

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001556 Date Listed: 10/31/91

Silas A. Rice Log House  
Property Name

Gilliam                      OR  
County                      State

N/A  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Antoinette A. Gee*  
*for* Signature of the Keeper

10/31/91  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Statement of Significance:** Under applicable National Register Criteria, criterion A is added.

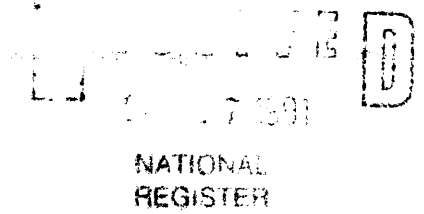
Criteria Consideration E is removed because the reconstruction used original materials.

This information was confirmed with Elisabeth Potter of the Oregon state historic preservation office.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Rice, Silas A., Log House other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Highway 19 at Bruns Park city, town Condon state Oregon code OR county Gilliam code 021 zip code 97823

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: James M. Hamrick, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, August 30, 1991

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Date of Action: 10/31/91

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: museum

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: simple pen of hewn logs

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone: basalt

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walls wood: log

---

roof wood: cedar shingle

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other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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The Rice Cabin is fifteen feet in width, thirty feet in length, eleven feet six inches at the eaves, eight feet to the peak of the roof which has a 50 degree slope. The logs vary from eight inches to 10 inches in width. The vertical sides were squared, and the horizontal sides left round. The joining technique is V notch and no nails were used. Split logs varying in length from one foot to three feet were carefully fitted between the logs on the inside. The outside was chinked with adobe to finish the seal.

The foundation consists of strategically placed basalt rock which had one nearly flat side. These were found near the building site on the homestead. The floor joists were secured with two-by-six rough lumber, as was the second floor. The roof has been resingled with cedar shakes.

The doorways are centrally located on the North and South sides of the building, and feature a two-tiered rock step entry. The doors are of one inch by twelve inch rough lumber with two inch batting covering the cracks. There are two windows on the South exposure, one on the East and one on the West exposure. Only two small windows on the North side of the house measuring one foot by three feet were installed, one downstairs and one above the stair well. One three foot window on each end, West and East upstairs provided light.

The indoor stairway was constructed of one-by-twelve rough lumber and below it, off the kitchen area is a storage area.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1884

1884-1890

Significant Dates

1884

1884

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Silas Adelbert Rice

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

History of Gilliam County, Gilliam County Historical Society, 1981. Memoir of Adelbert Silas Rice, son of Silas Adelbert Rice.

"Condon to dedicate big log cabin on July 4," The Dalles Chronicle, June 30, 1987.

"Condon slated to dedicate restored log cabin," Portland, The Oregonian, July 3, 1987.

"S. A. Rice Log Cabin dedication ceremony pictorial," Pendleton East Oregonian, July 4, 1987.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Gilliam County Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 0.31 acres Condon, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A 110 721480 5013430  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 10, Township 4S, Range 21E, Willamette Meridian, within the city of Condon, Gilliam County, Oregon. It is an essentially triangular lot fraction of approximately one third of an acre in size, making up the southwesternmost corner of Tax Lot 1100 at said location. Said lot fraction is leased to the Gilliam County Historical Society from the County-owned Gilliam County Fairgrounds holding of 19.13 acres.  See continuation sheet The nominated fraction of Tax Lot 1100 is more particularly described as follows:

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title June Kamerrer, President

organization Gilliam County Historical Society date February 5, 1991

street & number PO Box 377 telephone (503) 384-4233

city or town Condon state Oregon zip code 97823

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SUMMARY

The log house built by Gilliam County homesteader Silas A. Rice in 1884 originally stood on the plain two miles northeasterly of Condon, a townsite that had been platted in that year around a good spring. When it became the terminus of a branch of the Union Pacific Railroad main line, Condon developed as a trading center for a large district of the Columbia high plateau country and, in 1890, it was voted the county seat. Rice maintained his Condon-area farm and occupied the homestead house with his family until 1919, at which time he purchased a ranch near Olex, in the Rock Creek drainage some 20 miles to the north.

The original setting of the house was the east side of the John Day-Arlington Highway (Oregon Highway 19) on the northern outskirts of Condon. Even today, the Columbia Basin wheat country is characterized by vast spreads and sparse population. The population of Condon is under 1,000.

The significance of the Rice House under National Register Criterion C is that it is one of the few hewn long homestead houses remaining in the Columbia high plateau of eastern Oregon, certainly the only one of its kind in Gilliam County. Briefly characterized, it is a one and a half story rectangular volume with a footprint of 15 x 30 feet that is constructed of face-squared logs having V-notched corner joints. The ridge of its shingled gable roof is parallel with the facade, which faced north at the original site. It rested on a rock pier foundation.

The log walls are penetrated by formally-placed openings framed with simple surrounds. A central doorway in the facade was reached by a fieldstone stoop and flanked by single window openings on either side. Gable end elevations have a single window at ground level and at the attic story. Historically, window openings were fitted with six-over-six, double-hung sash. The interior is organized as two living spaces downstairs and a sleeping chamber aloft. The attic was reached by a steep, straight-flight staircase centered on the front door. The roof was vented for heating and cook stoves at the ridge line. Owing to the lack of timber on the open range, logs for construction of the house were hauled by wagon from Lost Valley in northern Wheeler County, nearly 30 miles to the south. They were chinked with mud.

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The Rice House long stood abandoned as livestock-raising and wheat-growing continued around it. The house deteriorated gradually over the years in the arid climate, but finally reached the brink of disintegration when it was acquired by the Gilliam County Historical Society in 1987, dismantled and relocated to a corner of the county fairgrounds in Condon. There it was reconstructed faithfully in main part.

The building still rests on its rock pier foundation, but it now faces southwesterly, away from the livestock arena that is the principal feature of the park. The logs have been chinked with a mortar consisting of three parts sand, two parts cement and one part lime. Owing to long loss of original windows, window openings are fitted with one-over-one, double-hung sash salvaged from another source. There are no operable stoves and stove flues at present.

