### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

### **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received FEB

date entered FEB 2 8 1985

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

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### 7. Description

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

The Dr. John E. and Mary D. Davidson House faces north on a large residential lot sitting back from Monmouth Street, one of the two major streets in the city of Independence in Polk County, Oregon. Immediately surrounding it are other older houses, but none apparently quite as early in date or as notable. Bordering the street in front of the house is an evergreen hedge, lawns, flower beds, older shrubs, and several early fruit trees are grouped around the building. The one and a half story wooden structure has the narrow, tall form and sharp roof pitch of about 45 degrees of the Gothic Revival style. A central gable punctuates the long front, the head of the building's T-shaped organization. Form characteristics and the exterior and interior detail suggest for the house a construction date in the late 1870s.

The plan of the house places the head of the T parallel to the street. The front is three bays in length plus a further, one story bay on the west. The central bay is the entrance door with transom. Fixed windows flank it. The front is sixteen feet deep and forty in length and includes an open stairway and hall flanked on the east by a bedroom, formerly a parlor, flanked on the west by the living room. Hung "stove" chimneys of brick originally served each room.

The rear wing dimensions are similar to the front; one room in width, first the dining room, and the kitchen beyond. Their doors and windows open to long flanking porches on the east and on the west. The  $1\frac{1}{2}$  story wing ends on the south in a one-story band of rooms containing a small bedroom and a bathroom. Now about ten feet wide, the band originally was about six feet and probably contained a pantry and back room. On the southwest corner of the house is a laundry (about 1950) and a garage. On the Sanborn map of 1925 no garage or structure was shown in the spot it now occupies although a freestanding outbuilding was shown in the southwest corner of the lot. The garage construction detail and siding are of the 1920s. Off the laundry stands a one-story brick fruit cellar or milk room, about ten by twelve feet, shown on the 1925 Sanborn map. It has plaster interior walls, ceiling of shiplap siding, simpler eave detail than the house, and may be a little later then the house in date, perhaps 1890 to 1900.

On the second floor three bedrooms surround the large hall and open stair well. Each has a window on one wall, to east, to west and to south. On the north wall of the hall is the glazed door which originally gave access to the roof of the porch. Each bedroom had a brick chimney about sixteen inches square for stove use. Two flanked the central hall; that in the rear bedroom was on the south wall. Two have been removed but a portion of the west chimney still stands in that room. To stiffen the building's section and at the same time to gain interior wall height the front bedrooms were made narrower than first floor rooms by placing secondary walls parallel to the eave walls. The long, narrow attics between inner and outer walls are unfinished and inaccessible.

Alterations have been made at three recognized periods. The changes of c. 1890 were the most extensive. Apparently included were: enlarging the rooms across the rear of the house; extending the living room to the west; shifting several existing windows to those in a Queen Anne style and reconstructing and extending the front porch. The workmanship of these alterations was skillfully done and included: exercising care in retaining openings; matching existing siding and closely approximating the original trim moulding. About 1955 some fenestration and interior changes were made which included installing the present kitchen cabinets. The most superficial changes were those of 1970 which relate in part to the installation of a hot air heating system. For that, the dining room ceiling was lowered with a new, coved plaster ceiling.

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The spatial characteristics of the original floor plans have survived almost intact, changes are minor. Changes were made to enlarge the living room: on its eastern end, by removing most of the wall along the central hall; on the western end, by the construction of a one-story, hipped roof, ten foot extension for the full width of the room. Minor changes include the introduction of a bathroom at the former pantry location off the kitchen. The ten foot six inch ceiling heights have survived except in the dining room and the kitchen. Both were lowered about two feet to facilitate the introduction of duct work for a hot air system and for lighting. The ceiling in the kitchen used a modular hung paneled system to provide for concealed lighting; above it the original ceiling is visible.

The structural system is apparently of balloon frame, although the detail of the second floor connection of the joists is not visible for inspection. Studing and the single ground sill piece are all circular sawn. Exterior siding is nailed directly to the studs. Interior walls and ceilings are lathed and plastered. The west bedroom walls still retain many layers of old papers. Floors are of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide T & G fir visible throughout the second floor spaces; most areas of the first floor have been covered with carpeting or oak flooring.

Two feet high brick foundations enclose all of the perimeter of the T-shaped portion of the house including the side porches but not including the back laundry room, the garage or the front porch. The one-story addition to the living room is on piers and enclosed with panels of shiplap siding. The front porch sits on piers with the spaces between them infilled with open jigsaw work.

