



McMinnville 100 Years Ago

Reflections On A Changing Way Of Life

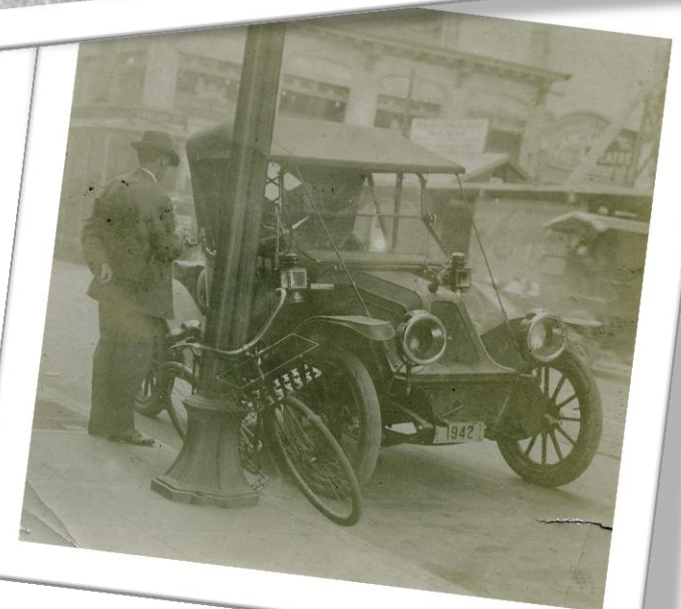
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MSCM 430 History Project  
Spring 2012

Presented by  
Jaffy Yin Xiao  
Joanna Peterson

# Introduction

Our project presents a historical view of transportation and its development in Yamhill County in the 1910s, and it especially focuses on McMinnville in 1912. McMinnville was incorporated as a town in 1876 and became a city in 1882. By that time, the Yamhill River provided an early artery for pioneer travel and commerce, and people still frequently rode horses (including stagecoaches) to travel between towns. Railways started to expand in Oregon in the late 1800s, when the nation was gripped in a railroad mania and the train was a wonder to behold by each town. Until the 1910s, steamboats and rails were two major public transportation modes, before many local residents could afford a car and traveled the roads.

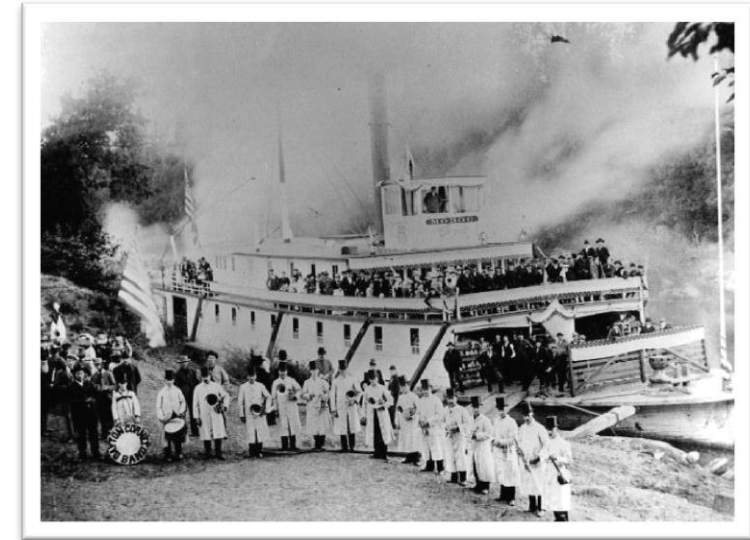




# Waterways



(Left) The Dayton band poses in front of a steam boat in Dayton, Ore. In 1912, getting photographed was a special honor, which is evidenced by the crowd gathered in the formal snap shot.

