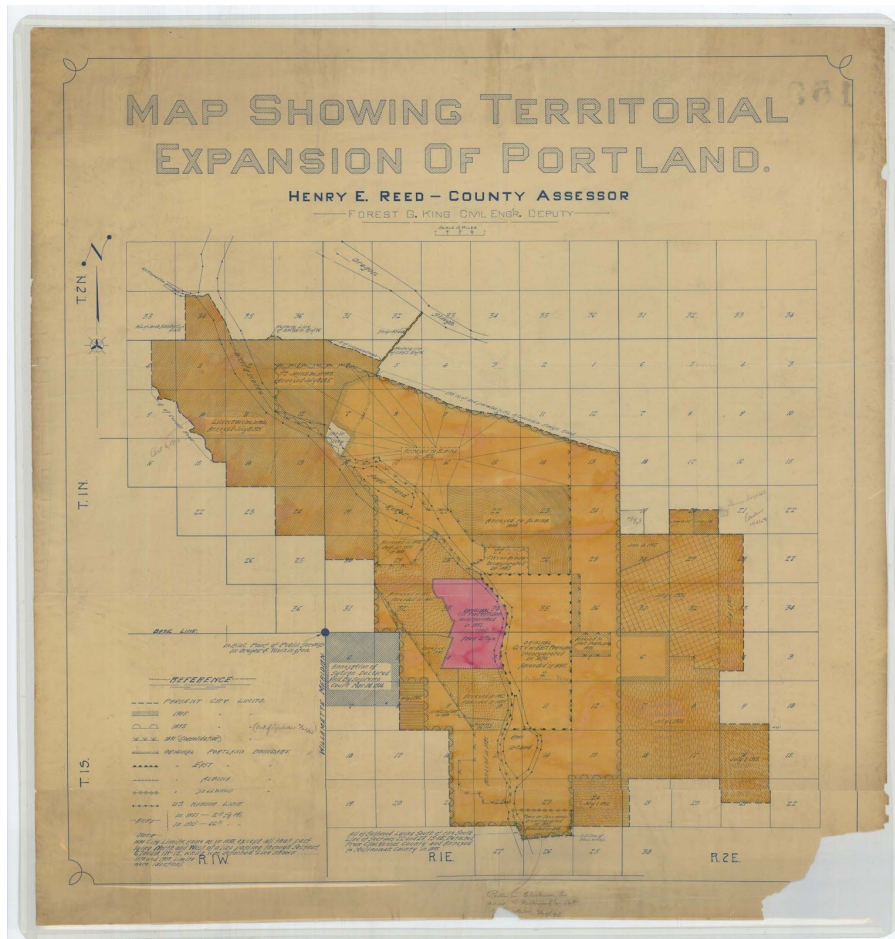


The author of this article lives and works on unceded territory of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other Tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River.

The Peninsula Boulevard System

Jan de Leeuw

Version 07-09-2018



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Which parts of Portland belong to the area known for a long time as the Peninsula is somewhat ambiguous. Geographically it makes most sense to define the Peninsula as the area between the Willamette River and the Columbia River, west of what is now I-5, or maybe west of what is now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It is also tempting to identify it with the modern North Portland Neighborhood Coalition, which consists of the eleven neighborhoods west of Interstate 5, plus Piedmont, East

Columbia, and Hayden Island. Or with what the City considers to be North Portland, which is basically everything between the rivers west of Williams Avenue. In the old newspapers the Peninsula, or Willamette-Columbia Peninsula, was defined loosely, and even included Woodlawn sometimes. The term does not really seem to be used much before 1890.

So what was there on the Peninsula at the end of the nineteenth century ? The oldest part was its most western area. Pieces of the Town of St. Johns were platted between 1865 and 1876. The City of St. Johns was incorporated and got its charter in 1902. The City of Albina incorporated in 1887, and In 1891 annexed all of the Peninsula, except St. Johns. As we shall try to show, one reason for the annexation is that some business interests started to make plans for the Peninsula. In the Oregonian of August 20, 1888 we see the first signs of this.

TWO STREET-CAR LINES TO RUN

Through the Central Portion

Of the city and across the peninsula to the banks of the Columbia, are to be pushed vigorously to completion, one being now under construction, and the franchise procured and iron ordered for the other.

No other locality in Oregon has such solid, substantial backing.
No other spot in Oregon can have just the peculiar combinations of

LARGE INTERESTS

Which are sure to make Albina

A Great Business and Industrial Center.