Because of its singularity as an example of type in Gilliam County and its rarity in the region generally, and because of its relative proximity to the homestead claimed by its builder on the outskirts of Condon, the Silas Rice House meets Criterion Considerations B and E relating to relocated and reconstructed buildings. The Rice Log House rightfully is the focus of community pride today as it is the only remaining architectural link to the year of platting of the county seat and initial settlement of the environs.

Working with very limited means, volunteers of the small farming and ranching community naturally chose short-term solutions for some of the problems encountered in the reconstruction. In due course, when funds are available, window sash having six-over-six lights will be reduplicated and metal flues to vent cooking and heating stoves will be rebuilt. The log pen itself was reassembled with precision using all the original logs and original and like-kind secondary fabric. Even the rock piers and stoop are historic materials. Notwithstanding the somewhat artificial setting afforded by a grouping of several early-day Condon buildings in a corner of the county fairgrounds, the visual character and feeling of the Rice Log House is remarkably like that of the original. The V-notch joinery details are undiminished. The house remains instructive as an example of early log construction technique rarely seen in Oregon's Columbia high plateau region today.



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The historic Rice Cabin, a fifteen by thirty foot, two story hewn log construction of 1884 having V notched corner joints, is a unique exhibit in place on the Gilliam County Historical Society's Museum Complex in Condon, Oregon, Gilliam County, Oregon. It is the only remaining example of a hewn log homestead house in Gilliam County and a large district of the Columbia plateau. It is directly related to the earliest period of settlement at Condon, and its historic purpose relates to farming, which is still the primary source of income in Gilliam County.

Early in 1987 the Gilliam County Historical society obtained the cabin from Bill and Annabelle Jaeger, who gifted it to the Society provided it was removed from the site and restored at a place where it could be enjoyed for generations to come.

The cabin was located two miles North of Condon along Highway 19 to Arlington on the original homestead site proved up on by the Rices. It was in sad repair, the South portion of the roof was about to fall in, the doors and windows had been knocked out by roaming cattle, and the floor tramped out. After careful scrutiny of the situation and consultation with a local building contractor, it was determined that it could be dismantled, each log numbered, and reassembled at the Gilliam County Historical Society's Museum Complex. On April 1, 1987 the dismantling process began, the logs were loaded on a truck and hauled to the present location. The split pieces of logs used for chinking the inside of the cabin miraculously were all found at the site and even the original foundation rocks were used, and slowly each log went into place. Rough lumber was procured for the floors and rough one by twelves for the stairway. Windows of the original size were obtained and all fell into place. Due to the impracticability of using adobe to put the chinking in place, a concrete mixture was used.

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Eight thousand dollars of donated money was spent to rehabilitate this homestead cabin and on July 4, 1987 a dedication ceremony was held at the Museum Complex with all remaining members of the Rice family present. It was then open to the public and is authentically furnished much like it was originally. Even a spool what-not shelf brought across the plains by covered wagon adorns a wall. The original Homestead Certificate signed by Theodore Roosevelt, September 15, 1902 has been gifted to the Historical Society and now hangs in the cabin.

The two-story Rice Cabin was constructed in 1884 by Silas Adelbert Rice who had migrated westward following his marriage in 1865 in Utah. They traveled by covered wagon from Utah to Idaho, where they lived and worked on a cattle ranch before moving to Milton, Oregon. In the Spring of 1884, they came to what is now called Condon, traveling with two other covered wagons. They camped in tents and had very few neighbors, as there was only a sheep cabin in Condon called Potter's Spring. Silas tried to buy Potter's camp but was unable to get clear title, so moved

two miles North of Condon and filed on a 160 acre homestead, there the log cabin he built from logs from Lost Valley was built. It was a long, slow process hauling the logs by team and wagon some 29 miles away in Lost Valley in Wheeler County.

All around the cabin was thriving bunchgrass which would grow three to four feet high, there was very little Greasewood at that time, noted D. S. Rice, a grandson. The bunchgrass would be cut for hay which they stacked for winter feed for the cattle. Bunchgrass was excellent feed and made the stock awfully fat. Water was obtained by digging perhaps 14 or 15 feet and the water would flow to the top.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That portion of Gilliam County, Oregon Tax Lot 1100, Section 10, Township 4S, Range 21E, Willamette Meridian as follows:

Beginning at the southeast corner of Tax Lot 1100, which is that parcel of 19.13 acres deeded by the Condon Park Association to Gilliam County in 1968 and recorded in Gilliam County Deed Records Volume 48, page 204, thence west along the south line of said tax lot 982 feet to the true point of beginning; thence west 300 feet to the southwest corner of said tax lot; thence north along the west line of said Tax Lot 1100 approximately 90 feet; thence northeasterly and southeasterly in a diagonal line approximately conforming the embankment of the Gilliam County Fairgrounds livestock arena until the line intersects with the true point of beginning on the south lot line of said Tax Lot 1100, encompassing in all 0.31 acres, more or less, and two developed features: the Rice Log House and a nearby false-fronted frame building of small scale and historic vintage relocated from the town center of Condon.

