

# Albany Old Times

## Travel in Early Albany

**Cathy Ingalls**

*Museum Board Member*

Early travelers going to and from Albany managed to get to their destinations, but it wasn't always a quick or an easy trip.

However with the arrival of trains, ferries, bridges and paved roads, travel became safer and faster.

Let's start with the portion of U.S. Highway 20 that runs from Albany to Corvallis.

Edward Loy, author of "Gem of the Willamette Valley, A History of Albany, Oregon" said, "I know stagecoaches followed the Albany-Corvallis route, that at least in part, roughly follows the present Highway 20.

"There are a few houses along 20 that would predate the improving and paving of the modern highway, so I would conclude that the new highway more or less overlays the old," he added.

Ron Irish, the city's transportation systems analyst, said, "I don't recall seeing anything around the office that hints at pre-highway travel routes between Albany and Corvallis."

So Irish wonders at what might have passed for a Willamette River crossing between Albany and North Albany before bridges were constructed.

"My money would be on a ferry, but I've never heard of any stories of a local ferry crossing," he said.

Irish is right.

Starting in 1851, E.M Briggs operated a ferry that plied the Willamette from the foot of Ferry Street.

He charged 75 cents for a wagon and team; 20 cents for mules and packhorses; 12.5 cents for people on foot; 10 cents for loose cattle; 5 cents for sheep and hogs; and 5 cents for 100 pounds of freight.

One clue that early travelers made it into Albany is that the Jeremiah Driggs house at 516 Elm St. S.W.

*Cont. on page 4*



Sternwheeler steams upstream near the steel bridge that crossed the Willamette from Calapooia St. Museum Collection #2007.015.587

## Once There were Eleven, Now There Are Nine

**Peter Dye**, *Resident & contributor*

**Kathwren Hayes**, *Visitor & Member Services Assistant, ARM*

In the Spring 2020 issue of Albany Old Times, the featured story was an article regarding The Messenger Tree and other designated Heritage Trees within the city of Albany. The Albany Heritage Tree Program was established in 1999. Its purpose is to recognize, foster appreciation of and protect trees having historic significance to our community. To qualify for heritage status, a tree needs to be unique in size, structure, species and or historically served an important roll in local, state or national history.

The Camperdown Scotch Elm tree at 547 Seventh Ave. SW had developed Dutch Elm disease during its long life. It was removed about two years ago and a new tree was planted in lieu of the Camperdown Scotch Elm. It is a Paper Bark Maple. The dedication plaque remains at Calapooia and Seventh Ave. SW.

Subsequent to the Spring 2020 issue, the tallest of all the Heritage Trees, an Incense Cedar, towering 100 feet at 406 Sixth Ave. SW was removed toward the end of 2020. Three or four years ago a tomographic study took place around its massive 17 feet trunk. The study indicated that the Incense Cedar was dying in the middle. Earlier in the year of 2020, some of the limbs from the Incense Cedar tree had damaged the roof of the adjacent home and concerns for safety warranted the necessity for that historic tree removal. Once there were eleven Heritage Trees, now there are only nine.

“As a young boy growing up in the neighborhood,” said Dye, “many of us enjoyed living around the giant Incense Cedar that overlooked the city. During warm summer evenings in the 1960s, we would often sleep in the yard and I can remember looking up at the massive trunk towering overhead in the night sky. In the early days, wildlife was very abundant in the city and during the night the owls, bats, and nighthawks would soar above the tree’s top.



