

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Formal DOE Date: 02/09/09  
NRIS#: 09000049

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Bloch, Ernest, House

Other names/site number Sea Krest Lodge

### 2. Location

street & number 116 N.W. Gilbert Way  not for publication

city of town Newport  vicinity

State Oregon code OR county Lincoln code 041 zip code 97365

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination X request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Deputy SHPO

12.30.08  
Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:)

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
2		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
3		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS: Arts and Crafts

OTHER: Rustic

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: shake

roof: CONCRETE: cement shingle

other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

PERFORMING ARTS

**Period of Significance**

1941-1959

**Significant Dates**

1941, 1959

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Ernest Bloch

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Lincoln County Historical Society

Bloch, Ernest, House  
Name of Property

Lincoln Co., OR  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.59 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	10	4946996	416001	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ernest Bloch Legacy Foundation, with assistance from Cara Kaser, Oregon SHPO Staff  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date October 2008; rev. December 2008  
street & number P.O. Box 1315 telephone (541) 574-5452  
city or town Newport state Oregon zip code 97365

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

**Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

name Salem First Baptist Church  
street & number 395 Marion Street NE telephone (503) 364-2285  
city or town Salem state Oregon zip code 97301

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## DESCRIPTION

### SUMMARY

The Ernest Bloch House, located at 116 N.W. Gilbert Way in the Agate Beach district within the city limits of Newport in Lincoln County, Oregon, was the last residence where the notable teacher and composer Ernest Bloch lived and the only property Bloch ever owned. Although initially built in 1914 as a coastal retreat for the locally well-known Asahel Bush III family of Salem, Oregon, Bloch would later purchase the house and property in 1941, remaining there until his death in 1959. While living at Agate Beach, Bloch undertook over twenty-five musical works, composing both in the main room of the house and in the upper floor of the garage-studio. In addition, Bloch used the lower floor of the garage-studio as a lapidary, and often walked a trail that wound down to Agate Beach. Today, the property remains relatively unchanged, and includes three contributing resources, including a house, a circa 1914 garage-studio, and a beach-access trail in its original location.<sup>1</sup>

### SETTING

The Ernest Bloch House is situated on eleven lots, totaling 1.59 acres, which slope gradually to the southwest before ending at a steep wooded bluff overlooking Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean. The area is located in the city of Newport in western Lincoln County along the central Oregon coast. The property is accessed from U.S. Highway 101 via N.W. Gilbert Way; a paved driveway leads from N.W. Gilbert Way to the main house. The property is heavily wooded with large coniferous trees, bushes, and other vegetation. Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean can be viewed from most points on the property.

Upon first accessing the Bloch House property, the garage-studio is set on a small rise toward the northeast corner of the property along a portion of the southeastern property line. A narrow paved driveway roughly parallels the main facade of the garage-studio, ending in a large paved parking area to the south. The house is located downhill from the garage-studio, perched at the top of a steep bluff. A trail system that winds down the bluff to Agate Beach begins a few feet from the rear, ocean-facing facade of the house. Remnants of a circa-1914 fence system, still with white weathered paint and decorative post finials, line portions of the southeastern property line near the southeast facade of the house. Both the house and garage-studio are constructed of Douglas-fir that was most likely produced by the C.D. Johnson lumber mill in nearby Toledo, Oregon.<sup>2</sup>

### House

#### *Exterior Description*

The one-story gable-roofed, U-shaped house is situated near the edge of a steep hillside and is constructed of old-growth Douglas-fir. A mix of the Arts and Crafts and Rustic styles, the building rests on a large aggregate concrete basement foundation and consists of a large, side-gabled, main volume.<sup>3</sup> Two front gable wings extend from the

<sup>1</sup> This description is based on two site visits by Cara Kaser (Oregon SHPO staff) on April 19 and June 14-15, 2008; conversations with Mark McConnell and Judy Buffo with the Ernest Bloch Legacy Foundation, and historic photographs and documentation.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Judy Buffo, Ernest Bloch Legacy Foundation, by Cara Kaser, Salem, Oregon, Spring 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The Ernest Bloch House is actually located on a southwest/northeast axis. For the purpose of clarity, this text references a south/north axis.

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northeast and southeast corners of the main volume: the south kitchen wing, and the north bedroom wing. There is also a relatively small, front gable volume stacked in front of the bedroom wing. A deck located on the south facade of the house provides exterior access to the kitchen wing, while another smaller deck on the north facade, connected to a non-original deck on the rear facade, provides access to the main volume of the house. An exterior entry to the basement is located on the south facade of the building. The entire building is clad in original 30-inch split cedar shake with 12-inch reliefs arranged in a coursed pattern. Two types of paired casement windows are found throughout the house. The "large" type consists of a set of 3 ½ foot wide by 5 foot tall paired casement windows with 8-lights per sash; the "small" type consists of a set of 3 ½ foot wide by 2 ½ foot tall paired casement windows with 4-lights per sash. Original wood knee braces and vergeboards are present in the gable ends of the building, while the gable sides exhibit exposed rafter tails. The building features a high-relief, but low-profile, non-historic concrete shingle roof.

### *Front (East) Facade*

The front facade of the Bloch House features an easterly-facing courtyard area made of poured concrete, flanked by the two wings of the house, and serves as the main access to the house. Attached near the middle of the north side of the kitchen wing is a large exterior fireplace and chimney constructed of smooth rounded river rock laid in a roughly coursed pattern with an original poured concrete mantel.<sup>4</sup> To the south of the fireplace is a 4-sash fixed ribbon window with 4-lights per sash. Two sets of large paired casement windows, and one set of small paired casement windows in between are present on the bedroom wing side facing the courtyard. Four small planters made of the same smooth rounded river rock as the fireplace are also present within the courtyard area, with two planters flanking a 1-panel, 8-light door with 8-light sidelights that serves as the main entrance of the house. A low pair of poured concrete steps lead up to the main entrance.

The gable end of the kitchen wing consists of one 4-light casement window, followed by two of the large paired casement windows as are present in the courtyard. The gable end of the bedroom wing also consists of one set of large paired casement windows, but also includes a slightly sloped scored terra cotta tile patio area recessed 4 ½ feet deep and is 8 ½ feet wide with a beadboard ceiling. This recessed area was once used as an outdoor shower and wood shower curtain rod holders are still present. Exterior access to the bedroom wing of the house is provided for by a 1-panel 8-light door from this recessed patio.

### *North Facade*

The north facade of the recessed patio area contains one paired casement with 2-lights per sash. From here, four windows in the north gable side of the bedroom wing alternate between the smaller and larger paired casement windows. Moving west along this facade sloping toward the bluff, the large aggregate concrete foundation becomes more exposed.

At the west corner of the north facade, a patio and non-original deck area is present within the "ell" created by the main volume of the house and bedroom wing, sheltered by a shed roof with exposed rafter tails and a smaller shed roof underneath constructed of beadboard. Two 4 by 4-inch wood posts resting on a remnant of a low river rock wall with a 4 by 4-inch crossbeam, braced with two 2 by 4-inch brackets, support the two shed roofs. Remnants of brick pavers originally used in the patio area are also present. A non-original concrete step and wood deck lead up to a 1-

<sup>4</sup> The exterior fireplace was constructed of smooth rounded river rocks collected from Agate Beach.

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panel, 8-light door with 8-light sidelights (same as the main entrance door). A large paired casement window is present within the patio area on the end of the bedroom wing. Across from this window, on the west side of the patio area, is a non-original 2-panel sliding glass door that leads to the rest of the deck area.

### *Rear (West) Facade*

As the site slopes down toward the bluff, the foundation of the house becomes more exposed at the rear facade. Four large picture windows, likely replaced during the 1940s or 1950s, are present on this facade and are situated in the same dimensional space as the original multi-pane casement windows. Two picture windows are located in 7-foot wide chamfered corners of the rear facade. The remaining two picture windows flank the exterior of a large 8 ½-foot wide non-original chimney constructed of oversized rock-faced brick. Roughly in the middle of the rear facade, the chimney extends through the gable side of the roof. Remnants of the original river rock chimney are present at the base of this newer chimney.

An elevated wood deck spans the entire width of the rear facade, complete with railing and balusters. The north end of the deck contains a wood ramp for wheelchair access to the house, while the south end of the deck contains a short flight of wood stairs. The lower portion of the deck is covered with wood lattice work to hide the deck's support structure. Although not original, the deck does not obscure views of the bluff, Agate Beach, or the ocean, and does not compromise the integrity of the Bloch House.

### *South Facade*

Like the rear facade, the south facade of the house sits on the exposed concrete foundation. A picture window is located in the middle of the gable end of the main volume of the house, with another picture window situated in the gable end of the kitchen wing. Exterior access to the basement of the house is situated in the "ell" formed by the two gable ends. A pair of cellar doors constructed of 2 by 4-inch lumber and plywood covered with metal sheeting supported by two poured concrete walls provides access to a steeply sloped poured concrete ramp stamped with trowel marks for traction. A set of long wooden boards with rungs for traction are positioned on top of the ramp. A 1-panel door located at the bottom of the ramp in the southeast facade provides access to the basement.

The south side of the kitchen wing contains three, 6-light fixed windows, with two of the windows flanking a 2-panel, 4-light door, which provides access to the kitchen. A small non-original wood porch with one flight of stairs on either end provides exterior access to the kitchen door.

### *Interior Description*

The interior of the Bloch House consists of four volumes: the main room, kitchen wing, bedroom wing, and basement area. Common throughout the house is the use of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir for the ceiling, flooring constructed of 2 ½-inch wide tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir, and walls constructed of 12-inch wide wood boards and 4 ½-inch wide wood battens. 4-inch and 5-inch wood ceiling moldings and baseboards with ¼-inch wood round trim, as well as 4-inch and 4 ½-inch plain wood door and windows surrounds, are also found throughout the interior.

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### *Main Room*

The main entrance to the house is through the courtyard on the east side, which leads directly into a large main room. The main room is an approximately 33 by 23-foot oblong octagon with an approximately 10-foot high ceiling constructed of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir running the width of the south and north ends of the room. The ceiling breaks into a high angled vault constructed of board-and-batten before breaking again into a flat apex made of beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir that defines most of the center of the room. Decorative wood box ceiling molding is present, as well as wider box beams where the ceiling begins to vault. The walls are constructed entirely of board-and-batten with each batten topped with a decorative cavetto-shaped molding. Both the north and south walls have two wide-chamfered corners on either end, with openings on the easterly side leading to either the bedroom or kitchen wings.

Picture windows are located on the south and west walls, with two windows located in the chamfered corners. Several windows have 1 by 7-inch windowsills that are supported by inverted cavetto-shaped brackets. Two picture windows flank a large fireplace constructed of multi-color brick centered on the west wall. A multi-light door with multi-light sidelights on the north wall provides access to the exterior of the house.

### *Kitchen Wing*

Entry to the approximately 36 by 22-foot kitchen wing is through a double-action swinging, 2-panel door with cross bracing. Like the main room, most of the walls consist of board-and-batten, but without the decorative cavetto-shaped moldings. The north, east, and portions of the south walls are constructed of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir. The south portion of the kitchen is divided by a single boxed-post supporting a box beam that extends nearly half the length of the wing and contains short decorative battens. The floor is currently covered in vinyl flooring.

Off of the kitchen area through the south wall is a small pantry with its original cabinetry. This space also provides access to the house's attic. Also off the kitchen through the south wall is a 5-panel door leading to a small half-bathroom, with a single, short multi-light paired casement window and walls consisting of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir boards.

### *Bedroom Wing*

Like the kitchen wing, entry to the approximately 36 by 30-foot bedroom wing is also located off of the main room through a double-action swinging, 2-panel door with cross bracing. Wood ceilings, and board-and-batten walls are present, as are wood floors, but these are currently covered with carpet. The attic of the house can also be accessed from the hallway.

All five bedrooms are accessed from the hallway through 5-panel doors. Upon entering, each bedroom consists of the same board-and-batten walls as are present in the hallway, and are configured in approximately the same way. To the right of each bedroom doorway is a 5-panel closet door; next to this door on the left is a built-in dresser/vanity area with an overhead storage cupboard. Continuing on the same wall, to the left of the built-in dresser/vanity is another closet with a 5-panel door. Although the southwestern-most bedroom still retains its original built-in dresser, the room's closets are no longer present. The northeastern-most bedroom's closet that was closest to the door is also no longer present. Each room has at least one tall, paired casement window (the northwestern-most and



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southeastern-most bedrooms have two sets of these windows). Currently, freestanding wood bunk beds installed by the present owners are in each bedroom.

The bedroom that Bloch used varies slightly from the arrangements of the other bedrooms. The northwestern-most room, Bloch's bedroom retains a closet and built-in dresser/vanity to the right of the entryway. Instead of a closet on the other side of the dresser/vanity, however, there is access to a half-bathroom that has board-and-batten walls, a single short, paired casement window, and vinyl flooring (this half-bath also connects through another door to an adjoining bedroom). Two more closets are instead located against the western wall of the bedroom, flanking a tall casement window.

The bedroom wing also contains two half-bathrooms and two full-bathrooms. Each bathroom contains board-and-batten walls, a single short, multi-light paired casement window, and original screened vent. The northwestern-most bathroom also has a built-in cupboard/vanity. Most floors in the bathrooms are currently covered by vinyl. Although originally a half-bathroom, the northeastern-most bathroom has also been retrofitted for the inclusion of a shower stall and was installed in a space that was originally a closet for the northeastern-most bedroom.

### *Basement*

The basement of the Bloch House is accessed from outside, down a poured concrete ramp and through a 1-panel door. Inside, a portion of the basement situated under the main volume of the house is only 6 ½ feet high. Crawlspace accessed through the basement are located under the bedroom and kitchen wings. The basement floor is poured concrete with massive concrete footings to support the building throughout. At times, the concrete footings are nearly two feet thick. Originally used to store firewood, the basement also contains many of the original windows and window screens that were removed from the rear facade of the house.

