

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Sumpter Valley Railway Passenger Station
and/or common Sumpter Valley Railway Depot

2. Location

street & number Main and Bridge Streets not for publication
city, town Prairie City vicinity of Second congressional district
state Oregon code 41 county Grant code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name County Court of Grant County, c/o Hon. John R. Moreau, Judge
street & number P.O. Box 234
city, town Canyon City vicinity of OR 97820 state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grant County Courthouse
street & number P.O. Box 234
city, town Canyon City vicinity of OR 97820 state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1976 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office
city, town Salem vicinity of OR 97310 state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sumpter Valley Railway Passenger Station is a two-story building of balloon frame construction, cruciform in plan, measuring 60x32 feet. It has shiplap, or drop siding, jerkin-headed cross-axial gable roofs, and bracketed, wrap-around canopies which shelter ground story openings of east and west wings containing freight storage and waiting rooms, respectively. No additions or major structural alterations have been made to the building since its construction in 1910. It is situated in the northeast corner of 3.96-acre Depot Park in the small agricultural community of Prairie City (population: 1,000). It is oriented to the south, with its long axis lying east to west. The tracks which once extended the full length of the station front are no longer in place. The site, bordered on the north by bottom land of the John Day River, is planted in lawn and is dotted with willows. Strawberry Creek flows through the southwest corner of the park.

General Condition: The building is basically sound, its deterioration having been neither extensive nor irreparable. Minor makeshift alterations made in the years following the station's closure, at whichtime the building was occupied as a dwelling place, have already been reversed.

Exterior Finish: Exterior finish is drop siding with modified Stick Style trim consisting of base panels of diagonally-laid tongue and groove boards. Trim elements which have deteriorated are being reduplicated in the current restoration effort. The original overall paint color is original treatment--a brownish red typical of railroad freight cars, railway and mill buildings. Door and window trim is black. Lettering on the building was white, and enough lettering remains to provide the basis for its restoration. Each of three chimney stacks with corbelled caps have been rebuilt following their original configuration.

Foundation: The original foundation consisted of 8x8-inch timber "sleepers" laid directly on the ground. The perimeter was enclosed by narrow boards laid horizontally. The foundation has been replaced with a six-inch concrete pad.

Roof: Original roofing material was wood shingles. Patterned shingles clad the canopies. All roof surfaces were overlaid with composition shingles with Boston hips and ridges in the recent restoration. It is planned that wood shingles may be replaced at some future date, and toward that end a careful record was made of the shingle pattern of the canopies.

Fenestration: With one exception (a leaded window lighting the original stairwell area), all windows are double-hung sash with one light over one. Replacement glazing and sash have been installed as necessary. Window trim is simple and includes molded lintels.

Doors: With the exception of a sliding freight door, all doors are of the standard five-panel type typical of the period. The majority of doorways have transoms, or top lights.

Ground Story Interior: The ground story contains the waiting room, office, baggage and express room, and freight room. The waiting room and office are wainscoted, and walls and ceilings are finished in center-matched lumber. The boards are standard ceiling stock, or beaded tongue and groove type. Wall boards are laid horizontally. Pine flooring is used throughout. Door and window trim is plain. Restoration of waiting room and office is essentially complete. All surfaces have been stripped, repaired and painted in colors approximating the original scheme.

The baggage and express room is finished, in part, in the same manner as the waiting room and office. Some of the walls, however, are covered with shiplap to which muslin-backed paper

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was applied. The original staircase was removed sometime after the station's closure to passenger travel in 1937, and this constitutes the building's only real structural change prior to recent replacement of the foundation. The east end of the baggage and express room was at one time partitioned to contain a small bathroom. Restoration of this area has been deferred for further study. The stairwell configuration shown in the accompanying floor plan is conjectural.

The freight room was equipped with a six-foot sliding door in the south wall giving access to the tracks. The door is missing and will be reconstructed on the basis of historic views. The room has not been altered. It is lined with plain, center-matched lumber.

Second Story Interior: Access to the second story is currently provided by a temporary stair. The upper story contained living quarters for the station agent. The spaces are arranged around a central hall conforming to the building's long axis. Dining and sewing rooms and pantry are in the west wing over the waiting room. The space over the east wing freight room is divided into three bedrooms. The kitchen and parlor are contained in the core of the building on either side of the hall. The second story was never plumbed for a bathroom. A large closet near the head of the stairway may have been intended for this purpose, as it is directly above the ground floor space in which a bathroom was installed.

