

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor  
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name **PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE**  
**FARMHOUSE & BARN**  
 and/or Common Name Sprague House & Barn

## 2. Location

Street & Number 6616 E. Orchard Road  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99217  
 Parcel Number 36242.9022

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name John Roderick & Karen Sprague  
 Street & Number P.O. Box 6211  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99217  
 Telephone Number/E-mail 981-4420, 994-7888, ksprague1@gmail.com

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse  
 Street Number 1116 West Broadway  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99260  
 County Spokane

## 6. Representation of Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey  
 Date Federal \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Local \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location of Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (see nomination, section 8)	<b>Condition</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<b>Check One</b> <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered  <b>Check One</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved & date _____
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*Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance**

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places Categories: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane 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 or 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 history.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property	6.09 acres.
Verbal Boundary Description	Section 24, Township 26, Range 43E, south 1/2 of southeast 1/4 of northwest 1/4 except west 877 feet.
Verbal Boundary Justification	Nominated property includes entire parcel and rural legal description.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name and Title	Linda Yeomans, Consultant
Organization	Historic Preservation Planning
Street, City, State, Zip Code	501 West 27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number	509-456-3828
Email Address	lindayeomans@comcast.net
Date Final Nomination Heard	August 21, 2013

**12. Additional Documentation**

Map	City/County of Spokane current plat map.
Photographs	Black & white prints, CD-ROM color images.

13. Signature(s) of Owner(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. For Official Use Only

Date nomination application filed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

Landmarks Commission decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

City Council/Board of County Commissioners' decision: \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners as set forth above.**

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**Kristen Griffin** **Date**  
**City/County Historic Preservation Officer**  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Third Floor—City Hall  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Spokane, WA 99201

Attest:

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/County Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City/County Attorney



*Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse in circa 1940*



*Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn in 2013*

***DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY***

***Summary Statement***

With construction started in 1891 and completed in 1895, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse is a fine example of the Folk Victorian style and type. The farmhouse is a two-story dwelling built in a gable-front-and-wing plan. A covered front porch is located on the home's gable-front and in the L formed by the gable-front-and-wing. The house and porch roof form a low-pitched hip roof which is covered with composition shingles. The exterior walls of the house are clad with horizontal wood clapboard siding, and original windows are tall 2/2 double-hung wood-sash units. The home is embellished with cornice returns in gable fields, inset wall dormers with 2/2 windows, and corner boards. Built in 1905 as part of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague farmstead, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn is located west of the farmhouse, and was listed in 2012 on the Washington State Heritage Barn Register of Historic Places. A 1905 fieldstone foundation that once supported a cabbage shed is located on the property west of the farmhouse.<sup>1</sup> Framed by manicured lawn, wild grasses, and a century-old fruit orchard, the farmhouse has undergone modifications since it was built over one-hundred years ago in 1891-1895. The property retains good integrity in original location, original design, original materials, original workmanship, and original association in excellent condition as a turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse built on Orchard Prairie in Spokane County. The 1905 Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn was rehabilitated in 2012 using guidelines from the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, and retains good integrity in excellent condition as a historic landmark of the Washington State Heritage Barn Register.

***CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION***

***Site***

The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn are located northeast of Spokane in Spokane County on Orchard Prairie on the south ½ of the southeast ¼ of the northwest ¼ of Section 24, Township 26 North, Range 43 East of the Willamette Meridian. The property is situated on the southwest corner formed by the intersection of East Orchard Road and North Orchard Prairie Road, measures 403.83 feet wide and 660 feet deep,<sup>2</sup> and includes 6.09 contiguous acres of farmland with manicured lawn, fruit trees, and wild grasses. The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse is 44 feet wide and 24 feet deep. A single-story addition built in 1964 on the west rear of the house is 12 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Located northwest of the farmhouse, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn is 46 feet wide and 42 feet deep. East Orchard Road abuts the property's north border, North Orchard Prairie Road abuts the property's east border, and farmland is adjacent to the property's south and west borders. The property is surrounded by rural farmland

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<sup>1</sup> A new cabbage shed was built in 2013 over the 1905 fieldstone foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

developed with farms, farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings mostly built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

***Farmhouse Exterior (built in 1891-1895)***

The exterior of the farmhouse is well-preserved in good condition. Built with a balloon wood frame system, the house is two stories and follows a simple gable-front-and-wing pattern. The gable-front of the house faces east and was built in 1891, five years before the north wing was added in 1895. The north wing is identical to the original 1891 gable-front, and has a north-facing gable. The ridge crests formed by the gable-front-and-wing are even with uniform height. A brick chimney with a corbelled brick chimney cap pierces the roof crest north of the center of the house. A fieldstone chimney rises past the roof on the south end of the house. The roof is covered with composition shingles. The roof of the house is steeply pitched with overhanging eaves, and is embellished with a deep cornice, a wide cornice trim band, and cornice returns at gable fields. Fascias are twelve inches deep and are made of solid wood (not plywood). The house is clad with horizontal wood drop siding (also known as rustic siding, novelty siding, and German siding). Wood corner boards protect the ends of the wood siding. Original windows at the house are symmetrically placed and are tall 2/2 wood-sash double-hung units with wood window sills and simple square-cut wood trim surrounds. The foundation of the house is composed of fieldstone culled from the area.

*The east wall of the farmhouse is considered the home's primary façade, and depicts the home's gable-front-and-wing design. A covered front porch is attached to the house at the first story in the L formed by the gable-front-and-wing, and has a low-pitched hip roof. The covered porch extends the full width of the house and is supported by square wood posts. A porch deck is made of wood and rises about a foot above grade. Two symmetrically placed tall 2/2 windows punctuate the east façade of the house above the porch roof in the gable-front. A small louvered vent to the home's attic is located in the gable peak. Cornice returns highlight the roof eaves at the home's gable-front. In 1895, a two-story wing was attached at a right angle to the gable-front of the house. The east façade of the wing features two symmetrically placed inset wall dormers with gabled roofs. Each dormer has a tall 2/2 window. At the first floor shaded by the covered porch is an entrance with sliding glass doors. A small horizontal sliding window flanks the doors on the north, and a large glazed picture window is located in the center of the gable front (south of the sliding doors).*

The *north side* of house features the gable-end of the 1895 wing, is clad with a continuation of the home's horizontal wood drop siding, and features cornice returns that match those at the east facade. A small louvered vent is located in the top of the gable peak, a tall 2/2 original window is located just beneath the louvered vent at the second floor, and a large picture window and an enclosed cellar entrance are located at the first floor. The enclosed cellar entrance has a gable-front roof and is attached to the house at

the west end of the north face. An entrance door opens to a flight of stairs that descend to a basement cellar with a fieldstone foundation.

