

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

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

For NCRS use only
received MAR 29 1982
date entered APR 29 1982

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

1. Name

historic Clemens, Michael, House

and/or common n/a

2. Location

street & number 612 Northwest 3rd Street n/a not for publication

city, town Grants Pass n/a vicinity of congressional district Second

state Oregon code 47 county Josephine code 033

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"/> n/a in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> n/a 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 Mr. and Mrs. Bryce White

street & number 612 Northwest 3rd Street

city, town Grants Pass n/a vicinity of state Oregon 97526

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Josephine County Courthouse

street & number Sixth Street (no street number)

city, town Grants Pass state Oregon 97526

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

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 shingle-sided Arts and Crafts Style house located at the southwest corner of N.W. 3rd and A Streets in Grants Pass, Oregon, was built in 1905 for Michael Clemens. The design is attributed to leading Rogue River Valley architect of the period between the World Wars, Frank Chamberlain Clark. The building's distinguishing features are its gable roof and attic dormers finished with plain vergeboards with shaped ends, its uncovered veranda with solid, shingled railings, its projecting window bays, and many small panes in upper window sash. It is oriented to the east on a landscaped double lot in a fashionable residential neighborhood three blocks from the civic center of Grants Pass. With its period plantings and tree-lined parking strip, the corner property is outstanding in the row of well-maintained properties along A Street developed shortly after the turn of the century.

The 2½-story frame house is square in plan and measures, in its main volume, approximately thirty-three by thirty-five feet. A shed-roofed, two-story porte-cochere and sleeping porch volume, the ground story of which was later adapted as a garage, extends part of the way across the rear elevation, and adds fourteen feet in depth to the structure. The sleeping porch level, originally screened, was later enclosed with banks of multi-paned windows. The conversion of the ground-level carriage pull-through, or porte-cochere, to garage use was carried out under Clemens' direction, probably about 1920. Clemens owned one of the early automobiles in Grants Pass. A second single-story lean-to garage adds an additional ten feet to the rear elevation. The main body of the Clemens House rests on a brick foundation. The exterior covering consists of shingles which flare in the bottom course above the foundation. The gable roof is presently covered with composition roofing material, as are all dormers and projecting bays. Two formally-placed gable-roofed attic dormers break the roof slope on the east elevation, and there is a similar dormer on the rear, or west slope. Rectangular bay windows project from the facade and side elevations. A year after the building's acquisition by Morris Milbank in 1944, a single-story sunroom was added to the south end of the porte-cochere/garage in such a way that it opened off the dining room in the southwest corner of the main volume of the house. It was sided with shingles and fitted with multi-paned windows in keeping with original treatment.

The principal facade, or east elevation, is distinguished by a gable-roofed porch with solid, shingled uprights slightly offset from the center of the facade. Molded architraves shaped in vague imitation of Tudor arches were inserted in each face of the porch shelter. An uncovered veranda with solid shingled railing extends on either side of the sheltered porch. The railing reaches six feet in height from grade level and is capped by a wide plank. The porch floor and front steps are wood. The second story bay window abuts the eaves and is supported by four large block-like brackets with rounded ends. Two interior chimneys and one exterior brick chimney break the roofline. Each has retained its simple cement cap. Typical windows are fitted with double-hung sash with eight lights over one. Casement windows with many small panes are used in tripartite organization in the bay window of the facade's second story and in the south elevation. The front entrance is flanked by seven-light sidelights. The door, fully glazed, has eighteen lights.

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The well preserved interior of the Clemens House bears the spatial organization around an entry stair hall, the paneled woodwork and fixtures which are characteristic of the Arts and Crafts tradition. All wall coverings, hardwood floors and dark-stained fir paneling and trim are intact. Ceilings on the lower floor are nine feet high, those on the second floor are eight feet high. The living room stands to the left of the entry hall, and an office/study to the right. The dining room joins the living room through a square opening with five-paneled pocket doors dividing the spaces. Paneled wainscoting is found throughout all lower rooms. Five feet in height, the wainscot is topped by a plate shelf. Small, rounded brackets support the shelf. A grid pattern is formed by wood ceiling beams in the living room. Windows and doorways have plain, dark-stained trim with molded architraves. Five-paneled doors are typical throughout the house. The main fireplace has a brick firebox surround a plain, somewhat massive wood slab mantel shelf supported by two large brackets with rounded ends which echo the design of exterior window brackets. Heat registers have decorative metal grillwork. Original brass lamp brackets remain in the living room.

