

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

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

For HCRS use only
received NOV 24 1981
date entered DEC 9 1981

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

1. Name

historic Arnold, Earnest, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 806 SW 5th Street ___ not for publication

city, town Corvallis ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Benton code 003

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Howard S. and Sally C. Reichmuth

street & number 806 SW 5th Street

city, town Corvallis ___ vicinity of state Oregon 97330

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number 120 NW 4th Street

city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Corvallis Woman's Club Inventory of ^{Historic Buildings} has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Oregon State University Map Room

city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97331

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 Earnest Arnold House is a small single-story Bungalow variant approximately 35 feet square and built of cast concrete blocks, 8 inches thick, with a texture and pattern intended to simulate rock-faced stone blocks. The hipped roof with overhanging eaves on exposed rafters was originally shingle-clad but is currently overlaid with composition material. Attached to the rear (NW) corner of the building is a small 8 x 17-foot wood frame pantry with roof and eaves matching the main volume and a concrete floor. This room was apparently part of the original construction. It has shiplap siding.

The NE corner of the house fronting 5th Street is dominated by a wood floored colonnaded veranda recessed under the roof of the main volume. It wraps half way around the east and north sides of the house. The plain entablature is supported by four tapered wood columns of the Tuscan order atop pedestals of the concrete block. The paneled and glazed front door is set in a bevel at the NE corner. At the end of the east leg of the porch is a secondary entrance giving into the parlor.

Typical window openings are unframed and are fitted with one-over-one double hung sash. The east-facing windows include one small square fixed-pane window in the kitchen and larger windows lighting the livingroom and parlor. All windows have 4 x 8 or 6 x 8 inch plastered wood lintels. The wood portions of all windows are sound and dry despite considerable contact between the sash and mortar. Exterior walls are lightly stuccoed.

The exterior of the house is sound, level, free of cracks and essentially unmodified from the original. The deterioration of the house is in the roof line, the porch floor, and interior flooring where the joists have extensive dry rot from inadequate crawl space ventilation and from direct contact of the joist ends with the concrete foundation.

Interior walls are all finished with lightly textured plaster over lath. The flooring was originally hardwood, believed to be pecan, and is visible only in the two bedrooms, as the livingroom and parlor have since been overlaid with fir. The house was originally heated with a wood stove in the living room. The interior chimney served the kitchen as well. The chimney is brick and penetrates the roof approximately 3 feet NW of the center of the roof. The kitchen originally was divided by a ^{5/8"} room partition which has since been removed to make the kitchen one large room.

All of the interior doors are five-panel solid doors with matching hardware. The three exterior doors are three-panel with glass upper section and matching hardware. The door plates and knobs are of bronze-plated stamped steel with a delicate floral design. The doorways, windows and wardrobes all have a simple matching molding. The baseboards are all about eight inches wide with an upper molded edge.

The only other structure on the property is a wood frame shop/garage located to the NW of the house. Reached by a long driveway along the north property line, it was built sometime after 1912.

The house, situated on a 50 x 179-foot lot, is located between the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks immediately to the west and the confluence of Marys River and the Willamette River two blocks to the east. The surrounding residential neighborhood, still cohesive in terms of its resources and general period of development, is at the southerly edge of the city's central business district.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1905

Builder/Architect Levi Mellon, Contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The single story house at 806 SW 5th Street in Corvallis, Oregon is believed to have been built for Earnest Arnold by local cement contractor Levi Mellon about 1905. It is significant as an example of the use of a patented construction system in residential architecture. It is the only small-scale house in Corvallis having "Miracle Hollow Block" wall construction in which exterior faces of concrete blocks were cast in imitation of rock-faced ashlar. Best known of larger buildings in Corvallis in which this building material was used is the Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Station of ca.1913. Miracle Hollow Block supplied by the Mellon and Gendren cement firm was used somewhat more widely in Corvallis for building foundations in the early years of the century. The manufacturing process^{was} patented in 1900 or 1901. The Arnold House has been granted Department of Housing and Urban Development housing rehabilitation assistance, and, in conformance with federal regulations governing the protection of historic and cultural resources, it was declared eligible for inclusion in the National Register by the Acting Keeper on March 12, 1981. The proposed rehabilitation work has been approved by the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Arnold House embodies the distinctive characteristics of its construction type. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with early 20th century Corvallis industry.

