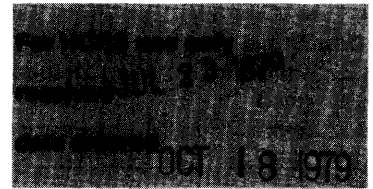


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



**1. Name**

historic Benedict (Edwin E.) House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number E of Florence on Cox Island \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Florence  vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Oregon code 41 county Lane code 039

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name The Nature Conservancy

street & number 1234 NW 25th

city, town Portland \_\_\_ vicinity of state Oregon 97210

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lane County Courthouse

street & number 125 E. 8th Street

city, town Eugene state Oregon 97401

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 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

The 1902-vintage Benedict House, lone surviving guardian of Cox Island in the Siuslaw River, and the former headquarters of the Siuslaw Boom Company, boldly stands watch to the north bank of the river and Highway 36. A simple and late expression of the Rural Gothic Style with a lean-to rear addition, the house is also reminiscent of the New England saltbox type. Located seven river miles from Florence, the property served as a holding station for one of Oregon's richest timber areas. Today its inhabitants are the feathered residents of a preserve owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization devoted to the protection of ecologically significant lands.

Isolated in both the topographical and cultural sense, Cox Island is 187 acres of sand and silt deposits supporting high immature salt marsh vegetation. It is accessible only by boat. The river has acted as a natural buffer, keeping man's impact to a minimum. The development that did occur as a result of its use during log booming activities was restricted to a knoll on the north side of the island legally described as: Sec. 25, T.18S, R.12W, W.M. The area proposed for nomination includes the Benedict House, a woodshed, apple and plum orchards, as well as the sites of five other buildings that once dotted the 4.5 acres. At the height of the company's activities, a total of ten structures contributed to the Siuslaw Boom Company operation. Centering around the family residence, the locations of the other buildings can be traced from a 1939 aerial photograph of the island and the childhood memories of Charlie Sanborn, the son of one of the company's early managers. The complex included a machine and blacksmith shop, boat houses, chicken coop, smokehouse, and barn. Since these subsidiary buildings have been either torn down or taken away, their sites are now marked only by the blackberry brambles that have thrived on their ruin, leaving the existing house and woodshed to stand alone as the last structural vestige of the once thriving enterprise.

The two-storied, simple rectangular house measures 24' wide by 45' long. The back of the building slopes down into a one-story lean-to. Coupled, double-hung windows flank the central entrance bay. At the second story level, a 2x6' projecting window bay with gablet surmounted a small hip-roofed porch with central pediment and simple chamfered posts. Originally the porch had a railing in a stylized pattern of uprights and diagonals, and this porch entablature and facade eaves were decorated with delicate, pendant zigzag woodwork reminiscent of rickrack edging for a lambrequin. Whitewashed 8" shiplap siding originally highlighted with trim in contrasting color finishes the exterior. Long abandoned to the elements, the house has deteriorated to the extent of having lost its front porch, but it is otherwise structurally unaltered.

Situated on the main land mass of the Siuslaw Estuary, its subframe is typical of that used in flood plain construction. A stub wall of cedar posts and girders resting on 12x12" wooden sleepers raises the house four feet off the ground. One by twelve planks laid vertically once enclosed the subframe but have since fallen away. Evidence of elevated walkways around the house also testify to the hazards and precautions associated with island life.

The walls are balloon frame construction with full-size 2x4" studs, 16" on center. Full-size 2x8" joists support the second-story floor, and the roof is constructed with 2x6" rafters, 24" on center. Upstairs, the floors, walls and ceilings are finished with 12x12" planks. Downstairs, the finish is similar, but the floors consist of two layers of three-inch tongue and groove flooring, the second layer added during 1912 remodeling undertaken to strengthen the structure and make some minor changes in the floor plan.

