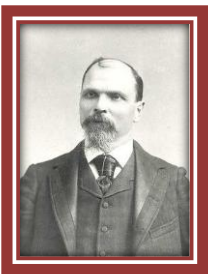




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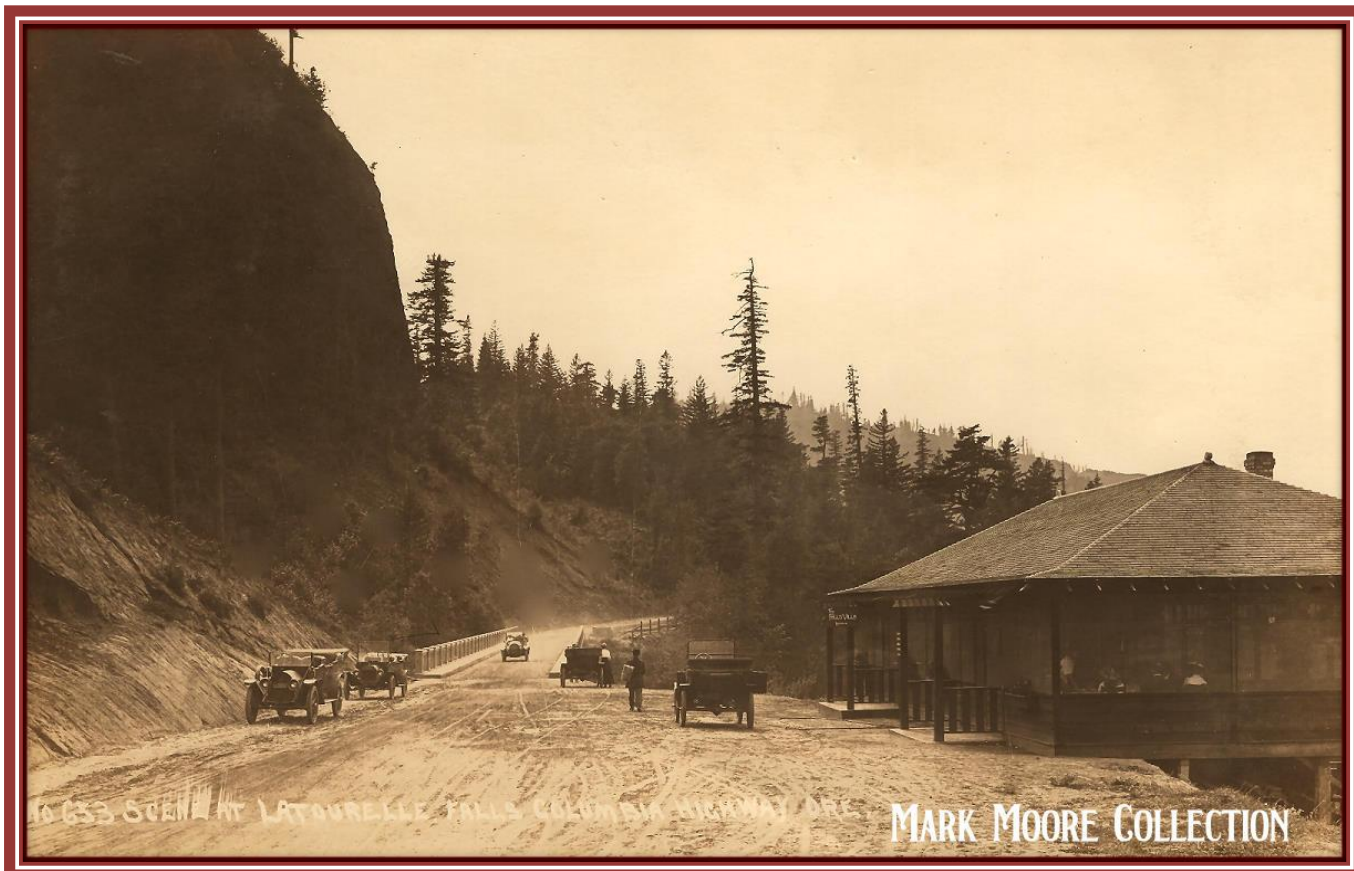


