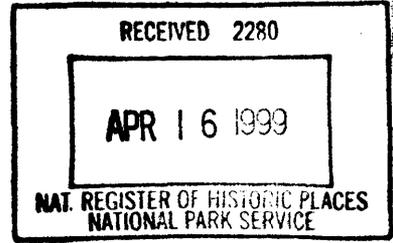


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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Dayton Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication ___
city or town Dayton vicinity ___
state Washington code WA county Columbia code 013
zip code 99328

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.)

[Signature] 4/5/99
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Edson H. Beall 5/31/99

other (explain): _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Downtown Dayton Historic District
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>29</u>	<u>13</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> total

Name of related multiple property listing
NA

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 3

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Business</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
	<u>Courthouse</u>
	<u>Rail-related</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
<u>RECREATION & CULTURE</u>	<u>Business</u>
	<u>Courthouse</u>
	<u>Museum</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK, STONE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other STUCCO

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

X 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.

X 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

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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

AGRICULTURE

TRANSPORTATION

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1880 - 1949

Significant Dates 1887
1899

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

W.H. Burrows, John Nash

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

Downtown Dayton Historic District
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9. Major Bibliographical References

(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: Dayton Historical Depot Society, Dayton Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—
	— See continuation sheet.					

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 Florence K. Lentz, based on information submitted by Dayton Historical Commission, for
organization Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation date December, 1998
street & number 107 E. 17th Ave. telephone 509-925-3944
city or town Ellensburg state WA zip code 98926

Downtown Dayton Historic District
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Additional Documentation

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Downtown Dayton is a four-block-long business district situated in the small farming community of Dayton, Washington. Dayton was founded in 1871 as an agricultural service center catering to the needs of farmers and ranchers in the rich Walla Walla wheat region of southeastern Washington. Dayton's downtown is a mix of late 19th-century and early 20th-century brick commercial buildings ranging in date from 1880 to 1949. Of primary importance are the 1881 Dayton Depot and the 1887 Columbia County Courthouse, both listed individually in the National Register. The district boundaries encompass about two-thirds of the small downtown core, and contain 42 buildings, 29 of which are considered contributing.

Natural Setting

Dayton lies at the heart of the earliest agricultural region on the Columbia Plateau. Rolling dune-like hills, high plateaus, and deep vegetated canyons characterize the topography. The town is surrounded by wheatfields. In their shifting cycles of cultivation, these hillside fields form a distinctive pattern of brown, green, and gold visible from most vantage points in town. To the southeast not ten miles distant lie the forested Blue Mountains.

Dayton was founded in 1871 on bottomland at the confluence of Patit Creek and the Touchet River, a moderately-sized stream prone to flooding in the spring. The Touchet flows into town in a northwesterly direction from its source in the Blue Mountains, then winds to the west. The town evolved on both sides of the river, connected by a bridge on Main Street which marks the highway entrance into downtown. Residential neighborhoods grew up on both sides of Main Street. The earliest platted additions are filled with handsome brick and wood-frame homes of the 1870s, '80s, and 90s. Two of Dayton's residential districts are already listed in the National Register.

Dayton has not experienced significant sprawl. The value of the surrounding land, and the lack of other growth industry in town, has resulted in considerable integrity of its edges, both

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of the town as a whole, and of the four-block-long business district. Only along the primary highway entrance into town from the southwest, from Walla Walla and Waitsburg, have agriculture-related businesses appeared.

Architectural Character

The development of downtown Dayton was typical of agricultural towns that rapidly took shape across the most fertile inland regions of the Pacific Northwest in the prosperous decades of the 1870s and 1880s. Three to four blocks of wood-frame, false-fronted commercial buildings lined Main Street during its first ten years. In the early 1880s, however, a series of fires destroyed individual structures and blocks of structures. Rebuilding occurred quickly with local brick from A.J. Dexter's brick manufactory, lumber from the town's planing mill, and iron from the local Columbia Iron Works.

Over the next two decades, the wealth of the region was expressed in Dayton's exuberant commercial architecture. The new business blocks included many two and three-story brick buildings with the vertical proportions, ornate roofline detailing, and cast iron storefronts fashionable in the late 19th century. The predominant style was Italianate, although there were also examples of Second Empire and Stick/Eastlake. Historic photos show that even the single-story brick buildings were enlivened with unusually elaborate parapet detailing. In the 1890s, elaborate Italianate cornices gave way to fanciful corbelled brick detailing above storefronts, around upper-story windows, and along parapets. Some of the more substantial buildings of this period were designed by local architects W.H. Burrows and John Nash.

