

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received NOV 24 1981
date entered DEC 22 1981

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wells, George A., Jr., House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 10635 Buena Vista Road not for publication

city, town Independence vicinity of First congressional district

state Oregon code 41 county Polk code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Fred E. and Linda G. Beebee

street & number 10635 Buena Vista Road

city, town Independence vicinity of state Oregon 97351

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Polk County Courthouse

street & number 850 Main Street

city, town Dallas state Oregon

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

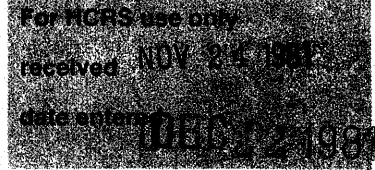
The George A. Wells, Jr., House (1904) is located one mile north of the historic farming community of Buena Vista at the southerly edge of bottom land on the west bank of the Willamette River. Situated on a rise of land, it is oriented to the east and Buena Vista Road, from which market road it is set back 150 feet. Detached from the south west corner of the house by a space of approximately two feet is a 16 x 16-foot gable-roofed shed which housed the first of two wells on the farmstead. The present well is approximately 100 feet to the west of the house. Located off the northwest corner of the house is a 24 x 40-foot frame garage with concrete slab floor, gable roof and drop siding built in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Outside the one-acre area proposed for nomination are a four-bay equipment shed measuring 30 x 72 feet and a 30 x 60-foot metal shop building situated southwesterly and northwesterly of the house, respectively. Both of the non-historic utility buildings were added to the site by previous owners in the 1970s. It was in 1977 that the historic 40 x 60-foot barn was dismantled. The current owners acquired the farm in 1980 and have since completed stabilization and repair work, including the removal of blackberry vines from the foundation area on the south, repair of the porch, and exterior painting to match original color treatment of gold body color with white trim. The house had been used as a rental property in recent years, and among the signs of neglected maintenance were dry rot in portions of the veranda, broken windows, etc. Otherwise, the house is sound condition and is structurally unaltered. In the front yard are two stately fir trees, and a large lilac bush on the north side of the house is a period planting. Current owners are considering the removal of a reversible carport added by previous owners to the west, or rear side of the house.

The frame house is rectangular in plan, its ground plan measuring 29 x 58 feet, and consists of a T-shaped 2½-story volume with a 1½-story, gable-roofed rear wing. The stem of the "T", containing a front bedroom, is surrounded on east and north sides by a single-story veranda decorated in the Eastlake tradition with turned porch posts, a cornice skirt of spindles, and a railing of fancy jig-saw work. The veranda has a post foundation which is screened by lattice work. The foundation of the house is of stone quarried on the property of Wells' father, George A. Wells, Sr., fronting the Willamette. Other than the veranda, about the only external reflections of the high style Queen Anne are the treatment of cross-axial gable roofs of the main volume in which cornices are carried across the top of the second story to create pedimented gable ends, and the polygonal configuration of the north wing which contains the living room on the ground story and a bedroom on the second story.

Both the vernacular Queen Anne Style house and its contemporaneous detached well house, now used for the storage of water tanks, are clad with shiplap siding. The roof cover of the house is asbestos shingles. The well house has a metal roof at present. Fenestration is essentially regular, consisting of one-over-one double-hung sash in elongated openings with simple architraves. The front and side doors opening onto the veranda are three-panel doors with glass panes at the top. The screen doors, with their rails of spool-turned spindles, are intact. Other exterior trim, such as corner and frieze boards, is plain. The principal brick stove chimney at the center of the front roof ridge has a flared top in keeping with the Queen Anne Style.

The rear wing contains the kitchen and dining room. A bath and utility room and an extra bedroom, or office, were appended to the rear wing in an 11-foot, single-story, hip-roofed addition of about 1972.

