

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stanger, John, House other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 9213 Evergreen Hwy. city, town Vancouver state Washington code WA county Clark code 011 zip code 98664

not for publication vicinity

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.

[ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

4/3/90

Washington State Department of Community Development Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.

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## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

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## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century

Other: vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood: plank

weatherboard

roof wood: shake

other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The John Stanger House is a one-and-one-half story plank and frame structure, built about 1867 and located four miles east of downtown Vancouver, Washington, on a high terrace overlooking the Columbia River. A small creek in a deep ravine runs about 30 feet east of the house, bisecting the property. To the north of the house about 700 feet, the property is bordered by the Evergreen Highway; to the south, the property extends to the banks of the Columbia River. Located on a four acre parcel that is part of the original 318-acre Donation Land Claim, the nominated property includes the original homestead house and a late 19th century ice house located on the banks of the creek. Noncontributing elements on the property include a 20th century residence, richly landscaped and sited 100 feet above the house; a trailer near the east bank of the creek, about 200 feet south of the house; and a deteriorated, nonhistoric barn. The property is one of the last historic houses in an area characterized by large modern homes and under intensive development pressure.

The Stanger House is T-shaped in plan, composed of the original side gabled plank house and a perpendicular rear addition, probably added sometime later in the 19th century. The original house is constructed of large vertical cedar planks, laid side by side and nailed to a sill and top plate. Each plank measures eight inches wide by one inch thick, and rises 12 feet to the plate. The plank walls are sided on the exterior with horizontal shiplap boards with simple corner board trim. The gabled roof is faced in hand-split cedar shakes (added in the 1960s to replace the original shake roof), with slightly projecting boxed eaves and plain frieze boards. A central brick chimney, with corbelled cap, rises from the center of the roof. The structure rests on a brick pier foundation.

The east facade of the house features a center door flanked by two double-hung windows. The single leaf door is paneled, and the windows are one-over-one wood sash units in wood frames. The door and windows are trimmed with simple wood surrounds. Spanning the facade is an open hip roof porch, supported by square posts and Victorian scrollwork brackets, added sometime after the house was constructed. On the side (gable end) elevations, windows are placed on both the first floor and attic levels. On the north side, the original double-hung wood sash units remain. The window on the lower level has one-over-one lights, with a simple wood surround, while the two upper windows (added later in the 19th century) are four-over-four units. Windows on the south wall were replaced in the 1960s with multi-paned casement units which open onto shallow balconies supported by consoles.

The rear kitchen wing is built of frame construction with stud walls, and is faced on the exterior with horizontal drop siding. Like the main house, the wing is one-and-one-half stories, rests on a brick pier foundation and rises to a gabled roof. The north and south side elevations feature original double-hung wood sash windows with simple surrounds. The north side also features a single leaf, paneled door which leads into the kitchen. Shed roof porches are located on both sides of the wing, with small rear enclosures. The most apparent nonhistoric element on the exterior of the house is the 1960s era carport, which extends from the rear of the wing. The carport is an open-sided, gable roof structure supported by thin posts. Although a visual intrusion, the carport can be removed easily without damaging the historic fabric of the house.

The interior of the Stanger House features a characteristic mid-19th century, frontier era plan. The original plank cabin is one room deep and two rooms wide, with a small vestibule between the parlor and bedroom. Because the cabin is of single wall construction, the exterior planks served as the interior walls, now covered with fabric. The floor is tongue and groove fir planking. Interior doors are paneled, single leaf units. Windows and doors are framed with simple fluted wood moldings with corner blocks. The fireplace in the front parlor has been altered and the original mantelpiece has been removed but the original brick hearth remains. When the rear wing was added, the builder erected a stud wall over the exterior of the rear plank wall, and then sided the interior of the wing with shiplap, which is still intact. The rear wing is accessed through the front parlor.

