

1044

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

other names/site number Chambers, Jacob, Barn; Chambers, Bert, Barn

2. Location

street & number .4 miles north of jct. Knox Butte Road and Scrael Hill Road N/A not for publ.

city or town Albany vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Linn code 043 zip code 97321

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Sam Hamsh August 26, 1996
Signature of certifying official Date Deputy SHPO

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

for
Signature of Keeper: Edson H. Beall Date of Action: 9-27-96

Entered in the
National Register

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources Within the Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:agricultural outbuilding
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:processing
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:animal facility
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:agricultural outbuilding
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:animal facility
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Timber Frame Barn
(Agricultural)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls WOOD
roof METAL
other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
AGRICULTURE
SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1860

ca. 1860-1900

Significant Dates

ca. 1860

ca. 1890

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Linn County Planning Dept.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

less than one acre (0.6 acres) Albany, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>10</u>	<u>498180</u>	<u>49441803</u>	___	___	___
2	___	___	___	4	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Kathryn Gallagher and May D. Dasch

organization Linn County Planning Department

date Mar. 1, 1996

street & number Linn County Courthouse, P.O. Box 100

telephone (541) 967-3816

city or town Albany

state OR

zip code 97321

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Kenneth and Pamela Chrisman

street & number 1944 Vineyard **telephone** 510-462-0503

city or town Pleasanton **state** CA **zip code** 94566

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

Linn County, OR

7. Description

Summary

The Matthew C. Chambers Barn is a side-opening, timber frame barn built in ca. 1860. Originally five bays in length, an addition of two bays was made to the south elevation in the latter part of the 19th century. Salient features include a combination hewn and sawn timber frame with mortise and tenon joinery; a low-pitched gable roof typical of early Willamette Valley barns; and interior spatial arrangement reflecting incipient agricultural development in Linn County with its central drive, threshing floor, mowstead wall, and grain bins. The barn is located approximately two miles northeast of Albany, Oregon, on the west side of Scrael Hill Rd., a former Territorial Road that was the main north-south route through the valley at the time of the barn's construction. The barn's site encompasses a knob of land near the western foot of a promontory known as Knox Butte and although the setting is still rural, the urban fringe of Albany is encroaching. Located on the former Matthew Chambers Donation Land Claim, the barn is a remnant of the farmstead developed in this location by Matthew C. Chambers and two ensuing generations of the Chambers family. The Matthew Chambers log dwelling and subsequent frame house were located to the southeast of the barn. The frame house was demolished in ca. 1970. The Bert Chambers House, built in 1941, is located even further to the south and is located outside of the boundary considered for the current nomination because its construction date is outside the period of significance. A noncontributing machine shed, built in 1940, is located to the east of the barn. Notwithstanding a recent addition to the barn's north elevation, the barn maintains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The design of the barn evolved during the 19th century mirroring the farm's increased agricultural production, the adoption of mechanized tools and shifting agricultural markets. The barn is currently in fair physical condition.

Supporting Paragraphs

The longitudinal axis of the barn is northeast-southwest, parallel to Scrael Hill Road. A wagon door is centered on the east wall of the original 26x60 foot rectangular main NPS

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Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

Linn County, OR

volume. The height of the barn is approximately 15' from the sill to the plate. As originally constructed, the barn consisted of five 12 foot structural bays defined by six timber frame bents. A two bay timber frame addition was made to the south elevation of the barn in the latter part of the 19th century. A lean-to, which continues the roof line of the original barn, is presently located on the west elevation and although not original, apparently replaced another lean-to in this location also in the latter part of the 19th century. A 28'x 41' addition, which functions as a loafing shed, was added to the north elevation by Bert Chambers in ca. 1980 (Chambers 1996).

The ground surface beneath the barn is uneven and therefore, the foundation is higher in the southwest corner than in the northeast corner. The foundation consists of an assortment of large boulders, in various stacked arrangements, wood timbers, and wood posts, that support the sills and girders at the corners and at intervals beneath the barn. A continuous concrete foundation replaced the original foundation beneath the east wall, in the area north of the wagon door, in ca. 1980 (Chambers 1996).

The substructure of the barn consists of a timber sill, four transverse timber girders, and a longitudinal timber girder beneath the two bays originally serving as the threshing floor. Flooring under the central bay usually received special reinforcement so that it would not collapse under the heavier weights drawn into the threshing aisle. The longitudinal sills are the only hewn timbers used in the barn's construction. Dimensions of both sills are 10"x 12", with the west sill unspliced along its sixty foot length. The east sill has been cut and removed north of the wagon door in the location of the aforementioned concrete foundation. The transverse sills, the four transverse girders, and the longitudinal girder beneath the threshing floor, are sawn timbers with dimensions of 10"x 10". Sill and girder connections employ mortise and tenon joints.

Joists beneath the mow bays (two most southerly bays) and beneath the grain bin bay (the most northerly bay) run north-south while joists beneath the threshing floor run east-west, from the sills to the central longitudinal girder. Although original joists have been replaced in a number of locations, original joists remain in several areas. Joists beneath the west half of the central bay are unpeeled logs, hewn or sawed on the upper face, and adzed on the underside near the joist ends where they are tapered to fit into joist pockets

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in both the sill and the girder. Joists beneath the west half of the barn in the two most northerly bays are rough sawn joists measuring 10½" x 2½". Like the log joists, they taper on the underside at the ends and are fitted into joist pockets. Joists are laid 2 feet on center. Original flooring has been replaced in many areas. Original floor boards that remain have variable width dimensions ranging from 9" to 12".

