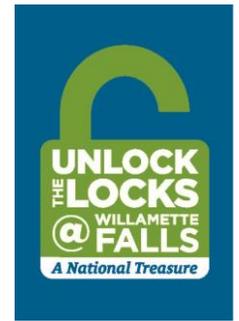


## HISTORICAL TIMELINE of the WILLAMETTE FALLS CANAL & LOCKS



- **1850** Construction of the first horse drawn portage around the Falls in Oregon City as the Willamette Valley begins to shift from subsistence farming to an export agriculture industry.
- **1865** Construction of a short railroad portage by the “People’s Transportation Company” around the Falls in Oregon City.
- **1868** Formation of the Willamette Transportation and Locks Company intended to compete with the People’s Transportation Company and break their monopoly by constructing the Locks to avoid the portage. Bypassing of the portage, by constructing a canal and locks, would allow ships loaded with wheat in Eugene to travel all the way to Portland or Astoria and reduce shipping times, meaning expanded competition and reduced freight costs.
- **1870** The Oregon Legislature allotted \$200,000 to the Willamette Transportation and Locks Company for construction of the Locks, making an approximate one-third contribution. Bernard Goldsmith, Portland Mayor, businessman, and partner in the Willamette Transportation and Locks Company, privately invested an additional \$200,000 to see the Locks completed.
- **1871** The People’s Transportation Company, seeing the end to their monopoly, was sold to the investor building the Oregon Central Railway.
- **1872** Monumental blocks of basalt from the quarry at Stone (now Carver) were rafted down the Clackamas River and towed back up to the falls by steam-tugs. Contracted East Coast engineers and blacksmiths designed and forged the hardware and tie-off rings and European stonemasons hand-fitted the rock for the walls of the canal excavated from bedrock by Chinese, Native American and white laborers.
- **1873** A boat loaded with Governors and other VIPs locked through the Canal just before the deadline on January 1, marking the first significant navigational improvement on the Columbia-Snake river system and immediately cutting freight rates by 50%. Steam-powered sternwheelers tailored to fit the Lock chambers and navigate the mud and shallows were built at shipyards above and below the falls. People transport was also an important service.
- **1871 - 1881** Opening the locks in 1873 pulled 25,000 tons of freight off the Portage Railroad in the first year of operations, but the arrival of the first railroad to serve the Valley in 1871 caused freight to begin a shift from the river to rail. By 1904, river traffic was reduced dramatically with the transport of logs, pulp and paper being the predominant remaining products. Giant Oregon log rafts made their way to Asia.
- **1892** Portland Railway, Light and Power Company (PRLPC)--the predecessor of Portland General Electric (PGE)--already sending power from Station A on the east side of Willamette Falls to Portland and lighting up Oregon City and West Linn, purchased the Canal and Locks from the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company in recognition of the value of the Willamette Falls for electric generation at Station B, on the canal.
- **1899** Sale of the Canal and Locks to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) failed due to lack of agreement on price – Corps willing to pay \$456,000 while PRLPC/PGE sale price was \$1.2 million.
- **1912** The US Army Corps of Engineers drew up designs for a competing Canal and Locks on the Oregon City side of Willamette Falls that would have destroyed most of the buildings and industry on the current Blue Heron site.
- **1912-1915** The US Army Corps of Engineers bought the Canal and Locks for \$375,000 from Portland Light and Power, thereby providing free passage around the Falls. In 1912-13, the Oregon Legislature and the US government each appropriated \$300,000 for improvements to the Locks
- **1930s** Locks became a bottleneck on a Willamette clogged with giant old-growth log rafts that had to disassemble to get through the 210 x 40’ chambers, so the USACE proposed replacing the four tandem lock system with a huge, 47’-lift, single-chamber lock. Work was authorized by Act of Congress, but design issues couldn’t be solved and WWII was on the horizon.
- **1950s** Lock Gate operations retrofitted from manual operation to hydraulics.
- **1964** Average annual number of lockages was 8,100 and average annual tonnage locked around the falls was 1,100,000 tons. Low priority recreational and passenger-carrying boats locked through last.
- **1970s** Timber shipment declined dramatically with the endangered species listing of the spotted owl and reduced harvests.

- **1974** At 100 years old, Willamette Falls Canal and Locks was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **1997** West Linn Paper Company shifted its movement of pulp and paper from the river to trucks when barges were not included in the purchase of the company.
- **2000** Total vessels counted locking through: 1,480
- **2002-2004** USACE budget cuts resulted in seasonal operations due to reduced usage.
- **2005** Locks were closed for lack of funding and went into “Caretaker” status.
- **2006-2008** Seasonal operations resulted from state and local fund raising that garnered a large federal ISTEA grant for historic transportation facilities and partner funds from ODOT and Clackamas County for 5 days per week. Total vessels locking through in 2007: 667
- **2008** Locks closed by the USACE due to the need for an overdue structural steel inspection of the gate leaves. Closed, the Locks prevented passage between upper river communities and the Portland region on the now-nationally recognized Willamette River Water Trail, which stretches from Creswell to the Columbia River.
- **2009** Gates were inspected and repaired with \$511,000 from USACE and \$118,000 from ODOT plus \$2.37 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (stimulus money). Some broken timbers on the gate leaf surfaces were replaced with synthetic lumber.
- **2010** Seasonal operations were funded thanks to Congressional earmarking. Total vessels locking through: 492
- **2011** Limited commercial lockages while under “Caretaker” status. On-site seepage indicated the effect of deferred maintenance activities.
- **2011** Locks transferred to “non-operational” status for life safety reasons due to suspected deterioration of embedded gudgeon anchors.
- **2013** USACE allowed two unmanned lockages to move the Canby Ferry to a downstream dry-dock for inspection and retrofitting.
- **2014** USACE initiated a stakeholder consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to address adverse effects on this property listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **2015** Present status:
  - Classified by the USACE as non-operational but not literally inoperable;
  - NHPA Section 106 process concluded that there are adverse effects and drafted a mitigation Memorandum of Agreement defining the steps necessary to repair and reopen the Locks, including possible transfer to a non-Corps entity;
  - USACE agreed to seek funding through the FY 17 federal budget for a “Final Disposition Study” to address:
    - An engineering and technical analysis of the physical condition of the facility to determine immediate and long-term repairs to reopen and sustain operations in the future;
    - An economic impact assessment of decommissioning and removal;
    - An economic opportunities assessment of repair, reopening and sustained operations;
    - An assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act of closure vs. repair options;
    - An assessment of potential toxic materials;
    - An assessment of real estate title and boundary issues;
    - An assessment of seismic issues; and
    - Definition of continued USACE oversight requirements in the case of transfer to a local entity.
- **2016 and the Future** Multiple efforts are underway to recognize and honor the historic and cultural significance of the area. In addition to repair and reopening of the Locks to commercial and recreational travel, the Willamette Falls Legacy Project (former Blue Heron Paper Mill) is undergoing redevelopment with the restoration of public access to the Falls for the first time in over a century. To effectively implement an historic and cultural marketing strategy while preserving and promoting significant historic resources, the Oregon

Heritage Commission has designated the area as a State Heritage Area and the US Department of Interior's National Park Service is considering the designation of a National Heritage Area.