

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 25 1986

date entered

NOV 2 1986

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

1. Name

historic Olsson, Captain Bror W., House Number of contributing resources: 1

and or common Same Number of non-contributing resources: 0

2. Location

street & number 631 S. Tenth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Coos Bay N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Coos code 011

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ray L. and Alice L. Prather

street & number 631 S. Tenth Street

city, town Coos Bay N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97420

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Coos County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Coquille state Oregon 97423

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1986  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 525 Trade Street SE

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Captain Bror W. Olsson House is an intact example of the Bungalow style which reflects especially in its interior, Craftsman influence. It was originally constructed between 1912 and 1913 as a single-family, balloon-frame residence for the Bror W. Olsson family. The architect was Benjamin Ostlind, who was prominent at that time in the Marshfield (now Coos Bay) community. Except for the removal of the eaves and the original front porch wood railing, the house remains intact and original in its configuration. In its 73rd year, the house is now being lived in by its fifth owners, Ray and Alice Prather.

The site selected by Bror W. Olsson consisted of two lots 50' x 95' within the City of Marshfield, purchased on July 11, 1911 from William and Kate Buck for the sum of \$10.00.<sup>1</sup> The site is found in Township 25, Range 13, Section 34AA, Lots 3 and 4, South Marshfield, Coos County, Oregon. The site faces east near Marshfield High School overlooking South 10th Street, and is situated among other older homes. The house is surrounded by landscape elements designed by Portland Landscape Architect Chandler D. Fairbanks.

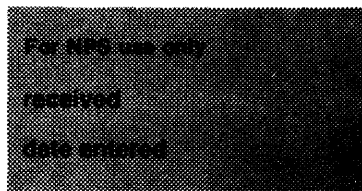
Because the house was quite large for the site and because there was a considerable slope from east to west, architect Ostlind placed the garage "San Francisco style" in the front yard of the house. At the rear of the garage, the stair leads upwards to the basement level of the house through an enclosed stairway hidden underneath the front porch. The garage door no longer exists, but will be replaced by the current owner to match the original. The garage is bracketed by a retaining wall that retains the front yard plant material and fill. The retaining wall was cast in concrete to match the cast-in-place concrete of the exposed foundation wall basement. All of the concrete work excepting the garage and the street level stair has been formed with form liner that simulates a rusticated ashlar finish. The forming was done quite well and is well preserved.

With the exception of the rear elevation, all the elevations of the house are nearly symmetrical. The east or entry face of the house is fairly imposing with two floors exposed to the street capped by a shed dormer which boasts a balcony or recessed gallery. The main entry porch is recessed within the wall plane and framed with an arcuated beam supported by two square columns which rest on the framed porch rail. Behind that recessed opening is the multi-paned front door bracketed by two windows which illuminate the entry/living room. Above the entry are two elliptically-arched openings to the dormer gallery which have been filled in the last twenty years to create a sun room off the upstairs bedroom. On either side of this central mass are hipped roof bay windows which further articulate the facade. The major changes to this facade over the years include: enclosing in the dormer openings, the removal of the roof and dormer eaves and knee braces and, the removal of the wood framed porch rail. The Prathers are considering replacement of the missing elements in a future project. A complete original knee brace assembly was found in the basement of the home and could be used as a template for replicating the eave structures. All of the windows in the house are the original wood frame windows in a one-over-one, double-hung configuration.

The house has twelve rooms and now accommodates two apartments in the basement level. These apartments were constructed in the late 1940s or early 1950s by a previous owner. There does not appear to be any significant damage to historic fabric by the addition of the living units.

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The house has the original Port Orford Cedar horizontal siding with one-by-one trim. At the perimeter of each window assemblies one-by-one trim is also used as well as the water table at the intersection of the wood frame construction and the poured concrete base. With the exception of the poured concrete base, the house is of wood construction.

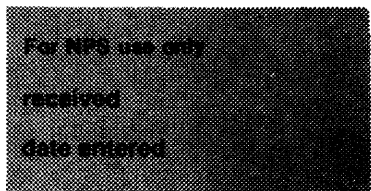
Upon entering the front door one is immediately immersed in the wonderful atmosphere created by the false beam ceilings in stained fir and trim articulating the living room and fireplace nook. To the right of the entry, through sliding multi-paned pocket doors that mimic the front door articulation, one views the dining room with beamed ceiling, paneled walls, and beautifully-crafted built-in buffet. Architect Ostlind created a nautical theme here by designing beams radiating from a central circular beam simulating a compass which does have an approximately correct orientation. To the south of the living room are bedrooms and bathrooms and upstairs are more bedrooms and bathrooms. There is very little change to the interior of the house. Perhaps the only "major" changes have been made in the kitchen area where modern appliances and plumbing have been accommodated. Even there, much of the original cabinetry and an original dumbwaiter remains, as well as the original cold box with ventilation to the exterior.

Some of the salient features of the interior which increase the significance of this structure are as follows: The living room fireplace nook is framed by an arcuated ceiling treatment mimicking the treatment of the front entry. In the nook one is introduced to the original fireplace that was purchased by Captain Olsson and sent to Marshfield from San Francisco to be used in the house. The fireplace mantle, hearth and front was purchased from the Watson Mantle and Tile Company, 415 Market Street, San Francisco. The Prathers have installed a brown toned Vermont Casting stove which is very compatible with the tiles as well as the color of the wood stain. The original herringbone oak floors, which are currently covered by carpet, are found in the living room, parlor and dining room. In the future, the owner intends to remove the carpet and refinish the flooring. Bracketing the fireplace is a pair of leaded stained glass windows which, according to local reports, were fabricated in San Francisco and shipped to Mr. Ostlind for installation in the house. On the west wall of the living room is a built-in cabinet/bookcase which has the identical glass treatment as the relights on either side of the fireplace. Many bungalows had small windows flanking the main chimney of the house. Although the chimney of this house is located on the interior the architect apparently wished to carry this theme into the interior of the house with the relights.

In the dining room one finds other influences of the Craftsman Movement. Apart from the radial beamed ceiling with original lighting accenting the compass points, the perimeter walls are paneled and feature a bracketed plate rail. The paneling on the walls and buffet is imported Elm, all of which is in very good original condition. In the northwest corner of the room is a custom-crafted buffet which has four nine-pane upper doors with heavy mullions and muntins in fir. The lower part of the buffet is composed of doors with elm panels. The original wall bracket wall fixtures are found on the north wall.

