

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

In 1889 John M. Ralston had this small but elaborate Queen Anne/Eastlake Style house built when he and his wife Edith moved to Albany after their home in Lebanon had burned to the ground in 1888. The architect, if there was one, is unknown and it is quite possible that the house was built by a carpenter/builder and based on one of the many pattern books then available such as Palliser's American Architecture; or Everyman a Complete Builder, (1888) or Modern Architectural Designs & Details (1881) by William T. Comstock. The condition of the house is good, verging on excellent.

The house is located in Albany's Hackleman District on a corner lot with an eastern exposure on the southeast side of Baker Street. When it was built, the neighborhood was one of the most fashionable sections of Albany. Diagonally across the street at 208 Seventh SE is the house which was built about 1885 for George Earl Chamberlain, Governor of Oregon 1903-1909. The latter house is now entered in the National Register of Historic Places. Also in the six-block area around the Ralston House are buildings which were built from about 1850 through the 1920s. This fine collection of historic houses include: Classic Revival, Gothic Revival, Gothic Vernacular, Italianate, Queen Anne, French Second Empire Baroque and Colonial Revival houses and some Bungalows. However, the Ralston House is also located very near the commercial district. The property abuts an antique store and is very near a fast food restaurant, a dry cleaning establishment and a fire station.

Architecturally, the Ralston House may be described as having 1 1/2 stories with basement. It is of wood frame construction with stuccoed brick chimneys and foundation and hipped and gable roofs. Located on a corner lot, the richly decorated house has a continuous water table band with diagonal "stick" decoration in the panels, and projecting gabled wings on three sides. Wings at the north and south are identical and have slant bays at the first floor with corner brackets, pendants, and pedimented gable with decorated bargeboards above. Centered in the tympanae are windows with stained glass borders in the upper sash-- the windows are flanked by imbricated wall shingles. The front (east) gable wing is similar with a rectangular bay and solid corner brackets with sunburst decoration. The central bay window has a stained glass transom. At the northeast corner is a pavillion set at 45° angle with detailing similar to the bays, and a balcony at the second floor with a flared pyramidal roof. Between the front bay and the corner pavillion is the ornate front porch with turned posts, brackets and pedimented gable with decorated bargeboards framing the entrance. The entrance has a paneled door with round stained glass top lights and an etched glass mid-light and stained glass sidelights and transom. Exterior walls are covered with horizontal drop siding and cornerboards with molded bases. Overall, the building has had very few alterations and thus is a prime example of a modest-scale, lavishly ornamented Queen Anne/Eastlake house. The changes that have occurred to the house include: addition of composition roofing shingles, the replacement of four one-over-one double-hung sash windows on the south and west (kitchen) sides in 1977 which replaced inappropriate windows which had been put in sometime prior to the 1970s; an extension of the veranda on the northwest side of the house, built with careful attention to the detail and style of the house in 1977; and replacement of the front porch steps and railings.

It is believed though not yet proven, that the stained glass windows were designed and made by the renowned Povey Brothers Studios in Portland.

The interior of the house remains as it was originally planned with the exception of the kitchen. Through the years the wall which divided the kitchen into two rooms (one for cooking and one for the maid's quarters) was removed to make one large room. In 1977 the current owners completely remodeled the kitchen. In so doing they added a stained glass window on the west wall which looks outside, sanded and refinished the fir floors, fixed a brick fire-place, restored the ceilings to the original height and put in new counters and cupboards with oak counter tops.

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The current owners are in the process of restoring the house to bring it back to its original condition. They are well aware of its architectural and historic value and strive to use only good materials and workmanship when they do rehabilitation work on the house. Mrs. Moore, an amateur horticulturist, has planted many wild ferns and plants around the yard which greatly enhance the beauty of the property.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1889

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Ralston House at 632 Baker Street in Albany is significant as one of the outstanding examples of Queen Anne/Eastlake architecture in Oregon. Comparatively modest in scale, but nonetheless lavishly decorated, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of its stylistic type: variegated siding, eyebrow dormer, corner tower balcony, sunbursts and s-curve brackets, and a profusion of stylized repeating ornament, including bosses and sawtooth edging used on window bays, porch posts and railings, gable bargeboards, panels, and friezes. John M. Ralston was one of three sons of Jeremiah Ralston, overland pioneer of 1847 and platter of the nearby Willamette Valley town of Lebanon (1852). John Ralston and his wife moved to Albany in 1888 following a family tragedy in Lebanon. The house completed for them in 1889 was occupied by Ralston, an insurance broker, at least to the time of his retirement in 1913. It possesses integrity of location, design, immediate setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with a notable family in the settlement and development of the upper Willamette Valley.

