## **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received

date entered



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Nam	ie			
historic	Multnomah Hotel			
and/or common	Same			
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	319 SW Pine			N∕A not for publication
city, town	Portland	N/A vicinity of $\top$	hird Congressiona	1 District
state	Oregon code	41 county	Multnomah	<b>code</b> 051
3. Clas	sification			
Category  districtX building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition N/A in process N/A being considered	Status  X occupied  unoccupied  work in progress  Accessible X yes: restricted  yes: unrestricted  no	Present Use agriculture _X commercial educational entertainment _X_ government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Proper	ty		
name	Landsing Property	Corporation		
street & number	811 SW Front			
city, town	Portland	N/Avicinity af	stat	e Oregon 97204
5. Loca	ation of Lega	l Descripti	on	
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc.	Multnemah County	Courthouse	
street & number		1021 SW Main		
city, town		Portland	state	e Oregon 97204
6. Repr	esentation i	n Existing	Surveys	
title	City of Portland Historic Resources	Inventor has this pro	operty been determined	eligible?yes _X_ no
date	1981-83		federal s	tate countyX local
depository for su	rvey records	Portland Bureau	of Planning	
city, town	Portland		state	e Oregon 97204

#### 7. Description

fair unexposed	Condition excellent deterioratedX good ruins fair unexposed	Check one unaltered X_ altered	Check one X_ original site moved dateN/A	
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#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Multnomah Hotel, erected in 1911, was designed in the American Renaissance style by the architectural firm of Gibson and Cahill. For many years the largest hotel in the city, the Multnomah was eventually leased to the General Services Administration in 1965 and converted into offices for 1200 federal employees. All former banquet, ballroom, and other public spaces in the hotel have been altered in the conversion with the exception of the fine Classically-detailed lobby and mezzanine, which is essentially intact. The building retains a high degree of exterior integrity, although some storefronts have been altered.

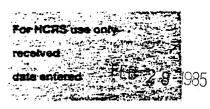
The building is located on the western edge of the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. In the immediate vicinity are buildings of similar scale, including the new US Bank parking garage to the west, the Early Modern Pacific Northwest Bell building to the southwest, and an early 1920s parking garage to the south which was constructed originally to service the hotel's patrons. The hotel's main entrance was on Pine Street. It occupies, a full 200' x 200' block, otherwise known as Lots 1 through 8 of Block 44, Portland Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. Erected in reinforced concrete veneered in tan-colored brick, the nine story, M-shaped building rises above a two-story base. The north/south oriented wings are bisected by the main service corridor which faces east/west. Originally, single, slightly off-center corridors separated the hotel rooms, each of which faced an exterior or light court elevation.

Storefronts of varying depths flanked the main entrance on Pine Street. The imposing lobby space, essentially T-shaped, was flanked on three sides by a mezzanine level. Banquet and meeting rooms were situated off of the lobby on the first and second levels, and a massive ballroom occupied the northwest corner of the building.

The first exterior elevation drawings presented a decidely classicized composition, with an elaborately detailed base and capital. Colossal columns, heavy cornices, quoining, pilasters, broken pediments and other details would have put the Multnomah in a stylistic vein that duplicated current revivalist decorative expression. This set of elevations, dated November 12, 1910, were not executed and a more modern interpretation was realized which nevertheless retained the classical organization of base, shaft and capital.

Instead of applied ornament in a different material, the exterior decorative program on the Multnomah is derived almost exclusively by the use of the ornamental potential of brick itself, primarily by the use of various types of corbelling. Instead of projecting quoins at the corner bays, recessed brick courses are used and result in the same but more stylized effect. Similarly, columns and pilasters are replaced by flat, minimally detailed panels on which V-shaped inserts in stone or concrete appear. Above these pilasters are found square, corbelled brick panels, the center of which is either decorated with a circular panel of stone or concrete, or with a bubble light fixture which once helped illuminate the exterior. Belt courses and cornices are plain. At the capital level, the sets of windows are separated by highly-stylized pilasters which are textured brick panels composed of combinations of recessed courses, corbelling, and dentil-like projections.