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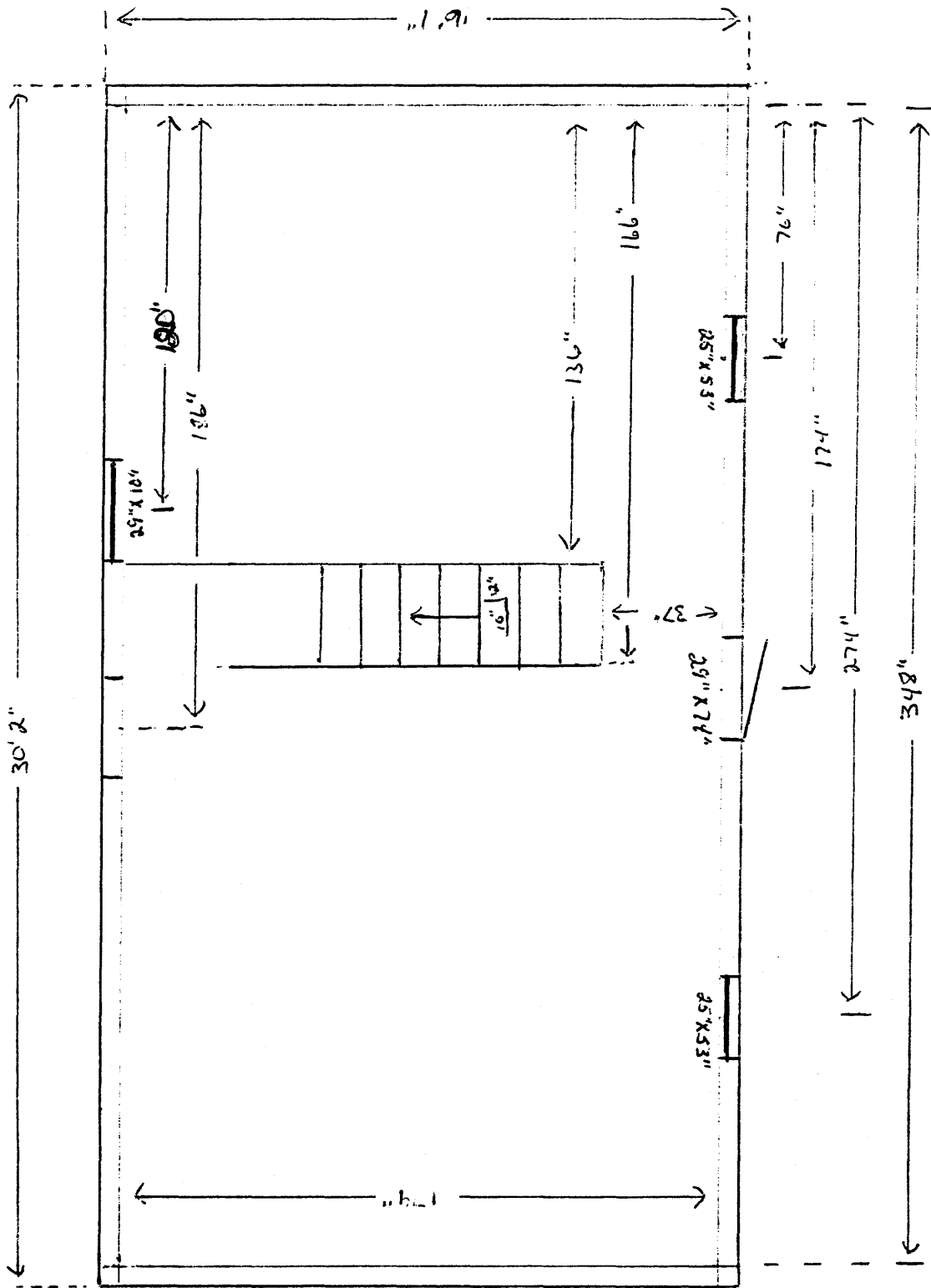
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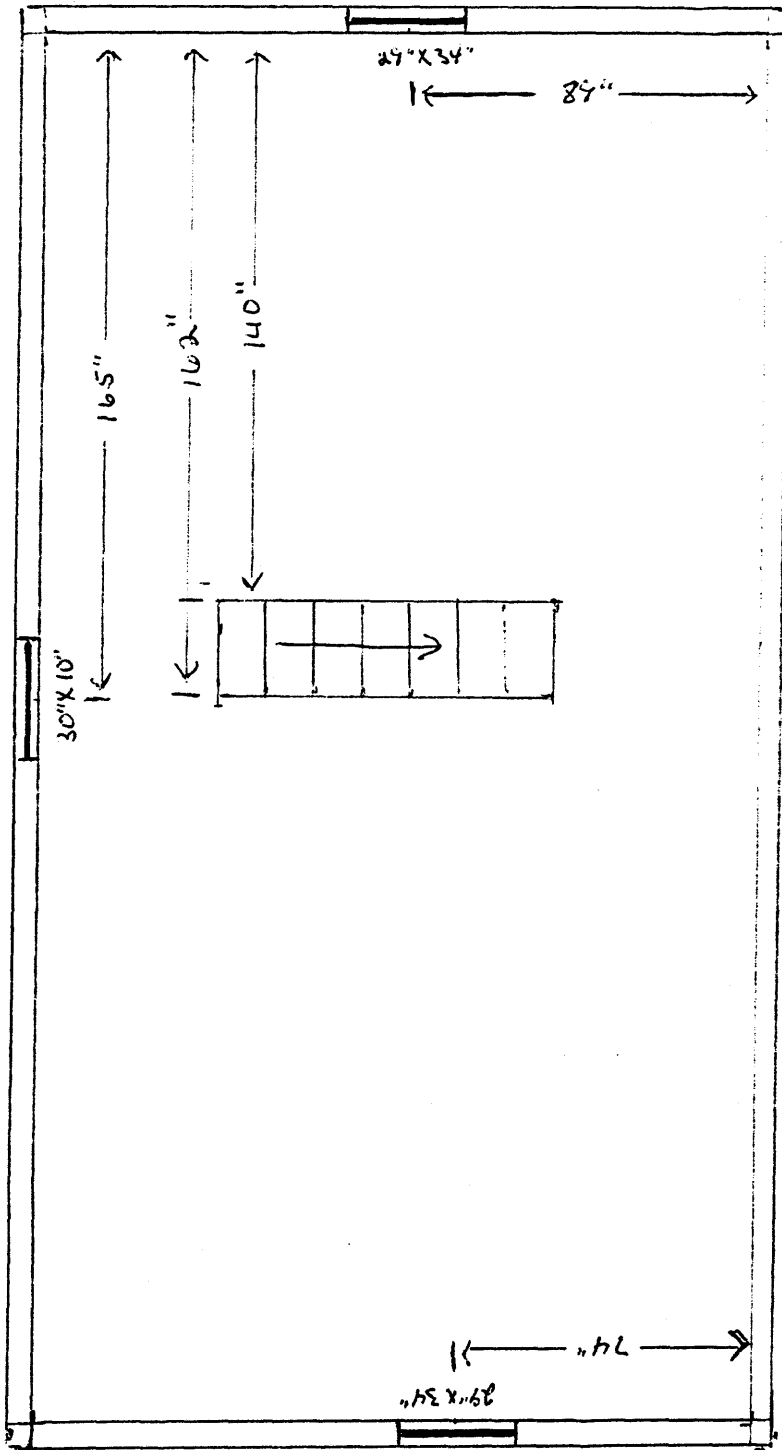
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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

