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

<u>1. Nam</u>	<u>e</u>						·	
historic	Sommerville,	Edgar	, House					
and/or common								
2. Loca	tion							
street & number	104 SE Fifth	St.					not for pu	ublication
city, town	Pendleton		vici	nity of	congressiona	l district		2nd
state	Oregon	code	41	county	Umatilla		coc	le 059
3. Clas	sification							
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisitio in process being conside		Status _X_ occupie unoccu work in Accessible _X_ yes: res yes: uni no	pied progress stricted	Present Us agricult comme educati entertai governi industri military	ure rcial onal nment ment	religio	te residence ous tific portation
4. Own	er of Pro	per	ty					
name	Bert and Patr	icia	Arndt					
street & number	104 SE 5th St	•						
city, town	Pendleton		vici	nity of		state	0regon	97801
5. Loca	tion of L	ega	l Desc	riptic	on			
courthouse, regis	try of deeds, etc.	Uma	tilla Coun	ty Courth	house			
city, town		Pen	dleton			state	Oregon	97801
6. Repr	esentatio	on i	n Exis	ting \$	Surveys	3	 	
title	Statewide Inv Historic Prop			as this pro	perty been deter	mined ele	gible?	yes X no
date	1976				federal	_X_ state	e coun	ty local
depository for su	rvey records	Sta	te Histori	c Preserv	vation Offic	e		
city, town		Sal	em			state	0regon	97310

7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SETTING

The Edgar Sommerville House is a well preserved and outstanding example of Queen Anne architecture in Pendleton, Oregon. It was built in 1899 in a fashionable residential area. Edgar Sommerville went outside Pendleton to Baker--100 miles to the south--to obtain the services of contractor Sam Howard. An elaborate version of the vernacular form of Queen Anne style popular in the area at the time was carried out. The local type is characterized by the usual multiplicity of bays and projections, short towers, large porches, dormers, an asymmetrical floor plan, pristine white exteriors, and a noticeable lack of gingerbread.

The Sommerville House was built on the southeast corner of Vincent Street (now SE 5th) and Lewis Street where it jogged north to Water Street (both streets now form SE Byers Avenue). The Water Street-Lewis Street neighborhood extended eastward from the downtown area on past the courthouse along the south bank of the Umatilla River. Most of Pendleton's elite families during the 1880s, 1890s and 1900s built their homes in this neighborhood, and the street became lined with large, fashionably-styled homes. Most of the homes built prior to 1900 were executed in an embellished farmhouse style or the chaste, simplified vernacular form of the Queen Anne. Later homes were more typical of the Colonial Revival, but all were large for Pendleton and endowed with as much fancy finish work as was appropriate and affordable in this rural region.

The Sommerville House was built on the oddly-shaped and unplatted block between Byers and SE Court, SE 5th and SE 6th Streets. The fine old Second Empire courthouse was in full view of the house, as it appears the southwest corner of the block may have been planted in gardens. Photos of the house show a portion of a dark-colored neighboring house or outbuilding but a later photo presents an orchard of small trees with a board sidewalk leading from the south porch to SE Court Street. In any case, several homes were eventually built on the block, including that of Gus Byers, whose flour mill was just across Court Street.

With its large porches and windows, the Sommerville House was oriented to the out-of-doors. Sitting rather in the middle of its present $100 \times 150'$ lot, the house was surrounded by lawns, elderberry bushes and other shrubs, with a rose garden in back. Mrs. Sommerville was noted for her gracious hospitality and entertained frequently. It is interesting to note that one of her specialities was elderberry pies, jams and wine. As of this writing, several elderberry bushes are still part of the foundation planting. SE Byers Avenue was for many years much narrower than it is now and lined with large trees. Private and public plantings gave the neighborhood a park-line character and afforded pleasant views from the large north veranda and attached gazebo.

A small, simple one-story garage was built off the southeast corner of the house in the early 1900s. This outbuilding, with its many-paned doors, has survived to the present and is still used as a garage. An open, detached gazebo in the south garden did not fare so well.

