

**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 Harding, Benjamin F., House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1043 High Street SE not for publication

city, town Salem vicinity of congressional district Second

state OR code 41 county Marion code 047

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 David M. and Loretta Ann Haberman

see continuation sheet

street & number 1043 High Street SE

city, town Salem vicinity of state OR 97302

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Clerk/Recorder

street & number Marion County Courthouse

city, town Salem state OR 97301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Salem Historical Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of Community Development, City Hall

city, town Salem state OR 97301

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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 Benjamin F. Harding House was built in 1884 as a suburban house on a full block of land south of Salem's commercial center. It faces High Street to the east and Bush's Pasture Park, which originally was the estate of Asahel Bush. On either side, in what had been orchard to the south and garden to the north, bungalows and two Post War houses were built as the property was subdivided. High Street is an arterial to a large residential area, the South High School and parking at the south end of the park.

The 2-½ story wood frame house is an example of vernacular Italianate architecture, simply finished without the elaborate jig-sawn details and bracketed cornice which characterize the Italianate Style. It's brick foundation was stuccoed in later years. The house is square in plan with a single story ell, with north side porch, centered in the rear, or west elevation. The main block has a hipped roof of moderate pitch and a central brick chimney which originally had a corbelled cap. The cornice and a wide frieze board are finished with moldings but are otherwise undecorated. All roof cover is presently composition shingles.

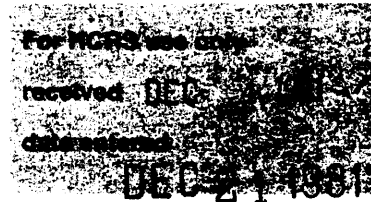
Fenestration is regular on front and side elevations, and the rear face is essentially blind. Typical elongated window openings are fitted with double hung sash with one light over one and are trimmed with molded caps. Rebated weatherboard siding is found on all elevations except the south, where shingles cover both main block and ell. Between first and second stories of the main block are six courses of shingles with fancy butts. The hip-roofed front porch with plain cornice is supported by four chamfered posts with molded necking and caps. At either end are shadow pilasters of matching style. The deck, now brick, originally was wood and was not enclosed by a railing as at present.

The openings sheltered by the front porch originally conformed with the scheme of formal facade organization. Window openings of the outer bays were aligned under second story windows. Centered between them were two identical doorways with single-pane top lights which gave access to the front parlor and to Harding's office, respectively. In 1911 a subsequent occupant, Jacob Amsler, eliminated the northerly doorway and installed a tripartite opening consisting of a large central picture window flanked by narrow, double-hung windows. In 1954, when the house was remodeled for use as a duplex, the southerly doorway and window were eliminated and replaced by a single six-panel door with rectangular top light.

As of 1903, the interior contained a kitchen and dining room in the rear part of the main block, and the ell housed a wash room and woodshed. This was changed in 1911 by the Amslers, when the kitchen-dining room was divided into a bedroom and dining room and the ell was extended to house a kitchen and a bathroom with wood and storage area addition on the outer end. Since 1974, the house has been restored to single family occupancy by the present owner who eliminated the upstairs apartment kitchen, and later partitions. There is no basement, and to provide heating upstairs and new utilities, conduit and ducting concealed in "beams" have been introduced into the living room, dining room and hall. The ceiling of the back bedroom has been lowered. Original horsehair plaster has been retained on the walls, and typical fir floors have been uncovered. Some original hardware has survived on interior doors. Originally, there were four bedrooms upstairs. A bath was added later. The stairs originally ascended from both the southerly front room and the kitchen dining room. The latter stairway was eliminated in 1911.

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Continuation sheet Harding, Benjamin F., House Item number 4

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Holder of the purchase contract is:

Jacqueline M. Gwinn Fisher (Mrs. William H. Fisher)
5500 Cooper Hollow Road
Monmouth, OR 97361

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1884 Builder/Architect Unverified

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The vernacular Italianate house at 1043 High Street in Salem, Marion County, Oregon was built in 1884 for lawyer, state legislator and U.S. Senator Benjamin F. Harding (1823–1899) and was occupied briefly by Harding toward the end of his career, from the time of its completion to 1888. It is one of three houses of similar style on the west side of High Street opposite the extensive holdings of wealthy newspaper publisher and banker Asahel Bush. Bush's holdings are now a city park and the Harding House and the others are lined up with bungalows which now provide the dominant architectural character of the park perimeter. The earlier houses were originally surrounded by fenced yards, gardens and orchards. They were suburban properties occupying a full platted block. The Harding House was later occupied by Jacob Amsler, farmer and chauffeur in the employ of the Bush family, and his descendants from 1903 to 1952. It was in 1911 that the ell was lengthened and ground story openings were initially modified. In 1954 the house was remodeled internally as a duplex, work which was reversed by the present owners beginning in 1974. The Harding House is significant to Salem as a well-preserved, if slightly altered, house embodying the distinctive characteristics of the vernacular Italianate style. It possesses integrity of location, feeling and association with an important figure in Oregon law and politics, and it possesses sufficient integrity of design, setting, materials and workmanship to meet the criteria of the National Register.

