

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



959

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Cornucopia Jailhouse

other names/site number N/A

name of multiple property listing N/A

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

2. Location

street & number Second St. (No street number) not for publication

city or town Cornucopia vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Baker code 001 zip code 97834

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B C D

[Signature] Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date 10-3-14

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- 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] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 11-24-14

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Correctional Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE: Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: METAL: Steel

other: N/A

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The circa 1885 Cornucopia Jailhouse is located in the center of the Second Street right-of-way in the unincorporated former mining town of Cornucopia, Baker County, Oregon, 65 miles northeast of Baker City within the Wallowa Mountain range. (Figures 1-3, Regional and local location maps and Baker County tax lot map). The Jailhouse is a simple, utilitarian, two-story rectangular 20'x12' building set on poured-concrete footings and constructed of wood cribbing¹ and rough-sawn framing clad in board-and-batten siding with a steeply-pitched front-gabled corrugated-steel roof. Fenestration is minimal, with two narrow, rectangular openings with evenly-spaced metal bars, set in the center of the north and south walls of the first floor, and two paired wood windows located on the east wall of the second floor. A single unadorned wood-plank door is located at the southwest corner. The first-floor interior consists of four small rooms: a small entry foyer at the west end with stairs to the second floor, a small room in the middle, and two identical jail cells located at the east end. The stairs on the opposite (west) end of the building lead to a second floor office containing a closet on the west side of the room. Interior finishes are minimal. Walls are clad in vertical or horizontal board, and evidence of wallpaper is present on the second floor. Non-historic alterations include the removal of the original, centered brick chimney; covering of the second floor window; installation of bracing on the exterior walls; addition of interior modern steel cables to stabilize the building; some limited replacement of flooring; and a poured-concrete foundation.

Narrative Description

Construction History

Due to a lack of written records and first-person accounts, little information exists documenting the town of Cornucopia and the construction of the Jailhouse. The fragmented historical record, contemporary second- and third-person accounts, and a physical examination of the building suggest that the original cribbed portion of the Jailhouse was constructed in Allentown, one half mile downslope of Cornucopia, in approximately 1885. Construction techniques and materials for the presumed original cribbed portion of the building are consistent for this time period, and the year 1885 corresponds to the rapid growth and development of Allentown, which likely necessitated the construction of a jailhouse. It is believed that the Jailhouse was subsequently moved one half-mile upslope to the sister community of Cornucopia between 1885 and 1889, when the Allentown site was progressively abandoned.

Sometime between its initial construction and 1920, when the building was photographed in its current location and configuration, the Jailhouse was enlarged to include a balloon-framed entry foyer and second floor office clad in vertical board-and-batten siding fastened with wire-cut nails. (Figure 11, Cornucopia Jailhouse c. 1920). The likelihood that the building was constructed in two distinct phases is supported by the presence of the same weathered building paper seen on the exterior of the building attached to the interior west wall of the cribbed portion of the Jailhouse, as well as nail holes and the structural remnants of a prior roof system over the original volume. The presence of wood skids under the building, before they were removed in winter 2013, and local oral tradition indicate that it is likely that

¹ Often used to build grain silos, or in other applications requiring great strength, Crib construction, also known as "staked wood" construction, is the practice of stacking wood boards on their wide side, overlapping the ends at corners and wall junctions. The Halfway Jailhouse, located in Halfway, Oregon, was also constructed of wood cribbing and dates to 1909 construction.

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the building was moved several times prior to 1920.² (Figure 7, Illustration of Cornucopia Jailhouse construction history).

Setting

The former mining community of Cornucopia sits at an elevation of 4,700 feet in northern Baker County's remote "panhandle region," 65 miles northeast of Baker City and due north of Halfway, Oregon along Oregon Route 86. Located above Pine Valley within the Wallowa Mountain range, the mountainous terrain is heavily forested. The Jailhouse sits west of Main Street and within the platted right-of-way of Second Street in Township 06 South, Range 45 East, Section 34 on a prominent outcropping extending from the slope. Second Street runs south of the Jailhouse. Cornucopia's unpaved gravel streets are generally platted along a north-south rectilinear grid parallel to nearby Pine Creek; although, in reality, the streets are placed on far less-regular alignments. Once a thriving small community, most buildings dating to the historic period collapsed or are abandoned and severely deteriorated. A handful of more-recently-constructed seasonal vacation homes are located to the immediate west and south of the Jailhouse. (Figures 1-4, Regional and local location maps, Baker County tax lot map, and site plan)

Exterior Description

The simple, utilitarian, unpainted, two-story, 20'x12' rectangular Cornucopia Jailhouse has a steeply-pitched (12/12) front-gabled roof clad in corrugated steel, and is set on concrete footings poured in 2013. Notably, the Jailhouse incorporates two distinct types of construction. The easterly two-thirds of the building is a single-story volume built of rough-sawn 2"x6" cribbed boards secured with nails, which is likely the original c. 1885 volume. Fragments of tar paper attached with nails remain on this portion of the building; although, it is unknown if the paper is original or was added later during the period of significance. The existence of a prior roof-structure over this portion of the building is evidenced by nail holes and remnant structure. The remaining west third of the first floor and second balloon-framed floor are built with rough-cut wood boards clad in nailed vertical wood-board siding, with and without battens. The roof exhibits a steep pitch clad in corrugated steel sheet with 12" skip sheathing spaced 3" to 5" apart, and is supported by rough-sawn 2"x6" trussed rafters spaced 19" to 22" on center and braced laterally and toe-nailed to the top plate. Over the years, the owner added trussed rafters, additional bracing, and bolts and cables to maintain the Jailhouse's structural integrity under the heavy snow load during the winter months. (Photos 1-4).

The west façade is clad in 1"x12" boards that extend the full two-story height with 1"x6" batts. The gable is sided with vertical wood boards without battens. The door is located at the southwest corner of the building, and is constructed of three vertical 1"x12" wood boards nailed to a frame constructed of two horizontal 1"x12" boards framing a diagonally-placed 1"x4" board. The door frame has wide 1"x6" casings, and is secured with a padlock. Above the door, a few of the batt boards are missing, and a metal cover conceals a light socket a few feet above the door. Other exterior fixtures on this side include an electric outlet with a metal cover to the north of the door and eye bolts. (Photo 1).

The board-and-batten siding wraps around from the west side to the north elevation of the building along the entire length of the 6' addition. The demarcation between the addition and the original 14'x12' cribbed structure is very distinct, with the board-and-batten vertical siding ending at the crib-walled

² In the absence of written records, the construction history of the Cornucopia Jailhouse is based on investigation of the building itself and personal communication with long-time Cornucopia resident Dale Taylor; General Contractor Brady Huff; and the author's on-site observations; the date given for the photograph shown in Figure 1 is a conservative estimate based on contradictory records. The same photo is accessioned twice by the Baker Heritage Museum, Baker City, OR and dated 1900-1915 and 1910-1920 respectively. For the purposes of this nomination, the correct date is assumed to be 1920. Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112107.

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portion of the first floor. The second floor above the original building is sided in vertical boards without batts. Located in the center of the first floor is a small rectangular 4"x22" window with five evenly-spaced vertical metal bars. (Photo 6). From the exterior, the west interior wall of the jail cells is easily located on the exterior north and south walls evidenced by the alternating pattern of boards. (Photo 5). The south side of the building is identical to the north elevation. (Photos 2, 4-6).

The east side of the building consists of the cribbed first floor with the location of the east-west running interior wall between the cells visible from the exterior at the center of the wall. Horizontal 2"x6" planks clad the gable end, and similar siding covers two paired, wood-frame, one-over-one, wood-sash windows separated by a wood mullion. Remnants of the original electrical wiring and eye bolts located above the windows and along the first story are still present. (Photo 3).

Interior Description

The Cornucopia Jailhouse includes approximately 400 square feet of interior space among five rooms and two floors, including an entry foyer, center room, two jail cells, and an upstairs office. The entrance of the Jailhouse is located on the southwest corner of the building in the framed addition. The casing around the entrance door is comprised of 1"x6" boards, with two 6" strap hinges securing the door. The bottom hinge is attached to two sistered 1"x4" boards nailed to the casing, and the top hinge is attached to a 1"x6" horizontal board also nailed to the casing. 2"x12" wood-plank flooring runs from the entry east to west through the length of the first floor. Immediately to the left of the entrance is a single flight of enclosed wood stairs leading to the second floor. The stairs make a quarter turn at the northwest corner of the building, without a landing, and have open risers and no handrail. There is no interior wall cladding in this portion of the building, and the framing, exterior siding, and electrical wires are clearly visible. (Photo 7 and Figure 5, first floor plan).

The former exterior west wall of the cribbed portion of the building is visible from the small interior entry foyer, and is covered with the weathered building paper observed on the exterior. The door to the original Jailhouse is centered in this wall and is hung with three 10" metal strap hinges with a simple latch. The 32" doorway is framed with plain 1"x6" boards covering the ends of the cribbed walls. The door opens to the 5 1/2'x11' center room, located within the original cribbed portion of the building. To the left (north) is a 27"x17" patched opening in the ceiling that marks the location of the chimney flue for a wood stove, since removed. Two 4"x24" centered rectangular windows with evenly-spaced vertical metal bars are set on the north and south walls 70" above the floor. Small shelves, electrical hardware, and other items are attached to the walls. (Photo 8 and Figure 5).

The jail cells are located on the east end of the building, and measure 7'x5'. Paired 30"x79" doors constructed of spaced vertical boards secured to "Z"-shaped wood-board frames latch at the center wall and open outward into the center room. Each cell door has a simple bar-and-lock system. (Photo 11) The interior cribbed jail cell wall is missing every other 2"x6" board and has vertical metal bars running horizontally through the wall. The interior of the cells are mirror images of the other, each having a toilet located in the inside corner, against the shared interior wall between the cells. A pipe vent extends up the wall and exits just below the ceiling. A small toilet paper holder is attached to the center wall. A 26" wide wood bed made of four 2"x6" boards with a 2" edge is located on the exterior wall of each jail cell. (Photos 9-11 and Figure 5).

The second floor office is supported by a floor made of 2"x12" or two sistered 1"x12" boards, and measures 11'x14'. The enclosed stair projects 35" into the northwest corner of the room along the north wall. The 30"x75" opening into the office is framed with unadorned wide wood boards and lacks a door. Broad horizontal wood planks cover the walls and the coved ceiling of the office. There is no interior trim.

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Temporary metal cables span the space to stabilize the structure. An approximately 7'x2 1/2' built-in closet clad with vertical board is located on the west wall of the room between the enclosed stair and south wall. The closet is accessed through a single four-paneled wood door, and has built-in wood shelving. A patched hole in the floor lines up with a patched opening in the ceiling marking the former location of the chimney flue. A pair of boarded-up double-hung one-over-one wood windows separated by a 4 1/2" wood mullion and framed with 3 1/2" wood casing is located on the east wall, directly across the room from the stairs. The windows' 28"x30" glass panes are held in the frames with a beveled-wood strip. A ceramic electric light fixture with a pull chain is centered in the ceiling. (Photo 12 and Figure 6, second floor plan).