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There is another clear sign. In July of that same year 1891 Portland, East Portland, and Albina were consolidated into a new city, also known as the City of Portland. The major reason for Albina and East Portland to vote for consolidation was that the larger city could more efficiently deliver the services needed for development. The excellent 1915 map at the beginning of this chapter illustrates the various annexations.

As a consequence of this annexation, and the planning of large private investments (or, more precisely, relatively small investments with a potentially large payoff) around 1890 development on the more eastern parts of the Peninsula really started to take off. We see tireless boosting by Francis McKenna, John Mock, Edward Quackenbush, William Killingsworth, and their various real estate companies and business associations. Undeveloped land was made ready for development. Piedmont, Saratoga and Lochinvar were platted in 1889, Portsmouth and Goodmorning in 1890, University Park and Arbor Lodge in 1891. Peninsula Additions numbers one to five were added between 1890 and 1892. The newspaper of record started to show the usual signs that some people were spending substantial amounts of advertising dollars to boost their investments. In the Oregonian of May 11, 1890 we see a tantalizing announcement.



<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Z-XFGRMwGUsATOYPHhXKOLAyAhNZdZcO>

The map included in this announcement is interesting. We see the “proposed belt line”, consisting of what is now Willamette Boulevard and Columbia Boulevard. We see the proposed Union Pacific railroad, crossing the Columbia. We see the Portland-Vancouver railroad, and the St. Johns Motorway. We see the many houses in Albina and the promising emptiness on the peninsula.

Famous persons were recruited to sing the praises of the Peninsula. Perhaps the most famous person in Oregon at the time was Henry Vilard, founder and/or owner of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the New York Post, The Nation, and General Electric, major donor to the University of Oregon, father of Union Station, the Portland Hotel, and the railroad line through the Columbia Gorge. In the Oregonian of May 22, 1890 we read his poetic view of the Willamette-Columbia peninsula.

It will contain some day the business and population of a large city. Look at the miles of waterfront navigable to the deepest sea-going vessels. That neck of land will be surrounded with docks and wharves where the vessels of the world will exchange cargoes. The busy hum of factories will be heard there from morning till night and from night till morning. Great banking firms will be established there to accommodate this business. Stores and dwelling houses will spring up in a night, as it were, to accommodate the laborer and his employer.

The Oregonian of May 15, 1890 gushes

Among the numerous enterprises of the past year none of greater importance or direct value to the city exists than the St. Johns motor line, which opens out and make readily accessible probably one of the finest districts about the city, known as the Willamette-Columbia Peninsula.

The article goes on mentioning that the “leading real estate people as well as the prominent financiers” are well aware of the major transactions that have been consummated in the area, and that are already in the records of Multnomah County. It promises, by citing an “Eastern gentleman of large and varied experience”, that “acres selling to-day for a few hundred dollars will in the course of very few years bring as many thousands”. We see a land boom in the making.



[Francis I. McKenna](#)

It is time to mention the name of the main actor in all of this. Let's meet the "father of the peninsula", primus inter pares, the main driving force behind the promotion and the growth of the peninsula. Francis I. McKenna platted the University Park subdivision, which surrounded the Portland University campus. He also platted Good Morning Addition and Lochinvar, and was the sole agent selling lots in Portsmouth and Arbor Lodge. It was clearly in McKenna's interest to "unlock the Peninsula" by having electric streetcar lines and a system of paved and wide streets (boulevards) going all the way to St. Johns. Thus he became the "father of the boulevard system" on the Peninsula as well as the "father of the St. Johns Electric Line". And he became very rich in the process and earned himself [a nice Wikipedia page](#).

We can illustrate the immense commercial value of the streetcar line, the university, and the boulevards in some advertisements for University Park, Portsmouth, and Arbor Lodge. All from the 1891 Oregonian. And all designed and paid for by McKenna's Conservative Real Estate & Trust Company.

PORTSMOUTH

Has a gentle slope toward the Willamette River, and everybody knows the nearer the Willamette the more valuable the property, either in the city or suburbs. Along Portsmouth water front will be great manufacturing establishments in the near future.

Portsmouth Now Has a Population of 100 People

And several new houses under construction to accommodate a large number more.

