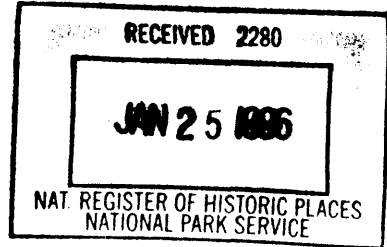


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dorris, Benjamin Franklin, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 707 East 17th Avenue not for publication n/a

city or town Eugene vicinity n/a

state Oregon code OR county Lane code 039 zip code 97401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Sam Harris

Signature of certifying official / title DSHPO
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date January 5, 1996

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

for
Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action
2/29/96

Entered in the
National Register

Dorris, Benjamin Franklin, House
Name of Property

Lane County, Oregon
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, with cast stone veneer

walls wood: (first floor) weatherboard
(second floor) decorative shingles

roof asphalt: composition shingles

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1871-1911

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

Dorris, Benjamin Franklin

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Dorris, Benjamin Franklin, House
Name of Property

Lane County, Oregon
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Oregon Collection, University of Oregon,
Knight Library, Eugene, OR

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .153 acre

Eugene East, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 493530 4876260
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David W. Skilton

organization State Historic Preservation Office date July 15, 1995

street & number 1115 Commercial Street NE telephone 503/378-5001, ext. 260

city or town Salem state OR zip code 97310-1001

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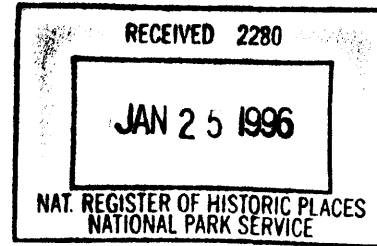
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Section 7 Page 1



Introduction

The Benjamin Franklin Dorris house is a two story structure in the Italianate style. However, it should be noted at the outset that this building was enlarged and remodelled several times during the period of significance, moved to its present location in 1911, and has been slightly altered since then. It originally occupied the northwest corner at 5th Avenue and Pearl Street, in what is now downtown Eugene. In the earliest visual record so far uncovered, a panoramic photograph of ca. 1870, the house appears as a simple, gabled story-and-a-half structure with a shed-roofed addition across the north end. This addition extends past the western edge of the gabled mass by eighteen feet, creating an overall L-shaped plan. A tall window is discernable in the photo, centered in the north gable.

Later historic panoramic photographs, taken from nearby Skinner Butte, reveal that the major addition of a full second floor took place ca. 1885, some time after a single story wing had been added to the west side of the house within the crook of the "L". The photographs, as well as Sanborn Insurance Company maps of 1890, 1895, and 1902, show the house originally facing east onto Pearl Street. Several outbuildings are also visible on the property in the later photographs

The property was sold by Benjamin Franklin Dorris, its owner and resident for forty years, on September 19, 1911, and the house was moved to make way for the yards of the newly created Oregon Electric Railway. The building reappears on its current site, facing south onto 17th Avenue at the northeast corner of the intersection with Hilyard Street, on a 1912 Sanborn map. On this new site the single story, shed-roofed section which had been attached to the north elevation of the house was left off the building, probably owing to the relative narrowness of the lot. At the same time, the front porch was extended to wrap around the east (formerly north side) masking this removal. Another modest porch was added on the west elevation. These changes were carried out to match the existing Italianate styling of the building.

Two apparently unrelated, one story building parts of undetermined age and origin were

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also attached at the rear of the house to provide a new kitchen and woodshed. Many houses in this neighborhood provided boarding for students and faculty at the nearby University of Oregon, and these latter additions may have been meant to accommodate this sort of use. Although the west porch and the added part of the wrap around front porch have been slightly enlarged and enclosed, the current footprint of the house substantially matches that of the 1912 Sanborn map.

Because the physical orientation of this building now differs by ninety degrees from that at its original site, all references to compass directions in the following discussion will refer to the existing configuration unless otherwise noted.

Exterior:

The two story section of the Benjamin Franklin Dorris house is L-shaped in plan. The two legs of this "L" are twenty-two feet wide (main body of house) and eighteen feet wide (north wing) respectively, and together they would fit into a rectangle thirty feet (east-west) by forty feet (north-south), with the common corner falling at the southeast. This part of the building has a hipped roof with a pitch of 7.5 in 12. The overall footprint of the house covers approximately 2000 square feet, and the upper floor adds another 770 square feet.