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On the east and west elevations, windows are grouped vertically in pairs in the "shaft" portion. The one-over-one, double-hung sash are set into recessed frames with slightly projecting brick sills and no lintels. At the upper level, the paired window arrangement, similar in size and configuration to those on the lower elevation, appears at the corner bay only. The remaining windows in the upper two levels appear between the pilasters and are two narrow, one-over-one, double-hung sash, which flank a set of paired one-over-one windows.

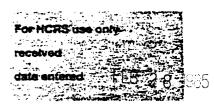
On the north and south elevations, windows are single one-over-one, double-hung sash which flank a central recessed bay on each wing which once served as a porch. Access was gained from the interior corridor. A bowed, cantilevered balcony decorated with projecting brick panels appears on each floor of each wing on the south elevation, and on the center wing of the north elevation. A metal fire escape is found on the flanking wings of the north elevation in place of the balcony. On the south, these features have been altered to allow for the installation of an exterior fire escape, which now extends to the street level but is not visibly intrusive.

Original mezzanine level windows, extant irregularly on the elevations, were composed of single glazed panels, some of which were casemented, and others being fixed. Original structural separation of the lower bays is generally intact with the exception of the southwest corner. Storefronts are most altered on the southern end of the Pine Street elevation, while it seems that much of the northern end of this elevation is intact on the lower level. Modern materials have been used to alter all of the entrances. Glass and aluminum is typical on the Pine and 4th Street entrances. The 3rd Street entrance has been bricked in, although with compatible or identical brick.

On the interior, only the original lobby space is intact. The indication of the magnificence of the interior spaces is evident in the elaborate plaster ornamentation, highlighted in gold leaf. The space is dominated by eight, square, free-standing columns, which rest on five foot high marble bases. Each face of the columns is basically a fluted Ionic pilaster, heavily encrusted with applied plaster at the base and at the capital. Festoons of fruit and a cartouche with a superimposed MH logo decorate the capitals, and is a motif that is repeated periodically around the periphery of the room at the mezzanine level. The coffered ceiling is divided into panels of varying widths, which contributes to the heavily textured effect realized by the extensive use of replicated plaster ornament, various foliate designs, egg and dart moldings, quatrefoil shapes, bosses and other meandering ornament employed to complete the composition. The decorative treatment is similar on the mezzanine and results in an overall lushness that manages to diminish the negative effects caused by unsympathetic remodeling around the edges of the lobby.

The former shop or service functions on the first floor of the lobby have been replaced with modern glass/wood or glass/metal storefronts. Most of these appear between structural or decorative columns and are therefore easily reversible. A similar situation exists on the mezzanine level, but by no means extends to the entire wall surface. The most intrusive elements are a free-standing wooden cage-like enclosure at the southeast corner of the lobby which serves the federal credit union, and a

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massive modern chandelier composed of spear heads, protruding elements, and red-shaded light fixtures. There is no furniture in the lobby although display board and directories dot the space. Two original stairs, consisting of marble wainscoting (to the third floor), and elegant wrought iron balusters and wooden rails, are located in the west and east wings.

When the building was new, it boasted 725 rooms and suites, 300 of which had private baths. This figure was reduced eventually to about 500, or an average of 85 per floor. When the building was converted to offices beginning in 1965, many of the room configurations were retained but the majority of the spaces were changed to open-plan use, necessitating the gutting of many of the rooms. Drop ceilings, fluorescent lighting, new partitions, wall treatment, doors and other detailing are standard throughout the building above the second floor. Major public spaces such as banquet and meeting rooms were turned into conference rooms if possible. The old ballroom served for a time as a restaurant but is now, also office space. Whether or not any detailing exists above the ceiling fixtures or elsewhere is unclear. Although there were continuing alterations to the interior of the building throughout its history, those undertaken by architect Richard Sundeleaf were the most extensive, although none are evident on the exterior except for the fire escape additions.