Construction of the house was commissioned by either Harry Lea Arnold or his half brother, Earnest Arnold, about 1905. Both were sons of Benjamin L. Arnold, second president of Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) from 1872 to 1892. It was in 1875, while serving as president of the college, that Benjamin Arnold purchased for a sum of \$400 a parcel of land on 5th Street from his friend, J. C. Avery, proprietor of the subdivision. Following Arnold's tenure as president, the property was registered in the name of his son, Harry Lea Arnold, until 1907. Harry Lea Arnold was in the U. S. Army from 1899 to 1914, and it is felt unlikely that he ever occupied the property. The Corvallis Gazette of May 24, 1905 reported that Earnest W. Arnold of Berkeley, California had arrived for a two-month stay. It is believed that Earnest Arnold stayed on in the Benton County seat, possibly commissioning construction of the house, but occupying it for a time, at least.

The house was built using a construction system referred to as "Miracle Hollow Block" and patented in June 1900 or 1901. The blocks are made of cast concrete with exterior faces textured to simulate rock-faced ashlar. They have interior air chambers for insulation, and wire reinforcement was added to corner blocks. The full building system involved the use of at least 15 different but coordinated block shapes, including sill blocks and molded base blocks. In the Arnold house there are eleven variations of the block, including base blocks with molding.

The builder of the house was Levi Mellon, principal of the cement contracting firm of Mellon and Gendren which was responsible for the construction of such local landmarks as the Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Station at 6th and Monroe and Mellon's own large house at the NW corner of 15th and Western Streets in Corvallis. The Arnold House is the only example in the area of the historic use of concrete block for exterior walls of a small-scale residence. The efficient layout and thorough detailing of the house suggests that it may have been constructed as a prototype for affordable concrete housing which went

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

REFERENCE NOT PRINTED

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	7	8	9	1	0	4	9	3	3	6	6	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

The Earnest Arnold House occupies Tax Lot 8900 in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon, and is more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point on the West line of 5th Street 100 feet South 20° West from the Southeast corner of Block 25, AVERY'S SECOND ADDITION

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 Howard and Sally Reichmuth

organization date 1981

street & number 806 SW 5th Street telephone 503/753-4301

city or town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

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 [Signature]

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date July 24, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

date 10/9/81

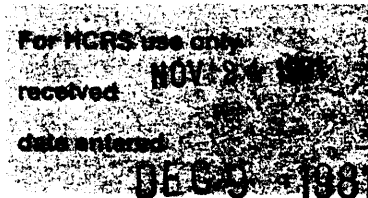
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews
Chief of Registration

date 12/7/81

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

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



Continuation sheet Arnold, Earnest, House

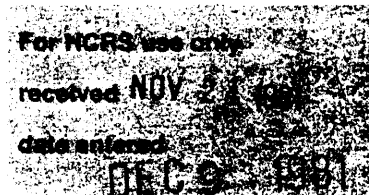
Item number 8

Page 1

unfulfilled. Levi Mellon, who had arrived in Corvallis in 1899, left the community in 1916. Hollow concrete block manufactured by his firm may be found as foundation material in a number of finer Corvallis houses built prior to the First World War.

