

Community of Roy

By Paul Senz

Roy is a small, rural community in Washington County, about three miles southeast of Banks. The community is named after the Roy family, early settlers of the area whose name railroad officials used for a station along an intended rail line in 1906 (which became the Roy post office in 1907).

Prior to 1900, as the community of Verboort in Washington County expanded, some of the Dutch, Belgian, and German settlers there moved north to the unsettled land that is now Roy. These settlers were almost exclusively farmers and, as their numbers increased, they intended to build a Catholic community similar to Verboort.

In the early twentieth century, Catholics in the area had to travel to Verboort to attend mass. Concluding that Roy had grown large enough to support its own parish (due in large part to the arrival of the Pacific Navigation Railroad after 1905), Father Ferdinand Kettenhofen, an assistant priest in Verboort, spearheaded an initiative to build a church there. St. Ferdinand's, a church and a school named in honor of Father Kettenhofen, were constructed in 1908. Father Francis Springer was appointed pastor in 1913.

The arrival of a second railroad line from the United Railways Company in around 1910 brought a boom to the community, indicating a need for a larger church. St. Francis, which was completed in 1921, was named in honor of Father Springer. A new school was completed in 1951, the basement of which has become the setting for many parish and community events, including an annual Steak Dinner begun in 1968, which continues to this day.

The Roy post office was closed in 1955. In 2004, due to low enrollment, St. Francis school was slated for closure, but overwhelming community support reversed the decision. Roy remains an agrarian, Catholic community centered on the church and school of St. Francis.

Sources

McArthur, Lewis A. and Lewis L. McArthur. *Oregon Geographic Names*, 6th ed. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1992.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

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