

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Gorman, Hannah and Eliza, House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Multiple Property Listing Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Ore.  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

street & number 641 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street  not for publication

city or town Corvallis  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Benton code 003 zip code 97330

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: \_\_\_ national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date 1-5-15

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 2/24/15

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	1	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY: Gothic Revival

foundation: WOOD; BRICK

OTHER: Vernacular

walls: WOOD: weatherboard; shiplap

roof: ASPHALT: composition shingle

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

#### Summary Paragraph

The circa 1857-1866 Hannah and Eliza Gorman House is located at 641 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon. Sited mid-block on a 75' x 100' city lot, the modest 925-square-foot building comprises two volumes built in two phases creating an upright-and-wing form with Gothic Revival stylistic influences. The earlier volume is the vernacular one-story, single-cell (one room) wing, built of stud-wall construction by or for the Gormans circa 1857. The Gothic Revival 1½-story front-gabled upright was built using the box construction method about 1866, and was attached to the north wall of the wing, creating the "upright-and-wing" building form seen today (Photo 1). A non-contributing, twentieth century garage is the only other building on the property. The site is simply landscaped with street trees, lawn, and foundation plantings.

Although there have been some alterations to the building, most dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the house retains integrity from its period of significance, circa 1857 to circa 1866, in the areas of design, workmanship, feeling, location, and association. Integrity of location, design, feeling and association is high. In the area of workmanship, the building displays a surprising level of historical integrity that is visible in the spaces not ordinarily seen by a casual viewer, namely the building's structural makeup, which is visible in the attic and storage spaces, and the substructure. In these areas the vernacular character of the building's method of construction is intact and clearly evident. Some later nineteenth and twentieth century alterations, such as window and siding replacements, have somewhat impacted the building's material integrity, but not to the degree that the building cannot convey its period of construction and significance. Its setting has evolved over 160 years, but remains residential in character. Overall, the Gorman house appears much as it did during the Gormans' time of residence, retaining its historic mid-nineteenth century location, form, and plan, as well as a number of its original interior and exterior architectural features.

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### Narrative Description

#### *Setting and Landscape*

Situated less than a quarter-mile from the west bank of the Willamette River, the Gorman House is located in Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, a now-dense urban neighborhood several blocks north of the downtown core of Corvallis. The house is situated mid-block between NW Polk and NW Tyler Avenues, and fronts west onto NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, a major one-way thoroughfare directing traffic from Highway 99W south into downtown Corvallis (Figs. 1-3). Although Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition was platted in 1854, its urban residential character apparently took some years to develop. As indicated on early Sanborn maps, the location of the Gorman property was historically the northern edge of downtown Corvallis, with "cultivated fields" immediately to the north (Figs. 10-12). One block to the east, closer to the Willamette River, a saw- and planing mill operated for many years.<sup>1</sup> Today, the house is surrounded by predominantly historic residential buildings, some of which have been converted to business use.

The house is set back approximately 50' from the tree-lined NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, which forms the western property boundary and features curbs and sidewalks dating to the early twentieth century. The

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<sup>1</sup> This site had a long history of industrial use, starting in the 1850s with the establishment of a steam sawmill by Hamilton Campbell and Mr. Kline. Mary Kathryn Gallagher, "Historic Context Statement, City of Corvallis, Oregon," (Corvallis, August 1993), pp. 34-36. By the late 1880s this was known as Friendly's Saw and Planing mill, later labeled on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps as the Corvallis Lumber Company. According to Sanborn maps the two-block site was used for mill purposes until sometime between 1912 and 1927. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1888, 1890, 1895, 1912, and 1927.

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east (rear) property line is delineated by a north-south gravel alley. To the immediate north and south of the subject site are private residential properties. (Fig. 4) Landscaping includes lawn, flower borders, and large street trees, as well as one yew tree located on the southeast corner of the house, a holly tree in the front yard, and various smaller plantings. A very old apple tree at northeast corner of the property (but just outside current property and nominated area boundaries) may be one of the last landscape features related to the period of the Gormans' ownership and occupation.

### *Exterior Description - One-story wing*

The Gorman House is a Gothic Revival 1½ story building comprising two volumes that together constitute an upright-and-wing form. The house was built in two stages: the one-story, single-room wing was constructed first in about 1857, followed by the 1½-story upright some ten years later, circa 1866. Given their distinct characteristics, these two volumes will be described separately below.

The one-story wing was likely built circa 1857, the year Eliza Gorman purchased lots 11 and 12, on which this part of the building sits (Figs. 4 and 9).<sup>2</sup> Taken as a separate, single-cell unit, the wing is strikingly similar in appearance, form, and dimensions to the single-pen vernacular houses constructed as slave dwellings in the Mid-Atlantic region and Missouri, both areas to which the Gormans had ties.<sup>3</sup> It is a simple, diminutive, one-room building, the main volume of which (without the porches) measures about 16' 4" (east-west) by 16' 9" (north-south), and approximately 9'9" in height from sill to eave. The relatively shallow-pitched side gable roof incorporates porches on the east (rear) and west (front) elevations that measure 4'8" and 4'5" deep respectively. The east-side porch was enclosed sometime between 1895 and 1912, while that on the west side remains open.<sup>4</sup> (Photos 1, 4 and 5) The overall character of the wing suggests that it was constructed and maintained with the materials that were on-hand at the time, perhaps not milled specifically for the construction of this building, with some components appearing to have been salvaged from other structures.

The original foundation of the wing consisted of 8" x 8½" hand-hewn sill logs supported on log round piers about 7-8" in diameter and about 7-8" in height. At least one log round remains in place, and brick and concrete pier supports have been added over time as the rounds deteriorated and were removed. The exact dates of these changes are not known. At least a portion of the western sill has been replaced with a sawn 4" x 6" beam; it is unclear whether other sections of original hewn sill remain in place. Notched into the sills are rough, sash-sawn floor joists of 1¾" - 2¾" thickness and variable width dimensions (in part due to the waney edges), laid east-west, about 32" on center.<sup>5</sup> Subfloor boards in the wing consist of tongue-and-groove boards, and the flooring, which was originally likely fir tongue-and-groove, has been covered with later applications of linoleum and tile. There is no readily-visible evidence of sub-floor storage, a cellar or significant crawl space beneath this portion of the house.

The balloon-framed walls are of rough, sash-sawn, 2" x 4" studs set about 24" on center with rough-sawn horizontal lapped boards on the interior walls, and a variety of siding types on the exterior, including two types of shiplap and a small section of original weatherboard. The west and most of the north elevation are sheathed in 5" shiplap with a 4¾ to 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" exposure attached with wire nails, which appears to date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The east wall of the now-enclosed back (east) porch is clad in wider-dimension shiplap, 6¾" exposed to the weather, with a slightly different profile. A small section of old weatherboard remains in place inside the enclosed rear (east) porch. With

<sup>2</sup> The wing portion of the building, in its entirety, sits on Lot 11, Block 11 of Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition which was purchased (along with the adjacent Lot 12) by Eliza Gorman in April of 1857. The upright section, in its entirety, is situated on Lot 10, Block 11 of Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, which was purchased by Eliza Gorman in April of 1866.

<sup>3</sup> Research on this theory is ongoing, but the single-cell form, nearly-square dimensions, porch configuration, window/door arrangement, and the characteristics of the fireplace all suggest some potential correlation with slave dwelling forms found in eastern States.

<sup>4</sup> This date bracket is based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1895 and 1912.

<sup>5</sup> Waney-edge lumber is rough-sawn with edges that are not squared or finished, often with tree bark still attached. See Photo 14 for an illustration of waney-edged skip sheathing.

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physical characteristics (type and dimensions) typical of the 1850s, and the use of cut nails for installation, this appears to be the last remnant of original siding on the wing portion of the building. All siding on the main volume of the one-story wing is installed over horizontal board sheathing.

The wing has a side-gable roof (north-south ridge orientation) with the relatively shallow pitch typical of the 1850s era. The front and rear porches were likely originally integrated into the gable roofline; the western (front) porch roof has since been repaired and replaced with a newer roof that has a slightly flatter slope than that of the main roof. Viewed from the unfinished attic space, the roof structure of the wing gives the impression of haphazard assembly using materials salvaged from other buildings. The rough sash-sawn rafters are of variable dimensions, most measuring approximately 2½" x 3½" with the ends sawn at angles to rest flat on the top plate. The rafter spacing is variable, and shows little or no correlation with the spacing of the studs.<sup>6</sup> Several rafters are tapered, of slightly greater dimension at the peak than at the eave, which is a detail that often indicates an early date in Oregon buildings.<sup>7</sup> Because only some of the rafters display this characteristic, it is supposed that these may have been salvaged from another building, or were perhaps part of a lot of donated lumber or building parts. The variable width, sash-sawn, waney-edged skip sheathing also shows signs of being re-purposed material (remnant and random notching in boards, signs of fire and odd finishes).<sup>8</sup> The original roofing material was likely the split cedar shingles typical of the period, now replaced with plywood covered with asphalt composition shingles.

Two doors currently provide access to the wing. The main front (west) entrance measures 2' 8¼" (approximately 32") wide by 6' 8½" (about 80") tall, and is off-set toward the north end of the west wall. The door is not original, though it appears that an older, possibly original door may have been in place at the time of the 1984 survey.<sup>9</sup> The location of the doorway may also not be original; it may have been shifted from a central position on the west wall, as suggested by alterations to the studs near the center of the west wall. A second door is centrally placed on the east elevation, leading to and from the now-enclosed rear porch, and appears to be in its original position. A third door historically opened into and out of the northern end of the rear (east) porch. This door appears in the 1984 survey photo, but has since been removed.

The only windows in the wing are the paired, one-over-one-light, double-hung sash that flank the front (west) door, and a boarded-up opening on the north elevation, none of which appear to be original. The paired one-over-one sash with lambs tongue details, molded architrave and simple 4½" x 1" trim appear to date to the late nineteenth century. Visible alterations to the stud wall above and around these windows suggest that they replaced either a smaller window or the original entrance door. The north side of the wing features a small, horizontally-oriented, non-original sliding sash window measuring 37½" wide by 29¾" tall. This opening is now covered with plywood. There is also an opening in the upper north gable end that opens into the unfinished attic space. This may be a later aperture; there is no sash, shutter or trim, and it bears no evidence of ever having housed a window.

Stylistic features on the wing are minimal, and many appear to post-date initial construction with dates likely ranging from circa 1890 to about 1930.<sup>10</sup> Such features include simple corner boards, frieze boards on the north gable end, applied architrave molding above the west-side door and windows, and boxed eaves. Trim boards are applied over the siding, not butted up to it, suggesting later application.

<sup>6</sup> The irregular spacing of several of the rafters as measured on the east roof slope are 28½" - 31½" - 27" - 28" - 31".

<sup>7</sup> This assessment is according to Gregg Olson, restoration carpenter specializing in Oregon's earliest buildings, and previous analysis by Philip Dole, University of Oregon professor of architectural history and recognized expert with extensive knowledge of pioneer buildings in Oregon. Three of the west-side rafters measure 2½" by at least 4½" at the ridge, tapering to lesser dimensions toward the eave.

<sup>8</sup> Several boards exhibit charring, suggesting previous proximity to heat or fire, others are sawn as if for original use around a stove pipe, and some have remnant paint still visible from their former use.

<sup>9</sup> The door shown in the 1984 photograph is a wood-framed door with upper lights in a configuration not uncommon in mid- to late-nineteenth century doors. It is not known when the door was removed or where it ended up.

<sup>10</sup> These approximate dates are based on materials such as molding, use of wire nails, window types and siding profiles.

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Any original surface details that may exist or have existed on the south gable end are now obscured by the 1½-story upright, added in the mid-1860s.

A prominent and significant feature of the wing is the large, internal fireplace of hand-made red brick. The original chimney, which rises from the ridge at the south end of the wing, has been extended by over 20 courses (approximately 4') with later red brick.<sup>11</sup> This was presumably completed when the upright portion of the building was added in the mid-1860s.

The two distinct porches—front and rear (west and east)—remained evident on Sanborn maps through the nineteenth century. The maps indicate that the rear porch was enclosed sometime between 1895 and 1912, and was eventually incorporated into a northern attached room (discussed below, now removed) (Figs. 10-13). Several roof rafters in the eastern porch are newer (date unknown), but the roof pitch remains visually integrated with that of the main roofline. The west-side porch roof structure was repaired sometime after the mid-1980s. The alteration involved removing the older support brackets and installing pressure-treated support posts, removing the small hip, and possibly slightly altering the roof pitch.<sup>12</sup>

Historically, the wing had a one-story, wood-framed volume extending north from the north gable end. This section of the building was evident on the 1888-1912 Sanborn maps during which time the rear (east) porch was incorporated into it, but this northern portion was apparently removed sometime before the 1949 map was published (Figs. 14 and 15). Its function is not currently known, nor is it clear whether it was part of the original circa 1857 construction or was a subsequent addition. The framing for a doorway into this missing section is visible in the internal wall framing on the north side of the wing, but is not evident from casual observation of the exterior or interior walls, which have both been covered with later siding and wall cabinetry, respectively.

#### *Exterior Description - 1½-story upright*

The upright 1½-story section of the house appears to have been built circa 1866, around the time the lot on which it sits, Lot 10, was purchased by Eliza Gorman. This rectangular volume is oriented perpendicular to the one-story wing, and is an example of box construction, which was commonly employed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century (Photos 1-4).

This portion of the building rests on circular-sawn 8" square sills on brick piers at the perimeter, with intermediate L-shaped sawn lumber piers supporting floor joists at various points beneath the house. There is no obvious evidence of a cellar or significant crawl space beneath this portion of the house. Circular-sawn 2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" by 7½" floor joists, which are laid north-south, are spaced 24" on center and notched into the sills. The tongue-and-groove subflooring is covered with fir flooring that appears to be original.

The box-constructed wall structure consists of 11-12½" x 1¼" boards set vertically and resting on a horizontal ledger attached to the sill. These structural boards are attached to the sills and the top plates with machine-cut nails. These boards run the full height of the house, from sill to eave, including on the east and west gable end walls. The east, west, and north exterior walls are covered with an old layer of building paper and weatherboard siding set flush with trim and attached with a mix of cut and wire nails. The weatherboard measures 5" by about 3/8" with 4½-5½" exposed to the weather, suggesting it is of a slightly later date than the old weatherboard remaining on the wing. Analysis of nail patterns and nail holes in areas of exterior wall where the siding has been removed did not imply an earlier use of vertical battens (for board-and-batten exterior cladding) as was sometimes employed on box-constructed buildings in Oregon. The southern wall, in which window alterations have occurred, is

<sup>11</sup> The remaining original portion of the chimney is comprised of 13 courses of brick. The extension is more than twice as tall, with at least 27 courses.

<sup>12</sup> This information was derived from analysis of the 1983-1984 survey form photograph, on file with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

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clad in shiplap with a 5" exposure, along with five frieze-level courses of fish-scale shingles, both changes that likely occurred around the end of the nineteenth century. Trim elements typical throughout the upright include plain 4" corner boards that die into the frieze boards (no corner board caps), a wide frieze and raking eave with bed molding, and boxed eaves with cornice molding.

Circular-sawn 3¾" by 1¾" rafters arranged 24" on center form the steeply-pitched roof of the upright, which has an east-west oriented ridge that is perpendicular to that of the wing. The variable-width 5- to-10" waney-edged skip sheathing is covered with plywood and modern asphalt composition shingle roofing. In contrast to the lower pitch and lack of stylistic detailing on the wing, in form and detail the upright roofline reflects the Gothic Revival influence popular in Oregon from the mid-1860s through about 1880. The boxed eave and gable details consisting of a wide frieze board with bed and cornice molding are characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century Gothic Revival tradition in Oregon.

Openings include a single door and later nineteenth century one-over-one wood sash on the west (front) elevation, larger replacement vinyl sash on the south elevation, and a mid-nineteenth century six-over-six window in the east gable end. The off-centered front (west) entrance to the upright is marked by a small, stoop porch and a twentieth century half-light door with framing for a transom above it, now filled in. This is the only exterior door in the upright section. Adjacent to and north of the front door, paired one-over-one sash with lamb's tongue have detailing, configuration, and dimensions that suggest a turn-of-the-twentieth century date. These may be in an original window location, but perhaps with an altered opening size. Above, a smaller one-over-one sash window partially infills a larger opening that was once a doorway to a front balcony. A siding patch below the window indicates the original opening size and location. (Photo 2) As indicated on Sanborn maps of 1895 through 1949, a full-width porch spanned the west side of the upright, and the former door suggests that a second-floor balcony was likely part of the design (Figs. 12-15). Evidence of the door opening remains visible in the siding, but no remnant of the former porch is readily visible.

On the south side elevation are two openings, one with a set of three, one-over-one sash, and another opening with a vinyl replacement sash. The bank of three windows (in the living room/parlor) replaced a bay window that appeared on the 1895 Sanborn map and remained visible on Sanborns through 1949. (Figs. 12-15; Photos 2 and 3) The date of removal of this feature is not known. The window sash themselves, in assembly, configuration, and details, also appear to be of late nineteenth or early twentieth century vintage, and may have been salvaged from the bay window, or perhaps from another building. The second window opening on the south facade (in the downstairs bedroom) has been altered by the installation of a vinyl insert, and it too appears to be an original location but an altered opening size. Both south-elevation openings are surrounded with simple board trim and a small decorative architrave molding. (Photos 2 and 3) Because no historic images of the house have been found, the original fenestration pattern and character of this elevation is not currently known.

