

INFORMATION SOURCES

Louie Simpson's North Bend

North Bend Between the World Wars: 1919-1941

L.J.: The Uncommon Life of Louis Jerome Simpson

Vern Horst, Pioneer and Grandad of United Air Lines

Coos Historical & Maritime Museum

BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTH BEND

Asa Simpson - sea captain, shipbuilder, lumberman - built a sawmill and shipyard in the mid 1850's at the north bend of the Coos Bay. Most famous of the 55 vessels built here (1858-1903) was the Western Shore, a 3-masted "Oregon clipper" that sailed between Portland and Liverpool in a record time of 101 days in 1876. The operation grew into a company town with the economy based on the natural resources of timber, coal and fish.

Louis Simpson, Asa's 21-year-old son, took over management in 1899. He purchased the townsite of Yarrow, added it to his father's lands and incorporated the City of North Bend in 1903. His goal was to imitate San Francisco.

Boomtown speculation reigned from 1903-07. Factories, businesses, offices and homes replaced scrub land. Early town life was raw, reflecting the coastal frontier. Townsfolk countered by organizing church and civic groups. Concrete structures, offering more fire resistance, became popular in the 1920's.

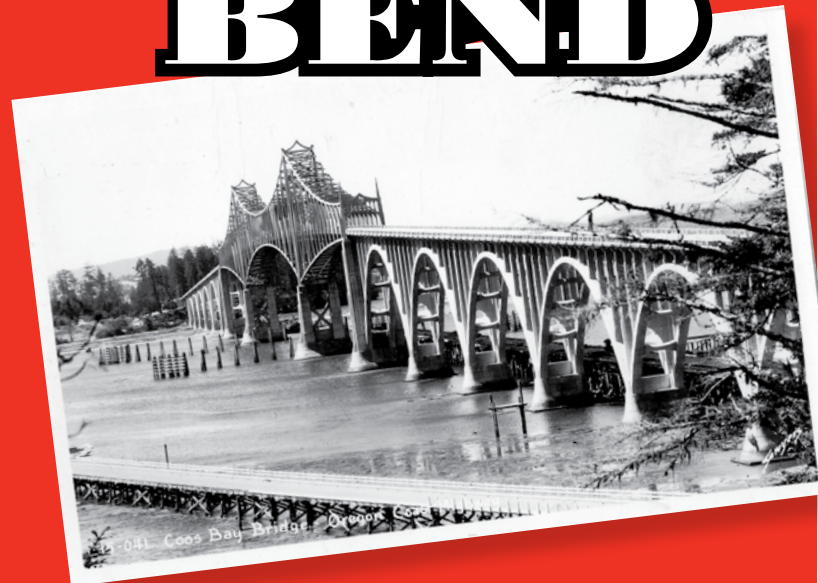
Isolated by difficult terrain, the citizens relied on the waterways to carry cargo and passengers to points on the bay or sloughs. Ocean-going ships navigated the treacherous Coos Bay bar to access other ports.

"Better Roads" was the cry once the automobile replaced horse and carriage. Closer ties to Oregon's interior came in 1916 with the first rail line and in 1936 with the opening of the highway bridge. Both brought increased commercial development and tourism.

Vern Horst, aviation pioneer, resided here, had numerous air and land transportation enterprises in other cities, and established the first West Coast air mail route, flying between Los Angeles and Seattle. The Kruse and Banks shipyard built wooden vessels for World War I and II military efforts. From the 1950's through the 1970's industrial activity focused on the sawmill and pulp operations of national corporations. Pony Village Shopping Center, the Oregon coast's first covered mall, opened in 1960.

Nearly 10,000 citizens now live in "the city that believes in itself." The future may differ from the past, but North Benders remain proud of their town and history.

NORTH BEND



Self-Guided Walking TOURS



Top photo:
McCULLOUGH BRIDGE

Bottom photo:
HOTEL NORTH BEND
(Each listed in National Register of Historic Places)

to Historic Points of Interest

BRIDGE AREA LOOP

A SIMPSON PARK

Part of land bought by Asa M. Simpson in 1855. Simpson heirs deeded city about 50 acres in 1916. Property divided by Hwy 101 completion in 1936. Considered city park from earliest days of North Bend (1903). Site of early ball field. Used as auto camp 1920's-1940's. Variety of old conifers including sequoia. See also Ferry Road Park.

