

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 18 1984
date entered NOV 15 1984

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

1. Name

historic Albers Brothers Milling Company

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 1118-1130 Front Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 057 051

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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Norcrest China

street & number 55 West Burnside Street

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97209

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 319 South West Fourth

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resource Inventory
City of Portland has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981-1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Planning, City of Portland

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Albers Milling Company Building is essentially a brick, six-story reinforced concrete utilitarian-style structure with concrete and wooden additions to the east. Constructed between 1909 and 1911, the building projects its original character. It is currently unoccupied and awaits rehabilitation.

SETTING

The Albers Milling Company Building is located on the Willamette River north of downtown Portland, in an area long used for industry and transportation. It occupies Block 318, Lots 2-6 of Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The Union Station and Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway are located on the opposite side of the river, along the west of the building. There are related milling and grain processing activities further downstream and on the opposite shore. The Broadway Bridge, connecting Northwest and Downtown Portland with the Northeast, runs along the fourth floor of the South elevation. On the south side of the bridge is a new housing development and the terminus of the waterfront greenway from Downtown.

The Albers Milling Company Building has a roughly square plan. The main entries are on the West, facing Front Street, which runs along the Downtown waterfront. On the east, the back of the building steps down and extends over the river. The building has flat roofs with heavy timber framing and reinforced concrete walls which, on the older section, are clad in brick.

DESCRIPTION

West Facade

The front elevation is six stories tall with a three-story office wing on the left. The facade is divided into eight equal bays and a larger end bay at the left. A band of concrete projects and forms a base for brick piers which rise to the parapet. A loading dock ran the full length with sliding wood doors and two three-light transom windows located between each pier. The end and middle bays also contain smaller hinged doors. The opening in the fourth bay from the right has been filled and a freight elevator located directly inside. The large end bay on the left has a window on each side door.

The metal shed roof over the former dock area is supported by wood braces and steel rods tied back to the piers. On the upper floors of the main building, each bay contains a single opening with a concrete sill. In the center is a three-over-three, double-hung window with a through-light transom; and at each side is a narrower four-light fixed window with two-light transom.

In the office wing there are three window openings per floor. Located in the center of the third floor is a four-over-four, double-hung window with a transom. At the sides are narrower, three-over-three, double-hung windows with transoms. The second story windows have been replaced with fixed single-lights in aluminum frames. Above the upper windows, the brick is corbelled out to a frieze that is flush with the piers. The frieze above the sixth floor contains "Albers Bros. Milling Company" in black and white paint surrounded by a raised brick border, and it is capped by a machicolated parapet. There is an iron fire escape and stand pipe in the left corner of the main building and a water tower platform and flagpole located on the roof here.

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South Facade

The south facing elevation has three components: the brick wall that wraps around from the front, four round concrete silos in the center, and a three-story addition with reinforced concrete walls at the right. The Broadway Bridge runs along the fourth floor. At the left, a single bay defined by brick piers contains a small square window and a door set in a larger segmental arch. The shed roof and landing platform located here connect the ones on the front. There is a faded mural above, at the level of the bridge, and paired, four-over-four, double-hung windows on the fifth and sixth floors. The brick is corbelled below the machicolated parapet.

In the center of the facade, the silos form a continuous wall, which at the upper level is painted like the packages of flour and oats produced by the mill. At the sixth floor there is a flat-stuccoed wall with four-over-four, double-hung windows located above each silo. The wall of the lower addition on the right is constructed of concrete on which the rough formwork is visible. There are three large openings with rolling metal doors, a multi-light hinged metal sash window in the left corner, three more on the second floor and another on the third floor.

East Facade

The two-story wing is extended over the water on wood piles and is clad with narrow horizontal wood siding. There is a two-story dock running the full length, with sliding wood doors at the basement level and first floor, and a lift near the center. Pairs of multi-light sliding windows form bands above the first floor doors and on the second floor. A thin, wall-like addition steps up two more stories covering the back of the original brick structure. A complex system of pipes for conveying grain is exposed on the roof. The undulating wall of the silos at the left is topped with a one-story stucco wall featuring a painted sign for Del Monte Flour.