Pivotal buildings erected in the 1880s and 1890s included the Columbia County Courthouse, the Guernsey-Sturdevant Building, the Day Building, the Hotel Dayton, the Lockwood Building, Weinhard Hall, the Odd Fellows Building (now demolished), and the Dayton Depot (moved downtown in 1899 from its original location across the river).

In the first two decades of the 20th century, construction of new commercial buildings downtown slowed considerably. Modest one-story and a few two-story masonry structures filled in vacant lots and replaced older wood-frame structures. These buildings continued the traditional Main Street formula in their facade and storefront design. Few buildings

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expressed pure architectural styles as such, although some facades were influenced by the Romanesque, Colonial, and Mission Revivals. Images from the period show a graded Main Street (paved by 1915), cast iron street lamps with triple globes, and multiple canvas storefront awnings. Early-day autos angle-parked up to extra wide concrete sidewalks.

Historic photos reveal virtually no new construction and few substantive changes to existing buildings from 1920 through the early 1940s. The impact of the automobile, however, became ever more visible. Main Street was paved and, by removal of the parking strips, widened to allow four lanes of traffic and parallel parking on either side. To better light the highway, tall cobra lamps replaced the old pedestrian-scaled, cast-iron light standards. Neon signage appeared at second-story and parapet levels to more effectively attract the passing motorist.

After World War Two, but still within the historic period, a Ford dealership and Shell gas station went in at the corner of First and Main. This sleek new structure in the Art Moderne style was the first to alter the traditional streetscape of downtown Dayton with a set-back from the sidewalk. Two more new buildings in a spare post-war style went up, replacing older brick structures. These were the Criss Furniture and Suffield's Furniture stores.

Today, the Downtown Dayton Historic District consists largely of the same stock of late 19th and early 20th century buildings. The preponderance of these date from the decade of the 1880s. Character-defining features from the historic period include the alignment of buildings with zero-setback along Main Street, rooflines with stepped parapets and corbelled brickwork, the rhythm and pattern of vertically-proportioned windows at the second-story level, exposed brick masonry and stucco facades, and storefronts with traditional configurations of bulkhead, recessed entry, display windows, and transoms. The overall character of the district still strongly reflects a small but prosperous, turn-of-the-century agricultural center.

Changes that have occurred since 1950 have, to some degree, eroded the ambiance of the district. The most serious of these include: the removal of upper stories from the Hotel Dayton, the loss of nearly one-half of Weinhard Hall to fire, the recent construction of a free-standing bank at the corner of Second and Main, and complete exterior remodels of part of the Day Block (now State Farm and Croft's Floral Shoppe) and part of the old Edwards-

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Hindle mercantile (now Sterling Savings). Other modifications include some incompatible storefront and street facade cover-ups.

In recent years, a number of these inappropriate alterations have been reversed, as property owners seek to recapture the historic character of downtown Dayton. These rehabilitation efforts range from full-scale, accurate restorations, to replacement of badly altered storefronts with new but compatible fabric. The carefully-executed restorations of the Dayton Depot and the Columbia County Courthouse together served as the catalysts for these projects.

Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

Contributing Features Contributing features are those that were present during downtown Dayton's period of significance (1880 through 1949), relate to its documented significance - in areas of commerce, agriculture, transportation, and/or government - and retain historic integrity. Buildings altered prior to 1950 may be considered contributing. Numbers correspond to those on the accompanying sketch map. Beginning at the lower end of Main Street on the northwest side:

1. **151 - 153 E. Main**

Day's Original Plat - B13, L(f)10
c. 1905

A single-story brick masonry building with corner pilasters, recessed brick panel and sawtooth coursing along the roofline. Original storefront configuration with recessed double entrance. Most storefront fabric and finishes replaced.

First appears on a 1909 Sanborn Insurance Co. map as a barber shop and office.

2. **157 E. Main**

Day's Original Plat - B13, L(f)10
c. 1905

A single-story brick masonry building with layers of ornate corbelled brickwork along stepped parapet. Storefront configuration intact, but most fabric and finishes replaced.

