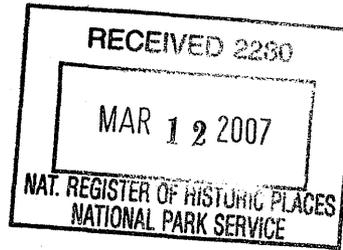


366

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name DeMoss Springs Park

other names/site number DeMoss Springs Memorial Park

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication

city or town DeMoss Springs near Moro vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Sherman code 055 zip code 97039

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 nationally statewide X locally.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO 3-7-07 Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper

4/18/2007 Date of Action

DeMoss Springs Park
Name of Property

Near Moro, Sherman Co., OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
3		structures
		objects
4		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/
Outdoor Recreation-Park

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/
Outdoor Recreation-Park
Community Development

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular (bandstand)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Wood frame with V-groove siding
roof: Metal
Other:

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

See continuation sheets.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

DeMoss Springs Park, renamed DeMoss Springs Memorial Park in 1921, is in central Sherman County, Oregon, an agricultural-based region of the state. Dedicated as a park in 1897 by the DeMoss family, who were renown musicians traveling the United States for over 60 years, the grounds have provided respite for travelers and community members for over 110 years. The park is the only county park in Sherman County and is along US Highway 97, a designated scenic byway. The 2.5-acre park was once the center of the small community of DeMoss Springs, a town platted by the DeMoss family. Natural springs and Barnum Creek made the site a ideal location for a community park. The family developed the park and built several structures to improve the park. The DeMoss family maintained the grounds for almost 25 years before donating the park to the county in 1921. After donating the park, however, the DeMoss brothers continued to help care for the grounds and plant new trees in the park until the 1930s. DeMoss Springs Park is a natural refuge in the midst of the surrounding grass covered hill and wheat farms.

SETTING

DeMoss Springs Park is located in North Central Oregon in Sherman County, Oregon about 15 miles southeast of the Columbia River. Many of the approximately 2,000 citizens make their living from dryland wheat farming. Situated in Grass Valley and Barnum Canyons about three miles north of the town of Moro, the park is on the east side of State Highway 97, a scenic highway known as the Journey Through Time Scenic Byway. The park, the only designated county park in Sherman County, is a 2.5-acre irregular parcel of land that is zoned "Exclusive Farmland." DeMoss Springs Lane, north of the park, leads to the DeMoss family cemetery, which is about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles east of Highway 97, and another gravel road directly to the south connects to Monkland Road.

Rolling grasslands, sagebrush hills, and wheat fields surround the park, and an intermittent stream, Barnum Creek, flows through the property in a northeasterly direction. A gravel parking lot is south of the park, and the abandoned grade of the Columbia Southern Railroad borders the property on the east. There are no structures outside the park boundary associated with the community of DeMoss Springs (demolished over the years), with the exception of a farmstead $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile to the south along the Highway 97 and the grain elevators bordering the parking lot. The nominated area does not include the parking lot or the grain elevators.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The park is sited on a relatively flat parcel of land with mature cottonwoods, poplars, locust, Russian olives, and some willow trees planted around the west, north, and east perimeter of the park. The west and northern part of the park is more densely planted and has more mature trees that date from the late 1890s to the early 1900s. George and Henry DeMoss planted many of the trees; the brothers named each tree after a local citizen.¹ Barnum Creek extends along the western edge of the tax lot and flows to the east through the northern portion of the property. A spring and intermittent rivulet (wetland area) near the northeast corner of the park, flows into Barnum Creek. The pump house is near the head of the spring. A large lawn area is in the center part of the park; some smaller trees are planted in this area. Most of the park is irrigated by an underground sprinkler

¹ No historic records or maps were located during the research that identified a tree with a local citizen's name.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

system. A concrete sidewalk, in the center of the park, extends north from the parking lot to Barnum Creek. A post and cable fence defines the south edge of the park from the parking lot.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Bandstand (Contributing Building): Commissioned by Henry and George DeMoss and built during the ownership of Sherman County, the DeMoss Springs bandstand was built by local contractor R.C. Byers in 1924². Measuring 24 ft. (east-west) x 30 ft. (north-south), the bandstand has a front-facing (east) gable roof covered with corrugated metal roofing. Large wooden brackets support the 4 ft. eave overhang on the front (east) façade. Smaller brackets support the 2 ft. rear overhang and exposed rafter tails support the 2 ft. side overhangs. The soffits are covered with bead board. The front (east) of the building is open to the stage area. Arches, at the top corners of the front façade, frame the stage opening.

The exterior of the building is clad with horizontal V-groove wood siding finished with corner boards. The siding covers the 2 in. by 4 in. framing system. Vertical window openings flank the rear entrance door on the west elevation. Two other window openings are located on the north and west facades of the building; the sash and glass have been removed due to vandalism and deterioration. The building has a concrete foundation.

The interior of the bandstand is divided into two main areas; the performance stage and the backstage area. The stage, measuring about 20 ft. (east-west) by 29 ft. (north-south), is a large open area encompassing the eastern portion of the building. A plywood half-wall defines the front of the stage; wooden stairs at the south end lead to a concrete pad in front of the bandstand. The interior walls and ceiling are covered with horizontally and vertically laid bead board. The stage ceiling, built to maximize acoustics, is slightly arched and canted to back. A door in the back (west) wall of the stage leads into a small backstage area. The room is U-shaped; the backstage area along the entire west elevation leads into two dressing rooms on either side of the stage. Doors from dressing rooms lead out into the performance area. At one time, the building had electricity. In fair condition, the building maintains its architectural integrity.

Pump House (Contributing Structure): The small pump house, measuring 6 ft. 2 in. (north-south) by 10 ft. 2 in. (east-west), is located east of the bandstand near a spring. The front-facing (west) gable roof is covered with corrugated metal (original wood shingle underneath), and has wide eave overhangs. Wide vertical planks cover the exterior of the building. A door (on the northern side of the west façade) accesses the interior. The building has a partial concrete foundation. In fair condition, the building most likely dates from the early 1900s.

Basalt Retaining Wall (Contributing Structure): A 3-foot high basalt retaining wall (a contributing structure to the site) defines portions of the west and south edges of the park along Barnum Creek. Some of the wall has been buried over time and other sections are missing due to erosion, flooding, and the installation of a flood control berm along the creek. The most intact portion of the wall is in the southwest corner of the park. This

² Interviews with family members indicate that the building was constructed by the DeMosses in 1919; however, county records indicate an "auditorium" for the Chautauquas was built in 1923. This may have been the bandstand.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

section includes an early entrance gate that is defined by 4-foot high, square rock and concrete pilasters finished with concrete caps. Iron gate hinges on the pilasters are still intact. The stone was quarried nearby and the wall was constructed in 1923 by Sherman County to help confine Barnum Creek.

Bridge Remnants (Contributing Structure): A bridge over Barnum Creek was located northeast of the bandstand; only the concrete piers remain after a flood destroyed the small wooden footbridge measuring 5 ft. x 30 ft. This bridge was built in the 1920s.

SITE AMENITIES (Non-Contributing Features)

Picnic Tables: There are several wooden picnic tables scattered throughout the park.

Swing Set: A swing set, dating most likely from the 1950s, is located in the eastern part of the park. The swing set has sling seats supported by chains, and metal stationary and chained swing bars. The end supports consist of diagonal metal poles.

Lighting: A power pole is located near the shelter in the center of the park. A light on top of the pole illuminates the park at night.

Restroom Foundation: The bridge over Barnum Creek connected the southern portion of the park with the smaller northern area that was originally the site of the 1920s restrooms. Only the board form concrete restroom foundation remains.

Potable Water Shelter: A small structure sheltering a water spigot is southeast of the bandstand. The building has a gable roof (north-south) covered with corrugated metal roofing and is supported by 4 in. x 4 in. posts. A small built-in wooden table with sink and faucet are under the shelter. The structure rests on a concrete pad. The concrete sidewalk from the parking area is directly west of this small structure. This building post-dates the 1960s.

Interpretative Signage: There are two interpretive signs at the entrance to the site at the parking lot. The brass plaque, attached to a boulder near the sidewalk entrance, states: *DeMoss Springs Memorial Park Donated and Dedicated to Sherman County by George DeMoss, Aurelia DeMoss, and Henry S. DeMoss August 12, 1921.* The plaque was placed on the boulder in 1986 honoring the DeMoss family. The second, larger sign is located in the northwest corner of the parking area. The sign gives a history of the DeMoss family along with pictures of the family. The title of the sign states, "Music when soft voices die vibrates in the memory" (Shelley). The sign was installed in the 1990s.

Restroom: A portable toilet is located along the south edge of the park near the rock entrance pillars.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

ALTERATIONS

The majority of the changes to the park have taken place due to deterioration of the buildings and natural life cycle of the trees in the park. These are a few of the known alterations to the site and amenities:

- Although any of the mature trees date to the historic period, new trees have been planted to replace trees that have died. Henry and George planted trees in the park until the early 1930s.
- A building, erected in 1925 by the county to house the DeMoss' stagecoach was demolished around 2000. This was located southwest of the bandstand.
- Restrooms, built in the early 1920s on the north side of Barnum Creek, were demolished and burned circa 2003.
- The footbridge across Barnum Creek was washed away in a flood; only the concrete footings remain.
- Play equipment and picnic tables styles have changed over the years. A merry-go-round was once located where the swing set is currently located. This is evident in a 1916 photograph.
- The main entrance to the park has changed from western side of the south boundary to the center of the south edge of the park.
- Older bandstand platform removed; unknown date.
- Shelter for potable water station built after the 1960s.
- Sidewalk installed 1978.

FUTURE PROJECTS

In 2005, Sherman County received a Transportation Enhancement Grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for enhancement of DeMoss Springs Memorial Park. Many people traveling the scenic highway visit the park, the only county park facility in Sherman County. Travelers with motor homes, campers, autos, as well as trucker and ranchers hauling horses, use the park as a rest stop.

Phase I of the enhancement grant project includes installing a new potable water system (the historic pump house will remain), paving or re-grading the parking lot (not in the nominated area), installing new restrooms and pump house (not in the nominated area), and adding a horse corral to the side of the parking lot (not in the nominated area). This work is scheduled for implementation in 2006 and 2007. ODOT is aware of the historic significance of the property and is taking into consideration the impact of the new improvements.

Phase II of the project, dependent on another ODOT grant, includes funding for the restoration of the rock wall, bandstand and pump house, and reconstruction of the bridge over Barnum Creek.

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).

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- 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.

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance
1897-1933

Significant Dates
1897
1921

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
James, Henry, George, & Lizzie DeMoss

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

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder
Bayer, Builder of the bandstand
Henry and George DeMoss, Park

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) 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

- Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University: PSU and U of O Archives
 - Other:
- Name of repository: Sherman Co. Historical Museum

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The DeMoss Springs Park, in rural north-central Sherman County, Oregon, is locally significant under Criterion B for its association with James, Henry, George, and Lizzie DeMoss, members of the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards, one of Oregon's premiere traveling musical groups in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The themes of Recreation/Entertainment, and the Performing Arts are represented by the DeMoss family's 60-year musical career and commitment to their art. The family brought their music into the lives of thousands of people, playing in a variety of venues from remote mining camps to urban opera houses. In 1883, the DeMoss family settled on land in present-day Sherman County in an area known as Grass Valley. Between rigorous touring schedules, the DeMosses developed a townsite and park on their land that became known as DeMoss Springs. People from all over the region came to DeMoss Springs Park for celebrations, picnics, and musical performances. The park, still in use today, is a lasting reminder of the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards who through their faith and love of music were committed to bringing the arts into peoples' lives.

