

Molalla Log House
Name of Property

Clackamas, OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

☒	private
☐	public - Local
☐	public - State
☐	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

☒	building(s)
☐	district
☐	site
☐	structure
☐	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: vernacular, log building

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: WOOD: log

roof: WOOD: shingle

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

The Molalla Log House is a one-and-one-half-story log building located at Hopkins Demonstration Forest in a rural, forested setting within the Cascade foothills of Clackamas County, Oregon. Historically used as a dwelling and later as an agricultural outbuilding, the building is presently maintained for educational and interpretive purposes. Although no documentary records establish its construction date, dendrochronological analysis indicates that it was constructed circa 1798–1799.¹ Originally erected approximately four miles south of present-day Molalla at an unidentified location, the building was relocated in 1892 to a site on Rock Creek near the intersection of Wildcat and Wilhoit Roads, where it remained until its dismantling for preservation in 2008.² Following documentation, study, and rehabilitation, the building was reconstructed at Hopkins Demonstration Forest between 2019 and 2026. Rectangular in plan and measuring approximately 18 by 25 feet, it is an exceptional example of early four-sided hewn, mass-horizontal Douglas-fir log construction employing half-dovetail corner notching and precisely fitted wood-to-wood joinery. The original logs were hewn and fitted so precisely that the exterior walls required neither metal fasteners nor chinking or other fill, creating a rigid, weather-resistant structure that demonstrates an exceptional level of craftsmanship and specialized woodworking knowledge.

The reconstruction incorporated approximately 50 percent of the original building fabric. Original material survives throughout the principal structural systems, including portions of all four wall elevations, original half-dovetail corner joinery, one original mudsill, several original first- and second-floor joists, and evidence of the original roof-framing system preserved in surviving peeled-pole rafters and rafter notches. Surviving construction evidence, including tool marks, saw kerfs marking planned openings, mortised framing, and joinery details, also remains intact. Reconstructed elements include the stone foundation, roof framing and cedar-shingle roof, flooring, doors, the east gable-end shed addition, portions of all four wall elevations, replacement Douglas-fir wall sections hewn in kind to match the original construction where deterioration required replacement and concealed structural stabilization measures required to meet current seismic and safety standards. Despite relocation and reconstruction, the Molalla Log House retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and setting to preserve the physical evidence necessary to investigate its construction technology, chronology, and alteration history.

¹ See Figures 10–12 of this nomination and Appendix A Photos A 16-18); Gregg Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise: Molalla Log House–Fox Granary* (Clackamas County, OR, January 2012), 22–36.

² Ticor Title Insurance Company (Portland, OR), title records for Township 5 South, Range 2 East, Section 32, Tax Lot 1100, 13290 S. Wildcat Road, Molalla, OR, title search conducted in 1984; Mary Etta Fox Dart, daughter of David Fox, statement to Diane Reed, ca. 1960, recalling that following its relocation and reassembly at the Wildcat site in 1892, the log building was first occupied as a dwelling before later being converted to an outbuilding known locally as the "David Fox Granary."

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Setting and Context

The Molalla Log House is located within the northern Willamette Valley of western Oregon, about 35 miles south of Portland and the Columbia River. The Willamette Valley extends approximately 125 miles from north to south and is bounded by the Cascade Range to the east, the Calapooya Mountains to the south, the Coast Range to the west, and the Columbia River to the north. The valley contains some of the most productive agricultural soils in North America and is characterized by a mild climate, abundant natural resources, and extensive wildlife habitat extending into the Cascade foothills. The Willamette River flows north through the valley before joining the Columbia River. The original location, the Wildcat Site and the Hopkins Demonstration Forest site are all situated east of the Willamette River within the western foothills of the Cascade Range. Numerous tributaries originating in the Cascade foothills drain the eastern portion of the valley, including the Pudding and Molalla Rivers.

Over the course of its history, the Molalla Log House has occupied three locations within the ecological transition zone between the Willamette Valley floor and the Cascade foothills of northern Clackamas County. The original location remains unknown but is believed to have been near Rock Creek, a tributary of the Pudding River, approximately four miles south of present-day Molalla. The Pudding River watershed encompasses approximately 528 square miles east of the Willamette River and is drained by numerous streams flowing westward from the Cascade foothills. In 1892, the building was dismantled and relocated approximately 1.5 miles south to a site near the intersection of Wildcat and Wilhoit Roads (the Wildcat Site), where it remained until its dismantling for preservation in 2008.³

Rock Creek is located immediately east of the Wildcat Site and flows southward through the watershed. Following disassembly for preservation, study, and rehabilitation, the structure was reconstructed between 2019 and 2026 at Hopkins Demonstration Forest, approximately ten miles north of the Wildcat Site.

The Molalla Log House is presently located at Hopkins Demonstration Forest in the Cascade foothills of Clackamas County, Oregon, within the Molalla River watershed. The surrounding landscape is characterized by Douglas-fir forest interspersed with white oak, bigleaf maple, small prairie openings, wetlands, and Little Buckner Creek, a perennial stream. Although situated within the Molalla River watershed rather than the Pudding River watershed, the landscape surrounding Little Buckner Creek closely resembles that of Rock Creek near the building's original vicinity and the Wildcat Site, retaining a comparable environmental context and rural forested foothill character. The building occupies a managed forest setting with trails and open clearings that provide public access while preserving the character of the surrounding landscape.

Hopkins Demonstration Forest is a 140-acre managed woodland property operated by Forests Forever, Inc., the building is situated in a small opening surrounded by native vegetation and oriented toward nearby ponds and wetlands. Educational panels, benches, and ADA-accessible trails support public interpretation and access.⁴ Although the present location differs from the original site in that it lies within

³ Interview by Diane Reed, owner of the Wildcat property in 1965, with Mary Etta Fox Dart, daughter of David Fox, ca. 1965 (author's files). Fox Dart recalled that the building had been dismantled, labeled, and transported by wagon from a location north of the Wildcat Site, described as "up the hill." She further recalled that when the building was reassembled in 1892, the logs fit together so precisely that the labels were hardly necessary.

⁴ To provide public access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a wheelchair-accessible footbridge was designed to provide access to the building. The accessible entrance is shown in Figure 6, *First Floor Plan of the Molalla Log House*, and Figure 9, *Accessible Entrance Details*.

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the adjacent Molalla River watershed and occupies a managed educational forest, it retains the environmental characteristics believed to have defined the original setting, including a forested foothill landscape, nearby watercourses, prairie-edge environments, and a rural context within the western Cascade foothills. As a result, the current setting continues to convey the relationship between the building and the broader landscape in which it was originally constructed.

Exterior Description

Elevation references in this nomination follow the building's present orientation at Hopkins Demonstration Forest: the front elevation faces south, the rear elevation faces north, and the side elevations face east and west.

For reference, the logs were labelled in 2008, beginning with the uppermost wall log (Log No. 1) and ending with the lowest wall log above the mudsills (Log No. 17).

At Hopkins Demonstration Forest, the reconstructed building rests on eight foundation stones. Four square-hewn 10-inch mudsills bear on these stones and are secured with concealed anchor bolts required for seismic stability (see Appendix A Photo A-43).

The Molalla Log House is constructed of Douglas-fir, a softwood species common to Oregon and throughout the forests of the Pacific Northwest.⁵ The rectangular building measures approximately 18 by 25 feet and is a single-pen log structure with a gable roof. Its original structural shell consisted of seventy-two primary horizontal timber members, including sixty-eight wall logs arranged in seventeen horizontal courses above four substantial square-hewn mudsills. Exterior walls are formed of four-sided hewn Douglas-fir timbers laid in tightly fitted horizontal courses and joined at the corners with carefully executed half-dovetail notching to create a mass-horizontal log wall system. Individual wall logs range from approximately 7¼ to 8¾ inches in height and each is approximately 6 inches in depth.

The logs are closely fitted, with little or no evidence of infill between courses. The height of the log walls, measured from the bottom of the mudsills to the top of the wall plates along the long elevations, is approximately 12 feet 1½ inches. Tool marks produced by broad axes, axes, and adzes remain visible on the exterior faces of the timbers. Although the individual half-dovetail notches vary slightly in dimension, they consistently produce tightly interlocking corners that reinforce the tightly fit stacked logs and structural stability.

Saw kerf cuts are preserved on the north and south elevations of the Molalla Log House.⁶ The kerfs occur in the tenth log course and extend approximately four inches into the log faces, appearing as narrow vertical saw cuts on the wall surfaces. (see Photograph 9). Five surviving saw kerfs are visible on the two 25-foot elevations. Four are arranged in a symmetrical pattern approximately 42 to 44 inches from the building corners. A fifth kerf is located on the left side of the north wall in the same log as the outer kerf, indicating a planned opening of 42". No comparable saw kerfs are present on the 18-foot east and west gable-end elevations, suggesting that no apertures were originally planned on those walls.

⁵ Like Douglas-fir in Oregon, locally available softwood species including spruce, pine, fir, and tamarack provided suitable structural timber for hewn log construction throughout the fur-trade regions of western and northwestern Canada.

⁶ Five original kerf cuts survive. Two outer kerf cuts, indicating a plan for apertures, are preserved on the south elevation, one outer kerf cut is preserved on the right side of the north elevation, and two kerf cuts on the left side of the north elevation define the intended width of a planned aperture.

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At an undetermined date prior to the building's relocation to the Wildcat Site in 1892, a small window was cut into the north elevation. Following the 1892 relocation, this opening was filled with sections of Log No. 17 salvaged from the south elevation. The infilled window remains visible today. (see Appendix A Photos A-11 & 29).

Sometime during the mid-twentieth century, a large window was sawn into the east gable end. Newly hewn log sections were installed during the 2019–2026 reconstruction to infill this opening and restore the building's original exterior appearance (see Appendix A Photo A-13).

A 36-inch-wide opening was reconstructed for a doorway, based on surviving physical evidence preserved in the original log fabric.⁷ (See Photo 2). A new door was constructed of three vertical 2-inch-thick cedar planks in a simple board construction. Because no evidence of the original door survives, the replacement was intentionally designed as an unembellished functional door compatible with the character of the building rather than as a reconstruction of a documented original feature.

The north elevation contains a centrally located doorway cut from Log # 7 down through Log # 17, during the building's relocation and reassembly at the Wildcat Site in 1892.⁸ A door appropriate to this architectural period was installed during the 2019–2026 reconstruction. Despite the later doorway and the infilled window opening, the north elevation retains a substantial amount of original log fabric, illustrating the building's original construction methods, workmanship, and surviving historic material (see Photo 3).

The original roof covering of the gable roof is unknown. The present roof is entirely reconstructed based upon surviving physical evidence, including the original rafter system, preserved rafter notches in the uppermost wall logs, and the documented absence of a ridge pole. The reconstructed gable roof is covered with cedar shingles and peeled-pole rafters project approximately 13 inches beyond the top plates. The roof serves as a protective covering and does not represent a documented original roofing material.⁹

A shed-roof addition is located on the east gable-end elevation.¹⁰ (See Photo 7) The addition is modest in scale relative to the main building and occupies a footprint narrower than the width of the log house. It is constructed of wood framing with peeled-pole rafters compatible with the historic roof system and remains open-sided, without wall enclosures. The roof slope is derived directly from the angle and configuration of the surviving historic rafter notches.

Exterior finishes are limited to the natural weathered surfaces of the logs, with no applied siding or cladding.

⁷ Evidence preserved in the building fabric indicates that portions of Log #17 from the south elevation were removed during the building's 1892 relocation and reused to infill the small window that had previously been cut into the north elevation at the original site. As a result, the south elevation was not reconstructed in its original configuration at the Wildcat Site; instead, its central portion was replaced with a stud wall. The location of the original south doorway was determined by matching the branch-rhythm pattern of the discarded Log #17 sections with the surviving portions of the same log course. When reassembled, the pieces fit the central section of the wall, leaving a 36-inch-wide opening that identifies the location and width of the original doorway.

⁸ Evidence for this construction sequence was revealed by examining how the doorway was cut into the log wall and secured with nails when the building was reassembled at the Wildcat Site in 1892.

⁹ The original roof covering is unknown. During the 2008 dismantling at the Wildcat Site, four successive roof coverings were documented, only one of which consisted of cedar shingles.

¹⁰ This feature was reconstructed between 2019 and 2026 based on physical evidence preserved in the original wall logs, including a series of rafter notches cut into the upper log courses.

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Interior Description

The interior of the Molalla Log House consists of a single ground-floor room with an open second-floor loft and exposed structural fabric, reflecting the building's simple, single-pen form (see Photos 10–14). Both floors measure approximately 17 feet ½ inch by 24 feet, and the ground-floor ceiling height is approximately 6 feet 7 inches.

Two centrally located entrances are positioned on the 25-foot elevations. The north entrance interprets the opening added during the building's 1892 relocation, while the south entrance marks the location of the original access. No evidence of interior partitions survives. The building contains no windows, consistent with the original construction. Consequently, the interior is dark, with natural light entering only through the north and south entrances and the operable gable-end shutters when they are open.

Exposed four-sided hewn log walls, visible joinery, and the massing of the square-hewn timber construction define the character of the interior space. No evidence of applied interior finishes survives on the log walls of either floor. Axe marks remain evident on both the original and reconstructed hewn log surfaces.

The first and second floors are finished with reconstructed Douglas-fir planks approximately one inch thick and ranging from approximately 8 to 15 inches in width.

Eleven exposed ceiling joists, each measuring approximately 17 feet 10 inches in length and six inches square-hewn, span the building to support the second floor and remain visible from the ground-floor interior. Four original joists preserve evidence of the builders' workmanship through their hewn surfaces and joinery. The remaining seven joists were reconstructed in kind using Douglas-fir to match the dimensions, workmanship, and appearance of the surviving originals.

The second floor is supported by joists notched into the Log course No. # 7. Six additional log courses are stacked above the second-floor joists, forming a knee wall approximately 4½ feet high around the perimeter of the loft. The uppermost log (Log #1) serves as the top plate supporting the roof framing. The distance from the top of the knee wall to the roof ridge at each gable end measures approximately 6 feet 1 inch, while the loft rises to approximately 10 feet 1 inch at its center.

A single, sharply cut dovetail-shaped notch is located in the Log # 7 on the interior south wall, immediately west of the original entrance and at the same elevation as the second-floor joists. Cut into the same wall log that contains the blind joist pockets, the notch consists of a narrow, vertically oriented slot (see Appendix A, Photo A-28). Unlike the blind mortises associated with the floor framing, this isolated feature has no obvious structural function. Its purpose remains unexplained but may relate to loft access, interior bracing, or an abandoned construction element.

The loft retains an open interior with the roof framing fully exposed. Surviving original peeled-pole rafters, together with matching Douglas-fir replacement rafters fabricated in kind, form the reconstructed roof framing. Rust-colored steel reinforcement rods, required to satisfy modern seismic standards, have been incorporated into the roof framing. These reinforcement members are visible only from the loft and do not diminish the visual integrity of the historic roof structure (see Photo 15). Anchor bolts concealed within the rafter notches of the top plate (Log #1) provide additional seismic stability but are not visible from either the interior or exterior of the building.

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The gable ends are enclosed with vertical boards incorporating hinged, door-like shutters that can be opened to admit natural light and ventilation into the loft (see Photo 5). The exposed roof framing rises from the top plate (Log #1) to an apex approximately 10 feet above the loft floor, providing sufficient headroom for occupants to stand comfortably throughout most of the loft.

The original method of access to the loft is unknown. No physical evidence confirms whether a fixed stair or movable ladder was originally used, and no reconstruction of the original access has been undertaken. A removable ladder currently provides access to the loft through an opening framed between the second-floor joists at the southwest corner of the building's interior.

No definitive evidence of a fireplace or other heating feature survives, although traces of gypsum were identified on the interior west gable-end wall, possibly indicating the former location of a heating feature.

Throughout the interior, original building fabric, including wall logs, ceiling joists, roof framing, joinery, and tool marks, preserves direct evidence of the building's original construction methods. Carefully executed in-kind reconstruction complements the historic fabric while preserving the building's historic character and clearly conveying its original design and workmanship.

Building Fabric and Construction Technology

The Molalla Log House derives its significance under Criterion D from the survival of original building fabric representing all principal structural systems and preserving the physical evidence necessary to reconstruct its construction methods, chronology, and alteration history. In the absence of documentary records identifying its builders, date of construction, original function, or construction history, the building itself serves as the principal source of information concerning its origins. Every surviving timber, joint, tool mark, and framing detail preserves evidence that reveals not only how the structure was built but also the knowledge, planning, and building practices of the individuals who constructed it.

The preserved fabric documents a carefully planned and systematically executed building process extending from the selection of Douglas-fir trees through timber conversion, seasoning, layout, assembly, and subsequent modification. Standardized measurements, disciplined construction sequencing, precise joinery, planned openings, and consistent structural relationships demonstrate that the building was erected according to an established system of construction rather than through expedient frontier improvisation. Together, these characteristics indicate builders possessing an intimate understanding of Douglas-fir as a construction material, sophisticated woodworking skills, and familiarity with a well-developed log-building tradition transmitted through training and practice. Their systematic approach to timber selection, preparation, measurement, sequencing, and joinery reflects a disciplined construction tradition founded on accumulated knowledge rather than expedient frontier practice.

The chronology of the Molalla Log House is interpreted through the convergence of multiple independent lines of scientific, physical, and historical evidence rather than reliance upon a single analytical method. Dendrochronological results indicating tree felling during 1798–1799 are reinforced by the physical evidence preserved within the building, including construction methods, timber joinery, tool marks, standardized planning, advanced weathering of the original log fabric, comparative architectural analysis, and historical research concerning settlement patterns and land use within the surrounding region. Collectively, these mutually reinforcing lines of evidence provide the most comprehensive and internally consistent basis for interpreting the building's chronology while documenting subsequent episodes of repair, alteration, and replacement preserved within the surviving fabric.

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Approximately one-half of the original structural shell survives, preserving evidence representing all principal structural systems of the building, and was reincorporated into the reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Deteriorated or missing members were replaced in kind using Douglas-fir timbers hewn to replicate the dimensions, profiles, surface finish, and joinery of the original members. Figures 21–24 identify the surviving original structural members, including the wall logs, mudsills, and floor framing, and distinguish them from replacement timbers incorporated during reconstruction.

Construction throughout the original log shell relied entirely upon fitted timber joinery and wooden fastening systems rather than iron or other metal fasteners. Collectively, the half-dovetail corner joinery, mortise-and-tenon framing, treenail connections, fitted roof geometry, surviving rafter notches, standardized layout, tool marks, and the absence of metal fasteners preserve direct evidence of the builders' structural knowledge, workmanship, planning, and sequence of construction. Together, these physical characteristics form the basis of the building's research value under Criterion D. As discussed in Section 8 and Appendix B, they are consistent with log-building technologies documented in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century frontier, fur-trade, and military-associated contexts in the Great Lakes region, eastern North America, northwestern Canada, and the Pacific Northwest. These comparisons establish the broader technological context within which the Molalla Log House can be understood while illustrating shared construction traditions rather than attributing the building to a specific builder, organization, or institutional affiliation.

The structural shell of the Molalla Log House is constructed of four-sided hewn Douglas-fir timbers laid in horizontal courses to form a tightly fitted mass-log wall system. The timbers were selected from relatively straight trees of sufficient size to permit hewing on all four faces while producing consistent wall courses. Dendrochronological analysis indicates that the trees used for the primary structural timbers were generally no more than approximately sixty years old when felled. The surviving original wall logs preserve carefully prepared bearing surfaces, broad-axe and adze tool marks, precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, mortises, framing pockets, saw kerfs marking planned openings, and evidence of subsequent alterations.

The building exhibits a standardized system of measurement throughout its construction. Principal dimensions conform to proportional relationships based on the British foot rule, indicating that the structure was laid out according to an established measuring system rather than through incremental field adjustment (see Appendix A Photo A-24). This standardized layout is reflected throughout the wall system, floor framing, roof framing, and the planned placement of openings. First-floor joists are spaced at approximately twenty-four inches on center, roof rafters at approximately twenty-five inches on center, and principal dimensions are consistently expressed in feet and inches. Collectively, these features indicate that the building was carefully planned and laid out before construction commenced.

Exterior bearing surfaces were carefully made to create continuous contact between adjacent logs without the use of chinking or daubing. The interior bearing surfaces were intentionally shaped to form shallow V-shaped or slightly trapezoidal relief grooves along the horizontal contact surfaces between adjacent logs. These relief grooves created a narrow interior cavity that could have accommodated moss or other compressible filler while permitting the exterior bearing surfaces to fit tightly together without visible gaps.¹¹ Together, the shaped bearing surfaces, tightly fitted wall joints, and absence of exterior chinking demonstrate a deliberate approach to timber conversion and wall construction that produced a durable, weather-resistant wall system.

The structure rests on substantial square-hewn Douglas-fir mudsills measuring approximately 10 inches square and supported on large foundation stones. The mudsills are joined at the corners by mortise-and-

¹¹ During the 2008 dismantling, small fragments of burlap (grain-bag material) were observed within the interior relief grooves between two adjacent wall logs. The origin and date of this material could not be determined.

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tenon connections secured during the original construction with octagonal wooden treenails approximately 14 inches long and 1¼ inches in diameter rather than metal fasteners, providing lateral stability to the foundation system (see Appendix A Photo A-23). The first 25-foot wall log is laid directly upon the mudsills without a notched connection and secured by its half-dovetail joint with the intersecting 18-foot wall log.¹²

The floor framing consists of eleven, 17' long, first-floor joists and eleven 17' 10" long second-floor joists spaced at approximately twenty-four inches on center that transfer floor loads to the wall system. The heavier first-floor joists are rounded Douglas-fir logs hewn flat on their upper surfaces to receive a plank floor. Their shaped, tenoned ends fit into corresponding mortises cut into the mudsills, forming secure and carefully fitted connections between the floor framing and the foundation system without the use of metal fasteners. This integrated framing system provided stable support for the plank floor while elevating the occupied interior above the ground.

Shadowed stain marks preserved on the first wall logs above the mudsills indicate that the original first-floor planks measured approximately 1½ inches in thickness. The number and widths of the 25-foot boards originally used for the first and second floors of the Molalla Log House, however, remain unknown.

The second-floor joists are secured within the wall system at Log # 11 log course on the 25-foot walls by blind mortises cut into the wall logs, creating a continuous structural framework linking the foundation, walls, and upper floor. The joist ends terminate in tenons fitted into these blind mortises and do not extend through the exterior wall, producing a flush exterior wall surface free of projecting joist ends. This concealed joinery protects the structural members from weather exposure, strengthens the wall system, and reflects the careful planning and precision evident throughout the building's construction.

The blind mortises measure approximately 6 inches high, 3 inches wide, and 1 inch deep and are laid out at a consistent spacing of 24 inches on center. Several second-floor joists retain wane, or portions of the original curved surface of the tree, at one end, indicating that upper portions of the original trees were utilized and that a single tree could yield more than one structural member. Physical evidence indicates that the mortises were cut after the hewn wall logs had seasoned and assumed their final twist, allowing the builders to lay out each joist pocket to the final orientation of the wall logs. By laying out the mortises after seasoning, the builders compensated for this natural movement, ensuring that the joists rested level within the wall system and that the upper floor and walls remained straight and true.

The uppermost wall logs, or top plates, were not joined with half-dovetail corner notching but were instead secured with substantial wooden treenails approximately 14 inches in length driven through the intersecting timbers and deep into the end logs.¹³ This method securely fastened the top plates together while reflecting a deliberate change in joinery at the uppermost level of the wall system.¹⁴

Above the mudsills, all wall logs are secured with carefully executed half-dovetail corner notches that mechanically lock successive log courses together while directing water away from the joints. The

¹² To satisfy modern structural and seismic requirements, concealed steel anchors were incorporated to secure the reconstructed mudsills to the foundation. These stabilization measures are distinguishable from the original mortise-and-tenon and treenail construction (see Appendix A Photos A- 22 & 23).

¹³ The original wooden treenails securing the upper wall system were documented during dismantling but had fractured and were not sufficiently intact for reuse. Concealed steel rods were therefore incorporated during reconstruction to provide structural reinforcement while preserving the legibility of the original joinery.

¹⁴ During reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest, concealed steel rods were installed through holes drilled in all log courses at the four corners of the 18-foot gable-end walls to satisfy current seismic building requirements. The rods are entirely concealed within the wall system.

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dovetail angles vary between approximately 14 and 18.5 degrees, with the steeper angles generally occurring in the lower courses. The joinery remains consistently executed and tightly fitted throughout the wall system, with minimal visible gaps between adjoining timbers. The slight variation in dovetail angles reflects hand-crafted construction rather than machine production, while the consistent dimensions, close fit, and uniform execution demonstrate careful workmanship, standardized layout, and precise joinery.

The original roof framing preserves exceptional evidence of the building's construction technology, workmanship, and structural design. The two 25-foot top plates each retain thirteen carefully cut rafter notches spaced at approximately twenty-five inches on center. These notches correspond directly to the layout of the original peeled Douglas-fir pole rafters and document the standardized spacing employed throughout the roof-framing system. The thirteen pair of peeled Douglas-fir rafters measure less than four inches in diameter and range from approximately 12 feet 4 inches to 12 feet 6 inches in length. Their upper surfaces were carefully hewn flat, and their upper ends were cut to meet without the use of a ridge pole.

Beginning at the point where they rest on the top plates, the bases of the rafters were squared and hewn to form heels approximately 2 inches deep and 3 inches wide. These heels seated within correspondingly sized notches cut into the uppermost wall logs, extending only halfway through the top plates before projecting approximately 13 inches beyond the exterior walls to form the eaves. The standardized layout positioned the outermost rafters near the ends of the wall system, providing continuous structural support across the roof while reflecting the precision and consistency evident throughout the building's construction.

The original roof framing preserves no evidence that metal fasteners were used in its construction. Instead, the rafters were secured through precisely fitted wall-plate notches and compression, relying on the geometry of the roof framing and closely fitted bearing surfaces for stability. Although nails and other iron hardware became increasingly common in the Willamette Valley during the American settlement period beginning in the 1830s, the roof framing reflects a structural system based on fitted timber joinery rather than metal fasteners. Whether lashing or other perishable fastening materials were originally employed cannot be determined from the surviving physical evidence.

The original rafters and associated framing members further demonstrate a high level of workmanship. Their labor-intensive preparation, precision of fit, and standardized layout are comparable to the workmanship evident throughout the remainder of the building. Several original peeled-pole rafters survive and further confirm the form, dimensions, and workmanship of the original roof framing (see Appendix A, Photo A-27). Together with the surviving rafter notches and framing geometry, they preserve important diagnostic evidence of the building's original structural design and construction technology.

During dismantling of the building for relocation to the Wildcat Site in 1892, workers modified the original wall-plate (Log # 1) rafter notches to permit removal of the roof framing. Physical evidence indicates that the original notches were widened to release the rafters from their tightly fitted wall-plate seats. When the roof was reassembled at the Wildcat Site, the rafters were reset within the enlarged notches, and the original compression-fit system was no longer employed. Instead, the reassembly crew secured the rafters with both square and round nails, materials that were readily available by the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ The enlarged notches and later nail fastening preserve important physical evidence distinguishing the original roof construction from the 1892 reconstruction while further demonstrating the precision with which the original roof framing had been assembled.

¹⁵ Gregg Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise: Molalla Log House–Fox Granary* (unpublished manuscript, Clackamas County, OR, 2012), chapter 2, "Physical Description," 14.

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Evidence of shed-roof additions at both gable ends was identified during the 2008 dismantling process. Unevenly spaced rafter notches were discovered in the upper log courses at the level of the eleventh log course on both gable ends. The notches are approximately 2 inches deep, measured from the outer edge of the eleventh log, and range from 2¼ to 2 9/16 inches in width. Unlike the original roof framing, whose rafters were laid out according to a consistent, standardized spacing pattern, these notches are wider and more irregular, ranging from approximately 24 to 27½ inches on center. Each surviving notch contained two or three machine-made square nails; no round nails were observed. The workmanship differs noticeably from the precision and consistency of the original roof framing (see Appendix A, Photo A-31). Together, the irregular layout and the associated machine-made square nails demonstrate that the shed roofs represent a later alteration to the original structure.

On the south elevation, the two end sections of Log 17 remained in their original positions, while two additional sections of the same log were identified within the north window infill.¹⁶ Together, these surviving fragments permitted reconstruction of the log's original length. Their measured dimensions demonstrated that a gap approximately 36 inches wide had originally existed at the center of the log, corresponding to the location of the south doorway. This reconstruction was independently corroborated by the preserved branch-spacing pattern within the surviving log fragments. Douglas-fir branches typically occur at intervals of approximately two feet along the trunk, creating a characteristic growth pattern that remains recognizable after hewing. The continuity of this branch-spacing pattern across the surviving sections confirmed that the infill pieces originated from Log 17 and occupied the missing central portion of the south wall log.¹⁷ Together, the dimensional evidence and matching branch pattern establish the original location and approximate 36-inch width of the south doorway while documenting the reuse of original building fabric during the building's relocation in 1892.

Evidence of Construction Planning and Sequencing

Analysis of the timbers used to construct the Molalla Log House indicates that the Douglas-fir trees were felled during the spring growing season. Because spring-felled trees contain relatively high moisture levels, the timbers would have undergone measurable dimensional shrinkage as they dried. The consistently close fit of the wall courses, together with the absence of significant shrinkage gaps, suggests that much of this shrinkage had occurred before the walls were assembled, indicating that many of the timbers had been seasoned prior to construction.

Additional evidence demonstrates that the builders continued to adapt seasoned timbers as construction progressed. One of the second-floor joist pocket notches appears to have been modified to accommodate slight twisting of a joist during curing, allowing the member to remain tightly fitted within the wall system. Rather than relying solely on standardized dimensions, the builders adapted individual members as necessary to maintain precise structural connections.

Construction sequencing is further demonstrated by a narrow dovetail-shaped socket preserved in the interior face of the wall near the second-floor ceiling level. The geometry of the socket shows that any

¹⁶ The small window was originally made on the original site, date unknown. It was filled in with segments of Log # 17 from the south elevation during the 1892 reconstruction at the Wildcat Site and serves as evidence for the original front door location and size.

¹⁷ Evidence preserved in the building fabric indicates that portions of Log #17 from the south elevation were removed during the building's 1892 relocation and reused to infill the small window that had previously been cut into the north elevation at the original site. As a result, the south elevation was not reconstructed in its original configuration at the Wildcat Site; instead, its central portion was replaced with a stud wall. The location of the original south doorway was determined by matching the branch-rhythm pattern of the discarded Log #17 sections with the surviving portions of the same log course. When reassembled, the pieces fit the central section of the wall, leaving a 36-inch-wide opening that identifies the location and width of the original doorway.

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corresponding dovetailed member had to be installed before the next wall log was laid because the overlying log encloses the upper portion of the dovetail and prevents later insertion or removal. This relationship establishes that the feature formed part of the original construction rather than a later alteration. Although the socket was empty when the building was dismantled in 2008, it preserves physical evidence that an original interior structural or architectural feature had been incorporated during the initial assembly of the wall and removed before the building's reconstruction.

Additional evidence of construction planning survives on the north and south elevations in the form of kerf marks indicating apertures that were planned during the original construction but never completed. Their uniform placement, dimensions, and relationship to the wall system preserve direct physical evidence of the builders' original design while demonstrating a carefully coordinated construction layout. Physical evidence within the wall system indicates that the walls were first assembled using continuous full-length timbers before the planned openings were laid out for later completion. Distortion of the wood grain adjacent to the kerf cuts indicates that they were made before the timbers had fully cured, reinforcing their association with the original construction phase. Cut to sufficient depth to permit insertion of a saw after the wall system had stabilized, the kerfs established the precise locations of the intended apertures. The practice of laying out openings by cutting kerfs before completing the apertures has been documented in North American log-building traditions.

Although the planned openings were never executed, the surviving kerfs preserve direct physical evidence of the builders' original planning process, construction sequence, and standardized system of measurement. Together with the evidence of timber seasoning, adaptation during construction, and the preserved dovetail socket, they demonstrate that the building was conceived as an integrated design rather than expanded or modified during its initial construction. Collectively, this evidence documents a carefully coordinated system of design and construction governing the arrangement, assembly, and sequencing of the building's principal structural elements.

Tool Marks and Timber Conversion

Tool marks preserved throughout the original wall timbers provide direct evidence of the methods of timber conversion, workmanship, and construction practices employed during the building's construction. Broad axe, scoring axe, adze, and nose auger marks remain clearly visible on numerous original members. Variations in broad-axe finishing and scoring patterns suggest that more than one individual participated in the hewing process, reflecting a coordinated construction effort. Differences in scoring direction on opposing faces of several timbers indicate that logs were repositioned during preparation or worked from opposite sides during hewing. The preserved evidence further suggests that the final face of each timber was finished by working inward from both edges toward the center, reflecting a deliberate sequence of timber conversion and careful finishing techniques.

Additional evidence for multiple workers is preserved on the underside of the first wall log, where the timber was carefully dressed to fit against the mudsill. Here, adze marks vary noticeably in width, blade profile, force, and execution. Some cuts are broad, deep, and confidently struck, while others are narrower, shallower, and less forceful, including marks produced by nicked or damaged cutting edges. These differ markedly from the regular hewing strokes visible on the wall timbers and from the precise workmanship exhibited in the half-dovetail corner joinery. Collectively, the variation in tool marks, cutting techniques, and workmanship indicates that multiple individuals possessing different levels of experience and skill participated in the building's construction, suggesting an organized division of labor during the timber preparation and assembly of the structure.¹⁸ See Appendix A, Photos A-19 and A-20.

