

Albany streetcar system

The Albany Street Railway Company began operation on August 30, 1889, with a one-mile horse-car line that ran from the Southern Pacific depot to downtown by way of Lyon Street and First Avenue, terminating at Second and Washington. Car No. 1 was manufactured locally by A.J. Anslyn and the Albany Iron Works.

In 1892, an extension was built from the train station south to the Goltra Addition. A steam dummy engine pulled Car No. 1 over the half-mile route, which ended near the orphan home run by the Ladies Aid Society. Steam dummies were small locomotives housed in streetcar-like bodies that were believed to be more attractive, as well as less frightening to horses.

Street Railway Vice President and banker William H. Goltra had been responsible for procuring the engine, however the railway found it too expensive to operate. When the engine broke down around 1900, both it and the Goltra Park extension were abandoned and Albany streetcars reverted to horsepower. By 1903, however, growing ridership allowed the railway to purchase a coach and a small Porter steam locomotive known as a “dinky.”

Electrification of the Albany Street Railway came after its acquisition by the Portland, Eugene and Eastern Railway on December 31, 1908 (the Southern Pacific Railroad later purchased the Portland, Eugene and Eastern Railway in 1915). Two trolleys served [Albany](#)'s single route. Interestingly, there is no mention of a car barn after the horse cars were retired. The new electric streetcars were apparently kept in a railway yard; and when they needed maintenance, they were swapped with sister cars from the Southern Pacific's Salem or Eugene streetcar systems.

As it happened, trolleys would reign in [Albany](#) for less than a decade. In 1918, the city that had inaugurated the first motorized street railway in the state outside of Portland became the first to abandon streetcars.

Written by [Richard Thompson](#)

Further Reading:

Thompson, Richard. *Willamette Valley Railways*. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

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