

A GREEK TEMPLE IN FRENCH PRAIRIE

THE WILLIAM CASE HOUSE
FRENCH PRAIRIE OREGON 1858 – 59

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FRENCH PRAIRIE OREGON 1858 – 59

GRANT HILDEBRAND MIRIAM SUTERMEISTER

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FOR MIRZA AND WALLACE

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
1 THE CASE FAMILY COMES TO FRENCH PRAIRIE	1
2 DESIGNING THE HOUSE	16
3 BUILDING THE HOUSE	42
4 THE HOUSE FROM 1860 TO 1976	63
5 THE HOUSE RESTORED	75
6 A GREEK TEMPLE IN FRENCH PRAIRIE	95
APPENDIX I: NOTES ON WILLIAM AND SARAH CASE'S CHILDREN	100
APPENDIX II: CASE LANDS, 1845 AND 1878	101
APPENDIX III: A NOTE ON COLUMN SPACINGS	102
APPENDIX IV: A NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY OF CONSTRUCTION	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107

WILLIAM M. CASE HOUSE

circa 1859

In 1845, 24-year-old carpenter William Case and wife Sarah arrived from Indiana and settled the French Prairie site. The farm became a center of technology in our valley, and on its 1500 acres there were barns, a sawmill, brick kiln, and forge. Case's energy and skills became legendary. At this house, finished as Oregon became a state, he provided information and hospitality to farmers, circuit riders, and territorial legislators. Its unusual size and style, with its peristyle of 31 doric columns, best exemplifies the spirit of the classic temple among Greek Revival buildings in the Oregon Territory.

(Text of the sign at the Case house entry gate)

A piece of domestic architecture, no less than a mosque or a chapel, can assist
us in the commemoration of ourselves.

Alain de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness*

I built those stalls and that shed there; I am a weaver, a shoemaker, farrier,
wheelwright, farmer ...

Travels in the Confederation, 1783, in Sloane 1954

As though he had risen and pleaded, so did I understand
The form of the dream he had followed, in the face of the thing he had planned.

Kipling, "The Palace"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS BOOK IS FOUNDED on the work of many people over many years. First among them is the late Professor Philip Dole of the University of Oregon, a pioneer in the recording and preservation of vernacular architecture, who inventoried the Case site and its buildings in the 1960s, and drew the plans of the site and the house from which the plans herein are derived. We had hoped to have Professor Dole's insights in the late development of the manuscript; his death foreclosed that possibility. Sandra Burke had prepared an extensive paper on the property when she was a student at the University of Oregon, and she has offered helpful critical commentary on this manuscript. Tom Currans assisted our on-site measuring of the house, and provided guidance on early steam power and sawmills in Oregon. Elisabeth Walton Potter, who did much of the preparatory work for the National Register Nomination, meticulously reviewed the project at an intermediate stage in its development, and suggested resources for further information. Nancy E. Kletzer Densmore and Virginia Caudill, great-great-granddaughters of William M. and Sarah Anne Potter Case, provided information on the family, and allowed us to replicate early photographs. Sherri Watts-Duree contributed genealogical material on William Case's second wife Eliza Bell. Karen and Harold Arendt Jr. were most gracious and generous in opening their memories and their records regarding the middle

decades of the Case house history. Richard Engeman kindly read the manuscript in its late stages of development, and offered invaluable suggestions. Ross Sutherland of the Marion County Historical Society, Steven Hallberg of the Oregon Historical Society, William Buckingham of the Pioneer Mothers Memorial Museum, Deborah Dancik of Willamette University's Atkinson Library, and various staff of the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, The Oregon Genealogical Forum, and the Knight Library Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Oregon, have contributed their assistance without reservation. Michael Jensen graciously made available to us three interior photos of the house.

The entire project is in many ways closely related to the Marion Dean Ross Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. The late Professor Ross, who taught for many decades at the University of Oregon and was a founding member of the chapter, was a mentor and friend to Mirza Dickel and Wallace Kay Huntington and to many others who have been involved with this project. Philip Dole was a member of the chapter from its earliest years, and Mirza Dickel, Wallace Huntington, Elisabeth Walton Potter, and Miriam Sutermeister have served as its presidents. Recent president Martin Segger established the Educational Projects Fund that supported much of the early photography and research work for this project. He, Shirley Courtois, Jeanette Reynolds, and many others of the organization, have encouraged us throughout its development.

Finally the authors and the reader alike must thank Mirza and Wallace for their restoration and dedicated stewardship of the house, and their generous participation in the telling of its story.



PEDIMENT

CORNICE

ENTABLATURE

ABACUS
CAPITAL

SHAFT

STYLOBATE

metopes, triglyphs
architrave

A GREEK DORIC TEMPLE: THE PARTHENON

I THE CASE FAMILY COMES TO FRENCH PRAIRIE

WILLIAM CASE'S PATERNAL GRANDFATHER, having served in George Washington's army, had retired to North Carolina; there William's father, Nathaniel, was born in 1792. By 1811 Nathaniel had somehow gone to Tennessee, where he married Margaret Anna Brown. Nathaniel and Margaret then went north to a wilderness that, five years later, would become Indiana, settling in eastern Wayne County, just a few miles from the Ohio line and 60 miles due east of the town that was to be Indianapolis. William, the fifth of their children, was born on March 8, 1820.¹ Five more children would follow; the last, Isaiah, who in later life would be William's closest confidant, was born in 1831.

In 1834 Margaret Case died; the following year Nathaniel was ordained a Baptist minister. With no mother in the house, and a meager and uncertain income, the Reverend Case was forced to find other situations for several of the children. Three-year-old Isaiah was sent to foster homes and local "seminaries."² William would have been fifteen, and as his later vocation would suggest, he was apprenticed at that time to a carpenter or builder, perhaps a furniture-maker; his will would cite "one large chest made by me in Indiana, in year [sic] 1840."³ But the father was an educated man--he would inculcate in his sons his interest in education--and among his books was a copy of Lewis and Clark's Columbia River journal.⁴ At some point in his late

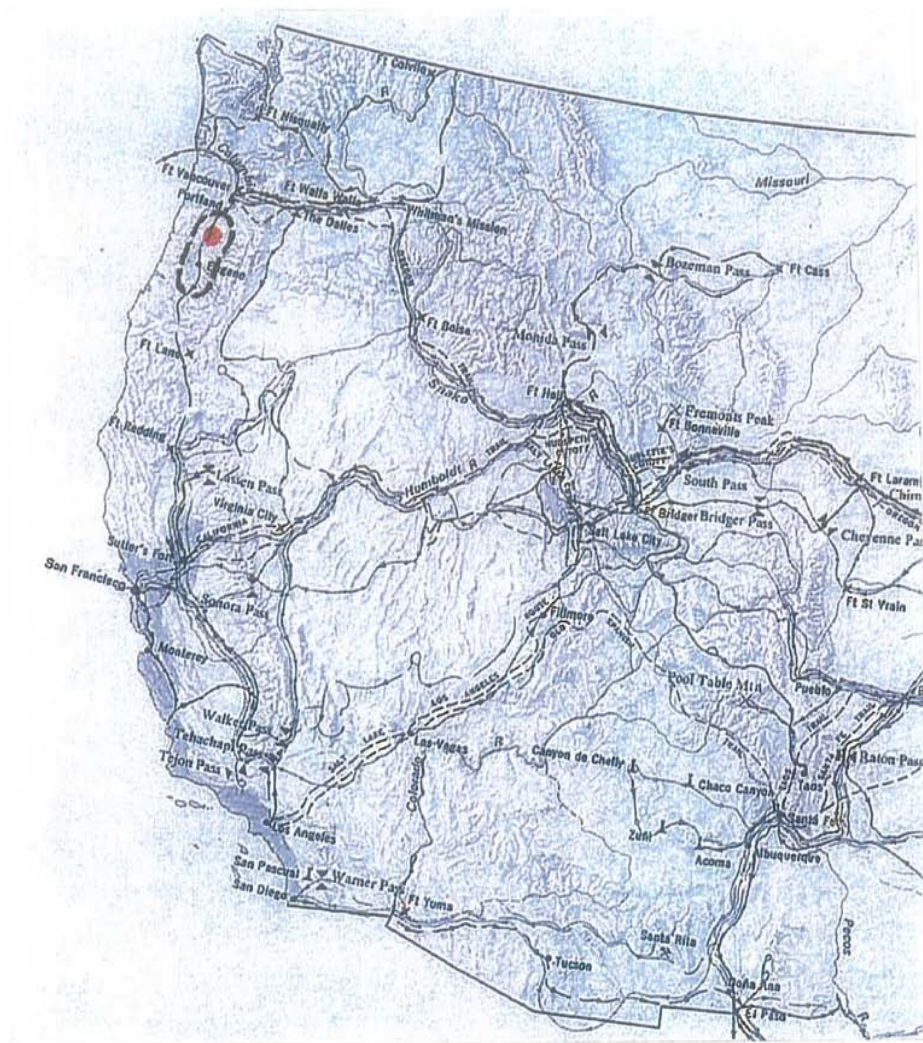
adolescence William read its descriptions of the region's dramatic landscape, rich ecology, and mild climate, and he decided he would go west as soon as he could. His father and, by that time, his stepmother, approved, not least, perhaps, because the Panic of 1837 had left a lingering dismal economy throughout the east. The Reverend Case's only advice to his son was to take a wife along. So on December, 29 1841, William married Sarah Ann Potter, daughter of John and Sarah Potter who had come to Wayne county from New Jersey. Three months later, on April 1, 1842,⁵ William and Sarah Case headed west.

They planned to rendezvous with an organized wagon train that was scheduled to leave Plattsville, Missouri on June 1, and had they done so they would have been early pioneers indeed. John Jacob Astor had founded Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia, in 1811, as an outpost for his American Fur Company, and a few missionaries had found their way to the far northwest in the 1830s, but 1842 was the first year in which serious settlers set out on the Oregon Trail in significant numbers.⁶ But Sarah was in advanced pregnancy when she and William left Indiana, and their first son, Jonas Potter Case, was born along the way on June 1, the very day the wagon train left Plattsville for the west. When the Cases finally got to Plattsville on June 10, William seems to have been offered work at good pay in Holt County on the Missouri River, at the far northwestern corner of the state. There, a little more than a year later, Sarah gave birth to a second child, a daughter, Sarah Frances.⁷ In the early summer of 1844 the Cases again set out on the Oregon Trail, joining a sixty-wagon train led by John Thorpe--or Thorp, or Tharpe. William must have done well in his Missouri work; although he was hardly past his twenty-fourth birthday, he is recorded as having hired at least two

other men in the train to assist with his family's possessions.⁸ (One account⁹ tells us that the Cases were traveling with a slave, an "Aunt Hannah," but Sarah had made a list of all of the women in the wagon train, and this appears to be a misreading of it. It would be impolitic to arrive in the Oregon Country with a slave in one's possession because, although the law was a feeble one, slaves were ostensibly illegal there.¹⁰ And William and Sarah would have been especially unlikely to do so, because William's father was "anti-slavery in politics, and struck many a sturdy blow for the cause of freedom."¹¹ The Missouri Compromise of 1820 had made Missouri a slave-holding state, and "Aunt Hannah" was probably simply one of its lucky ones who, serendipitously freed, was fleeing to a less intimidating far west.)

A train leaving Missouri in early June would normally expect to get to the Oregon Country by late September, perhaps early October, so the new arrivals could secure some kind of dwelling before winter. But the 1844 emigration was beset by unusually severe rains, with attendant wet ground, the trail often only a path of mud, if that, and the Thorpe train only reached the Oregon Country in December. At the Dalles the women and children were ferried across the Columbia to Fort Vancouver, for winter lodging; the men continued southwestward to the Willamette Valley to establish shelters for their families. William and Sarah had spent, in all, two hundred nine days in travel, in addition to their two years in Missouri.¹²

At the time of the Cases' arrival, the Oregon Country, the region that in 1848 would become the Oregon Territory, encompassed what would be, eventually, the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and bits of Montana and Wyoming. This vast region then held fewer than three thousand inhabitants; jurisdiction was still disputed between the United States and Great



- 1.1 The western United States in about 1850, after the establishment of the northern boundary at the 39th parallel. The Willamette Valley, the terminus of the Oregon Trail, is indicated by the dashed line, French Prairie by the red dot. Fort Vancouver, where Sarah and the children spent the early winter of 1844-45, is shown across the Columbia River just north of Portland.

Britain. Oregon City, all 37 buildings of it, had just become the first incorporated city of the Pacific Coast. Oregon's statehood was fifteen years in the future, the Civil War seventeen.

Sarah had been in advanced pregnancy again in the late stages of the trip, and in February of 1845, coming from Fort Vancouver to join William in the Willamette Valley, in an area called Tualatin Plains, she bore a third child, John Nathaniel.¹³ The following month the Cases acquired a 643 acre tract of land, a square mile, that would become their farmstead.¹⁴ It lay in an area of the valley known as French Prairie, so named by settlers from the American East because it had been lightly settled in earlier decades by Hudson's Bay Company trappers, French-Canadians, who had retired to the region to farm; their major crop was wheat. The French Prairie topography was chiefly one of



1.2 French Prairie.

broad plateaus excellently suited to farming, with some rolling hills, and extensive stands of virgin timber. Occasional pronounced north-south ravines carried streams running northward into the Willamette River, which in turn ran north to the great Columbia.

The Case land lay about 30 miles south-southwest of the just-founded town of Portland, three miles south of the town of Champoeg (pronounced *shampoo-y*), and an equal distance northeast of the Catholic Mission of St. Paul that had been founded in 1839.¹⁵ The area, therefore, had had a degree of settlement by the time the Cases arrived, but they had found an unclaimed tract that was superb for Case's purposes. It included generous expanses of flat, arable land for subsistence and commercial farming, and a stream in a steep ravine, whose considerable change of elevation would make possible a water wheel for power. It also held a plethora of that virgin timber; a majestic Douglas Fir, now 500 years old and fully nineteen feet in circumference, still stands near the entry to the extant house, and there is another of almost equal dimension at its side.

Near the center of their newly acquired land, on a peninsula of relatively level terrain between two declivities that fall away toward the ravine and streambed, Case immediately built a four-room log house and an equally essential barn.¹⁶ These projects would have involved the felling of many trees, hewing and sawing, the placement of many dozens of heavy timber pieces; Case could not have done this work alone. There was probably a communal exchange of labor among the settlers, each chipping in on the projects of others, working together to build facilities for all. Case may also have had a small work crew of his own, because as he was building his own house and barn he had already started his building trade: by mid-1845 he is recorded as

the builder of the Wilkins barn in Tualatin Plains, purported to be one of the first timber-framed barns in the Territory.

Sarah bore another son, Thomas William, in January of 1847, and another daughter, Susan Lucinda, in September of 1848. A month earlier, news had reached Oregon of the discovery of gold in California. The following February, leaving the family and staff to run the activities of the homestead, Case, not yet 29 years old, sailed for San Francisco, then went inland to Coloma, near the discovery site. There he quickly decided that more money could be made by building, and by mechanical work on the miners' equipment, than by mining itself. (He published an account of the adventure, in which he describes the murder of 32 of his fellow Oregonians by Indian tribes, and the retaliatory slaughter of all of the 76 males in the suspected villages. Case, at least by his account, seems to have been something of a leader in the retaliation. Unfortunately he says nothing whatever about buildings, his own or others.) At some point he went to nearby Sacramento to purchase the mechanical components of a sawmill,¹⁷ and had them sent back to the farmstead by land transport. The legalities of the Oregon land claim required that Case be in residence at least half of any year, so by early fall he was himself on his way back, overland, on a road carved by "Oregon men ... the previous autumn."¹⁸ He had done well in his brief venture: he brought back \$2800 in saved earnings, easily the equivalent, at the time, of two years' wages in many trades.

The Territory hadn't changed much in his absence; California was monopolizing the immigrants' attentions. But Oregon was on the threshold of dramatic growth, from 11,873 in 1850 to 52,465 a decade later. Perhaps Case foresaw that expanding market for his building business, or perhaps he was

simply confident of the value of his abilities; in any event, in the spring of 1850 he began a dramatic augmentation of his facilities. His first project, having brought the parts from California, was to build a sawmill, and in his timing he benefited from a bit of perverse luck, because a major flood in the closing weeks of the previous year had washed away nearly all of Oregon's 30-some extant mills. With the construction of this mill we begin to grasp the scope of Case's abilities and ambitions.

A sawmill requires a power source. The first steam-powered mill in Oregon, near Portland, dates from several months after Case's return from California,¹⁹ and steam was common in the northwest only after the completion of a rail line to Portland in 1883. Case's power source in early 1850, would have been, of necessity, a water wheel.²⁰ In this he had a choice of an undershot or overshot wheel. The circumferential paddles of an undershot wheel, immersed in the stream and driven by the stream's flow, only provide serious power if the stream is very large and fast flowing, and Case's stream was neither. An overshot wheel accepts water from above, in buckets rather than paddles around its circumference, so is driven by both the stream's force and gravity's pull on the water-buckets. In the typical stream it is far the more powerful device; it would have been Case's only reasonable option. It has the minor disadvantage that, although it yields high torque, it has a maximum speed of about 40 or 50 revolutions per minute, since at higher revolving speeds centrifugal force will throw the water out of the buckets. Its more major disadvantage is that unless a waterfall is handy it requires a dam to feed water at the top. No physical traces of either a dam or a wheel remain, but a letter from brother Isaiah²¹ attests that Case built both--and the reference to the dam is confirmation that the wheel was in fact overshot.

The minimum diameter of a wheel to power a sawmill would be, at a reasonable guess, ten feet, and it must be mounted clear of the stream, since it will rotate against the stream's direction of flow. So the dam that supplies it with water must be somewhat higher than the wheel's diameter. Case, therefore, would have had to build a dam about twelve feet in height above the stream's surface. The steep banks of the ravine would have brought a real advantage in minimizing the dam's breadth across the stream, thereby reducing materials and labor while increasing the dam's rigidity. Concrete was not yet commonly available, but large logs anchored into the banks and the streambed, probably in several layers, could serve, with the voids packed with gravel and clay. Case would have built two sluices at the top of the dam, one to feed the wheel and one to spill directly into the stream, each with a device to allow closure; opening one sluice and closing the other would activate or inactivate the wheel. (Stopping the wheel when not in use would save some wear and tear in the normal course of events, but in flood conditions it would be essential, since the underside of a powered wheel would rotate against the flow of the swollen stream, tearing the wheel apart.) The wheel itself would have been built as a stout timber frame with broad water-buckets on the circumference, firmly keyed to an equally rigid axle at its center, running in solidly anchored bearings.

In the late summer of 1850, adjacent to his new wheel, Case put up a robust structure of heavy timber framing, and installed therein the sawmill parts brought from California. The parts may have been designed for a circular saw, but it is more likely that Case bought parts for, and built, a gang saw--a vertically sliding frame, operated by a reciprocating drive, into which could be fitted a series of vertical blades. Such a saw is in one respect inherently

inefficient, because the stresses generated by the reciprocating action severely limit the cycles per minute, and therefore the cutting speed,²² but the cutting speed of any saw Case might choose would have been limited by the wheel's power. With his meager technical resources a sash saw would have been easier to build and maintain, and its inefficiency was in part offset by its ability to make several cuts simultaneously. The following year, with sawn lumber from



1.3 Autumn, 1850: Case's dam, water wheel, and sawmill, from the north (conjectural).

his new mill, Case erected a second dwelling on the site, a more spacious frame structure with more refined interior surfaces, to house his family in greater comfort and elegance.

In that same summer Case opened at least one clay pit for brick clay, and added to his facilities a tile and brick kiln and a smithy--built of bricks from the clay pits and the new kiln, to minimize the fire hazard. These accomplishments evidence his skill and enterprise, and his business acumen as well. For while Case was building buildings, he was also building facilities to produce materials from which buildings could be built. He was thus bypassing the profits of suppliers, to the benefit of his own construction business, and garnering additional profits from the sale of materials to other builders. He was also realizing an agricultural income from wheat and apples, at least, and perhaps from livestock.²³

In 1853 the territorial capital was moved from Oregon City to Salem, seventeen miles south of the Case lands, and the town's Oregon Institute was renamed Willamette College, then Willamette University. Other communities began to appear in the valley: Gervais, Butteville, and most notably, in 1856, the Utopian German-American Aurora Colony, just six miles east of Case's farmstead. All of this meant a growing demand for Case's building and building materials businesses, and his agricultural products as well. He hired increasing numbers of Chinese, both farm laborers and builders, housing them, by the mid-1850s, in yet another structure, "a large combination cook and bunk house"²⁴ a half-mile northeast of his own log and frame houses.

Among Case's projects of 1852 is the first evidence of what was to be his lifelong dedication to education. In that year he built--from his own moneys, his own milled lumber, his own molded and fired bricks, and his own



1.4 The Case Schoolhouse.

forged hardware--one of Oregon's earliest public schools. Dimensionally and stylistically it was a building of stunning modesty. Nevertheless this project, undertaken just eight years after his arrival in the Territory, is testimony to Case's business success, and an early example of his sense of civic responsibility. It was promptly named the Case Schoolhouse.