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Watson Tile Company also provided the tiles in the bathroom downstairs. In addition, architect Ostlind commissioned the lath and plaster contractor to imitate tile in the upstairs. This is itemized on his final summary of cost for the structure.

Footnotes

- 1 Warranty Deed, State of Oregon, dated July 17, 1890.
- 2 Ibid.

## 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1913 **Builder/Architect** Benjamin Ostlind, architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The commodious house at 631 South 10th Street in Coos Bay, Oregon was completed in 1913 for ship captain Bror W. Olsson (1871-1954), a native of Sweden and naturalized citizen of the United States of America, who compiled a distinguished and heroic record in West Coast lumber shipping from the time of his arrival in Coos Bay in 1913 to his retirement in 1945. At the close of his career he was bar pilot for the Port of Coos Bay and a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. Historically, the Olsson House was a locally distinctive example of Bungalow architecture in the Craftsman vein. It was designed by Benjamin Ostlind, a fellow native of Sweden and construction engineer for the C. A. Smith Lumber and Manufacturing Company, the employer of Captain Olsson. The broadly-overhanging eaves and knee braces of the gable roof and front and rear shed-roof dormers were removed about 1937 when Captain Olsson grew tired of having to paint them. While these features are lost, their loss is expressive of the original owner's direct and efficient approach to house maintenance as well as ship's maintenance. The house retains all other essential character-defining features, including weatherboard siding, central recessed porch with its square columns in antis, and the formally-arranged polygonal window bays. The interior, typical of the Arts and Crafts tradition, featuring dark-stained ceiling beams, wall paneling, inglenook with ceramic tile fireplace surround, and built-in cabinetry, is remarkably intact. The documentation of sources and costs of labor and materials provided by the architect's ledger sheet and accounts is unusually complete and sheds light on the procurement of such distinctive elements as the ceramic fireplace tiles.

Notwithstanding the interest it holds under criterion "c" as an example of its architectural type, the Olsson House is eligible for inclusion in the National Register primarily under criterion "b" as the only building in Coos Bay importantly associated with Bror W. Olsson and his wife, the former Veronica May Ley. The Olssons occupied the house until 1943, a period of 30 years, during which time Captain Olsson broke records in the frequency and total volume of shipments of lumber from the Port of Coos Bay to San Francisco Bay. Between 1907 and 1915 Olsson distinguished himself as a hero at sea half a dozen times. He was, in the best sense, a community celebrity and a legendary figure in West Coast maritime circles. The following contains a detailed account of his adventurous life.

The Olsson House embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction and is noteworthy as an example of the use of indigenous materials and craftsmanship. The house was designed in the Bungalow style popular between 1890 and 1930. The Bungalow style had roots in the Craftsman Movement and this is evidenced rather strongly in the fine detailing of the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Coos Bay, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	10	4	0	1	0	16	10	4	8	0	1	6	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Captain Bror W. Olsson House is situated on Lots 3 and 4, Block 15, South Marshfield Addition, Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, a parcel 100 x 95', otherwise known as Tax Lot 10200.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve L. Clay, Architect, and Ray L. Prather, owner

organization Samuels & Clay, Architects & Planners date December, 1985

street & number 170 S. Second Street, Suite 202 telephone (503) 269-5555

city or town Coos Bay state Oregon 97420

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

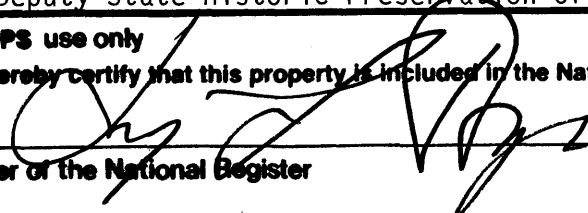
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date September 12, 1986

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



Keeper of the National Register

date 11/2/86

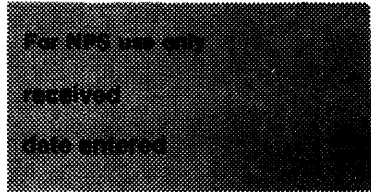
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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woodwork and spatial arrangement on the interior of the structure. Another interesting and significant aspect of this building is the fact that its construction process is very carefully documented and serves as a substantial resource as to the names and types of local craftsman and the types of construction popular in 1912 in the city of Coos Bay. In Mr. Ostlind's own hand we find much of the itemized bill of materials, payroll itemizations, etc. that were a part of the documentation of this project and his role as architect. These papers were found in the house by the current owners Ray and Alice Prather. It is significant also to find the entire interior of the house intact, as little interior remodeling has occurred over the 73 year history of the structure.

Captain Bror W. Olsson and his house have both left their mark on the city of Coos Bay. It is thought that late in the year 1911 Captain Olsson commissioned architect Benjamin Ostlind to design and oversee the construction of his home. In was under Mr. Ostlind's direction that the house was completed on February 27, 1913.

The house was not seen by Captain Olsson until his arrival in the Port of Coos Bay with his new commission, the ADELINE SMITH, which he had sailed from Newport News, Virginia, where the vessel was constructed. Leaving Newport News on October 26, 1912 the <sup>3</sup> the voyage took 64 days, and since the Panama Canal was not completed, he sailed around South America on a 14,000 mile trip.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. Olsson, with her first child, feared that the Captain was lost at sea, and consequently his arrival in port was one of great relief and happiness. Commenting about Captain Olsson's arrival with the ADELINE SMITH the Coos Bay Times wrote: "a baby boy and a handsome new home awaiting him are the pleasant features of the arrival of Captain B. W. Olsson in command of the ADELINE SMITH."<sup>5</sup> The Coos Bay Times description of the home stated: "Before Captain Olsson left he planned and started his handsome home in this city and it has been completed since he left and his family is now occupying the residence. The house contains twelve rooms and is one of the most handsome homes in the city of Marshfield."<sup>6</sup>