Because the plank walls of the original house did not rise above the top plate, the attic level was originally left unfinished. The attic in the wing, however, was framed with studs that rise the full height of the unit. At the juncture of the wing and the original house, one can still see the eaves of the west slope of the original gable roof, now exposed on the inside of the attic.

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The four acre parcel that surrounds the Stanger House still retains many of the features that it originally possessed. Stanger Creek, as it is commonly known, still flows to the Columbia. Straddling the creek not far from the house is a small frame ice house probably constructed in the late 19th century. The ice house is a one-story square structure with a hip roof and drop siding. The structure is built of frame construction, with sawdust insulation between the exterior and interior walls. A door, sheltered by a crude wooden canopy, provides entry on the south elevation, and the west wall features a small wood sash window. Inside the house, an apparatus lowered and raised buckets of milk into the cool waters of Stanger Creek. To the rear of the house are a simple wood frame outhouse and shed. Elsewhere on the property are several nonhistoric features, including a house constructed in the 20th century and enlarged in the 1960s, with a deck and ornamental landscaping; a trailer located on the east bank of the creek; and a deteriorated barn constructed from material salvaged from the original Stanger barn. But surrounding the Stanger house on the north and south is an expansive lawn that descends from the Evergreen Highway to the Columbia River and still preserves the riverside setting of the pioneer homestead. Only the house and ice house are contributing structures.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance  
c. 1867-1900

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Stanger, John

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Built about 1867 on the banks of the Columbia River, the John Stanger House is historically significant for its close association with the earliest period of settlement in Clark County, and as a rare example of pioneer plank construction. The simple gabled structure was the first permanent house of Stanger, who came to the area in 1838 as a millwright for the Hudson's Bay Company, settled on the nominated property by the 1840s, and received a Donation Land Claim patent for the site in the early 1860s. By 1867, Stanger had replaced his original log cabin with the nominated structure, a two room house built of milled cedar planks. A frame wing was added to the rear of the house in the late 19th century, and the house remained in the Stanger family until the 1960s. Although some modifications to the house and grounds have transpired over the last 120 years, the house is a clear reflection of the lifestyle and construction technology of the first settlers in the region, one of the last historic properties in an area undergoing intensive development, and one of the oldest properties in Clark County still on its original site.

#### Historical Background:

John Stanger (whose name was also spelled Stainsgair, Stanegier, Staingir, and other variations) was born in the Orkney Islands, Scotland, in 1812. As a young man, he signed up with the Hudson's Bay Company in England; travelled across Canada and down the Columbia River; and arrived at the company outpost at Fort Vancouver in 1838. According to Stanger's own testimony, the Scotsman's first responsibility was to tear down the temporary sawmill built by the company at a site on Mill Creek six miles east of the Fort, and replace it with a newly constructed mill. Stanger's work was a decided improvement: whereas the original mill had but one upright saw, the new mill, completed in 1839, was a larger structure fitted with gang saws. Shortly thereafter, apparently, the sawmill was converted to a grist mill, and Stanger is credited with supervising the grist mill for the next 12 years.

In 1839, one year after arriving in the area, Stanger built a shanty about four miles east of Fort Vancouver. According to a county history of 1885, he was among the first company employees to settle outside Vancouver. When American control over the region was established, Stanger claimed a 318 acre homestead in sections 32 and 33 of Township 2 North, Range 1 East, and sections 4 and 5 of Township 1 North, Range 2 East, under the provisions of the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. According to his claim, Stanger reported settling the land in 1849--a date that may refer to the construction of the log cabin where he made his first home with his wife Ellen Thomas Stanger, an Indian from The Dalles, and their eight children. In December, 1861, according to General Land Office records, Stanger was granted the patent to the property.

The log cabin that Stanger first built was a small two room structure, located just south of the nominated house. Historic photos from about 1900 show the cabin still standing, sided with clapboards with a shed roof porch. The structure has been demolished. But by 1867, according to the memoirs of Stanger's ninth and youngest child, Matilda Stanger Overand, Stanger built the plank house that stands today. The house was to serve as the family home until Stanger's death nearly 40 years later, and remained the home of Matilda until her death almost a century after it was first constructed.

