Building at the End of the Oregon Trail

Portland, Oregon
June 11-14, 1997

Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Vernacular Architecture Forum
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Tour Guide

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- Stauffer Farm Log House - Aurora, OR  (Photo by Philip Dole, 1967)
- Stone Masons at Timberline Lodge - Mount Hood, OR  (Photo courtesy of Friends of Timberline, 1937)

Graphic & Logo Design: Steven Blashfield
Dedicated to the memory of Marion Dean Ross
who introduced several generations of students and history
enthusiasts to the story of Oregon architecture.
I've been grubbin' on a little farm
On the flat and windy plains
I've been listenin' to the hungry cattle bawl
I'm gonna pack my wife and kids
I'm gonna hit that Western road
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

Chorus:
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall
Hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall
Where the good rain falls a'plenty
And the crops and orchards grow
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

Well my land is dry and cracklin'
And my chickens they're a cacklin'
Cause the dirt and dust is gettin' in their craw
They've been layin' flintrock eggs
I had to bust 'em with a sledge
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

Well my hogs and pigs are squealin'
They're a rockin' and a' reelin'
Cause there ain't no water to waller in the draw
I'm gonna grab one by his tail
I'm gonna take that western trail
And we'll hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

And my good old horse is bony
Yes he's dry and hungry too
You can see his ribs three quarters of a mile
Throw the kids up on his back
And the bay horse and the black
We'll hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

Well my wife gets sort of ailin'
When that mean old dust is sailin'
And she wishes for the days before recall
If the work there's in the future
In that North Pacific land
So we'll hit that Oregon Trail this comin' fall

"Oregon Trail," as sung by Woody Guthrie
Acknowledgments

A meeting such as this can take place only with the dedicated help and contributions of numerous individuals. The basic idea was broached to both Howard Davis and Lee Roth as early as 1992, and the two of us began serious explorations in 1993. Fundamental support has been provided by the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon, especially its Dean, Robert Melnick. We also owe thanks to our respective Departments and Department Heads (Art History for Lee Roth and Architecture for Howard Davis), who endured our absent-mindedness, our hectic schedules, and who provided some released time to conduct research and carry out research and writing investigations. The tour book was written by Lee Roth, but with the help of Howard Davis in some sections, and numerous students who performed basic field research and made field measurements over the past three years. The students who researched and drafted portions of the text are most thankfully acknowledged in their respective text sections.

We also had the dedicated help of three students in the Historic Preservation Graduate Program. During academic 1995-96 Anne Seaton carried out basic initial tasks and helped in pinning down the sites to be visited. During the next academic year, 1996-97, we had the invaluable help of Erin Hanafin Berg who did text editing and tied up many loose ends. Meanwhile, Steven Blashfield executed many of the tour guide drawings, and did the design and page layout of the tour guide book. These two also drafted the section of the text on Hood River. All three — Anne, Erin, and Steve — carried out vital field measurements over the last two years. The dedicated involvement and unstinted work of these three was invaluable.

During academic 1996-97 we also had the dedicated help of Gabrielle Shiffer and Bill Morrow, graduate students who carried out many special tasks, such as detailing the routes and times with the bus company, videotaping the packing operations at Lage Orchards, and many other critical and time-consuming jobs.

The text material for the first day of tours was carefully scrutinized by Professor Philip Dole who, over the past four decades, has made a specialty of studying the early settlement architecture of the northern Willamette Valley. Much of the text material would have been impossible to collect had it not been for the enormous aid given by Elisabeth Walton Potter and Henry Kunowski of the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office in Salem who provided copies of inventory and National Register nomination materials. Additional thanks to Chris Havel, who provided space and technical assistance at the SHPO.

We owe special thanks to Lisa Burcham and to the Historic Preservation League of Oregon which provided material, and Chet Orloff and the Oregon History Center which provided space for our reception. Thanks to Jennifer Sedwick and Larry Button for providing arrangements at the Benson Hotel in Portland, and Christine Sundt for guidance and assistance from the UO School of Architecture and Allied Arts Slide Library.

Special notation goes to Boyd Pratt, a member of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, who provided critical advice during early planning stages, and subsequent guidance during the development process for this conference.
At each of the many sites visited we had the unflagging support and help of the owners and public officials.

For information on Oregon City and its historic houses we must thank Denyse McGriff, formerly of the Oregon City Planning Department, who directed us to many sites and introduced home owners. Among the residents who opened their house we owe thanks to the McMahon Family, Herbert Beals and the staff at Atkinson Memorial Church, Fred Webster, and the Daniels Family.

Through a suggestion by Wallace Huntington we were directed to the small lumber mill at Yoder which has provided much special dimension lumber to those in the valley undertaking historic restoration. At Yoder we owe great thanks to Russell Yoder, David Yoder and the Yoder Families.

At the Aurora Colony we had the enthusiastic cooperation of Mike Byrnes, as well as that of the new museum director, Dan McElahinny.

The unique early Case house was opened to the VAF through the kindness of the current owners Mirza Dickel and Wallace Huntington who have done extensive research on the house and who carried out a careful restoration a decade and a half ago.

The Oregon Department of Parks kindly provided access to the early Manson barn at Champoeg. Adjacent to Champoeg, the oldest portions of the Zorn farm complex, including the granary, have been made available with the help and cooperation of the various generations of the Zorn family and the family members who reside there today, especially Jerry Owen.

A fortuitous drive revealed the surviving hops barn near Wilsonville and we owe a tremendous debt to Peter McDonald who operates the farm there today and allowed students to measure both the hops and horse barn.

The extensive complex that was once the Multnomah County Poor Farm has been recently rehabilitated by the McMinnamin brothers of Portland as a large bed and breakfast establishment with a full-time restaurant. The brother, winners of various awards for their efforts in putting historic architecture back into service, were recently recognized by the National Trust for their inventive restoration work. We owe them thanks for allowing us to visit the complex.

A fountain of information on the building of the historic Columbia Gorge Scenic Highway is Lewis McArthur who will be joining us for our second day and our stops on the old highway.

At Hood River we had the great help of Sally Donovan, a preservation consultant who makes Hood River her home. We also owe thanks to Pasquale Barone, owner of the historic Hood River Hotel where we will have lunch on our second day.

The enthusiastic support of Eddie Lage and also Kent and Judy Lambert of Lage Orchards in opening their barn and the family’s fruit packing house was warm enough to keep the students thawed who poured over the barn in the midst of a mid-winter blizzard, taking measurements. The Lamberts are due tremendous gratitude.

We also owe many thanks to Linnie Adamson, Curator of Timberline Lodge, Randy Black at Friends of Timberline, and to the operator and staff of the lodge in welcoming us to this awe-inspiring building.
Oregon

Chinook Jargon:
Where did you catch that trout?
*Kah mika klap okoke opalo?*
In Skamokaway River.
*Kopa Skamokaway Ikhol.*
Are there many fish there?
*Nah hiyu lepish yahwa?*
Not many; too much logging.
*Wake; klaska mamook hiyu stick alta.*
Well, I won't buy it today.
*Abba, wake tikeh iskum okoke sun.*
What do you think of this country?
*Jerah mika tumtum okoke llahlee?*
It is very pleasant when it does not rain.
*Hyas koshe yahkaw: sponse wake snass.*
Not always, it is worse when it snows and freezes.
*Wake kwonesum; Chahco wegt peshak sponse cole snass pee reluco.*

*From Gaston, Joseph. The Centennial History of Oregon, 1912.*
Even before the arrival of the first Euro-American settlers, the natives had identified the mystical and spiritual quality of this place called Oregon. How strange this view must have seemed to the first families that passed along the Oregon Trail (photo: Hines, An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, 1893).

Oregon!

That word alone was sufficient in the 1830s and 1840s to fire the imagination and to set one's feet to itching. It made the eyes glaze over with images of a fabled land flowing with milk and honey, of a New Eden, where life could be comfortable and where one could be assured of a bountiful future.

Throughout the mid-nineteenth-century United States, in the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, merchants and farmers had suffered greatly with the onset of the business depression of 1837. Thousands had lost heavily and were desperate to start over somehow. It was then they heard of this mythical land to the west. If they could just get there, they could make a new start. Unlike the crowded, depleted lands where they were struggling to eke out a living — amidst searing summer heat and humidity, between hard winter freezes, with the constant threat of spring or autumn tornadoes — the climate in Oregon was mild, the land fertile and free in exchange for simply living on it. It was worth almost any hardship to make the trek of two and a half thousand miles to reach this golden land.

Oregon!

So mystical was this land, that even the origin of its name
was unknown. There was, it was reasoned by geographers, four
great rivers that flowed from the heart of the North American
continent, each roughly towards one cardinal direction. The St.
Lawrence (River of the East) and the Mississippi (River of the
South) were well known, perhaps less so the Nelson (River of the
North) that empties into Hudson Bay. Somewhere in the
western part of the continent, it was reasoned, rose the great River
of the West. According to one British army officer, Major Robert
Rogers, this river was called Ouragon or Ourigan by the natives
of the region. In petitions he filed in 1765 and 1772 to explore
the western region, he first used the term Oregon, and soon after
the word appeared on an English map published in London in
1778. No information has yet surfaced to corroborate Rogers’s
claim regarding the authenticity of this word. The name was not
encountered by Captain Robert Gray, the first Euro-American to
discover the mouth of the fabled great River of the West, which
he christened the Columbia, honoring the ship he sailed out of
Boston. Gray sailed up the Columbia, roughly to the position of
present day Portland, but he never heard the name Oregon used
by the native inhabitants. Nor did Lewis and Clark, leading their
Corps of Discovery down the river in 1805, and it did not appear
in their published report in 1817.

Nonetheless, somehow knowledge of the name Oregon
reached the young romantic writer William Cullen Bryant who
used it in his epic poem, Thanatopsis, written in 1811 and first
published in 1817. Speaking of the American landscape, and the
need of Euro-Americans to establish a bond with the land, Bryant
wrote:

\[
\text{\ldots Take the wings}
\text{Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,}
\text{Or Lose thyself in the continuous woods}
\]

Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound
Save it's own dashings - yet the dead are here:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep - the dead reign there alone.

From the moment Bryant's poem was published, the word Oregon rocketed in mythic power. Meanwhile, other Eastern writers who had never ventured west of the Hudson wrote glowingly of the lands of this Eden watered by the river alternately called the Oregon, the Columbia, the Great River of the West. In a matter of only a few years, the region came to be called the Oregon Territory.

The Landscape
The landscape encompassed by the Oregon territory, roughly the southern half of which would become the state of Oregon, was one unlike that found in the eastern states from which the American settlers came. Along the southern sea coast are extremely rugged mountains, the Siskiyou, with alternating stretches of steep vertical headlands, contrasting with the broad expanses of coastal sand dunes to the north. This coastal belt is drenched with rain from late September through May, moisture picked up by prevailing westerly winds from the ocean currents moving northward along the coast and dropped as the air is pushed up over the mountains of the moderate Coast Range. In a few locations rainfall can reach 140 inches a year.

East of the coast mountains is the broad and, in places, absolutely flat valley of the Willamette River which springs from the Cascades in several branches and flows generally northward to join the Columbia. South of the expansive Willamette Valley are several smaller valleys of rivers that flow from the Siskiyou west to the ocean. Rainfall in these valleys averages about 45 inches a year, not much different in the aggregate from rainfall amounts in the East — except that in the Oregon valleys the rain settles most often as a heavy mist or drizzle, sometimes without apparent stop from October through April. From May through September, rainfall in the valleys may be slight or almost nonexistent as winds off the Pacific diminish or stop altogether.
With rich soils and gentle swells in the land, the Willamette Valley was the favored hunting ground of the Kallapooya and Molalla tribes who originally inhabited this area. For unnumbered millennia, the natives burned sections of the valley floor each autumn, destroying the low-lying brush and consuming the dry grass, but leaving unharmed the small copes of oak trees whose crowns were well above the burning grass. Early Euro-American arrivals in the Willamette Valley described the area as being like “a park” and marveled at its trim order, not realizing that they were surveying a landscape that had been carefully managed for thousands of years. When the grass grew back in the spring — all the more lush and succulent due to the fires — game would descend to feast from the mountains east and west, falling easy prey to the native hunters since there was no brush for cover. To the Euro-American arrivals, this beautiful valley landscape, defined by mountain ranges east and west, seemed truly to be a new Eden. In the valley, particularly, natives quickly disappeared due to government-forced resettlement to designated reservations, but victims even more of the European diseases — smallpox, measles, and influenza, to name a few — that ravaged the tribes. To the Euro-Americans eager to settle the valley, the virtual eradication of the natives seemed divinely ordained to empty the land for them, and some settlers were quite happy to assist the process if the natives did not seem to disappear fast enough.

East of the Willamette Valley and the southern river valleys rise the Cascade Mountains, a great ridge of volcanic upthrusts punctuated by the perpetually snow-covered conical peaks of dormant (but not extinct) volcanoes. Here, too, the rising landscape squeezes the last major component of moisture from the air moving from the Pacific, nurturing the dense forest canopy. Precipitation in the Cascades can average 80 to 100 inches over the winter, leaving snow packs of twenty feet. It is the snow on these peaks of 8,000 to 11,000 feet that feeds the rivers during the long dry summers. On the slopes of the Cascades, as on the lower slopes of the Coast Range, grow dense stands of black-barked Douglas Fir, hemlock, and other conifers, at one time so broad in diameter and so closely spaced that wagons could not pass between them. This forest floor, like that of the Coast Range forest, is covered with berry shrubs and a blanket of ferns. But as one moves east of the ridge of the Cascades, the landscape abruptly changes to one of widely spaced orange-barked ponderosa pines.
and an open forest floor dotted with manzanita brush and sage; this area is the rain shadow of the Cascades.

As one travels the roads up the long slopes of the Cascades from west to east, the ascent continues for miles; once over the ridge the descent ends quickly, for the central section of the state is covered by layer upon layer of basalt flows which raised the level of the land so that it seldom is less than 4,000 feet above the sea. Average rainfall in this high plateau ranges from 30 inches to only 10 inches in the driest areas. This is a moderately cool high desert, dusted with snow in the winter and lightly sprinkled with rain in the early spring and late autumn. This portion of the state was one which the early settlers hastened to get across, deeming it a wasteland compared to what they had read of the lush Willamette Valley. Only towards the very end of the nineteenth century did significant numbers of settlers begin to arrive, many lured to the high desert by unscrupulous developers who promised easy farming. The southeast quadrant of the state has proven to be suitable for cattle and horse grazing, but agriculture must be heavily irrigated from the rivers that drop down from the dispersed mountains. Harney County, in the southeastern corner, is the largest in the state and is larger than the eastern states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined, but scattered across its 10,228 square miles are fewer than 10,000 people.

In the northeast quadrant of the state rise the Blue Mountains, some as high as 8,000 feet. These peaks and high alpine valleys catch some of the remaining moisture, and gold strikes in several areas lured miners at the end of the Nineteenth century. Not originally considered good country for agriculture, this area was also hastily crossed by early pioneers on the Oregon Trail.

Furs, Missionaries, and Farmers

The late eighteenth-century British and American trade in the Oregon country was by sea, and the first ships to touch
land were loaded up with furs obtained from the Northwest natives. These pelts, especially sea otter, were highly prized in China, so that a global circumnavigational trade was quickly established, particularly by New Englanders who dispatched hundreds of ships from Boston around Cape Horn. Empfied of their manufactured trade goods, but reloaded with furs, these American vessels sailed west to China where the pelts were exchanged for tea, porcelain, and other trade items destined for New England and Europe. The fortunes being made were sufficient to prompt other entrepreneurs to set out overland. One of these enterprising fur traders was the German immigrant John Jacob Astor, who outfitted a party that set out for the Oregon territory in 1810. After an arduous trip, the Astor party arrived in the Oregon territory, descended the Columbia, and established a trading post near the mouth of the river, naming the small settlement Fort Astoria. The British were very successful in the overland fur trade, with the Hudson’s Bay Company sending out many French Canadian trappers and establishing a series of fortified trading posts along the Columbia and Snake rivers. Particularly important was the HBC trading post, Fort Vancouver, established on the north bank of the Columbia, near the point where the Willamette River flowed into it from the south. To this Hudson’s Bay outpost in 1824 was dispatched a large and formidable Scots physician, Dr. John McLoughlin, appointed Chief Factor for the Hudson’s Bay Company for the entire northwestern region. Despite a small American trade presence, the British, through the Hudson’s Bay Company, remained a powerful presence in the area after 1814, and the company was so determined to keep American trappers out that a policy was established to strip the entire area south of the Columbia of any commercially valuable furs. George Simpson, governor of the entire Hudson’s Bay Company, ordered his subordinates to trap beaver to extinction, saying “it is our interest to reap all the advantages we can for ourselves, and leave it in as bad a state as possible for our successors.”

The Oregon Trail

American fur trappers trekked west nonetheless, spreading throughout the mountains south of the Columbia and in the Willamette Valley. At this point, in the 1830s, the American missionaries began to arrive. It was the British who, inadvertently,
set this influx in motion. In 1829 the British took two native boys from the eastern Washington area to Eastern Canada where they were educated, converted, and baptized in the Church of England. When the two returned to their tribes, their education prompted the Nez Perce tribe to send a delegation to Saint Louis asking that missionaries be sent to them, too. Eager to answer this call, small groups of Methodist and Presbyterian ministers, with their wives and children (and later Roman Catholic priests) made the trek to the Oregon country. The letters the missionaries sent back east described a beautiful and bounteous country, attracting the first trickle of American settlers in 1839, a stream that doubled or tripled in number each year. In 1841 the first organized trains of wagons began to roll west from Missouri, with the “Great Migration” of 800 people moving west in 1843. Four years later, 5,000 people made the trip. Eighteen fifty-two was perhaps the peak year, with 13,000 new settlers arriving in Oregon from the east. The American population in the Oregon territory mushroomed from approximately 100 in 1839, to over 2,000 in 1845, to over 13,000 by 1850. Oregon joined the union in 1859 and the next year, when the official U.S. census was taken, it showed 52,465 American citizens living in the new state.
The Eden-seekers would gather in western Missouri, near St. Joseph or Independence and around Lawrence, Kansas, forming large encampments on the open grasslands. In May, when the grass was lush on the western prairies, ensuring ample food for the oxen pulling the Oregon-bound wagons, the groups would set out, following the Platte River toward the Rocky Mountains. As the trail rose higher in the western plains, the grass would grow spottier. After moving over the broad South Pass in the Rockies, food would become more and more difficult to find for the draft animals. Indeed, to the travelers’ dismay, every mile westward would become more arduous. Crossing what is now southern Idaho, the wagon trails would follow the Snake River, but the further they went the deeper the river dropped into a gorge, putting the water out of reach. Eventually they would cross the Snake and push over the Blue Mountains in northeastern Oregon and descend to the broad Columbia, following its south bank until they would come to the final and hardest obstacle which, after so much hardship, seemed to block their path. The broad flanks of Mt. Hood reached down to the water’s edge, ending in sheer vertical walls. With no path available along the river, travelers arriving at The Dalles would face one last agonizing decision: either tie everything to a raft and chance floating down the treacherous rapids and falls of the Columbia at The Dalles and Cascade Locks, or attempt to get their wagons over the rugged and heavily forested south slopes of Mt. Hood, with wagons now weakened and in bad repair, and with oxen and travelers alike exhausted from 2200 miles and months of walking. So close and yet tantalizingly held at bay.

In 1846 a new arrival, Samuel Barlow, blazed a toll road around the south side of Mt. Hood, charging users a fee of $5.00 (in mid-nineteenth century dollars). Even with the cleared trail, there was one precipitous drop on the southwestern slope where the only recourse was to lower the wagons using block and tackle. The chance of a rotten strand of rope or a bad connection, here only a few miles from the goal, could send everything careening to splintered devastation.

What persuaded the travelers to undertake this journey was not only the chance to escape frustration and debt back east, but also a remarkable program created by the Federal government in Washington, DC in 1850. Each white male arriving in Oregon was granted 320 acres of land as a homestead; if he lived on it
Fort Vancouver was the first destination of the earliest Oregon Trail travelers. Most stopped here so they could resupply before moving on to their land claims (drawing: Gaston, *The Centennial History of Oregon*, 1912).


and made certain improvements, including building a house, then title was made clear and permanent. This was the Donation Land Claim Act, the first such program of public land grant enacted by the government, providing the basis for the later national Homestead Act of 1862. Even more unusual, if the man were married, his wife would be granted another 320 acres in her own name; although the vote for women was many years away, in the Oregon country women could own property in their own right.

The goal of the first Eden-seekers was Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, a site at which to resupply in preparation for settling their land claims. But after 1842 the destination became Oregon City, platted and founded by Dr. John McLoughlin after he left the employ of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The site on the Willamette River, long studied by McLoughlin, was 26 miles upstream from the confluence with the Columbia. Here the Willamette had carved a steep-sided gorge through a thick basalt flow, tumbling over falls 42 feet high. A rocky ledge on the east side of the river below the falls seemed to McLoughlin perfectly formed for a settlement, and he was certain that the power of the falls could be used for mills and other industries. Within a few years McLoughlin’s vision was realized, and the stores and warehouses springing up at Oregon City provided the weary new arrivals, streaming in by river or the Barlow Road, the supplies they needed to set up their new farmsteads. The river, in fact, became the highway by which goods were taken to the towns and villages that began to dot the river’s edges, and by which other products were taken down river to the small village of Portland, quickly growing and soon to overtake Oregon City as the chief commercial center of the Oregon territory.

**Notes**

1 The Hudsons Bay Company was said to have been so long in the Oregon country that the white initials “HBC” on the red field of the company flag were believed to stand for “here before Christ.” Certainly the company trappers and traders were there well before any missionaries, either Protestant or Roman Catholic.


Portland

The Rose City

"We discovered, in short, a city that could best be described as an intelligently curated architectural museum. In little over a century, Portland had jelled into a magisterial modern metropolis, in which ancient spaces and futuristic skyscraper sculptures were brought together on miniature: two hundred foot blocks. What we had first seen as a quiet exotic outpost of American civilization revealed itself as an exquisite architectural microcosm, an extraordinary tapestry in which relics of the past were fantastically interwoven with buildings that pointed the way toward the world of tomorrow."

- Gideon Busker, Lena Lencek
Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture
Portland, Oregon
Central City

Key District
1 Skidmore/Old Town N.R. Historic District
2 Yamhill N.R. Historic District
3 Glazed Terra Cotta Historic District
4 Warehouse District
5 South Park Blocks
6 Government Center
The center for the VAF meeting this year is Portland, the largest city in Oregon and the largest metropolis between Seattle and San Francisco. Today well served by various modes of transportation the river bank where Portland would later appear did not seem a promising location to John McLoughlin in the 1830s. He chose instead to settle at Oregon City. With Fort Vancouver, these became the two most heavily settled areas in the Oregon Territory. At a point roughly midway between these two settled areas, the sloping and thickly forested river bank rising west of the Willamette offered a place of rest. There, natives and Anglo traders paused at a spot where some of the trees had been cut down. By 1842, in fact, the area was commonly called “The Clearing.” As more and more trees were cut and burned, the west bank of the Willamette began to look increasingly promising as a town site, especially to Asa Lawrence Lovejoy and Francis Pettygrove. In 1844 the clearing of trees began in earnest, and several buildings were started. Lovejoy and Pettygrove laid out a regular orthogonal grid of streets parallel to the river bank, with blocks 200 feet square and streets 60 feet wide.

From the outset, the sense of creating a home away from home was strong, as is evident in the naming of the new town. Pettygrove, from Maine, favored adopting the name of his home town, whereas Lovejoy, from Massachusetts, wanted to call the new town Boston. Deadlocked, the two decided to toss a coin; Pettygrove won and the name became Portland.
town, whereas Lovejoy, from Massachusetts, wanted to call the new town Boston. Deadlocked, the two decided to toss a coin; Pettygrove won and the name became Portland.

The city did not immediately prosper, but when gold was discovered in California in 1849, the economy of the entire Pacific slope was transformed in the blink of an eye. Settlers in the Willamette Valley (those who did not take off for the gold fields themselves) quickly saw the possibilities of providing the miners with foodstuffs and other essential supplies. Oregon City was one shipping point, but ocean vessels could not progress that far up the Willamette. The new town of Portland, far closer to the Pacific, also had deep moorage on the river bank. Aggressive promotion by Portland business leaders soon made it the major port in the entire northwest region, the funnel through which passed California gold in exchange for food and supplies. The selection of Portland as the contract mail drop for the region sealed its promise of financial dominance, and the growth of the city was just one of many ways that the opening of the gold fields changed the landscape and architecture of Oregon.

Over the next six decades Portland grew rapidly, first with extensions of the grid to the west and south, and then with a new section to the north. Where this northerly addition was to be laid out, the river made a swing to the west, and so Couch’s (rhymes with smoosh) Addition was rotated sharply to the west, resulting in an awkward collision of streets along the boundary line which became Burnside Street.

The pattern of development quickly emerged, with warehouses and business buildings lining the river bank in the original grid and north in Couch’s Addition, and houses of the well-to-do and their churches occupying the blocks to the west of the original town site. The focal point of this posh residential area was the green spine of the Park Blocks, forming what was to be a linear park system extending the entire length of the city. Somehow — with great regret that continues to this day — the central park blocks along Burnside Street fell into private hands and so the Park Blocks remain divided into the North and South sections.

Along this broad boulevard the major houses and churches were located in the 1880s and 1890s. Well into the twentieth century, the city’s major public buildings were placed along the
tree-canopied South Park Blocks, while on the North Park Blocks rose the grand classical U.S. Customs House. Meanwhile, a secondary warehouse district developed west of Couch’s original addition once the Northern Pacific transcontinental railroad reached Portland in the mid-1880s. The marker for the beginning of this warehouse and industrial area, still threaded with railroad tracks, is the huge red brick pile of the Henry Weinhard Brewery on Burnside.

What makes Portland remarkable among larger American cities is that most of these early commercial and residential districts are still quite visible. Many of the cast-iron business blocks and warehouses of the 1860s and 1870s, built immediately adjacent to the river on Front Street, were torn down in the 1950s to make way for several urban renewal projects. But the remaining early business buildings along First and Second streets survived, as the loss of their neighbors on the waterfront immediately showed Portlanders how important these buildings were to understanding the city’s history and culture. Moreover, the later commercial district of the teens and twenties, close by to the southwest, survives nearly intact, as do other surrounding commercial areas. Today many of the oldest buildings have been carefully restored and now house professional offices and other smaller ventures. To Gideon Bosker and Lena Lencek, authors of a history of Portland architecture, the city seems to stand out as “an intelligently curated architectural museum.” Three commercial historic areas have been identified, two of them encompassing the best of the earliest riverside business districts, and a third made up of the major department stores and early skyscrapers of the turn of the century. Furthermore, in the northerly Couch’s Addition two other historic districts are clearly discernable: the area closer to the river where Asians tended to settle (today Portland’s Chinatown), and the turn-of-the-century warehouse district to the west of Chinatown.
Skidmore/Old Town
National Register
Historic District

Key
1  Ankeny Square-1869
2  Reed Block-1890
3  New Market Block-1871
4  Smith's Block-1872
5  Hallock & McMillan
   Building-1857
   Fechheimer & White
   Building-1883
6  Failing Building-1886
7  United Carriage and
   Baggage Transfer-1886
8  Haseltine Building-1893
9  Bickel Building-1892
10  Blagen Block-1888
11  Merchant's Hotel-1880
12  Simon Building-1892
Skidmore/Old Town Historic District

One of the oldest districts is the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District, so called because of the fountain at the angular juncture of Ankeny and First Avenue, a good place to start exploring. It was designated a historic district by the city in 1975 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This was the original commercial heart of Portland in the 1850s and 1860s, when many small three-bay, two-story brick and wood business buildings were erected. With ships docking along Front Street, it was a busy and somewhat rough area, with merchants and sailors mingling on the streets. Taverns and bars were found everywhere, as were the accustomed female denizens of such wharf-front neighborhoods.

The area declined during the 1920s and 1930s as shipping moved north to deeper water and as businesses moved west, uphill, to get away from the spring flooding. Then the area was scheduled for urban renewal. During the 1950s, when scores of cast-iron and brick business blocks began to come down along Front Street and First Avenue, many of their sections of cast iron were salvaged. Some were stored in the area around the Skidmore Fountain, but the "midnight disappearance" in 1965 of some arches from the ornate Ladd Block prompted the creation of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission. Eventually, with revitalization of the Old Town area as a tourist attraction, many of the salvaged iron arcades and building fragments came back to Ankeny Park, a closed section of Ankeny Street between First and Front, where they can be viewed today, identified with name plaques.

The Skidmore Fountain, located in the open space off First Avenue, was a gift to the city in 1888 from Stephen Skidmore whose will provided for the construction of a public fountain for "horses, men, and dogs." On the building committee charged with having the fountain built was Portland essayist, traveler, and general man-of-letters, Charles Erskine Scott Wood, a friend of New York sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Scott asked Saint-Gaudens to design the fountain, but, swamped with already-delayed commissions, Saint-Gaudens recommended his young as-
The New Market Theater and Ankeny Block from an early Buchtel & Stolte drawing. The Ankeny Block, on the right, was later demolished, but the first floor arcade has since been reassembled in place (photo: Library of Congress).

This photo shows the New Market Theater and adjacent Poppleton Building as they appeared prior to renovation. At this time the theater was being used as a parking garage - with cars driving through the main arches. An elevator lifted cars to the upper levels (photo: Oregon SHPO Files, 1972).

assistant Olin Warner. Warner accepted the commission, and in turn recommended the New York firm of McKim, Mead & White to design the base and architectural setting, as they frequently did for Saint-Gaudens. The design of the base was placed in the hands of the firm's principal designer in the 1880s, Joseph Morrill Wells. Warner and Wells devised a tall central group of bronze caryatids supporting a bronze basin. Below them are granite pools fed by spouting lions' heads, some quite low to serve horses and dogs.

McKim, Mead & White played a highly significant role in shaping Portland's architecture in the years 1882 through 1920. They designed several large buildings in connection with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad (briefly headed in 1882-84 by Henry Villard who also had McKim, Mead & White design the famous group of six townhouses on Madison Avenue, New York City). The huge passenger station was never built, but the tourist hotel project was begun in 1883, then halted when Villard lost control of the railroad, and subsequently resumed by Portland business leaders in 1887. (It was demolished in the 1950s to make way for a parking lot and later transformed into the Pioneer Courthouse Square.) Although it was hoped that McKim, Mead & White themselves would finish the hotel, the commission was turned over to McKim's former assistant on the hotel design, William H. Whidden. On arriving in Portland to take on the job, Whidden persuaded his friend Ion Lewis, from the Boston office of Peabody & Stearns, to join him in Portland. Thus was born the firm of Whidden & Lewis, the preeminent architects in the city for a generation. The influence of Whidden & Lewis is seen throughout the city, as in the Reed Building, just north of the Skidmore Fountain. Built in 1890 for prominent businessman Simeon G. Reed, this business block is in the style developed by H. H. Richardson and used by Peabody & Stearns for several business blocks in Boston.

The New Market Block and Theater, on the west side of First Avenue south of the Skidmore Fountain, includes the iron arcade of the New Market Block, 1871-72, and the recently restored (1982-83) New Market Theater. This multipurpose com-
Commercial building originally had an auditorium on the second floor and a produce market that ran through the ground floor with a central passage wide enough for wagons to pass. Both buildings are attributed to architects E. M. Burton and W. N. Piper. (Cast-iron afficionados carrying a magnet may wish to determine which sections of the New Market Block arcade are fiberglass replacements of missing elements.)

Adjoining the New Market Theater to the south is the Poppleton Building, 1871, also designed by E. M. Burton, and recently restored. Its large ground floor windows are made possible by thin cast iron pilasters carrying double arabesques of cast iron leaves. Above is a heavy cornice visually supported by bulging consoles of clustered grapes.

In the next block to the south, on Front Avenue facing the new Tom McCall Waterfront Park, is the ornate Smith's Block, 1872, by W. W. Piper. Its scale today is misleading, for it was once much larger, running nearly the length of the block. In a portion now gone was the city's original stock exchange. Although missing its original cornice, it is nonetheless typical of the smaller, two-story highly embellished Italianate business buildings that preceded the larger Richardsonian business blocks of the late 1880s and 1890s.

Also on Front Street, one block to the south at the corner of Oak Street, is the adjoining Hallock and McMillan Building, 237 SW Front, built in 1857, but defaced in the 1940s. Next to it at 233 SW Front is the Fechheimer and White Building, 1883-85, with cast iron arches set between brick piers and stucco scored to look like stone. (Look for the signature stamp of the Oregon foundry in the lower right corner.) Tucked in the middle of the block, at 71 SW Oak, is the Dielschneider Building, 1859, the third oldest building yet standing in Portland. Originally only two stories, the third floor was added in 1876. Joseph Dielschneider built the structure to house the offices of his Novelty Iron and Brass Works, but after 1860 the building was rented to A. C. Gibbs, founder of the Oregon Iron Works. Iron threshold plates bearing Gibbs' name can still be seen at the entrances.

One block to the west, at the corner of Oak and SW First, is the Failing Building, 1886, designed by architect Warren Williams for a major Portland businessman and later mayor, Henry Failing. This three-story Italianate block also has cast iron arches set between brick piers covered in scored stucco. The restoration...
was done by architects Zimmer Gunsul Frasca before that firm had achieved its wide acclaim. A few steps to the north, at 224 SW First, is the **T. J. Seufert Building**, 1889, owned by the Seufert brothers who established a salmon canning factory near The Dalles supplied by numerous fish wheels along the river that lifted migrating fish out of the water. (These were banned by law in 1927.) The storefront's ground-floor posts are of turned wood, although the cornice is cast iron.

At the intersection of Pine Street and SW Second Avenue is the modest brick **United Carriage and Baggage Transfer Building** of 1886 (113 SW Pine) built for William S. Ladd, a prominent banker and financier in the region. Facing it at 133 SW Second is the far more ambitious Richardsonian Romanesque **Haseltine Building**. Its massive ground story arches are of Tenino stone. Built in 1893 for State Senator J. E. Haseltine to house a wholesale hardware warehouse, this structure was flooded by the Willamette River one year later; the highwater mark is noted on a sign in the entry arch, as is the projected height of the flood waters of early February 1996, fortuitously kept back by a seawall built in 1929. Regrettably, the Haseltine Building no longer has its original cornice. Next to the United Carriage building, at 112 SW Second, is the **Glisan Building**, 1889, a virtually untouched late Italianate business block built as an investment by Dr. Rodney Glisan, and the last of a group of three buildings erected for him on this city block. Glisan is better known in the medical community for his *Textbook on Modern Midwifery* of 1881. Next to this building is another venture by Glisan, now heavily altered.

At the northwest corner of SW Second and Ash is the **Bickel Building**, built in 1892 by German-born merchant Frederick Bickel who was in the confectionary-restaurant business. Across from the Bickel Building, at 58 SW Second and dominating the intersection, is another massive red brick and stone Richardsonian warehouse block, the **New Market Annex**, 1889, designed by the Portland architects McCaw & Martin. This was the city's first example of the massive bulk of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and must
have come as a shock amidst its many smaller and far more delicate Italianate neighbors.

Four additional buildings in this district are found north of Burnside Street. One way to reach this area is under the bridge carrying Burnside traffic up to the Burnside Bridge. This route runs along the new tracks for MAX, Portland’s light rail system that rings the central business district and which, on this line, extends out to the eastern suburbs. One block north of the overpass, at 30-34 NW First, is the Blagen Block, 1888, a large four-story Italianate building erected for Niels Blagen whose name is emblazoned in sheet metal scrolls in the central pediment. The design is attributed to Warren Williams and shows his ability to combine decorative motifs in highly fanciful pastiches using combinations of prefabricated parts. Note the heavily articulated corner and the upper cornice that erupts into quasi-pediments at intervals. The construction is typical mid-nineteenth-century hybrid, with brick piers carrying wooden beams and joists, outer walls of brick covered with plaster or stucco, and an embellished street front with cast iron pieces attached to the brick. Today the

The city has changed a great deal since this 1930s photo. A number of high-rise structures have been built and the waterfront areas have changed dramatically (photo: Brubaker Air Photo, Special Collections, UO Knight Library).
Blagen Block is considered by many to be the best preserved of Portland's Italianate "commercial palaces."

One block to the west, on NW Second Avenue, are two more notable buildings. On the southwestern corner of Davis Street and Third Avenue (120-136 NW Third) is the Merchant's Hotel, c. 1880-84, built for Louis, Adolph and Nicolai who operated a large saw and planing mill not far away. A large, four-story Italianate block, it contained one of the first hydraulic passenger elevators in Portland. As a hotel, it operated for nearly a century, but it also housed smaller business activities and apartments for what Terence O'Donnell identified as "single ladies with friends in the fleet." In 1968 it was acquired by Bill and Sam Naito who restored it, one of many restoration and rehabilitation projects they undertook along the waterfront.

Walking south on Third Avenue, past Couch Street, one comes to two small buildings just north of the intersection with Burnside Street. At 107 NW Third is the facade of the Simon Building, 1892, which was gutted by fire in 1970. By the time of the fire, however, the buildings in this district were held in sufficient esteem that the facade, damaged though it might be, was saved and stabilized and now partially screens a parking lot. Next to it at the corner is the Sinnott House, 1883, an Italianate building that served for a time as a small hotel. Built of cast iron parts, this is a more restrained example of this popular idiom.

One block further west, at NW Fourth and Burnside, is the entry to Portland's Chinatown. The large Chinese Gate, flanked by marble lions, was built by the Chinese merchants association in 1986. Beyond are various restaurants and shops, intermixed with family association buildings and martial arts schools.

Notes

Yamhill National Register Historic District

Key

1. Concord Building-1891
2. Bishop's House-1879
3. Dekum Building-1892
4. Centennial Block-1876
5. Willamette Block-1882
6. Moy Building-1909
7. Leon Chung Bldg.-1884
8. Thomas Mann Bldg.-1884
9. Franz Building-1880
10. Mikado Block-1880
11. Strowbridge Bldg.-1878
12. Harker Building-1880
13. Love Building-1878
14. Van Rensselaer Bldg.
15. Peare Building-1860
16. Poppleton Building-1866
17. Harker Building-1880
Yamhill Historic District

The second oldest National Register historic district in downtown Portland, called the Yamhill Historic District for the street that bisects it, is several blocks south of the Skidmore/Old Town District. Walking south from Second Avenue and Pine Street, one passes several notable structures on the way to the Yamhill District.

The area around Second and Oak was once the heart of Portland’s mid-nineteenth century Chinatown, then the second largest in the nation. This area and that to the south and east fell victim to two disastrous fires in 1872 and 1873 which swept away all of the businesses. Subsequent rebuilding favored extensive use of cast iron (although exposed and, hence, not well protected from fire), massive masonry with terra cotta and cut brick detailing. Later, the slender skeletons and classical details of office buildings introduced by Whidden & Lewis and revealed the strong influence of their eastern mentors McKim and Peabody. One of the first office buildings this firm designed after settling up in Portland in 1889 is the **Concord Building**, 208 SW Stark, just west of Second. This was built in 1891 and shows their debt to H. H. Richardson. Across the street at 219 SW Stark is the elaborate Gothic building commonly called the **Bishop’s House**, 1879, designed by Prosper Heurn. This was an addition to the Roman Catholic cathedral built on the corner of Third and Stark the year before. Not technically a residence, it was built to hold meeting rooms and other ancillary facilities for the church. Carefully restored in 1965 by William Roberts, this is perhaps one of the most decidedly Gothic business buildings in Portland, with its second floor triptych motif of slender lancet windows flanking a large central pointed arch window. These openings light a Great Room, 17 feet high and 24 feet square, with huge baronial fireplaces on either side.

At the southwest corner of Third and Washington Street is perhaps the most carefully detailed Richardson Romanesque office block yet standing in Portland, the **Dekum Building**, built in 1892 and designed by McCaw, Martin & White. Dekum was a Bavarian confectioner who settled in Portland and who also had a passion for songbirds, importing goldfinches, nightingales, and other species. Terence O’Donnell suggests there is much in the elaborate decoration of the building that suggests pastry and plum-
The Yamhill Historic District proper begins at Morrison Street, and is rich in examples of heavily and elaborately detailed late Italianate "commercial palaces," making extensive use of cast iron and sheet metal panels, and even wood cornices in places. Heavily "modernized" in the 1940s, many of the buildings have been carefully restored, with replacement pieces for missing cast iron elements made of fiberglass. With the coming of the MAX light rail system, which turns west on Morrison to loop around the present-day mercantile core of the city before returning to First Avenue down Yamhill, there is again a bustle of people and thriving shops that characterized this area in the 1880s.

At the southwest corner of Morrison and Second is the elaborate Italianate Centennial Block, built in 1876, but with a fourth floor added in 1889. When renovation was undertaken in 1985, the removal of storefront layers revealed the original cast iron columns, pilasters, and other elements. Where these had been physically removed on the ground floor, fiberglass replications returned the building to its original appearance.

One block to the south, another fulsome Italianate block dominates the corner at 722-28 SW Second, the Willamette Block, 1882, as noted in the curved pediment rising over the top cornice. This too was originally three floors, with a fourth floor added later. Like the Centennial Block, this incorporates fiberglass replicas for some of the ironwork removed on the ground floor. Diagonally across the corner at 204-18 SW Yamhill Street is a building of a much different vintage, the Moy Building. Constructed in 1909 of reinforced concrete from a design by David Williams, it was built for Moy Back Hin, a Chinese merchant who came to Portland in 1868, and who eventually served as China's consul for the four northwestern states. Two doors to the south, at the northwest corner of Taylor and Second Avenue, is another structure built by a prominent member of Portland's Chinese community. The Leon Chung Building, 831-37 SW Second, 1884, originally housed a tavern and a rooming house. Despite changes at the first floor level, the structure retains much of its original character.

On the southeast corner of Yamhill and Second are two small buildings, the Thomas Mann Building, 1884, at the corner, and next to it, at 140 SW Yamhill, the Franz Building, 1880, which
bears the monogram of George Franz cast in its ground floor iron pilasters. The Thomas Mann Building was originally a small two-story affair built by a contractor, but had a third floor added in 1890. Here, too, renovation and restoration in 1979 resulted in reconstruction of the many missing elements, as well as the addition of a new fourth floor.

The city block on which these two small structures stand, Yamhill to Taylor between First and Second avenues, was once the site of the Portland farmer’s market. The city’s equivalent to Seattle’s Pike Place Market, it was relocated in 1933 to a larger modern building where it soon expired. Except for the Mikado Block commercial palace at the southeast corner, the entire block today consists of a new infill building which connects with the surviving three and houses a large interior market recalling the earlier farmer’s market. Externally, the long facades are broken up into smaller period storefronts in keeping with the character of the district. The Mikado Block, 831-37 SW First, which completes the Yamhill Market ensemble, was begun in 1880 as a two-story commercial palace but was given an elaborate third story in 1886 for C. E. Smith whose initials are visible above the paired brackets at the roof cornice. At the time of this expansion the building was given its present name, apparently for the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta which had opened in London the previous year. The building retains its wealth of cast iron ornament on the upper floors, but the pilasters at the corner were salvaged from another building and reused here when the Mikado Block was renovated in the 1970s.

Just north of the Yamhill Marketplace, on the northwest corner of First and Yamhill, is the Strowbridge Building, 1878, built for Joseph Strowbridge to house his Oregon Furniture Manufacturing Company; a second furniture emporium moved into the building in the early 1880s. The middle floors retain their original features, but the wooden cornice was rebuilt in 1979 following period photographs, and the ground floor facades have been redone in the character of Portland’s historic commercial blocks.

Across First Avenue, north and south of Yamhill, are clusters of several small storefronts that survive from the late 1870s. The Harker Building, 728 SW First, is nearest in appearance to its original condition, whereas the Love Building, 739-32 SW First, lost its original embellishments and was remodeled in the
1960s. Running along Yamhill Street (65-73 Yamhill) is the Van Rensselaer Building which was given its third and fourth floors in 1884.

Around the corner, at 731-37 SW Front Avenue, is a structure that initially started as two separate two-story business buildings. The southernmost half, originally a simple brick building with three arched bays, was the Northrup and Blossom building, built in 1858 and today the second oldest commercial building in the city. Next to this to the north was the Fitch Building. The two were united by a common third floor added sometime prior to 1894.

The middle section of the block south of Yamhill Street is made up of three adjoining business buildings of the 1870s. At 814 SW First is the Pearne Building, built for Thomas Pearne about 1860. Nearly consumed by the fire of 1873, only the cast-iron columns and first story wall survived, but these were reused in the replacement building erected in 1873. At 818 SW First is an earlier Poppleton Building, 1866, also nearly consumed in the fire, but whose surviving cast-iron columns were reused in the new building after 1873. The fulsome baroque pediment and the Mansard roof date from the late 1880s when the third story was added. Next to this, at 824 SW First, is another Harker Building, built in 1880 for Asa Harker. The narrow brick piers in the upper facade have cast iron capitals, and the windows have elegant cast-iron keystones.

One further building, just beyond the official boundary of the Yamhill Historic District, deserves mention with a cautionary note. Situated now at the southern end of the Tom McCall Waterfront Park, just east of Front Avenue and south of Salmon Street, is what was once the Portland Visitors’ Information Center, designed in 1948 by Portland architectural designer John Yeon. Originally an essay in lean design, using carefully arranged rectilinear masses to define a central court, the building exploited wood construction in exposed structural supports and modular plywood wall panels. Moved to a new site and now converted to use as a restaurant and lounge (featuring Northwest microbrews and wines), the building’s interior finishes and exterior spaces have been gravely compromised. Indeed, when the proposal for renovation as a restaurant was initiated, Yeon himself vigorously and eloquently argued for the building’s demolition, saying that its original purpose was gone and that the inter-relationship be-
Ostensibly, the first house in Portland, built in 1844, was located in this area at about the corner of Front and Washington Streets (photo: Gaston, A Centennial History of Oregon, 1912).

Notes


This 1858 Kuchel and Dresel print shows a number of the early wooden structures in the city. Most buildings were originally two or three stories (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).
Glazed Terra Cotta
Historic District

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Glazed Terra Cotta Historic District

Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s, newer commercial development began to move west away from the river, toward higher ground but also toward the lines of the streetcars. The most vigorous period of building was between 1905 and 1930, and the new buildings going up were larger in ground area and far taller, using reinforced concrete frames to reach twelve or more stories. The preferred materials to encase these skeletons were glazed terra cotta and brick; much of the special terra cotta work was done by the Gladding McBean Company of San Francisco.² Paralleling a change then occurring in other major cities, the scale and color palette of these new Portland skyscrapers differed greatly from the narrow, two- to four-story, floridly Italianate business blocks closer to the river. The new taller towers almost invariably followed the classical tripartite formula worked out by McKim, Mead & White in New York, and used widely by the office of Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago.
in the first decade of this century. What makes those in Portland special is that they survive with minimal changes, and all but one retain their broad cantilevered roof cornices, so often sheared off in other cities, most notably in Chicago.

The building which would lead to this dramatic change (although it was built of brownstone and red brick) was the Portland Hotel, 1884-1889, which once filled the block bounded by Yamhill and Morrison and by Fifth and Sixth Avenues. This was the project begun by McKim, Mead & White, and later turned over to Whidden & Lewis to complete in 1888. The large bulk of the U-shaped Portland Hotel stood directly across Sixth Avenue from the chaste classical U.S. Court House and Post Office, 1869, although it faced its back side. The Federal Court House and Post Office was positioned to face east, towards the river, and was designed by the Federal architect’s office under the direction of Alfred B. Mullett. Given the date, the severe classical character seems at odds with other bombastically Second Empire Baroque Mansard piles that came out of Mullett’s office during the post-Civil War years. Terence O’Donnell suggests that the Portland federal building design was, “as it were, found at the back of a drawer, a design done but never used for some other city years before, and now thought good enough for this ultima Thule settlement on the other side of some mountains.” Another oddity concerns the site, for when the Court House and Post Office was built it was at the farthest edge of the commercial and governmental center — placed there because of some political or financial shenanigans. What was wrong at the time turned out to be just right, for today the building, popularly known as the Pioneer Courthouse, is widely admired and has been carefully restored. It has lent its name to the surrounding area.

