

**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 Cross, Curtis, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1635 Fairmount Avenue South _____ not for publication

city, town Salem _____ vicinity of congressional district Second

state Oregon code 041 county Marion code 047

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 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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Jeanne R. Purvine (Mrs. Ralph E. Purvine)

street & number 1635 Fairmount Avenue South

city, town Salem _____ vicinity of state Oregon 97302

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Clerk

street & number Marion County Courthouse

city, town Salem _____ state Oregon 97301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Salem Historical Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1980-81 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Department of Community Development, City Hall

city, town Salem _____ state Oregon 97301

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Curtis Cross House, built in 1924 from plans developed by Clarence Smith and completed by Jamieson Parker, is a two-story, Mediterranean Style wood frame construction with clay tile block exterior walls finished with light-hued stucco. Not only was the wall construction for fire resistance and extra insulation innovative in Salem at the time, Cross's house was the first in the city to be wired in conduit. All roof surfaces are covered with red mission tiles. Essentially rectangular in plan with eaveless hipped roof with metal gutters, the house is oriented with its long axis north to south and its principal facade facing east and Fairmount Avenue. It occupies the center of a generous, landscaped corner lot measuring 150 x 150 feet at the summit of Fairmount Hill, a fashionable residential neighborhood in south Salem developed, for the most part, between 1910 and 1935. The graded portion of the lot is a foot or two above the slightly sloping street grade, and the lower, street sides of the lot are lined with lawn-covered parking strips, sidewalks and a perimeter rock garden. The west, or rear side of the property is bordered by a brick-paved driveway which leads to a detached, rectangular three-bay garage with upper level living quarters. The garage is likewise finished in the Mediterranean Style and is oriented at right angles off the southwest corner of the house. Initially, another 17 feet was included across the south property line, and the area, shaded by a stand of firs, contained a tennis court, log cabin playhouse, woodshed, and native flora planted by Mrs. Cross, an accomplished gardener. These structures are no longer standing. The nominated property contains a narrow strip of the wooded area along its south boundary.

Facade organization of the house is essentially formal, with openings fitted with double-hung sash, casement windows and French doors--all multi-paned. In keeping with the style, opening other than the main entrance are framed with low-relief stuccoed framements which, because of their lack of differentiation by color treatment, are essentially unseen. Second story openings have exterior shutters, and doorways give onto wrought iron balconets. Another hallmark of the style is the central second story window lighting the stairwell which is screened by ornamental tile grillwork. The main entrance, centered in the principal facade, is surrounded by a classical framement, and the window in its elaborate paneled door is protected by a decorative wrought iron grill. The front stoop, central walkway and bowed satirway to the street level are of brick. The street level stairway is flanked by wrought iron railings in concrete bases and is lighted by a freestanding wrought iron lamp standard. At the southerly end of the street facade is a forward projecting section containing the dining room from which a single-story solarium wing with round-arched window and curvilinear parapet projects to the south. On the north end of the house, off the living room, is an arcaded porch, or loggia having a central salomonica, or spiral column in its north elevation. At the rear of the house are a tile-roofed port cochere and a breezeway which connects the kitchen entrance and the east end of the garage which contains an extra half story for living quarters.

The interior of the house is restrained, rather than flamboyant, with the entry stairhall exhibiting the strongest references to the Mediterranean Style. The stairhall has glazed tile floor covering and a stair railing of wrought iron. The walls are finished with lath and plaster throughout. South of the stairhall are the dining room and the tile-lined solarium. North of the stairhall is the living room with its focal feature a classical chimneypiece in the west wall over which the plaster ceiling is fashioned in a groin vault. The west, or rear portion of the house is subdivided into kitchen, maid's room and bath, and library, which is fully lined with paneling. Five bedrooms and two bathrooms are contained in the upper level. A 14-light skylight lights the stairwell, and the master suite contains walk-in closets and a fireplace. The full concrete basement contains furnace, storage and utility rooms; laundry, tool room and, in the north end, a billiards room with fireplace--the sine qua non of fashionable houses in traditional styles before the Second World War.