The dining room has a hutch/shelf built into the projecting window bay. Flanking each side of the eight-foot opening from the living room are two brass lamp brackets with original Steuben glass shades. A third is placed elsewhere in the dining room. In 1945 a rear window of the house was removed as the wall of the house extended back to include the small sunroom. This addition has paneled walls and large multi-light windows. The entry hall has paneled wainscoting and some corner boards to protect plaster. Original hardware remains on doors, brass light plates have push switches. A wide board with hooks provides space for hanging coats. The small study has built-in shelves with supporting brackets, paneled wainscoting and a fireplace.

The kitchen has a softwood floor, typical trim as appears in the rest of the house, and a back door with four-light transom. Appliances are modern. The pantry has original bins and latched cabinets with raised panels. Brass touch-plates protect doors to the dining room. A small bathroom fills former porch space at back of pantry. The basement has a single flight wood stair leading from the hall and is simply finished.

A dog-leg stair with landing and thirteen steps leads to the second floor. Walls of the stair space have typical dark-stained fir paneling. There are four bedrooms and a bath on the upper level. The master bedroom has a fireplace with brick face and mantel shelf with five supporting brackets. A window seat fits the interior of small projecting bay. A heavy plate mirror fits in the closet door. A smaller room adjacent to the master bedroom may have been a nursery. It now houses the bed, while the larger space serves as a sitting room. Wide baseboards trim all upper rooms. Woodwork upstairs has been painted. Two other bedrooms have been painted and papered. One has picture molding. A center hall which provides access to all bedrooms also has an entrance to the large full-size attic. The attic is finished and has had a small bath added. The sleeping porch has been roughly finished by the Milbanks and has a shower which was added when they acquired the house. Wooden interior shutters flank the windows.

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Alterations to the Michael Clemens House include the sunroom at the rear of the dining room, completed 1945-1950. At about the same time, the interior of the attic and the sleeping porch were finished by the Milbank family. The kitchen has been partially modernized and a bath added upstairs. The remainder of the interior is intact.

The landscaped yard has had a high level of planning and care throughout the history of the property. Large, mature maple trees line the front parking strip. The holly bush planted by Mrs. Clemens remains. All older trees and shrubbery were planted by the first owner/gardener. A large maple shades most of the back of the lot. A grape arbor thrives after many years. Dogwood, camelias, azaleas, lilacs, and a profusion of rhododendrons of all varieties grace the yard. The broad expanses of lawn are well cared for. Mrs. Milbank planned and executed the side yard, which includes boxwood hedges, flowers and bird bath. Virginia creeper and grape ivy cover banks. Local visitors come each year to view the garden's display of color. The setting, landscape, general excellent condition and location of the Michael Clemens House make it a particularly valuable contribution to the environment of Grants Pass.

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 checked="" 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 1905 **Builder/Architect** Frank Chamberlain Clark (attributed)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The two and a half story frame house built for Michael Clemens in 1905 at 612 N.W. 3rd Street in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon, is significant as a well preserved and rare example of Arts and Crafts architecture in the community. It is believed to have been designed by Frank C. Clark, the leading architect in the Rogue River Valley from the time of his arrival in 1904 to his retirement in 1945. This attribution to Clark, confirmed by Robert Keeney, Clark's partner in later years, is significant, for it places the Clemens House among Clark's earliest works in Southern Oregon. Clark produced buildings in all the current styles of his day. Examples of the Queen Anne/Shingle Style, the Colonial Revival, the Bungalow, Prairie Style, 20th Century Period Styles, and Modernistic Style are included in Clark's considerable body of work. The Clemens House is one of the few of his designs which embodies the distinctive characteristics of English Arts and Crafts architecture expressed in native materials. These characteristics include flared eaves on the main gable roof, prominent gable-roofed dormers, plain gable vergeboards with shaped ends, all-shingle exterior siding, projecting bay windows, and the repeated use of many small panes in casement windows and the upper sash of double-hung windows. The essence of the Arts and Crafts Style was allusion to medieval architecture and decoration coupled with an emphasis upon craftsmanship which was displayed in extensive wood paneling, built-in cabinetry of various kinds, and tile-trimmed chimney pieces. Situated on a generous corner double lot, replete with period plantings and stately maples in the parking strip, the Clemens House is a key property defining the eastern edge of a fashionable turn-of-the-century residential neighborhood adjacent to the central business district. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with Michael Clemens (1863-1941), a prosperous, hard-working druggist whose distinction in the local business community was that, at the time of his retirement in 1935, he had maintained his drug store continuously for 48 years--longer than any other Grants Pass business on record.