The old Portland Hotel, despite being the center of Portland social life, declined in popularity among travelers in the 1940s and eventually was razed in 1952 to make way for a parking lot. With the parking removed in the 1980s, the block was redeveloped as the Pioneer Courthouse Square, a public outdoor living room designed by Will Martin of Martin-Soderstrom-Matteson and opened in 1984. Once again this area is the center of public life in Portland. Its concentric rings of steps and ramps create an amphitheater for public events, its tumbling sheets of water mask street sounds, and on its upper level is a coffee shop.
Doyle used white-glazed terra cotta at the suggestion of Meier who had just visited Chicago and was impressed by Louis Sullivan's white terra cotta-clad Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. Department Store.

providing the beverages and snacks that invite people to stop and stay a while.

With Whidden & Lewis in the 1890s came the restrained and delicately detailed commercial Renaissance classicism of McKim, Mead & White. After the turn of the century a young associate in their office, Albert E. Doyle, began his rise as the preeminent Portland architect, forming the firm of Doyle, Patterson & Beach. Pioneer Courthouse Square is ringed with three buildings that serve well to introduce Doyle and his impact on the city. Off the southeast corner of the square is the Pacific Building, 1926, a tall Renaissance block with terra cotta cornice and rusticated terra cotta base; the plain mid-section is encased in glazed and light-colored brick. The lobby has remained little altered since 1926. In the garret attic space beneath the red tile roof was Doyle's office.

Off the northeast corner of the square is the huge mass of
the Meier and Frank Department Store, designed by Doyle’s firm and built in several stages until it filled the entire block. The company, operated by partners Aaron Meier and Emil Frank, had begun in a storefront at Front Avenue and Taylor but moved to this location in 1898. The first section of the present building, on the northwest quadrant of the block, went up in 1909 from designs by Doyle, but using as its cladding material white-glazed terra cotta at the suggestion of Meier who had just visited Chicago and was impressed by Louis Sullivan’s white terra cotta-clad Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. Department Store. The other identical sections of Meier and Frank were added in 1915 and 1932.

Off the northwest corner of Pioneer Courthouse Square is the Northwest National Bank Building, 1913, also by Doyle, and like the recently completed first section of the Meier and Frank Store, clad in white-glazed terra cotta incorporating Renaissance decorative features. Particularly fine is the three-story base with giant Corinthian pilasters encasing the internal steel columns and metal and glass infill panels. (The cast iron was painted green to resemble aged bronze; the main entrance was rebuilt in 1936-37 with extruded bronze sections.)

Opposite the Northwest National Bank, on the west side of Pioneer Courthouse Square, is a building that stands out, not because of height or size but because of its blazing white terra cotta skin and dramatic set-back crown. This is the Journal Building, 1912, designed by the Reid Brothers of San Francisco to house offices of the Oregon Journal newspaper. It was renamed the Jackson Building in 1951 for Charles S. Jackson, publisher of the paper. It is the perfect municipal ornament to the square, and at dusk is illuminated by 1,800 incandescent lamps placed along its salient edges. The sockets for the bulbs were incorporated directly into the terra cotta pieces at the time of construction.

One-half block north of Pioneer Courthouse Square, at 615 Broadway, is the sole example of true Art Deco in Portland, the Charles F. Berg store, 1930. This building was a remodel and face-lift of the Dolph Building (1902) for Berg who operated a men’s clothing and accessories store. The principal change was the new facade, produced by the Grand Rapids Store Equipment Corporation, using glazed terra cotta panels of black and 18 karat gold, with blue-green and cream-colored accents and recessed
spandrel panels. The low relief decorative motifs in the panels include zig-zags, rain clouds, sunbursts, spirals, and peacocks in stylized, flattened patterns. The interior, once equally lavish, has been changed.

Further west on Morrison is a narrow block where the park blocks would have continued from north to south had not these blocks fallen into private ownership. A short block further west is Ninth Avenue and the multi-story parking garage connected by an elevated walkway to the Galleria, originally the **Olds, Wortman and King Dry Goods Store**, 1910, designed by C. R. Aldrich and perhaps the first store in Portland and the Northwest to occupy an entire city block. This emporium is also encased in white-glazed terra cotta with a galvanized metal cornice. Although the detailing is purely classical Renaissance, the window glazing at the second floor is direct from Chicago, using a large central fixed pane with flanking operable sashes. In 1976 the building was renovated internally and, like the Yamhill Market, houses independent shops and boutiques around a large central light court.

Across Tenth Avenue from the Galleria, at the corner of Alder Street, is the distinctive **Seward Hotel**, 1909, designed by William C. Knighton. The heavy and unusual cream-colored terra cotta blandishments show Knighton's independent mind. One might describe the style as Arts and Crafts Art Nouveau, for the building, especially on the inside, incorporates the leaded glass and copper, onyx wainscoting, and mosaic floors typical of American Arts and Crafts, but with a freedom of invention that recalls Art Nouveau. The inverted trapezoid decorative motif became a kind of signature device for Knighton. Now called the Governor Hotel, the building has been thoroughly renovated and is one of the city's finest hostelries. A new lobby has been created around a working fireplace and hearth. Following a northwest history theme, large new sepia murals have been created in the lobby.

What made possible the expansion of the Governor as a viable up-scale boutique hotel was the linkage to the **Elks Temple Building**, 1920, which adjoins it to the west. The presence of a ballroom, meeting rooms, and other public spaces accorded exactly with the needs of the Governor Hotel renovation. The Elks Temple, which fronts onto Eleventh Avenue, could hardly be more different from the hotel building. Opened in 1920, this elegant
Italian Renaissance palazzo was designed by architects Houghtaling and Dougan as a variation of the Farnese Palace in Rome (the principal differences being additional floor levels and the open, glazed store fronts along Eleventh and Alder). Otherwise the chaste Renaissance details, as in the pedimented windows and the roof cornice, are carefully interpreted. Looking deceptively like limestone at a distance, the external cladding is speckled pinkish glazed terra cotta. The new passage linking the hotel with the Elks Temple is presently decorated with copies of the working drawings for the club, documenting the careful attention to detail.

The Woodlark Building, 1912, is located at the northeast corner of Ninth and Alder (813 SW Alder). This nine-story block was designed by the Doyle office for Woodard, Clark and Company, a retail drug business which occupied the entire building. While the window arches and other details are terra cotta, the projecting cornice is of galvanized iron sheeting. Adjacent, at the southeast corner of Ninth and Washington (812 SW Washington), is the Stevens Building, 1914, a good example of the mature work of Whidden & Lewis designed for Theodore B. Wilcox. The buff-colored brick facade is embellished with cream-colored terra cotta on the ground floor and in the two-story crown. The building is topped by a massive terra cotta cornice which includes traditional classical devices such as lion’s heads.

Diagonally across from the Stevens Building to the northwest is the large U-shaped Pittock Block, built in two sections, 1914 and 1923, from designs by the Doyle office. Because of its bulk, the building has a large external light court facing south, with a second internal light court. The covering for the reinforced concrete frame is buff brick with off-white glazed terra cotta at the ground and upper levels.

The Morgan Building, 1913, runs the length of Washington between Park Avenue and Broadway. This was designed by the Doyle office for the Morgan-Bushong Investment Company as offices and treatment rooms for physicians. Here Doyle used red richly-textured tapestry brick with cream-colored terra cotta trim that incorporates marine motifs such as dolphins and Neptune’s trident spear in the frieze band above the first floor.

Two blocks to the north, at the southeast corner of Park and Oak, is the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company Building, built in two parts, 1914 and 1926, and designed by San
Francisco architect Edwin V. Cobby working with the Doyle office. Of red brick with white terra cotta trim, this building is one of the few in this district to remain virtually untouched externally. As one moves further south on Oak, it becomes apparent how Cobby designed this building to complement the adjoining Oregon Hotel.

The Oregon Hotel, now called the Benson Hotel, on the southwest corner of Oak and Broadway, was built in 1913 for the hugely successful turn-of-the-century Norwegian-born lumberman Simon Benson (and given his name shortly after opening). Another product of the Doyle office, this is acknowledged as “the grand dame” of Portland hostleries, and it seemed fitting that it be the VAF headquarters in view of its history and excellent state of preservation. Because this was not to be a commercial office block nor a department store, Doyle and his associates employed a more elegant French Baroque idiom for this building’s exteriors, inspired by Holabird & Roche’s Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. The Mansard roof is part copper and part terra cotta glazed light green to resemble weathered copper. The lobby has an English atmosphere with its dark Circassian walnut paneling and deeply coffered ceiling, and the London Grill restaurant, in the lower level, seems slightly German, perhaps, due to its arched and vaulted ceiling that recalls a beer cellar.

A further note concerning Simon Benson: he donated the handsome four-bubbler bronze public fountains, located throughout downtown Portland and designed by A.E. Doyle, to the city. Numerous legends surround this gift, one being that Benson wanted to dissuade his loggers from imbibing other potables, another that he despaired himself of finding a drink of water one hot summer’s day. Legend also has it that the fountains were to run continuously night and day, but recent efforts to conserve what had seemed the inexhaustible supply of pure melt water from Mount Hood have resulted in the closure of three of the bubblers, with a fourth operated by a manual valve.

Across Broadway from the Benson Hotel is what is arguably the masterpiece of the Doyle office, the Roman temple form of the U.S. National Bank, 1917-25. The part facing the hotel is in fact the addition, matching exactly the original section to the east, fronting Sixth Avenue. Well detailed, using colossal 54-foot Corinthian columns with light metal and glass infill wall panels, this design shows Doyle’s clear debt to McKim, Mead &
White, particularly their Knickerbocker Bank in New York, long since destroyed. Here, too, initial appearances are misleading, for the external masonry is actually terra cotta with a special matte glaze using a gray base with overlaid speckles of pink and dark gray to give the appearance of granite. The paneled sliding bronze doors are based on the early Renaissance "Gates of Paradise" by Ghiberti for the Florence Baptistery. The later matching bronze doors on the west entrance by Avard Fairbanks, professor of sculpture at the University of Oregon, depict scenes from Oregon history. One of the glories of this building is its nearly intact main banking room, 30 feet to its coffered ceiling, with its carefully orchestrated and colorful marble finishes. Clearly this building was meant to last and to impress on patrons what one contemporary account described as "the soaring power of finance in a wealthy civilization."

On the southwest corner of this block, at Oak and Sixth, stands the first of the true skyscrapers in Portland, the twelve-story Wells Fargo Building, 1907, designed by Benjamin Wistar Morris of New York City. Here the palette of materials is quite varied, with gray granite in the plinth, limestone at the ground levels, and polychrome glazed terra cotta at the third floor and in the large three-story crown. The buff-colored bricks of the intermediate floors are laid in decorative diamond and cross patterns. Red brick was used for the top two-story window surrounds, while the cornice is of copper.

Around the block and back on Broadway are two adjoining Imperial Hotels. The older hotel on the northeast corner of Washington and Broadway is a Richardsonian Romanesque building erected in 1894 and was recently renovated to house the Hotel Vintage Plaza. Next to it, on the southeast corner of Stark and Broadway is the successor Imperial Hotel, 1909, designed by Whidden & Lewis. A modest nine stories, its external cladding is of buff-colored brick with cream-colored terra cotta at the ground floor and upper floor, as well as in the corner quoins. The heavy-looking brackets and cornice are actually of sheet metal.

Although not officially part of the Glazed Terra Cotta District, a third building filling the eastern half of this block is crucial to understanding the history of modern American architecture and should not be missed; this is the Equitable, now Commonwealth, Building, 1944-48, by Pietro Belluschi who had been the principal associate in Doyle's office for more than a
The Wells Fargo Building decorated for a July 4th celebration (photo: AAA Library Collection, University of Oregon).

The design (of the Equitable Building) was far more radical and carefully thought out than were those of its better known later rivals, for in the external skin Belluschi employed panels of aluminum which had been made in great quantities locally for use in building aircraft for the war. Moreover, he had worked closely with Pittsburgh Plate Glass and Libbey-Owens-Ford in producing oversized plates of green-tinted glass for the large windows. More important than these visible elements, Belluschi worked with mechanical engineers to develop a system of heat pumps to alternately warm and cool the interior as seasonal conditions required. Belluschi kept the principal public space at street level, filling the ground floor and avoiding the sterile entry vestibule favored by Mies. Some years later, two additional floors, identical in finish, were added to the top of the Equitable Building.

Diagonally across from the Equitable/Commonwealth, on the northeast corner of Stark and Sixth, is the diminutive Bank of California, 1925, also designed by the Doyle firm as a branch office for the San Francisco financial giant. The exterior is covered with buff-colored rusticated terra cotta blocks, with a marble base course and, originally, a marble frieze below the cornice. Since the bank moved to its new office tower in 1970, the building has housed various occupants. Despite some changes made inside and out, the building retains its basic original character.

One block to the south, on the southeast corner of Washington and Sixth is the Wilcox Building, 1911, another
Seen here in relationship to the U.S. National Bank by A.E. Doyle, the Equitable Building (1948) designed by Belluschi was enormously progressive at the time of construction (photo: W. Andrews, AAA Library Collection, Univ. of Oregon).
major office block by Whidden & Lewis (and to which they moved their own offices). This steel-framed thirteen-story office tower is covered with buff-colored brick with off-white glazed terra cotta used on the lower floors and in the upper floors and projecting cornice. Behind the Wilcox Building and filling the eastern half of this block, extending along Fifth Avenue from Washington to Alder Streets, is the **Lipman, Wolfe and Company Building**, 1912, another product of the Doyle office, built for investor H. W. Corbett, and originally occupied by a department store. The ten stories are covered completely with white-glazed terra cotta. During the 1930s, a lion's head from the cornice fell to the street prompting quick inspection of all projecting cornices downtown. Those found in bad repair were most often repaired, as was done here; today some of the Lipman, Wolfe cornice details are of fiberglass.

Across Fifth Avenue, on the northeast corner of Alder and Fifth, is a handsome but truncated office tower that did not fare so well following the cornice inspection of 1930. The **Yeon Building**, 1911, designed by the Reid Brothers of San Francisco, was for many years the tallest building in Portland, with sixteen floors. Also covered entirely with white-glazed terra cotta above the ground floors, it had a three story crown behind tall Ionic columns, an attic story, and a huge projecting cornice, like the Journal Building fitted with light bulb sockets built into the terra cotta pieces. In this case the deteriorated cornice was removed after 1930, and subsequent alterations have greatly changed the lobby as well. This building was one of many properties developed by John Yeon (father of the designer) who had made a sizable fortune in the lumber business along with Simon Benson. (Yeon sold Benson the land on which the Benson Hotel was built two years later.)

Just south of the Yeon Building across Alder Street is the **Failing Building**, 1907-1913, by Whidden & Lewis, with the lower six floors built first, followed by the upper six in 1913. The building had no official name until named for its builders in 1928.

Completing the Glazed Terra Cotta Historic District walking tour, with a return to the Pioneer Court House, is the **S. H. Kress and Company**, 1928, on the northeast corner of Morrison and Fifth, adjacent to the Failing Building.

**Notes**

1 The buildings in this district are discussed and analyzed in detail in Virginia Guest Ferriday, *Last of the Handmade Buildings* (Portland, 1984).
3 Quoted in Ferriday, *Last of the Handmade Buildings*, p. 120.

*The Public Service Building, yet another Doyle design, lies just outside of the Glazed Terra Cotta District, but is a distinctive feature in the area* (photo: AAA Collection, University of Oregon).
Warehouse District

Key
1. U.S. Customs House - 1901
2. Powell's Bookstore
3. Henry Weinhard's Brewery - 1906
4. Armory - 1891
5. Otis Elevator Co. - 1920
6. Ballou & Wright Building - 1925
7. SP&S Depots
8. Breyman Warehouse - 1906
9. Frye & Company Warehouse - 1900
10. Crane Building - 1910
11. American Chicle Co. - 1909
12. Portland Firehouse No. 3 - 1913
13. Simon Warehouse - 1907
15. Meier & Frank Warehouse - 1927
17. Pacific Biscuit Co. - 1905
18. Portland Cracker Factory - 1890
Warehouse District

About two blocks northwest of the Benson Hotel is another distinct area, the warehouse district, although not yet an officially designated historic district. It begins at Powell’s Bookstore (“World’s Largest Bookstore”) at Tenth and Burnside, and extends west to the sub-grade I-405 highway, spreading north for up to ten blocks. This was an area lightly built-up in the early 1880s until the railroad arrived and built its switching yard on the banks of the Willamette not far to the north, encouraging light industrial development in this area. These streets were laid with tracks extending from the rail yard further north, serving the warehouses and light industries, and many of these tracks, still visible on Twelfth and Thirteenth Avenues, remain in use. Originally railroad president Henry Villard proposed terminating the railroad symbolically in a grandiose passenger station to stand at the end of the North Park Blocks. This was not to be, but the idea was sufficient to result in an imposing classical U.S. Customs House, built east of the North Park Blocks at Davis Street in 1898-1901, directed by James Knox Taylor, but designed by Portland architect Edgar Lazarus. The Customs House was close to the river docks as well as to the rail lines.

The principal manufacturing plant in this warehouse district, recognizable by the distinctive odors that diffuse for blocks around, is the Henry Weinhard Brewery, filling the block along Burnside from Eleventh to Twelfth (one block west of Powell’s). A towering mass of red brick, it was built in 1906 and designed by the eminent Portland firm, Whidden & Lewis. The Weinhard plant today spreads over a five block area just north of Powell’s and subsumes various buildings of assorted styles and vintages. The original building’s few embellishments are done almost entirely in projecting brick, most notably the bold arched corbel table and cornice.

One of the nearby buildings now used by Weinhard runs the length of Davis Street, two blocks to the north, between Tenth and Eleventh. This is the Oregon National Guard Armory, now regrettably with many coats of white paint over its rough quarry-faced stone base and brick upper levels. Designed by McCaw & Martin in 1891, it shows a clear debt to H. H. Richardson in the large semicircular entrance arch on the east end, but the narrow slit windows, battlements, and arched corbel...
table cornices evoke medieval castles.

Proceeding along Tenth Avenue, at the next corner on the east side is a diminutive but elegant little office building designed in 1920 by company engineers to house regional offices of the Otis Elevator Company. The one-story building has the charm of a High Renaissance garden casino, with a terra cotta base, tapestry brick walls, and an upper entablature made up of a terra cotta architrave and cornice with a middle frieze of brick inset with decorative terra cotta panels and rondels. The red tile roof completes this Mediterranean image. The brick and terra cotta framing of the entrance is particularly well done. This building is now occupied by an accounting firm. On the west side of the street one block north, at 327 Tenth Avenue, is the large Art Deco warehouse built for Ballou & Wright in the 1920s. The building is distinctive among the surrounding warehouses for its large steel factory sash windows, its vertical piers terminated by set backs at the top, but most especially for its tower which also terminates with gentle setbacks.

Warehousing in the traditional sense is no longer done in this area, so the buildings are being gentrified, converted into self-storage facilities, lofts and apartments. The building on the northwest corner of Tenth and Glisan is perhaps the most extreme example of this kind of make-over in the area, with stuccoed surfaces and roof gardens. The ground floor has showrooms for upscale chic furnishings by Roche-Bobois, but the working-class underlying structure is revealed by the segmental arches at the third floor.

The area north of Hoyt Street was recently a large track fan for the various railroads coming into Portland. Most of the tracks have been pulled up and two remaining depot buildings, once used by the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad, have been converted to other uses, including townhouse residences. Long, narrow buildings running between the parallel tracks, these extend north from Hoyt Street on either end of Eleventh Avenue.

Continuing west on Hoyt to Thirteenth, one finds the particularly handsome Breman Warehouse at 1231 Hoyt (north-east corner of Thirteenth and Hoyt). Designed by William Knighton and J. T. Wilding in 1906, this has a clear base defined by segmental arches and a horizontal molding, with projecting piers above carrying segmental arches grouping the upper three floors, the whole capped by a cornice of corbeled brick. Across
from this, at 1240 NW Hoyt, is the more utilitarian Frye & Co. Warehouse, 1900, designer unknown.

Continuing another block to the west, a turn to the north on Fourteenth passes a Meier and Frank Warehouse filling the entire block on the west side of the street. At the northeast corner of Irving and Fourteenth is the large six-story handsomely detailed Crane Building, 710 NW Fourteenth Avenue, 1910. The entry is well emphasized, the base noted by recessed brick courses suggesting large rusticated blocks and marked by a thick stone belt course. From this point, projecting brick piers continue through five stories to a second stone belt course noting the uppermost attic level. Corbeled moldings and bracket-like devices embellish this upper floor. On the west side of the street, on the southwest corner of Johnson and Fourteenth, is the equally handsome American Chicle Company Building, 1410 NW Johnson, 1909, designer unknown. The base is set off by thick continuous bands of stone that provide the lintels for the windows. At the second floor level, however, these stone lintels are interrupted by red brick, suggesting a continuous vertical brick pier. This suggestion is reinforced and completed by a stone band that carries the eye over the round-headed third-story windows and back down to the next pier. A simple corbeled brick cornice caps the wall. It is surprising how much visual variety is achieved with only two materials, in a perfectly flat planar wall, through careful proportions and meticulous detail.

Turning back south on Fourteenth, a short walk to Glisan Street and a turn to the west brings one to Portland Firehouse No. 3, designed by Lee G. Holden and built in 1913. The side walls were quite plain and have been stuccoed, but the facade still bears evidence of the two huge doors for fire trucks; now refitted, these provide windows and a door for Touché, an Italian restaurant. The original facade also incorporates slender brick piers and a projecting balcony off the central arched French doors for what were the living and sleeping quarters for the firemen.

A walk east on Glisan back to Thirteenth Avenue brings one to a group of important buildings. On the northwest corner is the five-story Simon Warehouse, 1301-15 NW Glisan, built in 1907 and designed by Richard Martin. Again, careful attention to subtle detail gives special distinction to a simple facade totally of brick. The taller base level is set off by a simplified full entablature entirely of brick. The three middle floors have tall narrow win-
dow bays with recessed panels from floor line to window sill. The top-most of these three floors is very subtly terminated by shallow segmental arches gently contrasting with the flat lintels below. A slight projecting brick molding sets off the uppermost floor level with shorter windows, also with shallow segmental heads, and another brick entablature, partially painted black today. Next to the Simon Warehouse, and filling the northeast corner of this block, is the Heater & Company Building, built in 1907. Now painted, this brick building also employs segmental arches in the wide windows, but has continuous projecting brick piers rising through the four stories to a brick entablature.

Diagonally across the corner from the Simon Warehouse, at 1238 NW Glisan, is another warehouse that seems to bear the signature of William Knighton. Also of brick, with projecting piers, this has a most interestingly articulated entry, but even more significant, perhaps, are the inverted trapezoidal forms forming the impost blocks for the segmental arches connecting the piers. The brick detailing and vertical cornice projections over the piers are also unusual and with the upside-down trapezoids may tell us of the architect, or at least his influence.

Moving a block further south and one block west brings one to another huge Meier & Frank Warehouse, again filling an entire block. This expansive building of reinforced concrete, running the length of Fourteenth Avenue from Flanders to Everett, was designed by the prominent Portland firm of Sutton & Whitney in 1927 in a form of stripped classical moderne. Above the rusticated base are slightly projecting piers in the upper three floors with wide steel factory sashes between them.

Even more strongly influenced, perhaps, by the European mode of Modernism is the Kerr-Alexander Warehouse, one block further east on the southwest corner of Thirteenth and Everett. Designed in 1921 by Strong & MacNaughton, it has very slightly projecting brick piers with even broader expanses of steel factory sash windows. The lintels are of reinforced concrete. Next to it, on the northwest corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Davis, is what can rightly be called an Art Deco loft warehouse, now partly converted into a self-storage facility. Its darkly banded decorative pier capitals are unique in this utilitarian area.

One block east on Davis Street is the facility of the Weinhard Brewery and to two of the most intriguing buildings in this entire group. The two brick buildings fill the entire southern half of
this city block. On the northeast corner of Twelfth and Davis, 1129 NW Davis, is the Pacific Biscuit Company Candy Factory, built about 1905. Built entirely of brick, it is marked by the repetitive use of fully round-arched windows, even in the basement level where the broad arches spring upward at sidewalk level. The unknown designer was clearly emulating the motifs of the adjoining earlier Portland Cracker Factory, built on the northwest corner of Eleventh and Davis about 1890, likewise by an unknown designer. The proportions and detailing of the broad round-headed windows, even to the semicircular molding, are virtually identical. The Cracker Factory has a low gable roof, with corbeled brick cornice, like many New York loft and warehouse buildings of the 1880s. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of this building, repeated in the later adjoining candy factory, is the grouped triad of round-headed windows, seen on the south face of the Cracker Factory and the north face of the Candy Factory. Seldom does one encounter such attention to unified design in such allegedly ordinary buildings.

The Pacific Biscuit Company Building is one of the more recognizable structures in the Warehouse District. However, it has been deteriorating for a number of years (photo: S. Blashfield, 1997).
South Park Blocks Area

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<td>Fox Theater Site-1911</td>
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<td>Masonic Temple-1924</td>
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<td>Sovereign Hotel</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Park Blocks-1852</td>
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<td>University Club-1913</td>
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<td>Arlington Clu-1910</td>
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<td>Oregonian Building-1945</td>
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South Park Blocks Area

A tour of the general area around the South Park Blocks can begin at the Pioneer Courthouse Square, proceeding south along Broadway to Madison Street. Broadway, once at the edge of the city, came alive in the 1920s with the construction of vaudeville theaters and movie palaces along the street, largely from Yamhill Street south to Madison. One of these movie palaces, the Broadway, is gone, replaced by a new postmodern office tower at 1000 Broadway, with a set-back and white-domed crown. At its base is a four-screen multiplex with dramatic displays of neon lighting, studio spot lights, and other decorative displays that suggest in a limited way the lush ornamentation of the original theater on this site. The Fox Theater, 833 SW Broadway, was very recently demolished, after standing empty and unused for several years. Its floridly embellished ticket office used to stand in the entry, suggesting the fanciful delights to be found within. During the 1960s and 70s, as movie audiences shifted to suburban theaters, those along Broadway Street went to sleep.

Broadway is coming to life once again, partly with evening crowds from nearby hotels, including the Hilton, a bland neo-Miesian glass box of 1963 by SOM, set on a high blank podium which recently underwent a thorough postmodernization, however, that considerably enlivened the streetscape. On Broadway at Salmon Street is the Heathman Hotel, a stylish hotel originally built in 1927, designed by De Young & Foald, which has recently been thoroughly renovated and upgraded, making it one of the most upscale in the city.

Next to the Heathman is the lavish and spacious Paramount, now Portland, Theater, a design of the well-known movie palace architects, the Rapp Brothers, built in 1927-28. The theater and hotel were designed as a unit and the theater wraps around the hotel, with the soaring French Baroque-inspired lobby running along Madison, and the auditorium behind the hotel. Both hotel and theater are covered with a dark buff-colored brick with matching terra cotta trim. The broad blank walls of the theater auditorium facing Park Avenue are broken up into decorative panels outlined by shaped brick and terra cotta, and enlivened by diagonal diaper patterns laid in the brick.

After careful design analysis, the Portland Theater was re-
fitted and its acoustics altered to become the 2,800-seat Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, home of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra. The position of the lobby, running along the rising grade of Main Street, allows for entrances on grade both at the lower orchestra level and at the higher mezzanine level and permits audiences to spill out onto the sidewalks on three sides during intermissions. Main Street was modified so that the street can be closed to traffic by dropping gates incorporated into the decorative sidewalk pylons, creating a pedestrian mall between the renovated theater and the adjacent performing arts center.

The renovation of the old Paramount Theater as the Schnitzer Hall was part of a ambitious program initiated in the late 1970s to build a major performing arts center at this location. The block to the south of Main Street, owned by the Congregational Church, was leased and the L-shaped portion not occupied by the church was cleared. **The Portland Performing Arts Center**, built 1983-86, was designed by BOORA (Broome, Oringdolph, O'Toole and Rudolph and Associates) of Portland in a postmodern idiom, using brick of various colors to complement the renamed Portland Theater across the Street; moreover, several of the horizontal string courses reiterate moldings in the Congregational Church on Park Avenue. The center incorporates two smaller theaters seating 900 and 450 people, so designed as to accommodate various performance arrangements, as well as spacious lobbies and support spaces. Aglitter at night with hundreds of incandescent lights in its glass-walled lobbies, the Performing Arts Center, together with the refurbished marquee of the theater, light up this section of Broadway and make it, once again, Portland's "Great White Way."

Behind the performing arts center is the **South Park Blocks** area. As the city expanded westward from the Willamette River Banks, in 1852 a strip of 25 narrow blocks was set aside between two more closely spaced streets — Park and Ninth Avenues — to form a linear park extending the length of the city. At first called "the boulevard," it was inadvertently split in 1871 when blocks just south of Burnside were sold off, resulting in the five treelined North Park Blocks and the twelve elm-canopied South Park Blocks. By the 1860s and after, this green spine became the center of one of the most desired residential areas and, hence, an area where churches, clubs, and public buildings began to cluster as well. At the far north end the **Arlington Club**, established in 1867, built its present home in 1910. If the park had to be inter-
ruptured here, this was at least a fitting terminus.

The Park Blocks have undergone changes over time, including the planting of the towering elms, and the introduction here and there of major pieces of sculpture. Hence, it has acquired over the years much of the feeling of Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, which perhaps inspired it. At the far north end, facing the portal of the Arlington Club, the diminutive Benson Plaza was laid out in 1959, incorporating one of the lumberman’s fountains. At the southern end of this park block is Rebecca at the Well, a fountain by Oliver Barrett and Clark Linde, 1926. In the next park block to the south is George Water’s bronze Abraham Lincoln of the same year. The east side of the block is dominated by the imposing tower of the Congregational Church, 1891, a basalt building combining certain High Victorian Gothic elements with Richardsonian Romanesque details, designed by Portland architect Henry Hefty. The Gothic character is evident in the sharply pointed arches and windows, but Richardson’s influence is seen in the rough masonry, the grouped and recessed entry arcade, and the checkerboard limestone and basalt pattern over the entrance. The distinctive tower, with its seemingly top-heavy crown, is visible from many parts of the city even today and must certainly have been a major landmark when first built.

To the west of the Lincoln sculpture is the high-shouldered bulk of the Masonic Temple, 1924, designed by Fred Frisch of the firm Sutton & Whitney. Using brown brick and cast stone, a decorative trim material nearly as popular as terra cotta in the 1920s, Frisch is said to have based his design on King Solomon’s temple. Although a private club, this was a building well known to many Portlanders of both sexes since it served as the annual venue for high school proms and was home for many years to the Portland Rose Festival. After the Masons moved out in 1994, the building was acquired by the Portland Art Museum and has become the north wing of that institution.

The park block between Madison and Jefferson is enlivened by the heroic and plucky equestrian bronze of Theodore Roosevelt, Rough Rider, 1922, by New York sculptor A. Phimister Proctor. This block is flanked by two major humanistic institutions, housed in buildings from the beginning and the later periods of architect Pietro Belluschi. To the west is the low red-brick and creamy white travertine-trimmed Portland Art Museum, 1931-32, a subdued design that originally was intended to be a Georgian red
brick building recalling the recently finished Fogg Museum at Harvard University. The design was restudied and reduced in historic detail, bit by bit, until the present modern design emerged. This, the first major independent design by Belluschi, was also the first museum of art in the United States to be deliberately modern and non-historicist in design, preceding E. D. Stone’s Museum of Modern Art in New York by eight years. Belluschi made later additions to the museum and its art school, 1938 and 1968, subtly enlarging on his original modern idiom. Avoiding windows for its major painting galleries, Belluschi employed rooftop light monitors with Venetian blinds to bring in reflected light.

Across the Park Blocks to the east is the Oregon History Center which fills three-quarters of the block. The first portion of the center to be built was the cubic mass of cast concrete at the southwest corner, 1965-66, designed by Robert Frasca of the Wolf-Zimmer partnership, in consultation with Belluschi whose services were requested by the building's major donors. With the growth of the History Center — which includes the Oregon Historical Society museum, library, press, and bookstore — the center expanded in 1989 into the adjoining nine-story Sovereign Hotel, a Georgian style red brick and glazed terra cotta building of 1923 by Carl L. Linde. The blank west and south walls of the renovated hotel were painted with full-height trompe-l'oeil murals designed by Richard Haas and painted by a team of artists from Portland, New Orleans, and Providence, Rhode Island. The west mural depicts Lewis & Clark’s “Corps of Discovery,” while the south mural refers to Oregon’s early settlement.

On the northwest corner of Jefferson and Sixth Avenue is the University Club, 1913, a Jacobean brick building by Whitehouse and Fouldhoux. Across the street, on the southwest corner of Jefferson and Sixth Avenue, is the large Oregonian Building, 1945-48, another major post-war work of Belluschi. Filling the entire block, the building once housed the administrative and editorial offices of the region’s largest circulation newspaper, a radio studio, and the presses for the paper on the lowest floor. Built with a reinforced concrete frame, it is sheathed in warm red agate granite slabs on the ground floors, with Indiana limestone above. As in the nearly contemporaneous Equitable Building, large sheets of green-tinted glass were set in aluminum sashes. On the east side, these huge windows originally allowed for a full view of the presses on the floor below.
# Government Area

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<td>Koin Center-1984</td>
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<td>Justice Center-1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Standard Insurance Plaza-1963</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>First Interstate Bank-1972</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Multnomah County Courthouse-1909</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>U.S. Courthouse-1930</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Portland City Hall-1895</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lownsdale Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pacwest Center-1984</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Terry Schrunk Plaza</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Federal Courthouse-1997</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Hoffman Columbia Plaza-1962</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Federal Building-1975</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Chapman Square</td>
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BUILDING at the END of the OREGON TRAIL
Portland, Oregon
Government Area

One further district which may be of interest because of its concentration of government buildings and office skyscraper blocks that rose in the years after World War II lies a few blocks east of the South Park Blocks. A tour of this area may begin just south of the Pioneer Courthouse on Fifth Avenue. (Visitors may take the bus free in the fareless zone from two blocks east of the Benson Hotel on Fifth Avenue [one way south-bound]; exit the bus six blocks south at Salmon Street.)

On the blocks between Fifth and Sixth Avenues rise four successive signature office towers. The relatively small size of Portland blocks makes it quite feasible for a corporation to occupy an entire block, allowing generous setbacks from the streets and opening the surrounding space as public park terraces. The northernmost of this group is the 23-story Orbanco Building, 1980, by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Next in line to the south is the Standard Insurance Plaza Building, 1963, also by SOM, the first to incorporate the set-back tower form in a plaza, the better to advertise its corporate image. The block west of the Standard Insurance Plaza is filled by the restrained Art Deco/Classical U.S. Courthouse, 1930-31, by Morris Whitehouse, with a delightful lobby restored in 1984 by Allen, McMath & Hawkins. Continuing the row of corporate towers is the Pacwest Center, 1984, 1211 SW Fifth Avenue, headquarters of the Pacific Western Bank. A design of Hugh Stubbins with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, this building employs horizontal bands of aluminum and glass with softly rounded corners. This group concludes with the what is now called the Hoffman Columbia Plaza, 1300 SW Sixth Avenue, originally built in 1962-65, to house the Equitable Savings and Loan after it sold Belluschi’s earlier building of 1945-48. This new building was also by Belluschi, in association with Wolf-Zimmer of Portland. Occupying the entire block, it consists of a rather classical upper block, sheathed in pre-cast concrete panels and raised on slender columns, with a glass enclosed lobby; all this rests on a tall stone-clad podium which provides access to underground parking.

A block east and south, at Fifth and Clay, is a three-sided apartment tower, the Portland Plaza, also with an aluminum and glass skin. The easterly apartments overlook the Ira Keller Foun-
The City Hall is undergoing extensive renovations, and will continue to be used in its original function when completed. These view shows the building as it appeared in 1893 (above & below photo: AAA Slide Library, Univ. of Oregon).

tain, an urban park designed by Angela Tzvetin of the Lawrence Halprin office in 1966. Modeled in crystalline concrete masses, the fountain features a series of roaring cascades, plunges, and shallow pools in an abstracted equivalent of the mountain streams of the Cascades Mountains, a reference made all the more emphatic now that the surrounding trees and plantings have matured. This is but one of several downtown parks graced with fountains, but the only one to fill an entire city block.

The entire block northeast of the Keller Fountain is occupied by one of Portland’s major contributions to Postmodernism; the multi-use KOIN Center, 1984, designed by Robert Frasca of Zimmer Gunsul Frasca. The towering red-brick-clad volume incorporates a shopping arcade on the ground levels, the studios and offices of KOIN television in the lower floors, and apartments in the shaft above, diminished in several set-back stages and terminating in a blue pyramidal roof.

A short walk northwest to a row of plaza blocks — Terry Schrunk Plaza, Chapman Square, and Lowndsdale Square — beginning at the corner of Jefferson and Third Avenue, provides one with a good overview of several notable buildings. The most obvious, but far from the most important or aesthetically pleas-
ing, is the soaring 40-story white-marble-clad shaft of the First Interstate Bank Tower, 1972, by Charles Luckman Associates. Flanking it in the block just south of the greenery of Terry Schrunk Plaza is the low adjunct of the tower, the two buildings forming, according to critic Ada Louise Huxtable, a "monument that tacitly advertised the values of insensitivity, unsuitability, and flashy vulgarity." Somewhat obscured by the trees in Schrunk Plaza is the low Portland City Hall, 1895, by Whidden & Lewis, which brought the sober Eastern classicism of McKim, Mead & White to Portland. Employing a range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian motifs, the building is nonetheless a new design, as it most boldly demonstrated in the semicircular city council chamber which projects on the east side and is supported by a forest of rusticated pink granite columns on the ground level.

Two blocks to the south is the Multnomah County Courthouse, 1909-13, also by Whidden & Lewis as their career neared its end. In this building, too, the architects employed a sensitive classicism in a somewhat taller block with engaged Corinthian columns on its walls. Such classical and cultural allusions had totally disappeared from the architectural vocabulary, of course, by the 1960s or even 1975, when Skidmore, Owings & Merrill designed the anonymous blank box for the Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt Federal Building which rises east of Terry Schrunk Plaza, on the northeast corner of Jefferson and Third. Such characterless buildings marked the nadir of civic symbolism. This absence was dramatically corrected by two major examples of Postmodernism that rose simultaneously during 1980-83 around Chapman Square — the Portland Building to the west, between the classical City Hall and Multnomah County Courthouse, and the Justice Center directly to the east. The Portland Building, 1980-82, was the more heralded of the two because of the notoriety of the competition that was dominated by juror Philip Johnson who saw to it that the prize was awarded to his protégé of the moment, Michael Graves. Built quickly in a design-build process, the Portland Building suffered from a cramped budget that produced cramped public spaces and tawdry details in the cheapest of materials. Nonetheless it was featured in countless articles in popular newspapers and professional journals and achieved a fame that propelled its designer to the forefront of the profession. Portland was put on the architectural map with this celebrated building.
Across Chapman Square stands the other participant in this architectural dialogue, the **Justice Center**, 1983, designed by Robert Frasca of Zimmer Gunsul Frasca. A complex mix of retail space, police department, courtrooms, and jail, this is architecture that cannot be judged by its external appearance alone. (One might argue, conversely, that in the case of the Portland Building one can easily judge it by external appearances for that is, largely, all there is to it.) Frasca struggled to make this a public building equal in quality to the buildings he saw around him from the 1910s and 1920s. Avoiding the obvious historical quotations blown out of proportion by Graves, Frasca wanted to make a building solid in construction and detail, with public spaces, but one that would not shout “This is a slammer.” Hence the careful attention given to the external precast concrete panels, to the stainless steel of the railings, elevator doors, and other interior hardware, to the verde antique marble door surrounds, to the patterned terrazzo floors, and to the lobby vaulted in mirrored glass.

Another layer is being added to this Postmodern dialogue as this guide is being written, in the tall new Federal Courthouse Building designed by Kohn Pederson Fox, in association with BOORA, at the corner of Third and Salmon. Its discordant geometries and boldly arced crown suggest a Deconstructivist reference, yet the base is clad in a rough quarry-faced stone veneer that suggests nothing else so much as the massive nineteenth-century architecture of H. H. Richardson. Hence, Portland continues to rebuild itself in an often sensitive and intelligent way, retaining that character, described by Bosker and Lencek, of “an intelligently curated architectural museum.”

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**Justice Center (1983)**
*photo: S. Blashfield, 1997*

**Federal Courthouse (1997)**
*photo: S. Blashfield, 1997*
Willamette River Bridges
HAER Drawing
Drawn by: T. Croteau, G. Van Dusen, R. Koochagian, R. Villalobos, 1990
Library of Congress
Portland’s Downtown Bridges

Portland is of interest, too, for its many bridges across the Willamette, both for railroad traffic and for vehicular crossing. Altogether they represent every type of bridge construction involving moving sections. Originally Portland was on the west side of the Willamette, with only a few very small villages on the eastern shore. Movement across the river was by ferry only. Interest in bridges across the Willamette rose after 1870, and in 1887 the first Morrison bridge was built across the river. With this the development of the eastern satellite communities began in earnest. Quickly other bridges followed in a spurt of building activity that lasted until 1894. This first generation of bridges accommodated horse drawn carriages, bicycles, and pedestrians, as well as street cars. In a second flurry of rebuilding, all the bridges were replaced in the years between 1900 to 1926, the latter designs taking into account automobile traffic.

Adjacent to downtown Portland are the following bridges listed from north to south:

Fremont Bridge (11.1 miles upstream on the Willamette from confluence with the Columbia). Named for the early western explorer, John Charles Fremont, this is the newest and largest of the bridges (including approaches), built 1968-73. Technically described, this is a steel through-arch, tied-arch bridge, with an orthotropic upper deck (that is, strengthened in two directions), with two vehicular decks, each carrying traffic one way. The decks are carried by steel rods dropped from the two parallel arches. With an overall length of 2,159 feet, it has a clear span of 1,255 feet that rises 175 feet above the river, with the arches rising 381 feet above the river. A French-developed design was used that minimizes dead weight; hence the bridge, painted light green, looks strikingly light for its size. The engineers were Parsons, Brinckerhof, Quade and Douglas of New York City.

Broadway Bridge (river mile 11.7). Named for the street to which it connects, and notable for its brick-red color, this is a double-leaf Rall bascule drawbridge, with steel through-trusses. Constructed in 1911-13, this was the largest such drawbridge in the world when built. The overall length is 1,737 feet, with a center span of two operable leaves extending 297 feet and rising 90 feet from the water. The street car rails this bridge carried across the river were removed in 1940. The engineer was Ralph Modjeski of Chicago.

Steel Bridge (river mile 12.1). Named for the construction material of its predecessor built in 1888 (when wrought iron was more widely used), this second bridge (also of steel) is easily identified by its two tall black towers. It is a steel through-Pratt-truss double-deck vertical lift bridge, unique in the world. Built in 1910-12, the bridge’s main central (and movable) span is 211 feet. The double decks can be lifted independently, with the upper deck carrying vehicular traffic, and the lower deck carrying the rail lines of the Union Pacific Railroad. The lower deck is normally kept raised except for train crossings when it can be lowered 45 feet into position in only 10 seconds. The overall length is 1,624 feet. The engineers were Waddell and Harrington of Kansas City who had patented the double lift span design. When originally built, street car lines were included in the upper deck but were later removed. In 1984-86 rails for MAX, the Portland area light rail system, were reinstalled at a cost that
was five times the cost of the entire original bridge.

**Burnside Bridge** (river mile 12.4). Named for the street to which it connects, this is a steel double-leaf Strauss bascule bridge, 2,307 feet in overall length, with movable leaves spanning 266 feet and rising 64 feet above the water. Completed in 1926, this bridge was designed by the prominent eastern engineer Gustav Lindenthal and is painted yellow. It features prominent bridge-tenders' towers cantilevered out from the roadway (although these no longer house bridge tenders).

**Morrison Bridge** (river mile 12.7). Also named for the street it carries across the river, the Morrison Bridge is a steel double-leaf Strauss or Chicago-type trunnion bascule bridge, 760 feet overall, with a movable center span of 284 feet rising 69 feet above the water. Completed in 1958 from designs by engineers Sverdrup, Parcel of St. Louis with Moffat, Taylor, and Nichol of Portland, the bridge is aluminum gray in color and more utilitarian in design than the nearby Burnside Bridge. This was the site of the first Portland bridge across the Willamette built in 1887.

**Hawthorne Bridge** (river mile 13.1). Opened to traffic in December 1910, this steel through-Parker-truss bridge has five fixed spans, making for an overall length of 1,383 feet, with a vertical lift span of 244 feet resting at 53 feet above the river. The steelwork is painted yellow. Two lanes of traffic run within the Parker trusses, and two more run outside the trusses, with pedestrian walkways. The walkways afford a particularly good view of downtown Portland. The engineer was John A. L. Waddell who pioneered the use of nickel steel and the design of such vertical lift bridges.

**Marquam Bridge** (river mile 13.5). Considered by many less distinguished in design than neighboring bridges, this structure (named for an early Portland settler) was Portland's first freeway bridge across the Willamette. Completed in 1966 from designs by the Oregon State Highway Department engineers, this is a double deck bridge, a continuous steel through truss (painted gray), 1,044 feet in overall length, carried on large concrete piers. The main center span extends 440 feet, with the lower deck 130 feet above the water.

**Ross Island Bridge** (river mile 14). Considered one of the most graceful bridges across the river, this heavily used structure was completed in 1926 from designs by engineer Gustav Lindenthal. Looking much like a steel arch bridge, this is actually a cantilever design, with the trusses extended out in both directions from the main piers and anchored securely in the rock cliffs at either end. Hence the central curved half-arch segments are actually self-supporting. Named for the group of islands just to the south, this bridge has an overall length of 3,729 feet, with a center span of 535 feet rising 129 feet above the water (the great height results from high bluffs on both sides of the river). All steel work is painted a deep blue.

Several other important bridges are not visible from Portland's center, but might be of interest to engineering enthusiasts with their own transportation. At mile 16.5 upstream from the mouth of the Willamette is the Sellwood Bridge, opened in 1925, and also designed by Gustav Lindenthal. Because of its distance from Portland's industrial waterfront, it is not a movable bridge. Its four steel deck truss spans are of a modified Warren truss type, built up of open-web steel girders, painted green. Arguably the most elegant of Portland's bridges is the city's only suspension bridge located several miles north of downtown (upstream), at river mile 6, spanning the broad river between heavily wooded bluffs and hills. This is the **St. John's Bridge**, built in 1928-31 from designs by engineers H. D. Robinson and
Portland

David B. Steinman of New York City. Steinman, a former associate of Lindenthal, advocated a distinctly aesthetic approach to bridge design; his other major suspension bridges cross Mount Hope Bay near Bristol, Rhode Island (1927-29), across the Penobscot River near Bangor, Maine, completed in 1931 (the same year as the St. John's Bridge and somewhat similar in design), and across the Mackinac Straits in Michigan (1954-57). The St. John's Bridge in Portland, however, is considered by many engineering historians to be Steinman's most elegant design. Aside from advocating visual beauty, Steinman also made technical innovations, most importantly the weaving of braided steel wire rope cables, a significant improvement over the wrapped parallel wire cable first developed by Roebling; the St. John's Bridge may be the first use of such braided rope cables. The two main supporting steel towers, painted forest green, as well as the concrete piers of the approaches employ tall pointed Gothic arches and feature tall needle-like finials atop the tower piers. The curved bridge deck is stiffened with trusses below the deck surface. Because of the high bluff on the west side of the Willamette, and because of the need to accommodate the masts of ships, the deck is elevated 205 feet above the water in a graceful clear span of 1,207 feet; the overall length is 2,068 feet.4

Notes

1 The statues and fountains are only briefly noted here; for fuller treatment see the tour books: Norma C. Gicason and Chet Orloff, Portland's Public Art: A Guide and History (Portland, c. 1985); and revised edition prepared by Kristin L. Calhoun for the Metropolitan Arts Commission, 1992.
4 See the discussion of Steinman's bridge designs in David P. Billington, The Tower and the Bridge (Princeton, 1983): 141-46, where the St. John's bridge is discussed and illustrated. See also Steinman's own book, written with Sara R. Watson, Bridges and Their Builders (New York, 1941) and Donald C. Jackson, Great American Bridges and Dams (Washington, DC, 1988).
Tour Day One: Oregon City & the Northern Willamette Valley

June 12, 1997

What the individual requires..., is not a plot of ground but a place - a context within which he can expand and become himself. A place in this sense cannot be bought; it must be shaped, usually over long periods of time, by the common affairs of men and women. It must be given scale and meaning by their love. And then it must be preserved...  