The timber frame of the main volume of the barn was assembled with six bents. With the exception of the swing beam bent, located immediately north of the threshing floor, each bent consists of two end posts, a center post, and a girt (cross beam) connected to the posts approximately two feet beneath the plate. Braces, measuring 3"x 4", are employed in several positions: from both sides of the center posts to the girts; from the end posts to the girts; and from the end posts to plates. Posts, girts and braces are sawn and connected with mortise and tenon joints. Post dimensions range from 8"x 8" to 10"x 10" with measurements suggesting a slight tapering of individual posts toward the upper end. On each wall, there are three rough sawn wall girts located between the sill and the plate. The dimensions of the girts, some of which still retain bark, are irregular but in the range of 3½"x 4" to 4"x 5". The wall girts are mortised into the end posts thereby connecting each bent and serving as a nailing surface for the vertical board siding. An 8"x 8" (approximate) sawn plate, composed of three spliced timbers with a half lap scarfs, caps the posts on each longitudinal side. The east plate, as well as some of the posts and wall girts, are crudely sawn with bark still remaining on the surfaces of the timber.

A swing beam is located on the north side of the central drive floor. A swing beam is a bent which omits the center post thereby providing an uninterrupted space for threshing. The swing beam incorporates a truss in its design and in the Chambers Barn, the swing beam has an upper and lower chord separated by an upright and sway braces.

Atop each of the two girts adjacent to the wagon drive there are two sets of wooden brackets. These brackets were used in conjunction with a windlass system which, using horse power, raised wagon beds to the then current hay level of the mow where it could be more easily pitched (Chambers 1996). Referred to as a rack lifter (Arthur and Witney 1972), this is an early technology and its use in Oregon barns is not documented.

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Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

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The barn's timber framing is enclosed with an application of battened vertical boards. The original vertical boards, which were probably not battened, have been replaced in most exterior locations by circular sawn boards of regular 11½" widths. Some of the original vertical board siding is intact on the west and north elevations of the original barn volume. This siding, abutting the loft, has been protected from weathering by the lean-to. The vertical boards are rough sawn, widely spaced, with variable width dimensions ranging from 8" to 12". The spaced boards provided ventilation and light in early barns. Some of the boards have waney edges.

Siding has been removed in some locations that are now part of the barn's interior. Beneath the loft, the siding has been removed so that presently there is no wall between the main volume of the barn and the lean-to on the west elevation. The corresponding lowest level of wall girts has also been removed in this area. The original siding on the south elevation has also been removed above the level of the floor, presumably at the time of the two bay addition, so that there is no wall between the original volume of the barn and the addition. This siding may have been reused in other locations since some wide, rough sawn boards are employed on the west elevation. Siding has also been removed from the lower portion of the north elevation of the original barn where the 1980 addition adjoins the older barn.

A low-pitched gable roof (approximately 25 degrees) shelters the timber frame. Rough sawn 2"x 7" rafters are pinned into rafter seats in the east plate. Roof construction incorporates neither purlins nor ridgepiece. Spaced waney-edged boards serve as roof sheathing for the original 26'x 60' volume of the barn although some waney edged boards have been replaced by skip sheathing. Roof boards may have been moved to accommodate the shakes which are presently nailed to sheathing. Metal presently overlays the shakes. The eaves and verges of the barn overhang and the tapered ends of the rafters are exposed.

As constructed, the two southerly bays of the original barn functioned as a mow and the mowstead wall is still in place. These walls were generally four feet in height and the Chambers wall is typical at 4'3". The top of the wall is a girt which runs from the end posts to the center post. Studs, placed 2 feet on center, are notched into the girt and the

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Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

Linn County, OR

floor. One by ten inch breast boards are nailed horizontally to the studs. The center bay was the wagon drive which also functioned as the threshing floor. A double leaf wagon door, 11 feet in height, is located in the center of the east wall and opens onto the wagon drive. Evidence indicates that there was never a corresponding wagon door on the west elevation. The bay immediately north of the drive also functioned as part of the threshing floor. A grain bin was added to the west side of this bay in the latter part of the 19th century.

The most northerly bay was the location of three grain bins. Bent #2 has a lower second girt which serves as a top plate for the studs of the grain bin walls. The most westerly of the three grain bins has been removed in order to provide an aisle to a door accessing the previous and current additions on the north elevation. The grain bins that remain have their original board walls and slotted jambs for boards which were inserted or removed as the level of the grain changed. The wall boards of the grain bins are bevel cut providing a tighter joint. The ceiling above the bins is double layered of alternating wide boards. In some cases the boards are waney-edged. The loft is situated above the grain bins. The original function of a space in the southeast corner of the barn is unknown but evidence, including a stock door once on the east wall in this location, suggests that this might have been the location of one or two livestock pens.

Although the construction date for the two bay granary addition on the south elevation has not been ascertained with any certainty, a date in the latter part of the 19th century is suggested by the materials and workmanship employed. The timber frame construction is similar to the original portion on the barn except that the timbers are clearly circular sawn. Mortise and tenon joints connect the timbers but braces are toe nailed. Nails are machine cut. An aisle was carved out of some of the original barn's mow space in order to provide a passageway to the granary addition. While the roof line continues on the same plane as the original barn, because of the sloping ground surface, the floor of the addition is lower than the original volume of the barn necessitating two wooden stairs between floor levels. A ramp provides this function in the lean-to.

