

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



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 Oleson, Ole and Polly, Farmhouse
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 5430 SW Ames Way
city, town Portland
state Oregon code OR county Washington code 067 zip code 97225

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 2, Noncontributing 1 buildings, 1 Total

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 nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: James M. Hornum
Date: January 3, 1991
State or Federal agency and bureau: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) 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:
entered in the National Register (checked)
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Melvyn Byer
Date of Action: 2/3 2/91

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwellingDomestic: secondary structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwellingDomestic: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne/Eastlake(vernacular version)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls woodroof asphalt: composition shingleother _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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
Agriculture
Ethnic Heritage/European

Period of Significance

1889-1890
1890-1935

Significant Dates

1890

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.31 acres Lake Oswego, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	1	9	8	6	0	5	0	3	6	2	0	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in the Southeast quarter of Section 13, Township 1S, Range 1W of the Willamette Meridian, in suburban Washington County, Oregon. It is identified as Tax Lot 3100 at said location and is more particularly described as follows:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area encompasses the legally recorded lot lines of the entire parcel presently associated with the farmhouse built for Ole Oleson in 1889-1890. The historic Oleson barn stands on a separately-held parcel and, therefore, is not included in the nominated area. Contributing features of the nominated property are the house and its detached woodshed/wash house. An automobile garage is counted a non-contributing feature of the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marsha Takayanagi Matthews

organization _____ date August 1, 1990

street & number 3404 SE 16th telephone (503) 239-7740

city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97202

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The Ole Oleson House is a two-story pattern book Queen Anne-Eastlake style house sited on 1.3 acres overlooking Ames Way and Oleson Road in the Raleigh Hills area of Washington County. The acreage is dominated by many original plantings by the Oleson family that today creates a rural environment in the midst of intense suburban development. The house, built in 1889/90, apparently replaced an earlier 1860s structure. The house is situated in a north facing direction on the land.

The house is cruciform in plan, with balloon framing, approximately 40 x 60' with three attached porches. The original cement pad and wood post foundation has been replaced with a reinforced concrete foundation. There is a fruit cellar under the kitchen with access from the porch on the east side of the house.

The north side of the house features a small porch at the formal entrance with a second story balcony. The porch and balcony feature turned balusters, porch posts and brackets. The porch is currently in disrepair but the original posts and brackets remain. It is being reconstructed to its original design using photographs obtained from the Oleson family.

The second porch is off the kitchen entrance on the eastside of the house. It was originally a large open porch with lattice work walls but was enclosed in the 1940s with framed 8 paned windows. The original well was enclosed within this porch. The third porch was on the west side of the kitchen. It was added in approximately 1910. This porch was enclosed for a bathroom in 1930.

East of the porch on the north facade is a two story three-sided bay with recessed paneling and decorative cornice and cove moldings. The windows are the original capped one-over-one, double hung sash, symmetrically placed. The front entry door has four panels, two of which are arched, and a transom. The back east porch entry is the original single light door. The balcony door has four fixed lights. This door was salvaged by the Oleson family from the 1860s structure the house replaced.

Exterior decorative features are a simple belt course, corner fan brackets, and decorative spindle and openwork vergeboards on the end gables. The 1940s era shingling has been removed to reveal the original horizontal ship lap, "8 rustic" siding. This siding was reversed and used to clad the interior walls.

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The roof lines are asymmetrical, with medium pitch "Y" gables. The kitchen hip roof is one story. The roof is covered with composition shingles in a diamond pattern. There are three original interior chimneys with original Victorian corbelled caps.