Alterations

The Jailhouse is little altered outside of the historic period and remained in its current location since at least 1920, as evidenced by historic photographs. (Figure 11). Alterations include the removal of the original chimney and wood stove. Additionally, in an effort to stabilize the building, the current owners installed temporary metal cabling and bolts, and placed wood support beams brace the exterior south wall. In late 2013, the owner removed original foundation and replaced it with a concrete footing to stabilize the building. The footing is concealed with field stones, replicating the original appearance. The building was originally supported by three 6"x8" skids constructed of two layers of 2"x12" rough-cut wood boards laid perpendicular to each other and set on field stones. As part of the work, the owner also replaced deteriorated floor boards on the south wall of the center room. All lumber used in the 2013 building stabilization was cut to the exact measurements of the original boards, using the same local species Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and cut on a local volunteer's circular sawmill similar to the circular mills used in the area during the period of significance.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1885-1942

Significant Dates

1885, Estimated jailhouse construction
1942, Post office closed, town deserted

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the construction of the Cornucopia Jailhouse in Allentown, a sister community located a half mile downslope from Cornucopia, in c. 1885. While initially separate, the towns share the same historic context and developed and grew together before joining at the Cornucopia site in approximately 1889. The shared developmental history and eventual unification justifies beginning the period of significance with the construction of the Jailhouse and not later, after its relocation to Cornucopia. The period ends in 1942 when the U.S. Post Office closed after the mines shut down in 1941 and the community declined precipitously.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Present-day local residents and historians believe that the community moved the Cornucopia Jailhouse from Allentown a half mile upslope to its sister town, Cornucopia, sometime between 1885 and 1889. Having developed together and later merging into a single community at the Cornucopia site, the relocation of the buildings and residents of Allentown to Cornucopia is part of a larger, single development trend associated with gold mining on the upper slopes of the Pine Creek drainage in the late-nineteenth and early-to-mid twentieth centuries. Based on oral tradition and the previous presence of skids under the original portion of the building and the addition, it is also believed that the building moved repeatedly during the period of significance before arriving at its present location sometime before 1920, as shown in a historic photograph. (Figure 11).

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

The c.1885 Cornucopia Jailhouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Government, for its association with local self-governance and the maintenance of law-and-order in the former mining town of Cornucopia, Baker Co. In the early 1860s, prospectors discovered gold in the vicinity of present-day Baker City, and soon prospectors fanned out across the region. As miners traveled upslope from the Pine Valley, northeast of Baker City, the communities of Allentown, and a later sister community, Cornucopia, were hastily built to accommodate the over 1,000 miners that flocked to the area by 1884. Based on an examination of the building and oral tradition, local residents and historians believe that the Jailhouse was built in Allentown to meet the community's need to establish and maintain general law-and-order, and then was later moved to the Cornucopia town site in 1889 as mining activity moved upslope closer to the most productive mines. While Cornucopia was not as notoriously lawless as many other frontier communities, the Jailhouse was an important institution that fostered stability in a town with numerous saloons and bordellos, and served as a temporary holding place for disorderly citizens and criminals awaiting trial. The period of significance ends in 1942 when the local Post Office closed, shortly after the mines ceased operation in 1941 in response to War Production Board order L-208, which diverted resources to mines producing metals for the war effort during the Second World War.³ The Jailhouse meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration B for moved properties because the property was moved during the selected historic period. As the last remaining public building in one of Baker County's most significant mining communities, the Jailhouse is the key resource representing the history and governance of this former mining community.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (include a chronological or thematic context.)

The Founding and Initial Development of Allentown and Cornucopia to 1889.

Like many mining towns across the West, miners flocking to the gold fields quickly founded Allentown and its sister community, Cornucopia, which grew exponentially with the influx of thousands of miners, businessmen, shopkeepers, and their families to the newest promising strike in the Wallowa Mountains. As early as the summer and fall of 1863, miners established a gold placer mine on Carson Creek, northwest of Halfway. Prospecting father upslope from previous finds in the Pine Valley, in 1872 Alonzo G. Simmons discovered the ledge that was later filed as the Last Chance Claim in 1884, one of Cornucopia's most productive mines.⁴

³ James R. Evans, *Gold Dust and Caulk Dust*, 2nd ed., edited by Eloise Dielman (Baker City: Baker County Historical Society, 2007), 181; Jim M. Epling. "The Cornucopia Gold Mine of N. E. Oregon, 1965," TMs, p. 5, Pierce Library, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, OR; Howard Brooks, *A Pictorial History of Gold Mining in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon*, 2nd ed., (Baker City: Baker County Historical Society, 2012), 157.

⁴ LaVada Nudo, "Panter Assessment Area – 1990, Evaluation of Past Surveys/Recent Survey for the Planter Timber Sale" (Baker City: United States Forest Service, Wallowa Whitman National Forest, 1990, photocopied), 5; John Rice, Richard Reay, Jessica Mason, Dorothy Mason, "Cornucopia Mining District Record Search, Passport in Time" (Baker City: United States Forest

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Despite these promising finds, the short mining season, outdated or inadequate equipment and gold extraction processes, remoteness of the area, lack of water or areas to dispose of tailings, and the draw of other, easier, opportunities initially delayed the development of the Cornucopia gold fields.⁵

In a May 1882, surveyors from the Government Land Office noted an uninhabited landscape in the area of Cornucopia.⁶ New discoveries in the area beginning in 1881 and subsequent finds through 1884 attracted over 1,000 prospectors to the valley by 1884. The hopeful miners were drawn by stories of nuggets the size of quarters, and one reportedly as big as a hen egg.⁷ As prospectors moved into the area, gold seekers followed the mountain streams into the surrounding hills looking for new claims. As reported in the *Morning Oregonian* in September 1885, prospectors discovered gold in Pine Creek drainage in "late summer or early fall" of 1884 in the vicinity of Allentown. Various accounts place the founding of Allentown anytime between 1881 and 1885.⁸ Cornucopia, established around the same time, was located a half mile upslope.⁹ Meaning "horn of plenty," residents often gave the name "Cornucopia" to communities and mines throughout the West where there were great hopes for success. In this instance, prospectors from Cornucopia, Nevada likely suggested the name.¹⁰ The reporter from the *Morning Oregonian* described the twin communities as "mere collections of huts in the woods," noting "they afford the animal comforts of warmth and shelter and nothing more." While most of the residents of the "Pine Creek Camps" were men, there were a few women, mostly the wives of minors, and "a family or two of children."¹¹

Propelled by the population growth of people expecting great riches, Allentown and Cornucopia began taking on the semblance of more established, urban communities. In October 1884, a correspondent for the publication *The West Shore* traveled to the area, observing that Allentown was "nicely situated" and boasted "several frame buildings in the course of construction, while many log houses have already been built." The article counts one store, one restaurant, and one saloon. Lots were, as of yet, affordable, yet the residents expected prices to rise. The writer observed that less-developed Cornucopia, "with the exception of one nice frame building, consists principally of tents and log cabins, built rather hastily to accommodate the first rush." Even without permanent buildings, local businesses included five saloons, one store, two restaurants, blacksmith shop, barber shop, butcher shop, livery stable, and a lodging house.¹² The *West Shore* correspondent noted that building lots were inexpensive still, due to low demand, and investors held many properties on speculation, while the majority of the population preferred to live in what the reporter called "cheap luxury" in the surrounding camps. Building materials for the homes, businesses, and mine structures were likely supplied from a local saw mill observed by the *West Shore* correspondent at the forest's edge at the northern end of the valley, and then hauled up the rocky wagon road that crisscrossed Pine Creek to the camps.¹³ The camp gained a sense of permanency on December 7, 1885 when the U.S. Government

Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Pine Ranger District, 2001).

⁵ Nudo, 5; Miles F. Potter, *Oregon's Golden Years* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, 1995), 152; Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology, "The Mineral Resources of Oregon" December 1916, v. 2 no. 4 (Corvallis: State of Oregon, Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology), 74; Baker County Historical Society, *The History of Baker County, Oregon* (Baker City: Baker County Historical Society, 1986), 13.

⁶ W.B. Barr, "Government Land Office Survey Map, Township Lines and Subdivisions, Township 6 South, Range 45 East, Willamette Meridian" (Washington D.C.: United States Bureau of Land Management, 13 March 1883).

⁷ Eloise Dielman ed., *Baker County Links to the Past* (Baker County, Oregon: Baker County Historical Society, 1998), 181; Marden Guy, Margaret Durner, Karen Riener, "Boulder Beetle Heritage Analysis Area" (Halfway, OR: United States Forest Service, Wallowa Whitman National Forest, Pine Ranger District, November 2001), 2-3; Carmelita Holland, *Stories, Legends, and Some Oregon History* (Oregon, by the author, 1996), 59; Marden, et al., claims that Allentown was founded in 1881; however, given other period resources it is likely the community was settled later.

⁸ A. H. "The Mines: Third Letter from "The Oregonian's" Special Correspondent" (Portland, OR: *The Oregonian*, 15 September 1885); Allentown is referred to in some texts as "Old Cornucopia" as noted in Marden, et al; Various dates are provided for the founding of Cornucopia, including 1881 to 1883 by Rice, et al. and Potter, 155.

⁹ A. H. "The Mines."

¹⁰ McArthur, Lewis A. *Oregon Geographic Place Names*, Portland, OR Oregon Historical Society, 1974; "History of Cornucopia Property Is Told by Washington Newspaper Man," *Baker-Democrat Herald*, June 28, 1939.

¹¹ A. H. "The Mines."

¹² M.R., "Cornucopia" (*The West Shore*, October 1885). Subject file, "Cornucopia" Oregon State Library, Salem, OR.

¹³ *Ibid*; Brooks, 155.

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established a post office, and, later in 1887, residents formed Cornucopia School District number 39.¹⁴ (Figure 8, Cornucopia in 1887, and Figure 10, students and teachers of Cornucopia school, nd.).

The eventual consolidation of the two camps was not unexpected, nor was the continued exponential growth of the community, which paralleled that of the developing mines. A September 1895 article in the *Morning Oregonian* noted that “eventually the two camps will come together.”¹⁵ While Allentown was better situated and initially more developed, Cornucopia’s closer proximity to the four principal mines, The Union, Companion, Red Jacket, and Last Chance mines, and central location among the approximately 66 claims in the four miles surrounding the townsite guaranteed its eventual success.¹⁶ By March 1889 the Allentown site was largely abandoned, having moved upslope to join Cornucopia. At that time, a writer from *The Oregon Scout* observed that Cornucopia boasted 200 houses, three saloons, three stores, one public hall and a school house. Enthusiastically, *The Oregon Scout* writer noted “It is truly Cornucopia—a big horn of plenty...such is the richness and profligate distribution of gold in Cornucopia that ‘We need no pick or shovel, No pan, no spade or hoe, For the larger chunks are top of ground, Whichever way you go.’”¹⁷ While it is likely that the writer’s lyrical assessment was an exaggeration, it is true that the gold mines of the Cornucopia Mining District were the longest running and most productive in Oregon, and one of the most important gold mining areas in the nation over their 50 year history.¹⁸

In the late-nineteenth century, the need for formal local governance grew along with the increasing population and expanding town. Municipal and county building and civic records for Allentown and Cornucopia are unavailable; however, based on a physical examination of the Jailhouse, it is believed that the building was constructed in 1885, possibly by civic-minded citizens in response to the town’s rapid population growth during the initial settlement period. While an examination of available sources suggests that the residents of Allentown and Cornucopia were not as violent as those in other areas of Baker County, it is likely that ongoing conflicts and vices likely led residents to construct a jailhouse to house individuals for both minor and major offenses. The need for the jail was most apparent during the mines’ increasingly productive years of the early-twentieth century when conflicts arose over gold claims, money owed for labor, and drunken brawls in the saloons.