The Arndts, in their recent renovation, remodeled the backyard to make it more useful for their family. A circular swimming pool and surrounding deck were added in the backyard, which was in turn fenced-in with a high, white board fence with an inverted scallop pattern adorning the top edge. The rickety projecting dormer over the back service door was replaced with a striped awning and an arched grape arbor was added, extending southward along the fence from the living room's Palladian windows. All these modifications have been carefully designed to be in keeping with the rest of the house.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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The appearance and status of the immediate neighborhood has changed a fair amount in the last eighty years. The homes on the lots facing Court Street were torn down during the 1930s to make way for automobile dealerships and related businesses. One of the buildings, now occupied by Webb's Tires, forms a 15' high solid wall along the south property line of the Sommerville House. The one-story buildings across Fifth Street are now partially abandoned and constitute an eyesore.

Fortunately, SE Byers Avenue has remained residential, and most of the old homes between SE 4th and SE 8th Streets have survived. The potential for creation of an historic district is strong, since most of the homes remain in sound condition, and several have been restored. Several old homes within a block of the Sommerville House have been converted to apartments, including the neighboring gold brick Queen Anne style Tallman House on the southwest corner of 5th Street and Byers Avenue. The park-like setting for these historic houses has not been retained, however, due to a street-widening project which destroyed all the street trees and now brings concrete and asphalt from property line to property line.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLING

The Sommerville House is not exceptionally large or extravagantly decorated, but it is finished with materials and workmanship of high quality. Nine principal rooms are contained in the compact, two-story arrangement, and the house is devoid of the gingerbread that typified earlier eclectic styles. In form, the Sommerville House is basically a two-story, cruciform gabled farmhouse which has been enfolded in a massive sweeping roof and embellished with verandas, dormers, chimneys, an occasional tower, and an attached gazebo. This vernacular style was employed in a number of fine homes in Umatilla County at the turn of the century; for example, the Temple, Best and Thompson Houses in Pendleton, the Greer House in Weston, and the Koepke House near Athena.

EXTERIOR FEATURES

The Sommerville House is most frequently approached and photographed from the northwest, towards the sweeping roof and circular gazebo, and from the southwest, toward the octagonal tower. Because of this, two facades are usually viewed at any one time, and the gazebo and tower work very effectively to articulate their adjacent facades into a single composition.

From the northwest, the massive roof dominates the scene, sweeping down around the gabled, two-story, north "wing" of the underlying farmhouse to cover the porch and veranda on either side. A gabled dormer projects out over half the kitchen porch on the east, while an eyebrow dormer peers out above the veranda on the west. The roof extends around the north west corner in a hip terminating in a tier of three gabled dormers facing west.

The downward sweep of the roof is punctuated on the corner by the conical roof and classical columns of the attached circular gazebo. The upper floor and faceted roof of the octagonal tower loom out behind the western dormers. The bulbous fleur-de-lis finials atop the gazebo and tower, together with four chimneys, accent the skyline, while the Tuscan columns and simple railings of the porch, veranda and gazebo tie the house down to the black stone foundation.

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From the southwest, the roof is much less apparent and the building masses dominate the view. The octagonal tower, which is the central focus from this direction, extends upward from a basement study, for a little more than two stories. The tower is neither squat nor attenuated and is capped by a straight-forward octagonal-faceted, pitched roof. The tower is also not the highest architectural form in the house, that distinction being held by the topmost west dormer and its chimney.

The tower functions as a three-windowed bay for the parlor and one upstairs bedroom. The large windows and octagonal form give the tower somewhat the character of a "blockhouse" set out on the corner to guard the home. The facets of the tower also serve to carry the eye around the corner of the house to view the south and west facades as a single unit.

The tower is flanked on the left by the tier of west dormers and the sweep of the roof down to the anchoring circular gazebo. The lowermost dormer projects above the front entrance and the western extension of the veranda that wraps around the northwest corner of the house. To the right the tower is flanked by the gabled, two-story, south "wing" of the internal farmhouse. Beyond this prominent element, to the east, the roof once again breaks through, sweeping down to cover the south porch, at one time screened. A hipped-roof dormer projects out above the porch from the second story to provide light to the bathroom.

