

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **OCT 28 1983**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Curry, Nathaniel, House

and/or common Curry Manor

**2. Location**

street & number 1458 Quail Lane N/A not for publication

city, town Roseburg vic.  vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Douglas code 019

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: retirement/ nursing home

**4. Owner of Property**

name MR. and Mrs. Robert Warner and Ms. Barbara Walters

street & number 1458 Quail Lane

city, town Roseburg  vicinity of state Oregon 97470

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse

street & number 1036 SE Douglas

city, town Roseburg state Oregon 97470

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

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

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

The massive Queen Anne style home built for wealthy San Francisco businessman Nathaniel Curry is located approximately eight miles northwest of Roseburg, Oregon. The parcel of land on which the house stands is part of an original holding of 2,090 acres encompassing much of the rich bottom land near the point where the north and south branches of the Umpqua River flow together. The two story house measures, in its main volume, approximately 60 feet in width and 30 feet in depth. The house was completed just after Nathaniel Curry's death, and occupied by his family for fifty years. The big home suited the large Curry household for there were, in the years following the structure's completion in 1894, as many as twelve to fifteen individuals sheltered under its roof.

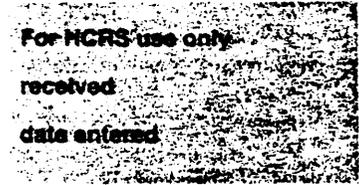
The Curry house is exceptional in Douglas County in several respects.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the largest rural houses in the Garden Valley District. The mass and height of the house contrast dramatically with the flat Umpqua River bottomland. The late Queen Anne style house displays a rich array of decorative elements on both exterior and interior. A large corner bay with pyramidal roof imitates a turret. Brackets, fans and garlands are employed throughout as decorative detail. The encircling veranda is unusual for rural homes in Douglas County in the late 19th century. Typical farm homes were vernacular expressions. The Nathaniel Curry home is a finer example of Queen Anne architecture than found on most Douglas County farms of the 1890s. The materials included in the house's construction and finishing are unique to the area. While the sandstone foundation was of locally quarried stone, and the basic frame of the house included fir from trees on the property, many materials were shipped raw, or in finished form, from San Francisco. Redwood is found throughout for mouldings, wainscoting, trim, and wall panelling, and on outside decorative elements such as turned porch posts, brackets and trim. On the interior are elaborately painted metal fireplace mantels, elaborately carved or pressed baseboards and trim, and Lincrusta-Walton employed as panelling in a two-flight stairwell. The condition of the Curry home is better than most in the area of a comparable period. Despite a low single-story addition on the north side elevation of the house, the Curry home is relatively more intact than others in the rural environs of Douglas County.

The surrounding area is rural in character with the majority of the land still used for agricultural production. A holding of approximately seven acres is now the only remaining portion of the once-huge farm still associated with the Curry home. A large barn, located about one-half mile south of the home was part of the complex, but now belongs with other property. Despite the reduction of the original farm, because the land is still in agricultural use, the integrity of the resource has not been lost.

<sup>1</sup>Assessment regarding the context of the Curry Home within Douglas County was obtained from Mr. Terry Harbour, Douglas County Special Projects Planner, and author of Douglas County Cultural Resources Survey, 1982.

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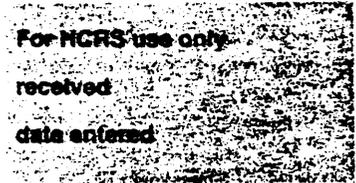
The Nathaniel Curry House is irregular in shape and composed of three large rectangular masses. It measures approximately 60 feet across the front elevation of the main volume and 77 feet 6 inches along the longest side. A low, one-story addition extends from the north elevation and measures approximately 54 feet in length and 40 feet in width. An encircling veranda on three sides of the main block adds 10 feet in width on each side and 10 feet in length at the front of the house. The two story home is of wood frame construction and rests on a sandstone foundation. Stone for the foundation was most likely quarried from a popular location about two miles away and downstream of the house across the south Umpqua River. The exterior of the building is sheathed with channel siding, and on portions of the sides and rear of the home not sheltered by the veranda, a belt-course of imbricated shingles with a flared base adds texture to the wall surfaces. The roof of the main house has a multiple design, with a basic hipped-roof shape from which low-pitched gables project on all elevations of the house. The square corner bay on the south corner of the front elevation has a hipped or pyramidal roof. The addition is covered with a low-pitched gable roof. Both main house and addition are presently roofed with composition shingle. The encircling veranda has a gently-pitched shed roof from which small porch gables project at the center. A smaller porch with similiar design extends over an entry on the south elevation toward the rear of the house. One tall brick chimney with corbelling extends from the interior toward the east end of the structure. A newer brick exterior chimney rises on the north elevation of the house where the addition joins the main volume of the house.

