

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 28 1984
date entered AUG 1 1984

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

1. Name

historic Beers, Oliver, House / Methodist Mission Hospital Site
and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 10602 Wheatland Road N/A not for publication
city, town Gervais X vicinity of
state Oregon code 41 county Marion code 047

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Paul and Frances Witteman
street & number P.O. Box 3-3883
city, town Anchorage N/A vicinity of state Alaska 99501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Courthouse
street & number 148 High Street NE
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties
title has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1971 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 525 Trade Street SE
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oliver Beers farmhouse is located in Marion County, Oregon, on a portion of Donation Land Claim No. 38 in section 38, Township 6 south, Range 3 west of the Willamette Meridian. The nominated area of approximately 3/4 of an acre is described as tax lot number 48315-000. The two-story, frame vernacular farmhouse was built ca. 1870 in a rural farm setting ten miles north of Salem. The house blends a traditional side hall plan and plain surface treatment with stylistic features owing to Classic Revival & Rural Gothic architecture. The house is composed of a main volume, a perpendicular wing, or ell, and a subsidiary wing at a right angle to the ell. The main volume is oriented on an east-west axis, its facade faces west toward Wheatland Road.

The Oliver Beers farmhouse was once the central feature of an extensive farm operation owned and administered by Beers from 1870 to 1913. The farmstead was established on the former farm claim of the original station of the Methodist Mission in Oregon and may have incorporated buildings and barns dating from that significant historic period ca. 1838 to 1844. Tradition relates that the farmhouse, or portions thereof, is the 1840 mission "hospital". However, architectural and archeological evidence dispels this rumour and suggests that an archeological component nucleated underneath the house constitutes the remains of the mission hospital. Therefore, no standing structures excepting the ca. 1870 farmhouse have survived from either the mission or Beers' occupation.

Approximately 3/4 of an acre (31,335 sq. ft.) of land is proposed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The nominated parcel of land is bounded to the west by Wheatland Road, to the south by a gully, to the east by an orchard and gravel auto-parking area, and to the north by a gravel driveway (see attached site plan). Encompassed within this area and considered the primary significant nominated features are a Willamette mission archeological component (ca. 1840-1870), an archeologically investigated privy-site (ca. 1850-1870), and the Oliver Beers farmhouse (ca. 1870). Of secondary significance is an archeologically investigated refuse scatter situated between the farmhouse and privy. Though approximately 800 artifacts were recorded, all are fragments of articles found in a disturbed context. A time range on datable materials indicates a disposal area stemming from the Willamette mission occupation up through the early 20th century. Enclosed within the nominated area, but currently possessing no significant historic value, are a rail fence (1970s), which borders the yard to the west and north, and a dilapidated greenhouse (1930s) situated to the east of the Oliver Beers house. The rail fence roughly follows the alignment of the original white picket fence. Introduced plant species are included in the nominated area. Many had contributed to the landscape in the historic period. Most distinctive are three stately maple trees to the front and north of the house. Fruit trees, small conifers, and ornamental flowering species also are included.

A Willamette mission archeological component was discovered underneath the second volume of the Oliver Beers farmhouse during 1981 archeological investigations carried out at the farm site (Bewall 1982). Historic artifacts, many relating to the early Oregon settlement period, were observed on the ground surface adjacent to and beneath the house. A 1 by 2 meter test unit was warranted. The test unit primarily yielded fragments of domestic articles such as ceramic plates and vessels, and glass jars and bottles. A fragmented "black" glass alcohol bottle and a clay pipestem were also discovered. The artifacts, approximately 300 in number, were found within a 40 centimeter depth in what appears to be a filled-in depression.

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This depression is bordered to the north by an alignment of brick. The alignment was only partially exposed during archeological investigations, however, over one hundred bricks were noted either in situ or scattered over the premises. The bricks are an early 2x4x8" hand-produced variety. They are distinct from those used in the Oliver Beers farmhouse, thus eliminating a possible source. In addition, the brick feature is not physically connected in any manner to the house. Most of the bricks are in a deteriorating state.

The limited extent of investigation into the archeological component restricts the data base necessary to make a sound appraisal of the dimension, depth or physical structuring of the brick alignment. The existence of the depression and associated artifacts is also under question. Possibly the brick alignment constitutes the remains of a cellar, house foundation or fireplace foundation. Most likely, the depression was a secondary refuse area, either dug as a refuse pit, or already existent if one accepts the cellar theory.

A high percentage of the recovered artifacts, including the bricks, range in date from the 1830s to about three quarters into the 19th century. Thus, most pre-date construction of the Oliver Beers farmhouse. Patterns observed on many of the ceramic fragments are identical to those found during archeological assessment of the Willamette Station of the Methodist Mission (Sanders, Weber and Brauner 1982). The Willamette station was headquarters of the Methodist mission in the Northwest from 1834 to 1841. The station was located on the east bank of the Willamette river one mile west of the presently situated Oliver Beers farmhouse.

Evidence supports two conclusions: one, a building previously existed at the site of the Oliver Beers house, and two, a Willamette mission occupation is inferred. The Willamette mission hospital building is the most likely candidate. This assessment is based on historical documentation, old land claim surveys, the early brick variety, and diagnostic historic artifacts, specifically the ceramics. The domestic nature of the artifacts and the employment of brick in construction indicates a house, and not likely a barn or out-building, was once at this site. The hospital, described in 1841 as a "well-built frame edifice", was Alanson Beers' dwelling in the 1840s and early 1850s. In the early part of these years he was employed by the mission as farm administrator and blacksmith. The fate of the building following Alanson Beers' death in 1853 is unclear. Data from the privy indicates an occupation at the site up through the 1860s. Possibly the executor of Alanson Beers' estate, Josiah Parrish, inhabited the hospital until 1862, at which time Oliver Beers Alanson's son, began a three year lease and eventual purchase of the claim.

The privy site is situated approximately 30 feet to the rear (east) of the Oliver Beers farmhouse. No standing privy structure remains. The privy site was partially excavated (down to 90 centimeters) during the 1981 archeological work (Bewall 1982). A re-evaluation of Bewall's interpretation of the privy indicates the artifacts are not restricted to an association with the Oliver Beers occupation (i.e. post-1870). Diagnostic glass and ceramic artifacts place the date range of the privy to ca. 1850-1870.

