

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic Mills, Lewis H., House

and/or common Mills, Lewis H., House

2. Location

street & number 2039 NW Irving Street N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

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 checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<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 Dr. and Mrs. James F. Robb

street & number 2039 NW Irving Street

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97209

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 1021 SW Fourth Avenue

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Portland Historical Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 14, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, Portland Bureau of Planning, 621 SW Alder

city, town Portland state Oregon 97205

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The house designed by Boston architect Charles Coolidge for lumberman Lewis H. Mills and built in 1916, is a symmetrical, 2-1/2 story Colonial Revival townhouse occupying a 55 x 100-foot lot in the Nob Hill neighborhood of northwest Portland. It is situated close to the south-facing front lot line on NW Irving Street and has scant sideyards. Around the corner, to the east, is the Abbott Low Mills House (1908) designed by Coolidge's firm, Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, for Lewis Mills' father. The rear yards of the houses of father and son are joined by a 25-foot shared lot line. The properties originally were connected by a brick walk and landscaping.

The plan dimensions of the Lewis Mills House are 46'-6" wide by 28'-4" deep with a 20'-8" by 17'-7" kitchen wing at the northwest corner. The overall height is approximately 35-feet from grade to top of roof. The house rests on a full basement.

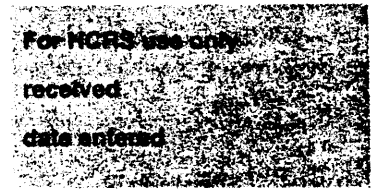
Construction is conventional, employing a poured concrete basement and foundation and western platform wood framing throughout the upper stories. Framing is generally sixteen inches on center. The floors and walls have 1x8 sheathing. The exterior is clad with 5/4x10 horizontal channel drop siding trimmed with staggered and rusticated quoins. The hipped roof has a finely detailed classical entablature and dormer windows with round-arched windows and cornice returns. The roof was originally crowned with a balustrade. Roofing is "Aluma-Lock" shingles on the sloping surfaces and sheet metal on the horizontal center main and kitchen wing roofs. Built-in eaves troughs and downspouts are copper. Two tall, formally-placed brick chimneys break the roof line at east and west ends of the house. Window openings have double hung sash with many small panes. The present shutters are replacements for the original functional shutters. Interior finishes throughout are wood lath and plaster walls and ceilings, run plaster moldings, wood paneling and trim, and wood doors and sash. Walls are wallpapered or painted. Some ceilings have a textured finish while others are painted. Finish flooring is hardwood under the present wall-to-wall carpeting throughout, except for tiled baths and second floor apartment kitchen.

City of Portland building inspection records show that the house was first altered in August, 1920 by adding "one story on kitchen," for a children's playroom, now the second floor dining room/conference room. When the Lewis family moved to a new house in Dunthorpe in 1938, they removed original front entrance portico, some trim from the back entrance, and the entrance hall stairway balustrade. This removal work was reversed by the new owners, according to the city records of March, 1939, which document the new owner's intent to "replace windows, doors, and stairways, interior finish and siding and etc. to make house complete." These changes are evident in the lack of quoins on the corners of the kitchen wing and on part of the back center wall and also in the simpler but nonetheless stylistically conforming front and rear entrances and stairway molding and ornament. The original front entrance portico, based on a Colonial archetype, was pedimented and employed a fully-expressed Doric entablature and fluted columns and pilasters framing the doorway and sidelights. The doorway incorporated an elaborate fan light. The replacement portico of 1939--actually the original back porch--is a flat canopy with classical entablature on fluted Doric columns and pilasters. Sidelights frame the doorway as in the original scheme.

The house underwent limited interior remodeling and mechanical and electrical system conversion in 1955 for an insurance company office and residence. The present owner has added a glazed sunroom enclosure over the back terrace. The roof railing had been removed earlier because of dry rot. It is to be reconstructed.

