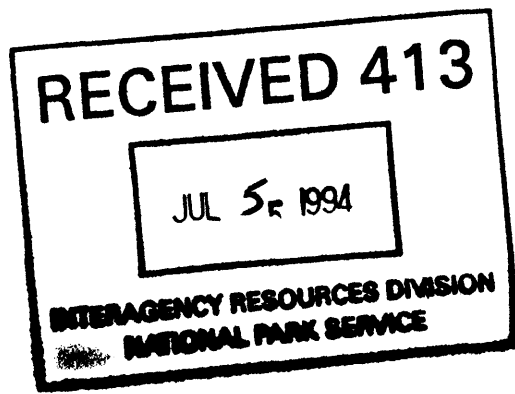


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ROOT-BANKS HOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 11 North Peach [1000 West Main] not for publication

city or town Medford vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Jackson code 029 zip code 97504

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hamrick June 27, 1994
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
8/5/94

Root-Banks House
Name of Property

Jackson County, Oregon
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic;Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade;Business [Office]

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/Early 20th c. American
Movements: Arts & Crafts

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Wood;Weatherboard
Brick
roof Wood;Shake
other Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

The Root-Banks House, built in 1915 with a substantial addition in 1922, is a single story wood frame residence designed by Medford architect Frank Chamberlain Clark in the Arts and Crafts Style. As the home of publisher-activist Llewellyn A. Banks, the house was the site of the fatal shooting of Sheriff George Prescott, the event which marked the end of the Good Government Congress period in Jackson County history. The Root-Banks House retains sufficient integrity to its historic appearance in site, setting, workmanship, and design to successfully relate the associations and events that make it significant .

SITE:

The Root-Banks House is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of North Peach and West Main Streets in a transitional commercial-residential corridor approximately one-quarter mile west of the Jackson County Courthouse and downtown Medford, Oregon. Fronting along West Main Street for slightly more than 80 feet, the corner lot also has a 140 foot frontage facing North Peach. A dirt alley lines the northern property boundary with the parking area for an adjacent commercial office use bordering the western property edge. Perimeter foundation plantings, a well-maintained lawn, and small trees surround the structure evoking a residential character. An early-appearing grape arbor is located to the rear, near the NW corner, between the main structure and the matching garage\apartment building.

The site of the Root-Banks House is legally described as Lot 1 and the eastern 24 feet of Lot 2, Block 1 of Cromwell's Amended Addition to Medford. It is further identified as tax lot 17300 on Jackson County Assessor's plat 37S-2W-25AC.

FRANK CHAMBERLAIN CLARK:

The architect of the Root-Banks House was the prolific Frank Chamberlain Clark (1872-1957) who arrived in the Rogue River Valley in 1903 and designed over 250 identified structures in the area during the next fifty years. Clark's impact on the Rogue Valley, as well as his significance as an architect, led to a survey of his work, funded by the Southern Oregon Historical Society and

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.¹ Numerous Clark-designed structures have subsequently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places for their architectural significance. While the original plans for the Root-Banks House are not known to exist, the building's construction was noted in a short article on Clark's current commissions published in the special 1915 New Year's edition of the *Medford Mail Tribune*. Under the heading "Building Outlook," Clark described the forthcoming \$12,000 structure as being "...of the better class of homes that will be built in this wonderful valley."² The builder or builders of the Root-Banks House have not been identified.

Stylistically, the Root-Banks House employs a variant of the Arts and Crafts Style that is commonly referred to as "Tudor." Typical elements include the half-timber-like treatment of the gable ends, the swept eaves (reminiscent of a thatch roof), and the elaborate raking cornices with pendants. Architectural historian Alan Gowans notes of what he calls "Tudorbethan" design that even at the architect-designed academic level (as opposed to mail-order design by what Gowans calls "near-architects") this style was often "confused" and somewhat eclectic despite well intentioned efforts at historically accurate designs.³ Of Clark's surveyed residential designs, twelve were determined to be in the Arts and Crafts style, making it one of the architect's more popular themes during the 1903-1920 period.⁴

In 1922, original owner John Root commissioned a major addition and remodel to the house, also designed by Clark. An article on the architect's current projects noted "John M. Root has also recently completed the library, living and dining rooms of his residence on West Main."⁵ This project is discussed in more detail under "Additions and Alterations," below.

As the Atwood-Evans survey of Clark's work notes, the Root-Banks House is but one of the architect's designs in the Arts and Crafts Style and, while significant, was not adjudged among the best examples of that style to be associated with Clark. As a result, although the involvement of the prominent Clark with the house certainly adds to the property's interest, it is not considered a determining factor in this nomination.

¹ See Kay Atwood and Gail Evans, *Frank Chamberlain Clark Inventory*, (Medford, Oregon, 1982). The Root-Banks House is included as Site 17, ranked as "Secondary."

² Frank C. Clark, Architect, "Building Outlook," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 1-January-1915, 5:2-3.

³ See Alan Gowans, *The Comfortable House*,: North American Suburban Architecture 1890-1930. (Cambridge, Massachusetts,: The MIT Press, 1986), 188. It is interesting to compare the mail order design by Henry L. Wilson, as published in *The Bungalow Book* (1913) and cited by Gowans, with the Root-Banks House.

⁴ Atwood and Evans, op. cit., 12.

⁵ *Medford Mail Tribune*, 9-March-1922, 8:1-2.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

CONSTRUCTION:

Exterior

The Root-Banks House rests on a perimeter concrete foundation. Lower portions of most exterior walls are clad with a veneer of bevel-edge Roman brick. This treatment continues to sill height along much of the south and east elevations and rises into bearing masonry columns that frame the major gable ends. These columns originally served as porch pillars prior to the enclosure of the full-width front porch. All brickwork is accentuated by formed caps and bases. A projecting stringcourse band ties the house together visually just below the height of the window sills. All remaining exterior surfaces are original narrow bevel-edge siding, approximately 2 1/2 inches to weather. A recessed concrete stairwell on the east elevation provides access to the cement root cellar and the full dirt floor basement beyond.

Gable ends are clad with the same narrow siding as the walls, overlaid with a series of vertical boards, painted a contrasting color, which are somewhat reminiscent of half-timbering, typical of the Tudor-variant of the Arts and Crafts Style. A projecting entablature-like band, with a slightly tapered base that rises to a central point, divides the gable-ends from the main wall area. In some instances (northeast corner of main building and the garage) this feature is visually supported by a series of projecting beam ends.

The wide projecting eaves of the Root-Banks House are supported by a series of over-size decorative outriggers that accent the soffit area, itself made of beadboard laid perpendicular to the wall plain. The wooden shake roof is highlighted with ornamental projecting hoods that sweep upwards gently at the end of each ridge. Gable ends are framed by a decorative raking cornice consisting of a plain board below a crown-type molding that splays outward at the eaves to create a decorative rectilinear "foot." A central pendent accents the ridge. Two brick chimneys, each with a corbeled cap, are also present.

Exterior windows in the main portion of the house are mixed 1\1 wood-sash double hung, multi-light wood casement, set in banks of three or more, and modern metal-frame windows. The infill windows that close off the original front porch and entry are mixed wood sash (1\1 double hung, fixed panel, and multi-light bands), metal double-hung, and translucent 6"x6" glass block.⁶ The original 4' wide wooden entry door, which figured prominently in the events of March 16th, 1933,

⁶ Please see below, Alterations and Additions, for a discussion of the reused window panels that enclose the original porches.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

survives as the North Peach Street entrance. The early pressed metal house numbers denoting the "1000" West Main Street address, visible in historic photos of the front porch, remain above the West Main Street entrance.

Interior:

The original interior spaces of the Root-Banks House retain the majority of their historic wall treatments, door and window trim, and other features. What are now the public areas, identified as "Lobby" on the attached floorplan, constitute the living and dining room areas during the residential period. A massive stone fireplace dominates the space, rising from a white marble hearth set into the floor. Dark wood trim above the projecting mantle tie into the heavy stained beams that form the vaulted ceiling in a coffer-like pattern.⁷ A stepped archway, with small protruding panels, divides the living and dining room areas. The dining room [the northern "wing" of the lobby area] also has a beamed and coffered ceiling although here there is no vaulting and the fields enframed by the beams are all wood. Door and window trim is generally original wide board with parting bead, crown, and other typical period detailing. Window seats line the eastern elevation. Various original hardware and light fixtures also remain.

The main entry foyer, accessed via a flight of stairs on the North Peach elevation, has a 7' high wainscot surround with a built-in window seat of matching wood. The 4' wide entry door retains the original glass orb and handle that is clearly visible in historic interior photos taken during Banks' occupancy. The three spaces formed by the enclosure of the front porch [identified as Office 1, Office 2, and the conference room on the attached floorplan] are generally detailed in modern fashion with plasterboard walls and ceiling.

