

## **The Way We Were, *The Stayton Mail*, January 18, 2012**

In a Jan. 24, 1946 story in *The Stayton Mail*, a rural mail carrier's lifetime of service was marked in the story "Rural Carrier Deposits 2 Tons Mail Per Box in 31 Years."

"Considered one of the oldest rural mail carriers, in point of service in Marion county, James Ripp on January 16 completed 31 years of carrying mail on Sublimity R.F.D.1, which covers the area between that place and Silver Creek falls. In all those years, once only, has the veteran carrier failed to get the mail through and that was December 11, 1919, when there was two feet of snow and the mail did not even get to the post office.

The Sublimity office is one of the oldest in the state, having been established in 1852; the rural route was opened in 1904. Jim, as he is more familiarly called, took the civil service examination when he was 21 and started on his route January 16, 1915.

There were few automobiles at that time, consequently horse-drawn vehicles were used for about nine years. It was not until 1917 that a car was used at all, and then for summer use only, as the roads were in such a bad condition.

Mr. Ripp owned 11 horses and used that many more which were loaned him to "break them in" for their owners. He also wore out three carts, two buggies and a sleigh. When needed, a saddle was borrowed so that the mail might be delivered.

The route, at first, was estimated as 25 5/8 miles in length. The measurement was made by counting the revolutions of a wagon wheel. Present mileage is said to be 42.45 miles, which is average length of rural routes throughout the country. Ripp calculated that he has driven 30,000 miles by horse and, up to date, about 300,000 miles by auto. He has driven 20 cars, running one Model-T Ford until it, like the proverbial "one-horse shay," fell to pieces about two miles from home.

... Ripp calculated that he has delivered three million pieces of mail in the past 31 years, or each box has received more than two tons of mail in the same period..."