

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Oregon
COUNTY:	Washington
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	JUL 10 1974

HM 10 / 5046480 507380

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**West Union Baptist Church**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**West Union Road**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**West Union**

STATE:  
**Oregon**

CODE:  
**41**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**Representative Wendell Wyatt  
Oregon First Congressional Dist.**

COUNTY:  
**Washington**

CODE:  
**067**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Oregon Baptist Convention (owner notified of nomination 11-7-72)**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**0245 S.W. Bancroft**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Portland,**

STATE:  
**Oregon**

CODE:  
**41**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Washington County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Hillsboro**

STATE:  
**Oregon**

CODE:  
**41**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1934**

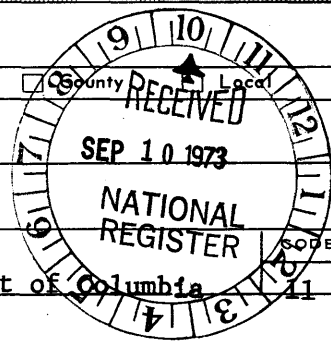
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**National Parks Service**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**District of Columbia**

CODE:  
**41**



STATE:	Oregon
COUNTY:	Washington
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

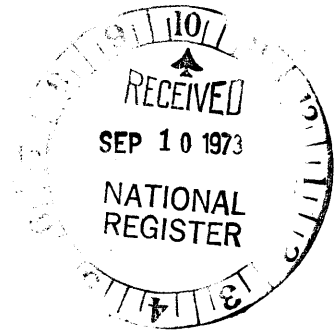
7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

West Union Baptist Church is located fourteen miles west of Portland and one-half mile west of West Union. Five early Oregon pioneers established the first Baptist congregation west of the Rockies in 1844 and, in cooperation with later members, constructed the church building in 1853, at a cost of \$1,512.43. This oldest of Baptist churches in Oregon is a 30 by 40 foot building of hand-sawn lumber. The church is a one-story structure with Classical Revival detail, typical of the early pioneer churches.

It is a meeting hall type with rectangular plan and a projecting vestibule. The low - pitched gable roof has an inset square belfry with louvered openings and no spire. There is a single window on the face on either side of the vestibule and there are three openings on either side elevation. The windows measure 53" by 8' 7½". The window heads on the sides meet the 23" cornice, which is made of four pieces forming the frieze and roof eave. The windows have plain surrounds. Clapboard exterior wall covering was used. The corner board trim is 4½ inches wide and is plain. The water table is 8 inches in height. The building originally was set on wood piers. There is now a concrete foundation. It may have been moved a few feet to the northwest when the new foundation was placed sometime after the church was photographed for HABS in 1934. The interior walls and ceiling are flush boards. A wood stove heats the building which is rarely used today. Many of the large oak and fir trees once surrounding the church are now gone, and there is a small house on the east side of the church. The Oregon Baptist Convention regards the building as an important vestige of the Baptist history and continues to maintain the building and grounds.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oregon	
COUNTY	
Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUL 10 1974

(Number all entries)

WEST UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

2. Location

West Union Baptist Church is located in NW ¼ Sec. 14, T 1 N., R 2W, of the Willamette Meridian, in Washington County, Oregon.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings, 1970.

Parks and Recreation Section  
Oregon State Highway Building,  
Salem, Oregon 97310

Code: 41

8. Significance

For 25 years regular services were held in the West Union meeting house. Services were discontinued there in 1878. For decades the building has stood idle, with shutters over the windows, its well-being as a historic structure cared for by the Oregon Baptist Convention which had its beginning in this church membership.

The church is generally recognized as a prime example of its type and one of the earliest surviving examples of a pioneer church in Oregon. In 1934 it was included in the Historic American Buildings Survey, the only church in Oregon to be recorded at that time.