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Robinson Harness & Saddle Shop in business here from 1907 through 1940. Appears on a 1909 Sanborn map at one-half its present depth, with an attached wood-frame harness repair shop at rear. By 1916, brick masonry structure doubled in depth, with detached wood-frame auto repair shop at rear along alley.

4. **Dusenberry & Stencil Building 179 E. Main**

Day's Original Plat - B13, L9
1880

Designed by Dayton architect W.H. Burrows. A two-story brick masonry building with Italianate detailing. Cast iron columns, multi-paned second story sash with label moldings, and intact entry to second story. An ornate, projecting cornice at the parapet removed prior to 1950. Storefront altered after 1950.

Touted as Dayton's "first modern brick" building. Appears in 1884 birdseye view of Dayton. Sanborn maps through 1891 show first floor businesses as general merchandise, books and stationery, a barber shop, and a restaurant, with a hall and rooms on the second story. Local traditions holds that the outlaw Tracy once wintered here. From 1909 on, Sanborn maps indicate a "repository" for agricultural implements, wagons, and autos, and a second story lodge hall. Businesses associated with the building over time were Dusenberry & Stencil, Gilmour Hardware, and Dingles Hardware. An American Legion Post met upstairs in the late 1940s.

5. **179 E. Main**

Day's Original Plat - B13, L8
c.1905, remodelled c.1930

A one-story brick building with a distinctive stepped parapet with contrasting cream and dark red brick. A traditional storefront with a full width span of vertical transom windows around both street facades. Double recessed entries, display windows, and bulkheads retain early configuration and original fabric.

Stands on the site of Dayton's first hostelry, the Columbia Hotel. It burned between 1884 and 1888, and was replaced with a one-story frame building. A 1909 Sanborn map shows a single-story brick building of similar proportions in place. Prater & Rinehart Hardware and

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Implements occupied it during this period. Another fire gutted the building in the late 1920s, and its roof and parapet were rebuilt to their present-day appearance.

6. 112 N. First

Day's Original Plat - B18, L12

c. 1895

A one-story brick building with narrow, segmental-arched windows and doors, corbelling along the parapet, and one garage opening with a modern, roll-top door.

First appears on a 1909 Sanborn map as a one-story addition to the Day Block which fronted on Main Street. The office of Dr. E.H. VanPatten, whose name appears on the door, and an auto garage shared the space. By 1943, the building housed one shop, one office, and a small garage.

8. Day Block 211 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B18, L11-12

1882

A two-story brick masonry building with a stucco finish, and five remnant round-arched windows at the upper floor. Original cornice and parapet detail removed and cast-iron storefront covered up prior to 1950.

The two-story remnant of one-half of the Day Block, an anchor structure in downtown Dayton. Levi Ankeny and associates of Dayton and Portland founded the Columbia National Bank in 1883. Sanborn maps from 1884 through 1943 show the Columbia National Bank (and later banks) as the principal occupant of the corner storefront. Historic photos show the original Italianate-styled brick building with eleven handsome round-arched windows, cast-iron storefronts, bullseye windows on the First Street side, and a bold projecting cornice at the roofline.

This half of the building housed general merchandise and later a hardware store. The second story contained professional offices accessed from the surviving sidewalk entry. By the late 1940s, this portion of the building had been stuccoed, and stripped of its elaborate cornice. The ground floor was in use as a Pontiac garage, and the storefront had plate glass windows.

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9. Guernsey-Sturdevant Building 217 - 225 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B18, 10-11
1882

A two-story, Italianate-styled, brick masonry building with an elaborate wood cornice, formal window surrounds, and intact cast-iron and wood storefronts. Facade stuccoed and cornice removed by 1950. Carefully restored in the late 1980s based upon historic photos, and returned to retail and residential use. Individually listed in the National Register in 1993.

Built by banker D.C. Guernsey, and attorney R.M. Sturdevant, in the prosperous decade of the 1880s. Two or three retail storefronts housed a variety of commercial businesses over the years, including a saloon, billiards hall, candy store, grocery, dry goods and notions, farm implements, and hardware. Offices and furnished rooms occupied the second story - primary access from the sidewalk remains.