Cross is thought to have served as his own contractor. He subcontracted with Ira Jorgensen of Salem for the decorative wrought iron.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1924 **Builder/Architect** Clarence L. Smith, designer
Jamieson Parker, architect (final stage)

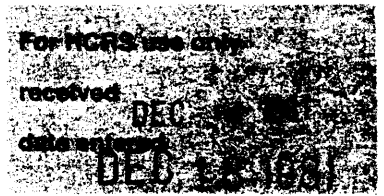
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The house built at 1635 Fairmount Avenue in Salem for packing company executive Curtis Cross in 1924 is one of the notable houses on Fairmount Hill, a fashionable residential neighborhood on the south end of the capital city which was developed, for the most part, between 1910 and 1935. The unaltered house is probably the preeminent example of residential architecture in the Mediterranean Style in Salem. With its stuccoed exterior walls, low hipped roof covered with red mission tiles, north end loggia, balconets and railings of wrought iron, the Cross House embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean Style, a variant of the Spanish Colonial Style popular in the first half of the 20th century. Of frame construction with clay tile block exterior walls finished with stucco, the house was designed by Clarence L. Smith, an accomplished draftsman who had two years' training at Cornell University School of Architecture and had been associated with the Portland firm of Sutton and Whitney before coming to Salem to specialize in residential design. Smith was responsible for many of the most fashionable houses in the city during the 1920s and 1930s. The house was completed, however, under the supervision of Portland architect Jamieson Parker when the client grew impatient with Smith's services. Smith, who worked in several 20th century period styles, most notably Georgian and Colonial, is known to have produced only one other house in the Mediterranean Style in Salem, namely, the Sam Adolph House of 1927, somewhat smaller in scale, which still stands at 1625 South Commercial Street and which has been adapted for commercial use. The Cross House possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with three successive owners who were key figures in Salem's business and professional affairs: Curtis Cross, Asel Eoff and Ralph Purvine.

Architecture. The Cross House was among the earliest projects by Clarence Smith in Salem. Reportedly, Curtis Cross, the client, grew impatient with Smith and took the plans to Portland architect Jamieson Parker, who was well trained in the period styles, for completion. Smith's widow recently was able to furnish a list of most of the designer's houses throughout the city. Clarence Smith (1894-1951) was born in Portland, Oregon and was three years an apprentice to Charles Ertz and, subsequently, O. L. DuPuy in his native city. He later served as draftsman to Gibb and Waltz in Ithaca, New York (1915-1916), Green and Wicks in Buffalo, New York (1916-1917), Kidd of New York City (1918), and Sutton and Whitney in Portland, Oregon (1919-1920). He studied two years at the Cornell University School of Architecture. He arrived in Salem as draftsman for contractor Cuyler Van Patten. Although Smith used the title of architect for at least ten years, he qualified for a license by senior examination of the State Board of Architect Examiners as late as 1940, and he did not keep his fees paid after that year. Those who knew him in Salem characterized Smith as a creative person, a sort of "unsung artist," and "genius." All acknowledged his modesty and "wonderful ability in design." In 1938 he took the examinations of the State Board of Architect Examiners and failed but one subject, architectural history. In 1940, the year in which he was successful in his bid for a license, letters of recommendation were submitted on his behalf by community leaders including Paul Wallace, William S. Walton and J. M. Devers. Construction photographs of the house were taken by Curtis Cross, the client, who was an accomplished amateur photographer. Jamieson K. Parker (1895-1939), a native of Portland, Oregon, was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and centered his practice in his native city. The First Unitarian Church of Portland (1924), one of his best-known works, is a National Register property. Parker was Director of HABS for Oregon and Washington in 1934.