The oldest remaining window in the building is a single six-over-one wood sash (formerly six-over-six) on the second floor of the east elevation. This pegged sash window originally consisted of six panes over six, as evidenced by the mortises in the lower sash, which were broken out at an unknown date. The panes measure 10x16" and remaining muntins display a narrow gauge and profile suggesting a very early date, perhaps pre-dating the upright section itself. Exterior trim is made of simple flat boards with a slightly projecting squared architrave/drip cap, a detail typical of the 1850s and early 1860s. Given its physical characteristics, it is possible that this window may have been original to the mid-1850s wing section, and was relocated to its current upstairs location. (Photos 3 and 4)

On the lower level of the east elevation is a small opening lighting the bathroom that is boarded from the exterior. This square, single-pane window opening appears to date to the twentieth century.

*Interior Description - One-story wing*



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The interior of the one-room wing section measures about 15' 2" (east-west) by 15' 11" (north-south), comprising about 241 square feet of space, and has been remodeled for exclusive use as a kitchen (Photo 7). Many of the visible surface elements are not original, although much of the historic material remains in place beneath later applications of modern coverings.

The original or historic fir flooring has been covered with later layers of plywood and laminate flooring and is not visible. There are no baseboards in this room. The walls from floor to ceiling consist of rough-sawn horizontal boards. The lower portion displays a wainscot of vertical V-groove boards with a horizontal molded chair rail cap. The date of the wainscot has not been determined, but it could relate to the period of the circa 1866 addition. The upper walls were historically (or originally) covered in muslin and wallpaper, which has since been either removed or obscured with later applications of wallboard and paint. Twentieth-century kitchen cabinetry has been installed along portions of the northern and eastern walls, further obscuring original features and finishes. The original wide ceiling boards have been covered in wall board but in raking light the board pattern is visible through the later finish.

The south wall with the large brick fireplace would have originally been this room's centerpiece. The entire wall structure behind and surrounding the fireplace from floor to ceiling, including the original mantle, was removed at an unknown date. Passage from the wing to the upright section is now provided through an open space with no door, just west of the fireplace (Photos 7 and 10; Fig. 5).

The massive, hand-made brick and mud mortar fireplace measures 5' wide by 2' 6" deep, with a firebox opening measuring 38½" wide by 32" tall (Photos 7, 8 and 10). The stack on the interior measures a slightly variable 26" wide at the face and 22" along the sides. At an unknown date, the firebox was bricked in (the depth of the firebox is therefore not currently known), and the stack retrofitted to receive a stove pipe on both the north and south sides of the stack, suggesting stoves facing into the wing (kitchen cooking stove) and into the upright (living room/parlor heating stove).<sup>13</sup> The bricks were very likely locally-made, although a more definitive sourcing study has not yet been undertaken. The bricks measure approximately 2" by 4" by 8" long, with slight variations. As evidenced by remaining paint patterns on the face of the brick, the fireplace and stack were originally finished with a painted wood mantel and cabinetry surround. The original appearance and configuration of the mantel and surround, or the date of their removal, is not known.

#### *Interior Description - 1½ story upright*

The upright volume is comprised of two rooms each upstairs and down; it is one room wide (north-south) and two rooms deep (east-west) on both floors with a north-south central staircase entered through the one-story portion (Figs 5 and 6; Photo 9). The stair divides the volume roughly one-third to two-thirds, with the smaller rooms on the east (rear) end of the building.

Flooring is 3½" to 5½" wide by 1" thick tongue-and-groove fir boards. A 5" wood baseboard spans the perimeter of the rooms, though it is not continuous throughout. The original rough-sawn vertical board interior walls on the south and east have been furred out with the construction of what appears to be a non-structural interior stud wall (on the first floor only), and covered with fiberboard forming a wall that is about 5-6" thick.<sup>14</sup> The original wall finishes, which likely consisted of muslin and wallpaper, have been wholly obscured. The bedroom portion of the east wall may also be similarly treated. Ceilings of the period were typically planed boards painted or covered in muslin and wallpaper. The ceilings are now also covered with thick fiberboard, and their original finishes are not yet known.

<sup>13</sup> This change may have occurred when the upright addition was made in the mid-1860s.

<sup>14</sup> The reasoning for this alteration is not clear, nor is the date, although the use of wire nails suggests a post-1890 installation. It likely occurred after the Gormans' ownership, perhaps at the time the bay window was added. With thin walls perhaps only 3" thick in total, box-constructed houses were (and are) notoriously cold, and the addition of this second wall may have offered additional warmth.



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Two period doors remain in the house, both of vertical two-panel design indicative of 1850s and early 1860s construction, but each different in execution.<sup>15</sup> The more modest of the two appears to fit into the doorway of the closet beneath the stairs. This simply built door consists of wood boards arranged to form the vertical, two-panel design, and is fastened together without formal joinery, aligning somewhat with the overall simple character of the building's construction. The door retains a rimlock (no knob) and the remnant of a two-part hinge that suggest an early date.

The second door has two recessed vertical panels with applied molding, and is joined with wood pegs. There is evidence of a number of latch sets having been used on the door, though none remains. The five-part hinge may date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Of a design that suggests a more highly detailed house, this door may have originally come from another building (historically or recently). An upstairs closet door of board-and-batten construction is the only other historic door in the building; all others are of mid-twentieth century vintage or newer.

The plan of the second floor mimics the first, being one room wide and two rooms deep, the two spaces separated by the staircase and landing. The narrow (29-inch-wide) boxed stairway to the second floor begins in the wing and runs up from north to south along the east side of the fireplace (Figs. 5 and 6; Photos 7 and 13). Evidence of an earlier balustrade along the eastern edge of the floor at the top of the stairs indicates that at least one side of the upper floor volume was historically open to the staircase.

Upstairs, the wide-board floor appears to be original, with 5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch floorboards laid east to west; a variable-height baseboard spans the perimeter of both rooms. The walls, including the 4-foot-high knee walls, are covered in a variety of materials, including shiplap with a 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" exposure, a manufactured plywood product, and wood paneling. The 15' x 11'9" west bedroom includes a closet in the northeast corner that measures 5'6" x 2'6" (Photo 12). Newspapers with dates as early as 1892 line the walls of this closet. This room features a window on the west wall, which at one point was a door that likely opened onto a small balcony atop the front porch.

The smaller east bedroom measures 10' 5" x 8'1" (Photo 11). It has a window on the east wall, and access to a narrow, 3'-wide, full-length attic space behind the knee-wall is provided through an original board-and-batten door. From this area the structural framework of wall and roof connection is visible (vertical boards connected to a sawn top plate, with roof rafters notched into and resting on the top plate, fastened with machine cut nails).

Aside from the built-in closet space, the alteration of the upper stairwell walls and balustrade, and the later wall finishes, the upstairs rooms appear to be largely unaltered since construction.

### *Garage*

The one-story garage, sited immediately northeast of the house, measures approximately 15' by 15' and is located about 10' from the rear northeast corner of the house (Photo 6). Constructed of modern-dimension lumber, the garage is sheathed in drop siding and features a gable roof that is partially covered in corrugated metal and composition shingle. The garage does not appear in its current configuration on the 1949 Sanborn map, and its physical features point to a 1940s or later construction date, well after the period of significance (1857-1875). It is therefore counted as a noncontributing resource.

### *Site and Outbuildings*

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<sup>15</sup> Both doors are detached, and their provenance is not currently known.

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According to pre-1900 Sanborn maps, several outbuildings were historically associated with the house, including a barn or stable and four other one-story wood-framed structures of unknown function.<sup>16</sup> It is not currently known which, if any, of these were present during the Gormans' tenure on the property.

The stable, originally located about 135 feet east of the house (on Lot 5), comprised a central one and one-half story volume flanked by what were probably sheds or lean-tos (Figs. 10 and 11). Other outbuildings of unknown function were sited closer to the house, from five to fifty feet to the west and north of the dwelling (on Lots 11 and 12).<sup>17</sup> By 1895, half of the stable building had been demolished or moved, as well as one of the outbuildings. A very small structure indicated along the northern property line approximately forty feet from the house (on Lot 12) may indicate a privy. This feature appears only on the 1895 map.

Further changes were apparent by 1912, with the conversion of the barn or stable structure into a dwelling with a south-facing porch and its own street number (641½). Two outbuildings remained to the west and north of the main house. With the division of the large lot by 1927 all outbuildings except one were lost. It appears the stable-turned-dwelling may have been relocated from the rear (east) portion of the property (on Lot 5) to a location about thirty-two feet east of the house (onto Lot 11). The existing garage building, sited roughly in the location of the 641½ dwelling, does not appear to be this same structure. Framing members of the garage suggest a 1940s or later construction date, and the building dimensions, location and orientation do not appear to align with the earlier structure, although the shiplap siding may have been salvaged from an older structure and applied to the garage. Additional research, site analysis and archaeological investigation are likely to reveal more information about the various historic outbuildings associated with the Gorman house, both during and after the Gormans' occupancy.

### *Additions/Alterations*

Alterations have been made to the site and to both volumes of the house, most of which occurred during the historic period and possibly during the Gorman's tenure. Changes to the site consist of property line adjustments, reducing the historic Gorman holding of nearly one-half an acre to the current .18-acre lot, and the subsequent loss of the historic outbuildings as described above. The major changes to the building, and the chronology of those changes, are somewhat more complex.

On the north end of the wing was once another room nearly as large as the wing itself. The age, structural makeup and function of this room are not currently known, but Sanborn maps from 1888 to 1927 indicate that it was one story and wood framed. (Figs. 10-14) By 1912, the rear (east) porch of the wing had been integrated into this north room, a form that was retained in the 1927 plan. By 1949, this north end section had been removed completely. (Figs. 10-15) The slightly off-centered doorway between the two spaces has been covered by interior cabinetry and exterior siding (the patch is visible from the exterior), but the framing remains apparently unaltered in the wall.<sup>18</sup>

A number of the other, noticeable alterations were (or appear to have been) made after Hannah Gorman sold the property in 1875. The east side of the wing features a porch that was enclosed in two separate stages. Evident on Sanborn maps, the porch was an open feature in 1888, but by 1912 it had been enclosed (Figs. 10-13). The porch on the front (west) side of the house, though maintaining a

<sup>16</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Corvallis, Oregon, 1888-1912.

<sup>17</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Corvallis, Oregon, 1888 and 1890. The other outbuildings could have included a privy, chicken house, well or pump house, and/or wood or storage sheds. Since Hannah worked as a washer woman, there may have also been a wash house on the property at one time.

<sup>18</sup> Given that the house was heated with wood, it is possible that this section could have served as a wood shed. If this volume was part of the Gorman house (and not a post-Gorman addition), it may have served as additional living space. (The attic in the existing wing is not finished, so it is presumed that it was not used for sleeping or living.) Further, the 1860 census indicates that 30-year-old Peter Cook was living in the household; perhaps this was his living space. This is a topic of continuing research; answers may become more clear with archaeological investigation.

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historically compatible size, configuration, and location, has been rebuilt recently as evidenced by photographic documentation, as well as the modern materials and construction methods.

The west (front) elevation of the upright had a full-width porch as indicated on Sanborn maps of 1895, 1912 and 1927. (Figs. 12-14) Not denoted on those maps was the second story balcony accessed by a door and later replaced by the existing window. A patch in the siding below the window provides evidence of this doorway, which once extended approximately 2½ feet lower than the current opening (Photo 2). The date of the current shed roof porch over the entrance is not presently known.

### *Integrity Analysis*

Overall and in spite of first impressions, the Gorman House appears to retain a fair degree of historical integrity related to the Gorman period. Integrity of location is evident, as current research does not indicate that it has been relocated, in whole or in part, from another site. The residential setting of the house is much as it was since the early- to mid-twentieth century, but has changed since the mid-1850s and 1860s. Although still likely residential in character, at the time of the Gorman's occupation, the neighborhood was much less densely developed and populated. Sanborn maps indicate that the area immediately north of the house was open cultivated fields until the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> (Figs. 10-13) In addition to the increased density of development, present-day street traffic has changed the setting (visually and audibly) and feeling significantly.

Integrity remains in the area of design, as the form and floor plan of the building remain essentially unaltered. In the wing, a substantial amount of the original structure, which helps to date that portion of the house, remains intact, and its diminutive form with front and back porches is still clearly evident. In addition, the original door configuration is evident. The original box structure of the upright, also an age indicator, remains intact and visible, and the steeply-pitched roof continues to convey the mid-nineteenth century construction date. The original fenestration patterns appear to remain, although the window sash themselves were replaced sometime around the turn of the twentieth century or later.

In terms of materials and workmanship, the building retains a fair degree of historical integrity relating to the Gorman's ownership period. The wing has perhaps suffered more in this area than the newer upright section, but overall the building can still convey its periods of construction through materials such as sash- and circular-sawn lumber, hand-made brick, and mud mortar. Original workmanship is apparent to varying degrees. In the wing, this is again visible in the structure and the fireplace, but is not obvious elsewhere in the building. Through the irregularity of materials and framing methods, the wing seems to illustrate the handiwork of lay-builders. This may support the theory that the Gormans had the help of the community or the church, and that materials and labor may have been donated for their benefit. In contrast, the regularity of materials and construction and the overall workmanship of the upright suggest the involvement of mechanics with some experience in house building.

The overall feeling of the building as a mid-nineteenth century dwelling has been affected by the changed setting and the addition of later materials and features, primarily those from the twentieth century. This impact to the feeling of the place has been compounded by the removal of significant elements such as the fireplace surround and mantle, original siding on the wing, and original windows throughout. While the building still clearly reads as "old," the feeling of it as a mid-nineteenth century dwelling is not immediately evident.

Integrity of association is maintained by the fact that the Gormans are known to have lived at this location during the period from 1857 to at least 1869, the year of Eliza's death, and the property was in Gorman ownership until 1875. A number of the building's physical attributes correspond to this time frame, and although altered in the later nineteenth century, it retains sufficient physical integrity in certain

<sup>19</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, City of Corvallis, 1888-1912.

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features (form, location, fireplace and chimney, basic design and some materials) that the association with the Gorman period of occupancy is evident.

*Summary*

The Hannah and Eliza Gorman House retains numerous internal and external elements of its original mid-nineteenth century building phases, and continues to convey its period and method of construction as well as its general historical appearance. The building fabric of the substructure and walls is largely intact, including hand-hewn and circular-sawn sill logs, and sash and circular sawn boards and dimensional lumber. The overall forms of each of the individual building dates, are intact and on inspection readily convey their respective methods and periods of construction. Although not a highly-articulated example of a mid-nineteenth century Gothic Revival house, the Gorman house nonetheless retains sufficient integrity of structure and detail to tell its particular story.

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**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

**Period of Significance**

c. 1857-1875

**Significant Dates**

c. 1857: 1<sup>st</sup> construction

c. 1866: 2<sup>nd</sup> construction

1875: house sold out of Gorman ownership

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

Black/African American

**Architect/Builder**

Not known

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance of circa 1857-1875 reflects the initial construction date of circa 1857 (the one-story wing), embraces the second phase of construction in circa 1866 (the 1½-story upright), and closes with the sale of the property by Hannah Gorman to Peter Polly in 1875.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The circa 1857-circa 1866 Gorman House is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement as one of only a handful of pioneer-era houses remaining in the community of Corvallis. Once common in this urban setting, today only six settlement-era dwellings remain in the Corvallis city limits, and just fourteen survive throughout Benton County.<sup>20</sup> The Gorman House is also significant at the statewide level under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage for its intimate association with Oregon's black pioneer history. The house is the only identified extant residence in Benton County that was owned and occupied by former African American slaves who crossed the Oregon Trail during the settlement period. Further, current research suggests that it may be the oldest extant dwelling in Oregon that was originally owned, during the pioneer period, by African American overland emigrants.<sup>21</sup> Having been freed from bondage, Hannah and Eliza Gorman, mother and daughter, both unmarried, purchased the property and built the subject house during a period in which Oregon's exclusion laws prohibited African Americans from owning property. As such, the building stands as an important primary resource embodying the struggles and triumphs of African American pioneers during Oregon's settlement period.

Although not being nominated under Criterion C, the wing portion of the house may have significance architecturally as a rare surviving example—perhaps the only surviving Oregon example—of a house built by or for former slaves in the form common to slave housing in the Eastern States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Preliminary study suggests that the one-story portion of this building is similar in dimensions, form, and design features (such as window, door and fireplace elements) to the single-cell slave dwellings found in Missouri and states further east.<sup>22</sup>

The building is not currently being nominated under Criterion D in the areas of Exploration/Settlement, Ethnic Heritage or Archaeology, although the property appears to have the potential to yield information in these areas, specifically relative to the lives of Oregon's early black pioneer residents—women in particular—during the pioneer period and the era of exclusion laws. Preliminary study of the property, including archival research and surface reconnaissance, suggests that there is reasonable probability that the site could yield information important to the early history of black pioneers in Oregon. This information is potentially archaeological and is also architectural, in that the form and structural makeup of the building itself may reveal information about building methods and architectural forms that migrated across the continent with African American pioneers.

