

Mount Hood History

Early-day accounts of activities on the Mountain, taken from a small pamphlet, published in 1907.

(By R. L. Glisan)

My first introduction to Mount Hood was the Summer before Cloud Cap Inn was built and the road there had just been completed. Cooper, after whom Cooper's Spur was named, guided us around the mountain over the glaciers until we reached a point where he pointed out Crater Rock. It was a very fatiguing day's trip, especially for youthful novices. At that time the mountain was considered inaccessible from the north side. Since then I have made the ascent twice from the north side, and have visited Government Camp, on the south side, by auto in an afternoon from Portland, and have also made two Winter trips to Cloud Cap Inn. I have seen the mountain in all its varying moods, and at different seasons, and consider the Winter trip one of special interest.

This Winter the Snowshoe Club made its fourth annual visit to Cloud Cap Inn. Our object it to go when the snow is deepest and conditions most favorable for good sleighing, snowshoeing and skiing, and this we find is the latter part of January. A party of ten enthusiasts left Portland January 18, on the morning train, arriving at Hood River before noon, the Columbia River scenery being dazzling and impressive in its

Winter garb of snow and ice.

After a hearty meal at the hotel, we bundled into two four-horse sleighs, and time, the road, and business cares soon slipped away. The sleighbells, crisp air, the crunching of snow under the runners gave us an exhilarating effect that no artificial spirits could produce. The road at first lead through acres of fruit trees and berry farms, apparently lifeless under the pure white mantle, giving little evidence of preparing for the wealth of fruit and berries that have made Hood River Valley world renowned.

We soon left the valley for the foot hills and where in Summer the horses sweated and toiled in choking dust they now spurned the grade with straining collars. Late in the afternoon we reached the home of the guides in the timber base of the mountain. The guides, Bill and Bert, each took a sleighload, a severe test of hospitality, but they had prepared for our coming, and in spite of the limited quarters we were royally entertained. After dinner Bert's quintette made a social call on Bill's, a half-mile distant, cautiously following the moon-lit furrow in the deep snow, like and unlike the Pilgrim Fathers on a New England Thanksgiving Eve.

Snow Shoeing

The next morning bright and early we were on the move again with fresh horses, chafing with impatience, and sped along where the snowplow the preceding day had thrown aside the surplus snow and packed the way for rapid travel. Gliding through fleeting forests of fir and pine we rushed down the slope and across the bridge over the ice-fringed but never ice-bound plunging waters, then up the slope again to a plateau, through more open and half-cleared stretches, where the primeval forest gave way to second-growth of young fir, sturdy chinkapins and deciduous bushes loaded to the breaking point with snow. As the grade increased our willing horses lessened their speed, and at the top of China Hill, where Mark, our third guide, waited for us, the deepening snow forced the horses to halt. Leaving overcoats and everything superfluous in the sleighs, we slipped our feet into the thongs and straps supposed to hold them in place on the snowshoes, and single file plodded up the grade. At the Elk Beds, under the friendly shelter of a decrepit open shed, we readjusted our straps, according to the method which had stood the test. Leaving Elk Beds we entered the heavy timber again and trailed up the snow-white path between forest walls of heavy green, a shifting scene of indescribable beauty at every turn.

At noon we stopped for light lunch, having no place to rest except the restless branches or the tops of telephone poles, the wires where they crossed the road proving snares for the careless. Late in the afternoon we reached the Inn, where the huge fireplace soon ablaze with light threw out a welcome heat, for the penetrating wind had met us as we rounded the last slope.

We had provisions enough for an army, a supply of both provisions and fuel having been cached for our benefit when the Inn was closed for the season, and the guides had made a special trip besides, packing perishable provisions for us.

A supper cooked by 13 cooks may be deadly, but our appetites were not of a shadowy or superstitious turn, and hunger made the meal perfect, and a fitting precedent for its successors.

The Inn occupies a commanding

position on the ridge, and catches the full force of every storm, and that night it blew a gale, and as the building shook and quivered with the succeeding blasts, we thanked the wisdom of those who had drawn heavy wire cables over the roof and anchored them to the solid rock.