The roof of the wider main body of the house originally had a flat metal-clad central section pierced by a central corbelled chimney. Two other chimneys are also visible in photographs from the late nineteenth century, and evidence of their exact locations may be discernable in the underside of the roof structure. The central chimney and fireplaces, which were near collapse, were demolished in 1990, and the flat roof section was capped by a new hipped rooflet. These changes are reversible, and there is ample evidence of the previous configuration.

The main roof rests above a twelve inch wide frieze board and regularly spaced, foliate jig-sawn brackets. The cornice, built up of several milled moldings, was designed to enclose an internal gutter system of metal, which may still be intact. These systems, briefly in vogue in the late nineteenth century, were prone to clogging and leaking, and this one was

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probably abandoned and roofed over in situ. Any remaining metalwork is of special interest in this case, however, because Benjamin Franklin Dorris was himself a tinsmith by trade, and would likely have installed the guttering or supervised the work directly. The original shingle roof layer has been removed, but the skip-sheathing is intact under layers of new plywood, tar paper, and asphalt composition shingles.

The exterior walls of the oldest lower story section of the house are of double plank construction, and where still exposed to the weather are clad with lapped horizontal, half inch by ten inch weatherboards of full rectangular section. All of the lumber in this construction is sash-sawn. The surviving intermediate addition, an eighteen foot square, single story wing, is also of double plank construction, but is built of circularly-sawn lumber, and is clad with true, tapered clapboards. The upper floor system, second story walls, and roof are all of frame construction dating from the 1880's. The upper walls are clad in alternating belts of scalloped (four courses per belt) and squared (two courses per belt) decorative shingle work. The uppermost belt consists of two courses of scalloped shingles. At the juncture between stories, the shingles are flared out, overlapping a water-table built up out of several milled moldings. The entire house is painted a cream white. Historic photos indicate that the body of the house was always painted a light color.

Eleven double-hung, one-over-one windows (six feet tall and two feet, six inches wide) light the second floor, two on the south elevation, three on the east (one replaced with fixed glass), four (mounted as two pairs) on the two sections of the west elevation, and one each on the two sections of the north elevation. They are trimmed with simple one inch by four inch board surrounds at the head and sides, with no apron piece under the sills. The head trim does not reach to the frieze. There is a shallow-roofed bay window at the west end of the first story, detailed with milled moldings in an Italianate style. It is composed of four windows exactly like those on the upper story. Other downstairs windows, two extant opening to the front porch and two removed, formerly opening onto the west porch, are/were also similar, and clearly date to the time of the second story addition. Patches in the plank wall construction indicate that at least the two front windows replaced wider, shorter ones. The oldest section of front porch, centered on the door, may predate the 1880's remodelling, although its current details are from that period.

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The 1912 kitchen and woodshed additions at the back of the house form a U-shaped plan when combined with the "L" of the original house. They are both of balloon frame construction and they are clad with different styles of novelty ship-lap siding. The woodshed is taller than the kitchen and its roof is hipped at the west end and gabled at the east, suggesting that the latter may have been attached to another building in an earlier use. The kitchen roof is a shed sloping north, and is awkwardly attached to the main body of the house in the middle of the flared water table shingles. This suggests that the roof was not added at this site, but arrived with the salvaged building part. The origins of these two added pieces are unknown, but they do not appear to have come from a common source, nor from the original site of the house on Pearl Street. There is a porch, filling in the "U" between the combined house parts, which shows on the 1912 Sanborn map. It has since been enclosed, while the wall separating it from the dining room has been opened.

At its original site the house probably rested on fieldstone piers, and was likely skirted with vertical boarding to the soil. After moving, it was provided with its current brick foundation, which is faced on the outside with solid "cast stone" blocks. Variations in the underfloor structure clearly indicates the stages in which the house was enlarged. (For roof plans of house over time, see appendix to this section.)

The original building (I) was a simple rectangle, twenty-two feet by thirty feet, carried on hand hewn six inch by twelve inch perimeter sills with mortise and tenon joints at the corners. A central hewn girder halves the twenty-two foot span. The two inch thick, sash-sawn floor joists in this section mostly have a waney lower edge, and they vary in depth. The sill beams are crudely notched to receive and level these joists, which are covered in turn by a layer of waney edged, one inch thick subflooring, and a finish flooring of fully sawn one inch by ten inch boards. A later layer of one inch by four inch tongue-and-groove flooring tops these.