The period of significance of circa 1857-1875 reflects the initial construction date of circa 1857 (the one-story wing), embraces the second phase of construction in circa 1866 (the 1½-story upright), and closes with the sale of the property by Hannah Gorman to Peter Polly in 1875. The building is in fair condition, and retains sufficient historical integrity to convey its period of construction, essential historic appearance, and historical associations.

<sup>20</sup> Willamette Valley-wide there are approximately 230 settlement-era (pre-1865) dwellings remaining. Data is derived from the Oregon Historic Sites Database, April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Information in the current State Historic Preservation Office Historic Sites Database, as well as current knowledge by the African American community as reflected in queries to the organization of Oregon Black Pioneers, supports the current belief that this is the oldest known African American pioneer building remaining in Oregon.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph McGill, personal communication with author, 2012-2014. Formerly with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Joseph McGill is intimately familiar with slave housing through his work on the "Slave Dwelling Project," an effort to elevate the visibility and importance of remaining slave dwellings in the U.S. Gary Fuenfhausen, personal communication with author, September 2013. Gary Fuenfhausen is a Missouri historian/architectural historian, and the president of the non-profit Missouri's Little Dixie Heritage Foundation. Note that the research correlating the form of this building to Eastern slave quarters is a work in progress and the assertion that the form derives from these prototypes cannot be made at this time.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Under the Multiple Property Document "Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, 1841-circa 1865," the Gorman House meets the Registration Requirements for listing under Criterion A in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Ethnic Heritage.

In the area of Exploration/Settlement the Gorman house stands as a good example of a vernacular Gothic Revival dwelling constructed during Oregon's settlement period by overland emigrants. Built in two phases, the first circa 1857 and the second circa 1866, the house is one of only about 200 remaining from the pioneer period in the Willamette Valley. This number accounts for less than 5% of the houses that likely existed in the Willamette Valley by the mid-1860s, which is widely considered to be the end of the early settlement period for that region.<sup>23</sup> It is one of 14 such dwellings remaining in Benton County, and one of only six surviving within the city limits of Corvallis. Physically, the house displays the characteristics of early Oregon buildings in its materials, construction methods, and architectural details, and retains sufficient integrity to convey its period of construction and historic appearance. As outlined in the "Settlement-era..." Multiple Property Documentation Form, the Gorman House illustrates significance under Criterion A through its embodiment of "...the physical characteristics and limitations of frontier construction..." as well though its "...structural and stylistic makeup, and other embodied characteristics, [which reflect the] physical and social circumstances of life in mid-nineteenth century Oregon."<sup>24</sup>

The Gorman House embodies characteristics of many frame buildings constructed by the overland emigrants during the settlement period in Oregon. The juxtaposition of rough balloon framing in the wing with more regular box construction in the upright allows the building to illustrate two common and early methods of construction, both of which reflect the technology, materials, and skills available at the time. These two phases of building also illustrate the physical evolution of many pioneer dwellings, and further, due to its particular sequence of construction, may shed light on the method of erecting a box-constructed building. It was not uncommon for modest early dwellings to have additions and upgrades as the owners were economically able to expand their living space, and the Gorman house is also a good example of this, with clearly discernable and distinct episodes of construction.

The Gorman House is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage as a rare remaining example of a mid-nineteenth century house associated with Oregon's black pioneers. It appears to be the oldest known standing building in Oregon with direct ties (including ownership and construction) to Oregon's black pioneer population.<sup>25</sup> Hannah and Eliza Gorman, listed as Hannah and Eliza Thorp in the 1850 census, came overland from Missouri to the Oregon country with the Thorp wagon train in 1844, and lived with John Thorp until the early or mid-1850s. At some date prior to 1857, they left the Thorp household, adopted the last name of Gorman, and proceeded to establish themselves as well-respected citizens and business women in the Corvallis community. In light of Oregon's exclusion laws, in place in various iterations since 1844, it is unusual and remarkable that these two single, black women were able to purchase and own property, build a house, and live and work in a small Oregon community for nearly ten years before the end of the Civil War technically "freed" all slaves in the States. Their ability to persevere in the face of probable prejudice and hardship is a testament to their character and fortitude, as well as the acceptance of a number of supportive friends and neighbors in the Corvallis community. The Gorman House is one of only two settlement-period dwellings built and occupied by or for former slaves known to remain in the Willamette Valley, and stands as a tangible reminder of an aspect of Oregon's pioneer history about which little is known, and from which little material culture remains. Additionally, the oldest portion of the house appears in form, dimensions, and basic design features to have been constructed in the tradition of dwellings built in the Eastern States by and for slaves. Hannah Gorman lived in Tennessee and Missouri prior to coming to

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<sup>23</sup> Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, 1841-circa 1865," (June 2014), Section E.

<sup>24</sup> Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Settlement-era Dwelling...of the Willamette Valle...", p. F-31.

<sup>25</sup> The other extant pioneer-era house that was originally owned by a former slave is the Cora Cox House, located just south of Brownsville, Linn County, built circa 1864.



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Oregon, and slave dwellings in both of those states exhibit a number of characteristics that are similar to the wing section of the Gorman House. The house may therefore be a graphic illustration of the cultural diffusion of building types from one part of the country to another, in this case via the migration of enslaved African American people westward to Oregon.<sup>26</sup>

Criterion D is not being applied in this nomination, but with more conclusive archaeological study, the Gorman House may prove to have significance under that Criterion in the areas of Exploration/Settlement, Ethnic History, and Archaeology. As African-American pioneers, the Gormans had unique circumstances in contrast to their Euro-American neighbors. Although spoken of favorably in several contemporary sources, we have little direct evidence for their experiences as African-American pioneers and therefore cannot be fully evaluate these historical references. Archaeological studies of women and minorities are an area of intense interest among historical archaeologists and historians. This interest is partially attributed to the fact that nineteenth century historical narratives are biased towards Euro-American male-centric perspectives. However, it is clear that women and minorities made significant contributions. Archaeology at sites associated with underrepresented people has the potential to play a vital role in correcting a skewed view of the past.

The archaeological record associated with the Gorman occupation is likely to provide evidence of household members and economic activities through analysis of food remains and household goods. The spatial distribution of artifacts will help archaeologists reconstruct how the Gormans organized their domestic space, which may have been significantly different from their Corvallis neighbors. Material such as bottle glass, ceramics, and building materials may help archaeologists reconstruct their economic network to contextualize nineteenth century African American socio-economic mobility. Ultimately, this information will be critical to understanding the Gormans' experiences as African American pioneers and help bring to light a little-known chapter of African American history in the western United States.

Preliminary study of the property suggests that deposits are likely to remain around the property and beneath the upright section of the house.<sup>27</sup> As one of only two African American-related sites known in Oregon from this period retaining an original dwelling, the Gorman house site offers unique opportunities to learn about the daily life of Oregon's earliest African American residents. Although there are other known African American pioneer sites, none has been nominated to the National Register, nor been the subject of archaeological investigation.<sup>28</sup> The Gorman House site offers the rare opportunity to learn from not only sub-surface archaeological study, but also via an archaeological approach to the study of the building itself. Information about the construction methods and materials used in the building, particularly of the one-story section, may be revealed by careful analysis of the internal system and areas in the substructure and attic that are not currently visible. Both methods of analysis have the potential to provide significant information about the African American women's pioneer experience in Oregon that is not readily available from other sites, previous archaeological studies or previous scholarly work.

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<sup>26</sup> Note, however, that the research correlating the form of this building to Eastern slave quarters is a work in progress and the assertion that the form derives from these prototypes cannot be made at this time.

<sup>27</sup> Chris Ruiz and Liz Carter, editors, "Hannah and Eliza Gorman House, Preliminary Study," (November 2013). This unpublished report was prepared following analysis of the house and site by University of Oregon students in coursework offered during the Spring and Fall of 2012.

<sup>28</sup> The Reuben Shipley site in Benton County has been located, but no formal archaeological investigation has been done. Other sites with standing buildings, such as the Daniel Waldo House in Marion County, may retain information relevant to black pioneer history, but that building was not owned or regularly occupied by African Americans. The Daniel Delaney House in Marion County is listed in the National Register, and has an historical association with black history, but the house has been moved from its original location.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

**Oregon Settlement<sup>29</sup>**

Western Oregon's Willamette Valley is located in the northwestern quadrant of the state, surrounded by mountain ranges to the east (the Cascades) and the west (the Coast Range) and bound on the north and south by the Columbia River and the Calapooia Mountains, respectively. Corvallis is situated in the central portion of the Valley, along the western bank of the Willamette River (Fig. 1).

Early nineteenth-century American claims to any of the Oregon territory were not a foregone conclusion; explorers from a multitude of countries had made forays into the area with varying degrees of success. The Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) Fort Vancouver provided an early "gateway" into Willamette Valley settlement by Europeans and American citizens. The Valley was initially occupied, in the late 1820s and 1830s, by Hudson's Bay Company employees, Methodist missionaries, and American mountain men. The landscape appreciated by these early settlers was not vacant, nor was it untouched by human activity. Native Americans occupied the Willamette Valley for thousands of years prior to Western settlement and expansion, and the land had long been altered and tended by the native people, who used prescriptive burning to encourage growth of desired food sources such as camas root and oak acorns, as well as to improve habitat for wild game. Later explorers and settlers found that the fire management had created optimal grazing land and open prairie essentially tree-free and ready for the plow.

As reports of the character of the territory reached the states, Oregon—and the Willamette Valley specifically—became the focus of eventual American political expansion and settlement. Several factors converged to fan the ensuing "Oregon Fever" and prompt the first significant wave of American migration. The HBC, explorer and missionary reports described the Oregon country as having rich soils and a climate so moderate that men could engage in year-round farming. The Panic of 1837 had led to a depressed economy in the east, and farmers suffered from record rainfall followed by flooding and then malaria outbreaks. Perhaps more influentially, starting in 1841 Missouri senators Lewis Linn and Thomas Hart Benton repeatedly proposed bills in Congress that would offer a generous donation of land to those who would settle in Oregon.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the Willamette Valley soon became the primary destination for the Oregon pioneers, who began arriving in the early 1840s.

"In the fall of 1842 the first substantial and organized body of American emigrants to reach Oregon arrived in the Willamette Valley after an overland journey from the Missouri frontier."<sup>31</sup> Oregon's population grew significantly in 1843 with the major settler migration of about 900 men, women, and children to the territory, which came to be known as the "Great Migration." In 1844 and 1845 the population of the Willamette Valley grew again with the arrival of over 4,000 new settlers, nearly 3,000 in 1845 alone.<sup>32</sup> Emigrants journeyed farther up the Willamette seeking land, venturing beyond the Mission into present-day Linn, Benton, and Lane Counties. The earliest permanent settlers reached this southern Willamette Valley region in 1845 and 1846, though the area had been traversed and explored years earlier.

A large percentage of emigrants to Oregon were farmers or ranchers, and the fertile soil of the Willamette Valley promised to provide ideal farming opportunities and lush grazing lands, as well as the possibility of greater prosperity, and for many a healthier living environment (free of the malaria typical of the Mississippi and Missouri valleys). The institution of slavery was becoming ever more divisive in the States, and some no doubt saw Oregon as an opportunity to escape the strife and start anew.

<sup>29</sup> This discussion of Oregon settlement is a synopsis of the narrative found in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, 1841-circa 1865," Section E.

<sup>30</sup> Dorothy O. Johansen, "The Role of Land Laws in the Settlement of Oregon," *Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims*, Volume I (Portland, Oregon: The Genealogical Forum of Portland, 1957), np; J.A. Hussey, *Champoeg: Place of Transition* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, 1967), p. 126.

<sup>31</sup> Hussey, *Champoeg: Place of Transition*, p. 104.

<sup>32</sup> Bancroft, *Works* Volume 29, 1886, 448 and 508; John D. Unruh Jr. *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 119.

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The trip from Missouri took some six months, and many were challenged by desert and river crossings as well as hardships such as illness and mishap. The dangers of the last leg of the Oregon Trail, down the Columbia River rapids, prompted the establishment of the Barlow Toll Road in 1846 and the scouting of the Southern Route, or Applegate Trail in the same year.

Oregon became a United States Territory in 1848, and Congress continued promoting American settlement with persistent but unsuccessful attempts to pass land laws legalizing settlers' land claims. Finally, in 1850 the Donation Land Act codified the disposal of public lands to settlers, providing a "free" one-half to one square mile of land to "...every white settler or occupant of the public lands, American half-breed Indians included, above the age of eighteen years, being a citizen of the United States, or having made a declaration according to law, of his intention to become a citizen..."<sup>33</sup>

In 1859 the Oregon Territory became a state, and just two years later the country was embroiled in the Civil War. Some Oregonians left to fight; most were satisfied to remain a physical distance from the conflict, though opposing political views were certainly voiced through local newspapers and at the polls. By the 1860s, communities had established schools, churches, road systems, industrial and shipping capabilities, and towns and cities were firmly established on the frontier landscape, and population growth in communities large and small was evident.

For a large number of Oregon pioneers, including many in the group with whom the Gormans came, the trip overland was an extension or continuation of earlier migrations. "Many American families from before and many since the Revolution had lived only ten to twenty years in any one place."<sup>34</sup> The implications of this were that a large percentage of those that came across to Oregon had previous experience in traveling, settling, and establishing a new home on an undeveloped frontier. They had already—in Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri—selected land, cleared, fenced, and planted it, built shelter and barns and outbuildings, and planned the overall layout of their farms. Some had done it several times in their multiple migrations westward, and the final emigration to Oregon often occurred largely in close-knit groups of people bound by familial relationships, years of migration associations, religious affiliations, or shared backgrounds. On arrival, settlers who had traveled together tended to stake claims near each other, reinforcing family and neighborhood ties by living in close geographic proximity.

This clan migration seems to have resulted in a strong sense of tradition in pioneer buildings. "Convention or the appearance of convention and of strong tradition [was] perhaps inevitable with pioneers; circumstance, building in a land yet undeveloped with limited [manufactured] resources..." resulted in any number of similarities, especially within family groups or neighborhoods.<sup>35</sup> Building forms were carried from places of origin (New England or Virginia, for example) to intermediary states (i.e., Kentucky, Illinois, or Missouri) and finally to Oregon, the traditional types adjusted to fit the environment and resources available. Building forms traveled with people, and not just white people. The early portion of the Gorman House bears strong physical resemblance to the modest, single-pen slave cabins that were prevalent on plantations in Missouri and throughout the middle-south during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It would appear that the Gormans utilized/employed their understanding of architectural tradition or convention in the construction of their first house—their own first house—on the Oregon frontier.

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<sup>33</sup> This so-called "free" land was dependent on the native people's having relinquished, abandoned, or been driven off of their native homelands, often forcibly or deceptively by U.S. citizens. Under the Donation Land Act, unmarried claimants who arrived prior to 1850 were entitled to 320 acres, and married couples could claim 640 acres, with ownership of one-half the holding recorded in the woman's name. Those who settled after 1850 were entitled to half that quantity. This was one of the first laws in the United States that permitted married women to hold land in their own name. Donation Land Act of 1850, Section 4. <<http://www.ccrh.org/comm/cottage/primary/claim.htm>> Retrieved September 2011. Some 7,000 claim patents (deeds) were ultimately issued in Oregon, about 4,600 of those to Willamette Valley settlers. These numbers are approximate, and the estimate of 7,000 is taken from Johansen 1957, np; the Willamette Valley number is based on an informal hand-count of claims, data derived from the Bureau of Land Management General Land Office records.

<sup>34</sup> Philip Dole Papers, "Covered Wagon," nd. Un-catalogued collection, University of Oregon Special Collections, Eugene.

<sup>35</sup> Dole Papers, "Covered Wagon."

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## Emigration of 1844

Hannah and Eliza Gorman arrived in the Oregon Country in 1844, in what was at the time the third-largest American migration to the region, which included nearly 1,500 people. The 1844 migration comprised at least four major wagon trains (possibly five), including the Stephens-Murphy Party, the Nathaniel Ford/Moses "Black" Harris Party, the "Independent Colony" led by Cornelius Gilliam (this "Colony" organized itself into four companies), and the Thorp Party, led by Major John Thorp.<sup>36</sup> The Thorp train, of which the Gormans were part, reportedly comprising about sixty wagons, and included all of John Thorp's six children, ranging in age from 15 to 24, their spouses, as well as several of his grandchildren.<sup>37</sup> Thorp traveled to Oregon as a single man, his wife Lucy Embree Thorp having died in 1832 in Missouri, and he never remarried.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the Gormans, there were at least seven or eight other African Americans that were part of the 1844 migration. Nathaniel Ford brought with him his slaves Robin and Polly Holmes and three of their children, as well as possibly a man named Scott.<sup>39</sup> Moses "Black" Harris may have been African American, and was a well-known and well-respected mountain man and guide who aided Nathaniel Ford's party. George Washington Bush and his family traveled to Oregon that year, but ultimately settled north of the Columbia due to negative attitudes about African Americans settling in Oregon.

It appears that most, if not all, of the 1844 emigrants initially settled in the lower portion of the Willamette Valley, many in the areas of present-day Polk, Yamhill and Marion Counties. The Thorp family members and neighbors who had traveled together seemed to congregate their land claims in and around Townships 8 and 9 South, Range 4 West, and were later joined by extended family. John Thorp's 320-acre claim, or a half-section of land, was located in Sections 10, 11, 14 and 15 of Township 9 South, Range 4 West, with the claims of son Fielden and daughter Araminta (Thorp) Johnson nearby.<sup>40</sup> Major Thorp's claim was the place where Hannah and Eliza Thorp (they would later change their names to Gorman) made their first home in Oregon.