10. Weinhard Building 229 - 235 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B18, L10
1890

A two-story brick building recently converted for use as a fine hotel and restaurant. Approximately one-half of the building burned down after 1950, and this vacant lot now serves as the hotel parking lot. Distinctive brick coursing and corbelling remains at the upper story level. Storefront remodeled somewhat earlier with new brick and plate glass.

German immigrant Jacob Weinhard moved to Dayton in 1880 and established Jacob Weinhard's Brewery on Front Street, now demolished. This building, which first appears on Sanborn maps in 1891, operated as a large saloon and billiard hall on the ground floor, and as a lodge hall on the second story. Sanborn maps for 1916 show the hall had been greatly expanded to the rear.

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The oldest surviving train station in Washington, built in 1881 by the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company in its quest to connect the fertile wheatlands of the Walla Walla region to Portland. Listed in the National Register in 1974.

15. Day Building 112 N. Second

Day and Mustard Plat - B31, L1

c. 1925

Mission Revival-styled, single-story stuccoed office building with simple wood detailing.

Built by and for Dr. W.W. Day, the third generation of pioneer Dayton physicians of that name. The first W.W. Day arrived in 1872, practiced medicine until his death, and was succeeded by his son C.H. Day. Earlier locations of the family practice in second-story offices on Main Street.

18. Dantzscher Building 309 E. Main

Day and Mustard Plat - B31, L11

c.1895

A two-story brick structure with segmental-arched second story windows. Stucco finish applied, and Italianate cornice removed, prior to 1950. Distinctive wooden storefront elements intact, but partially covered up.

The former location of Joy's Hall, a gable-roofed wood-frame building with a meeting hall upstairs. It may be this frame building that appears on Sanborn maps as early as 1888, housing Dantzscher's tailor and millinery shop, a drug store, and lodgings on the second floor. Brick structure in place by 1896. By 1909, the tailor shop became the local telephone company office, and remained so into the 1940s.

19. Columbia County Courthouse 341 E. Main

Day and Mustard Plat - B31, CH

1887

Designed by Dayton architect W.H. Burrows. A two and one-half story, stuccoed brick, Italianate building with a 22-foot lantern with louvered windows, bellcast Mansard roof, and iron cresting. Distinctive features include rusticated base, quoins, paired segmental arch windows, and pediment statuary.

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The oldest working courthouse in Washington. Columbia County was chartered in 1875, carved out of Walla Walla County. The "courthouse square," 8 lots donated by J.N. Day, appears as such (still undeveloped) on 1884 Sanborn maps. Construction funds were voted by the citizenry in 1886. Courthouse listed in the National Register in 1975. Exterior and interior were carefully restored with private and public funds in 1990-'91.

20. Suffield's Furniture 362 E. Main

Day and Mustard Plat - B30, L6
c.1945

A spare, Moderne-styled, single-story building with 1940s detail. Stucco finish, suspended canopy, angular recessed entryway. Original painted and neon wall signage.

Built on the site of the former Alta Hotel, a two-story brick building dating to c.1900. It housed Suffield's Furniture store and the local Power & Light Co. on the ground floor. New furniture store reflected wartime and post-war boom. Store remains in business.

21. Columbia Chronicle Building 358 E. Main

Day and Mustard Plat - B30, L5
c.1908

A narrow masonry building, single-story, with a raised basement. Faint suggestions of Romanesque Revival, including a street facade of rusticated concrete block. Distinctive fenestration, recessed entrance up granite steps. "Columbia Chronicle" in relief on parapet.

The "Columbia Chronicle" was founded in 1878, with R.M Burke as editor. Over the years the newspaper consolidated with others, including the "Columbia County Dispatch," founded in 1903. By 1928, the "Dayton Chronicle-Dispatch" was the only newspaper in the county. This building first appears in the 1909 Sanborn maps with a printing press in place. It remains in use today as the "Dayton Chronicle" building.

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29. 250 - 254 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B19, L5
c. 1900

A single-story brick building with pressed metal cornice and finials intact. Storefronts covered-up with wood shakes and vertical barn wood. Early photos show two decorative pediments atop the parapet. Both had been removed by 1950.

Grocery, drug store, and restaurant businesses occupied the two retail spaces from 1909 into 1960s. Additions to the rear housed bake house and warehouse uses.

30. 242 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B19, L4
1890

A simple, single-story masonry building with stuccoed, three-panel facade above an altered storefront. Transom windows covered up.

