

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 26 1979  
DATE ENTERED AUG 10 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

SMITHSON AND McKAY BROS. BLOCKS

AND/OR COMMON

SMITHSON AND McKAY BROS. BLOCKS

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

943 and 927 North Russell Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Oregon

CODE

41

COUNTY

Multnomah

CODE

051

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED (partially)

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

X COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

X ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Robert L. Gille

STREET & NUMBER

943 North Russell Street

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oregon 97212

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Multnomah County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1021 S. W. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Portland Historic Landmark (pending)

DATE

1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Portland Historical Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Smithson, and McKay Bros. Blocks, contiguous buildings presently under common ownership, were completed in 1893 and 1890 respectively. Located on North Russell Street in Albina, a separate city prior to 1891, the three story masonry structures comprise the western anchor of what remains of Albina's historic business district. Other nearby historic buildings on Russell Street include: the White Eagle Tavern (c. 1905); Davis Block (1894); Swinging Anchor Tavern and Apartments (c. 1910); No. 816-20 Russell Street (c. 1895); and No's 703-07 and 733-37 (both c. 1910).

Both the Smithson and McKay Bros. Blocks were designed to have retail and commercial space on the ground floors and living units for workers - mainly from the railroad - on upper floors.

## PLAN AND INTERIOR DETAIL SMITHSON BLOCK

At the ground floor the rectangular structure (60' x 100') is divided transversely into five store and office bays, and a narrow entry bay to upper levels slightly west of center on Russell Street. Interior spaces have been remodeled many times through the years though a few original paneled doors and trim elements remain.

The main stairway and the 2nd and 3rd floor interior are essentially as originally built. The stairway to the second floor is a straight run with mid-level landing and features a simple molded handrail, and vertical 1 x 4 tongue and groove wainscoting with cap molding. A balustrade with turned balusters and newel posts surrounds the stair opening.

Wood work throughout is Douglas Fir. Original finish was dark stain and varnish which can be seen in the second floor corridor. Original wood finish in most other areas has been subsequently painted.

A longitudinal corridor extends east and west from the stair hall off of which are approximately 26 one and two room living units, and a common bathroom at the east end. Most living units have connecting doors.

The corridor has a wainscot (without baseboard) the same as described for the stairway. Doorways have 5 panel doors (2-1-2) with clear glass operating transoms - trim is typically Eastlake: symmetrically molded casings, 5-1/2" wide; plinth blocks; corner blocks with concentric circle pattern and molded vertical terminal elements. Most original door hardware is intact: round porcelain door knobs, and cast bronze escutcheons and hinges with geometric patterns.

(see continuation sheets)

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Doors, and door and window trim within living units is the same as in the corridors. Flooring throughout is tongue and groove fir - some is painted. Walls and ceilings are wood lath and plaster. Living units have a 10" baseboard with cap mold.

The stairway to the 3rd floor is a straight run with return between flights. Floor plan and millwork details are generally the same as the 2nd floor except that door and window trim does not have vertical terminal units above the corner blocks. A skylight is located near the east end of the corridor, below which is a ballustraded opening allowing light into the 2nd floor. Wood and plaster is generally in good condition though badly in need of surface refinishing.

PLAN AND INTERIOR DETAIL  
McKAY BROS. BLOCK

Layout of the McKay Bros. Block is similar to the Smithson on both the ground and upper floors. The ground floor has four store bays and an off center entry bay with a stair to upper floors. Store interiors have been extensively remodeled for the present tenant, the Storefront Theater. A few original doors and casings remain.

The entry stair, a straight run with intermediate landing leads to the large second floor stair hall and a longitudinal corridor (east/west) off of which are sleeping rooms and a common bathroom at the east end. A 5' x 10' light well is located between the bathrooms and the outer wall.

The stairway has a simple round fir handrail with wainscoting of 1 x 4 vertical tongue and groove boards with beaded joints and a cap molding.

At the second and third floors only the bare stud partitions remain. Wood lath and plaster was in very poor condition and has been removed. Doors, door and window casings, baseboards, balustrades and other wood trim have also been removed and carefully stored for reuse in the near future when the upper floors are rehabilitated.

Original millwork design and finish is also similar to the Smithson Block - doors are 4 panel fir stained dark, and window and door casings are typical Eastlake patterns also stained dark. Flooring throughout is 1 x 4 tongue and groove fir.

The third floor plan is similar to the second, and is reached by a 90 deg. stair with winders. Skylights illuminate the central stair hall and the east end of the

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corridor, under which are ballustraded openings, oval at the stair hall, allowing light to the second floor. Most rooms adjacent to the corridors have relights.

### STRUCTURE

Structural systems for both buildings are similar, and typical for most commercial buildings of the period. Exterior walls are brick, 18" + thick at the base tapering to 12" + at the third floor.

The Smithson Block first floor is supported by transverse brick walls under store wall lines and intermediate rows of posts and beams - 12" x 12" posts on concrete footings 7'-0" + on center with 12" x 12" bolsters and 12" x 12" beams. Fir joists, 2" x 18", span longitudinally. The second floor is carried by transverse 2" x 8" stud walls and intermediate rows of tapered wood posts, 10" diameter at the base, 15' + on center. Posts support 10" x 12" bolsters and beams. Third floor and roof structures consist of wood stud bearing walls, joists, and rafters.

The first floor of the McKay Bros. Block is also supported by transverse brick bearing walls with intermediate rows of posts and beams - 6" x 6" and 8" x 8" posts on concrete footings at 10' + on center and 8" x 8" beams - and 2-1/2" x 12" floor joists. Structure for the upper floors is the same as the Smithson Block - wood stud bearing walls, joists, and rafters.