The *south face* of the house features the south side of the home's 1891 gable-front. It is clad with a continuation of horizontal wood drop siding, and is dominated by a large chimney made of manufactured cultured stone (constructed in 1970s). The chimney extends up and through the roof eave and is slightly tapered. A large, contemporary 1/1 window flanks the chimney to the west. An inset wall dormer with a gabled roof and an original 2/2 window matches the two dormers at the east façade of the house, and is located above the contemporary window.

*The rear of the house faces west* and is dominated by a one-story addition built in 1964. The addition has a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves, and is clad with wide horizontal wood siding. The foundation of the addition is constructed of concrete, and windows are a combination of fixed and sliding units with aluminum frames.

#### ***Farmhouse Interior***

According to Spokane County Assessor Records, the original gable-front-and-wing farmhouse has 864 feet of finished interior space, and the 1964 west rear addition has 120 square feet. Located under the north part of the 1895 wing, the fieldstone cellar is 10 feet wide by 16 feet deep with 160 unfinished square feet of space.

Considered the front entry, sliding glass doors at the east façade of the farmhouse open to the dining room in the 1895 wing. The dining room opens north into the kitchen in the northeast corner of the house, and opens west into the family room addition at the west rear of the house. From the front entry sliding glass doors, the dining room opens south into the front gable that was built in 1891, which is used as a living room. A bathroom is built in the southwest corner of the first floor. A single flight of enclosed stairs are located on the west wall and rise to the second floor. A long hall at the second floor parallels the stairs and opens to a bathroom, two bedrooms, and a sewing room. The second floor stairway (painted white) appears to be original with an original wood newel post, wood railing, and diagonally set plain 1.75-inch-square wood balusters. The second-floor hallway and bedrooms retain original eight-inch-deep wood floor molding, four-inch-deep window frames, and four-panel wood doors with brass and black opaque glass door knobs. The woodwork built in the 1891 gable-front half of the house is square-cut while the woodwork in the 1895 north wing reveals the addition of an ogee design on the floor molding. The floors in the 1891-1895 gable-front-and-wing house are made of fir and are covered with wall-to-wall carpet except for the bathrooms and kitchen, which are covered with vinyl. The kitchen has built-in cupboards and cabinets installed in 1964. When the rear family room addition was added in 1964, all original trim at the first floor was removed and replaced with narrow contemporary wood trim. The south wall of the living room is clad with field stone around a contemporary fireplace while the rest of the house (except the addition) is finished with painted lathe

and plaster. The ceiling height for the first floor is nine feet, and the ceiling height of the second floor is about 8.5 feet.

***Barn (built in 1905)***

The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn is located west of the farmhouse on the property's north border, and faces south. The barn has a rectangular footprint, and measures 46 feet wide and 42 feet deep.<sup>3</sup> The roof is side-gabled, covered with corrugated metal, and has widely overhanging eaves. The barn is clad with vertical board-and-batten wood siding stained dark brown to match the original stain, and is anchored to a fieldstone foundation that was rehabilitated in 2012. A wood water table course separates the foundation from the first floor of the barn. A large center inset gabled wall dormer distinguishes the south façade of the barn, and has a set of hay loft doors. At the first floor of the barn below the dormer, wide double board-and-batten doors with exterior metal strap hinges open to the unfinished interior of the barn. Wood sliding doors are located on the north face of the barn.

***ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS***

The earliest known photograph of the east façade of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse was taken in the 1940s. The photograph pictures the home's front-gable-and-wing plan, symmetrical window placement, front porch, tall narrow 2/2 windows, original materials, and original workmanship from the property's built date of 1891-1895. In the 1940s, the roof supported two original brick chimneys and was covered with wood shingles. The 1940 photograph pictured wood shingles that covered the porch roof and a wood spindlework frieze band that hung from the porch ceiling at the porch eaves. The photograph also pictured the east façade gable peak with decorative spindlework attached to the eaves of the roof, a single door located on the south end of the east façade in the gable-front, and a single door located in the north wing at the east façade. A small horizontal window was located just north of the door where there was an original tall narrow 2/2 window that matched the rest of the original windows in the house. A beveled bay window was located at the south end of the gable-front at the first floor with three 2/2 double-hung wood-sash windows.

*Modifications to the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse include:*

*1940s*      Oil heat installed (replaced wood-burning stoves). A small horizontal window replaced a tall, narrow, 2/2 window at north end of east façade of house.

*1964-1965*      Single story addition built on west rear of house at first floor. Electric baseboard heat installed in addition and throughout house. Bathroom replaced original kitchen in southwest corner of first floor. Large square window replaced tall, narrow window at south end of house. Kitchen relocated and rebuilt in northeast corner of first

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<sup>3</sup> Spokane County Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.



floor. Large square window replaced tall original window on north kitchen wall. All original wood trim and molding removed on first floor when addition built on house. Sliding glass doors with metal frames replaced single door at east façade of house in dining room. Large picture window replaced a single door and a single 2/2 tall window at the south end of the east façade. The original wood shingle roof on house and covered front porch was replaced with a new wood shingle roof. Insulation installed in attic.

*1970s*      Bathroom installed on south wall of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Center wall that divided the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space in an east-west direction in the 1891 gable-front was removed, making one large bedroom. Manufactured cultured stone fireplace built on south end of house at first floor, replacing an original first-floor bay window.

*2006*      Composition roof installed.

*2009-2010*      Natural gas forced-air furnace installed.

*2011-2012*      Barn rehabilitated per the USA's Secretary of the Interior's guidelines for rehabilitation of historic properties—stone foundation, watertable, board-and-batten siding, roof, exterior barn doors, and interior structural supports all stabilized and rehabilitated.

