

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

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

For NPS use only
received FEB 22 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Williams, George H., Townhouses

and/or common The Lawn

2. Location

street & number 133 NW 18th Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of First Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

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 type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Nancy Tanner, Trustee

street & number 2160 NW Flanders Street

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

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Recorder's Office

street & number 319 SW Washington Street, Room 211

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981-1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Portland Planning Bureau

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 August 1922

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The George H. Williams Townhouses were built about 1883 as a two and one-half story, three unit Victorian townhouse. Each unit was approximately 25 feet wide by 50 feet deep with a rear wing 15 feet wide and 25 feet deep. The overall appearance of the building, especially since later additions filled in the space between the rear wings, is of a 75 foot square mass. The bulkiness of the building is relieved by the projection of bay windows, porches, rear wings and the variety of roof forms and angles covering the bay and dormer windows, wings and porches. The building is of wood frame construction and sheathed with shiplap. The first floor is elevated approximately five feet above ground level and detailed with a water table. The first and second stories, sheathed horizontally in shiplap, are separated by a simple molding. The third floor, contained mostly under the roof, is separated from the second story with a simple molding and sheathed vertically with shiplap.

The front facade of the building, facing 18th Avenue, is divided vertically into three individual facades, the two end units being a reflection of each other. Each of the end units has a two-story bay window counter-balanced by a doorway at the first story and a single one-over-one, double-hung window above. Although the two doorways of the end units were made into windows when the building was converted to a boarding house, the center doorway to the middle unit is intact. The middle unit is entirely different in appearance from the end units; it is recessed between them and instead of a bay window, is detailed with a group of three windows at the first and second stories, counter-balanced by a doorway and a single window above. The window and doorway are detailed to appear to be part of a tower. The tower is capped with a truncated gable but from early photographs, it appears that the tower may have had a gabled roof. The roof, which is very steeply-pitched hip, is pierced by dormer windows which roughly correspond to the fenestration pattern on the lower stories. All of the dormer windows have one-over-one, double-hung sashes and are roofed with truncated hipped roofs. It appears from old photographs that these truncated hips as well as the rest of the multiple roof peaks were detailed with finials and cresting.

The front porch of the center unit also differs from the end units. The end units have small porches which stretched across half of the unit's facade and directly correspond to the original entrances of these units. The porch of the center unit is recessed, as is the facade, and stretches across the entire width of the unit. Although the stairs and much of the original railings are no longer intact due to weathering and the building's change of use, remnants of the original, simple turned railing exist on the southern unit and could be used as a pattern to restore the missing parts. The porch posts are chamfered and detailed with stick style brackets. As previously mentioned, the end units are decorated with two-story bay windows, polygonal at the first story with a projecting square bay at the second story. The lower bay has three one-over-one, double-hung windows and the upper has five one-over-one, double-hung windows. The bays are detailed with panel containing gothic points, diagonals, plain surfaces with molded edges, and quatrefoils. Additionally, the gable ends, from which the bays project, are detailed with king posts and braces, and cutwork panels with trefoil patterns.

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The bay windows on the front facade of the end units are repeated on the side elevations of these units. Again, the side elevations of the two units are reflections of one another, except for minor alterations which have occurred over time. Generally, the sides of the main body of the building are divided into four bays. The first towards the front of the building is devoid of fenestration except for a dormer window which was probably added in about 1917. The second bay contains the two story bay window. The third bay is detailed with a pair of one-over-one double-hung windows at the first and second stories and a dormer of similar design at the third floor, and the fourth bay is detailed with a grouping of two one-over-one double-hung windows with a panel of siding in between them at the first and second stories and a dormer at the third floor. The dormer window is not centered over the lower windows on the fourth bay. The rear wing has two one-over-one double-hung windows evenly spaced at the first and second stories and a double windowed dormer above. All of the windows at the first story have hoods with brackets similar to the porch detailing. The roof eaves are also supported by these brackets wherever the corner boards and the window trim meet the eaves.

