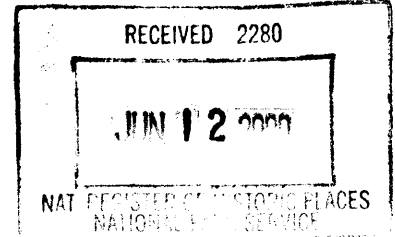


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

805



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Wallowa County Courthouse  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 101 South River Street ☐ not for publication N/A  
city or town Enterprise ☐ vicinity N/A  
state Oregon code OR county Wallowa code 063 zip code 97828

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. ( ☒ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hamrick May 18, 2000  
Signature of certifying official/Title /Deputy SHPO Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson W. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

7/14/00  
Date of Action

Wallowa County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Enterprise, Wallowa County, Oregon  
City, County, and State

## 5. Classification

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

- ☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public- Federal

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

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

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
4		objects
5	1	Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

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

Government: Courthouse, County

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

Government: Courthouse, County

## 7. Description

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

Romanesque with Queen Anne Elements

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

roof Asbestos Tile Shingles/Asphalt Roll Roofing

other Brick Chimneys, Metal-Faced Eaves, Fascia, and Cornices

## Narrative Description

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

### Narrative Description

#### SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Wallowa County Courthouse is located in Enterprise, Oregon and is a two-story rectangular building constructed of locally quarried Bowlby stone. The building was designed by Calvin R. Thornton, an architect from LaGrande in neighboring Union County, and constructed from 1909-1910 for the County of Wallowa. It remains in service today as Wallowa County's Courthouse housing most of the same functions as it did in 1910. The design of the courthouse displays no clearly defined architectural style. There are characteristics of the Romanesque style in the simple volume and massive, rough-faced stonework and arches. There are also elements from the Queen Anne style, such as the multiple roof forms, segmental arch windows and patterned shingles. The hip-roofed rectangular main volume with its simple classical cornice is characterized by bilateral symmetry and is dominated by an arched central entrance at the base of a tower that is surmounted by a steeply-pitched hip-roofed cupola. Generally, the building is in good condition, with its historic integrity very much intact.

#### SETTING

##### Location and Surrounds

The Wallowa County Courthouse is located at 101 South River Street (tax lot 2200) in Enterprise. The courthouse property encompasses an entire city block measuring 240 ft. by 240 ft. (approximately 1.3 acres). Sited on what is locally known as the "courthouse square", the imposing building sits centrally on the lot, with its main facade facing west. In the midwest tradition, the square is surrounded by commercial buildings. Although the commercial buildings extend several blocks west both on Main and North streets, the courthouse, on its own block with green grass and shade trees, serves as the symbolic center of town.

The historic integrity of the courthouse square area remains quite intact due to the fact that many of the existing commercial buildings that surround the square were built before or shortly after the construction of the courthouse. The block of Main Street that borders the square to the north is composed completely of historic buildings constructed between 1903-1917, all built of locally quarried Bowlby stone. It is an historically significant block in that it houses what was originally the Enterprise Hotel, the *Wallowa County Chieftain* newspaper office building, and the Enterprise Mercantile and Milling Company.

Courthouse Square is bordered on the east by East First Street. Diagonally northeast from the square on this street stands the Enterprise Library, one of the few remaining Carnegie libraries in Oregon that is intact and still used as a library. On this block, there is a well built brick storefront from the 1950's, a small historic brick building from the turn of the century, and a modern stucco structure. Diagonally

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southeast from the square stands Enterprise's best example of a large and finely restored Queen Anne residence, the Hyatt House (currently used as a Bed and Breakfast).

To the south, the square is bordered by Greenwood Street. This block houses a modern motel (on the site of what was originally a large opera house), and vistas towards the magnificent snow-capped Wallowa Mountain Range. The River Street block that borders the west side of the Courthouse Square has a mix of buildings that were built from 1909 to the 1950's. On the northern corner of this block stands a significant building that was built by a prominent Enterprise business man in 1909 of Bowlby stone. The intersection of River Street and Main Street is the town's key intersection, and at this intersection on the northwest corner of the courthouse lawn stands a prominent concrete arch that commemorates Wallowa County's early pioneers.

### The Grounds and Ancillary Features

The grounds of the courthouse property are flat with open grassy lawn areas. The main entrance into the building is on the west facade. However, there is a secondary entrance on the east side of the building that is used regularly. Therefore, a symmetrical system of concrete walkways has been established that lead to these entrances from the corners and centers of the surrounding sidewalks (see Site Plan). On the south side of the courthouse is an asphalt parking area for county employees.

On the grounds of the courthouse there are five ancillary features. Four of these features are contributing resources and cherished by the local community:

#### *#1 The Pioneer Memorial Arch, Contributing Feature*

This 10 ft. wide by 2 ft. thick concrete arch spans the northwest corner walkway, and was dedicated in 1936 by S. L. Magill. Large bronze plaques list and commemorate early pioneers who arrived in Wallowa County between the years of 1871-1879.

#### *#2 The War Memorial Cannon, Contributing Feature*

This Japanese Howitzer commemorates World War II veterans and was placed on the lawn just after World War II in ca. 1947. A cannon from World War I originally sat in its place, having been dedicated in June of 1926. The World War I cannon was removed and melted down for scrap iron during World War II.

#### *#3 The Granite Boulder Veterans Memorial, Contributing Feature*

The American Legion placed the 8.5 ton boulder from Hurricane Creek in front of the Courthouse main entrance on Memorial Day, May 1925. The bronze tablet on the west side bears the names of men who lost their lives while in the service of World War I. (In 1985, two more bronze tablets were added to honor veterans from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam).

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### #4 *The Granite Bench*, Contributing Feature

This bench honors the two pioneers, Stubblefield and Zurcher, who donated the public square on which the courthouse stands. The date of donation is not verified, but assumed ca. 1920's.

In the northeast corner of the courthouse square stands a 20 ft. by 24 ft. wood-framed gazebo built in 1986 that is used for band performances and picnicking. It is a non-contributing feature. On the northwest corner of the square there originally stood an ornate, delicately detailed gazebo built in the early 1900's. The date of its removal is unknown. The historic gazebo is evident in photos that were taken shortly after the construction of the courthouse.

### Landscaping

Deciduous trees were originally planted around the courthouse, but were replaced in March of 1925 with spruce trees. Eight of these spruce trees remain along the north and south edges of the property. The spruces on the west (front) lawn were removed in 1999 because they were reported to be a threat to the building. Those have been replaced by new oak trees. There are small decorative evergreen bushes that line the walkway to the main entrance, and a row of decorative crab apple trees along the sidewalk that borders the east side of the square. In the summer, the shade from the mature spruces offer welcome relief to pedestrians.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

### Basic Shape and Dimensions, Number of Stories

The Wallowa County Courthouse displays characteristics of the Romanesque style in its simple, massive volume, rough-faced stonework and arches. Some elements from the Queen Anne style are also displayed, such as the multiple roof forms, segmental arch windows and patterned shingles. It is slightly rectangular in plan, articulated with two gabled projections on the west and east facades, and one hip-roofed projection on each of the north and south facades, thus reducing the "boxy" effect of the volume.

The building measures approximately 92 ft. (east-west), and 76 ft. (north-south). The tower that is centered on the west facade measures approximately 14 ft. by 14 ft. It is approximately 65 ft. in height to the top of the cupola. The courthouse is a two story building with a full raised basement, and an attic that was originally used for offices, but is now used for storage due to lack of fire exiting. The building is capped with a hip-roof, and stands taller than any of its neighboring structures.

### Basic Structural Details

The perimeter foundation walls of the courthouse are built of Bowlby stone throughout except for a few areas that have been infilled with rubble stone or brick. Interior basement structural walls are also massively built of stone. Two names (Vernon Corkins and Charles Giovanini) and the date 1910 are

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etched in mortar on a basement hall wall, and presumably belong to some of the masons who worked on the building. The basement floor is concrete.

The first and second story floors are typically wood-framed with 2x12's, 16" on center and have a 3/4" thick wood subfloor, a thin layer of kraft-paper-faced hair insulation (presumably horse hair), and finally a fir finish floor. However, the floors of the men's and women's jails are constructed of reinforced cast-in-place concrete.

The first and second floor walls that are load bearing are shown on the original plans as brick with a plaster finish (could not be verified). Non load bearing walls and stairs are typically wood framed. The hip roof is wood-framed conventionally except for the roof over the court room. Above the courtroom is an intricate system of two massive trusses and related roof framing, from which is suspended the framing for the expansive pyramidal-shaped coffered courtroom ceiling (currently the ceiling is not exposed on the interior due to a modern suspended ceiling). The cupola that sits atop the masonry tower is wood-framed with applied sheet metal detailing.

By using stone from the Bowlby quarry, Thornton integrated the courthouse with the rest of downtown. The exterior walls are rough-cut, gray-brown Bowlby stone which was quarried from a local quarry in the Swamp Creek area (see Section 8: Bowlby Stone Construction). The walls are true load-bearing stone walls, and laid in a common bond, with true arches at the windows and main entry doors. The mortar joints are narrow and simply tooled. The keystones at each arch, and all the window sills, are made of a contrasting light gray granite. There is no indication of any reinforcement used the stone walls.

### **EXTERIOR FEATURES**

The Courthouse exterior is classically organized vertically, with a clearly defined base (highlighted by a water table just above the basement windows), a body, and a cornice capping the top. The building has a medium pitched hip roof covered with tan asbestos tiles that have aged to a charcoal gray color. (These tiles are assumed to be the original roof.) Above the medium pitched roof that is visible from street level, is another lesser pitched hip roof section that is covered with asphalt roll roofing. The ridges of the asbestos tile portion of the roof are capped with curved asbestos tiles made to look like true ceramic tile ridge caps. There are built-in sheet metal gutters. There is a metal ball-capped finial that caps the point of the cupola. The building has three brick chimneys (Bowlby stone is too soft to use for flues). One chimney sits fairly centrally on the roof, and serves the boiler exhaust. The two other chimneys are symmetrical, and sit above the east facade on the roofs of the gabled extensions. These chimneys served as a way of exhausting hot air from the building, and they are operated by opening or closing vents manually from the interior of the building. They are currently capped.

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The Courthouse has a white painted decorative cornice edged with ogee trim, and soffiting that has applied pieces of trim suggestive of bracketing. This sheet metal cornice detail extends around the perimeter of the building, interrupted only by hip-roofed extensions on the north and south, and at the cupola tower on the west. The gable roofed projections on the east and west facades feature semicircular windows with delicately gridded mullions and simple curved casings. These windows are surrounded by diamond shaped shingles. Small dormers that sit on the roof above the cornice flank the projections on the north and south facades, and also the main cupola tower. They are also decorated with diamond shingles.

The prominent, open-sided square cupola with beveled corners, which serves as a focal point in Enterprise, currently houses the town's fire alarm horn. It is unknown as to whether the cupola was originally designed to house a bell or clock. The stone section of the cupola tower is capped with a prominent cornice, on which sits the simply detailed cupola. Just below this cornice is another semicircular window that caps a pair of double hung windows. Below these are painted "MCMIX" in black letters on a white background (1909, the year of construction). Just above the main entrance arch is another tooled stone block painted with the words "COURT HOUSE", also black on white.

Although the back (east) facade is less ornate than the front (west) facade, the entry arches and original doors on both facades are equally detailed. Modern aluminum storm doors were added at each entry near the exterior face of the building in 1981 for energy-saving purposes, but the original double fir doors remain in their original positions recessed under each entry arch. The doors are glazed with the original clear beveled glass. Decorative clear leaded beveled glass sidelights flank the double doors, and patterned glass in a floral design forms the transom lights above. Concrete steps that lead up to the main west entrance were reconstructed in 1947. In 1981, a concrete stair and wheelchair ramp system was installed at the secondary east entrance.

The typical window in the Courthouse is a double-hung, one over one wood window with segmental arches. They typically are arranged in a paired fashion (the pairs being separated horizontally by about two feet of stone), and are placed symmetrically on all four facades. The simple wood white-painted frames are recessed a few inches from the face of the dressed Bowlby stone. The tympanums within the segmental arches are without embellishment. The sloping sills are dressed light gray granite. The stone segmental arches above the windows are true arches capped by a light gray granite keystone. The sashes are painted black, and the wood window frames are painted white.

There are five large semi-circular windows with true divided lights in a small grid pattern. Four of these windows are framed by the pedimented gables on the extensions that flank the main and secondary entrances. The fifth semi-circular window sits at the top of the cupola tower, just below the cupola.