B CITY SIGN OVER HIGHWAY 101 (1936)

One of last legal neon signs over state highway and source of local pride. Note supports reminiscent of McCullough Bridge.

C NORTH BEND INFORMATION CENTER

(c 1957) Formerly North Bend Chamber of Commerce. Information about local and statewide attractions, events, lodging, etc.

D COOS HISTORICAL & MARITIME MUSEUM

(1957) Built to house Coos Curry Historical Society's collections. Plans underway for new waterfront building in Coos Bay.

E MERCI BOXCAR (1949)

Narrow gauge French rail car known as "forty & eight" from use in World War 1 to carry 40 men or 8 horses. In appreciation for U.S. aid after WWII French people gave each state a decorated gift-filled car. Oregon's came to North Bend 2006. Restored by American Legion's "Forty & Eight" Society.



Park pavilion

F McCULLOUGH BRIDGE (1936)

Last of five coast bridges to complete the Roosevelt Highway (US 101). Was depression era WPA project, cost over \$2,000,000, employed hundreds, length 5,888 feet, center height about 150 feet. Originally Coos Bay Bridge, renamed 1947 for its designer Conde B. McCullough.

G SWING RAILWAY BRIDGE (1915)

One of several that Southern Pacific built to connect this area to Willamette Valley. First through trains arrived in 1916.

H FERRY ROAD PARK

Originally part of larger Simpson property gift, later divided by Hwy 101. From 1902 to early 1920's had pavilion to host civic and social events. Old growth conifers and aged myrtlewood trees.

I COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

* HANIS INDIAN VILLAGE: Recognizing territory that was home to Coos Indians and ancestors for thousands of years before land taken and opened to settlement.

* SIMPSON SAWMILL AND SHIPYARD - See Simpson Company Town Site.

J SIMPSON COMPANY TOWN SITE

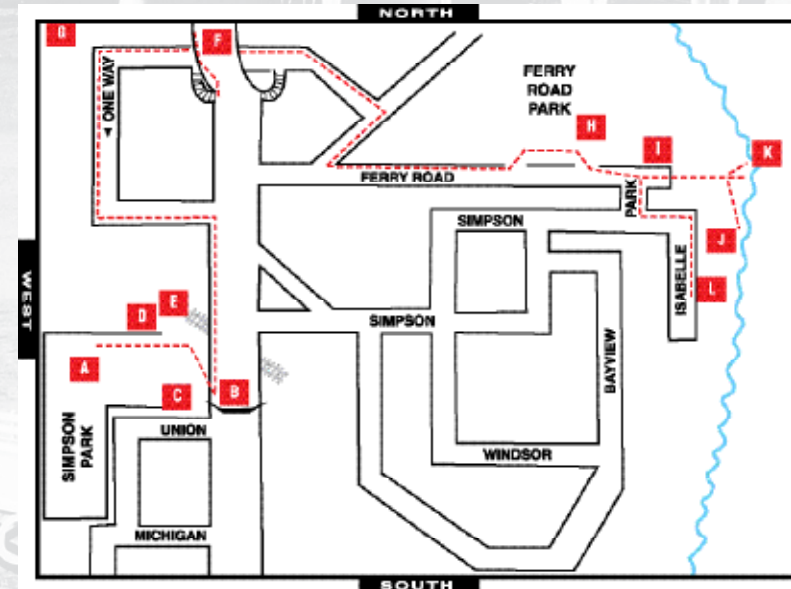
Lumber mill dates to circa 1857; shipyard to 1858. See interpretative signage at end of Ferry Road to the right (south). At low tide pilings are only remnant of development.

K FERRY SERVICE (1922-1936)

Before bridge, regular service between North Bend and Glasgow. See signage at end of Ferry Road to the left (north).