The rear facade of the center unit has been most effected by changes, however, the end units are intact with small porches at the first story and one-over-one double-hung window directly above the back doors. The porches are simply and beautifully detailed with chamfered posts, stick style brackets and molded panels. Most of the changes which have occurred on the exterior of the building, especially its two streets facades, are relatively minor in nature and could be accurately restored based on existing remnants and photographic documentation. Although the rear facade of the center unit has been changed more extensively over the years, most of the alterations are in keeping with the original exterior because original materials were reused in its construction.

This process of reusing original materials has also occurred on the interior of the building in its conversion from three townhouses to 32 housekeeping rooms. Although this has tended to make the alterations compatible in nature, it makes deciphering the original organization of the individual townhouses more difficult. One of the most interesting examples of this is the the main staircase which is built from materials from the original staircases. Although the interior configuration of the individual rowhouses is difficult to understand, much of the interior detailing remains intact; for example, fancy turned woodwork framing the doorways, the paneled doors, metal fireplaces and surrounding tile work, and a second-story staircase with beautifully curved handrail, turn balusters, newel posts and decoratively cut stringer base trim.

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"After the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition, the character of Nob Hill began a slow evolution of change. The civic success brought about by the fair was the primary reason that Portland's population grew from 90,000 in 1900 to nearly a quarter of a million by 1910. As a result of this population explosion, the commercial center of Portland underwent a construction explosion. This expansion was soon felt in the northwest section of the city, and began to infringe upon the residential character of Nob Hill. In the same manner that Couch had been forced to move from his earlier homes, the property in Nob Hill was becoming too valuable for single family structures to occupy an entire block.

Increasing real estate values in proximity to downtown was strengthened by the same streetcars that had previously carried people to the fair through Nob Hill. These car companies developed such good service that the northwest was becoming an ideal place for apartment development. Unheard of in Portland before 1904, apartments soon appeared next to the Glisan, 21st Avenue and 19th Avenue car lines. As a result, the northwest section of the city developed into the state's largest and most densely populated district."²

The history of TheTownhouses and the Williams residence are illustrative of these neighborhood changes. In 1910, when Williams died, the block including both structures was left to his daughter Ellen. In 1914, she sold the family's splendid residence and it was promptly demolished and replaced by a 54 unit apartment building on the southeast corner of the block and by a garage with a parking capacity for 100 cars on the southwest corner of the block. When she married in 1917, title of "The Guillaume" transferred to her brother Ted. He converted it to housekeeping rooms and christened it "The Lawn," the name by which it has been known ever since. The name undoubtedly derives from the large lawn and fountain which still fronted the building in 1917, a rare amenity in an area where every square foot of real estate was being sought for development.

"The Lawn" and its plot of grass remained unchanged until 1922 when the property was sold to Apartment Investment Company ending more than 50 years of Williams family ownership. Evidently, the building with 32 units was both economically viable and structurally sound, for the owners not only elected to retain the building, but to move it to the northeastern corner of the block where it stands today on the site of the lawn from which it was named. On its former site, another apartment house with 32 units was built, completing development of the block.

Little remains of the grace and elegance of the original neighborhood, although "The Lawn" has changes little in the years since 1922. Sandwiched between apartment houses and industrial buildings, the surviving structures are now cherished reminders of Portland's exuberant youth.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	c. 1883	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George H. Williams Townhouses, commonly known as "The Lawn" apartments, were built about 1883 as a two and one-half story, three unit Victorian townhouse. It is one of the few remaining structures representative of what, at the turn of the century, was Portland's most exclusive neighborhood - Nob Hill. Although the building was a townhouse built for income-producing purposes, architecturally it was as grand and elaborate as many of the surrounding single-family residences. Its original owner was George H. Williams, whose long and illustrious career as a U.S. Senator, U.S. Attorney General, and Mayor of Portland, made him one of the city's most prominent citizens. The building is exceptional in the Nob Hill area because of its age, configuration, and style of architecture, as well as its association with Mr. Williams.