The common window pattern throughout the building is one-over-one lights in double-hung sash. There are eleven windows of this pattern on the north elevation; five have been covered by the addition on the lower level. Eight windows of the type exist on the facade and west elevation; eleven are included on the south elevation, and five exist in the rear rectangular block's south and east elevations. Gable projections on the north and south elevations have three small windows in each. On the east elevation of the main block of the house, one window has been altered to a narrow horizontal shape. The front and primary entry has eight panels and a transom above. French doors above the main entry have ten lights in each panel. Similar doors appear on the south and north elevations. These appear to be later alterations. The only known historic photograph does not show such a door on the north elevation where one exists now. A panelled door provides entry on the south elevation and a five panelled door with transoms enters the former kitchen area.

Architectural decorative features include closed soffits and bracketed eaves. Windows in the corner bay have cornices with moulding and dentils incorporated for trim. Windows on the lower level of the main block extend from the window bottom to the porch floor and have decorative panelling inset below the window. Under the porch covering saw-tooth edged moulding joins the house wall and porch ceiling. A band of vertical boards with scalloped edges provides decorative interest below the upper eaves. Projecting gables from the main roofs and from the porch coverings have carved fan details. The encircling veranda is supported by turned porch posts with ornate brackets at the top. Carved inset pieces span the space between the porch posts. Garlands are incorporated on the freize panel of the corner bay. The rear porch is treated in a like fashion.

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The north wing, an addition of 1960, is of frame construction and sheathed with lap siding. It is used for nursing care. The roof is of composition material and the windows are of horizontal sliding design, with metal frames. Doors on the east and west elevations provide entry.

The interior of the Curry home is based on a central hall plan with multiple rooms on each side of the hall. The lower floor is comprised of two large parlors, a drawing room, dining room central hall, bath and storage space. The second level contains eight bedrooms and two baths, apparently formed out of one formerly large bathroom. The central hall contains panelled wainscoting 54" in height. The baseboard pattern in the hall and throughout is carved or pressed with a decorative scroll design. Similar material is used throughout the house for baseboard design. Doors have a common pattern of five panels with enriched bead-and-reel moulding within the panels. In a front parlor, panels are inset under the windows, reflecting the pattern established on the exterior. Ceilings are twelve feet in height and are unlowered with the exception of the hall. Transoms are above doors leading from the lower central hall. Moulding around doors and windows have bullseye corner moulding. The parlor fireplace has a massive oak mantel piece supported by grooved columns with bases and capitals. The immediate fireplace surround is of ceramic tile, as is the hearth. An oval, bevelled glass mirror is central on the over-mantel. A drawing room has a heavy metal mantel piece painted decoratively. A similar fireplace exists in former dining space now used as an office. Three foot high panelled wainscoting is included in a dining room and former library space. The former kitchen area has been remodelled into dining space for home residents, and through this area one reaches the addition. The addition has a central hall plan with eight bedrooms. Each room has its own bath. The walls are of drywall construction and the floors are linoleum.

The closed string stair has a dog-leg form and has two flights. The stairwell contains panelling of Lincrusta-Walton, a material patented in England in 1877 by Englishman Frederick Walton, who had already developed the popular floor covering, linoleum. The durable embossed wallcovering was tremendously popular in America where its manufacture was begun in 1883 by Fr. Beck and Co., of Stamford, Connecticut.