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1853**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                  | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Long superseded as a regular place of worship, the West Union Baptist Church and Cemetery are maintained as a historical shrine by the Baptist Convention. In 1844, five pioneers who had come to the Oregon country in the "Great Migration" of 1843 gathered in the log cabin of David Thomas Lenox and his wife, Louisa, on the Tualatin Plains to form the first Baptist Church west of the Rocky Mountains. They agreed to meet once a month. During the first year they had only two sermons, which were preached by the Reverend Enoch Garrison, a Methodist minister. In February, 1845, the Reverend Vincent Snelling, who had traveled across the plains late in the fall of 1844, preached a sermon at the home of Mr. Lenox, and he and his wife joined the church.

Lenox, a school teacher and farmer, was considered a deeply religious man. He had the distinction of being the first to sign under Peter Burnett for the wagon train of 127 wagons and 450 people, which left Platte City, Missouri, April 9, 1843, piloted by Marcus Whitman. Burnett started out as captain, but after some controversy he resigned, and Lenox was elected. Lenox would not permit the train to travel Sunday, a point of contention which was upheld by Marcus Whitman, despite his awareness of possible problems with the Indians. Even with Sabbath pauses, the Lenox party made it to The Dalles by November 1, 1843, where they broke into smaller groups.

The Lenox family was among those that came down the Columbia River in canoes, barges, and dugouts to Hudson's Bay Company Fort Vancouver, where they met Chief Factor John McLoughlin. They decided to go to Oregon City, arriving November 26, 1843. After about three weeks of searching for a suitable place to settle, Lenox moved his large family to Tualatin Plains to cope with a difficult winter.

The immediate emphasis was on clearing and cultivating the rolling land. By 1848 fundamental needs were met, and the newly formed West Union Congregation invited families from throughout the area to form the Willamette Baptist Association, the oldest Baptist association on the West Coast.

In 1853 the congregation decided to build a church. The first subscription papers were dated April 20, 1853. A contract was let to William Kane to construct the frame structure. It was dedicated December 25, 1853, by the Reverend Ezra Fisher. Lenox donated land for the church and the cemetery in which his remains were placed after his death in 1872.

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Miller, Clifford R., Baptists and the Oregon Frontier, (Nashville: Curley Printing Company, 1967), 25-27.  
 Wardin, Albert W., Jr., Baptists in Oregon, (Nashville: Curley Printing Company, 1969), 13, 18, 20, 159.  
 Powers, Ruth McBride, "The West Union Baptist Church, "Oregon Historic Landmarks: Willamette Valley (Portland: Oregon Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1963), 6-7.  
 "Historic Landmarks of the West Union Area," Tuality Tree Program (Renamed Tuality Valley Heritage) May, 1967, Leaflet No. 2. 3 pages.

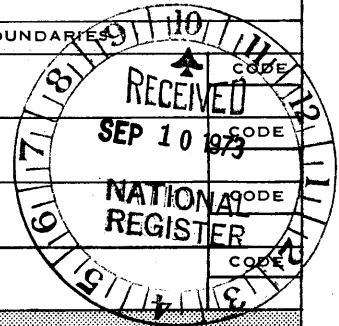
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "	45 °	34 ' 26 "	122 ° 54 ' 20 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.78 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Paul Hartwig, Assistant Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: Oregon State Highway Division DATE: August 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: State Highway Building

CITY OR TOWN: Salem STATE: Oregon CODE: 97310 41

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name George Duke Bellman

Title Director of Transportation

Date Sept 4, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AK Mortensen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/10/74

ATTEST:

Charles D. Ferguson  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date 7-10-74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Oregon	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER JUL 10 1974	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: West Union Baptist Church			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: West Union Road			
CITY OR TOWN: West Union			
STATE: Oregon	CODE 41	COUNTY: Washington	CODE 067
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: Oregon State Highway Division			
DATE OF PHOTO: June 1970			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Parks and Recreation Section, State Highway Building, Salem, OR			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  Southwest view from intersection of West Union Road and Dick Road.			