The Townhouses were built about 1883, upon George Williams' return to Portland from Washington, D.C., on the northwest portion of the block bounded by 18th, 19th, Couch and Davis Streets. The block was located in Captain John H. Couch's Donation Land Claim which was 640 acres in extent and was generally bounded by the Willamette River, 21st, Ankeny and Thurman Streets. As the city spread west in 1868, Couch extended his original plat westward to 23rd Avenue, paving the way for development of what was one of Portland's most elegant and fashionable places to live at the turn of the century. The area, which became known as Nob Hill, extended roughly from 17th to 21st Streets, and from Burnside to Marshall, with 19th as its thoroughfare. Portland's local gentry of the Victorian era displayed their wealth and prosperity by erecting extravagant residences in the most up-to-date styles, and by 1910, magnificent examples of every form of 19th century architecture filled the district. "At first there were simple box-like structures only once removed from a New England farmhouse. Later were built the Italianate villas whose Florentine rustication was reproduced in wood. Then came the great piles of the Gothic Victorian era, heavy with jigsaw, stained glass, and stick-style ornament. Some of them were faintly related to the French chateaux, others to the turreted Germanic castles. After the mansard fronts came the heavy stone and shingle Richardsonian style, and then the handsome Georgian mansions." "The Lawn" was constructed as a three unit Victorian townhouse by Williams as an income-producing property. It was unusual in the Nob Hill area not for its Victorian architecture, but for its configuration as a townhouse. Most other income-producing properties in the area, such as the Trenkman Residences (1704-1734 NW Hoyt and 526 NW 18th), were built as single-family detached residences. It may be that the inspiration for a townhouse came from Williams' experience of living in the east. In 1883, Williams also constructed a stately residence for his own family, designed by Joseph Sherwin in the Chateausque style, on the southern half of the same block. In 1890, the townhouses were converted to a boarding house, and Mrs. Rose Guillaume was hired as the building manager. "The Guillaume", as it was known for more than two decades, continued to be a distinguished address, with many of its tenants being listed in the Portland Blue Book and Social Register.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation 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	4	3	4	0	5	0	4	1	0	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

Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Block 170, Lots 5 & 8, Multnomah Co., Oregon.

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 Judith Rees and John O'Hara, Consultants

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date September 11, 1983

street & number 813 SW Alder Street, Suite 800 telephone 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 2/16/84

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

Entered in the National Register

date 3/22/84

 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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"The Lawn" is associated with George H. Williams, one of Portland's most prominent citizens, locally and nationally, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition to representing Oregon in the U. S. Senate, Williams served as U. S. Attorney General under Ulysses S. Grant, and was Grant's choice for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, although eastern opposition ultimately blocked his appointment to that post. Late in his career, Oregon's "grand old man" emerged from semi-retirement to become Portland's mayor at age 79, crowning more than fifty years in public life. Williams was at times controversial, and not universally well liked, but he accomplished much and distinguished himself as one of the most influential and powerful leaders of his day (See excerpts from Scott's History of Portland and McColl's the Shaping of a City).

Born in 1823 in New Lebanon, New York, Williams studied law and was admitted to the New York bar in 1844. Moving to Iowa the same year, he was elected Judge of the First Judicial District in the first election held after formation of the Iowa State Government. As presidential elector, he canvassed the state in 1852 for Franklin Pierce. After Pierce was elected President, he appointed Williams Chief Justice of the Territorial Court of Oregon which brought the 30 year old judge to the remote west in 1853. He was reappointed by President James Buchanan in 1857.

Williams was active in opposing the introduction of slavery to Oregon and helped build the Union Party in 1861. Elected to the U. S. Senate in 1864, he quickly established himself as an outstanding law maker, offering such well known bills as the "Tenure of Office Act" which prevented Republicans from being turned out of office by Andrew Jackson, and the "Reconstruction Act," under which the south was rebuilt after the Civil War.

After one term in the Senate (1865-1871), Williams was appointed U. S. Attorney General, and served three years in the Cabinet of President Grant. In 1874, Grant nominated him to succeed Salmon P. Chase as Chief Justice, but in the wake of heated controversy, Williams withdrew his name.

Williams returned to Portland in 1881 and resumed the practice of law. He was elected to the boards of three major banks, Dekum's Commercial National, Markle's Oregon National and Northwest Loan and Trust Company, all of which failed in the financial panic of 1893.