-August Heckscher
The Route to Oregon City

In the early years, access to Oregon City from Portland was via the Willamette River which, over this distance of roughly 13 miles, is relatively broad and placid. The route is old U.S. Highway 99 (now State Highway 43) which runs parallel to the Willamette for a considerable distance and affords good views of the river. The highway then runs past the east end of Lake Oswego, now an upscale suburb but once the site of the state's first iron smelting works. From this point the highway swings slightly west of the river through the town of West Linn and then suddenly crosses the Willamette arriving directly in the center of Oregon City.

The bridge over the Willamette at Oregon City is one of the most technically and artistically important in the state. The Willamette River (Oregon City) Bridge, built in 1922, is one of the early major works of state highway engineer Conde B. McCullough (1887-1946) who just a few years before had worked on the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Highway. McCullough was an ardent champion of the technical possibilities of reinforced concrete in bridge design, but he also possessed a keen eye and sense of proportion. Although his best work includes bridges built in the 1930s along the Coast Highway, U.S. 101, the Oregon City Bridge is an excellent example of his work and that of his staff. This is a concrete and steel through-arch bridge of 745 feet, with a central broad elliptical arch of 360 feet. The arch is actually of steel but encased in gunnite so that it appears to be of concrete. One of the distinctive characteristics of McCullough's bridges is the seemingly over-engineered massive piers marking the points where the arch rests; their weight helps to redirect the thrust of the arch more towards the vertical. The presence of these piers is clearly marked for pedestrians and drivers by a widening of the bridge deck and especially by vertical pylons or obelisks. The piers in McCullough bridges such as this one also are given better scale by being divided into vertical panels with recessed bush-hammered surfaces. Note also the attention to detail in the arcaded railings along the pedestrian walkways.
Oregon City
Day 1 - June 12, 1997

When we build, let us think that we build for ever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone: let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for; and let us think that at time is to come when men will say, 'See! This our fathers did for us.'

John Ruskin
Note: Open houses are indicated by square markers and blackened figures. Hatched figures indicate houses discussed in the text.
Oregon City, seen here as it appeared in 1842, was the first major city of Oregon. Though soon surpassed by Portland in population, it is commonly thought of as the end of the Oregon Trail (drawing: Gaston, The Centennial History of Oregon, 1912).

**Oregon City History: John McLoughlin**

The site of Oregon City is a series of three basalt terraces where the Willamette River has cut a channel, leaving a horse-shoe-shaped ridge creating the falls. It was a favorite place of seasonal residence by native peoples for more than 3,000 years, especially when the salmon were running and attempting to jump the falls.

To early European arrivals in the area, the falls, and the potential water power, seemed a likely spot for establishing a settlement. In 1828-29, Dr. John McLoughlin, Chief Factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, and George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, claimed the site at the Falls of the Walla-mot (as it was called then), having three log houses built to fix their claim. Native residents, incensed at this incursion, promptly burned the houses. In 1832, a flour mill and sawmill were built at McLoughlin’s direction. When Methodist missionary Jason Lee arrived in the Oregon Territory in 1840 he sent some of his party to Willamette Falls to settle as well. Although McLoughlin meant to hold onto his claim at the falls for himself and for the HBC, the area was soon overrun with American settlers. In 1842, to
further strengthen his claim, McLoughlin built another sawmill at the site, and hired surveyor Sidney Moss to lay out a town which he called Oregon City.

Later that year when a bedraggled company of American settlers arrived, McLoughlin generously allowed them to settle in Oregon City (against the direct instructions from his HBC superiors). He continued to aid American arrivals who often barely managed to survive the overland trek; eventually McLoughlin's magnanimity would cost him, the HBC, and Great Britain their claim to the Oregon Territory south of the Columbia River.

The continuing flood of American settlers, who dispersed through the upper Willamette Valley, shifted the center of activity from Fort Vancouver to Oregon City. In 1843 the new American arrivals in the Willamette Valley voted to establish a provisional government under the United States and the next year the legislature granted Oregon City a charter, making it the first American incorporated city west of the Mississippi. Having paid the Americans a considerable sum to secure his claim at Oregon City, McLoughlin was now being undercut, demoted, and abandoned by the British government and the HBC for his many kindnesses to hundreds of American settlers.

Having averted a war between Great Britain and the United States by placating both sides, McLoughlin now faced a difficult decision: either be transferred by the HBC to a more remote fur-trading fort, or leave the HBC and establish himself in Oregon City. He chose the latter and in 1844-46 built a large wood-framed double-pile Federal-style house with minimal elaboration. The generously-sized rooms, some later divided into smaller chambers, provided offices for McLoughlin's shipping and exporting business.

Of Scots heritage, McLoughlin had been born near Montreal, Canada. Later, after becoming Chief Factor for the HBC, McLoughlin traveled to Toronto and even to London, so that he knew of the classical houses being built in eastern Canada and England. He may have had in mind houses like the stone house called Homewood, Maitland, Ontario, 1800-01, when he came to have his own frame house built in Oregon City. Although the McLoughlin house survives, it was moved with considerable effort in 1909 from its original location near the river to a new site on the bluff in McLoughlin Park which had originally been donated to the city as a public square by McLoughlin himself.
When McLoughlin relocated to Oregon City in January of 1946, there were about 500 permanent residents but only 80 completed houses, two churches, two taverns, a hotel, a number of shops and mills at the falls, and a newspaper, *The Oregon Spectator*, the first on the Pacific coast. A detailed sketch by British Lieutenant Edward Warre, made in 1845 as part of an inspection of the area, shows the many mills already operating at the falls. The early small buildings were replaced with larger plants, such as the Oregon City Woolen Mill, 1864-65, and the city's first paper mill the next year.

Above the falls, on the first terrace, a separate community developed called Canemah. It was originally cut off from Oregon City by a massive basalt outcrop that rose from the water to the second terrace. This smaller community, now merged with Oregon City, became the focus of boat building and shipping upriver as far as Eugene.

In the 1880s, interest in the power of the falls expanded to include electricity, and in 1889 electrical power was first transmitted to Portland, 13 miles away. Four years later the nation's first electric interurban railway began operation between Oregon City and Portland. In the meantime, residences had begun to appear on the bluff of the second basalt terrace and by the 1870s numerous houses were scattered as far east as Madison and Monroe Streets. Seventh Street had become the spine of an upscale residential district and in the 1890s was illuminated at night by electric arc lights; this area is still known as the Arc Light district. A mile or so further south were several large farms operated by the city's wealthiest and most important political leaders.

The residences of three of these survive but are not included on the tour due to logistical complications. All three date from the earliest years of settlement: the William and Louisa Holmes house, "Rose Farm," 1847; the Morton McCarver house, 1850, constructed of milled lumber shipped around the Horn; and the ambitious tetraprostyle Grecian temple residence of Captain John Ainsworth, 1850-51, who operated ships on the Willamette.
Originally the lower area of Oregon City had a number of houses alongside the commercial district. Virtually all the houses are now gone, many moved up onto the bluff (photo: M.M. Haseltine, Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

The narrow lower basalt terrace, where Oregon City began, was laid out by McLoughlin with the same grid used elsewhere but with several kinks and reorientations to fit the available space.

Oregon City Commercial District: Main Street

VAF participants have the option of two self-guided tours beginning at the unloading point at Sixth and High Streets. The official tour is of a middle-income housing area on the upper terrace called Dutch Camp, with several houses open for tours. The “unofficial” tour is on the main commercial street on the lower terrace.

The narrow lower basalt terrace, where Oregon City began, was laid out by McLoughlin with the same grid used elsewhere but with several kinks and reorientations to fit the available space. This commercial area can be reached most efficiently by using the municipal elevator just north of the foot of Sixth Street. This elevator, built in 1954, replaced the original water-powered elevator built by the city in 1913.\(^3\)

Main Street, the original commercial spine of the city, is one block toward the river at the base of the elevator. To the south lies the rim of the falls and the site of the early water mills and of Publisher’s Paper Mill today. This is where Dr. John McLoughlin’s house was located originally, where commercial
electrical generation began in Oregon, and the site of the Oregon City Manufacturing Company Building (the woolen mill).

The building on the northeast corner of Sixth and Main is the Enterprise Building (603-11 Main), which dates from about 1860. Built of brick with internal wooden supports, it first housed a dry goods emporium, then a bank, later county government offices for several years prior to 1884, and then, from about 1884 through 1919, the Weekly Enterprise. Originally its tall brick arches recalled similar early buildings in San Francisco and Portland, but it was stuccoed and embellished with pilasters and a cornice around 1920. Further remodeling was done in the 1960s.

Across the street at 616 Main is the Stevens-Howell Building, originally a wood frame building of uncertain date and given a stucco remodeling after a fire in 1919. It originally housed Louis Adams' “Golden Rule Bazaar” on the ground floor and had a meeting hall upstairs. Since the 1930s it has housed Muno’s Bakery. On the west side of the street, at 621 Main, is the Andresen Building, built in 1902 by Solomon Garde and sold in 1905 to Burmeister and Andresen who ran a watchmaking and repair business there. It has been touched little over the years and still bears its decorative brick and terra cotta diaper patterns and window surrounds.

Rising at the intersection of Seventh and Main is the approach ramp of the Oregon City Bridge, noted above, which warrants close inspection.

At 701 Main is the Barclay Building, built 1895, with small shops on the ground floor and offices above. Regrettably it has been given a stucco veneer over its brick surface, which has largely hidden from view its Ionic pilasters, garlanded frieze, and other details. Across the street, at 702-04 Main, is the classical brick and terra cotta Bank of Commerce Building, built in 1922 and designed by Portland architect A.E. Doyle. In its original form it had a terra cotta base with brick walls broken by broad projecting pilasters with simple Doric capitals. The central recessed bay originally had two beautifully executed terra cotta Ionic columns, since removed.

On the west side at 707 Main is the Masonic Building, built by the local Masonic Lodge which was founded in 1846 and is the oldest west of the Mississippi. This building was erected in 1907 with an intriguing mix of motifs including rough quarry-faced masonry forming Romanesque arches on the ground floor, patterned brick in the upper walls, superimposed multi-story pilasters capped with Ionic capitals (now gone) and a broad projecting wooden cornice (also gone).

The McCald Building, 712 Main, was built around 1925-26 of brick with terra cotta trim elements. It had a shop on the ground floor with city offices above, including the office of the city manager. Although the shop on the ground floor has been changed, the remainder of the building facade has been hardly touched.

Across the street at 713 Main is the Huntley-Draper Drug Store, built in 1892 by pharmacist E.G. Caufield and his brother Charles. Its first occupant was Caufield’s former partner, Clyde Huntley and his brother William who ran a store selling drugs, books, and bicycles. In the 1920s Harry Draper bought an interest in the business. Heavily altered on the front, the building retains some of its original detailing at the rear. Also heavily altered on its Main Street facade is the Petzold Building, 714 Main, built of brick around 1905 by Gustav Friewald and sold to Richard Petzold in 1917. Originally it had a symmetrical facade with arched doorways to either side of a broad glass-fronted shop on the ground floor. The rear and south walls have remained intact.
At 718 Main stands the Star Theater, built shortly before 1913 and leased by mill worker William Long to show silent films. Here, too, the classical details have been shorn off and the building covered with stucco. The maroon Carra glass and glass block facade of the Gardner-Caufield Building, 719-21 Main, is an addition of the early 1950s to a building originally erected in 1888 by Edwin Caufield. The Commercial Club, 722-24 Main, is so-called because of a social and civic club that occupied its upper floor. Built in 1914, it also has been encased with a later veneer, but its original slim brick piers and broad expanses of glass are essentially intact behind the current siding. At the opposite corner, 723 Main is, at its heart, the oldest building on Main Street. The Caufield Building was built shortly after 1847 by early settlers Robert and Jane Caufield as a three-bay Greek Revival commercial building of frame construction. It had a broad gable with a classical pediment. Damaged in a fire in the 1930s, the building was lowered, widened and stuccoed.

North of Eighth Street, at 802 Main, is the Weinhard Building, erected in 1895 by Henry Weinhard of Portland as an outlet for his libations. The new building rose on the site of the Oregon City Brewery which Weinhard had bought and closed down the year before. While Weinhard occupied the southeast corner space, the remainder was rented out to a succession of businesses. Also remodeled, this building nonetheless retains some of its cast iron columns and stone pilasters, and a carved decorative door frame on Main Street contains images of beer kegs and hops-like foliate motifs.

The most significant building on Main Street remains largely untouched externally; this is the Clackamas County Courthouse at 801 Main. As noted, the county offices occupied the Enterprise Building at the other end of the street in the decades before a new courthouse was erected on this site in 1884. In 1935-37 the present courthouse was built, designed by F. Marion Stokes, and paid for in part by Public Works Administration funds. Stokes’ design fuses elements of classical formalism — base, mid-section, and attic — with characteristics of the fashionable Art Deco, with projecting piers supporting decorative sculpture and zigzag patterns in the cornice-like molding and in the recessed spandrel panels between the first and second floor windows. In front of the courthouse is a plaque commemorating the progressive political reforms of resident William S. U’Ren who introduced suc-
cessful state legislation for the initiative and referendum (1902), the direct primary (1904), and the recall (1908), which together were known as "The Oregon System." The age of Oregon City, which had the first American civil government west of the Mississippi, is dramatized by the original plat for the city of San Francisco, originally filed here in 1850 and still on file in the County Clerk's Office (a duplicate is displayed in the entrance hall). Behind the present courthouse along the river was the dock and freight house of the Oregon City Transportation Company, the "Yellow Stack Line," which operated passenger and freight steamboats making daily runs between Oregon City and Portland from the 1880s into the 1920s.

The last building on this Main Street tour has, like so many others, undergone remodeling. At 805-07 Main Street is the Liberty Theater, 1920, a second facility built by William Long, owner of the smaller Star Theater a block to the south. The architects for this brick and concrete building were the local firm of William and Frederick White. This larger theater, originally
seating 1,000, had a large stage, dressing rooms, and scenery rigging for the production of vaudeville shows; it also had sound equipment installed after 1927. The wood cornice and the elaborate marquee were removed when the building was converted to commercial use in the 1960s.

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
In 1915 the first Oregon City Municipal Elevator was opened for use. This elevator provided pedestrians free transport from the lower commercial area to the residential area, approximately 90 feet above. The original elevator was constructed of wood and steel, and was powered by water until 1924 when electricity took over as the source of energy. When powered by water the elevator consumed 170,000 gallons of drinking water a day. This led to a drop in water pressure at the upper level of the city. At its peak the elevator averaged 5000 passengers a day and carried as many as 20 people per trip. In 1954 the wood and steel elevator was replaced by a concrete elevator and observation deck that still operates today.

Dutch Camp
Somewhat to the south of the more upscale Arc Light area there developed a residential neighborhood of artisans and generally middle class families which extends roughly from Monroe Street to High Street and the edge of the bluff, and runs from Fifth to Second Street. It came to be called Dutch Camp since many residents of the 1880s were of German origin. The walking tour of the McLoughlin Conservation District of Oregon City is focused here. Because of the concentration of surviving houses in this area, participants will be dropped off near the municipal elevator and allowed to wander through the upper residential neighborhood.

Along the edge of the bluff runs the McLoughlin Promenade, a narrow strip of land between the houses and the cliff edge that was given to the city by
McLoughlin in 1847. This affords an excellent view of the lower portion of the city as well as the falls. A low dam was built along the edge of the falls to increase the head of water; it also gave a more artificial edge to the falls, which were originally rough and irregular in outline. The mills near the falls today include paper and other manufacturers, dominated by the Publisher’s Paper Mill on the near, eastern side of the falls.

Several homes in the Dutch Camp and Latourette Canyon areas of the McLoughlin Historic District are open for interior tours. One of them is located a few blocks northeast of the Municipal Elevator, on Washington Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets. The property, at 815 Washington Street, is known as the **H.B. and Pearl Cartlidge House**, and was constructed c. 1912 in the Bungalow style. The house plans were designed by H.B. Cartlidge and modified for construction by William and Frederick White of White Brothers Architects.

The house has a rectangular floor plan. The roof has a main gable with cross gables on the north and south elevations. The
gable ends are stuccoed with a half-timbered look. The windows are a casement type with six-over-one. The stone foundation is basalt, hewn from the site. The stone wall in front of the property was also constructed with basalt from the building site. The house has an interesting feature of two entry doors — one that goes into the living room and the other which enters into the hall. The three-bedroom house has been partially restored by the present owners, Denyse McGriff and Rob Guttridge, who also have a small collection of Oregon City memorabilia.

Harry Bradford Cartlidge, who went by “H.B.,” was born in Illinois and attended college in Indiana. He came to Oregon City via McMinnville from Colorado. Working as the foreman for the Enterprise-Courier in Oregon City for many years, he became editor of the paper after E.H. Brodie was appointed Minister to Siam. Pearl Cartlidge was a teacher who taught in the Canby schools and was Superintendent of School there. She also taught in the Oregon City school system at Barclay Elementary.

A number of houses were constructed along the McLoughlin Promenade. However, it is noted that they are addressed on High Street. At the intersection of Sixth and High Streets is the Senator Linn E. Jones Residence at 524 High Street. This house is an excellent example of the Craftsman style bungalow in Oregon City, which is open for interior tours. The house was built c. 1910 for Linwood E. Jones, whose family immigrated to Oregon along with Sam Barlow. Jones, who was born in 1875, was a druggist in Oregon City. A popular progressive politician, he later served as city treasurer, mayor of Oregon City, and a state legislator. He was influential in the establishment of the Carnegie Library and the development and installation of the municipal elevator. Jones’ wife, Erma, was a milliner and elementary-school teacher who was active in the McLoughlin Memorial Association and a frequent lecturer at the Chataqua festivals.

The Jones House is an Oregon craftsman bungalow, with a rectangular form topped by a broad gable roof and a prominent wrap-around porch which affords views of downtown Oregon City and the Cascade peaks to the north. The

The interior of the Jones House has elaborate woodwork and built-in cabinets. A basalt stone fireplace is a distinctive feature (photo: S. Blashfield, 1997).

Jones House - Second Floor
Drawn by: Steven Blashfield
The Milne House, seen here in 1895, has had few alterations on the exterior (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

The Milne House - First Floor
Drawn By: Steven Blashfield

The Milne House has multi-light windows throughout and large front and rear gable-roofed dormers. The interior characterizes the Craftsman style with dark fir woodwork, built-in bookcases and beamed ceilings. The lighting fixtures on the first floor are original. An unusual top-nailed oak flooring on the first floor, and birds-eye maple flooring on the second floor are also original features. The fireplace, which was constructed of the basalt rubble created while blasting the house's foundation, will be featured in an upcoming book on Bungalow interiors. The present owners, Bill and Cathie Daniels, have occupied the house since 1976, carefully restoring the home.

Next to the Jones Residence, at 509 High Street, is the four-square classic box **M.D. Latourette House** built in 1914. At 503 High Street is the older Queen Anne-style **Charles Latourette House**, 1880. Further south the house numbers refer to the promenade, and at 406 McLoughlin Promenade is the **G.R.H. Miller House**, erected about 1877 by Miller, a carpenter who built a number of houses in Oregon City. In 1867 Miller built the first steps up the bluff, connecting the two terraces. A short distance further south, at 306 McLoughlin Promenade, is the small **F.A. Toepelmann House**, built about 1880. What it may lack in size it makes up for in attention to detail, with spindle-work and turned posts in the porch, patterned shingles in the gable above a medallion frieze, a sunburst panel in the arch over the second floor window, and an exposed decorative truss motif at the ridge of the roof.

At the Toepelmann House the Promenade ends and turns to join Third Street. Just beyond the northeast corner of Third and High, at 409 Third Street, is the **J.E. Lawler House** built about 1904 but reflecting the Eastlake-Stick Style popular a decade or two earlier. Next to it at 411 Third Street is the **Hiram W. Ross Residence**, dating from 1879.

At the corner of Third and Center is the **James Milne Residence**, 224 Center Street, one of the oldest houses standing in this part of Dutch Camp, having been built about 1869. It is a significant and well preserved example of Gothic Revival architecture in
Oregon, and is open for interior tours. The exterior was extensively restored by the current owner following listing on the National Register in 1979. The Milne House originally stood on two lots at Sixth and John Adams streets, a prominent location near the library and City Hall now occupied by the First Congregational Church. In 1922, to make way for an earlier church, the Milne House was moved to its current 1/10-acre site.

There is some uncertainty as to when the Milne House was constructed. Deed records indicate 1869, but local oral tradition suggests that construction occurred earlier. The builder was most likely James Milne, the first occupant of the house and a carpenter by trade. By the time of the 1870 census, Milne and his wife Mary, an Illinois native, had five young children. County records show that in 1882 James and Mary Milne sold their property at Sixth and John Adams Street to A.J. Apperson for $1,100.

The Milne House is a good example of the later phases of the Downing-Davis Gothic Revival Cottage in Oregon. A rectangular house of one and a half stories, it has a steeply pitched gable roof with brick chimneys at each end. The roof is interrupted by a tall gable dormer of extremely steep pitch with a tall lancet window (to which a transom bar was added at some later date). The facade was originally symmetrical, but was altered in the 1880s with the addition of a projecting bay window on the east side. The interior plan is organized around a central stairwell. Originally, both floors had two rooms to the east and one large room to the west. The parlor has been divided into two bedrooms, but it retains the original chimney piece. Other rooms substantially retain the original woodwork, including wainscoting, window trim and picture molding.

The Milne House survived the move in 1922 remarkably well, perhaps due to its good structural condition. The only loss was the kitchen ell, which can be seen in an 1885 photo. The kitchen ell was replaced in 1922 by a porch with a hipped roof and square posts. A small, single-story utility room was also added to the back of the house. When Fred Webster purchased the Milne House in 1979, it was his intent to convert it into a modern rental unit, but the house was then in a serious state of disrepair. Concerned about the possible loss of another historic structure, the Clackamas County Historical Society persuaded Webster that the house should be restored and nominated

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VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM
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to the National Register. Webster agreed, although he discovered to his consternation that the cost was far higher than he had been led to believe. During the interior renovation, the rotted lathe-and-plaster walls were replaced, false ceilings were removed, and the woodwork and fireplace were restored. New bathrooms, plumbing, heating and wiring were installed. The character and age of the house encouraged a careful restoration of the exterior. The walls are salt box construction, essentially solid wood without any significant air space. During restoration, vertical 2x12 boards were replaced to restore the wall structure. The siding on the south end of the house was replaced, custom-produced to match the original. The front porch deck was reinforced and replacement balusters fabricated. A picket fence was constructed to match the original, based on dimensions scaled from an 1885 photograph. Altogether, restoration took 14 months in 1978-9 and cost approximately $55,000, with much of the work done by the owner.

Three doors east of the Milne House is the Isaac Farr Residence, 518 Third Street, built about 1900, a kind of Queen Anne house sheathed in fish-scale shingles. Opposite it on the northeast corner of Third and Washington streets is the Dr. Charles A. Stuart House, built in 1902. In the same location one block
farther south, at 302 John Adams Street, is the John and Ursula Budorisch House, built about 1911.

At the next corner, fronting onto Jefferson Street is the Carl and Carrie Huth House, 221 Jefferson Street, built about 1890 in a vernacular Italianate style. About one block farther south on Jefferson (204 Jefferson) is the Frank and Annie Busch House, dating from around 1898, a good example of Oregon City vernacular Queen Anne, with spindle-work, fan motifs, patterned shingles, and brackets. Busch owned the Busch Furniture Company located in Oregon City and was one of the original incorporators of the Willamette Valley Southern Railroad, serving on its board. Besides various building projects he undertook in the business section, he also built fourteen speculative houses nearby.

At the northeast corner of Jefferson and Third is the William B. and Mary Howell House, 306 Jefferson Street, built about 1913 in a simplified bungalow idiom. Adjacent to this, at 308 Jefferson, is William's father's residence, the William H. Howell House, built about 1895. William H. Howell was superintendent and engineer for the Oregon City Water Works at the turn of the century.

The Rudolph and Augusta Seiler House is located at the corner of Madison and Third (301 Madison Street), and is open for interior tours. Rudolph Seiler, born in 1845, is believed to have emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1871. In 1880, he married Augusta Haupt in New York City. Augusta, born in 1857, was also a German immigrant. It is not known exactly when the Seilers came to Oregon. Although the family is not listed on the 1890 Census, it is clear from deed records that the Seilers had arrived in Oregon City by March of 1895. Rudolph Seiler was a designer in the Oregon City Woolen Mills. The couple had four sons, Harry, Martin, Norman, and Rudolph, and a daughter, Florence. Most of the children lived nearby; in the 1916 City Directory, Florence and Harry Seiler, a machinist, are listed as occupants of 301 Madison Street, and Martin Seiler, a plumber, lived ap-
approximately three blocks west at 311 Washington Streets.

The Seiler House has an irregular plan, with a cross-gabled roof. The spindle-work on the Madison Street gable is reported to have been added at a later date according to Kathi McMahon, the current owner of the home. It is not known whether the single story gabled wing on the right of the house and the two porches were part of the original construction or later additions. The house is finished with shiplap siding and cornerboards, and the porch is ornamented with square carved wood posts and wood scroll cut brackets. The most notable feature, however, is the cutaway bay window on the front gable. The projecting bays over the windows are ornamented with scroll cut brackets and pendants. The house was painted its current color scheme of beige and orange approximately eight years ago.

The McMahons and previous owners of the Seiler House have kept intact many of the original interior features, providing a glimpse of the house at the turn of the century. The interior walls were not finished with lathe and plaster, but with sawn vertical boards, as can be seen in the downstairs bathroom. With the exception of its globes, the chandelier in the parlor is original, as are the light fixtures in the living room and an upstairs bedroom. The parlor has retained its pocket door, which has its original hardware still intact. The parlor, which is now used as a dining room, apparently had gold flocked wall paper. When the wall coverings were taken down in an upstairs room, the owners found that Martin Seiler had signed his name several times in pencil on the wall. One can also make out the initials “J.R.S.” and the name “Norman Seiler.” The heating system has been updated using the original heating grates.

Across from the Seiler House, at 302 Madison Street, is the vernacular Italianate Mahlon E. Willoughby House, built about 1889. This may have been a speculative house, since Willoughby, who owned several properties in the city, also owned the twin of this house at 312 Madison Street. At the northern end of the block, at 818 Fourth Street, is the Rudolph and Mary Koerner House, a Queen Anne structure with fishscale shingling built about 1893. Koerner was a superintendent at the Oregon City Woolen Mills who was elected Oregon City Councilman.

On Madison Street north of the intersection with Fourth is the Otto and Luella Erickson House, 819 Fourth Street, a richly-detailed Queen Anne house built in 1900. Erickson was a mill-
wright at the Crown-Willamette works. Next to this, at 411 Madison Street, is the Judge Robert Caufield House, dating from about 1874 but with alterations, including the porch, made in the 1920s. This house was moved from northern Oregon City to this site at the turn of the century.

At 415 Jefferson Street is the Ferdinand O. McCown House, a straight-forward three-bay gabled vernacular structure built around 1874. The general severity of form, plus the wide frieze board under the roof cornice and overhang, seem to refer back to the Oregon Greek Revival. Old photographs indicate that the original porch was lighter and more Italianate in detail, but it was later rebuilt with heavier Tuscan Doric piers which reinforce the classical character of the house. Two large additions were built in the 1880s and '90s, increasing the size to 24 rooms; one addition was removed and relocated to another site in Oregon City, and the other addition burned before the end of the century. By 1900 the house had returned to its present shape but sometime between 1911 and 1925, according to Sanborn maps, the house was lifted off its foundations and rotated so that the gable faced Jefferson Street.

McCown, the original owner, was born in Kanawha County, West Virginia in 1839, and crossed the Oregon Trail in 1852. He served in the state militia during the Yakima Indian War in 1855, subsequently teaching, and then moved first to San Francisco and then Nevada where he began a career as a lawyer. McCown returned to Oregon in 1862, marrying Sarah Jane Meldrum in 1865. The next year the couple settled in Oregon City, where McCown formed a law partnership with W. C. Johnson in 1869. McCown rose to social and political prominence, serving three terms as mayor of the city, 1873-76, during which time he built this house. McCown also helped to found the Oregon City Electric Company, as well as a company to improve the historic Barlow Road.

Across from the McCown House, at 410 Jefferson Street, is the Carl and Helen Joehnke House, a Colonial Revival style building, evident in the gable returns and the large Tuscan Doric porch columns, built about 1913. On the southwest corner of Fourth and Jefferson is the Thomas and Louise Carrico House, built about 1896 with the porch added later. Thomas Carrico was a dresser employed by the Oregon City Woolen Mills. Immediately south and behind the Carrico House is the John Staat
Rental at 315 Jefferson, which was likely the rear appendage of a nearby house and removed and relocated to this site in 1914.

On the northwest corner of Fourth and John Adams Streets, at 402 John Adams Street, is the John and Martha Trembath House, built about 1890. Here, too, the porch was added later, in the 1920s. Italianate in overall detail, this house has a short Mansard-like roof with bracketed eaves. Trembath was a fish merchant in Oregon City. Immediately north of the Trembath house, at 408 John Adams Street, is the Christian Schuebel House, a bungalow built about 1927. Schuebel was a prominent attorney who served in the Oregon state legislature where he championed the rights of the workers and introduced pioneering legislation supporting workmen's compensation, limited working hours, and other measures. His law partner was William S. U'Ren, the political reformer who introduced the Oregon System.

On the northwest corner of Fourth and John Adams Streets is the Lawrence and Lena Ruconich House, a bungalow built about 1923. Ruconich was Hungarian-born and operated a restaurant in Oregon City. Across from the Ruconich House, at 612 Fourth Street, is the Johannes Vigelius House, c. 1884, another
straight-forward end-gable residence whose severe lines recall the earlier Oregon Greek or Classical Revival. The present porch appears to be a later addition. Vigelius, a German immigrant, operated a barber shop.

At 412 Fourth Street is the Richard Lundy House, built about 1895. This is a small front-gable Queen Anne residence, so-labeled because of the shingle patterns in the gable and its porch, which is recessed into the block of the house rather than being a projecting addition.

On the southwestern corner of Fifth and Center Streets is the large W.C. and Anna Witham House, 419 Center Street. This residence was built about 1921 and shows characteristics of the Prairie School, perhaps through the influence of Portland architect John V. Bennes who had trained in Chicago. Its distinctive features include the low-pitched, multi-gable roof, with broad overhanging eaves carried on exposed rafters and trimmed with a bargeboard with cusped ends. The exposed tie and collar beams of the porch were originally supported by massive piers. Witham owned a furniture store in Oregon City. Across the street to the north, at 419 Fifth Street, is the Martin and Agnes McDonough House, a Queen Anne structure built in 1896. Its elaborate details include brackets, pendants, and a signature sunburst detail at the top of the gable.

Across Center Street, at 514 Center, is the John F. Miller House, built about 1885 and moved south one lot in 1910. Miller owned a shoemaking shop in Oregon City. The site formerly occupied by the Miller house is now the location of the large Richard Petzold Residence, 504 Sixth Street. This residence is considered the best-preserved example of Craftsman detailing in the McLoughlin Historic District. The house was erected by the Von der Ahe brothers for Petzold, a butcher who operated a meat market and several businesses in Oregon City for many years. Next to the Petzold house, at 512 Sixth, is another John F. Miller House, another severe three-bay front-gable residence. Here, too, the broad frieze board under the roof cornice recalls the earlier Oregon Greek Revival. Built sometime between 1879 and 1892, the house has a porch with ornate and delicate post brackets.

One block to the southeast, at 603 Sixth Street, is the Mortie Stevens House, a foursquare classic box built in 1908 whose porch is supported by paired Ionic columns. This large residence
is now the home of the Clackamas County Historical Society.

Two blocks away, at 610 Jefferson Street, is the William and Winifred Andresen House, a large foursquare Craftsman house built in 1914. Andresen was a partner in Burmeister and Andresen who operated a jewelry and optical shop at Seventh and Main. The exterior includes such standard bungalow features as narrow clapboard siding that swings outward at the base of each floor, broad roof overhangs, low pitched roofs, and roof dormers with their own broad overhangs. Among the most distinctive features are what appear to be projected joists with shaped ends, which support a curved roof over the recessed entry porch, as well as slightly cantilevered upper window bays, both square and rounded. The curved joist ends are further emphasized today due to being painted a lighter color than the darker surmounting molding and upper floor. The rhythm of the projecting joists is picked up in the standard bungalow detail of the projecting roof rafters.

Near the Andresen House is the Atkinson Memorial Congregational Church, the terminus of the Dutch Camp tour and the last of the buildings open for interior visits. Located at the corner of Sixth and John Adams streets, directly to the south of the Carnegie Library, the church is easily identified by its peachy-pink stucco exterior and unusual form. It was originally known as the First Congregational Church of Oregon City and was built in 1924-25. While appearing somewhat irregular, with a large rounded bay and several smaller projecting elements, the plan is, in fact, a symmetrical composition. The church was designed by Willard F. Tobey, a Portland architect best known for his many churches in Oregon, several of which exhibit a similar diagonal interior axis. Tobey developed this scheme in collaboration with the minister of the Sunnyside Congregational Church in Portland, which, in 1909, was Tobey’s first ecclesiastical commission. His design for the Oregon City church was intended to be a departure away from the High Victorian Gothic style and towards a more modern twentieth century style. He accomplished this by eliminating the long nave of the traditional cruciform plan, instead designing a radial auditorium which resulted in a closeness between the pulpit and congregation.

To further express this modern approach, the church building was constructed of poured concrete with a sand coat finish. Originally the building had two towers: an octagonal tower 66 feet tall, and a shorter, square tower which was removed in 1958. Both were built of galvanized iron and wood. The building boasts fifteen stained-glass windows by the Povey Brothers Studio, a firm that was founded in Portland in 1888 and designed windows for at least seven other churches in Oregon.

This congregation is said to be the oldest in the state, having originated in 1844. The building is named in honor of the Reverend George Henry Atkinson, a graduate of Dartmouth and Andover Theological Seminary who arrived in Oregon from Boston in 1848. Atkinson was instrumental in the establishment of Tualatin Academy, later Pacific University, and later served as the first Superintendent of Schools in Clackamas County.

Behind the Atkinson Church, on Jefferson Street, is a simplified Queen Anne structure built about 1905, the George Randall House, at 508 Jefferson. This has cross-gabled roofs, with the long sweep of the cross gable extending to cover the corner porch. Various patterns are found in the exterior shingle sheathing. Its twin, also owned by Randall, is located around the corner on Fifth Street.
Canemah\textsuperscript{10}  

The route out of Oregon City is on old U.S. Highway 99E, which runs along the east shore of the Willamette for several miles and affords a good view of present-day activity on the river. Visitors today need to imagine the river full of substantial steamboats that served for years as the major mode of transportation of heavy and bulky goods, all the way from Portland near to Eugene, almost 100 miles to the south. Before the first locks were built to allow boats to pass around the falls, goods were off-loaded and the freight moved over a portage road of about one mile, and then reloaded on other boats. Smaller boats could be physically lifted out of the water with block and tackle, moved to the other side of the falls, and lowered back into the water. During 1868-73 a set of four locks, each of ten-foot lift, were built against the western shore; the operation was privately owned by the People's Transportation Company but eventually passed to the Portland, Railway, Light and Power Company. In 1915 the lock system was purchased by the Federal government and has since been managed and maintained by the U.S. Corps of Engineers which has enlarged and improved the lock system.

Most of the steam vessels that plied the upper Willamette were built in a separate town that grew up one mile south of the Oregon City municipal elevator. The area had been the site of a Kalapooya village called \textit{kanim}, meaning "boat or canoe place." Recognizing the commercial potential as a transfer point of its location immediately above the falls, Absolom Hedges, recently from Ohio, staked the site as his Donation Land Claim in 1844 and began laying out what he called Falls City. For nearly six years the town was physically isolated from Oregon City by a steep basalt cliff that rose from the river's edge. In the early 1850s the cliff was blasted away to create a ledge for the portage road between the two towns. Falls City prospered as a boat building site, and with growth the original name faded as Canemah, derived from the original Indian name, became more commonly used.

Of the 36 boats built in Canemah over the years, the first three were constructed as early as 1851, the last in 1878. Repeated disastrous floods (the last one in February 1996) have removed industrial and commercial buildings at the waters' edge, but houses on the higher areas of the river bank have survived. Many of these were built by ships captains or others who prospered due to the shipping business. The threatened demolition of one of these old houses in the mid-1980s galvanized the community in support of preservation; in 1986 the entire area was designated a National Historic District.

The buildings that can be seen along Highway 99E (McLoughlin Boulevard South) include these examples:

\textbf{316 S. McLoughlin Blvd}: the Samuel L. and June Stevens house, c. 1867, a classical residence apparently built originally by John Cason from Missouri.

\textbf{402 S. McLoughlin Blvd}: the Capt. Sebastian Miller residence, c. 1862, also a classical residence moved here from its original location closer to the river.

\textbf{416 S. McLoughlin Blvd}: the E.B. Fellows house, c. 1867, a good example of the far-flung influence of the Downing-Davis "Gothic" cottage with its steep roof pitch and dramatic central gable with tall lancet window. Fellows, originally from Ohio, owned and operated a steamer on the Willamette.

\textbf{502 S. McLoughlin Blvd}: the Max Telford House, c. 1917, a Craftsman bungalow with a distinctive brick and stone chimney.
Oregon City

507 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the Albert and Mary Stokes House, c. 1903, a vernacular cottage built by a Canemah grocer that remains virtually intact.

515 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the A.F. Stokes House, c. 1907, a double-hip roof house of unusual shape built for Stokes who was also a Canemah grocer.

604 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the Capt. James Wilson House, c. 1868, another example of the Downing-Davis “Gothic” cottage, since expanded to the rear.

616 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the C.F. Kent House, c. 1870, built by the owner, a carpenter from Maine.

708 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the Capt. John Cochrane House, c. 1860. Now altered with original details obscured, this was also a Gothic cottage with heavily-scaled scroll-cut bargeboards that once ran under the gable edge and under the eaves.

816 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the Isaac Beals House, c. 1875 but heavily modernized in the 1920s. Although Beals was not the original owner, he owned and operated a grist mill further south at New Era where we will turn east towards Mulino and Molalla.

902 S. McLoughlin Blvd: the John and Catherine Scott Coburn House, c. 1865, another Gothic cottage which bears door and window hood moldings derived from Downing’s books (some altered during later renovation).

Notes


3 Information on the Oregon City downtown commercial district adapted from:

Erigero, Pat, and Debora McLaughlin, “Historic Oregon City Main Street Walking Tour” (Oregon City, 1983).

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Reprints of Clackamas County History (as pamphlets):

Big Industry Comes to Willamette Falls (Portland, OR)

History of Willamette Falls

1.1.26  BUILDING at the END of the OREGON TRAIL
Portland, Oregon
The "Firsts" of Clackamas County

4Text on the Cartledge House by homeowner Denyse McGriff.
5Research and draft text by Elizabeth Mickle. Information on the Milne House drawn from the following:

City of Oregon City, Oregon. Dutch Camp: McLoughlin Historic District Neighborhood Walking Tour, (Oregon City, 1982).

Clackamas County deed records from 1882. Oregon City, OR.


Jones, Fran. "Old House Bought for Rental Winds Up on Historic Register," The Oregonian (January 27, 1981), Portland, OR.


Hoffman, Mary. "Milne House to Open," The Enterprise Courier (September 21, 1983) Oregon City, OR.


Swender Blue Print Co., New Map of Oregon City and Vicinity, Portland, Oregon, undated.


United States Census of Clackamas County, 1870. [Typed from microfilm] Clackamas County Family History Society, Oregon City, OR, undated.
Oregon City


Webster, Fred. Photographs, drawing and restoration notes for the James Milne House, Oregon City, OR 1978-79.

Research and draft text by Dawn Mankowski. Information on the Seiler house drawn from the following:


Deed Record, March 15, 1895. Clackamas County Courthouse.

Holman, Pace, and Hankins Funeral Records, May 1933. Clackamas County Historical Society.

McMahon, Kathi, interviewed by D. Mankowski, December 7, 1996.

Oregon City Inventory of Historic Properties, May 1982.

Sanborn Map, 1911.

United States Census Records, 1890. Clackamas County Historical Society.

Researched by Corri Jimenez.

Researched by Chris Furney.

Information on the Atkinson Memorial Church drawn from Herbert Beals, the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1982.

Information drawn from Bert and Margie Webber, Oregon City . . . (Oregon City, 1993) and Pat Erigero, "Oregon City's Canemah Historic District," Oregon City Planning Department, Oregon City, 1986 (self-guided tour map).
Molalla
Day 1 - June 12, 1997

"(This) must give our readers a fair idea of the courage and determination necessary in this early day to face the dangers and endure the discomforts of a half year's journey, with oxen and wagons as the means of travel, over the desolate plains and through rugged mountains that lay wide and dark between the Missouri and Willamette rivers, a distance of a round two thousand miles."

Rev. H. K. Hines
An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, 1893
The western bands of the Molalla Indian tribe are the source of the name of this community (though they called themselves the Latiwe).

The town of Mollala developed along the route of the train traveling through the Willamette Valley, but was actually platted much earlier (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

Molalla

A few miles south of Oregon City the tour route leaves the river and turns east at the town of New Era, allegedly so-named because the railroad once terminated at Parrot Creek, next to Beals' grist mill, and its termination here was viewed by locals as marking a new era in river freight traffic. New Era road eventually joins State Highway 213 which swings in a gentle arc south from Oregon City, curving west, eventually reaching Salem. The highway passes through a gently rolling agricultural section of the valley drained by the Molalla River, once a hunting ground of the Molalla, Kalapooya, and Klamath tribes. The western bands of the Molalla (they called themselves the Latiwe), who ranged across the eastern slope of the valley up into the foothills of the Cascades, eventually succumbed to the introduced European diseases and to military campaigns. They ceded their lands around Oregon City to the Federal government in May of 1851. Soon after, in 1856, the remnants of the tribe were forced onto the Grande Ronde Reservation.

Highway 213 passes through Mulino, originally called
Howard’s Mill because of the grist mill on Milk Creek first built there in 1851 by Richard Howard. This one and-a-half story building, with a massive hewn frame, remains relatively intact. Additions built in 1890 accommodated the growth of milling operations (and the village too, which grew with it). Against the front wall three grain bins were built above an open loading dock; the lean-to added against the south wall served as a warehouse and housed the Mulino Post Office for seventy years. Across the road from the mill stand remnants of three structures from the 1880s that housed mill-related activities: the blacksmith shop, a grain warehouse, and the home of Charles Howard, son of the mill’s first owner. Milling ceased in 1958, although the building continued to be occupied. There have been proposals for restoration of the mill as a partially-operating historical exhibit and museum. The current name of the town, a corruption of the Spanish molino (mill) was adopted when the post office was established in 1882. A few miles south of Mulino lies Molalla whose first Euro-American settler, William Russell, made a land claim in 1840. The U.S. Post Office of Molalla was established as early as 1850 (although at a site closer to present-day Liberal, three miles north).

The arrival of the train in Molalla was marked with a large celebration by the town (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).
The Dibble House is built with hand-prepared timbers and lumber. Construction dates to the late 1850s (photo: Philip Dole, 1967).

Horace Dibble House

The story of Horace L. Dibble is a virtual case study of the early pioneers who came over the Oregon Trail. Horace Dibble was born in Madison County, New York, in 1815; his forebears for four generations had been from Windsor, Connecticut. In 1837 Horace’s father, Thomas, moved the family to Van Buren County, Iowa, where Thomas helped formulate plans for Iowa’s statehood. In Iowa Horace met and eventually married Julia Ann Sturges. Oregon Fever struck the couple and persuaded them, now with three children, to make the trek to Oregon in 1852. They arrived in Oregon in September of that year, and in that same month filed a Donation Land Claim. This original land claim was in Township 4s, Range 1e, Section 34 east of the Willamette Meridian, in what is now the town of Molalla, Oregon. This claim, however, does not contain the Dibble home. The house was built on land Dibble had came across in 1858 while searching for runaway oxen. He happened on a prairie knoll that the Native

The Dibble House has a salt box from, one of the few examples in Oregon (photo: Philip Dole, 1967).
This photo shows the fireplace at the time of restoration (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

Americans had kept burned off. Finding it particularly attractive, Dibble either bought or traded his original claim for it; it is on this land — the Larkin DLC, Township 5s, Range 2e, Section 17 — that the house came to be built. Dibble then traded 119 acres of this newly acquired land to a carpenter by the name of Phillips for the services of constructing the house. Phillips appears to have been assisted by a mister Bagley. There is some contradiction regarding who was the builder of the Dibble House. One record indicates that Phillips was given land as payment for building the house. Other records name Bagley. Ina Dibble, Horace and Julià Dibble’s granddaughter, did not recall the name Phillips and believes it may be a mistake; nor does she believe the payment was in the form of the original Donation Land Claim. Land records partially support Ina Dibble’s recollection that the land was farmed in the Dibble name during the mid 1860s.

Whatever those circumstances, it seems more certain that the house took four years to build, 1859-62, as is indicated in various records and by Miss Dibble. Few farmers were able to construct a lumber home before six or more years of improvements to their claim, and Dibble arrived in poor health after the journey across the Oregon Trail, an illness from which he never
fully recovered. As a result, Dibble relied heavily on his sons to do most of the farm work growing wheat and other grain crops as well as dairying and making cheese. This extended period of construction may also have contributed to the confusion regarding the builder.

The completed house is a rare example of the seventeenth-century New England Saltbox style, unique in the Willamette Valley. Dibble’s Eastern heritage may account not only for the house’s traditional design but also its conservative mode of construction. The Dibble House employs a hewn heavy timber frame for its principal structural members (roughly 7 by 7 inches square), with the rest of the lumber sawn, including studs (4x4 and 3x4 inches), siding, and flooring. The hand-hewn posts, round pole rafters, and sawn studs are visible in the unfinished lean-to section over the kitchen and small connecting room in the back of the house.

The two-story east elevation contains a pair of windows to one side of the entry door, and a single window on the other side. An entry portico is supported by two columns. Sheathed in sawn horizontal weatherboards (5-1/4 inches to the weather), the house

This detail shows the condition of the eave returns in 1967 (photo: Philip Dole, 1967).
still has its original six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. There is a simple box cornice, with a slight frieze return.

