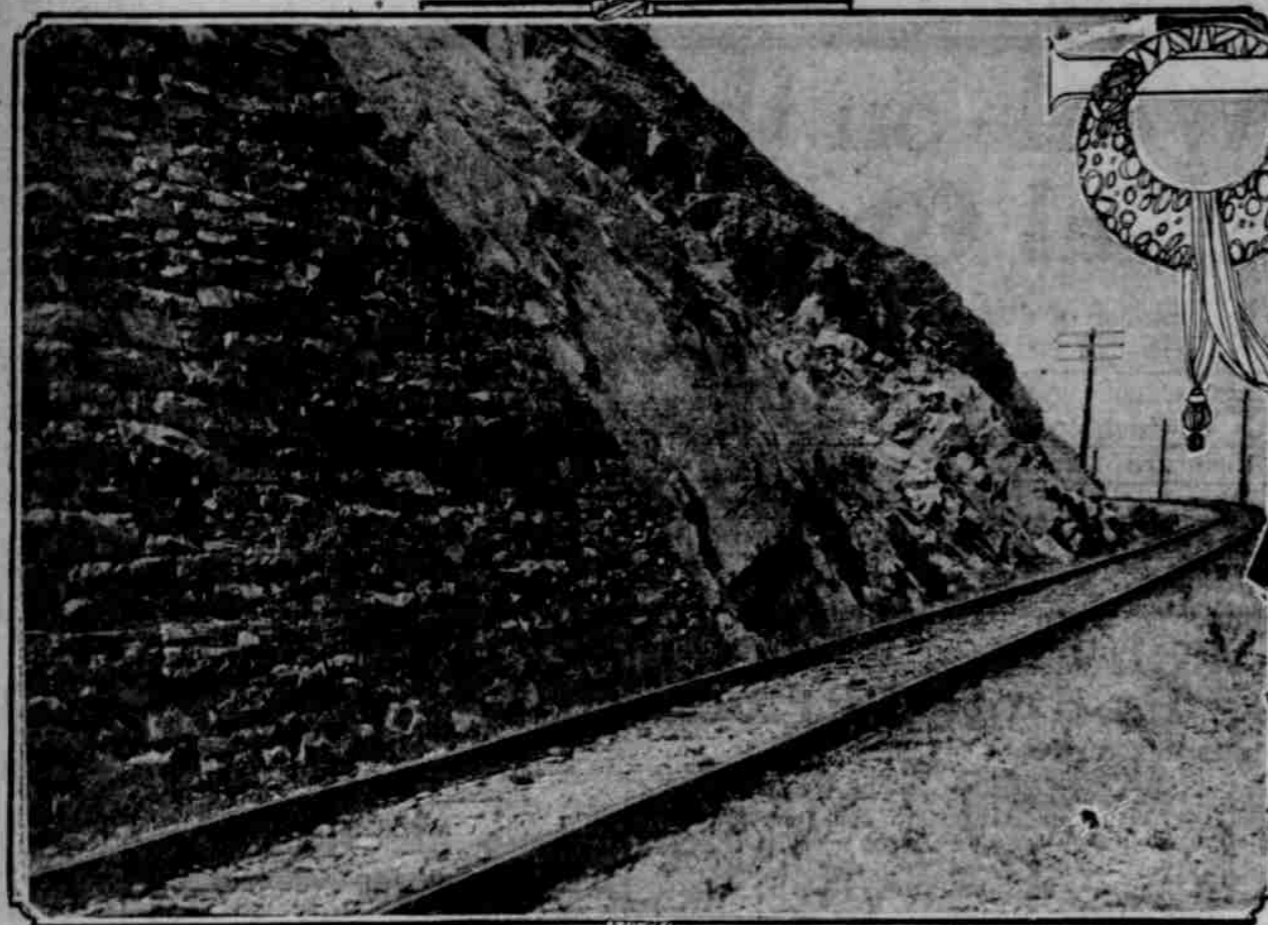


CONVICTS BEGIN WORK ON SCENIC ROAD AROUND SHELL ROCK

Barrier, Which Has Long Been Impassable to Wagons or Automobiles, Is to Be Removed in Building the New Columbia River Highway Connecting Hood River and Multnomah Counties.



