

Romanticized and Misunderstood: Surveying Works Progress Administration Public Buildings and

Structures in Oregon's Willamette Valley

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Table of Terms

Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration (WPA)

Public Works Administration (PWA)

Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA)

State Emergency Relief Agency (SERA)

Civil Works Administration (CWA)

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)

Reconstruction Finance Committee (RFC)

Emergency Relief Appropriation Act (ERAA)

Introduction

Formed under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), employed millions of unemployed Americans to conduct thousands of projects across the United States from 1935-1943.¹ Developed amidst a period of tremendous suffering, WPA activities helped to reinvigorate the nation's struggling economy and instill a sense of hope among the populous that recovery from the Great Depression was possible. As a temporary program, the WPA was intended to provide employment to stabilize the economy until the private sector could recover and to alleviate the hardships that had engulfed the country. In Oregon, there is a lack of documentation and analysis of these projects. This report documents WPA public buildings and structures constructed in the cities of Eugene, Salem and Portland to better understand their historical significance and why the work of the WPA has been confused with other New Deal programs.

The WPA focused on providing as many jobs possible based on their budget and the parameters of their organization while conducting useful projects for communities' active needs and future development. While primarily consisting of either construction or service projects, these initiatives included an incredible range of activities such as the construction of roads, sewers, and public buildings as well as academic research, medical care, records management, educational and recreational classes, and the creation of art in a variety of formats. All of these projects filled a need of the local community and allowed unemployed individuals within the

¹ Nancy E. Rose, *Put to Work Relief Programs of the Great Depression* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), 112. The Works Progress Administration's name was changed to the Work Projects Administration on July 1, 1939. This change was in response to criticisms of the agency inefficiently spending federal funds and making jobs with little work associated with them.

community to maintain their trade and professional skills to be prepared to re-enter private industry when jobs became available.

Over time the WPA has garnered recognition and praise for putting people back to work to conduct beneficial activities for their community and country. While millions of jobs were created, unemployment rates remained high until the early 1940s with the increase in war time activities and production. With the introduction of Roosevelt's federal relief programs, unemployment ceased its dramatic decline, but would fluctuate in the following years. The unemployment rate was at least 14 percent between 1931 and 1940.² An economic recovery to pre-Depression levels was never established nor intended, but the relief programs developed under the New Deal did contribute to the easing of suffering and marked a dramatic shift in the role of the federal government in providing aid.

The WPA provided desperately-needed support to citizens across the country, but not all Americans were treated equally. The program primarily created employment for white men, leaving women and minorities with less opportunities for work. More positions for women were eventually created, due in large part to the effort of Eleanor Roosevelt.³ For the women and minorities who were part of the WPA, they were generally paid less than white males conducting similar work.⁴

Despite the limitations of the WPA, the program has become shrouded in an aura of romanticism for its ability make meaningful impacts in communities across the country. The WPA itself advertised the mission of the organization with images of Americans seeing the

² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 126; United States Federal Works Agency, *Final Report on the WPA Program 1935-1943* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 2; Rose, 19.

³ Neil Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2000): 428.

⁴ Rose, 100-101.

country, working, and contributing to the common good. As discussed further in Chapter 2, these activities varied greatly based on the need, location, and the skills of the unemployed in the region. The most remembered of these projects have been the public buildings such as the schools, libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, stadiums, offices, hospitals, and firehouses. Many of these buildings have become monuments to their communities, representing the partnership between the community and the federal government during a period of immense economical and psychological hardship.

The WPA was the largest and most visible of the New Deal programs and as a result the best remembered. Because of this, other New Deal public buildings and structures in Oregon have been misclassified as being constructed by the WPA. There appears to be multiple reasons for this misclassification including confusion about the multitude of the "alphabet programs" formed under the New Deal such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Civil Works Administration (CWA), Public Works Administration (PWA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and National Youth Administration (NYA). Each agency represents the experimental nature of the New Deal and while similar in their intention these programs were unique in terms of how they were developed, managed, and the projects they conducted. The other major source of misclassification or misunderstanding is likely due to the process of public history in which information is informally shared. As these public buildings and structures were built, communities took note and passed this information amongst later generations. The average citizen would not have been concerned with identifying the specific New Deal agency responsible for a project, but rather that the activities was a collaboration between the community and the federal government. As the largest and most visible New Deal organization, it appears logical that a project would be associated with the WPA rather than a lesser known

agency. Whether through a lack of documentation or confusion over differences of these programs, the research gathered for this project indicates that the WPA has inappropriately been given credit for the construction of multiple New Deal-era public buildings and structures in the state.

By far the most common error is the classification of PWA buildings or structures as the work of the WPA (Oregon State Capitol, West Salem City Hall, Oregon Coast Highway bridges) or attributing the WPA with the construction of a resource when it was only responsible for the development of a site (Portland Municipal Airport), the interiors of a building (University of Oregon Library), or painting of a mural for the interior (Eugene Post Office). For some projects, multiple New Deal agencies were involved such as the Oregon State Forester's Office Building, West Salem City Hall, and Portland's Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station. It is likely that these collaborations could have contributed to the confusion of identifying the agency that constructed a resource as opposed to other associated tasks. These errors highlight the lack of documentation of New Deal construction projects conducted within the state and the differences between the various programs. As discussed further in Chapter 1, some of these resources have previously been surveyed and evaluated. However, there appears to be a significant void in the identification and analysis of New Deal activities within Oregon.

This report sets the foundation for further future documentation of WPA public buildings and structures within the state by surveying and analyzing the historical significance of these resources in the cities of Eugene, Salem, and Portland. WPA buildings and structures were constructed throughout the state in urban and rural areas. Many were constructed in the National Forest and state parks. Public buildings and structures were selected for this study as they are the physical representations of the work of the WPA, generally have the closest relationship with the

public, and are often the most remembered WPA projects within individual communities. A combination of field work and archival research was conducted to document these resources. While archival records, newspaper accounts, and secondary literature are important in analyzing these projects, fieldwork is equally important in confirming facts and determining changes to the physical materials. The report will add to the limited research on the impact of these resources in the state and the role of the WPA in shaping the development of these communities. Furthermore, it will highlight the great need for further documentation of these resources in Oregon.

Chapter 1 provides a review of the available literature on the study of the WPA at the state and national level as well as synopses of literature on the Great Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal. Academic articles and books on these subjects as well as architectural surveys conducted on New Deal buildings and structures within Oregon are discussed. A review of these resources helps to understand how some WPA projects have been misunderstood. To establish the back drop for the development of these resources and to illuminate how political and cultural forces shaped these resources, Chapter 2 provides a historic context of the time period. The Great Depression and the development of Roosevelt's New Deal are discussed with greater emphasis on the development, management, implementation, and effect of the WPA in Oregon. Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of the field methodology for surveying the identified resources. The following chapters (4-9) provide the results of these surveys including architectural descriptions, historical narratives, eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, and current and historic photographs and figures. Chapter 10 discusses the research and survey results, identifying patterns amongst the resources and their relation to the political, economic, and cultural climate of the time. How these resources compare to similar New Deal projects within

the state is also discussed. Finally, chapter 11 addresses the limitations and challenges of this study and discusses the possibilities for future research. The WPA made a significant positive impact on Oregon's economy and the psyche of its citizens, but the extent of its contributions is unknown. This report provides a glimpse of the effect of the WPA on Oregon and its communities.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The Great Depression, 1929-1939 devastated the economy of the United States and its collapse reverberated throughout the country and the world. The impact in the United States was felt among all citizens as the unemployment rate increased, the gross domestic product declined, and families across the nation struggled to survive. The development and implementation of the New Deal and its associated programs by President Roosevelt and the federal government strengthened the economy, preventing its further decline. While New Deal relief agencies such as the WPA, PWA, CCC, CWA, and FERA did not establish an economic recovery they did reduce unemployment, established a sense of normalcy by putting millions of people back to work, provided job training, and established a sense of hope that the country could recover.

Through these programs, thousands of infrastructure projects were conducted across the United States in rural and urban areas. Many of the buildings constructed have served as iconic symbols to their local communities and preserved the legacy of the federal agencies and workers who were responsible for them. While the New Deal has been extensively analyzed, little research has focused on the comprehensive documentation of these buildings, their impact on the development of individual communities, and their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The programs developed under the New Deal began a period of unprecedented government involvement in the economy and administration of relief. Controversy surrounded these agencies and prompted extensive analysis that began as soon as they were being implemented. The Great Depression and the New Deal encompassed so many aspects of

American economics, politics, and culture. As a result, any study of this period of history is extraordinarily large and diverse.

Literature on the Great Depression and the New Deal spans over seven decades and encapsulating this material is a study of its own. Early works examined the severity of the depression that had spread throughout the country, the role of government in providing aid, design and intention of New Deal programs, and evaluations of their effectiveness.⁵ Additionally, publications were produced as part of these organizations such as those on the occupational characteristics of employees receiving relief and the study of state histories.⁶ The WPA also published multiple reports documenting the types of projects conducted, where they were conducted, and the associated costs.⁷

Publications analyzing the New Deal continued in the following decades and peaked in the 1960s. Apart from the more general histories of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt, and the New Deal, scholars began analyzing the specific legislative acts and relief programs. Others sources examined the employees who participated in these aid organizations, the types of projects they worked on, and the crafts they produced.⁸

⁵ Harry L. Hopkins, *Spending to Save: The Complete Story of Relief* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1936); Dixon Wecter, *The Age of the Great Depression, 1929-1941* (New York: MacMillan, 1948); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958); Paul K. Conklin, *The New Deal* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1992); David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). These publications represent just a small sample of the available literature.

⁶ E. B. Mittleman, *Occupational Characteristics of Workers on Relief* (Salem: State Printing Office, 1936); Federal Writers Project, Oregon, *Builders of Timberline Lodge* (Portland: Works Progress Administration, 1937); Federal Writers Project, Oregon, *End of the Trail* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1940).

⁷ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory: An Appraisal of Results of the Works Progress Administration* (Washington, D.C.: Works Progress Administration, 1938); Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Progress*, September 1936, Portland: Oregon Works Progress Administration; Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Progress*, October 1936, Portland: Oregon Works Progress Administration; United States Federal Works Agency.

⁸ Conklin, 107-117.

Regional and state-focused studies have illuminated the impact of New Deal legislation and relief agencies in different sections of the country.⁹ Studies of the Great Depression and New Deal in Oregon have been relatively minimal. Scholarly articles have analyzed the different aspects of the Great Depression in Oregon including analyses of the Oregon experience at the time and the impact of the WPA in Portland.¹⁰ Scholarly books and articles on the history of the state have also been published, but few have specifically focus on the history of the Great Depression and the New Deal.¹¹

Surveys and documentation of the WPA activities conducted in the state are minimal and non-comprehensive. While limited, these surveys do symbolize growing appreciation for the importance of these resources. The majority of the WPA activities catalogued and evaluated as a group are construction related. The Oregon Historic Sites Database provides a list of WPA structures. While this list includes several WPA constructed buildings and structures it also includes a PWA constructed building, projects associated with but not constructed by the WPA, and a building with no association to the WPA.¹² Examples of misclassifications include the University of Oregon Library which was constructed by the PWA with interior work completed by the WPA and the Macleay Park Comfort Station and Portland Municipal Airport which the WPA was associated with and developed the site of, respectively, but did not construct the associated buildings. The Portland Art Museum is also included on this list. The only known

⁹ John Braemen, Robert H. Bremmer and David Brody, ed., *The New Deal* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975); Bernard Sternsher, *Hope Restored: How the New Deal Worked in Town and Country* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999); Richard Lowitt, *The New Deal and the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Sarah B. Munro, "The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the New Deal Oregon's Legacy," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (2008): 304-311; William G. Robbins, "Surviving the Great Depression: The New Deal in Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (2008): 311-317; Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 414-441.

¹¹ Robert E. Burton, "The New Deal in Oregon," in *The New Deal: The State and Local Levels*, ed. John Braemen, Robert H. Bremmer and David Brody (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975).

¹² Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, *Oregon Historic Sites Database*, <http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/> (accessed March 31, 2018).

association with the WPA is that it houses some pieces of WPA artwork. Some architectural surveys have included WPA constructed buildings, but these resources have not been the primary focus.¹³ The most comprehensive list of New Deal activities has been published by the website *Livingnewdeal.org*, but the validity of its classifications is questionable as at least one error has been identified.¹⁴ The website lists the West Salem City Hall as a WPA project. However, the National Register of Historic Places nomination describes the building as a PWA project.

Neil Barker developed the most comprehensive list of WPA constructed buildings in the state as a Master's thesis for Washington State University.¹⁵ His analyses and research notes highlight the lack of documentation and analysis of these historic resources in the state. While focusing solely on the city of Portland, the number of resources he identified indicates the existence of far more WPA resources in other Oregon communities that have been undocumented. Barker's research focused on a brief documentation and evaluation of these projects but did not extensively examine the development of the building, current condition or historical significance. The formation of his list of resources was primarily based on the WPA records held at the National Archives.

The Portland City Archives has a large collection of materials related to WPA projects conducted in the city. By no means comprehensive, the resources available indicate the wide

¹³ City of Portland, *Portland Historical Resource Inventory*, http://gis-pdx.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/45cd5acc12a04fd288f752c7c93d1e25_132 (accessed April 1, 2018); Michael Shellenbarger and Kimberly K. Lakin, *Ellis Lawrence Building Survey*, <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/2150> (accessed April 1, 2018).

¹⁴ The Living New Deal, *West Salem City Hall (Former) – Salem OR*, <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/old-west-salem-city-hall-salem/> (accessed April 1, 2018); Marvin James Sannes, *West Salem City Hall National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990). Only listed WPA buildings and structures in Eugene, Salem, and Portland were examined for documented association with the WPA. The Living New Deal website was developed by the University of California Department of Geography.

¹⁵ Neil Barker, "The Works Progress Administration in Portland, Oregon: An Historical Narrative and Survey Report, 1935-1942" Master's thesis (Pullman: Washington State University, 1996).

range of WPA activities and reveal a high level of detail regarding the proposals and execution of these projects. Other city governments and historical societies have materials related to some WPA jobs, but no collections that catalog these projects.¹⁶ Based on Barker's research and the records of the Portland City Archives, it appears that many WPA constructed buildings within the state have been undocumented other than in the records held at the National Archives.

The historical significance of the WPA and the New Deal has been extensively analyzed and documented for more than seven decades, but little research has focused on how many WPA buildings and structures were developed and their historical significance, particularly in Oregon. The identified publications provide an overview of the general impact of the New Deal and the WPA in Oregon as well as some specific resources. However, there appears to be a significant void in the documentation and analysis of these buildings and structures in Oregon. Without further examination it is not possible to understand the breadth of WPA projects conducted in state and their impact on individual communities. This report provides new insight into the effect of the WPA in the cities of Eugene, Salem, and Portland and how other communities in Oregon may have been impacted as well.

¹⁶ Through email communications, the city of Salem provided a list of what was believed to be WPA constructed buildings in the city, but all of the buildings listed were PWA projects.

Chapter 2: A Historic Context of the Great Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal

The 1920s was a period of exceptional productivity in the United States often remembered for the prosperity that followed the conclusion of World War I, prohibition, speakeasies, lavish parties, and the rise of automobile culture. However, it was also a period of time when social issues were becoming more prominent, particularly economic disparity.¹⁷ Between 1920 and 1929, the income of the top 7 percent of the population increased by nearly 200 percent while the bottom 93 percent of the population grew by only 6 percent.¹⁸

Contrasting with the imagery of the roaring 1920s, the 1930s was a decade of economic and social devastation felt throughout the country. Factories operated below capacity or closed entirely, farmers let crops rot as the market became too weak to make a profit, banks closed, unemployment continued to rise, and countless individuals and families struggled to survive.¹⁹ The October 1929 stock market crash has often been credited with the economic collapse and depression that followed, but signs of its decline were apparent years before.²⁰

By 1929, estimates of the total number of unemployed workers were as high as 3.1 million, about 3.2 percent of the country's population. Approximately 1.8 million were unemployed for the entire year.²¹ Between January and December of 1930, the number grew from four to seven million. By early 1933, unemployment reached approximately 14 million, representing 25.2 percent of the country and 37 percent of the industrial labor force. As high as

¹⁷ Conklin, 24.

¹⁸ Rose, 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁰ Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 415; Burton, 356.

²¹ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 3.

these rates were, they still did not factor in the discouraged able-body workers who were not actively seeking employment or individuals who left the country in search of employment.²²

The American economy in the 1920s became more complex as independent craftsmen with hand tools were replaced by factories utilizing machines. As a result, big businesses grew larger, small businesses decreased, and workers became more dependent on absentee owners. Private employment shifted from a local to national scale without a similar movement in the welfare system. Community organizations providing welfare such as the Salvation Army and the Red Cross began to take on a national problem, but they were unprepared and incapable of meeting the growing demand for relief.

At this time, changes in the economy were not matched by adjustments in public attitudes to assistance for the unemployed and the welfare system underwent only minimal alterations. The common belief was that unemployment was a local responsibility to be managed by local government and charitable organizations. When only a few people were unemployed the public consensus was to attribute fault to the individual, but once unemployment affected one-third of the country's workers it became clear that it was not the fault of the individual, but the economy. As the demand for large-scale relief far exceeded what charities and local governments could provide, requests for state assistance began and were soon followed by pleas to the federal government.²³

President Herbert Hoover, who served from 1929 to 1933 believed that the economy would recover naturally and that federal intervention would be inappropriate. With growing pressure for relief from the federal government, Hoover urged the private industry to be

²² United States Federal Works Agency, 2.

²³ US Bureau of the Census, 126; United States Federal Works Agency, 2; Kennedy, 164.

confident, neighborly, charitable, and create more jobs. This approach proved too impractical for the level of unemployment and economic depression throughout the country.²⁴ The economy deteriorated throughout his presidency as production decreased by one-third, prices and wages by one-quarter, and investment in new plants and equipment was nearly non-existent. The increase in unemployment also caused a decrease in working hours and wages, so those fortunate enough to be employed began to earn less.²⁵

Impact of the Great Depression on the American Economy, Culture & Politics

As the economy collapsed in the early 1930s, destitution and depression spread across the country affecting nearly every aspect of society. The farming industry, which had been suffering since 1926 when the prices of agricultural commodities began to fall, collapsed completely in some areas. The market became so weak that hiring harvesters became too expensive to make a profit in many areas. Some farmers allowed their crops to rot while others developed a bartering system known as self-help cooperatives where work was done in exchange for the crops that would have gone to waste otherwise. Hunger marches took place across the country on March 6, 1932. The day was later referred to as International Unemployment Day. These incidents, referred to as "food riots" and "hunger riots" became increasingly popular.²⁶

As more and more banks began to fail across the country, panic ensued and individuals rushed to withdraw everything they could. Bartering became more common than cash transactions. Transiency also increased as people searched for new opportunities and the hope of

²⁴ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 3.

²⁵ Rose, 17-19.

²⁶ Rose, 20-21.

a better life somewhere else. Transients were not just limited to men, but also included single women and entire families. Without a permanent residence some lived in cars or parks while others would go to jail just for a place to stay and a meal. Many individual and families assembled in the outskirts of cities constructing temporary housing communities out of wood and cardboard. These communities would infamously become known as “Hoovervilles,” referring to the president who was often blamed for the stagnant economy and despair of those suffering.



Figure 1: Hooverville shacks in Sullivan's Gulch, Portland, Oregon. Photo courtesy of City of Portland Archives.

The dramatic increase in unemployment and declining incomes were accompanied by declining tax revenues, resulting in the shutdown of many local government operations, including schools. The country was in disarray. With a sense of hopelessness overcoming many, suicides increased, particularly among middle-class men who could no longer provide for their families. The magnitude of the depression in terms of the sheer numbers affected and the severity of the hardship on society drastically impacted people's opinion on the role of the federal government in providing relief.²⁷

²⁷ Ibid, 17-18.

Impact of the Great Depression on Oregon's Economy, Culture & Politics

Oregon suffered from the same economic problems and social despair that engulfed the rest of the nation. Although unique in its economy, culture, and political climate, the state could not escape the depression that was spreading throughout all levels of society. Historically reliant on the timber and agricultural industries, Oregon's economy was already in a period of decline when the New York Stock Exchange crashed in 1929.²⁸ In both Oregon and Washington, the agriculture and lumber industries struggled following World War I due to the closure of shipyards, oversaturated markets for agricultural goods, and a weak construction industry.²⁹ Between 1927 and 1929 Oregon had the highest rate of business failures in the nation.³⁰ Like in many other western regions, the Pacific Northwest economy of the 1930s suffered from shipping its major commodities to markets outside of the region with a relatively low return and importing items of relatively high cost.³¹

As the number of construction projects in California declined, their demand for Oregon lumber decreased, resulting in a 25 percent reduction in production from 10 million board feet to 7.5 million between 1929 and 1930.³² By August 1931, the West Coast Lumberman's Association, the region's major trade organization, revealed that its mills were operating at only 38 percent.³³ Employment in manufacturing lumber and timber products dropped by 40 percent from 1929 to 1933.³⁴ The agriculture industry experienced similar hardships as the total cash

²⁸ Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 415.

²⁹ William G. Robbins, "Hard Times," *Oregon History Project*, 2002, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/hard-times/> (Accessed November 20, 2017).

³⁰ Dorothy O. Johnson and Charles M. Gates, *Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 502.

³¹ Lowitt, 140.

³² Munro, 305.

³³ Robbins, "Hard Times."

³⁴ Mittleman, 6.

income of Oregon farmers decreased from \$136 million in 1929 to \$49 million just 4 years later. The agricultural economy was upended as the cost of processing crops exceeded the market price. By 1933 forced farm sales reached a high of 41.3 per thousand. Declining farm prices and rising unemployment caused a decline in the per capita income of Oregonians.³⁵



Figure 2: WPA workers chopping down a tree. Photo printed in Works Progress Administration in Oregon, 1938.

With economic and social despair spreading across the state, county aid employees were sent to assess the devastation amongst the state's population in 1932. After visiting six southern Oregon counties, a relief worker reported that there was "serious danger of physical depletion and malnutrition among large numbers of children and adults."³⁶ There were also reports of bank deposits being completely depleted and children withdrawing their savings to buy food for their families. All the banks in Union County had closed and most of the homeowners and farmers were subject to foreclosure and unable to pay their taxes.