In 1872, the family began their career as traveling musicians in Eastern Oregon. Patriarch James DeMoss was a United Brethren minister who came to Oregon as a missionary in 1862 with his wife Elizabeth. After gaining recognition for teaching music, James and Elizabeth DeMoss took their music on the road, entertaining people and carrying out the word of the gospel in song. As soon as the children were old enough, they played with their parents to the enjoyment of everyone. Diaries chronicle their touring schedule that took them all over the United States. The DeMoss Family Lyric Bards gained national recognition while performing at many of the world's fairs. Members of the family wrote musical compositions, including a song written by George DeMoss entitled "Sweet Oregon," which was sung at the end of every concert; the family did more to promote Oregon and DeMoss Springs than any other group in the state at that time.

While on breaks from touring, the DeMosses continued to develop the community of DeMoss Springs. In the early 1880s, James and his two sons, Henry and George, offered lots to people who would establish a business. The only stipulation was that no alcohol could be served or sold on the property; DeMoss Springs was to be a temperance town in accordance with the family's faith. A post office, church, store, photo gallery, and school were built, and wheat farms were established in the surrounding hills. The family started a newspaper, printed by James DeMoss on his own press.

After the railroad was completed in 1897 from the Columbia River south to DeMoss Springs and Moro, Henry, George, and James officially platted the town of DeMoss Springs. The street names reflected the family's appreciation for the arts; each street was named after a famous poet or composer. The family's livestock brand, a fiddle, was even a symbol of their love of music. The park, at the center of the townsite, was dedicated in 1897. The DeMosses established the park not only to provide a place for the community to recreate, but to protect the natural springs — the water source for the town. Henry and George DeMoss improved the park by planting trees, installing a hand pump for water, and building a band platform and picnic tables. The community and outlying towns used the park for 4th of July celebrations, family gatherings, and traveling performers, including the touring Chautauquas.

The Sherman Highway (Highway 97) was completed in the early 1920s as auto touring became popular. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

DeMosses responded to the new automobile era by promoting DeMoss Springs Park as a resting place along the new roadway. To serve travelers, the family opened a gas station, rented small cabins, and sold sundries. George DeMoss even invented and manufactured a folding tourist bed for the comfort of travelers. In 1921, the DeMoss family donated the park to Sherman County to be used in perpetuity as a park. The county, with the financial backing of the DeMoss brothers, further improved the park by constructing restrooms, a pump house, a bandstand, and a building for the family's touring stagecoach. Although the county owned the park, the family remained active in caring for and improving the park by continuing to plant trees and overseeing the work in the park. The 1930s marks an end to the direct involvement of the DeMoss family with the park and town. Family members died or moved away, the state foreclosed on the family farm, and the band officially quit touring. The park; however, continued to be used for the next 75 years by the community and travelers as a place to rest and recreate. DeMoss Springs Memorial Park is currently the only County Park in Sherman County.

The period of significance spans the time between 1897, the year the park was officially dedicated, to 1933, the year the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards quit touring as a commissioned band after the death of George DeMoss.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

James and Elizabeth DeMoss and the United Brethren Ministry

James DeMoss was born in Greensboro, Indiana on May 15, 1837, to Peter and Elizabeth DeMoss. At the age of five, the DeMoss family moved to Iowa, where James later attended Western College. He studied civil engineering and taught music. By the time he married Elizabeth Bonebrake in 1858, James was a 21 year old ordained United Brethren minister and a gospel singer. Elizabeth, a daughter of a minister born on July 27, 1840, was also a musician, known for her eloquent voice. The two often played together in church; she was a soprano and he a baritone.

A devoted member of the Church of United Brethren of Christ, James' shaped his early life around the principles of the church. The United Brethrens, founded in the late 1700s by settlers of German descent, believed in Christian unity, obedience, discipline, separation from the larger world, and believer's baptism. Worldly vices such as swearing, drinking, and dancing were discouraged, and a life of service and simplicity encouraged. The United Brethren were active in social causes and took a stand against slavery years before the Civil War started¹. In the mid-1800s, the church-sponsored colleges were the first schools to admit women and people of color.

To spread the word of the church, regular "revival" meetings were held in schools, barns, community halls, outside or anywhere people could gather. Circuit riding ministers, mostly farmers, traveled the countryside attracting large groups who came from miles to the revivals. Membership to the church grew rapidly under the leadership of these dedicated circuit-riding ministers. James DeMoss was one of these early ministers who life's work revolved around spreading the word of the gospel particularly through music. James early career in ministry and music coincides with the post-Civil War period when there was a growing public interest in

¹ James DeMoss served as a lead vocal musician in the Union Army during the start of the Civil War.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

listening to instrumental music and traveling bards. In 1863, the DeMosses joined other missionaries traveling to Oregon; the first United Brethren missionaries traveled from Iowa to the Oregon Territory ten years earlier (1853) in an effort to start churches in the west.²

Early Life in Oregon

The DeMoss family traveled from Iowa, west to the Grande Ronde Valley of Eastern Oregon with their children Henry and Louella. The couple entertained wagon train members with their music, and arrived in Baker City in the fall of 1862 after a six-month journey. An extremely cold winter took its toll on their daughter, Louella, who died in the spring of 1863. Later that year, son James Jr. was born in Baker City.

James worked on several projects during his early residency in Oregon. He helped build bridges across the Powder and Grande Ronde rivers, constructed fish traps to catch salmon, operated a toll bridge and stage stop, and established a post office at what would become North Powder, Oregon. During this time, James continued his work as a circuit minister in Oregon. The gold rush in Eastern Oregon and Idaho brought hundreds of miners through the area; the DeMosses various businesses supported the family during this period. James also dabbled in mining before moving to Forest Cove (presently Cove, Oregon) in 1865, where he built a gristmill with his brother William DeMoss. James worked at the mill by day, and conducted revival meetings and taught singing at night. The family made periodic trips to Fort Walla Walla in the Washington Territory and Fort Boise to hold revival meetings, officiate at wedding and funerals, and teach music. Two more children were born during this period; George in 1866 and Lizzie in 1868.

Shortly after Lizzie was born, the family moved to a farm near Walla Walla where James started a music school and worked as a United Brethren circuit minister. The family often accompanied James on his travels, entertaining community members. Tragedy struck the family again while living near Walla Walla when their six-year old son James died of scarlet fever in 1869. That same year, daughter Minnie was born and two years later May was born. Elizabeth DeMoss home-schooled the children; music was a big part of their education. The older children often played at the evangelistic meetings that James officiated.

In 1872, James decided to start a full-time traveling career in music as a way to provide for his family and minister his faith. After hearing the DeMoss family sing, H.R. Hines (Oregon historian) offered DeMoss an organ in exchange for a cow. This act of kindness helped the family's musical career. The DeMosses began their first concert tour at Forest Cove among family and friends. The family received \$25 for the concert, and then traveled to La Grande for their second event. The family continued east to Boise, Idaho, and then to Ogden, Utah where they purchased train tickets to Iowa. For the next 10 years, the DeMosses toured the Midwest, taking time to enroll their older children in music schools. Elizabeth and James both became teachers in the Normal Music School in Des Moines, Iowa. The DeMoss family continued touring all over the United States playing in diverse settings from concert halls to logging camps. The band members stayed true to their faith and never drank alcohol or played at dances.

² The "Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society" was established in 1853 in an effort to further spread the United Brethren doctrine.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Around 1880, the DeMosses made their home in Colorado and continued their rigorous touring schedule. Minnie, the youngest daughter, was especially talented and received rave reviews for her instrumental and vocal skills. In June 1882, the family held a house concert at Buffalo Bill Cody's residence in North Platte, Nebraska. Cody stated:

To the public in general, Prof. J.M. DeMoss and his Family consisting of seven talented musicians, gave a Band concert at my house on the eve of June 21st and I can say that I never listened to a more harmonious and talented Family of musicians, especially his daughter Minnie, who I think is a wonderful child on the cornet. I cheerfully and with pleasure can recommend them to the citizens of every town where they may appear.

The DeMoss family wrote most of their own music, and played a variety of string and brass instruments. They assembled several bands including the Violin Band (violins and cellos) and Cornet band (cornets, baritone horns, a trombone, and bass horn). During this period, the band was known as the Lyric Bards of Oregon. During a San Francisco tour and homesick for Oregon, Henry DeMoss wrote *SWEET OREGON*. The song became one of their favorite songs, which the band played at the end of every concert throughout the United States and Europe. Henry DeMoss, a prolific composer, often composed as he traveled from one concert to another. The band stayed true to their United Brethren roots, playing inspirational songs, many of them original compositions.

The "Homestead" Years at DeMoss Springs

In 1883, the family came back to Oregon and decided to establish a permanent home. After hearing about the natural springs in an area in North Central Oregon know as Grass Valley, later part of Sherman County, Elizabeth DeMoss convinced her husband not to move to San Francisco where he had secured a job as a proofreader for a music publishing house. James writes in his journal of the decision;

My wife and family are tired of a city life. For eleven years, I have been living in cities preaching the gospel, teaching music, and taking trips or tours every season concerting. Now this beautiful prairie land was vacant and Henry is now 23 years old. He and I could take a homestead of 160 acres. The family all wanted to stop, but I had been reared up on a farm and had quite a farming life to preach. I, therefore, opposed the land proposition and wanted to go as far as we could with our teams and then sell out and go on to San Francisco, California..... With the influence of Elizabeth, which was considerable, and the entire citizens of Grass Valley, I was persuaded to abandon the idea of ever living in California, and to locate a home near the Badger Post Office..... Henry and I went to The Dalles Land office and homesteaded our claims of 160 acres each.³

James and Henry purchased land from Pierre Couture and also claimed government land. The area was originally called Badger and Deickmanville after early settlers who established post offices in the area near

³ Elbert Oliver DeMoss. *Sweet Oregon, The DeMoss family Lyric Bards—The West's Favorite Entertainers*. (Eugene: maverick Press, 1995), p. 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Barnum Creek. Early histories cite this location as a resting place for emigrants and soldiers who took advantage of the natural springs, sometimes resting for several days at the present location of the park. An 1862 General Land Surveyor's map shows a road entitled "Road from John Day's River to Tigh Valley" extended across what would become the settlement of DeMoss Springs. This was an early route across the state. "Water packers" would travel to the springs and collect water for use at their ranches and homes, and to sell to other people and businesses.

The DeMosses proceeded to "prove" their claim by building a plank house for the family with lumber hauled from 17 miles away. It was not an easy time for the DeMosses, as the sheep herders did not want grazing land fenced. Farmers began raising wheat on the bunchgrass hills, competing with the sheep and cattle ranchers for land. Despite the conflict with the herders, the DeMosses loved their new home. In 1883, the family spent the first Christmas in their house and played local concerts. They often invited people to join them for revivals near their home. James purchased stock for the ranch that included horses, cattle, and a bull; their livestock brand was in the shape of a fiddle and was known as the *Fiddle Brand*, another testament to their commitment to their music.

