

VALE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

**A Street between Holland & Longfellow Streets, north side of B Street
between Holland & Main Streets, Main Street South from A Street
through B Street, & Stone House at 283 Main Street South**

Vale

Malheur County

Oregon

HABS OR-177

OR-177

HABS

OR-177

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700

Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VALE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

HABS No. OR-177

Location: A Street between Holland and Longfellow streets; the north side of B Street between Holland and Main streets; Main Street South from A Street through B Street; and the Stone House at 283 Main Street South in the City of Vale, Malheur County, Oregon.

USGS Vale East, Oregon, Quadrangle

Date of Construction: 1872-1950

Architect: Various

Builders: Various

Present Owners: Various

Present Use: Commercial Center

Significance: The Vale Commercial Historic District is locally significant as a major shipping and distribution center for Malheur County's surrounding agricultural industries, and as an excellent collection of commercial buildings erected over a 128-year period that show a continuum and evolution of building materials, types, and styles. The District comprises a concentration of commercial structures dating from 1872 to 1950 reflecting the early development of Vale from a stage stop and wayside to a central trading and shipping center in Malheur County. Vale not only served the local community, but also handled regional trade of the ranchers and farmers who came to town to ship their produce, shop for goods, conduct business, and recreate.

Report Prepared By: James Norman, Cultural Resource Specialist
Oregon Department of Transportation, Environmental Services, Salem, OR
Sally Donovan, Cultural Resource Specialist
Donovan & Associates, Hood River, OR
Jo Reese, Senior Archaeologist
Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc., Portland, OR

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I. DESCRIPTION

Vale is the county seat of Malheur County and is located in eastern Oregon at the junction of U.S. Highways 20 and 26, approximately 16 miles west of Ontario, Oregon. U.S. Highway 20 extends east (one-way) on A Street through the Vale Commercial Historic District and joins Highway 26 one block east of the District's east boundary. The District includes: A Street between Holland and Longfellow streets; the north side of B Street from Holland to Main streets; Main Street South between A and B streets; and the Stone House at 283 Main Street South.

The District comprises a concentration of commercial structures dating from 1872 to 1950 reflecting the early development of Vale from a stage stop and wayside to a central trading and shipping center in Malheur County. Vale not only served the local community, but also handled regional trade of the ranchers and farmers who came to town to ship their produce, shop for goods, conduct business, and recreate.

Vale's early history centered around the Malheur River crossing along the Oregon Trail, and the 1872 Stone House, an early hotel and stage stop. Vale became the Malheur County seat in 1887 and was incorporated in 1889. The first major building boom occurred when the Malheur Valley Railroad was completed in 1907 from Ontario (the main line connection) to Vale. Almost half the buildings downtown were erected during this expansion period from 1906 to 1912. In the 1920s and 1930s, large-scale irrigation projects were built in the surrounding agricultural lands that set the stage for the community's second major expansion period after World War II. The post-war building boom occurred from 1947 to 1950, adding nine substantial commercial buildings along A Street West in downtown Vale. The buildings in the Vale Commercial Historic District reflect the agricultural activity that shaped the town and community.

Physical Description

Vale is located in eastern Oregon at the junction of U.S. Highways 20 and 26, approximately 16 miles west of Ontario, Oregon. U.S. Highway 20-26, a major arterial, extends east (one-way) on A Street through the historic downtown District. Sections of A and B streets, and Main Street South are included in the District. The District, located on a flat parcel of land, is west of the Malheur River and surrounded by newer commercial and public buildings.

The District encompasses portions of nine city blocks and includes two plats: the Original Plat of Vale and Eldridge's Addition. The blocks, measuring 200 feet square, are divided into eight lots measuring 50' x 94'. Generally, the 12' alleys extend north-south in the Original Plat of Vale (south side of A Street), and east-west in Eldridge's Addition (north side of A Street). Vale is laid out on a true north-south axis. Main and A streets, measuring 60' wide curb to curb, are wider than the secondary streets. The secondary streets (Longfellow, Court, Bryant, and Holland), measure 40 feet wide. Sidewalks along Main Street vary between 9' and 10' wide with 4" to 6" curbs. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) funded new 9' wide sidewalks with 6" curbs and handicapped accessible curb cuts along B Street and portions of Main Street in 1997. The sidewalk project along Main Street was funded by ODOT in 1997 as part of the Vale Historic Restoration Project.

Main Street extends north-south and terminates at the north at what historically was the location of the railroad depot. The south end of Main Street terminates at Vale's Riverside Park. The property owners have planted ash street trees in 3' x 3' openings along Main Street South, and sections of A and B streets. The streets are lined with cobra-head streetlights attached to wooden posts (a few are steel). There are very few street amenities (trash receptacles or benches) in the District.

Building footprints vary from 20'-0" to 94'-0" wide and generally span the 94' length of the lot. The structures constructed along Main Street represent some of the oldest structures in the District. Historically, buildings along Main Street were erected first, gradually extending east and west along A Street. The Stone House, constructed in 1872, was built near the southern end of Main Street and the railroad depot (razed) at the northern end. From 1872 to 1912, commercial structures were erected between these two anchor buildings. Most of the buildings along Main Street were built as a result of the completion of the railroad in 1907.

The buildings constructed prior to 1912 vary in height from one to three stories, though most are two stories. The structures are generally constructed of brick, native sandstone, or a combination of the two materials and are flush with the public right-of-way. In general, the buildings have a first story constructed of stone with arched storefront windows and a brick upper story with one over one double-hung wood sash windows. Although the buildings are more vernacular in style, some of the stone and brick buildings display characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style in their heavy appearance, arched openings, flat roof with parapets, decorative contrasting lintels with keystones, and stone construction. Other buildings reflect the Queen Anne, and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Commercial styles.

Only four buildings in the District were constructed from the mid-1910s to 1940. These buildings were constructed of concrete, brick, or hollow clay tile finished with stucco or a brick veneer. The buildings from the second major building boom, 1947-50, are similar in character. They are one or two stories in height, constructed of concrete or hollow clay tiles, with brick veneers and large storefront windows. Austere in their decorative detail, these buildings maintain the historic setbacks (flush with the sidewalk), building heights, and were constructed from similar materials. The two buildings (U.S. Bank and Dairy Queen) constructed after 1950 vary from the traditional setback and design of other buildings in the District.

Description of Historic-Contributing Properties

Property (Historic Name, date)

- A 343 A Street West (Albertson Grocery and Everyone's Clothing Store, 1948; Contributing)
The one-story concrete building has a brick veneer on the street façades, and a band of storefront windows along the Main Street elevation. Decorative details include a recessed panel in the spandrel embellished with a basket-weave brick pattern. Erected for use as a clothing store and an Albertson's grocery store, the building was completed in July 1948 by contractor Dick Humphrey. The building is currently used for storage.
- B 360 A Street West (Auto Shop 1938; Contributing)
The one-story concrete building has a high parapet divided into panels by raised pilasters. The two central storefronts with transoms above are flanked by garage doors. The building was constructed in 1938 for use as an auto repair shop and service station. In more recent years, Zekes Automotive occupied the building.
- C 340 A Street West (Kessler Chevrolet, 1949; Contributing)
The Kessler Chevrolet Building, constructed in 1949 by contractor Dick Humphrey, is a two-story concrete building with a buff-colored brick veneer on the front elevation. The building has multi-pane metal windows on the upper story and a band of large storefront windows on the lower story. Wooden doors with transoms above flank the storefront windows. The building was originally used as an auto dealership and service center. The Malheur County Health Department had their offices upstairs. The building was owned for years by Kenneth Kessler.
- D 318 A Street West (Bureau of Reclamation Building, 1928; Contributing)
Constructed in 1928, the brick building has a stucco finish. The front elevation is divided into three bays by raised pilasters. The predominant window types are one over one double-hung wood sash and multi-pane double-hung wood sash. The 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates the building was the shop and storage building for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Construction of the building was a result of the large-scale irrigation projects that were built in the county. The building has also been used by the Vale Consumer Coop and Irrigation District as offices, and the Vale Educational Service District.
- E 293 A Street West (Humphrey Building, 1949; Contributing)
The one-story concrete building has a brick veneer on the street elevations. The recessed spandrel panel is decorated with brick stretcher courses. Large storefront windows with an offset door comprises the front elevation along A Street West. The building was completed in late summer 1949, as the offices for Idaho Power and the "Charm Center" Store. The property was owned by Dick Humphrey, a local builder who erected 18 buildings in downtown Vale after World War II. The two buildings to the east were constructed at the same time in a similar style. The building is currently occupied by Vale Chiropractic and the Malheur Enterprise Newspaper.