Representative of the struggles of other states across the country, Oregon suffered from bank failures, bankruptcies, business foreclosures, and high unemployment, particularly in the

³⁵ Burton, 356.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 357.

agricultural and lumber industries.³⁷ The extremes of the Depression were not fully felt until 1933 when unemployment reached its height of 25 percent with an estimated 59,000 Oregonians unemployed.³⁸ Those kept their jobs, often did so at reduced pay. More than half of those available to work were unemployed or underemployed, challenging countless Oregon households to survive. The payroll in manufacturing fell from \$86 million in 1929 to \$34 million in 1933 and individual incomes dropped to 55.8% of the 1929 level. As a result of declining income and greater unemployment, unpaid state taxes increased from \$4 million to \$40 million between 1929 and 1933. During the winter of 1932-33, the state officially reported that more than 21,000 families were on relief. However, many more still needed assistance.³⁹

With unemployment on the rise and spending decreasing, businesses were unable to meet their payrolls and county and local tax obligations. As a result, funding for community services dried up. Oregonians' demand for assistance quickly exceeded available private aid efforts, job clearinghouses, food and clothing donations, and meal tickets for the destitute.⁴⁰ Throughout Oregon as in other states, the Great Depression lowered birth rates and increased multiple family households. It also increased the number of individuals and families relying on sporadic and part-time employment and occasional work relief jobs.⁴¹

Many politicians in historically Republican Oregon shared President Hoover's stance of limited government intervention. While a large proportion of Oregon's citizens struggled, Oregon politicians were restrained in providing aid, preferring to rely on charities and local governments that were incapable of meeting the demand. Total county revenues had decreased

³⁷ Robbins, "Hard Times."

³⁸ Burton, 356. This statistic does not account for those in need of work, but rather those actively seeking it.

³⁹ Burton, 356.

⁴⁰ Robbins, "Hard Times."

⁴¹ Robbins, "Surviving the Great Depression," 316.

from approximately \$18 million in 1928 to \$9 million in 1933 while welfare expenses increased from about \$1.2 million to \$2.3 million.⁴²

As the economy continued to decline in the 1930s it became increasingly apparent that the state and federal government would need to take on a larger role in providing relief. Oregon Governor Julius Meier who was elected as an independent in 1930 and served from 1931 to 1935 shared Hoover's stance on federal aid. While in office he provided words of sympathy and reassurance to Oregonians, but little meaningful assistance. Despite the advice of the State-Wide Relief Council that county governments could no longer be responsible for unemployment assistance due to insufficient funds, Meier assured Oregonian they did not need to worry. On June 20, 1932 he declared that the state had "practically everything necessary to meet the existing emergency."⁴³ However, a mere eight days later he privately contacted President Hoover to inform him that the state needed federal relief "if we are to avert suffering... and possible uprisings."⁴⁴

In response to Republicans' reluctance or inability to provide sufficient aid to Oregonians, voters shifted their allegiance to the Democratic party with 53% of votes for Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election. Democrats also won two of Oregon's three congressional districts. When Roosevelt was inaugurated in March of 1933, 40,000 Oregonians were on relief rolls, and 24,000 households were registered with the Portland employment

⁴² Herman Kehrli, "Public Welfare and County Finances in Oregon, 1928-1937," *Commonwealth Review*, *Commonwealth Review* 21 (1939): 4-7.

⁴³ *Report of Executive Committee State-Wide Relief Council to Honorable Julius L. Meier* (Salem: State Printing Office, 1933), 15.

⁴⁴ Burton, 358.

bureau. Many Oregonians relied on the assistance of public and private agencies such as the Public Welfare Bureau, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and state and local governments.⁴⁵

Precedents for the Rise of the Roosevelt Administration

The United States was unprepared for a major relief problem. Public assistance had primarily been administered by charities and under state poor laws, which were designed to meet the smaller relief needs of the past. The country's economy had changed significantly in the late 19th and early 20th century as it transitioned from an agricultural to industrial base. Public assistance had been a relatively small problem in the late 19th and early 20th century and poor laws were focused on the unemployable rather than the unemployed.⁴⁶

In response to the nation's economic decline and growing pleas for assistance, President Hoover initiated multiple relief efforts in 1930.⁴⁷ However, these efforts proved insufficient. As the banking crisis continued and public backlash towards Hoover increased, he was blamed for the economic collapse. There was a growing and desperate unmet demand for aid across the country.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Robbins, "Hard Times."

⁴⁶ United States Federal Works Agency, I.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 1; Munro, 305. Such efforts included increasing the budget for federal public works and holding conferences in Washington D.C. to urge businesses to maintain wages, and for railroads and utilities to expand construction. The President's Emergency Committee for Employment (PECE) was created in late 1930 to stimulate state and local relief activities as well as state and local public construction projects. The PECE was followed up by the President's Organization on Unemployment Relief in August of 1931, which stressed the development of state and local relief efforts. Neither committee was provided with funds for unemployment relief uses. The Emergency Relief and Construction Act (ERCA) was passed in 1932 and made \$300,000,000 of federal funds available for repayable advances to state and local governments that could not meet their demand for relief.

⁴⁸ Rose, 22. At this time there was a rise in protests and declining tax revenue. A study in the early 1930s reported that nearly one-fourth of the unemployed thought that a revolution could be beneficial for the country. A survey conducted by the American Association of Social Workers in 1932 indicated that only 25% of the unemployed were receiving any relief services.

The Hoover administration provided minimal relief, consisting of in-kind food, clothing, fuel, and medical care. This aid was also restricted to town residents who proved their residency and had no other sources of aid. The Hoover administration's reluctance to provide sufficient aid and establish a sense of hope that the country's economy could be revived created demand for change and a willingness for experimentation for the hope of prosperity.

Hoover's opposition to relief and his belief that the economy would recover naturally impacted his and the Republican party's popularity in proceeding elections. Roosevelt easily won the 1932 presidential election, receiving a staggering 472 of the 531 electoral votes. When he took office in March, 1933, factories and banks were increasingly idle, the economy was stagnant, and there was no indication that these trends would change soon. The New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade were closed and thirty-eight states had declared "bank holidays," a euphemism for closure at the time.⁴⁹ The Roosevelt administration sought to quickly develop legislation and policies to revive the nation's economy and its citizens' morale. Roosevelt's first 100 days in office were spent proposing extensive legislation. Passed by Congress, new legislation established a sense of needed change and hope for the future among the nation's citizens.

Roosevelt's New Deal

Roosevelt initiated a multitude of responses within the first hundred days in office including the Emergency Banking Act, the Economy Act, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, and the National

⁴⁹ Ibid, 25.

Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA).⁵⁰ NIRA was intended to aid national industry recovery, promote fair competition, and develop useful construction projects. The PWA, the FERA, and the CWA were also enacted at this time. These programs, discussed in the following sections, appeared to stop the economy's decline and re-establish a sense that the nation would recover. Despite the progress made in Roosevelt's first year nearly one-quarter of the labor force was still unemployed, many state and local government revenues remained low, and many counties, cities and towns declared bankruptcy.

Federally sponsored relief efforts were strengthened by the 1934 election as the Democratic party gained greater control at both the state and federal levels. The ineffective remedies for the Depression brought forth by the Republican party had produced a culture willing to embrace a new approach to economic recovery. This culture was critical to the election of Democrats at the state and federal levels.⁵¹ After 1934, Roosevelt's New Deal legislation was primarily economic in nature and focused on the economic needs of individuals and families rather than the market as a whole.

Federal Emergency Relief Administration & the Civil Works Administration

In 1932, Congress authorized the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to lend up to \$300 million to state and local governments for emergency assistance. This proved inadequate as

⁵⁰ P. F. Hopkins, "Public Works Administration," *American Municipalities* 59, no. 3 (1934): 13. NIRA was divided into three general sections including: Title I, Industrial Recovery; Title II, Public Works and Construction Projects; and Title III, Amendments to Emergency Relief and Construction Act and Miscellaneous Provisions. Title II formed the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Title III transferred from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to PWA the function of loaning to public bodies for the financing of self-liquidating projects.

⁵¹ Burton, 358.

demand steadily increased.⁵² In response, the government established the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in May, 1933 as a short-term program to provide states with grants to supplement their aid efforts. FERA received a budget of \$250 million for direct relief and another \$250 million for matching grants for work relief. These grants provided one dollar to match every three earmarked by a state. Governors applied for grants and once approved the grants were appropriated to State Emergency Relief Administrations that would distribute funds to official local welfare agencies.⁵³ Eligibility was based on need and individuals or families requesting assistance were required to be tested by a relief department social worker to determine the appropriate level of support. These funds were intended for those who were employable. The unemployable were to rely on local relief programs.⁵⁴

Work relief jobs established under FERA were intended to conserve the skills, professional habits, and morale of the employable, and to provide value to the community.⁵⁵ Early FERA jobs consisted of a continuation of existing local work relief projects such as cleaning city streets and parks, repairing roads, public buildings and other facilities, and the construction of small facilities.⁵⁶ As with the RFC, the FERA was insufficient in meeting the country's demand and additional assistance was needed. FERA remained in operation until the end of 1935. The agency provided supplementary aid during a period of great need and experimented with multiple approaches. Its implementation assisted the development and operation of the WPA and other New Deal relief programs.

⁵² United States Federal Works Agency, 1.

⁵³ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 4.

⁵⁴ Rose, 32.

⁵⁵ United States Federal Works Agency, 3. In the six months prior to FERA, more than 1,000,000 had been employed on emergency work projects, but these activities were more like "work tests" to determine the need for relief than meaningful jobs for the benefit of the public.

⁵⁶ Rose, 38.



Figure 3: FERA workers constructing Bay Shore Road in Tampa, Florida. Photo Courtesy of State Library & Archives of Florida.

The Civil Works Authority (CWA) was established on November 9, 1933 by an executive order under the authority of the NIRA. Unlike FERA, the CWA operated at the federal level. Federal offices of the CWA were established in each state and locality.⁵⁷ It was intended to supplement the FERA and PWA organizations and quickly provided employment to four million unemployed people. The CWA was in operation one week after its formation and a week after that had employed 814,511 workers with a weekly pay roll in excess of \$7 million. Within two weeks this total nearly doubled. The CWA replaced and expanded the early work relief activities of the FERA, leaving FERA to focus on direct relief.⁵⁸ By December 1933, there were 180,000 CWA projects across the country. At its height in January 1934, it employed nearly 4.3 million people with another 100,000 in FERA. The CWA provided employment for more people at one time than any other voluntary program in U.S. history.

⁵⁷ United States Federal Works Agency, 4.

⁵⁸ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 4.

The most common CWA activity involved work on highways, roads, and streets. Approximately 255,000 miles of roads were repaired or constructed. The second most common project was the improvement or construction of 60,000 public buildings including 30,000 schools. The CWA was also responsible for the construction or improvement of athletic fields, parks, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities.



Figure 4: CWA workers cleaning and painting the Denver State Capitol. Photo Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration.

As a temporary agency, the CWA dissolved after four and one-half months. When it closed, FERA began a work relief branch called the Emergency Work Relief Program which finished many incomplete CWA projects. By January 1935, employment in the division reached 2.5 million. Including those receiving work relief, direct relief, and their dependents, more than 20 million people were receiving assistance.⁵⁹ However, unemployment remained devastatingly high as seven million more people applied for work relief but were not accepted.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 4.

⁶⁰ Rose, 47.

Public Works Administration

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was established under the NIRA in June 1933 and was intended to grow the economy by stimulating the construction industry.⁶¹ Congress initially approved \$3.3 billion for the management and administration of the NIRA and later appropriated an additional \$400 million for Public Works projects. To encourage public bodies to conduct worthwhile construction jobs, the NIRA provided direct grants of thirty percent of the cost of materials and labor employed on such projects and for loans of the balance of the cost at four percent interest. The PWA administered grants to communities to conduct infrastructure projects and open bidding to private businesses responsible for hiring laborers.

The PWA facilitated the construction of useful and needed projects in communities across the country. Reemployment offices were formed to ensure that men who were unemployed would receive this type of work. To reduce the number of men unemployed, workmen were limited to 30 hours per week and minimum wage rates were established. Employees earned a reasonable wage to allow them a decent lifestyle. The PWA was responsible for a wide variety of projects including the construction of highways, parkways, public buildings, and publicly owned facilities. They also worked on the conservation and development of natural resources such as soil erosion prevention, development of water power, transmission of electrical energy, river and harbor improvement, and flood control.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 25-26.



Figure 5: Construction of the Oregon State Capitol by the PWA. Photo courtesy of Oregon State Archives.

The PWA represented an unprecedented level of federal involvement in unemployment assistance. However, it was slow in getting started due to a lack of adequate planning, legal difficulties, and other delays.⁶² The organization was unable to establish an early effect on economic recovery and as a result, the Roosevelt administration continued to experiment with relief programs to revitalize the nation's economy.⁶³

⁶² P. F. Hopkins, 13-15.

⁶³ Conklin, 33.

Civilian Conservation Corps

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established in March 1933 to provide employment in the nation's forests for young unmarried men. Projects were conducted to rehabilitate, protect, and develop the country's natural resources by planting trees, constructing hiking trails, building dams, and fighting wild fires. Stationed in forest camps, enrollees received job training, room and board, and a monthly salary of \$30. Over its ten-year existence the CCC enrolled 2.5 million men at a rate of 300,000 to 500,000 per month. The CCC was amongst the most celebrated New Deal programs as it provided job training and employment for low-skilled young men across the country.⁶⁴

CCC employees were sometimes used for assisting with WPA activities. In some instances, CCC workers were hired for the preparation of a site such as the Oregon State Forester's Office Building or the construction of roads and smaller buildings such as the Timberline Lodge project. This allowed WPA employees to focus on work requiring a greater level of skill. This partnership allowed for a larger number of the unemployed within a region to be employed at one time and complete jobs more efficiently.

⁶⁴ Robbins, "Hard Times."



Figure 6: CCC poster. Image courtesy of Library of Congress.

Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration

The Works Progress Administration, renamed the Work Projects Administration (WPA) in 1939, was the largest and most visible federal relief agency as well as one of the most controversial. Within the first year of operation it employed approximately 3 million Americans. When the agency was officially closed in 1943, the total number employed was approximately 8.5 million.⁶⁵ The program was responsible for thousands of service and construction activities in rural and urban areas across the country. These projects were well documented in local newspapers and construction sites often included signs stating a WPA affiliation.

⁶⁵ Ibid.



Figure 7: WPA sign. Photo printed in *Oregon Works Progress Administration in Oregon, 1938*.

Controversy surrounded the organization from the very beginning as it represented unprecedented involvement of the federal government in the country's economy. Earlier New Deal agencies had provided grants to states and individual communities to conduct infrastructure projects and open bidding to private businesses. The WPA circumvented private businesses to ensure jobs for the unemployed at reasonable wages. Many business leaders and politicians protested the program, believing that the WPA created unfair competition and permitted "boondoggling" or the creation of jobs with little to no work involved.

WPA Establishment and Mission

Under the authority of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act (ERAA) of 1935, President Roosevelt established the WPA on May 6, 1935 to provide work relief to the nation's unemployed. With the approval of the ERAA, Congress allocated \$4.9 billion to be spent at the discretion of the Roosevelt administration. This was the largest appropriation up to that point in

time.⁶⁶ The money was used to consolidate and expand multiple early temporary relief programs such as the FERA and the CWA that had served up to 30 million people. Congress allocated \$1.5 billion to the WPA, which was the most among all of the agencies created under the ERAA.

While the FERA and CWA organizations focused on both direct and work relief, the WPA like the PWA, focused solely on the creation of jobs. Unlike the PWA, WPA projects were not conducted by private industries, but by the federal government with local sponsors. Learning from the problems encountered with the FERA program, WPA administrators realized the need to establish direct federal-municipal relations, instead of dealing with cities through state governments. All WPA officials, including those in state and district offices were federal employees and paid by the treasury department. While technically federal projects, WPA activities were cooperative at the federal, state, and local level.⁶⁷

The intent of the WPA was to conduct a nation-wide program of useful projects for the improvement and development of communities and provide jobs for the unemployed. Through the execution of previous relief agencies, the federal government had learned that direct relief tended to diminish the self-respect and the skills of workers, while work relief tended to preserve if not enhance them. A primary objective of this temporary organization was to keep employees prepared to return to private industry. The types of jobs it created were intentionally diverse to allow individuals to stay within their professional fields. Work relief constituted a greater expenditure of federal funds but did result in the completion of public improvements that aided the national wealth. The 1929 national income was greater than 80 billion dollars, but by 1932 it

⁶⁶ Conklin, 59.

⁶⁷ United States Federal Works Agency, 8.

had plummeted to less than 40 billion dollars. During any single year the loss in national income was many times larger than the expenditure on relief agencies.⁶⁸

WPA Management

The WPA was divided into eleven programs consisting of Engineering and Construction, Service Projects, Training and Reemployment, Finance, Employment, Management and Administration, Statistics, Research, Investigation, Information, and Legal. Harry L. Hopkins was the Administrator of the WPA from July 1935 to December 23, 1938. He was followed by Colonel Francis C. Harrington who was the commissioner from December 24, 1938 to September 1940. Multiple others led the organization in the remaining years. The WPA functioned at four levels with the central administration in Washington D.C., the regional offices, the state administrators, and the district offices. WPA officials at each level were under the direct authority of the administrative head of each level. The central administration was responsible for the determination of WPA policies. The regional offices were responsible for directing and coordinating the program with their states. State administrations were responsible for the general operation of the WPA in the state, including ensuring federal approval and funding and verifying that activities met local needs. The district offices were responsible for the oversight and management of individual projects within the district and coordinating with local sponsors. At its height in August 1938, the WPA employed almost 36,000 people in various offices.⁶⁹

The planning of jobs was the responsibility of sponsors, but WPA officials would make suitable suggestions and proposals were often a collaboration between local officials and the

⁶⁸ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 5.

⁶⁹ United States Federal Works Agency, 11.

WPA district engineer.⁷⁰ The majority of WPA activities were planned and initiated by county, city, township, and village governments and their various agencies rather than the state or federal government. Proposals required a cost estimate for the work, what amount the sponsor was prepared to pay, and the amounts and kind of labor required. Construction projects required sponsors to provide preliminary engineering plans and sketches as they were responsible for the architectural and engineering features of these jobs. All sponsors were also required to agree to complete the work or useful components if the WPA could not. No federal funds could be used to purchase land and once projects were completed they would be the responsibility of the sponsors.⁷¹

For a project to be approved, the proposal had to provide employment in the local area based on individuals' skills. Many jobs were placed on hold until others in the community were completed or until enough qualified unemployed people had been certified for employment by the WPA. The majority of people certified were unskilled laborers, and many sponsors had to use their own funds to hire skilled workers.⁷² Sponsors shared the cost of these projects, but no fixed minimum percentage was established by the WPA. Some state governments assisted local governments by providing additional funds.⁷³ Funding was generally separated by labor and non-labor costs with the WPA covering the cost of labor and the local sponsor the cost of materials. This division was to ensure that a project was a high priority of the community. On average, communities spent \$1 for every \$4 spent by the WPA.⁷⁴ As a temporary program, funding was authorized on a year-to-year basis so jobs requiring more than one year to complete were divided

⁷⁰ Ibid, 48.

⁷¹ Ibid, 9.

⁷² Ibid, 2. School buildings and other public buildings often required the hiring of additional skilled laborers from outside the immediate area because the work required so many of them.

⁷³ Ibid, 9.

⁷⁴ Works Progress Administration, *Inventory*, 8.

into sections that would be financed and conducted in different years until the project was complete. WPA workers were also required to accept offers for private employment if available.⁷⁵

Types of WPA Projects and Workers

WPA activities were generally categorized as either construction or service projects. Within each group, there was a wide variety in the type of work conducted based on the need of the specific community. Between 1935 and 1943, construction jobs provided the greatest amount of employment with 77 percent of WPA funds.⁷⁶ Projects conducted in the first few years were more labor intensive and focused on employing as many men as possible rather than just public improvements.⁷⁷ Many of the earliest jobs consisted of improving and developing city parks and repairing or constructing roadways. These jobs would employ the most men, could be performed primarily with hand tools, and were of high need to many communities.

⁷⁵ United States Federal Works Agency, 48-49.

⁷⁶ Rose, 104.

⁷⁷ Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 417.



Figure 8: WPA workers constructing Wolf Creek Highway. Photo courtesy of City of Portland Archives.

Building activities included the repair or construction of schools, libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, offices, hospitals, penal institutions, dormitories, firehouses, garages, storage facilities, armories, and barns and stables. Unlike transportation-based construction projects, public buildings required a high percentage of skilled workers such as carpenters, brick layers, stone masons, mechanics, painters, plumbers, and others. Skilled workers made up about 30% of the WPA employees, semi-skilled 20%, and unskilled 50%.⁷⁸



Figure 9: Union High School in Tigard, Oregon. Photo printed in *Works Progress Administration in Oregon*, 1938.

⁷⁸ United States Federal Works Agency, 47-48.

The WPA also conducted work on outdoor recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds, stadiums, grandstands, bleachers, fairgrounds and rodeo grounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, golf courses, ice skating areas, ski runs and jumps, and bandshells. Additional activities included the installation of telephone and telegraph lines, electrical power lines, water mains, and many other types of projects that benefitted individual communities, states, and regions.⁷⁹ As the United States became more involved in World War II, jobs focused on the military and construction or repair of airports, military establishments, strategic highways, hospitals, and mess halls.⁸⁰



Figure 10: Sewer repair in downtown Portland. Photo courtesy of City of Portland Archives.

Jobs for professional and non-manual workers made up approximately 11% of the WPA budget. Service activities included research and records projects on economic and social topics (housing facilities, health surveys, studies of the effect of automation), historical records surveys

⁷⁹ Rose, 103.

⁸⁰ United States Federal Works Agency, 51.

(preserving records of historical importance), and research assistance at universities. Other jobs included education, operating recreation classes, working in libraries and museums, and the Federal Arts Project which established programs in music, art, writing, and theater. Artists created paintings, sculptures, murals, posters, and handicrafts that were exhibited in public institutions. Writers produced travel books for each state. Musicians, actors, and stage personnel formed WPA symphony orchestras, bands, and theater troupes that gave performances around the country. Public health projects provided work for skilled health professional such as doctors, dentists, nurses and pharmacists as well as non-professional "helpers" in hospitals, clinics and schools.⁸¹

Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration in Oregon

Portland was the epicenter of Oregon WPA activities and Emerson J. Griffith was the Director for the state office.⁸² Previously, Griffith led the Roosevelt for President League in Oregon during the 1932 election and was also the finance director of the Democratic National Committee for the state. He managed this work with support from H. E. Smith, the western regional administrator and Harry Hopkins the WPA chief administrator.

Democratic Governor Charles Martin (1935-39) like his predecessor Julius Meier resisted state and federal aid for the unemployed. As Governor, Martin, opposed many New Deal programs and reportedly told Harry Hopkins he could "keep his money out of Oregon." He resisted the Social Security Act and the WPA by declining to match funding for them, but

⁸¹ Rose, 107.

⁸² Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 417.

eventually relented.⁸³ Wanting to see an end to the WPA in Oregon he declared that the Depression was over in Oregon in 1936.⁸⁴ Although Governor Martin opposed numerous aspects of the New Deal many federal programs were effectively executed during his tenure. From 1935 until June 1939 the WPA expended over \$46 million in Oregon.⁸⁵

Oregon Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration Projects

Reflecting the national model, the WPA in Oregon conducted a combination of construction and service activities. Positions were part-time and had tools were promoted over the use of heavy construction equipment to create more jobs.⁸⁶ To meet the needs of individual communities throughout the state projects were active in rural and urban areas.

