CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE
INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES: A METHODOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT: This paper describes a methodology developed for an inventory of historic resources. Citizen participation is the key element. An information network, designed to elicit local impressions of important sites and buildings and the historic themes they represent, is analyzed. This methodology is compared with previous studies to show that the views of citizens are essential to a meaningful inventory.

INTRODUCTION

A survey of the historical resources in Benton County, Oregon, was conducted under the direction of the County Planning Department and the Oregon State University (OSU) Department of Anthropology (Fig. 1). The study was made between September of 1979 and August, 1980, and was designed to meet the objectives of the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). All areas of Benton County outside the Corvallis city limits were included.

In 1974, LCDC adopted a set of "State-wide Planning Goals and Guidelines" to guide local governments in the development of comprehensive land use plans. Goal number five addresses the conservation of "open space, scenic and historic areas, and natural resources;" it mandates that
lands with historic areas, sites, structures, and objects shall be inventoried by counties. Another LCDC goal requires that local governments "develop a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process." 

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal agency responsible for classifying historic resources and for setting goals and standards for their preservation. The survey methodology recommended by The National Register begins with a literature search from which a map is prepared. Buildings and sites are located and then researched and evaluated according to established criteria.

LCDC's goals require a more popular approach and shift the focus of historic preservation from the national to the local level. These goals are sensitive to the role of man in shaping his landscape, stating that "the general public . . . should have the opportunity to be involved in inventorying, recording, mapping, describing, analyzing, and evaluating the elements necessary for the development of the plans." 

A methodology for the Benton County inventory was planned to satisfy the LCDC goal of citizen participation. Planning Staff time and funding for the project were limited; the problem of identifying new sites and buildings required expediency in planning. The main strategy used for the survey was the interviewing of county residents. Local people are an important source of information; they identify sites
which otherwise might be missed. Also, buildings that are perceived locally to be important probably generate the greatest community support for preservation.

This paper describes the use of a local information network as a primary data source. The project should be considered a starting point for acquiring new information. The results of this endeavor are compared with information gathered in previous studies using other techniques.

Previous Studies

There were two previous county-wide compilations of historic resources. In 1903, J.P. Huffman, architect, prepared a map of structures, showing their use. The map indicates potential historical sites and permits comparison with the historical themes chosen for the 1980 survey.
In 1976, Stephen Dow Beckham, of Lewis and Clark College, conducted a preliminary historic resource inventory of the entire state to serve as a foundation for LCDC planning. The inventory followed National Register guidelines, including a thorough literature search, interviews with county residents, and a "windshield survey." Beckham's study is a reference point for comparing methodologies and the rate of loss of historic buildings.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BENTON COUNTY

A review of the history of Benton County may shed light on the attitudes of its people today toward certain historical themes. The recent beginning of the county's history is its most remarkable feature.

Written records indicate that in 1811, explorers associated with the Pacific Fur Company had penetrated what is now Benton County. White settlement dates to the 1840s. The local Indians, tribes of the Kalapooian family, were quickly subdued, and, in 1856, they were removed to the Grande Ronde Reservation.

Pioneers settled first in the northern part of the county, gradually filtering down to the south. William Bowen notes that by 1850, settlement of the county was dominated by midwesterners who, especially in rural areas, tended to cluster together according to blood ties. "Immigrants settled among their own kind, often recreating culturally distinct neighborhoods similar to those from which they had come."6

Benton County was created by the territorial legislature
in 1847. The first county courthouse was built in 1855 and was replaced with the present structure in 1889. Marysville, later named Corvallis, was the territorial capitol for a brief period in 1855 and was a busy shipping center. The gold rush in California and southern Oregon created a need for food and merchandise; many of these goods were produced in Benton County and shipped south from Marysville.

Transportation is an important aspect of the history of Benton County; people were separated by long distances. The old Indian trails leading to the coast and traversing the county from north to south were used as wagon roads by trappers and settlers. Road construction began in 1851. Land transportation was supplemented by steamship on the Willamette River until after the turn of the century. With the advent of the railroad in the 1870s, travel on the land improved.

Benton County has always had a strong rural backbone; its farmers have made an important contribution to the economy and politics. The early settlers raised livestock and grain. The main field crop was wheat, easily transported and exchanged, and was considered "legal tender" for debts.

