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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

JUN 13 1988

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Blank, Stephen and Parthena M., House
other names/site number "Old Stage Coach Stop"

2. Location

street & number 2117 "A" Street
city, town Forest Grove
state Oregon code OR county Washington code 067 zip code 97116

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal
Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 1 buildings, 1 sites, 1 structures, 1 objects, Total 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: June 3, 1988

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[X] entered in the National Register.
[] determined eligible for the National Register.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain):
Signature of the Keeper: Patrick Andrews
Date of Action: 7/14/88

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood (pine)walls wood (weatherboard)

roof asphalt (shingle)other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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The Old Stagecoach Stop is a two-story, gable-front-and-wing house detailed in the Greek Revival style. It is situated one block from the commercial center of Forest Grove, on the East side of "A" Street, and stands in well-kept grounds with mature trees. Several historic residential houses are in the immediate vicinity. From first construction in 1858 or 1859, this frame house evolved from a simple two-story dwelling, through additions made during its first thirty years. It was then moved, from the southwest corner of the block, 40 yards north to its present site. The house has lost very little of its architectural integrity, and nothing of its essential character.

The house is thought to have been constructed initially as a two-story dwelling with simple rectangular floor plan. It was then expanded with a two-story extension southwards, resulting in a T-shaped plan, with a porch in the angle on the west side having a hipped roof at the open end. Later, two 1-1/2 story additions eastward produced the present L-shaped plan. The completed ensemble of these several constructions was a harmonious, aesthetically pleasing expression of Greek Revival architecture. The front porch exhibits a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Doric order accomplished with square wooden porch columns and the use of available wood moldings to refine the entablature and column capitals and bases, and west bay window. The several roofs are of identical low pitch with boxed cornice partially returned at the gable ends and wide frieze boards.

Windows are predominantly six-over-six, thin-muntined, double-hung sash, with simple surrounds. Doors are paneled and also have plain surrounds. Two bay windows were added at the same time as the first, southward extension, on the west and south gable ends. The bay on the west is of particular interest with its full height, fixed single casement windows, the center one opening in the manner of a door. This entire bay has wood panels and raised moldings under and flanking the windows inside and out. Interior columns are identical to the porch columns. The south bay is more utilitarian with fixed casement six-pane windows, and wall siding extending beneath them.

The house stands on a large lot, close to the street, in well kept grounds. Mature cedar, holly, maple and English walnut trees are close to the house. The house faces onto a residential street, though there is commercial activity on the other three sides of the block. The house next door (to the south) is a Queen Anne style house in excellent condition, built in 1895. At the rear of the house, on the north side of the lot, is a simple gable-roofed, single-bay garage built around 1920. It is not counted as a contributing feature of the nominated property.

The foundation is composed of individual footings of large stones (some replaced with concrete pier blocks) supporting solid wooden posts approximately 30" high. Those of the original construction are rectangular and hand-hewn. Those of later

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additions are rough-sawn from commercial saw-mill production. The floor beams and joists of the original portion are solid hand-hewn wood and 3/4 round logs.

During recent restoration, portions of the framing system were exposed, and an interesting mixing of common methods was revealed. The original part was principally of the balloon system; however, the one corner exposed consists of a two-story solid timber post with lateral solid members joined by tenons fixed with wooden pegs. This post and beam element was abutted by rough-sawn balloon framing. The later addition to the house is an early version of box, or platform framing. Interior and exterior sheathing is of rough-sawn 3/4-inch Douglas fir with some boards more than 20" wide.

The original roof covering was wood shingle, as indicated by the spaced rough-sawn wood sheathing which remains under plywood added to accommodate the present composition shingle. The house has white-painted narrow weatherboard siding and cornerboards. The siding on the oldest part of the house is clapboard, except for the East gable where it has been replaced with board and batten. There are various types of siding, including shiplap, bevel and drop siding on other sections of the house.

Heating was provided from stoves connected to two interior corbelled brick chimneys, and the use of transfer grilles in floors and walls. One exterior chimney stack remains in the center of the north gable roof.