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Exterior changes are otherwise minor, and the house appears substantially as it did in the period it was occupied by the Millises, 1916-1938. Other than as noted, the exterior finish and trim is original. Windows are 6/6 and 9/6 double hung sash with sets of full-height 9/12 double hung sash opening from the living room to the terrace (shown on the 1916 drawings as triple hung). The existing non-operational wood shutters are replacements for the original shutters. They are to be modified to match original in appearance. The heavy 5/4x10 fir siding has a unique vee channel ship lap pattern which contributes to the illusory effect of masonry given by the wood quoins at the corners. The illusion of stone masonry evidently was more pronounced when the house was the original grayish yellow ochre color instead of the present white. The siding pattern is very similar to that of George Washington's plantation house at Mt. Vernon, Virginia, which is painted with a sanded finish to simulate stonework.

Except for repairs, the chimneys are original. The brick walls, steps, terrace paving and the front cheek walls need maintenance but are original. The original back yard laundry fences and side terrace trellis are gone, but the owners have rebuilt part of the laundry and yard fences to screen the terrace.

The interior of the house retains much of its original quality despite over fifty years of substantial changes wrought by the succession of owners. The first floor has a through entrance hall, living room on the east, dining room, pantry and kitchen on the west and rear. The main floor is now all office space and office fixtures with the original plan retained. The second floor had two bedrooms on the east side, center front bathroom, bedroom at southwest corner, bathroom and nursery on west side and northwest corner. Over the kitchen wing is the former playroom addition, now the conference room. The second floor and attic serve as the present owner's apartment. The former east bedrooms are combined in one living room. The southwest bedroom is now a study. The nursery is the kitchen. The attic contains the present master bedroom, bathroom, guest room and a dressing-sewing room.

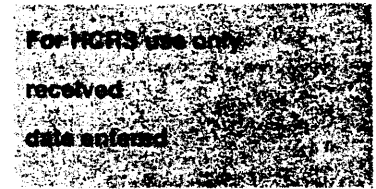
The present owners, Dr. and Mrs. James F. Robb, continue the office use of the first floor and the residential use of the upper floors. They are refinishing and partitioning the basement for storage and supplemental uses for their office. The basement had been all one space except for a fuel storage room in the southwest corner, laundry under the kitchen wing, small toilet at center west side, and "fruit room" under the basement stairs.

All utilities in the Lewis Mills House are modernized. There had been a coal or briquet fired gravity warm air furnace for domestic hot water in the kitchen wing areas, a dual system similar to the division of heating in the nearby Abbott Mills mansion. There are now separate gas fired forced warm air furnaces for office and apartment areas. The house has light commercial new wiring throughout. Most lighting is replacement and generally appropriate.

The original fireplaces and chimneys remain except for the nursery fireplace, which was removed. The original plan blueprints called for brick fronts and tile hearths with wood breast paneling, surrounds, and mantels. Firebox surrounds and hearths are

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marble trimmed at present and it is uncertain whether this represents an early change or a later one.

In summary, the house is in excellent condition and conveys the qualities of the time when it was built. The current owners have completed some restoration work, which includes reconstruction of dining room (office) wood dado moldings and other trim. Also planned are reconstruction of the roof railing, entry hall stair balusters and the back stairway landing window and fan light using the original designs.

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		

Specific dates 1916 **Builder/Architect** Charles A. Coolidge, architect
(Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge)

