

# Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

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## *The Tillamook Burn*

*By George Cushing*

In 1933 the first fire occurred in what has become known as the Tillamook Burn, to be followed at six-year intervals by three more fires in 1939, 1945 and 1951. By the time effective fire control measures had been put in place, over 350,000 acres had burned\*, killing thirteen billion board feet of timber – enough to build more than a million homes. Reforestation efforts began in 1949 using volunteers of all ages including forestry crews, prison inmates and school groups, and the area slowly returned to a green forest. In 1983 the first commercial thinning

contract was issued, pro-claiming the replanting a success.

During the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Oregon's northwest corner was primarily centuries-old Douglas fir, as well as cedar, hemlock and spruce, interspersed with open areas and an abundance of wildlife. Many small homesteaders had staked

out claims, and logging was the primary economy in the area. On August 14, 1933, a spark from one of these logging operations sparked the first of the fires (also the cause of subsequent fires). Ashes rose



\* To put this in perspective, the 2002 Biscuit Fire in southern Oregon burned 500,000 acres and the 1988 Yellowstone fire destroyed 800,000 acres. But these were nothing compared to the fires in the mid-1800s. Four Oregon fires that occurred between 1848 and 1865 burned 2.6 million acres – over seven times the combined amount of the Tillamook Burn. The worst, the Silverton fire in 1865, burned almost a million acres. The largest known U.S. fire burned three million acres in Idaho in 1910.

40,000 feet in the air and the plume could be seen as far west as

Yellowstone. Ashes piled up two feet deep along the northern Oregon coast and fell like snow in the Willamette Valley. Not only was the forest destroyed, but wildlife was decimated, rivers were choked with sediment and debris and seed cones were annihilated. Most of the land from the Pacific Ocean to the Tualatin Valley on the west, from the Columbia River to Yamhill Valley in the south was devastated.

Using a plan developed by Nelson S. Rogers, a state forester who had grown up in the area, the rebuilding of the forests began. Almost immediately salvage logging was started. The effort began with the formation of the Consolidated Timber Company, a cooperative effort headquartered near Glenwood on what is now Highway 6 to Tillamook. This logging started the rebuilding both by clearing the way for replanting, but also opened up the area allowing a more modern highway instead of the old wagon trails. Of the thirteen billion board feet of live trees

destroyed, almost 7.5 billion board feet was recovered through salvage logging.

The development of the modern chain saw, advances in tree seedlings, and use of helicopters for replanting, for aerial mapping and for supplying of construction materials all helped in the reforestation efforts. Thousands of volunteers arrived in fleets of school buses and swarmed over the mountains planting 72 million Douglas-fir seedlings, and the trees slowly started to reclaim the mountains.

The fires combined with the Great Depression to cause most landholdings to be transferred back to the state through tax foreclosures. A 1948 \$12 million bond measure provided acquisition funds for remaining lands, and on July 18, 1973 the area became the Tillamook State Forest.

The recreational opportunities in the Tillamook Forest continue to grow in this new and revitalized forest. With the recent addition of new day use areas as well as the planned opening this summer of the new Tillamook Forest Center, the opportunities for recreation abound.

## *Old Forest Grove Laws*

*By Claude Romig*

Item: "The City of Forest Grove does Ordain as Follows: ...That no person shall ride any bicycle [or] tricycle...on the sidewalks on Pacific Avenue in the City of Forest Grove, Washington County, Oregon, between Main Street and B Street. Any person violating...this ordinance shall on conviction thereof be punished by a fine of not less than five dollars nor more than ten dollars and the costs of prosecution, or be imprisoned in the City Jail not less than two days nor more than five days...."

Item: "...No vicious nor mad dog, nor any female dog in time of heat, shall be permitted to go at large in the City of Forest Grove, and it shall be lawful for any person to kill any such dog or dogs, whether it wears a collar with a tag or not..."

