

Multnomah Falls Painting

The moment you enter the new **Gateway to the Gorge Visitor Center**, you will be greeted by the stunning restoration of a century-old painting of Multnomah Falls. As the building it now resides has a compelling history, so does the painting.

This grand piece of Troutdale history measures 10 feet high by 6 ½ feet wide. It was painted by Hazel Alpha Harris of Vancouver, Washington, c. 1912 after having been commissioned by the Multnomah Hotel in downtown Portland. The painting hung prominently in one of the hotel's banquet rooms.

In 1929, as the hotel was undergoing a major remodel, the owner gave the painting to the Butler family of Troutdale. The painting hung in their home until 1953 when space requirements led to another relocation: into their garage. After a quarter-century of less than-ideal-storage – folded in half and kept on it's side – the painting was donated to the City by George and Eloise Butler and repaired by Rev. James Parten. The painting graced the walls of the newly remodeled City Hall for more than 30 years.

When old City Hall was closed in 2012 due to foundation and structural issues, the venerable painting was removed from the old building for safekeeping. A large vault was constructed in a wall of the City Conference Building where the painting remained until 2021. After being carefully removed from it's storage area, it was meticulously restored over the course of several months by expert art restorer Susan Scott-LaRue.

Upon completion of the restoration, the next step was to give the painting a frame it deserved. But since 10-foot frames are not exactly stock items, the new frame had to be custom milled. Donna Erwin, owner of Columbia River Gallery and an award winning framer, then hand-finished and assembled the frame. Finally, a company that specializes in moving and hanging large art pieces for museums brought the painting to it's new location.

The Gateway to the Gorge Visitor Center is located at 475 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy and is open Thursday through Monday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Use the slider to get a close up before-and-after view of the painting.







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