

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - TWO

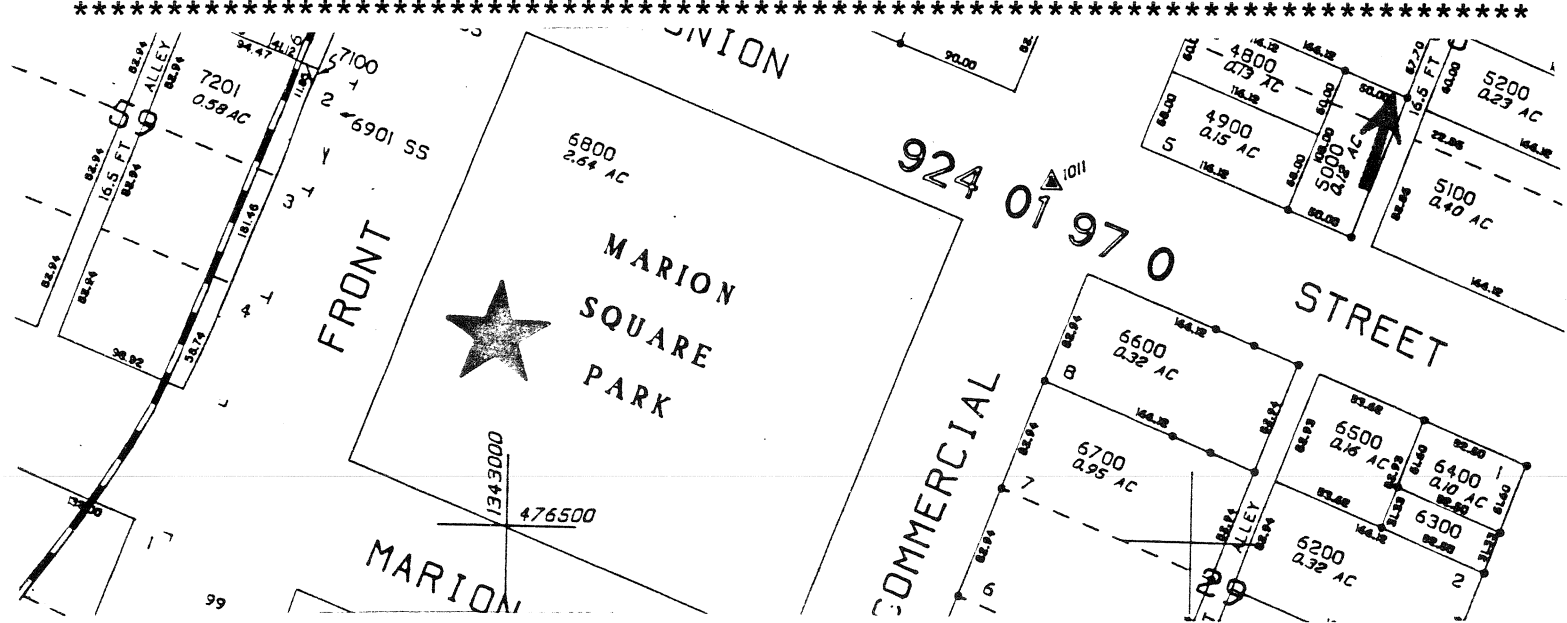
NAME: Marion Square Park  
ADDRESS:  
Salem, OR 97301

T/R/S: 7S\3W\22  
MAP NO: 22DB TAX LOT: 6800  
QUADRANGLE: Salem



NEGATIVE NO. :

SLIDE NO. :



GRAPHIC AND PHOTO SOURCES: Community Development, City of Salem

SHPO INVENTORY NO.:

~~809~~  
819

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM  
COUNTY: Marion

**PLACEST. NAME:** Marion Square Park  
**COMMON NAME:**  
**ADDRESS:** Commercial NE at Marion  
**CITY:** Salem, Oregon  
**OWNER:** City of Salem  
555 Liberty St., SE; Salem, OR 97310  
**T/R/S:** 7S\3W\22  
**MAP NO:** 22DB      **TAX LOT:** 6800  
**ADDITION:** Salem  
**BLOCK:**      **LOT:**      **QUAD:** Salem  
**TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER:**

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:** 1846  
**ORIGINAL USE:** public park  
**PRESENT USE:** public park  
**ARCHITECT:**  
**BUILDER:**  
**THEME:** Settlement\Recreation  
**STYLE:**  
**BLDG:**      **STRUC:**      **DIST:**      **SITE OBJ:**X

