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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Baker, Sophenia Ish, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 902 West McAndrews Road N/A not for publication

city or town Medford vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Jackson code 029 zip code 97501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hamrick July 25, 1993
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u>	Entered in the National Register	Date of Action <u>9/1/93</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Agriculture: barn

Agriculture: field/pasture

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Agriculture: barn

Agriculture: field/pasture

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Stick

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood: weatherboard

roof wood: shingle

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number: 7 Page: 1 Sopenia Ish Baker House, v. Medford, OR

The Sopenia Ish Baker House is a two-story wood-frame dwelling located in Jackson County, Oregon just west of the corporate limits of the City of Medford. Built in 1895, the house was designed by early Medford architect W.J. Bennet and built by local contractors Barrett, Butler, and Stewart in a modest rural example of the popular Stick style of architecture. Essentially unaltered from its original design, the Baker House has been owned by one family since its construction. The 4.27 acre parcel, in Ish-Baker family ownership since 1870, has remained in its current configuration for over 65 years. A distinctive structure in the rural Stick style, the Sopenia Ish Baker House retains substantial integrity in setting, design, use of materials, and workmanship and successfully conveys its original construction period and the associations for which it is significant.

SETTING, LANDSCAPES FEATURES & GROUNDS:

The Sopenia Ish Baker House¹ is located on a flat, basically rectangular, parcel between the cities of Medford and Jacksonville on the floor of the Rogue River Valley. Originally part of the Samuel Stearns Donation Land Claim, by 1870 the parcel had been acquired by the prominent pioneer, Jacob Ish and was incorporated into the 5000+ acre Ish ranch.² In 1925 most of the original 50 acre tract associated with the Sopenia Ish Baker House was sold and the nominated area essentially assumed its present size and configuration.³

Identified as tax lot 2900 on Jackson County Assessor's plat 37S-2W-24CC, the Sopenia Ish Baker House property is bounded on the East by Western Avenue, the boundary line of the City of Medford. West McAndrews Road diagonally clips the southeast corner of the parcel at the northwest corner of the intersection of McAndrews and Western. Prior to the designation of the Sopenia Ish Baker House by address, it was described in city directories as being at the "head of Jackson Street," and this remains an appropriate

¹ Prior to this research the subject house has been referred to in other studies as both the Ashpole House [in error] and more recently, the "Henry E. and Sopenia Ish Baker House," the name under which it is listed in both the Jackson County Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources [1991, Site # 242] and a Determination of Eligibility report prepared by the Oregon Department of Transportation, [Norman, 1991]. For reasons discussed at length in Section 8, the present research into the history and development of the structure indicates that it would be more properly identified as the Sopenia Ish Baker House and it is here so nominated.

² J.A. Brunner to Jacob Ish, Jackson County Deed Records [JCD] 5:229.

³ The land transfers relating the parcel are discussed further in Section 8. Please also refer to the attached 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance and 1932 Historic Area Maps. Minor lot adjustments as a result of roadway widening or realignment are the only changes in configuration since 1925.

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description today. Traveling west from Medford on Jackson Street, the Baker House is prominently sited directly ahead, visually centered and framed by the roadway. Though located outside the corporate limits, the Sophenia Ish Baker House site is now part of the City of Medford Urban Growth Boundary.

The vast majority of the 4.27 acre parcel containing the Baker House is open pasture land, some of which is cross-fenced. An irrigated garden area, located to the northwest of the main house, across the open irrigation that traverses the property, survives although it has not been used in recent years. A larger irrigation ditch bisects the pasture area to the west of the Baker House itself. The large rose and iris garden area, just west of the house, contains a wide variety of hybrids that were developed over many years by longtime owner Matthew N. Baker, youngest son of Henry E. and Sophenia Ish Baker.⁴

Other landscape features of the Sophenia Ish Baker House include mature trees of locust, ash, and other varieties that shade and seclude the structure, adding to its rural character. A small remnant fruit orchard, containing half-a-dozen trees, survives to the north of the small barn near the north property line. Early fencing and a cattle chute survive, possibly from the turn-of-the-century Ish Ranch era.

While the Baker House parcel itself is predominately rural in character, the surrounding area is a mixture of commercial uses along West McAndrews Road and smaller residential lots in the Maple Park Subdivision, facing Maple Park Drive, to the rear [north]. A non-compatible commercial use, now an auto body shop, is located immediately west of the nominated parcel. [See "Associated Structures" below.] The Baker House itself is set back approximately 90' from West McAndrews Road. Surrounded by trees and open pasture, the Baker House, despite the somewhat transitional nature of the immediate area, continues to successfully relate its historic, rural, setting.

CONSTRUCTION:

History

Ten months after Jacob Ish's widow, Sarah E. (Sallie) deeded 50 acres of the family ranch to her niece Sophenia and her children "in consideration of love and affection and one

⁴ Don Keener, personal communication with the author, 26-January-1993.

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dollar..." the local newspaper reported under the headline "Will Build a Fine Farm Residence" that Mrs. S.E. Ish began construction of a new residence between Medford and Jacksonville.

The main building will be 24 x 28 feet in size and two stories high, and to this will be added a 12 x 28 foot lean-to. The first floor will be divided into a sitting room, hall, dining room, parlor, kitchen, pantry, and bathroom. An open stairway will lead to the second floor where there will be three sleeping rooms and three closets. There will be a porch across the entire front, also one at the rear. It is one Architect Bennet's designs and is truly a beauty. The contract for the carpenter work is being done Barrett, Butler, and Stewart and the mason work and plastering by G.W. Priddy. The cost of the building completed will be about \$1400.⁵

Much confusion surrounds the various Ish-family women, whose numbers included two Sopenia Ish's as well as Sarah (Sallie) Ish herself. It is possible that in attributing the Baker House to "Mrs. S.E. Ish" the local newspaper simply confused Mrs. Baker with her Aunt or, perhaps more likely, that the generous Aunt Sallie did in fact build the house as a gift for her niece. Construction of the house apparently continued throughout the Fall and the house was ready for occupancy by the end of the year. According to Matthew Baker, his parents moved in on the day after Christmas, 1895.⁶

Description: Structural and Exterior

The Sopenia Ish Baker House is a two-story, wood-frame structure. The main 24' x 28' volume has a gable roof clad with 3-tab asphalt shingles. An intersecting front facing gable extends to include the prominent two-story front porch underneath the main roof area. To the rear, a single-story hipped roof, clad with wood shingles, covers the small open rear porch and kitchen wing. Early appearing metal ridge caps are present. This one story volume was constructed as an element of the original design.

At the extreme rear of the structure, the house is further extended on the northwest corner

⁵ *Medford Mail*, 16-August-1895, 5:5.

⁶ James Norman, *Cultural Resources Report: Highway 238 - Jackson Street Jacksonville Highway*. (Salem: Oregon State Highway Division, Environmental Section, 1991), 5.

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by a bathroom and screened porch area addition. This addition is roofed with a modified hip that continues from that of the kitchen wing. The sole modification of any impact known to have occurred in the 98-year history of the Baker House is the rear bathroom and porch addition. Although this appears to be of circa 1920s construction, it has not been dated conclusively.⁷

Two original chimneys are present on the Baker House. The main chimney, venting the central fireplace, is of brick and has a decorative corbeled top that pierces the main gable ridge. A smaller brick chimney, rising from the kitchen, is of unadorned utilitarian design.

The main volume of the house rests upon an 18" high brick perimeter foundation laid in running bond. Both the front and open rear porches have simple post and pier foundations without any skirting. The one-story kitchen volume also has a brick foundation while the later addition (the bathroom and screen porch area) is supported by a poured concrete perimeter foundation.

Walls are all of light wood framing, probably employing a balloon or similar structural system. Siding is 6" wide horizontal drop with 6" wide cornerboards on the main volume. A similar siding material is present on the rear addition without cornerboards. Mismatched seams, as well as the detailing of the foundation materials, provide confirmation of the later-than-original construction date of this portion of the structure.

The exterior wall surfaces of the Sopenhia Ish Baker House are visually divided into three primary areas through the use of a system of horizontal banding. Above the foundation a 10" wide plain board below a protruding watertable forms the base for the wall siding. The top of the first floor level is visually defined by a stringcourse constructed of a protruding board set at an angle away from the main wall plane. Located directly above the first window level, this feature runs the entire perimeter of the main volume. The top of the second floor is defined by a less elaborate band, a simple 6" plain board, that runs just above the second floor windows, tying into the cornerboards at eave level. This feature creates an open, pediment-type, area in the gable ends that is further accented by an additional horizontal board that visually mimics a collar beam, connecting the plain fascia boards as would that type of structural member. Small decorative flared panels at the ends of the raking cornice, coupled with paired brackets mounted on the cornerboards,

⁷ E. Bernice Geitner, personal communication with the author, 2-February-1993. Mrs. Geitner, granddaughter of Sopenhia Ish Baker, recalls the addition being present when her family returned to Medford in 1929.

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add visual interest to the gable ends of the side elevations. Surface detailing on the rear hipped kitchen wing, as well as the later addition at the extreme rear, is more simple in design.

The primary decorative feature of the Sopenhia Ish Baker House is the elaborate two-story front porch of the primary, south-facing, elevation. Below a recessed, full pedimented, gable end, the 6' deep open porch has twin 6' x 20' foot levels accessible from each of the two interior halls. Framed in a platform manner with the 6x6 inch chamfered posts set atop the floor surface, the porch is visually divided into three bays. Matching pilasters are present at the rear of both porch levels. The front entry door is located off-center, toward the west elevation, disrupting the otherwise bilaterally symmetrical facade.

The boxed cornice of the front porch frames a visually distinctive gable end of stickwork including sunburst patterns and other motifs. Such work was typical of the period and gable ends provided an accepted outlet for such exuberant detailing. The sunrise, or sunburst, designs "...derive from the overlapping of wedge-shaped sticks to create a radiating pattern...[that] imitate the rays of the rising sun."⁸ The sunburst motif is repeated in the open screen-type stickwork that frames the central bay of the second floor porch level, a detail that was also originally present on the main floor level creating a dual arched-opening effect. [See attached historic photos] The balustrade of the porch is of open stickwork, utilizing both diagonal "X" and horizontal elements.