It is unclear to what extent spatial arrangement varies from the original configuration in much of the front portion of the dwelling. Office 4, which retains a built-in cabinet along most its northern wall may have been a part of the larger living area. Office 5, which boasts a coffered ceiling detail of the type found in the public spaces, was likely the "Library" referred to in the 1922 article regarding Root's addition. Here, that project likely constituted more of a remodel or new finish treatment to a previously existing space than a true addition. The small closet at the SE corner of Office 5 [see plan] retains a bank of early-appearing file shelves, supporting the presumed library

⁷ Compare this vaulted ceiling with the similar design of the library at the Madden-McCaskey House [Central Point, Oregon], remodeled by architect Frank Clark in the early 1920s, and nominated to the National Register in 1993. Construction and detailing, though on a smaller scale than at the Root-Banks House, is virtually identical.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

or office use. As in the public spaces, window seats, with built-in storage, line the exterior walls in each of these west facing offices.

Office 6, almost certainly an original bedroom, provides access to an early bathroom, complete with built-in linen storage cabinet and large bathtub. Wall finish here is pink and black ceramic tile. Following conversion of the Root-Banks house to office use, a glass block partition wall was constructed dividing this space in half and thus creating a second bathroom which is accessible via the central hallway.

The northernmost portion of the Root-Bank House [likely the bedrooms of the original 1914 design] consists of three major spaces arrayed around an early bathroom. Retaining virtually all of the original wide-board trim, window surround, base and other details, parts of this area have been modified via the construction partition walls that create a variety of small offices. A small rear kitchen, apparently a portion of the original residential kitchen to the south, most likely dates from the multi-occupancy rental period of the early 1940s. The remaining portion of the original kitchen area retains c.1940s cabinets and built-in features as well as the side exit door shown in plan. The eastern facing gabled wing, at the NE corner, was originally an open porch.

Outbuilding:

To the rear of the Root-Banks House, facing North Peach Street, is a matching wood-frame garage, approximately 17' wide and 35' deep. A full-width driveway made of brick forms a parking area to the east. It is unclear whether or not the garage dates from the original 1914 construction period or was a later addition to the property.⁸ The detailing of the structure is identical to the main house with matching horizontal siding, gable end treatment, windows and swept eaves. The original wooden sliding garage doors survive. The rear portion of this structure has been remodeled to create a small one and one-half story apartment.

ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS:

While the exact dimensions and characteristics of the 1922 Clark-designed addition to the Root-Banks House cannot be entirely discerned, it seems clear that the building footprint was extended to the south at that time. As mentioned above, the "Lobby" spaces identified in the attached

⁸ Banks is known to have been an automobile aficionado, owning two Cadillacs. See Section 8, page 2.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

floorplan were likely the living and dining rooms referred to by Clark in his review of the project. Office 5, probably a previously existing living area, was remodeled into the library mentioned at the same time.⁹ The full-width front porch was also added to the house at this time, likely replacing an earlier front porch further north from West Main Street that was sacrificed for the construction of the newer spaces.¹⁰

Subsequent to the events of 1933 and the later residential uses of the Root-Banks House, little alteration to the exterior dwelling is known to have occurred to the house during the 1940s and early 1950s. Various interior remodeling, particularly to the bathroom adjacent to Office 6 and the kitchen areas may date from the pre-1960 period although this is not documented. By 1959, while still owned by the Earhardts, the Root-Banks House had been at least partially converted to office use as the site of a local hearing aid agency.¹¹ Sometime during this period, possibly as late as 1965, the front and rear porch spaces were enclosed, presumably to provide more rentable space.

In enclosing the front and rear porches, the unknown contractor reused the original windows, doors and trim to a great extent. The West Main Street windows, originally lighting the living room, were moved forward and incorporated into the new front elevation. Translucent glass blocks were employed as sidelights at the front entrance and are also present at various other locations of the original porch area. The multi-pane cottage windows that originally lined the east-facing bay window of the living room area were moved as a unit to the rear porch. The massive front door, along with the interior wainscot and other details of the foyer, were shifted and re-oriented to their present location facing North Peach. A small notch, at least hypothetically the path of the fatal bullet fired on 16-March-1933, is still visible on the door. Original exterior light fixtures, made of cast metal and detailed in a vaguely oriental-lantern like design, were also reused around the exterior. At some undetermined time the original 3-tab asphalt roof was replaced with the present shakes and the projecting hoods at the gable ends were added.

⁹ See *Medford Mail Tribune*, 9-March-1922, 8:1-2.

¹⁰ Physical examination of the both the foundation and roof structure of the Root-Banks House was inconclusive in determining the exact extent of the 1922 project.

¹¹ Local informants report that a doctors office was also located in the building although this is not confirmed. Personal communication with the author, Beverly DeVries, Southern Oregon Hearing Aid Center, and Mrs. Mickey Cass, 6-October-1993. Mrs. Cass has lived opposite the Root-Banks House since 1948. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of the house, first documented in 1927 and subsequently updated, indicate that portions of the porch enclosure may date as early as 1954.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

In more recent years, following a long period of heavy commercial use, various other alterations have occurred. Some windows, particularly those facing the harsh western sun, have been replaced with modern metal sash. The coffered ceiling in the living room portion of the lobby has been partially altered with a sprayed acoustic material and modern florescent lighting fixtures have been installed in most office spaces.

SUMMARY:

Built almost 80 years ago as the impressive residence of a wealthy orchardist, augmented by a major addition in 1922, and then occupied by the publisher-activist Llewellyn A. Banks, the Root-Banks House retains considerably integrity to its historic appearance. Although it has been used for over 30 years as a professional office, the building and site continue to evoke the original residential character of the structure in setting, landscape features, workmanship and design. The Root-Banks House successfully relates its historic period and accurately conveys the associations and events which make it significant.

Root-Banks House
Name of Property

Jackson County, Oregon
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Social History

Period of Significance

1926-1933 [Banks' occupancy]

Significant Dates

16-March-1933 [Prescott Shooting]

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Clark, Frank Chamberlain[Architect]
Unknown [Builder]

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Jackson Cty Courthouse

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Continuation Sheet

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SHPO SUMMARY

The single-story Arts and Crafts style house of wood frame construction standing at the northwest corner of West Main and North Peach Streets near downtown Medford was built as a town house for the orchardist John M. Root in 1914. The design was provided by leading Rogue Valley architect Frank C. Clark, who also oversaw an extensive remodeling and enlargement of the house for the original owner in 1922.

The house is significant under Criterion A because it relates to a pivotal event in the short-lived but explosive Good Government Congress period in local political history. The nomination contains a meticulous account of the so-called Jackson County rebellion of 1930-1933, which was fomented by second owner, L. A. Banks and his fellow publisher-activist, Earl Fehl. It was Fehl who, in taking office as County Judge in 1933, precipitated a crisis of power in county government. The Populist-leaning Good Government Congress organized and rallied to support Fehl and oppose tactical and legal challenges by the established government. Fehl and Banks were charged with resorting to criminal conspiracy to secure their advantage. Unrest in the Jackson County seat during the months of February and March, 1933 was widespread enough for Governor Julius Meier to place the National Guard on alert. The Oregon State Police as well as the local constabulary were involved in the arrests of the Good Government Congress leaders. Robert Ruhl, editor of the *Medford Mail Tribune*, won a Pulitzer prize for his editorial campaign against unscrupulous political activism.

The house, as historically remodeled, is unusual in the body of work in traditional styles by Clark because of its I-shaped mass composed as a main rectangular, gable-roofed volume with cross-gable sections at either end. Notwithstanding a conversion to office use beginning in 1959, the house conveys today the essential character of its historic period. Its gable verges are accented by distinctive hooded peaks, and gable ends are decorated with vertical stickwork akin to half timbering. Exterior walls and gable ends are clad with narrow, lapped weatherboards, and end sections are faced with red brick to the eaves line. In the tradition of late medieval archetypes on which the Arts and Crafts aesthetic was based in part, casement window banks have strong vertical and horizontal divisions in the form of mullions and transoms. Picture windows have multiple top lights and are flanked

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1B

by double-hung windows. Glass block used for the Peach Street entrance sidelights and elsewhere are later insertions associated with the adaptive use.

Located in a transitional residential/commercial corridor, the house was adapted for business use beginning in 1959. While beamed ceilings, door and window trim and a number of built-in cabinetry features are intact on the interior, much of the space has been subdivided for offices. The living and dining rooms, however, which historically were scarcely separate spaces, today function as a lobby, the two sections of which are demarcated by the original portiere arch. The livingroom section now has overhead fluorescent lighting fixtures and sprayed-on acoustical material between its ceiling beams.

Counted as a separately contributing features is the garage, which stands in a good state of preservation off the north end of the house. The detached building, finished in complement to the house, contains a compact, two-story auxiliary apartment unit in its west half. Owing largely to its renovation, the house was given secondary rank in the comprehensive inventory of Frank Clark work completed by Kay Atwood and Gail Evans in 1982 under auspices of the Southern Oregon Historical Society with assistance from the State Historic Preservation Office.

