

Final Report
The Fairmount Neighborhood- Reconnaissance Survey
Salem Oregon

A. Project Objective

To survey and evaluate the historic properties within the Fairmount neighborhood in order to establish the neighborhood's eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as a district.

B. Boundary Justification

The boundary was determined in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office to include adequate resources to determine a logical boundary for the district after the reconnaissance survey is completed. It extends from Miller Street on the north to Rural Street on the south, and from Commercial Street on the east to Rio Vista Way and River Road on the west. It includes the south two-thirds of the South West Addition to the Town of Salem (platted in 1865), the Myers Addition to Salem (platted in 1871), the Fair Mount Park Addition (platted in 1889), and the eastern half of the Fairmount View Addition (platted in 1949). Sections of these plats which were developed less than fifty years ago, such as the western half of the Fairmount View Addition, were not included in the survey area.

C. Historic Context

1. Settlement: 1830-1850

Methodist missionaries from New York were the first to settle permanently in the area around Salem. At that time the area comprising the present City of Salem was known commonly as Chemeketa. In 1834 Reverend Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary originally from Canada, was sent from the east coast to settle on the Willamette River ten miles north of the present City of Salem. In 1840 a second group of Methodists arrived and constructed a lumber and flour mill. Before long the new inhabitants were calling their settlement "Salem" a word derived from the Hebrew word "Shalom", which was meant to convey a "City of Peace".¹ At the current site of 960 Broadway, Lee built a home which became the headquarters of the Jason Lee Mission (1840). This home initially housed four mission families, before becoming a hospital, guest house, and post office. It eventually became the site of the Marion County Courthouse. Jason Lee also constructed the first log cabin at the mission which was known as the "Indian Labor School", the precursor to Willamette University.²

¹ Fowler, Constance E. *The Old Days in and near Salem*. (Frank McCaffrey Dogwood Press; Seattle, 1940) unnumbered pages.

² Ibid.

For twelve years Jason Lee worked to support the ideals established by the Mission in Oregon. Sadly, in 1838, Jason Lee's first wife Anna Maria Pittman and her two day old son died. In 1842, his second wife Lucy Thompson also died, leaving a three week old daughter. Reverend Lee had misunderstandings with his superiors in the East, and was called back in 1843 to confer with the Methodist Mission Board in New York. Another Reverend (George Gary) was appointed to replace him in 1844. Unfortunately, Jason Lee became ill, and died in 1845 while he was still in New York. The family remains lie in the mission plot in Jason Lee cemetery in Salem. A statue of Jason Lee stands in Washington D.C. commemorating his early efforts to settle Oregon.

Organized Catholicism soon followed Methodism to the Oregon Country. Father Francis N. Blanchet arrived four miles above Champoeg to a log church built in 1836. In January 1840, the first mass was celebrated in the Willamette Valley at St. Paul, in the structure which Father Blanchet constructed to replace the log church. The elaborate Catholic ceremonies impressed the Native Americans and many chose to convert. "Early Catholics were not as interested in claiming land as they were in spreading their religion, and many schools and churches in the valley bespeak the thoroughness of their work."³

Salem was first platted in 1846 by W.H. Willson who was an agent for the trustees of the Oregon Institute (precursor to Willamette University). Interestingly Salem's first plat was not recorded until four years later on March 22, 1850. Streets were 90 feet wide, and the plat consisted of two blocks. "The sale of these lots not only brought people closer to the Institute but also enabled the trustees to found an endowment for their school."⁴ The first block was bordered on the west by the Willamette River, on the south by Mission Street, on the east by Cottage Street, and on the north by State Street. The second block was bordered on the west by the river, on the south by State Street, on the east by Capitol Street, and on the north by Division Street.⁵

Champoeg was selected as Oregon's first capitol in 1843, however in 1844 it was moved to Oregon City where it remained temporarily. On August 14, 1848, the United States Congress proclaimed Oregon a territory of the United States. In March 1849, General Joseph Lane took over as territorial governor. Lane convened the first territorial legislature on July 16, 1849 at Oregon City. It was decided at their second regular session on December 2, 1850 to convene the next session in Salem.⁶

There are no resources in the study area dating to this period.

