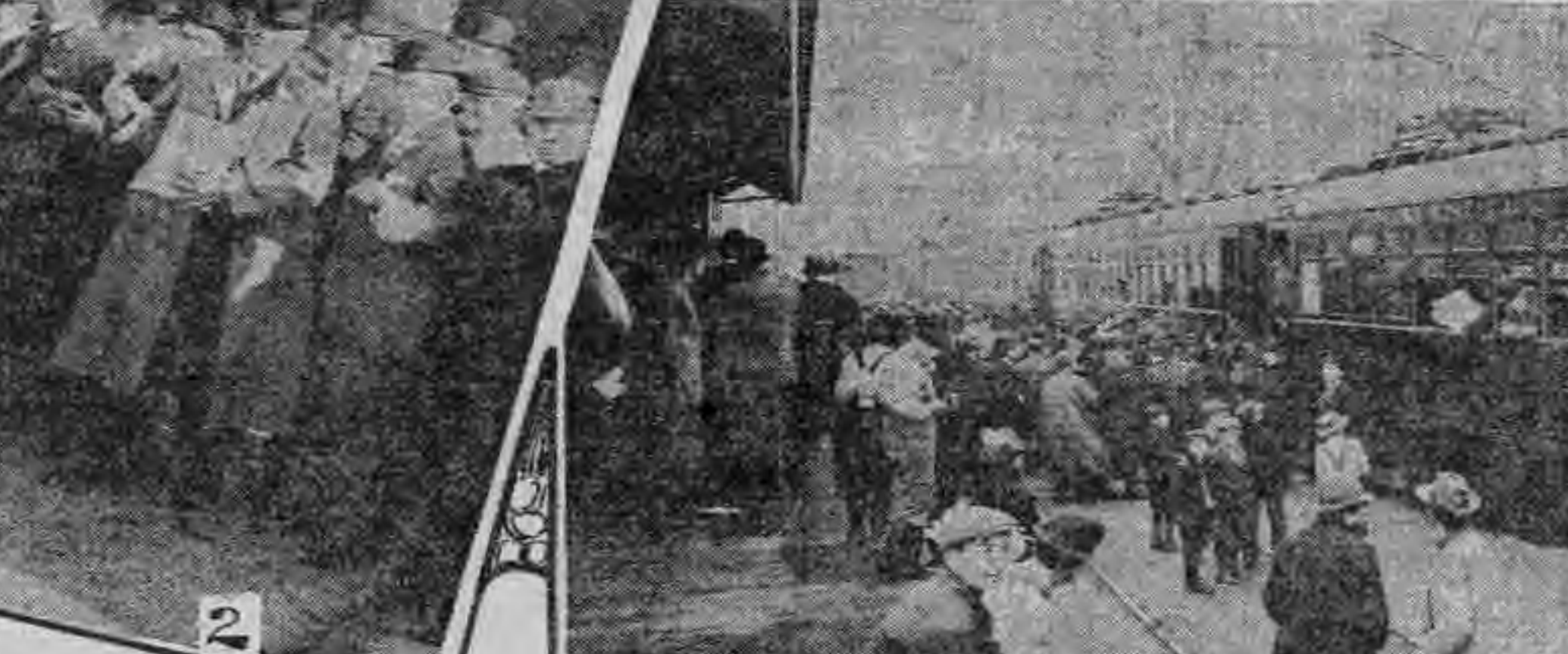


# NEW EPOCH FOR VALLEY DAWNS AS NEW RAIL LINE OPENS

Operation of "First Unit" of Portland, Eugene & Eastern Railway System Marks Beginning of Development Campaign—Big Sum Spent and Result Shows.



**F**IRST steps toward staving the great Portland, Eugene & Eastern Railway project to Oregon were taken two years ago, and the "first unit" of that service that will be formally opened for operation today is but the beginning of an extensive development campaign that is destined to give material aid in building up the Willamette watershed.

It was in the winter of 1911-12 that the directors of what was then known as the Harriman Lines decided to investigate the possibilities of electric rapid transit service in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Robert E. Strahorn was at that time located at Spokane and was finishing up his work of building the North Coast road of Washington, and in his hands was placed the responsibility of scouting over the great valley. That winter he visited every nook and corner of the Willamette watershed. Sometimes he traveled by automobile, sometimes by wagon and often he walked, but at no time did it leak out that a modern John the Baptist was preparing the way for a great interurban system of transportation.