Areas of Significance	Architecture
Period of Significance	1891-1963 house; 1905-1963 barn
Built Date	1891-1895 house; 1905 barn
Architect	Unknown
Builder	Eben Ephraim Palmer, homeowner

***STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE***

***Summary Statement***

Architecturally significant during the period from 1891-1963 and from 1905-1963 respectively, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn meet requirements for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C in the area of significance, “Architecture.” The home holds special significance as the oldest surviving farmhouse existing on Orchard Prairie and together with the barn, remains a recognizable architectural landmark. Construction began on the property in 1891 and was completed in 1895 when the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse was built by Eben Ephraim Palmer for his bride, Cynthia Jones Palmer. The simple 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse is a tangible expression of the Folk Victorian style, and is a balloon-framed wood, two-story, gable-front-and-wing dwelling with a steeply pitched roof, inset wall dormers, wide cornice trim bands, corner boards, tall narrow original windows, wood clapboard drop siding, and a covered front porch located in the L formed by the gable-front-and-wing house plan. The farmhouse and barn convey excellent association with the word “orchard” as revealed by the property’s highly visible location in the center of Orchard Prairie at the intersection of North Orchard Prairie Road and East Orchard Road, and with a well-preserved century-old fruit and nut-tree orchard. Eben & Cynthia Palmer homesteaded 160 acres, built the farmhouse, the barn (listed on the Washington State Heritage Barn Register), a cabbage shed, and planted and cultivated the land with a fruit/nut orchard, vegetables, and wheat fields. Their diligence and hard work to improve (“prove up”) their land was rewarded when in 1896, Eben Palmer was awarded a Patent Deed for clear title and ownership of the acreage from the Federal Government of the United States of America, signed by President Grover Cleveland. The second owners of the farmhouse were Orchard Prairie farmers, John & Rebecca Abbeal. John Abbeal was a well-liked farmer and carpenter’s assistant who helped other farmers and who built several farmhouses on Orchard Prairie. His wife, Rebecca Sprague Abbeal, supplemented their farm income with a dress-making business which she operated from the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse. Keeping the house in the family, Rebecca Sprague Abbeal’s nephew, John Henry Sprague, purchased the farmhouse and farmstead in 1938. Today in 2013, the property is owned by John Roderick Sprague, son of Rebecca Sprague Abbeal’s nephew. Through multiple generations, the Palmer, Abbeal, and Sprague families together rendered historical significance to the property through careful maintenance, preservation, and stewardship for more than 120 years.

### ***HISTORICAL CONTEXT***

#### ***Spokane, Washington***

In the 1880s, Spokane was one of the wealthiest and fastest growing towns in America. Prosperity shone brightly on the community when abundant ore, gold and silver lodes were discovered in the Coeur d'Alene mining region just east of the city. Dependable, strong transportation was needed to haul and distribute thousands of pounds of ore, and by the late 1880s, railroad routes linking Spokane to the Midwestern and Eastern United States were established. The Spokane community grew and gained popular recognition as a railroad hub and center for rail transport, mining, lumber, and agriculture. The town experienced phenomenal growth which swelled the population from 20,000 in 1890, to over 36,000 by 1900. Ten years later in 1910, the city's census exploded at unprecedented rates to more than 100,000 residents—the largest ten-year population increase the city had ever seen. Fantastic fortunes in mining, lumber, law, railroads, ranching/farming, real estate, and business were made overnight. Train passenger cars were overflowing as Americans from the Midwest and Eastern United States, and immigrants from Europe, the British Isles, and Canada flocked to Spokane in search of a better life.

#### ***Orchard Prairie***

Large expanses of rich, raw, undeveloped land surrounded Spokane, and were characterized by thick forests, fresh-water rivers and lakes, and open plains and prairies. Hundreds of farmers, trappers, traders, prospectors, pioneers, and people in search of “free land” were attracted to the region. Declared by the United States Federal Government, the 1862 Homestead Act offered undeveloped land to homesteaders who made a commitment to “prove up” or buy acreage:

*Heads of households, widows, and single persons over 21 years old could apply for 160 acres subject to entry under the Preemption Law. Patent for the land would be issued after 5 years of residence and cultivation or, if applicants so chose, they could commute their claim before the end of 5 years to a cash entry, paying the minimum price per acre.*

*The Homestead Law offered free land but building of a home and breaking soil for crops took capital. The environment also worked to defeat the dreams of many. Of the more than 1.3 million homestead entries filed before 1900, only about half would go to patent.<sup>4</sup>*

The United States Homestead Act lured people to Spokane and specifically Orchard Prairie. As told by Orchard Prairie historian, Kathryn Treffry Highberg, in her book,

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<sup>4</sup> Muhn, James and Hanson R. Stuart. *Opportunity and Challenge: The Story of the BLM*. Wash DC: U.S. Dept of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 1988.

*Orchard Prairie: The First Hundred Years*, Minnesota farmer, Oren Palmer, was one of the first to settle in Orchard Prairie, seven miles northeast of Spokane. In Minnesota, Palmer proved successful with “school teaching, flour-milling, and farming for 15 years.” However, after a series of reversals and brutal weather, he felt further “success could only be achieved elsewhere” and in 1881, came to Spokane on a scouting mission. Impressed with Orchard Prairie, Oren Palmer purchased the north half of Section 23, Township 26 North, Range 43 East in the center of the prairie. The land purchase gave him 320 acres of Northern Pacific Railroad land—land gifted to the Northern Pacific Railroad by the Federal Government, then sold to Oren Palmer by the railroad to finance railroad expansion in the West. Oren Palmer returned to Minnesota, and two years later in 1883, relocated his family to Orchard Prairie, including his wife, his father, and six children. The Palmer family built a house, barn, and outbuildings on their land, and developed and cultivated orchard trees and wheat fields.

### ***Eben Ephraim Palmer***

In 1891, Oren & Harriet Palmer’s unmarried son, Eben Ephraim Palmer, homesteaded 160 acres (quarter section) of land adjacent east of his father’s acreage. Located in the northwest quarter of Section 24, the acreage was sited in the L formed by the intersection of East Orchard Road to the north and North Orchard Prairie Road to the east. Government survey notes from 1880 gave the following “general description” of Section 24:

*The land in this township rises from level in [the] west half to broken on [the] north tier. The east half is generally high rolling land, about equally divided between timber and prairie. The soil is generally first rate in prairie, and second and third rate in timber. Nearly all the timber is small pine, rarely larger than 15 inches diameter except near brooks and water courses.*<sup>5</sup>

Orchard Prairie historian, Kathryn Highberg, further described Orchard Prairie:

*When the first homesteader saw this land in the Spring of 1879, he found a land undisturbed by the white man. The prairies were covered with lush bunchgrass, and Indian ponies by the hundreds grazed contentedly. In the forested areas along the edge of the bluffs were lofty pines, intermixed with Douglas fir and tamarack. The rich black soil was unbelievably fertile. Numerous creeks and springs flowed in the bottom lands. At many of the springs, campsites were already occupied by Indian families.*

*There was an abundance of food for all; wild game, deer, bear,*

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<sup>5</sup> United States Federal Government, Department of the Interior, Federal Archive. 1880 Survey, 1896 Patent Deed. Bureau of Land Management, Spokane, WA.

