

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received MAY 22 1985  
date entered JUN 20 1985

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

**1. Name**

historic Graves-Fisher-Strong House

and/or common Strong, Edward Webster, House

**2. Location**

street & number 391 East Jackson Street N/A not for publication

city, town Monmouth N/A vicinity of Fifth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Polk code 053

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Virginia Wolgast

street & number 391 East Jackson Street

city, town Monmouth N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97361

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Polk County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Dallas state Oregon 97338

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1985  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office  
525 Trade Street SE

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date           N/A          

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### GENERAL

The Edward Webster Strong House, at 391 E. Jackson Street, in Monmouth, Oregon is a locally outstanding example of the Stick/Eastlake style of architecture of the late Victorian period in Oregon. It is two stories in height with full attic and apparently was erected by May of 1892. The house embodies the distinctive characteristics of its stylistic type: varigated siding, sunbursts, porches, bays, irregular roof and a profusion of stylized repeating ornament including straight and curved pieces, scrolls, rosettes on front facings, decorative wooden cutouts added below the window frames and a semi-flared chimney (rare in the Monmouth of today).

Edward Webster Strong, a long-time mill owner, formerly of Corvallis, Oregon bought the property in 1907. Possibly he built the house. Certainly he resided there until his death in 1933; his widow until her death in 1949. Sanborn maps show a house of similar configuration was standing on the site by 1892. However, local tax lists do not reflect improvements to the property until the early twentieth century. In any event, the common understanding is that the house was constructed in 1891 or 1892 for Glenn O. and Mary Ann Graves. Monmouth seems to have no more distinctive example of the Stick/Eastlake style standing today.

#### EXTERIOR

The house is representative of the Stick/Eastlake style of architecture and has been restored as closely as possible to a photograph known to have been taken by 1914 by a Mr. Comstock. A variety of roof lines, punctuated by gables meeting at right angles and three chimneys have been retained. The roof ridge lines were crested with ironwork terminating in finials at an earlier time, but have not been re-created at this time.

The exterior of the house is divided by horizontal and vertical applications of boards accenting the corners and mid-divisions of the house. Curved pieces accent the upstairs windows and scrolls and cut-outs have been added to accent the lower windows. An owner in the 1950 s removed part of the length of a back porch and added a porch towards the front when apartments were created. The restoration process removed the additional porch and returned a door back to an original window.

The sunbursts decorating the gable ends were duly restored and retained but there was additional decoration between the lower and upper story windows that had been removed by a previous owner which has not been restored at this time.

The woodshed was earlier shown on the Sanborn map in a different position and may be even older than the house. Restoration was difficult because of the non-alignment of measurements.

The house faces north with a side porch facing east and is situated on a corner lot one block from the main east-west street in Monmouth. Jackson Street was a very busy street when the I & M Railroad operated between Monmouth and Independence from the 1880s into 1916. The parcel is further described as Lots 1 through 4 and a portion of Lot 5, Block 3 of Stanley's Addition to Monmouth, Polk County, Oregon.

While restoration of the house to its historic appearance, as documented by an early photograph, was generally true to the spirit of the Stick/Eastlake style, it should be noted that the present roof cover is shakes, rather than shingles, which were used originally.

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INTERIOR

When the Wolgasts first purchased the home for restoration only the interior wall studs were in place. The previous owners had taken much of the lath and plaster, sliding doors, light fixtures and other items from the exterior had been removed. Virginia Wolgast tells the story:

As we approached the front porch there were four electric meter boxes for the four apartments--all very exposed. The front door was a half-glass with 8 small panels--all finger painted to keep out the eyes of the curious. As we stepped in we had to walk very cautiously around the holes in the flooring where someone had sawed out a piece for repairing underneath the house. The staircase was intact but had been boxed in at the top to add another two feet and a place for a closet was included. The stair railing was hanging from the ceiling to the floor and all the balusters were gone and the newell post was missing. All these have been replaced with replicas of the time period.

The house had all the lath and plaster removed so that we could see through most of the rooms. Partitions were in place but only the studs were there throughout the house, and it was a dirty skeleton of a Victorian structure.

We knew pocket doors had been in the parlor and dining room because the tracks were still evident inside the walls. We found pocket doors for both. Downstairs the front hall opens into the parlor with a small door and the corner fireplace has a mantel that was shipped from Knoxville, Tennessee in 1908 by the Strong family.

The kitchen area was very spacious only to have more uneven and bad floors. The back porch had been enclosed and was retained as a laundry room, a breakfast room and a walk-in pantry. A back porch was added to this west side and the posts were all hand cut and a trim design to match the front and side exterior was placed. Lattice was added around the bottom.

