



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

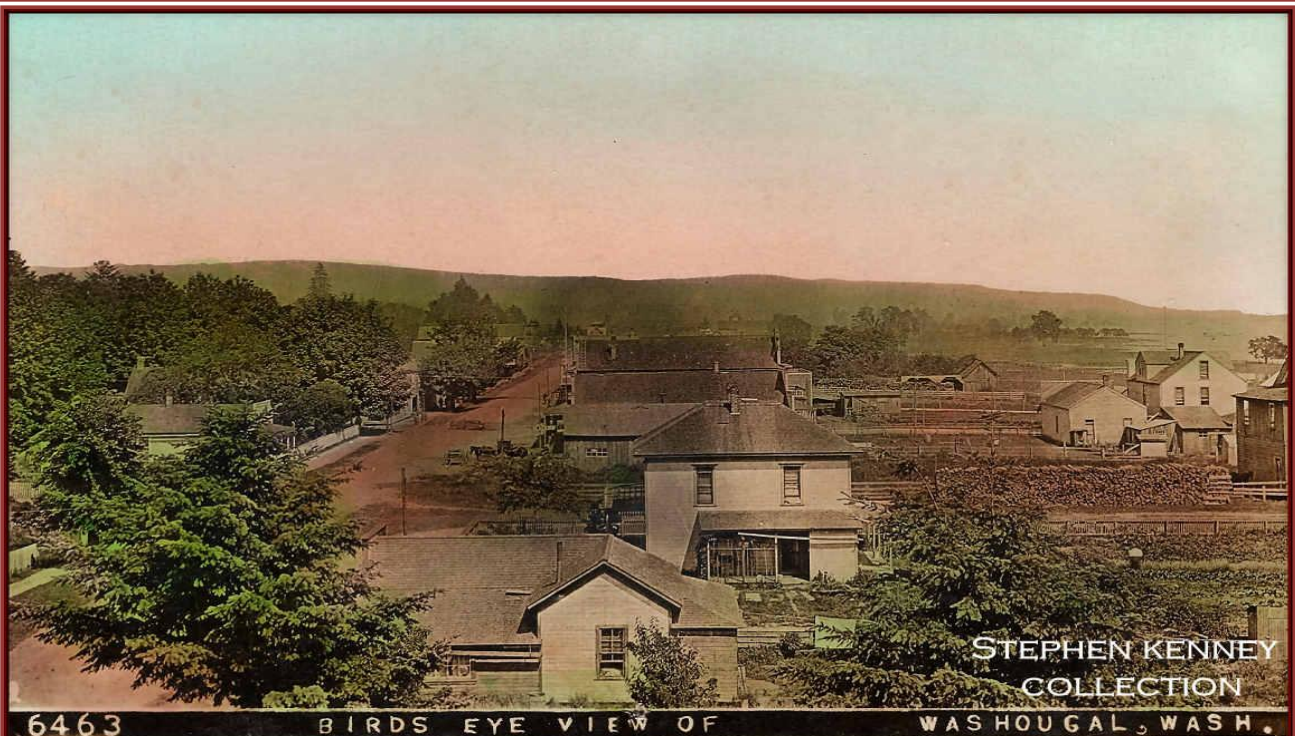
JANUARY 2026

CELEBRATING



1966-2026

A HISTORY OF WASHOUGAL WA



Hand tinted real photo postcard with a birdseye view of Washougal, Washington, circa 1910. Postmarked August 8, 1912.



Real photo multi-view Greetings from Washougal, Washington postcard. Postmarked February 7, 1911.

A HISTORY OF WASHOUGAL WA

Washougal is located 18 miles east of Vancouver, Washington on the north bank of the Columbia River. It is bordered to the west by Camas and connected to other cities via State Route 14. The Washougal River, a tributary of the Columbia, runs along the north side of downtown and separates the city from neighboring Camas. Washougal is the southernmost incorporated place in Washington state.

The name Washougal originated from a Chinookan term of disputed meaning that was recorded by fur trader Alexander Ross in 1811 as "Wasough-ally;" other variants included "Washougally," "Washougally Camp," "Wa-Shu-Go," and "Washookal."

The area around present-day Washougal was originally home to the Wallala, an indigenous Chinookan-speaking group with settlements along the Columbia River. Among the first non-indigenous people to visit the area were the Corps of Discovery led by Merriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1805 and 1806; they camped near the Washougal River during their return voyage in April 1806 and tentatively named it the "Seal River" and the "Seacalf River" due to the number of seals they observed in the river.



Patton real photo postcard of Main Street in Washougal, Washington circa 1914. Postally unused.



Real photo postcard of 2nd Street at Washougal, Washington, circa 1920s. Postally unused. By the 1920s, Washougal's leaders decided to rename Main Street to Second Street.



Real photo postcard of the Washougal Military Band, circa 1910. Postally unused.

English sailor Richard Ough (also spelled Howe) built a home in what would become present-day Washougal sometime between 1838 and 1841; he had arrived in the area to work at Fort Vancouver for the Hudson's Bay Company and later married the daughter of Cascade Chinook chief Schluyhus.

Ough was followed in 1844 by a cohort led by David C. Parker, who built Parker's Landing and claimed 580 acres under the Donation Land Claim Act; among the settlers was black pioneer George Bush, among the first African American settlers in the Pacific Northwest.

Parker's Landing, later renamed Parkersville, unsuccessfully applied for incorporation between 1852 and 1854 and by this time, it had a hotel, a saloon, and a store. Parker's Landing became a trading post along the river. A public school—claimed to be the first American school north of the Columbia River—was established there in 1852–53.

