

Beekman Bank
110 West California Street
Jacksonville
Jackson County
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-59

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. ORE-59

BEEKMAN'S BANK

Location: 110 West California Street, Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1862, C.C. Beekman acquired from Lewis and Almira Thompson the building at the northwest corner of California and Third Streets.¹ Beekman was both the local banker and the agent for the Wells Fargo Express Company.² On the 1864 map of Jacksonville the corner lot at California and Third Streets is shown as the Express Office;³ on the 1868 map it is shown as the Wells Fargo Company.⁴ The difference in shape and dimensions of the building plans shown on the two maps suggests that Beekman probably erected the present building about 1864 or 1865.

Cornelius C. Beekman arrived in Jacksonville in 1853.⁵ Having an astute eye for business opportunities, he purchased the local branch of Cram, Rogers, and Company, a subsidiary of the failing Adams Express Company.⁶ He then established a local express service to Sacramento, California, which he operated until 1863--when Wells Fargo Company extended its service to Jacksonville. By then Beekman had also established his banking house, which served more as a safe-deposit vault than as a bank. Gold was deposited for safekeeping unless the depositor wanted to sell the gold outright, in which case Beekman purchased it at a discount and forwarded it to San Francisco for credit to his own account.⁷

In addition to his banking interests, Beekman held substantial real-estate holdings, which at one time included the Union Hotel.⁸ His nephew, Fletcher Linn, later recalled that "Uncle Beek" had told him that his first investment was in Jackson County Warrants. Beekman took \$3,000 to San Francisco to invest at a higher rate than he could get locally. The Wells Fargo agent suggested that he invest in county warrants, but Beekman hesitated because they were discounted at sixty-five or seventy cents on the dollar. The agent inquired about the interest rate (which was eight percent) and advised Beekman to invest all his money in warrants and to buy any additional warrants for Wells Fargo--since all of Jackson County was security for them.⁹

Beekman was never actively involved in politics, but he did serve in a number of local offices--most notably as a director of the school

district.¹⁰ He was the first Street Commissioner when the town government was organized, and he undoubtedly played a role in setting the legal standards for the minimum maintenance of city streets and sidewalks included in the first ordinance passed by the Board of Trustees.¹¹ He was a trustee of the Presbyterian Church and served on the building committee that oversaw the erection of the present church building; when the congregation lacked funds to pay the entire costs of construction, Beekman assumed personal responsibility for the bills as well as for landscaping the church grounds.¹² He was the wealthiest man in Jacksonville, with an income of \$5,000 in 1868.¹³ He was married to Julia Hoffman, the daughter of William Hoffman, Jacksonville's leading public servant and lawyer.

FOOTNOTES

1
Jackson County Deeds, August 13, 1862.

2
Fletcher Linn MSS in Jacksonville Museum, Jacksonville, Oregon.

3
C.E. Curley [and J.S. Howard], "Map of Jacksonville," 1864.

4
"Map of Jacksonville," 1868.

5
A.G. Walling, History of Southern Oregon, Comprising Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Curry, and Coos Counties (Portland, Oregon: Publishing House of A.G. Walling, 1884), biographical appendix.

6
Jackson County Deeds, April 18, 1856. See also, Fletcher Linn MSS.

7
Fletcher Linn MSS.

8
Jackson County Deeds, April 22, 1858, July 22, 1858, and October 25, 1858.

9
Fletcher Linn MSS.

10
Jackson County School District Directors' Minutes, June 9, 1876.

11

Town of Jacksonville Board of Trustees' Minutes, December 17, 1860, and January 5, 1861. The ordinance set standards for the width of the sidewalks, which were to be of plank or gravel, and specified which streets were to have them.

12

Presbyterian Church Records, Oregon Historical Society MSS 967B, details the contributions C.C. Beekman made for the construction of the Presbyterian Church.

13

Jacksonville Reveille Weekly, July 4, 1868.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The entire building consists of one story.
2. Number of bays: The front (north) facade is three bays wide, each being an entrance bay.
3. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular.
4. Wall construction, finish, color: The walls are frame sheathed with clapboards. The building is painted off-white.
5. Openings: The three bays of the facade are double doorways separated by unornamented wooden piers. The first bay on North Third Street is also a double doorway. The four doorways contain double doors, each leaf having three glazed lights above a recessed, molded wooden panel.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape: The roof is a gable, sloping to the east and west from the ridge. It is masked on the facade by a parapet.
 - b. Cornice: The boxed cornice is bracketed. The brackets, of simple scroll design, spring from a frieze which runs across the facade.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The building consists of a single room.

2. Floors, walls: The floors are wooden and without finish. The walls are plastered and painted.
3. Fixtures: A counter runs from north to south along the west side of the building. At the north end an area is divided from the rest of the room; the vault is also at the north end of the building. The fixtures of Beekman's Bank are preserved intact.

C. Site and surroundings:

The building is on the northwest corner of California and Third Streets, adjacent to a one-story brick commercial building. It is separated from the building to the north by a small fenced yard.

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1976