The divisions of rooms on the ground floor are unequal and asymmetrical. The southeast room, the living room, contains the front door and a fireplace. The southwest room, assumed to be a sitting room, is small and contains the other fireplace. The northwest room is the kitchen, and contains an outside door and a small chimney supported on the inside of the west wall. The kitchen ceiling has remnants of a stovepipe hole which has been sealed. The northeast room is a bedroom. These rooms have been restored to their original appearance. A narrow and steep enclosed stairway from the ground floor to the upper floor, running east to west, connects the living room to one of the upper bedrooms. The second floor contains two bedrooms in the front part of the house, and the unfinished lean-to attic in the rear.

Modifications made when the house was rented, from the early part of the century to 1969, include modern cupboards on the north wall of the kitchen and an electric furnace installed in 1976. The Molalla Area Historical Society now owns and maintains the house. It was lived in by Horace and Julia Ann Dibble until their deaths in 1899 and 1904, respectively (Ina Dibble believes this to be inaccurate, believing her grandmother died first). The house was rented until it was bought by Ruth McBride Powers in 1969, who had it restored the next year by Lyle Warren, a Salem carpenter she had “trained” and used in many of her restoration projects.
Fredrick Von der Ahe House

Behind the Dibble house is the Fredrick Von der Ahe house, a somewhat later building moved to this location in 1972. In 1847, at the age of 18, Fredrick Von der Ahe migrated to New York from Hilla, a small town in Westphalia, Germany. Employment opportunities drew Von der Ahe westward to Blue Island, Illinois, where for five years he worked for the Rexford family and saved his earnings. As Von der Ahe's English improved, he learned more about Oregon and the opportunities there, and decided in 1852 that he would take his savings of S72 and cross the Oregon Trail. At first he traveled with another family, but after a falling-out at Fort Hall he set out on foot and reached Oregon City two weeks before they arrived.

To make money after his arrival, Von der Ahe worked at Pope's Hardware store in Oregon City. It was not until five years later, in 1857, that he had earned enough money ($600 in gold) to buy a 320-acre farm in Carus, a community to the southwest of Oregon City, a Donation Land Claim that had not been improved in accordance with the terms of the original land grant. After the purchase was finalized in August, 1857, Von der Ahe sent for his
Molalla
c
childhood sweetheart in Germany, Marie Louisa Kleine, who arrived in Oregon by 1858; they were married that same year.

The Von der Ahe House as it appears today was not started until seven to ten years later, 1865-68, when the couple could afford the expense. It was completed on the family property a few miles north of the neighboring town of Carus. Abandoned when the family built a new house years later, it was left to the elements but acquired by the Molalla Historical Society, moved to its present location, stabilized, and partially restored in 1972. The National Register of Historical Places nomination lists the designer/builder simply as a carpenter by the name of Kirk, and it is clear that a professional builder with a crew, not the owner alone, built the majority of pioneer homes in the area.

The Von der Ahe house is of classic “box” or plank construction, in a plain Federal style, with sawn horizontal weatherboards nailed over the vertical supporting planks. It has plain cornerboards and simple moldings around the doors and windows. In the attic, formerly a finished room, some of the interior horizontal wall boards have been removed, revealing the broad vertical structural planks, about 1-1/2” thick and of varying widths, but nailed up with spaces between them. Above them is the large top plate, whose lower outer edge is rabbeted to receive the vertical planks. It is a good example of rural Oregon construction from the period of 1860-1870s.

The house has two full stories, with a gable roof, boxed cornice returns, blank end walls, and a central chimney. The five-bay facade has six-over-six double-hung windows, with the upper story windows being shorter than those on the lower floor. The windows are flanked with wooden blinds. The house has been altered, so that the original floor plan is uncertain.6 Partitions, known to be vertical board planks set into notches in the floor and ceiling, have been removed, although some notches are still visible. It appears, however, that the front door opened into a large room which contained a fireplace, the chimney of which straddles the ridge to the right of center. The second floors layout is used today for storage for the Molalla Historical Society.

One of the most interesting aspects of the house is the separate single-story “summer kitchen” directly to the east of the house. It is in the same style as the larger house, and contains a stove and storage cabinets. It has doors on all four sides. The interior is original, with a painted wainscot grained in imitation of oak but likely constructed of cedar or fir. Judging from period photos, the summer kitchen is located roughly in the same area now with respect to the main house as it was originally—in back, to the right of the main structure. These photographs also confirm the color of the house to be light, with darker shutters.
Notes

4 Research and draft text prepared by Grant Crosby and Janet Hicks.
6 Ina Dibble's recollections were recorded on June 6, 1974 in an interview for the Historic Places Nomination.
7 The story of Ruth McBride Powers warrants an essay itself. An ardent admirer of Oregon's oldest architecture at a time when the preservation movement had yet to gain any strength in Oregon, she gradually purchased numerous irreplaceable buildings, critical to understanding the territory's early history. She stabilized them and undertook restoration as she interpreted the concept.
8 Research and draft text on the Von der Ahe house prepared by Grant Crosby and Janet Hicks. Many spellings of Von der Ahe exist. James Norman, in *Portland Architectural Heritage*, uses Vonder Ahe The National Register of Historic Places nomination form also uses Vonder Ahe. Vera Luhy Criteser, in an article for the *Enterprise Courier* refers to him as Christian Fredrick Von der Ahe, which would be correct German if the name derives from long forgotten title of nobility (Vera Luhy Criteser, "The Heroic and Romantic Story of Fred Vonder Ahe", *Enterprise-Courier*, Oregon City, March 27, 1959). Much of the early history of Christian Fredrick Von der Ahe's early life in American is substantiated through an interview Ms. Criteser had with Von der Ahe's great grandson, Eldon Evans. Evans, and his family still lived in the residence at the time of the interview, although they had added a second structure to the property that was not moved with the original structure.
10 Interview with Professor Philip Dole, University of Oregon, School of Architecture, July 15, 1975; Norman, *Portland's Architectural Heritage*, p. 34.
Yoder
Day 1 - June 12, 1997

"But the daily march over the dusty and sun-browned leagues, the night's weird bivouac under the stars, the fording of rushing rivers, the ascent and descent of precipitous mountains, the lone camp-guard, the thundering stampede of horses and oxen ... these must have been seen and experienced to be understood as they existed in reality from 1841, when emigration began, to 1860, about which time the pioneer emigrant era of Oregon may be considered to have closed."

-Rev. H.K. Hines
An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, 1893
Yoder Community

Key  Building                      | Key  Building
1    Jonathon Yoder House (1889)  | 6    Albert Yoder House
2    Yoder Creek                  | 7    Louis G. Wrolstad House
3    Yoder Mill                   | 8    Yoder Store
4    Aaron Yoder Farmhouse        | 9    Abandoned Rail Line
5    Schuknecht Farmhouse         |
The Yoder Mill has evolved and changed over the years with new technology, but the Mill has continued in operation for over 100 years (Photo: Courtesy of the Yoder Family).

Yoder Lumber Mill

The tour route continues five miles to the west of Molalla and one mile south to the small town of Yoder and the site of one of the area’s last small family-owned-and-operated lumber mills, once a business type found in countless small towns scattered through the Willamette Valley.

The cutting of trees and the production of lumber has been a component of Oregon’s economy from the earliest period of Euro-American settlement. Many later Oregon residents, such as Simon Benson and John Yeon, Sr., made considerable fortunes in this industry. Today the lumber industry continues, now confronted with diminishing log supplies and pressure from environmental activists. Several large lumber plants, owned by absentee multinational corporations, operate throughout the state, but most of the small, family-run operations have closed and their unique antiquated equipment bought and removed or scrapped. One such mill that has survived despite the many challenges is the Yoder Mill in the town of Yoder. Its success has rested in the production of special dimension lumber used locally in special purpose-built structures, and especially in preservation projects where modern-day dimension lumber is unsuitable. Two sites to be visited later today — the Case Farm and the McDonald Farm — have buildings restored in part using stock specially milled at the Yoder Mill.
The Yoder Family

In 1873 Gideon Lantz and his wife, Katherine Yoder Lantz, came to Oregon from Illinois. Katherine’s letters home to her family persuaded other Yoders to journey west as well. Before long, a sufficient number of Yoders had arrived to make the beginnings of a small Yoder community. Jonathan S. Yoder, Katherine’s brother, came to the Willamette Valley in 1888, and started the lumber mill. Later, William H. Yoder, one of Jonathan’s sons, operated two brick-making kilns, and sold the brick locally for the construction of chimneys, foundations and wells. He also built or helped build a number of the structures in the area. Other family members, such as Jonathan’s sons, Albert Yoder and Aaron Yoder, operated farms in the area, growing produce and raising livestock.

In 1889, the Yoder Mill provided lumber to build the Yoder School District’s one-room schoolhouse. Asa J. Yoder was the first school master and was also the superintendent of the Smyrna Church. The church began services by meeting in members’ homes, then moved to the schoolhouse. In 1891, a church was built on donated land with logs cut by Yoder’s sawmill. William Yoder and Iddo Hein made the pews. The church is still in existence, but has changed names and denominations over the years.

In 1915, Jonathan Yoder offered to build a general store with lumber from his mill if someone could be found to run it; he felt that since the railroad now came through Yoder, it should have a store. Louis Wrolstad took on the task, bringing general merchandise with him from a family-run business in Barlow. Soon after “the Yoder community built a warehouse and stock pens for shipping farm produce and lumber to market by rail... The railroad also delivered gravel to the Yoder area for paving roads, which eventually replaced the railroad. The warehouse was so successful that a few years later an addition was built.” The warehouse, located across the street from the Yoder Store, still stands but is currently not in use.

In the early years of this century, Craftsman bungalows were popular throughout the area and several were built by Yoder family and community members; the mill provided much of the material.

The Yoder family has had quite an impact on its namesake community. They built and still operate the two major commercial structures in town, the Yoder Mill and the Yoder Store. They
are involved in running a number of local farms, and make up a fair percentage of the community's population. When the main thoroughfare through town, the Canby-Molalla Road, was being renamed, "Yoder" was the obvious choice. However, according to Russell Yoder, a "distant" family member had already used the name for a local road. Not ready to rename the local street, the community opted instead for the name "Kropf" for the county road in honor of another prominent area family.

**Yoder Mill**

The Yoder Mill was started in 1888 by Jonathan Yoder, who had come from Missouri to the Willamette Valley the previous year to visit his sister. After the visit he decided that this was where he wanted to raise his family. At the same time he also decided to start a sawmill. Although he had no previous milling experience, he had long dreamed of owning his own mill. Before he left for home, he brought three forty-acre parcels of land, on one of which he planned to place the mill and build a house. On the other two parcels he proposed to harvest trees for the mill.
Jonathan then brought his family out from Missouri, including six boys and two girls. He had also acquired parts for the lumber mill in Missouri, some of which are still part of the mill machinery in use today. Near the first mill, to the north, Jonathan built a Gothic Revival style house which still stands, although in a dilapidated condition. When the mill was first started, it was powered by steam, the furnaces fed with wood waste from the mill. With some minor modifications, the operating machinery of the mill is the same as it was early in this century, although today the power comes from a huge electric motor below the working floor where the furnaces and boilers once were. The sawdust and thin slabs of waste wood today are sold to local residents who haul it away in pickups to heat their houses.

Due to a number of fires, the mill has been repeatedly rebuilt. The present mill, the fourth on this same site, is owned and operated today by Russell Yoder and David Yoder, grandson and great-grandson, respectively, of the founder. Russell Yoder figures most of the buildings and houses in the community were built with lumber from their mill.

The principal modifications recently made in the machinery include a laser spotting apparatus that permits accurate dimensional cutting of the boards, and a metal detector that warns of nails or electric insulators that would cause severe injuries should the large circular saw blade hit them and disintegrate during cutting.
In the early days of operation, local farmers and residents would bring logs, cut from their own wood lots, to the mill by means of a horse-drawn log wagon provided by the mill. This practice continued until the 1920s. The first forklift truck for use in the mill yard was bought by the Yoders in 1952. The forklift was purchased in Hood River, Oregon, but with no flat-bed truck to bring the forklift to Yoder, two of the Yoder brothers decided that they would drive it from Hood River to Yoder, a trip that took them two days.

The Yoder Mill has always done custom cutting on all types of wood, including Douglas fir, white pine, black walnut, even dense myrtlewood more common in southeastern Oregon. Prices, of course, have greatly changed over the years. In the 1930s the Yoders might pay $1.00 per thousand board-feet of raw logs. The costs added in trucking them to the mill and cutting into boards raised the end cost to $6.00 per thousand board-feet. Today, the final cost is $300 to $400 per thousand board-feet.

The Yoder Mill has always been a small operation. There have never been more than five workers, and at present two people run the operation. The mill has an outstanding safety record, however. There have been very few injuries and no fatalities; this is quite rare as most mills this size have had at least one fatality.

On the mill lot, just north of the main driveway, is a small shed building. This is the old blacksmith shop, the exact construction date of which is uncertain, built when horses still brought the logs to the mill. It is currently used for storage. Other larger sheds hold finished lumber.

Yoder Houses

The town of Yoder is made up a several residences and the Yoder Store. Among the houses is the Aaron Yoder Farmhouse at 32120 S. Kropf Road. Aaron Yoder acquired the house in 1919 from Rosa Watson, and retained ownership until 1961. At that time, it was purchased by his son, Nolan R. Yoder, and his wife, Helen M. Yoder. In 1991, the property was transferred to The
Nolan R. Yoder Trust. Nolan Yoder passed away earlier this year, and the home is currently occupied by his nephew, James J. Yoder and his wife, Diana Yoder. The original house on this site was built in 1898. Aaron Yoder, who worked at the mill with his father, Jonathan S. Yoder, made additions and alterations to the dwelling in 1920 to accommodate his family. At this time, the farm portion of the property was rented out. However, in 1933, Aaron’s son, Emerson Yoder, took over the farm, raising livestock and growing crops. He also worked at the mill, logging and driving trucks.

The Aaron Yoder house is a Craftsman bungalow, a rectangular but asymmetrical structure, covered in lap siding. A recessed porch runs the width of the house, and features an enclosed balustrade and squared posts with caps. The gabled roof is supported by purlins and braces, and features a gabled roof dormer and deep eaves. The home’s most distinctive feature is its ornate front door with paneling and beveled glass. This type of door can be seen on several other Craftsman bungalows in Yoder. According to Diana Yoder, the current occupant, the first ell on the east elevation, built in 1951, enclosed a water tower and incorporated a dormer into the roofline. The 1898 house originally faced north and was built by a man named Hein. The house was moved south and east of its original location. A porch on the north elevation was added or altered at an unknown date. The wide siding on the north elevation is believed to predate the siding on the remainder of the dwelling. It is not currently known if this is the original siding of the 1898 house. Most of the outbuildings at the site were moved there by James Yoder, Aaron Yoder’s grandson. The barn, built at the turn of the century by William Yoder, has gone through a number of alterations. In 1930, the roof line was squared off to accommodate a lean-to addition. The building was reshingled in 1990-91, at which time the cupola was added.

Another notable residence is the Fred and Jennie Schuknect Farmhouse, at 32235 S. Kropf Road, presently owned by Ruth Steninger. In 1898 Gunnar Fordal and Peter Jullam sold the land to Peter P. Skei in 1898, who in turn transferred it to Fred and Jennie Schuknect in 1920. Schuknect was responsible for the construction of the existing dwelling. The property was purchased in 1936 by Ralph E. and Anna Yoder, who resided there for 30 years. They farmed the land, raised cows and chick-
ens, and grew strawberries. In 1966, Anna Yoder, now a widow, conveyed the property to Ruth (Yoder) Steninger, her daughter.

The 1920s rectangular structure is also a Craftsman bungalow, with a distinctive ornate front door with beveled glass windows. The low-pitch gable roof was covered with metal within the last few years. It boasts a shed dormer with decorative brackets. The windows are one-over-one double-hung, and appear primarily in groupings of three. On the front facade, the large gable windows are flanked by two smaller ones. The house is covered with narrow siding. A deep, recessed porch runs the width of the house, and is covered by the main roof. The porch features an enclosed balustrade and squared, tapered posts.

Another family residence is the Albert G. Yoder House, at 32305 S. Kropf Road, currently owned by Norma J. Land. Albert G. Yoder purchased this property in 1906. He was a farmer, and also worked at the Yoder Mill with his father, Jonathan S. Yoder, the mill's founder. Upon Albert's marriage to Eve Sconce in 1909, he had the home built, presumably with wood from the mill. Albert and Eve Yoder lived in the home their entire lives. When Eve died in 1950, their son, Grant, took residence with his wife. According to the current owner, Norma J. Land, they both died by about 1986. Norma J. Land was referred to as a “newcomer” to Yoder, and is not related to the community's namesake family. The Albert Yoder house is another Craftsman bungalow, with a shingled clipped gable roof, broken by a clipped gable dormer and bargeboard. The asymmetrical structure has wood tongue-and-groove siding. A covered porch runs along two sides of the house, and features turned posts and a plain balustrade.

The Louis G. Wrolstad house, at 32415 S. Kropf Road (currently owned by Paul E. and Audrey Yoder), is on land purchased in 1921, along with the Yoder Store, by Louis G. Wrolstad from Albert G. Yoder. Wrolstad and his wife, Ann, ran the store and lived in the residence to its rear. An additional, generically Colonial Revival house was built in 1925 for Mrs. Wrolstad's mother, Mrs. Erickson. That dwelling was constructed by Mr. Wrolstad and Steven Day, a local carpenter. The house was later occupied by the Wrolstad's sons, and remained in the family through at least the 1950s. According to Emerson Yoder (Albert Yoder's nephew) the dwelling was originally a long, narrow building. After construction, a volume of equal size was added to the front of the house and the roofline was extended to cover both
Yoder Store Plan

Drawn By: Steven Blashfield
volumes. These changes were made during the Wrolstad’s ownership. The social center of the small community is the Yoder Store, 32441 S. Kropf Road (currently owned by Paul E. and Audrey Yoder). The Yoder Store was built in 1915 by Jonathan S. Yoder, on land owned by his son, Albert G. Yoder. With the arrival of the Willamette Valley Southern Railroad, Jonathan Yoder thought the town should have a store. The railroad tracks ran just south of the store site until the railroad was closed around 1925. It is assumed by Russell Yoder (Jonathan Yoder’s grandson), that the lumber for the store was supplied by the Yoder Mill. Jonathan Yoder rented the store to Louis G. Wrolstad, and it opened for business on June 14, 1915. Wrolstad brought the stock for the general merchandise store from a family-run store in Barlow. He maintained a chicken house behind the store, as customers would trade eggs, butter and live chickens for groceries. As was true for many country stores opened during the historic period, the Yoder Store became the commercial center of the community and, in many respects, the social center. Emerson Yoder recalls people sitting around the wood stove, and perched on stools at the counter, visiting.

In 1916, a dwelling was constructed to the rear of, and connecting to, the store. Wrolstad purchased the Yoder Store from Albert G. Yoder around 1918. Wrolstad and relatives ran the emporium until 1969 (except from 1928 to 1934 when it was ran by the Rivenes). In 1930, a feed store was constructed at the south end of the Yoder Store. It was attached to the main building by a covered, elevated walkway and parking bay. The feed store is currently used for storage. An addition to the north side of the general store occurred in 1939, providing its current configuration. In 1977, George and Doris Yoder purchased the property, and in 1990 title was transferred to Paul E. Yoder and Audrey Yoder. The current owners are the first direct Yoder descendants to run the store, with Paul being Jonathan Yoder’s great-grandson and Albert Yoder’s grandson.

The main portion of the store is a two-story Western false front, a form often used for commercial structures at the turn of the century. The store also features a main floor glass facade, and one-over-one double-hung sash windows. A shed-roofed porch, with chamfered posts, extends across the full width of the original structure. The interior of the store is rectangular, with a second-story U-shaped balcony open to the main level.

The feed store, at the south end of the building, is constructed of hollow clay tile on a concrete foundation. The rectangular structure has a gabled roof covered with sheet metal. The gable end is composed of narrow wood siding, and is similar to the gable over the connecting parking bay and the store’s siding. The feed store is decorated with alternating quoin courses and fixed four-over-two pane windows.
Notes

1 Research and draft text on the Yoder Mill, the buildings in Yoder, and the Yoder family prepared by Sarah Wright and Joy Sears.
2 South County Historic Background.
3 Quote from sources for Yoder family background include:

Clackamas County Historical Resources Inventories, SHPO Nos. 730, 731, 1863, 1864 and 1865.

Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, Clackamas County.

Yoder, Marquam, Wilhoit South County Historical Background.

Personal conversations with Russell Yoder and David Yoder, 23 Nov 96 and 4 Dec 96.

Personal conversation with Audrey Yoder, 23 Nov 96.
4 Oregon SHPO Document No. 1863.
5 Oregon SHPO Document No. 1864.
6 Oregon SHPO Document No. 730.
7 Oregon SHPO Document No. 731.
"Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. I looked in awe at the ground I trud on, to see what the Powers had made there, the form and fashion and material of their work. This was that Earth of which we have heard, made out of Chaos and Old Night. Here was no man's garden, but the handselled globe."

Henry David Thoreau.
Kiaadin
USGS Map
Whiskey Hill / Meridian Road Vicinity

The Whiskey Hill Barn is visible along the route to Aurora along Meridian Road (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).
Meridian Road

The route from Yoder follows State Highway 170 north to Barnards Road and then west through the little hamlets of Needy and Ninety One to Whiskey Hill. Of particular note is a true Pennsylvania German forebay barn, located about a quarter mile or less from the crossroads at Whiskey Hill, just off the south side of the road, and built with the forebay facing north, away from the prevailing “south-storm” winds. Built in 1889 by a member of the Kropf family (likely a member of the Mennonite community that had settled the nearby community of Hubbard), its technical description, according to Roger Ensinger and Philip Dole, is half-open-forebay standard barn.¹ From Whiskey Hill the route turns north on Meridian Road which runs nearly due north although, of necessity, it is adjusted to the ravines that drain into the meandering Pudding River just to the west. The road follows the line of the Willamette Meridian and to the north and south runs as an absolutely straight line, aimed at the pole star, nearly the length of the Willamette Valley. Establishing the Willamette Meridian was a crucial step in settling land claims as Oregon emerged as a United States territory. No surveys could be made until some fixed point of reference was established. In early June, 1851, John B. Preston, the newly appointed U.S. Surveyor General, rode up into the hills just west of Portland and drove a cedar stake. Located at 122° 44' 33" West Longitude and 45° 31' 12" North Latitude, it established the Willamette Meridian and the point from which the position of all real estate in the entire Pacific Northwest is determined. Almost four miles north of Whiskey Hills, Meridian Road runs past the location of the Aurora Colony brickyards just before it intersects Lone Elder Road. The tour route turns west on Lone Elder Road for a few hundred yards into the town of Aurora.

¹The Whiskey Hill Barn is eastern Pennsylvania German forebay barn, an uncommon type in Oregon (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).
Map of the Aurora Vicinity by Clark M. Will, 1972
Will Collection - Special Collections, UO Knight Library
The John Giesy House is the oldest house in the Aurora vicinity, approximately 1/4 mile from the community center. The house dates to c.1864-5, and is wood frame construction (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).

**Aurora Colony**

The next stop is the town of Aurora, established as a religious commune in 1856. A sense of what the original Aurora Colony was like can still be felt today when one walks though the small town, noting the consistent architectural style among many of the houses and commercial buildings, for an overriding simplicity and austerity dominate the Auroran landscape. This is the physical trace of a charismatic individual, Wilhelm Keil, and of the communal society that gathered around him and followed him across the continent.

Wilhelm Keil was born in Prussia in 1811, and after completing an elementary education, he trained as a tailor in Kolleda, Prussia. While in Kolleda, Keil became interested in mysticism, reading the works of Boehme and Paracelsus, and began to experiment with obscure medicinal remedies, searching for a medicine that would cure all diseases. In February 1836, Keil and Louisa Reiter were married, and their shared adventuresome spirit hastened their immigration to New York City. It was in New York that the first of ten children, Wilhelm Jr., was born in 1837. Keil’s knowledge of medicines and botany enabled him to open

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a drugstore. While some individuals who frequented his shop attested to the efficacy of his remedies, others referred to Keil as “Hexendoktor,” or witch doctor in English. Eventually, however, the title of “Dr. Keil” became a common reference to the German drugstore owner.

In order to live and work among a community of other German immigrants, Keil and his family moved to Pittsburgh in 1838. Keil’s introduction to evangelists came at a revival meeting led by William Nast, the founder of the German Methodist Church. A new-found devotion to the church led Keil to burn his books of mystical concoctions and remedies, and in 1839 Keil himself became a preacher. Keil’s preference to lead rather than follow was perhaps one of the main reasons for his break with the Methodist Church and taking his congregation with him. His forceful personality and vigorous leadership, coupled with the economic depression that had begun in 1837, fueled the enthusiasm of Keil’s followers. Refusing to adhere to a specific denomination, Keil created a denomination governed by the creed “Love One Another” that required a morally pure lifestyle.

The notion of a communal lifestyle may have been introduced to Keil by the “Harmony Society” of George Rapp, a fellow German immigrant living in Economy, Pennsylvania. Whether Keil was personally acquainted with Rapp is not clear, but Keil knew of Rapp and his community. The Rappists had been unhappy with the State church of Germany and had immigrated to America to worship as they pleased. The guidelines of Rapp’s Harmony Society stipulated that all possessions be placed into a common fund, that the style of houses and dress be uniform and simple, and that all labor be performed for the common good of the entire group. Some members of the Harmony Society were displeased with Rapp’s insistence on celibacy, however, and eventually many of them found a more liberated atmosphere in Keil’s community.

Keil, however, was interested in moving his community to a new location. After a reconnaissance expedition was completed by three of Keil’s followers in 1844, land was purchased in Missouri. The new site was called “Bethel,” a biblical term meaning “the house of God.” It became the home for Keil’s followers, a group of German families predominantly from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, and West Virginia. Hardships and disillusioned members decreased numbers in the community, yet despite the
abandonment by some, the Bethel community prospered economically and produced products of high quality. The contract for the Bethel community closely resembled that of the Rappist community, containing provisions for a common treasury for all possessions, insistence that dress and housing be simple and austere in style, and that all household goods, food and housing be distributed "free of charge" to the community.

Mounting enthusiasm by individuals who had journeyed west prompted Keil to send a scouting group to find a new site for the community. A location was selected in the Washington Territory in the valley of the Willapa, and in the spring of 1855 a train of 24 wagons began the journey west. Shortly prior to the departure, Keil's eldest son, Willie, perished from malaria. Because Keil had promised to bring his son on the journey, a special coffin was prepared, lined with metal and filled with alcohol to preserve the body; the wagon carrying Willie led the train west.

Upon reaching the Washington Territory, however, Keil concluded that the location was inappropriate for the new settlement. Dense forests, pelting rain and the site's isolation hastened his decision to look elsewhere, and in 1856 Keil purchased a land grant of 320 acres on the Pudding River between Oregon City and Salem from George White and George Smith. The new site was named Aurora after one of Keil's daughters. The property already contained a milldam, a small gristmill, and a sawmill built around 1850. By May 1856, Das Grosse Haus, constructed of squared logs from fir trees, was being built for Keil's family and the single men of the community. Keil's construction crew was given the task of cutting down a tree every day before breakfast, or if the meat supply was low, each individual was instead responsible for killing a deer prior to breakfast.

As the convoy of wagons began entering Aurora from Bethel, more land was purchased and more homes were constructed. Some of the first homes were log cabins, later replaced by hewn log houses. The second wave of house building had houses built of sawn lumber; others were hewn heavy frame, still others were of balloon frame construction, and many were of "box" or plank construction. A number of the farmhouses were probably built by communal carpenters. Some Colony-related families purchased land on their own, further out from the center of the community. The majority of the village houses as well as outlying farm houses were versions of hall-and-parlor types. Most of them
The Keil Store seen here after 1900 is still intact and used commercially.

(photo: courtesy of Philip Dole).

had a parlor fireplace and a wood stove in the kitchen, with chimneys at each end of the gable roof. Stairs were most often in the center (sometimes on the end wall by the fireplace), and usually had three flights (basement to first floor, first floor to second, second floor to attic).

The same facilities were established in Aurora as in Bethel, including a tannery, sawmill, gristmill, brickyards, workshops for cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, wagon makers, tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters. Nearly all of the members' clothing, furniture and household items were made within the Colony, although some items were purchased from neighboring farmers by Keil. The level of production may not have been large scale, although Aurora furniture -- particularly Jenny Linn beds -- were sold to the public. Instead the production was scaled to satisfy the requirements and needs of the community. There were three "stores." A community store and a drug store (both no longer standing) provided goods, foods, and medicines to Colony members free of charge. Non-colony members could purchase goods with cash in the third, the Keil store, which is still standing. In addition, extensive, well-managed orchards assisted in bringing public attention to Aurora, particularly for its exported fruit, apple butter and apple cider. A variety of sumptuous German-style meals at the Old Colony Hotel also attracted non-Colony members to the small community.

The period 1863-1870 has been dubbed Aurora's "Golden Age" by Eugene Snyder because it was a time when principal buildings were constructed, including the Old Colony Church and the Old Colony Hotel. By 1870 the population of the Colony stood at a little over 600. Among travelers the Hotel became famous throughout Oregon, and was one of the principal money-makers for the Colony with a menu featuring ham, sausage and venison. During this period, Colony members did not have individual written deeds to their land (legal title to nearly all land was in the name of Wilhelm Keil), nor was money involved or records kept in the daily transactions of goods between Colony members. Keil was responsible for overseeing the main treasury, and trade with non-members took place at the Wm. Keil & Co. Store. Personal hobbies or outside projects were allowed, so although they lived within a communal setting, Colony members were still able to maintain a sense of individualism. The two Aurora bands, which consisted of Colony members, were quite in demand at neighboring fairs and political meetings. On
the whole, however, life in the Colony was simple and plain, and this was reflected in the members' dress, furnishings, and homes.21

The golden days of Aurora eventually came to an end. During the 1870s, many second-generation Colony members became disillusioned with Keil's teachings, stringent rules, and restrictions. Keil's intense personal direction lessened. His three surviving sons had no aspirations to fill their father's shoes. Then in 1870 the Oregon & California Railroad sliced through the town of Aurora, bringing with it greater exposure to the outside world. One Colony member commented on the demise of the Aurora Colony in an interview with Fred Lockley:

Dr. Wilhelm Keil, the founder of our Colony, was a man of dominating personality... His word in the early days was supreme, but the young people became restless about the marriage restrictions and other regulations, so the colony was finally disbanded and the lands allotted in severalty to colony members.22

By the time of Keil's death in 1877, a disintegration of the Colony's old social order had already begun. Keil himself had begun transferring titles to properties to individuals within the Colony as early as 1872, as he may have foreseen the impending dissolution of the Colony. After his death, land in Aurora was divided among the remaining Colony members. Lands in Aurora and Bethel were assessed, and Aurora was given a portion of the total amount. From this point, the legal connections between Aurora and Bethel were ended.23

Although the Colony was technically and legally disbanded, life at Aurora continued in much the same vein for several years — people lived in the same houses, carried on the same employment, and attended the same schools. Aurorans, however, would never forget who brought them to this part of the country, and Keil's influence resonates throughout the Colony, even today.

The restoration and preservation of the Aurora Colony was initiated and supported financially by Dr. Burt Brown Barker, Ruth McBride Powers and, in particular, by Barbara Sprouse (daughter of Dr. Barker), each contributing to various buildings. Ruth McBride Powers also collected and contributed furniture and furnishings produced in Aurora. A group

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of colony descendents, who established the local Historical Society between 1963 and 1966, played an integral role in the effort and assisted in preserving the buildings. Today the Aurora Colony Historical Society curates a complex of clustered buildings, some on their original sites, others moved there. Tour participants will be able to explore this cluster at their leisure.

The cluster is accessed through the Ox Barn Museum. The Ox Barn, built ca. 1880, is, according to local tradition, one of two community barns located in the Aurora Colony used to house oxen. The oxen were used to haul logs and lumber to and from the mill. The building’s history is complex. It was used as a general store by the Will family for more than 20 years, and even provided lodging. The property was sold to the Aurora Colony Historical Society in 1963 and opened as a museum in September 1966.

Local tradition indicates the Emma Giesy-George Kraus House was originally built c. 1875 for Emma Giesy; however, the house was owned by the Kraus family for almost 100 years until 1972 when it was donated to the Aurora Colony Historical Society and moved from its original site at the corner of Third and Main Streets to this location. The hall-and-parlor structure is representative of the early phase of building in Aurora. Of “box” or plank construction, the house has an inside finish of wooden wainscot and plaster, with the exterior covered with board and batten siding. When the house was moved to the present site, the original brick foundation and basement were replaced with a concrete block foundation and crawl space.

The Summer Kitchen, built ca. 1890 (one of three surviving summer kitchens in the Aurora Colony) was originally located on the Leonard Will property. It was moved to the museum property in 1977 at which time the building was repaired.

The George Steinbach Cabin is representative of the kind of house quickly built by Keil followers upon arriving in Aurora. One of three remaining hewn log structures in the Colony, it was built either as a temporary home or a permanent residence. The logs, approximately 8-10 inches in diameter, are joined together with full dovetail notching. The cabin, built c. 1876, originally stood on the Steinbach farm on Miley Road north of Aurora. It was used as a home until 1883 when a more substantial hall-and-parlor house, built with a balloon frame, replaced it. The log house was then used for a variety of purposes, including a
machine shed, a granary and a workshop. The cabin was donated to the Aurora Colony Historical Society in 1967 by Ernest Becke, grandson of George Steinbach, and shortly after was moved to the museum property.

The Equipment Shed, built in the 1860s, is an open, wood frame structure used primarily to house wagons and agricultural equipment.\(^{28}\)

According to the Aurora Colony Historical Society, the Outhouse was moved to the Museum property from a post-Colony Victorian home on Liberty Avenue in 1966. The construction date is unknown.

Other Buildings in Aurora

Tour participants may also explore the town itself, including the following buildings, several of which are open for interior tours, following a self-guided walking tour.\(^{29}\) At the end of Second Street is the George Smith House, built c. 1870 at Main and Second streets but moved to this site in 1912 to make room for the Will-Snyder General Merchandise Store. Behind it and set back slightly is the Solomon Miller House, built c. 1875 and still on its original site with several outbuildings. This house is not open and is on private property.

At the intersection of Liberty and Second, opposite the Ox Barn, is the Jacob Miller House, built c. 1890 and although conservative in style and in essence a hall-and-parlor house, it is representative of the third major phase of construction after the Colony had disbanded. Jacob Miller, a “turner,” perhaps did the lathe work on the columns of the Colony Store’s front double-tiered portico and on the turned columns and porch balusters of the Frederick Keil house.

Just to the south of the Ox Barn building cluster is the Henry Kraus House, built c. 1900 but extensively altered. Kraus was a carpenter and hops grower. Across the street from the Steinbach log house is the Presbyterian Church which contains the original hand-planed pews from the Old Colony Church, which was dis-
manted in 1911-12. Next to the church is the **Second Leonard Will House**, built in 1905 and a very good example of the change toward more fashionable styles after the disbanding. The family’s more conservative first house can be seen around the corner on Third Street. Next to the Leonard Will House is the **Anton Will-Louis Webber House**, another Queen Anne house built c. 1897. At the northeast corner of Third and Liberty is the **Christian Zimmerman House**, built c. 1900, strikingly similar to the Henry Kraus house and likely built by Kraus who was an active carpenter. Zimmerman and the Will family (his wife’s family) came to Oregon in 1863. Zimmerman was a millwright and hops grower. The summer kitchen and wash house on the property dates from the Colony period, but the barn was built c. 1900.

At the southwest corner of Third and Liberty is the **Charles Snyder House**, built c. 1870 and recently restored. Of balloon frame construction, it is an excellent example of the marked conservatism of the houses built in the Colony period. The boxed cornice returns with minimal details are part of the distinctive Aurora adaptation of the Greek Revival, and are all the more important for still being used twenty years after that style had been replaced with more fashionable forms in other parts of the Willamette Valley. The front porch may be a later addition of c. 1900 when the rear kitchen wing was added. Recent paint analysis has shown that the original exterior paint colors departed from the traditional white; instead, the trim was painted olive green and black. On the interior, original wainscotting remains which was faux-finished to look like walnut. Charles Snyder was only ten years old when he came west, shortly after Keil arrived. Snyder married Christina Scheule, a former member of the Rappist community. (Note: the board and batten George Kraus house originally stood slightly west of the Snyder house on the south side of Third.)

Where U.S. Highway 99 sliced through the town in 1933, at the intersection with Main one block to the west, is the **Sadler-Kraus Building**, a mercantile store built c. 1913. North, across Third, is the Italianate Will Brothers Bazaar, built c. 1900 by Anton and Jonas, the sons of Leonard Will. The Wills operated a store here until 1906. The classical porch was added about 1920.

Across Highway 99 is the **Samuel Giesy House**, built c. 1890 but substantially altered and shifted in position to front the realigned highway in 1933. Next to it to the north is an elaborate
bungalow, the **Dr. Benjamin Giesy House**, built in 1915. Benjamin, long the town’s physician, was the son of Martin Giesy, the Colony’s doctor.

At the corner of Second and Main, just off the highway, is the large **F. Keil and Company General Merchandise Store**, built 1873-74, which survives nearly intact in its exterior form and details. Here, in the store run by Andrew Giesy from 1876 to 1920, outsiders could purchase goods produced by the Colonists. On the upper floor was a meeting hall. Across the street, opposite the store, and marked by a plaque in the middle of this broad intersection of the highway with Main and Second streets, was the site of Aurora Colony Store and Workshop, one of the Colony’s largest structures, where goods were disbursed at no charge to Colony members. Behind the General Merchandise Store today is the relocated **Octagon Building**, the only surviving portion of the Aurora Colony Hotel originally built in 1867 on a site near the millrace and railroad station several blocks to the north. The hotel served stagecoach travelers and then railroad passengers after 1870. The hotel was demolished in 1934 to make way for the highway realignment.

On the northwest corner of Second and Main Streets are two early Colony houses now carefully restored. The **William Fry House**, on the corner, was built in 1874 and, like the Charles Snyder House, shows the marked conservatism of architectural style during the Colony period. Fry was the Colony’s blacksmith and was one of seven chosen to administer the Colony after Keil’s death. To the north of this house is the **Walter Fry House**, built c. 1900 and illustrating a shift away from the austerity of the Colony architecture toward a more fashionable Classic Revival style. The front porch and rear deck are later additions, although original columns remain at the porch corners. To the rear of the Walter Fry House is the **Miley House**, which was moved to this location here from the banks of the Willamette in 1989. In form and construction it is similar to many of the Colony houses; its interior walls are left unfinished, affording a glimpse of the log construction technique.

To the north of the Walter Fry House is the second **Oregon & California Railroad Depot**, built c. 1900 to replace a building of c. 1870, and originally located across First Street and placed at an angle to parallel the tracks. This portion is roughly half of the original, and housed the baggage room, ticket office, and pas-
The Keil House is a distinctive five bay residence with a two story porch accented with classical columns (photo: HABS, Library of Congress, 1937).

senger waiting room.

On the east side of Main next to Highway 99 is the Will-Snyder General Merchandise Store built in 1912 on the site of the George Smith house. Further north at the intersection of First and Main is the Aurora State Bank, an early concrete block building originally constructed for the Lewis & Clark Exposition held in Portland in 1905. When the exposition closed, this building was moved here to house a bank which opened that year.

Beyond the bridge to the northeast along the river were the sites of the log pond, saw and grist mills. Also on the far side of the 1934 bridge is the Ziegler House, also known as the California Store Front, built in the 1890s as a residence, later converted to the town’s telephone office and then a funeral parlor.

Three important houses survive a short distance north and west of the town center on Ehlen and Airport roads. Beyond the Ziegler House, where Ehlen Road turns west at the intersection with Airport Road, is the Michael Rapps House, built in the Colony period, c. 1875, but extensively modified. Rapps, a sawmill operator, came west in 1856.

North on Airport Road is the large Frederick Keil House, built c. 1870 for the son of the Colony founder. (The large hewn log “Grosse Haus” built for Dr. Keil stood to the south, nearer the intersection of Airport and Ehlen roads.) The Frederick Keil
The Frederick Keil House (c. 1870)
Historic American Building Survey, 1937
Drawings by: Rudolph Paetz, Del

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House was occupied by descendants of Keil until the 1950s when it was sold to Robert Bogue who carried out the first restoration in 1960. Later in the decade the house was purchased by Fred Rothschild, and in 1970 by Roger and Jill Warren. The present owner is presently restoring it. It was included in the Historic American Buildings Survey of 1934, when measured drawings were made, and the building was photographed. The Frederick Keil House was one of the largest in the Colony, five bays in width, with a broad central through-hall and large rooms on either side. The five main rooms are each about twenty by twenty feet in size. The kitchen is in the basement where the ground slopes away. The stairs, as was typical in Aurora, connect all floors, including the attic, resulting in four flights. Particularly distinctive is its two-level porch, sheltering the broad Federal-style double-leaf entrance door with transom and side lights. The porch columns are turned posts with a swelling entasis; even the porch railing balusters are turned as miniature versions of the larger posts. Why Doctor Keil’s son had the largest house, with the finest detailing, in this communistic society, is not clear. But no other house approaches it in these two characteristics.

Further north on Airport Road is the site of the Colony Church, built 1867, a building that combined something of the form of New England/Ohio churches with Gothic details in its windows and doors. Instead of being placed in the commercial center of the community, it was located here on the highest rise of land where its 114-foot tower and spire could be seen for miles around. On its large projecting tower balconies the Aurora band played on important occasions. An important focal point during Dr. Keil’s lifetime, it declined in significance after his death. Sold in 1881, it was demolished in 1911. Bells from the tower and a window are exhibited in the Colony Museum.

A short distance further west on Ehlen Road, visible from the town, is the large white John Giesy Farm and House, built c. 1864-65 using a heavy hand-hewn, mortise and tenon timber frame. The great depth of the house is unusual for the Colony period, as are the closed classical pediments on the wide end gables. The proportions of the house recall Pennsylvania farm houses, which would relate to the fact that the Giesy family, early converts to Keil’s vision, moved from their original farm near Pittsburgh. The site is significant for retaining a nearly full complement of original outbuildings, including a Colony-period barn, a granary, and a summer kitchen.
Stauffer Farm Site Plan

Key  Building  Key  Building  Key  Building
1  Frame House (c1885)  6  Bake House  11  Smoke House
2  Log House (Existing)  7  First Hog Barn  12  Granary
3  Chinese Laborers' House  8  Second Hog Barn  13  Loafing Shed
4  Wood Shed  9  Third Hog Barn  14  Barn (c1870)
5  Windmill/Well House  10  Chicken House  15  Hops Field

Key  Structure Demolished
X Structure built 1869-1885
XX Structure built 1885-1925
| Structure built 1925-Present

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The Staufer Farm exemplifies early hewn log construction. The joinery at the corners is especially noteworthy (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).

Since this photo the Staufer Farm has lost many structures. A row of outbuildings originally sheltered the south end of the barnyard from southern storm winds (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).

John Staufer Farm Complex

The town of Aurora was the social and commercial core of the Colony, where a rather uneasy contact was made with "the world." The greater extent of the Colony consisted of farm complexes in the 15,000 acres around the town. One that survives nearly intact, with many of its outbuildings, is the John Staufer Farm, about three miles south of the town center, on Staufer Road which runs east from Highway 99.

The Staufer Farm was built by John Staufer about 1866 or 1867 as part of the original Aurora Colony. Staufer had been one of the early followers of Keil and had been one of the nine sent out to scout the Oregon territory in 1853. The original grouping of buildings formed a large courtyard with the barn located at the south end and the house located at the north end. The other buildings which help form the courtyard have all been rebuilt or inserted at later dates and are not part of the farmstead of 1867.
(See the plans showing successive growth and changes.) Nonetheless they form an important ensemble.

Besides the usual basic human and animal feed crops, the Stauffers also specialized in raising fruit used in the Colony and sold in the Colony store. Today the fields around the Stauffer farm are used for hops and hazelnut agriculture.

Stauffer House

The Stauffer House is a two-and-one-half story structure of hewn log construction with half dovetail joints and chinking. Like other houses in the Colony, the house has Pennsylvania characteristics, although it does not contain a central hall. A plank partition separates the kitchen at one end from the living space. An enclosed winding stair leads to the two-room second floor and then to the attic. One interesting feature is that part of the house was covered with horizontal weatherboard siding while on other parts the logs were left exposed. This protected areas of the house which were more subject to severe weather. Another interesting feature is that the fireplace and chimney is completely internal. The “foundation” and basement of the house is also quite intriguing. The house sits on partially hewn vertical log posts which also provide the support for the basement walls. Large dimension planks are attached to these timbers and thus retain the earth. A new foundation has since been installed to stabilize the house but the posts were left in place to illustrate the original system. The brick walls were introduced about 1900 when the original chimney was removed.

In front of the present log house a framed house was built about 1885. It was demolished in 1955 when a third home was built a short distance away.

Stauffer Barn

The Stauffer Barn is typical of other barns built in the Colony, but its long and narrow form distinguishes it from other non-Germanic barns found elsewhere in the Willamette Valley. The barn has a central drive with a haymow and lofts, and space at either end for about a half dozen animals — at the

The south wall of the Hewn Log House was covered with wood siding. This house was the second of three, preceded by a Log Cabin, and superseded by a Frame House, both of which have since been lost (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).

Log House Plan
Drawn By: Linda Babetski, Mike Hahn
north end for oxen or draft horses, and cows at the south end. The barn is constructed of a heavy timber frame with very little lateral bracing in the entire structure except for the central bay area which has diagonal bracing. Knee braces are used in other areas but these seem rather minimal with respect to the proportion of the frame. One very interesting feature about the large central diagonal braces is that they all run in the same direction. It is possible that these braces are not original but were added about 1900 when the barn began to lean. Their direction of support would resist wind loads from the south, which is the prevailing direction of winter storms. Outward thrust on the walls from the roof is also only minimally provided for. It has since been reinforced with cables. It appears that it was originally resisted by presumably wrought iron straps that connected the upper cross-beam to the columns, putting this upper beam into tension. Evidence of these straps is found only in the central bay area.

Another interesting feature is the asymmetrical division of the bays on either side of the central "drive." Equally intriguing is the amount by which the posts extend up beyond the central cross-beams.

Other buildings on the site include a granary built between 1885-1925, a chicken coop and smokehouse built since 1925, and a hog barn.
Notes

3 Research and draft text prepared by Jeannie Brush and Lizziebe Ollerbrink.
5 Eugene Snyder. *Aurora, Their Last Utopia: Oregon’s Christina Commune, 1856-1883.* (Portland, 1993): 7. In addition to the sources cited in subsequent notes, other highly useful sources are:

Aurora Colony Historic Society, Ox Barn Museum. Manuscripts, maps, photographs, and other documents.


Lebenserfahrungen von Karl G. Koch, Prediger des Evangeliums. (Cleveland, 1871).


Ross, Marion Dean. A collection of the private papers of Marion Dean Ross, Manuscripts Coll., Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene.


Will, Clark Moore, Papers, Manuscript Collection, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR.

The Stauffer's hewn log house expresses a simplified form common to many earlier East Coast examples of American architecture (photo: Philip Dole, 1966).

A wood frame house was built at the Stauffer farm in 1885. The log house remains, but the frame house was demolished in 1955. This photo shows the earlier drive coming from the west (photo: courtesy of Philip Dole).
Williams, Edgar & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Marion and Linn Counties, Oregon.* (Salem, OR, 1975).

