

ASTORIA TRAIN DEPOT
949 Exchange Street
Astoria
Clatsop County
Oregon

HAER OR-179
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ASTORIA TRAIN DEPOT

HAER No. OR-179

- Location:** 949 Exchange Street, Astoria, Clatsop County, Oregon
- Date of Construction:** 1925
- Original Owner/Use:** Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad; depot
- Present Owner/Use:** Columbia River Maritime Museum; under renovation for future use as a maritime education center
- Significance:** The Astoria Train Depot is a rare commercial example in the region of Prairie-style architecture and has been little altered from its initial construction.
- Description:** The Prairie-style brick depot consists of two buildings connected by a breezeway. The building once held men's and women's waiting rooms as well as an area for handling freight.
- History:** From 1925 to 1952, the Astoria Train Depot was an integral part of the passenger train service provided by the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway. James J. Hill planned the line to connect his Great Northern and Northern Pacific railways at Spokane with Portland, Oregon, via the north bank of the Columbia River. The Portland & Seattle, as it was first known, was incorporated in 1905 and construction began in 1907. The name was changed in 1908 to the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway Company.¹ It operated several subsidiary lines, including the Astoria & Columbia Railroad, which traveled a scenic 118-mile route between Portland and Clatsop Beach.²
- After 1952, the railway company shifted its focus to freight, and the depot was consequently used for freight operations. The company was

¹ For information on the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway Company, see Mike Schafer, *Classic American Railroads*, Vol. III (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International, 1996), Chapter 13; also John T. Gaertner, *North Bank Road: The Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1990).

² Astoria & Columbia Railroad, "The Western Wonderland, from Portland to a Summer Paradise in Four Hours through a Perfect Panorama of Magnificence via 'The Scenic Route'," (Portland, OR: Glass & Prudhomme Co. Printers, 1905).

eventually merged into the Burlington Northern Railroad in 1979, and the train depot was donated to the Columbia River Maritime Museum in 1987 when traffic ceased on the line. The building was damaged in 2001 as a result of the Nisqually earthquake, but the museum continued using the building as a boat shop and storage space. With the acquisition of additional storage space and through fundraising efforts, the museum hired Ecola Architects to design the renovation with the plan of using the building as a maritime educational center. Proposed work includes repairing the earthquake damage, repointing brick, and installing a new roof, porches, and entryways, as well as restoring plaster and windows. Some of these repairs are being completed by historic preservation and restoration students from Clatsop Community College.³

Sources:

Astoria & Columbia Railroad. "The Western Wonderland, from Portland to a Summer Paradise in Four Hours through a Perfect Panorama of Magnificence via 'The Scenic Route'." Portland, OR: Glass & Prudhomme Co., Printers, 1905.

Astoria Railroad Depot Project Description. Provided by Columbia River Maritime Museum.

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³ Glenn Linebaugh, ed. by Ron McCoy, "The Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railway" at The Pacific Northwest Chapter National Railway Historical Society, http://www.pnwc-nrhs.org/hs_sp_s.html, accessed June 2012; Astoria Railroad Depot Project Description, provided by Columbia River Maritime Museum; Angela Webber, "Ecola Architects Designs Astoria Train Depot Renovation," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, October 4, 2011, available at <http://djcoregon.com/news/2011/10/04/museum-helps-with-astoria-train-depot-renovation>, accessed June 4, 2012; Edward Stratton, "College Embarks on Journey to Restore Astoria Train Depot," *The Daily Astorian*, November 14, 2011.

**Project
Information:**

This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the HAER program. Todd Croteau, HAER Maritime Program Coordinator, produced the large-format photographs. Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, compiled the data in 2012.