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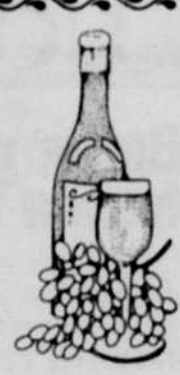


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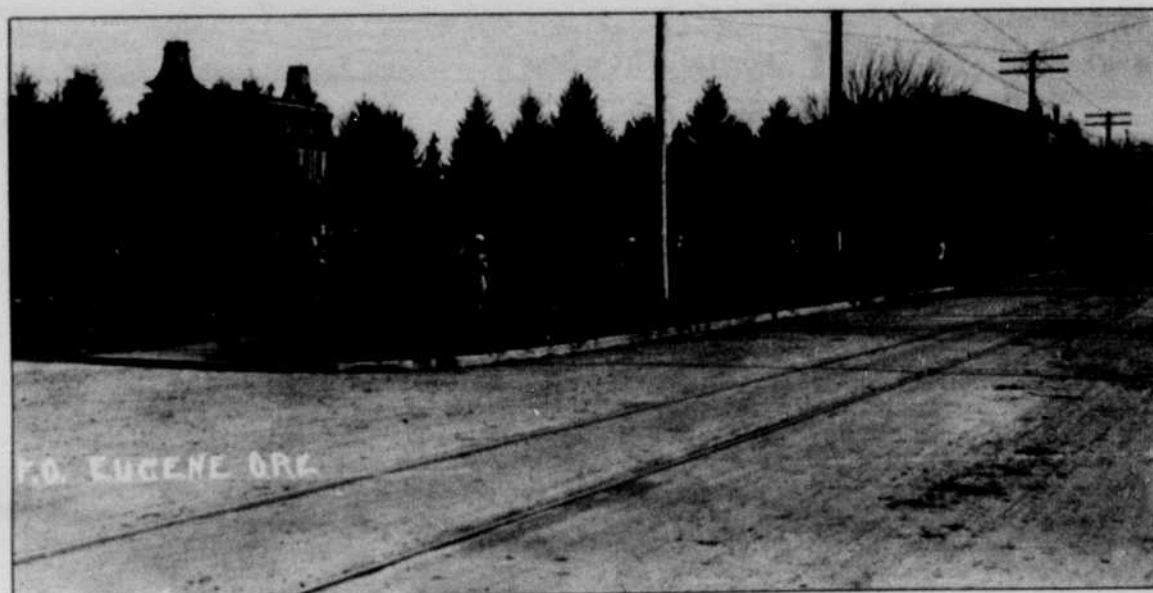
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Courtesy of University Archives

The old Eugene streetcar system traveled throughout the city from 1907 until 1927 and carried passengers down 13th Avenue to campus as shown in this photo taken in the early 1900s.

Workers discover old streetcar rails

By Stephen Maher
 Emerald Associate Editor

Workers building an ornamental gateway to the University at 13th Avenue and Kincaid Street have discovered that some things just never go away.

When a bulldozer dug up the asphalt on 13th Avenue on Nov. 5 it ran smack into the rails and ties of Eugene's old electric streetcar system.

"The whole track system was in there," said Kevin Knode, owner of Kip Construction Co.

of Eugene, which was awarded the contract for the Westgate III project.

"We didn't expect to find it," Knode said.

The rails and ties were four inches below the surface of the street, he said, and although the ties had deteriorated, the tracks were in remarkably good condition.

The Pacific, Eugene and Eastern Railway Co. operated the system from 1907 to 1927 before the practicality of automobiles harkened the streetcar's demise. The 45-foot long streetcars came equipped with airbrakes and electric heaters and were capable of carrying 100 passengers.

Prior to the establishment of electric streetcars, a mule-drawn system traveled through the city from 1891 to 1900. From 1900 to 1907 the city was

without the trolley, owing to what one newspaper termed, "the lack of business."

The streetcar line that traveled past the University began at the Oregon Electric Station in downtown Eugene and traveled on Willamette Street, 11th Avenue and Alder Street before turning on 13th Avenue. University Archivist Keith Richard said.

From the University, the trolley followed a loop up University Street to the vicinity of 24th Avenue and then down Moss Street to 13th Avenue.

Richard said he recently notified the University planning office that workers were likely to find rails underneath the asphalt on 13th Avenue.

But according to Harold Babcock, director of the University physical plant that is overseeing the project, no one relayed the information to his office.

"It would be nice if the people of Eugene realized they were still there," Richard added.

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