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Settlement. The Cross House represents the growing prosperity of the third and fourth generations of families which came to Oregon, typically by overland route, prior to 1855. Thomas Cross, grandfather of Curtis Cross and a native of England, arrived in Oregon in 1852. Cross's maternal grandfather, George Baskett, a native of Kentucky, settled a claim in Polk County, Oregon in 1850. The great grandfather of Cross's wife, Barbara Durbin Cross, was John Smith Durbin, who, with his wife and son, Daniel, arrived as early as 1845. John L. and Mary Eoff, grandparents of Ase! C. Eoff, second owner of the house, were in Oregon by 1848 and settled a donation land claim east of Salem. John Eoff was a native of Kentucky, as was his wife. The grandfather of Mrs. Ase! C. Eoff was Joseph Holman, an Englishman and a member of the Farnham or Peoria party, the first Oregon settlers to cross the plains (1839-1840). Holman was a participant in the convention of 1843 at Champoeg during which time it was decided to form the Provisional Government of Oregon. Holman also was a founder of the Oregon Institute in Salem which was to become Willamette University and he taught in the Indian Manual Labor Training School established by the Methodist Mission in Oregon under the Reverend Jason Lee. Holman's wife, Elmira Phelps, came to Oregon with Jason Lee on the Lausanne in 1840 and also taught at the Indian Manual Labor Training School. John and Mary Purvine, great grandparents of Dr. Ralph Purvine, third owner of the house, came to Oregon in 1848 with their son, Smiley Purvine.

Industry. Curtis B. Cross (1887-1939), for whom the house was built in 1924, was at the time of construction secretary of the Valley Packing Company, and in 1927 he became president of the company. He represented the third generation of Crosses in the meat packing and butchering business in Salem.

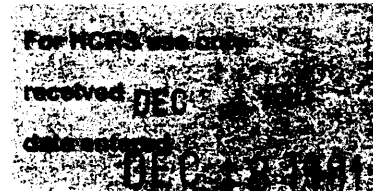
The story of the meat packing and retail business which Mr. Cross headed goes back to the arrival of his grandfather, Thomas Cross, in Salem in 1852 after crossing the plains by ox team. A native of England who had come to America as a boy, Thomas Cox had been engaged in the meat business in Chicago, and upon arrival here became Salem's pioneer meat dealer and soon established the first packing plant here. During the Civil War he had large contracts to supply meats to the Union army, and he later became the owner of extensive acreage in and near Salem. He relinquished control of the business in 1884 to his son, Edwin C. Cross, father of Curtis, who was born here April 19, 1887. Curtis became a half-owner of the business in 1907 and it continued under the name of E. C. Cross and Son until 1912 when, his father's health becoming poor, Curtis acquired full control...¹

In 1919, Curtis Cross consolidated both wholesale and manufacturing interests with the Steusloff Brothers to form the Valley Packing Company. The enterprise became the Cascade Meat Company in 1955, and all but the stockyard business was sold and closed out by 1962. The stockyard business, maintained by Douglas Chambers, a Steusloff grandson, closed in October, 1980, and was the last business of its type in Salem. Its closure ended an era of meat marketing in the Mid-Willamette Valley which served the independent grocer and butcher. Cross also operated the Meadowlawn Dairy.

¹Obituary article, Curtis C. Cross, Salem Oregon Statesman (January 26, 1939), p. 1.

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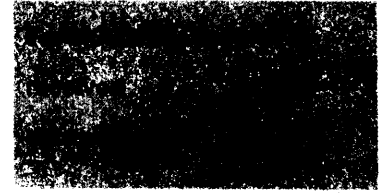
Ase1 C. Eoff (1901- ?), second owner of the house, founded Eoff Electric Company, which is still a major business, in the 1920s. Originally, it was a contracting, wholesale and retail firm. At present, it is a major wholesale distributor of electrical equipment serving not only contractors but local industries and food processors. The company has branch outlets in other Oregon cities.

Professions. Dr. Ralph Purvine (1910-1974), third owner of the house, was the son of Ellis and Dr. Mary Bowerman Purvine. Mary Purvine was one of the first graduates of the Willamette University Medical School and a pioneer doctor in Condon on the eastern Oregon frontier. Ralph Purvine was a graduate of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1935. He became State Medical Officer for the State Selective Service 1942-1946. He began practice in Salem with the Salem Clinic in 1938. In 1940 he became director of health services at Willamette University in Salem, a position which he held throughout his career. In 1948 he was appointed to the State Board of Medical Examiners. He was personal physician to several governors, including Mark O. Hatfield and Tom McCall, and for a number of sessions was physician for the Oregon Legislature. Dr. Purvine acquired the Cross House in 1951 and occupied it until his death in 1974. His widow, Jeanne Purvine, and daughter, Rebecca, are the current occupants.