The land occupied by the Grants Pass Town Plat was part of the Orson Gilbert Donation Land Claim until it passed to Thomas Croxton in 1859. The property on which the Clemens House stands belonged to Croxton, the town's first postmaster, until his death in 1867.¹ Grants Pass remained a small stagecoach stop until 1883, when the Oregon and California Railroad was completed and the passenger station was built on the northwest corner of 6th and Front Streets. In 1883 the Croxton family passed a portion of land, including the pertinent property, to Jonathan Bourne Jr., who laid out the town lots and filed a plat for Grants Pass on December 10, 1883.² By 1886, when the county seat was shifted

¹ Josephine County Deed Records, Book 5J p. 5.
² Josephine County Deed Records, Book 5J p. 98.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Clemens, Michael. Oral Communication, May 11, 1981.
 Durland, Florence. Oral Communication, May 8, 1981.
 "Grants Pass and Josephine County, Rogue River Valley", Grants Pass Commercial Club, 1911, p. 47. (See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Grants Pass, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A 10 473095 4699005
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Michael Clemens House is located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 18, T. 35 S., R. 5 W., W. M., in Josephine County, Oregon. The property is legally described as Tax Lot 9800, Map reference 36 5 18AA. It occupies Lots 1 and 2 and the easterly 15 feet of Lot 3, Block 7 of the Town of Grants Pass.

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 Kay Atwood
 organization n/a date August 7, 1981
 street & number 102 South Pioneer Street telephone 482-8714
 city or town Ashland state Oregon 97520

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 *Kay Atwood*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date March 18, 1982

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 4/29/82
Albin Byers
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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from Kerbyville to Grants Pass, the new county seat had ". . .135 residences, 51 business houses, a courthouse, jail and depot. . ." ³ One year later, in October, 1887, Davis Brower, city attorney, purchased Lots one through four in Block seven. It was in 1903 that Michael Clemens obtained the same property from the Brower family. ⁴ By 1890, the year before Michael Clemens arrived in Grants Pass, the town's population was 1432. ⁵

Clemens was born in Iowa on February 11, 1863, and during his childhood worked in the town drugstore. As a young adult he attended Chicago Pharmaceutical College and was licensed as a druggist. After a short residence in Seattle, Washington, Clemens arrived in Grants Pass in 1891. His first year was spent working for Dr. W. F. Kremer at the National Drug Store. In 1893 he left Dr. Kremer's business and purchased the Dimmick Drugstore, assigning the establishment his own name. The building in which Clemens' drugstore was located, (between E and F on 6th Street) still stands. In 1894 he married Ida Harkey, a young woman who had arrived in Grants Pass from Illinois. They occupied their first house on the corner of 5th and E Street until 1905. It, too, is still standing, but it is the house at N.W. 3rd and A Streets which reflects Clemens' ultimate attainment in the community.

By 1900 Grants Pass's population had grown to 2290. ⁶ Optimism was high for continued good mining results, and eastern money, invested in a variety of projects, provided a solid economic base for the community. The years 1904 and 1905 were busy building times. The local paper frequently commented on the boom:

. . .There is more building going on in Grants Pass than ever before. All over the business portion of town are brick buildings in the process of construction, and dwellings are going up everywhere. . . ⁷

. . .A count shows that more than 160 buildings and residences have been completed, or are in the course of creation this year. The class of buildings to be erected in 1905 is quite certain to be of even higher character than those of previous years. . . ⁸

During this active period, the Clemenses planned their new home and selected an architect for the project. Robert Keeney, former partner of Frank Chamberlain Clark, identifies the structure as an example of his colleague's work; noting specifically the use of projecting bays with brackets, gable vergeboards and the carry-over of certain architectural details, such as brackets, to the building's interior. ⁹

³ Edna May Hill, Josephine County Historical Highlights I, Josephine County Historical Society and Josephine County Library, 1976, p. 74.

