

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 25 1975

DATE ENTERED JUL 17 1975

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens

AND/OR COMMON

Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

115 S. Pekin Road

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Woodland

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Washington

— VICINITY OF

#3 - Honorable Don L. Bonker

CODE
53

COUNTY

Cowlitz

CODE

015

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Darryl Brown

STREET & NUMBER

115 S. Pekin Road

CITY, TOWN

Woodland

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cowlitz County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Kelso

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Cowlitz County Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1974

— FEDERAL — STATE COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Cowlitz County Historical Museum

CITY, TOWN

Kelso

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the south city limit of Woodland in southeastern Washington a few miles from the confluence of the Lewis and Columbia Rivers, the Hulda Klager Lilac Garden occupies a flat rectangular site approximately 200 feet by 600 feet. On the property there is a two story frame house, a small barn, a windmill, a water tower and other outbuildings.

The remainder of the grounds is comprised of the gardens containing the lilacs developed by Mrs. Klager as well as over 100 other species of trees, shrubs and plants (see attached list and map of the plantings). With the exception of the lilac nursery, the garden is planned in a very informal or picturesque arrangement. It is screened from the road by a thick border of flowering trees and shrubs and bounded at the back by Burlington Northern railroad tracks. The lilac nursery is planted in strict rows of closely spaced bushes that average about nine feet in height.

The house is a small bracketed Victorian farmhouse with cross gables, cornice returns and shiplap siding. It has two bay windows, verandas in front and in back and a "conservatory" or glassed-in porch. The barn, toward the northwest corner of the property, is about 15 feet by 30 feet. It has shiplap siding and two large doors on one side that slide on an overhead track. A smaller shed has been added to the barn on the side opposite the doors. Near the barn is the water tower and windmill, 40 and 60 feet tall, respectively. Both stand on steel framework and the water tank is a wooden drum.

Maintenance of the gardens has been neglected over the past year or more and it is rapidly deteriorating. All of the open spaces have grown up in grass and thistles and the plots of flowers and annuals are thick with weeds. The wisteria arbor has collapsed. Most of the lilacs retain their metal identification tags and they seem to be strong and healthy.

The present owner has removed a small but growing number of azalias, lilacs and rhododendrons.

The house is in fairly good condition retaining some of its stained interior woodwork. Asbestos siding has been installed but without removing the decorative carpentry. The barn is weak and leaning about ten degrees out of plumb. The windmill is probably repairable.

The Klager garden is quite glorious in early May when the lilacs blossom and throughout the year it is in continual bloom with other varieties.

A partial list of trees, shrubs and flowers in the Klager gardens:

Abelia
Acuba
Albizzia (Silk Tree)
Amaryllis
Andromeda
Anemone
Araucaria (Monkey Puzzle)
Astilbe
Azaleas, Evergreen and Deciduos
Bletilla Orchid
Broom (Many colors and varieties)
Cedar
Cherry (Flowering)
Chrysanthemum
Colchicum (Borders of them -- pink, white, lavender)
Crab Apple (Flowering)
Cryptomeria (Japanese Evergreen)
Daffodills (Many varieties and species)
Dahlias
Daisies (Several varieties)
Day Lilies
Delphinium
Fig
Ginkgo Tree
Golden Arborvitae
Heather
Holly (Many varieties)
Hydrangia (Many colors and varieties)
Japanese Peonies
Lilac Hybrids
Lilac Persian
Lilac Species
Lilacs Vulgaris (Over 150 varieties)
Magnolia Dena Data (Rare)
Magnolia Soulangeana
Magnolias Evergreen (Several large trees)
Oriental Poppies
Paulownia (Chinese Empress Tree)
Perennial Aster
Pomegranite
Primroses
Redwood
Sciadopitya (Umbrella Pine)
Seedling Peonies
Sequoia
Tree Peonies
Tulips
Variagated Box Elder
Violets (All colors)



8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1902 through 1960 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hulda Klager Lilac Garden is the private laboratory and showplace of a well-known experimental gardener.