ALLEYS * DON'T FORGET THIS * ALLEYS * IMPORTANT POINT! *

It is impossible to keep streets clean where there are no alleys, as coal, wood and other articles must be first dumped into the street and carried back, thus continually littering up the street. Where there are alleys wood and coal houses can be built on the alleys, into which the wood and coal can be stored, and, therefore, keep both street and alley clean. Portsmouth has alleys throughout.

Portsmouth { The Pride of the Peninsula!
Seat of Portland University!
Choice Residence Location!

All Persons Seeking Locations	
for Fine Homes Will Now	
Head Toward PORTSMOUTH	

EFFECT ON VALUES—Wherever a University, a College or a Seminary has been located in the suburbs of a thriving city, surrounding property has invariably increased in value from 300 to 2000 per cent within two years after establishment of institution. For proof of this statement we refer you to Chicago, Minneapolis, Omaha, Wichita and Kansas City.

TELL THE TRUTH—There are two boulevards projected on the Peninsula. The Willamette boulevard follows along the bluff of the Willamette to St. John's and is 100 feet wide. The Portland boulevard passes down the Peninsula on the east side of the St. John's Motor Line to St. John's, where it connects with the Willamette boulevard. The exact location of the latter is not definitely settled yet, as several places are bidding for it.

PRICES AND TERMS—We will sell lots for a short time at \$250 each, 10 per cent cash and \$10 monthly on a single lot, or \$15 monthly on two lots, or \$20 monthly on a purchase of three lots.

SWEET CHARITY—To purchasers of three lots we will offer the following extraordinary inducements: In case of death of purchaser, before completing payments for lots, we will give warranty deed to heirs of deceased clear of incumbrance for the three lots without further payments. If purchaser lose an eye, an arm, or a leg, we will give him a deed for one lot without further payment, and allow money paid in to apply on the other two lots. Whether lots sell or not, we will advance the price \$50 each month regularly till the price of \$500 is reached.

PORTSMOUTH—Don't forget the name. It is the old original Portsmouth Tract, without accent, emphasis or any unusual stress of voice on any particular part of the name. It is shown on every map of the city of Portland that has been made within the last ten years.

FOR SALE BY THE OWNERS,

Conservative Real Estate and Trust Co.,

FRANCIS J. MCKENNA, Manager.

G. H. VAN HOUTEN, Trustee.

Room 21, Washington Block, Cor. Fourth and Washington Sts. Take Elevator.

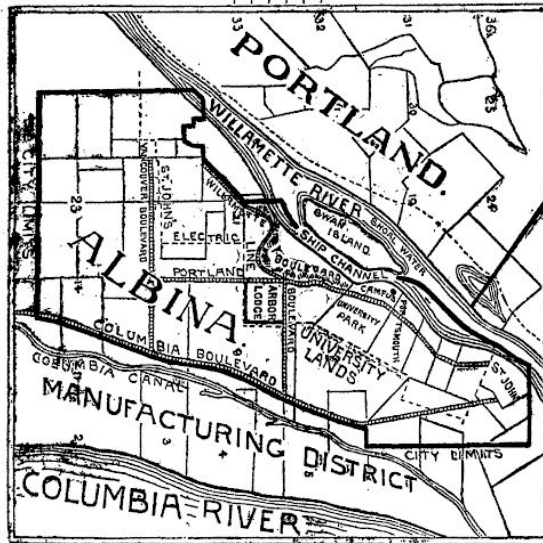
ARBOR LODGE

Will be on the Market

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Be prepared to take advantage of opening prices.

See Where Arbor Lodge is Located—Motor Line on Two Sides and Boulevard on Other Two Sides.



Conservative Real Estate & Trust Co.

FRANCIS I. MCKENNA, - - Manager.
C. H. VAN HOUTEN, - - - Trustee.

