

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 30 1975
DATE ENTERED	DEC 6 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Portland Skidmore/Old Town Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

*Roughly bounded by Harbor Dr., Everett, 3rd, & Oak St.*

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

Third - Robert Duncan

STATE

Oregon

CODE

41

COUNTY

Multnomah

CODE

051

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Multnomah County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1021 SW 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97201

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites & Buildings

DATE

December 30, 1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Parks & Recreation Section, Oregon State Highway Building

CITY, TOWN

Salem

STATE

Oregon 97310

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Skidmore/Old Town Historic District was once the center of commerce and entertainment in Portland and contains the city's largest remaining collection of mid to late 19th century business buildings. The district is an area of approximately 20 blocks centered on Burnside Street and bordered by the Willamette River on the east. The district is known throughout the United States for its Italianate architecture. The wooden cornices, masonry bearing walls, and the use of architectural cast iron in the street level facades once typified the streets of Portland and are well represented in the present Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. The focal point and source of the district name is the Skidmore Fountain built in 1888 and donated to the city by Stephen G. Skidmore.

The Skidmore Fountain was conceived and executed by Olin J. Warner, a sculptor of national reputation. It consists of an ornate bronze basin eight feet in diameter held aloft by an ionic shaft and two bronze caryatids of classical form and drapery. An octagonal granite pool 20 feet in diameter collects the splashing water from above and lion heads below spout small streams of water into the four horse and dog troughs. Metal drinking cups hung below the pool until the first years of the twentieth century when they were removed in the interest of public safety.

The New Market Theater, located about 100 feet southwest of the fountain, was built by pioneer seaman and merchant Alexander Ankeny in 1872. W. W. Piper, Oregon's first professional architect, designed the three-story brick building in the North Italian mode of the Renaissance Revival. The handsome structure housed an arcaded street level public market, a small restaurant and Portland's grandest theater between 1872 and 1884. The building retains its original east and west facades except for six cornice urns which have been removed and an 1884 remodeling of the theater's east entrances. The interior of the first level is restorable but the theater is now used for automobile parking and has been severely altered.

The New Market Alley Building was constructed soon after 1872 and housed the city council in 1879. This small two-story masonry building covered the alley entrance on the south side of the New Market Theater. The two arches on the street level allowed access to the alley, one for incoming and one for outgoing wagons. The building was constructed in the Italianate style although it shares the same cornice with the neighboring High Victorian Italianate Poppleton Building to the south.

The Poppleton Building, probably constructed in 1873, is composed of cast iron pilasters and thresholds, plastered brick, and wooden windows and cornice detail. This corner building now houses a modern specialty shop and has been altered structurally to allow access between the three original divisions.

The New Market Annex abuts both the Poppleton Building and the New Market Theater, and is considered the city's best example of Richardsonian Romanesque Architecture. The Annex was built in 1889 and, as originally, supports mixed

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___ PREHISTORIC	___ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___ COMMUNITY PLANNING	___ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___ RELIGION
___ 1400-1499	___ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___ CONSERVATION	___ LAW	___ SCIENCE
___ 1500-1599	___ AGRICULTURE	___ ECONOMICS	___ LITERATURE	___ SCULPTURE
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___ EDUCATION	___ MILITARY	___ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___ 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	___ ENGINEERING	___ MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	___ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___ PHILOSOPHY	___ TRANSPORTATION
___ 1900-	___ COMMUNICATIONS	___ INDUSTRY	___ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Portland's Skidmore/Old Town Historic District incorporates several valuable cultural assets for the city, the state, and the nation. Architecturally, the district includes the Italianate, the High Victorian Italianate, the Renaissance Revival, the Richardsonian Romanesque, and the Sullivan-esque styles. The use of cast iron to express architectural style is extensive throughout the district. Several structures from this district stand out as among the finest on the west coast. The New Market Theater, designed by W. W. Piper, is a fine example of the North Italian Mode of the Renaissance Revival style, the Blagen Block is used by Marcus Whiffen in his American Architecture Since 1780 as a prime example of High Victorian Italianate, and the Skidmore Fountain designed and executed by Olin J. Warner, was considered one of the more excellent fountains in the country when it was constructed in 1888.

By the early 1850s, Portland became the primary community in Oregon. Two factors contributed to its primacy. International shippers discovered that the Willamette River was unnavigable for oceangoing vessels beyond Portland during most of the year, leading to the decline of the upstream rival communities of Milwaukie and Oregon City. In 1852, the completion of the Portland and Tualatin Valley Plank Road (or the "Great Plank Road" as it was locally called), by which agricultural products could be more easily transported from the rich Tualatin Valley, firmly established Portland as the primary shipping point in Oregon. These two factors hastened the development of industry in Portland, which by 1850 included a tannery, a steam powered sawmill, and various commercial enterprises.

Portland had grown to a population of 821 residents by 1860, and evidences of permanent settlement were more apparent by that time. Several brick buildings were constructed near the waterfront, suggesting that Portland was becoming a more permanent commercial city. Of these buildings, the Hallock and McMillan Building and the Delschneider Building remain within the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. By the late 1860s, Portland was beginning to gain national recognition for its development. Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield Republican and editorial mouthpiece for Jay Cooke's Northern Pacific Railroad, remarked in 1869:

"Oregonians, have builded what they have got more slowly and more wisely than the Californians; they have . . . less to unlearn; and they seem sure, not of organizing the first state on the Pacific Coast, indeed, but of a steadily prosperous healthy and moral one--they are in the way to be the New England of the Pacific Coast."