## Early History of Corvallis<sup>41</sup>

Among the earliest Euro-American settlers who claimed land in and near what later became the city of Corvallis were Joseph C. Avery, a settler of 1845 who took a claim on the west side of the Willamette River at its confluence with the Mary's River, and William F. Dixon, who arrived in 1846 and settled on a land claim adjoining Avery's to the north.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Stephanie Flora, "Emigrants to Oregon in 1844," <<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/1844.htm>> (2004). Accessed January-May, 2014; Rev. H.K. Hines, D.D., *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon...* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893), p. 129.

<sup>37</sup> There were others in this train besides members of the Thorp family, including William and Sarah Case, whose fine Greek Revival house still stands on French Prairie. Stephanie Flora, "Emigrants to Oregon in 1844," <<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/1844.htm>> (2004). Accessed January-May, 2014. Another source suggested that one of John Thorp's sons, Fielden Thorp, traveled "...with a party of twenty-six men, and a train of twelve wagons." This may have referred to the Thorp contingency, rather than the entire party. Access Genealogy, "Thorp, Fielden M.," <<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/washington/biography-of-fielden-m-thorp.htm>>. Excerpted from Elwood Evans, *History of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon and Washington...* Vol. 2 (Portland, Oregon: North Pacific History Company, 1889), p. 605; Shirley H. O'Neil, *Polk County Pioneers: Study of the Inhabitants Listed in the 1850 Federal Census of Polk County, Oregon* (2002), pp. 153-156.

<sup>38</sup> John Thorpe and Lucy Embree married in Howard County, Missouri, in 1818. Several genealogical sources indicate that Lucy Embree Thorp died in Missouri in 1832, but none cite the original source. Thorp's Donation Claim records clearly state that he was "not married," and census records support this through the 1850s and 1860s. Ancestry.com, "Missouri Marriages to 1850," <<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=eammo&h=19719&new=1>> Accessed May, 2014; Stephanie Flora, "Emigrants to Oregon in 1844.," Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon...*, p. 486.

<sup>39</sup> Stephanie Flora, "Emigrants to Oregon in 1844."

<sup>40</sup> A clear illustration of the effect of clan migration, Thorp's children, their spouses, and their spouses' families, as well as neighbors and friends from Missouri, all settled within very close proximity. Some had traveled to Oregon in 1844, and others arrived a year or two later. This included the Johnson, Bounds, and Lovelady families, among others.

<sup>41</sup> For more detailed accounts of Corvallis history, see Mary Kathryn Gallagher, "Historic Context Statement: City of Corvallis, Oregon," (Corvallis, Oregon, August 1993), and David D. Fagan, *History of Benton County, Oregon...* (Portland, Oregon: D.D. Fagan, 1885).

<sup>42</sup> Others who claimed land in this vicinity were John Stewart, J.C. Alexander, and Heman C. Lewis. Gallagher, "Context," p. 7;

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In 1847-1848, Avery parceled off twelve acres of his claim to create a series of town lots, an area then known as "Little Field" that would later become the community of Marysville, later re-named Corvallis.<sup>43</sup> Also in 1848, Isaac Moore, a carpenter from Connecticut, took a 322-acre Donation Land Claim on the eastside of the Willamette River, opposite those of Avery and Dixon, and surveyed a plat for the east side community he named Orleans.<sup>44</sup> "The first true ferry across the Willamette River was operated by William F. Dixon by the year 1848. The ferry was located near his residence [in the vicinity of the current Harrison/Van Buren bridges]. In 1850, Wyman St. Clair and Isaac Moore were granted a license to operate this ferry...."<sup>45</sup>

In 1851, Avery formally platted the town of Marysville (later Corvallis) on his claim, and the community was designated the Benton County seat.<sup>46</sup> In August of the same year, William F. Dixon platted Dixon's Addition to the Town of Marysville, which joined Avery's plat to the north. Marysville quickly grew into a thriving community that consisted of Upper Town and Lower Town. Upper Town was on Avery's claim and included his store and cabin, as well as several shops, a hotel, and additional residences.<sup>47</sup> "Lower Town, which was located on portions of Avery's claim and Dixon's claim consisted of the Dixon residence which faced the river near Second and Polk streets, a blacksmith shop...the Hartless and St. Clair store, two new buildings...a log school house, and Isaac Moore's dwelling."<sup>48</sup> Within two years additional blocks in the quickly growing community were platted to the north and west (Fig. 8). In addition to transportation and commercial development, churches and schools were important early fixtures in Corvallis. The Gormans were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was initially organized in 1847 or 1848 in a schoolhouse located some five miles north of town on A. Fuller's donation claim; William F. Dixon was appointed one of the "class leaders."<sup>49</sup> The congregation moved in 1850 when they "...built a log school-house in Marysville on Lot No. 7, Block No. 1, Dixon's Addition, where meetings were held until 1855, when a commodious edifice was raised..." nearby on Lot 6, Block 4 of Dixon's Addition.<sup>50</sup>

The name of the town was changed from Marysville to Corvallis in 1853, and the place was soon established as the all-season navigable headwaters on the Willamette, making it a principal shipping point and a prominent transportation hub for the middle Willamette Valley.<sup>51</sup> The town limits were soon expanded when William Dixon platted Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition on a portion of his donation land claim in 1854, which added 13 blocks to the city.<sup>52</sup> Located in Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, on Block 9 near the Willamette River, was one of the earliest sawmills in Corvallis, a steam-powered mill believed to have been established and operated by Hamilton Campbell and a Mr. Kline.<sup>53</sup> Located one block east of the Gorman House, and a possible source for the lumber with which the house was built, this site would continue to be occupied by sawmilling operations well into the twentieth century.

By the time Oregon became a state in 1859, the town of Corvallis boasted a population of nearly 500 residents. Over the coming decade the population would nearly double, though the number of African Americans in the community would remain extremely small.<sup>54</sup> The percentage of non-white residents vs. whites in Corvallis and throughout the Willamette Valley was very small, likely less than 1%.

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Bruce Martin, "History of Corvallis, 1846-1900" (Master's Thesis, University of Oregon Department of History, Eugene. 1938), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Gallagher, *Context*, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Jill A. Chappel, Robert R. Musil, and Kathryn Anne Toepel, *Cultural Resource Survey and Evaluation of The Proposed AT&T Fiber Optic Cable Route, Linn and Benton Counties*. (Heritage Research Associates Report No. 128, on file at the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Salem. 1992), p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> Howard McKinley Corning, *Willamette Landings: Ghost Towns of the River* (Portland: Oregon, Federal Writers' Project (Or.), Binfords & Mort for the Oregon Historical Society, 1947), 161-162; Gallagher, "Context," p. 14. Dixon, Moore and St. Clair would later sell land to the Gormans.

<sup>46</sup> Benton County was created in 1847 from a portion of Polk County. Gallagher, *Context*, pp. 7 and 21; Lewis A. McArthur and Lewis L. McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, 1992), pp. 206-207.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Gallagher, *Context*, p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Fagan, *History of Benton County, Oregon...*, p. 424; Gallagher, *Context*, p. 29.

<sup>49</sup> Fagan, *History of Benton County*, p. 364; Benton County Historical Society, "Online Timeline."

[http://www.bentoncountymuseum.org/timeline/print\\_timeline.cfm](http://www.bentoncountymuseum.org/timeline/print_timeline.cfm) Accessed June 2014.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365. The 1855 church building was about four blocks south of the Gorman house.

<sup>51</sup> Gallagher, "Context," p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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## Early African American History in Oregon

The presence of African Americans in Oregon dates to the period of some of the earliest exploratory expeditions. Marcus Lopez is widely believed to be the first black American to set foot on Oregon soil, having arrived in 1788 as part of the crew of the ship *Lady Washington*.<sup>55</sup> In the ensuing decades, a number of other black explorers, fur traders and guides were present in the Oregon Country, but by the early and middle 1840s African Americans were also arriving as the slaves or servants of white American emigrants. Although the legality (or illegality) of slavery in Provisional and Territorial Oregon was not definitively decided upon until the vote of 1857, some emigrants nonetheless brought enslaved blacks with them, and were rarely forced to free their slaves on arrival.

The prohibition against slavery was in part an effort to avoid the problems the “slave question” was causing in the eastern United States, and was also meant to restrict the number of African Americans settling and living in the region. Several iterations of exclusion laws were adopted and revised in the 1840s and 1850s, all of which prohibited slavery in the territory but also excluded blacks from residing in or owning property in Oregon. The 1843 Provisional Government approved an organic act that included a prohibition on slavery, and a year later the region’s first exclusion law was in place, prohibiting African Americans from residing in Oregon.<sup>56</sup> The law “...included a ban on slavery and a requirement that slave owners free their slaves. African Americans who remained in Oregon after their freedom was granted, however, would be whipped and expelled.”<sup>57</sup> This first exclusion law was later repealed, as it was considered excessively barbaric.<sup>58</sup> In 1849, a new law was passed that prohibited African Americans from settling in the new territory, but allowed those that were already present to stay.<sup>59</sup> That law was repealed in 1854. “In 1857, when a constitution was written in anticipation of statehood, a third exclusion clause was inserted, prohibiting new immigration of African Americans, as well as making illegal their ownership of real estate and entering into contracts. They were also denied the right to sue in court.”<sup>60</sup>

Only one man, Jacob Vanderpool, is known to have been tried and expelled from Oregon under these exclusion laws. Vanderpool was a free man operating a saloon, restaurant, and boarding house in Oregon City (Clackamas County). Following a complaint filed by Theophilus Magruder, Vanderpool was arrested for living illegally in Oregon, and six days later, Judge Thomas Nelson reached a verdict and ordered Vanderpool to leave the Oregon territory.<sup>61</sup>

Census enumerations (either Territorial or Federal) of enslaved people in early Oregon are not entirely reliable, but there seems to be consensus among scholars of the subject that there were probably fewer than 200 African Americans in all of the Oregon Territory during the decade of the 1850s, and their status—whether they were free people, servants, or slaves—is not always clear.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Bosco-Milligan Foundation, “Cornerstones of Community: Buildings of Portland’s African American History.” (Portland, Oregon, August 1995), pp. 2-3; McLagan, Elizabeth, *A Peculiar Paradise, A History of Blacks in Oregon (Portland, Oregon: The Georgian Press, 1980)*, pp. 1-2. See this source for more detailed accounts of black residents in Oregon. Some sources suggest that Lopez may have been Hispanic.

<sup>56</sup> Nokes, *Breaking Chains...*, p. xiv.

<sup>57</sup> “The Black Laws of Oregon, 1844-1857,” on The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed. <<http://www.blackpast.org/perspectives/black-laws-oregon-1844-1857>>, copyright 2007-2011. Accessed June 2013 and May 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson, p. 54.

<sup>59</sup> “The Black Laws of Oregon, 1844-1857,” on The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed.

<sup>60</sup> “The Black Laws of Oregon, 1844-1857,” on The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed. See also Nokes, *Breaking Chains...*, pp. 142-143. “This clause, Article 1 Section 35, was subject to popular vote, as was the adoption of a ban on slavery and the entire constitution. The exclusion clause received more popular votes than the approval of the constitution or the ban on slavery. Although enabling legislation was never passed and the clause was voided by the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments passed after the Civil War, the ban remained a part of Oregon’s constitution until it was finally repealed in 1927.” See also “The Fourteenth Amendment,” Oregon Historical Society webpage, <<http://www.ohs.org/education/focus/fourteenth-amendment.cfm>> Accessed November 2013.

<sup>61</sup> McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise*, p. 23; “Guide to the Theophilus Magruder v. Jacob Vanderpool Case Documents,”

University of Oregon Library Special Collections, Northwest Digital Archives Finding Aid, <<http://nwda.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv11309>> Accessed January and May, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> Daniel G. Hill Jr., *The Negro in Oregon, A Survey*. Master’s Thesis, University of Oregon Graduate School (1932), 8; K. Keith Richard, “Unwelcome Settlers: Black and Mulatto Oregon Pioneers,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol 84, No 1 (Spring 1983), 36. Quintard Taylor... Hill states that the 1850 census indicated there were about 207 “Negros living in Oregon” but Richard suggests the

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The 1850 census data reveals instances where an African American was the only black in the household in a situation where he or she may have been a slave. At least a few blacks and slaves in Oregon were not counted at all—or, in some instances counted, but not identified by race. The omissions may be the fault of the slave owners, who did not want their slaves identified, or an attempt by white employers to protect African Americans from Oregon's exclusion laws.<sup>63</sup>

The 1860 census for Linn County listed Cora Cox and her 5-month-old daughter Adeline as the slaves of Jefferson Huff, but in most cases, "...a slave's true status was...disguised with the pseudonym 'servant.'" <sup>64</sup> Until 1860, "no previous U.S. census had specifically identified any of Oregon's black or mulatto inhabitants as slaves, even though some of them had undoubtedly been legally slaves prior to their removal to Oregon and had probably been treated in Oregon very much as they had been in the slave states of their previous residences."<sup>65</sup>

"Blacks and mulattoes came to Oregon throughout the 1850s although they knew that they were barred from freely immigrating to the Territory and that the white attitudes and legislation were similar to the black laws of other states and territories."<sup>66</sup> In some cases African Americans came to Oregon with the understanding that if they assisted their white owners in establishing homes and farms on the Oregon frontier, they would eventually be rewarded with their freedom. This was the case with Robin and Polly Holmes, and the situation may have been similar for Hannah and Eliza Gorman.<sup>67</sup>

Regardless of the methods and reasons for coming to Oregon, and the legal issues evident on arrival,

Slavery did not flourish in Oregon. White settlers who needed cheap seasonal labor could hire Indians for as little as three dollars a month - far less than the cost of keeping a slave. The few Southern whites who brought to Oregon blacks and mulattos—who had been slaves in their home states and who were treated in Oregon essentially the same as they had been in the South—found that slaveholding was not the mark of aristocracy that it had been in their previous places of residence. Slaves in Oregon were an expensive luxury rather than an important capital investment.<sup>68</sup>

Once in the territory, whether out of choice or necessity, a number of black and mulatto pioneers of the 1840s and 1850s established permanent roots in Oregon. These included Rachel Belden (1843), Robin and Polly Holmes and family (1844), Hannah and Eliza Gorman (1844), Lou Southworth (1851), and Reuben Shipley (1853), among others.<sup>69</sup> Although they were not allowed to own real estate under the state constitution, several did manage to purchase and own property. Reuben Shipley, who arrived in the Philomath area of Benton County with owner Robert Shipley in 1853, was given his freedom in exchange for his help with the overland crossing.<sup>70</sup> Records indicate that in November of 1857 Reuben Shipley paid \$700 for 140 acres of farmland in the Philomath vicinity. "Shipley likely was the largest African American landowner in the

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number was much lower, closer to 50-60. Richard's study indicates that by the 1860 census, 124 African American residents were enumerated in the State.

<sup>63</sup> Nokes, *Breaking Chains...*, p. 110.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Richard, "Unwelcome Settlers..." (Spring 1983), p. 38

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>67</sup> Nathaniel Ford made an agreement with his slave Robin Holmes that Holmes and his family would come to Oregon (in 1844) and assist Ford in both the trip and settling his claim, all in exchange for their freedom. Robin, his wife Polly and one of their children were ultimately manumitted, but Ford kept the other three children as his slaves in his household. This led to the only slavery case ever tried in Oregon, in which Robin Holmes won his children's freedom. See R. Gregory Nokes, *Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2013).

<sup>68</sup> Keith Richard, "Unwelcome Settlers: Black and Mulatto Oregon Pioneers, Part II," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* Vol. 84, No. 2 (Summer 1983), p. 191.

<sup>69</sup> This information was derived from a number of sources, including U.S. Census records, Nokes, *Breaking Chains*: (2013), and Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, *Perseverance: A History of African Americans in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties* (Salem, Oregon: Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Nokes, *Breaking Chains...*, p. 97.



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Willamette Valley at the time. He purchased an additional five acres for \$50 from George Howell on November 10, 1865.<sup>71</sup>

The Shipley house no longer stands, but the family's legacy continues in Benton County's Mt. Union Cemetery, established on land donated by him specifically for use as a cemetery in which members of the black community could be laid to rest.<sup>72</sup> The opportunity and ability to purchase land—for Shipley, the Gormans, and others—would have been dependent to a very large degree on the willingness of whites to sell land to them and welcome them as neighbors.

Oregonians were in general agreement that they did not want blacks and mulattoes in their colony, territory and state, whether slave or free. Yet the whites' hostility to blacks and mulattoes was in most cases more theoretical than practical. The anti-black and mulatto feelings of the white Oregonians were not sufficient to cause them to take action on the expulsion of any black and mulatto families and individuals living and working among them—in all probability as legal residents—but whom they recognized as human beings, inferior human beings, no doubt, but still worthy of some degree of consideration. Given the opportunity to become really acquainted with some of the black and mulatto settlers, white Oregonians sometimes came to respect and admire them....<sup>73</sup>

This seems to have been the case with Hannah and Eliza Gorman, who were, as unmarried black women, able to purchase land, build a house, and maintain a successful business in 1850s and 1860s Corvallis.