In the privy were found approximately 1300 whole and fragmented articles. Categories of artifacts primarily include items from domestic, personal and structural use. Among the items found are food preservative, proprietary medicine, drug, and nursing bottles, fruit

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jars, glass tumblers, glass kerosene lamp chimneys, ceramic plate and vessel fragments, and clothing buttons. Square nails found near the surface of the site are attributed to the privy structure. Undoubtedly the privy was used as a secondary refuse area by the dwellers of the hospital during the ca. 1850-1870 time period. Since only the top half of the privy was excavated, this date range may be pushed back further if investigations continue.

The Oliver Beers farmhouse is a wood frame house built in the early 1870s, a period when traditional pioneer architecture in the Willamette Valley was influenced by new forms and styles. The Oliver Beers house is perhaps best described as a vernacular farmhouse. The vernacular farmhouse blends traditional construction with more up to date stylistic attributes of the Gothic Revival. The older traditions of the Classic Revival are reflected in the Beers house by the symmetrical treatment of the main entrance portico and front door, which is surrounded by side lights and transom. The decoration of the portico, originally replete with ornamental brackets, posts and parapet, suggests influence from the Gothic Revival, while the utilitarian character of the Oliver Beers house is seen in the buildings overall plain appearance and complex volumetric organization. The Oliver Beers house faces west, an unusual orientation given climatic conditions of the Willamette Valley. It is likely that the house was built to face Wheatland Road.

The Oliver Beers house is composed of three successive volumes. The two-story main volume (east-west axis with gable end parallel to the road) contains the side entrance hall with an open, turned staircase, parlour (which historically functioned as a bedroom as it does today), living room, and three upstairs bedrooms. A full basement is located beneath the west half of this volume, and the half story under the gable roof functions as attic space. A porch off the living room on the east elevation is not original although a porch may have existed in this location originally.

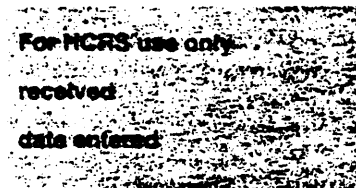
The one and one-half story second volume (north-south axis), or ell, is attached at a right angle to the first volume and incorporates the dining room, front porch, and an upstairs bedroom which was originally reached exclusively by a stairway from the dining room. Today this bedroom can be reached by a pass-through closet in the first volume thus providing access to this bedroom from the second floor.

A third (rear) volume (east-west axis), or ell, is attached at a right angle to the second volume and contains the kitchen, bathroom (not original) and additional rooms which historically functioned as a pantry and woodshed. The space beneath the roof once served as sleeping quarters for hired farm hands. Originally, a breeze-way existed between the woodshed/pantry and the kitchen. Mrs. J. Orlo Hayes, granddaughter of Oliver Beers, noted that this area was used for various activities such as churning butter and making sausage and sauerkraut in the early part of this century.

Architectural evidence suggests that this third volume was not original. Although a construction date for this volume is unknown, we do know that the house existed in its present configuration by the turn of the century. Architectural detail indicates that this wing was probably erected sometime during the late 1880s or the 1890s. Prior to the

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construction of this rear wing, it is probable that the present dining room in volume two served as the original kitchen. A hanging chimney in the dining room supports this probability. The construction sequence of volumes one and two is not known. Both volumes may be original. However, weatherboard patching on the south elevation of volume two and the presence of wainscoting in a closet under the dining room stair may be an indication that volume two's upstairs bedroom was not original. Thus volume two may have at one time been only one story in height.

A brick foundation supports the first and second volumes while the third volume is supported by 12" brick piers. The original watertable has been removed from the first and second volumes, probably during repair work. Today, a concrete veneer covers the original brick foundation.

The basement story under volume one is encased with brick walls. The six and one-half foot cellar originally had an earthen floor but has since been covered by concrete. Access to the cellar can be gained by either an interior door located in the southwestern corner of the living room, or by an exterior cellar door located on the north elevation of volume one.

The type of framing system employed is not known. Original sills and girders are hand hewn. Joists are connected to the sills by notching. Circular sawn joists are set at varying widths from 18" to 22" to centers. Several of the original sills and girders have been replaced.

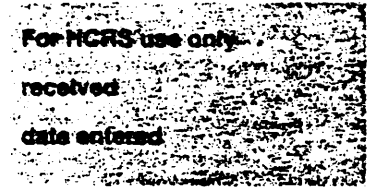
All three volumes of the Oliver Beers house are sided with 5½" weatherboards showing 4-4¼" to the weather. The weatherboards are finished with white paint with exterior trim painted in chrome green (munsell 2.5 3/4). The original roof covering of wood shingles has been replaced by composite shingles. The gable end treatment of all three volumes includes rake and fascia board beneath overhanging eaves. Uncapped corner boards of differing widths are present on each elevation.

Original exterior decorative treatment was exclusive to the two front porches. A parapet once graced the flat-roofed portico and can be seen in a turn of the century photograph. Original porch supports have been replaced. However, decorative brackets still remain on the portico. A shed roof covers the dining room porch, which extends the length of the ell's west elevation.

All original windows in volumes one and two of the Oliver Beers house were four over four double hung sash windows. Most of these windows remain although first floor windows on the west elevation have been replaced by six over one double hung sash windows. Generally, original upstairs windows are smaller than original first story windows with individual lights of 12x14" and 12x16" respectively. Shutters existed on the main (west) facade during the early part of the century. Shutter hardware is still evident on original windows. Original windows are capped by classical molded lintels. A palladian window with a round arch sash has replaced an original window on the north elevation of volume one. According to

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David Duniway, this palladian window formerly lighted the gable of the Holman Building in Salem.

Original doors in the Beers house are stile and rail four panel doors. Most of the exterior doors have been replaced although the main front door leading to the entrance hall is original. Interior doors have not been replaced and retain their original hardware including rimlocks, and porcelain doorknobs in jet, white, and Bennington. A variety of hinge styles are found throughout the house including two-part hinges, three-part "gothic" and plain hinges, and five-part hinges.

All three volumes have an original brick chimney. The chimney of the main volume originally served a double back-to-back parlour/living room fireplace. Today the parlour fireplace has been closed-up. A recent concrete block chimney pent has taken over the function of the original chimney in volume two. A brick stove chimney in volume three serves the kitchen and the hired-hand's quarters. All original chimneys bisect the roof at the gable ridge. Chimneys of the first two volumes are missing several brick courses and lack decorative chimney caps.

