

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received APR 17 1986

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Laughlin Round Barn

and or common N.A.

2. Location

street & number 8249 Barnes Dr. not for publication

city, town Castle Rock x vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Cowlitz code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Helen Kling

street & number 719 N.E. Riddle Dr.

city, town Grants Pass vicinity of state Oregon 97526

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cowlitz County Assessor

street & number 207 4th Ave. N.

city, town Kelso state Washington 98626

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Washington State Inventory of
title Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes x no

date 1985 federal x state county local

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

city, town 111 W. 21st Ave., KL-11, Olympia state Washington 98504-5411

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" 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 Laughlin Round Barn is a wooden pole barn located on 80 acres of farmland in the Cowlitz River Valley about four miles north of Castle Rock, Washington. The barn and several other farm structures, including a residence, are situated on the edge of a small rise several feet above the valley floor. The Cowlitz River forms a part of the southern boundary of the L-shaped tract, and Barnes Drive and Northern Pacific Railroad tracks cut across the farmstead between the river and farm grouping. To the north and east of the structures is a large field which gently rises to a ridge covered in old growth and second generation Douglas fir and maple trees located on the farm.

About 200 feet west of the barn is the site of the original Laughlin house, of Victorian style, which burned in 1923-1924. A one and a half story wood frame bungalow occupies a site close to that of the earlier house. Also on the property is a school (constructed in 1898 but considerably altered in the 20th century), two sheds (constructed between 1875 and 1890 but seriously altered), a county cemetery with about thirty stone markers, and the remnants of an old orchard. The 80 acre farm also includes pasturage and wooded areas as well as the remains of the orchard, but the round barn is the only structure which retains sufficient integrity or historic significance.

Barn

The Laughlin Barn is built on a round plan, with circular wall and conical roof. The roof has a middle pitch and rests on the low perimeter wall (sided with board and batten) and rises to a massive central column and cupola. A centrally placed wagon drive runs through the barn to the west of the central column. The wagon door faces north along the lower edge of the upper field. Extending from this entry is a simple gable shed, added at an early date and exhibiting similar materials, workmanship, and character. A later lean-to addition (used as a pig pen) is attached to the east wall of the entry shed.

The barn contains a large upper level loft which runs clear to the perimeter wall. The outer wall is approximately 63 feet in diameter, supported by a ring of 20 split posts which are breast high in the loft. An inner ring of 13 posts, 40 feet in diameter, rise to support the rafters and define the edge of the loft's central space. A striking feature of the loft is the fan shaped bracing which springs like vaulting from the central post to support the rafters.

On the ground floor, the livestock alley is located along the perimeter wall, with stalls facing an inner ring of posts. There are numerous stalls for cows or other livestock, four horse stalls, and three stanchions for calves. In the central area of the ground floor are two small spaces on either side of the central drive: a granary to the west, and a larger storage room to the east. Access to the stalls is gained by a narrow feeding alley located behind the curving walls of the granary and storage room.

Materials and Structure

The larger members of the framing system are hand hewn, split, or planed. These include the massive central post which tapers in dimension as it rises; the post and beam framing members, which are hand hewn and measure about 12 inches wide and between 12 and 17 inches deep; and the rings of posts, which are split, quarter round logs with the rounded edge facing outward.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

Smaller structural members, such as rafters, bracing, joists, and sill plates are circular sawn. Most of these are rectangular in shape, such as the rafters and bracing, which measure 1 7/8 by 5 7/8 inches. The plates are 3 1/2 inches thick and are sawn in a gentle arc on the outside edge to accept the rafters and maintain a conical roof shape. The plates are lapped over the posts and fastened by round iron spikes, one-half inch in diameter and ten inches in length.

The rafters diminish in number from about 100 above the outer ring of posts to 50 above the inner ring and to 25 above the junction with the fan bracing members, which also number 25. A ring of blocking supports the uppermost and intermediate rafters at their juncture with the bracing. The roof is sheathed in shingles, resting on 1/2 x 3 1/2 inch boards. The cupola is sheathed in sheet metal with vents constructed of wood slats. Originally, the cupola was shingled with an eagle weather vane at the peak. The outer walls of the barn are board and batten. The boards are one inch by 11 3/8 inches, as are the floor boards of the loft. The framing and roofing nails have roughly squared heads.