¹⁸ Gregg Olson identified at least two distinct broad-axe users and multiple scoring styles. He concluded that, if these variations reflect a division of labor during timber preparation, the evidence is consistent with a coordinated

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Tool marks associated with the concealed second-floor joist pockets include small starter holes consistent with the use of a hand auger, followed by shaping with edged tools. The characteristics of these starter holes indicate that the pockets were initiated without the use of a lead screw or drilling pin and are consistent with a downcutting, or "nose," auger. ¹⁹Nose augers remained in common use during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but were largely superseded by more efficient lead-screw augers by the time of Euro-American settlement in Oregon. The presence of tool marks consistent with a nose auger therefore documents a construction technology associated with an earlier woodworking tradition and provides independent physical evidence supporting an early nineteenth-century construction date.

Dating Evidence

The building fabric and construction methods preserved in the Molalla Log House provide the principal physical evidence for interpreting its age and construction history. Because no documentary records identify its builders or record its construction, the building's chronology must be established through multiple independent lines of scientific, physical, and historical evidence. Dendrochronological analysis provides the principal scientific basis for establishing this chronology and is evaluated in conjunction with examination of the surviving building fabric, comparative architectural analysis, and historical research. Radiocarbon analysis provides general chronological consistency but is not sufficiently precise to establish the construction date independently.

The principal scientific evidence consists of two independent dendrochronological studies conducted on Douglas-fir samples obtained from original wall logs and floor-framing members. The initial investigation compared tree-ring sequences from the Molalla Log House with chronologies developed from Douglas-fir stumps of known felling dates and increment cores collected from living Douglas-fir trees growing in foothill environments of the northern Willamette Valley under environmental conditions comparable to those believed to characterize the vicinity of the original building site. Although individual samples exhibited localized variation attributable to differences in growing conditions, disturbance events, and competition, the resulting correlations consistently support tree felling during 1798–1799. Collectively, the analyses indicate that the principal wall logs and framing members were harvested during the late eighteenth century, providing scientific evidence for construction at the turn of the nineteenth century. Additional information concerning the dendrochronological analyses is presented in Appendix A and Appendix C.

Radiocarbon analysis of original wood samples produced a broad calibrated date range spanning approximately one century. Because this range is insufficiently precise to distinguish among potential construction dates, the analysis provides general corroborative evidence but does not independently establish the chronology of the Molalla Log House.

Independent physical evidence preserved within the surviving building fabric further supports a late eighteenth-century construction date. Construction methods, timber joinery, tool-mark evidence, the standardized framing system, and the absence of metal fasteners throughout the original structural shell are consistent with practices associated with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

construction crew approaching a half dozen workers, although the precise number of workers cannot be determined from the surviving tool marks alone.

¹⁹ Raphael A. Salaman, *Dictionary of Tools Used in the Woodworking and Allied Trades, c. 1700–1970* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977).

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Comparative examination of the log ends at the half-dovetail corner notches reveals advanced erosion of the softer springwood while retaining comparatively sharp profiles in the denser summerwood. When compared with documented mid-nineteenth-century pioneer log structures, these weathering patterns indicate substantially greater age (see Appendix A, Photo A-18). Considered independently of the scientific dating studies, the surviving physical evidence consistently supports an early construction date.

A separate computer-based dendrochronological analysis drawing on a broader Pacific Northwest reference chronology produced an estimated felling date of 1883, introducing a discrepancy of approximately eighty-four years.²⁰ Review of regional settlement patterns, documentary records, and the surviving physical fabric did not identify builders, occupation, or construction activity consistent with this later date.

Although the dendrochronological studies produced differing results, the earlier 1798–1799 felling date is supported by the combined weight of the scientific, physical, comparative, and historical evidence presented in this nomination. Considered together, these independent lines of evidence consistently support construction of the Molalla Log House at the turn of the nineteenth century. This conclusion is further reinforced by the comparative architectural record, historical documentation, and regional settlement history, none of which identifies a late nineteenth-century building tradition in Oregon exhibiting the combination of construction characteristics preserved in the Molalla Log House. By the 1880s, regional log construction generally incorporated metal fasteners and reflected building practices associated with Euro-American settlement rather than the earlier timber-construction tradition represented by the Molalla Log House.

Construction throughout the original log shell relied upon precisely fitted timber joinery rather than metal fasteners. The foundation, mudsills, floor framing, wall system, half-dovetail corner joinery, top plates, and roof framing functioned as an integrated structural system in which each component interlocked through mortise-and-tenon joints, blind mortises, wooden treenails, half-dovetail corner notching, and carefully fitted roof geometry. Together with the surviving rafter notches, framing members, planned openings, evidence of construction planning and sequencing, preserved tool marks and timber-conversion evidence, and the multiple lines of scientific, physical, comparative, and historical dating evidence discussed throughout this section, these features preserve an exceptional body of physical evidence from which the building's original construction methods, workmanship, planning, construction sequence, and chronology can be reconstructed.

Although the building has been relocated and reconstructed, the survival of original materials representing each principal structural system, together with the accurate reassembly of those materials, preserves the integrity of materials and workmanship necessary to interpret the building's original construction technology and to investigate broader patterns of early log construction, technological traditions, cultural transmission, and early occupation in Oregon. As a result, the Molalla Log House retains the evidentiary value required to support its significance under Criterion D while satisfying the integrity requirements of Criteria Considerations B and E.

Alterations, Relocation, and Reconstruction

The chronology below distinguishes between alterations made prior to the 1892 relocation to the Wildcat Site, modifications associated with the 1892 reconstruction, later changes made during the building's use as a dwelling and farm outbuilding, and the documentation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction undertaken

²⁰ Radivojević, Suzana. *Dendrochronological Dating of the Molalla Log House: Draft Report and Future Recommendations*. Oregon, 2014.

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between 2008 and 2026. Although some phases postdate the period of significance, they are discussed because they inform the evaluation of integrity, the survival of original fabric, and the application of Criteria Considerations B and E.

Construction and Alterations on the Original Site (ca. 1799–1892)

Following its construction ca. 1799, the Molalla Log House appears to have undergone relatively limited alteration during nearly a century of occupation at its original site. Physical evidence preserved in the original timbers, including dendrochronological analysis, tool marks, joinery, timber dimensions, and other diagnostic construction features, supports the estimated construction date. Throughout this period, the primary log shell remained largely intact, preserving the original construction technology, layout, and workmanship within the surviving fabric. Most identifiable changes consisted of modifications to wall openings, the addition of gable-end shed roofs and localized repairs.

Although no direct evidence documents maintenance of the original roof during the building's occupation at its original site, the survival of the original roof framing until the 1892 relocation suggests that the roof remained functional throughout much of that period.²¹

Evidence of the building's earliest alteration history survives in the unfinished aperture layout preserved as saw kerfs on the north and south elevations. During the original construction, saw kerfs were laid out in the eighth log course before the logs had fully cured to establish planned aperture openings on these elevations. None of these planned openings was completed, and no comparable kerf marks were made on the east or west gable ends. At the completion of the original construction, the building appears to have contained only a single central doorway on the south elevation, with no completed window openings.

Smaller window openings on either side of the central south doorway, which did not utilize the original outer kerf cuts, may have been introduced during the building's occupation at the original site. Although these openings no longer survive, the replacement of the original south log wall with a wood-framed stud wall during the 1892 reconstruction, rather than reconstructing the wall with numerous short log sections, suggests that additional openings may have been cut into the south elevation before relocation to the Wildcat Site.²²

At an undetermined date, a smaller window was cut into the north elevation using a circular-sawn sill secured with square nails.

Another alteration occurred probably about the mid-1840s, when shed roofs were added to the east and west gable ends of the building. Surviving rafter notches and associated unusually small machine-made square nails indicate that these additions represent a later phase of alteration to the original structure.²³

²¹ The building remained in relatively good condition throughout much of the twentieth century and was designated a Clackamas County Historic Landmark in the 1990s. By 2008, however, the roof had collapsed after an undetermined period of failure, exposing the structure to accelerated deterioration that ultimately necessitated its dismantling for preservation.

²² Interpretation based on physical analysis of the original log fabric during dismantling, documentation, and reconstruction by Gregg Olson and Rich Isberg, 2008–2026.

²³ The unusually small machine-made square nails are comparable in size to those used in the construction of the Delaney-Edwards House (ca. 1845) and differ from the broader range of machine-made square nails commonly available by the 1850s, suggesting that the shed-roof additions likely date to approximately the mid-1840s.

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The survival of the original peeled-pole rafters until the building's relocation in 1892 suggests that the primary roof remained functional throughout much of the building's occupation at its original site. By the time of relocation, the rafters remained sufficiently sound to be dismantled and reused during reconstruction at the Wildcat Site.

Additional evidence of pre-1892 repair survives in the partial replacement of one end of a wall log on the west elevation with a circular-sawn 4 × 8 timber, demonstrating that localized deterioration had already required repair before the building was relocated. Beyond these repairs, however, the condition of the building immediately prior to its relocation remains largely unknown.

The original first- and second-floor joists remained in place throughout the building's occupation at the original site. The original floorboards, however, do not survive, and it cannot be determined whether they remained in place until the 1892 relocation or were replaced at an earlier date.

Comparable log structures of this construction tradition sometimes incorporated shallow cellars accessed through the floor. Whether such a feature existed beneath the Molalla Log House remains unconfirmed because the original building site has not been archaeologically investigated and the original flooring no longer survives.

Relocation and Reconstruction at the Wildcat Site (1892)

Prior to relocation in 1892, the Molalla Log House was carefully dismantled at its original site. Each log was marked in pencil within the joints, beginning with the lowest course. On the northwest corner, each log was additionally marked with an "X" to establish its orientation during reconstruction at the Wildcat Site.

In 1892, the building was transported by wagon approximately 1.5 miles south to the Wildcat Site near the intersection of Wildcat and Wilhoit Roads.²⁴ The relocation and reconstruction represent the most substantial alteration episode in the building's history, resulting in significant modifications to the original configuration of the log shell while retaining much of its original structural fabric.

The original south elevation, believed to have been the principal façade, was not reconstructed in its original log configuration.²⁵ Instead, the central portion of the wall was replaced with a wood-framed stud wall incorporating a centrally located doorway, resulting in the loss of a substantial portion of the original south log wall. Despite this alteration, original logs containing kerf evidence for planned aperture openings were retained, preserving important physical evidence of the building's original design and construction sequence. Only the exterior portions of the original kerf cuts remained visible following the 1892 reconstruction, leaving them as the principal surviving evidence of the original planned openings.

A new central doorway was cut into the north elevation during the 1892 reconstruction. The smaller window that had been introduced into the north elevation before relocation was infilled using log sections

²⁴ Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise: Molalla Log House–Fox Granary* (unpublished manuscript, Clackamas County, OR, 2012), chap. 1, 3; Ticor Title Insurance Company (Portland, OR), title records for Township 5 South, Range 2 East, Section 32, Tax Lot 1100, 13290 S. Wildcat Road, Molalla, OR, title search conducted in 1984; Gail J. McCormick, *Our Proud Past, Volume One: A Compiled History of the Families that Settled at the End of the Oregon Trail* (Mulino, OR: Gail McCormick Publishing Company, 1992), 170–208, 214; Interview by Diane Reed, owner of the Wildcat property in 1965, with Mary Etta Fox Dart, daughter of David Fox, ca. 1965 (author's files).

²⁵ Interpretation based on physical analysis of the original log fabric during dismantling, documentation, and reconstruction by Gregg Olson (Historic Building Repair) and Rich Isberg (finish carpenter), 2008–2026.

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removed from the south wall.²⁶ The east and west gable-end log walls remained without window openings. Localized deterioration at the west gable end was repaired through the replacement and patching of deteriorated log sections.

The earlier shed-roof additions at the east and west gable ends were not reconstructed following relocation. Instead, the gable ends were enclosed with vertical sawn boards that concealed the surviving rafter notches and the unusually small machine-made square nails associated with the earlier shed roofs.

During dismantling, secondary notches were cut into the upper wall logs to release the original compression-fitted rafters from the roof framing. When the roof was reconstructed at the Wildcat Site, square and round nails were introduced into the framing system, representing a departure from the original construction, which had relied upon compression-fitted timber framing rather than metal fasteners.²⁷

Despite these alterations, a substantial portion of the original log fabric was retained and reused during reconstruction, including much of the primary wall system, half-dovetail corner joinery, tool-marked surfaces, and other diagnostic construction features. As a result, the building continued to preserve substantial evidence of its original construction technology despite the modifications associated with the 1892 relocation and reconstruction.

Post-Relocation at the Wildcat Site: Use and Modification (1892–2008)

Following reconstruction at the Wildcat Site in 1892, the Molalla Log House served briefly as a dwelling before being adapted for agricultural use as a farm outbuilding.²⁸ Grain bins were installed within the east end of the structure. During this period, the building underwent a series of incremental modifications associated with changing functional requirements, routine maintenance, and gradual deterioration.

Alterations included the application of sheet metal over deteriorated portions of the west gable wall, the cutting of a large window opening into the east gable-end wall, and the lining of portions of the interior with rough-sawn boards and tarpaper. A shed-roof addition was also constructed on the south elevation but had been removed several years before the building was dismantled in 2008.

Evidence documented during the 2008 dismantling identified at least four successive generations of roofing materials, including wood shingles, composition asphalt shingles, and a final sheet-metal roof. These successive roof coverings demonstrate that the building underwent repeated roof replacement and maintenance throughout its occupation at the Wildcat Site.

Although these alterations occurred after the period of significance, they document the building's continued occupation, maintenance, and adaptation while leaving much of the original log shell intact. Original four-sided hewn wall logs, half-dovetail corner joinery, tool-marked surfaces, framing evidence,

²⁶ Interpretation based on physical analysis of the original log fabric during dismantling, documentation, and reconstruction by Gregg Olson and Rich Isberg, 2008–2026. The growth pattern, grain and hewing matched the original logs from the south elevation – the resultant products of the log pieces from the earlier addition of the smaller windows flanking the central door on the south (front) elevation on the building's original location.

²⁷ Gregg Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise: Molalla Log House–Fox Granary* (unpublished manuscript, Clackamas County, OR, 2012), chap. 2.

²⁸ Mary Etta Fox Dart, daughter of David Fox, statement to Diane Reed, ca. 1960, recalling that the log building, relocated to the Wildcat Site, was first occupied as a dwelling and later used as an outbuilding known locally as the "David Fox Granary."

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and other diagnostic construction features remained preserved beneath or alongside later alterations, allowing them to be documented, analyzed, and studied during the 2008 dismantling.

Dismantling, Documentation, and Rehabilitation (2008–2019)

By the early twenty-first century, deterioration of the Molalla Log House and concern for the long-term preservation of its historic fabric prompted its systematic dismantling for documentation, preservation, study, and eventual reconstruction. Beginning in 2008, the structure was carefully photographed, measured, mapped, and dismantled. Individual logs and structural members were numbered and recorded to preserve information concerning their original placement, subsequent alterations, and construction sequence, creating the documentary framework for later rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Following dismantling, the surviving building fabric, including both reusable and deteriorated timbers, was systematically documented and analysed. Examination of the individual logs and structural members provided an exceptional opportunity to study original construction methods, tool marks, joinery geometry, construction sequence, and evidence of later alterations that had remained concealed during the building's occupation at the Wildcat Site.

Analysis undertaken during dismantling also yielded important new evidence regarding the building's original configuration. Investigation of reused log sections demonstrated that fragments inserted into the infilled north-elevation window opening had originally formed part of the first-course log on the south elevation. Their dimensions, growth characteristics, and alignment support the reconstruction of an original central south doorway.

Rehabilitation was undertaken between 2008 and 2019 in preparation for reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Where feasible, original structural members were rehabilitated and retained. Where deterioration prevented reuse, replacement timbers were produced from Douglas-fir trees selected, hewn, and seasoned to match the original materials, dimensions, workmanship, and construction methods, using evidence preserved in the original fabric together with the documentation created during dismantling.

The documentation, analysis, and rehabilitation undertaken between 2008 and 2019 substantially expanded understanding of the building's construction history and provided the evidentiary foundation for reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Careful recording of the original wall logs, half-dovetail corner notching, floor-joist pockets, mortised framing systems, joists, rafters, and other original construction evidence preserved critical information concerning the building's design, construction sequence, and workmanship. The survival, rehabilitation, and documentation of these elements made it possible to accurately reconstruct key structural relationships while retaining the physical evidence essential to continued research, interpretation, and evaluation under Criterion D. As a result, the rehabilitation process not only preserved historic material but also ensured that the building's original fabric would continue to yield information concerning early construction technology, building chronology, and regional log-building traditions.

Reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest (2019–2026)

Reconstruction of the Molalla Log House at Hopkins Demonstration Forest was guided by surviving physical evidence, documentary records, comparative construction analysis, and established preservation standards. Hopkins Demonstration Forest was selected because it provides long-term stewardship, public accessibility, educational opportunities, and a landscape broadly comparable to the

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building's original setting. Although the precise original location remains unknown, available evidence indicates that the house originally stood within a forested foothill landscape near Rock Creek in the Pudding River watershed. The Hopkins site similarly occupies a rural Cascade foothill environment characterized by mixed conifer forest, nearby watercourses, prairie-edge environments, and a landscape consistent with the building's presumed original surroundings.

The reconstruction sought to preserve, stabilize, and interpret the surviving historic fabric rather than recreate an idealized appearance. Reconstruction decisions were guided by the physical evidence preserved in the original building together with documentation produced during dismantling and rehabilitation. The north elevation is presented as documented following the 1892 relocation, including the infilled north window and centrally located doorway. The south elevation is interpreted in its original configuration.²⁹ The east and west gable-end log walls are presented as restored to their original windowless appearance. Above the log walls, new vertical board infill encloses the gable peaks and incorporates hinged wooden doors that can be opened to admit natural light when needed.

Approximately one-half of the original log fabric was retained and incorporated into the reconstructed building. Original material survives throughout the principal structural systems, with the greatest concentration occurring within the north, east, and west wall systems together with original corner joinery, floor framing, roof-framing evidence, and numerous diagnostic construction features, including tool marks, saw kerfs, mortised framing, and joinery details. The reconstructed building therefore preserves evidence of both the original construction and the successive episodes of alteration documented throughout its history.

Original structural members were rehabilitated and retained whenever feasible. Where deterioration precluded reuse, replacement members were fabricated in kind using Douglas-fir selected, hewn, and seasoned to match the original materials, dimensions, workmanship, and construction methods. The reconstructed building retains representative examples of every principal structural system, allowing the original construction technology to remain directly observable. One original mudsill remains visible beneath the reconstructed east shed roof together with an adjacent original first-floor joist. Three out of eleven second floor joists were serviceable for reconstruction. Of the 13 sets of original peeled pole rafters only one set was sufficiently serviceable for roof framing and reconstruction. Several original peeled-pole roof rafters likewise remain in place. Replacement wall logs were provided with new half-dovetail corner notching replicating the original joinery. In one instance at the west gable end, opposite the reconstructed shed roof, a composite wall log incorporates an original surviving section joined to a replacement segment, preserving an original half-dovetail corner while reconstructing the opposite corner with new joinery. Replacement members were intentionally fabricated to remain distinguishable upon close examination while preserving the building's overall historic appearance and structural integrity.

The original foundation type remains unknown because the original building site has not been identified. At the Wildcat Site, the building rested on eight foundation stones supporting four square-hewn mortise-and-tenon mudsills beneath the long elevations. During reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest, the building was reestablished on eight foundation stones. Concealed steel anchor bolts were incorporated to secure the mudsills and foundation stones in accordance with modern seismic and public safety requirements while preserving the building's historic appearance. New Douglas-fir plank flooring was installed on both the first and second levels as part of the reconstruction.

²⁹ This is based on the evidence of the kerf marks for apertures never cut in and the 36" central doorway width, where logs were removed from the south elevation during the 1892 reconstruction at the Wildcat Site and used on the north elevation. Their branch rhythm matched that of the lowest logs on the south elevation, leaving the gap for the doorway.

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Because no original floorboards survived, the dimensions of the reconstructed first-floor planks were selected using the surviving joist system together with comparative evidence from contemporary Pacific Fur Company construction. The reconstructed planks, 1½ inches thick and approximately 8 to 15 inches wide, represent an informed interpretation rather than the replication of documented original floorboards.³⁰

No original south door survived. Accordingly, a new 36-inch-wide board door constructed of three 2-inch cedar planks fastened together was installed in the reconstructed south entrance. Its simple design reflects period construction practices without competing visually with the reconstructed south elevation and remains distinguishable from the original historic fabric. The original north door installed during the 1892 reconstruction had been removed sometime in the early 2000s. During rehabilitation, it was replaced with a period-appropriate historic door selected to represent the type of door likely installed during the building's reconstruction at the Wildcat Site.

Reconstruction of the roof system was based upon surviving physical evidence preserved in the original building, including rafter notches cut into the upper wall logs, surviving peeled-pole rafters, and the original ridge-less roof design. Although the original roof covering remains unknown, documentary evidence indicates that, following the 1892 relocation, the building was successively roofed with wood shingles, composition asphalt shingles, and finally sheet metal before dismantling in 2008. Twelve replacement peeled-pole Douglas-fir rafters were fashioned using traditional woodworking methods to match the surviving originals and installed in their original rafter-notch locations. The present cedar-shingle roof serves as a compatible protective covering and does not represent a documented original roofing material.

To satisfy modern seismic and public safety requirements, limited structural reinforcement was incorporated while minimizing visual impacts on the historic fabric. Concealed steel anchor bolts secure the mudsills to the foundation stones, vertical steel rods reinforce selected corners of the wall system, and concealed steel reinforcement has been incorporated within the reconstructed roof framing. Metal connectors secure the rafters to the wall system and to one another at the roof apex. Although these interventions differ from the original construction, they were designed to preserve the appearance, structural logic, and legibility of the historic framing system while ensuring long-term structural stability. None of the reinforcement is visible from the exterior, and only limited portions of the roof reinforcement are visible from the loft, allowing the modern stabilization measures to remain readily distinguishable from the historic fabric. The trails leading to the Molalla Log House were designed to meet handicapped accessibility standards. A freestanding accessible bridge provides entry through the north doorway introduced during the 1892 relocation. The bridge was designed to minimize physical impacts on the historic structure and remains clearly distinguishable as a contemporary intervention.

The east gable shed roof was reconstructed to protect vulnerable original log fabric from exposure to prevailing winter weather conditions at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Although based on documented historic evidence, the addition is intentionally distinguishable from the original building fabric. Modern structural supports and foundation elements provide stability, while the visible woodwork employs traditional notching and mortise-and-tenon joinery compatible with the character and craftsmanship of the historic structure. The reconstructed shed roof therefore serves both as a protective feature and as an interpretation of a documented historic alteration.

Physical evidence preserved in the original building demonstrates that shed roofs had once been constructed at both gable ends but were not reconstructed following the 1892 relocation. During

³⁰ The reconstructed floorboard dimensions represent an informed interpretation by Gregg Olson based on building practices described in Robert F. Jones, ed., *Annals of Astoria: The Headquarters Log of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia River, 1811–1813 (Duncan McDougall's Journal)* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

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reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest, one shed roof was reconstructed on the east gable-end elevation to interpret this documented phase of the building's evolution while also protecting the fragile east-end wall logs. Its design was based directly upon the surviving rafter notches, which preserve evidence of the former shed roof's location, roof pitch, and general configuration. Because little additional evidence survives regarding its detailed appearance, the reconstructed shed roof was intentionally designed to remain visually distinguishable from the historic building. Constructed using modern post-and-beam methods with treated timber supports and an open-sided configuration, it is clearly contemporary in execution, subordinate to the historic structure, and narrower than the width of the log house, thereby preserving visibility of the original half-dovetail corner joinery and other diagnostic construction features.

The reconstruction at Hopkins Demonstration Forest preserved, stabilized, and interpreted the surviving evidence of the Molalla Log House's original construction and subsequent alteration while ensuring its long-term preservation for continued research, interpretation, and public education. Original and replacement materials remain distinguishable upon close examination, allowing the building's construction technology, joinery, framing systems, tool marks, construction sequence, and later modifications to continue to be studied, interpreted, and evaluated through the surviving historic fabric.

Integrity

The Molalla Log House retains integrity despite relocation, alteration, deterioration, rehabilitation, and partial reconstruction during its history. The survival and accurate reassembly of original materials representing each principal structural system preserve the physical characteristics that embody the building's construction technology, workmanship, construction sequence, and alteration history. These defining characteristics continue to provide reliable physical evidence for investigating late eighteenth-century log-building technology, building traditions, and broader patterns of early occupation in Oregon. The seven aspects of integrity established by the National Register of Historic Places are evaluated below.

Location

Integrity of location has not been retained because the Molalla Log House has been relocated twice. The building was moved from its original site near Rock Creek to the Wildcat Site in 1892 and was subsequently dismantled and reconstructed at Hopkins Demonstration Forest between 2019 and 2026. Although the precise original location is unknown, the building has remained within the Cascade foothills of the northern Willamette Valley in Clackamas County throughout its documented history. Because the significance of the Molalla Log House derives primarily from the information embodied in its surviving physical fabric rather than from its association with a specific geographic location, the loss of integrity of location does not diminish its ability to yield information under Criterion D. It continues to preserve the physical evidence necessary to investigate its construction technology, workmanship, chronology, and subsequent alteration history.

Setting

Integrity of setting has been retained. Although the Molalla Log House has been relocated, its present location at Hopkins Demonstration Forest occupies a landscape closely comparable to its original setting near Rock Creek in the Molalla area. Both locations are situated within the rural Cascade foothills and are characterized by mixed conifer forest, nearby watercourses, prairie-edge environments, and a predominantly undeveloped landscape. While the building no longer occupies its original functional

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setting and is now interpreted within an educational and interpretive landscape, the surrounding environment retains the natural characteristics that defined its historic setting and continues to convey the building's relationship to the forested foothill landscape in which it was originally constructed.

Design

Integrity of design has been retained. Although the Molalla Log House has undergone alterations, relocation, and reconstruction, its principal design characteristics remain clearly legible. The building retains its original dimensions, massing, single-pen plan, one-and-one-half-story form, horizontal log construction, half-dovetail corner joinery, floor framing system, and ridge-less roof design. Alterations associated with the 1892 relocation, including changes to openings and wall configurations, remain identifiable and distinguishable from the earlier construction. Reconstruction undertaken between 2019 and 2026 was guided by extensive physical evidence, documentation, and analysis of the surviving fabric, allowing both the original design and subsequent alterations to remain legible and interpretable.

Materials

Integrity of materials has been retained through the survival of substantial original structural fabric. Approximately fifty percent of the original log fabric survives and has been incorporated into the reconstructed building. Significant original materials include primary wall logs, mudsills, corner joinery, floor framing members, surviving evidence of the original roof-framing system, tool-marked surfaces, kerf cuts, rafter notches, mortised framing, and other diagnostic evidence of the original construction. Replacement elements were introduced only where original materials could not be preserved and were fabricated in kind using compatible Douglas-fir timbers prepared to replicate the original materials, dimensions, workmanship, and construction system. The extent and location of replacement materials have been fully documented as part of the reconstruction process.

Workmanship

Integrity of workmanship has been retained. Original evidence of timber conversion, joinery, and tool use survives throughout the building. Features including half-dovetail corner notching, mortised mudsills, blind pocket notches for second-floor joists, kerf cuts marking planned openings, and extensive tool marks demonstrate the skill, precision, and construction techniques employed by the original builders. Collectively, this evidence documents the methods by which the timbers were converted, fitted, and assembled into an integrated structural system while preserving direct physical evidence of historic woodworking practices, construction planning, and construction sequencing. These characteristics continue to provide important information regarding the building's construction technology, timber-conversion methods, workmanship, and sequence of construction.

Feeling

Integrity of feeling has been retained. Although the Molalla Log House has been relocated and partially reconstructed, it continues to evoke the historic character of a turn-of-the-nineteenth-century log structure. The survival of substantial original fabric, together with the evidence-based reconstruction of missing structural elements, preserves the building's appearance and enables it to express the aesthetic and physical qualities associated with its period of significance.

Association

Integrity of association has been retained. Although relocation has severed the building's direct physical connection to its original site, the surviving fabric continues to embody evidence of its original

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construction, subsequent alterations, and long history of use. The relationship between the surviving physical evidence and the research questions for which the property is significant remains intact. Consequently, the building continues to possess a direct association with the construction traditions, technologies, and settlement-era processes that it has the potential to illuminate.

Summary

The Molalla Log House retains integrity despite relocation, alteration, and partial reconstruction because its defining physical characteristics remain preserved and interpretable. Although integrity of location has not been retained, integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association remain intact. The surviving original fabric preserves clearly legible evidence of timber conversion, construction technology, joinery systems, framing relationships, tool marks, construction planning and sequencing, chronology, and subsequent alteration history. Where original materials could not be retained, replacement elements were reconstructed in kind from evidence preserved in the surviving fabric, accurately replicating the original dimensions, joinery, structural relationships, and workmanship. Although these reconstructed elements are not themselves historic fabric, they preserve the building's original construction system and enable the surviving evidence to be understood and interpreted as an integrated whole. Collectively, the surviving original fabric and evidence-based reconstruction provide an exceptional body of physical evidence for investigating late eighteenth-century log-building technology, technological traditions, building practices, and broader patterns of early occupation in Oregon. Accordingly, the Molalla Log House retains the integrity required to support its significance under Criterion D and satisfies the requirements of Criteria Considerations B (Moved Properties) and E (Reconstructed Properties). Additional documentation, including the detailed physical description and reconstruction photographs, is provided in Appendix A.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ | A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| ☒ | B removed from its original location. |
| ☐ | C a birthplace or grave. |
| ☐ | D a cemetery. |
| ☒ | E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| ☐ | F a commemorative property. |
| ☐ | G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1798 - 1892

Significant Dates

ca. 1798-1799 (construction)

1892 (relocation)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Euroamerican

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Molalla Log House extends from circa 1798–1799 to 1892. The beginning of the period corresponds to the building's construction, which multiple lines of evidence, including dendrochronological analysis interpreted in conjunction with the physical evidence preserved within the structure, place at approximately 1798–1799. This date places the building within a sparsely documented period of early occupation in the northern Willamette Valley prior to sustained American settlement and marks

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the beginning of the sequence of construction, occupation, and early modification that forms the basis of the property's significance under Criterion D.

The period of significance ends in 1892, when the Molalla Log House was dismantled and relocated from its original site. The relocation marked the end of the period during which the building remained at the location where its original construction, occupation, and early modifications occurred. It also marks the conclusion of the sequence of construction and use that produced the principal physical evidence through which the building's construction technology, workmanship, chronology, and evolution can be investigated.

Alterations associated with the 1892 relocation, subsequent agricultural use, and the reconstruction undertaken between 2019 and 2026 fall outside the period of significance. Although these changes do not define the period during which the Molalla Log House acquired the characteristics that convey its significance under Criterion D, they form an important part of the building's documented construction history and, in several instances, have contributed directly to its interpretation. Most notably, alterations associated with the 1892 relocation led to the preservation of physical evidence that assisted in identifying and interpreting the original doorway configuration on the south elevation, thereby enhancing the building's information potential. Because these later alterations are well documented and remain distinguishable from the original fabric, their selective retention or reconstruction contributes to understanding the building's complete construction history without altering the basis of its significance under Criterion D.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Criteria Consideration B (Moved Properties)

Although the original location of the Molalla Log House has not been definitively identified, available documentary evidence, oral history, land-use records, and archaeological investigations indicate that it stood near Rock Creek, approximately four miles south of present-day Molalla within the Pudding River watershed, in the vicinity of Soda Springs and Thomas Roads. In 1892, the building was dismantled and moved approximately 1.5 miles south to a location near the intersection of Wildcat and Wilhoit Roads, identified in this nomination as the Wildcat Site, where it remained until its dismantling for preservation in 2008. The Wildcat Site is documented through historic photographs, local accounts, tax records, and twentieth-century documentation associated with the property.

While the original site remains unknown, available evidence indicates that both the original location and the Wildcat Site occupied comparable environmental settings within the Cascade foothills of the northern Willamette Valley. Both locations were situated in a rural landscape characterized by mixed conifer forest, prairie-edge environments, nearby streams, and proximity to historic travel corridors associated with Indigenous movement through the region. Both lay within the Rock Creek drainage and formed part of a broader landscape connected to well-documented Indigenous travel routes linking the Willamette Valley with the Cascade foothills and the Molalla River drainage. The building remained at its original location for more than ninety years and at the Wildcat Site for approximately 116 years before being dismantled for preservation in 2008 and reconstructed at Hopkins Demonstration Forest beginning in 2019.

The current location at Hopkins Demonstration Forest was selected in part because it retains many of these same environmental characteristics. The reconstructed building occupies a rural forested setting within the Cascade foothills, with nearby watercourses, wetlands, prairie openings, and a landscape context comparable to that of its presumed original vicinity. Although the building no longer occupies its original location, its present orientation, setting, and general environment remain compatible with the characteristics believed to have defined its historic setting, allowing it to continue conveying the relationship between the building and the broader landscape in which it was originally constructed.

Despite alterations introduced during the 1892 relocation and subsequent use, substantial original fabric was retained through both the relocation and the recent reconstruction, including primary wall logs, precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, mortised floor-framing systems, original rafter notches preserving

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evidence of the roof framing, wooden treenails, saw kerfs marking planned openings, and extensive tool-marked surfaces. Together, these elements constitute the essential physical evidence from which the property derives its information potential, preserving direct evidence of its construction technology, chronology, workmanship, and subsequent evolution.

