



# WEBFOOTER EXTRA

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# Merry Christmas



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# *Remembering Summit Station*

By Ben Carscallen

After the Columbia River Highway had made its way through dozens of small towns and communities across east Multnomah County and beyond, small businesses, gas stations, roadhouses, and souvenir shops started to pop up all along the route. One of them being the "Summit Filling Station." At first it was only a small ice cream parlor that soon added coffee and light lunches to the menu which were served by Laura Ross. (Jim and May Ross's daughter).

The parlor was built in May 1914 by Frank Knieriem and Earnest Graf for the Ross family. A year later in May 1915, Mr. Ross had added the filling station, and a small garage to service the increase in automobile traffic. James W. Ross was the proprietor of the establishment, and the Latourell's would operate the service station as a branch of the Latourell Motors Co. of Gresham. At this point on the Columbia River Highway it is the highest point in elevation along the road hence the name "Summit."



Summit Filling Station at the Summit of the Columbia River Highway, circa 1916.



The Nelson Ross family came to Oregon about 1876, bringing their large family with them. These consisted of Dewitt C. and Daniel W; who were twins; George, William, Hannah, and James. In addition there were three older children who were already away from home, Henry, Amanda, and Josephine. As did so many at the time, the Ross family got the Oregon fever. During the reconstruction days after the Civil War, when conditions were the most difficult, the promise of free land in Oregon was very tempting.

Nelson Ross was a veteran of Civil War, where he served with honor, leaving his wife and six children to take care of themselves while he served in the infantry. He was with General Sherman on his march through Georgia, and he told many interesting stories of his war experiences. The Ross family came from Michigan, where the family home was near the present city of Detroit.

When they first reached Oregon they spent some time in the Portland vicinity. The twins were then about 18. They finally decided to settle on the mountain above the Columbia, now called Crown Point. They began their home with brave hearts, with clearing the land. The first problem before farming was possible. The big boys of the family and their father began the task before them with all their strength, cutting down trees, digging stumps, and burning logs to get rid of them so the fields might be cultivated.



Summit House and Filling Station looking west. Photo courtesy CPCHS.

Sometime after 1877, they moved to Crown Point. Mr. and Mrs. Ross were married when they were 19 years of age. She had smallpox when she was a young girl, so her face was left badly pitted. She was a tiny person, but accomplished as much as anyone. She told of her early days on the new land, with all the hard work. She lived to be 94 years old, dying in 1925.

Mr. Ross worked hard, and became much stooped from heavy labor. As he grew old and unable to work the family moved to Fairview. There he spent his time reading the newspaper, histories, and reliving his war days. He told many interesting stories of these times and historical events. The old folks finally went to live with their daughter, Hannah Vincent. Mr. Ross died at St. Johns when he was 86 years old.



**Summit Filling Station and Riverview Lunch. Photo courtesy CPCHS.**

According to James Rhodes, Mrs. Hammer would take over the establishment after Palmer Mill closed down in 1936. Over the years she had created a great reputation within the community for her famous homemade chili. "Good snacks", beer, mountain bars, and ice cream which were a few things locals remember purchasing from the place. Not only was Mrs. Hammer's homemade chili a popular dish, but her pie was also a hit among locals. Bev Law mentioned that Mrs. Hammer also served excellent pie, although the Bridal Veil Motel also had good pie.



While Mrs. Hammer owned the chili parlor, loggers would frequent the joint after coming down off of Larch Mountain. From the metal spikes in the bottoms of their boots, she had started to set out cedar shake shingles next to the door. That way it would protect the wooden floors from getting ripped up by all of the foot traffic. The loggers would take one step into the place and stomp on two shingles and then continue shuffling towards the counter.

The building sat just barely between the road and the steep hillside behind it which makes Nancy Greathouse's comment very fitting, "It felt like you were going to fall into the gorge, the lunch bar looked right out the backside."



Summit Filling Station and Riverview Lunch in snow in 1950. Photo courtesy CPCHS.