Original interior wall treatment was 7-inch boards covered with wall paper on muslin backing. Interior doors are four-panel doors. Original chased metal hardware in the front part of the

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house is in place. Plain baseboards are five inches high. Window and door trim of stock mill supply is intact. In 1972, downstairs ceilings were lowered from 9½ feet to 8 feet, the kitchen was remodeled, and the living room enlarged by the removal of a partition. The original ceiling heights have been restored by the current owners. As the house was heated entirely by stoves, there are no chimneypieces. The most notable feature of the interior is the front staircase with its oak banister in a restrained Eastlake style.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1904 **Builder/Architect** Kense and Walcott, contractors

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The vernacular Queen Anne Style farmhouse built one mile north of Buena Vista in Polk County, Oregon for George A. Wells, Jr., in 1904 is significant as an unaltered example of turn-of-the-century farmhouse architecture and the most imposing dwelling place in terms of style and scale remaining in the purlieus of the historic farming village. It illustrates the attainment of the second generation of a noteworthy pioneer family which has been represented at this location on the Willamette River by four generations at least. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with the heyday of Buena Vista.

The community of Buena Vista grew up on the donation land claim settled by Reason B. Hall in 1847. Originally called Liberty, the landing place on the west bank of the middle Willamette River was renamed by Hall, it is said, after some of his relatives had participated in the battle of Buena Vista which ended the Mexican War in northern Mexico. In 1852 or 1853, Hall established a ferry across the Willamette, and warehouses and general merchandise businesses were established also, followed by a grist mill, a hotel, a wagon shop and blacksmith shop to accommodate the development of trade. The ferry crossing at Buena Vista is one of only three such crossings which have remained in use on the Willamette to the present day.

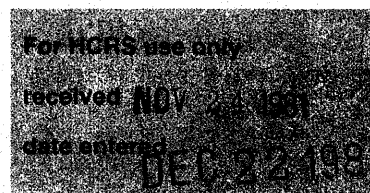
As town proprietor, Hall promoted Buena Vista as the site of the new capital when the selection of a seat of state government was in debate in the late 1850s. Hall noted in his advertisement such advantages as its central location on the Willamette, its situation on a high bank not subject to flooding, the accessibility of building timber, and the townspeople's willingness to donate land and assets for construction of the capitol. The advertisement notwithstanding, voters favored other contending townsites.

Buena Vista is noted in the annals of Oregon industrial history as the site of the first pottery manufactory in the Pacific Northwest. Founded in 1865 by Freeman Smith, Smith and Company began by manufacturing household crockery, but, after 1870 under the direction of Smith's son, Amadee M. Smith, the company produced fire brick in addition to stoneware for northern Pacific coast trade. The company's superior fire clay was mined from a bed near the factory, which no longer stands. Slip clay was found at Corvallis, 17 miles to the south on the Willamette. As early as 1872-1873, 15-inch drain and sewer pipe was manufactured at Buena Vista for the city of Portland and other Oregon towns. In prosperous times, the plant employed 50 men, some of them Chinese. The plant operated until 1886, at which time A. M. Smith moved to Portland, where he maintained his wholesale depot, to open a larger factory.

Buena Vista's main transportation link was the Willamette River even after the coming of the Oregon and California Roadroad west of town in 1879. It was, in fact, the head of steamboat navigation on the river in times of low water, but when traffic on the upper Willamette declined, and after the closure of the pottery kilns, the town's population peaked and gradually dwindled; its economic base returned to farming. The 1880 census had shown the population of Buena Vista at 183. The figure reached 200 in the 1890s. Today, the town's population is approximately half of its all-time high, and nothing of the mills, grain ware-

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houses and mercantile establishments remains to suggest the one-time bustle of the "bankside hamlet." Only a few houses, a church, a school, and a fraternal hall remain from the historic period.

George A. Wells, Sr., arrived at Buena Vista just as the community's fortunes were rising. The pottery manufactory had been in operation two years when Wells settled north of town on the former Alex V. McCarty donation land claim. He left his name on the land in two places: Wells Island in the Willamette and Wells Landing, where he and his sons and relations maintained a warehouse for community use. He deeded land for the community cemetery on a hillside north of town. His descendents, and those of a brother, William L. Wells, still reside in the neighborhood.