Exterior windows are all original 1/1 double hung wood sash. The basic opening size is 23" x 78" with the first floor the windows set in pairs. Second floor windows are both in pairs and single. There are three entries on the main volume, all original four-panel fir doors, two opening onto the front porch and one at the NE corner. The main entry door, at the front porch, is set below a small operable transom window. Window and door trim on the original volume and kitchen wing are uniform 6" wide plain boards, rising to meet the various horizontal trim elements described above. Trim on the rear single-story volume is of similar, plainboard, design. Another four-panel door opens onto the kitchen from the rear open porch. A door off the screened porch, at the NW corner, is no longer functional.

⁸ Gottfried and Jennings, *American Vernacular Design 1870-1940*. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 76.

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Description: Interior, First Floor

The first floor of the Sopenia Ish Baker House contains four main spaces in the original volume, historically described as "...a sitting room, hall, dining room, [and] parlor" with the kitchen wing to the rear.⁹ As near as can be determined at this time, each of these spaces survives virtually unchanged from its original design.

Ceiling height throughout the first floor is 10' with both wall and ceiling surfaces of lath and plaster. All rooms except the entry hall are painted with a surviving decorative wallpaper dado band dividing the walls from the lighter colored "lid" approximately 18" below ceiling level. In the "parlor" paint was applied over paper and the overlapping seams remain visible. Dados are all of a stylized floral motif and appear to date from the original construction period. The hall and open stairwell to the second floor retain early or original wallpaper in a large floral pattern. Flooring throughout is 3½" wide tongue and groove fir, most of which is unpainted.

Original door and window trim survives throughout consisting of 6" wide plain fir trim stained a typical orange-brown. Cornerblocks are present at all openings. Door casings rise from a 10" high decorative plinth and 8" wide plain baseboard molding, with a 2" decorative cap molding line the perimeter of all the spaces. Original doors, four-panel fir, as well as original hardware of embossed hinges and faceplates with black glass knobs survive throughout.¹⁰ In the "dining room," as shown on the attached floorplans, a 48" wide fir mantelpiece frames a brick-lined fireplace. Trim matches the rest of the design with matching base plinths and other detailing.

The 12' x 15' entry hall is dominated by a u-shaped, or "hollow newel," design open stairwell with two landings that rises to the second floor in a graceful, well executed design. All trim pieces, as well as the treads and risers, are of natural stained fir to match the rest of the house. A 6" x 6" tapered and chamfered newel post rises from the starting step which itself protrudes to cover a segmented arc riser and forms what is called a "circle end" tread that extends 6" beyond the basic 36" stairwell width.¹¹ The top cap of

⁹ *Medford Mail*, 16-August-1895, 5:5.

¹⁰ The exterior door and hardware of the rear porch entrance was severely damaged during a recent burglary.

¹¹ The terminology used in describing this feature is based upon that of Jennings and Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940* (New York; Von Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988), 102-118.

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the newel is a 8" square beveled plate, a design that is mimicked on the corner post at both landings as well as the second floor. Each stair tread protrudes slightly beyond the plain of the open stringer. At the two landings, the 90 degree turn is accomplished by two paired winders, or "turn steps, cut wider at one end than the other, so that they can turn an angle..."¹² The railing of the Baker House stairwell is formed by an open rectangular grid-pattern that recalls the so-called chinoiserie influence often found in Oregon architecture during the end of the 19th century.¹³ A rather unusual trim detail, a narrow 1" wide gold (possibly gilded) egg and dart molding band is present at the wall and ceiling corner.

The rear, single-story, kitchen wing of the Baker House has a 30" high wainscot of 3" wide vertical beaded boards. Wall and ceiling finishes are painted lath and plaster. Two original appearing cabinets, one above the wood drainboard at the NW corner and an 18" x 52" built-in hutch in the SW corner, survive. Both cabinets are built of the same vertical boards as the wainscot. No baseboard is present in the kitchen and all door and window trim, except that on the rear wall, matches the remainder of the first floor in design. Trim in the kitchen is painted. Two exterior exits, one opening onto the rear porch on the east and another to the screened porch on the west are present.

On the rear (north) wall of the kitchen a non-original doorway, framed with simple plain boards without cornerblocks or plinths, opens onto the small 6' x 7' bathroom addition. Here early plumbing fixtures survive, including a shower created by formed galvanized sheetmetal that rises 18" from a floor pan to create a basin below a flexible rubber hose used as the shower head. A door on the west wall of the bathroom opens onto the large, L-shaped, screened porch that surrounds the kitchen wing.

Description: Interior, Second Floor

The second floor hallway of the Sopenia Ish Baker House is, as is the first floor hall, dominated by the open stairwell. A matching railing continues from the newel post at the last stair tread toward the front elevation of the house and then turns toward the west wall, forming a 36" wide balcony that overlooks the open stairway core as well as the second floor exterior porch. A four-panel door provides access to the front porch. All finishes, wallpaper, trim and molding details of the second floor hall, including the egg and dart described above, match that of the first floor hall area.

¹² Ibid., 108.

¹³ Philip Dole, personal communication with the author, 2-February-1993.

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The three bedrooms of the second floor level are detailed in complimentary fashion to the first floor and stairwell areas. Door and window trim are of the same design although here have been painted rather than left natural, a variation that may be a later alteration. Baseboards in the bedroom areas are also of 8" wide plain board but without the decorative top cap found in the remainder of the house. Four-panel doors, all painted on the inside surface, are left stained on the face to retain uniformity with the hallway trim when closed.

Wall surfaces are painted lath and plaster in the rooms identified as "2" and "3" on the attached floorplan. Room "1" is also painted although here the rough surface texture indicates a lack of a finish coat during the original wall construction. This room was likely at one time wallpapered, a finish that no longer survives. Further research in closet areas, or though family photographs, might provide additional information on this area's original appearance. Three small closets, one in each of the bedroom areas, all survive from the original design. These closets were of sufficient interest to have been noted in period announcements of the original construction.¹⁴

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

Though generally a modest example of rural residential design that is in keeping with its original setting, the Sopenia Ish Baker House was the product of a design professional. As such it exhibits a well-conceived design employing the elements commonly associated with the "Stick" or "Eastlake" style rather than the plain, functional "vernacular" farmhouse designs found in much of Jackson County's 19th century rural residences. Architect Bennet's design for the exterior of the Baker House utilizes a system of horizontal division of the exterior surfaces into sections that mimic the interior structure and floor levels, typical features of the Stick style. Hugely popular in Oregon from the late 1870s until the beginning of the 20th century, the Stick style was highly influenced by the work of English furniture and household essayist Charles Eastlake. The use of elaborate surface detailing, the stylized design of the front-facing gable, porch railing and other details, is typical of the Stick style.

On the Baker House, architect Bennet's rather restrained use of the Stick style's trademark horizontal stringcourse bands, watertable and other features countered by the vertical

¹⁴ *Medford Mail*, 16-August-1895, 5:5.

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cornerboards and window trim on the side elevations, gives way on the primary elevation to the elaborately ornamental porch treatment described previously. That the porch should be so disproportionately detailed is not at all atypical. "In Oregon, porches were the most common location for Eastlake elements."¹⁵ The Sopenhia Ish Baker House front porch represents one of the best surviving examples of a rural use of Stick motifs yet identified in the Jackson County area.

ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES:

Historically, two outbuildings were associated with the Sopenhia Ish Baker House. The 1927 Sanborn Map (attached) shows a small wood-frame building behind the main dwelling located just behind and east of the main house. Historic information, both Sanborn Maps and photos, show this building to have been square in plan with a gable roof and vertical board siding. The building, apparently used as both a small barn and garage, no longer survives. Its demolition, which occurred sometime post-1952, is otherwise undated.

The second outbuilding on property is the Baker House barn, a wood-frame gable-roofed structure with a shed addition located to the northwest of the main house, near the northern property line. The barn, constructed sometime between 1927 and 1936, was used by the Baker family for a milk cow¹⁶. It is sided with vertical board, similar to the now demolished building mentioned above, and has modest rectilinear eave brackets, similar to Bungalow or Craftsman-style designs of the period. Photo and structural evidence indicate that the shed roof portion, to the west, is a later addition and Sanborn Maps, updated to 1952, do not include this feature. The Baker House barn remains in good condition. Although built some 30 years later, the Baker Barn is compatible with the main house and relates the agricultural use of the area. It is considered a contributing element to this nomination.

At 918 West McAndrews Road, west of the Sopenhia Ish Baker House, is a wood-frame commercial building currently the site of Ray's Auto Body. Essentially non-compatible

¹⁵ Rosalind Clarke, *Architecture Oregon Style*, (Portland: Professional Book Center 1983), 78.

¹⁶ E. Bernice Geitner, personal communication with the author, 2-February-1993. The 1927 Sanborn Map shows the barn not yet constructed while it does appear on updated Sanborns of 1936. Mrs. Geitner recalls the building being present in 1929.

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and located upon a separate tax lot, this building is not included in this nomination. Despite a high visually impact that is counter to the original rural character of the Baker House, this commercial structure does have a strong connection to the Baker Family and their development of the property.¹⁷ Clearly identifiable by construction method and design, the building at 918 West McAndrews was originally constructed as a part of the U.S. Army cantonment, Camp White, built east of Medford in 1942. Following decommissioning in 1946, virtually all of Camp White's 1300+ structures were sold for re-use or salvage. A local newspaper reported in July 1947 that one "R. Chester Baker" purchased a "Sheet Metal Shop," presumably this building, at one of the many Camp White surplus auctions.¹⁸ Robert Chester "Chet" Baker (1896-1973) the third of Henry E. and Sopenhia Ish Baker's four sons, worked for many years worked at Skinner's, a longtime Medford-area car dealer. By 1948, following the relocation of the building, Baker had opened "Chet Baker's Garage" at this site according to city directories. In subsequent years the building was used for a variety of similar commercial uses. The present occupant has been located here since 1976.

