

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	500 Commercial St NE Salem, Marion County	historic name:	Marion Square Park
assoc addresses:	551 Marion St NE	current/other names:	
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		township/rng/sect/qtr sect:	7S 3W 22
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Site	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	not eligible/non-contributing	total elig resources:	total inelig resources:
prim constr date:	1846	NR Status:	
	second date:	date indiv listed:	
primary orig use:	Park/Plaza	orig use comments:	laid out by William Willson in 1846 - ceremonial gathering place - altered after WWII -
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Not Applicable	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Not Applicable	architect:	
secondary siding:		builder:	
plan type:	Other/Undefined		
comments/notes:			
determined not eligible in 1980			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Salem Inventory Update RLS 2009	Survey & Inventory Project		2009
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	N/A	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
park			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>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 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.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	
Local Library:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Respository:	
Bibliography:			
City of Salem Context Statement, 1992; Marion County History, Vol 6, 1960; Corning, Howard McKinley, "Dictionary of Oregon History"; Elisa- beth W. Potter letter to T.W. Churchill, 10/6/93; Maxwell, Ben files, OHS			