

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 15 1977
DATE ENTERED DEC 27 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Joseph Borst House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

302 Bryden Avenue

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Centralia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd - Donald L. Bonker

STATE

Washington

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

53

COUNTY

Lewis

CODE

041

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Centralia - Donald A. Naismith, Mayor

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall Building

CITY, TOWN

Centralia

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington 98531

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Auditor's Office, Lewis County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chehalis

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

September, 1974

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Joseph Borst House stands on the north bank of the Chehalis River in western Washington, on flatlands historically known as Fords Prairie. The Greek Revival mansion was built c.1857 by pioneer Joseph Borst on his 640-acre donation land claim. For many years the house and a cluster of structures around it marked the site of a ferry crossing on the Military Road between Forts Vancouver and Steilacoom. The former Borst homestead lies at the northwest corner of the present day City of Centralia. A portion of the original land claim now forms Centralia's 100-acre Borst Park and includes modern facilities such as baseball diamonds and park offices, as well as the Borst House and blockhouse.

The mansion faces east on Bryden Avenue, a gravel road at the southern-most edge of the park. To the north is an open field which separates the house from the most heavily-used areas of the park. Directly to the south are the banks of the Chehalis. Land to the east of the house, where the Borst blockhouse was originally situated, is landscaped in the form of an arboretum. To the rear of the mansion some modern-day structures have been erected, including a two-car garage and several small sheds. Further to the west is a large metal maintenance shed near the site of the locally-famous Borst barn, built in 1861.

The dwelling house is a two and one-half story frame building with a one and one-half story kitchen wing appended to the rear, or west elevation. A steeply-pitched gabled roof on the main body of the house is oriented in a north-south direction. The structure rests on a foundation of hewn timber posts. The framework of the house is sheathed with two layers of vertical fir planks one inch in thickness. An exterior facing of clapboards on the sides, rear, and kitchen wing is, in all probability, a replacement siding. However, the front or east elevation of the house is faced with original flush-board siding. When the house was acquired by the City of Centralia in 1953, the roof surfaces were reclad with wood shakes. Chimneys from the rear wing and main body of the house have been removed.

Exterior features of architectural interest include porches and various elements of wall articulation. Corner boards with pilaster caps, a moulded boxed cornice with returns, and a broad frieze with moulding at the soffit add dignity and style to the mansion. The present-day shed roof porch and attached deck on the front facade appear to be relatively recent substitutes for an original verandah. An historic photograph clearly shows that the earlier porch extended the full width of the facade. Squared posts supported a tripartite entablature and balustraded deck above. Evidence of the original verandah's position is still visible on the flush-board siding of this elevation. A second porch occurs on the south elevation, protecting the rear entrance to the kitchen wing. It is covered by a shed roof supported on sturdy squared posts with caps.

Much of the distinctive character of the Borst House is attributable to the design of its exterior openings. The front entrance is recessed, with sidelights and a glazed transom. The door itself is grained and has four panels. Fenestration is regular and symmetrical, and consists of six-over-six light sash with the original glazing largely intact. Plain surrounds are decorated with elaborately moulded labels at each windowhead. This detail was consistently used on each facade, including those of the kitchen wing, and constitute one of the more prominent design features of the house. Green louvered shutters with cut nails and handwrought hinges remain in place on two windows to the rear of the house. Historic photographs show that these once existed at each window opening.

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The interior of the Borst House has undergone only minor alterations and has otherwise been well-preserved over the years. The floor plan is a simple one, consisting of a central stair hall and four corner rooms both upstairs and down. The floor area of each room is small in relationship to its ceiling height. Original wide plank flooring is visible throughout the house, although some rooms on the first floor have a three-inch, tongue-in-groove finish. Plaster over hand-split cedar lath covers the walls. Almost without exception, original mouldings and elements of woodwork remain in place. These are wood-grained in a crude but interesting pattern, and varnished. Doors throughout the house, also grained, are designed with two or with four vertical panels.