The service wing on the east end of the house is only seen when approaching from the east and appears to have been an after-thought, tacked on at the last minute and never integrated into the rest of the composition. The east facade is dominated by the wide, gabled, two-story east "wing" of the farmhouse onto which was added a narrower, single-story gabled laundry room on a slightly lower level. On top of this form was placed a sun room with a balcony and curved, Chinese-style gabled roof. A gabled dormer (since removed) was cantilevered out rather far over the rear service entrance. The whole arrangement is quite clumsy, even though the sun room is a rather unique and enjoyable feature. Documentation is lacking as to why this all came to be, but it appears the eastern, gabled end was designed as a point for further expansion, should the home need to be enlarged in the future. The laundry and sun room may have been added later or only intended for short-term use.

The exterior of the house was originally finished totally in white, except for the black masonry units of the basement. Naturally-weathered cedar shakes covered the roof, and approval has been obtained to re-roof the house in the same material. Natural-finish shakes were used in the gable-end pents that were found at the base of all the gables except the east end. Painted shingles in an irregular dentil pattern were applied to the wall surface of the second story and the ends of all the gables. The first story was sheathed in "drop" siding. The upper story and gable ends acquired a cream-colored paint in latter years, and the Arndts have elaborated the later scheme in the current exterior color treatment.

The windows are all double-sashed, with flat board casings and no hoods. They are found singly in the tower and service areas and in pairs in the second story of the gabled "wings" and bathroom dormers. Unusual, squared-off Palladian windows light the living room and dining room, and in the half-loops at their upper corners provide the only carpentergothic ornamentation of the house.

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For the porches, a simple Tuscan-style structural scheme was chosen. The columns, spaced widely apart, are tapered and plain, with unadorned capitals and unenriched bases. These columns support a plain entablature under the roofline, with a flat frieze and simply-molded, projecting cornice. The railings, suspended between the columns, curve around the veranda and gazebo to conform with the edge of the roof. The bal usters are all simple dowling, and the rail is a sturdy, molded affair that curves upward before attaching into the columns. The two porches and both ends of the veranda are all two bays wide. The gazebo is basically a circular extension of the veranda, with matching columns and railing and a three-quarter circular bench.

The plain entablature of the veranda and porches continues around all but the east end of the building as a wide, flat running board with a small, molded "cornice." The upper story walls flare out slightly just above the cornice. A smaller version of this running board extends around the second story of the tower at the top of the windows. Plain entablatures with wide cornices are also found around the tops of the tower and north and south gabled "wings."

The gables on the house are all steeply-pitched with simple detailing. There are molded cornice rakeboards and, against the shingled gabled ends, are wide, flat vergeboards. Sloping, shingled pent eaves form the base of most gables.

The four brick chimneys serving the house are tall, square, and slender. Towards the top, each has long, narrow recesses on each face, and the cap itself is shaped much like a ziggurat. All the chimneys serve interior stoves, rather than fireplaces.

The basement foundations of the house were built of blocks of irregular-cut black basalt. The stones are grouted and smooth-finished on the exterior. A wide, heavily-molded baseboard defines the boundary between the foundation and ground floor, continuing in a simple form around the edge of the porches and veranda.

The six staircases from the gardens to the porches and veranda were built of concrete rather than matching stone as was found in other area houses. These stairs are wide and deep, with two-step sidewalls, perfect for flower pots.

Simplicity of adornment, complexity of forms, and well-balanced design--these are the outstanding characteristics of the Sommerville House.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan--In proper Queen Anne tradition, the floor plan of the Sommerville House is both irregular and functional. The arrangement of rooms inside is expressed by the exterior forms. The major living rooms occupy the prominent gabled areas on the north and south facades. Bedrooms also fit neatly into these forms, and the octagonal tower contains a series of three rooms, in tiers, one above the other. The verandas mold around the house providing outdoor living areas or service porches, directly accessible from the individual rooms on the main floor.

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The family living area occupies the western two-thirds of the house and is neatly arranged around the main staircase and entrance foyer. From the main entrance facing 5th Street, one passes through the foyer directly to the three main living rooms--the fancy parlor in the octagonal tower, the family's living room in the south gable, and the dining room in the north gable. The living room and parlor face south through a number of large windows to take advantage of the winter sun and view of the garden. Retreat from the summer's heat was offered by the gazebo and large, shady veranda that curved around the northwest corner of the house. On a summer's evening or winter's day, the south-facing screened porch opening off the living room offered the opportunity to enjoy the out-of-doors without mosquite or gusty winds. For today's convenience, a powder room was installed by the Arndts in the closet beneath the staircase on the main floor.

