

ties. The number of Oregonians working in manufacturing skyrocketed by almost 400 percent in the 1880s. Lumber mills benefited because of the need for railroad ties and trestles. Woolen mills, flour mills, and railroad repair shops often followed the lumber mills. Numerous spur lines carried freight trade farther into previously isolated areas.

When the transcontinental lines were completed, more immigrants from the eastern United States and Europe began arriving in Oregon. Both the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific railroads sold property along their routes to settlers and others who would eventually need to use the railroads to ship their products. The railroads dispensed countless acres of land at reasonable prices, and Oregon's population grew from 90,000, in 1870, to over 413,000, in 1900.

THE STAGECOACH

Early Oregonians also traveled by stagecoach, a type of four-wheeled, covered wagon used to carry passengers, goods, and mail on an established route and schedule. The



Lilly Wilson Curtis labeled this photograph "My Fast Stagecoach Ride".
The coach apparently ended up with a broken wheel.

stagecoach had strong springs and was generally drawn by four horses or mules. Other vehicles used in the coach line were buckboards, dead-axle wagons, surplus Army ambulances, and celerity (or mud) coaches. Stage-line owners selected the most efficient vehicle based upon the load to be carried, road conditions, and weather.

Widely used before and after the introduction of the railway system, the coaches made regular trips between designated stations, traveling at an average of five miles per hour and covering sixty or seventy miles per day. The term "stage" originally referred to the distance between stations on a route. The coach would travel the entire route in stages, as a fresh team of horses would be waiting at each station, to rest, water, or feed the spent horses. This allowed the coach to continue with no delay. Over time, the word stage came to refer to the coach, itself.

An interesting tidbit from Tom Coon, a one-time stagecoach driver: *During long trips, the coach would stop, at intervals, so the passengers could relieve themselves. The women would head for the bushes on one side of the coach and the men would go in the opposite direction.*

By the time of the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, in 1905, less than 50 years after statehood, the frontier era had passed. Railroads had become the preferred method of travel; most of the feuding on the eastern lands had ended; and cattle and sheep grazed peacefully on fenced-in range. In spring, the fertile Willamette Valley burst with fruit blossoms, and the river cities bustled with trade and industry.

Ben Holladay, who was born in Kentucky in 1819, moved from Missouri to California in 1852 to operate 2,670 miles of stage lines. In 1861, he won a postal contract to Salt Lake City, Utah, and established the Overland Stage Route. He acquired the Pony Express in 1862. The "Stagecoach King," as he became known, added six more routes and eventually sold them to Wells Fargo, in 1866, for \$1.5 million. He built a transportation empire that included steamships and railroads.



Curtis family portrait, bottom row: William, Charity, Georgena, and Florence, second row: Ellsworth, Seymour, Alice, and Ethel Back row: Dale Chester and Jay



Curtis home in Canada

Barn near the home in Canada (Photo Credit unknown)