John M. Ralston was born in Rockville, Indiana, in March, 1824. He was one of three surviving sons of Jeremiah Ralston and Margaret McKnight Ralston. In 1847 the Ralston family emigrated overland to Oregon with three wagons and fifteen yoke of oxen. The elder Ralston settled near Lebanon, Oregon, a town he platted in 1852. Jeremiah Ralston operated a general store in Lebanon until his death in 1877. William M. Ralston mined gold in California and in 1853 he married Laura A. Denny. In 1870 he platted an addition to Lebanon and sold many town lots. William then moved to Albany in 1874 where he built a home and became stockholder in the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Military Wagon Road and in the Albany and Lebanon and Santiam Canal.

John M. Ralston lived in Lebanon until 1888 when he and his wife Edith lost two children in a fire. Perhaps encouraged by his brother, William, who had become fairly prominent in Albany John and Edith moved to Albany and had their house built in 1889. Soon thereafter they had another child, Rolla E. Ralston. John went into the Insurance Business in 1892 and became an insurance and real estate agent by 1902, remaining so until he retirement in 1913.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Clark, Robert Carlton, History of the Willamette Valley (Chicago: 1927).
 1890 Sanborn Map
 Beecher, Jan, Albany Preservation Thesis, University of Oregon, 1976.
 Albany Survey, George, McMath, 1978.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
 ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
 UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Albany, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	9	1	9	4	0	4	9	4	1	9	8	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

Tax Lot 2500, Block 7, Eastern Addition to the Plat of Albany, Linn County, Oregon. Beginning at the SE corner of Block 7, Eastern Addition, thence north 61 feet, west 90 feet, south 61 feet, and east 90 feet to the point of beginning.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rosalind Clark

organization City of Albany, Planning Department date August 1, 1980

street & number PO Box 490 telephone 503/967-4318

city or town Albany state Oregon 97321

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 June 9, 1981

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
Entered in the National Register	date <u>12/9/81</u>
Keoper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

for file


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Continuation sheet John Raltson House