Later in 1930, reminiscing about the Captain's voyage from Virginia, the Coos Bay Times reported: ". . . a New York paper predicted disaster for Captain Olsson and the ADELINE SMITH coming around the Horn."<sup>7</sup> And commenting about the ADELINE SMITH being three days late in arrival, the Times stated: "Many times Mrs. Olsson sat with her sewing in the big upstairs windows of their home watching for the Captain to bring his ship into the docks at the C. B. Lumber Company clearly visible from there. The home was built in 1912 and throughout it combines the Captain's nautical tastes with Mrs. Olsson's home making talent for comfort."<sup>7</sup> Finally, the Coos Bay Times comments: "In the time of storm when wind and rain make visibility from the upper window impossible, Mrs. Olsson tries to imagine what it is like on the sea, she finds she had to remember the Captain's words: "It's not the same kind of weather at sea as it is on land."<sup>7</sup>

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Bror W. Olsson was born in Smedbyorland, Sweden on December 3, 1871. At 22 years of age, Captain Olsson arrived in New York from Sweden on August 15, 1893.<sup>8</sup> Already a seasoned seaman of eight years since going to sea at the age of 14, he became a naturalized citizen in San Francisco, California on April 12, 1897.<sup>8</sup> One year later he applied for and was certified as a Master Seaman (September 26, 1898).<sup>9</sup> Captain Olsson continued throughout his long career to demonstrate skill and amazing ingenuity as a Master Seaman.

While Captain Olsson was at sea off the West Coast in the first decade of the 20th Century, he met his wife to be, Miss Veronica May Ley, a native of Zion, Minnesota.<sup>7</sup> While sailing on the ALLIANCE Miss Ley served as a nurse (having graduated as a Registered Nurse from St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland, Oregon) to the wife of William E. Borah (1865-1940), Boise, Idaho criminal lawyer, who was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1907. Senator Borah, having a sound sense of humor, told Miss Ley that the Captain was only a cabin servant and Miss Ley, believing the Senator, made good use of the smitten Captain's services. It made for a comical situation when, having been invited to the Captain's table for dinner, Miss Ley found out who the Captain really was. As the Times reported, the pretty nurse made ". . . Captain Olsson forget his resolution to remain a bachelor."<sup>13</sup>

Captain and Mrs. Olsson were married in Portland, Oregon on October 21, 1908.<sup>7</sup> Captain Olsson, already a well known local figure and hero, was greeted in Marshfield and North Bend with his new bride with much fanfare. Reporting of their homecoming the Times announced: ". . . when the ALLIANCE appeared off North Bend, early today, the whistles on every side shrieked a welcome and again when the ALLIANCE was drawing up to the Marshfield dock every large whistle on the upper bay did likewise. It was a new kind of chivalry but the tooting of the whistles proclaimed a welcome that everyone on the Coos Bay who knows the genial Master of the ALLIANCE would have been glad to personally join the demonstration, if they known the event."<sup>11</sup>

What had made Captain Olsson such a hero not only in the Coos Bay area, but up and down the coast, was his skillful mastery of navigation and his gritty courage. The first recorded demonstration of his character came in 1907, when the Steamship ALLIANCE's rudder was smashed by a large wave while crossing the Coos Bay bar. According to Captain Olsson this wave ". . . tore off the rudder and the rudder post and apice (sic) of the rudder got jammed in the propeller and threw off two flukes and damaged a third leaving all but one and half blades in working order."<sup>12</sup> During this ordeal, a passenger, Mr. B. F. Pyott of Coos Bay was washed off the ship into the ocean and drowned.<sup>13</sup> Captain Olsson proceeded to sail the crippled ship to Portland where he was then confronted by Captain Bailey of the bar tug TATOOSHA whose intent was to secure the ALLIANCE and force the owners to pay heavy salvage. Captain Olsson's resistance of Captain Bailey's force displayed a persistence and determination which would win him much honor and acclaim, not to mention his successful voyage of the ALLIANCE to Portland in spite of the damaged rudder.



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The perilous conditions of the voyage caused much worry to the Captain, but keeping his crew and passengers calm, he was hailed as a "brave man" by the passengers<sup>13</sup> and also awarded a pair of \$100.00 binoculars by the passengers as a token of their appreciation for his courage and skill.<sup>13</sup>

In 1909, Captain Olsson became a hero in a daring rescue of crew members of the lumber schooner MARCONI when it wrecked against the south spit at Bastendorf Beach after a new line from a pilot boat towing the MARCONI over the Coos Bay bar broke due to strain from wind and sea causing the schooner to go adrift. As the Times reported:

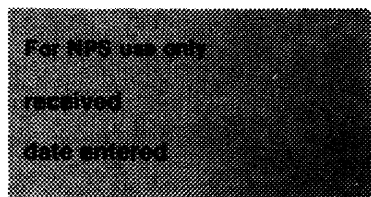
The sea was very rough and the crew from the life saving station could not reach the scene for a couple of hours. Fastening a heaving line to a tree on the bluff, Captain Olsson was lowered over the bluff on a half-inch line into the breakers. The members of the crew who realized the danger of the breakers and the danger of the shifting deck load of lumber, were watching Captain Olsson's movements and threw a fishing line with a float attached to one end overboard. The other end of the line was fastened on board the MARCONI. Three or four breakers dashed over Captain Olsson and threatened to sweep him down onto rocks before the fishline float was reached. Finally the waves carried it to him and he was enabled to haul in the three-inch heaving line with it. Then on this was arranged the noted 'boatswain's chair' and on it, Captain Olsson succeeded in pulling two members of the crew who were hoisted up over the cliff by the NANN SMITH's mate and his associate. <sup>14</sup>

The report goes on to state "Captain Olsson and his associates with the two men they had rescued had made their way back overland and very few knew of it until the story was brought in late today by Captain Wilson."<sup>14</sup>

For this rescue, Captain Olsson was nominated by the townspeople of Marshfield for the Carnegie Medal for Bravery. Reporting, the Times stated: "Captain Olsson is in a badly battered and bruised condition as a result of the fearful experience. Said Mr. Brown, his hands are lacerated, his legs are torn by contact with the jagged rocks of the cliff over which he went and his body is one mass of bruises. Captain Olsson was lowered over the cliff on a heaving line, the breakers repeatedly dashed him against the face of the cliff. In spite of this he managed to pass a line on board the MARCONI. . ."<sup>15</sup>