SUMMARY:

The Sopenhia Ish Baker House is an amazingly well preserved example of a rural farmhouse in the stick-style as built in Jackson County during the waning years of the 19th century. Over its 98-year existence the Baker House has experienced only a single major alteration, a pre-1929 addition, that deviates from the structure's original interior or exterior appearance. Located upon the 4.27 acre parcel with which it has been associated since 1925, the Sopenhia Ish Baker House continues to successfully relate its historic rural associations.

Intact in virtually all significant elements on both its interior and exterior, retaining substantial integrity in setting and landscape, the Sopenhia Ish Baker House represents a rare, if not unique, example of rural Stick-style farmhouse architecture within the Jackson County area. The structure is accordingly proposed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "C." for its exemplary ability to relate the distinctive characteristics of the rural Stick-style farmhouse type.

¹⁷ The parcel now identified as Tax Lot 2000 was re-purchased by Matthew N. Baker from J. Curtis Barnes in 1940. See JCD 253:420-421. Please refer to Section 8 of this nomination.

¹⁸ "CW Building Buyers Shown in WAA Auction List," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 28-July-1947.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Agriculture
- Architecture: 19th Century
- Community Development
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1895-1942

Significant Dates

1895

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bennet, W. J., architect

Barrett, Butler & Stewart, contractors

Priddy, G. W., plaster/masonry

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Southern Oregon Historical Society

Sophenia Ish Baker House
Name of Property

Jackson, Oregon
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.27 acres

Medford West, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 0	5 0 8 9 1 0	4 6 8 6 3 5 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George Kramer with Kay Atwood

organization for the Matthew Baker Trust date March 1, 1993

street & number 386 North Laurel telephone (503) 482-9504

city or town Ashland state Oregon zip code 97520

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustees of the Matthew Baker Estate

street & number c/o Dames & Dames PO Box 759 telephone (503) 779-4555

city or town Medford state Oregon zip code 97501

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

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SHPO SUMMARY

The stylish, temple-fronted villa of Sopenia Ish Baker on the outskirts of northwest Medford, Oregon was designed in the Stick-Eastlake tradition by early Medford architect W. J. Bennet and was completed for Mrs. Baker and her family in 1895. Looming stage set-like at the head of Jackson Boulevard, where McAndrews Road intersects with Medford's regular street grid, the house is the centerpiece of a 4.27-acre parcel, the nucleus of a 50-acre tract with which the house was associated historically.

The house meets National Register Criterion C as a notably well preserved and distinctive example of rural Stick-Eastlake architecture in Jackson County. It is a neat, two-story, side-gabled volume measuring 20 x 28 feet which rests on a brick foundation and is oriented southeasterly to present its portico to the tangent of West McAndrews Road. The double piazza, or portico extends nearly the full width of the facade, has a full classical pediment and is supported on slender chamfered posts. It is this dominant feature which, together with the moderate pitch of the roof, gives the house a conservative Palladian air evoking the state's settlement period when farmhouses of the 1840s and '50s adhered to the Greek Revival style. Originally, the gable peaks were crested with acroteria which underscored the villa's temple form.

The Baker House is entirely clad with drop siding. Cladding, along with tall, narrow window openings, string courses on secondary elevations, oversized, scroll-sawn corner brackets at the eavesline, and the stickwork of the portico proclaim the building's kinship with the Stick Style and Eastlake tradition. Stylized rising-sun cut-out work in the tympanum of the pediment and cut-out work making up archways in the central bay of the portico, as well as stylized porch and interior stair railings, were reflections of the late Victorian vogue for Oriental motifs.

Window openings are fitted with double-hung sash having one-over-one lights and, typically, are paired. They reveal an interior organization that is essentially formal--divided between an offset entry stairhall, dining room, and front a back parlors. At the core, a diagonal fireplace is vented by a tall brick chimney with

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corbeled cap. On the rear, or northwest elevation is a hip-roofed kitchen ell with a side porch on the east and a wrap-around shed addition on the west which contains a bathroom and screened porch.

Interior finish work is entirely intact, including flooring, plaster walls, staircase, bracketed mantelpiece, baseboards with crown molding, four-panel doors, and door and window trim having bull's-eye corner blocks--all of it good-quality, standard mill work of the day.

The provenance of the property begins with Jacob Ish, who, with his four brothers, arrived in the Rogue River Valley in 1861. Ish settled near Jacksonville and developed one of the largest ranches in southern Oregon. The nominated parcel is the surviving nucleus of a 50-acre bequest to Sopenia Ish Baker from Jacob's widow, Sopenia's aunt, the former Sallie Elizabeth Jones. It is thought the house itself may also have been a gift, commissioned by Aunt Sallie expressly for her niece. Sopenia, the daughter of William Ish, had been a member of her uncle Jacob's household following death of her mother when she was young. In 1888, she married Henry E. Baker, a local capitalist who left his family in 1907. The couple had four sons. Sopenia supported herself and her children by giving piano lessons in the house and, it is thought, by leasing the acreage as augmentation to the Ish Ranch holdings held and managed by her cousins. Eventually, as development overtook agricultural land in the valley, Sopenia sold off the bequest for new subdivisions. After Sopenia died in 1945, the remaining property passed to her youngest son, Matthew, who held it until his death in 1992. This long continuum in family ownership accounts for the unaltered state of the house in the present day.

The nominated property is essentially open pasture traversed by two irrigation ditches. The house is surrounded by mature shade trees, and a cultivated vegetable garden and remnant of the old fruit orchard are the other distinguishing features of the historic landscape. After sale of most of the acreage, Baker and her son built a barn for a milk cow at the back of the parcel. Believed to date from about 1927, and reflecting somewhat the then-current Craftsman style, the one-story barn had a lean-to addition on one side. It still stands as the only accessory building remaining on the property. The house and its setting of four acres survives as a rural enclave in an urbanizing area of mixed commercial and

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residential use. It is a good, intact and increasingly rare representative of the kind of agricultural development which filled the landscape between Medford and Jacksonville after the initial period of gold excitement in the Siskiyou. It illustrates how population growth and economic forces affected the pattern of land use on the immediate outskirts of Medford as broad acreages were converted to a few subsistence farms crowded by housing subdivisions. The Baker property, therefore, meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of agriculture and community development.

Sophenia Ish Baker and her son, Matthew, adapted to their changing circumstances by adding the cow barn in the late 1920s. Because their modest family farming operation was essential to their survival through the Depression, the period of significance is drawn to the end of the economic emergency, which generally is defined as the country's mobilization for entry into the Second World War. Owing to the significance of the agricultural setting as a whole, the farm site and the cow barn are counted as separately contributing features along with the house.

The Baker House has the distinction of having been designed by the first professionally trained architect in the environs of Medford. W. J. Bennet was drawn to the Rogue River Valley from Roseburg to supervise a hotel remodeling in 1894, about ten years after Medford was incorporated. Bennet's was a short-lived architectural presence, but before he left for Yreka, California in 1896 he had produced a number of houses and commercial buildings and at least one school. Two of Bennet's Medford works were previously listed in the National Register: The Queen Anne style Wilkenson-Swem Building (1896) and the Shone-Charley House, which perhaps has an incorrectly estimated date of construction of 1898. The Shone-Charley House is a Queen Anne cottage which, with its onion dome veranda pavilion, horseshoe-arch brackets, and tabernacle window frame, displayed a decorative bravado that surpassed the Baker House but did not necessarily improve upon the satisfactory blend of classical and exotic themes that may be seen at the head of Jackson Boulevard.

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The Sopenia Ish Baker House is a distinctive example of the rural farmhouses that once dotted the open plain between Medford and Jacksonville. Constructed in 1895 for the second generation of a prominent pioneer family, the Baker House was designed by prolific southern Oregon architect W.J. Bennet in a modest Stick style. Still owned by descendents of the original owner, the Sopenia Ish Baker House remains essentially unaltered in any manner from its original design. Located upon a 4.27 acre irrigated and fenced parcel, with a surviving barn, the site and setting of the Baker House sufficiently convey the once prevalent agricultural and ranching uses of this portion of the Rogue River Valley and qualify the property under Register criterion "A" for ability to relate that association. The Baker House itself retains substantial integrity in design, appearance, use of materials and workmanship to relate its original architectural character and qualify the property under criterion "C" as a rare surviving example of a rural stick-influenced farmhouse within this context.

THE ISH RANCH:

Subsequent to the Euro-American settlement of the Rogue Valley, the nominated parcel was part of the Samuel E. Stearns Donation Land Claim, a 319.78 acre claim that encompassed portions of sections 12, 13, 23 and 24 in Township 37S, Range 2 West of the Willamette Meridian. In May 1861, Stearns sold a portion of this claim to a J.A. Brunner.¹ Brunner in turn sold the property to Jacob Ish, another early Jackson County pioneer, in 1870.

Jacob Ish, born in Virginia in 1823, had arrived in the Rogue Valley with his four brothers, William, Horace, Matthew and Richard, in 1861. "Jacob purchased land about three miles from Jacksonville and became owner of one of the largest ranches in southern Oregon. The Ish Ranch soon became known far and wide for its broad acres, sturdy stock, and immaculately maintained buildings."² Ish added the Brunner acreage to his already extensive holdings, probably using the land for wheat or cattle. Upon Jacob's death on 4-March-1881 all of his holdings went to his second wife, Sarah (Sallie) Elizabeth Jones. Sallie had married Jacob, her brother-in-law, following the death of her sister J. Eleanor in

¹ Jackson County Deed Records [JCD] 3:122, 30-May-1861. Stearn's DLC was only patented after this transaction, (JCD 5:388, 26-July-1866) as was often typical in early land sales of the area.

² Raymond Lewis, "William H. Gore," *The Table Rock Sentinel*, (January 1984), 13.

