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### 3. Historical Background

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**Please provide historical background information for the property.**

Harper M. Orahood (1841-1914), a widely known and highly-respected early pioneer of Colorado, was born in Columbus, Ohio, on June 3, 1841.<sup>1</sup> His great-grandfather, Thomas Orahood, a native of Glasgow, Scotland, arrived in the United States in 1785, settling in Virginia. Harper M.'s father, William Jackson Orahood, was born in Virginia and later moved to Ohio where he married Pennsylvania native Ann Messenger and worked as a wagon maker.<sup>2</sup> The couple's youngest child and only son, Harper M., came to Black Hawk in Gilpin County in 1860.<sup>3</sup> In 1863, he married Mary Esther Hurlburt, a 21-year-old Missouri native who came to Colorado with her parents in 1860.<sup>4</sup>

Over the next several years, Harper M. established himself as a successful merchant in Black Hawk and Central City while also serving in the Colorado National Guard, where his duties included guarding of the mail, stages, and wagon trains.<sup>5</sup> During the Civil War, he was commissioned as an officer in Company I, Colorado 3rd Cavalry Regiment, serving for three months at the end of 1864.<sup>6</sup>

Harper M. and Mary had seven children: Walter Hurlburt, Franklin Hall, Gertrude Esther, William Fullerton, Harper Hiram, George Hurlburt, and Albert Teller.<sup>7</sup> In 1870, the elder Harper decided to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1873. He practiced with the firm of Henry M. & Willard Teller until 1877, when District Attorney Edward O. Wolcott appointed him deputy district attorney. Harper M. succeeded Wolcott the following year, serving as District Attorney of the First Judicial District, comprised of Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, and Summit counties, for three years. Afterward, Harper formed the firm of Teller, Orahood & Morgan with Willard Teller. During his time in Blackhawk, Harper M. held a number of public offices, including Gilpin County clerk and recorder, postmaster and city treasurer of Black Hawk, as well as city attorney of Central City.<sup>8</sup> An 1898 biography of Harper M. described the man as, "a man of many winning traits, liberal, large-hearted, enterprising and approachable, and he has won a deserved position of prominence among the people of the state."<sup>9</sup>

Harper achieved great success as both a merchant and lawyer specializing in corporate and mining law. In 1882, he built an impressive Italianate red brick residence at 2903 Champa Street in Denver, which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Curtis Park-Champa Street Historic District.<sup>10</sup> In 1901, he was elected city attorney of Denver. Harper M. served on the Denver school board for seven years and sat on the board of capitol managers, the group charged with overseeing construction of the Colorado state capitol.<sup>11</sup> Strongly committed to public service, he held membership in several fraternal organizations including the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Grand Army of the Republic. As a thirty-third degree Mason, he served as Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Colorado between 1879 and 80 and was a charter member of the Denver Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows.<sup>12</sup> In his spare time, Harper M. enjoyed fishing Colorado's many rivers and streams.<sup>13</sup> He died September 15, 1914, in Denver, leaving behind a considerable estate that included significant land holdings. Harper's widow Mary died in Los Angeles, California, in 1929.<sup>14</sup> They are buried together at Fairmount Cemetery in Denver.<sup>15</sup>

All of Harper M. and Mary Orahood's children were born in Colorado. On September 30, 1869, Mary gave birth to eldest daughter Gertrude who later married Denver attorney William Walter Dale in 1909.<sup>16</sup> William was born October 16, 1871, and married Ula E. Millett in 1898, before moving to Los Angeles, California, where he worked in the advertising department of the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>17</sup> Named for his father, Harper Hiram was born March 27, 1874. He married Lillian Reser in 1902 and the couple lived in Denver.<sup>18</sup> George H. was born April 1, 1883, and studied at Cornell before working as a draughtsman with the Mountain States Telephone Company. He joined the Four



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Hundred and Fifth Telegraph Battalion during World War I, serving in France. At age 58, George was tragically murdered in California in 1941.<sup>19</sup>