The spatial organization of the house is straightforward. The front entry opens directly into a large living/dining room area running the length of the house and just slightly separated by a subtle archway. In the southwest corner, three windows light the master bedroom.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
___ 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	___ communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1902 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The two-story frame house built for Edwin Ellis Benedict on the north shore of Cox Island in the Siuslaw River estuary is significant to western Lane County as the home of the resident manager of the Siuslaw Boom Company and its successors in the logging industry from the time of its completion in 1902 to 1939. As a consequence of periods of indifferent maintenance over the past forty years, the house and its adjoining woodshed are in deteriorated condition, but are capable of being reclaimed. The Nature Conservancy, current owner of the island, plans to restore the house for use as a hostel on the newly-established Wildlife preserve. Untouched by urban sprawl or industrial growth, most of Cox Island exists today as it has for hundreds of years. The house, woodshed and overgrown orchard, and the sentries of rotten pilings in the tidal flats are all that remain to hint at the activity that once enlivened the island.

First to use the island, the Siuslaw Indians are thought to have seeded the soft-shell clambeds now found on the south-southwest side of the island. These clam beds continue to be some of the most productive on the Oregon Coast, and the clams are a delicacy still enjoyed by the local population.

The history of the island's early ownership has been somewhat confused by the brevity of legal records and fading memories. However, one can be certain of association with Captain William Cox, a landowner and founder of Florence.

Born in Nova Scotia in 1832, Cox helped out on his family's farm and shipbuilding business. After moving to Boston and working in the shipyards there, he returned to Nova Scotia where he established the first lumber yard in Cawning. Success turned him to shipbuilding buying and selling, and the operation of his own merchandise and passenger lines. The bug to "Go West" struck Cox, and he moved to San Francisco in 1875. His flair for business sent him buying and selling his way up the coast, initiating several commercial enterprises that contributed to early West Coast development. He was the first to bring ships up the Smith River in California, and, further north in Coos County, Oregon, he engaged in the salmon fishing industry and started the jetty at the mouth of the Coos River. In 1880, Cox and his family found their way to Florence where they acquired and developed a large tract, owned a large stock ranch and a 1300-acre range where he raised pure-bred cattle and sheep.

Just how Cox obtained the island that is now named in his memory isn't known. Deed records trace the original ownership to a man named John Lyle, who bought it from the US Government on May 1, 1884. It is unclear what transactions, if any, preceded Cox's purchase but his possession of the island is documented in 1895, when he granted the right to drive pilings to Anna Marsh, "in trust". It is believed that the first house was built on the island soon after. Three years later, he gave her the booming rights as well, which she legally maintained until 1903, when they were sold to the Siuslaw Booming Co. During this period, legal records aren't adequate in describing the activity on the island, and oral testimony must be called upon to complete the picture.

Lucille Beers, the great-granddaughter of Edwin Ellis Benedict, first manager and partner in the Siuslaw Boom Co, recalls her grandmother's tales of courtship and marriage to Edwin's son, Elbert, who with his father had moved to Florence to run the log booming business. Away from his bride-to-be, Elbert occupied himself composing love letters and

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Capt. William A. Cox," The Siuslaw Pioneer (Aug. 1958), pp 1-4.  
 Hanson, D and Anne Rudy, Cox Island Report, compiled for the Nature Conservancy, Spring 1977.  
 Personal communications, 1978, with Charley Sanborn (Florence), Lucille and Shirley Beers, and Mary Johnston.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 4.5 acres  
 Quadrangle name Siltcoos Lake, Oregon Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Property is located on the upland area on the northern edge of Cox Island. It is located in SE 1/4 Section 25, T.18S, R.12W., <sup>W.M.</sup> The area is approximately ten feet above sea level, and described by the following informal metes and bounds. (see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Catherine Macdonald

organization The Nature Conservancy date September 20, 1978

street & number 1234 NW 25th telephone 503/228-9561

city or town Portland state Oregon 97210

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 6, 1979

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>[Signature]</u>	date <u>10-18-79</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>[Signature]</u>	date <u>10/18/79</u>
Chief of Registration	

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

Benedict (Edwin E.) House

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Subsequent remodeling shifted doors and adjusted walls to separate some space out of the bedroom for the latest in modern conveniences--an indoor toilet and galvanized tub--but the hot water still had to be carried from the adjacent kitchen. The kitchen held a brick chimney and woodstove venting into the living room for heat distribution and a cooler to care for the perishables. Protected access to the woodpile and pantry via a shed-roofed porch on the NE elevation increased the kitchen's utility. A simple staircase running against the south wall of the dining room was enclosed by the Sanborns in 1912.