### **Garage-studio**

#### ***Exterior Description***

The circa 1914 two-story, gable-roofed garage-studio sits just to the northeast of the house. Also constructed of old-growth Douglas-fir, the building mimics the appearance of the house in its use of elements borrowed from the Arts and Crafts and Rustic styles. Occupying an approximately 24 by 38-foot rectangular footprint, the building is supported by a large aggregate concrete foundation that becomes more exposed as the land slopes downhill towards the bluff. A small covered entryway addition on a concrete foundation is positioned at the northwest corner of the building. Although not original, this entryway provides access to the upper floor of the building. A set of concrete stairs leads up a small slope on the north side of the building to a non-original 1-panel door that provides access to the lower portion of the garage-studio. A non-historic wood staircase and landing on the east side of the building serve as an emergency exit for the upper floor, while a non-original, 1-panel door on this same side provides an emergency exit for the lower floor. Like the house, the entire exterior of the garage-studio is clad in original 30-inch split cedar shake with 12-inch reliefs arranged in a coursed pattern. Two window types are common throughout the building: a large set of 4-foot tall by 3 ½-foot wide paired casement windows with 6-lights per sash, and a small set of 4-foot wide by 2 ½-foot tall paired casement windows with 4-lights per sash. Original wood knee braces, tongue-and-groove soffits, and vergeboards are present in the gable ends of the building, while gable sides also exhibit tongue-and-groove soffits and exposed rafter tails. The building has an asphalt composition shingle roof.

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### *Front (North) and West Facades*

The front facade of the garage-studio exhibits a full-width skirt-roof positioned approximately half-way up the side of the building. Below the skirt-roof on the lower portion of the facade are two, non-original, 2-sash sliding glass windows. The upper portion on the facade consists of four equally spaced and sized small casement windows, although one window has been replaced with a 1-light fixed pane, although the original opening and casings are intact. A 1-panel door towards the northwest corner of the building provides entry to the lower floor. Entry to the upper floor of the building is accessed by a set of concrete stairs and wood hand railing leading to an outside porch and entryway. The west facade contains two, evenly spaced picture windows that were most likely replaced by the Blochs sometime during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>5</sup> The non-original porch and entryway at the southwest corner of the facade also contains a small, 2-sash sliding glass window.

### *Rear (South) and East Facades*

The rear facade features four evenly spaced and equally sized small windows in the upper portion of the building. One of the windows is a small paired casement window. Although the other three windows have been replaced with a 1-light fixed pane, the original window openings and casings are intact. The lower portion of the facade also exhibits three evenly spaced, large paired casement windows. The east facade consists of an emergency exit door on the lower portion of the facade, and an emergency exit door and wood staircase on the upper portion.

### *Interior Description*

#### *Lower Floor*

The lower floor of the garage-studio is accessed through the front facade. Due to its original use as a carriage house, the lower floor is an open volume consisting of a poured concrete floor and walls. The ceiling is covered with plywood, as are the ceiling beams, with ¼-inch ceiling molding. Like the house, this floor contains several freestanding wood bunk beds that were installed by the current owners. A non-original bathroom area on the west side of the building is divided from the main volume and accessed through a 1-panel door, containing toilets and two shower stalls. Flooring in the bathroom and shower area consists of vinyl and tile. A closet is located off the bathroom, also accessed by a 1-panel door. Although adapted for use as a garage and lapidary, and later "bunkhouse," the lower floor of the garage-studio still retains its sense of openness and original use.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Upper Floor*

The upper floor of the garage-studio is accessed through the small porch addition, the interior of which is sheathed in plywood with ¼-inch ceiling molding and vinyl baseboard. An original staircase off of the porch addition leads up to the studio area of the building. The enclosed staircase is clad in 12-inch board and 3 ½-inch battens, and includes a banister with 6 by 6-inch wood end posts with plain square post caps. Like the main volume of the house, the studio area is also a large volume with a vaulted 4-inch wide Douglas-fir beadboard ceiling that reaches approximately 8 ¼-feet in height before sloping to approximately 5 ¾-feet high along the gable sides. All walls on

<sup>5</sup> Photos of Bloch in front of the garage-studio dated from 1954 show these picture windows.

<sup>6</sup> Bloch's lapidary was located near the southeast corner of the lower floor, although no visible remnants of any machinery or the work area remain.

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the floor consist of 12-inch board and 3 ½-inch battens, with ¼-inch round ceiling molding, and 5-inch wood baseboards. Although original tongue-and-groove wood floors exist, they are presently covered with carpeting. Windows exist on three walls of the volume, including a picture window in the southwest corner near where Bloch composed. Because the building sits on a slight rise, Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean can be viewed from this corner of the studio. Several freestanding bunk beds installed by the current owner are present in the room.

The upper floor is divided by a wall and doorway that provides access to a sink, toilet, and shower area. Originally designed as a bedroom and half-bathroom, this smaller volume retains most of its original form. Like the main volume of the upper floor, this smaller bathroom area also has a vaulted ceiling, board-and-batten walls, and original tongue-and-groove wood floors underneath vinyl flooring. Sinks, countertops, and mirrors were installed in the former bedroom area by the current owners, while toilet and shower stalls were installed in the former half-bath area. The original 5-panel wood door separates the sink/vanity area from the toilet and shower area. There is a single window present on either side of the volume. The east wall contains a 1-panel door for emergency access.

### Beach-Access Trail

Bloch regularly accessed Agate Beach via a trail that begins near the rear facade of the house, winding down the steep bluff, and ending at the beach below. The approximately 300 foot long dirt beach-access trail winds through dense vegetation and tall trees, and includes a wood bridge, multiple sets of stairs, and rock retaining walls. Although part of the trail is inaccessible in its current condition, the majority of the trail is still used by residents of Agate Beach year-round. The trail begins at the top of the bluff, although the entrance is now blocked by a metal gate to prevent access on the steep hillside. A set of stairs now covered with vegetation leads to a wood bridge. The bridge is divided into five sections and is approximately 30 feet long, 4 ½-feet wide, with 3 to 4-foot high railings. The bottom railings appear to be constructed of 2 by 6-inch lumber, with 2 by 2-inch balusters, while the top railings appear to be made of 2 by 4-inch lumber. The center section of the bridge is more decorative than the outer sections, as the bottom railings and balusters are angled below the bridge's walkway in a fanned pattern. Although partially collapsed in the middle, the bridge still retains good integrity. An approximately 2-foot high river rock retaining wall begins at the eastern end of the bridge and continues for about 10 feet before ending in a "V" shape at the intersection of another trail.

The trail continues to wind downhill and has remnants of other river rock walls and steps. A simple, newer bench constructed of 2 by 4-inch and 2 by 12-inch lumber is located at one of the bends of the trail, with a view of the Pacific Ocean. Steps along the trail were made by using lumber boards supported by steel rebar and in-filled with dirt. At the bottom of the trail is a set of winding, large aggregate, poured concrete steps. Four- by four-inch pressure-treated wood posts with three long pieces of ½-inch PVC pipe attached to the posts make up a handrail along these steps.

### ALTERATIONS

Overall the Bloch House has great integrity with only modest alterations made both during the period when it was owned by Bloch and by the current owners. Alterations that appear to have been made before or during when Bloch owned the property include the installation of picture windows in the main room, and the enclosure of the south portion of the kitchen wing to accommodate a washing machine, refrigerator, and pantry area.<sup>7</sup> Alterations that

<sup>7</sup> A circa 1921 photo of the Bloch House show this portion of the kitchen wing already enclosed.

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occurred with the current owners include the replacement of brick with concrete in the front courtyard area, and some minor replacements of the original cedar shake with cedar rake shingle on the exterior of the house. A small, open porch has been added to the south facade and a larger deck and wheelchair ramp to the rear facade. This new deck replaced portions of an exterior partition at the northwest corner of the house, including the replacement of a multi-light paired casement window with a sliding glass door. The original river rock chimney and fireplace that is located in the main room was also replaced with an oversized-brick chimney.<sup>8</sup> Inside the house, sinks and mirrors have been installed in some of the bedroom closets, but do not compromise the integrity of the space. Bathrooms have also been updated with newer toilets, shower stalls, and vinyl flooring. The kitchen wing originally had a servant's bedroom along the northeast side, partitioned from the kitchen. This partition has since been removed and the bedroom area converted to house kitchen countertops, cupboards, and appliances. These alterations, however, are comparatively minor and do not effect the building's integrity for listing in the National Register.

The garage-studio has been also modestly altered over time, but like the house, some of these alterations were carried out while Bloch lived on the property. These include the replacement of multi-light windows on the southwest facade with picture windows, and the reconfiguration of the lower floor as a garage and lapidary. Modifications made after the Bloch family sold the property include the addition of a small porch and entryway to the southwest corner of the building, and a slight reconfiguration of the upstairs bed and bathroom. This included the move of a doorway connecting the main and bathroom areas two feet to the northwest of its original location, and the move of an original wall separating the bedroom and bathroom areas. It appears that a set of paired casement windows were removed on the northeast facade to accommodate an emergency exit door and stairs. A set of windows may have also been removed from the lower floor where there is now an emergency exit door.

The bays of the building that originally housed carriages and cars on the north facade have also been filled in with new concrete footings, walls, and sliding glass windows, and the original main entrance has been altered with a wall to prevent access to the upper floor from the lower floor.<sup>9</sup> There are also some areas where original cedar shakes have been replaced with cedar rake shingles. Although several modifications have been made to the building, most have been conducted in the garage area and not the upper floor studio area where Bloch composed many of his musical works.

<sup>8</sup> A survey of the property conducted by Stephen Dow Beckham in August 1974 explains that the internal Douglas-fir fireplace/chimney "is boarded up and in poor repair. It has moved away from the house about two inches and is cracked." It is assumed that the original Douglas-fir fireplace and chimney were replaced shortly thereafter. See "116 NW Gilbert Way, Bloch, Ernest, Home," State of Oregon Inventory, Historic Sites and Buildings, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, August 1974.

<sup>9</sup> The upper floor currently can only be accessed from the outside of the building through the small porch/entryway. In its current capacity as a "bunkhouse," the present owners wanted separate areas for girl and boy campers.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### SUMMARY

The Ernest Bloch House, scenically perched on a high bluff overlooking Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the internationally famous composer Ernest Bloch. Although originally constructed for the wealthy and prominent Asahel Bush III family of Salem, Oregon, the house at Agate Beach would later become notable both in the local and international musical community for its significant association with the Swiss-born composer Bloch, referred to by some as the fourth "B" after other notable composers Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.<sup>1</sup> The only property he ever owned and the best property to demonstrate its historic association with him as a creator of acclaimed musical works, Bloch resided in the beach-side house from 1941 until his death in 1959. Author Nancy Steinberg explained that Bloch "wrote some of his most moving and renowned works in the house at Agate Beach," and according to one Bloch scholar, Florida State University professor David Kushner, "the compositions of the Agate Beach period are, for the most part, an amalgam of Bloch's best creative impulses."<sup>2</sup> In composing some 72 pieces over his 57-year career, Bloch composed nearly 30 of those pieces at Agate Beach. The period of significance begins in 1941 when Bloch acquired the Agate Beach house, and ends in 1959 with his death at the age of 78.<sup>3</sup>

#### ERNEST BLOCH

Born on July 24, 1880 in Geneva, Switzerland, Ernest Bloch became interested in music as a child, when in 1891, at age 11, he wrote a vow on a leaf pledging to become a composer, before ritualistically burning the vow on a mound of stones.<sup>4</sup> When that same year Bloch began studying violin, he proved to be naturally gifted and a prodigy of the instrument, and began composing violin melodies shortly thereafter. In 1896, at the age of 16, Bloch moved to Brussels to study with famous violinist Eugène Ysaÿe for three years; there he continued to compose and grow as a musician, conductor, and composer.<sup>5</sup> In 1900, Bloch met Marguerite Augusta Schneider, a pianist at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany. The couple married in 1904, and had three children, Ivan (born in 1905), Suzanne (1907), and Lucienne (1909).

By the early 1910s, Bloch had composed several notable works including his *Symphony No. 1 in C-sharp minor* in 1903, and his only opera, *Macbeth*, in 1909. During his self-professed "Jewish Cycle" between 1912 and 1916, Bloch wrote six works, including the symphonic piece *Israel* in 1916, and perhaps his best-known piece, the cello rhapsody *Schelomo* in 1916. Authors Frank Geltner and Nancy Steinberg state that "these monumental works,

<sup>1</sup> The community of Agate Beach was annexed by the City of Newport in the early 1980s.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Steinberg, "Ernest Bloch: The Natural Beauty of Agate Beach Inspired this Renowned Composer " <[http://www.northwestmagazines.com/oregon\\_coast\\_ernest\\_bloch\\_agate\\_beach.php](http://www.northwestmagazines.com/oregon_coast_ernest_bloch_agate_beach.php)> [accessed May 26, 2008]; Kushner, 8.

<sup>3</sup> The Agate Beach house is the only property Bloch ever owned. The acquisition of the property was a turning point in Bloch's life, as he had never permanently settled in one area before his move to the Oregon coast. See David Kushner, *Ernest Bloch Companion*, Westport, CT.:Greenwood Press, 2002), 110. Although he lived with his wife for a time near his son in Lake Oswego, the Agate Beach property is the best property to show its association with Bloch due to the number of compositions written during his time there and the Oregon coastal scenery that inspired much of his later work.

<sup>4</sup> Kushner, 14; Frank Geltner, Ed., and Nancy Steinberg, *Ernest Bloch Legacy Project: Composer in Nature's University* (Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, April 2008), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 4.