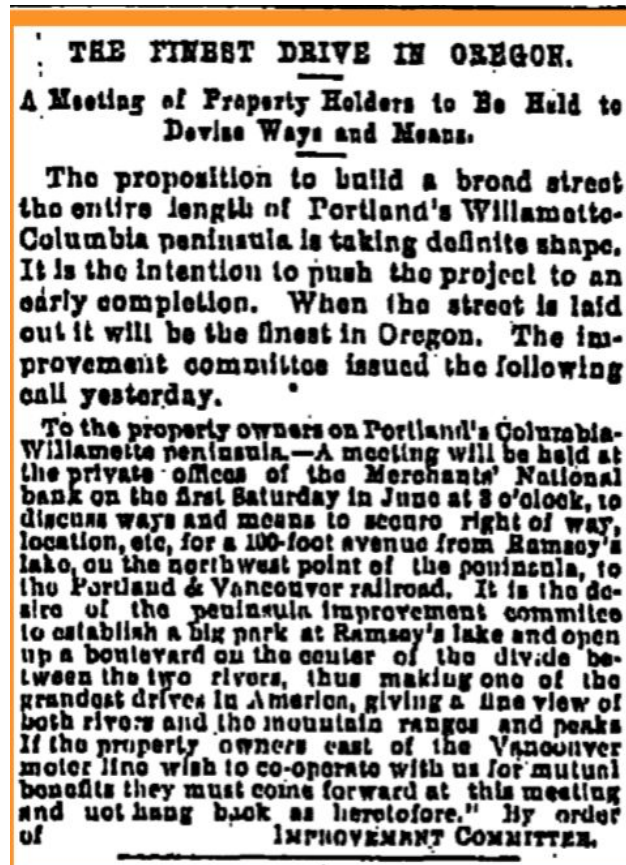
ROOM 21, WASHINGTON BLOCK

← WILL REMOVE →

To Storeroom No. 44 Stark Street, Concord Block, between Second and Third Sts., April 11.

ARBOR LODGE

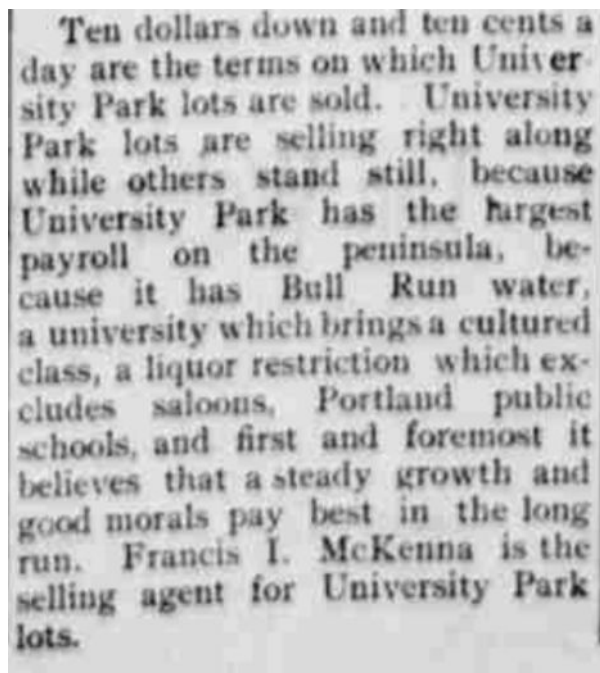
The maps in these advertisements again make it clear one more time where boulevards were planned. There is Willamette Boulevard along the Willamette River, Columbia Boulevard along the Columbia Slough, and Portland Boulevard through the middle of the Peninsula. All three boulevards started basically at Vancouver Boulevard and continued all the way to St. Johns. Note that in the advertisements Willamette and Portland Boulevards are drawn in as if they already existed, and were already graded and paved. That was not the case at all, as we will see below. In fact, Portland Boulevard (now Rosa Parks Way) was never extended that far west, and was replaced in the boulevard scheme by Lombard Street (only a "street", not a "boulevard").



Also note, as an aside, that the Portsmouth advertisement really makes it attractive to buy three lots. It even comes with a quaint type of mortgage insurance

In case of death of purchaser, before completing payment for lots, we will give warranty deeds to heirs of deceased clear of encumbrance for the three lots without further payment. If purchaser lose an eye, an arm, or a leg we will give him a deed for one lot without further payment, and allow money paid in to apply to the other two lots.

University Park was clearly the most influential and the most desirable area on the Peninsula. The following note from the St. Johns Review of August 17, 1906 illustrates the sales pitch.



Ten dollars down and ten cents a day are the terms on which University Park lots are sold. University Park lots are selling right along while others stand still, because University Park has the largest payroll on the peninsula, because it has Bull Run water, a university which brings a cultured class, a liquor restriction which excludes saloons, Portland public schools, and first and foremost it believes that a steady growth and good morals pay best in the long run. Francis I. McKenna is the selling agent for University Park lots.

Through the years, all the way into the twenty first century, Portland city government has very much agreed that “steady growth pays best in the long run”. I am not so sure they had the same positive opinion about the value and effectiveness of “good morals”.