Five windows on the first floor in the southeast corner of the building - at the location of the Men's Jail - have original steel bars mortared into the stone jambs, and are covered with woven wire steel security

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mesh on the exterior. One of these windows is missing a portion of the security mesh where a heat pump was once attached. Five more windows on the northeast corner of the building - at the original location of the Women's Jail - had their steel bars and security mesh removed in 1997 when the Women's Jail cell was dismantled. In the northeast corner of the building at the basement level, five small windows were originally stoned-in under the Women's Jail cell area, because that area has solid fill under the concrete floor. On the west facade, there are two windows (one on the first floor, and one on the second floor) that serve the vaults at the Clerk's and County Commissioner's offices. These vault windows are of typical construction on the exterior, but have solid steel shutters mounted to the interior of the vaults.

There are some modern alterations of the Courthouse windows. The bottom half of one first floor window houses a large air conditioning unit, and a few basement windows have been infilled with wood panels that house fan units. About forty percent of the Courthouse window sashes have been replaced by modern white vinyl sashes (frames are intact). The original sashes that remain are intact, but have aluminum storm windows (from the 1970's) mounted on their exteriors.

There are two small shed additions built in ca. 1960. One shed addition measures 7'-6" by 17'-10", and sits to the south of the secondary entry on the east facade. It is wood framed, sided with horizontal tongue and groove siding, and has a low-pitched shed roof that terminates just below the sills of the first floor windows. It houses garden equipment and a concrete stairwell that accesses the original entrance to the custodial area of the basement. The other shed addition, measuring 6'-8" by 15'-6" is on the north facade at the northwest corner of the building. It is wood framed, sided with horizontal tongue and groove siding, and also sits just below the sills of the first floor windows. It houses a concrete stairwell that accesses the basement Planning Office through a door that was cut in below an original window. There is a propane tank and emergency generator unit (from the 1980's) on the ground next to the addition.

### INTERIOR FEATURES

#### **General Layout (see Floor Plan for room layout)**

The Wallowa County Courthouse has a basement, two main floor levels, and an attic. The first floor is arranged around two intersecting central hallways that group the county office rooms into quadrants. A pair of identical staircases sit at each end of the first floor hallway that runs north-south. They access both the basement and the second floor. The full basement houses additional county offices, meeting rooms, custodial rooms, and mechanical equipment. The second floor is arranged around one north-south hallway. County offices sit on the west side of that hallway, and the courtroom with its adjoining offices sits on the east side of the hallway. At the south end of the second floor hallway is an enclosed stairway that leads to the attic. The attic was once used as office space, but due to lack of adequate fire



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exiting, it is now only used for storage. The portion of the attic over the Courtroom is devoted solely to a massive truss system that holds up the coffered ceiling in the courtroom.

**Basement**

The basement has a stone-walled hallway that runs full-length from north to south. Although it seems the basement was not originally intended for extensive public use (the ceiling is low, the wall finish is rough stone, and mechanical systems are surface mounted and fully visible), the hallway is now flanked by the Planning Department offices, the Commission on Children and Families offices, the Wallowa County Emergency Management office, Public Meeting Rooms, Custodial areas, and a Mechanical Room. There is a small bathroom on the north end of the hallway. Until the 1970's, the Meeting Rooms and Kitchen served as an apartment for the Courthouse custodians, who, in addition to building maintenance and boiler stoking, were required to cook for the jail prisoners. Rooms that are used for public offices have had paneling applied to the walls, and carpet or sheet vinyl applied to the original concrete floors. There have been a few non-historic partitions installed at office areas. The exterior stairwell and entrance to the Planning Office are not original to the building, and were installed ca. 1960. There is an original intact vault in the Planning Office.

The Mechanical Room houses the remains of a steam boiler installed in 1927 (the original 1910 boiler proved inadequate, and so was replaced). This enormous steel boiler tank was purchased from an abandoned saw mill and required some careful demolition and excavation work to install. It was encased in brick, and fired first by wood, then by coal, and lastly, by wood pellets in the 1980's and 1990's. In 1997, a small modern oil-fired steam boiler was installed beside the 1927 boiler (now defunct). The new boiler still serves the original radiator steam heating system that is throughout the building. The original radiators, with decorative relief, are intact. The current Workshop, adjacent to the Mechanical Room, was the fuel storage room. The wood and coal were loaded down through a window on the south side of the room. The fuel storage room had a dirt floor until 1998 when a concrete floor was installed. In approximately the 1970's, a surface-mounted sprinkler system was installed in portions of the building.

**First Floor**

The first floor houses the Clerk's Offices, the Assessor's office, the Veteran's Administration Office, the Sheriff's offices and County Jail, and Treasurer's office which are accessed off the cruciform shaped hallways. The double main entrance doors are located at both ends of the east-west hallway. The hallway system maintains the original plaster ceilings (approx. 10 ft. high), but has surface-mounted modern fluorescent light fixtures. The hallways have continuous 4'-6" high wainscoting made of plaster with a pressed brick pattern, and capped with a simple fir chair rail trim. The wainscot is painted a light yellow. Above the wainscot, the original plaster wall, painted white, remains intact. At the base of the wall, a 4" brown painted band suggests a baseboard.

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The interior hallway doors remain historically intact except for a new steel security door at the Sheriff's office, and new solid core flush doors at two modernized bathrooms at either end of the north-south hallway. The typical original interior doors are fir and have textured glazing in the upper panel with 3 wood panels below, and a transom light above the door. The casing is simple 4" fir, and the top of the door is capped with a fir crown trim. Some doors have historic painted lettering on the glazed panel. Door hardware is simple plate brass. The doors to the basement are under the stair landings and have perilously low six foot tall ceilings.

The northwest quadrant of the first floor houses the County Clerk's office. It includes the main office, a research room, and a vault. The Clerk's office and research room are carpeted, have lowered ceilings with fluorescent lights, and plaster walls that have been paneled. The original oak reception and research desks remain. The vault and its black-painted door are original and intact. The vault door is framed with gold pin striping, with ornate corner designs. At the center of the top casing is lettered in silver, "WALLOWA COUNTY COURT HOUSE". In the center of the door is written "Herring-Hall-Marvin Safe Co., Hamilton, O.", in silver. At the center bottom of the door is written in gold, "Purcell Safe Co., Seattle, WASH." The vault's interior is lined with high wood shelves that store county records. There is a window in the west wall of the vault that is shuttered with plate steel. The vault floor is concrete and the ceiling and walls retain the original plaster finish.

The northeast quadrant of the first floor houses the Sheriff's offices. It includes the main reception area and offices for the Sheriff and Deputy Sheriffs. The rooms are carpeted, have lowered ceilings with fluorescent lights, and plaster walls that have been paneled. Part of the reception area of the main Sheriff's office has been partitioned off into a small office. The adjacent room on the northeast corner of the building was originally the Women's Jail, and the cells are speculated to have originally come from a ship's brig. These steel jail cells were removed in 1997, and the room was then divided into offices. The entry portion of the women's cell (known as the "sally port") is currently displayed at the Wallowa County History Museum. The original double steel door that led to the jail remains and is intact.

The southeast quadrant of the first floor houses the Jail and the Treasurer's office. The Jail, on the southeast corner of the building, was originally the men's jail. Although the original cells remain intact, they are currently only used as a temporary "holding area" for prisoners during court appearances and bookings. The main double steel doors into the Jail room are original and intact. The main jail cell door is inscribed with, "The Pauly Sliding Door Locking Device, Patented Oct. 19, 1897, No. 591850, Pauly Jail Building Co., St. Louis, Mo." The jail floor is painted concrete, and the windows are barred for security. The walls are plaster, and the ceiling is plaster with surface-mounted fluorescent lights. The adjacent Treasurer's office includes a reception area, and the main office. The rooms are carpeted, have lowered ceilings with fluorescent lights, and plaster walls that have been paneled. The original oak reception desk remains, and also the original vault that sits in the southwest corner of the room.

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The southwest quadrant of the first floor houses the Assessor's office and the Veteran's Administration Office. The rooms are carpeted, have lowered ceilings with fluorescent lights, and plaster walls that have been paneled. The original oak reception desk remains in the Assessor's office. The office partition locations remain original except for one new partition separating the Veteran's Administration office from a computer room.

The identical pair of staircases that lead to the basement and second floor sit on the east side at either end of the north-south hallway. The stairs are "U-shaped" in plan, 4'-8" wide, and constructed of naturally finished fir throughout. The detailing is simple. The newel posts are square with a pyramidal wood cap. The balusters are square, and the railing is flat stock with rounded edges. The fir treads and risers are currently covered with carpet. The underside of the stairs are beaded fir boards. The same wainscot system as in the first floor hallway extends along the outside of the stairway walls.

### Second Floor

The second floor central hallway runs north-south along the full length of the building. It houses the two stairwells and two small bathrooms, one at either end of the hall. On the east side of the hall are doors that lead into the Courtroom and Circuit Court offices. On the west side of the hallway are doors that lead into the Administrative Services office, the County Commissioner's offices, the Jury Room, the District Attorney's offices, and the Child Support/Victim's Assistance offices. The ceiling of the hallway is the original plaster finish. There are six original-styled pendant light fixtures hanging along the hallway, presumed to be in new locations due to the surface conduit installation. The plaster wainscoting, plaster walls, chair rail trim, and "painted-on" base board are the same as the first floor hall, and are intact. The floor is carpeted. There are windows at the north and south ends of the hall. The plaster wall gently curves into the head, jamb, and sill, which is a typical window trim detail throughout the building. The doors in the second floor hallway are original and intact. The doors into the men's and women's bathrooms are only six feet tall and 24" wide. The tiny bathrooms have new fixtures, but the wood stall partitions, plaster walls, and ceilings, remain intact.

On the east side of the hallway, double doors are the main approach to the large, open courtroom. Six windows face east directly opposite the doors, making the principal view from the courtroom towards the hills - not to the majestic Wallowa Mountains. The courtroom is divided into two sections by an oak balustrade, separating the public from the judge's, attorney's, and jury's area. This balustrade has square newel posts with turned caps and decorative indented panels on the sides. The balusters are turned with round balls at the top and bottom of each. There were originally two oak swinging doors mounted to this balustrade which were removed in the 1980's (one remains and has been installed at the Circuit Court office). This balustrade detailing is repeated around the judge's bench area, and is the most ornate detailing found in the courthouse. The public seating area is surrounded by wooden bookshelves, and composed of fourteen oak spectator benches embellished with tiny decorative holes in the form of a star within a circle within a shield (The Ford and Johnson Company, Chicago). The jury box has 12 original

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graceful, slat-back oak chairs which are affixed to the floor by a single stem, and can tip back due to the spring construction. There are brass footrests below the chairs, and a modern wood "vanity" panel in front of the box. The judge's and attorney's desks are original oak furniture. Photos of early Wallowa County judges hang on the wall behind the judge's desk.

The ceiling of the courtroom was originally coffered, but now has a modern dropped ceiling with two surface mounted fluorescent lights above the judge's area, and four historic styled pendant fixtures hanging above the public seating area. The walls are original plaster, ending at the floor with tall fir baseboards. All the windows in the courtroom are original and intact, and have what appears to be the original, unpainted wooden slatted venetian blinds (Burlington Venetian Blinds, Burlington, Vermont). The floor is carpeted. There are three doors on the north elevation of the courtroom that lead into the Circuit Court offices.

The Circuit Court offices consist of three interconnected rooms: the reception office, the main office and the Judge's Chambers on the northeast corner of the building. All these offices have dropped ceilings, fluorescent lighting, and modern wall paneling. They are all carpeted.

The rooms on the west side of the second floor hallway have had only minor partition changes. A modern partition with two new doors was added in the Victim's Assistance room (part of the District Attorney's office). In the County Commissioner's area, a small office has been partitioned off. An original intact vault (identical to the Clerk's vault) sits to the south of the County Commissioner's office. Dropped ceilings have been added to all the rooms on the west side of the second floor. Wall paneling and floor carpeting has also been added to these rooms.

### Attic

At the south end of the second floor hallway, between the south stairwell and the bathroom, is a door to the attic stairs. The stairway was originally open, but was walled off in 1981. The attic was put to use as offices until the 1970's when concerns arose about its inadequate fire exits. It is now used for storage. With the dormer windows and the ceiling sloping down to the walls, a sense of the exterior design can be felt on the interior, making this one of the most interesting areas of the courthouse. In addition, a display of intact original finishes can be found in the attic due to the lack of alteration that has occurred there.

At the top of the attic stairway is a small landing with three doors. One door leads to a storage room on the southwest corner of the building. The second door leads to the largest room in the northwest corner of the building. The third door leads to the part of the attic that is over the courtroom. The storage rooms have original pendant light fixtures, plaster ceilings and walls that are water damaged in places. The fir-trimmed windows and doors are original. The flooring is fir with 10" fir baseboard and shoe mould. The area over the courtroom is a complexity of framing, consisting of two massive trusses built

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of 6-1/2" x 12" members that span the large courtroom, and configure the original pyramidal shaped coffered ceiling. There are no wall or ceiling finishes in this area of the attic. The dormers and windows were built not for daylighting, but for the balanced visual effect on the exterior of the building.

