Goose Hollow

The name of Goose Hollow, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Portland, first referred to the area around a hollow carved out by Tanner Creek. Since the mid 1970s, however, when the neighborhood association was formed, the name has applied to the larger neighborhood of flats and adjacent heights—King's Hill, Vista Ridge, and Gander Ridge—and canyons—Tanner Creek Canyon and Cable Car Canyon. The boundaries are I-405 (west) to Washington Park and from Burnside Street (south) to the low slopes of the West Hills. The 1926 Vista Bridge spans Tanner Creek Canyon and connects King's Hill to Vista Ridge. All are in Goose Hollow.

The first resident of Goose Hollow was Daniel Lownsdale, who established a land claim in 1845 near what later became known as Tanner Creek. He opened a tannery where Civic Stadium/Jeld-Wen Field now stands, near Southwest 18th Avenue and Taylor Street. According to Joseph Gaston's 1911 history, Lownsdale's was the only tannery north of Mexico and west of the Rockies, and the tannery played a significant role in boosting commerce for the young frontier town.

Lownsdale sold his tannery and land in 1848 and bought out Francis Pettygrove's land claim on the Willamette River. As a town booster, he helped persuade Portland to tax itself and build the Great Plank Road (now Jefferson Street, which becomes Canyon Road as it leaves Goose Hollow). The planks covered a muddy road in the narrow Tanner Creek Canyon and led to the Willamette River, providing a somewhat navigable road for Tualatin Valley farmers to take produce to port.

A few blocks east of the canyon, Tanner Creek flowed into the Tanner Creek Gulch that began near Jefferson Avenue and 17th Street. The creek carved out a deep, meandering hollow through Goose Hollow and then headed east toward Couch Lake (now the Pearl District and parts of Old Town/Chinatown). The hollow/gulch was approximately twenty blocks long, fifty feet deep, and two blocks wide. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Tanner Creek was buried and rerouted to the Willamette River through five-foot-tall pipes, and the Tanner Creek Gulch was infilled.

In the early days of the city, there were Native American encampments in the hollow near today's Alder Street, and Native women sold baskets, kindling, and berries to nearby households. From 1870 to 1909, Chinese farmers rented land in the hollow. Their farms covered twenty-one acres of Goose Hollow, including the slopes and the gulch where Lincoln High School, the Multnomah Amateur Athletic Club, and Multnomah Stadium (named Civic Stadium in 1966) were later built. Portland's merchant/capitalist class—some German, some Jewish, some British—built homes in the heights that are now part of Goose Hollow. The low-lying area around Tanner Creek and the hollow was populated by blue-collar laborers who were mostly German, Irish, and Jewish immigrants.

Historians Harvey Scott and Joseph Gaston credit Chief of Police James Lappeus with naming the neighborhood Goose Hollow in the 1870s. He was inspired by arguments over large flocks of geese that were allowed to run freely through the neighborhood and in the hollow. Women arguing over who owned the geese even assaulted a police officer responding to the ruckus.

The first use of the name Goose Hollow appeared in the *Oregonian* in 1879. Like many American place-names with the word "hollow," it was a name with negative connotations. In 1889, there was a brief attempt to change the name to Paradise Valley, but the more colorful name prevailed.

At the turn of the twentieth century, cable cars and streetcars transformed the neighborhood but were left behind a few decades later as the city changed again with a rush to accommodate automobiles. The 1960s brought urban renewal, and the construction of Interstate 405 demolished large chunks of the neighborhood. Today, Goose Hollow has many historic buildings, light-rail access, a mix of condos, apartments, and houses. In 2009, the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement approved the Goose Hollow banner—featuring the image of the goose from former mayor Bud Clark's Goose Hollow Inn sign—to represent the neighborhood's sense of community.

Written by Tracy J. Prince

Further Reading:

Prince, Tracy J. *Portland's Goose Hollow* . Mt. Pleasant, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Wong, Marie Rose. *Sweet Cakes, Long Journey: The Chinatowns of Portland, Oregon*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.

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