During his later years, Williams was a frequent and favorite speaker at numerous ceremonies, festivals and banquets. He maintained close ties to the Republican Party, and in the 1902 effort to unite the party, was coaxed from retirement to become Portland's mayor. It appears that the 79-year-old Williams was something of a figurehead as mayor and charges of bribery, corruption, and conflict of interest led to his narrow defeat in his 1906 re-election bid. His loss to Harry Lane marked the close of a colorful chapter in Portland's history. The era of powerful business, social and political connections had given way to popular government; Portland's wide open, freewheeling days were over.

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When Williams died in 1910 at the age of 87, the pages of the Oregonian were filled with tributes to the "Grand Old Man" and his 67 years of public service. The judges on the State Supreme Court compiled and published a substantial volume of eulogies in praise of their former colleague.

Today, a wealth of material on Williams and his life is readily available, yet his name is largely forgotten. The few tangible reminders of him include "Williams Avenue", a street named for him in Portland's Albina District, and "The Lawn" apartments at the northeast corner of 18th and Davis in the Nob Hill area of Portland. "The Lawn" apartments are, therefore, exceptional not only as one of the few remaining examples of the Victorian grandeur of the Nob Hill area, but as a reminder of George Williams, one of Oregon's elder statesmen and Portland's first citizens.

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¹ Nineteenth Street, Richard Marlitt, p. 5.

² Potential Historic Conservation Districts, Bureau of Planning,
pp. 131-132.

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Bureau of Planning, Potential Historic Conservation Districts,
Portland, Oregon, 1978.

Deady, Matthew P., Pharisee Among Philistines, Oregon Historical
Society, Portland, Oregon, 1975.

MacColl, E. Kimbark, The Shaping of a City, Georgian Press,
Portland, Oregon, 1976.

Marlitt, Richard, Nineteenth Street, Oregon Historical
Society, Portland, Oregon, 1978.

Scott, Harvey, The History of Portland, D. Mason & Co.,
Syracuse, New York, 1890.

Also the following sources:

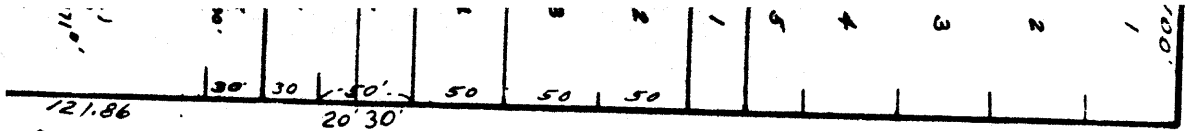
Oregon Historical Society photograph and Williams manuscript
files.

Oregonian Newspaper microfilms at Multnomah County Library.

Polk's Blue Book and Social Register, 1891-1916.

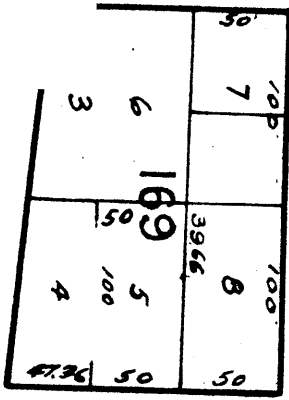
Samuel's City Directories, 1880-1884.

Sanborn Insurance maps at Oregon Historical Society.

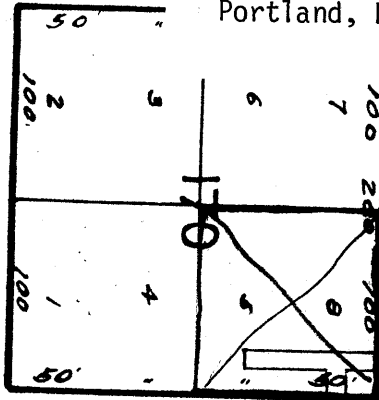


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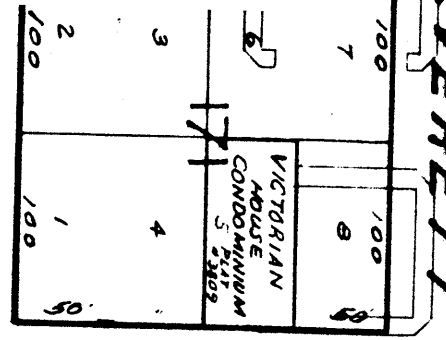
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133 NW 18th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