Barn Condition

The condition of the barn is fair in most areas, but is seriously deteriorated in those areas facing the south and west. The roof of the barn is missing many shingles, particularly towards the prevailing winds of the southwest. The roof plates and floor boards under those areas are suffering from dry rot. The barn is settling along the perimeter walls, but remains stable.

Most serious is the failing of the hewn beam which crosses the wagon drive at the minor southern entrance. The beam carried a post of the outer frame, which has partially fallen, and with it, one of the plates. Consequently, several rafters have begun to cave in and separate from the upper supports.

The other structures on the Laughlin farm, including sheds, have been altered over time and do not strongly reflect an association with the nineteenth century farmstead. The residence, which was built in the early twentieth century, is a rectangular one story bungalow with drop siding. The school house, constructed in the late nineteenth century, was resided with shingles and otherwise altered in the twentieth century when it was converted to a residence, and has since been partially resided with contemporary materials. Because the round barn is the only property of historical significance, the nomination is limited to the barn itself.

Resource count: One building (barn)

No noncontributing resources

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa 1883 **Builder/Architect** Samuel Laughlin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Laughlin Barn is an architecturally significant example of a round barn in Washington, one of fewer than five known to still stand in the state and the only example in Cowlitz County. According to one scholar of farm structures, the Laughlin Barn is "also probably the oldest round barn in Washington State if not in the northwest three state region."¹ Although deteriorated because of neglect in recent years, the barn is a good example of the round barn form, predating other known survivors and thus providing insight into the nature of construction and innovation in the agrarian economy of the late 19th century.

Historical and Architectural Context

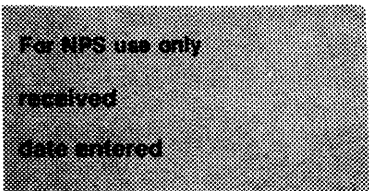
The construction of the Laughlin Round Barn was contemporary with a florescence of round barn construction in the United States, which began roughly in the 1880's and continued until the 1920's. This period was marked by an increasing stabilization and specialization in farming, centered in the Midwest. The popularity of round barns, especially for dairy farming, was due partly to experimentation by agricultural colleges and by the publication of round barn plans in farm journals. The advantages claimed by proponents of the round barn included economy of building materials when compared to rectangular forms of similar volume, as well as "greater efficiency in feeding and maintaining animals."² Eventually, as labor became more expensive and farms increased in size, round forms ceased to be advantageous economically and the construction of round barns became less frequent.

¹Tom J. Bartuska, Professor of Architecture, Washington State University, letter to author, November 4, 1985, p.1.

²Ibid, p.2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

Scholars have only identified seven round barns constructed between 1880 and 1920 in Washington State. Of these, only four remain today.³ In addition to these round barns, nine or 10 polygonal barns were constructed in Washington, of which six or seven are known to be standing.⁴ (Comparatively, in the state of Iowa, a total of 148 round and polygonal barns were constructed, a figure typical of other upper Midwestern states.)

Constructed about 1882, the Laughlin barn was unusually early in the era of round barns, preceding every other known example in the state. Many of the round barns in eastern and central Washington were constructed between 1915 and 1925, toward the end of the movement. In the southwestern part of the state, a polygonal and two other round barns were constructed. Notably, the polygonal barn in neighboring Wahkiakum County was constructed perhaps as early as the 1880s. It remains in good condition. The other round barn in Wahkiakum County, a large onion-domed dairy barn constructed about 1915, has fallen within the last two years.

Laughlin Family History

The Laughlin Barn was constructed by Samuel Laughlin (1843-1910), who immigrated from Missouri to Cowlitz County with his family in 1873. Laughlin and his wife Eliza first settled in Olequa, in a vacant house built during the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad two years before. Laughlin first worked as a land surveyor for the government, briefly as a school teacher, and for several years as a section foreman for the railroad bridge crew. He also served as the second postmaster in Olequa, operating the post office out of the his home for several years.⁵

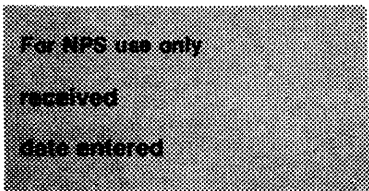
³Ibid, p.1.

⁴Karen Toor and Ron Tower, "Hall Round Barn, Ethnoarchaeology in Whitman County, Wa.," unpublished paper, Washington State University, 1983, p.4.

