

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.

## Structures: Ockley Green School

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## Introduction

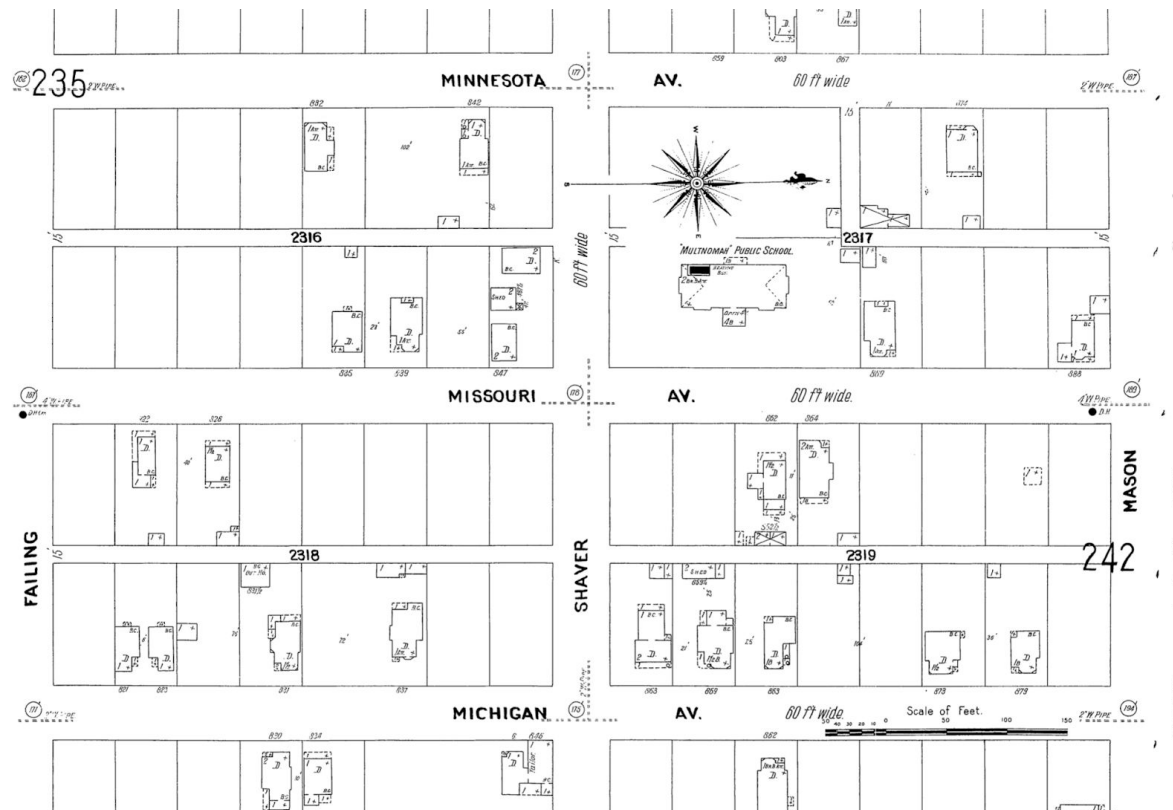
The 1947 aerial photograph above shows that Ockley Green middle school is in Arbor Lodge, on its border with Overlook. It's not in Piedmont. So there really is no reason for us to be particularly interested in this school. But the chapters of this book are primarily about the ownership of the land, and Ockley Green is part of a parcel that is interesting for Piedmont history. Thus this chapter will be more a history of that piece of land and less a history of the school itself. And, as in most of the current version of the book, we concentrate on the period between 1880 and 1920.

For those who are interested in the history of Ockley Green School after 1920 we refer to the Oregon Historic Site Form of 2009, when Ockley Green was considered for a place in the National Register of Historic Places. The PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009 concluded that *"The property consists of two resources that are not eligible. They consist of the main building with addition (178A and 178B) and two joined portables (178P1 and 178P2)."* Consequently the school was judged to be not eligible/non-contributing, and did not get historic status. There is, however, in the form a wealth of information about the buildings and their history. You can read it using the link below.