The main staircase, lighted by a window on the landing and the eyebrow dormer high above provided access to the three family bedrooms and bath on the second floor. The bedrooms occupied the upper portions of the octagonal tower and north and south gables. The bathroom sported a hipped dormer of its own. Walk-in closets were tucked away under the roof.

The Arndts joined the two bedrooms in the tower and south gable and transformed a closet into a small vanity bathroom to create a pleasant master bedroom suite. The bathroom, having undergone severe remodeling over the years, was also modernized. This area and the kitchen/pantry/laundry are the only portions of the house that are significantly altered from the original condition.

The eastern one-third of the Sommerville House was designed as the servants' domain. The kitchen and pantry areas and adjoining laundry wing occupied the main floor, and narrow staircases led down to the root cellar and up to the maid's bedroom, tucked under the eaves on the north side of the house. A large gabled porch opened northward off the kitchen, and the pantry had access to the screened porch on the south. A pass-through was provided directly from the kitchen to the dining room, while the maid entered through her pantry, a room designed for serving and the storage of china, linen, etc.

This portion of the house was remodeled by the Arndts to make it more useful and function all given the technology of today. The pantry assumed the food storage function that is more common today and was modified to house the laundry as well. The laundry room became a sunny family room/breakfast nook, with new sliding glass doors opening onto the pool and pation the Arndts installed in the back yard. The wall between the kitchen and family room was also removed, leaving the rooms separated only by a short flight of stairs. The door between the pantry and dining room was moved a few feet to create direct access between the dining room and kitchen. All of these alterations have made the house more livable without detractifrom its historic character.

INTERIOR STYLING

In keeping with the chaste exterior detailing, the interior of the Sommerville House was finished in a restrained manner. Although we have no knowledge of the original interior furnish ings, carpet, draperies or even wallpaper patterns, the overall design concept has been unaltered over the years. The wood paneling found in many other fine houses of the era was noticeably lacking as well as beveled and stained glass window treatments; rather, walls

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were papered and trimmed with wood moldings around the baseboards, ceilings, windows, and doors. The moldings were of simple design and stained rather than painted to bring out the reddish color of the redwood (or red fir). Large paneled wood sliding doors were provided between several of the main living rooms. Large-paned double hung windows flooded the house with light. A beautiful spindle staircase and rounded plaster moldings on the ceiling of the parlor accented this simple interior finishing scheme.

The woodwork in the house was all fashioned out of redwood (or red fir), and a common molded design motif was used. The picture molding across the upper walls was a small double-bead pattern. The casings placed around the doors and windows were about 6" wide with rounded edges and a raised, curved center section. While base blocks were plain and flat, corner blocks featured a molded rosette pattern. The 12" baseboards were molded only in the top 4". The window sill consisted of a matching molded "cornice." All but one of the single doors, both within the house and leading to the outside, feature glazed transoms and a raised-center panel motif. The beautiful natural-stained double-sliding doors also display raised-center panels.

The main staircase ascends to the second floor directly from the partially open entrance hall. The staircase begins with two steps up to a lighted landing. The principal flight continuing on up to a second landing and thence to an open all-balcony around the stairwell of the second floor. The bal ustrade consists of a series of spindles with square upper and lower shafts separated by a tapering turned section in the middle. Nine closely-spaced bands encircle the middle of the turned shafts. The ballisters are arranged in sets of four on the staircase itself and on each side of the main newel post. The upper newel posts are simple square pillars with an urn-like turned-wood ornament on top. The main newel post features boxed panel sections above and below the semi-open spindle arrangement. A brass coachlight once adorned the top of the main newel post.

The original wallpaper was covered up by the Drake family in the 1940s or '50s. They used a series of florid designs featuring large patterns of trees, tropical birds and flowers. A mural of palm trees and tropical vegetation was applied to one wall of the dining room. The Arndts covered over unsettling and out-of-scale series of designs with more appropriate traditional stripes and small floral patterns in pastel colors. A bright and cherry flower-and-vegetable print was used in the totally remodeled kitchen/family room. The bathroom, which was completely gutted and rebuilt, is the one departure from subdued period designs, featuring a red, footed bathtub and a silver, black and red decor.