No biographical information is available on the practice of the architectural firm of Gibson and Cahill.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 X 1900–	X architecture	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlemen	law literature military music	science sculpture social/ humanitarian
Specific dates	1911	Builder/Architect G	ibson and Cahill	

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Erected at a cost of two million dollars, the Multnomah Hotel, located at 319 SW Pine Street in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, was built in 1911 in the American Renaissance style for the Gevurtz family by the R. R. Thompson Estate Company of San Francisco. As the largest hotel in the city for a period of over 50 years, and as one of the premier caravansaries in the northwest, the Multnomah played an important role in Portland's development and therefore meets eligibility Criterion "a". In addition, the property played a significant role in the rise of the Gevurtz family as a major contributor to the city's commercial economic base, and was subsequently associated with Eric V. Hauser, one of the foremost contractors in the United States at the time. In this context it meets Criterion "b". In a secondary manner, the Multnomah Hotel can be evaluated under Criterion "c". Although the interior has been extensively altered above the second floor, it nevertheless retains the majority of its interior lobby and mezzanine spaces and detailing. Additionally, the building's significance as a type whose formal expression is unique in the city's built environment, and which displays most of its original exterior design elements, has not been diminished since its construction.

Mushrooming urban growth after the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905 accelerated demand in many service areas in Portland's business community, not the least of which was the hotel and apartment industry. As older hotels expanded and new small and medium-size hotels emerged, it became clear that the city's economy could support yet more rooms. When ground was broken for the 750 room Multnomah Hotel on Feburary 15, 1911, plans for the construction of its soon-to-be prime competitor, the addition to the Oregon (now Benson) Hotel, were being considered, although construction on the building did not begin until 1912.

As originally planned, the exterior of the Multnomah was to have been as elaborate as the interior. Considering the enormous expense of completing the project, it can be supposed that financial consideration eliminated much of the costly ornament in favor of the interior appointments, which were characterized by <a href="Hotel News">Hotel News</a> as a "wilderness of new astonishments in the way of conveniences, modern equipment and outfitting. . . "

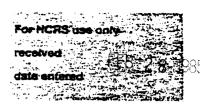
Built for Gevurtz and Sons on land leased from the R. R. Thompson Estate Company, the hotel was christened by Mrs. Roy Yates, wife of one of the Thompson Estate Company officers who was to shortly figure prominently in the hotel's affairs. Opened on February 12, 1912, over 8000 visitors paraded through the establishment on the first day, and over 1200 persons dined in one of the nine banquet halls, dining rooms, and grills in the establishment. Lushly decorated in the classical tradition, the public rooms on the lower floors were designed for the maximum comfort of the guests and for the maximum amount of flexibility for the accommodation of conventions or other groups. Philip Gevurtz, president of the Multnomah Hotel Company, was responsible for the high quality materials used in the hotel. Exotic woods, the best furniture (from the parent company) 70,000 square yards of carpeting, and elaborate wall coverings were standard.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10.	Geograp	hical Data			
	gle name <u>Portla</u>	rty less than one nd, Oregon		Quadrangl	e scale _1:24000
A 1 0 Zone	5 2 5 5 6 0 Easting	5 <sub>1</sub> 0 4 <sub>1</sub> 0 8 <sub>1</sub> 0 <sub>1</sub> 0	BZone	Easting	Northing
clil			ם   ם		
E			F l		
G			н		
Verbal t	boundary descrip	tion and justification	The Multnomah	Hotel is locate	ed on Lots 1-8 of
Block 4 200 x 20	14, Portland Ac 90'block bounde	ddition to Portland ed by SW Pine Stree	. Multnomah C	cunty. Oregon a	and occupies a full
List all	states and count	es for properties overl	apping state or	county boundaries	
state	None	code	county		code
state	None	code	county		code
11.	Form Pro	epared By			
	-				
name/title	<b>e</b>				
organizat	kion Herit	age Investment Cor	poration	date August	, 1984
street & r	number 123 N	W Second Avenue		telephone (503)	228-0272
city or to	wn Portl	and		state Oregon	97209
12.	<b>State Hi</b>	storic Pres	ervation	Officer C	ertification
The evalu	uated significance o	f this property within the	state is:		
	national	state	X local		
As the de	esignated State Hist	oric Preservation Officer f property for inclusion in t	or the National His	storic Preservation Ac	t of 1966 (Public Law 89–
according	g to the criteria and	procedures set forth by the	ne National Parks	Service.	s been evaluated
State His	toric Preservation (	Officer signature	<i>k</i> / <b>v</b> w	WHILL WE	
				100000	
title		e Historic Preserva	tion Officer	date J	anuary 8, 1985
	PS use only ereby certify that thi	s property is included in the	ne National Registe	er	
10	Silver	Q En	tered in		2-28-85
/VKeepe	er of the National R	10 jus	ional Registe	uute 1	
Attest	t:			date	
<i></i>	of Registration		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		