Early in her fifty-five years of work as a horticulturist, Mrs. Klager became nationally recognized as a leading authority on the hybridizing of lilacs. When she died in 1960, she had been credited with developing over 250 new varieties.

Mrs. Klager first approached plant hybridization from a pragmatic point of view. She is quoted as recalling how as a busy homemaker on a small farm she hated peeling the very small apples her trees produced, but loved making apple pies. So she attempted to develop a new strain of bigger (and easier peeling) apples.

She did have some success, but soon took on more artistic interests and started experimenting with flowers and shrubs. Mrs. Klager worked with dahlias and roses before concentrating primarily on lilacs.

Her commitment to her work with lilacs began with the reading of the book New Creations in Plant Life, by Harwood, an account of the work and methods of Luther Burbank, a renowned horticulturist and authority in plant hybridization. She adopted the methods of Burbank for her work, and was sometimes referred to as "the Luther Burbank of the West", although she soon developed many techniques of her own. She corresponded with Burbank and visited him where he worked in California.

The first lilacs were planted in the Klager garden in 1902. There were three varieties a double white named Mme. Casimir Perier from the French hybridizer Lemoin, a double blue named President Grevy also from Lemoin and a single red named Ludwig Spath from L. Spath.

Pollination of the lilac is a painstaking process. On the basis of experience, Mrs. Klager would select two varieties she wished to cross pollinate. The pollen of a lilac is very fine. A magnifying glass is required to see it, and it must be taken at precisely the right time varying from a few days to a few hours in some varieties. The timing could only be determined through years of experimentation. Using a brush or cotton swab, she would usually begin in the morning when there was dew on the plants and before it became too windy as the pollen was easily lost. After the pollen was placed on the female plant, she covered the blossom with a paper bag tied at the base to keep out bees and other insects that could contaminate

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"The Gold Book", National Federation of Garden Clubs, St. Louis, Missouri.

Thompson, Nancy. "Museum Shows Mementos of Woodland's Famed 'Lilac Lady'",
Longview Daily News, May 20-21, 1961, p. 3.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 0 | | 5 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 0 | | 5 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

UTM OK

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Alice Shewie

ORGANIZATION

Woodland Federated Garden Club

DATE

January 6, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

606 Butte Hill Road

TELEPHONE

(206) 225-3434

CITY OR TOWN

Woodland

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Charles H. Odegaard

TITLE

Executive Director - Charles H. Odegaard

DATE

June 20, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Allyson Leussen

DATE

7/17/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

JUL 16 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

the experiment with other pollen carried on their legs. These bags often puzzled visitors to the gardens who wondered what purpose they served.

In addition to dahlias, roses and lilacs, Mrs. Klager hybridized apples, crab apples, peonies, magnolias, azalias and colored broom (cytissus).

Mrs. Klager was first recognized for her work in 1926 when a Portland newspaper, The Oregonian, commended her for developing over sixty varieties of lilacs and credited her with having "the finest collection in the United States." In 1927 an article about Hulda Klager appeared in "The American Magazine".

In 1927, the Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs awarded Hulda Klager a citation for "Distinguished Achievement in Horticulture". Eleven years later, on August 3, 1958, the Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs presented its first horticultural award to Mrs. Klager. Both awards were the only ones of their kind ever presented to a living horticulturist by the federations.

The "Lilac Lady" is best remembered locally for her warmth and kindness toward visitors to her gardens. The gardens were almost always open to interested individuals, but in addition Mrs. Klager would open them annually for "Lilac Day". One Sunday each May when the lilacs were in full bloom people would gather at Mrs. Klager's gardens to admire her collection and to view the new varieties she had developed the previous year.

"Lilac Day" first started before World War I, and people came by horse and buggy from the neighboring towns to see the Klager Gardens in full bloom. About 1930, local towns began sending delegations during "Lilac Day" to choose one of Mrs. Klager's new varieties and name it for their town. "Longview was the first, but Vancouver had the biggest show" she is quoted as saying in 1947. Two of her most coveted lilacs were so named, the "kalama", a dark red with large individual flowers, and the "Chehalis", a lavender lacy blossom. The "Kalama" is recognized for its excellent deep tones in The Fragrant Year, by Helen Van Pelt Wilson. (See bibliography).