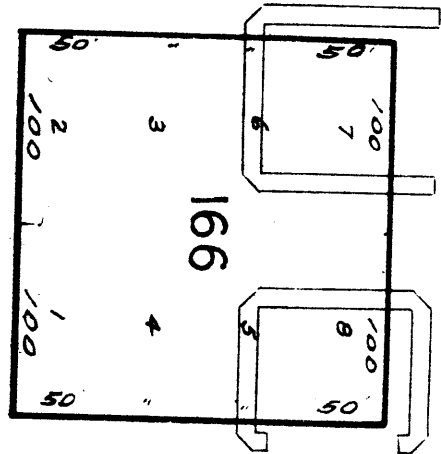
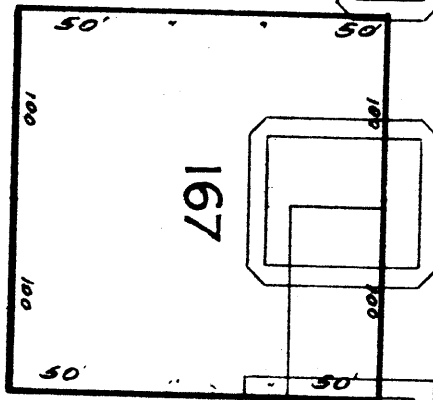
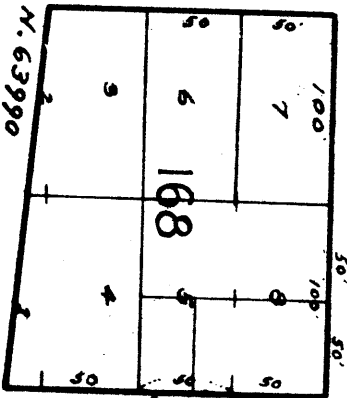
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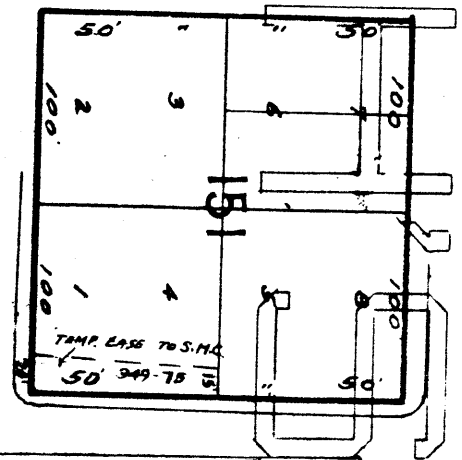
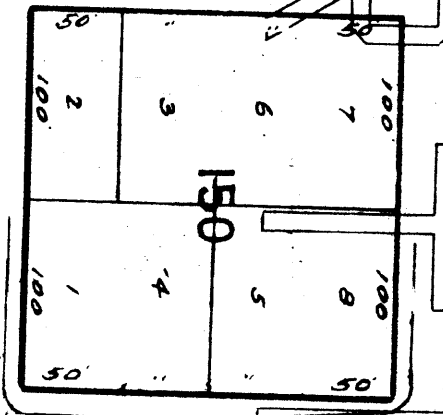
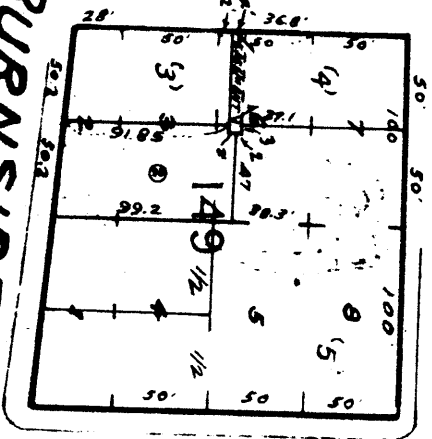
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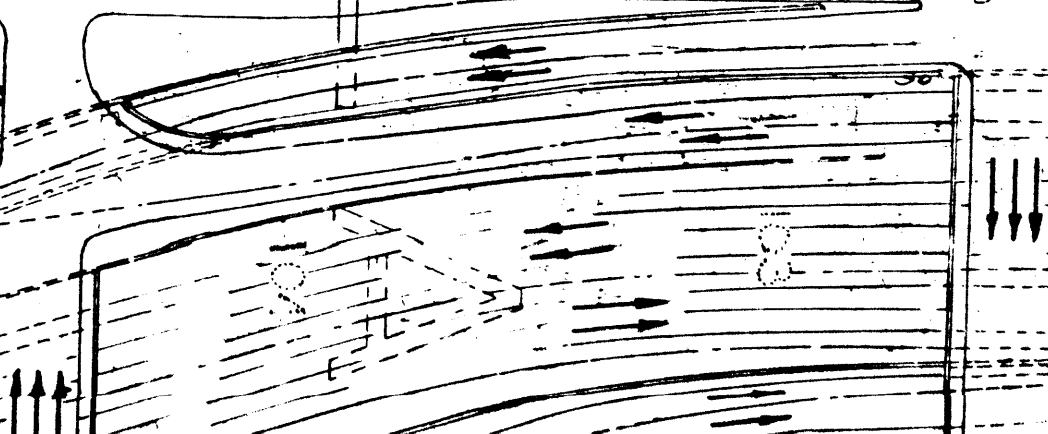