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

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



Continuation sheet Arnold, Earnest, House Item number 9

Page 1

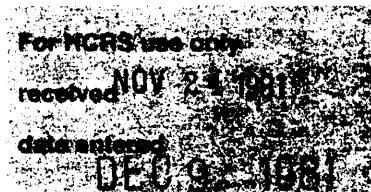
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Benton County Tax Assessors Office - Tax records for this structure are listed as commencing in 1905. First map reference to the house in its present form is on the Sanborn Map of 1912 in the Oregon State University map room.
2. Benton County Registry of Deeds - The property was registered to Harry Lea Arnold from 1892 to 1907, at which time it was transferred to his half-brother, Earnest. Oregon State archives show that Harry Lea Arnold was in the U. S. Army from 1899 to 1914 and that Earnest was the half-brother of Harry Lea Arnold and that both were sons of Benjamin Arnold, second president of Oregon Agricultural College (1872-1892). The Corvallis Gazette of May 24, 1905 reported Earnest W. Arnold of Berkeley, California arriving for a two-month stay. It is probable that Earnest stayed in Corvallis, either commissioning or occupying this house, but it has not been positively confirmed.
3. Benton County Registry of Deeds shows B. L. Arnold purchased a parcel of land at this location from J. C. Avery for \$400. Friendship between Arnold and Avery is inferred by Corvallis Gazette article for July 26, 1873 which reported Avery and Arnold were "chasing Elk" together west of Mary's Peak.
4. Building remnant behind Copeland's Lumber on 2nd Street. The Sanborn Map of 1912 shows this to be the site of Mellon and Gendren Cement Yard. A building fragment there with identical block, but with exposed interior faces shows an inscription cast into some blocks as follows:

"Miracle Hollow Block Patented June 9, 190⁰/₀, /1[?]/_?." Inspection of broken blocks in this building shows air chambers and internal wire reinforcing on corner blocks.
5. Inspection of Arnold House, Levi Mellon House, Southern Oregon Railroad Passenger Station, and artifacts on Copeland's Lumber Yard.
6. Conversation with James Scott, Dundee, Oregon 1981 - Mellon's grandson claims that Mellon came to Corvallis in 1899 and left in 1916.