In the rear kitchen wing, only the appliances and plumbing have been modernized. The most arresting feature of the dining room is a shallow fireplace lined with sandstone quarried in nearby Tenino. The chimney breast projects well into the room and is graced by a carved, panelled mantelpiece with pilasters. A front room which would appear to have served as a formal parlor still exhibits marbled baseboards, with grey and red striations on a cream base coat. To the rear of the parlor, a small bath and dressing room bear evidence of having been originally one space, partitioned at a later date. The original staircase to the second floor, with its fat cylindrical balusters, remains intact in the central hallway. Access to the attic is provided by an exceedingly steep, shallow staircase that projects into a second story room, forming a ladder.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

c.1857

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Jacob Ort, carpenter

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Borst House was constructed c.1857 on the banks of the Chehalis River by western Washington pioneer Joseph Borst. Borst's 640-acre donation land claim, situated directly west of the mouth of the Skookumchuck River, was one of the earliest on Ford's Prairie. The house itself once represented the most imposing of a cluster of buildings erected at an early Chehalis ferry crossing along the Military Road between Forts Vancouver and Steilacoom. Joseph Borst and his wife Mary Adeline Roundtree figured prominently in the white settlement of the Chehalis Valley. As early-day pioneers who eventually prospered and contributed to the development of the area, the Borst name was commemorated in the creation of Centralia's Borst Park. The two and one-half story house is a finely-detailed example of Greek Revival architecture which incorporates certain regional variations. Over the years it has remained architecturally intact and has been well-maintained by present and past occupants.

Both Joseph Borst and Mary Adeline Roundtree arrived in western Washington at an early date. Joseph was born in upstate New York and journeyed west in 1845 to what was then the Oregon Territory. On his cross-country trek he accompanied the Sidney Ford family, for whom Ford's Prairie on the Chehalis was to be named. Borst evidently built himself a small cabin on his arrival, and for several years struggled to survive. In 1848, he joined the Oregon Volunteers who were sworn to avenge the Whitman Massacre, and was stationed at Fort Walters in Waiilatpu. Between 1849 and 1851, Borst prospected for gold in California and British Columbia when he was reputedly held captive for a time by a band of hostile Indians. By August of 1851, Borst had returned to his land on the Chehalis. With Sidney Ford he is known to have attended the Cowlitz Convention which urged the separation of Washington from the Oregon Territory.

Mary Adeline Roundtree came west with her family from Illinois in 1852. After much hardship encountered on the trail and during their first months in the Oregon Territory, the Roundtrees homesteaded on Grays Harbor. After one lonely and uncomfortable winter, the family abandoned the homestead and set out eastward on foot. They spent the remainder of the winter in Olympia, where Dr. Roundtree served as doorman at the meetings of the first territorial legislature. The following spring (1854), the Roundtrees took a donation claim of 320 acres on the Black River, approximately 17 miles southwest of Olympia. Dr. Roundtree became the first postmaster at Union (now Oakville), and later the first justice of the peace and probate judge of Grays Harbor County.

Mary Adeline and Joseph Borst met in 1854 when Borst came to the Roundtree sawmill on Black River for lumber. The couple married that year and occupied Joseph's small cabin on the Ford's Prairie claim. In 1855, they fled with their six-week old daughter to nearby Fort Hennes on Grand Mound in fear of a possible Indian uprising. Although the Chehalis Indians at no time joined in the widespread hostilities, the Borsts and many of their neighbors remained huddled in the fort's cramped quarters for some sixteen months.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Centralia Daily Chronicle. "Borst left imprint on Centralia" - October 17, 1975.

Centralia Daily Chronicle. "Borst early Centralia farmer" - Bicentennial Edition, July 1976.