### **BOWLBY STONE CONSTRUCTION**

#### **Description of Bowlby Stone**

A type of stone called consolidated volcanic ash, or "tuff", local to the northeastern part of Oregon, was occasionally used in building construction. This stone originated from volcanic action when lava flows erupted into the ground water table or a lake. Lighter rock would float with gases to the surface and eventually form a light layer of rock. The result created a fractured basalt. This gray ash stone has many desirable characteristics. Almost as lightweight as wood, the stone, when wet, is soft enough to cut with a saw. Once extracted from the ground and exposed to the air, it hardens. Nails can even be driven into it. This building material did present some problems, however. Its popular use for chimney construction, prior to the discovery that it gradually burned away, accounts for the origin of many destructive house fires.

Buildings constructed of volcanic tuff were not finely finished despite the ease with which the stone could be worked; the treatment was heavy, with massive chunks of material. The front usually displayed roughly dressed stone while the sides were laid with rubble courses. Rarely was pattern introduced to the facade through decoration or variety in the courses or arches. The Wallowa County Courthouse presents perhaps the region's most harmonious blend of stone with a high Victorian style; its stone construction, emphasizing the building's mass, is accented by wood trim in the deep, pedimented gables, fan lights and tower.

#### **The Quarry**

One of the early pioneers of Wallowa County was Enoch Ross Bowlby. He was born in Greene County, Pennsylvania in 1861. The name Ross came from his early ancestors of whom the family remembers Betsy Ross, famous for making the first American flag. He arrived in eastern Oregon in 1893, and took up a homestead south of Enterprise. He bought a ranch on Swamp Creek where a stone quarry was opened and the stone was quarried for use in local building. At that time, two of the pioneers were stone masons. These two men could shape beautiful building blocks from this stone. Bowlby stone was routinely mined in spring, possibly at a time when the rock was more moist and easier to extract. When taken from the quarry the stone could easily be sawed. Time and exposure to the atmosphere set and hardened it so that buildings made from it have a permanency and architectural interest. From the quarry, the stone was hauled to town by six horse teams and sold for one dollar per cord. It is estimated that there is 100 to 1000 times more Bowlby stone remaining in the hillside, than was taken to town on horse-drawn wagons.

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According to Industrial Minerals Geologist, Ronald P. Geitgey, the volcanic tuff that is located in the historic Bowlby Quarry is a palagonite tuff that shows some color variation within the three quarry sites.

### Comparative Bowlby Stone Architecture

A number of prominent commercial buildings were built from this stone during Enterprise's building boom of 1909-1917. Soon the gray, volcanic material came to be recognized as a trademark of Enterprise. Although Enterprise is not quite the "Stone City" envisioned by the newspaper in 1910, stone buildings - seemingly on every corner of along Main Street - still make the town unusual. The following four examples of Bowlby Stone buildings occur in close proximity to the Wallowa County Courthouse:

#### *The Bowlby Building (1899)*

The first to build with this material, Enoch R. Bowlby, constructed a stone structure at 107 W. Main Street, undoubtedly as an advertisement for his quarry. Lest anyone forget, he prominently placed his name high on the building. While the front stone blocks are regularly coursed, the blocks on the sides are roughly laid, indicating less care in the stonework. This was typical of older mid-block buildings, both of brick and stone; the owner expected that eventual neighbors would hide its unsightly sides with similarly tall structures. Unfortunately, the building directly to the east remained only one story, and the one to the west, although two stories, never achieved the grand height of the Bowlby building. Besides the metal cornice, Bowlby also embellished his building with lighter gray stone which forms the arched openings on the ground floor. Builders of subsequent stone structures generally selected less elaborate detailing.

#### *The Enterprise Hotel (1903)*

In 1903, when city leaders realized that there were no "suitable" lodgings available, the townspeople contributed money to build this hotel and when it was completed they celebrated with a large banquet. It represented the first major construction effort in the county in several years. The building, once three stories before a fire burned the upper floor, was part of the most extensive block of stone structures in Enterprise. It stands as an edifice to the town's "enterprising" nature.

#### *The Litch Building (1909)*

The building standing at 100 W. Main Street is an anomaly with its mix of pressed metal imitating stone along River Street and Bowlby stone along Main Street. Originally, a one-story, wood-frame building stood on the corner before Samuel Litch in 1909 decided to expand the building by adding a second floor and an addition. Because of the weight of the stone on the wood-frame building, he had to use an imitation made of metal sheets on the second floor, but he constructed the two-story addition completely of Bowlby stone. The diagonal entrance of the two-story Litch Building faces Main Street and River Road, matching the diagonal entrance of the former Enterprise Hotel on the opposite corner. It was from

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the Litch Building that C. R. Thornton, also architect of the Courthouse, fell to his death from scaffolding while supervising it's construction.

### *The Enterprise Mercantile and Milling Building (1916)*

On the north block of courthouse square stands the largest stone building in Enterprise, built by the Enterprise Mercantile and Milling company, a descendant of Island City Mercantile and Milling. In 1916, during Enterprise's boom period, the company hired Portland architect John Toutellotte (though for the courthouse, a northeastern Oregon architect was good enough). There are ramps to the basement of the building where agricultural equipment was hauled for display. The ground floor and mezzanines of the three story-building were planned as a large department store, and it was expected to be the finest anywhere between Portland and Boise. But with the poor local economy, the firm failed just ten years later. Today, the building stands as a monument to past dreams.

## MAJOR ALTERATIONS

### Historic Alterations

- Original boiler replaced with new boiler in 1927.

### Non-Historic Alterations

- Two exterior shed additions that enclose concrete stairwells to access the basement on the east and north sides of the building were installed ca. 1960.
- Air conditioning unit installed in lower portion of one window (at Sheriff's Office) and the installation of exterior aluminum storm windows where original windows still exist (ca. 1970's).
- Interior changes include new carpeting throughout the building, lowered ceilings and added fluorescent lights in most of the building, and some offices have been partitioned and paneling added to walls.
- The enclosure of the stairway leading from the second floor hall to the attic in 1981.
- Front and rear entrance vestibule enclosed with aluminum storm doors in 1981 (original wood entry doors remain intact).
- New concrete stairs and accessible ramp added to rear entrance in 1981.

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- The women's jail cell and steel window bars removed in 1997.
- The installation of new vinyl sashes in about 40% of the first and second floor windows (1997-1999).

### **PROPOSED REHABILITATION**

Wallowa County is considering the following work pending funding: installing new roofing, upgrading areas of the building to improve accessibility (possibly an elevator), restoring the coffered ceiling in the Courtroom, and researching whether it is financially feasible to utilize the attic area for additional office space.



Wallowa County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Enterprise, Wallowa County, Oregon  
City, County, and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" on all that apply.)

Property is:

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

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1909-1949

### Significant Dates

1909 (start of construction)

1910 (completion of construction)

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Architect: Thornton, Calvin R.

Builder: Haworth S.R.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

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

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Wallowa County Courthouse

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

Note:

The majority of the material in this section is cited from four sources: *"Exploring Oregon's Historic Courthouses"* by Kathleen Wiederhold, *"5200 Thursdays in the Wallowas"* by Lloyd Coffman, *"The History of Wallowa County, Oregon"* by the Wallowa County Museum Board, and *"Mainstreet: Northeast Oregon"* by Barbara Bailey.

### SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Wallowa County Courthouse in Enterprise, Oregon, meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion "A" as the center of local governmental administration from the time of its construction in 1909 to the present. The courthouse was built 22 years after the county was created, and just one year after the railroad arrived. The arrival of the railroad in 1908 connected the isolated Wallowa Valley to the main railroad lines that passed through La Grande and on to Portland, and spurred rapid growth in the timber and agricultural industries of Wallowa County. For the first time, it was possible for Wallowa County ranchers, farmers, and timber workers to develop a substantial system of exporting their goods throughout the country. The construction of such a grand stone courthouse symbolizes this era of rapid expansion in Wallowa County and the community optimism that prevailed during that time.

The Wallowa County Courthouse is also eligible under criterion "C" as one of the few examples remaining of an early 20th century governmental building that is currently being used for its original purpose. In addition, the courthouse was built of volcanic tuff, a stone that is local to Northeastern Oregon, and was quarried locally in the Enterprise area. The stately, symmetrical building was constructed by local stonecutters and masons of massive blocks of this stone, locally known as Bowlby stone. Bowlby stone is a gray-brown volcanic ash material that is soft and easily sawed when taken from the quarry. Through time and exposure to the atmosphere the stone hardens and has permanency and particular architectural interest. Bowlby stone was used in Wallowa County primarily during the expansionist era of 1900 - 1919. Enterprise, the County seat, held the majority of the commercial and residential examples built of Bowlby stone, compelling the May 14, 1910 *News Record* to tout Enterprise as a "Stone City." Many of these stone buildings exist today, the Wallowa County Courthouse being the largest and most impressive example of Bowlby stone construction remaining in the county.

The period of significance dates from 1909 to 1949: The start date corresponds to the beginning of construction of the courthouse, and the date 1910 signifies its completion and opening for business. The end date represents the post war era when economic stability resumed after years of economic depression during the 1920's and 1930's. The end date also corresponds to the 50 year cut-off date of significance according to National Register guidelines. The areas of significance include Government and Architecture.

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### EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF WALLOWA COUNTY

Wallowa County, originally part of Union County, was formally organized in February, 1887. Wallowa County is situated in the northeastern corner of Oregon, bordered by Washington State on the north, and Idaho on the east. The remote county is defined geographically by the natural formations of the Wallowa Mountains on the west and south, the Grande Ronde Canyon on the north, and the Snake River Canyon on the east. These rugged land formations kept Wallowa County fairly isolated, and as a result permanent settlers didn't venture into the area until the 1870's, relatively late as compared to settlement in other parts of Oregon.

At this time of historic contact, the Joseph band of Nez Perce, with a population of 200-300, inhabited Wallowa County. They lived in villages along lower portions of Joseph Creek, the Grande Ronde River, the Imnaha River, and the Snake River during the winter months. In the Spring, family groups moved to camps in the surrounding upland prairies to harvest camas roots and fish from the Wallowa River.

As white settlers increased (in 1874 the U.S. Government formally opened the Wallowa Valley to settlement), Indian/White conflicts became increasingly frequent until in 1877, the Nez Perce were asked to leave the valley to be resettled in Idaho. This instigated the Indian War of 1877 when Chief Joseph conducted a retreat of 1400 miles over parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, to finally be forced by the U.S. Army to surrender just 50 miles from their freedom in Canada.

Between 1875 and 1878 a settler named A. C. Smith, a self-educated lawyer, made a significant contribution to transportation to Wallowa County. He built the first toll road over the hill from Cricket Flat, and the first toll bridge across the Wallowa River at Minam, thus greatly improving the connection of the isolated Wallowa area to the Grande Ronde Valley region. By 1879, a stage line into the valley was inaugurated.

The first Wallowa County post office was established in Wallowa in 1874. The first established town in the county was Lostine (1875), followed by the establishment of Joseph in 1879, and Enterprise in 1887. In 1884 the first newspaper was established at Joseph and known as the *Wallowa Chieftain*, and in 1887 the first bank in the county was chartered. A number of mining claims were filed in 1889, and the city of Wallowa was founded this year. In just 17 years, the population of Wallowa County had grown from 20 families in 1873 to 3,509 people in 1890.

### THE CREATION OF WALLOWA COUNTY AND ENTERPRISE

While the population gradually increased in the valley, some settlers began demanding a separation from Union County to the west. In the 1886 election, Frank McCully, a homesteader who had founded the

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town of Joseph and had advocated independence, won a seat in the legislature. Wallowa Valley citizens had been divided in their votes for the local man, but numerous voters in La Grande and Union, two large Union County towns, reportedly had cast their ballots for him because they did not want to pay for the considerable services, such as roads, soon needed in the valley.

Once in the legislature, McCully astutely became chairman of an influential committee which processed legislation on new counties; by February of 1887, the governor signed the bill creating the Wallowa County. (Wallowa was named after Nez Perce's method of trapping fish with rows of sticks supported by poles stretched across the Wallowa River.) Not surprisingly, McCulley's town - Joseph - was named the temporary county seat.

William Bennett, the first white settler in the Enterprise area, arrived in the early 1870's. The area near his cabin was called Bennett Flat and was famed among the stockmen of that pioneer day for two things; a race track for Indians, and a natural roundup center for cattle. Every Sunday when the weather was pleasant, the Indians would gather from far and near to test their ponies on Bennett Flat. The alkali salts and the water of Bennett Flat attracted cattle from far and wide in the hill ranges. This brought the cattle in naturally and made it the center of a large stock business. Later, in 1881, Robert Stubblefield, a Missouri sheepherder, filed the first homestead claim on the site of present-day Enterprise.