By 1885, Beck and Co. was offering 150 different patterns in Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Mooresque, Japanesque, Medieval, Renaissance, Louis XVI, and Eastlake styles. . . In the American West where fine wood for wainscoting was extremely expensive, lincrusta became the logical and ubiquitous substitute. . .<sup>2</sup>

In the Curry House the Lincrusta give a rich, leather-like quality to the surface of the stairwell walls. Newell posts are square-panelled and are spanned by turned balusters. Upper level rooms are entered from a long central hall. Transoms exist above hall doors and are trimmed with massive bead-and-reel moulding. Wall surfaces are papered; some modern panelling exists in a rear bedroom. Floors on the second story as throughout the house are of oak. Fireplaces exist in two of the upper bedrooms. One has a wood corniced mantel piece with chamfered corners on the side panels; another has a blue mottled ceramic tile surround with decorative Renaissance figures and a wood mantel piece. Several fireplaces appear to be missing.<sup>3</sup>

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Alterations within the Curry House include the following: the central hall has been divided into two parts by the inclusion of a small bathroom. Access from the former kitchen to a dining area has been blocked with the remodeling of the old kitchen. Imitation panelling has been added in a few locations, but is being removed. On the upper level, two bedrooms appear to have been altered in size at the east and rear of the house. The bathroom appears to have been divided into two smaller spaces; probably at the time the house was sold to the McDonald family in approximately 1950. The alterations are unfortunate, but considering the age and size of the Curry House, do not compromise the basic design and integrity of the house.

Outbuildings within the nominated area consist of a carport measuring approximately 18' x 15'. It is constructed of wood and is situated off the southeast corner of the house.

The immediate setting of the Curry House includes several large cedar, fir and oak trees. An expanse of lawn surrounds the house on all sides. A curved unimproved driveway approaches the house directly from Quail Lane at the west, or front elevation, and encircles the house. A cement walk leads to the front entry, and cement-walled flower beds line the drive. The environment expanding across fields in all directions from the house functions for the most part as farmland, although residential development has occurred to the north of the Curry home.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Bradbury, "Lincrusta-Walton," Old House Journal, October 1982, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> Roseburg News-Review, April 18, 1951. Article on Curry Home mentions seven fireplaces.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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** 1892-1894      **Builder/Architect** W. J. Bennett, Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The two-story, Queen Anne style house with Eastlake ornament completed for the heirs of prosperous San Francisco gun dealer Nathaniel Curry in 1894 is situated in a rural setting, in the Garden Valley District northwest of Roseburg, in Douglas County, Oregon. The original farm holding, an exceptionally large spread of 2,090 acres, was acquired by Irish immigrant Nathaniel Curry in 1887. In 1890, Curry and his oldest son, Charles, commenced plans for development of prune orchards and construction of a large farmhouse so that the family, including seven children, could move from San Francisco. The place was named Riversdale Farm, most likely because of its proximity to the confluence of north and south branches of the Umpqua River. Upon Nathaniel Curry's death in 1892, Charles T. Curry completed construction of the farmhouse. Riversdale Farm remained under Curry family ownership and was managed by Charles Curry until 1944. The farm was subdivided for residential tracts first in 1912 and again in the 1920s. In 1955 the farmhouse was converted to use as a sanitarium, a function which led to construction of a single-story wing on the north side elevation in 1960.

The farmhouse of the Nathaniel Curry Estate meets National Register criterion "c" as a locally outstanding example of rural Queen Anne/Eastlake-style architecture. The house is distinctive for the extent of its surface ornament, an encircling veranda, and a square corner bay, or turret.

Elaborate finish materials and fittings, such as chimney pieces and Lincrusta wallpaper, were shipped to the site from San Francisco. Adaptive use as a sanitarium resulted in minor interior spatial reorganization, but most of the building's significant interior space and notable features, including the Lincrusta wallpaper in the stairhall, are intact. Alterations have been limited to the downstairs hall, which was subdivided by a bathroom; the kitchen, remodeled and no longer accessible from the diningroom; and two upstairs bedrooms.

The farmhouse of the Nathaniel Curry Estate meets National Register criterion "b" for its association with gun dealer turned agriculturalist, Nathaniel Curry (1823-1892), and his heirs, who occupied the property for 50 years. The house is significant also under criterion "a" as a classic illustration of the break-up of large agricultural holdings in response to the rise of the suburbs in the early 20th century.