2. *Community and Industrial Growth: 1850-1900*

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Original Plat of Salem 100 Years Old this Week". *Oregon Statesman*. March 20, 1950.

⁶ Kadas, Marianne. *Historic Context Statement: Salem, Oregon*. (City of Salem, August, 1992) p 18.

Reverend George Gary was appointed to replace Jason Lee, and he arrived in Oregon in May 1844. The Indian Manual Labor School was sold to the trustees of the Oregon Institute and in 1853 the name was changed to Willamette University.

Jason Lee's only surviving daughter, Lucyanna Marie graduated from Willamette University in 1863. She became a teacher at the University and soon married Francis Grubbs, who was also an early Willamette Professor.

The Reverend A.F. Waller solicited funds and he constructed Waller Hall. "The building, started in 1864, was first occupied in 1867, when the school was marched by the acting president to the sound of martial music from the old house to the new."⁷

Transportation improved tremendously in the later half of the nineteenth century in Salem. In 1851 the passenger steamboat provided access from Salem to Portland. Plank sidewalks were constructed and there was regular stage service between established local communities like Salem and Albany.

In 1852 construction of the first Capitol Building began, but in 1855 the unfinished building burned. From 1857-1876 the state legislature met in the Holman Building on the southwest corner of Ferry and Commercial Street.

Construction on a second Capitol Building began in 1873 and was completed when the dome was finally added in 1892.⁸ Other state government departments and schools moved from Portland to Salem during this time period. In 1866 the State Penitentiary moved to Salem from Portland. The School for the Deaf opened in 1870, and the School for the Blind opened in 1873. In 1883 the State Hospital and Asylum moved from East Portland to Salem.⁹

In 1857 the City of Salem was incorporated, and on February 19, 1857, the first council was established for the City of Salem. Wiley Kenyon was elected as Mayor and several ordinances were passed including one that prohibited swine from running at large.¹⁰

Joseph Watt established his woolen mill in 1857, and by 1860 the mill had 100 employees and was producing \$100,000 worth of cloth. By 1871 the Salem woolen mill was flourishing. In this year the mill produced 56,000 yards of cashmeres, 52,000 yards of flannels, 16,000 yards of tweeds and 500 blankets.¹¹ This mill burned in 1875 and was not rebuilt. However, in 1889 Thomas Kay constructed another woolen mill. This mill burned in 1895, but Kay constructed a new one immediately. The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill employed 88 people and made National

⁷ Fowler, Constance E. *The Old Days in and near Salem*. (Frank McCaffrey Dogwood Press; Seattle, 1940) unnumbered pages.

⁸ Kadas, Marianne. *Historic Context Statement: Salem, Oregon*. (City of Salem, August, 1992) p 26.

⁹ Ibid. p 28.

¹⁰ "First Settlers Erect Framework". *Capital Journal*. July 2, 1938.

¹¹ Ibid, Section 8, page 10; also Oregon Business Directory, 1873

Guard Uniforms, blankets and other fine wool woven materials. The Salem Woolen Mill store was opened on Commercial Street in the late 1890's.

In 1869 Salem's population was 1,139. There were 700 private residences and 32 brick stores.¹² The two largest flour mills in the state during this time period were located in Salem: the R.C. Kinney & Company Flour Mill and the North Salem Flouring Mill. The Salem Flouring Mills incorporated in 1870 and sold flour under the "Wild Rose Flour" label. Other industries included the Salem Iron Works, the Capital Lumbering Company and the Salem Bag Factory.

In 1870 a natural gas system was installed and the Oregon and California Railroad (Southern Pacific) provided Salem easy access north to Portland and south to Eugene and beyond.¹³ Construction in the downtown commercial district also increased during this time period. Development occurred primarily along State and Commercial Streets, with four buildings constructed in the 1860's, six in the 1870's, six in the 1880's and three in the 1890's.

