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Seeing Portland's Urban Forest for Its History

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Portland, Oregon's urban forest is rooted in the city's social and environmental history. Portland visitors today are likely to encounter the city's popular nickname of "Stumptown." The name harkens back to the

mid-nineteenth century, when settlers cleared the land of trees, leaving streets of mud and stumps. (See figure 1.) Yet, the image of Stumptown neglects to acknowledge the trees that were not cut down as well as the subsequent 150 years of reforestation in the city. Advocacy for the protection of trees and the process of reforestation are a rich part of the city's history. As early as 1855, at the height of Portland's Stumptown days, the city established its first tree code to promote and care for trees planted in public rights of...

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