New flooring had to be laid almost throughout the house because of heavy damage. Much of this "new" flooring came from the old Methodist Home on Center Street in Salem. We made use of every possible space and added a 1900 style china cabinet in the kitchen area. We made many trips to Ritter's in Salem to find enough of the interior trim wood that needed to be added. It was my job to strip and refinish the trim and pull all the stray nails.

There is one bedroom downstairs that is at the southeast corner near the kitchen. The three bedrooms upstairs are all very spacious and there is a large walk-in attic to the south. There is a total of 2,376 square feet in the house.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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** 1891/1892 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Edward Webster Strong House, erected between 1891 and 1892, is located at 391 E. Jackson Street in Monmouth, Polk County, Oregon. The surface handling of the design, possibly derived from pattern books, is in the Stick/Eastlake style, while the massing of the house is more characteristic of the Queen Anne style. No architect or builder has been recorded. Originally constructed for the Glenn O. Graveses, the house was ultimately deeded to Edward Webster Strong in 1907. The house is locally significant under Criterion "c" as the distinctive example of Stick/Eastlake style architecture. It has been restored by the current owners. Occupying a prominent corner lot adjacent to Monmouth's main commercial street, the Strong House displays character-defining elements such as two-story hipped main volume, interesting gable projections, slanted bays, applied stick work, and Eastlake-style ornament in the gable ends.

The house is situated a block from Monmouth's Main Street, but was in the 1900s a very central and visible house to those who rode the Independence & Monmouth Railroad between the late 1880s into 1916. The narrow-gauge tracks went straight east down Jackson Street, near the townsite of Talmadge (and the one-mile horse track) into Independence, covering the 2½ miles for the nominal fee of 5¢.

The line was financed by substantial citizens of the two towns and died with the advent of hard surfaced roads about 1916. Monmouth continued to be a "temporary residence" town for those who were seeking a higher level of education for their offspring. In reading through the federal censuses available for 1870, 1880, 1900 and 1910, there are many references to "boarders", "students" and "at school" listed with families not of the same surname.

Business opportunities were not readily available in Monmouth and it is one of only two towns remaining in Oregon known as a "dry town." The tradition is of long standing, perhaps as long standing as Independence has been known as a "wet town." Only "tea-totalers" lived in Monmouth. In some families, poppa stayed on the farm while momma came to Monmouth to set up a temporary residence in rented or purchased property.

The Strong House seems to have been used for this purpose for most of its years, with some drastic changes in the interior during the '40s and '50s, by conversion to apartments.

The architect, if there was one, is unknown and it is quite possible that the house was built by a carpenter-builder and based on one of the many pattern books then available. In looking through a micro-film of the Westside published in Independence, there was an advertisement for house plans available from the Boston Globe in the 1890s.

The owners have located an early photograph of the house believed to have been taken about 1914. The photographer perched on the water tower next to the house and captured the view of the west side of the house. It is probably the same photographer who took the picture reproduced in at least three publications about the town of Monmouth showing the Oregon Normal School campus and Campbell Hall.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Monmouth, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	0	4	8	1	7	6	0	4	9	6	6	0	5	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Edward Webster Strong House is situated on Lots 1-5 of Block 3, Stanley's Addition to Monmouth, Polk County, Oregon, excepting the West 20 feet and the south 1 foot of the east 80 feet of said Lot 5.

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Addie Dyal

organization N/A date December 10, 1984

street & number 235 15th Street NE telephone (503) 363-4389

city or town Salem state Oregon 97301

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

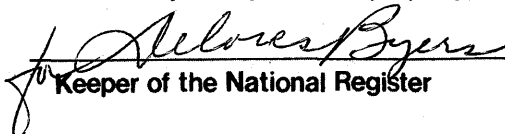
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date May 15, 1985

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

 Entered in the National Register date 6-20-85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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David Truman Stanley became the president of Christian College in 1882 just as the school was making the transition to a "Normal School" status under Oregon State legislation. He and his wife Mary B. filed an amended plat map of Monmouth Lot #4 in the Polk County courthouse on October 12, 1888. He had been listed in the 1881 Oregon - Washington Gazetteer as the county surveyor. A deed dated August 8, 1891 shows the sale of the property (probably without a building) by D. T. Stanley and wife Mary to Mrs. G. O. Graves for \$200. The associated plat shows the location to be where the house now stands. The 1892 Sanborn map also shows the house in position, with the exception of an out-building which was not then attached to the house as it now is.

The Graves family is of early day origins in Yamhill and then Polk County. They farmed property that had been in the Glenn O. Burnett family from 1850. Glenn O. Graves was named for his grandfather Glenn O. Burnett, who was associated with the Christian Church in Oregon and California. Bethel College was later joined with the Christian College at Monmouth in 1865. The site is located in the Bethel area near McCoy and is listed as an historic site.

