

Albina, Portland, 1909

By McDermid & Bell

This photograph shows the intersection of Vancouver and Russell in 1909, when Albina had been a part of Portland for eighteen years. From its incorporation in 1887 until 1891, Albina was a city in its own right. In 1891, both East Portland and Albina became a part of Portland. In 1883, the construction of the Union Pacific Railway and the terminal yards caused both the population and the property values in Albina to soar. From 1887 until 1891, Albina city ordinances primarily addressed the economic interests of the railroad and other large investors, making it essentially a company town. Just days before Albina's planned incorporation into the city of Portland was finalized, Albina's city council hurriedly passed ordinances and signed contracts for such expenditures as paved roads, city parks and lighting, which benefited property owners but created a financial burden for the taxpayers of the newly combined city. Prior to the opening of the Morrison Bridge in 1887, parts of Albina were uninhabited wetland. However, as transportation from the central district became easier, population in Albina continued to rise, as did land prices, quadrupling in the first decade of the 20th century. By 1910, a year after this picture was taken, the population on the eastside reached 120,000. When it joined with Portland in 1891, Albina's land area covered thirteen and a half square miles including St. Johns, more than Portland and East Portland combined.

Further Reading: MacColl, E. Kimbark. *Merchants, Money and Power: The Portland Establishment 1843-1913*. Portland, Oreg., 1988.

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