BEAVER MONEY

The early settlers of Oregon used the barter system because of the shortage of coins. When a farmer purchased goods he would offer a calf or wheat or beaver skins. In fact, wheat was made the legal tender under the Provisional Government. When gold was discovered in California and Oregon, gold dust was used as the medium of exchange. Because of the loss incurred while being transferred from hand to hand, the merchants only allowed $10.00 to $11.00 an ounce even though its real worth was more like $18.00 an ounce depending on its purity. This led the Provisional Government to arrange for the assaying, melting and coining of gold in spite of the laws of the United States making it a grave offense for the States or private individuals to coin money. But the Provisional Government decided "necessity knows no law".

The arrival of Governor Lane in March 1849 terminated the Provisional Government and the Territorial Government was established. As a remedial measure the coining of the gold dust became a private enterprise. The Oregon Exchange Company was organized by W.H. Kilborn, Theophilus Magruder, James Taylor, William H. Rector, Hamilton Campbell and Noyes Smith. The coining of $5. and $10. gold pieces called Beaver Money began in 1849.

On one side of the five dollar piece was a beaver surrounded by the letters "K.M.T.A.W.R.C.S.", the initials of the associates in the enterprise who had paid for the machinery, dies, and all the expenses. The letters "A" and "W" are on the half eagles, representing former Governor George Abernethy and Willson. Beneath the
beaver are the letters, "O.T. 1849". On the reverse side of the coin were the words "Oregon Exchange Company, 130 G. Native Gold, 5 D". The ten dollar piece was engraved on one side with the beaver surmounted by seven stars over which were the letters "K.M.T.R.C.S.". Beneath the beaver "O.T. 1849". On the reverse side were the words Oregon Exchange Company, "10 D. 20 G. Native Gold, 10 D."

The Beaver Money was quite abundant until the United States Mint was established in San Francisco in 1854. The gold and silver coins in different denominations made the Beaver Money unnecessary. As the Beaver Money contained nearly 10% more gold than the government coins it soon went out of circulation. The United States Mint at San Francisco called them in and redeemed them at their premium value. Only a few remain as mementoes to mark their place in history.

No one was ever prosecuted for the infringement of the constitution prohibiting the coining of money by the Oregon Exchange Co.

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HILLS OF GLASS

Oregon has so many natural wonders and obsidian is one of them. Many immigrants saw pieces of what appeared to be fragments of dark bottles along their route into Eastern Oregon. They learned that it was obsidian, a natural rock formed from lava which cooled so quickly that it hardened into glass. It is usually a dark color or black, but occasionally it is variegated with streaks of brown, and often a vivid red and sometimes silver. These SILICIC rocks are also called pitchstone or perlite. From it the early Indians made arrow points, primitive knives and other useful
articles.
Lots of obsidian exists in the Cascade Range. There are glass buttes west of the Harney Basin and in the northeast corner of Lake County. East Lake and Paulina Lake are separated by cinder cones and an obsidian flow.

Although not in Klamath County, a Glass Mountain exists not far from us. It is south of Tulelake, California and southeast of the Lava Beds. (There is a 1921 map which shows Tulelake as being in Oregon but that was probably a misprint.)

Researched & written by Mae L. Smith
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Mountains were pushed up by gasses inside the earth, and what we see now is what was left when the earth's stomach settled.!

AN OREGON FIRST!!

Etienne Lucier who planted a crop in French Prairie, near Champoeg, Oregon, in 1829 became known as the first farmer in Oregon.

In about 1831 Ewing Young settled in Oregon near Champoeg but not in French Prairie, and acquired extensive land holdings. He also planted crops and supplied others with grain and garden stuffs. It is interesting to note that in 1840 an entry in an account book states: Aug. 2..Ewing Young owes Etienne Lucier for large beaver, to be paid in salt as agreed, 5 bu. 2 hogs (hogsheads), 1 keg.

Salt came from the Hawaiian Islands at that time and was expensive. A hogshead was a medium of measurement and contained approximately 8.42 cubic feet or 210 dry quarts.

---Researched and written by Helen Helfrich---

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THE OLD HIGHWAY

Highway 97 is very much in the news these days as the time draws near for the beginning of Expo '86 in Vancouver, B.C.. People will be traveling more and more through our state. There has been much talk of what can be done to make their journey safer and more pleasant. Rumors are flying about the State Highway Department widening 97 north to a four lane highway and making longer turn outs for travelers pulling over to stop along the way.

When three lanes were made in some areas making it possible to drive in the mountains at a continuous rate of speed without having to reduce to 2nd or low gear behind a slow moving truck, it was wonderful. We had it made for awhile.

How many can remember when Main Street, Ninth, Prospect, Oregon Avenue and Biehn were the State Highway? It turned at the old Catholic Cemetery onto Lakeport and out through Pelican City, passing Pastega's Market, the Pelican Bay Lumber Company Mill and store. The old Company Store sold groceries and everything for logging in those days. Since then it has been used for many things including the Merry Mixer's Square Dance Hall. Now it has been remodeled by the Thomas Lumber Co. and is called J X 7 Windows and Door Center.

The highway curved on up the hill out of Pelican City to cross a bridge over the top of the S.P. railroad tracks. Then on around and through an area called in those days "Rabbit Flat". We know it as Wocus today. There are homes and small farms on both sides of the old highway with the hills on the right side in back of them. The old highway circles out towards Klamath Lake then down around the hill to Shady Pine curving in and out along the base of the rocky old mountain and out again to the lake. Then the old highway went up over the side of the mountain and there are still signs of it from the highway we use now.

