

**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

JOHN GALBRAITH HOUSE

and/or common

The Mill House, or Eatonville Lumber Company House

**2. Location**

street & number

140 Oak Street East

\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town

Eatonville \_\_\_ vicinity of

congressional district 3rd - Don Bonker

state

Washington

code

053

county

Pierce

code

053

**3. Classification**

**Category**

\_\_\_ district

building(s)

\_\_\_ structure

\_\_\_ site

\_\_\_ object

**Ownership**

\_\_\_ public

private

\_\_\_ both

**Public Acquisition**

\_\_\_ in process

\_\_\_ being considered

**Status**

occupied

\_\_\_ unoccupied

\_\_\_ work in progress

**Accessible**

\_\_\_ yes: restricted

yes: unrestricted

\_\_\_ no

**Present Use**

\_\_\_ agriculture

\_\_\_ commercial

\_\_\_ educational

\_\_\_ entertainment

\_\_\_ government

\_\_\_ industrial

\_\_\_ military

\_\_\_ museum

\_\_\_ park

private residence

\_\_\_ religious

\_\_\_ scientific

\_\_\_ transportation

\_\_\_ other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name

Thomas Michael and Catharine M. Gallagher

street & number

140 Oak Street East

city, town

Eatonville

\_\_\_ vicinity of

state

Washington 98328

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Pierce County Assessor's Office

street & number

County-City Building

city, town

Tacoma

state

Washington 98402

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Washington State Inventory of Cultural

title Resources: Pierce County

has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date 1978

\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state  county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town

Olympia

state

Washington 98504

## 7. Description

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

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

The Galbraith house is located on its original site at 140 Oak Street East, Eatonville, Washington. It stands in the center of a rectangular one and one quarter acre lot which slopes gently from Prospect Street, at the rear entrance to the property, to Oak Street East in the front. The house is flanked by mature elm trees, and the property is divided by stands of Lombardy poplars, large Douglas firs and other evergreens. The arrangement of the trees, and the manner in which the circular driveway separates the front yard from the house, creates the illusion of several distinct areas on the property.

Built in 1925 by John H. Galbraith, owner of the Eatonville Lumber Company, the house is located near the now defunct mill and is surrounded by company houses. The company store, which extended credit to the many workers who lived in the area, is also located on Oak Street, just southeast of the Galbraith house. Homes built for Galbraith family members and top management personnel surround the house. These houses are considerably smaller than the main house, and therefore exaggerate its size.

The Galbraith house itself is a large Colonial Revival structure, two stories in height and essentially rectangular in plan. A deeply recessed front porch is symmetrically flanked by two projecting gabled bays. The main roof is a steeply-pitched longitudinal gable with asphalt shingles replacing the original green stained cedar shingles. Wide lapped cedar siding covers the exterior wall surfaces. A centrally-placed formal entry features a multi-paned door with sidelights. Fenestration includes both four-over-four and six-over-six light sash with dark green louvered shutters on both first and second floors. The overall impression is one of simplicity and great size, the latter emphasizing the prominence of the house within the community.

The interior of the Galbraith house was designed for entertaining. The rooms on the main floor consist of a large living room with adjoining library, a formal dining room, powder room, and a large kitchen. Built during Prohibition, the house features a secret stairway from the library to a private barroom (now a study) in the basement. The foyer at the main entrance provides access to the second floor which contains four bedrooms, a sewing room, and two baths. The third floor was reserved for servants; here are a large central room, one bedroom, and two small rooms under the eaves. There is also a bathroom on this floor.

The interior is as it was originally, with broad coved, plaster walls and high ceilings. All lighting fixtures and porcelain bathroom fixtures are original (the latter in need of restoration). A sawdust furnace in the basement (converted to oil) provides heat for the hot water radiator system. The only known alteration to the house consists of the shortening of the steps to the front entrance. These once spanned the entire width of the porch, but have been cut to about two-thirds that width.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1925

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Galbraith House, built in 1925 in Eatonville, Washington, is a major focal point in the community's history. Located in an area of Eatonville known as "Mill Town," the house faces the remains of the once-prosperous Eatonville Lumber Company. Both John Galbraith and the Eatonville Lumber Company were intimately linked with the developing lumber industry of southern Pierce County and simultaneously with the economic well-being of Eatonville in the early years of this century. Galbraith acted as treasurer and then president of the Company from 1913-1941, and served as a progressive though controversial mayor and chairman of the school board for many years.

