

After struggle, Eugene claimed 'white elephant'

Unwanted university benefited city identity

By Carrie Dennett
Emerald Associate Editor

The University opened its doors in Eugene 115 years ago, boasting one building and 96 students. However, had Eugene residents not fought for what was then an unwanted institution, the city might be very different today.

In 1787 the legal tools for the establishment of a state university became available from the U.S. government, but went unclaimed for 64 years until a fast-approaching federal deadline created a desperate search for a city to take the university.

The burden was first assigned to Marysville (now Corvallis), but four years later, in 1855, it was passed on to Jacksonville.

Eugene at that time was a farming community of about 200 families, and the residents saw little need for an institution of higher learning. Those who sought more than a primary education simply went to a church-financed school such as Willamette University (Methodist) or Pacific University (Congregationalist).

By 1872, the deadline was up, and the future university had become a white elephant. Even Portland declined, not wanting to "waste" any land.

The state then began to explore the option of adding to an already-existing university.

If not for Joshua J. Walton, a Eugene circuit court judge, the university would not have come to Eugene. Walton saw a need for a university, and drove Eugene to the point of

bankruptcy to get it.

Walton formed the Union University Association, and proposed to the Oregon Legislature that in exchange for a site and a structure worth \$50,000 within two years, Eugene would receive the university.

The state university became

attractive to Eugene and Lane County residents because it was viewed as an enterprise that would bring money to the community without the community expending much of its own money, said University Archivist Keith Richards.

Richards said that for every

dollar spent at the University, four to five more dollars are created in the community. State-funded salaries were an added incentive.

After Eugene placed its bid, other cities jumped into the ring, assuming that Walton was onto something.

Eugene put a strong lobbying effort into gaining the rights to the university, but it was an agreement with Corvallis that turned the tide.

Corvallis had been lobbying for the university as well, but

Turn to **UNIVERSITY**, Page 22



This aerial photo of Eugene, taken in 1930, is a view looking west down the Willamette River, with Skinner Butte and the Ferry Street Bridge in the foreground.

INDEX

STUDENT-POLICE RELATIONS:

Members of the Eugene Police Department and some students at the University have seen and improvement in relations, due in part to the Community Relations Task Force. **See story, Page 4**

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

What can you legally expect from your landlord? Where can you go if you have questions or problems about your living conditions? Find out. **See story, Page 6**

GREEN THUMBS:

Although gardening space isn't often available in apartment complexes, the opportunity to grow fresh vegetables is offered through the Community Gardens program. Plots of land are available for rent in various locations throughout the Eugene area. **See story, Page 10**

GET INVOLVED:

Seats are available on more than 20 committees, commissions and boards that advise city staff and make recommendations to the Eugene City Council on a wide range of issues. **See story, Page 12**

COMMUNITY STAFF

SECTION EDITOR: Daralyn Trappe

GRAPHICS EDITOR: Jeff Paslay

CONTRIBUTORS: Meg Dedolph, Carrie Dennett, Dan Eisler, Dennis Fitzgerald, Nicole Sagen, June Williams, Soo May Wong

COPY EDITORS: Christopher Blair, Hon Walker

PRODUCTION: Sarah Clark, Jim Finch, Susan Head, Jennifer Roland, Don Ross, Hon Walker, Ingrid White

ADVERTISING: Kirsten Lucas, Andrew Poole, Catherine Royle, Eryn Scharwatt, Tera Surratt



Welcome Back!

Award-Winning Cookies

2 for \$1

(regularly 75c each)
Offer expires 10/5/91



FALL CREEK BAKERY

Classic Baking Since 1980 • 484-1662

881

EAST 13TH AVENUE

Next to the LO Bookstore

Cookies
Cakes
Pastries
Breads
Coffee
Espresso
Sandwiches
Catering!

OPEN

Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 6 pm
Saturdays
8 am - 6 pm
Sundays
8 am - 3 pm

A Great Cafe Since 1990 • 484-4663

JUST SAY AAH!

ICED OR HOT

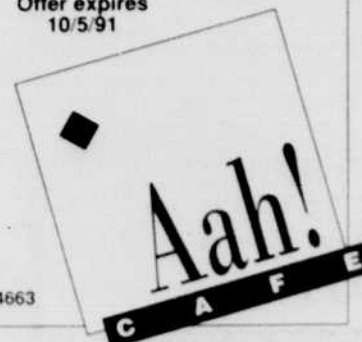
MOCHA

2 for the price of 1

(regularly \$1.25 each)

Offer expires 10/5/91

Made with Allann Bros. Coffee and Ghirardelli Chocolate



Time to do Laundry?



- Coin op and drop off laundry
- Dry Cleaning
- Ask about student discounts
- Attended 12-5:30 p.m. Mon-Fri

Come by EASTSIDE LAUNDROMAT AND DRY CLEANERS
1430 ORCHARD ST. 345-6133