The DeMoss homestead became known as the community of DeMoss Springs because of these natural springs. The DeMoss family thought the area was an ideal place for a town because it was at the junction of eight county roads (mail and stage routes) and had a good source of water. James DeMoss promoted the townsite by giving away lots to persons who wanted to start businesses with the exception of liquor-related businesses. Thus, DeMoss Springs was a temperance town — no alcohol could be sold on any lot in DeMoss Springs; violators would have to forfeit their property. This was in strict accordance with the United Brethren Church principals. Some of the early settlers did not want to abide by this stipulation but James' steadfast resolve convinced business owners to stay and start non-alcohol related establishments.

The family continued to tour in Oregon and Washington over the next few years despite the health problems of Elizabeth and daughter May. In the summer of 1886, the family once again began touring, playing in southern Oregon and northern California. In August of that year, their fourteen-year old daughter May died of typhoid fever while in Hornbrook, California. After burying May, the family continued touring southern Oregon. In December of the same year, Elizabeth DeMoss passed away; the death of her daughter took a toll on her already fragile health. The family once again resumed their tour after burying Elizabeth near Roseburg, Oregon. The family did not return to the DeMoss Springs home until the fall of 1887. The younger children, Minnie and Lizzie, attended school at DeMoss Springs, and the boys worked on composing new music and practicing on their many instruments. The 16th tour of the Lyric Bards began in April 1888. At this time, the DeMoss family played 31 different instruments and had six different bands: the Violin Band, Cornet Band, Mandolin Band, Ocarina Band, Chinese Gnee Sine Band, and the Martial Band.

The settlement of DeMoss Springs gradually grew as new residents built homes and businesses in the town. By 1889, there were about 39 residents, a general merchandise store and photo gallery, barbershop, blacksmith shop, a wagon-maker, feed stable, slaughterhouse (nearby), and a United Brethren Church. The DeMosses,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

besides teaching music to the local citizens, built a hotel. Henry DeMoss stated in a January 1, 1889 *The Dalles Times-Mountaineer*:

We claim to have the healthiest location for a large city in the entire Grass Valley country, because of the rolling hills near by furnishing an elevation in almost every direction where reservoirs may be built and the beautiful waters carried from the many springs and conducted by pipes into every building whose owners may desire to have such.

In 1888, the DeMoss family set aside land for a cemetery called the Echo Cliff Cemetery. The cemetery was northeast of town and was sited on one of Elizabeth DeMoss' favorite resting places where she would often sing into the surrounding canyons. The people of DeMoss Springs had great hopes for a thriving community. Plans were also made to build a United Brethren Church Seminary such as the one established in Philomath, Oregon. Articles of incorporation were filed in 1887 for the DeMoss Springs Seminary School with 13 members, and the school opened under the direction of Miss A.A. Coffin. Although the college was never fully realized, a school at DeMoss Springs was established to teach the local children.

The Tours Continue: The World Fair and Europe

The family continued to tour the United States in 1889; that same year Sherman County separated from Wasco County and became a new county with a population of 1,400.⁴ In December of that year, James DeMoss married Emma Shatto in Des Moines Iowa.⁵ The couple had two children, John and Ruth. James gradually became more active in managing the band than playing. The four remaining children from the first union, Henry, George, Lizzie, and Minnie, entertained the crowds that gathered for their concerts. The band traveled the eastern part of the state in 1890-91, and set up residency in Philadelphia to accommodate their touring schedule. In 1891, the family published a songbook with 126 songs; 74 of the compositions were written by the family members.

In 1893, the DeMoss family quit their touring to play at the Columbian Exposition at the Chicago World Fair. The band was nominated by Senator Mitchell in Washington D.C. to represent Oregon at the World's Congress of Musicians at the fair. The band played daily for thousand of visitors, and logged 520 engagements at the fair from May to November, 1893. The bards wrote songs for every state, which were played at the different state day celebrations during the fair (published in the *Columbian Souvenir Songs*). Although all the family members composed music, Henry DeMoss was the most prolific composer and did a lot of writing for the family.

The family continued to tour the East Coast, and in June 1895 they made their first trip overseas, traveling by sea to London where they promptly signed up for music lessons at the Royal Academy of Music. George DeMoss, the free spirit of the band, stated that the girls practiced from four to eight hours a day but he "couldn't stand that, from two to six hours does me up."⁶ He added, "Women are smarter than men anyway, so I console

⁴ The county was named after Civil War general William Tecumseh Sherman.

⁵ James and Emma had four children together, John, Ruth, Julia, and James.

⁶ DeMoss. *Sweet Oregon*, p. 52.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

myself.” A great honor was bestowed on the family while in Europe; Henry DeMoss was asked to play a private concert for Queen Victoria on her personal cello. The DeMoss Family Lyric Bards traveled Europe and amazed audiences by playing 41 different instruments. While in Europe, a fight for a permanent location of the Sherman County seat ensued; DeMoss Springs lost to Moro by four votes thus assuring more development for the town of Moro. The DeMoss’ returned to the United States and DeMoss Springs at the end of 1895.

Minnie DeMoss married long-time family friend Martin Cochran in September 1896. The family continued their tour of Oregon and California. On December first of that year, Minnie died suddenly of an allergic reaction to poison oak. She died four days before her 27th birthday. George remembered his sister as a poet, composer, vocalist, and instrumentalist who started with the band at the age of two. Despite another family tragedy, the band continued on.

In 1897, the DeMoss Lyric Bards added two new band members, long-time DeMoss friends, Aurelia and P. Waldo Davis. The band purchased a stagecoach, built as a scenic touring vehicle on a stage line for well-known railroad developer Ben Holiday. The stagecoach became known throughout the United States as it passed through communities. Residents lined the streets as the coach passed by with the riders singing “Sweet Oregon.” By late summer of 1897, the band was back in DeMoss Springs. This same year, the Columbia Southern Railway was completed from the town of Biggs on the Columbia River south through Wasco, DeMoss Springs, and Moro. The line was completed further south to Shaniko in 1901. The new railroad stimulated the economy of Sherman County. Sheep and wheat were shipped by short line to the main line of the OWR&N Railway along the Columbia River. The county’s population almost doubled from 1,792 in 1890 to 3,479 by 1900.

THE TOWN OF DEMOSS SPRINGS AND PARK

The Town Plat

The Columbia Southern Railroad brought new opportunities for the rancher and wheat farmers in the area. Recognizing an opportunity to capture the local wheat trade on the new railroad, George, Henry, and James DeMoss officially platted the 80-acre townsite of DeMoss Springs in 1897; the plat was filed with Wasco County on January 22, 1898.

The new town plat was organized in a grid pattern: the streets extending east-west were named for famous musicians: Hayden, Handel, Beethoven, Bradbury, Schuman, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and Haynes; and the north-south streets honored renowned poets: Byron, Tennyson, Longfellow, Milton, Shakespeare, Whittier, Burns, Moore, and Poe. The town plat showed three reservoirs at the north, east and west extent of the town, and two parks. The railroad tracks extended diagonally through the town.

DeMoss Springs soon became one of the shipping points on the Columbia Southern Railroad as thousands of sacks of wheat were sent from warehouses that lined the tracks. The towns of Moro and DeMoss Springs often competed against one another since they were only a few miles apart. The new Sherman County Courthouse was completed in 1899, and gave more permanence to the county seat of Moro; another disadvantage for the development of DeMoss Springs besides its reputation as a temperance town.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

After the five-acre park was formally dedicated in 1897, Henry and George worked on improving the grounds. The brothers planted poplar trees to create a windbreak around the park and named the trees after friends and local citizens such as the Eaton, McNab, Barnum, Waldo, Wood, French, Fulton, and Martin families. The tree names helped Henry and George keep track of how the trees were doing (the brothers planted trees until 1933). The brothers also built a plank bandstand (not the extant bandstand) and a gazebo that George referred to as his summer home. The natural spring and stream extending through the park made it an ideal gathering place, especially during the hot summer months. The brothers' other reasons for setting aside the parkland was to guard the water source for the town; the natural spring on the land. A hand pump was later added near the springs to be used by community members.⁷ An advertisement appeared around the turn of the 20th century, promoting the town of DeMoss Springs;

A FEW FACTS: De Moss Springs is located on a prairied plateau, in the north central portion of Oregon. Cereals grow in abundant quantities. 191,000 bushels of WHEAT shipped from our station last year. Fruits of exquisite flavor making this the natural commercial center of Sherman Co. Our Townsite is laid out with small parks to protect the springs of water. Beautiful snow-capped peaks can be seen the warmest of summer day. Stock stay out on the range all winter and keep fat. Wild flowers are gathered the first days in Feb. Merchants, Druggists, Blacksmiths, and in fact any tradesmen who desire a LOCATION WILL ADDRESS. DeMoss Brothers, DeMoss Springs, Oregon.

The town continued to grow although not at the rate of nearby towns of Wasco and Moro. The Davis family, the DeMoss' long-time friends, moved to DeMoss Springs with their five children. James DeMoss and Charles Davies attended Western College together in Iowa and both were United Brethren ministers. The DeMoss family began their own publishing company and started a weekly newspaper called the "Flip Flop" and a monthly news magazine called the "Home." The family also printed their playbills, promotional materials, gospel music, and songbooks. While touring James often sang a local favorite, "Boom Sherman County, Boom Sherman County," as a way to promote DeMoss Springs.

While playing more than 30 engagements on their tour at the Omaha Exposition in 1899, Aurelia Davis and George DeMoss were married in Omaha, Nebraska. The following year, Lizzie DeMoss and P. Waldo Davis were married, and in 1901, Henry and Julia Hall were married. Julia joined the bards as a pianist and toured with the band in 1901. The DeMoss family band continued spreading their faith through song and entertaining. Giles French, a well-known newspaper editor and historian, noted that the DeMosses purchased things for the church and donated profits from the concerts to the church.⁸

⁷ George DeMoss installed a hand pump at the park in 1901.

⁸ *Sherman County Observer*, June 26, 1908.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

They were musicians and no one who heard them from schoolhouse or church rostrum will gainsay that. They taught music to numerous sons and daughters of Sherman County settlers. It is an odd note in history that this family should have remained. They had no interest in farming and no adaptation to their stock brand a fiddle. Their enjoyment was to carry the word of God in song and sermon all over the world and they were satisfied with hand claps and handclasps in appreciation, whether there was food in the locker box under the Concord's seat or not.

The Next Thirty-Years: 1900-1933

In the first ten years of the new century, James, Lizzie, Henry, and George were busy promoting the town of DeMoss Springs. The various family members sold town lots to willing buyers. It seemed like many people were drawn to the area that was known for its famous musical family. The DeMoss Family Lyric Bards continued touring for the next thirty years. The band played in St. Louis at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and in 1905, at the Portland Lewis and Clark Exposition. The family always rested between tours at their DeMoss Springs home. George and Aurelia DeMoss remodeled the hotel in DeMoss Springs in 1905, and converted it into a private residence.