Timberline Lodge is the most recognized and well documented WPA project in the state. Other notable construction jobs in Oregon include the development of the Portland Municipal Airport and the construction of the Eugene-Florence Highway (Oregon Route 126), Eugene's Civic Stadium, Salem's Oregon Forester's Building, and Portland's Burnside Tunnels, Sunset Highway (U.S. Route 26), and Rocky Butte Drive. Similar to the national model Oregon service projects were varied and included public concerts, theater performances, and art work.

⁸³ Burton, 364-365.

⁸⁴ Duane Hennessy, "Tax for Relief Irks Governor," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), June, 13, 1936.

⁸⁵ Burton, 367.

⁸⁶ Robbins, "Surviving the Great Depression," 315; Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 417.



Figure 11: Timberline Lodge. Photo printed in *Works Progress Administration in Oregon*, 1938.

Between July and August 1936, the WPA band and orchestra under C. Ashley Cook and Harry Linden, gave approximately 85 concerts in the city of Portland that were attended by approximately 75,000 people.⁸⁷ The Federal Arts' Theater and Writers' Projects employed actors, writers, and artists for civic and public activities. Portlanders were also hired to inventory materials in county courthouses. The Writers' Project was charged with producing the *Oregon Guide*, a historical narrative of the state, its physical landscape, and cultural heritage.⁸⁸ By 1938, 450,000 Portland citizens had participated in WPA sponsored recreational programs such as swimming lessons, boxing leagues, and pottery and sewing classes.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Progress*, September 1936.

⁸⁸ Robbins, "Surviving the Great Depression," 315.

⁸⁹ Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 437.



Figure 12: WPA Band Playing in the Portland park blocks. Photo printed in Oregon Works Progress Administration, 1938.

Impact of the Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration in the United States

The WPA program was formed at a time of mass sorrow and was intended to reduce it as fast as possible. The urgency for aid and its experimental nature was captured by Harry Hopkins, Administrator of the WPA, speaking at a luncheon in Portland in 1936:

“If you had my job you would have to act quickly. There was not time to call meetings or to write a treatise for Harper’s Magazine... It wasn’t any fun when millions of people were involved and great sums of public money were being spent... you couldn’t say that you would investigate or look into it. Trouble was looking you right in the face and you had to do something right there and then... You had to decide what was the best way to give relief; you would have had to decide who was going to get relief...”⁹⁰

As with the other aid organizations that preceded it, the WPA was in a constant state of flux, evolving and reacting to unemployment levels and political pressure. While the WPA was popular among workers, some business leaders and politicians criticized it as inappropriate government intervention that created unfair competition with the private enterprise, and inefficiently used federal funding.⁹¹ The charges of inefficiency eventually led to the renaming of

⁹⁰ Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Progress*, October 1936.

⁹¹ Robbins, “Hard Times.”

the program to the Work Projects Administration on July 1, 1939. The November 1938 elections resulted in an influx of conservatives to Congress. When they took office in the spring of 1939 they actively began to dismantle New Deal organizations, particularly the WPA.⁹²

The New Deal did not achieve a total economic recovery from the Great Depression, but it did initiate periods of growth that provided better living conditions and the belief among citizens that recovery was a realistic possibility. Funding was never sufficient to create enough jobs for all who needed them. Some were not eligible for WPA work as they were recipients of unemployment compensation payments, had accumulated savings, or were receiving assistance from families or friends. WPA employment was also restricted to only one family member. At times there were insufficient funds to employ all eligible WPA workers. Estimates by the WPA suggest that the agency never hired more than 40 percent of the unemployed and at times was as low as 18 percent.⁹³

The WPA like other New Deal organizations provided relief so more individuals and families could live somewhat decently. The program was not designed to provide employment for all. It was intended as a temporary measure to provide employment with a small income to many of the unemployed. Jobs were supposed to help establish a sense of pride among workers by allowing them to make meaningful contributions to their communities while also maintaining their skills until the private sector could hire them back

The number of jobs made available for WPA projects varied month-to-month based on the level of employment during a fiscal year and was limited by the funds appropriated by Congress for work relief. The number of people on WPA rolls fluctuated in response to the

⁹² Rose, 111-112.

⁹³ United States Federal Works Agency, 29.

private sector and the number of jobs private businesses provided. WPA hiring peaked in November 1938 with an average of 3,335,000 employees.⁹⁴ From July 1, 1935 to June 30, 1943 the WPA employed approximately 8.5 million. Nearly one-fourth of all families were dependent on WPA wages. These numbers steadily declined after 1939 as the country became more involved in World War II with an average of 2,000,000 in 1940, 1,709,000 in 1941, and 271,000 in 1943.⁹⁵

Investment in the Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration

Despite the WPA's limitations, substantial federal, state, and municipal funds were allocated to the jobs conducted. Federal contributions totaled approximately \$10 billion while state and local entities who served as project sponsors contributed \$2.8 billion, more than one-fifth of the total cost. By June 30, 1942, the WPA had provided approximately 18.4 billion hours of employment with associated earnings of \$8.9 billion. Through June, 1943, the total funds expended on projects was nearly \$13 billion with more than \$10 billion from the WPA and \$2.3 billion from sponsors. The majority of WPA funds went towards providing labor (88.7% of funds contributed) while the majority of sponsor funds went to non-labor costs (83%).⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid, 28-29.

⁹⁵ Ibid, iii.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 115, 124.



Figure 13: WPA worker receiving paycheck. Photo courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration.

WPA Projects Conducted Nationwide

The variety and multitude of WPA construction projects significantly altered the American landscape and how citizens interacted with it. From 1935 to 1943 more than 40,000 public buildings were constructed and 85,000 improved. Educational, recreational, and hospital buildings made up nearly half of this total. Other buildings constructed or improved included libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, recreational buildings, offices, armories, firehouses, and penal institutions. The transportation system in the country was drastically enhanced at this time as well. Almost 1,200 airport buildings were constructed and 2,800 were reconstructed or improved. Over 1,000 landing fields were constructed or improved and approximately 5,925,000 linear feet of runways was constructed.⁹⁷ The WPA was also responsible for the construction or repair of over 650,000 miles of roads, the installation of 16,100 water mains and distribution facilities, and the development of 24,300 miles of sewers and sewage facilities.⁹⁸ These projects

⁹⁷ Ibid, 51-52.

⁹⁸ E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1915-1950* (Portland: Georgian Press, 1979), 111.

provided employment to millions while creating or enhancing public resources, modernizing the country, and setting the foundation for future development.

Service jobs were incredibly diverse and provided an essential role by creating employment for non-laborers who provided needed community assistance. These activities were also critically important for women who were generally excluded from all construction projects as they were solely viewed as men's work.⁹⁹ Apart from providing needed services to the communities, many of the service jobs such as education classes and recreation and arts programs helped to provide psychological relief and escape to the public from the depression of the time.

The combination of construction and service projects allowed for individuals from all fields to maintain and develop their skills so they would be prepared to re-enter the private sector once it was able to accommodate them. Individuals were able to earn a living as opposed to taking direct government financial support, contribute to their communities and reestablish a sense of normalcy and hope for the future. The WPA served as an important social and economic stabilizer to thousands of communities across the country.

Impact of the Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration in Oregon

Oregon shared a similar experience with the WPA and other New Deal agencies as other states. A complete economic and social recovery did not occur, nor was possible based on the available funding. However, the WPA along with other New Deal programs helped to prevent a continued economic decline and instilled a sense of hope for recovery within the state. The construction of

⁹⁹ Robbins, "Surviving the Great Depression," 316.

the Bonneville Dam, a PWA project, and the country's involvement in World War II would eventually provide the needed diversification of the state's economy to significantly aid the end of the Great Depression. Government contracts for ship building in Portland, the construction of aluminum reduction plants and electricity industries, food processing, and other industries designed to meet the production demands of the war were essential to this process. The number of workers in the manufacturing industry in Oregon increased 85 percent between 1939 and 1954.¹⁰⁰ While never achieving a perceived recovery, the state and its citizens benefitted immeasurably from federal government intervention, particularly the WPA.

The WPA provided employment for thousands of Oregonians of various trades and experience in both rural and urban areas. As a reflection of the political culture at the time, the vast majority of WPA positions were held by white males. For those fortunate enough to be hired by the WPA, many were able to remain in their field of trade and maintain or develop their skills. Other inexperienced laborers gained new abilities and employment experience. All WPA workers were able to contribute to meaningful projects to their communities.

Oregon Works Progress Administration/Work Projects Administration Projects

Service projects assisted communities by organizing city and country documents, researching state histories, conducting surveys of historic building, establishing educational and recreational classes for the public, creating and exhibiting artwork, and presenting theatrical and musical performances. These activities assisted in the maintenance and growth of communities, but also significantly enhanced the quality of life of its residents. In Portland, over 100,000 people

¹⁰⁰ Burton, 369.

attended outdoor concerts in the South Park blocks during the summer. By 1938, 450,000 citizens had participated in WPA-sponsored recreational programs such as swimming lessons, boxing leagues, and pottery and sewing classes.¹⁰¹

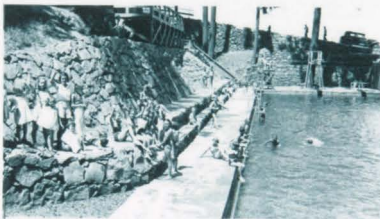


Figure 14: WPA constructed swimming pool in Oregon City, Oregon. Photo printed in *Works Progress Administration in Oregon*, 1938.

Similarly, construction projects provided employment for thousands of Oregonians on meaningful activities that would drastically alter the landscape and the potential for future development. A 1938 WPA report documented a variety of public buildings that had either been improved or constructed across the state including city halls, court houses and other state and municipality buildings. School buildings were the most popular type of public building as they were one of the most needed community resources, particularly in rural area that even before the Depression era had difficulty in providing suitable school rooms and facilities for the children in the district.¹⁰² Larger cities and counties generally had more WPA projects as they had more resources to conduct such activities.

¹⁰¹ Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 437.

¹⁰² Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Works Progress Administration in Oregon* (Portland: Oregon Works Progress Administration, 1938).



Figure 15: WPA constructed library and community center in Sandy, Oregon. Photo printed in Works Progress Administration in Oregon, 1938.

As the country's economy fluctuated throughout the Great Depression, the WPA's budget and scope adjusted to these market changes to provide relief while limiting government intervention. The number of Oregonians employed by the WPA varied year-to-year and month-to-month based on available funds and the approval of projects. By June 30, 1942, the WPA had provided approximately 117 million hours and \$63 million to Oregon workers. The aggregate cost of all jobs between 1936 and 1943 was \$78,468,447.¹⁰³ While never establishing a full economic recovery, the impact of the WPA and other New Deal agencies was substantial.

The WPA and other New Deal agencies employed millions of Americans to conduct thousands of projects nationwide. The jobs created provided economic support to needy families and psychological aid as individuals went back to work and reestablished a sense of normalcy in their lives. Those employed by these relief agencies also developed a sense of pride as their work contributed to the improvement of community resources and the future development of cities and states. Service projects such as educational and recreational programs provided needed

¹⁰³ United States Federal Works Agency, 110-112, 115, 120.

distractions at a time of great hardship. These government relief programs eased the suffering of the country and established a sense of hope that recovery and prosperity was possible.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This project originated as a selective architectural survey designed to identify and evaluate WPA-constructed buildings in the state of Oregon. To limit its scope, resources in the cities of Eugene, Salem, and Portland were selected. As the most populated cities in the state it was assumed that they would have the highest number of WPA buildings and therefore would provide a reflective sample of the types of buildings, architectural styles, and materials used. WPA buildings constructed in rural areas and those in the suburbs of these cities were not evaluated, thus a comparison with the resources investigated for this study was not possible.

The number of resources surveyed was also reduced by only evaluating buildings constructed by rather than improved by the WPA. The scope was further reduced by the selection of only WPA public buildings and structures. Public here, refers to the resources that were designed for the use of the general population or were easily accessible to the public such as the Oregon State Forester's Office Building.¹⁰⁴ It is these buildings that have been most remembered by their communities and have contributed to this sense of romanticism that surrounds the WPA. Non-publicly accessible buildings constructed by the WPA include Portland's Fire Department Drill Tower, Macleay Park Caretaker's Cottage, Mt. Tabor Yard Office and Maintenance Shop, and the Westmoreland Park Maintenance Shop. Resources of less than 100 square feet were also not included in this study as they were typically not places the public would gather or were not

¹⁰⁴ Oregon Department of Forestry, *Oregon State Forester's Building* (Salem: Oregon Department of Forestry, 2008). The Oregon State Forester's Office Building has established itself as popular site for school field trips in Salem.

widely accessible. Such resources include Portland's Macleay Park Storage Shed and Woodshed, and the Oregon Health Science University Bus Stop Shelter.¹⁰⁵

The surveyed resources were selected by examining publicly available and accessible publications about WPA projects in Oregon. City governments, archives, and historical societies were also consulted. None of these institutions had a comprehensive list of such resources or any formal collection related to them. Some institutions had records on individual resources, but no lists of WPA projects. Official records of the WPA activities within the state are stored at the National Archives and Records Administration, but they were not accessible remotely and visiting the facility was not feasible.

For each identified resource, a site visit was conducted to evaluate the building's current condition in terms of additions and alterations. These site visits were also critical in determining the historical integrity of these resources and evaluating their potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. These architectural surveys were limited to the public right of way. Due to this restriction, not all elevations were visible and the interiors were not evaluated. Photographs were taken to document the current condition of each resource and to offer comparison with historic photographs and records when available.

To better understand how these resources were developed and used over time, a historic narrative was drafted. These narratives also serve to document the historical significance of the resources at the local, state, and national level. Local newspapers, scholarly articles and books, previously conducted surveys, and other materials from archives and historical societies provided information for the development of these narratives. The historical context plays a crucial role in

¹⁰⁵ For more information about these resources see: Neil Barker, "The Works Progress Administration in Portland, Oregon."

understanding the significance and development of these resources, particularly the collaboration between the federal government and the local community.

In the proceeding chapters, each identified resource is summarized with an architectural description, historic narrative, and evaluation of historical significance. The integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association are analyzed. Eligibility of these resources for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places is also included. Current and historic photographs and images are provided to illustrate the integrity and condition of these resources. included.

Chapter 4: Civic Stadium – 1938-39 (Destroyed by Fire 2015)



Figure 16: Viewing northwest. Photo by Brandon Grilc.

Architectural Description

Destroyed by fire in 2015, the 1938-39 Eugene Civic Stadium was located at 2077 Willamette Street on a 10.2-acre irregular-shaped lot in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. The site is bounded by Willamette Street to the west, a single-family residence, large paved parking lot, and multiple associated office and maintenance buildings to the north, Amazon Parkway to the east, and a series of medical offices with a surrounding parking lot to the south. Located on the east end of the College Hill neighborhood, the surrounding buildings are primarily single-family residences to the west and north with some commercial business along Willamette Street to the south. On the east side of Amazon Parkway is South Eugene High School and associated athletic fields (See Appendix A for site maps). The streetscape includes sidewalks, utility poles, bus stops, park strips covered with grass, deciduous trees, and shrubbery.

The L-shaped building was on a concrete foundation, constructed with old growth Douglas fir, and included a low-pitch gable roof with asphalt shingles. The building's design appears to be based on the Timber Engineering Company's Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand from their book *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and*

Engineers.¹⁰⁶ Its asymmetrical design was intended to benefit its multi-purpose function, particularly football and baseball. The main entrance was centrally located so that guests would enter directly at the 50-yard line of the field.¹⁰⁷ Three additional entrances were located in the west elevation and one more in the north elevation. The seating was oriented to the south and east, originally looking over the undeveloped Amazon tract and the Hendricks Park ridgeline.



Figure 17: Viewing southeast. Photo by Natalie Perrin.

The grandstand featured post-on-pier construction with concrete footings. The Douglas fir posts were 8" x 8" with varying heights. The posts were reinforced with cross and horizontal bracing of Douglas fir boards with steel supports. Exterior cladding consisted of weatherboard and plywood. Builders also used Douglas fir for the seating and interior siding. A tongue-in-groove wooden beadboard siding was installed in the upper portion of the grandstand below the

¹⁰⁶ Timber Engineering Company, *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use of Architects and Engineers* (Washington D.C.: Timber Engineering Company, 1948).

¹⁰⁷ Natalie Perrin, *Civic Stadium National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 2008).

roofline. Horizontal louvered openings were added in this section to create ventilation.¹⁰⁸ The tiered seating consisted of multiple levels of wood board benches without backs.



Figure 18: Viewing north. Photo by Natalie Perrin.

The transverse hip truss roof and its timber connectors were manufactured by the Timber Engineering Company in 1939.¹⁰⁹ The roof design was also featured in the *Typical Designs of Timber Structures* and was referred to as Design 109A Grandstand Roof.¹¹⁰ A press box was constructed at the center of the western roof section. Documentation on its construction, design, and removal has not been identified.

¹⁰⁸ Perrin.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Timber Engineering Company.



Figure 19: Viewing north. Photo by Natalie Perrin.

Changes to the original structure began circa 1965 with architectural plans for an addition to the northeast section of the grandstand and facility improvements. The single-story rectangular addition with a shed roof was constructed out of wood and concrete masonry units and provided locker rooms and public restrooms.¹¹¹ When the Eugene Emeralds became the primary lessee of the property in 1969 they needed to update the facility for use as an AAA minor league ballpark. At this time two large light standards and 800 wooden, theatre-style box seats were purchased from River Island Stadium, which was the home stadium of the San Diego Padres minor league team.¹¹² The seats were installed in front of the original grandstand and the light standards were mounted on the roof. It is likely that the rooftop press box was removed at this time and a new one was constructed at the intersection of the two sides of the grandstand. Other changes included upgrades to the irrigation system and field, paving of the concession area, new paint, and the construction of fencing. The metal, hand-turned scored board was also installed at this time. The wooden box seats were replaced with blue plastic riser seats in 1986. Wooden

¹¹¹ 1965 Stadium Remodel Architectural Plans (Eugene: 4J Eugene School District, 1965).

¹¹² Perrin.

platforms and ramps were installed on the northeast and south sides of the grandstand in the early 1990s. The stadium was severely damaged in a fire on June 29, 2015 and was subsequently demolished.¹¹³

Historic Narrative

Amidst a period of unprecedented depression, the city of Eugene, Oregon sought a new athletic field to meet the needs of the local schools and community.¹¹⁴ In 1937, a preliminary project proposal for a recreation center was submitted to the WPA. The proposal included plans for a baseball/football field and track on a 17-acre tract referred to as the Amazon tract. On December 24, 1937 it was announced in the local newspaper, the *Eugene Guard*, that the Oregon WPA would be "very favorable in considering the development and building of the entire proposed Eugene recreational center."¹¹⁵

On January 11, 1938 it was reported that plans for the proposed recreation center were complete and the Chamber of Commerce Field Committee had presented them to the Eugene City Council and School Board. The 17-acre Amazon tract at the east base of the College Hill neighborhood was proposed as the location for development and the Field Committee requested that the City Council approve its donation to the local school district. At this time the tract of land was owned by the city due to \$6,000 in back taxes. Led by Stanley Stevenson, the Field Committee estimated that \$12,000 was required to complete the first year of construction and

¹¹³ 4J Eugene School District, "Civic Stadium," <http://www.4j.lane.edu/communications/civictadium/> (accessed April 1, 2018).

¹¹⁴ 4J Eugene School District, *Proposed Finding of Fact: Resolution in the Matter of Sale of Property: Civic Stadium* (Eugene: 4J Eugene School District, 2010).

¹¹⁵ "WPA May Develop Recreation Plant," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), Dec. 24, 1937.

requested that the school board match the committee's \$6,000 contribution. The money would "provide the capital to grade and tile the field and put it in shape for baseball, football, and track, and to build a modern covered grandstand seating 4,600 spectators."¹¹⁶ Stevenson also informed the City Council and School Board that the WPA would provide the necessary labor. However, the WPA had not yet committed, most likely waiting for confirmation of the proposed acquisition of the Amazon tract. It appears that the City Council agreed at the meeting to sell the Amazon tract to the school board for the development of the project.

By January 26, it became quite apparent that the stadium's development and WPA funding were at risk due to concerns stemming from the back taxes. Multiple articles in the *Eugene Guard* discussed the debate over who should pay the \$6,000 and whether the city should require the payment at all.¹¹⁷ One article reported that a deadlock between the City Council, School Board, and Playground Committee could delay the project indefinitely and as a result forfeit \$12,000 in WPA funding. The three organizations had previously discussed an agreement in which the city, through the Park Board would contribute \$6,000 by a special levy to pay off the back taxes. The School Board would also contribute \$6,000 from cash reserves and the Citizen's Committee, previously referred to as the Field Committee would raise an additional \$6,000. This plan was apparently at a standstill due to a City Council meeting where Mayor Elisha Large and some councilmen refused to submit a city levy unless the property remained with the city. However, the School Board reported that they would be unable to put up the money or be a sponsor for the WPA project unless they owned the property. Uncertainty continued for months until it was determined that it should be decided by a special election.

¹¹⁶ "Athletic Field Now Up to Board, Council," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), Jan. 11, 1938.

¹¹⁷ "Fire Won't Burn Stick," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), Jan. 26, 1938; Dick Strite, "High Climber," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), Jan. 26, 1938.

Before the special election took place a committee from the Chamber of Commerce presented drawings and plans of the proposed athletic field and stadium to the School Board for their approval on May 9, 1938. The Board approved of the plans and an application for WPA funding was subsequently submitted. On May 15, 1938, the *Eugene Guard* published a plan to the public for the proposed development of the Amazon tract area including a football and baseball field with grandstand, track field, swimming pool, tennis courts, shuffle board courts, and ping-pong courts (See Figure 20).¹¹⁸ The intention was to begin with the football and baseball fields and then incorporate the other elements.¹¹⁹

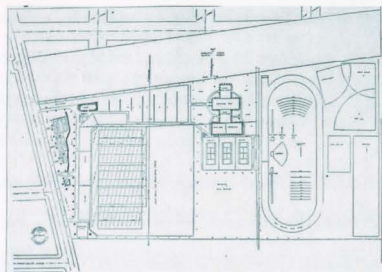


Figure 20: Plans for the proposed recreation center. Printed in the *Eugene Guard* May 15, 1938.

On May 20, 1938, city residents approved a bond measure for the recreation center by more than a two-to-one margin. City Recorder Cal M. Bryan stated that the City Council would vote on transferring the tract of land from the city to the school district. The approval of the transfer would be dependent on the school district's agreement to fulfill their promise of

¹¹⁸ "Athletic Field Vote Friday," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), May 15, 1938.

