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WEEKEND BREAK



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Train arriving at Astoria, Oregon.



Columbia River Maritime Museum

ABOVE: A postcard with one of Astoria's many trains pulling into town. BELOW: An advertisement for the Astoria & Columbia River Railroad.

The great railroad boom

The history behind luxurious vacations to the coast

By JULIA TRIEZENBERG
For *The Astorian*

For years, 19th-century Astorians dreamed of a railroad that would connect their town to the rest of the country. Although Astoria was situated at the mouth of the Columbia River, most shipping traffic ended its journey in Portland.

Throughout the better part of the 1800s, Astorians believed that a railroad's construction would transform their town into the booming port it was meant to be.

As transcontinental rail lines expanded west, Portland was once again establishing itself as the terminus for this type of travel. James J. Hill's Northern Pacific line technically ended in Goble, so Astoria was once again stranded.

Its residents took matters into their own hands.

William Reid was originally contracted to oversee the construction of the Astoria & South Coast Railway, which connected Astoria to Seaside.

However, Reid's relationship with his employers eventually fell apart, and Astorians had to figure out yet another way to connect the coast with the rest of Oregon.

A businessman from Montana named Andrew Hammond was hired to finish what had been started. Instead of continuing south along the coast, Hammond built rail along the Columbia River. He connected Astoria with the Goble line, establishing the Astoria & Columbia River Railroad in 1898.

At last, Astorians were linked to the rest of the country in a totally different way. One promotional piece boasted, "A railroad, speeding ahead of the drifting Columbia River to the sea, or gliding back up its toilsome currents, was a dream of nearly half a century."

Business boomed as tourists from Portland flocked to the coast during the summer. Seaside was one of the most popular destinations.

In the early 1900s, Seaside's population during the off-season was

ASTORIA & COLUMBIA RIVER RAILROAD

CLATSOP BEACH RESORTS
ASTORIA & COLUMBIA RIVER R. R.

CLATSOP BEACH
ON THE
PACIFIC OCEAN

Many people visit the "PACIFIC COAST" without seeing the PACIFIC OCEAN, in all its majestic grandeur.

The great Pacific is jealous of its coast, presenting few clear beaches easy of approach, but the best of all, CLATSOP BEACH, is reached and skirted for miles by the Astoria & Columbia River Railroad, with parlor car trains from Portland along the Columbia River and through Astoria—that city in the romantic history of which the flags of Spain, France, Russia, Britain and America mingle, over which Astor's men and Hudson's Bay men wrangled, and which was objective to Lewis and Clark.

No one should fail to take this short and interesting trip to CLATSOP BEACH, an all-year resort, and stay a day, a week or a month, the memory of which will last with life.

CLATSOP BEACH AND ASTORIA EXCURSIONS

Low round-trip excursion fares from Portland:

Astoria, Saturday and Sunday, returning Monday.....	\$3.00
Clatsop Beach Points, Saturday and Sunday, returning Monday.....	3.00
Clatsop Beach Points, daily, limit six months.....	4.00
Clatsop Beach Points, five round-trip commutation ticket, limit one year.....	15.00

A. & C. R. trains arrive at and depart from Grand Central Station, Portland.

See schedules on opposite pages.

Illustrated booklet and folder, descriptive of mountain and seaside resorts tributary to the Astoria & Columbia River Railroad sent free upon application to W. E. Coman, General Freight and Passenger Agent, Portland, Oregon. A postal will do.

around 500. At its peak during the summer months, that number could range anywhere between 5,000 to 10,000 people.

Now Portlanders who had struggled to get to their vacation by boat or horse-drawn carriage could make a trip to the coast in just under five hours. Weekend excursion trains took businessmen to the coast to visit their families and would get them back to Portland in time for work on Monday morning.

During the railroad's peak, the trip from Portland to Seaside was meant to be luxurious. Parlor cars held lounges with velvety upholstered chairs, as well as folding chairs that could be taken to the observation decks outside.

It wasn't always pleasant, though. Some travelers reported that when the train crossed over Youngs Bay, they would draw their shades or grip their

seats until it was over, the same way nervous airplane passengers might before they take off.

Passenger service declined over the first half of the 20th century until it came to a halt in the 1950s. During that time, companies exchanged hands through multiple mergers and acquisitions, including Burlington Northern's takeover of Astoria & Columbia River Railroad, Great Northern Railway and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway.

Burlington Northern sold off what was left of the Astoria line in the 1990s. You can still see glimpses of this once-thriving industry all along the coast, including on the Astoria Riverfront Trolley, which runs along the Astoria Riverwalk.

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