On September 1, 1909, Captain Olsson again demonstrated his bravery and cunning by extinguishing a threatening blaze which was threatening to a large part of the Marshfield business district. Reporting, the Coos Bay Times stated: ". . .while all the members of the fire department did excellent work, one of the most heroic acts of the fire fighting was done by Captain B. W. Olsson of the NANN SMITH. Captain Olsson was near the scene soon after the fire was discovered and saw the necessity of fighting the fire from the south side. No one was able to get up on the roof of the building on the south to play the hose on the danger spots. Finally Captain Olsson got H. W. Skinner and Charles Lash to hold a chair out of the second story window of Otto Schetter's apartment and getting on this, he

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succeeded in reaching the roof. Ralph Matson quickly followed him and the two were able to handle the hose from the dredge OREGON and quickly extinguish the fire that was spreading to the Garfield Hotel building." 16

On January 20, 1911, Captain Olsson, while bringing the NANN SMITH up the coast from Cape Blanco, saved the crew of the steam schooner LAKME. The Coos Bay Times reported, quoting Captain Malmgren of the LAKME, after a Captain O'Brian of the steamer WATSON refused to pick-up the shipwrecked crew: ". . .four hours after nightfall when the WATSON deserted us, . . .the weather suddenly moderated, and we would have had no trouble in getting away from the LAKME and aboard the WATSON. Several vessels passed us, some of them, including the WATSON, stood by for a few hours and then deserted us. Half of my crew was on the forecastle head and the rest aft. There was no drinking water and we all suffered with the cold and the cutting wind. The NANN SMITH picked us up Thursday afternoon, then miles below Coos Bay. We were tenderly cared for, and it seemed like paradise."17

In 1914 Captain Olsson fought "high seas" at Point Reyes to save the vessel POMO and was hailed by residents of San Francisco as a hero.<sup>18</sup> Because of Captain Olsson's skill in saving twenty-four lives and the salvaging of the POMO in such a way that he was able to tow the vessel into Drakes Bay where much of the vessel's machinery was saved, the Inter-Ocean Transportation Company sent Captain Olsson a resolution commending Captain Olsson's heroism:

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Corporation express to Captain B. W. Olsson and the officers and crew of the S.S. ADELIN SMITH, Their hearty approval of the action taken in the rescuing of the Steam Schooner POMO, and the efforts put forth to save the vessel itself. 19

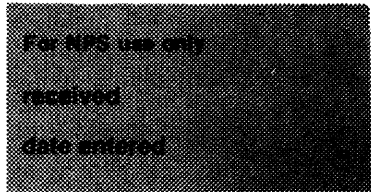
On November 2, 1915 the Coos Bay Times headlined that the steamer SANTA CLARA had wrecked on the South Spit of the Coos Bay bar. The news of the wreck came from Captain Olsson's wireless radio of the ADELIN SMITH.

Captain Olsson had a difficult decision to make. Should he risk his ship and its cargo of lumber to help the people and crew on board the SANTA CLARA? If he could get the ADELIN SMITH closer to the SANTA CLARA he could shoot a line across to it and attach a breeches buoy for taking people off the ship. Captain Olsson decided against approaching closer to the SANTA CLARA and instead used his wireless to bring help from shore. With this call for help Captain Olsson inadvertently put in motion one of the most interesting and ". . .heroic efforts ever attempted on the South Coast . . .to save the passengers and crew of the SANTA CLARA" but which ended . . .in a sorry display of human greed, which from a strictly legal standpoint was criminal in nature."<sup>20</sup>

Of all Captain Olsson's adventures, the saddest was the loss of the vessel COOS BAY off Land's End in San Francisco Bay. Although Captain Olsson was the Master of the vessel when it was lost, he was nevertheless praised for his heroism and bravery: ". . .the captain observed all rules, to save the vessel after it had been carried onto rocks by a tide in a heavy fog which made it impossible for Captain Olsson to gain correct bearings."<sup>20</sup>

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It would be enough if Captain Olsson was only noted for his consistency in heroism, but he was also noted for his industry and productivity. On April 13, 1921 the Oakland Tribune ran an article about the Captain breaking a world record in lumber shipping: "Establishing a world's record of bringing 150,000,000 feet of lumber from Coos Bay, Oregon to Oakland, California for thirty months, completing 100 voyages without a mishap, the Steamer C. A. SMITH commanded by Captain B. W. Olsson has broken all records of any single vessel in carrying lumber."<sup>21</sup> So frequent and hurried were Captain Olsson's visits to the San Francisco Bay Area that a good friend of his, William Randolph Hearst, nick-named him Captain "Midnight" Olsson and in the San Francisco CHRONICLE on January 22, 1917, an earlier report of his already record breaking trips was reported as: "Big Coaster ADELINE SMITH breaking all records."<sup>22</sup> The article goes on to state: "Big Lumber carrier ADELINE SMITH in heavy seas bound to his port from Coos Bay, Captain 'MIDNIGHT' Olsson makes the fastest time of any skipper on the coast and his command carries 1,700,000 feet of lumber."<sup>22</sup>

Captain Olsson's skills were already perfected to a "T" when the HAZEL DOLLAR of the Dollar Steamship Lines sailed into Coos Bay. Because of the size of the vessel, much concern was justified when the ship arrived. There had been extremely low tides, presenting a limited channel for the ship. Stated the Coos Bay Times: "Captain Olsson of the NANN SMITH piloted the HAZEL DOLLAR in and docked her. There's where he took Captain Pentony's cork under and part of the pole. When Captain Olsson sailed right up to the Smith Mill dock, Captain Pentony began to inquire for the tugs that were to dock her. Captain Olsson couldn't explain things to his satisfaction until he threw the line and tied up. It was on the ebb tide. On the intide the boat swung into the dock as pretty as anything you ever saw. Naturally Captain Pentony couldn't understand how it could be done because he had never seen it, it always and everywhere else required two tugs to dock the big vessel."<sup>23</sup>

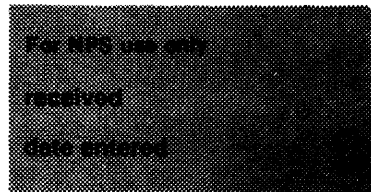
As time went on and Captain Olsson grew older, he used his much practiced skill of handling large vessels on Coos Bay as Bar Pilot for the Port of Coos Bay. Although he still continued to sail in the open seas, he continued to serve as the Port's Bar Pilot until his retirement in 1945.<sup>21</sup>