Some alterations associated with the 1892 relocation also contributed directly to the interpretation of the earlier building. Most notably, modifications to the north elevation preserved physical evidence that later assisted in identifying and interpreting the original doorway configuration, thereby enhancing the building's information potential rather than diminishing it.

Relocation is consistent with both the structural characteristics and the historical use of horizontal mass-log construction. Buildings composed of four-sided hewn timbers are assembled from discrete, interlocking members that can be dismantled and reassembled without destroying evidence of their original construction. Because the principal structural members remain individually identifiable following dismantling and reassembly, the physical relationships among materials, workmanship, construction sequencing, and alteration history continue to be preserved and interpreted after relocation. This characteristic historically facilitated the movement, repair, adaptation, and continued use of log structures in military, fur-trade, mission, and settlement contexts throughout North America. Within this architectural tradition, relocation represents a documented aspect of the life history of log buildings rather than an isolated or exceptional occurrence.

The comparative examples discussed later in this nomination and more fully in Appendix B demonstrate that buildings constructed using four-sided hewn horizontal mass-log systems were frequently dismantled, relocated, reconstructed, adapted, and preserved throughout their histories. Prince's Cabin, the Covington House, reconstructed buildings at Fort St. James, and other former fur-trade posts illustrate recurring patterns of relocation, reconstruction, adaptive reuse, and the continued preservation of original fabric. Viewed within this broader architectural tradition, the history of the Molalla Log House represents a continuation of well-documented practices rather than an exceptional departure from them. These examples demonstrate that the movement, preservation, and reuse of log buildings often formed part of their historical development while preserving the construction evidence and cultural information embodied within their surviving materials.

The Molalla Log House experienced extended periods of occupation at both of its historic locations—the original site and the Wildcat Site—before its relocation to Hopkins Demonstration Forest for preservation. Successive phases of use, maintenance, and alteration became incorporated into the surviving fabric that forms the basis of its significance today. Because the significance of the Molalla Log House derives primarily from the information embodied in its surviving physical fabric, rather than from its original location, and because its present setting remains compatible with its historic landscape, relocation has not diminished its ability to convey the characteristics that make it significant under Criterion D. The surviving materials continue to preserve the physical evidence that gives the property its information potential, including evidence of construction technology, chronology, builder knowledge, material preparation, joinery systems, architectural traditions, and subsequent adaptation. For these reasons, the Molalla Log House retains sufficient integrity of setting, materials, workmanship, design, and association to satisfy the requirements of Criteria Consideration B while continuing to embody the information potential upon which its significance under Criterion D is based.

Criteria Consideration E (Reconstructed Properties)

The Molalla Log House was dismantled in 2008 for preservation, study, and rehabilitation and reconstructed at Hopkins Demonstration Forest between 2019 and 2026. Approximately fifty percent of the original log fabric was retained, rehabilitated, and incorporated into the reconstructed building. Surviving original materials include substantial portions of the primary wall system, half-dovetail corner joinery, floor-framing members, tool-marked surfaces, saw kerfs, original rafter notches, and other diagnostic construction features. Deteriorated elements that could not be preserved were replaced with newly hewn Douglas-fir timbers

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prepared to match the original species, dimensions, workmanship, and construction methods documented in the surviving historic fabric.

The reconstruction formed part of a long-term preservation and restoration effort initiated with the systematic documentation, numbering, mapping, photography, dismantling, and study of the building beginning in 2008. As documented in Section 7 and Appendix A, reconstruction was guided by extensive physical evidence embodied within the structure, including numbered logs, recorded measurements, joinery geometry, tool marks, historic photographs, surviving framing members, original rafter notches, and detailed analysis of construction sequencing and alteration history. Rather than recreating a conjectural appearance, the building was reassembled using the surviving physical evidence as the primary basis for reconstruction. Because the surviving structural members remained individually identifiable throughout dismantling and reconstruction, the physical relationships between materials, workmanship, construction sequencing, and alteration history remain legible within the reconstructed building and continue to provide direct evidence for future investigation.

The reconstructed building retains the original dimensions, massing, plan, wall system, corner joinery, floor-framing configuration, and ridge-less roof design while preserving evidence of later alterations documented in the historic fabric. As a result, the reconstruction represents an accurately executed re-creation based upon substantial architectural, historical, and physical evidence rather than a speculative interpretation. Original and replacement materials remain distinguishable upon close inspection, allowing the surviving historic fabric and later interventions to be readily identified and studied.

The current location at Hopkins Demonstration Forest was selected because it provides long-term stewardship, public accessibility, educational opportunities, and a landscape setting comparable to that of the building's original vicinity near Rock Creek. As discussed in Section 7 and under Criteria Consideration B, the reconstructed building occupies a rural forested environment within the Cascade foothills characterized by nearby watercourses, wetlands, prairie openings, and mixed conifer forest—features consistent with the available evidence regarding the historic setting of the Molalla Log House.

National Register Bulletin 15 recognizes that reconstructed properties may be eligible when they are accurately executed, presented as part of a restoration plan, and when no other building or structure with the same associations has survived. The Molalla Log House satisfies these conditions. No other known surviving building in Oregon preserves the same combination of a turn-of-the-nineteenth-century construction date, four-sided hewn horizontal mass-log construction, half-dovetail corner joinery, standardized framing systems, and associated diagnostic construction features. Consequently, no comparable surviving resource exists from which equivalent information concerning this construction tradition and its regional context can be obtained.

Approximately fifty percent of the original structural fabric, representing all principal building systems, remains incorporated within the reconstructed building, preserving the essential physical evidence from which the property's significance is derived. The principal diagnostic characteristics—including original wall logs, half-dovetail corner joinery, floor-framing systems, original rafter notches, tool-marked surfaces, saw kerfs, and evidence of construction sequencing and later alteration—remain legible within the surviving fabric. Original and replacement materials remain distinguishable upon close inspection, while modern structural reinforcement is limited in extent and largely concealed. Because the property's significance derives primarily from the information embodied in its surviving physical fabric rather than from its original location alone, reconstruction has not diminished its ability to yield important information concerning construction technology, builder knowledge, material preparation, architectural traditions, and Euroamerican activity in the northern Willamette Valley. The reconstruction therefore preserves the essential characteristics that convey the property's significance while maintaining its ability to address the principal research questions identified under Criterion D. Accordingly, the Molalla Log House satisfies the requirements of Criteria Consideration E and remains eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion D.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Molalla Log House is significant at the statewide level under Criterion D in the areas of Architecture and Exploration/Settlement for its potential to yield important information concerning early log-building technology, construction practices, and undocumented occupation in the northern Willamette Valley at the turn of the nineteenth century. Constructed ca. 1798–1799, the building preserves an exceptional body of physical evidence—including four-sided hewn Douglas-fir wall logs, precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, mortised floor-framing systems, blind pocket-notched joists, saw kerfs marking planned openings, original roof-framing evidence, and extensive tool-marked surfaces—that permits investigation of construction technology, workmanship, material preparation, building sequence, adaptation, and technological traditions in a region where documentary evidence and comparable surviving structures are limited. The period of significance extends from ca. 1798–1799 through the building's relocation in 1892, encompassing the period during which the original construction, occupation, and early modifications created the physical evidence upon which its significance is based. Although the building has been relocated, altered, and partially reconstructed, substantial original fabric remains intact and continues to preserve the information from which its significance is derived. The property therefore meets the requirements of Criterion D, with the effects of relocation and reconstruction appropriately addressed under Criteria Considerations B and E.

The property's significance under Criterion D is further amplified by the scarcity of comparable resources within Oregon. Few, if any, extant Oregon buildings preserve original physical fabric securely dating to the turn of the nineteenth century, and the archaeological record contains relatively few sites capable of yielding comparable information regarding early construction technology from this formative period. As a result, the Molalla Log House represents an exceptional and largely irreplaceable source of information for investigating early construction technology, technological traditions, and the earliest phases of Euro-American occupation and settlement in the Oregon Country.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context and Evaluation Framework

Indigenous Landscape and Early Movement Networks

The Molalla Log House was historically located, and remains today, within the northern Willamette Valley in the Cascade foothills of western Oregon. Situated within the Pudding River watershed near the transition between valley-floor and upland forest environments, the building occupied a landscape connected to broader networks of Indigenous travel, resource use, and exchange extending throughout the Pacific Northwest. Indigenous trail systems connected the Willamette Valley to the Cascade Mountains and extended both north–south and east–west across the Pacific Northwest, facilitating travel, exchange, and communication over broad regions. Particularly important were routes extending eastward through the Cascade Mountains into eastern Oregon and the Columbia Plateau, a region encompassing portions of present-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and western Montana. Within this context, structures associated with hunting, storage, seasonal occupation, or travel may have been constructed along these corridors without generating formal documentation, particularly beyond the oversight of established trading posts or later settlement centers. The apparent absence of a documented trading post, settlement, or administrative center in the immediate vicinity of the Molalla Log House enhances its research value because it raises questions concerning the role of smaller, undocumented structures within Indigenous travel corridors, hunting territories, resource-extraction zones, and early fur-trade landscapes that are poorly represented in surviving documentary records.

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Nez Perce and Cayuse groups, whose homelands extended across the Columbia Plateau, were active participants in regional trade networks during the early nineteenth century and maintained established relationships with fur traders operating throughout the Pacific Northwest. Ethnohistoric sources document seasonal hunting by Plateau groups in the Willamette Valley along established overland routes connecting the interior to the valley floor. Early fur traders and hunters relied in part upon Indigenous knowledge, established travel corridors, and existing exchange networks to access the Willamette Valley and western Cascade foothills.³¹

Historical and anthropological sources identify the Ahantchuyuk as a Central Kalapuyan-speaking band associated with village sites along the Pudding River. Cultural materials, including surface finds of tools and other artifacts documented on a property along Kaiser Creek approximately one mile north of the original vicinity of the Molalla Log House, indicate Indigenous occupation in the immediate area. Although no formal archaeological investigation has been conducted, these materials have been reviewed by tribal archaeologists and are considered consistent with known patterns of Indigenous land use in the Pudding River watershed. Based on this review, the Kaiser Creek locality has been interpreted as a possible long-term or permanent village site from which seasonal hunting and resource-gathering activities into the Cascade foothills likely occurred.³²

Northern Molalla groups occupied settlements along the Molalla River, including the Dickey Prairie area east of the Willamette Valley, while Ahantchuyuk communities occupied villages within the Pudding River drainage. The Molalla Log House was situated within a broader Indigenous cultural landscape characterized by long-term habitation, resource use, travel, and exchange. Its location away from known fur-trade forts and later settlement centers enhances its research value because it may provide evidence concerning activities, land use, and patterns of movement that remain poorly documented in surviving historical records.

Although Fort Connah, established in 1846 in western Montana, postdates the estimated construction date of the Molalla Log House by several decades, it remains relevant as a contextual comparative example because it illustrates patterns of site selection and occupation that persisted within the fur-trade landscape of the Pacific Northwest throughout the nineteenth century. Fort Connah, the last Hudson's Bay Company post established south of the forty-ninth parallel, occupied a rural valley setting within the foothills of the Mission Mountains rather than a major transportation hub or fortified trading center. Located within the territory of the Flathead people, the post was constructed without defensive palisades and relied upon established Indigenous relationships, travel routes, and regional exchange networks.³³

Like the Molalla Log House, Fort Connah occupied an inland setting connected by overland travel corridors, nearby waterways, and Indigenous movement networks. It functioned as a subordinate trading post under Fort Colville, approximately 203 miles north at Kettle Falls, while both posts operated within the broader administrative system centered at Fort Vancouver. This relationship illustrates the dispersed nature of fur-trade operations in the Columbia River basin, where relatively small facilities often functioned within Indigenous communities and landscapes far removed from major administrative centers. The comparison is therefore not

³¹ Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *Indians of the Pacific Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 93; C. Melvin Aikens, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins, *Oregon Archaeology* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2011), 400; Harold Mackey, *The Kalapuyan: A Sourcebook on the Indians of the Willamette Valley* (Salem: Mission Mill Museum Association, Inc., 1974); David G. Lewis, *Tribal Histories of the Willamette Valley* (Portland, OR: Ooligan Press, 2018); Stephen Dow Beckham, *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2006).

³² Eirik Thorsgard, MAIS Cultural Protection Coordinator, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, letter regarding a culturally sensitive site in the Molalla area, August 2011; Patrick O'Grady, letter to Susan Hansen, November 14, 2007, Museum of Natural and Cultural History, University of Oregon; Pamela Hayden and Gregg Olson, site visit with property owner Susan Hansen, 2011.

³³ Fort Connah Restoration Society, Walter McDonald, Chairman. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, Fort Connah Site, Flathead Post II*. Helena, Montana, 1968.

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chronological but contextual, demonstrating how strategically located buildings could support travel, trade, provisioning, and communication within extensive regional networks without requiring the scale or permanence of major forts.

Geopolitical Context and Fur-Trade Expansion in the Pacific Northwest, ca. 1780–1815

In contrast to other regions of North America, the Willamette Valley did not develop a system of permanent fur-trade posts during the earliest phases of exploration and trade in the Pacific Northwest. Aside from the short-lived Wallace House and Willamette Post (1812–1813), fur companies generally relied upon freemen hunters and trappers operating within the valley and transporting furs to larger depots such as Fort Astoria (later Fort George) and, after 1825, Fort Vancouver. As a result, little is known about temporary structures associated with these activities, and no confirmed examples survive.

The precise origins of the Molalla Log House remain unknown, and no primary documentary sources directly link the structure to a specific trader, company, or event. Early records from this period consist largely of journals, correspondence, and later memoirs and seldom describe small structures constructed by traders, hunters, or explorers operating beyond established posts. Consequently, the building itself becomes a primary source of information regarding construction practices, intended function, and patterns of occupation within a poorly documented landscape.

Physical evidence places the Molalla Log House within the broader period of early exploration and fur-trade expansion in the Pacific Northwest during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Dendrochronological analysis indicates an early cutting date, and the structure exhibits characteristics associated with early log construction, including the absence of iron fasteners and evidence of long-term exposure and weathering.

The building's location within a network of Indigenous travel routes and resource-rich foothill environments raises important questions regarding its original purpose. The scale of construction, degree of planning, and investment of labor suggest a function extending beyond short-term shelter, yet no documented fort, settlement, or trading post is known to have existed in its immediate vicinity during the estimated period of construction. One avenue of future research is whether the structure was intended to support anticipated patterns of trade, travel, provisioning, or settlement that never fully developed in the region. If so, the building may provide rare material evidence of plans, expectations, or economic activities that preceded the establishment of the better-documented fur-trade infrastructure that emerged in the Pacific Northwest during the following decade.

The Oregon Country, a vast region extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains and encompassing much of present-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, British Columbia, and portions of Montana, became the focus of expanding British and American interest during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century, fur-trade activity extended into the Willamette Valley, and by the 1830s retired French Canadian and Métis fur traders had established agricultural settlements in the French Prairie area along the Willamette River, approximately 23 miles west of the Molalla area. American missionary groups arrived during the 1830s and 1840s, followed by thousands of American settlers who entered the region during the 1840s and 1850s via the Oregon Trail. The Provisional Government of Oregon was established in 1843, and by the mid-nineteenth century the Willamette Valley had become the center of American settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Prior to the resolution of the Oregon boundary dispute in 1846, however, the region remained subject to overlapping territorial claims by Great Britain and the United States, with governance characterized by joint occupancy and a limited administrative presence south of the Columbia River.

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British maritime traders operating along the Northwest Coast during the 1780s and early 1790s demonstrated the profitability of sea-otter pelts in global markets, while inland fur-trade companies simultaneously sought routes connecting continental fur resources to Pacific outlets.³⁴ In 1792 Captain George Vancouver surveyed the Pacific Coast and confirmed the location and navigability of the mouth of the Columbia River, establishing the river as a viable corridor linking interior regions to the Pacific and an important route for maritime trade.³⁵

The North West Company, based in Montreal and formally organized in 1783–1784, emerged as the principal rival to the Hudson's Bay Company in the Canadian fur trade. In the decades following the American Revolutionary War, shifting political boundaries and increased competition within the fur trade encouraged British traders to expand westward into previously underdeveloped regions of western Canada and the Pacific Northwest.³⁶

The first recorded Euro-American overland crossing of North America north of Mexico occurred in 1793, when Alexander Mackenzie, accompanied by Alexander McKay, reached the Pacific Ocean at Bella Coola on the mainland coast of present-day British Columbia. Mackenzie sought a practical route linking the interior fur trade with the Pacific and assessed opportunities for trade and future post locations. His expedition directed the attention of the North West Company toward west-flowing river systems and the Pacific slope.

North West Company traders and explorers including Peter Pond, Alexander Mackenzie, Alexander McKay, David Thompson, and Simon Fraser, together with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, contributed significantly to the exploration, mapping, and geographic understanding of western North America. Their observations, surveys, and travel accounts informed subsequent exploration, fur-trade expansion, and the development of increasingly accurate maps of the continent's interior and Pacific Northwest.³⁷

Following his return from the Pacific Coast, Alexander McKay worked in the Churchill and Athabasca districts of the North West Company. In 1798 he supervised a group of carpenters rebuilding Fort Île-à-la-Crosse, a principal provisioning and transportation center within the company's inland network. The Methye Portage corridor linked the Saskatchewan River system with the Athabasca drainage and facilitated movement between fur-trade communities at Lac la Loche, Lac La Biche, Lac la Ronge, and other settlements throughout northwestern Canada. These transportation networks enabled the movement of people, materials, technical knowledge, and construction traditions across western North America. The enduring influence of these networks is reflected in the later building traditions documented within Métis communities associated with these corridors and discussed in Appendix B.

Mackenzie actively promoted his vision of Pacific-oriented trade among fellow North West Company wintering partners and administrators, as well as British military officers, politicians, and colonial officials in Canada. In

³⁴ Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001; first published 1930); James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast 1785–1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992); Lawrence J. Burpee, *The Search for the Western Sea: The Story of the Exploration of Northwestern America* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2005); Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, vol. 27, *Northwest Coast I, 1543–1800*, and vol. 28, *Northwest Coast II, 1800–1846* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, 1886); Lawrence J. Burpee, *The Search for the Western Sea: The Story of the Exploration of Northwestern America* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2005).

³⁵ Edmund Hayes, ed., *Log of the Union: John Boit's Remarkable Voyage to the Northwest Coast and Around the World, 1794–1796* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1981).

³⁶ Wallace, W. Stewart. *The Pedlars from Quebec: The Story of the North West Company, 1763–1821*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1954; E. E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967).

³⁷ W. Kaye Lamb, ed., *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806–1808* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007); Elliott Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799–1814*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897); Arthur S. Morton, ed., *The Journal of Duncan McGillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794–1795* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1929).

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1801 he traveled to England and published a strategic plan for a transcontinental fur-trade system linking the Atlantic and Pacific, including the establishment of a post near the mouth of the Columbia River. Although the proposal was not immediately implemented, Mackenzie's ideas circulated widely among individuals who later participated in Pacific-oriented trade ventures and helped shape broader discussions regarding the future expansion of the fur trade into the Pacific Northwest.

Among those associated with this generation of Pacific-oriented fur traders were his cousin Donald McKenzie and former expedition companion Alexander McKay, both of whom later joined John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company and participated in the establishment of Fort Astoria. Their involvement illustrates the continuity of personnel and ideas linking Mackenzie's transcontinental exploration with subsequent efforts to expand fur-trade activity to the Pacific Coast.³⁸

The momentum generated by Mackenzie's expedition was carried forward during the first decade of the nineteenth century as David Thompson and Simon Fraser explored, mapped, and established trading posts across the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains and into the Columbia River basin, extending fur-trade infrastructure and geographic knowledge into previously undocumented regions of western North America.

This expansion relied not only on company officers but also on large numbers of Indigenous, Iroquois, and Métis hunters and freemen trappers who operated far beyond established posts. By the early nineteenth century, these individuals played a significant role in extending fur-trade activity into the Columbia River basin and regions west of the Rocky Mountains.³⁹

American interest in the Pacific Northwest developed concurrently. Following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, President Thomas Jefferson dispatched Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the newly acquired territory and assess its commercial and strategic potential. Reaching the Pacific in 1805, the expedition identified the Columbia River as a major transportation corridor and contributed to growing American interest in the region for trade, settlement, and territorial expansion.⁴⁰

These developments culminated in the establishment of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company. In 1811, Alexander McKay, an experienced wilderness explorer and former North West Company wintering partner who had accompanied Alexander Mackenzie on his 1793 transcontinental expedition, joined Astor's venture and sailed aboard the *Tonquin* to the mouth of the Columbia River. There he helped establish Fort Astoria, the first fur-trade post on the Pacific Coast south of Russian America. The establishment of Fort Astoria represented the realization of objectives that had been discussed by fur-trade entrepreneurs for nearly two decades.

³⁸ James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Gabriel Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814; the First American Settlement on the Pacific*, trans. J. V. Huntington (1854; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969); Washington Irving, *Astoria*, The Works of Washington Irving, Fulton Edition (New York: The Century Co., 1910); Robert F. Jones, ed., *Annals of Astoria: The Headquarters Log of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia River, 1811–1813* (Duncan McDougall's Journal) (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

³⁹ Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4, *History of Indian-White Relations*, general ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1988). Theodore J. Karamanski, "The Iroquois and the Fur Trade of the Far West," *The Beaver*, Spring 1982; Jennifer E.

Jameson, *Iroquois of the Pacific Northwest Fur Trade: Their Archaeology and History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 2007), master's thesis, Oregon State University.

⁴⁰ Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Bradford & Inskeep, 1814); Ziak, Rex. In *Full View: A True and Accurate Account of Lewis and Clark's Arrival at the Pacific Ocean, and Their Search for a Winter Camp along the Lower Columbia River*. Astoria, OR: Moffit House Press, 2002; John Bakeless, ed., *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (New York: Signet Classics, 1964); Samuel Lewis, a[er William Clark, *Map of Lewis and Clark's Track across the Western Portion of North America from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, 1804–1806*, copy a[er Clark original, Oregon Historical Society Library Archives.

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Together, the activities of British and American explorers, traders, and fur companies transformed the Pacific Northwest from a largely unknown region in Euro-American geographic knowledge into an increasingly interconnected landscape of exploration, trade, and territorial competition during the early nineteenth century.

Within this broader historical context, the Molalla Log House represents a rare surviving structure whose physical fabric may provide evidence regarding activities, building traditions, and patterns of occupation associated with this formative period of Pacific Northwest history. Unlike major trading posts, whose operations are documented through extensive written records, the Molalla Log House has the potential to illuminate less-documented forms of movement, resource use, provisioning, and occupation occurring beyond established centers of trade. Comparative analysis presented in Appendix B further demonstrates that the building shares characteristics with broader traditions of log construction associated with early fur-trade and frontier landscapes across northern North America.

Early Nineteenth-Century Presence in the Willamette Valley and Cascade Foothills

North West Company fur-trade expansion west of the Rocky Mountains was advanced by David Thompson, a surveyor, trader, and explorer who led expeditions and established trading posts throughout the Columbia River basin in present-day British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Working with crews composed of French Canadian voyageurs, Métis freemen, Indigenous guides, and company clerks, Thompson helped secure inland transportation and trade networks extending toward the Pacific Coast. These activities brought fur-trade operations into close geographic proximity to the Willamette Valley and Cascade foothills through established Indigenous travel corridors and resource zones. Thompson's efforts formed part of a broader North West Company strategy to secure access to Pacific trade routes and compete with expanding American interests in the region. Within this broader context of exploration, competition, and strategic positioning, the construction of provisional inland structures to support hunting, storage, reconnaissance, provisioning, or future expansion would have been consistent with documented fur-trade practice.

The Molalla Log House, dendrochronologically dated to 1798–1799, fits both chronologically and geographically within this period of heightened exploratory activity.⁴¹ In the absence of documentary evidence identifying its builders or original function, the structure is best understood as an architectural artifact of material culture examined within this historic context.

The apparent incompleteness of the Molalla Log House, evidenced by planned but unexecuted window openings, may reflect the volatility of fur-trade enterprises during this period rather than abandonment through neglect. Shifts in company economics, changing strategic priorities, competition for access to Pacific trade routes, and broader geopolitical conditions affecting British and American interests all influenced the viability of inland initiatives. Within this context, the structure may represent a provisional effort associated with plans that were later altered or abandoned.

The scale, material investment, and workmanship of the Molalla Log House distinguish it from temporary shelters or expedient structures commonly associated with short-term occupation and suggest a building intended for repeated or extended use within the landscape.

Scattered physical and documentary references suggest early Euro-American and Métis presence in the Cascade interior and upper Willamette drainage during the first decades of the nineteenth century. An 1808 stump identified near the Clackamas Lake area has been interpreted by some researchers as possible evidence of early tree engraving associated with American trader movement.⁴²

⁴¹ Gregg Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise: Molalla Log House – Fox Granary* (Clackamas County, OR, January 2012) chap. 3.

⁴² F. Alton Everest, *Tales of High Clackamas County: An Anecdotal History of Experiences on the Lakes Ranger*

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Later historical accounts reference an individual known as Montour as among the earliest non-Indigenous residents in the French Prairie area of the Willamette Valley. Montour was likely Métis and possibly related to Nicholas Montour Jr., the Métis son of Nicholas Montour Sr., a founding partner of the North West Company of Iroquois and French-Canadian descent.⁴³

Additional references place Jean-Baptiste Desportes McKay "Dupaty" in the Willamette Valley by approximately 1809, several years prior to the establishment of the Pacific Fur Company post at Astoria in 1811–1812. Montour and "Dupaty" are generally understood to have operated as free hunters in the fur trade rather than as representatives of a formal company presence.

Several individuals associated with the North West Company and the Pacific Fur Company are relevant to this discussion because they illustrate the documented presence of experienced fur traders, explorers, and free hunters operating within or near the Willamette Valley during the same period represented by the Molalla Log House. Although none can be directly associated with the structure, their activities help establish the broader context of exploration, reconnaissance, provisioning, and inland movement that characterized the region during the early nineteenth century.

Alexander McKay, a North West Company partner and later a principal participant in John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company venture to the Columbia River, exemplifies the experienced fur traders involved in the exploration and expansion of fur-trade activity in the Pacific Northwest during the period represented by the Molalla Log House. He possessed extensive experience in wilderness travel, navigation, and fur-trade operations and was regarded as an effective leader who developed strong trading relationships with Indigenous communities, an essential component of successful fur-trade expansion. McKay was highly regarded by Alexander Mackenzie, who supported his promotion to partner in the North West Company in 1799. The o accounts described him as "one of the best" traders in the company. His reputation later attracted the attention of John Jacob Astor, who recruited him to assist in establishing Fort Astoria and developing inland trade networks extending into the Columbia region.

Donald McKenzie provides another example of an experienced fur trader directly associated with exploration of the Willamette Valley during the early nineteenth century. A former North West Company wintering trader who later joined Astor's Pacific Fur Company, McKenzie left little written documentation despite having received a formal education in Scotland. Contemporary accounts describe his enthusiasm for the Willamette Valley, which he reportedly characterized as "delightful beyond expression."⁴⁴ He noted abundant beaver along the river and described surrounding prairies as rich grasslands supporting elk, deer, and bear. These observations reflect early assessments of the valley's economic potential by fur traders scouting locations for hunting, provisioning, storage, and possible trading establishments.

In the spring of 1812, McKenzie led a small party into the Willamette Valley to explore tributaries of the Willamette River and assess opportunities for hunting, trapping, and trade with Indigenous communities. Contemporary accounts indicate that McKenzie referred to the Willamette River as "McKay's River," although the reason for this name was not recorded. The reference appeared shortly after the death of Alexander

District of the Mount Hood National Forest, 1930–1935 (Sandy, OR: St. Paul's Press, 1993), 27; artifact in the collections of the Sandy Pioneer and Historical Society Museum.

⁴³ Hussey, J.A. Champoege: Place of Transition, a Disputed History. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with Oregon State Highway Commission and the National Park Service, U.S Department of Interior, 1967), 43; Ruby, Robert H. and Brown, John A. Indians of the Pacific Northwest (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 93; Elliot Coues, ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799–1814, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 757.

⁴⁴ Hussey, J.A. Champoege: Place of Transition, a Disputed History. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with Oregon State Highway Commission and the National Park Service, U.S Department of Interior, 1967), 25.

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McKay, McKenzie's colleague and fellow wintering partner in the Astorian venture, who was killed in the destruction of the Tonquin in 1811.⁴⁵ Fur traders commonly applied the names of fellow traders to geographic features encountered during exploration, and the name may reflect this practice, although no direct explanation survives.

Documentary evidence suggests that the Pacific Fur Company viewed the Willamette Valley as a potential provisioning and storage region during this period. The only known fur-trade establishment constructed in the valley by the Pacific Fur Company was Wallace House, built in 1812 along the Willamette River north of present-day Salem within the Pudding River watershed. Duncan McDougall, chief partner at Fort Astoria, recorded plans to winter in the valley and later intentions to store supplies there, although no specific locations were identified.⁴⁶

Journal references written by Hudson's Bay Company brigade traders in the 1820s at Fort Vancouver describe journeys south along the east side of the Willamette River toward the Champoege area and onward to the Umpqua River region for hunting and trapping. In these accounts, traders refer to a place described as "McKay's Old Fort" and "McKay's Abandoned Establishment on the Multnomah."⁴⁷ These references appear to place the location somewhere in the vicinity of the traders' campsite along the Willamette River near present-day Champoege.

Although these accounts do not provide sufficient detail to identify the exact location, form, or date of construction, they indicate that traders in the 1820s were aware of an earlier inland structure regarded as an abandoned company establishment not otherwise documented in surviving records.

Étienne Lucier and Joseph Gervais, along with their Métis families, camped on the Pudding River in 1814, and a "Freemen's Encampment" was recorded in fur-trade journals in the Cascade foothills during the 1820s.⁴⁸ Lucier later maintained a camp near where he herded and sold horses to supply company brigades.

These individuals, along with many retired fur traders and their Metis families, later established settlements on French Prairie beginning in the 1830s. They are referenced here to demonstrate the documented presence of fur-trade-associated and Métis individuals within the Willamette Valley during the early nineteenth century and to provide context for the broader regional landscape of exploration, hunting, trapping, provisioning, and settlement in which the Molalla Log House existed.

The original location of the Molalla Log House lay approximately twenty-three miles southeast of the Champoege area in the Pudding River watershed within the Cascade foothills. This landscape included numerous tributaries, wetlands, and riparian habitats that supported significant beaver populations during the early nineteenth century and formed part of the broader trapping landscape exploited by fur traders. By the 1820s, however, traders reported declining beaver numbers in portions of the valley, and Hudson's Bay Company brigades increasingly travelled southward into the Umpqua region. The presence of a surviving early

⁴⁵ Robert F. Jones, ed., *Annals of Astoria: The Headquarters Log of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia River, 1811–1813* (Duncan McDougall's Journal) (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Alexander Roderick McLeod, *Journal of a Trapping Expedition along the Coast South of the Columbia in Charge of A. R. McLeod, Chief Trader, Summer 1826*; David Douglas, *Journal*, entries September 2–15, 1826, accompanying Alexander Roderick McLeod and Jean-Baptiste McKay to the Umpqua River region, Oregon, 1826. None of the journal writers know where the location is, only in reference. William Cannon, Michael Laframboise, and other freemen fur traders working for the Hudson Bay Company hunted and kept horses near McKay's Old Fort, as per these journals.

⁴⁸ Hussey, J.A. *Champoege: Place of Transition, a Disputed History*. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with Oregon State Highway Commission and the National Park Service, U.S Department of Interior, 1967), 44; Peter Skene Ogden, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26*, ed. E. E. Rich (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1950).

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log structure within the nearby foothill watershed contributes important physical evidence for investigating this poorly documented phase of exploration and inland fur-trade activity.

Settlement Transition, Provisional Claims, and Nineteenth-Century Reoccupation

Although thousands of American emigrants reached the Willamette Valley via the Oregon Trail during the 1840s, settlement in the Molalla area remained extremely limited, with only isolated individuals documented prior to the early 1850s.

During this period, an individual named Isaac Abel recorded a provisional land claim under Oregon's Provisional Government along Rock Creek in 1846, in the general vicinity of the original site of the Molalla Log House.⁴⁹ Available records indicate that this was the only recorded provisional claim in the immediate vicinity of the Molalla Log House at that time.⁵⁰

The provisional land-claim era represented a transitional period between earlier fur-trade occupation and the imposition of formal American settlement patterns, during which land was claimed through occupation and local governance rather than federal authority. Under the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, eligibility for federal land claims in Oregon was restricted to white settlers.

Following the 1846 boundary settlement, when the United States formally assumed governance south of the 49th parallel, Isaac Abel abandoned his short-lived provisional claim and subsequently occupied a 640-acre claim near the Pudding River in the Champoege area, situated between land claims held by retired fur-trade trappers Montour and Le Rock.

While little documentary evidence survives regarding Abel's background beyond land records, his association with retired fur-trade figures and limited genealogical references suggest that he may have been of Métis descent. Aside from these land records, Abel appears infrequently in historical documentation, although Oregon militia records for the Champoege area indicate that he may have had two sons who served in local militia units during conflicts between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the 1850s.⁵¹

In 1853, John and Phoebe Wilhoit received a Donation Land Claim encompassing land previously held under a provisional claim by Isaac Abel along Rock Creek. An 1852 survey map of the area depicts a well-worn trail leading directly into this vicinity, indicating established access to the site prior to Wilhoit's claim.⁵²

Contextual evidence potentially relevant to the later history of the Molalla Log House is found in the 1910 journal writings of pioneer John Bagby, recounting events of the 1850s. Bagby described an "Indian scare" during which "the whites all fortified up at Wilhoit's fort about a week."⁵³ In settler accounts of the period, the

⁴⁹ Treaty of Oregon, June 15, 1846; *Genealogical Material in Oregon Provisional Land Claims*, vols. VI–VIII (1845–1849), Isaac B. Abel entry, Clackamas County, provisional land claim of 640 acres on Rock Creek, Molalla Settlement, recorded July 25, 1846, abandoned October 25, 1847, vol. 3, p. 8; microfilm, Oregon State Archives, Salem.