Albert Teller Orahood (1885-1963) was the seventh and last child born to Harper M. and Mary Orahood. Born on July 29, 1885, in Denver, Colorado, Albert Teller attended East Denver High School before receiving his B.A. from the University of Colorado.<sup>20</sup> A member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, Albert's 1909 University of Colorado yearbook noted his college nickname as "Bright Eyes."<sup>21</sup> After receiving his Bachelor of Law from the University of Michigan Law School in 1911, Albert returned to Denver where he joined his father in the successful law firm Orahood and Orahood.<sup>22</sup>

Albert soon married Mary Hamilton Foote and in 1921, the couple moved into a new home at 920 Milwaukee Street, where they would live for over twenty-five years.<sup>23</sup> A Colorado native, Mary was born on January 16, 1881, to Robert Foote, a lawyer, and his wife Frances.<sup>24</sup> Albert T. and Mary H. Orahood had two children: Harper M. (1915-1997) and Gertrude Dale. (1917-?).

During the 1920s and early 30s, Albert served as a judge in the Denver District night court and later as attorney for the Fairmount Cemetery Association.<sup>25</sup> After his death in 1963, Albert was interred at Fairmount in the Orahood family plot, which is identified by a simple yet striking granite obelisk.<sup>26</sup>

Carrying on a family tradition, Albert's son Harper M. studied law at the University of Colorado, graduating in 1940. He joined the Army in 1942, serving 17 months in North Africa before joining the OSS for the remainder of his two year tour of duty. After his discharge, Harper M. worked with the Office of Price Authority, the agency that oversaw the federal government rationing programs during World War II. In 1948, Harper M. and his wife Petrana returned to Denver to practice law. In 1959, Harper established a practice in Arvada with Howard Roepnack, partnering with Dwight Griggs after Roepnack's death in 1963. Petrana and Harper M. raised two children, Albert H. and Mary P. Like his forefathers, Harper M. was a Mason and a member of several public service and professional organizations.<sup>27</sup> He and Petrana lived in the city of Wheat Ridge near Denver area until his death in 1997.<sup>28</sup>

Beginning in the 1920s, the Orahood family enjoyed a summer residence known as "The Babbling," near Shawnee in Park County, Colorado. The community of Shawnee is located along Highway 285 near the northeast corner of Park County. Originally platted at the turn of the twentieth century as a resort and summer home community, the town is historically significant for its connection with transportation and recreation. During the 1860s, the settlement served as a stop on the Denver-Leadville stage line. Physical evidence found on the Orahood property suggests that the stage road once passed through their land.

Once the railroad reached the Rocky Mountains, Shawnee was situated directly on the route of the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad, which facilitated local industries and tourism. Wealthy Denver residents, such as the Orahood family, would escape the pollution, noise, and heat of the city for a weekend in their summer cabins along the South Platte River near Shawnee. The area's most notable buildings, including a lodge and hotel, were directly related to the tourism and recreation business. Many of the existing historic residences were and continue to be private seasonal homes.



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Albert T. Orahood, his wife Mary H., and their children began visiting the cabin sometime in the 1920s.<sup>29</sup> During his lifetime, Albert's father Harper M. and his business partners had acquired properties that included Wellington and Jefferson Lakes. According to the family, these parcels were sold to the City of Denver in 1910, which was seeking to expand its water supply. As part of the negotiation, the family reportedly received cash plus several large property parcels in and around the Denver area, including 80 acres just outside the town of Shawnee. The details of the complicated transaction are somewhat opaque, but it is known that in 1927, Mary Esther Orahood, widow of Harper M. Orahood (d. 1914), exchanged a parcel of Orahood-owned land located within the Pike National Forest for what is today the Orahood family's summer residence.<sup>30</sup>

Available county and family records do not indicate who built the well-constructed wood frame summer cabin known as "The Babbling" or exactly when it was completed. However, a circa 1913 ditch map appears to document a structure in the vicinity of the current cabin.<sup>31</sup> This would be consistent with family oral history that tells of a squatter living in a cabin on the property before the Orahoods arrived in the 1920s.