The DeMoss children began having families of their own. In 1906, Herschel Davis, son of Lizzie DeMoss and P. Waldo joined the band at the age of four and Elbert DeMoss, George's only son, also joined the band. The 1906 touring season was cut short because of the San Francisco earthquake. The family returned to DeMoss Springs and sponsored the first 4th of July Celebration at DeMoss Springs Park. Orations by locals added to the festive day of music and games. The DeMoss band played for the crowd on the plank bandstand. The celebration became an annual event. In 1908, a merry-go-round was added to the grounds for the enjoyment of the children. A local paper reported that George Miller accomplished a daring feat by sliding down a distance of 300 feet (from a height of 75 feet), holding a slack wire in his teeth. By 1910, the July 4th celebrations had grown as the DeMosses held a fiddle contest while also playing for the event.

Although James DeMoss, the founder of the band, still traveled with the family, he became the advance manager, setting up and booking concerts. The DeMoss family played at the 1908-09 Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle. The early 1910s was an active time for the family mixed with sorrow and joy. James DeMoss, the patriarch, died on January 17, 1912 at his DeMoss Springs home. James DeMoss was buried at the Echo Cliff Cemetery at DeMoss Springs. P. Waldo and Lizzie Davis took over the management of the store at DeMoss Springs. Henry and Julia DeMoss separated, and eventually divorced. The band continued to play locally for events such as at the 1910 Sherman County School Picnic and Graduating Exercises at DeMoss Springs Park, and the July 4, 1911 celebration that drew over 1400 people to the park.

Members of the DeMoss family pursued other interests besides entertaining. George, an amateur designer, invented the DeMoss Tourist Bed that folded down into a suitcase that could be used while traveling. He built a small factory at DeMoss Springs in the fall of 1910 to manufacture the bed. George even hired a manager, W.E. Jewells, to work as an employee in the factory. George also operated the motel and gas station at DeMoss Springs in the early teens, and built tennis courts with his sons in the park.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

The DeMoss Lyric Bards toured the Midwest in 1913-14, giving over 300 concerts. Despite the family's intense schedule, they always made time to go back "home" for the 4th of July celebration at their beloved park. The July 10, 1914 *Sherman County Observer* states that,

The DeMoss Pioneer Picnic Association was formed during the day with more than 100 members, which is yet open for members. No membership fee is charged, dues is a dollar a year. Funds so raised go to provide entertainment, such as a band, orator, etc. Concession rights are retained by the DeMoss family, fund so raised going for park improvements.

The park was frequently used for other events as stated in the July 23, 1915, *Sherman County Observer*,

... [The DeMoss family] for the last several years, cleaned up after from one to three picnic parties each week during the summer months. Not many would consent to having their front yard unceremoniously used by the public under such circumstances and if it was so used undoubtedly a charge would be made, at least sufficient to keep the park clean. DeMoss Brothers at all times are consistent in having the public use the park without thought of collecting a charge.

The 1916 July 4th celebration was full of activities for all ages: a merry-go-round, a shooting gallery, photographic booth, a concert by the DeMoss band, orations, afternoon exercises, a baby show, sports-races, high jump, potato sack race, Mexican rug dance, greased pig race, and fireworks. In 1918, the DeMosses helped bring the Ellison and White Chautauqua to DeMoss Springs Park for a twelve-day engagement; the DeMoss family members were committed in exposing people in small communities to the arts.

The 1920s were busy times for the DeMoss band. Traveling bands, like the DeMoss Lyric Bards, became a popular form of entertainment during the "roaring twenties." The DeMoss family band was in demand all along the eastern seaboard and Canada. George and Henry's children, Elbert and Homer, continued to play with the band, following the footsteps of their gifted parents. Elbert married in 1926, and his wife, MaeBelle, joined the concert circuit. The annual tour took the band all over the country.

As the Depression struck the nation, the DeMoss family performed closer to home, touring the Pacific Northwest and California. Elbert and MaeBell DeMoss moved from DeMoss Springs to Eugene to start the DeMoss school of music. Although Elbert and MaeBell were in Eugene, the couple continued to tour with the band. The bands 59th tour consisted of only five concerts near Eugene. The long touring history of the DeMoss Family Band as it had been known for over 60 years came to an end with the death of George DeMoss on February 20, 1933. On the bands 61st tour, George collapsed backstage after playing "Sweet Oregon" for the last time, and died four days later. He played more than 12,000 concerts during his long career. George was interred at the DeMoss Springs cemetery. This was the last time the DeMoss Family Bards officially toured together.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

By 1936, Sherman County, like much of the nation, was hard hit by the Depression. Henry and Aurelia DeMoss lost the family farm to the state.⁹ Henry DeMoss died a year later on June 1, 1937, in Eugene at his sister Lizzie's house. P. Waldo and Lizzie DeMoss Davis still played at the pioneer picnic even though they resided in Eugene. Lizzie DeMoss Davis died on December 30, 1941, on the eve of World War II, and Aurelia DeMoss, George's wife, died in Eugene in 1952.¹⁰ Some of great-grandchildren of James and Elizabeth DeMoss carry on the family tradition by playing music.

DeMoss Springs Memorial Park & Sherman County

In August 1921, Henry and George DeMoss deeded the family park to Sherman County to care for and develop. The Sherman County records state of the park site,

George G. and Henry S. DeMoss, residing at DeMoss Springs, Oregon desire to make a gift to Sherman County of their beautiful park, together with certain water rights and reservoir sites for the purpose of a permanent memorial to the American Legion of Sherman County and a park for the use of the public, and, Whereas, said park is centrally located and will be adjoining the highway that is to extend through the county, thereby making such a place desirable for the county to own and develop into a real, restful and beauty-spot that the residents, as well as the passers-by, may mingle and commingle and enjoy the shade and the refreshing cool spring water, and, it is fitting and proper that this splendid and generous gift be accepted from the donors herein, the same to be used, developed and maintained for the purposes for which it is intended that the people now living as well as generations yet unborn may enjoy this delightful spot planted and fashioned by nature and to be further beautified and adorned and improved by the County Court in and for said county....

Although the park was donated to the County, the DeMoss family attached certain conditions and terms to the deed that included: 1) the name be designated as the DeMoss Springs Memorial Park; 2) the park should be suitably improved; 3) the county establish rules and regulations that will encourage and foster all things educational, both literary and musical.....and towards the betterment and uplift of the people, making them better, happier, and more content; 4) no dancing or drinking permitted in the park; 5) no charge could be solicited for the use of the park; and 6) the park should be maintained by the county as a park forever (shall revert back to DeMoss heirs if this deed is broken).¹¹

Soon after the park was donated and dedicated as DeMoss Springs Memorial Park, the county began improving the park with the help of the DeMoss family and other citizens. A park committee was formed to oversee the improvements. In 1923, the county constructed a women's restroom, complete with plumbing, and a water system. The same year a rock retaining wall was built along the proposed new highway (Highway 97) to keep the spring freshets from flooding the park. In 1924, the county, along with the financial support of George and Henry DeMoss, hired local carpenter R.C. Byers to build a new bandstand (also referred to as "the auditorium")

⁹ John DeMoss, the son of James' second family, later purchased the farm and continued to live at DeMoss Springs.

¹⁰ Elbert DeMoss (grandson of James) died in 1962, his wife MaeBelle died in 1976, and Hershel died in 1984.

¹¹ Sherman County Deed Book T, p. 42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

in the park.¹² Upon completion at a cost of around \$1,000, the new bandstand had an enclosed stage, concrete foundation, electricity, and dressing rooms (extant). The following year, a men's restroom and bridge over Barnum Creek were erected at the north end of the park.

In 1925, the park board hired a caretaker (W.L. Dillinger) to help maintain the grounds during the summer months. Various civic organizations donated flowers and shrubs to enhance the grounds. A transformer was placed near the park so electricity could be installed in the park. A building was also constructed to house the DeMoss Stage Coach; the DeMoss family donated the lumber for the building. The following year, an irrigation system and pump in the well for drinking water was installed, and playground equipment purchased.

The citizens of Sherman and surrounding counties used the park extensively during the 1920s. The DeMoss family played regularly at the park for various occasions, and people of the community used the grounds for celebrations, birthday parties, graduations, holiday celebrations, and family reunions. The Dalles-California Highway (Sherman Highway-Highway 97) was paved and completed in 1926, bringing more tourists into the area. The DeMoss family started the DeMoss Springs Tourist Park that had cabins for rent and sold gas, confections, and picnic supplies. The tourist park was situated directly west of the park. The park was promoted as having abundant shade for travelers and was only "15 miles from the Columbia River Highway."¹³ Henry and George DeMoss continued to improve the park by planting new trees. In 1930, the northern part of the park was deeded back to the Henry and George DeMoss. This parcel of land included about 3.0 acres and was not developed like the southern park of the park; the remaining parkland was about 2.5 acres.

Throughout the 1930s and WWII, the park continued its use as a community gathering place and the site for various celebrations. On June 2, 1946, the first meeting of the Sherman County Historical Society was held at the park. Giles L. French, local historian, talked about Sherman County history, which was followed by a potluck dinner and afternoon program music. "Sweet Oregon," the DeMoss family's most well-known song, was played as the audience sang along.

Recent Past: DeMoss Springs Memorial Park

Sherman County maintains and cares for DeMoss Springs Memorial Park with the aid of community organizations. The park continues to be used for graduation celebrations, various holidays, and family reunions. Over the years, the restrooms and other buildings were removed because of deterioration, however; many of the trees planted by the DeMoss brothers remain. In 1978, the Lion's Club purchased and installed an irrigation system. Some landscaping was also completed at that time and a sidewalk constructed. In 1986, the park was rededicated and a plaque placed by the Sherman County Historical Society in honor of the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards who brought music into the lives of many people during their long tenure as traveling musicians. Another interpretative sign was added to the park in 1990s.

¹² John Jr. and John Curley DeMoss and Elbert DeMoss corroborate that even though the county owned the park, the DeMoss family remained active in helping to construct the new buildings in the park and maintain the grounds.

¹³ DeMoss. *Sweet Oregon*, p. 124. Advertisement for auto park.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

The Town of DeMoss Springs and Other Associated Buildings

Aside from the use of the park and grain storage facilities, the town of DeMoss Springs declined during the 1930s and 1940s. Highway construction, deterioration, vandalism, and the abandonment of the railroad in 1968 took its toll on the buildings and people living in the community. None of the buildings once associated with the town of DeMoss Springs survived with the exception of the farm of John DeMoss, the son of James DeMoss from his second marriage. The farm is about ½ mile south of the park along the highway; the historic buildings in the complex have been altered over the years. Another group of farm buildings associated with the DeMoss family is northeast of the park about 1.2 miles, near the Echo Cemetery. The DeMoss brothers once owned this farm. The deteriorating buildings in this complex have been altered over the years and do not retain architectural integrity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIVIDUAL DEMOSS FAMILY MEMBERS

Each member of the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards contributed to the success of the touring group. The family members all helped develop of the town of DeMoss Springs and dedicated the park for public use. Four members of the DeMoss family have the strongest association with DeMoss Springs Park and the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards since other family members had passed away before the park was officially dedicated in 1897. These include James DeMoss, the patriarch of the family, sons George and Henry, and the daughter, Lizzie DeMoss Davis.