Both buildings have dirt floor basements with low ceilings - 7'-0" + to bottom of joists. Floor to ceiling heights for the Smithson Block: 1st - 13'-9"; 2nd - 11'-7"; 3rd - 10'-6"; and for the McKay Bros. Block: 1st - 13'-8"; 2nd - 10'-6"; and 3rd - 10'-6". Roofs on both buildings have a shallow pitch with a longitudinal ridge and a built-up asphalt covering.

### EXTERIOR - SMITHSON BLOCK

The principal facade (south) on Russell Street is divided vertically into six asymmetrical bays in an A-B-C-B-B-A mode by continuous pilasters that extend through the parapet (pilasters also served as chimneys for gas unit heaters). The west facade on Interstate Avenue is basically symmetrical with an A-B-A bay system. At the southwest corner the building face is cut at a 45 degree angle with a bay nearly identical to the "C" bay on the south.

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The Smithson Block, quite typical of Portland's more modest examples of the Romanesque Revival, is covered with red brick, and cast stone, wood and stucco trim elements. Face brick is laid in common bond with beaded joints and is in good-fair condition. Some minor structural cracks are evident and brick needs cleaning and repointing. Ground floor brick on the south has been painted.

On the Russell Street ground floor are five storefronts, four of which are essentially as originally built. Typical storefronts, framed in wood, have recessed side entries, with glazed slanted side walls. Original entry doors have a clear glass upper panel and two solid lower panels with bolection moldings. The center panel is infilled in a nailhead pattern. At the street line, storefronts have a large single-pane window to door height with simple wood paneling below. Above, continuous into the door recess, is a clear glass double transom - the lower with vertical muntins, and the upper divided in typical Queen Anne fashion.

The "C" bay on Russell Street is the entry to upper floors and features a round arch opening in stucco with coffered soffit, paneled spandrels, and ornamental wood keystone. Flanking pilasters have modified Corinthian capitals in cast stone. The ground floor of the corner bay is similarly treated except the arch is brick and the pilasters do not have capitals.

The lower level on the west facade has high windows in the two bays adjacent to the corner, and two doors and a window in the northerly bay. Door and window openings have segmental arches.

The second story, defined by a wood belt course between pilasters has rectangular windows with flat arches, and double hung sash, one light over one. "A" bays have two windows, "B" bays - three, and "C" bays - one. Projecting, double course sills are continuous within each bay and are supported by 12" wide spaced corbels.

Round arch openings characterize the third floor. Arches, supported by secondary pilasters, span the full width within each bay. Windows vary in number as at the second floor, and wood sash is also double hung, one light over one. A spandrel panel in each bay below the continuous sill features brick headers set in a 45 deg. "sawtooth" pattern. Arches are trimmed with simple projecting perimeter courses and an inner "dentil" course.

The roof line is articulated by a belt course between corbelled pilasters, below which is a row of tapered corbels and a dentil course. Above on the west and south facades is a straight paneled brick parapet. The corner bay parapet

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is crowned with a segmental arch and a sheet metal panel with the building name: SMITHSON BLOCK.

**EXTERIOR - McKAY BROS. BLOCK**

Though completed in 1890, the adjacent McKay Bros. Block reflects the Italianate commercial style of the 1880s.

As the Smithson Block, the main facade on Russell Street is vertically divided in an asymmetrical manner by continuous pilasters, in this case five bays in an A-B-A-A-B mode. Facing is red brick laid in common bond with a row of headers at each eighth course. Some sagging is evident at the second floor lintels, and brick is in need of cleaning and repointing. Below the second floor the brick has been painted.

Three of the original ground floor store fronts are basically intact. Each store in an "A" bay has a central recessed entry with slanted sidewalls of glass. Original doors (two sets remain) are paired - each leaf with two stacked clear glass panels and lower solid panels with bolection moldings. Above the doors are large clear glass transoms. The front store windows, divided at the transom line, slant slightly inward to simple 3/4 round cast-iron posts that frame the recessed entries. Below the front windows are perforated cast-iron ventilation panels framed in wood. Posts and panel frames rest on cast-iron sills, continuous between pilasters. Brick pilasters which define each storefront are clad with paneled cast-iron elements from the ground to mid-door height. Pilasters have classically detailed wood capitals which support a classical frieze, and cornice formed of sheet metal.

The westerly "B" bay houses the entry to upper floors. Typical paired doors are framed in a round arch opening with a cast-iron Keystone having a shell motif. Pilasters and trim elements are the same as at the store fronts.

Second floor windows have stilted segmental arch openings framed by projecting brick courses that continue horizontally between windows and pilasters. Window sills at the second and third floors are cast-iron, and sash is of wood, double-hung, one light over one. Some sash has been removed for repairs.

The third floor line is articulated by a metal cornice similar to that at the second floor line. Round arch windows align with second floor windows below and are trimmed with simple projecting brick courses around the arch and horizontally

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at the spring line between windows and pilasters. Pilasters have simple projecting brick ornamentation at the trimline at both the second and third floors.

Between pilasters at the roof line is a corbelled string course. The bracketed wood cornice which once adorned the parapet was removed several years ago.

The exposed east party wall is solid common brick with chimneys projecting from the third floor through the parapet. Part of the wall has old painted signs. The rear (north) wall of both buildings is common brick with doors and windows in segmental arch openings. A wood fire stair has been added at the west end of the Smithson Block.