Social/Humanitarian. Curtis Cross, for whom the house was built, was involved in numerous civic activities. He was a director of the YMCA for fifteen years and eventually became director emeritus. He was a charter member of the Salem Cherrians, a booster organization which paraded everywhere, and the local Kiwanis club. He was active for many years in the Chamber of Commerce also.

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Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., Marion and Polk Counties or Salem, Marion and Polk Counties. Telephone Directory, 1922-1942.

CURTIS CROSS

Oregon Statesman: April 9, June 14, 1899, Salem Amateur Photographers.
Jan. 31, 1924, Salem Riding Academy.
Feb. 15 & 24, 1924 and Jan. 1, 1925. Curtis Cross to build and permit
Sept. 21, 1924, article on hollow brick; examples Cross and Lunsford
houses under construction.
Jan. 1, 1925, p. 3 and July 10, p. 8. articles on Cross market and
Valley Packing Co.
Jan. 26, 1939 p. 1., Curtis Cross is dead. Jan. 28, p. 4. Editorial.

Statesman Journal: Oct. 12, 1980, sec. 3, p. 1. Last stockyard in Salem closes.

Duniway, David C., "Salem when Deepwood was built, 1893-94," Deepwood Stories,
October 1979. Yew Park.

CLARENCE SMITH

Interviews with Mrs. Clarence L. Smith, Viva Poorman, Opal Young, Edith Schryver,
Francis W. Smith, Alice McCormack, Robert Aiken, Shirley Hadley, and Nancy Gormsen.

Oregon State Board of Architect Examiners. Clarence L. Smith file (State Archives).

Morning Oregonian: June 22, 1951, sec. 3, p. 6. Funeral Notices.

Interviews relating to the owners and the house: Frank Durbin Cross, Virginia Cross
Peters, Vida Cross Byrd, Joseph Eoff, Jeanne R. Purvine, Mrs. Clarence L. Smith,
Nancy Gormsen, Jacqueline Schneider and Agnes Janssen.

Clark, Robert C., History of the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Chicago, S. J. Clarke
Publishing Company, 1927. Vol. 2, p. 60-62, Frank W. Durbin.

Corning, Howard McKinley, Dictionary of Oregon History. Portland, Binford & Mort
Publishers (1956). Holman, Joseph, and Mott, James Wheaton.

Gatke, Robert Moulton, Chronicles of Willamette, the Pioneer University of the West,
Portland, Binford & Mort, Publishers (1943). P. 162-3, Joseph Holman.

Genealogical Forum of Portland, Oregon, Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land
Claims, Vol. 1, 1957, V. 2, 1959 (Abstracting files in the National Archives Records
Center, Seattle), Oregon City Land Claims.

1964 Eoff, John L.; 2462 Purvine, John; 3065 Baskett, George; 4280 Durbin, Isaac; and
4282 Durbin, Daniel.

Salem World Feb. 13, 1928, p. 1. "They put you on the air" (article on Eoff).

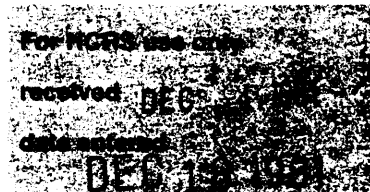
Oregon Statesman, Oct. 5, 1974, Section II Obituaries (Ralph E. Purvine).

Oregon Journal, Oct. 28, 1948, p. 5, Salem Doctor named to Examiners Board.

A Century of Service, 1858-1958 (Spring Valley Presbyterian Church), p. 19 (Smiley Purvine).

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JAMIESON PARKER

List of Buildings Designed by Jamieson Parker. Unpublished manuscript by Parker's widow, undated. Oregon Historical Society Manuscript Collection.

Oregon State Board of Architect Examiners. Application No. 97, dated October 3, 1919, Jamieson K. Parker.

Obituary, Oregonian, December 9, 1939, page 1.

Withey, Henry F., and Withey, Elsie Rathburn, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970), 454.

MacColl, E. Kimbark, The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1915 to 1950 (Portland: The Georgian Press, 1979), 8, 522.