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incorporating Jewish themes and melodies, were – and are today – hailed as masterpieces.”<sup>6</sup> Immigrating to New York City in 1916, Bloch soon joined the faculty of the newly established Mannes School of Music in Manhattan, where he eventually became head of the theory department. After a brief return to Switzerland, Bloch brought his family to the United States in 1917, describing in a letter to his mother that he was full of a “feeling of future and of possibilities.”<sup>7</sup>

Bloch began his move westward when he was appointed the first Musical Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1920. Geltner and Steinberg explain that “during the Cleveland years, Bloch composed some of his most notable chamber music, including the *Piano Quintet No. 1*, called by one critic ‘the greatest work in its form since the piano quintets of Brahms and César Frank.’ He also composed his *Concerto Grosso No. 1* to show his students that ‘neo-classicism’ . . . was a dynamic, forward looking genre.”<sup>8</sup> At the Cleveland Institute of Music, Bloch also refined his teaching philosophy and spoke to a wide-range of groups, including music students and civic organizations. While visiting the Library of Congress in 1922, Bloch was impressed by both the library and its representation of the American people. Stepping out onto a balcony of the building which framed both the United States Capitol building and other national monuments, Bloch decided to become an American citizen and was naturalized in 1924.<sup>9</sup>

Bloch taught and composed at the Cleveland Institute for several years before moving on to the recently established San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he served as Director from 1925 to 1930. While living in San Francisco, Bloch composed *America: An Epic Rhapsody* in 1927, in response to a competition sponsored by the magazine *Musical America*. *America* was selected unanimously out of 92 entries by a panel of five of the nation’s most respected conductors at the time, including Leopold Stokowski, and was premiered in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco over the weekend of December 21-22, 1928. Over the next year, Bloch’s *America* was presented by more than fifteen other orchestras across the United States, including the then-named Portland Symphony Orchestra.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of his tenure at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Bloch was financially sustained by a unique trust fund of \$100,000 established for the purpose of developing the Department of Music at the University of California, Berkeley by the Rosa and Jacob Stern family who were generous patrons of the arts. Although Bloch occupied an endowed chair at Berkeley, he was able to dedicate himself exclusively to composing, until finally retiring in 1952. Under the terms of the trust, Bloch could live anywhere in the world, and decided to return to Switzerland in 1930.<sup>11</sup>

Arriving in Switzerland in the summer of 1930, Bloch set about working on his epic *Sacred Service*, a piece commissioned by San Francisco’s Temple Emanuel. Although actually debuting in Turin, Italy in 1934, the piece was also presented in Naples and Milan, and later at New York’s Carnegie Hall. Although originally commissioned for the Temple Emanuel, the piece was not performed in the Temple until four years later in 1938. In December 1938, an Ernest Bloch Society was founded in London, with Albert Einstein as the honorary president, and other

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Luciene Bloch, Interview with J. Enyeart, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, March 15, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> Geltner, 6; Olin Downes, *New York Times*, December 10, 1950, as quoted in Robert Strassburg, *Ernest Bloch: Voice in the Wilderness* (Los Angeles: The Trident Shop, 1977), 56-57.

<sup>9</sup> Suzanne Bloch with Irene Heskes, *Ernest Bloch: Creative Spirit, A Program Source Book* (Jewish Music Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board 1976), 35-36.

<sup>10</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> Kushner, 80.; Geltner and Steinberg, 8.

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well-known British and non-British members.<sup>12</sup> Evidently hastened by worsening events in Europe, Bloch left Europe for the United States in the spring of 1939.<sup>13</sup>

### Return to America

Although usually proliferate in the number of his compositions, Bloch published nothing between the time he left Europe in 1939 and purchased the house at Agate Beach in 1941. In letters to his family and conversations with those who knew him, Bloch indicated that he was profoundly disturbed by the events leading up to World War II in Europe. Now living with his wife in Oregon near their son, Ivan, Bloch expressed in a letter to his daughter, Suzanne, in New York, on July 24, 1940 "his dismay at the war news while affirming a belief that despite the horrors in Europe, spiritual values and humanity's advance could not be destroyed."<sup>14</sup> Bloch disclosed in a June 18, 1941 letter to his niece, Evelyn Hirsch, who was living in Switzerland at the time, that "despite my efforts, I haven't been able to accomplish any creative work for months. My mind isn't in it. The Big Tragedy, with everything that it encompasses, has installed itself in me like an illness attacking your whole organism."

In June 1941, Bloch left Berkeley to visit his wife and son, who were living in Lake Grove, Oregon near Portland, with a trip to the Oregon Coast along the way. Detained by high water over the coastal road, Bloch decided to spend the night in nearby Agate Beach, a resort community near Newport. Evidently taken by the rugged yet beautiful environment of the Oregon Coast, Bloch explained to Evelyn, "I paced back and forth, alone with the sky, the sea, clouds, seagulls, this beach so much that I was dead tired. I couldn't ever tire of it. Never had the ocean made such an impression on me. This and two or three days without any newspapers, almost without any radio, and without noise as well, gave me my balance back, like a healthy animal."<sup>5</sup> In his same letter to Evelyn, Bloch recounted how he came across a house for sale at Agate Beach:

I had seen a house for sale overlooking the ocean on a high cliff, among pines, with flowers everywhere. Although isolated, it was tempting. And the price too. Unbelievably cheap. Unfortunately it was too big, not intimate, a little dark, and sinister inside. And it would cost a lot to maintain. Five bedrooms, four toilets, which would have delighted Aunt Marguerite, although you can only use one at a time!, [sic] and a huge sitting room, a dining room for 300 people, a high garage too, with bedrooms, shower, everything in cedar. It must have cost them [the Bush family] \$20,000-\$25,000 twenty years ago and it is for sale, furnished, for \$8,500. But, unfortunately, it is not what we want. The day before yesterday, too, we spent two days on this coast, Marguerite and I, and again seven hours of walking on the beach absolute silence, except for the sound of the sea.<sup>15</sup>

Although initially Bloch thought the Agate Beach house was not the right place to settle, the proximity of the property to the beach and ocean alone may have convinced Bloch to stay, as evidenced in his last sentence about walking on the beach for hours in peaceful silence.

<sup>12</sup> Kushner, 101-102.

<sup>13</sup> Geltner and Steinberg quote Vinita Howard's "Bloch Said 'Most remarkable of Living Composers,'" *Yaquina Bay News - Newport Journal*, January 1, 1950, 1, citing that he left Europe in December 1938.

<sup>14</sup> Kushner, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Joseph Lewinski, Emmanuelle Dijon, *Ernest Bloch: Sa Vie et sa Pensée Geneva*, Editions Slatkine, 2005) Trans. Sandrina Detandt and Cindy McConnell.

<sup>15</sup> As quoted in Geltner and Steinberg, 19.

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### The House at Agate Beach

The house and property overlooking Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean that Bloch was drawn to was originally constructed in about 1914 as a vacation home for Asahel Bush III, his wife, Margaret Lynn Boot Bush, and their two sons, Asahel Bush IV and Stuart Bush of Salem, Oregon. Born in 1887, Asahel Bush III was the grandson of prominent Salem newspaper magnate, banker, and public official, Asahel Bush Sr., who had founded the *Oregon Statesman* newspaper and the Ladd & Bush bank in Salem, and was active in Oregon politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Asahel Bush III graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts in 1909, later marrying Margaret in 1911. Their two sons, Asahel and Stuart, were born in 1912 and 1916, respectively. After a three-year long illness, Margaret passed away in Toledo, Oregon in 1934 at the age of 44; her husband passed away the following year after a short illness at the age of 48.<sup>16</sup>

### *Rise of Vacationing Along the Central Oregon Coast*

As descendants of Asahel Bush Sr., the Asahel Bush III family was financially well-to-do during the early twentieth century, and had their vacation home constructed in the fashionable Newport area along the Oregon Coast. Although such communities as Seaside and Neahkahnie located along the upper north Oregon Coast drew weekend travelers from Portland, Newport's location along the central Oregon Coast appealed to those who lived in the mid-Willamette Valley at Salem and Corvallis.<sup>17</sup> As a natural pass over the Coast Range from Corvallis proved to be one of the shortest routes to the central coast, a wagon road had been established as early as the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Although it took an entire day to travel from Corvallis to Newport along the wagon road, an issue of the 1879 *Corvallis Gazette* reported "every house and camping place full" with vacationers.<sup>19</sup> Travel to the central Oregon Coast was greatly improved in 1885 with the completion of a railroad that ran between Corvallis and Yaquina City, located several miles north of Newport. With the railroad in place, greater numbers of vacationers and tourists began to take advantage of the central Oregon Coast, which precipitated a boom in the construction of summer cottages like the Bush's.<sup>20</sup>

Its views of the ocean, in addition to cooler summer-time weather, were some of the reasons why the Oregon Coast beckoned city-dwellers from the Willamette Valley. Naturally, vacationers began building summer houses along many of the coastal "ridges" or bluffs that provided a natural barrier from the beach and ocean. Like the Newport area, the northern Oregon Coast experienced a boom in ocean-view housing construction during the 1910s, so much so, that by the 1920s, nearly every ocean-view lot had been developed.<sup>21</sup> Access to the Oregon Coast continued to improve with the introduction of the affordable automobile during the early twentieth century. In 1912, then-Governor Oswald West declared Oregon's seashore a public highway, implying that a real road to parallel to the coastline should be constructed in the future. Roads between towns on the central coast, however, left much to be desired. In an effort to generate public awareness of the deplorable state of coastal roads, a car with driver and

<sup>16</sup> "Bush, Margaret Lynn" and "Bush, Asahel," "Salem Pioneer Cemetery Data" <<http://www.open.org/pioneerc/pg07.html>> [accessed July 1, 2008]

<sup>17</sup> George McMath, "Emerging Regional Style" in *Space, Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America* eds. Thomas Vaughan and Virginia Guest Ferriday, (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974), 341.

<sup>18</sup> Allen Cain "Nye Beach, Newport, 1936," The Oregon History Project, Oregon Historical Society, 2006 <[http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/historical\\_records/dspDocument.cfm?doc\\_ID=AC5D14AC-E9A9-A135-55977AA91ACF81C1](http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/historical_records/dspDocument.cfm?doc_ID=AC5D14AC-E9A9-A135-55977AA91ACF81C1)> [accessed July 1, 2008].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> McMath, 341.



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photographer set out to document the condition of the road between Newport and Siletz Bay (a distance of approximately 20 miles), a journey that took nearly 23 hours to complete.<sup>22</sup>

In 1919, two bonds were approved to improve roadways both between the central Oregon Coast and the Willamette Valley, and between coastal communities. A local bond issue was passed to improve the wagon road from the coast to Benton County and ultimately Corvallis. That same year, a statewide bond was approved for the construction of the Roosevelt Coast Military Highway (later known as Highway 101) that would connect the Columbia River with the Oregon Coast to the northern California border.<sup>23</sup> With the improvement of roadways connecting the coastline, the central Oregon Coast became even more accessible and popular with vacationers and tourists, and provided a major north-south link between California, Oregon, and Washington.

### *A New Home, A New Haven*

Perhaps ironically, without the improvements made to the Oregon coast highway barely twenty years before, Bloch may have never been able to visit Agate Beach, let alone see his future home. By early August 1941, Bloch decided that he could no longer live in Berkeley. In an August 7, 1941 letter to his sister Loulette, Bloch explained, "There is a battle inside me, and like the impossibility to go any further. The thought of being stuck in Berkeley is unbearable . . . I suffocate in this place. The bitterness poisons me. My spirit is prey to recriminations. Is prey to everything that makes the worst of myself come out. The opposite of what artistic creation demands."<sup>24</sup> The Oregon Coast, however, and the property at Agate Beach seemingly begged Bloch to come there to stay:

. . . And then in Portland terrible heat at the moment. And here, next to the ocean, the weather is cool and the freshness beneficial . . . I pace the beach for hours. Am I staying? Am I going back? I don't think anymore of the house I visited, but it is as if a hidden force holds me back here, prevents me from going any further . . . I need an asylum, a haven, to complete my life's works. What I will still have to give to this poor and mad humanity.<sup>25</sup>

Ernest Bloch purchased the house at Agate Beach during the summer of 1941 – the only home he would ever own. With their children by now grown, Bloch and Marguerite moved into the large home on September 8, 1941. Kushner writes:

It was this life choice that shaped both the personal and professional side of Bloch's life in ways that could not have been foreseen. The remoteness of the location, conducive to the enjoyment of such hobbies as collecting and polishing agates and exploring the various species of mushrooms that abound in the area, resulted in Bloch's isolation from the world's musical centers and from much of the contemporary trend setting in terms of musical composition. As the musician was, however, not merely a mushroom enthusiast and an agate collector, but, in fact, something of an expert on these natural wonders, he was able to find a degree of personal fulfillment apart from music. These pastimes helped to bridge the equivalent of writer's block, which he experienced as he ruminated about the omnipresent tidings of war.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Steve Wyatt, "Taft: The Transformation of a Waterfront Community to a Resort Town" (Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 2001), 22.

<sup>23</sup> Cain; Wyatt, 22.

<sup>24</sup> As quoted in Geltner and Steinberg, 19.

<sup>25</sup> As quoted in Ibid, 19, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Kushner, 111.

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Geltner and Steinberg write that having composed nearly nothing during the war years due to extreme depression, Bloch's "new home provided the solace, quietude, and soothing natural beauty that helped restore his creativity after the war ended."<sup>27</sup> Inside the house, a piano occupied a prominent place in the main room. Although Bloch composed mostly at his desk and later in the studio over the garage, he seemed to review passages from his works-in-progress on the piano in the main room.<sup>28</sup> After three years at the house at Agate Beach, Bloch finished his first work in several years, the three-movement orchestral work *Suite Symphonique* in August 1944.

Finally overcoming his writer's block, Bloch produced a number of award-winning compositions from his home at Agate Beach. Bloch was awarded the first Gold Medal in Music in 1947 by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the prestigious New York Music Critics' Circle Award for his *String Quartet No. 2*, composed in 1945. That same year, a concrete series of Bloch's varied works was sponsored by the Juilliard School of Music and the League of Composers. In 1950, Chicago held a six-day "Blochfest" during which Rafael Kubelik and Bloch conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, performing a varied Blochian repertory. After retiring from Berkeley, Bloch was again awarded by the New York Music Critics' Circle in 1953 for two other works, his *String Quartet No. 3* and *Concerto Grosso No. 2*.<sup>29</sup> Bloch also received several honorary doctorate degrees and service awards from such institutions as Reed College, the University of Oregon, and Brandeis University.

Although many assume that Bloch's work as a twentieth century composer will sound dissident and "modern," much of his work is distinctly melodic. Many of his best-known works hearken back to the Romantic era of lush melodies and rich, textured instrumentation.<sup>30</sup> In an article for *Aperture Magazine*, Eric Johnson wrote, "the final result of [his] creation was always emotionally charged. Bloch's daily life, however, was marked by an extreme self-discipline and concern for logic, which balanced his tumultuous emotions. In his sixties he undertook three years of analysis of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* . . . [and] studied the forty-eight preludes and fugues of Bach throughout his life. Bloch's love for the music of Bach was a perfect balance to his own stormy scores."<sup>27</sup> In essence, Bloch never stopped studying and learning the classics. He once told his student and personal secretary for the last 13 years of his life, Helen Johnston, "I regret not to be younger only to begin studying the masters all over again."<sup>31</sup> As an educator, he did not teach his own work or music from the perspective of his compositions but from his life-study of the masters.