Second story walls are finished with shiplap to which muslin and wallpaper were applied. Window and door trim is plain, similar to that of the ground story. All surfaces have been either cleaned or stripped, and new muslin is being applied in preparation for wallpaper similar to that of the 1910 period in spirit. No sheetrock has been used in the interior.

Other Structures: The only other structure in the park grounds is the toilet and shower building of concrete block construction erected in 1975. It is situated 60 feet to the west of the station and is relatively unobtrusive. Original restroom facilities for the public consisted of two outdoor privies, which no longer exist.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications ✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry ✓	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1910 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sumpter Valley Railway Passenger Station was completed in 1910 at what became the western terminus of an 80-mile narrow gauge line connecting with the Union Pacific at Baker. It is significant to Grant County and the state as the only substantial building now standing which is associated with the historic enterprise which played an important role in the development of the timber industry and hard rock mining in northeastern Oregon. The Sumpter Valley Railway was chartered in 1890, and construction was carried out between 1891 and 1910. Passenger service on Oregon's longest narrow gauge line was discontinued in 1937 in the midst of the Great Depression, but freight hauling carried on through another decade before the line was abandoned. As an unaltered building on its original site in Prairie City, it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association. Now the focal point of a County-owned park which is maintained under lease agreement by the City of Prairie City, the station was nearly demolished for lack of funds for refurbishment in recent years. In 1979 a citizens action group known as the Sumpter Valley Depot Restoration Committee raised funds and volunteered services in a successful effort to preserve the building. Ultimate plans call for use of the ground story as a historical museum and exhibit area and use of the second story living quarters as a community hall.

As initially projected, the Sumpter Valley Railway was to continue south from Prairie City in the Blue Mountains to Burns and across southeastern Oregon desert country to Lakeview. Original investment was over \$1,500,000. If it had been completed as planned, it would have been northernmost in a potential network of narrow gauge railroads connecting Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. Although its primary purpose was to exploit untapped pine forests in the Blue Mountains, it also was a factor in mining and agricultural development. As the Dictionary of Oregon History entry explains, "...Engines burned wood for most of the line's existence, gulping prodigious quantities, locally cut and piled along the right-of-way. Steam was hard to raise and the grades were steep. But the trains went through, hauling the commerce of mining town, farmland, and logging operation..." Because a large body of folklore built up around it, the line had become legendary long before its demise. Its existence was vital to settlement and development of a large and often inaccessible area of northeastern Oregon, and at times it provided the only transportation and communications link to major centers of population. While the main line was only 80 miles in length, it crossed several mountain ranges that were otherwise impassable during much of the year, and there were many additional miles of spur track.

Historical Background: The home office of the Sumpter Valley Railway was in Baker. The railway was chartered August 15, 1890, with Utah industrialist David Eccles as president. Eccles, owner of the Oregon Lumber Company, had arranged with Union Pacific to build a narrow gauge line that would provide access to the stands of virgin timber south and west of Baker. Track was laid to McEwen in the Sumpter Valley by October 1, 1891, and the first logs were hauled to the Oregon Lumber Company's mill in Baker at that time. Regularly scheduled passenger service was inaugurated May 31, 1893.

The railroad arrived at Sumpter on October 3, 1896, and contributed substantially to a famous gold mining boom which lasted until 1908. At the height of the boom, between 1899

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ferrell, Mallory Hope, Rails, Sagebrush and Pine: A Garland of Railroad and Logging Days in Oregon's Sumpter Valley (San Marino, California: Golden West Books, 1967).
 Arrington, Leonard J., David Eccles, Pioneer Western Industrialist (Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 1975).
 Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., Dictionary of Oregon History (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1956), page 237.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property ca. 3 acres

Quadrangle name Prairie City, Oregon

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	0	3	6	4	3	5	0	4	9	2	3	9	5	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

See continuation sheet

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bertha A. Brainard, with assistance by John W. Evans, Director of Libraries, Eastern Oregon State College, La Grande, OR 97850

organization Justice of the Peace and Chairman, Sumpter Valley Depot Restoration Committee date August 8, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 283 telephone 502/820-3598

city or town Prairie City state OR 97869

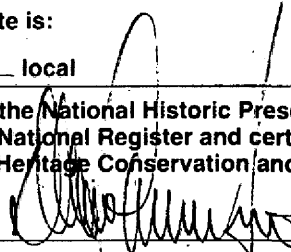
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local


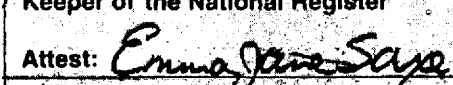
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 6, 1981

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
	date <u>5/5/81</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: 	date <u>5-4-81</u>
Chief of Registration	

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and 1901, there were two regularly scheduled passenger round trips daily, two regularly scheduled freights daily, and occasional extra service.