The plaster work in the tower parlor is a simple molded pattern that was applied around the edge of the ceiling and in an anaglypta for the lighting fixture in the center of the room. Even here, the ornamentation was simple.

Interesting interior appointments are found in the little sun room on the east end of the second floor. The entire room is paneled in plain, flat sheets of reddish wood, and a series of curved supporting beams are left exposed in the ceiling. The whole arrangement seems to reflect a Chinese influence, perhaps derived from the McComas House a block away on SE Byers Avenue.

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A variety of interior appointments have not survived through the years. All the ornate cast iron radiators, for example, were destroyed by freezing when the last tenants abandoned the house during the winter. No trace remains of the original cabinets, lighting fixtures, or wall coverings. One strange cut and etched glass overhead fixture was found, but it is uncertain if it was put in by the Sommervilles or later tenants. In their redecorating of the house, the Arndts attempted to recreate the proper feeling within the house to reflect its age and exterior. While the decor may be more light and livable than a Victorian interior, it has been well executed and blends well with the overall design of the house. From the etched glass chandelier in the dining room to the antique stoves in the kitchen to the new powder room under the stairs, all is in character.

In their recent restoring of the Sommerville House, the Arndts made several alterations to make the house more functional for this day and age. All the alterations, which are listed below, have been carefully executed to blend in with the rest of the house.

- 1) Powder room developed out of a closet beneath the staircase.
- 2) Kitchen/family room developed out of the old kitchen and laundry.
- 3) Vanity bathroom created in a closet in the master bedroom.
- 4) Removal of an interior wall between the south and tower bedrooms to create a master bedroom suite.
- 5) On-going finishing work in the basement.
- 6) Replacement of the cantilevered dormer over the laundry room service entrance with an awning.
- 7) Placement of a sliding glass door in the south wall of the old laundry room (faces the pool and backyard patio).
- 8) Construction of an arbor, patio, swimming pool and fence in part of the backyard.
- 9) Renovation of the bathroom.

8. Significance

Period

prehistoric

Specific dates

	mmerce engineering exploration industry invention	music /settlement philosophy politics/governm	humanitarian theater nent transportation other (specify)
1500–1599 agr 1600–1699X arc	cheology-historic conservation riculture economics chitecture education	literature military	science sculpture social/

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

archeology-prehistoric community planning

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Builder/Architect Howard Brothers, Baker, Oregon, Contractors

landscape architecture

The two story house with basement built for Edgar Sommerville in a fashionable residential neighborhood east of the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton in 1899 is significant as the preeminent example of Queen Anne architecture in Pendleton. Because it is the most flamboyant house of its vintage in the city, it is among Pendleton's best-known landmarks. It is associated with pharmacist, County Commissioner and Umatilla Indian Agent Edgar J. ("Doc") Sommerville, a colorful figure, who resided in the house from the time of its completion to his death in 1932. The house occupies a prominent corner of the "S" curve on Byers Avenue (originally Water Street), where it is a focal point visually as well as a catalyst of interest in possible designation of a Water Street Historic District.

Edgar J. Sommerville (1848-1932) was a native of Edgar County, Illinois. As a boy of five, he crossed the plains to Oregon with his father, Alex Sommerville, in 1853. The elder Sommerville settled his family on a claim hear Harrisburg in the Willamette Valley. Edgar Sommerville, trained as a pharmacist, came to Eastern Oregon in 1879. He formed a partnership with Col. J. H. Raley, and the two operated a drug store together in Pendleton. In these days, Sommerville earned his nickname "Doc." In 1882 he married Clementine Cornoyer, daughter of Umatilla Indian Agent Narcisse A. Cornoyer. Clementine (b. 1852) had been raised on her grandfather's farm on the Willamette River near St. Paul and received her education at the convent at St. Paul and, after her father moved to Eastern Oregon, at St. Vincent's Academy in Walla Walla, which was run by the Sisters of Providence. The couple represented a demographic trend of the times in which the offspring of early pioneers left claims in the Willamette Valley to find fortune in Eastern Oregon. At the height of his career, Edgar Sommerville was perhaps the most influential lay member of the Catholic Church in Umatilla County, which had a predominantly Protestant population.