Outline marks in the attic of the wrap around porch indicate that a shed roofed room (II) visible in the earliest extant photographs, was added on to the original structure. No physical evidence has been uncovered to indicate that its undercarriage was integrated with the existing sill system, further strengthening the supposition that it was an addition.

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When an eighteen foot by eighteen foot addition (III) was made to the house, plank construction was again used for the walls, but the undercarriage was made up of two sawn twelve inch by twelve inch beams supporting two inch by ten inch joists. The perimeter joists are doubled. Along the edge where this new room was attached to the existing house, the twelve inch by twelve inch beam was placed below the original hewn sill, creating the new floor level one step below the older one. The roof of this addition was removed in a subsequent remodeling and has not been documented, although some physical evidence may exist in the existing structure. It was probably a gable form, as shown.

As noted above, the final changes to the building on its original site consisted of the addition of a full second floor (IV) as well as extensive remodeling downstairs. The kitchen (V), woodshed (VI), porch extension (VII), and west-side porch (VIII) were added in 1912 to accommodate the building to a new use and site.

Interior:

The age of the oldest part of this building was documented when a page from the New York Times, dated May 6, 1857, was discovered behind wallpaper on the original downstairs plank walls. Unfortunately this discovery was made during the removal of all the lath and plaster finishes inside the house. However, much of the woodwork from the period of significance survives, including windows, some trims, casings, and the staircase. The fir floors have been rehabilitated, and much of the original window glass is intact.

The configuration of the rooms in the Benjamin Franklin Dorris house went through a series of changes and additions which parallels those to the building's massing. The original rectangular floor plan was divided in two by a central fireplace and chimney. The front door appears to be in its original location, centered on the principal elevation and opening into the space between the front wall and the side of the fireplace. The area to the left upon entry was originally subdivided by a plank wall into two unequally sized rooms, perhaps a parlor and a bedroom. The smaller room was at the back. The remains of a board, set on edge between the floor boards to anchor this wall, is still visible running

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the full width of the floor, suggesting that these two rooms did not communicate directly with each other. The rooms appear to have been opened up into a single large living room, and the bay window added, during the last remodelling undertaken by the Dorris family, ca. 1885. Several new doors from this room to the rest of the house were also opened at this time.

The room to the right of the entry appears to have served as the earliest kitchen. It has only one window at present, opening to the front porch. Evidence of another opening, symmetrically placed on the opposite wall, was partially uncovered during the removal of lath and plaster in 1990. It lies behind the existing staircase, which dates from the ca. 1885 alterations. Typically a steep winding staircase, as well as a door to the small bedroom mentioned above, would have occupied the space between the fireplace mass and the back wall. A very old door still intact in the end wall of this room in 1990 (but subsequently removed) would originally have served the one story shed-roofed section of the house which was lost in the move to the current site. An archway in the northerly half of this wall (now filled in) had eliminated any evidence of other original openings prior to the 1990 investigation.

The existing stairs rise from east to west along the back wall of the living room, and reach the second floor via a ninety degree winding turn to the left. At some point, probably after 1911, the staircase was altered at the third step up into a landing with three short runs of steps descending to different areas of the downstairs. The original steps are intact under this landing, and there is a closet under the west end of the staircase.

The second story of the house is spatially more intact than the first. Arriving at the head of the stairs one is facing south onto an east-west hallway near the inside crook of the L-shaped floor plan. This hall gives efficient access to four bedrooms, and a bathroom at its east end. The doors to the two forward bedrooms are skewed forty-five degrees, giving more space to the hall. All the bedrooms have built in closets.

The original spatial configuration of the second addition, which probably dates from the mid 1870's, is unknown. It is currently subdivided into a dining room on the west and a

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bathroom on the east. The raised bathroom floor and its wall system seem to be of later construction, but also appear to predate the move to the current site, which suggests that this may originally have been one large room. There is also physical evidence in the remnants of the wall which originally separated this room from the west porch of two tall windows symmetrically flanking a centered door. Another bathroom, probably dating from the time of the move to this site, is built into the back end of the wrap-around porch. All the bathroom fixtures and plumbing in the house date to the 1990 interior remodelling work.

