

**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 Caton (Jesse H.) House

and/or common Dixon-Caton House

2. Location

street & number 602 N.W. 4th not for publication

city, town Corvallis vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Benton County 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 Bob Irwin

street & number 602 N.W. 4th

city, town Corvallis vicinity of state Oregon 97330

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number 120 N.W. 4th

city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1976 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 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 date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The original use of this property was that of a farm on Blocks 16 and 17 of Dixon's Second Addition to Corvallis. The oldest part of the house was built by, or for Levi C. Phillips between 1855 and 1859 in the Greek Revival Style. The house is in very good condition. Much of the framing is oversized cedar and is very sound. The present owner is contemplating plans for restoration.

The house is located in Section 35, Township 11 S, Range 5 W, W.M. It is oriented to the east, fronting on 4th Street, and is bordered on the south by Polk Avenue. The Jesse H. Caton House is in a predominantly residential area with some nearby commercial use. Fourth Street is a one-way street that is one of the main arterials for downtown Corvallis. The vegetation of the area is that of an established residential area. A magnificent black walnut on the southeast corner of the site is probably the only representative planting of the early settlement period; it was planted soon after the house was first built. Most of the plants on the site are recent additions by Dorothy Irwin.

The original part of the house is T-shaped. It has two stories, the entrance and gable end facing the street. It also has a one story service wing which is original to the plan, but because it was rebuilt after the 1861-1862 flood, is not original to the building. The base dimensions of the house are 16' x 24'. Additions to the original house are: the porch of ca. 1910-1912, the living room, and later the dining area and kitchen. The third addition was the room which connects to the original carriage house. The carriage house itself has been enlarged by the present owner.

The foundation is of large wooden posts which, when rotted, were replaced with new concrete pier blocks and 6 x 6's. The exterior wall construction is of siding over cedar wood frame. The interior is of rough sawn boards covered with cheese cloth or flour sacks, then wall paper. The roof is of heavy split shakes over 3/4 x 4-10" V.S. verticals over 10" - 20" x 3/4 R.S. planks. Cedar rafters are 3 x 4 1/2 posts 5 x 5.

The exterior siding is painted green. Subsequent additions have similar width (being 6 1/2'). The trim is white. The gabled end has entablature. Shutters are additions from when Jim Gathercoal owned the house.

Flooring in the original "t" floor plan, the oldest part of the Dixon-Caton House, is original. The walls were rough sawn boards covered with cheese cloth or flour sacks with wall paper over all.

In 1940 to 1941, Paul Gathercoal changed the floor plan to its current configuration. He took out the original stairs and switched their direction. Gathercoal obtained the "new" staircase from an old Corvallis funeral home being destroyed at that time. Gathercoal also installed the bath at this time. He found no remnants of the original fireplace which had been in this part of the house. Gathercoal did however find and locate the position of a fireplace washed away in the Willamette River flood of 1861-1862. The present fireplace stands almost on that position. After the flood, the fireplace was not replaced. Instead, the addition of the house of which the fireplace had been a part was enlarged. Two more rooms—a kitchen and dining area—were added and also a small porch. A shed shown in the Sanborn and Perris Insurance Atlas map of 1895 was removed in 1941-42 by Paul Gathercoal. The carriage house remains. Sawdust insulation in the walls of the latter building suggests that the original function was a fruit cellar.

The major change shown in Sanborn and Perris maps by 1912 was the addition of the present porch sheltering front entrance to the residence.

Today, the main block of the house is joined to the carriage house by an addition done by Jim Gathercoal in 1948. Jim Gathercoal at this time also closed in part of the porch with windows. A small covered porch, 8' x 11', also had been added in 1941-42 by Paul Gathercoal.

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The extension to the carriage house was done by Bob Irwin in 1957.

The original interior finish was rough sawn boards covered with flour sacks or cheese cloth which were then covered with wall paper. The ceilings were 1½ inch shiplap painted light green. The walls at present are wall papered in the main part of the house, and now are plastered and painted in the living room, kitchen, and dining area. The ceilings, except for the living room, dining area and kitchen, which are plastered, are all covered with celatex fiber-board.