As Case's business enterprises and civic reputation were growing, so was his family. Mary Elmira was born late in 1850, just as the sawmill was completed. In September of 1851, with the new frame house just finished,

Thomas, not yet five years old, died. In 1853 Alice Amanda arrived, then Jane Elizabeth in 1855, Margaret Anna in 1856,²⁵ and Benjamin Isaiah on August 20, 1858. And there was, for a time, another adult in the household: William's brother Isaiah had come to Oregon from Indiana, and he lived with William's family for several months before moving to Portland and thence to Astoria.²⁶



1.5 Sarah Ann Potter Case, circa 1852.

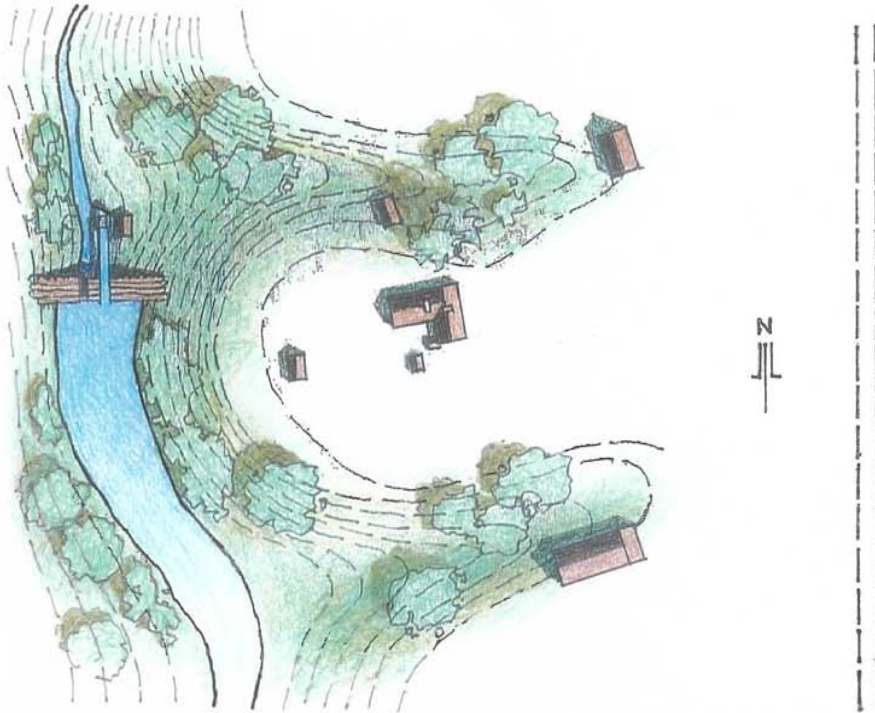
With all of these personal events, and the growing demands of his two spheres of business, William Case was leading a busy life. We have no portraits of him at this time, but those of later dates show a lanky, bearded, intense, and rather stern figure, and it is not surprising that contemporary accounts give us the impression of a man who asked a lot of his workers, his animals, and himself: the legend is that he slept only five hours a night. Nevertheless--or perhaps therefore--from 1857 to 1859 Case found time for yet another project: in those years he designed and built an expensive, ambitious, and unusual third home for himself and his family.

I NOTES

- ¹ All documents but two give his name as William M. Case, with no indication of a middle name. The exceptions cite his middle name as Mason and Milner, and both sources are unreliable on other matters.
- ² From E. C. Holden, Secretary, Astoria Chamber of Commerce, "Biographical Sketch of I[saiiah] W. Case, Esq.", March 23, 1892, 1-2; McCall Papers, Oregon Historical Society, MSS 921C.
- ³ A letter of August 1851 from Nathaniel to "Dear children in Oregon [William and Sarah] ... "Saw Mr. Ferris ... he told me he had sold some \$7 worth of your books, and took \$5 to pay himself. He would send the trunk and balance to me."
- ⁴ A gift from friend, congressman, and president-to-be William Henry Harrison.
- ⁵ This date, like many in this story, is surrounded by some confusion. There are also numerous accounts of the arrival of the Cases in Oregon in 1844 with three children, but that number is refuted by the known birth and death dates.
- ⁶ Bowen 1978, 11.
- ⁷ Jonas Potter Case b. I June 1842; Sarah Frances Case b. 28 June 1843, although one account has her being born during the trip "across the plains from Indiana to Washington [sic]." From RootsWeb.com., Ancestry.com.
- ⁸ From "Tribute to W. M. Case -- Honored Pioneer of 1844, Who Died at the Age of 83," in *The Morning Oregonian*, 16 Feb 1903.
- ⁹ Sutton, 118.
- ¹⁰ The law had many caveats and exceptions, and in 1844, the year of the Case family's arrival, it only stated as a "penalty" that any slave brought into the territory and not removed within three years would be granted freedom by the government. The Case family's anti-slavery stance is evidenced by an 1861 letter from Isaiah to William, mentioning that "California has Elected a Republican Governor which is glorious news . . ." The party was Lincoln's, of course, and was unambiguously anti-slavery. The letter, at this writing, is held by Wallace Huntington.
- ¹¹ "Tribute to . . .".
- ¹² "Tribute to . . .".
- ¹³ John Nathaniel Case, b. 12 February 1845.
- ¹⁴ The Land law of 1843 granted those who settled before 1850 320 acres each, 640 acres for a couple. (Vaughan, 1974, 65).

- ¹⁵ *Building at the End of the Oregon Trail*, 1.5.2.
- ¹⁶ Philip Dole inventoried the site in the 1960s and, with Gary Moye, photographed the buildings extensively and made site and floor plan drawings. All subsequent scholarship on the Case property is indebted to their diligence.
- ¹⁷ This according to Wallace Kay Huntington, who restored the property in the 1970s and is its owner at this time of writing.
- ¹⁸ From "Reminiscences of William M. Case" in the Oregon Historical Society Quarterly, v1 March-December 1900.
- ¹⁹ Lewis L. McArthur, "Industrial Building," Vaughan, 1974, 161.
- ²⁰ This is confirmed by a chronicle entitled *The William Case Farm*, held by the Marion county Historical Society, and apparently a compilation of several sources, which states that the "Sawmill on Case Creek, westerly of the house, had a water wheel."
- ²¹ Letter from Isaiah, 14 December 1861, following a serious flood in the Willamette Valley; Isaiah says he is "anxious to hear how your mill and dam came out"; and see n.1, Chapter 2.
- ²² That the blades might only cut on the downward stroke was typically remedied by a double-cutting tooth configuration.
- ²³ Letters from Isaiah at later dates refer to wheat and apple shipments by William that have been going on for some time, and cite, at William's request, market prices for chickens, turkeys, beef, and pork.
- ²⁴ The sawmill, frame house, and bunk house are described p. 1 of a typewritten account from which this and the preceding quote are taken, by Mrs. Lansing Stout, a descendant of William and Sarah Case through daughter Mary Elmira and her daughter Lubel Felt Reed (Mrs. Sanderson Reed). See also Chapter 2. No trace of either the frame house or bunk house remains; the site of the sawmill and dam is now impassable.
- ²⁵ Mary Elmira Case, b. 25 November 1850; Alice Amanda Case b. 24 March 1853; Jane Elizabeth Case, b. 4 February 1855; Margaret Anna Adelaide Case, b. 11 October 1856. RootsWeb.com.
- ²⁶ Letters from Isaiah to William, both before and after the fact, attest to this event.

2 DESIGNING THE HOUSE



- 2.1 The Case property: site plan. The house of 1858-59 is at center; left of it is the original log house. Above is a later carriage house. The original barn is at lower right; a later second barn is at upper right. At far left is the stream, now Case Creek, and the dam, water wheel, and sawmill. The location of the present-day Case Road is indicated by the dashed lines at right.

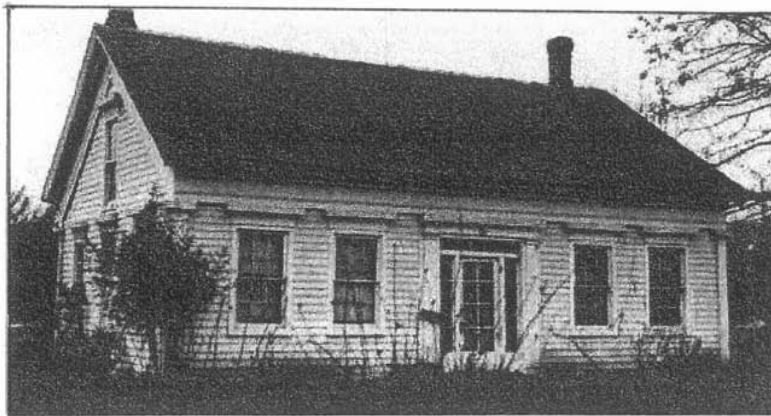
MOST ACCOUNTS OF THAT STILL-EXTANT HOUSE tell us that it was built over a period of from five to seven years, beginning about 1853 and finishing near the end of the decade.¹ The most convincing dates, however, because the most specific on that point, are found in a detailed chronicle by a descendant of the family² that tells us that Case, returning from California in 1849, "built a water-power saw mill on Champoeg Creek [sic; actually the stream immediately east] ... and with lumber sawed in this mill erected a frame house, which after the erection of a third and final dwelling, was used as a sleeping quarters for white help. This house stood until 1930 or 1931 when it was destroyed by fire." This is the only known account of an intermediate "frame house," but the details of its use and demise lend it credibility, and suggest that other accounts may have conjoined the two projects. The chronicle continues: "The large ranch house was built in 1858-59, and is still standing in an excellent state," and elsewhere the author mentions "the two years the house was under construction . . ."

In designing the new house Case may well have sought something that would express a status that was growing with every passing year. His building business was a significant local industry, and his agricultural and construction employees represented a significant local payroll. He had built that schoolhouse that the community had decided should bear his name; and by 1858 he had started a history of substantial donations to Willamette University in Salem. Within a few years he would be elected to the first of four terms as Marion County Commissioner.

Many of his compatriots in similar circumstances were building modestly ornamented two-story hip-roofed boxes that relied on an elaborate entry porch to impress. The house built by Colonel James F. Bybee in 1856, on

Sauvie Island in the Willamette River north of French Prairie, is an example of that approach, as is the Jason Lee house in Salem of the 1850s. The Reverend William Kiel, founder of the Aurora Colony, built there a full-width two-story version in 1858-59.³ More typical of houses in the area in Case's time, however, is the Andrew Smith house in Dayton, with its odd eave detail and no porch at all, or the Robert Newell house in Champoeg, whose full-width porch, surmounted by a simple dormer, asserts no stylistic claims whatever.

2.2 The William Kiel house, Aurora, Oregon, ca. 1858-59.



2.3 The Andrew Smith house, Dayton, Oregon, 1859.

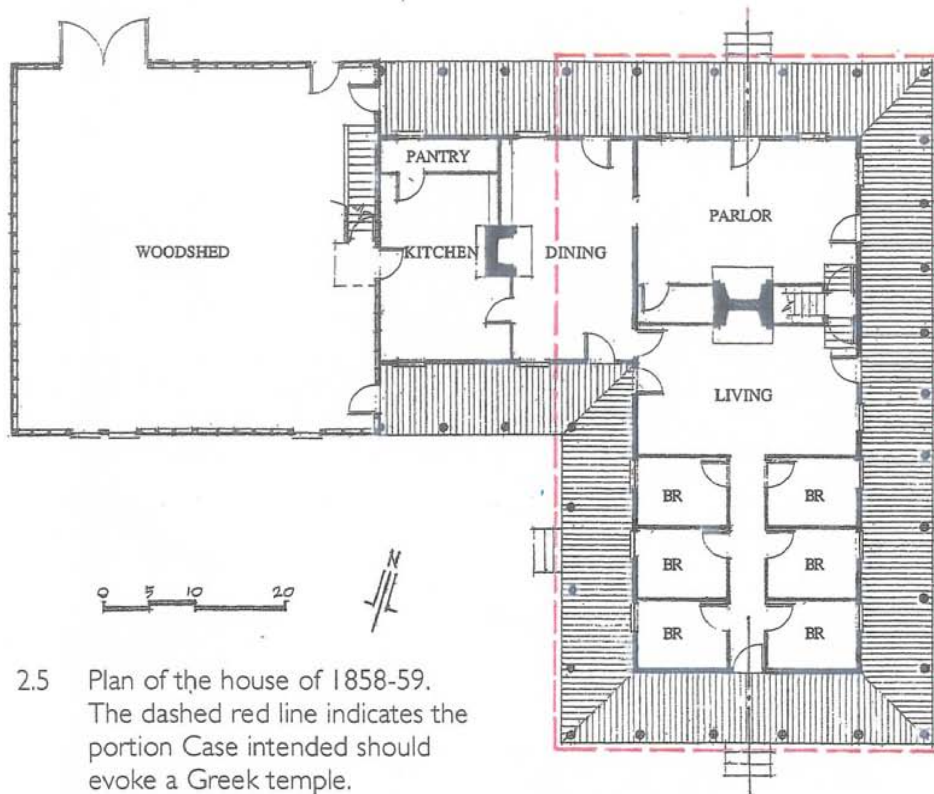
2.4 The Robert Newell house, Champoeg, Oregon, 1856.



Case had in mind a building radically different from any of these in its appearance, and unique in its size.

Since his household was constantly changing, the number of bedrooms in the new house must inevitably be a question of the feasible rather than the ideal; Case's plan provides six of them, three on either side of a short corridor, all identical, all only seven feet seven inches by ten feet. North of these is a living room to house the appurtenances of family life, including a piano and a sewing machine. Beyond the living room is a parlor for the reception of guests. These rooms are served by back-to-back fireplaces that share a common chimney. The bedrooms, living room and parlor form what we might call the rectangle of the house, for reasons that will emerge. A dining room, capable of seating the large family with space for occasional guests, and a large kitchen, where much of life on such a farmstead would have been lived, are accommodated in what we might call a peninsula that projects westward from the northern half of the rectangle. A third fireplace warms the dining room; its chimney also serves the kitchen's great wood stove. A wall on the north side of the kitchen creates a pantry. The peninsula ends in an enormous woodshed,

with stairs on its east wall leading to a cellar under its north half, and an attic above the living spaces. The attic is also accessed by a stair from both living room and parlor; the purpose of the small room on the opposite side of the fireplaces is unknown.



2.5 Plan of the house of 1858-59. The dashed red line indicates the portion Case intended should evoke a Greek temple.

Outboard of all of the living spaces is a porch with a continuous colonnade of twenty-nine columns; two half-columns abut the woodshed. When such a colonnade encompassed the entire perimeter of a building, the ancient Greeks called it *peripteral*. Case's colonnade doesn't quite meet the definition, since it doesn't circumnavigate the woodshed--but since it

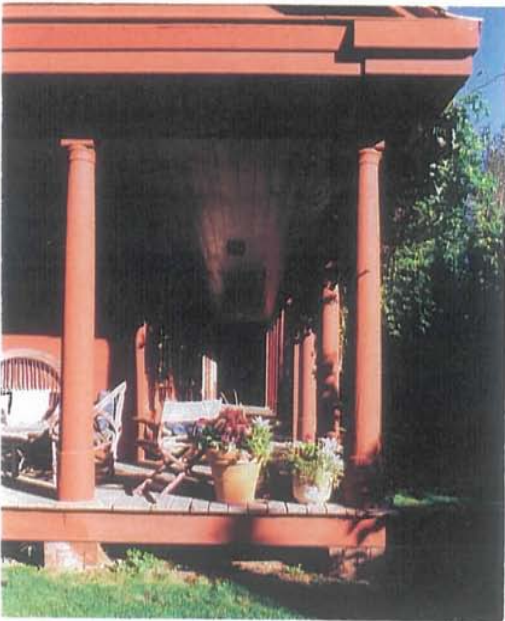
circumnavigates everything else, perhaps we could waive the technicality and call it peripteral colonnade. The roof above terminates at the south in a gable that, by virtue of the pronounced horizontal trim at its base, suggests a classical pediment. An identical gable/pediment crowns the eastern part of the north façade.

The north façade of the house is 101 feet in length, from the edge of the porch floor to the west face of the woodshed wall. The east façade is 74 feet 1 inch to the edges of the porch floor; the breadth of the gabled south façade is 40 feet 5 inches. These dimensions made this the largest farmhouse in the Willamette Valley.⁴

But Case had in mind something more than just a large farmhouse. Because of its pediment-like gables and its colonnade, that part of the design indicated on the plan by the dashed red line evokes a classical temple, and more specifically a Greek temple, since the Romans rarely built temples with peripteral colonnades. There can be no doubt that Case meant it to do just that, because he followed his classical-temple idea in the details as well. The columns of his colonnade emulate the classical model (although in this case the model they emulate is more Roman than Greek): a cylindrical base 15 inches high and 11 inches in diameter supports an unfluted shaft that rises with a delicately bulging taper--the Greeks called this curving taper *entasis*—at the top of which a vaguely classical capital is crowned by a classically correct square block, the *abacus*, that bears the beams above. Case also followed the Greek canon that a temple shall have an even number of columns at the pedimented ends and an uneven number on the sides: he gave his southern façade, and the pedimented part of the northern façade, a proper six columns in five bays, and on the east side he provided a proper eleven columns in ten bays.



2.6 The south façade.



2.7 The house from the south: the east corner of the porch.



2.8 The southern half of the eastern façade.

The Greek-temple idea drove much of the design. It mandated a single-story scheme, which in turn mandated tiny bedrooms--they could have been more spacious on the upper floor of a two-story design. It dictated the axial arrangement of bedrooms, living room, and parlor, and the generous nine-foot six-inch floor-to-ceiling dimension, which was essential to the noble proportion of the colonnade but also gives the interior spaces a remarkable grandeur.

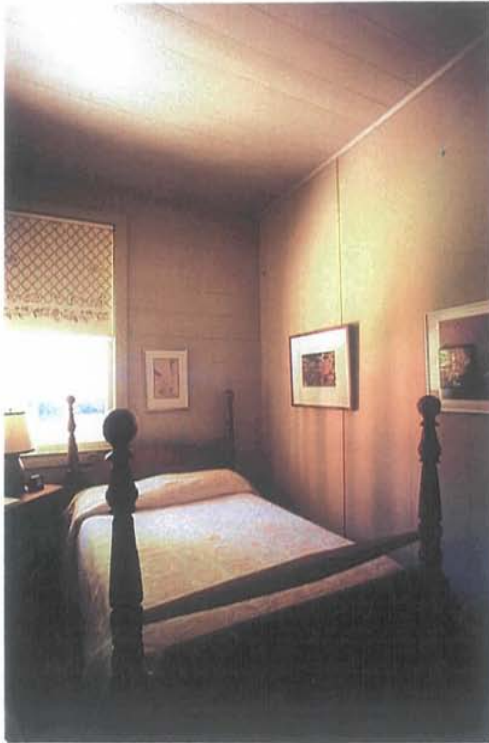
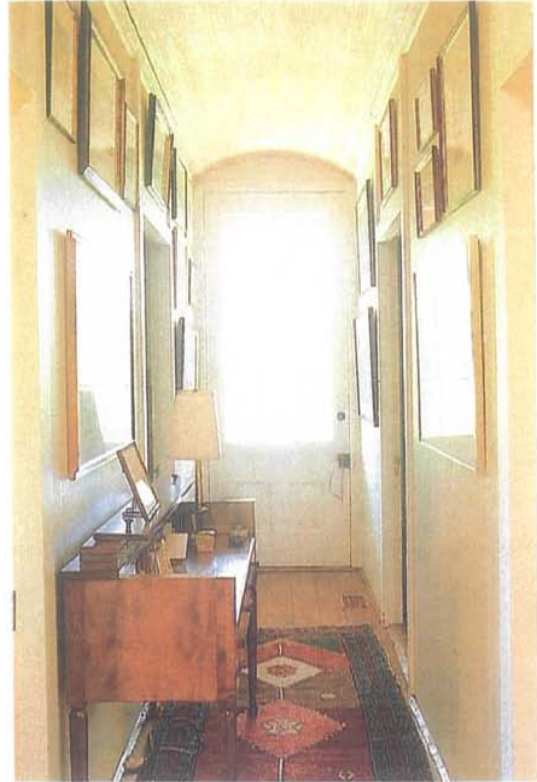
Grandeur aside, the interior spaces of Case's design seem, at first glance, straightforward. Floorboards are of unpainted fir, oriented north-south in the rectangle, and east-west in the peninsula. Most interior walls are of painted vertical boards, with horizontal boards on exterior walls and both sides of the wall between kitchen and dining. There is an 18-inch-high skirting board at the base of all walls. Windows are⁵ identical six-over-six sash three feet wide, six

feet high, with sills two feet nine inches above the floor. Ceilings are of painted wood boards, also oriented north-south in the rectangle, east-west in the peninsula. Ceilings are flat except that in the bedroom corridor; it is a segmental vault of boards--a decorative feature with no structural purpose. Case's creative interest in design is clearly evident in this detail, and is more subtly evident in many other characteristics of the interior.



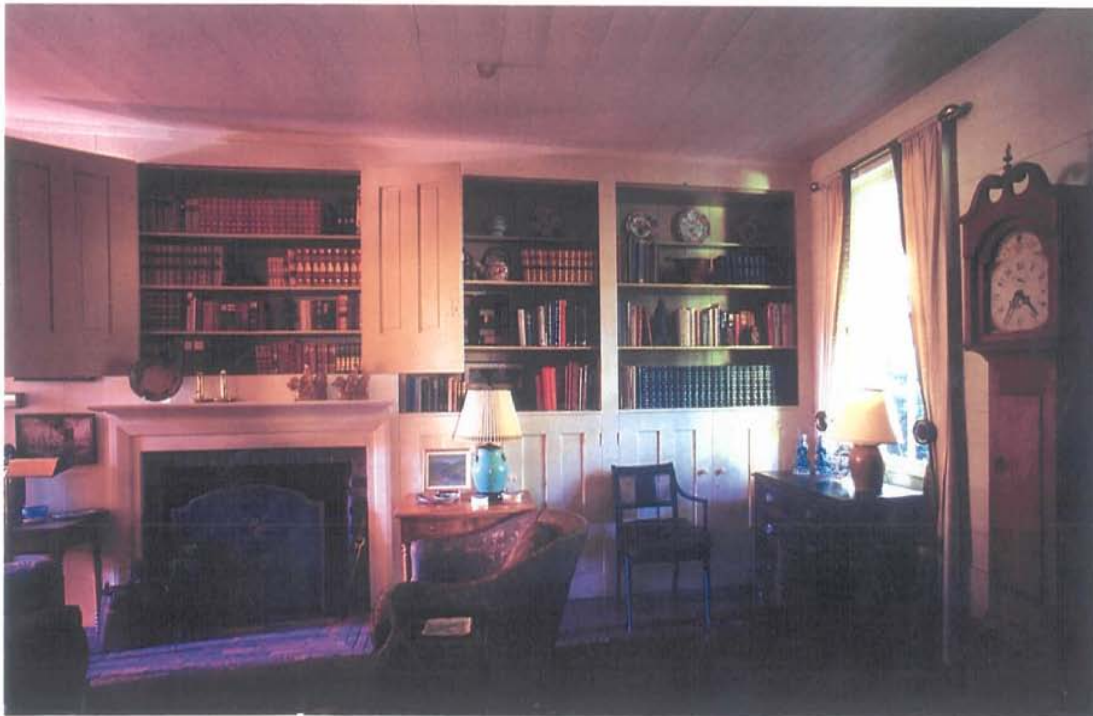
- 2.9 The living room, looking northwest; the attic stairs off-camera at right. The vertical boards of the typical interior wall are evident here, with horizontal boards on the wall at left. Above the fireplace, here and in the parlor, Case has treated the wall as three framed panels; doors are similarly designed, as can be seen in the door to dining at left.

