EARLY DAY TRAVEL TO CRATER LAKE
BY WAGON - 1909
BY AUTO - 1911

WAGON TRANSPORTATION (1909)

Crater Lake was a newly discovered "tourist wonder" at the turn of the century and everybody who was anybody, considered a trip to the lake a must on their itinerary. The first sightseers made the trip by wagon.

There were no plush motels with thick carpeted floors—but there were overhanging fir boughs and deep layers of fragrant needles to sleep on.... there were no automatic dispensers of Coca Cola or sandwiches wrapped in foil - just clear, cold spring water, deer in the forest and native berries beside the trail.... over all was the sweet smell of the woods, the neigh of a horse that never had seen a gasoline station.... the roads not yet smoothed with the rut less pavement gave many a traveler a backache to be remembered.... it was a time when families found someone to milk the cows, gathered the quilts and plenty of food; hitched the team and turned to the open road. The trip from the Basin to the lake covered 150 to 190 miles and took 11 days to complete.

The following is a day-by-day chronicle written by Mrs. W. F. Jinnette.

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1909

"We left Merrill about midmorning in a lumber wagon drawn by four horses. It was a warm dusty ride into Klamath Falls, but we felt better after a bath when we arrived.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17

In our grub boxes we have bacon, ham, flour, cornmeal, potatoes, ripe peaches, canned corn, peas, tomatoes, salmon, baked beans, applesauce and jelly, condensed milk, butter, eggs, baking powder, salt, pepper, soda, salad dressing, rice, sago, tapioca, graham crackers, soda crackers, cream of wheat, shredded wheat biscuits and sugar.

We took a few tools, lanterns, grain for horses, tarps, and beddings. We also had a Kodak and three rifles.

We left the Falls in the morning, and started north over the hills. There was quite a climb over the barren hills back of the Falls, then we went for miles through a beautiful pine forest. We had to take off our colored glasses in the forest, but we needed them for the long open spaces where the sun hurts your eyes.

About noon we left the forest and entered the Klamath Indian reservation, coming in sight of Upper Klamath Lake. This is a fine body of water 35 or 40 miles long by 20 miles wide.

Late in the afternoon we left the lake and traveled through the Wood River Valley. This is such a pretty valley— as level as a table and watered by the Wood River. About 6:30 we stopped at an Indian’s house to see about camping all night in his pasture. Nobody was home so we just made ourselves at home. The men slept under the hay stacks near us, and we women slept in the hay shed.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18

It was another fine clear day in which several interesting incidents happened. We camped at a place called Vaughn’s camp. Amazing thing, there were no mosquitoes. Which had bothered us tremendously before.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19

We got off to a early start to begin the gradual climb of 3,000 feet to the lake. About nine we hit Annie Creek, it’s canyon is beautiful, the sides are quite precipitous- some places they are a solid rock wall, in other places there is soil with ferns and tall pines growing.

Before noon we entered the border of Crater Lake Park. We were passed all along by other campers. The horses did not mind the automobiles at all even though they made a lot of noise with their horns when they were letting us know they were coming. There were some people from Portland out who had been touring the country for a month without an accident.
After lunch we passed a government lodge where the keeper lives and he hailed us to get our names. He had registered between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors to the lake this year.

We stopped at the last camping place before reaching the top. The men filled the demijohn and buckets with water to carry up to the top so we could stay up there all night. We had to rest the horses every few minutes since this is a very steep part of the climb, 1,000 feet in a half mile, some of the men beat us up there and showered us with snowballs when we arrived. We made camp and spent a lot of time looking at that beautiful lake.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20

All the adults got up early to see the sun rise. However, it was a little hazy and the colors were not so predominant as the evening before. We decided to take the walk down to the lake, although I had some doubts since there had been rumors of ladies fainting on the way down. We took ropes and sticks and started. It was quite steep and rocky, but little streams from the melting snow made it a little more enjoyable. The climb back out was extremely trying on one's heart and lungs, but we made it without mishap. Once out we packed our stuff for the trip homewards. We came down that hill at breakneck speed. We made the main hill in six minutes, however the jockey box broke and stuff was scattered all along the trail down. We camped at Vaughn’s camp again that evening.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21

We spent the day at Vaughn’s camp resting. The men hunted and fished to try and build up our grub reserves a little. The fishing was all right, but the hunting wasn’t much of a success.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22

It was Karl’s birthday and he enjoyed it to the fullest playing all day long. The wind came up towards night and it was quite chilly.

