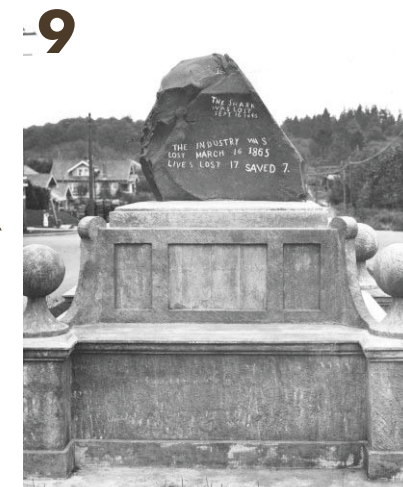


# A LOOK BACK AT 1940 ASTORIA



Submitted photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society  
The Shark Rock Memorial was placed on Niagara Avenue for a Founders' Day celebration in July 1926. In 1965 it was moved to the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Seventy-five years ago, in the throes of the Great Depression, the federal government published [Oregon: End of the Trail](#).

This 500-page guidebook was produced in connection to the American Guide Series by the New Deal-era Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration.

Story by MATT LOVE

**O**regon: *End of the Trail* was just one of 48 state and three city guidebooks that comprised one of the most fascinating publishing projects in American history. The idea was to put unemployed writers to work by having them visit virtually every inhabited place in the country, document heritage, dig up the lore, and then shape the facts and anecdotes into a novel travel guide that hoped to motivate Americans to travel and pump some discretionary income into a beleaguered economy. The writers went unaccredited as a matter of editorial policy, but later it was discovered that future luminaries such as Saul Bellow, Studs Terkel, Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison were some of the writers published in the series.

One of these unemployed writers visited Astoria and delivered some of the best writing I've ever read about the city. This is classic writing that has long been out of print without any hope of resurrection.

Until now. Just in time for the 75th anniversary of *Oregon: End of the Trail's* release.

Perhaps a visitor or local who wants to understand the contours of new Astoria in relationship to the city from 1940 should read excerpts from the *Oregon: End of the Trail's* chapter on Astoria, one of only 10 cities profiled in the book. I found it utterly fascinating.

If you are so inclined, then here you go:

Matt Love lives in Astoria and is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon. They are available at coastal bookstores and through [www.nestuccaspiritpress.com](http://www.nestuccaspiritpress.com)

## ASTORIA

**Railroad Station:** 20th St. and Waterfront for Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway.  
**Bus Station:** 614 Duane St. for Spokane, Portland & Seattle Transportation Co.; 11th St. and Waterfront for Oregon Motor Stages.  
**Airport:** 3 m. SW. on US 101, bus fare 15c, taxi \$1.50; no scheduled service.  
**City Busses:** Fare 10c.  
**Taxis:** Basic fare 25c.  
**Piers:** River steamers, foot of 11th St., weekly trips to Portland; ocean steamers, Port Terminals, Portway off Taylor Ave. (consult travel agencies or classified telephone directory for ocean travel).  
**Accommodations:** Five hotels; numerous auto camps.  
**Information Service:** Chamber of Commerce, 14th and Exchange Sts.

**Radio Station:** KAST (1370 kc.).  
**Motion Picture Houses:** Two.  
**Athletics:** Gyro Field, Exchange St. between 18th and 21st Sts.  
**Tennis:** Y.M.C.A. courts, 12th and Exchange Sts.  
**Swimming:** Ocean beaches: Clatsop Beach (25 miles long), 9 m. SW. on US 101 at Skipanon, 18 m. SW. at Gearhart, 20 m. SW. at Seaside; Cannon Beach, 30 m. SW. on US 101 and unnumbered road. River beaches: Numerous on lower Columbia River, along US 30 and US 101; beaches vary with level of river; inquire locally.  
**Golf:** Astoria Golf and Country Club, 8 m. SW. just off US 101, 18 holes; greens fee \$1.  
**Annual Events:** Astoria Regatta, four days prior to Labor Day.

**ASTORIA** (12 alt., 10,349 pop.), named for John Jacob Astor, is the seat of Clatsop County and the site of the first permanent settlement in the Oregon country. Because of its commerce and industry and its position at the mouth of the Columbia River, Astoria has grown from a palisaded trading post to an important port. Flour mills, sawmills, salmon canneries, and grain elevators line the course of the river, and fishing boats and fleets of ocean-going vessels dock at the long wharves.

Sprawling waterfront warehouses and docks, orderly rows of business blocks along a narrow beach, steep declivities where houses are niched into yellow clay banks, terraced hillsides where

substantial residences rise one above the other, and the timbered crests of Coxcomb Hill where the Astor Monument points toward the sky are individual bits of Astoria's pattern but by a whim of nature in fashioning the headland upon which the town is built no general view is possible except from the Columbia River. Yet even this vantage point cannot reveal the caprice that completely eliminated Thirteenth Street from the city plan, yet permitted Bond, the second street in the alphabetical arrangement that originates at the waterfront, to wander through Union town as Taylor Avenue.

