

'Twas No Laughing Matter As First Car Chug-Chugged Its Way Into Peaceful Klamath County

At first glance a perspective of the early history of the automobile in Klamath county presents an aspect predominantly humorous. The irate farmers who viewed the bucking, splinting contraption a menace to the country, the eminent citizens who passed ordinances that the speed limit in Klamath Falls should not be in excess of five miles an hour, and the manner in which automobile owners 17 and 18 years ago were subjected to threats varying from scolding to shooting, cause those who now live in an enlightened world to sit back easily in their arm chairs and view the past with a tolerant amusement and wonderment of the ignorance that could have brought about such animosity to the automobile.

Caused Many Laughs.

The clumsy machine of the early days, few of which now exist, caused many a laugh from those who judge them from the present standard of perfection.

But on second glance, the immense strides that the automobile has made becomes of primary consideration. Few realize what part the automobile has taken in the upbuilding of this county. The farmer, at one time the greatest enemy the automobile had, may now come to town in a few hours to haul his products or to visit his neighbors. They are indispensable to industry or a business of any sort. Commerce has been facilitated, general health of the people has been improved, and in all other lines of progress the automobile has taken an important part.

Train Followed Auto.

Perhaps a coincidence or perhaps a natural course of events, but the fact remains, that with the advent of the automobile in 1907, the prosperity of Klamath Falls took an upward trend and ever since has held that course. Several years after the first automobile was driven over the Green Springs mountain, the first locomotive arrived. The automobile and the railroad welded the link of an efficient transportation scheme that necessitated more production and hence was the means of more settlers coming into this country.

Automobiles and the railroad have rendered this county—considered at one time an isolated backwash—accessible to the world. Fifteen years ago Klamath Falls was but a name to the outside world. Living in this city for years and years were old families who, because of lack of new blood, were growing stale. With the auto came a stream of live business men who now dominate this city and influence the county for the good.

Harry Peltz Pioneer.

The pioneer of pioneers of Klamath county is Harry E. Peltz, wholesale tobacco dealer. Early in the year of 1907, Peltz hearing of the new means of conveyance known as an automobile, journeyed to Portland for the purpose of buying one. But a few cars were on the market at the time—the Oldsmobile, the Ford, the Cadillac, the Pope Tribune and others. Peltz went into the matter thoroughly and finally concluded that a Pope Tribune, made in Tarrytown, would suit him about right.

At that time there was not a garage between Portland and Medford, but without mishap he reached the latter town.

Then the proposition of getting over the Green Springs mountain into Klamath Falls presented difficulties. Those who now are inclined to cuss at the road would have lost their minds 17 years ago. But Peltz proceeded on his tortuous way over the hills and down the steep grades, and finally after many stops for repairs and replenishment of the gas tank, he approached Klamath Falls.

The Horses Cussed.

Reactions of the first horse that saw him bumping along over the road between Keno and Klamath Falls was stark staring with amazement. If there had been present an interpreter of the equine language it would have probably been found that the horse said:

"Well, I'll be d-d!"
But when the chug-a-chug of the two-cylinder motor was heard, panic overtook him, and his hoarse master peering up the road at a cloud of dust that was kicked up by the horse's hoofs as he tore on his way to Klamath Falls, shook his fist as Peltz passed him on the road.

The trip of the first automobile down Main street was a momentous affair. Curiosity and resentment battled for precedence in the minds of most of the populace. Horses whined, dogs scurried behind the houses, men stood open-mouthed at the mechanical marvel before their eyes, and others told each other that "something ought to be done about it."

Dunham Second Buyer.

E. A. Dunham, proprietor of the Dunham garage, but at that time the owner of a confectionery store, was the second person to purchase an automobile. Early in the spring of 1907 he journeyed to Portland and purchased a two-seated, four-cylinder

der Ford, the first that Henry Ford placed on the market.

"How we ever made the trip from Portland to Medford is a mystery to me," he said. "There wasn't even a garage between Portland and Medford and we certainly had some time in making any progress. Over the Green Springs mountain it was a nightmare, but eventually we drew near Klamath Falls.

"The interest among the people of the town was amazing," he continued. "Men would offer me \$5 to take them for a ride of a few blocks. There were also many who considered the auto a terrible thing. I could name about a dozen old timers—now driving cars, by the way—who actually threatened to do me bodily harm if I did not cease driving my machine on the city streets. One man whose horse was particularly scared, threatened he would shoot me and the car, too, if I didn't keep away from his horse.