*rabbits and grouse. There were wild animals—cougar, wolves and coyotes, to provide an extra income to the trapper homesteaders. Among native plants which were in common use were kause (wild carrot), which tasted like parsnips when eaten raw. The Indians ate this in several ways, but mostly made up into a biscuit and baked. Then there was wild celery...numerous berries such as chokecherries, service berries, elderberries, and huckleberries...*<sup>6</sup>

In 1891 when he applied for and received his right to homestead 160 acres next to his father's property, Eben Palmer could choose to "prove up" his land by the end of five years, thereby receiving free title to the acreage, or he could choose to pay cash for the land before the end of five years, anywhere from 25-cents to \$5 per acre.<sup>7</sup> Being well-acquainted with "farm chores and the usual back-breaking drudgery of farm life,"<sup>8</sup> Eben Palmer chose to improve his land.

He built a two-story farmhouse in the Folk Victorian style for himself and his new bride, Wisconsin native, Cynthia M. Jones, who at that time resided in Post Falls, Idaho. In 1895, he added a north wing to the house, and completed the home's construction. He planted his acreage in wheat, orchard trees, and vegetables. Many of the orchard trees remain today and continue to produce pears, apples, crab apples, Green Gage plums, Italian plums, cherries, and chokecherries as well as nutmeats, including filberts and walnuts. At the end of five years in 1896, Eben Palmer had "proved up" his land and was awarded title to his 160 acres, recorded as a full Patent Deed from the United States of America, signed by United States President Grover Cleveland.<sup>9</sup> Eben Palmer and his wife, Cynthia Jones Palmer, met their homestead obligations, and the land was theirs to own free and clear.

The Palmers continued to live on the acreage, farm the land, and raised six children: Clay, Raymond, Lelia, Pearl, Estella, and Oren Palmer. Eben & Cynthia Palmer planted lilacs in front of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse, cultivated and prospered the fruit/nut orchard, and built the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn in 1905. In addition to hundreds of bushels of winter wheat, the Palmers grew and sold cabbage and other vegetables, and built a "cabbage shed." The original fieldstone foundation for the cabbage shed (vegetable processing building) remains in good condition (a wood-frame structure similar to other cabbage sheds in the area is currently being built in 2013 atop the rock foundation). To protect the farmhouse and provide shaded grounds, Eben & Cynthia Palmer planted trees around their home in the 1890s. A poplar tree planted 120

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<sup>6</sup> Highberg, Kathryn Treffry. *Orchard Prairie: The First Hundred Years 1879-1979*. Spokane: 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Muhn, James and Hanson R. Stuart. *Opportunity and Challenge: The Story of BLM*. United States Federal Government, Dept of the Interior: 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Highberg, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup> USA Patent Deed, document deed 4689, dated 4 March 1896. Bureau of Land Management, Spokane, WA.

years ago at the northeast corner of the farmhouse is still growing. Its bulk and enormous proportions are a tangible reminder of the Palmer's diligence and perseverance in developing, improving, and maintaining the property, beginning with developing their homestead in 1891. After 16 years, Eben & Cynthia Palmer sold their property in 1907 to neighboring farmers, and moved to Hillyard in northeast Spokane where Eben ran a hay market and grocery store.<sup>10</sup> In 1909, two years after relocating to Hillyard, Eben Palmer's wife, Cynthia Jones Palmer, died.

A short while later, Eben married Karen "Carrie" Everson from Gulbrandedalen, Norway. They raised three children: Edwin, Frank, and James Palmer. In 1918, Eben & Carrie Palmer returned to Orchard Prairie, rented a house just south of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn, and farmed part of Eben's original homestead land, which he leased for a year. Eben & Carrie Palmer eventually settled east of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn on the east side of North Orchard Prairie Road, and lived on Orchard Prairie until Eben's death in 1950, and Carrie's death in 1957. Eben Palmer's daughter, Estella Palmer Olsen, who was born and raised in the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse, remembered in 1979 that Orchard Prairie was "just as beautiful as it must have been when the early settlers first came, and seemingly untouched by urban problems. The view of Mt. Spokane in the distance, and the good living the land has given to all, makes it a blessed place to recall as once my home."<sup>11</sup>

### ***John & Rebecca Abbeal***

Friends of the Palmers, Orchard prairie farmers, John & Rebecca Abbeal, bought part of Eben Palmer's homestead in 1907.<sup>12</sup> In addition to part of Eben Palmer's land, John Abbeal retained clear title to acreage he homesteaded in the 1890s east of North Orchard Prairie Road in the northeast quarter of Section 24. John Abbeal was born on a farm in New York in 1856, but was raised on a farm in Minnesota. By the 1890s, John Abbeal traveled to Spokane, picked a homestead on Orchard Prairie around other Minnesotans, and worked hard to improve his land. Besides cultivating and planting his own acreage on Orchard Prairie, John labored for various farmers on the Palouse in Eastern Washington during harvest, and learned the building trade as a carpenter's assistant. With that knowledge, he built a number of homes on Orchard Prairie.<sup>13</sup> He finally "proved up" his homestead, was awarded a clear title and deed for the land, and married his childhood sweetheart, Rebecca Sprague, from Indiana. The Abbeals had no children of their own but helped raise various nieces and nephews. As told by Orchard Prairie historian, Kathryn Treffrey Highberg, Rebecca Sprague Abbeal industriously helped her husband, John Abbeal, supplement family finances by operating a dress-making business

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<sup>10</sup> Highberg, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> Abbeal family records confirm a purchase date of 1907, but Spokane County did not record the transaction until 1914 (it was not uncommon for real estate transactions to be recorded months and sometimes years after the date of conveyance).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 71-73.

in the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse, and by baking and selling homemade pies during the Depression in the 1930s.

