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CASCADE LOCKS, OREGON

# 73 Years In Cascade Locks

BY JACK MCCRARY

The land just this side of the Craignont hotel was rather low and cleared back as I remember, while the land to the west of it was rough and wooded. The boats docked about where the depot now stands, and since the arrival and departure of the boats was the center of interest it was natural that Travis should seek a location nearby when he decided to enter business.

Up to 1878 there had been no stores here and the settlers were forced to cross the river and do their buying down at the town of Cascades opposite Bonneville. With the founding of the town of Cascade Locks when work was commenced on the locks, a chap by the name of Cameron opened a store, and a little later Bothwick & McKinnon opened a store. They were followed by Captain Dyer. Then Patrick Cull built a hotel and Davey Jones opened a bar. Whiskey Flat became a strong and sturdy youngster. After a time there was a dance hall, and pretty soon two madams and two houses full of girls. Whiskey Flat was fairly launched. The present town site was ignored. Known as Emigrant Hill, it attracted no business.

In those days men drank their whiskey straight, fought like demons, shook hands and drank some more. But the town was not so tough as some people of the present generation might attempt to make us believe. We worked hard and had our fun, and we took our fun where we found it. I was more than 25 years old when work was started on the locks, healthy and strong, so I got a job driving a team. Thus it has been my lot to see the town go forward under the impetus of the contracts awarded in those days, and to see it again go forward with the awarding of contracts awarded in construction of the Bonneville dam.

Agitation for the locks had gone on year after year. Their construction was authorized in June, 1874, and the first surveys were in the autumn of that year. Four years later the first bids were opened. That was in October, 1878. The contract was awarded to Ball & Platt of New York. Ball came out with a force of men on October 21 and began erecting buildings. The first building still stands. It is occupied by the engineers' office down on the reservation. That was Ball's residence. He died there in January, 1879, less than four months after his arrival in Oregon.

Mrs. Ball and Platt and other members of the organization carried on the work and the original contract was finished in December, 1879. After that the government carried on the work.

Construction of the locks was the means of bringing workmen to the district and the town of Cascades was born, so it may be said that the town as we know it today was founded in the year '78. Business houses were opened, hotels were built, saloons flourished. That was more than 55 years ago. History is repeating itself.

Land on the Oregon side of the river was embraced in farms. William Burston had a saloon about where the Texaco gas station now stands, and the stage station stood just up the road, but there were no stores and only four or five houses.

But things changed overnight. First of the newcomers to reach the district was Mike Travis, an Irishman, who had worked several years for the Oregon Steam Navigation company on the Washing-

ton side of the river. He put up a hotel, started a saloon and installed a ferry which he operated with oars. With the arrival of Travis Whiskey Flat was founded.

The Columbia river falls 37 feet in a series of rapids over a distance of almost six miles. These rapids, and those at The Dalles, were a serious handicap to river navigation. The boats were able to handle the traffic with the help of the portage railroad down the Washington shore, but the necessity of improving transportation facilities became more and more pronounced as wheat shipments commenced to come downstream and people journeyed into Idaho and Montana.

In the early '70s the Northern Pacific railroad which was building a line north from Kalama to Tacoma got hold of the Oregon Steam Navigation company. The steamboats were earning money, but the failure of Jay Cooke & Company in New York threw the railroad company into bankruptcy and the stock in the navigation company was passed out among creditors to satisfy claims.

Things looked pretty dark for a time, but back in Washington, D. C., congress passed a bill authorizing construction of locks at the Upper Cascades. If you will brush up on your history you will observe that the building of the locks brought a flood of eastern money into Oregon. It came in on the heels of the panic and there was wide spread prosperity in the mid-Columbia district. That prosperity was to continue until the depression of 1929. We had dull times in 1892, but men were working on the locks here then and we did not feel it as badly as it was felt in other communities.

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5:46 A. M.	9:34 A. M.
9:15 A. M.	12:30 P. M.
12:15 P. M.	4:29 P. M.
3:23 P. M.	8:00 P. M.
5:45 P. M.	11:30 P. M.
9:21 P. M.	1:24 A. M.

Allow 10 minutes difference in time for Bonneville and 15 m for Warrendale.

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2:30 P. M.	4:30 P. M.
10:00 P. M.	Midnight

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