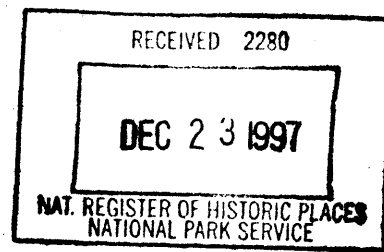


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1610

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name AGEN WAREHOUSE  
other names/site number Olympic Cold Storage Warehouse, 1201 Western Avenue Building

2. Location

street & number 1201 Western Avenue not for publication  
city or town Seattle vicinity  
state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Date 11.14.97  
Signature of certifying official  
David M. Hansen, Acting State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet  
determined eligible for the National  
Register.  See continuation sheet  
determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
removed from the National Register.  
other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 1/23/98  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Property Name Agen Warehouse

County and State King, WA

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

No. of Resources within Property

- |                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| contributing                        | noncontributing          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                     | buildings                |
|                                     | sites                    |
|                                     | structures               |
|                                     | objects                  |
|                                     | Total                    |

Name of related multiple property listing:  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Functions or Use**

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade/Business

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade/Business

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial Style

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation see narrative description

walls brick

\_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property Name Agan Warehouse

County and State King Co., WA

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1910-1947

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1910

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

John Graham, Sr./ Purdy & Henderson, Engineers

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property Name Agan Warehouse

County and State King Co., WA

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/0	5/4/9/7/9/5	5/2/7/2/4/8/3	/	/	/	/
2	/	/	/	4	/	/	/

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)**

The Agan Warehouse occupies the south half of the block between University and Seneca Streets and between Alaskan Way (formerly Railroad Avenue) and Western Avenue.

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)**

The boundary is based on the city block and plat historically associated with the property.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jeffrey A. Roush, Partner, and Dianne M. Cole, Executive Assistant

organization Third and Spring LLC, c/o Martin Smith Real Estate Servies date 10-8-97

street & number 1109 First Avenue, Suite 500 telephone 206-682-3300

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98101-2988

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)**

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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The Agen Warehouse occupies the south half of the block between University and Seneca Streets and between Alaskan Way (formerly Railroad Avenue) and Western Avenue. Originally built to house John B. Agen's expanding butter, egg and cheese business, the four story building of 1910 was increased by two additional floors the next year. Both the original design and the addition came from the architectural offices of John Graham Sr.

Structurally, the warehouse sits on concrete footings, which in turn are located over timber pilings. It is constructed with brick bearing walls and heavy timber posts and beams sized to reflect the diminishing loads of the upper floors. The posts range in thickness from 18 x 18 inches on the first floor to 10 x 10 inches at the sixth floor. Architectural drawings for the 1911 addition indicate that lower floor posts had to be reinforced with added thickness and that some lower floor posts were used in new construction and replaced by thicker posts. This would indicate that the building was not originally designed with expansion in mind and major structural changes had to be accomplished in order to support the additional two floors.

The floor heights range from 19 feet 6 inches on the first floor to 10 feet 6 inches at the upper 3 floors. The sixth floor height varies from 10 feet 6 inches at the north and south end walls to 12 feet at the center because of the pitch of the roof. Oddly, the second floor, at 12 feet, and the third floor at 14 feet 3 inches, were intended to have been reversed according to the original designs so that the taller level would have been located below. From the standpoint of window scale in relation to other floor, this would have made more sense than the present arrangement. The change that occurred in construction might be accounted for partly by the uses to which each floor was subject and partly to some structural reason of which there are no clues in the drawings. Another oddity is the planned slope of the floors -- six inches lower at the east end of the building than at the west. This may have been designed to provide a method of drainage, though there are no indications of that in the original plans and

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sections. Furthermore, the Seneca Street side of the building had originally been designed with first floor level 18 inches above the level of the rest of the floor.

According to the drawings, the first floor fronting Western Avenue contained rental space, office and services for employees. The bulk of the first floor was taken up with candling rooms, where eggs were held up to lights for inspection, a creamery, a testing room, and a refrigerated room. The 19 foot 6 inch height was broken up by a small mezzanine, greatly expanded in 1911, containing offices, toilets, and lockers. All other floors provided open warehousing space, some of which may have been leased to the Fischer Brothers, whose sign appears on the principal facades below the topmost floor in a 1911 photograph.

There were three staircases, one on each of the three streets, and a central freight elevator on the Seneca Street side of the building when it was constructed in 1910. Modifications that occurred in 1911 included 1) removal of the freight elevator and installation of a new elevator just south of the center of the building on the west side (this required construction of a new brick pier between the elevator shaft and the stairwell); 2) lowering of the floors of the two south bays of the building's first floor by 18 inches to correspond with the floor level of the rest of the building; 3) additional offices, toilets, and lockers were provided on an expanded mezzanine level; 4) a number of window openings were bricked in and window sash and frames removed or replaced elsewhere; 5) decorative concrete and tile spandrels identical to those in upper floors replaced plainer brick spandrels below third floor windows; and 6) along the west side of the building, the ground floor was lowered and new granite sills were installed.