In 1938, John & Rebecca Abbeal sold the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn and farmstead to Rebecca Sprague Abbeal's nephews, George Vernon Sprague and John Henry Sprague. In 2009, Karen M. & John Roderick Sprague, son of John Henry Sprague, purchased the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn and 6.09 acres on the farm. Rod Sprague and his wife, Karen Sprague, have restored the 1905 barn, are reconstructing the 1905 cabbage shed and restoring the farmhouse, organically cultivate and prosper the 120-year-old fruit and nut orchard, and actively perpetuate preservation of the property.

### ***SIGNIFICANCE***

#### ***Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse***

The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Folk Victorian style, and clearly embodies distinctive characteristics that commonly recur in the Folk Victorian style, type, and method of construction. The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse refers to the way in which Folk Victorian-style farmhouses were conceived, designed, or fabricated in the 1880s-1890s on Orchard Prairie in Eastern Washington.

#### ***Folk Victorian Style***

The Folk Victorian style grew out of the National style in America, which was prevalent between 1850 and 1890. Transportation of building materials was in its infancy in 1850, and relied on horse-and-wagon as well as steamship travel in coastal areas, rivers, and lakes.

*The nature of American folk housing changed dramatically as railroads mushroomed across the continent in the decades from 1850 to 1890. Modest dwellings built far from water transport were no longer restricted to local materials. Instead, bulky items used for construction, particularly lumber from distant sawmills in heavily forested areas, could now be moved rapidly and cheaply over long distances. As a result, large lumberyards quickly became standard fixtures in the thousands of new towns which sprouted as trade centers along the railroad routes. Soon folk houses built with logs, sod, or heavy hewn frames were being abandoned for wooden dwellings constructed with light balloon or braced framing covered with wood sheathing. The railroads thus changed the traditional building materials and construction techniques of folk dwellings over much of the nation.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>14</sup> McAlester, Lee and Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1988, pp. 89-93.

Architectural historians, Lee & Virginia McAlester, explain that “while two-story gable-front houses dominated urban folk building in the northeast [United States], a related shape...became common in rural areas. In this form, an additional side-gabled wing was added at right angles to the gable-front plan to give a compound, gable-front-and-wing shape. A shed-roofed porch was typically placed within the L made by the two wings.”<sup>15</sup>

The Folk Victorian style is an *embellishment* of the aforementioned simple house form. Inexpensive Victorian detailing like wood spindlework posts, turned-wood balusters, lacey fretwork, and decorative spandrels were readily available to fashion-conscious homeowners and builders who wanted to update plain, older looks, especially at porches, cornice lines, and gable peaks. These dwellings made strong stylistic statements, and reflect the Folk Victorian style. Although Folk Victorian-style dwellings may have some Queen Anne-style spindlework detailing, they are “easily differentiated from true Queen Anne-[style] examples by the presence of symmetrical facades and by their lack of the textured wall surfaces characteristic of the Queen Anne [style].”<sup>16</sup>

Identifying features of gable-front-and-wing house forms built in the Folk Victorian style commonly include the following:

- Built dates from 1870 to 1910
- Gable-front-and-wing plan and symmetrical front and side-gabled plans
- Roof ridges of uniform height
- Pitched roofs
- One and two-story dwellings
- Overhanging eaves
- Boxed or open eaves
- Triangular gable-ends
- Cornice returns
- Cornice-line brackets, dentils, or modillions under eaves
- Cornice-line horizontal wide trim bands
- Corner boards
- Tall, narrow windows with symmetrical placement
- Simple, square window and door surrounds
- Spindlework and fretwork detailing (turned-wood spindles and lace-like spandrels and frieze bands) at porches and gable peaks
- Wood clapboard siding

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 92.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 310.



*Folk Victorian character-defining and stylistic features specifically found at the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse* include the home's original two-story gable-front-and-wing footprint and plan, uniform height roof ridges, gable ends on both the gable front and gable wing, overhanging eaves, emphasized wide horizontal cornice line trim, cornice returns, corner boards, lacey fretwork embellishment in the east façade gable peak, horizontal wood clapboard, tall narrow windows, simple wood window surrounds, symmetrical window placement, and a covered front porch built in the L of the gable-front-and-wing plan. A circa 1940 photograph revealed the front-facing gable peak and covered front porch, which were originally embellished with decorative wood spindlework and fretwork in the front-facing gable peak, and lacey spindlework in wide frieze bands suspended from the porch ceiling at the porch roof's eave line. In addition, Rod Sprague, the home's current owner in 2013 and son of John Henry Sprague who owned the farmhouse/farmstead during Rod Sprague's childhood, remembered dentil courses located under roof eaves, turned-wood posts, and balusters at the front porch.

### ***Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn***

The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn is characteristic of a simple, one-and-one-half story, side-gable, wood balloon-frame structure—common barn construction in the Western United States in the early 1900s.<sup>17</sup> Before the beginning of the 20th century, most barns employed post-and-beam construction with massive, heavy wood posts and beams and mortise-and-tenon joints. Post-and-beam barn construction gave way to wood balloon-frame barn construction, especially when industrial assembly-line technology was introduced and utilized in milling operations. Barn architectural historian, Randy Leffingwell (*The American Barn*), explained that lumber “dimensions became more reliable, and standardized lumber sizes developed. Barn builders better understood the strength of wood with each succeeding project, recognizing that smaller dimension timbers could do the work of huge posts and beams.” He further explained that “the cost—as well as the ease and speed—of assembly” were the factors that led to balloon-frame barn construction. “Mass-production steel wire nails, available by the late 1800s, helped as well.”

The Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn was constructed when Oben & Cynthia Palmer owned the property. In 1905, fourteen years after they homesteaded the land and built the south half of the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse in 1891, the Palmers built a barn northwest of the farmhouse along the north border of the property. According to the Sprague family, the barn was built and erected by a man experienced in barn construction who was seeking work and lodgings in the vicinity of the Palmer property. In return for building their barn, the Palmers provided room and board for the barn builder. Unfortunately, the barn builder's name and place of origin were never noted.

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<sup>17</sup> Leffingwell, Randy. *The American Barn*. Wisconsin: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1997.

***Summary***

Built in 1891-1895, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse is significant as the oldest surviving farmhouse on Orchard Prairie. It is a fine representation of the Folk Victorian style, and with the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Barn, is a tangible expression of the Palmer, Abbeal, and Sprague families' commitment to maintain and preserve the property. Architecturally significant, the Palmer-Abbeal-Sprague Farmhouse & Barn meet requirements for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C.