Not unlike the Columbia, which determined its settlement and growth, Astoria displays aspects as enchantingly diverse as its weather, which, according to Finnish residents, may be predicted by reading the fog on the Washington shore of the Columbia. All glitter and brittle air in summer, all hush or foggy mystery in autumn, and all bluster and fury during winter storms, Astoria never lacks the characteristics

of the sea that has drawn Finns, Norwegians, and Swedes in such numbers that shop signs in the various languages are commonplace. Finnish is usually spoken in the stores and fraternal orders and churches often conduct their ceremonies in both that language and English. The steam bath, of Finnish heritage, is ritualistically observed both in private homes and in public bath houses.

Astoria's industry and commerce consist chiefly of fishing, lumbering, dairying, general agriculture, and a rapidly increasing tourist business. Dairying is on the way to becoming a \$2,000,000-a-year industry, and specialized as well as general agriculture has been developed. Some of the first cranberry bogs on the Pacific Coast were planted near by, and the growing and canning of peas is proving increasingly profitable. The principle manufacturing output includes lumber, and box shooks, salmon products, flour, fertilizer, cheese, powdered milk, and medicinal oils and other fish by-products.



Submitted photo  
The 500-page *Oregon: End of the Trail* guidebook profiles 10 cities in Oregon, including Astoria.



Submitted photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society  
This postcard photo ca. 1920 shows the Hannula Boarding House, which was located at 937 Taylor (now Marine Drive) next to the Finnish Mercantile in Uniontown.

This postcard photo taken in June 1935 shows the Union Fisherman's Cooperative Cannery, a point of interest in the Oregon: End of the Trail guidebook chapter on Astoria. After labor disputes, about 200 fishermen formed the Union Fisherman's Cooperative Packing Co. in 1897. By 1904, theirs was the largest cannery in Astoria. It remained a fishermen-owned business until the late 1940s. Today, the Cannery Pier Hotel stands on the former cannery's 100-year-old pilings.



Submitted photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society



### ASTORIA POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The Site of Old Fort Astoria
2. The Site of Original Settlement at Astoria
3. The Site of the First Post Office
4. The Interstate Ferry Slip
5. The Flavel Mansion
6. The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Cannery
7. The Port of Astoria Terminals
8. The Columbia River Packer's Association Plant
9. Shark Rock
10. Shively Public Park
11. The Astor Column

1. The SITE OF OLD FORT ASTORIA, 15th and Exchange Sts., is heavily outlined in paint on streets and sidewalks. A square laid out diagonally to the present city streets, the area comprises approximately two city blocks. A marker at the northwest corner of the intersection bears a diagram of the fort, showing its construction and plan.

2. The SITE OF ORIGINAL SETTLEMENT AT ASTORIA, 16th and Exchange Sts., occupied by the city hall, is marked by a granite boulder and bronze plaque, placed by the D.A.R. in 1924. Here the thirty-three members of the Astor party settled temporarily after disembarking from the Tonquin, while they were building Fort Astoria.

5. The FLAVEL MANSION (open 9-5 weekdays), Duane St. between 7th and 8th Sts., is a striking example of pioneer architecture. Built of lumber freighted around the horn, it is a two-story frame dwelling with turret chimneys, and a three-story tower at the northeast corner accentuates its height. It was erected in the early 1880's by a family prominent in Astoria's civic and cultural life. The estate deeded the house to Clatsop County in 1936 with the stipulation that it be used for philanthropic purposes. It is occupied by the Clatsop County Relief Association, the Red Cross, and other civic agencies.

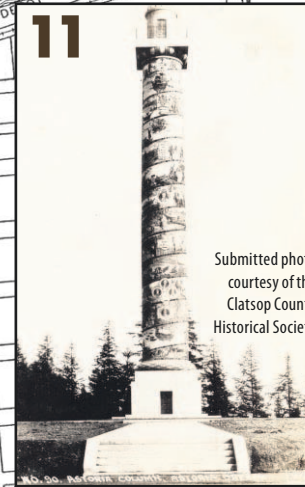
UNION-TOWN, Astoria's foreign quarter, along the western section of Bond Street, has Chinese restaurants, Finnish steam bathhouses, river union offices, and Japanese and Scandinavian shops.

10. SHIVELY PUBLIC PARK, S. of reservoir at S. end of 16th St., on an eminence commanding a view of Youngs Bay, Saddle Mountain, and the Coast Range, is centered by a natural amphitheater used for public gatherings. To the southwest beyond Youngs Bay is the Lewis and Clark River, which flows past the site of Old Fort Clatsop, the explorer's winter camp. In the park are the Portals of the Past, decorative columns saved from the ruins of the Weinhard Hotel, destroyed in the fire of 1922.

Right: This postcard photo shows the Astoria Ferry Ship Landing on 14th Street. The Interstate Ferry Slip was a point of interest in the Oregon: End of the Trail guidebook, published in 1940.



Submitted photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society



Submitted photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society

This postcard photo of the Astoria Column is ca. 1925-1935. The Column is, unsurprisingly, one of the points of interest on the 1940 map of Astoria in Oregon: End of the Trail.

Submitted image