



Sellwood Bridge Interpretive Displays Summary

Display Topic	Summary
The Timber Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Side Lumber Company • Historic photos, location, connection to trains
A River of Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kalapuyas, primary Native American group • River as food, water, transportation • Importance of Willamette Falls to Native Americans • Waves of immigrants, new vessels • Rise and decline of shipping • Center of Portland life
Architecture for a Solemn Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River View Cemetery • Architect bios • Cemetery features
River View Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of prominent people buried at River View • Cemetery founder bios
Spanning the Decades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of 100 years the Sellwood Bridge witnessed • Modes used on the bridge • Notes 1894 Burnside Bridge approach girders for the 1925 Sellwood Bridge
A Grand View North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image pointing out prominent features in the view north of Sellwood Bridge • Featuring Oaks Amusement Park
A Grand View South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image pointing out prominent features in the view south of Sellwood Bridge
A Living River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local natural history • Fish and wildlife species • Habitat considerations • Restoration efforts
A Slippery Slope Threatens the Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westside landslide • Geologic layers image • Relationship to bridge foundation
Building a Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Sellwood/Moreland
City of Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief descriptions of 11 bridges across the Willamette (Ross Island, Tilikum, Marquam, Hawthorne, Morrison, Burnside, Steel, Broadway, Fremont, BNSF, St. Johns) • Profile images of the bridges

In the early 20th century, Portland smelled of sawdust and wood smoke and echoed with the sounds of sawmills and lumber trains. Here on the east bank of the Willamette was one of the city's largest mills: the East Side Lumber Company.



THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

The East Side Lumber Company was established in 1902 on the site of the smaller Sorensen and Young Planing Mill, which had been in operation since the 1890s. During the first decade of the 20th century, the mill thrived in this growing, lumber-hungry city, expanding to include door and box-making subsidiaries. In the 1920s, the complex employed 300-500 men, many of whom lived in Sellwood. Timber was hauled in by interurban railroad or floated in on the river. Hard times in the 1930s led to the East Side

Lumber Company's downfall. By the end of the decade, the main mill had shut down. In 1940, a huge fire burned many of the buildings. One part of the complex, the Oregon Door Company, stayed in business until the 1950s.



THE FIRST DESIGN

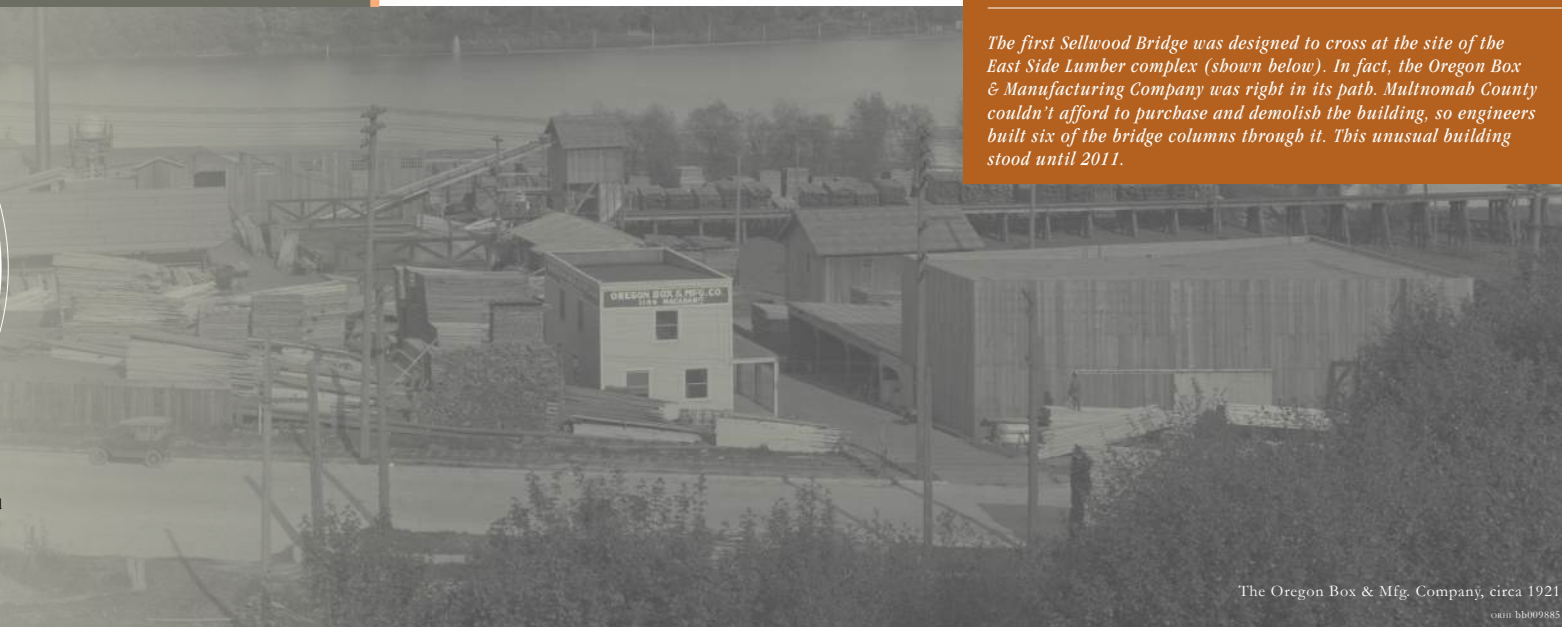
The first Sellwood Bridge was designed to cross at the site of the East Side Lumber complex (shown below). In fact, the Oregon Box & Manufacturing Company was right in its path. Multnomah County couldn't afford to purchase and demolish the building, so engineers built six of the bridge columns through it. This unusual building stood until 2011.



