

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 BOATMAN-AINSWORTH HOUSE

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 6000 112th Street, S.W.  not for publication

city, town Tacoma  vicinity of 3rd congressional district

state Washington code 53 county Pierce code 053

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dr. and Mrs. Craig Glenn Gunter

street & number 6000 112th Street, S.W.

city, town Tacoma  vicinity of Washington state 98499

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pierce County Recorders Office, City-County Building

street & number 930 Tacoma Avenue, South

city, town Tacoma  vicinity of Washington state 98402

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Washington State Register of Historic <sup>Places</sup>  has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date May, 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Olympia  vicinity of Washington state 98504

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Boatman-Ainsworth House stands in the southern outskirts of Tacoma, Washington, in an area now known as Lakewood. The property is situated on the south side of 112th Street, SW, opposite Clover Park High School. Some recent residential development has occurred to the rear of the property, but a broad expanse of open lawn still separates the house itself from its changing surroundings. The site also includes a gravel driveway and an unattached frame garage to the west and rear of the house, as well as a few specimens from Willis Boatman's century-old orchard.

Between the close of the Indian War in 1858 and 1861 when pre-emption claim papers were filed, Boatman built a 24' by 30' house on his original 160 acres. The house had heavy plank siding and consisted of two main rooms with a fireplace and chimney between. This early dwelling now forms the kitchen and dining room of the present-day house. Several features from this early structure remain in place today, and these include chair rail-height wainscoting, three windows with six-over-six light double hung sash, and the dining room fireplace (whose 1930 mantelpiece has recently been replaced by an 1840's mantelpiece from a home in Galena, Illinois).

The main body of the house, believed to be a late 1860's or early 1870's addition by Boatman himself, is one and one-half stories in height. Its medium-pitched gable roof runs east-to-west, and its symmetrically arranged facade fronts upon the lawn and 112th Street to the north. This c. 1870 portion of the house contains two large parlors to either side of a central stairhall, and three bedrooms upstairs. Original tongue-in-groove wainscoting, staircase, and mantelpieces remain intact, as do the four-over-four light double-hung sash on the ground floor and the four-light horizontal-slide sash of the upper story. At the center of the front facade is a four-panelled door with glazed transom and a small hipped-roof entry porch with slender posts and simple decorative brackets.

Around 1940 the original rear kitchen wing was expanded by a 12' addition to the east and a one-half story addition above. The resulting configuration of this portion of the house is that of a saltbox with dormer windows on the eastern slope of the roof. This addition allowed for a bath, sewing room, furnace and utility rooms on the ground floor, and two additional bedrooms on the upper floor. An unattached garage with a pump house and saddle room was constructed to the southwest of the house at approximately the same time.

The house as a whole is sheathed with a grooved, horizontal siding held in place on the oldest portions of the house by hand wrought nails. Hewn beams, massive floor joists, and 3" by 5" studs form the structural framework. A concrete foundation was installed under the house by the current owners in 1971. The roof is entirely clad with wood shingles, thought to have been applied c. 1940. Presently the entire house is painted white with dark green solid board shutters at all of the windows on the front facade. For the past ten years, the owners have worked steadily to return the house to an earlier appearance, and have removed much post-1940 fabric, replacing it with mid-19th century materials whenever possible.

## 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**

**Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Boatman-Ainsworth House in Tacoma, Washington, draws its primary significance from its association with several prominent Washington pioneers. The house was constructed by Willis Boatman, one of the earliest white settlers (1853) in what is now Pierce County. From 1878 to 1889, the house and land were owned by Captain John Ainsworth, founder of the powerful Oregon Steam Navigation Company. Walter J. Thompson, subsequent owner of the home, was a Territorial legislator, and founder of the Merchant's National Bank of Tacoma and Tacoma Trust and Savings Bank. The core of the Boatman-Ainsworth House dates to between 1858 and 1860, placing it among the earliest of surviving frame houses in western Washington. Although a 1940 addition has somewhat altered the form and dimensions of the original two-room cabin, early pioneer simplicity still characterizes the house as a whole.

Willis Boatman left his home in Sangamon County, Illinois, in March of 1852, and journeyed by wagon train over the Oregon Trail to Portland. The party was decimated by cholera, and among the hundreds who died along the trail that spring was Boatman's brother-in-law. After a winter's stay in Portland, Boatman brought his family north to Steilacoom on Puget Sound in Washington Territory. They worked briefly in a lumber camp, then started a boarding house in Steilacoom, and in January of 1854 located a donation land claim in the Puyallup Valley. The Indian War of 1855 forced the family to return to Steilacoom. Boatman worked for the Quartermaster out of Fort Steilacoom until the close of the Indian War in 1858.

Pre-emption land claim records reveal that by 1861 Boatman had settled upon land approximately four miles from Steilacoom near Gravelly Lake. There he had fenced 140 acres, planted an orchard, built a substantial barn and erected a one-story 24' by 30' house, "a comfortable house to live in." It is believed that this original structure is now incorporated in the enlarged rear kitchen and dining room wing of the house as it exists today. More visually prominent today is the 1½ story main body of the house, situated perpendicular to the early core and fronting on 112th Street to the north. Although no documentation has yet come to light, it appears that this major improvement was also accomplished by Boatman, probably in the late 1860's or early 1870's.

