

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 1 1986
date entered NOV 5 1986

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

1. Name

historic Knight, William, House Number of contributing resources: 1
and/or common Same Number of non-contributing resources: 0

2. Location

street & number 525 SW 4th Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Canby N/A vicinity of Fifth Congressional District
state Oregon code 41 county Clackamas code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Orville and Dorothy Krebs
street & number 21717 SW Creek Court
city, town Tualatin N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97062

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clackamas County Courthouse
street & number 801 Main Street
city, town Oregon City state Oregon 97045

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Clackamas County Cultural Resource Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1984 federal state county local
depository for survey records Clackamas County Planning Department
city, town Oregon City state Oregon 97045

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ N/A _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William Knight House in Canby, Oregon, a two story, vernacular building in the tradition of American architecture of the Federal period, was built in 1874-1875 for William Knight and his bride, Martha Birtchet, the daughter of a pioneer family. The house is surrounded by modern day residential development south of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks which separate south Canby from the downtown. Among the newer residences are a few older residences dating from the period 1890 to 1920. The house is prominently sited at the southwest corner of the intersection of 4th Avenue and SW Elm Street. The house was used as a single-family residence until Martha Knight's death in 1947. Afterward, her daughter Bertha took in boarders and eventually converted it into an apartment house. The building, which has been used as an apartment house since that time, is in good condition under the present owner. It had remained in Knight family ownership until 1953, at which time Bertha Knight Lee passed away. The Knight House is considered the oldest residence in Canby. It is a rare, belated example of its vernacular type generally in Oregon, and it is the singular example of an essentially 18th century building type in Canby.

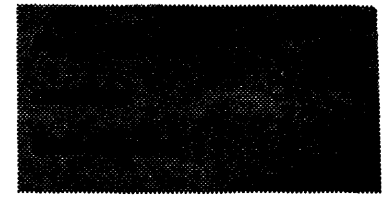
Site

The Knight House occupies a large, irregular, unplatted parcel in Township 4 South, Range 1 East, Section 4BA of Clackamas County. The lot measures 135' x 160' x 200' x 100'. An oil painting by William G. Weston from a documentary watercolor view of early date shows it surrounded by a white picket fence, with a stand of large redwoods behind the building. The area has been developed greatly since the historic depiction of the building was recorded. Most of the redwoods are gone, and a large stand of myrtlewood, chestnut, holly and walnut trees now grow next to the house. Flowering plum trees line SW Elm Street in front of the house. Shrubs and grass fill in the large lot surrounding the house.

Exterior

Presumed to be of balloon frame construction, the Knight House is rectangular in plan with a one story rear addition, or ell added in the early 1900s when the original lean-to used as a kitchen was removed. The main mass of the house is two stories in height covered with a gable roof, and sided with narrow weatherboards. Two interior brick chimneys were originally at each gable end. The house now has a concrete foundation. The construction appears to have been carried out by William Knight himself from lumber milled at his brother Joseph's lumber mill, located near the Molalla River at the site of present-day Canby Park. Joseph Knight was instrumental in supplying lumber for many of the buildings constructed in Canby after the Knight family arrived in the area.

The documentary view of the Knight House shows that it had characteristics similar to those of the distinctive houses built from 1857 onward by members of the Christian communal colony in nearby Aurora. This similarity is not surprising, as the Knights came to Oregon as part of the Wilhelm Keil commune which settled in Aurora. An excerpt from the Aurora Colony Historic Resource Inventory, July, 1985, characterizes the houses as follows:

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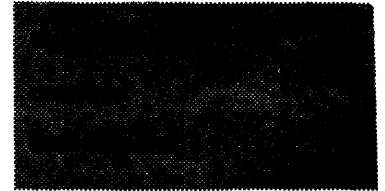
The typical house is predominantly 18th Century in character. It has white, painted, horizontal weatherboarding. There may be a pronounced asymmetry in the position of its "central" front door, which usually has a transom. . . The house rarely has classical detailing and curvilinear moldings in its exterior finish. However, it always has six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. . . The window surrounds are flat boards. . .¹

The front elevation of the Knight House faces northwest. It has a central entry which is presently covered by a one story porch topped by a deck with simple balustrade of square posts and balusters. The porch is supported by two square columns and two shadow pilasters. Above the front porch is a small one-over-one window with flat wooden surrounds. Four, double-hung sash windows with wooden surrounds of the same type were formally arranged on either side of the central entry bay on the first and second stories. Trim elements, including frieze and corner boards and water skirt, are plain, unadorned.