Constructed of locally-harvested lumber, the simple utilitarian vernacular building is characteristic of boom-town architecture that adequately met immediate needs without requiring a large investment of time or materials.¹⁹ Local residents and historians believe that the Jailhouse was moved to Cornucopia with the buildings and residents of Allentown sometime between 1885 and 1889.²⁰ Although there is a lack of clear historical records to verify this, one can surmise that the jailhouse was built of locally-cut and -milled lumber, possibly constructed by resident volunteers, probably most of whom were miners or store owners. William Usher, a wealthy local land speculator, was influential in the development of Cornucopia, and may have contributed to the construction of the Jailhouse, if not in manpower, perhaps in financial support.²¹ Usher purchased the Richland townsite during the period he still owned and sold property in Cornucopia. It is also possible that the mining companies hired miners or other workers to construct the Jailhouse in an attempt build a better community and to encourage their employees to stay out of trouble.

¹⁴ Bernal D. Hug, *The History of Union County, OR* (La Grande, OR: Eastern Oregon Review, 1961), 69; Evans, 181; At the time School District 39 was formed Cornucopia was part of Union County.

¹⁵ A. H. “The Mines”; Allentown is referred to in some texts as “Old Cornucopia.”

¹⁶ LaVada, 5; Rice, et al.

¹⁷ *The Oregon Scout*, “Cornucopia” (Union, Oregon), 21 March 1889.

¹⁸ Albert Burch, “The Development of Metal Mining in Oregon” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 43, no 2. (June 1941), 111; Potter, 152.

¹⁹ Dale Taylor, personal communication with author, 2013; Information about timber resources and the milling of them for the construction of Cornucopia was obtained through communications with Dale Taylor, a local resident who spent years collecting historical information for his own personal interest and on behalf of the Baker County Historical Society.

²⁰ The exact date Allentown was moved the Cornucopia site and whether the relocation was sudden or gradual is unknown. Sources used for this nomination vary widely in their accounts of this event. Marden, et. al, 2; Holland, 59.

²¹ Dielman, 93.

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Gold Mining and the Development of Communities in Oregon and the Baker Valley Region

Long before the founding of Cornucopia and Allentown, Oregon residents' first experiences with gold fever were the local economic booms resulting from the export of lumber and agricultural products to the gold fields in Sutters Mill, CA. in 1848 followed by strikes in the Rogue River Valley in the early 1850s.²² Gold was first discovered in northeastern Oregon in 1861 by overland emigrants of the ill-fated Meek wagon train traveling through the Malheur and John Day river drainages; although, the travelers were not aware that the attractive rock they collected was gold-bearing until arriving at their destination in the Willamette Valley. Like other finds throughout the West in previous decades, news of the discovery soon attracted hopeful prospectors to Eastern Oregon.²³ One of the first prospectors, Henry Griffin and his party, crossed the Blue Canyon on October 23, 1861 and sunk a prospect pit, discovering gold and beginning a gold rush that led to the founding of Auburn and growth of northeastern Oregon.²⁴

Gold deposits in Eastern Oregon, and the many past and present communities associated with them, are generally located in a belt 120 miles long and 50 miles wide extending from John Day east to the Snake River in the southeast part of the Blue Mountains. The principal mining districts of the area are in the Powder, Burnt, and John Day River drainages of Baker and Grant Counties, with some mining areas extending to adjacent regions of Malheur and Union Counties.²⁵ Gold, silver, and other metals often found with them, such as zinc, lead, and copper, form during the geologic process of mountain building that causes rock to melt under pressure and then travel to the surface through fissures before cooling into quartz veins. Quartz is ubiquitous across the mountain west, but very few veins contain gold.

Placer mining is the practice of extracting gold from water-deposited sands and gravels eroded from the gold-bearing-quartz outcrops and washed downstream, often far from the gold-bearing outcrop. The strike found by the Meek party was, based on contemporary descriptions, a placer deposit. Placer deposits were the first to be exploited in the mid-nineteenth century, and were the most common type of gold mining before 1880. By comparison, lode, or hard-rock, mining developed much later, requiring more sophisticated prospecting techniques. Once the gold-bearing rock was located, large, powerful machines were needed to mine the ore and extract the gold through a process that included crushing the ore in stamp mills before it was washed and chemically treated. The entire development process required patience, as well as sufficient capital to construct the mines and mills, purchase needed machinery, and to hire a large work force.²⁶ Lode mining eventually represented half of the region's total output. The advent of improved mining machinery and processes and the extension of the Union Pacific Railroad to Baker City in 1884 spurred production.²⁷

While mining metals and minerals in the West was a financially risky business, the U.S. Congress took steps to add some assurances and encourage the expansion of the industry in the mid-nineteenth century. Beginning in 1866, Congress passed the first mineral law in its history, allowing for "free mining" as a legitimate practice on all western public lands.²⁸ Initially only applying to lode mines, the act was amended four years later to include placer mines. Before 1866, it was unclear if the profits from mining operations on federal lands would be split with the government, and the passage of the law led to a dramatic increase in mining on public property. Subsequent federal laws more clearly defined the mechanisms of establishing mining claims and the extent of a claimant's property rights. Building on the 1866 law, Congress passed the General Mining Act of 1872, which was based largely on the informal system of acquiring and protecting mining claims on public lands developed by prospectors in California and Nevada in the 1840s through the

²² Gordon B. Dodds, *Oregon: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1977), 72; Potter, 13.

²³ Isaac Hiatt. *Thirty – one Years in Baker County: History of the County from 1861-1893*, edited by Eloise Dielman (Baker County, Oregon, 1893); Baker County Historical Society, 13.

²⁴ Hiatt, 13.

²⁵ Dielman, 75; Potter, 99; Burch, 106.

²⁶ Kent A. Curtis, *Gambling on Ore: The Nature of Metal Mining in the United States, 1860-1910* (Boulder, Co. University Press of Colorado, 2013), 17-18, 70

²⁷ Dielman, Eloise, 75; Potter, 99; Burch, 106.

²⁸ The 1866 Law was called "An Act Granting the Right-of-Way to Ditch and Canal Owners through the Public Lands and for Other Purposes. Curtis, 70; 78

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1860s. Under the law, all citizens of the United States 18 years or older could stake a claim on public lands. The act also simplified the claim process, increased the allowable time a claim remained valid, and more clearly defined the relationship between surface and subsurface land rights as it related to following an underground mineral vein, among other provisions. The passage of the 1866 law and later acts provided the certainty that allowed mines to expand across the West, including Oregon, spurring the settlement and development of the entire region.²⁹

Prior to Griffin's discovery in Eastern Oregon, settlement in Oregon was concentrated west of the Cascades, primarily in the Willamette Valley. Settlement on the east side of the mountains was limited primarily to two U.S. Army posts at The Dalles and Umatilla, and trading posts along the Oregon Trail. The beginning of the gold rush in present-day Baker County resulted in rapid settlement and development.³⁰ Thousands of miners arrived in the region from the Willamette Valley, as well as California and Utah, and reportedly some Oregon Trail emigrants decided to stay on their way west. Numerous Chinese miners also traveled to the area in the 1860s shortly after the first strikes in the region. The waves of newcomers created demand for stores, supply outfitters, saloons, and other services, that in turn brought others to open and operate these facilities. Fortuitously, Oregon's gold rush coincided with the passage of the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 and the Homestead Act of 1862. The acts allowed many traveling to the mining areas to obtain land and raise produce and livestock to provide food for the miners, further supporting the settlement and growth of the area.³¹ Reflecting the region's burgeoning population, Baker County was officially established in 1862 from part of Wasco County. The county was named after Col. Edward D. Baker, a U.S. Senator from Oregon. Related settlement in the Grand Rhonde Valley, on the other side of the Wallowa Mountain range, resulted in the creation of Union County in October 1864.³²

University of Wisconsin Geographer Randall Rohe notes that unlike agricultural settlements across the West, mining communities "achieved a widespread and almost universal degree of urbanization, as towns appeared almost simultaneously with the finds," as businessmen, tradesman, and other townspeople "appeared almost simultaneously with the miners."³³ As demonstrated by the locations of Allentown and Cornucopia, and many other Oregon mining towns, these unplanned gold boom towns were cited close to mining operations, often in remote, rough terrain, and characteristically alongside and parallel to a stream. Mining towns usually centered around a commercial district of mostly wooden, false-front buildings on narrow lots, along a single dirt street with wooden sidewalks platted for that purpose, with homes constructed just outside the district. Miners, however, often lived outside of town in proximity to their claims. Architecture ranged from primitive structures, canvas tents, log and hide houses, brush huts, and caves, to one- and two-story frame buildings with modest architectural details based on eastern antecedents as milled lumber became available in more established communities.³⁴

Rohe further observes that that the mining settlements established by these newcomers "did not follow a steady and uniform growth pattern, but reflected mining conditions. As a result, fluctuations rather than steady growth characterized the population of any given camp."³⁵ Initial influxes of miners were often followed in a handful of years by rapid depopulation as deposits were exhausted or rumors of new findings drew the hopeful to the next big strike. Turnover among the population was constant, as was the endless construction activity during flush times. Communities established on placer deposits were particularly unstable due to how rapidly the resource was extracted.³⁶ By 1860, miners and businessmen founded and abandoned many gold mining

²⁹ Ibid, 70-100.

³⁰ Baker County Historical Society, 13.

³¹ Brooks 7.

³² Hiatt, 68.

³³ Randall Rohe, "The Geography and Material Culture of the Western Mining Town," *Material Culture*, 16, no. 3 (Fall 1984), 99, 102.

³⁴ Rohe, 100, 102, 104, 107-108.

³⁵ Ibid, 110.

³⁶ Ibid, 110, 113; William J. Trimble, *The Mining Advance into The Inland Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1914), 104.