James DeMoss, 1858-¹⁹¹²1862: James DeMoss, the driving force behind the DeMoss Family, is significant as the founder of the DeMoss Family Lyric Bards and the developer of the townsite and park. Born in Indiana in 1837, James was educated at a United Brethren college, and studied music and science. He became a United Brethren minister and moved to Oregon with his wife as missionaries in 1862. James decided to start touring with his musical family in 1872, as a way to entertain and spread the word of the gospel. He taught his children to play an instrument as soon as they were able. James DeMoss donated land to plat the town of DeMoss Springs and the park that would become known as DeMoss Springs Memorial Park. A minister, musician, and entrepreneur, James was always booking tours or starting new projects. He remained active in the development and promotion of the town of DeMoss Springs and Park, and in the music business until his death in 1912.

Henry DeMoss, 1866-1933: Henry DeMoss, the oldest of the DeMoss children, was born in Iowa in 1866. He studied music from his father and later at schools in Des Moines, Chicago, Cincinnati, and at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His special training was in musical composition and voice. Henry was a prolific composer, writing most of the songs the family sang. In the 1890s, he helped managed the band, setting up concerts and tours. He composed "Sweet Oregon" which was sung at every concert. In 1883, Henry took out the land claim that would later encompass the town of DeMoss Springs. Henry owned half of the land that the town of DeMoss Springs and the park were platted. He along with his brother, George, planted many of the trees in the park and help fund many of the building improvements. Henry enjoyed trying his hand at farming and built a dairy barn in 1927. Henry DeMoss died in 1934 at his sister's house in Eugene.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

George Grant DeMoss, 1866-1933: A talented musician with a gift of playing multiple instruments at one time, George DeMoss started playing with band at age six (born in 1866). He was committed to his music and enjoyed teaching (started teaching at age 12) the area's children. George, the jokester of the family, played the cello, banjo, guitar, and two cornets at one time. He was an entertainer at heart and enjoyed the audience's adulations at each concert. After the death of his father in 1912, George became the driving force behind the touring DeMoss Family Lyric Bards. George helped lay out the town of DeMoss Springs and did his best at promoting the new townsite. George loved the park, and called the gazebo he built in the park his summer home. He planted many of the trees that still shade the grounds, and also helped finance the many of the improvements after his family deeded the park to the county. George died on tour in 1933.

Lizzie DeMoss Davis, 1868-1941: Born in Oregon in 1868, Lizzie DeMoss Davis was the only DeMoss sister to survive until the turn of the 20th century and last of the original DeMoss children to die. She was an accomplished musician who also could play several instruments, but excelled at playing the violin. A stately woman, Lizzie continued to play music with her two brothers after her sisters and mother died. She played with the band until the mid-teens when she retired from touring to care for her family and tend to the family home at DeMoss Springs. Lizzie DeMoss Davis died in Eugene in 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

- An Illustrated History of Central Oregon.* Spokane: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905.
- Burnet, Althea. The Dalles, Oregon. Past resident of the DeMoss Springs area. Phone interview by Sally Donovan. May, 2006.
- DeMoss, Elbert Oliver. Phone interview by Sally Donovan with Elbert DeMoss, great-grandson of James DeMoss, resident of Eugene, OR., June 2006.
- DeMoss, Elbert Oliver. *Sweet Oregon, The DeMoss Family Lyric Bard—The West's Favorite Entertainers.* Bend: Maverick Publications, 1995.
- DeMoss, George G. *55 Years of the Concert Platform: The DeMoss Entertainers.* Booklet about the DeMoss Family Bards. New York: 1928.
- DeMoss, John Jr.. Phone interview by Sally Donovan with John DeMoss Jr., great-grandson of James DeMoss, resident of DeMoss Springs, OR., June 2006.
- DeMoss, John Curley and Vada. Phone interview Bruce Howard with John and Vada DeMoss, grandson of James DeMoss, resident of Moro, OR., June 2006.
- Due, John F. and Giles French, Ed. *Rails to the Mid-Columbia Wheatlands: The Columbia Southern and Great Southern Railroads and the Development of Sherman and Wasco Counties, Oregon.* Washington, D.C. University Press of America, 1979.
- French, Giles. *The Golden Land, A History of Sherman County, Oregon.* Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1958.
- General Land Survey Maps. T1N R17E and T1S R17E. Willamette Meridian, Oregon. 14 December 1861.
- History of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington, Volume II.* Compiled and published by the North Pacific History Company, Portland, OR., 1889.
- Kaseberg, Sherry. Phone and personal interview at Sherman County Historical Society, Moro, OR. May 2006.
- Kaseberg, Sherry. *A Sense of Place: Sherman County, Oregon Place Names,* 2000.
- Metsker Map. Sherman County, Oregon. T1S, R17E. W.M., 1934 edition. Wasco County Library collection, The Dalles, OR.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

McNeal, William H. *A Brief History of Wasco County, Oregon*. The Dalles: Wasco County Pioneers Association, 1950.

“Official Program: Celebration by the DeMoss Springs Pioneer Picnic Association at DeMoss Springs, Oregon.” President, George DeMoss, July 4, 1916.

Oregon Historical Society. Scrapbook No. 166, July 14, 1900 article entitled, “Three Notable Citizens.” Portland, OR.

Oregon Journal. “Musical Oregon Family Begins Road Career when Cow is Traded for Organ.” 5 October 1913, Sec.1, p. 15. Portland, OR.

Oregon Journal. “Impression and Observations of the Journal Man,” by Fred Lockley. 14 November 1938. Portland, OR.

Oregonian. “Talented DeMoss Family Traveled to the Ends of the Earth.” 3, December 1939. Portland, OR. Sherman County Courthouse. Clerks Office, Deeds and Records. Moro, OR.

Sherman County Courthouse. County Court minutes. 20 November 1923; 19 December 1924; 3 December 1925; 4 February 1950.

Sherman County Historical Museum, Moro, OR. Photographic and biographical files.

Sherman County Historical Society Program. “Second Annual Meeting and Picnic, Sunday, 1 June 1947 at DeMoss Springs Park.”

Sherman County Observer. Moro, OR. 26 June, 1908; 20 May 1910; 27 May 1910; 18 November 1910; 23 December 1910; 14 June 1912; 12 July 1912; 10 July 1914; 23 July 1915; and 29 July 1921.

The Dalles Chronicle. “Sherman Re-Dedicates DeMoss Park; Descendants Gather.” 8 July 1986, The Dalles, OR.

The Sunday Oregonian. “They Rang the Bells.” Sunday, 3 December 1939. Portland, OR.

United Methodist Church. “History of the United Methodist Church.” <<http://www.techshopministry.org>>

United States Census Bureau. 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 Sherman County, Oregon censuses.

DeMoss Springs Park
Name of Property

Near Moro, Sherman Co., OR
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	10	681059	5042373
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	10	681139	5042261

3	10	681178	5042388
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	10	681061	5042210

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Donovan / Principal

organization Donovan and Associates date June 2006

street & number 1615 Taylor Street telephone 541-386-6461

city or town Hood River state OR zip code 97031

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Sherman County (contact person -Sherry Kaseberg, County Commissioner)

street & number 500 Court Street (P.O. Box 365) telephone 541-565-3416

city or town Moro state OR zip code 97039

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 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

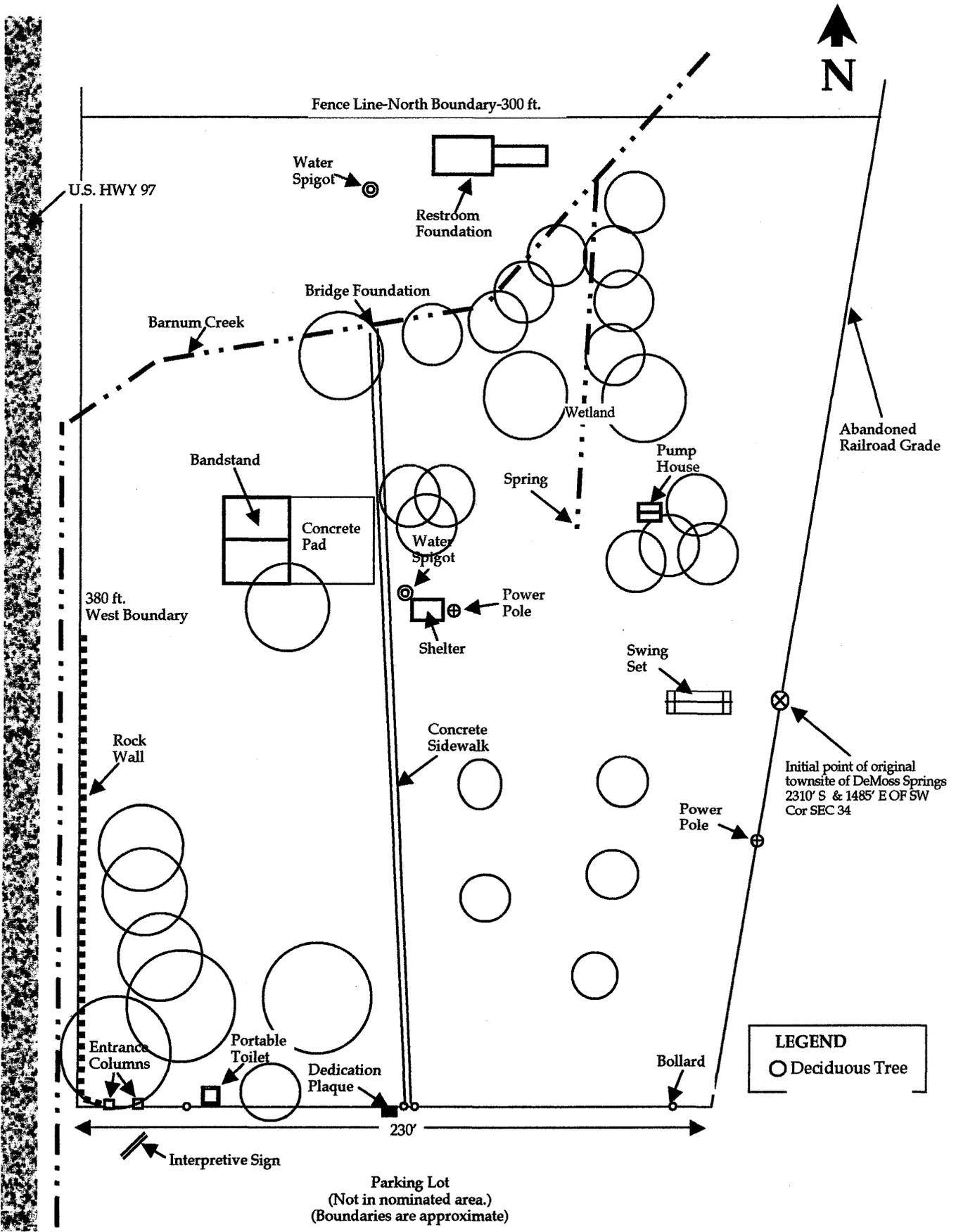
VERBAL DESCRIPTION

Description of nominated area is based on the June 27, 2006, survey of Tax Lot 800. 1S-17 for the NW Corner of Section 3, Township 1S, Range 17E:

Point of beginning is 26.83 ft. along curve C7 south of found 5/8" rebar on Oregon Dept. of Transportation U.S. Highway #97 Right of Way Strip Map as represented on the June 27, 2006, survey. The point of beginning is the northwest corner of Tax Lot 800, thence in a clockwise fashion, 292.53 ft. easterly along existing wire fence at the north boundary of Lot 800, thence southwesterly following a curve 10 ft. west of the centerline of the abandoned O.W.R.R.N. Co. Railroad approximately 350 ft. to the southeast corner of Tax Lot 800, thence continuing southwesterly along the abandoned railroad right of way approximately 30 ft. into Tax Lot 1S-17 1100 (owned by Sherman County) to the southeast corner of the established park, thence westerly approximately 230 ft. along the edge of the gravel parking lot and cable fence of the park to the park's southwest corner marked by a rock wall connected to two rock pillars (the original park entrance), thence northerly approximately 380 ft. along the west boundaries of lots 1100 and 800 to northwest corner of Tax Lot 800, the point of beginning. The park encompasses approximately 2.5 acres

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated area was originally part of a larger parcel of land that included a 5-acre park the DeMoss family laid out in their townsite and later donated to the county. In 1921, the original five-acre park was deeded to the county; only the southern portion of the park remained in park use (the nominated area). In 1930, the north three acres were donated back to the DeMoss family and the county retained southern 2.5 acres of the park.

