

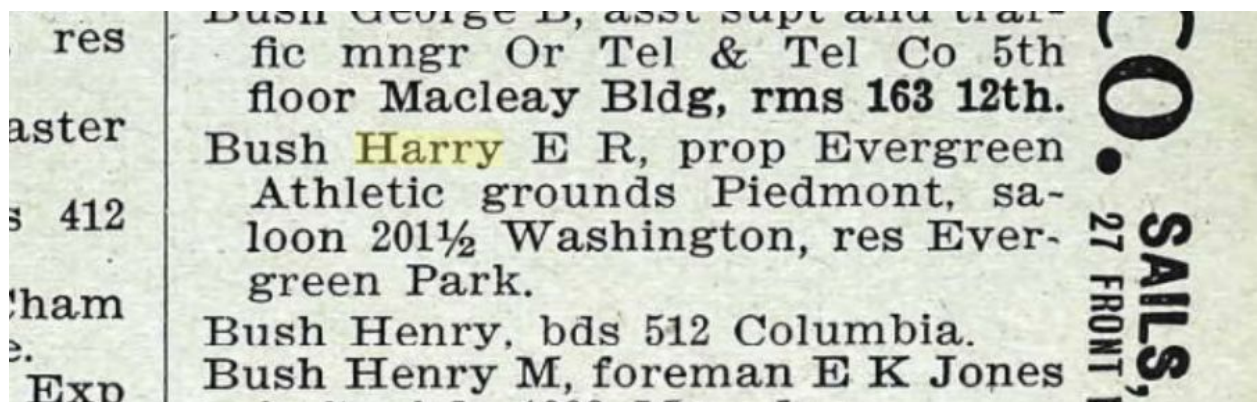
The author of this article lives and works on unceded territory of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other Tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River.

Structures: Evergreen Park

Jan de Leeuw

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Around 1899, at the height of the bicycle craze, a number of people associated with the North End, and the Senate Saloon in particular, wanted to get in on the action. Bicycle parks were starting up all over the state, and they decided to create one on the Portland East Side. The names associated with this business enterprise were Elizabeth Smith, Harry Bush (or Busch), Henry Chase, and John Darrow. Elsewhere in this book there is a chapter on Elizabeth Smith, also known as Elizabeth Duncan, Elizabeth Young, Elizabeth Hutchinson, and, most famously, as Liverpool Liz. Her business partners Henry Chase and Harry Bush were two men later convicted for beating her up. I don't know much about John Darrow, except that he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly in 1902. A fine bunch. It seems that Chase was the contractor, Bush was the manager, and Liz was the financier. In the 1900 Polk City Directory Harry E.R. Bush is proudly listed as the proprietor of the Evergreen Athletic Grounds.



Between Ainsworth Street and Portland Boulevard (now Rosa Parks Way) to the North, and between the west boundary of the Piedmont subdivision at Commercial and Kerby Avenues and Patton Boulevard (now Interstate Avenue) to the West were 80 undeveloped acres of land, owned by banker and investor William Kanan Smith, one of our early local millionaires. By the way, Smith also owned considerable property in the Whitechapel area and on the waterfront. Our budding developers leased 40 acres of that land to start what they called Evergreen Park, the race track with a saloon in the middle. It is not entirely clear which part of the Smith tract they actually leased. Court proceedings later on indicated Piedmont was a

quarter of a mile to three quarters of a mile away. In the same proceedings it says the resort is to be located on Willamette Boulevard, which is now another stretch of current Interstate Avenue. The conditions on the lease are also unknown, but clearly nobody actually “bought” the land from W.K. Smith. In 1900 the City would buy the southwest corner of the W.K. Smith tract for Ockley Green School, in 1909 it would buy the eastern 20 acres for Peninsula Park, and in 1920 it would lease 25 acres for the Municipal Automobile Park.

It is not clear what was actually build or realized of Evergreen Park. Here is an ad in the Oregonian of May 20, 1899.

**WILL RECEIVE BIDS FOR THE NEXT
two days for grading a racetrack at Piedmont,
Or.; cubic yards, 1850. I reserve the right to
reject any or all bids. Contractor must give
bond to finish in specified time and correctly.
Telephone (Pink) 80. Harry M. R. Bush,
Piedmont, Or., Evergreen Park.**

Maybe a racetrack was indeed graded. It seems the area had a board fence, some type of buildings went up, and maybe even some actual bicycle racing went on. Spider Johnson told Stewart Holbrook

Mrs. Esther Smith-O'Neel, who lives here in Portland, told me that she remembers of being at Liz' bicycle park when she was about 5 years old. She remembers especially the dust that went up from the track when the “scorchers”, as they called them then, went by (Holbrook, 1933).

Maybe. But it could have been another track, Mrs. Smith-O'Neel.

In the history page of the Piedmont Neighborhood Association's website it says

Originally the site of “Liverpool Liz's Place”, it had been a roadhouse and racetrack for quarter-mile horse racing.