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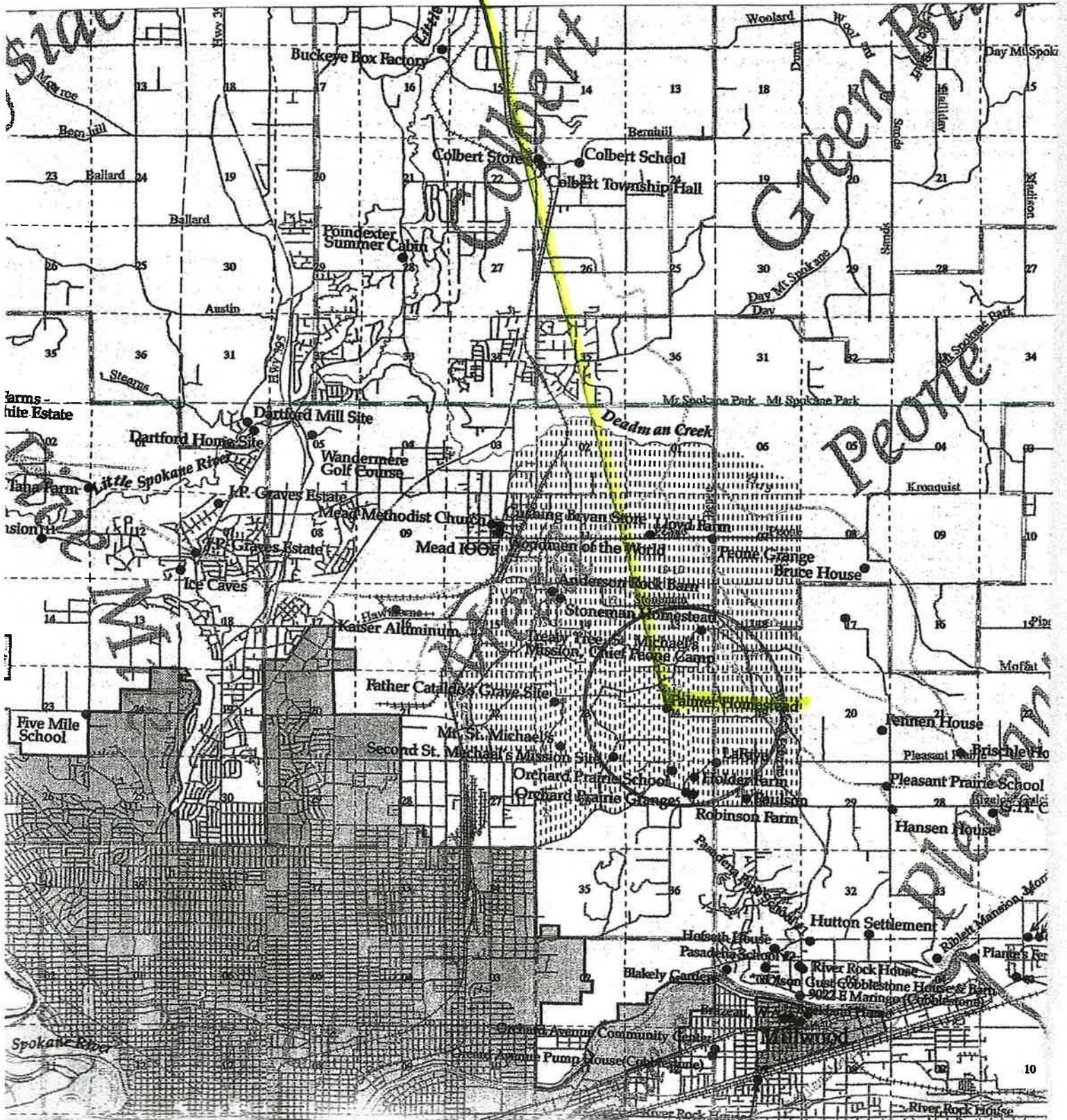
Sprague Family Records and Personal Interview. John Roderick Sprague. Spokane,  
WA.

# PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

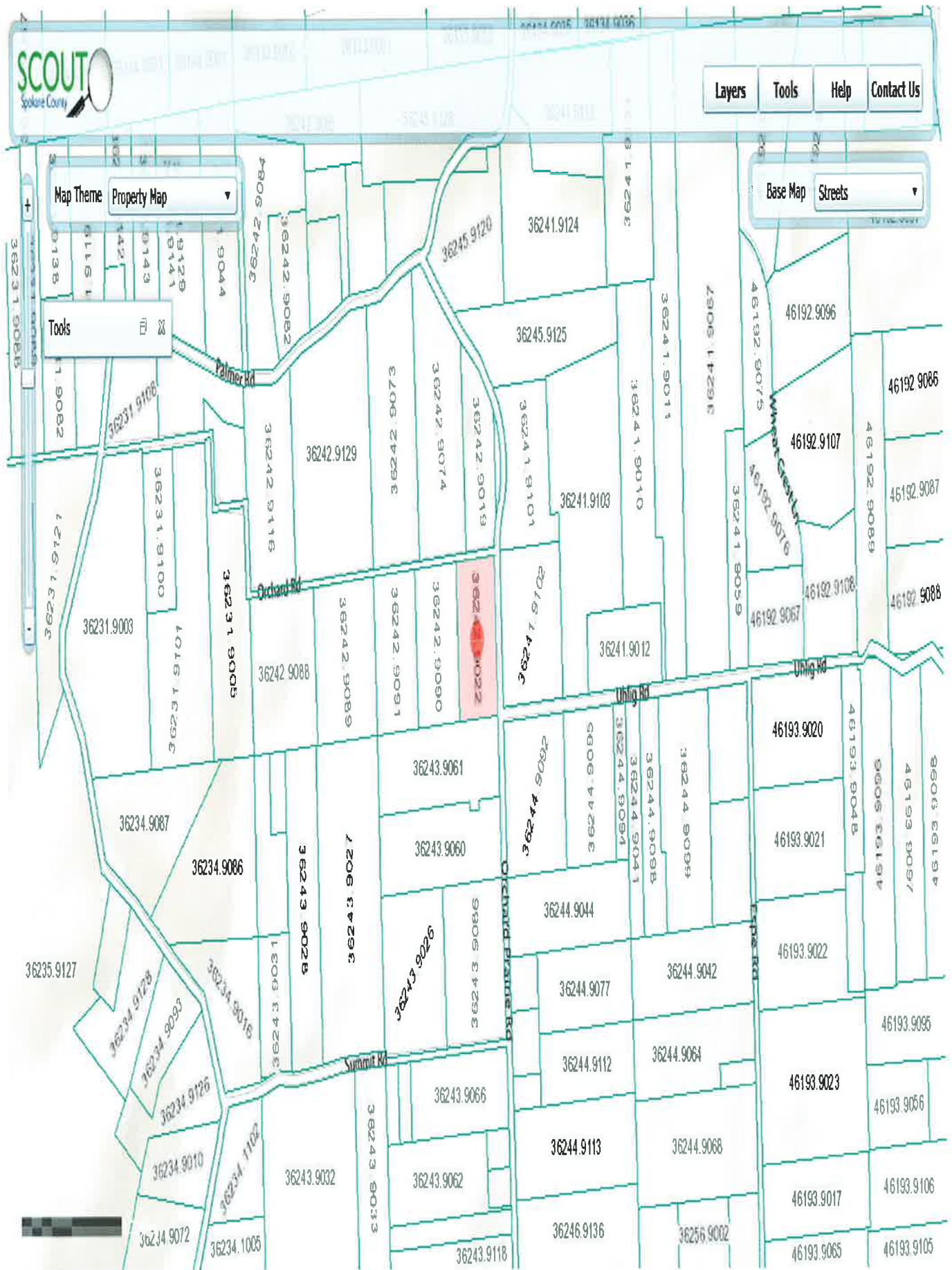
## 1998 Map Spokane County's Cultural Resources & Historic Sites

### PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMSTEAD





PALMER-ABBEAL-Sprague  
FARMSTEAD 2013





Date: 6/26/2013  
Parcel: 36242.9022



**OWNER INFORMATION**

Owner/Name	Address 1	Address 2	City	State	Zip	Country
SPRAGUE, JOHN RODERICK & KAREN M	8720 E BIG MEADOWS RD		CHATTAROY	WA	99003	

**TAXPAYER INFORMATION**

Taxpayer/Name	Address 1	Address 2	City	State	Zip	Country
SPRAGUE, JOHN RODERICK	PO BOX 6211		SPOKANE	WA	99217	

**SITE ADDRESS INFORMATION**

Parcel Type	Address	City	Land Size	Size Description	Description	Tax Year	Tax Code Area	Status
Real	6616 E ORCHARD PRAIRIE RD	SPOKANE	06.09	Acre(s)	11 Single Unit	2013	<a href="#">0680</a>	Active

**Assessor Description**  
24 26 43 S1/2 OF SE1/4 OF NW1/4 EXC W877FT

**APPRAISAL INFORMATION**

Parcel Class	Appraiser	Contact Your Appraiser	Neighborhood Code	Neighborhood Name	Neighborhood Desc	Appraiser Name	Appraiser Phone
11 Single Unit	118	<a href="#">Click here to send a question to the appraiser</a>	733640	ORCHD	RNGE ORCHARD PRAIRIE AR	Deborah	477-5945

**Assessed Value**

Tax Year	Land	Dwelling / Structure	Current Use Land	Taxable	Personal Prop	Total Value
2014	76,610	57,600	0	134,210	0	134,210
2013	76,610	54,900	0	131,510	0	131,510
2012	76,610	60,400	0	137,010	0	137,010
2011	76,610	60,400	0	137,010	0	137,010
2010	93,530	56,200	0	149,730	0	149,730
2009	70,900	105,400	0	176,300	0	176,300

**LEVY INFORMATION**

Levy Name	Levy Rate 2012	Levy Rate 2013	Levy Type	Tax ID
County General	01.2338	01.2982	Non-Voted	0680
County General Cons Futures	00.0456	00.0475	Non-Voted	0680
County Library General	00.5000	00.5000	Non-Voted	0680
County Road	01.3809	01.6862	Non-Voted	0680
Fire District 09	01.1738	01.2393	Non-Voted	0680
State School	02.3456	02.4451	Non-Voted	0680
Fire District 09 Special	01.7524	01.7963	Voted	0680
SD123 Orchard Pr General	01.3134	01.3374	Voted	0680
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>9.7453</b>	<b>10.3499</b>		

**CHARACTERISTICS**

Dwelling/	Yr	Yr				Roof				Half	Full

Structure	Blt	Remod	Size	Type	House Type	Material	Heat	Cool	Bedrms	Bath	Bath
Dwelling	1890	1964	See Residential Sq Ft Breakdown		25 Classical 2/2+ story	Comp sh medium	Forced hot air-gas	None	1	0	2
SHEDGP	1960	0		1						0	0
<b>Residential Sq Ft Breakdown</b>							<b>Sq Ft</b>	<b>Extension</b>			
Basement							120	R01			
1st Floor							984	R01			
2nd Floor							864	R01			
<b>Total Sq Ft</b>							<b>1,968</b>				
<b>Features/ Structure</b>					<b>Main Floor Size</b>			<b>Size Type</b>			
Fireplace								1			
Open Frame Porch								298 SF			
Upper Roof Extension Canopy								298 SF			
<b>Land Number</b>		<b>Soil Id</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Sq Ft</b>	<b>Frontage</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Lot(s)</b>				
1		TO10	6.09	0	0	0	0				

**SALES INFORMATION**

Sale Date	Sale Price	Sale Instrument	Excise Number
09/08/2009	150,000.00	Statutory Warranty Deed	200909997
05/05/2003	0.00	Quit Claim Deed	200311939

Sale Date	Sale Price	Sale Instrument	Qualified /Unqualified	Vacant /Improved	Transfer Type	Verification	Book	Page
04/21/1992	0.00	QUITCLAIM DEED	UNQUALIFIED	IMPROVED	NORMAL SALE	QUITCLAIM	9200	6028
09/20/1991	0.00	QUITCLAIM DEED	UNQUALIFIED	IMPROVED	NORMAL SALE	QUITCLAIM	9101	4482

**PROPERTY TAXES**

There are no active exemptions.