Building appears on 1889 Sanborn map as "being built." By 1891 a concrete tin shop had been appended to the rear, later serving as a restaurant, and storage area. The storefront variously housed a hardware, general merchandise, drug, barber, and billiards businesses.

31. 238 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B19, L4
c. 1895

A narrow masonry building with dignified, faintly Romanesque-styled details including rusticated granite piers and voussoirs surrounding a segmental-arched transom. Original wood framed window and entrance with granite steps intact. Historic photos show an ornate, prominent pediment - now removed - perched atop the parapet.

Designed as a office, and appearing as such on Sanborn maps for 1896 through 1943. May have been built for J.L. Wallace. Serving as the offices of Wallace Abstract for several decades into the 1960s.

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The first-story remnant of one-half of the Day Block, an anchor structure in downtown Dayton. The corner space housed the Columbia National Bank, and the two other storefronts drugs, paints, and general merchandise. The second story housed offices. Historic photos show the full brick, Italianate-styled building with eleven handsome round-arched windows, cast-iron storefronts, bullseye windows on the First Street side, and a bold projecting cornice at the roofline. By about 1920, the corner three bays housing the bank had been remodeled with a stucco finish, Neo-Classical-classical columns, and a more restrained cornice.

13. 257 E. Main

Day's Original Plat - B18, L7
1898, remodeled in 1952

A single-story brick masonry building, radically remodeled in 1952, now housing Sterling Savings Bank.

One-half of a larger structure that includes the building next door (see #12 under Contributing Features above), the whole was built by Jacob Weinhard on the site of a former frog pond. The larger building served as the general merchandise store of Edwards and Hindle Co. This portion was covered over with marblecrete in 1952 for the Broughton National Bank. Painted wall signage at rear reads "Edwards-Hindle Department Store."

16. 303-305 E. Main

Day and Mustard Plat - B31 L12
c.1963

A modest, single-story bank/office building with International Style features, including marblecrete finishes, modular glass and metal panels, and a serrated roofline.

Built on the site of early wood-frame buildings which variously housed an auction house and second-hand store, a harness shop, a cafe, a shooting gallery, a Chinese restaurant, a cobbler shop, and a barber shop. In the 1940s, these were all removed and replaced by a small, hut-style gas station. Newly constructed in 1963, the building houses insurance and attorneys' offices.

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8. Statement of Significance

Downtown Dayton, Washington, is significant as a reminder of the promise of late 19th and early 20th century agriculture on the southeastern Columbia Plateau. The town of Dayton emerged in the 1870s as a prosperous agricultural service center. Stimulated by the enormous success of regional dry-land wheat farming, by its designation as the seat of Columbia County in 1875, and by the arrival of the railroad in 1881, Dayton flourished as the hub of local commerce. Through the first half of the 20th century, downtown Dayton continued to grow and adapt in response to changing patterns of agriculture, transportation, and government. The Downtown Dayton Historic District illustrates these changes in tangible ways. As a whole, the district represents the physical evolution of the heart of a small community, sustained by agriculture for over 130 years.

Exploration and Settlement

Prior to formation of a town, the fertile valley of the Touchet River is said to have been a crossroads and summer gathering place for indigenous peoples. These included bands of Walla Walla, Cayuse and Palouse Indians and, to a lesser extent, Nez Perce and Umatilla. Indian trails from four directions crossed the Touchet River near the present-day railroad bridge. Here on common grounds, native inhabitants gathered to hunt, socialize, and race ponies along what is now Main Street.

The first Euro-Americans to pass through the valley were Lewis and Clark who, on their return trip in 1806, camped a few miles up Patit Creek from the future townsite of Dayton. The trail led near what is now Dayton's Main Street, up the course of the Patit, and dropped down into the Tucannon River valley. Lewis and Clark are said to have named the Touchet River "White Stallion" in honor of the beautiful white horse presented to them a few days earlier by a Walla Walla chieftain.

Trappers, missionaries, and military men passed through the area over the next fifty years, as the struggle for control of the vast Oregon country progressed. By the time of the Yakima

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Dayton Established as an Agricultural Service Center: 1870s

At this strategic location on the Touchet River, settler Jesse Day envisioned a full-fledged town to serve the region's growing population of farmers and ranchers. There was need for a commercial center, and not a better location for miles around.