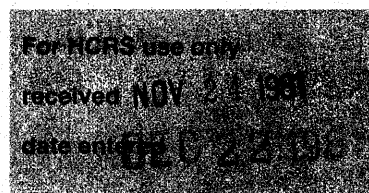
George A. Wells, Sr., a native of Pike County, Missouri (b. 1830), married Henrietta Turner in Pike County Illinois in 1850 and, with his wife, joined a train of forty wagons, all from southern Illinois and all bound for Oregon, in 1853. After crossing the plains, the elder Wells settled a claim in Benton County, but soon bought a half section of land near Hubbard, in Marion County. It was in the Hubbard vicinity that George A. Wells, Jr., was born in 1864. Three years later, the family moved to Buena Vista.

George A. Wells, Jr., was one of eight children born to George and Henrietta Wells. In 1894, he married Myrtle Smith, a relation of Amadee Smith, the pottery manufacturer. According to testimony given by his wife in 1932, the younger George Wells purchased his 525-acre farmstead north of Buena Vista from Amadee Smith in 1904. George A. Wells, Jr., and his wife raised four children (Orville, Clifford, Alma, and Henrietta) in the house completed for them in 1904. Eventually Wells acquired an additional 90 acres for farming. Today, 274 acres of the holding remains unsubdivided. The prosperous farm produced grain, hay and hops. George A. Wells, Jr., served as Polk County Commissioner 1912-1916.

According to family tradition, a barn measuring 40 x 60 feet was built on the property before the house was completed. It was torn down by previous owners in 1977. Local contractors Kense and Walcott lived in tents with their families on the premises for the duration of construction. George Wells the younger, his wife and three children lived in a woodshed on the place until the house was readied. Stone for the foundation was quarried locally on the riverfront property of George Wells the older. The stone is said to have been taken by skiff up river a mile or so to Buena Vista and hauled from there to the building site by team and wagon. According to the eldest son of the original occupant, O. G. Wells of Buena Vista, lumber was purchased from a mill at Falls City on the Luckiamute River 25 miles to the northwest of town, and construction of the house cost \$1700.

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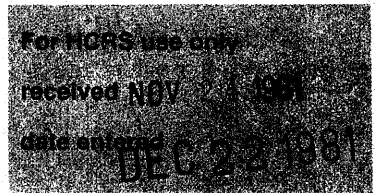
Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., Dictionary of Oregon History, (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1956), 38.

Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., Willamette Landings (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1947), 142-148.

Lang, H. O., History of the Willamette Valley (Portland: George H. Himes, 1885), 825.

Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims, Volume 1, Abstracted from Applications by the Genealogical Forum of Portland, Oregon, 1957, page 62, Application No. 1541.

Lockley, Fred, "Impressions and Observations of the Journal Man," Oregon Daily Journal (July 6, 1932), 10. Note on George A. Wells.

