

**CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY
FIELD FORM 1988-1989**

HIST. NAME: Oregon Iron Company cottage
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1880
COMMON NAME:
ORIGINAL USE: Residence
ADDRESS: 40 Wilbur Street
OWNER: Chas R. Snowden
PRESENT USE: Residence
ARCH./BLDR.: Unknown
T/R/S: 2S 1E 10AD
TAX LOT: 4400

STYLE: Vernacuiar
RESOURCE TYPE:
Building
THEME: Industry;
architecture
ADDITION: Oswego
BLOCK: 2
LOT: 13
QUAD: Lake Oswego
LOT SIZE:
ZONE: DD

PLAN TYPE/SHAPE: Rectangular
NO. OF STORIES: 1
FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Unknown
BASEMENT: None
ROOF FORM & MATERIALS: Low pitched gable; composition shingle

WALL CONSTRUCTION: Wood
STRUCTURAL FRAP/E: Wood
PRIMARY WINDOW TYPE: Four-over-four double-hung sash w/narrow surrounds and narrow muntins
EXTERIOR SURFACING MATERIALS: Shiplap w/rake and cornerboards
DECORATIVE FEATURES: None

OTHER: Hip roof porch w/plain posts; shed roof attachment across rear; brick interior chimney
CONDITION: Good
EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Porch possibly altered, (n.d.)
shed roof additions, s. and e. elevations, (n.d.)
NOTEWORTHY LANDSCAPE FEATURES: None
ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES: Gabled garage w/ horizontal lap siding, multi-light windows s. of house

SETTING: Located on the south side of Wilbur Street, .5 block from State Street, a heavily trafficked thoroughfare; on the southern periphery of the Old Town Neighborhood; north of George Rogers Park and the Oregon Iron Co. chimney

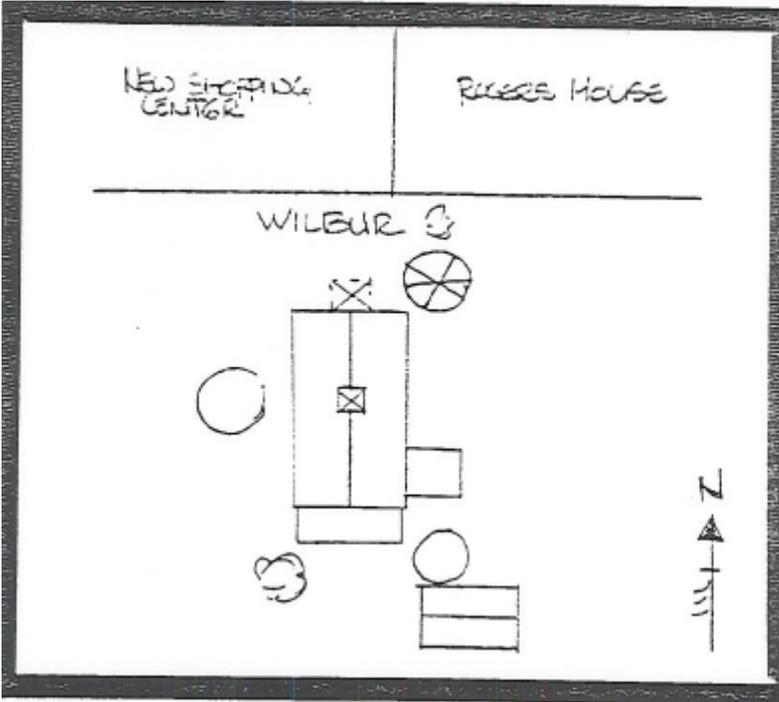
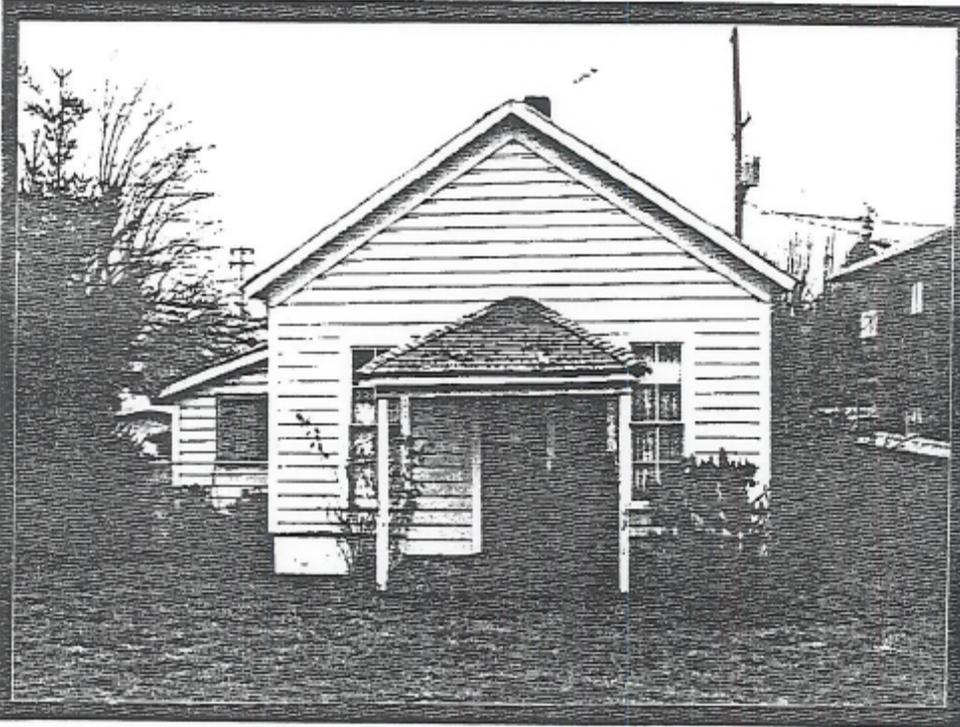
NOTES:

