



Southern Oregon chapter National Railway Historical Society
P.O. Box 622 Medford, Oregon 97501
Newsletter for July, 2011



Colonel Robert G. Shaw.
Commanding 54th Mass. Regiment.

“Before this war began, many of my regiment had never seen a Negro. Now the roads are choked with the dispossessed. We fight for men and women whose poetry is not yet written but which will presently be as enviable and as renowned as any”.

54th Mass. Regiment.

54th Mass. Reg. was organized in March, 1863 at Camp Meigs, Readville, Massachusetts by Robert Gould Shaw, twenty-six year old member of a prominent Boston abolitionist family. Shaw had earlier served in the Seventh New York National Guard and the Second Massachusetts Infantry, and was appointed colonel of the Fifty-fourth in February 1863 by Massachusetts governor John A. Andrew. As one of the first black units organized in the northern states, the Fifty-fourth was the object of great interest and curiosity, and its performance would be considered an important indication of the possibilities surrounding the use of blacks in combat. The regiment was composed primarily of free blacks from throughout the north, particularly Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Amongst its recruits were Lewis N. Douglass and Charles Douglass, sons of the famous ex-slave and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass.

Greetings from the Plush NRHS Editorial Offices- Bringing the chapter news to the History starved massesRic Walch Editor, Home 772-6255 or cell 840-4380 engmgr@medfab.com.

July. Activities- *The following is our july. activities schedule, this schedule will appear monthly to help remind everyone of our monthly meetings and any special planned activities.*

10 July- *Park Open*

12 July. *7:00 P.M. @ Model Railroad Clubhouse- NRHS membership meeting.*

24 July *-Park Open*

25 July. 5:30 P.M. @ Model Railroad Clubhouse-*Park committee meeting.*

26 July. 7:00 P.M. @ Model Railroad Clubhouse- *NRHS board meeting, forging the future with steel from the past....*

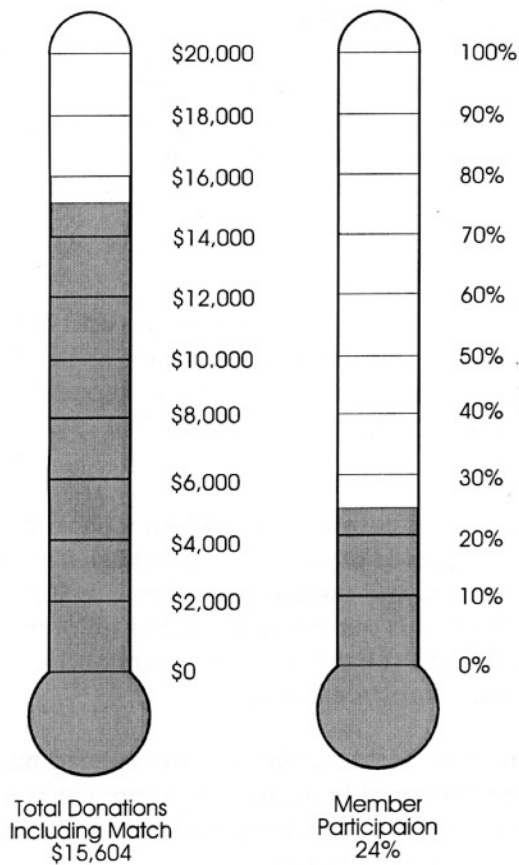
FINAL PUSH TO COMPLETE MEDCO #4



The end of this project is at hand and we are totally committed to put #4 back on tracks. This has been a long difficult project but we are drawing ever closer to attaining what many deemed an impossible goal. We are determined to restore this old Willamette and put her back on tracks as a living tribute to the loggers and trainmen that worked their way into legend in the Medco timber tracts. Please do what you can to help us finish funding this project and accept the thanks of us all in advance.