It was in 1929 that Lewellyn Banks (1870-1945) acquired the property which was destined to become the setting of a pivotal event in local Depression-era politics. Banks, who had been attracted to the Rogue Valley by the orchard industry, branched out as editor and publisher of the *Medford Daily News* to promote his anti-government and big business philosophy. When he shot and killed Sheriff George Prescott at the front door opening onto West Main Street on the mid-morning of March 16, 1933, he effectively brought to an end the political turmoil he had helped to create in the fertile climate of economic depression. The Root-Banks House is locally significant in the areas of politics and social history as the place most notoriously associated with the Good Government Congress and its prime inspirator.

The environmental aspect of this corner property at a busy intersection west of downtown has changed since Banks resisted his arrest in 1933. Commercial development has encroached, and trees are no longer present in the parking strip. But in other respects, the house is readily recognizable as the place where Banks shot one

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1C

of his arresting officers with a rifle. Banks never returned to the house following this fateful act of aggression which, some believe, stemmed from paranoia over serious financial reverses. He was jailed in Josephine County, tried in Lane County and served out a life sentence in the Oregon Penitentiary. He died in prison in 1945 at the age of 73. Without active leaders, the Good Government Congress lost momentum quickly. It had died out altogether long before the time of Earl Fehl's death in 1962.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

Completed in 1915 for local entrepreneur John M. Root and later the home and office of Llewellyn Banks, the notorious leader of the Good Government Congress, the Root-Banks House is a one-story wood-frame dwelling built in the Arts and Crafts Style from a design by local architect Frank Chamberlain Clark. As the site of the fatal shooting of Jackson County Sheriff George Prescott in 1933, the event which marked the dramatic conclusion of what has been called Jackson County's "civil war," the Root-Banks House is significant under Criterion "A" for its association with the Good Government Congress and the unusual role it played in Jackson County's political and social history.

JOHN M. ROOT:

The original owner of the Root-Banks House was noted orchardist, developer, and entrepreneur, John M. Root who arrived in Medford as one the many easterners drawn to the area during the so-called "Orchard Boom" of 1909-1912. Root built an orchard home [known as "Oak Lodge"] on King's Highway, southwest of Medford and quickly became influential in a number of Medford-area projects.¹ Apparently deciding to have a "town residence" to augment the orchard dwelling, a typical desire of the wealthy orchard class in Medford, Root purchased the subject parcel at the corner of West Main and Peach streets in March 1914.

In January of the following year, local architect Frank Chamberlain Clark announced that plans were ready for a "...residence that will undoubtedly be erected in the summer which will cost about \$12,000 [one] of the better class of homes that will be built in this wonderful valley." Clark and Root had worked together previously on other projects, including the Sparta Building, completed in 1911 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

Root continued to reside in the house, apparently using it as his primary residence. In 1922 he commissioned a substantial addition, including the library, living and dining room. In 1929 the house was sold to Llewellyn A. Banks.

¹ Among other ventures, Root was the president of the Medford Building Company, which erected the Sparta Building at Main and Riverside, listed on the National Register in 1992.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

LLEWELLYN A. BANKS:

Llewellyn Banks, often referred to in print as L.A. Banks, was a wealthy orchardist in southern California prior to his arrival in Jackson County in 1926. Born in 1870 in Ohio, Banks' father operated an orchard in that state and as a young man, Llewellyn had toured the nation as a representative of a Cleveland-based fruit-distributor. In 1909 he settled in Riverside, California and soon owned and operated an extensive tract of lemon and orchard groves, as well as his own packing house. Banks amassed a substantial fortune and lived in what was later described as a "palatial" home.

In 1921, Banks came to the Rogue River Valley, which he had visited briefly in 1910, to investigate the circumstances of a local orchardist who owed the Riverside packer a large sum of money. The grower, mired in other debts, signed his orchard over to Banks....²

Acquiring other Rogue Valley orchard tracts, most notably the Suncrest Orchard, outside of Talent, Banks soon became a major figure in the southern Oregon orchard industry. While maintaining his holdings in Riverside, Banks continued to expand his Oregon holdings, eventually building his own packing plant near Voorhies Crossing, south of Medford. A well-educated and cultured individual, Banks' 1926 move to the Rogue Valley was an event of some note. "He was pretty flamboyant in dress and he took a leadership role in whatever he was doing."³ His lifestyle was the subject of much discussion among the locals. "His West Main Street home was carpeted with Oriental rugs; his two Cadillacs, one a touring car and the other a coupe, added to the impression of wealth."⁴

From the start, Banks sudden entrance into the close-knit valley orchard industry caused a stir. An individualist, Banks chafed at the established way of doing things and resented the pricing policies of Medford's existing packing houses. His own packing house, operated on a "cash-basis" was apparently more "grower-oriented" and Banks' policies soon earned him the loyalty of many of the smaller orchardists in the out-lying regions of the valley while at the same time alienating him from the remainder of Medford's business community and its leaders. Much of Banks' philosophy represented a practical exercise of the political beliefs of the Populist-era and,

² Jeffrey Max LaLande, *"It Can't Happen Here" in Oregon: The Jackson County Rebellion, 1932-1933, and its 1890s-1920s Background.* Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, University of Oregon, June 1993. 107-08.

³ Janet Guches, personal communication with the author, 6-September-1993. Mrs. Guches, then eighteen years old, served as Banks' secretary in 1932-1933.

⁴ LaLande, 106.

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

as his actions and public persona took on more and more of an anti-government, anti-big business character, he developed a huge following among Jackson County's dissatisfied rural and agrarian elements. Many of these individuals, comparing their small-scale efforts and limited profits with those of the large, eastern-bred, orchardists and packing-house owners, resented the increasing concentration of wealth and power in the business leaders and elected officials who were thought to be running the county for their own benefit.⁵

In 1929, Banks' purchased the financially struggling *Medford Daily News*, Jackson County's only morning daily and the weak rival of the area's dominate paper, the *Medford Mail Tribune*. In characteristic fashion, Banks undertook a substantial upgrading of the paper's capability, moving into new offices and purchasing high-capacity modern printing equipment. It was clear he intended his first foray into the newspaper business as a serious venture, one that could challenge the establishment *Mail Tribune* and its publisher Robert Ruhl.⁶

Writing in a regular editorial column entitled "Once in A While," Banks used the *Daily News* as a vehicle for increasingly skill commentaries on national and local events of concern to the area's rural and populist-leaning citizens. Attacks upon government regulation, financial institutions, the power company, establishment packing houses, and various civic officials were typical of his writings.

A number of related themes recurred regularly in Banks' writings after 1930: an anti-government and anti-corporate individualism, a blend of Western populism that focused on conspiracy theory, a political stance that can be seen in some respects as semi-fascist, and a visionary — almost apocalyptic — approach to the Depression as America's moment of truth.⁷

Characterizing his enemies as "the gang," Banks' paper grew in popularity and Banks himself, often described as a charismatic, almost hypnotic, public speaker, developed a large and devoted following.

⁵ The evolution of the populist movement and the divisions between the rural and urban populations of Jackson County, as well as Banks own role in this period, are the focus of LaLande as cited above. LaLande's research provides the primary basis for much of the discussion presented herein.

⁶ See George S. Turnbull, *History of Oregon Newspapers*. (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1939), 253. Turnbull notes "Banks had some ideas, but a certain lack of balance was apparent from the beginning. He was antagonistic and suspicious."

⁷ LaLande, 111.

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Banks' writings and actions were echoed by Earl Fehl, contractor, perennially unsuccessful candidate for office, and most importantly, publisher of the *Pacific Herald-News*, another paper that often challenged the "establishment" on a number of local issues. In Earl Fehl, Banks found a vocal ally and together the two began the quest for local political power that would culminate in the so-called "Jackson County Rebellion."⁸

THE JACKSON COUNTY REBELLION: 1930-1932

In the summer of 1930, as the Depression began to deepen, both Banks and Fehl were facing mounting debts and, soon, a number of legal actions to settle outstanding notes. Banks, perhaps buoyed by his local following, entered the race for U.S. Senator as an independent candidate, campaigning against Republican incumbent Charles McNary. Generally dismissed as a serious candidate, Banks won only 7% of the statewide vote. In Jackson County, however, he polled almost 40 percent, coming within 700 votes of the popular McNary. Fehl, who had run for Mayor of Medford also lost in the 1930 election but showed increasing political strength. "Fehl's strongest showing came from the same working-class and lower-middle-class precincts that had supported Banks' bid for the Senate."⁹

This outpouring of rural support was not lost on the two crusading publishers and they soon focused their editorial efforts on local issues, haranguing the "gang," particularly the *Mail Tribune's* Ruhl, District Attorney George Coddling, Circuit Court Judge H.D. Norton, and Sheriff Ralph Jennings. As financial woes grew among the valley's farmers and more mortgages were foreclosed, the resentment directed toward the "gang" increased, providing more and more support for Banks and Fehl. By 1932 discontent in Jackson County, fostered in no small part by Banks and Fehl, had reached epidemic proportions. In the primary election of that year Banks and Fehl, through their editorials, supported a loosely organized slate of candidates for a variety of public offices as alternatives to "the gang" candidates. Fehl himself ran for the Republican nomination to the office of County Judge, the head of the Board of Commissioners and the chief officer of Jackson County government as it was then organized. To the surprise, and presumably dismay, of what Banks and Fehl referred to as the "Coddling-Tribune Syndicate," Fehl won the nomination with a solid majority. Other candidates did well but, with exception of Gordon Schermerhorn, whom the *Mail Tribune* called the "Banks-Fehl insurgent" candidate for Sheriff,

⁸ Fehl's surname rhymes with "pail."