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1877. Jacob and Eleanor had one daughter, Sopenia.³

In 1895 Aunt Sallie Ish gave 50 acres of the ranch to her niece, Sopenia Ish Baker. The deed of gift, in consideration of "love and affection" specified the following:

It is expressly intended by this conveyance that it is a deed of gift to Sopenia Ish Baker . . . to be a home for her and her children after her and at her death the said land and premises is to descend to and become the property of all the children of said Sopenia Ish Baker, share and share alike...⁴

As stated in Section 7, Aunt Sallie, not Sopenia or Henry Baker, was cited in the local newspaper as the individual who was building the "fine farm residence" that is the subject of this nomination. It is highly likely that the structure, as well as the land on which it sat, was a gift of Sopenia's generous Aunt. Aunt Sallie Ish died in 1910. While most of the still extensive Ish Ranch holdings were left to Sopenia Ish Gore, Jacob's daughter, "...cousin Sopenia Ish Baker was given property in the section which has now become the Medford Airport."⁵

The Ish Ranch continued under the management of William H. Gore, husband of Jacob's daughter Sopenia. Descended from another prominent Jackson County pioneer family, William Gore himself had an illustrious career as an innovative rancher and businessman, serving terms in the Oregon legislature and as the director of a variety of Medford banks and business concerns. Both he and wife Sopenia led a lavish life-style and by the 1930s the once vast family fortune had been lost though ill-advised investment and poor management. Upon William Gore's death in 1946, Sopenia Ish Gore, then 82-years old, was left essentially penniless. She and a daughter, Mary, with no where to go, moved into the subject property with Sopenia Ish Baker's youngest son, Matthew, then its owner. Sopenia Ish Gore died in Jacksonville on 17-April-1949.

³ Sopenia Ish *Gore*, (1864-1949). To avoid confusion between the two cousins, Sopenia Ish Gore and Sopenia Ish Baker, both born in 1864, they will be referred to by their married names throughout this document.

⁴ JCD 28:181, 24-October-1894. It should be noted that Aunt Sallie specifically excluded Sopenia's husband from her generosity

⁵ Lewis, 17.

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SOPHENIA ISH AND HENRY E. BAKER:

Born on 11-May-1864 in Umatilla County, Oregon, Sopenia Ish Baker was the daughter of William K. and Ann Ish. William Ish was Jacob's eldest brother and had moved to Oregon from Virginia with the family in 1861. He apparently traveled considerably, possibly in connection with mining. Upon the death of Ann Ish, the couple's young daughter Sopenia was taken in by Jacob and Eleanor, her aunt and uncle, and raised along with Jacob's own daughter Sopenia Ish Gore.⁶ Jacob and Eleanor provided their niece with all the advantages the family's wealth could offer. Sopenia Ish Baker "...attended both the public school and later Saint Mary's Academy in Jacksonville, where she majored in music and art. As a girl she took a prominent part in the musical activities of the valley."⁷ On 7-November-1888 Sopenia married Henry E. Baker. The respected southern Oregon minister Moses A. Williams presided over the ceremony.⁸

The 1900 census shows that Henry E. Baker was born in Wisconsin 1862, of German descent. Little other biographical information about Baker could be located for this project. He apparently arrived in Jackson County sometime after 1880 as he is not listed in the census for that year. In McKeeny's Pacific Coast Directory 1886-1887, Baker is listed as the proprietor of the "Medford Farmer's Warehouse," apparently a shipping facility of some sort that was located upon the depot grounds. After his marriage, Baker's name shows up in a variety of property transactions recorded in the Jackson County Deed Records, many concerning commercial lands in downtown Medford. By the 1906 *Polk's Jackson County Directory*, Baker's occupation is listed as "Carpenter."⁹ Family informants report that Mr. Baker was also involved with various mining projects during his years in Jackson County.¹⁰

Henry E. and Sopenia Ish Baker had four sons; Henry (known as Harry) Ish Baker (1890-1961), George William (1892-1939), Robert Chester (1896-1973) and Matthew Norman (1899-1992). In 1907 Henry E. Baker abruptly left Jackson County and went to

⁶ Virginia Dudley, personal communication with the author, 27-January-1992. Mrs. Dudley is a niece of Sopenia Ish Baker.

⁷ *Medford Mail Tribune*, 28-January-1945.

⁸ *Marriage Certificates*, Southern Oregon Historical Society, MS 271.

⁹ Based upon this statement, as well as comments by Matthew Baker, previous studies have reported Baker as the builder of the subject property. While Baker may have participated in some manner in the house's construction, this attribution now appears to be incorrect.

¹⁰ Virginia Dudley, op cit., and E. Bernice Geitner, telephone communication with the author, 2-February-1993. Mrs. Geitner is a grand-daughter of Henry E. and Sopenia Ish Baker.

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California, leaving Sopheria and the couple's four sons. By 1925, Henry Baker was living in "Amboy Township" and in 1930, city directories list Sopheria as being Henry's widow. His actual date of death was not researched for this project.¹¹

The specific details of Henry E. Baker's move to California are unclear. His connection to the subject property was by result terminated. On the basis of Henry's relatively brief residence as compared to Sopheria's, as well as the actual ownership of the property in only Sopheria's name, the nominated parcel is more accurately described as the Sopheria Ish Baker House.

Left with the four young children, Sopheria likely generated some income through leasing the 50 acre tract to her cousins, who still operated the huge Ish Ranch, renamed following Aunt Sallie's death as the "W.H. Gore Ranch." Skilled in music, Sopheria also taught piano, giving lessons in her home.¹² Sopheria Ish Baker died at the age of 80 on 24-January-1945. "Mrs. Baker had lived at her present home [the subject property] for over 50 years."¹³

Following Sopheria Ish Baker's death, the family home became the property for the youngest of the four brothers, Matthew Norman Baker. Born in the house on 10-September-1899, Matthew Baker lived virtually his entire 93 year life on the parcel. After graduating from Medford High School in 1921, Matt Baker worked for many years at the Railway Express in downtown Medford. Baker died on 8-December-1992.¹⁴

MAPLE PARK:

In 1925, likely coincident with the decline of the W.H. Gore Ranch, Sopheria Ish Baker and her children determined to sell off much of the land given to them by Aunt Sallie thirty years earlier. In April the northern portion of the parcel was transferred to E.C. Corn and J.C. Barnes, two Medford-area real estate agents.¹⁵ Barnes was long influential in the real

¹¹ *Medford Oregon, City Directory 1930-1931*, (Medford: Medford Printing Company), 23. Although the couple apparently remained married, there is little indication of any contact between them following Henry's 1907 departure from the Medford area.

¹² E. Bernice Geitner, Letter to the author, 2-February-1993.

¹³ *Medford Mail Tribune*, 28-January-1945.

¹⁴ Obituary, *The Jacksonville [Oregon] Nugget*, (December 1992) 15:1-2.

¹⁵ JCD 154:180. For reasons not exactly clear Henry E. Baker is listed as a part owner on this deed and

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estate market in Jackson Count. Two future orchardist described recalled their arrival in Medford in June 1928 as follows.

We met up with a fellow, J.C. Barnes. He was waiting to meet the trains. J.C. was an honorable man who must have sold every piece of property in Jackson County at least once. Thirty years later we were still buying land from him. He was a fine guy, an entrepreneur of the first order.¹⁶

In the mid-1920s Jackson County was undergoing a modest "boom" at this time and Corn and Barnes segmented the acreage they purchased from the Baker family into a subdivision they called "Maple Park" although they never took the formal step of recording its plat. In March, before the deed of transfer actually had been recorded, the following advertisement ran in a local newspaper:

MAPLE PARK

New Subdivision — New County Road

Two acres only \$50.00 cash, balance \$10.00 a month. At end of Jackson Street, just outside city limits. Twenty tracts to choose from, two-acre tracts, \$400.00 to \$600.00. You only need \$50.00 cash. Nothing better in small tracts will be offered. Partly in alfalfa now. Good garden and berry land, irrigated.

J.C. BARNES, Real Estate

6 So. Central¹⁷

With the sale of land for Maple Park, the nominated parcel had essentially assumed its present 4.27 acre configuration. On the smaller lot, the family pursued some modest, small-scale, ranching uses and the fencing, cattle chute, irrigation ditches, and other features that remain from the commercial ranching era, augmented by the c.1927 barn, continued the rural development of the site. A small family orchard, extensive vegetable garden, and the iris and rose gardens developed by Matthew Baker after World War II,

his acceptance of the contract was relayed via a notarized statement made in Amboy Township, California. Further, the title description, apparently in error, described the entire 50 acre parcel given to Baker by Aunt Sallie.

¹⁶ Harold Thorniley, as told to Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches, A Gathering of Rogue Valley Orchard Memories*. (Ashland: Kay Atwood, 1981), 26.

¹⁷ Medford Mail Tribune, 12-March-1925, 7:3-4.

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also add to the property's rural character. However, with the sale of land to Corn and Barnes, the commercial agricultural use of the parcel was predominately over.

Despite the efforts of Corn and Barnes, Maple Park developed slowly. Few of the lots in Maple Park were sold prior to World War II and little residential development occurred in the area. In 1940 Matthew Baker re-purchased two lots of the original family tract from Barnes, one of which would become the site of Chet Baker's Garage, described in Section 7, page 9-10.¹⁸

ARCHITECT AND BUILDERS:

The Sopenhia Ish Baker House was designed by W.J. Bennet, one of the first individuals to work in Medford who may be appropriately described as an architect.¹⁹ Bennet first came to Medford in late 1894 at the behest of Captain Nash, owner of local hotel, to oversee the remodeling and expansion of that establishment.²⁰ Along with an announcement of Bennet's arrival from Roseburg, Oregon, the local press reported:

THE MAIL is glad to make mention in connection with this item that there is a probability of Mr. Bennett (*sic*) becoming a permanent resident of our city. He is an architect of superior ability and we hope his final decision will be favorable to his locating in [Medford].²¹

Biographical information about Bennet is lacking however it is known that he was working in Roseburg, 100 miles north of Medford in Douglas County, as early as 1892. While in Roseburg, Bennet was responsible for the design of the Nathaniel Curry House, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.²² By January 1895 Bennet had

¹⁸ JCD 253:420-21. Recorded in 1944, these parcels are each located in another unrecorded sub-division of the original 50-acre Baker tract identified on Assessor's Maps as "Channing Sweet Acres."