L SIMPSON HOME SITE

Asa Simpson build his first house in late 1800's, used when visiting area. 1899-1918 was in-town home for Asa's son Louis and wife Cassie. Burned in 1920. Tudor style (Tower House) rebuilt on site in early 1920's.



NORTH BEND DOWNTOWN ASSN.

www.northbenddowntown.com

CITY OF NORTH BEND

www.northbendcity.org



Produced by:

North Bend Historic Landmark Commission

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NORTH BEND Self-Guided Walking Tour... DOWNTOWN LOOP

Tour includes partial listing of historical buildings / sites

LEGEND: ■ Existing Structure ● Site Only

1 NORTH BEND CITY HALL (1939)

When opened, housed most municipal services, including City Council Chamber, administrative offices, fire and police departments. Later city library annex added. Library and fire now separate buildings.

2 ECKHOFF BUILDING site (pre 1900)

Town pioneer did combination home and commercial building in "San Francisco's Victorian style," reflecting California's influence on many early structures. (Now car sales lot.)

3 HOTEL NORTH BEND (1922)

Designed by J.E. Tournellotte, was grandest building in city, concrete lessened fire danger, provided 68 rooms, most modern conveniences, dining facility. Vern Gorst met here with national air line executives in 1930, suggested and helped form United Air Lines. First National Bank of North Bend (Sherman/Virginia) closed temporarily 1933-34, city minted myrtlewood money during crisis. (After remodeling, reopened 2009 as housing complex with two storefronts.)

4 IOOF BUILDING (1923)

Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodge hall on second floor, also professional offices, living quarters, and store fronts. Hall redone as ballroom. (Still storefronts and living quarters.)

5 WHOLESALE GROCERY WAREHOUSE(1906)

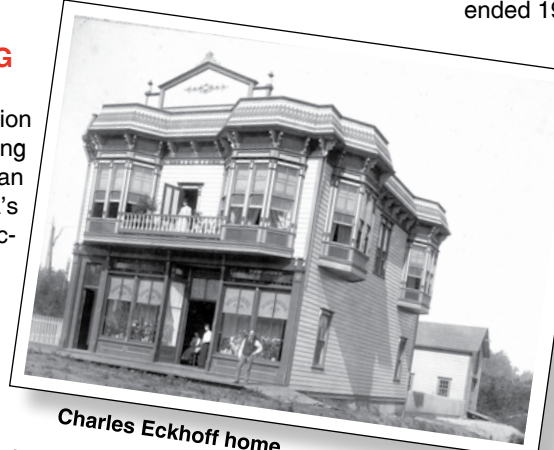
Only remaining building of early bustling waterfront, wooden structure on pilings. Many uses - fish cannery, building supply area, ticket office for Breakwater, steamer that sailed Portland - San Francisco route. (Now Kyle Building.)

6 WATERFRONT (early 1900's)

Boardwalk gives view of area once busy industrial hub of city with shipping, fishing, and passenger ship activity, also mills, factories, shipyards, related ventures. Pilings for city dock still visible. Gorst flew passengers in hydroplane to Marshfield (Coos Bay) starting 1913, could have been America's first actual air route, but no written schedule printed.

7 CUTLIP'S ICE CREAM PLANT (1924)

First and largest ice cream factory in area, slogan "Made Its Way the Way It's Made," discontinued operations 1979. (Now stands empty.)



Charles Eckhoff home

8 SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRAIN DEPOT site (1916)

After railway bridge over Coos Bay, passenger service began to Willamette Valley and beyond, typical wooden terminal, separate waiting rooms for men and women. Rail service ended 1953, building demolished 1962. (Now State offices)

9 BRICK BLOCK (1909)

Impressive first view of city for passengers arriving by train, housed First National Bank, U.S. post office, hardware store, professional offices. Hitch rings for horses still imbedded in curbstone. (Now Beauty & Beast Antiques anchors building.)

10 GORST & KING BUS TERMINAL (1924)

Service started 1912 with passenger cars, later bench-filled room with snack bar was indoor place to wait for local and/or Greyhound busses. G&K vehicles left every 30 minutes for downtown Marshfield (Coos Bay) via Skyline or Waterfront route. Intercity service ended 1964. (Now Engles Furniture.)