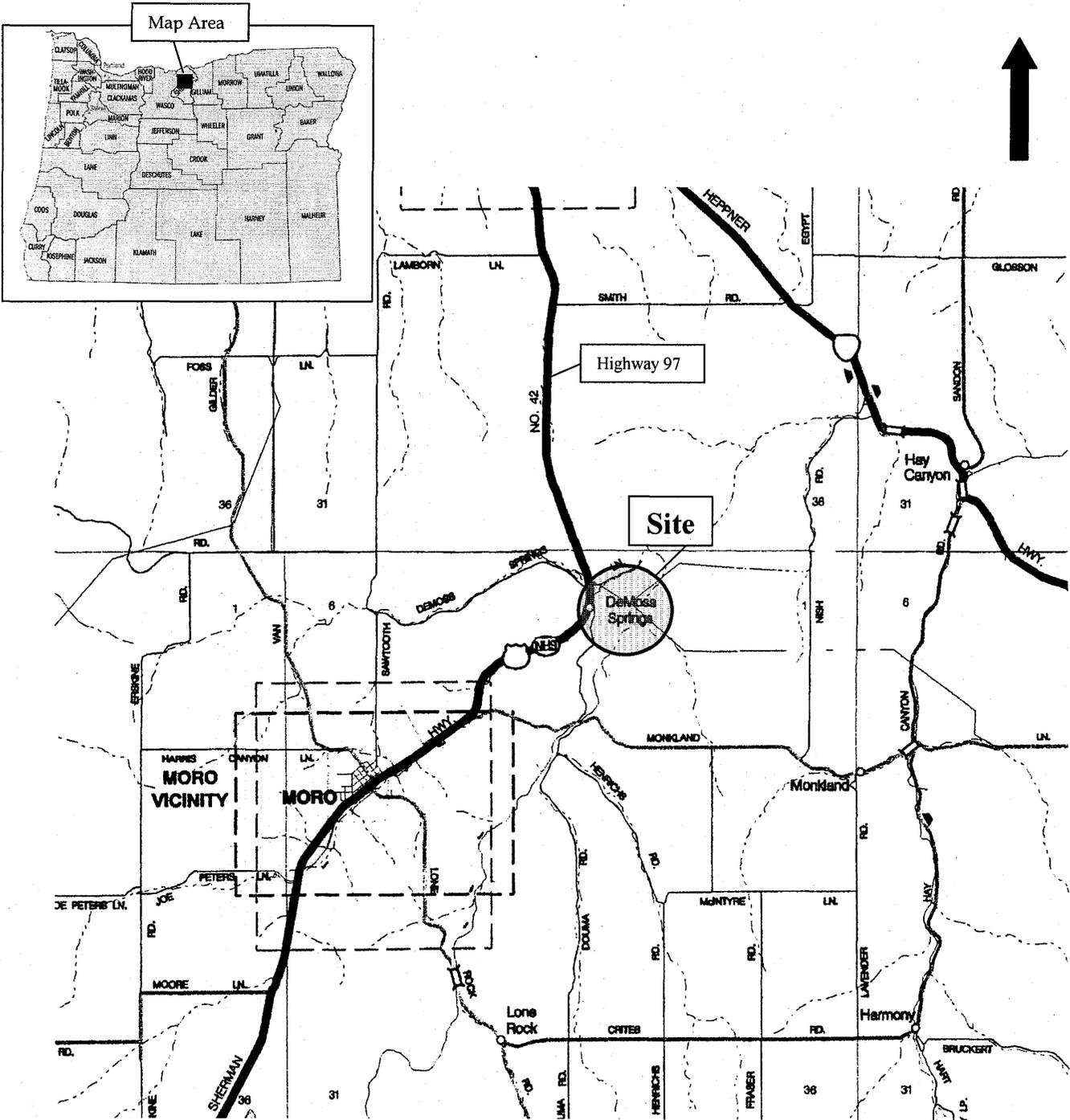


**DEMOSS SPRINGS PARK
SITE MAP**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 1

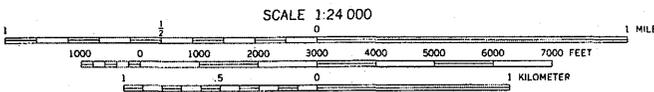
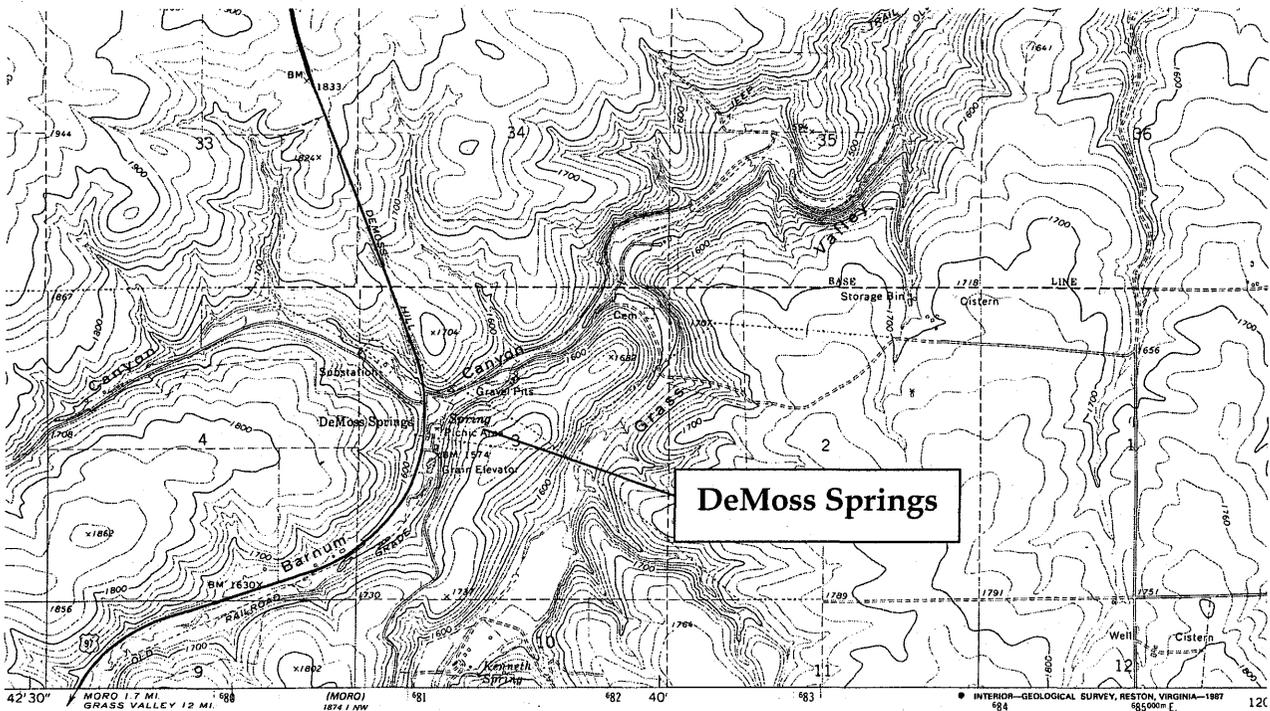


Area Map of DeMoss Springs

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 2



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
○ Interstate Route	□ U. S. Route
	○ State Route



WASCO, OREG.
SW 1/4 WASCO 15' QUADRANGLE
45120-E6-TF-024

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1981 and other sources
This information not field checked. Map edited 1987

1971
PHOTOREVISED 1987

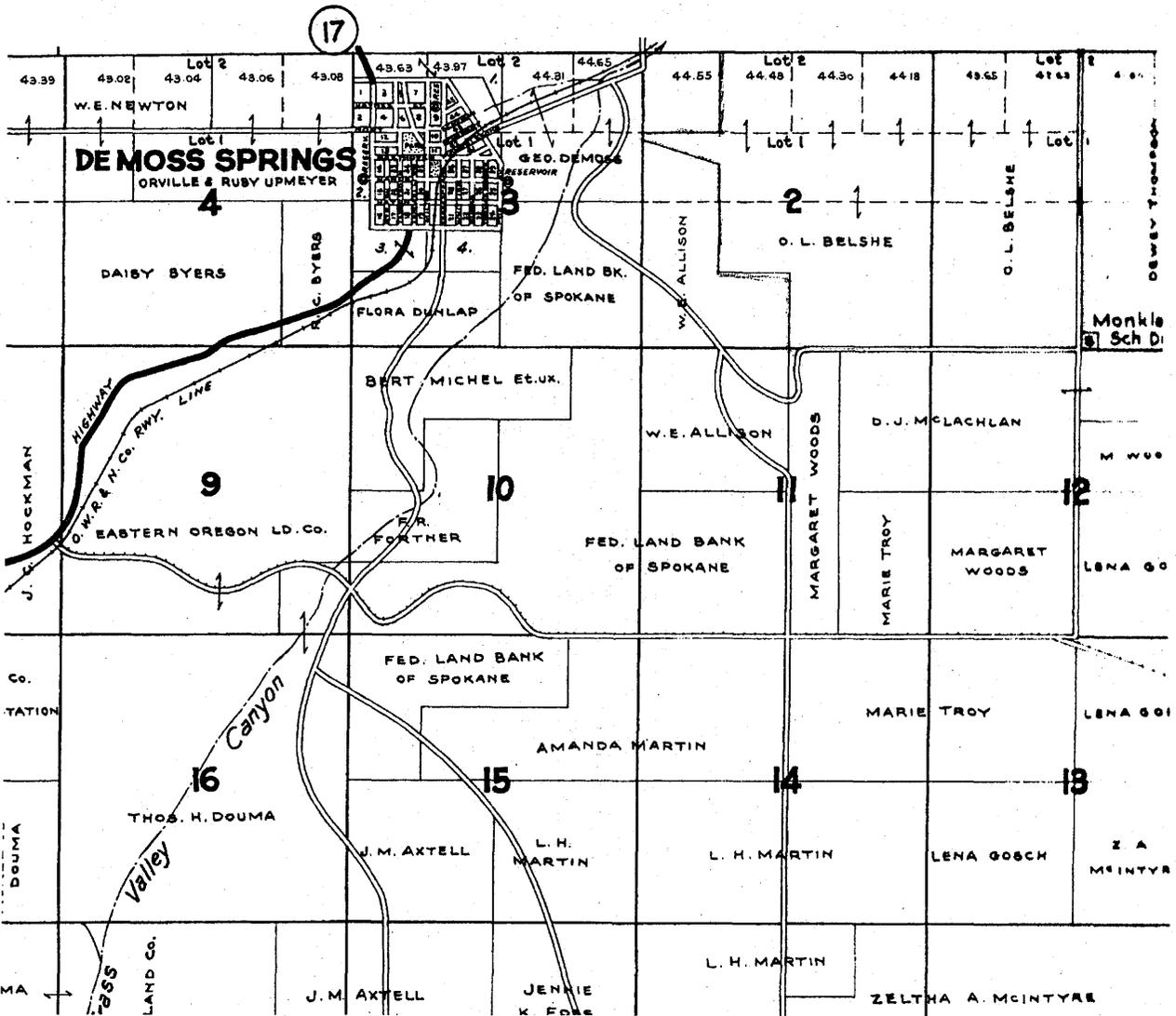
7.5 Topographic Map Wasco, Oregon Quadrangle