¹¹⁹ Perrin.

contributing \$6,000 to the project and the Chamber of Commerce Athletic Field Committee to raise an additional \$6,000. The committee had already raised \$1,000 by that time. The proposed stadium would allow for both Eugene and University high schools to have a permanent home field for their football games and no longer rely on the University of Oregon field, which was not always available.¹²⁰ The Eugene Public School District 4J purchased the Amazon tract for \$1 on June 13, 1938.¹²¹

On June 7, 1938, the School Board accepted the bid of \$1,489 by J. F. Oldham to conduct grading and rock work on the field. Construction began shortly after approval on June 21. Local Eugene architect and University of Oregon alumnus Graham B. Smith designed and oversaw the construction of the grandstand. His plans were approved by the School Board in July. Local old growth Douglas-fir was exclusively used and donated by local lumber mills and timber owners. The WPA provided the necessary labor to construct the stadium.¹²² The grandstand was completed by mid-September and a dedication ceremony was held on October 22, 1938 with a performance by the Eugene High School marching band. Those in attendance included students from the city's three high schools and townspeople (See Figures 21 & 22).¹²³

When officially opened the stadium was still without a roof. A few days after the dedication, the Moose lodge announced a plan for a benefit dance for the athletic field fund to help them reach their \$1,400 goal to complete the project.¹²⁴ The clay and sawdust field was first

¹²⁰ "City Issues Okayed by 2-1 Majority," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), May 21, 1938.

¹²¹ 4J Eugene School District, *Proposed Finding of Fact*.

¹²² *Ibid*.

¹²³ *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), October 23, 1938.

¹²⁴ "Moose Plan Benefit Dance to Aid Field Fund," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), October 23, 1938.

used on October 28, 1938 for an afternoon football game between Eugene and Corvallis High Schools with several hundred in attendance.¹²⁵

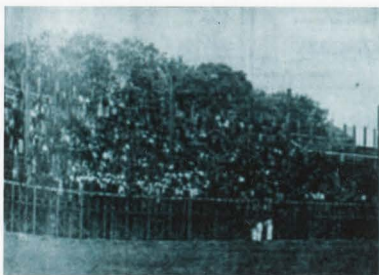


Figure 21: Civic Stadium dedication ceremony. Printed in *Eugene Guard* on October 22, 1938.

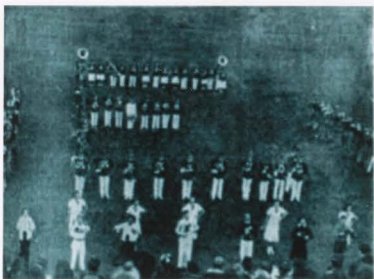


Figure 22: Eugene High School marching band performing at dedication ceremony. Printed in *Eugene Guard* on October 22, 1938.

¹²⁵ Dick Strite, "Eugene High Gridders Held to Scoreless Tie by Corvallis on New Field," *Eugene Guard* (Eugene, OR), Oct. 29, 1938.

The West Coast Lumberman's Association of Seattle designed the grandstand roof. It was also constructed with old growth Douglas fir and completed in 1939. The floodlights were purchased and installed by the Eugene High School student body. The School Board agreed to loan \$3,600 to the student body under the condition that it would be repaid within the next three years.¹²⁶

Although the original plans for the entire athletic complex published in the *Eugene Guard* on May 15, 1938 were never completed, additional buildings were constructed in the following years to service the stadium. On October 14, 1940, the School Board approved a proposal by the Coca-Cola Company and Foster-Kleiser Company for the construction of a large score-board adjacent to the athletic field in exchange for displaying advertisements for their companies. In 1941, a heating plant building was constructed to house an 880-gallon sawdust-fired water boiler. The boiler was the only source of hot water for the stadium's locker and bathrooms. A two-story repair garage for the district's bus depot was constructed in 1946. The second floor included two apartments, one for the facility's groundskeeper and the other possibly for bus drivers or the manager of the bus depot. A bus repair garage was constructed in 1950. Between 1950 and 1952 another building was developed to provide a lounge for bus drivers. Multiple garages were built on the premise between 1952 and 1956 with one being attached to the east side of the grandstand. The majority of these buildings were constructed to the north of the grandstand. During the 1960s and 1970s, other temporary and permanent buildings were erected including ticket booths and concession stands. In 1960 the eastern section of the original

¹²⁶ 4J Eugene School District, *Proposed Finding of Fact*.

Amazon tract was conveyed to the city by the school district for the construction of what is now the Amazon Parkway.¹²⁷



Figure 23: 1948 University of Oregon baseball team. Photo courtesy of Oregon Digital.

Between 1938 and 1969, the stadium was primarily used for high school football, baseball, and soccer games. It also became a venue for different sporting events, Fourth of July celebrations, and rodeos. In 1969 the Emerald Empire Baseball Club minor league team moved up to the Class AAA Pacific Coast League and required a larger facility. The team signed a three-year lease with the Eugene School District to use and alter the stadium. As part of the lease, the School Board determined that the club would need to make a minimum of \$34,000 in improvements to the stadium.¹²⁸ Upgrades included new turf, the addition of sound-deadening materials, 800 wooden theatre-style box seats, and increasing the lighting system. The box seats were purchased from the River Island Stadium (demolished), the former home stadium of the San Diego Padres minor league team. Civic Stadium was home to the Emeralds baseball team

¹²⁷ Ibid.; Perrin.

¹²⁸ 4J Eugene School District, *Proposed Finding of Fact*.

until November 25, 2009 when the team decided to move to a new ballpark constructed by the University of Oregon across the Willamette River near Autzen Stadium.

In 2015, the School District sold the stadium and surrounding property to the city of Eugene. Shortly after they sold the property to the Eugene Civic Alliance. The city retained approximately .5-acre of the 10.2-acre property to develop into a small park and an easement for a narrow corridor to be used as a walking and biking path. The Eugene Civic Alliance planned to renovate the stadium and develop the property as a sports and recreation complex. A fire severely damaged the stadium on June 29, 2015 precipitating its subsequent demolition.¹²⁹

Historical Significance

Civic Stadium was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.¹³⁰ The original building was found to be significant under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C at the local level for its association with the WPA, contribution to community development, and its architectural style. At that time, it had continuously been used as a municipal athletic facility since the date of construction and contributed to the entertainment and recreational needs of Eugene and the surrounding area. It was deemed significant under Criterion A for its contributions to community planning and development as it brought together the government and Eugene's citizens during the Great Depression. Under Criterion C it was determined to be significant for its architectural style as an example of typical Depression Era stadiums constructed throughout the Pacific Northwest. At the time of the nomination it was the tenth oldest minor league ball park in the country and one of two known examples of the Timber

¹²⁹ 4J Eugene School District, "Civic Stadium."

¹³⁰ Perrin.

Engineering Company's Typical Design No. 109 Grandstand models. After the 2015 fire and its subsequent demolition the resource was removed from the National Register of Historic Places.

If not for the 2015 fire, the resource would have most likely retained sufficient integrity to maintain its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A & C at the local level. The collaborative effort of the Eugene School District, the Eugene Chamber of Commerce, the residents of Eugene, and the WPA is an exceptional example of community planning and development during President Roosevelt's New Deal program. Each group played an integral role in the project's success as the site was acquired with a city bond measure, materials were donated by local lumber mills and timber owners, the school district allocated funds, and city residents made private donations for its completion during a time of incredible economic hardship. It was also a rare example of Depression era stadiums designed in the Pacific Northwest and wood constructed stadiums in the country. If still standing the stadium would have been one of 14 known remaining wood baseball stadiums in the country and would have national significance.¹³¹

¹³¹ "Searching for Current Wooden Baseball Parks? See Where they are Today," <https://www.aplussportsandmore-fanshop-baseballfield.com/Current-Wooden-Baseball-Parks.html> (accessed April 1, 2018).

Chapter 5: Oregon State Forester's Office Building (1938)



Figure 24: Viewing southwest. Photo by author.

Architectural Description

The 1938 Oregon State Forester's Office Building is located at 2600 State Street on a 10.25-acre irregular-shaped lot in Salem, Oregon. The building has a fifty-foot setback from a busy thoroughfare and is one of several Department of Forestry structures within the complex. The site is bounded by State Street to the northeast, Mill Creek to the southeast, a paved walkway to the southwest, and a parking lot and paved walkway to the northwest. The surrounding buildings include a modern office building housing the Oregon Department of Forestry to the southwest, a relocated CCC structure that now houses the Forest History Museum to the northwest, and the State Penitentiary on the north side of State Street (See Appendix B for a site map). The streetscape includes street lights, utility poles, sidewalks, deciduous and coniferous trees, and a short discontinuous stone wall constructed by the WPA. The 2 ½ -foot high random-coursed stone wall is broken at regular intervals with small pillars. It runs along the south side of State Street from the western edge of the parking lot to the western bank of Mill Creek with inlets for

the western and eastern driveways. A separate section runs along a paved walkway to the south of the Oregon State Forester's Office Building and connects to a stone equipment bridge approximately 85 feet in length. Also constructed by the WPA, the bridge features two concrete arches and originally included hand rails of Doug Fir logs. When constructed the bridge linked the Department of Forestry buildings and the CCC compound on the east side of Mill Creek.



Figure 25: Viewing west. Photo by author.



Figure 26: Viewing south. Photo by author.

The L-shaped 1½ story structure is on a concrete foundation and includes a concrete basement. Its cross-hipped roof with multiple hipped roof dormers is finished with wood shake shingles. It portrays characteristics of the National Park Service Rustic style architecture common during the period of construction. Such characteristics include the application of regional wood and stone materials, a rustic appearance, and harmony with the surrounding landscape and park space. A curved path of oxidized basaltic flagstones leads from the sidewalk on State Street to the main entrance on the northeast facade. The pathway is flanked by a grass lawn, short shrubbery, and a few coniferous trees.

The northeast (primary) façade features multiple hipped dormers, cladding of oxidized basaltic flagstones and vertical boards and battens, hewn timber window frames, and an asymmetrically located recessed main entrance with a small porch. Flagstone is the primary cladding material and includes a variety of greys and browns. The stones are asymmetrically placed throughout the structure. The west and east ends of façade include short projections with eaveless gable roofs. The larger eastern projection includes a set of three fixed multi-light wood frame windows with thick painted stone window surrounds. The flagstones above the window set are oriented in a sunburst design. The western projection includes a single-hung multi-light wood sash window and the peak of the gable roof is finished with vertical board and batten siding. The main entrance includes a truncated stone archway and single-door opening. The entrance includes a multi-light multi-panel wood door flanked by multi-light side lights. Two single-hung multi-light wood windows are situated to the west of the entrance. An air-conditioner unit has been installed in the upper section of the eastern window. Three hipped dormers with multi-light wood casement windows are evenly spaced on the upper floor. At the east corner of the

intersecting L-shaped roof form is a gable clad with vertical board and battens with a centrally located vent.



Figure 27: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

The southeast elevation is clad with oxidized basaltic flagstone up to the height of the first-floor window sills where it transitions to 10-inch Douglas Fir weatherboard painted in a light blueish green hue. A chimney of the same flagstone is positioned on the north end and tapers in above the first floor. It includes a fixed wood window with circular designs on the south end. First-floor fenestration consists of one single-hung multi-light wood window, a wood bay window with three single-hung multi-light wood windows, and four sets of two side-by-side single-hung multi-light wood windows. The upper floor includes five hipped dormers with pairs

of multi-light wood casement windows. Multiple air-conditioner units have been installed in these windows at each level.



Figure 28: Viewing southwest. Photo by author.

The southwest elevation is clad with oxidized basaltic flagstone up to the height of the first-floor window sills where it transitions to 10-inch Douglas Fir weather board that is painted in a light blueish green hue. The southern end includes a centrally located six-light hexagonal fixed wood window that is flanked by two single-hung multi-light wood windows. An air-conditioner unit has been installed in the upper section of each window. The peak of the gable is clad with board and batten siding and includes a centrally located wooden vent. The northern section includes four single-hung multi-light wood windows on the first-floor and two hipped dormers with multi-light wood casement windows on the upper floor.



Figure 29: Viewing northwest. Photo by author.

The northwest elevation is clad with oxidized basaltic flagstone up to the height of the first-floor window sills where it transitions to 10-inch Douglas Fir weather board painted in a light blueish green hue. The southern section features a recessed porch with a multi-light wood door entrance. The porch is supported by truncated archways of stone, similar to the main entrance. Two single-hung multi-light wood windows are positioned to the north of the entrance. An air-conditioner unit is located in the upper section of the northern window. A modern ADA wooden ramp is attached to the porch. To the south of the porch are two sets of two single-hung multi-light wood windows flanked by a single-hung multi-light wood window to the north and a single-hung multi-light wood window to the south. Metal storm windows have been placed over three of these windows and an air-conditioner unit has been installed in the upper section of one of the centrally located windows. The upper floor includes four hipped dormers with multi-light wood casement windows. An air-conditioner unit is located in the upper section of one of the centrally located windows. A chimney of oxidized basaltic flagstone protrudes from the center of

the roof. The northern section of the elevation includes two symmetrically spaced single-hung multi-light windows.



Figure 30: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

Alterations to the property were identified during a site visit on January 5, 2018 and a review of historic sources. Changes include replacement roofing material (c. 1973), the installation of multiple air-conditioner units in some of the windows, metal access ladders to the southeast and southwest elevations, and the access ramp in the southwest elevation (dates unknown). It appears, that the original landscape has been altered with the replacement and re-arrangement of original plantings and addition of new shrubs (dates unknown). The setting has also been altered with the removal of two warehouses, a machine shop, and a 14-car garage that were constructed by the CCC on the west side of Mill Creek c. 2002-03. The CCC also constructed multiple other buildings on the east side of Mill Creek, but none remain.¹³² A small surviving stone storage building adjacent to the stone bridge on the west side of the creek was constructed by the CCC. The setting has been altered with the relocation of a CCC building to

¹³² Alan Maul, e-mail message to author, March 26, 2018.

the west of the Oregon State Forester's Office Building (c. 2000), construction of a new office building to the southwest, and the expansion of the parking lot (c. 2003). The surrounding area has also become more densely populated since the date of construction with new residential buildings to the south and commercial buildings along State Street.

Historic Narrative

Following major forest fires that caused substantial losses of Oregon timber in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the State Legislature enacted a 1911 law establishing a Board of Forestry, a State Forester, and a State Forestry Department.¹³³ Governor Oswald West and his appointed State Forester, Francis Elliott, created a state forest by exchanging isolated tracts of national forests and school lands for a contiguous section of national forest land. The Oregon State Board of Forestry was responsible for the development of a forest policy that led to the formation of state forests by 1920. West and Elliott also advocated for cooperative fire protection, a forest nursery for artificial reforestation purposes, and control of invasive insects. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the State Forester became responsible for the management of as many as 14 CCC camps in the state.¹³⁴

The Oregon State Forestry Office was originally located in the Oregon State Capitol building until the Capitol was destroyed by fire in 1935.¹³⁵ When it was announced that the rebuilt Capitol would not have sufficient space for the State Forester's offices, J. W. Ferguson,

¹³³ Mike Miller, *Forests, People and Oregon: A History of Forestry in Oregon* (Salem: Oregon State Forestry Department, 1982).

¹³⁴ James G. Fisher, *Oregon State Forester's Office Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1981).

¹³⁵ Oregon Department of Forestry, *Oregon State Forester's Building* (Salem: Oregon Department of Forestry, 2008).

the State Forester led an effort to acquire land for a new centralized headquarters. On June 26, 1937, Ferguson submitted a proposal for a new headquarters to the Board of Forestry that included the possibility of WPA funds and additional funding for CCC constructed warehouses, machine shops, and garage. The Board instructed Ferguson to investigate possible sites and whether federal funds could be acquired. On November 18, 1937, Ferguson submitted another proposal to the Board for the acquisition of a 5.5-acre tract of land on the east side of Salem along Salem-Turner Road, across the street from the State Penitentiary and adjacent to a 4.5-acre site under development for the state headquarters of the CCC. The Board approved the project and the land was purchased soon after. At a later meeting the Board approved the purchase of an additional 1.76 acres adjoining the original property on the west.¹³⁶ The acquired lot was the former site of an auto-camp and a large skating rink.¹³⁷

The WPA allotted \$18,000 for necessary labor to conduct the project. Initial estimates of state expenditures for materials was \$13,000, but subsequent reports listed the total cost as \$93,500.¹³⁸ WPA laborers constructed the office building, stone walls, and walkways. They also conducted revetment work on Mill Creek. The WPA collaborated with the state nursery in Corvallis on the landscaping plans. Additionally, they were responsible for the construction of the equipment bridge spanning the creek and connecting the headquarters with the CCC complex on the other side. Due to federal requirements, definitive spaces needed to be established to differentiate the work of the CCC from other federal agencies. The National Youth Administration assisted the WPA with the interior woodwork such as the construction of all

¹³⁶ "Building Combines Utility and Beauty," *The Forest Log* 9, no. 6 (1938): 1, 7.

¹³⁷ "Work is Started on New Headquarters," *The Forest Log* 8, no. 9 (1938): 1-2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*; Fisher.

doors and window casings. They also sanded flooring materials and other interior materials. The CCC prepared the site, but the construction was solely the responsibility of the WPA.¹³⁹



Figure 31: Viewing southwest. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry.

State Forester J. W. Ferguson designed the building including the floor plan and interior finishes. He was assisted by the engineering department of the U.S. Forest Service in Portland who prepared detailed drawings of the interior and exterior.¹⁴⁰ Construction of the new headquarters began on March 28, 1938 with an average of 30 men working at the site each day.¹⁴¹ Due to the proximity to Mill Creek and marshy ground surrounding it, debris from the former State Capitol was used as landfill.¹⁴² In order to bring the tract up to grade 25,000 yards of gravel was added. Wood for the construction of the building was acquired through direct departmental purchase or through donation by local lumber manufacturers. Due to its proximity

¹³⁹ "Building Combines Utility and Beauty," 1, 7.; "Work Progressing on Headquarters," *The Forest Log* 8, no. 10 (1938): 1; "Work is Started on New Headquarters," 1-2; Oregon Department of Forestry.

¹⁴⁰ "Building Combines Utility and Beauty," 1, 7.

¹⁴¹ "Work Progressing on Headquarters," 1.

¹⁴² Fisher.

to the creek and the fact that the water level would rise several feet above the basement floor the basement was designed to be water-proof.¹⁴³



Figure 32: Viewing southwest. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry.

Construction continued until December 1, 1938 when the building officially opened. After the 1935 State Capitol fire, the Forestry Department had relocated to temporary offices in downtown Salem that were described as “cramped and unsatisfactory.”¹⁴⁴ The opening marked the first time all offices and equipment were at the same site since 1935. At the time of opening, not all of the interior work had been finished so with the exception of the tax roll and bookkeeping departments, all office personnel worked in the basement until the interior work had been completed. This interior work was expected to be done by the end of 1939. The WPA finalized the landscaping of the headquarters by 1940.

¹⁴³ “Building Combines Utility and Beauty,” 1, 7.

¹⁴⁴ “Department Moves into New Building,” *The Forest Log* 9, no. 6 (1938): 1, 7.



Figure 33: Viewing north. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry.

Once completed, each of the offices were finished with a specific variety of native Oregon wood. Eighteen types of wood were provided by private lumber companies including 11 conifers and seven hard woods. Conifers included Douglas and noble firs, hemlock, Port Orford and western red cedars, Sitka spruce, ponderosa and sugar pines, western yew, western juniper, and tamarack. Oregon hardwoods included myrtle, bigleaf maple, golden chinquapin, madrone, white oak, red alder, and ash. Crowfoot hemlock and some knotty and sap-stained woods were also applied for "unusual" details.¹⁴⁵ The selection of wood represented every forested region of the state and displayed "the finest examples of Oregon manufacturer's ability to produce the choicest, most satisfactory and unquestionably the most beautiful woods available for this character of work."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Oregon Department of Forestry, *Oregon State Forester's Building* (Salem: Oregon Department of Forestry, 2008).

¹⁴⁶ "Eighteen Oregon Woods Used in Office Finish," *The Forest Log* 9, no. 6 (1938): 3-6.



Figure 34: Viewing southeast. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry.



Figure 35: Viewing northeast. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry.

Historical Significance

The Oregon State Forester's Office Building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Although not specifically indicated in the nomination, the property was deemed significant under Criteria A and C. It was determined to be significant in the areas of landscape architecture, art, conservation, politics/government, and architecture for representing the best

design, most comprehensive planning, and highest degree of integrity among facilities constructed for the State Forestry Department during the Great Depression. The surrounding stone wall, stone bridge, and landscaping were included in this nomination.

The Oregon State Forester's Office Building retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. While the addition of air-conditioners, metal ladders, and wooden ramp have altered the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, the majority of original material remain and the building's character defining features have been retained. The later alterations could be removed without significant adverse effects on the original materials. The setting has also been altered with the development of the complex and surrounding neighborhood as well alterations to the landscaping, but the property has retained the surrounding landscaping area, stone wall, and bridge that are original to the period of construction. The building has retained integrity of association and feeling as it has continuously served as the headquarters of the State Foresters Office and other associated administrative offices. The Oregon State Forester's Office Building has retained all seven aspects of integrity and research indicates the property is historically significant at the local and state level for its association with politics/government and as an exemplary example of National Park Service Rustic style architecture during the New Deal.¹⁴⁷ Its period of significance is 1938, aligning with its date of construction.

¹⁴⁷ Interiors were not within the scope of this project and were not evaluated. However, research and a field investigation indicate that the interiors have retained sufficient integrity to be significant for their association to New Deal artwork.

Chapter 6: Oregon Ceramic Studio (1937)



Figure 36: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

Architectural Description

The 1937 Oregon Ceramic Studio is located at 3934 SW Corbett Avenue on a 0.37-acre irregular-shaped lot in Portland, Oregon. Located within a mixed residential commercial neighborhood, the site is bounded by SW Corbett Avenue to the west, a modern apartment complex to the north, and commercial buildings to the east and south. Multiple Victorian-style houses from the late 19th and early 20th century are located in the surrounding area (See Appendix C for site maps). The streetscape includes street lights, utility poles, sidewalks, a metal bike rack, deciduous and coniferous trees, and shrubbery. A small rectangular parking lot is located on the north end of the site.

The one-story rectangular-shaped building with side and rear wings has undergone multiple additions and alterations since its original construction that obscure its original design. It is on a concrete foundation and includes a basement and a multi-level complex roof form with metal coping, aluminum gutters in some sections, and at least one skylight. The roof is finished

with a variety of materials including built-up roofing material, composite shingles, and standing seam metal sheeting. Originally designed in the Art Deco style, it more closely represents the minimal traditional and commercial architectural styles today with its one-story height, minimal architectural details, and storefront windows.