Four grain bins and a grain box are located in the granary addition. A double leaf roller wagon door, now removed and the opening enclosed with vertical board siding, accessed

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the drive located in front of the grain bins. The grain bin doors are singular in their use of diagonally laid grooved tongue and groove boards. Until ca. 1950, these grain bins, as well as the grain bins in the original portion of the barn, were used for wheat, oats, and barley. A storage loft is located above the bins. In the lean-to portion of the granary addition, there are two pens accessed by a stock door in the southwest corner. Historically, the south pen was used for a stallion while the north pen was a calf pen.

The current lean-to across the entire west elevation of the barn is not original but evidence suggests that a lean to was originally located on this side of the barn. The original lean-to may have served as an earthen floored shelter for livestock. The current lean-to, like the granary, probably dates to the latter part of the 19th century. The lean-to, which continues the roof line of the original barn, is timber frame and like the granary addition has mortise and tenon joints for the timbers and uses toe-nailed connections for the braces. On the west wall of the lean-to, there are five openings shuttered with siding boards. A wagon sized door on the west elevation is accessed by an earthen and concrete ramp. The door has been replaced by plywood leafs which open like a Dutch door. Wood stanchions for cows, added to the barn in ca. 1940 by Bert Chambers, are currently located in the lean-to. The lean-to, however, originally housed draft horses. Wood pegs on the west wall once accommodated harnesses.

A lean-to, date of construction unknown, was located on the north elevation until ca. 1980 when it was replaced by the current loafing shed addition. The former lean-to in this location was referred to as the cow barn (Chambers 1996). The 28' x 41' foot loafing shed addition is one story and has timber posts aligned with the posts in the older portions of the barn. The addition has vertical board and batten siding, composed of materials salvaged from the Matthew Chambers House, and a metal clad gable roof. The north wall omits siding beneath the level of the gable in conjunction with the addition's function as a loafing shed. Like the older portion of the barn, the roof line of the addition, although dropped below the level of the original barn, follows the profile of the lean-to on the west elevation. The wood manger in this addition was built by Bert Chambers in 1980 using materials salvaged from the Matthew Chambers House.

There is some hand-forged hardware in the Chambers barn. There is a hand-forged NPS

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hinge on the south leaf of the wagon door and several hand-forged pintles including two in the jambs of the wagon door and one in the jamb of a grain bin. The wagon door hardware may have been reused when the original wagon doors were rebuilt using circular sawn boards. The framing of the opening indicates that the size of the wagon door opening is original.

In addition to the aforementioned evolutionary modifications, steel cables have been added to the barn extending from the center of the girts on each bent to the plate. Mr. Bert Chambers indicated that one of the cables extends the entire width of the barn and was added in 1919 after a large snow storm. The other cables were added in ca. 1960. A wood hay fork track and Loudon grapple style hay fork were added by Bert Chambers sometime in the period from 1935-1940. The girt and presumably the center post of bent #5 has been removed. A partial gutter is supported by large brackets on the north side of the west elevation.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page A

CHAMBERS, MATTHEW C., BARN (c. 1860, c. 1890)

West side of Scrael Hill Road, about one half mile north of intersection with Knox Butte Road
Albany vicinity, Linn County, Oregon

COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Matthew Chambers Barn stands in the fertile bottom lands of the Mid-Willamette Valley that lie between the main channel of the Willamette and the forks of the Santiam River, in Linn County, Oregon. The barn is situated on the westerly toe of a knobby outcrop known as Knox Butte, on the west side of Scrael Hill Road, a former main route of travel north and south in Territorial days. The location is about a mile north of the road's intersection with Knox Butte Road, on the northeasterly outskirts of Albany, the Linn County seat.

The nominated area of slightly more than half an acre [0.6] is defined by wooden fencing enclosing the barnyard, but the east boundary is extended to include a portion of the historic driveway, or approach from the old Territorial road. One non-contributing feature is encompassed in the boundary. It is a non-historic machine shed of 1940 which stands at the east edge of the barnyard.

The barn is a side-opening, timber frame type and it was built about 1860. Originally five bays in length and oriented with its longitudinal axis north to south, parallel with the road, the barn was extended by two bays, or 26 feet at the south end and by a 15-foot lean-to the length of the west side about 1890, making the total historic footprint 41 x 86 feet. The present lean-to is a replacement of the original, and its roof continues the slope of the main roof. The barn meets National Register Criterion C as a rare well-preserved example of hewn and rough-sawn timber frame construction exhibiting mortise and tenon joinery. The low-pitched gable roof is typical of mid-19th century barns in the Willamette Valley. It is presently overlaid with metal. The sills and girders rest on a rock pier foundation.

The barn is enclosed with battened vertical board siding in fair condition. Most of the siding is replacement of original unbattened boards. There is some intact original siding to be found on the original west elevation, where the remaining section of wall under the loft was later protected by lean-tos.