The line reached Whitney, a sawmill town, on June 1, 1901. It arrived at Tipton, a station serving the Greenhorn mines, in June, 1904. Track was laid to Austin and Bates, another sawmill site, in the fall of 1905.

In 1909 construction was resumed, and the line was completed as far as Prairie City in 1910. The Sumpter Valley Railway contemplated building southward and eventually linking up with Nevada Central, but these dreams were not realized. Prairie City remained the western terminus of the line and served as an important shipping point for cattle and farm products from the John Day Valley, as well as a depot for inbound shipments of feed, seed and equipment.

The gold boom at Sumpter was over by 1908, and the town declined. The town burned in 1917 and was not rebuilt. Rail traffic to and from Prairie City gradually decreased after the First World War, and in January, 1933, the line from Austin and Bates to Prairie City was abandoned. Formal passenger service on the Sumpter Valley Railway ceased July 31, 1937, although those who wanted to do so were allowed to ride the caboose until the summer of 1947, when freight traffic also ceased. At this time the rails were pulled up and all remaining steam locomotives and rolling stock were disposed of.

Several factors contributed to the demise of the Sumpter Valley Railway and similar lines, including: depletion of natural resources the lines were built to exploit, improved highways and motor vehicles, economic depression, and changing patterns in society and industry. Of the several settlements along the Sumpter Valley right-of-way, only Baker and Prairie City continue to flourish as active small towns. The population of Baker is 9,500; that of Prairie City, 1,000.

The Sumpter Valley Railway always enjoyed a warm place in the hearts of people who knew it, and it was regarded with equal fondness by those it served and those it employed, most of whom referred to it affectionately as "the Stump Dodger" or "Polygamy Central" (the latter in acknowledgement of its Mormon ownership).

David Eccles: A pioneer western industrialist and Utah's first multi-millionaire, David Eccles (1849-1912) owned a great many businesses and corporations. His operations in Oregon, in addition to the Sumpter Valley Railway, included the extensive Oregon Lumber Company, which in 1893 listed principal mills at Hood River, Meacham, North Powder, Baker, and Pleasant Valley. He was involved in other mills in La Grande and elsewhere, and he built a sugar factory in La Grande at the turn of the century. Although his many firms were never discriminatory in their hiring practices, he was in large measure responsible for the relatively high number of Mormon families who settled permanently in eastern Oregon. He was in several respects a key figure in the development of the region.

Summary of Restoration Efforts: Although community sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of preserving and restoring the station when development of the station grounds for park purposes was undertaken in 1975, no restoration funds had been raised by June of 1979, and demolition was being considered by City and County governments. A number of interested

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persons responded to the challenge by forming a committee to save the endangered building. Several local fund-raising projects have been undertaken by the Sumpter Valley Depot Restoration Committee and, as a result, preservation of the building has been ensured and restoration is well underway. CETA employees have been made available by the County. Local groups are sponsoring restoration of individual interior spaces, and other forms of volunteer assistance have been provided. The park is owned by Grant County, which has assumed the responsibility for restoration of the building's exterior and providing a foundation. The park is maintained by Prairie City under a lease agreement with the County.

Prairie City boasts an excellent small historical museum. When restoration is completed, it is planned that the collections will be housed in the station. It is expected that the second story will serve as meeting rooms for community groups.