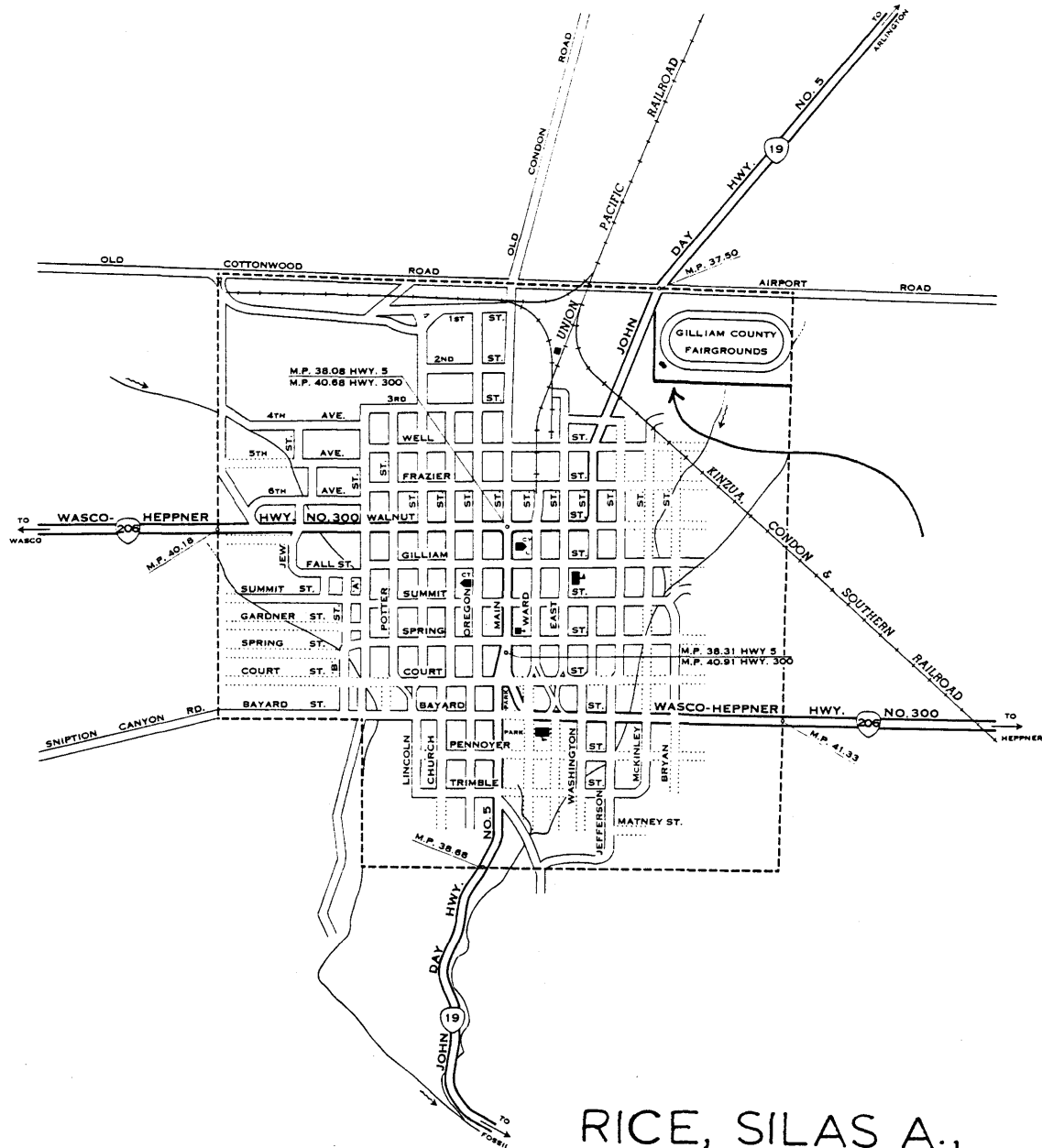
The nominated fractional lot of approximately a third of an acre at the southwesternmost corner of the 19-acre Gilliam County Fairgrounds parcel (Tax Lot 1100) includes two improvements: the relocated Silas A. Rice Log House and a diminutive, false-fronted, gable-roofed commercial building of frame construction which stands apart to the southeast. The "barber shop" building, though historic in terms of age, was not related to the log house historically and, therefore, is counted a non-contributing feature. Two other relocated buildings, an historic schoolhouse and railroad station stand in reasonably close proximity to the south, on a 0.34-acre parcel (Tax Lot 1201) that is owned by the Gilliam County Historical Society in fee simple. (The nominated area is leased by the historical society from Gilliam County.) The schoolhouse and railroad station, therefore, are on a separate parcel and are not a part of the nominated area. The Rice Log House is oriented to the southwest, so that it faces away from the livestock arena which is the principal developed feature of the Gilliam County Fairgrounds. The approximate bounds of the nominated area are marked by chain link fencing on the west, by the fence outlining the arena embankment on the north/northeast, and on the south by a roadway separating the log house and barbershop from the south building group.



Lower Floor  
Rice Cabin



Upper Floor  
Rice Cabin



# RICE, SILAS A., LOG HOUSE

### SIGNED ROUTES

- INTERSTATE
- U.S.
- ORE.

### LEGEND

- Post Office
- Public Bldg.
- School
- R. R. Depot
- City Hall
- Court House
- Armory
- Library
- Street open for travel.
- Street dedicated but not open.
- City Limits.