The arrangement of interior space reflects the transition from early agriculture to mechanized farming practices. The central drive passes at a perpendicular angle to the long axis from east side of the barnyard through to the lean-to stable and west barnyard beyond. The cross drive is

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page B Chambers, Matthew C., Barn
Linn County, Oregon

surrounded by hay storage, livestock pens, and grain bins. There is additional hay storage in the loft. In recent years, about 1980, a loafing shed measuring 28 x 41 feet was added to the north elevation. It is entirely subordinate to the main volume, having a lower ridge for the gable roof, which, on the west elevation, matches the slope of the main roof. The loafing shed replaced an earlier north-end lean-to of unknown date.

The historic dwellings of the Matthew C. Chambers Donation Land Claim were a log house and its successor, a frame house, which stood to the southeast of the barn. These features are no longer standing. The present farmhouse, built by a descendant, Bert Chambers, in 1941, is not included in the nominated area.

This document carefully describes the barn's construction technology, its "evolutionary modifications," and the function of salient features in farming practices of the historic period. Especially valuable is a discussion which shows that the concepts behind Willamette Valley side-opening barns were traditional, but the early barns were individual in construction. The Chambers barn is the only known example of its type in Linn County with an intact mowstead wall, which the preparers identify as "an important feature related to the functional organization of pre-mechanized threshing." (A mowstead is a segregated space where hay was salted prior to baling.)

The Chambers barn also meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of settlement and agriculture for its association with early EuroAmerican settlement and agricultural development locally. Matthew Carey Chambers (1817-1898), a native of Vermont, was an overland pioneer of 1847 who laid claim to 640 acres of land at the foot of Knox Butte. After a sojourn in the California gold fields in 1849-1850, he returned to marry Mary Knox, daughter of James Knox, owner of the adjoining claim whose name was given to Knox Butte. In 1851, Chambers was elected first county clerk of Linn County. The primary crops of his farm initially were wheat and oats, and his livestock embraced sheep and swine, draft horses, milk cows, a few head of cattle, and poultry. By 1879, the farm had entered a period of high productivity which reflected both diversification, exemplified by plantation of an apple orchard, and the accelerating transition to mechanization.

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Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

Linn County, OR

8. Significance

Summary

The Matthew C. Chambers Barn, built in ca. 1860, illustrates principles of timber frame barn construction and agricultural practices that are centuries old. Traditions embodied in the conception of this barn demonstrate a cultural continuity from Europe, to the English colonies in America, and, at the dawn of the age of mechanized agricultural production, to Oregon's Willamette Valley. The granary addition to the Chambers Barn reflects the regional increase in agricultural production in the latter part of the 19th century, likely the corollary of mechanized threshing. The Matthew C. Chambers Barn meets Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as a well-preserved example of an early Willamette Valley, side-opening barn. It is the only known example of a barn in Linn County with an intact mowstead wall, an important feature related to the functional organization of pre-mechanized threshing. The barn also meets Criterion A, in the areas of settlement and agriculture, for its association with Euroamerican settlement and early agricultural development in Linn County in the nineteenth century.

Historical Background

Matthew Carey Chambers was born in Bridgeport, Vermont on Aug. 23, 1817, the son of Matthew Chambers and Hannah Smith Chambers. When he was twenty-one years old, he moved to Galesburg, Knox County, Illinois where he reportedly attended Knox College. In the spring of 1847, he joined a wagon train bound for the Oregon's Willamette Valley. After his arrival in the fall of 1847, he ascended the valley, crossed the Santiam River, and claimed approximately 640 acres of land at the foot of a promontory now known as Knox Butte. In 1849, he tried his luck in the gold fields of California returning to Linn County in the fall of 1850. The following year he married Mary Margaret Knox. Mary Knox was the daughter of James Knox, a neighbor whose claim bordered Chambers' claim to the north. That same year, he was elected the first county clerk of Linn County.

No written documents or oral family traditions concerning the construction of the

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Chambers, Matthew C., Barn

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Chambers Barn have come to light. The date of the barn has been assigned on the basis of architectural evidence and historical information on Matthew Chambers and farming practices in the Willamette Valley. A date of construction sometime in the period from 1855-1860 is suggested by general knowledge of the typical development of an Oregon Donation Land Claim on which the timber frame barn is generally erected before the frame house. Given Matthew Chambers' early tenure on this claim, it is likely that he would have erected a timber frame barn by 1860. While the barn's sawn frame may signify a slightly later date of construction, perhaps after 1860, other characteristics do not support this later date. The design of the barn, as discussed below, reflects an incipient level agricultural development. Other early characteristics include the very low-pitched roof and the use of non-standardized lumber.

Actually, the use of sawn timbers may not be unexpected. Hubbka (1984:56), in referring to New England barns, states that "...many barns built after 1840 employed standardized 8 inch by 8 inch straight-sawn major structural members..." There were two sawmills located in close proximity to the Chambers farm. The earliest of the two mills was the Anderson Cox sawmill reportedly built in the fall of 1849. The Anderson Cox mill was located approximately two miles from the Chambers farm (current Waverly Lake vicinity), on the main road into Albany (G.L.O. Maps). The John Powell sawmill was located approximately two and one-half miles to the east of the Chambers farm (G.L.O. Maps). The Powell sawmill account book has survived with records of sales beginning in 1857. While the name Chambers is not listed, several of his nearby neighbors purchased sawn timbers and barn boards (Powell Family Manuscripts).

Like many Linn County farms in the 19th century, the primary crops of the Chambers farm were wheat and oats. Wheat production on the Chambers farm increased in the years between 1870 and 1879 when yields climbed from 360 bushels to 1000 bushels. Oat production increased to a lesser extent from 250 bushels to 450 bushels over the same period. Matthew Chambers also raised sheep and swine. Other livestock included draft horses, several milk cows, a few head of cattle, and poultry for egg production and personal consumption. In 1879, the farm included a 100 tree apple orchard (U.S.