Both buildings originally had gas lighting, and were heated by gas space heaters that were connected to chimneys in each pilaster. None of the original heating or lighting equipment remains.

It is the owners intent to rehabilitate both buildings and to organize and encourage other nearby historic building property owners to do the same.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Community Developme

SPECIFIC DATES 1890 and 1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Smithson and McKay Bros. Blocks are significant as good and relatively intact examples of a once prevalent late 19th century building type in Portland - the 2-3 story masonry structure with ground floor retail and office space and upper floors devoted to low cost worker housing, and as buildings that display the characteristic elements of the two dominant commercial styles of the period - Italianate and Romanesque Revival.

Perhaps of greater significance is the setting and context of these two modest structures. Along with a very few others the Smithson and McKay Bros. Blocks are the only remaining 19th century buildings on North Russell Street, once the east-west axis of the thriving business district of Albina, a separate City until consolidation with Portland in 1891.

Of the many communities that ultimately merged to become the present City of Portland, Albina has occupied a unique place in the City's history. Founded in controversy, Albina has to the present day been an area with special character, and more recently an area of special concern to the larger city.

In April 1852, James L. Loring settled upon and filed a Donation Land Claim for land on the east bank of the Willamette River near the site of the present Fremont Bridge. Portland, which had been incorporated a year earlier, was located two miles to the south on the west bank of the river. Shortly before he died, Loring permitted Joshua Delay and his family onto his land as tenants. Upon Loring's death, the Delays moved into his house, denied ever having known Loring, and filed a Donation Land Claim of their own for the same plot. Further legal complications arose when Joshua Delay and his wife Sara died before either claim had been patented. Subsequently both estates were granted title to the same land. A long court battle ensued with the case finally decided for the Delay heirs. (The present Interstate Avenue within the Albina area was formerly Delay Street.)

About 1870 the Delay parcel was sold to Portland attorney William W. Page, who in 1872, sold to Englishman Edwin Russell, local manager of the Bank of British Columbia, and George H. Williams who was just returning to Portland after a term in the U.S. Senate. Russell and Williams named the town Albina after Page's wife and daughter (which the family pronounced Al-BEAN-ah).

(see continuation sheets)



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .55

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1, 0 | | 5, 2, 5 | 3, 2, 0 | | 5, 0 | 4, 2 | 9, 2, 0 |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, Block 1, Proebstel's Addition

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George A. McMath, A.I.A.

ORGANIZATION

Allen, McMath, Hawkins, Architects

DATE

March 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

213 S. W. Ash Street, #210

TELEPHONE

(503) 228-5154

CITY OR TOWN

Portland

STATE

OR 97204

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*George A. McMath*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE June 15, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Carol Shull*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*W. Ray Juice*

DATE

August 7, 1979

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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While Russell had the major property interest, Williams laid out the townsite and filed the plat in 1873. Russell and Williams, particularly the latter, represented the "westside interests" as Portland's business establishment was known. Though the players changed through the years, these "interests" dominated Albina development and politics for decades. Albina was in effect a "company town".

Williams had a colorful and controversial career, and by the end of the 19th century he would become Portland's most nationally prominent citizen. Born in a log cabin in upper New York State in 1823 and admitted to the bar at 21, Williams practiced law as a Democrat in Iowa in 1845. He was sent to Oregon in 1853 as Chief Justice of the Territorial Court that also included Justices Olney and Deady. Six years later Williams established a private law practice in Portland, became a Republican, and proclaimed his opposition to the extension of slavery in the territories. In addition to his term as U.S. Senator (1865-71) Williams served as Attorney General (1873-77) under President U. S. Grant. Subsequently, he was nominated to be Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. Strong opposition developed in the east due to his performance as Attorney General and Grant was forced to withdraw the nomination. Williams returned to Portland in 1881 and formed a law partnership and became involved in banking and other business. His interest in politics continued and in 1902, at age 79, he was elected Mayor of Portland where he served a single term. Williams died in 1910.

While Williams was serving as Attorney General, Edwin Russell proceeded to develop their townsite, investing all his savings and borrowing heavily. Russell shared the dream of other river town developers that his townsite would become the metropolis on the Willamette. Within a period of two years he built a saw-mill, iron foundry, and a shipbuilding plant on the river, and a grand home on the bluff overlooking his domain. The bank panic of 1873 shattered Russell's dream and by the end of the following year he was wiped out and had left for San Francisco. After his departure his controlling interest in the form of foreclosed mortgages was sold to William Reid and James B. Montgomery, financiers involved in shipbuilding and railroad enterprises, who proceeded to plan for additional development. (In 1876 the Revenue Cutter, Thomas Corwin, was launched from the boatyard, the first U. S. Government vessel built in Oregon.)

Few, if any towns in Oregon grew more rapidly than Albina. In 1880 the population had yet to reach 150, but by 1888, the year after incorporation, the population was nearly 3,000. (Albina was formally incorporated February 4, 1887. A month later Ordinance No. 1, City of Albina was adopted by the City Council, "To provide for licensing Bar-rooms and Drinking Shops.")

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Investment in Albina and the surrounding area by Portland and out of town interests was substantial. Frederick Wm. Proebstel platted his Addition, site of the Smithson and McKay Bros. Blocks, in 1881. Proebstel crossed the plains in 1852 and settled in Wallowa Co. in eastern Oregon. He had a ranch near Joseph and was later involved in banking in LaGrande. He retired to Portland during his later years and invested in real estate. Proebstel with his large family lived in the northern part of Albina until his death in 1911.