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Continuation sheet

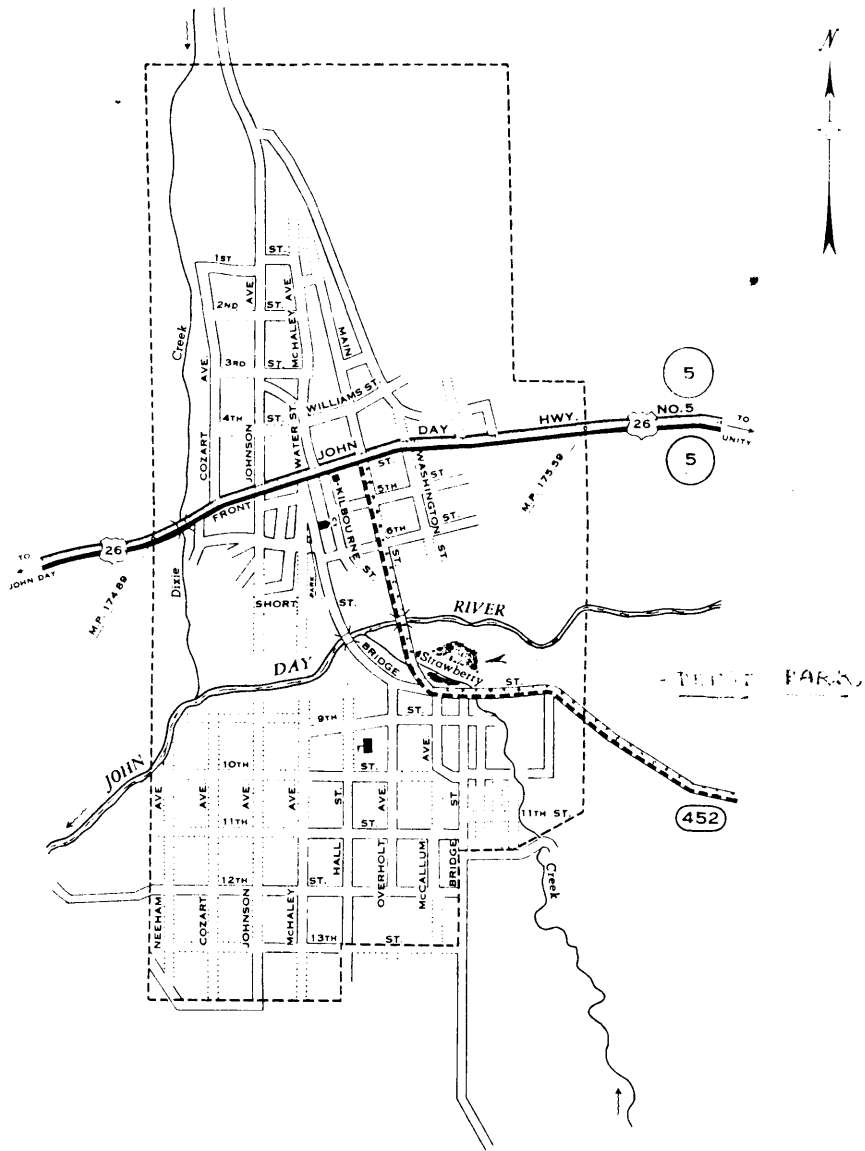
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Sumpter Valley Railway Passenger Station, Prairie City, Grant County, Oregon

The property is located in Sec. 11, T.13S., R.33E., W.M., within the corporate limits of Prairie City, Grant County, Oregon. Beginning at the SW corner of Tax Lot 300, at the intersection of Main and Bridge Streets, thence southeasterly along the south boundary of Tax Lot 300 539.5', thence north in a line perpendicular to the north boundary of County Road 308.5', thence west in a line parallel with the north boundary of County Road 587.1' to the east boundary of Main Street, thence southeasterly along the east boundary of Main Street to the point of beginning, containing in all three acres, more or less.

The nominated area encompasses grounds of the passenger station which was the western terminus of the Sumpter Valley Railway. Strawberry Creek flows through the southwest quarter of the site. The only historic building standing on the property today is the passenger station. Trackage which was laid in right of way on the south side of the station is no longer in place. Tax Lot 300 was developed as a public park with assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1975. Site development included access road improvements, parking, overnight campsites with full utility connections, restroom and shower building, footpaths and bridge spanning Strawberry Creek, picnic sites, perimeter fencing, and power and sewer lines. The park is maintained by Prairie City under a lease contract with Grant County. The overnight camping area developed on the south bank of the John Day River (behind, or north of the passenger station) encompasses approximately .96 acres and is not included in the nominated area.