The establishment of the City of Enterprise was tightly entwined with the battle over which of the county's towns would be the county seat. Although Joseph had been named the temporary county seat in February 1887, the permanent position was to be decided in a later election. Besides Joseph, only Lostine and Alder (now a ghost town) had significant populations, and each was determined to win the coveted position of county seat.

Several Union County business owners, calling themselves the Island City Mercantile and Milling Company, also knew the benefits of being the chosen town. In 1887, they approached first Lostine and then the Joseph leaders about the company constructing a bank, general store, and a flour mill if the town would contribute the land. (Apparently they did not believe that Alder had a good chance of winning the election.) Both refused the proposition, saying that the business owners could afford to buy the land themselves.

Upon their refusal, the leader of the Island City Mercantile and Milling Company reportedly stated that it was obvious his company would just have to build a town of its own. Not long after, Robert Stubblefield and his neighbor, John Zurcher, filed a twenty-one-block plat at Bennett Flat, and called it Wallowa City. Directly in the center of the plat for Wallowa City sat an area designated as the Public Square on land that had been donated by both men. Significantly, Public Square was a term that in the mid-western United States had become synonymous with Courthouse Square. The Missourian Stubblefield and the Ohioan Zurcher thus, perhaps unintentionally, revealed both their heritage and their ambition.

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On July 11, 1887, the Island City Mercantile and Milling Company spokesman prepared to make good on his boast to build a town when his company became recipient of an entire block in the choicest section of the proposed town of Wallowa City for a sale price of \$1.00. The deeding party bore the name Robert F. Stubblefield. Not surprisingly, a partner in the Island City Mercantile and Milling Company became mayor of the new town.

In a letter printed March 26, 1887, the Joseph correspondent to the *Scout* reported, "The county seat question is being agitated all over the valley. The fight is mainly between Joseph and Bennett Flat (Wallowa City)." Surprisingly, the contest had apparently dissolved to a choice between the leading town of the valley and a site that was not a town at all. At the time of the correspondence, Bennett Flat had a population consisting of only a few scattered homesteaders. In the general election of 1888, when all the votes had been counted the upstart town of Wallowa City had received affirmation on 482 ballots to Joseph's 370. Wallowa City became the new County seat.

However, postal officials refused to locate a post office in Wallowa City, since a town of Wallowa already existed in the county. According to lore, the local citizens held a meeting, but no names were favored until one participant declared that whatever name they selected, "it ought to be an enterprising little town anyway." Robert Stubblefield proposed the name "Enterprise," which was enthusiastically adopted. On June 14, 1888, the "Town of Enterprise" was filed and recorded.

The City of Enterprise was incorporated on February 21, 1889, by the Oregon Legislature. The first telephone in the town was installed in 1895. And on November 14, 1908, the railroad came through. The arrival of the railroad, relaxed homesteading rules, and general prosperity throughout the nation transformed Wallowa Valley - especially the town of Enterprise. Many of the new buildings were of stone. An article in the May 14, 1910 *News Record*, just after the completion of the new County Courthouse, described Enterprise as a "Stone City." A significant stimulus to vigorous expansion in the county seat town occurred with the arrival of the Eastern Oregon Lumber Company. In 1915, this Kansas City based firm erected a modern lumber mill within the city limits, built a logging railroad north of town, and began the harvest of a stand of timber that they estimated would keep the mill at full capacity for twenty to thirty years. The operation employed over three hundred men who, along with their families, caused the town's population to more than double in less than a decade.

The opening of the mill in November 1915 triggered the largest building boom in Enterprise History. A good many of the buildings that help define the current skyline date their beginnings from 1916-1917. The infusion of money and population created an illusion that the long dreamed of period of continued growth and prosperity had finally arrived. For instance, a local realtor began predicting in his advertisements that Enterprise would achieve a population of 5000 within five years while one of the building projects launched at this time was billed as the largest retail building between Boise and Portland. The laying of the cornerstone for this ambitious construction effort in particular seemed an affirmation to the promising future that beckoned. Intended to house the Enterprise Mercantile and

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Milling company's modern new department store, the massive three story stone structure covered most of one block and quickly became a matter of civic pride. Town boosters could not have conceived a more appropriate symbol for the optimism permeating the community. Actual completion of the building had been delayed by the war so initial occupancy did not occur until 1922. Three years later the firm found itself forced into involuntary bankruptcy.

Towards the end of the expansionist years in Enterprise, when prosperity seemed assured, a special election was held in March 1919, passing a ballot measure establishing that the city would be responsible for paving the public areas, such as street corners, but property owners would be assessed to pay for the paving of the separate streets. A *Chieftain* reporter stated, "The paving already in sight will cost probably \$125,000 making this the largest public work ever undertaken in the county."

By the beginning of the Great Depression, Enterprise had lost almost all of the gains in population acquired during the first two decades of the century; the population in 1930 was 1379. This sudden deflation of hopes for a thriving city seemed to prove the death knell of the enterprising spirit that had so characterized the town in its early days. For instance, the physical appearance of the entire downtown business district remains essentially the same today as it was in 1917, the population that reached it nadir in 1930 had only slightly rebounded in the past fifty-odd years, and no new industry has ever replaced the important mill. Today, trade and government are the economic mainstays of the town.

### THE 20TH CENTURY WALLOWA COUNTY

By the turn of the century, Wallowa County had moved from a scattered group of fairly self-sustaining homestead families (who had to travel to the Grande Ronde Valley for staples they couldn't produce themselves), to the establishment of several very viable commercial centers from which people could buy supplies, do banking, educate their children, and use the postal system.

But in 1903, the county appeared to be in the doldrums, apparently waiting for the long anticipated railroad to get things going again. Although some construction occurred (the Enterprise Hotel in 1903, and the Wallowa County High School in 1907) building was slow. During this same period many other citizens placed their hopes for the future on one or more of the several mines in the area. When the railroad finally arrived in 1908 (relatively late as compared to other parts of Oregon), commerce really started to boom. The ability to export local products, coupled with the influx of successful entrepreneurs of firms like the Island City Mercantile and Milling company, spurred on the optimism of local citizens.

In 1915 an additional stimulus to growth was the attraction of the Eastern Oregon Lumber company. The optimism of the day was reflected in a June 18, 1914 *Chieftain* article that stated, "The coming of the Eastern Oregon Lumber Company ushers in a new day for Wallowa County. The project will give a tremendous impulse to the commercial, industrial, and farm life of the entire county. It will provide work for homesteaders and all others. It will bring the rich north end within a few miles of a railroad at

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once, as this will be a standard railroad that will handle all traffic offered." The opening of the mill in November 1915 triggered the largest building boom in Enterprise history.

During World War I there existed in the county an inflated war time economy. Wheat and farm commodity prices had risen dramatically. At the same time, a ready supply of funds made it easy to obtain credit to finance expansion. Farmers and merchants took the opportunity to improve their properties, and lobby for civic improvements. With the ending of the war, and the prosperity abounding, the citizens of Wallowa County would never have guessed the hard times to come.

But on August 30, 1919, fate struck a serious blow to the optimistic feeling infusing the county. The sawmill of the Eastern Oregon Lumber Company burned to the ground - a total loss. A *Chieftain* editorial called it, "the heaviest single blow which ever fell on the county." Overnight hundreds of men found themselves thrown out of work with a resultant staggering loss to the local economy. More bad news reached the populace in December when the school census showed fewer children enrolled in the county schools than in any year since 1914. There was also a shift in population within the county from the farms to the towns.

The tide of depression did not change. The sluggishness observed in the wool, cattle, and lumber markets began to manifest itself in grain as well. Wheat prices plummeted and then, perhaps in the cruelest blow of all, the governors of the Federal Reserve bank decided to devalue currency in order to bring inflation under control. After a relatively stable 1923, the commercial foundations of the county began to collapse. Each year from 1924-1926 the *Chieftain* recorded stories of personal tragedy as business houses succumbed. Among the casualties of this period were some of the previously most substantial firms in the county, including the successor to the Island City Mercantile and Milling Company, the organization that, in a sense, founded Enterprise.

The widespread depression struck down not only the general store and the small inadequately financed "mom and pop" operations. It also took its toll on some of the leading local fortunes. There is no question that the most devastating consequence of the prolonged downturn manifested itself as a loss of initiative and ambition among the county's business, professional, and civic leaders. To cite just one example, no major new construction occurred in the town of Enterprise between 1918 and 1941.

If there is anything positive to say about the 1920's it is that those years admirably prepared Wallowans for the decade to come. The statistics tell the story. Population had decreased 20%, from 9,778 to 7,814, the number of farms diminished by 199, while the county's assessed valuation had fallen more than a third. And in the four incorporated towns of the county an even more dramatic decline had occurred. There population had decreased 26% while assessed valuation had plunged 44%. So, as the year 1930 dawned, and the nation's urban areas began to experience their first bitter taste of a depression brought on by the stock market crash of October 1929, agricultural areas such as Wallowa County were already inured, having suffered through nearly ten years of economic storm.

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Prosperity began to return to Wallowa County in the early 1940's. However, again it was at the cost of war - defense plants in large cities began enticing an already depleted population to leave the county, and industry, ground down by the extended depression, had long since departed. In the towns, demolition replaced construction while, in the surrounding areas, hillside farms became abandoned homesteads. In the late 1940's, the county's population had decreased to about 7,200 from its peak of 9,778 in 1920.

The population of Wallowa County and its towns continued to decline from the 1950's to the 1970's due to a decrease in the number of farms and ranches, and the decline of the timber economy and closing of local mills. Since then, there has been a gradual shift from an agricultural and timber based economy, to one that is supported mainly by governmental jobs, tourism, commerce and the arts. The current population of Wallowa County is just over 7,000.

### WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

After the 1888 general election when Enterprise became the County seat, county officials rented the second story of a building on Main Street. Ten years later, citizens proposed to fund half the expense of a courthouse costing between \$5,000 and \$8,000, but the thrifty court refused, saying that it was cheaper to rent than to pay the interest on their half of the capital outlay. In 1908, after the county court had rented its quarters for twenty years, residents from the town of Wallowa made an attempt at securing the county seat position, and another election was called. According to the May 21, 1908 *News Record*, the Wallowa paper claimed it was nearer to the "geographic, habitable and population center of the county," but this was all refuted by the Enterprise newspaper, which went on to say that "all the other claims made in the *Sun's* article are equally false." After reporting Enterprise's subsequent victory, the June 4, 1908 *News Record* attempted to reconcile the fractured county by noting that "nothing has occurred to call for future revenge," but added that "the people have spoken in clear and unmistakable terms."

To prevent another county seat war, officials decided it finally was time to build a courthouse. After five business owners offered the county court \$10,000 for the public square Stubblefield and Zurcher had donated, the county began considering a more grandiose location on the hill east of town. When the court solicited the opinions of three attorneys as to who really owned the square and whether it could be sold to private individuals, their response was that the "public" owned the square, that it could not be sold, but that county buildings could be erected there.

Once again local citizens offered to contribute \$5,000 for the courthouse, but seemingly mistrustful of the county court, they promised to pay only when the walls were up to the second story. Another condition stated that the county build a "suitable" courthouse costing at least \$25,000. By dictating a minimum amount, the citizens hoped to have a building that would reflect well on the county and on Enterprise.



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Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

S. R. Haworth, a contractor, presented the plans designed by his wife's cousin, architect Calvin R. Thornton of La Grande, and a month later, his bid of \$31,300 was accepted by the court. (According to notes from a County Commissioner Journal of October 1908, a lower bid from S&S Maulton was accepted, but Maulton was unable to comply with his bid, so Haworth won the bid). According to a *Wallowa County Chieftain* article, a work shop was put up for the Courthouse workmen in January of 1909. The Courthouse was constructed of hand cut Bowlby stone which was quarried from the Bowlby quarry in the Swamp Creek area. The contract for the plumbing and heating portion of the work still remains in the courthouse archives and states that in July of 1909 it was agreed that the sub-contractor would be paid \$4,592 for the work. A December 1909 *Chieftain* article states, "The steam heating plant in the new courthouse was tested last week and found to work all right. Plastering will begin soon. Workmen are enclosing the tower."

To supervise the construction of the new courthouse, Thornton moved to Enterprise and also accepted other building projects in the town. In December 1909, while helping to install iron work on a second-floor window at the Litch Building on Main Street, the fifty-year-old architect stepped backward off the scaffolding and tumbled twenty feet to the street. He never regained consciousness and died three days later. Sadly, the architect never witnessed the completion of the Courthouse.