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Continuation sheet

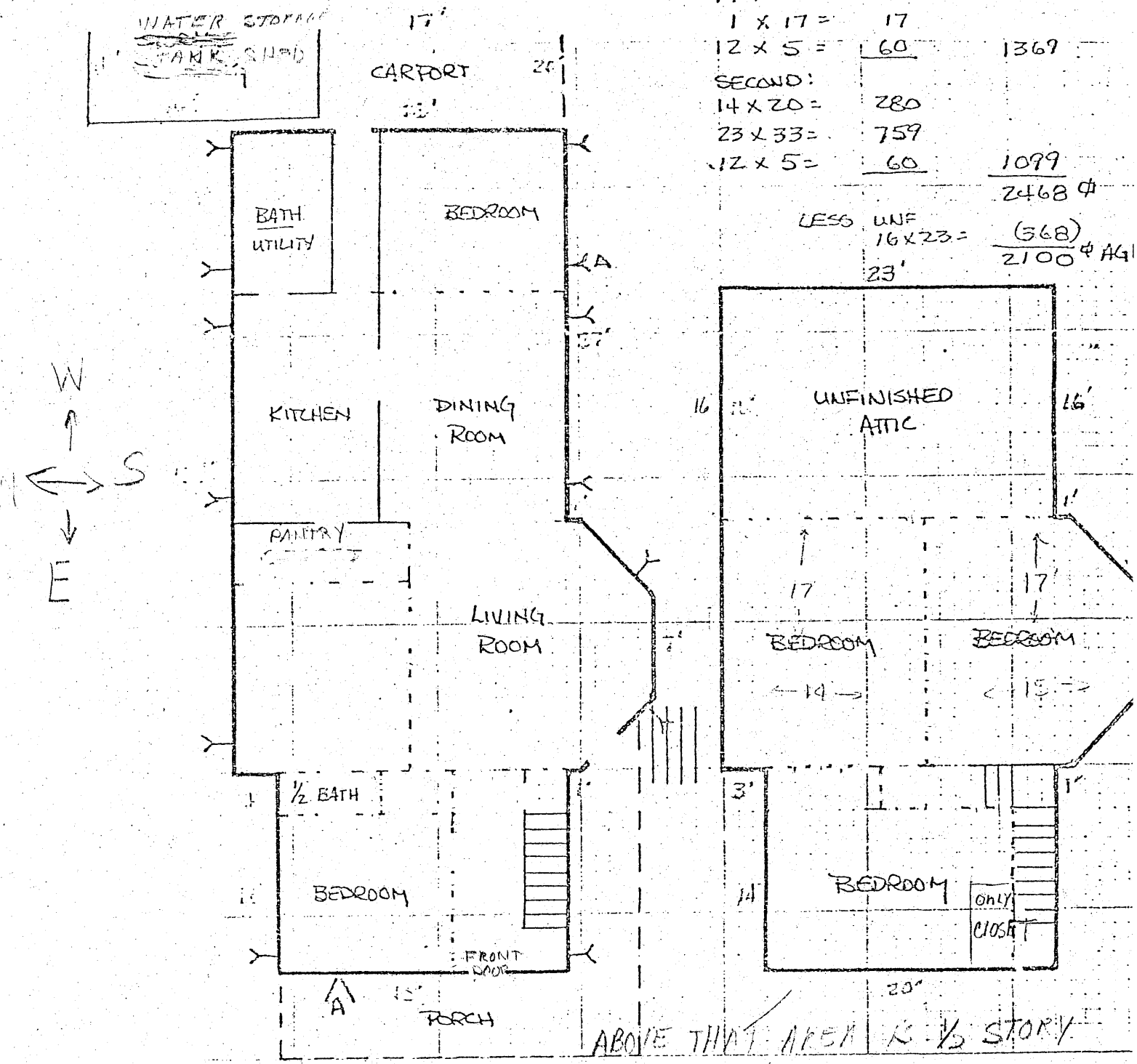
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Beginning at the center point of the intersection of Wells Landing Road and Buena Vista Road, thence west to the west margin of Buena Vista Road, thence south along said westerly margin of Buena Vista Road approximately 885' to the true point of beginning; thence west in a line perpendicular to the west margin of Buena Vista Road 290', thence south 150', thence east approximately 290' to the west margin of Buena Vista Road, thence northerly along said west margin of Buena Vista Road 150' to the true point of beginning, containing in all one acre, more or less, and, in addition to the house, a detached storage shed, a modern well and a non-historic garage. Excluded from the nominated area are modern equipment sheds north and southwesterly of the area boundary, respectively.

$23 \times 44 = 1012$
 $14 \times 20 = 280$
 $1 \times 17 = 17$
 $12 \times 5 = 60$
 1369
 SECOND:
 $14 \times 20 = 280$
 $23 \times 33 = 759$
 $12 \times 5 = 60$
 1099

2468ϕ
 (568)
 $2100 \phi A4$



SCALE: 1" EQUALS APPROXIMATELY 10'

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

Linda Beebee Photo, 1980
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

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West and north elevations prior to
restoration.

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

Linda Beebee Photo, 1980
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

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Detail of veranda, north elevation,
in process of restoration.

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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Historic view ca. 1910. West face with family group. Copied from original in possession of Oroville Wells, son of George A. Wells, Jr.

Copy negative: Linda Beebee
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

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DEC 22 1981



Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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South elevation after major stablization
and repair work. Exterior color treat-
ment (gold with white trim) matches
original.

Linda Beebee Photo, 1981
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

NOV 24 1981

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

Linda Beebee Photo, 1980
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

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South elevation and storage shed
prior to restoration.

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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Looking west along south wall of
house. Removal of vines and weeds
in progress.