2.10 The bedroom corridor, with its vaulted ceiling, from the living room. Photo: Michael Jensen.



2.11 A typical bedroom.

Fireplace hearths are of brick, whose coursing is mitered to return to the wall at each end. The lower stiles of doors are exactly the height of the skirting boards, and lie in the same plane; door frames are flush with adjacent door edges. The same door-to-frame condition is nicely echoed in the cabinet doors, including those that grace the dining room on the fireplace wall—which means those doors must be to exact sizes, unlike the more usual and less demanding condition in which cabinet door faces lie forward of the frame. These details have been thought through with care, and an eye to consistency.



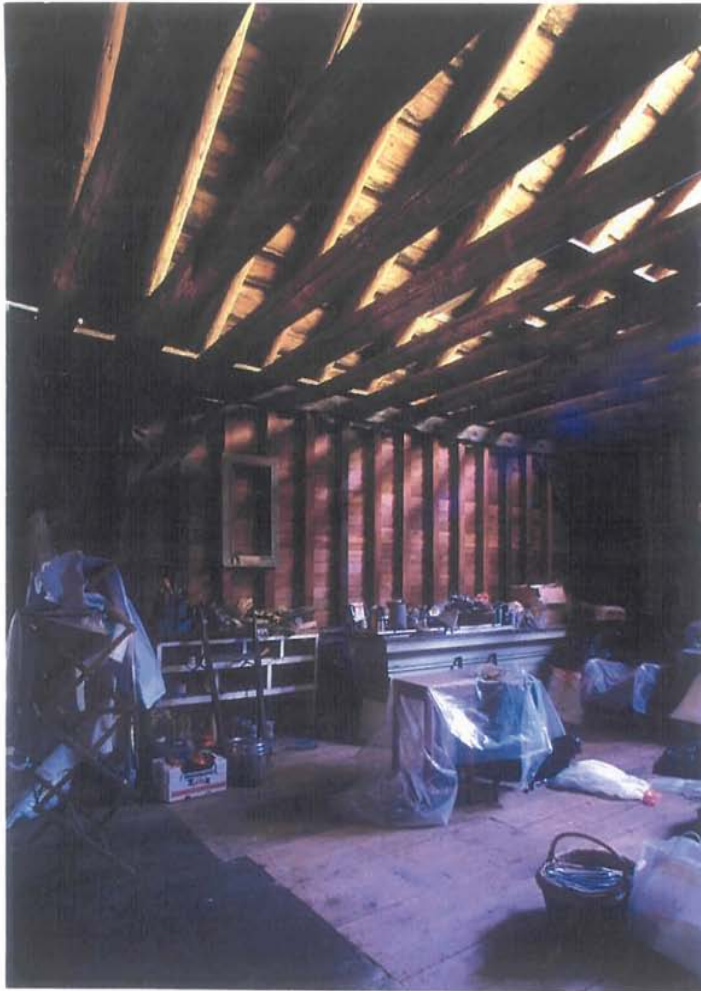
2.12 The dining room: the fireplace wall with typical wall and ceiling surfaces, trim and cabinetwork.

2.13 The northeast corner of the living room: coordination of attic door, stair, exterior door trim, and exterior door.

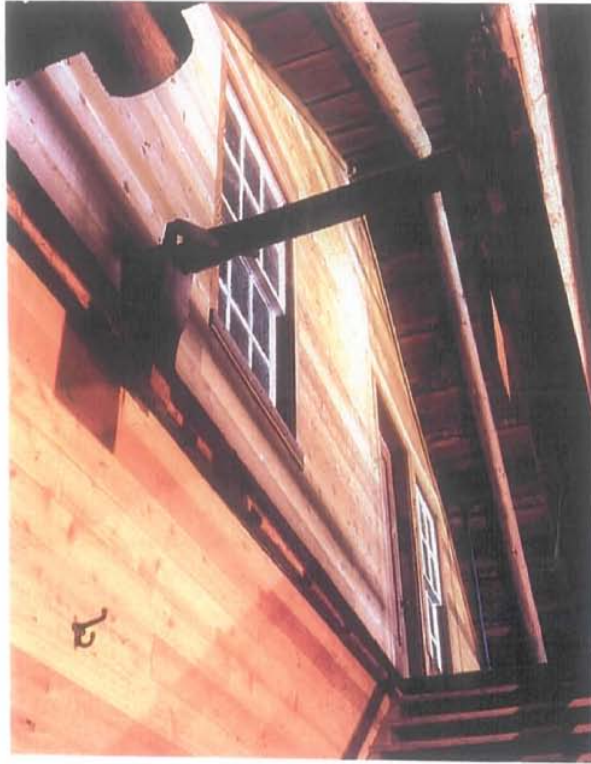


At the corners of the living room and the parlor are the first runs of the attic stair, and there too an attention to the relationships of things is evident: the upper door and the stair are tailored to the recessed opening, the lowest stair riser just meets the exterior door jamb trim, the attic and exterior door share the same relative dimensions; all elements bear an ordered and coherent relationship to one another. We wonder: did Case learn to make study drawings or models of architectural conditions in his adolescent Indiana apprenticeship, or at some later time--or did he have a rare innate ability to envision three-

dimensional relationships? It must have been one or the other—or both. And he must have had as well an aesthetic impulse, an innate conviction that such relationships are worth the working out.



2.14 The woodshed: the interior looking southwest. Walls of 4 by 4 timbers at two feet on centers support the log roof structure that spans the vast space with no intermediate supports.



2.15 The woodshed: the east wall, with the stair to the attic, and gable windows.

The woodshed is almost a building in itself; at 40 by 40 feet it is the size of a conventional house. Yet its volume, which seems enormous to modern eyes, is in fact hardly adequate for its task: it will hold about 125 cords of wood, and a house of similar size in nearby Gervais is known to have used 400 cords in one particularly severe winter.⁶ Walls of heavy timber mortice-and-tenon construction bear great logs that span the vast space as cross-ties, resisting the outward thrust of the massive log rafters, above which the roof surface aligns perfectly with that of the rest of the peninsula. And here we must admire in Case a somewhat different design skill: each member of the woodshed's structure is utterly different in character and dimension from its

compatriots in the peninsula to the east, yet Case has brought the surmounting sloping surfaces of the two different systems into exactly the same plane. This is a tricky architectural problem, and in resolving it, Case must again have made study drawings or models to scale, or, just possibly, constructed a full-scale mock-up; there would be no other way to coordinate exactly the two different sets of conditions.

The house completed, Case painted the exterior a very un-Greek-temple-like brick red.

Such, then, was Case's design. Where did it come from? Why did Case choose it?

Of those many drawings, perhaps models, he must have made, nothing has survived. We have none of the notes he made to himself or his workmen, no orders for specialty products, no invoices. Of extant physical evidence we have only the house itself. But since it was carefully restored in the 1970s to something close to its original state, it can tell us a lot about its own evolution. We can also try to discover or infer its story from its times and its context, and from what we know of those involved in its design and construction.

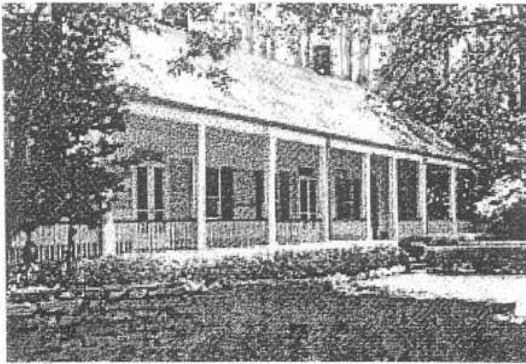
All decisions would, in the end, have been vested in William Case, but he would have discussed the design with his family, perhaps his workmen and his staff, on many occasions and from many points of view. His thoughts would have been shaped too by buildings he had seen or heard about, and by his resources and abilities. We can glean an insight into one aspect of those abilities from letters from his brother Isaiah, several of which suggest that William had something of a design eye. An excerpt from one such letter reads: "Enclosed you will find a rough sketch of a Railing. I cannot find a book that

has any patterns in it. I want them turned after some neat and tasty [tasteful?] pattern, which you can figure out better than I can."⁷

There are hints of southern influences in his design. Windows and doors throughout the house are aligned, which encourages ventilation, and locating major rooms on the north side will keep the heat of the summer sun from those spaces. So too the eight-foot overhang of the porch shades the walls of the living spaces; only the woodshed walls are exposed to the summer sun. Although summers can be hot in French Prairie, all of those features would be more important in the American South. The plan type too, a rectangle with peninsula, is widely known in the south as a Windward Islands plan.

An unpublished account held by the Oregon Historical Society further asserts that the house "was modelled after the plantation home of Mr. Case's grandfather in the South," but that seems improbable. William's father Nathaniel had been born in that house, of course, and he may have talked about it with his children, perhaps especially William, who must have shown early promise of becoming a builder. But the latest possible date for that house would be 1792—the date of Nathaniel's birth--which would place it in the era of the Palladian mode, and there is nothing Palladian about William Case's design. Robert Sutton suggests another specific southern source: he notes that the Narcisse Prudhomme Plantation known as Beaufort, near Natchitoches (*Nok-toshe*), Louisiana, is "similar in style, massing, detailing, and dimensions" and he proposes that it, or a compatriot structure much like it, may have been the source for Case's design.⁸ But there again problems arise. There are similarities between the two designs, and there are differences. Beaufort also has two fireplace masses, but both lie on the centerline of the rectangle, which therefore is much more prolonged, thereby losing any chance at a temple

proportion; Case's design already stretches the canon on that point. The detailing of Beaufort's gables makes them less evocative of pediments. Finally, the Beaufort porch is supported not by columns but by square piers of markedly uneven spacing, whose outer faces lie in the plane of the eave, suggesting not the flank of a Greek temple but the Potomac facade of Mount Vernon.



2.16 The Narcisse
Prudhomme Plantation,
"Beaufort," near
Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Assertions of southern influences also raise the question of Case's knowledge of southern practices. He is not likely to have known of its architecture directly, since a journey from Oregon to the deep south would have taken many weeks at the least, and no record of such a journey exists, nor does any reason for one suggest itself.⁹ Still, he did not build his house single-handedly, and it may be that one or more of his employees—or one or more of his friends, for that matter—came from the deep south, and brought along some architectural memories. (Whether Case would have welcomed the ideas of others is an open question; we know too little of his personality.) Against that argument is the fact that few immigrants to Oregon, including those who claimed to be carpenters, came from the south. In the 1850 census, 56 persons in rural Oregon—that is, outside Oregon City and Portland—identified

themselves as carpenters. Of these, fully 21 were from Ohio, and of the remaining 35 only three were from "southern states."¹⁰ If by "southern states" is meant the eleven that later became the Confederacy, and if we accept that many carpenters will have been self-employed, and that there were employers other than Case, the likelihood of a southern man in his shop is slight indeed. And yet, oddly enough, a young German immigrant named John Hoefer, who is reported to have built the Case furniture, came to the Willamette Valley after two years of apprenticeship in furniture making in New Orleans.¹¹ We are still a long way from the influence of any specific example, including a specific Louisiana example, but Hoefer may have carried memories of southern architectural traditions, including the Windward Islands plan type, and so, of course, may others who came to French Prairie.

Case would also have had in his shop some "pattern books." These books, rife at the time, presented a wide range of supposedly fashionable architectural designs, typically houses only, shown in plan and a single perspective view. Such books were useful, even essential, in providing designs that could be shown to prospective clients by builders who, like Case, lacked architectural training. But the pattern books were authored in the east, and the earliest of them date from about 1850, by which time the Gothic Revival was in vogue there, and the era we know as "Victorian" was in its early years. The pattern books therefore tended toward more picturesque multi-story-cottage types, and examples with the formal purity of the Case house were markedly rare.¹² It is just possible that Case knew of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*, about which more later, but there were few other written materials to which he could turn; the *American Architect and Building News*, the country's first architectural journal, was decades in the future.

There are also some pragmatic explanations for the "southern" features of Case's design. The doors in the bedrooms logically lie nearest the major spaces of the house, minimizing traffic distances. Aligning the windows with them, where there was no reason to do otherwise, would have been a straightforward way to build, simplifying framing, siding, and trim. Philip Dole notes too that an eastern or northern orientation for the living room and parlor was characteristic of the Willamette region.¹³ Family life would have centered on the kitchen during the day and, of course, the bedrooms at night, with perhaps two or three hours in the dining room, and those rooms are well placed to capture the Oregon sun. They would have captured still more of it, of course, with a lesser overhang to shade their walls--which brings us again to the external character of the house, and in particular the colonnade and gables of the porch. Among other things, they express the rectangle, and such an expression was also a local tradition; Dole says that "all these early houses shared characteristics that distinguish them from trends that began to appear in the 1860s. A pervasive form was the single, clear, rectangular volume. Elements and details were evolved in a way which would emphasize the singleness of this volume."¹⁴

But of course the "rectangular volume" of the Case house is something more than that. As we have seen, it evokes a Greek temple, and Case meant it to do so--which now takes us squarely to the question of the Greek Revival, and its role in his thinking.

The Revival was in large measure a creature of Stuart and Revett's four volumes on the *Antiquities of Athens*, the first of which was published in 1762, and the last 56 years later, in 1818.¹⁵ For the first time in the modern era their work brought to widespread attention the Greek origins of the heretofore-

dominant architectural heritage of Rome that had shaped, among many examples, Thomas Jefferson's Virginia State House, modeled on the Roman Maison Carré at Nîmes, and his library at the University of Virginia—a half-size version of Hadrian's Pantheon. The Greek Revival also supplanted the Palladian influence that had informed Monticello, Mount Vernon, and many other 18th-century southern houses including, perhaps, Case's ancestral North Carolina home. In the east the Greek Revival was contemporaneous with the era of the Erie Canal, and the new towns of upstate New York—Troy, Syracuse, Ithaca—were rich in the style, as one might guess from their names. The Revival followed the canals southwestward into Ohio, the source of so many of Oregon's carpenters,¹⁶ some of whom may have found their way into Case's employ. But Case would have known of the movement in any event, from his own early years in Indiana, and from conversations with settlers coming every year to the Willamette Valley. And although by mid-century the Gothic Revival had prevailed in the east, the Greek mode persisted in the midwest and the west right through the 1850s.

Case would also have known of several local examples. The Marion County Courthouse in Salem, built in 1852, was a gable-roofed two-story building with a four-columned porch, above which, with no intervening entablature, was a gable whose projecting lower edge offered the only suggestion that it might be a pediment. Another example was the "permanent statehouse," also in Salem, begun in 1853, finished in 1854. It was similar to the Marion County building, but a bit more accomplished. A porch with four Doric columns was surmounted by an entablature—utterly simple, but an entablature nevertheless—and a pediment which was unique among the building's elements in being of almost-classical proportions. The building was

to have been of stone, but in the event the budget wouldn't stretch to that; it was built of wood. It burned within the year. Only one drawing of it exists.¹⁷



2.17 The "permanent statehouse," Salem, 1853-54, burned 1855.

Additionally, many houses in the region had Greek Revival entry porches of varying quality. One of the finest was the Granville Baber house in Albany of 1850, whose porch featured four fluted Doric columns, far thinner than their classical prototypes, and with a straight taper—no entasis—but otherwise very finely done. They were surmounted by a simple but well-proportioned entablature that continued around the building. The Baber porch was crowned by a truly impressive pediment.

But none of these examples boasts a peripteral colonnade. A peripteral colonnade entails additional foundations, a porch structure and surface, and the purchase or fabrication of the columns themselves, and it can double the area of roof structure and surface. This costs money, quite a lot of it, and the extra expenditure does little or nothing for the building's usefulness. Perhaps for that reason peripteral colonnades were shunned by the practical Romans, and for the same reason Greek Revival examples with that feature are rare indeed. Of 103 buildings illustrated by Mills Lane in his *Architecture of the Old South*,

only one has a true peripteral colonnade, and one other nearly so.¹⁸ Robert Sutton, in his chronicle of the Greek Revival's westward movement,¹⁹ cites 78 buildings; seven have peripteral colonnades. Neither of Lane's examples, and only one of Sutton's--the Case house itself--is in the Oregon Territory.

There is one instance of a peripteral colonnade, however, that is particularly interesting. In 1831 the state of Indiana began a new capitol building in Indianapolis, designed by Town and Davis of New York.²⁰ It was completed shortly before William and Sarah left for the west, and it was widely publicized. It was an intentional emulation of the Parthenon in its proportions, its Doric order, the numbers of columns in its colonnade (seventeen on each side, eight at each end), its entablature, its pediments, even the steps of its stylobate. The building's only egregious departure from its prototype, for which

2.18 The Indiana State Capitol, Indianapolis, Town and Davis, Architects, 1831 (demolished 1877).



it was widely criticized, was a neo-Renaissance dome-on-colonnaded-drum in the middle of its otherwise purely Greek tiled roof. It was the grandest example of the Greek Revival in Indiana, one of the grandest anywhere, and one of the best-known—and among all the possible sources from which Case could draw, it alone possessed an array of correct classical columns arranged as a complete

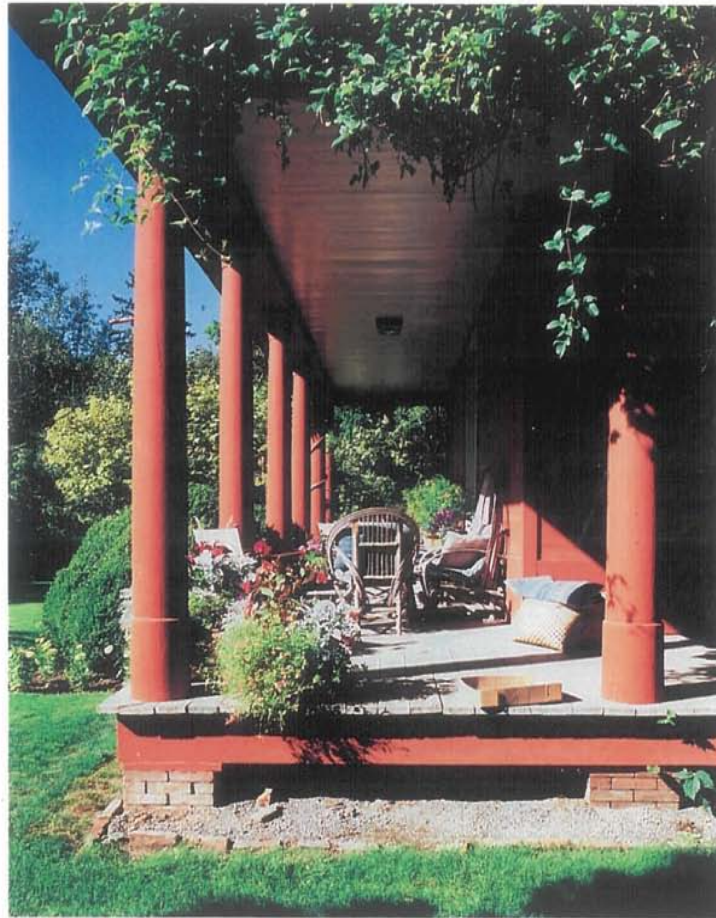
peripteral colonnade. The hint of the Parthenon that gives the Case design its classic composure finds its most plausible source here: William, in building his French Prairie house, may well have sought an echo of that grand building of his adolescent years, however distantly remembered.

Yet at this point one must acknowledge the obvious: the Case house, unlike the Indiana Capitol, is not really a close emulation of a Greek temple, nor even a meticulous example of the Greek Revival. It lacks a stylobate--the stepped base from which all Greek temples ascend. Its columns are too widely spaced, they are too slender, and their classical characteristics, such as they are, are more Roman than Greek. There is no entablature at all, Greek or Roman; the gable cornices are much too steeply sloped, and the gables have sash windows, which Greek temples certainly did not. And although the Greeks painted many parts of their temples, sometimes in quite garish colors, none, so far as we know, was painted brick red in its entirety. Case was clearly trying to achieve a classical-temple-like building; why is the result so far off the mark?

Well, as we have seen, there was no architect nearby to whom he could turn to find guidance on archaeological correctness,²¹ no pattern books or journals to help him; and Case himself, of course, had no architectural training. Likewise the local examples he could study were generally unsophisticated. It is possible that he had access to one or more of Stuart and Revett's volumes, yet even with such materials at hand he did not have the craftsmen, tools, materials, money, or time, to build anything like an accurate reprise of a classical temple. And there were practical matters to address: his roof must have a slope appropriate not to Aegean tiles but to Oregon shingles, and the resultant attic, which Case intended should be of some use, must have light and ventilation. So, having chosen a rare and highly sophisticated architectural

type, he significantly reinterpreted it as his needs and limitations, perhaps even his tastes, demanded. But why paint it brick red? The only explanation that comes to mind is that he knew of, but misinterpreted, the ancient Greek predilection for bold colors.

From those responses to his circumstances Case achieved a unique and, in its own way, a remarkably satisfying design, not the least of whose qualities is a strangely memorable dignity.



2.19 The Case house: the southeast corner of the porch.

2 NOTES

- ¹ Certainly no later than 1860, as a hand-written report of that year, by Dale Morrow, certifies its completion. Philip Dole, "Farmhouses and Barns of the Willamette Valley," in Vaughan, 116, says "six or seven years' construction." Sutton, 120, says "seven years." Neither cites a source. Elisabeth Walton Potter ("William Case Farm," p. 2) says "The existing buildings were constructed late in the Territorial period, ca. 1857-1858." The National Register nomination says the house "was erected about 1860."
- ² Held by the Oregon Historical Society. Although the chronicle is ostensibly anonymous, notes lead to the conclusion that it was prepared by Lansing Stout, the great-grandson of Case's daughter Mary Elmira.
- ³ We are grateful to Richard Engeman for suggesting these comparative examples.
- ⁴ The axis of the bedrooms-to-parlor rectangle is oriented 17 degrees west of north (see fig. 2.1). The dimensions and orientation of the house in many published plans are in error, sometimes significantly. The dimensions given here are as measured and triple-checked in the summer of 2006. The orientation given is as measured from distortion-free aerial photographs, survey documents, and legal descriptions.
- ⁵ Or were; the kitchen window was replaced in 1943; see chapter 5.
- ⁶ Humphrey, 154.
- ⁷ Letter Isaiah to William, 3 September 1861.
- ⁸ Sutton, 120.
- ⁹ See n.1, Chapter 1.
- ¹⁰ The figures cited are our own, derived from Sutton, 115, by applying to total figures for states and regions of origin the ratios he cites for urban and rural locations. As extrapolations, therefore, the figures given here may be off by one or two persons in any particular instance.
- ¹¹ Unpublished paper held by the Marion County Historical Society.
- ¹² Nonexistent, so far as we can tell. In perusing a large sampling of the many pattern books then available, and in consulting other architectural historians, we find no example that suggests the Case design.
- ¹³ Dole, "Farmhouses...", 132.
- ¹⁴ Dole, "Buildings and Gardens" in Vaughan, 96.