Both historical and more recent alterations have been made to the Knight House. Originally, there was no porch on the facade. Simple wooden steps led to the front door. A porch was added to the house in the early 1900s, according to Mrs. Martha Elliot, the granddaughter of William and Martha Knight.² The porch covered the length of the front facade, being surmounted by a simple balustrade on the second story. The original six-over-six window centered over the front door was replaced in the early 1900s by a door which led to the second story porch deck. In the early 1940s the full-length porch was reduced, leaving the smaller existing porch. The original windows in the house were all six-over-six, double-hung sash with wooden surrounds. The windows on the lower story of the front facade were replaced by one-over-one, double-hung sash windows in the early 1920s. These windows and the remaining six-over-six, double-hung sash windows were replaced with one-over-one thermal pane aluminum sash windows in 1985. The original wooden surrounds remain. On the end elevations, window openings were removed in 1985 by the current owner, who made improvements to the interior of the building at that time. The central, second story window opening was also reduced in size when the thermal-pane window was installed. The rear portion of the house is a single-story house, added to the Knight House when the lean-to kitchen was removed in the early 1900s. The rear addition, believed built c. 1900, has a gable roof, shiplap siding and one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. It is compatible with the character of the Knight House and has remained virtually unaltered on the exterior since its attachment to the main volume. The eaves of the ell are supported by exposed rafter ends and knee braces at the gable end.

Interior

A central entry stairhall divides the house interior. Doors to the four downstairs and upstairs apartments open from this stairhall. The fifth apartment is located in the ell. The building was used as a single-family dwelling until 1947, when Martha Knight passed away, leaving the property to her daughter, Bertha. She rented to boarders over the next few years and soon converted the house into a five-unit apartment complex known then as the "Chestnut Apartments."

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Through most of its history, when it was a single-family dwelling, the house had two rooms downstairs: William Knight's study, and the living room/dining room. The bedrooms were upstairs, and the kitchen originally was a lean-to addition at the rear. Though the apartment finish work has been changed, the configuration of rooms has remained essentially the same. The two lower apartments off the stairwell represent the lower rooms, and the upper apartments represent the former upper rooms. Insulation, plumbing, and electricity were all improved in 1984-1985 when the current owner brought the building up to contemporary code requirements. At this time also, he removed the hallway which ran next to the staircase and led to the basement at this time. Access to the partial basement is gained at present through the outside stairs on the east facade.

Though there have been both historical and more recent modifications to the Knight House, the building continues to convey its historic period. The proportion and organization of the facade, basic plan and mass, size and shape of window and door openings, and siding of the residence remain.

Historical alterations which have occurred, including the addition of shutters to the exterior windows, probably were a matter of convenience and fashion which the Knight family accepted as "keeping up with the times." The more recent changes were made in a practical attempt to weatherproof the building and add the necessary electrical service and plumbing to the apartments.

Footnotes

- 1 Dole, Philip, and Rees, Judith. "Aurora Colony Historic Resources Inventory," July, 1985, p. 10./
- 2 Most of the historic changes that were made to the Knight House were confirmed by Martha Elliot, and Myra Weston.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1875-1922 **Builder/Architect** William Knight, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The William Knight House in Canby, Oregon is a two-story vernacular building in the tradition of architecture of the American Federal period. It was built by its original occupant, a builder and businessman, in 1874 and 1875. The house is locally significant under National Register criterion "c" as a rare example of the survival of 18th Century building traditions in the later 19th Century. In its rectangular massing, moderately-pitched gable roof, the interior end chimneys it had originally, its narrow weatherboards, unadorned trim elements, attic windows of square proportion in gable ends, and double-hung windows in simple frames, the house is similar to buildings erected decades earlier by members of the Christian communal colony at nearby Aurora, an enterprise with which Knight's parents were associated for a time, and which transmitted to Oregon the building traditions of German-speaking communities in Pennsylvania and Missouri. Like its counterparts in Aurora, it did not have a porch originally. The house is significant also under criterion "b" for its long association with William Knight, son of Canby pioneer Joseph Knight. Knight occupied the property from the date of construction to his death in 1922. He made substantial contributions to the upbuilding of Canby by his activities in public education, local government and commerce. His house at 525 SW 4th Avenue is the building which best represents his productive life.