Board of Directors
Southern Oregon Chapter
National Railway Historical Society

Medco No. 4 Fund Drive Update



It has been three months since our fund drive was initiated. We are now at about 78% of our goal with about 24% of our members responding. Donations to-date, not including matching funds, total \$7,802. Chapter member donations total \$4,753 and varied from \$10 to \$1,000. Donations from non-members totaled \$2,925 and varied from \$25 to \$1,500. An additional— \$124 was collected in donation jars at events like the National Train Day in Ashland and the Railroad Park run days.

We have made impressive progress in the last month and are close to meeting our financial goal, but member participation is still lagging. In order to help us reach both of our goals, the deadline for the matching funds offer has been extended to August 1st to take advantage of the matching funds offer. We can meet our goals if every one chips in.

Following are some comments included with recently received donations:

- 0 “In honor of the 100% goal! \$10.00 for the Medco #4 fund. Keep it resurrecting.”

- 0 “As a child during WWII and into the late 1940s. I saw the No. 4 and any other Medco locomotives hauling logs on the tracks east of Butte Falls, as the railroad pass along one side of my of my father’s farm. Perhaps I even rode on it; my mother said that the engineer would occasionally give rides to local children.

I am pleased to help finance the restoration effort. Please thank of me the chapter member who is matching donations for the boiler rehabilitation.”

Remember, donations must be postmarked on or before August 1, 2011 to qualify for the matching funds. Every donation and every dollar counts. No donation is too small or too large.

Lost Railroads in Jackson County Project- Everyone is well versed of the histories of the Southern Pacific and Rogue River Valley Railroad in Jackson County, less documented is the Medco Logging Railroad but have you ever heard of the Bullis Logging Railroad or the Gold Hill Railroad and Lumber Company? Last year we began working with the Jacksonville woodlands association to help develop the Bullis Rail Trail and recover artifacts (now on display in the CB&O at the park) and the history of this little known logging railroad. We had also started researching the history of the GHRR&LC and have recently made significant progress. It is our intent to publish a comprehensive history of the Jackson County logging railroads. Anyone that would like to help with this research please let me know.

Projects

1- Bullis Logging Railroad —We want to survey and map the line from the end of the RRVRR in Jacksonville to as far up Jackson creek as we can determine the line ran and research additional history of its brief operation. We will also continue to support and document the Jacksonville Woodlands association's efforts on the Bullis Rail Trail development.

2- Gold Hill Railroad and lumber Company This operation existed for a short time starting in 1910 and was almost lost to history, thanks to efforts of researchers from the Southern Oregon Chapter NRHS, Gold Hill Museum and the Southern Oregon Historical Society we are recovering a wealth of information. It is our intent to gather all of the operational history of this line that we can locate and reestablish the extent and survey the spur lines that ran up Kane, Foot and Sardine Creek watersheds.

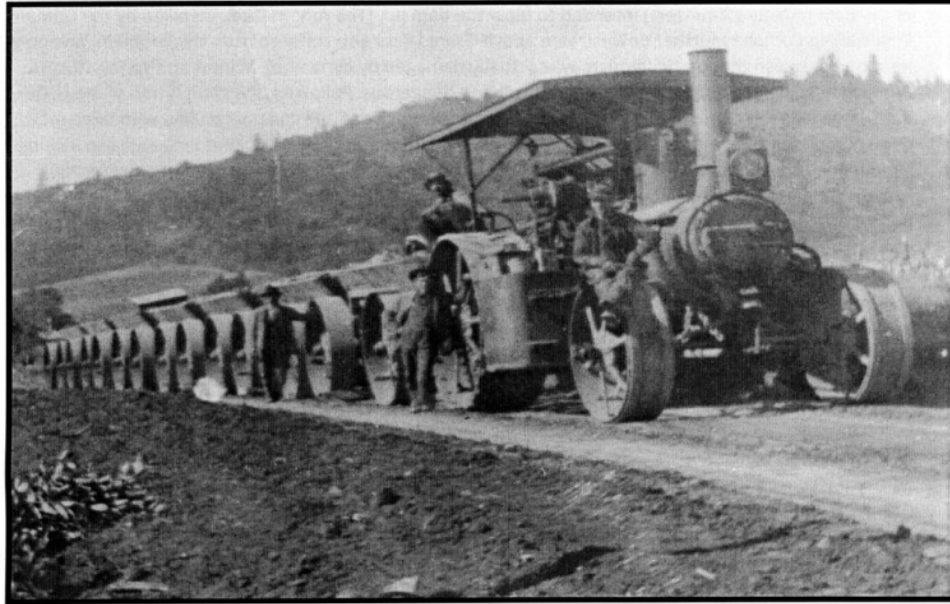
3- Medco Logging Railroad- We are initiating an effort to interview and record oral histories of any ex Medco employees that were involved in timber operations that have any firsthand accounts of the Medco rail operations. We want to compile these firsthand accounts and save them to add to our existing Medco database.