⁹ LaLande, 129.

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none were successful in securing nomination for the November election.¹⁰

Throughout the Fall of 1932, Jackson County grew increasingly divided as political tensions mounted surrounding the coming election and the growing threat of violence between the "gang" and the "insurgents." National politics, with Franklin Roosevelt opposing Herbert Hoover, set a somewhat bitter tone that was heightened at the local office level. An ancillary issue to the campaign arose regarding a recall effort against Circuit Court Judge H.D. Norton, led by the Banks-Fehl coalition. Bitterly divisive, the recall effort eventually failed but served as a rallying call for the insurgents.¹¹ Most of the energy on both sides focused on the outcome of the race for the powerful position of Jackson County Judge. Facing Fehl was a field of three other candidates, former Medford mayor A.W. Pipes, William Phipps, and the *Mail Tribune*-backed candidate C.E. "Pop" Gates, a long popular former Mayor of Medford. "Pop," by then essentially retired from public life, was more or less "drafted" into the race by the concerned establishment as a compromise candidate who would hopefully appeal to both urban and rural voters.

"Pop" is the man who can win, and the man who can harmonize the various conflicting factions that are disrupting the county, and thus get southern Oregon united and hitting on high once more.¹²

In large part due to Pipes and Phipps splitting the opposition to the "insurgent" effort, Fehl defeated Gates by over 1300 votes, winning the election for County Judge. Gordon Schermerhorn, running against incumbent Sheriff Ralph Jennings, also won election. Jennings, who had lost the Democratic primary to Schermerhorn, had mounted a write-in campaign that was almost successful in keeping him in office, losing by less than 150 votes to the Banks-Fehl backed Schermerhorn. Rightly suspicious of election fraud, Sheriff Jennings called for a recount.¹³ George Coddling, the despised incumbent District Attorney had defeated M.O.

¹⁰ In some races, both in the primary and again in the Fall election, the Banks-Fehl group ran "favorite son" candidates who, although given little chance of winning themselves, served to divide the electorate, hopefully in a favorable way.

¹¹ Norton, who was not up for re-election in 1932, had made what were considered unfavorable rulings to the "insurgent" cause and was the focus of much acrimony in both Banks' and Fehl's editorials. It should be noted the recall effort was begun following Norton's refusal to recuse himself for "prejudice" from hearing various legal actions against Banks for indebtedness. See Banks' column entitled "Will the Gang Win?" *Medford Daily News*, 25-February-1933 for a biased chronology of these events.

¹² "Gate Petitions for County Judge in Field Monday," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 18-September-1932, 1:7.

¹³ Complicated by the write-in candidacy, many ballots for Jennings had been "dismissed" for minor errors in how they had been compiled. A recent legal ruling that stated a ballot was valid if the voters *intent* was clear had, according to Jennings supporters, not been followed in the final tally.

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Wilkens, one of Banks' own lawyers, to retain his office.

Searching for a silver lining in what must have been a rebuke to its anti-Banks and Fehl stance, the *Mail Tribune* ran an editorial that made the best of the results under the headline, "George Codding Is Vindicated."

Needless to say, many of the results of Tuesday's election were disappointing. But there were many compensations. First and foremost was the re-election of George Codding as District Attorney.¹⁴

The *Mail Tribune* went on to plea for unity, stating "So now the battle of the ballots is over, let's get together, not behind this faction or that, but behind the entire community..."¹⁵ Banks and Fehl, however, seemed little inclined to mend fences. To the insurgents, the election was proof that "the people" had spoken for an end to "gang rule" and that they now had a mandate for their agenda of political change in Jackson County.

THE GOOD GOVERNMENT CONGRESS: 1933

In late November and December 1932, as Fehl prepared to assume office, the political situation in Jackson County reached explosive proportions. Sheriff-elect Schermerhorn, fearing the results of a potential ballot recount, went into hiding to preclude being served with papers that might postpone his assumption of office. The pitch of Banks' editorials grew more and more violent as increased threats toward non-insurgent office holders became more common. District Attorney Codding, as well as Commissioner Norton, were given nighttime guards at their homes by members of the American Legion and armed "vigilance committees" were reportedly roaming the county under Banks direction, ready to seize control. Robert Ruhl received threats of sabotage and feared for the safety of his children.¹⁶

On New Years Eve, the out-going County Judge, Charles Lamkin, orchestrated the resignation of elderly commissioner John Barneburg and, along with another "lame duck" commissioner, Victor Bursell, replaced him with the young and active R. Emmett Nealon, seen as a potential counter to the incoming Earl Fehl. This "midnight" appointment quite naturally outraged Banks, Fehl, and their supporters and was seen as a continuation of "Gang Rule," greatly adding to already feverish

¹⁴ "George Codding is Vindicated," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 10-November-1932, 8:2-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ See LaLande, 151.

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political tensions in the valley. On January 1st, 1933, having been sworn in by Fehl, Sheriff Schermerhorn reappeared and assumed his office. Controversy, and confusion, reigned throughout the Jackson County Courthouse. Fehl, now in control of the County Court, issued bench warrants for the arrest of former commissioners Lamkin and Bursell and then fined them for contempt when they failed to appear. Huge crowds of supporters surrounded the courthouse, spilling out of the halls and onto the lawn. Contesting the legality of the Nealon appointment, Fehl refused to hold court with him as a member.

For the first week of January, as the Oregon attorney general's office investigated the legal tangle, two separate "county commissions" met at the courthouse; one in the formal court chambers and the other in Judge Fehl's new quarters down the hall....When the attorney general ruled in favor of Nealon's midnight appointment...a number of Fehl supporters arrived outside Nealon's Central Point home, demanding his resignation.¹⁷

Concern over Medford's political upheaval were sweeping the state. An editorial from *Baker Herald-Democrat* entitled "Civil War In Medford," read in part;

The beautiful city of Medford is getting in the headlines oftener these days that is good for her....the other day nearly 1000 irate citizens marched to the court house to demand resignations....two former commissioners have been arrested [and] charges of collusion...have been handed out. The "war" seems to have been started by one Llewellyn Banks, publisher of the Medford News. Banks has been stirring up the animals ever since he landed in Medford...¹⁸

As concern mounted over the growing influence, and potential violence, of the Banks and Fehl supporters, Medford's "establishment" finally roused itself to an organized effort at re-asserting "order" in southern Oregon. Medford attorneys E.E. Kelley and Porter Neff led an effort that culminated in a mass meeting at the Medford Armory on January 19th, drawing a crowd of some 1200-1500 people. Not to be outdone, as word of the planning efforts of the opposition became known, Banks and Fehl took steps to formally organize what soon became known as "the Good Government Congress," or GGC. Though his editorial column, Banks urged the creation of "Good Government Clubs" and cautioned his supporters to "... remember that enemies of the

¹⁷ Ibid, 154.

¹⁸ 'Civil War in Medford', as quoted in *Medford Mail Tribune*, 19-January-1933, 4:2-3.

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Good Government Congress are not asleep....¹⁹ The first organizational meeting of the Congress was held at the Jackson County Courthouse, in Judge Fehl's chambers, on January 18th. Less than a week later, on the 23rd, a second meeting of organizers drew some 250 people. "Although Judge Fehl provided the [Courthouse] facility for these meetings, he maintained a discrete distance; Llewellyn Banks, in contrast, was involved centrally in both of them."²⁰ Banks' influential role in the GGC was formalized by his election as its "honorary president."

On February 4th, the first Good Government Congress assembly was held at the Medford Armory, attracting a crowd generally estimated at over 2,000 people. Banks was introduced as "the man of the hour" and spoke at length of his vision of a revitalized Jackson County when "gang rule" was broken once and for all. Judge Fehl also spoke to the group, although advised not to appear, complaining to the assembly that he;

....had put five hard weeks in trying to bring about a reformation in your government. Here's what's been accomplished in five weeks: Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And it will go on that way until you people begin to rise up and demand a government that is representative of the people.²¹

Banks and the GGC, backed by Judge Fehl, continued to meet throughout February 1933. On the 16th of that month, under a banner headline claiming Banks' desire to be the "Dictator" of Jackson County, the *Mail Tribune* began a series of articles designed to reveal the truth of the Good Government Congress, its membership, and its leaders. Under a sub-heading reading "People Pawns in Effort to Grab County Offices," the series opened with an editorial note stating;

The articles are published with the view of thoroughly informing citizens of the county as to the motives behind the movement and what may be expected should the effort prove successful....Complete control of the courts of this county would be advantageous to Banks, it is pointed out, but rather disadvantageous to those who are forced to seek the last resort in collecting an honest debt.²²

As County Judge, Fehl's position as the chief elected official in local government greatly complicated the legal situation. Factions of elected officials, either GGC backed or in opposition,

¹⁹ "How to Do It." [Editorial] *Medford Daily News*, 25-January-1933, 1:1.