The kitchen addition of 1912, discussed above, is attached to the back of the second addition. The door between the two rooms originally opened onto a large covered back porch which shows only on the 1902 Sanborn map. An exterior door now opens at the back of the kitchen, directly opposite the doorway to the rest of the house. There is one window, over the sink in the east wall. All the cabinetwork was replaced in 1990, but some original wainscoting and a stove chimney which rises at a slant up the south wall (to avoid a second story window) were saved.

The woodshed room opens off the enclosed west porch via a small intermediate anteroom. It is tall and has been divided horizontally with a loft. It also contains a small toilet room under the loft at the east end. There is a door in the north wall, and two windows, one above the other, in the west wall. A very old, hand made six pane window sash was removed from the uppermost of these openings by a previous owner, for safe keeping. It is not stored on site.

Siting:

The Benjamin Franklin Dorris House today stands on a somewhat narrower lot than it originally occupied. As a consequence it stands closer to a lot line on its east, while a small apartment at the north of the lot diminishes the space at its rear. The building's orientation is also now to south while it originally faced east. However, the house is still situated on a corner lot in the same position relative to the streets, and the current setbacks from 17th Avenue and Hilyard Street are comparable to those on the original site.

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These changes took place during Benjamin Franklin Dorris's lifetime, and it is the preparer's opinion that were he or the members of his family able to visit the property today, they would undoubtedly recognize it as their former home.

While relocation of this house to a new residential neighborhood might seem unfortunate from a historic contextual point of view, it should be borne in mind that the original context was being extinguished during the period of significance. It should be noted as well that the part of Eugene where the house is now located, the West University Neighborhood, contains many late nineteenth century houses which were moved there from the environs of the expanding downtown in the early years of the twentieth century. Among these houses is another Italianate structure once owned by George Byron Dorris, Benjamin Franklin Dorris's younger brother. The salvaging and moving of houses in Eugene during the early decades of this century is in fact an interesting historic phenomenon which should be considered positively in the evaluation of the moved historic resources in this neighborhood.

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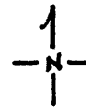
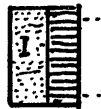
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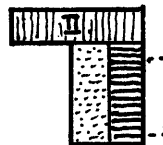
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Appendix: Roof Plans

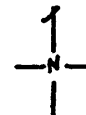
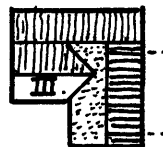
ca. 1860



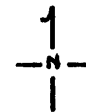
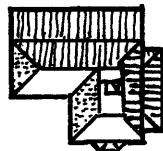
ca. 1865



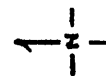
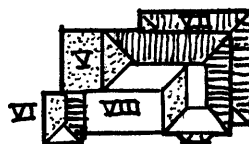
ca. 1875



ca 1885



1912



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DORRIS, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, HOUSE (1871-1911)
707 E Seventeenth Avenue
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon

COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The house built for Benjamin Franklin Dorris in Eugene, Oregon is significant under Criterion B as the building most immediately associated with a leading member of a family which rose to prominence in local affairs. Benjamin Dorris (1829-1915) is best remembered for his role as first president of the Union University Association, which was organized in 1872 to establish at Eugene a state university in fulfillment of the Federal land grant authorized by the Donation Land Law of 1850 and the act of Congress admitting Oregon to the Union of States in 1859. Dorris's identification with the cause of the University of Oregon was pivotal. Not only did he arrange financing through public subscription and serve many years (to 1882) on the board of regents, on being elected to the State Legislature in 1878, he sought and achieved needed legislative support for the newly opened university. The University played a defining role in Eugene's growth and development once financial stability was provided by Henry Villard's major endowment in 1880s.

The core of the Benjamin Dorris house was standing in 1871 as a single-story gable-roofed building of plank, or box construction clad with weatherboards. Dorris entered it with his wife of 14 years, the former Cecile Pellet, just as his long association with the University of Oregon was about to unfold. Having arrived in Eugene from Crescent City in 1868, Dorris had set himself up in the tinsmithing and hardware trade, which he had learned as an apprentice in Tennessee. The original site of the house was at the northwest corner of 5th Avenue and Pearl Street, close to the Eugene central business district. Dorris enlarged and remodeled the house significantly in 1885 by adding a second story. It was at this time the house took on its essential character as a two-story, foursquare, hip-roofed volume in the Italian bracketed style. Within a year or two of these changes, Dorris was to launch a new business career as a real estate and insurance agent and would begin his long tenure of 22 years as City Recorder. Before the remodeling, Dorris had served two consecutive three-year terms as Mayor of Eugene.