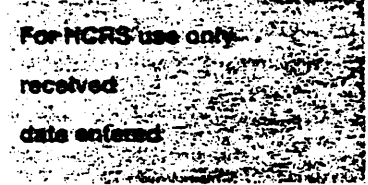
The walls of the Oliver Beers house are insulated with horsehair and plastered over lath. Today, a variety of paint and paper finishes cover the walls and ceilings. None of the finishes are original. Decorative treatment of the Beers house interior is plain. Wainscoting is used in all first floor rooms with the exception of the stairhall. Baseboards are found in other rooms lacking the wainscoting. Windows and doors all have plain board trim. Flooring used throughout the house is fir except in the dining room where a hardwood is used. There is a built-in cabinet in the southeast corner of the dining room. At one time, this was a pass-through cabinet to the kitchen. The kitchen side has since been sealed. The stair hall contains an open-string curved staircase, with railing of turned balusters anchored by a turned newel post with a cherry wood cap. The rear staircase, located in the northeast corner of the dining room is closed. However, several turned balusters and a turned newel post are located at the top of the stairs.

Restoration Procedures

The current owners of the Oliver Beers farmhouse, Paul and Frances Witteman, produce cherries and blueberries on 18 acres of land which surrounds the nominated area. The farm is known as Mission Cherry Farm. The Wittemans plan to carry out restoration procedures and visual improvements to the house in a manner keeping with the historic character. Missing detail on the front porch will be replaced, the cinder block chimney removed, and missing caps on the original chimneys replaced. The rail fence is destined to be replaced by a picket fence, and moved a little closer to the house. Period doors will replace newer doors throughout the house. More recent lower story windows will be removed, with authentic styles

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to replace them. The missing exterior window shutters will be returned. Interior restoration will involve the conversion of the middle upstairs bedroom to a bathroom, the passageway in the kitchen/dining room cupboard will be reopened, and the parlor/living room fireplace will be restored. Inappropriate wall coverings throughout the house will be removed.

Maintenance and long-term preservation of the house and site is foremost in the Witteman's plans. The primary archeological sites will be protected until the opportunity arises for professional historic archeologists to continue excavations. Analysis will provide knowledge necessary for an eventual interpretation of the sites to be useful and interesting to both scholars and the public alike. The Wittemans fully support further archeological investigations. The historic archeological and architectural significance of the sites and farmhouse are clear in their understanding.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates ca. 1840-1870 **Builder/Architect** Unknown.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Oliver Beers farmhouse is situated on a slight knoll ten miles north of Salem, Oregon, state capital and Marion county seat. The Willamette River, a main tributary of the Columbia river drainage system, meanders to the north about a mile or so west of the farmhouse. The physical setting is rural farmland and orchard. The area proposed for nomination comprises 31,335 sq. ft. of the original 640-acre Donation Land Claim of Oliver Beers, Willamette valley agriculturist and stockman. The farm claim was designated an official land unit under the Provisional Government in 1844. Prior to that time, the claim was one section of the original 16-section Methodist mission farm claim which was established by the Reverend Jason Lee in the 1830s. The Oliver Beers farm claim thus dates to the earliest large scale agricultural operation by citizens of the United States in the Pacific Northwest.

The primary nominated features at the Beers site are an archeological component or hospital site (nucleated underneath the farmhouse) associated with the Methodist Mission in Oregon, the privy site, which is associated with an occupation episode at the hospital, and the Oliver Beers farmhouse. The secondary nominated feature is a refuse scatter to the rear of the farmhouse. This area contains fragments of articles which date in time to the 143 year span of habitation at the farm site. The nominated parcel of land has been the historic administrative core area of the farm since the 1830s. As far as is known, the Olive Beers farmhouse (ca. 1870) is only the second structure to occupy this site. The mission hospital (1840) (used only as a dwelling) is believed to be the most likely of the mission farm buildings to have been located here. The hospital apparently continued in capacity as farm-administrator residence up to construction of the Oliver Beers farmhouse. The ca. 1850-1870 date of the privy supports the assumption that the hospital was inhabited during this period.

The Oliver Beers house is locally significant under National Register criterion "C" as an intact example of an 1870s vernacular farmhouse, of which a limited number exist in the Willamette Valley today. The mission archeological site is nationally significant under National Register criterion "A" as a component of the Willamette Methodist Mission. The Methodists organized the first mission to the Indians in Oregon, and in the process, succeeded in promoting American sovereignty in the Northwest region. The mission component is also significant under National Register criterion "B" as a primary property associated with prominent members of the mission community, many of whom achieved notoriety in Oregon's burgeoning government. The mission component and the privy site are both significant under National Register criterion "D" since each has yielded and has yet to yield important historical data on a past lifestyle through material culture studies.

The Willamette mission archeological component symbolizes the presence and activities of the Methodist missionaries in Oregon. The Methodist mission, spearheaded in 1834 by Reverend Jason Lee, was the first mission established in the Pacific Northwest, and for a time was the largest single missionary operation in the world. The mission headquarters on the Willamette fostered numerous subsidiary stations throughout the Columbia river basin. The Methodist missionaries were the wellspring of church organization on the west coast. In addition, the missionaries were a strong force in the settlement and orderly development of

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bewall, Douglas A.

1982 Archeological Testing at the Willamette Mission Hospital Site. A Thesis submitted to Oregon State University Department of Anthropology, Corvallis, Oregon. (See continuation sheet).

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .72[±] Acres

Quadrangle name Mission Bottom, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	4	9	8	2	6	5	4	9	9	0	8	6	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 area proposed for nomination encompasses .72[±] acres and is contained within the 18 acre Witteman property boundary: beginning at a point that is south (see continuation sheet)

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith A. Sanders and Mary K. Weber

organization Department of Anthropology

date December 1983

street & number Oregon State University

telephone 754-4515

city or town Corvallis

state Oregon

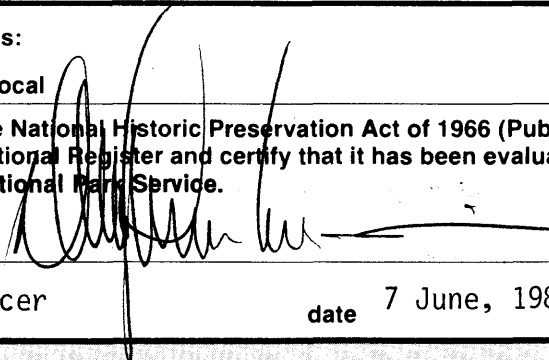
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 7 June, 1984

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

8/1/84

for Helene Byrne
Keeper of the National Register

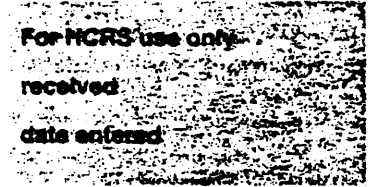
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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the Oregon country by United States citizens. Numerous Provisional government organizational meetings were held at the Methodist mission. The mission granary, on the farm claim in close proximity to the hospital, witnessed several important legislative committee meetings from May 16-19, 1843. On a regional level, the missionaries generated the early development of agriculture in the northwest, and founded both the city of Salem and Willamette University.