The Knight House is locally significant as a belated interpretation of 18th century vernacular architecture. Its proportions and plain detailing are similar to houses built by German-speaking members of the Christian communal colony at nearby Aurora. William Knight's parents traveled to Oregon with settlers led by Wilhelm Keil, who established the commune. When Joseph Knight the elder and his family settled in Clackamas County in 1868, he purchased 600 acres of land at what was to become the southern outskirts of Canby. This large tract of land was subdivided over the years. Two hundred acres were sold to the Southern Pacific Railroad; 50 acres to the Methodist Church. After the death of the patriarch Joseph Knight in 1874, son William started construction of his own house for his bride-to-be, Martha Birtchet. Lumber for the Knight House was manufactured on the Molalla River at the mill of William's brother, Joseph.

The Knight House is also significant for its association with William Knight. The Knights, of German-speaking background, settled originally in Pennsylvania. Joseph and Sara (Gates) Knight had 10 children before Sara's death in 1843. The family soon thereafter moved to Bethel, Missouri to join the Christian communal colony founded by William Keil. There the widower Joseph was married to Catherine, and had four more children. Joseph's first trip to Oregon was in 1853, after which he returned to Missouri. In due course, Joseph traveled to

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Canby, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	10	5	2	13	9	15	10	5	10	1	11	4	14	10
Zone	Easting						Northing							

B

Zone	Easting						Northing							

C

Zone	Easting						Northing							

D

Zone	Easting						Northing							

E

Zone	Easting						Northing							

F

Zone	Easting						Northing							

G

Zone	Easting						Northing							

H

Zone	Easting						Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification The William Knight House occupies an unplatted area north of the Bradt1 Weygandt Addition to the City of Canby in Clackamas County, Oregon. The parcel measures 135' x 160' x 200' x 100' and is legally known as Tax Lot 1900, Clackamas County Assessor's Map No. 4-1-4BA. The nominated area is more particularly

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries described as follows: (continued)

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberly Demuth, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization date March 14, 1986

street & number 3136 NE 20th Avenue telephone (503) 288-3568

city or town Portland state Oregon 97212

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

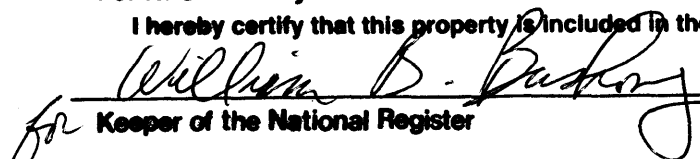
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date September 26, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 11/5/86
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Oregon again, bringing his family with him to the place where Wilhelm Keil had led his followers on a mission to relocate the commune. The family eventually settled on Baker Prairie, approximately four miles northeasterly of Aurora, in 1868.

In 1874, the same year the family patriarch passed away, his son, William, started building a house at 4th Avenue and SW Elm Street, in Canby. William was a successful businessman, city recorder, justice of the peace, school clerk, and Clackamas County sheriff. He and his brothers, Joseph II, Charles, George, and Adam were responsible for much of the development of Canby. William, in partnership with his brother George, founded the Knight Mercantile, which opened in 1871. It was located on the corner of NW 1st and Grant Street, opposite the train depot. Another of William's brothers, Charles (Doc) Knight, Canby's first postmaster, opened a drug store across N. Grant Street. William and George constructed George's house near the first townsite. William also participated in construction of the Knight Hotel and the house of his brother, Adam, overlooking the Molalla River.

Knight also was known for the founding and construction of the Canby School in June of 1875. The Canby School District was formed in 1887, and soon thereafter, a second school was constructed in 1890. Knight was school clerk from 1875 to 1922, excepting the four-year period from 1885-1889, when he and his family moved to Oregon City in order for him to fulfill his obligation as Clackamas County sheriff. The family moved back to Canby by 1890, and William became a major supporter of incorporation of Canby, which finally took place in 1893. He was also Canby's first city recorder, and he served as postmaster from 1877 to 1884. During these years he was also a railroad agent and justice of the peace. The Oregon and California Railroad line connecting Portland, Oregon and Sacramento, California had reached Canby in 1870, and the town continued as a shipping point after the line was taken over by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

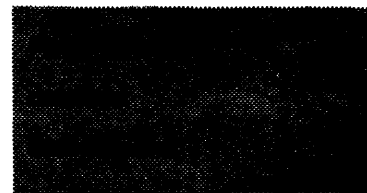
William and Martha Knight had five children, all of them born and reared in the Knight House, which was first occupied in 1875. The house remained in the family from 1875 to 1953, when William Knight's daughter, Bertha Knight Lee, passed away.