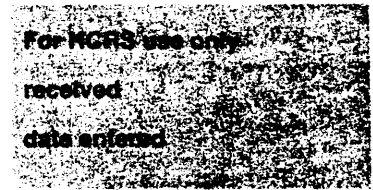
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The house built for lumberman Lewis H. Mills at 2039 Irving Street in northwest Portland in 1916 was designed by Charles Coolidge, co-founder of the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge who subsequently worked in association with George C. Shattuck. A noteworthy example of Georgian Colonial architecture in wood frame construction, the Lewis Mills House was the second of two houses in Portland designed by Coolidge. Eight years earlier, Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge produced plans for the substantial red brick Georgian house around the corner at NW 20th Avenue and Johnson Streets for Mills' father, Abbott Mills, president of the First National Bank. In 1916, Portland's First National Bank Building, a National Register property, designed by the successor firm of Coolidge and Shattuck, was completed along with the Lewis Mills House. It was a consequence of the ties between the Harvard-educated elder and younger Mills and their Boston friends and relations that these three examples of the work of the eminent Boston firm are standing in Oregon today. The house on Irving Street was occupied by Lewis Mills until 1938, at which time the Millses moved to a new house designed along traditional lines in Dunthorpe, an exclusive southwest Portland neighborhood. The Millses took with them the front and rear doors, front porch trim and the balusters of the stair railing in the entry stairhall. The second owner placed the original classical back porch canopy in front to shelter the main entrance. Beginning in 1955, an insurance executive remodeled the interior somewhat for business as well as residential use. All but one of the original chimneypieces are intact, but have new marble firebox surrounds. Except for the entrance portico and the lost roof balustrade, which is to be reconstructed by the current owners, the exterior of the Lewis Mills House looks essentially as it did during the years that it was occupied by Mills. Originally, the exterior was painted ochre, as opposed to white, a treatment evidently intended to enhance the illusory appearance of stone masonry. An all-glass sunroom conforming with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for greenhouse additions recently was constructed on the rear face. With its bilateral symmetry, hipped roof with balustrade, classical cornice, weatherboards and staggered quoins, dormers with round-arched openings, double-hung windows sash with many small panes, and the mantelpieces and elaborate classical cornices of the interior, the Lewis Mills House embodies the distinctive characteristics of the late Colonial Revival style, and it is one of the outstanding examples of that style in Portland. It possesses integrity of location, setting and feeling and sufficient integrity of design, workmanship and materials to meet the criteria of the National Register. It is significant locally as one of only three buildings in Oregon designed by Boston architect Charles A. Coolidge and for its association with Lewis Mills, member of a prominent Portland family and a leading businessman of the early 20th century.

The Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge designed the Georgian brick townhouse which was constructed at 733 NW 20th Avenue for banker Abbott L. Mills in 1908 on the site of an earlier Colonial Revival house designed for Mills by Portland architects Whidden and Lewis. The formal garden in the rear of the house was later shared in common by the house built by Coolidge's firm for Mills' son, Lewis H. Mills, on the south side of the block. According to family tradition, the house at 2039 NW Irving

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Street was a wedding present to the bride of the younger Mills. A partial set of the original blueprints for the Lewis Mills House is in the collections of the Oregon Historical Society. The sheets are unsigned and undated but labeled "House at Portland, Oregon for L. H. Mills, Esq., Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, Architects, 122 Ames Building, Boston, Mass." In the Lewis Mills House, changes, for the most part, have been carried out with care for the quality and character of original work.

The Lewis Mills House has the central, through stairhall plan with principal rooms arranged on either side which was characteristic of Colonial archetypes. Its exterior and interior finish work is based on classical architecture of the Georgian period. The Millses of Portland maintained strong ties to the Massachusetts and New Jersey branches of their family. Their houses, designed by a Boston architect, seemed appropriate in a city often referred to, for social reasons, as the "Boston of the West."

Lewis Hunt Mills (1892-1953) was the first child of Abbott Low Mills, a leading Portland banker, and Evelyn Scott Lewis, the granddaughter of Capt. John Heard Couch, the homesteader and developer of the principal part of what became Northwest Portland. Lewis Mills grew up in the family mansion at NW 20th Avenue and Johnson Street in Couch's Addition to Portland.

The young Lewis Mills studied at Harvard and also worked as a logger in the Pacific Northwest woods. He had been a student, athlete, and worker when he married Miss Elinor Lewis, daughter of the Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts. Their house on Irving Street was the bride's father's wedding gift to the couple. They lived in the house for 22 years and raised four children there. Lewis H. Mills became one of the region's leading men in the lumber industry and was active in many peacetime civic and wartime activities during the First and Second World Wars. The Lewis Mills family moved to a new house in Dunthorpe in 1938.