6 Snyder, 7-9.
7 Simon, 7-8.
8 Simon, 13.
9 Snyder, 29.
10 Simon, 21.
11 Snyder, 50.
12 Simon, 31-34.
13 Simon, 30.
14 Philip Dole. “Aurora Colony Architecture: Building in a Nineteenth Century Cooperative Society” *Oregon Historical Quarterly,* 92 (Winter 1991-1992): 377. This is the principal study of this community and its buildings. See also Dole’s somewhat shorter discussion in Vaughan and Ferriday, eds., *Space, Style, and Structure,* 1:14-49. See also the Dole-Rees *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.*

15 Simon, 57-58.
17 Snyder, 63.
18 Dole, “Aurora Colony Architecture,” 384-86.
19 Snyder, 66.
20 Snyder, 81.
21 Simon, 63.
22 Simon, 54.
23 Snyder, 74.
24 Snyder, 80.
25 Simon, 67.
26 Snyder, 95.

28 Snyder, 101
29 See Dole-Rees, *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.* #105.
30 See Dole-Rees, *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.* #108.
31 See Dole-Rees, *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.* #108.
32 See Dole-Rees, *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.* #106.
33 See Dole-Rees, *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.* #106.
34 Information adapted from the Aurora Colony Walking Tour map, by Luana Hill et al., published by the Aurora Colony Historical Society, 1987; dates are based on the Dole-Rees *Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory.*

35 Research and draft text prepared by Mike Hann and William Morrow.
French Prairie
Day 1 - June 12, 1997

Many of the prairies are several miles in extent, but the smaller ones . . . where the woodland and the plain alternate frequently are the most beautiful. The space between these small prairies is covered with an open forest of tall, straight evergreens. . . .

The clusters of trees are so carefully arranged, the openings so gracefully curved, the grounds so open and clean, that it all seems to be a work of art . . . .

J. Quinn Thornton, 1846
**French Prairie**

The area purchased by Keil for his Oregon commune lay on the eastern edge of the area first significantly settled by European arrivals. The earliest major group of Euro-Americans were not American trappers or Methodist missionaries but retired French-Canadian trappers, formerly employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company. They tended to gather in the gently rolling lands along the river at a point where it ran roughly west to east a few miles up from the falls of the Willamette. When they first settled here, the area was a lush expanse of tall grass, with scattered copse of white oak, the result of centuries of burning by the native Kalapooya people. The landscape was, in French, a *prairie*, a meadow-like grassland. Its idyllic character was well described in 1846 by J. Quinn Thorton, an early American settler:

> Many of the prairies are several miles in extent, but the smaller ones . . . where the woodland and the plain alternate frequently are the most beautiful. . . . the space between these small prairies is covered with an open forest of tall, straight evergreens. . . . the clusters of trees are so carefully arranged, the openings so gracefully curved, the grounds so open and clean, that it all seems to be a work of art. . . .

The French-Canadian ex-trappers took up farming and many married native women (whether with the blessing of a priest or not). The center of their settlement was the Catholic mission of St. Paul, where the town of that name survives today. Soon, in the early 1840s, other Euro-Americans began to arrive and join the ex-trappers. They called this portion of the valley French Prairie, after those they found living there. The increasing settlement was focused on the banks of the Willamette River in a town they named Champoeog (given various spellings and purportedly derived from a native word, it is pronounced *shampoo-y*). Other Americans, and French who pledged to become U.S. citizens, obtained Donation Land Claims in the lands surrounding St. Paul and Champoeog.

The route to French Prairie provides a glimpse of the agricultural activities in the northern Willamette Valley today. Originally the individual settlers pursued subsistence farming with
surpluses carted to the river and shipped for sale in Portland or for export. The farmlands still remain relatively small in size; there is little presence of multinational agribusiness controlling production as far as the eye can see. Agricultural pursuits are still highly varied across French Prairie. In addition to corn, wheat, barley and fruit orchards, production has shifted to vegetables, hazelnuts, hops and berries. The newer horticulture includes flowers (including growing wildflowers for seed), and most recently, turf and ornamental tree nurseries supplying the rapidly expanding Portland suburban market for yard landscaping.

Although the tour buses will bypass St. Paul, the site of the original Catholic Mission founded in 1839, the town contains some noteworthy resources. On the eastern edge of the community is the cemetery in which are buried some of the earliest French-Canadian settlers. Almost on axis with the highway to the west is the brick church of St. Paul, built in 1846 with later changes. Behind the fire station on Mission Avenue, one block north of the St. Paul Highway, are three notable local houses, the diminutive but elaborately detailed Queen Anne style Emmett Kirk house of 1889, still in situ and now the home of the St. Paul Mission Museum. Next door is the white Matthew Murphy house, the rear portion of which was built in 1856 next to the river. The enlarged house has been moved four times, including the relocation to its present site.

At this point the tour divides into two sections, one group going to the Zorn Farm and the other going to the William Case House. Both groups of buses then continue on to Inchinnan Farm.

*Early settlers at Champoeg (drawing: Gaston, The Centennial History of Oregon, 1912).*
**Case Farm Site Plan**

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<td>5</td>
<td>Barn (c1880)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sawmill site</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Original log house site</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Original Barn site</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hops Barn Site</td>
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*drawing: Philip Dole*
The William Case Farm

In addition to the early French-Canadian settlers of the 1830s, the French Prairie became the home of later American arrivals, one of whom was William Case who created a farm and business complex in the late 1850s that was remarkable for its diversity of production.

As noted above, the Greek Revival appeared in Oregon and the Willamette Valley as soon as the large wagon trains began to arrive. For the most part, this was a highly reduced and simplified variant of this widely popular style. Many Oregon Greek Revival houses were detailed with boxed cornice returns on otherwise vernacular buildings, with the entry located under the eave. One of the only true temple-form residence built in the state is the Captain Ainsworth House, 1851, high on the bluffs on
the perimeter of Oregon City. With no local carpenters yet able to fashion true round and fluted Doric columns, octagonal columns were made with attached battens to suggest fluting.

Another striking exception to the typical Oregon version of the Greek Revival is the William Case House. The house and farm complex were built by pioneer William M. Case during the years 1853 to 1859, according to Philip Dole who has studied the house extensively. This an unusual Greek-influenced house, perhaps an Oregon vernacular expression of early Louisiana French colonial rural architectural traditions.

William M. Case was introduced to Oregon through a Lewis and Clark Columbia River Expedition journal while a young boy in Wayne County, Indiana, where he was born in 1820. Intrigued by descriptions of the rich grasslands and mild climate of the Willamette Valley, he determined to migrate as soon as he was old enough. Following the advice of his father to take a wife with him, at age twenty-one Case and his twenty-year-old bride Sarah headed west.

The couple had planned to stop in Plattsville, Missouri, but actually wound up in northern Missouri where they remained for three years. They arrived in the Willamette Valley in December of 1844. In 1845 Case was recorded as the builder of the Wilkins barn in Tualatin Plains, and later that year William and Sarah Case had settled in a four room log house on two sections of land in Champoeg, one acquired by Donation Land Claim and the other purchased. This is the site of the existing farm, on Case Creek, about three miles south of the Champoeg townsite. Case was soon engaged in building other barns in the area, but like many other Oregonians, he was lured to the California gold fields in 1849. After discovering there were hoards of miners panning for gold, but very few builders or craftspeople, Case concluded there was more certain money to be made by plying his trade. In 1851 he returned home with $2,800.

The farm on Case Creek prospered in the ensuing years. A sawmill, blacksmith shop and tile or brick kiln were kept busy supplying neighbors. Case employed both Caucasian and Chinese labor-
ers who were housed on the farm. His commercial ventures seemed to have delayed finishing the house he had begun upon his return from California.8

The Cases eventually had a family of thirteen children and were influential in their community. William Case served four terms as County Commissioner during the years from 1862 to 1872, and contributed generously to Willamette University where seven of his daughters were educated.9

William and Sarah Case took great care in the building of their house. The one-story, elongated L-shaped structure, with a broad gable roof, is supported by brick foundation piers and a partial brick cellar. The exceptionally broad gable roof shelters a peristyle with thirty-one solid columns lathe-turned so they have a Grecian classical entasis. A large woodshed extends the footprint but interrupts the complete surround of the peristyle. The huge woodshed, by itself, was larger than many early Oregon houses.

Although the building exhibits Greek Revival style elements fashionable in Oregon during the 1850s, its most unusual characteristics seem to have been similar to that of the French style Louisiana plantation houses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Why this might be so remains a question. It is tempting to think there might be a connection to the French trappers who earlier had settled in this area, as Dole has suggested, but the ex-trappers came largely from Quebec.

Similar to the early French houses in Missouri, the Louisiana houses were one-story framed houses on either a raised brick basement or piers, shaded by a wide peristyle, and capped by a broad hipped roof. Typically they were rectangular in form and one room deep to facilitate cross ventilation. An unusually close similarity exists between the Case House in Oregon and the Narcisse Prudhomme Plantation (Beau Fort) near Natchitoches, one of the earliest settlements in Louisiana. Beau Fort, a Creole-influenced house of the 1830s, is similar in form to the Case House, including a gable roof. Dole pointed out the similarity to this type of building in 1974 and it was confirmed by Wallace Huntington and Mirza Dickel, the present owners of the Case House, a few years ago on a visit to Natchitoches. Even

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*Case House six-over-six
window detail (photo: Philip Dole, 1967).*
though a portion of its peristyle had been closed in, they were struck by Beau Fort’s similarity of plan, scale, form, and overall character to their own house in Oregon.  

The largest known house constructed in the Willamette Valley in the mid-nineteenth century, the Case House measures about 70 x 100 feet including the woodshed. The main rectangular block (with the pedimented ends) was made up of six small bedchambers, three on either side of an axial barrel-vaulted hall, with two parlors separated by back-to-back chimneys. To one side projects an ell containing a dining room and a kitchen. Beyond the kitchen and continuing the ell is the huge woodshed. Particular care was exercised in positioning windows and interior doors in line with each other, facilitating cross ventilation. Floors are laid of straight-grain fir.

The lumber and iron nails used in its construction were all produced on the property. The brick was also made on site and used in the three fireplaces, the 20 x 40 foot cellar (laid in American bond), the foundation support piers, the well, and in the stove of the wash house that once abutted the southwest corner of the peristyle. (Only the brickwork of the well and stove survive.) The house is of hewn braced frame construction, with finely fitted horizontal boards making up the exterior sheathing. There are multiple exterior doors and tall, thin-muntined, six-over-six double-hung windows. The ceiling members span the breadth of the building and are cantilevered over the exterior wall out to the peristyle.

The interior partition walls are built with single boards, carefully fitted in a molded channel at ceiling and floor. Case hired a local cabinetmaker to build furniture, fabricate fireplace surrounds, and execute the many Greek Revival-style two-panel doors found throughout the house and in the cupboards. The distinctive 20-inch high
bottom door rail matches the height of the wainscot in the adjoining walls. Ceilings are painted wood. Though comparatively plain in ornament, the house with its large rooms, high ceilings, tall windows, and obvious attention to detail, has a decided elegance. Case's innovation, skill, and otherwise careful planning is indicated in the unusual taper of the roof rafters which are 8" deep at the wall but are reduced to 4" in depth at the ridge. This is a framing detail characteristic of work throughout Oregon.

Wallace Huntington, landscape architect, and Mirza Dickel, interior architect, purchased the Case House in 1976 with 7-1/2 acres of land. Regrettably, the house and property had been neglected for generations. Most of the outbuildings had collapsed or were in need of full reconstruction; the house was also in a very dilapidated state. Appreciating the historic and architectural significance of the property, the couple undertook painstaking restoration. The exterior walls, protected by the peristyle, were found to be sound and still so true that Huntington's carpenter could find only a one-inch variation in the entire length of the house. All of the original thirty-one columns were saved. The necessary new wood elements were specially cut at the Yoder Mill. A centralized heat-pump heating and air conditioning system was installed, but so as not to place the exterior condenser units outside the house, where they would clash with the period architecture, they were lowered into unobtrusive wells under the floor of the peristyle. Assisted by architect Charles Gilman Davis, A.I.A., of Portland, a modern bath and dressing rooms were created from three of the six bedrooms. Modern conveniences were sensitively added by Lyle Warren to the kitchen, and the smokehouse was rebuilt using original materials. After careful analysis the house was repainted its unusual but original red color. Upon completion, Dickel and Davis won an unprecedented joint A.I.A. award for the restoration.13
Notes

1Thornton quoted in Marilyn Schafer, "Greek Revival on French Prairie," *House and Garden*, (September 1986): 142.

2Research and draft text by Sandy Burke.

3See the discussion of the Case farm complex in Vaughan and Ferriday, eds., *Space, Style and Structure*, 1: 116-18, 130-133.

4Wallace Huntington and Mirza Dickel, interview by Sandy Burke, 16 November 1996, Case Farm near Champoeg, Oregon. Information concerning the building dates gleaned by Mr. Huntington from Case family letters.

5H.S. Lyman, "Reminiscences of Wm. M. Case," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 1 (September 1990): 269-70.


7Hartwig.

8Lyman, 277; Marion County, Oregon Court, An Outline History of the Marion County Court (Salem: Marion County, Oregon Court, 1962), 37.


10Hartwig.


The Settlement of Champoeg

The Case House, and numerous other farms in the 1850s, were built near the existing settlement of Champoeg which aspired to become a major town on the Willamette. It was never to be and today only a twentieth-century log cabin and some survey posts mark the location of this town.

Understanding the derivation of the name Champoeg is instructive. The origin of the word is greatly disputed, with some individuals claiming it comes directly from language of the local Indians, while others claim it is purely French, and still others state that it is a combination of both the Kalapooya Indian and French languages. Louis Labonte asserted that the name was derived solely from the Kalapooyan language, using the common prefix cham and the word poeg which referred to po-wet-sie, a plant similar to camas the Indians found in abundance there.1 However, those in favor of a strictly European derivation claim Champoeg is a corruption of an old French designation for the surrounding area: Campment du Sable or Champment Sable.2 Another common assertion is that the name is a combination of the French term champ, meaning field, and the Indian word pooitch.

The region has a long history of Indian habitation prior to the arrival of European and American explorers in the Willamette Valley. Twenty bands of Indians, known collectively as Kalapooya or Kalapooia, lived in the Willamette Valley upriver from the falls at Oregon City. The tribal population is difficult to ascertain but estimates place it in the range of 3,000 individuals.3 Because the Champoeg area was close to the borders of the Kalapooya territory, it was used as a trading spot by local tribes.4 For the Kalapooya people, the Champoeg region was significant since it was at the center of a network of trails that brought goods and information. With the arrival of the Europeans and later the Americans, Champoeg continued in its role as a primary location for meeting and trading in the Willamette Valley.

During the early 1800s British and American fur companies trapped and hunted throughout the Willamette Valley. Both groups of trappers set up many trading posts in the valley, including one
of permanence, McKay's Old Fort or the Willamette Post, established around 1813-14 by Astor's North West Company between present-day Champoeg and Newberg along the banks of the Willamette River. Just as Champoeg had been a central meeting point for the Indians, McKay's Old Fort was a nexus for the fur trade.

In addition to the trappers working directly for the fur companies, there were also a number of independent free-lance trappers present in the Willamette Valley. Many of these free-lance trappers were French-Canadians formerly associated with the Pacific Fur Company, and in spite of their frequent trapping forays they began to establish more or less permanent residences throughout the French Prairie area. Champoeg's transition to a farming community began when three of these independent trappers, Etienne Lucier, Joseph Gervais, and Jean-Baptiste Desportes McKay, abandoned the declining fur trade to settle in the region. Lucier was raising horses several miles upriver from present day Champoeg as early as 1826. By 1827, Gervais had staked out a claim further south toward Salem, but whether he occupied the claim permanently at that time, or merely used it as a temporary camp, is unknown. McKay was trapping throughout the valley as early as 1825, but by 1830 or 1831 he had established a full-time residence on the south bank of the Willamette just west of the future Champoeg townsite. In time, all three men began farming their claims, primarily growing wheat which they sold to the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver or to the Methodist missionaries who had settled near Salem. McKay's farm served as the main point of entry to Champoeg and the rest of the French Prairie by providing a landing for the boats which brought supplies from Oregon City and Fort Vancouver and for those transporting wheat back to those cities.

The subsequent influx of American settlers in the French Prairie area caused increasing squabbles over property law, since the entire region was occupied jointly by Great Britain and the United States. Which legal system

took precedence? In many cases, decisions were rendered by McLoughlin for the English Hudson’s Bay Company, or by the Methodist missionaries, since they were the only American authorities in the territory. To decide minor issues the settlers often held community meetings where problems were discussed and resolved. Repeated attempts to set up a limited government led to fights between the U.S. and British factions, stalling any resolution.

The Methodist missionaries were the first to make a formal attempt at the formation of a government by petitioning U.S. Senator Linn in 1838, and again in 1840 and 1843. At Champoeg, events came to a head with the demise of Ewing Young in 1841, for Young left a large estate but no heir. Once again a community meeting was called to resolve the handling of his estate which led to an attempt to establish a system of government and provide military protection. Although this meeting resulted in no clear settlement of the governance issue, it soon lead to further and more productive meetings. The pivotal gathering took place on May 2, 1843. There were by this time about 83 French-Canadian families, and perhaps 130 Americans, totaling perhaps 215 adult males equally divided between those of French heritage and those from the United States.

On May 2 about 100 men gathered to again tackle the governance question. A committee report was read, discussion ensued and disagreement mounted, such that “considerable confusion existed in consequence.” Amidst the din, the secretary for the meeting, George LeBreton, called for those present to divide themselves among those in favor of an American-based community government and those opposed. Exasperated, the grizzled mountain man Joe Meek rose and boomed out: “Who’s for a divide. All for the report of the committee and an organization follow me!” The group divided, and a head count showed those in favor of the American government had narrowly carried the vote; most of the French-Canadians voted against, but not all. The matter was settled and over the next few years efforts were mounted to get the United States to recognize Oregon as an American colony and to annex the territory. Soon after its formation at Champoeg, the fledgling government relocated to Willamette Falls (Oregon City).
Casper Zorn Farm Site Plan

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<td>Greenhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Machine Shed</td>
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drawing: Linda Babetski

BUILDING at the END of the OREGON TRAIL
Portland, Oregon
Farm residence of Casper Zorn, Champoeg, Marion County, Oregon, showing the original H-shaped plan (lithograph: Edgar Williams, Illustrated Historical Atlas Map Marion and Linn Counties, 1878).

Casper Zorn Farmhouse and Granary

Two of the early settlers in Champoeg were John Hoefer and Casper Zorn who arrived during the 1850s. Hoefer arrived in Oregon from New Orleans in 1852 and was listed in the official census of 1860. Zorn arrived two years later. By 1862 the two men had acquired an interest in the Champoeg Mill situated on Champoeg Creek a little over a mile east of the townsite. The Champoeg Flour Mill stood at a location just east of Champoeg Creek where present-day Champoeg Road crosses the creek. Zorn sold his interest in the mill in 1876. The mill operated into the 1930s but was abandoned after 1944 and later demolished; a fragment of a concrete foundation wall survives just east of the modern bridge. (The small l icy decorated Eastlake house above the mill site is believed to have been erected about 1869.)

By 1878 Hoefer and Zorn had acquired 146 acres around the mill, and within a decade they had acquired other large portions of the original Robert Newell land claim. By 1909, when

The Zorn House combines elements of vernacular, Southern Greek Revival, and Gothic Revival design traditions, the Southern references apparently derived from Hoefer's and Zorn's early years spent in New Orleans.
Hoefer died, he and his partner had reassembled virtually the entire original Newell Donation Land Claim of roughly 640 acres, measuring one mile square on the south banks of the Willamette.

In the southeastern corner of the reassembled property, just off the Champenog-Oregon City Road (today Champenog Road), on the rise of a hill overlooking Champenog Creek, Casper Zorn set up a farm, building together with Hoefer the initial portion of a farmhouse in 1867-70. By 1896 Zorn had also moved a granary from near the second Newell House to a location north of the house, opposite the entry drive to the house.

The Zorn House combines elements of vernacular, Southern Greek Revival, and Gothic Revival design traditions, the Southern references apparently derived from Hoefer’s and Zorn’s early years spent in New Orleans. Zorn left New Orleans, crossed the Isthmus of Panama, and sailed to Oregon in 1854; soon after he became Hoefer’s brother-in-law. Over the years the Zorn House was enlarged so that today it has fourteen rooms and measures 80 feet in length and 49 feet in width at the widest point. Originally it had a smaller H-shaped plan, with two-story end wings connected by a central one-story section. The principal expansion occurred in 1880, when the western kitchen portion of the house was shifted laterally and the central one-story connector given a second floor, resulting in an L-shaped arrangement. At the same time the long 42-foot north porch was added, with its square posts embellished with classical capital-like details. The newer portions of the house have somewhat wider siding boards, produced from fir trees on site. The square nails were also produced locally. The Southern connection is said to be evident in the detailing of the operable window shutters.

The next major addition, in 1896, was built adjacent to the house: the four-story windmill and water tower which provided running water for the house (the fan of the windmill was destroyed in a wind storm of 1962). At the same time an ornate bell cupola was placed atop the house to call farm hands for lunch. Both tower and bell housing have Eastlake detailing. The windmill tower is a substantial structure in its own right, measuring 20-feet square at the base and rising three stories. The middle level has a steeply pitched and flared shingle roof.
The granary just north of Champoeg Road today is the focal point of “Generations,” a nursery business operated by descendants of the Zorn family. The granary, relocated to the Zorn property about 1890, contains elements of a granary originally built near the second Newell House about a mile to the west. It is believed to be the oldest surviving granary in the state. The internal structure employs girts, floor joists and posts left in the round. No longer used as a granary, it still retains many of its bins, chutes and some of the belt-driven machinery. Today the older parts of the building are masked by additions made in the 1940s.

Section through Zorn grain elevator building - right. Note underground grain bin. First level plan - below (drawings: Steven Blashfield, 1997).
Robert Newell and the Development of the Town of Champoeg\textsuperscript{10}

Robert Newell, a former trapper in the Rocky Mountains and a relatively recent arrival, was one of the participants and recorders of the meetings to set up the first government. He quickly became a respected local figure. Between May of 1843 and February of 1844, Newell acquired Walter Pomeroy's land claim, which included the lower portion of Champoeg Creek and the mill started by Webley Hauxhurst in 1835. Newell built a house and barn a quarter of a mile south of the river and began cultivating fields of wheat to support his family. His farming activities continued until 1844 or 1845 when he felt the desire to lay out a townsite, as was occurring at so many places elsewhere in Oregon. Newell formed an association with his neighbor André Longtain to create and promote the town of Champoeg. In a failed attempt to lure back the provisional government and increase the stature of the settlement, Newell offered the legislative body a full city block and thirty additional lots if they would relocate to Champoeg. In 1849, Robert Newell left his family to work the California gold mines.\textsuperscript{11} Upon his return in 1850, he fueled the development of Champoeg through the construction of a general store, warehouse and the initiation of a wheat-selling business. With J.P. Crawford as a partner, Newell also opened the first mercantile store in Champoeg. Finally, in 1854 Newell built a new house for his family one-quarter mile southwest of town at the edge of a higher bluff.

\textit{The newly-platted town of Champoeg, about 1852} (drawing: Oregon State Highway Department, 1967).
Champoeg also received a boost to growth in 1851 with the advent of steam navigation on the Willamette River above Canemah-Oregon City. The heavy water traffic used Champoeg as a terminus since the river above that point was so much swifter and winding that passengers found it more convenient to travel by land if they needed to go further south. The main steamboat landing was also utilized as a ferry landing to transport people and goods across the river.\(^{12}\)

Although the town already existed, it was not until 1853 that it was officially surveyed and the plan filed in the office of the County Recorder of Marion County. In a show of faith in the small community, John McLoughlin purchased an entire block as well as several other lots along the riverbank. In 1855 Newell made one last improvement to his town when he constructed the Champoeg Flour Mill. Located at the junction of Champoeg Creek and Case Creek the mill provided a much-needed service at the heart of the Willamette Valley's best wheat-growing region, and within a few years it occupied a prominent place in the local economy.

Even at its height Champoeg was no more than a very small town. The 1860 census lists only 60 people working in the local area and never more than a few of the surveyed blocks were ever built upon. The potential of Champoeg to become a major commercial center in the valley came to an abrupt end during a single night early in December 1861. At the end of November that year, during a winter which was significantly wetter than normal for

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*The Champoeg area after the flood, about 1878 (drawing: Oregon State Highway Department, 1967).*
Oregon and the entire western coast, rising temperatures caused
the mountain snow pack to melt and sent water raging into the
Willamette Valley. From December 2-6 the flooding at Champoeg covered the bottomlands to a depth of seven feet and the torrent washed away the entire town. Mrs. S.A. Clarke had visited the town just prior to the flood and again just after; she recalled:

... after the flood, one saw only drifting sand, and land de-
nuded of its soil [that] marked the abandoned townsite. What
a visitation it must have been, when a single night swept off
every sign of habitation, or place of trade, leaving not a foun-
dation, even, to be identified with the past! Many lives were
lost in that night of sorrow as well as great destruction of
property.

The obliteration of the town was devastating and many resi-
dents left shortly afterward. Those few who remained rebuilt near
Newell's house on the bluff, although several warehouses and
docks were rebuilt near the river. Newell was financially ruined
by the flood but remained at Champoeg long enough to assist his
neighbors, providing many of them shelter for months until they
reestablished themselves. Shortly thereafter Newell left for Idaho
were he sought to rebuild his fortune.

After the terrible winter of 1861, Champoeg, though still
valuable as a shipping port, never regained its former vitality.
By 1880 the steamboat was in decline as a means of transportation as the railroads began to carry freight. Then in 1890, the
Willamette River flooded once more. This time, the river peaked
at a height just two inches lower than it had in 1861 and once
again the current swept away the remaining structures in the
bottomlands. This final disaster made it clear that revitalizing
Champoeg was hopeless and by 1892 the townsite was aban-
doned. Today the momentous political events which transpired
at Champoeg are memorialized by a stone monument that was
placed on May 2, 1901 at the location of the eventful meeting of
1843. Gradually property around the old town site was acquired
by the state to create a park commemorating the state's begin-
nings. Then in 1928-31 the Daughters of the American
Revolution raised funds to build a log structure recalling the first
state house and honoring Oregon's pioneer mothers.
The Donald Manson Barn

One of the early buildings in the area to survive the two devastating floods is the Donald Manson Barn, one of Oregon’s oldest examples of a pioneer barn. Donald Manson was born about 1798 or 1799 in Scotland and was apprenticed to the Hudson’s Bay Company when he was 17. He worked at the American headquarters in the Lake Winnipeg area near Hudson’s Bay. He helped explore the Pacific coast country, and was eventually sent to the company’s new Columbia River headquarters at Ft. Vancouver. He was eventually made Building Operations Supervisor there and changed the location of Ft. Vancouver from high ground to nearer the river where the city of Vancouver now stands. In 1828 he married Felicité, the daughter of ex-trapper Etienne Lucier who had already established himself in the French Prairie area just west of Champoeg.

Though based at Ft. Vancouver, Manson traveled widely on company business until 1839, when he returned to Scotland for a two-year visit with his parents. Dissatisfied with prospects for advancement in the company, Manson decided to settle near his father-in-law. He returned to Champoeg in 1857 to Newell’s new town in which Newell himself was losing interest. Manson met with Newell and bought the agricultural heart of Newell’s lands. Manson, like so many others, was nearly ruined by the flood of 1861, but he was able to start over, acquiring additional land higher on the bluff next to the road, and building there a house, a barn and several other outbuildings over the years.

The T-shaped Manson House, of box construction and sheathed in vertical board and batten siding, regretfully burned in 1931, but the barn, just a few yards to the east and now one of the oldest in the state, survives. The date generally attributed to the Donald Manson Barn is 1862, but there has been some confusion over the source materials of the building, and some questions concerning the rapidity of its construction. Physical evidence in the barn itself suggests different hewing techniques — some of the supporting members are very roughly hewn, while others are carefully squared. This may indicate the work of two different
workers. In the Manson Barn the rough hewing is associated with nailers and the more careful hewing is associated with columns, top plates and rafters.

The barn, never moved from its present foundations, was constructed to accommodate the threshing of grain. It is 30' x 40', with double outward-opening doors on the long sides of the barn. Below the doors were ramps enabling a wagon to be driven inside the barn for off-loading of grain. There were two lofts on either side of the main floor used for storage of unthreshed grain while the lower floor was used as a threshing platform.

About 1910, the building was converted into a shelter for cattle. Three of the four sides of the barn were extended and a standard cupola was added. The floor structure was removed along with the doors, hinges, sill joist, and siding. At this point the lofts were not used since the floor was used as a mow.

In the 1930s, the barn was damaged by the elements and the south bent was falling in and needed jacking up. It was stabilized and the building was repaired using materials from the farm, hewn by the then-owner Joe Zorn. The replacement hewn loft joists, however, came from the Red Barn, a structure associated with the Newell House. Then, in the 1950s, the barn was again converted to house sheep.

In 1962, the year of the barn's 100th anniversary, the infamous Columbus Day Storm, with winds of over 100 miles per hour, tore off siding and roofing. The legend developed that owner Joe Zorn was able to save the only remaining original full-length member by chaining it down. But Jim Bader, Park Manager of the Champoeg State Park which now administers the site, and who is familiar with old barn construction, is convinced that most of the underlying structure of the barn is indeed original.

In 1992 the barn's historic significance prompted the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to award two grants of $10,000 for successive phases of restoration. The work is now
nearing completion. A small amount of interior work is still needed, but almost all of the structural reconstruction is complete. On the back of the barn, a small lean-to shed is also being reconstructed. The historical basis for this addition comes not only from period photos, but from evidence on the barn structure. The addition was clearly used for storage of some sort, but its exact purpose is unclear.

It is hoped that more research can be done to determine more accurately the exact age of materials used to construct the barn. An old-growth Douglas fir, over 200 years old, has fallen nearby and it is hoped that tree-ring analysis in comparison to the wood of the barn will fix dates for some structural members. Future work will also include grading of the land so that it more closely matches the original contours. An interpretive pioneer community is planned to be centered around the barn and should be finished in 1997.

Present-day Champoeg State Park (drawing: Oregon State Highway Department, 1967).
Notes

1 Louis Labonte was the son of an Astorian and lived in the Champoeg area from 1831-1834. See John A. Hussey, *Champoeg: Place of Transition, A Disputed History* (Portland, OR, 1967), 19.

2 Hussey, 18.


4 Hussey, 17.

5 Hussey, 34.

6 Hussey, 47-55.

7 Quoted from the minutes of the meeting in Hussey, 153.

8 Hussey, 192.

9 Information drawn from National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, Oregon SHPO office, Salem, prepared by Catherine Zorn, September 1979.

10 Research and draft text on Newell, Champoeg, and the Manson Barn by Kendra Carson, Erich Karp and Darren Schmidt.

11 Hussey, 203.

12 Hussey, 205.


14 Oregon Historical Society, Scrapbook, p. 49. quoted in Atherton, 4.

15 Research and draft text by D. Schmidt. Sources consulted include:


Schmidt interview with Jim Bader, Champoeg State Park Manager, November, 1996.

*Historic Champoeg* (Champoeg: Park Commission, State Printers, 1936).


Inchinnan Farm

Day 1 - June 12, 1997

"I have lived through much, and now I think I have found what is needed for happiness. A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbor - such is my idea of happiness."

- Leo Tolstoy.

Family Happiness
Inchinnan Farm

Key | Building                  | Key  | Building                  
----|---------------------------|------|---------------------------
1   | 1860 Farmhouse            | 5    | Hops Barn                 
2   | Caretakers Cottage        | 6    | Filbert Orchard           
3   | Red Barn                  | 7    | Landing Site              
4   | Tractor Shed              | 8    | Original Red Barn Site    

Willamette River

Property Line
Early Agriculture in Oregon

The original landscape of the Willamette Valley, with its mild climate, consisted of tall grasslands in valley bottoms and oak-park lands on the foothills. The grass was annually regenerated by Indian burning to facilitate the hunting of deer by denying them extensive protective cover. The native peoples also gathered grasshoppers, wild honey, sunflower seeds and wild wheat (tarweed). For the French-Canadian ex-trappers, and then the Americans who moved in among them, the many open prairies of grassland, with interspersed pockets of timber, were perfect for setting up farms. The open grasslands precluded laborious clearing and, because of the mild climate, winter housing and feeding of livestock were largely unnecessary. Ex-trapper Etienne Lucier seems to have been the first Euro-American settler in 1830; by 1833 there were eight or nine farms on the Willamette. By the autumn of 1839 there were 50 to 60 farms on the Willamette and by 1845 the Willamette Settlement extended sixty miles upstream from Willamette Falls along both sides of the river.  

The most common crops grown on these subsistence farms included Irish potatoes, cabbages, peas, turnips, onions, parsnips, etc.  

For the French-Canadian ex-trappers, and then the Americans who moved in among them, the many open prairies of grassland, with interspersed pockets of timber, were perfect for setting up farms.
tomatoes, and carrots. Corn was grown only for roasting ears, and string beans were dried for winter use. Besides these food crops, most farmers raised their own tobacco and grew chicory as a coffee substitute.

A farmer was lucky to open up 16 acres a year to cultivation. The 1850 agriculture census indicates that even after several years residence, most farmers had improved less than eighty acres of their claims. Several factors accounted for the small acreage. From a strictly technological standpoint, the plows were inefficient and easily broken. Also, they were drawn almost exclusively by oxen, the same animals that had recently hauled the immigrants' wagons across the continent. After the long journey, and the rigors of a winter spent in the open, many of these beasts were so weakened that they were incapable of performing heavy labor for extended periods of time. Still another element was the limited amount of wheat available for planting. In an economy where many early settlers lived on the verge of starvation, only so much seed could be saved. For impoverished newcomers this was especially true, and it was only by the strictest conservation that even fifteen or twenty bushels of this vital resource remained for planting the first crop. Gradually wheat, oats, and barley became the principal trading grains, with most farmers growing vegetables for their own use.

By 1850 many of the more improved farms also had young orchards, but except for the older plantings of the French Canadians, few trees had matured sufficiently to bear more than a token harvest. Apple, peach and pear were the most common, and all were grown from seeds. Opinions varied as to the proper methods of cultivation — at first the farmers, who were used to harsh eastern winters, thought that fruit trees could not be raised from seeds without colder temperatures. Also, it was widely believed that because of the tremendous numbers of rodents in Oregon, seeds had to be planted on islands to survive. As a consequence, the establishment of orchards was somewhat retarded.

Hops Cultivation in Oregon

Hops represent an extreme example of a specialty crop. There is essentially only one use for hops: as a flavoring agent in the production of malt beverages. (A very small amount of hops is used today to manufacture pharmaceutical products and perfumes.) No substitute product exists from which brewers can impart the flavor of hops in the beer brewing process. In fact, brewers are so concerned about maintaining a consistent taste and character in their beers that they strive to use the same quantity and quality of hops for each brand of beer they produce.

The volume and cost of hops are very small relative to the finished product. One pound of hops provides flavor for more than 1,300 12-ounce bottles of beer. In 1980, about 30 cents worth of hops were utilized in each barrel brewed, which represented 331 12-ounce bottles of beer. Hops, therefore, represented .09 of a cent, or $.0009 in the total cost of a 50-cent bottle of beer.

At the farm level, hops are a perennial crop, with several years required to bring a hops yard into full production. Capital investment costs are high for field trellising systems, the most distinctive above-ground feature of hops fields. A regular grid of 10-12" poles, perhaps 12 feet high, carries a
network of crisscrossed tightly stretched steel cable. Twine is strung from the hops on the ground up to the cables overhead, and during the summer the hops vines climb the trellis. A single vine can reach 25 feet, growing six inches a day. By the end of summer the fields are opaque with the deep green curtains of the dense hops vines. The hop plant is unisexual, with male and female flowers on separate plants. When fertilized, the ovaries of the female flowers greatly enlarge and the flower can become 2 inches long. It is the harvested and dried female flowers that are the commercial product.

Harvesting was once an extremely labor intensive operation, with thousands of people being hired to pluck the mature flowers in late August or early September. Indians came to the fields, and entire families went to pick, viewing this as a camping outing in the last dry days of summer. Tent cities would be put up by growers. Once picked, the succulent flowers, containing up to 80 percent moisture, must be dried and the water level lowered to 10 to 12 percent. This is where the hops barn played a crucial role, providing a place where this drying could be done. After drying the hops were pressed into bales for shipment.

Currently, Oregon produces about 17% of this country’s hop harvest. Hop acreage in this country has concentrated in the Pacific Northwest (especially Washington at 74% of the harvest) because mildew diseases limits yields in more warm and humid climates. This disease problem has contributed to acreage shifts from Oregon and California to Washington and Idaho during the past 30 years, further contributing to the loss of older hops barns.

Oregon’s Early Hop Farmers

Hops are known to have been grown for domestic use in a number of locations in Oregon Country in the first half of the nineteenth century, but not until the second half are the crop records clear. Nearly five hundred pounds, approximately two and a half bales, were recorded in the 1859 census, so a least one or two farmers must have recognized their importance. The first grower to claim the distinction of having planted the earliest commercial hops farm in Oregon was William Wells of Buena Vista, Polk County. Wells began production in 1867, but his fields remained small and his activity did not inspire much emulation.9 Other experiments were tried about the same time. In 1867, Adam Weisner emigrated from Wisconsin to Oregon and settled in Buena Vista, planting hop roots he had brought with him from Wisconsin. Although he had gone to considerable expense, Weisner’s attempt failed. He sold some roots to George Leasure, who planted them in the spring of 1869 in the Willamette River valley near Eugene. This was the beginning of a yard that bore hops for over thirty years and was often referred to as the earliest in the state.

The Willamette River valley became one of the most active hops-growing regions in the United States. The crop was raised on the river bottoms and on the shelves on either side above the flood plain. The early fields were modest in size. Farmers found that if they planted hops along with their other crops, they needed only to employ local labor and could take advantage of favorable market conditions.
to export their crop. San Francisco was then the closest market. Hayden & Lincoln, dealers of that city, offered a first prize of twenty dollars in gold at the 1876 Oregon State Fair for the best ten pounds of hops grown, cured, and pressed in Oregon.

Oregon's hops production statistics were very promising during the late nineteenth century. In the 1880 census, Lane County was clearly the leader, with 143 acres under cultivation, producing 99,298 pounds. Marion, Linn, Clackamas, and Polk counties were in the next class, although each had an average of only about 30 acres in bearing.9

The story of the rise in Oregon's commercial production can be traced in the history of the Seavey family. Alexander Seavey, a sailor, packtrain driver, and pioneer merchant of Lane County, took up farming in 1855. Seavey began raising hops about 1877, and by the turn of the century had one hundred acres in production near Springfield. More impressive, however, were the holdings of his three sons, Jesse, John, and James. The last, in particular, became well known as a Portland-based dealer and owned five ranches in Washington, Clackamas, Lane and Benton counties.

By the turn of the century the four principal hops marketing centers were Eugene, Salem, and Independence, all on the Willamette River, and Grant's Pass, on the Rogue River. Independence claimed the title of "Hop Center of the World," largely due to the enormous fields at "Bird Island," made up of the Horst and Hirschberg ranches. Lane County was left behind, since Marion and Polk counties soon contained over half of Oregon's acreage and their share increased to three-quarters by 1919. In Polk County about twenty-five hops houses were erected in the 1894 season alone.

These counties thrust the state to the forefront of hops production. Oregon ranked first in the United States from 1905 until 1915 and again from 1922 until 1943, when it was superseded by Washington state. The number of Oregon growers doubled from 1919 to 1929 and, by developing foreign markets, hops growers were able to plant their peak acreage in 1935, when nearly 26 million pounds of hops were harvested. By 1939 approximately half of all American hops were being grown in Oregon, and the other half was about equally divided between Washington and California.

Perhaps the most important lesson twentieth-century hop growers have learned is their near-complete dependence upon the international market. The flow of American hops increased when the production in Europe was slowed. A small European crop in 1911 greatly enhanced the demand for the American product, and the price rose. World War I altered the price structure even further, so that by 1919 U.S. hops were selling at a high of a dollar per pound. The hostilities on the other side of the Atlantic meant that European hops fields were not being cultivated. After World War I, prohibition took hold in more and more states, counties and cities, yet the export demand for hops far exceeded the supply, and American hops growers received top prices for their crops from abroad, especially Germany and Austria.
Hops were brought in from the fields, taken up ramps and spread out in drying rooms (A). Fires were lit in Finerooms (B), and the rising heat dried the hops. The dried hops were pushed into the large wing of the barn (C) where they were bailed and stored. When it came time to ship, the wagons were loaded at the back shed (D). The wagons would travel around the barn through the passage (E) and proceed down to the landing at the river's edge. They would then return to reload. The upper diagram illustrates the relationship between the architecture and the topography. The barn is situated on the bluff so that the hops never have to be raised to the next space. This is the key to the siting and design of the barn as seen today (drawing: George Bleekeinan III).
The Hops Barn

Particular to hops agriculture is the special type of barn used for processing the crop. The traditional hops barn (or English “oast house”) was formed by a modular, nearly square bay, with a furnace below, and a hipped roof over the drying chamber, terminating in a tall slender vent stack or chimney. In some cases larger barns could be made up of two to four modules or cells built side by side. The barn had two levels, an upper level with a slotted floor, and a lower level housing furnaces which were fueled and fired to produce prodigious currents of hot air to dry the flowers spread out on the slotted floor above. The slots were wide and cheesecloth or burlap was fastened down to keep the flowers from falling through. After being heated, when the moisture level had dropped to the desired level, the desiccated flowers were moved to a cooling room and left to cure for up to 12 days, during which time the distinctive pungent oleoresinous compounds were formed. When sufficiently cured the hops would be pressed into bales of about 18 cubic feet (200 pounds) for shipment. In Oregon and Washington, where the greatest volume of hops have been raised, the hops flowers were dried in wooden barns heated by huge wood-burning stoves, and fires consumed many of the barns. With the switch to kiln drying during the twentieth century, the old hops barns, easily recognizable due to their tall vent stacks, have gradually disappeared, or a few converted to new uses.
Inchinnan Farm (once known as the Geer Farm) sits on a picturesque setting along the Willamette River (photo: courtesy of Peter McDonald).

Inchinnan Farm

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, agriculture changed from subsistence farming to more specialized growing of single cash crops such as hops. The next stop of this tour examines this change and introduces the unique hops barn. The site is on the north side of the Willamette River, slightly to the east, on what was one of the early Donation Land Claim grants. The route takes us west from Champoeg to the modern State Highway 219, north toward Newberg and bridging the Willamette. Watch for the historic plaque to the side of the road pointing out the approximate site of Willamette Post, the Astor fur-trading site.

The farm to be visited, called then the Geer Farm and today known as Inchinnan Farm, is southwest of Wilsonville in Clackamas County, and dates to the early settlement of Oregon. In 1846, Frederick W. and Mary Ann Geer left Connecticut for the west. They came via the Oregon Trail, leaving Independence, Missouri and slowly making their way to the Columbia River. Since the Barlow road around Mt. Hood was still being blazed, the Geers had to raft down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver. In 1850, when the U.S. Congress passed the Donation Land Claim
Inchinnan Farm

Act, the Geers claimed 635 acres along the Willamette River, on the north side of the river and a few miles down river from Champoeg. By 1856, Geer had subdivided the land and sold it. The 207-acre tract that now contains Inchinnan Farm was sold to John Hughes in 1856.

Hughes built the present farmhouse in 1860, and also logged the property of the Douglas fir that covered the site. (The three Douglas fir in front of the farmhouse are old growth and were left standing by Hughes.) The farmhouse survives but underwent a major renovation around 1890 and later had large plate glass windows installed (it will not be open to tour visitors). Hughes also planted the black walnut trees that are still standing on the property, with seeds brought by ship around Cape Horn. Hughes apparently suffered reverses, for in 1870 he lost the farm to John D. Crawford in a foreclosure. In 1883 the farm was sold to Solomon Galland, who died 4 months later, leaving no will. It was not until 1892 that probate was settled, and the farm was sold to Mary Herron for $2,600 at a sheriff’s sale. Herron then turned around and sold the farm to William Mackintosh for a profit of $3,400. (It should be noted that the historic name for the farm is the Hughes-Mackintosh Farm.) Presumably up to this point the crops raised were varied, although information is scant.

It was Mackintosh who began growing hops, which had emerged as an important cash crop for Oregon. Mackintosh began to specialize in this crop and erected three large double-bay hops drying barns, one of which survives. Mackintosh also later built the present large red horse barn which was moved in 1945 to its current location (see site plan). In 1904 Mackintosh sold the farm to Lee Mee Ginn, Wong Sue Lin, and Lynn S. Lee for $10,000. They operated under the business name Clackamas

Hops Barn Section
Drawn by: Steven Blashfield
Measurements by: ??
Hop Farming Company since at the time Chinese were barred from owning land in Oregon. They in turn sold the farm in 1921 to Ralph Williams, who continued hops production through prohibition and survived by exporting to England. (Note the stencil labeling tested on the barn walls which show a London destination.) During the Williams period the hops fields were gradually replaced by seed crops. By the time Williams sold the farm to Isaac Hunt in 1945, only a partial field of hops remained, and two of the three hops barns were already torn down. In 1956, the farm was sold to Sir James McDonald, the British counsel in Portland, who named it Inchinnan Farm, after his boyhood home in Scotland. It was McDonald who began the production of filbert nuts on the farm, a practice that McDonald’s son, Peter

*The Hops Barn at Inchinnan Farm is a double bay barn with two drying spaces. Originally a ramp connected to the two exterior doors from the ground so hops could be carried into the dryer (photo: courtesy of Peter McDonald).*
Inchinnan Farm

McDonald, continues today.

There appear to be some discrepancies in the acreage comprising the farm over the years. According to documents held by the Oregon Historical Society, the farm was 200 acres as it was repeatedly resold. When Williams sold the farm in 1945 to Hunt, the property was 200 acres. Yet the Metzgers Map, published in 1951, clearly shows the boundaries of Inchinnan Farm as it exists today, at roughly 60 acres. Nonetheless, a 1984 article on the Inchinnan Farm noted “53 acres of filbert orchards, 150 acres of grazing pasture, 50 acres of Christmas trees, and 200 acres of tree farms,” giving a total of 453 acres. The Clackamas County Historic Resources Inventory (1990) lists the farm’s size as 59.4 acres, occupying the same boundaries as the Hunt farm in 1951.

Inchinnan Farm stretches along the north bank of the Willamette River, sitting high on a bluff (see site plan). The topography of the site lent itself well to the processing of hops. There is a 90 foot difference in elevation between the edge of the river and top of the bluff. The remaining hops barn is a T-shaped, two-bay example, with the top of the T being the paired drying chambers, and the lower extension corresponding to the curing and baling area. When Mackintosh built his hops barns he used the topography to his advantage (at least as shown in the remaining barn); by situating the hops barn at the edge of the bluff, the hops could be brought in from the fields and carried up ramps to the two doors visible on the west side of the barn (the ramps have long since been removed). The hops would be dried on the upper floor, where patches of the burlap cloth used for drying are still visible, and then moved to curing platforms in the rear extension of the barn and eventually packed in bales. Hence gravity was exploited in moving the hops from step to step. From this point the processed and baled hops would be loaded into wagons which would then travel down a path to the steamship landing, where the hops could be loaded and shipped to Portland. The design of
the barn allowed for this easy processing, as well as loading, since
the wagons could be loaded at the east end of the barn, turn west
and pass back through the barn in a passage in the middle of the
barn. Since hops cultivation ended on the farm, the furnaces
have been removed from the lower level of the hops barn, neces-
sitating the addition of supportive braces. The unique hops barn
has managed to remain standing by having been adapted to house
cattle.

The exact locations of the other two hops barns is not known.
As can be seen in an aerial photograph from 1936, there are other
buildings on the farmstead that are no longer standing. Some of
these buildings may have been workers’ housing (urgently needed
during harvest time) and other outbuildings, but none have the
footprint of the traditional hops barns. Another aerial photograph
of 1982 shows the farmstead with some of the filbert orchards
established. It is interesting to note that you can “read” the origi-
nal Geer D.L.C., with roads as boundaries.