⁵⁰ Genealogical Material in Oregon Provisional Land Claims, vols. VI–VIII, 1845–1849 (Salem: Oregon State Archives; Portland: Oregon Historical Society); Surveyor General's Map of Clackamas County, Oregon, 1852, General Land Office survey, Oregon State Archives, Salem.

⁵¹ Captain George Abel, adjutant general, Muster Rolls, Indian Wars, 1855–1856: Rogue River and Yakima Campaigns, Second Oregon Mounted Volunteers, Company B, Recruiting Battalion (Oregon Territorial records); Jackson Abel, Road Petition from Tualatin Plains to Rainier, December 27, 1853, Oregon Territorial Government records, 1843–1859.

⁵² 1852 GLO Map, surveyor Generals Office, Oregon City, August 12, 1852, of Township 5 South of Range 2 East, Willamette Meridian, Territory of Oregon (Clackamas County Historical Society).

⁵³ Gail J. McCormick, *Our Proud Past*, vol. 1, *A Compiled History of the Families That Settled at the End of the Oregon Trail* (Mulino, OR: Gail McCormick Publishing Company, 1992), 79.

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term "fort" was often used as vernacular frontier terminology and does not necessarily imply a formally constructed military or company fortification. Although the specific structure referenced by Bagby cannot be identified with certainty, the account suggests the continued presence of a substantial building or defensible gathering place in the vicinity of the Wilhoit claim during the early settlement period, providing potential context for local traditions later associated with the Molalla Log House.

Settlement in this vicinity increased during the 1850s, as families, many originating from the Upper South and southeastern United States, established farmsteads and constructed dwellings typically framed with milled lumber rather than log construction, reflecting building practices associated with mid-nineteenth-century American settlement.

Most emigrants who arrived in Oregon during the 1840s and 1850s departed from Midwestern states such as Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa and often traced family origins to the Upper South and eastern United States. The forest environments of these regions were typically dominated by hardwood species such as oak, hickory, and maple or, in portions of the Midwest, were limited by extensive prairie landscapes. These conditions often produced shorter, less uniform timbers and encouraged a range of vernacular building adaptations.

Contemporary accounts of settlement patterns further indicate that pioneer construction followed a staged sequence, beginning with temporary shelters and progressing through log structures to framed buildings as resources and infrastructure became available.⁵⁴ This process, often occurring over several years, reflects the expedient and transitional nature of early construction in the region and contrasts with the level of planning and execution evident in more formal log-building traditions.

In contrast, the forests of western Oregon, particularly along the foothill margins of the Willamette Valley, were characterized by dense stands of tall, straight softwood species, including Douglas-fir and cedar, which are well suited to the production of long, uniform, square-hewn timbers. The Molalla Log House reflects a construction system that takes advantage of these material properties, employing tightly fitted horizontal log courses and carefully executed half-dovetail corner notching.

This distinction is important in evaluating construction traditions. While Oregon Trail settlers were familiar with log building, the variability in material conditions and construction practices in their regions of origin contrasts with the high degree of regularity and precision evident in the Molalla Log House. Such characteristics more closely align with established building traditions documented in fur-trade and military contexts, where standardized construction knowledge and skilled labor produced comparable forms.

The transition from provisional occupation to permanent agricultural settlement provides an important context for interpreting the Molalla Log House. By the time Euro-American settlement expanded into the Molalla area during the 1850s, the building already appears to have represented an older construction tradition distinct from the dwelling forms commonly associated with Oregon Trail settlement. Consequently, the structure occupies an important position at the intersection of two historical eras: an earlier period of exploration, fur-trade activity, and provisional occupation, and the later agricultural settlement that transformed the northern Willamette Valley. This contrast further supports the potential of the Molalla Log House to yield information regarding earlier patterns of occupation, construction technology, and building traditions in the region.

⁵⁴ Philip Dole (1921–2006), Professor of Architecture at the University of Oregon (1956–1986), co-founding the first graduate program in historic preservation west of the Mississippi in 1979. A specialist in Pacific Northwest vernacular architecture and farmsteads.

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Fur-Trade Architectural Traditions

The Molalla Log House is best understood within the broader architectural traditions that shaped the movement of construction technology and building knowledge across northern North America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this period, military expansion, the inland fur trade, and frontier settlement created extensive networks through which experienced builders, craftsmen, and laborers carried established woodworking traditions across vast geographic regions. Because no documentary record identifies the builder, construction date, or original function of the Molalla Log House, interpretation relies primarily upon analysis of its surviving physical fabric, construction technology, workmanship, and comparison with documented examples of contemporary log construction. This architectural context establishes the technological tradition within which the building is evaluated and provides the historical framework for understanding its significance as an exceptionally early surviving example of horizontal mass-log construction in Oregon.

Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, inland fur-trade activity across western Canada, British Columbia, and the Oregon Country relied upon well-established log-building traditions adapted to local materials, available labor, and the practical requirements of frontier occupation. Trading posts, dwellings, warehouses, workshops, and service buildings formed part of an expanding network of exploration, commerce, and settlement extending across northern North America. Although these buildings varied according to function, location, and permanence, they frequently shared common approaches to timber preparation, structural framing, corner joinery, and overall design that reflected established woodworking traditions rather than improvised frontier construction.

Construction knowledge circulated through the continual movement of Scottish and British wintering partners, company clerks, military personnel, French Canadian carpenters, laborers, Indigenous peoples, and Métis communities.⁵⁵ British and Scottish participants introduced building practices shaped by military, institutional, and colonial traditions, while French Canadian craftsmen contributed horizontal log-building techniques developed throughout eastern Canada and the Great Lakes region.⁵⁶ Indigenous and Métis communities likewise played an important role in transmitting construction knowledge through their participation in the fur trade, adapting established techniques to local materials, environmental conditions, and regional patterns of occupation. Through this continual movement of people and labor, construction traditions spread across broad geographic regions while remaining sufficiently flexible to accommodate differing landscapes, available timber resources, and functional requirements.

Within these interconnected landscapes, two principal forms of horizontal log construction became established. The first consisted of horizontal mass-log construction secured through dovetail or half-dovetail corner joinery, known to French Canadians as *pièce-sur-pièce à queue d'aronde*. In this system, long horizontal timbers formed both the structural framework and the wall surfaces of the building, producing rigid, weather-resistant walls capable of supporting substantial roof loads without additional framing. The second system, commonly known as *pièce-sur-pièce en coulisse*, or the Red River system, employed shorter horizontal timbers fitted

⁵⁵ Hector Straith, late Major in Her Majesty's Army and former professor of fortification and artillery at the East India Company's College at Addiscombe, *Introductory Essay to the Study of Fortification for Young Officers of the Army* (London: Parker, Furnivall, and Parker, ca. 1840), 91–92; Richard J. Young, *Blockhouses in Canada, 1749–1841: A Comparative Report and Catalogue*, *Canadian Historic Sites Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979); Carl Benn, "The Blockhouses of Toronto: A Material History Study," *Material Culture Review* 42, no. 1 (1995); John I. Rempel, *Building with Wood and Other Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Building in Central Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

⁵⁶ *Cumberland and Hudson House Journals, 1775–1782*, Hudson's Bay Record Society (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1951); Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence, 1795–1802*: Edmonton House, 1795–1800; Chesterfield House, 1800–1802, Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. 26 (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1967).

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between grooved vertical posts.⁵⁷ This post-supported method simplified repair, enlargement, and replacement of individual wall members and became increasingly common during the nineteenth century, particularly within later Hudson's Bay Company establishments and Métis settlements.⁵⁸

These two systems represent distinct technological traditions rather than successive stages of development. Both relied upon skilled timber preparation and careful joinery, but they differed fundamentally in structural organization. Horizontal mass-log construction depended upon the precise execution of interlocking corner joints and closely fitted wall courses to create a self-supporting structural shell. In contrast, post-supported construction transferred structural loads to vertical framing members while permitting individual wall timbers to function primarily as infill. Recognition of these differing structural systems provides an important framework for interpreting surviving log buildings and evaluating their relationship to broader construction traditions documented throughout military, frontier, and fur-trade landscapes.⁵⁹ Archaeological investigation on the French Prairie revealed that posts were used in the log construction of retired fur trader houses.⁶⁰

The Molalla Log House Within the Fur-Trade Architectural Tradition

The Molalla Log House preserves physical evidence of a mature timber-building system that had already developed into a coherent and repeatable architectural tradition by the close of the eighteenth century. Its four-sided hewn Douglas-fir timbers precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, standardized layout, concealed framing systems, and closely fitted horizontal wall courses collectively demonstrate an established method of timber construction rather than an isolated or improvised building technique. Although no documentary record identifies its original builder, the surviving fabric preserves evidence of a sophisticated construction system whose design, workmanship, and material characteristics are consistent with an established horizontal mass-log building tradition. Comparable examples illustrating this construction tradition are examined in the following section, Comparative Analysis of Construction Traditions (Criterion D), and are illustrated in Appendix B.

The building demonstrates how this construction system achieved structural stability through skilled carpentry and an understanding of the structural properties of wood rather than dependence upon manufactured iron fasteners. The primary wall system derives its strength from the interlocking geometry of the half-dovetail corner joinery and the weight of the horizontal timbers. Mortise-and-tenon connections secure the mudsills and first-floor framing, while blind pockets support the second-floor joists. Evidence preserved in the original rafter

⁵⁷ Dovetail notching is a specialized corner joint that sheds water away from the corners of a building, improving durability, while also allowing four-sided hewn horizontal logs to be tightly fitted. The half-dovetail, widely adopted in British colonial contexts, shares these functional characteristics but is more efficient to execute. The terms "dovetail" and "half-dovetail" are often used interchangeably in the literature, despite representing distinct joinery forms. While the distinction is not always critical, the more precise term "half-dovetail" is appropriate in describing the Molalla Log House. As noted by John Rempel in his study of nineteenth-century construction techniques in central Canada, the half-dovetail notch was associated with

British military-style log construction, combining the structural advantages of the full dovetail with greater efficiency in execution.

⁵⁸ Tusa Shea, "From Necessity to Style: A History of Log Buildings in British Columbia, from the Colonial Era to the Present" (Victoria, BC: Heritage Branch, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, 2005).

⁵⁹ In Upper Canada or English Canada, the English did not use the intermediary coulisse to break up the walls or to provide a frame for building as the traditional Canadian style dictates. Instead, they used four-sided hewn logs that were long enough to extend across the breadth of the wall and then they dovetailed the corners. James Michael Hebert, *Culture Built Upon the Land: A Predictive Model of Nineteenth Century Canadian/Métis Farmsteads*, (M.A. thesis, Oregon State University, Department of Anthropology, 2007); Peter Moogk, *Building a House in New France: An Account of the Perplexities of Client and Craftsmen in Early Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977); A. J. H. Richardson, "A Comparative Historical Study of Timber Building in Canada," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology* 5, no. 3 (1973).

⁶⁰ David R. Brauner, *Early French-Canadian Settlement, Marion County, Oregon: Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1993), Section F.

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notches demonstrates that the roof framing likewise relied upon accurately cut bearing surfaces, gravity, and compression rather than metal connectors. Wooden treenails were employed only where additional fastening was required. Collectively, these features demonstrate that a substantial timber building could be erected from locally available materials using carefully prepared timbers, precisely executed joinery, and well-established carpentry techniques.

The physical fabric further demonstrates that construction followed a carefully organized and standardized building system. The building's consistent dimensions, concealed framing, planned opening layout, coordinated joinery, and integrated structural design indicate that its principal components were conceived as part of a unified construction plan before assembly began. These features distinguish the building from an improvised building process and instead reflect a carefully planned and standardized construction system capable of producing durable, weather-resistant buildings under frontier conditions. Collectively, this evidence demonstrates that the building was planned and executed as an integrated structural system.

The Molalla Log House reflects more than individual craftsmanship. Its construction demonstrates the application of a well-developed body of technical knowledge concerning timber selection, seasoning, structural behavior, joinery, framing, measurement, and building sequence. The standardized dimensions, integrated framing systems, disciplined workmanship, and consistent execution indicate that the builders were working within a highly developed building tradition refined through repeated practice rather than developing construction methods through experimentation at the building site. This tradition embodied a systematic body of construction knowledge in which methods of timber preparation, measurement, joinery, framing, and assembly had become standardized, repeatable, and widely understood among experienced builders. Such knowledge was transmitted through apprenticeship, practical experience, and the mobility of skilled craftsmen, allowing sophisticated timber buildings to be reproduced across widely separated regions while adapting to local materials, environmental conditions, available labor, and functional requirements.

Several features of the Molalla Log House exceed the requirements of an expedient shelter. The concealed floor-framing system mortised structural connections, standardized layout, carefully proportioned elevations, precisely executed half-dovetail joinery, and exceptionally close fit of the wall timbers required additional planning, labor, and technical skill beyond what was necessary simply to provide protection from the elements. Likewise, the framed first floor and concealed second-floor joists created a more finished and orderly architectural appearance than was required for purely functional construction. Rather than representing unnecessary embellishment, these characteristics reflect confidence in an established construction system and the ability to execute a disciplined architectural tradition whose objectives extended beyond immediate utility. The resulting building embodies permanence, structural order, and technical competence through its design and construction, expressing a mature timber-building tradition rather than an improvised frontier shelter.

Evidence preserved in the timbers also provides insight into the organization of construction. The dimensions of the Molalla Log House and the size and handling characteristics of its structural members suggest that the building could have been erected by a relatively small work crew. Tool-mark evidence likewise indicates the work of a limited number of individuals rather than a large or highly specialized labor force. Physical evidence also suggests that the Douglas-fir timbers were seasoned before assembly, facilitating the exceptionally close fit achieved between adjoining wall logs while reducing shrinkage after construction. The closely fitted wall courses, shallow V-shaped interior bearing surfaces, precise corner joinery, and absence of original chinking demonstrate that weather resistance depended upon careful timber preparation and accurate assembly rather than later filling or adjustment. Together, this evidence indicates a construction process requiring planning, coordination, and skilled workmanship. Contemporary fur-trade journals describe similar patterns of advance planning and material preparation, providing useful context for interpreting this physical evidence.⁶¹

⁶¹ Laura Peers and Teresa Schenck, eds., *My First Years in the Fur Trade: The Journals of 1802–1804*, George Nelson (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002); Daniel Williams Harmon, *Harmon's Journal*,

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Documentary accounts of fur-trade construction provide useful context for interpreting this physical evidence. Alexander Mackenzie's account of establishing a wintering post on the Peace River in 1792 records that several men had been dispatched months before his arrival to prepare the 18 foot hewn timbers required for building his wintering and trading house.⁶² Although this account does not establish that the Molalla Log House was constructed in the same manner, it demonstrates that timber buildings erected in remote fur-trade settings could involve advance planning, material preparation, and coordinated work by relatively small groups. The standardized layout, evidence of seasoned timbers, integrated framing systems, and indications of a limited work crew preserved in the Molalla Log House are consistent with this organized approach to construction.

The Molalla Log House also differs substantially from the forms of log construction most commonly associated with nineteenth-century Euro-American settlement in Oregon. It is neither a round-log, nail-fastened structure characteristic of Methodist Mission construction in the Willamette Valley nor an expedient cabin of the type frequently erected during the initial stages of Oregon Trail settlement.⁶³ Many of those later buildings employed round or only partially hewn logs, projecting corner notches, extensive chinking or daubing, and comparatively simple framing systems. By contrast, the Molalla Log House employs fully hewn horizontal timbers joined through precisely executed half-dovetail corner notching, closely fitted wall courses without original chinking, mortised floor framing, and an integrated structural system. These distinctions place the building within a markedly different architectural tradition than that represented by most surviving nineteenth-century settlement buildings in Oregon.

Dendrochronological analysis places construction of the Molalla Log House in 1798–1799, during a period for which surviving architectural evidence in the Pacific Northwest remains exceptionally limited. More importantly, the building preserves physical evidence of a highly developed timber-building tradition whose methods, technological knowledge, and organization can be investigated directly through its surviving fabric. Rather than preserving simply an early log structure, the Molalla Log House preserves evidence of a construction tradition refined through generations of practice and transmitted through skilled builders. Its standardized layout, sophisticated joinery, integrated framing, workmanship, and material characteristics provide a reliable basis for comparison with documented examples of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century military, frontier, and fur-trade construction. The comparative analysis that follows examines those relationships in greater detail and places the Molalla Log House within its broader architectural and technological context.

Methodology and Evaluation Framework

In the absence of direct documentary attribution, evaluation of the Molalla Log House is grounded in analysis of its physical fabric rather than associative significance. The structure exhibits characteristics consistent with an established construction tradition, including regular log geometry, carefully executed corner joinery, limited original openings, standardized dimensions, and overall coherence of design. These features provide a reliable basis for assessing construction technology, workmanship, construction sequencing, and technological context independent of stylistic attribution or assumed cultural affiliation.

1800–1819, foreword by Jennifer S. H. Brown, Estate of W. Kaye Lamb (Victoria, BC: Touchwood Editions, 2006); J. B. Tyrrell, ed., *Hearne and Turner Journals* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934).

⁶² Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in the Years 1789 and 1793* (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1971).

⁶³ Judith A. Sanders, Mary Kathryn Weber, and David R. Brauner, *Willamette Mission Archeological Project: Phase III Assessment* (Corvallis: Department of Anthropology, Oregon State University, 1983); Philip Dole (1921–2006), Professor of Architecture at the University of Oregon (1956–1986), co-founded the first graduate program in historic preservation west of the Mississippi in 1979 and was recognized as a leading authority on Pacific Northwest vernacular architecture and farmsteads.

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As a standing structure, the Molalla Log House is evaluated not only as an architectural form but as material evidence of the construction knowledge, labor practices, and technological traditions that shaped its creation. Interpretation of its fabric relies upon contextual analysis informed by comparative architectural study, documented construction practices, and the physical evidence preserved within the building itself. This approach permits evaluation of the structure within broader traditions of military, frontier, and fur-trade construction while recognizing its significance as a source of information regarding the transmission, adaptation, and application of building knowledge in the Oregon Country during a poorly documented period of regional history.

Criterion D Information Potential

Building upon the historic, architectural, and comparative framework established above, the Molalla Log House is significant under Criterion D because its surviving physical fabric is capable of yielding important information concerning construction technology, chronology, builder knowledge, function, and the adaptation of established North American log-building traditions within the Oregon Country during the poorly documented period surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century.

Preliminary archaeological investigations undertaken to identify evidence associated with the building's original location yielded limited or no subsurface cultural deposits directly attributable to its earliest occupation. This result is not unexpected given the building's nineteenth-century relocation, subsequent agricultural use of the surrounding landscape, and later ground disturbance. Consequently, the standing structure itself constitutes the principal source of material evidence for investigating the building's origin, construction, and early history.

The research value of the Molalla Log House is further enhanced by the scarcity of comparable sources of evidence in Oregon. Few, if any, extant buildings within the state preserve physical fabric dating to the turn of the nineteenth century, and relatively few archaeological sites have yielded comparable information regarding domestic or fur-trade construction technology from this formative period. Consequently, the Molalla Log House constitutes an exceptional source of material evidence for investigating early building practices, technological traditions, and patterns of cultural transmission that are otherwise only sparsely represented in Oregon's architectural and archaeological record.

The Molalla Log House preserves an extensive body of original and datable construction evidence, including four-sided hewn Douglas-fir wall timbers, half-dovetail corner joinery, tightly fitted wall joints, mortised framing systems, tool marks, saw kerfs, original roof-framing evidence, and standardized log geometry. Together, these characteristics permit systematic investigation of construction technology, material preparation, framing methods, building sequence, workmanship, and builder knowledge while providing a reliable basis for comparison with documented examples of military, frontier, and fur-trade architecture throughout the Great Lakes region, western Canada, British Columbia, and the Pacific Northwest.

The building also presents significant unanswered questions that contribute directly to its research value. Uncertainties remain regarding its original function, builders, orientation, sequence of occupation, and original location. Questions also persist concerning the original roof system, the presence or absence of a heating source, interior circulation, access to the second floor, and the purpose of the unaccounted-for notch associated with the upper-floor framing. Although the building's overall configuration has been reconstructed and later alterations have been distinguished from the original fabric, these unresolved questions demonstrate the property's continuing capacity to yield additional information through future investigation.

Future research may include expanded comparative analysis with similar log structures throughout the Great Lakes region, western Canada, and the Pacific Northwest; continued investigation of Hudson's Bay Company, North West Company, and other archival sources; examination of land claim records and related documentary evidence; archaeological investigation if the original building location is identified; and continued application of

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dendrochronology, material analysis, and other analytical techniques. Such investigations have the potential to refine understanding of the building's chronology, technological context, builders, function, and relationship to the earliest phases of exploration, fur-trade expansion, and settlement in the Oregon Country.

Taken together, the historic context, comparative analysis, and surviving physical evidence demonstrate that the Molalla Log House possesses exceptional potential to yield important information concerning early construction technology and the establishment of North American log-building traditions in the Oregon Country during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Its significance derives from the information embodied in its surviving material fabric, which continues to support investigation of one of the earliest known standing structures in Oregon.

Statewide Significance

The Molalla Log House is evaluated at the statewide level of significance under Criterion D because its principal importance lies in its ability to provide information concerning the early history of Oregon and the Oregon Country. Although the construction traditions represented by the building extend across broader military, frontier, and fur-trade landscapes of northern North America, the property's significance derives from its capacity to illuminate early construction technology, architectural traditions, patterns of occupation, and technological influences within Oregon during a poorly documented period of regional history. The comparative examples presented throughout this nomination and in Appendix B provide the architectural framework necessary to interpret the building's physical evidence, while the information it preserves is most directly relevant to understanding the development of Oregon's earliest historic landscape.

Comparative Analysis of Construction Technology (Criterion D)

Multiple lines of evidence, including dendrochronological analysis, place construction of the Molalla Log House in 1798–1799, during a formative and sparsely documented period of Pacific Northwest history. Few extant buildings dating to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries survive for direct comparison, particularly within the Oregon Country and Lower Columbia region. The comparative analysis draws upon surviving structures, archaeological investigations, architectural surveys, historic photographs, documentary evidence, and scholarly research. Later buildings that preserve comparable construction technology and workmanship provide important evidence for understanding the continuity and transmission of earlier building traditions.

This analysis evaluates the Molalla Log House within a broader tradition of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction associated with military, fur-trade, Indigenous, Métis, mission, and settlement landscapes across North America. Particular attention is given to diagnostic construction characteristics documented in the Molalla Log House, including four-sided hewn log walls, tightly fitted horizontal construction with minimal reliance on chinking, half-dovetail and dovetail corner joinery, concealed floor-framing systems, building form and proportions, roof framing, and timber preparation methods. Together, these characteristics provide a framework for examining the transmission, adaptation, and persistence of this construction tradition across regions and successive generations. Buildings constructed using the Red River frame system are discussed only where relevant to regional context because they represent a distinct construction tradition from the mass-horizontal log construction documented in the Molalla Log House.

The comparative examples discussed below were selected not because they are contemporary with the Molalla Log House, but because they preserve comparable construction technology and building traditions. Their comparative value derives less from their dates of construction than from their ability to illuminate the continuity, adaptation, and long-term persistence of the building traditions represented by the Molalla Log House.

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Military and Frontier Origins (Eastern North America)

The following examples illustrate the use of four-sided hewn horizontal log construction and interlocking corner joinery within British military and frontier settings during the eighteenth century, providing context for the construction technologies later transmitted through fur trade networks. The presence of German-speaking soldiers and engineers in British service during the eighteenth century may have contributed to the transmission and continuity of these techniques.⁶⁴ British military and frontier construction in eastern North America and Upper Canada employed tightly fitted hewn log walls secured through various forms of interlocking corner joinery, as documented at Fort York and other military installations of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁶⁵ Although these structures vary in form and function, they demonstrate the broader construction tradition from which related frontier and fur trade building practices developed. Additional discussion and illustrations of Fort York and comparable British military examples are provided in Appendix B.

The surviving blockhouse at Fort Halifax, Maine, constructed in 1754 during the French and Indian War, provides an early example of four-sided hewn horizontal log construction secured through dovetail corner joinery.⁶⁶ Although the defensive blockhouse form differs substantially from the domestic scale and function of the Molalla Log House, the building demonstrates that the construction technology represented by the Molalla Log House was already established within British military contexts by the mid-eighteenth century. Its comparative value lies not in architectural form but in illustrating disciplined hewn-log construction traditions that later influenced frontier and fur trade building practices.

Fort Yargo, built in 1793 in present-day Georgia, provides a useful comparative example because it demonstrates how military-derived log-building technology could be adapted to a small-scale frontier structure. Measuring approximately 18 by 22 feet, the building closely resembles the dimensions of the 18 by 25 foot Molalla Log House. Like the Molalla Log House, Fort Yargo is a one-and-a-half-story rectangular building with a gable roof, four-sided hewn horizontal log walls, and half-dovetail corner joinery.⁶⁷ Constructed only a few years before the Molalla Log House, it provides a near-contemporary example of the same construction technology. The close correspondence in dimensions, together with the shared use of four-sided hewn timbers and interlocking corner joinery, supports evaluation of the Molalla Log House within a broader tradition of horizontal mass-log construction extending beyond the Pacific Northwest. The building's documented history of disassembly, relocation, and reconstruction further illustrates how diagnostic construction evidence can survive multiple relocations while remaining interpretable for architectural and historical study, providing a useful comparison for evaluating the continuing research value of relocated and reconstructed log structures under Criteria Considerations B and E.

The extant Scadding Cabin, located in Toronto, Ontario, is one of the strongest comparative examples for evaluating the Molalla Log House. Constructed in 1794 by military carpenters of the Queen's Rangers for John Scadding, clerk to Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, the building originally served as a residence and office near the Don River and Fort York before later being relocated and preserved as a historic landmark. Its

⁶⁴ Terry G. Jordan, *American Log Buildings: An Old World Heritage* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 75.

⁶⁵ David A. Simmons, *Military Architecture on the American Frontier*, Selected Papers from the Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences, 1983–1984 (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division, n.d.); Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. 1 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), 116–117.

⁶⁶ Fort Halifax (1754), British colonial fortification constructed during the French and Indian War, Winslow, Maine. See Emerson W. Baker and John G. Reid, *The New England Knight: Sir William Phips, 1651–1695* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); and Maine Historic Preservation Commission, “Fort Halifax (Winslow),” National Register of Historic Places documentation.

⁶⁷ The Historical Marker Database (HMdb.org), “Fort Yargo's Early History,” Winder, Barrow County, Georgia, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=187300>.

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documented history of relocation, reuse, and restoration provides a useful parallel for evaluating the Molalla Log House under Criteria Considerations B and E.

In form and construction technology, the Scadding Cabin exhibits numerous similarities to the Molalla Log House. Both are small rectangular single-pen structures with one-and-a-half-story gable-roof forms and comparable dimensions, the Scadding Cabin measuring approximately 18 by 24 feet. Both employ four-sided hewn horizontal log walls secured with half-dovetail corner joinery and exhibit tightly fitted wall construction. The Scadding Cabin also incorporates concealed pocket-notched second-floor joists, a feature closely comparable to the blind joist pockets documented in the Molalla Log House. Window openings in the Scadding Cabin are similar in scale to the kerf-marked openings identified on the north elevation of the Molalla Log House and provide a useful dimensional comparator for interpreting the intended size of original openings.⁶⁸

The comparison is particularly significant because the Scadding Cabin is securely dated to 1794, while dendrochronological analysis places construction of the Molalla Log House in 1798–1799. The close chronological relationship, combined with substantial similarities in scale, form, joinery, structural design, and construction technology, makes the Scadding Cabin one of the most persuasive comparative examples for evaluating the Molalla Log House within a broader late eighteenth-century tradition of hewn horizontal mass-log construction. As a surviving structure that retains identifiable historic fabric despite relocation, it also demonstrates how moved log buildings can continue to yield important information concerning construction methods, workmanship, and building sequence. The broader significance of this comparison is reinforced by the widespread use of similar construction technology throughout the Great Lakes region and the Ohio Territory during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, reflecting the circulation of building knowledge through military, frontier, and settlement networks.⁶⁹

Fur Trade Fur Trade Expansion and the Transmission of Construction Knowledge

Saskatchewan River, Lac la Loche, and Métis Settlements

Métis communities of Saskatchewan and Alberta provide important evidence for the continuity and westward transmission of four-sided hewn horizontal log construction within fur trade landscapes. Emerging from the fur trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Métis communities transitioned from seasonal hunting economies to permanent agricultural settlements, constructing dwellings that reflected construction technologies associated with the fur trade.⁷⁰ Studies of Métis settlements along the Saskatchewan River, including Batoche and St. Laurent, document one-and-one-half-story houses built of four-sided hewn horizontal logs with half-dovetail corner joinery, gable roofs, symmetrical façades, and, in some cases, gable-end shed

⁶⁸ John I. Rempel, *Building with Wood and Other Aspects of Nineteenth Century Building in Central Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 79, 86; York Pioneer and Historical Society, *Scadding Cabin* (Toronto, Ontario: York Pioneer and Historical Society, n.d.).

⁶⁹ Donald A. Hutslar, *The Log Architecture of Ohio* (Columbus: The Ohio Historical Society, 1972). Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 3–26 (originally published 1965); Fred B. Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States: A Time-Place Perspective," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 159–181; Fred B. Kniffen and Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986); Fred B. Kniffen, "On Corner-Timbering," *Pioneer America* 1, no. 1 (January 1969): 1–8; Clinton A. Weslager, *The Log Cabin in America from Pioneer Days to the Present*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969.

⁷⁰ David Burley, Gayel A. Horsfall, and John D. Brandon, *Structural Considerations of Métis Ethnicity: An Archaeological, Architectural, and Historical Study* (Vermillion, SD: University of South Dakota Press, 1992).

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additions. In construction technology, scale, form, and design, these buildings are strikingly similar to the Molalla Log House.⁷¹

Photographic evidence from trading posts and Métis settlements in the Lac la Loche, Lac la Biche, and Île-à-la-Crosse regions demonstrates the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-log construction with dovetail and related corner joinery. These communities occupied important fur trade landscapes that connected the Great Lakes with the interior districts of western Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Although most surviving examples postdate the Molalla Log House, their comparative value lies in documenting the persistence, geographic distribution, and intergenerational transmission of a construction technology closely comparable to that represented by the Molalla Log House.

Peace River Fur Trade Structures, Settlements, and Community Buildings

Among the most informative comparative examples for understanding the construction traditions represented by the Molalla Log House are those associated with the Peace River fur trade corridor of present-day northern Alberta and northeastern British Columbia. Archaeological investigations, documentary records, historic photographs, and extant buildings collectively document a tradition characterized by four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, tightly fitted wall logs, and dovetail and half-dovetail corner joinery. Although many of the examples discussed below postdate the Molalla Log House, they remain relevant under Criterion D because they preserve evidence of building traditions whose origins can be traced to the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fur trade.

Some of the earliest fur trade posts in western Canada were established along the Peace River and its tributaries, including Fort Chipewyan (1788), Fort Vermilion (1788), Fort St. John (1794), and Fort Dunvegan (1805). Together these posts formed part of an interconnected network through which people, goods, technologies, and construction practices circulated across western Canada. Archaeological investigations at Fort Chipewyan and Fort Dunvegan have documented substantial hewn-log construction, while fur trade archaeologist Heinz W. Pyszczek identified dovetail notching as one of the most prevalent corner-joining methods at both sites.⁷² Although no buildings survive from the earliest occupations of these posts, archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that construction methods comparable to those documented at the Molalla Log House were present within the Peace River fur trade system during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Archival photographs from Fort St. John, originally established in 1794, document substantial four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log buildings exhibiting construction methods comparable to those documented elsewhere in the Peace River region.⁷³ Although none of these structures survive, the photographs provide additional evidence for the widespread use of this construction technology within the fur trade landscape.

The strongest surviving evidence for this tradition is found at Fort Dunvegan and Fort Vermilion. By the late nineteenth century, both settlements had evolved beyond their original functions as trading posts and had become centres of agriculture, missionary activity, transportation, and regional commerce serving communities composed of retired fur traders, Métis families, Indigenous peoples, and other residents whose lives remained

⁷¹ Edward J. McCullough and Michael Maccagno, *Lac La Biche and the Early Fur Traders*, Occasional Publication No. 29 (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, Alberta Vocational College, and Lac La Biche Archaeological Society of Alberta, 1991).

⁷² Heinz W. Pyszczek, "The Architecture of the Western Canadian Fur Trade: A Cultural-Historical Perspective," *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 17, no. 2 (1992): 32–41. Heinz W. Pyszczek, *The Last Fort Standing: Fort Vermilion and the Peace River Fur Trade, 1798–1830* (Calgary: Archaeological Society of Alberta, 2015).

⁷³ Fort St. John, Peace River, photograph taken in 1906. Source: British Columbia Archives.

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closely tied to the fur trade economy. Although the earliest buildings no longer survive, extant structures preserve evidence of building practices established during the fur trade era.