The Springwater Corridor (red line —), a trail managed by Portland Parks and Recreation, follows an old rail line that once brought timber to the East Side Lumber Company.



The East Side complex produced lumber, railroad timbers, lath, shingles, siding, decorative trim, doors, and boxes. Scrap wood was distributed to locals for heating fuel.



The Oregon Box & Mfg. Company, circa 1921
oam bb009885

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RIVER OF OPPORTUNITY

LIKE MANY OTHER GREAT CITIES,
 Portland has a great river at its
 heart: the Willamette.

From its headwaters south of Eugene to where it joins the Columbia, the Willamette is almost 200 miles long. By the time it passes under the Sellwood Bridge, it's running strong with nearly the entire drainage of the Willamette Valley.

For thousands of years before the city of Portland was founded, the Willamette provided people with food, water, and transportation. Just ten miles south of today's Sellwood Bridge is Willamette Falls, one of the most important Native American trading centers of the Pacific Northwest. This stretch of the river bustled with trade and traffic.

The 1800s brought sweeping changes to the Willamette. Introduced diseases killed a large percentage of Pacific Northwest Native peoples. Waves of immigrants arrived from the east to farm the Willamette Valley. On the river, steamboats and barges replaced canoes and rafts.

Within just a few decades of its founding, Portland was one of the West's major port cities, shipping timber, grain, and produce from the Willamette Valley.

As the 20th century dawned, river commerce dwindled as highways and railroads eclipsed much of the Willamette's shipping business. But the river remains at the center of Portland life—and close to the hearts of Portlanders.



CHALLENGES

Among the greatest challenges to pioneer life were the Willamette's frequent floods (1948 flood shown in background). The high waters deposited rich soils, but they also threatened farms, settlements, and lives. In the 1940s, the US Army Corps of Engineers began a huge flood control project designed to regulate the river's flow and generate electricity. By the late 1960s, the thirteen dams of the Willamette Valley Project had "tamed" the river's surges.



When the first Euroamericans arrived here, the primary Native American group of the Willamette River were the Kalapuyas.



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ARCHITECTURE FOR A SOLEMN SETTING



Funeral home architect
 Ellis Fuller Lawrence (1879-1946)



Gates architect
 Albert Ernest Doyle (1877-1928)



Gates architect
 Pietro Belluschi (1899-1994)

RIVER VIEW CEMETERY IS MORE than just a historic and scenic resting place—it's also a treasure of Portland architecture.

Founder and dean of the University of Oregon School of Architecture, Lawrence also designed many other notable houses and buildings in Portland, including Cooley House at Lewis and Clark College and the Cumberland Apartments.

Doyle, who was based in Portland, designed many iconic Northwest buildings, including Multnomah Falls Lodge, the Multnomah County Central Library, and the Benson Hotel. He also designed Portland's famous "Benson Bubbler" drinking fountains.

Belluschi took over mentor Albert Doyle's firm and eventually became a major figure in modern American architecture. In addition to sketching out the cemetery's gates, Belluschi designed the cemetery's Chapel Mausoleum and Office. Other Portland works include the Pacific Building, the Commonwealth Building (originally the Equitable Building), and the Belluschi Building at the Portland Museum of Art.

Funeral Home

This Georgian-style brick building (*below*) was completed in 1913. Once known as the Superintendent's Residence, and now housing the funeral home, it replaced an older "caretaker's cottage" designed by Warren H. Williams. A widow's walk originally capped the building, but it was removed sometime after 1987.



Funeral home

Cemetery Entrance

The original cemetery gates (designed by Ellis Lawrence) were removed in 1928. Architect Albert Ernest Doyle was on his deathbed when he shared his concept for a new set of gates with his student Pietro Belluschi. At Doyle's direction, Belluschi sketched the inverted Ionic columns (*below*)—symbols of death in Greek architecture. The gates have since been removed.