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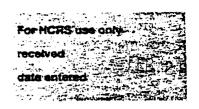
Color and gold leaf were used freely on the decorative motifs and "Multnomah Red," a color taken from Oregon Native American pottery, was employed frequently. The hotel also boasted such conveniences as filtered air, "washed, cleaned, and dried several time a day," and featured a system by which ice water was routed through the steam heating system in the summer for the comfort of the guests. Reportedly, the Multnomah also introduced the innovation of room service in Portland as well as the first tea room in the city to allow women the privilege of smoking cigarettes "without fear of rebuke." The entire seventh floor was given over to 65 sample rooms, each offering a bedroom and bath.

The hotel quickly became the social center of the city, being constantly booked for any number of meetings or social events, and its fortunes seemed secure. One of the most interesting early occurrences associated with the hotel came on June 15th of the same year, when before 50,000 persons, Mr. Silas Christoffer flew a Curtis Pusher bi-plane off of a 150 foot wooden runway which had been attached to the roof of one of the north/south oriented wings. This event was said to be the first of its kind in the United States.

Unfortunately for Philip Gevurtz, the Panic of 1913 began to create havoc among his various financial obligations and by July, 1913, caused him to deny vehemently in public rumors of the hotel's insolvency. The hotel had been the most ambitious undertaking of Isaac Gervutz and Sons. The patriarch, born in Russia, emigrated to New York in 1869 and eventually settled in Portland in 1881, where he opened a second-hand furniture store which ultimately blossomed into one of the largest and most successful retailing enterprises in the city. Around the turn of the century, the company was reorganized and the eight children were given shares in the business. Philip Gevurtz was one of the most active, promoting the purchasing and construction of numerous small hotels and apartment houses in the city which resulted in the family becoming one of, if not the largest holder of this type of real estate in the city. The company holdings included the Mallory, Phillip, Carlton and Foster Hotels, plus the Highland Court, American, Cecelia, Lois and Lillian apartment buildings. Considered by many to be unscrupulous, Philip overextended his credit and his actions resulted in the bankruptcy of I. Gevurtz and Sons in the amount of \$400,000. The major bank creditor offered to loan the company the funds to prevent this action, but only if Issac Gevurtz would personally take over the management of the firm. This was not the case, and eventually, the three youngest sons reorganzied the business, which subsequently thrived and is still in operation.

The R. R. Thompson Estate Company acquired the hotel and continued operating under the guidance of Roy O. Yates, who became the sole stockholder in the Multnomah Hotel Company. This situation lasted three years until early 1916, when Yates filed for bankruptcy, stating that he had lost over \$300,000 of his own money. Crucial factors were "apathy" on the part of Portland citizenry, perhaps because of the success of the more ideally-located Benson Hotel, plus a recently enacted law prohibiting the sale of liquor. Over 200 employees were laid off as the result of the closure, which was to last until the fall of that year.

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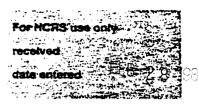
The largest hotel in the city was not vacant for long. Millionaire mid-western railroad contractors Eric V. Hauser and Grant Smith purchased the property from the Thompson Estate Company for \$700,000. Mr. Smith already owned several hotels and apartment buildings in the city. However, it was Mr. Hauser who was to be most closely associated with the hotel, becoming president and general manager of the Multnomah Hotel Company after he moved to the city from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Born in Minneapolis in 1864, he apprenticed from the age of thirteen in a newspaper office and eventually followed the printing trade for ten years. Subsequently, he became a contractor and with Grant Smith, operated one of the largest construction companies in the United States. He helped build the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads, and also assisted in the construction of the New York City subway. During World War I, he built ships for the United States government, and began doing work on the west coast at the turn of the century. Moving the headquarters of his other operations to Portland, he operated the Multnomah Hotel until his death in 1928. His son Eric V. Hauser, Jr., was a managing director and vice president of the hotel company until his father's death, after which he assumed the presidency.