At Fort Dunvegan, the Chief Factor's House (1877–1878) exhibits several characteristics comparable to the Molalla Log House, including four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, half-dovetail corner joinery, tightly fitted wall logs with little reliance on chinking or daubing, and a balanced façade with symmetrical fenestration. Equally significant are St. Charles Mission Church and Rectory (1885–1889), which retain four-sided hewn-horizontal log walls joined by half-dovetail corner notching and exhibit the same tightly fitted construction that minimizes the need for chinking and daubing.⁷⁴ Their excellent state of preservation allows direct examination of workmanship, timber preparation, joinery, and building techniques comparable to those preserved in the Molalla Log House.

The Réveillon Frères Trading Store (1908), located in the Dunvegan area, further illustrates the long-term persistence of this construction tradition into the twentieth century. Photographic evidence presented in Appendix B indicates that the building exhibits four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, dovetail corner joinery, tightly fitted log courses, a symmetrical façade, and a rectangular form closely comparable to those documented in the Molalla Log House.

At Fort Vermilion, photographic and architectural evidence documents the continued use of the same construction tradition within mission, educational, domestic, and community settings. Notable examples include the Bishop's Court House (1876), St. Louis Church and Priest's House (1906), St. Henry's Roman Catholic Mission School (ca. 1900), and numerous residential buildings constructed by Métis builders in the surrounding agricultural settlements.⁷⁵ Collectively, these buildings exhibit four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, tightly fitted wall logs, and dovetail or half-dovetail corner joinery with little reliance on chinking and daubing. Although substantially later in date than the Molalla Log House, they demonstrate the continuity of construction methods established during the fur trade era and their continued application within Métis, missionary, educational, and settlement communities of the Peace River region.

Viewed collectively, archaeological evidence from the earliest posts, archival photographs of later Hudson's Bay Company buildings, and surviving mission, domestic, commercial, and community structures reveal a construction tradition that persisted across more than a century of western Canadian fur trade history. Particularly significant is the repeated appearance of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction combined with dovetail and half-dovetail corner joinery, the same diagnostic characteristics documented at the Molalla Log House. While evidence of the earliest phases of this tradition often survives only through archaeological remains, documentary records, or historic photographs, the Molalla Log House retains substantial late eighteenth-century material fabric that can be directly examined through archaeological and architectural investigation. Tool marks, timber preparation, joinery, construction sequencing, framing systems, and alteration evidence preserved within the structure provide a rare opportunity to study the technological knowledge and building practices associated with the earliest phases of fur trade expansion in the Pacific Northwest. Viewed within this broader continuum, the Molalla Log House assumes increased significance under Criterion D because it preserves an unusually early and tangible record of a construction tradition whose earliest physical manifestations rarely survive for direct study.

⁷⁴ Parks Canada, Canada's Historic Places, "Historic Dunvegan,"; Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, Historic Resources Management Branch (File: Des. 698)

⁷⁵ Mackenziefrontier.com website, Historical-Guide.pdf, 2018.

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New Caledonia (British Columbia) Fur Trade Settlements and Community Buildings

The New Caledonia fur trade district of present-day central British Columbia provides another important body of comparative evidence for understanding the construction traditions represented by the Molalla Log House. Like the Peace River region, New Caledonia preserves evidence of a building tradition that originated during the early years of North West Company expansion and continued through successive generations of Hudson's Bay Company occupation, missionary activity, and community development. Although few structures survive from the earliest decades of occupation, archaeological investigations, historic photographs, documentary records, reconstructions, and extant buildings document the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, tightly fitted wall logs, and dovetail and half-dovetail corner joinery throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The North West Company began formal exploration and post construction in New Caledonia during the first decade of the nineteenth century following the 1793 transcontinental journey of Alexander Mackenzie and Alexander McKay. Under the leadership of Simon Fraser, a series of posts was established west of the Rocky Mountains, including Fort McLeod (1805), Fort St. James (1806), and Fort Fraser (1806–1807).⁷⁶ These posts formed part of an interconnected transportation and trading network linking the interior of British Columbia to the broader western fur trade system. The continuity of personnel and building practices following the 1821 Hudson's Bay Company–North West Company merger contributed to the persistence of established construction traditions throughout the region.

Fort McLeod, founded by Simon Fraser in 1805, provides evidence of the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction within the New Caledonia district despite the absence of surviving original structures. A photograph taken in 1929 of the now non-extant fur trade post depicts a small rectangular building constructed of four-sided hewn logs with corner notching and a gable roof.⁷⁷ Although constructed later, in the nineteenth century, the building is worthy of comparison because of its similar form, scale, and construction technology and because it demonstrates the persistence of a construction tradition established during the earliest phases of fur trade occupation in the region.

Fort Fraser provides one of the strongest comparative examples within the New Caledonia district because of its close correspondence to the Molalla Log House in both architectural form and construction technology.⁷⁸ Although the original post was established in 1806, the extant building dates to the 1880s and was relocated to its present site on the Fraser River in the early 1960s. During relocation, the structure was dismantled and reconstructed using many of the original logs and portions of the original stone foundation. Constructed of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal logs with dovetail corner joinery, the building exhibits a rectangular plan, one-and-one-half-story massing, gable roof, tightly fitted wall logs, and a symmetrical façade. Particularly significant is the use of second-floor joists housed within concealed wall pockets rather than projecting through the exterior walls, a construction feature comparable to the blind joist pockets documented in the Molalla Log House and

⁷⁶ Simon Fraser, *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806–1808*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1960; repr., Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007); Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793–1843* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997); Kenneth Favrholt, *The Cordilleran Communication: The Brigade System of the Far Western Fur Trade* (M.A. thesis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, 1971); Barry Gough, *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1759–1809* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); Adrien Gabriel Morice, *The History of the Northwestern Interior of British Columbia, Formerly New Caledonia, 1660–1880* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905); Northern BC Archives & Special Collections, Geoffrey R. Weller Library, University of Northern British Columbia, *Kent Sedgwick Fonds*, 2012.13, Prince George, British Columbia.

⁷⁷ Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858*, 3 vols. (Kelowna, BC: Centre for Social, Spatial, and Economic Justice, University of British Columbia Okanagan, 2010).

⁷⁸ Northern BC Archives & Special Collections, Geoffrey R. Weller Library, University of Northern British Columbia, *Kent Sedgwick Fonds*, 2012.13, Prince George, British Columbia; David T. Fortin, Jason Surkan, and Terence Radford, *Métis Nation British Columbia Architectural Design Guidelines* (Métis Nation British Columbia, 2023).

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one that contributes to the formal appearance of both buildings. The building shares numerous diagnostic characteristics with the Molalla Log House and provides compelling evidence for the continuity and transmission of fur-trade construction technology from the early nineteenth century into later generations of building. Its documented history of dismantling, relocation, and reconstruction further enhances its comparative value and provides an additional parallel for evaluating the Molalla Log House under Criteria Considerations B and E.

Fort St. James, established on Stuart Lake in 1806, represents one of the most significant surviving Hudson's Bay Company sites in British Columbia. Rebuilt extensively during 1887–1888 as the post evolved beyond its original fur trade functions, the fort contains both Red River frame and mass-horizontal log construction traditions. While the larger buildings are generally associated with the Red River frame system, smaller buildings within the complex, including the Men's House (1884) and Trading Store (1888–1889), were constructed using four-sided hewn mass-horizontal logs secured with half-dovetail corner joinery. In these buildings, individual logs span the full length or width of the walls without interruption by vertical posts. Both structures exhibit characteristics comparable to the Molalla Log House, including rectangular plans, tightly fitted four-sided hewn log walls, half-dovetail corner joinery, gable roofs, and symmetrical façades. Fort St. James is particularly valuable because it demonstrates the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction while also illustrating the coexistence of mass-horizontal and Red River construction systems within a major fur trade complex.

A further comparative example is provided by the non-extant Fort Victoria Jail (ca. 1840s), formerly located within the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Victoria, established in 1843 as the company's principal Pacific Coast headquarters in British-controlled territory. Although neither the jail nor the original fort buildings survive, historic photographs document a rectangular one-and-one-half-story structure constructed of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal logs with corner notching, a gable roof, and a centrally placed doorway. These characteristics are comparable to the Molalla Log House in overall form, construction technology, and façade arrangement. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site archaeologist Douglas C. Wilson also observed similarities between the Molalla Log House and the Fort Victoria Jail. Although the structure postdates the estimated construction of the Molalla Log House, it provides additional evidence for the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction within Hudson's Bay Company contexts on the Pacific Coast.

Viewed collectively, the New Caledonia examples demonstrate the continued use of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, tightly fitted wall systems, and dovetail or half-dovetail corner joinery across a wide range of fur trade, commercial, and institutional settings. Although most surviving structures postdate the Molalla Log House, they document the persistence and regional transmission of a construction technology closely comparable to that represented by the Molalla Log House and provide important comparative evidence for interpreting its construction traditions under Criterion D.

Lower Columbia River and Willamette Valley Fur Trade Landscapes

The scarcity of surviving early fur trade buildings in the Oregon Country further underscores the significance of the Molalla Log House. Some of the earliest structures associated with the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains were established by David Thompson and other North West Company personnel during the first decade of the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ Historic drawings suggest that some of Thompson's buildings employed Red River construction methods, although little physical evidence survives to permit detailed architectural comparison. Similarly, the buildings erected at Fort Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company beginning in 1811 were constructed of four-sided hewn timbers, although no structures remain extant and little documentation survives regarding their precise construction methods or corner joinery. A contemporary site plan of Fort Astoria depicts a small log building measuring approximately 18 by 24 feet, dimensions closely comparable to those of the

⁷⁹ Elliott Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799–1814*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897).

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Molalla Log House. While the surviving evidence is insufficient to permit detailed architectural comparison, the similarity in both scale and the use of four-sided hewn-log construction suggests that buildings of comparable size and construction formed part of the architectural landscape associated with early fur-trade activity in the Pacific Northwest.⁸⁰

Within the Willamette Valley, the earliest documented fur trade establishments include the Wallace House (1812) and the Willamette Post (1813–1814). Both are now lost, and no known structures associated with the early activities of the Pacific Fur Company, North West Company, or Hudson's Bay Company survive from this formative period of regional exploration, trade, and settlement.⁸¹ Consequently, opportunities to directly examine the construction technology, workmanship, and building traditions associated with the earliest phases of fur trade occupation in the valley are extremely limited.

Fort Vancouver, established in 1825 as the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company's Columbia Department, became the principal centre from which people, materials, and construction knowledge circulated throughout the Pacific Northwest. Archaeological investigations at Fort Vancouver and Kanaka Village have documented the use of Red River construction within portions of the settlement. Contemporary drawings and paintings dating from the 1840s and 1850s, however, also depict small outlying dwellings constructed of horizontally laid logs without visible vertical posts.⁸² These buildings exhibit corner-notched log walls, rectangular plans, gable roofs, symmetrical façades, and, in some instances, gable-end shed additions. Although the drawings do not provide sufficient detail to evaluate workmanship or corner joinery, they suggest that mass-horizontal log construction remained in use among the diverse populations associated with the Columbia Department.

Further evidence is provided by the Covington House, constructed in ca. 1848 east of Fort Vancouver.⁸³ Built as a residence and later used as a school, the building exhibits four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction with half-dovetail corner joinery and no vertical posts. Although later than the Molalla Log House, it closely resembles the Molalla Log House in form, massing, and construction technology and provides one of the few surviving regional examples of this building tradition.

Additional evidence comes from the French Prairie settlements of the central Willamette Valley, one of the most important fur trade settlement landscapes in the Oregon Country. Among the most significant regional comparisons is the non-extant Joseph Gervais House, constructed during the 1830s by retired Hudson's Bay Company employee Joseph Gervais. According to an oral history recorded in 1900, the house measured approximately 18 by 24 feet, dimensions nearly identical to the Molalla Log House. It was a rectangular two-level building constructed of square-hewn logs with a solid floor system, pole rafters, and a symmetrical arrangement on the principal façade.⁸⁴ Although details of corner joinery and log fitting were not recorded, the documented dimensions, form, roof system, and overall appearance indicate a building closely comparable to the Molalla Log House. Constructed within the first half of the nineteenth century and located within the same broader geographic and cultural landscape, the Joseph Gervais House provides an important comparison in terms of age, location, fur trade association, and documented physical characteristics.

⁸⁰ Robert F. Jones, ed., *Annals of Astoria: The Headquarters Log of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia River, 1811–1813* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

⁸¹ J. Neilson Barry, "Site of Wallace House, 1812–1814," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 42 (September 1941): 205–207.

⁸² John A. Hussey, *The History of Fort Vancouver and Its Physical Structure* (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society; National Park Service, 1957); John A. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures Report: Historical Data*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1972); John A. Hussey, *Historic Structure Report: Historical Data*, vol. 2, *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* (Washington, DC: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1976).

⁸³ National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Inventory — Nomination Form: Covington House, Clark County, Washington, by Robert A. Hidden, Fort Vancouver Historical Society, November 10, 1971 (NPS Ref. #72001268).

⁸⁴ Lyman, H. S. "Reminiscences of Louis LaBonte." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 1 (June 1900): 173

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Taken together, the evidence from Kanaka Village, the Covington House, and the Joseph Gervais House indicates that mass-horizontal log construction continued to be employed within the Lower Columbia and Willamette Valley fur trade landscape throughout the nineteenth century. These examples provide important regional context for interpreting the Molalla Log House and the persistence of fur trade construction traditions in the Pacific Northwest.

Prince's Cabin, Fort Nez Percés, and Métis Communities of the Columbia Plateau

One of the most significant comparative examples for the Molalla Log House is Prince's Cabin, constructed ca. 1837–1841 by Hudson's Bay Company Chief Trader Pierre Pambrun of Fort Nez Percés as a gift for the son of a Cayuse chief near present-day Walla Walla, Washington. Although not a company building, it was erected by an individual directly involved in fur trade operations and reflects construction technologies associated with the Columbia District. The building is particularly important because it combines a direct fur trade association, an Indigenous community setting, and construction methods closely comparable to those documented in the Molalla Log House.

Prince's Cabin was constructed of Ponderosa pine, another softwood species comparable to the Douglas-fir used in the Molalla Log House. It exhibits four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, half-dovetail corner joinery, a rectangular single-pen plan, one-and-one-half-story massing, a symmetrical front façade, gable roof, pole-rafter roof system, and stone foundation. It is among the earliest surviving buildings associated with the Columbia District fur trade and one of the strongest regional comparisons in terms of age, form, and construction technology.⁸⁵

Although the structure exhibits a less formal character and appears to have undergone more extensive alteration during its history, it shares many of the same fundamental construction characteristics documented in the Molalla Log House. The Prince's Cabin does not display the same degree of precision in log fitting and lacks the concealed pocket-notched floor framing that represents one of its more distinctive construction features. Originally constructed as a dwelling, it was later adapted for agricultural purposes before being dismantled, relocated, and reconstructed at the Frenchtown Historic Site for preservation and interpretation. These similarities and differences make Prince's Cabin one of the most compelling comparative examples for evaluating the Molalla Log House under Criterion D while also providing useful parallels under Criteria Considerations B and E.

Additional evidence is provided by Métis settlements associated with the Walla Walla region and Cayuse territory. Documentary sources, historic photographs, and interpretive maps depict clusters of small rectangular log dwellings occupied by Métis families, freemen, and Indigenous communities during the nineteenth century. Although construction details are often poorly documented, these settlements indicate the continued use of horizontal log-building traditions within the Columbia Plateau. A late nineteenth-century photograph of a log house associated with Andrew and Alexandre Pambrun at Spring Hollow Creek on the Umatilla Indian Reservation further suggests the persistence of this building tradition within Columbia Plateau fur trade descendant communities. Collectively, Prince's Cabin near Fort Nez Percés, and the associated Métis settlements provide important evidence for the persistence of mass-horizontal log construction within fur trade networks in the Columbia Plateau during the nineteenth century.

⁸⁵ Greg Cleveland and Associates, *The Construction and Survival of the Peterson Cabin: A Walla Walla Valley Legacy of Canadian Métis Craftsmanship*, report submitted in partial fulfillment of BPA Contract No. 45211 (February 2010); Sam Pambrun, *The Prince's Cabin: Discovery, Authentication, Restoration*, unpublished manuscript (Walla Walla, WA, ca. 2015).

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Mission Communities of Western Montana

The mission communities of western Montana were established during the mid-nineteenth century within valleys of the northern Rocky Mountains that had long served as Indigenous homelands and important transportation corridors. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, North West Company traders and explorers, including David Thompson, established trading posts and travel routes throughout the region, integrating these valleys into broader fur-trade networks that linked the Columbia Plateau, northern Rocky Mountains, and interior fur-trade districts. Repeated requests for Catholic clergy by former fur traders, including French Canadians, Iroquois, and their Métis families, who had become integrated within Indigenous communities throughout the region, led to the establishment of St. Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot Valley (1841) and St. Ignatius Mission in the Mission Valley (1851). These mission communities represent a later expression of the same cultural landscapes and community networks that developed through the fur trade and later became part of the reservation homelands of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

The construction of mission buildings relied heavily upon the labor, knowledge, and resources of Indigenous, Métis, French Canadian, and Iroquois communities whose cultural and economic roots lay within the fur trade. At St. Mary's Mission, surviving examples include Chief Victor's Cabin (1861), Father Ravalli's Log Pharmacy (1866), and the log fabric incorporated within St. Mary's Church (1866–1879).⁸⁶ Particularly notable is Father Ravalli's Log Pharmacy, which exhibits tightly fitted wall logs with little reliance on chinking and concealed floor framing comparable to the blind joist pockets documented in the Molalla Log House. These characteristics reflect a high degree of workmanship and demonstrate how construction technologies associated with the fur trade could be adapted to create durable, formal institutional and community buildings through precise timber preparation and joinery. At St. Ignatius Mission, the original mission building constructed in 1851 remains extant.⁸⁷ Collectively, these buildings exhibit four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, dovetail and half-dovetail corner joinery, rectangular plans, and gable-roofed forms comparable to construction characteristics documented in the Molalla Log House.

Summary

Viewed against the scarcity of surviving early fur-trade buildings in the Oregon Country and broader Pacific Northwest, the Molalla Log House assumes particular significance under Criterion D. Few comparable structures survive from the opening decades of the nineteenth century, and those that do are often known only through photographs, drawings, documentary descriptions, archaeological investigations, or later reconstructions. The comparative examples discussed herein and presented more fully in Appendix B demonstrate the widespread distribution and long-term persistence of four-sided hewn mass-horizontal log construction, tightly fitted wall systems, dovetail and half-dovetail corner joinery, and related building traditions throughout military, fur-trade, Indigenous, Métis, mission, and settlement landscapes across western North America.

Although many of these examples postdate the Molalla Log House, they provide important evidence for understanding the transmission and persistence of construction technologies across geographic regions and successive generations. Unlike most comparative examples, however, the Molalla Log House retains substantial historic fabric that can be directly examined and interpreted. Its surviving wall logs, joinery, framing systems, construction sequencing, and alteration history provide a rare opportunity to investigate building practices associated with the earliest phases of fur-trade expansion in the Pacific Northwest.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the Molalla Log House was not an isolated example of log construction but part of a well-established architectural tradition documented across military, fur-trade, Indigenous, Métis, mission, and settlement landscapes throughout North America. The persistence and adaptation of this construction tradition across diverse geographic regions, cultural settings, and successive

⁸⁶ Montana Historical Society, "St. Mary's Mission Historic District," Historic Montana.

⁸⁷ William L. Davis, S.J., *A History of St. Ignatius Mission: An Outpost of Catholic Culture on the Montana Frontier* (Spokane, WA: C. W. Hill Printing Co., 1954).

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generations demonstrate its continued transmission well beyond its earliest fur-trade origins. As one of the earliest surviving examples of this architectural tradition in the Pacific Northwest, the Molalla Log House provides an exceptional opportunity to investigate the introduction, adaptation, and transmission of established North American log-building traditions in the Oregon Country. The building's surviving fabric is capable of addressing broader questions concerning technological knowledge, mobility, cultural interaction, and early settlement during a formative and poorly documented period of regional history.

Information Potential (Criterion D)

Building upon the comparative and contextual framework presented above, the Molalla Log House is capable of yielding important information concerning the introduction, adaptation, and application of established North American log-building traditions in the Oregon Country during the transitional period between long-standing Indigenous occupation and the earliest documented phases of fur-trade activity and Euro-American settlement. Constructed during the sparsely documented period surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century, the building preserves a substantial body of original physical evidence that permits direct investigation of construction technology, workmanship, builder knowledge, and architectural practice. Its research potential is heightened by the limited number of comparable architectural and archaeological resources available for this period in Oregon. As one of the very few surviving sources of physical evidence from this formative era, the Molalla Log House provides a unique opportunity to investigate construction methods, technological traditions, and the transmission of building knowledge that are otherwise only minimally represented in the state's historic record. The surviving evidence supports investigation of the following principal research questions.

Integrity and Research Value

For properties evaluated under Criterion D, integrity is measured primarily by the survival of physical evidence capable of yielding important information. Although approximately fifty percent of the original building fabric was replaced during reconstruction, the Molalla Log House retains substantial original material and workmanship representing all of the building's principal structural systems. Original components include primary wall logs, mudsills, half-dovetail corner joinery, mortised and pocket-notched floor-joist systems, preserved roof-framing evidence in the form of original rafter notches, tool marks, and evidence of construction sequencing. Collectively, these elements embody the diagnostic characteristics that define the building's significance and provide the essential evidence necessary to investigate its chronology, construction methods, workmanship, subsequent alteration, and technological context.

This original fabric provided the basis for dendrochronological analysis establishing an estimated construction date of 1798–1799 and continues to document an established construction tradition evident in military, frontier, and fur-trade settings across northern North America. Standardized dimensions based on the British foot rule, tightly fitted four-sided hewn Douglas-fir wall timbers, precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, integrated framing systems, carefully laid-out openings identified by saw kerfs, construction without iron fasteners, and extensive edged-tool marks collectively demonstrate a carefully planned and systematically executed building tradition while preserving direct evidence of eighteenth-century woodworking technology, construction methods, and craftsmanship.

These characteristics distinguish the Molalla Log House from the later nineteenth-century log construction more commonly associated with Oregon pioneer settlement while providing an uncommon opportunity to examine an earlier construction tradition through surviving material evidence. Because the original fabric can be distinguished from subsequent modifications, the building permits separate analysis of original construction methods, later adaptations, and changing patterns of use over time. This ability to differentiate successive phases of construction enhances the property's research value by allowing investigators to reconstruct the original building campaign and trace its subsequent evolution with an unusual degree of confidence.

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Unlike many historic log buildings that have been substantially altered, concealed, rebuilt, or reduced to archaeological remains, the Molalla Log House retains clearly interpretable evidence of timber preparation, framing relationships, workmanship, and alteration history. These characteristics permit investigation of construction technology, labor organization, material selection, structural design, and patterns of technological transmission that extend well beyond the history of the individual building, making the property an important source of evidence for understanding the adaptation of established North American log-building traditions in the Oregon Country.

Original rafter notches associated with the primary roof framing further demonstrate the retention of integrity of workmanship. These carefully executed notches preserve evidence of the original framing layout, roof design, and construction sequence, allowing the original roof system to be accurately reconstructed from the surviving fabric. Rafter notches associated with the later gable-end shed additions likewise document a subsequent phase of alteration, preserving evidence of how the building evolved to accommodate changing functional requirements during its nineteenth-century occupation. Together, these features permit reconstruction of the building's developmental history while contributing directly to investigations of workmanship, maintenance, and changing patterns of use.

Only limited documentary evidence survives regarding the earliest period of Euro-American activity in the northern Willamette Valley, and no other known standing structures in Oregon date to the turn of the nineteenth century. Likewise, few buildings associated with the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fur trade survive elsewhere within the Columbia River watershed, British Columbia, and western Canada. Many fur-trade structures were lost through fire, flooding, decay, rebuilding, relocation, salvage, or abandonment, while valuable hewn timbers were frequently reused as settlements evolved. As a result, intact examples preserving substantial original construction fabric are exceptionally uncommon.

The Molalla Log House followed a different trajectory. Although the building was apparently never completed according to its original plan, as indicated by the absence of the intended window openings, it remained useful and was adapted to changing needs over time. The addition of shed-roof wings during its nineteenth-century occupation and its later use as a granary indicate continued maintenance and investment by successive occupants. This continued care, together with its relatively remote foothill location and the durability of its construction, likely contributed to the preservation of physical evidence that has been lost at many comparable sites.

As one of the earliest surviving examples of horizontal mass-log construction in Oregon, the Molalla Log House preserves a rare and unusually complete body of physical evidence documenting an established architectural tradition that extended across much of northern North America. Taken as a whole, this surviving evidence continues to provide an important basis for investigating construction technology, builder knowledge, technological transmission, and patterns of exploration and settlement during the poorly documented period surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century.

Principal Research Questions

The following research questions identify the principal lines of inquiry supported by the surviving physical fabric of the Molalla Log House. Together, they illustrate the range of information the property is capable of yielding under Criterion D.

1. Construction Technology, Chronology, and Building Sequence

What does the physical fabric reveal about construction planning, measurement systems, sequencing, workmanship, and chronology? Does the structure represent a single coordinated building episode or multiple phases of construction, alteration, and repair?

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2. Technological Tradition and Builder Knowledge

To what extent does the construction technology reflect a highly organized and systematized building tradition rather than an improvised frontier structure? What does the fabric reveal about the technical knowledge, training, and craftsmanship of the builders?

3. Transmission of Construction Knowledge

How did the construction technologies represented in the Molalla Log House become established in the Willamette Valley by 1798–1799? What does the building reveal about the movement of skilled labor, construction knowledge, and cultural traditions through fur trade, exploration, Indigenous, and Métis networks during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?

4. Intended Function and Use Context

What was the original intended function of the structure? How do its dimensions, wall construction, framing systems, opening patterns, and overall design inform interpretations of domestic, storage, security, commercial, institutional, or other uses?

5. Alteration, Occupation, and Adaptive Reuse

What do alterations, repairs, and later modifications reveal about changing patterns of occupation, maintenance, abandonment, and adaptive reuse from initial construction through later nineteenth century use?

6. Comparative Construction Traditions and Fur Trade Landscapes

What do these comparisons reveal about the transmission, adaptation, and persistence of construction traditions, and how can the Molalla Log House improve our understanding of early fur trade landscapes in Oregon, where comparable architectural evidence is exceptionally limited?

7. Archaeological Potential and Associated Activities

If the original building location can be identified, what archaeological evidence might survive to clarify the structure's function, occupation history, associated activities, and relationship to broader patterns of fur trade movement, settlement, and land use within the Willamette Valley? How might such evidence complement the exceptionally limited architectural and archaeological record for Oregon's earliest Euro-American occupation?

Criterion D Summary

The Molalla Log House meets National Register Criterion D because its surviving physical fabric has yielded and continues to yield important information concerning construction technology, architectural traditions, and the adaptation of established North American log-building practices in the Oregon Country during the poorly documented period surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century. As demonstrated through the historic context, comparative analysis, and integrity assessment presented above, the building preserves a substantial and highly legible body of original material evidence capable of addressing significant questions concerning chronology, construction technology, builder knowledge, function, patterns of occupation, and the transmission of construction traditions across western North America.

Dendrochronological analysis establishing a construction date of 1798–1799 places the Molalla Log House within a formative period of regional history for which documentary evidence is limited and few contemporary buildings survive. The building retains substantial original fabric, including four-sided hewn Douglas-fir wall logs, precisely executed half-dovetail corner joinery, mortised framing systems, original roof-framing evidence,

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tool marks, saw kerfs, and evidence of construction planning and sequencing. Collectively, these diagnostic features document a highly organized and systematic approach to building design and construction, demonstrating careful planning, standardized layout, precise sequencing of assembly, and an understanding of the structural behavior of seasoned timber. They further reveal a sophisticated construction tradition that relied upon locally available Douglas-fir, simple edged tools, precisely fitted timber joinery, and structural connections constructed without metal fasteners. These characteristics permit detailed investigation of construction planning, workmanship, technological traditions, later alteration, adaptive reuse, and the transmission of construction knowledge while allowing original construction to be distinguished from subsequent modifications.

Although the building has been relocated and reconstructed, its significance derives from the information preserved within its surviving original material fabric. The evidence-based reconstruction, derived from that surviving fabric and the physical evidence it preserves, accurately re-establishes the original structural relationships, dimensions, joinery, and construction system, allowing the original building and its subsequent alterations to remain legible and interpretable while satisfying the requirements of Criteria Considerations B and E.

As the only known extant building in Oregon dating to the turn of the nineteenth century and one of the earliest surviving examples of four-sided hewn horizontal mass-log construction in the Pacific Northwest, the Molalla Log House preserves an exceptional body of physical evidence documenting a construction tradition documented across military, frontier, and fur-trade landscapes throughout northern North America. Its research value extends beyond the history of the individual structure by contributing to a broader understanding of systematic construction planning, builder knowledge, timber conversion, technological transmission, adaptation to locally available materials, construction without metal fasteners, and the establishment of early Euro-American building traditions and occupation in the Oregon Country. Accordingly, the Molalla Log House possesses exceptional information potential because it preserves an exceptional body of physical evidence documenting a highly organized log-building tradition founded upon systematic planning, precise workmanship, an understanding of the structural behavior of wood, the use of locally available materials, and construction without metal fasteners. These characteristics provide an unparalleled opportunity to investigate early construction technology, technological traditions, builder knowledge, patterns of occupation, and the development of early Euro-American settlement in the Oregon Country. The Molalla Log House therefore meets the requirements of National Register Criterion D.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Molalla Log House

Name of Property

Clackamas, OR

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.0 acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 45.247009 -122.525188

Latitude

Longitude

3

Latitude

Longitude

2

Latitude

Longitude

4

Latitude

Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property consists of approximately one acre within the 140-acre Hopkins Demonstration Forest, a privately owned nonprofit property managed by Forests Forever, Inc. The one-acre nominated area contains the Molalla Log House and encompasses its immediate setting within an open forest clearing.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the area immediately surrounding the structure that is necessary to convey its historic character, setting, and environmental context. This open clearing and its relationship to nearby wetlands reflect the type of landscape in which such structures were historically situated and allow for interpretation of the resource. The boundary also includes native vegetation that contributes to the property's historic setting. The boundary excludes the surrounding forested acreage of the Hopkins Demonstration Forest because these areas are not directly associated with the historic function or significance of the property. Limiting the boundary to approximately one acre ensures that only those features necessary to convey the property's integrity of location (as reconstructed), setting, feeling, and association are included.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pamela Hayden, Primary Preparer; Greg Olson (Section 7) date 7/29/2026

organization Hopkins Demonstration Forest, Forests Forever Inc. telephone 503-539-6573

street & number 16750 S Brockaway Road email pamelahayden@gmail.com

city or town Oregon City state OR zip code 97045

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Molalla Log House
Name of Property

Clackamas, OR
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	<u>Molalla Log House</u>		
City or Vicinity:	<u>Oregon City (vic.)</u>		
County:	<u>Clackamas</u>	State:	<u>OR</u>
Photographer:	<u>Pamela Hayden</u>		
Date Photographed:	<u>March 19, 2026, unless otherwise noted</u>		

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photograph 1 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0001
Setting within Hopkins Demonstration Forest, showing forest clearing and trails, near ponds. View to the north.
- Photograph 2 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0002
Primary (south) elevation. View to the north.
- Photograph 3 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0003
North elevation showing 1892 reassembly modifications. View to the south.
- Photograph 4 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0004
East elevation. View to the west.
- Photograph 5 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0005
West elevation. View to the east.
- Photograph 6 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0006
Oblique view. Photographed by Pamela Hayden, 2025.
- Photograph 7 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0007
Oblique view of northeast corner showing shed roof addition. View to the southwest.
- Photograph 8 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0008
Northeast corner detail showing half-dovetail notching and axe marks. Photographed by Pamela Hayden, 2025.
- Photograph 9 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0009
North elevation showing kerf marks indicating planned openings. Photographed by Gregg Olson, 2008.
- Photograph 10 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0010
Interior, first floor, northeast corner.
- Photograph 11 of 15.** OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0011
Interior, first floor, north elevation.

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Photograph 12 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0012
Interior, first floor, southeast corner.

Photograph 13 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0013
Interior loft, east elevation.

Photograph 14 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0014
Interior loft knee wall, north elevation.

