

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



980

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

1. Name

historic Townley, W.J. House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 782 N. 5th Street ___ not for publication

city, town Union ___ vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Oregon code 41 county Union code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Garald L. Kohler

street & number 782 N. 5th Street

city, town Union ___ vicinity of state Oregon 97883

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Union County Courthouse

street & number 1100 "L" Avenue

city, town La Grande state Oregon 97850

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1976 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The commodious 2½-story Queen Anne Style house built for Union mercantilist and orchardist W.J. Townley in 1894 is of frame construction, with a native stone foundation (and basement) said to have been quarried on Catherine Creek. It retains its turned posts and the lattice-work "screening" beneath the veranda. The veranda runs across the front (east) elevation of the house and wraps around the northeast corner. (Deposited in its corner is the safe which W.J. Townley brought from his Sanger mine office and located in his office in the residence.)

The main volume of the east-facing rectangular house is crowned by a high hipped roof in front and a lateral gable at the rear. Three massive brick chimneys break the slope of the roof on north, west and south sides. These are articulated in imitation of clustered flues, and originally had arcaded open parapets. That of the north chimney is still intact. Facade organization is asymmetrical and displays the multiplicity of gablets, variegated siding (both lapped boards and shingles with fancy butts), bays and balconies which typify the Queen Anne Style.

The east, or front elevation is dominated by a projecting section under pedimented gablet offset to the south side, a feature which is balanced by the veranda and balcony recess above it on the north. The front entrance in the center is marked by a pedimented gablet in the veranda roof, the tympanum of which is filled with foliate ornament in imitation of pargetry. The north elevation is dominated by the east slope of the north-south gable roof which extends from roof ridge to veranda. Under this impressive sweep of roof, a bull's eye window and oriel pierce the exterior wall. The latter, fitted with leaded stained glass, lights the entry stairhall. The west, or rear elevation is regular in organization and plainly finished at the second story level. The hip-roofed, one-story wing which had been Townley's office and an enclosed porch with deck and railing project at ground story level.

A small tool shed with low gable roof has been attached to the rear of the shallow office wing. It covers what was originally a basement entrance.

The interior spaces are intact and are finished with materials and trim characteristic of the period and style. Baseboards have a deep crown mold, and openings are trimmed with beaded surrounds with bosse-embellished corner blocks. Along with the stairhall landing with its tripartite window fitted with leaded stained glass, the numerous fireplaces with their ceramic tile surrounds and carved mantel pieces, some with overmantels, are outstanding features of the interior.

There are four gable-roofed outbuildings on the property which date from the historic period of use, but which are not individually significant. These are:

- 1) shiplapped milking barn (W.J. Townley originally employed a dairy man and a dairy maid)
- 2) shiplapped carriage house/garage (Townley's inscriptions of mileage logged remain today)
- 3) outhouse (refitted as a gashouse, but retains its original structure)
- 4) chicken house with vertical board exterior walls (concrete floor has been added, but appears to date with others)

While the property is only a portion of its former size, it retains its stately appearance at the town's western edge, where the openness of fields and farms predominates.

The immediate grounds contain many of the original evergreens, and some fruit trees survive. One striking feature of the front yard is a mountain ash tree, resembling somewhat a large bonsai, which was trained by W.J. Townley.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1894 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The commodious house completed for Williams James Townley on the western edge of the northeastern Oregon agricultural community of Union in 1894 is significant as one of two neighboring examples of Queen Anne domestic architecture built for related families and which are of such outstanding quality they have been regarded a satellite to a Union Historic District proposal now under consideration. The house proposed for nomination is significant also for its association with the early orchard industry in northeastern Oregon. In 1894 W.J. Townley planted on acreage adjoining his new house the first commercial orchard in the Grand Ronde Valley.

The 2.7-acre property proposed for nomination was originally part of an 80-acre tract belonging to Charles L. Blakeslee (born in New York in 1827), who first came to the Grand Ronde Valley in September of 1864. Blakeslee taught the first school in the Summerville district, the first school in the Cove district, and, in the Fall of 1865, held the first school in the Union district. The latter school, which existed for four years, was by subscription.

After purchasing his 80 acres on the west side of Union, Blakeslee erected a chop mill to serve freighters. His mill was the second project in the Union area to utilize water power, and he later added shingle saws, planers and lathes. This plant, on the southern half of the tract, was sold around the turn of the century to a Seattle lumber company.

The northerly 36 acres of the Blakeslee holding was acquired by William James Townsley in 1893. W.J. Townley was born at Briggsville, Wisconsin, on January 19, 1862, the son of Rev. Robert and Mary (Wilkinson) Townley. Rev. Townley was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and an ordained minister of the Church of England. Rev. Townley decreed himself a Universalist upon his departure for Boston in 1842 bearing a letter of introduction to Emerson. He preached in Boston for ten years before removing his family to Wisconsin.

W.J. Townley's younger brother, Sidney Dean Townley (1867-1946), distinguished himself in the fields of astronomy and geodesy. Upon receipt of his master's degree in 1892, Sidney Townley was awarded a Hearst fellowship at the Lick Observatory, where he worked mainly with variable stars, a lifetime interest. After the 1906 California earthquake, Dr. Townley was influential in the formation of the Seismological Society of America. He was also responsible for the painstaking assembly of the "Descriptive Catalog of Earthquakes of the Pacific Coast of the United States, 1769-1928." Dr. Townley was married to Frances Wright, daughter of Union's W.T. and Belle Mallory Wright. At the time of his death, he was Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and Geodesy at Stanford University, where he had been affiliated for a considerable length of time.