We are interested in interviewing any and all Ex Medco Logging Railroad- Train Crews, Mechanics, Maintenance or support personnel. Please contact The Southern Oregon Chapter NRHS @ P. O. Box 622 Medford, Oregon 97501 or 541 -772-6255

Kane Creek's Braden Mine and Gold Ray Dam

condensed from information researched and contributed by Kerby Jackson and the Gold Hill Museum.

The "caves" referenced in the Mail Tribune that the Kane Creek Branch of the GHRR&LC was built to turned out to be the Braden hard rock mine. B.A. Knott of Gold Hill located the mine in the Kane Creek drainage area sometime around 1875. Knott began early development of the mine by treating the ore with an arrastre. Following the location by Mr. Knott, the mine went through a succession of early owners including Dr. James Braden for whom the mine was eventually named. The Braden mine was located about a mile and a half up Kane Creek [known in early records as T^hVault Creek for early Dardanelles pioneer William G. T^hVault] and is today on private property. Research shows the major commodities were gold and silver, with traces of arsenic, lead, and copper. In 1900, Braden sold the mine to Dr. Charles R. Ray who later lived in the Tolo area. That turn of the century year the doctor had been sent to Alaska by his wealthy brother, Colonel Frank H. Ray, for the possibility of investing in some Alaskan gold mines. When he found nothing of substantial value, Charles telegraphed his brother and told him that he would be returning home empty handed. Not wishing that



