

Schroader, Kathy

From: Orjiako, Oliver
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2015 11:49 AM
To: Euler, Gordon; Alvarez, Jose
Cc: Schroader, Kathy
Subject: FW: THE HISTORY OF BYCX

What!

From: Carol Levanen [mailto:cnldental@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2015 6:32 PM
To: Mielke, Tom; Stewart, Jeanne; Madore, David; Benton, Don; Orjiako, Oliver
Subject: Fw: THE HISTORY OF BYCX

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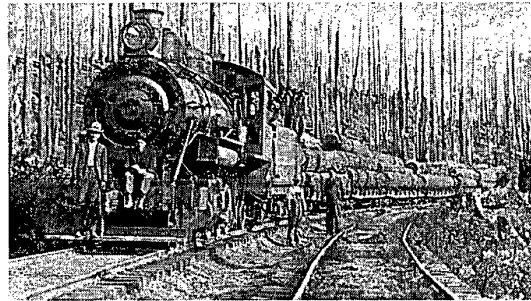
From: susan rasmussen <sprazz@outlook.com>
To: Carol Levanen <cnldental@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2015 2:40 PM
Subject: THE HISTORY OF BYCX

THE HISTORY OF BYCX

<http://www.bycx.com/CPRRHISTORY.htm>

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Twin Falls Logging, a Weyerhaeuser company, train near Yacolt (1912)

THE HISTORY OF THE CPRR

There had been on-going discussion about the need for a railroad out of Vancouver for quite some time since the completion of the trans-continental railroad. The first person to take action was L.M. Hidden, a Vancouver businessman. Hidden was involved in farming, brick making, hotel operation and philanthropic endeavors. Hidden was also involved in Clark County activities and helped form the Clark County Fair Association.

There is an unverified story that Hidden and his family, along with several friends and their families, went on a picnic at Moulton Falls. They were so impressed with the abundant timber in the area that they decided to build a railroad to gain access to it.

In any event, on 7/8/1886 Hidden and 5 associates left Vancouver to survey the proposed route to Yakima. Hidden felt that the route would give him access to the timber, the wheat growing country around Yakima and there might be coal and other minerals along the way. They were gone a month and returned with estimates of timber and mining resources and certain that a practical route could be laid out.

On 9/22/1887, the Clark County Register announced that the Vancouver, Klickitat and Yakima, Vancouver's first railroad, had recently been incorporated with one million dollars in funding. L. M. Hidden was vice-president. On 1/31/1888, work began, and the first locomotive for the line arrived in Vancouver on 12/20/1888. The goal of the railroad was to serve Vancouver and Yakima by way of the Klickitat Pass. It was envisioned that it would ultimately connect with the Great Northern Railroad and the Manitoba line of the Canadian National Railway at Yakima creating a transcontinental connection.

The line was eventually built to Brush Prairie, but the country fell into an economic depression and money ran out for further expansion and operations. Finally, on 11/25/1897, the railroad was broke and had to be sold. It was renamed the Portland, Vancouver and Yakima Railroad by the new owners.

Within four months under the new ownership, the railroad was bringing 50,000 board feet of logs a day from Brush Prairie to Vancouver. In November of 1898, the stockholders increased their capital stock

from \$50,000 to \$250,000 and sought right of way to extend the line to Chelatchie Prairie.

By September 1901, there were 4 work camps working on extending the rail line to Yacolt. During that period, crews were working on a 300-foot long tunnel between the Lewis River and Battle Ground at Moulton Falls.

The summer of 1902 was exceptionally dry and by the second week in September, there were fires all over the Northwest. One fire started near Bonneville, in Skamania County and moved through the timber covered hills taking 10 days to reach the Yacolt area. The wind changed and Yacolt was spared. By the time the fire burned out near Mt. St. Helens, the loss in property and resources reached approximately 13 million dollars. Much of the burned land was owned by the Weyerhaeuser Timber Co., which mounted a huge salvage operation, based in Yacolt. Operations were conducted by the Weyerhaeuser subsidiaries Clarke County Timber Company and Twin Falls Logging Company. The Twin Falls Logging Company laid track and ran logging trains through the woods.