Assuming that the construction of the house took place over a period of some years, in several stages (evidence of which clearly exists in the roof and under the floor), the house was complete by 1888, and probably much earlier, for it appears on the Sanborn Fire map of that year. It was moved, in its entirety, 40 yards from the corner of the block to its present site, when the Queen Anne residence was built in its place. Since then it has remained essentially unaltered on the exterior. Exceptions to this are the replacement of the two six-over-six windows over the porch by two wider four-over-four mullioned windows; the replacement of the six-over-six window under the porch by a second entrance door, and the loss of the southernmost third of the porch.

The interior of the house was altered when it was converted to a triplex in the late 1950s. Changes have mainly consisted of additional dividing walls, modern finishing materials and additional bathrooms and kitchens. All this work was reversed by the present owner of the house, who is in the process of restoring the house to a condition congruous with its appearance at the turn of the century, as documented in the photographs of that time. Enough remains of the original interior features and materials to be able to restore or replace with similar materials and finishes: plain door and window trim and baseboards, ceilings of plain boards, patterned drop siding used as a ceiling, car siding wainscoting in

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the living room, and lath and plaster walls covered with muslin-backed paper. The staircase was altered when the house was converted to apartments in order to create a separate entrance to the upper floor. This has now been restored to its original position, with the last five steps turned at a 45 degree angle.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1858-1895

Significant Dates
c. 1858
c. 1895

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Stephen Blank (attributed)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Stephen and Parthena McMillen Blank House at 2117 "A" Street is a locally distinctive example of Greek Revival architecture constructed in 1858 or 1859 and subsequently enlarged. The two-story house with its T-shaped plan, lapped weatherboard and board and batten siding, has an especially fine boxed cornice with returns and unadorned frieze. The house was enlarged at an early date by single-story rear additions at right angles to the long axis of the stem of the "T."

Single-story polygonal window bays are centered in the front and south side gable ends. The outer third of the square-columned porch presently is missing. Second story windows in the facade of the stem were changed to paired four-over-four, double-hung windows from six-over-six windows after 1900. In 1895 the house was turned at a 90 degree angle and was moved 40 yards north onto a new pier foundation to face west on a lot adjoining its original location. Otherwise, the house outwardly is little changed from the appearance it had when it occupied the southwest corner of the block, facing south. The historic relocation, undertaken after the Blanks left the property, was so minor in scope, and so routine for the period, it overcomes the normal exclusion of relocated properties.

The house is significant under Criterion C as one of two distinctive examples of Greek Revival architecture of the 1850s remaining in Forest Grove. Also, it represents an unusual combination of balloon frame and box construction. Stylistically, the house is closely related to the Alvin T. Smith House, the more widely known Classic Revival house of 1857, thanks due to the Historic American Buildings Survey of 1934. (Smith was Forest Grove's first settler in 1841.)

The original occupants of the nominated property are noteworthy in Forest Grove history. Stephen Blank (1829-1914), a native of New York, was a carpenter and farmer who owned a sash and door factory in Forest Grove. His father-in-law, Joseph McMillen, owned a sawmill. It is likely that Blank was the builder of his own house. The Blanks sold the place in 1892 and moved to a new house which they built across the street. The house in which Stephen and Parthena Blank spent the remainder of their lives is no longer standing.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Washington County Deed Records. Business Gazeteer of Forest Grove, 1880s.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1888, 1892, 1902, 1912.

Proceedings of the Forest Grove City Council 1880 onward.

Hines, H.K., An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893).

Interviews: Dr. Walter Dyke, Mrs. Joseph G. Fowler, June, 1987.
(Dr. Dyke and Mrs. Fowler were children of Forest Grove attorney, Walter Dyke, and were raised in the house. They supplied information and historic photographs which accompany the nomination.)