The cemetery column

MORE THAN A CEMETERY

Established in 1882, River View Cemetery is the oldest not-for-profit endowment care cemetery in the Portland area. It is owned and operated by the River View Cemetery Association and governed by the volunteer Board of Trustees. The site is 146 acres and features one of the last tracts of forested habitat left intact in the Portland area. The property provides access to the Willamette River for people and wildlife and helps knit together a wildlife corridor along the west hills.

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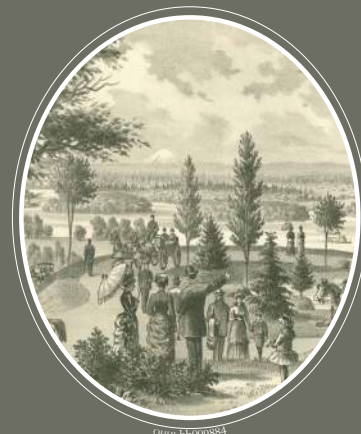
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RIVER VIEW CEMETERY



WELCOME TO RIVER VIEW CEMETERY. ONE OF Portland's oldest cemeteries, River View is also the final resting place for some very celebrated citizens. Please feel free to respectfully explore this lovely site.

River View Cemetery was laid out by Edward Schwagerl, a German immigrant who designed cemeteries in Cleveland and Toledo, as well as the master plan for St. Louis University in Missouri. The image above is from an advertisement encouraging people to picnic at the cemetery.

In the late 1800s, Portland citizens had an uncomfortable problem. The existing town graveyard, located on the east side of the Willamette River, was not sufficient for the growing city. In 1882, a group of prominent locals formed a non-profit association to establish a better cemetery. Following a national "pastoral" movement that favored natural, park-like burial grounds, they chose a bluff on the west bank, with a striking view of the river and hills.

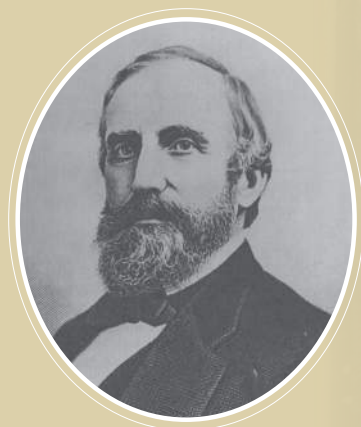
- Portland pioneers (including Simon Benson, Henry Weinhard, and James Terwilliger)
- Political figures and activists (including Oregon's first governor, George Abernethy; Oregonian publishers Harvey Scott and Henry Pittock; Portland's first woman mayor, Dorothy McCullough Lee; and women's suffrage crusader Abigail Scott Duniway)
- Sports figures (including Carl William Mays and Lyle Alzado).

Today, the River View Cemetery is a window into history. Here, you'll find the graves of:

A BODY KIDNAPPED

For all its serenity, River View Cemetery has some darker stories as well. In 1897, the body of William S. Ladd—one of the cemetery's founders and a mayor of Portland—was stolen from his grave and held for ransom. When the family recovered Ladd, they had his coffin encased in concrete to deter future "kidnappings."

Interested in a free self-guided walking tour? Visit the cemetery office (located on SW Taylor's Ferry Road) for brochures. A variety of tours are available.



Founders (left to right) William S. Ladd, Henry W. Corbett, and Henry Failing purchased and donated the land that established the cemetery.

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PANNING THE DECADES

OPENED IN 1925,
 the historic Sellwood Bridge
 served as a river crossing for
 nearly a century— a notable
 Portland landmark and
 an artifact of the early
 automobile age.

When Portland's first big bridges were built in the late 1800s, river traffic was flourishing, and automobiles were still a rare novelty. But cars were on the rise. The Ford Model T—the first affordable automobile—was introduced in 1908. Within a decade, the Portland streets were packed with chugging motorcars. As traffic on the river slowed, traffic above the river exploded. Bridges were more important than ever—and there weren't enough of them.

In 1922, Multnomah County passed a bond measure

interface with the Willamette. The project included three major bridges, including a crossing here at Sellwood.

The Sellwood Bridge, completed in 1925, was the first Willamette bridge designed almost exclusively for cars. It had two auto lanes and—unusual for this era—no streetcar tracks. Built high enough over the river to allow boats to pass underneath, it was the first fixed-span bridge in the city.

