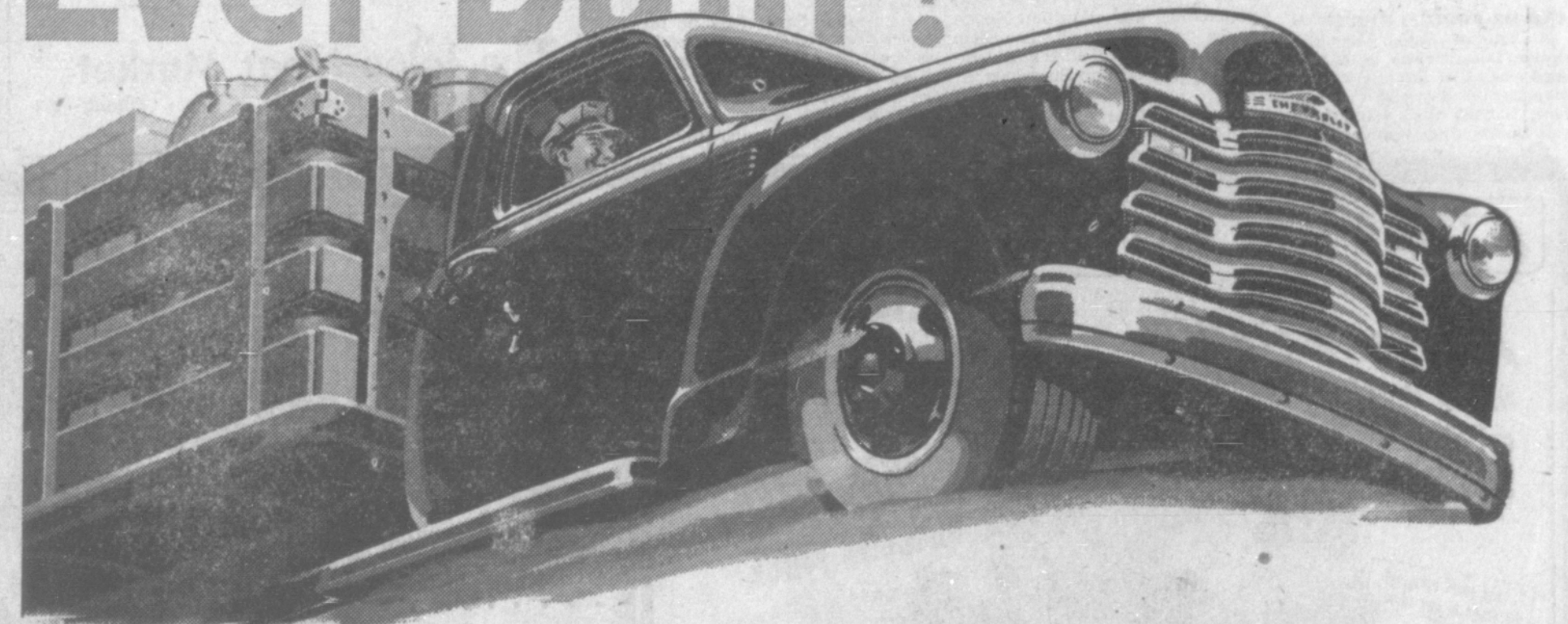
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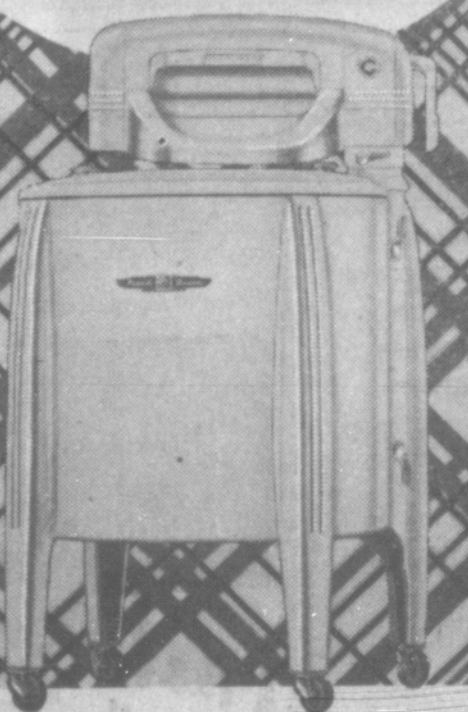
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