- ¹⁵ *Antiquities of Athens: Measured and Delineated* by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *Painters and Architects*. The most recent edition is that of Princeton Architectural Press, New York, October 2007. Since Case's father was a serious bibliophile, it is possible that he had one or more of the *Antiquities* volumes that William could have seen in his youth, but this, of course, is pure speculation.
- ¹⁶ Humphrey, 135.
- ¹⁷ The Commanding Officer's Quarters at Fort Vancouver includes peripteral porches on two stories, but they are simply porches whose floors and roof are supported by utilitarian square posts, and the roof is hipped, therefore without gables. Case may have known of the building through word of mouth, but Sarah would not have seen it during her brief stay at the fort in 1844-45, because it was built four years thereafter. See Hawkins, 39-41.
- ¹⁸ Lane 1996. The true peripteral example, illustrated 127 but not discussed, is the James Jackson house, Forks-of-Cypress, near Florence, Alabama, of 1830. The peripteral colonnade of the Christophe Haydel house, Evergreen, near Vacherie, Louisiana, of ca. 1795, is interrupted by pavilions at the rear corners.
- ¹⁹ Sutton, 87.
- ²⁰ From <http://www.in.gov/statehouse/parthenon/>. The firm practiced from 1829 to 1835. They also designed the North Carolina State Capitol at Raleigh, N. C., the first scheme for which was based "upon the exact model of the Parthenon" (Lane, 59), and the U. S. Customs House in New York City. For a synopsis of their career see Adolf K. Placzek. *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Vol. 1-4. London: The Free Press, 1982.
- ²¹ The first courses in architecture were taught at the United States Military Academy as early as 1814, but no degree in architecture, of course, was offered. The first degree-granting professional program in architecture was founded at MIT in 1861. But the term "architect" was used before and long after those dates by those who simply claimed competence in building design; neither Frank Lloyd Wright nor Mies van der Rohe had college or university training in the field. But there were few men in the French Prairie area in the 1850s and the early 1860s who made any claim to the title, whatever their training.

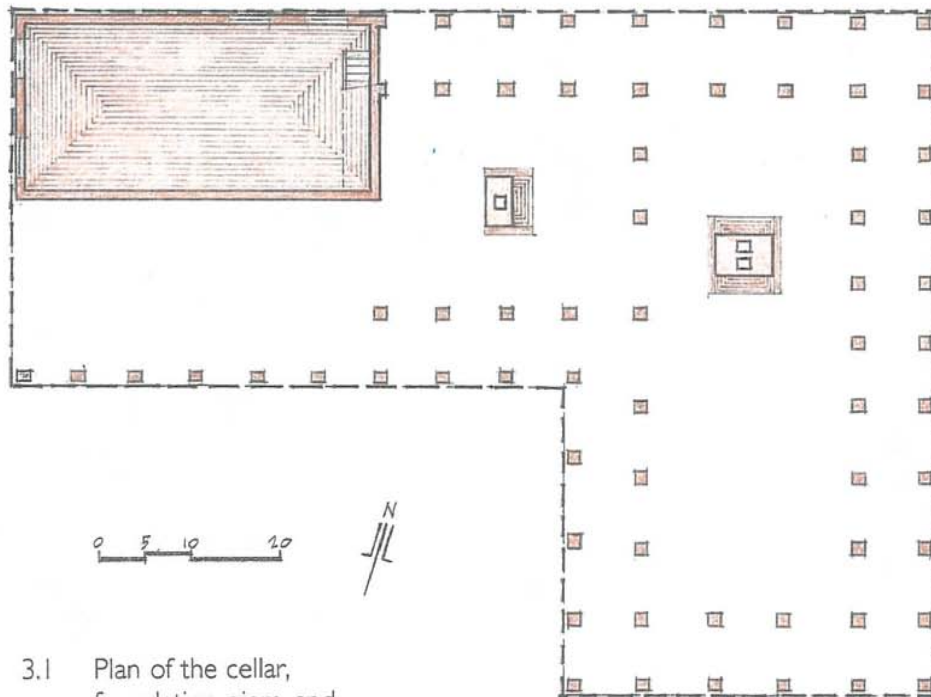
3 BUILDING THE HOUSE

LOCAL LEGEND HAS IT that Case built the house in its entirety with materials from his own lands, but that can't be strictly true. He could not have made the window glass, nor mortar for bricklaying, because he had neither the raw materials nor the equipment. Nor did he have iron deposits on his land, and if he had, it would not have been worth his while to make the hardware for the doors, still less the kitchen stove--much simpler to order such things from catalogs. All else, however, he could obtain from his own lands, and fabricate in his own facilities.

His first task would have been to obtain material for the foundations. French Prairie is poor in stone, and concrete still lay in the future¹; Case's only option was brick. Several veins of clay wander through the area, and in the fall of 1857 he would have extracted from them a supply of clay. He would have done this in the fall because the clay comes from the pits in obstinate lumps, and a winter's freezing and thawing is a labor-free way to break them down. In the late winter, by adding water to the then-smaller lumps, and kneading--the hardest part of the entire process--the material would be worked to a pliant mixture. From this Case's workmen molded and fired the necessary thousands of bricks, either specifically for the house, or to replenish the draw it would make on his inventory. They would have tried to start the molding not much later than mid-February of 1858, because, although an experienced team could

mold one or two thousand bricks a day, the bricks would still need two weeks or more of drying, and three more weeks of kiln-firing.

As the brickmaking was under way, perhaps even as Case was thinking through the design, he must have weighed the tricky matter of staffing--which of his workers to use for the job, and for how many hours a week. This would have been something of a balancing act, because he could not slight ongoing work to favor a personal project, yet he would want to get the exterior shell of the house completed by late fall so the interior could be used for work in the winter months.



3.1 Plan of the cellar, foundation piers, and fireplace substructures.

With the first decent weather--March, or April at the latest--Case would have marked out the building's outlines on the site with stakes and twine, and his workmen could begin digging for the cellar and foundations. By opting to build the house on piers rather than continuous foundation walls, he cleverly reduced by half the number of bricks required for the foundations, and the cubic feet of excavation too. Yet here, at the very outset, the premium exacted by the porch is evident: the woodshed aside, pits were dug for 58 piers; 29 of them--exactly half--were for the porch. Case was an experienced builder; he must have known that this, and much else, would follow from the decision to have the peripteral porch, and he had decided it was worth it.

A building's foundations must reach below the level of winter frost penetration to avoid "frost heave," the vertical movement, and consequent destruction, that will otherwise follow cycles of freezing and melting. In regions with severe winters the frost depth, and therefore the necessary foundation depth, can be three or four feet. But the French Prairie climate is moderate, and having had a lot of experience building in it, Case set the depth at eighteen inches. This further reduced excavation work; it also minimized the likelihood of ground water in the foundations. A sandy soil would also minimize that likelihood, and would provide ideal bearing. Case chose a site free of clay veins, with a thick sand substrate under the humus soil. (Bedrock is the ideal bearing material; sand and compacted gravel are a close second.) The excavating must have been miserable work in the wet earth of early spring. But it would need careful supervision, because plan alignments must be maintained, and the bottom surfaces of the pits had to be horizontal planes all at the same elevation, so the piers would not rock and tops of piers and cellar walls, when completed, would be where they should be.

With excavating done, if the weather had been dry, foundation work could begin. If not, the crew would do other preparatory work--sawing necessary lumber, preparing material for the columns--because brickwork could only begin when the pits were reasonably free of water. The thick seven-foot-high walls of the cellar would have to be technically first-rate to resist, eventually, the pressure of the earth backfill, and water incursion as well. The cellar floor with its mitered corners would be an exercise in exact control of course-to-course dimensions, so everything would meet properly at the center and all edges, and mesh at the mitered corners.

3.2 The cellar: the southeast corner. Wood sills atop the brick walls support log beams roughly fifteen inches in diameter.



3.3 The cellar: the brick floor, laid to an American bond pattern and--remarkably--mitered at the corners, so the coursing at each wall is parallel to the wall.



The piers, 12 by 16 inch solid pedestals, would then be, on the face of it, simple bricklaying. But Case's decision to build isolated piers, rather than a continuous foundation, would bring with it a disadvantage. In building a

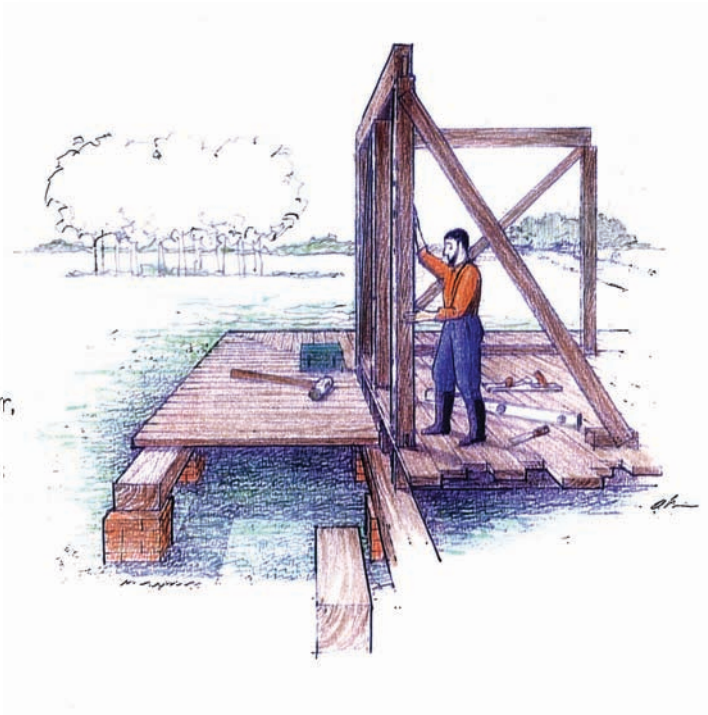
continuous foundation the bricklayers would work within the trench, moving backward as the wall progressed; only the last bits must be done from above. Individual pits, on the other hand, give the workers no place to stand unless the excavations are far larger than the piers require, in which case a major advantage of the pier idea is lost. The bricklayers must have worked at the edges of the pits, reaching down with trowel, mortar, and brick, to set each course from above. We can imagine they were grateful that the excavations were shallow--not so far to reach, fewer bricks to place, less time fighting hypothermia on the damp spring ground.

The two large fireplace masses would have been the most challenging of the masonry work. Their complicated geometry included ledges and mortices to receive structural members for the floor and roof; the fire-box voids, which had to be lined with firebrick made from a special clay and fired at a higher kiln temperature; the three hearths with their mitered coursing that must be set to lie flush with a finished floor not yet in place; and chimney stacks that must be built to their ultimate height. Unfortunately, although the bricklayers built the chimneys to a high level of craftsmanship, they built them as simple brick shafts with no flue-tile lining. Impossible to clean, the Case chimneys would eventually become fire hazards.

Seven- by eight-inch wood sills were then fitted atop the cellar walls and the fireplace ledges, and from pier to pier, and floor joists for the house, and log beams for the woodshed, were seated on the sills. The joists would not have been perfectly straight, nor entirely uniform in dimensions, and certainly the logs would not have been--and despite all care the bricklayers had taken, the tops of the piers are unlikely to have been at exactly the same elevation. Yet the tops of all joists, and all of the logs, must be brought to the same

horizontal plane, if the floors that would rest on them were to be level and squeakless. So the workmen, with levels constantly at hand, would have been doing a good bit of shimming in this phase of the work, and some arduous planing here and there. Floorboards were then laid for the house proper and the woodshed. The porch floorboards will have been laid at this time too, to complete the working platform. They included, at about the midpoint of each side, two tapered boards laid together, wide ends to narrow.² The only possible reason for this would seem to be to make an element of adjustable width to fit the last gap in the run. But this would mean that the two tapered boards must be able to slide against one another, and in any event it seems a clumsy answer to the problem—simpler, one would think, just to run a custom width of board through the sawmill.

3.4 June, 1858:
building the
exterior bearing
walls at the
southeast corner,
looking south.
(Some elements
are omitted to
illustrate floor
structure and
flooring).



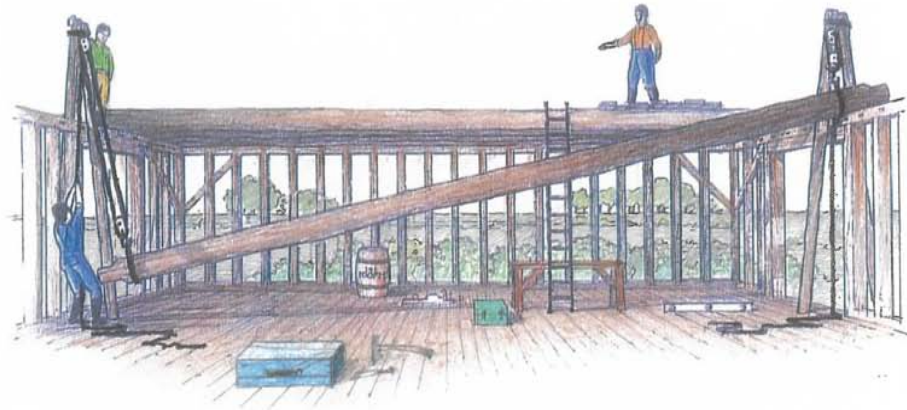
On this platform the exterior walls, and the interior walls between parlor and dining and kitchen and woodshed, could now be built. Their structure is a wood frame whose members are fully four by four inches in actual dimension. The method has been called "hewn construction," but the members are unlikely to have been hewn in any literal sense; they would have been sawn to size in Case's mill. On these sturdy walls, beams 3 by 12 inches in section were placed to span the 25 foot dimension of both the rectangle and the peninsula. On these beams, in turn, the attic floor was laid; it would serve as a working platform for erecting the roof rafters.



3.5 The woodshed, the north wall. The rectangular sockets--mortises--in the plate suggest that the piece was salvaged material, probably from a barn.

The woodshed's construction would have been proceeding simultaneously, but the members of its timber framed walls are much larger than those of the bearing walls of the house, and the hefty vertical members occur at about two-foot intervals. (Some of the material--the plate on the top of the wall, at least, on which the roof structure rests--appears to be salvaged material from some other structure, probably a barn.) The structure above these enormously sturdy walls is entirely different from that of the house: simple trusses made of large logs span the entire breadth of the shed. Each of these huge members weighs several hundred pounds; getting them in place

would have been a challenge in itself. The 40-foot horizontal pieces, the heaviest single elements of the entire project, are likely to have been raised by a pulley system; even so, the task would have entailed a crew of several men.



3.6 July, 1858: with the heavy timber framed walls of the woodshed completed, the log roof structure is begun; looking west.

Case might have done all of this construction in a very different way. He could have used the system, invented in Chicago in 1832, in which small lumber elements—2x4s—were held together by nails. The system made a light, quickly built structure capable of erection by relatively unskilled workers. In various permutations it became the ubiquitous American building method for small buildings, and it remains so to the present day. It was exhibited in 1851, at London's Crystal Palace, where it was called "Chicago Construction," but it was known in the United States in its early years as "balloon framing."³ It was efficient, yielding far more square feet of construction per acre of felled timber than the methods Case was using--with

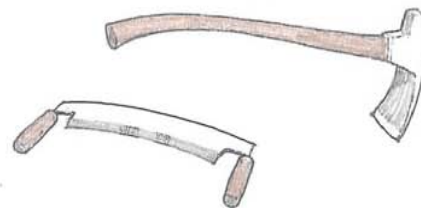
balloon framing, the woodshed's cross-tie logs alone, cut into 2x4s, could have yielded enough lumber to build the entire woodshed with, probably, something left over. The system was fast, requiring no time-consuming carpentry joints. And it demanded little in the way of skills, and no tools other than a saw, hammer and level--in a pinch one could do without the level. Case may have built the second house, the "frame house," in that way. Why, then, did he use heavy-construction methods for the third house, including the extraordinarily heavily built woodshed? He doesn't tell us, but two reasons seem likely. One is structural feasibility: the 25-foot spans of the living spaces would have been a challenge, at the time, for a balloon frame, and the 40-foot span of the woodshed would be out of the question; intermediate supports would have been needed. And balloon-frame construction was thought not to be durable, hence the name under which it was known--and we might speculate that Case wanted his new house to last.

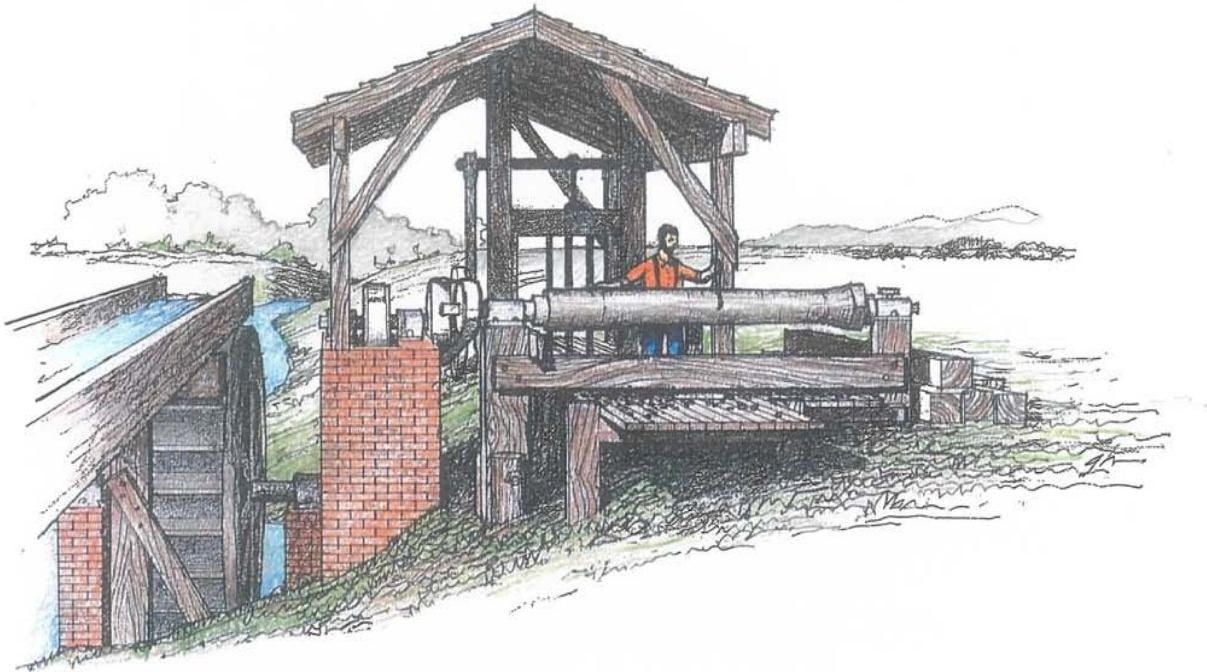
Before or during the placing of the roof cross-members, the porch columns will have been made, and the effort given to their fabrication again testifies to the importance Case vested in the porch. Their consistent circular section tells us that they were turned on a lathe. Such columns were available from eastern factories by the mid-1850s, but they would have had to come overland by wagon, or by sea around South America, so delivery was a lengthy business. They could also have been ordered as custom work from a shop in Portland or Oregon City. But if the legend of on-site materials and fabrication is true, Case made the columns himself. For that he would obviously need a lathe, and a large one. Such a lathe need not be factory-built; all that is needed is an inert bearing, with some horizontal adjustment, at one end, a driven shaft at the other, and a movable tool rest. The tricky issues are

that everything must be extremely rigid, and a power source must rotate the piece at a considerable speed, since the chisel is ineffective against a slowly rotating piece. The sawmill was clearly the promising site. For a builder of Case's experience, building an expedient lathe at the mill would have been a straightforward project.⁴ Still, the lathe would be unusual in dimension--since the distance between bearing shafts would be about ten feet--and in strength as well, since it must bear the weight of a ten-foot log a foot in diameter.

The graining still evident on the columns indicates that they were turned from quarter-logs. Case must have felled some sizable trees; he needed eight ten-foot logs at least 36 inches in diameter throughout. He may have left them in their natural near-cylindrical form, or perhaps he hewed them to a square cross-section. Each was then cut longitudinally, then cut again, to make four quarter-logs. (The technique was thought to minimize splitting and checking, and it has; the columns today, all original, are in superb condition after 150 years of exposure to the seasons.) The eight logs would thus yield 32 quarter-logs; thirty would go to the lathe. Before setting them in the lathe, Case, or his craftsman, would have shaped them--by adze, plane, or spokeshave--to a roughly cylindrical shape, to reduce the mass and imbalance, and therefore the inevitable vibration, of the early stages of the turning.

- 3.7 An adze, for rough hewing, and a spokeshave, for finer shaping.

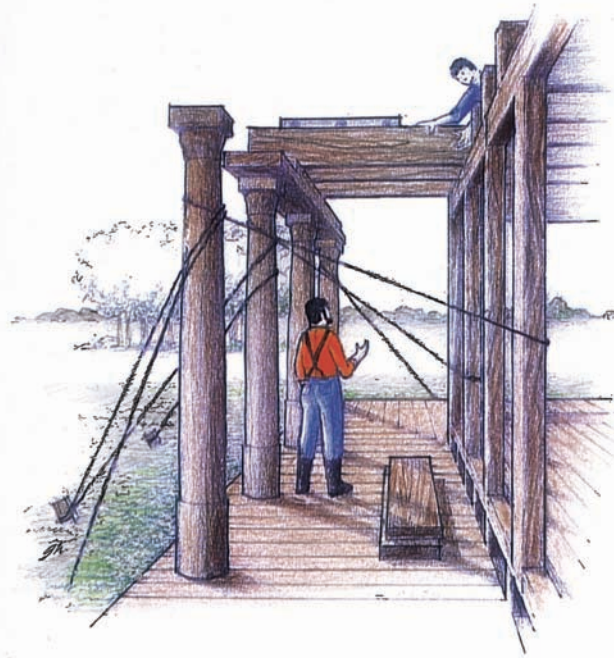
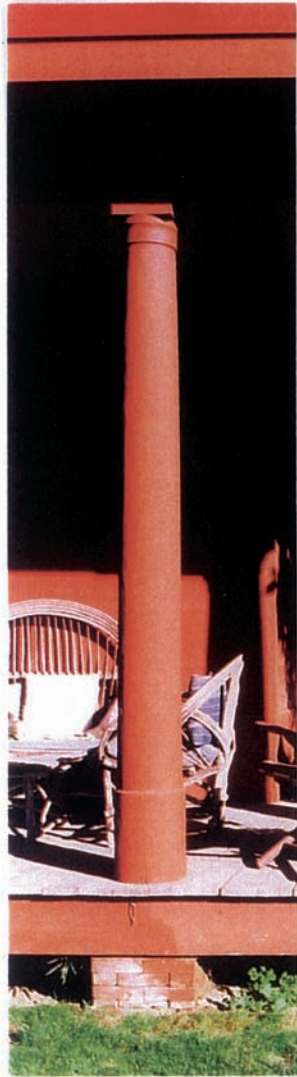




3.8 Summer, 1858: turning the columns on the expedient lathe at the sawmill, from the south (conjectural).

The two half-columns to abut the woodshed would present a particular problem, since a cylindrical form is not easy to cut longitudinally with accuracy. The modern craftsman would cut the piece before turning, then glue the two halves together with a paper layer between, and separate them again after turning. Case may have used a similar technique.