Of his music and philosophy, Bloch once stated:

Spiritual values can never die. The universal idea must prevail. This crucial idea has permeated all of my life and most of my works – my ultimate faith and belief in the unity of man, in spite of real racial values and dissimilarities. My faith is in justice – even delayed – on earth, in the right of each man to live his life decently and usefully and giving to the community what he can give, according to his gifts, his forces."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 23.

<sup>28</sup> Milchev, May 7, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Kushner, 9; Steinberg, "Ernest Bloch."

<sup>30</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Johnson. *Aperture Magazine* 16:3, "A Composer's Vision: Photographs by Ernest Bloch". New York: Aperture inc., 1972.

<sup>31</sup> Helen Johnston, interview with Nancy Steinberg, February 6, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Milo Wold, *Oregonian*, "Ernest Bloch: Music from the Oregon Sands", October 3, 1948, 7.

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Geltner and Steinberg explain how "Bloch believed that his gift – composition – should be used in service to humankind, and would ultimately 'save' humanity."<sup>32</sup> Johnston remembers Bloch as a passionate, intense man, even volatile at times. Understanding his nature, she explained, was "like untangling knots . . . his goal was to write music that would bring peace and love to mankind,"<sup>33</sup> and he became intensely depressed when he felt that the goal of peace and love was not being reached. Bloch's son, Ivan, jokingly called him "the most optimistic pessimist I ever met."<sup>34</sup>

Although physically removed from the musical centers of the world while at Agate Beach, Bloch was still very much a part of the contemporary musical milieu and was recognized both nationally and internationally for his work. By the mid-1950s, Bloch was a name so recognized in popular culture that references to him appeared in such places as the 1954 *New York Times* best selling novel *Auntie Mame*, later adapted for Broadway in 1956 and a film by the same name in 1958. For Bloch's seventy-fifth birthday in 1956, a lifelong admirer, Olin Downes, wrote an influential article about him for the *New York Times*. Bloch's birthday was also celebrated with commemorative concerts, awards, and honorary degrees from several institutions of higher learning.<sup>35</sup> In terms of popularity and influence, Bloch can be compared to many of his great contemporary composers of European and American background, such as Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Samuel Osborne Barber II. Most of these composers, however, never achieved the level of international recognition that Bloch received.

Despite his relative physical isolation at Agate Beach, Bloch received many guests in his home including Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti, cellist Zara Nelsova, and Janet Guggenheim, concert pianist and longtime collaborator with the world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman. Guggenheim remembers how she visited the house at Agate Beach often. At the age of nine, she remembered playing piano for Bloch at his home. She explains, "I still have a palpable feeling of being surrounded by beauty, arts and books. It was a powerful sensation, and although at the time I didn't realize exactly what it was, I now know that the mood in this room [the main room] exuded the all-encompassing culture of the 'the arts.'"<sup>36</sup> World-renowned concert cellist, Zara Nelsova, also wrote about visiting Bloch at Agate Beach and practicing in the studio above the lapidary. Nelsova wrote, "Very often I would hear the tramp of feet coming up the steps and he would suddenly appear wearing his hip rubber boots and his little beret, saying 'No, no, no, not like this, like this!' And then he would sit down at the piano with those rubber boots and we would start to work together."<sup>37</sup>

Other international-acclaimed musicians also visited Bloch at the Agate Beach house, including the world-renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin who thought of Bloch as "one of the Seven Wonders. Like Hercules, a world of ecstasy, of pain rested on his shoulders. He also seemed at one with great vistas and jagged peaks of the Swiss Alps, against which he loved to photograph himself . . . as at Agate Beach, with the pounding Pacific breakers. He was cast by the gods in a superhuman mold – a prophetic scale of size and vision, of strength and vitality, which exceeded the common mortal's."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Helen Johnston, February 6, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Ivan Bloch, March 31, 1978.

<sup>35</sup> Kushner, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Janet Guggenheim email to author, May 1, 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Zara Nelsova interview Tim Janof, <<http://www.cello.org/Newsletter/Articles/nelsova.htm>> [accessed May 26, 2008].

<sup>38</sup> Bloch and Heskes, 102.

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### Bloch at Agate Beach

Bloch's daughter, Lucienne, remembers how her father, "always preferred living away from cities, from the glamour of parties, receptions, and even concerts. His large library in his home amid the forests and beaches of Oregon sufficed him."<sup>39</sup> In addition, his son, Ivan remembers, ". . . when walking in the woods, looking for his favorite chanterelle spot, traversing dewy meadows, [or] climbing gentle the slopes of the Oregon countryside, . . . [he] was enveloped by a pervasive peace which bathed those who happened to be with him."<sup>40</sup>

Bloch soon became a notable figure on Agate Beach, from which he could easily access via a trail between the beach and his home. With his black cape, beret, knee-high boots, walking stick, and satchel, Bloch loved to collect agates that he would later polish in his lapidary and driftwood for the giant fireplace in the main room of the house. As a young girl, Peggy Raridan remembers asking Bloch as he strode along the beach, "Are you Superman?" "Oh, no," Bloch replied. "I'm somebody much more important than that."<sup>41</sup> Current Newport resident Jeff Hollen also remembers meeting Bloch on the beach when he and his friends were building a fire. Bloch approached the young group and warned them not to play with fire, and then invited everyone up to his house on the bluff for hot cocoa.<sup>42</sup> Teaching herself how to cook, Marguerite devoted much of her attention to preparing food, from cooking fresh fish caught from the ocean or mushrooms collected by Bloch and guests on the property, to using fresh vegetables from the garden that her husband tended meticulously.

Bloch's grandson, Ernest Bloch II, remembers how his grandfather would spend hours walking the beach below his home collecting agates. Bloch II states how his grandfather, ". . . taught me the importance of those little stones from the beach, which were the 'bowels of the earth' and had hidden beauty in them. His interest was in revealing that beauty . . . Not just the surface was beautiful but [the] inside was too."<sup>43</sup> Bloch II also recalls how Bloch would spend much time in his small lapidary shop in the ground floor of the garage-studio. Bloch II explains:

The most poignant times I spent with him were in the very small lapidary shop that only had a sanding belt and a diamond saw. Bloch eschewed the idea of mass-producing anything so that there was no tumbler, which would have depleted the agate supply of the beach more quickly. Each agate was treated individually for its unique and unseen beauty . . . Thus he processed a series of polished agates. Without ever using the word, grandfather demonstrated the importance of patience.<sup>44</sup>

Bloch's granddaughter, Sita Milchev, remembers that all of the agates Bloch collected seemed to end up on his large desk in the main room of the house, as well as many agates that did not. "[Those] he threw out the window . . . that always amazed me because of the beauty of the stones . . . he just didn't think they were 'good enough,'" Milchev states.<sup>45</sup> Milchev also remembers staying with her mother in the studio above where the garage and lapidary were. She explains, "walking up the stairs was exciting . . . the smell of his pipes and the beautiful carpet in

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Lucienne Bloch, for the Spoleto Festival, Charleston, SC, April 1980.

<sup>40</sup> Ivan Bloch, interview with J. Enyeart, Center for Creative Photograph, University of Arizona, March 31, 1978.

<sup>41</sup> Geltner and Steinberg, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Hollen explains it was the best hot cocoa he ever had, "it was probably good European chocolate."

<sup>43</sup> Bloch, Ernest II. *Ernest Bloch Legacy Project: interview with Ernest Bloch II* by Joella Werlin, DC ROM Famillore 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Sita Milchev email message to author May 7, 2008.

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that room . . . we'd walk through his working studio to the little room with the twin beds. I loved reading his joke books before sleeping. He had lots of books there."<sup>46</sup>

Among his other hobbies, Bloch was also a gifted amateur photographer whose subject matter was wide-ranging, from landscapes to portraits. Writer Bonnie Ford Schenkenberg explains, "For Bloch the camera was a vehicle to record the events, the scenes, and the people in his life. He used photography as a point of departure from the taxing demands of musical composition."<sup>30</sup> Renowned photographer Alfred Stieglitz not only commended Bloch's photographs, but also sought Bloch's advice for his own projects. Among other notables of the visual arts that Bloch had contact with were Georgia O'Keefe, Diego Rivera, Ansel Adams, and Edward Weston.<sup>47</sup>

Bloch continued composing during the final year of his life at Agate Beach. Among his final works include his *Piano Quintet No. 2*, *Symphony in E-flat major*, and a few solo string suites. The composer's final work is, as Steinberg states, "aptly entitled, *Two Last Poems (Maybe . . .)*, the first subtitled *Funeral Music* and the second, *Life Again?*"<sup>48</sup> In failing health due to cancer, an Associated Press news flash was published in the *New York Times* in September 1958 explaining that Bloch had undergone major surgery but was in good condition. Jacob Avshalomov, conductor and musical director of the Portland Youth Philharmonic, visited Bloch during his convalescence explaining:

I had two scores under my arm, his own work and the *Pange Lingua* mass by Josquin. I told him "People are doubtless bringing you flowers, but I have something even more beautiful." Within minutes we were singing the two-part *Pleni sunt coeli* in our cracked composers' voices, regardless of the nuisance it might be to neighboring patients, oblivious to any incongruity of two Jews singing an ancient Catholic mass in a Protestant hospital – just because we loved the music.<sup>49</sup>

During his final illness in July 1959, Bloch asked his family to bring him images "of the sky, the galaxies, the Milky Way, the infinity of worlds that form the universe showing how really unimportant our little earth is."<sup>50</sup> Shortly thereafter, Ernest Bloch passed away surrounded by his wife and three children at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland on July 15, 1959. When Marguerite passed away in 1963, both her and Bloch's ashes were scattered by their two daughters, Suzanne and Lucienne, Lucienne's daughter-in-law and her daughter in the Pacific Ocean below their house at Agate Beach.<sup>51</sup>

After his death in 1959, Bloch's life and accomplishments were celebrated by adherents in many ways. A new Ernest Bloch Society was created in the 1960s, with the first *Ernest Bloch Society Bulletin* published in March 1967, running through 1991. Festivals have been held in the United States and around the world over the last 50 years in Bloch's honor, and a documentary about him titled "About Ernest Bloch" was aired on Portland CBS-affiliated station KOIN-TV in 1968, followed by the fifteen-hour long program "Ernest Bloch: The Man and His Music" broadcast by

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bonnie Ford Schenkenberg, *Ernest Bloch Archive* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1979, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Schenkenberg, 5-6. Schenkenberg states, "His photographs, more than 6,000 negatives and 2,000 prints – are catalogued and curated in the Ernest Bloch Archive at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona. He is in excellent company: the Center also archives the works of Edward Weston, Alfred Stiglitz, Ansel Adams, and Richard Avedon, among other renowned photographers."

<sup>48</sup> Steinberg, "Ernest Bloch."

<sup>49</sup> As quoted in Kushner, 139.

<sup>50</sup> Kushner, 139.

<sup>51</sup> Kushner, 139-140; Geltner and Steinberg, 29-30.

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FM station WRVR in New York City. In 1976, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) produced two programs about Bloch that aired nationally. Numerous records and compact discs of his music, as well as references to him in musicological literature have also been distributed over the years to an international audience.<sup>52</sup> Much of Bloch's works, letters, programs, and photographs have been donated to such places as the University of California, Berkeley, the Library of Congress, the Geneva Conservatory of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona.

### SUMMARY

Inconspicuously situated on a high bluff above the Pacific Ocean and Agate Beach, the Ernest Bloch House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the internationally famous composer. Journalist Vinta Howard explained that "those who knew him would say that Ernest Bloch was a man of tremendous integrity and passion, an intellectual who studied and analyzed Bach manuscripts in minute detail but found equal beauty and inspiration in the simple glint of an agate on the beach. He was an ardent humanist and believed passionately in justice."<sup>53</sup> Kushner observes, "History, the final arbiter in all aspects of the human enterprise, will, in all likelihood, reserve for Ernest Bloch a place of honor in the pantheon of the musical elite of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>54</sup> In 1954, Cleveland-based composer and music critic, Herbert Elwell wrote, "Bloch has established himself like Walt Whitman – in the company of the great. Let those, who can, follow in his enormously human and inspirational footsteps."<sup>55</sup> In a 1962 memorial, professors A.I. Elkus and E.B. Lawton, Jr. said of Bloch:

The Legacy of Ernest Bloch is in two parts, the intangible and the tangible. The intangible is the impact on his friends, associates and students: the model of an exemplary musician, unswervingly dedicated to the canons of his art. The tangible is the body of his works written over a period of sixty years: music that speaks with vigor, eloquence, and beauty."<sup>34</sup>

Although the Swiss-born composer had the opportunity to live anywhere in the world, Ernest Bloch chose to live at Agate Beach along the Oregon Coast, purchasing the only home he ever owned, for the last and most productive third of his life. By the time Bloch settled in Oregon, he had already established himself as one of the world's most significant composers. During the years he lived at Agate Beach with his wife, however, he only continued to produce some of his most important and profound works. It is a tribute to the unique features of the Oregon Coast that Ernest Bloch found the answer to his greatest needs as expressed by Walt Whitman, "Give me solitude; give me nature." And at Agate Beach, he found the solitude and nature he desired. Bloch's music continues to be recorded, performed, and heard around the world today.

<sup>52</sup> Kushner, 144-150.

<sup>53</sup> Howard, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Kusher, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Wold, *Northwest Radio Magazine*, "Music From Stones" November 21, 1954, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Professors A.I. Elkus, W.D. Denny and E.B. Lawton, Jr. In Memoriam, Ernest Bloch, *Preface to the catalog of the Autograph Manuscripts of Ernest Bloch*, University of California, 1962, 6.

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Janet Guggenheim email to author. May 1, 2008.

Sita Milchev email message to author. May 7, 2008.



Bloch, Ernest, House  
Name of Property

Lincoln Co., OR  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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Zara Nelsova interview Tim Janof, <<http://www.cello.org/Newsletter/Articles/nelsova.htm>> [accessed May 26, 2008].

Bloch, Ernest, House  
Name of Property

Lincoln Co., OR  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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National Park Service

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Ernest Bloch House occupies approximately 1.59 acres on lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 29, and lots 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of Block 30 of the Agate Beach Addition to the city of Newport, Lincoln County, Oregon (tax lots 3100 and 3200 as shown on Map 10-11-29-CA).