It is important to emphasize again that the plan for the boulevard system was born in the City of Albina. This is shown clearly in the map on the Arbor Lodge advertisement. At that time talk of consolidation with Portland was very much in the air. The Oregonian published letters on May 14 and May 20, 1891 signed by a person or persons using the pseudonym “Albina”.

The main argument made by “Albina” in those letters (you can find links in the references section at the end of this chapter) was that the anti-consolidationists conspired with both city and state government to postpone consolidation for a couple of years until they had secured the \$ 50,000 in bond money and \$ 50,000 in parks money that the city council of Albina had allocated. Transferring the bond, and the plans for boulevards and parks on the Peninsula, to a consolidated Portland introduced an element of uncertainty. Although “Albina” never mentions McKenna by name, it is clear that he is the main villain in this conspiracy. The boulevards, railways, and parks were greatly increasing the value of his property, and that of the other real estate men involved in the conspiracy.

Last year a certain dealer in real estate down on the peninsula, who, by the way, is not a resident of Albina, succeeded in working up a boulevard scheme in connection with other owners of property through or along which the proposed boulevard would pass.

Now I must admit that my personal biases make it easy for me to believe that real estate dealers and developers conspire with local government to get their projects approved and their plans passed. This does not imply that their projects are necessarily detrimental to the common good, but it does imply that undue influence is used to make some people richer than others, and that tax dollars are used to heavily subsidize growth of private fortunes.

There was a furious reaction to “Albina” by McKenna on May 24, 1891. Again, see the link in the references section. His letter includes a short history of the boulevard system proposal.

About two years ago a large number of property owners on the peninsula and in Albina concluded something must be done to attract the attention of the people to Albina’s natural advantages or “the city would grow south” and Albina would be left the same old “mud hole”

The “public-spirited men” decided to establish the Willamette-Columbia Peninsula Advertising Committee, buying \$ 4,000 worth of advertising to promote Albina. The committee agreed for McKenna to advocate in the Oregonian for “a grand system of boulevards connecting Albina, Portland, East Portland, St. Johns, and Mount Tabor.” Subsequently a right-of-way committee (chaired by Killingsworth) and a finance committee (chaired by McKenna) were appointed.

At this time I did not own one dollar’s worth of property on the proposed line of boulevard and neither did the people I represent.

And we are supposed to believe that ? Several miles of right-of-way were obtained, presumably for Willamette Boulevard, and negotiations with the state senate and the Albina city council resulted in the actual allocation of \$ 50,000 for boulevards and \$ 50,000 for parks. At consolidation, of course, the newly formed City of Portland took over the encumbrances of the bonds. McKenna tells the story how the boulevard scheme fared in state and city government, all in 1891, and ends his letter with a Trumpian flourish.

Mr. “Albina” if you believe what you say, it is your duty to have me indicted before the courts, or if you will sign your name to that statement and give the names of the parties to whom you refer in that statement I will forthwith call you into court.

The exchange of letters illustrate various important points. It is possible to be public-spirited and make a lot of money at the same time. Being both public-spirited and rich makes it easy to negotiate with local government and convince them of the value of your projects. And, finally, impugning the integrity and public-spiritedness of a rich real estate person can easily lead to a lawsuit.

Back to the boulevard system. In its very last meeting of July 6, 1891 the Albina city council awarded the contract for clearing the boulevards to Wolf, Hendricks & Co. The Oregonian of July 7 describes the four boulevards on the peninsula, being 15 miles total, that have been “laid out”. It also mentions that “the boulevard question has occupied the attention of the council to a very great extent”. That is putting it mildly -- it almost seems as if in its last year it was the only item on the agenda.

THE BOULEVARDS.

The boulevard question has occupied the attention of the council to a very great extent. Four of these highways have been laid out on the peninsula and covering a distance of over fifteen miles. They are as follows:

Willamette Boulevard—A street 100 feet wide, from the point where the section line between sections 21 and 22, town. 1 north, range 1 east, intersects the bluff of the Willamette river; thence following the irregular line of the bluff through the Alrama and Knox tract and other tracts of land to the Willamette boulevard in Willamette; thence along the last named boulevard, through Willamette and Arbor Lodge, to and through the land of John Mock, and thence to St. John's.