## Hannah and Eliza Gorman

Very little has as yet been learned about the lives of Hannah and Eliza Gorman prior to their 1844 emigration from Missouri to Oregon. According to census records spanning 1850 to 1880, Hannah Gorman was most likely born in Tennessee, sometime between 1808 and 1820. At an unknown date she moved or was moved to Missouri where her daughter Eliza Gorman was born, probably in 1836.<sup>74</sup> Hannah and Eliza came to Oregon in 1844 in the train of Major John Thorp (Thorpe), who had been born in Madison County, Kentucky, in 1796 or 1797.<sup>75</sup> According to one Thorp descendant, Hannah and the young Eliza were not slaves of John Thorp, but were given as a wedding gift to Fielden Mortimer (F.M.) Thorp (John Thorp's son) and his new bride Margaret Bounds by her father John Bird Bounds in 1842.<sup>76</sup> Bounds was purportedly a slave holder in Tennessee, although little information has been discovered about him or any slaves that he owned in Tennessee or later in Missouri.<sup>77</sup> Since census records do not indicate Hannah and Eliza's status in either state, it is difficult to know the reality of their circumstances either with F.M. and Margaret Thorp in Missouri, or with John Thorp in Oregon. Perhaps they were manumitted upon being given to the newlywed Thorps, and absent any more enticing options, stayed on with the family. Apparently emancipated blacks were not looked upon kindly in Missouri, making the theory of the Gormans' being given their freedom less likely. One Missouri historian notes that "It was not a tradition here for slave owners to free slaves. Freed slaves were not very welcome here and [were] looked upon as more or less a problem. The number of freed people of color in Missouri was very small for the period 1830-1860."<sup>78</sup> In any case, when the decision was

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> The Shipley cabin collapsed in the winter of 1918. Hazel Waterman, "Twice Under the Cloud of Slavery," *Portland Sunday Oregonian Magazine*, (March 2, 1952), pp. 98-99; Oregon Historic Sites database/inventory, "Reuben and Mary Jane Shipley cabin site," (1986).

<sup>73</sup> Richard, "Unwelcome Settlers...Part II," p. 192.

<sup>74</sup> Census data from 1850-1880 provide birth years for Hannah that vary from 1808 to 1820. Eliza's birth years range from 1834 to 1836. Hannah also had a son, Hiram, who was born in Missouri sometime between 1833 and 1835. Salem Pioneer Cemetery, online records, <[http://www.salempioneer cemetery.org/records/display\\_record.php?id=2732](http://www.salempioneer cemetery.org/records/display_record.php?id=2732)> Accessed July 2013.

<sup>75</sup> "Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Lane Claims," Volume 1 (Portland, Oregon: Genealogical Forum of Portland, 1957), p. 48; Shirley H. O'Neil, *Polk County Pioneers...*, pp. 153-156.

<sup>76</sup> Randall Thorp, personal communication with author, September 2013.

<sup>77</sup> Randall Thorp, September 2013. Bounds later emigrated to Oregon with his family, and in 1846 settled a claim just south of the Thorps in Polk County.

<sup>78</sup> Gary Fuenfhausen, personal communication with author, September 13, 2013. Mr. Fuenfhausen specializes in the history

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made to migrate to Oregon, Hannah and Eliza accompanied the Thorps, whose train consisted of over 120 individuals, both family members and non-relations.<sup>79</sup> The Gormans were among the earliest documented African American families to make this journey; Mrs. William Case included "Aunt Hannah, a negress," and Eliza, a mulatto girl" on her "list of ladies" who were a part of the Thorp wagon train.<sup>80</sup>

On arrival in the Willamette Valley late in 1844, John Thorp established a 320-acre Donation Land Claim and built a house.<sup>81</sup> Although John Thorp appears on Oregon Territorial lists or censuses for 1844, 1845, and 1849, Hannah and Eliza do not.<sup>82</sup> They were, however, listed in the 1850 Federal census as living in John Thorp's household, with his last name, but with no indication of race or status.<sup>83</sup>

The years between 1844 and the mid-1850s are yet somewhat mysterious: no information seems to be available regarding Hannah and Eliza's status or their eventual departure from the Thorp household. Major Thorp and other members of the family relocated to Washington State in 1858, an event that may have precipitated the Gorman's liberation from the household and their relocation to Corvallis.<sup>84</sup> On leaving Thorp's, Hannah and Eliza took the last name Gorman.<sup>85</sup> By early 1857 (perhaps earlier), four years before the start of the American Civil War, Hannah and Eliza had relocated about 15 miles south to Corvallis, and despite the restrictions of the Territory's exclusion laws they began to purchase property. Over the following nine years, between 1857 and 1866, the Gormans purchased in total four city lots in Block 11 of the newly platted Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition. In April of 1857 Eliza made the first purchase of two lots from William and Julia A. Dixon for the sum of \$200.00.<sup>86</sup> It is presumed that soon thereafter the one-story, one-room house was built, and Hannah and Eliza began making their lives as citizens of Corvallis. Eighteen months later, in November of 1858, Hannah purchased the single Lot 5 to the east of their house from Isaac Moore and Wayman St. Clair for \$50.00.<sup>87</sup> By 1860, the census indicated that Hannah was working as a "washwoman" and Eliza as a "seamstress"; also living in their household was 30-year-old Peter Cook, a white man, listed as a laborer.<sup>88</sup> There is little documentation of their daily living situation, but a few glimpses survive. In September of 1861, Catherine Blaine, wife of Methodist missionary David E. Blaine, wrote a letter to her mother from Lebanon, Oregon. In it, she stated that,

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and culture of southern Missouri. He is the president of the Missouri Little Dixie Heritage Foundation.

<sup>79</sup> Jenny Tenlen, "The Immigration of 1844," (2001-2007). <<http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/bancroft/bancroft3.html>> Accessed January and May 2014; H.S. Lyman, "Reminiscences of William M. Case," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* Volume 1, No. 3 (September 1900), 272; Flora, 1844. Among those in the Thorp train, which according to William Case comprised sixty wagons and 120 men, were all of Thorp's six children and at least one grandchild.

<sup>80</sup> May D. Dasch 2004. H.O. Lang, *History of the Willamette Valley...* (Portland, Oregon: George A. Himes, 1885), p. 285.

<sup>81</sup> General Land Office, Cadastral Map Township 9 South Range 4 West (1852 and 1860); Thorpe's 320-acre claim, about fifteen miles north of Corvallis in Polk County, was located in Township 9S, Range 4W, Sections 10, 11, 14 and 15. He is recorded as having officially settled his claim in 1847. At the time of his emigration to Oregon, Thorp was a widow, his wife Lucy Embree Thorp having died in 1832 possibly giving birth to their son, Theodore. Thorp was apparently a miller in Holt County, Missouri, and was listed as such in the 1860 Polk County (Oregon) census; his son Theodore also later ran a flouring mill in Falls City and later in Rickreall. More early information on the Thorp Family is available via Ancestry.com at <<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=lesliemwood&id=11511>>. Accessed May, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Ancestry.com. *Oregon, "Compiled Census Index, 1841-1890."* Accessed May 2014. The Gormans do not appear to have been enumerated in these early censuses in any way.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Census, Polk County, Oregon Territory, 1850.

<sup>84</sup> William Denison Lyman, *History of the Yakima Valley, Washington...* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1919), 268; "Links Traced in Thorp Family Chain," *Ellensburg Daily Record* (April 30, 1968), p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> The reason for the name change, and the source of the name, isn't clear. The work *Perseverance...* by Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers mentions that Hiram Gorman (Hannah's son) "...was likely one of several slaves owned by Thomas Gorman of Macon, Missouri..." No citation is provided, and thus far no further information has been found. *Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, Perseverance...*, p. 92.

<sup>86</sup> William and Julia A. Dixon to Eliza Gorman (Lots 11 and 12, Block 11 Dixon's Secnd Addition for \$200), Benton County Deed Record (April 27, 1857).

<sup>87</sup> Isaac Moore to Hannah Gorman (½ interest in Lot 5 Block 11 for \$25.00) and Wayman St. Clair to Hannah Gorman (½ interest in Lot 5 Block 11 for \$25.00), Benton County Deed Records (September 17, 1858). Moore and St. Clair operated the nearby ferry between Corvallis and the east-side settlement of Orleans.

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Census, Corvallis, Benton County, 1860. Peter Cook may have been related to James and Nancy Cook, who were listed as living two houses away from the Gormans in the 1860 census. Interestingly, the 1880 census indicated that Hannah was living with Nancy Cook on Second Street in Corvallis.

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Eliza, a mulatto girl—I think I have mentioned her—had told me she would clean and make over my black silk dress, and our plan had been to remain there [in Corvallis] until it was done... I must stop here and tell how nice everything was at Eliza's. She and her mother, Hannah, live together, take in washing and sewing. They will wash from \$1.50 to \$2.00 worth in the morning and then Eliza will do a day's work at sewing. She has a machine and some days does \$2.50 worth in a day. They have 3/- a dozen for washing without ironing. Everything about the house is as clean and neat as can be, some of the negro love of ornament displaying itself. Their bed valances, ruffled and starched, their pillow and bolster cases trimmed; such handsome bed quilts, too; then the bed was so perfectly clean and sweet.<sup>89</sup>

Another brief description of their living situation was published in the *Corvallis Gazette*: "Herself [Eliza] and her aged mother, by industry and economy had built them a comfortable home, furnished in good style, and surrounded it with fruit, flowers, and everything necessary to human comfort and happiness."<sup>90</sup> This relative prosperity was reflected in the 1860 census, which valued the Gormans' real estate at \$1,200 and their personal property at \$200. By these accounts, the Gormans were comfortable and well-respected in the community.

In May of 1866, Eliza made the final addition to their land holdings with her purchase of Lot 10 from Frenchman and jeweler Louis Belfils for the sum of \$60.00. This history, coupled with the physical characteristics of the 1½ story portion of the building, strongly suggests that the construction of the upright section coincides with this purchase.

Sadly, in July of 1869, Eliza died at a relatively young age of an unknown illness. Her death notice in the *Corvallis Gazette* provides a window on the community's esteem for both Eliza and Hannah, stating:

In this city, July 13<sup>th</sup>, Eliza J. Gorman (colored), aged 30 years. Eliza has been a member of the M.E. Church in this place for about fourteen years. Her intelligence, modesty, kind and sympathetic disposition consistent Christian life, and uniform courteous behavior, has won the respect and confidence of the entire community. Herself and aged mother... seemed to live only for each other, and to make others happy. By the restless archer—Death—marked her for victim, claimed her as his own. She had a severe—almost unendurable affliction to her aged and devoted mother; and but for the hope of soon meeting "beyond the flood" she could not bear it. For several months Eliza has been a patient, but constant sufferer—frequently remarked "if it was not for her dear mother, she would gladly be released from earth." The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. J.W. York, at the church, on last Wednesday. The large number of citizens in attendance, and the attention she received during her illness was strong proof of the high estimation in which she was held. She will be missed, and her loss mourned, by nearly every family in Corvallis.<sup>91</sup>

Following Eliza's death, Hannah moved from Corvallis to Portland, Oregon, where she lived with and worked as a "domestic" for Reverend J.H. Wilbur, a renowned Methodist Episcopal minister.<sup>92</sup> In 1871, Hannah's son Hiram arrived in Oregon, having moved from Missouri to Montana before relocating to Salem.<sup>93</sup> At some point it appears that Hannah may have mortgaged a portion of the property (Lots 10, 11 and 12) to Hiram, although neither of them apparently lived in the house through the 1870s. Hiram returned the holding to Hannah with a \$200 transaction in 1875, and several days later she sold the property—all four lots, including the house—to Peter Polly (Polley) for \$1,000 in gold coin.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> David Blaine, *Letters and papers of Rev. David E. Blaine and his wife Catharine; Seattle, 1853-1856, Oregon, 1856-1862*. (Seattle: Historical Society of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the Methodist Church, 1963), p. 193.

<sup>90</sup> "The Obituary of Eliza J. Gorman," *Corvallis Gazette*, Corvallis, Oregon, July 17, 1869.

<sup>91</sup> "The Obituary of Eliza J. Gorman," *Corvallis Gazette*, Corvallis, Oregon, July 17, 1869.

<sup>92</sup> U.S. Census, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, 1870. Wilbur had come to Oregon in 1847, and was considered a leader in Oregon's early Methodist community. His parsonage and church building still stand in the Douglas County town of Wilbur.

<sup>93</sup> Salem Pioneer Cemetery, online records, "Gorman, Hiram."

<[http://www.salempioneer cemetery.org/records/display\\_record.php?id=2732](http://www.salempioneer cemetery.org/records/display_record.php?id=2732)> Accessed July 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Hiram and Georgia Gorman to Hannah Gorman (Lots 10, 11 and 12, Block 11 Dixon's Addition for \$200.00), Quit Claim Deed, Benton County Deed Record (March 23, 1875).

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Hannah eventually moved back to Corvallis, and was listed in the 1880 census as boarding with Nancy J. Cook, quite possibly the Gormans' former neighbor and relative of early boarder Peter Cook. In her final years she may have lived with her son Hiram in Salem, where she passed away on July 2, 1888. Her death notice in the *Portland Morning Oregonian* read: "Death of a Pioneer Slave — Hannah Gorman, a pioneer negress, who came to this country from Missouri as a slave of Capt. Sharp [Major Thorp], in 1844, and settled in Polk county, was found dead in bed at the home of her son, Hiram Gorman, this morning. Heart disease was probably the cause. She was aged about 82 years."<sup>95</sup>

Her death was followed about two weeks later by that of her son Hiram, whose obituary in the Salem newspaper revealed a little of his history.

In Salem, July 23, 1888, at 4 a.m., Hiram Gorman, aged about 55 years. The deceased was born in Missouri, of slave parentage, and was set free by the Emancipation Proclamation. For some time during the war he was attached to the Union forces as a teamster, and was present at the battle of Wilson Creek, where he saw Gen. Lyon killed while leading a charge. Mr. Gorman went from Missouri to Montana about 1865, and from there came to Oregon in 1871. He shortly afterward obtained employment at the STATESMAN office in turning the wheel of the power-press, in which position he was retained until his services were superseded by the application of steam as a motor, in 1883, a period of about twelve years. "Hi" was a well-known character in Salem, and was universally liked for his unfailing good nature and for his large-hearted generosity. His acts of kindness were innumerable. For some months preceding his death, he was an invalid, and unable to do any work, but he was sustained at home by relatives and friends. He leaves a wife and three children to mourn his death. The funeral will take place today at 2 o'clock p.m.<sup>96</sup>

Efforts to find Gorman descendants have been unsuccessful to date, although it is believed Hiram's wife and children eventually relocated to Kansas.

## Construction History

The circumstances of the construction of the earliest portion of the Gorman house are not clear. Given the Gormans' involvement with the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is possible that they had the help of church members in the acquisition of materials and labor for constructing the building. The purchase price of \$200 for the first two lots (Lots 11 and 12) seems high for vacant land, particularly in light of the \$50 and \$60 later paid for the other two lots (Lots 5 and 10, in 1858 and 1866 respectively). It may be that the price included some building materials, labor, or possibly the building itself. The somewhat haphazard character of the framing in the wing suggests that at least some of the work may have been completed by non-carpenters. In the eastern states, slaves were sometimes responsible for the construction of their own dwellings, and it is possible that Hannah and Eliza had the skill to construct the wing themselves. There were several other black residents in Corvallis/Benton County at the time, and they may have aided in the construction of the building, lending some influence on its design.<sup>97</sup>

The scale, form, and basic layout of this part of the house are suggestive of early slave dwellings in the places with which the Gormans were familiar, namely Tennessee and Missouri.<sup>98</sup> If the earliest section of the house was not constructed by the Gormans or by (or with significant contributions of) other black pioneers, it certainly appears to have been influenced by their ideas about its design. According to previous and current scholarship on these buildings, and review of numerous photographs of slave dwellings (both extant and demolished), single-pen slave dwellings were typically 12-15' square in dimension, with a window and door on

<sup>95</sup> "Death of a Pioneer Slave...", in the [Portland] *Morning Oregonian*, July 3, 1888.

<sup>96</sup> "The Obituary of Hiram Gorman," *Oregon Statesman*, Salem, Oregon, July, 24 1888.

<sup>97</sup> Other African American residents in the area during the pioneer period included the Shipleys, Lou Southworth, Letitia and David Carson (David was listed as "White" and died in 1852), and Richard Sortes. There were likely others. U.S. Census records, Corvallis, Oregon, 1850 and 1860.

<sup>98</sup> Note that this research is a work in progress and the assertion that the form derives from these prototypes cannot be made at this time.

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the front elevation.<sup>99</sup> The large, brick fireplace on the gable end wall was also a typical feature. Built of log or frame construction, these buildings were invariably simple and vernacular in character, with little to indicate any formal architectural style. The wing portion of the Gorman house displays all of these characteristics, which remain evident despite alterations that include the removal of a northern portion of the building, rear (east) porch enclosure, application of new siding, and replacement door and windows. In contrast, the upright section displays more regularity in its construction in terms of material and assembly, and appears to have been built by a relatively experienced hand.