In March of 1910, Ashley's furniture was awarded the bid to furnish the new courthouse with "all loose furniture, counters and bar railings." The bid was: furnishings, \$1,657.10 and counters \$726.00. The courthouse was completed in May 1910, but had already been officially opened for business on January 5, 1910. Although the furniture had not arrived, county officials eagerly moved in. Reflecting the community's deep pride, a May 5, 1910 *Wallowa County Chieftain* article states, "The new courthouse is enough to make anybody happy. She is what the parlance of the day would call a "humdinger" - a humdinger being everything that could be desired in a new courthouse. And everybody is glad to note that stage in Wallowa County's development which is marked by so substantial a public building as this new courthouse. Moreover, the building itself, showing in concrete form the progressive spirit of Wallowa County, will be one of the biggest advertisements Enterprise and Wallowa County could have. It will simply verify in the visiting mind that slogan, "Watch Enterprise Grow".

### ARCHITECT: CALVIN R. THORNTON

Calvin R. Thornton, architect of the Wallowa County Courthouse, died in Enterprise, Oregon, in December of 1909 while the courthouse was under construction. The following is an obituary from the 12/23/09 issue of the *Wallowa County Chieftain*:

#### **C. R. Thornton Dies from His Injuries**

C. R. Thornton, who fell from a scaffold on the Litch Building to the sidewalk, alighting on his head, about 2:00 o'clock Monday afternoon died at the same hour Thursday afternoon

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 9

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

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without ever gaining consciousness. Just a little while before he passed away he opened his eyes and glanced at the weeping friends but there was no sign of recognition. Brief services were held in the home at 7 o'clock Friday morning, Rev. C. E. Trueblood officiating. The remains were taken to LaGrande Friday, where the funeral was held, Rev. H. E. McLeod preaching the sermon. Mrs. Thornton, her mother, Mrs. Harrison, a friend, Mrs. Leighton, and a nephew of the deceased, Perry Thornton, all of LaGrande, accompanied the body from here.

Calvin R. Thornton was born near Dexter, Iowa, February 16, 1859. He went to Kansas at the age of 25 and later moved to Weiser, Idaho, where he was in the drug business, and in 1886 came to LaGrande. He was married to Miss Para Farris, February 1, 1893, and they spent the first year of their married life in this county, on Trout Creek, 12 miles north of this city. They have since resided in LaGrande, except the last few months they lived here, where he was superintending the erection of the Courthouse and the new Litch Building, both of which he designed. His plans were also used for the Enterprise Hotel, Burnaugh and Mayfield's wareroom, the remodeling of the E.M.&M. Store, Dr. Ault's residence, and the fine new home of J. H. Dobbin on Prairie Creek.

Besides his widow, adopted son and daughter, he is survived by his aged parents, one brother and sister at Earlham, Iowa, a brother at Nevada, Mo., and a sister at West Branch, Iowa. Charles McReynolds of this city, and Mrs. S. R. Haworth of LaGrande, are cousins of Mr. Thornton.

The deceased was brought up in the Friends Church, but he was a member of the Methodist Church of LaGrande. He was a man of quiet disposition and one had to be well acquainted with him to appreciate his sterling character. He was a member of the W.O.W.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 1

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

## Bibliography

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- Bartlett, Grace. *From the Wallowas*. Enterprise, Oregon: Pika Press, 1992.
- City of Enterprise. City Map. Enterprise, Oregon.
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- Coffman, Lloyd W. *Wallowa County, Oregon, a Capsule History*. Enterprise: Wallowa County Centennial Press, 1987.
- The History of Wallowa County, Oregon*. Wallowa County: Wallowa County Museum Board. 1983.
- An Illustrated History of Union and Wallowa Counties*. Spokane: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1902.
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- Sekora, Lynda. "Oregon Courthouses, Architects, Builders, and Dates of Construction", compiled for the State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Parks and Recreation, Salem, Oregon.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (from Oregon History Society Research Library). Enterprise, Oregon, 1910 and 1917.
- Wallowa County Courthouse Archives. Original blueprints of the Wallowa County Courthouse for reference. Enterprise, Oregon.
- Wallowa County Chieftain. Enterprise, Oregon. Newspaper articles: 10/3/07, 12/23/09, 1/21/09, 9/11/09, 12/20/09, 1/20/10, 5/5/10, 3/18/25, 5/21/25, 6/24/26, 10/13/27, 12/1/27, 1/16/47, 9/25/47, 9/20/73, 11/7/85, 12/4/86, 1/8/87, 3/5/87, 1/4/96, 3/30/97, 5/29/97.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section No. 9 Page 2

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

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Wallowa County Commissioner Journals. Wallowa County Courthouse, Enterprise, Oregon. 4/6/87, 6/22/88, 7/2/88, 7/5/88, 7/6/88, 4/8/99, 10/17/08, 10/19/08, 1/5/10, 1/8/13.

Wallowa County Historical Museum. Archives, photographic collection and records. Joseph, Oregon.

Wallowa County Plat Books. Wallowa County Courthouse, Enterprise, Oregon.

Wiederhold, Kathleen M. *Exploring Oregon's Historic Courthouses*. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1998.

Wallowa County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Enterprise, Wallowa County, Oregon  
City, County, and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.32 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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 Zone 

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 Northing

2 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

3 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

4 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

☐ See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No. 2200

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wendy Hansen  
organization Wendy Hansen Design date November 26, 1999  
street & number 113-1/2 E. Main St., P. O. Box 653 telephone 541-426-9402  
city or town Enterprise state OR zip code 97828

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and/or properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
- **Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
- **Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

## Property Owner

name Wallowa County  
street & number 101 South River Street telephone 541-426-4543  
city or town Enterprise state OR zip code 97828

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section No. 10 Page 1

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

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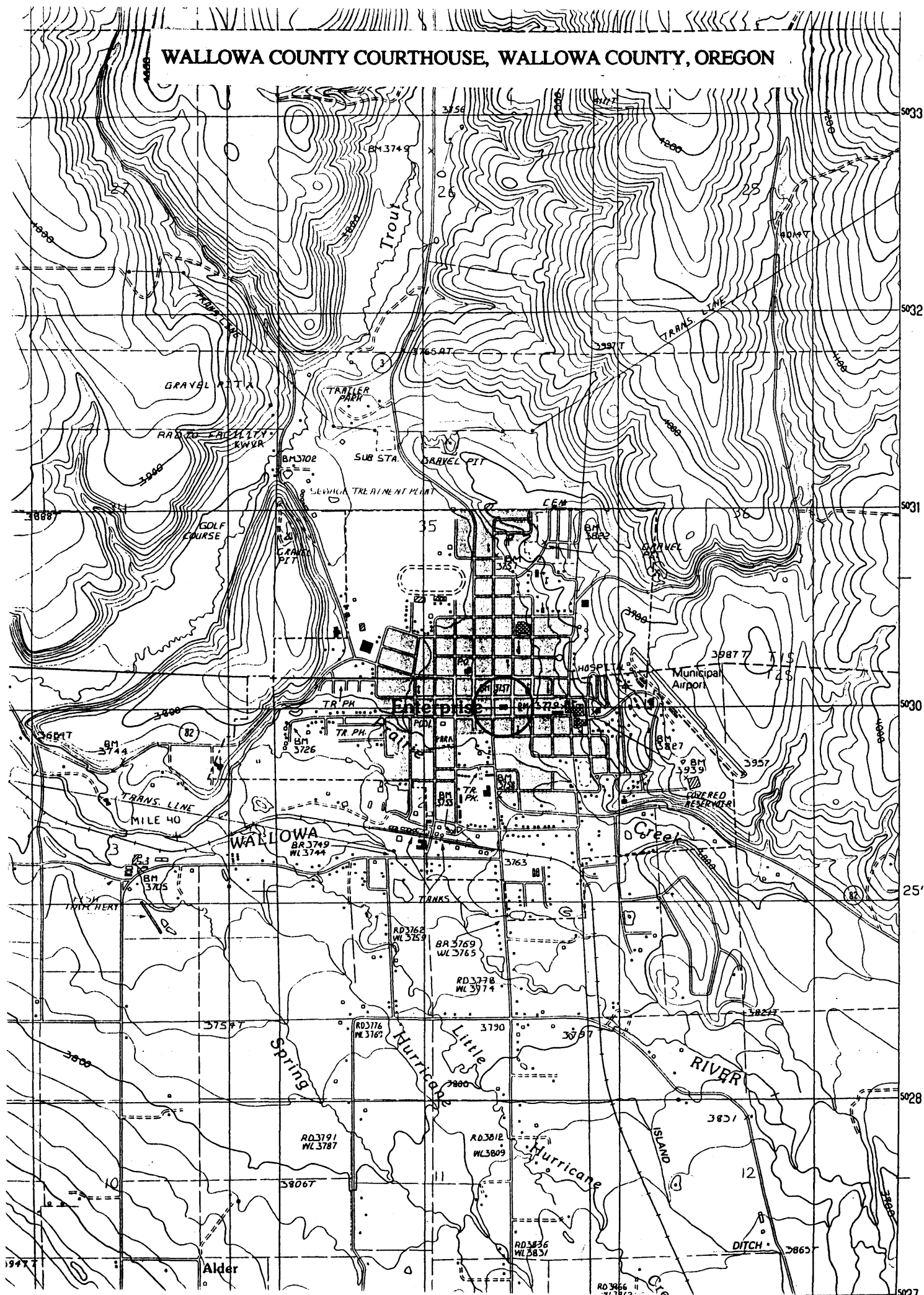
**VERBAL DESCRIPTION**

The Wallowa County Courthouse is located on Tax Lot 2200 in Block 11 of the City of Enterprise, Wallowa County, Section 2, Township 2 South, Range 44 East, Willamette Meridian. The nominated area covers approximately 1.32 acres.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated area encompasses the entire city block which was originally donated as a public square by pioneers J. Zurcher and R. Stubblefield in the late 1880's. The nominated area includes the courthouse, lawn area, parking area, a pioneer memorial arch, a war memorial cannon, a granite boulder veteran's memorial, a commemorative granite bench, and a gazebo. The nominated area corresponds to the historic boundary of the property.

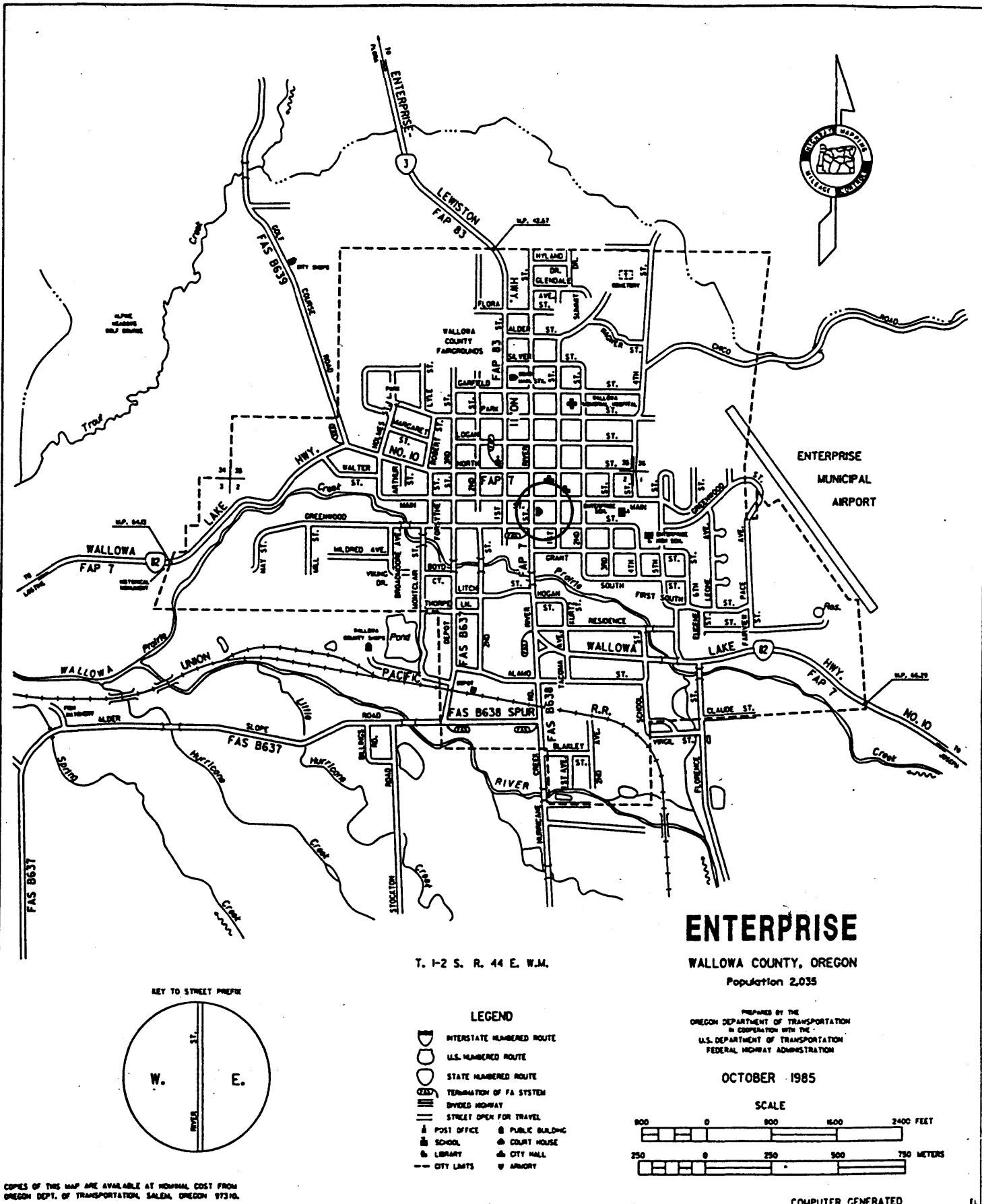
WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON



**USGS Map (reduced copy, original enclosed)**

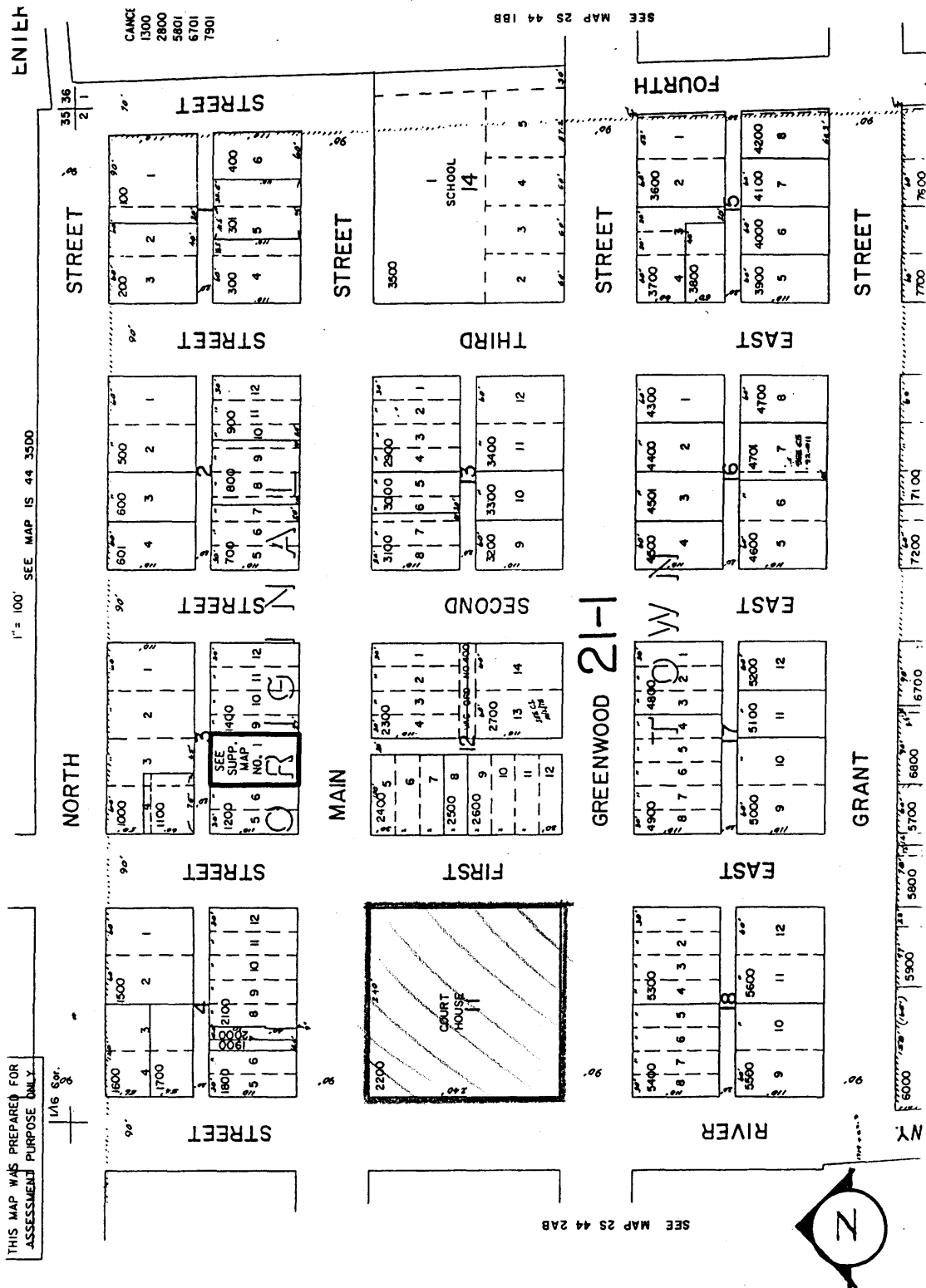


# WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON



City of Enterprise Map

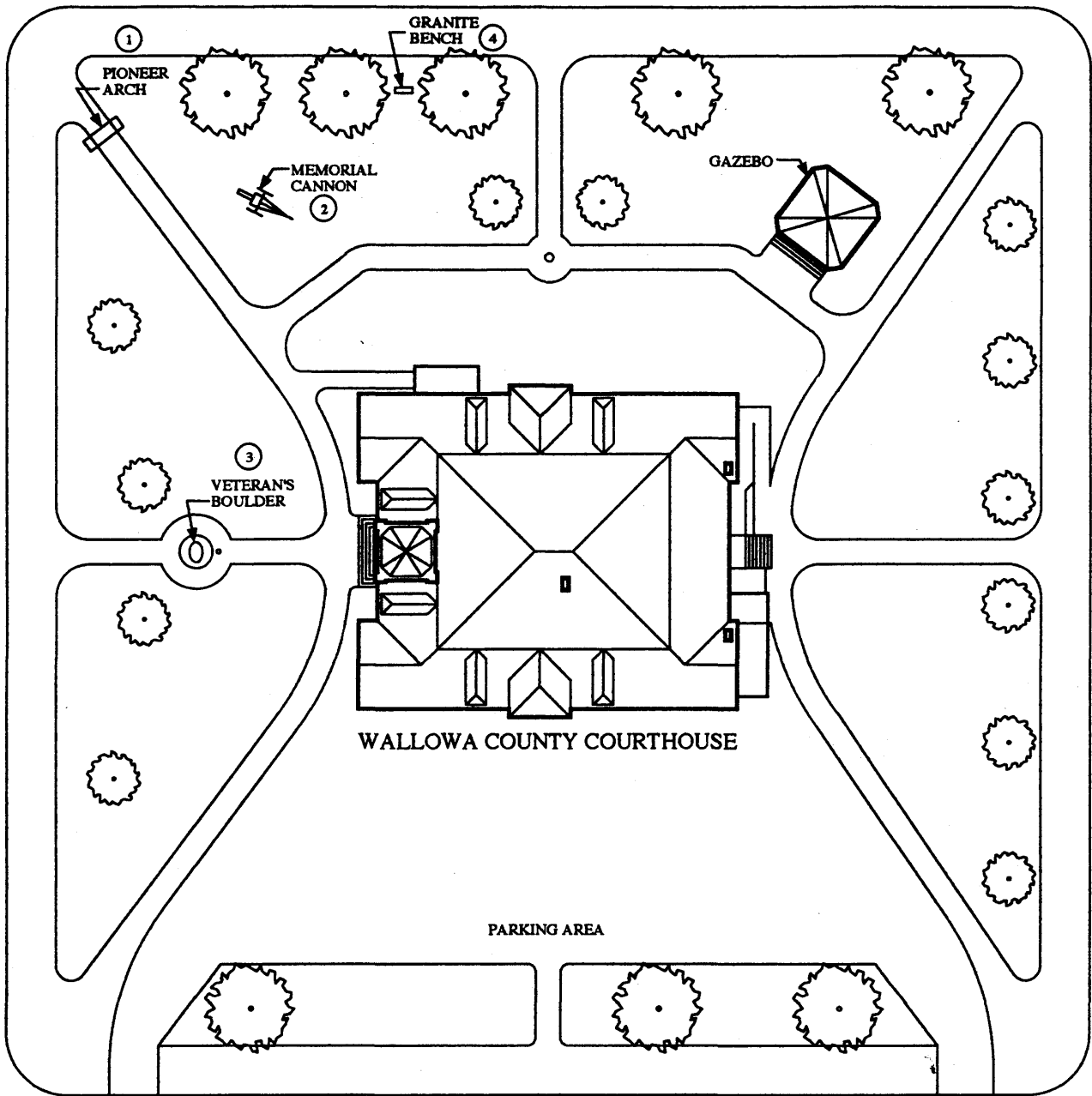




**Current Assessor's Map (reduced copy, original enclosed)**

RIVER STREET (HIGHWAY 82)

EAST MAIN STREET



EAST FIRST STREET

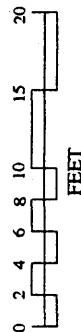
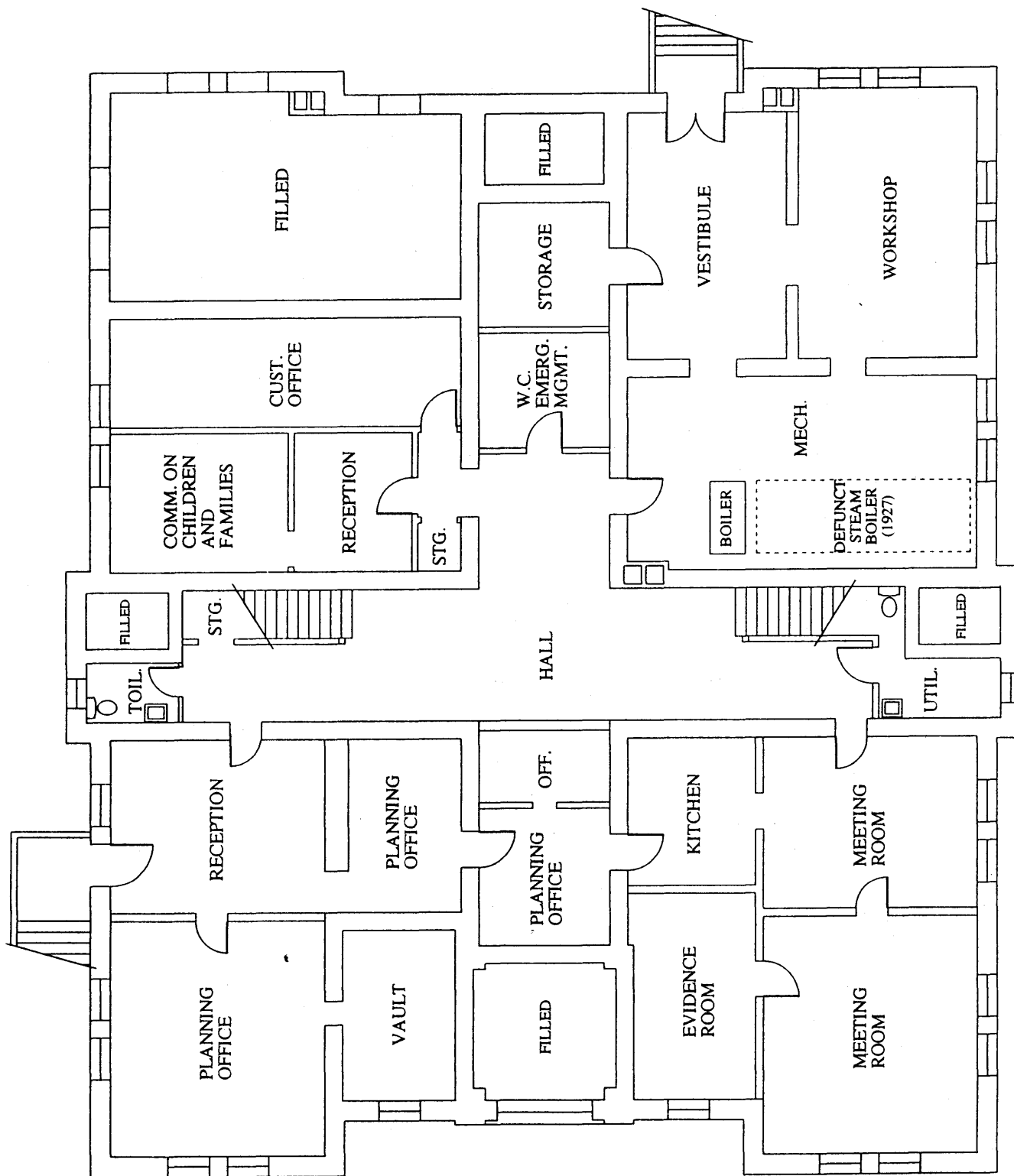
EAST GREENWOOD STREET