The mortar in the foundations is a soft early lime mortar; both it and the bricks are from the nineteenth century construction date of the house.

All exterior wall surfaces on the front and back portions, other than some window detail, are original. The walls are covered with horizontal weatherboarding which is exposed  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches to the weather with plain corner boards and a ten inch water table with a plain beveled cap. Boxed in eaves project nearly a foot with single boards for major elements, an astragal and cavetto as the bed moulding, a cyma for the crown. One vertical board of about fifteen inches serves as the frieze; no architrave is indicated. The one-story hipped roof extension on the west end of the front has much of this detail. All roofs have been covered with composition shingles. The walls now are a deep bluishgray with eaves and trim a deeper shade, porch posts and other elements are white. Surviving pieces of siding concealed by the present porch roof suggest that the original color was white.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799X 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community plan conservation economics education engineering		e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	Late 1870s	Builder/Architect	Unknown	

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The one and a half story frame house at 887 Monmouth Street in Independence, Oregon, is T-shaped in plan and, based on various of its stylistic characteristics, appears to date from the late 1870s. The house was enlarged and updated in the Queen Anne/Eastlake style about 1890. It meets National Register criterion "c", primarily, as a locally distinctive example of Rural Gothic architecture. It was built on the donation land claim of Independence pioneer John E. Davidson, a medical practitioner and mercantilist who arrived in the area in 1850. According to deed records, Davidson and his wife, Mary, held the property until 1881, and thereafter the house underwent a succession of ownerships by several noteworthy citizens. Secondarily, therefore, the house meets Register criterion "b" for its association with Dr. and Mrs. Davidson, early Polk County settlers. The house is significant further, as one of the few houses dating from the 19th century remaining at the west end of Monmouth Street, the main, east-west thoroughfare in Independence.

As an example of Gothic Revival architecture, the house is distinguished by refined crafts-manship and certain remarkable details which it shares in common with some of the outstanding Rural Gothic houses around the state. Siding alone could suggest a date for the house of the early 1870s. Horizontal weather boarding lost popularity as siding in Oregon in the later 1860s but is found on some Gothic Revival houses in the early 1870s, the latest example is of 1877. Before that shiplap sidings had become very popular for residential buildings including those in the Gothic Revival style.

The elaborate character of the front porch is in contrast to the utilitarian character of the two rear, side porches, although both contain the same railings. In this house type character distinction between porches always would have existed. The rear porches are original in detail, recessed on three sides within walls of the house; two chamfered square wood posts supporting their open sides. Low railings of jigsaw work match in pattern those on front.

In rebuilding the front porch, c. 1890 stylistically, the roof pitch was increased by the installation of rafters above the original roof, which was retained; the new rafters supported by the original plate. The porch as first constructed had run across the full width of the facade. The new construction also carried it around onto the east face of the house, a circular quadrant connecting the two rectangular areas. Except for railings, most elements are part of the rebuilding.

The attentuated Tuscan columns have a double entasis, bulging at about 24" above the floor. Across the lintel a frieze of spaced six inch square scored blocks is grouped between brackets. The crown is faced with a running moulding of pierced scallops. The railing panels are 5/8 inches thick indicative of modern replacement. These however match in pattern the 7/8 inch thick jigsaw work which encloses the porch crawl space. That thickness and pattern undoubtedly come from the original porch.

Three types of windows are represented in the house: the originals, the alterations which accompanied the porch rebuilding, and a few alterations of the mid-20th century. More

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recent changes were for a plate glass window over the kitchen sink and at least one of the living room windows. The original fenestration was tall vertical, double-hung, one-over-one sash as is found in most of the second floor sash, the second floor door to the porch and is represented in the single light transom above the front door. Double-hung, one-over-one sash windows became common in the 1880s, but a number of examples in urban areas are found as early as 1875. The Queen Anne type windows may include the large front fixed windows of a single light below a horizontal band of eight small lights. Most windows which accompanied the c. 1890 porch alterations incorporated the original double-hung sash frames but reset for the increased roof pitch of the front porch and relate sympathetically to the Gothic spirit of the building. A number of these nine-over-one lights are found in the front of the house, also one in the kitchen. The original window caps are about three inches high and are made up of profiles which reflect the eave bed mouldings, surmounted by a plain beveled cap. These are found throughout the building although a few more recent windows have retained just the cap detail. Over the front door a bold set of mouldings use the same but larger elements as the original window caps, five inches high and projecting four. A few other Oregon houses have, or had this Gothic detail, such as for example in Eugene, the John Steven's House, 1875; the demolished home of Elmer Calef, 1874.