In 1911, Dorris, a widower whose eight children were grown, sold his house of 40 years, as it was to be displaced by the yards of the Oregon Electric Railway. The house was moved by its new owner some 16 or 17 blocks to the southeast, where it was placed at the northeast corner of the intersection of East Seventeenth Avenue and Hilyard Street in what is now known as the West University Neighborhood. In its new setting, facing south onto Seventeenth, and further

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enlarged and modified, the house for years has helped fulfill the demand for multi-family housing that is common to university towns having large student populations. The transformation of the building footprint as a result of the relocation was recorded in a Sanborn fire insurance rating map of 1912. At this point, the following had occurred. 1) The front porch was extended to wrap around the east elevation in replacement of an old shed addition which was not moved from the first site. 2) A smaller porch was added to the west, or Hilyard Street front. 3) Two buildings were attached to the north, or rear, side to house a new kitchen and woodshed. Also, the house had been placed on a brick foundation faced with cast stone. In later years, the porches were enclosed and enlarged slightly, and when the central chimney and fireplaces were removed in 1990, the flat section of the hip roof was crowned with a subordinate hip. On the interior, circulation was adjusted for access to the attachments. Lath and plaster wall finish was removed, but early woodwork remains in the form of door and window frames, window sash, other trim elements, a staircase, and fir flooring. The building is turned at a 90° angle from its original, east-facing orientation, but it retains a street corner relationship which was common to the original setting.

To test whether the building meets Criteria Exception B, relative to the normal exclusion of relocated buildings, the preparer carefully diagnosed the building's evolution, identifying alterations early and late, and drawing attention to an abandoned metal-lined gutter system built into the cornice which he believes the erstwhile hardware man Benjamin Dorris himself is likely to have supervised. In addition to the hip roof, hallmarks of the Italianate style evident on the principal building exterior are the cornice, with its scroll-sawn brackets and wide frieze, second story siding of imbricated shingles having alternating bands of square and scalloped butts and a flared base, elongated second story windows with double-hung wood sash, and a bracketed, single story polygonal window bay that is almost certainly of stock millwork. The conclusion to be drawn is that the core volume continues to express its character as realized by 1885. It is not subsumed, but is distinguishable from its attachments and likely would be recognized by its original occupant.

It is the State's opinion, and that of the City of Eugene, a local government certified for expanded participation in the preservation program, that the Criteria Exception is satisfied and the property meets registration requirements for association with historic individuals. In Eugene, as elsewhere, relocating serviceable buildings in the path of larger development was the norm in the years surrounding the turn of the century. Since Benjamin Dorris occupied the house throughout most of his life in Eugene, there are no other properties in town more directly associated with him. Even Deady Hall, the original building on the University of Oregon campus which Dorris worked to build, does not embody his contributions as Eugene mayor and long-time recorder.

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Summary

The Benjamin Franklin Dorris house, although moved from its original site, is the surviving structure most significantly associated with this historic Eugene citizen. An early tinsmith and hardware merchant, Benjamin Franklin Dorris (1829-1915) was active in Eugene city government for forty years. He also took a central role in securing the siting of the University of Oregon in Eugene, an event which has profoundly effected the subsequent development of the city and the state. With the exception of the three years following his arrival in Eugene, and the four years between its sale and his death, this house was his residence. He and his wife, Cecile Pellet Dorris, raised eight children here, owning, occupying and enlarging the house over the period from 1871 to 1911. Several of their children also went on to distinguish themselves locally, in business, agriculture, politics, and the arts.

The gradual evolution of this house over time, from a simple vernacular home to a high style residence, is evident in its very fabric. The structure has already yielded many interesting insights into its owners' lives, and the times during which they occupied it, and it is likely to yield more. Although the house was moved from its original location in 1911, this action occurred within Benjamin Franklin Dorris's lifetime and as a direct result of his actions. It furthermore bears witness to a widespread historic practice in early twentieth century Eugene, that of recycling houses which were being displaced by development.

Benjamin Franklin Dorris

Samuel and Susanna Dorris met and were married in Nashville, Tennessee, where Benjamin Franklin Dorris, their oldest son, was born on December 18, 1829. Their families had earlier immigrated to the area from Maryland and North Carolina respectively. Ben attended school in Nashville until 1843, when he entered into apprenticeship as a tinsmith. In 1852, at the age of 22, he decided to try his luck in the newly opened gold fields of the west. Sailing for Panama from New York City on the steamship "Ohio" on July 5, he survived an epidemic of cholera which killed 250 of his 1400 fellow travellers, crossed the

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isthmus, took passage on the "Columbia", and arrived in San Francisco on August 14. During 1853 he briefly tried his hand at mining in southern Oregon, but decided that tinsmithing offered him better prospects. After a second brief sojourn in San Francisco, he settled in the port town of Crescent City, California, a few miles south of the Oregon border. On June 16, 1857, he was married there, to Miss Cecile Pellet, a twenty-four year old immigrant woman who had arrived in America from Neufchatel, Switzerland, a few years earlier.

The Dorrises resided in Crescent City until 1868, when Ben's younger brother George Byron Dorris, a lawyer, who had moved to Eugene City several years earlier, convinced them of the greater opportunities to be had there. The family, by this time with four children, moved north, probably lodging with George and his wife, Emma Hoffman Dorris, upon their arrival. The newcomers wasted no time in reestablishing their business. A surviving printed handbill advertisement prepared by Dorris proclaims:

"Eugene City, _____, 1869, M_____, Having located in Eugene City, I wish to call your attention to my stock of goods... It is a well established maxim in domestic economy that the best article is always the cheapest. Being a practical mechanic and manufacturing all my ware, especially my stove furniture, and using none but the best material, I will warrant the best articles that can be purchased in the county, and for less money than has heretofore been charged for articles greatly inferior both in point of workmanship and quality of materials used... B. F. Dorris, West Side, Willamette Street, in the stand formerly occupied by Messers. Walton & Son."

On May 4, 1871, a deed recorded with Lane County described the sale of the property at the northwest corner of 5th Avenue and Pearl Street by E. S. and Maria Applegate to B. F. Dorris. As was customary, no reference is made to a house in the deed. However, a ca. 1870 panoramic photograph of Eugene clearly shows a simple, gabled story-and-a-half house on the lot. The property is also fully fenced and it is planted with what appears to

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be a maturing orchard, an indication of a well established home. This parcel of land, Lot 1 in Block A of Eugene Skinner's original plat of the city, was among those that he donated to Lane County as part of the bargain which secured Eugene City as the county seat. Prior to the Applegates (1864-1871), the property had been owned by Byron J. Pengra (1859-1864), and James and Arena Wallace (1855-1859). It is as yet undetermined which of these owners built the house.

Both of the Dorris brothers took an active role in the civic life of their adopted home town, although George, a Democrat, a lawyer, and a speculator in land, was more embroiled politically than his brother. Ben, who was a Republican, appears to have been of a more practical and mild temperament. He was first elected to the Eugene City Council in 1871, and at about the same time joined with a group of his fellow citizens who were trying to establish a high school in town. At one of their meetings, in the summer of 1872, it was mentioned that the Legislative Assembly was reviving its dormant efforts to establish a state college, and that groups in the cities of Albany, Salem, and Independence had already submitted bids to obtain it. In a memoir from his old age, Benjamin Franklin Dorris remembered that the idea of the high school was dropped from the agenda without ceremony and that the Union University Association was formed on the spot. He was elected its first president, and for the next ten years his life was focused primarily on efforts to locate and secure the University of Oregon in Eugene.

At first the venture met with a spectacular string of successes, winning out over the other towns and acquiring seed funding from both the state and county governments. In the summer of 1873, however, with the building now known as Deady Hall already under construction on the new campus, the Lane County Commissioners withdrew their financial support, threatening the project with ruin. The regents, including Dorris, rallied, deciding to appeal directly to local residents for help and contributions. The strategy proved a workable and successful one, but so many small gifts were made in labor and in kind that the regents' office had to act as a sort of central exchange in order to convert the hodgepodge of donations into cash and usable building materials.