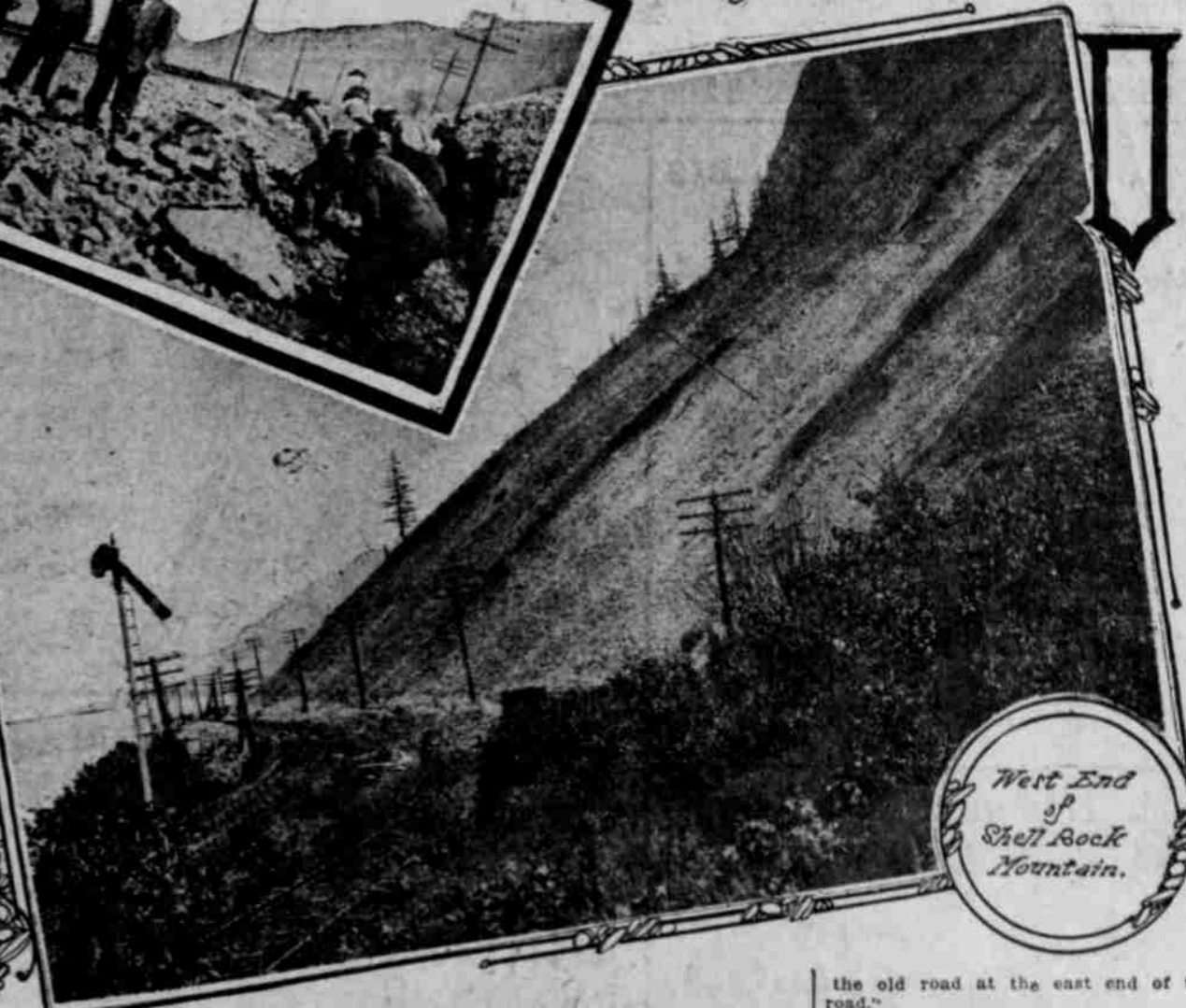
Point where Road Must Pass through Cut of Solid Rock.



Governor and Hood River Officials See Convicts Begin First Work.



Building Stretch of Road near Wyeth



West End of Shell Rock Mountain.