Original interior four-panelled doors are found throughout the house and the same kind is also used as an exterior kitchen door to the east porch and from the dining room to the west porch. Each panel is fielded, mortised into the rails and stiles with bed mouldings applied at the meeting of panel and surround. Mortised cast iron locks have white porcelainized knobs. Cast iron hinges, three leaves stamped with foliated motifs, have pins terminating in Gothic finials.

Execptionally fine Gothic baseboards and trim are intact throughout the second floor and surround the front entrance door. Plain rectangular trim has replaced some of the original in the first floor rooms. Plainer trim may always have been used in the kitchen areas. Original nine-inch high baseboards have a series of stepped-back planes capped by an assembly of mouldings terminated by a big, projecting astragal. Trim surrounds have similar but larger sections with little flat or field surface, combining fillets, scotias and astragals which spring directly from the floor line and carry completely around the opening. These pieces now are painted white.

The exterior doors on the front main floor and that on the second floor are of unusual interest. The second floor exterior door under the gable is a customary Gothic feature. Its upper portion is divided horizontally into two lights. The one horizontal panel below has narrow fielded margins which give way to a beveled sunk edge flanking a raised fielded area.

Throughout the 1870s, front doors essentially of four rectangular panels were shaped into more complex polygons. The lower panels are small square rectangles while the upper two are elongated rectangles. Blocking modified the right angles into a diagonal (or a quarter circle). The entrance door of the Davidson House has angled corners on all panels which produce the effect of "octagons," or more exactly, "lozenges." The application to the mouldings of a rebated bolection achieved a bold Gothic effect similar in projection and dimensions to the deep mouldings of the surrounding trim.

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The finest interior element, the staircase, is a straight flight with turned pieces perhaps of chestnut. The staircase is intact. The starting newel, cut from an eight-inch square, is a series of urns, one below and two above a circular tapered shaft. The profiles are finely shaped, deeply and crisply cut. Two balusters on each tread support a shaped handrail which ascends with the flight, and on the second floor surrounds the well on two sides, with no intervening newels. Hand rail and starting newel have a high gloss natural finish, perhaps with graining on the newel. Painted white balusters relate in detail to the newel post; although circular with ten inches of complex profiles surmounted by a tapered shaft with entasis. The newel, baluster and tread details are very like those at the Asa Sanders House, c. 1879, Mollala. Identical balusters are found in several other houses; in Eugene: Hiram Smead c. 1890, John Stevens, 1875; at Lake Labische: Michael Mumper, c. 1870.

John E. Davidson was born in Barron County, Kentucky in 1823. In 1829 he moved to Illinois, and later to Oregon. He settled in an area which was to become the southern portion of the city of Independence. His donation land claim is number 44, and was surveyed on March 14th, 1854. In 1850 he and a man named Burbanks built the first business house in Independence. When the Cayuse War ensued, Dr. Davidson joined Nesmith's command and fought against the Indians. John E. Davidson began practicing medicine in 1853, but did not secure his medical diploma until 1868 from Willamette University in Salem. In 1850 he married Mary Davis.

On April 18th, 1881, Dr. Davidson sold a portion of the land to Francis Austine Patterson and his wife, Caroline (Tatom) Patterson. She being the daughter of Richard Tatom, an early Oregon pioneer. The portion that the Pattersons purchased was platted on April 9, 1881 as Patterson's Addition to the City of Independence. Francis Austine Patterson was born in St. Clair County, Illinois, October 1, 1835. He, his parents and three of his brothers and sisters moved to California when he was 17. He came to Portland, Oregon in September, 1857, after mining and farming in California. On the 3rd of October, 1858, he married Caroline Tatom in Kings Valley, Oregon. They moved to Washington County near Hillsboro. In 1881 he purchased 320 acres of the Davidson Donation Land Claim. Patterson platted two additions to the City of Independence. He helped organize the Polk County Land Company, and was elected president. The company owned land between Independence and Monmouth, forming a fair association with seventy-one acres in fairgrounds, with a race track and park. He was one of the founders of the company that built the railroad between Independence and Monmouth, known as the Independence and Monmouth Railway Company.

On May 15, 1882, Pattersons sold the property to W. E. and S. F. McKillip, who in turn sold it to Henry Christian on March 14, 1889.