## CONDON

GILLIAM COUNTY, OREGON

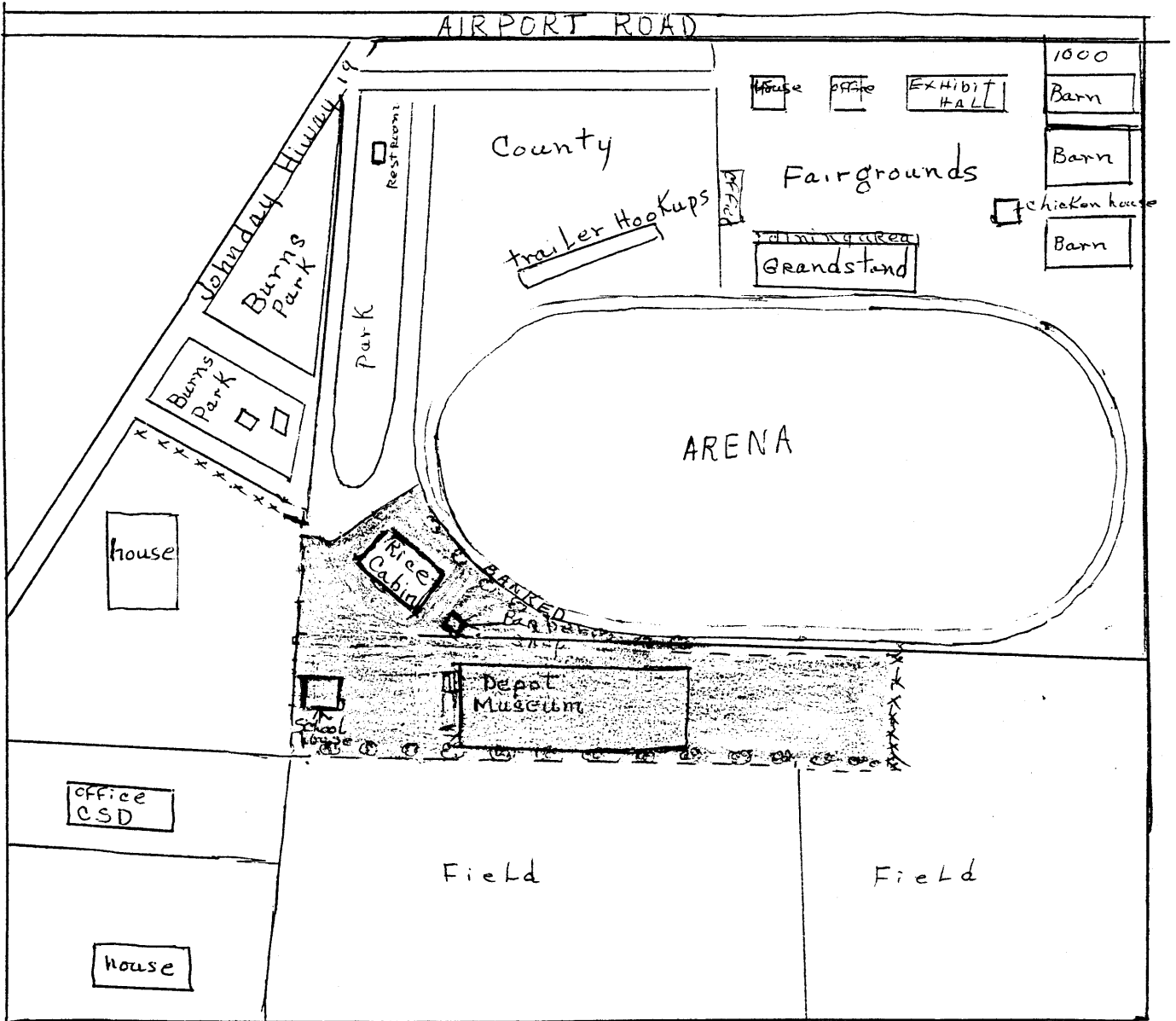
PREPARED BY THE  
OREGON STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION  
IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

Population 1,149

Scale in feet



February 1, 1961



Not to scale.