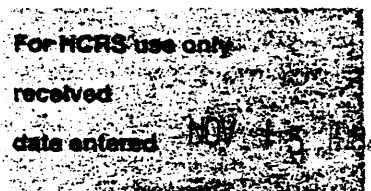
The sixth floor of the red brick structure contains pairs of four-over-four, double-hung windows in each of six bays, and corbelling at the top between the piers. This rhythm and window type is repeated below in the newer wall. At the top is a machicolated parapet and a panel with "Albers Milling Company" in black and white paint, surrounded by a raised brick border. At both corners of the roof are boxes, with the larger one featuring piers at the edges and corbelling below the top.

North Facade

The north elevation is divided in half with the original brick structure on the right and a two-story blank concrete wall (added in 1967) at the left. At the right, the three-story office wing is divided by brick piers into three small bays and a larger center one. On the ground floor there are four-over-four, double-hung windows in the first and second bays, a single window and door in the center, and a door in the fourth bay. On the upper floors, the large bay contains two pairs of four-over-four, double-hung windows, while the other bays contain single pairs.

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The brick is corbelled between the piers and the parapet is painted with a sign for Flapjack Flour. The brick building steps back to the main six-story section. There are three bays on the right containing paired four-over-four, double-hung windows, and a smaller end bay with a single window on the sixth floor. This end bay is narrower due to an enclosed stairway which ends in the box on the roof. Below the machicolated parapet is a panel featuring "Albers Milling Company" in black and white paint.

Interior

The interior layout for the Albers Mill consists of large open areas with very high ceilings. The wood plank floor systems are supported by an extremely large post and beam structure, also in wood. In some areas, post and beams are connected by iron caps but wood caps predominate. A large freight elevator is located in the western portion of the building. The early multi-story wood frame addition to the east abuts the eastern brick wall of the original structure. Portals were cut into the brick to allow for the passage of fork lifts, but the major portion of the wall is intact. All mill machinery is intact, and is generally clustered towards the south central portion of the building. The majority of the space was for the warehousing and shipping of the company's products. The office wing, located to the north, consists of several floors of remodeled space, which provides little evidence of the original fabric. Drop ceilings, tile floors, and paneling are evident in the rooms. Otherwise, the interior of the mill is coated with particles of grain dust which covers every surface.

Comparative Data on The Albers Milling Company Building

The City of Portland Historic Resource Inventory was used to provide comparative data for the nominated building. In searching through all of the files, only three buildings in the entire inventory are listed as having had "mill" as their original or subsequent function. These are:

Albers Brothers Milling Company
1118-1130 NW Front Avenue
Constructed between 1909-11

Olympia Cereal Mill
100 SE Stark
Constructed in 1919

Western Farmers Association Feed Mill
6135 N Basin Avenue
Constructed in 1960

All of these buildings appear in the stylistic category called "Reinforced Concrete Utilitarian." There is one other mill building which although adjacent to the Albers complex, was not listed in the Portland Inventory. This is the Crown/Centennial Mill, located at 1362-1464 NW Front. Although there is no date for this building in the city's building records, the firm appears in the Portland City Directory by 1911. The first

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permit record dates from 1921. There were almost continual alterations to the building between that date and 1973, according to the record. Quoting a 5 October, 1966 article in the Oregon Journal, the original building "used to be an animal feed mill," and was rebuilt as a flour mill in 1948 when Centennial purchased the property.

In summation, the Albers Brothers Milling Company building, when compared to the other known mill buildings in the city, is the oldest, and has the most historical associations of the three in the Portland Inventory. Unlike the Crown/Centennial Mill, a building not listed in the inventory, it did not change its original function and has more physical integrity.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1909–1911 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Albers Brothers Milling Company Building, located at 1118–1130 NW Front Avenue in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, was constructed between 1909 and 1911 for the Albers family, Portland immigrants who built what, at the time, was the largest cereal and grain manufacturing corporation on the Pacific Coast. As the oldest of the four extant flouring or feed mills in the City of Portland, and the only structure in Oregon associated with the family's extensive milling operations, the building meets Criterion "a."