Archeological investigations at the Oliver Beers site supports speculation that a structure believed to be the hospital of the Willamette Station of the Methodist Mission was once located here. Further archeological excavations may confirm this assessment and shed light on the nature, extent and integrity of the site. Questions can be answered on the type, date and source of recovered material items. In addition, patterns of discard, deposition and human behavior can be deciphered. In conjunction with the 1982 archeological research completed at the mission headquarters (one mile to the west), the hospital component represents a significant study for early Oregon archeological research. Implications exist for regional studies focusing on cultural associations through artifact comparisons, establishing trade networks, etc. The potential for increased knowledge on early Oregon lifestyle is straightforward.

The mission hospital (1840), a two story frame building with double piazza across the facade, was reportedly well-built and comfortable. Brick used for foundation work, if indeed that is what the recently discovered brick alignment signifies, points to a conscious effort towards durable construction and promotes the theory that the missionaries possibly produced the first brick of local manufacture in the Willamette valley. Construction of the hospital was supervised by Dr. Elijah White and directed by former ship carpenter William H. Willson between the years 1838 and 1840. These New Englanders invariably considered contemporary east coast architectural style during their work. The building was to be the first American hospital in the northwest (to serve settlers, Native Americans and mission personnel), but never formally attained this function. Instead, the hospital has achieved status as the first frame building connected with the mission settlement, and in turn, the American settlement period in Oregon.

Important individuals associated with the mission, who also achieved prominence in state and local government affairs, lived in the compartmentalized hospital. Included are George Abernethy, mission secular agent and later Provisional Governor of Oregon (1845-1849), the Reverend Gustavus Hines, minister, explorer and author of Oregon history, Dr. Ira Babcock, mission doctor and Provisional government Probate Council member, and Alanson Beers, mission blacksmith and farm administrator, member of both the Provisional Government Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of the Oregon Institute (Willamette University) and later, wealthy real estate developer, agriculturist and stockman. Alanson Beers bought the mission farm claim in 1844 and resided in the hospital until his death in 1852. Oliver Beers, Alanson's son, was born there in 1845.

The excavation of the privy provided additional evidence that a building previously existed at the site of the Oliver Beers farmhouse. The ca. 1850-1870 date range implies an occupation after Alanson Beers death. However, only the top portion of the privy was excavated. Articles in the lower portion could push the date range back, possibly to the

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mission period. A privy could only be used for so long, but many factors such as time-lag on article disposal and varying discard patterns must be taken into consideration. Further archeological investigations would be a logical next step in order to establish a tightly-dated episode of use. Research would also provide an archeological study in these areas: one, types of articles in use during an established time period (important for comparative studies), two, disposal patterns, three, implications on diet, wealth, personal taste, and lifestyle, and four, generalized research on the length of time a privy was normally used, and studies on preservation and decay rate in a privy atmosphere.

The Oliver Beers house is an intact example of a vernacular farmhouse. At this time, examples of this type dating from the 1870s are limited in number. The Beers farmhouse is significant as a relatively rare, intact representation of its type and date in its original, unaltered setting. Its presence on the site of the Willamette mission hospital establishes a cultural association to the historic period in Oregon's development. Oliver Beers' connection with the farm site sporadically spanned almost 70 years. Original outbuildings have vanished since Oliver Beers sale of the farm in 1913, however, the farmhouse has not been physically compromised to any great degree. The integrity is good except for the replacement of lower story windows (1920s) and the loss of certain gothic detailing on the portico. The house has retained the original exterior paint scheme - white body with green trim. Large, old maple trees and bedding plants enhance the house and yard, bordered by a white rail fence.

The three primary nominated features, mission hospital site, privy and farmhouse, are all related in space but not necessarily in time. They are culturally related, however, by a farming tradition and family generation ties. Archeological and architectural investigations confirm a continuum of occupational history at the site from the 1830s to the present. The nucleus of the farm site, which is the nominated area, represents a significant era of early Oregon settlement and agricultural development.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

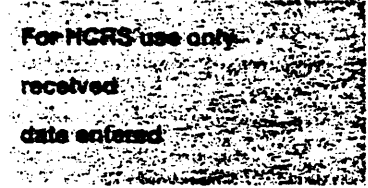
NOTE: The following information is derived from a document by Sanders and Weber entitled "The Beers Farm: An Historical and Architectural Perspective of a 19th Century Farm Site in the Willamette Valley", 1980.

Oliver Beers built a farmhouse for his bride in about 1870 on a parcel of land significant in early Oregon settlement history. The occupational history of the site dates to the 1830s at which time the Methodist church established a foothold in the Pacific Northwest. A mission to the Native Americans was located in 1834 along the east bank of the Willamette river, ten miles north of present-day Salem. The primary concern of the missionaries was the christianization and education of the indigenous aboriginal population in the area.

Once the mission was deemed a success, increased personnel were required to fill positions at the settlement. The arrival of settlers in the summer of 1837 prompted the missionaries to extend their landholdings one mile southeast to higher ground. There were several reasons for this expansion. Undoubtedly the site would be less prone to Willamette

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river floods. Also, the missionaries were intent on increasing their landholdings to provide subsistence for an expanded settlement, and there were plans to construct a community hospital.