The historic period of significance of the William Knight House is drawn from 1875, the date of construction, to the date of Knight's death in 1922. Knight occupied the house until his death in December of that year. During this period Knight made notable contributions to his community in the areas of commerce, education and politics.

Commerce: Though William Knight had been active in the business community prior to his marriage, it is apparent that he was equally active after 1875. He was responsible for the development and construction in 1891 of the Carlton and Rosenkrans General Merchandise Store located at NW First and N. Fir Streets. The second story of this building known as "Knight Hall," was used as the town's first council chambers. As agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad, Knight helped promote business in the town. He planned, constructed and financed a number of other commercial and residential buildings.

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Education: Knight played an active part in improving education for the citizens of Canby by his construction of the Canby School in 1875, and serving as long-time clerk of the Canby School District from 1875 to 1922.

Politics and Government: As Canby's first city recorder, William Knight contributed to the local political scene. He also served the city as justice of the peace in 1875, and postmaster from 1877 to 1884. He provided the meeting space for the first city council meeting, which was held in 1893, in Knight Hall. In the latter year, the town was incorporated, and Knight was a champion of incorporation.

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Lang, H. O. History of the Willamette Valley, Portland: Hines and Lang, 1885, p. 852 and 809.

Hines, Rev H. K. An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1893, p. 1120.

The Canby Herald, Thursday, March 26, 1970, p. 2 "43-year service to Canby's schools is William Knight's contribution to developing community of Canby."

Clackamas County Cultural Resources Inventory, Canby/Barlow, Book VII, November, 1984, Clackamas County Planning Department.

Vertical Files - "Knight Family," misc. family papers, Aurora Colony Historical Society, Ox Barn Museum, Aurora, Oregon.

Diary of William Knight's 1863 Plains Trip, edited by Clark Moor Will, June 30, 1973, Salem, Oregon.

"Biography of William Knight," William Knight School, Canby, Oregon, May, 1976

Interviews regarding the Knight House:

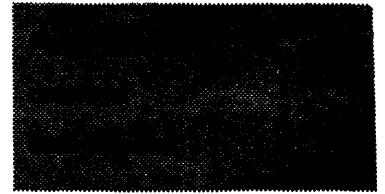
Martha Elliot Knight, granddaughter of William Knight