In 1943 Captain Olsson, then 72 years old, became a Lieutenant Commander of the U. S. Coast Guard Reserve, serving through the end of World War II. During this service he was a key figure in the piloting of naval vessels in and out of the Coos Bay. He consequently earned respect and admiration from those with whom he worked. In expressing his appreciation to Captain Olsson, R. A. Zeusler, Rear Admiral USCG of the Thirteenth Naval District, wrote:

. . . Words cannot measure or convey the Coast Guard's appreciation for your patriotic work. Your valuable experience gained through the years of professional piloting activities was quickly and readily recognized by the Coast Guard, and by tendering your commission as an Officer in the Temporary Reserve of the United State Coast Guard, you were given a military status which enabled you to handle confidential and secret information for the

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Government. The proof of the value of your Coast Guard duty lies in the fact that the ships of the Allied Nations were safely and expeditiously sent to and returned from the war fronts of World War II without a single serious loss of the area where you piloted them.<sup>24</sup>

Although much more could be written about Captain Olsson's career, it is important not to allow the overwhelming activities of this one man to shadow his devotion as a practicing Christian, a faithful husband and loving father to his three children. In the family bible it is stated by family members that the loss of the COOS BAY at Land's End (San Francisco Bay) dealt a harsh blow to the aging seaman, but the death of his second son Theo in an auto accident on May 23, 1931 was more heartfelt. Impressed with the love and concern of his wife's congregation during this grievous time in his life, he soon converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism, being baptized by Father Sheridan, in August, 1931.<sup>25</sup>

Captain Olsson was also a lifetime member of the Elks Lodge, a Rotarian and a member of the Knights of Columbus. Also civic-minded, he served on the Coos Bay City Council between 1943 and 1944. It is especially significant today that Captain Olsson served on this particular council because that elected body was the first to attempt to consolidate the twin cities of Coos Bay and North Bend. The council's recommendation was put to vote and was defeated by the citizens of North Bend on November 11, 1943.

Because of Captain Olsson's wartime activities, he resigned from the City Council in 1944, stating: "As the war effort takes me out of the city too much to give the city affairs my full attention, and being enrolled in the USCG Reserve, I may be called 'elsewhere' at any time. I hereby tender my resignation as councilman of the City of Coos Bay to take effect at your earliest convenience."<sup>27</sup>

At the age of 72, Captain Olsson sold his home to Grade and Leila Sumerlin for the sum of \$6,000.<sup>28</sup> Olsson died in Portland on November 2, 1954. During the ownership of the Sumerlins, two one-bedroom apartments were built in the full basement of the home.

On June 10, 1952,<sup>29</sup> Leonard C. and Joyce A. Farr purchased the home from the Sumerlin family. On September 10, 1959 the Farris commissioned Chandler D. Fairbanks, landscape architect from Portland, Oregon, to design the grounds. In this project special rock from the Millicoma River was used to form a great deal of the flower beds and patio retaining walls.

Mr. Farr, an active Rotarian, hosted several high school students from both Europe and South America in the home as part of the Youth Exchange program of Rotary.

The Farris sold the home in 1972 to Tom Gregg, a local businessman, who sold the home to the present owners, Ray and Alice Prather, on August 1, 1984.<sup>30</sup>

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The Captain Bror W. Olsson House is distinctive and significant in that it embodies the characteristics of the Bungalow style and key elements of the Craftsman Movement in the exterior and interior of the residence. Some of those characteristics are as follows: (1) low pitched gable with wide overhanging eaves; (2) shed dormer; (3) king posts at peak of roof at north and south ends; (4) exposed rafters on east and west elevations; (5) the collar beam under the king post at the north and south elevations; (6) knee braces found under eaves at the north and south elevations as well as at the shed dormer roofs facing east and west; (7) recessed dormer gallery and large recessed front porch; (8) large windows flanked by two smaller windows on the front facade as we see in the first floor and basement levels of the east elevation; (9) wood frame construction with rustic surface materials which in this case include the concrete form work with simulated rusticated ashlar; (10) and multi-paned front door lights.

The Craftsman Movement is shown in the dining room and in the living room. Coloring of the paneling goes to the lighter browns which Gustav Stickley suggested as being a delicate shade of gray or green or brown and is carried through all of the formal areas of the house and extends to the interiors of the bedrooms and bathrooms. The multi-paning of the windows is carried through in the French doors between the living room and the dining room, the relights on either side of the fireplace. The fireside nook very strongly resembles the fireside nook as illustrated in an issue of the Craftsman, published in 1905, wherein the nook is described as being constructed with a lower ceiling "than that of the main room giving it an effect of comfort that is hard to obtain in any other way."<sup>60</sup> In the illustration that accompanies that description, Stickley had shown the fireplace bracketed by two small windows and built-in furnishings.

Another significant aspect of this residence is that it displays prominently products of Arts and Crafts-oriented firms that exist today. In photographs 6, 10 and 11 the glass products of Opalescent Glass Company are displayed. This company began manufacturing glass in 1888 in Kokomo, Indiana and in this period created the hand rolled glass as you see in the photographs. The glass works were assembled by Church Art Company in San Francisco, we understand, is the oldest glass studio in San Francisco.

Also significant is the Elm paneling in the dining room shown in photographs 8 and 9 which was hand carried by Captain Olsson as he delivered the NANN SMITH to Coos Bay from the East Coast. After arriving at his new home the paneling was installed and Captain Olsson finished it himself.

One can see the painstaking and careful records that were kept in the Captain's absence by his architect, Benjamin Ostlind. This kind of documentation allows us to better understand construction processes of the day.

This house is also significant because it stands as one of the few remaining works of architect and engineer Benjamin Ostlind.