Vancouver Boulevard—A street or boulevard eighty (80) feet in width to be called Vancouver boulevard and bounded and described as follows, to-wit: Beginning in the north line of Piedmont at a point ten feet east of the east line of the county road leading from East Portland to the south bank of the Columbia river opposite Vancouver, Wash., and known as the Vancouver road, and running thence southerly on a line parallel with the said east line of said road to the north line of Russell street; thence west along the north line of Russell street eighty feet; thence northerly on a line parallel with said road to the north line of Piedmont; thence east eighty feet to the place of beginning.

Multnomah Boulevard—A street or boulevard 100 feet wide commencing on the southeast corner of section 21, township 1 north, range 1 east, and extending thence north along section line between sections 21 and 22, 15 and 16, 9 and 10, township 1 north, range 1 east, to the Columbia slough road, to be known as the Multnomah boulevard.

Portland Boulevard—A boulevard or street 100 feet wide beginning at the point where the section line passing through the center of sections 15 and 16, township 1 north, range 1 east, intersects Vancouver avenue; thence west along said line to where said line intersects the center line of Willamette boulevard as shown on plat of Arbor Lodge; thence northwesterly along said center line of said Willamette boulevard to the line between sections 16 and 17 also 8 and 9 in said township; thence north along said line between said sections to the central line of First street in Peninsular addition No. 2; then west along said last-named street to the west line of Glenwood park.

Some notes for clarification: the line between section 21 and 22 intersects the bluff at the west end of Russell Street, at the south end of the Union Pacific Railroad yards. The Abrams and Knox tract was northeast of the railroad yards. The southern part of the proposed boulevard follows a track similar to current N Greeley Avenue. There already was a Willamette Boulevard in the plats of Arbor Lodge and Willamette, running east from Patton Avenue (now Interstate Avenue) to the bluff, and then along the bluff to Portland Boulevard (now Rosa Parks Way). The proposed Vancouver Boulevard, 80 feet wide, runs from Russell to the north line of Piedmont, and is 80 feet wide. It overlaps with, and thus replaces, the old Vancouver Road. Multnomah Boulevard, 100 feet wide, follows the same route as current Interstate Avenue, from Russell north to the Columbia Slough Road (now Columbia Boulevard). Portland Boulevard runs west along what is now Rosa Parks Way starting at Vancouver Road until it intersects Willamette Boulevard on the bluff above Mocks Bottom, then north along the east line of the Arbor Lodge subdivision on what is now N Wabash Avenue, and then west along N Willis Boulevard until N Washburne Avenue.

So this is where the boulevard system was in 1891. Four boulevards approved, and "laid out", which presumably means graded. After 1891 there is an ominous silence about the boulevards. There are several possible reasons for this. One is the grandiose promises of real estate salesmen which usually fail to materialize. Second, and more seriously, the 1890's were rocked by serious economic depressions, known as the [Panic of 1893](#) and the [Panic of 1896](#). Especially the 1893 one, which lasted at least three years, was as almost as serious as the great depression of the 1930's. A quarter of all railroad companies went out of business, five hundred banks closed, fifteen thousand businesses failed, and numerous farms ceased operation. The unemployment rate hit 25% in Pennsylvania, 35% in New York, and 43% in Michigan. That must have depressed real estate sales everywhere, including sales on the Peninsula, in particular in University Park. And finally, the last moments and deeds of the Albina City Council were tainted by graft and incompetence. The Oregonian of October 30, 1899, has an amusing piece about the last days before consolidation. Here is a paragraph from that article.

'They Spent Money Like Water.'

The closing scene of the old city council of Albina was very pathetic, indeed; and will not soon be forgotten by those who happened to be present at that time. For about a week the council had been holding special meetings almost every night to close up business and make as many appropriations as possible for that portion of the city. It was felt that the large sums that had been gathered through the sale of bonds for the great boulevard system on the peninsula, the parks and other things must be spent, or that they would fall into the hands of the consolidated city. One of the last acts was to make a contract for the grading of the Willamette boulevard. There were \$50,000 in boulevard bonds to start work on the gigantic scheme which was to benefit land speculators. The contract was let. It was the sale of parks that caused a squabble. It was known that the city council would buy some parks, and there were many offers, and finally four pieces were bought, none of which will ever be suitable for park purposes. Fancy prices were paid.

Just to tie up a loose end, the four park properties bought by Albina are described in the Oregonian of January 1, 1904. You have to guess the unreadable last words in each line.