The 29 full columns and two half-columns were then placed on the porch floorboards over the pier centers, shored against the rigid house structure, and checked and checked again for alignment and verticality. They were then joined to one another by the exposed shallow superimposed beams, and integrated with the structure of the house by outrigger beams still visible in the attic.



3.10 September, 1858: with columns fabricated and placed, the outrigger beams join the colonnade to the existing structure; the southeast corner looking south.

3.9 The column, with cylindrical base, slightly bulging entasis taper, and vaguely Tuscan capital surmounted by the abacus block.

That done, and a rough attic floor already in place, there would then exist a complete L-shaped horizontal platform about eleven feet above the floor, 74 feet in its north-south dimension and 60 feet east-to-west, each leg of the L being 40 feet wide. On this platform Case and his men would build the doubly-sloping structure that would carry the roofing of the house proper.

The roof structure of the rectangle portion of the house is an entity in itself, a gable-roof structure that rests on the long walls of the rectangle and the gable-surmounted columns at each end. The wall between parlor and dining supports the northwest edge of the rectangle's roof, which, of course, is why it was built as an exterior wall. The roof structure of the peninsula is simply appended to that of the rectangle.



3.11 The attic. The taper of the rafters, from eave to ridge, can just be discerned. The colonnade outriggers are visible beyond the vertical members that rise from the exterior wall below.

The rafters, laid at an 8 on 12 slope, are 3-1/2 inches in width, but they taper in their vertical dimension from 6 inches at the eave to 3-3/4 inches at the ridge (fig. 3.7). This strange feature was typical in the region, although it entailed extra work, is unknown elsewhere, and no reason for it suggests

itself. From the exterior walls below, 4 by 4 inch vertical studs rise to each of the rafters, making the structure over the porch, in effect, a cantilever everywhere except at the gables. Longitudinal boards were then nailed atop the rafters to receive the shingles. All members of the roof structure have impressively planar surfaces and crisp edges. Where saw-marks are evident they are straight across the piece, perpendicular to its length, as they would be if made by our conjectural gang saw in Case's mill. The undersides of some rafters look to be machine-planed, but these may be replacements, of unknown date, for rotted originals.

In the woodshed, temporary working platforms were built across the great horizontal log cross-ties, so the workmen could bring up the sloping rafter pieces, probably also by a pulley system. Joining them at the apex, then raising them to a vertical position, may have been the most difficult task of all, since, taken together, the pair of rafters would weigh even more than the great single horizontal pieces. And in spite of the rustic appearance of this work, it was done to a meticulous precision, with assiduous control of every dimension, in order to coordinate the woodshed with the house proper in plan dimensions, floor and eave elevations, and roof planes. The perfect integration that was achieved between the two very different architectures is a remarkable tribute to Case's planning and the skills of his crew.

Some nails are evident in the roof structure, and occasionally elsewhere. They are square in section, cut from wrought stock, but this does not mean that Case made them in his own smithy. Factory-made nails were available east of the Mississippi as early as 1832,⁵ and in San Francisco by at least 1853, and by and large they were, at that time, of the cut wrought type found in Case's work. It would hardly have been worth his while to make his own,

and he needed relatively few for the structure itself in any event, since many of his wood connections relied on carpentry joinery. The roof shingles are another matter, but of the nails used to secure them no trace remains.

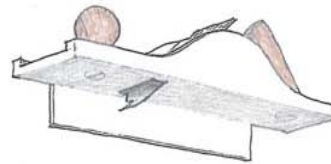
With the roof structure in place, and having--we suppose--had one of his workers busy splitting thousands of shingles, Case would have bent every effort to get them on the roof promptly, nail the siding to the exteriors of the wall frames, and put up some kind of temporary substitute for doors and windows--because with the shell of the house closed to weather, work could continue in its interior through the winter months, with even the comfort of an occasional log fire or two.

The attic and the woodshed were left as utilitarian spaces, with a usable floor in each but no finished surfaces other than the woodshed's east wall. All other remaining work--the walls, the doors and their trim, the windows and their trim, the many cabinets, the attic stair in the parlor and the living room, and the ceiling boards--would demand smoothly planed paintable surfaces, and so entailed much more work than had the rough-sawn elements of the building's structure. A 30-year-old woodworker, John William Schatz, from Baden, Germany, was Case's craftsman, or his lead craftsman, for all of this more meticulous finished work.

It would have been useful to make the 22 sash windows immediately after a makeshift closure of the house, because glass, unlike any temporary material, could let in a useful amount of light for ongoing work. All windows were identical, so Case, or Schatz, would have made the requisite numbers of interchangeable parts, then assembled them without regard for atypical conditions, simplifying the process considerably. Still, this would have been the most painstaking work of the entire project, as the pieces are small, there

are a lot of them, few are simple shapes, and they must all be exact in dimension. They must also have strong interlocking joints, and in carpentry and cabinetwork "strong interlocking joints" usually means complication, and always means precision. Case and Schatz would have made jigs for many parts, to ensure accuracy, and the sawmill, too, may have been useful for a few operations. Still, most of the work would have been done with hand tools, and, since that was the conventional practice everywhere for such work at the time, highly specialized tools were widely available. The most important were planes with a projecting apron (a "fence") along one side that, held against the face of the material, would guide the plane accurately; these planes were made to accept blades specifically shaped to make accurate moldings, rabbets, and grooves, in several sizes and shapes. Schatz, as a trained and experienced craftsman, would have had in his toolbox an impressive array of such tools.

- 3.12 A cabinetmaker's plane, with a blade for shaping a molded edge on, say, a window frame, and a fence to guide the stroke.



Since Case had neither glass sand on the farmstead, nor the equipment to turn it into sheets of glass, he must have ordered it from Salem, Oregon City, or Portland. If it arrived pre-cut to the sash sizes, it would have obviated a lot of on-site cutting, but it would present Schatz with yet another demand for dimensional precision, because glass cannot be slightly trimmed if the opening is a bit undersized, nor shimmed if the opening is too big. The glass was held in the sash with small tacks, and sealed with putty made from clay and linseed oil.

The interior walls were built by means of what Philip Dole has called box construction, in which a grooved sill at the floor, and a grooved plate at the ceiling, hold a single thickness of vertical boards. The system is neither particularly strong nor particularly high in insulating value--the frame-and-cladding system Case used for the structural walls is better on both counts. But neither strength nor insulation are important for the interior walls, and the box system could be put up with less material in less time. Its other advantage lies in its unchanging vertical dimension. Wood shrinks significantly across the grain, but very little parallel to it. In box construction the grain, like the boards themselves, is vertical, so vertical shrinkage is negligible. Shrinkage gaps might open between the boards, but for all practical purposes their vertical dimensions would remain constant over time.

How to keep the boards aligned with one another, to ensure a planar wall surface? They could be doweled--a relatively simple process, involving only the drilling of matching holes in adjacent faces--and Case, or Shatz, built the pantry wall in this way. A method known as "feathering" was used for all other walls. A groove was planed into the mating faces of each piece and, as the boards were brought together, a single wooden spline was driven into the mating grooves--the result is much like a modern tongue-and-groove joint but with the tongue installed rather than milled. The process was more difficult than doweling, but it was stronger, and it would span shrinkage cracks; with time, a recess in the wall's surface might appear, but no actual opening. Exterior joints were sealed with white lead.

By these means the interior walls were put in up, horizontal boards nailed to the interior surfaces of the exterior walls, and the skirting boards put in place. The ceilings were similarly installed, and the finish floorboards laid.

Doors, including cabinet doors, were built through long hours of careful joinery. The complicated hardware--hinges, door knobs, and locks--would have been purchased, while various hooks, hinges, fireplace grates, the occasional strap or latch, were made in the smithy. With the fitting of decorative moldings to the fireplaces, all would be ready for painting.

The interior was painted a rather dark ivory, with two exceptions: the bedrooms were in a somewhat lighter off-white, and the kitchen a coffee brown. Case could make the white and ivory from skim milk, lime, and either linseed oil, made from flax seed, or neat's foot oil, extracted from cattle hooves and used elsewhere on the farmstead as a leather preservative. The brown for the kitchen and the red for the exterior would have been made by adding to the basic mix some iron oxide--rust--or animal blood. Since those ingredients were ubiquitous on any farmstead, that color was commonplace in the American landscape--"barn red" is still an everyday phrase. Brushes, we assume, were store-bought from Salem or Oregon City, or sent from Portland by Isaiah. But why did Case paint the exterior at all? There is a long-standing romantic notion that wood weathers best when it is left unpainted, and in some usages this is true: shingles cut, in ages past, from old growth cedars--pine and oak were also used--are known to have lasted for a century with neither paint nor stain;⁶ the shingles Case put on his roof may have had such a life span. But for many usages paint is a first-rate preservative, and its value for that purpose is attested by the near-flawless condition of Case's columns and exterior walls after 150 years in the wind and rain.⁷

The furnishings for the new house included six bedsteads (one a "four poster"), a "folding bed" with wheels, for use on the porch on summer nights, three mirrors, a dining table, a round table, a small table, 19 chairs, five

rocking chairs, a desk, two "bureaus," four wooden "stands" (one of them bamboo), and "kitchen furniture." The young furniture maker John Hoefler, from Germany by way of New Orleans, made many or all of these pieces. One of Hoefler's chairs survives, and two of the beds. If they are typical, as there is every reason to think they are, Hoefler provided serviceable pieces with no pretensions to any particular style--sturdy designs, well-proportioned, well-built, the wood left unpainted. In addition the house was furnished with a wash stand, two "patent rockers" (rockers with a stationary base surmounted by a patented rocking mechanism), a console piano, a professional-quality sewing machine, and a profusion of oil lamps. These, and perhaps a few other more minor factory-produced pieces, would have been the only items with ambitious ornamentation.⁸

In having to make just about everything from scratch, it may seem that Case and his workmen faced a job that is now infinitely easier. Some things haven't changed much--bricklaying, for example--but modern foundations are of concrete, poured around formidable steel bars, and where brickwork is called for, today's builder simply orders the bricks. He buys shingles and lumber already sawn, finish trim milled and sanded, even primed. He uses plywood and gypsum wallboard where Case used a lot of individual boards. Doors come from factories, by and large, ready-made and even pre-hung; windows, in infinite sizes and styles, are selected from catalogs. The client buys the furniture from stores. The modern builder's task is more one of assembly than of fabrication, while Case had to address both in full measure. But we must remember that before roughly the turn of the twentieth century buildings were simpler things. Case did not have to incorporate an electrical system, nor plumbing, nor its appurtenant bathtub(s) (jacuzzi?), toilet(s),

basin(s), dishwasher(s) and icemaker(s). He did not have to weave the ductwork of a heating system through the hollows of his walls, floors, and ceilings, nor dodge the insulation therein. To bring our comparison to still more recent times, Case had no three-car garage with door openers to deal with, no air conditioning, no multiple telephone jacks, TV cables, DSLs, or fiberoptics. He had no permits to secure, no zoning restrictions, no energy codes to meet, no inspectors to satisfy. Finally, he could assume a cooperative, non-confrontational, sympathetic, and understanding client.

With the furniture in place, and no certificate of occupancy to obtain, the Cases, and William Schatz too, moved into the new house; the 1860 census has him "living with the Case family."⁹

3 NOTES

- ¹ Concrete, a mixture of Portland cement, sand, gravel, and water, was widely used by the Romans, and Vitruvius set down the formula for posterity. Nevertheless it only reappeared as a commonplace building material in the late nineteenth century.
- ² This feature is found in the north porch floor, which is the only one that is original, the others being replacements of 1977-78. We assume the feature was originally included on all sides, but this is not certain, as no notes were taken during the restoration.
- ³ See Sprague, "The Origin ..." 311-19.
- ⁴ "Considerable speed" here means not revolutions per minute but inches of material passing the chisel in a given unit of time, for which the 12-inch diameter of the columns would be advantageous, since at even 120 rpm, 75 inches would pass the chisel every second. If the water wheel turned at 40 revolutions per minute, this would mean only a three-to-one gearing--not so difficult, and roughly what is shown in the drawing.
- ⁵ See Sprague, 313.
- ⁶ Unfortunately this is no longer true. The longevity of shingles is crucially dependent on the quality of the material, and currently available cedar yields shingles capable of a decade or two of life at best.
- ⁷ Schatz lived with the Cases in the earlier frame house during the construction of the new one, and he also did both the architectural finish work and the furniture for Isaiah's house project in Portland. In 1862, after the completion of both projects, Isaiah and Schatz went to Umatilla to try their hand at gold.
- ⁸ From "Inventory and Appraisalment of the Estate of William M. Case, deceased," na., nd., typescript, University of Oregon Library Special Collections.
- ⁹ Sutton, 123.

4 THE HOUSE FROM 1860 TO 1976

IF WE COULD VISIT THE HOUSE VICARIOUSLY, as it was shortly after the Cases moved in, what would we find? Since it is now restored to something close to its original condition, we would find something much like what is depicted in the photographs in this book--with several exceptions. In the evenings, especially the long evenings of the winter months, the rooms would have been lit by those oil lamps that would cast sharper shadows, and, lighting only relatively small areas, would leave the distant zones of the rooms in a mysterious half light, or less than half-light. In those same long winter evenings there would be the continuously flickering light, and the warmth, and the smell, of the three fireplaces. Late in the evening an oak log, brought inside in the morning for the purpose, would be put in the grate to last, with luck, until morning. But the floors would be cool in summer, and bitterly cold in winter, because the pier foundations offered no impediment to the winter winds.

At any time of the day or year the kitchen would be filled with smells, because cooking, on and in the enormous wood-fired cast-iron stove, was a more-or-less all-day affair: although the letter is of a much later date, Mary described a schedule that must have been typical: "... have scrubbed the kitchen, churned, washed dishes, baked bread, and I don't know what all ... We don't get through until 9 o'clock every night and up at 5 in the morning." The

long hours were spent, too, in a darker kitchen, because it then had only the typical three-foot-wide window. The occasional sound of running water, so familiar today, would have been entirely absent. But the intermittent rhythmic hum of the treadle-powered sewing machine would have sounded through the house a substantial part of the time, because the machine was a serious one, and Sarah used it to make and repair clothing for the many children, and to repair, when necessary, the workers' clothes too. And since at least four of the daughters played the piano, the grand spaces must have been filled with music many hours a day, played, certainly, with varying degrees of accomplishment, but always wonderfully enriched in its overtones by the wood surfaces that lay in every direction.

On February 14, 1859, as the house was at mid-point in its construction, Oregon had become the 33rd state.

In that same year Fannie married, at the age of 16. The following summer, the family's first in the new house, was marked by tragedy: on successive days in July, Benjamin, who had been born just as the house was underway, and his sister Susan, not yet twelve, died of unrecorded causes. Even in an era in which child deaths were more common, the agony of those sequential events can hardly be imagined. In December of the same year Lincoln was elected President, the Civil War began the next April, and one source states that the Cases' first-born, Jonas, "went off to fight." Otherwise the lives of the Cases were little affected in any direct way by events east of the Mississippi.¹ In January of 1861 Sarah gave birth to twins, George and Ella Nora.² Fannie's early marriage turned out to be a serious mistake--her husband had beaten her, severely on at least one occasion. She secured a divorce, with

much help from her father and Isaiah, then in Portland, and returned to the household in the summer of 1861 with her two-year-old daughter, Emma Susan Strowbridge.³ The last of William and Sarah's children, Ida Belle, was born in 1864.⁴ In August of 1865 Jonas, who had gone off to war, died; we don't know where or why. So the tiny bedrooms were, from the beginning, places of some confusion, occasional delight, and a good bit of sorrow, against which the rest of the house may have offered a degree of spacious tranquillity.

In 1862 William Case was elected to the first of four terms as Marion County Commissioner, serving until 1870. He continued to prosper as a builder, and letters from Isaiah attest that he continued to sell large quantities of apples and wheat, and perhaps beef, pork, and chickens. He added to the buildings on the farmstead site a second barn, a hops barn, a smoke house, and a carriage house. His teams of oxen were locally famous for feats of unusual strength. His business successes allowed him, over the years, to enlarge his farmstead property to 1500 acres, and he acquired another 500 acres near Champoeg, and ranches in Marion and Yamhill counties. And he may have used one of the barns at French Prairie as a stable for at least one horse of riding quality, with proper riding tack, perhaps even a groom or trainer, because in 1864 Fannie won a local woman's equestrian competition.

Only a few of Case's own letters to his family have survived, but he saved all, or nearly all, of those that came to him. Many in the family wrote only every year or two, some less than that, but Case's frequent correspondence with Isaiah in Portland and Astoria is especially revealing. In a typical example Isaiah writes about a ream of writing paper William had asked him to obtain: "The paper ... costs \$5.00 per ream. I could have bought good paper for \$3.50. You sent for the very best ..." In another Isaiah says of a kettle

he had not yet ordered, " ... it would weigh 100 lbs and consequently cost \$100.00 so I thought you could not possibly want a Kettle so heavy or expensive...." These and other of Isaiah's comments convey an impression of William Case as a man who wanted quality, even elegance, in his everyday accoutrements, as the house and its furnishings also attest.

Frances, "Fannie," living at the farmhouse with her young daughter, entered Willamette University in the fall of 1862 and graduated, as "Mistress of English Literature," in 1866. In late August of 1867 she and a college classmate, Miss Mary Robinson, climbed to the summit of Mt. Hood; they were the first white women to do so.⁵ Fannie became a music teacher and married again, to a journalist who shared her interest in literature. She bore a second daughter in 1871 and, widowed in 1886, married yet a third time. Her letters reveal her as an intelligent and articulate woman.

John began studies at Willamette University in 1863, but stayed only through 1864, and Jane--"Jennie"--attended from 1865 through 1866, living in a house in Salem that Case had built for the children's use. Mary began at Willamette in 1866 and graduated in 1870; Alice graduated in 1874; and Margaret Anna may have graduated too; the record is unclear. All of the Case women who attended Willamette were proficient in music.⁶ It must be remembered that colleges and universities at that time were almost entirely male and, at that, only a tiny fraction of the male population went on to higher education; women who actually completed a degree program were rare indeed.⁷ William Case was a major benefactor of the university, so it may be that the Case children were given some preference. But in that era grown children were usually an assumed, and needed, part of the work force. It is much to the Cases' credit that they saw the matter from a rare perspective.

4.1 Sarah Ann Potter Case in 1874.



4.2 The Case daughters, probably in 1877, clockwise from far right: "Fannie," Mary Elmira, Jane ("Jennie"), Margaret Anna, Ida Belle, and Ella Nora ("Eleanor"), with Alice Amanda at center.

Yet against these accomplishments, few of the children achieved successful lives; few even achieved self-sufficiency. John, having moved to Omaha, wrote to his father in 1873 "if you could send me seven hundred

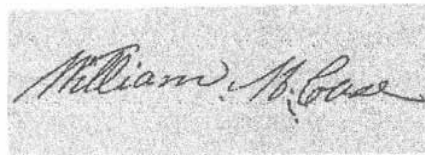
dollars," and in 1874 "you must know that I was in a bad ficks or I would not have asked you for money . . . I am broke . . . what shall I do . . ." In 1878 Mary and Annie went to California to operate a boarding house. In 1882 Annie wrote from San Gabriel: "You told me you would help me . . . I can get started nicely with \$300," and in 1885: "I got the draft you sent . . . and I tell you it was an immense help to me." A year later, from Mary: "how grateful I am to you for the money," and from Anna, "letter containing check for Five hundred dollars \$500 just received. You have again helped me out of a great difficulty." In 1888 Jennie wrote from Victoria B. C.: "Could hardly believe my eyes for I have been wanting a little money so badly . . ." The appeals extended into the next generation, for in the same year John's daughter wrote: "Perhaps you remember you owe Papa \$1000 so you could send us \$500 . . ." Even Sarah's mother, via her brother, wrote to William late in life to ask for "a little means she says she has no money." Nor was this a tranquil family: a letter from Belle to Fannie in 1877 asks: "Sister why don't you and Allie be friends, I think it is a shame that a family of sisters like us should always be quarreling . . ." An 1890 letter to William Case from Mary's ten-year-old daughter is a refreshing exception: "My dear Grandpa, I am old enough to write to you. I am going to school and have only Sat. and Sun. to write. I must stop now. Your loveng [sic] Grand daughter Lubel K. C. Felt." This young lady would, in womanhood, marry into Portland society as Mrs. Sanderson Reed, and late in her life would leave to the Oregon Historical Society papers that are now key sources of genealogical information on the Case family.

Sarah Ann Potter Case, unlike her daughters, had no college education, but she was an avid reader, and her letters are those of an aware, intelligent and humane woman. She died in 1877 at the age of fifty-six. The following year

William married Eliza Bell, and her family later joined the Case household at the red house.

As his family changed through these years, William Case's regional importance grew, and the house, lying midway between Portland, the state's largest city, and Salem, the capital, became "a center of hospitality for politicians, circuit riders, and other travelers."⁸

He returned to Indiana only once, by rail in 1889, with Eliza, at which time he brought back to the French Prairie house the chest he had built in his adolescent years. But by this time his civic hospitality, the continuing moneys provided to the children, and perhaps his own overspending, had begun to stretch even his considerable resources. Even before his building construction business faded away with the depression that began in 1893, he was selling significant tracts of land to obtain liquid funds. Since each such sale further diminished his agricultural income, the process became a vicious circle. Ultimately Case would sell more than four-fifths of his lands, keeping only 192 acres of the once-grand farmstead.