"I was the first to ever make the trip around upper Klamath Lake, and I shall never forget how the farmers regarded me. They painted the air red."

The next two to purchase cars were Major Worden and W. T. Shive. Shive came one day, in the year 1908, to a pseudo-repair shop owned by a man named Crosemiller, now a resident of Lakeview. His was a tale of dire distress as the car would not run.

"How are the spark plugs," Shive was asked.
"Cleaned 'em, clean as a whistle."
"After several hours of work the man working on the car decided to fix the plugs despite Shive's assertions.

It developed that Shive had taken a rag and without unscrewing the plugs had assiduously wiped off the porcelain of the plugs and considered the job well done.

Justice of the Peace Emmitt tells of the visit of Senator Fulton and how, when the senator was asked if he would like to ride to Merrill, he replied:

"Not a chance. I have walked too many miles to the next town to take a chance on one of those rigs."
This, from a United States senator, indicated that the distaste for automobiles, then prevalent in this community, was not entirely local.

Entered Races.
Will Baldwin tells of the visit of two automobile men to Klamath Falls in 1907 to take part in the county fair. Horse races were faded by the new-fangled machines that were going to stage a race.

"It was the funniest thing I ever saw," Baldwin said. "The two cars would start out together on the track and half way around one would cough, sputter and stop. Then they would return and start over again. Half way around the other car would give up the ghost. If there had been a race between the horses and the automobiles the horses would have been in their stalls and fed by the time the autos arrived at the finish line."

From 1907 to 1910 the automobile was regarded as a freak. But when the railroad came in and the value of rapid transportation was appreciated, a demand was created and establishment of the first garages took place. Will Baldwin and E. A. Dunham both started garages in the spring of 1910 and shortly afterward the first two carloads of automobiles arrived.

Business Took Spurt.
From that point to the present time the automobile business has increased by leaps and bounds. People of this county found that they could not get along without motor transportation. Garage after garage was established until at the present time there are 16. The antipathy towards the automobile decreased and people were brought to realize the important bearing they had upon the progress of the county.

In conjunction with the rapid increase of automobiles came a demand for good roads. Highways were built by the state, county and the government that spread out like a net and topped all the fertile sections of this county. With good roads came the tourist and hence the new settler.

Closed cars now have a definite lead in popularity over open.

HEALTHY GROWTH OF AUTO BUSINESS IS PREDICTED BY SCHWAB

NEW YORK, Feb. 26.—That the automobile business as well as the steel business should show a healthy growth this year over last year, was the opinion expressed here by Charles M. Schwab, chairman of Bethlehem Steel Corporation and guiding head of the Stutz, upon his return on the majestic from a four-week trip to Europe, which was begun January 12.

lake. Returning they would be able to drive along the western side of the lake.

Market Roads

Other county road projects in view are completion of the Poe

valley market road and construction of a new market road leading from Klamath Agency to Chiloquin and Williamson river bridge.

On the Poe Valley market road grading and the laying of the base

rock has been completed. All that remains is to lay the top layers. This will be done this spring.

The Agency, Chiloquin, Williamson River road has been cleared and partially surveyed. It is hoped

to commence grading at an early date. Surveying has been completed from Chiloquin to Williamson river. Surveying from Chiloquin to Klamath Agency will be finished this spring.

WEST KLAMATH L. HIGHWAY ON 1924 PROGRAM

Rock Creek Road Will Open New Country And Give Route to Crater L.

Completion of the Rock Creek crossing, 20 miles from Klamath Falls, will be one of the principal factors in the 1924 county road construction road program, according to the county surveyor's office.

The Rock Creek road is now completed to a point known as Bear Wallow, 13 miles northwest of Klamath Falls. An engineer was to be sent today to the present terminus of the road to lay tentative plans for construction work in the spring. It is predicted that the road will be completed to Rock crossing by summer.

To Continue Road
The road skirts the west side of Klamath lake. Future plans are to continue the road along the lake through Odessa and to have it run into the Crater Lake highway near Fort Klamath. While one of the purposes of the proposed road is to open up the country it is also being regarded as a route to Crater lake. Motorists driving from Klamath Falls to Crater Lake could make the trip up to the lake along the eastern side of Klamath

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