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Agricultural Schedule, 1880).

Matthew Chambers died on Dec. 23, 1898. One of his sons, Jacob "Jake" Chambers, took over the family farm. In 1941, Jake's son, Bert Chambers, built a small house to the south of the first wood frame house. Bert Chambers became the sole operator of the farm after his father's death in 1960 and the Chambers farm was designated a century farm in 1968. The older house on the property was demolished in ca. 1970. Bert Chambers and his wife occupied the 1941 house until the recent sale of the farm. The farm was purchased by Ken Chrisman, a great grandson of Matthew C. Chambers, and his wife Pamela. Mr. Chrisman is planning to rehabilitate the barn maintaining the character-defining features which identify this barn as an example of an early Willamette Valley side-opening barn.

The Early Willamette Valley Side-opening Barn

The Willamette Valley side-opening barn is the progeny of a centuries old English barn building tradition. "In England by the 16th century farmers of the yeoman class were building side-opening barns, a scheme taken to America with the colonists" (Dole 1974:93). In America, as in England, the side-opening barn was used for grain threshing and grain storage. According to Philip Dole (1974:88), the side-opening barn was the major type of barn throughout the Willamette Valley in the 1850s. Characteristics of this type of barn, which are shared by the Chambers barn, include post and girt timber frame construction; dimensions approximating 30x60 feet; a height from floor to plate of 15 to 18 feet; a very low-pitched gable roof; unpainted vertical siding; double-leaf wagon doors with handwrought hardware located on a side wall; and interior spatial organization reflecting the early agricultural development of the Willamette Valley when grain production was at a subsistence level and grain was threshed without the benefit of machinery (Dole 1974:89). The interior design of the Matthew Chambers Barn reflects this incipient level of agricultural development with its threshing floor; a mow for storing hay or unthreshed sheaves of grain; grain bins for threshed grain; a loft above the grain bins; and one or more livestock pens.

The first Euroamerican farmers in the Willamette Valley harvested wheat by cutting the

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standing grain with a cradle and bundling it into sheaves. Although mechanical threshers were in limited use in areas of the United States at the time that the Willamette Valley was being settled, generally threshing machines were not an item in the pioneers' inventory. Essentially, there was a choice between two traditional threshing techniques; the sheaves could be beaten with a flail--a two-piece, jointed wooden tool swung with the hands such that one section crashed down on grain bundles laid on a wooden floor or hard packed ground, or the sheaves could be trampled by horse or oxen. "Called "treading," "tramping," or "tromping," the hooves of horses and oxen made to walk or trot on the sheaves replaced the striking action of the flails" (Rikoon 1988:1).

The threshing floor is generally located in the center bay, which also serves as the driveway, and generally extends to an adjacent bay. In order to provide a space that is unencumbered by a center post, builders often removed the center post from the bent located between the two bays which, combined, served as the threshing floor. To omit the center post of the threshing floor required an exceptional, long span truss (Dole 1974:91). The Chambers barn has this truss.

In the side-opening barn, a haymow is often located on one side of the threshing floor. Several authors describe the low retaining wall that was often located on the side of the threshing floor dividing the threshing floor from the haymow. Calkins and Perkins (1995:49) note that "Smaller horizontal girts often extended from both sides of the central upright to the bent's endposts. Positioned into the upright, approximately four feet from the floor, the girts often served as a frame for a short retaining wall, formally separating the center threshing aisle from the adjacent bay." Gray (1955:4) states that "The hay was stored in a mow to one side of this floor, and a tightly boarded breast girt kept the loose grain from scattering into the hay." This wall has been referred to as a mowstead or threshing wall (Rikoon 1988:10). The Chambers Barn is the only identified barn in Linn County with this mowstead wall.

Grain bins are another characteristic of the Willamette Valley side-opening barn. Philip Dole (1974:89-90) notes that along the far wall are "...two or three small grain bins with a total capacity of about 1,200 bushels and perhaps a small bull or calf pen." The Chambers Barn has two of the original three grain bins intact.

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The Evolution of the Chambers Barn in the Nineteenth Century

A biography of Matthew Chambers states that "He continually improved his farm adding new buildings from year to year, and more extensively, raising all kinds of stock" (Anon 1903:1571). In the latter part of the 19th century, two additions were made to this barn: a lean-to across the west elevation and a granary on the south elevation.

The lean-to provided a stable for draft horses. It is interesting to note that the number of horses owned by Matthew Chambers increased from 4 in 1870 to 13 in 1880 perhaps prompting the need for the lean-to horse stable (U.S. Census Records, Agriculture Schedule, 1880). The increase in the number of draft horses may reflect the increasing use of mechanized equipment which relied on horse power.

Lean-tos of this design are found in New England from whence Chambers hailed. Calkins and Perkins (1995:57) describe full-length lean-tos on the rear sides of English threshing barns in noting that the size of the lean-to was generally determined by the amount of area that could be covered by the extension of the main roof, because most builders maintained the original pitch of the roof. The barn-length shed across the rear side creates a saltbox-roof appearance (Noble and Cleek 1995:78).