The reports which Mr. Strahorn sent to New York presented an impressive picture of the resources of the valley, and outlined a plan by which railroad lines belonging to the Southern Pacific Company, then a part of the Harriman merger, should be taken over for rebuilding and electrification, that for proper connections and feeders a number of independent railroads should be purchased and rebuilt, streetcar systems should be taken over in Salem, Eugene and Albany, and with the construction of certain new lines, the valley should be given a 350-mile system, which should serve every section of the valley with equal facility. These acquisitions and activities were merged into the then organized Portland, Eugene & Eastern Railway, of which Mr. Strahorn was made president.

The Commercial Club special train of yesterday covered about one-third of the mileage provided for in the original plan. But to the officials of the company it meant that more than one-third of the big scheme was finished.

There remain to be constructed a new main line track from Oswego to Salem, and which will be located almost parallel to the Southern Pacific, the Salem-Independence cutoff, the Wellside-Albany cutoff, and the continuation of the line from Molalla to Silverton. Then, with the erection of the overhead construction of poles and wires, a little retouching of tracks, the erection of terminal stations at Salem and Eugene, the thing is done.

Even at this early stage of its plans, the Southern Pacific Company, through its ally, the Portland, Eugene & Eastern, has accomplished most satisfactory results on Fourth street—the elimination of steam trains on that busy thoroughfare. Beginning today Fourth street is to see the quiet-moving electric, and with each succeeding week others will be added until it is believed probable that 100 trains per day will discharge their loads of passengers at Salmon, Yamhill, Stark or Burnside street stopping points, or at the Union Depot further to the north. All outgoing trains will pick up travelers at those places.

In leaving Portland the Willamette Valley line now has two routes in construction. The West Side line proceeds directly out Fourth street and reaches the Hillsboro and Forest Grove country. The other diverges from Fourth street at Jefferson street, swings through the old depot terminal grounds at the foot of Jefferson street and goes on to Oswego, Beaverton and Newberg. The two lines unite at St. Joseph and proceed southward to McMinnville and Whitson.

The right-of-way for the new main line begins at Oswego and proceeds southward along the west side of the Willamette River to West Oregon City, making use of a part of the roadbed of the first electric interurban road built in Oregon, the Willamette Falls Railway. On the way to Salem it crosses the river one mile west of New Era, necessitating planning a bridge which will have an elevation of 70 feet above low water. Much of the right-of-way for the new main line has already been

secured, while condemnation suits are pending in some instances where the company and property owners have not been able to reach agreement. The Southern Pacific and Portland, Eugene & Eastern officials appear most hopeful that the financial markets of the country may so adjust themselves that the electrification of old steam lines and the construction of the new roads required to complete the system may proceed with the opening of Spring. The old rails on the old steam road have all been replaced with heavy materials, the roadbeds have received several extra coatings of gravel, and all that is necessary now on the West Side is the order to start wire-stringing gangs on their march southward.

The company has acquired land for permanent shops at Bolton, at West Oregon City, but for the present all the work of equipping the new steel cars with motors, etc., will be carried on at Beaverton, where temporary shops have been erected and equipped.

When all of the lines shall be electrified it is a part of the plan to build large terminal stations at Salem and Eugene. No announcement has as yet been made of the location of an uptown station for the company.

## STREET SYSTEMS ABSORBED

**Salem and Eugene Properties Taken In Among First Steps.**

Among the first properties to be acquired when the Southern Pacific and Portland, Eugene & Eastern companies began assembling their gridiron interurban system in the Willamette Valley were the city streetcar systems at Salem and Eugene and the one-line service in operation at Albany, with T. L. Billingsley as superintendent. The present investment in these properties represents \$1,400,000.

At Salem and at Eugene the P. E. & E. Company acquired blocks of ground near the center of the business districts for the erection of central stations. It is planned to operate all streetcar and interurban lines from the train sheds of these stations, making it possible for the passenger to transfer under overhead cover in bad weather, minimizing the inconvenience of reaching trains and saving much time between the home or place of business and the depot. These plans will necessitate the expenditure of large additional amounts.

In securing these properties the railroad company added some famous old landmarks into oblivion. The ground at Salem was the site of the first schoolhouse erected by the pioneers of the early days. It was built of hewn oak timbers and from the rough benches which formed its first furniture some of the big men of Oregon had their minds illuminated by the first rays of intellectual light.

