

TILLAMOOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Tillamook County Historical Society was formed in 1984 to bring together those persons interested in preserving the history of Tillamook County. The Society concentrates on doing a number of projects such as placing historic plaques, conducting historical tours, printing books about local history and producing a newsletter with local history topics and up-coming events. **Let us know how you would like to participate as a volunteer.** The Society schedules regular meetings and events and an annual meeting of the general membership where a speaker or program is planned. Members are welcome to attend all meetings. Annual dues are \$10.00 for Family Membership and include the newsletter.

If you would like to keep receiving this newsletter, please make sure your dues are paid for the current year. We will be dropping those who are more than a year behind from the mailing list. Thank you.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR EMAIL HAS CHANGED!

2021 TCHS MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings are suspended until at least the summer. Call 503.523.8387 for information.

Watch for updates on our facebook page.

 www.facebook.com/tillamookcountyhistoricalsociety/

Stay safe, be well, follow social distancing guidelines. Please wear a mask to protect yourself and others in places where social distancing is difficult to maintain.



TILLAMOOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 123, TILLAMOOK, OR 97141

www.tcpm.org/tchs.htm

JANUARY 2021

THE UNEXPECTED CONTINUES....

Due to continued Covid 19 restrictions, meetings are on hold until at least summer and perhaps beyond. Given that most of us belonging to the Historical Society are in a vulnerable group (age for one), we opt for being safe and seeing all of you in the future. The annual dinner is also postponed and set for sometime in the summer. Perhaps June. The day, the time and the location are but a mystery, to be revealed when the time is right. However, that should give us plenty of time to find a great speaker for the return to public gatherings. Watch for updates on our facebook page for ongoing projects, historical photos, and more.

In 2020, the Historical Society, with thanks to a Tillamook PUD grant and the efforts of Sally Rissel and others, took on an ambitious project to promote and highlight downtown Cloverdale's history.

Main street towns have suffered a downturn with changing communities and shopping habits. Cloverdale was once an important hub of South Tillamook County. It had an hotel, cheese-factory, movie theater, pharmacy, hardware store, barbershop, and many more small businesses. In the last few years, there have been empty storefronts and a few small businesses holding on.

With the help of the grant, the TCHS took on promoting and celebrating Cloverdale's long history. Four huge historical photo murals have been placed on buildings depicting the early town. The 100-year old Charles Ray house has a new interpretive sign in front. Various businesses have historical pictures on their inside walls for people to enjoy. Planters and new signage have spruced up the town. A series of Burma Shave-inspired signs have been placed at the north end of town to help slow traffic and promote the town.

The mural to the right depicts Lloyd McKillip as a teenager in front of the New Cash Market delivery truck. Lloyd helped out the family business in the summer, holidays, and weekends delivering to Neskowin, Woods, Pacific City, Beaver, Blaine, and even Brooten Springs, thriving during this period.

Lloyd had a passion for local history. He collected old photographs and tracked down the names of the people in the photos. He wrote short accounts of local towns and shared his research at gatherings and the Tillamook County Historical Society. Lloyd was a teacher at Cloverdale High School and served as president of the Pioneer Association.

Lloyd's memories and research have made a valuable contribution to the history of South Tillamook County. Pay special attention to the great smile on Lloyd's face in the mural. You can imagine how he loved his life here in Cloverdale.

The new energy of the project has attracted several new businesses, as well as a beautifully made Free Library, used by tourists and locals alike.



REQUEST RETURN SERVICE

www.tcpm.org/tchs.htm

P.O. BOX 123, TILLAMOOK, OR 97141

TILLAMOOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Once again, thanks to Bill Minshall for saving this article from a 1974 Smithsonian magazine and Elizabeth for sharing it with the Historical Society.

AUTOMOBILE COMES TO TILLAMOOK

by Lawrence Fernsworth

When a bright new Orient Buckboard arrived in 1905 by boat, it signaled the end of an Oregon county's isolation.

The author's news career led him from Tillamook to the Times of London.

Tillamook County, on the Oregon coast, lies between mountains and sea, about 50 miles south of the Columbia River. In 1905 the town of Tillamook had about 900 people. It was the county seat and served as the metropolis for those who lived along the rivers and valleys and battled for salmon. Automobiles had appeared in what Tillamook folk called "the outside," but no one was sure how to pronounce them - whether to rhyme with "bill" or "bile" or "nobile" or "beel." People said that no automobile could get into Tillamook County from the outside, anyway.

In 1905, a small coastal steamer called *Sue H. Elmore* made the trip down the coast from Astoria once a week - if the weather held. The stagecoach did even better, taking only two days to make it from outside, except when snow blocked the passes. But in the spring of 1905, the county's first automobile arrived, introduced by Rollie Watson, editor of the *Tillamook Herald*, one of three weekly newspapers.

Rollie had served in the Navy and came to town, tattooed up to his neck, to start a new career. He bought the *Herald* from his uncle, R.M. Watson. Not long after, R.M. received a consignment of crates on the *Sue H. Elmore*. The town drayman, who was also chief of police, carted the rates to the back of a furniture store, and they turned out to contain a platen press that could be run by water-power or foot pedal, a printshop stone, a planer and mallet, some iron forms and several cases of type. R.M. thus set up *The Independent*. Independent it was.

At Each Other's Throats

In no time *The Independent* (editor R.M. Watson), the *Herald* (editor Rollie W. Watson) and the *Tillamook Headlight* (editor Fred C. Baker, a naturalized Englishman) were snapping at each other to the glee of the citizenry. People always gathered at the post office on the respective press days, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, to read what R.M. and Rollie and Fred had to say. What Fred had to say about R.M. one week was that he could drink enough whiskey to float the *Sue H. Elmore*. Then there was a rush

next Saturday to read what R.M. had to say about *that*. R.M. said he would discuss it before the august tribunal of law - which was the circuit court.