LATOURELL, OREGON TIMBER TOWN OF THE 1880S

GREETINGS FROM



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION



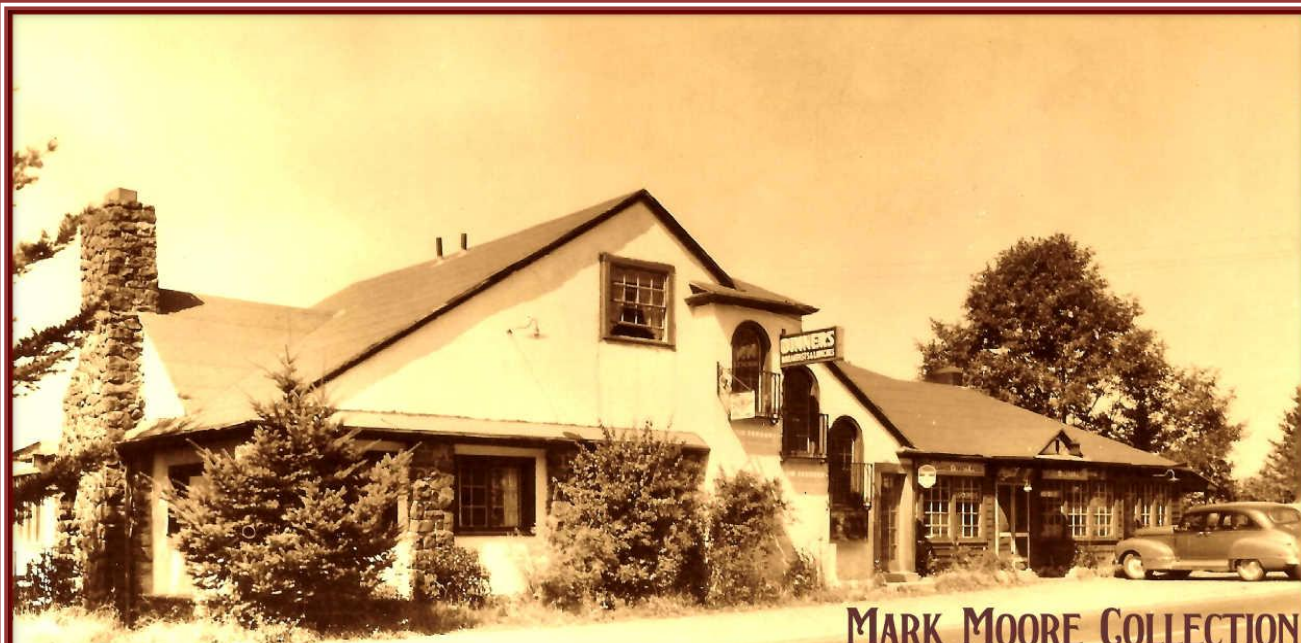
Patton real photo postcard of the newly-opened Falls Villa at Latourell Falls, circa 1916. Postally unused.

Latourell, Oregon, is an unincorporated community in the Columbia River Gorge, about eight miles east of Troutdale and five and a half miles west of Multnomah Falls. It was named after Joseph Charles "Frenchy" Latourell, a 19th-century French-Canadian immigrant who settled in the area in the 1850s. He owned a mercantile and a fish wheel, and he worked as a boatman on the Columbia River. Latourell was born in February 1831 in New York and died at the age of 80 in Multnomah County, Oregon on November 9, 1911.

The waterfalls at Latourell Falls are known for their 249-foot plunge and Latourell is unique among the best-known Columbia Gorge waterfalls, in the way that it drops straight down from an overhanging basalt cliff. The area, including Latourell Falls and the surrounding land, is now part of Guy W. Talbot State Park. The park was named after Guy Talbot, who donated the original land, including Latourell Falls and the Latourell Creek Bridge.

The Columbia River Gorge, including Latourell, has a rich geological history, with evidence of ancient lava flows and volcanic activity. The area was also an important gathering and trade site for various Native American tribes.