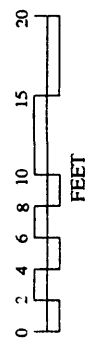
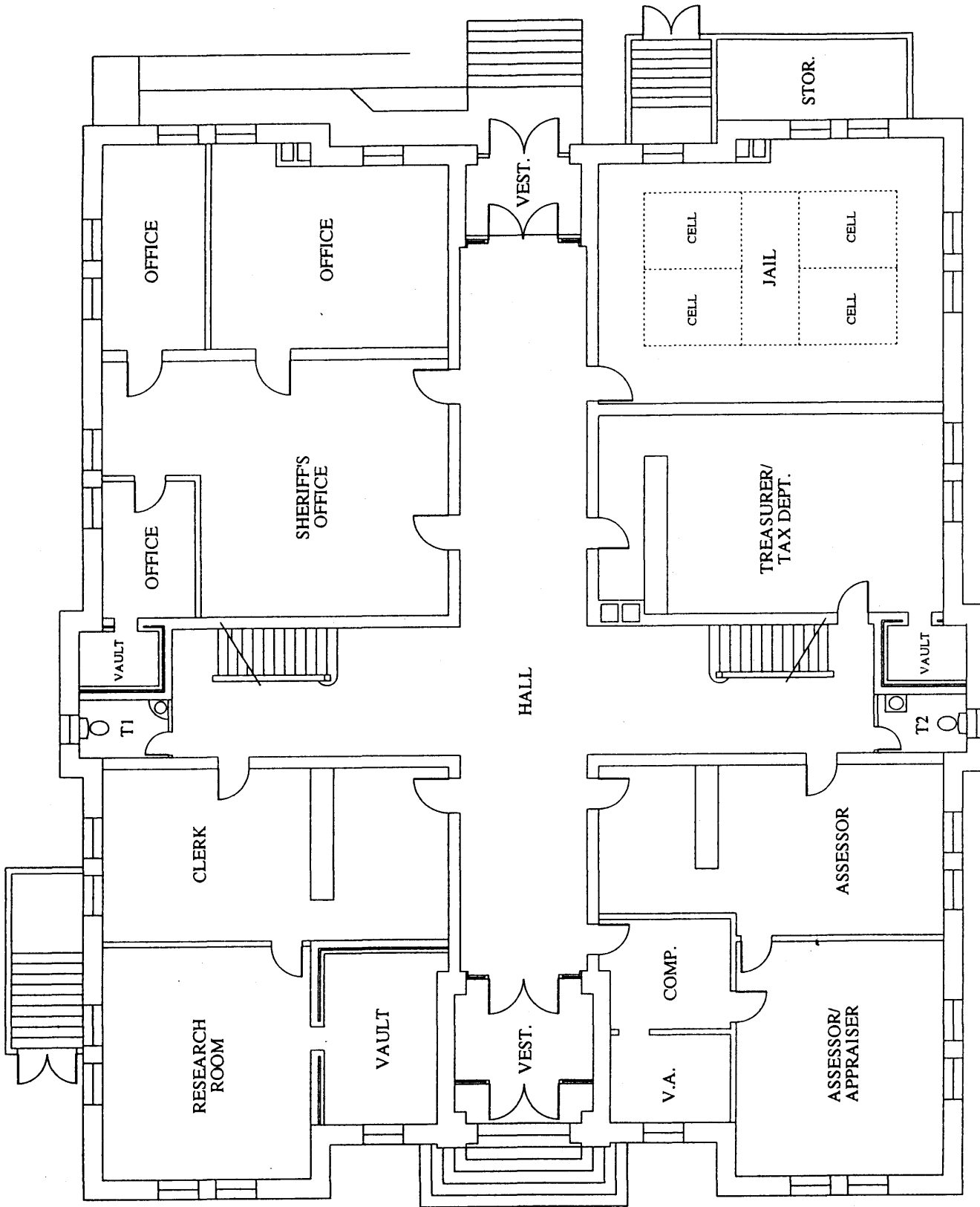


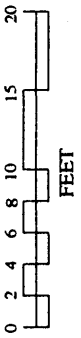
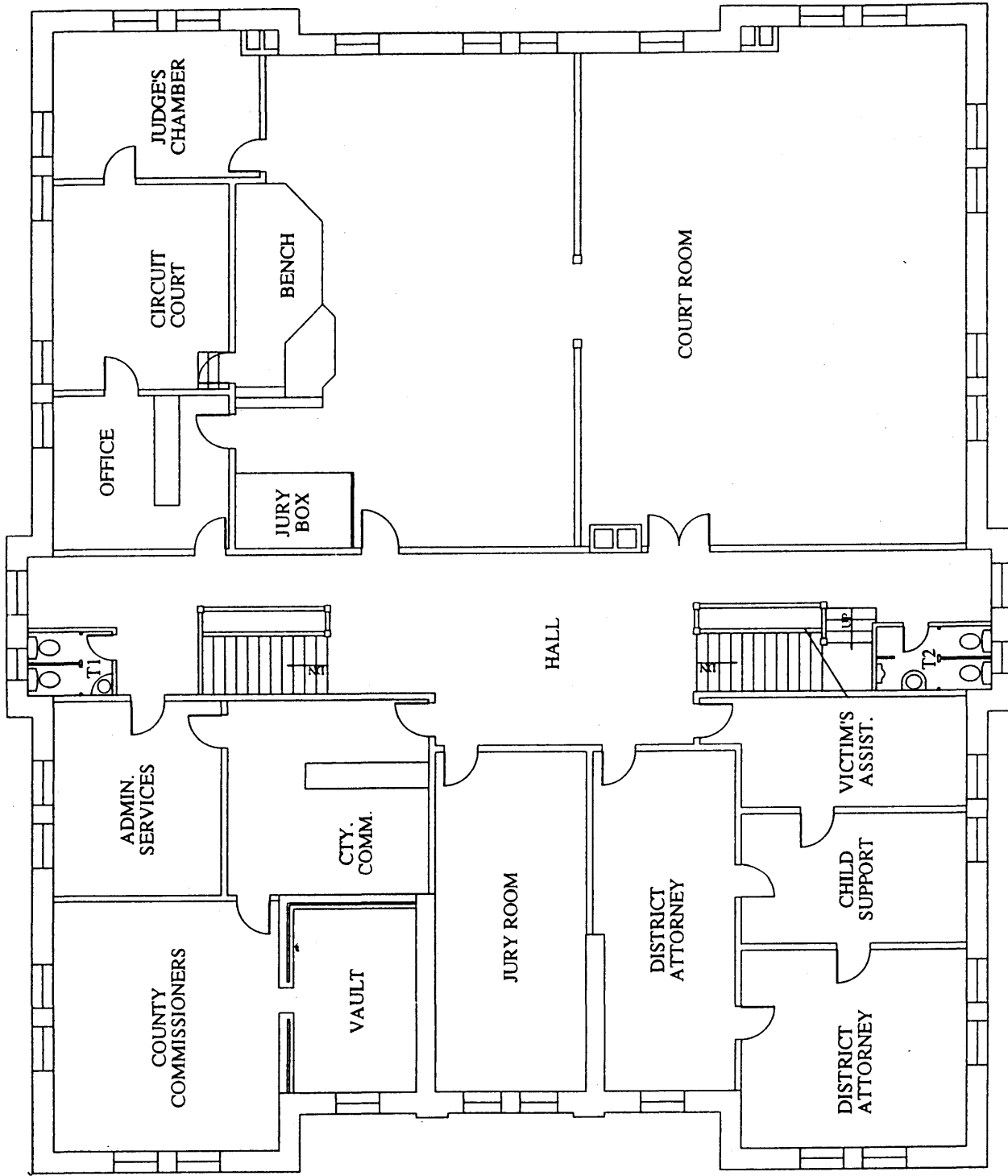
## WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

SITE PLAN November 1999

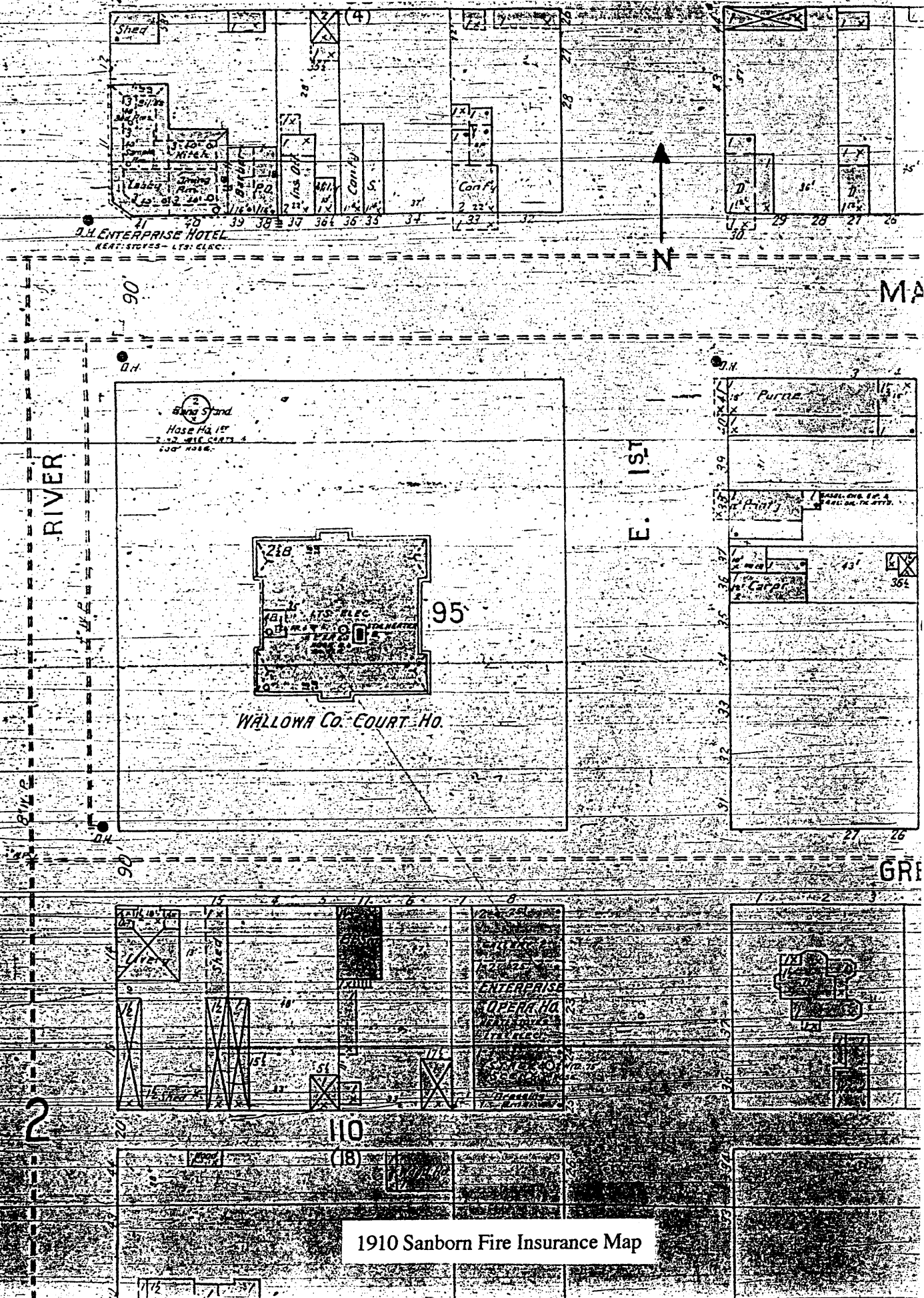
No Scale







WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON



WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON

RIVER

N

NORTH

MOVING PICTURES

PRINTS

2nd Hand

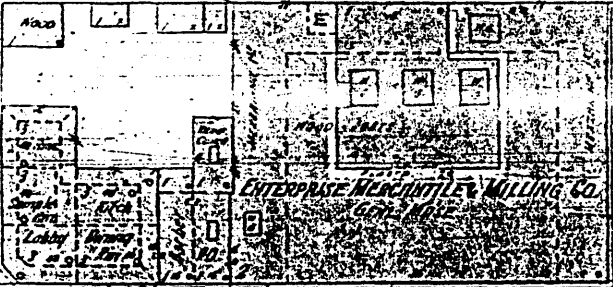
Books

OFF

PLUMBO

80

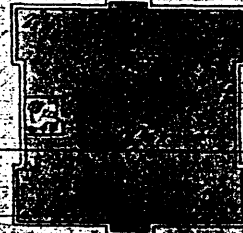
81



HOTEL ENTERPRISE



MAIN



WALLOWA CO. COURT HOUSE

1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

GREENWOOD

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

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**Common Label Information (Photos 1-13)**