A rectangular inset showing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "William M. Case".

4.3 William M. Case, circa 1890.



On November 12, 1899, he wrote to "My dear daughter Frances, . . . Well I suppose you have been posted by some of the girls by this time concerning [the death of] Dear Mary, the most sad thing in the history of my family." (The underlining is in the original.) She was the fifth of William's children to die in his lifetime. Shortly thereafter he wrote again to Fannie of his continuous pain and fatigue--"I am so very tired." He died in 1903, at the age of 83. Even given the accepted tenor of eulogies, his were unusually glowing. He was buried at Champoeg Cemetery, half a mile north of the red house.

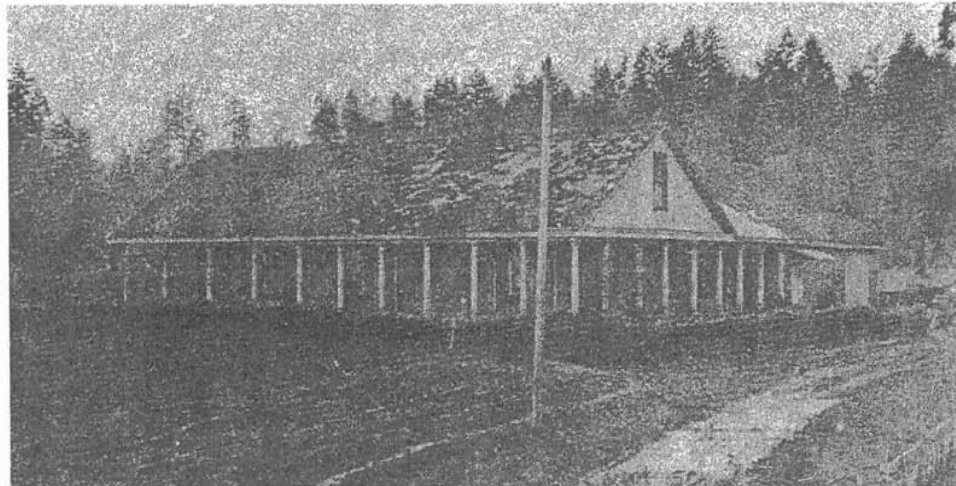


4.4 The Case house in about 1905: "*Hand-tinted photo 1901-1910 . . . appears that grape arbor was strung between columns of the east veranda. Hops (?) in the foreyard.*" (Case family papers: item 5 of Miscellaneous Documents file, AX 1925, University of Oregon Library Special Collections.)

Case's will, drawn a few weeks before his death, and significantly revised several days later, bequeathed the remaining land, the buildings thereon, and the furnishings therein, to daughters Fannie and Ella Nora

("Eleanor") and Fannie's daughter Emma Susan Strowbridge Thielson, with the condition that the house "be kept for my wife, Eliza Case and my children and grand-children ... to dwell as long as they may desire." But Case's second marriage may not have been one of unalloyed affection, because, mortgaging a small bit of his remaining real estate, he put \$2000 in trust to be paid to Eliza a year after his death, on the condition that she renounce all other claims to his estate, and she is not buried at Champoeg as are many of the Case family. She left the house, in fact, immediately after William's death, to live with her sister in Eagle Creek, Oregon.

The ensuing tenure of the farmstead is complicated and not always clear until 1943, when the property went into receivership for delinquent taxes. In the following year it was purchased by Harold J. and Alfretta Arendt, who with their children moved into the house. It had been unoccupied for some time, and had long since been painted white.



4.5 The house ca. 1925: what appears to be a low surrounding hedge is in fact firewood.

Harold Arendt died in 1965. Two years later Professor Philip Dole of the University of Oregon, assisted by Gary Moye and Don Marlow, inventoried the site. At that time the second barn and the hop barn still existed, both in ruins; the wash house and smoke house were intact but "a Mess."

In 1969 Alfretta Arendt, in failing health, moved elsewhere, and the house was again unoccupied. On her death in 1973 the property was divided equally among the six Arendt children. Harold Arendt Jr., as executor, parceled the property, then 180 acres, into six 30-acre sections. In the same year the house, with 9.5 acres of contiguous land, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination cited the house as "an unusual example of the peripteral type of Classical Revival Architecture in Oregon," and "the largest house constructed between 1850 and 1870 in Western Oregon." The nomination noted that its architectural integrity was intact, as it had never been altered,"⁹ but also noted that "the building is in need of repair." It was indeed.



4.6 The Case house in the 1970s, from the west.

Some gable trim on the south and west had disappeared, exposing the roof structure to weather, the porch floor was unwalkable, and the roof was in desperate need of replacement. In 1976 Harold Arendt Jr. offered the house and the contiguous acreage to the State of Oregon; they lacked funds to buy it. From among several subsequent offers Arendt decided to sell the property to Wallace Kay Huntington, with the proviso that the house be renovated without compromising its integrity.¹⁰



4.7 The house in the 1970s: the southwest corner of the porch, with the ruinous wash house near collapse.

4 NOTES

- ¹ But the legislation of the time was inevitably felt in the region: the Homestead Act of 1862 led to an increasing rate of population growth; the Land Grant Colleges Act of the same year transformed Corvallis College into Corvallis Agricultural College, then, over time, into Oregon State University; and the transcontinental railroad, finished in 1869, vastly improved communication with the markets, and the ideas, of the east, and the importation of goods therefrom, including steam engines for both agriculture and industry.
- ² One source gives them the same birth date--fair enough--but has one born in Champoeg, the other in Portland.
- ³ Or, in some accounts, Stowbridge.
- ⁴ Humphrey, 154.
- ⁵ Grauer, 207.
- ⁶ Oregon Historical Society, genealogy Case family, typewritten 2-page ms OCLC-MARC.
- ⁷ The University of Michigan, founded in 1817 and in the 1860s the largest in the country, only began admitting women in 1870 (Peckham, 72). From its founding as a University in 1853, however, roughly half of Willamette's students were women, as was its first graduate, Emily York, in 1859.
- ⁸ Hartwig, 1.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ The 9.5 acre figure of the original National Register nomination was modified to 7.2 acres at the time of the sale.

5 THE HOUSE RESTORED

GRAHAM GREENE HAS SAID "There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in."¹ As a child in Salem, Oregon, Wallace Kay Huntington witnessed the 1935 burning of the capitol building, and experienced too the subsequent demolition of the beloved Victorian home of his grandparents, to create a larger site for the new capitol campus. These events imbued in him a predilection toward the preservation of things of value, and especially buildings of value. This predilection was encouraged and deepened in his college years at the University of Oregon, where Professor Marion Dean Ross, the founder and inspiration for the regional chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians,² taught architectural history. Wallace remembers that "I took every course he offered --he became a presence in my life." But Wallace's mother and grandmother, both of them avid gardeners, were an equally strong influence in his life, and among their friends were Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver, accomplished landscape architects who were doing distinguished work in Salem, and in Portland and Tacoma as well. Wallace chose landscape architecture, a field in which Ross was also knowledgeable, as his profession, and he has had a notable career in that field. But his continuing interest in architectural history and preservation has been accompanied by a professional involvement as well, and when he bought the Case house he intended, from the outset, to restore it to a professional standard. He asked friend, interior designer, and fellow historian and preservationist

Mirza Dickel to help him. Neither foresaw that they would marry, and that the house would be their home for an ensuing thirty years.

Mirza recalls the tenor of the time:

I see the Case house restoration as a story that had its roots in a shifting national outlook toward our country and our past. The 1960s saw a growing awareness of our habitat and a pride in our surroundings, as well as a desire to save our history and retain the good and the beautiful. Preserving our heritage became a movement across the country. The National Trust for Historic Preservation was established, and many states had set up funding to help people save their heritage by allowing property tax breaks for those projects considered worthy.

At that time I was president of our local chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers. It seemed to me that it was time to contribute our talents to the public good, so I approached Thomas Vaughan, then director of the Oregon Historical Society, and asked if there was anything we could do that would be of help. I received an enthusiastic "yes." He had persuaded Multnomah County to buy the Bybee-Howell house on Sauvie Island, and the Society had offered to restore it and open it to the public. The house had been built in the 1850s; it was derelict, covered in blackberries, its orchard dying from neglect. All of our members played a part in the restoration. And landscape architects joined the cause, Wallace Huntington among them, and they tackled the blackberries while we dealt with the interiors. When the house and grounds were opened to the public they became a destination for Portlanders--they came and ate the apples in the restored orchard, drank cider from the press

The project brought me to a closer relationship with my long-time friend Wallace Huntington. He was living in a significant Victorian house

[in Portland], and continuing the restoration that had been carried some way when he purchased it. I helped him with furnishings, and in the process he suggested I join the Society of Architectural Historians. Its members were primarily academics, but they welcomed any who were interested in any aspect of architectural history--and their annual meetings were held in various cities of architectural interest. It was a wonderful learning experience for me, for through it I have seen the architecture of our country geographically, historically, and stylistically. It intensified my interest in restoration and the restoration movement.³

Wallace had long been familiar with the Case house, and had told a friend who was remotely related to the Cases that if it was ever for sale he'd like to know of it, as he'd be willing to give up his Victorian house for it. He learned in 1976 that it was on the market, and after a year of negotiation with the Arendt family he closed the purchase. The house was derelict, much exterior trim was missing, the roof structure was open to the weather at the lower edge of the south gable; the roof itself was a shambles; the chimneys were deemed unsafe. No one sensitive to his own well-being would have walked the porch. Water was available only from a well with neither hand nor electric pump, although there must have been at one time, as one of the bedrooms had been converted to a half-bath, whose water closet was broken. Mirza, looking at it with Wallace, remembers that

We said it wasn't covered with blackberries as the Bybee-Howell house had been, and of course we could "get it back in shape." I think if we hadn't had all that background we would not have had the courage to tackle it. The State of Oregon had funding available for restoration of significant properties, and as the house was by that time on the National Register for

Historic Properties, they were willing and eager to see it restored. Time was of the essence, however; it could not last another winter without a new roof.

But Case had built the house to last, and its basic structure was sound. The deep porch had protected the exterior walls, and the woodshed had acted as a weather break to the west. Everything was entirely plumb and true, and dimensionally consistent throughout to within an inch. And--unusually for a building of its era--the house had seen few changes over its 120 years. Some floorboards had been cut away in the woodshed to allow its use as a garage; one bedroom had been converted to the rudimentary bath, two others had been made into one by removing the wall between them. A wood stove had been installed in the bedroom corridor. A primitive electrical system had been fitted in the attic early in the twentieth century, so a few cords with bare bulbs hung from the ceilings of the major rooms. In the 1940s the small kitchen window had been radically enlarged.⁴ Paint colors had changed, and changed again. Otherwise, the house was as it had always been. No central heating system had ever been installed.

Wallace felt that the restoration should bring the house to a condition as near the original as was at all reasonable; convenience would yield to authenticity wherever possible. But the house could not be returned to its original state in every way, because he--and increasingly he and Mirza--meant to live there. For that, the house must have a sensitively designed heating system, a modern electrical system, a working kitchen, and a civilized bath. Mirza had been in the school of architecture at the University of Oregon at the same time as Gil--Charles Gilman--Davis, and had since worked with him on several projects. She suggested that Wallace contact him for help. Davis

prepared a twelve-page set of architectural drawings showing a heating system, removal of the bedroom corridor stove; stainless steel flue liners for all chimneys; an unobtrusive but completely updated electrical system; insulation to a modern specification, especially under the floors; a bathroom in what had been the northwest bedroom; and complete details for a new kitchen. The drawings also described repairs to damaged elements, and replacement of things that, one way and another, had gone missing. Davis proposed no real rebuilding of the basic fabric of the house, because no such major work was needed. Lyle Warren would be the master craftsman, leading the restoration team and personally executing much of the finer work, including floors and cabinets.

How to provide an unobtrusive heating system? Davis proposed two heat pumps, located in pits under the porch and accessed by special hatches in the porch floors: one, just west of the north entry, serves the peninsula; the other, mid-way along the eastern porch, serves the rectangle. Ducts suspended in the crawl space under the floor serve individual floor outlets in the rooms. The only visible elements are the outlets themselves, and they are made of wood finished to match that of the floors.

Mirza describes the more difficult problems posed by the electrical system:

With the single-board wall construction throughout the house, there was no space within the walls to hide wiring. As there is an attic, there was no problem in putting in ceiling lights ... and there were already some single light bulbs hanging down in a few rooms, all of which were removed except in the bath and kitchen. But retaining those two took some ingenuity,

as there was no way to install a switch and hide the wiring. Gil solved this by building out some vertical framing at the entrance door to the bath and the kitchen. Mr. Case had used this detailing in the bedrooms, primarily to give some rigidity to the walls, I think, so Gil's design had the same look, but the "framing" was hollow to provide a channel for the wiring. The rest of the wiring was from underneath the house. We have flush floor plugs the way modern houses have wall plugs. They are double-socket brass fixtures with "lids" that cover the sockets when not in use. As there is no carpeting in the house, they are very satisfactory ...

For the bath they chose a Victorian approach, since in the normal course of events that would have been the period in which a properly plumbed indoor bath might have been fitted.

This gave us an opportunity to thicken the walls, wallpaper them...which on our old painted boards I couldn't do. Part of the decision was inspired by a wonderful freestanding painted iron washstand that Wallace had bought years earlier. It has a mirror, a porcelain washbasin, and is tall enough to look in scale with our 10-foot ceiling height. Gil built out a framework with classic columns containing the tub and shower. The projection nicely framed a recess for the WC, and managed to look appropriate to the earlier house.

The fireplace fire brick had burned halfway through, and the hearth surfaces were deeply worn. The Hidden Brick Works in Vancouver, Washington, cast new fire brick to identical dimensions to reline the fire boxes, and the hearth bricks were turned over and reset to expose the heretofore hidden lower faces as the new wearing surfaces. Stainless steel flue liners, in six-foot sections, were slid into the unlined chimneys from above.

The only interior floorboards that needed replacing were those that had been removed from the woodshed and a few that were badly worn in the kitchen. Dish cupboards in the dining room that now serve as bookshelves can still be closed by the original cupboard doors, or accurate replacements, and although not all the cupboards in the living room and parlor are in use, all remain. The short stairs and doors in the living room, Mirza says, "were very prominent, as the doors in the ivory-painted walls were a dark and exotic wood. As there was no way to conceal this, it remains as it is. Everyone wants to know where the steps go, and if they can struggle over the stacks of books, they may trek up to the attic."



5.1 The parlor; the stair to the attic is at left.

So too Wallace's policy mandated restoration of the missing bedroom wall, and the consequent uniformly tiny bedrooms. "If I had known that I was going to marry Wallace and live in this house, would I have been so enthusiastic in support of that policy? Probably so, as I have enjoyed so much having a dressing room which acts as a sitting room, which we use as a place to have a cup of tea in the afternoon ... or just a place for conversation."



5.2 The dressing room.

But restoring the original kitchen window and door would make the kitchen impossible for twentieth-century use. The authorities under whose guidelines Mirza and Wallace were working felt that since the window was from the '40s, it represented a historical evolution, and it remains. Opposite, the pantry wall that had been removed was replaced, "so the pantry is back," Mirza says, "and I couldn't live without it."

As stained wood floors were dominant, we decided on a wood counter top to run the width of the kitchen. We chose oak, and I wouldn't recommend it; it has black marks all over from cookware with iron bottoms. We have but one countertop with a recessed stove forming an "L" return, and a center island with half a wood top and half slate. Back of the island is a sitting area, so half of the kitchen is a "family room," with a breakfast table and the wood stove. So a working modern kitchen was adapted from the 19th century original.



5.3 The kitchen, looking southeast toward the window from the 1940s. Photo: Michael Jensen



5.4 The kitchen, looking northwest; the pantry is at center. The opening at left, originally closed by a door, is now a recess that includes the doors to the cellar stair, at right, and the woodshed, ahead. Behind the wall at extreme left is the niche that keeps the refrigerator hidden from view.

The kitchen door to the woodshed was originally in the kitchen wall. It was moved to the farther side of the cellar stair, which created a niche opposite the cellar stair door for the refrigerator, because Mirza "felt strongly that the refrigerator was the most obtrusive element in a room that was still essentially mid-19th century, and the visual benefit of its niche location is well worth the slight inconvenience." An extension of the niche on the woodshed side provides a minimal laundry room for washer and dryer.

Wallace and Mirza wanted to avoid overhead cabinets if at all possible, as they seemed incompatible with a 19th century ambience. Since a recessed full-height closet left of the stove provides a lot of storage, just two small overhead cupboards were added, flanking the 1940s window, for everyday dishes. The rest of the storage is provided by an old Oregon breakfront of the period. A shelf was added, high above the window, that turns the corner and continues above the door, to end at the chimney. It holds some of Wallace's collection of early earthenware storage pots made and fired in local kilns. Many have lids, and Mirza uses a number of them "to store sugar, flour, and various dry foods, in which case they sit on the countertops and, to my eyes, are beautiful as well as useful."

Original paint colors were established by careful scraping to the last coat over bare wood, and all, including the brick-red exterior, are as near the original hues and values as Mirza's eye could make them, except the kitchen. It had been "a ghastly coffee brown," and neither Mirza nor Wallace felt they could live with that. They opted for the deep ivory of the remainder of the house. The only other departure from the typical ivory was the cupboard interiors of the dining room, which had been a deep ochre originally, and a deep ochre they remain.

Wallace yielded to his own taste in the exterior gable detailing, which at each corner differs slightly from the original (see 2.6 and 4.7). And then there is the brick-red exterior. Mirza remembers that "Wallace had bought his dream house: the classic white Greek Revival standing alone in its grandeur. But not so. It turned out that it was a red house standing alone in grandeur. But he has learned to love the red house, and I think he no longer dreams of it in dazzling white."



5.5 The dining room. Photo: Michael Jensen.



5.6 The south porch, looking southwest.

The restoration took a year. The work was supported by State of Oregon funds and a Federal Historic Preservation Grant. On its completion in 1979 the project, and Mirza and Gil Davis, received an award for preservation, the first of its kind, from the American Institute of Architects. For craftsman Lyle Warren, it was his favorite restoration project; he brought friends and possible clients to visit it.



5.7 The gate from the parking lot, with the entry path beyond.

One now approaches the house from the car park through a timber gate; a sign immediately inside describes the history of the house (see epigraph p. viii). A path then leads westward through a landscape of Wallace's design, descending through dense vegetation along the edge of the northern declivity. After fifty yards or so the foliage opens at left to offer a glimpse of the house. Shortly thereafter the path turns leftward; a few stone steps lead upward onto the plateau, and to the main entry to the house, with the north gable above.

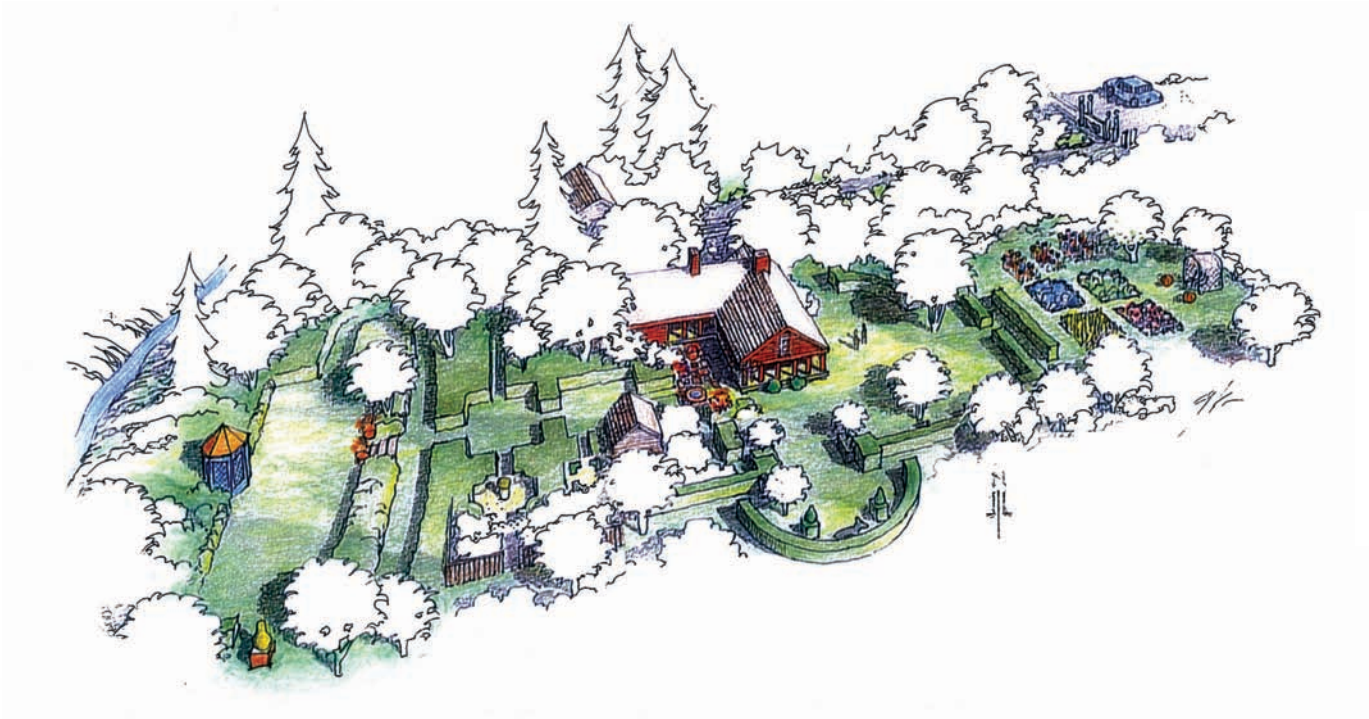


5.8 The north entry, appropriately on the axis of Case's temple.

Wallace had intended from the beginning that a part of the property should be an experimental garden in which to study the adaptability to the Oregon climate of various non-indigenous species. He also wanted what the British would call a kitchen or cottage garden, a place to grow vegetables and flowers for household use. The kitchen garden at the eastern edge of the property is organized along an east-west axial path that terminates in a rustic bench in an arbor flanked by ceramic pumpkins made by a local craftsman. The experimental garden envelops the kitchen garden and continues southward and westward along the edges of the site.