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries make up the 1.59 acres that include the house, garage-studio, and beach-access trail that have historically been part of the Ernest Bloch House during the period of significance and that maintain historic integrity.

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National Park Service

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

**Address:** Ernest Bloch House  
116 NW Gilbert Way  
Newport, Lincoln County, Oregon 97365

**Photographer:** Mark McConnell, Newport, Oregon  
**Date:** Summer 2008, unless otherwise noted  
**Ink and Paper:** Epson UltraChrome pigmented inks and Epson Premium Glossy Paper, unless otherwise noted  
**Location of Negatives:** Digital, negatives held by photographer

- 1 of 19: Exterior View: Looking west at house and garage-studio.
- 2 of 19: Exterior View: Looking west at east end of bedroom wing of house.
- 3 of 19: Exterior View: Looking southeast at north facade of bedroom wing of house.
- 4 of 19: Exterior View: Looking southeast at rear facade of house (Epson pigmented inks and Fuji Crystal Archive Paper).
- 5 of 19: Exterior View: Looking east at south facade of kitchen wing of house.
- 6 of 19: Exterior View: Looking south at north side of kitchen wing at stone fireplace and chimney of house.
- 7 of 19: Exterior View: Looking west at main entrance to house from courtyard of house.
- 8 of 19: Interior View: Looking north at main room in house towards bedroom wing. This was the approximate location of Bloch's piano (Epson pigmented inks and Fuji Crystal Archive Paper).
- 9 of 19: Interior View: Looking west out of window in main room.
- 10 of 19: Interior View: Looking west from kitchen wing towards main room.
- 11 of 19: Interior View: Looking west at bedroom wing hallway towards main room.
- 12 of 19: Interior View: Detail of built-in vanity and dresser in Bloch's bedroom.
- 13 of 19: Exterior View: Looking east at north and west facades of the garage-studio.
- 14 of 19: Exterior View: Looking west at south facade of garage-studio.
- 15 of 19: Exterior View: Looking west at east and north facades of garage-studio.

Bloch, Ernest, House  
Name of Property

Lincoln Co., OR  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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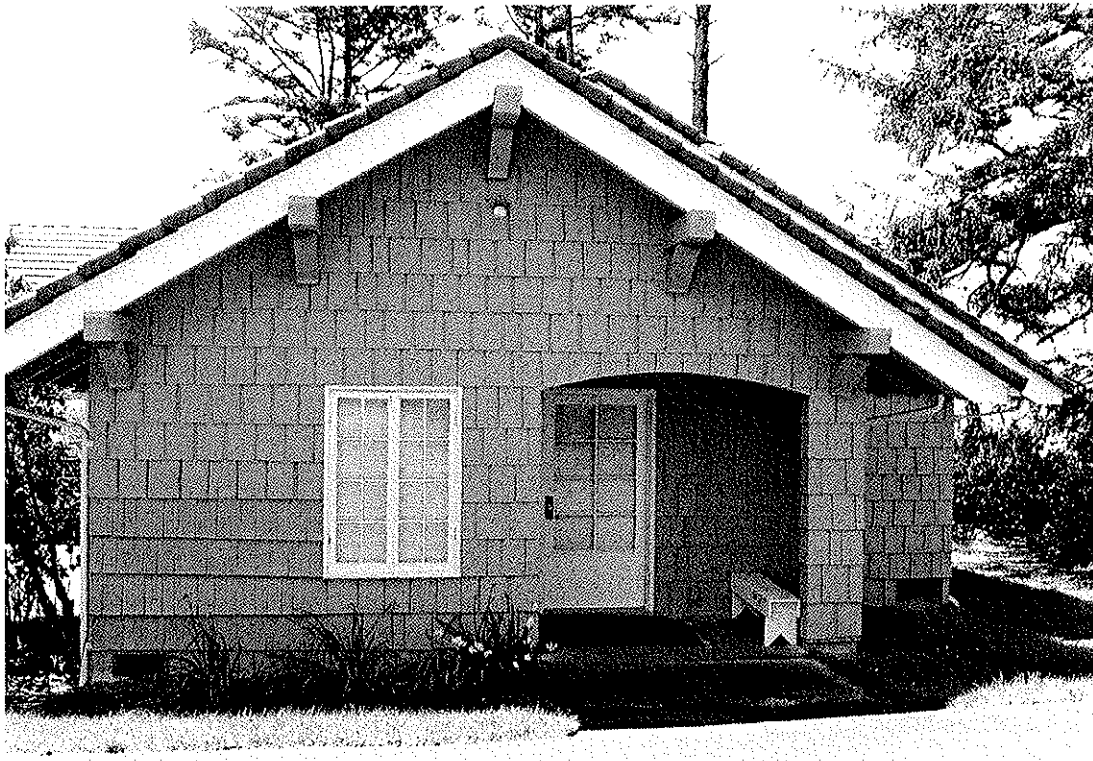
Section number Photographs Page 2

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- 16 of 19: Interior View: Looking north at upper floor of garage-studio. Approximate area where Bloch viewed the ocean and composed.
- 17 of 19: Exterior View: Looking northwest at stone wall that defines bluff edge and leads to beach-access trail.
- 18 of 19: Exterior View: Looking northeasterly up bluff toward the house with bridge along beach-access trail in foreground.
- 19 of 19: Exterior View: Looking northeasterly at rock retaining wall along beach-access trail.



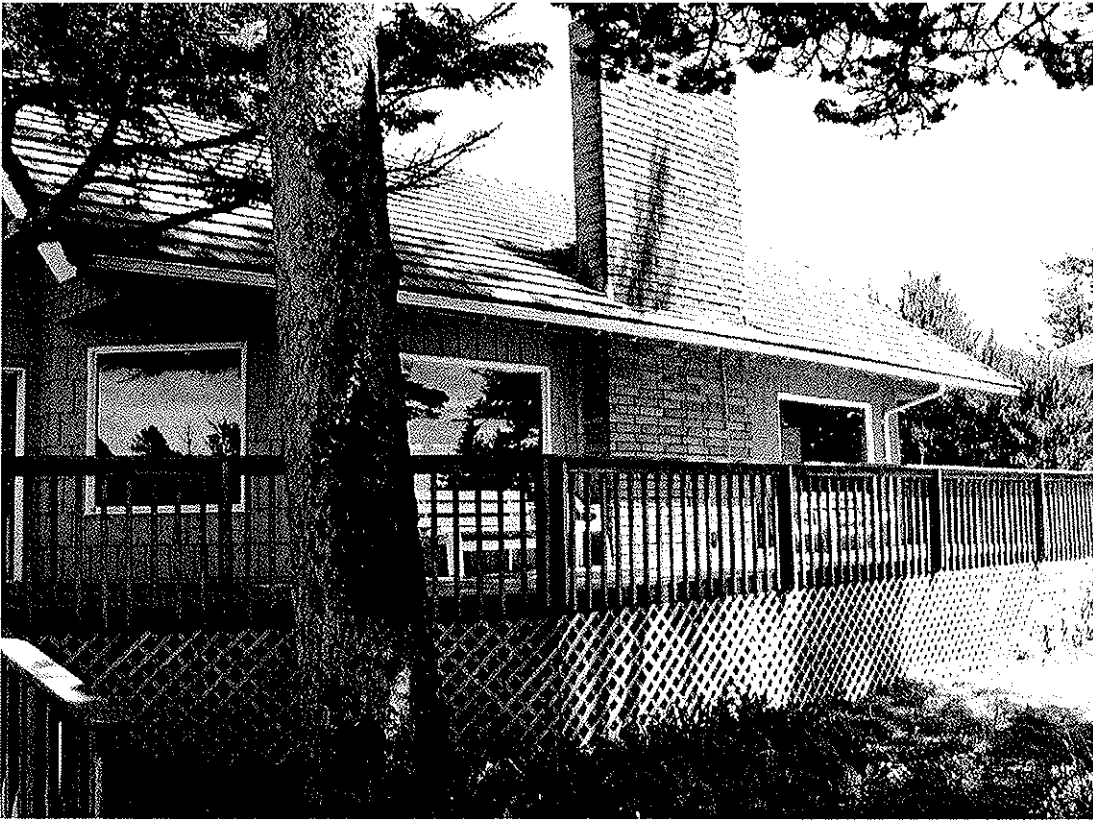
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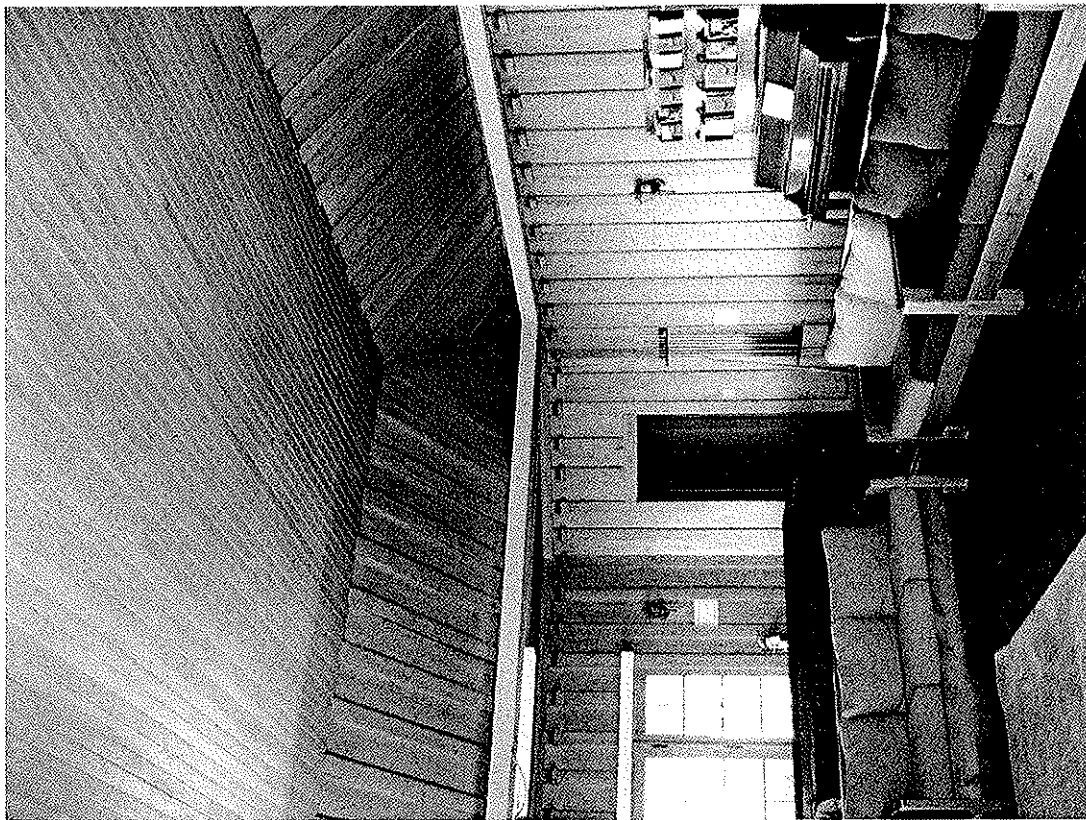
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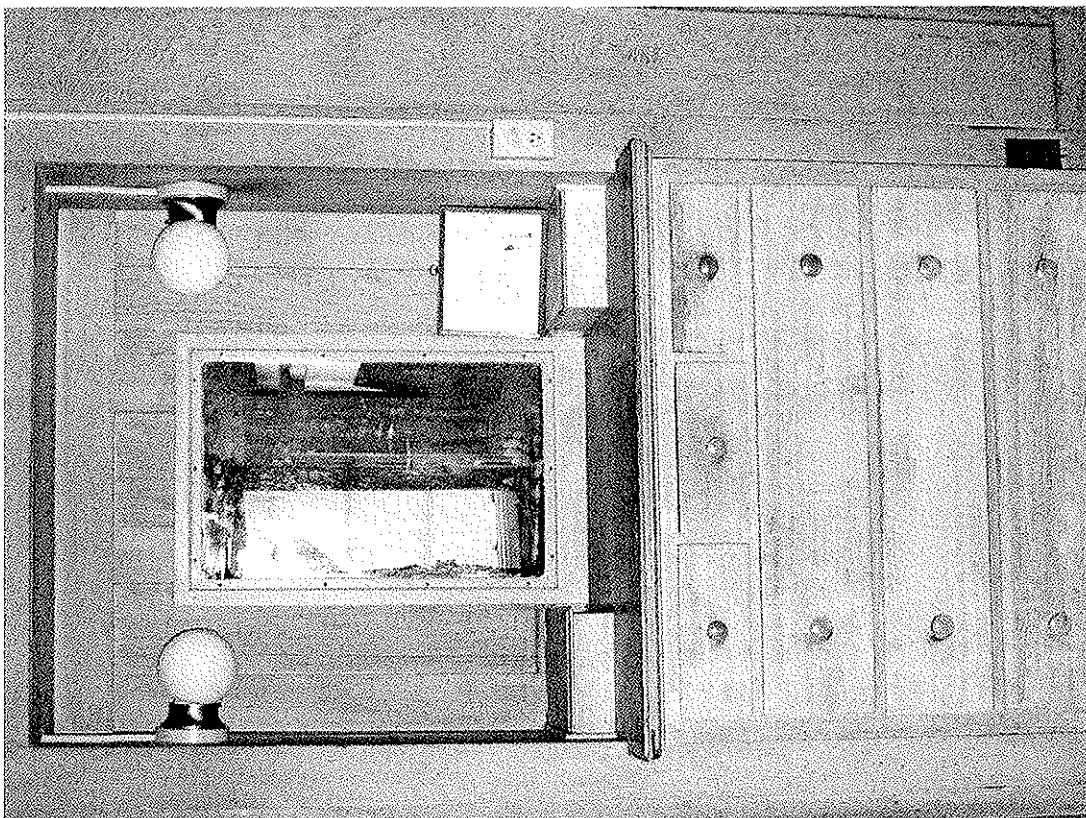
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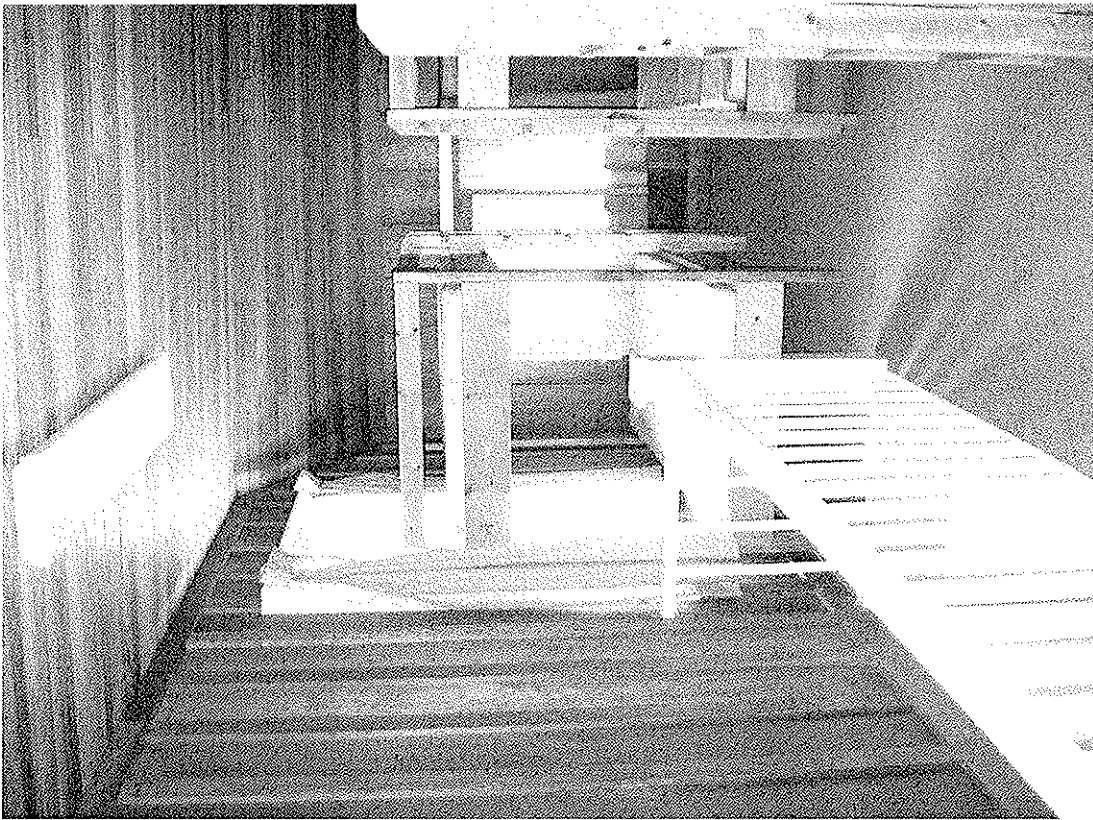
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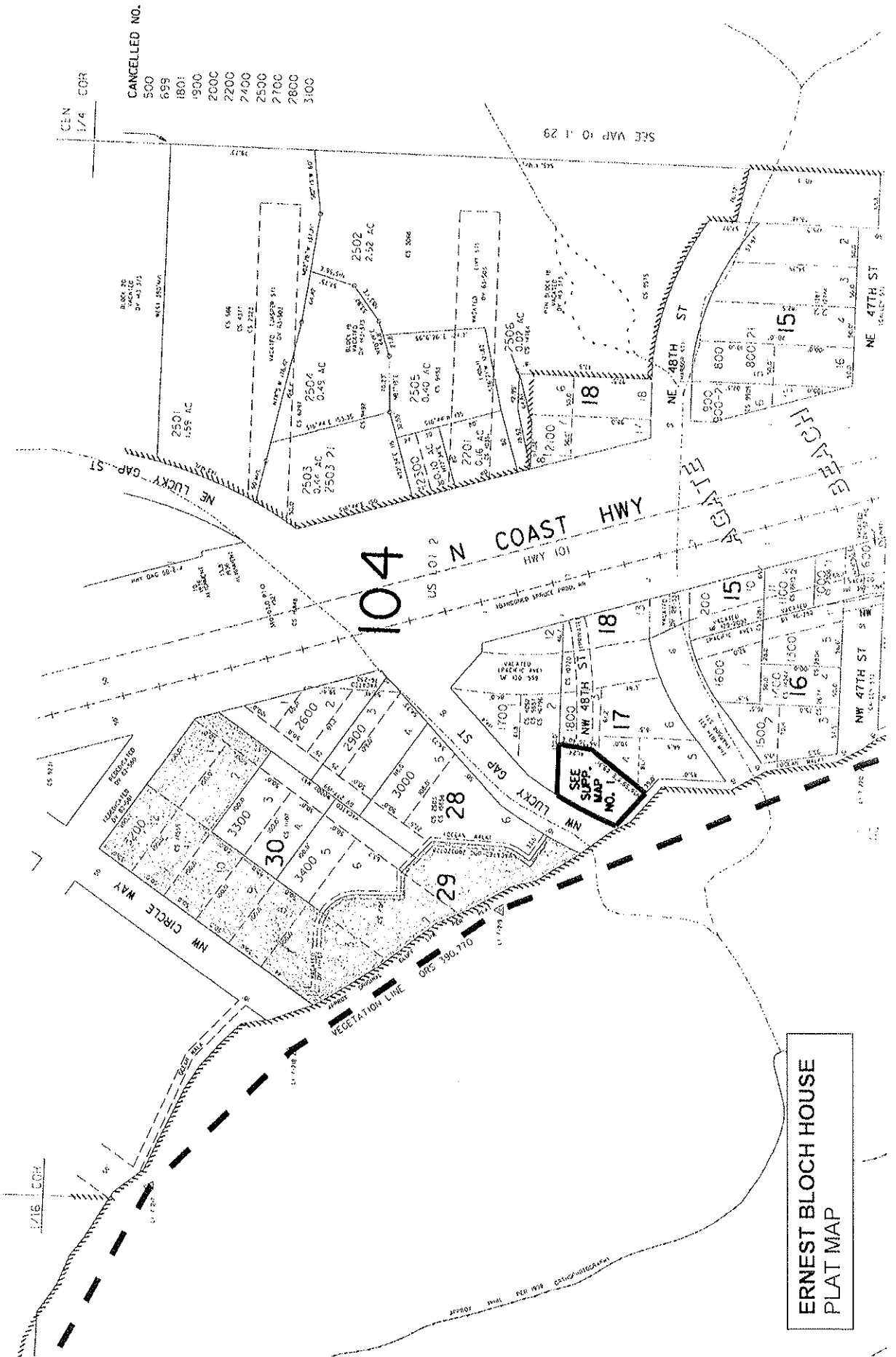
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NEWPORT