Upstairs are found two bedrooms, a large attic in the sloping lean-to, and the stair hall railed off with  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$  square base spindles nine inches on center. A closed-off door in the west room indicates there have been some minor alterations in the upstairs floor plan as well. Open support beams in the east room suggest it might have been smaller to accommodate a hallway between the two rooms.

The interior is finished various mediums. Layers of tattered wallpaper and paint expose the muslin sheeting and newspaper undercovering. Floors all of wood were protected with different colors of paint, most of which have now been lost to weather. The same 8" shiplap siding covering the exterior was used inside as baseboard. Newer, acoustical tile has been added to the downstairs ceiling.

Perpendicular to the SE corner of the house, and connected to the porch off the kitchen, the woodshed stands approximately 32x16'. Also raised off the ground on a stub wall, the gabled structure supplied added room for the first modern plumbing facilities, a pantry, woodshop and shed.

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF COX ISLAND HOMESTEAD

#### I. Basic Shape and Dimension of Plan

- A. Two-story, gable-roofed rectangular building with a one-story lean-to at rear.
- B. 24x45', approximately
- C. Three "bays" wide
  - 1) Central, four-panel door
  - 2) Coupled windows on either side
  - 3) Second story central "bay" consists of a two-foot projection, 6' wide with side lights.
- D. Boxed eaves
- E. Porch on middle bay with 4x4" champered posts
- F. Side porch, NE elevation

#### II. Subframe, foundation

- A. Flood plain construction, lifted approx. 4' off the ground.
- B. Wood subframe on 12x12 sleepers running the length of the building, spaced 8' apart.
- C. Was enclosed by 1x12's.

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### III. Wall and Floor Construction, Wall System

- A. Balloon frame
- B. Full size 2x4 studs on center, 16"
- C. Second-story floor joists full size 2x8".
- D. Upstairs floors, walls and ceiling covered with 12x3/4" paneling (varies in size, but similar for all)
- E. Downstairs floor is double floor (the second layer is later floor), 3" tongue and groove
- F. Windows, double-hung sash, with one over one lights.

### IV. Roof Construction

- A. Rafters 2x6", full size, 2' on center
- B. Original wood shingles
- C. Structure and roofing strips fairly intact

### V. Spatial Organization

- A. Five rooms downstairs, 9' ceilings
  - 1) Kitchen, SE corner
  - 2) Living room, 14x16', front of house (NW)
  - 3) Bathroom adjacent to kitchen
  - 4) Dining room, SW corner with triplet of windows
- B. Upstairs, 9' ceilings
  - 1) Two large bedrooms
  - 2) Stair hall
  - 3) Large attic in lean-to

### VI. Subsequent Alterations

- A. Bathroom added by Sanborns in 1912
- B. Minor alterations
  - 1) Kitchen door moved approx. 1' west
  - 2) Dining room door moved approx. 1' west
- C. Originally, stairs came up into one of the bedrooms which opened into the east room through a door now closed off.
- D. Archway to the east of front door in living room may have been added or altered.
- E. 1x12's closing off stairs from the living room added by Sanborns.

### VII. Interior Finish

- A. Walls covered with muslin and layers of wallpaper
- B. Some rooms whitewashed
- C. Floors painted
- D. Upstairs shair rail 1½x1½ square base spindles, 9" on center, most missing
- E. Baseboards of 8" shiplap
- F. 4x4 paneled doors
- G. Few cabinets intact
- H. One chimney with brick base in kitchen

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- I. Opening for a stove pipe from kitchen to living room
- J. Kitchen has screened vents for a pantry
- K. Newer acoustical tile on ceiling downstairs

VIII. Exterior Finish

- A. 8" shiplap
- B. Painted white

IX. Condition

- A. Southwest corner badly weathered and rotted
- B. Out of plumb
- C. Roof in fairly good condition
- D. Upstairs ceiling in good shape
- E. Upstairs floor 20% in need of repair
- F. 75% of downstairs floor in need of repair
- G. Most door and window sashes gone, doors and windows likewise
- H. Porches fallen down
- I. Subframe should be rebuilt