The remainder of the site is a realization of Wallace's long-held desire to create a sequence of outdoor rooms for human pleasure. Although he says "I never sat down at the drawing board and said 'I'm going to do something English,'" he acknowledges that he has been much influenced by two English gardens in particular. Sissinghurst in Kent, created between 1930 and 1938 by

Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, is a series of ten separate and quite different gardens—outdoor rooms-- that in their complexity create a sense of a much greater extent than actually exists, and an accompanying feeling of seclusion, peace and repose. Hidcote, in Gloucestershire, created by the American Lawrence Johnston from 1910 to 1930, is, like Sissinghurst, a sequence of outdoor rooms of varying scales and characters. Wallace intended that his pleasure garden be similarly a composition of outdoor rooms.



5.9 The house in its garden, from the south; the foliage canopy is minimized to show the ground plane. At top right is the entry path; at far right is the kitchen garden. The hemicycle of the southern parterre is in the foreground. Left of the house are the outdoor rooms leading to the gazebo and its parterre. At far left is the stream that is now Case Creek.



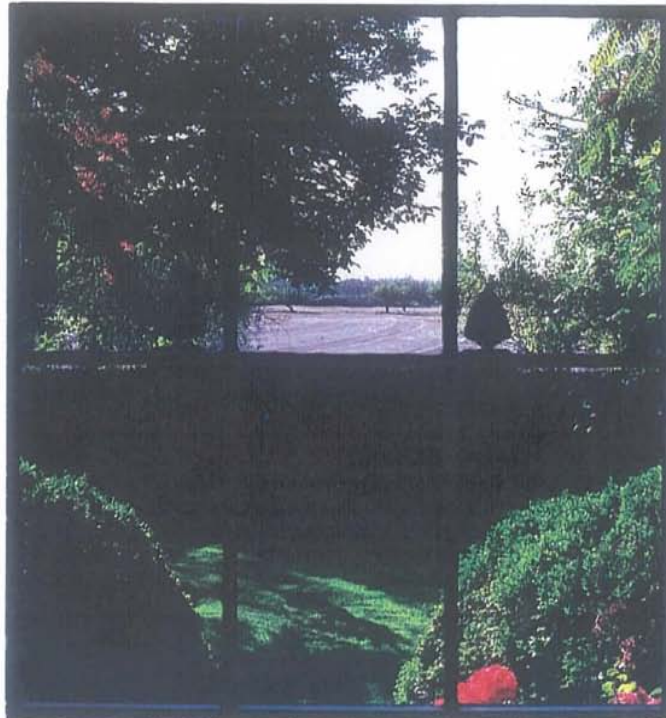
5.10 The flagged patio off the western porch.



5.11 The view from the flagged patio to the western outdoor rooms, with the gazebo in the distance.

The eastern parterre is a simple expanse of lawn with hedges to northeast and southeast; box and yew hedges to the east mask the kitchen garden. The western gardens, the most spatially complex, are organized on an east-west axis that begins at the west porch, passes through three outdoor rooms, and ends at the gazebo, at the edge of the ravine where were once the sawmill and dam.

5.12 The view from the door of the bedroom corridor to the hemicycle of the south parterre, with the landscape of French Prairie beyond.



The southern parterre is on axis with the southern façade of the house, and its framing elements lie on the axes of the east and west porches; it seems an extension of the architecture, projecting the order of the house into the landscape. Its southern terminus is a hemicycle of box hedge, beyond which is a view of tremendous reach, across the fields of French Prairie to the distant horizon.



5.13 The Case house in the summer of 2005; the southern hemicycle is in the foreground.

5 NOTES

- ¹ *The Power and the Glory*. London, Penguin, 1962, 12.
- ² Originally the Northern Pacific Coast Chapter, it was re-named in the 1990s and is now The Society of Architectural Historians/Marion Dean Ross Pacific Northwest Chapter.
- ³ This and all other quotations in this chapter are from correspondence from Mirza Dickel to the authors, summer and fall of 2006.
- ⁴ Edward E. Miller, a local carpenter, installed the large multi-paned window in about 1943, and at the same time did some maintenance work on the brick piers. The Arendts were owners at the time; see chapter 4.

6 A GREEK TEMPLE IN FRENCH PRAIRIE

IN ITS LARGE OUTLINES French Prairie has changed little since the Case house first stood on the plateau at the edge of the ravine. Most of the virgin timber is long gone, of course, but a good bit of second and third growth has replaced it, and the area is now rife with fields of nursery material, perpetuating both the agrarian and timber traditions of the region. There are many hop fields, as there were in William Case's day. There are more houses along what is now Case Road, but not many more. Case's dam and sawmill have long since vanished from what is now Case Creek, and its banks are impenetrably overgrown. The town of Champoeg has disappeared; Aurora, St. Paul, and Butteville have grown little if at all.

The house itself was long ago recognized for its historic significance, as the largest of its day in the western Oregon Territory, as a highly unusual example of the Greek Revival, both regionally and nationally, and as the home of a significant pioneering family in the Territory, for whom it remains as an evidence and a commemoration. It remains because its present owners have given it a second life, restoring it to something very close to what it was, so that its original character can be experienced still. Their restoration has made this literary and photographic record possible. And although literary and photographic records of architecture can never be a full substitute for the thing itself--because the architectural experience depends on movement through the

building's solids and spaces, its colors, its materials, the qualities of its light-- nevertheless the photographs and words herein are better surrogates than words alone, better too than the photographs of the house in its less fortunate days.

The house was never copied in its region. No town, not even a hamlet, has grown up around it. Its austere but stately architectural vocabulary remains poignantly appropriate to its isolation. Its simple horizontals still echo the vast horizontal planes of the Prairie, and both house and Prairie are now complemented by the parterres of Wallace's garden.

There is a grandeur in the house, the sense one has of its volumes, and especially in the vertical dimension. This is difficult to grasp from the two-dimensional representations to which this book is limited. It can be appreciated to some degree, perhaps, by studying 5.5, in which the chair gives a sense of the true height of the interiors. Visitors who see the house for the first time are invariably surprised to find this grandeur of vertical dimension. And in fact this grandeur is immediately evident even before one enters the house, because it is a striking characteristic of the porch, as can be seen in 5.6.

Which brings us to the great peripteral porch. It is an extremely rare thing, even among other examples of the Greek Revival, and Case obtained it at considerable cost. It seems to have been essential to his image of the house. It is the manifestation of a simple but, at the same time, a sophisticated idea: the colonnade envelops the house in a gracious threshold zone for human relaxation, casting it in deep inviting shadow, while the tall columns, evoking ancient classical models, play with the light as only cylinders can do. It does these things without bombast, with not a hint what of we mean by the term "Victorian." It is the most remarkable of Case's decisions, and the grandest element of his design.

The porch, in turn, brings us back to the matter of the Greek temple--and as we have noted, the Case house is not a particularly close emulation of the real thing. It lacks a stylobate; the columns are too thin and too widely spaced, and they are Roman, not Greek, in origin; there is no entablature with its triglyphs and metopes, no pedimental sculpture. There is so little of the Greek temple in Case's design that it may seem a stretch to call it either a temple or an example of the Greek Revival.

But there is a deeper analogy. The temples of the classic age were the late refined progeny of a type that had begun, centuries earlier, as a simpler thing, built, like Case's house, of wood. The builders of the earliest temples of the Aegean had none of the resources of a later age--no extensive stone quarries, no skilled sculptors, no specialized tools, no generous calendar, no generous treasury. They had to work from materials near at hand, using simple tools and simple skills. They made their columns--the ancestors of the classic fluted orders--from logs with the bark removed--sometimes they left the bark in place. Square wooden pads--they would become the abacus blocks--atop the columns bore the beams of the wooden roof structure. The exposed ends of the beams would become the triglyphs of the classical era; simple panels between the beam-ends to keep out the weather would become, eventually, the sculpted metopes. The entirety was covered by a gable roof, whose tiled surface was sloped just enough to carry away the infrequent Aegean rain, and whose ends became the pediments.

William Case too had no skilled and experienced sculptors, no generous calendar, no generous treasury with which to build his house, and unlike his classical predecessors, who could, some day, open limestone and marble quarries, he had a limited palette of materials--just wood and clay, really, not

much else. And so, although there is no reason at all to think that he saw the matter in this way, his design reprises not the classic Greek temple but its deepest origins. And this, in the end, is much the more interesting thing, because in doing so the Case house tells us about its time and place, the conditions that confronted its builder and those who lived in it, as a correct emulation of a temple of the classic age could not do. It tells us, with what W.S. Gilbert called a "silent eloquence," what it was like to be there then.

In 2005 the Champoeg Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is now carefully tended, and the graves of many of the Cases, and John Hoefler as well, are easily found there, just inside the gate.



6.1 A Greek temple in French Prairie.

APPENDIX I NOTES ON WILLIAM AND SARAH CASE'S CHILDREN

Jonas Potter Case
(1 June 1842-25 Aug 1865)
first child/first son

Sarah Frances ("Fannie") Case
(30 June 1843-ca. 1925)
second child/first daughter
graduated Willamette University 1866
3 marriages: Strowbridge, Moreland, Harvey
two children/daughters
one of three women inheriting the farm

John Nathaniel Case
(12 Feb 1845-8 Sept 1924)
third child/second son
attended Willamette University
settled in Nebraska and Iowa
1872 married Agnes Magee
9 children

Thomas W. Case
(11 Jan 1847-24 Sept 1851)
fourth child/third son

Susan Lucinda Case
(18 Sept 1848-5 July 1860)
fifth child/second daughter

Mary Elmira Case
(25 Nov 1850-14 Sept 1899)
sixth child/third daughter
graduated Willamette University 1870
married: Felt, moved to Los Angeles
2 daughters

Alice ("Allie") Amanda Case
(29 Mar 1853-1936)
seventh child/fourth daughter
graduated Willamette University 1874
married: Borthwick
one son

Jane ("Jennie") Elizabeth Case
(4 Feb 1855-unknown)
eighth child/fifth daughter
3 marriages: Nevin, Croghan, Free
one son

Margaret ("Anna") Adelaide Case
(11 Oct 1856-unknown)
ninth child/sixth daughter
graduated Willamette University
2 marriages: Hoyt, Maxwell
lived in Los Angeles, supported ailing husband
one daughter

1878 marriage William M. Case to
Eliza Bell
(2 Aug 1845-1 Apr 1914)
no children this marriage
Eliza is buried in historic Philip Foster
Cemetery, Eagle Creek, Oregon

Benjamin Isaiah Case
(20 Aug 1858-3 July 1860)
tenth child, fourth son

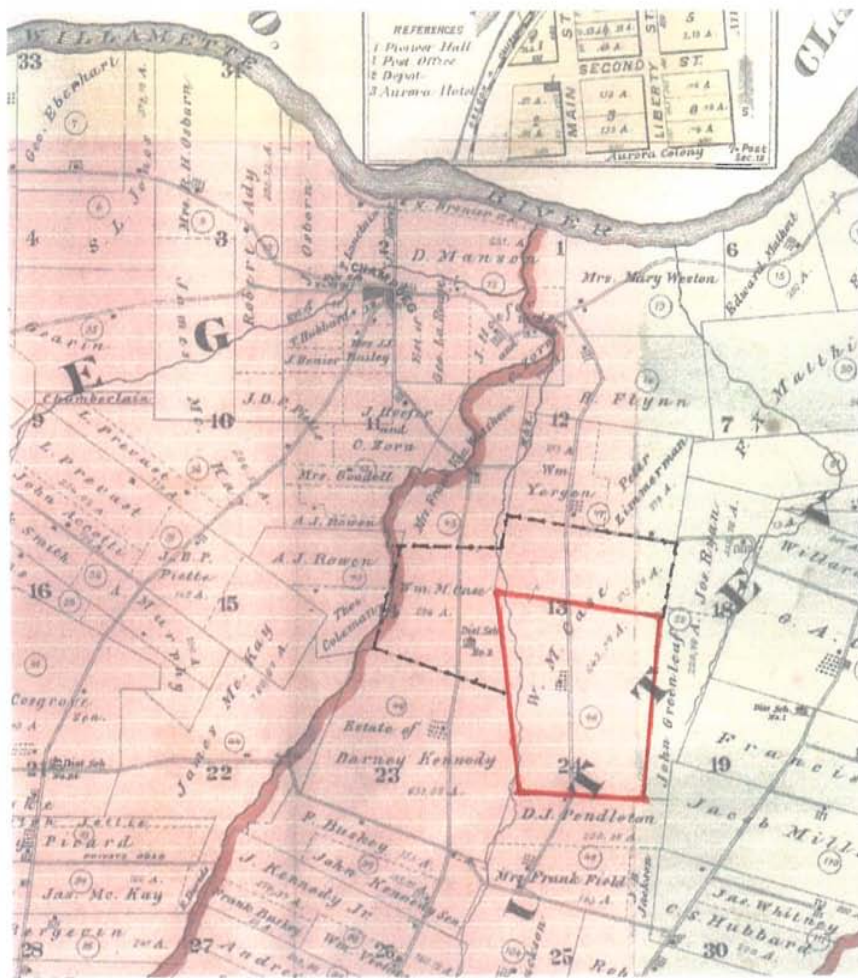
Twins:

Ella Nora ("Eleanor") Case
(14 Jan 1861-unknown)
eleventh & twelfth children
seventh daughter
1898 married: Cranstoun
one of three women inheriting the farm
and

George William Case
(14 Jan 1861-1925)
fifth son
1882 married: Clara Ellen Feller
settled on farm north on Case Road
nine children this marriage

Ida Belle ("Belle") Case
(20 July 1864-unknown)
thirteen child/eighth daughter
1886 married: Gibbons
one child/son

APPENDIX II CASE LANDS, 1845 AND 1878



Township 4 S,
Range 2 W
of Willamette
Meridian, Oregon;
land ownership in
French Prairie in
1878.

From the 1878
Historical Atlas Map
of Marion and Linn
Counties, Oregon,
map 1, pp. 28-29.
Courtesy Marion
County Historical
Society.

The original 1845
Case donation
is outlined in red;
additions to 1878
are indicated by the
dashed black line.

APPENDIX III A NOTE ON COLUMN SPACINGS

THE GABLED SOUTHERN COLONNADE has six columns in five 7 foot 9 inch bays (fig. 2.6). Since the gable is echoed at the north, the columnar arrangement is repeated in the eastern six columns of the north porch. The remaining bit of the northern colonnade comprises three "contracted" bays at the significantly lesser dimension of 6 feet 11 inches, and the "contracted" arrangement is again repeated for the "opposite" colonnade south of the kitchen (see plan, fig. 2.5). All of the bay modules are inexact by as much as an inch and an half plus or minus, however, apparently because of a not-unwise decision to center the columns on the piers which, given the vicissitudes of bricklaying in a series of pits, are themselves inexactly located. Within those tolerances, and at two different modules, the northern and southern colonnades share common centerlines.

The eastern and western colonnades do not. The eastern colonnade is a classically correct eleven columns in ten bays of 7 feet 3 inches. The southernmost bay of the colonnade west of the bedrooms is of the same dimension, but that leaves a remaining space of 26 feet 9 inches, for which the only options are three bays at 8 feet 11 inches, or four at 6 feet 8 inches. Case chose to do it in three bays, but either choice would yield a spacing markedly different from the eastern colonnade. The misalignment could have been resolved by shortening the house by about three feet, or lengthening it by more

than five feet, but either choice would mean an even number of columns in the eastern range. To align the east and west columns and also have an odd number in the eastern range, the house must be lengthened by about twelve feet. Case chose to stay with a plan that seemed otherwise ideal.

What of the contracted bays immediately east of the woodshed? The three bays a 6 feet 11 inches yield a total dimension of 20 feet 9 inches. Had Case used for those bays the 7 foot 9 inch spacing that obtains eastward, the three-bay dimension would be 23 feet 3 inches. The difference is 2 feet 6 inches. This is far out of the range of possible error in the setting out of foundations; the change in module must have been intentional. Was it a result of a construction sequence, the woodshed and the rectangle of the house having been built autonomously, for example, and the peninsula inserted later to join the two structures? Is there other evidence on the chronology of construction?

APPENDIX IV A NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY OF CONSTRUCTION

WAS THE HOUSE, including the woodshed, designed and built all at once, or was it done in stages, and if so, what was their sequence? There are a good many bits of evidence on these questions. Unfortunately they lead to different conclusions.

The three contracted porch bays immediately east of the woodshed suggest that the "rectangle" portion of the house, and the woodshed, were originally separate structures, and at some later date the dining room and kitchen were built in the intervening space, the column bays then being wedged into the available dimension. This interpretation is supported--perhaps--by an examination of the roof structure, which shows a complete and autonomous structural system over the rectangle, supported at the northwest by the bearing wall between dining and parlor. In this interpretation the windows in the woodshed gable would have been simply to light the east end of the woodshed. But building the rectangle part of the house as an autonomous structure is an entirely reasonable way to build an L-shaped plan, and a hypothesis that the kitchen and dining were infill would mean that the original rectangular house and the detached woodshed were built with perfectly coordinated plans and elevations throughout, since their roofs, floors, and walls are completely integrated in the ultimate scheme. That seems highly unlikely.

On the other hand, the windows in the upper wall separating the woodshed from the kitchen (fig. 2.15) suggest that the house was completed at that point, the windows then looking out to the west, and the woodshed, which effectively blocks their view, was added later. That suggestion is supported by the many radical differences between house and woodshed. But if we take that position, we face other difficulties. The problem of the contracted bays is one of them: if rectangle and peninsula were built first, why an atypical spacing for the peninsula colonnade? Another problem, and the most obdurate, is the question of what the house would have looked like before the woodshed addition. Did the porch continue along the west to circumnavigate the house, with a third temple-like gabled façade at the west? That would mean that the colonnade would replace half of the kitchen as we know it. It would also mean, after the corner bays were set out to typical dimensions, two even more contracted column spacings in the peninsula. Alternatively, if the kitchen were built as we have it, and the colonnade did not continue along the west façade, what would that façade have looked like? Did the west wall extend to the porch edge, effectively but oddly closing the colonnade? Or did the ends of the colonnade remain open to the west, making a sort-of T shaped western wall? Either alternative is architecturally bizarre.

We look again at the gable in the east wall of the woodshed. The header of its south window is also the door header--see center right fig. 2.15--which means that the window and the door are contemporaneous. Since the door without its stair makes no sense, the stair must be contemporaneous too. The original parts of that stair, in turn, seem to be of the same campaign as those of the stair to the cellar. And the cellar, in its turn, is in every way integrated with the woodshed; the two cannot reasonably be imagined as separate projects.

Therefore the east gable, including its windows and door, must be an original feature of the woodshed. The woodshed and the peninsula itself, then, must be contemporaneous, since the stair that is integral to the gable must always have led to somewhere. And the attic structures, and all other details, of both rectangle and peninsula, must then be contemporaneous as well.

Taking one thing with another, then, the strongest evidence seems to support the conclusion that the entirety of the house as we have it was designed and built as a single project. The windows in the east gable of the woodshed were probably simply meant to work in concert with their three compatriots in the west wall, to give the attic of the peninsula a bit of light and ventilation. The contracted column spacings immediately east of the woodshed remain unexplained.

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- 1851 14 Oct "Case, Thomas W., d. 24 September, nr Champoeg, age 4 years," 3:2.

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- 1859 19 Apr "Case, Fannie S., m. to J. P. Strowbridge," 3:1.
 1864 12 Sep Case, William M., "Marion County Commissioner donates lbr [lumber] for San[itary] Fair Pavilion," 1:5.

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- 1864 3 Oct Case, Fannie S., "of Marion County wins prize in ladies' riding contest at State Fair," 2:4.
 1866 23 July Case, Fannie S., "Graduates as Mistress of English Literature at Willamette University," 3:2.
 1871 26 Dec "Case, Fannie S., m. to S[amuel] A. Moreland of Portland."

