

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Oregon</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Clackamas</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>FEB 12 1974</b>	

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Oregon Iron Company Furnace**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Oswego Iron Company Furnace**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**George Rogers Park** **Oregon First Congressional District**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Lake Oswego** **Representative Wendell Wyatt**

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
<b>Oregon</b>	<b>97034</b>	<b>Clackamas</b>	<b>005</b>

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>Monument</b>
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**City of Oswego**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Lake Oswego**

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
<b>Lake Oswego</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>97034</b>

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Clackamas County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Oregon City**

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
<b>Oregon City</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>97045</b>

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings**

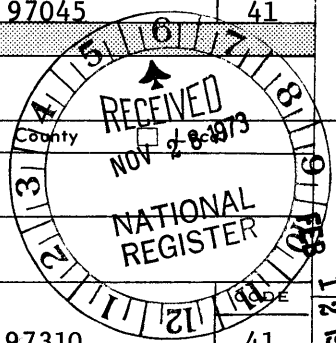
DATE OF SURVEY: **1970**     Federal     State     County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Parks and Recreation Branch**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Oregon State Highway Building**

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
<b>Salem</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>97310</b>

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FOR NPS USE ONLY		

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1865 at Oswego, a small town on the Willamette River six miles south of Portland, H.C. Leonard, H.D. Green, and William S. Ladd formulated plans for the construction of the first blast furnace and iron foundry in the Pacific Northwest. A Connecticut builder, G.D. Wilbur, was employed to erect the furnace in style similar to one at Lime Rock, Connecticut. The company used locally-mined iron ore from Iron Mountain near Oswego and, for fuel, charcoal manufactured on the spot.

In May 1865 ground was broken for the furnace, but the structure was not in operation before August 1867. The furnace was constructed of hewn basalt and was 32 feet high, 34 feet square at the base, 26 feet square at the top. The blowing engines were driven by water power. The construction cost was \$126,000. The first production was begun on August 24, 1867, on which day six tons of metal were poured. The average capacity of this blast furnace was eight tons per day. Two and a half tons of limonite ore dug near the furnace produced one ton of pig iron.

Operating through subsequent years under various names and managements, the furnace was abandoned in 1885. Today the only vestige of the Oregon Iron Company operation is the furnace, which is preserved by the City of Lake Oswego as an historical attraction in George Rogers Park.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1866-1885

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first pig iron produced west of the Rocky Mountains was smelted in the Oregon Iron Company furnace on August 24, 1867. The foundry provided material for the cast iron fronts of the important buildings of the day in Portland and other West Coast cities. Ore was mined from Iron Mountain west of Oswego and was transported to the furnace by oxen, and later by narrow gauge railroad. The operation was fueled by charcoal and water power provided by Oswego Creek.

The Oregon Iron Company of Oswego had an up and down career. Troubles beset the company, forcing frequent closures of the operation. The cost of manufacturing the pig iron was so high that the industry had difficulty competing with Eastern-made pig iron, and ultimately the local operation was discontinued.

In the early days of Oregon's statehood freight rates were high. There was a great demand for steel products, and Oregonians felt that the progress of the state was being impeded by nearly prohibitive rates on rails, sawmill machinery and other heavy hardware. As a consequence, Oregon was the first Western state to urge the mining of iron ore and its smelting and manufacture into pig iron.

In 1862 a blacksmith at Oswego smelted iron ore found in the vicinity of Oswego and made a pick and also made horseshoe nails from the iron he had smelted. This led to the formation of the Oswego Iron Company, with a capital of \$500,000. Its promoters and chief stockholders were William S. Ladd, H.C. Leonard and H.D. Green. On May 13, 1865, at a meeting of the stockholders W.S. Ladd was elected president; H.C. Leonard, Vice-president; and Henry Failing, Addison M. Starr, John Green and Henry D. Green, Directors. G.D. Wilbur of Connecticut was employed to build a furnace at Oswego similar to the one at Lime Rock, Connecticut. In May 1865 ground was broken for construction. In August 1867 the first casting of iron west of the Rockies was made. The following month saw fifty tons of Oswego iron shipped to San Francisco on the ship Montana. By October 1867 the company had manufactured 224 long tons at a cost of \$29 per ton. By 1869, 2400 tons of pig iron had been turned out at Oswego.