Willis Boatman sold his house and land to Captain John Commingers Ainsworth on October 8, 1878. In his youth, John Ainsworth began his colorful career on the Mississippi River where he became a riverboat pilot and subsequently a steamboat master. The discovery of gold in California brought Ainsworth to San Francisco in 1850. Soon afterward he traveled north to take command of the steamship "Lot Whitcomb." For some thirty years thereafter, Ainsworth was closely associated with the steamboating industry on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. He founded and directed the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, a consolidated system of railway portages and steamers which plied the Upper Columbia and Snake Rivers and all their navigable tributaries. The company enjoyed the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 1-1/3 acres

Quadrangle name STELLA Coom, WASH

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	1   0	5   3   6   7   2   0	5   2   2   2   3   2   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

See attached.

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

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Florence K. Lentz, editor. Based on draft submitted by C. G. Gunter

organization Office of Archaeology and Historic Pres. date October, 1980

street & number 111 West 21st Avenue telephone (206) 753-4011

city or town Olympia, state Washington 98504

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

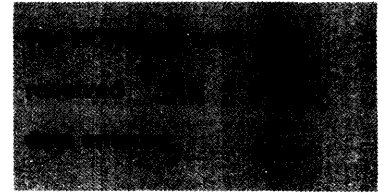
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Jacob E. Thorne date 1/4/82

For HCRS use only	hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the National Register	date <u>2/19/82</u>
<i>Jacob E. Thorne</i>	Keoper of the National Register		
Attest:	Chief of Registration		date

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most complete monopoly of any transportation corporation outside of California, until it merged with Henry Villard's Oregon Railway and Navigation Company in 1879. Ainsworth headed the latter company until 1881, when his interests turned to banking in California and Portland.

During the late 1870's, Ainsworth's involvement in real estate and railroading in western Washington had grown. He was instrumental in the completion of the Northern Pacific line between Portland and Puget Sound and invested extensively in real estate in Pierce County. Ainsworth and his family used the Boatman House as a summer home and headquarters for his Washington Territory enterprises. It is believed that the home also served as his occasional hunting lodge.

After Ainsworth had moved to Oakland, California, the property was sold in 1889 to Walter J. Thompson of Tacoma. In addition to the founding of two Tacoma Banks, Thompson helped organize the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce. He served in both the lower house and Senate of the Territorial Legislature, and in 1890 was a Progressive Party candidate for the U.S. Senate. Known for his fine personal library and collection of paintings, Thompson was much interested in public education in Tacoma. He donated a portion of the old Boatman-Ainsworth property to Clover Park High School, land which became known as Thompson Field.

The nominated property remained in the hands of the Thompson family until 1939 when it was purchased by A. Dwight Orr. At that point the rear kitchen wing was expanded to the east and enlarged by one-half story. The house was rented for a number of years until purchased by the current owners in 1971. It is now undergoing restoration.

Architecturally, the Boatman-Ainsworth House contains much of its original mid-19th century fabric. Its structural system is intact, including the heavy hewn beams and 3" by 5" studs. Exterior horizontal siding is held in place by hand wrought nails. Most of the original fenestration, including six-over-six and four-over-four light double hung sash, remains in place in the early sections of the house. Original panelled doors and hardware, wainscotting in nearly all of the rooms, and several Classical Revival mantelpieces also lend considerable interest to this solid example of an early but permanent western Washington homestead.

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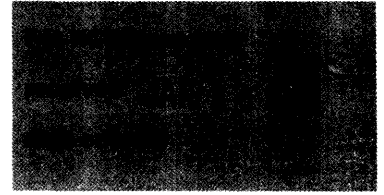
Lewis and Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest. E. W. Wright, editor. The Lewis and Dryden Printing Company. Portland, Oregon, 1895.

Told by the Pioneers, Vol. 1. Secretary of State, Olympia, Washington. 1937-1938.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office. Portland, Oregon. Selected property records.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commencing at the Northwest corner of the East half of the Northeast quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 11, Township 19 North, Range 2 East of the W.M., thence along the North line of said subdivision South 89° 35' 00" East 70.00 feet, thence parallel with the West line of said subdivision South 01° 12' 23" West 30.00 feet to the South right of way of 112th Street W.W. and the true point of beginning, thence continuing South 01° 12' 23" West 184.01 feet to the P.C. of a curve, thence along a curve to the left, having a delta angle of 90° 47' 23" and a radius of 50.00 feet, for a distance of 79.23 feet along said curve, thence parallel with the north line of said subdivision South 89° 35' 00" East 196.14 feet, thence North 01° 25' 00" West 102.33 feet, thence North 15° 13' 44" West 137.49 feet to the south right of way line of 112th Street S.W., thence along said line North 89° 35' 00" West 203.24 feet to the true point of beginning.