The interior decorative features and layout remain largely unchanged. The formal entry opens to a hall with an open straight flight stairway with turned ash balusters and newel posts. The family parlor is entered from the front hall, with the formal parlor to the north. The two parlors are separated by four panel, 7' pocket doors. One of the more charming features in the family parlor are the original carved mantel and overmantel with two painted panels of the Olesons' Swedish homeland. To the south of the parlors is a small dining room. The original wainscoating remains in the dining room and parlors. There were originally two bedrooms, one west of the family parlor and one west of the dining room. The bedroom west of the dining room was converted to a bathroom in the 1930s. The other bedroom remains unchanged. The kitchen is located at the south end of the house. The original pantry wall has been removed to enlarge the kitchen area. The interior doors are original, 7', four panel cedar doors with transoms, fluted casings and bulls eyes. Victorian cast hardware and hinges remains on all the doors. The 10' ceilings are beaded tongue in groove throughout.

The upstairs consisted of five bedrooms, three on the east side of the house, and two on the west side. One of these bedrooms has been converted to a bathroom. The upstairs decorative detailing is being reproduced in a sympathetic manner to the downstairs.

There are two outbuildings, a shed of the same vintage as the house and a garage of later construction. Only the shed is counted a contributing property. It was used as a wood shed/laundry room. It has a gable roofline with shed addition. The shed is built in the main with horizontal tongue and groove siding. Vertical tongue and groove siding is used above the door frame in the shed addition to the half gable. The shed is placed in the usual pattern with the short roof pitch on the side facing the street and the long roof in back.

Much of the landscaping surrounding the house is mature plantings dating from the time of construction. The trees include redwood, black walnuts of large proportions, pin oak,

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English walnut, cherry, maple, fir, cedar, and yew. These plantings are in the main around the periphery of the site creating a secluded but not a forested environment. The yard retains the original layout from 1890. It is laid out on a north/south axis with the house. The yard is not a farmyard but shows a lay person's attempt at formal landscaping. An effort was made to create an environment around the house that separated it from the farm proper.

The Oleson family planted an orchard of cherries, pears, apple and plum trees for their own use and for commercial sale. The plum trees have all succumbed to old age and disease but five of the original apple trees remain. These are sited in the southwest corner of the property facing Ames Way. In addition three original grape arbors still exist.

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SUMMARY

The two-story, balloon-frame, vernacular Queen Anne/Eastlake farmhouse located on SW Ames Way in suburban Washington County, Oregon that was built for Ole and Polly Patton Oleson and their growing family was completed in 1890. It is locally significant in the context of late 19th Century/early 20th Century transitional agriculture as the place representing the ultimate attainments of a Swedish immigrant farmer whose prominence in the Garden Home area is recognized in the naming of Oleson Road. The house meets National Register Criterion A, therefore, as well as Criterion C. The Washington County Cultural Resource Inventory shows that, as an intact example of its vernacular type, the house is unsurpassed in the Beaverton-Cedar Mill survey area.

Ole Oleson acquired his acreage at this location in 1874, at a time when Willamette Valley agriculture was changing to specialized crops sustainable on smaller parcels than those required by wheat growers. Industrious, late-arriving immigrants were able to take advantage of this trend, selling timber in the process of clearing the land and growing a variety of crops on the marginal tracts. Subdivision of the 100-acre holding commenced in 1905, forced by economic conditions and by bisection of the farm, first by an interurban electric railway and then by an early market road bearing Oleson's name. The break-up and sale of the farm acreage was completed by Polly and Ole Oleson's heirs after 1935.

The house is a simple adaptation of a popular pattern book design. It has a cruciform plan and gable roof broken by two prominent chimney stacks with corbelled caps. Exterior elevations are clad with shiplap and trimmed with plain corner boards and a string course dividing first and second stories. Window openings are regularly spaced and have architrave framements. Several single-story rear porches were enclosed over time. The gable-end entry facade is distinguished by a transomed doorway offset to the west side that is sheltered by a single-bay porch having a bracketed upper deck supported on three turned posts. The entrance bay is balanced on the east by an Italianate two-story polygonal bay. The front gable is decorated by fancy spindle and cut-out work at the apex of vergeboards and by cut-out fan brackets at the base of raked frieze boards. Interior layout and finishwork are essentially intact. A general rehabilitation has been put underway by the present owners.