In time, Sommerville was appointed agent at the Umatilla Agency east of Pendleton. He served in that capacity about four years. He also was Umatilla County Commissioner and a member of the Pendleton City Council. While holding such respectable posts, "Doc" Sommerville also displayed a taste for the unusual and the adventurous. His elegant stature and long-flowing auburn hair set him apart from other men, physically. He invested heavily in silver mines and gadded about the region, checking on his investments and exploring new ones. He was a good friend of such notables as Sheriff Til Taylor as well as his business partner Col. J. H. Raley.

In August 1890 the Sommervilles took up a homestead near Cold Springs north of Pendleton, but they did not leave their Pendleton home. The land was farmed by one of their three daughters and a son-in-law, and passed to a grandson, David A. Lindberg. Following Sommerin 1932, the widow Clementine stayed on in the Pendleton house until her own demise in 1939. The estate was left to the daughters: Esther, Sydney, and Evelyn (Mrs. Arthur W. Lindberg, mother of David Lindberg). In 1940 the house passed from the family's hands to Lee Drake, co-publisher of the Pendleton East Oregonian, who resided in the house for some years. The property changed hands a number of times thereafter and was occupied and indifferently maintained by tenants before it was acquired by the present owners in 1974 In the middle of winter, 1968, tenants abandoned the house, leaving the plumbing and heating

9. Majo	or Bibliographica	al References		_
Shiach, Wm.	An Illustrated History of 902), p. 177.	Umatilla County and o	of Morrow County (Spokane:	W.H.
Lockley, Fre		ations of the Journal regonian (Nov. 21, 197	Man," <u>Oregon Journal</u> (Oct. 74) p. 1, 7.	3, 19
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List all states	and counties for properties over	lapping state or county bo	undaries	
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state	code	county	code	1.5
11. For	m Prepared By			
name/title	Steve Randolph			
organization		date	January 24, 1980	
street & number	Star Route Box 850	telephone	503/276-7111	***************************************
city or town	Pendleton	state	Oregon 97801	
12. Sta	te Historic Pres	ervation Offic	er Certification	
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665), I hereby nor according to the	d State Historic Preservation Officer minate this property for inclusion in to criteria and procedures set forth by to eservation Officer signature?	the National Register and certif	fy that it has been evaluated	
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4 Keeper of the N	lational Register			
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systems to freeze and burst. The present owners began restoration immediately upon taking possession, and most of the work was completed by 1977. The Arndts' efforts were well-publicized, and the Sommerville House came to be featured in historic house tours and as a backdrop for local theatrical production promotion, etc. Mr. Arndt presently runs his investment business from "Doc" Sommerville's old office in the basement of the octagonal corner tower.

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Lindberg, Mrs. David. "Turrets, Fireplaces, Fancy Woodwork, Grace Summerville's Pendleton Home," <u>Pioneer Trails of Umatilla County</u>. Vol. 1, No. 4 (March 1977), p. 20-21. Interviews and family memorabilia, David Lindberg family, Cold Springs Highway, Pendleton, Oregon, January 1980. Edgar Sommerville was grandfather of David Lindberg.

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The legal description for Tax Lot 2700 in Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon, is as follows:

Commencing at a point on SE 5th Street, formerly Vincent Street, in the City of Pendleton, 100' north of the NE corner of SE 5th Street and SE Court Avenue, formerly Vincent and Court Streets, in the City of Pendleton, also being described as being a point of intersection with the easterly produced south line of Block 10 in the Original Town of Pendleton; thence easterly along the north line of James Jones' property, lying between the City of Pendleton and Jacob's Addition thereto, 150'; thence northerly 100' to the south line of SE Byers Avenue, formerly Lewis Street, of LaDow's Addition in the City of Pendleton; thence westerly 150' to the east line of SE 5th Street; thence southerly along the east line of SE 5th Street, 100' to the place of beginning, all being in SW ½, SW ½, Section 2, T2N, R32E, of the Willamette Meridian, in the County of Umatilla and State of Oregon.