- owned by Hist. Soc.
- Leased From Gilliam County

### SITE PLAN

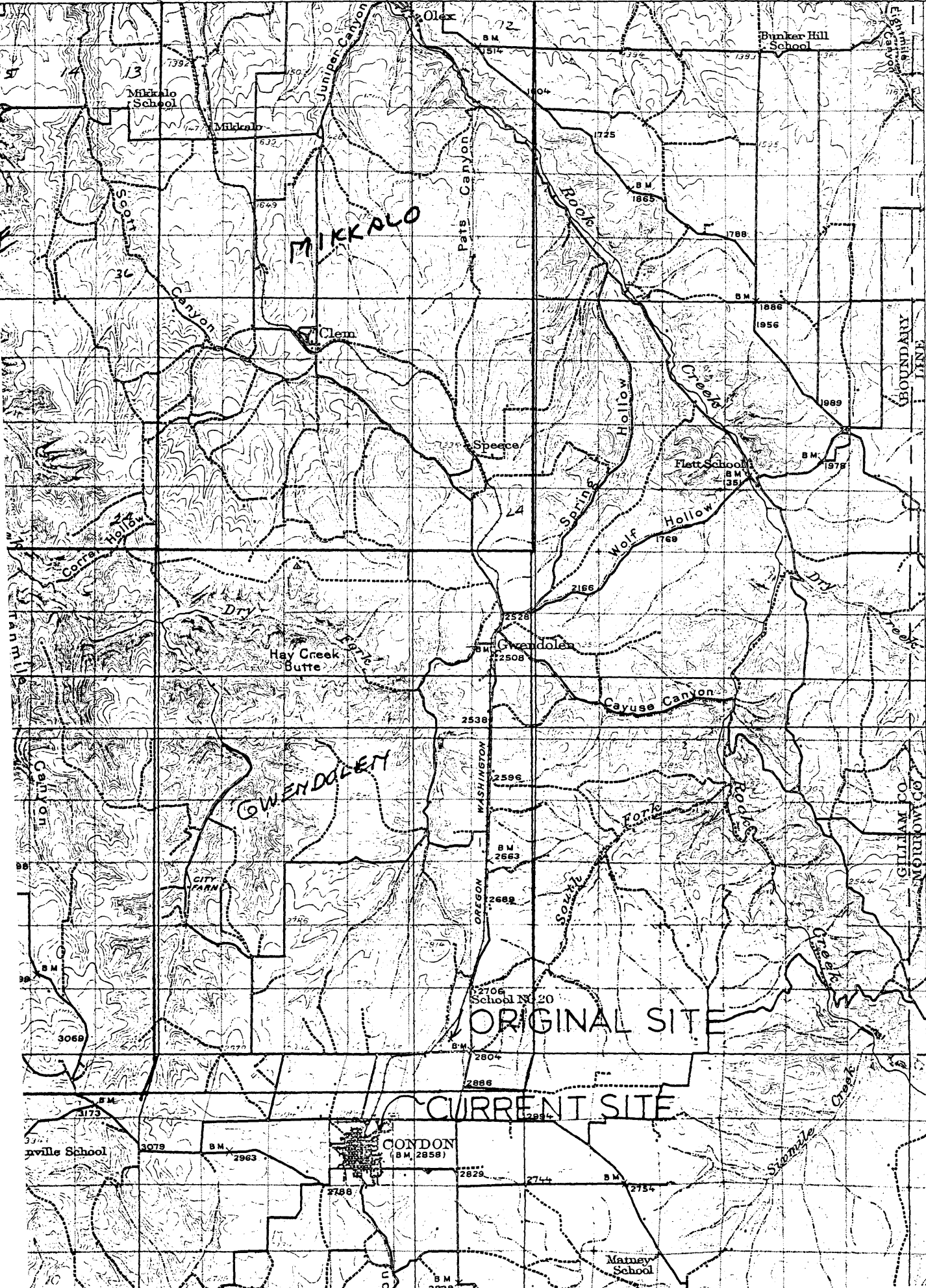


(Arlington)

R. 21 E. 10'

R. 22 E.

120° 00' 45" 30'



T. 1 S.

T. 2 S.

T. 3 S.

T. 4 S.

BOUNDARY LINE

ORIGINAL SITE

CURRENT SITE

CONDON  
(B.M. 2858)

Matney School

Mikkalo School

Bunker Hill School

Flett School

Hay Creek Butte

School No. 20

ville School

GWENDOLEN

MIKKALO

WASHINGTON  
OREGON

GILLIAM CO.  
MORROW CO.

UO

(Black)

75 21 10

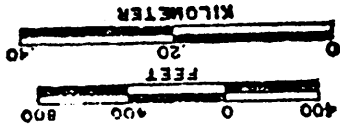
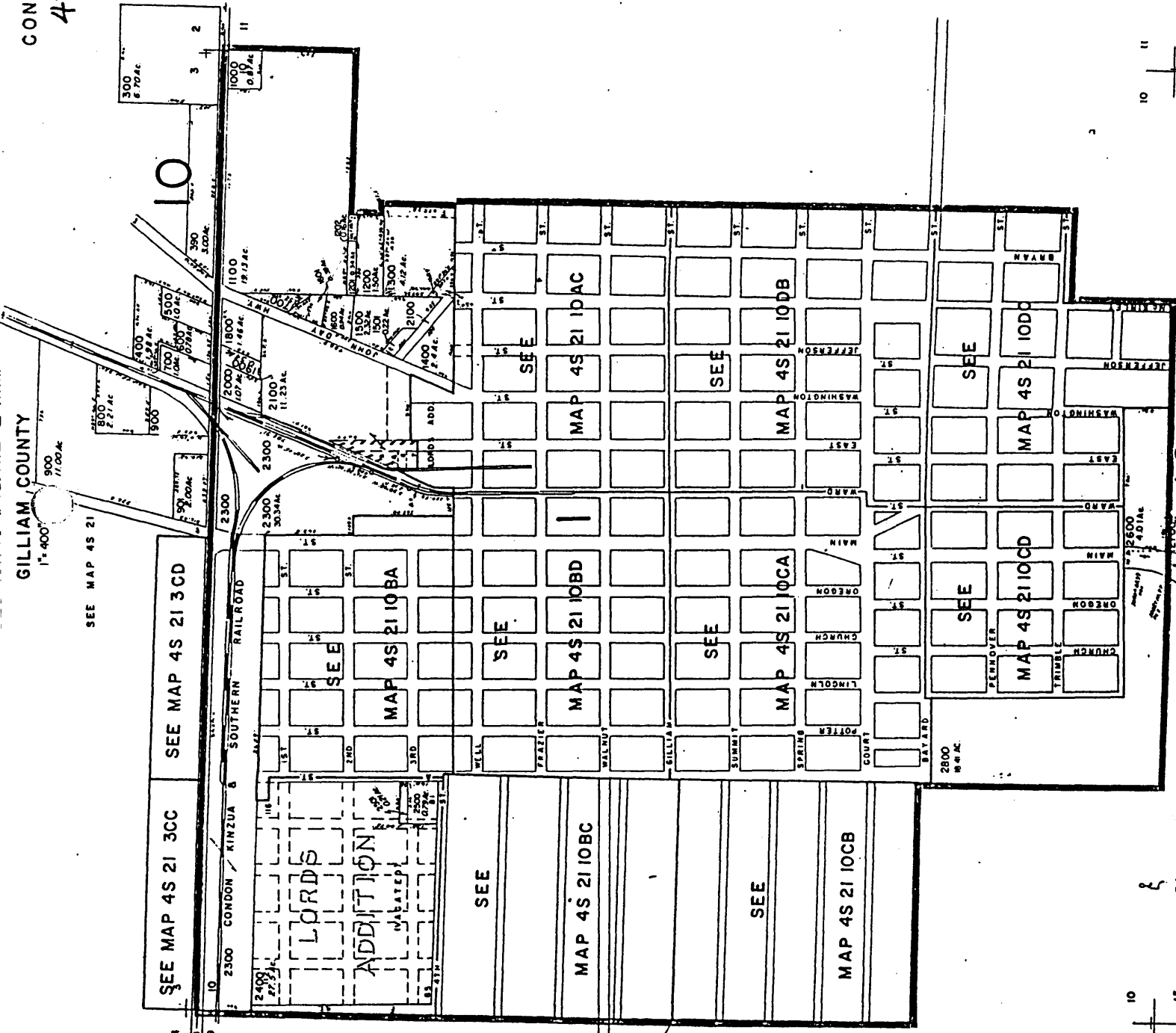
GILLIAM COUNTY  
CONDON & INTX

