

Acknowledgements

The descriptive text herein has been provided through the resources of the Heritage Museum with information and excerpts from - *The Early History of Independence* by Sidney Newton; *A History of Independence, Oregon*; and the *United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, and the Independence Historic Resource Survey completed in 1989.*

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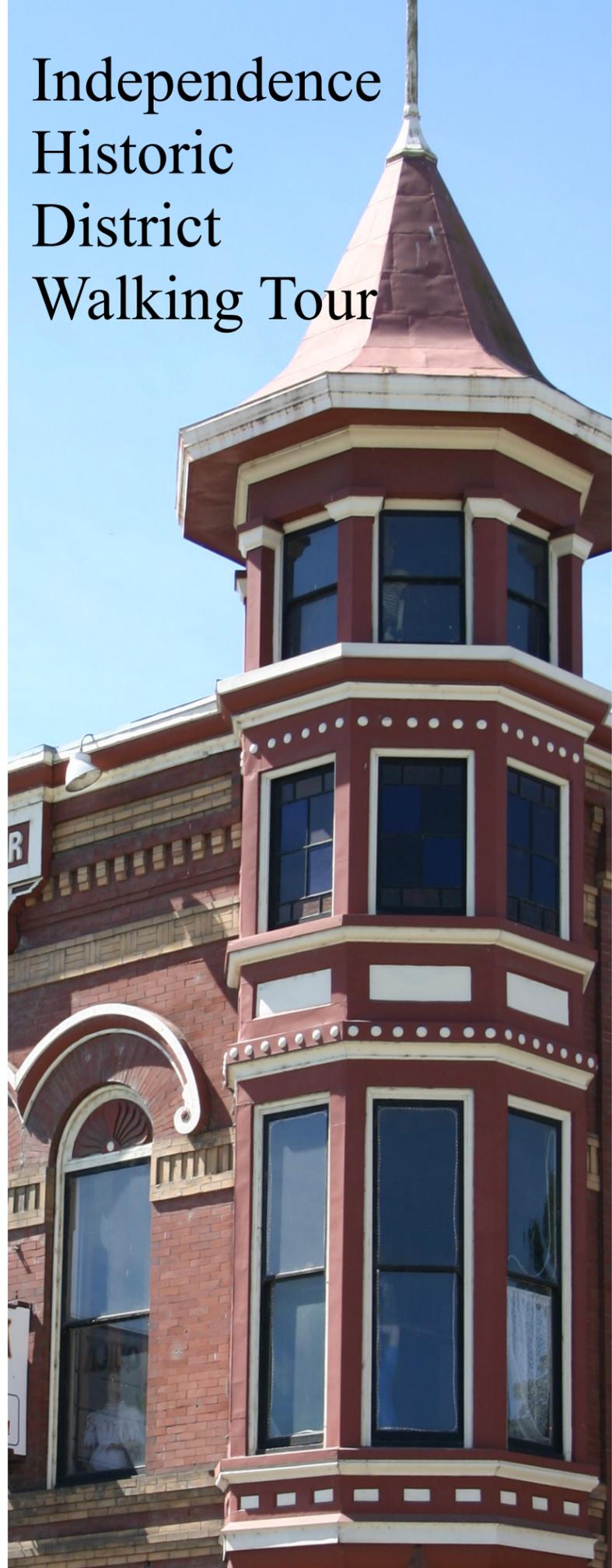


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In order to sustain the availability of this and future walking tour maps, which are offered for free but there is a suggested donation of 75 cents to the Heritage Museum Society, P.O. Box 7, Independence, Oregon, 97351. For more information call the Heritage Museum at 503-838-4989.

Independence Historic District Walking Tour



Welcome to a Walking Tour of the Independence Downtown Historic District



Elvin A Thorpe arrived from Council Bluffs, Iowa in the spring of 1845 and petitioned the U.S. Government to lay out a small township on the North side of Ash Creek. He received the patent in February of 1866. The township was named after Independence, Mo. by Mrs. Thomas Burbank who had lived there before her journey along the Oregon Trail. The town prospered until the winter of 1861-62 when flooding completely destroyed "Thorpe's Town of Independence". Henry Hill had arrived in 1847, staking his claim along the west bank of the Willamette River just south of Ash Creek. The town's folk were wary of rebuilding in Thorpe's town and beseeched Hill to platt a town. He platted 40 acres connecting to Thorpe's main through fare and gave away two lots to people to build a home. Hill's town was filed June of 1878 and incorporated in 1885.



The majority of the buildings downtown were built between 1880 and 1890 as the population grew from 700 to 1200. Three railroads were established in the 1880's; the O & C to Corvallis, Western Railroad completed a line down 2nd Street and the "Peanut Roaster" ran between Monmouth and Independence in 1890. There was a ferry system across the Willamette, which is still visible at the river bank on the end of "C" Street, electric street lights were working in 1890, the water works was completed in 1891, and the telephone and telegram office opened in 1892. From 1902 to 1905 the population grew to 1800, the first automobile was owned by Dr. Otis Butler in 1907 and six streets were paved in 1912.

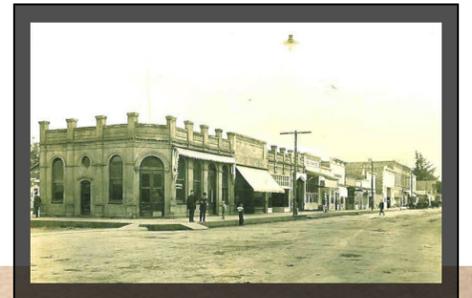


During the 1920's a hospital, still located at Log Cabin and Grand streets, Independence Elementary school, and the library were all built. This renewed prosperity was primarily due to the Hop industry, the major crop from the mid 1890's through the 1940's. Independence was known as the "Hop Capital of the World". In 1913 a total of 4,275,000 pounds of hops were harvested at \$.22 a pound. In the 1940's it is estimated that 25,000 people came to Independence to work the harvest.

Today large manufacturers and small business owners keep Independence much as it was 100 years ago. With the renaissance movement of the current city government, Independence continues to be a lively place to live, work and play. There are over 250 historic homes and businesses within Independence National Historic District.



Your tour begins at the plaza at Riverview Park, is less than a mile in length and holds more treasures than can be featured here.



For additional information, please contact: Independence Heritage Museum
112 S Third St. P.O. Box 7 Independence, OR 97351 503-838-4989 Website: www.orheritage.org