



Jackson Bottom has always been a special place. Native peoples used the rich bottom lands to gather food and to hunt. Waterfowl passed through in great numbers. Early settlers homesteaded the uplands. Unfortunately, lack of understanding led to years of abuse and degradation of the wetlands. The wetlands were ditched and drained for agricultural purposes, cattle grazed on the native vegetation, and the wetlands were used over time for disposal of cannery wastes and construction debris.

Hyer Jackson, born in 1806, married Elizabeth Craig in 1831 and studied law in West Virginia, passing the bar in 1836. They moved to Indiana and in 1854 followed Hyer's brothers and sister to Oregon. Hyer obtained land through the Oregon Donation Land Law. He wanted the site by the Tualatin River so he could establish a steamboat landing for the purpose of transportation of people and farm produce, although he was not a farmer. While he was Country Treasurer, he died of a heart attack in 1873. Read more about Hillsboro's Jackson Family.

In 1910 the City of Hillsboro installed sewers in the downtown area which were connected to a septic tank located in the north end of Jackson Bottom. In 1935 the City constructed a sewage treatment plant along Highway 219 to replace the inadequate earlier system.

By the 1930s Hillsboro's population had reached approximately 3,500 people and its economy was centered on cannery and lumbering activities. Cannery wastes were discharged directly into the Tualatin River, polluting the river to such an extent that the dairy farmers could no longer use the river water for their herds.

Many farmers were incensed about river pollution and at least a few threatened to sue the city. With the effects of the Depression prevalent in Oregon, money was tight and the City leaders were hesitant to take action against the canneries. In 1939 the largest cannery, Maling & Company, purchased the 120-acre Trent farm to eliminate the most vocal opponent of river pollution. The farm was then resold to the City and became the first publicly owned property in Jackson Bottom.