The floors are made of 5 ½" boards one inch thick. In the living room and dining area they are covered by carpet and in the kitchen by lineoleum, but the boards are exposed in the original living room and upstairs.

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

Specific dates 1855-1859

Builder/Architect Levi C. Phillips (attributed)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Greek Revival house built in Corvallis by, or for Levi C. Phillips some time between 1855 and 1859 is significant to Corvallis and Benton County as the only landmark associated with Jesse H. Caton, Oregon Trail pioneer of 1843 and one of the first settlers in the county. Caton acquired the house in 1859 and resided in it until his death in 1863, after which time his heirs continued to occupy the property for fifty years. Next to the Robert Biddle House (1856-1857), it is perhaps the oldest house still standing on its original site in Corvallis. Moreover, it is one of only a half dozen Greek Revival houses now standing in all of Benton County. While it has been enlarged by additions and single-story extensions over the years, its main block, with its intact classical boxed cornice with returns at gable ends, would meet the test of "recognizability" by original occupants. The distinctive feature of the house is the longitudinal plan of the original two-story block in which the main entrance is in the gable end. This type of plan was unusual among early Oregon houses. A gable-end entry was more characteristic of churches and public buildings such as the first state capitol building—a Classic Revival structure of the same period as the Caton House. The former was located a few blocks away from the latter and was used by the Oregon Legislature when Corvallis was the seat of state government briefly in 1855.

This house is commonly known in the Corvallis area as the Dixon-Caton House, a misnomer attributing the building's construction to William F. Dixon, one of two original land grant donors to the city first known as Marysville.*

This house is on the first of the lots registered in the Benton County Tax Assessor's rolls for the City of Corvallis. It is among the two or three oldest houses in town still on the original site. Levi C. Phillips bought Block 16 and 17 of Dixon's Second Addition plus 23 1/2 acres adjoining on the north from W. F. Dixon, original land grant holder. He paid one thousand dollars. September 5, 1859, Jesse H. Caton, 1843 pioneer from the Bell-fountain area, bought Blocks 16 and 17 Dixon's Second Addition plus 12 acres adjoining on the north. He paid Angenette and Levi C. Phillips (\$3,000) three thousand dollars. It is felt that this increase of two thousand dollars over four years represents the addition of a farmhouse to the property.

Jesse H. Caton was, in the fall of 1846, the first occupant of the area later known as the Belknap Settlement (founded in 1847). He arrived in Oregon via the overland trail in the company of the Applegates, Dr. Marcus Whitman and Col. James Nesmith in 1843, helping to bring the first wagon down from the Blue Mountains. According to legal abstract, in 1859 Jesse Caton bought a residence in Corvallis from Levi Phillips and moved his family there.

Jesse H. Caton, described as "a gentleman of leisure" in the 1860 census, died suddenly in 1863 on a trip to Eastern Oregon. He has sixty-four years of age at his death. He left to his widow, Precious Starr Caton, two boys and two girls, the farm in Belknap Settlement and the house and property of Blocks 16 and 17 Dixon's Second Addition to Corvallis. Precious Starr Caton soon married Silas L. Shedd, whose brother was president of Marshall-Fields in Chicago. Shedd had arrived in Corvallis in 1862 as a teacher and part-time farmer. Precious Starr Shedd died November 2, 1908. The property was then inherited by Ida M. Fortson and Jesse L. Caton, trustee Silas L. Shedd.

