

III.D. AUTO CAMPING IN JOSEPHINE COUNTY, OREGON: 1930s

1930 New low freight tariff to Grants Pass, from San Francisco to Crescent City by boat and to this city by truck on the Redwood Highway, has just been authorized by the Medford-Crescent City Truck Line, cutting below the recent rail price reductions made to meet Redwood Highway competition (January 22, 1930)

1931 Caveman Bridge The new concrete Pacific Highway bridge in Grants Pass, Oregon opened in 1931. It is now known as the Caveman Bridge.

A study of 714 auto camps in the Evergreen Playground, soon to be published, indicates that 551 or 77.2 per cent are cabin camps with a total of 5,450 cabins. A majority of these camps have running water, wood stoves for which the wood is furnished, electric lights, store, and community house or kitchen. A considerable proportion also provide shower bathes and laundry facilities. The usual tenting charge is 50 cents per day, but the cabin charges range with a few exceptions from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per day (Norman Hayner. March - April 1931. The Auto Campo As A New Type Of Hotel. Sociology and Social Research. University of Washington).

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To provide for increasing tourist business, the Crater Lake National Park company has begun the construction of a group of additional auto camp cabins at the rim near the cafeteria. The company now has sixteen cabins and will continue building as long as new ones are found necessary (Add Auto Cabins For Crater Lake. *Grants Pass Bulletin*. Friday, July 10, 1931). The cabin accommodations have been in considerable demand and quite a number could not be accommodated, but this difficulty is not expected to present a problem after the next two weeks in view of the rapid construction progress of the building. The lodge has been open for several days and has been entertaining a long list of guests. Boats on the lake are now in operation and saddle horse are available.

Since the Redwoods highway was finished, cutting the Illinois valley in half as it were, there has been a splendid growth of auto camps (Auto Camps On Redwood Highway Growing. *Grants Pass Bulletin*. Friday, July 31, 1931). Every mile or so there is an auto camp. The travel of the Redwood highway has made this necessary. Scores of folks have purchased timbered land alongside the highway and have cut out camp sites, put up cabins and cottages and are serving the world as it passes through their doors. Most of these camps are doing a good business, even this year. Each camp apparently does not divide the business for the increase in travel has so far taken up the slack which would naturally result from such competition but there is little, if any, room for

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more camps now because each will be adding more cabins and making their places more attractive.

Wesley Bagley drive his new Ford roadster from Yreka, California to spend Sunday here with his sister, Miss Edith and their grandmother, Mrs. McCormic (Hugo Items, Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, September 4, 1931).

About eight inches of snow greeted people of this vicinity, Sunday morning. There was no Sunday school at Hugo church, Sunday morning, on account of bad roads (News From Route 1, Grants Pass Bulletin, December 18, 1931).

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1932. Pacific Highway Association Will Meet January 30 *The Oregon Pacific Highway association will hold a meeting at Woodburn January 20 (1932), according to Edward E Bailey , president of the group. The executive committee will meet at a dinner at the Woodburn hotel at 6 P. m. and attend to routine business of the association. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, January 8, 1932.*

One of the main subjects of discussion at the general meeting of the association is the five-year plan of highway development under which the highway commission would select the highways in all parts of the state on which it would expend funds for the period and outline the type of work it would do. Mr. Bailey said that the association is interested in an orderly program of highway development in order to maintain the confidence of the people of the state in highway matters. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, January 8, 1932.

1932. Where Tourists Come And Go To. Out-of-State cars travel 434, 000 miles daily on the highways of Oregon.

Invitations are being sent out by C. T Baker of Medford, secretary of the association, to all highway groups and to prominent people in all parts of the state to attend the Woodburn meeting. Preliminary reports show that about 400 are expected. The five-year plan, originally proposed by this association, has been discussed and approved by several large highway organizations that have written their intention of sending delegations. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, January 8, 1932.