**PLAN TYPE/SHAPE:** square  
**FOUNDATION MATERIAL:**  
**ROOF FORM & MATERIALS:**  
**WALL CONSTRUCTION:**  
**PRIMARY WINDOW TYPE:**

**NO. OF STORIES:**  
**BASEMENT (Y/N):**  
**STRUCTURAL FRAME:**

**EXTERIOR SURFACING MATERIALS:** grass  
**DECORATIVE FEATURES:**  
**OTHER:**  
**CONDITION GOOD:**    X    **FAIR:**      **POOR:**      **MOVED:**      **(DATE):**

**EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS (DATED):** many original trees removed

**NOTEWORTHY LANDSCAPE FEATURES:** mature fir and maple trees

**ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES:** concrete block restrooms on south of park

**KNOWN ARCHEOLOGICAL FEATURES:** Native American camping\gathering place for many tribes

**SETTING:** park is in downtown Salem, bordered by a Willamette River bridge approach on the south, southbound Commercial Street on the east two-way Union Street on the north, and northbound Front Street by-pass on the west

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Historical and/or architectural importance, dates events, persons, contexts)**

Marion Square Park was platted in the original William Willson 1846 plat of Salem. The park is bordered by Union, Commercial, Marion, and Front Streets and encompasses 3.2 acres. This block-square area was set aside as a park in 1846 and continues in that function today even though it is now somewhat isolated to pedestrian traffic by multi-lane highways. It is easily recognized by a stand of mature conifers planted more than a century ago. For hundreds of years before the Methodists arrived in the Salem area, the site of Marion Square Park had been the permanent camp site for the Chemeketa band and others of the greater Willamette Valley Kalapuyan "tribe". One of the last large encampments on the site occurred in the winter (see following page)

**SOURCES:** City of Salem Context Statement, 1992; Marion County History, Vol 6, 1960; Corning, Howard McKinley, "Dictionary of Oregon History"; Elisabeth W. Potter letter to T.W. Churchill, 10\6\93; Maxwell, Ben files, OHS

**NEGATIVE NO.:**  
**SLIDE NO.:**

**RECORDED BY:** Marianne Kadas  
**DATE:** July 1994

**SHPO INVENTORY NO.:** ~~809~~ 819

**ADDRESS:** Marion Square Park, Commercial NE at Marion

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:** of 1847, according to Henry Brown, writing in 1878 of Chief Quinaby in the Marion County Historical Quarterly. Brown states that all of the Chemeketa and Chemawa Indians formed their winter camp in Salem that year, the camp commencing on the north edge of Marion Square and extending south to North Mill Creek. There were about 400 people camping there when an epidemic of measles broke out. The usual treatment was a stay in a sweat house and then a plunge into the icy water of the creek. This procedure, added to the lack of immunity among the Indians, took a toll of about half the population during the winter. Apparently the burying ground was some distance away from the park site itself. This was one of the last organized encampments at this particular location, however, the park continued as a traditional gathering place and in the 1870s the park was the site of a conference for a treaty. Early settler Fabritus Smith recollects logging in this park during the latter part of the 19th century. In earlier days, the park was surrounded by fine residential development on the river bank; a very small remnant today is nearby Heritage Village. A covered bandstand was built in the park c.1895. A contemporary photograph shows a thickly-wooded park, a 1920 photo, 25 years later, shows much thinning of trees had occurred. The bandstand was in use for about 50 years before its demolition in 1943-44.

William Willson (1805-1856) was one of the founders of present-day Salem and the first Provisional government treasurer. Willson was born in New Hampshire; he followed the trades of cooper, ship-carpenter, and whaler, and studied medicine aboard the ship "Diana" under the tutelage of Dr. Elijah White during the voyage to Oregon in 1837. He practiced carpentry and medicine at Willamette Missions before being sent to establish a mission station in the Nisqually Valley in 1839. Returning to the Salem area, he took a land claim near present-day Salem and was active in early Provisional and local government. He was elected president of the bench for Champoege County in 1845. In 1846 he platted and named Salem and donated the block forming Marion Square Park, also donating land for the Oregon Institute. In 1852 Willson was a candidate for Congress to succeed Samuel R. Thurston. He was a long-time trustee of Willamette University and a commissioner for the projected Oregon and California railroad. Willson was married to Chloe Aurelia Clark in 1840, the couple had three children.