⁴ Josephine County Title Company, Abstract #326.

⁵ Hill, Josephine County Highlights, II, p. xv.

⁶ Hill, Josephine County Highlights, II, p. xv.

⁷ Rogue River Courier, June 11, 1903.

⁸ Rogue River Courier, November 24, 1904.

⁹ Robert Keeney, Oral Communication, April 8, 1981.

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Frank Clark arrived in the Rogue River Valley in 1904 and began his practice in Ashland. Born in 1872 in Greene, New York, Clark had come to the west coast and worked in both Los Angeles and San Francisco before moving north to Oregon. In 1905 he designed a home in Grants Pass for A. C. Hough, local attorney, which still stands at the top of A Street.¹⁰

Frank Clark continued to design houses and business buildings for well-to-do clients in the Rogue River Valley for the next forty years, including several in Grants Pass.¹¹ The Michael Clemens House was included on a page of photographs of fine residences in a Grants Pass promotional booklet published in 1911.¹²

In 1914 Clemens became affiliated with the Rexall organization, and maintained one of the longest-operating Rexall Drugstores in the west.¹³ The Courier recognized his prominence in the issue for April 3, 1935:

CLEMENS RANKS FIRST OF ALL GRANTS PASS BUSINESSMEN
'Mike' is one of the best known druggists in the state, and his fame has spread to the Atlantic coast, where he is known as one of the most successful promoters of one-cent sales in the Rexall organization.

In 1941, on his 77th birthday and after 48 years of business, Michael Clemens sold his drugstore to his younger partner, Harold Bechtel, who had worked with him since 1923.¹⁴ Eight months after his retirement the local paper announced Clemens' death:

At the time of his retirement, Mr. Clemens headed all men in Grants Pass in continuous operation of any business in the city. . .Mr. Clemens has taken an active part in civic and community affairs. . .¹⁵

Ida Clemens continued to live in the house until her death in 1944. She was active in community affairs, and was an accomplished landscape gardener. Both her own garden and that of the Episcopal Church became known for their beauty under her eye and care. The house was purchased in 1944 by Morris Milbank, who had come to Grants Pass in 1929 and operated the Rogue River Box Company. Milbank served as Mayor of Grants Pass from 1950 to 1954 and died in 1960. His wife carried

¹⁰ Medford Mail Tribune, June 1, 1920.

¹¹ Other structures by Frank Clark include Churchill Hall on the Southern Oregon State College Campus, Elks Building, Swedenburg House and Taverner House--all in Ashland. In Medford, notable works are Harry and David's Bear Creek Orchards Building, Medford Hotel, Methodist Church, Holly and Craterian Theatres, and Kay Building. Residences in outlying districts include the Van Hoenburg House which has been entered into the National Register. A complete inventory of Frank Clark's architectural work is planned.

¹² "Grants Pass and Josephine County, Rogue River Valley", Grants Pass Commercial Club, 1911, p. 47.

¹³ Michael Clemens, (grandson) Oral Communication, May 11, 1981.

¹⁴ Grants Pass Daily Courier, February 10, 1941.

¹⁵ Ibid., November 3, 1941.

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on the fine landscape tradition at 612 N.W. 3rd Street and continued to live there until she sold the property in 1965. The Michael Clemens House then had two intervening owners before its acquisition by the current owners in 1978.

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Major Bibliographical References continued:

Grants Pass Daily Courier, February 10, 1941, November 3, 1941.
Hill, Edna May. Josephine County Historical Highlights I, Josephine
County Historical Society and Josephine County Library, 1976, p. 74.
Josephine County Deed Records, Book 5J.
Keeney, Robert. Oral Communication, April 8, 1981.
Medford Mail Tribune, June 1, 1920.