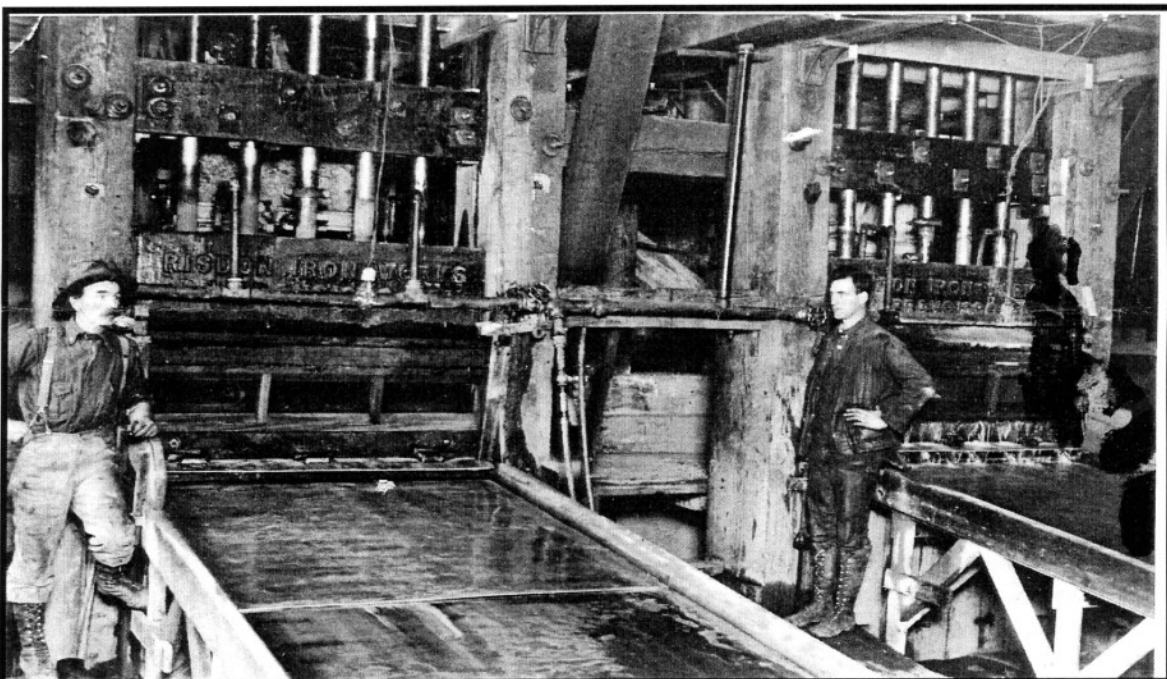
Braden Mine Ore Train

the trip be for nothing, the Colonel persuaded his brother to take a look at a mine in southern Oregon which he had heard about. That mine was the Braden.

By 1902, the Ray brothers had decided that a way to make the mine very profitable would be to deliver electricity to the site. However, at that time, there was no electricity in the immediate vicinity of the mine. Under Oregon's water laws of 1899, the ability to divert and dam water for the purpose of developing hydro-electricity for mining was considered to be a granted right. With no electricity available to purchase, amongst much snickering of the locals who believed that harnessing the mighty Rouge River was impossible, the Ray brothers set out to build their own dam for the purpose of developing power. Initially, the Rays wished to build their dam near the town of Gold Hill, but after the city fathers wanted too much money for a piece of property, they decided to look elsewhere. They were contacted by a local miner named Dan Condor who had a placer mine four miles upstream of Gold Hill, at what was then popularly known as Tolo. Seeing the benefit of the installation of such a dam, Condor immediately entered into a business deal with C.W. Ray. As Frank Ray was an organizer and vice president of the American Tobacco Company, he had no problem raising the capital for the venture and in 1902 he sold stock on the New York Stock Exchange for a company called Condor Water and Power Company to help fund the construction.

The ambitious project got off the ground by autumn 1902 with the construction of a coffer dam to divert the waters of the Rouge in preparation for the construction of the main dam but soon encountered a few slight hitches. According to local legend, after digging the streambed down to bedrock, one of the workmen discovered a rich quartz vein running across the river and it appears that the work crew were somewhat sidetracked by chipping visible gold out of the bedrock. A much larger problem was the discovery of dynamite which had been planted at the work site and the constant concern that opponents

of the dam [mostly gill-netters] intended to blow the dam up. [The Ament Dam, installed by the Golden Drift Mining Company further downstream above Grants Pass also suffered from this problem, and on at least one occasion that particular dam was actually damaged by dynamite]. Winter and spring storms bringing high water also made the work difficult and dangerous. Following the completion of the coffer dam, large logs were secured into cuts made into the bedrock and the gaps were filled with large rocks. Once completed the dam, then known as Ray Gold, was 17 feet high and 350 feet long and also included a mundane fish ladder. Water was drawn out of the north side of the river and used to power a 250 kilovolt generator which had been manufactured by General Electric in 1897. The water turned a series of pulleys at a rate of 360 rpms which in turn pulled on 1600 feet of one and three quarter inch rope which was rigged in such a way to turn the generators. Needless to say, if a rope broke there was no power until it could be spliced back together. In late 1904 electricity flowed for the first time to the Braden Mine, initially a whole 1.5 megawatts worth, but the next year the generators were upgraded to 750 kilovolts. Good businessmen, the Rays soon realized that there was actually more money to be made by supplying electricity to other mines and to nearby towns than they could make from the production of their Braden Mine. It was at that time the Condor Company reorganized under the name Rogue River Electric Company, also advertising telegraph and telephone services. With much grandeur and publicity the town of Medford was connected in 1904. Between 1905 and 1907 the Ray"s company stretched 18 miles worth of electric lines from Tolo to the famous Greenback Mine near the town of Placer and also to the Granite Hill Mine on Louse Creek. By 1905 the 40 stamp mill at the Greenback Mine was powered by electricity. Remnants of some of those original electric lines can still be seen near the site of the Granite Hill. The Rays also built lines into Gold Hill, Grants Pass, Jacksonville, Rogue River, Ashland, and other surrounding communities, not to mention to numerous mines, firmly establishing the development of electricity in Southern Oregon. Less than ten years later the community of Medford, Oregon, used more electricity and had more electric stoves, electric water heaters and electric heaters per capita than any other town in the UNITED STATES. In other words, the entire use of electricity in our region really has its roots tied to the development of the Kane Creek Braden Mine.



