

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 14 1983  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln

and/or common Koehler Hop Kiln

2. Location

street & number 176th Street East (Leach Road) not for publication

city, town Orting vic. X vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Pierce code 053

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Louise Koehler Anderson Helene K. Williamson Karl Koehler, Jr.

street & number 15519 176th Street East 2521 Vista View Drive Rt. 1, Box 401K  
Tacoma, WA 98465 Orting, WA 98360

city, town Orting vicinity of state Washington 98360

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pierce County Assessor

street & number 2401 South 35th Street

city, town Tacoma state Washington 98409

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Pierce County Cultural  
title Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date December 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11

city, town Olympia state Washington 98504

## 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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln is a large agricultural structure that was constructed in two phases. The earliest section is built of notched logs and the later addition is of balloon-frame construction. The entire structure is beneath one large hip roof. The hop kiln is part of a farm complex in the Puyallup Valley east of Tacoma. Though deteriorated, the structure is in surprisingly good condition considering its age. Later alterations to the structure have not impaired its integrity.

The hop kiln is situated on a farm located approximately one mile from the town of Orting and one-quarter mile from the west bank of the Puyallup River, which flows in a northerly direction at this point. The farm is near the southern edge of the Puyallup Valley; to the south and east are the foothills of Mount Rainier. The surrounding area consists primarily of small farms with little recent suburban development. Other farm buildings near the kiln include a large barn, a farmhouse, and a root cellar.

The hop kiln consists of two 24 foot square drying chambers (kilns) connected by a baling room (see continuation sheet 7-1). The kiln on the north end of the structure was constructed in 1869 of large, notched cedar logs. The exterior of the logs were slightly charred to prevent deterioration of the wood. The kiln on the south end is of frame construction and sheathed in novelty siding. This kiln, the baling room, and the living quarters were built in 1890. The kilns are elevated on posts and stone piers to provide a draught for ventilation.

On the west side of each kiln is a large gable-roof wall dormer that pierces the roofline. These dormers were used for loading and unloading and have wooden barn doors. Between the two kilns is the two story baling room. The west side of the baling room is clad in board and batten siding. On the east side is a three-part addition that served as living quarters for farm laborers. This addition is composed of a central two story gable-roof structure flanked by two one story shed-roof sections. All are clad in board and batten siding and have irregularly spaced casement windows. A brick chimney c. 1940 rises from the northern portion of the living quarters.

A large shingle-covered hip roof covers the kilns and baling room. Two attenuated cupolas crown the ridge of the roof. Until recently, these cupolas had iron finials.

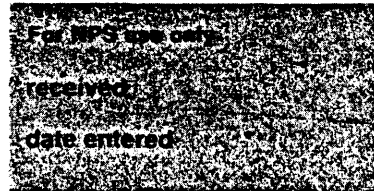
Each kiln contains a stove capable of receiving cord wood fed from outside the kiln at ground level. Large stovepipes are attached to a "T" so that pipes run parallel to the interior kiln walls. Heat, maintained at 150° for fifteen to twenty hours, rose from the stovepipes through slatted floors which were piled two feet deep in freshly-harvested hops. The rising heat carried moisture from the curing hops out through vents in the cupolas.

The central baling room contains an elevated ramp which provides interior access to the drying rooms, storage space, and a compressing device for baling hops for shipment.

Originally, there was a loading platform with a shed roof on the west side of the kiln. This platform was in an extremely deteriorated condition when it was removed in the late 1940's. Wood rot is evident in other parts of the structure and some roof shingles are missing.

