

**STAGECOACHES**—Lined up on Ashland's main street in front of the old post office are several stagecoaches of the type that used to carry the mail over the toll road from Sacramento to Portland. The picture is believed to have been taken in the late 1880's.



**CROSSING 99**—Two miles from where Highway 99 reaches the Siskiyou summit, the vestige of the toll road comes up from below and crosses the highway, taking off up the eastern slope of the mountain as shown above.



**AT THE TOP**—Here the toll road creeps out of the forest after climbing the eastern slope of the mountain and reaches its own "Siskiyou summit." From there it winds down the west side and follows the railroad tracks through the canyon and on to the California border.

# Culvert Last Sign of Dollarhide Toll Road

## Service Stopped In March, 1915, On Siskiyou Route

By DON ROBINSON  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

The last toll road in Jackson county is nothing more today than a rocky culvert and a faint clearing through the brush. It last saw service before women were allowed to vote.

The Siskiyou Mountain Wagon road, later the Dollarhide toll road, wound its way painfully from the foot of the Siskiyou mountains four miles south of Ashland, through rocks and scrub oak southwest over the top of the mountain and down to the canyon floor, turning south again to the California border, halting wearily at what was known as Cole's station.

**Familiar Path**  
It began as a familiar path for Indian ponies. That was in days when Indians, missionaries, and a few scattered trappers were the only humans in the Rogue river valley.

It ended in 1915 as a well traveled 56-year-old "public road." The new Pacific highway, predicted by the Mail Tribune in 1913 to be "... one of the scenic boulevards of the world," had sliced disrespectfully over the toll road and pushed it into history.

Today, even that highway is outdated. Too many "Sharp Curves" signs mark its path for 200 horsepower travelers. Highway 99 is the present "boulevard" over the mountain.

An act of the Territorial legislature establishing a Siskiyou Wagon Road company passed the House Jan. 14, 1858. It gave Michael Thomas and associates a 20 year franchise, to a road from Southern Oregon into California. Thomas sold the next year to Captain Lindsay Applegate.

**Applegate Brothers**  
Three Applegate brothers, Lindsay, Charles, and Jesse and their families, had come to the Oregon territory in the great wagon train migration from Independence, Mo., in 1843.

The Lindsay Applegates built a toll house half way up the mountain ... a log cabin with stone fireplace and heavy plank doors.

In 1861, new house went up in its place. Ivan D., son of Lindsay Applegate, hauled lumber by freight wagon from a mill in Butte Falls for this large two story frame dwelling. Rocks laden with sea shells were gathered in back of the building to make a pair of giant fireplaces inside.

**Operated Nine Years**  
The Applegates operated the road and collected tolls for nine years.

Each day men on foot, in bugles and wagons, and droves of sheep, hogs and cattle moved along the road: Rates of toll ran from 25 cents for "one horse man" to the 40 to 80 dollars per month paid by the stage company.

The construction of the road made possible the organization of the Oregon-California stage company in 1860. The big red and yellow coaches carried mail from Sacramento to Portland the year around.



**LOOKING EAST**—This is what remains of the toll road as it is seen on the east side of the Pacific highway. It crosses the highway a few feet up the mountain from here, continues westward, crosses it again, and goes on to where the toll gate once stood about a mile from the point shown.

sound of another team's bells, they waited until it had passed so as not to meet it on narrower, impassable stretches.

Trains of as many as 80 pack mules sometimes plodded through the toll gates behind a bell mare.

Ivan Applegate's "Cash Journal and Diary of the Weather," now being preserved in the Jacksonville museum, is a handwritten, day by day account of toll payers and weather on the mountain for several months.

On a typical winter day, Dec. 22, 1868, it was noted "Today is cloudy and dirty cold at 3 o'clock it commenced raining and rained very hard until 6 o'clock when it broke off again."

**Tells Story**  
Mrs. Emil C. Peil, first white baby born in Klamath county, daughter of Ivan Applegate, and now a resident of Ashland, tells this story of her father and his brother Oliver which happened at the toll house:

The two young men found a cow freshly killed by a bear which had been bothering cattle on the place for some time. They brought a rope from the house and perched themselves in an oak tree directly above the carcass.

Several hours went by. Then, rambling out of the brush, came a mother bear and her half grown cub. When the bears were about to make a second meal of the cow, Oliver dropped a noose around the cub's neck and pulled the rope tight.

Ivan leaped onto its back. The Applegate dog, trained for hunting but not necessarily wrestling bears, tore into the fray. The blur of fur and buckskin rolled down a small hill and Ivan said afterward it seemed as though the bear "turned right around in his skin."