X. Woodshed

- A. Perpendicular to SE corner of house
- B. Connected to porch off kitchen
- C. 32x16', approx.
- D. Also raised up on base wall approx. 4'
- E. Exterior covered with vertical boards
- F. Gable-roofed
- G. Inside finished with shiplap siding

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"readying" the island. The existing house on Cox Island was a wedding present to the bride from her lonely fiancée. The couple was married on June 29, 1902. The house was completed for the Benedicts' honeymoon, and it continued thereafter as the on-site residence of the Company's managers. If the deed records are accurate, all this would have taken place before the Benedicts obtained possession of the island. It is not certain who Anna Marsh was or how she might fit in, but some connection between the lady logger and the Siuslaw Booming Co. or the Benedicts would account for the early use of the island. For a time, ownership bounced back and forth between the Benedicts and the Siuslaw Boom Company. A new manager was hired by the Company in 1912, and Benedict left the island to make room for Sanborn and his family who moved in and began modernizing the house and working toward self-sufficiency. Collecting water from a canyon across the river, the Sanborns piped it to the island to provide the vital resource needed for further development of a homestead on the salt water marsh. To better support chickens and livestock, they built a chicken coop and new barn to replace the old one, which they had turned into a machine and blacksmith shop. Surrounded by excellent fishing, they added the luxury of a smokehouse. As business improved, three boathouses were docked in front of the house, one of which served as the Boom Company's office.

In 1914, Florence published a promotional brochure hailing the many opportunities to be found in and around the "bustling metropolis" and boasting especially the excellence of the Siuslaw Harbor. Closer to San Francisco than other Northern Pacific Coast harbors it was sure to be the key shipping center for the 60 billion board feet of timber ready to be harvested from Lane County forests. Before the development of the modern highway system, rivers served as the main avenues of transportation and commerce. Flumes shuttle the logs into rivers, where they were rafted down to central sorting stations. The Siuslaw Boom Co. was one of the major sorting stations on the Siuslaw. A demanding occupation log booming was a constant battle against the moods of the river. During storm conditions when the river rose with the swelling tide, the neatly-ordered rafts could easily break apart, freeing their logs to run with the torrent.

Sanborn obtained the island from the Company on a labor lease in 1938, but by this time booming activity had slowed. Sanborn sold the island in 1939. Many rapid turnovers like this marked the next ten years of the ownership history. Usually empty, the house and surrounding buildings started to deteriorate. As man's use of the island decreased, the natural environment began the long process of reclaiming the land it had lost. Siuslaw Forest Products bought the island, owning it for the next four years. As a ploy to avoid paying taxes, the latter outfit set out to help the natural processes. The boat houses were floated away, the out-buildings torn down, and the windows were knocked out of the house, and the interior gutted.

In 1977 the Nature Conservancy was given the island by Champion International Corp., which had received it in a 1953 exchange. Studying the island's biological significance, the Nature Conservancy decided that it should be preserved for its excellent representation of high immature salt water marsh habitat. In addition, the Nature Conservancy recognized the island's cultural and historical significance.



FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Ken Kesey's saga, Sometimes a Great Notion, portrays the feelings and realities of Oregon's early logging days and what life on the island must have entailed. The fictional Stamper House was actually inspired by the Benedict House, a fact which was confirmed with author Kesey. Artists frequently use the Benedict House as subject matter for landscapes. A "we're almost there" landmark for coast-bound motorists on Highway 36, the house holds special meaning for those who notice it. The Nature Conservancy hopes to restore the house as a hostel for marsh researchers and for the historic and esthetic values it lends the Cox Island Preserve.