The building has come under several ownerships and warehousing uses since its construction. But the most notable interior changes occurred when the building was converted for use as a cold storage facility in 1953. This required insulating floors and walls, installing refrigeration equipment, partitioning the warehouse floors into rooms,

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pouring concrete floors over the original fir floors on the first floor, removal of roof skylights (indicated in the 1911 roof plan) and covering with wood or filling in nearly all window openings in order to maintain constant cold temperatures within the building. This last modification is certainly the most visible change to the facades, which, otherwise, remain surprisingly intact and unchanged from their appearance in 1911.

The Western Avenue and Seneca Street elevations are the two principal facades of the warehouse and are, consequently, more decorated than the simple brick facade adjacent to the railroad tracks and housing the loading dock. The facades honestly reflect the structural principles upon which the building was constructed. Window bays of varying height and width are separated by brick piers and defined by decorative brick and tile spandrels in the older section and, in the additional floors, by galvanized metal panels that cover vertical fir spandrels. There are eleven equal bays along the Seneca Street facade and seven unequal bays -- three on either side of a narrow central window bay -- on the Western Avenue facade. Lower floor brick has been laid in alternating projecting string courses to give the appearance of masonry pilasters. The oversized window and transom area along the first floor (now filled in) have Roman brick flat arched heads, providing them with a fan or sunburst appearance. Originally, these areas provided for two retail bays on the north side of the Western Avenue entrance and one major retail outlet on the south corner -- probably the Agen company display showroom. At the center of the Western Avenue facade is a cast concrete arched entrance portal. Its beaux arts styled treatment is simple, with a corbel keystone and a garland motif. On either side of the arch is a shield embossed with the letter A for Agen. Brick spandrels with cement rectangular borders frame basket weave laid brick rectangles. At the center of these panels, green, black, blue, and yellow tiles and brick form diamond patterns.

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The building's brick piers are treated as pilasters with capitals of herringbone laid brick that form vertical swags. The 1910 cornice of the building is composed of a brick corbel table in the spandrels projecting out to the pier plane. Alternating triangular and oval shields fill the spaces between the corbels -- simplification of the original detail drawings, which show four varied shapes suggested for these shields. The flared brick parapet created by projecting string courses was removed in 1911 to accommodate the additional two floors. Along the west part of the Seneca Street side and at the rear or Alaskan Way side of the building, loading docks are placed for receipt and shipment purposes. Protective canopies over these docks are not original.

*Building Exterior:*

The renovation of the former Agen building in Seattle's Waterfront Place neighborhood was completed in July of 1986 at a cost of \$5.8 million.

Originally constructed as a storage facility for butter, cheese and eggs, the building itself had been focused inward and was uninviting. For seven decades all of the exterior windows were sealed with masonry. The task of the development team was to bring excitement to a structure that was cold and uninviting.

Architectural modifications included complete renovation of the building shell and core and development of designs for the addition of a new penthouse office space and a roof deck area. All of the office spaces and the roof deck area were designed to capitalize on one of the building's greatest resources, the panoramic views of Puget Sound.

The penthouse, set back from exterior faces in compliance with the new view corridor ordinance, was constructed with light gauge metal framing and finished on the exterior with painted Portland cement stucco. The modulation of the penthouse facade mimics rhythm of pilasters at the east, south and west elevations. New aluminum window frames match the mullion spacing of the wood windows in the brick facades. No glazing has received a reflective coating.



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All exterior windows were replaced with new wood frames and wood sash. Working from historic photographs (see enclosed), mullions, muntins and window modules were designed to match the original patterns. Triple glazing for upper floor windows on the west side of the building eliminates noise from the adjacent Highway 99 viaduct.

Generous awnings have been installed at street level. While not part of the original design, the detailing and profile reflect the historic character of the building. The awnings were designed to accentuate the building's original stone arch entry while providing weather protection for pedestrians. There are no archival photographs of the original storefront windows. Design of the new system was derived from the construction drawings of John Graham Sr., architect for the original warehouse, and from the renovation architect's knowledge of storefront patterns from the period. The original transom areas over the storefronts have been preserved. New mullion and muntin profiles match the upper story windows.

The Agen Warehouse, built in 1901 to accommodate John B. Agen's pioneer butter, egg and cheese business, is recognized as a regional landmark. Agen, known as the father of the dairy industry in the Northwest, is memorialized by the two embossed "A" shields appearing on either side of the entry archway. The green, black, blue and yellow exterior color scheme on new architectural elements was derived from the original decorative tiles in the brick spandrels.