**Cub Tires Out**  
The cub was eventually tired out and quieted down. The boys tamed it and sold it to Woodward's gardens in San Francisco where it grew to be one of the largest bears ever known there.

Bad weather and like men caused the workers at the toll station to be constantly alert and laboring.

When winter came to the mountain, maintenance crews equipped with a team of oxen and heavy timbers spent the daylight hours clearing snow from the grade. It reached depths up to 16 feet at times.

On days when toll money amounted to a sizeable sum, one of the men would be chosen to take it into the woods and sleep with it over night. There were no banks nearby and holdup tries were not infrequent.



**THE GATE IN 1887**—Henry Clay Dollarhide (center) stands with his family beneath the original toll gate at the toll house in the Siskiyou mountains. The picture was taken in 1887. The sign across the top designates the route as the "Toll Road." Henry ran the road

with his father, Jesse, until his brother, Dudley, bought them out and continued operating the toll station until 1915. This picture and the one of the old stagecoaches above are from negatives owned by Memory Lane Studios, Ashland.

hide, granddaughter of Dudley, bought several acres of the old corporation land including what used to be the toll house in 1946. They built a temporary house near the edge of the property's stand of virgin timber and moved in last July with their three giant St. Bernard dogs, Drifted Snow, Swiss Robe, and Frosty Dawn.

**Erect Gatepost**  
They have erected a gatepost over the entrance to it painted "Old Wagon Road." Mrs. Presley derived this from the two names given the old route, "Mountain Trail" before 1856, and Siskiyou Mountain Wagon Road" after the corporation was formed.

Below the Presley place the road can be traced as a yellow culvert littered with rocks. Above, it is a faint but distinguishable path up to Highway 99, crossing the highway at milepost 334 two miles from the summit, crossing the Southern Pacific tracks near the Siskiyou station, heading up the eastern slope of the mountain, down the other side and along the rails to the border.

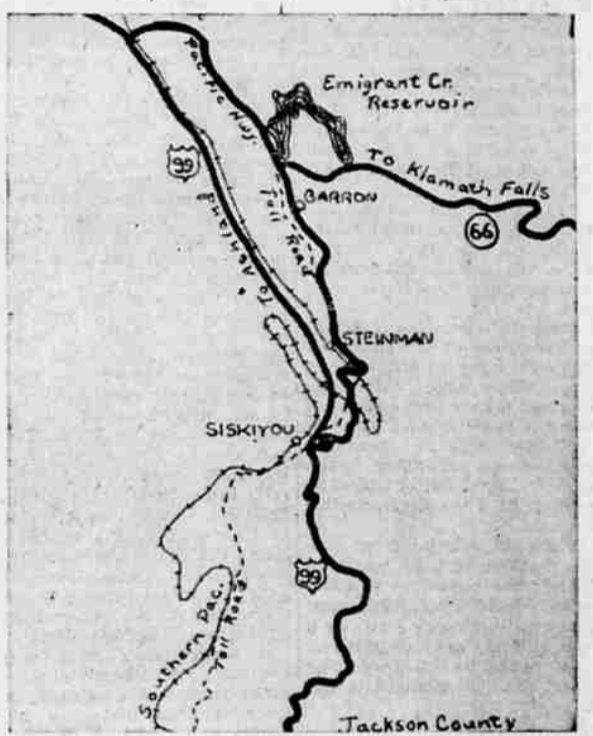
The Daughters of the American Revolution, Ashland, at the instigation of Mrs. Peil, plan to put up a marker on the Presley place near the old toll road, commemorating the Dollarhides, Thorntons, and Applegates.

**Amateur Historian**  
An amateur historian with several scrap books filled with clippings of her famed pioneer family, Mrs. Peil has the toll road as one of her historical interests.

She has notes and clippings about it including a short essay written by her aunt, the late Mrs. Alice Applegate Sergeant.

Mrs. Presley is also fond of her grandfather's old road, and is the possessor of the official

**BLOWN TO BITS**  
Moriaix, France—(U.P.)—Two young French boys were blown to bits Friday by a World War II shell they found in a field. Officials said the shell exploded as the boys tried to take it apart.



**AREA MAP**—Traced from superimposed 1950 and 1910 maps of Jackson county, the above shows the old toll road, its successor the Pacific highway, and the present main route over the Siskiyou, Highway 99. The toll road and the Pacific highway follow each other so closely they merge at one point on the map.

changes, with the grade in ruins, way has now been transferred to Highway 99. But history at least will not forget the father of them both, the Siskiyou Mountain Wagon road, later the famous and sometimes controversial Dollarhide toll road.

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