The forests of southern Pierce County represented from the beginning a major economic resource of Eatonville. At an early date, groups of independent loggers had established logging railroads to transport their products to Tacoma. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, recognizing the economic potential of tying these rail lines together, established the first major feeder line through the area terminating at Eatonville. This feeder line still serves southern Pierce County and eastern Lewis County, and its freight still consists largely of logs or timber products. Feeder lines facilitated an even more rapid expansion of the lumber industry, so that it soon attracted entrepreneurs from the East. A group of investors from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, built a lumber mill in McKenna and then a second in nearby Eatonville in 1907. The Eatonville mill suffered from mismanagement and, after a short time, the Bank of California took control and sought new managers. T.S. Galbraith was hired in 1909 to operate the mill. By 1913 Galbraith and E.J. McNeeley of Tacoma gained a controlling interest in the company.

John H. Galbraith joined his father in Eatonville in 1910, at the age of 20, and began working in the shingle mill. When his father took over the Eatonville Lumber Company in 1913, John was named treasurer. From this point forward John H. Galbraith played an increasingly important role in the lumber industry of southern Pierce County and in the history of Eatonville. A scant seven years after his appointment, at the age of 30, John Galbraith was elected mayor of Eatonville--a position he held for nearly 22 years. In 1925, T.S. Galbraith bought out McNeeley, his partner, and assumed total control of the Eatonville Lumber Company. John Galbraith was appointed vice president and treasurer of the Company. It was during this year that John built the large house that overlooks the mill. Five years later John Galbraith bought his father's interest in the company and became president and treasurer. He controlled the Eatonville Lumber Company until he sold out in 1941 and moved to Gig Harbor.

Galbraith was known as a man of forceful personality with a sincere interest in the town of Eatonville and its progress. He gave the town much of his time and energy, serving nearly 22 years as mayor and several terms as chairman of the school board. Although some of his decisions and projects were highly controversial, and for a time split the community into factions, Galbraith never hesitated to use his influence and economic power to bring to completion any program he believed to be in the best interest of the town or the school. His terms as mayor were marked by many progressive accomplishments.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

History of Tacoma Eastern Area, Vols. I and II, Proceedings "Operation Bootstrap," 1954.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED  
ITEM NOT VERIFIED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1.25 acres

Quadrangle name Eatonville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	0	5	5	6	1	4	5	5	1	9	0	1	2	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

B 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

C 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

D 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

E 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

F 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

G 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property occupies Lot 3, Block 3 of ELCO First Addition, Eatonville, Washington, as recorded in Vol. 17 of Plats, p. 37, Records of Pierce County.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Duane F. and Cheryl L. Warren

Edited by F.K. Lentz, OAH, Olympia, WA

organization former owners

date December 1978

street & number current address unknown

telephone

city or town

state

# 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 Rob E. Thom

date 2/1/82

For HCRS use only

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

Delores Byers

Entered in the  
National Register

date 3/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

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As chairman of the school board, Galbraith helped the Eatonville School District become one of the finest in the state. With his wife, who was active in civic matters, Galbraith was also constantly involved in charities, church activities and community betterment programs.

"Mill Town" was the thriving industrial center of Eatonville for many years. It supported about 200 employees in the mill, company store and office, but the economic well-being of the entire area depended upon its continued operation. When the mill suffered, southern Pierce County suffered. The greatest example of the importance of the Eatonville Lumber Company to the economics of the area came on December 9, 1932, when the mill burned to the ground. The entire community was devastated. The population decreased, loans were frozen, and business became stagnant. During the following two years, while the entire nation suffered through a depression, Eatonville became one of the poorest communities in the state, with an unemployment rate of nearly 65 percent. During this time Galbraith depleted his company still further by assisting employees with rental credits, groceries, and clothing. Finally he was forced to seek aid from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. The mill was rebuilt, and Eatonville began to thrive again.

Until 1941 the lumber company logged its own timber, maintained railroad tracks, owned locomotives and cars and operated a logging camp. When Galbraith sold the company and resigned as mayor in 1941, the mill began to purchase its timber. The seemingly inexhaustible supply of forests had begun to disappear. During the following decade the mill's production declined under several different managers until it was closed in 1953. This event changed the course of recent history in southern Pierce County, but it was an event that might have been predicted by the felling of the Eatonville Lumber Company's last tree, and by the rise of the great tree-growing companies that now dominate the forest industries of Washington State. The retirement of John C. Galbraith marked the end of an era in the history of Eatonville and the Tacoma Eastern Area.