The west (primary) façade features, a brick patio, two recessed entrances, two modern bay windows, and a cornice of protruding bricks. Original sections of the building are clad with red brick laded-up in an American running bond and what appears to be wood board siding. The additions to the building have been sheathed with wood shingles and feature a wood board fascia. The current main entrance features a deep setback from the sidewalk and is accessed via a double-door metal gate and a brick patio on the south end. The main entrance includes a double-door opening with two large single-light modern metal doors. Two large rectangular four-light windows, an aluminum downspout, and what appears to be a single-light fixed metal window are positioned to the south. A brick wall extends from the patio entrance to the south running adjacent to the sidewalk. A large L-shaped metal mansard awning covers the main entry way, modern box-shaped wall sconces, and the original brick patio. The patio features a rounded end and brick steps along the façade. The awning is supported by wooden brackets and beams and covers a wooden soffit. This section of the façade is where the original main entrance was located and now includes a modern single-light fixed metal window and a large metal mail box. To the west of the original patio is a large modern metal rectangular-shaped bay window. Further west is a recessed side entrance with a single-door opening, a single glass door with a single-light glass side light, and recessed overhead light fixtures. The recessed entrance also includes a concrete entry way and a brick wall that runs along the façade to the north of the entrance before

turning into the building. The wall also forms a cavity between it and the building. To the west of this wall is a larger rectangular-shaped metal bay window.



Figure 37: Viewing east. Photo by author.

The north elevation of the northern wing is clad with wood shingles and consists of a loading dock with a rectangular wood framed opening, and a recessed entrance. The entrance includes a double-door opening and two flush-panel doors with a double floodlight and a recessed light fixture above. A large wooden board functions as a bumper on the loading dock. The other sections of the north elevation were highly obscured from the public right of way on the day of the site visit. However, it appears that the elevation includes a multi-light metal window and wood stairs that access the back porch. The east elevation was not visible from the public right of way on the day of the site visit. However, views of the interior indicate that the elevation includes several multi-light windows. A wrap around wood porch extends from the north and east elevations and is supported by wood posts and brackets.



Figure 38: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

The southern elevation was partially obscured from the public right of way on the day of the site visit. The portion visible featured wood shingle siding, a wood board fascia, and metal coping. A double floodlight is centrally located along the roof line and a large metal pipe is positioned on the east end.



Figure 39: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

Alterations to the property were identified during a site visit on November 2, 2017 and a review of historic sources. In the early 1960s, the building was remodeled and expanded to transform vacant spaces into new exhibition galleries and update the building's exterior (See Figure 43). The changes made included a new northern entrance, an enlarged exhibition gallery (Lydia Herrick Hodge Gallery), the transformation of an exhibit gallery into a sales area, an enlarged studio workshop, and the construction of a deck on the east elevation. At this time the kiln was removed and the kiln room was renovated.¹⁴⁸ The plaster house was renovated circa 1965 and additional gallery spaces were constructed on the first floor and basement in 1976.¹⁴⁹ In the 1990s an annex was constructed on the north end.¹⁵⁰ Other changes include the removal of the original marquee, main entrance, store front window, vertical multi-light windows with awning operation, and the wooden fence to the south of the original entrance. These changes likely occurred in the 1960s, but no records of changes to the building were found.



Figure 40: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

¹⁴⁸ *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 16, 1961.

¹⁴⁹ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 3934 Corbett: *Fifty Years at Contemporary Crafts* (Portland: Contemporary Crafts Association, 1987), 27, 69.

¹⁵⁰ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection: Selections from the Museum of Contemporary Craft* (Portland: Museum of Contemporary Craft, 2008), 103.

Historic Narrative

In the late 1930s, crafts were primarily considered to be weaving and ceramics, but grew to include additional practices through the Great Depression and World War II. Maintaining these practices was a challenge during the two World Wars and the Great Depression as resources and discretionary income used to buy art was limited. The Great Depression was both economical and psychological in nature as high levels of unemployment was felt throughout the country and millions of Americans struggled to survive. As with almost all other industries there was minimal growth of cultural institutions. No new local art venue had been organized in Portland since Julia Hoffman formed the Arts and Crafts Society in 1907.¹⁵¹ Amidst this suffering Lydia Herrick Hodge recognized the potential benefit of a new arts institution for the state.¹⁵²

Hodge was a native of Indiana and a graduate of Indiana State College, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Oregon. After graduating with honors from the University of Oregon in 1927, she moved to Paris to study art. She exhibited her work in multiple French salons and the experience motivated her develop a similar art-interested culture in the Pacific Northwest. When she returned to Oregon circa 1935, Hodge worked with fellow graduates from the University of Oregon to create an organization to establish greater financial and professional opportunities for artists and craftsmen in the state. Ellis F. Lawrence, the dean of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts along with his colleagues W. R. B. Wilcox, an art professor, and Avakian, a ceramics instructor, assisted these graduates in forming the Alumni Art League

¹⁵¹ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 8. The Arts and Crafts Society was later known as the Oregon College of Art and Craft.

¹⁵² Contemporary Crafts Gallery, v, 3.

(AAL) in 1936. One of the earliest projects of the AAL was to develop a non-profit, community based ceramic studio with a focus on art education.¹⁵³

The Oregon Ceramic Studio was formed in 1937 with Hodge leading the volunteer-based effort. The vision of the Oregon Ceramic Studio was twofold: it was to support regional craft artisans and to educate. Artists could purchase hard-to-find materials such as clays, glazes, and tools, use the on-site kiln to fire their work, submit their art for critiques, and exhibit it within the gallery.¹⁵⁴ A long-lasting multi-dimensional education program also connected artists with the community through hands-on experiences. Hodge and other women associated with the studio believed such an organization was particularly needed during the Great Depression. The studio could provide education, assist with the development of new skills, and be a place of leisure to provide refuge from people's ordinary lives.¹⁵⁵

In 1937, the Oregon Ceramic Studio initially leased and then purchased from the Portland Public School District a four-lot plot on a hillside overlooking the Willamette River in a southwest residential neighborhood. The land was purchased for ten dollars with the agreement that the Oregon Ceramic Studio would fire ceramic works by the district's students. Once opened the studio collaborated with the Portland Public School District to develop its art program and initiated a series of children's exhibitions beginning in 1941.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ibid, 3-4.

¹⁵⁴ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 8. During the 1930s and 1940s, clay as a medium for artistic representation was seldom used amongst West Coast artists as access to potter's wheels, glazes, kilns, and molds was scarce. The resources for those working with clay were few and academic institutions providing instruction were rare.

¹⁵⁵ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 15, 24.

¹⁵⁶ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 15, 24-25.

The Art Deco building was designed by the architect Ellis F. Lawrence.¹⁵⁷ Bert Brown Barker, the vice president of the University of Oregon successfully applied for three WPA grants to cover the cost of labor.¹⁵⁸ All materials, labor, and additional costs were donated by either Oregon business firms and organizations, the WPA, or private citizens. Tax assessor records list the building as completed in 1937, but other historical records indicate that the kiln and studio were in operation prior to that.¹⁵⁹ When finished, the kiln was the largest commercial kiln west of Denver.¹⁶⁰ The Oregon Ceramic Studio received financial assistance for the organization's operations from the Arts and Crafts Society, the AAL, the board of higher education, and private citizens. The original board of directors was comprised of representatives from the University of Oregon, the AAL, Portland Public Schools, and the Portland Art Museum.¹⁶¹



Figure 41: Photo printed in the Works Progress Administration in Oregon, 1938.

¹⁵⁷ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 4. Bert Brown Barker was the former head of the Oregon Federal Art Project.

¹⁵⁹ "Art Sale Tuesday for Ceramic Fund," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), May 24, 1937. The *Oregonian* reported on an auction to be held at the Heathman hotel to raise funds for the maintenance of the "nearly complete" Oregon Ceramic Studio. All art pieces were designed by Oregon artists and included water colors, etchings, book plates, china painting, leather tapestry, stained glass, wood-cuts, puppets, and more.

¹⁶⁰ "Ten Years of Service to Community Art," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 25, 1948.

¹⁶¹ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 65.

The early development and management was volunteer based, and Hodge with the volunteer Activities Committee did all of the work and the majority of the policy-making relating to exhibitions, development of the salesroom, the recruitment of kiln users and artists, and the maintenance of the facility.¹⁶² The first exhibit opened in 1939 and by 1940 the museum had grown to feature 43 craftsmen, expanded membership to 77, and was accepted into the Association of Western Museums, which provided access to the association's traveling exhibits. Hodge worked with the Portland Art Museum to sustain the Studio's operations and plan for its growth. She continued to collaborate with the Portland Art Museum, the University of Oregon, and Portland Public Schools in the following years to develop exhibitions and educational courses and lectures.¹⁶³

The museum struggled during the war years. In the 1941 annual letter Hodge wrote "Facing the year ahead of us, we would certainly have our fingers crossed were we not so busy using them, concocting plans to keep our project afloat and still progressive."¹⁶⁴ The organization struggled as many of the volunteers moved away following husbands on military assignments. Some who remained worked at the Red Cross, providing crafts for those in hospital rehabilitation wards and some improved the plaster house to serve as a retreat for personnel from the 29th Engineers Division.

The success and growth of the Oregon Ceramic Studio was aided by industrial designer Russell Wright who launched the American Way of Education in 1941, a national movement to

¹⁶² Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 65. Ray Sheehan, president of the Gallery from 1970 to 1973, remarking on the early development and management stated "Do you know how this place works? You see a group of women arrive early in the morning to open the place up, clean it, manage the shop, install exhibitions or whatever. In mid-afternoon they disappear to work a few hours in their kitchens. Then they're back at night, all dressed up and with platters of food, to host the opening. They clean up again, go home, get some sleep, and often they're back the next morning. That's how this place works."

¹⁶³ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 5.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

create a network between craft artisans, manufacturers, and retailers of domestic and architectural wares. The Oregon Ceramic Studio represented this movement regionally. Some of its artists produced goods, which were sold in leading regional and national department stores under the American Way label. At that time, more artisans were discovering the studio as a supportive place. Artists included potters, weavers, jewelers, wood-carvers, and stitchery artists. The organization also began to work with several local organizations such as the Portland Handweavers Guild, the Portland Garden Club, and the Women's Architectural League.¹⁶⁵

In 1944, The American Craftsmen's Council (ACC) asked for the Oregon Ceramic Studio to jury submissions of Northwestern artists seeking to sell their crafts at America House, a retailer operated by the ACC. This national recognition elevated the Oregon Ceramic Studio to a leading craft institution in the Pacific Northwest. During the 1940s, the Oregon Ceramic Studio would exhibit the works of regional and nationally recognized artists. The conclusion of World War II fostered significant growth within the craft community as academic institutions devoted greater attention to its study and many veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill to enroll in such coursework. This marked the beginning of the American Craft Movement. In the following decade, more international artists would work with and display their crafts at the Oregon Ceramic Studio.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 66-67.

¹⁶⁶ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 21, 29-30.



Figure 42: Photo printed in *Fifty Years at Contemporary Craft*. Referred to as "early" photo.

The passing of Lydia Herrick Hodge in 1960 caused concern among board members about the survival of the institution. Ken Shores, who was an artist-in-residence at the time, unofficially led the organization until 1964 when he became the first paid director. Collaborating with Board President David Pugh, Shores worked to restructure the organization's management and mission. The two men initiated a three-phase expansion program for the building. They hired architect Richard Norman and landscape architect Richard Ellis to enlarge and remodel the building to transform vacant spaces into new exhibition galleries and update the building's exterior.¹⁶⁷ The proposed plans included a new north entrance, an enlarged exhibition gallery, transforming an exhibition gallery to a sales area, increased storage areas, an enlarged studio workshop, and a new deck overlooking the river (See Figure 43).¹⁶⁸ Pugh, an architect and head of the Portland office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill designed the new Lydia Herrick Hodge Gallery, which was dedicated in October, 1962.¹⁶⁹ At that time, architect Earl Newberry renovated the kiln room and built a new deck. With the expansion and renovation of the building

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 47-48.

¹⁶⁸ *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 16, 1961.

¹⁶⁹ "Fire, Clay and Grog Fete to Open Major Summer Art Event," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland OR), June 25, 1961. Funding for the new gallery was provided in part by a gala preview at the Portland Art Museum for a national traveling exhibit on ceramics titled "The Fire, Clay, and Grog Fete."

in 1965, the organization's name was changed to the Contemporary Crafts Gallery to more clearly communicate the range of crafts exhibited and sold. The kiln was also dismantled as clay was no longer sold and the organization no longer fired the works of local public school students.¹⁷⁰

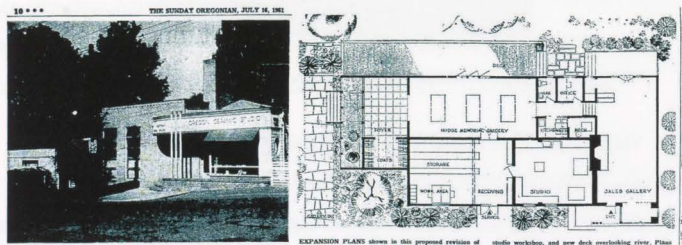


Figure 43: Printed in the Sunday Oregonian July 16, 1961.

In 1965, Richard Norman, a board member since 1962 became the board President. Under his leadership approximately \$1,500 was spent to renovate the plaster house between 1965 & 1969 to house an artist's studio.¹⁷¹ Norman also proposed to the Board a communal studio space to house multiple young artists working with fabric, wood, and metal. In 1969 the artist-in-residence program was established by Norman and the Contemporary Crafts Gallery Director Gordon Smyth and endowed by Ruth Halvorsen. The one-year program was designed for young artists beginning their careers to provide them the opportunity to create significant pieces of art that would be placed on exhibit and donated to the collection.¹⁷² Smyth was also responsible for

¹⁷⁰ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 8, 27.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 27. Norman, his wife Dorothy, and Jack Wilson and his wife Helen supplied \$1,000 in the form of a memorial fund named after their children.

¹⁷² Ibid, 27. Partnering with the Oregon Arts Commission a small monthly stipend was provided beginning in 1970.

the Craftsmen-in-the-Schools program, which assigned craftsmen to conduct workshops in Portland public schools beginning in 1970. It grew from five workshops in 1970 to ninety in 1978. By 1986, 233 weeks of residences had been scheduled with 28 artists visiting over 100 schools.¹⁷³

In 1976, the Gallery announced an extensive expansion of the building to include additional galleries on the main floor and in the basement. These alterations would double the exhibition space and cost approximately \$156,000. By 1976, 650 craft artisans had become associated with the organization and the work of 70 of them had been exhibited with 20% being nationally recognized artists. The gallery produced nearly 300 exhibitions between 1978 and 1987, displaying the works of hundreds of artists.¹⁷⁴



Figure 44: Photo printed in *Portland Historic Resource Inventory* (1984).

In the 1990s, Director Marlene Gabel conducted a fundraising campaign to add a new annex to the building designed by the local architect Bill Fletcher. This annex allowed for the

¹⁷³ Ibid, 28-29; Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 67.

¹⁷⁴ Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 11-12.

exhibition of rarely seen works from the collection. After the completion of the annex, the organization's name was changed to the Portland Center for Contemporary Craft by the new Director, Pam Siers. The name was changed back by the following Director Darcy Edgar. The Contemporary Crafts Gallery remained at its Corbett location until 2007 when it moved to Portland's Pearl District in July 2007.¹⁷⁵ The Museum of Contemporary Craft was the oldest continuously-operating craft institution in the United States until it closed in 2016.¹⁷⁶

Ellis F. Lawrence was an active architect in Portland for 40 years. He also founded the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts in 1914 and served as its first Dean from 1914 to 1946. Born in Malden, Massachusetts in 1879, Lawrence received his Master's degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He practiced in Boston and San Francisco before moving to Portland to work with Edgar M. Lazarus in 1906. After a brief stint with Lazarus he formed his own firm with fellow MIT graduate Ernest Boyd MacNaughton, and engineer Herbert E. Raymond. Lawrence was the principal designer until leaving the firm in 1910 to work independently. He later started a firm with William G. Holford in 1913. Frederick Stanley Allyn, and Ormond R. Bean joined the firm in 1928. Bean would leave the firm in 1933 and Holford and Allyn followed in 1941.

Lawrence's architectural practice was responsible for more than 500 designs, including residential, commercial, and educational buildings. He developed campus master plans for Whitman College in 1909 and the University of Oregon in 1914, which he updated in 1923 and 1932. He designed a total of 23 buildings on the University of Oregon campus. He was known for designing in the style of Classical Revival, Arts & Crafts Revival, Mediterranean, Northwest

¹⁷⁵ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *Unpacking the Collection*, 15, 103.

¹⁷⁶ Museum of Contemporary Craft, *History*, <http://www.museumofcontemporarycraft.org/about/c/history/> (accessed January 6, 2018).

Regional, and Art Deco. His most notable designs include Portland's Public Market Building (1933) and Salem's Masonic Building (1912), Thomas A. Livesley residence (1924), and Elsinore Theater (1926).¹⁷⁷

Historical Significance

The Oregon Ceramic Studio has retained integrity of location and setting. However, due to the extensive additions and alterations and the closure of the organization, the building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association have been significantly diminished. The building is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Politics/Government, Art, Commerce, and Education. It is significant at the local and state level as a WPA building that served as an important regional cultural institution for the creation and exhibition of craft and as an education institution. Its associated period of significance spans from 1937 to 1968, representing its date of construction through the major period of additions that demonstrated its growth and importance to the community at the time.

The Oregon Ceramic Studio opened during a period of significant hardship in the region. Its development was dependent on the partnership between regional artists and the federal government. Its construction was the result of WPA labor, donated materials, and the financial support of the region's citizens. The Oregon Ceramic Studio provided a space for the creation and exhibition of crafts and the education of the region. Its development and longevity were dependent on the support of the community, which it worked to serve. The Oregon Ceramic

¹⁷⁷ Richard Ritz, *Architects of Oregon: A Biographical Dictionary of Architects Deceased – 19th and 20th Centuries* (Portland: Lair Hill, 2002): 242-243.

Studio hosted exhibitions and participated in campaigns that greatly contributed to the Pacific Northwest' legacy of craft.

Chapter 7: Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station (1938-1939)



Figure 45: Viewing northwest. Photo by author.

Architectural Description

Overlook Park is a city park located at 1599 N Fremont Street in Portland, Oregon. Located within the northeast Overlook neighborhood, the park provides public space for a variety of leisure activities. Currently 10.93 acres, the park is situated on a slightly sloped lot descending to the west and south with a curved short hillside to the north. Large deciduous and some coniferous trees line the park boundaries. Views of the Willamette River, downtown Portland and the west hills are accessible from the western and southern boundaries.

Located on the bluffs of the Willamette River, the 11-sided Overlook Park is bounded by N Interstate Avenue and the Kaiser Permanente Interstate Medical Office West to the east; N Greeley Avenue to the south and west; N Fremont Street to the south, and N Melrose Drive and N Overlook Boulevard to the north. The residential neighborhood of Overlook is located to the north and includes multiple residential properties from the early 20th century. North Interstate Avenue includes a track for the MAX Yellow Line and multiple commercial buildings with

Kaiser Permanente Interstate Medical Office East being the largest and most prominent. The primary entrance is located at the south end of the park along the N Fremont Street cul-de-sac. The park features large open grassy areas, a baseball field, a softball field, a soccer field, a basketball court, a tetherball court, a playground, an uncovered picnic area, a jogging path, an off-leash dog park, a circular concrete wading pool, and a National Park Service Rustic style stone shelter and comfort station (See Appendix D for site maps).¹⁷⁸

Constructed in 1938-39 by the WPA, the symmetrical single-story rectangular stone shelter and comfort station exhibits characteristics of the National Park Service Rustic style architecture common during the period of construction. Such characteristics include the application of regional stone and wood materials, a rustic appearance, and harmony with the surrounding lawn and park space. Built on a concrete foundation, the building is primarily constructed out of stone and includes a stepped two-tier gable roof with composite shingles, an aluminum gutter system, and a stone chimney on the east end. Typical of National Park Service Rustic style shelters, the centrally-located shelter area is open, providing access from the north and south.¹⁷⁹ Short protruding wings with gable roofs are located on the west and east ends and house lavatories and storage rooms.

The north elevation features four stone buttresses that support the large shelter area and cathedral ceiling and two single-door openings in the west and east wings. Each of the buttresses include benches on each open side with stone bases and concrete tops (See Figure 47). The central shelter opening includes a narrow wood fascia. The eastern opening provides access to a

¹⁷⁸ Neil Barker, "The Works Progress Administration in Portland, Oregon." The Overlook Park wading pool was also constructed by the WPA as part of a larger development project for the park. The circular wading pool has a radius of 20' and a fountain and drain at its center.

¹⁷⁹ United States National Parks Service, *Park Structures and Facilities* (Rahway: Quinn & Boden, 1935), 111.

storage room and includes an original door consisting of five vertical wood boards with historic iron brackets, door handle, and a centrally located 4" diamond-shaped cutout at eye-height that originally held striated glass. A metal electric meter box and metal downspout are attached to the west of the entrance. The western opening provides access to a storage room and includes a replacement single-panel wood door with historic metal brackets. A metal downspout is attached to the east of the entrance.



Figure 46: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.



Figure 47: Viewing northwest. Photo by author

The west elevation consists of four square window openings, a narrow rake board in the western wing, and a triangular louvered vent at the peak of the central western gable. The windows are symmetrically spaced in sets of two and each feature large stone sills. The two northern windows include metal screens with a diamond pattern and the two southern windows include wooden louvered panels.

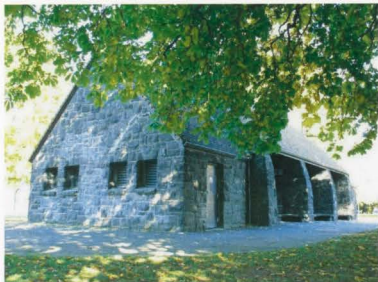


Figure 48: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

The south elevation features four stone buttresses that support the large shelter area and cathedral ceiling and two single-door openings in the west and east wings. Each of the buttresses include benches on each open side with stone bases and concrete tops. The central shelter opening includes a thin wood fascia. The western opening provides access to a lavatory and includes a replacement flush-panel metal door. A metal downspout is attached to the east of the entrance. The eastern opening provides access to a lavatory and includes a replacement flush-panel wood door with historic metal brackets and door handle. A metal downspout is attached to the west of the entrance.



Figure 48: Viewing north. Photo by author.

The east elevation consists of four square window openings, a narrow rake board in the eastern wing, and a stone chimney at the peak of the eastern central gable with two triangular louvered vents below. The windows are symmetrically spaced in sets of two and each feature large stone sills. The two southern windows include six-light fixed wood windows with mesh metal screens and the northern windows include wooden louvered panels.



Figure 50: Viewing northwest. Photo by author.

The interior of shelter includes an architecturally finished concrete floor and a stone fireplace on the east end that has been infilled. Due to the open-air interior, the roof framing lies exposed and consisting of beams, sills, rafters, collar beams, ties and struts. Fir framing members were originally planned to be used throughout and they appear to remain.