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Counted as a separately contributing feature of the one-and-a-third-acre nominated area is the original woodshed/wash house with its lean-to addition on the east. The outbuilding is offset from the southeast corner of the house. A remnant of the Oleson fruit orchard is included also. The barn stands on a separately held parcel and is not included in the nominated area. An automobile garage is counted as a non-contributing feature.

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Statement of Significance/Oleson House

The Queen Anne farmhouse built in 1889/90 for Ole Oleson at Garden Home, a Portland suburb in Washington County, Oregon, meets National Register Criterion "A" as the property which represents the aspirations and achievements of a Swedish immigrant farmer who came to the United States with his family on the eve of the second great wave of immigration to Oregon between 1880 and 1910. The Oleson family acquired land from a prominent settlement era political figure that was located in the western foothills of the Tualatin Mountains. The Oleson family became respected and well-known residents of Garden Home by dint of persistent hard work and a fortuitous marriage link to a prominent pioneer family. The Oleson property is significant as an example of marginal agriculture in Washington County between the 1870s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, as well as an example of the assimilation of an ethnic immigrant farmer into the society of the pioneer community. The Oleson house is also important under Criterion "C" as one of only two Queen Anne style residences out of forty-eight historic resources identified in Historic/Geographic Area No. 2 (Beaverton/Cedar Mill) of the Washington County Cultural Resource Inventory. It is also the second oldest historic property of the forty-eight, and long a landmark in this the first and most intensely suburbanized portion of Washington County.

Ole Oleson was born in Sweden in 1856. His father, John Oleson, was born in Sweden, near Stockholm, in 1812. Ole, his father, and two older sisters emigrated to Claytonville, Kansas, in 1868. Thereafter, the family removed to Portland on 22 February 1874. The Oleson family's move was somewhat ahead of the main body of Swedish immigration to Oregon during the nineteenth century, but typical of the patterns of stopover immigrants. There were only 205 foreign-born Swedes in all of Oregon in 1870, less than 1.8 per cent of the total foreign-born population. Thus the Olesons were probably amongst the first Swedes in Washington County. The Swedish population in Oregon jumped significantly with 3,774 emigrating in 1890 and over 10,000 in 1910. Swedish immigrants tended to stopover in other parts of the United States for prolonged periods of time. As a result, Swedes were less prone to forming distinct ethnic communities in Oregon due to the acclimatization to American culture they achieved during their sojourns in other parts of the country. The Olesons' ethnic isolation in the Garden Home area was therefore not

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particularly unusual. The Olesons were proud of their origins but intent on pursuing their future as an individual family rather than as part of a Swedish community.

John and Ole Oleson jointly acquired 103.20 acres of the Robert Denny Donation Land Claim in the Garden Home area of eastern Washington County from Judge E. D. Shattuck on 11 August 1874. The history of the property's ownership prior to the Olesons' is an important prologue to the story of their long tenure at Garden Home.

Robert Denny was related to Thomas Denny, who established a Donation Land Claim a few miles to the west in 1853. Denney was related by marriage to a group of several prominent early New England settlers in the Beaverton area. Robert Denny's 320 acre claim, filed in 1853, was located in the gently rolling western foothills of the Tualatin Mountains. It was composed of first class clay loam, and wooded with fir, yellow pine, white oak and dense undergrowth. Denny only held his land for seven years, whereupon he sold it to Matthew Patton, an immigrant of 1847, for \$4,000.

Patton was somewhat atypical of the Tualatin Valley pioneers, in that he had gone to the California gold fields soon after his arrival in Oregon in 1847, made a fortune quickly (\$10,000 in gold dust) and returned to the Portland area to invest in real estate and commercial ventures, such as the iron works at Oswego. Patton could be characterized more as a successful speculator than a farmer, which put him in a class apart from his less ambitious neighbors. More will be heard about the Patton family below. Patton held the land for twelve years, selling it to Judge E. D. Shattuck for \$2,580 on 16 September 1872.