As had been the case with East Portland to the south, the main stimulus to Albina's rapid growth was the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Co. (later owned by the Union Pacific Railroad.) Controlled and operated by railroad baron Henry Villard, and the Failing, Ladd, and Corbett families among other west side interests, the O.R. & N. Co. became the most powerful corporation in the State. By 1890 the O.R. & N. Co. owned nearly two miles of riverfront and had massive developments on both sides of the river. The Albina yard included a large brick roundhouse with 22 stalls; car shops, the largest over 400 feet long; and a boiler house with a 156' high brick chimney, a designated Portland Landmark. Other important early industrial developments were the Portland Flour Mills owned by W. S. Ladd, and the Pacific Coast Elevator, a million dollar project by Minneapolis businessman, F. H. Peavey.

Also in 1890 the McKay Bros. Block was built, one of the earliest masonry commercial structures in Albina. At this time Russell Street had developed as a primary business area, connecting the river and railroad yards on the west, by ferry and streetcar, with the residential area on the high ground to the east. The prime commercial corner was Russell Street and Williams Avenue where the Hill Block was also built in 1890 (razed in early 1970s). Commercial development also spread north and south along the streetcar lines on Williams Avenue, and in later years on Union Avenue further to the east.

Like many Albina business structures the McKay Bros. Block was a speculative venture built by absentee owners. William R. McKay and his younger brother, John, were successful farmers in Marion County. William was manager of his father's substantial estate which had mainly been created by a successful venture in the California Gold Rush. While spending most of his time on the family farm William McKay bought and developed property in the Portland area and throughout the Willamette Valley.

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Bowing to pressure from the railroads and local realtors, the state legislature in 1889 and 1891 authorized Albina to annex undeveloped land to the north, an area nine times larger than the incorporated city limits. When annexation was completed Albina contained more land than Portland and East Portland combined. In July 1891 an election was held on the question of consolidating the three separate cities. The measure was approved by a wide margin. At the time of the election Albina's population was nearly 7000.

Albina continued to grow along with the railroads and the entire region. One of the prominent commercial structures was the three story brick block built by Alexander J. Smithson at the corner of Russell and Delay Streets (now Interstate Avenue), immediately east of the railroad yards. Smithson and other members of his family operated the Smithson Land Co. with offices in the Smithson Block. Smithson was a long time resident of Albina, and served one term on the City Council.

Until the turn of the century Albina consisted of almost three separate communities: the low lying river front land used by industry and the railroads; the commercial strips that developed along Russell, Mississippi, and Williams Avenues; and the adjoining residential areas. Railroad and other industrial development provided semi-skilled and many immigrants came to the area, primarily Irish and Germans.

Most Portlanders today consider Albina to have historically been the City's Black District. But that was not always the case. Prior to World War I Portland's small black population was spread throughout the City and many had substantial jobs. But as European immigration accelerated the labor unions refused to admit blacks who were consequently forced into the most menial low paying jobs. Low cost housing was difficult to find and unpublicized realtor pressure slowly forced blacks into "less desirable districts", principally Albina. By 1960, approximately 80% of Portland's 15,600 black population would be confined to Albina. While housing discrimination has largely disappeared, Albina today still contains the City's largest concentration of blacks.

During the late 1960s and early 70s Model Cities Programs, Urban Renewal, and Freeway construction virtually eliminated Albina's historic business districts. All that remains is a four block section along lower Russell Street between the Fremont Bridge ramp and the railroad yards west of Interstate Avenue. The Smithson and McKay Bros. blocks are the best examples of commercial architecture still standing in the district.

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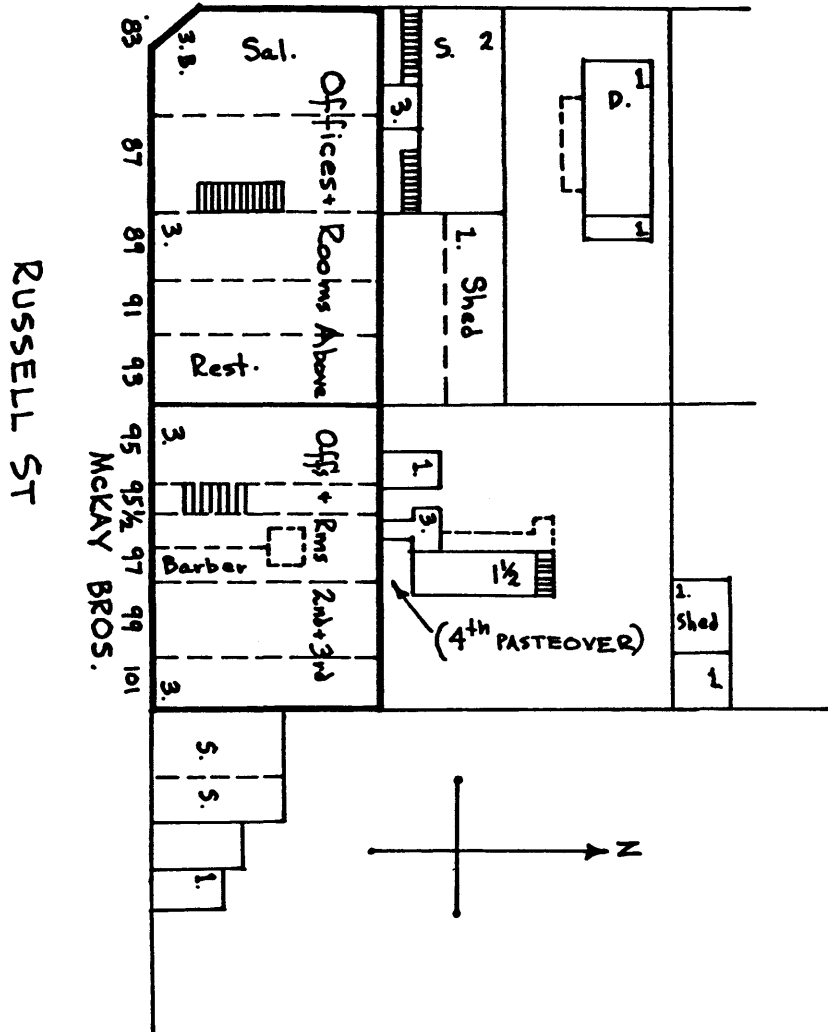
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- . "Central Albina Study", prepared by Portland Bureau of Planning, 1962.
- . "The Peninsula", compiled and edited by the Peninsula Publishing Co., Portland, c. 1909.
- . North Pacific Coast Directory, 1888-89, p. 880.
- . Vertical File, "ALBINA", Oregon Historical Society Library.
- . Oregon Journal, August 31, 1976, Sec. 2, p. 17.