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camp and some larger communities in California, Nevada, Colorado, Washington, Idaho, and New Mexico.³⁷ Established after Griffin's initial discovery, the boom town of Auburn was founded and abandoned within a two-year span after the easily extracted placer deposits were depleted.³⁸

Despite the often temporary nature of mining towns, author Duane Smith notes that the establishment of these camps often spurred the growth of other communities that provided needed supplies or served as shipping points for goods both to and from the mines.³⁹ Summing the role of western mining towns in the settlement of the West, Rohe notes, "regardless of how fleeting their existence, mining towns contributed to a permanent settlement." Place names, and the many towns, large and small, farms, and other supportive industries established to serve the mines sometimes outlasted the mines themselves.⁴⁰ Despite the influx of people, the population of present-day Baker and Union Counties remained comparatively sparse. However, the wealth generated by the mines and the related industries was massive, and much of it was reinvested to create towns and regional infrastructure, further driving the local economy, and that of larger region, including San Francisco, CA, the Wilmette Valley, The Dalles, Baker City, Umatilla, Wallula, and Lewiston, ID.⁴¹

Growth and Consolidation, Cornucopia 1890 to 1900⁴²

As discussed by Rohe and Smith, the founding of Allentown and Cornucopia, their eventual union, and the development of the town and the lode mines is reflective of the rapid uneven growth, population characteristics, and governance of mining communities across the West. The Cornucopia District was one of the last to open in Oregon, yet the mines were notably successful. In his 1941 history of mining in Oregon, Albert Burch observes that "one of the most important mines from the point of view of production and long life, is the Cornucopia" group of mines. The nucleus of which included the Union and Companion claims and a number of other mines that were incorporated in 1895 by the Cornucopia Mines Company of Oregon.⁴³ The investment was possibly spurred by the arrival of the railroad the same year in Baker City, and the subsequent extension of other local lines.⁴⁴

In Burch's words, production up until 1895 was "desultory," lacking a major capital investment in the equipment needed to develop the lode mines.⁴⁵ Gold in the Cornucopia district occurred in mostly 4' veins in solid rock that ranged up to 10' in width, with a gold content between 1/2 and 1 troy ounce per ton. The relatively low concentration of gold required large-scale and sophisticated mining processes to profitably extract the valuable metals. Although many veins yielded higher grade ores, most veins could not be profitably mined because the ore was of a lower grade or the vein too narrow.⁴⁶ In order to extract more gold from the ore, the Cornucopia Mines Company of Oregon installed a twenty-stamp mill and a chlorination plant the same year it purchased the properties; however, the chlorination process proved to be ineffective and the extraction rate reached only 65 percent. While the arrival of the railroad made it easier to transport heavy machinery and supplies to the mines and gold concentrate out, Cornucopia's remote location still meant that shipping to and

³⁷ Curtin, 16, 17-18, 80.

³⁸ Virginia Duffy McLaughlin, "Cynthia Stafford and the Lost Mining Town of Auburn" *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 98, No. 1, Aspects of Eastern Oregon History (Spring 1997) 6-7, 50-51.

³⁹ Duane Smith, "The Golden West: Facts behind the façade of 115 Years of Mining" *Montana the Magazine of Western History* (Summer 1964), 7-12.

⁴⁰ Rohe, 115.

⁴¹ Trimble, 104-105; Brooks, 7, 15; Potter, 42, 99.

⁴² Authors of the various works used to complete this National Register nomination appear to have inconsistently and /or incompletely referred to the names of mines and their owners in the period after 1900. To the extent possible, the text attempts to clarify the chronology of mine development as it relates to the subject of this nomination and identify any apparent inconsistencies for future research. There is no attempt to provide a complete administrative history of the mine companies operating within the Cornucopia Mining District.

⁴³ Burch, 106, 111.

⁴⁴ Dielman, 75.

⁴⁵ Burch, 111.

⁴⁶ Dielman, 76-77.

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from the camp was difficult and costly. Further, the relatively low extraction rate continued to pose significant obstacles to development.⁴⁷

Like all mining towns, Cornucopia's population grew and contracted with the fortune of the mines, attracting residents from many different backgrounds. An examination of Baker County property deeds show that property sales were brisk throughout the 1890s and early 1900s before the community reached a relatively stable development plateau.⁴⁸ During this early period, individuals of all nationalities came to Cornucopia, including "Cornishmen," who were often experienced miners, and referred to as "cousin jacks."⁴⁹ Constant turnover in the workforce was common. Many laborers worked just long enough to earn sufficient money to open their own mines, or start another business, such as stock raising. Others were career miners. As they lived in an isolated community, the residents of Cornucopia largely entertained themselves. Saturday-night dances were popular, and Christmas, the Fourth of July, and later Labor Day, were major holidays for the camp and a welcome reprieve from the continual operation of the mines. (Figure 12, Labor Day celebration in Cornucopia, 1913).

The opportunities to work in the mines came with many dangers, and were one reason many workers left the mines. The "sickness," later known to be a pulmonary illness, was constantly hanging over the heads of the miners, and many suffered and died. Eight-year-old Erma Cole and her family were the latest newcomers among Cornucopia's churning population when they arrived in 1898. Erma's father, a career miner, initially worked in the mines for \$3.50 a day, but quit the work after two weeks after becoming ill with pneumonia. Premature explosions, tunnel cave-ins, and frequent avalanches in the winter also claimed many workers. Avalanches also claimed the lives of the miners' families, and, even with the ongoing annual threat, houses and buildings were rebuilt in the same locations because of a shortage of building locations near the mines.⁵⁰ Mining, however, was not the only occupation in Cornucopia. After leaving the mines, Erma's father then pursued work first as a hotel manager and later cutting wood in the nearby forests to meet the incredible demand for lumber used to shore up mine tunnels and shafts and to build sluice trestles, among other uses.⁵¹

From her memories, Erma described Cornucopia as a typical mining town fitting Rohe's characterization of these communities. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Cornucopia consisted of a single street lined on both sides for several blocks by flat-front commercial buildings and miners cabins. Common for mining communities of the period, Cornucopia is located in a small steep valley formed by nearby Pine Creek, which also supplied water for drinking and industrial uses.⁵² In her book, *Stories, Legends, and Some Oregon History*, local amateur historian Carmalita Howard notes that Cornucopia at this time encompassed a 20-acre townsite that boasted a number of private businesses, including two stores, one hotel, several boarding houses, two restaurants, two taverns, a dance hall, blacksmith shop, and a livery. The community also supported several public buildings, including a post office, school, council chambers, and a jailhouse, thought to be the building that is the subject of this nomination. The mining company also constructed a number of buildings, including office space for company officials, stables, warehouse, livery, and other support buildings. As a young woman, Erma worked serving the single men in the company mess hall.⁵³

While not crime- or problem-free, by 1889 Cornucopia was a well-established and relatively peaceful locally-governed town. Local historian Lambert Florin relates Erma's personal experience stating, "Cornucopia lacked the wild shooting frays and killings so characteristic of other mining towns in early days, but in common with

⁴⁷ Burch, 111; Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology, 74; Max M. Dixon, "Geological Processes Represented in the Cornucopia Mining District, Cornucopia, OR." (M.A. Thesis, Columbia University, New York City, 1922), 2; The Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology, 74; Potter, 159; Dielman, 75;

⁴⁸ Baker County Recorder, Cornucopia Property Deeds (Baker City).

⁴⁹ Potter, 152.

⁵⁰ Lambert Florin, *Oregon Ghost Towns* (Seattle, WA: Superior Publishing Company, 1970), 39-40; Potter, 154-155. Holland,

64.

⁵¹ Florin, 39-40.

⁵² Marden, et. al, 2; Rohe, 100, 102, 104, 107-108; Holland, 59.

⁵³ Florin, 39-40; Holland, 59; Marden, et. al, 2; Rohe, 100, 102, 104, 107-108; Holland claims that the town of Cornucopia and the mines were electrified at this time; however, this detail is unsubstantiated by other sources, and is therefore not noted in the text.

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them, had the usual quota... of 'sporting ladies.'"⁵⁴ In fact, the town may not have been so unusual. Smith says that "life on the mining frontier, as it existed in most camps, too often has been portrayed as something wild, wicked, romantic, and even glamorous." Smith acknowledges that some towns went through a "wild period," "but it was neither typical nor usually of lasting duration," and further comments that "the growth of municipal government in the camps closely paralleled that of the mining district," as is evident in Cornucopia.⁵⁵ Establishing order was important in communities where the recognition of land rights, specifically mining claims, was critical to the local economy. Reflecting the priorities of these entrepreneurial communities, the first official in mining towns was the claims recorder who would establish the legal location of mining claims, and soon thereafter came the sheriffs and judges to enforce the rule of law.⁵⁶

While Cornucopia never was the wild mining community of popular culture, and was not even as violent as other communities in the region, the town none-the-less deemed it necessary to construct a Jailhouse and establish a municipal government. As with many of the mining towns, conflicts arose over gold claims, money owed for labor, or drunken brawls in the saloons. Despite a handful of notable incidents, most disturbances were caused by drunk and disorderly citizens, and often settled among the men themselves.⁵⁷ Sometime between 1889 and when the jailhouse was photographed in 1920, the building was expanded to include a wood-framed foyer and second story office, reflecting the growing needs of the community and sophistication of its government.

Cornucopia at the Turn of the Century until 1933

The draw of Eastern Oregon's gold fields led to continued growth in Cornucopia and the region as a whole at the turn of the century. In September 1900, a local paper reported that "New York and Chicago Capitalists" were looking to invest in the area.⁵⁸ Indeed, the investors' interests were well founded. A 1901 U.S. Geographical Survey report noted,

I have never been in any mining country which I consider more promising or as having a brighter future than that of eastern Oregon. I find that the mines running ten to twenty stamps which could just as well be operation fifty. They would not then be able to exhaust the ore during this or the coming generation.⁵⁹

Reflecting the area's growth and the regional importance of Baker City, in 1901, Cornucopia, formally part of Union County, and the rest of the "panhandle" region generally between the Powder and Snake Rivers and the southern boundary of Wallowa County, was transferred to Baker County.⁶⁰ With a new local government, increasing investment, and continued production, the town grew. The 1900 Census reported 359 individuals in the Cornucopia precinct, and the local school served 35 students. By 1902 Cornucopia was home to two hotels, two livery stables, two general stores, a few meat markets, bakeries, and barber shops, along with eight saloons.⁶¹

Typical of all mining communities, Cornucopia experienced economic downturns throughout its history. Continuing obstacles to profitable mining led to the shutdown of at least some of the less profitable Cornucopia mines in 1903. Up until this time, Burch estimates that the Cornucopia mines produced a little

⁵⁴ Florin, 41.

⁵⁵ Smith, 12-15

⁵⁶ Smith, 13; Brooks, 20.

⁵⁷ Potter, 155.

⁵⁸ "Fall Prospects are Flattering" 18 September 1900 (Portland, Oregon Historical Society, Vertical File "Mines and Mining, Gold Mines, Oregon.")

⁵⁹ Waldemar Lindgren, "U.S. Dept of the Interior, 22nd Annual Report to Congress" (Washington D.C.: United States Geographical Survey, 30 June 1901). Quoted in Potter, 157.

⁶⁰ Hug, 68-69.

⁶¹ Epling, 5; Evans, 181.