A two bay granary addition extended the barn to the south. The addition of bays to either gable end was a common solution to expanding this type of barn in New England. This addition greatly increased the grain storage capacity of the barn and reflects the increased agricultural productivity of the farm. A large grain bin was also added to the original portion of the barn. The placement of this grain bin over a portion of the original threshing floor reveals that the threshing floor was no longer needed.

Comparative Analysis

The number of surviving timber frame barns dating to the early period of Linn County history is uncertain because the county has not been comprehensively surveyed for this type of resource. One early Linn County barn, the Hugh Leeper Brown Barn, built in

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ca. 1849, was listed on the National Register in 1978 and is among the oldest extant buildings in Linn County. Other early barns that have been inventoried include the Gideon Backus Barn and the Pearl Barn. These barns, and other barns which represent the first generation of Euroamerican settlement, are very important for while standard in concept, these early barns were highly individual in construction detail (Klein 1978). The Chambers Barn is notable for its ability to interpret agricultural practices in the 19th century. The Chambers Barn may be the only barn in Linn County to survive with its mowstead wall intact.

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9. Bibliography continued

United States Census Records. Linn County, Oregon, Schedule 2 -- Productions of Agriculture, 1880.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 35 of Township 10S, Range 3W of the Willamette Meridian, in Linn County, Oregon. The nominated area, rectangular in shape, encompasses .6 acres of tax lot 500. Boundaries of the nominated area parallel the four sides of the barn and lie at a distance of 20 feet from the south wall, 50 feet from the west wall, 30 feet from the north wall, and 100' feet from the east wall of the barn.

Boundary Justification

The south, west and north boundaries are defined by fencing delineating the current barnyard associated with the barn. The east boundary is extended to encompass a portion of the driveway leading to the barn and a non-contributing machine shed which is situated in close proximity to the barn.

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Photograph Catalogue

Chambers, Matthew C., Barn, Linn County, Oregon

Photographer: Mary Kathryn Gallagher

Printed by Bob Ross

Negatives on file at the Linn County Planning Department, Linn County Courthouse,
Albany, Oregon

- 1) General setting, looking to the northwest, Feb. 21, 1996.
- 2) East elevation, looking west, Feb. 21, 1996.
- 3) South elevation, looking northeast, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 4) West elevation, looking east, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 5) Oblique view, north and west elevations, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 6) Hand forged pintle and hinge on the lower portion of the south leaf of the wagon door on the east elevation, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 7) Fieldstone foundation, southeast corner of original barn volume, Feb. 21, 1996.
- 8) Substructure detail illustrating fieldstone foundation, girder and log joists, Feb. 21, 1996.
- 9) Looking southeast at end post of bent #2 illustrating connection of girts, wall girts and braces, Feb. 21, 1996.
- 10) Bent #3, swing beam, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 11) Mowstead wall, looking west from wagon door, Sept. 27, 1995.
- 12) Grain bins in the granary addition, looking southwest, Feb. 21, 1996.

