

# Astoria in the 1800s

## A Walking Tour

Astoria was built over the tide flats atop wood pilings and developed a strong economy with help from its timber and salmon industries. This tour takes us back in time to Fort Astoria in the year 1811 and gives us a glimpse of Astoria throughout the nineteenth century. Try to picture in your mind horse-drawn vehicles clopping along wooden streets, mills and wharves built out over the water with the smell of fish and timber, rowdy saloons, bustling cigar and furniture shops, and boarding houses. Some of the houses that were built in the 1800s still stand today. On the map, you will find seven numbered sites that are described below, and arrows that point the direction of our path.

### 1 Tidal Rock: Commercial/15th St.

Before it was developed upon, the Columbia River reached all the way to where Duane St. is now. Tidal Rock was of paramount importance for activities of Fort Astoria in the early 1800s. It allowed ship captains to determine the tide line and, therefore, know how close to the shore they could anchor.

### 2 Fort Astoria: Exchange/15th

On April 14th, 1811, John Jacob Astor's ship, *Tonquin*, dropped anchor and set up Fort Astoria as a fur-trading post. Fort Astoria ultimately fell into the hands of the British in 1813 and was renamed Fort George when it was used as a garrison during the War of 1812. Here, you will see a replica of one of the fort's bastions and a mural of the site painted by local artists, Roger McKay and Sally Lackaff. The green lines painted on the street mark the outline of the fort.

### 3 Site of First Post Office: Exchange/15th

In 1847, this became the site of the oldest U.S. Post Office west of the Rocky Mountains with John M. Shively as the first postmaster. It was eventually destroyed in 1906, and the site is now marked with an obelisk and a plaque presented by the Astoria Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution in 1955. On it you will see a small relief of the original building.

### 4 Astoria's Oldest House: Franklin/12th

Half of this house was originally constructed in 1852 by River Pilot Captain Hiram Brown in Astoria's Uppertown neighborhood. In 1862, this house was barged down the Columbia River, then drawn up out of the water onto log rollers and settled into this location when the backwater came up up as far as 12th St. and Franklin.

Consider membership to the Lower Columbia Preservation Society to learn more about preserved and historic sites all around Astoria! Membership supports the mission of the LCPS to preserve the history, sites, and culture of communities bordering the Columbia River in Clatsop, Pacific, and Wahkiakum counties. Delivering a broad range of historic preservation services, LCPS strives to make preservation accessible to all by inspiring curiosity, advancing knowledge, creating a "sense of place," and delivering economic benefit for our communities. For more information, visit our website: [www.lcpsociety.org](http://www.lcpsociety.org)

### 5 Astoria's Oldest Homes: 8th - 14th Sts

These houses have truly stood the tests of time:

1410 Franklin Ave, Warren-Case House, 1866

1388 Franklin Ave, Charles Stevens House, 1867

1370 Franklin Ave, Dickinson House, 1888

1278 Franklin Ave, Peterson-Skibbe House, 1896

1229 Franklin Ave, John Q A Bowlby House, 1892

989 Franklin Ave, Dewitt-Clinton-Ireland House, 1870

960 Franklin Ave, Capt. Eric Johnson House, 1875

828 Franklin Ave, Conrad Boelling, Rental, 1885

584 8th St., Samuel Elmore House, 1885

788 Franklin Ave, Marshall Kinney House, 1884

817 Exchange St., Job Ross House, 1860

441 8th St., Capt. George Flavel House, 1884

### 6 8th Street Vantage Point: 8th/Franklin

Imagine standing at this very spot in the 1800s. Would you have seen these sites that no longer stand today?

**A** Foot of 8th, Gray's Wharf, 1888

**B** Commercial, Post Office & Custom House, 1873

**C** Duane, First Clatsop County Court House, 1855

**D** Franklin, McClure School, 1882

**E** Exchange, First Public School, 1859

### 7 Clatsop Mill Fire: Exchange/14th

On July 2, 1883 at 6pm, the fire bell rang from its tower behind City Hall at 11th and Commercial. A fire had started at the Clatsop Mill, built in 1861 and spread down Commercial between 14th and 17th streets destroying several businesses along its path. Tide was low making it difficult for horse-pulled engines to put out the flames.



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