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In the autumn of 1873, Dorris, who had already been awarded a contract to provide a metal roof for the grand new building, scraped together enough materials to do the work without payment, in order to avoid rain and frost damage to the half-finished structure. The new University did manage to open its doors the following year, but it continued in a financial limbo until the spring of 1877, when millionaire railroad magnate Henry Villard rescued the institution with a huge endowment, setting it firmly on its feet. Benjamin Franklin Dorris continued to serve as a regent until 1882, and he was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives for a term in 1878, where his principal efforts were on behalf of the fledgling college. In 1885 he personally constructed and sealed the copper box which served as the time capsule in the cornerstone of Villard Hall, the second building on the University campus. When it was opened one hundred years later, his business card was among the articles found inside.

This was also the period during which Benjamin Franklin Dorris was first elected to city wide office. He served several two year terms as mayor of Eugene (1875-1877 and 1879-1881), and in 1887 was elected City Recorder. He was subsequently re-elected to this position ten consecutive times, retiring at age eighty in 1909 after twenty-two years in the office.

Dorris was also continuously active in the International Order of Odd Fellows during his adult life, twice representing the combined Oregon lodges at national convocations, in 1875 at Indianapolis, and in 1876 at Philadelphia. At his death he had been a member of the Eugene lodge for 53 years.

In 1886 Dorris sold his tinsmithing and hardware business and began selling insurance and dealing in real estate instead. At about this time the family home also underwent the dramatic remodelling into the Italianate form which it presents today. Pearl Street had developed from a dirt lane at the outskirts of town into a highly fashionable neighborhood, and the Dorris family exemplifies this transformation perfectly. Benjamin Franklin Dorris had made the transition from a skilled tradesman and concerned citizen to a respected city father.

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In 1900 the Dorrises sold their home at the corner of 5th and Pearl to Mrs. Dorris's sister, Marie Gruebler of Switzerland, renting it back from her as part of a complicated property exchange. Cecile Pellet Dorris died in 1906 and her sister passed away four years later. Late in 1910 Ben purchased the house back from Mrs. Gruebler's heirs, and in the following year he again sold the property, this time to the newly formed Oregon Electric Railway Company which needed space for its trainyards. The house was removed to its current site and Dorris himself moved several doors up Pearl Street, boarding at No. 334 for the remainder of his life.

Benjamin Franklin Dorris remained active in retirement. He wrote his memoir about the founding of the University of Oregon and continued to serve as the secretary of the Eugene Odd Fellows lodge. The *Eugene Daily Guard* of Thursday, November 11, 1915 recorded his passing.

"Death came as he had always wished, it is stated. He went to his work this morning in the best of health. At 11:15 a. m., the janitor at the White Temple building saw Mr. Dorris sitting in his chair at his desk, with his hat on the floor, and his head bent forward. Further investigation revealed that Mr. Dorris was dead."

Benjamin Franklin and Cecile Pellet Dorris are buried in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Block 3, Lot 7, R. F. Scott's Addition to Eugene, Oregon, as recorded in Lane County, Oregon, Records.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated area is a platted city lot.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Gayle and Larry Hescoc

street & number P. O. Box 1156 telephone 503/923-0152

city or town Crooked River Ranch state OR zip code 97760

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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Information for items 1 through 5 is the same for all photos, and it cited in the first entry.

Photo 1

1. Benjamin Franklin Dorris House
2. Lane County, Oregon
3. July 22, 1995
4. David Skilton, 1115 Commercial St NE, Salem, OR 97310-1001
5. View of house in context, looking northeast.
6. 1 of 14

Photo 2

5. South elevation.
6. 2 of 14

Photo 3

5. West elevation.
6. 3 of 14

Photo 4

5. West elevation and part of north elevation, looking east-southeast.
6. 4 of 14

Photo 5

5. North elevation and part of west elevation, looking south-southeast.
6. 5 of 14

Photo 6

5. East elevation and part of north elevation, looking west-southwest.
6. 6 of 14

Photo 7

5. East porch entablature, corner detail, looking southwest.
6. 7 of 14

Photo 8

5. Bay window, west elevation, looking northeast.
6. 8 of 14

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Photo 9

5. Bay window, west elevation; entablature detail, looking northeast.
6. 9 of 14

Photo 10

5. Southwest corner, decorative shingle and entablature details, looking up and northeast.
6. 10 of 14

Photo 11

5. Water table at transition between floors, west elevation at "L" , (ca 1860 weatherboards, corner board, and frieze board below, ca 1885 decorative shingles above), looking east.
6. 11 of 14