*Photo Courtesy Peter Dye*



Photo Courtesy Peter Dye



Photo Courtesy Tony Wilson

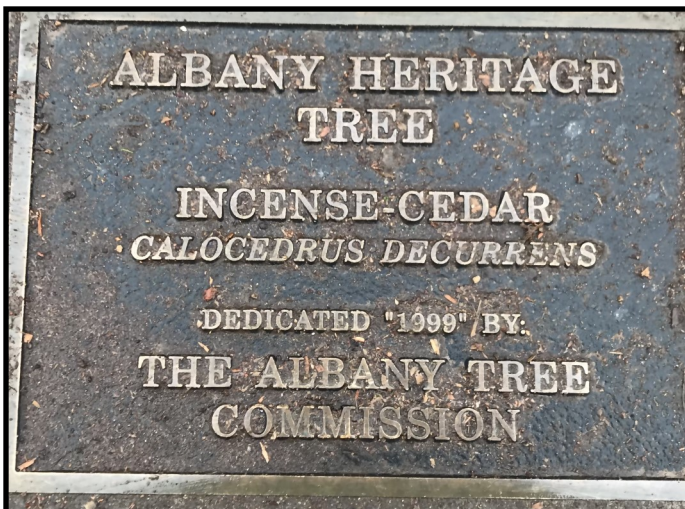


Photo Courtesy Kathwren Hayes

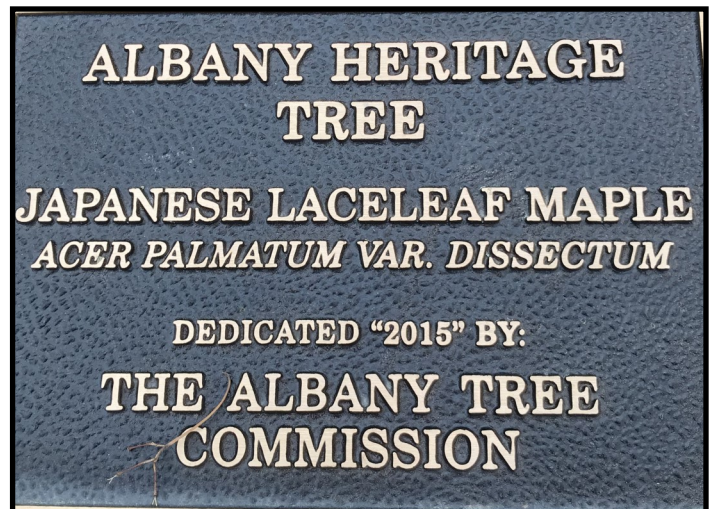


Photo Courtesy Kathwren Hayes

The fragrant Incense Cedar had a long life overlooking Albany's history from its infancy to today's modern times. The Incense Cedar was estimated to be 140 years old but upon viewing the growth rings, the massive trunk appeared to be much older than originally thought, said Dye. All that remains of the giant Heritage Incense Cedar is a plaque placed by the Albany Tree Commission on the West sidewalk near Sixth and Ferry Street. It was dedicated in 1999, one of the first trees to be dedicated.

In 2015, a new tree was dedicated. A Japanese Laceleaf Maple located at 624 Broadalbin St. SW. It spreads 20 feet and has a height of 15 feet. It is thought to be about 100 years old and turns vibrant red in the Fall.

Plan your visit, learn a little history and check out the two plaques and remaining nine Heritage Trees in Albany. More information and addresses can be found at:

<https://www.armuseum.com/newsletters>.  
 (armuseum/research/newsletters/Albany Old Times Spring 2020)  
[https://www.cityofalbany.net/images/stories/parksandrec/urban-forestry/2015\\_04-heritage\\_trees.pdf](https://www.cityofalbany.net/images/stories/parksandrec/urban-forestry/2015_04-heritage_trees.pdf)



Paperbark Maple Tree, Photo Courtesy  
Kathwren Hayes

**Travel**, *Cont. from page 1*

built in 1868 was a stage stop. That makes sense to historian Bill Maddy because the first bridge across the Willamette lined up with Elm.

The steamer Multnomah was the first to make it up the Willamette to Orleans, located in Linn County across the river from Corvallis. The boat docked in Albany in 1851 at the foot of Broadalbin Street.

From 1850 to 1875 “the steamboat became as important to Linn County’s progress as the farm and freight trucks of today,” author Floyd C. Mullen noted in his book “The Land of Linn”.



Postcard with photograph on front which shows a view of the Ellsworth Street bridge under construction circa 1925. Museum Collection #1987-012-0001.

The railroad arrived in 1871, leading to the demise of the riverboat.

Traveling to Albany and Corvallis via crossing the Willamette became a snap after November 1917 when the Oregon State Highway Commission developed terminal points for a paved highway between the two cities.

In 1925, the two-lane, Ellsworth Bridge was built, opening a year later. The 1,090-foot-long, steel-truss structure was designed by renowned designer Conde McCullough.

What was then known as the Albany Bridge was constructed by the Union Bridge Co., based in Portland.

So what was a route very early travelers relied upon to go north or come south to Albany?

Loy believes that people and freight coming southbound from say Salem took a ferry at the city of Jefferson and then continued the journey into Albany on Old Salem Road.

Councilor Dick Olsen said he recalled Dick Reid saying that when he “was a kid, the family lived at his dad’s veterinary office at Ninth and Washington. He would hear the big, freight trucks come shifting down to make the corner and then shift back up to make the next corner at Elm Street.”

From there, somehow those on the road made it west to Corvallis.

Much later, between 1939-40 the construction of the Pacific Boulevard overpass finished the segment of the major roadway in Albany.

More information about Albany’s transportation systems can be found at the Albany Regional Museum, 136 Lyon St. S.

Mullen’s and Loy’s books are for sale at the museum, which is open to the public from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday – Friday.

You can call 541-967-7122 or email [info@armuseum.com](mailto:info@armuseum.com) with questions or for requests for assistance.



### Sponsor An Object - Thank You's

The Museum sends its thanks to Darrel Tedisch for sponsoring multiple objects from our Sponsor an Object program. Darrel's financial support allows us to purchase the materials necessary for the care and preservation of items like these..





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## Upcoming Events & Programs

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**Memorial Day May 31**

Visit the AVA to pickup a map of houses decorated to commemorate those who have died in service to our Country.

**June 2021**

The museum will be adding Saturday hours back to our schedule. We will be open from 10 am—2 pm each Saturday beginning June 5.

**Friday, June 4**

The return of 1st Friday at the Museum for our first month we will have extended hours until 7 pm. We look forward to bringing back artists in future months.

**Wednesday, June 9 at noon**

Virtual History Bites—Authentically Alan: the life and legacy of Dr. Alan L. Hart (via Facebook Live) Join the Museum online as we learn about Alan Hart who grew up in Albany, and was one of the first known people to have a gender-affirmation related surgery. He himself became a doctor, in a time where “transgender” wasn’t even a word.