Tax Year	Charge Type	Annual Charges	Remaining Charges Owning
2013	AV Property Tax	1,361.11	0.00
2013	Aquifer Principal HOUSE	30.00	0.00
2013	Soil Conservation Principal CNSV3	5.00	0.00
2013	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE1	17.20	0.00
2013	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE3	0.50	0.00
2013	Stormwater Principal RES1	21.00	0.00
2013	Weed Control Principal WCWEED1	2.00	0.00
<b>Sum</b>		<b>1,436.81</b>	<b>0.00</b>
2012	AV Property Tax	1,335.21	0.00
2012	Aquifer Principal HOUSE	30.00	0.00
2012	Soil Conservation Principal CNSV3	5.00	0.00
2012	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE1	17.20	0.00
2012	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE3	0.50	0.00
2012	Stormwater Principal RES1	21.00	0.00
2012	Weed Control Principal WCWEED1	2.00	0.00
<b>Sum</b>		<b>1,410.91</b>	<b>0.00</b>
2011	AV Property Tax	1,290.21	0.00
2011	Aquifer Principal HOUSE	30.00	0.00
2011	Soil Conservation Principal CNSV3	5.00	0.00
2011	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE1	17.20	0.00
2011	State Forest Patrol Principal SFFIRE3	0.50	0.00
2011	Stormwater Principal RES1	21.00	0.00
2011	Weed Control Principal WCWEED1	2.00	0.00
<b>Sum</b>		<b>1,365.91</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>0.00</b>



## TAX RECEIPTS

<b>Tax Year</b>	<b>Receipt #</b>	<b>Receipt Date</b>	<b>Receipt Amount</b>
2013	5614161	03/26/2013	1,436.81
2012	5567464	10/31/2012	705.46
2012	5407070	05/03/2012	705.45
2011	5216643	11/03/2011	682.96
2011	5015469	04/28/2011	682.95
2010	4711241	09/03/2010	681.83
2010	4516902	03/23/2010	681.83

**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 1  
Photo 2

East façade of house in c. 1940  
Northwest rear of house in c. 1930



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 3  
Photo 4

East façade of house in 2013  
East façade of house in 2013



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 5  
Photo 6

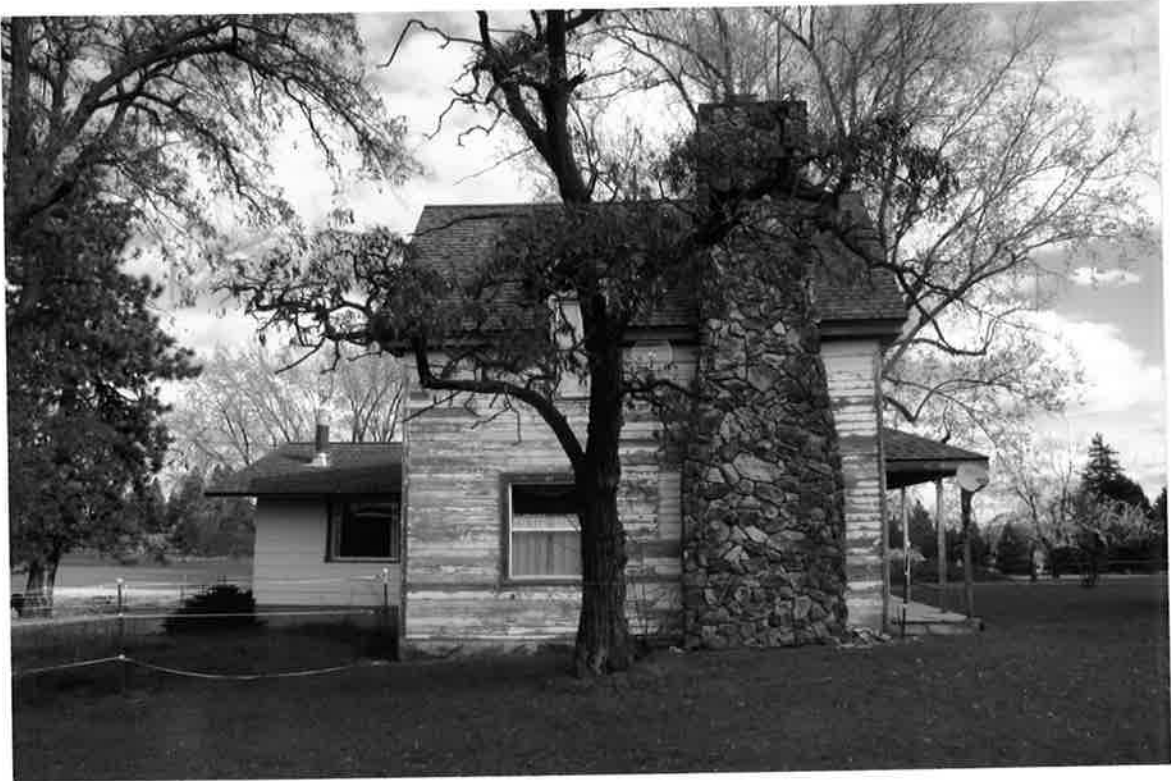
North side of house in 2013  
Northwest rear of house in 2013



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 7  
Photo 8

South side of house in 2013  
Orchard with fruit trees located east of house (portion of house  
pictured at far right side of photo)



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 9

Living room in background; dining room in foreground of 2013 photo.



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 10

Hallway on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, looking north in 2013



**Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet**  
**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE** **Section 9**

Photo 11  
Photo 12

South façade of barn in 2013  
Dry stack rock wall from 1910; foundation of cabbage barn. Photo taken in 2013





**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

Circa 1930 photo of northwest rear of house  
Circa 1940 photo of east façade of house (notice baluster and turned wood  
baluster posts, and fretwork spandrel under porch eaves)



## **PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

East façade of farmhouse in 2013



**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

North side of house in 2013  
Detail of rock foundation and clapboard siding on cellar entrance at north side of house in 2013



**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

Northwest rear of house in 2013

West rear of house in 2013



**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

South side of house in 2013

East fruit orchard and east façade of house in 2013



**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

East fruit tree orchard, looking south in 2013

Northeast fruit tree orchard, looking east in 2013



## **PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

North side of house and fruit tree orchard in 2013

Kitchen in 2013 (northeast corner of house)



## PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

Living room in 2013, looking southeast

Family room in 2013, looking west





**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

Stairs and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway in 2013



**PALMER-ABBEAL-SPRAGUE FARMHOUSE**

6616 E. Orchard Road  
Spokane, WA 99212

South façade of barn in 2013

1910 rock foundation wall for cabbage barn in 2013