Nathaniel Curry was born in County Fermanaugh, Ireland on November 6, 1823. Census and family records indicate that the Curry family immigrated to the United States as early as 1835 and lived for a period of time on the east coast. Part of the family, including two brothers, Nathaniel and John, lived at least briefly in Washington County, Ohio, for John Curry registered to vote in San Francisco years later, on proof of his father's naturalization at Marietta, Ohio in March, 1847. Nathaniel Curry was also naturalized in Washington County, Ohio.<sup>1</sup> Charles Curry, oldest of the three brothers moved to San Francisco in approximately 1850 and established the firm of C. Curry Guns and Fancy Goods at 55 Commercial Street. From 1854 to 1860 his store was located at 87 Battery Street where he established himself as an importer, wholesale and retail

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.515 acres

Quadrangle name Sutherlin, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 10 465050 4790000  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Nathaniel Curry House is located in Section 32, Township 26 South, Range 6 West, W.M., Douglas County, Oregon. It occupies that portion of Tax Lot 1100 which is described as follows: (continued)

### 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 March 6, 1983

street & number 102 S. Pioneer telephone 503/482-8714

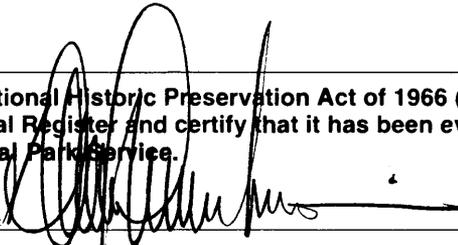
city or town Ashland state Oregon 97520

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

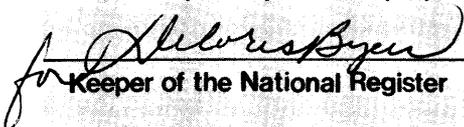
title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date October 10, 1983

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 11/25/83

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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dealer in "Guns, Rifles, Pistols, Powder and Shot", as he proudly announced himself the sole agent for Derringer pistols in California.<sup>2</sup> In 1861 he moved his store again to 317 Battery Street between Clay and Commercial Streets and here he was joined in business by his brother Nathaniel who had worked as a clerk for his brother for two years. Charles Curry died suddenly late in 1861 and his brother prepared to take responsibility for the flourishing business. Charles Curry had succeeded tremendously in his trade with miners and entrepreneurs who flooded San Francisco during the years his gun store was open. A San Francisco historian, John S. Hittell noted:

From the profits of his business and judicious investments in real estate, he accumulated a handsome fortune which he left to his brothers, Nathaniel and John Curry.<sup>3</sup>

Nathaniel Curry operated the business alone from 1862 to 1864 when he was joined by his brother John, and the firm name was listed, N. Curry and Brother, Guns, Pistols and Sporting Materials. In 1869 the firm moved to 117 Sansome Street, and Hittell again describes their business:

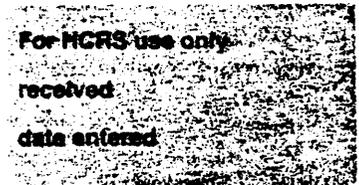
They have a large importing and jobbing business, extending to all points tributary to San Francisco including Mexico and the Sandwich Islands. They are the Pacific Coast agents for the Remington breech-loading rifle, magazine rifles and shot-guns. . . and for Sharps rifles, and they import largely of Colt's revolvers. . .<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these special items, the firm dealt with repairs for guns, and began the manufacture of fine guns and rifles to order.<sup>5</sup>

In 1865 Nathaniel Curry travelled to Ireland while making an extensive trip to buy firearms of various European manufacturers for resale in the United States. While in Ireland he married Isabelle Jane Graham, who was seventeen years of age at the time of their marriage. They returned to San Francisco and their first child, Charles Thomas, named after Nathaniel Curry's brother, was born in September, 1869.<sup>6</sup> During the next eighteen years, while the Curry brothers continued their successful enterprise, seven more children were born to the couple.<sup>7</sup> The family lived first at 408 Sixth Street, San Francisco, and moved into a larger home at 2416 Howard in 1879. The 1880 Census of the United States indicates that the household on Howard Street also included two brothers of Isabelle Curry's. In 1886 Nathaniel Curry sold his business to Charles Ladd of San Francisco and retired permanently. His wife was pregnant with their eighth and last child, and perhaps sensing both his age (sixty-four) and long-lasting responsibility, Nathaniel Curry decided to move his family out of San Francisco, and to pick a more rural place to watch his children grow. On August 18, 1887, the same month his son, William was born, Nathaniel Curry purchased 2,090 acres of rich farmland in Douglas County, Oregon, almost 450 miles north of San Francisco. He paid \$35,173.00 for his extensive land.<sup>8</sup> The purchase was made from Thomas Brown who had accumulated the large acreage in three townships, and which included his own Donation Land Claim and land claims, or sections of claims of six other individuals.<sup>9</sup>

