

TRASK RIVER TOLL ROAD

The Trask River Toll Road was a travel route that traversed the Coast Range between Tillamook Bay and the Willamette Valley. In Tillamook County it followed the Trask River to its headwaters. Construction of the road was started around 1870. The state authorized the sale of construction bonds in 1872. The first stage line using the road began operation in 1872. Operation ceased in December 1911, when the railroad became the main means of transportation to Tillamook and the coast.

The Old Trask Toll Road was a connection to the outside world for early Tillamook pioneers. Over this road the stage coach made two trips daily. One coach left Yamhill at 4:00 a.m., the other at 4 p.m. The trip took two days to reach Tillamook. Besides passengers and mail brought in by stage, there were freight wagons that brought in needed supplies. An 1896 advertisement for the North Yamhill and Tillamook Stage Line shows the following time schedule:

Leave North Yamhill 8:00 p.m., arrive Fairdale 10:00 p.m.
 Leave Fairdale 6:00 a.m., arrive Tillamook 4:00 p.m.
 Leave Tillamook 6:00 p.m., arrive Trask House 9:00 p.m.
 Leave Trask House 6:00 a.m., arrive North Yamhill 2:00 p.m.
 The stages ran daily except Sunday and price was \$3.50 per person.

By today's standards for roads, portions of those we will be traveling may seem rough. But modern suspension on the vehicles will smooth the ride considerably. The following is a stage driver's description of the ride in the "good ol' days:"

"The coach we used was a through-braced (suspended on heavy leather straps that ran parallel to the running gear) - the hardest riding coach man ever made. Most coaches were sprung up and they rocked sort of from side to side. The through brace's wuz a toward and backward one. It made it awful hard ridin'. Too, when you hit a good bump like as not you bite a kidney. Sometimes you'd slip and fall into the boot. That would hurt.

"The through braced stagecoach waz a much harder drivin' coach. Many times we would strap the passengers and ourselves in good and tight to stick with the durn wagons."

It was a 45 mile trip over high summits and described by many as "the most awful ride in the world." Stages left Tillamook at 2 a.m., hoping to make Yamhill by the late afternoon. The 4 p.m. stage stayed all night at Trask House. Horses were changed twice. When snow was deep, four-horse teams were used. If the snow was too deep to travel with horses, two men on snowshoes would try to get the mail through once a week.

The route included many steep grades. To keep the wagon from overrunning the horses, some drivers would put a pole through the back wheels to have them slide. The Trask House was where folks traveling the Toll Road would spend the night before continuing their journey. It was started by Tom Burton in the 1870s and enlarged two or three times. Rowland Gobar said his mother sent him up in the tower to

watch for the Yamhill Stage to come over the hill above, so he could tell her to put the potatoes on to cook. The Trask House burned in the 1933 Tillamook Burn.

According to the state inventory, the site of the Toll Road has historic significance to the County because of its association with travel and transportation. The original road was obliterated when a new road was constructed along the north bank of the Trask River.



Murphy's Camp site was first used as a relay station for those traveling the Toll Road, later a railroad logging camp of the Murphy Timber Co. and owned by Ed M. Murphy and his four sons. This is where the Murphy's logging railroad connected with the



Flora Mainline operated by Joe Flora Logging Co. The logs were taken from here to the mill at Carlton. Following that, logging railroads were built to transport the logs from the area prior to the first Tillamook Burn. After its use as the logging camp in the early 1930s, it became a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) "Side Camp." In the 40s and 50s, the site was an Oregon State Forestry Department Guard Station.

When you see the Murphy Camp site today, it is just a quiet opening in the forest where five roads come together. But in the 1930s, it was a busy noisy hub of logging. Steam engines passing through pulling train loads of large logs down to the mill or bringing empty cars back, steam donkeys with their shrill whistles, whining cables and chugging engines hauling the logs to the landings or loading logs on cars, the crash of falling trees and hundreds of men employed doing jobs from cook's helper to high climber who would top and rig the 75 to 100 foot spar trees. If you talk to an old time logger he will tell you it was a dangerous but exciting time.

At Fairdale, the Mountain House was built in 1880 by Jim Fairchilds. It is now the location of the Flying M Ranch. In the old days it was rumored that if you broke the law in North Yamhill, your best defense was to go to Tillamook. There was a good chance the sheriff would not make the trip over the miserable road to catch you because he would have to come back the same way. This doesn't speak well of the people that populated the valley, but after all, it is only a rumor.



Windy Ridge, Larch Point and the Telephone Exchange Cabin were also used for changing of horses. The telephone exchange site was known for its gorgeous view.

Some interesting facts from "TILLAMOOK HISTORY":

Even though the stage would carry considerable cash from time to time, it was only help up twice. Both times the robber was eventually caught.

A landmark along the route was Deadman's Tree. So named because Austin Wagner froze to death nearby in 1886. He attempted to cross the mountains when the snow was deep and the temperature below freezing.

Even though the route was steep and rough there was only one accident recorded which resulted in the death of a passenger. The accident happened July 3, 1901. The man killed was only listed as a Mr. Trowbridge from Fresno, California. His brother and the stage driver were also injured.