The City of Albina, before its annexation, had bought for \$35,000 25½ acres June, 1891, which were given the name of Columbia Park and became the property of Portland on the annexation of Albina. Holladay Park, in East Portland, five acres, was acquired by the recording of the plat in December, 1891, an acre in Albina Homestead was bought of E. Mallory for \$11,200, in July, 1891, other small park on the East side created by the plat of Ladd's Addition south of Hawthorne avenue.

In 1899 the Oregonian of February 28 gives a sad report about the state of the boulevard system. There is no mention of the Vancouver and Multnomah boulevards, but Portland Boulevard is short and insignificant, and Willamette Boulevard is a mess. In the eight years since grading there has been no graveling or other forms of paving. There is some hope the situation will improve if the boulevards are made county roads, which makes the county responsible for overseeing their maintenance.

Boulevards Are County Roads.

Through a bill introduced in the legislature the Willamette and the Portland boulevards, on the peninsula, were changed into county roads. The construction of these boulevards was the result of a real estate scheme worked through the late lamented Albina city council, and they cost nearly all the \$50,000 in boulevard bonds authorized for their building. They were simply graded out at great cost and never graveled. During the dry season they are in fair condition, but the Willamette boulevard is now almost impass-

able in the winter. If it were graveled in the center, after the fashion of other county roads, it would make a magnificent road. Beginning at the top of the hill, above the O. R. & N. terminal works, it winds around the margin of the bluff above the Willamette river for a considerable portion of the distance to St. Johns. From the point it first touches the edge of the bluff above the river the road swings around the eastward curve to the campus of the Consolidated Portland university for a distance of about 2½ miles, when it leaves the river. On the whole, it is a very picturesque drive, and averages about 80 feet wide. If the county will gravel the center of it, it will answer all purposes. The Portland boulevard is a short street cut through from the Vancouver road to the Willamette, and is not of much importance. Had the vast boulevard scheme under contemplation at that time been carried out, the cost would have run up into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The contracts for the grading of the Willamette and the Portland boulevards were let just before consolidation, and that ended the matter.

None of this in any way impeded Francis I. McKenna from making additional grandiose plans (and additional money). In the Oregonian of August 28, 1910, he proposes to make the Columbia Slough Road into an 80 feet wide boulevard, running from St. Johns to Troutdale.

On the Peninsula I think we are fortunate in having our fine boulevard system, which is just now being improved and extended. I had a part in the great fight to get that boulevard system, and even then we did not get all we were after. We did not have time to complete our work before consolidation, but what we did get stays. We failed to make Vancouver Avenue an 80 foot boulevard for lack of time.

The rest of the interview is also worth reading. McKenna ignores the fact that it has been twenty years since the grading was done. He also admits that consolidation got in the way of his schemes. Looking back it does indeed look as if the incorporation of Albina, which made it possible to issue bonds, the quick annexation of the peninsula after that, and the quick adoption of the boulevard and park schemes, was an elaborate and rather shameless ploy by real estate interests.

FORTUNE CALLING YOU

Where seven railroads meet the ocean-going vessels of the world there must be a great business center. There is no exception to this rule. The Willamette River bounds University Park on the south and west, the Columbia River on the north, with four transcontinental and three interstate railroads centering in its midst

Railroads Make Cities

Railroads made St. Paul, Minn., 250,000 population, then centered at a point 12 miles away and made Minneapolis 300,000 population. Railroads formed a center almost in the front doors of Chicago, St. Louis and Cincinnati, and like magic sprang up Indianapolis, 150,000 population. At the junction of three railroads in an open, bleak prairie, Des Moines grew to 150,000 population. The location of every inland populous city was determined by the advent of railroads. If railroads have done such wonderful things without water transportation, what will railroads do for University Park, with the assistance of two great navigable rivers? You see the point.

Railroads

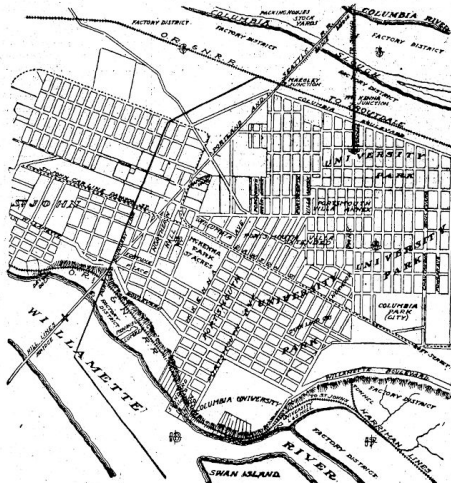
The Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Northern Pacific and Great Northern—four great transcontinental railroads—cross, recross and surround University Park. The Portland & Seattle, Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company and the Oregon & Washington Railroad also have lines projected through University Park. These railroads are main lines and not branch lines.