Dr. Elijah White and his family were one of the first of the party of newcomers to arrive at the settlement. The White's promptly started construction on a house at the new site:

There was some difficulty in accomodating the newcomers, but they were obliged to enter the house (main mission house) with the old inmates, already numerous. This enlarged the family to sixty members, and made Mrs. White anxious to remove to their own house, which they did in a few days, although it was not in a fit condition for inhabitants. There was no chimney in it, and but roof enough to cover a bed, a few loose boards for a floor, and one side was entirely unenclosed. As nearly all their cooking utensils were yet at Ft. Vancouver, they were obliged to boil the meat and potatoes in a tin kettle, in the open air. However, the chimney was soon built, and as there was no suitable stone within several miles, the hearth was made of clay and ashes, which, after drying, became measurably, though not perfectly hardened. But one of Mrs. White's greatest domestic privations was, that she could never wash her hearth, as in this country, for, even by sweeping, it would have to be removed every two or three months. In a few days the roof was completed, the house sided, and their dwelling made very comfortable.

Margaret Smith Bailey, who also arrived at the mission in 1837, described the physical setting of Dr. White's house:

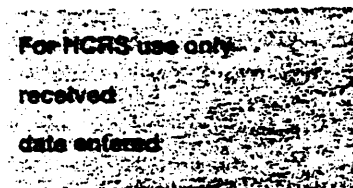
Dr. White has a fine blockhouse situated upon a pleasant and extensive prairie, with a delightful evergreen grove of fir trees upon one side, and the agreeable variety of valley, hill, maple and cottonwood, and deer, wolves, snakes, etc., upon the background.

The White's entertained prominent visitors at their home in the late 1830s. Amongst the first were Chaplain and Mrs. Herbert Beaver, stationed at Fort Vancouver:

They were much pleased with everything around them, especially the indoor arrangements, as might be inferred from the lady's exclamation on first entering the house-- 'Why, Mrs. White,' said she, 'how nice this is; it looks as though a white woman's hands had been here. This is the first white woman's house I have been in since my

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arrival in this country'.

Dr. Marcus Whitman, Presbyterian minister at Wailaptu made a visit, and so did Dr. John McLoughlin (Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Ft. Vancouver) and his wife: Bringing with them beds, bedding, tea, coffee, sugar, bread, cakes, cheese, and not even the wine was left behind".

The missionaries completed construction on a hospital in the spring of 1840. The completion date coincided with the arrival of additional personnel at the mission settlement. Thus, the hospital apparently was never used as such since it was needed for living quarters. Dr. White made a note of circumstances surrounding the construction of the hospital. The following letter was written in the spring of 1838:

(Jason Lee) wished me to begin an outfit for a hospital now about to be erected on the mission premises, for the benefits of the mission proper, the settlers of this country, and the perishing Indians of Oregon. Our hospital is to be 50 feet in length, and two stories high, to be put up by a good carpenter and finished in a durable and workmanlike manner, and I wish it to be most distinctly understood, that what is proper in New York or Boston, is needed here".

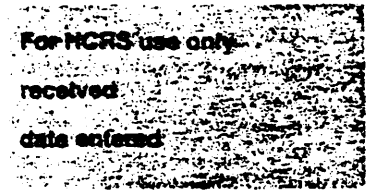
The piecing together of facts concerning construction of the hospital suggests the building was a two story, 50 foot long frame structure, possibly box system, with 1 inch thick floor boards, weatherboard exterior siding and a double piazza across the front facade. Dr. White, who oversaw construction, ordered a substantial amount of weatherboards, planking and inch boards from Ewing Young on April 4, 1839. Workmen were hired to erect the building under the supervision of carpenter William H. Willson, who had arrived with the 1837 mission reinforcement. Willson was a former ship carpenter from New Hampshire. The fittings and hardware used in construction may have been brought from the east with the arrival of missionary personnel, purchased from the stores at Fort Vancouver, or possibly various items were handwrought by mission blacksmith Alanson Beers. Dr. White requested in early 1838 the following items for use in the hospital once it was completed and ready for patients: "30 comforters, 80 pairs of cotton sheets, 70 dollars worth of ticking, 8-10 quilts, 80 pairs of pillow cases, bed gowns, and hundreds of yards of flannel or calico".

Controversy surrounded the construction of the hospital. Jason Lee, mission superintendent, was absent from the mission premises from 1838 to 1840, the precise dates of hospital construction. Reportedly, upon his return to the settlement, Lee looked unfavorably upon the cost involved in building the hospital, which perpetuated a disagreement between Lee and Dr. White. According to one source: "It was his (Lee's) opposition to the expenditure of Dr. White that incensed that gentleman against him." However, Mrs. White expressed a differing opinion as to the disagreement between her husband and Lee, and noted that Lee:

...was greatly pleased with the hospital etc. Everything seemed to move to mutual satisfaction till the

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late reinforcement (1840) reached the mission premises, some ten days after Mr. Lee's arrival. Then as the hospital was new and clean and the old mission house (on the bank of the Willamette river) so infested with vermin that one of the sisters picked from her dress 73 bedbugs only by sitting during divine service, they all seemed anxious to get a place there, and such as could not get there begg'd to be admitted into our house (Dr. White's house), and this I believe was the real cause of the first uneasiness with Mr. Lee after his return for all at once he appeared disburbed and morose and this was much increased when my husband in kindness sold them a cow, horse or anything else to make them comfortable. "...soon after as our family numbered nearly twenty and only two rooms, I felt the want of a kitchen exceedingly and prevailed on my husband to ask Mr. Lee's permission to put up one or provide for one of the families before winter set in, but he would do neither..."

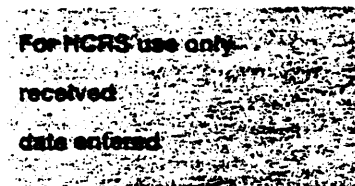
Reverend Gustavus Hines was among the reinforcements who arrived at the mission settlement in 1840. His families' stay in the hospital lends credence to the fact that the building was used for a dwelling soon after its completion. On his arrival, Hines noted:

Here we arrived in safety on the 16th day of June, 1840, and were cordially welcomed by the missionaries on the ground, and made as comfortable as their circumstances would admit. Remaining two days in the family of Rev. David Leslie, I then took possession of a small room in a house about one mile from the station, built for a hospital, where we again commenced keeping house, and where I designed my family to remain until I had performed an exploring tour through the country of the Umpquas."

Though the missionaries received many prominent visitors at their establishment, one of the more important was Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, Commander of a U.S. Exploring Expedition to the Pacific. Included in an extensive survey submitted to the government was a geographical, natural and physical description of the Willamette valley. The document supplied valuable information for use by intended 1843 Oregon country emigrants. Wilkes visited the mission settlement in 1840 and provided the only known physical description of the hospital: "The hospital is now used for dwellings by some of the missionaries. It is perhaps, the best building in Oregon, and accomodates at present four families: it is a well-built frame edifice, with a double piazza in front."