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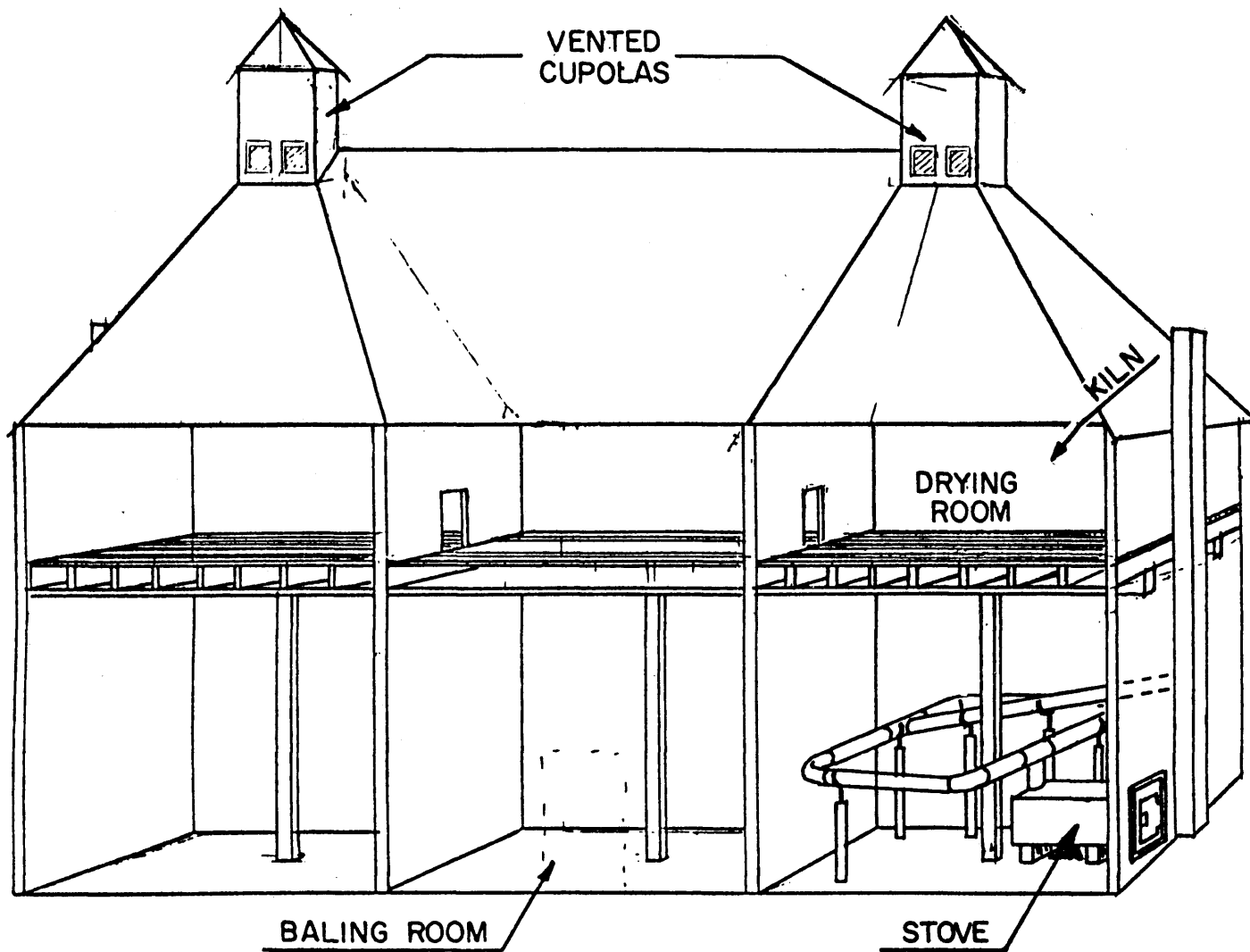
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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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BASIC DESIGN OF A PUYALLUP VALLEY HOP KILN

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> politics: government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1869, 1890      **Builder/Architect** Jacob Woolrey-Builder

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln is one of the last physical links to an agricultural industry developed by the earliest settlers in the Puyallup Valley. The commercial activities of these pioneering farmers established the Puyallup Valley as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the Pacific Northwest. These industrious farmers also produced a functional architecture in a distinctive vernacular style.

The history of settlement in the Puyallup Valley spans little more than a single century. The settlers of the mid-1850's were attracted by the fertile soil of the area, which encouraged pioneer agriculture to spread quickly over the entire valley floor. Early settlers benefited from the productive soil and many established small sufficiency farms. The valley's first cash crop developed with the hop culture which expanded in two decades, beginning in 1865, from a modest enterprise on a few acres of land to an industry of worldwide significance.