RECYCLING

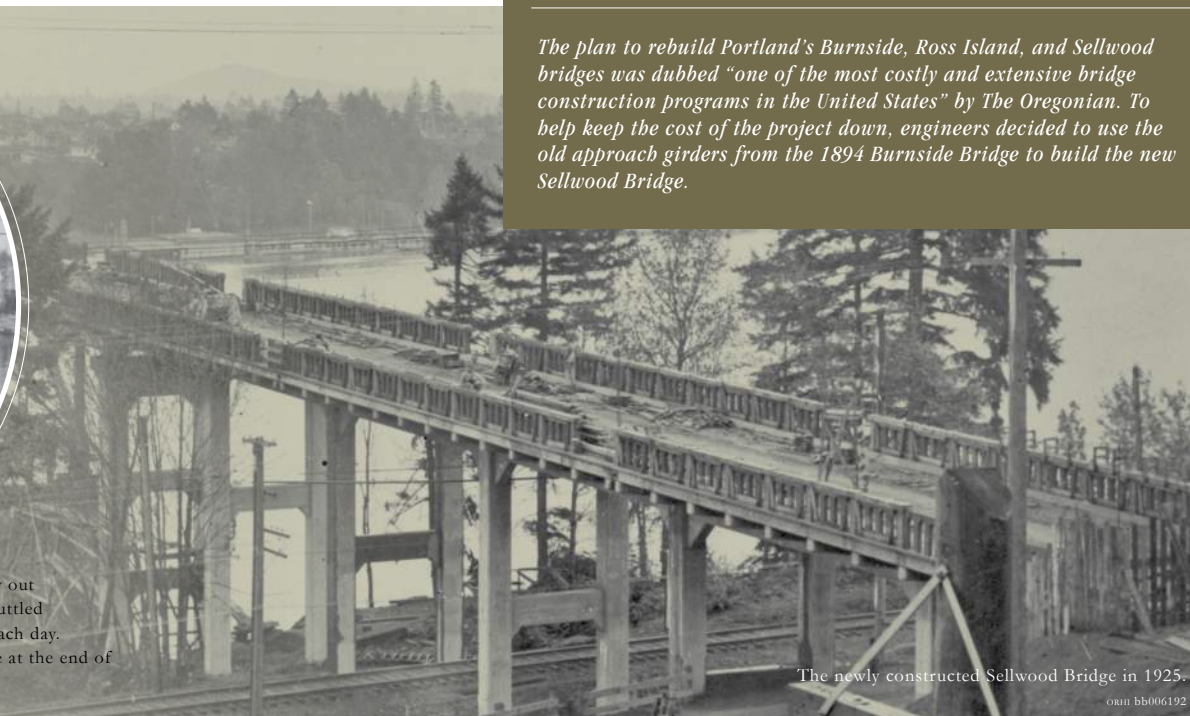
The plan to rebuild Portland's Burnside, Ross Island, and Sellwood bridges was dubbed "one of the most costly and extensive bridge construction programs in the United States" by The Oregonian. To help keep the cost of the project down, engineers decided to use the old approach girders from the 1894 Burnside Bridge to build the new Sellwood Bridge.



Construction began in January of 1925. Crews worked feverishly to meet the contracted schedule, which stated the new Sellwood Bridge was to be completed in just 250 working days, before the end of the year.



When the first Sellwood Bridge was built, it put a ferry out of business. From 1904 to 1925, the John F. Caples shuttled hundreds of passengers and vehicles across the river each day. Its old landings can still be seen today: on the east side at the end of Spokane Street, and on the west side near the old Staff-Jennings boat yard.



The newly constructed Sellwood Bridge in 1925.

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From here, you can see a patchwork of Portland's history, from iconic downtown buildings to a historic amusement park.



GRAND VIEW NORTH

If you build it, they will come... that was the philosophy of the Oregon Water Power and Railway Company (OWPRC). In 1904, to boost ridership on their electric streetcar line, the company created an amusement park, served by regular trolleys and special "expedition cars." During its heyday, Oaks Amusement Park attracted tens of thousands each weekend to ride the Barrel of Fun and the carousel, watch Punch and Judy puppet shows, and roller-skate in one of the best rinks in Portland.

In 1909, OWPRC (which later became Portland General Electric) sold the park. Today it's operated by a private company.



"Shoot the Chutes" roller coaster at Oaks Park



Making ice cream cones at Oaks Park



Oaks Park, foud of 1904.

BY BOAT, HORSE, AND EVENTUALLY CAR...

When Oaks Park opened, the only ways visitors could get to it were by streetcar, boat, and horse. An easement was planned along the railroad tracks so people could come into the park by auto as soon as a road was built. This easement also gave members of the Oregon Yacht Club access to their docks.



The portion of the 1905 Lewis & Clark Fair held in Oaks Park.

Information courtesy of Sharon Wood Wortman, author, *The Portland Bridge Book*.