After but a few months trouble began to cripple the operation. A dispute over water rights on the Tualatin River was the crowning blow. Operations ceased on April 8, 1869. A group of Eastern capitalists bought the company and reopened the foundry in the spring of 1874. Iron for the foundries of Portland and San Francisco was produced satisfactorily, but a competitive price was not maintained, and once again the foundry closed its doors. To satisfy a judgment of creditors, the properties of the Oregon Iron Company were sold at sheriff's sale in 1877. L.B. Seeley and E.W. Crichton were the purchasers. The pair reformed the Oregon Iron Company, and improvements were

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Blakely, Frances, "Oswego Area's History Full of Romantic Lore," Oregon Journal (January 17, 1956), Sec. 2, p. 1.  
 Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., Dictionary of Oregon History, (Portland: Binford's Mort, 1956) 29.  
 Goodall, Mary, "Markers of the Makers of Oregon History," Clackamas County Historical 1961 (West Linn, Oregon: Clackamas County Historical Society, 1961), 44.  
 , "The Iron Foundry at Oswego," Oregon Historical Landmarks, (Portland: Oregon Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1957) 16-17.  
 Lockley, Fred, "Impressions and Observations of the Journal Man," Oregon Daily Journal, (May 20, 1933), 4.

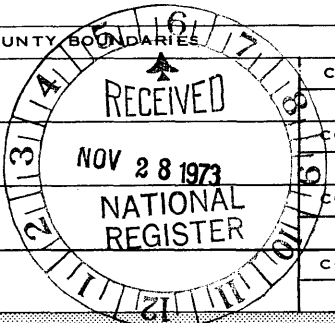
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (Continued)**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . "	0 . "		45 ° 24 ' 40 "	122 ° 39 ' 34 "	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 4.52

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



10/  
526660  
502842  
H

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Paul B. Hartwig, Assistant Park Historian  
 ORGANIZATION: Oregon State Highway Division DATE: October 1973  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
Oregon State Highway Building  
 CITY OR TOWN: Salem STATE: Oregon CODE: 41  
 ZIP: 97310

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:  
 National  State  Local   
 Name: George M. Baldwin  
 Title: Director of Transportation  
 Date: 11/20/73

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.  
Al R. Montonen  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 Date: 2/10/74  
 ATTEST:  
W. J. [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register  
 Date: 2-11-74

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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COUNTY	
Clackamas	
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	FEB 12 1974

(Number all entries)

Oregon Iron Company Furnace

5. Location (Continued)

The Oregon Iron Company Furnace is located in NW ¼ SW¼, Sec. 11, T. 2 S., R. 1 E., of the Willamette Meridian, Clackamas County, Oregon.

8. Significance (Continued)

made, including the building of a narrow-gauge railroad to haul the ore, and the opening of a new mine.

This second company operated until 1882, when the Oregon Iron and Steel Company was incorporated to take over the business. The power behind the project was Simeon G. Reed, a capitalist whose name is perpetuated in Oregon through Reed College, the institution he helped to finance.

In the fall of 1885 operations were again suspended.

In 1888 the Oregon Iron and Steel Company resumed operation but abandoned the old furnace and constructed an entirely new plant. The new company was to encounter many of the same difficulties which led to the failure of the earlier corporations, and it ceased operation in 1894. All that remains of the original plant is the furnace.

9. Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Samuel, L., "Iron Manufacturing at Oswego," West Shore (1889), Vol. 15, No. 178, 232-238.

Treasher, Ray C., "Oregon's Iron Industry," Geological Society of Oregon Country (October 25, 1941), Vol. 7, No. 20, 184-186.