On the block at Eugene stood the First Methodist Church and the First Christian Church. The former is now used for temporary station purposes, while the other building has been torn down. Both congregations were enabled to dispose of the properties for sums of money that formed substantial beginnings for building funds that have enabled the congregations to erect two of the finest churches on the Pacific Coast.

The P. E. & E. now operates approximately 14 miles of streetcar tracks at Salem and 17 miles at Eugene, the latter city making the claim that it has more miles of such service than any city of its population in the world. During the past year the owning company has expended large sums in betterments for both systems.

Ultimately the Albany line will be extended and the company will take advantage of its franchise to build and operate a streetcar system at Corvallis. In the latter city ground for a terminal station has been acquired in the uptown district and it is proposed to extend the service to the campus of Oregon Agricultural College.

## CROSS LINE BIG ADVANTAGE

**Electric Service Will Feed From Rich Valley Territory.**

Recognizing the tremendous advantage and aid that a cross valley line would lead to moving the tonnage of the Willamette Valley, the management of the Southern Pacific and Portland, Eugene & Eastern companies decided to purchase the Salem, Falls City & Western line, bridge the river at Salem and extend the line east of that city to a connection with the Woodburn-Silverton-Brownsville-Springfield branch. When electrified this service is designed to make the district west

## CARVER'S DREAM IS REALIZED

**Golden Spike Celebration at Monroe In September, 1913. Historic.**

September 3, 1913, a golden spike, driven by President Strahorn on a

skirts the famous Oaco orchards, operated under the direct supervision of officers of the Oregon Agricultural College.

Between Corvallis and Monroe and parallel to the line of the P. E. & E., now conceded to be one of the best roadbeds in the West, its 40 square miles of land which are to be included in the first drainage district organized under the laws of Oregon and which is now in course of formation. Through getting rid of water early in the Spring the growing season of the district will be advanced from four to seven weeks, while the land yield is expected to increase from 100 to 200 per cent.

Surveying parties were immediately thrown into the field and within a few months the road had been entirely rebuilt, and extended an additional 23 miles to Eugene, being formally opened for business September 5, 1913, by a golden spike celebration at Monroe participated in by hundreds of residents of that section of the state. Up to date the P. E. & E. Railway has expended \$1,375,000 on the Corvallis-Monroe property.

Along the new road have sprung up the towns of Lela, Ferguson, Hubert and Alvadore, the latter being located on the famous Fern Ridge and adjoining the orchards operated by E. L. Kiewer, while further south the new road

a train of cars. They were the old pioneers of that wonderfully rich country which had waited for 50 years for the whistle of an engine, and in many respects it was a remarkable gathering. Hundreds of automobiles stood on the prairie around the little town of 200 people, while the good-natured crowd surged back and forth from the big tent to the few stores and places where food could be obtained. It mattered little that the Portland, Eugene & Eastern had expended \$375,000 in laying a railroad track for that first train to use. The big thing was that the "Mo-lalla" had a way to ship its grain and livestock.

Molalla will do it again when the first electric trains run into their commodious station, but it will be done in a town whose population has already doubled. From a crossroads trading point to paved streets, municipal electric plant and water works is "going some" for two years' work, but that is what Molalla is aiming to show its next crowd of visitors.

## GRESHAM VOTERS SIGNING

**Town Clerk Receives Blanks and Registration is Begun.**

GRESHAM, Or., Jan. 17.—(Special).—D. M. Roberts, Town Clerk, has received the necessary blanks from County Clerk Coffey and has commenced the registration of voters for Gresham and vicinity.

Gresham Precinct has been divided, east and west, by the Powell Valley road. North of the road is designated North Gresham Precinct, No. 309, and south of the road is No. 208. There are about 600 legal voters in the two precincts since the women have been given the franchise.

## Molalla Celebration Last September

**Real Pioneers' Fete.**

September 19, 1913, 5000 people gathered at Molalla, over on the east side of the Willamette Valley, to welcome



1—Crowd at Depot in McMinnville. 2—Union Distributors at Sherwood. From Left to Right—J. Corvo, F. W. Loneragan, W. O. Hocken, J. E. Nordback, George W. Saylor, J. M. Edwards, Fred J. Eggle, F. M. McMillan, Frank R. Johnson, G. E. Warner, George H. Himes, J. H. Kelly, C. H. Mayer, F. W. Clark. 3—Crowd at Depot in Beaverton. 4—Women on Reception Committee at Newberg. 5—Pioneer Outfit Representing McMinnville 60 Years Ago in Street Parade at McMinnville.

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