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A GREEK TEMPLE IN FRENCH PRAIRIE: ADDENDUM

A TIMELINE OF EVENTS CENTRAL AND TANGENTIAL TO THE WILLIAM CASE HOUSE

1750-1799

- 1750 19 Jan *Birth of Isaiah CASE, father of Nathaniel CASE, grandfather of William M. and Isaiah W. CASE, Morris County, New Jersey; raised by Abel and Elizabeth TOMPKINS, a Quaker family of Morris County, New Jersey. 2 older brothers: William settled in Indiana, Charles Theosopholis in Kentucky; and see 1848.*
- 1759 *Birth of Frances CASE, mother of Nathaniel CASE, grandmother of William M. & Isaiah W. CASE; and see 1834.*
- 1775 - 1783 *Revolutionary War.*
- 1775 *Isaiah CASE enlists as a private under Lt. Currin and Major Ludlow, in a New Jersey Regiment; served 3 or more months.*
- 1780 Apr *Isaiah CASE moves to Wilkes County, North Carolina.*
7 Oct *Isaiah CASE again enlists, serves a year under Colonel Cleveland, fights in battle of Kings Mountain, North Carolina.*
- 1781 18 Oct *Isaiah CASE participates in siege and British surrender at Yorktown. After the war he remains in North Carolina until 1818; and see 1848. Marriage of Isaiah CASE and Frances CASE.*
- 1790 ca. *Birth of Sarah PLATT; and see 1882.*
- 1792 12 May *Birth of third child of Isaiah and Frances CASE: Nathaniel CASE, Wilkes County, North Carolina; and see 1867.*
- 1792 13 May *Birth of Margaret Anna BROWN, daughter of Benjamin and Susanna BROWN; and see 1834.*

1800-1849

- 1811 *Marriage of John POTTER and Sarah PLATT POTTER; and see 1822.*
- 1812 5 Nov *Marriage of Nathaniel CASE and Margaret Anna BROWN CASE; and see 1834 and 1867.*
- 1818 *Isaiah CASE moves to Indiana two years before birth of grandson William M. CASE.*
- 1820 8 Mar *Birth of fifth child of Nathaniel and Margaret CASE: William M. CASE, Wayne County, Indiana; and see 1841 and 1903.*
- 1822 17 Jan *Birth of Sarah Ann POTTER, daughter of John and Sarah PLATT POTTER, near Mt. Holly, New Jersey; raised New Garden Township, Wayne County, Indiana; and see 1841 and 1877.*

- 1826 ca. Birth of John HOEFER [HOFER], German cabinet maker; and see 1909.
- 1831 11 Sept Birth of tenth and last child of Nathaniel and Margaret CASE: Isaiah W. CASE, near Richmond, Wayne County Indiana; and see 1895.
- 1834 13 Aug Death of Frances CASE, mother of Nathaniel, grandmother of William M. and Isaiah W. CASE; and see 1859.
- 1 Dec Death of Margaret Anna BROWN CASE, mother of William M. and Isaiah W. CASE; buried Concord Baptist Cemetery north of Williamsburg, Indiana; and see 1759. Nathaniel CASE is ordained as Baptist Minister.
- 1839 Dr. William J. and Margaret J. BAILEY: one of first all white couples to settle on French Prairie: Bailey, Margaret J. " French Prairie Farm, 1839-1850," *Marion County History*, v. 5, 42-47. Salem, Oregon: Marion County Historical Society.
- 1840 U. S. Census: William M. CASE residing Green Township, Wayne County, Indiana.
U. S. Census: John POTTER, father of Sarah Ann POTTER, residing in New Garden Township, Wayne County, Indiana.
- 1841 17 Jan Marriage of William M. CASE and Sarah Ann POTTER.
- 1842 1 Apr William M. and Sarah Ann CASE embark for Oregon Country.
1 June Birth first child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Jonas Potter CASE, on trail to Missouri.
10 June William, Sarah, and Jonas CASE go to Holt County on Missouri River.
- 1843 30 June Birth second child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Sarah Frances ("Fannie") CASE, Holt County Missouri; name appears as both Frances and Francis. William M. CASE, in final will and in letters to her, uses Francis: and see ca. 1920s.
- 1844 8 May William, Sarah, Jonas, and Frances CASE depart Holt County, Missouri, for Oregon Country in wagon train from Plattsville, Missouri, led by Major Thorp/Thorpe/Tharp. Roll call list by Sarah Ann CASE names eleven female emigrants in train including "negress Aunt Hannah" and "mulatto girl Eliza." Slaves were illegal in Oregon, and there is no mention of these before or after Sarah's listing of them.
- 1844 3 Dec On arrival at The Dalles. women and children of the train are taken across the Columbia to Fort Vancouver; the remainder of the train turns southwest to the Willamette Valley.
- 1844-45 Dec-Jan Sarah, Jonas, and Sarah Frances CASE winter at Fort Vancouver.
- 1845 Census shows William M. CASE residing in Tuality, Provincial & Territorial # 12193 of Oregon Territory Land Claim Act.
- 1845 12 Feb Birth of third child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: John Nathaniel CASE, Oregon Country.
- 1845 William M. & Sarah Ann CASE settle Tualatin Plains near place now known as Hillsboro. An early cedar barn is mentioned in National Register documents.
- 1845 William M. CASE builds one of first frame barns in the Oregon Country on Wilkins site.
Mar. William, Sarah, Jonas, Frances, and Nathaniel CASE move to Donation Land Claim of 640 acres in French Prairie, acquired by Oregon Territory Land Claim Act (renamed Donation Land Claim Law, 1852). CASES may have been the second all-white couple, after William and Margaret BAILEY (see 1839), to settle on French Prairie; and see 1852.
- 1845 2 Aug Birth of Eliza BELL, Monmouth, Warren County, Illinois.
- 1847 27 Jan Birth of fourth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Thomas W. CASE; and see 1851.

- 1848 8 Jan *Death of grandfather Isaiah CASE; buried Concord Baptist Cemetery north of Williamsburg, Green Township, Wayne County Indiana.*
- late Aug *News reaches Oregon of California gold strike.*
- 18 Sept *Birth of fifth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Susan Lucinda CASE; and see 1860. The Oregon Country becomes The Oregon Territory.*
- 1849 *Territorial Government Convenes in Oregon City.*
- 1849 Feb *William M. CASE goes via bark "Anita" to San Francisco, then to Sacramento and Coloma. Employed profitably as a mechanic, he opted out of the mining.*
- 1849 Sept *DLC law requires residency on the land claim, dictating William CASE's return to French Prairie. Shipped/brought back parts for a water-powered saw mill to be constructed on the creek (later Case Creek) that flowed through his Land Claim.*
- 1850 - 1899**
- 1850 *First steam-powered mill in Oregon built in Portland by Reed Coffin; see Vaughan 1974. William CASE builds dam, water wheel, and sawmill on his land.*
- Apr *Isaiah CASE leaves Indiana for Oregon Territory*
- 27 Sept *Isaiah W. CASE arrives French Prairie, stays 18 months after arrival.*
- 25 Nov *Birth of sixth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Mary Elmira CASE, Champoeg, Marion County, Oregon Territory; and see 1899.*
- 1851 *Champoeg County becomes Marion County; Tuality becomes Washington County.*
- 31 Aug. *letter from father Rev. Nathaniel CASE, to children in Oregon Territory mentions chest/trunk made by William M. CASE in 1840, left in Indiana; and see 1903.*
- 24 Sept. *death of fourth child Thomas W. CASE, age 5; buried Champoeg Cemetery South, Lot 1; Plot 6.*
- 1852 *Donation Land Claim Act replaces act of 1845; CASE DLC #764. William CASE builds early, perhaps second, public school in Marion County, known as Case School House: Marion County School District #2 school house at southwest corner Case Road N.E. and Yergen Road, Marion County, Oregon. Stagecoach service established between Oregon City and Champoeg by Edward DUPUIS.*
- 1853 *Steam-powered sawmill built in Seattle by Henry YESLER; see Vaughan 1974. Washington Territory created from land north of the Columbia River. Oregon Territory capital is moved from Oregon City to Salem. Willamette University, Salem, is chartered.*
- 24 Mar *Birth of seventh child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Alice ("Allie") Amanda CASE, Marion County, Oregon; and see 1874 and 1936.*
- 1854 *Tax roll William M. CASE Lane County Provisional & Territorial 14092. Tax roll William M. CASE Marion County Provisional & Territorial 12277A.*
- 1855 *Tax roll William M. CASE Marion County Provisional & Territorial 12277B.*
- 4 Feb *Birth of eighth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Jane Elizabeth ("Jennie") CASE, Champoeg, Marion County, Oregon; and see 1874.*
- 1856 *Tax roll William M. CASE Marion County Provisional & Territorial 12277C.*
- 11 Oct *Birth of ninth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Margaret ("Anna") Adelaide CASE; Champoeg, Marion County, Oregon; and see 1863-64.*
- 1858 *Tax roll William M. CASE Marion County Provisional & Territorial 12277E.*

- 1858-59 William M. CASE *builds new farm house to emulate Greek temple*; 1971 report by Dale MORROW cites "John (William) SCHATZ, German cabinet maker, responsible for interior furnishings and built-in cabinets"; John HOEFER, *cabinet maker, mentioned MCHS v. XI.*
- 20 Aug Birth of tenth child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Benjamin Isaiah CASE; and see 1860.
- 1859 Willamette University's first graduate, Emily YORK.
- 14 Feb Congress admits Oregon as 33rd state.
- 5 Apr Marriage of Sarah Frances ("Fannie") CASE to John P. STROWBRIDGE; *the couple live until 1861 in Powell Valley near Portland, Oregon. (CASE Family Letters bound volumes 26 Apr. 1859; and Oregon Statesman 19 Apr. 1859 3:1).*
- 1860 Marion County census lists CASE family household as William CASE (40), his wife S.A. (38), sons J.P. (18), J.N. (15), Benjamin Isaiah (1), daughters Susan (11), M.E. (9), Alice (7), Jane (5) and Anna (3), and William SCHATZ (30) carpenter from Baden. Does not include daughter Sarah Frances CASE.
- 3 July Death of tenth child Benjamin Isaiah CASE, age 2 years; buried Champoeg Cemetery South, Lot 1: Plot 5.
- 5 July Death of fifth child Susan Lucinda CASE, age 12 years; buried Champoeg Cemetery South, Lot 1 Plot 4.
- Dec Lincoln elected President.
- 1861 14 Jan Birth of eleventh and twelfth children of William and Sarah Ann CASE: twins Ella Nora ("Eleanor") CASE and George William CASE.
- 25 Jan Birth of first child of Sarah Frances CASE: Emma Susan STROWBRIDGE, near Portland.
- Apr Civil War begins with Confederate attack on Fort Sumter.
Nathaniel CASE ceases preaching at the onset of the Civil War.
Sarah Frances CASE STROWBRIDGE returns to French Prairie farmstead with child.
- 1861 18 Sept Divorce of Sarah Frances CASE STROWBRIDGE from John P. STROWBRIDGE in Salem, Marion County, Oregon. (CASE Family Letters v. 1 & Oregon State Archives #1131.) Terms stipulate Sarah Francis be given management of the child forever.
Severe flooding Champoeg, Willamette Valley, and Portland.
- 14 Dec Case Letters v. 1 to William CASE from Isaiah W. CASE: "Anxious to hear how your mill and dam came out also the sheep."
- 1862 Isaiah W. CASE to Umatilla and Idaho gold mines.
- 22 Sep Lincoln announces Emancipation Proclamation.
- 3 July Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg.
- 19 Nov Lincoln delivers a short address at Gettysburg Cemetery in southern Pennsylvania.
- 1863-64 John Nathaniel CASE attends Willamette University; no record of graduation.
- 1863-64 Margaret Anna Adelaide CASE attends Willamette University.
- 1864 20 July Birth of thirteenth and last child of William and Sarah Ann CASE: Ida Belle ("Belle") CASE, Multnomah County, Oregon; and see 1878 and 1886.
- 1865 9 Apr Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox.
- 14 Apr Lincoln is assassinated.
Civil War ends.

- 1865 25 Aug *Death of first child Jonas POTTER CASE, age 23; buried Champoeg Cemetery South, Lot 1; Plot 1; headstone inscription is given as "James" in Champoeg Cemetery Inventory.*
- 1866
23 July *Jane Elizabeth CASE attends Willamette University, no record of graduation.*
Sarah Frances CASE (listed as Fannie S.) graduates Willamette University (listed in later bulletin under married name MORELAND), as "Mistress of English Literature."
- 1867
Isaiah W. CASE, merchant and banker, moves from Portland to Astoria, Oregon, founds Astoria Savings Bank.
Aug 26-28 *Sarah Frances CASE and Willamette University classmate Mary A. ROBINSON are first two white women to climb Mt. Hood; see Mt. Hood: A Guide, 88; Grauer, 207; and Marion County History v. 10, 1972-1976; Clark Will, "Aurora Colonists..." 34.*
14 Sept *Death of Nathaniel CASE; buried Concord Baptist Cemetery north of Williamsburg, Indiana; and see 1892.*
- 1869 *Transcontinental railroad completed.*
- 1870-80 ca. *Extant barn north and east of the new farmhouse is built of fitted beams and pegs.*
- 1870 *Mary Elmira CASE graduates Willamette University.*
- 1871 26 Dec *Second marriage of Sarah Frances CASE STROWBRIDGE, to Samuel A. MORELAND.*
- 1872 *Marriage of Jane Elizabeth CASE to Robert NEVIN; and see 1874 and 1875.*
- 1874 *Alice Amanda CASE graduates Willamette University.*
1 Apr *Birth of only child of Robert and Jane Elizabeth CASE NEVIN: Roy William NEVIN.*
13 Aug *Marriage of Alice Amanda CASE to Alexander Elijah BORTHWICK.*
- 1875 *Divorce of Jane Elizabeth CASE; returns to farmstead with son Roy William NEVIN.*
- 1877 *Margaret Anna Adelaide CASE HOYT and Ida Belle CASE move to Los Angeles.*
29 Mar *Death of Sarah Ann POTTER CASE; buried Champoeg Cemetery South Lot 1 Plot 2.*
- 1877 5 Oct *Articles of Incorporation by William M. CASE for Champoeg Mills Wagon Road & Warehouse Company; see National Register Documents February 27, 1975.*
23 Oct. *Birth of second child of Sarah Frances ("Fannie") CASE STROWBRIDGE MORELAND: Edna MORELAND; and see 1889.*
- 1878 *Marriage of Mary Elmira CASE to Ira FELT, in California, accompanied by Ella Nora CASE.*
Marriage of William M. CASE to Eliza BELL, Clackamas County, Oregon.
- 1880 ca. *Death of John POTTER, father of Sarah Ann POTTER CASE.*
30 June *Marriage of Emma Susan STROWBRIDGE to Horace Westron THIELSEN or Thielson.*
12 Oct *Birth of child of Mary Elmira CASE FELT: Lubel Kinley FELT.*
- 1881 9 July *Birth of only child of Alice Amanda CASE and Alexander Elijah BORTHWICK: William Lawrence BORTHWICK.*
- 1882 *John Nathaniel CASE living in Omaha, Nebraska.*
Margaret Adelaide CASE HOYT running a boarding house in Los Angeles
July *Death of Sarah PLATT POTTER mother of Sarah Ann POTTER CASE; see Dec 1882 letter from grandchild to William M. Case.*
6 Dec *Marriage of George William CASE to Clara Ellen FELLER, Butteville, Marion County, Oregon.*
- 1883 *Railroad to Portland completed.*

- 1883 Letter from Mary Elmira CASE FELT to William M. CASE ... "very low rainfall. If we had that creek here on this place it would be all the fortune we would need." See Case Family Letters bound volumes.
- 1886 Death of Samuel A. MORELAND.
- 13 Apr Marriage of Ida Belle CASE to Clifford C. GIBBONS, Los Angeles.
- 1887 10 Oct Birth of first child of George W. and Clara Ellen FELLER CASE: Clifford Charles (or Charles Clifford?) CASE; and see 1966. Private 54th Spruce Sq WWI, member of American Legion.
- 1889 Indiana visit of William M. and Eliza BELL CASE; only such visit since departure in 1842.
- 4 Feb Birth of second child of George W. and Clara Ellen FELLER CASE: Mildred CASE.
- 18 Apr Marriage of Edna MORELAND to Walter Edwin TYLER.
- 15 May Birth of child of Ida Belle CASE GIBBONS; Edward Russell GIBBONS.
- 1890 Third marriage of Sarah Frances CASE STROWBRIDGE MORELAND, to Edward G HARVEY, Clackamas County Oregon.
- 10 Nov. Birth of third child of George W. and Clara FELLER CASE: Harold CASE; and see 1956
- 1892 14 Sept 100th reunion of birth of Nathaniel CASE, hosted by Isaiah W. CASE, Astoria, Oregon; photo showing attendees and list of attendees in Astoria newspaper article, undated.
- 1895 Census John Nathaniel CASE in Marion County Oregon.
Census Ella Nora CASE in Multnomah County, Oregon.
Census Eliza Bell CASE living on CASE farmstead.
- 3/5 Feb Death of Isaiah W. CASE, Astoria, Oregon; William M. CASE obit (OHS) tells of Isaiah's financial reversal before death, includes an early photo.
- 1899 14 Oct Death of Mary Elmira CASE FELT; letter William CASE to "Dear Daughter Frances, dear Mary died Oct. 1899 the most sad thing in the history of my family. "
- 1900-2007**
- 1900 ca. The town of Champoeg, repeatedly flooded over the years, is abandoned.
- 12 Nov Birth of Alfreda Grace PHILPOTT ARENDT (1900-1973) on homestead in Oklahoma; see 1943-45 and 1973.
- 1903 24 Jan Will and codicil of William M. CASE, revised 3 Feb. 1903. The remaining 191.87 acres of the original 640 acre Donation Land Claim was the only land mentioned in William M Case's will. Its bequest, with furniture and house, was to Sarah Frances CASE HARVEY, Ella Nora CASE CRANSTOUN, and Emma Susan STROWBRIDGE THIELSEN, with the stipulation that it be available to all children and grandchildren of William and Sarah CASE for as long as they wished.
- 11 Feb Death of William M. CASE; buried Champoeg Cemetery South, by front gate, Lot 1; Plot 1.
Eliza Bell CASE left the farmhouse soon after William M. CASE's death to live with sister Emma Jane BELL (Mrs. John McKee BOYCE) and family at Eagle Creek, Clackamas County, Oregon.
- ca. Hand colored photo of farmhouse mentioned in National Register Documents and in possession of W. K. Huntington.
- 1903 - 1925 Second generation (George William CASE) farming the land, with others outside the family.

- 1904 ca July *Class reunion photo of the 1852 CASE School House: 6 adults: 1 man (F. A. Bauer), 5 women (Chambers, Kennedy, Buskey, Bauer, Longeran).*
- 1905 *Birth of twin children of George William and Clara Ellen FELLER CASE.*
- 1909 25 Apr *Death of John HOEFER [HOFER]; buried Champoeg Cemetery North, Row 2 Lot 23.*
- 1910 *Census Eliza Bell CASE living with sister Emma Jane Bell BOYCE, Eagle Creek, Clackamas County, Oregon.*
- 1914 Aug *Beginning of Great War (WW I).*
- 1914 1 Apr *Death of Eliza BELL CASE; buried in historic Foster Cemetery, Eagle Creek, Oregon.*
- 1917 *World-wide flue epidemic.*
- 1918 11 Nov *Great War armistice.*
- 1920-25 *Death of Sarah Frances CASE STROWBRIDGE MORELAND HARVEY.*
- 1925 *Death of George William CASE; buried Champoeg Cemetery North, Row 3, Lot 2; and see 1861.*
Photo of CASE farmhouse, looking shabby, surrounded by firewood "hedge"; photo by Clark Moor Will from Marion County History v. 10 p. 16: Marion County Historical Society.
- 1925 *After death of father George William CASE, Clifford and Harold CASE continue farming bequeathed property and land north belonging to their mother, Clara Ellen Feller CASE.*
- 1930 *Four of the 13 CASE children still living: Alice Amanda CASE BORTHICK and Margaret Anna Adelaide CASE HOYT MAXWELL, both of Portland; Eleanor P. CASE. CRANSTOWN [CRANSTOUN] of Boston; and Ida Belle CASE GIBBONS of Los Angeles.*
- 1934 18 Oct *Death of Emma Susan STROWBRIDGE THIELSEN; buried Champoeg Cemetery West ½ Row 4; Lot 45; and see 1861 and 1880.*
- 1934 13 Dec *Death of Horace Westron THIELSEN, buried Champoeg Cemetery West ½ Row 4; Lot 45; and see 1880.*
- 1934 Dec *Until death of Emma Susan STROWBRIDGE THIELSEN and Horace Westron THIELSEN, the acreage on the east side of Case Road and the sliver of land on Case Creek were held in their ownership.*
- 1936 *Death of Alice Amanda CASE BORTHWICK; buried Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery, Portland, Oregon.*
- 1941 7 Dec *Japanese carrier aircraft bomb PEARL HARBOR beginning WWII.*
- 1943 *Death of CLARA Ellen FELLER CASE, buried Champoeg Cemetery North Row 3, Lot 26; headstone reads "Mother."*
Case farmhouse, now white, is vacant, the land leased to a Mr. Mandeville.
- 1944 *Case farm acreage bequeathed to 3 Case descendants, 191.87 of original 640 acre Donation Land Claim, is purchased by Harold Joseph ARENDT, Sr. and Alfretta Grace PHILPOTT ARENDT, for \$14,300.00, from George Guthrie, receiver, Oregon-Washington Joint Stock Land Bank of Portland, Oregon. Purchase includes house, barns, and out buildings (p. 217 of Case Farm Abstract held by Karen Arendt); and see 1977.*
- 1943-69 *Alfretta Grace PHILPOTT ARENDT occupies the farmhouse until 1969, when, in failing health, she moves to Canby, Oregon.*
- 1945 Aug *WWII ends.*
- 1956 25 Sept *Death of Harold CASE, third child of George W. and Clara Ellen FELLER CASE.*

- 1957 6 June *Death of Lubel Kinley FELT REED.*
- 1958 4 Dec *Death of William Lawrence BORTHWICK.*
- 1962 *Columbus Day Storm blows down part of the pole barn.*
- 1965 11 Mar *Death of Harold Joseph ARENDT, Sr.; buried Champoeg Cemetery North, Row 10 Lot 60.*
- 1966 28 June *Death of Clifford Charles CASE; buried Champoeg Cemetery.*
- 1969 24 Dec *Gilbert ARENDT is farming the 191.87 acres; see Elisabeth Walton Potter Report 24 December, 1969.*
- 1970-76 *The farmhouse is unoccupied; Lorin ARENDT lives in adjacent house, near the present Case house entry walk.*
- 1971 *Mrs. Harold Joseph ARENDT, SR. is sole owner of CASE farmhouse and land, farmed by Gilbert ARENDT.*
Don Morrow report mentions John HOFER/HOEFER as furniture builder for Wm M. CASE house.
- 25 June *Two-page hand written Case House report by Dale Morrow included with the National Register of Historic Place Inventory-Nomination Form notes that the 1861 census has John SCHATZ, aka William, German cabinet maker, living in William & Sarah CASE household, and responsible for interior furnishings and built-in cabinets.*
- 1973 27 Feb *National Register Nomination describes 9.5 acre site; encompassed is the core of the historic farmstead: the original cedar barn (no longer extant; info about layout, dimensions, and shape); the Cherry Orchard adjacent to house on south substantially intact; the detached service structures on westerly side of the house; the 20th century carriage shed northeast of the main building; the 1860's board-and-batten smoke house southwest of the pegged-construction barn, with brick hearth, wood flooring; the bath or wash house, also of pegged construction, immediately off the veranda at the SW corner of the house; matching the house in its Classical Revival finish. Its temple form was recorded before its collapse; within its ruins are a brick fire box, chimney with iron kettle, and a brick-lined well with rope and windlass.*
- 1973 Dec *On death of Alfretta PHILPOTT ARENDT the property is subdivided among the ARENDT progeny.*
- 1977 *An amendment to the National Register Nomination decreases the acreage considered to be contiguous to the house from 9.5 acres to 7.12 acres.*
The farmhouse and 7.12 acres are sold to Wallace Kay HUNTINGTON.
Award-winning restoration and adaptive reuse by E Gilman DAVIS AIA, Mirza DICKEL ASID, Wallace Kay HUNTINGTON ASLA, and Lyle WARREN, Master Craftsman.
- 1977-2007 *Development of the garden to Wallace Kay HUNTINGTON's design.*

THE ADDRESS OF THE CASE FARMHOUSE HAS VARIOUSLY BEEN NEWELLSVILLE, BUTTEVILLE, CHAMPOEG, HUBBARD, AND (CURRENTLY) AURORA.

SURNAMES OF CASE DESCENDANTS INCLUDE: BORTHWICK, BROWN, CASE, CAUDILL, CRANSTOUN, CROGHAN, DENSMORE, FELLER, FELT, GIBBONS, HARVEY, HOYT, MAXWELL, MORELAND, NEVIN, PLATT, POTTER, REED, STOUT, STROWBRIDGE, and THIELSEN