1. Wallowa County Courthouse
2. Wallowa County
3. Photographer: Kim Lamb
4. Date: November 26, 1999
5. Negative on file at Wallowa County Museum, 110 S. Main, P.O. Box 430, Joseph, OR 97846

**Photo No. 1:**

6. Main (west) facade of Wallowa County Courthouse. (Camera facing south-east)

**Photo No. 2:**

6. Rear (east) facade showing secondary entrance and gazebo. (Camera facing southwest)

**Photo No. 3:**

6. East and south facades. (Camera facing northwest)

**Photo No. 4:**

6. South and west facades. (Camera facing northeast)

**Photo No. 5:**

6. Exterior detail of main west entry arch and signage. (Camera facing east)

**Photo No. 6:**

6. Exterior detail of semi-circular window on west projection gable. (Camera facing east)

**Photo No. 7:**

6. Exterior detail of stone tower on west facade. (Camera facing east)

**Photo No. 8:**

6. Interior detail of typical door. (Camera facing south)

**Photo No. 9:**

6. Interior detail of beveled glass sidelight at main entry. (Camera facing west)

**Photo No. 10:**

6. Interior detail of vault door and original file cabinet at County Clerk's office. (Camera facing south)

**Photo No. 11:**

6. Interior detail of one of pair of main stairways at first floor (Camera facing southeast)



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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section No. PHOTOS Page 2

Wallowa County Courthouse, Wallowa County, Oregon

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**Photo No. 12:**

6. Interior of courtroom showing the judge's area. (Camera facing northwest)

**Photo No. 13:**

6. Interior detail of courtroom balustrade. (Camera facing north)

**Photo No. 14:**

6. Interior detail of original window showing sill, jamb, and wood blind and radiator. (Camera facing east)

**Photo No. 15: HISTORIC**

6. Panorama of Wallowa County Courthouse looking north up river street. (Camera facing northeast)  
Wallowa County, Oregon  
Photographer: Felix Vergere  
Date: 1910-1911  
Negative on file at Wallowa County Museum

**Photo No. 16: HISTORIC**

6. Wallowa County Courthouse during construction. (Camera facing northeast)  
Note: Portions of roof inaccurate due to damaged original photo.  
Wallowa County, Oregon  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date: circa 1909  
Negative on file at Wallowa County Museum

**Photo No. 17: HISTORIC**

6. Wallowa County Courthouse showing historic gazebo. (Camera facing southeast)  
Wallowa County, Oregon  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date: circa 1910  
Negative on file at Wallowa County Museum

**Photo No. 18: HISTORIC**

6. Interior detail of Wallowa County Courthouse Sheriff's Office. (Camera facing southeast)  
Wallowa County, Oregon  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date: February 28, 1912  
Negative on file at Wallowa County Museum



WALLA WALLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLA WALLA COUNTY, OREGON

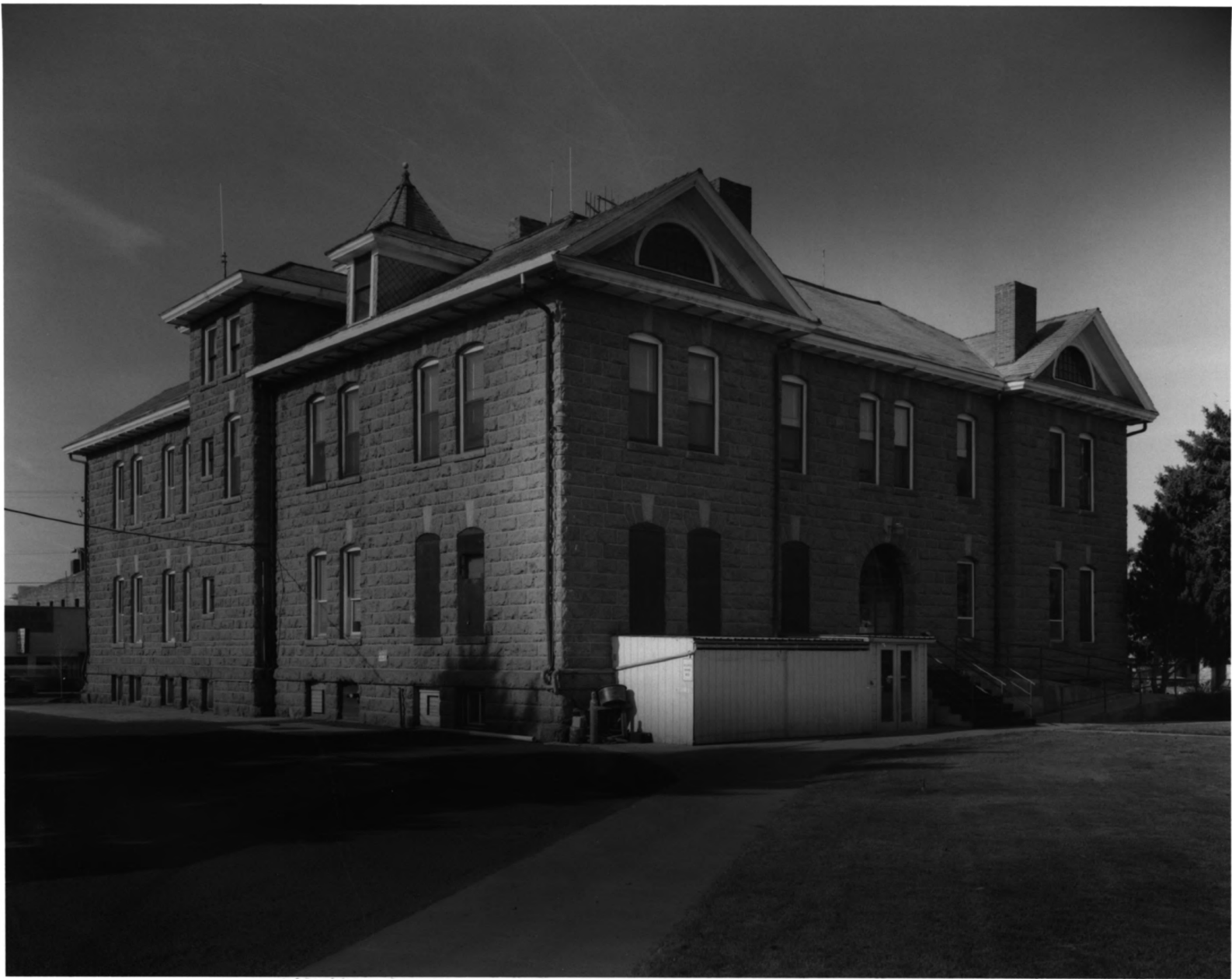
PHOTO # 1



WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # 2



WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO # 3







WALLA WALLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLA WALLA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # 4

# COURT HOUSE



Walla Walla

WALLA WALLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLA WALLA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO # 5



WALLA WALLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLA WALLA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO #6

WALLA WALLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLA WALLA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO #6



WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON

PLD # 7



104

ASSESSOR

OPEN

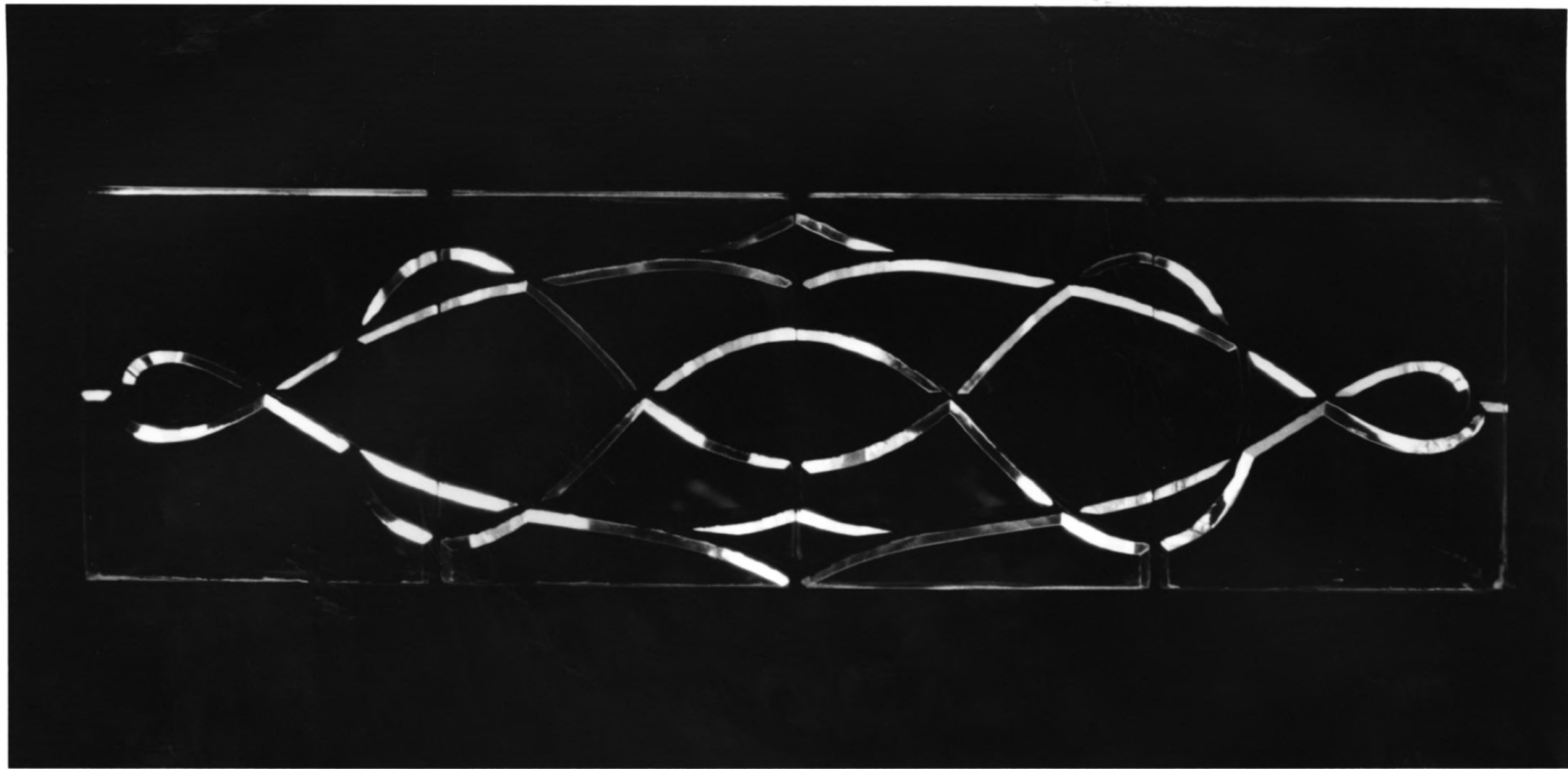
OFFICE HOURS  
DAY THRU FRIDAY  
8:30 AM TO 5 PM

ASSESSOR  
OFFICE





WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO # 8



WALLULA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLULA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # 9



WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON  
P11070 #10



WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # //





WALLLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # 12



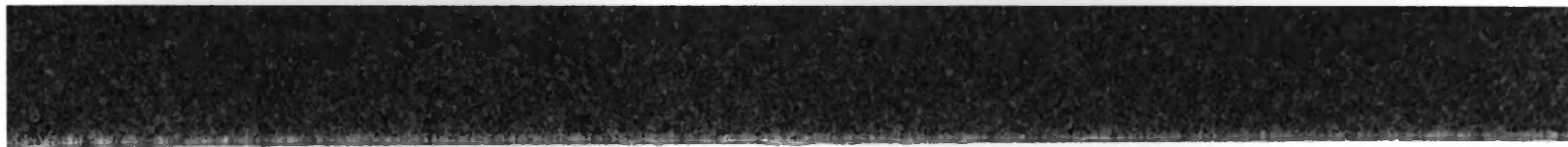
WALLAWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLAWA COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO # 13



WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON

PHOTO # '14



WALLOWA COUNTY DARKHOUSE  
WALLOWA COUNTY OREGON  
PHOTO # 15





WALLOWA COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLOWA COUNTY, OREGON  
P. 570 # 16



WALLOWA COUNTY CARTMOOSE

WALLOWA COUNTY OREGON

PTD # 17



SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
ENTERPRISE. 2/28/12.

WALLACE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
WALLACE COUNTY, OREGON  
PHOTO # 18