Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTME NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Construction of the Railway Exchange Block began in mid-February 1910 after the wrecking and clearing of the debris from the Mallory Building which stood on the site of the projected six-story Railway Exchange Block. Tenants of the Mallory had been given notice to vacate the premises by February 2, 1910. The expedience with which the Mallory came down was to set a precedence for construction of not only the new building on this site, but of construction of new office buildings throughout the city.

Originally, the Railway Exchange Block was to occupy the 200' x 50' site on the southside of Stark Street between Third and Fourth Avenues across from the since torn down Commerce Building. The size of the site changed, however, in mid-February 1910 when the Friedmen Brothers sold Lot 2, Block 47; a 50' x 100' site, to Mr. Peterson who in turn leased the site to Stickney and Associates for a period of 23 years. This transaction enabled the Railway Exchange to be increased in size on Third Avenue by 50 percent. In order to use this additional lot, Barnes Market Building was torn down.

The anticipated cost of the Railway Exchange was \$250,000 before the addition and rose to \$325,000 with the Third Street addition. The building boasted of the "most approved system of ventilation" which was to be installed in the structure. The air was introduced through the basement, and washed by passing it through coils of water, with the impure air being drawn out the top of the structure by means of suction pumps and fans. Two hydrolic elevators of the most modern and expensive type were also installed in the building.

With a heavy demand for office space in the Fourth Avenue area at the time, the speed at which new buildings were going up was astonishing, with the Railway Exchange breaking all records; taking a mere 5½ months to complete. This was one-half a month longer than anticipated. To accomplish this task, both a night and day force were employed. Interestingly, even with the speed at which a building of this size was constructed, there was little obstruction of the streets and inconvenience to the public.

In August, 1910, the tenants of the new Railway Exchange Block began moving in and by September the building was completely filled.

Since its construction, the Railway Exchange Block has had two name changes. The first change, to the Builders Exchange Building, came in the 1930's shortly after the purchase of the building in 1929 by the Sun Dial Corporation. The second change, to the Oregon Pioneer Building as it is known today, occurred in 1962 by Melvin Mark Properties, who own the building presently. The change coincided with the third anniversary of Oregon Pioneer Savings & Loan Association, a principal tenant at the time.

One of the more notable of the early tenants, who still reside in the building today, is Huber's Restaurant.

Huber's is Portland's oldest restaurant. Founded as a saloon by Frank Huber in 1879, it was originally located at Fourth and Washington Streets and soon became

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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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one of early Portland's favorite spots with its 10¢ beer and free turkey sandwiches. Although 10¢ was high for beer at the time, Huber felt the free sandwiches with the beer made up for it. Shortly after 1885, Huber hired Jim Louie, a Chinese immigrant from Canton China, to cook at Huber's. While at Huber's, Louie gained the reputation as a master chef. By the turn of the century, with Huber serving drinks and Louie serving food, Huber's had acquired an unique reputation which was not limited only to Portland.

In 1905 Jim became manager of Huber's and in 1910 Huber's moved into the newly constructed Railway Exchange Block. Huber's new quarters was paneled in Philippine mahogany, a stand up bar, two cash registers, imported mirrors and vaulted ceilings with three leaded stained glass skylites; adding an unique setting to the already famous saloon.

In 1916 Frank Huber died unexpectedly. Huber's continued to be managed by Jim Louie and owned by Huber's widow. Prohibition came but rather than closing, Huber's changed from saloon to restaurant by the suggestion of patrons, friends, and land-The once free sandwiches and other foods were now a new income for Huber's.

In 1940 after the death of Huber's widow, Jim Louie became part owner with silent owner John Huber. In 1946 Jim Louie died and his nephew Andrew Louie, who had worked at the restaurant for many years, acquired his uncle's half of the business.

In 1952 not wishing to run the business with a silent partner, Andrew Louie offered the business back to John Huber. Huber, not having any interest in the business, sold out to Andrew Louie. Today, Andrew and his son Jim run the restaurant and pride themselves in the fact that they still do things the old way emphasizing care and personalization.