Former Staff Jennings boat yard

Stonchenge Tower: Installed in 1990, this 625-foot radio tower is the tallest structure in Portland.

Veterans Hospital is one of many medical buildings atop the knoll fondly nicknamed "Pill Hill."

Downtown Portland includes the two tallest buildings in Oregon: the 546-foot Wells Fargo Tower and the 536-foot U.S. Bancorp Tower.

Ross Island gravel pit

On a clear day, in the direction of the Lloyd Center Towers, you can see Mount St. Helens.

Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge

Springwater Trail

Just past the Macadam Bay houseboat community, look for a cluster of small houses on the shore. Some of these are former houseboats, carried aground on floodwaters and re-made as riverfront cottages.

Sellwood Riverfront Park

Oaks Amusement Park

Spokane Street ramp was the eastern dock for the old Sellwood Ferry, replaced by the Sellwood Bridge.

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GRAND VIEW SOUTH

From here, you can see landmarks from Portland's past and present.

- **The Springwater Corridor** pedestrian and bike trail follows the historic interurban rail line that was an important East Side transportation link from 1903 until 1989.
- You'll still hear freight trains rumble past along the tracks of the **Oregon Pacific Railroad**.
- **Waverley Golf Course** opened in 1896, served by interurban rail lines from downtown.
- The **Portland Rowing Club** moved to its current location at the foot of SE Harney Street in 1920.
- The **Portland West Hills** are part of a low volcanic mountain range that separates the Portland Basin from the Tualatin Basin.
- **River View Cemetery** offers a veritable who's who of Portland history. Many of the names here are names which can be seen today marking schools, streets, and other well-known landmarks.
- **Powers Marine Park** is on land donated (in part) during the great depression by the owner of Powers Furniture Company, Ira Powers.



Sailing on the Willamette, circa 1910

RIVER VIEW CEMETERY
 Established in 1882 as a "pastoral" cemetery for Portland, River View was designed by luminaries of Oregon architecture. It's the final resting place for many prominent Oregonians and was such an important destination that special cemetery cars ran regularly on the interurban line.



Waverley Golf Course, circa 1905



Established in 1896, the Waverley Golf Course sits on the former site of the Luelling cherry orchard where the Bing cherry was developed.

The Portland Rowing Club has been at this location at SE Harney Street since 1920

Powers Marine Park.
 Recent efforts to restore native trees, shrubs, and forbs has improved salmon habitat along this narrow 14-acre park.

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LIVING RIVER

Do bald eagles fly over urban bridges? They do in Portland! The Willamette River brings a little bit of the wild into the center of the largest city in Oregon.

Take a few minutes to watch for wildlife—you might be surprised at what you can spot here:

- Great blue herons nest on Ross Island and often fly from this home base to forage along the river's bank.
- Bald eagles are known to nest on the islands near Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge. Watch for them flying along the river, or perching in trees along the shore.
- Osprey winter in South America, but can be seen all along the Willamette River during summer.

Meanwhile, in the river below:

- Adult spring Chinook salmon swim underneath the Sellwood Bridge between February and June, and fall

Chinook pass between August and October. Juvenile salmon rear in the sheltered waters of side channels and along the banks.

- The sand and mud under the Sellwood Bridge is habitat for juvenile Pacific lamprey. The young lampreys nestle in the sediment, feeding on microscopic plants and animals.
- The Willamette is an important spawning river for white sturgeon. These fish can grow to over 15 feet long, weigh over 1000 pounds, and can live for 80-100 years.
- At dawn and dusk, you might spot the V-shaped wake of a beaver, mink or otter swimming close to the bank.

KEEPING THE RIVER HEALTHY

A thriving, living river today, the Willamette nearly died. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, as the population along the river boomed, cities and industry dumped waste directly into the water. By World War II, the river was a biological desert and a health hazard. In the latter part of the century, with the establishment of municipal sewage treatment facilities, tighter control of river dumping, and a new emphasis on preserving natural areas along the shore, the river began to come back to life. Now it is possible to see fish, river otters (background photo), and other riverine inhabitants. Habitat restoration work continues to improve the river's health.



Ongoing restoration projects—such as bank revegetation, weeding out invasive species and creating shelter for young fish—make the Willamette River even more valuable for wildlife.



Natural areas such as the one here at Powers Marine Park (part of Portland's Public Parks system) are critical to the health of the Willamette.

Once a sanitation landfill, the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge is now a thriving wetland and one of the best birding sites in the Portland area.



