

First businesses added to aura of city

By Marilee Miller
Special writer

Depending on perspective, a hundred years can seem like a very long time ago, or "just past the corner." Titus Willard, who owned a strategic land claim on the Coquille River, fought as long as he could against platting a town. But that the site was indispensable to pioneer traffic soon proved right. For a place which acquired its first fledgling business — a store — in 1871, Coquille came quite a long way by the year 1885, when it was incorporated.

What exactly was here in 1885? Quite a lot!

O.E. Smith was dentist for the whole Bay Area. J.P. Easter practiced surgery and obstetrics in Coquille; as also, W.C. Angell, a physician and "accoucheur." Doctors C.W. Tower, Marshfield, and J.M. Volkmar, Myrtle Point, also advertised in the pages of the Herald. The City Brewery was run by G. Mehl; W. Gallier did blacksmithing and horse-shoeing. Pioneer Feed Stable was operated by Hunt Bros.; R.E. Buck had the Coquille Feed and Livery. G.A. Brown's "new hack line" hauled passengers and baggage to meet the riverboats running on the Coquille.

Our up-and-coming town had a Coquille Commercial College. Primary

instruction for any age or grade cost \$5 a term. Secondary or business education could be obtained for \$7 a term. Clark Andrews, principal, also taught elocution and ornamental penmanship.

There was also the enterprising John A. Dean. As if being owner-publisher-editor of the Coquille City Herald weren't enough, Dean sold both real estate and tombstones.

A.H. Wright was local watchmaker and jeweler. C. Andrews' "Post Office Store" sold books, shoes, hats, stationery, dry goods, ladies and gents clothing, general furnishings, groceries, canned goods, cigars and tobacco and candies. (Andrews paid the "highest price for country produce.")



The Whitney and O'Connell hardware store bragged on its tin, copper and sheet iron wares; stoves; wood and willow

ware. George McEwan kept an establishment he called the Pioneer Hardware. Dean and Huntington ran the City Boot and Shoe Store. Dr. S.L. Leneve owned the City Drug Store; J.H. Nosler had the New Drug Store, and over in Myrtle Point, patrons could call at W.L. Dixon's Drug Store.

The Robinson house had "recently been furnished with spring beds and other conveniences." Meals, served all hours, cost 25 cents per plate. Meanwhile, the Olive Hotel on Front Street perked along under the guidance of Mrs. C.W. Olive.

Progress was in the air everywhere — and there was much in-county trafficking back and forth. Some of the other out-of-town advertisers in the Herald were G.H. Hamdell, Myrtle Point, a photographer who would call at every point on the river between that place and Bandon; at Norway (a small settlement above Coquille, on the river), O. Nelson sold groceries, pure wines, stationery, medicines, and paint. Jarvis, Cornwall & Co. operated the Wells Fargo and U.S. Mail contracts, running a stage (an open wagon travelling on the beach- es) between Empire City and Drain.

So, from the late 1850s until 1871, the future home of Coquille City was but a convenient campsite in the wilder-

ness; and in 1871-72, it was platted at just five blocks, acquired a post office and a store — a simple trading post. But just 14 years later, in 1885, business seemed to be booming.



Coquille must have thought it had a lot of catching up to do with town like Oregon City or Portland, founded in the 1840s and 50s. Is it any wonder those enterprising Ko-kwellers shook off the somber aura of the rough frontier to try their best to grow up as a viable community in a grand big hurry?

Coquille City Herald, Jan.-March 1885; available on microfilm at the library. Ed. Note: Readers may be interested to note that Titus Willard's tombstone is still to be found in the pioneer cemetery in town (Sixth Street, near the "county barns").

Congratulations
To The
City of Coquille
On Your

100th Birthday

We at McKays Market are proud to be a part of this celebration.

McKay's Market