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BENJAMIN OSTLIND

The Captain Bror W. Olsson house was one of the outstanding works of Benjamin Ostlind, Architect and Engineer. Benjamin Ostlind was born in Karlstad, Sweden, on July 4, 1885. He received his baccalaureate degree from the Royal Technical Academy of Stockholm, Sweden in 1905.<sup>38</sup> The young Ostlind having read the Empire Builders and other books on American business, decided, upon the advice of his father, to take a leave of absence before starting his post-graduate studies at the Technical School in Zurich, Switzerland, and see America.<sup>33</sup> On the boat crossing the Atlantic, Ostlind met Mr. C. A. Smith, who took an interest in the young engineer. By the time Ostlind reached New York, Mr. Smith ". . . had talked him into going to Minneapolis where he could 'start at the bottom' and learn the lumber business from the ground up."<sup>34</sup> Mr. Smith also informed young Ostlind that he planned on forming a group of young men to go to Marshfield, Oregon to build . . . the largest sawmill in the world."<sup>35</sup>

By 1906 Benjamin Ostlind was on his way to San Francisco, where he witnessed the effects of the great earthquake.<sup>36</sup> In San Francisco he boarded one of the Smith Lumber Carriers and headed for Marshfield, Oregon.<sup>37</sup>

From 1906 to 1913 he "was employed by C. A. Smith Lumber & Mfg. Co. as a construction engineer. Benjamin spent three years as the Chief Draftsman and 2 1/2 years as engineer in full charge of design and installation of improvements and new construction of two sawmills."<sup>38</sup>

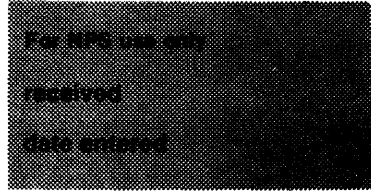
In 1912 Mr. Ostlind received his "Second Papers (Naturalization Papers) in the regular term of Circuit Court of Coos County (April 23, 1912),<sup>39</sup> and it should be noted that Mr. Ostlind was a very proud American. Being born on the Fourth of July, he always displayed his citizenship in every way he could. One familiar sight the people of Marshfield became accustomed to was his flying the American Flag on every opportunity he could."<sup>52</sup>

That same year he qualified as an architect by completing the International Correspondence School's (Scranton, PA) Structural Engineering courses.<sup>40</sup> Setting up his office in the Irving Block, in Coos Bay, he advertised himself as a Consulting Engineer and Architect.<sup>41</sup> On or about this time Mr. Ostlind also formed the Long Fellows Club, a club organized to help extra tall men (Mr. Ostlind being 6'4"). Through a long period of association with this club and the Tall Men's Association, a National organization, Mr. Ostlind was most instrumental in pressuring hotels (the McAlpin Hotel, New York, being the first) and Pullman cars across the nation to install accommodations for extra tall persons.<sup>53</sup>

During the period from 1912 to 1917 Ostlind was kept occupied designing and supervising construction of Captain Olsson's house; the D. L. Buckingham House (located on 1881 SW Blvd., Coos Bay, Oregon)<sup>42</sup>; the Catholic Church Chapel annex to Mercy Hospital in North Bend, Oregon<sup>43</sup>; the Henrik Gjerdrum Conservatory of Music located at 8th and Central, Marshfield, Oregon; the First

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National Bank Building in Bandon, Oregon, (which was one of the few buildings that survived the Bandon fire of 1936),<sup>44</sup> and the Overland Bridge located on Highway 36 between Coos Bay and Coquille. This period also occupied Ostlind in the design and engineering to two sawmills, one being identified as the Evens Mill (now the location of Fred Meyer Stores, Coos Bay, Oregon).<sup>46</sup>

From 1917 to 1918 Mr. Ostlind became a member of the firm Ostlind & Payne, Engineers & Contractors, in Marshfield, Oregon. During this time he built three ship sheds for Kruse & Banks Shipbuilding Company, North Bend, Oregon: a one-fourth mile railroad trestle; and nine traveling yard cranes to load lumber onto ships and barracks for the Armed Guard.<sup>47</sup>

From 1918 to 1919 Ostlind served with the Army Corps of Engineers and in 1919 he returned to Coos Bay to design and construct the Veneer and Battery Separation Plant for Western Lumber Manufacturing Company in Marshfield, Oregon.<sup>48</sup>

On February 16, 1920 Ostlind was registered with the Board of Engineers Examiners and was licensed (#1147)<sup>57</sup> as a Mechanical and Structural Engineer. That same year he organized the Coos Veneer and Box Company which made furniture, Port Orford white cedar veneer and electric storage battery separators. This plant employed approximately 350 persons.<sup>49</sup>

During this period, the Professional Engineers Association of Southwestern Oregon was established and Mr. Ostlind became a charter member of this organization on April 16, 1926.<sup>58</sup> Mr. Ostlind was also a Rotarian (becoming a member in 1923) and was President of the Marshfield-North Bend Rotary Club from 1924 to 1925. He "maintained three years of 100% attendance including three International Conventions and three District Conferences and Executive Meetings".<sup>54</sup> In 1926 he also started the Ostlind Mathematic Prizes for Marshfield High school.<sup>55</sup> These prizes are no longer awarded at Marshfield High School. However, the excellence which they fostered is still a proud tradition of the school's math department. Finally it should be noted that he stated in his personal resume that he was "interested in miscellaneous community work and enterprises such as the Chamber of Commerce, Community Chest and the building of a new hotel (the Tioga).<sup>56</sup>

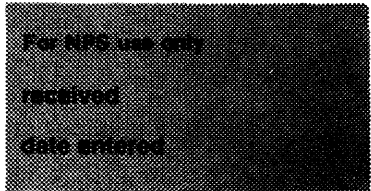
During in the Depression, the Coos Veneer and Box Company limped along. During this time, aircraft builders began using light metal for airplane construction and began cancelling orders from Ostlind's plant. Continuing to make furniture and miniature looms, the company struggled along until finally in 1939 it was liquidated, a great blow to Mr. Ostlind.<sup>50</sup>

Mr. Ostlind then moved to Southern California where he finished his career. He died of lung cancer on July 15, 1956 in the McAuley Hospital, Los Angeles, California.<sup>51</sup>

The Captain Bror W. Olsson house then, stands in testimony to the careers of two men significant in Marshfield's heritage and development as well as an exemplar of the Craftsman Movement.

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Footnotes

- 3 Coos Bay Times, February 13, 1913.
- 4 Olsson Family Bible in possession of Mrs. Sara (Olsson) Truman, Seaside, Oregon.
- 5 Coos Bay Times, February 13, 1913.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Record of Naturalization, District Court of the United States for Northern District of California, April 12, 1897.
- 9 Master's License #101, Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, September 26, 1898.
- 10 Graduation Announcement, St. Vincent's Hospital, March 7, 1905.
- 11 Coos Bay Times, October 26, 1908.
- 12 Portland Tribune, December 4, 1907.
- 13 Coos Bay Times, December 5, 1907.
- 14 Coos Bay Times, March 24, 1909.
- 15 Coos Bay Times, August 26, 1909.
- 16 Coos Bay Times, September 9, 1909.
- 17 Coos Bay Times, January 20, 1911.
- 18 The San Francisco Examiner, January 4, 1914.
- 19 Corporation Resolution, Inter-Ocean Transportation Company, January 9, 1914.
- 20 The San Francisco Examiner, November 8, 1927.
- 21 The Oakland Tribune, April 13, 1921.
- 22 The San Francisco Chronicle, January 22, 1917.
- 23 Coos Bay Times, April 27, 1911.