Jesse Day had a townsite surveyed, changed the post office name to Dayton, and waited for a year for people to come. When nobody came, Day conferred with S.M. Waite, whose mill enterprises had jump-started the nearby community of Waitsburg. Waite offered to build a flouring mill in Dayton in exchange for certain incentives in the way of land and water power. To that end, Jesse Day donated five acres of land, a mill site along the banks of the Touchet River, and one block each for residences for Waite and his partner, William Matzger.

Within a few short years, resource-based industries had raised confidence in the future of the town, and attracted newcomers. Construction of the flouring mill spurred the first burst of local development. Jesse and his wife Elizabeth Day formally recorded the plat of Dayton at the courthouse in Walla Walla on November 23, 1871. The new townsite encompassed some 20 square blocks on both sides of the Touchet, extending from Spring Street to Patit Streets, and from Second to Willow Streets. The sale of lots for business purposes on Main Street boomed. The following spring, Waite and Matzger erected a planing mill, and soon a third industry, the Dayton Woolen Mills, was introduced. By the fall of 1872, Dayton's population had swelled to 500.

Through the 1870s, Dayton remained a strategic transportation link within the region - regular six-horse stage coach service connected Dayton with Walla Walla and Lewiston. By the end of the decade, the newly-formed Oregon Railway and Navigation Company had planned a program of railroad construction into the fertile wheat belt to the north and east of Walla Walla.

Dayton's future as a government center was assured in 1875, when Columbia County, along with what is now Garfield and Asotin Counties, was separated from Walla Walla County. Dayton served as the temporary county seat, a distinction which was then confirmed by

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general election in 1876. Two years later, Dayton was formally incorporated and a city hall constructed. Over the course of ten years, the town's social and political institutions took root. Newspapers, a library, churches, and fraternal lodges were established. The town gained fire protection and a telegraph service.

By the end of that energetic first decade, Dayton boasted a population of 800. Five additions had been made to the original townsite before the close of the 1870s. Besides the three mills, there were two large hotels, a handful of brick business blocks, and a predominantly wood-frame commercial district that stretched along three blocks of Main Street from Front to Third Streets.

Although no buildings within the historic district survive from this initial decade of construction, the grid pattern, the street names, the orientation of downtown to the Touchet River bridge crossing, are all the direct result of Jesse Day's original plat of 1871.

Decades of Prosperity: 1880s - 1890s

Agriculture on the southwest Columbia Plateau was transformed in the early 1880s by the arrival of the railroad to remote farming centers. This event energized the economy of the entire region. Like the communities of Walla Walla, Waitsburg, and Pomeroy, Dayton flourished in the 1880s and 1890s. Dayton's historic downtown is a direct result of its most prosperous decade, the 1880s, and is inextricably linked to developments in both transportation and agriculture during that time period.

Prior to existence of the railroad, local farmers in the wheat districts northeast of Walla Walla had hauled their grain harvest overland to steamboat landings on the Snake River. The river lay 2000 feet below the uplands, and was accessed by tortuous, rugged trails down steep tributary canyons. From there, the grain was shipped to the Columbia River, around several portages, downstream to Portland, and hence to England, California, and the East. In May of 1880, an official of the O.R.&N. Co. visited Dayton and announced the company's plans for linking the wheat country more directly to Portland by rail. The first phase would include an extension of the line from Walla Walla to Grange City on the Snake River. A short branch line would be built into Dayton, if citizens would donate the right-of-way and a depot site.

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these in a stripped-down Art Moderne mode. The late 1940s marked the very beginnings of a trend toward updating the street facades of the old brick buildings with sleek, plain-surfaced sidings and "modern" storefronts. As in small downtowns across America, the decade of the 1950s would see an accelerated loss of architectural integrity in downtown Dayton.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 35A Name of Property Downtown Dayton Historic District
County and State Columbia County, WA

UTM:

- A) 11 / 424750 5130040
- B) 11 / 424830 5129920
- C) 11 / 424650 5129820
- D) 11 / 424580 5129930

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Downtown Dayton Historic District

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Photograph Captions

Downtown Dayton Historic District

Columbia County, Washington

Photographer: Jack Williams

October, 1998

Negatives on file: Dayton Historical Depot Society, Dayton, WA.