## Comparative Analysis

According to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office Historic Sites Database, in its local context, the Gorman house is one of six dwellings in the Corvallis city limits that date to the settlement period before circa 1865. It is one of fourteen remaining in Benton County. Although it has seen several alterations, most occurred in the historic period (more than fifty years ago), many of which appear to be late nineteenth century changes. The basic form, floorplan, many of the materials, and general character of the building remains much as it would have been during the Gormans' ownership. This very vernacular building does not display any overt details of the Classical Revival style (also known as Greek Revival) so popular in 1850s Oregon, and its circa 1866 addition is a simple iteration of the sometimes-elaborate Gothic Revival style of the late 1850s through about 1875. The building's significance lies less in its architectural character, and much more in the fact that it is one of very few survivors from the settlement period. Of the estimated 4,600+ houses that likely existed in the Willamette Valley prior to the mid-1860s in Oregon, only about 200 remain: less than 5% at best.<sup>100</sup>

In the context of buildings in Oregon with African American pioneer associations, the Gorman house appears to be unique. Based on the information currently available on known historic properties, the Gorman House is the oldest remaining house originally owned by African American pioneers in Oregon.<sup>101</sup> The circa 1864 Cora Cox House in Linn County was also owned by a former slave woman. Cora Cox was manumitted by her owner Emeline Johnson, probably before Emeline sold over thirty acres to her former slave for \$10, apparently in appreciation of the "...faithful services rendered by my former colored servant."<sup>102</sup> The Cox House is less vernacular in character than the Gorman House, displaying a graceful blend of Classical Revival and Gothic Revival features. No other mid-nineteenth century houses known to have been owned by African American overland emigrants have as yet been identified and listed in the Oregon Historic Sites Database or the newly developed database "Preserving Oregon's African American Historic Places."<sup>103</sup>

## Multiple Property Document Registration Requirements

The Hannah and Eliza Gorman House is being nominated to the National Register under the "Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon" Multiple Property

<sup>99</sup> These characteristics are evident in extant buildings, Historic American Building Survey images of slave dwellings, and are discussed in more current scholarly sources, including several essays in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) as well as John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 153-182. Personal communication with Joseph McGill and Gary Fuenfhausen also reiterated that these are characteristics typical of slave housing of Missouri and the Middle South.

<sup>100</sup> This estimation is probably conservative. The approximate number of dwellings is certainly low, and is based on the estimated number of Donation Land Claims in nine Willamette Valley counties; it does not account for the multitudes of early urban houses, the number of which would be difficult to ascertain.

<sup>101</sup> The Gorman house and the circa 1864 Cora Cox House in nearby Linn County are the only two extant, pre-1865 dwellings known to have been owned by black pioneers (occupancy and/or ownership) that have been identified in Oregon.

<sup>102</sup> Jobie Hill, Draft National Register Nomination form, "Cox, Cora, House," (2012), p. 9. This draft document was completed for a University of Oregon class, and was not submitted for review.

<sup>103</sup> <<http://www.makeoregonhistory.org>> This is a joint effort between Oregon Black Pioneers and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

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Documentation Form (MPD). The Gorman House meets the “General Registration Requirements for All Property Types, and for Dwellings,” in that it was constructed in the Willamette Valley between circa 1857 and circa 1866, within the generally recognized settlement-period time-frame of 1841 to circa 1865. Although currently vacant, the house has not been altered to meet a function other than use as a residence, and it retains sufficient historical integrity (as discussed in Section 7) to convey its historic appearance as well as its significance under Criterion A in association with Exploration/Settlement and Ethnic Heritage in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

With regard to specific criteria, the house meets the Registration Requirements for dwellings under Criterion A because it is, by virtue of its age and history, inherently associated with Willamette Valley and Oregon’s mid-nineteenth century settlement. The Gorman house was initially constructed as a single-family residence, and was used as such through the twentieth century. Although some alterations have occurred to materials and features, the house retains integrity in the areas of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. In aggregate, “...the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association [circa 1857-circa 1866]” are sufficiently present and visible to allow the Gorman House to convey its pioneer history.<sup>104</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As one of a very small percentage of settlement-era dwellings remaining in the Willamette Valley, and one of even fewer extant buildings known to remain in Oregon with African American pioneer associations, the Hannah and Eliza Gorman House is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A for its significance to nineteenth century Oregon settlement and to African American heritage in Oregon. Although somewhat altered, it retains sufficient historical integrity to convey its period of construction and significance, and thus its unique and little-understood story.

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<sup>104</sup> Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Settlement-era Dwellings...of the Willamette Valley...,” pp. F-32-33.

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McGill, Joseph. Personal communication with author, 2012-2014. Formerly with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Joseph McGill is intimately familiar with slave housing through his work on the "Slave Dwelling Project," an effort to elevate the visibility and importance of remaining slave dwellings in the U.S. <<http://slavedwellingproject.org>>

Thorp, Randall. Personal communication with author, September 2013 and May 2014. Mr. Thorp is a descendant of Major John Thorp, with whom the Gormans traveled from Missouri to Oregon.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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Gorman, Hannah and Eliza, House  
Name of Property

Benton County, Oregon  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>44.570095</u>	<u>-123.258870</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property, located at 641 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Corvallis, Benton County is located in T9S, R4W Section 35. The nominated area is comprised of tax lot 2300 in its entirety, including the nineteenth century house and twentieth century garage, identified by Benton County as tax identification number 11535DB02300. The lot measures 75.86' by 101.18, encompassing .18 acres, all of which was owned by the Gormans during the period of significance.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated area boundaries were selected to correspond directly to the current legal tax lot boundaries, and include the contributing house and the non-contributing garage. The nominated area, which includes Lot 10 and 1/2 of Lot 11, Block 11, Dixon's Second Addition, was purchased and owned by the Gormans during the period of significance. The northern half of Lot 11 and Lots 5 and 12, also historically owned by the Gormans, were not included because those parcels are no longer linked with the subject property by current ownership.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Liz Carter and Chris Ruiz date 30 June 2014  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 541.343.6499  
street & number 1375 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue email lizcarterhp@gmail.com  
city or town Eugene state OR zip code 97403

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**

Gorman, Hannah and Eliza, House  
Name of Property

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Gorman, Hannah and Eliza, House  
**City or Vicinity:** Corvallis  
**County:** Benton **State:** Oregon  
**Photographer:** Liz Carter  
**Date Photographed:** May and June, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**Photo 1 of 14:**

- Photo 1. Front (west) elevation, looking southeast.
- Photo 2. Front (west) and south side elevations.
- Photo 3. South side and rear (east) elevations.
- Photo 4. Rear (east) elevation, with circa 1866 volume at left, circa 1857 portion.
- Photo 5. North end elevation.
- Photo 6. Non-contributing twentieth century garage, east of house.
- Photo 7. Interior of wing, looking southeast from front doorway.
- Photo 8. Fireplace detail.
- Photo 9. Living room/parlor of 1½ story upright volume, with view beyond into bedroom at left.
- Photo 10. View from parlor into wing, with back of fireplace exposed.
- Photo 11. East side upstairs bedroom.
- Photo 12. West side upstairs bedroom.
- Photo 13. View of stairs, looking down from bedrooms.
- Photo 14. Detail view of attic roof structure.

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Willamette Valley, Oregon

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### List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

- Figure 1. USGS topographic vicinity map.
- Figure 2. Location map with Gorman House location indicated.
- Figure 3. Benton County tax map with Gorman House property indicated.
- Figure 4. Site plan of Hannah and Eliza Gorman House property with nominated area boundary indicated.
- Figure 5. First floor plan of Gorman House.
- Figure 6. Second floor plan of Gorman House.
- Figure 7. Plat map of Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, Corvallis, Oregon (1854).
- Figure 8. Early map of additions to the City of Corvallis (nd).
- Figure 9. Configuration and dates of purchase of Gorman property.
- Figures 10-15. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Corvallis, Or., 1888, 1890, 1895, 1912, 1927 and 1949.



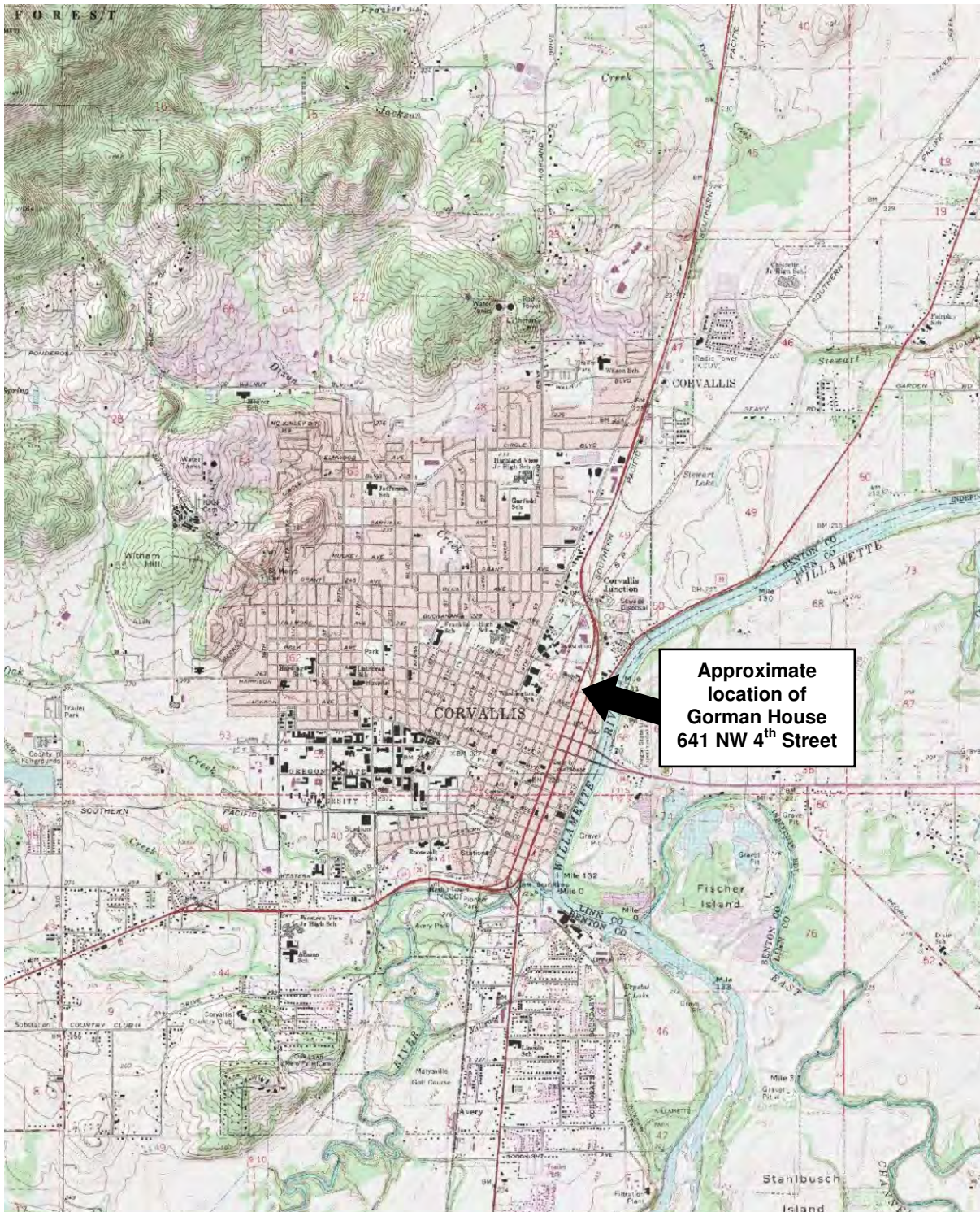
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Figure 1. USGS topographic map with general vicinity of Gorman House indicated.







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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

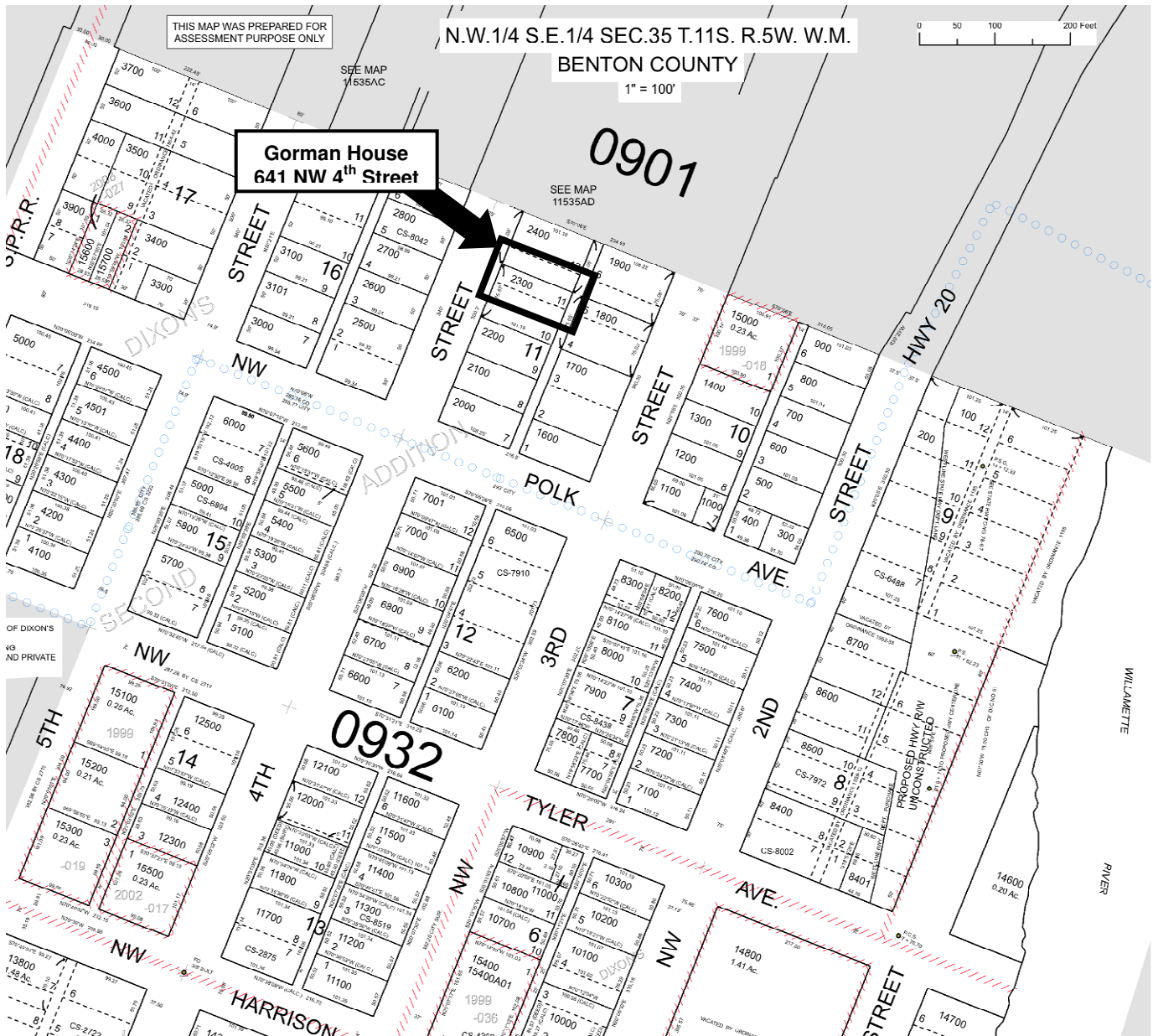
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Figure 3. Benton County tax map with Gorman House property indicated.  
Lat/Long coordinates: 44.570095/-123.258870



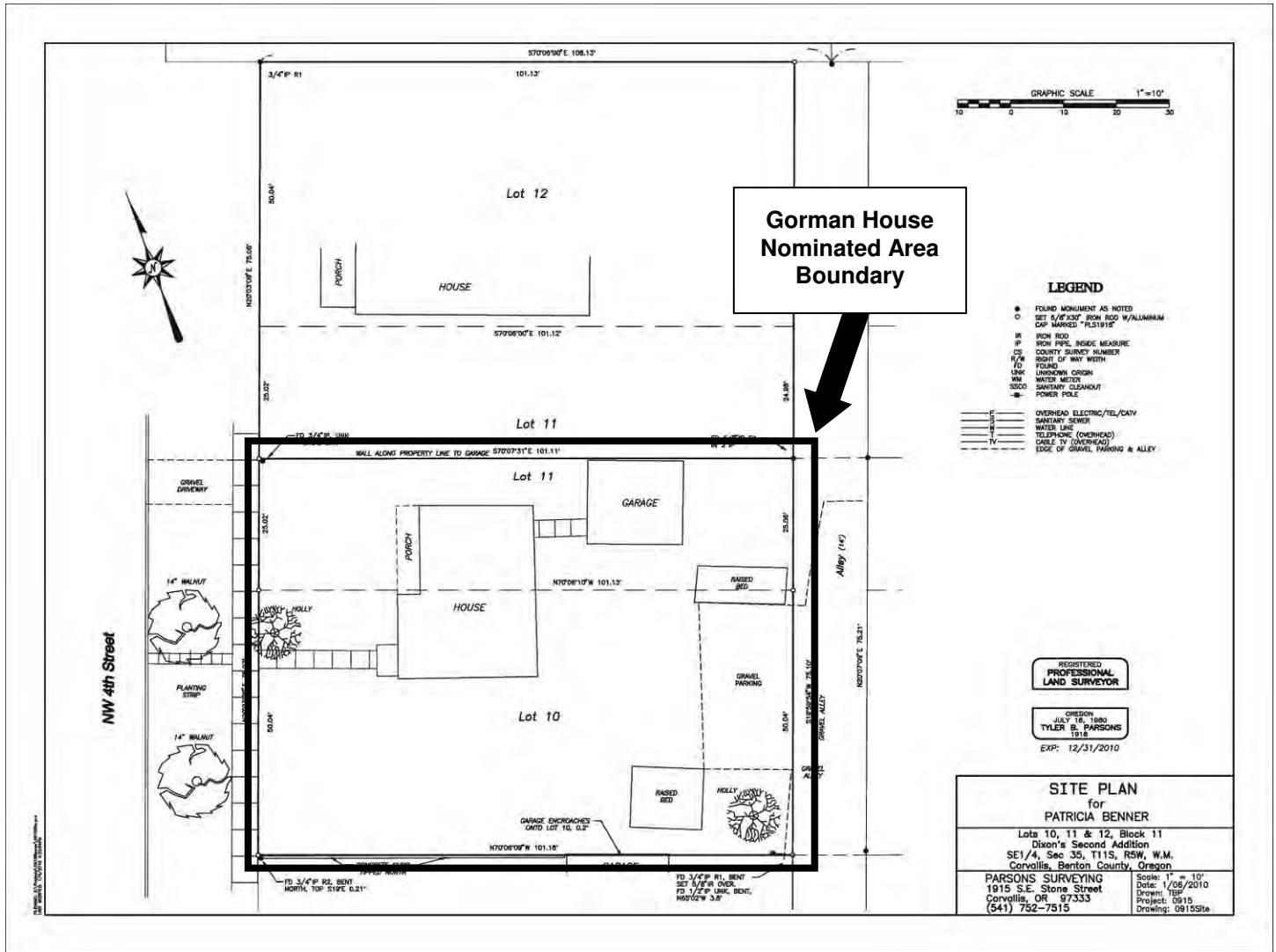
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Figure 4. Site plan of Hannah and Eliza Gorman House property with nominated area boundary indicated.