On the old highway far above the lake was a viewpoint where travelers could turn out and stop to watch the waves, the pelicans and the other birds. The Oregon History Monument Marker was here and easy to read. Now there is not enough "turn-out" on the present highway to be able to stop and read it safely. The view from the highway both then and now is beautiful with a really
spectacular view of the snow capped mountains across on the other side of the lake. Then on to Algoma, a company owned mill, lumber yards and homes. The highway stayed above most of the houses then went down a grade turning quite sharply at the bottom to the old Algoma school. Some of the old ranches are still there and the road curves around the fields dividing them.

The old logging railroad came down off the Algoma Incline at Naylo. It was always a breath taking thrill to watch several flat cars loaded with logs coming over the top and down that steep hill while on the other track a bunch of empties were going up to be filled. At the bottom the full flat cars were connected to an engine and pulled on across the flats to the Algoma Mill. Now there is only a trace of the old railroad bed left. A few ties scattered down the face of the Incline to mark it's place in our past logging history.

The old highway curves around Hagelstein Park at Barkley Springs then comes out along Upper Klamath Lake. Following along the lake to Modoc Point, the highway turns left at Lamm's Mill. It cuts through the valley with it's ranches and grazing cattle; plus a few sandhill cranes too sometimes.

The old Williamson River Store is still doing a nice business especially during the fishing season. But the bridge over the river seems much more narrow now.

Again the old highway came out to Upper Klamath Lake where there are many beaches and boat landing. Neptune Park has been there for many years. Then it's off through the grain fields and then through timber to the old Indian Agency. Most of the old buildings remain. The highway passes the road into the old Oregon State Fish Hatchery on Fort Creek. Fort Creek is beautiful and very cold.

The highway goes through the beautiful Wood River Valley but instead of turning left to go to Fort Klamath it continues on up Sun Mountain. Wood River heads in Kimball Park. Sun Mountain had several turn-outs where you could stop and look down into the valley and at the winding Wood River and the ranch land. It had quite a grade and was difficult to drive in the winter time.

Sand Creek and Sand Creek Station have been in existence for
many years as have Chemault, Crescent, Gilchrist and LaPine. There was no highway 58 then. One traveled to Bend and then could take either the McKenzie Pass (but not in the winter time though) or either of the Santiam Passes into the Willamette Valley.

-----Mae L. Smith-----

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BALD EAGLES

Of all the counties in Oregon, Klamath County has the largest population of Bald Eagles. During the winter months there are around 2,000 and in the spring there are around 600 nesting pairs. They mate for life and always use the same nest adding more small branches each year until sometimes the nest will weigh a ton or more.

The Bald Eagle is not bald because of lack of feathers on their heads but is called bald because the head of the adult is white. The feathers of the young are all brown. After the third year the tail has turned white and by the fifth year when they are ready to mate the head has also turned white.

The female lays two eggs but usually only one egg hatches. She is the larger of the two making it easier for her to cover the eggs in the nest.

They have a wing span of 7 1/2 to 8 feet. They help to keep the world a cleaner place because they eat carrion as well as a fish diet.

Not only does Klamath County have the most Bald Eagles in Oregon but we also have more than any other state except Alaska.

-----M.L.S.-----

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PATIENCE: This would be a fine world if all men showed as much patience all the time as they do while waiting for a fish to bite.

DIET: A balance diet--what you eat at buffet suppers!
THE ALGOMA INCLINE

The Algoma Incline was on land belonging to the Herlihy family. Later it was sold to people by the name of Brown.

The track was laid sometime after 1914. At the top of the hill were several tracks for switching the empty cars around to be loaded and the full cars to be switched on to the single track that went about 1/3 of the way down the Incline before becoming two tracks for passing. It became a single track again about 1/3 of the way from the bottom. Then at the bottom it again became two tracks. There was a little house at the bottom and the automatic switches. A man unhooked the full load from the cable and hooked it to the steam locomotive and they were taken into the mill. The engine then brought out the empty flats and they were switched over onto the second track ready to be pulled back up the incline as another full load came down.

The tracks swung out from the bottom of the Incline and came out near Hagelstein's house and crossed the road. It then swung out in a curve and went over near the highway and on towards the mill.

At the top of the hill they had one of the largest double drum Steam Engines with one continuous cable about 3" in diameter synchronized so that one would unwind from one drum while the opposite drum would rewind. Logs were loaded on to a flat car with one end butting against a back stop. The cable was hooked to the cars.

The idea was to let a load of logs down the Incline while pulling the empties up. They passed each other on the passing track in the center and continued to counter balance each other until the loaded car reached the bottom and the empties reached the top. One time a load would come down one side and then the next time it would come down the opposite side.

When they got the empties up to the top they kicked them out on to a little gravity track and started them rolling slowly down the track. Hand brakes on 2 or 3 cars would be set but when the next car came along it bumped them so they would go foreword a ways.

The Algoma Mill had 2 logging camps on Algoma Hill and the logs
were cut and brought in from the Swan Lake area to load on to the cars. Two locomotives were actually taken to the top of the Incline to the camp railway in the same manner as the flats of full logs and the empties were let up and down. Water for the camp was pumped from a spring near Herlihy's big, rock house.

The rattlesnakes were terrible on the Algoma Incline. In fact, the hill where the old highway turned to go into Algoma was called "Rattlesnake Point".

After logging ceased up on the top and the Incline was no longer needed, the tracks were taken away and the land below the Incline was levelled for farming again. One flat car remains but the road goes right over the top of it and few would ever know or remember it was there.

Two logging roads were put in later. The Forest Service road starts at Hagelstein Park at Barkley Springs and goes to the top of the hill.

And yes! There was one or two run-aways when the cable gave way.

Source of information
Vincent Herlihy and
Bob Elliott.
----Mae L. Smith----