In 1884 Salem was the third city in Oregon to receive telephone service. In 1886 the first bridge was built across the Willamette River. In 1888 ten electric lights were installed downtown, and horse drawn street cars provided local public transportation around the city. In 1890 two electric street cars began operating which made a two and one quarter mile circuit around the downtown.¹⁴

There are a small number of resources in the study area dating to this period, primarily the last decade of the 19th century.

3. 20th Century Progress: 1900-1950

In 1907 Commercial Street was paved from State to Ferry, and in 1908 from Trade to Center. Commercial Street from Church to 12th was paved last, and cement sidewalks replaced the planks. Additional streetlights were added throughout the city, and the commercial center of the city migrated slightly to the east. In the first decade of the 1900's twelve new commercial buildings were constructed, eight of them on Court Street. The Grand Theatre was built by the Odd Fellows in 1900 as part of their building, and soon became one of Salem's favorite theaters. In the 1910's eleven additional new buildings were constructed, with a majority of these constructed along State Street.

In the early 1900's the streetcar service expanded and transportation in Salem continued to improve. The Oregon City Transportation Company offered passage to Portland every other day as well as service to Corvallis and Independence. The City was also served by Southern Pacific and the Oregon Electric Railway. By 1913, the Southern Pacific Railway offered seven mainline

¹² Kadas, Marianne. *Historic Context Statement: Salem, Oregon*. (City of Salem, August, 1992) p 23.

¹³ Evans-Hatch, Gail. *Salem Downtown State Street—Commercial Street Historic District National Register Nomination*. (Silverton, Oregon, 2000), Section 8, page 9.

¹⁴ Ibid. Section 8 p10

passenger trains. Oregon Electric made ten trips per day between Portland and Eugene and its tracks ran down the center of High Street in Salem.¹⁵

The development of an expanded transportation network improved access to other communities for average citizens, but also decreased the cost of shipping and receiving goods and materials for businesses. Agricultural and forest products could be easily transported by rail or ship to Portland for distribution. In 1929 Salem citizens passed a \$50,000 bond issue for construction of an airport. By 1930, McNary Field, southeast of downtown Salem, had four runways and hangars for 12 planes. United Airlines began service to Salem in 1941.¹⁶

Wheat and hops were Salem's main staple crops. Wheat was ground at Salem's flour mills. By 1913 Oregon was one of the largest hop producing states in the country. In 1912 Salem marketed over 115,000 bales of hops at an average price of \$35 per bale.¹⁷ The Salem Canning Factory was founded in 1890. The Hunt Brothers Cannery was also established and by 1914, was processing 75,000 cases of food. Salem grew to have the largest number of canneries on the west coast. By 1930, there were 27 canneries operating in Salem.¹⁸ Lumber related industries also began to grow during this time. In 1920 the Oregon Pulp and Paper Company opened, followed in 1926 by the Western Paper Converting Company.

Population had grown from 2,538 in 1885 to 14,094 in 1910 due in part to annexations of North, South and East Salem. Population continued to grow from 14,094 in 1910 to 30,908 in 1940.¹⁹ By 1950 it had reached 43,140.²⁰

Construction continued in the early part of the 1920's with eleven buildings constructed in the downtown core between 1920-1926. The City of Salem adopted planning and zoning codes in 1926. No new construction occurred downtown in the latter half of the 1920's when new construction declined in the commercial core and never quite recovered, with only five new buildings constructed from the early thirties to 1950.

Plats for the Survey Area

The survey area includes the south two-thirds of the South West Addition to the Town of Salem (platted in 1865), the Myers Addition to Salem (platted in 1871), the Fair Mount Park Addition (platted in 1889), and the eastern half of the Fairmount View Addition (platted in 1949). Sections of these plats which were developed less than fifty years ago, such as the western half of the Fairmount View Addition, were not included in the survey area.

¹⁵ Ibid. Section 8 p14

¹⁶ Kadas, Marianne. *Historic Context Statement: Salem, Oregon*. (City of Salem, August, 1992) p 40.

¹⁷ Ibid. p 31

¹⁸ Ibid. p 41.

¹⁹ Ibid. p 33 and p 40.

²⁰ Oregon Council of Governments; City of Salem.

