

# Map of the Oregonian Railway Co. Ltd. East Side Line - Silverton to Glasser Station 3 foot narrow gauge

Drawn by Scott Gavin, 2018  
Geographic features from USGS topographic maps 1914-1988

-  Oregonian Railway Co. Ltd.  
1880 - 1890 Converted to standard gauge 1890
-  Location not confirmed
-  Southern Pacific
-  Southern Pacific  
Stayton Branch
-  Oregon Pacific R.R. 1880 - 1893  
Oregon Central & Eastern 1893-1894  
Corvallis & Eastern 1894 - 1917  
Southern Pacific 1917-1997
-  Abandoned 1837  
tracks removed 1960
-  Albany and Lebanon Railroad
-  Lebanon and Crabtree Cut-Off
-  Scio - West Scio Railroad  
1880-1900
-  Oregon Electric Railway

**Note:** This portion of the Oregonian Railway Co. Ltd. was constructed between 1880-1882. The station of Pratum was originally named East Side Junction and a branch line was constructed into the Waldo Hills a distance of between one and five mile. The exact route of this branch and its destination are as of yet unknown. It is likely the branch only operated for a year or two before being abandoned.

The narrow-gauge line was leased to Henry Villard in 1882. Villard only acquired the narrow-gauge railroad in order to prevent competition with his other railroad holdings. Service was negligible and maintenance non-existent. The railroad bridges across the North Santiam River was damaged or destroyed by floods and was not repaired or rebuilt under Villard's "management", which severed the narrow-gauge line in two.

When Oregon Pacific Railroad reached Albany in 1884, the citizens of Lebanon, having been bypassed by the narrow-gauge line, petitioned the Oregon Pacific to provide railroad service and began a fund-raising campaign to sweeten the deal. Henry Villard incorporated the Albany and Lebanon Railroad Company and rushed the 11 mile branch line to completion in only two short months, with a view towards blocking the Oregon Pacific Railroad from access to the best route between Albany and its proposed route eastward via the South Santiam River. Luckily for the Oregon Pacific Railroad, Judge John Waldo and John Minto of Salem had determined that the North Santiam River provided a better railroad route to a new pass Waldo has discovered the summer before than the wagon road route up the South Santiam River, and thus the Oregon Pacific was able to avoid Villard's blockade. The Albany and Lebanon Railroad saw very little traffic until the lumber industry settled into Sweet Home and Lebanon several decades later. It would later prove to be a godsend to the Southern Pacific that this impractical branch line had been built.

In 1884, Villard repudiated his lease of the narrow-gauge railroad and the Oregonian Railway Co. Ltd. came back under the control of the Scottish bondholders. The bridges across the North Santiam river were rebuilt, and the remainder of the line rehabilitated and placed back into operation.

The Oregon and California Railroad (Southern Pacific) acquired the narrow-gauge line in 1890 and converted the railroad to standard gauge by 1892. As soon as the line was converted to standard gauge, the Southern Pacific built a branch line from Geer Junction, just south of the station in Salem, to Geer Station, south of Pratum. This branch provided a secondary connection with the Southern Pacific mainline so that traffic would not have to be routed north to Woodburn or south to Tallman in order to be transferred to the mainline.

The Southern Pacific build a branch line between Shaff Station and Stayton to provide rail service to several large canneries. The nearby station of West Stayton is famous for only one thing. As a young man, before he earned fame writing Western novels, the author Louis Lamour worked in the freight house there.

The citizens of Scio, dismayed at being bypassed by the railroad, constructed their own short line between Scio and West Scio, a distance of a mile and a half. This independent railroad only operated for a few short years.

In 1907, the South Santiam River, as well as most of its tributaries, went on a rampage. The flood changed the route of the river by a significant amount in several places, and completely destroyed over seven miles of the former narrow-gauge railroad. Rather than rebuild the railroad, a new line was built between Balm and Lebanon, east of the South Santiam River, on slightly higher ground. The original route between Balm and Tallman was abandoned.

In 1963, the Southern Pacific determined that the bridge across the North Santiam River was nearing the end of its useful life. Rather than replace the bridge, the railroad was abandoned between North Santiam and Shelburn, and the tracks and bridge removed. The Mill City branch (the former Oregon Pacific line) was rerouted onto the former narrow gauge line between Shelburn and Lebanon. This permanently severed the railroad into two separate branch lines.

