

Albany Old Times

Oregon & California Railroad First Arrives in Albany 150 Years Ago

Bill Maddy

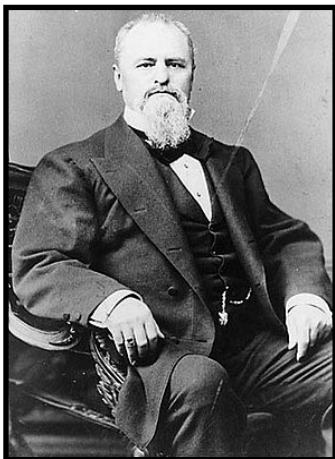
Museum Docent

The Oregon and California Railroad (O&C) was the first railroad to connect Oregon with California. Construction of the line began in Portland during the spring of 1868.

Ben Holladay was the builder of the O&C Railroad. Holladay changed the route of the railroad to connect with Albany after businessmen raised the \$50,000 that he demanded to make it happen.

On December 8, 1870, Albany celebrated the arrival of the O&C with bunting, flags, a parade and brass band music. Albany citizens, city and county officials swarmed the O&C depot for the arrival of Ben Holladay and 300 notables aboard the official train pulled by the locomotive *J. B. Stephens*. The Albany mayor Alphonso W. Stanard presented Holladay with a special flag to honor another O&C locomotive the *Albany*. A welcoming speech was presented by Abigail Scott Duniway, Albany resident, merchant, and Women Suffrage leader.

The arrival of the Oregon and California Railroad in 1870, greatly furthered Albany's growth, as did the 1880 completion of the Santiam Canal for transportation, a water source and hydropower for a growing city. The railroad and the canal project also brought to Albany seventy to eighty Chinese-born residents, who helped build the railroad and canal. Many later resided in Albany and operated businesses that occupied a one-block section of downtown (present location of the Albany Regional Museum).



Clockwise from upper left: Ben Holladay (a man who knew his worth!); Albany O&C engine; Oregon & California Albany Depot Hotel

Back to the Future for Young Building

Cathy Ingalls

Museum Board Member

Unlike the characters in the movie “Back to the Future,” Oscar B. Hult is taking the 108-year-old building that houses his upscale men’s clothing store back to the past.

Hult and his wife, Tamalynne, are purchasing the former S.E. Young & Son mercantile store constructed in 1912 at the corner of 124 Broadalbin St. S.W., where in early November they moved their The Natty Dresser business.

The couple began their clothing operation in 2014 at 425 First Ave. W., but that location became too small for what all the couple had in mind.

“We want to be a place where people want to come back to and bring their friends. We want them to enjoy the atmosphere, appreciate the quality of the clothes and maybe see a gift to buy,” he said.

The Hults first looked at purchasing the St. Francis Hotel but the renovation costs neared a prohibitive \$10 million. He would love to see someone else renovate the building into a place where people can stay.

The former Young building attracted the Hults because of the architecture, the outside brackets, the renovation possibilities, the place was for sale, and he could secure bank and Small Business Administration loans to finance the purchase and renovation.

So how does a guy who worked in the composing room at the Democrat-Herald and often wore Civil War-era clothing on the job get to the place where he can buy and redo a downtown building?

“God is the only explanation,” he said. “We prayed and asked for business guidance and wisdom.”

Hult had realized that there definitely was a market for quality men’s clothing in the Willamette Valley. He said no men’s store exists between Portland and Eugene, so he could attract customers from all over.

Many of his shoppers these days are younger and come in after seeing what people are wearing on various TV and streaming programs and on YouTube.

Since the Hult’s takeover after Riley’s Billiards closed in 2019, the exterior has been spruced up and the interior transformed using custom-made wood treatments throughout that were constructed by Pyburn & Sons.

The carpets were ripped out, and the concrete beneath was exposed and refinished.

Dressing rooms were installed, two with themes: The Rat Pack and James Bond. There is a department where women can get their wedding gowns altered, a shoeshine chair and areas devoted to hat sales and tuxedo rentals.

The interior now resembles a London men’s club from long ago.

Of particular interest are the new and old stained-glass windows near the mezzanine level.

Each window does or will contain the first letter of a clothing store that has occupied the building: Y for Young; H for Hamilton’s; W for



Above: S.E. Young & Son 1912

Below: Montgomery Ward 1937





Photo Courtesy Kay Burt

Montgomery Ward; B for Broadway; and N for The Natty Dresser.

Still to come is a wine and beer tasting bar. Food will consist of cheese plates as Hult said he doesn't want to open a full-scale kitchen, and there are good restaurants already in the downtown area.

The basement is being fixed up for storage, some of which will be available to rent.

Before that can happen, however, a new elevator must be installed. The one in the store was put in in 1925 and is no longer considered safe.

According to information on file at the city of Albany's planning department and provided by planner Anne Catlin, the building was designed by Albany architect Charles Burggraf in the Queen Anne style.