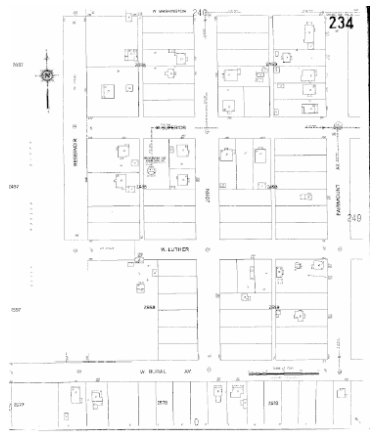


Figure 5: 1927 Sanborn, Rural to Washington; Fairmount to Reservoir

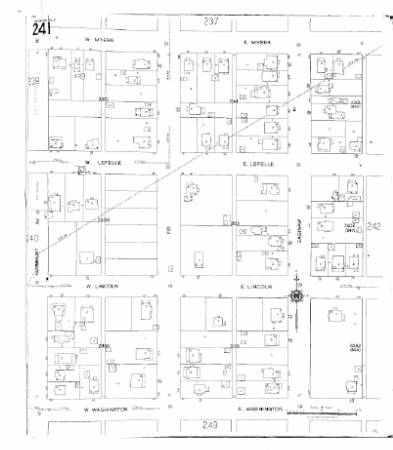


Figure 6: 1927 Sanborn: Washington to Myers; Saginaw to Fairmount

D. Survey Results & Resource Types

433 resources were surveyed in the reconnaissance level survey of the Fairmount area.

As expected, resources in the survey area are fairly uniform. Buildings included within the survey area are primarily single family residences. There are a very limited number of other resource types, including a school, some multiple family residences, a park, and a few commercial buildings along the western edge of the survey area. The majority of the buildings are wood frame construction, with a few brick or other masonry buildings scattered throughout. Most buildings date to the early 20th century, from approximately 1910-1940, with some later infill. Development appears to have spread from the north and east toward the south and west. There are a small number of buildings dating to the late 19th century, primarily in the northern portion of the study area.

E. Recommendations:

Boundary

Based on our reconnaissance survey of the Fairmount neighborhood area and archival research, we proposed the following boundary for the Fairmount District: Myers Street on the north, Commercial Street on the east, Luther street extending to Commercial Street on the south, and John Street extending to Myers Street on the west.

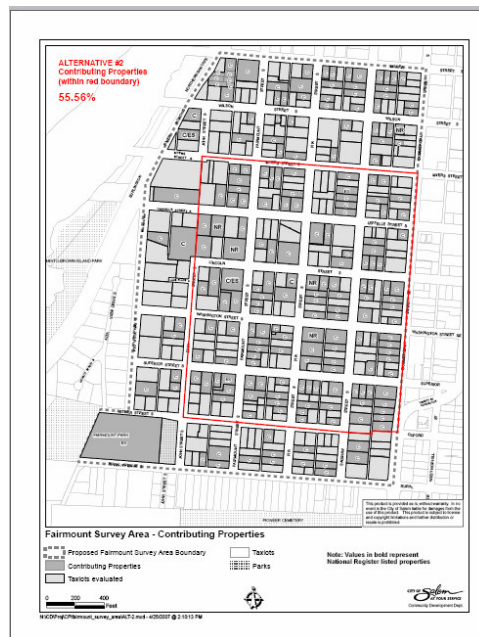


Figure 7: Boundary #2 Alternative

This boundary was determined using the National Register Bulletin Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties. The major considerations applied to this district are the historic boundaries, exclusion of peripheral areas that no longer retain integrity, and physical barriers.

The district boundaries have been drawn to generally follow those of the Myers Addition To Salem Plat of 1871. Excluded from the district are those portions of the survey area north of Myers Street, south of Luther Street, and west of John Street. The proposed boundaries encompass those portions of the present Fairmount neighborhood that contain of predominance of buildings constructed between 1900 and 1939. The proposed boundaries are based on boundaries at a specific time in history, visual changes, and visual barriers.