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- 24 U. S. Navy, Form NAVC02742, July 24, 1944.
- 25 Baptism Registry, St. Monica Roman Catholic Church, Coos Bay, Oregon, August, 1931.
- 26 Coos Bay City Council Minutes, November 16, 1943.
- 27 Coos Bay City Council Minutes, September 5, 1944.
- 28 Warranty Deed, State of Oregon, July 20, 1943.
- 29 Note, No. 2159, The First National Bank, July 10, 1952.
- 30 Escrow Form, Key Title, August 1, 1984.
- 31 Coos Bay Times, October 26, 1908.
- 32 Douthit, Nathan The Coos Bay Region, Life on a Coastal Frontier, Coos Bay, Riverwest Books, 1981.
- 33 Millie Ostlind, "Gramillie's Relfections," 1917, p. 33.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Benjamin Ostlind, Personal Resume, 1920.
- 39 Coos County Circuit Court Immigration Records, 1912.
- 40 Benjamin Ostlind, Personal Resume, 1920.
- 41 Coos Bay Times, December 16, 1913.
- 42 Walter Buckingham, personal interview by Ray Prather, November 29, 1985, Coos Bay, Oregon.
- 43 Rev. Scott Vandehey, "A History of Oregon's South Coast Vicarate," North Bend, Oregon Holy Redeemer Parish, 1981, p. 40.
- 44 Millie Ostlind, "Gramillie's Reflections," 1971, p. 40.
- 45 Benjamin Ostlind, personal resume, 1920.
- 46 John Gerhart, interviewed by Ray Prather, November 29, 1985, Coos Bay, Oregon.

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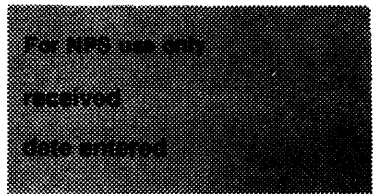
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47	Benjamin Ostlind, personal resume, 1920.				
48	John Gerhart, interviewed by Ray Prather, November 29, 1985, Coos Bay, Oregon.				
49	Millie Ostlind, "Gramillie's Reflections," 1971, p. 57.				
50	Ibid.				
51	Ibid.				
52	Lucille Aldesperger, interviewed by Ray Prather, November 27, 1985, Coos Bay.				
53	Millie Ostlind, "Gramillie's Reflections," 1971, p. 57.				
54	Benjamin Ostlind, personal resume, 1920.				
55	Michael Bioleau, interviewed by Ray Prather, November 29, 1985, Coos Bay, Oregon.				
56	Benjamin Ostlind, personal resume, 1920.				
57	First Biennial Report of the State Board of Engineering Examiners of Oregon to the Governor and the 31st Legislative Assembly Regular Session, 1921 (State Printing Department), p. 37.				
58	Minute Book of the Professional Engineers Association of Southwestern Oregon, April 16, 1926, Coos Bay, Oregon, p. 245. NOTE: book is in possession of Mr John Gerhart, Coos Bay, Oregon.				
59	John Blumenson, "Identifying American Architecture, a Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945," Nashville, 1977, 1981, American Association for State and Local History, pp. 70-71.				
60	Gustav Stickley, "The Best of Craftsman Homes," Santa Barbara, California, Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1979, p. 167.				
61	Rosalind Clark, <u>Architecture Oregon Style</u> , Portland, Oregon, Professional Book Center, Inc., pp. 145-149.				
62	Lucy Varoujean, Art Glass instructor and restorer of Classical Glass Stained Glass Studio, North Bend, interviewed by Ray Prather, December 14, 1985, North Bend, Oregon.				
63	Dave Shuck, Opalescent Glass Company, Kokomo, Indiana, interviewed by telephone by Ray Prather, December 15, 1985, Coos Bay, Oregon.				
64	Helen (Arno) Olsson, interviewed by Ray Prather, July 28, 1985, Reedsport, Oregon.				

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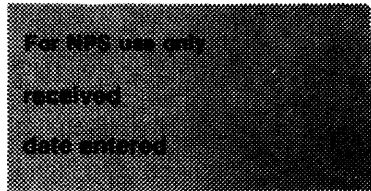
Baptism Registry, St. Monica Roman Catholic Church, Coos Bay, Oregon, August, 1931.