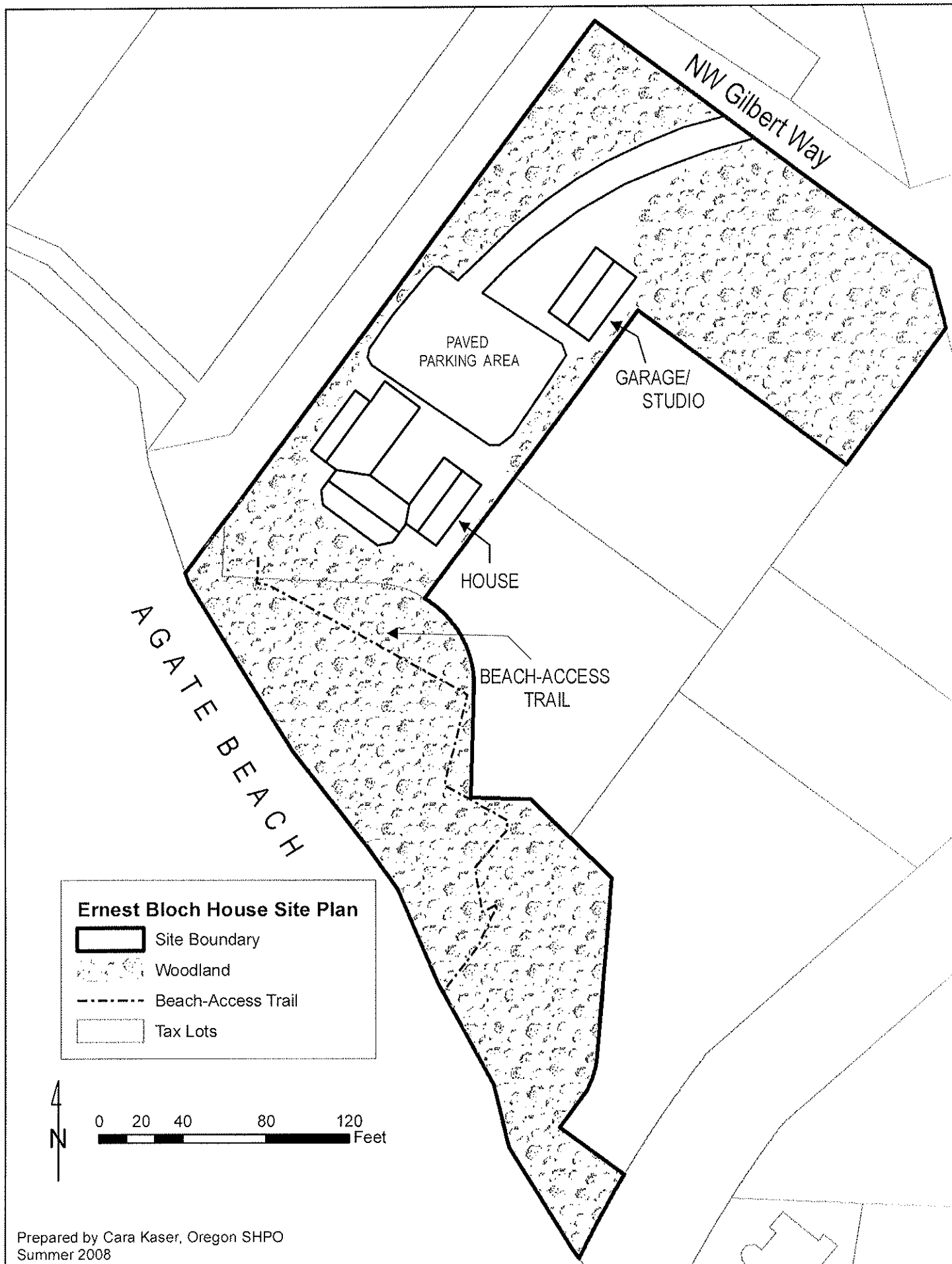
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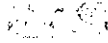




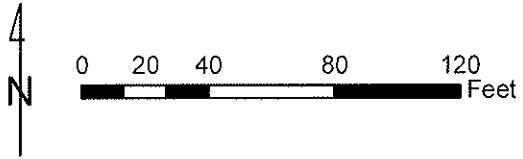
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ERNEST BLOCH HOUSE  
PLAT MAP

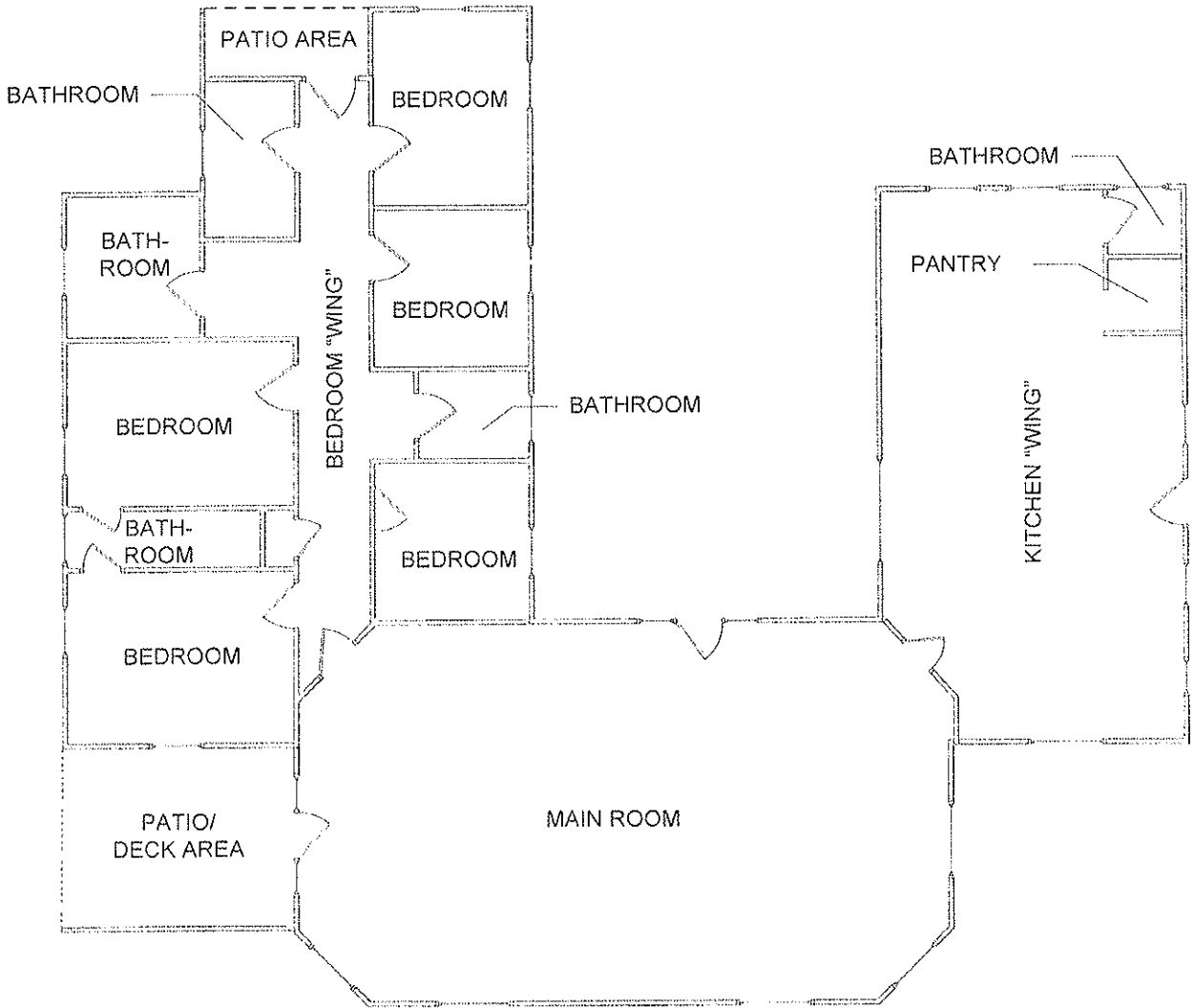


**Ernest Bloch House Site Plan**

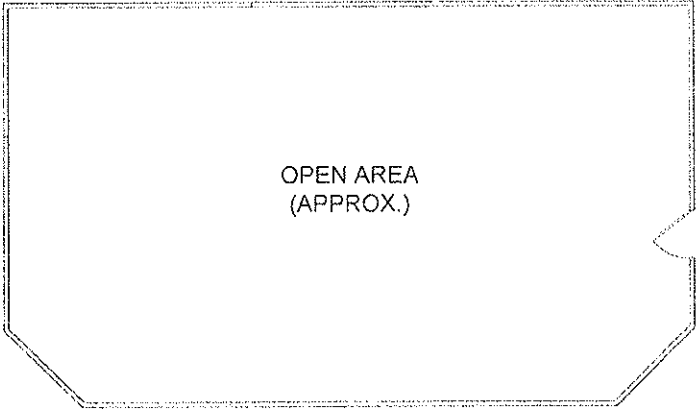
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-  Woodland
-  Beach-Access Trail
-  Tax Lots