11 WINSOR BUILDING (c. 1903)

Often called Castle building because of grandeur and Castle Restaurant in first floor corner. Third floor and penthouse, now removed, housed the Commercial Club, early civic booster association. (Now storefronts and apartments.)

12 KOLTES BUILDING (1932)

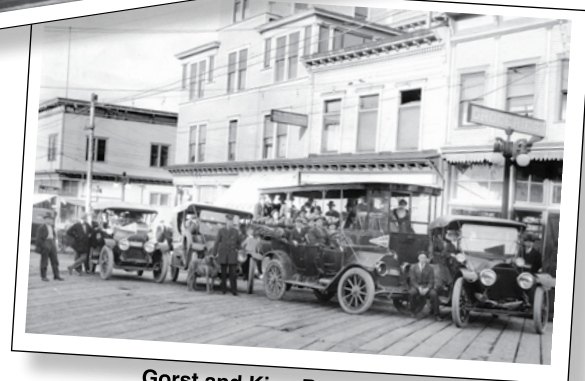
First Dunham Grocery, later Safeway. 1955 became first Troutman's Emporium, only chain store born in North Bend. Before dissolution, Emporium department store corporation one of the largest of its kind in Pacific Northwest. (Now American Home Furnishings.)

13 LIBERTY THEATER (1924)

Originally silent movie palace, today home of The Little Theatre on the Bay (LTOB), Oregon's second oldest amateur theater company. Presents wide range of programs, including famed Little Ole Opry featuring country music in July.



Winsor Building



Gorst and King Busses

14 PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH (1924)

Planned as community and worship center, bungalow style church with craftsman interior featuring local woods. Design error extended porch /steps into street. City granted variance, narrowing Union for one block. Congregation moved to Pony Village area 1967. (Now Unity by the Bay.)

15 AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING (1922)

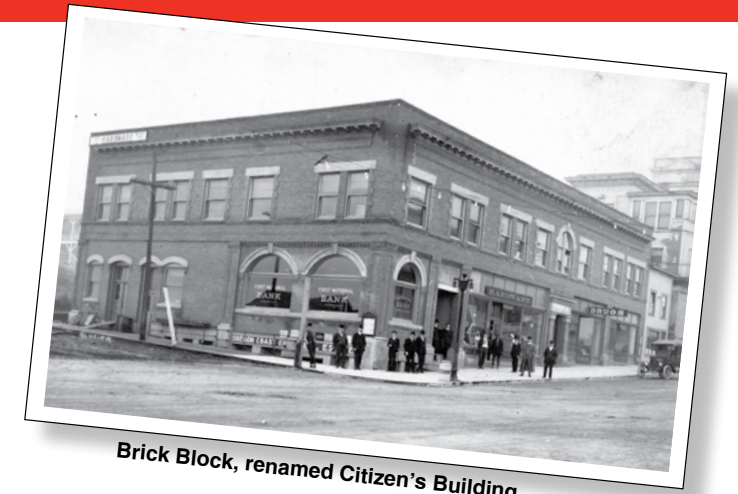
80' x 100' dance floor site of many early well-attended community events helping Legion pay off mortgage, but depression caused shortage of funds. Carl Golder purchased in 1934 for auto supply store, family continues ownership. (Now art studio annex.)

16 HOLLISTER HOUSE (1913)

Billiards room in home of prominent local attorney, played important role in cultural development of city. Mrs. Hollister offered it as first public library. (Now North Bend Chapel.)

17 KEIZER BROS. HOSPITAL (1923)

Drs. Phil and Russell Keizer built the city's second hospital which featured medical and dental offices, as well as living quarters for nurses. Closed 1974 when Bay Area Hospital opened. (Now Coos County courthouse annex.)



Brick Block, renamed Citizen's Building

18 BANK OF OREGON (1903-04)

Originally on corner of Sherman and Virginia, building moved one block west, turned one quarter to accommodate construction of North Bend Hotel 1921. One of city's oldest structures, closely linked with Louis J. Simpson, founder and first mayor of North Bend, principal member of bank's Board of Directors. (Now storefronts and living quarters.)