The earliest industrial enterprises focused on the immediate needs of the settlers for food and shelter. Grist mills and sawmills appeared in the 1840s and '50s. By 1900, the industrial pursuits of the county had diversified. An article in a 1905 Corvallis paper, "Industry and Resources of Benton County," enumerated the following.
Six flour mills with a combined capacity of 650 bbls.; eight to ten saw mills; one sash and door factory; one ice factory; one furniture factory; one organ and carriage factory; one hardwood manufacturing plant which manufactures wagon gearing supplies and also 300 carloads a year of hardwood lumber; excellent transportation facilities by rail and river boats; and a large and growing trade with Alaska, Spanish America, and the Orient.

Community development has been an integral part of Benton County history. Religion and education were as basic and essential to the early settlers as flour and sawed lumber. The early churches and schools ensured the continuation of values of the social order left behind and served as community centers.

Two major institutions of higher learning have flourished in Benton County. Philomath College was built under the auspices of the United Brethren Church in 1867 and functioned until 1929. The building now stands as an historical landmark. Oregon Agricultural College, now Oregon State University, was created by the 1862 Land Grant Act "to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."³

METHODOLOGY

An extensive bibliography was compiled so that buildings
and sites could be researched in the future. Written records provided an outline of historical themes pertinent to Benton County (Appendix A).

The interested public was invited, through the media, to attend four meetings of the Planning Department; professional and lay people participated. The purpose of the project was explained and the 1976 inventory shared with the group. Volunteers were asked to help in the locating of additional historical sites and buildings and to provide the names of local historians. From these meetings, a list of potential informants was developed, covering as much of the county as possible. Historic structures found along county roads had been photographed for identification during the interview process.

**Interviews**

A letter of introduction, including the outline of historical themes, was sent to about forty informants. Twenty-one of these people were interviewed, either by phone or in person. A few sent information to us by mail.

The interviews were unstructured and open-ended, concentrating on four general questions: 1) Do you know of sites and structures in your community related to the historical themes? 2) Do you have, or know of, written or photographic records concerning the sites and structures? 3) Do you know of other people who can furnish information? 4) Which historic buildings (or sites) would you like to see preserved? People were asked, also, to identify photos.
Ground Survey

A second ground survey made it possible to locate and photograph most of the resources mentioned in the interviews. In many cases, the local historians came along to show the way. The address, surroundings, condition, and architectural style of the buildings were noted.

Mapping and Data Compilation

The historical resources were mapped to show location and historical theme represented. For comparison and future research, the sites on the 1903 county map and in the 1976 inventory were mapped in the same manner. In order to avoid possible inconvenience to property owners, the locations of the resources are considered confidential; they are shown in this discussion under "Results" only by theme. Interested persons may contact the Benton County Historical Society for further information.

The interview notes were analyzed. Data on the number of new names and the amount of new information gathered at each meeting or interview were compiled. The number of buildings representing each historical theme was tabulated for comparison with the 1903 map and the Beckham study.

RESULTS

Introduction

In this survey, information about historical resources was derived from local people by a cumulative discovery process. The methodology included public meetings, inter-
views, and a ground survey. As mentioned earlier, the survey procedure recommended by The National Register, and used by Dr. Beckhaxn, commences with an extensive literature search. To compare the two approaches, this presentation of research results focuses on the cumulative discovery process, the distribution of newly discovered resources, and the historical themes represented by the sites.

**Characteristics of Cumulative Discovery**

The discovery process included interviews with enough people to indicate patterns of information accretion. When time permitted no further interviewing, a discrepancy emerged between two kinds of incoming information. The number of potential informants appeared to be limited (Fig. 2); the amount of information about resources seemed to be indefinite (Fig. 3).¹⁰

In the first several meetings, the request for names of local historians was very fruitful. A network of knowledgeable people emerged which covered most geographic areas of the county. Later, the number of new names quickly dropped off; duplication of names already mentioned in previous interviews began to appear. Names of those who could supply information only about known sites were recorded for future reference but are excluded in the graph, since it deals only with methods of identifying new sites. After the fifteenth meeting, no new names were mentioned (Fig. 2). This may indicate that there were few, if any, additional people who could serve as sources of general information.
Figure 2 New names of key informants. Dotted lines represent the percentage of new names given at specific meetings; the solid line shows the cumulative percentage.
Figure 3. New information on sites and buildings. The dotted line represents the percentage of new information given at specific meetings; the solid line shows the cumulative percentage.
All of the people interviewed by Dr. Beckham were included in the current information network. However, many others, interviewed for this study, had not been consulted previously. The reason for this may be that Dr. Beckham interviewed people at or near known sites, which he had identified through a literature search. My list of informants was accumulated as a result of public meetings.