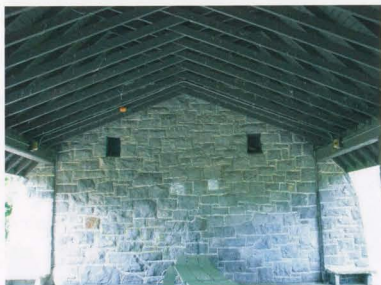


Figure 49: Interior viewing west. Photo by author.

Alterations to the property were identified during a site visit on November 2, 2017 and a review of historic sources. Changes include renovations to the bathroom circa 1978, replacement doors for the two lavatories and the western storage room, painting the remaining original door, replacement gutters, the infill of the chimney, and the removal of exterior glass lighting fixtures (labeled men and women) that were located outside each lavatory (dates unknown).¹⁸⁰ The red cedar shingle roof was replaced in kind around 1978 and later replaced with asphalt minimal composite shingles at an unknown time.

¹⁸⁰ Portland Parks Department, *Overlook Park* (Portland: Portland Parks & Recreation, n.d.).



Figure 50: Viewing southwest. Photo by author.



Figure 51: Viewing south. Photo by author.

Historic Narrative

Located in the southern end of Portland's Overlook neighborhood, the park was named after the Overlook subdivision, which was platted in 1906.¹⁸¹ The name is also based on its physical location as the park is situated on a bluff above the Willamette River. The original section of

¹⁸¹ Eugene E. Snyder, *Portland Names and Neighborhoods* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1979): 251.

Overlook Park was acquired by the city of Portland for development in 1930. This parcel was already owned by the city and had been used as a landfill since 1920.¹⁸²

Prior to the park's development, the city had hired the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm in 1903 to advise them on developing a park system. John Charles Olmsted visited the city that year and envisioned an extensive park running along the river bluff east of the Willamette River from approximately NE Broadway Street up to the University of Portland, including the present-day location of Overlook Park.¹⁸³ Olmsted believed that the area would be an ideal site for a park as it would meet the needs of the growing surrounding population and frame the views of the Willamette river, the downtown, and the west hills.¹⁸⁴ The firm's report recommended to the city that "In the selection of parks the first consideration should be to locate them so as to secure within them as great natural advantages as practicable, or so they will command the best possible views of whatever great landscape features there may be in the vicinity, or both."¹⁸⁵

Although the city implemented 25 of the 35 recommendations in the report they decided not to develop a park in the Overlook neighborhood until nearly three decades later. The development of the park was spurred by the growth of the surrounding neighborhoods in the

¹⁸² "Park Purchase Urged: City Asked to Buy Overlook Property," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Jan. 27, 1929; City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Historic File Overlook Community Center and Park* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1972).

¹⁸³ Chet Orloff, *Olmstead Portland Park Plan*,

https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/olmsted_portland_park_plan/#.WiHP7UqnHIV (November April 22, 2017).

¹⁸⁴ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Annual report of the park board* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1903), 58.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

1920s and the increase in population.¹⁸⁶ There were also continuous pleas for a park by Overlook residents and social organizations, particularly the Overlook Women's Club.¹⁸⁷

By 1929, with growing pressure to develop the site into a park and increased concern over land-slides around the property that had damaged private properties, the Portland City Council actively worked to allocate funds to develop Overlook Park.¹⁸⁸ While funds were raised for the development of the park, additional lots to extend the park further west were purchased in 1932.¹⁸⁹ Bids for infilling the former landfill began in August of 1933 and by December 100 unemployed men had been hired with funding from the CWA to initiate the development of the park.¹⁹⁰ State Emergency Relief Agency funds were allocated for additional development and work was conducted between September and December 1934. More significant development of the park did not begin until circa 1937.¹⁹¹ The delay was due to the need to let the ground settle and the outbreak of the Great Depression. By 1937 two baseball fields, basketball courts, and a softball backdrop had been constructed.

¹⁸⁶ Dan Haneckow, *An Overlook Overview*, <http://www.cafeunknown.com/2006/06/overlook-overview-overlook.html> (accessed November 2, 2017).

¹⁸⁷ "Parks to Get Land," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), September 30, 1929; "Plea Made for City Help," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), January 15, 1931; "More Parks Envisaged Action of Voters Might Facilitate Development Work," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), September 4, 1932.

¹⁸⁸ "Park Purchase Urged," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Jan 27, 1929.

¹⁸⁹ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Ordinance No. 63306* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1932).

¹⁹⁰ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *4978 Overlook Park Fill* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1933); "9853 men to get jobs," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), December 28, 1933.

¹⁹¹ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Emergency Relief Projects Correspondence: Overlook Park* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1934); City of Portland (OR) Archives, *5036: Development of Overlook Park Sept 1937* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1937).



Figure 52: Viewing northwest. Photo courtesy of City of Portland Archives.

On April 22, 1938, the city of Portland submitted an application to the WPA for a combination stone shelter and comfort station to be constructed of wood and stone along with 420-foot sewer pipe. The building was designed by the Portland architectural firm of Lawrence, Holford & Allyn. Ellis F. Lawrence who also designed the Oregon Ceramic Studio (1937) was likely the chief designer.¹⁹² The total cost was estimated to be \$11,800 with approximately \$7,200 for labor and \$4,000 for materials. C. F. Wiegand, Assistant Superintendent of the Bureau of Parks acted as the superintendent for the sponsor. The proposal indicated that the City Council had dedicated money in the 1937 budget for materials for this project if the WPA would provide the cost of labor. The Bureau of Parks agreed to contribute \$2,688 for materials, \$56 for wheelbarrows and small tools, \$825 for a truck, gas and oil, and \$180 for the architect's fee.

According to the proposal all stone would be quarried from Rocky Butte, approximately five miles to the east of the site.¹⁹³ The plan stated that no stone would be less than 4" thick,

¹⁹² Shellenbarger and Lakin. For a summary of Ellis F. Lawrence's career see pages 92-93.

¹⁹³ Neil Barker, "Portland's Works Progress Administration," 415. The stone from Rocky Butte was also used for multiple other WPA projects in the area including Rocky Butte Scenic Drive, Rocky Butte Jail, tunnels on Cornell

outer facing stones would be split so that projections would not exceed 2", and the inner faces in the rooms would be made "as smooth as the nature of the stone and available tools will permit."¹⁹⁴ Fir would be used for its framing and vertical grained fir would be used for cornice facias, rake molds, and louvered ventilators.¹⁹⁵ The wood sash windows would feature a plain striated glass and the roof would be finished with red cedar shingle that was 100% clear heartwood and 100% vertical grained. Rectangular gutters would also be installed. Doors would be of a stock slab pattern No. 613, finished with vertical grain fir facing with V-grooves that show the plank effect. Each door would include a centrally located 4" diamond of striated glass at eye-height.

On October 8, 1938, an additional \$4,230 was requested to complete the building. The additional funds were needed as a result of the wage increase for stone masons (raised from \$1.00 to \$1.50) after the project was approved. The hours needed for completion had also been underestimated. The building was estimated to be completed by the end of February 1939.

In the following decades, the park saw further development with additional playground equipment and updates to its baseball and softball fields, and other amenities. Around 1970, the cul-de-sac providing access to the south side of the park and the Kaiser medical office was constructed.¹⁹⁶ In 1978, the stone shelter and comfort station was renovated to update the lavatories and provide needed repairs. In 1983, the city's Park Bureau released its master plan with an estimated \$500,000 dedicated to improvements. The master plan included the addition of

Road and Burnside Street, numerous retaining walls, guardrails, and stone bollards along Portland streets, and Timberline Lodge.

¹⁹⁴ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Overlook Park Works Progress Administration Project Proposal* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1938).

¹⁹⁵ The use of vertical grain wood reflects the care and attention put into the design of the building.

¹⁹⁶ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Historic File Overlook Community Center and Park* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1972).

tennis courts, basketball court, soccer field, a walkway encircling the park, an open-air amphitheater, and renovations to the wading pool and bathrooms.¹⁹⁷



Figure 53: Viewing southwest (1978). Photo courtesy of Portland Parks and Recreation Archives.

Historical Significance

The Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station has maintained integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association due to its retention of location, the majority of original materials, character defining features, and continued use by the city. Despite the continued development of the park and changes to the surrounding neighborhood, the character defining features of the park such as the open grass fields, large deciduous trees, wading pool, and views of west Portland have been maintained.

As one of few known examples of WPA constructed buildings in the city of Portland, the Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. It is significant at the local level in the area

¹⁹⁷ "Improvements at Park Hailed: Overlook has Jogging Path, Fitness Equipment," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), March 8, 1983.

of community development for the collaboration between the city of Portland and the federal government to provide a needed resource to the community that would not have been possible otherwise. It is also recommended as eligible under Criterion C as the only known example of a National Park Service Rustic-style design by Ellis F. Lawrence. Lawrence designed multiple park structures for the city of Portland, but this is the only known example of one representative of the National Park Service Rustic style.¹⁹⁸ Its period of significance is 1938-39, aligning with its date of construction. The Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station represents the legacy of the WPA as local sponsors responded to public pleas for needed community resources and collaborated with the federal government to provide them.

¹⁹⁸ Shellenbarger and Lakin.

Chapter 8: Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium (1941)



Figure 54: Viewing southwest. Photo by author.

Architectural Description

The Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium is located at 7602 N Emerald Avenue in the Peninsula neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. The Peninsula neighborhood is primarily residential but includes commercial buildings along N Lombard Street. The site is bounded by single-family residences to the north, N Drummond Avenue to the east, an Arby's fast food restaurant and related parking lot to the south, and N Emerald Avenue to the west. The majority of the original school building has been demolished and replaced by the Arby's site. Part of the school building remains attached to the Auditorium and Gymnasium to the west and south (See Appendix E for site maps). The streetscape includes street lights, utility poles, sidewalks, grass, medium-sized shrubs, and deciduous trees. A metal chain-link fence surrounds the building and another connected building that was once part of the school. The site is accessed via a paved driveway located on N Drummond Avenue. A small paved parking lot is located to the north of the building. A secondary paved driveway and parking lot is located further south on N

Drummond Avenue. A large yard of grass and native vegetation is positioned between the two driveways.

The one-story rectangular-shaped building includes a concrete foundation, stucco finish, and a barrel vault roof form. Originally designed in the Art Deco style to match the newly reconstructed school, the building has undergone multiple alterations that have hidden or removed some of the architectural details that represent the style such as the windows and marquee. The north (primary) façade features the arched roof form, a simple cornice of three bands, a central marquee that has been covered, and two symmetrically spaced double-door openings. Each entrance includes two flush-panel metal doors and a set of seven concrete steps with metal pipe handrails. A modern rectangular porch light is attached above the east entrance. Small rectangular louvered vents are placed to the inside of each of these entrances. Two aluminum downspouts are positioned at each end of the façade with piping running across the middle of the elevation to connect them.



Figure 55: Viewing southwest. Photo by author.

The east elevation features a simple cornice of three horizontal bands, a water table band, a double-door opening on the south end, and several infilled vertical rectangular windows. The entrance includes two flush-panel metal doors and a set of four concrete steps with metal pipe handrails. These steps lead to a paved pedestrian path with a metal pipe handrail and another set of seven concrete steps that provide access to the N Drummond Avenue sidewalk. Above the entrance is a single infilled vertical rectangular window. To the south is another infilled vertical rectangular window with a concrete sill and to the north is three sets of three infilled vertical rectangular windows with concrete sills. A set of four metal grates are located to the east of the entrance and below the water table. A modern rectangular overhead light is attached to the elevation on the north end. The south and west elevations are not visible from the public right of way as the building is attached the remaining section of the original school building.



Figure 56: Viewing west. Photo by author.

Alterations to the building were identified during a site visit on March 30, 2018 and a review of historic sources. Changes include the infill of the original windows and marquee, the

replacement of the original doors, and the addition of new exterior lighting (dates unknown). New roofing materials was installed circa 2000.¹⁹⁹ The single-family residences and condos to the north replaced the original athletic field.



Figure 57: Viewing northwest. Photo by author.



Figure 58: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

¹⁹⁹ "7602 N Emerald Avenue," *Google Earth Pro*, April 6, 2018.



Figure 59: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

Historic Narrative

On the afternoon of July 1, 1939, a fire engulfed the roof of the three-story Peninsula School. The fire spread to the lower floors destroying the roof, auditorium, office, and music rooms in the east wing and the roof and attic of the west wing. The Peninsula manual training building as well as two of the eighteen classrooms were undamaged. The fire was attributed to burning papers that got lodged on the roof. A mechanical crew lit the papers in a furnace to clear the dust out of a freshly brushed flue. Fire Marshal, Fred W. Roberts, estimated the damage at \$50,000. Reports indicated the school could be salvaged but would need to be completely renovated. As the school would not be ready for the first term of the following school year the 450 students attended other grammar schools in the surrounding area.²⁰⁰ The majority of students went to the Woodlawn school and others transferred to the Kenton, Ockley Green, and Portsmouth schools.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ "School Building Swept by Fire," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 12, 1939; "School Waits Repair Work: Peninsula to Open Next February," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 13, 1939.

²⁰¹ "Students Get Cut in Rates," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 28, 1939; "Remodeling Plans Backed: Peninsula School Revamping Told," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Aug. 24, 1939.

By August 24, 1939 tentative plans for the new building were approved by 100 patrons of the school at a meeting with Superintendent Ralph E. Dugdale and George M. York, supervisor of maintenance. The plans called for reconstructing the building as a two-story structure and the erection of a new combination auditorium and gymnasium. The tentative plan for the combination auditorium and gymnasium included a 57' wide by 80' long structure to be built behind the school. The school board had not approved the plans at that time but had already approved of the construction of a new roof over the second story. The school district's insurance company determined the total damages at approximately \$36,000. The cost of repairs would be financed with insurance money.²⁰²

On January 28, 1940 the *Oregonian* reported that the Portland Public School District had received a WPA grant of \$32,178 to complete work on the school. The district had approximately \$25,000 remaining in fire insurance money after the construction of the new roof. The plans for the new school building included brick walls on the lower level, stucco for the upper floors, and a flat roof. The interior would include 12 class rooms, a reduction from the original 18.²⁰³ By September 1, the school was completed and the auditorium and gymnasium was under construction to the north on a site once occupied by "portables." The *Oregonian* described the new school building as "among the most beautiful of the district's structures."²⁰⁴ The building was scheduled to be completed around the first of December. The Peninsula school project was financed entirely by the fire insurance money and the WPA. The total cost was estimated at \$100,000. A *Sunday Oregonian* article indicated the gymnasium was close to

²⁰² "Remodeling Plans Backed: Peninsula School Revamping Told." *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Aug. 24, 1939.

²⁰³ "Schools Enter New Semester," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Sept. 28, 1940.

²⁰⁴ "Portland School Buildings in Spick and Span Order," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Sept. 1, 1940. The interiors of the school were painted by the WPA who were also responsible for painting the interiors of Linnton, James John, Portsmouth, and Roosevelt schools. The school district had a contract with the WPA to paint all of the interiors of the district's schools.

completion by April 27, 1941 as the building was being inspected by representatives of the Portland Public School District and the WPA.²⁰⁵

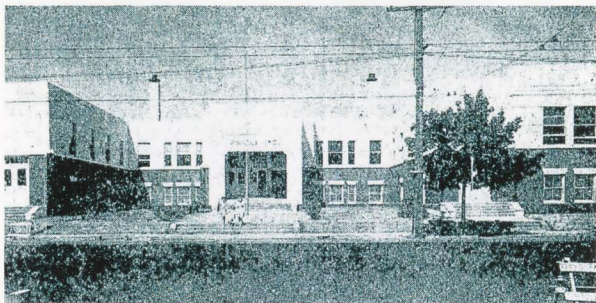


Figure 60: Peninsula School viewing north. Printed in the *Oregonian* August 30, 1940.

²⁰⁵ *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), April 27, 1941.

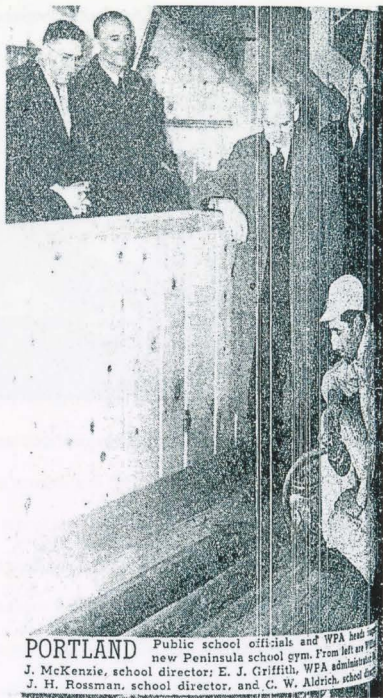


Figure 61: Printed in the Sunday Oregonian April 27, 1941.

The Peninsula School was in operation until 1958 when the Portland Public School District sold the building to the archdiocese for a new coeducation Catholic high school. By August 20, 1958 the building was being remodeled for a planned enrollment of 130 freshman from the St. Johns and Kenton neighborhoods. Changes to the building included the construction

of chapel and physical education rooms and a new athletic field. When the school opened it was the only co-educational catholic high school in the city.²⁰⁶ On September 2, 1958 the North Catholic High School officially opened with 121 students.²⁰⁷



Figure 62: Viewing northeast (1945). Courtesy of City of Portland Archives.

On the morning of July 14, 1970, the second story of the school was destroyed by a four-alarm fire. The first floor was severely damaged by water from the firefighting efforts. The auditorium and gymnasium building as well as the northern section of the school building was untouched by the fire. The estimated damage was \$250,000 and the cause of the fire was suspected of being arson.²⁰⁸ By August 15, 1970 the Portland archdiocesan school board had announced they had decided not to rebuild the school at an estimated cost of \$1.8 million as there was not a large enough student population to support it.²⁰⁹ By 1974, the school had been

²⁰⁶ "Catholics Add Co-Educational High," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Aug. 20, 1958.

²⁰⁷ *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Sept. 3, 1958.

²⁰⁸ "Four-Alarm, \$250,000 Blaze Rips N. Catholic High School," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 15, 1970; *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), July 15, 1970.

²⁰⁹ "N. Catholic Classes Out," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Aug. 15, 1970.

demolished. The auditorium and gymnasium as well as part of the school building in the northwest corner remained. These buildings appear to have retained their original function.²¹⁰

Historical Significance

The Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium has maintained integrity of location, and design due to its retention of location and original form. However, due to the loss of the original school building, the infill of the original windows and marquee, and the development of residential properties to the north, the integrity of setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association have been diminished. Although one of few documented WPA school buildings in Oregon, the Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium is recommended as not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places due to lack of integrity. Future research may provide a greater historical context or identify it is a rare example of WPA school buildings in the state. If so that may justify its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

²¹⁰ 3171 N Lombard Street, Portlandmaps.com (accessed April 6, 2018).

Chapter 9: Jefferson High School Stadium (1941)



Figure 63: Viewing east. Photo by author.

Architectural Description

Jefferson High School is located at 5210 Kerby Avenue in the Humboldt neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. The Humboldt neighborhood is primarily residential but includes commercial buildings along N Killingsworth Street. The 1914 Portland public library is located to the northeast of the site and the 1971 Portland Community College Cascade Campus is located to the northwest. The original site has expanded since its original construction to its current size of approximately 12 acres. The Jefferson High School campus is bounded by N Alberta Street to the south, N Kerby Avenue to the west, N Killingsworth Street to the north, and N Commercial Avenue to the east. The campus includes the original 1909 building that has undergone multiple additions, a gymnasium, an auto shop, a baseball field, a football field with a track surrounding it, and a stadium (See Appendix F for site maps).

The 1941 stadium consists of a concrete grandstand with a foundation of concrete footings and a modern two-story press box on the top level. It is centrally located along the

football field to the west. It is bound by the football field and track to the west, a paved parking area to the south, two tennis courts to the east, and an open paved area to the north. The rectangular grandstand is approximately 22' 3" tall, 130' wide, and 33' 6" deep. The grandstand is divided into four sections with 13 rows of seating and is painted blue with accents of yellow, the school colors. Modern metal benches have been installed over the original concrete. Simple concrete stairs are positioned on each side of the four sections, dividing them and providing access to the seating. Metal pipe handrails are positioned along the edges of the north and south elevations as well as the western edge of the lower concrete walkway. Openings are located at the north and south ends of the walkway as well as three more that align with the three central staircases. Each opening includes four concrete steps from the ground level. A metal plaque adjacent to the middle entrance reads "DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN L VESTAL IN APPRECIATION OF HIS GIFT TO THE SCHOOL CHILDREN OF PORTLAND." At the top of the grandstand metal chain link fencing provides backing.



Figure 64: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

The north elevation includes a large triangular opening underneath the seating that provides access to a storage area, men's and women's lavatories, and a concession stand. Metal chain link fencing has been constructed in front of the elevation with a double-door opening with two metal chain link doors on the east end. A metal bracket is attached above the entrance and likely held a sign for the women's restroom similar to the one present on the south elevation.



Figure 65: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

The east elevation reveals the concrete masonry unit construction of the grandstand. It lacks fenestration and includes two murals. A painting of the school's donkey mascot with "School of Champions" underneath it is centrally located. The other mural includes an alternative logo with the mascot, the letter J, and "Democrats" and is positioned to the south.



Figure 66: Viewing northwest. Photo by author.

The south elevation consists of a recessed double-door entrance and a single large store front window that has been covered with plywood. The entrance includes two flush-paneled metal doors and wood trim. The store front window includes wood trim and a wooden awning finished with composite shingles. A metal rectangular sign reading “MEN” is attached to the east end of the elevation.

The symmetrical two-story rectangular-shaped press box is asymmetrically positioned at the top of the grandstand. It is clad with blue sheet metal and includes a shed roof with aluminum gutters and standing seam steel panels. The west (primary) façade features six two-light vertical aluminum sliding windows on each floor and a wide eave with wooden rafters. A pair of flood lights are attached to the rafters at each end. A pair of speakers are centrally positioned along the rafters with a smaller one attached to the siding below.



Figure 67: Viewing northeast. Photo by author.

The south elevation includes a first-floor single-door opening with a flush panel metal door, a single-light fixed vertical aluminum window, a second-floor single-light fixed vertical aluminum window, and standing seam vertical metal cladding. A small rectangular porch with a metal handrail is in front of the entrance. A single speaker with metal bracing is attached to the second story.

The east elevation is absent of fenestration and includes three first-floor vertical vents and one second-story vertical vent. The north elevation is identical to the west elevation with a first-floor single-door opening with a flush panel metal door, a single-light fixed vertical aluminum window, a second-floor single-light fixed vertical aluminum window, and standing seam vertical metal cladding. A small rectangular porch with a metal handrail is in front of the entrance and a single speaker with metal bracing is attached to the second story.