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George Abernethy and his wife were one of four families (with the Hines') living in the hospital. Abernethy served as mission steward upon his arrival at the mission settlement in 1840. Later he became governor of Oregon under the Provisional government from 1845 to 1849, and eventually became a prominent Oregon City merchant. Wilkes provided a hint of the interior space at the hospital while he was visiting the Abernethys:

Mr. Abernethy and his wife entertained us kindly. He is secular agent of the mission. Order and neatness prevail in their nice apartments, where they made up very comfortable, and gave us such hospitality as we should receive at home. It seemed an out-of-the-way place to find persons of delicate habits, struggling with difficulties such as they have to encounter, and overcoming them with cheerfulness and good temper.

Wilkes observed two log houses in close proximity to the hospital. One was undoubtedly Dr. White's house. Dr. White served as physician at the mission for three years. In 1840, according to his own account, he resigned due to difficulties with Jason Lee. However, by 1842 he returned to Oregon in the capacity of sub-agent of Indian Affairs for the U.S. government.

The other log house Wilkes mentioned belonged to Dr. Ira L. Babcock. Dr. Babcock resumed Dr. White's duties as mission physician. A former resident of New York, he was included among reinforcements to the mission in 1840. During a meeting which was organized to form a government in the Oregon country (held on February 18, 1841 at the main mission house), Dr. Babcock was assigned Supreme Judge with probate powers covering the years 1841 to 1843. At one point, between 1841 and 1844, Dr. Babcock moved his residency to the hospital.

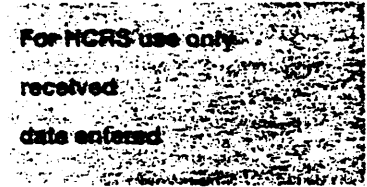
The mission granary, built in the vicinity of the hospital, functioned as a multi-purpose building--granary, schoolhouse, church and briefly, on May 15, 1843, as a legislative hall to prepare laws for the newly organized Provisional government in the Oregon country. The frame, vertical board structure measured 16 by 30 feet, with only the upper story used as a granary. Though it is not known when the granary was built, possibly it was contemporaneous with the hospital.

In 1841, the mission farm fell under the management of Alanson Beers, a blacksmith and farmer. Beers, who arrived at the mission with his family in June of 1837, originally had a blacksmith shop and residence near the main mission headquarters. Once he moved to the new site, Beers may have been living in the hospital with the Hines family and the Abernethy's. The mission farm, under Beers' administration, was a fairly productive operation. According to Jason Lee:

I was told that Broth's Hines, Abernethy, and others sat down in a room to estimate the expenses of the farm in the meantime, and there made up their conclusions; but when the farmer (Beers) and myself

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looked into it, we thought it had more than cleared itself. This last year (1843) the farm will make considerable money. A barn has been built, the farm well fenced in, and we have become accustomed to work it. Bro. Beers is selling out to the people. He manages the farm, and is as good of man to work as you will find anywhere. When he first began he was not a farmer, but has now got used to it. He is one of the Executive Committee, at the head of the Oregon government.

Lee is referring to results of the Provisional government meeting held at the granary on May 17, 1843. An Executive Committee of three was formed to act as a council in "cases of emergency", in addition to the Legislative Committee. The Methodist mission was represented by Alanson Beers, a "good, honest, faithful, and intelligent Christian man, acting with heart and soul with the interests of the settlement and the American cause."

Alanson Beers, born on May 19, 1808 in Fairfield county, Connecticut, was married to Rachel Beardsley on November 17, 1830. A call for a blacksmith at the Oregon Methodist mission prompted Beers to embark with his wife and three children to the Oregon country in 1836-7. A physical description of Beers was noted by Dr. and Mrs. White on the trip over:

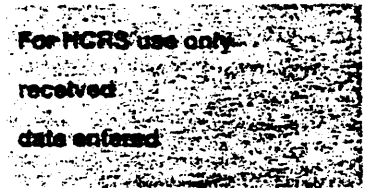
He was a man of low stature, rather dark complexion, thin visage, rigid puritanical manners, and well versed in scripture, ever stoutly insisting on all coming to his landmark, his righteous soul chafing sorely at the last departure of his friends from his golden rule. Being rather bilious, it increased the austerity of his manners, which failed to render him a favorite with either crew or passengers. Mrs. Beers, was of medium height, round favored, philosophical turn of mind, docile, quiet temperament, and perfectly obedient to her husband, as the reader might suppose she had best be, after the above description of him.

Once the Methodist mission enterprise in Oregon was dissolved in 1844, the mission farm was sold to Beers. The following entry was included in the Reverend George Gray's diary on July 11, 1844:

Today we made a bargain with Mr. Beers to sell him the farm which he occupies with the stock, tools, etc., at the appraisal of Messrs. Force and Cook. This sale puts a heavy concern off of our hands. We soon shall be able to dismiss Mr. Beers from the services of the

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mission; whenever the present crops are secured and disposed of by mutual arrangement, his support from the mission is to cease. This family is a large one--wife and six children. His salary and table expenses have been nearly eight hundred dollars a year. I gave him out of his purchase one thousand dollars as an equivalent for his claim on The Board to be returned to the place of his former residence in the states...This mission farm of Mr. Beers has done the best of any of our farm business here...

Beers' mission farm purchase became an official land unit under the Provisional government with a survey conducted by Jesse Applegate in 1843. The claim became an official Donation Land Claim in August, 1853 with an identical metes and bounds notation: Certificate No. 45, Notification No. 234, Claim No. 38, 640.85 acres in Township 6 South, Range 3 West, Willamette Meridian. The 1843 and 1844 county census records reveal Beers owned 70 horses, 60 "neat" stock, and 7 hogs. Four hundred acres of farm land and orchards were developed.

Beers' wife Rachel died in Oregon on September 14, 1851. Beers married Sarah S. Smith on February 19, 1852 in Oregon City. Alanson Beers died on February 20, 1853, leaving behind a substantial amount of real estate and personal property. Probate records from his estate reveal he owned a wealth of material items, though it is not apparent whether entries in these listings are referring to the farm complex, or to Beers' various houses and projects in the city of Salem.