1932. Where Tourists Come And Go To. *Out-of-State cars travel 434, 000 miles daily on the highways of Oregon. This mileage constitutes 22. 1 per cent of all motor traffic in the state. The mileage traveled by foreign cars in Oregon is greater than the visiting car mileage of any other state in the west, and Oregon merchants cash in on this fact every day of the year. The above facts are clearly shown by the United States government's survey of traffic which was completed in 1930, but the findings of which have only recently become available.*

We have always known that Oregon stood high in percentage of tourist traffic and through the registration records of non-resident cars in California and in Oregon we have had definite knowledge that Oregon entertains more out-of-state cars than does California, notwithstanding California's international reputation as a tourist state.

If the government figures are correct and the statistics from which the computations were made are the most comprehensive that have ever been made, then foreign licensed cars in Oregon are paying to the merchants of Oregon, a sum far in excess of the estimates made previously. This is true also of the contribution of foreign cars to the highway fund through the gas tax as out-of-state cars have contributed almost \$1,500. 00 per day, and this amounted, in 1931, to over One-half Million Dollars!

The government figures show that tourists purchase 36,166 gallons of gas each day in Oregon which means an annual gas tax payment of \$528,030.90. The One-half Million is only the tax. In addition, they spend many millions for gas, oil, servicing, food, souvenirs, housing, and the many hundreds of items which enter into a tourist's expenditures... " Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, May 13, 1932.

1932. Camping At Crater Lake Is A Novelty *Attesting the popularity of auto campgrounds in the park, scores of campfires are blazing nightly while visitors are preparing evening meals and later while away pleasant hours around the ruddy glow. Conditions are ideal for the use of the rim campgrounds the largest of several maintained in the park. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, July 29, 1932.*

These under lofty hemlocks, softly sighing in evening breezes, visitors can establish camps in the proximity of free wood, shower bathers and in the vicinity of a caretaker, whose pride and joy are centered in his efforts make all visitors comfortable and contented. Campers are not located far from the Community House, where the educational, division presents lectures, moving pictures and programs of general entertainment, including singing and dancing. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, July 29, 1932.

That more tourist are passing through Grants Pass in January of 1932 than in January of 1931, is made positive by the fact 58 percent more out-of-state motor vehicles have been registered at the Chamber of Commerce during the first 15 days of January this year than January last year. Records show 73 cars for the first 15 days last year and 114 for the same period this year. (Stories Told on Jan. 16. *The Daily Courier*. Jerry Acklen)

An entire day spent driving over Josephine County roads has convinced the Josephine County Commission that the county's road system is in good condition with better surface conditions enjoyed in all parts of the county than afforded by Grants Pass city streets. (Today in History — Stories Told on Jan. 9. *The Daily Courier*. Jerry Acklen)

Gasoline in Grants Pass today was selling for 17 cents at one garage and 16 cents at two service stations. Both Roseburg and Medford are reported to be selling gas at 16 cents. (Today in History — From Out of the Past. *The Daily Courier*. Jerry Acklen)

1933. Auto Camp Men Adopt Code In Convention Here *Delegated to the annual two-day convention of auto camp owners held in Grants Pass Tuesday and Wednesday of this week changed their name from Oregon Auto Camp Owners association to Motor Court Trade association of Oregon at the first session held Tuesday morning, and then turned their attention to the formation of a code of practices for their trade; under the NRA. Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, October 6, 1933.*

1932. Gasoline in Grants Pass today was selling for 17 cents at one garage and 16 cents at two service stations.

About 60 camp owners were in attendance, including some from Washington and California as well as the Oregon group. Labor in or about auto camp grounds for children under 14 years of age is prohibited by the group. Houses have been decided. Hours for men are limited to 54 per week, and for women, 48. New minimum wage for men is \$14.50 per week. Grants Pass Bulletin Friday, October 6, 1933.

A. E. Brown, of San Francisco, chief inspector of motor courts for California, was present to help with the code planning. (Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, October 6, 1933).

Proper Registrations Of Automobiles Urged. After a few days' pause due to the death of Hal E. Hoss, auto registrations have been resumed at the chamber of commerce building following the appointment of P. J. Stadleman.

Traffic officers are more active in stopping and examining foreign cars for proper registration papers, J. R. Harvey pointed out this week. He urged hotels and merchants to remind out-of-state drivers to register here. This may avoid troublesome stops, and in some cases, a return of several miles to register, Harvey said (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, February 16, 1934).