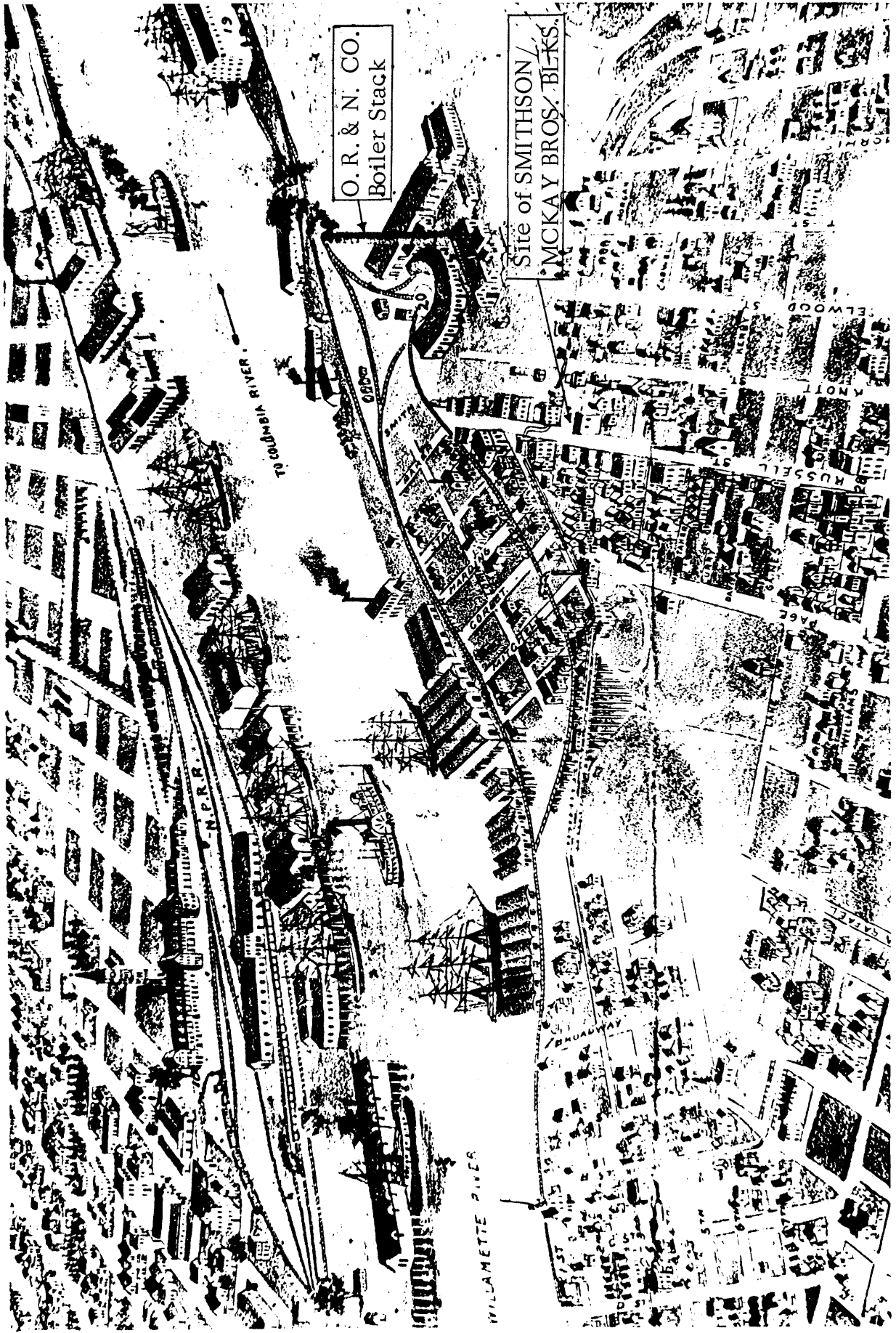
JUN 23 1979

DELAY ST.  
(FORMERLY Helm St. - now Interstate)  
SMITHSON BLOCK



SANBORN MAP • 1889 corrected to 1897  
SCALE : 1" = 50'

