

City of Tualatin... 100 Years Old!

WRITTEN BY: LOYCE MARTINAZZI

As the City preens itself to celebrate the one hundred years since incorporation, let us examine what the area looked like one century ago.

There were two hubs of commerce, old town and new town. Both areas clustered around a railroad station; this was after all, the community that sported two railroads.

Old Town, where John Sweek had platted out several blocks that he named "Tualatin" in 1889, was around the Southern Pacific Depot. Potts store, the Home Hotel, the El Rey Saloon, Salem Brewery, and the Methodist church comprised the business community. Several new homes had been built on the streets named Washington and Jefferson with cross streets numbering first to fifth. In between was the Railroad with North and South Front streets.

The Smith family owned all the property between what is now the City park south to Tualatin-Sherwood Road, east to Martinazzi Avenue, then north to the river. The Smiths owned and operated the Tualatin Mill Company where the park is now, as well as the Tualatin Brick and Tile Company which was close to Tualatin-Sherwood Road.

The Smiths first built a frame store on the corner of Tualatin Road and Boones Ferry Road, then in 1912 they moved the wooden structure east and built a brick store on the corner, the bricks coming from their brickyard just a few blocks away. The Smiths also platted out their land into a development called Tualatin Grove.

With two businesses and lots of jobs available, the population quickly grew as families purchased lots and built homes. Trouble was, the roads were very muddy in winter and thick with dust in the summer, making travel by horse and wagon, and the occasional new horseless machine difficult. Each home had a well and an outdoor privy and people were throwing their garbage into the muddy roads or backyard.

named after him) were vehemently opposed to any use of "Demon Rum" and spouted the evils of alcohol. They were happy to see the saloons close down.

Incorporating the City would mean that the saloons could stay open, and the liquor taxes levied would help pay for needed improvements. So a petition was circulated in May of 1913, to allow a vote on incorporation. The residents took sides with the Anti-Saloon League against incorporation, and most businessmen and workers for incorporation. The ensuing fight would bring many humorous comments in the press.

On Sunday, February 17, the scene of the 1913 vote will be re-enacted, as the Tualatin Historical Society presents a play featuring City Officials and other important folks taking the role of the local people, for or against the issue back in 1913. The play, called "You Are There" will be staged at Winona Grange, 8340 SW Seneca Street at 2 pm in the afternoon.



A new law was passed in 1913 that stated alcohol could only be served within the limits of an incorporated city. The El Rey saloon and Salem Brewery in Old Town were shut down. No fair, said the working men, who felt they needed to meet and have a beer with their friends after a long day at work. And no fair, said John and Fred Wesch, who owned the El Rey, and Charlie Roberts who ran the Salem Brewery.

The Methodist Church folk, led by staunch prohibitionist Reverend Henry Blake (Blake Street was



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Tualatin Historical Society presents
"YOU ARE THERE"
 at the Winona Grange
 8340 SW SENECA STREET
 SUNDAY, FEB. 17 • 2:00 PM



Potts owned the store and lived in the house on the south side of the Southern Pacific track. The pile of cordwood on the right would be used to stoke the train's steam engine.



The Smith family lived in this row of houses, which lined Tualatin Road from the park to the brick store.



Old Town. Potts store and home on the right, the El Rey saloon and Salem Brewery on the north side of the Southern Pacific track.



The new Robinsons brick store, sitting alongside the old store which was moved.



Tualatin Brick & Tile Co. Photo was likely taken the same day as the one with the Robinsons' brick store, as there was snow on the ground.



The Oregon Electric train. WES now travels these tracks.



The first Methodist church was located kitty corner to where the Heritage Center now stands.