Shattuck was very atypical of Tualatin Valley settlers. An 1853 immigrant, he came to Oregon by ship, entered immediately into local politics, and by 1857 was a Washington County delegate to the constitutional convention, and had moved to Portland to practice law. Shattuck went on to become a very successful judge and Portland politician. Shattuck purchased the Denny claim from Patton in 1872 to establish a country estate for his later years. He subsequently sold 103.20 acres of the Denny claim to John and Ole Oleson in 1874 for exactly the same price he paid for the entire 320 acres two years before, \$2,580. It is interesting to note that the land sold to the Olesons had declined significantly in value between 1860 and 1872, from approximately \$125.00 an acre to

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\$80.00 an acre, only to jump from that figure to approximately \$240.00 an acre by 1874. The agricultural economy of the 1850s and 1860s was dominated by wheat, which required large tracts of land to make any sizeable profit. By 1874, the agricultural economy was beginning to change, with more diversification of crops and intensive land use for specialized crops. Smaller farms were becoming more common and in demand by the late arriving immigrants. The Olesons were in the right place at the right time.

It is unknown how much improvement either Denny or Patton made to the land under their respective ownership. Oleson family tradition has it that there was an 1860s vintage house on the land when the family acquired the 103.20 acre tract, presumably built by Patton. The family lived in this house during the early years of the farm. In any event, there is no such house extant today.

John and Ole Oleson farmed the land jointly between 1874 and 1883, when John sold the land to Ole for \$1,700, and went into retirement at the age of 71. Ole Oleson, who had married Polly Philena Patton on 22 October 1878, was now the head of household and proprietor of the Oleson farm. Ole's marriage to Polly Patton re-established the Patton family's link to the land the Oleson farm was built on. Polly Patton was a daughter of John Patton, a son of Matthew Patton. John Patton had immigrated to Oregon with his family in 1847. John's brother, Dr. Robert Patton, Matthew's most successful and well-known son, had a country estate that had been carved out of the Talbott Donation Land Claim immediately to the north of Oleson's farm. No doubt Ole met Polly through participation in Garden Home's social life.

Having assumed responsibility for further developing the farm after 1883, Ole had constructed a barn by 1887, which was located northwest of the present house, near Fanno Creek (see Sketch Map). The barn was constructed from timber milled on the property. The mill was a modest affair, and was apparently located on the creek as well, but no records exist as to its exact date of construction or location. Family tradition has it that John and Ole built the mill and sold cordwood to the railroad at Beaverton, and milled lumber for farm projects.

Ole and Polly Oleson, both married at 22, had produced four children by 1887. Family correspondence indicates that Polly and the children may have lived elsewhere during

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east, creating the Shattuck stop. Ole had a stop named in his honor as well. The actual stop consisted of a modest open shelter built on a sled frame that could be set in place from a flatcar, and was located at the east end of the now-demolished trestle over Oleson Road (see Sketch Map). The stop was a few hundred yards west of the house.

Ole Oleson connected Oleson Road to Garden Home sometime after 1912, again lending his name to Washington County's historic transportation system. Oleson Road had previously been a dead end dirt lane connecting the Oleson farm to Scholls Ferry Road. The improvement of Oleson Road provided an important component to the road network developing along the western foothills of the Tualatin Mountains during this period.

The introduction of electric interurban commuter service sparked a flood of speculative real estate ventures along and adjacent to the rail lines in Washington County after 1908. These were called garden tract developments, as they were designed to capture the allure of the small family farm on a suburban scale. Many of these garden tract developments were built in the immediate proximity of larger towns such as Beaverton. The success of such ventures may have influenced Ole Oleson to try his hand, for he platted Oleson Acres on his land in March of 1925. Only one house was ever built on the eight lot subdivision.