⁵Kathryn Keatley Garvey, "Samuel Davidson Laughlin," unpublished manuscript, Vacaville, California, 1985, p.5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3

Four years after moving to Olequa, on August 15, 1877, the Laughlins' purchased the 80 acre Cowlitz Valley tract from Olonzo Clough for \$550. The track was approximately three miles down river from Olequa along the Northern Pacific Railroad. Records show that Clough had purchased the tract from William Smoot three years previously on January 2, 1873. Smoot filed the original homestead claim of 160 acres, gaining title on July 13, 1874. It was not until December of 1881 that the Laughlin family moved to the property, remaining in Olequa for four and one-half years after the purchase, probably awaiting completion of their Victorian residence.⁶

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact year of the barn's construction, it was built shortly after the family moved into their new home about 1881. Mortgages on the property by Laughlins in the 1880s--\$400 in 1882, \$300 in 1886, and \$400 in 1888--might have been applied to building costs. Family histories indicate the importance of the barn and place its construction date as "probably within one or two years of the move" in 1881,⁷ or "in the following summer or soon after the move."⁸ This would be consistent with a historical pattern during the period in which a settler often constructed a permanent barn early in the development of the homestead.⁹ At any rate, it is known that the substantial Victorian house on the farmstead had been built at least by the early 1880s, since Eliza Laughlin's seventh child was born there in December 1883. (This homestead house burned in 1923.) The barn was probably built shortly thereafter. Samuel Laughlin, who constructed a house for his family in Missouri, built the barn with the help of his

⁶Ibid., p.1.

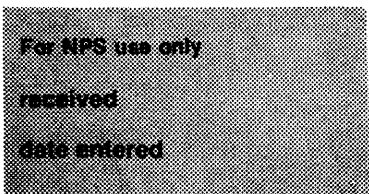
⁷Jean Smith, letter to the author, December 1985.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Philip Dole, "Farmhouses and Barns of the Willamette Valley" in Space, Style and Structure.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

4

son Peter. Laughlin is believed to have been inspired by examples of round barns he saw after visiting relatives in Oregon.¹⁰

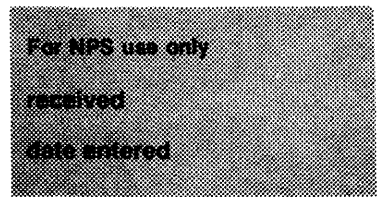
Integrity

The current condition of the Laughlin barn is only fair, and in some places the structure is clearly deteriorated. The decline in the structure's condition over time is due to age, weather, and neglect--the same factors which have claimed so many barns of historic or architectural interest in Washington. Despite this, the basic structural integrity remains, and the barn clearly reflects the construction, plan, massing, and form of the type. Importantly, the owner is interested in recognizing and preserving the historic character of the barn while returning it to a more active agricultural use. Other buildings on the land--an altered schoolhouse, non-historic residence, graveyard, and several altered sheds--do not reflect the historic period and are not included in the nomination.

¹⁰Smith letter.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

2

Garvey, Kathryn Keatley, (Great-granddaughter of Samuel Laughlin), "Samuel Davidson Laughlin," unpublished manuscript, December, 1985.

Smith, Jean, (Granddaughter of Samuel Laughlin), personal letter, December, 1985.

Toor, Karen, and Ron Tower, "Hall Round Barn, Ethnoarchaeology in Whitman County, Wa.," Washington State University, Pullman, 1983.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