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The area in which Nathaniel Curry's new farm lay was known as Garden Valley, just above the junction of the north and south branches of the Umpqua River. The location earned its name from the rich character of the bottom-land soil, and was adapted early to vegetable, and fruit production. Like much of the land in Oregon near major rivers, however, the Garden Valley was vulnerable to flooding, and suffered devastating damage in the 1861-1862 winter flood which inundated the valley and destroyed all farms, and all improvements except for one residence on slightly higher ground.<sup>10</sup> Garden Valley lies approximately seven miles northwest of the community of Roseburg, Oregon. Roseburg, the county seat of Douglas County figured prominently in the early history of the area, and derived its name from the land claimant of the property where the town began, Aaron Rose. The U. S. Land Office, originally at Winchester, Oregon, was moved to Roseburg in 1857 and became the center for processing of Donation Land Claim filings and patents during the settlement of southern Oregon. The town was incorporated in 1872, the same year the Oregon and California Railroad laid tracks across Roseburg's boundaries. The road was completed to this point and then work ceased while ten years of struggle and negotiation passed. In 1882 the extending of the track south began and the completion of the railroad line greatly increased Roseburg's potential and growth. The Umpqua Valley's major River, the Umpqua, has two branches; the north, which has its source at Diamond Lake, and the south, which meets the north branch at Garden Valley. The river continues on to the sea near the community of Reedsport. Scottsburg, a small town approximately twenty miles up river from Reedsport served from 1850 through the peak gold mining years as a supply center for the interior valleys, and Thomas Brown and the other farmers in the Garden Valley area found numerous outlets for their crops and produce in the miners, pack trains and new settlers entering the area during these early years. The arrival of the railroad offered new promise to successful farmers and fruitgrowers.<sup>11</sup>

Approximately one month after Nathaniel Curry bought Thomas Brown's land, to local paper announced:

**JUST WHAT DOUGLAS COUNTY NEEDS**

Mr. N. Curry and son, late of San Francisco have returned to Roseburg and are making arrangements to go upon their fine large farm in this county lately purchased of Mr. T. Brown. It is one of the finest farms in Douglas County and young Mr. Curry will show us a specimen of good farming for he is young, active and enterprising.<sup>12</sup>

Apparently his father thought Charles was responsible too, for he left him in 1890 at the age of twenty-one to supervise the planning and construction of the family home on the new property. Nathaniel Curry returned to San Francisco and it appears that he selected a plan for the house, began making arrangements for special materials, and communicated regularly with Charles regarding construction. By 1892 the house foundation and beginning structural work were underway. In August, 1892, Charles Curry sent a note into Roseburg with an order for more material:

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August 31, 1892

Riversdale Farm

Please give the bearer Sam Wiley 15 planks, 2 x 12 x 14 feet, and charge the same to N. Curry. I will be in town the latter part of the week and will settle for the above.

Yours Truly,

Charles T. Curry<sup>13</sup>

Three months later, while his fine new home was just underway, Nathaniel Curry died in San Francisco on December 8, 1892. His will, which had been prepared two years earlier, left his entire estate of money and property to his family. He requested that the family remain together and live together, that his property in Oregon be divided among any living children, but that it not be distributed until the youngest child would reach the age of twenty-one years.<sup>14</sup> His funeral was held Sunday, December 11, from B'nai B'rith Hall on Eddy Street, conducted by his Masonic Lodge, Pacific Lodge, Number 136. Nathaniel Curry was buried beside a daughter who had died in 1873. The family plot lay in the oldest section of Woodlawn Cemetery at Colma California.<sup>15</sup>