²⁰ LaLande, 161.

²¹ E. Fehl speech excerpts, "Good Government Congress etc." file (Jackson County Archives) as quoted in LaLande, 162.

²² *Medford Mail Tribune*, 16-February-1933, 1:6.

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used the power of their respective offices to attempt to gain control of county government. Repeated efforts on the part of District Attorney Coddington would be countered by Judge Fehl and the situation became increasingly complex as lines of authority were overlaid, case after case. Open vigilante efforts on the part of the GGC were the result of increased mistrust of traditional legal channels and the situation grew more and more threatening as Sheriff Schermerhorn was reported in the process of "deputizing" huge numbers of Banks-Fehl loyalists and rounding up opposition leaders. Public threats of the hangman's noose and other similar forms of mob violence became commonplace.

Clearly, a climax to the situation was approaching. The beginning of the end for the Good Government Congress occurred on the evening of 20-February-1933. The recount request of former Sheriff Ralph Jennings had wound its way through the legal system to a visiting Circuit Court Judge, George Skipworth, of Lane County who had been brought in to assure impartiality for all sides. Skipworth ruled that the recount should proceed immediately.²³ During a mass-meeting of the GGC on the Jackson County Courthouse steps, held the night before the proposed recount, "someone" broke into the county vault and stole thirty-six official pouches containing the election ballots. In the outrage that followed, especially following the apprehension of Mason Burl and Wilbur Sexton, two young jailers who quickly provided detailed confessions to the state officials investigating the crime, it became clear that Judge Fehl himself had been personally involved in orchestrating the theft. The Oregon State Police investigator assigned to the case would later write of the event as "The most openly defiant and brazen act in the history of the State."²⁴ Beside Fehl, who apparently concocted the idea and provided a degree of access to the vault, those indicted included the Mayor of Rogue River, the foreman of the Jackson County Shops and a number of GGC officials. After stealing the ballots, the pouches were divided and taken to various points around the county where they were either burned or tossed into the Rogue River, never to be recovered.

On February 27th, following an investigation into the affair, a wide variety of Good Government Congress leaders, including both Judge Fehl and Sheriff Schermerhorn, were arrested and charged with "burglary, not in a dwelling" and, in some cases "criminal syndicalism."²⁵ As Medford police officer George Prescott, accompanied by OSP investigator O'Brien approached the bench of the Jackson County Courthouse to serve the warrant for the arrest of Judge Fehl, a huge crowd

²³ Judge Norton, focus of the recall effort, would have normally had jurisdiction over this case.

²⁴ Detective Sergeant James R. O'Brien, OSP, "The Man Who Tried to Be Hitler in the U.S." *True Detective Mysteries*, February 1940. 48.

²⁵ "Syndicalism" is defined in *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* [Tenth Edition, p. 1179], as "...a revolutionary doctrine by which workers seize control of the economy and the government by direct means."

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threatened violence. Detective O'Brien later recounted the incident in a magazine article.

Officer Prescott and I gingerly fingered the gas bombs in our pockets and moved back against the windows. One false move from the crowd and the place would be a sorry mess. Judge Fehl apparently realized as much and finally arose to accompany us, ordering that room be made for our passage. This, I believe, was the first time a County Judge has ever been arrested while he sat on the bench.²⁶

Fehl immediately posted bail and resumed his official duties. Quickly issuing writs of habeas corpus, he released the majority of those arrested on the ballot theft charges, many of whom then left the county, evading recapture. With the arrests, the county grew even more tense following the ballot theft, causing Governor Meier to place local National Guard units on "alert" in case of violence.²⁷ Clearly the situation was spiraling out of hand.

MARCH 16, 1933:

Although certainly suspected in connection with the ballot theft, neither the confession of the Sexton brothers, nor any other evidence had directly linked Llewellyn Banks with the crime. Nevertheless, the closing days of February 1933 had provided other crises for the "leader" of the insurgency. The decline in orchard prices, coupled with his over-eager expansion and investment in the *Daily News*, had fairly destroyed Banks' once extensive fortune. Newsprint was seized from the *News'* offices and its employees went without pay. Banks continuing battle with the paper's previous owners [one of the cases which had resulted in his animosity toward Judge Norton] had resulted in a decree of foreclosure on February 25th, ending Banks' editorial forum.²⁸ In April of the previous year, the Banks' home had been deeded over to Edith Banks, Llewellyn's wife, an indication of his mounting debt. By the time of the ballot theft, Fehl's arrest and the other events of late February and early March 1933, Banks was essentially tottering on bankruptcy with most of his orchards and other holdings gone to satisfy creditors. The Good Government Congress remained one of his sole continuing outlets for what must have been growing frustration at his own financial situation and an increasingly paranoid belief that his persecution was politically based.

²⁶ O'Brien, 98.

²⁷ See LaLande, 207.

²⁸ "Announcement," *Medford Daily News*, 26-February-1933, 1:1-2.

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On March 6th, the Good Government Congress held what would turn out to be its final rally on the lawn of the Jackson County Courthouse. Some 2,000 people attended and cheered on Fehl and other Congress leaders. Banks spoke last.

You were told.... that if they could close the *Daily News* that you would have peace in Jackson County. You were told that Llewellyn A. Banks was a "disturber of the peace." (Voice from the audience: "A riotous man!") Yes, a riotous man. Now my friends, the *Medford Daily News* was stolen....deliberately stolen into the hands of thieves.²⁹

Looking toward the *Mail Tribune* reporters and others of the "establishment" that were watching the rally, Banks concluded "...Unless we can have justice, I will take the field in revolution against you people — now make the most of it."³⁰

Banks went into hiding in the West Main house, meeting with a steady stream of Good Government Congress supporters as the group planned its next action. Meanwhile, as the situation continued to deteriorate, Medford was turning into something of an armed camp. District Attorney Coddling had been working diligently to build a case against Banks in connection to the ballot theft, eventually gathering enough evidence to charge him in the crime. On March 16th, Medford constable George Prescott and Oregon State Police detective James O'Brien were sent to Banks house with a warrant for his arrest. They did so with no small amount of trepidation as Banks had previously claimed he would kill any officer who attempted to bring him into what he claimed was a biased judicial system.³¹

At approximately 10:15 in the morning, Prescott and O'Brien ascended the steps of Banks' porch to serve the warrant. Two other officers covered the rear exit, by the garage, to prevent any attempt at escape. O'Brien knocked on the front door and soon Edith Banks opened it slightly, limited by the length of burglar chain. Prescott stated "I am sorry Mrs. Banks, but I have a bench warrant for your husband." Mrs. Banks attempted to shut the door but Prescott stopped it with his foot, adding "Just a minute, I will give you that warrant and let you read it...." As Prescott reached into his pocket to get the papers, Llewellyn Banks appeared over his wife's shoulder. As Mrs. Banks stepped out of the way, he stuck a hunting rifle through the narrow opening, leveled it

²⁹ "Report of Good Government Congress speeches", 6-March-1933, in DA\RG8\#79140, box 8/14. Jackson County Archives, as cited in LaLande, 212.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ O'Brien, 99.

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at Officer Prescott, and shot him point blank in the chest. Prescott fell back into O'Brien's arms and the two men tumbled to the floor of the porch. The sixty-three year old Prescott died almost instantly. Detective O'Brien scampered from the porch and wrote "10:20, Officer Prescott killed...Banks shot with rifle..." in his notebook, to provide evidence should he himself be fired upon. Running across the street to an apartment building, O'Brien called for reinforcements. As police cars streamed into the area and began to cordon off the street for a possible siege, Mrs. Banks called Medford Police Headquarters and stated her husband's willingness to surrender peaceably. State Police Captain Lee Bown and Deputy Sheriff Phil Lowd, a former Banks-supporter, arrived and escorted the suspect to a jail cell in Josephine County, outside the jurisdiction of Jackson County's renegade Judge Fehl.³²

AFTERMATH: THE END OF THE JACKSON COUNTY REBELLION

With the gruesome and brutal murder of George Prescott, a longtime and much loved Medford public servant, much of the support for Banks, Fehl, and the Good Government Congress evaporated. Many, horrified at the violent turn of events, publicly abandoned their membership in the organization. Some diehard supporters claimed Banks was being made a martyr. Shorn of its leaders, the Congress quickly separated into factions and within a short time ceased to exist as an organized political force. A few individuals associated with the GGC would continue to play a minor role in local political events into the 1940s but the movement essentially ended with Prescott's death and Bank's arrest. Robert Ruhl, of the *Mail Tribune*, editorialized in a piece printed entirely in capital letters that "...the tragedy that the *Mail Tribune* has feared — that is has fought with everything in its power for months, — has at last happened."