26 25

35 36 10 3W 35

SCALE 1:9600



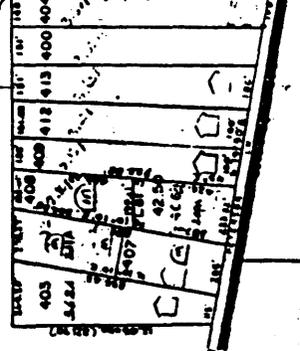
LINN

34 35 36 10 3W 26

See Map 10-3W-34

8-4

SE. Cor. America Houston D.L.C. No. 48



300 2.67 654c

SCRAVEL HILL RD

RD

2001 5019A

100

8-9

8-26

SW Cor. James Knox D.L.C. No. 42

Lot 3 2862

8-2

Lot 1 2863

WY. NW. Cor. John Earl D.L.C. No. 41

313 7.86A

See Map 10-3W-350

NE. Cor. Matthew Chambers D.L.C. No. 40

600 44.00A

312 4.771

302 14.68A

311 10.74A

See Map 10-3W-350

NE. Cor. Christian Miller D.L.C. No. 41

LOT 2 117A

LOT 4 117A

See Map 10-3W-34

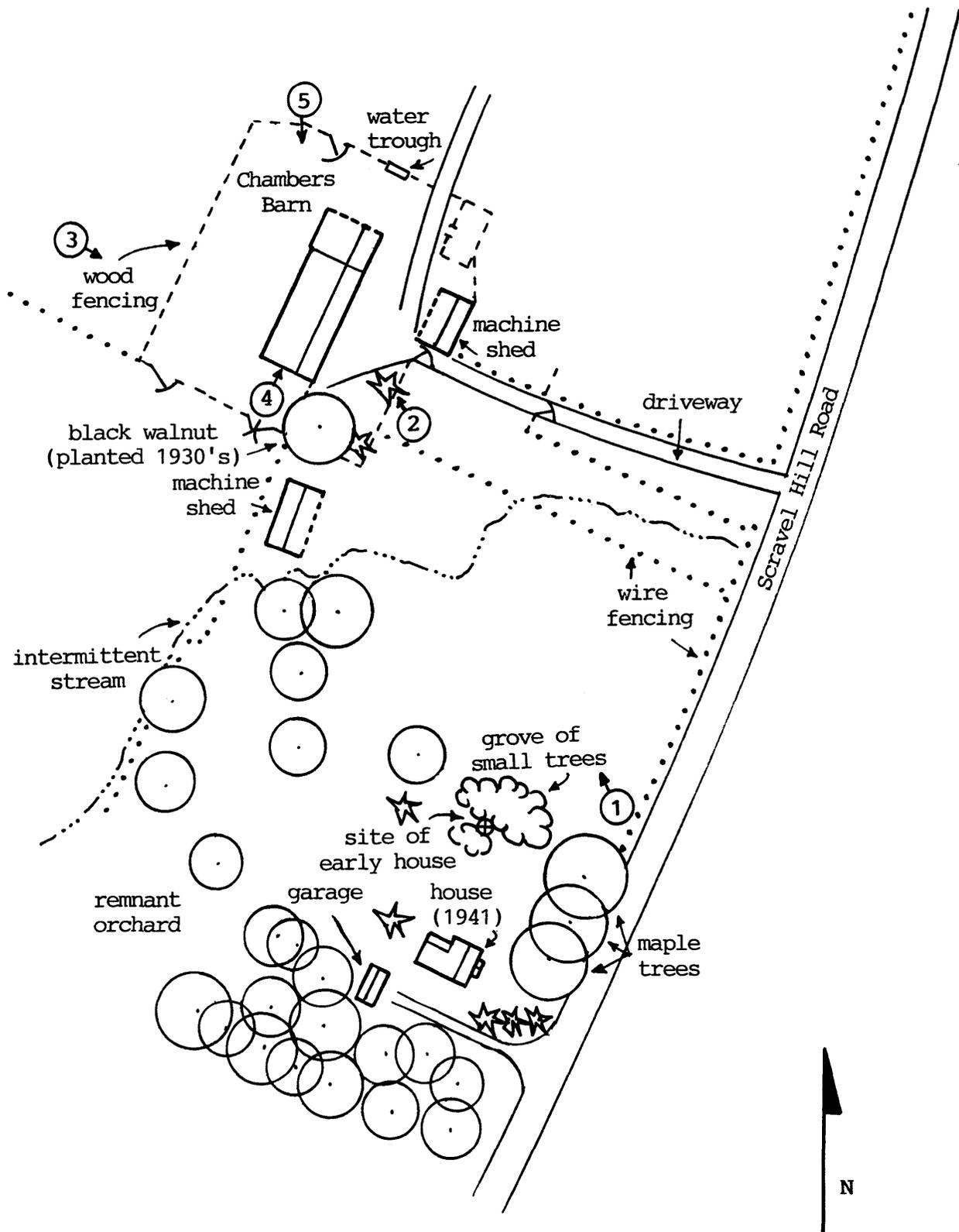
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10 3W 35