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1dFstMdxmA5mS\\_z\\_ieTnpeOseDEBC1Cn-](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1dFstMdxmA5mS_z_ieTnpeOseDEBC1Cn-)

## The School

In 1891, as part of the consolidation of Portland, Albina, and East Portland, Portland Public Schools, also known as Multnomah County District #1, annexed the Multnomah School in Albina from District #31. The school, founded in 1893, was located at N. Shaver & Missouri Street. Here it is on the 1901 Sanborn Maps.



In 1901, the school building was moved to the current campus. The school continued to be called Multnomah School for a while, but it was renamed Ockley Green in 1909.

The 1901 Sanborn map shows the lot, numbered 6772, on the corner of Patton (Interstate) and Ainsworth. It also shows the rest of the parcel that interests us to the north and to the east, bordered in the north by the Good Morning Addition and in the east by Piedmont. There is no Peninsula Park yet, the whole 80 acres are completely undeveloped.





## The Name

I am not entirely sure about the origin of the name Ockley Green, but the streetcar line to St. John's, which was so important in the development of the Peninsula, had an Ockley Green station, on the corner of Maryland and Killingsworth. The steam motor line to St. Johns was in operation since 1889, and it seems that the Ockley Green station was there from the beginning. In fact it initially was the place where the part of the line that was electrified first, that came up north on Commercial to Killingsworth, where it turned west, connected to the steam line that was not electrified until 1903. My guess is that Ockley Green was loosely defined as the area close to the streetcar station. If Ockley Green was actually a well-defined area in Overlook, then I am not sure about its boundaries. There is no plat for Ockley Green, and it is not a tax district designation.

I guess the name is not that important, but I hate loose ends. There is an intriguing piece in the Morning Oregonian of December 1, 1891. Some horses belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Moore had strayed out to Mount Tabor, and they offered \$ 40 for their return. John Russell brought them back and wanted his \$ 40, but Mr. and Mrs. Moore did not actually have that kind of money.

*When the horses were returned, Mr. Moore, who is a poor man, had no money, borrowed \$25 from Ockley Green, and gave his note at five percent per month, and paid \$20 of it to the man who brought the horses to him, supposing it was all right. He supposed the money he then paid was to be applied to the \$40. Russell bought this note from Green, and yesterday obtained judgment against Mrs. Moore for \$ 40.*

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Clearly somebody was taken advantage of. But in any case there was a person named Ockley Green around in Portland, although not a very sympathetic person considering the interest rate he charged on loans. I have no idea if this person is connected in any way to the Ockley Green area.

A person who was certainly connected to the area was J. H. Dixon, who ran a wood and coal business in the area, and lived on the northwest corner of Killingsworth and Delaware. If we look through the local newspapers for references to J. H. Dixon we see him described as an "old farmer", and we get mostly information about his two disastrous marriages.

## The Move

Around 1900 there was a relentless boosting and bumping of the Peninsula going on, driven by developers like Francis I McKenna and William A. Killingsworth, and by investors and bankers such as Edward Holman, J.C. Ainsworth, and William K. Smith. The purpose, of course, was to increase the value of the land. All the available tools to make the area more attractive to industry and home buyers were used: ferries, bridges, parks, boulevards, exhibitions, car camps, zoning, utilities, streetcars, railroads, and schools. Various areas on the north side established improvement clubs and associations. In Ockley Green this started around 1900, as these two articles from the Morning Oregonian of January 28 and February 2 1900 show.

**Ockley Green Meeting.**  
The residents of Ockley Green will hold a meeting Thursday evening, February 1, at 8 o'clock, to discuss improvements and hear reports of committees on graveling boulevards and bicycle paths and improvement of railroad service. School facilities will be discussed, and a petition signed asking the school board for a new schoolhouse. Members of the Peninsula Improvement Association are invited to attend the meeting.

**Meeting at Ockley Green.**  
A meeting of the Ockley Green Improvement Club was held last night at that point, on the St. Johns motor line, to take steps toward securing school facilities. J. H. Dixon, president, presided over the meeting, and Mrs. Pershin acted as secretary. It was an enthusiastic meeting of the citizens of that place. After considerable discussion, a petition was circulated and signed by all present, asking the board to provide a school in that neighborhood. It was realized that the board cannot build a schoolhouse there this year, but the people are asking for a school. A temporary building may be had there for that purpose, and the school may be provided for the children there.  
Reports were received from the committees previously appointed on the proposed completion of the cycle paths and the improvement of the boulevards, to the effect that work on the paths would proceed when the weather would permit. The other improvements are also promised. Regarding car service, the promise is made the people of the peninsula that it will be improved this year.