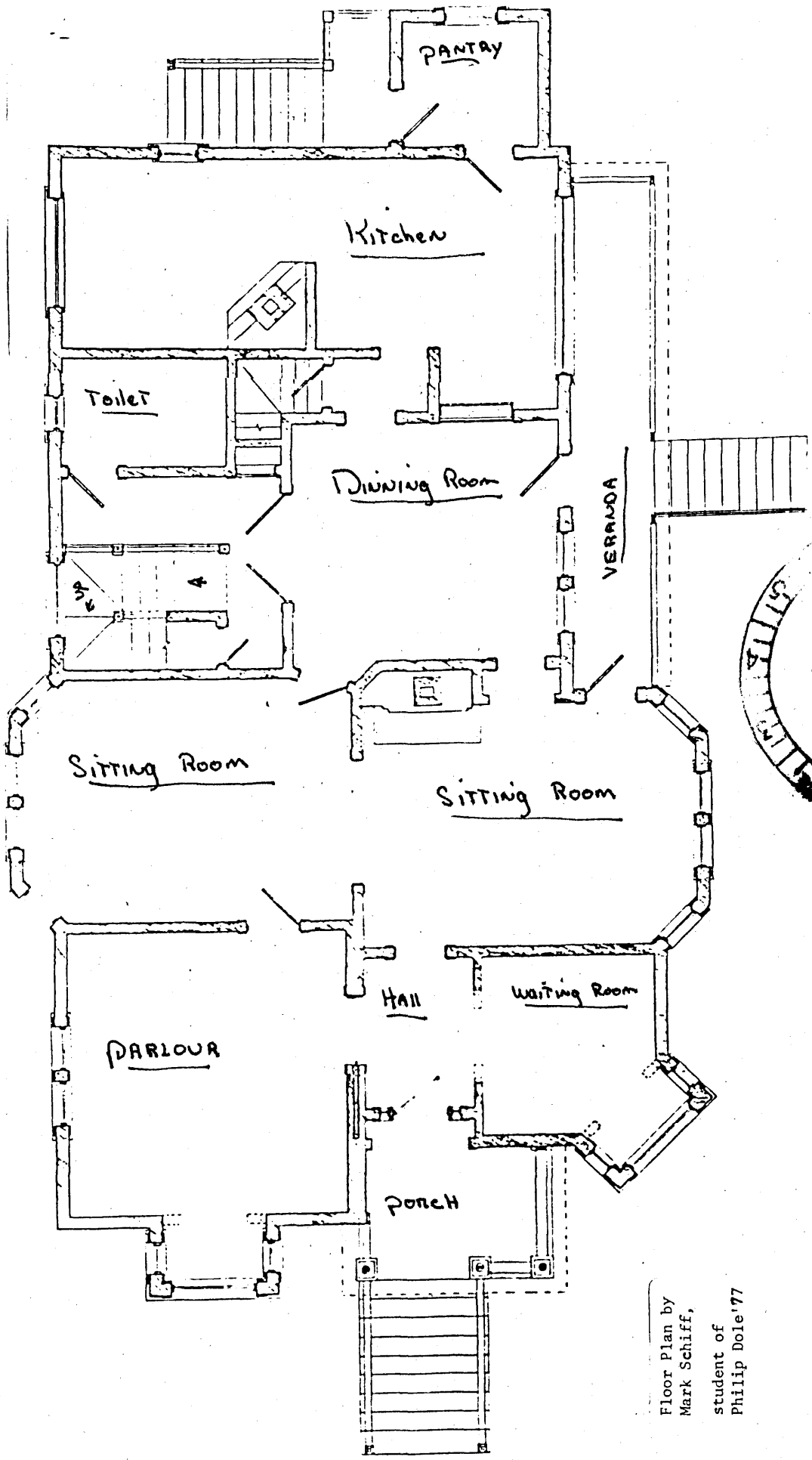
Item number 9

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Albany Directories: 1892, 1902, 1905, 1907.

Linn County Tax Assessor's Records.

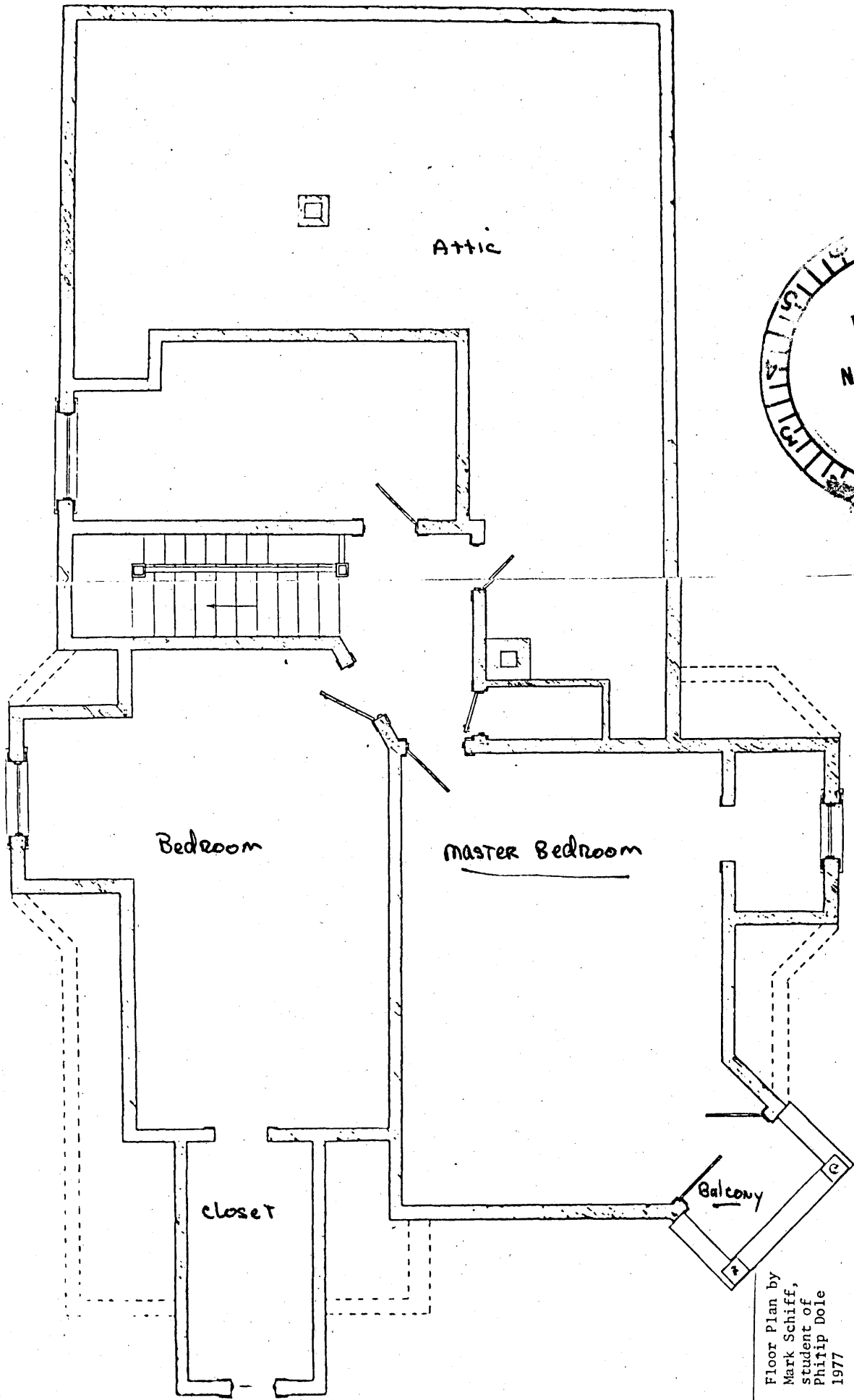
Interviews with Floyd Mullen and Lee Rohrbough, Local Historians.



DEC - 9 1981



Floor Plan by
 Mark Schiff,
 student of
 Philip Dole '77



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