

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUN 15 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Neil Cooney Mansion (Spruce Cottage)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 802 East 5th Street not for publication

city, town Cosmopolis vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Washington code 053 county Grays Harbor code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Leon and Jeanette Esterbrook

street & number 802 East 5th Street

city, town Cosmopolis vicinity of state Washington 97536

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grays Harbor County Courthouse

street & number 100 West Broadway

city, town Montesano state Washington 98563

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington State Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town 111 West 21st Avenue, Olympia state Washington 98504

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Neil Cooney Mansion, also known as "Spruce Cottage," is a large 2½ story frame structure sited on a hill overlooking the lumber mills on the Chehalis River. The house was built of select western woods to demonstrate their merits to customers of Cooney's Grays Harbor Commercial Company. The building's frequent use of spruce gave rise to the structure's popular nickname and the fine interior detailing warrants its description as "the showplace of Grays Harbor." The building is well maintained and alterations to the original appearance have been minor.

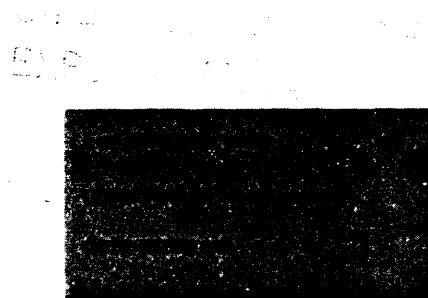
Although the view is now obscured by trees, the Neil Cooney Mansion is located on a hill in Cosmopolis looking east over the mill area where its owner once presided. The house is a generally rectangular 55 foot by 75 foot structure with a full basement. The exterior is covered with cedar clapboards and the frame rests on a concrete foundation. On both the east and west sides, small gables project from the larger parallel gable of the main roof. All of these rooflines are flared at the eaves. Wide shed roof dormers flank each side of the main gable roof and are glazed with eight-over-eight and ten-over-ten sash. Beveled, exposed rafter ends and purlins pierce slightly recessed fascia boards. Exterior brick chimneys are at the east and west ends of the house. A large porte cochere is on the north side. Four brick piers with concrete bases and corbelled capitals support the porte cochere's roof which has recently been reconstructed. This new roof copies the original and has beveled exposed rafters and a simple balustrade with squared newels. A porch on the west side was later clapboarded and glazed as was a utility porch on the rear. Other details include a stringcourse between the first and second floors, wooden panels where there were once radiator vents, and multipaned casement windows in the basement. Most windows in the rest of the house are one over one sash. There are also some leaded and stained glass windows.

The formal entry to the house is recessed and the door is flanked by wide sidelights and is topped by an elliptical fan that was probably once glazed. The central glass panel in the door has been replaced.

A garage once stood to the southeast of the house. It had space for two cars with a chauffeur's quarters above and was detailed similarly to the house. This garage collapsed several years ago.

Stylistically, this building combines elements of the Bungalow and Colonial Revival styles. This is not unusual in a period of eclecticism where a picturesque bungalow roofline could be balanced by a formal entry.

The interior is beautifully detailed and clearly owes its inspiration to the turn-of-the-century Craftsman movement. Sitka spruce is used in every possible decorative manner. There are beamed ceilings in the living room, dining room, and entry. Board and batten wainscoting is throughout the first floor. In the main hall it extends to the ceiling and in the dining room is topped by a plate rail. A dramatic central staircase has square newels and balusters and at the landing has leaded glass windows whose geometric patterns recall those employed by the contemporary Prairie style. The dining room boasts a built-in buffet with a leaded glass window. The living room has built-in leaded glass bookshelves, and built-in window seats flank the brick fireplace. Original Tiffany-style glass bud lamps grace the livingroom walls, and were probably at the crossings of the ceiling beams. A metal and glass chandelier in the center of the room also employs these bud lamps. The kitchen is the only room in the house to have been substantially remodeled, but it does maintain the original copper sink and some cupboards.



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Continuation sheet

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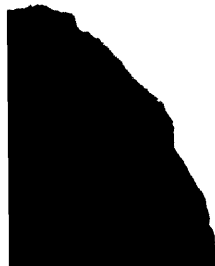
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There are five bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor. Common features include simple spruce window and door trim, picture rails, porcelain sinks, clawfoot bath tubs, and walk-in closets. The master bedroom has a yellow brick fireplace and built-in window seats. The master suite also has a sun porch and a period shower mechanism above the tub.

The third floor has one bathroom and four servants bedrooms, each with a porcelain sink. The basement has a large "ballroom" that has not been restored, and four open shower stalls. One utility room has been turned into a game room.

Most rooms have ornamental radiators and an original intercom system connects all of the rooms. Original brass fixtures are throughout the house. One of the most outstanding features of the house is the intact collection of Mission or Craftsman style furniture. Local sources claim that the furniture was specially built for the house. These furnishings include a dining table with chairs, davenports, sideboards, china cabinets, desks, tables, rockers, Morris chairs, a player piano, and other assorted pieces. This furniture, together with the built-in features, creates a remarkable intact Craftsman interior.

The builder of the house was Edwin Rhodes, who also built company houses, mills, churches, and a railroad trestle in Cosmopolis. No architectural plans are in existence and longtime Cosmopolis residents attribute the design to shipwright Cooney himself.



## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	1910	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Edwin Rhodes, Builder
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Neil Cooney Mansion is a most important structure in the Grays Harbor area, both for the quality of its design and its association with Neil Cooney. Mr. Cooney, "a man reviled and maligned through the timber country" ran the company town of Cosmopolis through his position in the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, which at one time was one of the largest wood processors in the state. Mr. Cooney built his home to be a showcase for local timber products. The beautifully articulated interior is a remarkably intact example of the Craftsman aesthetic. Its use of simple, strong lines in the paneling, stairs, ceiling, and built-in features, and its wealth of Mission style furniture reflect an era that was turning its back on the excesses of the Victorian age. Contemporary with this progressive movement was the integration of modern plumbing in house designs. The original plumbing fixtures compliment the historical ambiance of the dwelling. While the exterior of the house employs no single style, it is solid and imposing, certainly the most impressive house in Cosmopolis.

Cosmopolis, "City of the World," had been the site of tanneries, grist mills, and lumber mills since its founding in the 1860's. In 1888, Pope and Talbot Company sent Captain G.S. Hindsdale, then manager of Pacific Pine in Los Angeles, to purchase "Shingle Mill Slough," in Cosmopolis. Machinery was purchased and George Statson, a Seattle lumberman, was sent to Cosmopolis to start construction. Also purchased was the Cosmopolis Mill and Trading Company, which later became part of the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in 1895 with an outlet at Pope and Talbot in San Francisco.

Born on Prince Edward Island in 1860, Neil Cooney worked in Eureka, California, came to Port Madison as a shipwright and then to Cosmopolis where he built the steamer "Montesano" and the tug "Chehalis." In Cosmopolis he came to work for Stetson and was named outside superintendent in 1889. He became assistant manager of the Grays Harbor Commercial Company in 1906 when its chief officer moved to Seattle. In 1913 Cooney was made general manager and became sole owner when he bought out other stockholders in 1920. The mill ceased operations in 1929.

During its years of operation, the Grays Harbor Commercial Company was one of the largest timber producers of the west. The planing mill was one of the largest in the nation; its wooden tanks and boxes were sold worldwide. Dry kilns and shingle mills were housed in shipping sheds that could load an entire train at one time.

Cooney was known as a tough manager. During the heyday years of the mill, Cosmopolis was the mill and the mill was Cooney. The town was a company establishment with a huge mess-house with its own slaughterhouse, bakery, stores, sinks, bunkhouses, and general store. At its high point, the mill cut 600,000 feet of lumber a day and employed 1,200 men.

Cooney ran an operation where any man could get a job, a meal, and a bunk and work out his fare to Cosmopolis. It became known as the "Western Penitentiary" where down-and-outers could serve time and Mr. Cooney was known "beyond earshot as 'the warden.'" The plant was never unionized and strikes, even those of the militant IWW, had no effect on Cooney's plant.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

McDonald, Lucille. "Cosmopolis--Tops in Valuation," Seattle Times, January 17, 1964.  
 Babcock, Thorpe. "Cooney; Ship's Carpenter to Millionaire," Daily World, December 17, 1970.  
 "From the Four L Lumber News" (Publication on file with the Washington State Library), October 1, 1928, Portland, Oregon.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1.1

Quadrangle name Aberdeen

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** That portion of the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 23, Township 17 North, Range 9 West, W.M., described as follows: Beginning at the point of intersection of the center line of B Street in the city of Cosmopolis with the north line of said Section 23, said point of intersection

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
	n/a			

state	n/a	code	county	code
	n/a			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shanna B. Stevenson Edited by Mark Brack  
 O.A.H.P.

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 1983

street & number 3032 South Lybarger telephone (206) 943-4212

city or town Olympia state Washington 98501

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Jacob E. Shan

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/6/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the

National Register

date 7/14/83

J. Alloua Byers  
 Keeper of the National Register

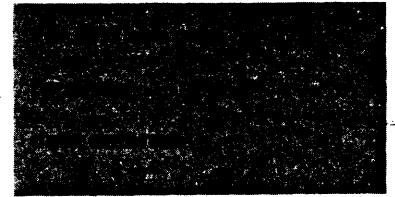
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The company was responsible for improvements to the town, including the water system and many worker's cottages. At the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, a display of fir planks more than six feet wide and a great timber square shown by the Grays Harbor Commercial Company caused a sensation.

With the final closure of the outdated and worn facilities in 1931, Cooney bought the mill site and timberlands offering them to anyone who would build a pulpmill. When he died in 1943, the will further bequested a 500 acre site and \$100,000 to anyone agreeing to build a sulphate pulp plant producing not less than 150 tons daily and still be in operation seven months after his death. There were no takers so executors tried to sell the site to the city of Cosmopolis which was unable to obtain financing. The mill site was used to build wooden barges during World War II. Cooney's dream later came true when Weyerhaeuser completed a sulphate mill there in 1957.

Cooney willed funds to build a wing of the hospital in Aberdeen and gave other moneys to the school district for scholarships.

As the major managerial force behind the Grays Harbor Commercial Company, Cooney and his house represented the power and success of this huge enterprise. The fine interiors in this beautifully designed home are truly outstanding, and the importance of the property is assured through its association with the legendary Neil Cooney.

10-11-81  
E.D.

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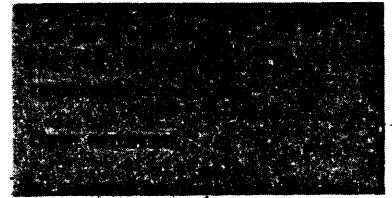
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Van Syckle, Edwin. They Tried To Cut It All, Friends of the Aberdeen Public Library,  
1980.

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being North 80°49' West 1,308.01 feet from the North Quarter Corner of said Section 23; thence South 65°09' East 395.9 feet; thence South 61°06' East 159.1 feet; thence South 53°30' East 165.7 feet; thence South 48°21' East 85.4 feet; thence South 35°30' East 74.54 feet; thence South 25°04' East 67 feet; thence North 77°32'08" East 36 feet to the point of beginning; Situate in the county of Grays Harbor, state of Washington.