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

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

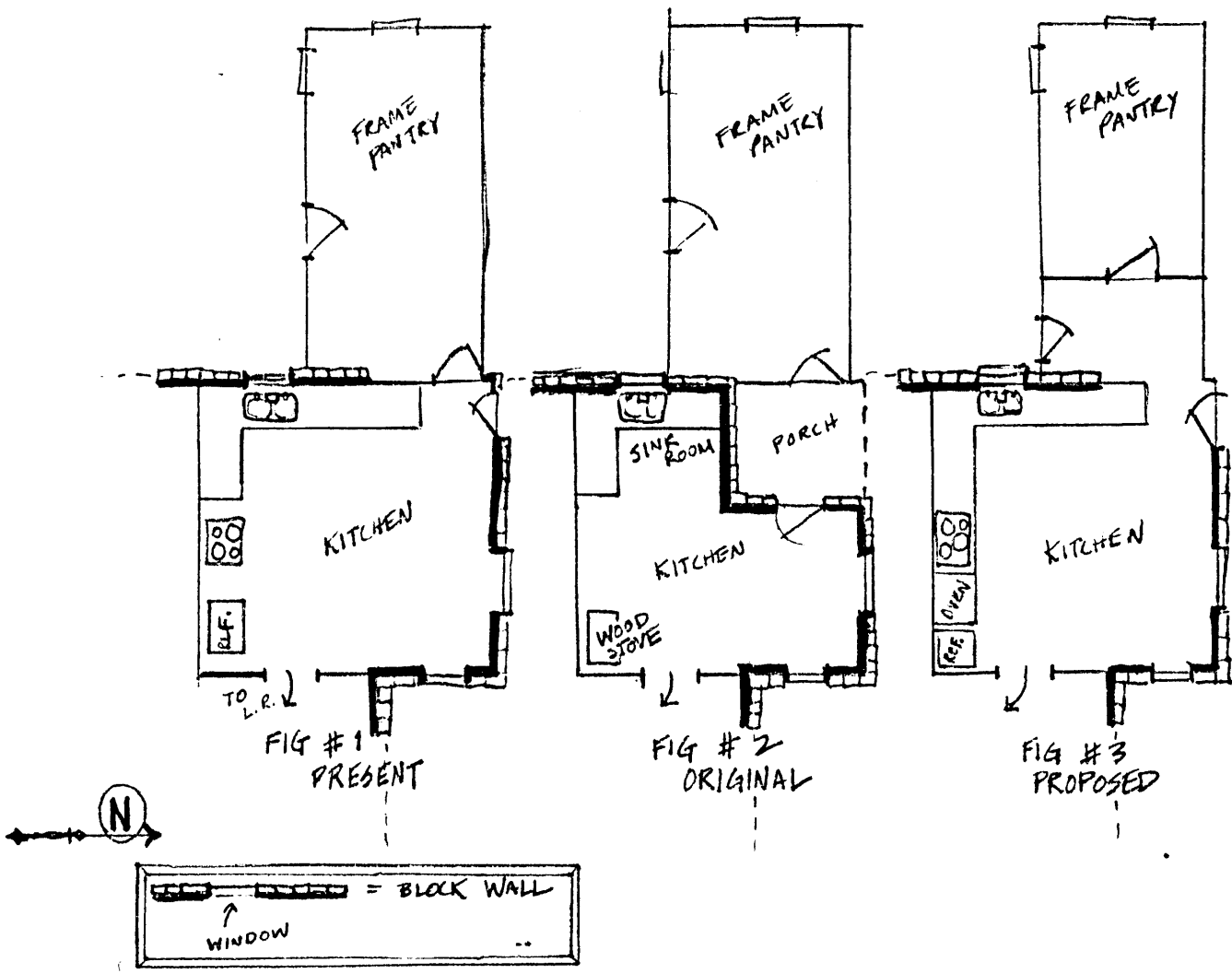


Continuation sheet Arnold, Earnest, House

Item number 10

Page 1

to Corvallis (formerly Marysville), Benton County, Oregon, thence South 20° West along the West line of 5th Street 50 feet; thence North 70° West 179 feet; thence North 20° East 50 feet; thence South 70° East 179 feet to the place of beginning.



DEC 9 1981



019/80

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Arnold, Earnest, House

Benton County, OREGON

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/20/90

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 09 1990

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 1 Page 1ARNOLD, EARNEST, HOUSE
806 SW 5th Street
Corvallis
Benton County
Oregon

Control number: 81000470

Listing date: 12-9-81

The purpose of this continuation sheet is to report that local cultural resource survey work carried out after the above-named property was listed in the National Register has revealed the listed building's actual date of construction, its original owner and contractor, and information in the listing record should be amended accordingly, as follows.

Historic Name: Taylor, Jack, House
Common Name: "Arnold, Earnest, House"
Construction Date: 1907
Builder: Charles Heckart

These amendments are prompted by an excerpt from "Local Lore," an article which appeared in the Corvallis Times for August 6, 1907. The excerpt, quoted below, identifies the owner and builder and characterizes the projected "bungalow cottage" as "the first cement dwelling in Corvallis." Research in Benton County Deed Records undertaken by the proponents of the nomination in 1981 correctly associated Harry Lea Arnold with the land as its owner from 1892 to 1907, at which time title was transferred for what appears to have been a brief time to Arnold's half brother, Earnest. There is no apparent reason to revise the listing record with regard to the source of the concrete blocks used in the building's construction. Undoubtedly the Miracle Hollow Block was supplied by the local cement contractors Mellon and Gendren.

The first cement dwelling house in Corvallis is shortly to be built. The contract has been awarded to Charles Heckart. Jack Taylor is to be the owner. The structure will be of cement blocks put together with cement mortar. It will be a bungalow cottage, 38 feet square, with two broad porches. Its cost will be very little more than if built of lumber, and once completed, there will be no demands for paint or repairs. It will occupy lots adjoining the home of H. H. Glassford, near the Southern Pacific Depot.

Corvallis Times, August 6, 1907.


Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

December 15, 1989