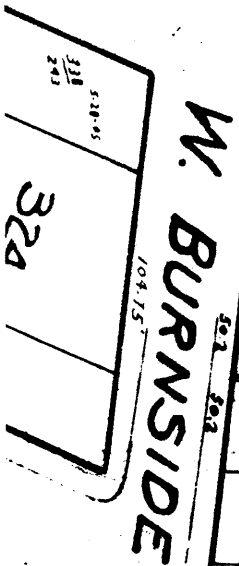
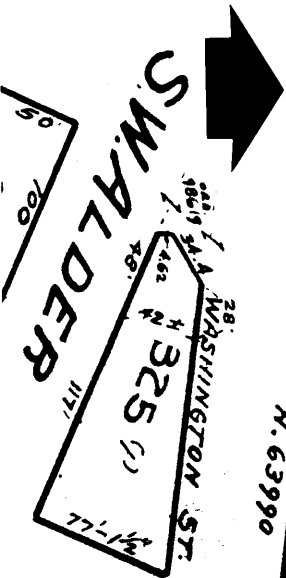
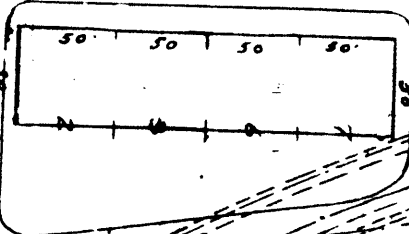
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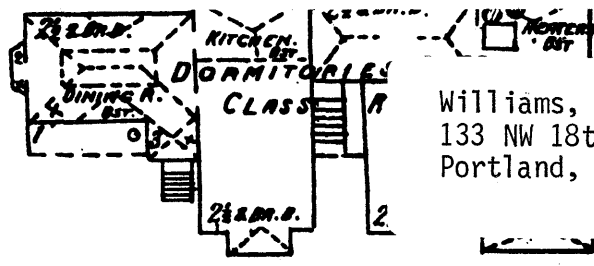
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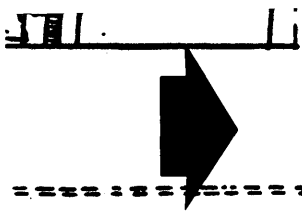