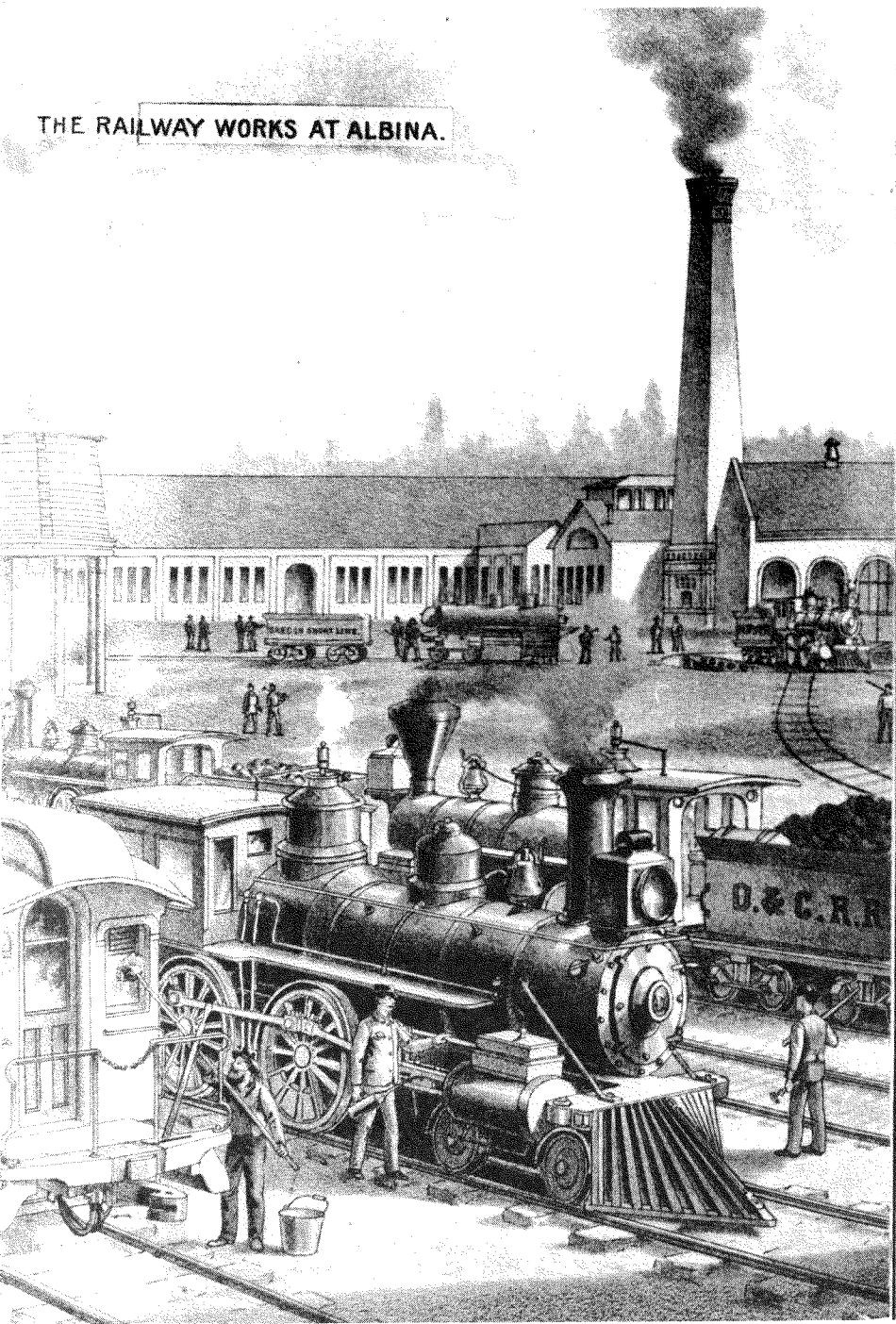
JUN 28 1879



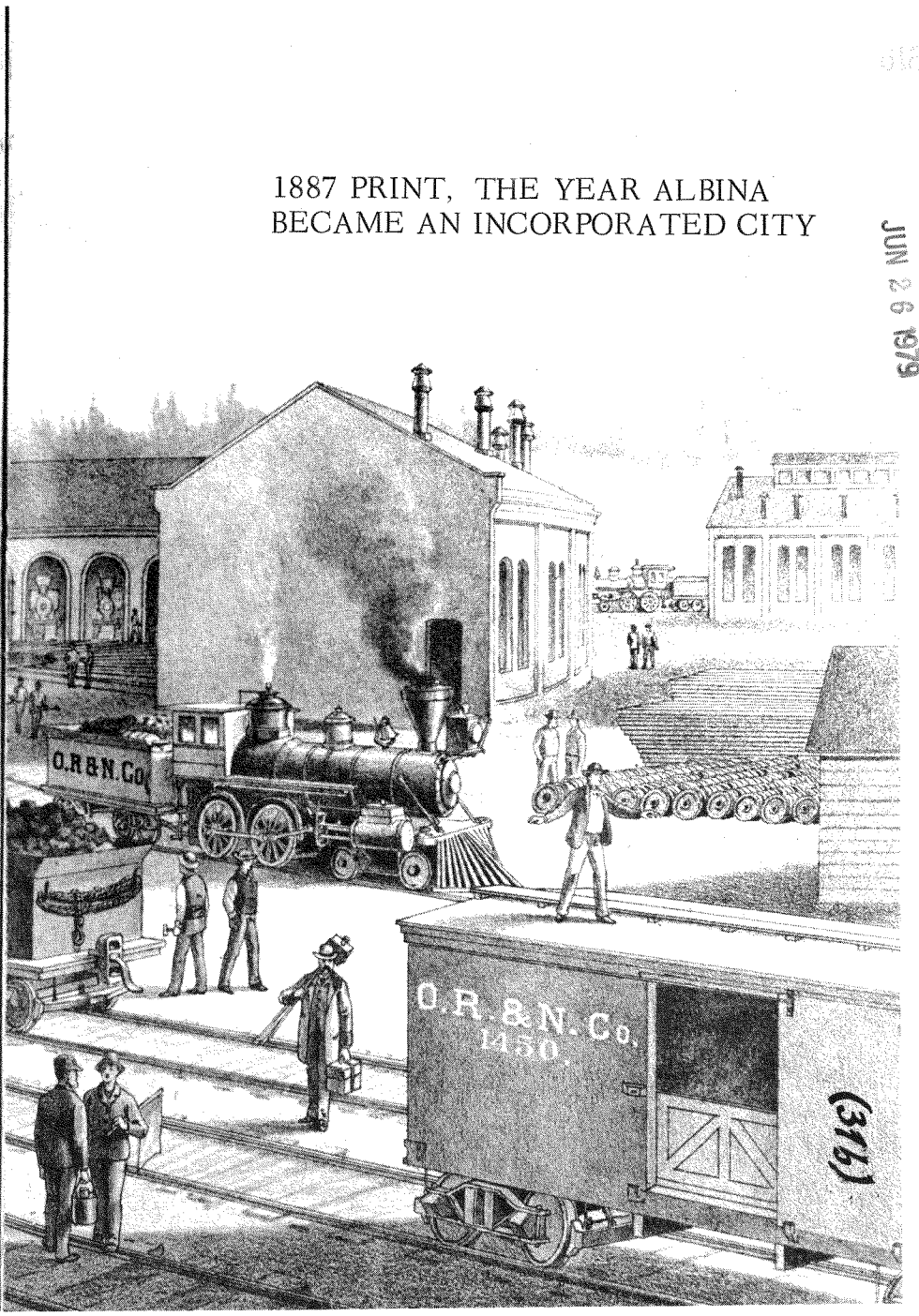
PORTION OF 1890 PORTLAND LITHOGRAPH - LOOKING WEST - ALBINA AT LOWER RIGHT  
(based on 1889 data - prior to construction of SMITHSON / MCKAY BROS. BLOCKS)



THE RAILWAY WORKS AT ALBINA.

