

STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon State Parks, Salem, OR 97310



County Linn
Ranking _____
Name
(Common) Ralston Park
(Historic) Ralston Park
Address 919 Park Street
Present Owner City of Lebanon
Address 925 Main Street
Original Use park
Date of Construction c. 1950
Map Reference Number 140

Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

Ralston Park covers three-fourths of a city block, or about two acres, with the Albany-Santiam Canal cutting diagonally across the southeast corner. There are no structures in the park beyond benches located on the path parallel to the canal and a store with a historical plaque at the park's west entry. There are many large trees including a tall cedar at the northwest corner. The park is named after Jeremiah Ralston, his wife Jerima and their five children who settled and built their home on this spot in 1847.

History

Jeremiah Ralston learned the trade of carpenter in Cincinnati and later became a resident of Iowa, engaging in general merchandising in Burlington until 1847. With his wife Jerima Ashpanch Ralston and children he started across the plains to Oregon.

He obtained a Donation Land Claim but on arriving found two squatters, William Smith and Thomas Morgan, who had arrived earlier for farming. He bought their rights for thirty dollars and a yoke of oxen, and took possession of much of the land which has become downtown Lebanon. After bringing the land under cultivation, around 1856, Ralston laid out the town and opened the first store in the county. He named the town after the Cedar of Lebanon trees
(continued)

Recorded by Heritage Investment Corporation, 813 SW Alder, Portland, OR 97204 (228-0272)
Allen, McMath-Hawkins, Architects, 213 SW Ash, Portland, OR 97204 (228-5154)

Initials _____ Date _____

Sources consulted: see attached.

Continuation Sheet 1 of 1
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growing along the river, and for his birthplace, Lebanon, Tennessee. He managed the store for about eight years, then turned his attention to supervision of his land and stock interests.

Jeremiah Ralston and his wife were members of the Methodist Church, contributing to its support, and donating lands for the church, cemetery and the Santiam Academy. Jeremiah Ralston was also one of the first Board of Trustees at Willamette University. He met an accidental death in August 1877 at age 80 while the mother passed away December 22, 1894, when 77 years of age. They became parents of nine children, two of whom saw service in the Indian Wars.

Sources Consulted

1. "C. H. Ralston, Sr., Is Called to Great Beyond," Lebanon Express. August 7, 1929.
2. Welsh, William, A Brief History of Oregon City and West Linn, Lebanon, Oregon, Crown Zellerbach Corporation. 1941.