New 1933 Ford Here — Biddle Gets First One. The new 1933 Ford V-8 arrived in Grants Pass Saturday and fifteen minutes after it was placed on the floor it was sold to Riley Biddle.

This is the sixth Ford car purchased by Mr. Biddle. Last year he purchased the first car, also. The new car is a beauty. The description does not do it justice but you will enjoy reading the description, just the same.

The 75-horsepower V-8 cylinder engine, with its new aluminum cylinder heads and rubber mountings, the new double-channel, double-drop X-type frame, newly designed head and cowl lamps, bumpers and horn, skirted front fenders, smaller wheels and larger tires appeared to attract fully as much attention as the new bodies with their flowing lines, distinctively modern design and luxurious interior appointments.

The new V-8 car is the fastest and most powerful car since Henry Ford launched into volume production of motor cars. It is exceeding flexible in traffic and capable of sustained speed of 80 miles an hour on the open road.

The secret of its power and alertness lies in the improved V-8 engine and its new cylinder head design. Because aluminum dissipates heat more rapidly, the all-aluminum cylinder head permits unusually high compression which results in increased speed and power (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, February 17, 1933).

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Around Southern Oregon. Gold pans are now a standard article in the hardware stores of southern Oregon, is the impression that a visitor making a trip through this part of the state gains. Going along the Rogue, sluice boxes are observed frequently and the same sight is seen even more often along the creeks back in the country where the average tourist does not penetrate.

Historic Jacksonville, which in 1859 was known as the richest town in Oregon, has taken on new life. In the backyards and front yards piles of gravel can be observed. Hand power and motors are being used to pull up buckets of gravel from the drifts which miners are running from shafts sunk in every conceivable location. While Jacksonville has not as yet regained its distinction of the richest town in Oregon, the men in most cases report that they have something to do and are making a living.

Yet the real gold found in southern Oregon is left by the tourist trade. Grants Pass, Medford and Ashland give the impression of California cities. Restaurant, auto camps, and hotels on every hand bid for tourist business. Ashland probably has the finest park of any city outside of Portland in Oregon. While Lithia spring water does not taste any better to this particular critic than a sample of water from Soda spring on our own Clear creek, everyone going through Ashland has to stop and sample it.

An Ashland hotel proprietor gives something of the spirit which builds communities and makes tourist travelers feel welcome when he discussed advertising. He said, "Sure, I advertise and when my company advertises I am all the happier because the more people that we have stopping in this town the more business we will all do."

This is the spirit that builds. When all Oregon works on this basis it will be a better place in which to live and an easier place in which to make a living.

At least we recommend a few days away from the old grind as good means for obtaining a brighter slant on life. — Forest Grove News-Times. (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, April 6, 1934).

A Tourist Year. A good meal in Japan last year cost but 15 cents in American money, and a traveler could have satisfactory accommodations for as little as a dollar a day. Prices in other countries, both in the East and in Europe were likewise low in terms of the American coin, due to the high value of the dollar in foreign exchange. People who could travel were going abroad for little more than it would cost to tour America.

But the 1934 season will be different. The dollar has been almost halved in its value abroad; tourist expenses outside of this country are therefore much higher. Result is that Americans are going to follow the old adage and really see their own country.

Which is an excellent idea. This is a big country, and can offer as much in the way of scenery as any other part of the world. The West will share a large portion of the tourist business this year. It has a multitude of attractions, and it is more extensive in area than usually realized.

The eleven western states are larger than the combined area of the following 12 countries of Europe: England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden Norway and Hungary. The West may be likened to a separate nation, and a large one at that. But since it is a part of the United States, uses the same currency, speaks the same language, and has bonds of industry and custom with other regions of the United States, it will be visited by thousands of citizens who have never crossed the Rockies before.

People who have not felt free to travel in the past few years will do so this year. They have been under a strain. Nerves need a rest. And they are finally able to leave their business overnight without fearing the worst.