- Photo A: Streetscape, showing map features #4 and 5. View from corner of First and Main Streets, camera facing west.
- B: 157 E. Main, map feature #2. Camera facing northwest.
- C: 205 - 207 E. Main, map feature #7 (non-contributing). Camera facing northwest.
- D: Guernsey-Sturdevant Building, 217 - 225 E. Main, map feature #9. Camera facing northwest.
- E: Streetscape, showing map features #7, 8, 9, and 10. View from mid-block on Main Street between First and Second, camera facing west.
- F: Monnett & Hamilton Buildings, 241 E. Main, map feature #11. Camera facing northwest.
- G: Dayton Depot, map feature # 14. Camera facing east.
- H: 303-305 E. Main, map feature #16 (non-contributing). Camera facing northwest.
- I: Columbia County Courthouse, map feature #19. Camera facing northwest.

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-
- J: Streetscape. View from corner of Second and Main Streets, camera facing southwest.
- K: Suffield's Furniture, 362 E. Main, map feature # 20. Camera facing southeast.
- L: Columbia Chronicle Building, 358 E. Main, map feature #21. Camera facing southeast.
- M: Hubbard Building, 350-352 E. Main, map feature #22. Camera facing southeast.
- N: 238 E. Main, map feature #31. Camera facing southeast.
- O: 230 E. Main, map feature #33. Camera facing southeast.
- P: Lockwood Building, 218 E. Main, map feature #34 (non-contributing). Camera facing southeast.
- Q: Streetscape, showing map features #34 (tallest building mid-block), 35, 36 and 37 (non-contributing), and 38. View from corner of First and Main Street, camera facing east.
- R: Ford Dealership/Shell Station, 176 E. Main, map feature #39. Camera facing southeast.



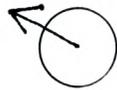
Contributing Features



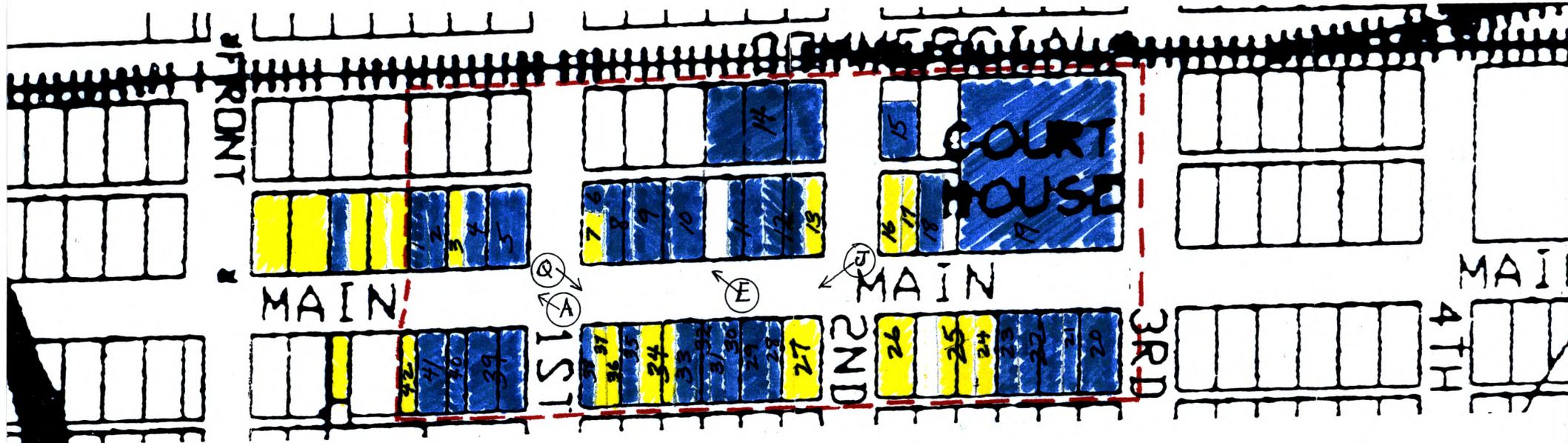
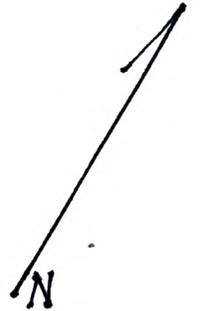
Non-Contributing Features



District Boundary



Streetscape Photo Views



**DOWNTOWN DAYTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT**