

P.J. Ryan's First Brick Store Building (Jacksonville Inn)
175 East California Street
Jacksonville
Jackson County
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-118

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PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. ORE-118

P.J. RYAN'S FIRST BRICK STORE BUILDING
(JACKSONVILLE INN)

Location: 175 East California Street, Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The structure built by P.J. Ryan on the north side of California Street has had a long and checkered history. One of the most frequently altered buildings in Jacksonville, it has often been remodelled for new uses. Ryan purchased the land--formerly part of the U.S. Hotel lot--from C.C. Beekman in 1860.¹ Beekman specified in the deed that if Ryan were to build on the lot, the building had to be of brick or stone construction and had to extend to the line dividing Ryan's and Beekman's property; Beekman was thus ensured of a brick wall to which he could attach a building of his own. The following year, Beekman granted Ryan an additional foot of ground; Ryan had evidently missurveyed his lot and had begun to construct his building with the west wall resting on Beekman's lot.² Between September 11 and October 29, 1861, the stone cellar walls were built by Frank Kraus. Kraus did not receive payment immediately, and the following month placed a mechanic's lien on the "new brick house on the north side of California Street." The lien notes that Nathaniel Witt was the contractor for the building.³

The original building appears to have been only one story: In 1871, Ryan took out an insurance policy on a one-story brick storehouse located between the hotel and a livery stable--certainly the present building site.⁴ Previous to 1871, several persons had rented space in the building. On the 1868 map of the town it is shown as a double store, with Henry Judge's Harness Shop in one half and Morris Mensor's General Store in the other;⁵ late in that same year, the Jacksonville Reveille Weekly reported that the U.S. Hotel would be extended and mentioned that to the east of the hotel was "the brick [sic] occupied by Mr. Miller."⁶

In 1874 The Democratic Times reported that after a fire in the building, Ryan rebuilt his store, adding a second story. In 1879 a third story was added.⁷ Late nineteenth century photographs show the building with a frame penthouse on top of two brick stories.

Although little is known about P.J. Ryan, he was one of the most active and successful merchants in Jacksonville. An early settler in the town, he owned the Palmetto Bowling Saloon, one of the first local establishments of its kind.⁸ Probably aware that the merchants of the town desired safer, so-called fireproof buildings, he constructed several

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brick buildings and purchased another.⁹ In 1883, the Democratic Times reported that Ryan was building several houses for rental purposes, making him one of the few speculative builders of residential properties in the town.¹⁰

FOOTNOTES

1
Jackson County Deeds, July 24, 1860.

2
ibid., August 19, 1861.

3
ibid., November 26, 1861.

4
Phoenix Insurance Company, "Insurance Book."

5
"Map of Jacksonville," 1868.

6
Jacksonville Reveille Weekly, November 7, 1868.

7
The Democratic Times, September 18, 1874; November 6, 1879.

8
Jackson County Deeds, November 20, 1853.

9
The P.J. Ryan Building on the south side of California Street was built in late 1884 or early 1885; in 1868, he purchased the brick building known as the Ben Drew Commission House. See HABS No. ORE-74.

10
The Democratic Times, December 14, 1883. Other persons entered the speculative real estate market by subdividing land and selling lots that other people would then build their own houses on. This is the only example identified of someone building speculative housing.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The building is two stories.

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2. Number of bays: The facade is four bays wide at the second-story level; the first floor has been altered.
3. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular.
4. Wall construction, finish, color: Above the stone foundation, the walls are unpainted brick. The walls have been rebuilt, and the present facade brick is twentieth century.
5. Openings: The present off-center entrance is recessed between horizontal bands of windows. There are also bands of windows above the foundation to light the basement. The four second-floor windows are set between horizontal string courses; below each window is a tablet. The windows are one-over-one light double-hung sash. On the east side facade there is a doorway to the second floor approached by a dog-leg exterior staircase of modern design.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape: The roof is flat and is hidden by a parapet.
 - b. Cornice: The facade cornice, returning on itself, is several courses tall. The lowest course is a pattern of bricks laid horizontally and vertically in groups of three; above this are several projecting courses that form a cornice. The wall continues above the entablature to form a parapet. Over the two east bays and the two west bays, the parapet breaks upward to define two separate store fronts.

B. Description of Interior:

The interior has been entirely remodelled. In the basement, the stone foundation walls are exposed; the space is used as a bar and restaurant. The first floor is largely a meeting room and banquet space. The second floor has been divided into hotel rooms.

C. Site and Surroundings:

The building is located at the end of a row of structures on the north side of California Street. To the west is a one-story brick building; to the east, a detached one-story concrete-block building and a parking area. Behind the building is a parking lot for hotel guests.

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D. Original Appearance:

The original building was two stories, with two shops on the ground floor and living quarters on the second floor. At one time, a third story was added; it was narrower than the street facade but extended the length of the building from north to south; it had a gabled roof on the street facade. A balcony, supported by posts along the street line, was attached to the facade and presumably one of the second-floor openings was a doorway. The facade may have been five bays at one time. The present facade is a twentieth-century construction; the seam where it was added to the building is visible on the east side elevation.

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