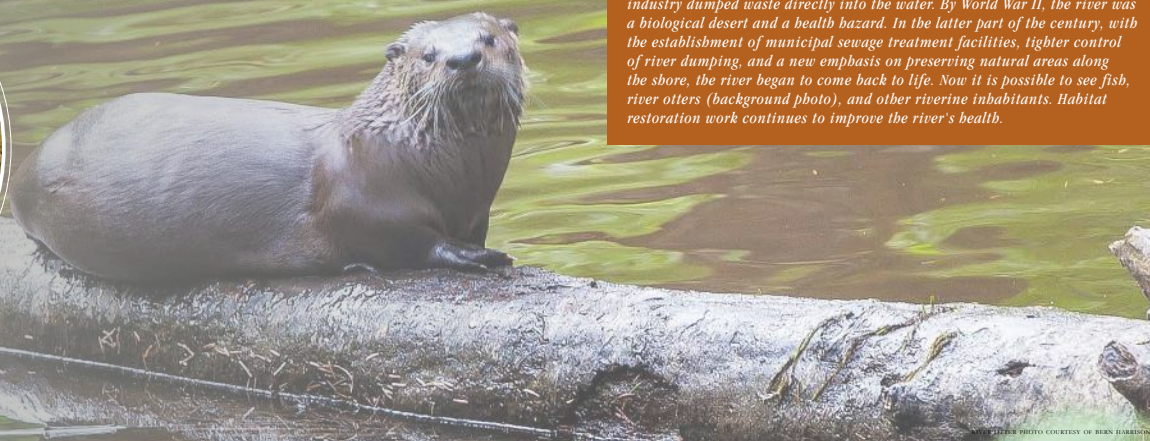
Great Blue Heron



Bald Eagle



Juvenile Chinook Salmon



OTTER PHOTO COURTESY OF BEAN BURTON

The tall bluffs on the west side of the Willamette here at the Sellwood Bridge aren't stable—and that's one of the biggest reasons that the old bridge was replaced.



SLIPPERY SLOPE THREATENS A BRIDGE

The tall bluffs at the west end of the Sellwood Bridge are in constant motion. For thousands of years, inclining basalt over slippery clay has been sliding down toward the river. In fact, an ancient landslide narrowed the Willamette River here and may have contributed to the choice of this site for the original 1925 bridge.

Bridges need a solid foundation. However, the creeping west bank was anything but stable. The original Sellwood Bridge was not anchored in bedrock, but in loose fill and unstable material below it. Persistent earth movement meant constant repairs to shore up the cracking bridge supports.

The new Sellwood Bridge is built with the challenges of the west bank in mind. Bridge supports extend down through the unstable material and into firm basalt bedrock. Surface water diversion is provided to reduce the erosion of the unstable material. Lightweight fill was used in places to avoid changing the delicate landslide weight balance.

Out of view beneath the ground surface, engineers developed a unique pattern of ground anchors and shear piles that literally knit the earth back together. Over the long term these elements will resist the landslide forces and keep the bridge from being pushed towards the river.

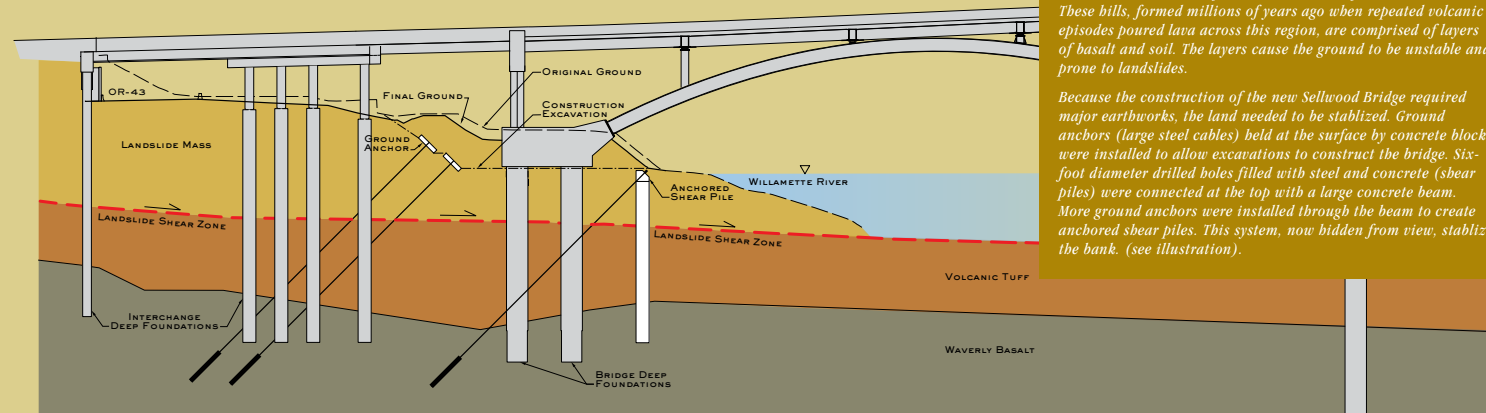


Workers drilling holes for ground anchors on concrete blocks.