Braden Mine Stamp Mill

In the meantime, while some mining was being done at the Braden, it appears that the Rays were much occupied with other projects that placed much of the Braden's development on the back burner. One of their other projects at that time included a stone quarry and a sawmill near the town of Tolo. In 1907 Diller and Kay reported that according to mine manager E. W. Wiljegan, the Braden Mine had been under lease to the Opp Mining Company of Jacksonville for about a year. At that time the greatest reported output of the mine was in excess of \$30,000, which would equate to nearly 1,600 ounces of gold. At that time the equipment at the mine consisted of a 10-stamp mill, one giant crusher, four Johnson concentrating tables, one air compressor and machine drills. The mine ran 24 hours a day with electric power being brought in from the Gold Ray Dam. Despite the tremendous success of that 1907 season, only a "small production" was reported in the first portion of 1908 and by August of that year "Mining American" magazine reported an unexplained shut down at the Braden Mine. The article stated

"The stamps are hung up and the crew discharged. J. W. Opp, manager of the mine, does not state the reasons for suspension of business, but intimates that it is through no fault of the property itself The Braden is one of the oldest quartz mines of the Gold Hill district and has always been a good producer. One year ago, its old mill was torn down and replaced by a larger one. Other improvements were made on the property, and it has been operating for several months on a much larger scale. "

However, this was far from the end of the Braden Mine. By autumn 1909 a crew of ten men was reported working in the mine. By 1913 it was reported that the Braden was one of the most important mines in Jackson County. Equipment at the mine at that time consisted of a 10-stamp mill equipped with a crusher, two 10-foot amalgamation plates, four Johnson vanners and electric engines, one of which was 85 HP and was utilized to supply power to an air compressor. The mine had four levels which were interconnected by raises and winzes.

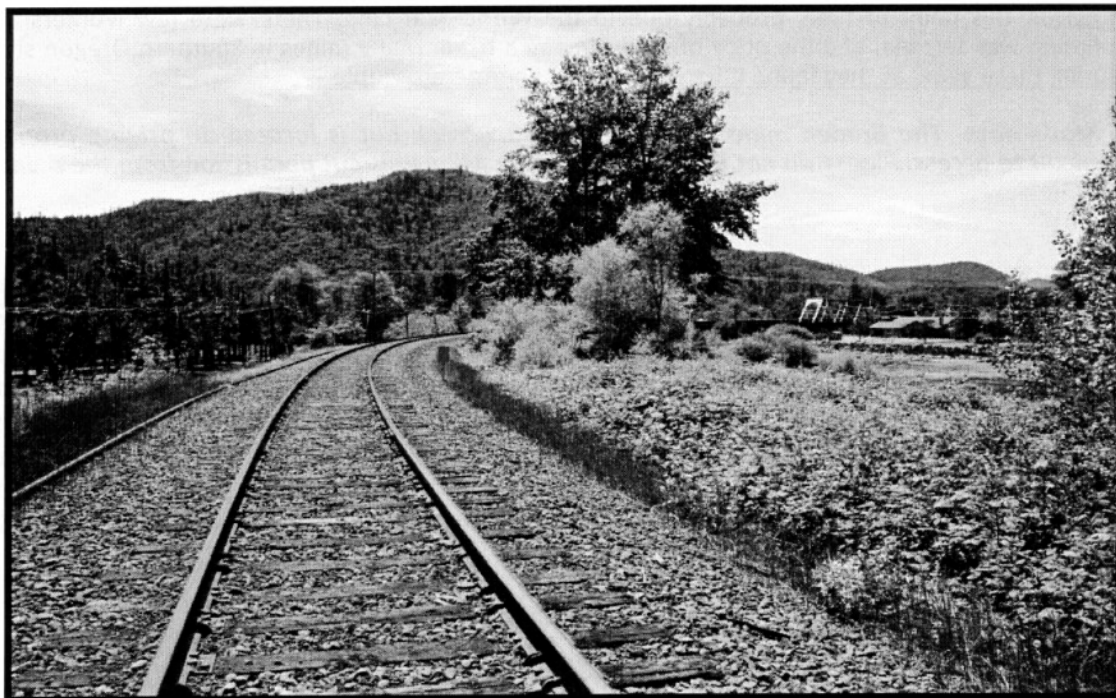
In the summer of 1916 the mill at the Braden was dismantled. It appears that the Braden Mine was shut down at this point of time, probably due to the World War One. There were few workers available, inflation was terrible, and the price of gold remained fixed. Many mines in Southern Oregon shut down during these years as they found it very difficult to operate profitably.

