

LAKE COUNTY HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY

NAME
(Historic) Eskelin Well Derrick

THEME Agriculture: Farming

NAME
(Common) (same)

PRESENT OWNER Harold Miles

ADDRESS HC-61
Silver Lake, Oregon 97638

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Silver Lake, Oregon 97638

T 27S R 15E Sec 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ SE of SW

ORIGINAL USE windmill base and well derrick

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION winter 1934-35

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry Ostrom (Ostrum), Fred, Ed, and John Eskelin

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Description of property and statement of historical significance, including type, features, style and related history.

The Eskelin Well Derrick stands over the irrigation well at the Eskelin Farm on the north side of the Fort Rock-Christmas Valley Road on the south side of the Fort Rock Valley. The tower is constructed of peeled pine poles, four of which lean toward the center as they rise from the ground. Near the tower base is a small, gable roof insert which originally housed the pump. The tower base measures 2.6 meters by 2.6 meters. It has been moved to the side of the well opening.

This well was the key to successful farming on the Eskelin Ranch and was drilled in April, 1935, by Fred and Ed Eskelin. They drilled the well with their own, homemade machine (see file sheet) and began pumping water on April 10, 1935. The Eskelin family settled in the Fort Rock Valley in February, 1909. Fred Eskelin was born in 1876 in Iisalmi, Finland, and emigrated in 1902 to the United States. On June 7, 1904, he married Marie Elise Lievonen of Hammerfest, Norway, in Calumet, Michigan. The Eskelins eventually had three sons and two daughters. Between 1909 and 1917 Fred Eskelin worked in the logging camps of the Pelican Bay Sawmill in the Klamath Basin during part of the year. He subsequently worked as a blacksmith for the Shevlin-Hixon Mill in Bend. Fred Eskelin died on January 14, 1954; his wife died the following year. Both are buried in the Silver Lake Cemetery. Ed Eskelin lived at this site until his death in 1980. This structure is one of several in an important ensemble of early homestead era buildings and objects in the Fort Rock Valley.

Sources consulted:

Chappel, Jill A.

1990 Homestead Ranches of the Fort Rock Valley: Vernacular Building in the Oregon High Desert. MS Thesis, University of Oregon.

Eskelin, Edwin A.

1979 Interview with Stephen Dow Beckham, 16 August, Fort Rock Valley, Oregon. (con't.)

Recorded by: Stephen Dow Beckham (revised by Jill A. Chappel) Date: 23 June 1981
(1 July 1990)

- 1979 History of the Eskelin Farm, Located in Fort Rock Valley, North Lake County, Oregon--Part 2. Unpublished manuscript, Fort Rock Valley.
- 1975 History of the Eskelin Farm, Located in Fort Rock Valley, North Lake County, Oregon--Part 1. Unpublished manuscript, Fort Rock Valley.
- 1971 A Brief History of Wells in the Fort Rock Valley, Both Domestic and Irrigation Wells. Unpublished manuscript, Fort Rock Valley.

Parks, Helen

- 1955 Ft. Rock Pioneer Dies Saturday. Lake County Examiner (Lakeview OR), Scrapbook Vol. 3, Deaths, 1954-57, Schminck Memorial Museum, Lakeview OR.
- 1954 Ft. Rock Resident, Fred Eskelin, Dies January 14. Lake County Examiner (Lakeview OR), Scrapbook Vol. 3, Deaths, 1954-57, Schminck Memorial Museum, Lakeview OR.

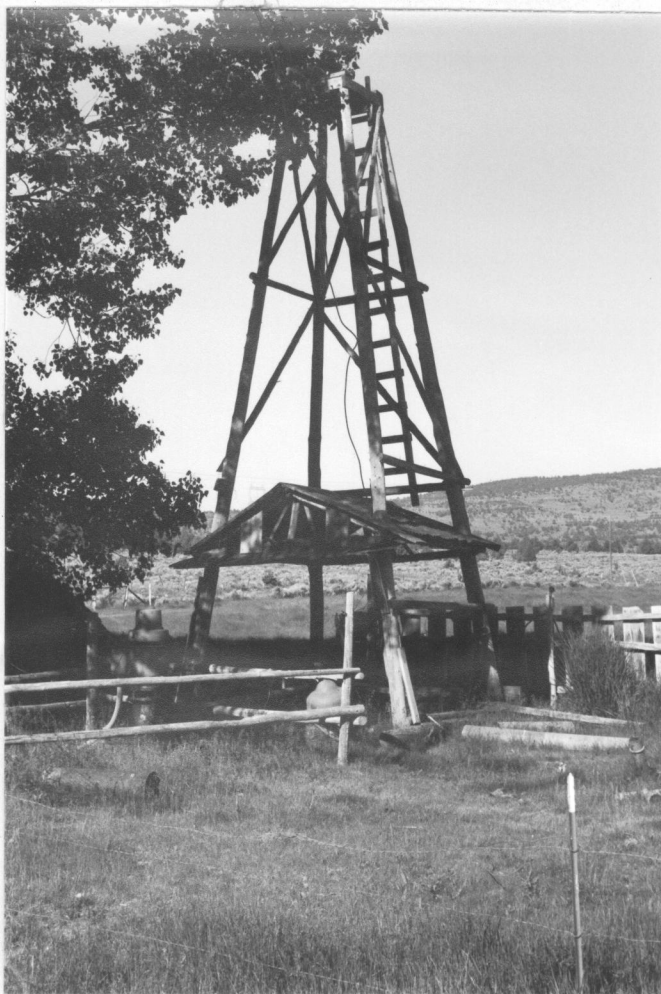
Silver Lake, Oregon, Cemetery

Tombstone inscriptions, Eskelin Family Plot.

NAME
(Historic) Eskelin (Ed) Well Tower

T 27 S R 15 E Sec 2 1/4 SE of SW

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



View looking to SW showing the peeled log well tower or platform for the original windmill for pumping water prior to the advent of electricity in the Fort Rock Valley. Note the small, gable roof for sheltering the pump near the base of the tower.