Photograph 15 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0015
Interior loft roof structure showing rafters and reinforcement.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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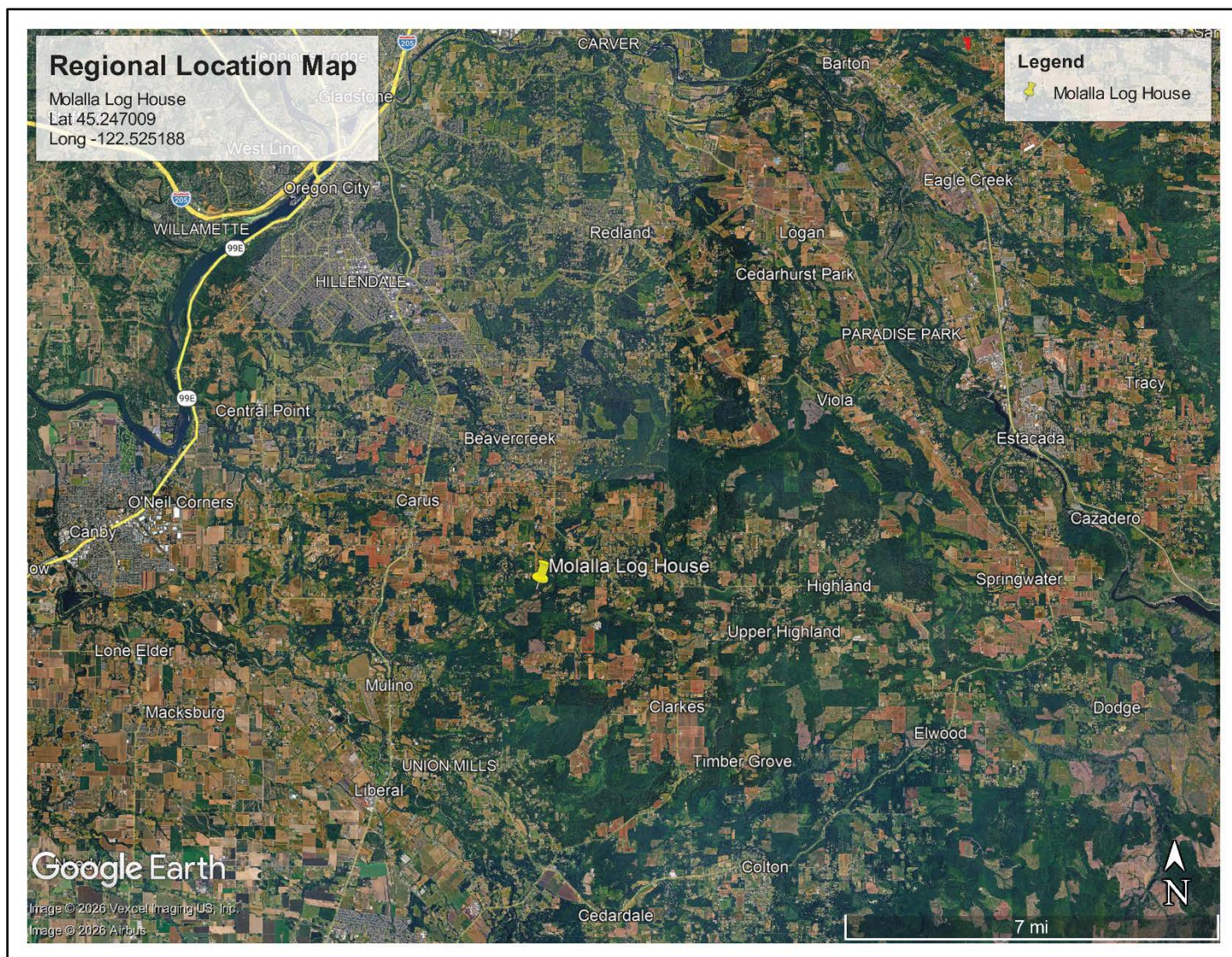
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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

Figure 1: Regional Location Map, showing Molalla Log House and vicinity. Source: Google Earth



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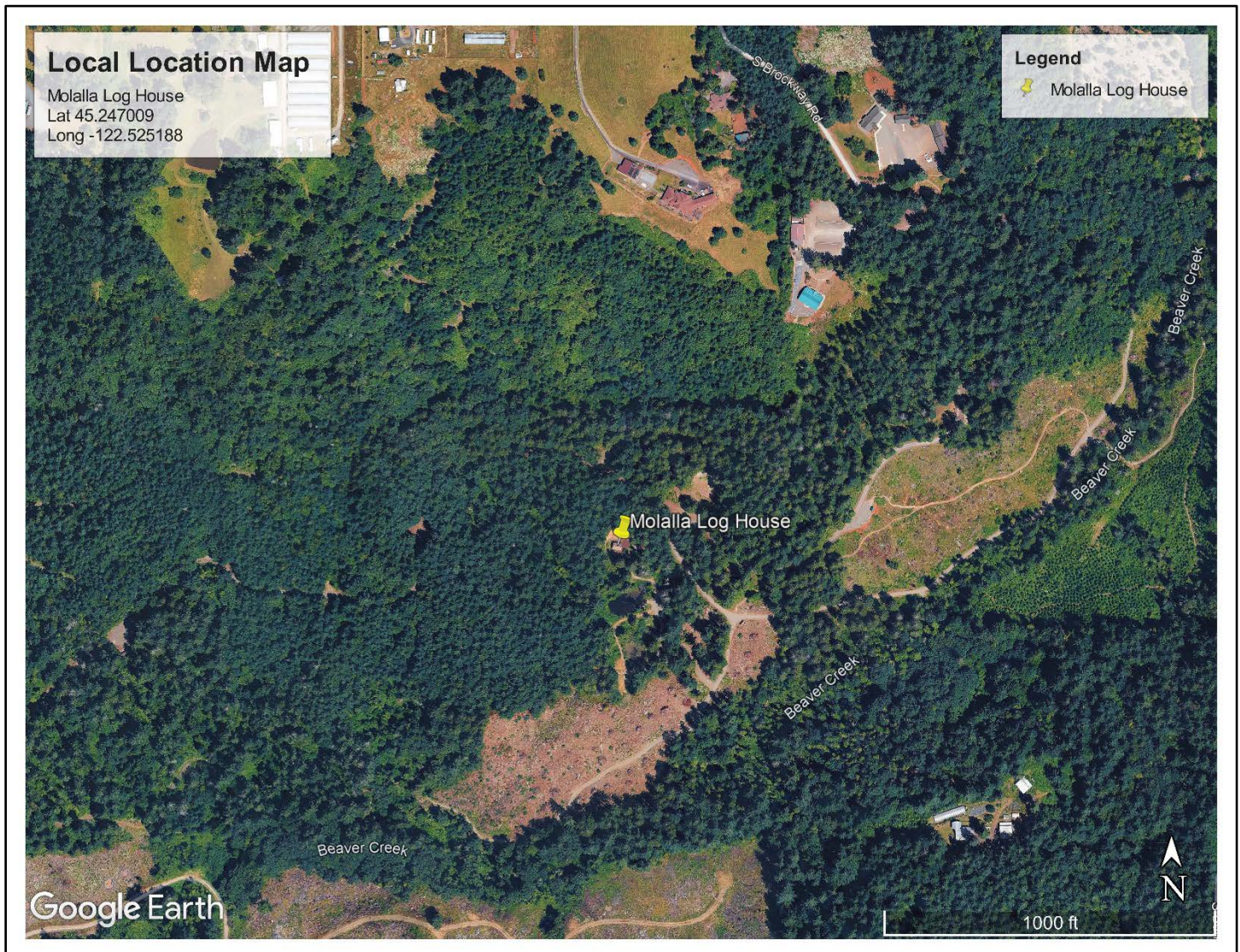
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Figure 2: Local Location Map showing the Molalla Log House within the Hopkins Demonstration Forest.
Source: Google Earth



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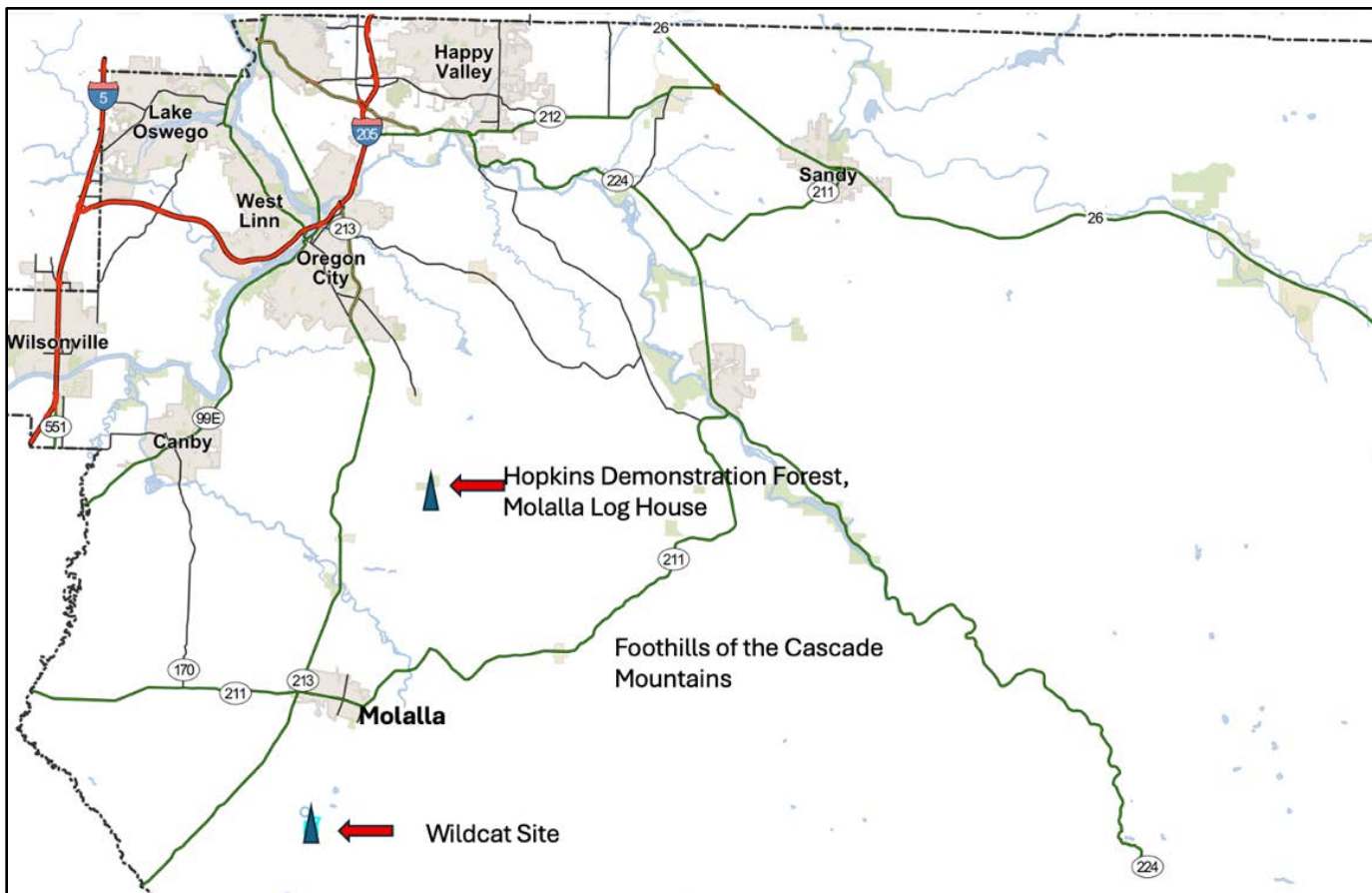
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Figure 3: Molalla Log House Location Map: Clackamas County Oregon

Locations of the Molalla Log House: Vicinity of original site (1799-1892), Wildcat Site (1892–2008), and Hopkins Demonstration Forest (2019–Present). Hopkins Demonstration Forest, Clackamas County, Oregon is 10 miles south of Oregon City. The Molalla Log House was moved there in 2019-2020. The Wildcat Site, location of MLH from 1892 – 2008, is 10 miles south of Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Original location of the Molalla Log House is believed to be approximately 1.5 miles north of the Wildcat Site.



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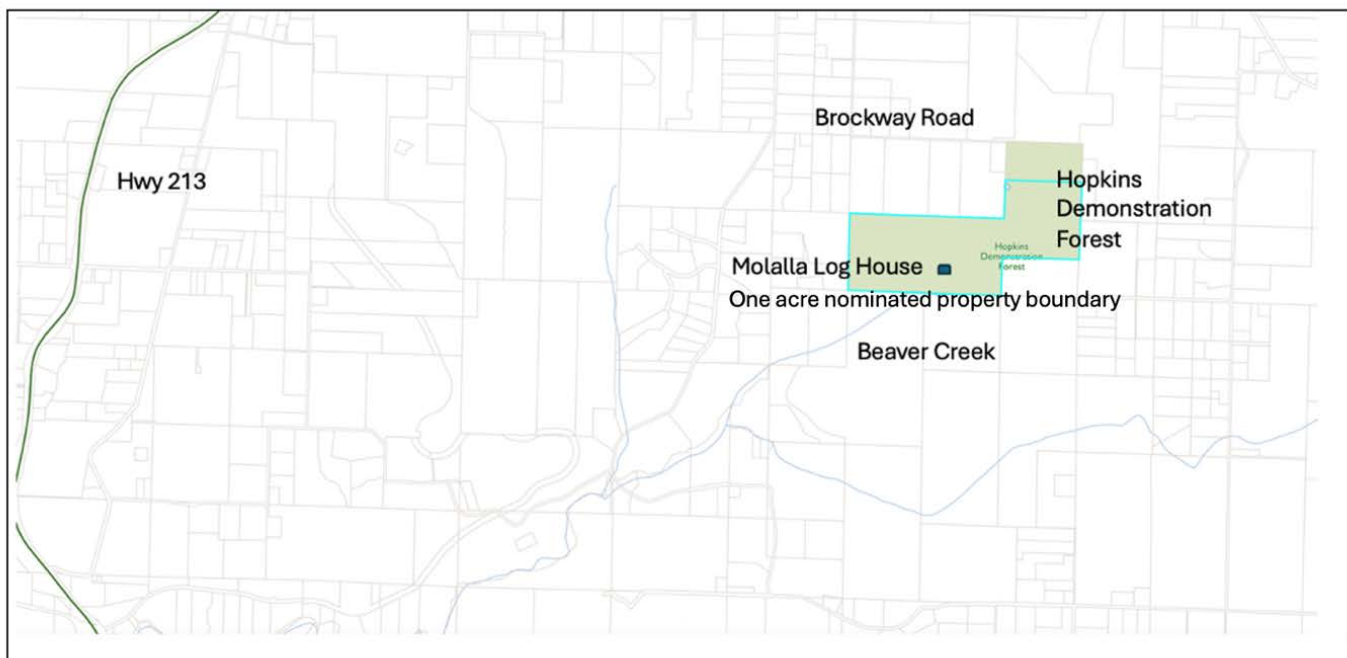
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Figure 4: Tax Lot Map

The Molalla Log House is situated within a one-acre nominated area located within the 140-acre Hopkins Demonstration Forest. T4S, R2E Section 02, Tax lot 01700; 16750 S Brockway Road, Oregon City, OR 97045.



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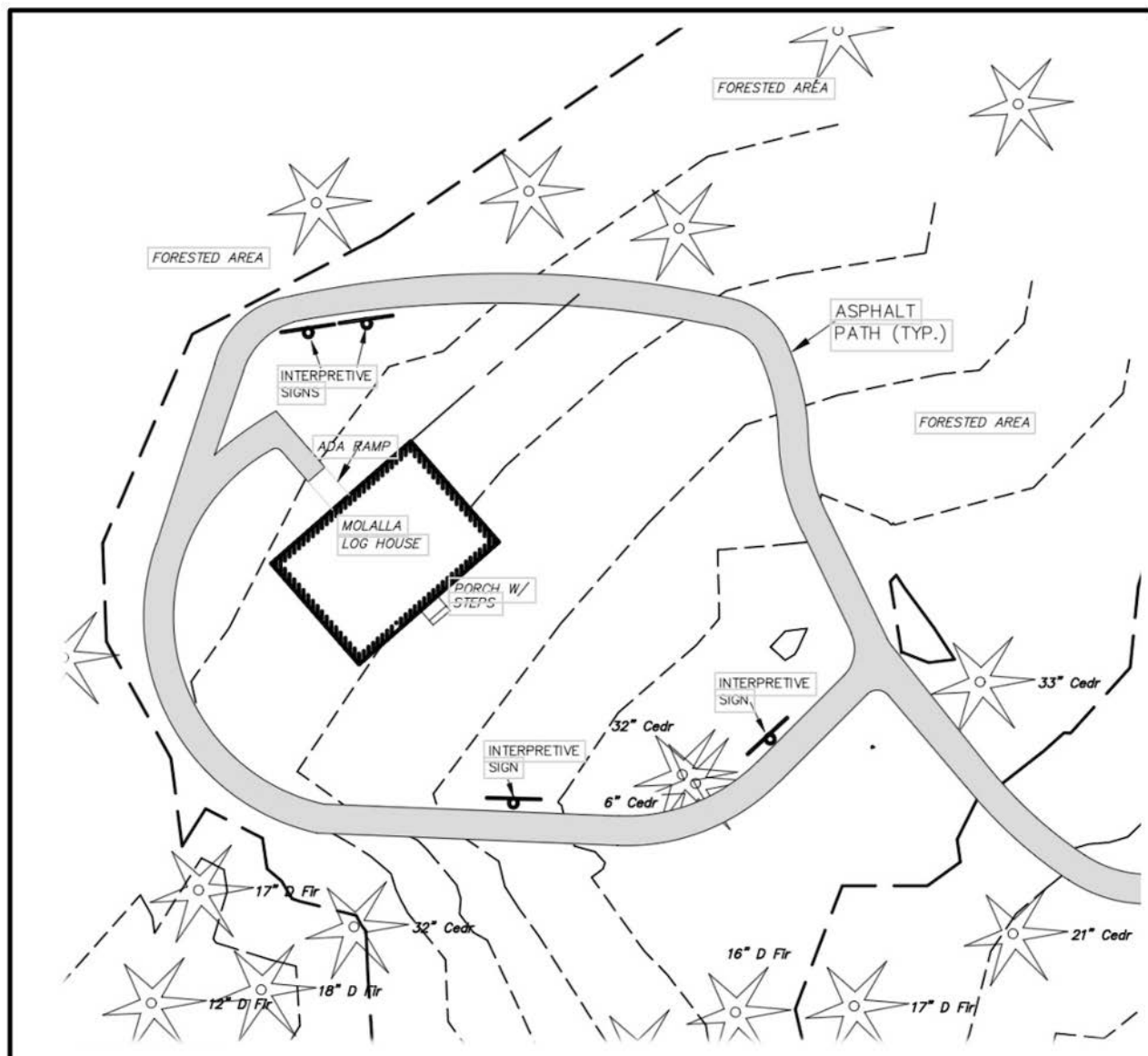
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Figure 5: Site Plan of the Molalla Log House

Approximate one-acre nominated site surrounding the Molalla Log House. Features include open grounds surrounding the building, landscaped with native vegetation beneath a canopy of Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar. An ADA-accessible crushed-rock trail leads from the parking area to the house. Four interpretive signs are located along the trail. Additional hiking trails (not shown) extend westward and northward into Hopkins Demonstration Forest.



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Figure 6. Location Within Hopkins Demonstration Forest

Site of the Molalla Log House within the 140-acre Hopkins Demonstration Forest, shown northwest of the parking area and wetland ponds.



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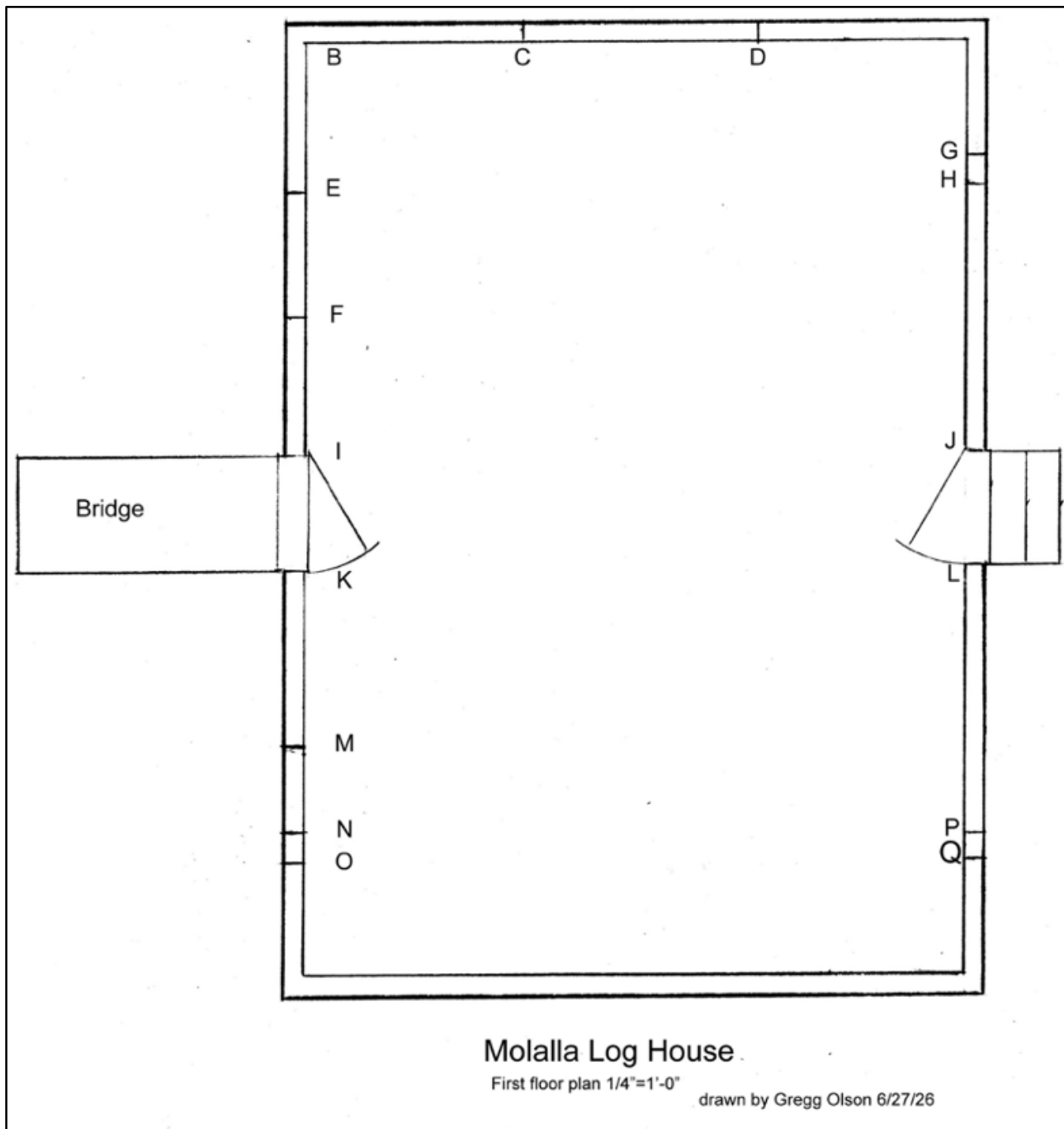
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Figure 7. Molalla Log House First Floor Plan



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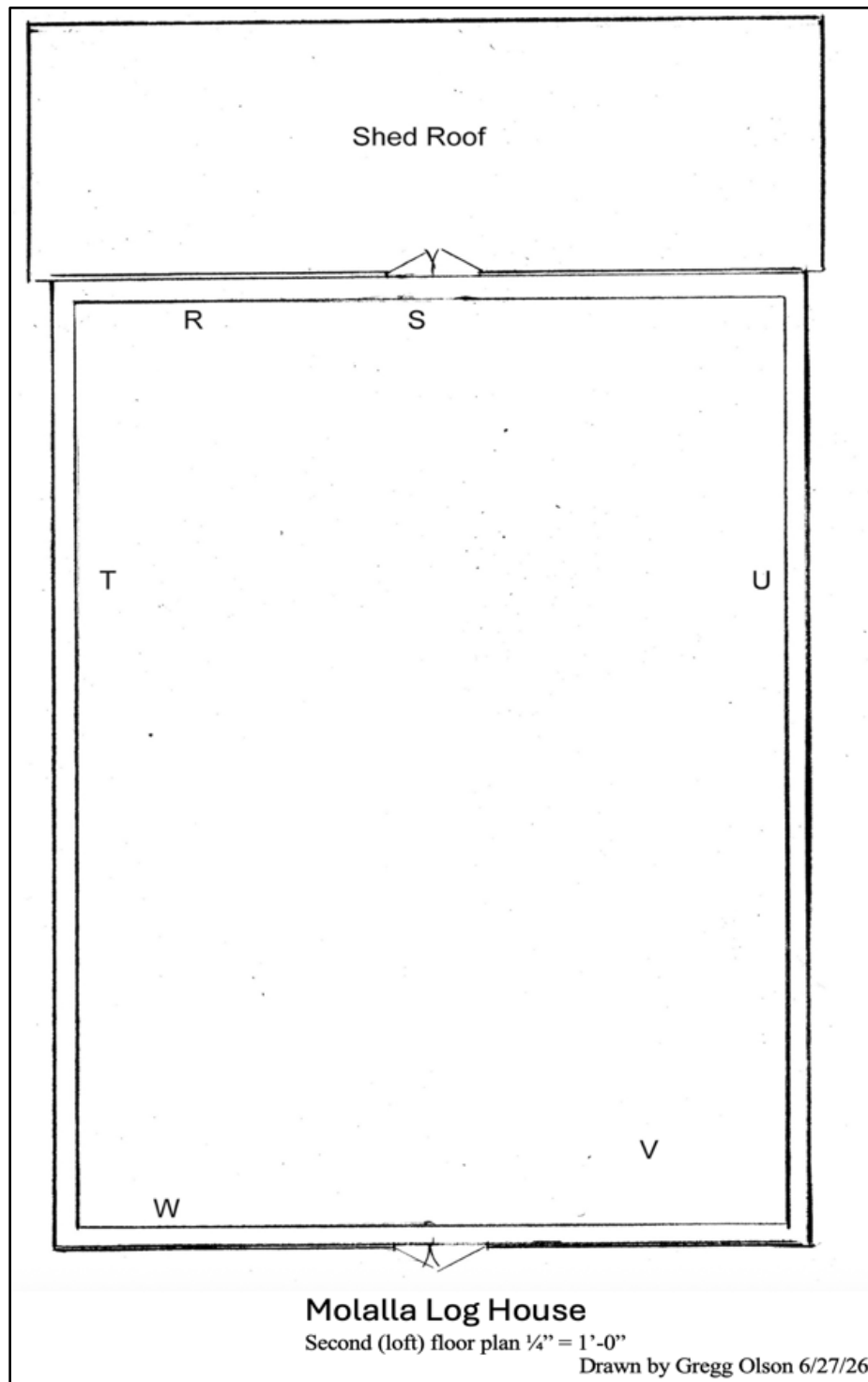
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Figure 8: Molalla Log House Second Floor (Loft) Plan



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Figure 9: Molalla Log House Floor Plan Key - Letters A-W align with floor plan drawing labels.

First Floor

- A** Shed Columns eight-foot spacing.
- B** Walls of the building are 6" thick and the width is 18'-0" and the length is 25'- 0".
- C-D** C to D is a 1940's chainsaw cut for a window never completed.
- E** E and F are partial cuts made when the log was freshly cut. This would allow a regular saw to fit after the stacking was completed to saw out an aperture. If for a window it was a classical size before the Gothic Revival.
- F** See E.
- G** G, Q and possibly O are similar to E and F which may indicate an original desire for four windows.
- H** H and P are cuts made in 1892 when logs surrounding whatever windows and door openings were abandoned for a new stud wall with thin 6' wide boards inside covered with tar paper.
- I** I and K are cuts for a new door opening needed when the front became the back in 1892. This elevation and the roof are restored to 1892.
- J** J and L are an original door opening. The location proof is the survival of the bottom logs of this elevation found between K and N.
- K** See I.
- L** See J.
- M** M to N is the location for one small later window closed in 1892.
- N** See M.
- O** See G.
- P** See H.
- Q** See G

Second Floor

- R** R and W are the top original logs where angled notches are evidence of steep sheds installed after small machine-made square nails were available C.1843.
- S** No evidence for original gable enclosure was found leaving the possibility of lashing. The same is true of the roof.
- T** This original top log has notches for each original rafter and a notch beside to release it made in 1892.
- U** The top log was remade with single tight notches for each rafter pole.
- V** The end second floor joist was cut out prior to restoration work leaving the end tenons in the wall log. This is likely the space for a stair and any heat source. It is also the location of the single trapped dovetail piece which would have supported something.
- W** See R.

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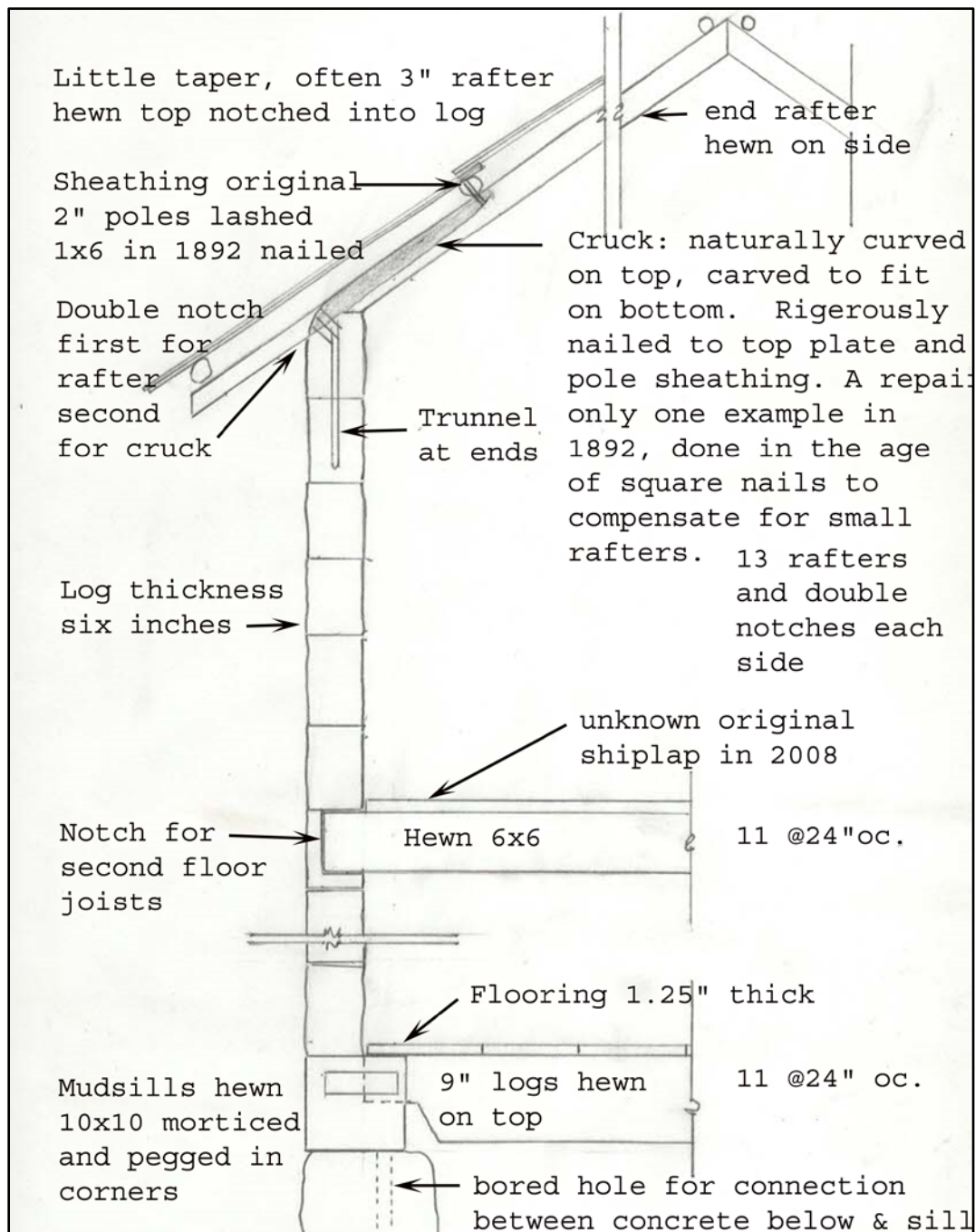
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Figure 10: Structural Section Showing Roof, Wall, and Floor Framing Details

Section drawing showing the roof framing, wall construction, floor framing, and principal joinery details. Drawn by Gregg Olson, 2019.



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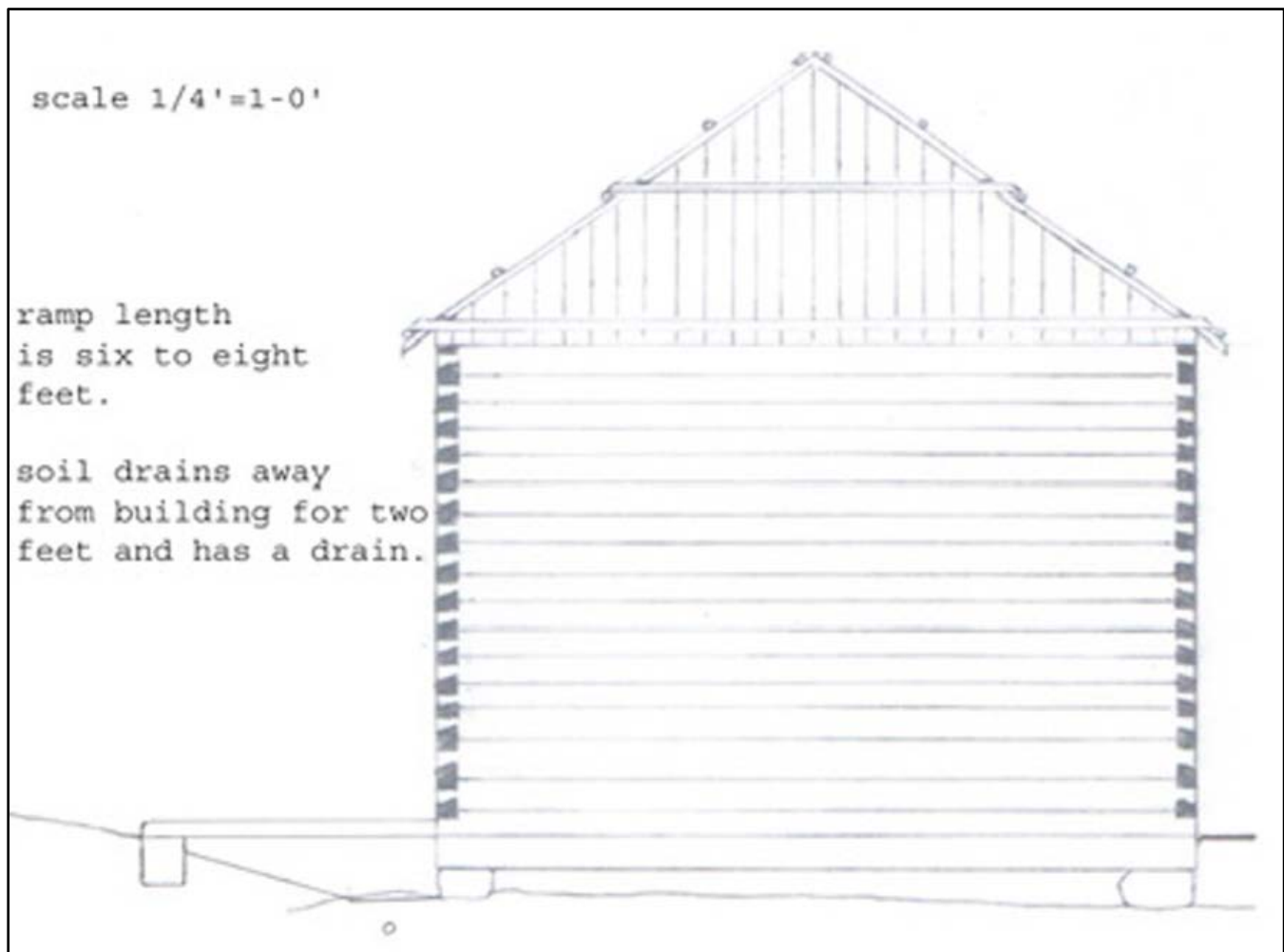
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Figure 11: West Gable Elevation Showing Site Grading and Drainage

Drawing showing the accessible ramp, including the ramp framing, grating surface, threshold treatment, and attachment methods at the 1892 north doorway. Drawn by Gregg Olson, 2019.