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National Park Service

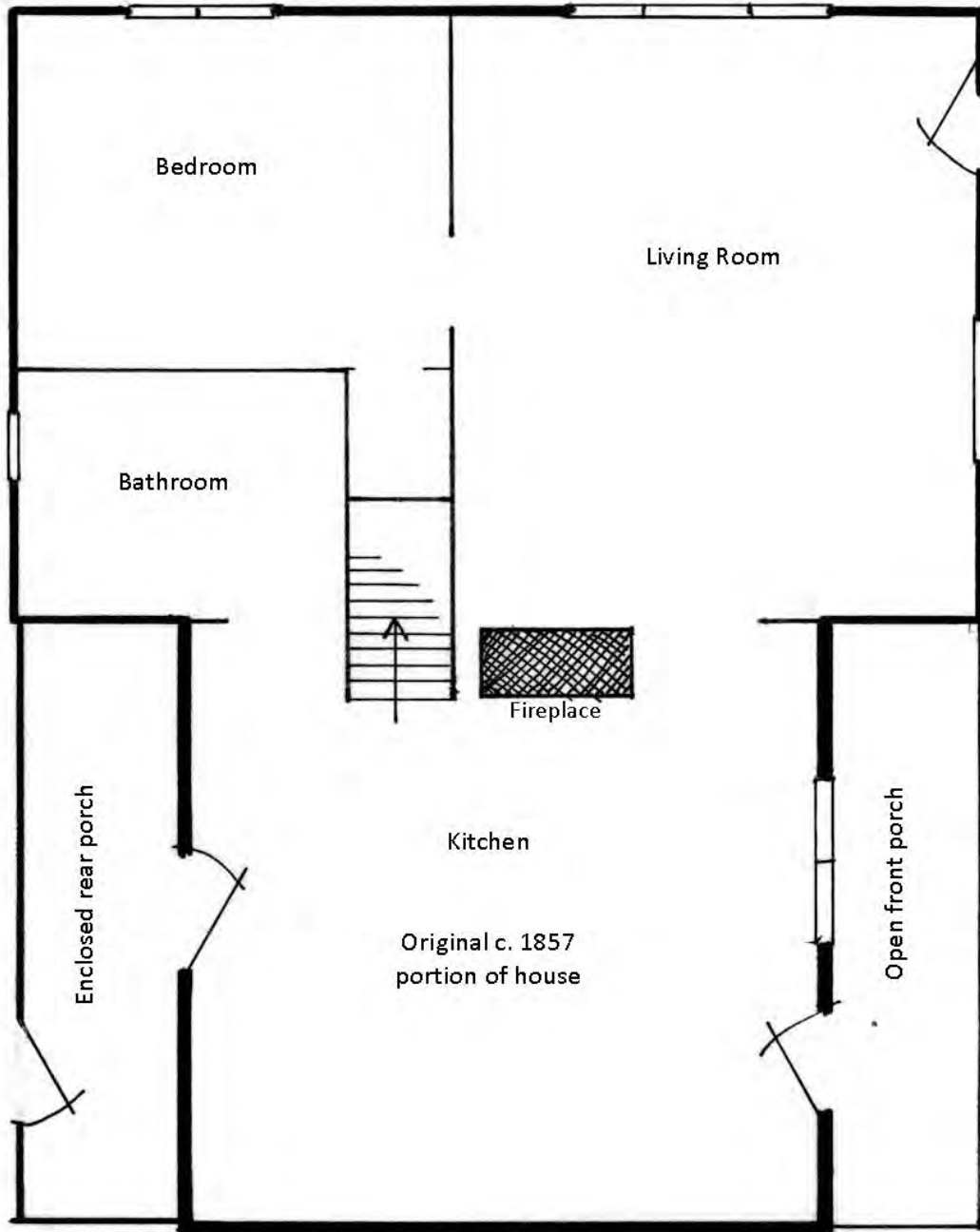
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Figure 5. First floor plan of Gorman House.



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Figure 6. Second floor plan of Gorman House.

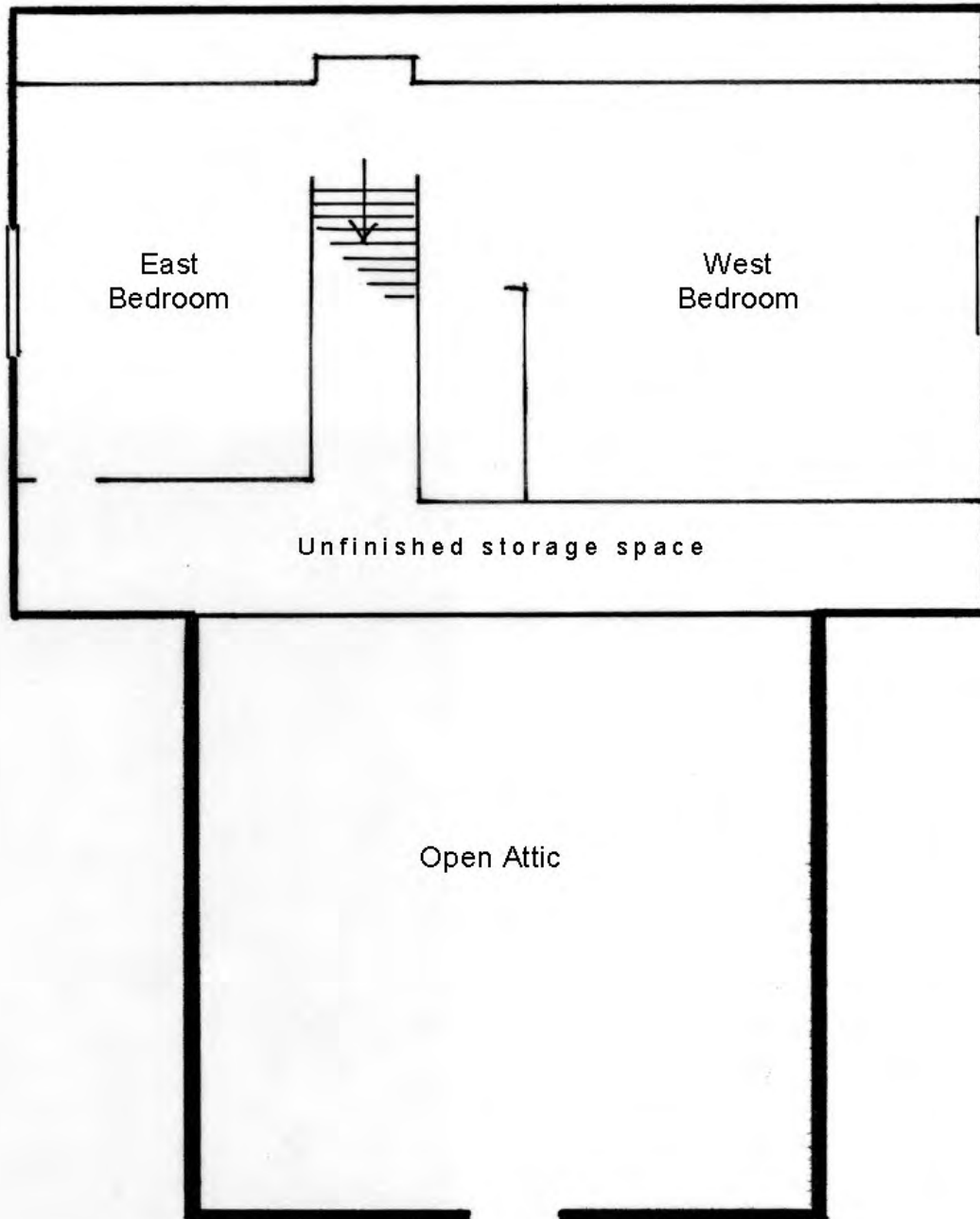


Figure 7. Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Corvallis plat map with

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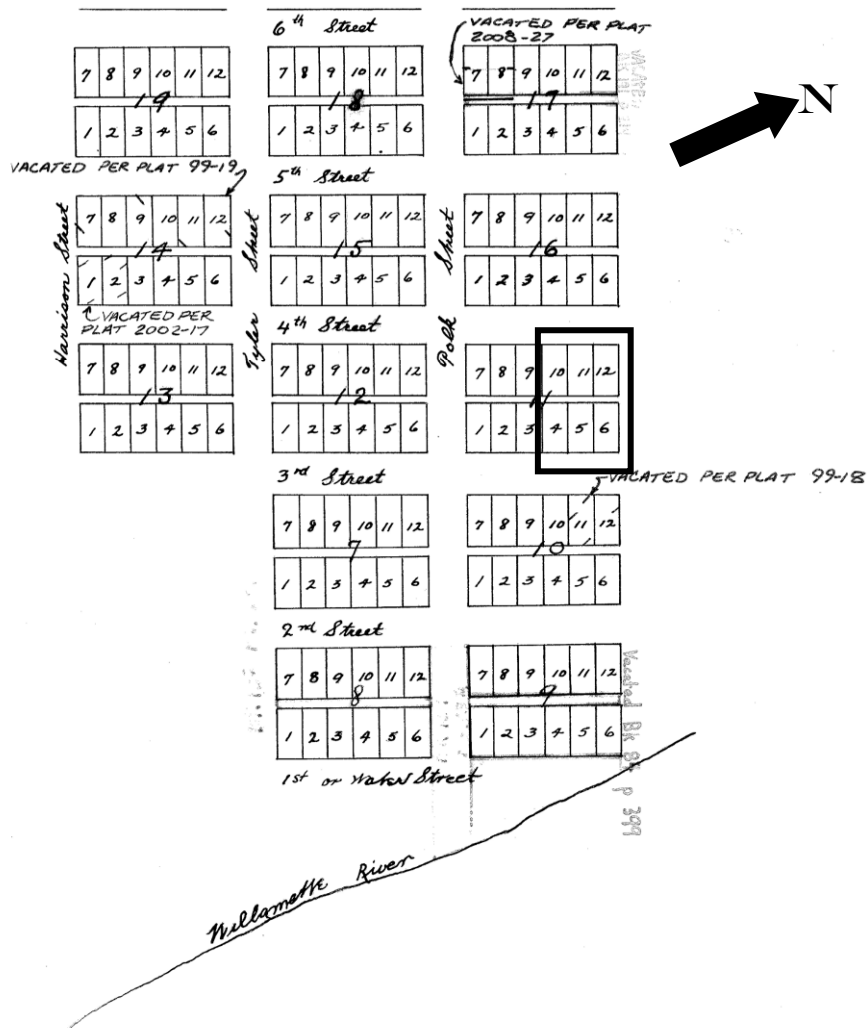
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the Gorman's property (Lots 5, 10, 11 and 12 of Block 11) indicated.

*Dixon's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to the town of  
Corvallis (formerly Marysville)*

*All the Streets are 80 feet wide All the alleys are 14 feet wide*

*All the lots are 50 by 100 feet*





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Figure 8. Early Corvallis plats, with Gorman property indicated.



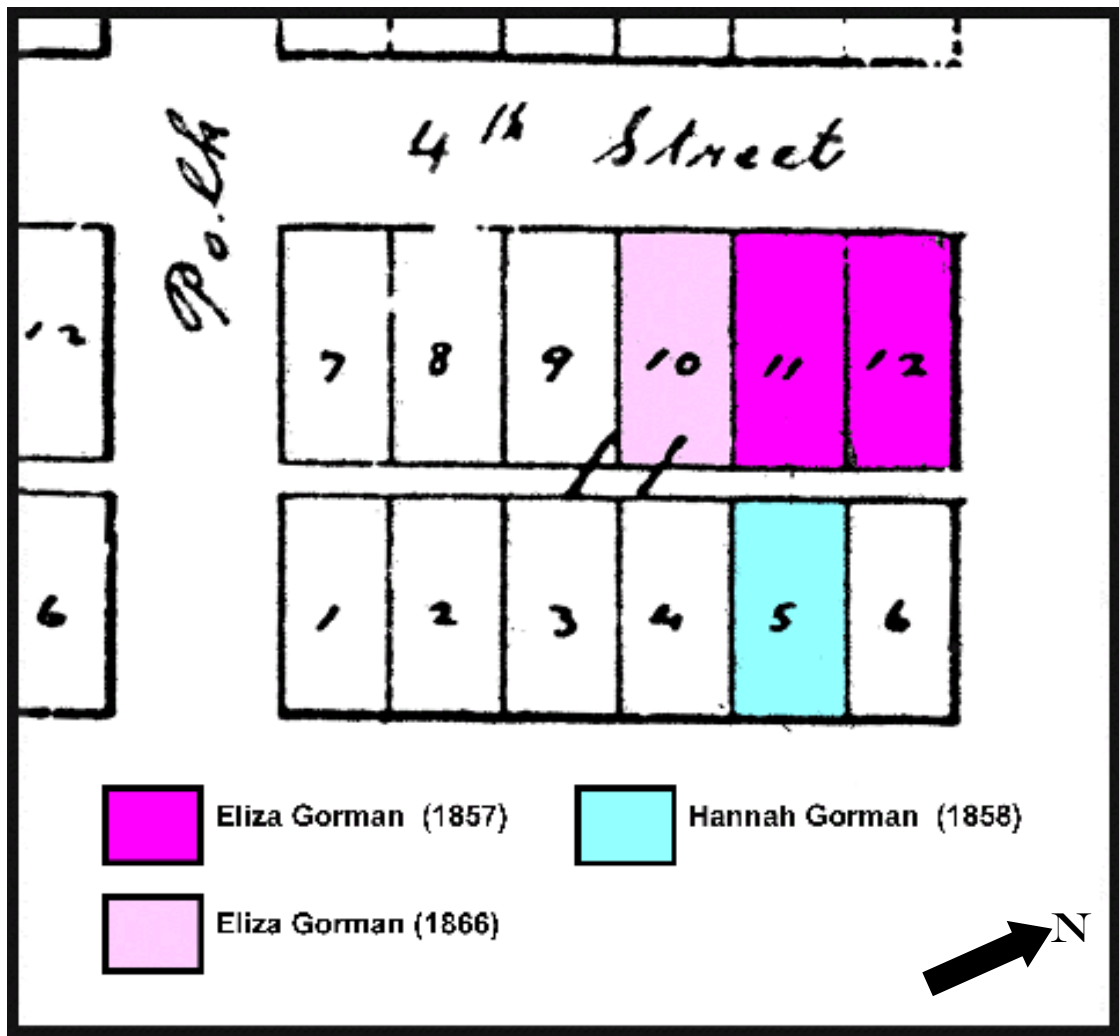
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Figure 9. Configuration and dates of purchase of Gorman property.  
 Lots 11 and 12 were purchased by Eliza Gorman in 1857,  
 Lot 10 was purchased by Hannah Gorman in 1858, and Lot 5 by Eliza in 1866.  
 Courtesy Patricia Benner.





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Figure 10. 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with Gorman House indicated.