*Building Interior:*

Floor heights range from 19 feet 6 inches on the first floor to 10 feet 6 inches at the upper three floors. According to original construction drawings, the first floor fronting Western Avenue contained a rental space, a creamery, a testing room and a refrigeration room. The 19 foot 6 inch height was broken up by a mezzanine containing offices, toilets and lockers. All other floors provided open warehousing space. There were three staircases, one on each of the three streets, and a central

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freight elevator on the Seneca Street side of the building when it was constructed in 1910.

The building has come under several ownerships and warehousing uses since its construction. The most notable interior changes occurred when the building was converted for use as a cold storage facility in 1953. This required insulating floors and walls, installing refrigeration equipment, partitioning the warehouse floors into rooms, pouring concrete floors over the original fir floors on the first floor, removal of roof skylights and covering with wood or filling in nearly all window openings.

To the greatest degree practical, the 1986 renovation work restored the interior finishes of street level retail spaces to their original Agen-warehouse condition. Brick walls, timbers and cast iron structural connections were exposed. Upper floors were converted to appeal to the market for unique, "Class A" office space in downtown Seattle.

The new lobby is identified by a stone archway in the Western Avenue facade. The greatest design challenge was to devise an entry using the charming, but diminutive original archway, that created a scale and identity appropriate to the prospective upper floor office uses. The solution retains the brick and stone facade while the storefront recedes from the sidewalk creating a wider and more gracious entry. Visitors and tenants move through the archway to the front door and enter a grand procession terminating at the elevators. Interiors are imported Chinese marble tile floor, painted drywall ceiling and walls. Interior colors are coordinated with the exterior material pallet.

Offering views of Elliott Bay, the Olympic Mountains, and the Seattle city skyline, the building's six stories and penthouse contain 90,000 sq. ft. of quality office space and 13,000 sq. ft. of street level retail.

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The Agen Warehouse was the headquarters of the pioneer dairy wholesaler, John Bernard Agen (1856-1920), who created a business of international scope and importance. Brought up in the dairying section of New York State, Agen established a one man store in Iowa, which supplied a large shipment of butter and eggs to a friend in Seattle after the Great Fire of 1889. Encouraged by the sale, Agen came to Seattle to investigate and decided to establish a business in butter, eggs, and cheese. Before his dairying business was well developed in the Northwest, he got a large portion of his supplies of butter and cheese from New York State.

Agen has been called the father of the dairy industry in the Northwest. In the early 1890's, scores of dairymen of the White River valley, Stanwood, Mount Vernon, and other places now famous for milk production were advanced money and credit by Agen to get established. In 1890, Agen himself founded one of his first creameries at Mount Vernon, receiving at first only 800 pounds of milk a day. By 1914, it was not infrequent to produce a quarter of a million pounds of milk per day. Besides the Mount Vernon creamery, Mr. Agen built and operated creameries in Yakima, Centralia, Enumclaw, O'Brien, Burlington, Dungeness, and Oak Harbor and built and operated cheese factories at O'Brien and Dungeness.

As the outfitting point of the Klondike gold fields, Seattle became a significant merchandising location. Packaging perishable food for shipment to the interior of Alaska was a problem. Agen's butter, packaged in tin with the slogan, "Agen's Best Has Stood the Test," soon became the best known brand in the North. While meeting the almost overwhelming demand from the Yukon, Seattle's rapidly growing trade also had to be accommodated. For a long period, Agen's production plant was never locked and two crews worked around the clock. When the Klondike rush began to abate, the gold strike in Nome repeated the rush on a somewhat less feverish scale. The result was the establishment of branch stores in Dawson, Skagway, Valdez, Nome, and other Alaska points and in the principal cities of Washington state.

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The development of the Washington dairying business, largely Agen's doing, did away with dependence on Eastern supplies of butter and cheese. A complete creamery was established in the company's building at 1207 Western Avenue. Milk from all over Western Washington was received there for churning. Under its founder's shrewd judgement and executive ability, the John B. Agen Company became one of the foremost organizations of its kind in the country, marketing throughout the United States and making shipments to foreign lands. He located cold storage plants in Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota, and conducted trade with the Orient, South America, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The plant in Mount Vernon manufactured evaporated milk, a line that proved more profitable than butter and eggs. The butter, egg and cheese business was sold to the C. G. Bradner Company (a firm established at Columbia St. and Western Avenue in 1886) in 1914. This left Agen free to devote his time entirely to the manufacture and sale of "Mount Vernon" milk at the original location and with processing plants at Mount Vernon, Ferndale, Seattle, Tenino. This was so successful, that it brought an offer to purchase from the company's only important competitor, the Carnation Company. In 1916, Agen accepted the offer.