Myers Street was selected as the northern boundary because it is the northern limit of the Myers Addition To Salem Plat of 1871. Furthermore, the concentration of contributing resources immediately north of Myers Street is low, although a separate historic district may be possible north of Wilson Street.

Commercial Street is the eastern boundary of the district. It is a major arterial and delineates a historic and contemporary boundary for the neighborhood.

Luther Street extending along lot lines to Commercial Street is the proposed southern boundary of the district. The neighborhood was generally developed from north to south, and there is a high concentration of later constructed resources in the southern portion of the study area. As the proposed period of significance is 1880-1939, the area south of Luther Street was excluded for a lack of contributing buildings.

The western boundary selected is John Street extending north along lot lines to Myers Street. West of John Street the topography begins to slope steeply down to the west toward the river. This area is excluded because it was clearly developed much later, as very few of the buildings are historic.

Additional changes to the district boundaries are possible, primarily to eliminate non-contributing properties along the periphery of the district.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for architecturally significant properties is the date of construction. Therefore for a district, the period of significance is a range encompassing the construction dates of all the contributing properties. For the proposed Fairmount District, we recommend a period of significance from 1880-1939. This range encompasses the earliest building constructed in the area and extends to just before World War II, when building styles changed dramatically.

Although the period of significance will begin in 1880, there are only four buildings within the proposed district constructed before 1900. Of these, one was constructed in 1880 and three in

1890. There are only 9 buildings built between 1900 and 1909. Construction jumps dramatically during the period between 1910 and 1919, when there were 32 buildings built in the proposed district. The largest number of resources were constructed between 1920 and 1929, when 80 buildings were built. Between 1930 and 1939, 45 buildings were constructed. Of the houses built in the 1940s, seven were built in 1940, and then there was no more construction in the proposed district until after World War II ended.

The houses built in the Fairmount area were mostly individually designed homes. The styles represent those that were common in the early 20th century across America. The most common style is the Craftsman Bungalow, one of the most popular styles of the early 20th century. Along with the Craftsman Bungalow, two other styles, the Colonial Revival and the English Cottage, make up the majority of the houses within the proposed district. Other styles represented in far smaller numbers included the Italianate, Queen Anne, French Renaissance, Mission, Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor, and Arts & Crafts styles.

Just before and after World War II, the need for housing jumped dramatically. The resulting building boom instigated the development of a new style of house, the small, one-story homes commonly referred to as post-WWII cottages. These simple cottages were economical and quickly constructed in large numbers across the country. They typically had a rectangular box form with a low-pitched side gable roof and minimal detail. Because these cottages constructed in the 1940s are so different in style and form from the majority of the proposed district, and represent a distinctive period of construction, we recommend that the period of significance end in 1939.

Date	Resources in Survey Area	Resources in Recommended District
Pre 1900	10	4
1900-1909	21	9
1910-1919	47	32
1920-1929	118	80
1930-1939	68	45
1940-1949	55	29
1950-1957	35	16
After 1957	38	11
Other	36	13
Total	394	239

Summary

With our recommended boundaries and period of significance, the Fairmount Historic District would include 239 properties, of which 135, or 56%, are contributing. This meets the National Register requirement that at least 50% of the resources be contributing with a comfortable margin.

The boundaries encompass the portion of the study area with the highest concentration of contributing buildings contained on the Myers Addition To Salem Plat. Within this boundary, all resources constructed before 1940 and retaining historic integrity are considered contributing.

F. Explanation of Fieldwork Techniques:

A reconnaissance level survey was conducted of an area extending from Miller Street on the north, Commercial Street on the east, Rural Street on the south, and Rio Vista Way and River Road on the west. We walked down every street and looked at each resource within this area. We took notes on each resource including the style, materials, number of stories, and plan type. We estimated the construction date, and evaluated the integrity of each resource. Finally, we photographed each resource.

We checked the tax assessor's records for construction dates, checked the National Register for listed properties, and constructed a database for our information.

We developed a historic context of the survey area, detailing the historically significant events for each period of development.

We then analyzed our results, developed a recommendation for the proposed Fairmount District boundaries, and prepared a report of our preliminary results.

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