Smith, Herndon, compiler. Centralia: The First Fifty Years. Daily Chronicle. Centralia, Washington, 1942.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	5,0,1,3,7,5	5,1,7,3,8,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Borst House is located at the eastern end of Bryden Avenue, on the north bank of the Chehalis River, approximately 300 yards west of the mouth of the Skookumchuck River. The property lies within the boundaries of Borst Park in Centralia, Washington.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Florence K. Lentz

ORGANIZATION

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

DATE

April, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-1707

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

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

Jeanne M. Welch

TITLE

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

June 8, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

Robert B. Rettig

ATTEST:

Chuck Adams

DATE

12/27/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

10.22.77

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While there, Joseph assisted regular soldiers from Oregon in the construction of a substantial blockhouse on his own property. The blockhouse was to serve as storage for grain and supplied destined for the White River and Puyallup Indian campaigns. In 1915 the blockhouse was relocated to prevent its being undermined by the changing course of the Chehalis. Though removed from its original riverfront site, it now stands in Borst Park within the boundaries of Borst's original donation land claim.

In the fall of 1856, the Borsts returned to their homestead on the Chehalis. Local tradition holds that Joseph had promised Mary Adeline a new white mansion at the time of their engagement. It is generally presumed that Joseph began its construction soon after their return from the fort. In the meanwhile, the couple resided in the blockhouse itself (during which period their second child was born), and then in an old frame store building situated adjacent to the blockhouse. The old "Coats Store" as it was known, had stood previously in the little community of Skookumchuck, and was purchased complete with merchandise and relocated by Borst onto his own property.

Construction of the mansion was a lengthy project which lasted almost two years. The house was of timbered construction, sheathed vertically with two layers of fir planks one inch in thickness, and faced horizontally with flush boards. Reportedly, the ends of each board of siding were dipped in white lead to insure waterproof corners and joints. A settler of German blood, Jacob Ort, served as chief carpenter. A Dane whose name remains unknown was responsible for the graining of the mansion's woodwork. Lumber for the project was hauled from Tumwater, and window casings and hardware were purportedly shipped from San Francisco. A sandstone fireplace was fashioned in the dining room. When completed, the spacious house with its high ceilings, shuttered windows, verandah and balcony, was known as one of the most handsome along the road from Vancouver to Steilacoom.

The mansion, blockhouse, and store building were not the only structures which distinguished the Borst property. Following a particularly severe winter in 1861, Joseph constructed a barn of massive proportions. The structure was much noted and admired by passersby and neighbors for miles around. The building housed hay, grain, and in bad weather it sheltered the cattle which were driven from east of the Cascades for fattening early each summer. The famous barn remained standing, serving a number of additional purposes over the years, until it was condemned and dismantled in 1969-1970.

The Borst family, which eventually included eight children, continued to prosper materially. An additional 160 acres was soon added to the original donation land claim. A farm on Scammon Creek was purchased for a married son, as well as two farms at Adna and a large ranch in the Boistfort Valley. Borst also acquired substantial ranch land holdings near Ellensburg east of the Cascades. In time, a second Borst home with double bay windows was built in the nearby community of Centralia. With many of their children grown and married, the Borsts retired to this townhouse and leased the farm. In 1922, Allen Borst donated 100 acres of his father's original claim to the City of Centralia for use as a

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park. In time the City acquired the Borst mansion and barn as well. Today the house is occupied and well-maintained by a park employee.

Although the Borst mansion is no longer surrounded by its early, historically significant outbuildings, its physical fabric has been only minimally altered. Among Washington's surviving homes of the 1850's Indian War era, few can boast such spaciousness, such permanent structural design, or such attention to refinements of style and detail. The Borst House is unusual in Washington as a particularly pure example of the Greek Revival style, from its interior mouldings, to its sidelighted front entry, to its massive frieze and corner pilasters. Gothic Revival label mouldings over the windows are a consistent and emphatic exception. The lateral orientation of the steeply gabled roof and the original full-width verandah with deck might be described as regional variations on the Greek theme. The attention which was given to interior finish, especially the grained woodwork and marbled baseboards, is equally remarkable in a house of this time period built in a still-remote location. The Borst House architecturally embodies the pioneer's driving urge to "civilize", soften, and stabilize the wilderness quality of the Washington Territory in the mid 19th Century.