The building's structural framing is concrete with a brick exterior and brick columns.

The building measures 102 feet by 90 feet, has two floors, a partial mezzanine and a basement that extends out under the sidewalk at Second and Broadalbin.

The structure is considered to be in good condition with good integrity.

More information about the building and S.E. Young can be found at the Albany Regional Museum, 136 Lyon St. S.

Although the museum currently is closed because of COVID-19 restrictions, staff is often on hand to answer questions. You can call them 541-967-7122 or email, info@armuseum.com.



Photo Courtesy Kay Burt

To help understand the building's long history, Hult provided a timetable:

1912-15, S.E. Young & Son;

1915-36, Hamilton's;

1925, elevator installed;

1937-70, Montgomery Ward;

1937, current lights and fans installed;

1971-72, Hamilton's;

1973-85, The Broadway;

1973 mezzanine and five show windows are covered. All windows on Broadalbin will be reopened.

1986-97, Sid's Furniture;

1999-2019, Riley's Billiards;

2002, elevator condemned;

2020, The Natty Dresser.



Photo Courtesy Kay Burt

Thank You, Museum

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Blast from the Past

Enjoy this article originally printed in our Fall 2010 Newsletter, highlighted now as we once again see impromptu parades and cruises used to celebrate during tough times.

Saturday night parades

By Jack Gillespie

There were no rules, there was no planning, there was no real reason for it to happen but it was a spontaneous event that came around a few times during the summer months in downtown Albany in the late 1940s.

The event consisted of a number of cars getting in line on a warm Saturday night and parading up and down First Avenue between Washington and Main streets.

A six-day work week (or at least 5 ½) was not unusual for the workers during these years and Saturday night was a popular “get out and go” time. One could sleep in a little late on Sunday morning.

Come Saturday evening people would come into town and eat out and take in a movie at one of three theaters on First Avenue. Others would come to town to shop for the coming week. For whatever the reason downtown Albany could be very busy place on Saturday nights during the summer.

Some of us teenage boys with cars would come to town just to drive up and down First Avenue. (It was sort of a man-boy thing.)

One Saturday night we were doing our “Cruising First Avenue Routine” when we noticed the line getting longer. Soon it became apparent that both lanes were filled with the cars going very slow.

It was quite a sight to see automobiles from the 20s, 30s and 40s parading east on First and turning around at Main and heading west to Washington. Part of the turn-around on Main Street was going through the Hancock gasoline station on the southwest corner of Main. The station has a sign offering 10 gallons of gasoline for \$1 and a quart of oil for 10 cents. (A ten-o-clock curfew-declared during World War II-was still in effect and a loud horn would blast meaning that everyone without business should head for home-thus breaking up our cruising.)

Of course, First Avenue is now a one-way street going west and there isn't too much cruising on Saturday nights in downtown Albany. But it wasn't always that way. I remember it well.

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- Increase to 20 % off Museum Store
- General Research Fee is Waived
- Private Tour of Museum

TAKENA SOCIETY - \$500

All the benefits of Heritage Circle plus:

- Listed on Takena Society Plaque
- One Free Community Room Rental
- Invitation to Annual Directors Dinner

From the Directors Desk...



Keith Lohse, Executive Director

We've been here before...

If it feels like we have been here before that is because we have. The current closures of Museums have rolled out just as they did in the Spring. We made it through the first closures, and we will continue past the current ones. Our community has built the Museum up into a resilient organization.

On a grander scale we have dealt with a pandemic before and most of the same measures were used in 1918 as they are today. If you have not been following along with our regular posts on Facebook, I encourage you to do so, you will note that closures of public spaces, limits on attendance, and masks are nothing new. Our community made it through these difficult times before and we will once again.

As we look to the future, I want to hear from you. What do you want to see at the Museum? What questions do you want answered? What would you like to have offered? This could be ideas for exhibits, requests for program topics, or something entirely new. Whatever your idea or interest, I want to hear about it. Look below to find all the information you need to contact me.

As we near the end of 2020 we can see hope on the horizon for a better year, but no one has a crystal ball. We cannot say that 2021 will be without its own challenges. We will push so that we will survive and may even thrive. Will you help us reach this future? The Museum is running its annual appeal and set a high bar of raising \$10,000. This amount will set the Museum up to take 2021 head-on. To not only persevere but to grow as we pass through these difficult times.

We are grateful to all those who have given in the past and the leadership who prepared our Museum to be a strong and secure home for our history. Help us to continue that tradition by donating today. You will find a donation slip that you can cut out and mail to the Museum in this newsletter, or if you prefer you can go to our website armuseum.com to find additional ways to donate.

Stay safe and be well!

To contact Keith you can choose one of the following options:

E-mail klohse@armuseum.com

Call 541-967-7122

Write 136 Lyon Street S., Albany, OR 97321

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- I would like information about making a gift to the Albany Regional Museum through bequest, annuity, charitable trust, insurance, securities or real estate.
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