After Stanger's association with the Hudson's Bay Company ended about 1850, Stanger farmed his land, raising cattle and crops. He also played a small but important role in the development of the city of Vancouver. In 1868, about a decade after the community was incorporated, the city was searching for a reliable source of water. That year, the Vancouver Water Company was organized for the purpose of bringing water into the city from Stanger Creek. In exchange for his water rights, the City of Vancouver supplied Stanger with all the water he needed for household purposes and for his stock. (The agreement was upheld until 1939 when a new water pipe was laid in the area.) During this period, the Stanger homestead

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grew to include other structures, including two cabins (one on either side of the creek) for sons Tom and Jim, and a nearby house for daughter Sophia and her husband Louis Maschke (still standing, but under separate ownership). In addition, several barns and outbuildings were constructed which have since been lost except for an ice house that was constructed over the creek and used to store blocks cut from the Columbia River during the winter months.

The Stanger house was located along two principal 19th century routes connecting Vancouver with eastern Clark County. The Evergreen Highway was an important wagon road, two hours travel-time from the Stanger homestead to Vancouver. In later years, the highway became a gravel road, and local men were required to work two days a year on its maintenance. The Stangers also reached Vancouver by the Columbia River using their own row boats or hailing passing steamers which plied the river before the north bank railroad line was built in 1908. Life in the late 19th century also included a close affinity with the natural resources of the area. In addition to their own fruits, dairy products, and crops, the Stanger family cooked deer, duck, geese, salmon, and sturgeon, and bought camas roots from local Indians.

Stanger died October 5, 1900, and was followed in death by his wife Ellen the following year. The Stangers' daughter Matilda lived in the house until about 1960. Over the years, the original land claim was sold off and subdivided until by 1960 it included only the nominated four acres. After Matilda's death, the property (which by that time included a cabin built by grandson Steven Stanger) was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Vinson Weber, who retained the house, made a few modifications, and rented the historic property to tenants including former U.S. Congressman Don Bonker. (The Webers themselves lived in the Steve Stanger House, greatly expanded the cabin, and landscaped the surrounding lawn.)

Despite the presence of 20th century structures on the nominated parcel, the Stanger House is a reminder of the earliest settlement of Clark County. Stanger's ownership bridges the Hudson's Bay Company era and the years of early American settlement. Moreover, the house reflects an increasingly rare form of construction. Plank houses like the Stanger House (also known as box, or single-wall, houses) were built of milled planks placed vertically, side-by-side, and nailed to a sill and plate. The construction involved no studs, and the planks formed a single exterior-interior wall. But with the availability of dimension lumber, plank construction was replaced by the lighter and more flexible balloon frame system, like that used in the wing that was added to the original house in the later 19th century. Thus, the Stanger House illustrates two construction technologies from the period. Finally, although a few structures in Clark County are known to be older--the Columbia Lancaster House in Ridgefield, for example--the Stanger House is one of the oldest structures to remain on its original site.

**9. Major Bibliographical Reference**

History of Clark County, Washington Territory. Portland: Washington Publishing Company, 1885.  
Image Community File, Clark County Museum, Vancouver, Washington.  
Transcript of interview with Matilda Stanger Overand, November 30, 1947.  
Transcript of interview with William Maschke (grandson of John Stanger), August 1, 1959.  
U.S. General Land Office, Washington Donation Land Claims Index.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property four acres

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>532960</u>	<u>5050200</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel is legally described as Clark County tax parcels #166939-000, 16985-000, 166960-000 in the John Stanger Donation Land Claim, Clark County, Washington.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is a four acre parcel, with original homestead house, Stanger Creek, and surrounding fields that run from the Evergreen Highway on the north to the Columbia River on the south and still evoke the original setting of the house.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title	<u>Leonard Garfield</u>	date	<u>October 15, 1989</u>
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