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 4

TOWNSHIP 1 S., RANGE 17 E.W. M. SHERMAN COUNTY, OREGON

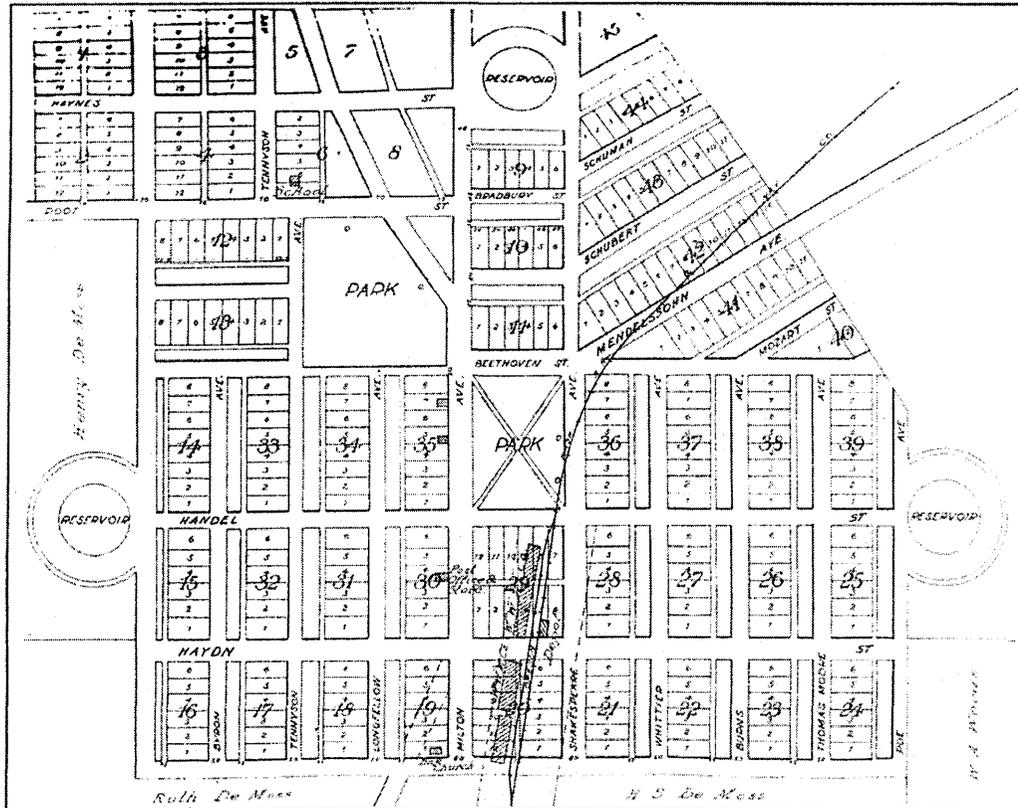


Metsker Map, 1934

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

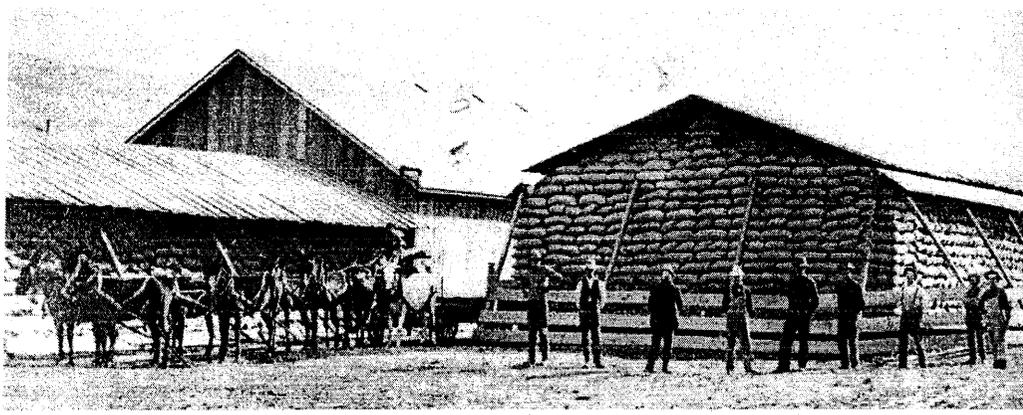
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 5



Above: DeMoss Springs as George had envisioned.

Below: Over 3,400 sacks of wheat were shipped from DeMoss Springs.



DeMoss Springs town plat map with photograph
of wheat warehouses

Graphic Credit: Elbert DeMoss, Sweet Oregon.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 6



Lizzie Minnie Elizabeth Henry James George Mae
DeMoss Family circa 1882 Tenth Annual Tour



James DeMoss, late 1900s



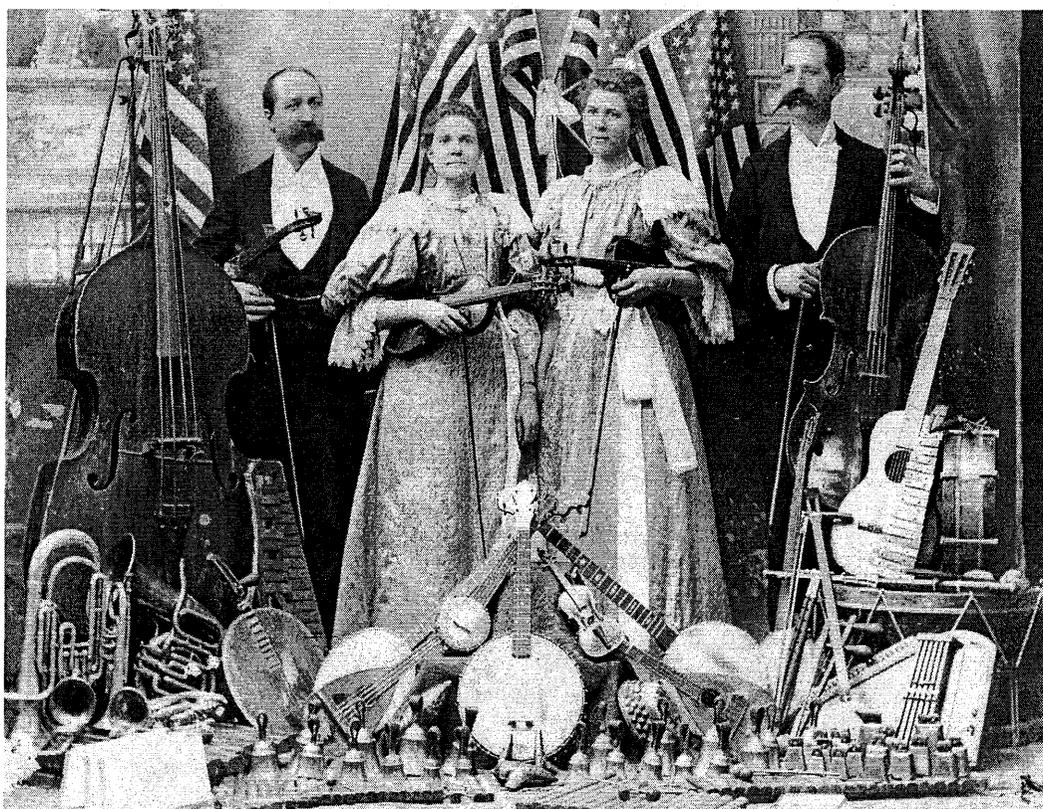
Dedication of DeMoss' Echo Cliff Cemetery, 1888.

Photograph credit: Sherman County Historical Museum Collection.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 7



«De Moss Family Concert»
 LYRIC BARDS—NATURAL SINGERS—PRODIGES IN
 MUSICAL FEATS. Perform on all kinds of Musical Instruments.
 WILL BE HELD AT THE
Stewartstown, M. E. Church
 For the benefit of Sabbath School,
 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10th, 1890,
 ADULT'S TICKET, 25 Cts.
 DOORS OPEN AT 7 O'CLOCK. CONCERT BEGINS AT 8 SHARP.