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baird, Joseph A., Jr., "New Market Block and Theater: Photograph--Data Book Report" Historic American Building Survey, June: 1964.

Johansen, Dorothy O. and Gates, Charles M., Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest, New York: 1957.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 44 acres

UTM REFERENCES

*UTM OK-UN  
12-22-75*

<i>0A</i>	1,0	5,2,5	5,7,0	5,0,4	1,1,0,0	<i>AB</i>	1,0	5,2,5	9,4,0	5,0,4	1,1,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
<i>C</i>	1,0	5,2,5	5,7,5	5,0,4	0,6,3,0	<i>BD</i>	1,0	5,2,5	9,4,0	5,0,4	0,4,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gregg Olson/Robert K. Sutton, State Historic Preservation Staff

ORGANIZATION

Oregon State Parks

DATE

September 4, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

State Highway Building

TELEPHONE

(503) 378-6118

CITY OR TOWN

Salem

STATE

Oregon 97310

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL XX

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*David G. Falbot*

TITLE

Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

*Sept. 19, 1975*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

*James L. Proctor*

DATE

*12/6/75*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*W. M. ...*

DATE

**DEC 4 1975**

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



PORTLAND SKIDMORE  
 OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

△ SYMBOL INDICATING  
 DIRECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received MAY 15 1985  
date entered

Continuation sheet PORTLAND SKIDMORE/  
OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Item number 8 Page 3

The Portland Skidmore/Old Town Historic District is primarily significant for its collection of late 19th Century architecture. In addition, the district contains a number of post-1900 buildings which also contribute to the architectural traditions of the immediate area. This statement will place the 20th Century buildings within district boundaries in the context of the overall development of the city and, thus, more clearly establish their contributing status.

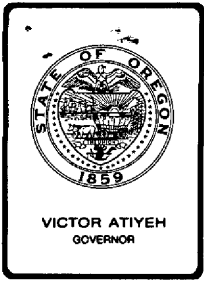
Boosterism in the prosperous city of Portland at the turn of the century led to the creation of the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905. The exposition received national attention and attracted large amounts of investment capital to the city after it closed. Increased developmental interests resulting from the healthy economic climate encouraged construction of many commercial and residential buildings in Portland.

Most of the new commercial development occurred west of the Yamhill and Skidmore/Old Town Historic Districts. To the north and east of the new commercial core, numerous three to five story buildings were constructed, most often as residential hotels with commercial storefronts at the ground level. Most of these buildings were constructed in brick and most displayed a modicum of historic detailing on their elevations.

A number of these 20th Century buildings were constructed within the boundaries of the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. Most are still standing, and most were given conservative compatible rankings in the original rankings in the original National Register nomination document. Only one 20th Century building, the George Lawrence Building (1902), was given a secondary ranking in the documentation, primarily due to its association with the leading Portland architectural firm of Whidden & Lewis. The George Lawrence leather goods manufacturing firm is among the city's significant historic businesses, however. Today, all these buildings are considered of secondary significance.

A small number of buildings ante-dating the First World War are within the district boundaries, and are considered compatible, having been constructed in materials, scale, and design similar to their earlier 20th Century neighbors. The 1930 end date for the period of 20th Century significance corresponds to the general cessation of commercial development in the city in advance of the Depression.

*Additional info*



*Department of Transportation*  
**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

Parks and Recreation Division

525 TRADE STREET S.E., SALEM, OREGON 97310

May 1, 1985

Carol D. Shull  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Park Service  
PO Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find supplemental information on the Portland Skidmore/Old Town Historic District nomination.

The Continuation Sheet, Item 8, page 3, is offered to more firmly establish the contributing status of buildings within the district which ante-date 1900. In addition, we request that "1900-" be checked under "Period" on the first page of Item 8.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please phone me at (503) 373-7694, if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

*James Hamrick*

James M. Hamrick  
Preservation Specialist

JMH:sqh  
Enclosure

cc: Paul W. Alley, WRO

*Rec'd 5-15-85*





# PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore / old town  
Historic district  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. new market block from  
SW



#3

1969

SKIDMORE

## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75  
Title: Portland Skidmore / old Town  
Historic district  
Multnomah County, Oregon  
Loc. New Market Block from SE. Packer Scott  
Bldg + Skidmore Fountain in  
background.



#6

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore/Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. Looking SE down Second Avenue

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



#7

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore / Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

oc. Looking NE from corner of Penn.  
& Second Ave.





#8

# PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore/Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. Looking SE down First Ave

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8-4 25



#14

# PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75  
Title: Portland Skidmore / old town  
Historic District  
Multnomah County, Oregon  
Loc. Intersection of Second +  
Ankeny St. from E



#15

# PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. East facade of Block #20

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



#16

# PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore / old town  
Historic district

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. Intersection of Couch St +

First Ave looking S





# 17

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore / Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. W facade of Block #9 (Frank's Tool &  
Supply with Blazer Block in fore-  
ground



## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75Title: Portland Skidmore/Old Town  
Historic DistrictMultnomah County, OregonLoc. NW corner of Block #9(Blagon Block)



#22

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75  
Title: Portland Skidmore/Old Town  
Historic District  
Multnomah County, Oregon  
Loc. Looking S down Second Ave.  
from Couch St.



#23

## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75

Title: Portland Skidmore/Old Town  
Historic District

Multnomah County, Oregon

Loc. Intersection of Third and  
Burnside from the South

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## PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 12/6/75  
Title: Portland Skidmore / Old Town  
Historic District  
Multnomah County, Oregon  
Loc. Northwest corner of Third  
and Davis.