- F 289 A Street West (The Dilley Building, 1949; Contributing)
The Dilley Building, completed in August 1949, is a one-story concrete building with a buff brick veneer façade. The building has raised brick soldier and stretcher courses outlining the windows and building perimeter, and has a recessed entrance. The property was owned by Edgar Dilley and housed a dime store, Ben Franklin's. The two buildings flanking the structure were constructed at the same time in a similar style. The building's two storefronts are currently occupied by a hair salon and an insurance company.
- G 263 A Street West (Thurston Building, The Malheur Enterprise, 1949; Contributing)
The one-story concrete building, completed in 1949, has a brick veneer finish on the front façade. The spandrel is decorated with a recessed panel with courses of brick laid in stretcher courses. The two western storefronts retain the original recessed entrances while the eastern two storefronts have been modified and are not recessed. The building was used as the offices and the printing department for the Malheur Enterprise Newspaper. The property was owned by Robert V. Thurston and constructed by Dick Humphrey. The two buildings to the west were constructed at the same time in a similar style. Commercial businesses occupy the storefronts.
- H 225-231 A Street West (Goodrich Hotel, 1907; Contributing)
Erected in 1907, the Goodrich Hotel is a two-story brick building. The cornice is embellished with drip corbelling, and arched lintels cap the paired and singular one over one double-hung wood sash windows on the upper story. The ground floor story has been modified with the application of stucco over the western side of the façade, and window and door modifications. The building housed the hotel (later apartments) on the upper floor and a variety of commercial businesses in the first floor storefronts. Currently, the first floor is commercial space and the second floor is apartments.
- I 201 A Street West (First National Bank, 1907; Contributing)
Constructed in 1907, the First National Bank building was erected for a cost of \$15,000. The two-story, red brick and sandstone building has a projecting cornice with decorative raised brick panels and sandstone beltcourse above the second-story one over one double-hung wood sash windows. A sandstone beltcourse separates the two stories. Stucco covers the first floor façades between the large arched window openings. The first floor windows are finished with a coursing of sandstone. The corner entrance is surrounded with sandstone and a ghost sign stating "Bank" is still visible above the entrance. A barber shop was located in the back store front and professional offices upstairs. The first administrators of the bank were James N. Jones and Don E. Masterson. Flying Realty Inc. and other offices are currently located on the ground floor. A one-story brick addition was added to the back of the building.
- J 240 A Street West (Rex Theater, 1922-23; Contributing)
The Rex Theater is a one-story hollow clay tile building with a raised parapet. The façade has been covered with stucco. The building retains the original wooden entrance doors and transoms, and upper story multi-pane casement window. The original Rex Theater was damaged by fire in the early 1920s and was reconstructed in 1922-23. The building is still in use as a movie theater.

K 189 A Street West and 130 Court Street (Vale Trading Company, 1911; Contributing)
The one-story, brick Vale Trading Company was built in 1911. The high parapet is embellished with recessed panels divided by raised pilasters. The original transom windows have been covered, the brick finished with stucco on the street elevations, the storefront windows modified, and an addition has been added to the back of the building. Although modified, the basic form of the building has been maintained. The Vale Trading Company was used for a merchandising store until 1986; only the name changed over the years from the Vale Trading Company to the Vale Commercial Company and then to Vale Supply. It was later known as Quisenberry's. The building currently houses a fitness center.

L 123 Main Street (Drexel Hotel or the Vale Hotel, 1908; Contributing/ National Register Property)
The three-story Drexel Hotel, erected in 1908, is a brick and sandstone building that has a central tower on the Main Street façade. Constructed of red brick, the structure has a buff brick veneer on the upper stories of the street elevations. A bracketed cornice projects from below the stepped parapet. Sandstone beltcourses define the top and bottom of the upper story, one over one double-hung wood sash windows. The first story is comprised of arched storefront openings with a central entrance. A wooden balcony caps the entrance on Main Street.

The hotel was constructed by the First Bank of Vale who had their offices in the northeast corner of the building. The hotel had 58 rooms, baths with hot and cold running water, a drug store, café, doctor's office, a formal dining room, barber shop, and telephone office. The Drexel Hotel, later called the Vale Hotel, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

M 170 A Street West (Tavern, 1949; Contributing)
Constructed in 1949, the one-story building has a brick veneer façade. The building has a recessed spandrel panel decorated with a basket weave brick pattern. A metal canopy projects over the modified storefront windows and door. The building was erected for use as a tavern by contractor Dick Humphrey. Currently, the building houses the A Street Tavern.

N 122 A Street West (The Cue Café, 1950; Contributing)
Built in 1950 by contractor Dick Humphrey, the two-story building has a buff colored brick façade. A band of metal sash windows line the upper story façade; the first story is divided into three storefronts. The entrances are in the middle of the storefront bays which have brick bulkheads. The original building on the site burned in January 1949. One store front was originally occupied by the Cue Café, currently the Trail House Restaurant.

O 100 A Street West (I.T.T. Nelson Building, 1910; Contributing)
The buff-colored brick building was constructed in 1910 by I.T.T. Nelson. The parapet is decorated with a stone coping, recessed brick panels, and a brick drip course. The upper

story's paired, one over one double-hung wood sash windows are accented by darker colored brick lintels with keystones. The original corner entrance has been modified and the storefront transoms covered. Known as the Nelson Building, the structure has been used as a furniture store, drug store, undertaker's parlor, and office space.

P 135 Main Street (IOOF Hall, 1907; Contributing)

The two-story brick and sandstone building is capped with a parapet finished with sandstone coping. A wide cornice supported with brackets extends around the street elevations. The upper floor is finished with brick and the windows capped with stone lintels and keystones. The Odd Fellow interlocking chain symbol, made of stone, is below the cornice. A sandstone beltcourse divides the two stories; the lower story is constructed of sandstone. The storefront windows and transoms have been covered.

The Independent Order of the Odd Fellows erected the structure in 1907 on a prominent corner of downtown Vale. The building housed commercial businesses on the ground floor and the lodge hall on the upper floor. A tavern is currently located in the first floor.

Q 104 A Street East (C.C. Boswell Building / Vale Drug Store, 1908; Contributing)

The two-story Boswell Building is constructed of brick on the upper story and sandstone on the lower story. The parapet is capped with sandstone coping, and the cornice is embellished with brick drip coursing and recessed brick panels. The one over one double-hung wood sash windows are capped with a stone lintel. The lower story's corner entrance is accented with a round arch opening and contrasting colors of sandstone. Original wooden storefront windows are intact.

The C.C. Boswell Building, originally called the Vale Drug Store, was erected in 1908 by John Boswell for \$6,000. Professional offices were on the second floor of the structure. Boswell served as postmaster for many years. The building currently houses a barber shop.

