



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

JULY 2024

MCMINNVILLE, OREGON — CONNECTING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT

BY DONALD R. NELSON



Lithographed hand-water-colored postcard of McMinnville Bab(p)tist College (now Linfield University), circa 1908. Don Nelson collection.

McMINNVILLE, OREGON — CONNECTING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT

BY DONALD R. NELSON

The town of McMinnville, Oregon is my birth place; I stayed with my mother and brother at my grandparents' home before and shortly after my birth before returning back to our home in Portland and rejoining my father.



Real photo postcard of McMinnville Baptist College, circa 1906. Don Nelson collection.

The photo on the front of this card is unblemished, but the entirety of the blank space around the image of today's Pioneer Hall was used for correspondence. At that time, only the recipient's address was allowed on the back of the card.

The town of McMinnville, Oregon got its start in the 1840s when this region was known as the Oregon Territory. McMinnville was the first county seat of Yamhill County which was one of Oregon's first official counties, founded in 1843. Later, the town of Lafayette would become the county seat. Prior to that, the native residents of the area were members of the Kalapooia tribe. By the end of the decade, there were about 2,000 immigrants in the area, though many left in 1849 during the gold rush.

William T. Newby, a traveler in the Great Migration from the eastern part of the country in 1843, claimed land in what would become McMinnville. He built a mill on the future site of Third Street and platted the city in 1855. He named it McMinnville after his hometown in Tennessee. The town was incorporated 20 years later and became an official city in 1882. Four years later, it took the distinction of county seat from Lafayette.

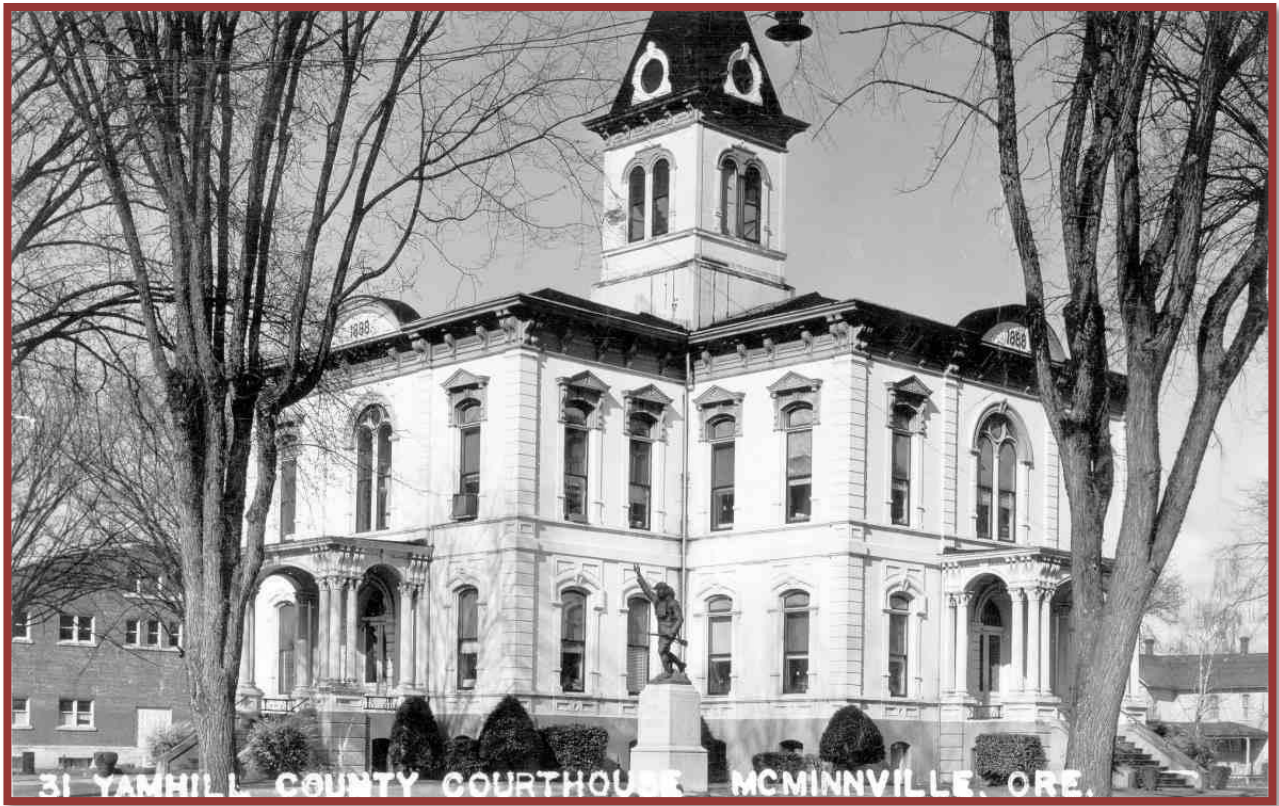


Linfield University, Pioneer Hall, 2024, Donald R. Nelson photo.