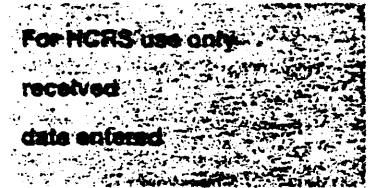
Upon Alanson Beers' death, J.S. Parrish (a blacksmith who arrived at the mission in 1840) was appointed executor of Beers' estate. Reverend Thomas Pearne, agent of the Methodist Mission Board, was appointed guardian of the Beers' children. Apparently Parrish converted Beers' property to his own use and auctioned off, in the mid-1850s, a substantial amount of Beers' personal possessions. Parrish was challenged by Pearne in a court-suit, though to no avail.

The Beers children included Sally Ann, Eleanor, Benjamin, Joseph, Abigail, William, Oliver, Jonathan, and David. Oliver was born at the farm complex on April 10, 1845. At the age of eight he lived with his uncle Charley Craft and his family, and then stayed with the Reverend and Mrs. David Leslie (1840 mission arrivals) for two years. Oliver went to the Oregon Institute in Salem for his schooling, then worked for three years on the Linn county farm of his brother-in-law Jesse Parrish. In 1862, when Oliver was 17, he leased the farm complex, still under Josiah Parrish's jurisdiction, for three years. In 1863, the patent for Alanson Beers land claim was granted to his children. Oliver noted years later the circumstances surrounding his acquisition of the farm claim:

When I was 20 years old (1865), I began paying for the farm. Each of us children had a seventh interest

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in it. The farm was appraised at \$3500. To buy the shares of the other, I had to pay my six brothers and sisters \$500 each. I had the farm paid for by the time I was 25 (1870).

Oliver married 16 year old Margaret Myers on July 7, 1869. Margaret had come to Oregon previously with an emigrant party. The Beers' children included Lyndon, Daisy Belle, Arthur Custer, Ivan Clifford and Eugene Murray.

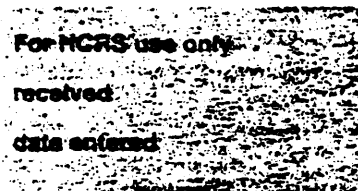
Oliver Beers acquired fulltitle to the original 640 acre Donation Land Claim in 1873. He kept most of his agricultural land in wheat production and tended livestock. The farmstead included the farmhouse, barn, chicken coop, smokehouse, various outbuildings used for tool and equipment storage, and outhouses and wells.

By most indications, Oliver Beers built the farmhouse at the mission hospital site in about 1870. Though previous historical research indicates the possibility that the Beers house dates to the hospital, or that a major Willamette river flood in 1861-62 destroyed the hospital, no conclusive information to support these hypothesis has been found. Reportedly the hospital was razed sometime prior to construction of the Beers house. Oliver Beers may have dismantled the hospital and incorporated salvageable construction materials for use in his new house.

Oliver Beers sold his 640 acres with farm group in 1913 to the Ladd and Bush bankers, a Salem based firm. Since 1913, a succession of owners and renters have lived in the house. In 1973, Paul and Frances Witteman purchased 18 acres of Beers' land claim, and the farmhouse.

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Sanders, Judith A. and Mary K. Weber

1980 The Beers Farm: An Historical and Architectural Perspective of a Nineteenth Century Farm site in the Willamette Valley. Paper submitted to Philip Dole University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts, Eugene, Oregon. Copy on file, Oregon State University, Department of Anthropology, Corvallis, Oregon.

Sanders, Judith A., Mary K. Weber and David R. Brauner

1982 Willamette Mission Archeological Project: Phase III Assessment. Report Prepared for the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. Department of Anthropology, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

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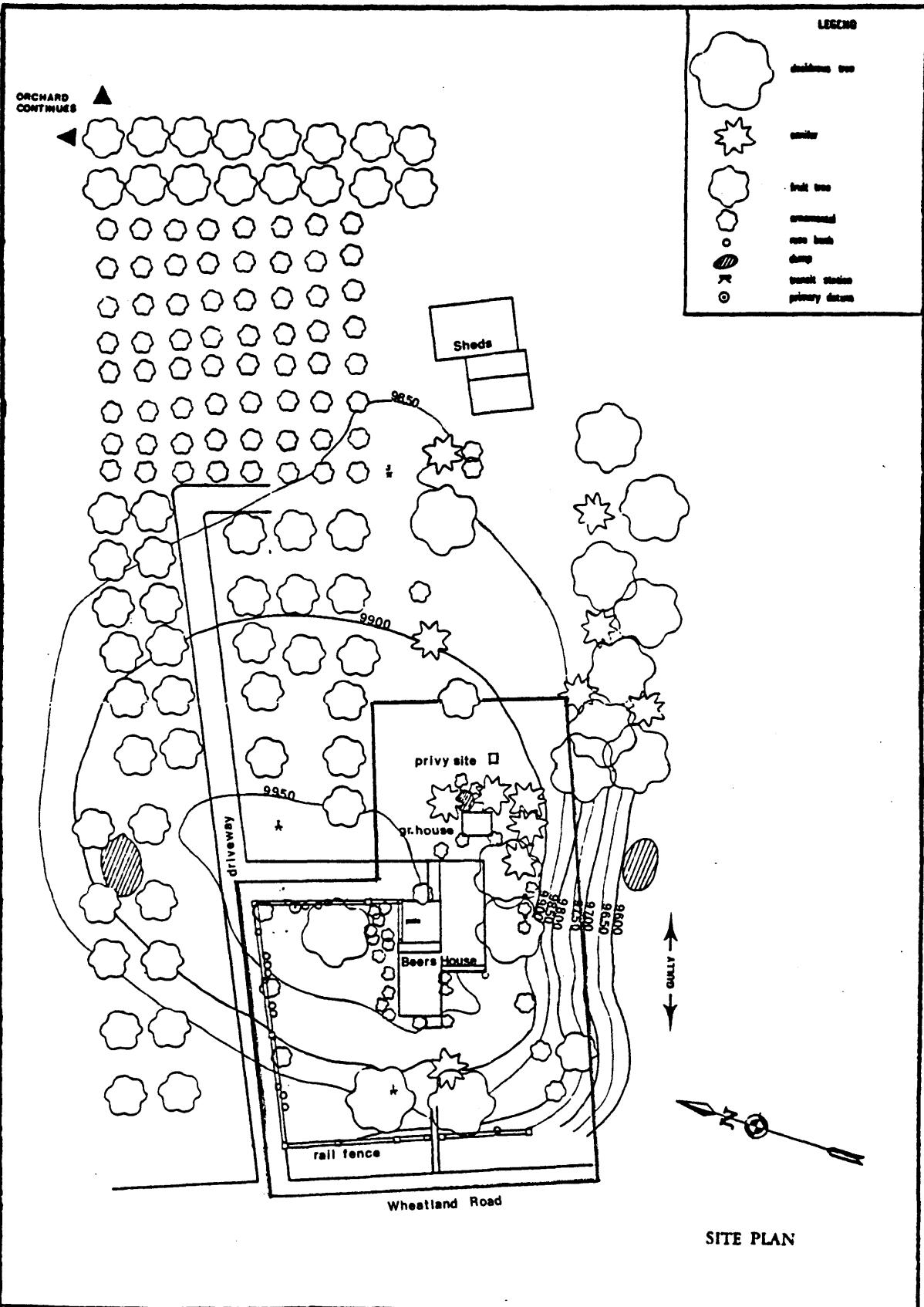
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34° 32' East 20.15 chains from the most westerly corner of the Alanson Beers Donation Land Claim No. 38 in Township 6 South, Range 3 West of the Willamette Meridian in Marion County, Oregon; and running thence South 34° 32' East 9.039 chains; thence North 56° 54' East 19.798 chains; thence North 32° 58' West 9.036 chains; thence South 56° 54' West 20.045 chains to the point of beginning, being situated in the Alanson Beers Donation Land Claim in Township 6 South, Range 3 West of the Willamette Meridian in Marion County, Oregon. The nominated parcel of land is contained within the southwest corner of the property boundary and is bounded to the west by Wheatland road, to the south by a gully, to the east by an orchard and gravel auto-parking area, and to the north by a gravel driveway (see attached site plan).