The Mill can also be evaluated in a secondary manner for its association with the Albers family, who joined numerous other German immigrants in Portland in collectively making substantive contributions to the city's economic growth. There are no other standing buildings associated with the family in Portland.

Background

Oregon began shipping wheat and flour to California as early as 1850, and this remained their primary market until the late 1860s, when the first shipment of wheat was transported to England. From that time to the time the Albers Mill was constructed, Oregon sold approximately 500 million bushels of wheat and barley to California and abroad. During the 1870s and 1880s, wheat and flour were the state's chief exports, comprising an average of 90%. In 1883 William S. Ladd incorporated the Portland Flouring Mills, which later was to become the largest milling operation in the northwest in the late nineteenth century. Originally located in Albina, the operation was later guided by Theodore B. Wilcox and was later sold in 1918 to Max Houser, largest individual grain exporter in the world at the time. He was later to lose a staggering 15 million dollars as the dollar value of Portland's grain exports fell a total of 65% in four years around the First World War. According to Paul Merriam in "Portland, Oregon, 1840–1890; A Social and Economic History," an unpublished dissertation, the grain business at that time was continually plagued by uncertainties and he contends that few individuals derived substantial profit from the trade in the period between the two great wars. It can be noted that the rapid expansion of the Albers firm occurred during a period ending in 1918.

In the 19th century, large numbers of German immigrants settled throughout the United States. This well-educated, industrious and stable group was easily assimilated into the American cultural and business environment. In Portland, there were German settlers as early as 1849, and by 1870 a full 30 percent of city businesses were owned by Germans. In addition to merchants, there were cabinetmakers, butchers, grocers, printers, barbers, musicians, farmers, and garbage collectors represented in the city. Such notable Portlanders as Henry Weinhard, Frank Dekum, Jacob Kamm, Aaron Meier, and Sigmund Frank were all of German descent. By the turn of the century, German persons constituted the city's largest minority.

The Albers family came into this welcoming environment as early as 1889, with the arrival of Bernard H. Albers, the eldest of nine children. It was he who began the family milling business in Portland, and was one of six members of the family to immigrate to the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	2	5	4	0	0	5	0	4	1	8	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The Albers Brothers Milling Company Building is located on Block 318, Lots 2-6 of Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Oregon, Multnomah County, approximately 250 x 150 feet in dimension.

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

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date

street & number 813 SW Alder, Suite 800 telephone (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland state Oregon 97205

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.

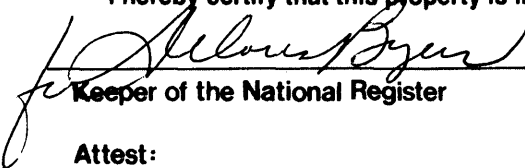
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date September 19, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register

date 11-15-84



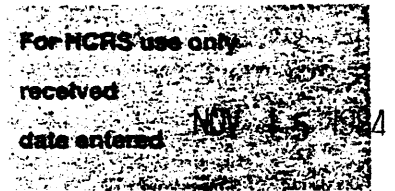
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Born in Lingen, in the province of Hanover, on March 6, 1864, he was the son of Johann H. and Theresa V. Albers. The father was a grain merchant, who provided young Bernard with much of his training in the grain business. In 1887, he emigrated to New York and after two years in Terre Haute, Indiana, he came to Portland, wherein he worked for four years for the firm of Rogge and Storp, feed merchants.

Eventually saving enough money, he established a grain business under the firm name of Albers and Tuke in 1893, which became Albers and Schneider in 1895. By this time, Bernard's brothers, Henry and William, had emigrated, and shortly after this two other brothers, George and Frank, came to Portland. A sister, Anna, married and settled in the city.

The family business increased steadily, necessitating the construction of a large mill in 1898 close to the site of the nominated building. With subsequent purchases, the company eventually controlled approximately 600 feet of waterfront warehouse and shipping docks.

Reportedly, the bulk of the family fortune was based on a government contract for hay shipments to the Philippine Islands during the 1901 war with Spain.