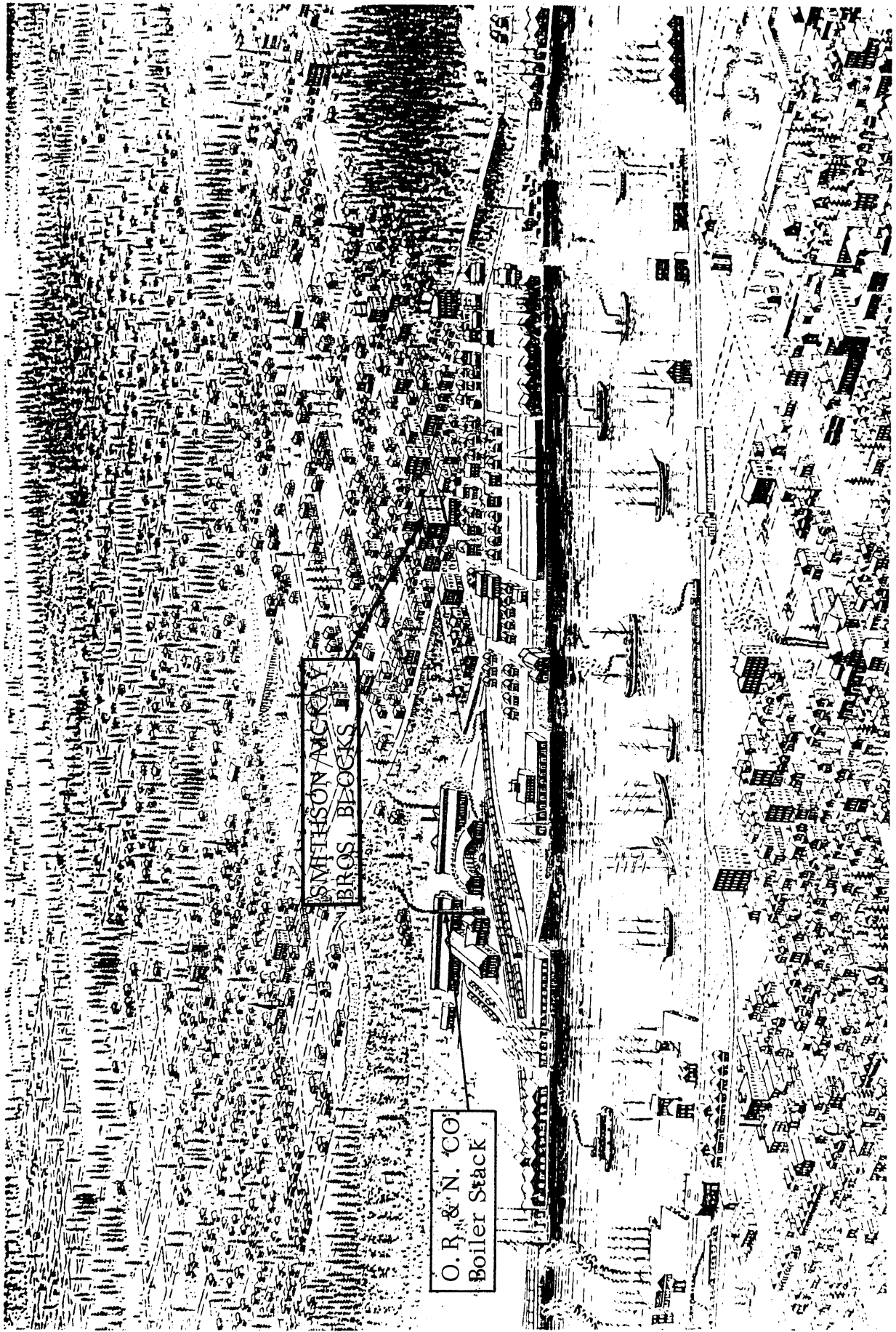


1887 PRINT, THE YEAR ALBINA BECAME AN INCORPORATED CITY





JUN 26 1913



PORTION OF 1904 PORTLAND LITHOGRAPH - LOOKING NORTHEAST - ALBINA AT CENTER

JUN 26 1979

SANBORN MAP - PORTLAND BUR. OF PLANNING

1" = 100'

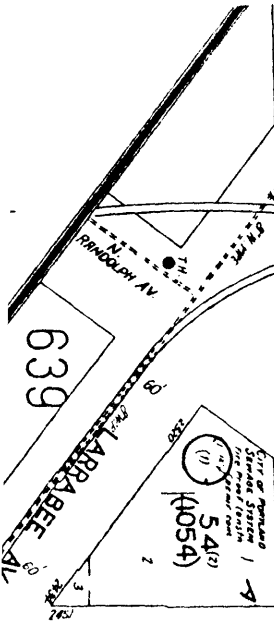
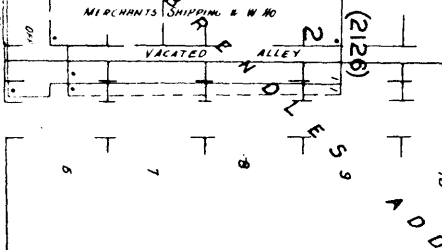
PORTLAND, OREG. VOL. 6

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1/4 SEC. 2729, 2829