His family remained in San Francisco during 1893 while Charles continued to supervise the construction of the house. The Plaindealer noted in August, 1893:

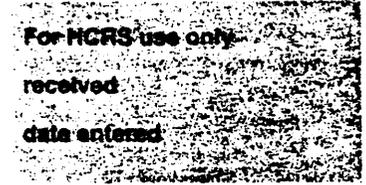
The Callahan mill is getting out a large quantity of lumber for the Curry residence on the Riversdale Farm.<sup>16</sup>

Later in that same year, on November 30, 1893, the same paper noted that the N. Curry Estate was among the higher ranking taxpayers in the area. The Callahan Mill near the community of Melrose, Oregon at the foot of the Coast Range was run by William and Milton Callahan, sons of George J. Callahan, early settler in Douglas County.<sup>17</sup> The two brothers headed the work of the mill and Ben Jones, long-time Douglas County resident recalled that Callahan moved the mill to the Curry property to saw lumber for the house.<sup>18</sup> Several locations carry the Callahan name near Melrose, including Callahan school, Callahan Mountain and Callahan Trail.<sup>19</sup>

Nathaniel Curry's family, widow Isabelle, age 46, and seven children, ranging in age from six to twenty-five years, followed his wishes and left their long-time San Francisco residency for the new, strange place. Their large, beautiful home on the farm they apparently bestowed the name of Riversdale Farm, was completed in 1894, finished with fine lumber and materials shipped north from San Francisco and installed by the builders.<sup>20</sup> They lived together on the farm, and the family included Violet Haines Curry, whom Charles Curry had married in Roseburg in 1892.<sup>21</sup> The farm became known both legally and popularly as the Nathaniel Curry Estate, because his provision that the property remain undivided meant that the land was tied for a long period of time to his name and his wishes.<sup>22</sup>

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The younger children attended school in the area, all contributed to the family's new life as a farm unit. Charles established himself as a responsible adult with a family to guide. The house had sixteen rooms including parlors, library, bedrooms, bath and kitchen, and the huge farm demanded much of his time and energy to supervise. The local paper printed an enigmatic but pleasant line about Charles Curry the year after he had been joined by his family:

Charles Curry, the big rancher of Umpqua Valley, came up Tuesday as serene as a sunflower. . .<sup>23</sup>

The family did not come into Roseburg often and through the years did not involve themselves in most instances in community life. The girls were trained musically, however, and on several instances played the piano or sang for community events. Isabelle, for example, played a piano duet for the commencement exercises in May, 1903 for Roseburg High School.<sup>24</sup> Lulu Curry taught school in the Garden Valley area and Birdella Elizabeth travelled back to live in San Francisco where she participated actively in the Stanford University Library. An early friend of the family recalls that all of the children except Charles were college-educated.<sup>25</sup>

Charles supervised the planting of extensive prune orchards and, assisted by his brother, William, developed a reputation as a fine orchardist throughout the area.<sup>26</sup>

In 1912, several years after the youngest child had reached his majority, the family decided that the proper time had arrived to sell a portion of the large farm. The movement toward reduction of large orchard tracts into smaller portions for purchase by families and individual orchardists had developed in practice and popularity during the last part of the previous decade in many interior valleys including Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties. During almost every issue in March and April, 1912, the Roseburg Review printed the following advertisement:

Ten acre tracts

Ten acre tracts

Riversdale Tracts

Subdivision of the N. Curry Estate Ranch.

This well known ranch has been subdivided and placed on the market in ten acre tracts. Riversdale Tracts are located five miles from Roseburg, Oregon on the North Umpqua River.

N. Curry Estate Owners

On April 12, a special magazine enclosure in the newspaper read:

The opening of the Riversdale Tracts a few days ago illustrates the changes which are taking place in Douglas County land, and marks the passing of another of our large tracts of fine land from the ownership of one person or family into the ownership of many small homemakers. . . There is no finer fruit, vegetable and berry land in Douglas County or southern Oregon than this. . . the management of the Curry Estate

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didn't care to undertake quite so large an order as planting and raising an orchard upon the entire holdings, so it was recently decided to subdivide and sell off a portion of same. . . . Five hundred acres have been divided into ten acre tracts and are now being marketed. . . . The Curry Estate, of which Mr. Chas. T. Curry is manager, is handling the sale of Riversdale Tracts and an office has been opened in the Masonic building, Roseburg, for this purpose.<sup>27</sup>

Portions of land continued to be sold, with several purchases being made during the 1920s.<sup>28</sup> The farm continued to support the family and provide many acres of orchards. Charles Curry constructed a prune dryer on the property which enhanced his operation considerably.