Agriculture. Ben Harding was always interested in farming, but as his family changed, he did not stay put. His donation land claim south of Salem, near the present-day Jefferson interchange on Interstate Highway 5, was next to that of his first father-in-law, Thomas Cox, Salem's first merchant. Harding's brother, E. J. Harding, acquired over 2,000 acres on French Prairie, north of Salem, and Ben moved to French Prairie in the 1860s, acquiring land near Fairfield, (now a ghost town) on the west bank of the Willamette River. He lived there until after the death of his second wife, Sally M. (Bush) Harding, in 1873. By 1880 he was living in Salem, and he had evidently lived in the capital city previously. In December 1883 he acquired a full block across High Street from the holdings of his second father-in-law and political ally, Asahel Bush. On High Street, Harding built his simple Italianate house and maintained an orchard and garden. He, or perhaps his son, acquired another farm property on Row Creek, outside of Cottage Grove in Lane County, for his only surviving son, Daniel W. Harding. In 1888 the elder Harding left Salem to be near his son in the Cottage Grove vicinity.

In 1903, the north portion of Harding's block-large holding on High Street was acquired by Jacob Amsler, who was in charge of Mr. Bush's farming operation immediately to the east. The Bush suburban farm involved a substantial herd of Guernsey cattle, founded in 1884, the year Amsler was hired as farm hand. Amsler eventually became the Bush family chauffeur.

Architecture. Though altered in the arrangement of ground story openings of its principal facade, the Harding House is one of the well-preserved vernacular Italianate houses still standing on the perimeter of Salem's downtown core. The architect, or builder, is as yet unknown, but it has been speculated that local contractor W. F. Boothby, who completed the Asahel Bush House in 1878, had a hand in the design. Salem directories show that

9. Major Bibliographical References

Union Title Company, indexes to deed
 Marion County Deed, Marriage and Probate records (Clerk's office)
 Territorial Government Documents, (Oregon State Archives) various references.
 Marion County Tax rolls, 1857-1865.

(Continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Salem West, Oregon

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED
 Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	9	6	8	5	0	4	9	7	5	0	7	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

Lot 2, Block 6, G. H. Jones Addition to the Plat of Salem, Marion County, Oregon in the NE 1/4 SW 1/4, Section 27, Township 7 South, Range 3 West, W. M., Marion County Assessor's map reference 27 CA 7 3W.

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 David C. Duniway

organization _____ date March 2, 1981

street & number 1365 John Street South telephone 503/581-2338

city or town Salem state Oregon 97302

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.

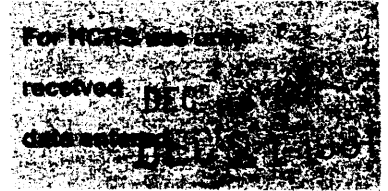
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date October 16, 1981

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
	entered in the National Register date <u>12/21/81</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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Harding boarded with a family named Boothby in 1850. Harding is thought to have assisted in laying the roof cover of his house on High Street. The story is told that a bill collector climbed to the roof to see him and Harding paid him with a check written on a shingle which was cashed at the Ladd and Bush Bank. The Asahel Bush House, an example of high style Italianate architecture, was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

Law. Harding first studied and practiced law in Joliet, Illinois. He not only practiced in Oregon, but served as U.S. District Attorney for the Territory in 1853, the same year in which he served on the original Board of Trustees of Willamette University. In 1852 and 1853 he was a commissioner of the Cayuse War claims.

Settlement. Ben Harding arrived on the West Coast during the California Gold Rush, but, because of illness, he came north to Salem, where he became a leader in the Democratic party. The house he built on High Street for his old age included space for a law office. It represents a step in the development of South Salem, first as a suburban area with farm acreage within walking distance of the city center. Jacob Amsler (1863-1952),* the fourth owner, came to Salem as a member of a party of 20 Swiss immigrants who arrived by train in 1884. Amsler was to bring other Swiss families to Salem and environs. He was immediately hired by Asahel Bush to work on the Bush farm, and he adapted the former Harding house, which he acquired in 1903, to the needs of his family.