Sanborn Map, 1889
corrected to 1895.



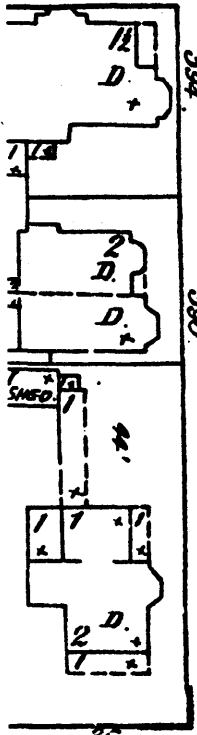
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133 NW 18th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon

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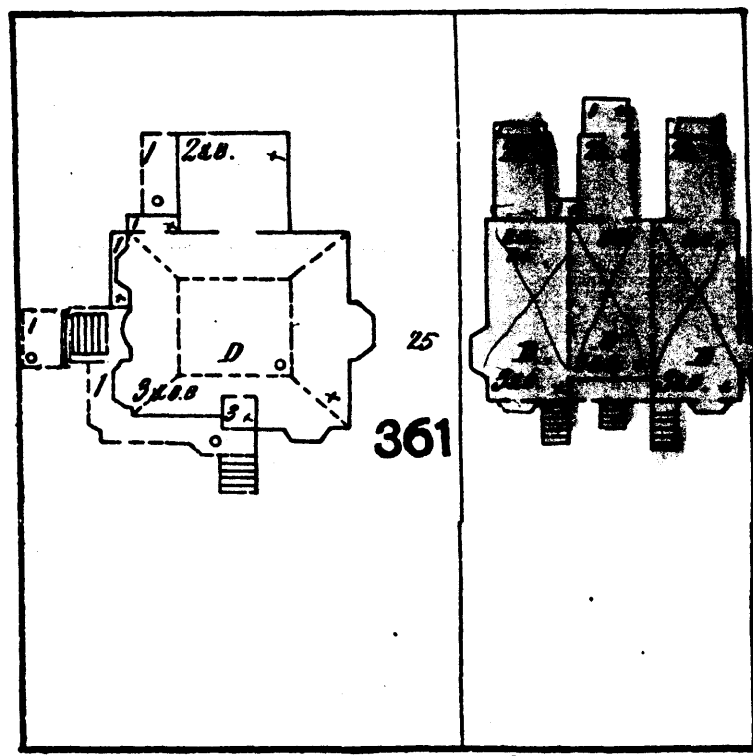


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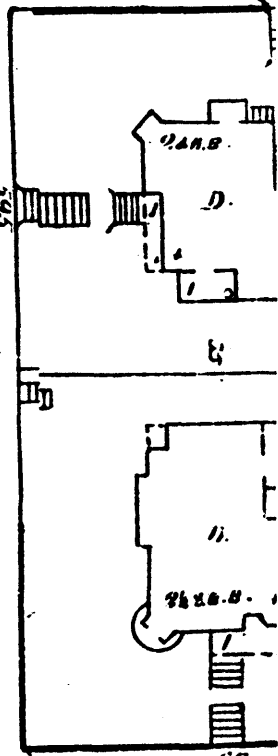
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STREET



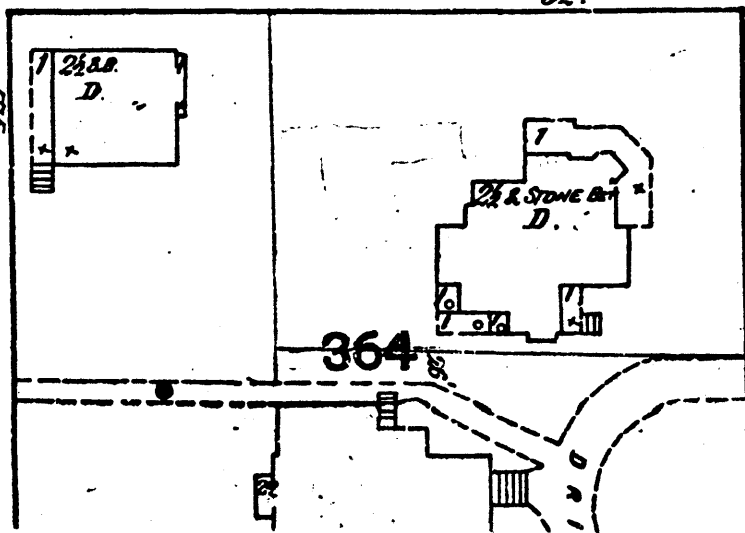
DAVIS ST. 60'
FORMERLY D. ST.



EIGHTEENTH

FORMERLY N. 17TH
52.