The Red Barn

Also built sometime between 1890 and 1904 was the large
horse barn, called the “Red Barn,” which originally stood just
east of the axis of the entrance drive. In 1945 it was moved
closer to the hops house and positioned at the edge of the bluff, forming a work yard between it and the hops house. The Red Barn is nearly square in plan and is capped by four tall gables, each as broad as the wall below. The ridge intersection is marked by a large octagonal cupola. The barn is constructed with a form of sawn-lumber balloon frame, not short dimension solid timbers; the siding is horizontal with corner and rake boards. Even more interesting are the interior posts, for they are laminated of three narrow boards. The horizontal plates, also sawn lumber, are continuous boards that run the full width of the barn, passing through the center of the built-up posts, achieving an unusual structural continuity. From the topmost plates, diagonal braces rise to a purlin extending mid-span under the roof joists. Throughout the barn, the sheer length of the knot-free structural members is impressive; this wood came from the kind of old-growth timber that is virtually impossible to obtain today. Today the horse barn is used for storage of various farm and household articles.

**Filbert/Hazelnut Agriculture**

Replacing hops agriculture at Inchinnan Farm has been the raising of filberts (hazelnuts). An equally specialized procedure, this requires the planting of orchards of carefully spaced trees, which begin to produce nuts in three years. When mature the trees can reach 25 or more feet and their branches form a solid canopy over the cleared aisles below. By mid-summer the open ground below the canopy is a series of dark tunnels. By the time
the orchards are mature, the leaf canopy is so dense that grass is seldom able to grow on the floor. Branches and other debris are kept swept up, so that the orchard floor can seem like a paved floor. This cleaning is done so that in the autumn when the nuts fall they can be quickly swept up, dried, and packed.

Filbert growing on a commercial scale began in Oregon just south of Springfield on the George and Lulu Dorris Ranch. The Dorrises bought the ranch in 1892, introducing filbert trees brought up from California in 1903. From there the production of filberts spread northward and has become well established in the upper valley. Filbert trees do extremely well in Oregon’s temperate climate which has minimal freeze and desiccation damage in the winter but yet provides a cool dormant period which the trees require. Unlike hops, filbert production requires little in the way of specialized architecture. Aside from buildings to shelter and protect farm machinery, little else is necessary other than the machinery for drying the harvested nuts; this can be seen at Inchinnan Farm on the east side of the Red Barn.

The Inchinnan Farm thus neatly encapsulates the history of early land division and farming in the Geer Donation Land Claim, a phase of specialized agriculture requiring highly adapted buildings, in hops agriculture, and the transition to filbert nut farming. It is especially fortunate that we are able to view Inchinnan Farm as it stands today, for the area immediately east of the farm, closer to Wilsonville, epitomizes suburban sprawl, with heavily detailed mansionettes dropped down on minuscule lots. Trophy country estates, the palatial getaways of computer and sportswear executives, are pushing out agriculture in this area, and can be seen west of Inchinnan Farm. Certainly the nearby presence of I-5 and its connection to Portland only encourages this kind of cancerous residential development. Our visit may have barely outrun the developers’ bulldozers.
Notes

1 Research and draft text by Tiger Grinnell.
2 Information here and in subsequent paragraphs adapted from James R. Gibson, Farming the Frontier, The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country 1786-1846 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1985): 129-37. Other sources include:

   Tom Gooding, Gooding West: A Family Saga of their Westward Migration (La Grande, OR: Palmer Particular Printers, 1988.)


4 Bowen, 74.
5 Bowen, 94.
6 Research and draft text by Tiger Grinnell.
7 Information here and in subsequent paragraphs adapted from Gooding, Tom, Gooding West, a Family Saga of their Westward Migration (La Grande, OR: Palmer Particular Printers, 1988): 245-60.
9 See Clair Cooley, “Remembering Lane County’s Hop Yards,” Lane County Historian 41 (Summer 1996); reminiscences of a woman who picked hops with her family in the Seavey fields early in this century; includes excellent photographs of the tent city for pickers and of multi-bay hops barns.
10 Tomlin, Tinged with Gold, 30-38.
11 Research and draft text by George M. Bleekman III with assistance from Rebecca Ossa and Emilie Blase.
12 Stephen J. Beard, “Country Classic,” 1984, p. 6. This article from an agricultural journal is held by Peter MacDonald who kindly made it available. Additional information came from the Oregon SHPO Historic Resources Inventory listing, from librarians at the Oregon Historical Society, and from various maps kept in the University of Oregon Map Library.
13 Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Dorris Ranch, Facility Development Plan, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Springfield, OR, 1986. The Dorris Ranch is now a public park but continues commercial production of nuts by means of a private grower who tends the trees and harvests the nuts. A portion of the proceeds fund operation of the park.
Tour Day Two: Columbia River, Hood River Valley, & Mount Hood,

*June 13, 1997*

The world is in motion. Tectonic plates drift across a spinning planet. Mountains are lifted up and eroded to the sea. Glaciers advance and retreat. All natural features move, but few natural features move so obviously as rivers.

The Columbia River

The second day of tours has a dual focus on the Columbia River and Mt. Hood; firstly, on the use of the river as means of transportation and, later, power, and secondly, on the use of the physical resources of the mountain and its valleys. The second day's tour takes us through the scenic Columbia River Gorge, the site of titanic struggles between earth and water, between forces at work for millennia. Forces pressed the land ever upward, and simultaneous rush of water from the east has insistently worn away the land as it forces its way to the sea.

The struggle takes place so slowly from the human time perspective that we give it little thought until a mountainside comes crashing down or a dormant volcano explodes and blows itself into dust. Even the river seems placid now, held back from its ancestral headlong rush by a staircase of dams until, that is, a season of pelting rain and rising temperatures sends its waters smashing and spreading across the human-occupied fields. This is a dynamic landscape.

The tour route begins in Portland on Interstate 84 (old U.S. 30) which heads for the Columbia River Gorge. The rich land east of Portland was once a fertile farming area, highly desirable to the first American settlers. Berry growing was widespread around the small town of Gresham in the 1930s, fourteen miles east of Portland's center and several miles south of the highway. Gresham is now an eastern suburb of Portland and the terminus of the new light rail system. Further on, about 12 miles from central Portland, is Fairview, named in 1855 and once a village surrounded by orchards, bulb farms, and a few suburban homes in the 1930s. Three miles further is Troutdale, located on the Sandy River, a major stream draining the northwest slopes of Mt. Hood. Once Troutdale too was a small agricultural center for fruit and vegetable growing, specializing in celery during the 1930s. The extensive agricultural character of the area and the distance from Portland (and hence lower land costs) made the area just south of Troutdale a natural choice for the relocation of the Multnomah County Poor Farm in 1911.
Edgefield

Day 2 - June 13, 1997

The town, largely occupied by butchers, meat-cutters, loggers and railroad workers, dangled at the end of the trolley line, a mile east of the Multnomah County Poor Farm. Weary of seeing buildings burn, Troutdale citizens had managed to acquire one modest two-story brick hotel. But, in 1911, workers came to the poor farm site with tons of bricks to raise the grand Georgian-style main building, now called Edgefield Lodge, and, behind it, a smaller but equally sturdy Power Station.

Sharon Nesbit, A History of Multnomah County Poor Farm and McMenamin's Edgefield
Mulnomah County Poor Farm

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Multnomah County Poor Farm

Poor Farms in Oregon

Early in its history, the territory of Oregon adopted laws ensuring support for “every poor person who shall be unable to earn a livelihood in consequence of bodily infirmity, idiocy, lunacy or other cause.” Poor laws passed in 1854 made county courts responsible for superintendence of the poor in their respective counties and allowed that “the county court of any county in this state may, if it thinks proper, cause to be built or provided ... work-houses for the accommodation and employment of such paupers as may from time to time become a county charge.” These laws provided the basis for all Oregon poor laws until the New Deal.

In the 1850s and 1860s the population in Oregon was growing rapidly, but total numbers were still small. During this time, most counties provided support for the poor through outdoor relief, providing food or monetary assistance directly to families in their homes. But as Oregon grew, the creation of centralized institutions for the care of the poor came to be seen as a more economical option. Some counties contracted local farmers or townspeople to administer relief to the poor. Often, these contractors would provide housing for the poor and might require
the poor to do farm work or other labor. Other counties constructed poor farms to provide a place for the poor to live and work. Not every county built a poor farm, but in 1927 at least 17 poor farms existed in the state.

These poor farms seem to have varied greatly in size and in quality of care. The State of Oregon conducted a survey of county farms in 1920 which lists poor farms as having anywhere from 278 to five residents. Acreage also varied greatly, with the largest farm having 330 acres and the smallest only two acres. Inspectors commented upon the conditions of living quarters for residents, and their comments ranged from “commodious and well suited” and “large, airy and well lighted” to “very dirty, infected with vermin” and “poorly constructed and are fire hazards.”

Little general information is available about the architecture of poor farms in Oregon. The 1920 survey briefly describes the Baker poor farm as an “old wooden house” and at the Clatsop county poor farm, “the buildings...are of concrete and very commodious and are well suited to the purpose intended.” Most poor farm buildings were probably fairly utilitarian in nature and would have included dormitory-like residential quarters, barns, sheds and other agriculturally related outbuildings.

The Multnomah County Poor Farm

As Portland grew, it was decided that a pauper’s farm was needed to provide relief to both the poor and to the county’s pockets. Portland’s first pauper’s farm was opened in 1868 in what is known as the West Hills. The farm’s 160 acres were bought by the county for $4,000. It was a grim and hopeless place, with alcoholism and sickness. The charity association movement decried its conditions. The county decided that a farm in the countryside outside Portland was needed.

In 1911 the Multnomah County Poor Farm was built on 330 acres outside Troutdale. The land was bought for $100,000, while the old West Hills farm, which later became exclusive residential neighborhoods, was sold for a profit of $154,000. The new county farm opened with 211 residents, seventy-five of whom were bedridden. In 1914 the farm housed 302 residents, plus a herd of cows, 100 hogs, and 420 chickens. The farm grew vegetables, fruit, hay and grain. Residents produced enough food to feed
themselves as well as the county jail, hospital and juvenile home; they showed a profit of more than $2,000 and again in 1918 a profit of $7,600. The farm was a success, totally self-sufficient and self-powered, and became "home" to many.

As time wore on the Poor Farm's role began to change. More and more of its residents were the old and ill. In 1934 an infirmary wing was added. At its peak in the Depression the poor farm housed more than 600 people. During the war years recuperating soldiers took refuge there. When the war ended farm residents began to take advantage of the new Social Security and welfare systems or began to search for higher paying jobs. The Multnomah County Poor Farm became home to the old and to those who had nowhere else to go. The herd of cows was sold in 1969, and slowly the farm as a self-sufficient entity was dismantled.

Architectural History

The two original buildings of the Poor Farm were the Main Lodge and Power Station built in 1911. The Craftsman style Administrator's House was built later in that same year. The Cannery, Duplex, Infirmary Wing of the Main Lodge, and many of the outbuildings were built later, as a result of the severe economic depression of the 1930s. The original land holding was 330 acres, making this the largest poor farm in Oregon.

The original buildings of the Multnomah County Poor Farm were built by the firm of Weber and Bridges in the Georgian Revival style made popular by the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876. Typical of the Georgian style, the main building is bilaterally symmetrical, has low-pitched hip roofs, a staircase leading to an elevated first floor, a prominent formal entrance with fanlights and dentil moldings. The Georgian style was both sturdy and stylish, giving the Multnomah County Poor Farm a dignified appearance that would last decades.
Main Lodge

The floor plan of the Main Lodge is typical of early institutional housing, organized in an “H” configuration around a central court. In order to allow for all rooms to have a window for ventilation, natural light and a view, the two-story wings of the “H” are composed of central halls with rooms on both sides. This plan creates a formal exterior, which helps define it as the focal point of the farm.

The belvedere or cupola located above the entrance is the most dominant feature of the building and originally contained a bell which called workers in from the fields. The Main Lodge’s notable decorative brickwork includes pebbled recessed crosses in the upper corners of the building and polychrome beltcourses at the second floor window heads, which in turn have radiating voussoirs with exaggerated, projecting keystones. At the center rear of the building, windows with fan lights indicate the location of the Day/Activity Room which was used as a chapel, theater and women’s dining room.
The east and west sides of this main residential building have identical double wood porches with classically inspired motifs including a grill balustrade, clustered rectangular columns set on wood piers, pilasters, and a prominent frieze.

Extremely plain compared to the exterior, the interior was more functional than decorative. Finishes are simple, common materials probably selected for durability and ease of maintenance, as well as compatibility with the ‘no frills’ philosophy of a Poor Farm. Common restrooms were located in each wing on each floor.

The third floor, an attic filled with wood columns that support the roof structure, at one time housed the overflow of residents. The north end of the main building wings and Infirmary basement was built half above-ground for light and ventilation.

The dining room on the main floor provides access to the Infirmary wing. Originally planned as a two story addition, it was completed as just a one-story building. Window sills of the would-be second floor are visible and bricked in.

**Power Station**

Exterior decorative motifs from the Main Lodge, such as the corner crosses, radiating voussoirs and quoining, are applied to the Power Station and provide continuity to the two separate buildings with completely different functions. The original Power Station sign still rests on the facade. A two-story gabled brick wing which now serves as a theater was added on the rear of the building. Further renovation was required after the interior of the building burned in 1988.

**Administrator’s House**

Constructed in the same year as the Power Station and Main Lodge, the Administrator’s House is built in the more residential Bungalow and Craftsman styles. Features of the Administrator’s House include the low-pitched gable roof, wood construction, exposed rafters, and decorative brackets, purlins and braces, as well as ten-over-one, double-hung windows, an asymmetrical plan, and a porch. One Chicago-style window is located on the facade to the left of the primary entry, and each gable end has a pair of multi-light casement windows with decorative heads. The
Administrator's House is the only building in the Complex to retain the original landscaping features with mature ornamental foundation plantings.

Numerous additions to the exterior sides and rear of this building have been built, including a large one and one-half story shed-roof attachment on the west side of the house and a one story addition on the east.

Cannery

Built around 1937, a one and one-half story wood-framed building which was originally the Cannery faces west across from the Power Station. Capped with a gable roof and a full-width hip-roofed porch supported by four simple rectangular posts, the cannery appears plain and industrial. The full porch protects an elevated concrete loading dock. The building's original meat locker and cold storage are used today for the on-site brewery.

Other buildings are scattered on the site, including a Colonial Revival duplex that was built c. 1940 but designed to fit in stylistically with the complex. A stable is located to the far south of the complex, south of the new Blackberry Hall built by McMenamins. Its gable roof projects in sections over three side window bays on both the north and south elevations. Other buildings were once located on the property, such as the de-lousing shed to the rear of the Main Lodge and the Incinerator building with its English Cottage style chimney. The chimney's wide base curves up to terminate in two flues. The Dairy barn, located behind the Power Station, has been torn down, but the silo remains. Many foundation elements from other razed buildings can still be found on the site.

The Later History of the Poor Farm

The farm and home functions were separated in 1960, expressing the deep-seeded change in image that had been developing for the past thirty years, if not more. At this time, the activities of the farm dwindled, and in 1962 the Oregonian reported that the poor farm needed "ambulatory old men" to work. The farm was officially shut down in 1964, and Edgefield Manor and
Lodge, a retirement facility, opened, the two parts jointly named Edgefield Center.

The Infirmary wing, now acting as a convalescent hospital, was joined with the main dormitory building to form the nursing home, or Edgefield Manor. A physical and occupational therapy program started in 1969, making Edgefield the first nursing home in Oregon to offer this kind of progressive therapy. The old tuberculosis hospital to the west of the complex housed emotionally disturbed children and was named Edgefield Lodge.

In 1975 the county decided to shut down the complex due to the expense of bringing the structures to modern building standards. A "Save Edgefield Manor" public campaign staved off the closure until 1982, when the last residents were moved out.

From 1982 to 1990, Edgefield suffered severe neglect and dilapidation. During this time a minimum security prison was built on part of the land holdings originally ascribed to the Poor Farm. Three years after closing the original buildings the county decided to raze all the buildings and put the land on the market for industrial buyers. In 1986 the Troutdale Historical Society, with the help of the Historic Preservation League of Oregon, challenged this decision. Using state preservation and land-use legislation, the Troutdale Historical Society convinced the planning commission and the city council to instate a historic zone change for the complex. As Edgefield continued to be threatened by several demolition permits, the historical society desperately tried to find a buyer who would respect its historical value. In 1990 Mike and Brian McMenamin, owners of the well-known McMenamin brew pubs of Oregon, bought the complex from the county for $500,000. At this time Edgefield was named to the National Register of Historic Places. The McMenamins had a

\[\text{First Floor Plan}\
\begin{align*}
&\text{Infirmary} \\
&(\text{drawing: Oregon SHPO Files}).
\end{align*}\]
grand plan of restoring and adapting the site to be a “village complex with music, food, lodging — a no-television, no-telephone, no-smoking retreat. . .”

Over the next four years, the restoration process began. The main dormitory was converted into a 100-room bed and breakfast inn, complete with large restaurant, gift shop, ballroom, and winery in the Infirmary wing. The walls of the inn are covered with murals composed by 24 local artists, all of which celebrate the history of the region, Poor Farm, nursing home, and the people who lived here. The Power Station was converted into a pub and theater, the Cannery became the brewery, and gardens and vineyards are now flourishing in the landscape. The incinerator was renovated and is now used as a brandy and cigar shack. The original silo, stable, and two outbuildings from the Poor Farm complex remain in disrepair. The McMenamins are planning on restoring these outbuildings in the near future for storage use. The foundations of the other farm structures, demolished in 1981, still stand to the southwest of the complex.

**Troutdale**

Troutdale, fifteen miles from Portland center and the entry point into the Gorge, was originally called Sandy, after the river that flows past its west flank into the Columbia. As that name became more associated with the other community closer to Portland, the name was changed to Troutdale about 1880 by Captain John Harlow, named for a pond he had near his home which was stocked with trout. When the Northern Pacific Railroad was built through the Gorge, the name became firmly established. Still a small community today, it is largely a manufacturing center. In the 1930s, however, it was a center for truck gardens, orchards, bulb gardens, and dairy farms.

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**Notes**

1 Research and draft text by Tracey Althans, Leslie Heald, Kailla Platt, and Mikayle Stole; written by Howard Davis.
Columbia Gorge
Day 2 - June 13, 1997

"The physical domain of the country had its counterpart in me. The trails I made led outward into the hills and swamps, but they led inward also. And from the study of things underfoot, and from reading and thinking, came a kind of exploration, myself and the land. In time the two became one in my mind. With the gathering force of an essential thing realizing itself out of early ground, I faced in myself a passionate and tenacious longing - to put away thought forever and all the trouble it brings, all but the nearest desire, direct and searching. To take the trail and not look back."

- John Haines

The Stars, The Snow, The Fire:
Twenty-Five Years in the Northern Wilderness
Rooster Rock is just one of the distinctive rock outcroppings along the Columbia River (Hines, An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, 1893).

The Columbia River Gorge: Of Rocks and Water

Beyond Troutdale to the east, the cliffs of the Columbia Gorge begin to rise, signaling a most unusual and dramatic landscape. The Gorge is the result of eons of action — the river cutting down, the mountains rising up. About 200 million years ago the southeastern quarter of Oregon was the edge of a continental shelf.\(^1\) By 150 million years ago the Pacific plate slowly pushed under the continental mass, causing the earth to wrinkle, buckle and rise, creating the Wallowas, the Blue Mountains, and the Klamath Mountains, what were then coastal mountain chains, but which today, considerably eroded, run across the state diagonally from southwest to northeast. Around forty million years ago a string of volcanoes formed an arc east of the Klamath mountains, running north and east toward the Blue Mountains. Then volcanic activity shifted to the west and the present-day Cascade Range began to rise in a series of eruptions that dwarfed the recent explosion of Mt. Saint Helens. About 25 million years ago,
however, the building of the Cascades dropped off significantly and a series of more fluid lava flows began to the east, between the Cascades and the older Blue and Wallowa mountains, layer upon layer oozing up from huge cracks, covering the older landscape in layers several thousand feet thick. Then, most peculiarly, about 12 million years ago volcanic activity shifted back to building up the Cascades. Meanwhile, the continuing easterly movement of the Pacific plate under the continental plate was slowly folding up the Coast Range mountains, starting at the southern end of the state around 50 million years ago and continuing northward so that the entire Coast Range was certainly present by 5 million years ago. The Willamette Valley, therefore, started as an inland bay between the rising Coast Range and the Cascades; gradually the underwater valley between the mountain chains was filled with lava flows and sediment, rising from the sea floor, likewise starting at the south end and working northward. By 15 million years ago the Willamette Valley was completely above water level, the Willamette River and its tributaries already beginning to wear down the sides of the Coast Range and the Cascades.

So much for the mountain building and the rising land. As the land began to rise, the river was started. The Columbia River, as it was shaped and reshaped by the ages of glaciation, begins at Columbia Lake in eastern British Columbia, 2,650 feet above the sea and 1210 miles from the mouth on the Pacific. It carries 222 billion cubic feet of water to the sea from a drainage area of 258,200 square miles, and is exceeded in its volume only by the Mississippi at New Orleans; it is described as the most powerful river in the U.S. Today its many dams produce one-third of all hydroelectric power in the United States. From Columbia Lake the river flows north for about 190 miles, turns sharply around the Selkirk Mountains in British Columbia and starts its flow south toward Washington and Oregon. The river flows south into Washington and then turns west into the center of the state but then continues south and east again, joining with its most significant eastern tributary, the Snake River, near the Oregon border at a point about 324 miles from the mouth. From this point the Columbia flows generally westward toward the Cascades. Even as the Cascades began to rise, the river was already cutting its channel through them. At Portland, about 106 miles above the mouth, the Columbia receives the waters of the Willamette and then turns north and west in an arc until it reaches
the sea. Despite the sediment the river carries from the entire northwest region, there is no delta, for the swift river current and the active Pacific currents prevent this, instead forming (before work by the Army Corps of Engineers), shifting and treacherous sandbars.

In recent geological times the Columbia has carried periodic catastrophic floods and has also been impounded by natural dams. During the period of glaciation, ice dams held back waters in Washington, forming vast glacial lakes in some areas, plugging the accustomed channels and forcing the river into new, elevated channels. One of these is the Grand Coulee in Washington, a flat dry elevated river bed, fifty miles long, 1000 feet deep, ranging from one mile to three miles in width, ending where the diverted river plunged over 400-foot cliffs. With warming at the end of each glacial period, the ice dams would weaken and then explode, releasing unimaginable torrents of water that scoured the landscape, creating the scablands of western Washington, and sending a wall of water down the Columbia that backed up into the Willamette Valley, and coincidentally deepening and widening the Gorge channel through the Cascades. This damming and flooding was repeated about forty times.

Other natural dams were made of earth. About 800 years ago a three-mile chunk of Table Mountain fell into the Columbia Gorge (near the present-day town of Cascade Locks) and blocked the river for a time, but eventually the waters broke through. In the end, the river always wins. Perhaps for a time the river undercut the slide, leaving a natural arch. Such a temporary link between the Washington and Oregon sides may be the basis for the local Native story of the Bridge of the Gods. This story relates that there was once such an arch over the river. Two brothers, Pahto and Wy’East, sons of the Great Spirit, lived in this area. They both became enchanted with the lovely Loo’wit and eventually began to fight over her, throwing fiery rocks at each other across the river, in the process knocking down the Bridge of the Gods. The Great Spirit was so provoked that he turned his two sons into the guardians of the river; Pahto became Mt. Adams on the Washington side, Wy’East became Mt. Hood, and Loo’wit was changed into Mt. Saint Helens. In this story lies a truth about the violent nature of the mountains, throwing out fiery rocks, a story that early Euro-American settlers gave little credence to but which was confirmed when Mt. Saint Helens exploded in
1980 and leveled the forested landscape to its north.

Where the river eventually cut through this massive slide from Table Mountain became the Cascades of the Columbia, one of several points along the river’s course marked by rapids and falls. Another was at The Long Narrows of The Dalles des Morts, near the present-day city of The Dalles, where the river cut a narrow channel through one of the basalt lava flows that had temporarily blocked its ancient path. Both these rapids are today flooded under the backwaters of dams.

These falls and rapids were the places where salmon were forced to leap up, from level to level, in their relentless compulsion to return to the gravel beds in the upper tributaries where they hatched, to spawn and create a new generation of fish. By the hundreds of millions they swam upriver in several waves during the cycle of the year. And at those appointed times, tribes from both sides of the river assembled to catch the salmon, dry the fillets, and trade them for goods brought in from the entire western area of the continent. Each tribe, each clan, each family had its accustomed rock outcrop from which to drop their dip nets; these were known by all who fished at these places. When the Celilo Falls at the The Dalles were about to disappear under the waters behind the dam there, Tommy Thompson, the eighty-year-old leader of the Celilo village wrote, “All these usual custom fishing places and rocks have names and I know all of them.” The Dalles was a major point of rendezvous, of social gathering.

The Columbia River Gorge also marks a sharp differentiation in climatological and botanical zones on its two banks. The walls, especially on the Oregon side, are so tall and steep that during the entire course of a year the sun never penetrates into many of the narrow ravines. In cool shade, and kept incessantly moist by the waterfalls that made them, these ravines have plant life that does not exist on the Washington side where the more sloped and much drier bluffs are constantly exposed to the sun.

For millennia, the river had meant fish and life to those who lived along it. In the nineteenth century, for the newly arriving Euro-Americans it also meant transportation, as portage railroads and then locks were built to permit stern-wheeler steam boats to carry wheat, fruit, and freight up the river and back. Over-fishing, with gills nets and fish-wheels, was already beginning to affect the health of the salmon when the great dams, built as pub-
Public works projects beginning in the 1930s, began the rapid decimation of their numbers. From the 33.9 million pounds of salmon caught and canned in 1880, the number had dropped to 23.8 million pounds by 1948. As logging, cattle grazing, industrial discharge, and other forces ruined spawning grounds, and as dams proliferated along the length of the Columbia, the catch in the river dropped to 10.9 million pounds in 1973. By 1993 the catch had dwindled to 1.4 million pounds, and in some upper tributaries such as the Snake the returning adults were so few that they were given nicknames. On one mid-summer day in 1994, at one observation point on the upper Columbia, only four Chinook salmon were counted. There are many fish in the river, but now they are non-commercial carp and shad, newcomers filling in the man-made piscatorial vacuum. As Richard White has commented: “If this were the old Columbia River system there should be salmon, but this is a different river. It is not the river the salmon evolved in.” It is a series of slack warm impounded lakes. It is a river diverted to serve commercial demands. The managers and engineers wanted the river and its watershed to say electricity, aluminum, lumber, cattle, wheat and fruit, but that means it can no longer say salmon.

When the dams were proposed in the 1920s and early 1930s, their potential for electrical power would clearly far exceed the demand in the northwest region. But with the dams came aluminum refining plants, well known for their ravenous appetite for electricity. And aluminum was vital for aircraft production in the northwest during World War II. Electricity was also vital for the refinement of plutonium for atomic weapons, as was vast quantities of cooling water, so the Columbia became the site of atomic weapon production too. After the war, industries depending on cheap electricity congregated along the Columbia east of Portland (especially on the Washington side — an Alcoa aluminum plant is visible directly opposite Edgefield), and within the picturesque Gorge local developers were clamoring with countless schemes for building and defacement.

The quality of scenic beauty that made the Gorge so attractive was also causing a density of development that promised to destroy the very qualities that drew visitors. Vociferous, active, and determined, a few individuals pleaded the cause for creating a national scenic area in the Gorge to protect its natural beauty. Finally, in November 1986 an act of Congress established the
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, protecting an area of almost 300,000 acres. This unique partnership between the U.S. Forest Service, the two states of Washington and Oregon, six local counties, and four tribal governments was given the difficult charge of protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Gorge, while also encouraging the compatible economic growth and development of the area. It is a daunting task, but without such a safe-guard agency the Gorge is in danger of being loved to death.

Columbia River Gorge Scenic Highway

When social critic and theoretician Lewis Mumford was brought to Portland in the early 1930s to draft a proposal for planning the northwest region, he was awe-struck by the panorama of the Gorge, which unrolled itself, he wrote, "like some great kakemono of classic Chinese [sic] landscape art." His rapture at seeing the Gorge was shared by many who found solace and regeneration in its grandeur. The trouble was that it was difficult to get to see.

Before 1913 there was no way through the Gorge except by boat or train and neither made stops during the passage. The Columbia River Gorge has always been an important route through the Cascades, from Portland to the fruit-growing and farming areas just east of Mount Hood. Although routes through the mountains were considered safer, they were impassable during the winter. The earliest pioneers had floated down the river in rafts. In the 1850s, several portage roads were built by pioneers to get around the largest rapids. Between 1872 and 1876 the State of Oregon built a military wagon road from the Sandy River to The Dalles; it was extremely steep and crooked, and was replaced by the railroad. All land routes remained secondary to steam navigation until the railroad was built in 1882-3.

As automobile use began its dramatic rise among the upper and middle classes after the turn of the century, there began to emerge a desire to take pleasure drives through the splendid scenery of the Gorge. The chief promoter of such a road was a recent arrival in the Northwest, Samuel C. Hill who was also a champion of the use of reinforced concrete. Hill, who had purchased
Columbia Highway Locator Map, Oregon Department of Transportation
a large parcel of land at the east end of the Gorge on the sunny Washington side, tried at first to persuade Washington State interests to build a scenic automobile highway on their side but without result. He then began to cajole and persuade Portland and Oregon leaders, with more positive results, and was joined in his enthusiasm by two influential former lumber barons, Simon Benson and John Yeon. Eventually it was Portland city interests that undertook building the scenic highway, using Multnomah County road funds.

On a tourist map published by the Portland Chamber of Commerce in 1923, the new Columbia River Highway was called “America’s greatest asset” and described in this way: “Its beauty is the combination of the wonders of the Alps, the Rhine, and Southern Italy with the wild grandeur of the American Rockies.” The newly-completed highway was clearly not intended to be a utilitarian road like today’s Interstate 84. Steam navigation and the railroad already served that purpose. The highway was intended by its creators to be a scenic road, providing motorists with a more leisurely way to view the great Columbia Gorge. It was also meant to attract people to Oregon, putting it “on the map” as a good place to visit, do business, and live.

In the early 1900s, there were few paved roads in Oregon suitable for the automobile. Most existed in the Portland metropolitan area, reaching not more than 15 miles out of the city. The railroad was still more used for long distance travel. However, by 1915 there was a sizable increase in automobiles in Oregon, numbering 12,000. Agitation for more and better roads increased with the number of autos. The U.S. government also encouraged the building of roads to improve national security.

Although the increasing support by the public and the U.S. government made the building of a highway in the Columbia Gorge possible, the high quality achieved in the highway was due to the personalities who conceived and built it. Samuel C. Hill was a Northern Pacific Railroad attorney who had moved west from Minneapolis to make a fortune. Hill believed that without good roads there could be no civilization. In an article for the Oregon Journal in 1915 he wrote, “You ask me what good roads mean to Oregon. You might as well ask me what hands and feet mean to man.” He was the Chairman of the Washington High-
The Mosier Twin Tunnels (the second partially visible in the background) were blasted out of the rock along the Gorge high above the river bed. Several other tunnels were necessary along the length of the highway (photo: Oregon SHPO files, 1923).

Viewed from the opposite end, the Mosier Twin Tunnels were filled with rock and this section of the Columbia Highway was abandoned after construction of the Interstate Highway. These tunnels have been recently dug out and opened to pedestrian and bicycle traffic (photo: Oregon Department of Transportation).

way Advisory Board, the President of the Washington Good Roads Association, and the President of the American Roadbuilders Association. Hill first tried to lobby for a road on the North side of the Gorge, but Washington state refused to finance it. He then shifted his attention to the southern side of the Columbia. In 1912 he invited friends for an informal walking tour of the Gorge to gain support for the road in Oregon, and in 1913 he invited the Oregon Legislature to his Maryhill estate, built on the bluffs at the east end of the Gorge, to inspect his private road and to give a lecture on road building. Out of this meeting, the Oregon State Highway Commission was formed and a map was drawn of the proposed main highways. The Columbia Gorge highway was given first priority. Engineer Samuel Lancaster, Hill’s friend, was appointed designer and supervisor of the project.

Samuel Lancaster had lived in Tennessee as a child, finished one year of college, and then studied engineering with the Illinois Central Railroad. He contracted malaria when he was 22, and then for 18 months battled infantile paralysis (polio militia). The doctors believed that he would never recover, but through his own determination he slowly and painfully loosened his tendons through massage and exercise. Oral Bullard argued that it is this fight against paralysis that later gave Lancaster the will to overcome the engineering obstacles in building the road. In 1906, Lancaster moved to Seattle, met Samuel Hill, and accompanied him on a tour of scenic European roads. Both were inspired by the rubble masonry walls of the Rhine Valley in Germany, as well as by the Axenstrasse overlooking Lake Uri and Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. Lancaster recalls in his book, Romance of the Gateway Through the Cascade Range published in 1915, that while looking at the masonry walls of the Rhine, Hill told him that he would “see something like that on the Columbia some day.” Lancaster remembered thinking, “not in my lifetime — if I ever have a grandson he may live to see it, or maybe his son.” Yet only five years later, he would begin preliminary surveys for this highway.
Lancaster wanted more than a highway; he wanted a park. A deeply religious man, Lancaster agreed with John Muir and other preservationists that “God’s work” should not be spoiled. Lancaster also knew and admired Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, sharing in his belief that natural beauty and recreational opportunities should be accessible for public enjoyment. Along with Hill, Lancaster also agreed with other middle class “civic-minded” reformers of the time, who believed that access to the natural environment could “heal the ills of urban life” caused by the increasing industrialization of the cities. In an interview, Lancaster said:

My love for the beautiful is inherited from my mother. When I made my preliminary survey here and found myself standing waist deep in ferns, I remembered my mother’s long ago warning, “Oh, Samuel, do be careful of my Boston Fern.” And then I pledged myself that none of this wild beauty should be marred where it could be prevented. The highway was so built that not one tree was felled, not one fern crushed, unnecessarily.

Two other major figures made the highway possible. Simon Benson, former lumberman, hotel owner, and civic leader based in Portland, made significant funds available and energetically supported the project. In addition, John B. Yeon, also a former lumber baron now doubly wealthy through Portland real estate investment, took on the task of serving as county roadmaster (i.e. supervisor of work) for a token salary of only one dollar per year. Yeon was a great enthusiast of automobiles and took great pleasure in spending day after day on the construction site.

Construction of the highway began in 1913, moving eastward from the Sandy River at Troutdale towards Hood River by winding up gentle grades on the south side of the bluffs to Crown Point and from there descending to the river near Multnomah Falls where broader river banks were used for the final approach to Hood River. The second phase of the highway began in 1915, continuing from Hood River to The Dalles. Because the railroad owned most of the right-of-way on the flat land beside the river, most of the highway had to be carved out of the cliffs above the Gorge. This presented a major engineering challenge, as the Gorge walls, formed of great basalt flows that cracked as they had cooled,
are geologically unstable. The tools used were manpower, mulepower, and some steam engines. Lancaster and Hill’s high construction standards were also a major consideration: a minimum 24 foot wide roadbed, a 100 foot minimum curve radius, and a maximum grade of 5 percent. Moreover, Lancaster was insistent that reinforced concrete, still largely a new and untested material in the United States, be used in all construction.

Besides the advanced construction standards, several other distinctive features were incorporated in the highway. Rubble masonry walls, resembling those Hill and Lancaster had admired on the Rhine, were used, and rubble parapets with arched openings lined the road. Pedestrian overlooks with benches were also provided at strategic points to allow people to stop and admire the landscape. Each bridge was designed differently to fit its specific location. Viaducts were used in several sections to support the road on rock ledges below. These features, designed by Lancaster for the first section of the road, were repeated in the second section extending eastward to The Dalles.

Given the construction standards, building the highway across Crown Point was said to be “impossible.” The highway had to descend from Crown Point, 725 feet above the valley floor, to Latourell Falls, near sea level, in a very short distance. To preserve the 5% grade, Lancaster designed the road in a series of five parallel switchbacks. However, with the minimum turning radius, there would not be enough space on the cliff for the road curves. To provide more surface area, Lancaster built concrete supports up from the broader shelves of rock below. This section of the original road is still widely used today.

The tunnel at Oneonta Gorge, two miles east of Multnomah Falls, was constructed because the railroad occupied all the available space beside the cliff. To prevent the rock from falling on the tracks, weaker sections of the cliff were plugged with concrete before blasting. This was the first of several tunnels built for the Highway.

The Moffet Creek arch, now directly beside I-84 westbound, was the longest reinforced concrete three-hinged arch of the time,
The Mitchell Point Tunnel was one of the most dramatic constructions on the highway, with a series of five arches peering out of the rock to the river. The tunnel was destroyed by construction of I-84, to get enough width for the roadway. However, a sharp eye can still spot the former location of this tunnel as you pass by on the highway below, just a few miles west of Hood River (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

with a 170 foot span and a rise of only one foot for every ten of run.

At Mitchell Point, a tunnel needed to be built close to the face of the cliff. Hill and Lancaster saw the opportunity to model it after the Axenstrasse they had both admired in Switzerland, where three windows had been cut in a tunnel overlooking Lake Uri. Passing though the Mitchell Point tunnel, 390 feet long, motorists could view the Gorge below through five “windows” carved out of the side of the 19-foot high tunnel. The tunnel was demolished when the cliff face was cut back to build I-84 down below.

On July 6, 1915 the first section of the Columbia River Highway was officially opened between Portland and the city of Hood River. However, many had not shared in the excitement over the highway. Many tax payers had vigorously protested the folly of wasting public county funds on an automobile highway to Hood River (wasn’t that what the steam boats and railroad were for?). But the Oregon Journal, on January 3, 1915, attempted to boost public opinion by arguing that other public improvements such as the recently-built county courthouse and Broadway Bridge cost one third more than the highway. There was also considerable resistance to paving the highway, but Simon Benson and John Yeon launched a powerful and persuasive campaign. In the face of such determination, the opposition faded. On June 27, 1922 the second section was opened, creating the first major paved highway in the Pacific Northwest.

Within a few brief years the Columbia River Highway became a victim of its own success. People did not know how much they wanted a road until it was built. Travel through the Gorge was expected to be a balance of steam navigation, railroad, and auto. Not only was automobile traffic far greater than expected, trucks began to dominate the road, carrying produce to Portland. The highway could not sustain this high use. Only eighteen years after it was built, Samuel Hill was alerted to the disrepair and traveled to Salem to meet with the Highway Commission, but unfortunately he died on the way. Only in the early 1950s was Interstate 84 built below the scenic highway by filling in the marshes along the river, and this, in turn, had only been made feasible by the damming of the river in 1937, thus preventing the worst shore erosion. It is hard to imagine today the steep walls of the Gorge before the Interstate was built.
By 1983 many sections of the scenic highway had fallen into disrepair; only 51 out of the 74 miles could be used for local traffic. Nonetheless, in 1983, the Columbia River Highway and several related adjacent areas were put on the National Register of Historic Places with the efforts of the Oregon Department of Transportation. Today the Highway is undergoing restoration, and several segments of the road are being converted to hiking and bicycle paths.

Vista House

Originally the scenic highway followed the Sandy River from Troutdale, slowly rising and passing through what was the hamlet of Corbett. In this way the top of the basalt cliffs, 725 feet above the Gorge, was reached via gentle grades. There the road approached the edge of the bluff, culminating with the arrival at Crown Point, an overhanging basalt promontory that affords uninterrupted views up and down the Gorge. To mark this awe-inspiring spot, and to provide a rest stop, a automobile turn-around and observation building were built. The dedication took place on May 6, 1918, when two thousand people gathered for the ceremonies. Frank Branch Riley waxed rhapsodic in his dedicatory address:

This is the day that shall loom big in the annals of the West. You and I are actors in a drama— an epic in Oregon history—and we play our parts on this colossal stage set boldly upon the edge of this mountain top, with the noblest of American rivers flowing in silver silence in its titanic chasm below... an heroic stage for the expression of a sentiment as lofty as any that pulsates in human hearts—remembrance, gratitude and the desire to commemorate in monument as imperishable as man's hands may fashion it, the deathless deeds of the pioneers.

This speech reflected what prompted the construction of Vista House, for it was to be much more than a utilitarian rest station or overlook; it was to be a monument to the Columbia Gorge and to the pioneers who had traveled there.
Columbia Gorge

It was Samuel Lancaster, the supervisor and engineer of the Columbia Highway, who first proposed a building at Crown Point. In an interview, he said that it would be an ideal site for “an observatory from which the view both up and down the Columbia would be viewed in silent communion with the infinite” and that it would be a memorial to the “trials and hardships of those who had come to the Oregon Country.” Lancaster even suggested the name “Vista House.”

On October 23, 1915, fifty-two prominent businessmen and civic leaders met to consider Lancaster’s proposal and formed the Vista House Association to promote and oversee construction, with H. L. Pittock as president. Construction began in late 1916. John B. Yeon, roadmaster of the highway, was appointed supervisor of this enterprise as well, while Edgar Lazarus of Portland was appointed architect. Multnomah County agreed to donate $12,000 from its emergency fund, and donations were solicited from school children in the county and descendants of pioneers. A full page was devoted in the Oregon Journal in January 1917, extolling the benefits of the structure and asking for donations. The actual construction cost, which amounted to $99,148, was more than eight times the original estimate. As with the highway itself, many Portland area residents questioned the use of public funds for a structure they did not feel they needed.

Edgar Lazarus, architect of the Vista House, seemed to share many of Lancaster’s sentiments about the Gorge. He said in an interview: “The silent dignities of the Pavilion with its outline against the sky will recall the ancient and mystic Thor’s Crown which the point was originally named.” Lazarus, who had studied in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, also designed many prominent buildings in Portland, including the Agricultural Building at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1903-5, the Portland Art School in 1905 and the Multnomah Athletic Club. The form of the Vista House reflects Lazarus’ Beaux Arts training, while the detailing curiously combines Gothic and Arts and Crafts traditions. The late Marion Ross went so far as to label the building an Oregon version of Art Nouveau and thought it similar to contemporaneous German expressionist architecture.

Both new and old techniques were used in the construction of the building. The structure is of reinforced concrete, faced on the exterior with coursed quarry-faced ashlar sandstone. The roof was originally covered with ornamental glazed tiles but was re-
roofed with copper after World War II. The windows employ stained glass. The interior walls are faced with Kasota limestone, with plaster and marble ornaments, and the dome and ribs were painted to simulate bronze and marble. The floor is of multi-colored marble. At the suggestion of Lancaster, the indigenous inhabitants of the Gorge were represented by eight Native American heads in the bosses at the base of each rib. Eight plaster panels, containing the names of pioneers, are embellished paintings of local plant life, and paintings of early Oregon settlements hang between the windows.9

The Vista House quickly became a popular stop for those traveling the Highway. In 1938, Vista House was deeded over to the Oregon State Highway Commission. During World War II, the building was closed and sustained extensive weather damage; subsequent repairs included adding the copper roof. Oregon State Parks took possession of the structure in 1952. In 1980 a team of people from the Columbia River Highway Project placed Vista House on the National Register of Historic Places and began plans to restore the structure.

**Multnomah Falls and the Lodge**

From Vista House and Crown Point the Highway begins a rapid descent into the Gorge, passing Latourell Falls which drops 224 feet. The road originally passed over Sheppard’s Dell on a concrete bridge of remarkable design, into the town of Bridal Veil below. Originally a small lumber town, Bridal Veil was named for a waterfall which was later diverted into a long flume to bring logs from the top of the bluff to the mill on the floor of the Gorge. The mill, town and flume are now gone, and Bridal Veil Falls once more plunges unimpeded into the Gorge. Two more smaller waterfalls, Mist Falls and Wahkeena, are passed before another major stopping point on the highway is reached. Roughly 34 miles from Portland is Multnomah Falls, a sheer drop of 611 feet into a pool which then feeds a secondary waterfall of 69 feet. Multnomah Falls is not only Oregon’s highest waterfall, but the fifth highest in the country. As Lancaster wrote: “There are higher waterfalls and falls of greater volume, but there are none more beautiful than Multnomah.”

*Multnomah Falls is the highest waterfall in the Gorge. The Lower Falls, seen here, is crossed by a bridge which offers a dramatic viewpoint of the upper falls. Notice the wooden bridge in this photo, built prior to the existing concrete bridge (photo: H.C. Mackay, Special Collections, UO Knight Library).*
Columbia Gorge

So popular was stopping here to view the falls that a decision was made early in the 1920s to build near the foot of the falls a lodge offering meals and other conveniences. This spot represented the turnaround point for many Portlanders making afternoon jaunts into the Gorge; indeed, the Falls and the Lodge are still Oregon’s largest single tourist attraction, boasting up to 2.5 million visitors per year.

Originally the Scenic Highway passed directly in front of the Lodge, whereas today the Interstate is some distance to the north. Running just to the north of the old highway are the tracks of the Northern Pacific (now Burlington Northern) Railroad. From the area in front of the Lodge one can get a good view of the concrete deck arch bridge spanning Multnomah Creek. Faced with rubble masonry, this bridge was completed in 1914 and was one of the first continuous-pour concrete bridges ever built in America. As the old highway continues east from the Lodge, one can see some of the concrete piers supporting the deck of the road.

The site of Falls and Lodge was owned at the time by the prominent Portland lumber baron, Simon Benson, who had purchased the 300 acres in 1900. He presented the property to the City of Portland in 1915 and thus it came to be included in the Scenic Highway. In making the gift, Benson said “I had two objectives in view: first, to provide a recreation ground for all the people . . . where they could enjoy at any time . . . one of the beauty spots of the Columbia River Gorge [and] . . . second, to provide an added charm to the highway.”

To design and build the lodge at the foot of the falls, the City of Portland hired architect Albert E. Doyle in 1925. Doyle had already experimented with a bold architecture, expressive of the expansive character of the Pacific Northwestern landscape, in a huge log structure built as the Forestry Building for the Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland, in 1905. Similar rustic buildings had already begun to appear in the earliest national parks, most notably the Old Faithful Lodge at Yellowstone Park designed by Seattle architect Robert C. Reamer in 1902-03, although the six-foot diameter of Doyle’s Forestry Building logs dwarfed the timbers of Reamer’s lodge. Even before this, in 1889, high on the northeast slope of Mount Hood, a rustic Adirondacks-style lodge called Cloud Cap Inn had been built by Whidden & Lewis for the Mazama Club, an organization of inveterate climbers in Portland. Moreover, in 1911-14, on the very rim of Crater Lake, Oregon, a large rustic hotel lodge had been built, its hodgepodge design attributed to R. L. Hockenberry & Co. Far better in scale and detailing was the small Nehah-Kah-Nie Tavern and Inn, on the Pacific beach at Nehkahnie, near Nehalem, built in 1912 from designs by Portland architect Ellis F. Lawrence, in a variation on the Eastern Shingle Style. At Nehkahnie, where artists and like-minded people from Portland set up a summer colony, Doyle had been building a series
of cottages, simple and rustic in design, including the Isom cottage in 1912, and cottages for Harry Wentz and Anna Belle Crocker in 1916. Doyle took aspects of these cottages — the simplicity of materials of the rough wood siding and quarry-faced masonry, and the directness of the Arts and Crafts expression — and merged it with meticulously studied proportions, boldly scaled masses, and steep sweeping roofs to define in the Multnomah Falls Lodge what was soon to be labeled "Cascadian" architecture, reflective of and sympathetic to the hugely-proportioned mountains and trees of the Pacific Northwest. Multnomah Falls Lodge was built in 1925 for a cost of $40,000.