Henry Christian, fourth owner of the property, came to Oregon in 1851. He was born on the Isle of Man on July 27, 1832. When he was 14 years old he went to sea and sailed until there was an accident. He was on the Maria Jones, bound for London. The ship was wrecked in the Indian Ocean in a squall. Eventually they reached the Isle of France, where they were taken into port. At this point, Mr. Christian retired to Liverpool, England. In 1849 he emigrated to New Orleans, later going to California where he went to Yreka. Taking out a "good deal" of gold, he came to Oregon with

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General Jos Lane and arrived at Scottsburg in the spring of 1851. With the aid of Governor Gibbs, Mr. Christian received the first two mail contracts covering the Corvallis to Scottsburg area. He held the route for three years. He next engaged in merchandising in Scottsburg with JoeMoore and Jack Neckleson.

Their business was loading pack trains. In 1856 he married Emily Tetherow, daughter of Sol Tetherow who was an Oregon pioneer of 1845. In 1857 they moved seven miles west of Independence to the Luckiamute. He farmed in this area, buying several large acreages and selling them. On March 14, 1889, he bought the house on the nominated property. He owned several business buildings in Independence, and built the Christian Hotel.

On October 20, 1896, the Christians sold the house to Alfred Flickinger, a bachelor. Alfred came to Independence from the Marys River area, where his family was well known for their tannery. The tannery was owned by Jonathan Flickinger & Brothers. (His brothers). He was believed to be a farmer. From the 1700s on the Flickingers are known to have lived in Adamstown, Pennsylvania, where a Henry Flickinger was married to Margaret Adams, daughter of Richard Adams, son of William Adams founder of Adamstown, Pa. The Flickingers migrated west by wagon train and are believed to have gone directly to the Marys River area of Oregon, and then to the Independence area. It is believed that Henry Flickinger settled in the Suver area south of Monmouth. According to family history, Alfred Flickinger was believed to have been ill when he moved to Independence, dying in 1899. The house was not sold until January 15, 1901. There was a disagreement in the family over settlement of the estate, a nephew of Alfred's wanting his deceased father's full share. When the court settled the dispute they sold the property to a relative on the maternal grandmother's side of the family.

The house was sold by Referee's Deed to E. M. Young and Ellis T. Young. The Youngs, through Mrs. Young, who was a Brown and a descendant of a Brown of Bourbon County, Kentucky, whose maiden name was Todd. This being the same Todd family as Abraham Lincoln's wife.

The Youngs sold the house on February 2, 1908 to Janet E. Dawes. On December 5, 1908 Janet Dawes sold the house to her husband William, for "Love and affection and one dollar."

The house passed through various members of the Dawes family: William to Orpha Dawes on June 10, 1924, and then through Probate and was sold by Charles G. Dawes & Lucille, et al on May 11, 1942 to John E. and Faith K. Black.

The Blacks sold it on June 12, 1943.

Cecil and Maxine Lehman bought the house on June 12, 1943. Mr. Lehman was well known in the community. He owned a service station on Monmouth Street in Independence for years. Mr. Lehman also started an auto parts store in Independence. Both businesses are still operating. Mr. Lehman was an avid fisherman. He drowned in the Willamette River by the Independence bridge. His widow sold the house on June 8, 1953 to Elmer Albert Katter and his wife.

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age

Mr. and Mrs. Katter lived in the house with their children. One of their daughters, Joni Katter Wesely (Mrs. John) recently visited the house with Mr. Katter. They have been the source of much information about interior house changes.

The Katters sold the house on March 19, 1960, to Earl A. Godsey, who was a realtor. He sold the house to Ray John Strong, Jr. and his wife the same month. Mr. Strong was manager of the market on Monmouth Street that was formerly known as Mayfair Market, and which was sold to Roth's in 1983. Their daughter Dale Strong Hagedorn has confirmed many details about the structure of the house and yard.

During the time the Katters had owned the house, the gardens had become noted in the community, and the Strongs maintained the gardens.

In August of 1968, the house was sold to August R. Pope and his wife, who moved to Independence from southern California. The house was used as their residence and also as an antique shop. On September 9, 1969, they sold the house to Leslie F. and Marian Kelly.

The Kellys purchased the house for their retirement years, and so used it for a rental for the next three years. Mr. Kelly and his wife moved into the house. They spent their remaining years as owners of the property trying to restore the yard, and maintaining and repairing the house. Due to ill health, they were forced to sell the property, and did so on January 12, 1984.

Andrew Gustav Newberg and his wife Betty Lou Newberg are the current owners of the property and are embarked upon a restoration program.

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