In addition to his dairy business, Agen was a director and vice president of the National Bank of Commerce (now Rainier Bank) and the Scandinavian American Bank. The project for the erection of St. James Cathedral reputedly originated at his table, where he had gathered a group of friends soon after Bishop O'Dea was transferred from Nisqually to Seattle.

Agen owned considerable real estate in the central business district, particularly along Western, Second, and Third Avenues. Directly across from the warehouse loading docks at the foot of University Street was Pier 6 (now Pier 56) -- the John B. Agen dock. It provided him with a facility for his Alaskan trade in butter, eggs, and milk. Architect John Graham, originally in partnership with David Myers and, after 1910, on his own, became Agen's designer for a number of projects apart from the Agen

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warehouse on Western Avenue. These included the "reconstruction" of a brick building at 1418-22 Second Avenue (the J.B. Agen Building) to provide for three stores on the ground floor (1911), and a two-story, terra cotta-faced retail building on the southeast corner of Sixth Avenue and Pike Street (1922) (now demolished and the site of the Sheraton Hotel).

John Graham Sr. was one of Seattle's most talented and prolific designers of commercial and office buildings. Arriving in the city at the turn of the century, he established his reputation in association with David Myers from 1905 on in the design of hotels, apartments, and homes, in August 1910, shortly after collaborating on the Agen warehouse, he and Myers dissolved their partnership. Graham went on to design many of the city's distinguished buildings, including the McDermott Building, Second and Union Street (1912), Joshua Green Building, Fourth and Pike Street (1912), Frederick and Nelson Department Store, Fifth and Pine Street (1918), Dexter Horton Building, Second and Cherry Street (1923), the Bank of California Headquarters in Seattle (1924) and Tacoma (1927), the Exchange Building, Second and Marion Street (1929), The Roosevelt Hotel, Sixth Avenue and Pine Street (1930), The Bon Marche, Third and Pine Street (1930), and Fraser-Patterson Department Store, Second and Pike Street (1930).

The Agen Warehouse marked a pivotal point in Graham's career. It was one of his earliest large scale industrial buildings. On the basis of Graham's expertise in the design and engineering of such warehouse and industrial structures, Henry Ford hired Graham in 1913 to design an automobile assembly plant in Seattle. The plant on Fairview Avenue (now Craftsman Press) opened in 1914. While it has similar qualities to the Agen project, it shows a degree of refinement in scale and detailing that the more basic 1910-11 building lacks. Graham was selected as Ford's company architect, designed the Highland Park plant in Detroit and more than 30 assembly plants in the United States and Canada between 1914-1917.

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The Agen Warehouse is a significant example of a prevalent late nineteenth/early twentieth century urban building type. Mills, manufacturing sheds, factories, and warehousing structures were a result of the industrialization of American cities and the development of rail transportation to carry goods from their place of manufacture and production to other areas of the country. Until concrete slabs, steel trusses and posts were refined, the prevalent method of construction for these vast enclosed workshops was the brick bearing wall with heavy timber posts and beams -- essentially the same method that was used for all commercial buildings in Pioneer Square in the 1889-1892 period. A number of early twentieth century warehouse buildings similar in style and materials to the Agen Warehouse have been recognized for their functional honesty and their place in the economic development of Seattle. These include several recently rehabilitated buildings in the Pioneer Square Historic District (Merrill Place, Court-in-the-Square, Heritage Building) and along First Avenue (The National Building). The Agen warehouse compares favorably with these.

The Agen Warehouse is particularly interesting in that its loading docks are adjacent to extant spur lines for railroad freight cars and directly across the street from a shipping facility dubbed Agen's wharf in early city directories. A 1911 photograph shows Pier 6 (now Pier 56) as the John B. Agen Dock. A principal tenant appears to have been the Pacific Net and Twine Company. The location of the warehouse building along former Railroad Avenue with its own docking facility at the foot of University Street provides an understanding of the workings of trade and commerce at a time when the railroad, sail and steamships formed an essential link between the producer or the manufacturer and the distributor, and efficiency was a function of how close the factory and storage facilities were from the freight cars and shipping lines. As trucking became more prominent, factories and warehouses relocated to open areas along highways, incidentally disturbing the developable farmlands immediately to the south and east of Seattle. With the decline of rail services and changes in the uses of the waterfront,

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warehouses of the sort that the Agen building represent became less effective for the purposes, which they were built to house.

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Pacific Builder and Engineer, August 27, 1910, p. 85. Note on dissolution of partnership of Graham and Myer.

Clarence Bagley, History of King County, pp. 728-32. Biography of John B. Agen.

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