



Henry Brooks Van Duzer  
1874-1951

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# Mystery Solved: The Van Duzer Corridor

## Most Know The Name, But Not The Claim To Fame

by Roy Widing, Contributing Writer



story and later used the funds to further his education at Union College.

**'Not only a corridor, but also a park'**

### Important Life Events of H. B. Van Duzer

- **March 28, 1874**  
Henry Brooks Van Duzer is born in Elmira, New York.
- **1890's**  
Van Duzer studies engineering at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He takes a job in engineering before graduation, later moving to Portland in 1898.
- **1900**  
Van Duzer begins his long career with Inman-Poulsen Lumber Company, one of Oregon's largest lumber firms. He later serves as company president.
- **1905**  
Van Duzer Marries Frances Therkelsen.
- **1923**  
Van Duzer is appointed to the Oregon State Highway Commission, serving as a member for eight years.
- **1927**  
Van Duzer is named Chairman of the Oregon State Highway Commission and serves in the head position for four years.
- **1931**  
Van Duzer is named 'First Citizen' and resigns from the State Highway Commission.
- **1936**  
Receives honorary Doctorate of Humane letters from alma mater, Union College.
- **1939**  
Henry B. Van Duzer Corridor named.
- **1951**  
H.B. Van Duzer dies in Portland, Oregon, He is buried there in Riverview Cemetery next to his wife, Frances.

### H.B. Van Duzer Forest State Scenic Corridor Facts

- 660 acres
- Over 5 miles long
- Free park access
- Picnic areas/swimming hole
- East & west-bound park areas
- For more information, call Oregon State Parks at (800) 551-6949

Driving to the central Oregon Coast from Salem, who hasn't wondered about the long tree-lined strip billed as the 'Van Duzer Corridor' 15 miles east of Lincoln City? That extreme 'splash of green' is a well-traveled, but often ignored plot of dense forest on Highway 18. Located near the Tillamook—Lincoln County border, the area's elevation is generally less than 1,000 feet, fairly low for a mountain pass. Snow is common during Winter and there's plenty of rain year-round, making the area particularly lush. But there's far more to this story than what meets the eye. Some motorists curious about H.B. Van Duzer and the corridor sharing his name no doubt ponder that if Van Duzer was so significant, why isn't his name more familiar? The answer to this riddle is rife with clues, like highway signs along the road of Oregon history.

Van Duzer was the rare individual seemingly as comfortable leading the highest levels of Oregon government as he was at the helm of private enterprise. Van Duzer's experience both inside and outside government allowed him to effectively reckon with the issues unique to each organizational realm. During his tenure as head of the Oregon State Highway Commission, Van Duzer held tremendous power to get things done and by most accounts he wielded that power admirably.

Given his engineering and lumber backgrounds, H. B. Van Duzer was a particularly qualified person to oversee the State Highway Commission through a period of vital growth. During his years of leadership in public transportation, Oregonians experienced a doubling of much-needed highways. In 1939, H.B. Van Duzer was formally recognized with the naming of the corridor in his honor.

Van Duzer's beginnings were hardly meteoric. Born Henry Brooks Van Duzer in Elmira, New York, he headed west in 1898 for an engineering position in Oregon. A few years later, he began work for Portland's Inman-Poulsen Lumber Company, eventually becoming president of the venerable Portland-based firm. In taking on that task, Van Duzer oversaw one of Oregon's most successful lumber firms through war, labor strikes and the Great Depression, bringing it to renewed prosperity.

One of Van Duzer's more unusual achievements occurred early in life while working as a cub reporter in his native New York state. The assignment was made on the rumor that famed American humorist and writer Mark Twain was gravely ill. After much effort, Van Duzer scored an exclusive interview with Twain, who was also known as Samuel L. Clemens.

Van Duzer found the legendary man standing before a fireplace. "Just tell them I have a carbuncle," was Twain's reported reply. Van Duzer was paid \$50 for the

The west end of H.B. Van Duzer Corridor features wayside parks on each side of the highway with an appropriate blend of its namesake's interests. Given his close ties to both the lumber industry and public transportation, it's easy to see why this living monument is the ideal tribute to Van Duzer. The area's gorgeous stand of old growth Douglas Fir trees represents the many years he worked for the Inman-Poulsen Lumber Company and chaired the fir industries board during World War I.

The corridor bearing his name on an important public Oregon road is appropriate as well, given Van Duzer's tenure at the Oregon State Highway Commission. It's also fitting that the Van Duzer Corridor is located near the Salmon River, because one of H.B. Van Duzer's passions was fishing. The H.B. Van Duzer Corridor includes some of Oregon's most desirable features just a short stop off the road. Remember it the next time you take a ride to the Oregon coast on Highway 18.