The pattern of new information accumulation for historical sites and buildings is quite different from the pattern of acquiring new informant's names (Fig. 3). The first few meetings yielded very little information. The reason for this is unknown, but it is thought that people feel more comfortable, in a public setting, about giving names of other people as being "local experts" than posing as such themselves. When the more intimate interviews began, the quantity of information increased; fluctuations in the number of new sites and buildings mentioned depended on the wealth of knowledge of the informant. Many duplications of information did occur throughout the interviews, but at no time was it decided that the locations of all the historic buildings and sites had been discovered. The number of buildings depicted on the 1903 map alone (295) points to a wealth of possibilities for future research.

Forty-six new historic sites and buildings were recorded for the state register as a result of my discovery process (Fig. 4). Many other resources were mentioned, but time limitations did not allow for their documentation. A list
was prepared for the Planning Department of buildings that informants would like to see preserved. The list includes sites both in my inventory and in Dr. Beckham's (Appendix B).

**Distribution of Recorded Resources**

Maps showing the location and theme of the historical resources recorded in 1976 and in 1980 indicate certain features and biases inherent in the respective methodologies (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). The distribution and density patterns of each inventory partially reflect the historic settlement pattern as shown on the 1903 map. However, in both inventories, the quantity and location of resources depend primarily on the knowledge of the local informants.

Dense concentrations of resources are mapped in areas where informants were prolific. For example, compare the northwest quarter of the county on each map. The abundance of sites on the 1980 map is mostly the result of an interview with one descendant of pioneers of the King's Valley area, Leone Lyday. In contrast, the 1976 map shows a greater concentration in the southwest area, around Alsea. According to the 1976 inventory, this is due, in part, to Dr. Beckham's interview with Mr. Rufus Hayden. Although our network divulged Mr. Hayden's name, it was not possible to reach him for an interview.

The difference in emphasis between the rural and urban sector in the two inventories is important. Of course, the 1980 inventory is biased in favor of the small town and rural parts of the county, because the Planning Department
Fig. 4 Abbruzzese inventory of historical resources (1980), based on interviews.
Inventory of Historical Resources in Benton County
(Excluding Corvallis)

Legend
△ School
□ Residences
○ Government
◊ Transportation
● Cemeteries
◆ Commerce
† Churches
■ Industry
▲ Agriculture

Data Source: Stephen Dow Beckham (1976)

Fig. 5 Beckham inventory of historical resources (1976), based on literature search.
excluded Corvallis from the study. But the 1976 inventory has a strong urban bias which may not accurately reflect Benton County's settlement and development. Of the seventy-three sites recorded in 1976, forty-eight percent are in Corvallis and sixty-eight percent are in either Corvallis or Philomath.

The present population of Benton County totals 71,300, with 41,750 in Corvallis and 2,400 in Philomath. With sixty-two percent of the population in the urban nucleus, the rural element appears relatively unimportant. However, data from the U.S. census records do not show a predominance of population in Corvallis and Philomath until after the turn of the century. Early census figures are confused by the changing size of the county; before 1893, Benton County was several times its present size. Even in 1900, the population of Corvallis and Philomath made up only thirty percent of the total county population. Since the average date of construction for buildings in both inventories is around 1885, it seems logical that a historic resource survey should reflect a rural, rather than an urban bias. Possibly the urban emphasis of the 1976 survey can be attributed to methodology. The historical literature, the initial source from which a site list was compiled, was probably generated mainly from an urban point of view and reflects an urban orientation.

Historical Themes Represented by Sites

Of the forty-eight themes outlined at the beginning of
the project, ten have importance for Benton County as reflected in the historic sites identified by local residents. These choices generally concur with the themes indicated in the 1976 survey and the 1903 map (Table 1 and Figs. 4 and 5).

Table 1.--Historical Themes Represented by Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Abbruzzese</th>
<th>Beckham</th>
<th>1903 map</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residences</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Systems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apparently, non-residential sites are more prominent in the minds of the local historians than they are in historic literature and maps. But even in the 1980 survey, residences, such as "Alpine House" (ca. 1852) of Senator Sewall Hawley, are revered for the pioneer spirit they represent (Fig. 6).