Today, besides Huber's Restaurant, the Railway Exchange Block (now known as the Oregon Pioneer Building) houses the Peruvian and Venezuelan Consulates, the Department of Justice, and the Columbia River Gorge Commission as well as various professional offices

### Structure

The six-story, plus basement, Railway Exchange Block is a reinforced concrete structure. The exterior walls are non-bearing. The basement has three foot thick brick and stone walls. Columns within the basement are laid out in a grid plan which is reflected in the above floors. Along Stark Street, from east to west, the columns are spaced: 15'0", 15'2 16'0", 16'10", 16'7", 17'7", 16'10" and 16'7". Along the south of Lot 2, from

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east to west; 15'0", 22'5", 8'1", 15'3", 9'0", 10'0", 10'0", 10'0" and 11'0".

The building has poured reinforced concrete slab floors measuring as such: First floor -  $7"-7\frac{1}{2}"$ ; Second -  $6"-6\frac{1}{2}"$ ; Third -  $5\frac{1}{2}"-6"$ ; Fourth -  $5\frac{1}{2}"-6"$ ; Fifth -  $5\frac{1}{2}"-6"$ ; and Sixth -  $5"-5\frac{1}{2}"$ .

Floor heights are as such: Basement - 10'10"; First - 15'; Second - 11'6"; Third - 11'; Fourth - 12'; Fifth - 11'; and Sixth - 10'.

The building has a composition roof.

#### Exterior

Except for alterations to the ground floor level, the original exterior is intact and in excellent condition.

The main entrance is located on the north facade which is divided into 13 bays; the main entrance is flanked by 6 bays to each side. The bays from east to west follow an AA-B-AAA-B pattern, with a width of 15'4", reflecting office space in some of the upper floors. Dividing the bays are galvanized iron pilasters. Marble stairways with brass handrails lead to the basement and are located at the third and tenth bays.

Alterations to the ground floor include the covering of sidewalk skylites, which are still evident in the basement with mortar. The base panel which originally had basement lites have been covered with tile of varying colors and two different styles. The basement lites, while not evident from the basement, are still visible through vents in the tiles. Some of the large plate glass window settings are original, but most have been replaced with modern aluminum ones. The same holds true for the street level doors.

The original decorative entrance has been remodeled extensively, with the original ornamentation being removed. Store entrances on the northeast and northwest have also been moved back with the most extensive alterations on the northwest store front area.

Separating the first and second level of the north, east, and west facades is a frieze panel upon which tenants names have been added, and a cornice with modillions which also serves as the second floor sill course.

The second to sixth story bays are in a column and spandrel arrangement, with nearly 70% of the outside wall space consisting of plate glass windows.

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"A" bays at the second story level have large plate glass windows with three transom lites. "B" bays have large plate glass windows with four transom lites. On the third, fourth, and fifth stories "A" bays have large pivoted plate glass windows with one over one, double hung, sash sidelites. "B" bays have two large pivoted plate glass windows with one over one, double hung, sash sidelites. At the sixth story "A" bays have three large pivoted plate glass windows while "B" bays have four. Both "A" and "B" bays have decorative arches.

The galvanized iron cornice of the building consists of decorative brackets with acorn pendant, a row of dentils, stylized trigliphs and metopes, topped by stylized acroteria.

The west or Fourth Avenue facade is divided into three "A" bays spaced at 15'7", 16'10" and 15'7", north to south. On the southern most bay is a cast iron fire escape. This facade is the most altered of all facades at the ground floor level.

The east or Third Avenue facade is divided into six bays in a A-B-AA-B-A pattern, north to south. Spaced 15'7", 16'10", 15'7, 16'6", 16'6" and 16'6", north to south. The southernmost bay of this facade has a cast iron fire escape. At the fourth bay entrance the ornamental galvanized iron hood has been removed.

The south facade is exposed brick, at present painted silver with mostly two over two, double hung, sash windows.

Major alterations to the building during the 30's and 40's, when Sun Dial purchased the building and again in the 1960's after Melvin Mark Properties took ownership of the structure.

The remodeling in the 1960's was under the direction of architect Lewis Crutcher. Cornices were repaired and the building painted Charcole green and Mayberry red with white and gold trimmings. The gold and white awnings were also added at this time. The most recent painting of the building occurred in 1976, again in the colors suggested by Crutcher. Internal improvements in the 1960's included complete repainting, reflooring, and new light fixtures. Many of the old fixtures of the building can be found in the basement.

The original plans for this structure are located at the Portland City Hall on microfilm.

#### Interior

Originally the Railway Exchange Block was designed to have 14 store rooms on the ground floor each measuring  $16\frac{1}{2}$ ' x 48'. The second story was to have 15 large offices and the four stories above 30 offices each for a total of 135 offices. The basement is divided into two compartments with entrances on Third Avenue and Stark Street.