¹⁹ "Architect" was often historically used by contractors, carpenters or builders who also provided designs for their projects. In modern terms, aside from licensing and education issues, "architect" is now typically reserved for those individuals who design but do not physically participate in the actual construction process. Bennet clearly was a designer, not a contractor.

²⁰ The Nash Hotel, long a prominent fixture of downtown Medford, was located on the SE corner of East Main and Front Streets.

²¹ *The Medford Mail* 21-December-1894, 1:4.

²² Fred Reenstjerna, Douglas County Museum, personal communication with the author 9-February-

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leased office and living space in Medford and by February had opened his extensive architectural practice, at that time the city's only such firm, in the Halley Block.

The new men employed in Mr. Bennet's pleasant and very beautiful office are I.A. Palmer, recently from Portland, but who at one time was the government architect for the Hawaiian islands. Mr. Palmer will be chief draftsman for Mr. Bennet. The other recent acquisition to the office is T.W. Terwilliger, gentleman from Portland, who is visiting in the city for a few weeks....²³

Although no information on Bennet's training or previous experience is known, the size of his firm, as well as the fact that an apparently skilled draftsman such as Mr. Palmer would accept a secondary role, indicates that Bennet did indeed have an established reputation or training in building design.²⁴ His rather immediate success in Medford certainly demonstrates his acceptance on a local level. Within a short time after his arrival in Jackson County, Bennet is credited in the local press with the design and oversight of numerous projects including the new Medford school, residences for J.O. Johnson, L.B. Warner and Spencer Childers, Jr., among others. Bennet also designed the Jeremiah True House, in rural Jackson County as well as Medford residences for W.H. Halley, attorney A.S. Hammond, and A.P. Green.²⁵ In Medford, the Bennet-designed Shone-Charley House and Wilkenson-Swem Building has each been previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places.²⁶

Bennet continued his Medford practice for only a short time, moving to Yreka, California in Summer 1896 where he was working on a new courthouse design.²⁷ Although his tenure in southern Oregon was short-lived, Bennet was highly prolific while he was here.

1993. Bennet's design of the Curry House is described in *The Roseburg Plaindealer*, 8-May-1893.

²³ *Medford Mail*, 1-February-1895, 5:1.

²⁴ Issac A. Palmer and David W. Terwilliger are each listed in the Polk's 1894 *Portland City Directory* as "architects." Palmer had his own office while Terwilliger was employed by T.J. Jones.

²⁵ *Medford Mail*, 27-September-1895, 5:2-3. The Jeremiah True House survives and was ranked as Primary in the Jackson County Survey (Site 338). The Medford school has long been demolished and most of the other residences attributed to Bennet in Jackson County remain unidentified at this writing.

²⁶ The nomination of the Shone-Charley House (305 N Grape St) lists a construction date of 1898 although research for this document indicates the building would more accurately be dated 1895. The Wilkenson-Swem building (217 E Main) was built in 1895-1896.

²⁷ *Ashland Tidings*, 25-June-1896, 3:4.

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It has been estimated that in his eighteen months in Jackson County, from January 1895 to June 1896, produced nearly 30 designs.²⁸ His work in Yreka, or elsewhere, remains unidentified.

The original announcement of the construction of the Sopenia Ish Baker House credits its construction to Barrett, Butler, and Stewart with masonry and plasterwork by G.W. Priddy.²⁹ W.R. Barrett, W.E. Butler and Percy Stewart were moderately busy local contractors as can be judged from mention of their projects in the local newspaper. None, however, appears to have remained in the Medford area for any great length of time. G. W. Priddy, also did plaster and masonry work for Bennet on the Medford school project as well as the architect's design for the Presbyterian Church in Medford. Unlike the contractors, Priddy was a longtime area resident, eventually operating his own brick concern, the Medford Brick Company, according to city directories.³⁰ In the 1920s, Priddy was apparently involved in some modest residential development and he remains in city directories as a contractor into the 1930s.

CONTEXT: RURAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN MEDFORD AND JACKSONVILLE

By the mid-1850s, most of Township 37S-2W was covered with a dense overlay of donation land claims. This comparatively flat, arable, portion of the Rogue River Valley was ideally located near southern Oregon's then population center at Jacksonville, providing a valuable market for agricultural products. General Land Office maps of the area, field-surveyed in 1854-55, document a solid cluster of claims in the Township, described at the time as being "Level Prairie, soil first rate clay and loam."³¹ (See attached map) It is within this context that Jacob Ish first began to develop what would grow to become the 5000+ acre Ish Ranch. "Ish found it extremely profitable to furnish supplies for government troops stationed at Fort Klamath and to the stage stations along the road from Grants Pass to San Francisco."³²

²⁸ L. Scott Clay, personal communication with the author, 2-February-1993. Clay has done extensive research on Bennet and his work in Jackson County.

²⁹ *Medford Mail*, 16-August-1895, 5:5

³⁰ *Polk's Jackson, Josephine and Douglas County Directory, 1910*, (Portland: R.L. Polk and Co.), 135.

³¹ Ives and Hyde, Survey of 37S-2W dated 25-December-1854 and 16-January-1855. Jackson County Surveyors Office.

³² Lewis, p. 13.

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While mining waned as the dominant industry in the valley, agricultural uses in the township grew.³³ "By the mid-1870s agrarian Jackson County prospered. Even without the existence of a railroad, demand for the farm products soared."³⁴ With the completion of the railroad link, tying the area first to the Willamette Valley in 1883-4 and then to California, across the Siskiyou Range, in late 1887, the agricultural development of the Rogue Valley went into high gear. Medford, a city founded in the middle of the valley along the new rail line, quickly developed into a major shipping point for the surrounding rural lands. County land, on the plain west of Medford between that city and Jacksonville, for decades remained an area of widely scattered rural residences located upon the main roads, or set back only slightly from them, and surrounded by huge tracts devoted to various agricultural uses. As late as 1910 the area along West Main Street was still composed of large, essentially rural, parcels. The 1904 E.N. Warner House, now the Westside Deli (2241 West Main, JCty Survey site 251) was built as the proprietor's residence for the Medford Dairy, an agricultural use located in this now commercialized area. The extensive orchard development that characterized much of the remainder of Jackson County's history had only limited impact in the area immediately surrounding the Sopenhia Ish Baker House.

In addition to the now compromised Warner House mentioned above, only a limited number of rural dwellings in the area west of Medford potentially illustrate the associations of the nominated property. These include the Ish-Gore Farmstead (JCty Survey Site 236, pre-1884, ranked secondary) and the J.F. Niedermeyer House (Site 233, 1903, ranked primary). The Ish-Gore House, associated with Jacob Ish and later his daughter and son-in-law, has strong connection with the early ranching pattern and the role of the Ish Family in the area. However, this house, of Italianate Style, has been substantially altered, reducing its ability to convey those themes. The Niedermeyer House, which is in excellent condition, exhibits some Stick Style detailing, but has very different associations. Built for a later immigrant to the Valley rather than a pioneer family, the Niedermeyer House post-dates the Baker House by almost a decade. Within the context of rural Medford, the Baker House presents a rare, if not unique, combination of architectural quality and integrity. Its long-term association with an important Jackson County family only adds to the resource's significance. The significance and integrity of

³³ The City of Jacksonville, site of the original "strike" that led to the boom settlement of the area is located in Section 32, at the base of the mountainous ravines and gulches of the extreme SW corner of the subject Township.

³⁴ Kay Atwood, *Jackson County Cultural and Historical Resource Survey*, (Medford: Jackson County Planning Department, 1992), 5.

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the Baker House were recognized by its listing as "primary" in the Jackson County Survey (Site No. 242). In December 1991 James Norman, Cultural Resource Specialist for the Oregon Department of Transportation prepared a Cultural Resources Report that found the Baker House eligible for listing in the National Register.³⁵

With the 1925 Maple Park Subdivision, and the temporally concurrent demise of the W.H. Gore Ranch, much of the area surrounding the Sopenia Ish Baker House began to move toward smaller, rural residential, uses interspersed with large, remnant, holdings from the original agricultural development period. The Great Depression effectively limited the impact of projects such as Maple Park in the area north of West McAndrews and the 1932 Metzger's Map shows the sections near the Baker House as still being largely open agricultural lands, especially those parcels owned by cousin Sopenia Ish Gore, just north of the nominated parcel. However, in the years after World War II, as Jackson County experienced unprecedented population increases along with much of Oregon, the lands west of Medford were typically divided into smaller parcels for higher density residential and commercial uses. Development in Maple Park, as well as newer residential areas to the west along Ross Lane, quickly, and dramatically, changed the character of this area from rural to residential. As a result of such post-war development, the Baker House, occupying a prime frontage along a major county road, now remains one of the few 19th century farms with a tangible connection to the original agricultural development of the region. And, located within the urban growth boundary of Medford, development pressure upon the Sopenia Ish Baker House will likely increase in the coming years as the City expands to the west, thereby making its agricultural setting all the more rare.

SUMMARY:

Located upon land associated with the prominent Ish Family for over 120 years, the Sopenia Ish Baker House has been occupied by only a single family since its construction over 98 years ago. The house remains as a rare if not unique example of the Stick style designs that were employed for late 19th century rural farmhouses in Jackson County. In setting, the nominated 4.27 acre parcel remains essentially unchanged from its configuration in 1925 and, containing early wooden fencing, a cattle chute, and irrigation features, is counted as a contributing site under criterion "A." With the c.1927 barn, (

³⁵ James Norman, *Cultural Resources Report: Highway 238 - Jackson Street Jacksonville Highway*. (Salem: Oregon State Highway Division, Environmental Section, 1991).