On March 29, 1913, Ida M. Fortson and J.L. Caton sold the property (Lots 1, 2, 7, 8,

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one (100 x 99.3')

Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	7	9	4	9	0	4	9	3	1	5	0	1	0	1	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

Lots 1 and 2, Block #16, Dixon's Second Addition to Corvallis

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 Claude N. Jillson

organization Student of architecture
University of Oregon, Architecture and Allied Arts December 1978

(Course title:
street & number 407 G Historic Preservation) telephone (503) 687-9706
236 W. 15th

city or town Eugene state Oregon 97401

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 6, 1979

For HCRS use only

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

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 9.27.79

Attest: *[Signature]*
Chief of Registration

date 9/27/79

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9, 10, Block 16, Dixon's Second Addition). On April 12, 1913, Arna M. Irwin sold Lots 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10 Block 16, and Lots 3 through 12, inclusive, Block 17, Dixon's Second Addition, to J. H. D. Goldson. May 3, 1921, Georgia I. and J. H. D. Goldson sold Lots 5, 6, 11, 12, Block 17, and Lots 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Block 16, Dixon's Second Addition, to Sarah J. Brown. January 17, 1925, Sarah J. Brown sold to Stella Brown Lots 5, 6, 11, 12, Block 17, and Lots 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Block 16, plus the east half of Lots 7 and 8 of Dixon's Second Addition. Stella Brown, a local Corvallis bootlegger, quit claim to her property on February 16, 1937, soon after she married Rudolph Quetschke and left Corvallis. On October 30, 1940, Paul and Marion Gathercoal bought the property for \$800 from the City of Corvallis. Goathercoal is a retired businessman. On November 13, 1944 Paul and Marion Gathercoal sold to Paul's brother Jim Gathercoal and the latter's wife, Cleona, the house and property (Lots 1 and 2, Block 16, Dixon's Second Addition.). Jim Gathercoal, now deceased, was a local architect. He sold the house in 1953 to the present owner, Bob Irwin, head of the Corvallis School of Ballet.

The house has been part of the fabric of the city of Corvallis since the earliest settlement days; its evolutionary development reflects a long history under a number of different owners.

*Research indicates that the only connection that William F. Dixon had with the property was in his capacity as original land grant holder and donor to the city of Marysville.

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Abstract of Title. prepared by Benton County Abstract Company, Corvallis, Oregon
property Paul Gathercoal.

Benton County, Oregon 1860 Census, Index to 1860 Census. Benton County, Oregon.

Enumeration of the Inhabitants of Benton County, 1853. Copied from original records
in the Benton County Courthouse by Mrs. James C. Moore, Winema chapter D.A.R.,
1947.

Fagan, David D. History of Benton County, Oregon. Portland: A. G. Walling, 1895.

Hewitt, Mary and Mary McCauley. Marysville Revisited, a tour of historic houses.
Corvallis, Oregon, 1976.

Martin, Bruce. History of Corvallis. Thesis, University of Oregon, 1938.

Smith, John. Early Corvallis History. Published in the Corvallis Gazette-Times
1939-1959, Corvallis, Oregon.

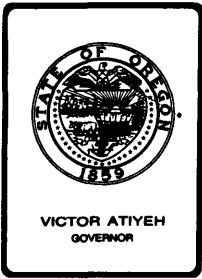
Interviews:

Gathercoal, Paul, 460 SW Jefferson, Corvallis, Oregon, June 14, 1978.

Gathercoal, Marion, 460 SW Jefferson, Corvallis, Oregon, June 13, 1978.

Moore, Harriet, 420 SW 8th, Corvallis, Oregon, June 13, 1978.

Onstad, Preston, 418 NW 13th, Corvallis, Oregon, June 5, 1978.



Ray

Department of Transportation
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Parks and Recreation Branch
525 TRADE STREET S.E., SALEM, OREGON 97310

August 17, 1979

In Reply Refer to
File No.:

Mr. Charles A. Herrington, Acting Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
440 NW G Street
Washington DC 20243

Dear Mr. Herrington:

This concerns the nomination of the Caton (Jesse H.) House, Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon which was forwarded to you on July 16, 1979.

We have discovered an error in the first paragraph of the Statement of Significance.

Because Oregon did ^{not} achieve statehood until 1859, corrections in the last two lines of the paragraph should be made as follows:

...buildings such as the former Territorial Capitol--a Classic Revival structure of the same period as the Caton House. The former was located a few blocks away from the latter and was used by the Legislature when Corvallis was the seat of government in Oregon briefly in 1855.

We will greatly appreciate your reflecting these corrections in the master copy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Walton Potter
Preservation Specialist

EWP:nmw

Attachment