LAYERS OF BASALT AND SOIL

The Portland West Hills form the west bank of the river here. These hills, formed millions of years ago when repeated volcanic episodes poured lava across this region, are comprised of layers of basalt and soil. The layers cause the ground to be unstable and prone to landslides.

Because the construction of the new Sellwood Bridge required major earthworks, the land needed to be stabilized. Ground anchors (large steel cables) held at the surface by concrete blocks were installed to allow excavations to construct the bridge. Six-foot diameter drilled holes filled with steel and concrete (shear piles) were connected at the top with a large concrete beam. More ground anchors were installed through the beam to create anchored shear piles. This system, now hidden from view, stabilizes the bank. (see illustration).



Workers remove slide debris from SW Barbur Blvd. circa 1937.



Shoring up a slide in 1939.

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The town of Sellwood (now the Sellwood-Moreland neighborhood of the City of Portland) was born in the 1880s, an age of Oregon industry and entrepreneurs.



BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Sellwood's roots reach back to the 1850s, when settler and orchardist Henderson Luelling established a fruit orchard here on the east bank of the Willamette. In 1866, Luelling sold the land to Reverend John Sellwood, a pioneer Episcopal minister.

By 1882, settlement was booming along the Willamette, with new towns springing up every few months—and every few miles. Reverend Sellwood's property was convenient to a variety of industries in Portland, making it a prime location for a new town. In 1882, Sellwood sold 321 acres to Henry Pittock's Sellwood Real Estate Company. Platted for development and marketed as "contiguous to the city of Portland," the lots sold in installments of \$10 per month.

Savvy businessmen, the owners of the Sellwood Real Estate Company knew that the key to populating their town was access. They established a free ferry across the Willamette—a ferry that crossed at the same point as today's Sellwood Bridge.

The lots sold quickly, and the town grew fast. In 1883, Sellwood had a post office. In 1887, it was incorporated and, in 1893, it merged into the City of Portland. Many residents worked at the East Side Lumber Company (at the east end of the Sellwood Bridge), or for the streetcar system. Others commuted to Portland.

A TRANSPORTATION HUB

Sellwood was a transportation hub even before the turn of the century (background photo). In 1892, the first interurban rail line reached the town. In 1904, the interurban line became an electric streetcar line. In 1909, the streetcar company built the Sellwood Car House (Portland's largest) to shelter and service its cars.

Many Sellwood residents were employed as streetcar operators and mechanics. The company even built a recreation building near the Car House, a perk for employees. Ironically, the Sellwood Bridge was built in 1925 without a streetcar line. It was Portland's first bridge without rail.



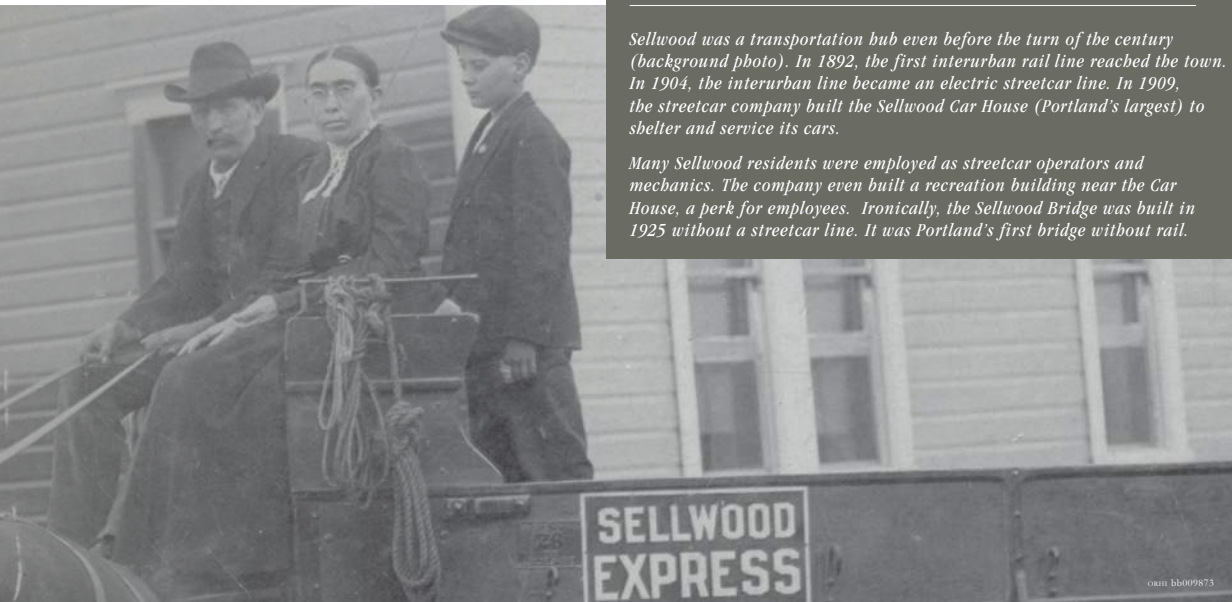
Waverley Golf Course (visible just past the boat docks) was established in 1896. It was a popular stop on the streetcar line.