Because of increasing use, Multnomah Falls Lodge has been enlarged and modified repeatedly, although in ways that are largely invisible from the front. Originally the broad openings on the north face were an open loggia; these have since been glazed in to provide more seating area for the restaurant. To the rear and facing the falls, a glass-roofed addition to the dining room was built from designs by Doyle's grandson, George McMath. Most recently, in 1993, the ground floor was largely redone and the outside terraces and walks rebuilt with ramps for the disabled. These renovations alone cost nearly $1.7 million. Much of the property will be undergoing repairs in the summer of 1997 due to the recent flooding of the site caused by ice dams in the adjoining stream.

Since 1943 the ownership of Multnomah Falls Lodge has been transferred from the City of Portland to the U.S. Government. The U.S. Forest Service has assumed its administration, although the dining room, the gift shop, and coffee shop are privately operated. Overnight lodging was provided until 1952, but the few small rooms were increasingly unsuitable, even when used subsequently to house employees. Since 1977 the rooms have been used as offices and for storage.

About five miles further east from Multnomah Falls Lodge, on the Washington side of the river, rises Beacon Rock, a volcanic plug 800 feet high and the second largest free-standing monolith in the world, exceeded only by the Rock of Gibraltar.
Notes

Research and draft text by Beth Cantrell. Sources consulted in preparing this section include:


Paradise Road: *The Historic Columbia River Highway*. Produced by the Public Broadcasting Station. 30 min., 1992, documentary film.


Research and draft text by Beth Cantrell. Sources used in preparing this section include:


*The Oregon Journal*. January 1917.


“Vista House Row is Now in Court.” *The Oregon Journal*. August 14, 1918.


Copy, Vertical Files, Oregon Historical Society.

Rappaport, *Vista House Historic Structure Report*, 3-4

*Oregon Journal*, 1918


Lancaster, quoted in *Oregon: End of the Trail* (Portland, 1940): 274.

Research on Multnomah Falls Lodge and draft text by Erik Cockburn who drew information from the booklet entitled *A Traveler’s Guide to the Historical Columbia River Highway*, conversations with Mr. Richard Buck, former concessionaire at Multnomah Falls Lodge who was interviewed in the Portland *Oregonian*, October 31, 1985. In September, 1996 a large block of basalt midway up the cliff face broke lose and dropped into the pool below. The yellowish unweathered stone is still visible here this block became detached.
Eagle Creek
Day 2 - June 13, 1997

"The restless sea, the towering mountains, the silent desert - what do they have in common? And what are the essential differences? Grandeur, color, spaciousness, the power of the ancient and elemental, that which lies beyond the ability of man to wholly grasp or utilize, these qualities all three share."
-Edward Abbey
Desert Solitaire
Bonneville Dam/ Eagle Creek

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Bonneville Dam

Nine miles east of Multnomah Falls Lodge is the Bonneville Dam, one of the two major dams built on the Columbia in the 1930s which forever altered the character and life of the river, even while bringing inexpensive electric power to the entire region. The other, even bigger dam is the Grand Coulee Dam in eastern Washington. These dams were the central fixtures in a broad program of progressive reform instituted in the Pacific Northwest in the 1930s.

The idea of using the river for hydroelectric power emerged early in the century, but the enormous scale of the task was clearly beyond the ability of Oregon or Washington, or even of the states combined. During the 1920s proposals were made for the possible locations of dams, and in what is called the "308 Report" of 1925, prepared by the Army Corps of Engineer and the Federal Power Administration, the sites for all likely major dams were indicated. Bonneville Dam would be 42 miles east of Portland and 144 miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia. The location of the dam took advantage of Bradford Island and Cascades Island in the river channel, so that the dam could be built in three separate sections, thus avoiding the necessity of the enormous concrete mass of the Grand Coulee Dam.

How such projects would be financed was an unanswered question, for the population and business density of the region were not sufficient to support sale of power from these huge endeavors. Then, with the onset of the Great Depression, the need for jobs, underwritten by Federal support, made the construction of the dams possible. Indeed, President Roosevelt personally championed the con-
struction of dams on the Columbia, and in a campaign speech given in Portland in September 1932 he spoke of the “vast possibilities of power development on the Columbia River.” He concluded his visit by insisting on a tour through the Gorge so he could see the site of the future Bonneville Dam. He would make a second visit in August 1934.

The nagging question of what to do with the enormous surplus of electricity generated by the two dams was answered in part by an energy utopianism propounded by Lewis Mumford. As in the Tennessee Valley, the electricity would go to the existing cities and their industries, of course, but it would also be distributed to hundreds of small towns in eastern Oregon and Washington, and to the thousands of farmers who could now afford to pump Columbia water (conveniently impounded behind the dams) for crop irrigation. The distribution and marketing of this power would be put in the hands of the newly-created Bonneville Power Administration. Thus, what Mumford called the paleotechnic world of drudgery would be replaced by a neotechnic world in which electricity, and the aluminum made by it, would replace coal and steel. Instead of the be-sooted and congested cities characteristic of the East, the new Northwest cities would be purified by electricity, and society purified in the process. As Mumford preached, electricity would restore workers to the countryside. The old industry of coal and iron of the East, which fostered monopoly and concentration, would be replaced by industries powered by electricity which would promote independence and decentralization. In the power of the river lay an untapped liberating potential. Such was the vision that Mumford described.

Liberating, that is, to the Euro-Americans who had arrived in huge numbers to this land only a short century before. But debilitating, demoralizing, and displacing the original Oregonians who had been coming to the falls of the Cascades and to the Long Narrows of The Dalles for eons of time, to fish, to socialize and to renew those bonds that made their cultures thrive across the entire region. As the buffalo had been slaughtered and thus denied to the Plains tribes, so now the Columbia Basin tribes would be prevented from fishing and their way of life enervated.

Bonneville Dam, named for Captain Benjamin Eulalie de Bonneville who explored the Oregon Territory and later became commander of the U.S. garrison at the American Fort Vancouver,
was begun in October, 1933, at a site just below the falls of the Cascades, with the construction of labor camps, realignment of the adjacent railroad tracks, and exploratory drilling. By June, 1935, excavations had been completed and pouring of the concrete commenced. In less than two years, the dam and powerhouse were completed, the protective cofferdams removed, and the first two generators installed. The cost was a then-staggering $82.2 million. Included in this and other dams were large locks, facilitating boat and barge travel on the now quieted waters. On September 28, 1937, the dam complex was dedicated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The power from the first two generators went on-line in March, 1938; over the following years 8 more generators were installed in waiting bays in the original powerhouse, and another 8 were added in a second powerhouse in 1981. The locks were ready to operate in January, 1938, and on July 12, the lock was opened for the Charles L. Wheeler, the first deep-sea vessel to dock at The Dalles and to make it an ocean port, 189 miles inland.

The human and mechanical power used to build the dam was commemorated by Woody Guthrie who was employed by the Federal government for a month to express this heroic effort in song. His most enduring tune became “Roll On, Columbia Roll On,” which was used in the documentary film Columbia: America’s Greatest Power Stream.

Bonneville Dam is not the highest nor the most visually impressive dam on the river. Perhaps it was never meant to be, but was meant to settle into the Gorge and blend with it (as much as it is possible for a great dam to “blend in”) since it was conceived as an instrument of social uplift and not a great artistic or civil engineering monument in its own right. In technical terms the main dam across the center channel (between Bradford and Cascades Island) is described as a gravity-type concrete spillway, ogee crest dam, reaching 1,230 feet across. It is 180 feet thick at its base, and is divided into eighteen modular bays, with twelve having 50x50 foot movable-crest steel gates, and six with 50 x 60 foot gates, set between ten-foot wide concrete piers. The dam height is 197 feet, with a mass of 1,168,000 cubic yards of concrete, providing a hydraulic head of 90 feet. The provision of a navigational lock along the south edge created Robins Island. The original lock measured 500 feet in length and was 76 feet wide and was then the largest single-lift lock in the world. This
was replaced with a larger lock that opened in March, 1993, measuring 675 feet in length and 76 feet across. Both provided a maximum lift of 70 feet, but this typically varies from 30 feet in winter high water to about 66 feet at low water by the end of August. (The new lock alone cost $341 million).

Between Robins Island and Bradford Island is the original powerhouse, 1,027 feet long, whose ten generators are capable of 527,000 kW; in 1938 only two of these generators were operated. It is 190 feet from the adesite bedrock to the top, and 190 feet wide. The second powerhouse to the north, between Cascades Island and the Washington shore, 986 feet long, has eight generators capable of producing 558,000 kW. Together, the three sections of the dam-powerhouse complex block the river and hold back Lake Bonneville that reaches 44 miles to The Dalles and took two years to fill when the dam was completed.

An innovative feature of the Bonneville Dam complex was the incorporation of flume-like fish ladders designed to enable migrating salmon to swim around the dam with a minimum of energy-consuming leaping. Fish ladders are located on both Bradford and Cascades Island. Included in the path of the fish ladders is a dimly-lit viewing room below water level with a thick glass window where fish moving upstream are identified and counted. As one recent tour guide put it: "When salmon do swim past the windows, they’re treated like champs. Everybody in the viewing room roots for them to make it back to the spawning grounds." It was hoped that such provisions would ensure the salmon runs. The passage up river was made far easier, it is true, but the smolts heading downstream are sucked into the penstocks and in passing through the turbines are converted into salmon-smolt-purée. One solution is to divert the fry into holding tanks and truck them around the dams; another solution is to cut back on power generation and release water over the dams to allow the smolts to pass. But now users and utilities in the northwest region say they have no power to spare for the fish.

On the Oregon shore of the dam complex are a fish hatchery (built by the State of Oregon) and the administration complex (Federally funded) which are of some interest. The administration building, built in 1934-37 from designs by Hollis Johnston, is a wood-frame building with brick cladding in what could be called the Roosevelt Colonial Revival style. This was a classically derived style of diminished and stylized detail promoted
Original construction drawings of the Bonneville Dam
(drawings: HABS - Library of Congress.)
during Roosevelt's administration. The building had just been finished in 1937 when it was immediately expanded with projecting wings designed by P.A. Spice. The building has not been significantly modified since its original construction, although it was painted camouflage green during World War II, as were all structures at Bonneville, including the macadam roadways. (Portions of the green paint were still visible on the lower walls of the Administration and Auditorium Buildings as late as 1984).

The Administration Building was but one of many buildings begun in 1934 that made up a government town during construction. Of these buildings, the Auditorium, originally the visual anchor of the town plan, survives; twenty-two Colonial Revival residences were removed in 1982. At its height, the dam project employed 3,000 people (although not all lived on site). The Auditorium is also a wood-frame building with brick veneer, but it is not known if the architect was also Hollis Johnston. Originally it served as a communal gathering place, a kind of club for residents of the temporary town. Of special interest, too, is the landscape plan which was far more developed than at most such sites and included both formal and informal plantings over an area of 20 acres. Surviving plans indicate that the landscape was designed by an employee named Gerke in 1934.

*Spillway elevation*

This series shows the construction of worker housing built on Cascades Island on the Washington side of the dam. All of this housing has since been demolished or moved off the site of the dam. The houses, 40 - 50 in number, were family size residences built with an elegant simplicity (photo: Oregon SHPO files).

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*Pier construction axon*  
(drawing: HAER - Library of Congress)
Eagle Creek

Originally, a short portage railroad transferred cargo at Eagle Creek, later to become the site of Bonneville Dam. The cars were pulled by mules. The land in the center of the photo is the site of the Overlook Building (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

Eagle Creek Complex

At Eagle Creek, just beyond the Cascade Salmon Hatchery on the old highway, is an elegant stone and concrete bridge, a 60-foot span designed by state highway engineer K.R. Billner. It is an attractive remnant of the 1915 Columbia Gorge roadway. The nearby Eagle Creek Campground, a project of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), is at the head of Eagle Creek trail. The trail leads hikers past favorite swimming holes, many miles up into the mountains high above the Gorge. A short distance from the trailhead is Punch Bowl Falls, an often-photographed watercourse setting.

The group of campground buildings, built in 1937, consists of a large restroom facility, a footbridge, basalt rock retaining walls, and a log picnic shelter referred to as a community building. All have been recently restored by the Heritage Structures Team of the U.S. Forest Service (assisted by students in the Historic Preservation Program, University of Oregon). The rock walls built by the CCC crews contrast with those done by Italian
EAGLE CREEK CCC OVERLOOK SHELTER

HABS Drawings
University of Oregon
Historic Preservation Program
stonemasons brought in to assist. Many of the Italian masons, with a discriminating artistic eye in coursing and varying stone size, had worked on the stonework of the Columbia Gorge Highway in the teens.

Across the highway, perched high above the river, is a scenic overlook constructed in 1938 by the CCC. It is a finely crafted structure, rustic and typical of the Cascadian Style, with a kitchen and restrooms, set on a stone columned terrace that over looks Bonneville Dam. Also recently restored, it provides a public place to watch the engaging activity along the river.

**Bridge of the Gods**

Four miles west of Bonneville is the modern steel Bridge of the Gods. Built at a narrowing of the Gorge to provide a vehicular link between Oregon and Washington, it was undertaken by the Wauna Toll Bridge Company, a private venture, rather than by either state highway department. It is a steel truss cantilever bridge of 1,131 feet, with a clear span between the principle piers of 706 feet. Because it is upriver from the dam, in the 1930s it was necessary to elevate the bridge 26 feet above the rising waters of the lake. This was done by adding to the piers and extending the elevated approach bridges, adding about 700 feet to its total length.

**Cascade Locks**

About one mile east of the Bridge of the Gods is the town of Cascade Locks, on the upper end of the Cascades rapids which were once a major obstacle to navigating the river. From the time Lewis and Clark encountered the cascades on October 31, 1805, travelers and chroniclers have noted the extreme hazard posed by the rapids. Here, as at The Dalles, overland travelers had to stop and dismantle their wagons, strap them to rafts, and hope for the best. Many perished. When the Barlow Road was cut through the forests around the south flank of Mt. Hood in
1846 there was at least that alternative, though it meant a very long detour. At Cascade Locks, in 1856, a portage road was built around the rapids to facilitate navigation. This was augmented in 1862 by a short portage railroad of four and a half miles that ran between steamboat stops at Upper Cascades and Tanner Creek. Motive power was provided by the Oregon Pony, the first locomotive both built and operated west of the Mississippi. The locomotive is housed today in a shelter in front of the Cascades Locks Museum, a house built in 1906. Although steamboat traffic was already in steep decline by 1896 because of the Northern Pacific Railroad, lobbying from state and local officials persuaded the Federal government to build locks here between the shore and an offshore island. The massive granite blocks used for the locks construction demonstrate a high skill in masonry building. Now inundated to its former high water level, the locks have long since had their gates removed, but the stone walls remain a favorite fishing spot. Also surviving are a row of lock keepers houses, built around 1905, one of which now houses the Cascade Locks Museum.

**Columbia Gorge Hotel**

The old Columbia Gorge Scenic Highway is largely replaced now, between Cascade Locks and Hood River, by I-84, which passes within several hundred feet of the Columbia Gorge Hotel. The hotel was another venture of Simon Benson, a deluxe hostelry just outside of the town of Hood River, perched at the edge

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*Plan of the Columbia Gorge Hotel (drawing: Rudiger Krohn, Oregon SHPO Files, 1979)*
of the bluff so that the northerly rooms have good views of the river. Picturesquely designed in a Mediterranean style, it has asymmetrical masses balanced around a tower. Built in 1921-22 from plans by Portland architect Morris Whitehouse, it was once a destination point for those driving out along the river. As was fashionable at the time, the manicured grounds had a brook, winding paths, and a flower garden through which to stroll; the present grounds retain something of that character. The path takes the visitor to the back or north side of the hotel where a terrace provides a vertiginous view of Waw-Guin-Guin Falls that drop over the sheer cliff to the river below. Today the hotel is surrounded by scattered and poorly designed commercial buildings, so that the once bucolic country setting is hard to imagine.

Notes

1 Observations in this paragraph based on Wright, Organic Machine, 56-58.
2 In addition to the material in Wright, Organic Machine, see also Lorena S. Fisher, The Bonneville Dream (n.p., 1991), written by the widow of one of the engineers who built the dam and who had lived at the site, 1935-43.
3 Technical data from National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, prepared by Stephan Dow Beckham, August 1984; Carl Condit, American Building Art: Twentieth Century (Chicago, 1960): 379; Donald C. Jackson, Great American Bridges and Dams (Washington, DC, 1988): 300; and from literature supplied by the Bonneville Power Administration and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.
5 See Fisher, The Bonneville Dream, noted above.
6 The discussion of the Eagle Creek complex was prepared by Don Peting, Professor of Architecture and Director of the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Oregon, who directed the student team that undertook the restoration of this site in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service.
Hood River
Day 2 - June 13, 1997

"Then came the ceaseless rush of moving trains, hitherward, thitherward, everward, with the magnetism of their dash, and the force of their momentum starting into activity and hurry stews that had been set to the slow movements of the ox in weary months of travel by his side."

-Rev. H. K. Hines
An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon
### Hood River

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<td>Riverside Community Church</td>
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<td>Community Stairs</td>
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Note: Most buildings in the central core of Hood River are commercial structures open to the public. Exceptions include the Fruit Warehouses and the Roe-Parker Houses. Sites indicated with a circle are significant properties. Sites indicated with triangles are those suggested for visiting the interiors. Additional sites are included in the text.
East of Cascade Locks, the flanks of Mt. Hood come down to the river, with steep cliffs of fractured basalt towering over the narrow strip crossed by the railroad (laid here in the 1880s) and I-84 (on fill created about eighty years later). A score of streams pour down from the mountain, here and there cutting ravines into the steep cliffs, but there are no more river-level terraces large enough for a town. There are several turnoffs for small state parks with trailheads for steep paths that ascend the cliffs. Twenty miles east of Cascade Locks, however, the traveler comes to a high terrace where the Hood River drains into the Columbia. This major stream originates in glaciers at the mountain’s peak and receives most of the water from creeks and streams that run off the north slope of Mt. Hood. The river was observed and noted by Lewis and Clark when they descended the Columbia and they called it Labeasche River, after a French-Canadian boatman in their party. Most early pioneers, floating on rafts that had survived the gauntlet of the rapids at The Dalles, simply drifted past this point and settlement at the mouth of Hood River was limited for many years. However, a few early settlers from The Dalles and Oregon City sought to use the valley as ranch land. The river became known as “Dog River” after some cowboys became sepa-
The connection to Hood River by train had a significant impact on the growth of the town and the agriculture in the valley above (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

The Apple Belt Line connected the valley's fruit growers to the main rail line along the Columbia. Hood River became a primary intersection for commerce in the area (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

rated from their herd by the swollen river and were forced to eat their dog. As more genteel settlers began to arrive in the area, objections surfaced as to the name and at the suggestion of Mrs. Nathaniel Coe the stream and the small town were renamed "Hood River." The name appeared on maps by 1856 and two years later when the U.S. Post Office was opened it became the official name.

Very quickly the earliest American arrivals discovered that the high fertile valley on the upper terrace south of the town was more suitable to agriculture than ranching. Elevations across the valley range from 300 to 1,800 feet, while the surrounding mountains increase in height, culminating in the perpetually snow-clad peak of Mt. Hood. The Hood River Valley proved to be a choice agricultural area, although transportation of produce was hampered until regular steamboat service, and then railroad service, became available. It soon became clear that the valley was best suited for fruit growing, especially apples and pears. Hundreds of farms were established, supplying fruit to scores of independent packers, each with their own colorful box label. Many examples of these labels are displayed in the Hood River County Historical Museum. The town prospered as the shipping point for the fruit growers. This business activity increased when the Mount Hood Railroad was started in 1905, with tracks extending south from Hood River up and into the valley, generally running parallel to the Hood River, through Pinegrove, Odell, Dee, and reaching Parkdale, twenty-one miles away, in 1910. Although built to bring logs down to a lumber mill near the town of Hood River, it also profited by carrying fruit boxes down to the Columbia for regional and national distribution. In 1986-87, local business interests purchased the Mount Hood Railroad from Union Pacific, continuing to carry some freight but also operating a successful tourist passenger train through the picturesque valley during the summer months.
The Town of Hood River

Beginning in 1854, with the first Donation Land Claim granted to Mary and Nathaniel Coe, gradual settlement of the Hood River Valley resulted in the little city which now bears its name. However, Native Americans had established an encampment at Hood River and often used a game trail around the east side of Mt. Hood. As early as 1838, Reverend Daniel Lee drove cattle across the Hood River Valley from Oregon City to The Dalles along this route. After a disastrous attempt by two early settlers to establish the Hood River Valley as range land in 1852 (all but 15 of the original 500 head of cattle perished during the winter), the Coe family and two others staked claims near Hood River in 1854 and discovered the true assets of the valley — its fertile volcanic soil and moderate climate. The Coes planted apple seeds for nursery stock and a large vegetable garden, and by 1858 were producing apricots, meat, melons, peaches, and vegetables for sale in The Dalles. The Coe’s successful farm, gardens, and orchard attracted new settlers, and by 1860 seventy people lived in the Hood River Valley and its reputation as fertile farmland continued to grow.

The Hood River Valley, which stretches 30 miles from the Columbia River to Mt. Hood and is between three and eight miles in width, became especially known for its fruit orchards beginning in the 1870s. At first, the only method of transporting produce was by Columbia River steamboats and wagon train. In 1881, the town found out that the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company (O.R.&N.C.; later incorporated into the Northern Pacific Railroad) was planning to locate a depot in Hood River. In anticipation of the new trading opportunities and the additional settlement that the railroad would bring, four square blocks comprising the town of Hood River were formally platted at this time.

The Coe family donated their pasture land to settlers who would establish commercial businesses in the new town site, provided alcohol was not sold on the premises. John Parker took advantage of this offer and constructed the first merchandising store in the town at the corner of First and Oak Streets. The
Mount Hood Hotel was constructed in August of 1881, directly south of the proposed depot site, and was followed by the construction of two other buildings. Several residences were also constructed within the new city limits.

As expected, completion of the O.R.&N.C. railroad in 1882 resulted in the rapid growth and development of the Hood River Valley. The valley’s famed produce, which now included strawberries as well as apples, peaches, pears, and cherries, could be shipped all over the country with less spoilage. Apples grew especially well in the valley, due to its warm days and cool nights, and the area soon became known as the “apple capital of the world.”

The period from 1884–1913 was one of tremendous growth for Hood River, as the valley’s fame for fruit-production spread and its tourist potential was realized as well. The town was officially organized during this time, and 1891 marked a small building boom in the town, with the construction of two churches, two commercial buildings, an armory, and several residences. Beginning in 1897, residential and commercial building in Hood River took off, with the first brick building in town being constructed in 1899. ‘The Heights,’ a relatively flat section southwest of downtown, began to develop. Travel between the Heights and downtown was difficult due to poor road conditions and the steep terrain, so the area functioned independently, serving primarily the valley farmers and orchardists. Shortly after the turn of the century, the Heights had its own commercial center including a grocery, drug store, greenhouse, and confectionery store, and surrounding residential neighborhoods with a couple of schools and churches.

Between 1901 and 1913, a number of substantial buildings were constructed in downtown Hood River, replacing the earlier one-story, wooden false-front structures of the settlement period. The construction of brick buildings such as the E.L. Smith Building (1904), the I.O.O.F Hall (1906), the First National Bank (1910) and the Hood River County Library (1913) demonstrate the prosperity of the town and its fruit-growing and timber industries. A number of cold-storage warehouses, which provided ice-making and pre-cooling machinery for the shipment of fruit, were constructed near the banks of the Columbia. In 1908, Hood River
became the county seat, which further stimulated growth in the area. Several additions expanded the town’s area at this time and prompted the construction of a number of residences.

In 1915, the city boasted three banks, two hotels, several dry goods and men’s furnishings stores, implement houses, meat markets, groceries, four automobile garages, and even paved streets. Indeed, the invention of the automobile and the completion of the Columbia River Highway in 1916 were significant turning points for Hood River, as these events brought another period of rapid expansion for the town. Auto tourism increased dramatically, and a number of service stations and car dealerships were constructed to meet the demand of tourists and locals alike. The population of Hood River increased from 2,331 in 1910 to 3,000 in 1920. The town’s residential neighborhoods continued to grow during this period, and resulted in the construction of many houses in the Bungalow and Craftsman styles. Only one apartment building, the Oak Street Apartments, was built during this time, and through its singularity is indicative of the prosperity of the town at this time.

The population of Hood River remained relatively stable at just over 3,000 through the duration of World War II. The community was shaken in 1942, when the long-standing Japanese-American residents of Hood River were interned for the duration of the war. Only about 40% of the original Japanese-Americans living in Hood River returned to the valley, but since then have been more fully integrated into society than they were in the early decades of this century.

The war years brought increased prosperity to the fruit growers of the valley, as more orchards were planted and production rose. Pear production surpassed that of apples at this time, amounting to approximately 70% of the fruit grown in the valley. Diversification in wood products to include plywood and cardboard manufacturing, as well as the fruit industry and ever-growing tourism industry, led the county to become one of above-average per capita income, an enviable distinction which is still true today. In the last fifty years, the population of the valley has grown by only 3,000, a slow rate in comparison with the remarkable growth of cities in the Willamette Valley in the past few decades.

The construction of Interstate 84 made the drive to Portland manageable in only one hour, and the conversion of Highway 26...
to a year-round highway in the 1970s increased recreational access to Mt. Hood. The introduction of windsurfing in the early 1980s resulted in the identification of Hood River as a prime location for this high-performance sport, due to year-round stiff gorge winds and standing waves in the river, and has brought yet more tourists to the town. Together with the snowboarding tie-in industry has resulted in a year-round flow of recreation-seekers.

This noted increase in tourism and recreation has brought big changes for the city of Hood River. As is typical for small towns across the United States, a number of long-standing businesses have left downtown, including Hood River’s largest department store, Paris Fair, which left in 1989. Smaller downtown groceries have been replaced by supermarkets on the edge of town, and buildings which had housed service establishments such as dry cleaners have been turned into brew-pubs and gift stores. However, despite the presence of a Wal-Mart and an increasingly mobile population, downtown Hood River has managed to persevere. Today the downtown offices and storefronts are over 90% occupied, and the excellent physical condition of the commercial core is a draw for tourists in and of itself.

Today Hood River enjoys increasing social and ethnic diversity, with a population which is approximately 20% Hispanic, and continued prosperity. The town’s fine historic architecture, together with its stunning location, proximity to Mt. Hood, the Columbia River Gorge, and Portland, and varied industry make it a pleasant place to live and to visit.

The earliest stages of commercial development at Hood River began at the corner of First and Oak street, with the construction of the first store by John Parker in 1881 (see the Roe-Parker House). The building was constructed of wood, with shops at the lower level and living quarters above. This four square block area, surrounding the intersection of First and Oak was originally platted in 1881, with expectations of a new rail station one block north. After the arrival of the railroad in 1882, similar development quickly extended through the town to the west. Many of the structures in Hood River were later replaced by more permanent brick structures, with only one wood structure remaining today.

The **Blowers Block Building**, on the site of the original Parker Store at 101 Oak, was constructed around 1910 by A.S. Blowers. A native of New York, Blowers began his hardware
business in Hood River in 1889. Like many Hood River businessmen, Blowers was connected to the fruit industry, with his own acreage of apple orchards and strawberry fields in the valley south of town. Blowers Hardware Store was located in the east half of the building for many years, with the west side operating as a moving picture theater and a stage. The original uses of the structure have been retained, with the present hardware business and theater, although the building has been used for several other purposes in past years, including an auto store, a grocery store and a restaurant. The theater is currently the only movie house in town. Neither business is historically connected to the original owners.

The Blowers Block is built of structural brick in a Commercial style. The only major alteration occurred immediately after construction, with the addition of a basement in 1912. Notable features include raised quoins and flat arches above the windows. The storefront windows have been replaced with aluminum windows and the transom light covered with wood panels. The cornice was removed in 1993.

The Mount Hood Motor Company, constructed in 1919 at 107-113 Oak, was built by Harry deWitt for his auto dealership. The structure originally contained a garage entry in the center bay of the 100-foot square building. The building has been used for a number of functions through the years, including the Greyhound Bus Depot in the late 1920s and 1930s, a grocery store, and a garage. The building has been subdivided for multiple uses throughout most of its history. The storefront has been extensively modified. In 1947 a fire caused significant damage, though it was rebuilt. The current mall configuration was established in 1979.

The Commercial style of the structure is typical of a number of automobile-oriented structures designed around the same time period in Hood River. This structure is likely the best example, with some interesting detailing. The structure is built of structural brick, with a stucco finish (recently painted). Distinctive characteristics include a central inverted V-shaped parapet, decorative plaster modillions and a cone-shaped keystone.

The bank building at the southeast corner of Oak and Second is the first brick structure in Hood River, constructed in 1899. Though it has been extensively remodeled, obscuring any remnant of its historical appearance, it is significant as its construc-
Hood River

The Hall Building, with four commercial bays, is virtually intact on the exterior (photo: S. Blashfield, 1996).

The design utilizes structural brick, with cast stone sills and large storefront windows at the lower level. The buff-colored finish brick was made locally. Other distinctive features include a stepped brick parapet, raised pilasters with stone capitals, and a drip corbeled cornice. The storefronts have been altered on several occasions, but the overall design is intact and in good condition. The plan is rectangular with 65 feet of frontage on Second Street.

One of the more distinctive buildings in town, the Keir Medical Building at 209-211 Oak is exemplary of the Art Deco influence in Oregon, and the only Art Deco design in the commercial district. The Keir Building was remodeled in this style in 1927 by A.S. Keir and a man by the last name of Cass, and was originally used as a drug store. The original date of construction is unknown. Keir was a significant figure in Hood River as Chairman of the School Board and pharmacist. His son owned the store from 1935 until it was sold in 1969 to Loy and Marjorie Fisher. Keir’s Drug operated in this location until it closed in 1993.

The building is distinctive with unusual decorative chevron designs and pink and blue tile at the central stair entry to the second floor. This tile is contemporary with the 1927 remodel, though many of the Hood River residents have perceived it as a
later alteration. There have been few exterior alterations since construction, and the property has continued to retain sympathetic commercial uses.

Constructed in 1904 for a cost of $10,000, E.L. Smith built this building at 213-215 Oak after relocating his business from the town of La Grande in 1900. Smith had previously operated as an investor and owned a lumber company before developing the First National Bank in Hood River. The bank was started in collaboration with his brother-in-law, F.S. Stanley, and relocated from a site one block east when this building was constructed in 1904. This was the first bank at this intersection, which was later flanked by banks at each corner. Banks still exist on three of the four corners today.

The Smith Building was originally designed for both commercial and residential use. The building was subdivided to house the bank on the corner and a grocery store. The First National Bank operated from this site until 1910 when it moved to the opposite corner of Oak Street. The building also housed Smith’s office. Several other businesses have been located in the building, including the Bragg Mercantile and the office of Dr. E.O. Dutro. Another doctor, V.R. Abraham, started a practice in the building in 1911 and maintained his office there until 1929. The building is still owned by the Abraham family and was listed on the National Register in 1991.

The building is located on a sloping site which includes the structure immediately to the south on Third Street. Like most of the commercial buildings, the Smith Building is constructed of structural brick. Notable features include segmentally arched windows and a pronounced cornice. The cornice is constructed of wood and is visually supported by projected brick pilasters which effectively divide the facade. The building has been significantly altered, with three oriel windows removed from the upper level prior to 1940 and a historic addition to the south dating from 1911. Oriel windows remain on the west face of the building. The addition is currently used as a law office, though mechanical equipment utilized by the original grocery store for moving heavy goods is still evident from the exterior. The Oak Street facade includes decorative brickwork dividing the two storefronts. The original spatial divisions of the upper level in the building remain unchanged, though the office and residential spaces are vacant. The exterior was sandblasted at some point,
E.L. Smith Building, Second Floor Plan, (drawing: Oregon SHPO Files)

Renovations to the exterior are quite obvious at the E.L. Smith Building. The second floor is apparently largely unchanged, though it is used only for storage and generally inaccessible (photo: S. Blashfield, 1996).

though it presently appears to be in sound condition.

The Butler Bank, one of the more architecturally distinctive structures in Hood River and located at 301-303 Oak Street, was designed by Portland architect A.E. Doyle. The bank was originally founded in 1900, and was housed in several other buildings until the completion of this structure in 1924. Truman Butler and his father, Leslie, founded the bank together. Leslie was a pioneer, traveling to Oregon in 1881 from Indiana. He played a significant role in the community, working on treatments of tuberculosis, and became a significant member of the State Highway Commission. The Butler Bank operated in Hood River until 1932, when it became a victim of the Depression and was forced to close. The structure was used to house the County Courthouse from that time until the construction of the current courthouse building in the 1950s.

The building is distinctive in several ways. The style of the design shows a distinctive Egyptian Revival influence, with the heavy entry surround supported by two large fluted columns. Winged elements at the corner of the roof add subtle detail to the overall composition. The small planter strip at the east side of the building is also a distinctive feature, as it is the only site in the commercial district, aside from the empty lots, where the building does not completely extend to the lot line on the street side. This concern for greenspace within the commercial district
was not common at its time of construction, and remains a distinctive feature today.

The Bartmess Building is the only structure remaining from the initial commercial building period in Hood River, and is located at 311 Oak Street. At one time, prior to the turn of the century, similar wood buildings lined Oak Street. Constructed in 1893 and more commonly known as the Paris Fair Annex, the building was commissioned by Samuel Bartmess as both a business and residence. The business had a dual function as a furniture store and a mortuary. In 1899, because of increasing business, Bartmess enlarged the building by adding a wing to the east. The addition was in keeping with the original design but is visible to the discerning eye. In 1916, Bartmess sold the furniture business to concentrate on his work as an undertaker. He was active in the construction of the Brethren Church, was a member of the city council, and helped organize the Pioneer Historical Society in 1907.

The building is the only remaining wood structure in the commercial district. It predates the paving of the streets and installation of sidewalks. However, a number of changes have substantially affected the appearance. Like many of the original wood structures in the commercial district, the Bartmess Building once had a pronounced gable roof capping off the facade, which has since been replaced by a roof of lower pitch. The original wood appearance is best viewed through the upper balcony. Painting and plywood coverings over most of the exterior are later additions, though much of the original fabric remains underneath. The upper level apartment is now vacant and used for storage.

The building has large storefront windows on the lower level below a balcony with a series of columns at the upper level. The new, shallow gable roof projects just over the top of the facade, but does not have the presence on the street as did the original design. Shiplap siding covers the structure, which includes projected window cornices and diamond wood shingles over the storefronts.

Designed by the architect Paul Minton Hall-Lewis in 1906, this building at 315 Oak Street housed the Paris Fair Department Store and the I.O.O.F. Hall in Hood River. Hall-Lewis practiced in Hood River for only a short time, from 1905 until 1909, but had a significant impact on the town’s commercial architecture. During this brief period, from his office adjacent to
The IOOF Hall/Paris Fair Building is one of the largest structures in the commercial district. Recent tenants have subdivided the first floor space, but the third floor remains largely intact. Notice the Bartness Building visible to the left, prior to the roof change (photo: Oregon SHPO Files, 1912).

The Hood River Jewelers Building is noted by its decorative tile designs on the upper portion of the facade (photo: S. Blashfield, 1996).

At the Waucoma Hotel, he designed several of the commercial structures in town, including the Davis Building, the Eliot Building and Hood River High School. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was established in Hood River in 1891 as the town's first fraternal lodge, and held meetings and events in this building until 1978, when membership declined. The third floor is currently unused. The Paris Fair Department Store operated at this location up until 1989, occupying the first two floors. The store opened in Hood River under the proprietorship of W.O. Ash and M.E. McCarty. For much of its history, the Paris Fair was the largest store in Hood River. An old Paris Fair sign still remains, attached to the corner of the building.

The building is designed in the 20th century Commercial style common to most of the buildings in Hood River. It is one of the larger buildings in the commercial district with three full floors and a partial basement. The facade of the building offers a straightforward elegance of design, with simple brick detailing. Distinctive features of the structure include segmental relieving arches at the windows, corbeled string courses, and a corbeled cornice. The building bears the insignia of the I.O.O.F. on the front elevation. The building is primarily an open plan, with three structural columns as the only interruptions on the first two floors. The first floor has a mezzanine level to the back, which housed offices for the department store. An elevator in the northwest corner still retains the original pulley and ball mechanism. Some original finishes remain, though the third floor is the only one which remains substantially intact.

The Hood River Jewelers Building is located at the westernmost edge of the commercial district, at 413-415 Oak. The building was constructed in 1909 and first used as a mortuary. The longest tenants were the Spaulding Dry Cleaners, an appropriate transitional service, adjacent to the residential neighborhood which extends west on Oak Street. The building is structural brick, with decorative brick detailing on the facade.

On the corner of Oak and Third streets, the Hood River Banking and Trust Building was the second of four banks to be constructed at this intersection. It was built in 1907 under the direction of the bank owner J.M. Culbertson. The building housed two tenants originally with the bank at the corner and F.H.
Coolidge's jewelry store to the north. Currently, the building is utilized as a jewelry store.

The Hood River Banking and Trust is one of the earliest brick structures in Hood River and is notable for the distinctive pressed metal cornice and facade details. Details include decorative swags and garlands, arched transom windows with small leaded panes, and an egg and dart pattern below the cornice. The building is in excellent condition, and although white paint covers all exterior finishes and a recently installed awning significantly obscures the level of detail in the facade, the building’s fine points are visible through close inspection.

The La France Building at 212 Oak was constructed in 1914 in the Commercial style. It was originally constructed for Garrabant and Parker’s Confectionery store and was later divided into two businesses. The building displays distinctive characteristics with diamond-shaped concrete inserts in the brick construction, and multi-pane transom windows with leaded glass.

In 1905, Dr. Frampton Brosius, a prominent local physician, constructed the Brosius Building at 202-206 Oak Street to house multiple businesses, including his office. Brosius arrived in Hood River from Nebraska in 1894 and became mayor by 1902. He was also president of the Commercial Club and a prominent member of a number of local organizations. One of the original businesses was the Bon Ton Barber Shop, which was housed here for almost eighty years. Along with two other doctors, J.K. Watt and H.L. Dumble, Brosius organized the Cottage Hospital on Oak Street in 1905. This hospital operated until 1932, when it was replaced by a new venture.

Other tenants in the Brosius Building included the Kresse Drug Store, a grocery store, and an office of the Electric and Gem Theater. The building is distinctive with its Roman brick construction, decorative stone sills, raised pilasters and segmental arched windows. The building originally had operable awnings at the first floor level on each storefront, of which only one remains. A number of the storefronts have been altered in recent years.

In 1909, T.L. Eliot constructed the Eliot Building at 116 Oak for the E.A. Franz Hardware store. Thomas Eliot was a significant figure in Oregon history. After establishing the Church of Our Father Unitarian Church in Portland in 1867, he was ac-
tive in the establishment of Reed College and served as the first president of the Board of Trustees. Eliot financed the Franz hardware store in Hood River, designed by P.M. Hall-Lewis in 1906. The building was constructed three years after its initial design, under additional direction from A.E. Doyle. The store was purchased in 1937 by the Jubitz family and has been continuously used as a hardware store since construction. Distinctive features include raised brick quoins, a projecting cornice, and a facade of locally-made buff-colored brick.

The C.H. Sprout Building was constructed in 1911 for E.A. Franz’s furniture store, located at 112 Oak. Franz, who was expanding his business ventures, connected the building with his adjacent hardware store in the Eliot Building through an archway cut into the adjoining wall. The building was designed by W.H. McLain, an associate of Franz, who became the manager of the furniture store.

Sprout was a prominent businessman and an official in the Hood River Apple Growers’ Union. The building is distinctive with its raised quoin details and large second story windows. Glass transoms extend across the storefront in a similar style to a number of other local buildings, though they have since been boarded over. The locally-made buff-colored brick matches the adjacent hardware store building.

Once part of a larger structure, the Annex at 104-108 Oak Street is the only remaining piece of the Mount Hood Hotel, which was once the premier hotel in Hood River. As the first hotel in town, established in 1881 to coincide with the arrival of the railroad to Hood River, the building was located directly adjacent to the train station. The parking lot north of the Annex was the site of the original structure, which was demolished in the 1930s. The current building was originally constructed to provide retail space on the ground floor facing Oak Street and hotel rooms on the upper floors. The structure was built in 1912 by C.A. and Lola Bell, who operated the business from 1893 until 1942. The construction occurred during a significant period of growth, due to the growing success of the fruit industry, the timber industry, and tourism. The Annex was built to face Oak Street to increase visibility for the growing amount of automobile traffic coming through town. The original design included elements such as an opera house and a bowling alley, which were never constructed.
Designed in a typical Commercial style common to Hood River, the Annex has a number of distinctive features. The building developed a strong similarity in design to the original wood hotel with a prominent cornice line and matching floor levels. The two story design houses a daylight basement, exposed to the north because of the sloping site. The building contains five major bays, of which three are operated by local retail businesses. The center business is the only one retaining the original storefront appearance, with recessed wood panels. The original storefronts once had glass transoms, similar to the current lobby bays, which were replaced in a recent restoration. The building originally housed a fourth retail storefront, which was later acquired as an expansion of the lobby space by the hotel. The main lobby was relocated from the original building prior to the fire which destroyed the wood hotel, to face Oak Street in 1926, because of the growing importance of automobile traffic. The date of opening for the new lobby corresponded with the official dedication of the Mount Hood Loop Highway that extended around Mt. Hood to the south.

The shallow porch at the Hotel entry, facing Oak Street, is somewhat unique for commercial design in town, but provides outdoor dining area for the current restaurant. The building is constructed of brick, and was one of the last major structural brick buildings built along Oak Street. Recessed stucco panels, a geometric design over the second story windows, and a corbeled string course are some of the details which make this structure distinctive. The Hotel houses forty-one guest rooms, was extensively rehabilitated in 1988, and was placed on the National Register in 1993.

At 12 Oak Street is the location of the Yasui Brothers’ Mercantile, significant as an indication of the Japanese influence in Hood River. The first Japanese settlers arrived in the area in 1903. Many of the Japanese immigrants worked in the logging camps or along the railroad. By 1910, Hood River boasted the largest Japanese population in the state, outside of Portland. One of the first Japanese arrivals in Hood River was Taiki Kuma. Kuma opened the Miguma Variety Store in 1905 on the corner adjacent to the site of the Yasui Brothers’ Mercantile. The Yasui family, who had immigrated to Portland from Japan in 1904, relocated to Hood River in 1907. Masuo Yasui and his older brother Renichi purchased the Miguma Variety Store from Kuma in 1908.
This photo show the first Depot at Hood River, in the distance, and a matching service building in the foreground. The tower of the original Mount Hood Hotel is visible to the left (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

The Yasui family relocated their business to a new building in 1930, when they constructed the Yasui Brothers’ Mercantile Building. The design is generally unassuming, but relatively intact aside from some minor facade alterations.

Yasui became a prominent businessman in Hood River, and at one point owned interest in one-tenth of the cultivated land in the Hood River Valley. On his land he grew a variety of produce, including apples, pears, cherries, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, and beets. He served as Director for the Apples Grower’s Association for ten years. The Yasui family operated the store until World War II, when like many Japanese, they lost their property and were relocated to internment camps. The building is of typical brick construction, in the Commercial style.

In 1882, the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company arrived in Hood River, touching off a significant period of development that lasted nearly forty years. Created by Henry Villard as part of his effort to create a transcontinental railroad link to Portland, the Depot quickly became a major passenger and shipping stop, with the rapidly growing fruit and timber industry of the area. With the addition of a branch line, the Mount Hood Railroad, to Parkdale in 1910, property owners in the valley could transport fruit and timber directly to the major shipping port in Portland. As a result of these connections, these industries had a significant impact on the growth and economic
success of the area. The current station was constructed in 1911, at the bottom of First Street. Constructed for the Columbia Line which extended through the Columbia River Gorge, the railroad served significant passenger and freight traffic. Aside from the general traffic, tourism has existed in Hood River since the development of the railroad, with people coming to see the distinctive landscapes of the Columbia Gorge.

For many years the building was known as the U.P. Station after the merger of the O.W.R. and N. and the Union Pacific railroad. The U.P. operated the station until 1987, when it was purchased by the Mount Hood Railroad Corporation and partially restored. The building is still in use by Amtrak and the branch line is operated by the Mount Hood Railroad Corporation offering tours of the Hood River Valley.

An earlier depot building was constructed in 1882. This was later demolished for the construction of the current building in 1911. The Depot is in the Craftsman style, of a combination of brick and wood frame construction. The brick is covered with pebble-dash stucco. The building has wide overhanging eaves, corbeled brick coursing, and half timbering at the gable end. Dormer windows project from the gable roof to allow light into the high-ceilinged interior spaces. Only minor alterations have changed the appearance of the structure, the most significant being the relocation of the original front door on the southeast facade, which was later bricked-in. The design received a reputation for sturdiness after being impacted by a runaway train in 1918, which caused only minor damage. The interior houses a waiting room, public facilities, a ticket office, and a baggage room. The building is one of only two brick depots remaining along the original O.W.R. and N. line. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Located at the corner of Cascade and Second Street, the Waucoma Hotel was the major rival of the Mount Hood Hotel after the turn of the century. The third brick building in town, it was constructed based on the design of C.J. Crandell in 1904. The original owner of the building, P.F. Fouts, built the structure for approximately $17,000 including the furnishings. The original design includes twenty-seven guest rooms, providing each an exterior window facing the street. When opened, the building had a large two-story wraparound veranda, which was removed in 1911 when the sidewalks were installed. The building con-
tained a number of 'modern' amenities including a call bell system, porcelain bathtubs and steam heat.

In 1909, the building was sold to Charles Hall and Ernest Smith for approximately $25,000. The hotel name was changed to Hotel Oregon, and a fourth story was added. An open air garden with a pergola on the fourth level became one of the major distinguishing features. Under the designs of architect R.R. Bartlett, other alterations including an expanded lobby. The building operated as a hotel until it was closed for fire code violations in the late 1970s. Like many of the commercial structures in town, the building is constructed of structural brick and has a corbeled cornice. It is currently operated as a pub on the lower level, with the upper levels remaining vacant.

Completed in 1920, the Hood River City Hall on Second Street between Oak and State streets is still in use by the local government. The building is constructed of concrete with a brick veneer on the facade. The building originally housed the jail and the fire station along with city offices, though some of these functions have since been relocated. Distinctive features include the projecting cast stone down lights at the top of the parapet. The building demonstrates a Romanesque influence, unusual for Hood River commercial architecture, with large decorative arches on the front facade.

Hood River first began receiving regular mail service in 1904. However, it was not until 1935 that the Postal Service constructed a building for this purpose, originally operating out of the Mason's Building on Second Street. The Hood River Post Office, at 408 Cascade Street, is constructed in the Art Deco style and continues as the local Post Office for Hood River. The building is constructed of concrete and has very simple detailing including a raised a belt course and stucco exterior.

Constructed in 1886 and located on the northeast corner of Sixth and State streets, the Ezra L. Smith House was originally the residence of a prominent politician and entrepreneur in Hood River, Ezra L. Smith. Smith was an integral figure in the establishment of the town and the development of agriculture in the nearby valley. He served in the California Legislature, and was once acting Governor of the state of Washington in the early 1870s. Smith was integral in the incorporation of the town of Hood River and served as the first mayor. The house originally had a com-
manding presence on the hill, though a series of alterations and later development have obscured its appearance. Historically, members of the community referred to this as the “Mansion on the Hill.” It has been occupied as a funeral parlor, and currently houses several businesses, including a wine store. Refer to the E.L. Smith Building for additional information.