Alterations to the stadium were identified during a site visit on January 20, 2018 and a review of historic sources. Five poles with six 1500-volt floodlights each were installed on the

west and east ends of the field between 1946 & 1947. Architectural plans from 1949 indicate that the grandstands were updated at that time with men's and women's lavatories and a concession stand. Concrete floors and concrete block walls were constructed to divide the space under the grandstand for these three rooms as well as the original storage space. Plans for the concession area include doors, a window, and counters and shelves with hardware. The lavatory plans include water closets, urinals, sinks, soap dispensers, towel cabinets, and drinking fountains. New lighting fixtures were also planned as well as minor repairs to areas with water damage. At this time, it appears that a set of bleachers were also installed with one on each side of the grandstand.²¹¹



Figure 68: Viewing southeast. Photo by author.

In 1987 a new two-story press box was installed at the top of the grandstands. Architectural plans and historic photographs indicate a smaller wooden press box was removed at this time. The date of this press box is unknown. Other changes include the removal of the original wooden seats that would have been attached to the concrete benches. The football field

²¹¹ "Field House Site Plan" (Portland: Portland Public School Archives, 1949).

and surrounding track has also undergone numerous modifications and upgrades since their original construction.

Historic Narrative

The need for additional schools for the growing city had become apparent to the Portland Public School District by 1905. At this time, fireproofing school buildings was a growing concern due to multiple highly publicized reports of fires in schools across the country.²¹² In a speech in October 1906, Portland Mayor Harry Lane called for all new school buildings to be fireproof.²¹³ In 1910, the City Council would require all school buildings constructed after January 1, 1911 to be fireproof. Jefferson High School was built at a reported cost of \$321,078 and when finished was not only fireproof, but also one of the largest high schools in the country.²¹⁴ The school was completed in February 1910, but first opened to students in 1909 due to overcrowding in the district.

Originally named Albina High School, it was renamed Jefferson High school in February 1909 along with changes to other high schools in the city.²¹⁵ The main building was designed by Morris Whitehouse of the architectural firm of Whitehouse & Foulhoux.²¹⁶ The three-story brick building with a finished basement was designed in the Arts & Crafts and Classical Revival

²¹² Entrix, *Jefferson High School Oregon Historic Site Form*, https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/58/Historic%20Building%20Assessment/Jefferson_ILS.pdf (accessed April 1, 2018).

²¹³ "Mayor Lane and the School," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Oct. 31, 1906.

²¹⁴ Entrix.

²¹⁵ "Change in Names of High Schools," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Feb. 9, 1909. West Side High School was renamed Lincoln High School and East Side High School was renamed Washington High School.

²¹⁶ Ritz, 242-245. The firm was also responsible for the design of Lincoln High School (1911), the Multnomah Athletic School (1911), the University Club (1913), Platt Building (1913), Waverly Country Club (1913), 705 Davis Street Apartments (1913), and the East Moreland Country Club (1918).

architectural styles common during the time of construction. Enrollment exceeded 2000 by the 1920s and remained at that level until the late 1960s.²¹⁷ Additions and alterations to the campus reflected the shifting needs of the community.

In 1928 a gymnasium was constructed on the east elevation. By 1936, the district sought athletic fields for the school that were closer than those available at the time. The school district identified vacant land to the south of the building between N Commercial Avenue and Vancouver Avenue that they thought would be most suitable. This acquisition would expand the site from 11.35 acres to 20.63 acres allowing for sufficient athletic fields for the school.²¹⁸ On July 19, 1938, the *Eugene Guard* reported that a special committee of the Portland Public Schools (PPS) board announced their intention to apply for \$100,000 from the PWA for the construction of athletic facilities and stadiums for seven Portland high schools. Their proposal would be presented to the school directors for approval.²¹⁹ Three days later the *Albany Democrat-Herald* reported that the school board had voted the previous night to commence a \$70,000 building program to provide athletic facilities and stadiums for each of the city's eight high schools.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Ev Hu, *Portland's Jefferson High Celebrates Centennial*, http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2009/05/portlands_jefferson_high_celeb.html (accessed March 20, 2018).

²¹⁸ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Jefferson High School Site* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1936).

²¹⁹ "Portland Seeks PWA," *Eugene Guard* (Portland, OR), July 19, 1938.

²²⁰ "Portland Schools to Get Own Stadia," *Albany Democrat* (Albany, OR), July 22, 1938.

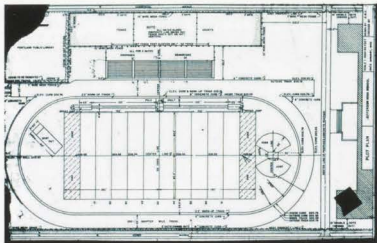


Figure 69: 1940 Site Plans. Courtesy of Portland Public Schools Archives.

By June 1941, the WPA began construction on the new \$14,000 Jefferson High School Stadium that included a new 1,000 seat stadium and football field to the north of the main building. The project was a collaboration between PPS and the WPA.²²¹ On June 29, 1941, the *Sunday Oregonian* reported on the official groundbreaking with WPA Administrator E. J. Griffith, Superintendent Ralph E. Dugdale, Assistant Superintendent J. W. Edwards, supervisor of maintenance for the school district George E. York, and PPS board members J. H. Rossman and C. W. Aldrich in attendance. By August 24, 1941, the concrete foundation for the new stadium had been poured. On October 10, 1941, the new field was named after former Jefferson principal Hopkin Jenkins who served as principal since the school first opened.²²² The stadium was dedicated to John L. Vestal who had left multiple properties in his will to the school district before his death in 1925.²²³

²²¹ City of Portland (OR) Archives, *Grandstand Construction* (Portland: City of Portland Archives, 1936). The school board had previously conducted a WPA project for the construction of a portable bandstand for summer concerts in 1936.

²²² "Athletic Field Rites Slated," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), Oct. 10, 1941.

²²³ Portland Public Schools, *John L. Vestal*, <https://www.pps.net/Page/7578> (accessed March 27, 2018). John L. Vestal owned several drug stores and other property in the Portland area and when he died in March 1925 he left a large portion of these properties to the Portland school district to be used for the education of children. The

Work Started on Jefferson's New \$14,000 Stadium



Ground was broken this week for the new \$14,000 stadium project at Jefferson high school, with Portland public school and WPA officials taking part. In action in the foreground, with shovels and wheelbarrows are, left to right, Assistant Superintendent J. W. Edwards, Board Member J. H. Dugdale, WPA Administrator E. J. Griffith, Superintendent Ralph E. Dugdale, Board Member C. W. Aldrich and George E. York, supervisor of maintenance for the school district. The stadium will seat 1000. A new football field will be built.

Figure 70: Printed in the Oregonian, June 29, 1941.

Portland High Schools to Have Own Stadiums



Pouring of concrete for the new Jefferson high school stadium is but one of the centers of action on the Portland prep football front as a new season nears. Inspecting work include three school officials pictured with workmen. From left in center are Superintendent Ralph E. Dugdale, George York, supervisor of maintenance for the school district, and William J. MacKenzie, member of the school board.

Figure 71: Printed in the Oregonian, August 24, 1941.

properties were appraised at \$172,000, subsequently invested in bonds by the school district, and a large sum was spent on schools during the Great Depression when funding was limited.

The campus continued to develop in the subsequent years. In 1952 an auditorium addition was constructed in the southeast corner of the main building and a girl's gymnasium was built in the northeast corner in 1953. A separate gymnasium was constructed to the northeast of the main building in 1964, and a separate auto shop was built to the south of the girl's gym in 1968. A baseball field was also constructed at an unknown date to the south of this group of buildings.

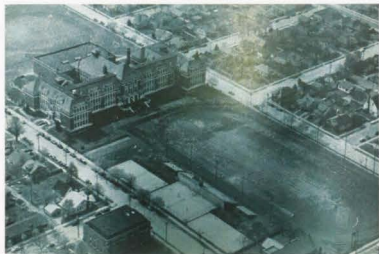


Figure 72: Ariel view to the southwest, 1949. Photo printed 1949 Year Book.

Jefferson High School was primarily populated by white students living in north Portland until the Vanport flood of 1948, which resulted in a large influx of Blacks into north Portland and its public schools. Following this integration, accusations of segregation and unequal educational opportunities were reported. PPS responded with several programs to integrate the district's schools and establish equity amongst its students.²²⁴ Jefferson High School became known as "an academic powerhouse with strong academic achievement and, for many years, it

²²⁴ Entrix.

provided a high number of Rose Festival queens from largely blue-collar neighborhoods."²²⁵

Today it is the city's oldest remaining high school.

Historical Significance

In 2009, it was determined that the high school lacked integrity and was ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a result of the multiple alterations and additions.²²⁶ The stadium was not evaluated at that time. The Jefferson High School Stadium has maintained integrity of location, setting, and association due to its retention of location and continued use by the high school. However, due to the replacement of the original seating, the construction of the modern press box, and significant alterations to the school building and athletic fields, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship have been diminished.

Although one of few known examples of WPA built structures in the city of Portland, the Jefferson High School Stadium is recommended as not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Future research may provide a greater historical context or identify it as a rare example of WPA school structures in the state. If so that may justify its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

²²⁵ Hu.

²²⁶ Entrix.

Chapter 10: Survey Findings

The surveyed buildings and structures for this project varied in terms of use, size, architectural style, construction materials, setting, and local sponsor, but each of the resources was the result of a sponsor from the local community collaborating with the federal government to develop a needed facility for the community that would not have been possible otherwise. Whether identified through WPA applications, city council minutes, or newspaper reports, local sponsors sought to take advantage of funding from the federal government to build these resources while also providing desperately needed jobs for the local population. It appears that the specific New Deal agency was not of significant importance to the sponsors as they were focused on acquiring the necessary funding. Some sought funding from multiple agencies to conduct the work.

Projects such as the Overlook Comfort Station and Shelter, the Oregon State Forrester's Office Building, and Civic Stadium were parts of larger plans envisioned by the associated sponsor. Overlook Park was undergoing a transformation from a former landfill to a city park, the Oregon State Forester's Office Building was part of a larger complex of WPA and CCC buildings, and Civic Stadium was envisioned as the centerpiece of a larger community athletic center. The Portland Parks department was able to utilize both WPA and FERA funding to prepare Overlook Park for future development and expansion. The WPA and CCC constructed complex surrounding Mill Creek was achieved, but the vision of an athletic center in Eugene was never completed.

Each of the surveyed buildings and structures provided a needed resource to their communities. Civic Stadium, Jefferson High School Stadium, and the Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium all provided a desired multi-purpose recreation facility. The residents

of the Overlook Neighborhood had long sought the development of the site for a public park. The shelter and comfort station as well as the wading pool constructed by the WPA were a turning point for the neighborhood. They became central beloved communal spaces for a variety of leisure activities. The development of the Oregon Ceramic Studio led to the creation of a regional institution that contributed to the growth of craft in the Pacific Northwest. It was an important resource to artists and its educational outreach was established in the community for decades. The Oregon State Forester's Office Building has continued to serve as the central offices for the Department of Forestry and a common site for school field trips. Alongside Timberline Lodge with its intricate features, it is one of the best examples of the craftsmanship of WPA laborers from the region.

The integrity of these buildings ranges drastically from the demolished Civic Stadium and heavily altered Oregon Ceramic Studio to the Oregon State Forester's Office Building which has retained excellent integrity. Continued ownership and sustained original use appears to have contributed to the survival of historic design, workmanship, and materials. However, for some of the resources these aspects of integrity have also been lost due to updates to accommodate continued operations. The Jefferson High School Stadium required a larger press box to meet the needs of new technology and the Oregon Ceramic Studio was repeatedly expanded to include larger gallery spaces to showcase more art. While no evidence has been uncovered to support the claim, knowledge of the building as a WPA project may have also benefitted the retention of original character defining features. The Oregon State Forester's Office Building proudly embraces this aspect of its history and Civic Stadium was a well-known-WPA resource within the community. If the general public is aware of the association between a building or structure

with the WPA they are more likely to be concerned about its preservation and retention of character defining features.

The resources' integrity played a critical role in the determination of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, particularly under Criterion C. The retention of design, materials, and workmanship were necessary for eligibility under Criterion C as they are the greatest representations of the work of the architect and/or the associated style amongst the seven aspects of integrity. However, these aspects of integrity were not as critical under Criterion A. Eligibility under Criterion A was more dependent on the resource's association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. Maintaining the majority of the aspects of integrity, particularly design, materials, and workmanship was important in the determination of eligibility, but not totally necessary. Although the Oregon Ceramic Studio's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship were diminished, its association with major contributions to community development, art, and education in Portland and the Pacific Northwest provided enough historical significance to be determined eligible under Criterion A. For the Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium and the Jefferson High School Stadium the minimal information about their history and the work of the WPA with schools throughout the state made their determinations of eligibility more challenging. Without a better understanding of the number and types of WPA constructed school buildings in the city and state there was not sufficient evidence to determine them eligible based on their lack of integrity. A broader historical context and a comprehensive list of WPA projects in the state may change their eligibility in the future if they are shown to be extremely rare examples of a building type or are associated with larger historical movements or events other than their association with the New Deal.

In comparison to other New Deal era buildings, these resources share some commonalities that distinguish them such as their size, materials used, and level of detail. CCC buildings tended to be smaller, more simplistic, and representative of the National Park Service Rustic style, particularly U.S. Forest Service structures. PWA buildings such as the Oregon State Capitol, Oregon State Library, and Salem High School were much larger projects, featured more intricate classical architectural details, and included more expensive materials such as marble or stone. This was likely due to the differences between the intent, management, and funding of these programs. The PWA provided federal grants to communities to hire private companies to construct projects while the WPA bypassed private industry by working directly with local sponsors. The WPA would generally provide the funds to cover the cost of labor while the local sponsor was responsible for providing the land and materials.

As the WPA developed, it became more common to use monolithic concrete for the construction of buildings and structures. In some states it was a prevailing design. This type of construction required the fewest skilled laborers and lowered the costs for sponsors. The WPA also promoted newer tendencies towards simplified architectural styles as simplicity in design was best suited for workers with limited skills. Sponsors were urged to refrain from incorporating ornamental architectural features, intricate structural design, and elaborate trim. Simplicity was promoted to reduce the need for skilled laborers and to increase the efficiency of jobs.²²⁷ However, larger and more ornate buildings such as Timberline Lodge and the Oregon State Forester's Office Buildings were constructed by the WPA. These are more likely exceptions amongst WPA construction projects and reflect the plans of local sponsors and their ability to acquire the necessary materials. As a temporary program, the WPA's budget was much

²²⁷ United States Federal Works Agency, 52.

more limited than the PWA and funding was allotted on a year-to-year basis. As a result, WPA projects were generally on a one-year schedule. Larger jobs tended to be conducted by the PWA. If a WPA project was larger and required multiple years to complete, it was planned out in phases that could still be beneficial if all phases were not completed.

While a building's size, architectural style or materials may indicate whether it was conducted by the WPA, PWA or CCC, there is insufficient data to establish a strong correlation between government agency and building form. There are also many commonalities between the buildings and structures associated with these organizations and determining who was responsible for them is dependent on evaluating primary sources such as original work proposals or newspaper articles. Without a historical plaque it is difficult to determine which buildings are WPA simply by looking at them, but they do have common features. Documentation was key in determining the collaboration between multiple parties, which was the hallmark of the New Deal as it required partnership between private and public entities.

Chapter 11: Conclusions

The WPA was the culmination of an experiment in administering relief by the federal government during a time of unimaginable economical and psychological suffering across the country. It represented unprecedented involvement in the economy by the federal government, drastically changing society's views on the role of the government and the administration of aid. The WPA was the product of the development, implementation, and execution of its predecessors including the FERA, CWA, PWA, and CCC. Through this continued experiment in administering relief the Roosevelt administration recognized that the most effective form of aid was work relief opposed to direct relief. People benefitted economically by earning a wage and psychologically through the process of working, even if only as part-time temporary employees. By contributing to projects that aided local communities individuals developed a sense of pride. They were able to support their families and not rely on what were perceived as handouts for their survival.

The WPA is most remembered for providing millions of jobs to the unemployed to conduct thousands of projects across the country. Although the WPA never achieved a total economic recovery or provided jobs for the majority of the unemployed, it made significant contributions to the country's economy. The WPA and other New Deal relief agencies prevented the rapid decline of the economy of the late 1920s and early 1930s. This intervention stabilized the economy and established an important sense of recovery amongst citizens.

Despite its limitations, the WPA was responsible for a wide array of jobs that benefitted cities across the country. These activities brought communities together as each project required a local sponsor to organize its development and the majority of laborers were hired locally when possible. Although representing a small aspect of the WPA, the most recognized and

memorialized WPA projects have often been the construction of public buildings and structures. As opposed to roads, sewer lines or drainage ditches, many of these structures also provided public meeting spaces that served as important facilities for the communities. Unlike service jobs, buildings and structures physically represented the partnership between the federal government and local communities and have thus developed a longer lasting place in public consciousness. Many of these buildings have garnered a local monumental status for their economical and psychological contribution at the time of construction as well as the service they continued to provide afterwards.

In Oregon, the most notable and memorialized WPA building is Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood as it was one of the largest WPA projects in the state in terms of size and cost. It also showcased the National Park Service Rustic style architecture becoming more prominent at the time and the craftsmanship of regional laborers. While other WPA buildings such as Salem's Oregon State Forester's Office Building and Eugene's Civic Stadium have been well documented and included in the National Register of Historic Places, little documentation has been conducted on the other WPA resources within the state.²²⁸ A 1938 publication from the Oregon WPA reported that 88 public buildings had been constructed and 145 more had been repaired within the state.²²⁹ As the WPA was in operation until 1943, many more buildings would be expected to have been constructed, but only a small percentage have been identified. It is apparent that there is a lack of understanding of the number of buildings and structures the

²²⁸ Elizabeth Gail Throop, "Utterly Visionary and Chimerical: A Federal Response to the Depression: An examination of Civilian Conservation Corps Construction on National Forest System Lands in the Pacific Northwest" Master's thesis (Portland: Portland State University, 1979). Although focused on CCC buildings this publication supports the historical significance of New Deal architecture.

²²⁹ Oregon Works Progress Administration, *Works Progress Administration in Oregon*. The number of buildings constructed and repaired were categorized by county so it was not possible to determine the exact location of the projects.

WPA was responsible for in the state. Of those that have been identified, many have been misunderstood in terms of the contribution of the WPA or how they are part of a larger system.

The buildings and structures identified in this report represent the larger network of WPA projects in Oregon and states throughout the country. They express the federal government's bold response to public pleas for relief during a time of unimaginable economic hardship and psychological despair. These resources reflect the collaboration of the federal government and local communities to develop meaningful and useful projects as well as the labor of the local community. Despite the importance of these resources, the lack of identification and analysis of these other WPA buildings and structures has constrained our understanding of the impact of the New Deal in the Oregon

This report was limited in terms of the survey area and the resources evaluated. As there is not a publicly available comprehensive list of WPA buildings and structures in the state outside of the National Archives, one of the greatest challenges was the identification of resources. Visiting the National Archives was not a viable option for this project, but the identification process used was valuable in recognizing the void in the documentation of these resources. Examining the available records at the National Archives would be essential for future study of these resources. However, these records are limited in terms of the level of detail they provide about each resource.²³⁰ Additional primary source documentation from the local sponsors and regional newspapers may provide additional information to better understand their initial development.

²³⁰ Through personal communications, Neil Barker informed the author that the WPA documents at the National Archives are generally brief and lacking details about projects.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the impact of the WPA in the state has previously been addressed, but not to the extent of evaluating the number of buildings and structures developed. There is also a lack of understanding the diversification of these resources as well as their impact on local communities. There is an apparent need for future research to document the buildings and structures constructed by the WPA in the state. By developing a comprehensive list of these projects, it would be possible to better understand their historical significance and the differences between other New Deal organizations such as the PWA. A lack of understanding of the differences between the New Deal relief programs and the problematic aspects of public history has resulted in a misunderstanding and misclassification of many of these resources. While conducting preliminary research at the Oregon State Capitol, tour guides informed the author that the Capitol was one of multiple WPA projects in the area. Although a misunderstanding between similar programs, it is easy to see how a lack of documentation and public misconceptions have shaped our understanding of the WPA.

Developing a comprehensive list of WPA buildings and structures would assist in correcting past misclassifications of WPA buildings and structures in the state by clarifying the resources they constructed, repaired, contributed to or had no known affiliation with. This documentation would also more clearly differentiate the work of the different relief programs as some projects involved multiple New Deal agencies. Furthermore, it would provide an additional narrative on how the WPA brought together diverse private-public partnerships in a short period of time to make significant accomplishments. The buildings and structures surveyed for this report demonstrate the range of resources constructed and services provided to communities. In part, the WPA was a building campaign that touched so many different aspect of the built

environment and affected people's lives. These buildings and structures are emblems of the period's architectural, financial, and social creativity.

While it is important to understand the unique features of the different relief programs developed under the New Deal, the primary significance of the projects they conducted is the association to the collaboration between the federal government and local sponsors. Regardless of the relief agency responsible for a building or structure, each resource is significant for the association with the unprecedented level of government intervention to provide aid and the government's partnership with individual communities. All of the projects conducted by these agencies are important to document and analyze to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the effect of New Deal relief programs and the changing role of government. A National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form for New Deal program buildings would significantly contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of the New Deal in Oregon. Such a documentation would provide a greater historical context and clarity to the number of buildings constructed, the variety of buildings, and their geographic distribution. It would also be an exceptional resource in the determination of the eligibility of individual New Deal related resources for the National Register of Historic Places.

This report sheds light on the challenge of documenting WPA resources in the state. Furthermore, it reveals how little information is known about how many buildings and structures the WPA was responsible for. With a lack of understanding of the resources that were developed and what remains, there is a significant need for additional analysis of the impact of the WPA on the state. Additional research and architectural surveys would assist in better understanding how the WPA shaped the Oregon experience during the Great Depression, how individual communities were affected, and how these resources represent an era. This report provides a

glimpse of the impact of the WPA in Oregon and sets the foundation for future documentation to obtain a better picture of its contributions.

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Appendix A: Civic Stadium Site Maps and Additional Figures



Figure 73: Accessed via Googlemaps.com.

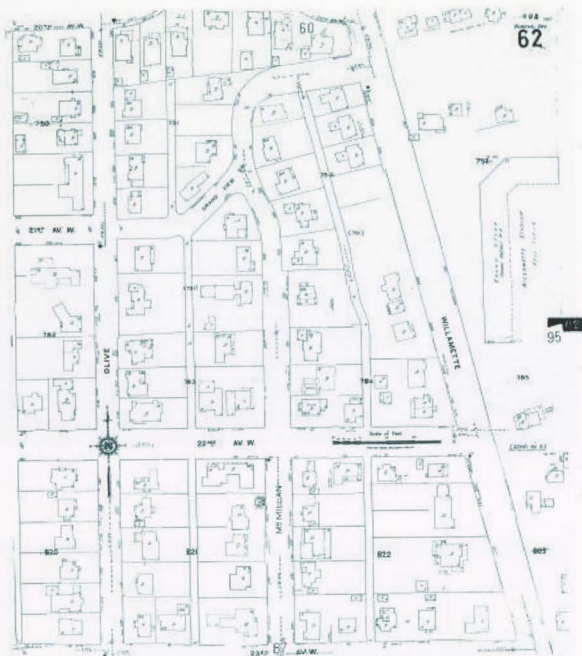


Figure 74: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1962, Sheet 62.

