

Portland Hotel, 1890

By Unknown

The Portland Hotel opened in 1890. It had eight floors, 326 bedrooms, and extensive dining facilities, and the design suggested substance and elegance rather than opulence and frivolity. In a sense, it reflected something of Portland's conservative (some said dull) character. All told, the hotel had cost well over a million dollars and taken years to complete. Railroad magnate Henry Villard began construction of the Portland Hotel, however, his finances collapsed and progress halted for over two years. When George B. Markle, Jr. came to Portland he decided to begin a campaign to raise enough local money and support to complete the hotel. He succeeded in getting acquainted with the "right" sort in Portland and generated interest and capital from notables such as Henry W. Corbett and William S. Ladd. Over 150 Portlanders subscribed to Markle's plan, and construction of the hotel resumed. Until it was torn down in 1951, the Portland Hotel stood between Southwest Morrison and Yamhill, on Sixth Street, facing the Pioneer Courthouse. When the parking structure that replaced the hotel was in turn replaced by Pioneer Square in 1984, the iron scrollwork gate that had graced the hotel was incorporated into the design of the new public space.

Further Reading: Gohs, Carl. "There Stood the Portland Hotel." *The Sunday Oregonian Northwest Magazine*: May 25, 1975.

MacColl E. Kimbark. *The Shaping of a City: Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1885-1915*. Portland, Oreg., 1976.

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