

Has Anybody Here Seen Eckley? Writer Asks In Telling About This Place

BY EMIL R. PETERSON

Has anybody here seen Eckley?—Eckley in the middle of the trail? Can you spot Eckley on the map? My guess is that you can not. I believe that nine out of ten of you can't. I couldn't either, for a long time, though I had heard the name for many years. It was just one of those names that have a misty, hazy association with some remote sections off and away from the traveled roads. I wasn't even sure whether it was in Coos or in Curry county.

So let us get our bearings by starting with some well known points. Most of us know where the city of Powers is located, on the South Coquille, some twenty miles beyond Myrtle Point. And we know that Port Orford is on Highway 101 about thirty miles south of Bandon. Now, if we could follow a crow that had roosted at Powers and was going to Port Orford for his breakfast, straight over the mountains, about mid-way between the two places we could look down and see the Eckley country, a sort of Switzerland planted in Southwestern Oregon. It drains off into the Sixes river, which flows into the ocean a few miles north of Port Orford.

The pioneers who first entered the Eckley country didn't follow the crow. Not quite, for the going was too rough. They must pick their way through devious passes, over ridges and across canyons. It seems that the Indians had trails even before the coming of the Whites. Bob Harrison, a recognized authority on pioneer gold mining lore in Coos and Curry, tells about "Bovine" Johnson and "Sandy" Summers following an Indian trail in the early fifties. An Indian at Port Orford had displayed some gold nuggets, saying he had found them at the forks of a creek over the mountains to the east.

The folks Johnson and Summers followed the trail and made the rich strike which resulted in the name of Johnson creek, a swift-flowing stream tumbling out of the Johnson Mountains into the Coquille River some miles up stream from the present site of Powers. That discovery by Johnson and Summers must have been in 1853; for by 1854, gold seekers were swarming in from all directions.

The trail that led "Bovine" Johnson and "Sandy" Summers from Port Orford on their way to the gold strike must have passed through the country that we now know as Eckley.

We next learn of it through Joseph A. Haines, who came in 1859. He had crossed the plains from his native state of Illinois in the middle or early fifties, and had settled for sometime in the Willamette, coming from there into Douglas county. He doesn't tell how he first learned of the location of his future home in Curry county, the place that later became known as Eckley. But when he left Scottsburg in 1859, with T. C. Davis, he seemed to know just where they were going. The little steamer Washington landed them near the mouth of the Umpqua River; they walked down the beach to Coos Bay; crossed and found their way to the head of Isthmus Slough, then over the divide into the Coquille country, and on up that stream to Roland Prairie on the South Fork. From there they headed over the mountains to the place then occupied by Wash Waters. Haines arranged to buy Waters' claim. He then returned to Scottsburg, but came again in the spring of 1860; put in a garden; went back to Scottsburg for his family. He tells of going by way of Roseburg, Camas Valley and the Middle Fork of the Coquille. He says: "We arrived at the place August 15, 1860. It was a lonesome place. The furniture consisted of three or four three-legged stools, a slab table, a few pots and pans, a Dutch oven, blankets, a brush broom, and a lot of pack saddles."

(Years later, Mrs. Haines told a neighbor that she refused to move into the cabin until the place was cleared of pack saddles.) Mr. Haines continues, "The next day was devoted to house cleaning. My furniture had been sent to Port Orford and in September I got it home. . . . Our nearest neighbor, John Leggett, lived four miles away, and the next nearest was twelve miles. Our first visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. We were very glad to see them. . . . And in a short time we returned the visit." Just when the next families

moved into the Eckley country isn't clear. But among those who came were the families of Alfred (Tim) Greene, who is reported to have settled there in 1877; Thomas Jefferson (Jeff) Gibbs—(not certain whether he was head of the family or one of the sons; date of arrival not given.) The Bigelow family were among the early settlers, but definite information is not at hand.

The year 1876 appears to be quite definite for the coming of the George H. Guerin family. In time the Guerin family increased until there were ten children. And, incidentally, the Haines family increased until there were fourteen young Haineses. Others, also, had large families. Yet there appears to have been little in the way of schools in the community. This is not easy to understand, for those hardy pioneers had come largely from educated families; and in the years that followed, the children also were given educational advantages, though not in the home district.

Joseph A. Haines reports that he hired Ellen Tichenor for three terms of three months each at a salary of \$25 per month and board. Later they had a man teacher from San Francisco on the same terms. Mr. Haines reports further that in 1874 he took his family to Wilbur, a few miles north of Roseburg, where they remained for thirteen years to give the children the advantage of a good school. They returned to their mountain farm home in 1887.

Another report tells of a small school house being built in the local community. The structure was something referred to as the "chicken house." It is said that on one side there was a lean-to that covered a hen roost.

Six of the ten children of the George Guerin family were sent to the Bishop Morris School in Portland and St. Helen's Hall.