Local lore also says that some of the buildings were actually stables for the horses. I have seen very little evidence of any horses racing in the area. And, as we shall see, Evergreen Park only operated in the single summer of 1899, maybe only for a month, and it seems unlikely that anything substantial was going on during that period. The Grand Opening was on June 4, with music and dance and a balloon ascension, but no racing of any kind.

And no liquor license. Harry Bush almost from the start ran into all kinds of trouble. Remember that Piedmont was platted by Edward Quackenbush, and that it was one of the first areas that had something like CC&R's. Only houses could be built, no businesses, houses had to be of a certain price, and no alcohol could be sold in the neighborhood. The good citizens of Piedmont send delegations to the Committee of Licenses to prevent the unsavory Bush from getting a liquor license. And those "Piedmont Men" had some heavy hitters, like Quackenbush, Charles E. Ladd, and William Killingsworth. They testified before the liquor license committee. According to the Oregonian of June 10, 1899:

The general purport of their remarks was that they did not want a saloon in their neighborhood. They had gone out there to be away from such places, and for the sake of a proper neighborhood in which to rear their children had submitted to expense and

some privations, and they asserted that they were there first, and that their wishes and rights in the matter ought to be considered before those of a saloon-keeper.

It was said that Bush is a man of disreputable antecedents and character, and it is alleged that the money he has expended comes from a disreputable source, and the people of Piedmont have no faith in his promise to keep an orderly place. They stated that there was a very noisy and disorderly crowd at Bush's place last Sunday; that there was a sound of devilry by night there, and that the noise was kept up till 10 or 11 o'clock, and could be heard nearly a mile.

Clearly one of the early examples of NIMBYism. Note that the license committee met on June 9, and "last Sunday" was the June 4 opening of the park. The "Piedmont Men" must not have appreciated the music of the best concert band on the pacific coast. Also note that the "disreputable source" of the money was, of course, Liverpool Liz. The committee decided to advise the council not to grant the liquor license.

Bush tried to counter at the next meeting of the committee by having one George Moore, ex-policeman, special policeman, and constable, apply for the license. The people of Piedmont were not fooled. The Oregonian of June 20, 1899, says:

Notwithstanding that his record would seem to entitle him to be fully qualified to run a saloon, the Piedmont people appeared to regard him as a blind, or figurehead, representing Bush, and they have an idea that Evergreen Park, as a roadside resort, is bound to be a rendezvous for a class of people who cannot "carry on" as they would like to at the resorts they patronize in the city.

Bush did not get his license. He sued the City, filing a petition for a writ of mandamus to compel the mayor and council to issue the license, arguing arbitrariness and improper procedure. Also. from the Oregonian of June 30, 1899:

Bush alleges that he has invested a large sum of money in the place, and, to make it profitable, it is necessary for him to sell wines, liquors, and beer, and that the park has at all times been carried on in a peaceful, quiet manner.

The petitioner further asserts that the saloon is not obnoxious to the residents of the vicinity, the majority of them being willing that the saloon be located there, and the only reason given by the council for withholding the license is that some people in Piedmont, a distance of from one-quarter to three-quarters of a mile, object to it.

If this distance estimate is not just a legal excuse by a desperate person, then the 40 acres of Evergreen Park were in the western half of the W.K. Smith tract, bordered on the west by current Interstate Boulevard, and largely in the current Arbor Lodge neighborhood. Some additional pinpointing will be necessary.

Bush's lawyers did have a valid point, however. The mandamus was based on the fact that the council did not deny the license by resolution, but merely acknowledged the report of the license commission. On August 20, 1899, we find in the Oregonian

A suit follows, wherein the redoubtable Bush mandamused the auditor and license committee to compel them to issue a license, and the question was thought favorable to Bush, but yet he has not been granted a license.

By August 20, however, the license problem was moot. As we mentioned, the money Bush used for the park came from Liz. The single time she visited the park Bush beat her up. In addition he threatened to kill a certain Martin Gearhart, and went around shooting his pistols near the park.

What part of his thrilling programme of two night ago he commenced with is uncertain. A woman of the North End, well known as "Liverpool Liz", was badly pummeled, and doubtless the bold, bad man regarded this as a curtain-raiser, and immediately after reached the climax. Martin Gearhart and his wife, living near the park, awoke to find bullets whizzing through the air.

People living near the park say he has been using his pistol too freely on more than one occasion.

Bush was fined \$ 50 for "warlike demonstrations", and locked up for assault with a deadly weapon, awaiting a grand jury arraignment. In October 1899 his assaults landed him in jail for a year, and that killed his mandamus court case against the city. Less than a year after it started Evergreen Park was already belly-up and whatever was built was being torn down. In the Oregonian of May 20, 1900:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B94Urj3OjM7BX2l0MGQ5cHlwUU0/view>

The next article, from the Morning Oregonian of May 12, 1900, illustrates the pathetic role Liz had in the Evergreen Park enterprise. She was out \$ 6,000, about \$ 160,000 in 2017 dollars. She had supported both Bush and Chase for months, and all she got out of it were some serious beatings. As with the Municipal Auto Park, W. K. Smith got to keep all the improvements and became even richer than he already was.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B94Urj3OjM7BX2NJeWk5OWxNT3M/view>