Diaries of Alvin T. Smith, 1840-1888.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

Forest Grove Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one Forest Grove, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A 110 4911220 51041071010
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located in Section 31, Township 1N, Range 3W, Willamette Meridian, in Forest Grove, Washington County, Oregon. It is identified as Tax Lot 9300 of Block 2, Walker's Addition to the City of Forest Grove, and is more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point North 135.5 feet from the SW corner of said Block 2, thence North 73 feet, thence East 214 feet, thence South See continuation sheet 73 feet, thence West 214 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property, measuring 73 x 214 feet, encompasses the lot historically occupied by the 1858 house of Stephen Blank from 1895 onward. In the latter years, the house was turned at a 90° angle to face west and was moved 40 yards to the north from its original location at the SW corner of the same block on which it stands today.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gladys Haynes, with assistance of Mrs. Julian Gibbard
 organization Historic Landmarks Board of Forest Grove date August 1987
 street & number 2119 "B" Street telephone (503) 357-9356
 city or town Forest Grove state Oregon zip code 97116

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The nominated house is popularly known as the "Old Stage Coach Stop." While the Blanks did board students of Tualatin Academy, it is thought likely the stage house term came to be used during the occupancy of the second owner, W. H. Crosley, a carriage maker. It was Crosley who was responsible for relocating the house. He occupied it for several years on its original foundation before moving it to a neighboring lot in order to build his Queen Anne style residence at the southwest corner of the block.

The house originally was a rectangular two-story dwelling. Newspapers dated 1858 were found pasted on the original interior wall boards, underneath wallpaper in the original rectangular section. It was expanded by a two-story wing and became T-shaped in plan. At another date, but before 1888, two one and one-half story additions created its present L-shaped plan. During each addition, the overall architectural features were integrated.

The influence of the Greek Doric order is evident in the use of square wooden porch columns and the use of available wood molding to enhance the entablature, column capitals and bases, and the west bay window. The several roofs all have identical pitch with boxed cornices partially returned at the gable ends and wide frieze boards.

The windows, for the most part, are six-over-six, thin-muntined, double-hung sash, with simple surrounds. Most of the glass is original. When the first extension was added, two bay windows were added at the same time on the present west and south gable ends. The bay on the west facade is particularly interesting because of its full height, fixed single casement windows, the center one of which opens, as would a door. This bay has a full classical entablature and inset spandrel panels. The south bay is simpler. It has fixed casement, six-pane windows and bulk heads finished with weatherboards.

The Blank House retains its original footings of large stones (a few of which have been replaced with concrete piers) which support solid wood posts about 30" high. Those posts which are the original ones are rectangular and hand-hewn. Those for later additions are rough-sawn indicating commercial sawmill production. The original floor beams and joists are solid hand-hewn wood and 3/4 round logs.

Original construction materials and methods have been uncovered during the past two years during restoration work. It is evident that balloon frame and box construction methods were mixed.

Stephen Blank's biography contains the information that he was first a carpenter in New York state before he moved to Illinois in 1844, where he farmed. After he came to Oregon in 1852 he bought three acres adjacent to Tualatin Academy (now the Pacific University campus) and then added other parcels to this holding. He

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erected substantial buildings on his properties ". . .thus aiding in the growth of the city." He worked in logging camps (his father-in-law, Joseph McMillen, owned a sawmill) and owned a grocery and meat market. He continued to work frequently at his carpentry trade. By 1858 he owned a sash and door factory in Forest Grove, which he managed for some ten years. From the 1893 biographical information it is logical to infer that he built his own house.

Stephen Blank was born in New York, where he attended school a little during the winter. Parthena McMillen Blank was born in Ohio and her parents, Joseph and Ruth McMillen, also came to Forest Grove at about the same time. All four pioneers are buried in Mountain View cemetery, northwest of Forest Grove. Stephen and Parthena were married near St. Charles, Illinois, in 1850 and migrated to Oregon in 1852. Blank drove a herd west when he came. His cattle were stolen at The Dalles, though he was told they were sick and died during his absence in Portland. The Blanks settled in Forest Grove in October, 1852, and lived there the remainder of their lives.