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more than a million dollars in gold; however, the profits were reinvested into further development.⁶² Other mines in the area apparently remained open, including the very productive Union-Companion gold and silver mine.⁶³ The economic stress on the community appears to have resulted in at least a handful of violent conflicts, underlining the need for a local jailhouse and municipal government. On July 21, 1905, a disagreement between the Mayflower and Union-Companion Mines over the road right-of-way resulted in a shootout. While two or three men were injured on each side, no one lost their lives.⁶⁴ Crime continued to increase in 1906 when an assailant killed a man in a fight at Gallagher's saloon. The local authorities arrested the same individual again for a hold-up and robbery at the saloon a year later on February 06, 1907, where he also beat a man.⁶⁵ Another murder took place later that year when a miner from Bourne, Oregon killed a man. Two years earlier, the perpetrator of this crime tried to slash the throat of another man.⁶⁶

When the remaining mines were reopened in 1908 the Cornucopia Group enjoyed a number of years of profitable operation, becoming the largest producer of gold in the state, and one of the biggest in the nation. Starting in 1908 and continuing for the next five years, the Cornucopia mines accounted for nearly one-third of all the lode gold produced in the state. The company's success occurred despite national trends that led to the closure of many gold mines. During WWI, rising wages for experienced workers employed in base-metal operations and the increased cost of supplies, particularly cyanide, most of which mines imported from Germany, dramatically increased the cost of operating gold mines. The one notable exception was Cornucopia, where the region's geographic and economic isolation held down wage increases, and the higher grade of ore extracted between 1913 and 1918 reduced processing costs.⁶⁷

Between 1914 and 1926, the mines produced over half of all lode gold in the state before again shutting down sometime between 1926 and 1929.⁶⁸ The relatively high output of the Cornucopia mines during this period was assisted by fresh capital being injected into the enterprise, and the fact that a number of smaller mines during this period were "worked out" and no new major discoveries were made.⁶⁹ Just before the war, in 1913 investors reorganized the Cornucopia Mines Company, and by 1920 the company had a value of \$1.5 million in stock with shares at \$100 each. The operation had a total of 1600' of shaft, 4000' of adit, hydroelectric power, 40 stamps, three tube mills, and employed 200 men.⁷⁰ The owners completed a cyanide plant in 1913, and, combined with a process that ground the ore more finely, achieved a recovery rate of 90 percent.⁷¹ Other improvements included the introduction of the pneumatic drill and better transportation to the mines, as late as the 1920s horses were still used to haul heavy ore wagons.⁷² Aerial trams provided access to the mines high on the mountain slopes, easing the transportation of men, equipment, and ore; however, these could be dangerous. In one instance, a man died in 1926 after falling from the bucket when the line jerked and the bucket swung out of control.⁷³

The growth and population of Cornucopia reflected the mine's economic fortunes, yet the community persevered. During good times the population was stable. For instance, in 1903, before the first major mine closure, there were 65 children enrolled in the schools, and a similar number, 60, in 1916, during the productive period during the WWI. However, the population could swing widely. The number of residents

⁶² Burch, 111.

⁶³ Holland, 59; Holland claims that the Union mine operated without interruption between 1884 and 1941 with only a brief shutdown between 1927 and 1930, an account that is repeated in Potter, 152; however, Burch states that the Cornucopia Mine Group, which included the Union Companion Mine, did shut down during this period. The continued relative health of the community suggests that at least some of the mines remained open, and thus it is the opinion of the author that Holland's account is likely correct.

⁶⁴ *Morning Oregonian* "Boggs and Dennis Free" (Portland) 2 August 1905, 7.

⁶⁵ *East Oregonian* "Charged With a Saloon Holdup" (Pendleton) 11 February 1907, 7.

⁶⁶ *East Oregonian* "West was Bloodthirsty" (Pendleton) 25 November 1907, 8.

⁶⁷ Burch, 118.

⁶⁸ The dates for the shutdown of the Union-Companion Mine, the principle mine of the Cornucopia Group, differs. The date given by Burch, is 1926, and Brooks, 157 gives the date as 1929.

⁶⁹ Burch, 111, 117-119.

⁷⁰ Alexander R. Dunbar, *American Mining Manual* (Chicago: The Mining Manual Co., 1920), 299.

⁷¹ The Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology, 74; Potter, 159; Brooks, 157.

⁷² LaVada, 5.

⁷³ Holland, 71.

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dipped from 359 in 1900 to 132 ten years later, then to 242 in 1920. During these thirty years the town's population transitioned from foreign-born citizens, mostly German, and those born in other states, to largely Oregon-born residents.⁷⁴ Despite the shifting population, the town incorporated, either in 1906, according to the 1937-1938 Oregon Blue Book, or 1913, as noted in the 1941-1942 edition.⁷⁵ The 1917 edition of the Blue Book lists several public officers, including a mayor, treasurer, marshall, street superintendent, water superintendent, and several councilmen.⁷⁶ While resilient, the town was still dependent on the mines. During the total shutdown in 1926, not a single student was enrolled in the local school, and the 1930 census recorded a total of only eleven people.⁷⁷ (Figure 9, Cornucopia c. 1918).

Boom to Bust, Cornucopia 1929 until 1941.

By 1933, investors seeking a safe investment during the throws of the Great Depression drove the price of gold above the fixed United States government price of \$20.67 an ounce, resulting in the export of gold, further destabilizing the nation's gold-standard-based economy. In response, the government first prohibited the export of gold, and later began to purchase gold at \$34 an ounce. The dramatic increase in prices resulted in an immediate surge in placer mining. There was also a strong, if not somewhat delayed, increase in lode mining, reflecting the fact that it takes significantly more capital and time to reopen a lode mine.⁷⁸ Writing on the topic, the Baker County Historical Society noted that in Oregon the "revitalization of gold mining activity is considered by some to have equaled, and possibly even surpassed, the original gold rush of the 1860s, both in productivity and intensity."⁷⁹ One of the most prolific producers of this period was the Cornucopia, which was the largest lode producer during the period.⁸⁰ In 1939, the Cornucopia mines milled 160 – 175 tons of ore per day, and then shipped the product by rail to the smelter in Tacoma, Washington.⁸¹

Many challenges faced the workers at the Cornucopia Gold Mines Company during the most prosperous years. Mining was a physically-demanding year-round operation in Cornucopia, and at one point a news release noted that the mines operated continuously for three years. Under these conditions, men commonly succumbed to the "sickness." The company made an effort to treat the mystery illness, which was thought to be caused by no sunlight, by building a recreation room and solarium for miners to access artificial sunshine. Still, miners that could not be returned to health were replaced. Working through the winter, workers cut tunnels and paths through the 15'-30' foot snow drifts to access the mines.⁸² Chris Schneider Jr., who grew up in Cornucopia, explained the process of cutting these paths. "The snow was solid ice. To clear a path through it the men used cross-cut saws to saw the snow into blocks they could push down the mountain side.... While working in the snow everyone covered his face with cloth to keep from going snow blind."⁸³ After many years of enduring bad working conditions, in 1938 the employees Cornucopia Company formed a Labor Union under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, also known as the Wagner Act, which guaranteed the right of private employees to form unions and engage in collective bargaining. The Company went on to blame the law for future financial issues and other problems.⁸⁴

The success of the mines in the years before World War II immediately reflected in the fortunes of the town. In 1936 a total of 175 people were employed in the mines, and the *Baker-Democrat Herald* reported in 1939 that

⁷⁴ United States Manuscript Census (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1900, 1910, and 1920).

⁷⁵ State of Oregon, Oregon Blue Book (Salem: State of Oregon, 1937-1938); State of Oregon, Oregon Blue Book (Salem: State of Oregon, 1941-1942).

⁷⁶ State of Oregon, Oregon Blue Book (Salem: State of Oregon, 1937-1938); State of Oregon, Oregon Blue Book (Salem: State of Oregon, 1917-1918).

⁷⁷ Evans, 182; United States Census, 1900, 1910, and 1920.

⁷⁸ Burch, 122.

⁷⁹ Baker County Historical Society, 15.

⁸⁰ Burch, 122.

⁸¹ Brooks, 153.

⁸² Holland, 59, 63-64; Florin, 40; *Baker-Democrat Herald*, "Davis Relates Story," (Baker City) 6 April 1939.

⁸³ Holland, 66.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 64.

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the community operated without debt or levying taxes by using the receipts from its water system to pay the town's operating expenses. By 1939 Cornucopia had a surplus in the town treasury. With the surplus came modern amenities comparable to those of large cities at the time, including electricity and municipal water, and entertainment, such as picture shows.⁸⁵ At the peak of town's development, in 1940, the census recorded 395 residents in Cornucopia, mostly native-born Oregonians, 350 men were employed by the mines, and 60 children attended the local school.⁸⁶ While Cornucopia had a reputation as a well-behaved town, the Jailhouse was still an important asset during the booming days of mining. In 1938, six men were arrested for high-grading, which is the "secreting of high grade ore from a mine and then selling it or pounding out the gold in it for sale."⁸⁷

When the US became involved in WWII, production of gold in Oregon was higher than for any other year between 1887 and 1964.⁸⁸ However, the United States' total war effort required refocussing the nation's energies. War Production Board order L-208 redirected resources away from noncritical mining efforts, to iron, among other metals, needed to build weapons. The order resulted in the closure of Gold mines across the nation.⁸⁹ After mining an astounding 36 miles of tunnels, on November 7, 1941, the *Baker Democrat Herald* reported that the Cornucopia mines were closed indefinitely, effective November 1st. Among the reasons given for the closure was an "inability to meet wage demands of present operations." The author further explained that "low grade ore has been prevalent and in general the mine has not been paying." While not citing order L-108, the paper observed that "under present conditions a gold mine cannot compete with companies supplying defense metals which bring a better price."⁹⁰ Other area mines closed as well, many because the development costs associated with operating a mine were increasing due to war production during WWII. Shortly after the mine closure, the post office closed in June of 1942. The local school district joined the Halfway School District in 1953.⁹¹

Comparative Analysis

Few of Cornucopia's historic buildings remain today because of the heavy snow common at the town's high elevation of 4,700' and at the Cornucopia Mine at 8650'. Dolliver Thompson recorded the snowpack in May of 1938 to be "22 feet at Snyder Meadow, 22 feet at Cornucopia, and 26 feet up at the Union Mine, and it was heavy." The heavy snowpack lead to major landslides during and after the historic period, destroying mining structures and buildings in town. Since then, many buildings succumbed to the heavy snow, including the original 1887 school house and two other schools. The last school house was only six years old when it and the old Community Hall were destroyed by the 1944/1945 winter snow.³⁰ In addition to snow, fire destroyed many buildings, and insensitive additions, material salvage, and decay adversely affected the historic integrity of many others. The efforts of volunteers of the Pine Valley Museum preserved the Cornucopia Jailhouse, which is now one of a handful of buildings remaining in the former mining town that retains its historic integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. Although the building was moved early during the period of significance from Allentown to Cornucopia, and then within town during the historic period, the consolidation of the two communities and relocation of the building is part of a larger single development trend associated with gold mining in the area. The Jailhouse is the only remaining building associated with the governance of Cornucopia.

⁸⁵ *Baker-Democrat Herald*, "Cornucopia a City Without Debt or Tax" (Baker City) 5 May 1939;

⁸⁶ Evans, 182; United States Census, 1940.

⁸⁷ *Baker-Democrat Herald* "High-Grading Charge Filed" (Baker City) 6 September 1938; *Baker Record-Courier*, "One Miner Pleads Guilty to Ore Theft" (Baker City) 8 September 1938.

⁸⁸ Baker County Historical Society, 15.

⁸⁹ Baker County Historical Society, 15; Potter, 157.

⁹⁰ *Baker-Democrat Herald*, "Gold Mines at Copia Closed" (Baker City) 7 November 1941.

⁹¹ Brooks, 155.

Cornucopia Jailhouse
Name of Property

Baker Co., OR
County and State

Conclusion

The Cornucopia Jailhouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion A, Government, for its association with the self-governance and maintenance of law-and-order in this former mining town. As one of the very few remaining historic buildings in the community and the only resource historically related to the governance of the community, the Jailhouse stands as a strong symbol of the hard work, dedication, and sacrifices that the mining workers and their families made, and a reminder of Cornucopia and Baker County's rich mining past.