45 21 10

CANCELLED NOS  
100  
200  
2200

SEE MAP 45 21

570, 500



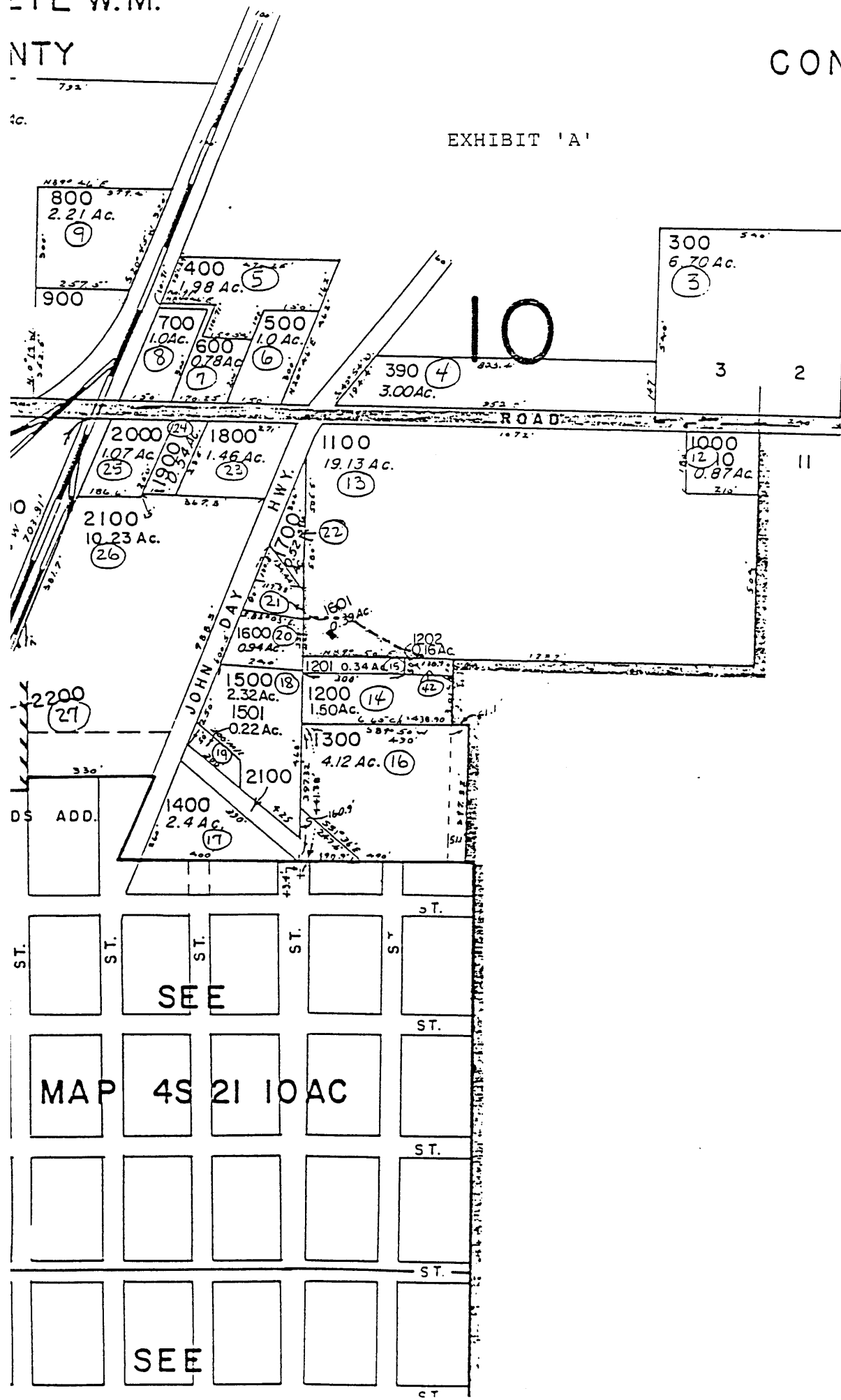
SCALE 1:5000

SEE MAP 45 21



**RECEIVED**  
 MAR 16 1990  
 DEPT. OF REVENUE, STATE OF OREGON  
 ASSESSMENT & APPRAISE DIV.

EXHIBIT 'A'



CANCELLED NO'S

- 100 (1)
- 200 (2)