In 1903, the railroad was completed to Yacolt, and the town boomed. The Vancouver Independent wrote:

"Keep your eye on Yacolt and Battle Ground. Both of these little towns are now experiencing booms that are almost phenomenal. During the past month there has been quite a movement in real estate in both places and a number of new buildings have been erected. The booms in both towns are occasioned by the increase in the logging business. The Columbia River Lumber Company have just established three camps on a spur near Battle Ground and in the Yacolt Country preparations are being made for an extensive logging business."

Also in 1903 the P,V&K merged with the Washington and Oregon Railroad and they became the Washington Railway and Navigation Company. This company lasted only 3½ months and it was transferred to the Northern Pacific Railroad on 11/11/1903 to be under control of that company's Pacific Division.

The new owners immediately began regular passenger service to Yacolt, with one passenger coach making the trip each way daily. A one-way ticket from Yacolt to Vancouver cost \$1.07. Prior to the addition of passenger coaches by the Northern Pacific, passengers rode wherever space was available; in the caboose, on freight cars, even on the engine.

The salvage of burned timber was completed by 1910, and by the mid-1920's, logging of green timber in the area was winding down. On December 4, 1929, George S. Long, general manager of Weyerhaeuser, wrote the stockholders of the Clarke County Timber Company regarding the closure of operations in the area. The area had been logged off, he wrote, and that there was no demand for the land for agricultural purposes as it would cost more for the purchaser to clear the land of stumps than he could buy an already cleared and cultivated parcel for.

As for Yacolt, Long wrote:

"At Yacolt we have two or three worn out buildings, all vacant and without any perceptible value whatever, these including an old warehouse, a residence formerly occupied by our logging Superintendent, a hospital building, which has been robbed of much of its equipment, and one or two very small buildings of no value, in fact none of them have any value today for Yacolt is absolutely dead with no promise for a future life."

After the departure of Weyerhaeuser, The Northern Pacific continued to operate logging trains on the line to serve the remaining small-scale operations in the area, but there was no longer any need for passenger service. By the mid-1940's, the Northern Pacific was only running one train a week to Yacolt.

In 1948, Harbor Plywood completed the long planned extension to Chelatchie Prairie, opening that area to logging. Two years later, the Longview, Portland and Northern bought the rail line Harbor Plywood and later bought the remainder of the line from the Northern Pacific. International Paper Company, the parent company of the L,P&N, built a huge lumber and plywood plant there in 1960.

Even though the Northern Pacific sold the line, it was not the end of NP involvement in the area. In the late 1950's NP was running one log train a day from Kelso to Yacolt. The train would leave Kelso at 7:00am, pick up empty cars at Longview, stop at Battle Ground where the crew would eat lunch, and arrive at Yacolt at 12:30pm. On the return trip, the train would drop off the log cars at Longview and be back in Kelso at 7:45pm.

When the mill was closed in 1979, the entire line was put up for sale.

Three Vancouver businessmen bought the line in March 1981 and changed its name to the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad. It was used both commercially and for passenger traffic until January of 1984 when the owners filed for abandonment in order to tear it up, sell the tracks and ties and 340 acres of right-of-way.

Clark County purchased the railroad and leased it to the Lewis and Clark Railroad, which had run excursion service and continues to use a portion of the line for commercial purposes.

Over time, with severe winter weather, lack of maintenance and changes in ownership, the track-bed, rails, bridges, and buildings north of Battle Ground have deteriorated. A group of community volunteers came together in 1998 with the goal of restoring the line and building the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad into a functioning historical railroad. Working with the support of Clark County, the track from Moulton Falls to Chelatchie Prairie has been restored, and excursion service resumed on May 26, 2001. Work continues on improving the track and upgrading equipment with the goal of restoring service to Battle Ground.

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