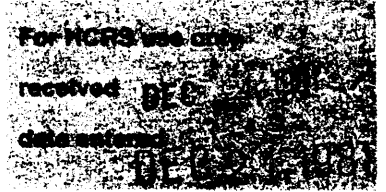
Politics and Government. On his arrival in Oregon in 1850, Benjamin F. Harding became clerk of the House of the Oregon Territorial Legislature. He was Speaker of the House from Marion County in 1852 and 1853 and a member for the State Legislature in 1859 and 1860. He was Speaker of the House in 1860. He was Secretary of the Territory from 1855 to 1859 by appointment of President Pierce, and served as acting Governor in 1856 in the absence of Governor Curry. With Asahel Bush and James Nesmith, he was a ruling spirit among the Union Democrats of Oregon, as opposed to pro-slavery Democrats such as General Joseph Lane, Delazon Smith and others. After the death of Colonel E. D. Baker of the United States Senate at the battle of Ball's Bluff, Harding was elected to fill the unexpired term and served in the United States Senate from September 12, 1863 to March 3, 1865. This was his final official service for the people and the Democratic party, but he was still involved in Democratic affairs when he lived in the house on High Street in Salem. One of his biographers described him as one of the "shrewdest politicians in Oregon." None of Harding's other abodes in Salem and environs is known to be standing.

Other. Benjamin F. Harding was a charter member of Chemeketa Lodge No. 1 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows instituted at Salem December 6, 1852. It was the first Odd Fellows lodge in Oregon.

*Jacob Amsler was born in Canton Aargau, Switzerland, April 29, 1863. He died June 16, 1952.

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Marion County Voter's Registers, 1902, 1904, 1906.
U.S. Census, Marion County, 1850, House 148; 1860, House 422; 1870, Fairfield Precinct,
House 876. (Microfilm of original in National Archives, Oregon State Library).
Salem Public Works Department. Record of Building Permits, 1954-1975.

Harding:

Baker, Ernest E.
Fairfield Cemetery. (Ms, Oregon State Library, NB-2 #1)

Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971, 92nd Congress, First Session,
Senate Doc. 92-8, p. 1067.

Bush Family papers, Political Correspondence. Letters from B. F. Harding, 1850-1888.
(Bush House Archives)

Carey, Charles Henry
History of Oregon, Chicago, The Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1922, v. 2, p. 467,
496-7, 627, 661, 668, 713, 772, 781-86.

Hendricks, R. J.
"Bits for Breakfast," Oregon Statesman, 6 April 1929, p. 4.

History of Bench and Bar of Oregon. Portland, Oregon, Historical Publishing Co., 1893,
p. 267-8.

Lang, Herbert O.
History of the Willamette Valley, Portland Oregon, Himes & Lang, 1885, p. 703-4.

Lockley, Fred
"Observations and Impressions of a Journal Man." Oregon Journal, 29 October 1939, Sec. 1, p. 1

Oregon State Library, Oregon Collection.
Correspondence with Charles A. McCarthy of Pittston, PA 1977.

Oregon State Archives
Members of the Legislature of Oregon, 1843-1967, Bulletin 2, Revised, p. 17.

Oregon Secretary of State
Biennial Report . . . H. R. Kincaid, Secretary of State, Salem, Oregon. W. H. Leeds, State
Printer, 1899, p. 177-8.

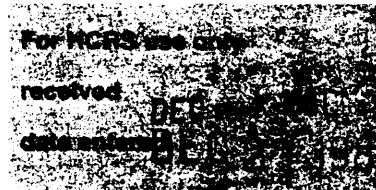
Oregon Statesman, July 23, 1873, death of Mrs. B. F. Harding. August 1, 1884 (weekly),
Cleveland and Hendrick Club organization...Committee on reception of speakers. . . B. F.
Harding . May 18 & 19, 1899, Articles on IOOF, Chemeketa Lodge, No. 1. June 17, 1899,
Died at Cottage Grove . . . (Obituary).

Oregonian (Sunday) June 18, 1899, p. 1. B. F. Harding dead . . .

Oregon Spectator Index, 1846-1854, v. 1, p. 222.
Many entries, including marriage Nov. 27 to Eliza Cox of Santiam, 2 Dec. 1851, p. 3 col. 3.
(Note reports death in Rogue River War. This is Benjamin M Harding, born 1831, or perhaps
J. R.).

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Scott, Harvey W.
History of the Oregon Country, Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1924, Vol. 5, p. 277.

West, Oswald
"Reminiscences and Anecdotes: The Harding Brothers," Oregon Historical Quarterly,
Vol. 52, No. 4, p. 235-240.

Williams & Company, Edgar
Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Marion and Linn Counties, Oregon, 1878. Pgs. 28-29,
32-33, Maps of Champoeg and Fairfield precincts. P. 40-41, map of Jefferson precinct,
for Harding land holdings. P. 46 for identification of Donation Land Claims.

Wunder, John R.
"Tampering with the Northwest Frontier, the accidental design of the Washington/Idaho
Boundary," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1, p. 1-12. Analyzes Harding's
"inept" service as U.S. Senator.

Amsler:

Oregon Statesman (weekly), April 29 & May 2, 1884. Arrival of the Swiss. June 16, 1952,
Obituary.

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R. L. Polk, Marion County Directories, 1902-1959.

Interviews with Hilda Amsler Roemhilde, October 14 and 21, 1980.