Cornucopia Jailhouse
Name of Property

Baker Co., OR
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bibliographical Note:

In the forward to his 1893 history of Baker County, author Isaac Hiatt noted the difficulty of assembling the records of Baker County and its towns and communities, stating “in the present work, accounts of events and dates of their occurrence have been taken from written documents whenever they could be obtained, and in other cases where no record could be consulted, conclusion had to be reached by summing up the testimony on the best witnesses to the fact.”⁹² Assembling the facts of the establishment of Allentown and Cornucopia and the construction of the Cornucopia Jailhouse 121 years after Hiatt made his observation is no easier. The history of these towns is that of the mines, and while primary source information related to the establishment, operation, and output of the mines are captured in corporate records and government reports, the history of the towns themselves is largely lost – either mislaid, destroyed, or never recorded. A number of secondary resources do address the history of Cornucopia, but the unsourced narratives are often based on secondary oral histories, and are often incomplete or contradictory. The discussion presented here broadly uses a variety of resources to construct the most plausible narrative. Where possible, primary and secondary resources are used in concert to establish important facts, and, as necessary, contradictory information is identified.

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⁹² Hiatt, 5.

Cornucopia Jailhouse
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Halfway Library and Baker County Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Cornucopia Jailhouse
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

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

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45.007013°</u>	<u>-117.196806°</u>	3	<u></u>	<u></u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u></u>	<u></u>	4	<u></u>	<u></u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

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

The boundary of the historic property includes the physical extent of the Cornucopia Jailhouse itself and a perimeter of 5' measured from the base of each exterior wall to form a rectangular boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Cornucopia Jailhouse is located in the center of Second Street, a dedicated public right-of-way, within the Cornucopia town site. The selected boundary represents a reasonable limit for this resource, and includes the jailhouse itself and a modest perimeter to physically separate the property from the surrounding land uses without extending onto the adjacent tax lots.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Mahon, edited by Oregon SHPO staff date August 8, 2013
organization Wallowa Soil & Water Conservation District telephone (541) 426-4521 ext. 108
street & number 401 NE 1st, Suite E email
city or town Enterprise state OR zip code 97828

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Cornucopia Jailhouse
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Photographs:

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Cornucopia Jailhouse
City or Vicinity: Cornucopia
County: Baker **State:** OR
Photographer: Lisa Mahon
Date Photographed: Photos 1-5, 7-8, 11-12 7/3/2013; 6, 9, 10 9/23/2009

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

- Photo 1 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0001
West facade, camera facing east.
- Photo 2 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0002
North facade, camera facing south
- Photo 3 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0003
East facade, camera facing west.
- Photo 4 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0004
South facade, camera facing north.
- Photo 5 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0005
Detailed photo of the joining of the exterior wall and interior jail cell walls shown in photo 4, camera facing north.
- Photo 6 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0006
Detailed photo of the window on the south facade, camera facing north.
- Photo 7 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0007
Entrance of Jailhouse facing north at the stairs to the second story office.
- Photo 8 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0008
Room between entrance and jail cells, camera facing north.
- Photo 9 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0009
Outside of the north jail cell and its door, camera facing northeast.
- Photo 10 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0010
Inside of the south jail cell, camera facing southeast.
- Photo 11 of 12:** OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0011
Detail photo fo jail cell locks, camera facing east

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Photos Continued

Photo 12 of 12: OR_BakerCounty_CornucopiaJailhouse_0012
Second story office, camera facing southeast

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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List of Figures

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

- Figure 1:** Regional Location Map showing location of Cornucopia relative to larger communities in Eastern Oregon.
- Figure 2:** Local Location Map of the Cornucopia Jailhouse in Cornucopia.
- Figure 3:** Baker County tax lot map (Township 06 South, Range 45 East, Section 34) with property indicated.
- Figure 4:** Site Plan
- Figure 5:** First Floor Plan
- Figure 6:** Second Floor Plan
- Figure 7:** Illustration of Cornucopia Jailhouse Construction History.
- Figure 8:** Cornucopia, 1887. Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112070
- Figure 9:** Cornucopia, c. 1918. Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112073.
- Figure 10:** Students and teachers of Cornucopia School, nd. Oregon Historical Society, Call No. ORHI56900.
- Figure 11:** Panorama of Cornucopia between 1910-1920, courtesy of Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112107
- Figure 12:** Cornucopia 1913 Labor Day Celebration, courtesy of Baker County Library, Call No. 003\1985120

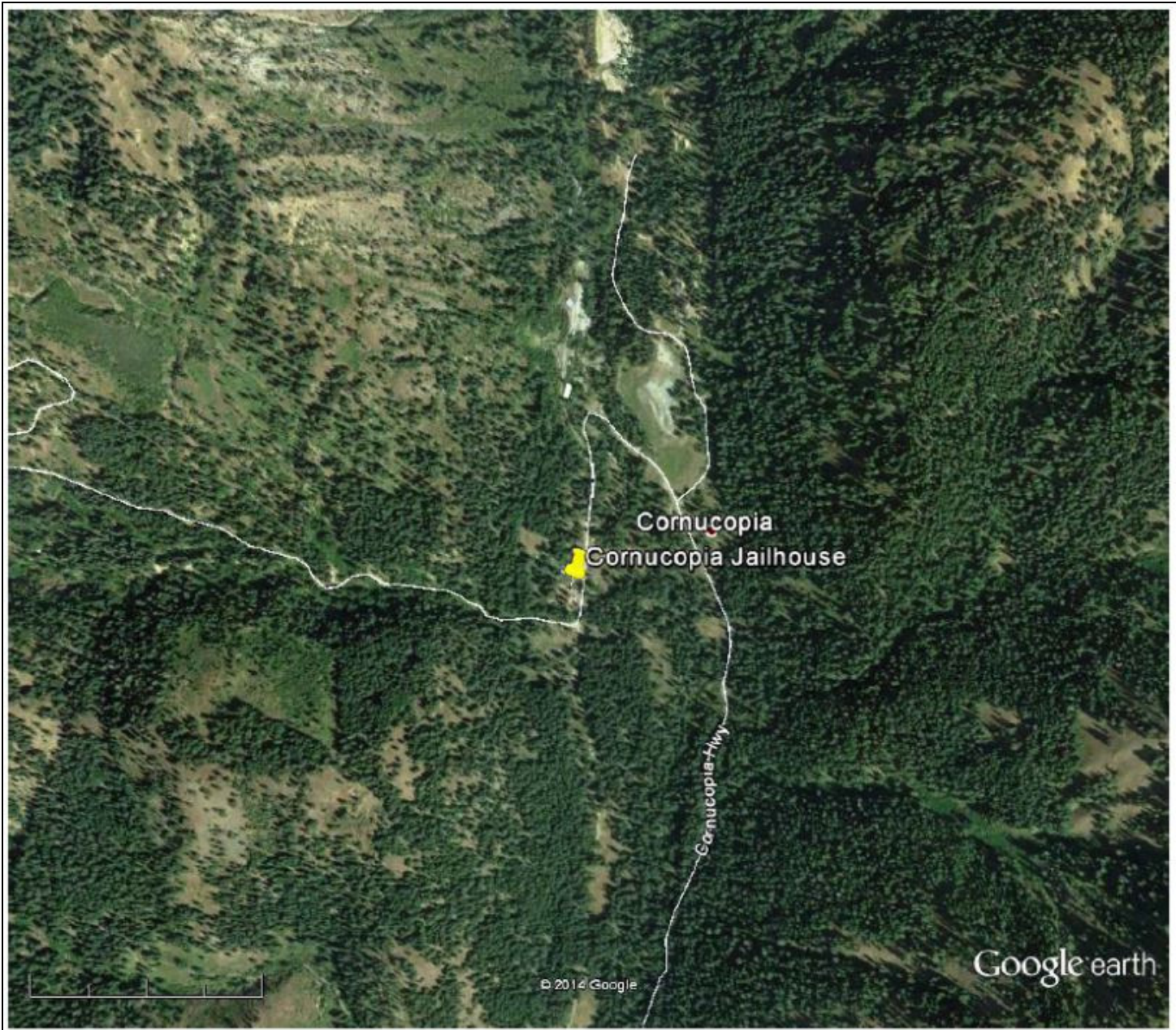
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Figure 1: Regional Location Map showing location of Cornucopia relative to larger communities in Eastern Oregon. Latitude: 45.007013°; Longitude: -117.196806°



Google earth

feet | 4000
km | 1

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Figure 2: Local Location Map of the Cornucopia Jailhouse in Cornucopia.
Latitude: 45.007013°; Longitude: -117.196806°



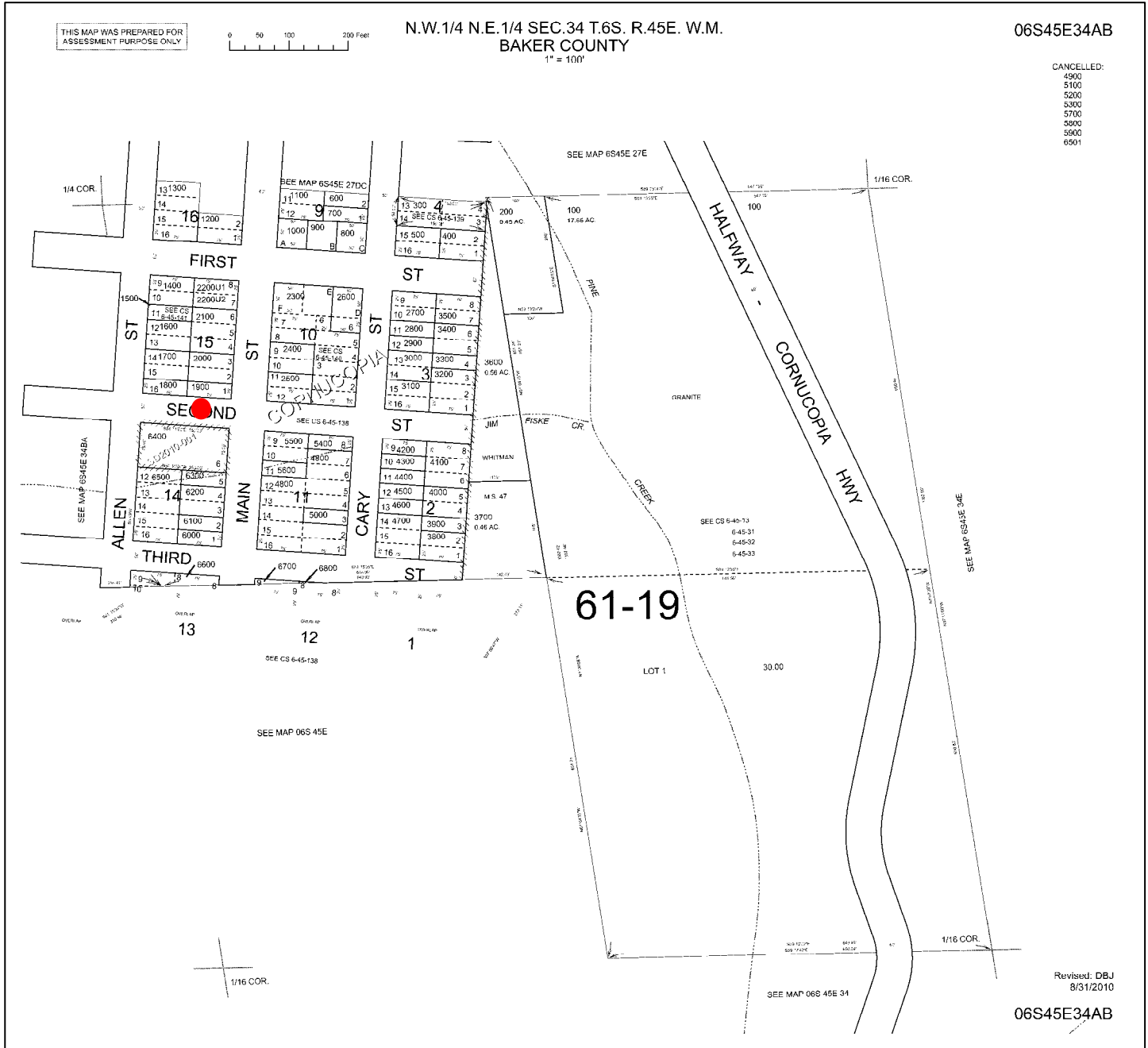
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Figure 3: Baker County tax lot map (Township 06 South, Range 45 East, Section 34) with Jailhouse indicated. The Jailhouse is legally located within the right of way of Second Street.