R 150-172 A Street East (Humphrey Building, 1911; Contributing)

The Humphrey Building, built in 1911, is a one-story buff-colored brick building divided into bays by raised pilasters. The cornice is slightly corbelled and the spandrel panels are decorated with a diamond pattern designed in contrasting brick colors. The storefronts have been modified. The Humphrey Building housed the Vale Hardware Store and Vale Saddlery Company. The saddlery was operated by Vogue and Rose (William "Billy" M. Rose). Portions of the building were later used as a garage and roller skating rink. One storefront currently houses the City Library.

S 192 A Street East (Saddle Shop, 1947; Contributing)

The building, constructed in 1947 by contractor Dick Humphrey, is a two-story building with a brick veneer. The parapet steps down on the east side to one story. One over one double-hung windows and slider fill the window openings on the second floor. A band of large storefront windows line the first story façade. The U2 Saddle Shop and Dry Good store is currently located in the western portion of the building.

T 187 Main Street (Hope Brothers Building, 1893; Contributing)

Constructed in 1893, the Hope Brothers Building is a two-story sandstone building and has a stepped parapet with stone coping. The second story windows have been enclosed on the Main Street façade and the three first story storefronts have been enclosed, although, the bays have been retained. The building has been modified on the south side by installing garage doors for the fire department.

The Hope Brothers Buildings was erected by Milton G. and Isaiah W. (Zay) Hope for use as a general mercantile store. The Hope brothers built the first general store in Vale in 1885 and were prominent in the early development of the town. Isaiah Hope was a member of the school board and state legislature, and one-term mayor, and Milton Hope served as postmaster for eight years, helped found the First Bank of Vale, and was a two-term mayor. After the Hope brothers sold the store, it was occupied by the Vale Trading Company. The building was used by the company until 1911 when the store was moved to a new building on A Street West. Representing one of the oldest buildings in Vale, the Hope Brothers Building is now used as the City's fire hall.

U 147 Main Street South (Opera House, 1895-96; Contributing)

The Opera House, erected in 1895-96, is a two-story sandstone building with a brick coping on the parapet. One over one double-hung wood sash windows with stone lintels and sills line the upper story façade; the lower floor has been modified with the enclosure of the storefront and the removal of the original cornice. The south portion of the structure (a later addition) was partially demolished in 1984. The building was used as a tavern by James Fell, an early county sheriff. After the tavern was shut down in 1908 due to prohibition, the building was renovated into an opera hall for a cost of \$3,000. The building is currently vacant.

V 148 Main Street South (First Bank of Vale, 1901; Contributing/National Register Property)

The First Bank of Vale, constructed in 1900-01, is a two-story sandstone building with a central peaked parapet. The windows have arched openings; the first-story windows have pendants at the ends of the storefront arches. All the windows are original. The First Bank of Vale opened in 1901 with a capital stock of \$50,000. The president of the bank was J. L. Cole. The building, erected for \$5,000, is architecturally significant for its design and sandstone construction. The First Bank of Vale was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

W 283 Main Street South (The Stone House, 1872; Contributing/National Register Property)

The Stone House, constructed in 1872, is a two-story sandstone building with a hip roof. The two over two double-hung windows on the front façade of the second story flank the central balcony door. The first floor wood windows and door have arched openings; the entrance door is a double wooden door. A balcony supported by decorative posts extends across the front of the building. A side door is located on the second floor of the north elevation; wooden stairs lead to the door.

The Stone House is one of the oldest buildings in Malheur County. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, the building was erected by Amanda and Louis B. Rinehart. The house served as a way station for emigrants migrating west, a hostel, a stage stop, and post office (established in 1883). A small stone outbuilding north of the house was used as a storage/cellar building. The Stone House now functions as the Rinehart Stone House Museum.