N. LARRABEE AV.

602



N. INTERSTATE AV.

INTERSTATE AV.

N. INTERSTATE AV

SMITHSON BLOCK

N. KNOTT

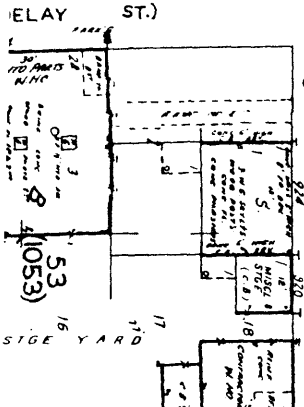
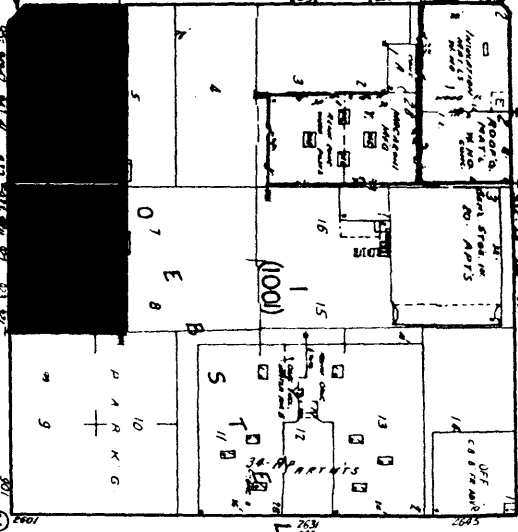
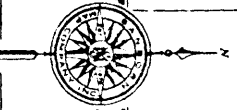
MCKAY BROS. BLOCK

641

641

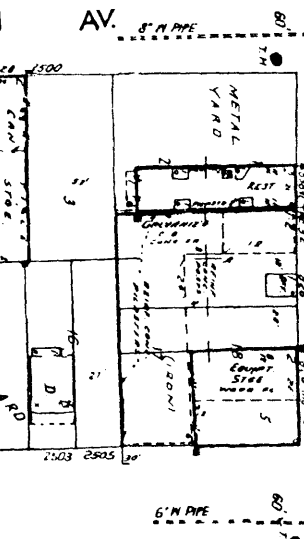
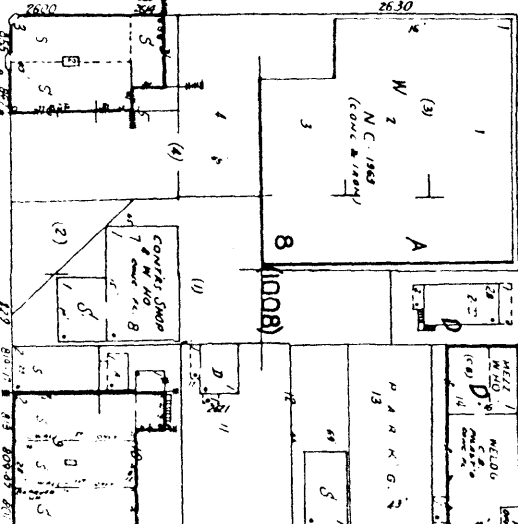
N. RUSSELL

N. RUSSELL



N. MISSISSIPPI AV.

615



N. ALBINA AV.

N. ALBINA AV.

N. ALBINA AV.

627