MONDAY, AUGUST 23

9:30 found us on the road once more. We stopped in Fort Klamath to get the horses shod and to pick up some supplies. We took the Crystal and Cherry Creek Road home because we wanted to see something little different. We soon came to the mountains. We saw more pine timber and ferns waist high --beauties-- and gooseberries by the bushel. We camped by the Browns who own the outlet of Crystal Creek.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24
The men went hunting and fishing except for my husband. He and I took the soiled towels and went to the creek. We tied them to the back end of the boat while we had a boat ride. After a few miles the towels were pretty well cleaned. That afternoon Will and Mr. White took off on a hunting trip that would last until noon the next day. Back at camp we noticed a little white schoolhouse and asked about it. There are three desks, a teachers desk and a reciting bench. The teacher said he had from four to six pupils, most of them from the Brown family.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25

It was a terrible night because of the mosquitoes, and the day not much better, but that evening Will came in with some venison. He said they had shot a deer early that morning. But the horses who took off during the night had made it within a mile of home. By the time the guide had caught them and went the nine miles back to get him, it was nearly dark so they didn’t get in on time.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26

At 8:30 we left camp. It was a very warm dusty ride today, in fact it was the dustiest ride we’d had yet. We were very glad when we got to a camping place that was almost ideal. It was well protected by trees, had easy access to water. We were out of bread and butter so Will went back to a ranch to see if he could buy some. When he got there he found a very rich rancher lived there and the lady was so glad to see him that she gave him all he needed and more. So all in all we had a very delicious supper and went to bed early. It was the coldest night yet so we had to sleep on pine boughs under the trees and it required all the bedclothes and covers and coats we could muster.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27

This was a very hard part of the trip because it was so rocky and dusty. The ranches were very sparse and the timber got smaller and scrubble as we got closer to the Falls. When we got to the Falls, everybody was more tired than they had ever been in their lives. We didn’t have a loss and but one break which all added up to an ideal outing.”

**AUTO TRANSPORTATION**

“...A journey worthy of your mightiest efforts at the steering wheel.” That is the way Fred Ehlers described the trip to Crater Lake in 1911 if done by auto. His account reprinted in the
February 26, 1961 Herald and News was first printed in the Sunset Magazine for October 1911. Here are some of the interesting highlights of the trip.

"It was a quarter of eight when we crossed the railroad tracks where Main Street crosses them and turned left across the government ditch. Then we were out of the irrigated country and straight away we climbed into the hills. (Over the hill where O.T.I. was formerly located.)... The road clung bravely to the sides of the valley, first on one side and then on the other, and there were stretches where we coasted downhill with a silent engine for nearly a mile... Riding in the tonneau (rear seating compartment of an auto) of the big machine, we had no sensation of traveling at all, except when we swerved around corners and bends in the road, but the driver was continually at work. The road lies over a country covered with 'lava points' which are sharp rocks and this means incessant work at the wheel. A heavy car drives easier than a light one on these roads, but it is well for one to have snug-fitting gauntlets and strong wrists.

Just after we had got out of the rock country the machine stopped where a clear, cold stream skirts the road, and the driver got out his rubber bucket. ...Boiling water shot from the radiator when the cap was removed. Our engine had been working coming through the hills but the hardest part of the climb was ahead of us. A canvas water bag is a handy thing to carry on any motor trip, here because nature has provided streams and springs fed by snow and ice and cold as any ice water and scattered conveniently along the route. They are necessary, for you get a third more power out of a cool engine than from a hot one and there is no danger of cracked cylinders.

The driver stopped at the summit of a grade in response to entreaties from those who wanted to drink in the magic scenery of Upper Klamath Lake. At one side of us a cliff rose suddenly in a sort of giant's causeway of disintergrated [sic] lava. And below the road the slope dropped down to where the steel rails of the new Southern Pacific hugged the shore line. ...On the marsh bank immense white pelicans floated serenely indifferently, on the water so smooth that they left a wide ripple behind them. On the other shore, directly above the blue mountains that came to the water's edge, rose the sharp peaks of Mt. McLoughlin.

After crossing the Indian reservation and going through the village of Fort Klamath, the road began to climb and great pines shut out the light of the sun. In some places there was hardly clearance for the machine. Twisting and winding through the forest we passed the station where the ranger lived. Several campers in wagons loaded for a summer's outing hailed us as we sped...
past. Then some one in the machine gasped and pointed to the right. We were traveling right along the lip of a gorge through which water dashed and roared. It was the Annie Creek Canyon. For fifteen miles the road hugged the edge of this chasm and twice we stopped the machine to peer over the brink. For over two thousand feet the mountain falls away in a sheer cliff of granite, cleft with vertical fissures, markings of the giant fingers that had wrought this miracle. A sharp turn in the road and we were on a bridge spanning the Annie Creek at the head of the gorge. Everyone scrambled out to drink, and the radiator which threw jets of live steam to the sky was unscrewed, and cooled off again.

Nearly noon, they hit some of the soft pumice soil and the machine refused to move. All hands piled out and dragged pine branches to put beneath the wheels and we made another try but this time the engine would not start. We were on such a steep hill that the gasoline in our feed tank beneath the front seat would not flow to the carburetor. A pump was attached to the auxiliary tank under the back seat and gasoline was forced to the engine. With one of us pumping and the rest shoving and manipulating the pine boughs, we made the start and chugged upward toward the blue sky. Then suddenly we gasped. Another sky lay almost beneath our feet. We were at last on the rim of Crater Lake.

