

### III.B. AUTO CAMPING IN JOSEPHINE COUNTY, OREGON: 1910s

**1912** Speed limit in Grants Pass was set at 15 miles per hour. Fine for first violation was \$50.00 or 25 days- second offense \$100.00 or 50 days- third \$150.00 or 75 days (Sutton, Jack. 1966. *110 Years With Josephine, The History of Josephine County, Oregon: 1856 - 1966*).

The Daily Rogue River Courier editorializes, “Isn’t it about time that the macadam on lower Sixth street receives dressing of oil? This should have been done last season but the learned gentlemen who control the destinies of that street thought it better to wait until winter before the oil was applied, and then winter came and the matter was put over until spring, and it begins to look as if there would be a still longer delay. (Today in History — From Out of the Past. *The Daily Courier*. Jerry Acklen)

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**1911** The entire Riley family took off July 1911 in their Packard touring car on a four-week tour of western Washington and British Columbia. A feature article in the August 6, 1911 Sunday Oregonian told of the excursion.

*The car was equipped with tire and motor trunks, small baggage, luncheon and thermos bottle kits. All through the tour the midday meal was enjoyed in some grove of scenic attraction, in regular picnic fashion, and they managed to make connections with some hotel for the night.*

**1914.** In 1914 Dr. Findley has purchased one of the new five passenger Ford automobiles. Jos. Moss who recently received a shipment of eight of the machines has housed them in the Ford garage at 304 North Sixth street, where the 1914 car is attracting a great deal of favorable comment, and so fast are the machines going that a second shipment is being contemplated by Mr. Moss (February 27, 1914).

**1914** "Moderm Auto Stage" began service in competition to Crescent City stage coach. Bus driving time was 12 hours compared to horse stage's 24 (Sutton, Jack. 1966. *110 Years With Josephine, The History of Josephine County, Oregon: 1856 - 1966*).

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**1915.** Josephine County automobiles now number 266, of which 46 have been purchased since the first of January. There is one car to every 34 persons in the county and the ratio of persons to cars is greater than the state average. Auto owners in the state now number over 21,000, and of this number 4528 were purchased since the first of January. If these cars on the average, cost \$700 each, Oregon people have over \$15,000,000 invested in gas burners. Yet, some continue to say that times are hard (*The Oregon Observer*, August 15, 1915).

Grants Pass and Ashland, Oregon opened free municipal auto camps in 1915. The municipal auto camps are designed to favor downtown merchants. As long as they are free the private business can not compete.

*"... on the river bank east of the park and all camp conveniences will be provided to make the stop of this class of tourists in Grants Pass as pleasant as possible. The town has already become a favorite stopping point for tourist going there by train, or those auto tourist who make their stops at hotels, and the campgrounds were provided for those who carry camp equipage and do not patronize the hotels. "* (Rogue River Courier. May 16, 1915).

**1916** A carload of Ford machines arrived yesterday for the C. L. Hobart Co. The car contained eight Fords, most of which have been disposed of already. A force of six men was put to work and had one machine out last night which was bought at that time. Two more were sold this morning and two this afternoon (August 22, 1916).

A local agency for the sale of the Saxon-6 automobile has been established in Grants Pass by Dan Jolley (March 31, 1916).

If new automobiles are an index of coming prosperity, then prosperity is sure enough here. The streets of Grants Pass look like the main floor of an auto show in New York City. The dealers can hardly get them out of the freight cars fast enough (April 28, 1916).

In the July 1916 issue of Touring Topics, the Automobile Club of Southern California implored the city of Los Angeles to open an auto camp for tourists. The article state that Los Angeles and the larger cities of Southern California had "something to learn in the matter of hospitality to visiting motorists."

(Willis Osborne. *Los Angeles Corral*. Number 222. Winter 2001-01. *Los Angeles Municipal Auto Camp*). The article continued:

*"Los Angeles is included in the itinerary of so many automobile travelers that some such provision (i.e., auto camp) for the comfort of the city's transient should be made. The establishment of such a free camping park would further advertise the hospitality of Southern California and would help to induce travelers to journey by way of Los Angeles on their summer trips."*

**1917** The "Hyatt Roller" the world's long-distance car, now making a tour around the United States, arrived in Grants Pass on Saturday. This 1909 Model I Buick, still equipped with its original set of Hyatt Quiet Bearings, holds the world's mileage record, having traveled 268,437 miles to date (August 12, 1917).

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As World War I drew to a close, road-building conditions took an upswing. The 1917 Legislature considered the state's highway system and decided that building roads was too big an undertaking for counties, so it handed the state the responsibility. The state Legislature further planned for the financing of state highway construction and maintenance through motor vehicle license fees and by establishing a one-cent-per-gallon gasoline tax. That gas tax, enacted in 1919, was the first of its kind in the nation (Oregon Highway Division. *The First 75 Years. 1988*).

**1919. Automobile Stage** The Grants Pass-Crescent City automobile stage made its first trip of the season on Tuesday, leaving the coast town at 7:30 a.m. and arriving in this city at 4:30 p.m.

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with six passengers. H. A. Reed, one of the owners of the state line, drove the car and he states that the roads are in fairly good condition - this side of the mountains being in excellent shape, but the road on the coast side is quite soft on account of the heavy timber through which it passes.

The automobile stage is run in connection with the regular horse stage of which Ed Lister is manager on the Oregon side and Breen Bros on the California side (June 14, 1919).

By 1919 dozens of California cities boasted free or inexpensive auto camps, including several Southern California communities as Long Beach, Pomona, Santa Monica, Redlands, and San Bernardino. Los Angeles was not among them (Willis Osborne. *Los Angeles Corral*. Number 222. Winter 2001-01. *Los Angeles Municipal Auto Camp*). In the January issue of *Touring Topics*, the Auto Club again pushed for a Los Angeles auto camp.