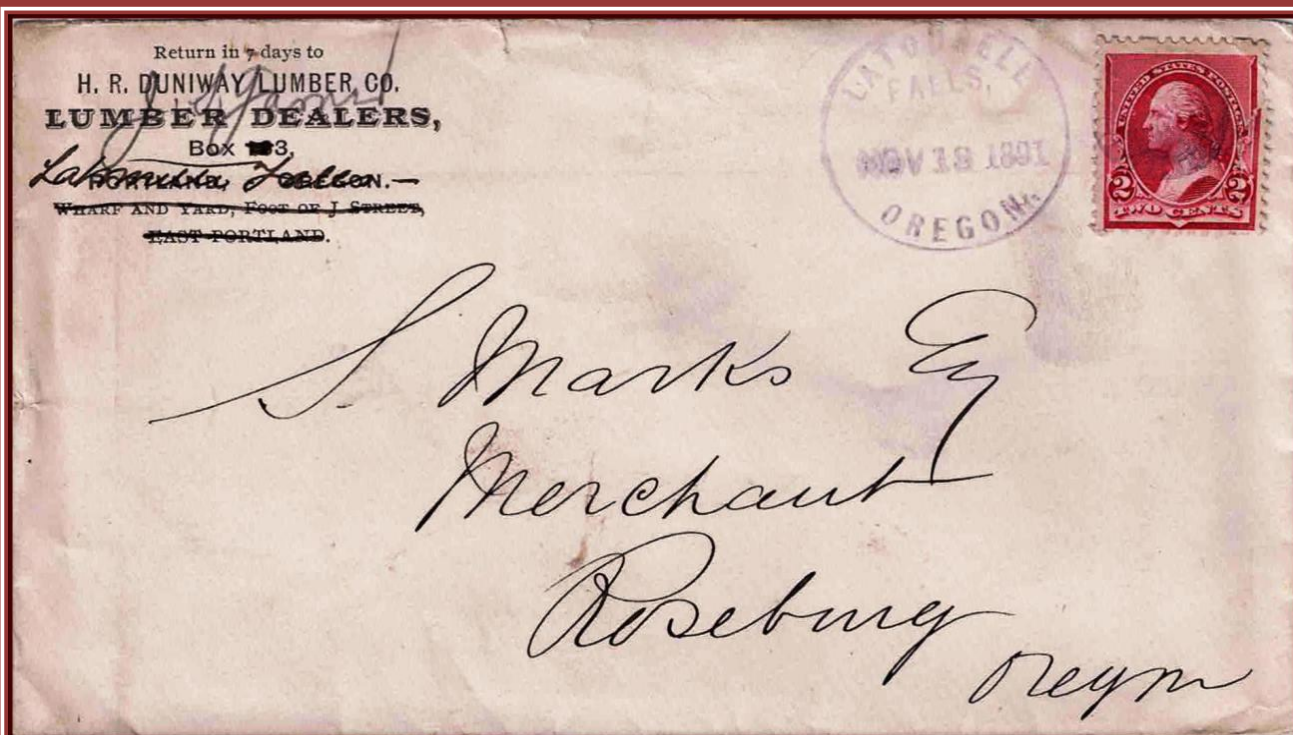
The original post office was named Rooster Rock, and it was established May 5, 1876. The post office was served by a steamer mail route from Washougal, Washington. John Gilstrap was the first postmaster. This post office was discontinued on August 10, 1887.



MARK MOORE COLLECTION
Latourell Villa - Columbia River Highway - Latourell, Oregon

Real photo postcard of the Latourell Villa, circa 1940. Postally unused.

After Harold Maffet acquired Latourell Villa, in the early 1920s, he gave the building a makeover to a Spanish Colonial architectural style. After Interstate 80-N (now 84) opened in the mid to late 1950s, Latourell Villa was closed due to the declining number of patrons, after a request for a freeway exit to Latourell Falls from Interstate 80 was denied. The land that it sat on became the property of the Oregon State Highway Division and the building was bulldozed to the ground about 1959.