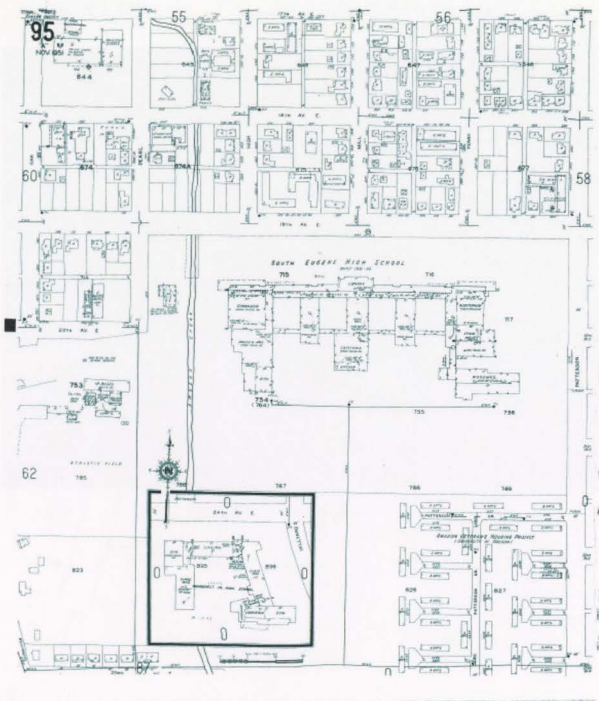


Figure 75: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1962, Sheet 95.

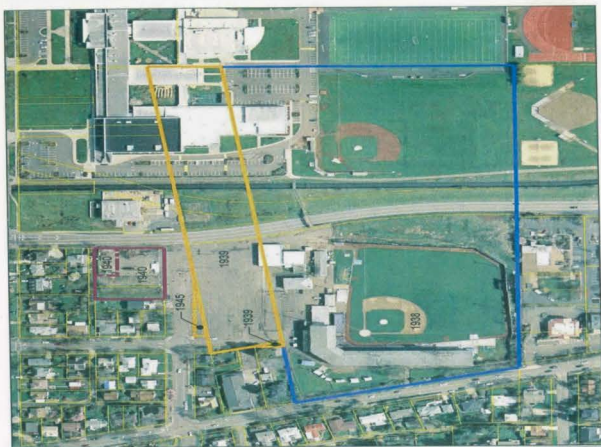


Figure 76: Property Acquisitions. Printed in Proposed Finding of Fact: Resolution in the Matter of Sale of Property: Civic Stadium.

Eugene Athletic Center FIELD FUND

Voluntary Contribution

Name

Address Amount

Make out all checks to C. R. Marferud, treasurer Eugene
Athletic Field Fund. Mail to Register-Guard, Eugene, Ore.

Figure 77: Advertisement for the Eugene Athletic Center Field Fund. Printed in the Eugene Guard from June 9 to 22, 1938.

Appendix B: Oregon State Forester's Office Building Site Maps and Additional Figures

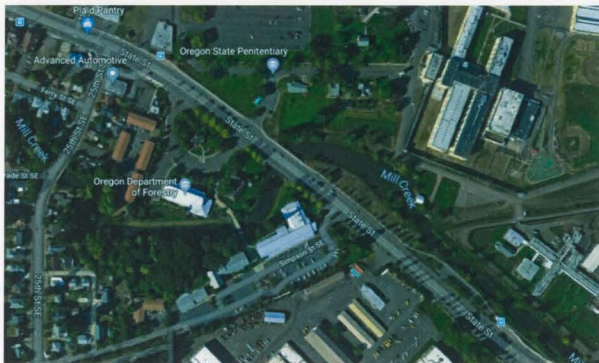


Figure 78: Accessed via Googlemaps.com.

Appendix C: Oregon Ceramic Studio Site Maps and Additional Figures

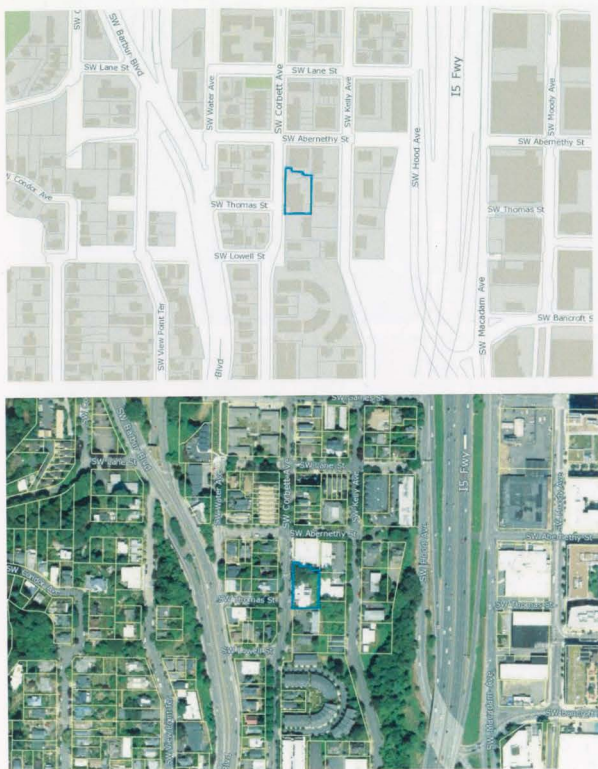


Figure 79: Accessed via Portlandmaps.com.

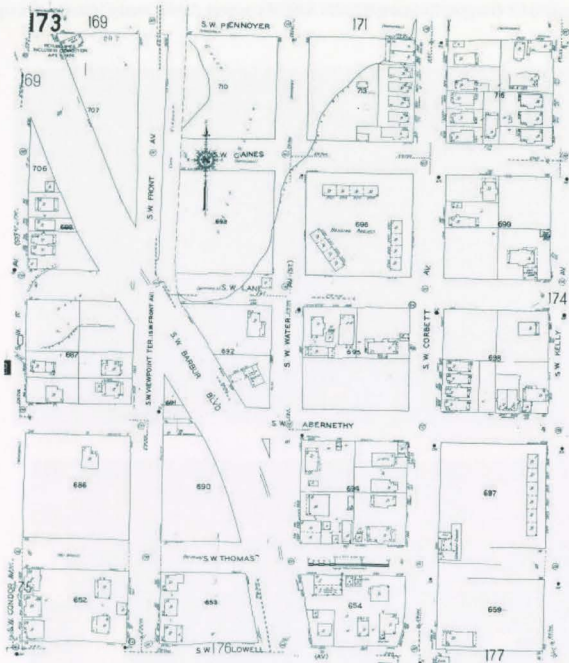


Figure 80: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1950, Sheet 173.

Appendix D: Overlook Park Comfort Station & Shelter

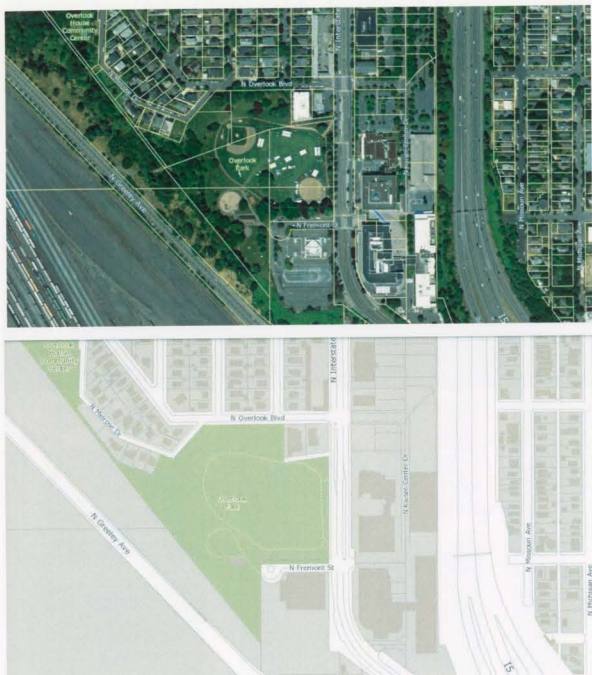


Figure 81: Accessed via Portlandmaps.com.

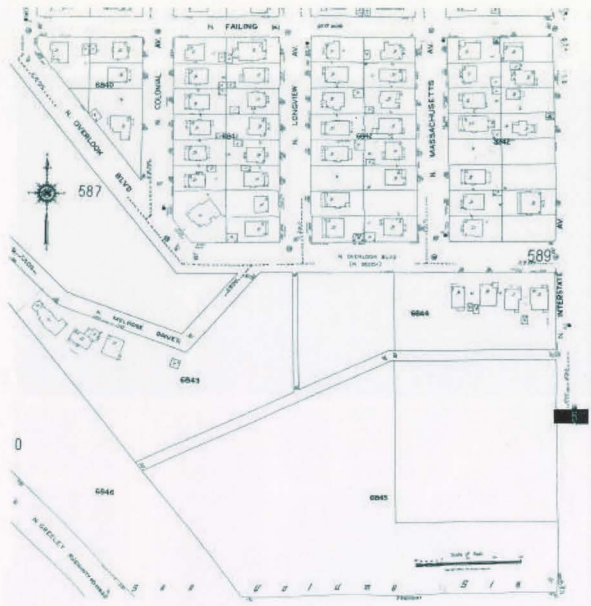


Figure 82: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1950, Sheet 588.

Appendix E: Peninsula Auditorium & Gymnasium



Figure 83: Accessed via Portlandmaps.com.

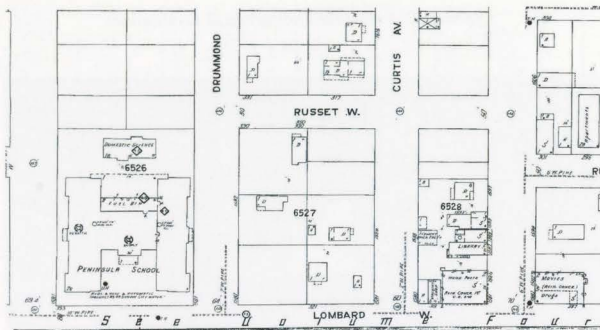


Figure 84: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1924, Sheet 393.

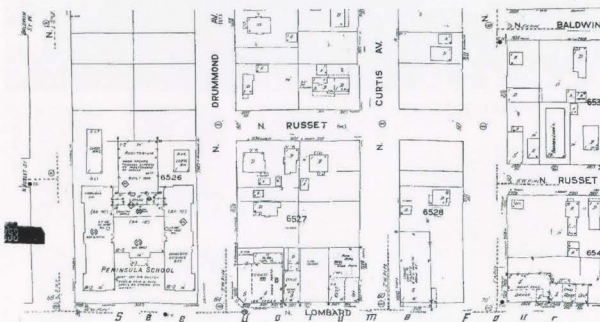


Figure 85: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1950, Sheet 393.

Appendix F: Jefferson High School Stadium



Figure 86: Accessed via Portlandmaps.com.

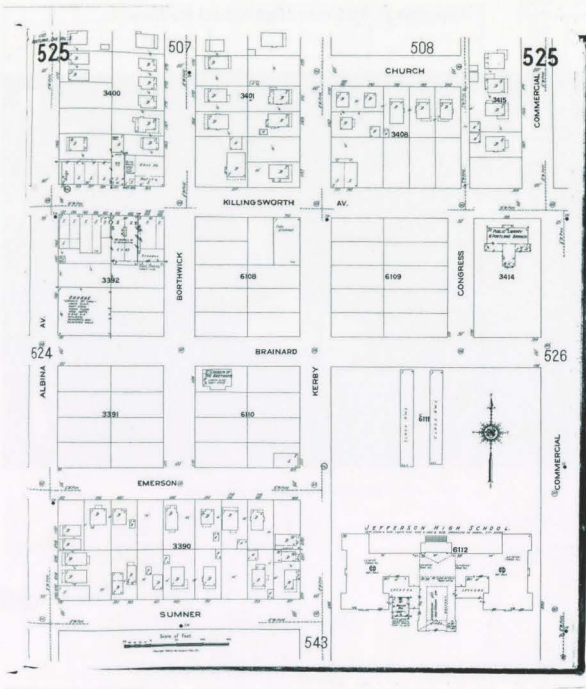


Figure 87: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1924, Sheet 525.

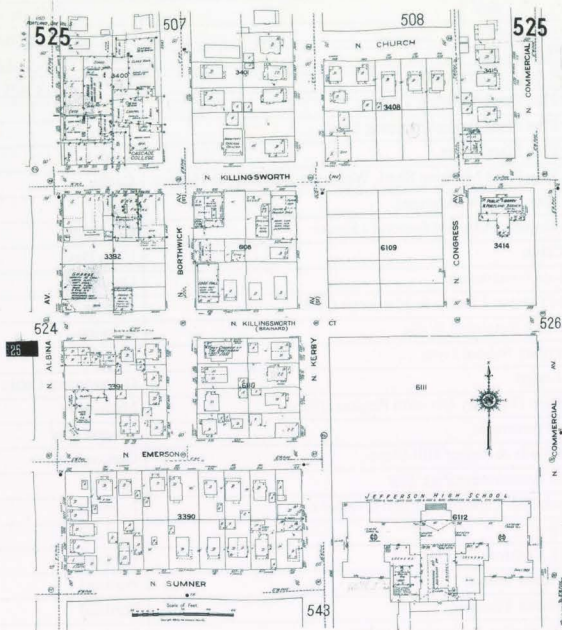


Figure 88: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1950, Sheet 525.

Appendix G: Oregon WPA Structures Listed in the Oregon Historic Sites Database²³¹

Resource Name	Location
Franklin Avenue Undercrossing	Bend
Lone Elder Flax Plant Wretting Tank	Canby
Lone Elder Flax Plant Boiler/Combing Shed	Canby
Lone Elder Flax Plant Dryer	Canby
Lone Elder Flax Plant Machine Shed, Weighing Building, & Houses	Canby
Lone Elder Flax Plant Warehouses	Canby
Camp Withycombe, Adjutant General's House	Clackamas
Boy Scout Cabin	Coos Bay
Guthrie School Gymnasium	Dallas
University of Oregon Library & Memorial Quad	Eugene
WPA Stonework Retaining Walls	Fairview
Fossil Elementary School Gym	Fossil
Timberline Lodge	Government Camp
State Of Oregon Highway Division Region Office	Milwaukie
McLoughlin Promenade	Oregon City
Singer Creek Falls & Singer Hill Steps	Oregon City
Council Crest Amusement Park Site	Portland
Johnson Creek Fish Ladder Falls and Overlook	Portland
Macleay Park	Portland
Macleay Park Comfort Station	Portland
NW Cornell Road Tunnel 1	Portland
NW Cornell Road Tunnel 2	Portland
Overlook Park Shelter & Comfort Station	Portland
Portland Art Museum	Portland
Portland-Columbia Airport	Portland
Rocky Butte Scenic Drive Historic District	Portland
Rocky Butte Tunnel	Portland
Washington Park Amphitheater	Portland
Westmoreland Park	Portland
North Salem Underpass NO. 02131	Salem
Oregon State Forester's Office Building	Salem

²³¹ Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, *Oregon Historic Sites Database*, <http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/> (accessed March 31, 2018). Not all of the listed resources were constructed by the WPA, but all were listed on the database at the time this report was completed.

Sunnyside School	Sweet Home
Vale City Hall	Vale
Graham Bridge	Washington County
Retaining Wall	Washington County
Ladd Hill School	Wilsonville

Appendix H: Oregon WPA Resources Listed on the Living New Deal Website²³²

Resource Name	Location
Lithia Park	Ashland
Quail Ridge Golf Course	Baker City
Bend Skyliners Lodge	Bend
Harney County Courthouse	Burns
Wilson River Highway	Coast Range
Civic Stadium	Eugene
University of Oregon Howe Field Memorial Gates	Eugene
Fossil Elementary School Gymnasium	Fossil
Silcox Hut	Government Camp
Gresham High School Improvements and Additions	Gresham
Johnson Creek Rockwork/Flood Control Project	Milwaukie
Timberline Lodge	Mount Hood National Forest
Ainsworth Elementary Marquetry	Portland
Burnside Tunnel	Portland
Council Crest Park	Portland
Eastmoreland Golf Course Improvements	Portland
Franklin High School Statue - Benjamin Franklin	Portland
Jefferson High School Stadium	Portland
Johnson Creek Fish Ladder and Overlook	Portland
Macleay Park	Portland
Oregon Ceramic Studio	Portland
NW Cornell Road Tunnels	Portland
Overlook Park Wading Pool	Portland
Overlook Park Shelter and Comfort Station	Portland
Portland Air National Guard Base	Portland
Portland International Airport	Portland
Rose City Golf Course Improvements	Portland
Sunset Highway	Portland
Washington Park Amphitheater	Portland
Waterfront Park: Harbor Wall	Portland
Westmoreland Park	Portland
West Salem City Hall	Salem
Sheridan Bridge	Sheridan
Silver Falls State Park Projects	Silverton

²³² The Living New Deal, *Projects in Oregon*, <https://livingnewdeal.org/us/or/> (accessed April 1, 2018). Not all of the listed resources were constructed by the WPA, but all were listed on the website at the time this report was completed.

Resource Name	Location
Multnomah County Poor Farm Improvements	Troutdale

Appendix G: WPA Buildings, Structures, and Objects Identified in Portland, Oregon²³³

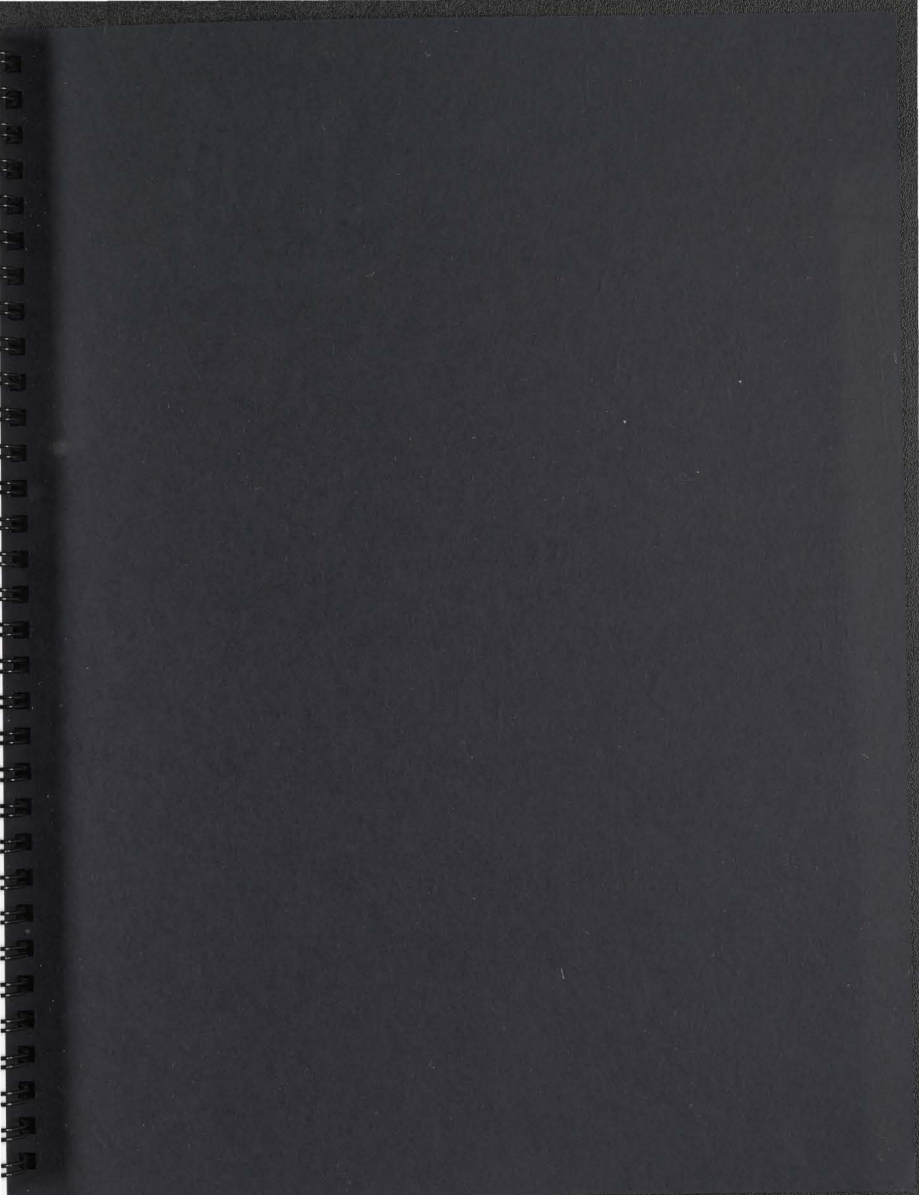
Resource Name	Location
<i>Buildings</i>	Portland
Adams Community Garden Caretaker's Cottage	Portland
Adams Community Garden Storage Shed	Portland
Adams Community Garden Woodshed	Portland
Peninsula School Auditorium & Gymnasium	Portland
Oregon Ceramic Studio	Portland
Fire Department Drill Tower	Portland
Mount Tabor Yard Office & Maintenance Shop	Portland
Oregon Health Science University Bus Stop Shelter	Portland
Overlook Park Comfort Station	Portland
Westmoreland Park Maintenance Shop	Portland
<i>Structures</i>	Portland
Burnside Street Vehicle Tunnel	Portland
Cornell Road Vehicle Tunnels	Portland
General Road Work Appurtenances	Portland
Harbor Wall Balustrade	Portland
Jefferson High school Stadium	Portland
Johnson Creek Fish Ladder	Portland
Johnson Creek Riprap	Portland
Oregon Health Science University Rock Wall	Portland
Overlook Park Wading Pool	Portland
Rocky Butte Scenic Drive Historic District	Portland
Rose City Golf Course Rock Wall and Stone Curbs	Portland
Rose Test Gardens Stairways	Portland
U.S. Veteran's Administration Hospital Stairway	Portland
Westmoreland Park Casting Pool and Model Yacht Basin	Portland
<i>Objects</i>	Portland
Alameda Grade School Marquetry	Portland
Chapman Grade School Marquetry	Portland
Franklin High School Statue	Portland
Irvington Grade School Marquetry	Portland

²³³ All of these resources were listed in Neil Barker's 1996 Master's thesis "The Works Progress Administration in Portland, Oregon."

Resource Name	Location
Irvington Grade School Mural	Portland
Jefferson High School Marquetry	Portland
Jefferson High School Mosaic	Portland
Jefferson Highschool School Sculpture	Portland

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