RECORDER(S): Koler/Morrison
SHPO #: 370

DATE: January 1989
FIELD #: 163

CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

ADDRESS 40 WILBUR STREET
TAX MAP/LOT 2S 1E 10AD/4400
SHPO# _____ ROLL/FRAME# _____



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Address: 40 Wilbur Street

Historic Name: Iron Company Worker Cottage

This dwelling is significant because it is believed to have been built by the Oswego Iron Company in 1880 to house employees. It is one of three known "workers cottages" built for this purpose. The company sold the building to Tobias Athos in 1922. Although there is no historical or other information on Athos' life he is known to have died by 1927 when the administrator of his estate, Christina Athos, sold the house to E. and Luella Ingraham.

Luella, a widow in 1938, sold the house to Charles C. and Dorothy Ingraham--presumably her son and daughter-in-law--in 1938. They held title to the property for ten years after which it was transferred to Clarence E. and Virginia Ault. The Aults, with the exception of the Iron and Steel Company, were the longest owners of record retaining ownership until 1974.

The company played an important role in shaping the early history of the community and was the largest employer in the area for many years. During its operation it is known to have constructed numerous small cottages to house its many employees. All of these are believed to have been within the Old Town and South Town neighborhoods. The subject building is one of only three known surviving dwellings associated with this company.

In 1865 the Oregon Iron Company was formed by William S. Ladd and the Green brothers, John and Henry, in hopes that large amounts of cast iron could be manufactured locally. The Greens, owners of the Portland Gas and Light Company and Portland Water Company, were particularly interested in the production of cast iron water pipes to supply the 30-year city water franchise in Portland. Otherwise expensive pipes were shipped in from New York. Investors in the venture underestimated expenses. Pig iron from San Francisco turned out to be substantially cheaper than Oswego iron, and available in greater quantity. Less than two years after production had started the Oregon Iron Company closed its furnace in 1869.

In 1877 Investors L. B. Seeley and E. W. Crichton formed the Oswego Iron Company and the furnace operated for the next few years off and on until 1881. According to Oregon's Iron Dream, "In spite of the failure of the venture, it had succeeded in bringing to the community many experienced iron workers and new residents who were to form a backbone of employees for the coming larger operation."

The larger operation arrived in 1882 with the incorporation of Simeon Reed's Oregon Iron and Steel Company. Investors included Reed, Ogden Mills, a New York financier, William S. Ladd and his son William M. Ladd and bankers from the Ladd & Tilton Bank. The company purchased thousands of acres of land believed to contain rich iron deposits, much of it in the Oswego area. 'Once again, costs had been underestimated. By 1886, Reed was forced to resign with losses exceeding \$500,000. The following year Oregon Iron and Steel received a large contract from the Portland Water Committee, brightening the company's future considerably. Reed returned as president while the company expanded its facilities and built a new 160 foot chimney. In 1888, after three years of dormancy, the smelter was fired up once more. The company's peak year for production occurred in 1890. At that time over 300 workers were employed.

As a result of the 1893-94 Depression iron prices plummeted. The plant closed and after that operated only intermittently until 1910. In 1929 the furnace and foundry were dismantled.

This dwelling represents a building type which was commonly built throughout the area around the turn-of-the-century. Characteristic features include the one-story, rectangular plan with moderately pitched gable roof and little or no decorative details. Siding is generally horizontal lap which is often attended by corner and rake boards. Fenestration is typically long, narrow double-hung sash. Unlike the other two buildings of this type which have one-over-one sash, the subject dwelling has retained what are probably the original four-over-four sash windows. It is also the best preserved example of its type in the city with only minor changes which do not destroy the overall character. These include what appear to be changes to the front porch and the addition of a one-story shed roof wing on the rear elevation.

Bibliography:

City of Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan.
Clackamas County Cultural Resource Inventory, Department of Transportation and Development, 1984.
Ticor Title Company Records, Oregon City, Oregon.
Merchants, Money and Power, E. Kimbark MacColl with Harry H. Stein, 1988.