A post office was established at Washougal in Clark County Washington on August 6, 1852 and it closed September 10, 1868. Another post office opened at Washougal on August 17, 1874 and it has operated continuously since.

A portion of Ough's own claim was sold to Joseph E. C. Durgin, who established a townsite in 1880 that was named Washougal; and it was platted on May 6, 1880. The new settlement overtook Parkersville.



Real photo postcard of a Spokane, Seattle and Portland Railway train at the newly opened depot at Washougal, Washington, circa 1908. Postally unused.

Washougal, whose western limits blend seamlessly with the eastern portion of Camas, had very little in the way of industry before the coming of the railroad in 1908. After the arrival of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway, the town was formally incorporated in November of the same year. At that time, there was a creamery, a condensed-milk factory, four general stores, and a variety of small farms and businesses.

In 1910, two years after the railroad arrived and when the town's population numbered only 456, a Portland physician, J. F. Bailey, opened the Union Woolen Mills. The company went bankrupt two years later, but the Pendleton Woolen Mills, owned and operated by brothers Clarence, Roy, and Chauncey Bishop, stepped in and purchased it. The mill soon became Washougal's dominant industry.

A new east-west highway along the Columbia River (now part of State Route 14) opened in 1927 and it contributed to the development of summer homes and recreation areas near Washougal. In the mid-to-late 20th century, Washougal became a bedroom community for workers in Vancouver and Portland. The SP&S Railway merged with the Burlington Northern and in March 1970 it began operating as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

The Mount Pleasant Grange Hall in Washougal is the oldest continually used grange hall in Washington. Pendleton Woolen Mills is still one of the city's top employers. The population of Washougal in the 2020 census was 17,039.



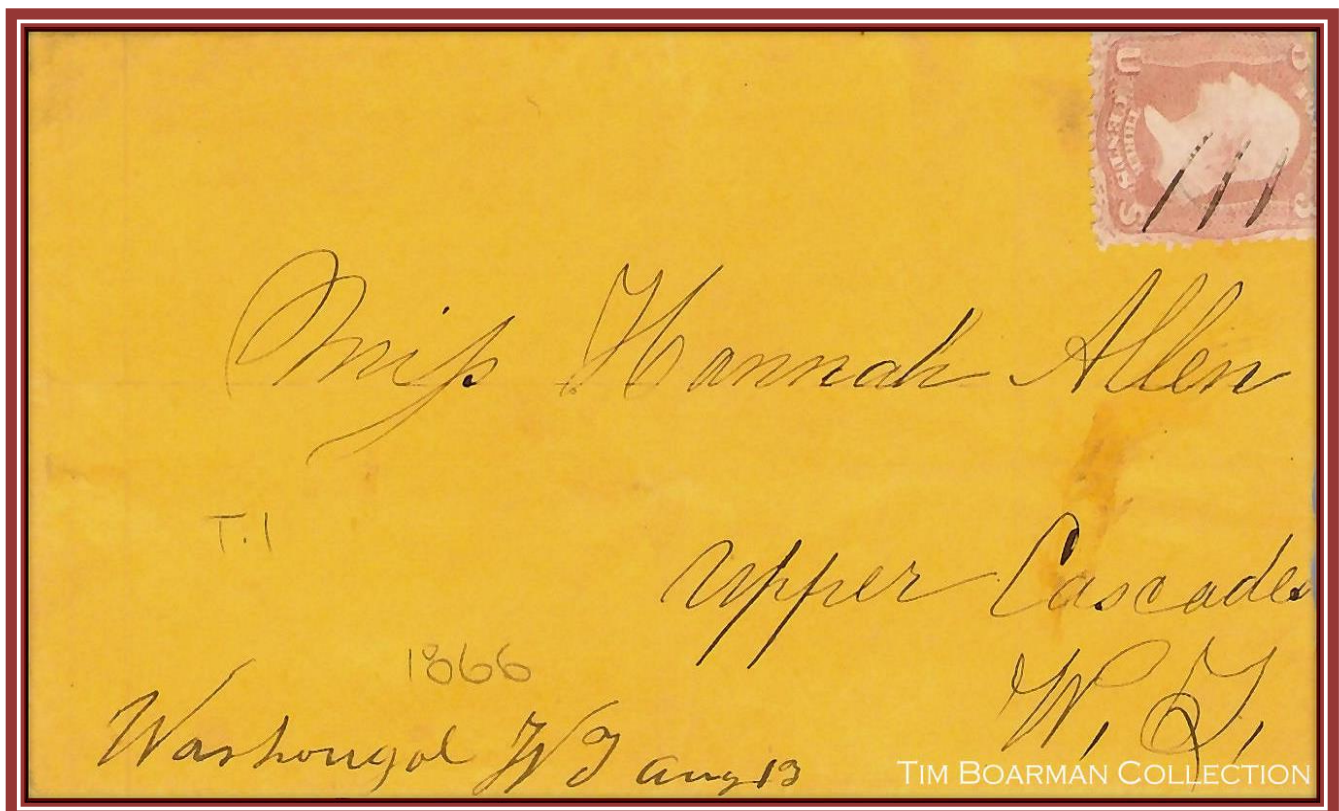
Real photo postcard of the Washougal Woolen Mills circa 1912. Postally unused.



Patton real photo postcard of interior of the Wollen Mill at Washougal, Washington, circa 1914. Postally unused.



Real photo postcard of the Columbia Condensed Milk Co. in Washougal, Washington circa 1910. Postally unused.



Earliest known manuscript cancel from Washougal dated August 12, 1866.



Patton real photo postcard of the SP&S Depot at Washougal, Washington circa 1912. Postally unused.

Editor's Note: Sources for this article include HistoryLink.org, Post Offices of Washington by Tim Boardman, and Wikipedia.

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