

THE UMPQUA

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THE MAIL



MYRTLE CREEK

The Cover Photograph

Nugget, Douglas County, Oregon, is one of the lesser-known post offices which once flourished in our country. It rates one of the briefest accounts in McArthur's "Oregon Geographic Names", viz: "This post office was named Nugget because of gold mines in the vicinity." The office was located up South Myrtle Creek about 11 miles from Myrtle Creek, and was near the "Continental" and "Chieftain" gold mines. From data furnished by Johnny Stephens and R. A. Briggs, it appears that Nugget post office was established about 1896 and that Mrs. Ben Sanders was the first postmaster; Ben Sanders made weekly trips to Myrtle Creek after the mail, which he carried to Nugget on his back. He was killed when the boiler in the Potts sawmill exploded. The next postmaster was Mrs. Dunning, who also operated a little store, stocking groceries and supplies. Lloyd Ady is believed to have been the next postmaster, succeeded about 1910 by Mrs. Fanny Stephens, who kept the office and a few school supplies in the small frame, false-fronted building shown on the cover; the hack in front of the office carried mail and passengers from Myrtle Creek. This photo was furnished through the kindness of John Andrews of Roseburg.

Mrs. Stephens operated the post

office for about 4 years, after which it again moved, going to the Polly Marsters' place. Around 1918 it was moved to Wm. Wright's (the old Sellers place) and Mrs. Wm. (Lulu) Wright, mother of R. A. Briggs, became postmaster; a small log building about 12 x 14 feet was built for her use as a post office.

From the Wright place, the office evidently was returned to the Ady place, and Iris Ady was reportedly the last postmaster, the office being discontinued about 1922. Memory of the office lived on for some time, the rural mail route to the area being known as Nugget Route, but this usage gave way to South Myrtle Route.

The once-a-week pack trips of Ben Sanders were replaced by the horse-drawn mail rigs, such as the one pictured and believed to be the hack driven by Al Akers. Others who drove the mail stage to Nugget were Willard Willis, Howard Carter, Sam Welker, Ray Allen, Rene Newton, and John Boyles.

These tiny post offices filled an important role in the lives of those residing in the more isolated regions of the county before the era of good roads and the auto; Buck Fork post office on North Myrtle Creek was the counterpart of Nugget in that area.

South Myrtle Creek (Map 7)

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