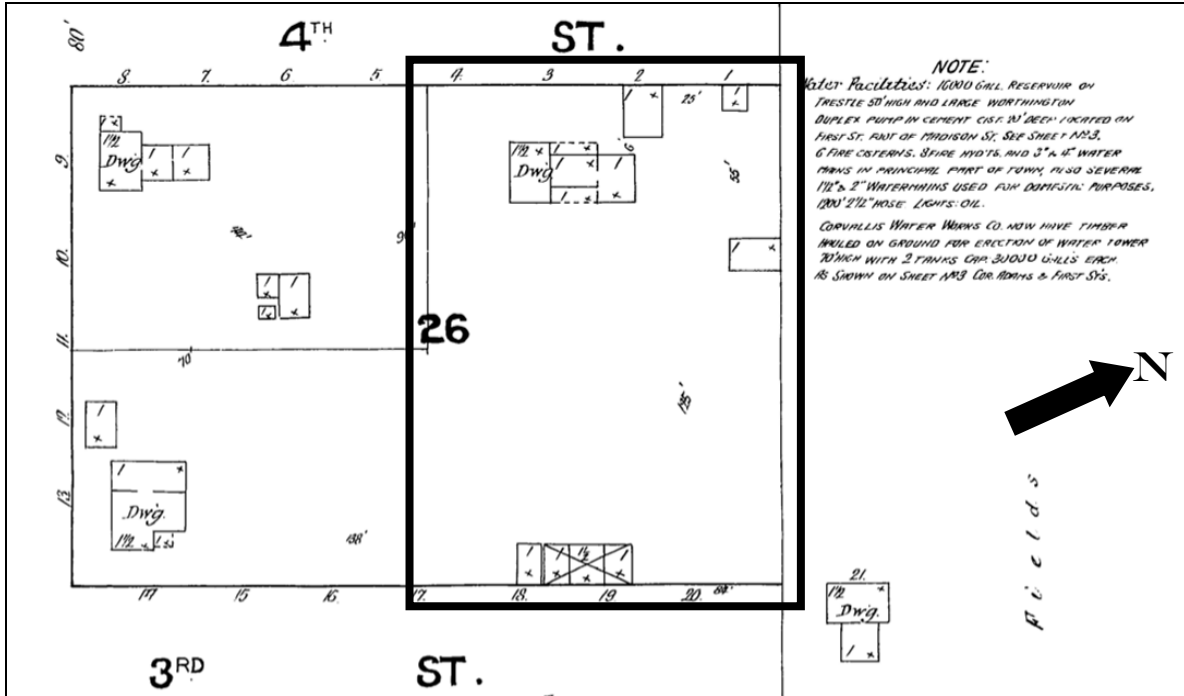
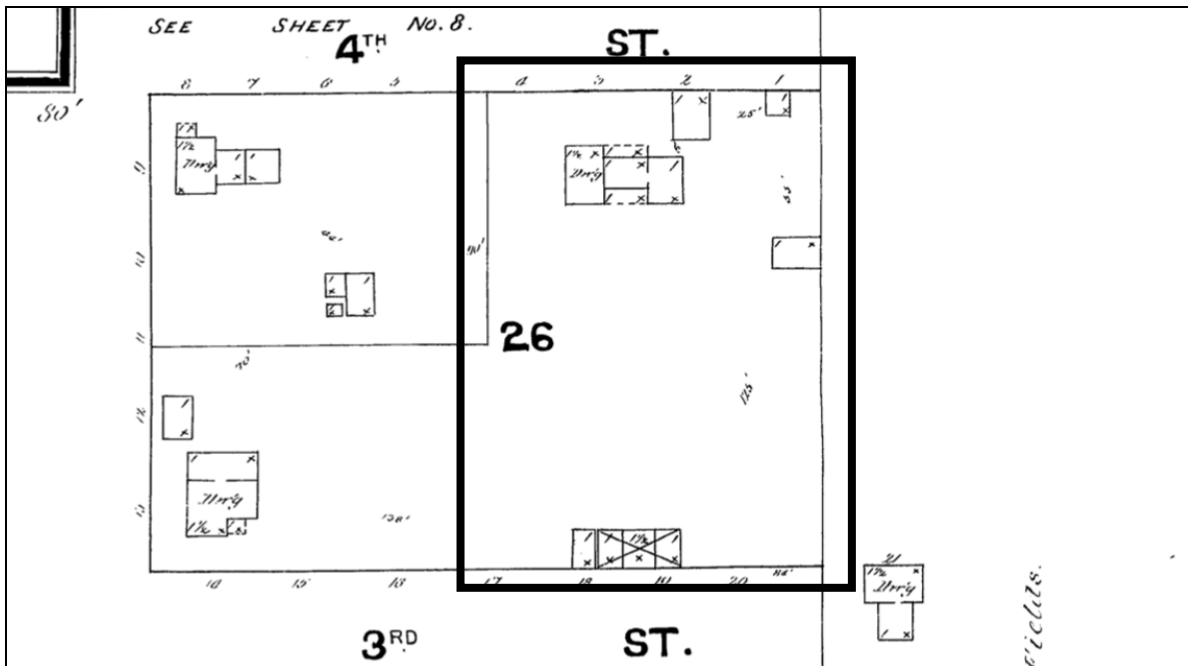


Figure 11. 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with Gorman House indicated.



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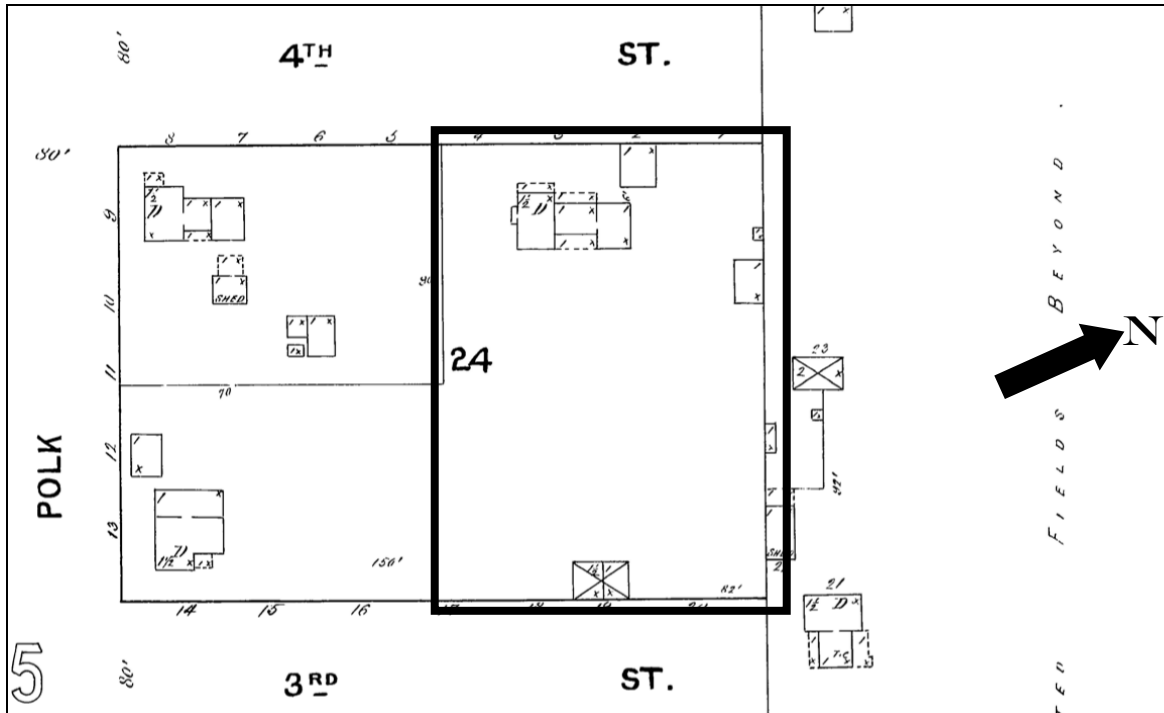
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Figure 12. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with Gorman House indicated.



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Figure 13. 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with Gorman House indicated.

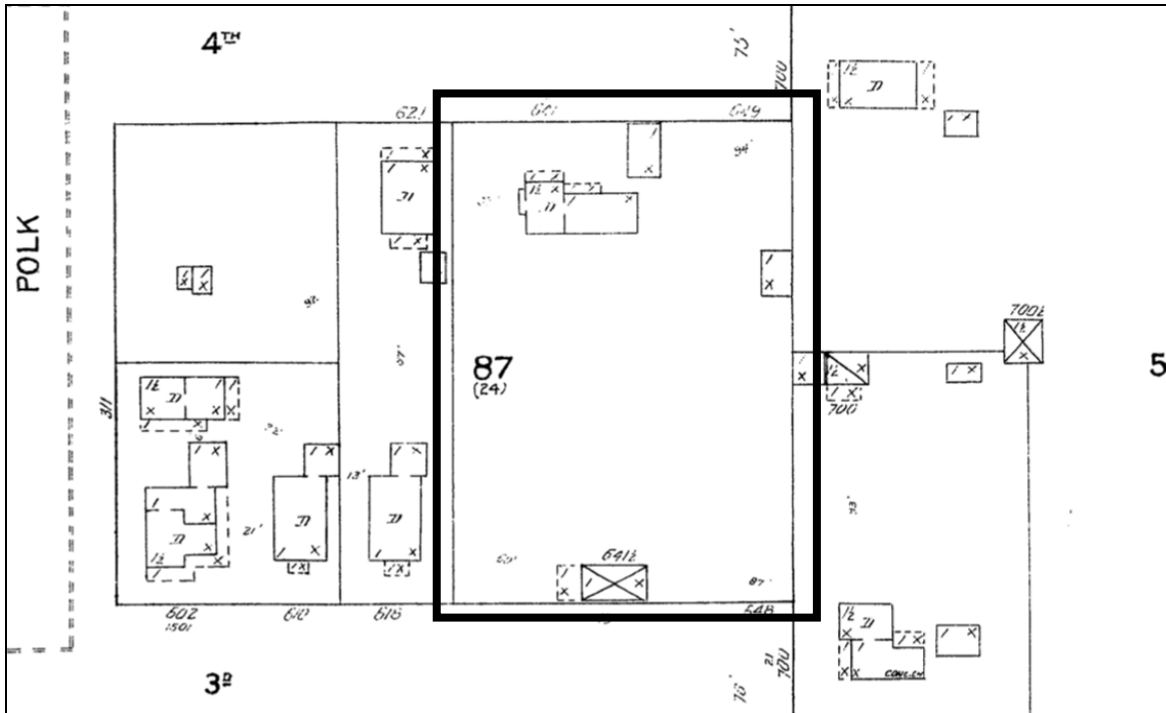
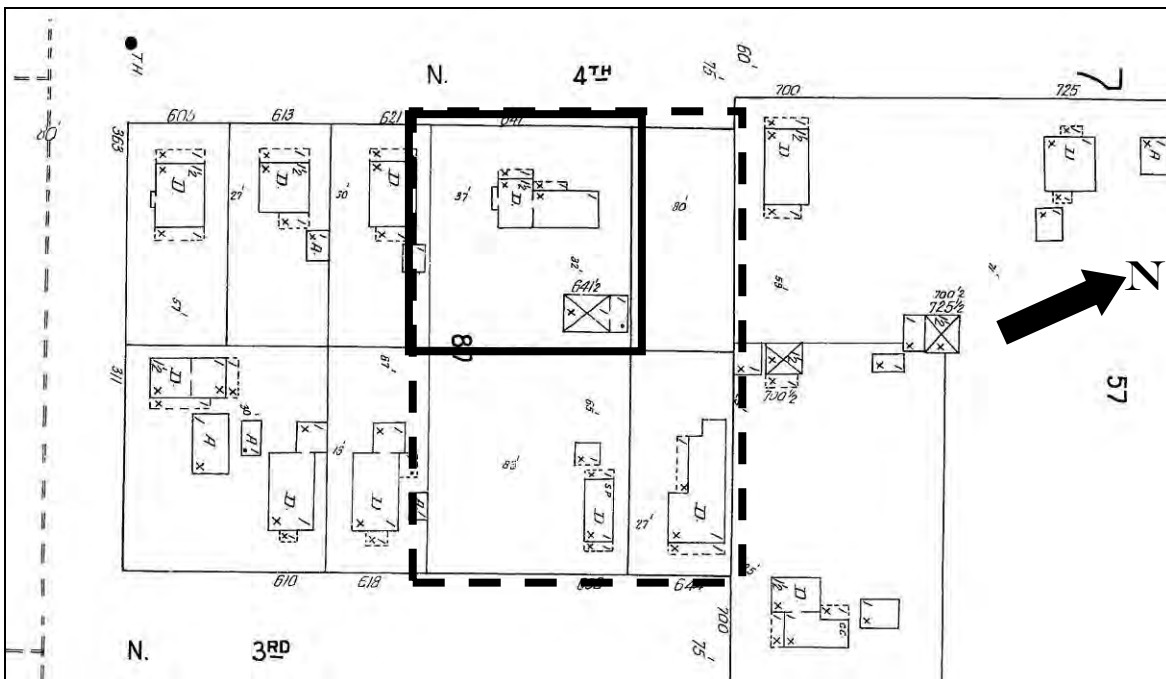


Figure 14. 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with new Gorman House property boundaries indicated in solid black; approximate historic (larger) property boundary in dotted black.



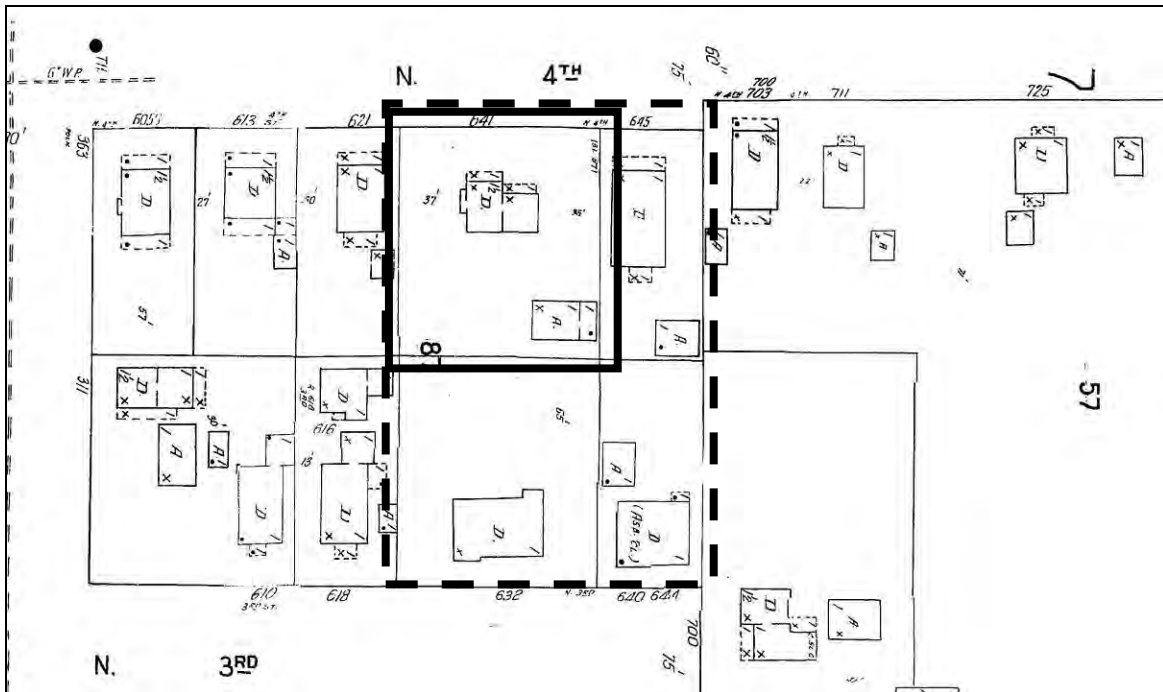
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Figure 15. 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance map with new Gorman House property boundaries indicated in solid black; approximate historic (larger) property boundary in dotted black.







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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Gorman, Hannah and Eliza, House

MULTIPLE NAME: Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon MPS

STATE & COUNTY: OREGON, Benton

DATE RECEIVED: 1/09/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/24/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000045

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/24/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*AOS - exploration / settlement  
Ethnic heritage: Black  
POB c. 1857-1875*

RECOM./CRITERIA A  
REVIEWER [Signature]      DISCIPLINE [Signature]  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 2/24/15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

State Historic Preservation Office

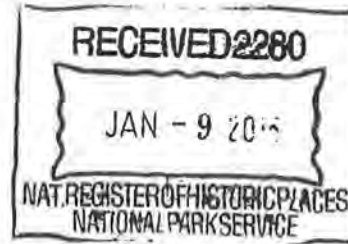
725 Summer St NE, Ste C

Salem, OR 97301-1266

Phone (503) 986-0690

Fax (503) 986-0793

[www.oregonheritage.org](http://www.oregonheritage.org)



January 6, 2015

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmarks Program  
1201 Eye Street NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Mr. Loether:

At the recommendation of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, I hereby nominate the following historic property to the National Register of Historic Places under the auspices of the following Multiple Property Document:

**SETTLEMENT-ERA DWELLINGS, BARNs AND FARM GROUPS OF THE  
WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON, 1841-1865  
MULTIPLE COUNTIES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENT**

**GORMAN, HANNAH & ELIZA, HOUSE  
CORVALLIS, BENTON COUNTY**

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination listed above to the National Register of Historic Places. It also contains the true and correct copy of the Multiple Property Document.

We appreciate your consideration of this nomination and MPD. If questions arise, please contact Diana Painter, Architectural Historian, at (503) 986-0668.

Sincerely,

Roger Roper  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Encl.