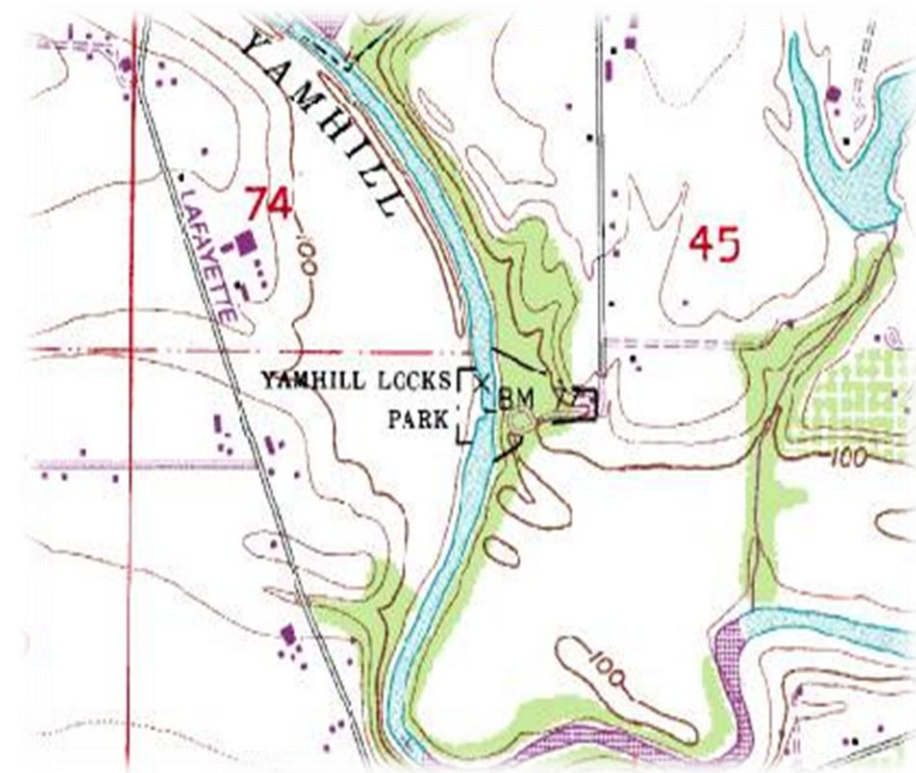
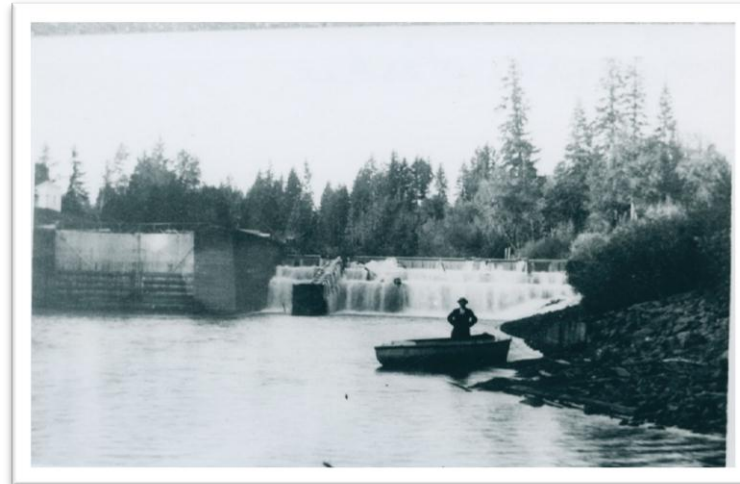


“Bonita” at the Yamhill Locks

Because of rough roads, boats (both steam boats and human-powered styles) were a main mode of moving goods and people during 1912. The Yamhill River (a tributary of the Willamette River) was used most frequently, as it could weave through obstructions as far as Dayton, and logs could be passed down from 50 miles above the mouth of the river. Before steamboats entered the transportation scene, crews from the Klickitat tribes oared boats up and down the rivers, carrying loads of wheat or lumber to the necessary destinations. The first steamboat to reach Dayton was “The Hoosier” in 1851. The construction of the Lafayette locks was completed in 1900, which made it easier to navigate though the Yamhill rapids. Dayton and Lafayette were both major hubs of activity in the water transportation world, sending goods to locations such as Oregon City, McMinnville and Portland.

“So much rain falls, that it is difficult to keep the roads in repair...Most farmers from the interior who haul their produce to market, complain that the roads are in bad condition at the most important season of the year—just when their produce is ready for market.”  
– The Oregonian, 1865

# Waterways: Locks



(Left) The remains of the locks in Lafayette, Ore. (Right) The Lafayette locks during the 1900s, when they were still in use for transportation.

Map of the locks and surrounding river area

Because river transportation was so necessary (due to rough roads), the Yamhill Locks and Transportation company was formed in 1869, which was meant to spur the construction of locks along the Yamhill River, making it simpler to navigate rapids and obstacles in the water. During 1896-97, Congress appropriated \$200,000 for constructions on the Yamhill River. This money was to be spent building 275-foot long locks with a dam that could raise the water level 16 feet, allowing year-round trips to McMinnville. The Lafayette Lock was completed in September of 1900. They were used until February of 1954. Then, the Army Corps of Engineers closed them because they were not being used enough to justify the cost of keeping them running. By 1959, the country sold the locks and dam to Yamhill county at the price of ten dollars.



# Railroads

Unlike many cities founded as new rails were built, McMinnville was the few cities that has been occupied for many years on the site of an old mill Newby built in 1853. At the time the nation was gripped in a railroad mania, McMinnville as a small town successfully had railroad lines built.