(To be continued)

WASHINGTON WEEK

(Continued from page six)

winter has been unusually bad. The snows are deep in the mountains where hundreds of claims are located, preventing the work from being done this spring. Also many claim owners have become so accustomed to letting the work go by default if it was required that assessment work be brought up-to-date by the end of June this year. Accordingly, I supported a compromise proposal put through the Senate by Senator Cordon—to extend the time for completing the work just 90 days—to October 1. Following a Public Lands committee hearing at which I spoke at some length in support of the Cordon bill, it was favorably reported. The bill carries an amendment providing that assessment work for the present and coming year may be done at the same time. I assume the House will pass it but that remains to be seen. Apparently the Administration has abandoned the idea of at-

tempting to pass the whole package of socialized medicine legislation this year. It is still endeavoring, however, to get some portions of it passed piecemeal. In this connection it might be interesting to note that the British Minister of Health recently reported that in its first full year of operation, the cost to the British treasury (U. S. money?) of Britain's medical plan was \$17.65 for each man, woman and child—over and above the regular payroll contributions. Just multiply that by 150 millions and you can figure for yourself what it would cost here if we were on the lower British income basis.

Speaking of population figures—40 out of every 100 persons are on the public payroll (Census Bureau report). In 50 years, government employment has increased more than 525 per cent. No wonder we are paying such enormous tax bills.

At Arago

Mrs. Althea Harrah of Coquille and son, Arden Harrah, of Corvallis, were Sunday visitors at the home of Frank Lane.

The wild blackberries are getting ripe, folks. "Yes" those luscious berries, which gives out that delicious aroma in your kitchen when you make a pie, jelly or jam.

So put on your straw hats and get your jell and look in your favorite berry patches.

There seems to be another abundant crop again this year, and in another week of good weather there will be plenty of ripe ones, just waiting to be picked.

Mrs. Alice Watkins was a Saturday visitor at the home of Mr.

and Mrs. S. C. McAllister.

Mrs. Oscar Harper left last Tuesday for Klamath Falls to attend the state garden club convention and was accompanied by her son, Billy, and Mrs. Louis Langenberg and Mrs. Lee Fisher from the Coos Head Garden Club.

While in Klamath Falls, Mrs. Harper and son visited her mother, Mrs. W. P. Myers, and returned home Friday.

Mrs. Stanley Halter and Miss Nettie Halter were callers at the home of Mrs. W. B. Farrier, who recently returned home from Mast hospital.

Scott McAllister left Monday for his home in Coos Bay after spending the past two weeks with his grand-parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. McAllister.

Mr. and Mrs. John Mulvihill and family of Coquille, were Sunday callers at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Miller.

A family dinner was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lige Culbertson of Gravelford. Those attending were Mr. and Mrs. Ben Watson and family of Myrtle Point, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Atkinson and family and Bob Groves of Coquille, Mr. and Mrs. James I. Watson, Mr. and Mrs. James A. Watson and family.

Mrs. Clyde Haga returned home Sunday after spending Thursday through Sunday in Coos Bay.

HITS NAIL ON HEAD

Lalo Rios, hailed as "the film find of the year" for his work in Paramount's "The Lawless," is a carpenter by trade. "The Lawless" role is his very first try at acting.

Sentinel

COQUILLE, OREGON.

JUNE 22, 1936.

STOP THE PRESS

Deliberate wrecking of a newspaper plant in Paramount's "The Lawless" cost producers Wm. Pine and Wm. Thomas \$20,000 for a single three-minute sequence.

Here's a pretty dessert for a graduation party. A baked meringue shell filled with sliced canned cling peaches and sweetened fresh strawberries topped with whipped cream.

For a glamorous ladies' luncheon entree, fill cream puff shells with a mixture of canned salmon, celery, ripe olives and dill seed combined with mayonnaise seasoned with lemon juice, salt and freshly ground pepper.

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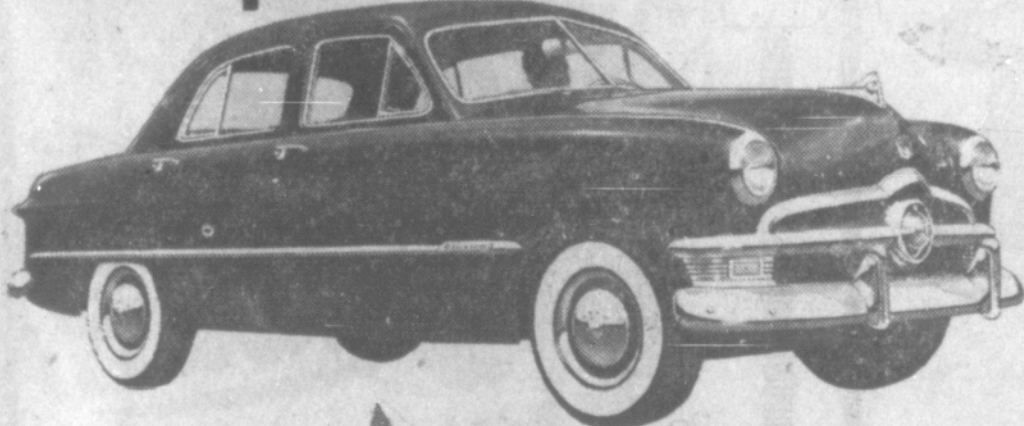
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