Other Advantages

University Park is no outside, wildcat speculation. It has been within the city boundaries of Portland for fourteen years. It has Bull Run water, a 30-acre public park owned and kept by the city, city schools, quick transportation, electric arc street lights, graded streets, cement walks, a building restriction, three systems of wide boulevards, view of Cascade and Coast Ranges of mountains, view of four perpetually snow-covered mountains, high level and sightly, and the seat of Columbia University. You know what this means.

Study the Picture

Look at the location of the navigable rivers; look at the location of the railroad and proposed railroads; look at the street-car lines; look at the factory district, north, south and west;



look at the boulevards and wide streets; see where the dry-docks, stockyards, packing-houses, lumber mills and the Columbia University are located. Notice the location of the proposed Harriman tunnel. See where McKenna Junction and Masgely Junction are located. You know that it will be only a question of a short time till this condition will make the cheapest lot in University Park worth \$100 per front foot—\$500 per front foot in 10 years need not surprise you. Here is your opportunity.

Remember!

Don't forget that lots at St. Johns advanced from \$100 each to \$10,000 each since 1901, and that advance was made on the strength of only one freight spur or branch railroad. St. Johns today has no main line, and yet there are lots in St. Johns that cannot be bought for less than \$10,000 that sold in 1901 for less than \$100. Remember, also, that in 1900 and 1901 I foretold, through the columns of this paper, what would take place in St. Johns, and those who followed my advice made big fortunes. Those who will follow my advice now and buy a few lots at University Park in vicinity of McKenna Junction, within the next 60 days, will make big profits within the next three years. This is your opportunity.

Prices and Terms

Prices range from \$200 per lot, 25x100 feet, to \$250. Terms: Ten per cent cash down, balance \$5 per lot monthly. No interest on deferred payments if paid on or before due. These prices will be advanced from month to month without further notice.

FRANCIS I. McKENNA

Office at University Park Station, on St. Johns Electric Line, PORTLAND, OREGON.
Phone Woodlawn 239. No Up-Town Office.

McKenna now personally owned more than 1000 lots on the Peninsula. The Saint Johns Review of April 30, 1909 reports he bought 500 lots in University Park for \$ 100,000.

Mr. McKenna made this large investment not for the purpose of reselling with with the determination to hold every lot until after the year 1920, at which time he believes no lot favorably situated on the Peninsula can be purchased for less than \$100 per front foot.

McKenna himself didn't make it until 1920. He died February 24, 1914. Besides the obvious vindication of starting as a farm-hand and ending up as a multi-millionaire, his boulevard system was also generally seen by 1910 as a great visionary success.

After the economy improved, and George Williams became mayor of Portland, both the county and the city got serious about paving the main boulevards and streets. Also, Dawson Street and Pippin Street were joined and renamed Lombard Street, which finally did produce something like a central boulevard. The Oregonian of April 28, 1912 sings the praises of the boulevard system, and the idea of running 80 and 100 feet wide boulevards through what was, at the time, "the brush that covered most of the Peninsula with an impenetrable mess." The article says that 2.5 million dollars already has been spent on streets north of Killingsworth, with another one million to come in 1912, as well as between one and two million for a sewer system, and up to six million for the industrial area on the Slough. In the Oregonian of January 16, 1913, announces the paving of Willamette Boulevard, together with Wabash Street, Greeley Street, Lombard Street, Patton Avenue (Interstate) and Albina Avenue with hard-surface pavement (asphalt).

Other chapters in this book will detail the history of the important streets in Piedmont that were part of the boulevard system: Lombard Boulevard, Vancouver Avenue, and Portland Boulevard will each have their very own chapter. This chapter, on the Boulevard System, argues that gambling on so-called visionary ideas will only pay off if it is backed up by boundless energy, lots of borrowed money, and by a local government that is willing to accept at least some form of graft. Under capitalism a benefactor is rewarded by being the main beneficiary of the benefactions. Public spiritedness can be a good investment.

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A Voice from Albina. Morning Oregonian, May 14, 1891

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