Isabelle Jane Curry died early in December, 1928 and the Roseburg News Review, December 4, 1928 carried announcement of her funeral at St. George's Episcopal Church, Roseburg and her planned burial in the family plot near San Francisco. Her son, Nathaniel Curry, named for his father, had pre-deceased her, drowning off the coast of California in 1925. William Curry, the youngest child died June 30, 1930. Charles Curry continued supervision of the Curry farm until his death February 24, 1944. Isabelle, Edith and Lulu Curry decided that they could not continue living on and caring for the rural property and arranged to offer the remaining land and the home for sale. In the late 1940s the three sisters moved into Roseburg to live and a family bought their home. The Curry sisters moved south to Medford in 1961 and Lulu, the last to die, succumbed on November 10, 1869.<sup>29</sup>

The MacDonalds, who purchased the Curry home lived there until approximately 1955 when the property was purchased by Mrs. Lesta Follett who used the house as a sanitarium. In the early 1960s she added the wing now present on the north side of the house. The severe flooding of 1964 forced the end of her sanitarium operation. After a long period of vacancy the land was purchased by the McCarver family who again took in roomers, in this instance, veterans only. All three purchasers after the Curry family bought the house and seven-acre plot of land on which the home stands.<sup>30</sup>

The current and recent owners of the Curry house and land are continuing the precedent of operating a nursing home/retirement home. They have committed money and time to the removing of some unfortunate, but temporary alterations, such as panelling, wall board, and layers of paint. They plan to receive ambulatory individuals into the main house for retirement living, and people needful of additional care into the nursing home wing.

Although the land has been subdivided, and the use of the Curry home has changed, the relationship of the structure to the landscape and to its past remains intact. The approach to the home from Curry Road and Quail Lane through the broad flat bottom lands, reveals the height and mass of the Nathaniel Curry Estate home in dramatic

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vertical contrast to the surrounding terrain. The significance of the property and house as the noted landmark of the Garden Valley environs continues to make its impact on visitors and residents in Douglas County.

The following reference to the Curry House appeared in the Roseburg Plaindealer for May 8, 1893:

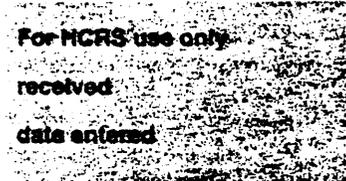
W. J. Bennett [sic], the architect, has completed plans for a residence which Charlie Curry will build on Riversdale farm. It will be modelled after the old Southern style of a home, and it will be one of the finest farm homes in the county. The carpenters will go today to begin work on it.<sup>31</sup>

W. J. Bennet is noteworthy in the architectural history of Oregon as the earliest architect of record in Medford, metropolis of the Rogue River Valley in southern Oregon. Bennet opened his practice in Medford in 1894 and was credited with designing over 30 buildings -- residential, commercial and institutional -- in southern Oregon and northern California over the next two-year period. Little is known of his training or professional life before his emergence in Medford in December, 1894, or after 1896.<sup>32</sup>

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- 1 Obituary for Nathaniel Curry, San Francisco Call, December 11, 1892, and Letter from Gerald D. Wright, California Historical Society written to Ella Mae Young, Douglas County Museum, December 6, 1982.
  - 2 David M. Gazlay, (compiler) Gazlay's American Biography For 1861, San Francisco: 1861, p. 23.
  - 3 John S. Hittell, The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast of North America, San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1882, p. 671.
  - 4 Ibid.
  - 5 Hittell, p. 671.
  - 6 Roseburg News Review, December 4, 1928. Obituary, Isabelle Jane Curry.
  - 7 The children included: Elizabeth, b. 1872, d. 1873; Isabelle, b. March, 1873, d. March 11, 1966; Birdella Elizabeth, b. March, 1876, d. December 19, 1952; Nathaniel, b. January, 1878, d. December 23, 1925; Edith, b. April, 1881, d. February 25, 1968; Lulu, b. March, 1883, d. November 10, 1969, and William, b. August, 1887, d. June 30, 1930.
  - 8 Douglas County Deed Records, Volume 119, p. 55.
  - 9 The individuals and their claims included: #1882, William Wilson, #1883, Peter McKinney, #1884, Oliver Williams, #1885, James Stewart, #1886, John Spence.
  - 10 A. G. Walling, History of Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Curry and Coos Counties, Portland: 1884, p. 432.

