

Robert Childs collection continues to yield rare Mount Hood history

By Lloyd Musser

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Last month in this space we shared some of the photographs and history of Welches area gleaned from the donated collection of the late Robert Childs. The response to the column and depth of the collection inspired us to share more history from the collection this month. First in response to a reader's question about the last covered bridge in the Mount Hood area. The collection includes photographs of many bridges in the area circa 1910-1928. We shared a photograph of the covered bridge on the Zigzag River on Lolo Pass road. We quoted from George Henderson's book, *Lonely on the Mountain*, that this was the last local covered bridge when it was destroyed when a truck hit it in 1943. The reader asked about the Brightwood covered bridge. An article in the Clackamas County News, on April 5, 1931 reports the Brightwood covered bridge was swept away with a man standing on the bridge. The man was saved when a neighbor threw him a rope. The John McIntyre home, which was close by, was also lost in the swollen waters. The Zigzag River bridge in Rhododendron was swept away also.

There were a lot of cabins being built in the 1920's around Welches. We know the lumber for these buildings came from small portable sawmills scattered from Government Camp to Alder Creek. The roofing material of choice was cedar shakes or shingles. The Faubion family made and sold cedar shakes as a source of income, but they did not have a shingle mill. An unlabeled photograph of a nice shake and shingle mill in the Childs collection led us to research where such a mill might have been located. One line in the Clackamas County News in 1922 says C. H. Tawney is very busy in his shingle mill at Welches. Tawney's operated the Mountain Home resort and Edw. Roberts the photographer lived close by. We therefore believe the shingle mill was located near the same area in Welches and operated by Clyde Tawney.

Edw. W. Roberts liked to photograph places of interest in the Welches area including forest scenes like lakes, river, waterfalls, rock formations and the aftermath of forest fires. An interesting photo exhibit would compare these 1920 photographs with 2020 photographs of the same scene. Someone had the foresight to have Jennie Welch label many of the photographs with names and places. One such photograph of a man, an automobile, a tent and a lake is labeled: Camping at Clear Lake with our new tent. To our amazement we found a receipt from Willamette Tent and Awning Co. to Walter Burrell for a 10' x 14' wall tent that cost \$23.40. The seller is none other than Henry Wemme, the public-spirited businessman that in 1915 purchased the Barlow Road, removed the toll and donated the road to the state of Oregon. This donation led to the creation of the Mt. Hood Loop Highway and eventually US 26.

Visit the Museum's Facebook page, [mthoodmuseum](#), to see more of the photographs from the Robert Childs Collection. Send comments or questions to email: info@mthoodmuseum.org