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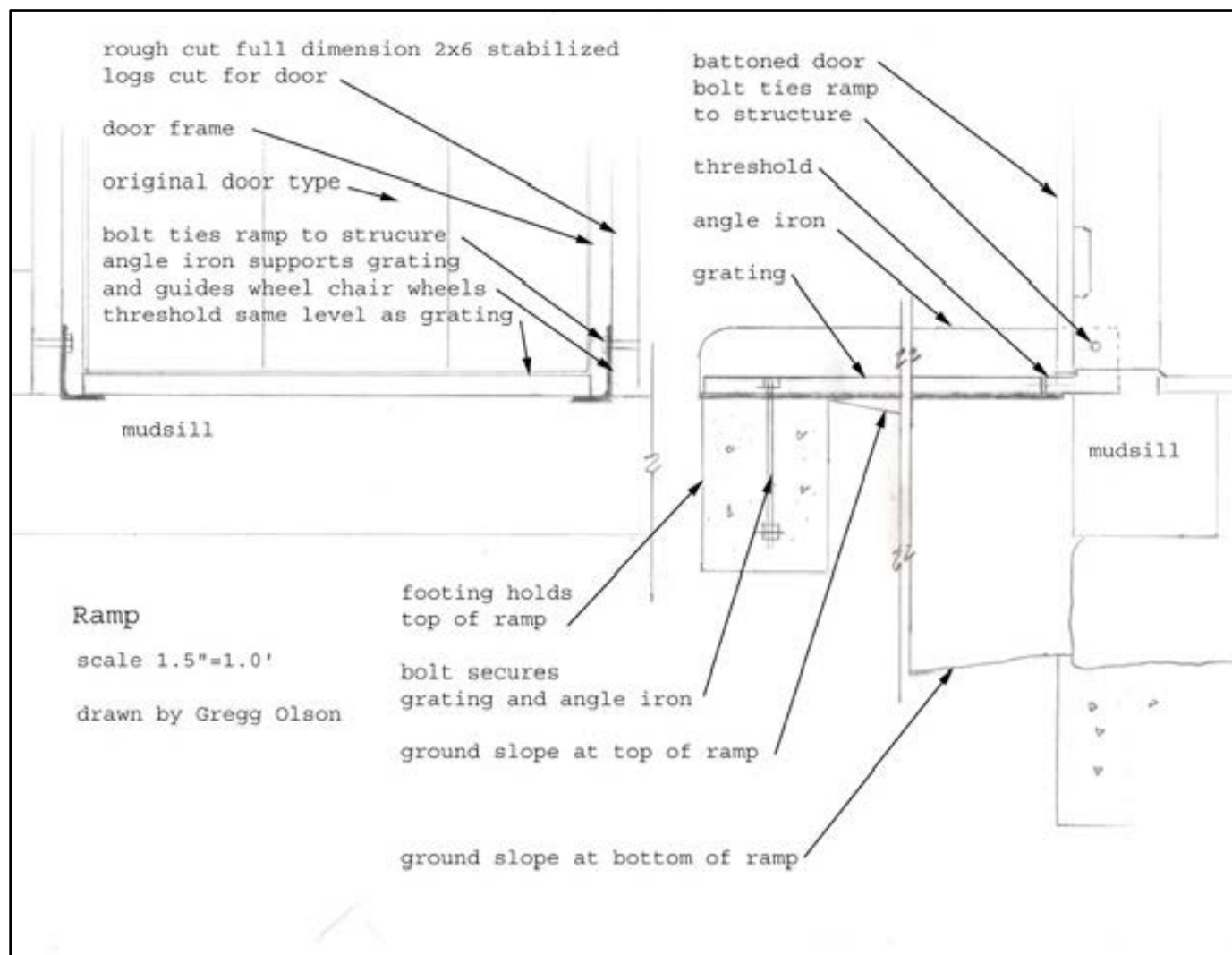
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Figure 12: Accessible Entrance Details, North Elevation (1892 Configuration).

Section drawing showing the threshold treatment, bridge/ramp framing, grating surface, and attachment methods at the 1892 north doorway. Drawn by Gregg Olson, 2019.



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Figure 13A: Dendrochronological Investigation of the Molalla Log House

The following summary is adapted from Gregg Olson and Pamela Hayden, *Treatise on the Molalla Log House* (2012), Chapter 3, *"Efforts to Establish the Age of the Building: Log End Erosion and Dendrochronology."*

A dendrochronological investigation was undertaken to establish the approximate felling date of the Douglas-fir timbers used in the construction of the Molalla Log House. The study was conducted over a two-year period and compared tree-ring sequences from the Molalla Log House with samples obtained from eleven old-growth Douglas-fir trees growing within approximately thirty miles of the original Rock Creek site under comparable environmental conditions, together with available regional dendrochronological data. Increment cores, stump sections, and historic wood samples were examined to compare ring counts, distinctive narrow and wide growth years, and recurring growth patterns in order to establish chronological correspondence between the building timbers and independently dated trees.

Not all comparative samples proved equally useful because of differences in growing conditions, tree sensitivity, preservation, and sample quality. Nevertheless, several independently dated old-growth Douglas-fir samples exhibited strong and consistent correspondence with the Molalla Log House tree-ring sequences. Collectively, these comparisons indicate that the principal construction timbers were felled during the winter of 1798–1799 or shortly thereafter. The analysed trees began growth approximately in 1739 and were about sixty years old when harvested, and the resulting tree-ring chronology consistently supports a construction date at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Because no comprehensive Douglas-fir dendrochronological chronology had yet been established for the Willamette Valley, the investigation represents one of the earliest systematic applications of comparative tree-ring analysis to the dating of a historic structure in the region. Although future studies incorporating additional reference samples may further refine the regional chronology, the results of this investigation consistently support an estimated felling date of 1798–1799. These findings are further corroborated by the Molalla Log House's construction technology, tool marks, absence of nails in the original fabric, and comparative architectural evidence presented elsewhere in this nomination.

The following photograph and skeleton plot are reproduced from Olson and Hayden (2012) to illustrate representative ring matches and the analytical methodology supporting the estimated 1798–1799 felling date for the principal construction timbers of the Molalla Log House.

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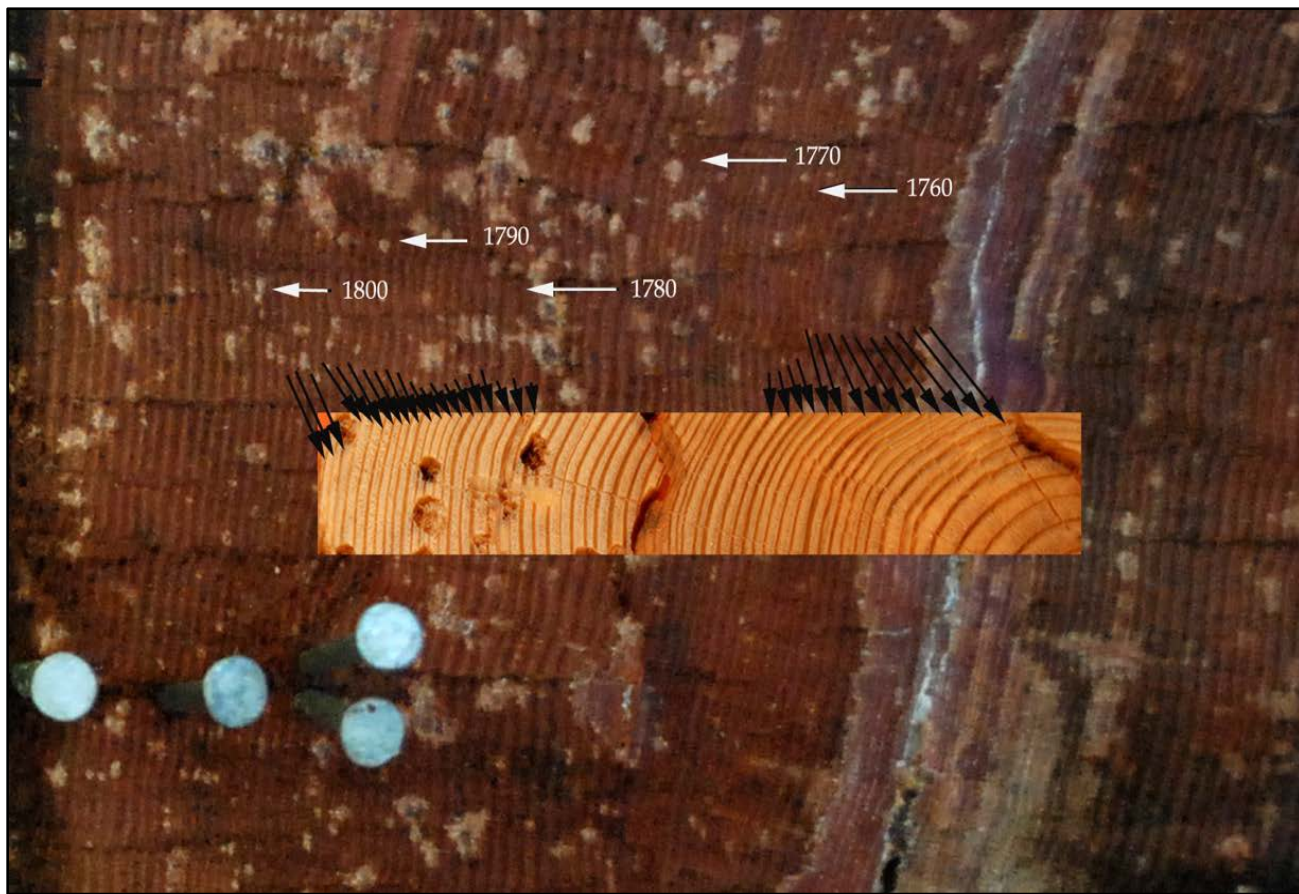
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Figure 13B: Photographic Comparison of Bagby Stump A and the Molalla Log House Joist

Photograph illustrating the visual correspondence between the tree-ring sequences of Bagby Stump A and a Molalla Log House joist. This comparison is representative of the dendrochronological correlations supporting an estimated 1798–1799 felling date for the principal construction timbers. Reproduced from Olson and Hayden, *Treatise on the Molalla Log House*, Chapter 3 (2012).



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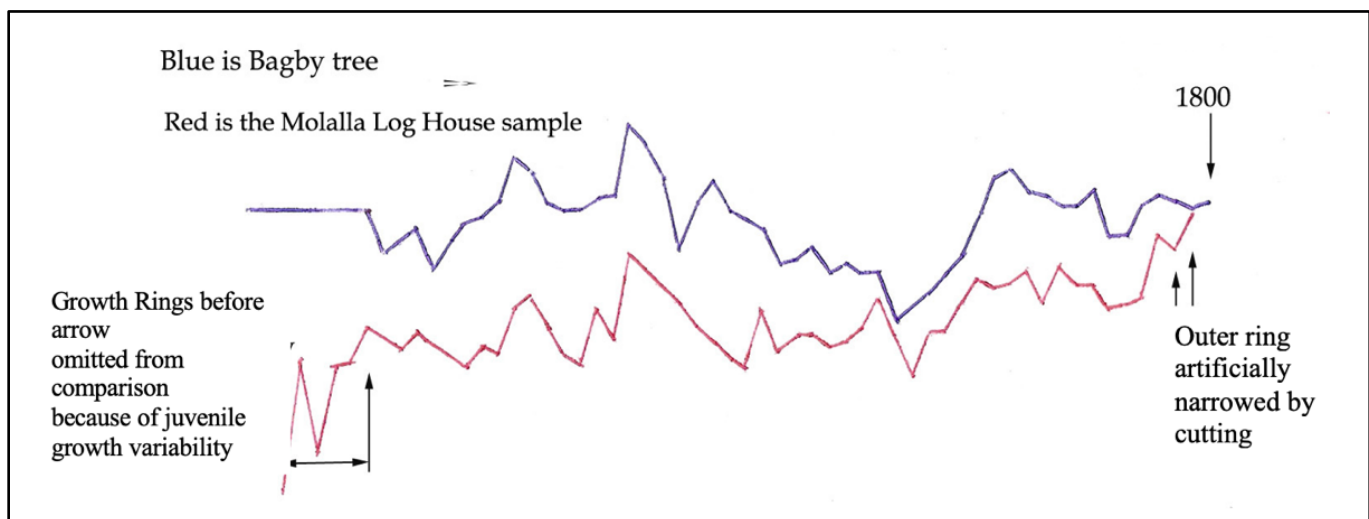
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Figure 13C: Skeleton Plot Comparison of Bagby Stump A and Molalla Log House Joist Sample

Skeleton plot comparing the tree-ring growth patterns of Bagby Stump A (blue) and a Molalla Log House joist sample (red). The correspondence of narrow and wide growth-ring sequences is representative of the dendrochronological correlations that collectively supported an estimated 1798–1799 felling date for the principal construction timbers. Adapted from Olson and Hayden, *Treatise on the Molalla Log House*, Chapter 3 (2012).



The tree-ring sequences were further evaluated using skeleton plots, a standard dendrochronological method that compares distinctive patterns of narrow growth rings among multiple samples. The skeleton plot confirmed the visual correspondence observed in the photographic comparison and demonstrated consistent agreement with additional independently dated Douglas-fir samples. Together, these analyses supported an estimated felling date of 1798–1799 for the principal construction timbers of the Molalla Log House. Although future investigations incorporating additional regional reference chronologies may further refine the chronology, the available dendrochronological, technological, and comparative architectural evidence consistently supports this interpretation.

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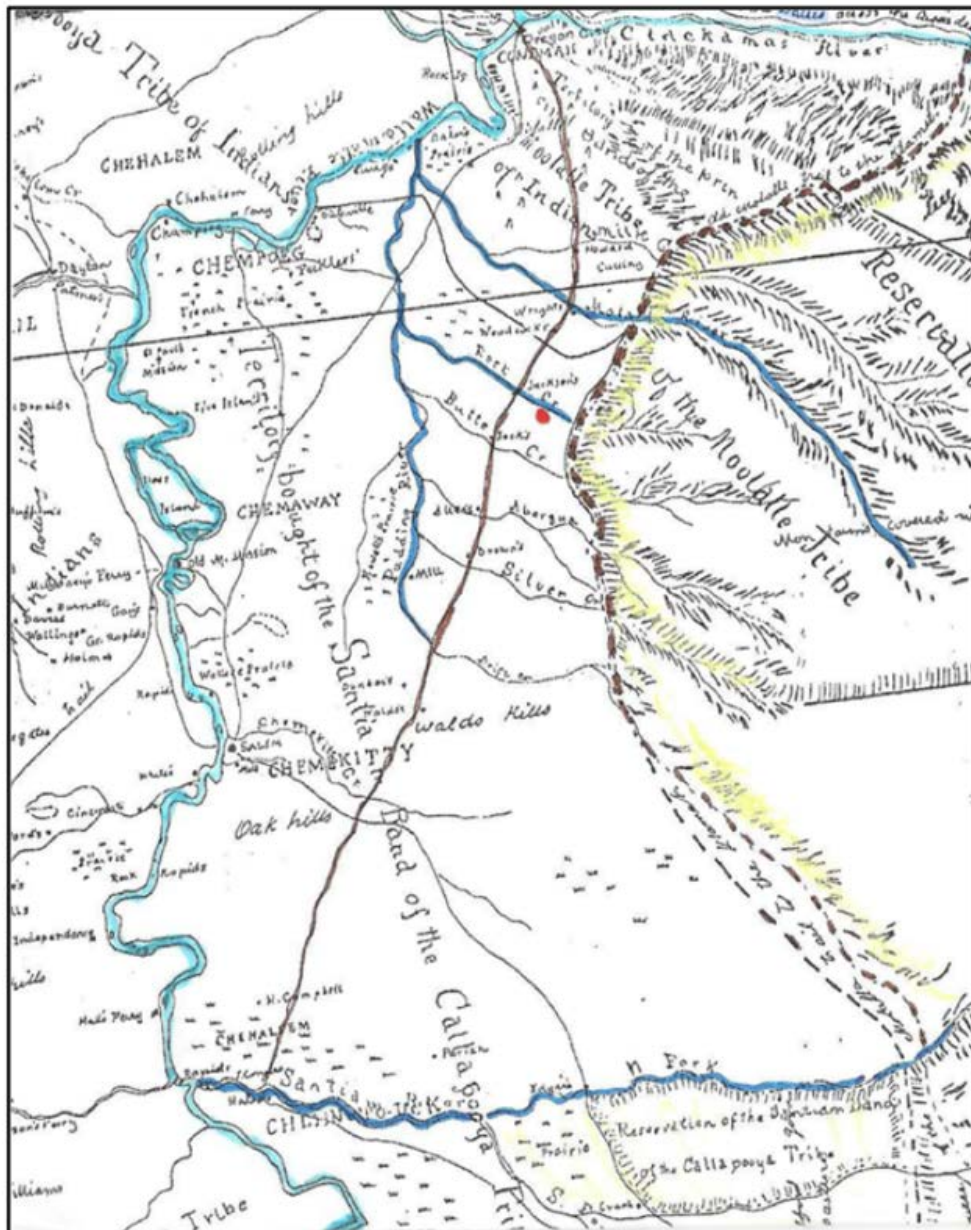
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Figure 14: Historic Sketch of Indigenous Travel Corridors in the Central Willamette Valley

Historic map of the central Willamette Valley showing the approximate location of the Molalla Log House on Rock Creek (red dot). The Molalla Trail (dotted brown line) and the Indigenous travel corridor approximated by present-day Highway 213 (solid brown line) are shown in relation to the house. Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society Research Library, *Sketch of the Willamette Valley*, 1851 (OrHi 104274; Catalogue No. 48789). Annotations by Olson and Hayden (2012).



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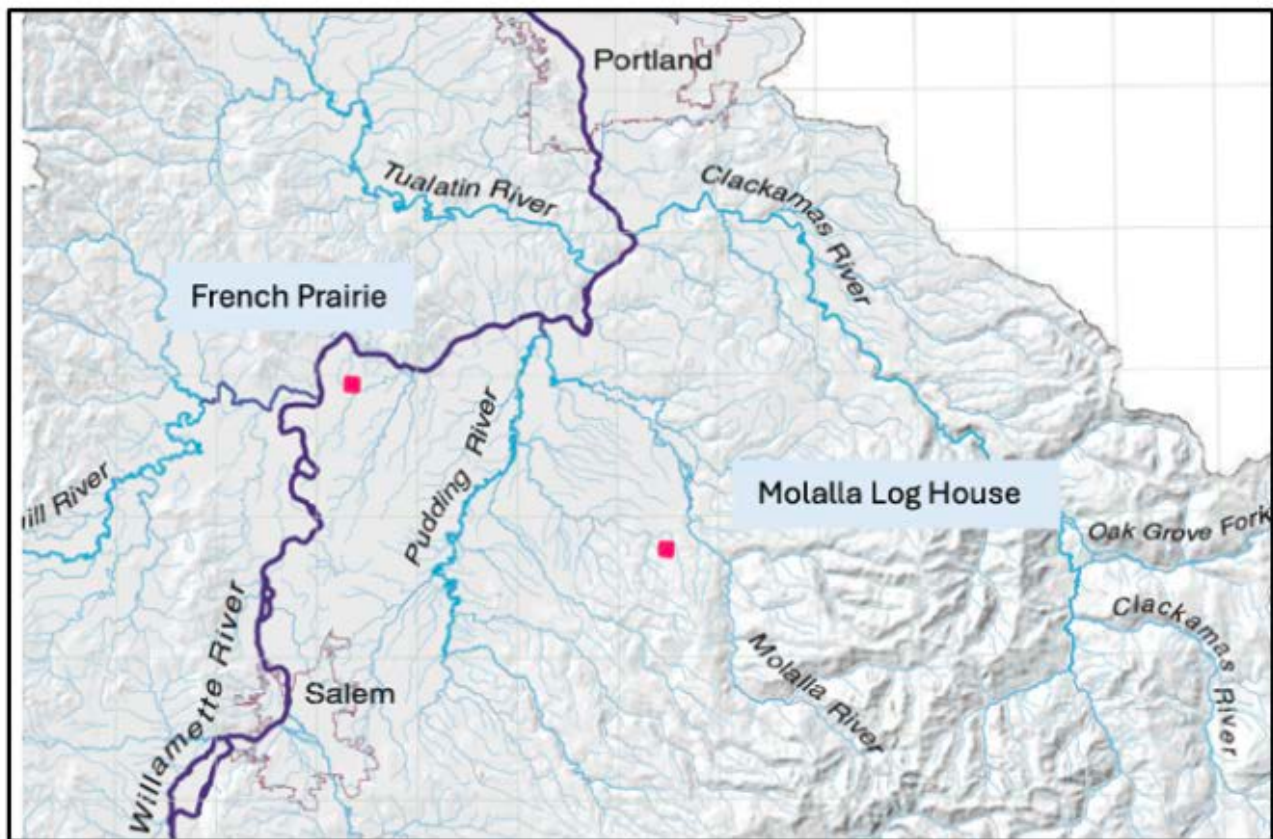
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Figure 15: Watershed Map (showing French Prairie, Molalla Log House, Pudding River, Molalla River, Willamette River)

Map of a portion of the Willamette River basin. The Pudding and Molalla Rivers converge and empty into the Willamette River south of the city of Canby. The original site of the Molalla Log House is indicated by a red dot on Rock Creek. French Prairie is located to the northwest. Source: *Willamette River Basin Atlas*, 2nd ed. (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2003). Annotations by Pamela Hayden 2026.



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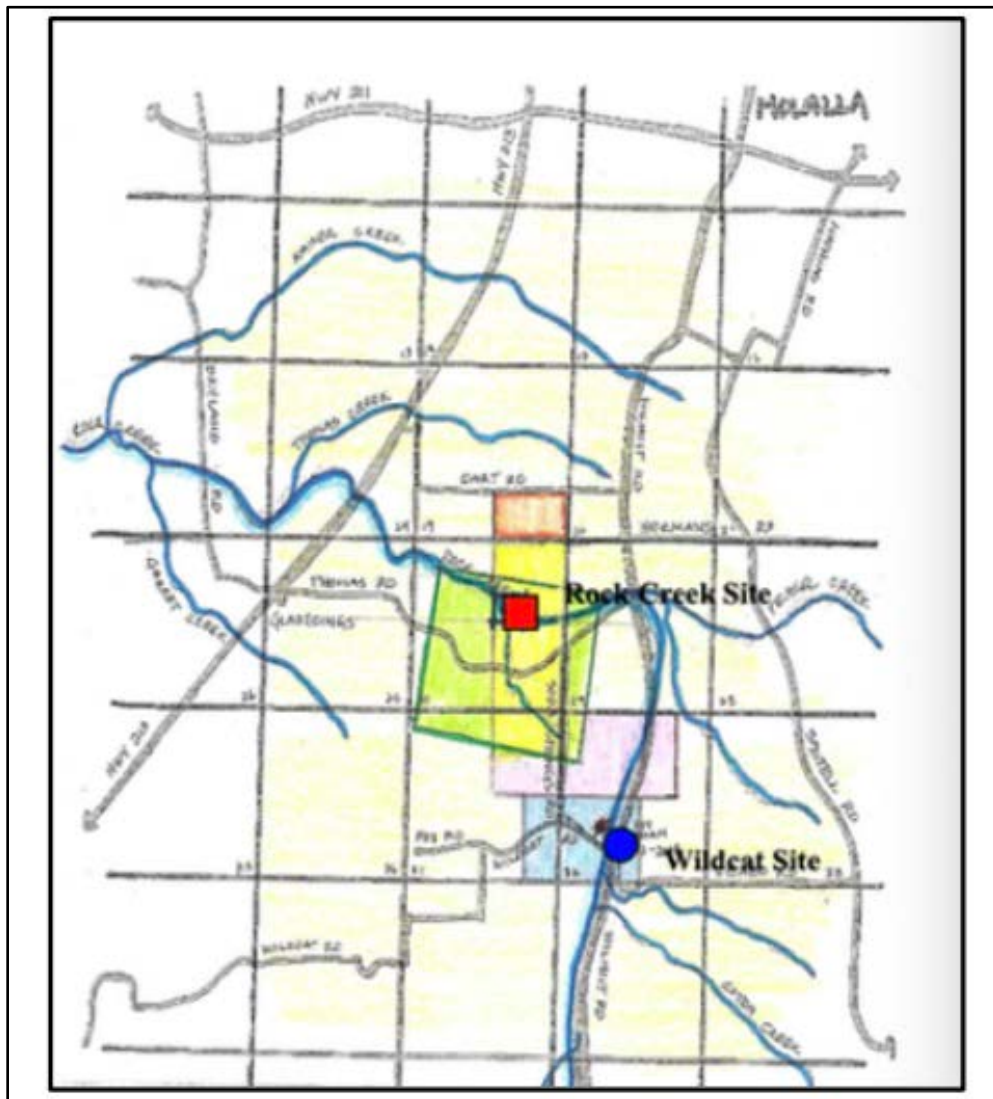
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Figure 16: Rock Creek Site's (vicinity of original site) location within Isaac Abel Provisional 1846 Land Claim and Wilhoit's 1852 DLC

The red square indicates the Rock Creek site, vicinity of original location of the Molalla Log House. The green area represents Isaac Abel's 1846 Provisional Land Claim, with John and Phoebe Wilhoit's 1852 Donation Land Claim overlaid in yellow. The blue dot marks the Wildcat site, where the Molalla Log House was moved in 1892 and later dismantled in 2008 for preservation. Other colors on the map represent pioneer family members of David and Phoebe Fox, likely including those who assisted in moving the building's logs by wagon (Source: Olson Hayden Treatise 2012).



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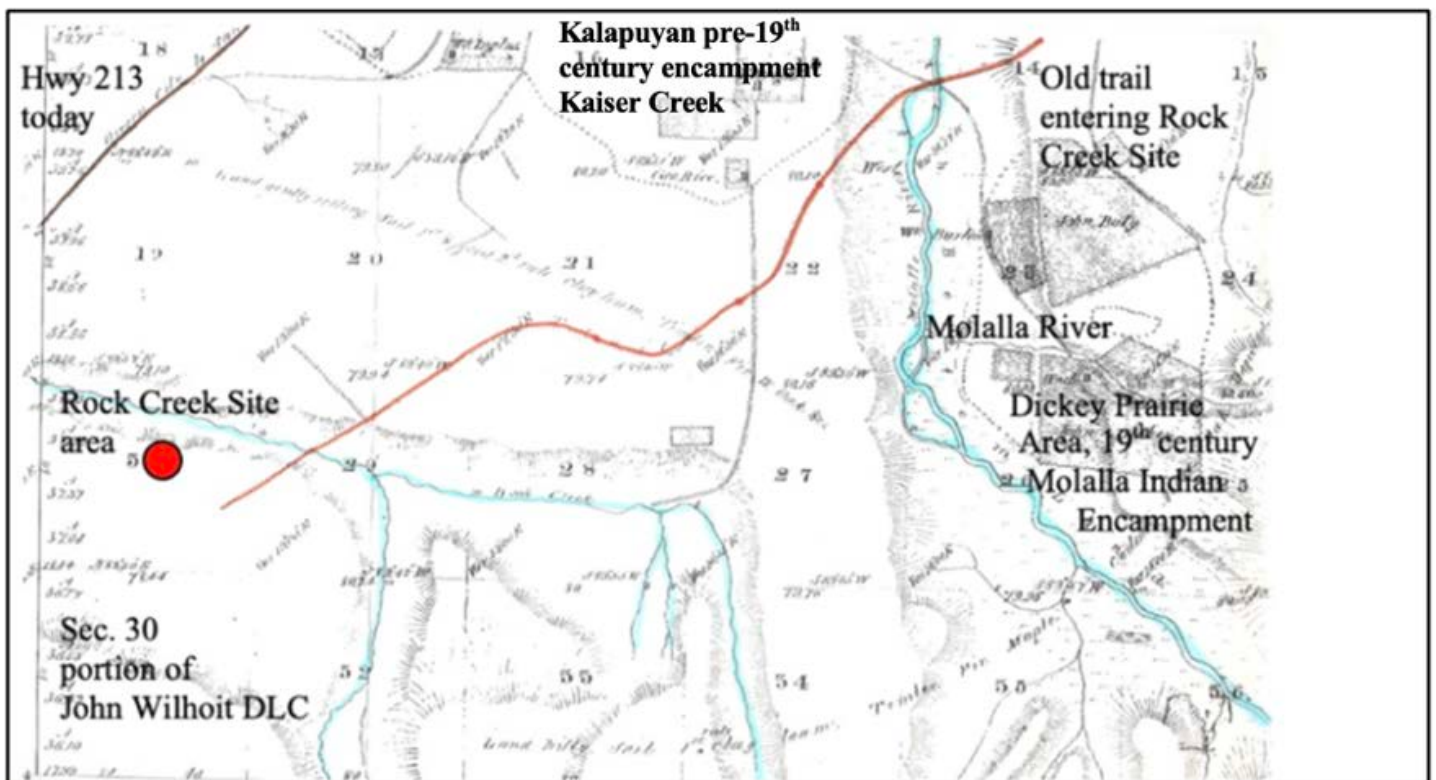
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Figure 17: 1852 General Land Office Survey Map Showing the Historic Trail in the Vicinity of the Original Location of the Molalla Log House.

The trail, highlighted in orange, trends generally northeast to southwest from near present-day Sawtell Road, along the alignment of the historic Molalla Trail. Located in Township 5 South, Range 2 East, Section 30, within the later John and Phoebe Wilhoit Donation Land Claim. Map annotations by Pamela Hayden, 2010. Source: Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Cadastral Survey Maps and Records, Oregon, 1852. Annotations by Olson and Hayden (2012).



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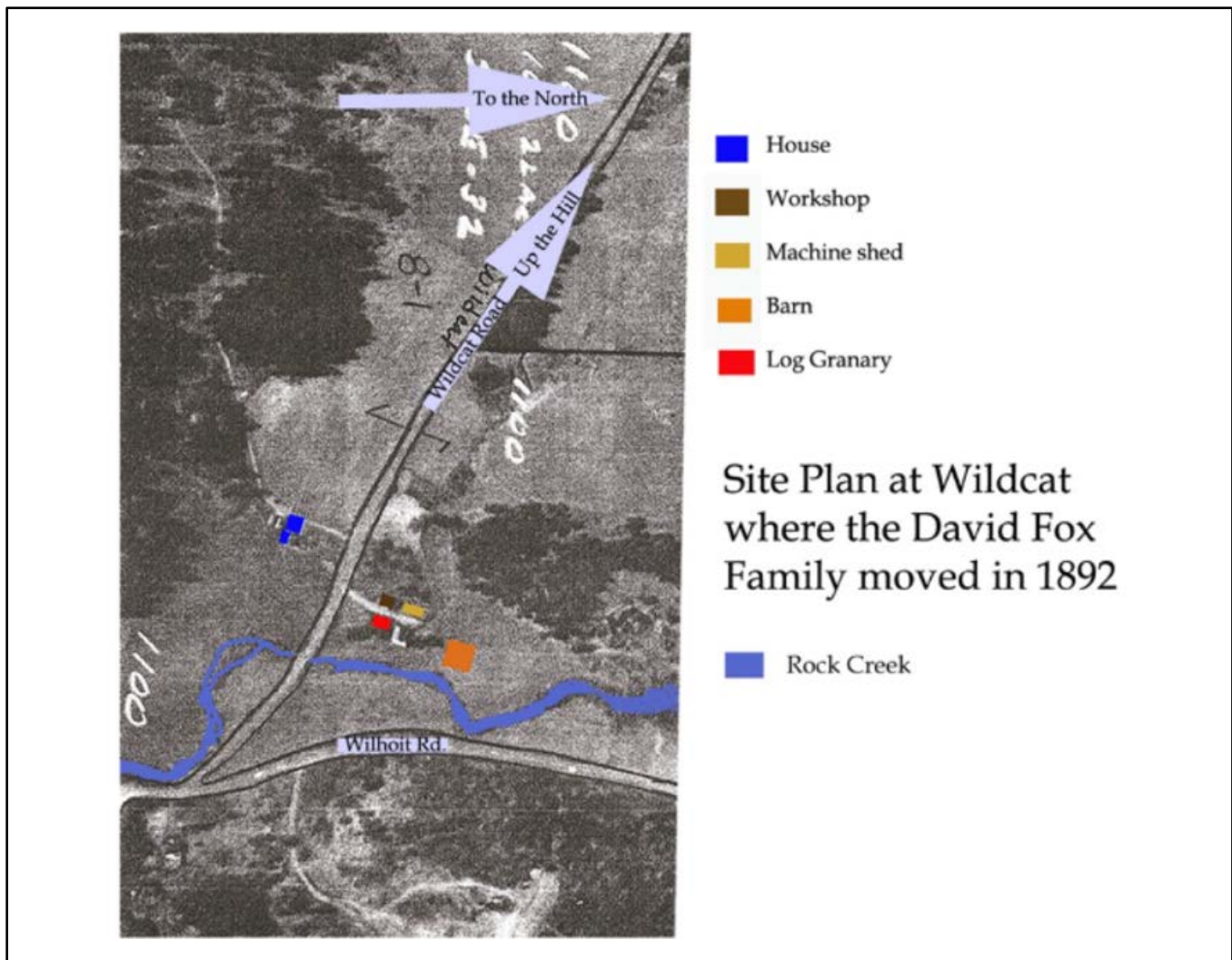
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Figure 18: Wildcat Site and location of vicinity of Original Site

Map depicting the relocation of the Molalla Log House (formerly known locally as the "David Fox Granary") from its original location to the Wildcat Site at the northeast corner of Wildcat and Wilhoit Roads, southern Molalla area, in 1892. (Source: Dian Reed, interview by Pamela Hayden and Gregg Olson, Wildcat Site, Molalla, Oregon, 2008. She was given information by daughter of David Fox in c. 1960, who witnessed the log house move. Annotations by Olson and Hayden (2012).