This information taken from notes in the Tillamook County Historical Society files, the pamphlet "From Yamhill to Tillamook by Stagecoach," published by the Yamhill County Historical Society and "Tillamook History," published by the Tillamook Pioneer Association.

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The Emergency Conservation Work Act

A vast scheme of conservation by hand labor emerged from the depression of the early thirties. Franklin Roosevelt came to the White House with a definite plan for putting

idle men to work on the land. When accepting the nomination for presidency, he proposed to relieve the distress created by the shutdown of factories through employing a million men on restoration of forests and other natural resources.

Within a month after Roosevelt's inauguration, Congress passed the act which

created an organized group of 250,000 unemployed young men between the ages of 18 and 25, to place them in healthful constructive forest labor. The act authorized the president to formulate rules and regulations for a work program in construction, maintenance and other public improvements which would result in protection and reforestation of federal forest lands. Authority was also included to extend these provisions to state, county and private timber land owners under guidelines established in other cooperative acts of Congress (Clarke-McNary).

Initially, there was considerable confusion and misunderstandings in discerning the application of the act. A conference was called on April 6, 1933, by the Secretary of Agriculture and was attended by forestry and government officials from throughout the United States. The conference outlined an organizational plan and set up lists of works to be done:

Prevention and control of forest fires; control of blister rust and other forest diseases; control of insects which at-

tack or kill forests; forest planting; improvement of timber stands by thinning and removal of undesirable trees; removal of fire hazards including standing dead trees, old logs and brush along roads and trails; preparation of fire breaks; control of soil erosion in the interest of flood prevention; eradication of poisonous plants which prevent or diminish the use of forest ranges by permitted livestock; eradication of rodents destructive to forest growth; re-vegetation of overgrazed forest ranges; installation of forest protective improvements including foot, horse and truck trails, telephone lines, and simple shelters for protective forces; and forest timber and range surveys.

While these guidelines were prepared for work on federal lands, they also applied to work on state lands under conditions established by the president. The conditions provided that the state agree to share with the federal government profits as might result from sale of the lands or its products, but was limited to an expenditure by the state or not to exceed a maximum of \$3.00 per acre.

Work Experience

When the program began, the minimum number of men to be placed in each camp was set by federal officials at 200. Foresters generally objected to 200-men camps, arguing that it would be impossible to efficiently conduct work with such a large organization. In a resolution the foresters endorsed the idea of the larger camp but also argued that permission be granted to establish small temporary camps under leadership of foresters in areas where work made it impossible to employ the entire 200 men. Secretary of Agriculture Wallace reminded foresters that the CCC was primarily a relief measure and secondarily a forestry measure although foresters approached it from a forestry standpoint. Nevertheless, the camp enrollment policy was later given added flexibility through establishment of "side" or "spike" camps apart from the main camp.

Under the original CCC plan, enrollees were required to allot a certain portion of their monthly cash allowance to dependents. The cash allowance was fixed at \$30 per month and at least \$25 had to be sent home. This allotment was paid directly to the dependent by the army, leaving the enrollee with only \$5.00 for the month. By the end of the program the allotment to dependents was reduced to \$15.00 per month, with the army retaining \$8.00 per month for the benefit of the enrollee upon discharge from the CCC.

The remaining \$7.00 per month was paid directly to the enrollee. Included in the wage, in addition to the regular \$30 or more per month allowance, were food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental attention, education and ministerial services. By 1941, this was estimated to equal approximately \$66.00 per month in "real wages."

Shortly after the program began, a policy was established which selected a certain percentage of men to be designated as local experienced woodsmen (L.E.M.'s). Selection was based solely on knowledge of woods work. These woodsmen were employed to direct and aid the many inexperienced men in handling axes, saw and other tools.

Camp Trask

Camp Trask was located 16 miles from Tillamook on Trask River at the North Fork junction. The camp was part of a 280 acre tract which Hammond Lumber Company and Winton Oregon Timber Company conveyed to the county in May, 1936. This tract was also dedicated for park and recreational purposes, and a lease effected with the Federal Government to continue operation of the campsite.

Company 2109 was the first group to occupy the camp in April 1935 and consisted primarily of enrollees from Rhode Island. They also planted in the Hamlet Experimental Forest and 25 men were sent to Toledo where they constructed the fire protection headquarters building. Fire season also meant time on fire lines. In June 1938, a crew of 85 from Camp Trask was involved in the Big Creek Fire in Clatsop County. When the big burn took off again in 1939, they manned the lines.

Their big achievement was also the building of a major bridge. In 1937, Trask CCC constructed a 250-foot bridge across the North Fork of Trask River. It was 16 feet wide, 33 feet above low water and designed to support 60 tons. It was located at the east end of the CCC camp, a short distance from camp buildings.

The Trask unit worked at self-sufficiency. They kept their own bees and produced hives from wild swarms. The southern boys produced a program of songs and skits, which featured the Dixie Hornet Band. Performances were given in Tillamook. Lack of enrollments and reductions in congressional appropriations finally resulted in the closure of Camp Trask in June 1941.

Thanks for this information taken from "A Chronicle of the Tillamook County Forest Trust Lands," by Paul A. Levesque.

Photos courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society, Clyde Hudson Collection and Paul Clock's book, "Punk, Rotten and Nasty."