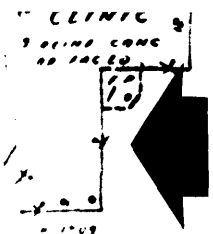
COUCH FORMERLY C. ST.



Sanborn Map, 1908
corrected to 1955.

N.W. 18TH AV.

Williams, George H. Townhouses
133 NW 18th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



360

N.W. DAVIS

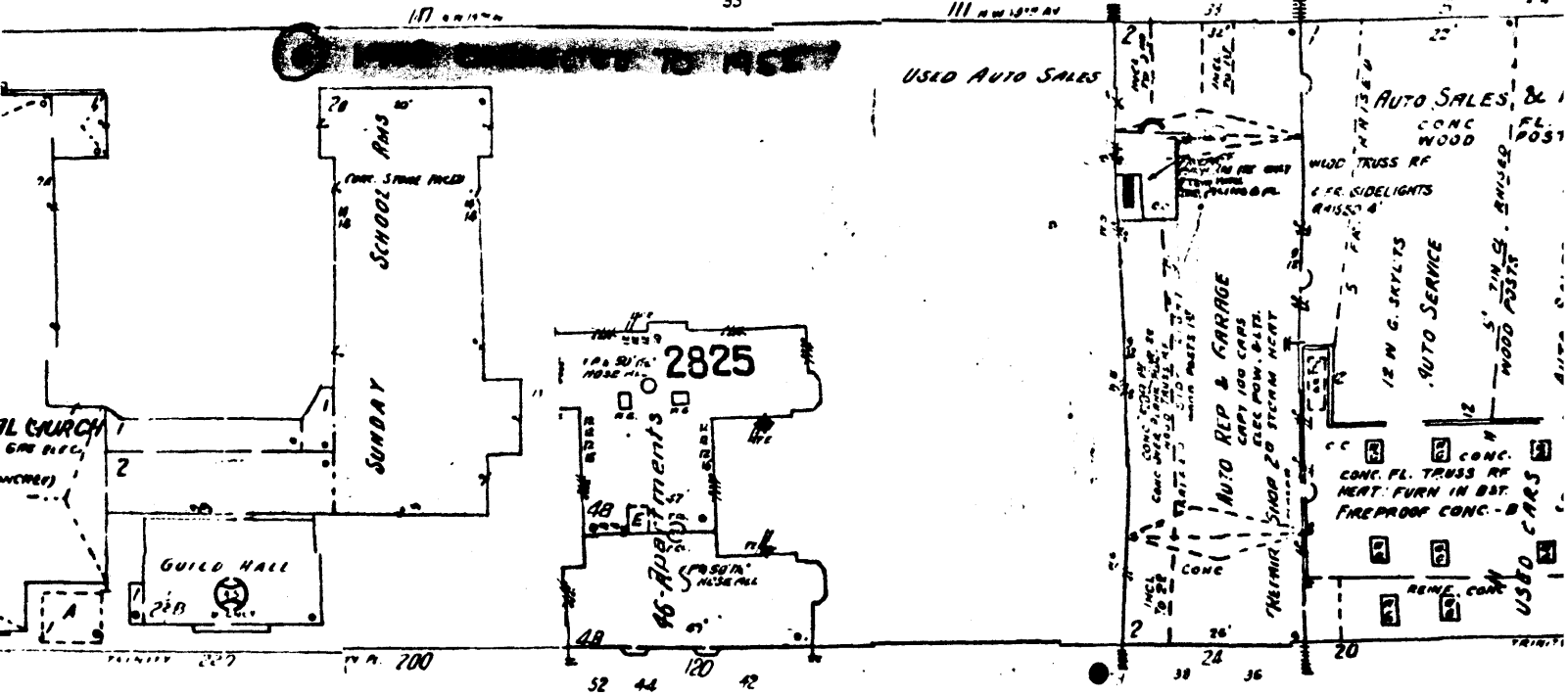
N.W. COUCH

32 Apartments

CONC. BODY WKS. & PAINT'S
GARAGE CAP'Y 60 CARS

N.W. 19TH AV. (ST. N.)

AV. (ST. N.)



N.W. TRINITY PL. (N.W. 19TH PL.)