1856

Arrival of the transcontinental railroad

1878

The first steam lines from Dayton to Sheridan under the guidance of a well-know railroad promoter Joseph

1867

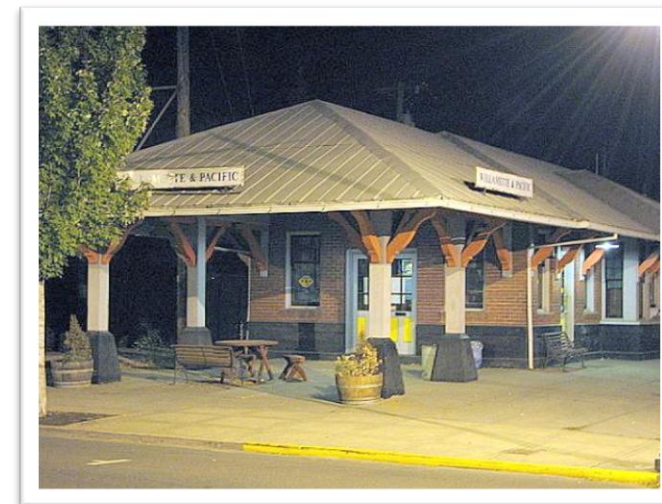
The Oregon Central Railroad Company had been incorporated to build a line toward Forest Grove and McMinnville.

1880

A rain station was first established in the city of McMinnville while the Western Oregon Railroad built a mainline going south.

1910

The state had about 2500 miles of tracks



McMinnville railroad Depot in 1910 vs. present



1915

Southern Pacific Railway Co. provided Red Electric interurban trains between Portland and Lake Oswego with stops in Newberg, McMinnville and beyond

1929

Because of development of automobile, train passenger services were hurt and abandoned.



“The railroad decided to route its line to Corvallis through McMinnville as a result of a determined effort by McMinnville civic leaders and citizens, who offered both labor and materials in order to obtain the railroad service.”

-The News-Register



Freight House (above) was the original McMinnville station. Before the railroad came to town, this building was rumored to have been a “rooming house for ladies with questionable moral standards,” according to The News-Register.

THE NEWS REPORTER, McMINNVILLE, YAMHILL COUNTY

**OUR SPECIAL TRAIN TO BROADMEAD**

7-30-1909

Saturday, July 31st, at McMinnville to take on passengers. Those buying tickets from this point may avail themselves of a half rate fare for the round trip by application to any of the Company's salesmen or agents on the train or at Broadmead. If you can't take the special—take any train—above all—be there! You will never regret it and you will have a good time.

Special train leaves Portland promptly at 8 a. m. Saturday, July 31st.

See the town of BROADMEAD in the building—walk over BROADMEAD'S 3,000 acres—note big this opening, and the greater things in store. Satisfy yourself about BROADMEAD. Its future greatness is ed by its present fertility. Be on hand, and be on time. BROADMEAD is sold at easy prices, on easy terms.

**FREE TOWN LOT**

A full-size town lot goes to every person upon payment of 10 per cent. of the purchase price of any 20-a but not after Saturday, July 31—our opening day. This is a generous offer—you can't afford to miss it.

**BIG BARBECUE**

We have arranged to treat all of our visitors to a grand big barbecue on our opening day—we'll be prepared care of a great many people—come and try the roast, satisfy your appetite, and see BROADMEAD at y are.

**Columbia Trust Company**

4 of Trade Building  
South Street  
PORTLAND, OREGON

An announcement/advertisement in 1909 on The News Reporter

# NOTICE!

Effective Tuesday, Dec. 3, 1912

The following *Additional Local Train Service* will be inaugurated on the Springwater Division of the **P. R., L. & P. Co.**

Leave Bellrose, Daily except Sunday	7:00 a. m.
Arrive Portland, “ “ “	7:45 a. m.
Leave Portland, Daily except Sunday	8:00 a. m.
Arrive Stanley, “ “ “	8:35
Leave Stanley, “ “ “	8:40
Arrive Portland, “ “ “	9:10
Leave Portland, “ “ “	4:15 p. m.
Arrive Stanley, “ “ “	4:50
Leave Stanley, “ “ “	4:50
Arrive Portland, “ “ “	5:20

For Bellrose, Linnemann, Gresham and Boring  
Leave Portland, Daily except Sunday 5.25 p. m.

PORTLAND RAILWAY, LIGHT & POWER CO.

A local Train Service schedule in 1912



# Automobiles

Rise of automobile transportation started in late 1910s and occupied business of passenger service between towns. McMinnville also had its first year of paved streets in 1912.

(Bottom) Yamhill County's first rural mail vehicle, a 1912 air-cooled Franklin.



(Above) Local banker Wortman Family bought the first automobile in McMinnville.

## Conclusion

During a time when the economy was so fueled by production, transportation was vital for people in all different areas of life. During the span of the 1850s to the 1900s and on, Yamhill county went from relying on human-powered boats to steamboats. Roads improved and railroads were implemented. Eventually, horse tie up areas turned to parking spaces for automobiles. 1912 landed in the middle of all these transitions, making it a pivotal year in its decade.

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