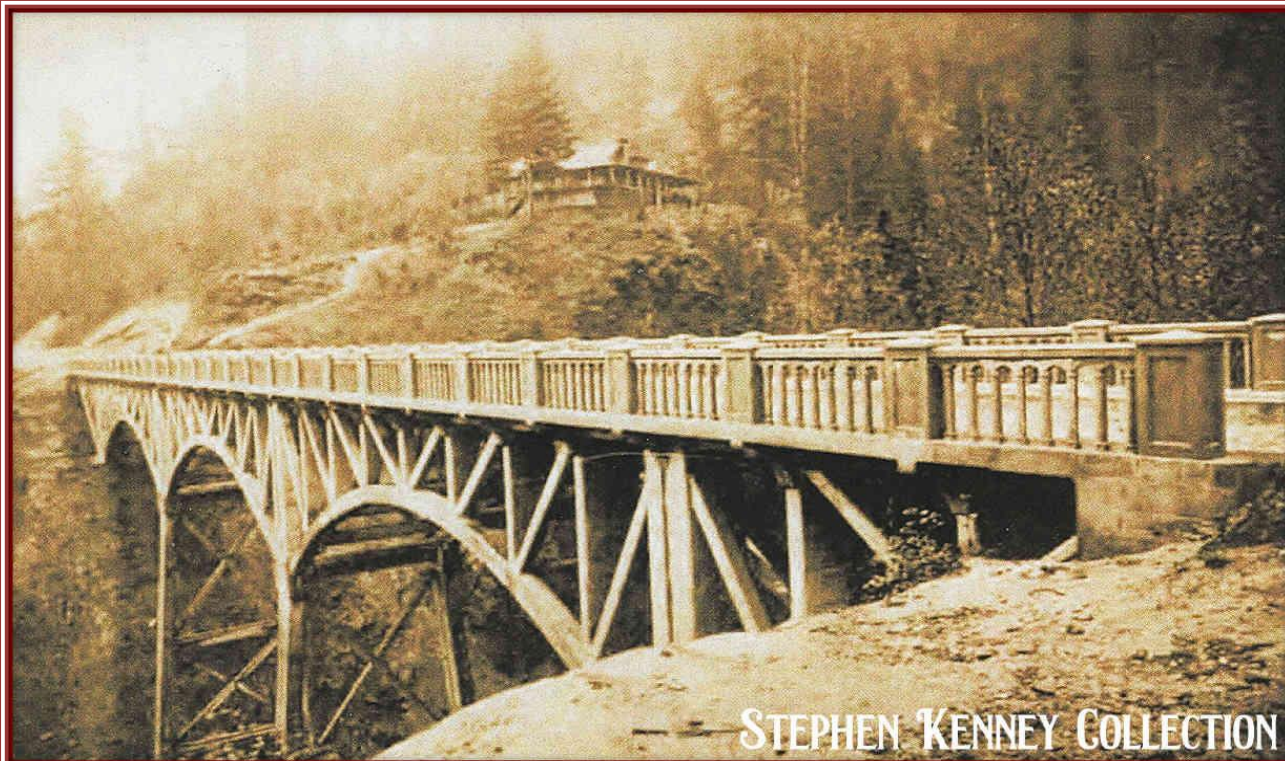


Latourell Falls cover dated November 18, 1891, courtesy of the PNWPHS.



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION

Photo of the Latourell family at their home at Third and Fall streets in the town of Latourell in 1905. Pictured from left: unknown, John Larrson, Clara Latourell Larrson, Clifford Latourell, Joseph Latourell, Grace Latourell, five unknown children, Alice Latourell Courter, Lorena Latourell Courter, Anna Latourell Dickson, Marie Latourell Craig, Mason Craig, unknown.



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Photo of the newly-opened Latourell Falls Chalet and the Latourell Bridge on the Columbia River Highway, circa 1914. The Chalet, owned by Margaret E. Henderson, was built in 1914 and it burned on January 23, 1915. With support from Samuel Hill, entrepreneur and promoter of the Columbia River Highway, and other prominent businessmen, she opened the Crown Point Chalet in 1915.



Real photo postcard of the Latourell Falls Footbridge, circa 1915. The footbridge was torn down about 1957 because large trucks couldn't drive under it. Postally unused.