HOOD RIVER, Or., June 1.—(Special.)—Because it was the initial work done on the new Columbia River highway around Shell Rock Mountain, which has long been an impassable barrier to a wagon or automobile on the road connecting Hood River and Multnomah counties, the beginning made by the 15 convicts at Camp Benson on the west end of the towering mass of sliding stones Thursday afternoon will be historic. The slogan of the citizens of Hood River County, who are eager to see the completion of the scenic highway, is "Make the route to Portland from Hood River passable as soon as possible." A few local men have been using their efforts toward securing the highway for the past three years. C. K. Marshall and W. L. Clark have spent their time and money in making personal inspections of and securing data for the right of way of the proposed route. The local business men as a whole and a majority of valley orchardists have become greatly interested in the road since the beginning of the year and are lending it their support.

The convicts who have been at Camp Benson, named for S. Benson, the donor of the \$10,000 fund to be used in the Shell Rock construction during the coming year, began their task without ceremony Thursday afternoon. The crew has been at the scene of operations for three weeks, awaiting an agreement between the O-W. R. & N. and the county. With the exception of a dispute relative to a point at the east end of the mountain, where a solid rock overhangs the railroad right of way, and as to liability for damages that may be sustained by passengers over the railroad and travelers using the highway around Shell Rock, the county officials and the railroad have come to terms. These details remain unsettled. However, it was thought advisable to begin work at once and settle the disputed matters later.

Road Will Parallel Railway.

The route of the way around Shell Rock Mountain will parallel the railroad track. A plan was proposed whereby the railroad would move its tracks over the water of the Columbia by means of a trestle. However, because of the depth of the water at this point and the necessary expense that



Setting First Grade Stake.

At Foot of Shell Rock, where Columbia Road will Pass.

Photo by Slocum's Book and Art Store, Hood River.

would be entailed for the work, the railroad company refused to concede this point. The river a few feet from the bank here is said to be 125 feet deep. Several years ago a carload of rails was overturned at this point and dumped into the river. A diver who was secured to reclaim the lost rails declared that the stream had cut far into the side of the cliff, and the railroad was built on a jutting cliff.

Shell Rock Mountain is declared by scientists to be a glacial moraine. The heap of loose stones, which in the winter time, when covered by snow, is a source of great annoyance to the railroad company, as it covers the tracks with slides, is said to be the blanket over tons of ice.

Although it is known to but few people, the state attempted more than a quarter of a century ago to build a road across the Cascades by the Columbia River route, and was thwarted by Shell Rock Mountain. Indeed, the road was completed as far as Herman Creek, beyond Bonneville. The remaining walls of the old highway may be seen today, on the side of the mountain, several hundred feet above the right of way of the railroad track. However, it was a difficult pass, and slides of the loose stones have de-

stroyed all traces of it in some places. At the west end of the mountain and on the other side the railroad company has made use of the old right of way. Where the old road still remains intact it would be passable were the bushes that have sprung up in the roadbed during the last 25 years cut away.

Pioneer Recalls First Work.

James Wallace, who came to this city with his parents in 1875 and who is now janitor of the Commercial Club, spent three years at work on the old State road, which was built under the supervision of the late John Marden, of The Dalles. "We began work on the top of the divide between the Mosier hills and this valley," said Mr. Wallace, "and for three years continued the construction of the highway. In that length of time the highway was completed to a point near Herman Creek, beyond Bonneville.

"The road was good around Shell Rock and I have driven around there many times. The road was used as a mail route between here and Boise, Idaho, before the railroad was built. When the railroad was constructed, the right of way of the road was used in all of the points difficult of passage. The removal of loose stone at Shell Rock caused slides which obliterated

the old road at the east end of the road."

Settlers Contribute Liberally.

The new road beyond the West Side of the mountain will use the old right of way of the railroad track for about half a mile and construction work here will be comparatively light. The Wyeth road district has available from a special road tax levied last year about \$7500, which is being expended by the district on a new highway to connect with the stretch of road around shell Rock. Although the Valley between Wyeth and Cascade Locks is sparsely settled, the citizens there are aiding the construction of the highway in every way possible. They voted the highest road tax in the county last year, and nearly every male citizen in the district has been busy working on the roads. While the special road tax struck the railroad, Western Union Telegraph Company and the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company pretty hard, it laid a burden on the citizens, but they declare that they are willing to use more of their funds to see the road completed.

The construction in the Wyeth district, where Supervisor Hendricks is at work, is comparatively easy, for the route lies over a bed of loose stones and the only work of the men is in leveling and crowning the right of way, which will be covered later with an 18-inch layer of cinders.