R.M.'s suit against Baker went to the jury in due course, and the jury decided that it really wasn't true that R.M. could drink that much whiskey. The jury awarded R.M. one dollar in damages. Ever after, R.M. could say that if the *Headlight's* readers wanted the facts about its editor's capacity for telling the truth, all they had to do was go to the county clerk's office and read what an august tribunal of law had said about it.

Well, to get back to the automobile... Tillamook was an all-wooden town: houses, stores and sawmill, where a steel buzz saw was run by the steam from an iron furnace which fed on sawdust. Even the water pipes were wooden. They provided power for the presses, the only other machinery besides the sawmill. No one seemed aware of any such thing as a gasoline engine.

Then, in the spring of 1905, the *Sue H. Elmore* brought in a knocked-down automobile, an Orient Buckboard made by the Waltham Manufacturing Company in Waltham, Massachusetts. Body, natural wood; gasoline capacity, three gallons; horsepower, four; cylinders, one; top and sides, none. It cost \$375 and was tiny compared to some of the monsters even then humping along the tamped-down dirt roads on the outside - automobiles made by Mors, Napier, Haynes, Locomobile. For \$5,000 you could get a Darracq Double Phaeton Tulip. Biggest sellers were the Wintons - the Quad and the two-cylinder touring car. There were then about 43 makers of automobiles.

When the Orient Buckboard was unloaded I was one of the onlookers because I was printer's devil for the *Herald*. There were many remarks in the crowd as the contraption was assembled. How would it perform on rocky dirt roads? What would it do to children? To dogs and cats? To horses and cows? What would *they* do to it?

One of the critics was "Judge" Cooper. I heard him say, "Too bad - Rollie will never know how to manage his money." I knew that was a spiteful remark because Rollie had been criticizing the water company, which Judge Cooper headed. Rollie had said that if the water company had done its job properly it would have

prevented the wooden courthouse from burning to the ground.

Rollie then complained that Judge Cooper was getting back at him by keeping pressure low on the *Herald's* press days so there wasn't enough power to run the two-revolution Cottrell press, the most advanced piece of machinery in town after the sawmill. I don't know if Judge Cooper did keep the pressure low, but I know that on press days, I had to push the cylinder that carried blank sheets of paper back and forth over the type bed - a job that Judge Cooper's water power should have done.

Anyway, putting the Buckboard's pieces together was like doing a jigsaw puzzle. It had a tiller to steer by. It had solid rubber tires. The seat was mounted

on a flat platform of polished slats. The engine was under the platform in the rear. I seem to remember that the men kept after that engine for a couple of days, trying to make it work. It had frequent fits of sputtering, and the onlookers would shout "Thar she goes!" and then it would die, and hopes with it. At last some inspired onlooker counseled, "Get Hank Crenshaw."

Hank was the town electrician. He had charge of the town system and of the dynamo at the sawmill which provided power for lighting from sundown to sunup. The sawmill blew its whistle to signal lights on and off all over town.

Hank responded to the pleas and finally got the thing going.

It would be nice to report that the bystanders cheered when the engine caught hold. No such thing. People seemed silently awed.

The automobile was wheeled out onto the street in front of the *Herald*, and Rollie hopped in and invited someone (not Judge Cooper) to share the maiden trip along the three-mile road to the cemetery, and then back again. Then other favored citizens had their turns. I, finally, among them.

For quite a while after that Rollie's car was a familiar sight, competing for attention with familiar rubber-tired buggies such as the ones owned by Doc Sharp the dentist and ice cream parlor man, who ran ads in the papers announcing "I scream."

The automobile sparked a movement to improve our roads. The riverbeds had plenty of gravel, so the county court summoned citizens to meet and arrange to use the gravel and get the roads rolled by steamroller.

One summer afternoon, I think in the same year, 1905, word spread through town that two men had driven another

automobile through the mountains from the outside. They had come right through the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation and along the Nestucca and Trask rivers. When folks gathered to hear them tell about it I was there, too, for I was also a fledgling

reporter. I talked to them and took notes. They told me of the marvelous speeds they had made - 20 or even 30 miles an hour, in places.

In 1908 Rollie Watson

bowed out of journalism to inaugurate a new enterprise, an automobile stage route from McMinnville, on the outside, to Tillamook. Fare, \$10. The Orient Buckboard had emitted its last sputter, and Rollie had acquired an impressive affair with enclosed sides and from and back seats. I was one of the first passengers, and I wrote a feature story for the *Portland Oregonian* about Rollie's new stage run.

The automobile had by now become a competitor with the *Sue H. Elmore* and with the horse-drawn stagecoach that took a breather at the top of the mountain pass and arrived the morning after it set out. I described the country through which we passed in Rollie's automobile, and the people along the way who watched this advance in transportation with deep interest. Reading my feature, later, some of the townsfolk thought I laid it on rather thick.

In 1912 a passenger train made its first run into town. It soon put the stagecoaches, both horse-drawn and motorized, and the *Sue H. Elmore* out of business. But it was a great day for Tillamook when a circus train rumbled over the mountains for the first time.

Tillamook changed a bit as the years passed. Rollie, I believe, went into real estate. His uncle, R.M., left town and started a weekly paper over near Astoria, *The Seaside Signal*, which still flourishes. Then he left Seaside and went across the Columbia River into Washington State to start still another paper. He and I exchanged letters for a while, but I finally lost track of him.

Fred C. Baker stayed put. It's my understanding that he died in Tillamook, with his boots on, as they say in the West.

Tillamook's train has gone now. A motor bus will bring you in from the outside on paved roads. It takes two hours.