W.J. Townley himself came West from Waukesha, Wisconsin, the family home, in 1881, to work in the gold mines at Sanger (in the southeastern "panhandle" of Union County, now a portion of Baker County). He represented a Milwaukee, Wisconsin mining firm for some eight years. When the Panic of 1893 descended, Townley purchased the tract in northwest Union which included the residence and grounds that comprise this nomination.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Eastern Oregon Republican (Union, Oregon newspaper, 1910-1913 issues).
 The Oregon Scout (Union, Oregon newspaper, 1889-1898 issues as available).
 Illustrated History of Union and Wallowa Counties, Western Historical Publishing Co., 1902.
 The Centennial History of Oregon, Vol. III, (S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912).
 Interview(s) with Donald Gale (now deceased) and Miskell Bloom Gale.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 2.7 acres

Quadrangle name Union, Oregon

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	1
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 Zone

4	3	1	1	6	4	1	0
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 Easting

5	1	0	0	6	8	1	8	1	0
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 Northing

B

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

C

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

D

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Easting

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 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen Edvalson Miller

organization

date March 1980

street & number PO Box 516

telephone 503/562-5091

city or town Union

state Oregon 97883

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy SHPO

date August 15, 1980

For HCRS use only

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

W. Ray Juice
Keeper of the National Register

date 11-6-80

Attest: Emma Jane Saxe
Chief of Registration

date 11-4-80

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Townley (W.J.) House

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

In 1884 Townley married Mary Frances Gale in Wisconsin. Meanwhile, Mable Townley, the sister of W.J. Townley, married Alfred Isaac "Fred" Gale, the brother of Mary Frances Gale; thus the offspring of these two unions were double cousins.

The tract purchased by W.J. Townley was divided into two parcels, with Mable Townley Gale being deeded the west half, where a nursery was set up, and the east half going to her sister-in-law, Mary Frances Gale Townley. The properties were thus held in the names of the wives to protect against business reverses.

In 1894 W.J. Townley and his family were able to move into the newly completed residence. This was also the year that he planted the Grand Ronde Valley's first commercial orchard on his property, with some 35 acres of apple, peach, pear and Italian prune trees, as well as other non-fruit varieties. Nursery stock was advertised.

In 1897 Townley opened Townley's Busy Mercantile Store on Main Street in Union in the ground floor of the Masonic Lodge, now occupied by the US Post Office. Townley's Busy Store operated for nearly two decades, sometimes as a joint venture of the in-laws ("Townley-Gale's Busy Mercantile Store") and sometimes simply as Townley's.

Townley was influential in the establishment of a chapter of the Masonic Lodge in the city of Union as well as in the construction of its new building in 1898.

Townley also had a 1600-acre farm several miles northwest of his residence near Hot Lake. Here he raised stock and feed, with his interests including registered Kentucky and Percheron saddle horses, purebred Poland China hogs, and registered shorthorn cattle.

The Townley-Gale influence on the community has been most significant, perhaps, in the steady supply of fruit it has provided for both out-of-hand consumption and the home canning engaged in by many Union homemakers through the generations. Some employment was provided in the Townley fruit packing shed in the earlier part of the century. The shed was located several blocks further south of the nominated property; it is no longer standing.

Valley residents continued to depend on the Townley-Gale orchard long after its originators were gone. Most of the orchard has been presided over for many years by Donald R. Gale, son of "Fred" Gale and Mable Townley Gale, who carried on the fruitgrower tradition of his family until his recent death.

Donald R. Gale (1898-1979), was born and died in the neighboring Gale House and carried on the tradition of his uncle W.J. Townley, growing quality fruit. His son, William R. Gale, who has substantial holdings in the Hood River, Oregon area, is a fifth generation orchardist.

On the southeast "notch" cut out of the original property (not a part of this nomination) stood large show barns where W.J. Townley kept his favorite horses. A long driveway looped into the property from the road to the south, so that those parties who had business with W.J. Townley could alight directly at his office door on the southwest portion of the residence.

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1980

Continuation sheet Townley (W.J.) House Item number 9 Page 1

Commencing at a point on the west side of the county road, 30' west of the NE $\frac{1}{2}$ corner of the south half of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 13, Township 4 South, Range 39 East, of the Willamette Meridian; running thence west 366'; thence south 300' more or less, to the north line of the county road; thence east along the north line of said road a distance of 166', more or less, to the SW corner of land conveyed to J.N. Scarbrough by deed recorded in Book 92, Page 228, Records of Union County, Oregon; thence north 100' to the NW corner of said land of J.N. Scarbrough; thence east along the north line of said land of J.N. Scarbrough, a distance of 200', more or less, to the west line of the county road, thence north 200' along the west line of said road to the place of beginning.

SUBJECT TO easement for pole and electric transmission lines as granted to Eastern Oregon Light and Power Company by deed dated July 10, 1929, recorded in Book 88 at Page 501, Deed Records of Union County, Oregon.

Situated in the county of Union, State of Oregon (Tax Lot 300).