Blank also lent money. According to A. T. Smith's diary, he went up to the Grove sometime in the early 1860s to borrow \$500.00 in gold from Stephen Blank. The two men were also close personal friends. When Smith's new house was finished about 1857, he gave the first party he ever mentioned, and the Blanks were among his guests. He mentioned visiting them a number of times. He reported that Mrs. Blank made new drawers for him after his own wife died. Smith stated that he had a builder for his new dwelling. It is possible Blank closely observed the Smith House while it was under construction.

The Blanks had no children of their own, but reared three girls orphaned on the Oregon Trail. One of them, whom they had taken care of since she was three, became ill and died when she was twenty-three. The other two were sisters who married and remained loving daughters. The Blanks also boarded college students in their home less than two blocks from the campus.

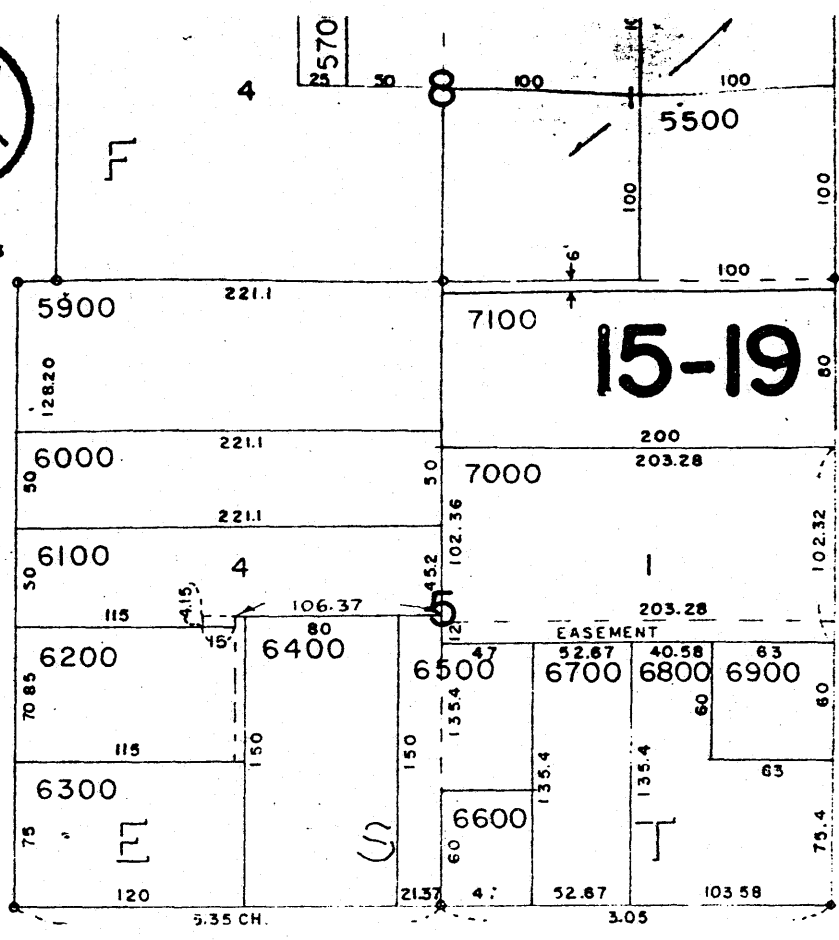
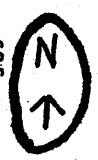
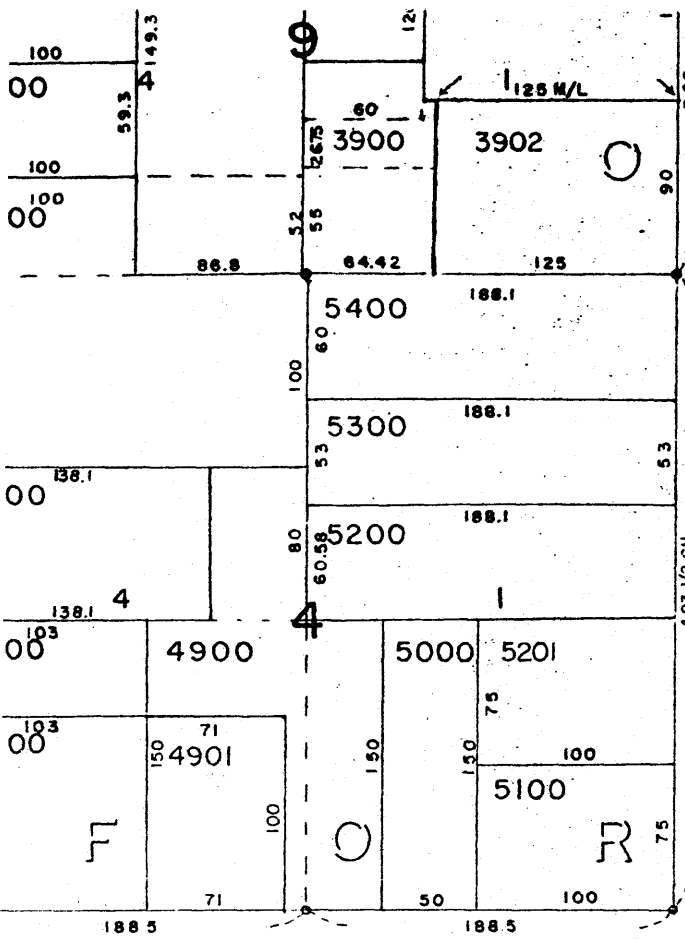
It is not known that the Blanks themselves operated a stage coach inn. However, according to local tradition, the house was an overnight stage coach stop between Portland and Tillamook in the last century. An elderly son of the Reverend Elkanah Walker provided this information to the present owner some thirty years ago. Mrs. Joseph Fowler, whose parents, the Walter Dykes, owned this house from c. 1917 to 1949, also said it had been a stage stop before her parents bought it. The second owner, W. H. Crosley, was a carriage maker and he may have been the one who utilized it as a stage coach stop. In any event, its common name was always well-known.