Note the prominent role of J. H. Dixon, assisted by Mrs. Zola Pershin, a real estate agent who did not live in the area.

The school board met on August 28, 1900 and discussed the petition. Director Thomson argues that a school at Ockley Green would not have more than 20 students, and consequently was not viable. Director Wittenberg mentioned that the improvement club said there would be 34 pupils, and the number would grow rapidly.

## The Size



## The Parcel

The land on which Ockley Green school was built was in what was commonly known as the “*W.K. Smith Tract*”, more precisely the northern 80 acres of the south-western quadrant of section 15, township 1 north range 1 east. It is the large parcel between Interstate Blvd (Patton Blvd) to the west, Kirby to the east, Rosa Parks Way (Portland Blvd) to the north, and Ainsworth to the south. Various chapters in this book describe how this northern half of the [Evander Howe 1870 homestead](#) went in 1883 from Evander Howe’s heirs to George Woodward, then in the same year to Sylvester Farrell and Edward Holman, and finally in 1890 for \$ 40,000 to [W. K. Smith and the Ukase Investment Company](#).

The parcel remained wild and undeveloped for quite a while. In 1900 Smith sold a 200 by 200 feet section, a little bit less than one acre, in the southwest corner to School District #1 for \$ 500. Here is the deed.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1R9HB2Ggbw6apSGHrzhV6UI89fuBa66y8>

In 1909 the district bought additional land for the school from Smith’s Ukase Investment Company for \$3,700.00.

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The Ukase Investment Company by that time was getting rid of the whole 80 acre parcel. In 1913 they sold the eastern 20 acres to the City of Portland for Peninsula Park. In 1920 they leased the 20 acres from Albina to Minnesota to the City of Portland for the Municipal Auto Camp, and when that project folded in 1924 they platted the Greensborough addition and sold off the individual lots. That left them with the 40 acres between Minnesota and Interstate. They sold these (between 1916 and 1919) to ...

### Principle Addition Name of New Tract

The name “Principle” addition has been applied to the tract opposite Peninsula park opened by the Johnson-Dodson company last week. The tract was formerly christened the Good addition, but because of confusion with Good’s addition, the building commissioners requested a change. The land is owned by Mrs. Mary Milburn and has been platted in 19 three quarter acre tracts and 30 50 by 100 feet homesites. The larger tracts are offered at prices ranging from \$2400 to \$3000 and the smaller ones at \$500 to \$600 each. Several of the sites have been sold during the past week, according to the Johnson-Dodson company.

The Johnson-Dodson company handled the sales of the lots, and in 1920 they offered seven lots to School District #1 for \$12,540. We see the lots, numbered 3 to 10, on the plat map. This acquisition brought the Ockley Green site to its present size of 5.20 acres. In the 1921 report of School District #1 we see that the 3.4 acres they bought were valued at \$ 8,605, although they paid \$ 15,548.84.

## PROPERTY PURCHASED

During the year the following properties have been purchased.