Also loved are the houses of settler families who provided focal points of social gathering. One of the Gallatly houses in Philomath had a grove of trees behind it called "Gallatly Grove" where people met for picnics and family reunions (Fig. 7).
The country schools are almost as important to our informants as residences; according to the 1903 map, they must have been important historically too. The importance of schools is underestimated in the table, since many leads were not investigated. The old schools still serve a variety of uses. Some function as schools; many, like the Westwood schoolhouse, are used as residences (Fig. 8). A few are kept alive as community centers. The turn-of-the-century Soap Creek schoolhouse is well-maintained by local people (Fig. 9).

The 1903 map shows few churches; perhaps most of the
Figure 8
Westwood School

Figure 9
Soap Creek Schoolhouse

Figure 10
"Little Brown Church"
early structures were in Corvallis and Philomath. Although churches are not considered eligible for inclusion in The National Register, both Beckham and the local informants did mention several.

Some churches have colorful histories. The "Little Brown Church" (ca. 1910), located at the Benton County Fairgrounds, was originally in downtown Corvallis (Fig. 10). Later, it was moved to the banks of the Willamette River and was used as a hay barn. With the help of T.J. Starker and Jack Brandis, the church was moved to the fairgrounds, where it is used as a church.

Cemeteries also are not National Register material. Perhaps for this reason, none appears in the 1976 survey. However, several pioneer cemeteries serve as connections to the past for local residents. Pleasant Valley cemetery, near the Gray farm, is cared for by the descendants of pioneer families (Fig. 11).

Figure 11 Pleasant Valley Cemetery
The importance of transportation development in the county is confirmed by historical records, the 1903 map, and the two inventories. The reliance on local residents to identify important sites turned up many historical transportation resources which might have been overlooked and lost forever. An interview with Janet Tunison and a walk on her family's farm revealed traces of the old nineteenth century wagon road, and Indian trail, to Alsea (Fig. 12). Above Highway 34 is the old Alsea highway, a gravel road used from 1905 to 1937 (Fig. 13). Also on the farm are hand dug irrigation ditches and wooden pipelines of the first Corvallis water system (Fig. 14).

Several informants mentioned the abandoned Valley and Siletz Railroad engine house at Hoskins, expected to be demolished soon. An interview with OSU professor Robert Lowry, a local expert on old railroads, led to documentation of the steam-driven belts and other machinery inside (Figs. 15, 16, and 17).

Some historic resources in the county are simple and dilapidated; they probably would not be noticed in a windshield survey. A residence across from the King's Valley Store was a medical office and pharmacy in the 1890s (Fig. 18). A residence in Philomath was the original jail (Fig. 19). These are examples of the many modest buildings cited by local residents and photographed for the inventory.
Figure 12
Wagon Road

Figure 13
Old Alsea Highway

Figure 14
Water Pipes, Gray Farm
Figure 15
Engine House, Valley and Siletz Railroad

Figure 16
Steam-driven belts, Engine House Valley and Siletz Railroad

Figure 17
Detail of machinery, Engine House, Valley and Siletz Railroad
Fig. 18 Medical office and pharmacy.

Fig. 19 Philomath jail
DISCUSSION

The development of a network of local informants was a useful field technique for eliciting information about Benton County's historical resources. Compared with the literature search technique recommended by The National Register of Historic Places, network development does have advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of comparing information gathering techniques, however, is not to show which is better. The information from each complements the other. The question is which should come first or be given greater emphasis in land use planning. Since the preservation of any resource depends, in part, on its perceived importance, every effort should be made to involve the public in resource identification and to make it possible for interested citizens to influence the direction of preservation efforts.

Interest in the preservation of King's Valley Church is an excellent example of the importance of public participation (Fig. 20). This is a site that has been missed in previous surveys, yet it was one of the most enthusiastically supported resources of all that were encountered. King's Valley is a tiny community with little commercial activity, but many local residents are intent on restoring the church in order to have a community center. Grass roots efforts like this should be supported by planners.

An extensive literature search, such as Dr. Beckham performed, is necessary for detailed and accurate document-
Information obtained from lay persons may be inaccurate or incomplete and must be verified by written and photographic records. Further, it is difficult to assess how representative of the general population any informant network may be. For example, the attitudes of architects, businessmen, and developers cannot be ignored if a balanced consensus is to be achieved. The literature search can provide a degree of objectivity, although the Beckham study did show a bias toward urban resources.

