STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon State Parks, Salem, OR 97310

Place Photo Here

County Harney

Theme 5-b, 10-a

Name
(Common) PLS Headquarters

(Historic) (same)

Address 626 N. Buena Vista
Burns, Oregon

Present Owner Blanch McWilliams

Address 626 N. Buena Vista, Burns, Oregon

Original Use PLS Headquarters

Date of Construction ca. 1896

Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

In early December of 1896 spectators saw two freighters with forty horses and mules struggling to move a heavy and cumbersome burden through the ice and snow with the aid of a capstan. The Pacific Livestock Company (PLS) headquarters was being moved from its original location in the declining town of Harney City to the thriving new county seat at Burns in order to be closer to its land holdings. The January 13, 1897, edition of the local Burns newspaper described the PLS structure as, "quite an elegant addition for Burns."

The Pacific Livestock Company controlled by Miller and Lux was one of the largest livestock operations in Harney County at that time. In 1887 the Burns East Oregon Herald described the PLS as:

> ...perhaps the strongest on this coast if not the strongest in the world. Their dominions extend from Grant County, Oregon, to the Southern confines of California. They can travel hundreds of miles from here in a southerly direction and camp every night on their freeholds. (Oliphant, p. 192)

(over) continue on back if necessary

Recorded by Royal G. Jackson & Jennifer A. Lee Date 1978

For Harney County Planning Commission and Harney County Historical Society with comprehensive planning grant assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Sources Consulted: See Bibliography Notes: 4.20, 3,23,42,72,166,202,224,225

Please enclose map. Township 23 (S) 31 (E) W Section 7

Henry Miller is said to have owned more than 4.5 million acres of land and it was from this headquarters in Burns that he periodically administered his vast holdings. Miller died in 1916 and the company business operations were moved to the Island Ranch. The building was purchased by Ike Holland, a bookkeeper for the PLS, for $4,500 in 1917. The headquarters provided a spacious residence for Holland's family with its seven bedrooms upstairs and the kitchen, dining room, bathroom and living room on the main floor. At one time Mrs. Holland provided room and board for school teachers for $32.50 a month.

After Mr. and Mrs. Holland died, their daughter Gladys acquired the house, and she resided in it until 1968. Blanch McWilliams, a friend, shared the spacious home with Gladys Holland until Gladys' death in 1968 at which time Mrs. McWilliams inherited the property. Today Mrs. McWilliams retains only a small apartment for herself and rents the remainder of the large dwelling to tenants.

The PLS Headquarters was constructed for functional purposes with almost no attention given to decoration. Two gables rise in from a plain hip roof and windows are mostly tall, plain, and double-hung. The porch is built into the house, and it is here that virtually the only adornment occurs. Modified square columns frame the main entry as well as the small secondary entry way on the south side of the structure. The two brick chimneys exhibit stylized cap pieces. The wooden building is painted grey and trimmed in white, and in the summer of 1976 a new composition shingle roof was installed.

The old PLS Headquarters building provides historic evidence of the early colorful period of cattle empires in the Harney County country.