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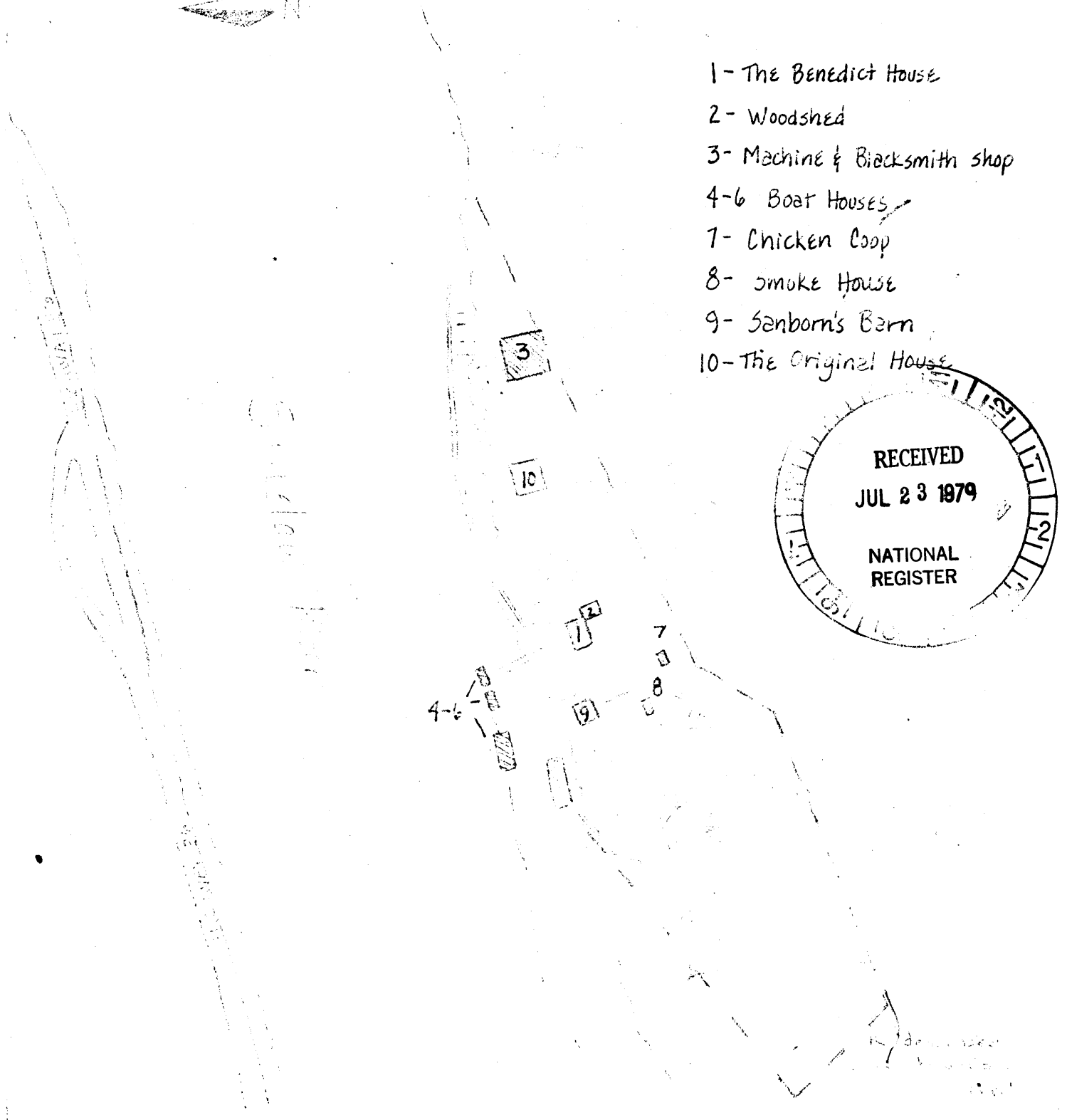
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Beginning from the house and heading N 78° East about 570 feet to the farthest eastern edge of the knoll, thence S 65° West about 185 feet, thence S 70° West about 462 feet, thence N 25° West about 162 feet, thence N 63° East about 720 feet to the point of beginning.

Interpretive overlay for 1939 aerial photo

Benedict (Edwin E.) House  
Cox Island, Florence vicinity  
Lane County, Oregon

□ Still Standing  
▨ 1939 Aerial Photograph  
Sanborn, Christine



- 1- The Benedict House
- 2- Woodshed
- 3- Machine & Blacksmith shop
- 4-6 Boat Houses
- 7- Chicken Coop
- 8- Smoke House
- 9- Sanborn's Barn
- 10- The Original House