Family remembrances also indicate that the Orahoods began visiting the cabin in the early 1920s, before Mary Esther acquired title to the property in 1927. One plausible theory is that the Orahood family leased the property from the Forest Service before acquiring ownership in 1927. On March 5, 1915, Congress passed the Term Occupancy Act, which allowed individuals to hold 30 year permits on private summer homes on Forest Service land. The permit program preceding the Term Occupancy Act was considered inadequate and drew many complaints from permittees and commercial entities, which were hesitant to invest their time and money to construct summer homes when permits were issued for only one year. By extending the lease term to 30 years, the Term Occupancy Act made investing in construction of a summer home far more practical. These permit programs may explain how the cabin could have been built before Mary acquired deed to the previously Forest Service land. It is also quite possible that family memories have grown hazy over time and the family did not begin visiting the property until 1927 when Mary Esther acquired the land.

Regardless of the cabin's exact date of construction, it is clear that Albert Teller Orahood is largely responsible for the historic appearance of "The Babbling," which has not changed significantly since the late 1920s. Albert is known to have improved the kitchen and bath in the 1930s or 40s and is responsible for the construction of the stone and concrete fountain and extensive landscaping surrounding the main cabin.<sup>32</sup> Stenciled boards used to construct the garage indicate that the materials were shipped to a Judge Orahood, presumably Albert T.

After his mother's death in 1929, Albert T. inherited "The Babbling."<sup>33</sup> The family continued to visit the site regularly during the summer months, creating long-lasting family memories. In Denver, Albert and Mary would put their children Harper M. and Gertrude on the Colorado and Southern Railway train to be dropped off at the cabin in the afternoon. As a young law school graduate, Harper later studied for his bar exam in the quiet guest cabin on the property.<sup>34</sup>

In his last will and testament, released February 19, 1964, Albert left the property to his son Harper M. Orahood, whose favorite hobby was raising trout in the hand dug ponds on the property.<sup>35</sup> Harper transferred the property to his wife Petrana P. Orahood on August 22, 1996, via gift deed,



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with easements to the Denver Water Board and Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company and its successors.<sup>36</sup> At the end of 2007, Petrana deeded the property to the Orahood Family LLC, which includes her son Albert H. Orahood, daughter Mary and their respective families.<sup>37</sup> The Orahood family continues to visit the property regularly, carrying on the traditions established by Albert and Mary over 80 years ago. They remain committed to preserving the unique character and picturesque setting of what is today called “The O Ranch” for many generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilbur Fiske Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), 768.

<sup>2</sup> 1860 United States Federal Census.

<sup>3</sup> Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 768.

<sup>4</sup> William C. Ferril, ed., *Sketches of Colorado* (Denver: The Western Press Bureau Company, 1911), 211; 1910 United States Federal Census.

<sup>5</sup> Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769.

<sup>6</sup> Official Army Register of the Volunteer Force 1861-1865, accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>7</sup> Only five of Harper M. and Mary Orahood’s seven children reached adulthood, Walter Hurlburt died in infancy and Franklin Hall drowned at age 11. <http://www.findagrave.com>; Bible record for Harper M. Orahood family, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ORAHOOD/2003-06/1056249445>.

<sup>8</sup> Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769; Ferril, ed., *Sketches of Colorado*, 211.

<sup>9</sup> *Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing, 1898). Accessed at <http://www.memoriallibrary.com/CO/1898DenverPB>.

<sup>10</sup> Denver Neighborhood History Project, 1993-4: Five Points Neighborhood, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ferril, ed., *Sketches of Colorado*, 211.

<sup>12</sup> Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 770.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Bible record for Harper M. Orahood family.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.findagrave.com>.

<sup>16</sup> 1920 United States Federal Census; Bible record for Harper M. Orahood family.

<sup>17</sup> 1920 United States Federal Census; Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769.

<sup>18</sup> 1940 United States Federal Census; Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769.

<sup>19</sup> California Death Index, 1940-1997. Accessed via Ancestry.com; Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769; The “Confessions Claimed in Orahood Slaying,” *Greeley Daily Tribune*, November 15, 1941, 1.