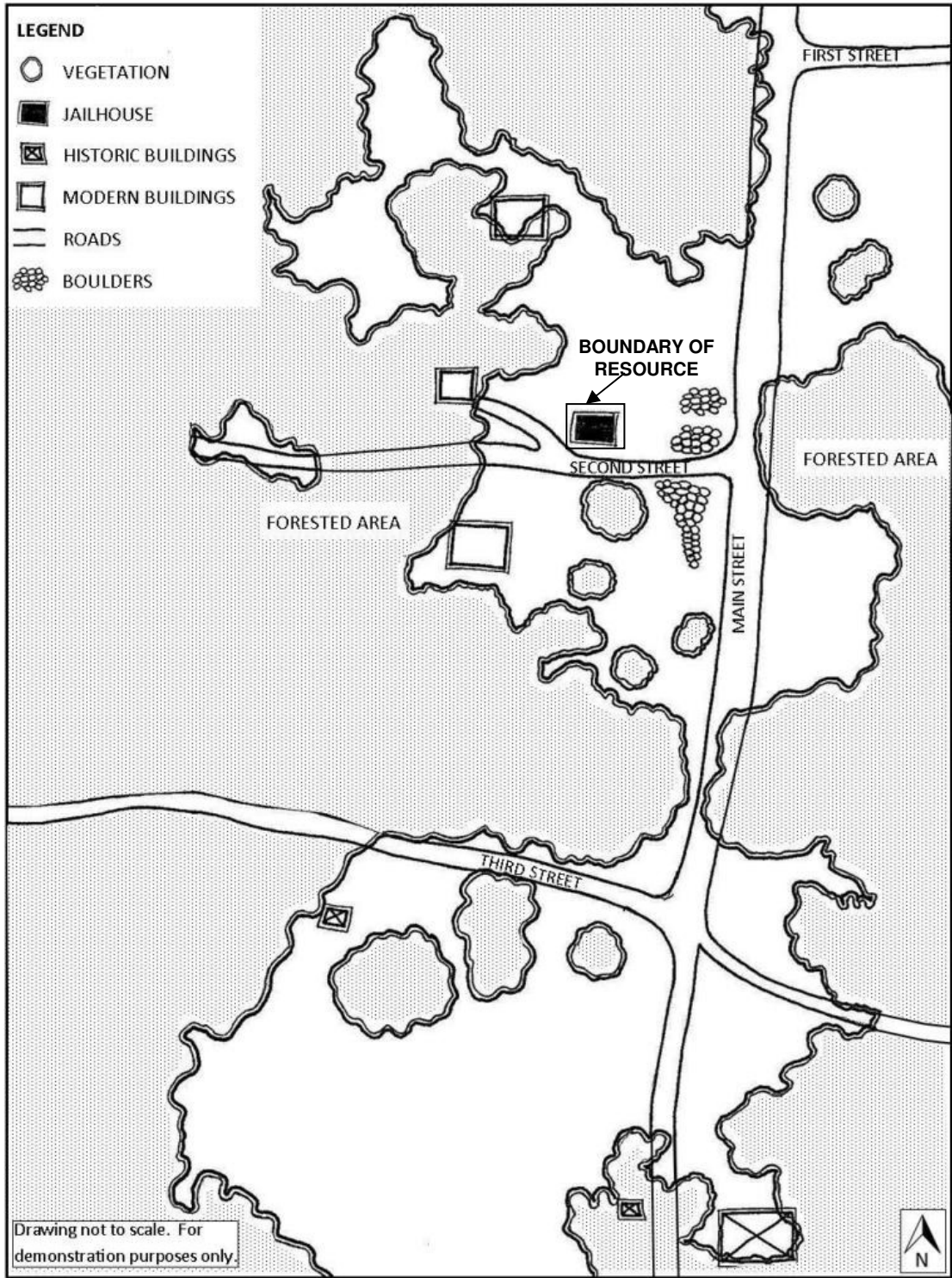
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Figure 4: Site Plan; map below shows current physical alignment of Second Street in relationship to the Cornucopia Jailhouse. The Jailhouse sits in the middle of the plated right-of-way for the street.



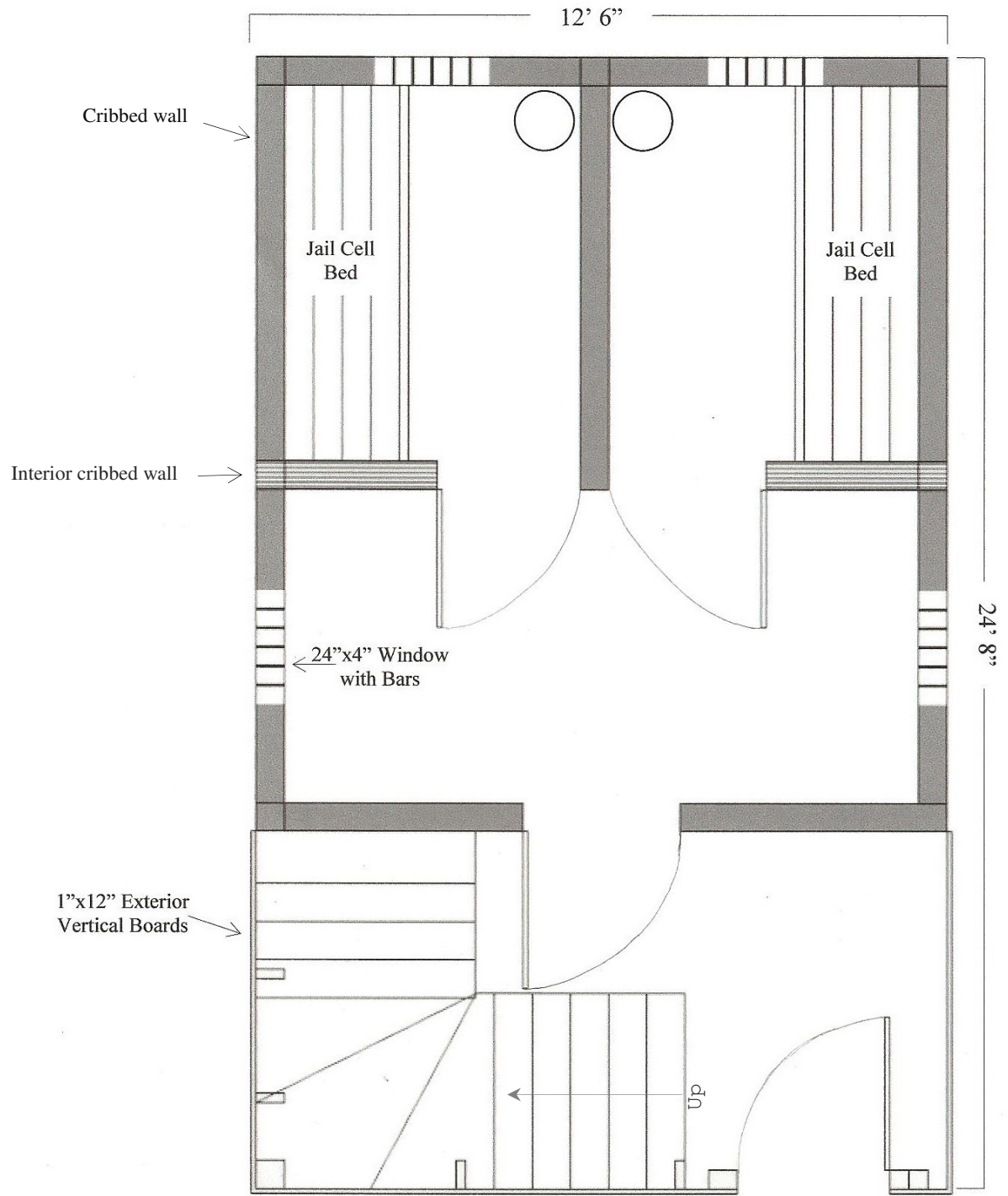
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Figure 5: First Floor Plan of Jailhouse.



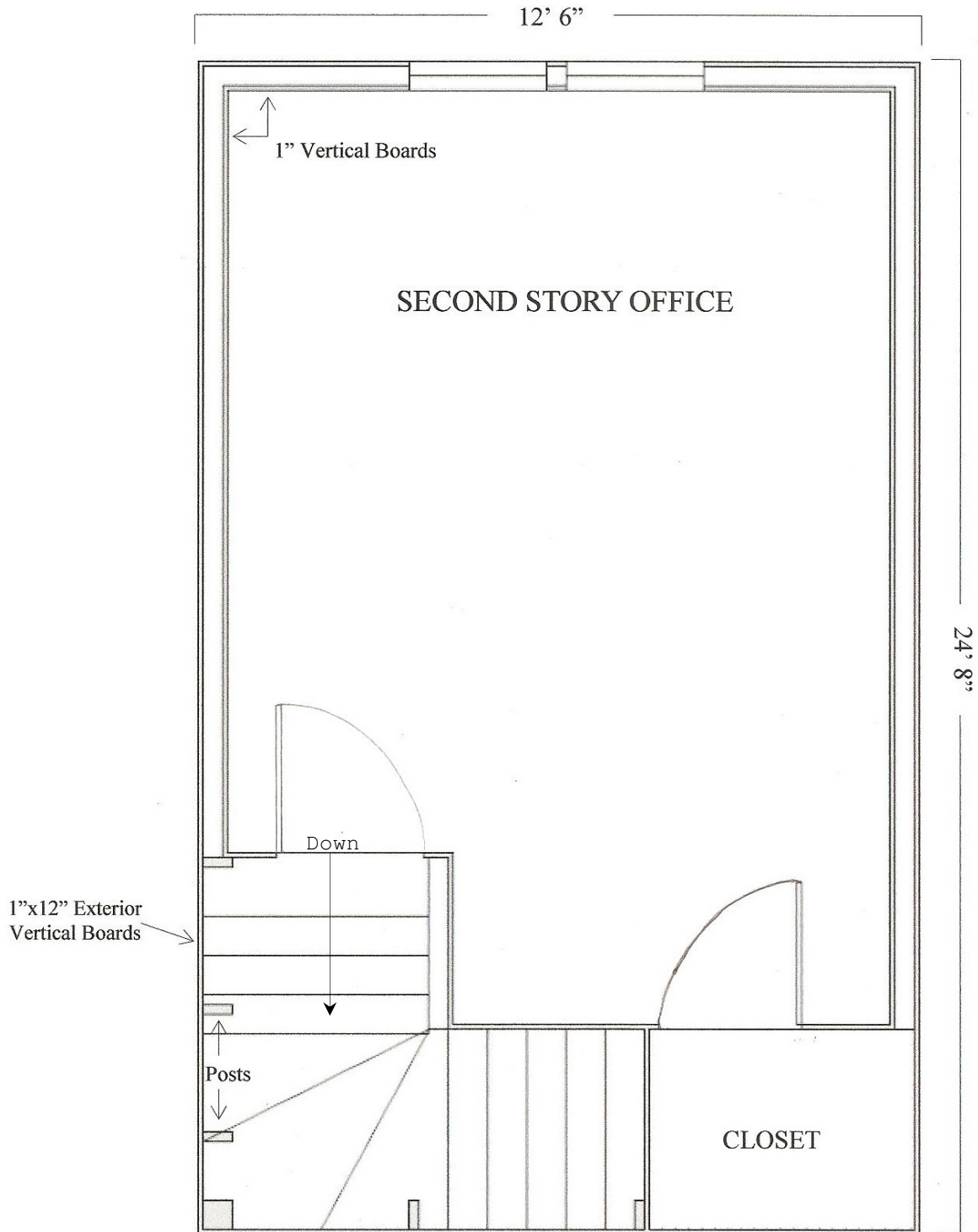
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Figure 6: Second Floor Plan of Jailhouse.



