

Oregon Historic Site Record

| LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| address: | 106 NW 1st St Enterprise, Wallowa County (97828) | historic name: | Wallowa County Chieftain Building |
| assoc addresses: | | current/other names: | Old Chieftain Building |
| location descr: | | block/lot/tax lot: | |
| | | tnwshp/rng/sect/qtr sect: | 2S 44E 2 |
| PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS | | | |
| resource type: | Building | height (stories): | 1.0 |
| elig evaluation: | eligible/significant | total elig resources: | 1 |
| prim constr date: | 1916 | NR Status: | Individually Listed |
| | second date: | date indiv listed: | 11/21/2012 |
| primary orig use: | Manufacturing Facility | orig use comments: | |
| second orig use: | | prim style comments: | |
| primary style: | Late 19th/20th Amer. Mvmts: Other | sec style comments: | |
| secondary style: | Commercial (Type) | siding comments: | |
| primary siding: | Volcanic Stone | architect: | |
| secondary siding: | | builder: | John Oberg |
| plan type: | 1-Part Block | | |
| comments/notes: | | | |
| GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS | | | |
| Survey/Grouping Included In: | Type of Grouping | Date Listed | Date Compiled |
| Wallowa-Enterprise RLS 08 | Survey & Inventory Project | | 2008 |
| SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY | | | |
| NR date listed: | 11/21/2012 | 106 Project(s): | None |
| ILS survey date: | | Special Assess Project(s): | None |
| RLS survey date: | 06/01/2008 | Federal Tax Project(s): | None |
| ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION | | | |
| <i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i> | | | |
| <p>Completed in the first half of January 1916, the Wallowa County Chieftain Building occupies portions of lots 1 and 2, Block 6 of the original town plat of Enterprise within the downtown business district, near the city center. Also known as the "Old Chieftain Building, the resource fronts onto NW First Street, and stands approximately 590 feet northwest of the Wallowa County Courthouse, which is located at the intersection of Main and River Streets. The building is a one-part commercial block in dressed, local stone known as Bowlby stone, a locally-quarried volcanic tuff stone used to construct many of the early commercial structures in the city. The front (east) side sits 14.5 feet off the parking curb on NW First Street. An asphalt alley extends along the south side of the building. The rear of a building fronting on W. North Street is within a few inches of the west (rear) elevation of the Chieftain Building. The north wall of the building adjoins the neighboring building. The building is characterized by its stone walls, centered entry door flanked by windows on the east (front) elevation, and flat roof with parapet. The building has a single-story concrete-block addition to its north elevation, filling the 10 feet that originally separated this building from the next to the north. The addition is set back 22.5 feet from the principal (east) elevation. The original parapet is present, topped with an approximately 2-foot tall, standing-seam steel extension with steel coping. The interior includes ten rooms on the main floor, two in the addition, and a partial basement beneath the west (rear) portion of the original building. Some original wood trim remains; however, most surfaces were replaced during a remodel in the 1970s. Despite the presence of some modern elements, the historic fabric and appearance of the building are readily apparent.</p> | | | |
| HISTORY | | | |
| <i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i> | | | |
| <p>This building is now vacant. The Chieftain moved! This building was built for the Wallowa County Chieftain newspaper and remained the location for the newspaper until 2007. There was a small addition added to the north side. The building is for sale as of December 2007. It is built of Bowlby stone and has an industrial feel to the interior. The 1916 Wallowa County Chieftain Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion A, Commerce and Communications, as the business headquarters and place of publication of the Wallowa County Chieftain, the most widely read regional newspaper in Wallowa County throughout the first half of the twentieth century. First known as the Wallowa Chieftain in 1884, then becoming the Wallowa County Chieftain, the Enterprise Record Chieftain, the Enterprise Chieftain, and finally the Wallowa County Chieftain again; the paper is without dispute the most influential source of communication for Wallowa County between the construction of the Chieftain Building in 1916 and 1956, the end of the period of significance for the Multiple Property Document (MPD) "Historic Resources of Downtown Enterprise, 1888-1956." The Chieftain Building meets the registration requirements established in the MPD for one-part block commercial buildings. Throughout its history, the Wallowa County Chieftain newspaper, and the many names under which it has been known, was a profoundly important and influential source of news and opinion in Enterprise and rural Wallowa County. Demonstrating a strong association with the historic context presented in the MPD, the building is eligible for listing under the document under Criterion A, Commerce, for its historic association with the development of downtown Enterprise and under Communication for the role the paper and its editors played in the collection and dissemination of information across the community. Constructed in 1916 in downtown Enterprise during the MPD's period of significance; exhibiting the character-defining features of a one-part-block commercial building; and possessing a strong association with the growth and development of the community, the building meets the general and specific registration requirements set forth in the MPD for one-part commercial buildings. The Chieftain was founded 1884 in the fledgling community of Joseph, then a part of Union County, in the northeastern portion of Oregon. Its first few years were largely consumed with the fight over the selection of a county seat for the new Wallowa County, which was separated from Union County in 1887. During that time, the paper promoted Joseph as the permanent county seat, having been selected as the interim seat when the county was formed. In 1888, the seat was established at the new community of Enterprise, and within a few years, the Chieftain relocated there. After passing through numerous owners and publishers, in 1911, George Cheney became the owner, editor, and publisher of the paper, a position he would hold for the next 30 years. Cheney wasted little time in incorporating ideas that made a fine newspaper even better, immediately focusing on local history in new features. The early-twentieth century was a period of rapid economic expansion in Enterprise due to the arrival of the railroad in 1908, booming agriculture production, and the expected opening of a large sawmill to be operated by the Eastern Oregon Lumber Company in 1915, leading to the rapid expansion of downtown. Riding the wave of prosperity, on July 22, 1915 Cheney announced plans to move the business to his property at 106 NW First Street in downtown Enterprise. The paper's new home would be a single-story rectangular building constructed of Bowlby stone, a locally available volcanic tuff stone characteristic of the buildings constructed during this time. The building was specifically designed to meet the needs of the business, and included office space and areas to print the weekly paper. The contractor, John Oberg, began construction in autumn of 1915, but completion was delayed due to snow. Subsequently, it was not until January 1916 that the printing equipment was moved into the building. From its new permanent location, the Wallowa County Chieftain became an important long-running business in downtown Enterprise and continued to be a key source of local news</p> | | | |