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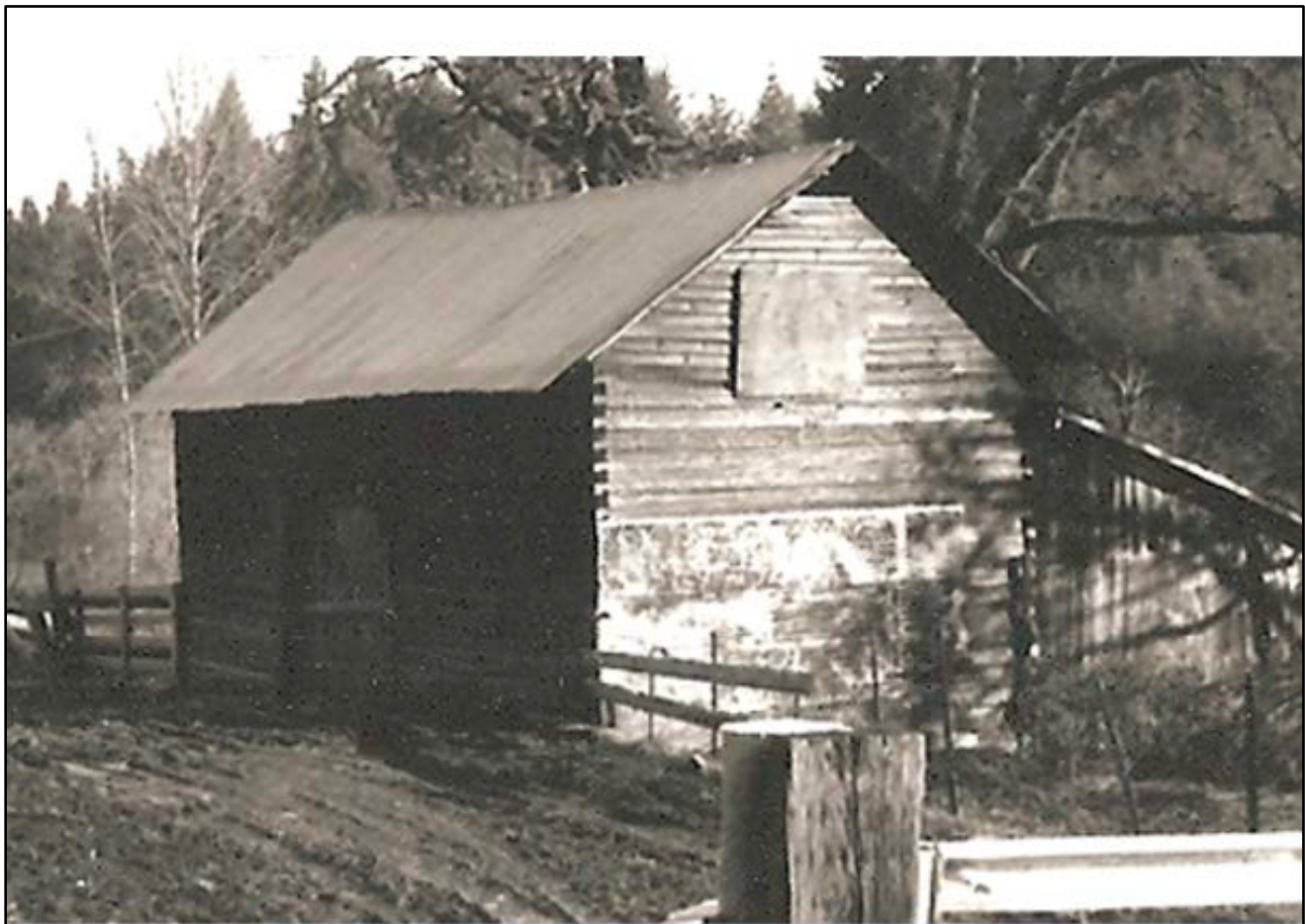
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Note: For consistency, elevation names in the following figures are based on the building's present orientation at Hopkins Demonstration Forest.

Figure 19: Molalla Log House ("David Fox Granary"), 1984

West elevation showing metal sheathing covering the lower wall logs and the shed roof on the south elevation, both added after the 1892 relocation to the Wildcat Site. Photograph by Pamela Hayden for the Clackamas County Historic Resources Inventory, 1984.



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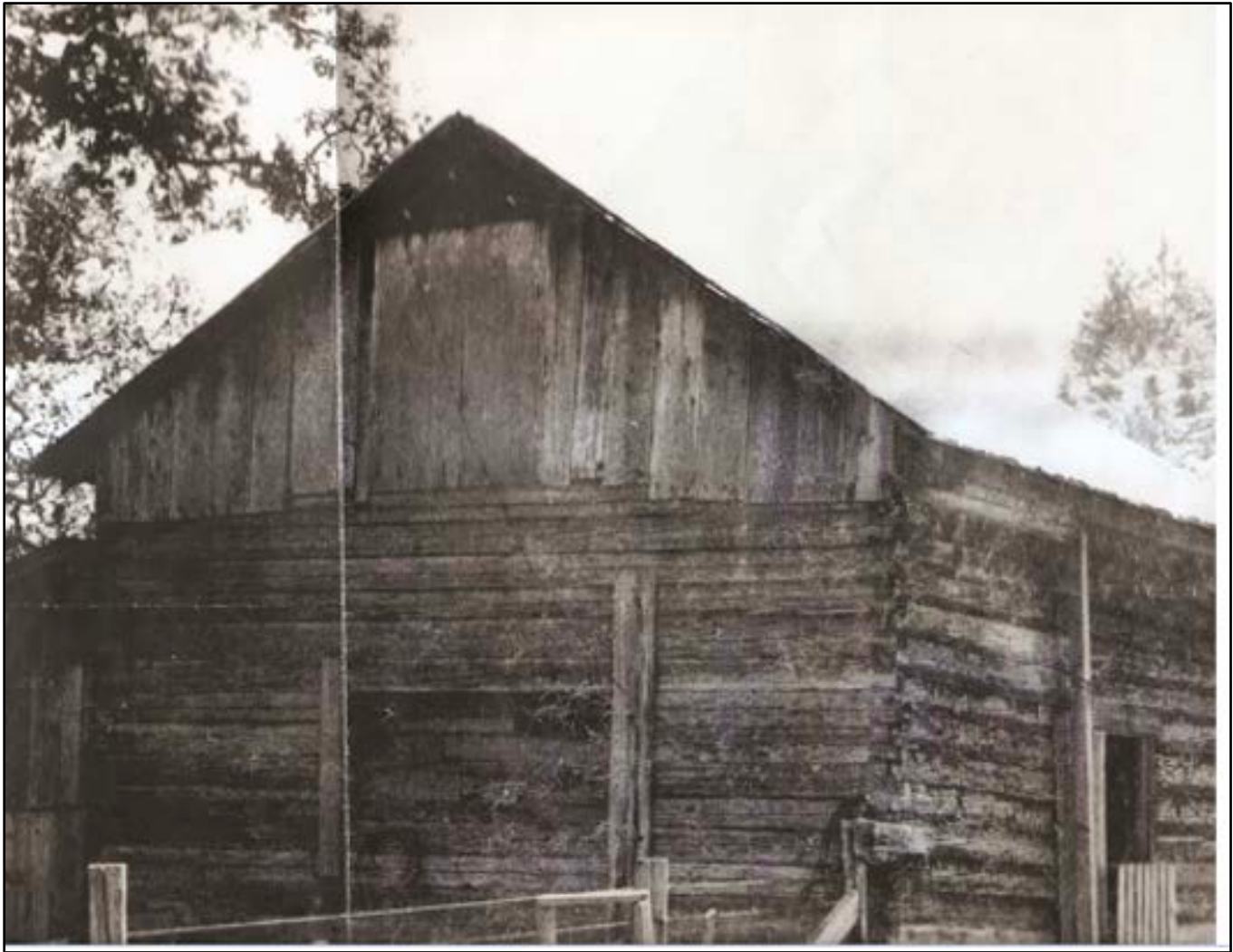
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Figure 20: Molalla Log House ("David Fox Granary"), 1984

East elevation showing the window opening cut in the 1940s, later infilled at the Wildcat Site. Photograph by Pamela Hayden for the Clackamas County Historic Resources Inventory, 1984.



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Figure 21: South Elevation (Original Front Façade), 2008

Annotated photograph at the Wildcat Site of the original front façade prior to dismantling in 2008, showing the locations of the original kerf cuts for planned openings, the 1892 stud-wall alteration, and the surviving top plate. Photograph by Gregg Olson, annotations: Olson and Hayden (2012).



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Figure 22: Northwest Oblique Elevation

Photograph showing the collapsed metal roof exposing the original pole rafters seated in the top-log notches. Metal sheathing on the west elevation covers much of the lower wall logs. The intact half-dovetail corner joinery, log walls and original 1892 door location are visible on the north elevation. Photograph by Gregg Olson, annotations: Olson and Hayden (2012).



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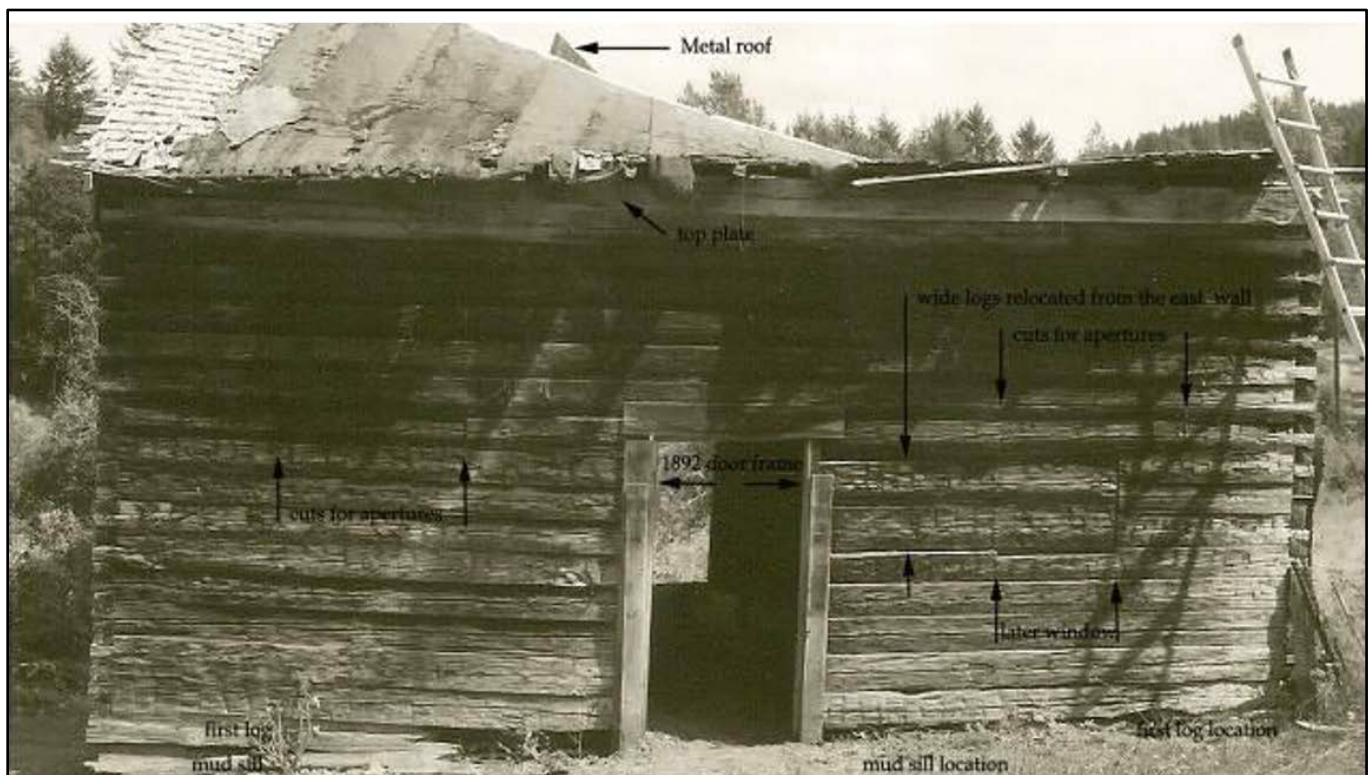
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Figure 23: North Elevation (1892 Rear Façade), 2008

Photograph showing the Molalla Log House at the Wildcat Site in deteriorated condition prior to dismantling, with the collapsed metal roof. Visible features include the 1892 doorway, original kerf cuts for planned openings (black arrows), and a later window opening infilled with logs salvaged from the original south elevation. Photograph by Gregg Olson, annotations: Olson and Hayden (2012).



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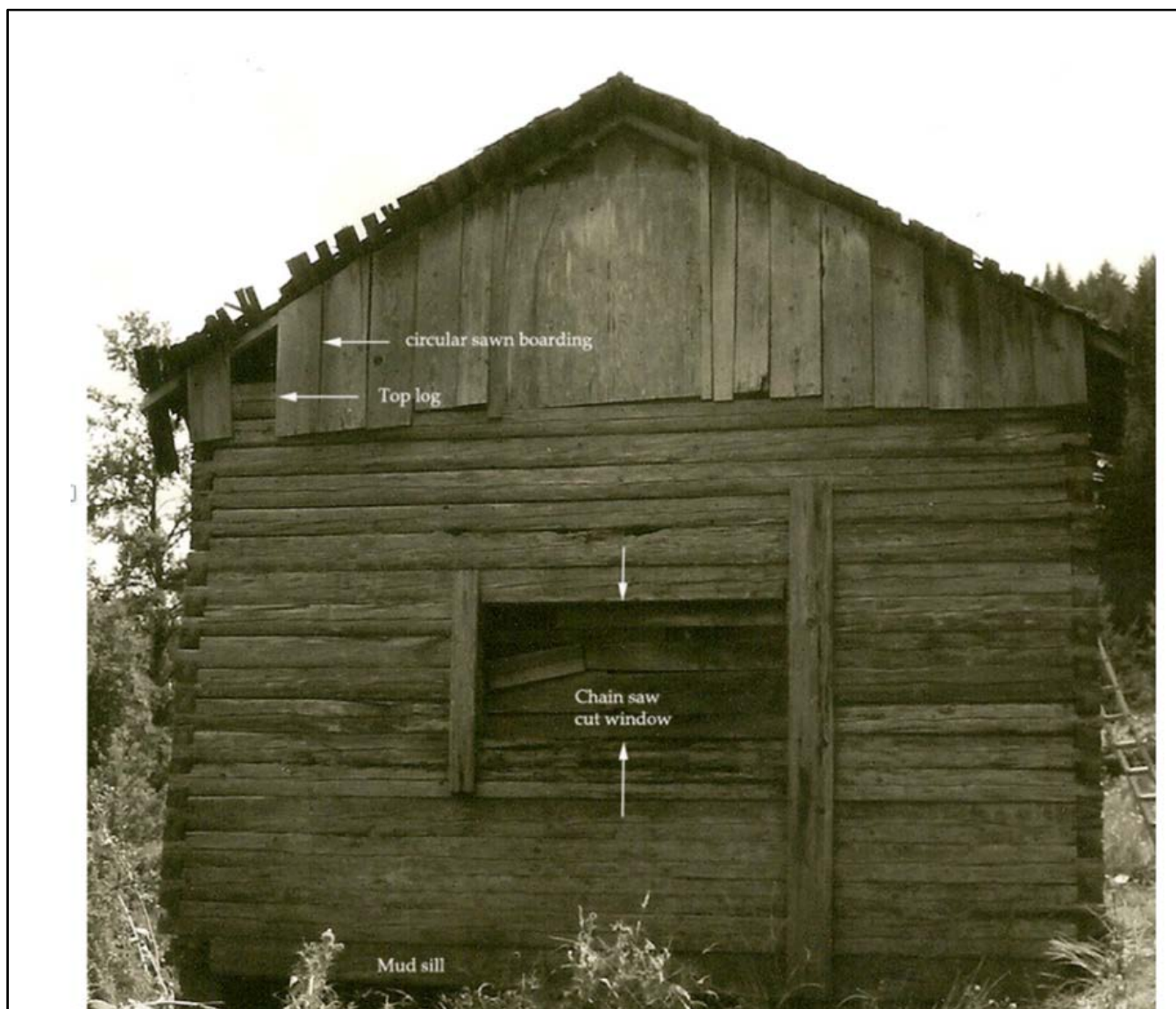
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Figure 24: East Elevation, 2008

Photographed prior to dismantling, showing tightly fitted four-sided hewn Douglas-fir wall logs and half-dovetail corner joinery. The window opening was introduced during alterations in the 1940s. Photograph and annotations by Gregg Olson, 2008. Photograph by Gregg Olson, annotations: Olson and Hayden (2012).



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Name of Property

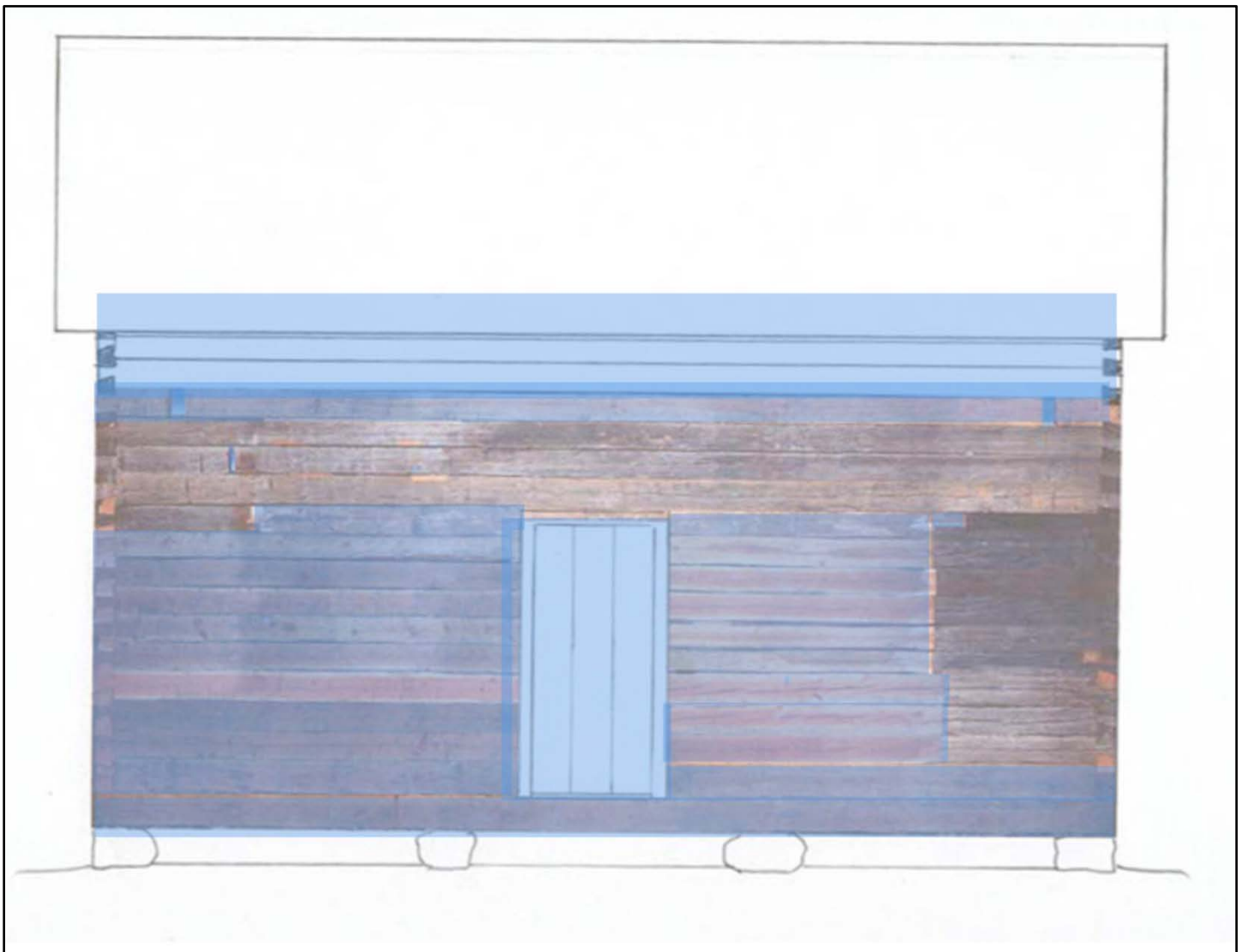
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Figure 25: South Elevation

Photogrammetric elevation prepared by Gregg Olson, 2018 and revised 2026. Blue denotes new hewn replacement logs on the primary façade. Outer kerf marks are visible at each end of Log #10 above the doorway.



United States Department of the Interior
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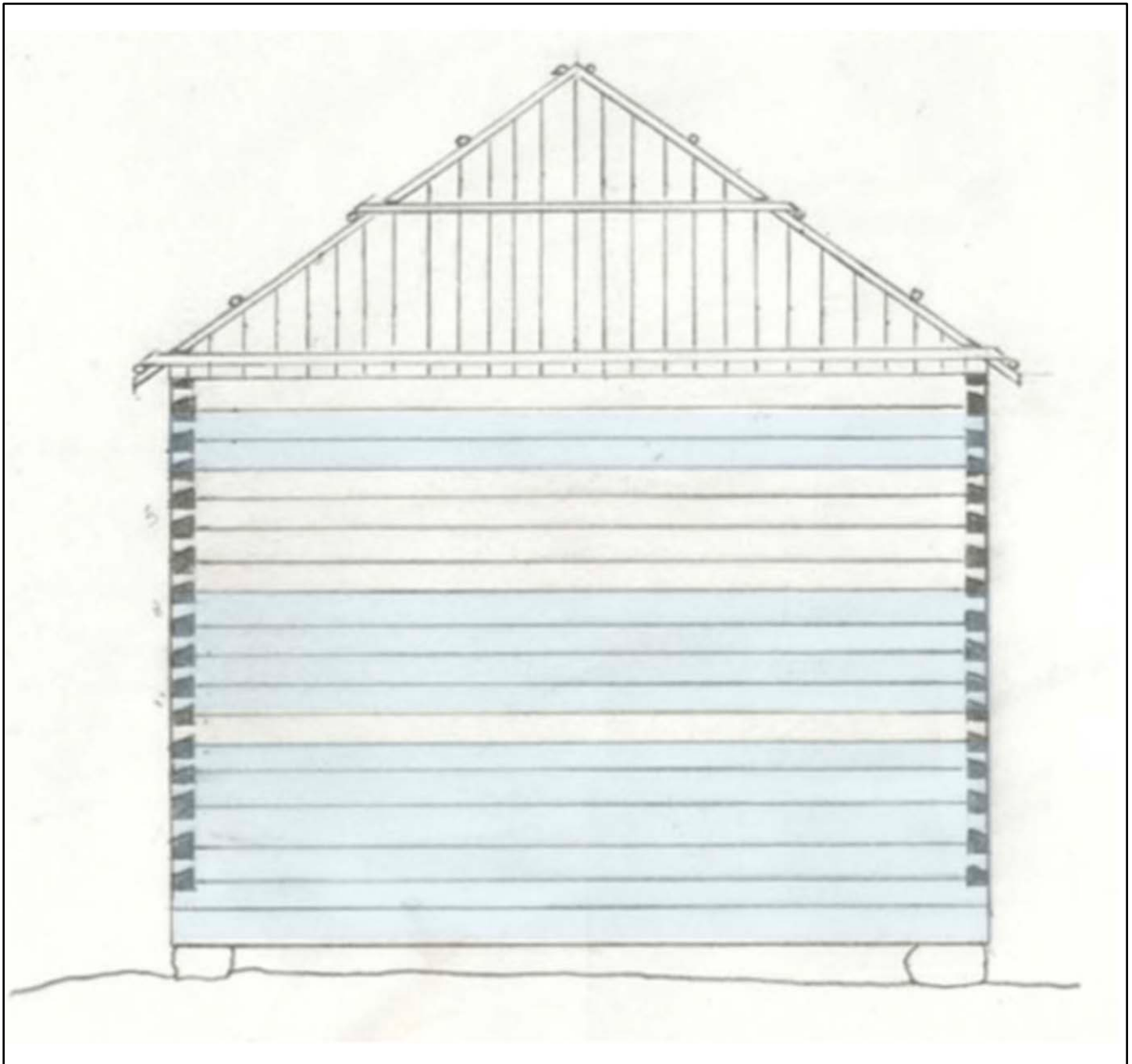
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Figure 26: West Elevation

Reconstruction drawing by Gregg Olson, 2018 and revised 2026. Blue denotes new hewn replacement logs.



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Figure 27: North Elevation

Photogrammetric elevation prepared by Gregg Olson, 2018 and revised 2026. Blue denotes new hewn replacement logs on the building's most intact original elevation.



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National Park Service

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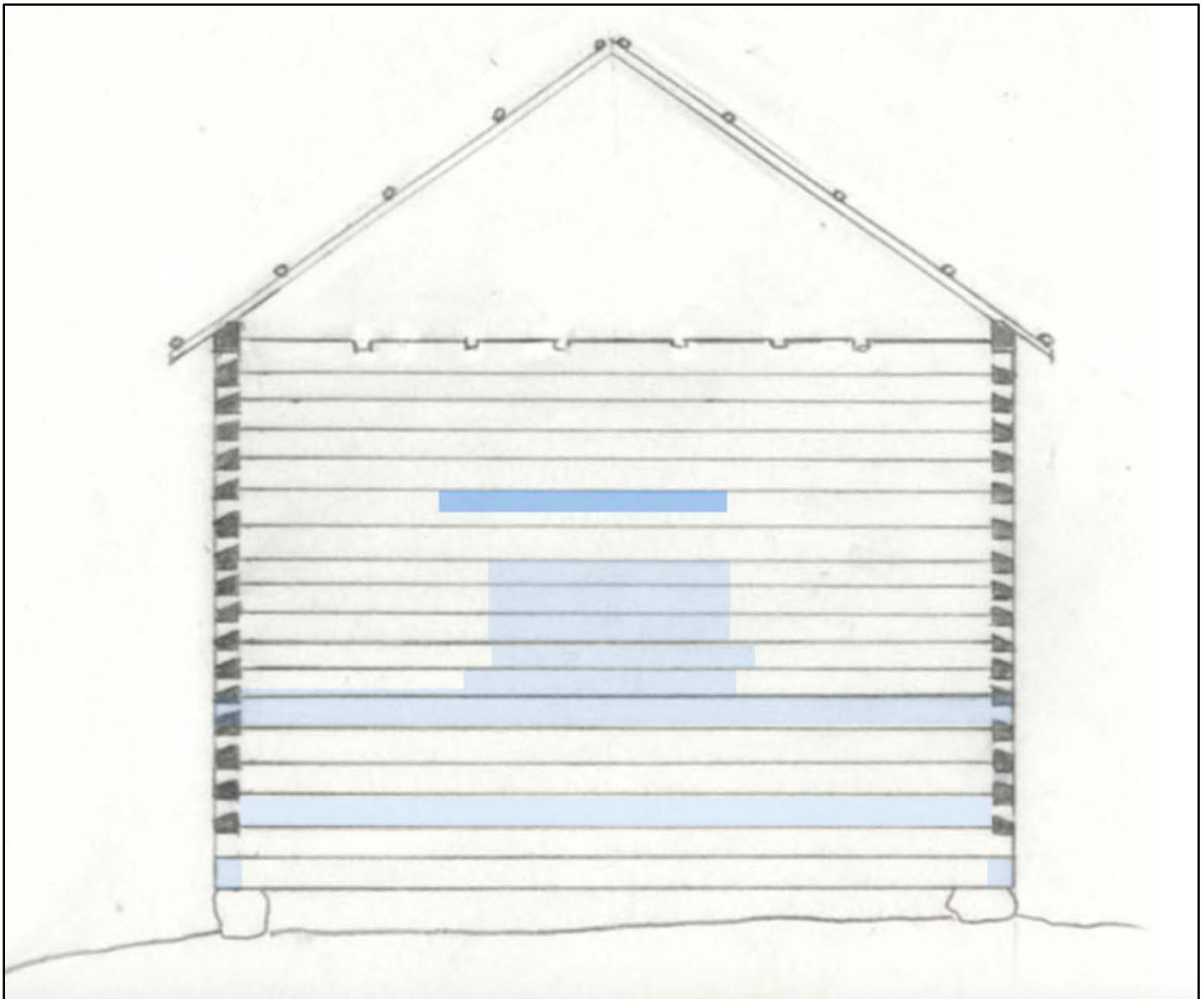
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Figure 28: East Elevation

Reconstruction drawing by Gregg Olson, 2018 and revised 2026. Blue denotes new hewn replacement logs, including the infill of the mid-twentieth-century window opening.



**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 1 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0001
Setting within Hopkins Demonstration Forest, showing forest clearing and trails, near ponds.
View to the north.



Photograph 2 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0002
Primary (south) elevation. View to the north showing shed roof addition.

**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 3 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0003
North elevation showing 1892 reassembly modifications. View to the south.



Photograph 4 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0004
East elevation. View to the west.

**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 5 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0005
West elevation. View to the east.



Photograph 6 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0006
Oblique view of northeast corner prior to shed roof installation. Photographed 2025. View to the southwest.

**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 7 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0007
Oblique view of northeast corner showing shed roof addition. View to the southwest.



Photograph 8 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0008
Northeast corner detail showing half-dovetail notching and axe marks. Photographed 2025.



Photograph 9 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0009
North elevation showing kerf marks indicating planned openings. Photographed 2008.



Photograph 10 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0010
Interior, first floor, northeast corner.

**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 11 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0011
Interior, first floor, north elevation.



Photograph 12 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0012
Interior, first floor, southeast corner.

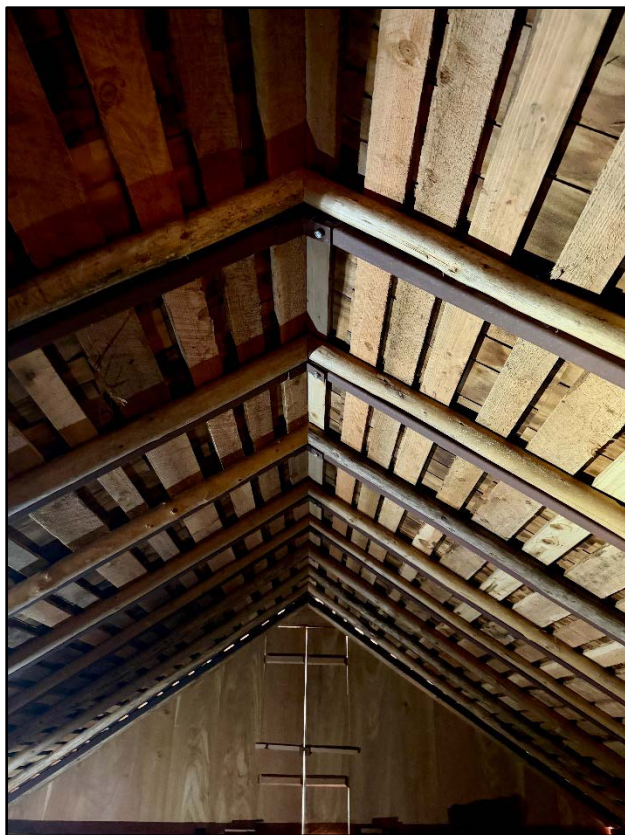
**Molalla Log House
Clackamas County, OR**



Photograph 13 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0013
Interior loft, east elevation.



Photograph 14 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0014
Interior loft knee wall, north elevation.



Photograph 15 of 15. OR_ClackamasCounty_MolallaLogHouse_0015
Interior loft roof structure showing rafters and reinforcement.