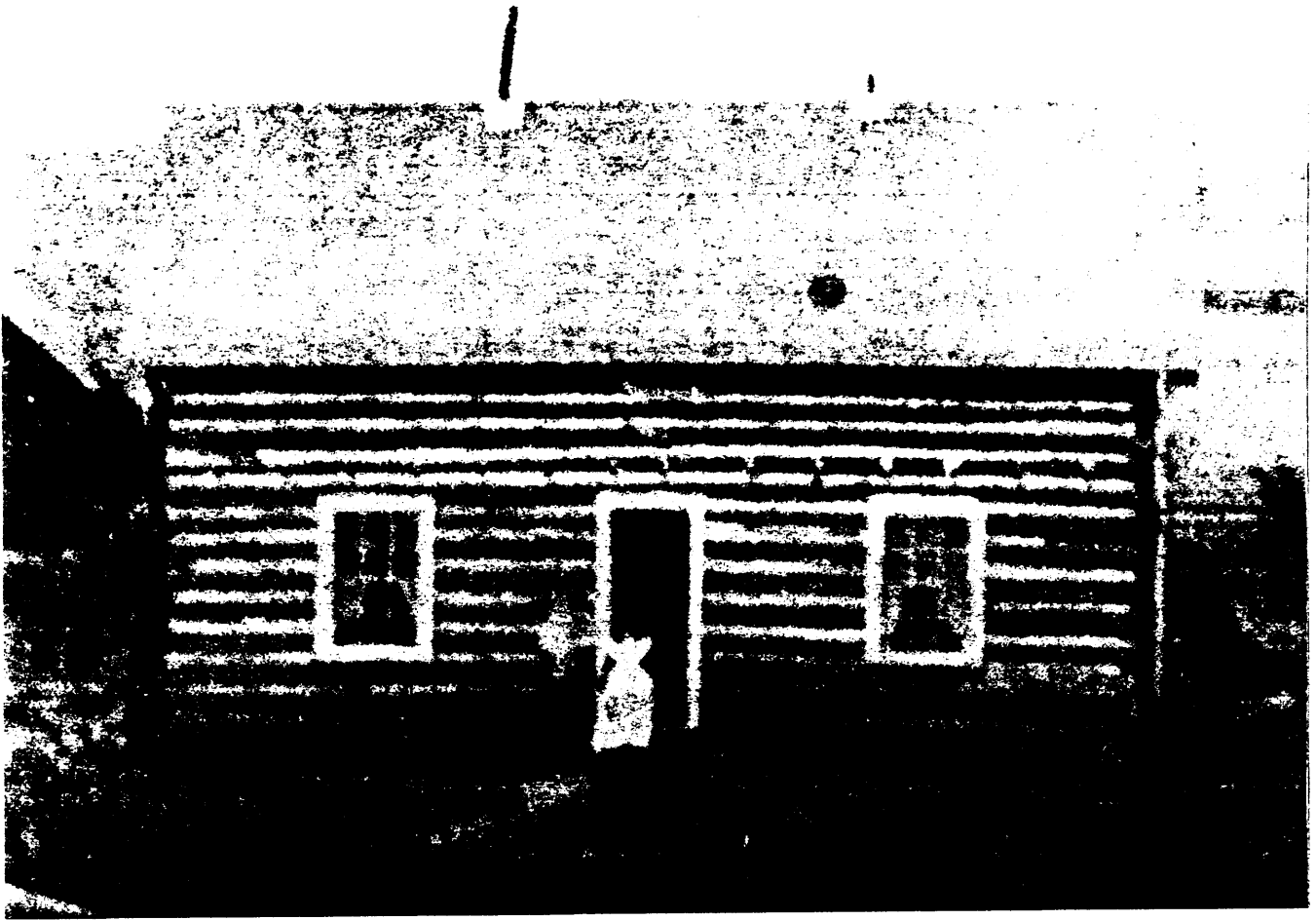
SEE

MAP 4S 21 10 AC

SEE

SEE MAP 4S 21

RICE, SILAS A., LCG HOUSE    CONDON, GILLIAM COUNTY



Historic view of north (front elevation), about 1885, original site.

RICE LOG HOUSE, CONDON VICINITY, GILLIAM COUNTY

OREGON HIGHWAY 19

1971

E. Walton Photos

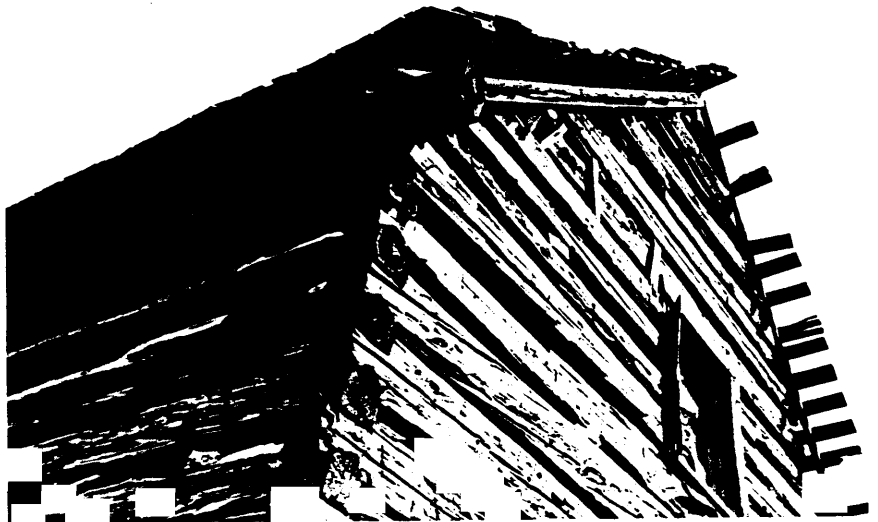
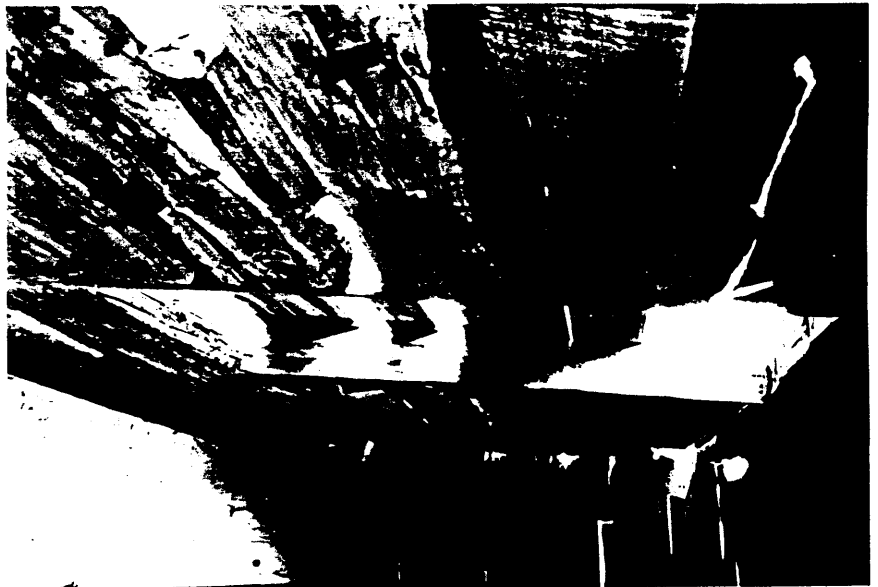
North and West Elevations

Original Site











RICE, SILAS A., LOG HOUSE    CONDON, GILLIAM COUNTY



South (front) elevation as restored. Jean Gilliam photograph, February 25, 1991. Present site on Gilliam County Fairgrounds, Burns Park at Condon.