Polly Oleson died in 1934, and Ole died in 1935. After their deaths, the farm passed to the children, and was gradually broken up and sold off to family members and residential subdivisions over the years. The family home and limited surrounding acreage remained in family hands until its sale to the current owners in 1985.

Ole Oleson was a well-known community figure in Garden Home over the course of his life on the farm. He had a reputation for fiscal conservatism, and was an active Republican. Ole Oleson is representative of how later-ethnic immigrants successfully adapted themselves and their smaller farms to the persistent agricultural socio-economic structure founded on kith and kin relationships established by the settlement era pioneers. His 1890 home remains as a landmark of that success in Garden Home, the centerpiece of his imprint in eastern Washington County.

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Ole's development of the farm complex during the late 1880s. In any event, Ole built the subject house during 1889-90 to accommodate his growing family - another child was born in 1891, and three more were added by 1904. Ole Oleson had the home built by a contractor, probably choosing the design from a plan book. Family tradition has it that material from the earlier house on the farm was included in the 1889-90 house. The new home provided yet another social gathering place for the growing community of Garden Home. Family history and documents indicates that the Olesons hosted frequent dances and socials at their home, beginning with a grand ball on 1 January 1890 to inaugurate their new house.

Apart from timber sales, Ole Oleson raised a variety of crops suitable to his small and hilly farm: onions, hay, and a plum orchard. Fruit became an important component of Oregon's agricultural economy between 1880 and 1900. Ole Oleson's plum crop was a part of this agricultural trend. Augustus Fanno had become the "Onion King of Oregon" during the settlement era because of his successful development of that crop on his Beaverton area land claim. Oleson may have chosen onions in addition to plums because of their success in the area. The Oleson family's success as farmers was limited by the size and nature of their farm. They did not have the land to be a single crop mogul like Fanno. Like many small farmers of their day, the Olesons made a little money and raised their family, and were respected members of the Garden Home community. They stand out due to the family's ethnic heritage and links to the socially prominent Patton family, and their longevity at Garden Home.

The limits of their success can be measured in part by the bank attachment of Ole Oleson's farm in 1894, and Ole's subsequent sale of the farm to his wife Polly in 1896 for \$1,700. The depression of 1893 brought financial ruin to many small farmers, and it may be that Ole Oleson was close enough to the edge to have been caught up in such problems.

Ole sold 14.73 acres to his son John Alden Oleson in 1905 for \$1,000 so that he could build a home. This represents the first subdivision of the Oleson property. In 1908, the Oregon Electric Railroad built its interurban electric commuter line through the Oleson farm on its way west to Beaverton, Hillsboro and Forest Grove. Like other property owners along the right-of-way, Ole Oleson apparently granted permission for the line in exchange for a stop on his land. Judge Shattuck had done the same immediately to the

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Oleson, Ole. Letter to Polly Oleson, 21 August 1889.

Oleson, Ole. Telephone interview with author. Banks, Oregon, May 1990.

Oleson/Patton Family papers; Obituaries, news clippings, ephemera.