HIGHWAY CLASSIFICATION

	State (Red)	Federal (Green)
PRIMARY	—	—
SECONDARY	—	—
OTHER	CO	N.F.D.

SIGNED ROUTES

INTERSTATE	5
U.S.	30
ORE.	22

LEGEND

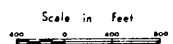
- Post Office
- School
- R. R. Depot
- Public Bldg
- cy - City Hall
- ct - Court House
- A - Armory
- L - Library
- Street open for travel.
- Street dedicated but not open.
- - - City Limits.

PRAIRIE CITY

GRANT COUNTY, OREGON

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

Population 801

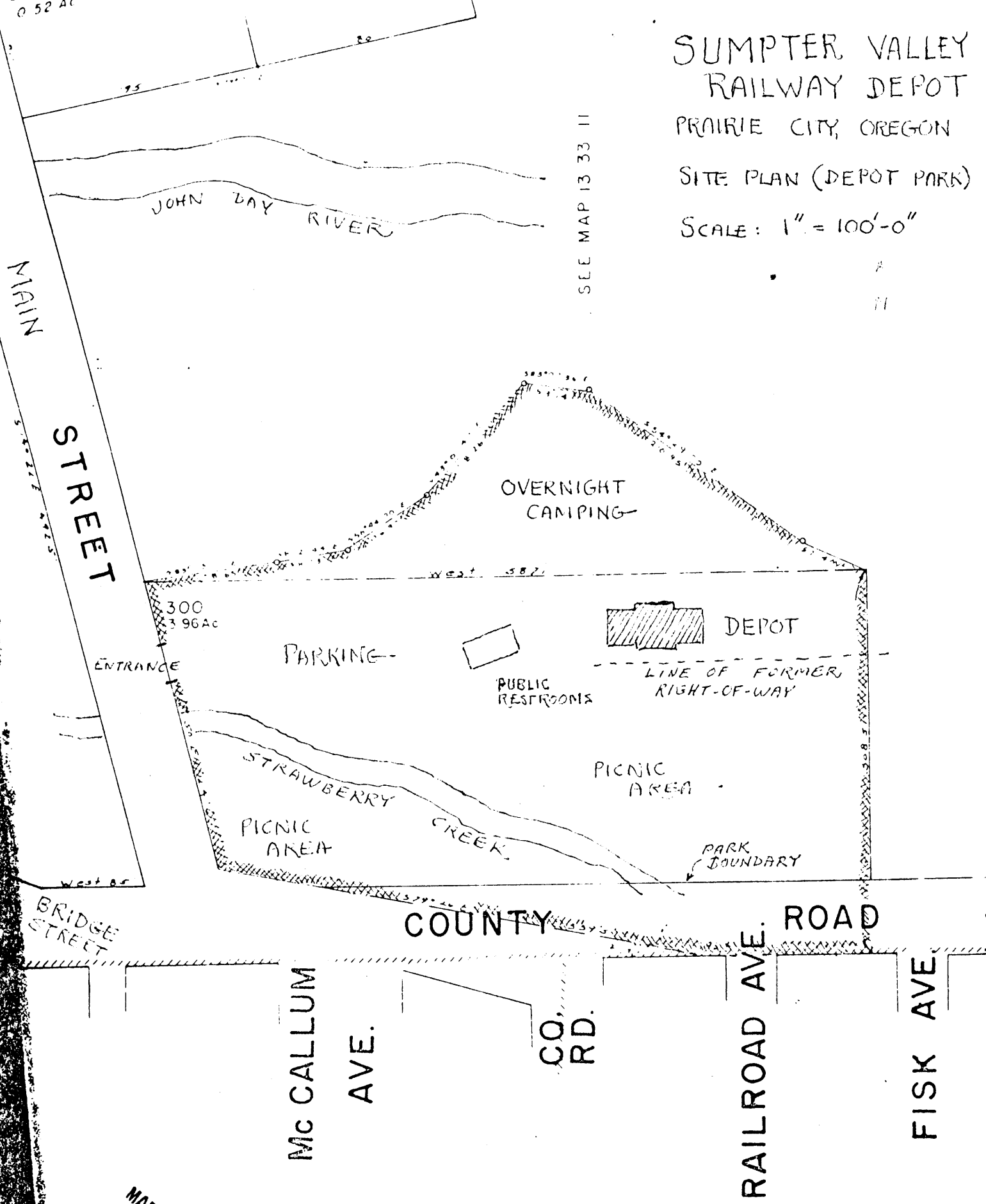


November 1, 1960

MAR 24 1981
5 1981

SUMPTER VALLEY
RAILWAY DEPOT
PRAIRIE CITY, OREGON
SITE PLAN (DEPOT PARK)
SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