Before the building reopened in October of 1916, Eric Hauser ordered several changes to the facade and interior. This included the redesigning of the Pine Street entrance, unspecified changes to the lobby, replacement of furniture and the repainting and repapering of rooms. Hauser wisely decided not to open all of the hotel's vast eating facilities at first, but did undertake an upgrading of the kitchen facilities. A dinner dance for 500 persons was planned for the re-opening and the menu, priced at \$2.00 was as follows:

> Rose City Cocktail Canape Multnomah Salted Almonds Stuffed Celery Hearts Ripe Olives Tomato Bouillon, Bellevue Fillet of Baby Salmon, Sauce Meunier Pommes Julienne Lamb Chops a la Nelson Mint Sherbet, Brizzolari Stuffed Jumbo Squab in Bird's Nests, Multnomah Style Prime Ribs of Eastern Beef, Yorkshire Pudding Baked Potatoes Green Peas Apple a la Princess Ice Cream Arcadian Assorted Cakes Individual French Pastry Neufchatel and Bar le Duc Toasted Crackers Demi Tasse After Dinner Mints

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The Multnomah again became a popular gathering spot for meetings, luncheons, parties and conventions. Items announcing weekly events were regularly published in the press and no further scandal occurred at the hotel.

A few years after the elder Hauser's death, his son leased the hotel to Western Hotels, Incorporated, one of the largest operators of hotels on the Pacific Coast, whose holdings were located primarily in Washington state at the time. The hotel was leased to the corporation for fifteen years for a rental of approximately \$1,250,000. At that time, gross revenues at the hotel were in excess of \$1,000,000 per year. Eric Hauser, Jr., then became a director of the Western Hotels organization.

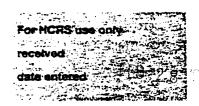
The corporation almost immediately spent \$14,000 on the redecoration of the lobby. The Oregonian of June 28, 1931 noted that the "ceiling, walls and columns have been retouched in a modernistic style with 16 colors. . ." Other improvements undertaken by the firm of Tourtellotte and Hummel included alteration of the lighting system and the addition of 15 Austrian rugs. The repainting required the skills of twelve persons and took six weeks to complete.

A significant alteration to the Multnomah, also completed in 1931, was the addition of what was reported to be the largest neon sign in the United States. The structure, 39 feet high by 156 feet in length, was outfitted with letters eight feet in height and illuminated with "marine green" neon.

The company continued to invest in the refurbishment throughout the years, and employed local architects such as Pietro Belluschi. They offered innovations such as registration by television in 1956. By this time, the building was noted as Portland's convention center, offering 14 banquet and assembly rooms, and room to seat 2000 diners. Each week the hotel consumed 700 pounds of turkey, 3000 pounds of potatoes, 1800 pounds of prime rib, 700 pounds of coffee, and 600 dozen eggs. By then, the corporation owned 23 hotels in seven states, including the Benson, to which they were about to construct the existing addition. It could be argued that this move effectively spelled the doom of the Multnomah, since it signaled the beginning of expansion of the number of available rooms in downtown Portland, now somewhat at a distance from the Multnomah. Nevertheless, at the same time, the corporation annnounced that they would also spend \$1,000,000 in a facelift of the Multnomah, which was to include a complete redecoration of public spaces and rooms, new air conditioning, and other updating of the facilities. This announcement occurred after Western signed another twenty year lease with the Hauser estate.