LEGEND

	deciduous tree
	shrub
	fruit tree
	ornamental
	evergreen
	shrub
	small shrub
	primary forest

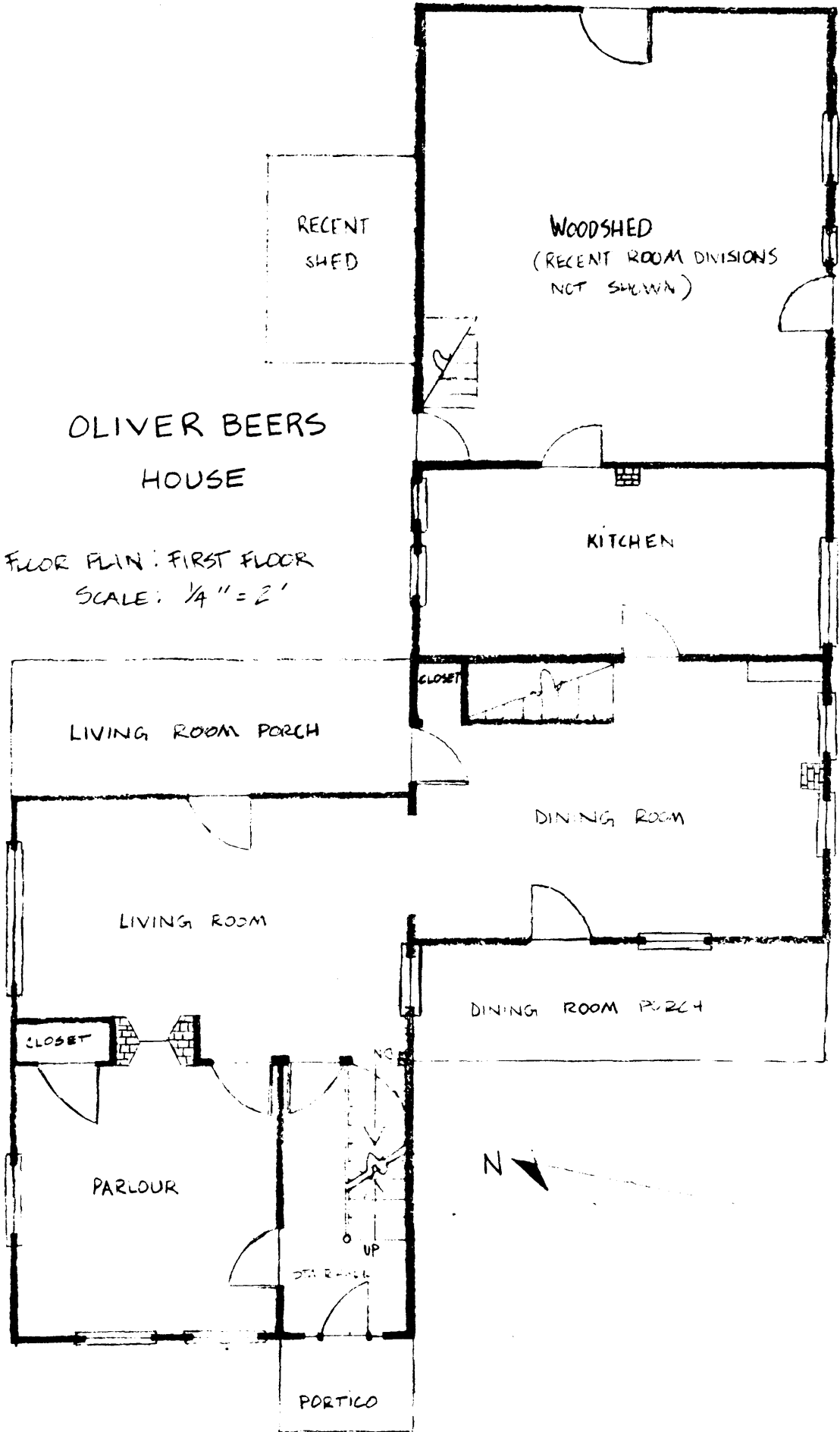
DESIGNED AND DRAWN BY
J. LEE
J. SANDERS
M. WEBER
 20 000 100

SCALE OF STRUCTURE
OLIVER BEERS HOUSE
 T65 820 SECTION 36 IN BIRCHARD

NOMINATED AREA:
 .72± acres

OLIVER BEERS
HOUSE

FLOOR PLAN: FIRST FLOOR
SCALE: 1/4" = 2'



OLIVER BEERS HOUSE

FLOOR PLAN: SECOND FLOOR

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 2'$