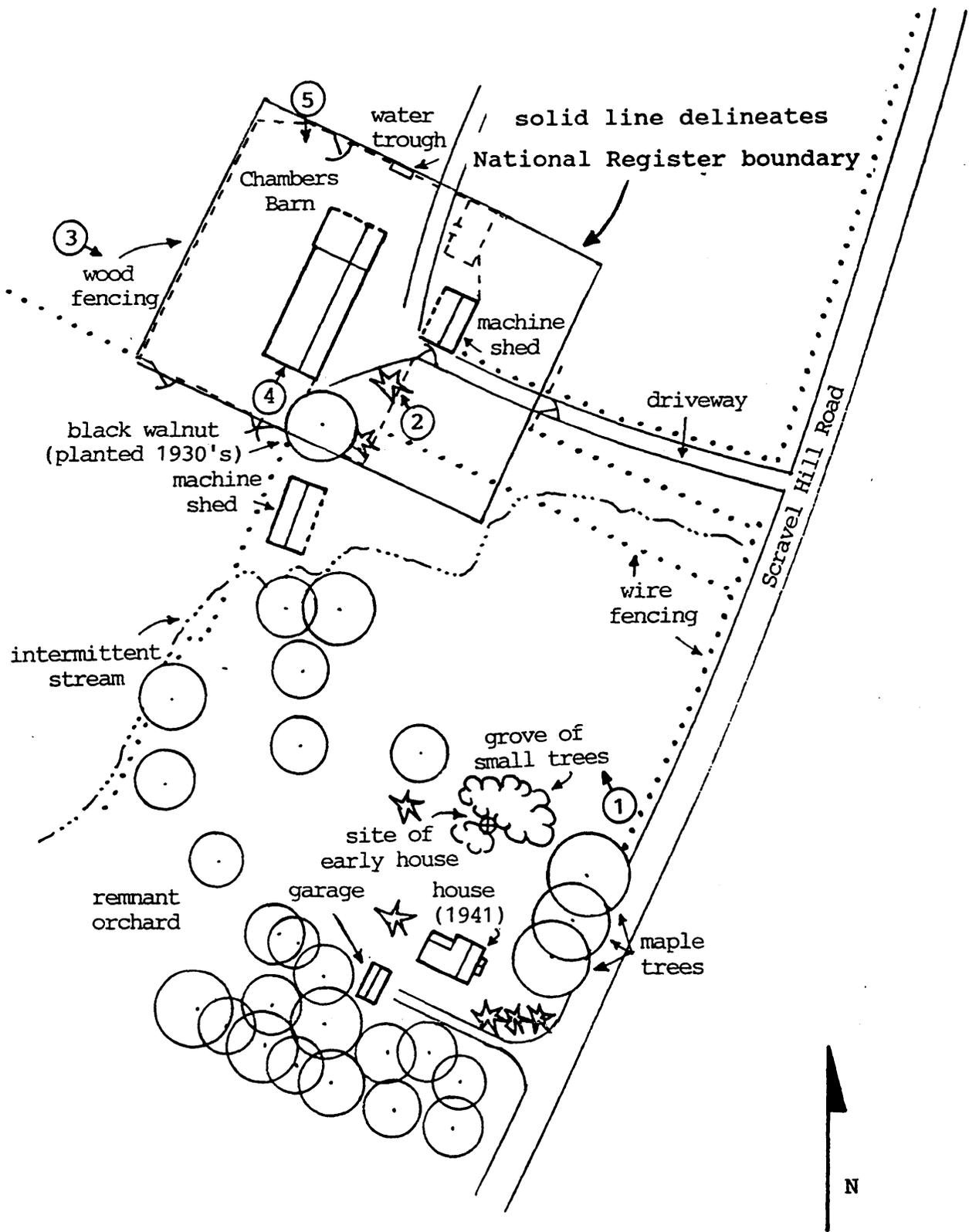
MATTHEW CHAMBERS BARN

See Map 10-3W-2

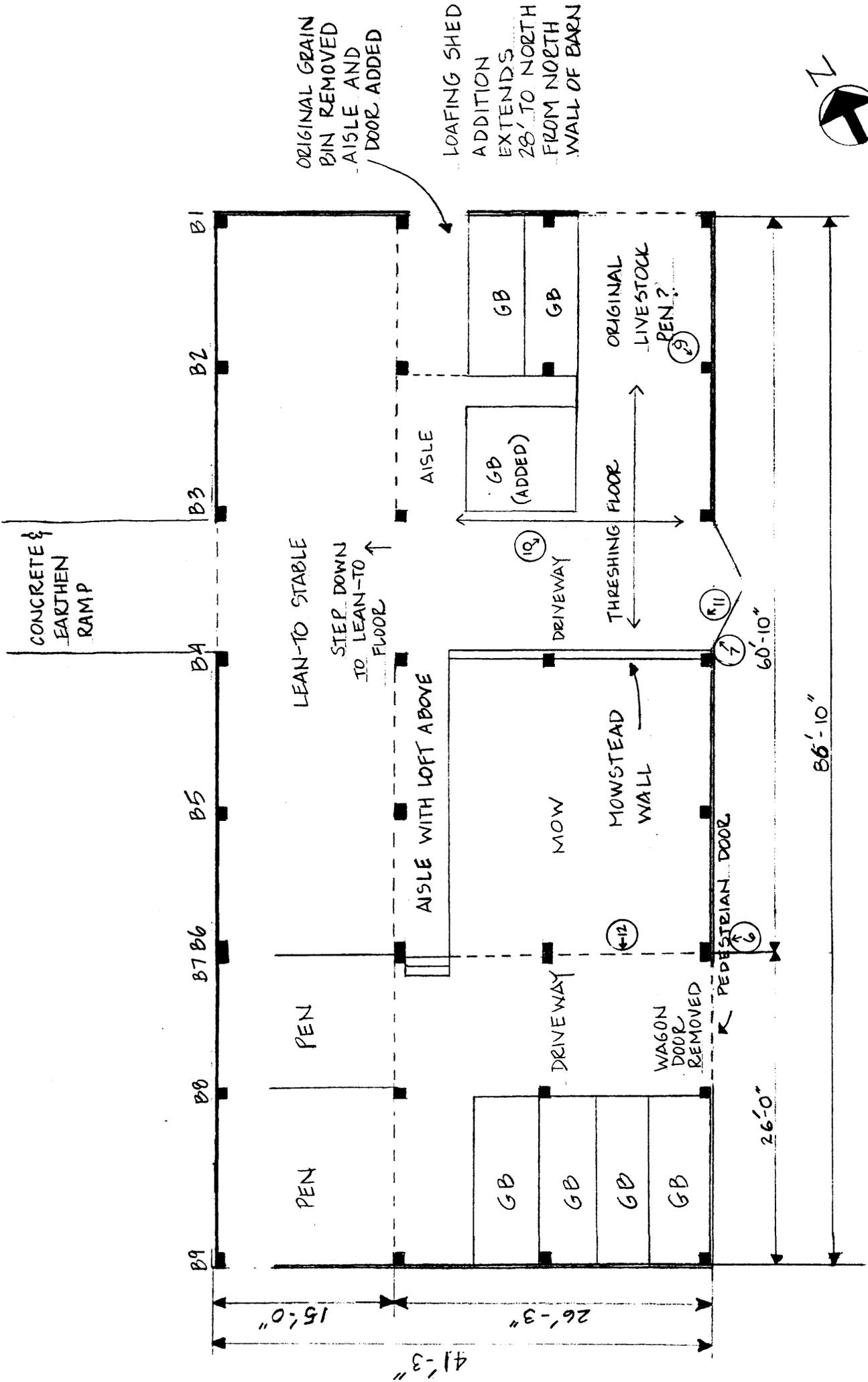
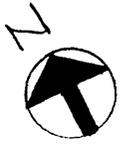
10 3W 35



MATTHEW CHAMBERS BARN, LINN COUNTY, OREGON



MATTHEW CHAMBERS BARN, LINN COUNTY, OREGON



MATTHEW CHAMBERS BARN
 LINN COUNTY, OREGON

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"