Community of Vida

The unincorporated community of Vida is located along the McKenzie Highway (Route 126), just east of Goodpasture Covered Bridge. The community development at Vida is modest, with gas station, cafe, store, post office, and several state offices and storage buildings. At one time, Vida was an important link between the Eugene-Springfield area and the upper McKenzie River. A log bridge crossed the creek; it was replaced in 1903 by a covered bridge and again in 1929 by an open concrete bridge.

A post office with the name of Gate Creek was first established at the site in 1874. The name was changed to Vida in 1898. According to *Oregon Geographic Names*, Vida was the name of postmaster Francis A. Pepio's daughter.

The Benjamin Minney farm was established at the edge of the community in 1895. The homestead served as a lunch and horse-changing point for the wagon stages that ran between Eugene and McKenzie Bridge. The historic red horse barn still stands on the old homestead.

Vida was near the upper end of the early logging activities along the McKenzie River. The Ben & Kay Dorris State Park, which overlooks Martin Rapids, is nearby.

The Thomson family lived on the south shore of the river below Martin Rapids, but above Vida. In 1912, the family opened Thomson's Lodge across the river, a fishing lodge that could accommodate as many as fourteen guests, including Herbert Hoover, who was a regular visitor before and after he was president. The lodge was sold in 1948 and burned in April 1954. Access to the lodge was by boat and over a swinging footbridge. The location, which was known as Thomson's Landing, is now called Prince Helfrich Landing after the Helfrich family that bought the property. Helfrich was a long-time, well-respected river and fishing guide on the river.

Written by Gerald W. Williams

Further Reading:

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West, Ruth. "'Grandma' Thomson Recalls History of Thomson's Lodge." *Eugene Register-Guard*, Aug. 8, 1948.

Williams, Gerald W. *McKenzie River Names: A Listing of Social, Historic, and Geographic Place Names*. Portland, Ore.: Gerald Williams, 1988.

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