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LIFE OF A BOY IN PIONEER DAYS

Hood River. (cccccc) folk are fortunate in that H. C. Coe, son of Hood River's founder, Nathaniel Coe, has written a history of the early days of the community. The interesting story of Mr. Coe, who now resides in Manhattan Beach, Calif, will appear serially under the title, "A Boy's Life in Pioneer Days." The forward to the interesting document follows:

Nathaniel Coe, the pioneer settler of Hood River, and on whose Donation land claim the city of Hood River was first laid out, was born at Morristown, N.J, September 28, 1789, and died at his home in Hood River October 17, 1869, in his 80th-year. When only a boy his family moved to western New York, where he received a liberal education. In 1828 he married Mary White, a New York city girl, well known for her literary talents. After serving three full terms in the state Assembly, he declined the nomination for the United States senator to accept the office of Special Postal Agent for the Pacific Northwest and in the fall of 1852 departed for his post of duties taking his third son, Eugene, then a boy of 14, with him, going by the Panama route. His work was arduous in the extreme. Postoffices were to be established and mail contracts let. His work extended from Olympia, Wash., to Rogue River in southern Oregon and the mode of travel was on horseback over Indian trails.

After a year's stay he decided that Oregon was good enough for him and sent for the rest of his family, Mrs. Coe and three sons, Lawrence W., Charles C. and Henry C., the author of these memories. They also came by the Panama or Isthmus route, reaching Portland about the 6th of January, 1854. Father, mother and I were entertained for the time being at the home of Thomas J. Dryer, editor and proprietor of the Weekly Oregonian, Mr. Dryer being a warm personal and political friend of father's. The incoming Democratic administration (President Pierce) March 4, 1854, appointed father's successor, he having been appointed-by the Whig, President Filmore, and the business of home hunting began.

Portland at that time was not a great city. There were practically but two streets; (now

Front and First) and they were only about three or four blocks long, and First street had numerous great fir stumps, scattered along its full length. About a week later we secured rooms over a store building at the corner of Front and Stark streets, but later we secured a dwelling on First street, where we were very comfortable. The Oregonian at that time was published in a one-room building in the same yard with Mr. Dryer's house, and printed on a press operated by hand, one side at a time. The paper to be printed was placed on an open frame, on hinges, then turned down on the table over the type, a crank was turned and the table, type and paper run under a large square iron plate, a large lever pulled across the press that pressed the frame down on to the paper and type, the bed run back, opened up and the printed page taken off. When one side was completed, the type was removed and the forms containing the reverse side placed on the table and the reverse side also printed. It was a very tedious and tiresome job at best, and printing day ranked fairly well with the family wash day.

At that time the late Henry L. Pittock was press man, and being a very small man, or rather boy, as I do not think he was out of his teens, had to have a box to stand on in order to reach the lever on the opposite side of the press. I remember one day a young man named Boyd, a type setter, picking him up in his arms and sitting down in a the old rocking chair starting to put the baby to sleep. I do not think Mr. Pittock ever left the employ of the Oregonian and at the time of his death was many times over a millionaire and general manager of that great paper.

At that time father had taken option on 80 acres of land on the East Side, not far out, but heavily timbered and covered with dense underbrush. There was only one house there then and that belonged to a man named Stevens. Early in August father, mother and I started on a trip up the Columbia to The Dalles. Transportation business was then in its infancy all over the country and eastward just beginning. The Bradford brothers, Dan, Ash(?) and Put, had obtained some large government contract and were rushing work on a tramway at the Cascade portage. and when we reached there everything was in a turmoil and it took us three days to get across the portage. My three brothers were employed there with my oldest

brother in charge of the work. The Bradfords had just completed a small schooner, called the "Mary," after Mrs. Put Bradford, which was shortly afterward converted into a steamer of — the same name, which for many years saw service on the river.

It was on this trip we discovered Hood River. Perhaps it would be nearer correct to say Dog River, as that was the name it went by then, but it always seemed so horrid to think that our lovely valley should ever be called by such a brutal name. We left the upper Cascades early and wing and wing before a freshening breeze our trim little schooner was making a record on this, her maiden trip. It was an ideal day, autumn tints were already coloring the hill sides with red and gold, and as we emerged from beneath the shadows of the mighty Cascades, Hood River in all its beauty lay before us, while the graceful lines of snowcapped Hood towering far above made a picture unsurpassed on our continent. The scene was irresistible. and all exclaimed, "Why not here?"

We reached The Dalles about 3 p. m. and as there were only two or three houses we concluded to return the following day on a little Iron-hulled-propeller called "The Allen." On account of high wind we only reached White Salmon, where we were entertained by E. S. Joslyn and wife, the pioneers, who had located there the previous year. We reached Portland the following week and father and the boys, accompanied by William Jenkins, returned to Hood River and staked out their claims, Jenkins taking the place later owned by Adams. So we found Hood River, and our future home.

Foot note — After retiring from the transportation business, having been succeeded by the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, Ash Bradford and his brother, Put, came to Hood River to live, building a home on State street opposite the Methodist church, where they lived until their death. Put had a son, Flint, who lived at White Salmon, but later moved to Hood River, where he died a few years ago.

Dear Ivan: Glad to know you are still digging at the "road" problem because you are the best digger I've ever known. I've not had much time for research this year, but did run across a couple of things I thought might add to our confusion or clear up some points, one or the other. Right now I can't put my hands on them, but will do directly after Christmas.

I got off on a steamboat kick last fall and believe it may, have been thought that the references to the roads popped up. Perhaps they'll amount to nothing, but it's worth a try. We are missing one of Harvey Scott's volumes at this library and I had thought of asking them to get it for me at the state libe. I keep finding stuff in his tomes, if I look carefully.

By the way, could you tell me where to write in Washington for verification of the fact that Nathaniel Coe, first white settler in Hood River, was appointed special postal agent for the Oregon Territory and came out here for that purpose? I find the years 1851 and '52 used concerning this appointment. For a while I wondered if his position was a figment of his son Henry's imagination, since I found a small item in one steamboat book about his having distributed the mail from the "Canemah" above Oregon City. However, I guess even important government people stooped to such work in those days. But I will feel easier if I have definite proof of his appointment by the President of the U.S.

This year has been so filled with other things that history had to take a back seat. Our son Christopher came from Virginia with his wife and baby in September for his 30-day leave before going to Vietnam. He left the 28th of October and is at Long Thanh, 15 miles east of Saigon. Even there they do not go for walks outside the perimeter, with attacks by artillery all around them. He is technical supply officer in charge of a computer, 40 enlisted men and the doling out of over 16,000 airplane parts. Thank goodness, the only helicopter flying he does is to go out to downed choppers, both ours and the enemy's. He's disappointed, because he loves to fly. His wife and year-old daughter have an apartment in Portland, so we are busy visiting back and forth.

However, I'm itching to get back to my research, which I love. I have to discipline myself not to take time for it these busy days. If it snows a lot in January, I should be able to catch up on some of it.

Regards to Mrs. Donaldson and a Merry Christmas to you all.

RUTH GUYPPY (sp.?)
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P.S.: My friend, Lois Talbot, and a friend hiked over Tooth Rock again, starting from Eagle Creek. That was this month! Beautiful, she claimed.