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- 11 Ibid., pp. 410-412.
- 12 The Roseburg Plaindealer, September 16, 1887, 3:1.
- 13 Account Book (Howell), Book H-1 Douglas County Museum.
- 14 San Francisco Call, December 30, 1892, 7:2, and Ella Mae Young, Interview, March 9, 1983.
- 15 San Francisco Call, December 11, 1892, 6:7, and Ella Mae Young, Interview, March 9, 1983, and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth G. High, San Francisco, California.
- 16 Roseburg Plaindealer, August 17, 1893.
- 17 Nannie Callahan Dunn, "Reminiscences of So. Oregon Pioneers, 1939, Douglas County Historical Society.
- 18 Ben Jones, Interview G-27, Douglas County Museum, 1974.
- 19 Interview, Ella Mae Young, Douglas County Museum, January 19, 1983.
- 20 Early residents of the Garden Valley area recall that a fine stand of fir timber existed on the Curry property and was used for some of the basic timbers of the house. The redwood lumber used throughout the interior of the home was shipped from San Francisco, as was the staircase. Other decorative architectural details also came from the bay area. The builder's name is not definitely known, but it can be assumed that the Callahans were much involved.
- 21 U. S. Federal Census, Douglas County, 1900.
- 22 The Roseburg Plaindealer article of November 30, 1893, which lists the property as valuable on the tax list, refers to the land as the N. Curry Estate.
- 23 Roseburg Plaindealer, March 7, 1895.
- 24 Roseburg High School Graduation Program, May, 1903. Douglas County Historical Society.
- 25 Maybelle Young, Interview, January 19, 1983, Roseburg, Oregon.
- 26 John Thomas, Wilbur, Oregon. Interview, March 7, 1983. Mr. Thomas was an employee and friend of the Curry family.
- 27 Roseburg Review, XV, no. 35 April 10, 1912. (article on inside of back cover of magazine. n.p.)
- 28 Transactions are recorded as follows: Douglas County Deed Records. Vol. 85, p. 528, (3/4/23) Vol. 86, p. 211 (8/8/24) Vol. 88, p. 279 (7/20/26) vol. 88, p. 639 (1/10/27) Vol. 90, p. 286 (1/26/28).
- 29 Lulu Ann Curry, Probate Records, Jackson County, Vol. 219, p. 712.
- 30 See Plat D, N. Curry Estate, filed July 16, 1945, Douglas County Surveyor's Office.
- 31 The Roseburg Plaindealer, May 8, 1893.
- 32 L. Scott Clay, National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Wilkinson-Swem Building, Medford, Jackson County, Oregon, January 20, 1982.

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A parcel of land lying in Lot 2, Block 1 of "N. CURRY ESTATE, PLAT D" as recorded in Volume 6, Page 3 of the Plat Records of Douglas County, Oregon, being a part of Section 32, Township 26 South, Range 6 West, Willamette Meridian, said parcel also being a portion of that property described in Instrument No. 82-12349 in the Deed Records of Douglas County, Oregon and is more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwesterly building corner of the northerly wing of the Curry Manor building from which point the East  $\frac{1}{4}$  Corner of the above said Section 32 bears N73°39'30"E 1663.04 feet; thence along the northerly line of said northerly wing of the Curry Manor building, and the extension thereof, N68°17'40"E 85.64 feet; thence S21°42'20"E 162.40 feet; thence S68°17'40"W 138.27 feet; thence N21°42'20"W 162.40 feet; thence N68°17'40"E 52.63 feet to the point of beginning and containing 0.515 acres of land, more or less.