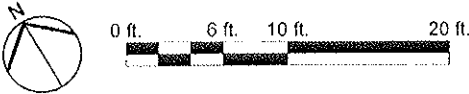


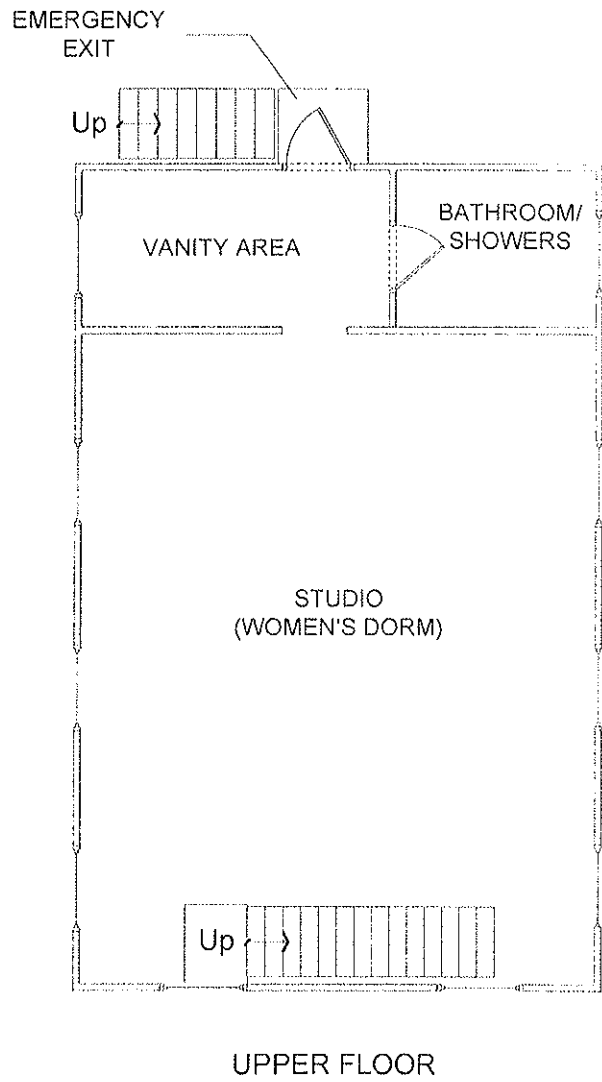
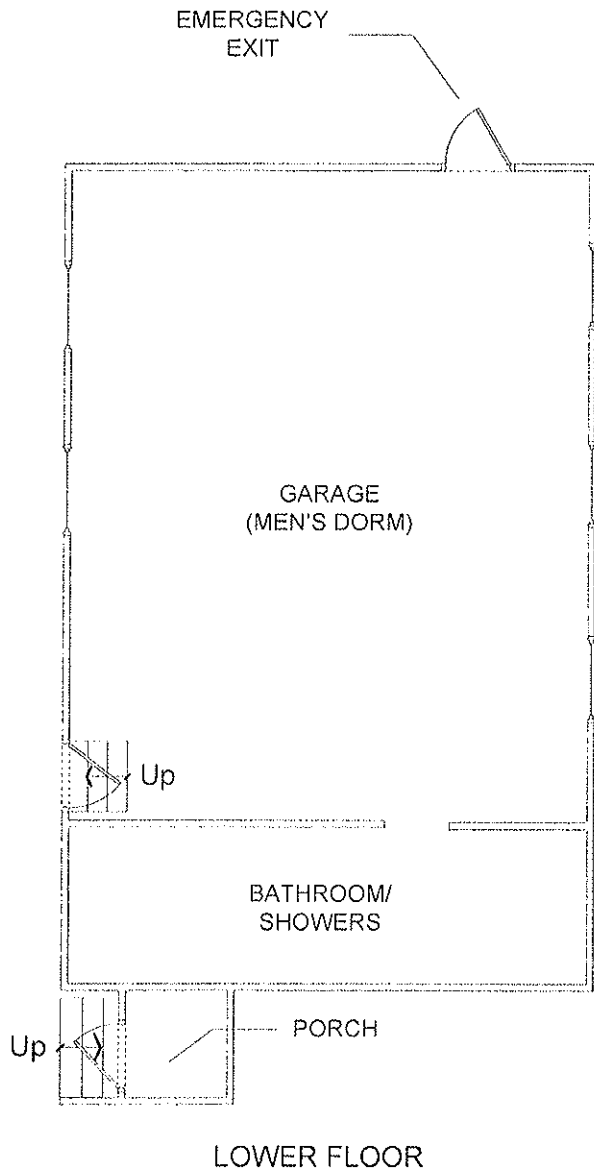
MAIN FLOOR



BASEMENT

**ERNEST BLOCH HOUSE**  
**HOUSE FLOOR PLAN**  
 (INTERIOR SPACES NOT TO SCALE)





**ERNEST BLOCH HOUSE**  
**GARAGE/STUDIO FLOOR PLAN**  
 (INTERIOR SPACES NOT TO SCALE)



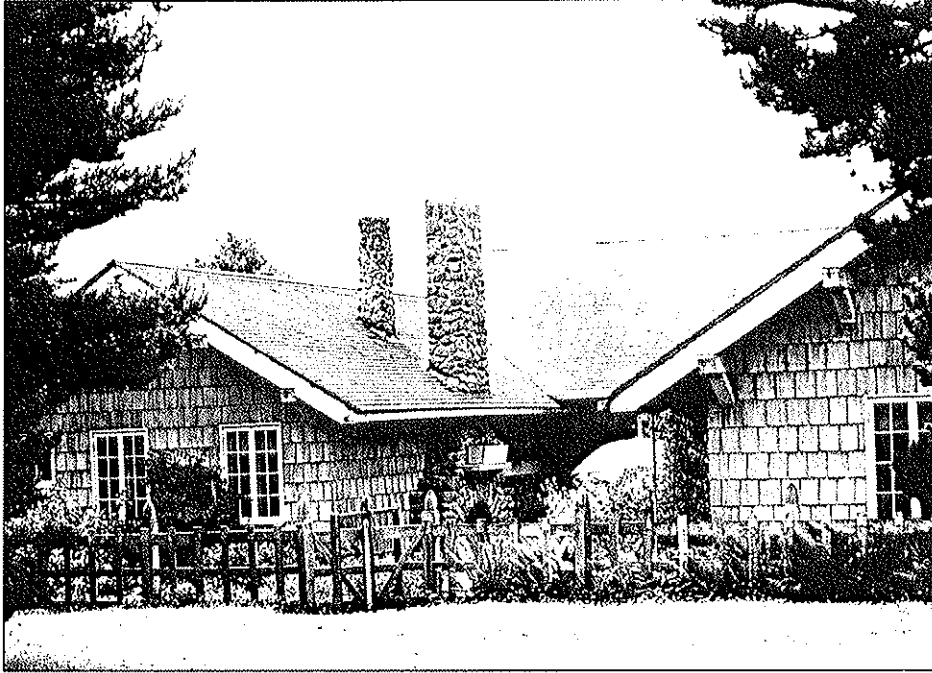


Figure 1: The Ernest Bloch House circa 1914. Photo courtesy of Sam Bush private collection.

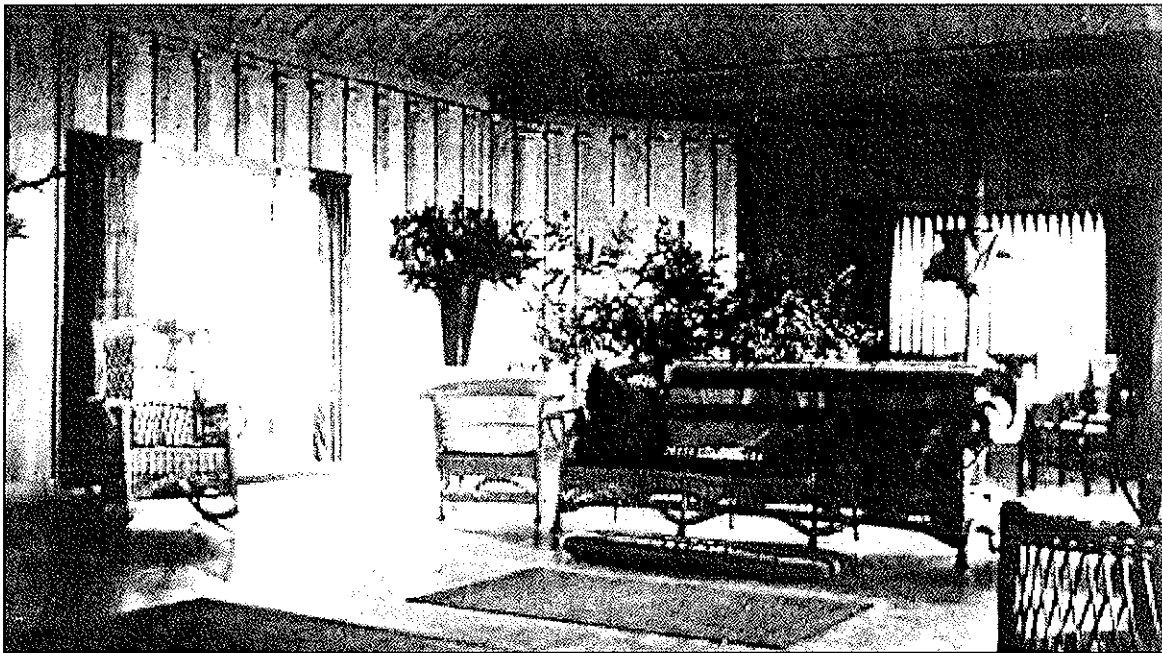


Figure 2: Interior of the Ernest Bloch House in circa 1914. Photo courtesy of Sam Bush private collection.

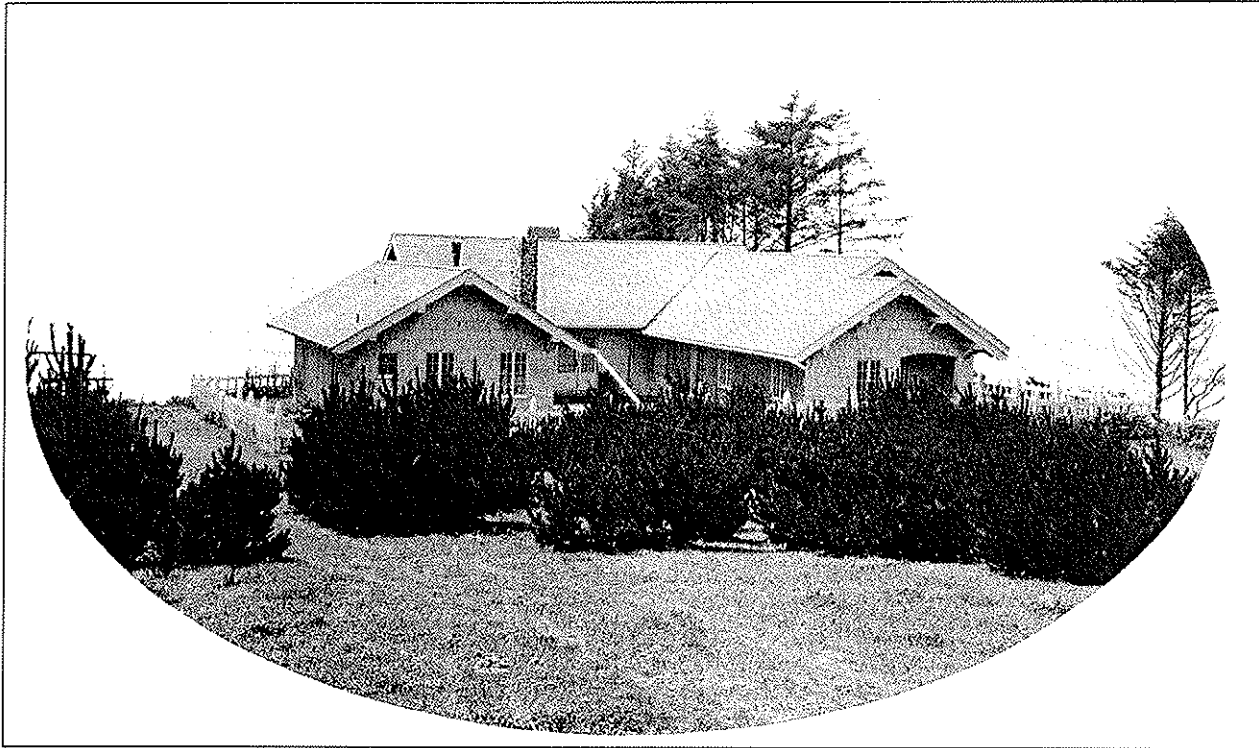


Figure 3: The Ernest Bloch House as it appeared in 1921. Photo courtesy of Lincoln County Historical Society.