"Lilac Day" attracted more visitors every year, until it evolved into "visitation week". At the peak of Mrs. Klager's fame, the gardens attracted as many as 8,000 visitors from throughout the United States, Canada and foreign countries during visitation week. No charge was ever made by the distinguished gardener, but many visitors were so taken with the beauty and grandeur of the gardens that they would leave token gifts of money in a little box at the front gate.

In 1948, a river dike nearby broke during heavy flooding and the lilac gardens were inundated for more than a month. Almost every plant and shrub in the gardens was killed. But Hulda Klager would not be defeated. At age 85, she immediately began the process of rebuilding her beloved lilac gardens. The Gresham Federated Garden Club assisted by giving starts of many of the lilacs Mrs. Klager had earlier developed. An article about Mrs. Klager's plight was published in the August 29, 1948 issue of The Oregonian. Many more of the original lilac starts were donated, and within a few years the gardens were accurately restored to their prior splendor, and "Lilac Day" once again became an annual event.

On April 28, 1955, the Lewis River News, a local paper, published a lengthy article about Mrs. Klager and the restoration of the lilac gardens. On May 8, 1955, a local group presented her with a "loving cup", in appreciation of her many years in floriculture.

Today, Hulda Klager's lilacs are growing in parks and arboretums throughout the nation. Among them is the famous Arnold Arboretum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she sent 13 plants in 1929. More of her plants are growing in Lombard Park, in Lombard, Illinois. One of the finest collections of her lilacs is contained on the grounds of the Washington State Capitol in Olympia. The plot with 42 varieties represented is marked with a bronze plaque in her honor.

On May 20, 1961, a year after her death at age 97, the Longview Daily News printed an article outlining Mrs. Klager's achievements and acknowledging the existence of a large collection of her belongings and mementos which the Cowlitz County Historical Museum still maintains.

Numerous varieties of lilacs now in cultivation throughout the United States were first grown by Hulda Klager at her home on the south city limits of Woodland, Washington. This unique garden represents the life's work of a master horticulturist. Although discontinued since her death, annual visitation to the garden was for almost sixty years a traditional community gathering often drawing visitors from other states and foreign countries. The lilac is an exceptionally popular flowering shrub in the Pacific Northwest frequently found in yards and park plantings. Mrs. Klager is considered to be one of the best known hybridizers of lilacs in North America, and her work and the public attention it attracted must have contributed substantially to this popularity.



Wilson, Van Pelt, Helen and Bell, Leonie. The Fragrant Year, New York: M. Barrows & Company Inc., 1967, p. 73.



FLOWERING CRAB FIG TREE MAGNOLIA
BORDER RHODOS. AZALIA LILACS

CRYPTOMERIA TREE (EVG.)



RHODOS.

MAGNOLIAS (2)

SEQUOIA

TREE PEONIES PLOT

FLOWER + BULB PLOTS

PLOTS

LILAC NURSERY

MAGNOLIA DENA DATA

MAGNOLIA

CEDAR
MONKEY PUZZLE TREE

AZALIA BORDER PATH

HOUSE

SHED

PATH

CAMELLIAS

ORCHARD

VEGETABLE GDN.

DAHLIA GDN.

PEONIE GDN.

WINDMILL

BARN

LILAC BORDER

MAGNOLIA PLANTING

ROSE GDN.

FLORNG. CHERRY PAULOWNIA TREE HOLLY
BOX ELDER

UMBRELLA PINE

BERRIES

WISTERIA ARBOR

RHODODENRONS

REDWOOD TREE

FLOWERING TREES
RHODODENRONS
BORDER PLANTS, ETC.

PINK DOGWOOD
LILACS

ROSE ARBOR ENTRANCE



VISITORS' PARKING

LILAC BORDER

BORDER PLANTS
(DELPHINIUM, ETC.)

SKETCH MAP
OF
PLANTINGS

ABOUT THREE ACRES