This ends the dastardly campaign of inflammatory agitation, the contemptible circulation of lies and falsehoods, which has been going on in this community for so long, with just one purpose in view — to destroy this community, to allow one man to dominate it and by armed force, threats, and blackguardism [and] escape the just penalties which the law provides.³³

In May 1934 the *Mail Tribune* was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer prize for meritorious public

³² The chronology of the events of March 16th 1933 are taken from local newspaper accounts, Detective O'Brien's own account as cited above, and LaLande, pages 218-220 which draws heavily on the testimony contained in *State v. Banks*, the court case on the murder.

³³ "Too Late,"

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service in "...stemming a rising tide of public insurrection which was the growth of a bitter political fight."³⁴ Statewide and national praise for Ruhl and the *Mail Tribune* was nearly unanimous. The Jackson County uprising, and Ruhl's role in its end, would be dramatized for an episode of the radio drama, *Pulitzer Prize Playhouse*, and it has at least been theorized that Ruhl's role in the Good Government episode influenced the crusading newspaperman of Sinclair Lewis' novel "It Can't Happen Here."

Both Banks and his wife were charged with Prescott's murder and "criminal syndicalism." The charges against Mrs. Banks were eventually dropped. Her husband was tried, in Lane County, and duly found guilty. Sentenced to life imprisonment in the state penitentiary, Llewellyn Banks died at age 73, on 21-September-1945. Judge Earl Fehl was found guilty in the ballot theft case, removed from office, and was also sent to jail. He was pardoned in 1936 with the proviso that he remain outside of Jackson County for a specified time. "Returning on the morning the proviso expired, Fehl demanded protection from potential enemies and filed suit to regain his position as county judge."³⁵ He was not successful. Earl Fehl died in Medford, in 1962.

SUBSEQUENT OWNERSHIP OF THE ROOT-BANKS HOUSE

Following Banks' incarceration, his financial condition, already dismal, continued to deteriorate. On 19-June-1933 he and Edith were declared bankrupt and their few remaining holding were deeded to various creditors.³⁶ Although not specifically enumerated, the family house at 100 West Main was likely sold at this time. In a strange twist of fate, the University Club, a group comprised of Medford's elite business and civic leaders, moved its headquarters to the building in November 1933.³⁷ In 1942, with the housing crunch brought on by World War II, the Root-Banks house was being used as a rental and by 1949 it had become the property of M.J. Kounz.³⁸

³⁴ "Pulitzer Awards Made of 1933," *New York Times*, 8-May-1934.

³⁵ "Earl Fehl Back," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 16-August-1937 and "Earl Fehl Files Demand," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 7-September-1937.

³⁶ See "In the Matter of L.A. Banks, also known as Llewellyn Banks, and Edith Banks..." Jackson County Deed Records 196:143.

³⁷ See *Medford Mail Tribune*, 5-November-1933, 2nd, 2:1 and 8-November-1933. As Evans and Atwoond note in the Clark Inventory, the University Club's acquisition of the Banks home was a fact "the older members appreciated for its irony..."

³⁸ In 1942, with the boom war time economy in Medford a tight housing market must have offset any squeamishness surrounding the Banks House history. And, after ten years many were likely unaware of the events of 1933.

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In March 1949, Samuel D. and Kahryne R. Earhardt purchased the house for \$19,500. Earhardt, son of a early Medford family, was a well-known physician. The Earhardts lived in the house until the early 1960s, when its converted to office use, first for a hearing aid company and then, until recently, as an insurance office.

RELATED RESOURCES:

Given the widespread nature of the Good Government Congress, a number of structures throughout southern Oregon retain some connection with the movement, its leaders, and the events that transpired in Jackson County during late 1932 and March 1933. The home of Earl Fehl, Banks' fellow publisher and GGC-supported County Judge, still stands at 504 South Oakdale in Medford. The Fehl House was included in the Oakdale Historic District (NR, 1979). The Jackson County Courthouse, scene of the ballot theft and various GGC rallies was listed on the National Register in 1986. Both the offices of the *Daily News*, at 117 West Main in Medford, and that of the *Pacific Herald-News*, also survive. No other property, however, has as clear a relationship to Llewellyn Banks, or is associated with the single climatic shooting of George Prescott, as does the subject structure.

SUMMARY:

As the scene of the March 16th, 1933 murder of George Prescott, the violent climax of a populist-inspired political upheaval that has since been dubbed Jackson County's "Civil War", the Root-Banks House remains the single best resource associated with the Good Government Congress and its charismatic leader, Llewellyn A. Banks. Although short lived, the rise and dramatic end of the Good Government Congress was a significant period southern Oregon history and a local expression of the popular unrest that swept much of America during the depths of the Great Depression. Retaining substantial integrity in setting, site, design and materials, the Root-Banks House conveys its appearance during the historic period and successfully relates the associations for which it is significant.

Root-Banks House
Name of Property

Jackson County, Oregon
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre (0.26) Medford West, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1,0	509760	4685550
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George Kramer, M.S., HP
organization Historic Preservation Consultant date 1-December-1993
street & number 386 North Laurel telephone (503) 482-9504
city or town Ashland state OR zip code 97520-1154

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Perkins Properties [Mr. William Perkins]
street & number 11 North Peach Street telephone (503) 773-6933
city or town Medford state Oregon zip code 97504

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Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

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Section Number: 10 Page: 1

Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

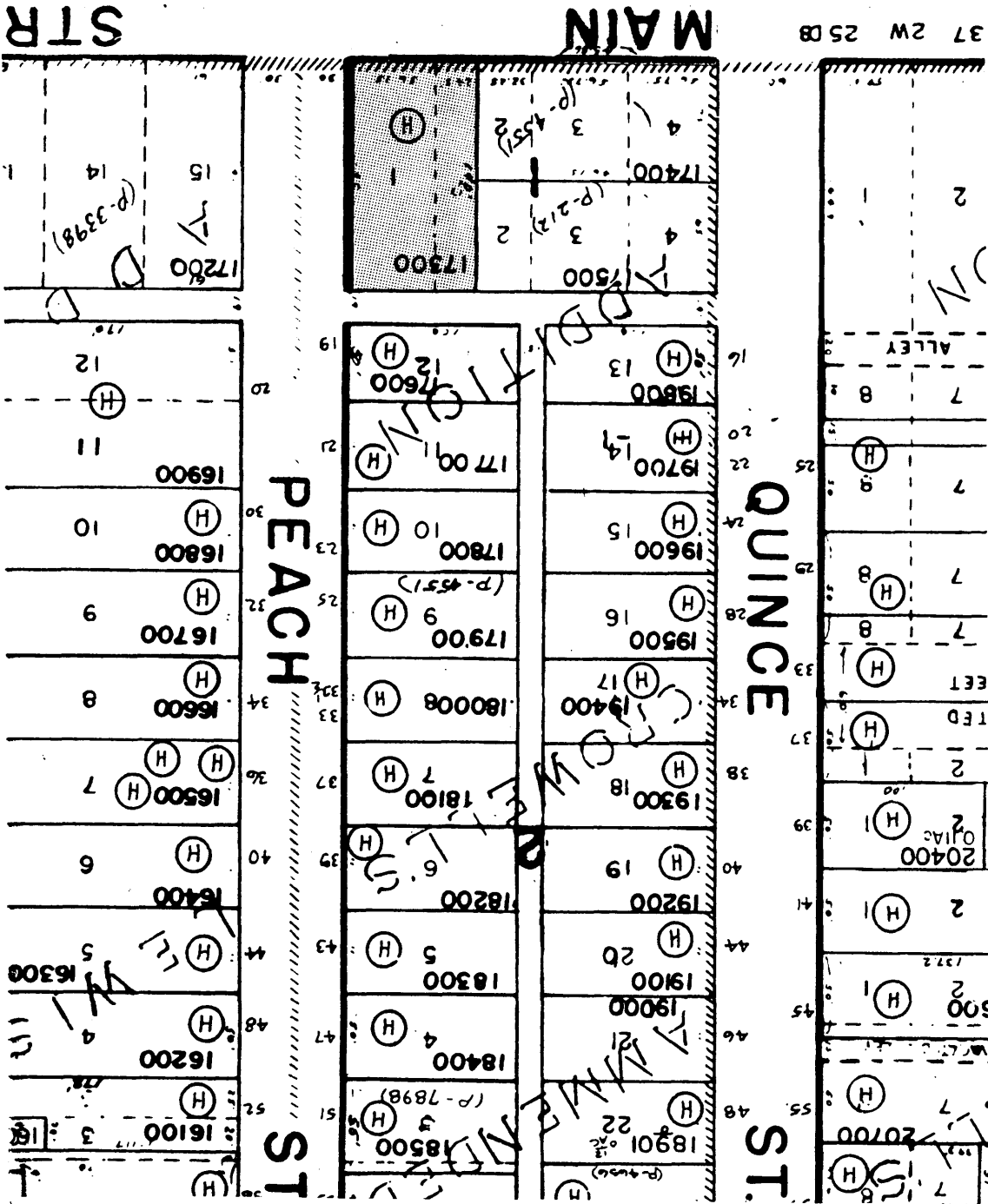
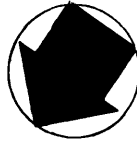
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