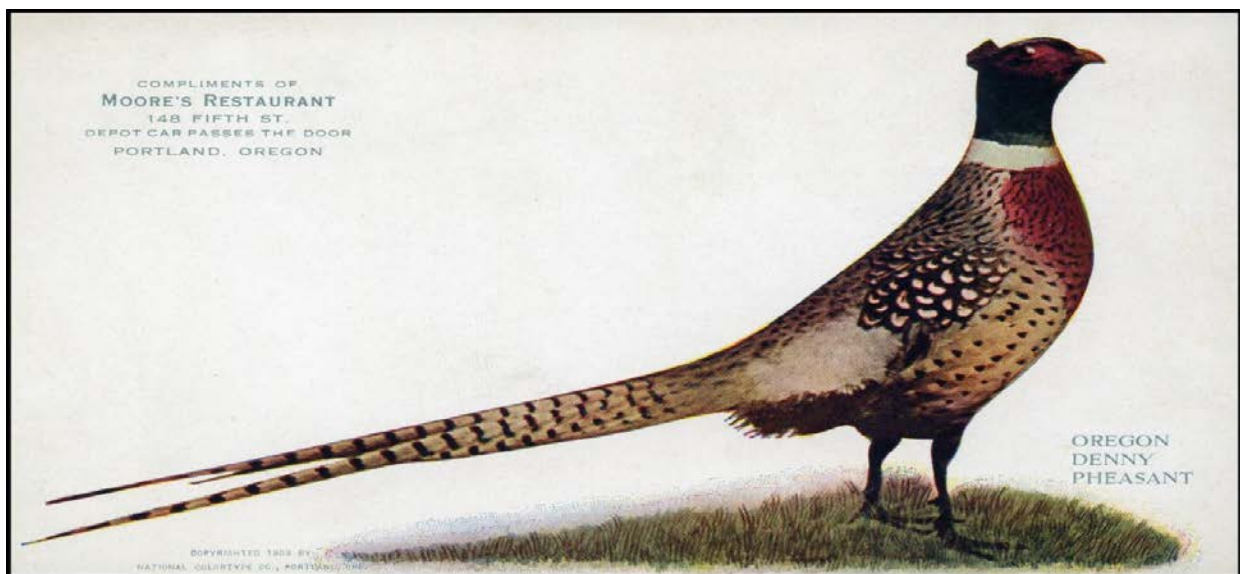
The Hammer's would run the lunch counter until the late 1960s or early 1970s. According to John Leamy, former Corbett resident, "The state bought this property in about 1972 from Mrs. Hammer. My brother Pat and I bought the building from them for a dollar and tore it down." About a decade later, around 1983, Mrs. Hammer had passed away.

**Editor's Note: Information on the Nelson Ross Family comes from the book Sons and Daughters of the Pioneers of East Multnomah County, Volume 2, published in 1972 by the East Multnomah County Pioneer Association.**

# Pheasants in Oregon

By Steve King, composing and editing by James Bennett

The ring-necked pheasant was introduced into Oregon from China in 1881. Judge Owen Denny (1838-1900) and his wife Gertrude (1838-1900) are responsible for probably the most successful introduction of a game bird into North America. During 1880-1884, Judge Denny was the US Counsel General in Shanghai, the top US diplomat post in China. His first shipment of pheasants during 1880 to Portland was a failure as most of the 60 birds perished during the shipment.



The Oregon Denny Pheasant was used to advertise Moore's Restaurant.

An advertisement for "PHEASANT CLEANING WORKS". On the left, a cartoon illustration shows a man in a suit and a woman in a dress sitting at a table with a turkey, with the text "Thanksgiving to Cleaned-in-time". Below this is a paragraph of text: "Our patrons are thankful that they have received the benefit of our experience in dry cleaning. Our methods have attained that degree of perfection that cannot be surpassed. We are thankful to be able to prove it. 'A trial will convince you'". Below the text is a circular logo for "THE DRY CLEANING ASSOCIATION OF PORTLAND OREGON" with "PHEASANT CLEANERS" in the center. At the bottom left, it says "Play Safe Look for this Emblem". On the right, an illustration shows three pheasants on a rock, with the text "GUARDING HIS INTERESTS AS WE GUARD OURS". At the bottom right, the business name and address are listed: "PHEASANT CLEANING WORKS 1224 SANDY BOULEVARD PORTLAND, OREGON Phone Tabor 4483".

The Pheasant was used in advertising for Pheasant Cleaners.

The next year, another group of pheasants was successful - 29 live birds arrived in Portland, followed by 48 more in 1882. The release site was near the family farm (Peterson Butte in Linn County). Peterson Butte is a 1,439 foot hill southwest of Lebanon and about 10 miles east of Albany. It is named for Asa Peterson, a very early settler in the area that took a Donation Land Claim that included the butte.

The Willamette Valley was perfect habitat for the ring-necked pheasant. With no other major bird occupying the niche the pheasant found for food, its population exploded. Complaints from farmers about the nuisance bird soon ran high. The first shooting season was opened in 1893, with an estimated take of 30,000 birds. The next year's "harvest" was estimated between 250-300 thousand birds.

As a tribute to Judge Denny, a concerted effort was started to call the bird the "Denny Pheasant." The name stuck for a while, but reverted to China or Chinese pheasant and finally the ring-necked pheasant, which the bird is known by today. The bird is abundant in agricultural areas of eastern Oregon. The Willamette Valley population has greatly declined due primarily to changes in agricultural practices. Pheasant populations abound in other agricultural states, such as Iowa and the Dakotas. During hunting season each year, harvest of the birds run into the millions.



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