By 1901, the business was incorporated under the name of Albers Brothers Milling Company, with all five brothers being listed in executive positions. An expansion period lasting until 1918 began with the lease and subsequent purchase of milling operations in Tacoma (1902) and Seattle (1906). Expanding to Los Angeles (1907); San Francisco (1908); Ogden, Utah (1916); and lastly Oakland (1918), the company eventually owned nine mills with floor space exceeding one million, three hundred and twenty five thousand square feet, and with annual sales amounting to twenty million dollars.

Under the Albers, Carnation, Peacock, Del Monte, and Sunripe trademarks, the company produced flour, oats, cereal, meal, stock and poultry feed, and numerous other items, all of which created the largest manufacturing corporation of its type in the Pacific Coast. The parent company is currently known as the Carnation Corporation.

Of the five brothers, only Bernard, Henry and William remained in Oregon. George and Frank lived in Seattle and San Francisco, respectively, helping run the family business in the other states. George Albers was eventually named as the chairman of the animal food products committee for the Northwest, which was under the supervision of then U. S. Food Administrator, Herbert Hoover.

In its heyday, the mill employed 100 persons. Currently nothing remains of the old machinery associated with the original flour producing operation. This was all replaced c. 1940 when feed production became the focal point of the operation. Essentially, the plant operated 24 hours per day converting corn, barley and oats into commercial feed. The raw material was unloaded on the west elevation by truck or railroad car and then stored in the large silos on the south elevation until ready for processing. It was then crushed, ground and/or rolled by the machinery situated on the south end of the plant. Various bins containing other materials or additives to go into individual feed

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compositions were added at midpoint in the process and finally, the materials were either bagged (40%) or shipped in bulk (60%). The large areas on the east and on the upper floors of the original portion of the building were for storage, but weren't used as extensively in later years since bulk sales eliminated the need for large in-house storage capacity.

Thus the original form of the building confined production to the south end so that it would be more accessible to the rail and truck deliveries. The expansion towards the east into large warehouse spaces was to accommodate the ship loading requirements for exporting from the state in the early years and because there was little bulk sales: everything was packaged. The feed operations continued until 1983, when the mill was closed.

Additional History

While the family is significant collectively, the history of Henry Albers, who became president of the company upon the death of Bernard in 1908, is of particular interest to the city of Portland. Having arrived in the city in 1891, Henry Albers was employed in various small jobs until he joined his brothers in the Albers-Schneider enterprise, of which he was a vice-president. Assuming the presidency upon his brother's death, Henry shepherded the phenomenal growth of the company and oversaw the erection of the nominated building. Of plain and unassuming character, Henry eventually became embroiled in what has been described as the case that "rocked Portland, Or., and the whole Northwest." (Oregonian, 4 April, 1937, "Northwest Magazine.")

The initiation of hostilities between the United States and Germany eliminated the supportive environment that had sheltered the German population in the United States. Suspicion and hysteria dominated everyday life and even the most stable and respected citizens were subjected to humiliation and harsh treatment because of their heritage. All Germans not naturalized were considered aliens and, by Presidential Proclamation, forbidden near one-half mile of any Federal or State fort or naval vessel. In Portland, it was necessary that permits be obtained before any person of German origin could get close to the waterfront. This situation, naturally, provided some difficulties to those businesses on the waterfront which were German-owned.

In order to sell Liberty Bonds, "five minute men" went into every business in town. "You bought a bond, or else your name was turned in to a committee as one who 'would bear watching.'" Textbooks were censored, Germanic street names in Portland were changed, and food items such as sauerkraut, hamburger and frankfurthers became "liberty cabbage," "liberty steak," and the now ubiquitous "hot dog." Pacifism was not tolerated for religious or moral reasons, and the general feeling was that the conduct of Portland citizens, even if they felt differently, should come into accord with the "wishes and designs" of the United States government.

Although the Albers' company was watched, its loyalty had not yet been questioned. The family had previously purchased \$300,000 worth of Liberty Bonds and had encouraged their employees to enlist from the beginning of the hostilities. However, an incident on April 6, 1917, threatened the stability of the business and changed Henry Albers' life permanently.