At four o’clock, all too soon, was the return trip started. Down, down the forest roads along the lip of the Annie Creek Gorge, through the Wood River Valley and to the village of Fort Klamath, we dashed. It was as though we had floated down from the clouds along with the twilight and as gently. The stars shining throughout the pine branches overhead, a last look at Upper Klamath Lake in the starlight from Modoc Point and our faces were turned toward home. The ‘geologist’ of the party announced... ‘We are now passing over an active volcano which may break through the earth-crust under us at any moment.’ Everyone had noticed the increasing heat of the floor of the car. It was smoking. The ‘geologist’ jumped out of the machine to examine the strata of earth at a safe distance from the gasoline tank while we pulled up the foot boards. One of our brakes was stuck. We had to put gallons of water on it before we could touch the sizzling iron to readjust the set-screw. ‘The brakes had been at work while we floated down from the heights.

We got back at eleven o’clock that night. It had been a grand trip for everyone, except for the driver, who was quite fatigued.”
Some hints for those planning to take the trip.... “Stop and water your radiator every
time you get a chance. Remember you are in the mountains and your carburetor will need more
air because the air is rarer in these high altitudes. You will need about forty gallons of gasoline
and you should take advantage of every down grade to coast with a dead engine. If possible
secure an auxiliary tank on the dash from which the gasoline runs to the carburetor, then you will
strike no hill too steep to put the carburetor above the gasoline supply. You can obtain gas at the
village of Fort Klamath but it will cost 47 ½¢ a gallon, so it is wise to start from home with a
good supply. Two gallons of lubricating oil is plenty for the trip. And before you start from
Klamath Falls, let some of the air out of your tires if they are tight. Hard tires do not ride well
over the 'lava points'. Besides they will puncture more easily. Be sure to check your brakes to
see they are in good condition.”

Ruth Kirk wrote in 1975 regarding a 1912 report of the Crater Lake Park that the
Superintendent mentions that automobiles are permitted on the roads of the Park from 6:30 a.m.
to 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. No explanation of what went on during the hours in
between.

There also were rules about autos meeting team driven vehicles.... “When a automobile
sees a team approaching, the automobile must take the position on the outer edge of the roadway
regardless of the direction in which the automobile was headed, taking care that sufficient room is
left on the inside passage for the team.”

Speed was limited to six miles per hour except when on a straight stretch where
approaching teams would be clearly visible. When no teams were in sight, the speed could be
increased to the rate that was indicated on the signboards along the roadway. “In no event,
however, shall the speed exceed 15 miles per hour.”

In 1912, auto registration was said to have begun at the Park. 580 cars were registered
that year.

In 1919 the Rim Road was established all the way around the rim -- but it was described
as a “miserable road meandering around boulders and giant Hemlocks with boggy places and
usable on a few weeks out of each year”.

Compiled by Janis Kafton
Typed & edited by Susan Rambo
FOUR-HORSE MOTOR—Maude and Kate, Bell and Bess were the horse power that pulled the heavily laden farm wagon bearing a party of nine and duffel on an 11-day trip to Crater Lake in 1909. In the rear seat is the author of the diary, Mrs. William Jinnette, her husband and son, Karl.

ON THE RIM—Early visitors to Crater Lake.
Our next meeting will be October 22 at 7:30 pm. The Antiques and Collectibles Sale will be held November 14th, 9am to 4 pm and November 15th, 12pm to 5 pm. The Rummage Sale was postponed until the Spring.

Looking for a Christmas gift? The museum has tree ornaments depicting the 1919 Klamath County Courthouse. They sell for $12.95. They are a beautiful red color. There are a limited number available, so get yours now.

Lynn needs tobacco items for a display in the museum. Tins, pipes, etc.

A few of you noticed that your Trumpeter didn't come for March & June. I had to make a temporary move to Portland. My son had a heart transplant and he needed someone to assist him in his recovery. He is doing fine and I hope to get back on track real soon.

One last item. As of Sept. 1, 1998, the following Amtrak volunteers donated $260 to the Endowment Fund. This was an allowance awarded to them for their lunch: Bobbi Adams, Byron Beach, Rose Chapman, Don & Betty Hancock, Edna Hunsaker, Barbara Kosta, Greg Pholl, Robbi Porter, Phyllis Robinson, Fred Rocken & Barbara Welch.

Susan Rambo

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ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTIONS
in memory of...

Orval DeVaul
Marianne Bridges
M/M Charles Cheyne
M/M Robert Evans
Janis Kafon
Jeane MacBeth
M/M Wayne Scott
Mae Smith
L. Lucille Estes
Jeane MacBeth
Myrtle Flemming
M/M Harold Dixon

Cressa Grubb-Tennant
Jeane MacBeth
Richard & Jean Hessig
Mae Smith
Carrol B. Howe
M/M Earl Fergusón
William Ganong Sr.
Jeane MacBeth
Mae Smith

THE ENDOWMENT FUND, OFFICIALLY KNOWN AS THE KLAMATH COUNTY MUSEUM FOUNDATION HAS GROWN TO OVER $190,000. THERE WERE TWO ANONYMOUS DONATIONS OF $10,000.00 & $50.00 AWARDED SINCE THE FIRST OF 1998. THANK YOU FOR BEING SO GENEROUS!!!