

HOLMAN STATE PARK
in
POLK COUNTY

Holman State Park is a small, pleasantly situated area with a background of local historic interest. It adjoins the north side of the Salem - Dallas Highway (State 22), 4 4 miles west of Salem's business center, smuggled between the roadway and the rising south slope of the pleasant and fruitful Eola Hills. On the opposite side of the highway is the Willamette Valley railroad closely paralleling the Willamette River for a short distance along the park front as it transports long train loads of logs and lumber from the Coast Range forests.

The park borders upon the highway for a distance of 1,517 feet east and west, and is 298.8 feet in width described by metes and bounds as being in Section 30, Township 7 South, Range 3 West, Willamette meridian, in Polk County, containing 8.62 acres. The original deed was dated April 17 1922, which was superseded by a correction deed signed December 29, 1925.

The west end of the tract is bounded by the Eola - Chaplin corners county road as it begins its ascent of the hills. The east line of the one time Eola townsite is forty feet, more or less, west and across the county road from the southwest corner of the park.

Townships 7 South, Ranges 3 and 4 West, Willamette meridian, which hold the park and townsites, were surveyed by William Ired between November 10 1851 and February 5, 1852 and approved by Jno. B Preston, Surveyor General at Oregon City February 5, 1852. Included in these townships were the two William Duran Donation Land Claims, No's 61 and 69. The park is a portion of No. 69.

Two townshites were platted in this immediate vicinity. Eola was laid out on both sides of the range line between sections 30 and 25. The

other, called "Cincinnati", was platted west of and touching the range line for a distance of eight blocks north from the river. A post office was established at "Cincinnati" on June 5 1851 Joshua Shaw, a Donation Land Claim settler was the first postmaster.

On page 248, "Scott's History of the Oregon Country" we read:

"Mrs Abigail Scott Duniway taught a school at Eola in 1853. This village was three and one half miles west of West Salem on Rickreall River, formerly called Cincinnati * It was incorporated as a town under the name Eola, by the territorial legislature January 17, 1856 (Special Laws 1856). Land-owners of the site were William Duran and Joshua Shaw. The first town election took place in March 1856 conducted by J. B. V. Butler, William Hayden and A. C. R. Shaw'.

Old maps show La Creole Creek (now Rickreall River) as entering the Willamette River approximately two miles east of its present outlet. At that time the Willamette River touched the southeast corner of Township 7 South Range 4 West, then made an acute bend to the southeast swinging back to its present channel where the La Creole formerly joined it. The flood of 1890, which reached a crest of 3.1 feet at Salem surged thru an old channel, entering and sweeping down the old La Creole stream bed, where it still flows.

This Eola "Cincinnati" area seems to have been an ambitious, early day community. If it attained any prominence this was eclipsed by the much better situated and perhaps more enterprising citizens of the Salem vicinage, as hopes of future greatness for these embryo towns were never realized:

* In the office of the Marion County Surveyor there are on file two town-site plats. One for Cincinnati and one for Eola which are entirely different.

The Eola-Chaplin Corners road, touching the park has been referred to as a part of the early territorial road system. This does not seem to be substantiated by official records of that time. "A map of Oregon Territory West of Cascade Mountains. Surveyor General's Office, October 1, 1855. C. K. Gardner, Surveyor General and printed as Senate Executive Document No. 1, 34th. Congress 1st. Session" shows a territorial road crossing the Willamette River at Salem, which is followed, approximately, by the present location of the Salem-Dallas Highway to Dallas, where it connected with the road which crossed the river from Oregon City to "Linn City" thence westerly to connect with a road from Portland, thru Lafayette, to Dayton, Dallas, Corvallis, on to Winchester and beyond thence to southern Oregon and California.

From the Salem-Dallas road there was a less used one which turned south from "Cincinnati", crossed the Luckiamute River at the present Helmick State Park site, and connected with the main west-side territorial road at the southwest corner of Township 10 South, Range 3 West, Willamette meridian south of Dallas. The only other territorial road shown on this authentic map of 1855 as being west of the Willamette River and north of the Salem-Dallas road, is the Dayton-Dallas route. This was then the most popular one from the north to points south of Dallas, and most of the early travel southward from Salem also passed thru Dallas when enroute to Eugene or points farther south. If the Eola-Chaplin-Corners road had ever been designated as a part of the early territorial system it was evidently later than the Surveyor General's report of 1855.

An alternative south bound route from Oregon City was thru Silverton, and the present Lebanon, to Spore's ferry, which crossed the McKenzie River near Springfield, and connected with the west side road for journeyings

farther south, not unlike the present road routings.

The rather narrow, elongated Holman Park area is situated at the south base of the Eola Hills, where highway and railroad occupy most of the usable land between the park and the Willamette River. The westerly portion of the park, where development has been carried on, has a low highway bank, with a sloping background that rises for a distance of one hundred fifty feet or more to the flowing spring that wells from the base of the steeper ground, just below the turn of the county road as it begins the ascent of the Eola Hills. The park land, as it rises in its easterly trend, is shaded by fir, oak and maple trees thruout. Its defect is a heavy infestation of poison oak that precludes its use for a picnic area until the poisonous shrub is eradicated. When this is accomplished the area usable for picnicking can be considerably enlarged. However, the elevation of the park spring is too low to supply water to this eastern portion.

The cleared ground has long been a picnic area, for small local and Salem family groups who now utilize the available tables and other park facilities, particularly on the bright and warm days of spring and autumn. The spring was also a popular drinking fount for passers-by, and a watering place for animals long before this popular site became a state park.

The drinking fountain is now much used by those who know the spring and appreciate the cool goodness of its flow, so conveniently accessible beside the highway.

Imbedded in concrete near the drinking fountain is an iron barrel, which is of historic interest to the older citizens of the Salem area, by reason of its associations and long use as a drinking place for the thirsty horses that brought people and produce to the city's marts.

Once a mark of considerable distinction in the community, it was moved from place to place as needs arose its last location on State street, in front of the Ladd and Bush Bank Building As Salem assumed a more metropolitan air with the growing use of automobiles, the incongruity of its presence in front of this venerable institution, after the passing of the "horse and buggy days" was only too apparent, and in keeping with the citys progress, it was removed to its present and final resting place in Holman State Park.

W. A. Langille

September 10, 1947


W. A. LANGILLE

HOLMAN PARK

Recommendations

Holman Park should remain as a picnic wayside area. In time its present picnic area may be enlarged eastward, but the present facilities are sufficient for the patronage of the park at this time. The sunken barrel above the drinking fountain should have a tablet commemorating its early usage in the city of Salem as a horse watering trough, it standing on the curb in front of Ladd and Bush bank. The wooded area should have a general cleanup for fire protection purposes. The wooded hillside should be added to the present park.

May 7, 1948


S. H. Boardman
State Parks Superintendent