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Stephen Blank engaged in other activities important in a pioneer community. The original plat of Forest Grove made for the new Tualatin Academy in 1849 incorporated the two-hundred acres given by the Reverend Harvey and Mrs. Clarke. Elkanah and Mary Walker also gave the new school a portion of the southeast part of their D.L.C. (The Walkers had been forced to leave their mission near present-day Spokane after the Whitman Massacre.) The Blank House is located on Walker land as part of Walker's Addition in Forest Grove. The plat provided for streets on a grid pattern. Blank platted Walnut Street (now 21st Avenue) across his property west of the campus of the institution which became Tualatin Academy and Pacific University in 1854. Later in his career, Blank was a stockholder in the

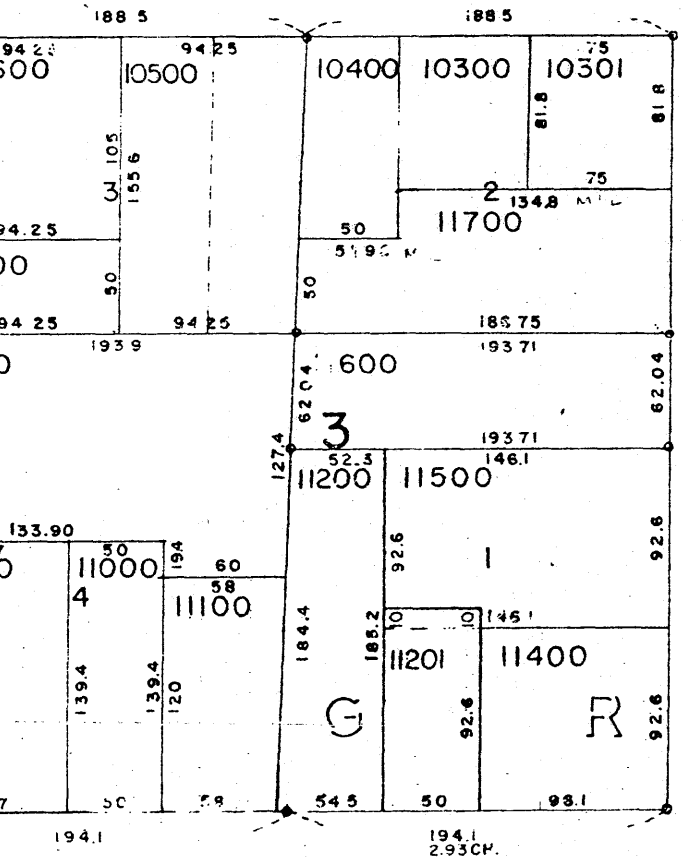
Canning Company and the Electric Light Company. Those enterprises were the first of their kind in Forest Grove. All of his activities indicate that Blank was very active in Forest Grove's business life in its formative decades.