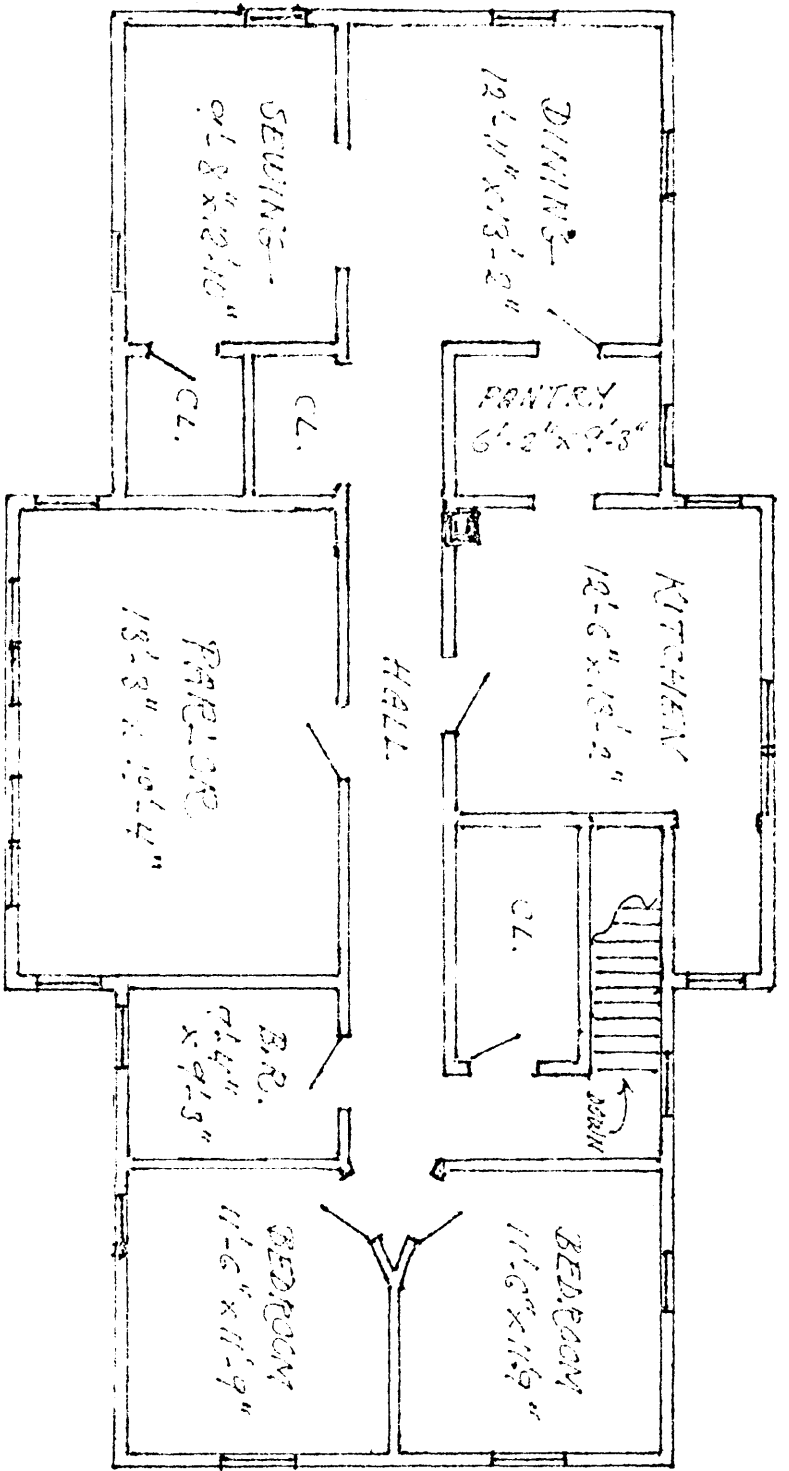
SEE MAP 13 33 11



MAR 24 1981

1981

13 33 11BA

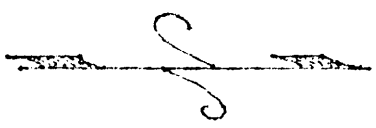


SUMPTER, VALLEY RAILWAY DEPOT.
 TRAIKE CITY, OREGON

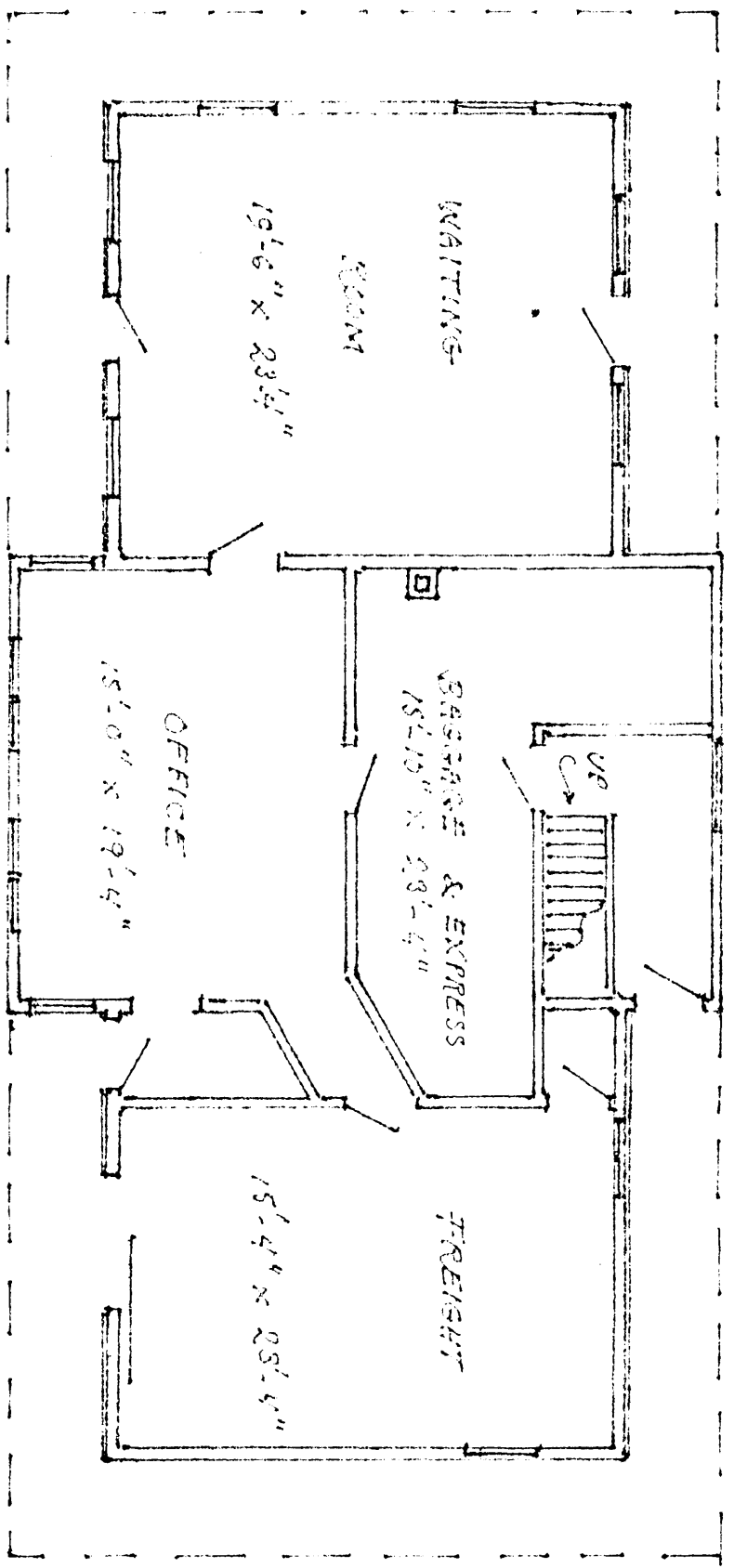
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

JOHN W. EVANS - 8-1-1930



MAR 5 1911



SUMPTER VALLEY RAILWAY DEPOT
 PRAIRIE CITY, OREGON

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Drawn by: Evans 8-1-1983