Editor's note- The Braden mine still exists up Kanen creek but is located on private property and difficult to access. Please do not attempt to visit the Mine without permission from the owner.

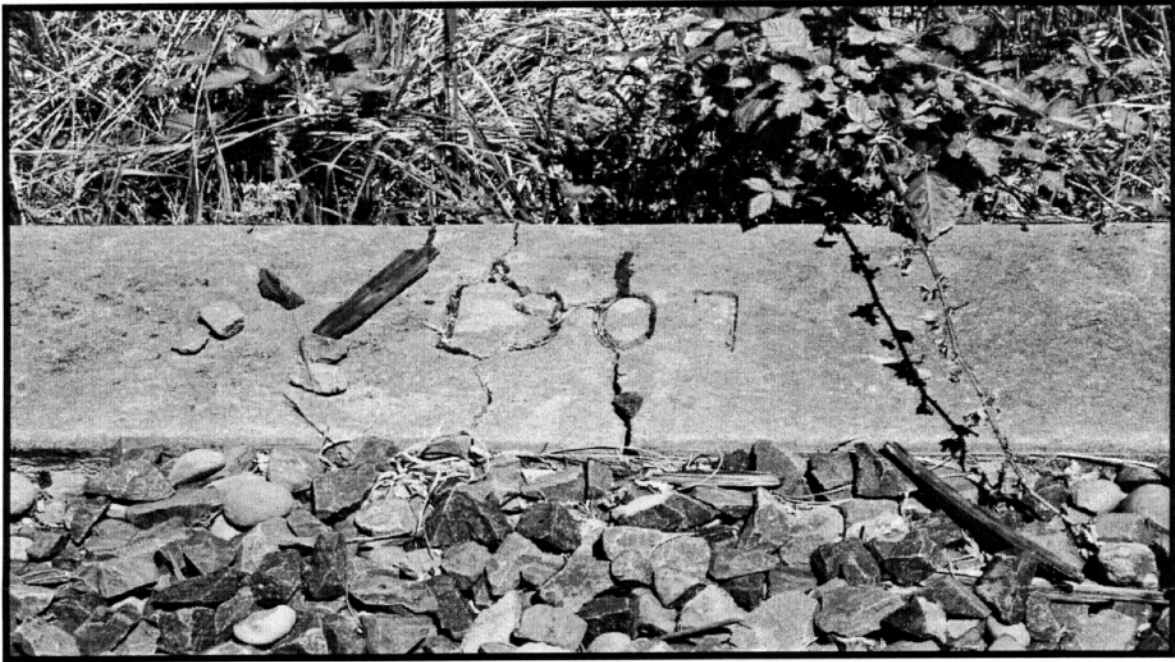
Chavner Junction- The GI-IRR&L left the mainline at Chavner Junction. This junction was located just south of the Rogue River Bridge at gold hill and apparently split to serve both Foothills Creek and Kane Creek. The spur extending up Sardine creek is believed to have been constructed directly from the mill to the headwaters of Sardine Creek. The line from Chavner Junction connected to the mainline and was standard gauge but the line that ran directly from the mill up Sardine creek was believed to be narrow gauge as it did not connect to the main line. It is our intent to survey these spurs as far as possible to establish the extent of operations. If you have Google Earth you can see the junction as it enters the mainline adjacent to the existing tree farm.**Editor**