The Blank House is, above all, significant as one of two distinctive examples of Greek Revival architecture of the 1850s remaining in Forest Grove. It is located on a quiet residential street. The block, however, is zoned commercial, because its eastern side fronts Main Street. The quiet elegance of the house, now in the process of restoration, on its large tree-shaded lot imparts a sense of history to all who pass by. The house is listed in the Chamber of Commerce "Guide to Historic Forest Grove," and is always included in "walking tours" taken by Forest Grove school children studying architecture and community history. The Blank House was built by two people who were active participants in the settlement and early development of Forest Grove. Their friends and contemporaries included the A. T. Smiths, the Elkanah Walkers, Tabitha Brown, and the Sidney Harper Marshes. A great deal has been written about the people who helped found Tualatin Academy and Pacific University. The Blanks arrived after the founding of the academy but they were important figures in the upbuilding of the community thereafter.

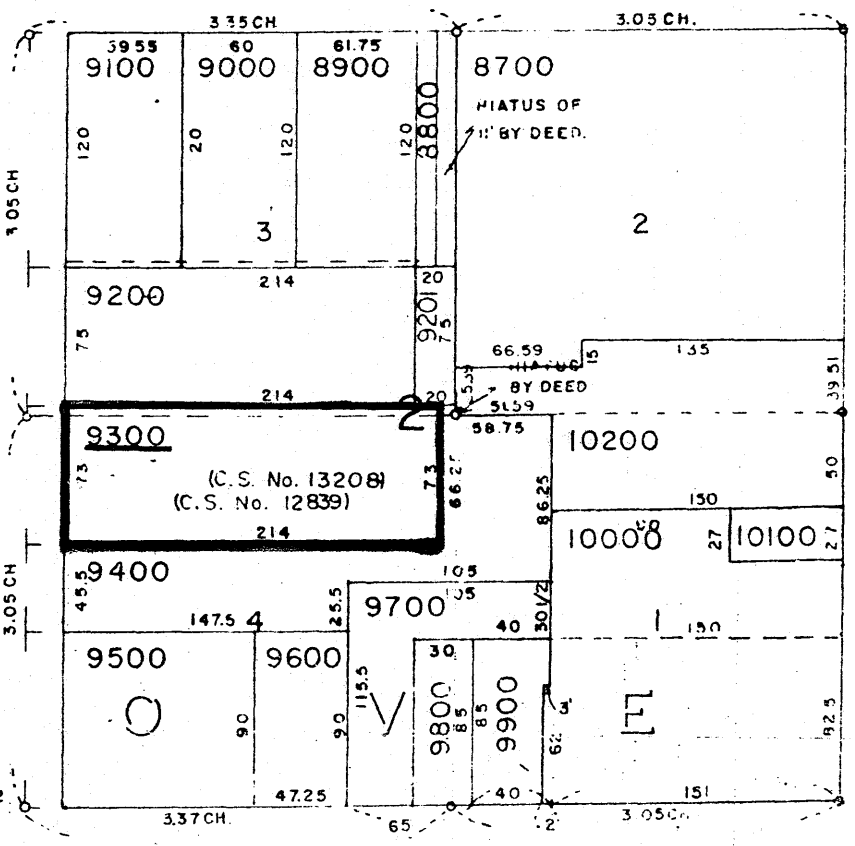


22nd

AVENUE



21st



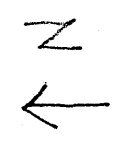
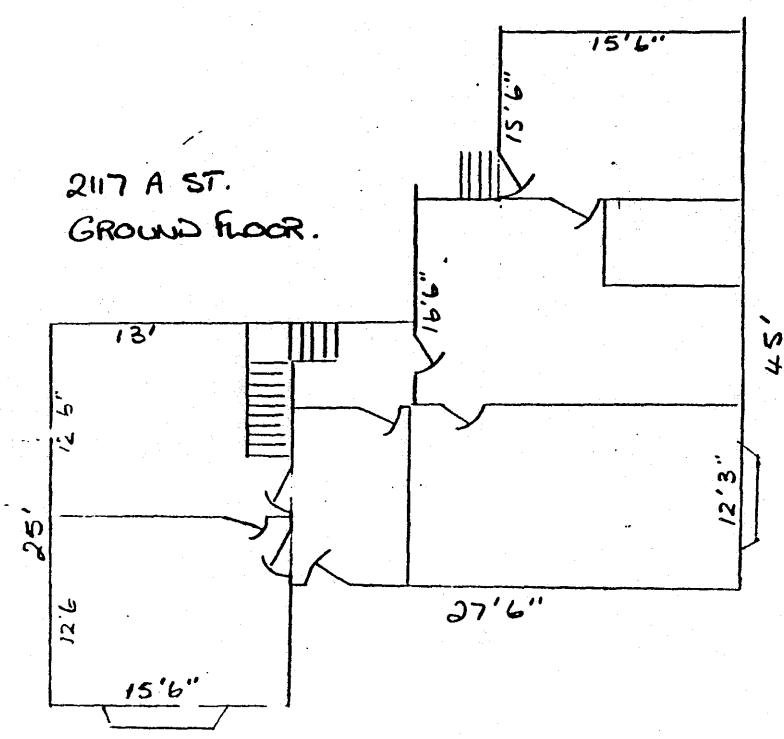
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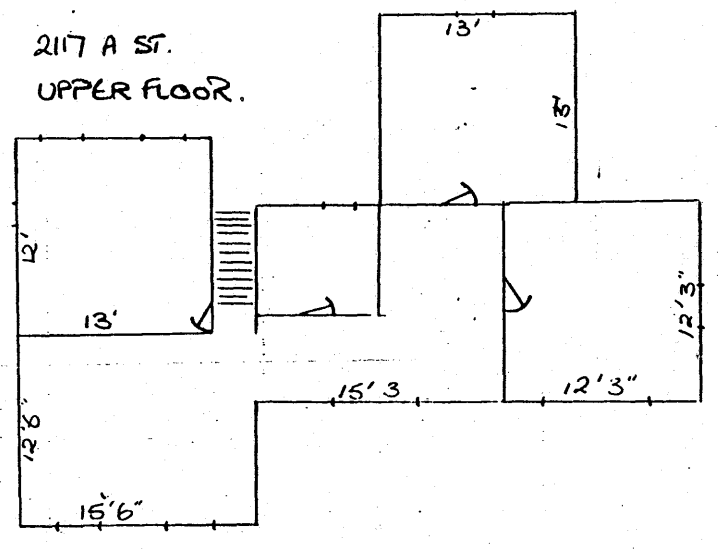
SEE MAP IS 3 6 BB

Old Stagecoach Stop
Forest Grove.

2117 A ST.
GROUND FLOOR.



2117 A ST.
UPPER FLOOR.



Old Stagecoach Stop
Forest Grove.