Photo 12

5. Ca. 1860 corner detail, southwest corner, looking northeast.
6. 12 of 14

Photo 13

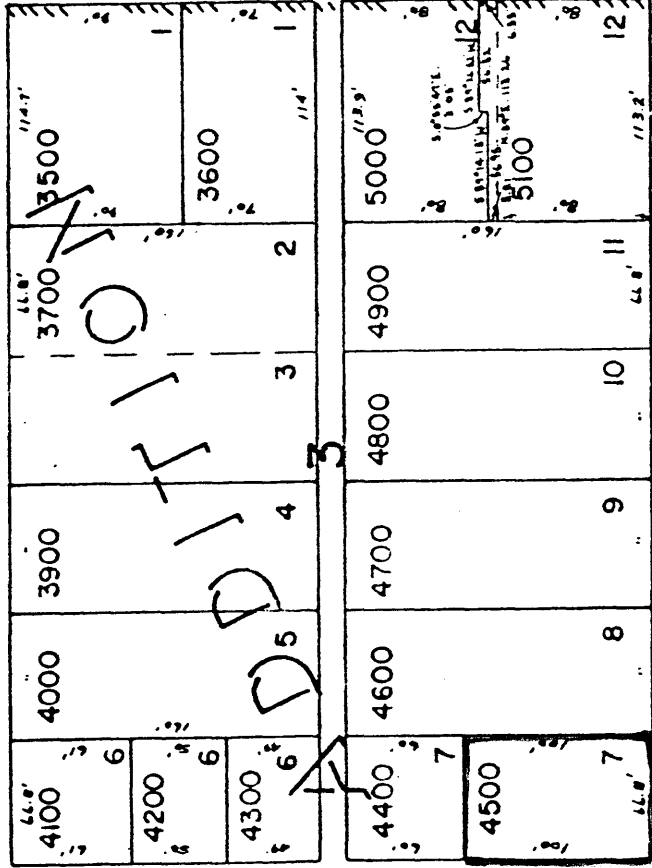
5. Late twentieth century door in mid nineteenth century opening, main entry, south elevation.
6. 13 of 14

Photo 14

5. Typical second floor window trim detail, south elevation.
6. 14 of 14

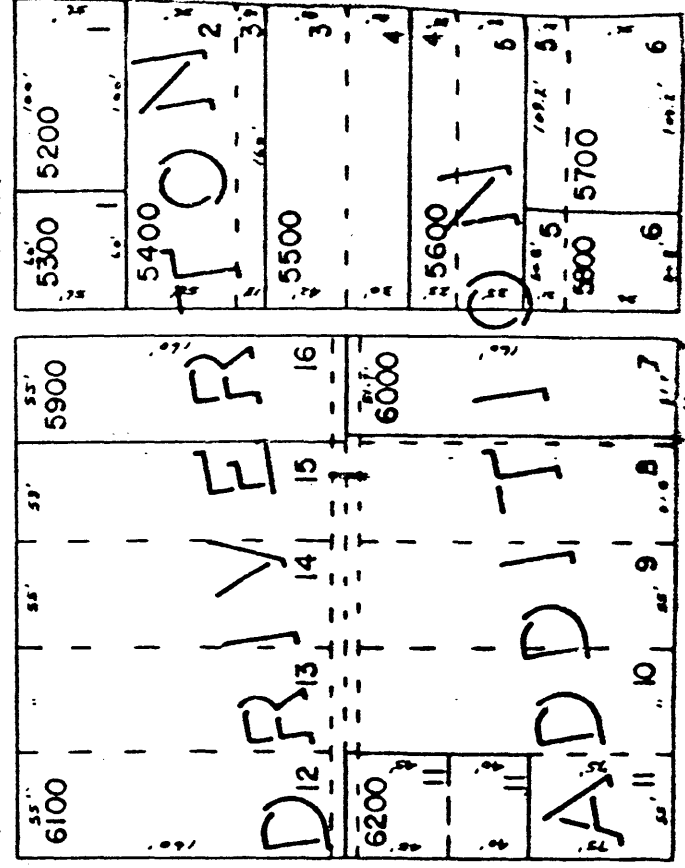
See Map 17 O:

16 th AVENUE



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17 th AVENUE



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