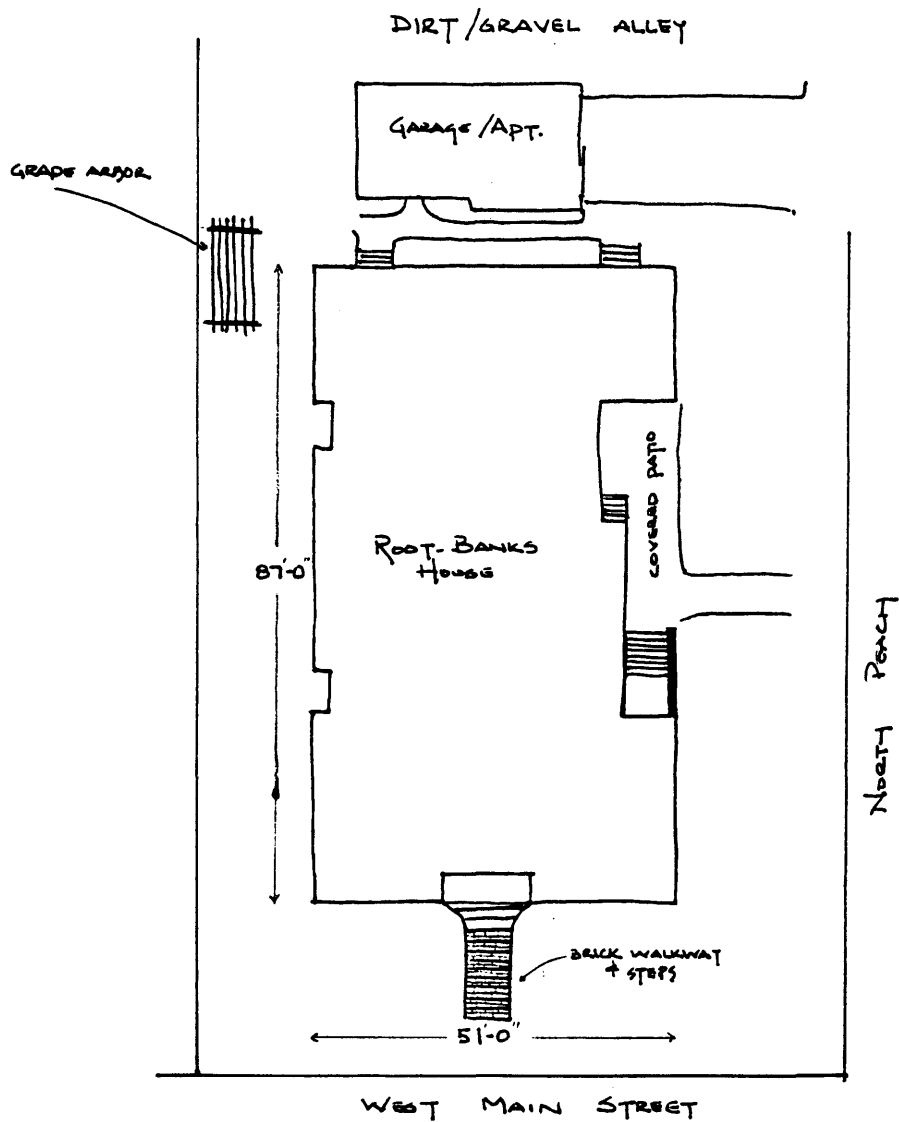
The nominated parcel includes all the land described on Jackson County Assessors plat 37S-2W-25AC as Tax Lot 17300. This 80x140 foot parcel is rectangular in shape and is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of West Main and North Peach streets, west of the downtown commercial core of Medford, Oregon. Historically the property was identified as "1000 West Main Street" but is now generally known as "11 North Peach Street."

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

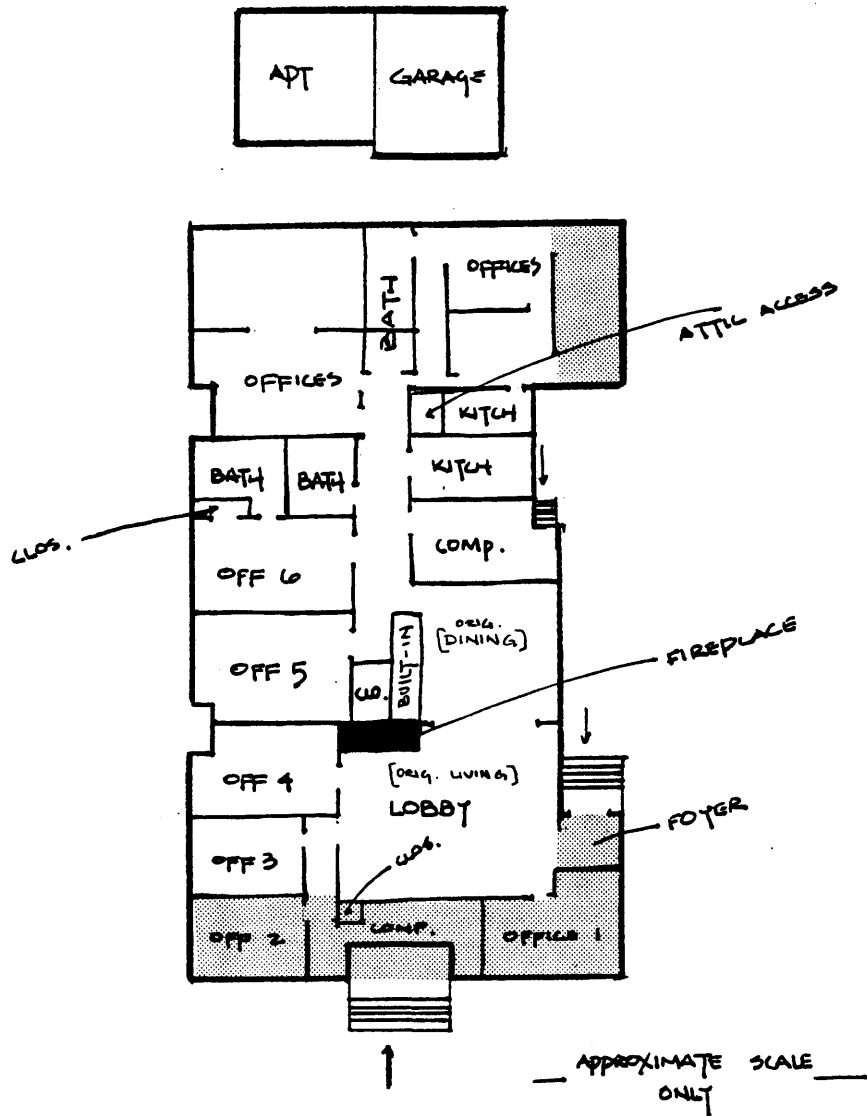
The nominated area includes all of Lot 1 and the eastern 24 feet of Lot 2 in Block 1 of Cromwell's Amended Addition to the City of Medford as filed in the Jackson County Records office. This represents the entire area purchased by both John Root and, later Llewellyn Banks, that has been historically associated with the Root-Banks House since its time of construction.

Root-Banks House
 1000 West Main, Medford Oregon
 Tax Lot 37S-2W-25AC-17300
 Source: Jackson County Assessors Plat





