

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	900 State St Salem, Marion County	historic name:	Gatke Hall
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	
location descr:	Willamette University	block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	7S 3W 27
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	2.0
elig evaluation:	undetermined	total elig resources:	
prim constr date:	1902	second date:	
		total inelig resources:	
primary orig use:	Post Office	orig use comments:	
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Beaux Arts	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Stone:Other/Undefined	architect:	Taylor, James Knox
secondary siding:		builder:	
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
(Moved, 1937)			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.			
Farmstead/Cluster Name:			Willamette University
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	N/A	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
Refer to scanned documents links.			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>Gatke Hall, located at the northeast corner of Willamette University, is named for Robert Moulton Gatke, University of Willamette professor in the history and political science departments from 1919 until 1961. Professor Gatke joined the Willamette University faculty as a graduate student in 1919, introducing political science courses in 1926. He is remembered also as the author of "Chronicles of Willamette", a lengthy volume tracing the history of Willamette University and the Mid-Willamette area from 1842 to 1942. At the time of his death in 1968, he was working on a second volume to bring the work up to date. Gardening was another of Mr. Gatke's interests; he was a director of the American Rhododendron Society and personally planted many of the rhododendrons on the campus as well as the giant sequoias near Collins Hall. Mr. Gatke was a director of the American Rhododendron Society and was editor of the "American Rhododendron Yearbook" from 1947 to 1949. Gatke Hall was originally built as the Salem Post Office and was located at Church and State Streets. In 1937 it was slowly and carefully moved to the Willamette University campus with no damage to its stone construction. Willamette University grew from the early Methodist Missionary school called the Oregon Institute. The Methodist Mission in Oregon lasted ten years, from 1834 to 1844, at which time the property was divided among the missionaries and a three-story frame building which had been constructed as an Indian Manual Labor School was sold to nine trustees of the "Oregon Institute." The building was then put to use as a school, encompassing mostly elementary students under the guidance of Mrs. Chloe Clark Willson, wife of one of the trustees. Tuition was charged, \$24 per year, and by 1849 the Institute had 36 primary and 42 advanced pupils. In 1852 the curriculum was broadened to include some college preparatory courses. While meeting in Willamette University's one building, Oregon's Territorial Legislature issued a charter to Willamette University in 1853, making it one of the oldest universities on the West Coast. College classes began in 1855, it granted its first degree in 1855. Costs were paid by tuition and the sale of lots in the township of Salem. Waller Hall, constructed of bricks made in Salem specifically for the building, was completed in 1867. After the Oregon Institute burned in 1872, Waller Hall was the lone building on the campus until the turn of the century. However, classes continued to grow; the law school was started in 1866. A theology school was established in 1867, and trained ministers until it closed in 1930. A medical school was also established in 1867, but was moved to Portland to merge with the University of Oregon in 1913. Enrollment remained fairly constant at about 100 students until the turn of the century. The campus was conservative; literary societies were the major extracurricular activity, church on Sunday was mandatory, and social events were carefully chaperoned. A move to Portland was defeated by vote in the 1890s. A growing student body after the turn of the century stimulated new structures; the building now housing the Department of Art was built in 1906 for the medical school. Eaton Hall, named for a major contributor, was built in 1909, and Lausanne Hall, named for the ship bringing the "Great Rein-forcement" to the Mission in 1840, was completed in 1920. The gymnasium was built in 1923 followed by the library in 1938 and in 1941 Collins Hall, the science building was completed. Construction continued after World War II with a men's dormitory, Baxter Hall, in 1948, and McCullough Stadium provided a new facility for athletic events in 1950. A major fund-raising drive in 1958 resulted in the Fine Arts Building and Auditorium, Doney Hall, a women's dormitory, and Bishop Memorial Health Center. Willamette University continues as a small, private, church-affiliated (Methodist) college in its original location. Its establishment as one of the earliest colleges on the West Coast has been an important factor in the character and growth of Salem.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	
Local Library:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Repository:	
Bibliography:			

: Salem Inventory, 1987; Gatke, "Chronicles of Willamette"; City of Salem Context Statement, 1992; architects renderings located at Willamette University physical plant.