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With the addition of the annex and subsequent changes within the interior to accommodate tenants, the building when opened had 17 large store rooms and offices on the ground floor. The second floor had 18 large offices with the upper four floors accommodating the remainder of the 138 office rooms.

Philippine mahogany was used throughout the interior finishing. The entrance to the elevators on Stark Street and the main Third Avenue entrance leading to the elevators were finished in Vermont marble with 10 inch verde antique bases. Verde antique was also used in wainscotting the Stark Street vestibule.

Typical corridor finish in upper stories consists of 8" wood bases, plaster walls, and picture molding. All stores and offices had 10" wood bases, and picture molding. All molding was originally stained but most is now painted.

Originally the first floor had terrazzo floors in the corridor. Upper floor corridors were covered with tile. All rooms and offices had painted cement floors. Today most floors have been carpeted. The bathrooms had small white tiles, which have also been covered.

Most interior glass is 3/16" thick ribbed glass.

Each floor has a men's and women's restroom, while restrooms have been remodeled; an example of an original men's restroom can be found in the basement.

Within the building are two sets of stairs. One in the original (main) building and a second in the Third Street annex. Both stairways, leading to the second floor, have marble tread and risers. The main stairs have brass handrails, the annex has an iron ballustrade and handrail. Stairways above the second floor are of cement, with the stairway in the main building having brass rails and the annex oak.

When first constructed, the structure had two hydrolic elevators. The elevator opening on the first floor was ornately decorated with cast iron and openings on upper floors were of wired plate glass. All evidence of original elevator openings have been removed and the original elevators replaced, using the same shafts.

On the first floor some of the original lighting fixtures are still intact. As well as the original cast iron mail shute which runs up to the sixth floor. However, most of the original lighting fixtures throughout the rest of the building have been replaced.

The building throughout the years has retained its use as an office building with commercial ground level space. Alterations to internal space has been largely confined to the addition of walls and partitions to accommodate tenants.

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#### Huber's Interior

Huber's Restaurant is located in the annex of the structure and can be reached through either Stark Street or Third Avenue entrances, the preferred original entrance, however, is located on Third Avenue.

Huber's is the most intact and elegant portion within the interior of the structure. To enter Huber's you pass through two sets of double hung mahogony doors, 75"  $\times$  30" and vestibule. The first set of doors are two paneled, a polished glass panel with "HUBER'S" etched in, over a wood panel. The vestibule measures 5'8"  $\times$  6'0". The second set of doors are two paneled with a leaded stained glass panel over a wood panel. The doors have brass hinges.

Floors are terrazo marble. Wood base throughout the restaurant is the same type of marble in the corridor varying from 6" to 8" along the bar which is 29'4" and runs the length of the west wall in the main dining room. The dining room measures approximately  $29'4" \times 30'$  including bar and back bar. To the east of the vestibule is office space and to the right a continuation of the main dining room, a door from this section leads to the men's restroom, but is no longer used. The reason for only a men's restroom is that originally only men were allowed in.

The bar itself stands 3'8" and varies in width on the top from 2'2" to 2'4". The north 21' of the bar counter has been replaced while the other portion reveals the original bar counter. The back bar is original. Wainscoting as well as the bar and all other wood throughout the restaurant is of Philippine mahogony. The wainscoting is 7'10" high and consists of patterns of recessed paneling topped with plate rail.

The ceiling in this room is vaulted and has four sections, three of which have stained leaded glass skylites. The vaulting of the ceiling is reflected then in archways and columns throughout the restaurant.

Behind the bar, the archways are paneled in glass and originally gave the effect of a much larger room. The upper portions of the mirrors were damaged by fire in the 30's or 40's and are now covered with wall paper which is also present in all arches and wall space above the wainscot except for the south wall.

To the west of the main dining room is a booth space section, running north and south, approximately 31'8" x 11'. Originally there were three booths, running east and west. Today there are two, one was removed during the 1950's to make more room, but this was not accomplished according to Andrew Louie, owner.

Between the main dining room and booth section are two columns with 7" marble pedestals. Around the upper portion of the columns are brass coat hooks. These

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coat hooks also run along other portions of the wall, all hooks of brass; some of which have been painted.

To the south of the main dining room is the kitchen, 7'9" x 30' running east and west. To the east of the kitchen are stairs leading to the basement. Originally there was a skylite in the kitchen, the skylite has since been covered with tar because of leakage.