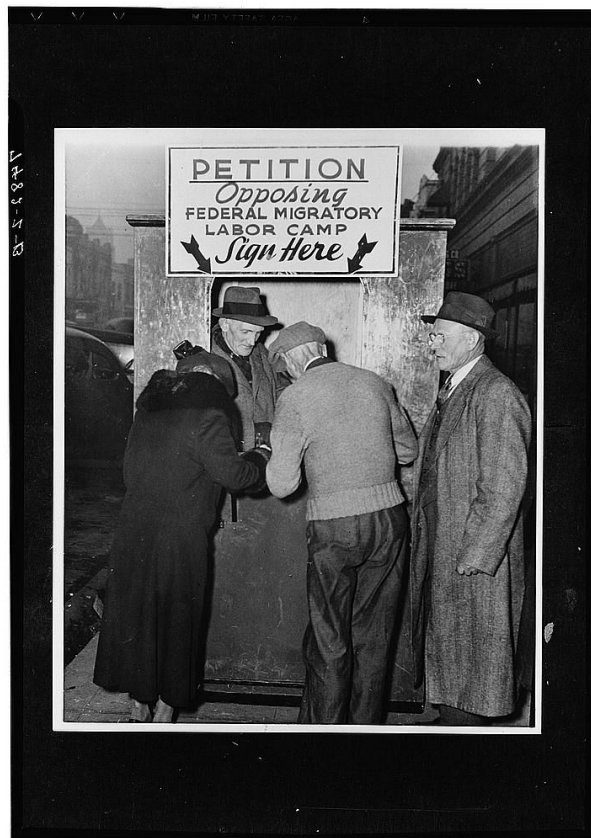
School	Description	Assessed Valuation	Purchase Price
Fernwood ----	Lots 23 and 24, Block 10, Broadway Addition. 9,000 square feet.	Grounds ----- \$1,000.00 Improvements -- 1,140.00 Total ----- \$2,140.00	\$ 7,750.00
James John High (New) --	10.95 acres. Bounded on the north by Central Ave. and on the west by Burr Street. This acreage is a part of a 15-acre tract contracted by the board on February 10, 1921	Grounds ----- \$9,100.00 Improvements -- ----- Total ----- \$9,100.00	12,075.00
Marysville ---	4.89 acres. Bounded on the south by 50th Ave. and on the west by 77th Street S. E. This is a new site for an elementary school intended to relieve Arleta, Kellogg, and Lents situations.	Grounds ----- \$3,500.00 Improvements -- 160.00 Total ----- \$3,660.00	8,750.00
Ockley Green.	Lots 3 to 10, inclusive, Block 7, Principle Addition.	Grounds ----- \$8,605.00 Improvements -- ----- Total ----- 8,605.00	15,548.83
Rose City Park	Lots 15 to 18, inclusive, Block 9, Syndicate Addition.	Grounds ----- \$ 475.00 Improvements -- ----- Total ----- \$ 475.00	525.00
		Total -----	\$44,648.83

## The Underbrush

Between 1912 and 1916 there is an interesting and fairly well documented period in the Ockley Green saga. It is interesting to me for various reasons.

In the first place it gives us information about the W.K. Smith tract and the way the Ukase Investment Company handled its ownership of the tract.

In the second place it shows us that many of today's problems are historically recurring, or even cyclic, events. After each of the deeper crises of capitalism many persons in the most vulnerable positions lose their belongings as well as their protections, and become unhoused. This is true for the Panic of 1893-1897, for the Great Depression of 1929-1939, and for the Great Recession of 2008 (and beyond). Then, as now, unhoused people have great difficulty maintaining their physical and mental health, as well as securing a regular stream of income. Then, as now, the "upstanding citizen" ideology, a poisonous mixture of capitalism, calvinism, and extreme individualism, maintains that there was something terribly wrong with unhoused people. They were not among the elect, they were lazy, they were morally degenerate, they stole property, they misused common resources, and so on.



<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B94Urj3OjM7BNE5fcC1Fcml5a0E>

An excellent review of the “hobo menace” around 1900 is the [2015 PSU thesis of Marin Elizabeth Aurand](#). A balanced review of the current houselessness crisis in Oregon is the [2019 report commissioned by the Oregon Community Foundation](#). A [2018 report by the Feantsa and Abbé Pierre Foundation](#) discusses the housing exclusion in Europe, and clearly shows us that neoliberalism and financial capitalism have created a global crisis, not just one that affects Portland or the United States.

Allright. Back to Portland and Ockley Green. The incidental cause of the problems at Ockley Green was that there were a few acres used for an elementary school in the corner of a parcel of 50 acres that was otherwise heavily wooded and completely undeveloped. In the Oregon Daily Journal of January 27, 1912 we see the first signs. We are a bit more careful these days to call people “degenerates”, but otherwise the article could be straight out of the comment section of today’s Oregonian.

**Seek Degenerate**—The police have been asked to search for a degenerate who is lurking around the Ockley Green school, 1911 Maryland avenue, and making persistent efforts to lure young children. Several young boys have accompanied the man and have come back with stories of frightful abuse that has aroused the neighborhood. The school is surrounded with heavy woods, and the man is said to be hidden in the brush at the times when the children are in the school yard or on their way to or from school. The police have stationed a patrolman at the school in an effort to apprehend the man.

Initially the upstanding citizens tried to go the City Council route. Again, in a surprisingly familiar way, the City Council failed them.