and opinion. During his influential 30 years as editor and publisher, Cheney reported and commented on many locally important events, including the temporary local fuel shortage in 1917, the 1918 smallpox epidemic, a devastating fire that brought about the total loss of the Eastern Oregon Lumber Company sawmill, the economic downturn following WWI, and the subsequent Great Depression. A consistent booster, Cheney's news and editorials were upbeat and supportive of the community. With war looming, Cheney sold the paper, then named the Enterprise Chieftain, in 1941 and the building in 1943 to Gwen Coffin, who brought an honest, but not necessarily popular, form of journalism. Under Coffin's leadership the paper often reported on controversial issues, offering a platform for debate and discussion. However, Coffin did not shy away from making his own opinions known. His thorough reporting and commentary on legalized gambling in Wallowa County attracted the attention of state regulators who ended the practice. Sharply criticized for publicizing the issue, Coffin remained unapologetic for this and his many other controversial positions through his tenure ending in 1972.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

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| 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:

Historical Society:

University Library:

Other Respository:

Bibliography:

Coffman, Lloyd W. 5200 Thursdays in the Wallowas. Enterprise: Wallowa County Chieftain, 1984. Donovan, Sally. "Enoch R Bowlby Building." Salem: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 2009. Dickenson, Elaine. "Wallowa County Newspaper Sold." Enterprise: Wallowa County Chieftain, 13 August 1998. Enterprise Record Chieftain. "Changes coming on Cross St." Enterprise, 22 July 1915. _____. "Record Chieftain Moves to New Shop." Enterprise, 20 January 1916. _____. "Record Chieftain Moves Next Week." Enterprise, 6 January 1916. _____. "Will Rush Moving of Printing Plant." Enterprise, 13 January 1916. _____. "Work Begins on New Stone Record Chieftain Building." Enterprise, 16 September 1915. Swart, Donald. Personal interview by author. 24 February 2012. Swart, Rick. "Ex-Chieftain Publisher Reflects on Relics of Printing Business." Enterprise: Wallowa County Chieftain, 11 May 2000. Wallowa County Museum Board. The History of Wallowa County Oregon. Joseph, OR: Wallowa County Museum Board, 1983. Wallowa County Courthouse. Assessor's and Clerk's Office. Enterprise, OR.