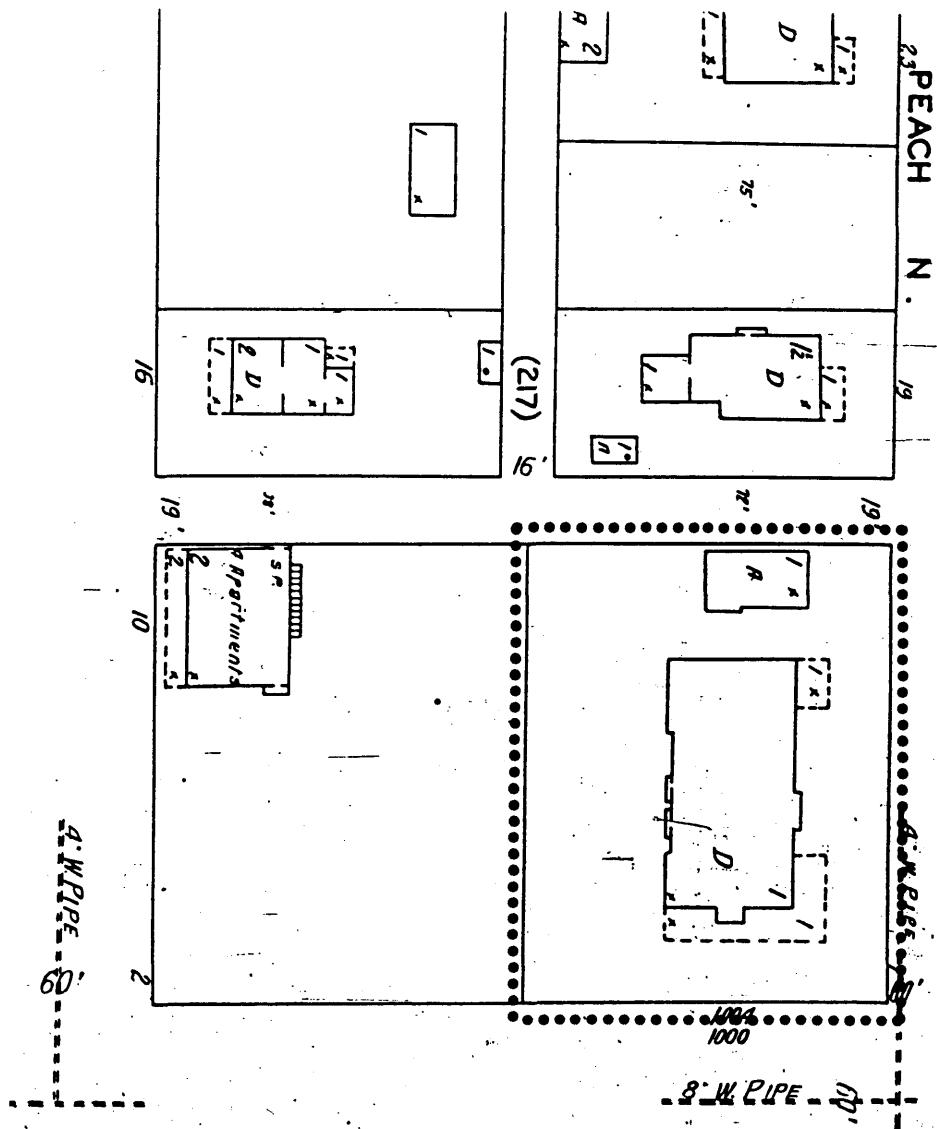
Root-Banks House
1000 West Main, Medford Oregon
Site Plan & Vicinity Map



▨ : ORIGINAL PORCH AREAS

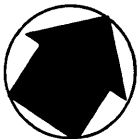
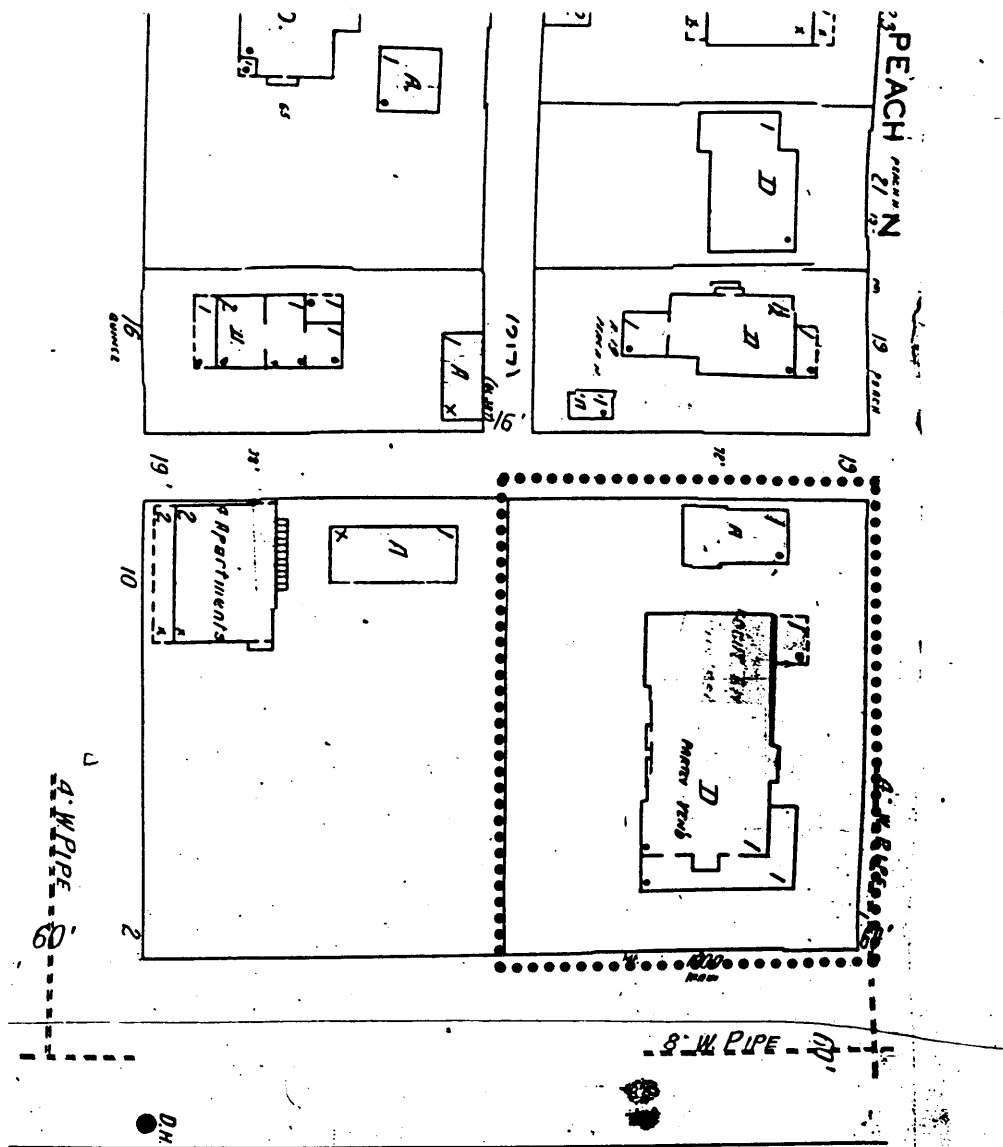
Root-Banks House
1000 West Main, Medford Oregon

Floorplan



Root-Banks House
1000 West Main, Medford Oregon

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
 1927



Root-Banks House
1000 West Main, Medford Oregon

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
 1927, updated to 1954

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Section Number: Photographs Page: 1

Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

1. Historic View: South [Front] and East [Side] elevations
Looking: NW, from intersection of West Main and North Peach
Photographer: Verne Shangle, Shangle Studios, Medford
Date of Photograph: March 1933
Negative: State of Oregon Archives, [State of Oregon v. L.A. Banks,
Supreme Court File #7853, Exhibit 3, "Affidavit of Prejudice"]
2. Historic View: North [Rear] and East [Side] elevations
Looking: SW, from driveway area
Photographer: Verne Shangle, Shangle Studios, Medford
Date of Photograph: March 1933
Negative: State of Oregon Archives, [State of Oregon v. L.A. Banks,
Supreme Court File #7853, Exhibit 3, "Affidavit of Prejudice"]
3. Historic Detail: West Main Street entry and front porch
Looking: North, from West Main Street
Photographer: Verne Shangle, Shangle Studios, Medford
Date of Photograph: March 1933
Negative: State of Oregon Archives, [State of Oregon v. L.A. Banks,
Supreme Court File #7853, Exhibit 3, "Affidavit of Prejudice"]
4. Historic Interior: Living and Dining Room area, front entry foyer
Looking: From Dining Room, looking south across living room to entry
Photographer: Verne Shangle, Shangle Studios, Medford
Date of Photograph: March 1933
Negative: State of Oregon Archives, [State of Oregon v. L.A. Banks,
Supreme Court File #7853, Exhibit 3, "Affidavit of Prejudice"]
5. View: South [Front] Elevation
Looking: North, from West Main Street
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
6. View: East [Side] Elevation
Looking: West, from North Peach Street
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

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Section Number: Photographs Page: 2

Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

7. View: West [Side] Elevation
Looking: SE, from adjacent parking lot
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
8. View: North [Rear] Elevation, showing rear entrance
Looking: SE, from grape arbor at west property line
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
9. View: Garage, East [Front] Elevation
Looking: SW, from driveway/parking area
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
10. View: Garage, North [Side] Elevation
Looking: SE, from rear alleyway
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
11. View: Garage, West [Rear] Elevation
Looking: East, from property line
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
12. View: Garage, South [Side] Elevation showing side entry doors
Looking: NW, from driveway area
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
13. Interior Detail: Windows, rear kitchen
Looking: SW
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Photographs Page: 3

Root-Banks House, Medford, OR

14. Interior Detail: Built-in file cabinet, Office 5 Closet
Looking: SE, from Office 5
Photographer: C. Soderstrom
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
15. Current View: South [Front] Elevation
Looking: North, from West Main Street
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author
16. Exterior Detail: South [Front] Entry, showing brickwork
Looking: NE, from brick walkway
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author
17. Exterior Detail: Main Entry Door [East Elevation]
Looking: South, from concrete patio area
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author
18. Interior View: Foyer
Looking: NE, from "Lobby"
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author
19. Interior View: Living Room fireplace and ceiling
Looking: NW, toward Office #4
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author
20. Interior View: "Lobby" area, [Original Living and Dining Rooms]
Looking: SW
Photographer: G. Kramer
Date of Photograph: October 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author