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Henry Albers' intemperate behaviour contributed to his predicament. On the date in question, he was returning to Portland from a business trip in San Francisco where, according to his friend, Jack O'Neill, he had spent ten days drinking brandy and not eating. In 1914, Oregon had passed a prohibition law and Albers took advantage of the California portion of his return trip to become quite intoxicated. He continued this behaviour after he entered Oregon which, unfortunately, came to the attention of Deputy U. S. Marshall Frank B. Tichener. Tichener, a former state representative from Coos and Curry Counties, was, at the time, employed in the arrest and harrassment of both suspected German "spies" and violators of the state liquor prohibition. Mr. Albers, in his drunken state, allegedly loudly proclaimed pro-German statements such as:

"Once a German, always a German."

"I served 25 years under the Kaiser, and it was better there than here."

"Why should the government tell me what to do?"

"We could never lick the Kaiser in 1000 years."

"My brothers are pro-Hun, so am I."

"There will be a revolution here in ten years; yes, in two years, may be."

Later, there were accusations of entrapment, which seem substantiated by the facts, but this has not been proven. Albers was arrested after his indictment on 2 November, 1917. The trial did not begin until 25 January, 1919. Upon his arrest, Albers immediately resigned as president of the company and sold his 10 percent of the stock. Accused of violating the Federal Espionage Act, he was defended by Portland Judge Henry S. McGinn and John McCourt. The federal prosecutors were U. S. Attorney Bert Haney and Assistant U. S. Attorney B. H. Goldstein, himself a naturalized citizen.

After significant difficulties in selecting a jury, the trial began. The prosecutors' case, built on the testimony of Frank Tichener and four "witnesses," sought to prove that Albers intended "to undermine the morale of our young men who were being called to the colors." Oregonians' paranoia and hatred, engendered by the war, seemed focused totally on Henry Albers, as if he represented the entire German cause. Local and regional newspapers recorded in detail every aspect of the trial. That Albers made the alleged statements, or some facsimile thereof, was never disputed by the defense. They attempted to disprove the allegations by contending that his drunken, irrational state was responsible for the statements. However, this approach was not effective in the face of the overwhelming negative atmosphere of the courtroom. Indicative of the prevailing emotionalism is the admission by the court of the following quote of a popular song, made by Mr. Goldstein:

"If you don't like the stars in Old Glory,
If you don't like the red, white and blue,
Then don't act like the cur in the story,
Don't bite the had that is feeding you."

Reportedly, Albers "crumpled" upon hearing the words and subsequent efforts on his behalf, including testimony from uniform-clad former employees regarding his loyalty to America, was unsuccessful. He was found guilty on two of the seven counts: That his words were

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said to incite, provoke, and encourage resistance to the United States or to promote the cause of the enemy; and that he supported and favored the cause of Germany and opposed the cause of the United States.

The fact that an armistice was in effect by the end of the trial did not diminish the sentence of three years in prison with a \$10,000 fine. A lower court appeal was denied although Albers never spent a day in prison for his "crimes." While awaiting a Supreme Court appeal of the verdict, U. S. Attorney General H. M. Daugherty intervened, confessing that there had been "error in the case." Stating that "incompetent" evidence, "highly prejudicial and erroneously admitted," had been introduced at the trial, the Attorney General sought to remand the judgement in favor of a new trial.

Individuals and organizations such as Senator Charles L. McNary, the Oregon Bar Association and the American Legion expressed outrage and attempted to influence the Attorney General's decision. Bearing in mind that the petition had not yet reached the high court, the unusual behind-the-scenes wrangling centered around the question of whether a "bureaucrat" should be allowed to overthrow a circuit court decision. Further complicating the proceedings was a complaint from Judge C. H. Carey, who was disappointed that he wouldn't be able to argue the case before the Supreme Court for Albers.

Efforts to free Albers were eventually successful but were in vain because he had a stroke and died on 27 July, 1927, paralyzed, sightless and "mentally deranged."

Subsequently, historical perspective of the period softened the harsh opinions of alleged German criminals. In a 1937 article in the Oregonian, "genial Henry" was more sympathetically characterized:

"... he was a fine citizen, a public spirited man, an honest one and a better American by far than many of the 100 percenters who whooped for bigger and better prosecution of the huns."