Light fixtures within the restaurant are original including the candlestick lights behind the bar.

Stools at the bar have been added. Originally Huber's had a stand up bar. Some of the chairs in the restaurant are original, as are several of the tables and the booths, except for the booth table tops. Originally tables were covered with felt and glass. Today tablecloths or nothing is used. A removable partition has been added in the main dining room and stands 5' high running east and west separating the carving table from the customers. A portion of the original carving table remains but most has been replaced with more modern appliances.

The cash register, behind the bar, is probably original; there used to be two. A bottle corker at the north end of the bar is original and probably from Huber's previous location, as there is an 1897 date on it. The clock above the vestibule is reported to be original and a gift to Huber's when it first opened. A second clock above the bar is not original, although an antique.

The color scheme within the restaurant was done by Stewart Church in the 1950's or 60's. He also painted the portrait of Jim Louie on the south wall.

Basically, except for the modernization of appliances and worn furniture, Huber's original interior is intact and in good condition.

### 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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BUILDER/ARCHITECT David C. Lewis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Railway Exchange Block, now known as the Oregon Pioneer Building, was designed by David C. Lewis. It is a fine example of office construction during the period.

The Railway Exchange was one of the five major commercial structures of 1910, along with the Yeon, Spaulding, Selling and Haah-Burke Building which together amounted to some \$2,000,000 in construction costs alone. The Railway Exchange is also the first major all concrete building in the city and lies in a zone dense with National Register properties between the Skidmore/Old Town and Yamhill Historic Districts.

The significance of the interior portion of the building known as Huber's Restaurant, lies not only in the fact that it is the oldest Portland restaurant (Huber's will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year, 1979), but also in its exquisite interior.

David C. Lewis, born December 21, 1867, was a member of the Oregon Chapter A.I.A. Lewis received his formal education at Princeton University and studied architecture at Columbia University, New York. He began professional practice early in life and during his career designed a number of note-worthy buildings in Portland. Among these were the Board of Trade Building, Trinity Church, The Couch and Lewis Buildings, The European Building at the Lewis & Clark Exposition, and in addition a number of private homes.

Jim Louie gained the reputation as one of Portland's most colorful and best known restaurant operators while part owner of Huber's Restaurant. His was an art that had long been recognized in Portland, and his way with turkeys and hams was known to lovers of food all along the Pacific Coast.

Louie left his home in Canton, China at the age of eleven and landed in Portland in 1881. As a young man he worked in the old Peerless Saloon, one of Portland's bright spots. After that, he went to the Bureau Saloon and operated a lunch counter there for several years before going to work for Frank Huber.

While here in the United States, Louie made four trips back to China, the last in 1936. His wife and children lived in China with his Portland relatives, including his brother Bing Louie, his nephew Andrew Louie and a neice Ruth Louise Moy.

On the day of his death; September 5, 1946, he worked as usual and there were no indications of his illness. Jim Louie was 76 years old at the time of his death.

<sup>\*</sup>A perspective view of the Railway Exchange Building was published in the 1910 Yearbook of the Second Annual Exhibition of the Portland Architectural Club. The caption credited D. C. Lewis and H. G. Beckwith, Associate Architects, Portland.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

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Railway Exchange Building and Huber's Restaurant, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

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The Railway Exchange Building designed by Portland architects D. C. Lewis and H. G. Beckwith and erected in 1910 is significant to the city of Portland as one of the large commercial construction projects which typified the city's great period of upbuilding in the years before the First World War. The project set new standards in construction technology locally. It was Portland's first major business block to be constructed of reinforced concrete, and it was one of the earliest buildings in the city to utilize a curtain wall in which as much as 70% of the exterior surface was plate glass Moreover, with heavy demand for rentable office spaces as an incentive, construction of the Railway Exchange Building was commenced and brought to completion in the record time of five and a half months.

### United States Department of the interior National Park Service

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Railway Exchange Building and Huber's Resta	urant Multnomah Co., OREGON
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL	Keeper Shlowy Fyen

## **United States Department of the Interior**National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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RAILWAY EXCHANGE BUILDING AND HUBER'S RESTAURANT

320 S.W. Stark Street

Portland

Multnomah County

Oregon

Control number: 79002132

Listing date: 03-13-79

The purpose of this continuation sheet is to verify that the correct and complete historic name of the above-named property includes the word <u>Railway</u> Exchange Building and Huber's Restaurant.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: June 28, 1990