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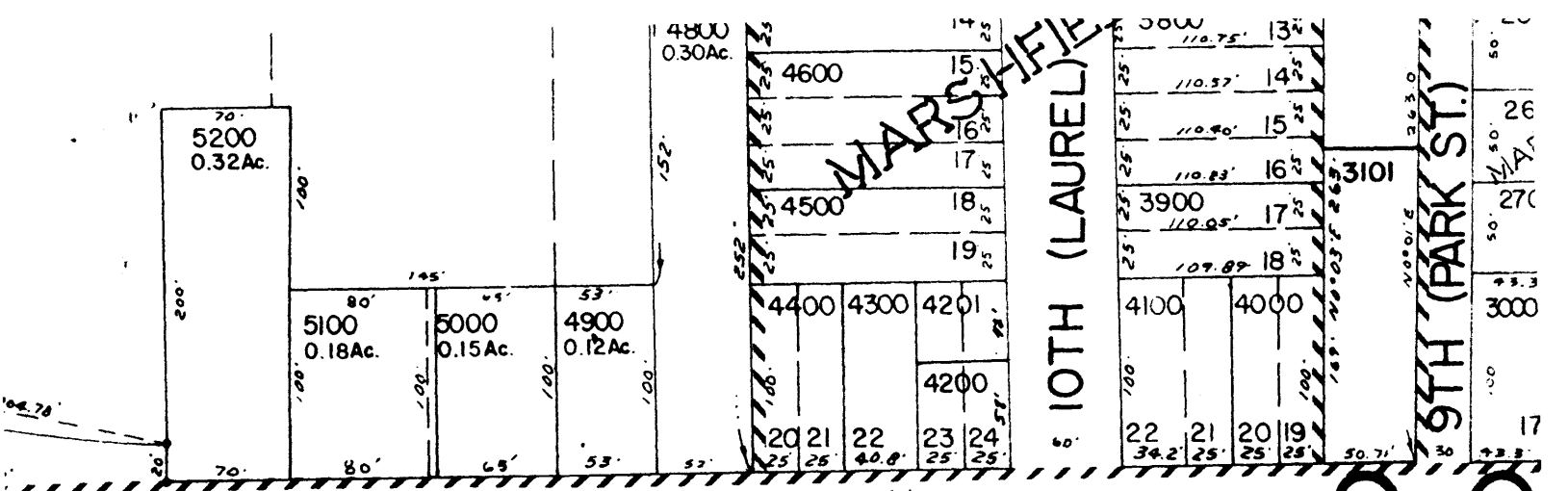
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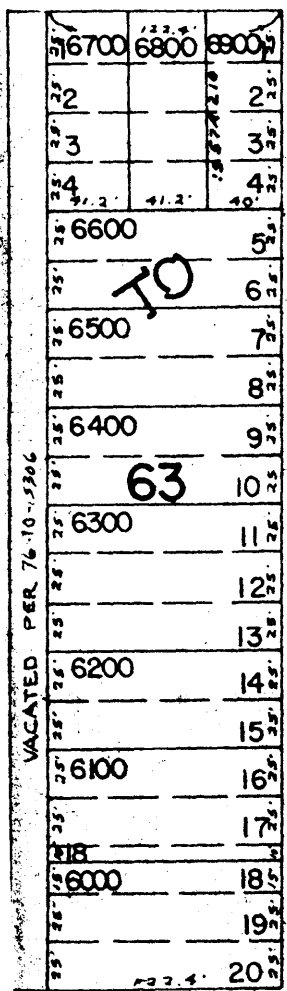
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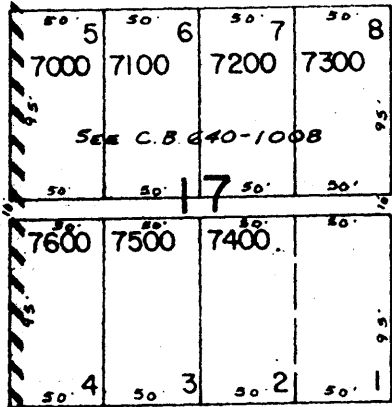
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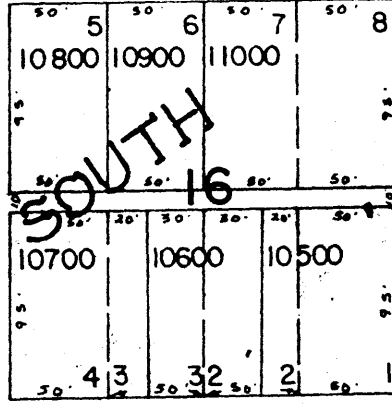


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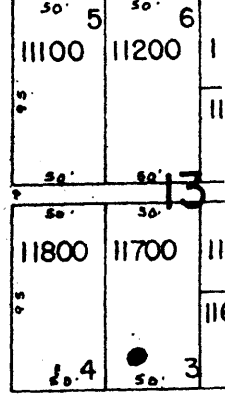
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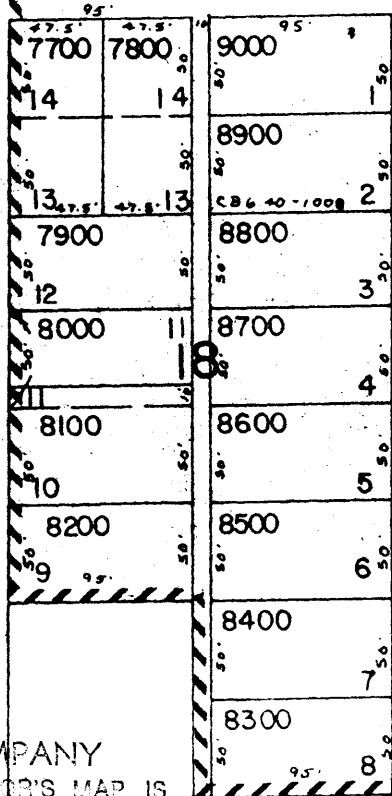
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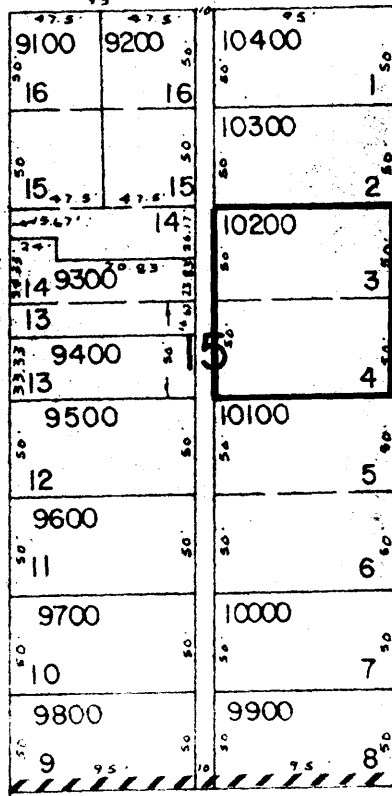


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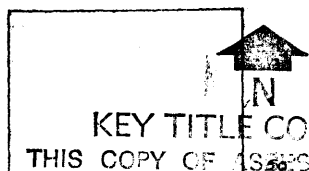
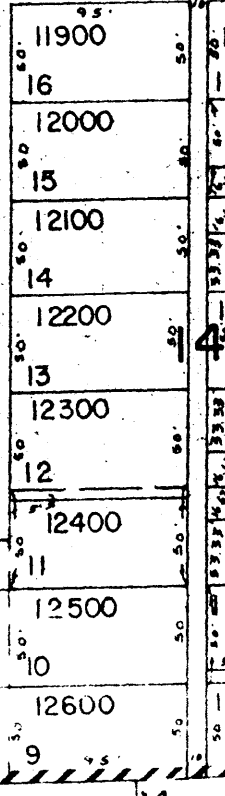
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