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1

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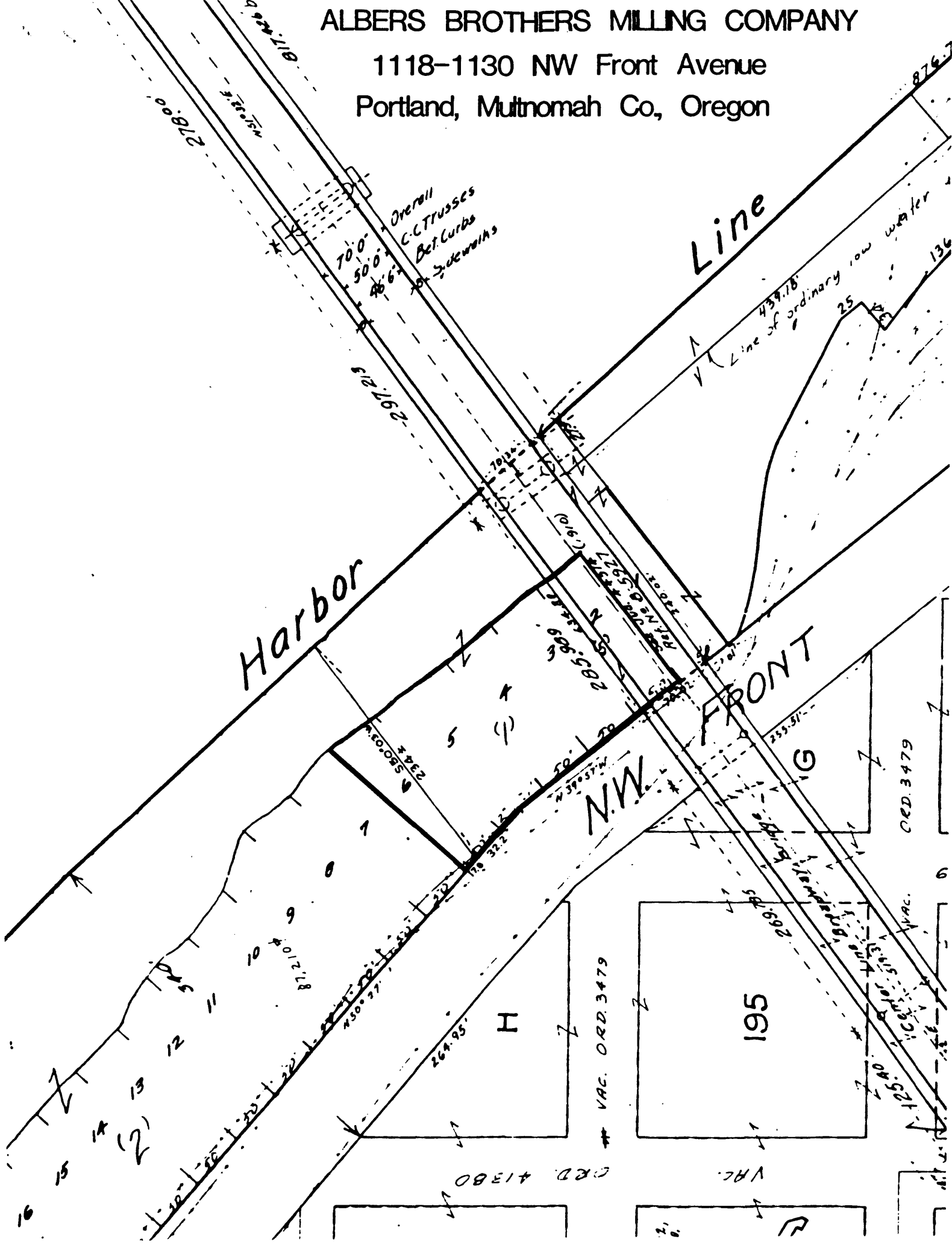
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MacColl, E. Kimbark, The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915-1950, Portland. The Georgian Press, 1979.

ALBERS BROTHERS MILLING COMPANY

1118-1130 NW Front Avenue
 Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



Harbor

Line

FRONT

N.W.

H

G

196

ORD. 41380

VAC. ORD. 3479

VAC.

ORD. 3479

VAC. 125'-0"

VAC.