

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 31 1975
DATE ENTERED	MAY 6 1978

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

House
C. C. VanArsdol Residence

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Fifteenth at Chestnut

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Clarkston

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#5 - Hon. Thomas S. Foley

STATE

Washington

CODE

53

COUNTY

Asotin

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Elsie Bailey

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 384

CITY, TOWN

Siletz

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Oregon

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Asotin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Second and Filmore

CITY, TOWN

Asotin

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The C. C. Van Arsdol house is a complex assembly of additions built onto a small one story, one room homesteader's cottage dating from the early 1880's. Across the front of the cottage is a shed roof porch with turned posts and the remains of a balustrade along its ends. There is an exposed chimney on the south wall located at one end of the roof ridge. Apparently the original cottage had a simple transverse gable that was later extended in back forming a modified saltbox. The present shingle siding here is probably a replacement.

Attached to this cottage on the north wall is a one and a one half story house, nearly square in plan, with a medium pitch gable roof, its ridge running parallel to that of the cabin. This house is the central part of the building, and it once had very pleasant detail and proportion. There is a gable roof porch centered on the front wall, and a one story bay window on the west side. The siding is clapboards up to the eaves. Above this siding the gable ends are decorated in alternating bands of fancy butt diamond and fish scale shingles. The central band is a row of long shingles like inverted pickets. These and a pattern on the fish scale shingles once were painted in a contrasting trim color. The end of the porch gable is also finished in decorative shinglework.

There is a chimney with a corbelled cap at the midpoint on the roof ridge, and tall double hung windows flank the porch and the bay window.

About 1900 an additional wing was built onto the east wall. Its gable roof is attached at right angles to the house and offset toward the back. There is a similar chimney along its ridge, and a gable dormer is centered in the slope toward the front. Just under the eaves below the dormer is a shed roof porch across the length of the addition. In the process of this work, ornamental apex brackets were installed in all the gable ends (only one remains) and decorative stickwork and balustrades were added in between the porch posts at the top and bottom, respectively. Also, a multipane attic window was added above the front porch, the upper sashes of some first floor windows were converted to the multipane type, and millwork cornices and corner brackets were included atop window enframements on the attic story.

There has been an odd assortment of further modifications on the east side and in back of the house including a dormer and shingle siding. The Van Arsdol home is now considered unlivable as a result of deterioration and damage by tenants.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cassius C. Van Arsdol was born in 1851 near Muncie, Indiana. He grew up on a farm in Iowa, and graduated in Civil Engineering from the University of Iowa in 1876. Two years later he was hired by the St. Louis, Kansas City & Northern Railroad as a "blackflag" on a survey crew. In 1881 he became employed as office assistant to J. Blickensdurfer, Chief Engineer in the Omaha headquarters of the Union Pacific. Van Arsdol is said to have introduced Blickensdurfer to the engineering applications of blueprints, and for this he was given a position with the Railroad. After only four years he became engineering division head for the Colorado office. There he was principally engaged in survey and exploration work to determine the most advantageous routes for laying new track.

His most dramatic accomplishment was the building of a 95-mile section of railroad from Cheyenne to Chugwater, Wyoming, in the winter of 1886-1887. This work proceeded under a deadline that would cause forfeiture of \$400,000 in bonds approved by voters in Cheyenne if the Union Pacific did not finish on schedule. The weather conditions were extremely adverse, but despite deep snows and sub-zero temperatures the track was completed on time.

After making several additional surveys for this railroad, Van Arsdol was hired by the Northern Pacific. He then built most of their trackage in the Clearwater country including the first line to Lewiston, Idaho, in 1898. He remained with the Northern Pacific from 1889 to 1903.

During the depression of the mid 1890's, the Northern Pacific was in receivership and all construction activity ceased. Van Arsdol then conceived a plan for an irrigation project which became the first major reclamation of semi-arid lands in southeastern Washington. Prior to this effort, Clarkston and the Jawbone Flat region had few settlers, many of whom were starved out by repeated crop failures. Van Arsdol succeeded in diverting Asotin Creek to irrigate otherwise worthless land which in turn he sold to farmers and orchardists. He encountered considerable difficulty in purchasing acreage because the owners identified him as a "railroad man". They assumed that his intention was to acquire property for future railroad construction, so they held out for a better price. His solution was to privately commission others to close a deal without identifying him as the actual purchaser. He obtained financial backing from Charles Francis Adams, former president of the Union Pacific. He also had promotional assistance from D. H. Libby, a Yakima publisher. The Lewiston & Water Power Company was incorporated in 1895, and the following year they completed an irrigation ditch. Van Arsdol promptly platted the town of Clarkston and settled with his wife in an existing one room cottage on 15 acres of arable land. At the time there was only one other cabin in the vicinity.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Van Arsdol was involved in an unsuccessful attempt to save Lewiston from the record flood of 1894. During that year the local population began to refer to him as "Father Noah". A hastily constructed dike gave way when high winds forced waves over the rim, beginning a rapidly multiplying erosion that eventually destroyed it.

After the depression, he returned to work on the Northern Pacific, selling out his interest in the Lewiston & Water Power Company. He was Division Engineer during construction of the Canadian Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad from Edmondton, Alberta, to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, from 1903 to 1914. He and his engineers surveyed every conceivable route and mountain pass. The pass eventually decided upon had a grade of four tenths of one percent, reportedly the most gradual crossing of any major barrier to transportation in the world, surprising even the Panama Canal at one percent.

In 1914 Van Arsdol returned to Clarkston where he worked as a civil engineer for highway construction. He designed the Lewiston Spiral Highway, Whitebird, Winchester, Pomeroy, Rattlesnake and other canyon grades. He is credited with a major contribution toward the opening of this area to automobile transportation, and he became the first president of the Blue Mountain Tri-State Highway Association.

Cassius Van Arsdol married Della Barrada April 29, 1886, in Yuba City, California. They had four children. Mrs. Van Arsdol kept several pets including a talkative parrot that lived forty years.

When they built a permanent home onto their Clarkston cabin, Della Van Arsdol made china-ware in a kiln using heat from the cabin fireplace. Her work was hand painted with scenes from nature, and she often donated it for sale at charity auctions. She is also remembered for her hospitality to itinerant Nez Perce Indians. C. C. Van Arsdol maintained an experimental garden plot where he grew several varieties each from an assortment of fruits, nuts, and ornamentals to determine which grew best under the climatic conditions.

The C. C. Van Arsdol residence is significant as the home of a civil engineer whose skillful contributions in railroad and highway construction serve to establish his historical importance in a crucial period in the development of transportation for the northwest. Charles M. Hayes, president of the Grand Trunk Pacific, praised him as "the foremost railroad pathfinder on the American Continent".