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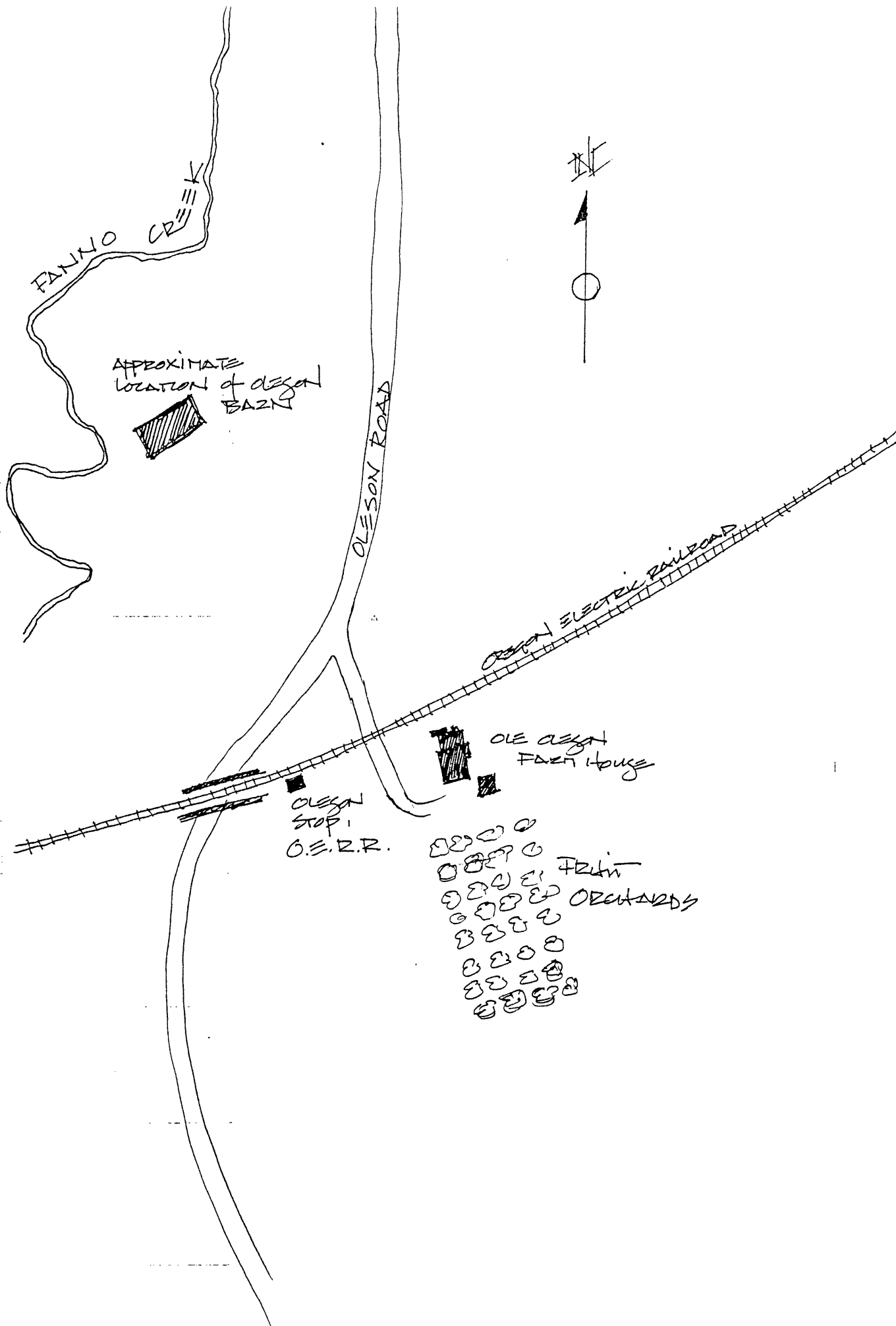
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Beginning at the most Westerly corner of Lot 6, Block 5, HEMSTREET HEIGHTS, PLAT NO. 2, a plat of record in Section 13, Township 1 South, Range 1 West, Willamette Meridian, in the County of Washington and State of Oregon; thence along the Westerly line of said subdivision South 25°50' East 210.70 feet to an iron pipe and South 10°00' East 155 feet to an iron pipe; thence leaving said Westerly line South 74°41' West 162.75 feet to an iron pipe; thence North 15°19' West 329.30 feet to a point; thence North 56°56' East 46.84 feet to an iron pipe; thence North 63°54' East 95.73 feet to the place of beginning.



FANNO CREEK

APPROXIMATE
LOCATION of OLSSON
BAZIN

OLSSON ROAD

OLSSON ELECTRIC RAILROAD

OLSSON
STOP,
O.E.R.R.

OLE OLSSON
FARM HOUSE

OLSSON
ORCHARDS