Portland's streetcar system, powered by electricity generated at Willamette Falls, was one of the first in the nation.



Sellwood City Hall



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The Sellwood Bridge is just one member of a large and historic family of Portland bridges. Concrete and steel; green, red, and black; arched and flat; bascule and lift spans... each bridge has its own character, its own story, and a unique place within the city's landscape.



CITY OF BRIDGES

Ross Island Bridge

This 1926 steel cantilever deck truss was designed by Gustav Lindenthal, the engineer for the original Sellwood Bridge.

Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People

Opened in 2015, this cable-stayed bridge features 14 foot wide bicycle-pedestrian paths on each side—more than any bridge over the Willamette at its time of construction. The main span length between towers is an impressive 780 feet.

Marquam Bridge

This double-deck cantilever bridge carries Interstate 5 traffic across the Willamette. Designed and built by ODOT at a cost of \$14 million in 1966, it is Oregon's busiest bridge.

Hawthorne Bridge

Open since 1910 and made of steel, it is the city's oldest bridge—and the oldest operating vertical lift in the U.S.

Morrison Bridge

This 1958 bascule replaced two earlier swing span bridges. It is the oldest bridge site in Portland—in use since 1887.

Burnside Bridge

Built during the Roaring 20s—along with the Ross Island and Sellwood bridges—the Burnside Bridge we use today replaced a swing span bridge designed in 1894 for horse traffic.

Steel Bridge

The only existing bridge of this type in the world, the two-level, telescoping lift was built by the railroad. It opened in 1912 to trains, followed by cars a few weeks later.

Broadway Bridge

A rare example of a double leaf “rolling” bascule—it is raised and lowered using counterweights. Dating to 1913, it is Portland's first bascule bridge.

Fremont Bridge

Massive but graceful, this distinctive bridge arch is a classic Portland landmark. Spanning 1,255 feet, the 1973 Fremont Bridge is the longest tied arch bridge in North America.

BNSF Railway Bridge 5.1

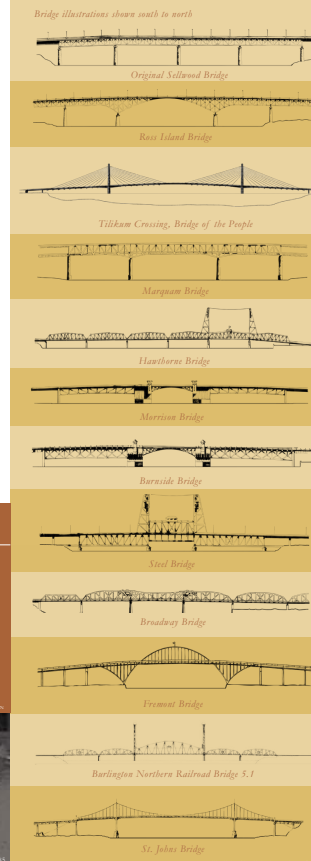
Completed in 1908 as a swing span bridge, the BNSF 5.1 was converted from a swing span to a vertical lift to widen the navigation channel in 1989.

St. Johns Bridge

The beautiful Gothic cathedral spires of this 1931 steel cable suspension bridge made this a career favorite for noted structural engineer David B. Steinman.

BUSY BRIDGES

As Portland has grown, so has roadway traffic—more than a million cars, trucks, and buses used the big river metro-area bridges on an average weekday in 2013. At the same time, river traffic has decreased dramatically. One hundred years ago, tall-masted sailing ships, steamboats, and other watercraft crowded the Willamette. North of the Steel Bridge, there still is considerable commercial traffic: grain ships, other bulk carriers, and petroleum barges. The only water traffic remaining south of the Steel Bridge is recreational boats, tour boats, and construction barges. Nevertheless, federal law for navigable waterways requires that bridges must either open for vessels or be high enough to let them pass under.



client **Sellwood Bridge/Multnomah Cty.**

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project sellwood bridge

code SEL-001

note(s) 64w x 24h

Approved without changes

Make Changes, show new proof

Signature:

main identification

scale nts

by mw

date 01.15.15

versions