Hops (*Humulus Lupulus*) adapted well to the fertile soil of the Puyallup Valley and the moist temperate climate of the Pacific Northwest. Planted in hills with twelve to sixteen foot poles for the climbing vines, hops required relatively little care. Pioneers, inexperienced at farming, found that they could cultivate hops successfully but that great care had to be taken in harvesting and curing the crop and preparing it for market. The commercial value of hops lies in lupulin, which imparts a bitter flavor to malt liquors. Improper drying and curing can destroy this sensitive substance, rendering an entire harvest worthless. Pioneers became students of hop farming, developing kilns and curing methods which enabled production to rise dramatically without endangering the harvest. Though the earliest hop harvests were cured in the home, farmers of the late 1860's were building specialized structures for curing the hops and preparing them for shipment. By the late 1870's, curing had been perfected to a degree so that most kilns shared certain definitive characteristics. A farm of forty acres would typically have two kilns separated by a single baling room, all under one roof.

Hop farming in the Puyallup Valley can be divided into two distinct periods. During the first period, between 1865 and 1891, hops were established as the primary commercial crop of the entire valley. By the mid 1880's, Puyallup Valley farmers were harvesting three thousand pounds of fresh hops per acre, while the world's other principal hop producing regions in England and New York were yielding but six hundred and eight hundred pounds, respectively. With transportation provided by the Northern Pacific Railroad and the young seaport of Tacoma, hops from the valley were distributed throughout the world. Hops brought in a reported twenty million dollars to the Puyallup Valley area during this period.

The second period began in 1891, when a plant lice epidemic ravaged extensive stretches of the hop fields. The reliance of farmers upon a single cash crop contributed to the ultimate demise of the crop by providing a concentrated and uninterrupted breeding ground for the destructive lice. By 1895, the crop was decimated and the Puyallup Valley farmers began exploring alternative crops.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Louise Koehler. 11519 176th Street East, Orting, Washington. Interview with Mark Brack, June 16, 1983.  
 Bonney, William Pierce. History of Pierce County, Chicago, 1927.  
 Burbank, Nelson. House Construction Details, Simmons Boardman Publishing Corp., New York, 1938.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Orting

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Southwest quarter of Section 30, Township 19 North, Range 5 East, W.M. Parcel No. 5-19-30-3-013 as recorded in the Assessor's Office.

### 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	Oscar Graham & Caroline Gallacci Ad Hoc Committee for Historic Preservation in Pierce County	date	May 10, 1983
street & number	2401 South 35th Street, Room 16	telephone	(206) 593-4570
city or town	Tacoma	state	Washington 98409

Edited by Mark L. Brack  
O.A.H.P.

## 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 James E. Moore

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 9/9/83

For NPS use only

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

~~Entered in the~~  
~~National Register~~

for Alvares Byers date 10/13/83  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries came into prominence by 1910. The bulb industry, most notably tulips and daffodils, became dominant during the 1920's. Rhubarb farms developed contemporary with the bulb industry. The diversification of crops helped strengthen and stabilize the Puyallup Valley's agricultural and economic base. Despite the epidemic, a few Puyallup Valley hop farms continued to operate, though on a greatly reduced scale, through the late 1950's.

Agricultural activity associated with the Woolrey-Koehler farm spans both of these periods of development. In the 1860's, Jacob Woolrey acquired his farm and by 1869 had constructed a charred cedar log kiln for curing hops. In 1890, he expanded the kiln to its present configuration. Karl Koehler purchased the farm in 1902 and continued producing hops through the early 1930's. After that time, he followed his neighbors and diversified his agricultural activity. Mr. Koehler farmed bulb flowers for a number of years and during that time the kiln was used for bulb storage. The building has been vacant for the past decade and is in fair but steadily deteriorating condition.

The specialized purpose behind the construction of hop kilns make them an interesting and uncommon type of agricultural building. The Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln is one of the very few remaining hop kilns in this once-famous hop growing valley. The other surviving kilns all date from after the turn of the century and none of them share the Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln's log construction. The Woolrey-Koehler Hop Kiln has maintained its integrity and it remains an important artifact of the valley's early agricultural heritage. It is also a supremely picturesque community landmark, having been featured on postcards and magazines such as National Geographic and the Saturday Evening Post.

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Carrigan, Anna. Telephone interviews with Oscar Graham, April 12 and April 13, 1983.

Pierce County Planning Department. History of Puyallup Valley Agriculture. Manuscript.