In Aid of Y. W. C. A. Building Fund
 ~~~~~  
**DeMoss Lyric Bards**  
 AMERICA'S FAMOUS ENTERTAINERS  
 ~~~~~  
 CITY HALL
 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th, at 8:30 p.m.
 ~~~~~  
 25c TICKET. ADMIT ONE



**«Concert and Entertainment»**  
 BY THE  
**DE MOSS FAMILY**  
 LYRIC BARDS  
 With 6 Bands, 41 Musical Instruments, and Vocal Quartette,  
 FOR THE BENEFIT OF  
**Brandywine Baptist Church**  
 AT CHADD'S FORD, PA.,  
 SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 27th, 1891.  
 CHILDREN'S TICKETS, 15 CENTS.

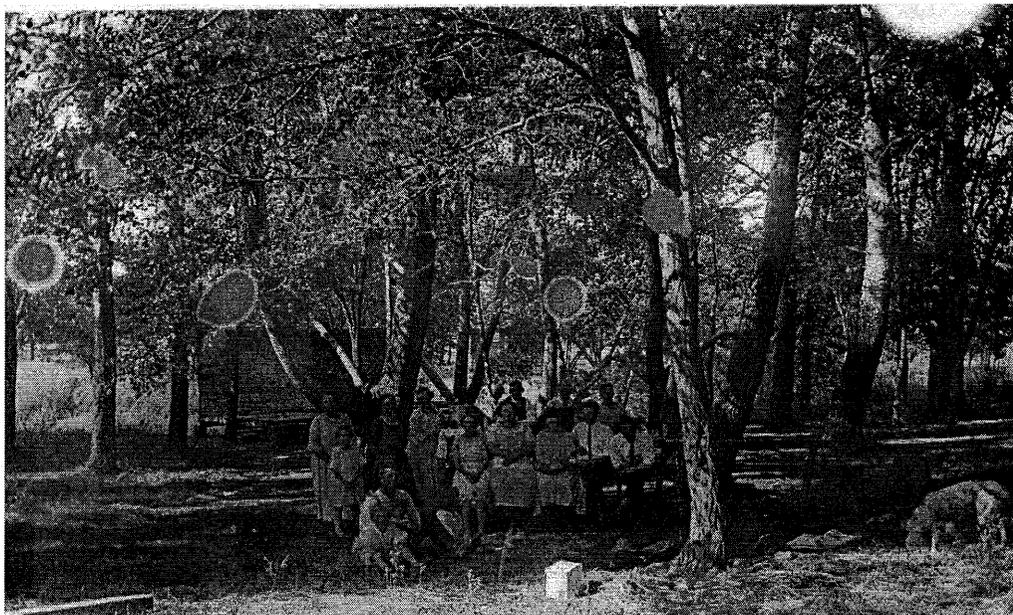
DeMoss Family Lyric Bards on 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour, 1917.  
Photograph and memorabilia credit: Elbert DeMoss, Sweet Oregon.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 8

---



Picnic at DeMoss Springs Park, circa 1922, Sherman County Historical Museum Collection.



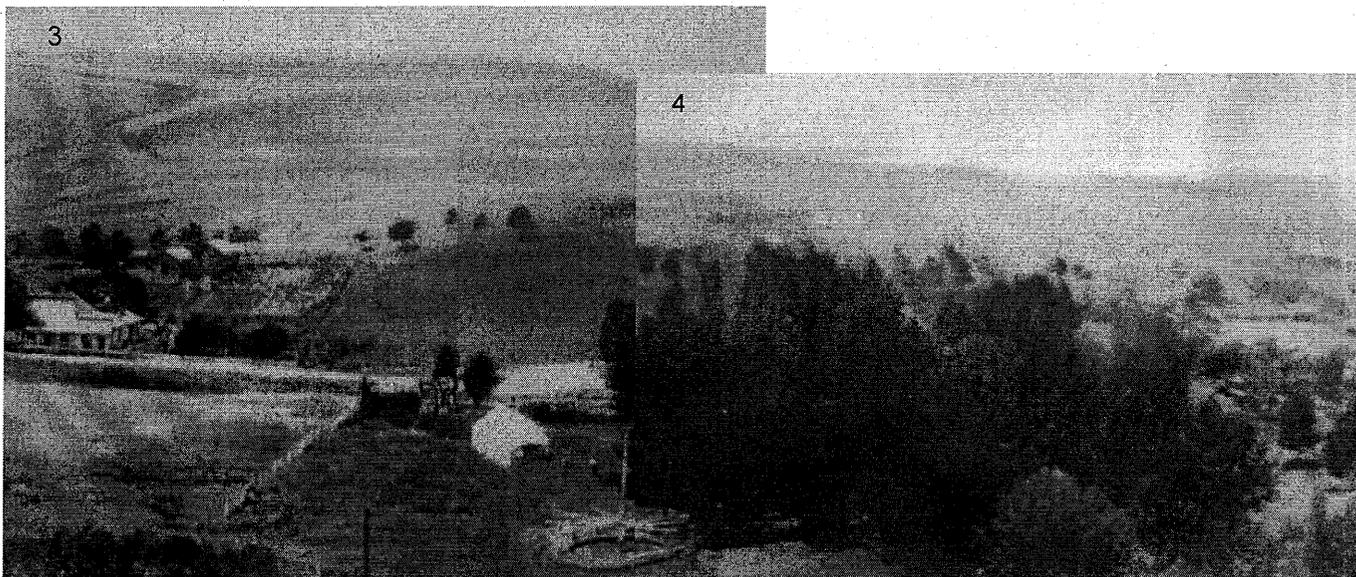
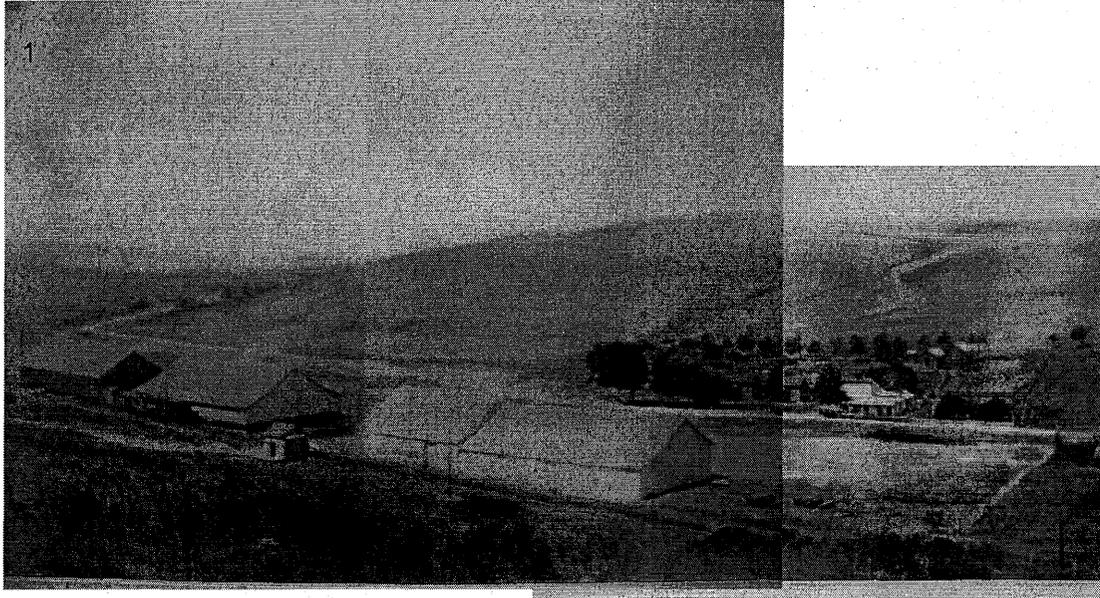
Rock wall and entrance gate at DeMoss Springs Park. 1939. Sherman County Historical Museum

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 9

---



View of DeMoss Springs  
1916  
John DeMoss Jr, Collection

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Material Page 10



DeMoss Family Bard playing on bandstand at DeMoss Springs Park circa 1916.  
Sherman County Historical Museum Collection.

DeMoss Springs Park  
Name of Property

Sherman Co. Oregon  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number      Photographs      Page      Log     

---

Photographer: Sally Donovan  
Donovan and Associates

Date of Photographs: May 2006

- 1 of 17 Looking south from Highway 97, contextual view of rolling hills around DeMoss Springs Park in center of photograph.
- 2 of 17 Looking north at the trees in DeMoss Springs from road behind grain elevators.
- 3 of 17 Looking north at 1920s rock entrance pillars and rock wall at the southwest corner of the park.
- 4 of 17 Looking north from parking lot at center walkway, bandstand and shelter in background.
- 5 of 17 Looking northeast from central walkway to lawn area and swingset.
- 6 of 17 Looking north from original entrance to park, mature poplars and cottonwoods in park.
- 7 of 17 Looking southwest from eastern side of the park at bandstand and shelter.
- 8 of 17 Looking east from mid-point of park, historic railroad grade in background.
- 9 of 17 Looking west at east façade of bandstand.
- 10 of 17 Looking southwest at the east and north facades of bandstand.
- 11 of 17 Looking northeast at west and south facades of bandstand.
- 12 of 17 Interior of bandstand, looking northwest.
- 13 of 17 Looking southeast at pump house.
- 14 of 17 Looking northwest along south side of Barnum Creek at bridge foundation.
- 15 of 17 Looking east at Barnum Creek and bridge foundation.

16 of 17 Looking southeast at shelter over water spigot.

17 of 17 Looking north at plaque on rock re-dedicating park.

**DeMoss Springs Park**

Name of Property

**Sherman Co. Oregon**

County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number      Photo Log      Page   1  

Photographer: Sally Donovan  
Donovan and Associates  
Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 2200  
Ink Type: Epson UltraChrome Pigmented Inks  
Paper Type: Epson Premium Glossy Photo Paper  
Date of Photographs: May 2006

- 1 of 17 Looking south from Highway 97, contextual view of rolling hills around DeMoss Springs Park in center of photograph.
- 2 of 17 Looking north at the trees in DeMoss Springs from road behind grain elevators.
- 3 of 17 Looking north at 1920s rock entrance pillars and rock wall at the southwest corner of the park.
- 4 of 17 Looking north from parking lot at center walkway, bandstand and shelter in background.
- 5 of 17 Looking northeast from central walkway to lawn area and swingset.
- 6 of 17 Looking north from original entrance to park, mature poplars and cottonwoods in park.
- 7 of 17 Looking southwest from eastern side of the park at bandstand and shelter.
- 8 of 17 Looking east from mid-point of park, historic railroad grade in background.
- 9 of 17 Looking west at east façade of bandstand.
- 10 of 17 Looking southwest at the east and north facades of bandstand.
- 11 of 17 Looking northeast at west and south facades of bandstand.
- 12 of 17 Interior of bandstand, looking northwest.
- 13 of 17 Looking southeast at pump house.
- 14 of 17 Looking northwest along south side of Barnum Creek at bridge foundation.

DeMoss Springs Park  
Name of Property

NPS Form 10-900-a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Sherman Co. Oregon  
County and State

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Log Page 2

---

15 of 17 Looking east at Barnum Creek and bridge foundation.

16 of 17 Looking southeast at shelter over water spigot.

17 of 17 Looking north at plaque on rock re-dedicating park.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 07000366

Date Listed: 4/18/2007

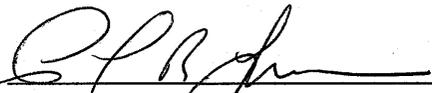
DeMoss Springs Park  
Property Name

Sherman  
County

OR  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

4/18/07  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**Location:**  
A more precise location should read: "DeMoss Springs, off US 97 approximately 3 miles north of Moro"

**Classification:**  
The Resource Count total should read: *five (5) contributing resources.*

**Significance:**  
The nomination is amended to add *Criterion A* in addition to *Criterion B*.  
[The most appropriate National Register Criteria when significance rests in the cumulative importance of a collection (or family) of prominent individuals is A rather than B. The succession of members of the DeMoss family that lived in the community and had a demonstrable impact on local community development, especially in the arts, is best recognized under *Criterion A*. In addition, *Criterion A* better addresses the importance of the park as a locally significant recreational venue in addition to its associations with the DeMoss family performers. The current nomination provides a minimal justification for the four individual members of the family and their specific contributions under *Criterion B*.]

**Geographical Data:**  
The correct order of the U. T. M. Coordinates (#1-4) is found on the USGS map not on the nomination form, where points #2 and #3 are switched.

These clarifications were confirmed with the OR SHPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)