The next day we went down the ravine found the old trapper, our acquaintance of previous years, in his cozy snow-covered log cabin, near the spring. His statement that it was an off season was hardly borne out by the freshly stretched skins of pine marten on the wall. The wind came with lessened force that evening, and in the morning died away completely, and from our blankets, through the broad windows, where the wooden shutters had been removed, we could see the mountain in crystal clearness looking down on us. Rushing out in the crisp morning air, we ascended the roof platform and secured a panorama that has no equal, so perfect as to be beyond human conception, so impressive that the mind was tuned with what the eye took in. In all its majestic symmetry the mountain rose before us in a sky of liquid blue, its austere white softened by the first golden tints of dawn. In the east Lookout Mountain hid the rising sun, only to emphasize the shafts of light, forerunners of its blazing glory. In the west great bands of reflected color rose above the gloom of forest green, while across the winding fog which marked the Columbia River Basin rose the other snow peaks in their grandeur.

Tobogganing

That day we added tobogganing to the list of our accomplishments, and the following day on Norwegian skis that proved a trial at the start and a joy forever after, we rounded the curves and flew down the road, the return trip to the sleighs proving far too brief. The sleighs on the down grade never slackened their speed, and, stopping only for lunch, we returned to Hood River in record time.

Historical Scraps

For many years it has been currently reported that in October, 1849, United States troops were stationed at Government Camp, on the south side of Mount Hood, for the protection of early settlers, and particularly to guard the Barlow road across the Cascade Mountains, against hostile Indians. Also that an early snow storm shut off supplies, causing great suffering, and that settlers from the Willamette Valley finally rescued the troops, who were in dire straits; that they abandoned wagons, cannon, etc., all of which were finally condemned and sold at Oregon City.

Eruption of Mount Hood

W. F. Courtney, a Pacific coast pioneer, now a resident of Walla Walla, thus describes an eruption of Mount Hood:

"The eruption took place during the latter part of September, 1859. A party of us were bringing a band of cattle across the Cascades by way of the old Barlow route. The night the old mountain flared up we were camped on what is known as Tygh Ridge, about 35 miles from Mount Hood. The ridge is very high and the night in question was chilly, with a stiff breeze blowing. Fearful that our stock would take it into their heads to bolt in the dark, guards were placed over them during the night. It was about 1:30 o'clock in the morning; another man and myself were watching the animals. I was facing the old mountain, when suddenly the heavens lit up and from the dark there shot a column of fire. With a flash that illuminated the whole mountain side with a pinkish glare the flame danced from the crater. Suddenly it sank from sight. For two hours, as we watched, the mountain continued to blaze at irregular intervals, and when morning came Mount Hood presented a peculiar sight. His sides, where the day before there was snow, were blackened as if cinders and ashes had been thrown out, but aside from that nothing appeared to be wrong, and I do not believe any damage resulted. That was the only time that I ever saw flames issue from the

crater, but I was a member of a party at one time when we encountered hot cinders on the mountain sides."

—Everett Record.
May 17, 1902.

Eruptions of Mt. Hood

On Wednesday last the atmosphere suddenly became exceedingly hot about midday. In the afternoon the heavens presented a singular appearance, dark, silvery, condensed clouds hung over the top of Mount Hood. The next day several persons watched the appearance of Mount Hood until evening. An occasional flash of fire could be distinctly seen rolling up. On Thursday night the fire was plainly seen by every one whose attention could be drawn to the subject. Yesterday the mountain was very closely examined by those who have recently returned from a visit to its summit, when by the naked eye or a glass, it was seen that a large mass of the northwest side had disappeared, and that the immense quantity of snow which, two weeks since, covered the south side, had also disappeared. The dense cloud of steam and smoke constantly rising over and far above the summit, together with the entire change in its appearance heretofore, convinces us that Mount Hood is now in a state of eruption, which has broken out within a few weeks. The curious will examine it and see for themselves. —Weekly Oregonian, August 20, 1859.

When a summons for a car parking offense was called in Johannesburg, South Africa, it was found that the person named was a three-months-old baby, and when the father explained that the child's name had been inserted in error, he was fined.

When an Arab miller near Jerusalem refused to give money to armed brigands they locked him, his wife and four-year-old daughter in the mill and set fire to the place, but were beaten off by three Jews who then rescued the family from the flames.

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Discouraged from visiting southern Morocco because of a typhus epidemic tourists awaited in Tangiers for their schedules and the number became so great that Tangier hotels reported good business for the first time in many years.

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