10

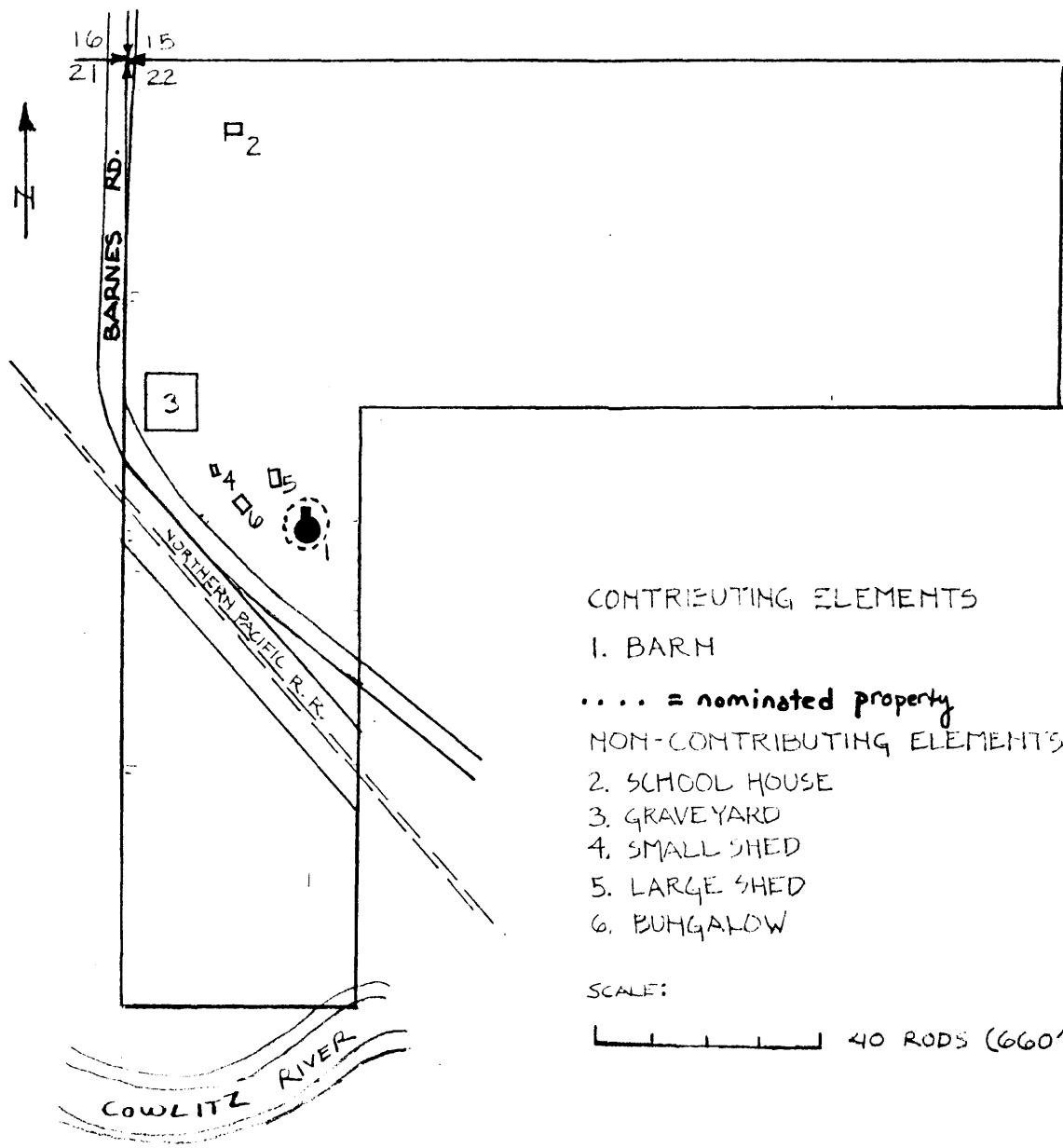
Page

2

The nominated property includes only the round barn located on the following parcel: Beginning at the northwest corner of Section 22, Township 10 North, Range 2 East, Willamette Meridian, running thence south 160 rods; thence east 40 rods; thence north 106 2/3 rods; thence east 120 rods; thence north 52 1/3 rods, and thence west along the boundary of said Section 22 to the point of beginning.

Within that parcel, the nominated property can be verbally described thusly: To reach the point of beginning, start at the northwest corner of said Section 22 and proceed southerly along the eastern edge of Barnes Road approximately 1337 feet (81 rods); then proceed east from Barnes Road approximately 264 feet (18 rods) until a point 20 feet from the outer wall of the barn. From this point of beginning, proceed in a circular path 20 feet from the circumference of the barn describing a circle with a 100 foot diameter, to the point of beginning. See attached map, drawn to scale, for illustration.

LAUGHLIN FARM & BARN



CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

1. BARN

..... = nominated property

NON-CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS (NOT NOMINATED)

2. SCHOOL HOUSE

3. GRAVEYARD

4. SMALL SHED

5. LARGE SHED

6. BUNGALOW

SCALE:

40 RODS (660')