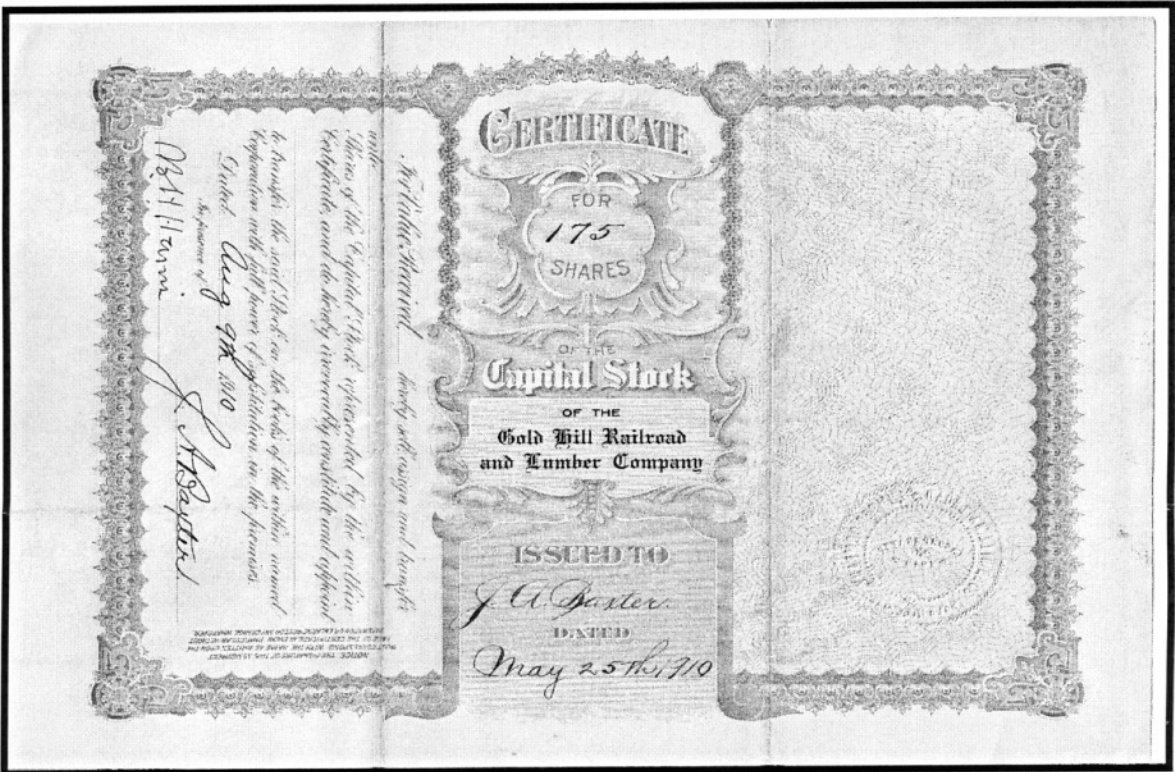
This is where we believe Chavner junction left the mainline just south of the Rogue River Railroad bridge. The irrigation canal right of way thru the tree farm was probably established on the old GHRR&Lco grade.



Present day Chavner Junction (Gold Hill Bridge in background)



Concrete at Chavner Junction showing 1907 Date



**Original issue stock certificates GHRR&L Company....(175 Shares)
(courtesy Gold Hill Museum)**

OC&E (SP) 2001-Roger Phillips submitted some nice photographs of OCE 2001 while still in service, I even recognize the dents and scratches.



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Richard Gibson



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Steven Vincent