Unfortunately, this expenditure did not prolong the life of the Multnomah, now effectively associated with Old Town and Skid Row. As mentioned in the press in the summer of 1963, the size of the building, its relative isolation from the business center, and especially the encroachment of new hotels such as the Hilton, and the "motor Hotel." It was noted that over 2000 units (including those of the Benson addition) had been added since 1960 and that the city contained more hotel and motel accommodations per capita than any city in the United States outside of New York. As the occupancy rate dropped a few percentage points, the corporation considered turning the property into a residential hotel, but decided that it was in their best interests to sell it, even though company executives were denying these plans in public.

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By October, 1963, it was announced that Lutheran Homes and Hospitals was to acquire the property and turn it into elderly housing, and would have included a 47 bed infirmary on the ground floor. Units were to be sold at life-time lease fees ranging from \$2,250 to \$22,000. In addition there was to have been a monthly service charge for meals, laundry, and utilities. If converted, the grand ballroom would have become a chapel, with the stage serving as the altar. Other changes included the addition of a bowling alley and other recreational spaces.

Regretfully, the Lutheran organization was unable to sell enough of the packages to make the deal work, and they withdrew their option in early April, 1964. While the hotel continued to operate, new owners were sought. By late 1964, it was announced that the hotel had been offered to the Internal Revenue Service or the Forest Service through the General Services Administration for a maximum rental of \$49,122 per month.

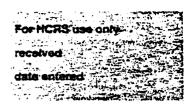
As low bidder, the proposal was accepted and by March, 1965, notices were sent out to hotel guests that the building would be vacated by April of that year. While the commercial spaces on the lower floor exterior were to remain, \$1,500,000 was to be spent converting the upper level rooms and part of the mezzanine into office space. It was noted in the <u>Oregonian</u> that the Multnomah would still "look somewhat like a hotel on the first floor. . ."

An auction of the hotel's furnishing was held on April 22, 1965. While some of the nicer furniture went to the Benson, the majority was auctioned, including the suite that had been installed for the visit of Queen Marie of Rumania in 1926. It was purchased by a Corvallis merchant for \$2,100. A final party was held in the next month and the property formally turned over to the GSA in December of that year.

An article in the <u>Oregon Journal</u> on March 31, 1965, noted that "when people thought of Portland, they thought of the Multnomah Hotel," and remarked further that notable visitors to the hotel included Presidents Taft, Hoover, Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Kennedy. Others included Lana Turner, Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, The Lennon Sisters, Wallace Beery, Clark Gable and Jack Benny.

Currently, the building is occupied by the US Forest Service and the Corps of Engineers. The building was altered again in 1975, but still manages to retain the major elements comprising its exterior integrity and historical associations. It has received a II ranking in the Portland Historic Resources Inventory.

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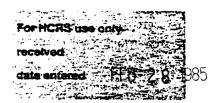
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Nov. 14, 199
  Feb. 6, 1912
  Feb. 7, 1912
April 10, 1912
  June 15, 1912
  Aug. 1, 1912
  Aug. 22, 1912
Jan. 16, 1913
Oregonian
  July 18, 1912, p. 12
  Jan. 11, 1913, p. 7
  Feb. 8, 1912, p.4
  Feb. 9, 1912, p. 15; p. 19
  Feb. 25, 1912, sec. 7
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  Aug. 7, 1963, p. 18, c. 2
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 Oct. 17, 1963, sec. 3, p. 7, c. 1
  Oct. 18, 1963, p. 26, c. 1
  Dec. 12, 1963, p. 35, c. 1
  Jan. 27, 1964, sec. 3, p. 6, c. 1
  Jan. 30, 1964, sec. 3, p. 5, c. 7
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   March 30, 1965, p. 1, c. 2
   March 31, 1965, p. 14, c. 6
   April 4, 1965, Forum sec., p. 2, c. 2
   April 9, 1965, p. 43, c. 1
April 20, 1965, p. 14, c. 1
   April 21, 1965, p. 19, c. 6
   April 23, 1965, p. 28, c. 3
April 24, 1965, sec. 3, p. 6, c. 7
   May 6, 1965, sec. 2, p. 21, c. 4
   July 23, 1968, sec. 2, p. 2, c. 1
Oregon Journal
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