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counted as contributing structure) the setting of the Sopenia Ish Baker House continues to relate the historically significant rural development of the area between Medford and Jacksonville. The Sopenia Ish Baker House itself, built in 1896 by a locally influential and prolific architect, continues to convey its original appearance and is a visually distinctive structure within the west Medford, rural Jackson County, context. In interior and exterior appearance, the Sopenia Ish Baker House retains sufficient integrity to its original design, use of materials, and workmanship and is an exemplary design under criterion "C." Located upon a large rural parcel that contains both built and site features that add substantially to the property's ability to convey its past, the Sopenia Ish Baker successfully relates its original period of development and conveys the rural associations which make it significant.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property is described on Jackson County Tax Assessors plat 37S-2W-24CC as tax lot 2900, being a roughly rectangular shaped parcel bounded on the east by Western Avenue, just beyond the western limits of the City of Medford in Jackson County, Oregon and running parallel and south of Maple Park Drive. The property is legally described as follows:

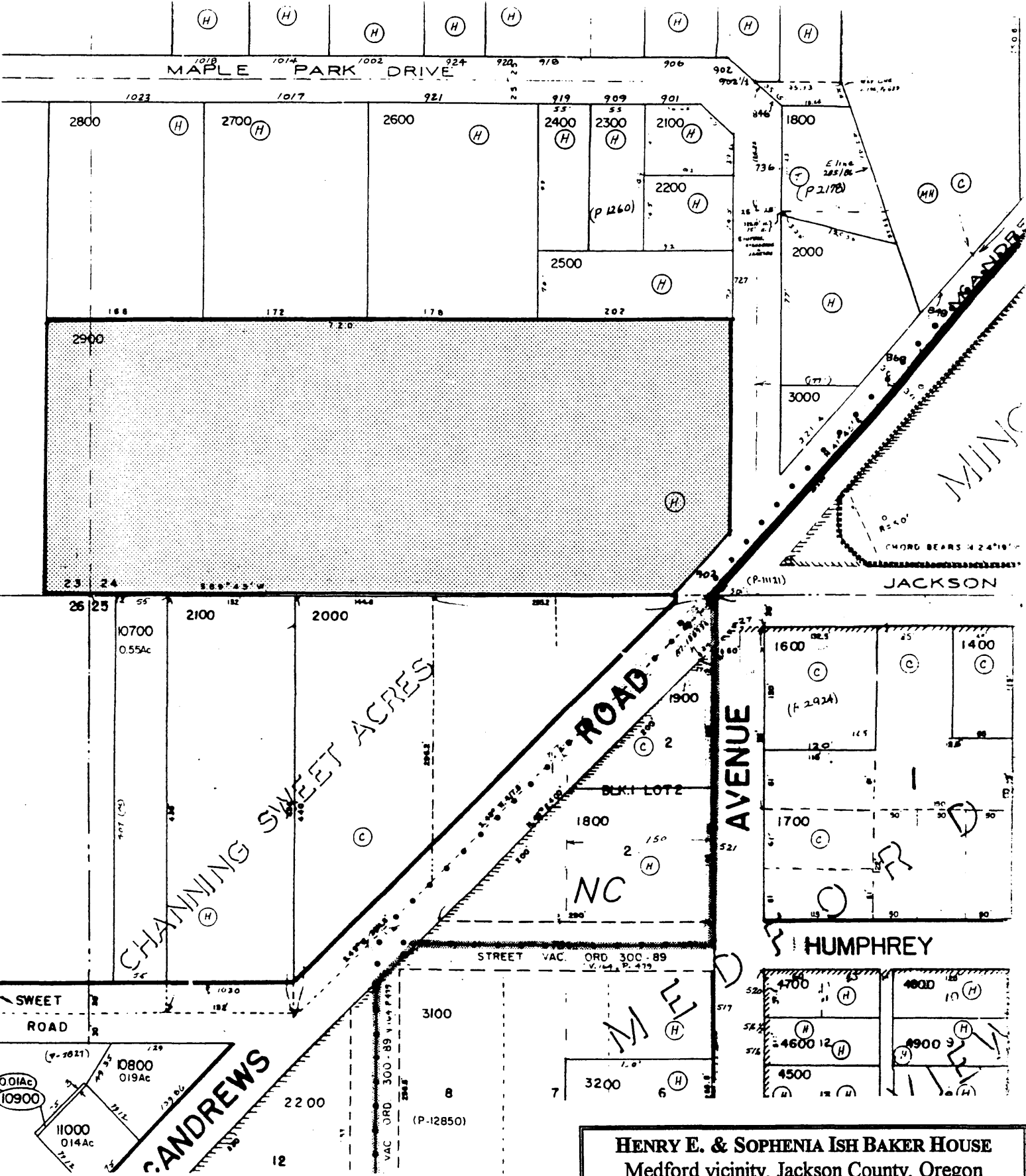
Beginning at a point 6.21 chains west of the southeast corner of Donation Land Claim # 88, Township 37 South, Range 2 West of the Willamette Meridian, this beginning point being the middle of the County Road through Maple Park;

From this true point of beginning thence; North along center of said road 284 feet thence;
West 745 feet, thence;
South 284 feet, thence
East 745 feet, to the point of beginning and known as Lot 25, Maple Park.

This description has been slightly modified by subsequent road realignments, primarily as it creates the diagonal "cut" at the southeast corner of the parcel, fronting for approximately 86' on West McAndrews Road. The property contains a total of area of 4.27 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

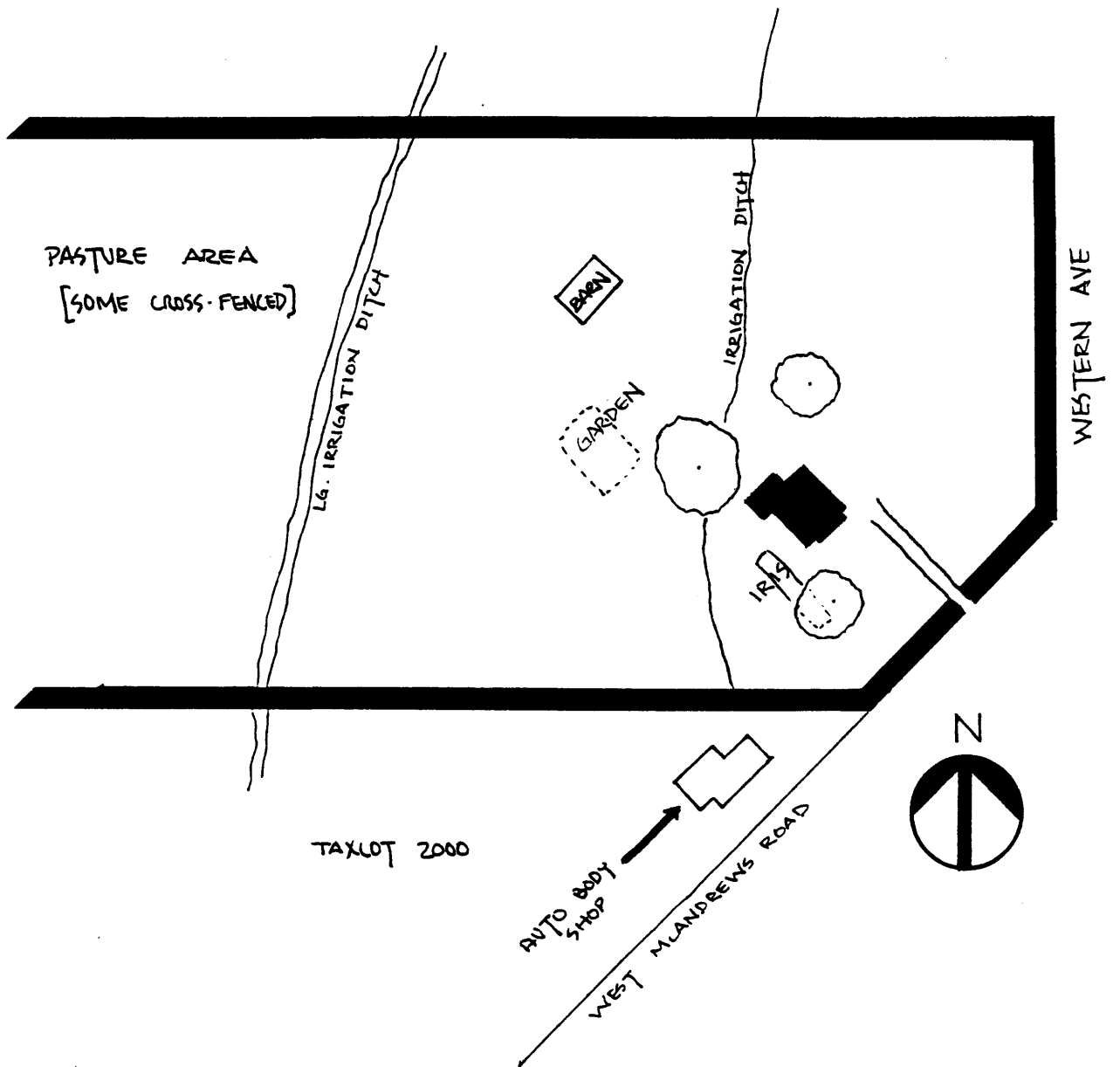
The nominated parcel contains all of that portion of the 50 acres given to Sophenia Ish Baker by her Aunt Sallie Ish in 1894 that has remained in continuous Baker family ownership since that time and serves as the site and setting of the Sophenia Ish Baker House, its related outbuilding, and landscape features.



HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
 Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

ASSESSOR'S TAX PLAT

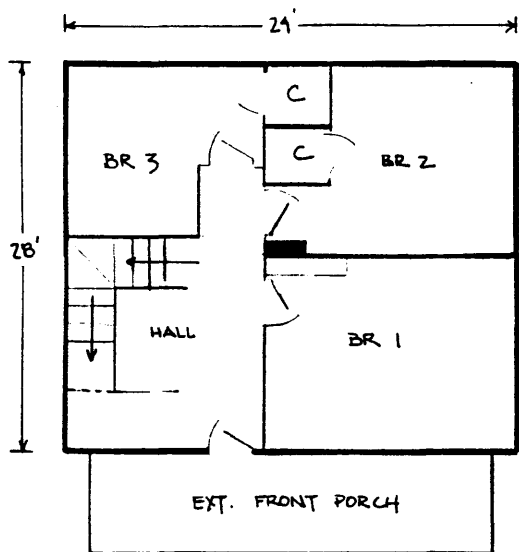
Tax Assessor's Plat, 37S-2W-24CC
 Tax Lot 2900



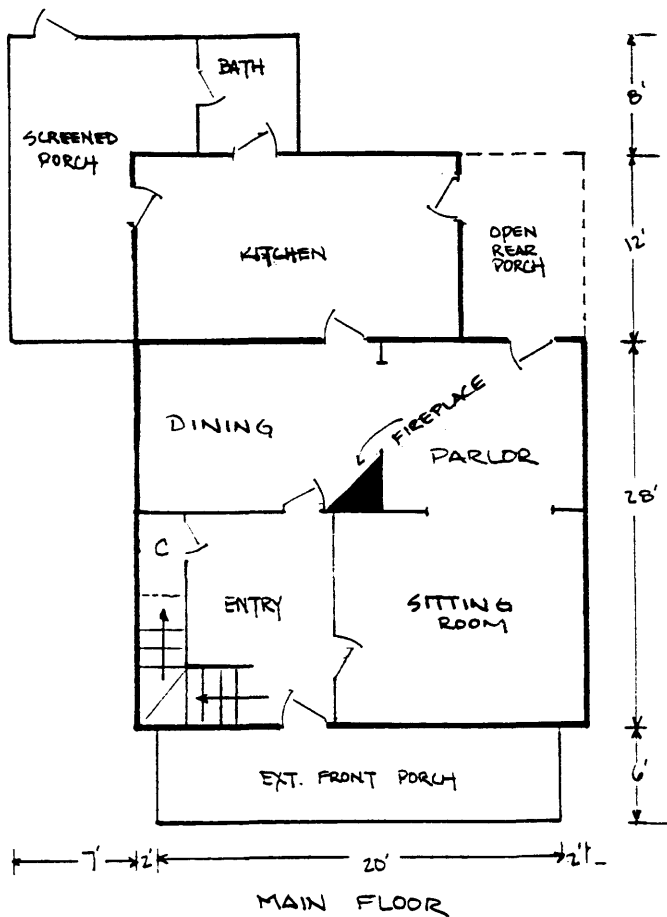
HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
 Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

SITE PLAN

Tax Assessors Plat, 37S-2W-24CC
 Tax Lot 2900



SECOND FLOOR



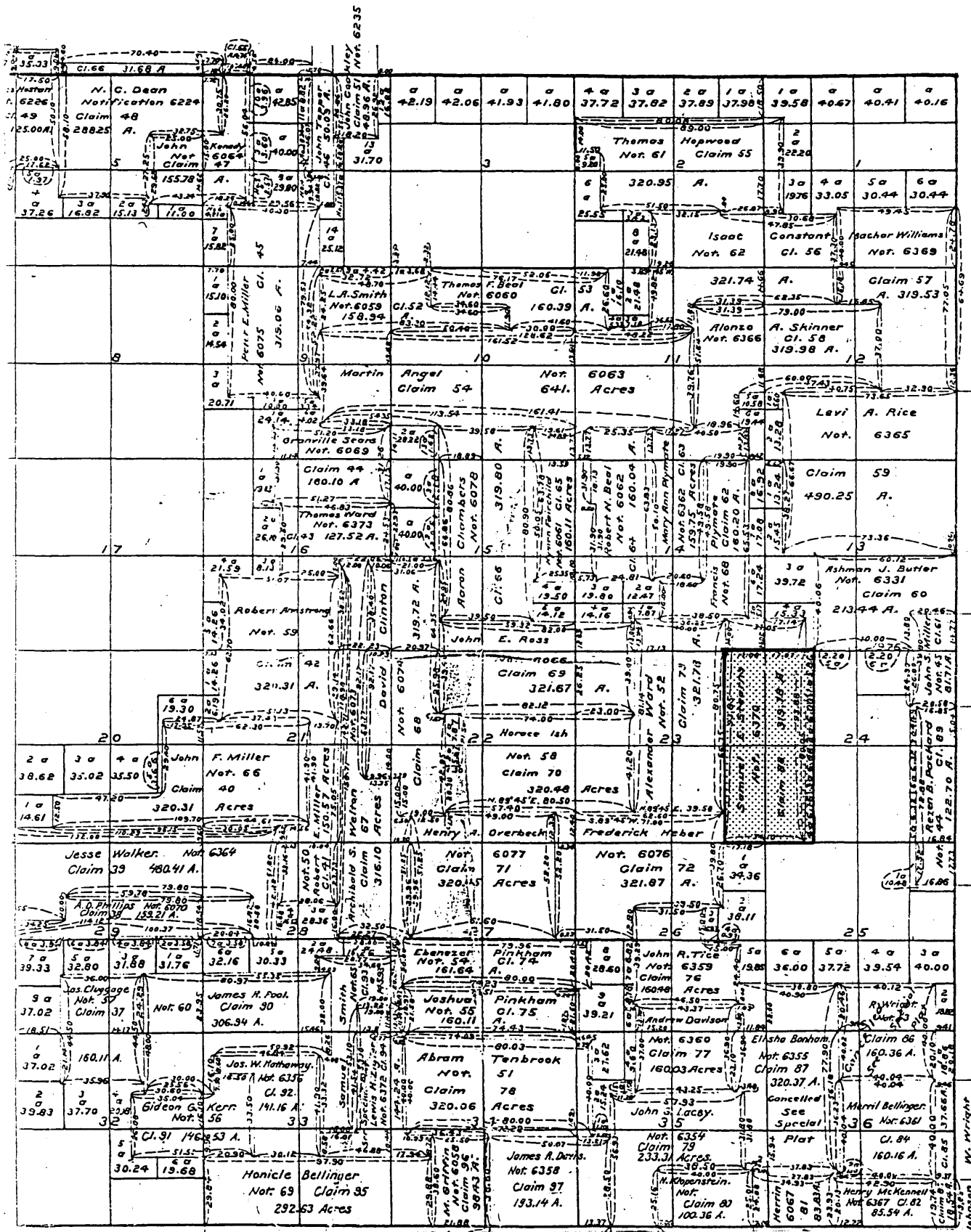
MAIN FLOOR



HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
 Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

MAIN & SECOND FLOOR PLANS

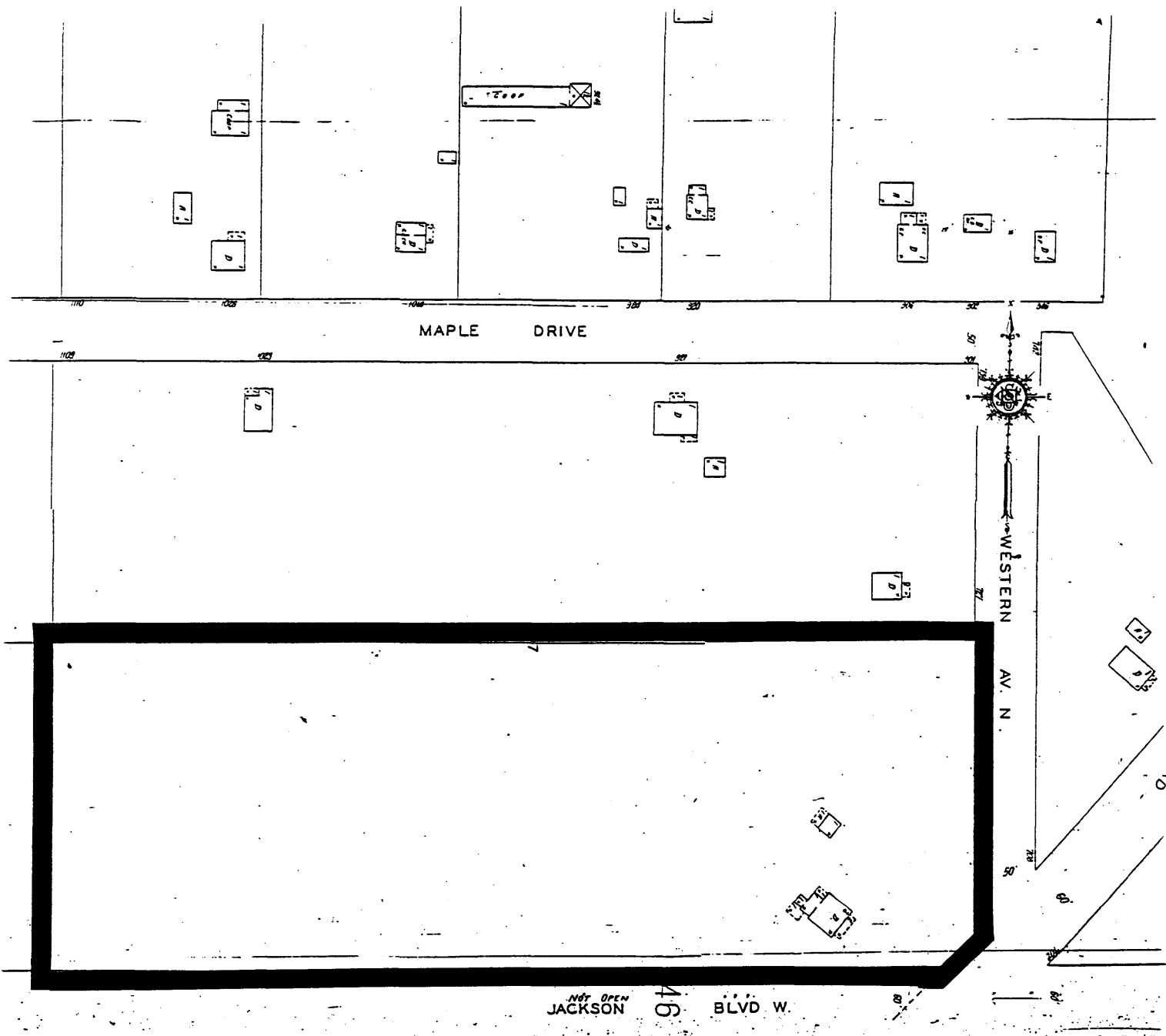
Tax Assessors Plat, 37S-2W-24CC
 Tax Lot 2900



HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
 Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