Constructed in 1913 through a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, the **Hood River County Library** on State Street between Fifth and Sixth is one example of a number of Carnegie Libraries in Oregon. The Library was designed by the Portland architects Sutton and Whitney on a sloping site one block above the main commercial district of Hood River. The style has been termed Jacobean, with both English vernacular and gothic motifs represented in the detailing. The structure has two levels, constructed with a brick veneer and cut stone details. The main stacks are located on the upper level, under a vaulted ceiling with exposed structural beams. A substantial staircase leads down to the children’s and periodicals sections of the collection.

The structure is remarkably intact, with only one small addition of an entry foyer at the west side of the structure. The library sits on property adjacent to the original Ezra Smith property extending between State Street and Oak Street. The park was donated to the library by the Smith estate in 1935, originally identified as the Georgian Smith Park by a dedication of the Women’s Club in 1936. It is more commonly referred to as the Library Park by the residents of Hood River. Several of the large trees on the site are associated with the history of the Ezra Smith estate.

In 1905, Mrs. Asenath Parker sold a twelve room house and surrounding acreage to move into town. She purchased this Queen Anne style residence at 535 State Street, now called the **Roe-Parker House**, which exists today as one of the few residential properties remaining in the main commercial district of Hood River. As a well-known fruit farming family, the Parkers played a significant role in the history of Hood River. Asenath’s husband, John, was the first person to construct a building in the new plat of Hood River in 1881. For many years, Mrs. Parker operated Parker’s Confectionery and Delicatessen with her son Frank.

The house was constructed around 1900 by the George Roe
family. But it was quickly sold to Gertrude Schall in 1903, who subsequently sold the house to the Parkers in 1905. The house remains virtually intact, with one small historic addition in the rear and a new foundation at the porch as the only alterations. Among the noteworthy details are the sunburst patterned gable ornaments and the original carved front door panels. The basalt foundation demonstrates a typical material used in this region. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987 and has recently been restored.

The Riverside Community Church built in 1915 has a decorative rough-faced ashlar stone facade. The church sanctuary is reached up a flight of stairs immediately inside the entry doors. Despite the form suggested by the exterior elevation, the sanctuary extends perpendicularly away from the street, not to the west as one might expect from the exterior. A pipe organ and decorative stained glass offer a simple beauty to the interior spaces. Stone, used for the majority of the exterior surfaces, has been an uncommon building material in Hood River. The glass wall and exposed beams at the west side of the north facade are the result of a later addition, which simply replaced the exterior wall and added only 2-3 feet to the space inside.

Constructed in 1954, the Hood River County Courthouse, located at State and Third streets, is one of the newer structures within the Commercial District. The building was designed by the Portland architect Elmer Harrington, on the site of the original schoolhouse for Hood River. The schoolhouse was constructed in 1883, and used as an educational facility until 1895, when it was converted to use as a courthouse. The original building was used until 1932, when the courthouse was relocated.

Predating the use of automobiles in Hood River, a long staircase leads down the hill from major residential areas into the commercial district. The Community Stairs, constructed in 1905, are situated south of Second Street, and extend from State Street up to Montello Street in the residential neighborhood above town. The concrete stairs are approximately four feet wide with a pipe handrail, and are a replacement of original wood stairs constructed at the site. Still in common use, the stairs provide an important site responsive solution to the particular topography of Hood River and the Columbia Gorge.

Since the extension of the rail line into the Hood River Valley around 1906, Hood River has been a significant supply
source for the agricultural industry and fruit growers. A number of businesses in Hood River capitalized on this connection. The Sheppard family provides an important example through the several businesses they have operated in Hood River beginning in the 1920s. The Shepards were early residents of Hood River Valley, owning an apple orchard near Odell. C.M. Sheppard and O.W. Sheppard started their business in the small valley town of Odell in 1919, selling fruit packing equipment. In 1926-27 they moved from Odell and began operating in Hood River.

The property at 102 State Street is the first location of the Sheppard businesses, which later expanded down the street. This structure, the Shepards Equipment and Supplies Building, was originally constructed in 1920, and operated as a feed store. The Shepards leased the structure beginning in 1926. The family has conducted business from this location ever since, with the exception of 1929-1931, when they briefly relocated to a site at Fourth and Cascade. In 1932 the Shepards expanded their business from irrigation equipment to include John Deere farm machinery. For a time after 1939, they sold cars, including Studebakers and later Toyotas. But the auto business was dropped in favor of farm machinery.

The building is notably intact, including one of the few remaining operable awnings in town. The interior is remarkably reminiscent of a historic period, with the remaining drug store style counter, open truss framing and floor scale. The building is constructed primarily of concrete, with the original wood floor and glass storefront and transom remaining. The concrete has been covered with a stucco finish, which may be historic.

The Foust and Merles Garage at First and State streets, along with the Sparks Showroom, were acquired for use by the Sheppard family's farm machinery business in 1950. The building was constructed in 1915 by the local contractor Louis C. Boyd, using locally manufactured bricks. The earliest occupant was the Foust and Merles Garage and Machine Shop, which survived only four years. The building was occupied by the Slutz Brothers Auto and Repair Shop from 1920 until 1928, when Edward Sparks purchased this building adjacent to his shop. Sparks operated a tire store in the building until 1943 before it was purchased by the Sheppard family. The building is brick with stucco finish and a glass storefront, sharing a common wall with the Sparks Showroom.
In 1950, the Shepards expanded to the **Sparks Showroom Building**, across First Street from their store, for use as a maintenance and equipment repair facility. This use has continued to the present. The structure was originally constructed in 1930 as a car showroom by Edward Sparks. Among the more interesting business dealings in Hood River, the Butler Bank in Hood River failed shortly after construction was completed, leaving Sparks $5,000 in debt to the contractor, Lou Baldwin. Needing money to pay a sub-contractor, Art Loft, who in-turn owed $5,000 to Sparks, Baldwin negotiated a deal with the exchange of only 50 cents between parties. The building is a similar style to the Sheppard Supplies Building with concrete construction under a stucco finish. Major distinctions include two arched windows and stepped parapet at the front. Adjacent to the Sparks Showroom Building was a gas station built in 1922, now replaced by a more modern structure, which was also operated by the Sheppard family.

A number of noteworthy churches and residences lie at the edge of downtown Hood River along State and Oak streets, historically very prestigious addresses, and are a short walk from the commercial district. The **St. Asbury Church** (United Methodist Church), located at 612 State Street, is a small Gothic-inspired church which cost $20,000 when finished in 1913. Built of brick, it features a stunted side tower and intersecting gable roofs. The characteristic Gothic pointed arch motif is present throughout: in the entrances, framed in brick; in the large windows and the individual stained-glass sashes within them; in the mock-timbering at the second floor; and in the gable-end vents. Since it’s construction, it has undergone a few modifications, including the addition of a turreted skylight, the enclosure of the side porch, and the addition of a small shed entrance vestibule on the west elevation.

Located at 705 State Street, the **Marshall House** (1912) is an excellent example of the Craftsman-inspired bungalow, a style which became predominate in Hood River during the first decades of the 20th century. The house’s hip roof with flared eaves and brackets and roof dormers are typical of the style in Oregon, as are the recessed porch and upper sashes of leaded-glass.

The ‘jerkinhead,’ or clipped gable, on the front of the **Ferguson House** at 715 State Street, built in 1910, is particularly common in Oregon, as is the Bungalow style of the building.
Less common is its vernacular expression, evident through the overhanging second story and incised pattern in the concrete porch and stair wall. The original owner, Anna Ferguson and her husband, Judson, owned and lived in this house for over fifty years. Anna Ferguson was active in real estate deals, and had the reputation of being an influential and astute business woman.

The Stewart House, built in 1903 and located at 719 State Street, is a unique example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style in Hood River, evident through the gambrel roof parallel to the street. Other notable features include the bowed second floor balcony, a Tuscan balcony and porch posts, recessed wrap-around porch, diamond-pane leaded glass, and prominent corbeled chimneys. The Stewart family operated a hardware and furniture store between Second and Third streets on State Street, and resided at this address until 1946.

The Unitarian Church building at 903 State Street, has been used as a residence since 1978. Built in 1900, it is the oldest church building in the town of Hood River, and reflects the lasting popularity of the Gothic style for church architecture. Despite its present use, it has not been significantly altered, and retains original features such as its decorative stained-glass windows, pointed arch windows on the side elevations, a front portico with decorative Tudor arch, and round gable-end windows. The second-story windows have been altered, and the garage and carport to the rear are later additions.

The Shaw-Dumble House (1898) at 318 Ninth Street has long been regarded as one of the most distinctive residences in Hood River, and has been listed on the National Register since 1990. An unusual adaptation of the Queen Anne style, the house features a fairly steep hip roof with a hexagonal turret, the only example of its kind in Hood River, and another half-turret. When originally constructed in 1898, the house was only one story. The turret and bay windows on the front facade date from this time. The house was modified beginning in the early 1900s, when a second story was added, the house was expanded to the rear, and a room was added to the south side. An attached garage was added early in the automotive age.

The interior of the house, which is approximately 1800 square feet, contains seven major rooms (four at the time of original construction), two bathrooms, a utility room, and a cellar. The living room occupies the northeast corner of the house and
has bay windows on both the east and north elevations which look over the porch and the Columbia River Gorge, respectively. The north bay is carried up to the second floor and forms a window seat for the north bedroom.

The room addition to the south side of the house is presumed to have been used as an after-hours or emergency doctor’s office, as it is accessible directly from the entry hall and patched portions of the floor in the room are consistent with the bolt holes for an examining table. Both of the early owners, Marion F. Shaw and Howard L. Dumble, were physicians; the office addition dates from the time of Dumble’s residence. The property’s retaining walls, which were built in 1913 of rounded river rock, are unusual in Hood River due to their height, which reaches five feet in some sections. Large trees, including a tall Ponderosa pine, a holly, and a cedar, date from the early years of the house.

Drs. Shaw and Dumble were both prominent figures in the early medical, social, and economic history of Hood River. Together, the doctors helped to form the Hood River Hospital in 1905, and both participated, through the purchase and development of orchards, in the dramatic growth of the fruit industry in the valley.

An excellent example of the Colonial Revival style built in 1907, the Orrin B. Hartley Residence at 1029 State Street was constructed for early pioneer and prosperous businessman Orrin B. Hartley by local builder F.A. Jerome. The house was built during a period of rapid development in Hood River, and in a style popular in larger cities at the time, evidence of the owner’s upward mobility. Its location on State Street was an enviable one—many of the town’s most prominent residences were built along State and Oak streets in the decade after the turn of the century.

The exterior of the house demonstrates characteristics of the Colonial Revival style through its symmetry, hip roof, wide overhanging eaves with modillion brackets, and frieze with classical dentils. Two symmetrical bay windows extend around the east and west corners of the front elevation and feature leaded glass in the upper window panes. The front porch portico is supported by six solid wood columns resting on rough aggregate concrete block bases. The entrance is flanked by fluted pilasters capped with dentils and Tuscan posts with projecting capitals.
The interior of the residence is intact and displays finely crafted wood detailing, including a beveled-glass entrance door, half-walls of recessed panels which support solid Tuscan posts, and a central stairway composed of square newel posts and a turned balustrade. The living room, on the east side of the house, features a bay window in the northeast corner, a stained-glass window on the north wall, and a French door on the east wall leading to the side porch. A diagonal tiled fireplace is located in the southeast corner of the room. The dining room is entered through a large Tudor-arched opening from the living room, and features a built-in cabinet and bookcase, and an oriel window on the south wall. Some of the original cabinets remain in the kitchen, as does an original marble bread-making counter. The second story is comprised of three bedrooms, a small nursery or sewing room, and a bathroom. A stained glass window is located in the northeast bedroom above the door leading to the upper porch deck. The Hartley House was listed in the National Register in 1989.

A unique adaptation of the Craftsman style constructed in 1907, the **Franz House** at 911 Oak Street features a corbeled chimney, a second-story polygonal bay dormer and balcony and a recessed porch. Part of the front porch was been enclosed with glass in 1989, and a garage and office wing was added in 1992. Otherwise, the house is remarkably intact. Ernest Franz, the original owner, was the founder of the E.A. Franz hardware store. He and his wife Dora lived in this house until 1911, at which time they built a newer residence down the street at 1002 Oak. The family of the second owner, Christian Dethman, who was vice-president of the First National Bank in Hood River, owned the house until 1963.

The **Bone House** at 902 Oak Street is a distinctive example of the Bungalow style. Built in 1911, it features low massing which is exaggerated by its sunken site, as well as the recessed upper story porch, overhanging eaves, massive porch supports and paired carved brackets typical of its style.

Constructed in 1901 in the Queen Anne style, the **Brosius House**, located at 821 Oak Street, features a corbeled chimney, shaped shingles on the gable ends, grouped Tuscan porch posts, a stick balustrade, and a small upper story balcony. Frampton C.
Brosius was once the Mayor of Hood River, and was active in the Commercial Club and fraternal organizations in town.

The Duckwall House, a vernacular adaptation of the Colonial Revival style built in 1906, is located at 811 Oak Street. Although a fine residence with a prominent wraparound porch and classically-inspired interior details, it is primarily associated with the life of John Duckwall who owned the property from 1929 until his death in 1976. Duckwall was the owner of the Duckwall Brothers Fruit Company, which eventually became one of the largest fruit packing and shipping companies in the Northwest. The Duckwall House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Located at 725 Oak Street, the Davidson-Childs House was built in 1904 and is detailed with clipped gable dormers, a central projecting porch with decorative stick work and cut-out circular and clover designs in the balustrade, and ornamental stick work in the gable ends. The only example of the Stick Style in Hood River, the Davidson-Childs House was listed in the National Register in 1989.

Notes

1 Commercial Club, Hood River, Oregon (Hood River, OR. 1909), 3.
2 See Clem L. Pope, Switchback to the Timber: A History of the Mt Hood Railroad and the Oregon Lumber Company (Parkdale, OR, 1992), and Rider’s Guide to the Mount Hood Railroad (Hood River, OR, 1988).
3 The Hood River section was written by Steven Blashfield and Erin Hanafin Berg. Sources consulted include:

   Donovan, Sally. Conversations. Fall 1996.

   Hood River County Historic Resources Inventory. 1988.

Lage Orchard
Day 2 - June 13, 1997

"Of course in indicating the forces that formed this now verdant valley, glacial action must not be forgotten. Far extending moraines and wide glaciated surfaces tell the story of the far-away eras ...."

-Rev. H.K. Hines
An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon
Lage Orchard

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Fruit trees are common throughout the Hood River Valley. The fruit industry has had a strong impact on the local economy since the earliest days of Euro-American settlement (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

**Lage Orchards**

East of the city of Hood River, the highway crosses over the river and intersects with East Side Drive. The road ramps up the hillside and runs nearly due south through orchard after orchard into the Hood River Valley. Today most of the small family-owned orchards in the valley have been subsumed by huge agri-business corporations like Diamond Fruit. A few smaller family operations still thrive through careful management, however, and among them is Lage Orchards.

**Fruit Agriculture**

In the 1870s, agriculture in Oregon managed to progress despite the lack of railways other than local lines. The number of farms more than doubled between 1870 and 1880, increasing from 7,587 to 16,217. The majority of these farmers who came to Oregon from 1870 to 1890 were from the Midwestern states of Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. While most farms were created in the Willamette Valley, farms were growing in size and number in places like the Hood River Valley as well. As
Lage Farm

The Hood River Valley offers fertile land for agriculture. Apples and pears are the major crops, though some wineries are also beginning to develop in the area (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

Fruit from the Hood River Valley is shipped around the country. Originally most of this shipping happened by rail, connecting through the town of Hood River (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

noted, the Hood River farmers specialized in fruit growing.

What makes the valley particularly good for fruit production is the elevation and eastern exposure. It was high enough to have cold nights, but the morning sun warms the ground. In order for an apple tree to produce fruit, it must undergo a winter conditioning. The trees are hearty enough to withstand subfreezing temperatures but are often planted in low-lying pockets of hilly areas to avoid frost that can damage the blossoms. An apple tree may produce fruit for up to a century but orchards are generally replanted every 30 years. The reason for replanting is that the trees generally pass their peak of production after this time. Walter Ebeling, in his book *The Fruited Plain*, states that most fruit trees do not “come true” from seed, so a bud or piece of shoot of the desired variety is grafted onto a small tree known as the rootstock. The rootstock has no effect on the size, shape, or quality of the apples, but has an important effect on ultimate tree size. Rootstocks resulting in semi-dwarf trees have become popular. As many as 200-300 trees can be planted to an acre, compared with only 50-100 full-size trees. The smaller trees are easier to manage, yet produce more fruit per acre and the fruit is of better quality. The semi-dwarf trees become full-bearing in 6-8 years after planting compared to 12-15 years or more for standard trees. Dwarf or semi-dwarf characteristics can also be obtained by grafting mutations or "sports" onto standard rootstocks. It is important for the commercial apple grower to be fully aware of the soil fertility when a decision needs to be made regarding what variety and what rootstock is to be used.4

Pears are closely related to the apple and are also indigenous to western Asia.5 The care and culture of both types are similar but pears are susceptible to fire blight. The ideal conditions for growth of both pear and apple trees are cool nights and sunny warm days. Although the trees are similar in appearance, pears are not as tolerant of extreme weather conditions. They do, however, require a winter conditioning like apple trees. Although the most popular pear variety is the Bartlett, the most important winter variety is the Anjou pear. Ninety percent of winter pears in the U.S. come from Washington, Oregon and California.6 Generally, it is recommended, whether planting pears or apples, that more than one variety be planted to insure cross-pollination.7 Late April and early May is when the trees flower, and at that time the valley floor is bright with the blossoms of scores of or-
chards extending almost as far as the eye can see. The harvest is from September to October. The comparatively long growing season in the Hood River Valley means that the trees come into bearing much sooner than other areas of the United States. It is the major winter pear growing area of the state and has over 14,000 acres of irrigated orchards.

Although the area receives 30 inches or more of rain a year, nearly all of this comes in the winter months from October through April. In the summer months, when the fruit ripens and the trees need to be well watered, there may be virtually no rain at all. Hence nearly all orchards are irrigated in one manner or another.

Seasons vary among different varieties of both apples and pears depending on the climate of the area. Pears are a bit more complicated to harvest than apples. In order to determine when

This drawing provides some conception of the size and shape of the Hood River Valley. Protected between two ridges at either side, the valley has offered dramatic scenery and productive agriculture since the arrival of the first Euro-Americans (drawing: Oregon SHPO Files).
the pears are ready for harvest, a pressure tester is used. Pears will not ripen adequately on the tree, so they must be picked green and put into cold storage until they are ready to be marketed. Final ripening should take place at room temperature at the market.

Cold storage is a vital part of the production process for both fruits. This slows down the ripening process and allows the fruit to be stored for several months. The fruit, in wooden bins, is placed in large air-tight insulated chambers. In the process of cooling the air, oxygen is removed and cold nitrogen-rich air is pumped back into the chamber, gradually lowering the temperature as well as the oxygen content which slows down the ripening process considerably. In this way fruit can be kept in a cold static state until needed by shippers and retailers. The largest concentration of cold storage facilities in the country is in the Pacific Northwest.

The first orchard in the valley, in what is today the town of Hood River, was planted by Nathaniel Coe in the 1850s. Across
the river in Washington, the White Salmon area orchards were already established, but during an attack by local tribes those orchards were destroyed. Hood River residents kindly provided the new trees to help White Salmon farmers restart their orchards. The initial Hood River orchards were placed along the river but expansion carried them south towards the mountains into the higher elevations. Early orchards were main sources of food for families and vegetables were often planted between the rows of trees. Often, several varieties of trees were planted to provide families with fruit for the longest periods possible.

Today, almost all of the orchards are irrigated by sprinkler systems and the fruit is packed and marketed throughout the world by the Diamond Fruit Growers Cooperative, Duckwall Brothers, Stadelman’s Fruit Company, Pooley Orchards, and Webster Orchards.\(^{10}\)

Lage Orchards

Hans Lage and his family were early settlers in the Hood River Valley. Hans Lage was born March 18, 1847 in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, near the border with Denmark. Lena Hock Lage was born in southern Germany. Both immigrated to Davenport, Iowa, the location of a German colony. Hans and Lena were married there soon after they arrived and lived in Davenport until 1875. They eventually had ten children, four born in Iowa and six in Oregon.

The Lage’s decision to go west was influenced by the Suksdorf family of the German colony at Davenport who immigrated to the White Salmon area in Washington Territory in 1874 where they purchased the E.S. Joslyn holdings. Joslyn had been a fruit grower. The Lage family soon came west by Central Pacific Railway to Sacramento, California, and then by steamship to Portland, Oregon, then taking a steamboat up the river to White Salmon. In the spring of 1876 after looking for land and home sites in Washington, the Lages moved to the Hood River Valley and bought the Milton Neal homestead of 160 acres. The Lage farm has been in the family since that time.

Hans Lage planted orchards in two acres, creating one of the early apple, pear, and peach orchards in the Hood River Valley. He was also roadmaster for many years and was instrumental with forming and filing water rights for the Eastside Irrigation
E. Riddle Lage on the packing line in 1930s Packing House (photo: Courtesy of the Lambert Family, 1945).

The packing line showing the apple sorting process (photo: Courtesy of the Lambert Family, 1945).

Red Barn Section.  
Drawn By: Anne Seaton.

25.8 BUILDING at the END of the OREGON TRAIL  
Portland, Oregon
King Roberts and Charles Lage move workers housing across a field (photo: Courtesy of the Lambert Family, 1945)
Dramatic views of Mount Hood, on a clear day, demonstrate the beauty of the Hood River Valley (photo: Courtesy of the Lambert Family, 1945).

Lage Farm

The orchard consists of roughly 300 acres, and is situated with dramatic views of the mountains and the valley (photo: Historic Preservation Program, University of Oregon).

District. The big red barn at the farmstead, built in 1890, was a general purpose building accommodating cattle, horses, a root cellar, and a frost-free storage area in the lower level. The upper level was used for storing grain and hay. The original packing room was an area about 20 by 40 feet in the red barn, from which boxes of apples were taken by wagon to Hood River to be sold.

By 1928 the family economy had shifted from subsistence farming to the commercial growing of fruit. Edward Lage, one of Hans’ sons, added a room to the red barn to house waxing and polishing equipment to make the apples more attractive for marketing. Edward and his sons Riddell, George, and Charles, continued to clear land and expand the orchards. Riddell studied at Oregon State University and returned to introduce a more scientific approach to management of the operation during the Great Depression. When a neighbor, Doc Winchell, died, the Lages purchased 88 acres of his land, including a more modern apple packing building, moving their packing operations from the red barn to that facility. By 1959 Lage Orchards was incorporated.
Up until 1960 the apples and other fruit were shipped to other locations for cold storage as soon as they were packed. As the volume of production grew, it became increasingly difficult and costly to have others do the storing. Hence, in an effort to maintain their independent operation, the family decided to seek credit assistance to build their own cold storage facility. A second storage unit was added to the original cold storage room in 1965, large enough to hold 100,000 boxes of fruit, followed by a third room in 1976, and a fourth in 1981. Today Lage Orchards comprises 300 acres. In the heavy rains that produced the disastrous floods of February 1996, the Lage Orchards were heavily damaged by raging streams which tore up 100 pear trees and cut a gully 25 feet wide and 10 feet deep through one of the orchards.\footnote{11}
**Pine Grove Community**

The first permanent American settlers in this section of the Hood River Valley arrived in 1861. The Lage family settled here in 1876. At the time there was not a church in this immediate area, so three families regularly assembled in the Lage home where the first Sunday School was formed in 1879. The Lages were also instrumental in starting the first local school. Although a school had been built at Lentz Butte, halfway between Odell and Pine Grove, students had to walk the long distance to and from that school. The distance was so great that Hans Lage generously offered land to build another school a few hundred yards from the Lage farm. When surveyed, however, it was found that this land was actually on the Fike farm, not Lage’s. Nonetheless, a one-room log structure was built on this location in 1887, and it was named Pine Grove for the grove of pine trees in which it was built. The Sunday School met in this building until 1889 when a separate two-room building was built for the school. The one-room log school was moved to the present church site, and a two-room school erected in its place. In 1927, the present school building was built with the auditorium added in 1951. When the present school was built, the older building (originally two rooms but by this time enlarged) was near the area where the church had already been built and was converted into a parsonage. The present church, although recalling types popular several decades earlier, was built in 1907. The land on which it is built was donated by Virgil Winchell with the provision that if ever religious meetings were no longer held in the building the land would revert to the Winchell heirs.
Notes

1 Research and draft text by Maia Brindley. Sources consulted include:


Hood River County Historical Society, *History of Hood River County, Oregon* (Hood River, OR, H.R. County Historical Society, 1982).


Fite, Gilbert, *The Farmer's Frontier*, 149.

Ebeling, *Fruited Plain*, 277.

Ebeling, *Fruited Plain*, 277.

Ebeling, *Fruited Plain*, 277.

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Oregon State Department of Agriculture, *Agriculture in Oregon*, 32.

Hood River Historical Society, *History of Hood River County, Oregon* (Hood River, OR 1982).

Lage Farm
Timberline

Day 2 - June 13, 1997

Grades shot at an average snow depth of 34 feet, which may result in some inaccuracies. It is strongly recommended that this sheet be redrawn when conditions prove more favorable.

-paraphrased note on Sheet 1, Site Plan, of Timberline Working Drawings. Works Progress Administration (WPA, 1937)
Timberline Lodge is named for its location at the top of the tree line on Mount Hood. Dramatic views of the surrounding mountain peaks and Mount Hood, at 11,000+ feet, offer a dramatic setting. This late 1930’s air photo shows the Lodge and original drive before parking expansion and the addition of a Day Lodge (photo: Brubaker Air Photo, Friends of Timberline).
The Pacific plate, inexorably inching its way under the continental plate, curls down under the Cascade Mountains into the hot subregions, there melting into masses of magma that rise to the surface. At weak spots the magma rises further still, periodically erupting on a schedule of tens of thousands of years, building the mountains up, but sometimes lowering them in huge violent explosions. The peaks of the Cascades, perpetually blanketed in masses of white snow and ice, belie the fire that has built them up over millions of years. Mt. Saint Helens, now minus its top and shorter by almost 2,500 feet after the explosion of May 18, 1980, has reminded us of how these mountains have grown and been torn apart, only to be built up even higher. The peaks of the Cascades in Oregon — from Mt. Jefferson in the north (10,497 feet) to Mt. McLoughlin in the south (9,495) — average just under 10,000 feet, and all are mantled in snow and ice year round. But all these peaks pale in height and sheer physical presence when compared to Mt. Hood whose massive cone rises to 11,245 feet. From over the whole region of the Hood River Valley, and even across the more distant rolling French Prairie to the west, Mt. Hood appears on clear days as a sentinel, a fixed point of reference. Often seen rising from clouds gathered around its shoulders, the white peak blazing against a cerulean sky, the mountain seems to embody a mystic power.
The Barlow Road

As beautiful as the mountain may appear to us today, it was to the early American overland trekkers the last and perhaps most formidable barrier, blocking their path only a few score miles from the goal towards which they had walked for months. Steep cliffs rising from the mountain’s lower flanks at the rivers edge, and the deadly Cascade rapids, threatened at the very end to keep them from their dream. Samuel K. Barlow, who came to Oregon in 1845, peered into the boiling waters of the rapids and falls at The Dalles and then looked at the distant, dark green and thickly forested slopes of the mountain and declared God had never made a mountain without a place to go over or around it. Barlow decided he would find that way. Led by Barlow and Joel Palmer, thirteen wagons set out to carve their way around the mountain. They managed somehow to penetrate the forest, in places winching their wagons down precipitous slopes, finally getting mired near what came later to be called Government Camp. Abandoning the wagons, they finally managed to walk into Oregon City in December, the last of the party arriving Christmas Day. When the snow had retreated sufficiently the following July, they returned to get their wagons and finished blazing the road. Barlow then petitioned the Provisional Oregon Government to build and operate a toll road on the trail he had helped clear. With financing supplied by Philip Foster, Barlow opened up the road (such as it was) in August 1846 and installed toll gates at either end.

The Barlow Road was hardly a road in the sense used today. It was a rough cleared path barely wide enough for wagons, over which travelers paid $2.00 per wagon to pass (plus additional fees for livestock and riders on horseback). This was then a princely sum. Many had no cash, so Barlow would allow them use of the road if they promised to pay him later. Today portions of the old road are cleared, and below Government Camp is a small state park containing a reconstructed gate.

About the curious name Government Camp: in 1849 the First U.S. Mounted Rifles came over the plains to The Dalles. Most of the troops were sent on to Ft. Vancouver by boat, but the animals and wagons rested at The Dalles. Before the animals were fully rested, orders came to proceed immediately to Oregon City via the Barlow Road. Two thirds of the animals perished on the drive, so when the outfit reached this point on the road, the wagons were abandoned and the few men and remaining animals
went on to Oregon City. Because of the supplies left behind, this spot became known as the government camp, and the name was retained when the post office was officially established in 1931.

Timberline Lodge

Timberline Lodge is located at the 6000-foot elevation of Mt. Hood where the annual snowfall averages twenty feet. The highest mountain in Oregon, Mt. Hood is one of the jewels of Oregon. While the lodge’s design is not “vernacular” in the narrow sense, as it was designed and its construction supervised by professional architects, it does reflect the individual work of scores of anonymous craftspeople who shaped its woodwork, metalwork, wooden furniture, light fixtures, fabrics and other building parts and furnishings. Conceived as a ski lodge and winter recreational
The Lodge is detailed with a number of carved animal heads at the interior and exterior (photo: Friends of Timberline, 1938).

center for Portlanders, the Timberline Lodge incorporates a three-story, hexagonal main lounge with massive stone fireplace as the center of a two-winged building that also includes a dining room, guest rooms, and various other lodge rooms. A new wing, compatible with the original construction, houses large meeting and dining rooms.

Mt. Hood is perhaps the most climbed mountain in the whole Cascade Range. There are numerous jumping off points; the slope is not too severe, and the height is not too extreme. That is not to say there are not significant risks as the near-yearly deaths on the mountain's slopes attest. In the latter nineteenth-century, however, the most significant obstacle to climbing the mountain was getting anywhere reasonably close to its base. Improved roads were critical and they were few. In 1884 the Mt. Hood Trail and Wagon company began work on a road leading south from Hood River to the base of the mountain. (Those planning to use the road would first need to reach Hood River by boat or train.) Four years later several prominent Portland businessmen acquired the company and had an additional right-of-way cleared up the slopes of the mountain. They also commissioned a lodge to be built on the northeast slope of the mountain near the timberline, engaging the newly-arrived New York architects, William H. Whidden to design it. Whidden developed a rustic character for the low build-

Partial Section at Dining Room
Timberline Lodge
USDA Forest Service
ing called Cloud Cap Inn. It was huddled against the ground so
as to better contend with fierce winter wind gusts, even being
tied down by heavy wire cables. Materials included rough logs
with square-cut lap joints, shingles, and rough ashlar stone fire-
places and chimneys. An early visitor described it as “a long,
irregular, one-story building, constructed of logs, with great, open
fireplaces,” saying that “it was a thoroughly homelike and hospi-
table place.”

The route to Cloud Cap Inn was too long and circuitous to
attract casual visitors, and the final approach was winding and
often blocked with snow. Even by the start of the new century,
the Barlow Road was still a toll passage. In 1912 the old right-
of-way was bought by E. Henry Wemme who made some im-
provements and made arrangements to bequeath the road to the
state just before his death. The small community on the road was
named for him, and its post office opened in 1916. Slightly fur-
ther up the improved road the community of Zigzag formed, earn-
ing its own post office by 1917. In 1913 the improved portion of
what was to become Highway 26, incorporating significant por-
tions of the old Barlow Road, extended east from Port-
land only slightly beyond Sandy; by 1921, however, an
all-weather road extended all the way from Portland,
around the southern shoulder of Mt. Hood, to what
would become U.S. Highway 97 extending south from
The Dalles. (There was still no connection between
this new road and a highway running south from Hood
River.) Soon winter sports enthusiasts were traveling
U.S. 26 in growing numbers, especially to Government
Camp to enjoy skiing which was becoming increasingly
popular.

By the mid-1920s it was clear that overnight ac-
ccommodations were needed at the southern base of the
mountain. In 1926 Francis E. Williamson, Jr., a land-
scape architect who worked for the U.S. Forest Ser-
vice, drew up some early tentative proposals for a lodge
at the timberline on the south slope just above Govern-
ment Camp, but the onset of the Great Depression in
1929 halted any progress. Meanwhile, the young Port-
land designer, John Yeon III (son of the Columbia Gorge
highway roadmaster), who had tramped virtually ev-
ery ridge and ravine of Mt. Hood on summer hikes and who was
himself an enthusiastic skier, drew up plans and prepared models of two timberline lodges, one on the northeast side, near Cloud Cap Inn in 1932, and another lodge for the south face in 1933. Both were decidedly modern in character, with some flat roofs, but the south slope version was designed for a ridge-line site so that winter winds would have kept the building clear of snow accumulations.

Public sentiment favored a lodge site at Government Camp, largely because such a site lay immediately adjacent to the highway. But Yeon argued that this was 1,000 below the normal snow-line and such a site would require some sort of large-capacity lift to where snow could be expected. He urged a site higher up at the timberline, even though this would require a spur road up the mountain that would need to be kept clear of snow at all times. Eventually his position was adopted.

A WPA Project

Portland backers formed the Mount Hood Development Association in January 1934, and approached Emerson J. Griffith, the WPA Director for Oregon, about building a lodge with Federal funding. At the same time other regional government officials became interested, seeing in the project another way to provide badly needed employment as the Depression continued. Once the Federal government became a participant, the U.S. Forest Service became the official sponsoring agency. In December, 1935, Griffith approved the project and agreed to provide the bulk of the funding, with contributions provided by the Development Association and additional financial support from the Forest Service. Of the project Griffith said:

The Timberline Lodge project was distinctly an experiment... to get away from the leaf raking type of project; and this was the spark that fired the imagination of those who planned Timberline Lodge...
was to be a monument to the skill and industry of the unemployed and it is a monument the world will have to acknowledge.

**Design and Construction**

The design was developed by many individuals. Serving as overall supervisor and consultant was architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood of Los Angeles, acting through his firm's representative Stanley Stonaker. It was Underwood's Los Angeles office that initially proposed a building of two long wings extending out from a central octagonal core which came to be called the "head house." Most of the actual drawings, however, were made by employees of the U.S. Forest Service. These included Linn Forest who prepared the floor plans and the exterior views. Howard Gifford, another Forest Service architect, designed the interior spaces, basing many decorative designs on the twelve angular geometric monthly symbols, allegedly Indian symbols, published in the 1936 Campfire Girls handbook that belonged to his daughter. Best known is the geometric pattern used as the logo by the lodge which also appears in the enormous bronze weathervane atop the chimney of the head house. Dean Wright designed much of the wrought iron hardware and millwork. The
structural engineering, carefully studied to deal with the enormous snow loads and creep, was done by W.D. Smith and W.W. Gano.

The lodge was designed to afford a view of the summit of Mt. Hood and also Mt. Jefferson and other peaks of the Cascade Range to the south. The steep-roofed form of the building, and particularly the central head house, echoes the form of Mt. Hood itself and the surrounding peaks. The steep roofs also respond to the heavy snow loads at the 6000-foot elevation. To minimize disruption to the surface soil, largely pumice powder and volcanic ash, and the fragile alpine vegetation, careful attention was paid to issues of drainage, grading, and the overall condition of the site. The lodge, as built, is 200 yards to the west of the site originally designated since it was viewed as too dangerous for winter activities. When the final site was surveyed in May 1936, the snow was found to be 18 feet deep in some places.

The plan consists of two long wings at an angle of 120°, extending to the southeast and southwest from the central hexagonal hall. The ground story is concrete with rubble masonry veneer, surmounted by two stories with walls of a variety of wood

*From: The Builders of Timberline Lodge, 1937 Works Progress Administration*

*Large stones were used over concrete foundation walls to form the base of the Lodge. The man standing to the left is the construction supervisor (photo: Friends of Timberline, 1937).*
Cascadian Style

Forest Building, 1905 Lewis & Clark Exposition (photo: Special Collections, UO Knight Library).

Multnomah Falls Lodge (photo: Sawyer, Oregon SHPO files, 1925).

Silcox Hut (photo: Oregon SHPO Files).

Cascadian Style is seen in structures throughout Oregon. Stone and wood combinations, as primary building materials, offer the rustic appearance commonly associated with this style.

Siding, including clapboard, board-and-batten, and shingle; this variety helps to break down the large scale of the building. There is an attic story, lighted by hip-roofed dormer windows. Many features of the building were designed to help anchor the building visually to the site, including hip roofs at the end of the wings and other projections which extend close to the ground. Masonry buttresses are brought up from the ground and visually connect with the chimneys at either end of the building. The head house has two roofs — a lower pitched roof below, and a shingled, steep pitched roof on the outside. The wood shakes were 1-1/4 inches thick, and are three-deep at the eaves.

Design work began early in 1936 with several changes studied, resulting in a shift from an octagonal to a hexagonal “head house” whose axes were determined when the site was surveyed in May 1936. E.J. Griffith, WPA Director for Oregon, wrote that the design character of the lodge was “Cascadian,” an American variant of European alpine architecture: “With steep sloping roofs, massive and rugged walls to meet the weight of the snows and force of winds, the design was the development of a pioneer motif...” Furthermore, the form of the lodge was meant to evoke the spirit of the mountain behind it. Linn Forest said “the shape of the central lounge was inspired by the character and outline of the mountain peak. The steepness of the roof was determined by the heavier snow loads at that elevation... It was our hope not to detract from the great natural beauty of the area. The entire exterior was made to blend as nearly as possible with the mountain side.”

The site for the building was fixed in May, 1936, while considerable snow still lay over the ground. The next month construction began and, with great good fortune, the first snows of the next winter did not begin until December. Building started on the west wing, then the east wing, and finally on the head house connecting them. By the time snow began to fall, the building had been closed in. During the winter work continued inside, including laying the stones for the massive hexagonal central chimney by Jack DiBenedetto and up to ten assistants. Exterior finishing resumed when the snow stopped the next summer, while interiors were sufficiently completed for dedication in September of 1937.
Cascadian Style

Cascadia is a name given to the entire Northwest water-shed, which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, part of California, and southern British Columbia. Cascadian Style (also referred to as Northwest Style) is a name that has been given to architecture of this region, because of the distinctive regional design characteristics most often seen in public/park projects. Timberline Lodge is considered to be one of the prime examples of the Cascadian Style, a rustic style characterized by steep roofs, rough cut stone masonry, and wood siding. This architectural character can also be seen at Paradise Lodge on Mt. Rainier, the lodge at Silver Falls State Park near Salem, Crater Lake Lodge (recently restored by the National Park Service), Multnomah Falls Lodge by A.E. Doyle, and other buildings in the Pacific Northwest. The rough stonework on the exterior was done with local stones, by men who had also worked on the Vista House, on the old Columbia River Highway, and the stone bridge at Eagle Creek.

Furnishings

Aside from the construction, another aspect of the building served the needs and purposes of the WPA — the furnishing and decoration of the interior of the lodge. The decoration was directed by Margery Hoffman Smith, Supervisor of the Oregon Art Project of the WPA. A prominent Portland decorator, she devised the Art Deco character of the patterns used in the rugs, window curtains, bedspreads, and other furnishings. Ms. Smith had a connection to the American Arts and Crafts movement, as her mother was responsible for the founding of the first Arts and Crafts Society in Oregon. The Society sponsored classes in weaving, bookbinding, pottery, leathercraft and jewelry making. The project to make the furnishings for Timberline Lodge lasted for over a year, from November 1936 to December 1937, three months after the formal dedication of the building by President Roosevelt.

It was the architects who recommended that the decorations and furnishings be handcrafted. The building structure was designed to express handcraft skills in building, drawing on pioneer-era building methods and craftsmanship, although the massive timber members were cut at a mill and surface-adzed to give the appearance of hand work. The six enormous principle columns of the head house lounge were hand-hewn by Henry Steiner, for $25 each, from logs brought from the Gifford-Pinchot Na-
tional Forest in Washington. The fittings and embellishment of the interior would further expand on this theme of handcraftsmanship. A blacksmith and a cabinetmaker were hired to train assistants and supervise the production of interior furnishings. The Federal Arts Project of the WPA, which tended to finance mostly mural decoration, came through with an allocation of $10,000 for this purpose.

A wrought iron unit, employing initially unskilled workers, was set up in blacksmith Orion B. Dawson's shop in Portland to make the window grilles, gates and door fittings of the building. All work was done at the forge and anvil, with hand-held tools and without any casting or electric welding. Dawson, who learned smithing in a vocational class in a Los Angeles high school, had nine relief workers under his supervision, seven of whom had previous experience in smithing. Dawson's style was modeled after that of Samuel Yellin, a famous ironworker on the East Coast, and like Yellin's work rewards very close inspection. The first project for the building was the gates to the dining room, with designs based on three motifs: the wolf's head, the zigzag and the half moon. Dawson and his assistants also made wrought iron fittings for the main entrance door, iron rods for suspending ceiling lights, andirons, fire screens, pokers, and a brass and bronze weathervane that is at the peak of the central hexagon of the building. All together, there are 181 pieces of ornamental ironwork, not including iron bands used in beams, posts and columns, or hardware for furniture including 320 strap hinges.

The woodworking shop, set up by Ray Neufer, a Portland cabinet maker, was in the basement of a high school in Portland. They produced carvings for the entrance doors to the lounges, carvings for the newel posts, railings for stairs, wooden entrance gates, furniture, and many other items. Oak was used for furniture in the main lounge and fir elsewhere. Most of the work was done quickly, with Neufer fashioning chairs and other pieces without drawings. Once the prototype was finished, drawings were done up to guide workers in making duplicates. All the furniture makers were out-of-work carpenters. When it was learned late in 1937 that President Roosevelt would journey west to dedicate the building himself, Neufer had to hastily build a special arm chair for the President to accommodate his disability, as none of the standard chairs had arms. The newel posts, perhaps the most charming and lovingly burnished examples of
wood carving in the building, were made from old cedar utility poles that were bought in Portland for $2.10 each. The first newel posts carved were not successful, and the bear’s heads carved into them were installed in exterior locations. The later, more successful newel posts were topped by carvings of beaver, duck, owl, eagle, and other native animals and birds, based on preliminary drawings by Florence M. Thomas.

The weaving, sewing and rug-hooking projects were supervised by Margery Hoffman Smith. Women were employed in these projects, officially called the Professional and Women’s Project. Weaving techniques were taught by an elderly Swedish weaver working for Ms. Smith, and rug hooking techniques were taught to older women on relief. The project included draperies (summer and winter sets), two bedspreads for each bed, upholstery fabrics, and rugs. Furnishings included floor and table lamps and smoking stands. A total of 912 yards of fabric — 312 yards for bedspreads and 564 yards for upholstery — were woven for Timberline Lodge.

Late into the project, Marjorie Smith noticed there was no bar included in the original plans, and she persuaded Griffith to convert a wood storage area underneath the terrace into a bar. She designed fused glass murals depicting Paul Bunyan and his famous ox for the Blue Ox Bar; the panels were fabricated by Virginia Darcé, an artist with the Federal Art Project. Other Arts Project artists did oil paintings (such as those by C.S. Price), works in wood low-relief (such as those by Erich Lamade), and unusual low-relief linoleum murals in what was originally the Ski Grill, a fast food service now converted to a small auditorium (murals by Douglas Lynch). Interior woods include pine, fir and cedar. Flagstone for the hearths came from quarries near Stayton, in the Willamette Valley; upholstery and bedspreads were made with Oregon flax and wool, and hand-appliquéd cotton or linen draperies and hooked rugs were made of scraps and cuttings salvaged from WPA sewing units and discarded uni-
forms and blankets from camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Many of the decorative designs used in the linens were based on wildflowers collected within a mile radius of the lodge. Many of the light fixtures were designed by Frederick Charles Baker, lighting designer in Portland. Altogether up to 200 people were involved in working on the interior furnishings.

Of this great effort, Margery Hoffman Smith said:

The job was to be done and done in a hurry. There was no time, there were no facilities for blueprinting. It was a quick swing into action — and what action it was! Creative outlets were offered to some who had long been deprived of the privilege — and to others who had never experienced them. . . . The response was one of the most stimulating of human adventures — the job was done with interested hearts and loving hands. Workmen left with tears in their eyes; and not one, but many, look back at it as the most interesting work experience in their lives.

Later History

Formally dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 28, 1937, the building needed further detail work and was not opened to the public until February 4, 1938. Soon a mechanical ski lift was installed running up a mile from Timberline. At its terminus a small rustic cabin of massive stones and large timbers was built in 1939. Named Silcox Hut after Ferdinand A. Silcox, then chief of the U.S. Forest Service, it followed the style of the lodge and was built by WPA workers. After a new chair lift was built in 1962 the hut was abandoned and left to the elements, to be restored in 1985.

When the United States became a major combatant in World War II, Timberline Lodge was closed from 1942 to 1945. After the war the lodge became something of a victim of its own success, in that its attractiveness and the growing popularity of skiing subjected the building to far heavier use than anticipated, and it was not well operated nor maintained. Having fallen into ex-
tremely bad repair, it was closed in 1955, but later that year its operation was taken over by Richard Kohnstamm who began an ongoing program of careful upkeep and repair.

To make the lodge more useful as a conference site in the summer months, a new wing was added in 1975. Designed by several associated Portland firms — Farnham, Peck, Associates; Fletcher, Farr and Associates; and Zaik-Miller-Butler, working with the U.S. Forest Service — the addition was positioned so as not to be visible from the south and to be sympathetic to the original lodge. A latter-day Northwest Regional expression of Cascadian architecture, the wing was named after C.S. Price who did several paintings for the original building. Two of his canvases, done for Timberline but turned down, were relocated, restored, and hung in the new wing.

Kohnstamm's efforts at restoring the physical fabric of Timberline were facilitated by the shift of the heavy daily skiing activity (up to 9,000 visitors a day) to a new facility called Wy-east Lodge, built in 1980-81 just below the original lodge and designed by the Portland firm BOORA. Pushed into the ground, the new building was deliberately designed to provide a contrast to Timberline Lodge rather than try to emulate its hand-hewn character. The concrete uses exposed aggregate and is tinted to blend with the surrounding volcanic soil. In 1975, with the encouragement and support of Richard Kohnstamm, a groups called Friends of Timberline was formed, with the task of undertaking the conservation and repair of the art work and furnishings of the building. Fabrics were recreated, following the original patterns and techniques, to replace those now heavily worn, paintings were cleaned, parchment and rawhide were replaced, and other details carefully tended to, so that Timberline Lodge operates as both a working hostelry and a museum. In 1979 Linny Adamson, a weaver, was hired as the Lodge's first full-time curator. A flurry of activity, by both the Friends and Kohnstamm, returned the building to its original appearance for its fiftieth anniversary in 1987. The work continues to this day.

A wing and inspiring visitor after visitor, Timberline Lodge is a practical demonstration of the objective Margery Hoffman Smith had in 1936-37:

You can develop a creative spirit in almost anyone if you give them an opportunity. And that's what we felt we did.
Notes

2 This section written in large part by Howard Davis. Information drawn from:


5 E. M. Griffith, quoted in Griffin and Munro, *Timberline Lodge* (1978), 45.
6 Participants listed in Griffin and Monro, *Timberline Lodge* (1978), 4-5. This study includes lists of all the major designers and artists, as well as many construction drawings and construction photographs.
8 M. H. Smith, in a reminiscence of 1944, quoted in Griffin and Munro, *Timberline Lodge* (1978), 45.
9 M. H. Smith, from a recorded interview used in the soundtrack of *The Builders of Timberline: The History of A Classic* (Portland, 1987).