X 252 B Street South (Vale City Hall, 1938; Contributing)

Vale City Hall, constructed in 1938, is a two-story hollow clay tile building designed with elements of the Art Deco Style. The multi-pane windows are capped with a concrete beltcourse and the elevated foundation level is constructed of concrete. The central entrance is flanked by raised pilasters. The look-out tower on top of the building was constructed in the 1950s by the Vale Civil Defense Club. The City Hall building was built for use as a city hall, library, and fire station (in basement). The building was constructed by the PWA.

Y 191 Bryant Street (L.D.S. Church, 1940; Contributing)

Erected in 1940, the one-story building is constructed of reddish stone laid in a random pattern. Decorative details include arched openings and a recessed, rounded arch entrance. Locally quarried stone from a hillside near the Bully Creek Dam was used in its construction. The church building was erected by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (L.D.S). The Mormons built a new church at the west end of Vale in 1948-49 and sold the stone building. The former church was then used as a mortuary and currently houses a photography studio.

II. HISTORY

Vale has a long history rooted in the migration across the United States on the Oregon Trail. After fording the Snake River at Fort Boise, travelers headed west to the Malheur Crossing at the present site of Vale. Emigrants stocked up on fresh water, grazed livestock, and bathed in the natural hot springs at the Malheur River crossing before continuing their westward journey. The Malheur Crossing continued to be an important stopping point for many years. In the 1860s, gold was discovered in Idaho and thousands of miners crossed the Malheur heading east on the Trail in pursuit of gold.

By 1863, permanent settlers began claiming land near the present town of Vale. Trader and trapper Jonathan Keeney built the first house of logs, willow sticks and mud in the early 1860s on the south side of the Malheur River, which served as a wayside inn. Keeney sold his land to Lewis B. Rinehart in 1872 who built a stone house on his property, which still stands today in downtown Vale (283 Main Street South). The house became the center of the community serving as a residence, hotel, and station for the stage line between Boise and Canyon City. During the Bannock-Paiute War of 1878, settlers sought shelter in the stone house until the uprising was over. During the 1870s, gold was discovered in the Willow Creek, Burnt River and Powder River valleys north of Vale which brought many Idaho miners west on the Oregon Trail crossing the Malheur River at Vale. Rinehart also established a ferry on the Malheur River (1872-1881) known as Rinehart Crossing which was used by the postal service, stages, and travelers. The Dalles-Fort Boise Military Road (completed in 1869) crossed the Malheur River at Vale; the road was a major transportation route across Eastern Oregon.

Many settled in the Vale area to farm and raise livestock after leaving the gold mines of Idaho and mining districts north of the town. Irrigation ditches were constructed in the 1880s that helped distribute water to the ranches and farms, further stimulating growth. Vale became a trading center as new businesses accommodated the influx of settlers. A post office was established in 1883, and the first general store opened in 1885. Other businesses and public buildings soon followed including hotels, a newspaper office (*Malheur Gazette*), a public hall, liverys, blacksmith shops, a school, fraternal halls, and a flour mill on the banks of the Malheur River. These buildings were simple wood structures and lined what is now Main Street.

In February 1887, Malheur County was formed with Vale designated as the temporary county seat. Six towns were vying for the county seat and after many elections, Vale became the permanent county seat. The City of Vale was incorporated in 1889, and a new stone courthouse was completed in 1902 (demolished 1958). As the county seat, Vale thrived in the first decade of the twentieth century.

A 1906 city ordinance stipulated that all commercial buildings were to be made of brick or stone to help prevent fires. This provision changed the face of the town as buildings of locally quarried sandstone began appearing along the main streets. This change occurred simultaneous with another important development; the completion of the Malheur Valley Railroad (later leased to the Oregon Short Line). The local community raised \$15,000 to extend the railroad from Ontario (on the main line) to Vale. The railroad was completed in 1907, and the depot stood at the north end of Main Street just outside the core commercial area. The railroad was extended to Brogan

in 1910, and to Burns in 1924. Sheep, cattle, and agricultural goods were shipped on the line, which brought about a building boom, and Vale became the shipping and distributing hub for the region, doubling in size from 600 people in 1906 to 1,200 in 1911.

The October 16, 1909, *Caldwell Tribune* highlights the City of Vale and states, “Vale is the most lusty and thriving giant municipal infant in all the Pacific Northwest” and further states that, “Its buildings meet every exaction of architectural beauty and utility. Its business blocks are almost invariably stone and brick, and its dwellings unusually attractive and comfortable and fully half of the structures were built within the past 18 months.”

Many of the substantial commercial buildings in downtown Vale were erected during this boom period from 1906 to 1911. These buildings included the Goodrich Hotel, First National Bank, Vale Trading Post, Drexel Hotel, Nelson Building, IOOF Hall, Boswell and Humphrey buildings, First Bank of Vale, and the new railroad depot at the north end of Main Street. Doctors, lawyers, and insurance companies established offices downtown. The Vale Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1910, and under their guide, other civic improvements were completed. These included beautification of the public park, installation of new water and sewer systems and telephone lines, purchasing a fire truck, and constructing a stone, two-story high school. More church buildings and residences were also erected at this time. The hot springs, east of downtown, were developed when a natatorium and laundry were built in 1910-11 on the banks of the Malheur River (used until 1960).

This building boom slowed in the 1910s and 1920s, when only a few commercial buildings were erected in downtown. Although building slowed in town, construction of the large-scale irrigation systems began in the county. Federal reclamation acts encouraged the construction of these irrigation projects in an effort to promote development of agricultural lands. Projects in the Vale area included Owyhee, Bully Creek, and Willow River projects, and the Vale Irrigation Project. The Vale Project received its first appropriation in 1924 and was completed in 1939, opening thousands of acres for development. The Bureau of Reclamation established an office and storage building in Vale to assist in the management of the irrigation projects. Agriculture and livestock continued to be the backbone of the local economy. Corn, sugar beets, potatoes, onions, and grain were grown. Labor camps were set up and migrant workers were brought in to help with the harvests. The beef and dairy cattle industry played an important role in the economy, taking advantage of the natural grasslands.

Building continued at a slow pace during the 1930s Great Depression in the City of Vale; only a church, the City Hall (WPA project), and an automotive garage were erected in downtown. The area started to recover from the Depression as World War II began. During World War II, German soldiers were interred at camps in Vale, and were used as field workers in the neighboring agricultural areas. After World War II, Vale experienced another period of rapid growth and expansion due to post-war prosperity. From 1947 to 1950, nine substantial commercial buildings were constructed in downtown Vale primarily along A Street West. Built with brick façades, these new edifices blended with the older commercial buildings. This boom mirrored the construction spurt Vale experienced in the first decade of the twentieth century. New churches, a hospital, a new county courthouse, and residential subdivisions were planned

and erected, and the rural fire district was organized. The population grew from 1,083 people in 1940 to 1,500 in 1950 and more slowly since 1950 to 1,990 in 2000.

The economy of Vale is still closely linked to the agriculture of Malheur County. The Vale area produces one-third of all crops grown in the county including fruits, seeds, potatoes, sweet corn, onions, sugar beets, wheat, barley, and field corn. The livestock industry also continues to be an important industry for the city's economy. Vale has attracted new agri-businesses including a grain elevator, feed lots, livestock sales barn, fertilizer plant, diatomite plant, and a mushroom growing plant that utilizes the hot springs vital to the historic development of the city. Vale also is the headquarters for the region's Bureau of Land Management. Vale's historic downtown buildings reflect its history based in the agricultural lands that surround the community.

III. SOURCES

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IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation has been prepared for the Oregon Department of Transportation, which is planning a project intended to enhance pedestrian amenities, improve safety and improve physical accessibility in downtown Vale. The project will reconstruct existing deteriorated sidewalks and add street amenities (i.e., historic-style light fixtures and street trees) along a one-mile section of A Street (eastbound US 20-26) and Washington Street (westbound US 20-26) in Vale. Much of the project is within the Vale Commercial Historic District.