My grandparents, Albert and Clara Bridenstine, lived across Highway 99 from Linfield University. Linfield University's Pioneer Hall was erected in 1883. The institution was founded in 1858 as the Baptist College at McMinnville. After a generous gift from Frances Ross Linfield in 1922, the school was renamed Linfield College and went by that name until 2020 when it became Linfield University.

The historical buildings that line charming Third Street and nearby blocks were erected mainly between 1890 and 1912. Pioneer Hall's interior was rebuilt after World War II. My cousin, Don Jole, worked on the project.

As an agricultural center, McMinnville attracted businesses and residents who worked in that industry.



Real Photo postcard of the Yamhill County Courthouse, circa 1950, Don Nelson collection.

The Yamhill County Courthouse at NE 5th Street and Evans Street was built in 1888 and completed and opened in early 1889. This view is from the early 1950s. Structural deterioration problems led to the removal of the tower first and then the whole building. The structure was torn down and replaced with the current courthouse in 1964.



Photo of the Yamhill County Courthouse, 2024, Donald R. Nelson photo.



Patton real photo postcard of the Yamhill County Courthouse, circa 1950, Don Nelson collection.

This historically iconic view of the entrance to McMinnville's City Park, SW Adams Street at the west end of NE 3rd Street, shows the Carnegie Library on the left. In the left center background, is the Star Flouring Mills Co., built in 1881 and it operated into the 1920s. The mill was destroyed by a fire in 1927. In 1938, most of the building came down. In the center of the photo is a sign for an auto campground within the park. On the right side, is an auditorium for various events. It was razed in the 1920s.



McMinnville City Park, 2024, Don Nelson collection.

This photo shows the original McMinnville Library on the left. The Soper Fountain, from 1928, is in the center. The fountain was relocated from its original location where the original McMinnville Pools were built in the 1950s. The Aquatic Center is to the right.



Gillam real photo postcard of Baker Street, circa early 1950s, Don Nelson collection.

The early 1950s view of NE Baker Street, from SE 1st looking north, exudes an old-fashioned small-town charm. McMinnville Lumber Yard is on the left. There are signs from three gas stations visible. A bus depot and the Depot Cafe can be seen on the right side of the image. The buildings featured prominently in this view no longer exist.

Over the years, we have seen many changes to McMinnville which is now a thriving city of about 33,000 residents. Although it is known today for being surrounded by vineyards, that is a fairly recent development. Grapevines weren't routinely planted in the area until the 1970s.

Sources:

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- Historic Resources Survey, City of McMinnville Yamhill County Oregon
- Morning Oregonian* - January 24, 1927
- News-Register* - September 4, 2018
- Oregon Encyclopedia, Wikipedia:
McMinnville
- Polk's Yamhill and Washington County Directory 1912-13
- McMinnville, Oregon - Our Historic Built Community - Map, 1980



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CALENDAR

August 3 – Webfooters Post Card Club Meeting at the Oregon Stamp Society
4828 NE 33rd Ave in Portland – 9:30 am to 1:30 pm

Sept 3 – Webfooters Board Meeting at Elmer's Restaurant (no host)
9660 SE Stark St – 5:30 pm (Board meetings held every other month)

Sept 7 – Webfooters Post Card Club Meeting at the Oregon Stamp Society
4828 NE 33rd Ave in Portland – 9:30 am to 1:30 pm

Sept 19-21 – Antique Paper Round-Up at Lloyd Center – Space C108
2201 NE Multnomah Street in Portland



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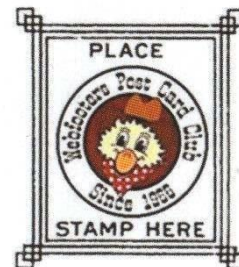
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