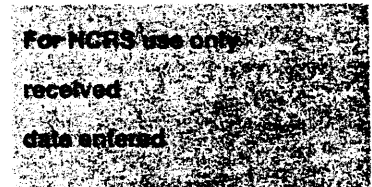
The first Lewis Mills House had a succession of five owners through the late Depression and World War II period, 1938-1955. Between 1955 and 1970, the house was remodeled on the interior for the insurance business and residence of Dudley Clark and Associates. Marvin M. Lacy, MD, and his wife, Leona R. Lacy, had a medical office and their residence in the house from 1970 to 1975, after which it was sold to the present owners, James F. and Joyce M. Robb, who conduct their business, Pacific Research, Inc., from the first floor and reside in the upstairs apartment.

The Robbs have taken a great interest in the house and have completed the restoration of the dining room (office) and entrance hall decoration and part of the landscaping and fencing. They plan additional restoration and rehabilitation, including the roof railing, shutters, entry hall stair balusters and back stair landing windows to match the pre-1938 appearance.

Charles A. Coolidge (1858-1936), a native Bostonian, also was educated at Harvard, and was trained in architecture at MIT. He worked in the office of Henry Hobson Richardson until Richardson's death in 1886. Thereafter, Coolidge formed a partnership with two other members of Richardson's drafting staff, George F. Shepley and Frank E. Rutan.

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Among the first commissions awarded the firm was the campus plan and early buildings of Leland Stanford University at Palo Alto, California. In fact, collegiate and medical school design became a speciality of Coolidge's firm throughout his career. Among the important early works were the Art Institute of Chicago (1892-1897), the Chicago Public Library, and the United States Building of the Paris Exposition (1900). To facilitate the major commissions, Coolidge established an office in Chicago, where he represented the firm for a time. In the period 1914-1922, following the death of his partners in 1903 and 1914, respectively, Coolidge formed a partnership with his erstwhile draftsman, George C. Shattuck. In 1925, Coolidge organized a new firm including Henry R. Shepley, son of his former associate, Francis V. Bulfinch, and Lewis B. Abbott. The present-day firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott maintains its headquarters in Boston. Coolidge was a long-time member and president of the Boston Society of Architects and was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1891.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Marlitt, Richard, Nineteenth Street (Portland: The Oregon Historical Society, 1968), pp. 105-107.
Men of Timber (Portland: Pacific Logging Congress, 1954). Biographical note on L. H. Mills, President of the Pacific Logging Congress, 1930-1931.
Holbrook, Stewart, Harvard Man in the Timber: Personalities of the Woods (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	2	4	0	5	0	5	0	4	1	4	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Lewis H. Mills House of 1916 by Charles A. Coolidge occupies West 1/2 Lot 8 and East 1/2 Lot 9, Block 283, Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alfred M. Staehli, Architect, AIA

organization N/A

date November 24, 1981

street & number 317 SE 62nd Avenue

telephone (503) 235-3515

city or town Portland

state Oregon 97215

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 14, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

entered in the
National Register

date

8/26/82


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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For NCRS use only

received

date entered

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(San Francisco: Bethlehem Pacific Coast Steel Corporation, 1954), p. 37.
Collected reprints of advertisements featuring biographical sketches.

Withey, Henry F., and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of
American Architects, Deceased (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970), 136-137.

Vaughan, Thomas, and George McMath, A Century of Portland Architecture (Portland:
Oregon Historical Society, 1967), 117-119, Abbott L. Mills House; 143, First National
Bank.

Assessor's Map Showing Location of Lewis Mills House Property
2039 NW Irving Street, Portland, OR.

The sketch below is made solely for the purpose of assisting in locating said premises and the Company assumes no liability for variations, if any, in dimensions and location ascertained by actual survey.

Pioneer National Title Insurance Company
A TICOR COMPANY