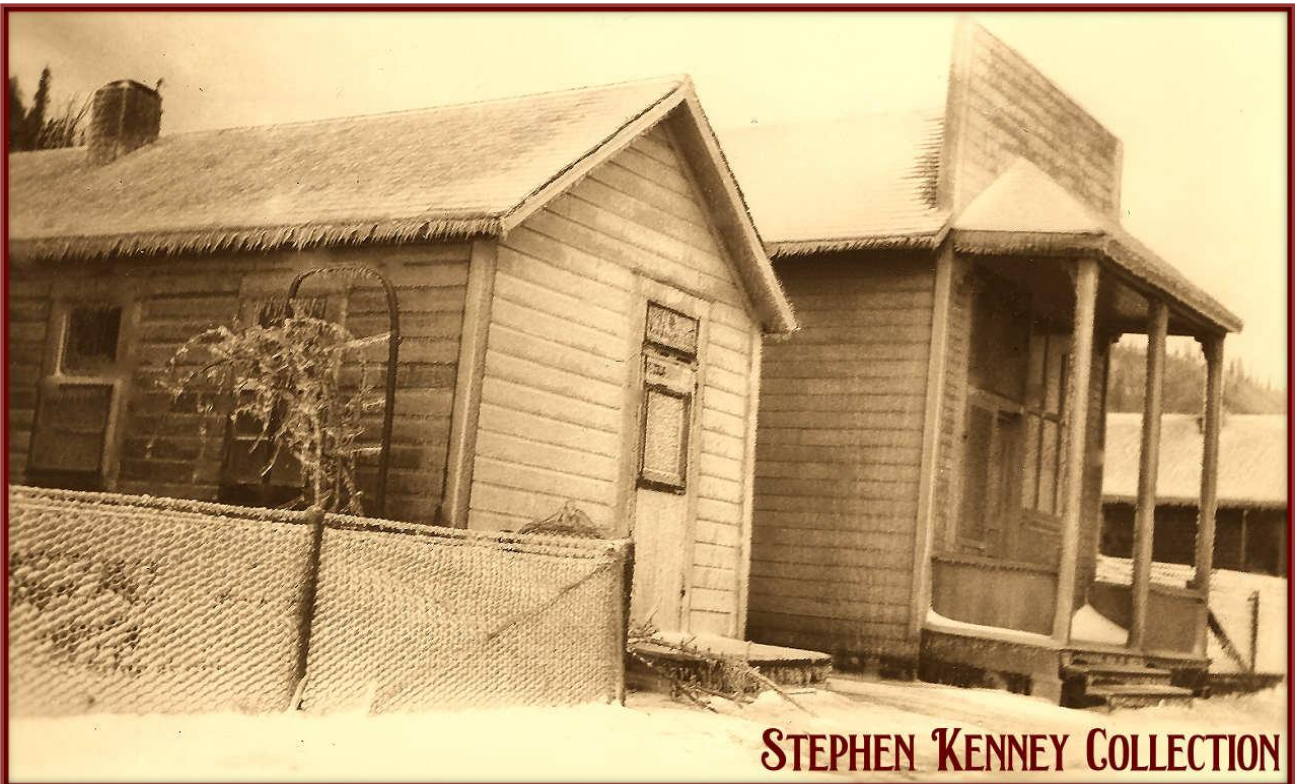


Photo of a house and the long-closed saloon at Latourell during a silver thaw, circa 1940.



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION

Photo of the Latourell Band in 1889.



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION

Photo of the Latourell twins, Lorna and Marie, at the "Latourell" Depot in 1916.

After the Oregon Washington Railway and Navigation Company built a rail line along the south shore of the Columbia River, the post office was moved near the Falls, where Latourell Creek enters the Columbia River, three miles east of Taylor, now Corbett. At that time, the post office was renamed Latourell Falls on August 10, 1887, with Joseph Latourell serving as the first postmaster.

The Latourell Depot was established when the railway line opened in 1883. When tourists first began exploring Samuel Lancaster's graceful new Columbia River Highway in 1915, Latourell Falls became a favorite stop. This was Oregon's first paved highway and it was modeled after the great scenic roads of Europe. In the early days, a pair of roadhouses (the Latourell Falls Chalet and the Falls Villa) flanked the highway at the east end of the dramatic highway bridge spanning the creek, and offered lunch with a view of the falls.

The Latourell Falls post office was discontinued on February 28, 1960. However, the post office continued to operate as a rural station out of Troutdale until September 2, 1964.

At its peak, Latourell was a timber town with five saloons and a brass band, with large-scale logging arriving in the 1880s. Before that, many Columbia River Gorge residents cut and delivered cordwood to Columbia River steamships. Though the area still has several homes, there are no businesses remaining in the town of Latourell and it is listed as a ghost town in a list of Oregon Ghost Towns.

Sources for this article:

The Gresham Outlook Newspaper, Stephen Kenney, Oregon Post Offices by Richard W. Helbock, PdxHistory.com, Wikipedia



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