Consideration of citizen's rights presents a dilemma in any approach to resource identification and documentation. Photographing of private property and documentation are inevitable in resource discovery, and this raises serious questions with respect to privacy and disclosure.
implications of registering private homes as "historic residences" arise; if a survey is publicly funded, the point can be made that the results should be public information, yet the right of every citizen to privacy is taken for granted in a democratic society.

The problems of privacy, bias, and constraints of administrative or funding agencies are inherent in any resource inventory process. The proliferation of government information about members of society makes it necessary to reevaluate the moral obligations of researchers and planners.

It is the position of this geographer that the perceptions of local people must be integrated into resource planning if we are to have a truly representative government "of the people." A list of historical resources deemed to be important by local residents should be compiled and, except where property owners object, be made available to the public. The sharing of inventory information raises the group consciousness of identity with place. Thus, the community may be aided in its efforts to preserve its most beloved historical resources.
FOOTNOTES

1 Oregon State University, Department of Anthropology, "Cultural Resource Inventory, Benton County, Oregon," (Corvallis: August 1980) Vols. I and II (Mimeographed.)


4 Op. cit., footnote number 2, LCDC

5 J. P. Huffman, Map of Benton County, 1903, Oregon State University Map Library.


7 Mark Phinney, "Inventory of the County Archives of Oregon" No. 2, Benton County, prepared by the Oregon Historical Records Survey Service Division, Work Projects Administration, Portland, Oregon, 1942.

8 Phinney, op. cit., footnote 7, p. 70.

9 Not all of the buildings mentioned by informants are included on the 1980 map. Not shown are those needing further research or identification.

10 The first five interviews were actually group meetings. The initial meeting was with the staff from the Oregon State University Anthropology Department. Another of
the meetings was organized by local King's Valley folk. The other three were public meetings held at Benton County Planning Department. Subsequent private interviews frequently included more than one family member. More than once, the news of an interview attracted friends and relatives who listened and contributed information. All meetings, whether public or private, are referred to on the graphs as meetings.

11 Interview with Corvallis Chamber of Commerce on November 11, 1980. Figures are for December 1979.


APPENDIX A

OUTLINE OF BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL THEMES

I Indians
   Calapooia Family
      Chepena tribe
      Long Tom tribe
      Lakmut tribe
   Klickitat invasion 1840s and 50s
   Dayton Treaty 1855

II Exploration
   Overland
   River

III Fur Trader Period

IV Pioneer Period (1845-1860)
   Gold rush period

V Early Settlement Groups
   Ethnic (e.g., Corvallis Chinatown)
   Religious
   Political

VI Agriculture
   Wheat farming
   Cattle and livestock
   Fruit
   Dairy and poultry
   Grass

VII Industry and Commerce
   Flour mills
   Canneries
Creameries
Farm implement manufacture
Furniture manufacture
Sawmills
General stores, taverns
Grist mills
Early newspapers
Blacksmiths
Carriage factory
Cigar factory
Boat building

VTII Transportation
Indian trails
Wagon trails
Early roads (military as well as civilian)
Ferry landings
Steamers
Railroads
Covered bridges

IX Institutions
Churches
Cemeteries
Schools
Government
Water systems (including towers and cisterns)
Post offices
Military, e.g., Fort Hoskins, Adair
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; dredging and clearing on Willamette River
APPENDIX B

BUILDINGS INFORMANTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE PRESERVED

Soap Creek Schoolhouse, Tampico
Thomas Read House, near Lewisburg
Dunn House, near Hoskins
Watson House, near Hoskins (owner does not wish to be in inventory)
J.C. Avery Store (Robinettes), Corvallis
Southern Pacific Depot, Corvallis
Waldo Hall, Oregon State University
Benton Hall, Oregon State University
Philomath College, Philomath
Mt. View Apartments, Philomath
Robert Gallatly House, Philomath
Sheik House, Philomath
United Brethren Church, Philomath
Beaver Creek Schoolhouse, near Philomath
Hoskins Schoolhouse, Hoskins
Kings Valley Church, Kings Valley
Kings Valley Store, Kings Valley
Plunkett House, near Summit
Belknap House, Alpine
Sewall Hawley House, Alpine
Wilhelm House, Monroe
St. Rose Catholic Church, Monroe
Benton County Courthouse, Corvallis