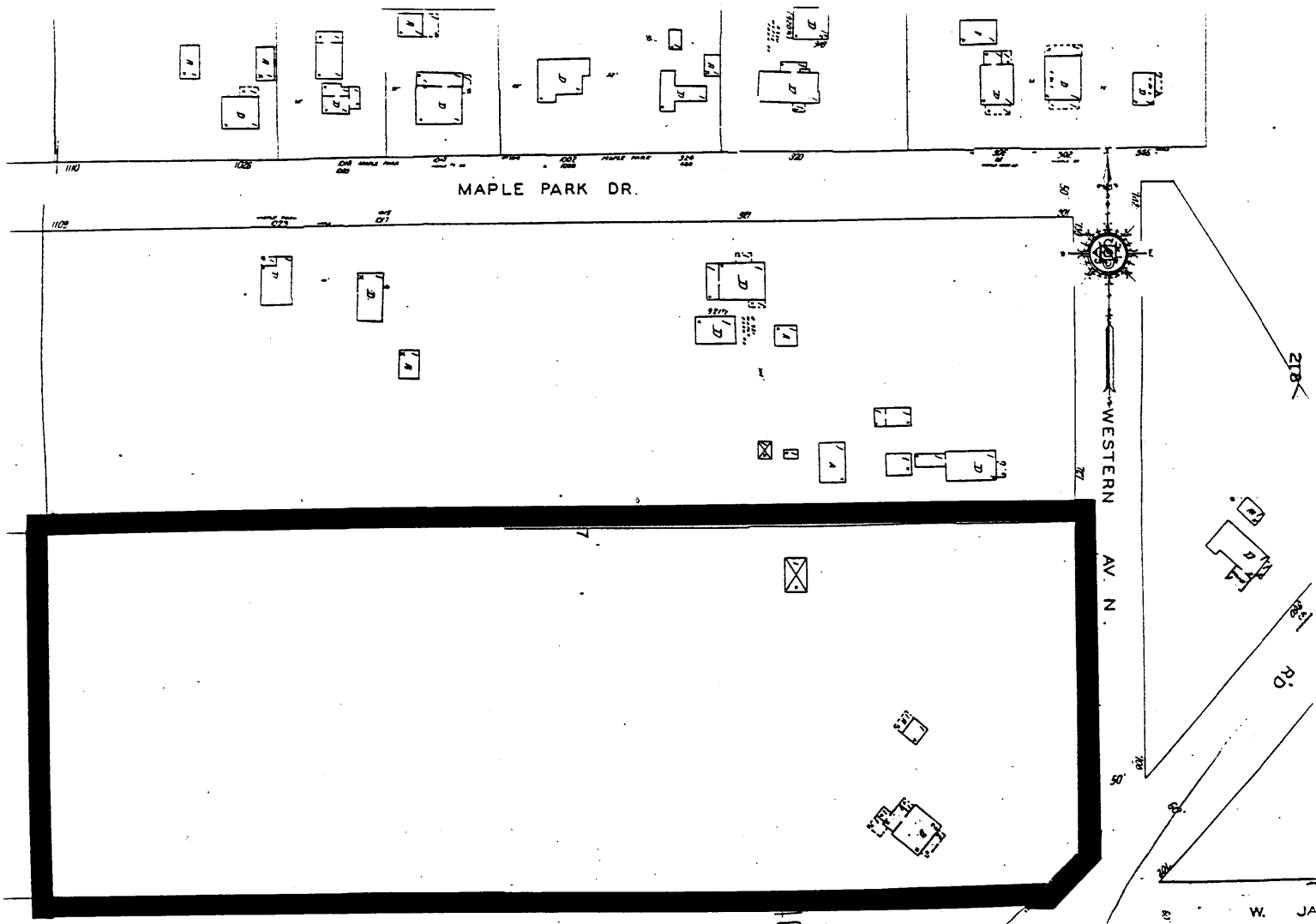
Township 37S-2W
GLO SURVEY MAP, 1855

Shaded area is Samuel Stearns, DLC #88



HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

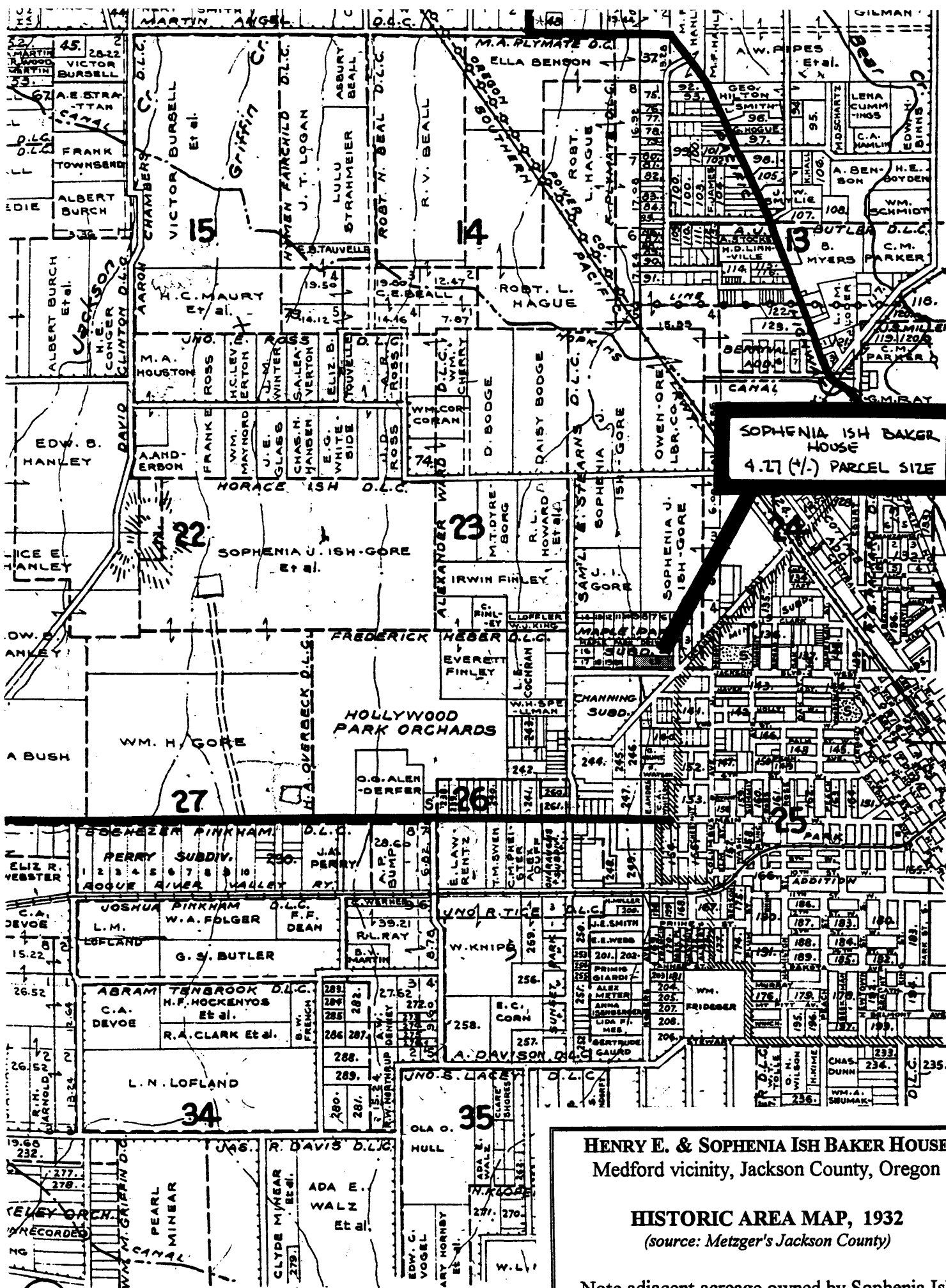
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP
1927



* NOTE BARN CONSTRUCTED POST-1927

HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP
1927, updated 1936, 1945 & 1952



SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
4.27 (1/4) PARCEL SIZE

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MEDFORD

HENRY E. & SOPHENIA ISH BAKER HOUSE
Medford vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon

HISTORIC AREA MAP, 1932
(source: Metzger's Jackson County)

Note adjacent acreage owned by Sopenia Ish Gore, remaining from original Jacob Ish Ranch

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01. Historic View: Front Elevation
Looking: northwest, from McAndrews
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: c.1895
Negative: Image from E. Bernice Geitner,
negative copy, Collection of the Author (1:4a)
02. Historic View: Front and East elevations
Looking: northwest, from McAndrews
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: c.1900
Negative: Image from E. Bernice Geitner,
negative copy, Collection of the Author (3:29)
03. Current View: Front Elevation
Looking: northwest, from McAndrews Road
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:13a)
04. Current View: Front Elevation, Porch
Looking: northwest
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:15a)
05. Current View: Front and East Elevation
Looking: northwest
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:21a)
06. Current View: Rear and East Elevations
Looking: southwest
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:16a)

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07. Current View: Rear and West Elevations
Looking: southeast, from garden area
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (3:8)
08. Current View: Baker House, barn, and setting
Looking: southeast, from rear property line
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (3:12)
09. Detail: Front porch
Looking: north
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:27a)
10. Detail: Front porch
Looking: northeast
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (3:16)
11. Interior: 1st floor, stairwell
Looking: southwest, from dining room
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:5a)
12. Interior: Parlor, Sitting rooms
Looking: into sitting room, from rear open porch entry
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:9a)

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13. Interior: Dining Room, fireplace
Looking: southwest, from parlor
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (3:2)
14. Interior: 2nd Floor, stairwell and landing
Looking: southwest, from BR #2 doorway
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:1a)
15. Interior: Bedroom 1,
Looking: northwest
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (3:5)
16. Historic View: "Mrs. Baker and her youngest son, Matthew"
Looking: east,, toward now demolished garage, from garden area
Photographer: unknown
Date of Photograph: 14-January-1922
Negative: Image from E. Bernice Geitner,
negative copy, Collection of the Author (3:20)
17. Current View: Baker Barn
Looking: nouthwest
Photographer: George Kramer
Date of Photograph: February 1993
Negative: Collection of the Author (2:18a)