

# and riverboats provided the transportation

They owned a number of boats through the years. There was the little propeller boat Venus, the Liberty built by the Hermans, the Antelope, the Dora and the Coquille. His company also used the Myrtle and the Echo on the nine mile run between Coquille and Myrtle Point.

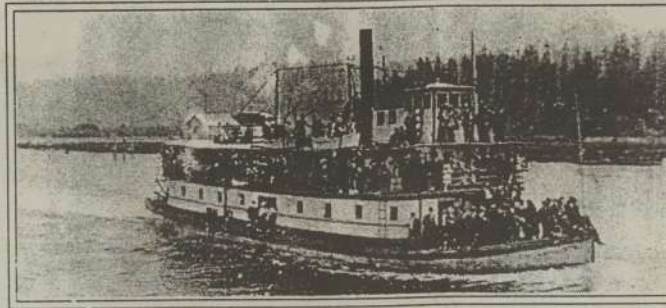
The Coos Bay, Roseburg and Eastern extended its railroad from Marshfield, the seaport town on Coos Bay, up Isthmus Slough and over the Coaledo hill into the Coquille valley. This rail communication was completed to Myrtle Point in Sept. of 1893. This added transportation unit greatly increased Captain Panter's freight and passenger business on the Coquille River.

Their largest boat was the Telegraph, which was built on the ways at the Herman Ranch in 1913 for \$9,500. It was a sternwheeler 103 feet in length with a beam of 25 feet. It ran from Bandon to Coquille during the years from 1914 to 1925 carrying a maximum of 100 passengers at a top speed of fifteen knots. Bill Panter told me that he recalled the day the Telegraph was launched. As a fireman on the Dora they were hurrying down river to be on hand for this historic event when the Dora hit a "sinker." At that moment he had the fire door open and the sudden jolt almost threw him into the firepot. (A sinker is a log so heavy that it floats a little below the surface of the water.)

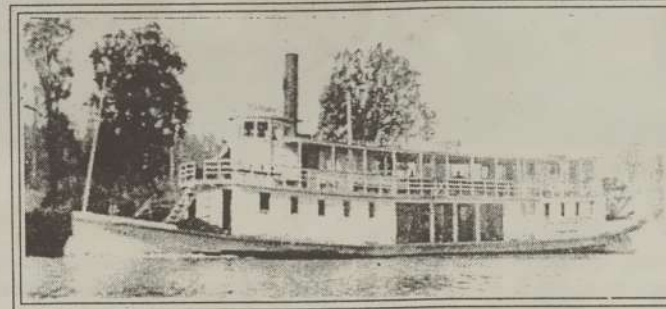
He recalls a tragic accident on the lower river when William Hutchinson, a fireman on the Dispatch, was knocked overboard as the large pile of slabwood slipped into the river. Hutchinson was dead when they picked him up out of the water.

One of the fastest boats Cap Panter owned was the Charm. It was a 75-foot screw driven gasoline powered launch. It was built in 1913 at Prosper by the Herman brothers according to Peterson and Powers, but Bill Panter thought it was built by Ott Willard of Coquille. He said

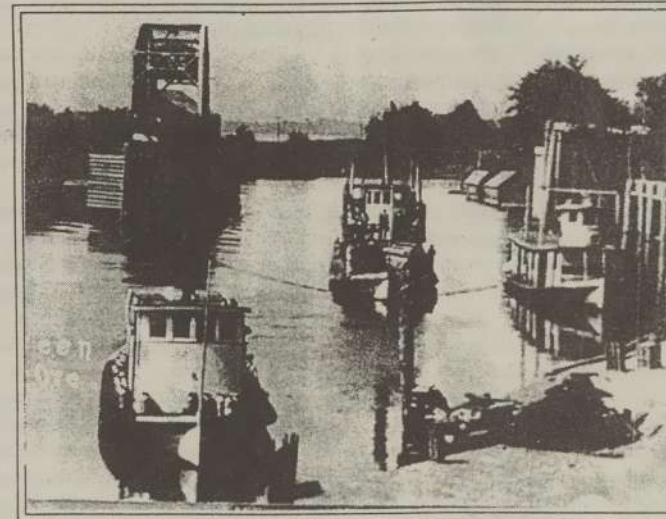
## Early boats of the Coquille River



The Dispatch



The Telegraph



At The Coquille Docks After The Bridge Was Built

Cap Panter bought this sleek and fast boat from Charley Ashton to use on his passenger and mail run to Bandon. This boat could make two round trips a day on the twenty mile run between Bandon and Coquille which was twice as fast as the older steam boats could do. Panter soon had the gasoline motor replaced by diesel power at considerable savings in fuel. The Charm was the last of Cap Panter's boats to move up and down the Coquille River. Even after the highway was completed he had to run at a loss for some time before his mail contract could be terminated.

In 1926 the Charm made its last run thus bringing to an end a way of life along this once useful waterway. The Charm was sold to the Shaver Brothers Transportation Co. of Portland, Oregon.

The majestic Telegraph was beached on the riverbank near Cap Panter's farm where it slowly died the death of an unused boat as it rotted into the mud of the river it had served so faithfully.

This river and Cap Panter with his boats had played an important part in serving and settling this part of Oregon. Yes, the development of roads, cars and trucks terminated historic era, but Cap Panter was ready to meet this new change. Although his boating business came to an end when he was 68 years old he was far from being ready to retire. That was before Social Security so this rugged individual embarked on a new career servicing the very thing that had brought an end to his life work. He went into the service station and grocery business in south Bandon where he spent his remaining years. He lived to age 83. He always wore his captain's cap and I can still remember him, so tall and erect, as he strode about his place of business in the same manner that comes from running boats for 30 years on the Coquille River.

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