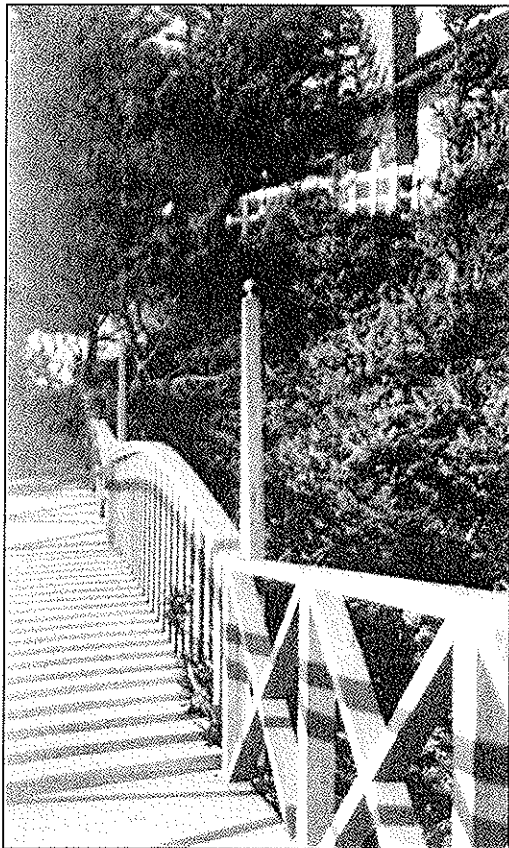


Figure 4: A wood bridge along the beach-access trail that led from the Ernest Bloch House to Agate Beach. Photo courtesy of Sam Bush private collection.



Figure 5: Composer Ernest Bloch in the main room of his Agate Beach house. Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy of Old Stage Studios, Gualala, CA.

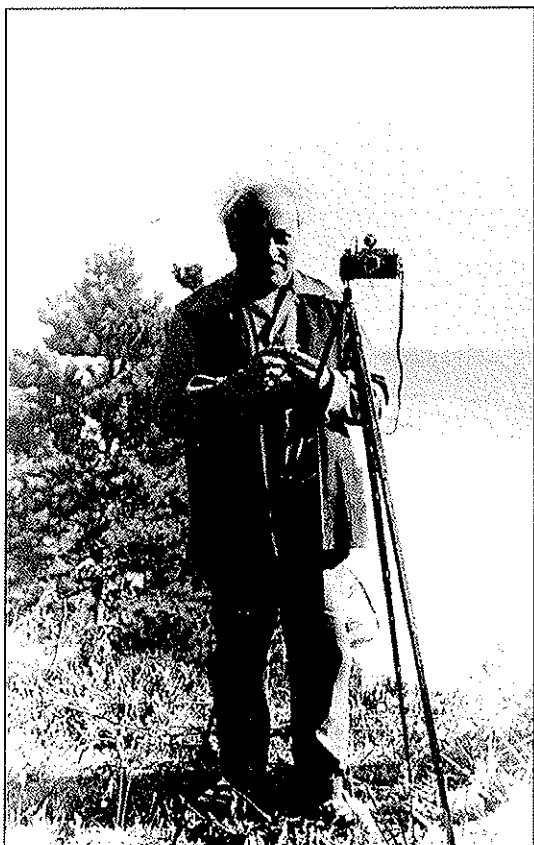


Figure 6: Composer and amateur photographer Ernest Bloch at his Agate Beach home in 1954. Photo courtesy of Lincoln County Historical Society.

Figure 7: Ernest Bloch agate hunting along Agate Beach below his home in 1958. Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy of Old Stage Studios, Gualala, CA.



## Appendix I

### Ernest Bloch – Awards and Honors

1. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Chamber Music Prize for SUITE for viola and piano, 1919.
2. Carolyn Beebe Prize, New York Chamber Music Society for FOUR EPISODES for chamber orchestra, 1924.
3. MUSICAL AMERICA Prize for AMERICA, 1926.
4. RCA Victor Award for HELVETIA, 1928 (one of five compositions which shared the prize).
5. Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Accademico Onorario, December 27, 1931.
6. American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1947 (first Gold Medal in Music for STRING QUARTET NO. 2).
7. Music Critics Circle of New York City, 1946-47 (for STRING QUARTET NO. 2).
8. In November 1947, the Juilliard School of Music and the League of Composers sponsored a series of three concerts featuring a representative sampling of Bloch's varied musical speech.
9. Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon. Doctor of Human Letters, 1948.
10. November 28-December 3, 1950 a six day festival in Chicago in honor of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday
11. Stephen Wise Award for outstanding contribution in the field of Jewish culture, 1951.
12. Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, May 23, 1952.
13. Named "Professor Emeritus University of Berkeley even though he was not a full time professor. The Music Department requested that he continues to receive interest from the Stern Funds for the rest of his life which removes all worries for his old age.
14. Corelli Tri-Centenary Commemorative Medal, 1953.
15. Music Critics Circle of New York City, 1953 (Two Awards of their three awards, one for chamber music - STRING QUARTET NO. 3 and one for symphonic music - CONCERTO GROSSO NO. 2), the first time that a composer is rewarded in two categories during the same year.
16. In 1953 Bloch was honored by the Italian Government, which invited him to Italy to attend a series of concert and radio performances of his works, climaxed by the production of his opera, *Macbeth*.
17. Jewish Theological Seminary of New York. Doctor of Humane Letters, October 26, 1954.
18. Reed College, Portland, Oregon. Doctor of Letters, April 17, 1955.

19. University of Oregon Distinguished Service Award, 1956
20. Frank L. Weil Award, National Jewish Welfare Board, Chicago, Illinois, 1956 (for the advancement of North American Jewish Culture).
21. Henry Hadley Medal for distinguished service to American music, National Association for American Composers and conductors, 1957.
22. Brandeis University Creative Arts Awards Medal in Music, April 7, 1959.
23. Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Honorary doctorate, June, 1959. (*Note: Bloch was voted an honorary doctorate, but, due to ill health, he was not able to accept the award.*)



## Appendix II

### Ernest Bloch, the Man and his Photography

Eric B. Johnson, BA. 1971 University of Oregon; MFA, Photography, University of New Mexico, 1978, researched, printed and wrote about the photography of 20th century composer Ernest Bloch. (Aperture, 1971, "A Composers Vision: The Photographs of Ernest Bloch") He taught photography at Western Washington University, 1978, and Ohio State University in Columbus, 1979. In 1980 he moved to California to join the faculty at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo where he is Professor of Art and Design. This appendix is based on materials shared by the author and the photographs on pages 1, 2, and 3 were developed by Johnson and copied with his permission.

In 1970, Eric Johnson began his six year journey of discovery of Ernest Bloch. At the suggestion of his professor at University of Oregon, Johnson contacted the son of Ernest Bloch, Ivan, who was then living in Bend, Oregon and he then directed Johnson to Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff living in Northern California. Johnson looked through the approximately five thousand negatives, mostly 35 mm but some 4 x 6 glass plates. As he worked with the negatives, viewing and making prints, he listened to Bloch's music and at other times read from Bloch's carefully annotated books on philosophy, music and art. As part of independent study program designed by Johnson for the Honors College at University of Oregon, he immersed himself in Bloch for most of a year.

Johnson observed, "I had come to the project with the preconception that I would correlate [his] music and the photographs. I found that Bloch usually expressed a different aspect to his temperament in his photography. The music I listened to was composed by a man distraught with mental struggles, a man unable to accept the world. The photographs, however, showed a man accepting the world with wonderment and joy. The full range of Bloch's abundant personality was emerging."

And, "Those who have only listened to Bloch's music will never experience the full substance of the man. His photographs communicate a direct confrontation with life itself. They are pure Bloch - - above art and ideology."

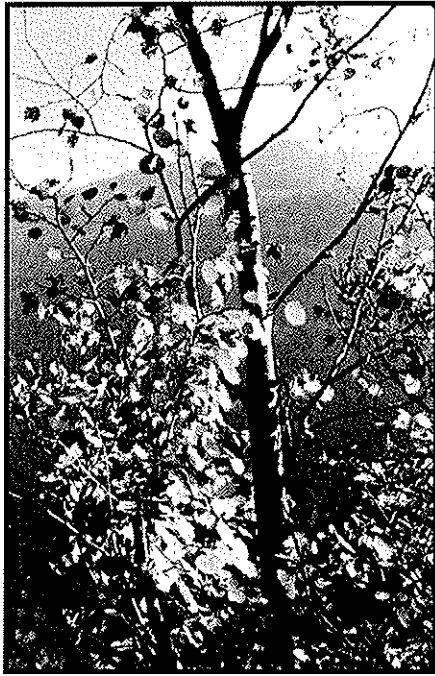
As in the rest of his life, Bloch was meticulous and maintained discipline; he composed his photographs to fill the entire frame of the negative. He did not rely on the darkroom to frame the picture.



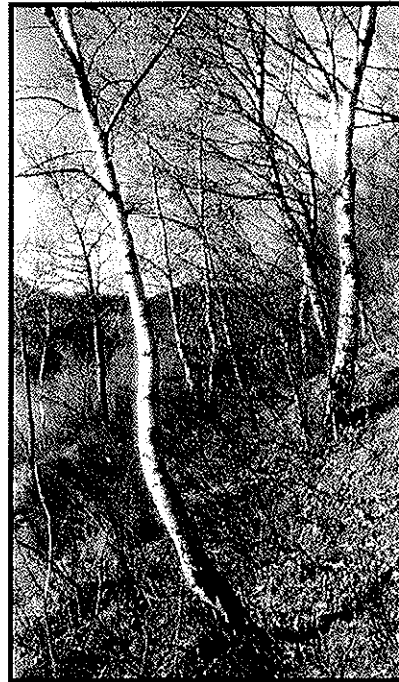
Yehudi Menuhin  
Paris-1931

"ONE OF MY MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES WAS PRINTING BLOCH'S PICTURES OF A YOUNG YEHUDI MENUHIN." - Eric Johnson

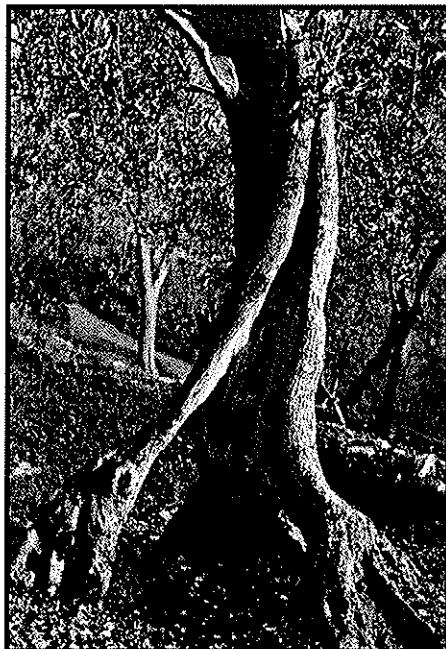
Eric Johnson revealed, "Bloch saw music in trees. He labeled some of his tree photographs according to the musical composer who he felt was similar in feeling and structure: "Debussy," "Bach," "Beethoven," and "Mozart." The photographs [taken in the French Alps in 1932] evoke feelings much like each composer's music.



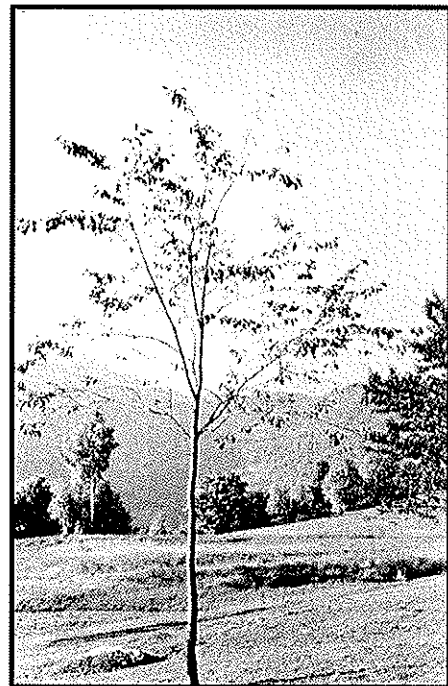
"HIS 'DEBUSSY' TREE IS A CONTINUOUS THREAD, INCOMPLETE WITHIN THE FRAME. FIGURE-GROUND RELATIONSHIPS BECOME AMBIGUOUS, STRUCTURE IS LOOSE AND FEELING IS UNDEFINED." - Eric Johnson



"HIS 'BACH' TREE PHOTOGRAPH IS A STRICT COUNTERPOINT OF ILLUMINATED BIRCH TRUNKS WITH A COMPLEX BACKGROUND." - Eric Johnson



"BLOCH SEES 'BEETHOVEN' INVARIABLY AS A SINGLE MASSIVE TREE APPEARING TO TWIST AND STRUGGLE OUT OF THE SOIL." - Eric Johnson



"'MOZART' IS MUCH DIFFERENT; A DECEPTIVELY LIGHT, BUT STURDY, TREE COMPLETE WITHIN THE FRAME AND CLEARLY DEFINED BY LIGHT." - Eric Johnson



"THE MUSHROOM LADY"  
SATIGNY, SWITZERLAND  
1912

BLOCH'S CHILDREN  
SUZANNE, LUCIENNE, AND  
IVAN  
1914



According to Johnson, "In the 1940's, after he had settled and stopped traveling, Bloch's interest in photography diminished. Polished agates began to attract him. He found music in the color and line of the translucent stones and took great pleasure in revealing their beauty with his handiwork. The problems and tensions built up in composing seemed to resolve themselves more freely when he worked consistently on his agates."



ERNEST BLOCH II REMEMBERS, "HE AND I USED TO SIT ON THAT BENCH AND REST AFTER THE CLIMB UP FROM THE BEACH. " EARLY '50s

Throughout the project, Johnson had been in contact with Ansel Adams who was a friend of Ernest and Ivan Bloch. Because of the superior facilities and desire to have the Bloch materials preserved, Ansel Adams made the connection with the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona. The heirs of Ernest Bloch, Ivan Bloch, Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff, and Suzanne Bloch Smith, entered into an agreement to donate the entire collection of photographic materials for the "study of the history and aesthetics of creative photography".

The Center for Creative Photography is also where Ansel Adams, Edward S. Curtis, and Alfred Steiglitz have left their collections.

### Bibliography

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