

# The promise of the early years... 1897-1904

1897

In 1897, the Coos Bay Coal Field was the most important in the state and a new bed was opened in the River-ton area. The mouth of the Coquille River was producing some coal as well. The best quality coal was being mined at the Beaver Hill Mine and the best operating mine was in Newport. The Newport mine was the longest running, in operation at that time for 40 years. The Coastal Range coal mines were developed quite rapidly and some were very successful. Two small steamers and six schooners were making regular trips from San Francisco to the Coquille River.

1898

The Beaver Hill Coal Mine shut down in 1898. Workers from the mine were soon recruited by the E.B. Dean & Co. Mill, which was under new ownership when the mine shut down. Mr. Graham, purchaser of the mill, stated that he wanted to hire workers from the mines as well hire more workers to have a larger work force than ever before in the area. The big gripe for local citizens was that the workers would inevitably be immigrants; most of the workers in this area at that time were Chinese, Italian, and African.

1899

In the late 1800s, Coquille City boasted a rich economy full of resources. The Coos and Coquille Valleys were the most productive areas of the county. The county, with its population of 8,000, cultivated 30,000 acres of land and exported 275 vessels of coal in 1899. There were crops of every sort, exports of 500,000 pounds of butter and cheese, and animals as well. Coos County's biggest claim to fame? The crops of the area were grown without irrigation and yielded far higher profit than those of other areas of the state.

1900

Coquille population hits 728, Myrtle Point now 530, County totals 10,324.



MUSIC was enjoyed in Coquille's early days, as shown in this 1906 photo of a marching band in front of the Coquille Hotel.

The Standard Oil Trust raised the price of kerosene. Less than a year earlier, the price had been eight cents a gallon. Prices rose 62.5 percent within a year, leaving them at 13 cents a gallon, a price unheard of to the residents of Coquille City.

1901

During 1901, residents of Coquille City were more concerned with foreign affairs than local news. The English and Boer War was a popular news topic of that time. Reports of 1061 grown white people, 4902 children, and 1308 colored people who had died over a two month period in British concentration camps covered the front pages.

1902

Construction began on a Montana & Oregon Lumber Co. Sawmill in January. The eight acres of land along the waterfront was leased to the company for 20 years. On leasing the land, the company made no delays in getting things started. They didn't even bother to wait for spring to start work on the construction.


1903

In April of 1903, an accident occurred at the Government Rock Quarry near Bandon. A large scow loaded with rock was moored at the quarry's dock where there were blasters at work. A rock blew up from the blast and land-

ed on the scow, causing it to sink. That left workers only one scow to transport rocks from the quarry to the jetty. To further complicate matters, a 61-foot dead sperm whale washed ashore just south of the jetty soon after.

1904

While out on a hunting trip, an unsuspecting young hunter came across a large ledge of gold at an unpublished location in southern Oregon. The discovery caused quite a stir as southern Oregon residents began to once again believe that there were more undiscovered gold ledges in the area.



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