**ORDINANCE FAILS TO PASS**  
**Cutting of Trees and Shrubberty**  
**Near Schools at Issue.**  
 An ordinance giving the city power to cut all dense shrubberty and trees within 300 feet of any school building if the owner does not cut it after five days notice, failed to pass the city council this morning. The ordinance was aimed to care for the situation existing near the Ockley Green school where several men, according to reports, have attacked small girls.  
 The matter was referred to Commissioner Dieck with power to act and the ordinance was discarded.



Note that in the first article “young boys” were attacked, while in the second article it is “small girls”. In the next article, still from October 1913, the degenerates widened their scope with attacks on the women teachers.

## TEACHERS TELL HOW 'WILD MEN' TERRORIZE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

### Frequent Attacks by Degenerates in Ockley Green Are Cause of Complaints.

How degenerate characters have terrorized school teachers and pupils of the Ockley Green school and residents of the district on the peninsula was related to the city commissioners this morning by the principal of the school and several women teachers, when the officials paid a visit to the school and the scene of the haunts of the so-called “wild men.”

According to the teachers and others, children have been frightened out of their wits while passing through a thickly wooded tract near the school, when suddenly confronted by uncouth men. An attack was even made on one of the women teachers a few days ago, it is said.

According to a report made to the police a week ago a little 7-year-old girl had been the subject of an attack from one of the degenerates. Following the report the entire neighborhood was searched, but no trace could be found of the person responsible. Since that time numerous reports have been made by other children that they had been accosted while on their way to and from school by the “wild men.”

The city commissioners this morning were told that the latest appearance of the fellows who have terrorized the neighborhood was an attempted attack

on one of the teachers. She, it is said, was so badly frightened that she could not attend school for several days.

Parents, for fear their children may be attacked, are keeping them home and the principal of the school has ordered all children to keep away from the wooded tract on their way to and from school.

As the police have been unable to find trace of the men, the principal of the school took the matter up with the city commissioners in an attempt to have arc lights strung through the heavily wooded tract near the school.

This morning Commissioners Daly, Brewster, Bigelow and Dieck visited the scene. They found immediately adjoining the school property on the north a tract of nearly 50 acres thick with underbrush. The property is owned by W. K. Smith, who is now being sought by the commissioners so that he can be ordered to cut down the trees at least 50 feet wide around the entire tract. If this is not done immediately the city will probably have it done.

As we have seen the ordinance forcing W. K. Smith to clear the tract was defeated, and the promise that the city “would have it done” did not come to pass. Two years later, however, there was an ordinance.



## Brush Must Be Cut.

Owners of property around the Ockley Green school are to be required at once to cut all underbrush and weeds, which are declared a menace. The city council this morning decided that

unless property owners cut the weeds arrests should follow.

But, again, city ordinances can be rather toothless and the millionaire class can often afford to ignore them. So it was just waiting for the next event. On November 16, 1915, Miss Viva Walker, an Ockley Green teacher decided to take a shortcut and *"a hand reached out from the brush and grabbed her ankle"*.

## HAND OF UNKNOWN MAN GRABS WOMAN'S ANKLE; SHE SCREAMS

Miss Viva Walker Notifies  
Police, Who Search Brush-  
Covered Lot for Assailant.

### SEARCH CONTINUES TODAY

Teacher at Ockley Green School Is  
Frightened on Her Way Across  
Vacant Acreage.

The tract of 40 acres of uncleared land near the Ockley Green school in north Portland is being combed by police officers under Sergeant Roberts today as the result of an attack, made Tuesday night, by an unknown man, on Miss Viva Walker, a teacher of the school.

The area of uncleared acreage has been a hiding place for criminals for years, and a source of terror to persons living in the vicinity.

Tuesday afternoon about 4 o'clock, as Miss Walker made a short cut along a path across this land, a hand reached out from the brush and grabbed her ankle. She screamed, and the man, whom she saw sufficiently to describe to the police, fled.

Sergeant Roberts and his officers spent all of yesterday searching the woods, and are there again today.

For many months in 1914, children and women were forced to avoid this district, because a wild appearing man persisted in frightening the children, and annoying the women with his actions. A man was captured by the police, finally, and he received a heavy jail sentence.

Captain of Police Moore, who is taking an especial interest in the case, believes it was this same man who frightened Miss Walker.

That did it. In March 2016 the citizens of Ockley Green had enough. They took two initiatives: the first was to establish a vigilante

After 1920

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