Fact or fantasy? The reality is that the Forest Grove City Council passed Ordinance 128 (regarding bicycles) on October 16, 1903. The dog ordinance (Ordinance 3) was passed on April 16, 1891. One can only speculate why, over a hundred years ago, the City Council was prompted to pass laws allowing the shooting of dogs and prohibiting the riding of bicycles. There are literally hundreds of old ordinances, many handwritten and bound in their original ledgers, located on a shelf in City Hall. The topics of these ordinances range from the building of sidewalks to tax assessments, from stock running at large to the prohibition of liquor. As another example, to regulate those citizens who annoyed their neighbors, the Forest Grove City Council passed Ordinance 9 on November 4, 1891:

“If any person or persons within the corporate limits of said City of Forest Grove...shall disturb the peace and quietude of any citizen of said City by hollowing, hooting or blowing...horns or [by] the unnecessary ringing of bells, or making loud or ungainly noises of any manner detrimental to the peace of any other citizen...shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof...shall be fined in any sum not less than five dollars (\$5) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100)....”

Shooting firearms was also prohibited. “If any person or persons shall within the corporate limits of the City of Forest Grove shoot off or fire any shot gun, rifle or pistol or any kind of gun...or shall shoot any substance from what is commonly known as a bean shooter or nigger killer...he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction of the violation...of this ordinance...shall be fined in any sum not exceeding one hundred dollars nor less than two dollars....” Ordinance 12 was passed on November 11, 1891.

In 1904, Forest Grove was a dry town. Only a licensed pharmacist, under a doctor’s orders, could dispense alcohol: “It shall be unlawful for any person not a registered pharmacist...to sell or give away any spirituous, malt or vinous liquors or other intoxicating compounds within the Corporate limits of the City of Forest Grove...except on a written prescription of a registered and practicing physician, and no more than one sale or gift shall be made upon the same prescription.” Ordinance 132 was passed on January 27, 1904.

On August 13, 1903, Ordinance 126 was passed. This ordinance prohibited a potpourri of activities including prostitution, indecent exposure, fighting and vagrancy: “...That any person who, while within the incorporated limits of the City of Forest Grove, Washington County, Oregon, shall be guilty of violent, riotous or disorderly conduct, or shall use any profane, abusive or obscene language, or shall curse or swear, or shall make any loud or unnecessary noise, or shall make any...indecent exposure of his or her person, or

shall expose or circulate or distribute any indecent or improper picture, print, book or matter of any kind...or shall be guilty of peeking in at the window of any church, school house or any house not his own...or shall attend any prize fight, or shall engage in fighting or quarrelling...or shall operate a fortune wheel, game of chance, or gambling device of any nature or description...or shall be a tramp, or hobo, or shall be a vagrant...shall be fined in any sum not exceeding fifty (\$50.00) dollars....”

Ordinance 44, a curfew law, was passed by the Forest Grove City Council on November 6, 1893: “...That no person under the age of eighteen years shall be permitted to roam the streets of the city of Forest Grove after the hour of eight o’clock in the evening, unless such person or persons have the written permission of their parents or guardians and are performing especial duties or messages, or are accompanied by their parents or guardians.” Those in violation of the provisions of this ordinance would “...be punished by a fine of two dollars for each violation or one day in the city jail...”

Finally, it appears that gambling was an issue in 1893 Forest Grove. “...That each and every person who shall deal, play, or carry on, open, or cause to be opened...any game of faro, Monte, roulette, poker, draw poker or any banking or any other game played with cards, dice, or any other device, whether the game be played for money, checks, credits, or any other representation of value, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor...[and] shall be punished by a fine of not less than ten dollars nor more than twenty-five dollars for each violation....” The Forest Grove City Council passed Ordinance 40 on July 3, 1893.

There are many hundreds of ordinances, historic as well as current, accessible to the public at Forest Grove City Hall. Many ordinances make exceedingly tedious reading; however, there are a few interesting and revealing gems for those who wish to take a glimpse back into the city’s history. Happy hunting.

**Preserving Forest Grove** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 503-992-3233, or [JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us](mailto:JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us).

***The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program***

Is your house on our local *Register*? If it is, did you know that your house is eligible for restoration or rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features or if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

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