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Figure 7: Illustration of Cornucopia Jailhouse Construction History. The original c. 1885 cribbed portion of Jailhouse is identified by white rectangle. The wood-frame small foyer and second story were added sometime before 1920.



North facade



East facade

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Figure 8: Cornucopia, 1884. Note stump in the center of the Main Street of Cornucopia, less than a year after the town was platted. O. H. P. McCord wrote on back of photo: "William Hulick provided this photo. He says that this is a picture of Cornucopia, Oregon, taken in 1884. His father was employed at work in connection with the mine." Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112070



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Figure 9: Cornucopia, c. 1918. Car sits on main dirt street of Cornucopia. Note false-front buildings. Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112073.



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National Park Service

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Figure 10: Students and teachers of Cornucopia School, nd. Oregon Historical Society, Call No. ORHI56900.



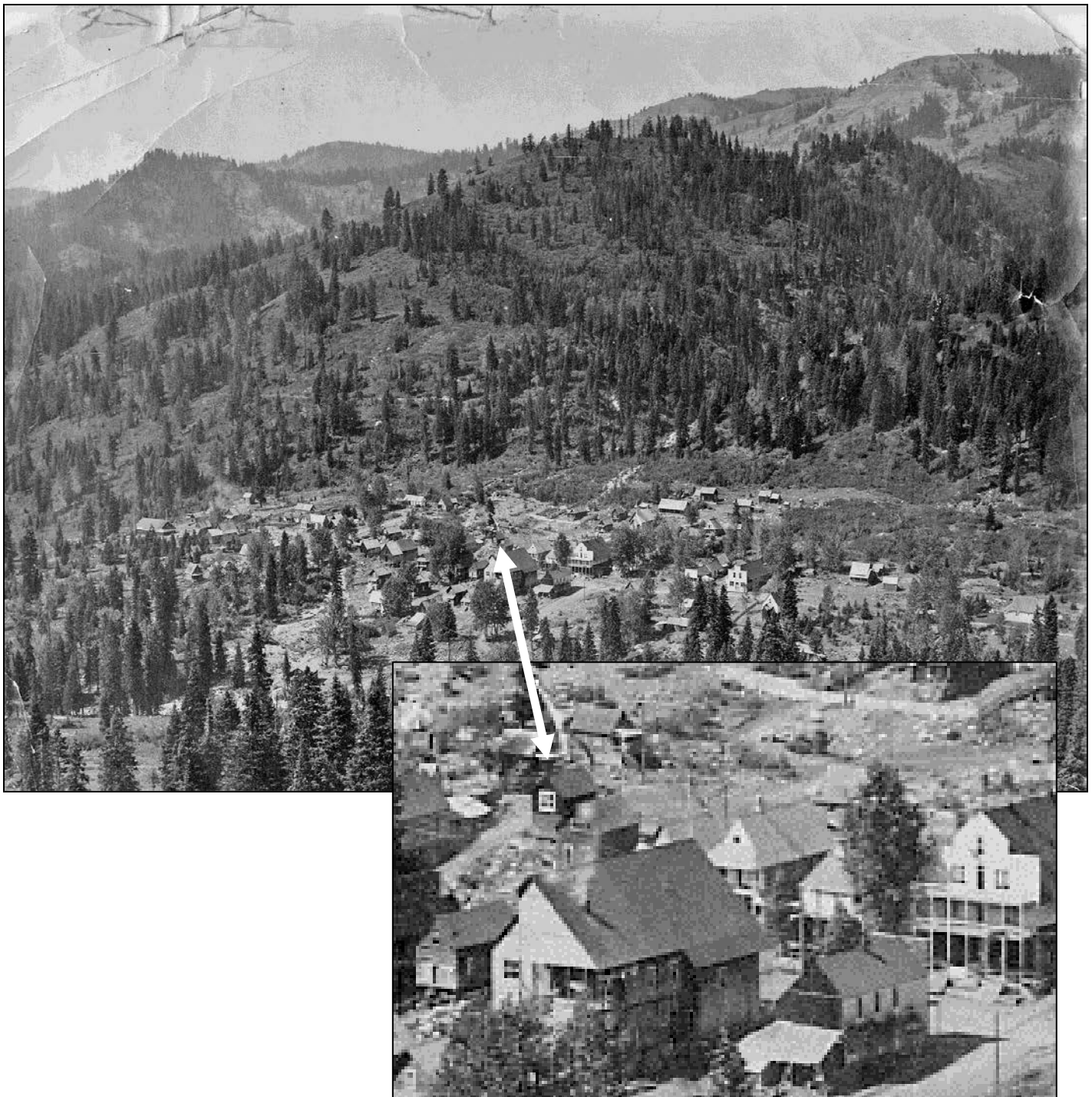
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Figure 11: Photo Courtesy of Baker County Library. Two prints of the same image are both labeled as taken between 1900-1915 or between 1910-1920. For the purposes of this nomination, the correct date is assumed to be 1920. Baker County Library, Call No. 003\198112107



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National Park Service

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Figure 12: Photo courtesy of Baker County Library. Photo is labeled “Cornucopia. Labor Day 1913 celebration in front of Keller Dance Hall.”





BAKER CO.
PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING





BAKER CO.
PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING





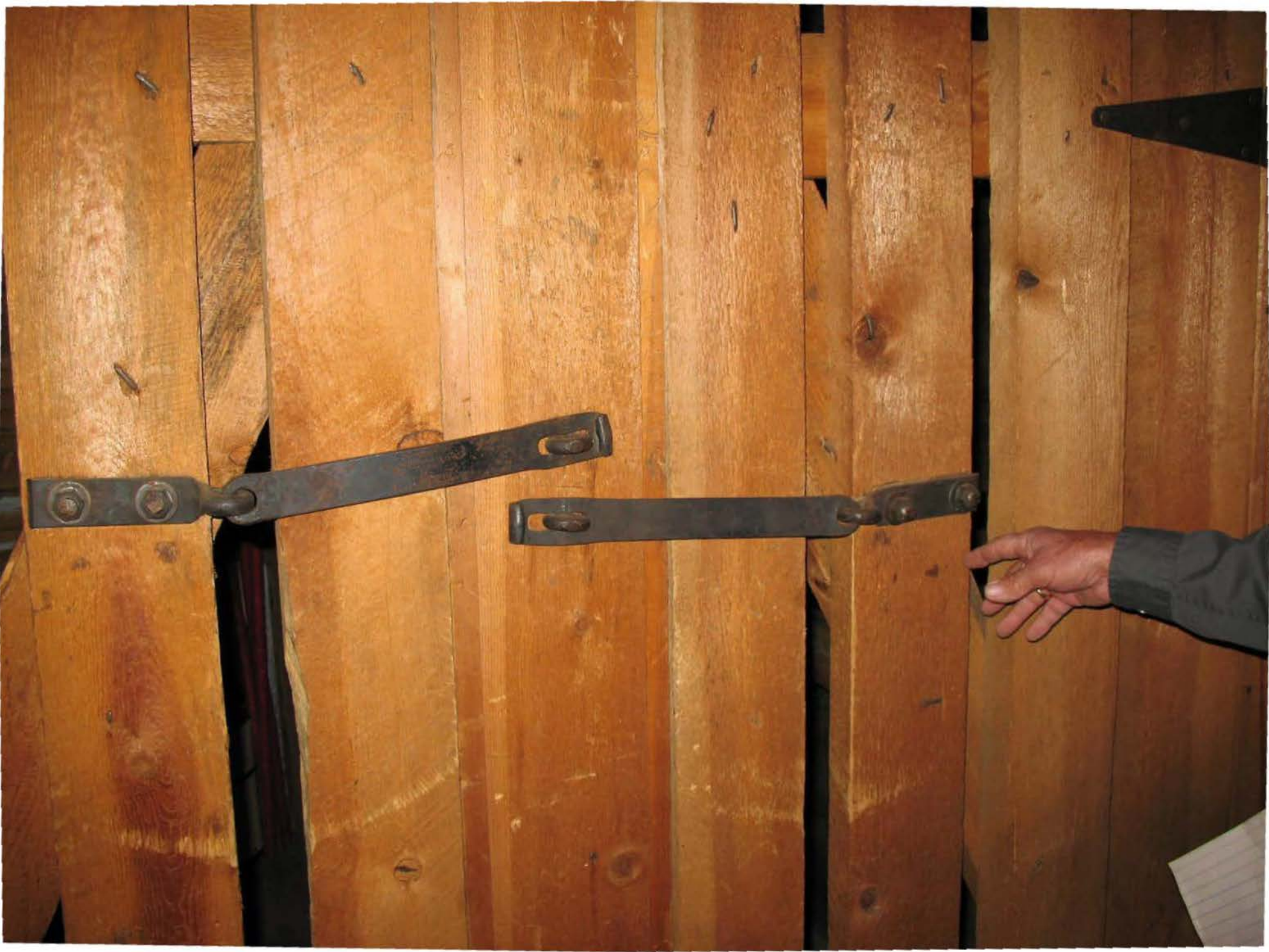














6 JARS 3 LBS
REAL ROAST
CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Cornucopia Jailhouse
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OREGON, Baker

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/18/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/26/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000959

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11-24-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer St NE, Ste C

Salem, OR 97301-1266

(503) 986-0690

Fax (503) 986-0793

www.oregonheritage.org



October 3, 2014

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
USDOI National Park Service - Cultural Resources
1201 "Eye" Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Shull:

At the recommendation of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, I hereby nominate the following historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

CORNUCOPIA JAILHOUSE
2ND ST
CORNUCOPIA, BAKER COUNTY

LOSTINE PHARMACY
125 HWY 82
LOSTINE, WALLOWA COUNTY

SISKIYOU SMOKEJUMPER BASE (BOUNDARY INCREASE)
SMOKEJUMPER WAY
CAVE JUNCTION, JOSEPHINE COUNTY

The enclosed disks contain true and correct copies of the above nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations. If questions arise, please contact Ian Johnson, National Register & Survey Coordinator, (503) 986-0678.

Sincerely,

Roger Roper
Deputy State Historic Preservation

Encl.