Linda Beebee Photo, 1980
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

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Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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View from front porch of house,
looking northeasterly toward
Willamette River.

Linda Beebee Photo, 1980
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

NOV 24 1981

DEC 22 1981



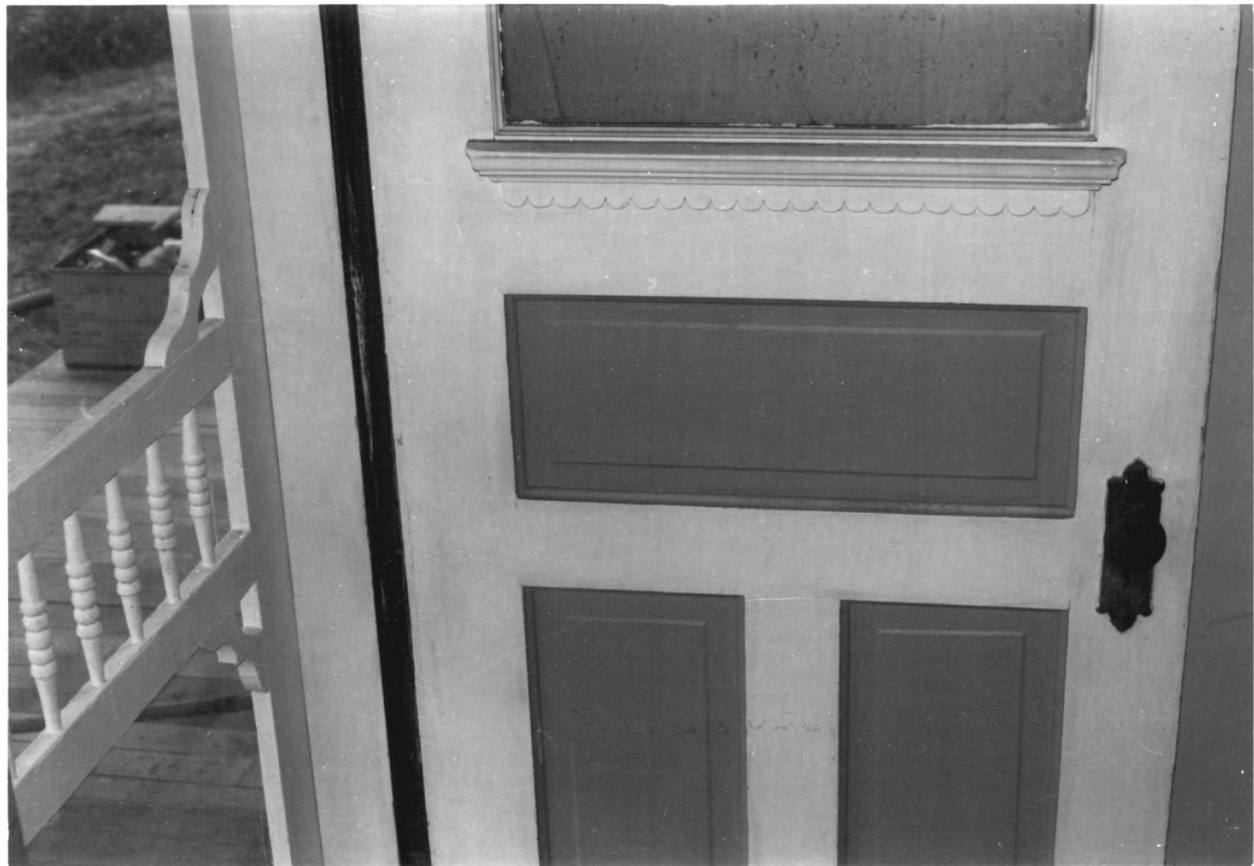
PLATE 2

Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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Detail of typical door hinge.

Linda Beebee Photo, 1981
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351 NOV 24 1981

DEC 22 1981



Wells, George, House
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence vicinity, Polk County, OR

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Detail of three-panel front door and
screen.

Linda Beebee Photo, 1981
10635 Buena Vista Road
Independence, OR 97351

NOV 24 1981

DEC 22 1981