<sup>20</sup> 1900 United States Federal Census; Stone, *History of Colorado, Vol. 3*, 769-70. *Coloradan Yearbook*, University of Colorado, U.S. School Yearbooks database. Accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>21</sup> *Coloradan Yearbook*, University of Colorado, U.S. School Yearbooks database.

<sup>22</sup> University of Michigan Law School, *University of Michigan Law School Bulletin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan), 42; University of Michigan Law School, *University of Michigan Law School Bulletin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1912), 40; 1912 Denver City Directory, Denver, Colorado. Accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>23</sup> 1921-1953 U.S. City Directories accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>24</sup> 1900 United States Federal Census; Florence Moore, “Family Law Tradition: Orahood ‘Carrying On,’” publication and date unknown. From the Orahood family files.

The 1900 census lists Mary Hamilton’s date of birth as January 1881. After her marriage to Albert T. Orahood, her date of birth is listed in the census as either 1885 or 1886. The Social Security Death Index for Mary Orahood lists her date of birth as January 16, 1881 and her last residence as Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

<sup>25</sup> 1920s & 1930s U.S. City Directories identify Albert T. Orahood’s profession as Justice of the Peace at the Court House. More specifically, family history notes that Albert T. worked as a night court judge in Denver. 1960 Denver City Directory



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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.findagrave.com>

<sup>27</sup> Moore, "Family Law Tradition: Orahood 'Carrying On'."

<sup>28</sup> Social Security Death Index. Accessed via Ancestry.com.

<sup>29</sup> Conversation with Albert H. Orahood, Thursday, June 24, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Park County Deed Records, Book 102, 174. This transaction was made possible by passage of the General Exchange Act of 1922 (42 Stat. 465) permitting the United States Secretary of the Interior to accept or acquire lands outside of the boundaries of current national parks deemed to be of national-forest purposes interest. Federal land could also be exchanged for privately owned land within the boundaries of United States National Forest.

<sup>31</sup> 1913 Ditch Map, Park County Local History Archives.

<sup>32</sup> Conversation with Albert H. Orahood, Thursday, June 24, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Park County Deed Records, Book 99, 369. Attached to the property were water rights for mining, agriculture, and manufacturing.

<sup>34</sup> Park County Local Historic Landmark Eligibility form, completed by Albert H. Orahood, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Park County Deed Records, Book 179, 218; Moore, "Family Law Tradition: Orahood 'Carrying On'."

<sup>36</sup> Park County Deed Records, Book 464, 99.

<sup>37</sup> Park County Deed Records, Book 648, 38.

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#### 4. Statement of Significance

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Please explain the significance of the property in relation to the criteria selected in Section 1.



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### Section 4: Significance

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house and outhouses incorporated log construction in a manner typical of the Rustic style. With its rubble stone foundation and chimney, the garage demonstrates the influence of the Rustic style as well. The Rustic style, characterized by its natural setting and the use of forms and materials that echo early pioneer cabins, gained popularity after 1910, especially in the mountain communities. Many of the summer homes, resorts, and hotels constructed in the Shawnee area after 1910 were built in this style. Rustic style summer homes of the time were constructed to blend with the surrounding landscape, enhancing the feeling of being immersed in the natural world. The architectural significance of "The Babbling" is thus further enhanced by the exceptionally well-preserved context in which they sit.

Though relatively modest in appearance, the cabin exhibits a number of features and details, such as the exceptionally well-crafted windows installed in the front porch area, that reflect the wealth and status of the Orahood family at the time of construction. Significant attention was paid to the construction of the outbuildings as well. Both the garage and ice house incorporate stone masonry and are fine examples of their types. Few 1920s era garages and even fewer ice houses survive today in such excellent condition. The small guest house and even the sturdy log outhouses show evidence of care and craftsmanship in their construction.

"The Babbling" is also unique in the number of quality of the man-made landscape features found on the site. The fountain, concrete bird house and eclectic collection of stone features, urns, and birdbaths that dot the landscape convey a sense of humor and whimsy that was not uncommon in architecture of the 1920s and 30s. With high integrity this unique landscape provides valuable information that contributes to our understanding of rustic garden landscapes of early twentieth-century.