Early spring in Oregon has attracted 25 per cent more tourists so far this year than last. Few major highways have been closed. Roadside flowers are already blossoming in colorful and fragrant glory. Automobile clubs all over the nation have received more and more inquires about Oregon. People are waking up the the beauties of our state.

West-bound traffic this year will be further swollen by the thousands who went to Chicago last year for the world's fair. Automobile clubs in California predict an increase of one-third over last year's total.

All this means money for southern Oregon and for Grants Pass. A great opportunity is here. We have something good to sell, and people are coming to our doors to buy. To reap a harvest from the tourist crop, residents of this region must exercise their best salesmanship. Visitors must be treated courteously, told of the scenic spots, persuaded to stay longer.

If each tourist who visited Oregon last year had been induced to stay just one day longer, the crop would have grossed 15 per cent, or \$3,000,000 more. That is a sum worth going after (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, April 13, 1934).

Tourist Dollar Diffused Among All Businesses. Of vital interest to every resident of southern Oregon is the income from tourist travel, one of the greatest sources of business activity in this region. A detailed explanation of the effect and distribution of the tourist dollar is to be explained at the chamber of commerce forum luncheon Monday noon by Ray Conway, manager of the Oregon State Motor association.

Merchandise, including farm produce, foods, clothing and drugs is the largest single item. Of this surprisingly, the largest amount goes to cosmetics, according to figures released last week by the motor association.

Conway's talk will review the importance of tourist travel, and its benefit to all classes of the population residing in a tourist areas such as this.

Thousands of dollars have been spent by automobile clubs in several state to obtain accurate figures on this question. Compilation made from the various studies have made it possible to get correct estimates and percentages. Conway will also explain how this has been accomplished (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, April 27, 1934).

More People Are Touring In 1934. During the first 20 days of May 471 more cars were registered at the chamber of commerce office than during the same period last year, indicating that 1,400 more persons visited Grants Pass, based on an average of three persons to the car.

<p>1934. Last year Grants Pass registered 20.6 per cent for the total for the state. During the first four months of 1934, this office registered 21 per cent of the total.</p>

A greater number of tourists this summer than last for the state as a whole is seen in the figures for March and April, when 706 more out-of-state cars entered Oregon than in 1933.

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The month of May has shown a 61 per cent increase in cars stopping at the local office.

While the first two months of this year failed to show gains over 1933, one contributing factor to the 1934 decrease was the change in Oregon's license fees. Under the higher fees of a year ago, many Oregon residents evaded the requirements, licensed their cars in neighboring states and registered in Oregon as visitors, bringing up the non-resident totals. With the drop to a fee more comparable to adjacent states, such persons registered in Oregon this year, taking their proper classification as Oregon car owners rather than as tourists.

The March and April gains are thought to be more accurate reflections of tourist trends for 1934 and proportionate increases are expected through the summer.

Cars From Far-off States. Classification of the 12,155 tourists who registered their automobiles in entering Oregon during the first four months of 1934 reveals that 215 cars came from the opposite coast of the United States, from the section along the Atlantic seaboard. The mid-western or central states supplied 663 visiting motor vehicles during the same period, according to records of the secretary of state's office.

California, as usual, contributed the largest number of visitors, registering 7,410 cars, Washington was second with 2,700, and Idaho third with 358. From Canada, 258 automobiles were checked from U. S. possessions, including Alaska, Hawaii, Canal Zone and the Phillipines 24 were listed, France sent two, and Haiti and Mexico each one. The mountain states, exclusive of Idaho, totaled 523 (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, May 25, 1934).

City Gains in Auto Registrations Over Other States. Grants Pass leads the state both in auto registrations and increase in registrations over last year, it was revealed by figures released Thursday by J. R. Harvey, secretary of the chamber of commerce.

Heralded by the rustle of road maps, spread out in millions of American homes after the dinner dishes have been exported to the kitchens, the Nomad season has arrived. In this season which is bounded roughly by the vernal equinox on the north and autumn equinox on the south, the Man in the Street becomes the Man on the Highway.

This office enjoyed a 54 per cent increase over the month of May, 1933, while the increase over the state as a whole was only 16.15 per cent. Redwood Empire association advertising was given credit for a large part of the increased travel through this city.

