

“Do you know when the Siuslaw Road was begun? It was years before the water grade road beginning from opposite the Territorial Road ran in a broad curve generally bordering the creek (or Siuslaw River) to the Cottage Grove Road, across it and a mile northward to where it rejoined Territorial Road.”

Early day travel in the Siuslaw valley was described by Jane Powell, an early Lorane settler, in a letter to Donald Drullinger. “Pioneers were skillful and efficient in caring for the sick or injured. I don’t think anyone ever thought of pitying themselves but pity was certainly due for both horses and riders if a doctor was needed. A trip to Cottage Grove by team and wagon required work that was anything but easy from daylight to dark. I never rode a horse to Eugene, but judging by one such ride I had from my home place to Lorane, it **could be** downright unpleasant. I was letting my horse lope along the only firm strip of road between the old Petrie and Doty homes when suddenly she went down on her knees and I went over her head. When I picked myself up, I found my hat sticking crown down in the mud. Dolly, the horse, must have hit a sink hole or chuck hole of mud with her front feet.”

In later years, because of the muddy condition of the roads during the winter months, cars were usually jacked up on blocks for the duration of the bad weather and put back into service when summer arrived. Rodney Dillon recalls that in the early 1930s, the only way someone could get very far down the Siuslaw River Road was on horseback or by foot in the wintertime. “Once in awhile they’d take a car down there if they had chains and plenty of power. On down, that was just a wagon road down there then, and on down to the Falls it was hardly a good Indian trail.”

Many of the lesser-used roads, such as Ham Road and parts of Territorial were plank roads. Ham Road used to be a trail over the mountains past the former Paseman place until about 1952, when Harry Holt put it through to Camas Swale Road, leading into Creswell. When the Walt Paseman family moved to their home on Ham Road in 1950, the mailman turned around at their place where 3 other mail boxes sat beside their



A log truck rounding the curve in front of Blaine Addison’s Store. The high school is in the background. Early 1940s.



Addison plank road

own for the 3 families that lived beyond their place to where the road ended.

Before the roads in and around Lorane were paved, there was quite a problem of flooding. Because of this, a long wooden bridge was built on Territorial Road and referred to as the wooden road. It stretched across two creeks from the present Lorane General Store at the “foot of the hill” to the James Ledgerwood house on south Territorial Road. There was another plank road extending from the Lorane Family Store at the “foot of the hill” to the present Gary Willoughby place on Cottage Grove-Lorane Road.

Cliff Koch of Springfield recalls his father telling of riding his horse past the Lorane I.O.O.F. Cemetery on Territorial Road late one night when suddenly someone wearing a white sheet ran from the cemetery towards him. The horse needed no prodding as it and its rider vacated the area in record time. Koch was sure afterwards that people from 15 miles away could have heard the hoofbeats of his horse clattering on the wooden road in an effort to leave the “ghost” far behind.

A section of Territorial Road from Gowdyville Road through Mill Camp was made of wood also, because without the planks, the road was too muddy in the winter to travel. Mr. J.M. Nighswander described that particular section of the road as a “T” bridge, and described it as the strangest of the plank roads in Lane County.

Lucille Addison Jellison, who grew up in the Cartwright House, remembers when her father made an occasional business trip to Coos Bay. He rode his horse to Curtin where he turned it loose. The horse would return home and he caught the train to Coos