Orville Krebs, current owner

Myra Weston, co-owner of the Canby Herald from 1947 to 1972

Judith Rees, co-author of the Aurora Colony Inventory, 1985

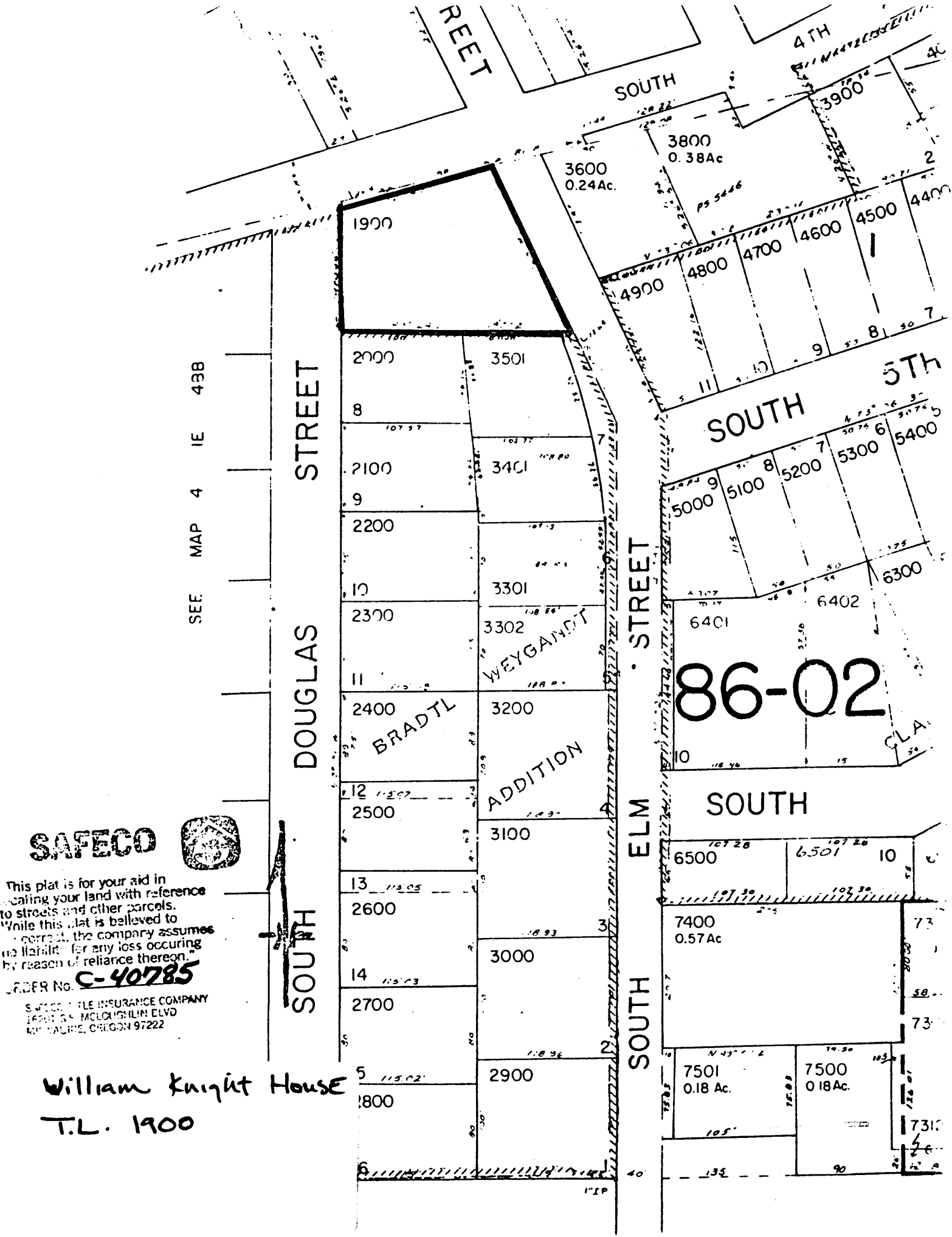
Oil Painting of the Knight House by George Weston, 1983. This painting was done from an original watercolor of the house soon after its construction in 1875.

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A tract of land in the Northeast one-quarter of the Northwest one-quarter of Section 4, Township 4 South, Range 1 East, of the Willamette Meridian in Clackamas County Oregon, and being a portion of the tract of land described in that certain conveyance from Martha E. Knight to Bertha E. Lee and recorded December 12 1947, in Book 400, Page 462, Clackamas County Deed Records, Clackamas County Oregon. described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the Southeasterly boundary of the Philander Lee Claim No. 49, Township 4 South, Range 1 East, of the Willamette Meridian with the West boundary of the said Northeast one-quarter of the Northwest one-quarter and which intersection is South 0° 02' West 535.25 feet distant from the Northwest corner thereof, and North 78° 13' East 681.75 feet distant from the Southwest corner of said claim; thence, following said claim boundary North 78° 13' East 143.63 feet to a one-half inch bridge spike; thence South 11° 47' East 14.28 feet to a 3/4 inch iron pipe in the Southeasterly boundary of South 4th Street; thence following said Street boundary North 73° 42' East 32.79 feet to the true point of beginning, which point is the intersection of the East line of South Douglas Street in the Plat of Bradtl Weygandt Addition and the South line of South 4th Street; thence South 0° 01' East along the East line of said South Douglas Street 104.19 feet; thence South 89° 24' East along the North line of Lots 8 and 7 in said Bradtl Weygandt Addition 197.02 feet to the West line of S. Elm Street; thence Northwesterly along the Westerly line of said S. Elm Street a distance of 160 feet, more or less, to the intersection of the Westerly line of said S. Elm Street and the Southerly line of said South 4th Street; thence Southwesterly along the South line of said South 4th Street 127.47 feet, more or less, to the true point of beginning.



SEE MAP 4 IE 438

DOUGLAS STREET
SOUTH

ELM STREET
SOUTH

86-02

SAFECO



This plat is for your aid in locating your land with reference to streets and other parcels. While this plat is believed to be correct, the company assumes no liability for any loss occurring by reason of reliance thereon.

ORDER No. **C-40785**

SAFECO TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY
JAMES G. McLOUGHLIN, ELVD
MINIUMORE, OREGON 97222

William Knight House

T.L. 1900