In the 48 registration offices of the state, the total for May was 7,493 cars, as compared with 6,451 cars during the same month last year.

Grants Pass registered 1,853, Ashland 1,249, Klamath Falls 602, Portland 422, and Medford 403 (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, Friday, June 8, 1934).

Advice Given To "Auto Nomads" Heralded by the rustle of road maps, spread out in millions of American homes after the dinner dishes have been exported to the kitchens, the Nomad season has arrived. In this season which is bounded roughly by the vernal equinox on the north and autumn equinox on the south, the Man in the Street becomes the Man on the Highway.

His yearly obit may vary, but fundamentally it remains the same. There are cities, beaches, mountains, streams and Aunt Kate's to visit. There are stars to be slept under and new camps to be pitched in purple shadowed canyons.

For the unwise, or novice Nomad, this seasonal elliptic is not without difficulties, which range from simple inconvenience to actual peril.

To eliminate insofar as possible these last, the Oregon State Motor Association has announced a handy list of “Do’s” and “Don’ts” for the vacationing motorist. The primary rule for all motorists, tourists or otherwise, is to observe safety precautions. Drive sanely. Go slow on curves and on blind hills to keep to the right. Avoid night driving, if possible. Don’t try to make miles — enjoy your trip. Start early in the morning and turn in early. This saves nerves and assures you of better accommodations.

Equipment? A small cooking outfit in a light container, if you favor auto camps. Roll your bedding in a waterproof, dust proof “tarp” or oil skin. Tuck a large thermos bottle in your war bag if your trip is through desert country. Next to the thermos bottle put a first-aid kit. Practical kits may be had for little cost. Take no perishable food as most auto camps have a store nearby. Don’t forget the auto robe. Field glasses, if you have them. Also smoked glasses. Fishing tackle may be rented if you are going to a national park.

A minimum of clothing is wisest. For women, one good traveling suit — wool knit preferred — and a wash dress or dark silk for very warm days. Medium weight traveling coat, comfortable shoes, serviceable gloves and simple accessories complete her outfit.

Don’t carry the family bankroll in cash or currency. Buy travelers checks in tens or twenties. They are accepted everywhere. Leave your jewelry at home or in the bank. It’s harder to lose in either of the latter places than on the highway.

Don’t overlook that vitally important item — your car’s health. Give it the benefit of the doubt by having its ignition, lubrication system, brakes, lights, tires and other important parts inspected before you leave. On the road watch your gas, oil and grease carefully.

If you tire of auto camps clean comfortable hotels will be found in virtually every town.

Secure reliable road information and avoid jousts with detours and bad roads (Grants Pass Bulletin, Friday, June 9, 1934).

Sought By Association. Improvement of the Pacific highway south of Ashland to increase travel over that road and consequently attract more tourist business to Oregon is the goal of the Pacific Highway association which met Thursday noon in the Redwoods hotel to discuss the recent allotment of federal and state money for road construction in southern Oregon.

The delegates passed a resolution favoring the diversion of the major portion of the funds to completion of the Siskiyou highway. Those present represented Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, and Lane counties (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, June 29, 1934).

Auto Licensing Time Approaches. Automobile owners in Oregon will receive reminders this week of the approach of another registration year, when more than 260,000 letters are released in the mails by P. J. Stadelman, Secretary of State. Twelve-months licenses may be purchased for

five dollars (\$5.00) for private passenger cars to be registered for the year 1935, this rate being the lowest in many years and enjoyed by car owners for the second consecutive time (*Grants Pass Bulletin*, November 16, 1934).

1935 In 1935 Grants Pass welcomed the first automobile show in years Friday night with exhibitors reporting about 1,000 visiting the latest models (December 7, 1935).

In 1935 James K. Manuel has announced the opening of the Manuel Motor company in a sales and display at the corner of 5th and H streets. The new motor company will have the agency for Hudson and Terraplane cars in this territory. A carload of the new 1935 models was unloaded Friday and placed on display today (February 2, 1935).

1936 Grants Pass automotive dealers sold 41 cars during the first 31 days of 1936, they reported to the Courier (February 1, 1936).