The obituary of Charles B. Graves gives some of the early history:

Charles B. Graves--One of the First Men Who Crossed the Plains. Monmouth, Or, Jan. 23--The death of Charles B. Graves, a pioneer of 1846, occurred here this morning, after a protracted illness from pneumonia. The deceased was the son of the late Col. James Graves of Sheridan. He was born in Ky. in Jan. 1824, whence he moved to Missouri with his parents when he was 8 years old. He crossed the plains and settled first in Yamhill County and removed to Polk County in 1864, where he has since remained. In 1851, he married Miss Mary H. Burnett, dau. of the late Rev. Glenn O. Burnett and niece of Peter Burnett. He was first Territorial Governor of Colorado, and the first president of the Pacific National Bank of San Francisco. The children of the deceased are J. L. Graves of Portland; T. J. Graves of McCoy; Glenn O. Graves of Monmouth; Mrs. Kertson, wife of the editor of the Medford Mail; and Misses Nettie, Mary and Diasy Graves. The remains will be removed to McCoy where the funeral services will be held Monday. Weekly Oregonian, Jan. 29, 1892, 3:3.

Glenn Owen Graves (the son of Charles B.) moved to Portland by 1900 and died in 1937. He is buried in the Bethel Cemetery with his wife and father and mother, but the day and month of death could not be found in order to find an obituary.

Lack of city directories, missing runs of newspapers, and a 1900 census without street names has hampered the search for data. The Oregon/Washington business directories have helped to pin down some of the residents, but they are incomplete.

The next owner of the property was Sarah E. Fisher, who was a widow by July 17, 1898, when she purchased the property from Glenn Owen Graves and wife Mary Ann. The Fisher family lived in Dallas for the 1880 census and had several children of college age by the time Mr. Fisher was elected to the 1889 Oregon Legislature. It is surmised that the

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family was in Monmouth for educational purposes because of the following statements which were made as part of the widow's petition in 1899:

That at the time of the death of her husband, the family consisting of your petitioner and three minor children were living in a rental house; that your petitioner had no other home for more than one year thereafter; that she had no other means of support for herself and said minor children than the money and property belonging to said estate; that she had expended large sums in the support, education and domiciling [of] said children. Polk County Probate file #824

To further complicate matters, a son of Charles G. Fisher and Sarah E. is named Charles F(ranklin) Fisher and he married a Sarah Eulalie (last name unknown). Sarah E. (Johnston) Fisher died in Monmouth on January 1, 1903, before her husband's estate was fully probated and the son, Charles "Frank" Fisher was noted as "buying the home place and moving in same" in the newspaper of April 9, 1903. It is this family that Clares Powell (1896-1978) remembers as living in the house and it "had always been there." Iris Powell (wife of Clares) has a calling card of Mrs. Charles Franklin Fisher given to Clares' mother when Clares was born.

It is evident by the obituary of a son of Charles G. Fisher and Sarah E., Ralph B., that most of the family had died or dispersed from the Monmouth area by 1908. The only exception was a sister, Henrietta Fisher, who married Harold Haley, a son of a long-time carpenter in Monmouth.

The next family to own the property was Edward Webster Strong and his wife Belle, who signed a deed dated July 29, 1907. Edward's obituary in the Oregon Statesman, June 8, 1933, 3:3, is revealing:

FUNERAL SERVICES HELD FOR STRONG-- Was Retired Businessman at Monmouth; Neared 57th Wedding Date. Monmouth June 7--Funeral services were held here Saturday for Edward Webster Strong, 77, a retired business man of Monmouth who died at the family home. He had lived in Monmouth for 26 years.

Mr. Strong was born Dec. 1, 1855 at Rainier. His father died when the boy was five, and he was reared by an uncle W. G. Gean of Portland. At an early age he entered the lumber business and for many years was owner and operator of the Corvallis Lumber Mill.

In 1907 he moved to Monmouth and was engaged in the hotel business for a time. June 22, 1876, he was married in Portland to Miss Isabella Watts. They would have celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary this month. Surviving are Mrs. Strong, and nine children: Harold, Gresham; Frank E. and Robert of Monmouth; Marie Strong, Silver City, New Mexico; Charles Wesley and Mrs. Ida Siegel, Portland; Mrs. Edna Barnell, Springfield; Delbert J., Placerville, Calif; and Albert H., Oakland, Calif. Also 18 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

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Because the Strong family were the longest residents of the house, most of the "old-timers" around Monmouth have referred to the house as the Strong House, and it is for this reason that the house is commonly known for the one-time Monmouth hotel operator. A comment in Belle Strong's obituary suggests the house was built by the Strong's in 1907, but evidence points to the fact that they probably were engaged in a remodeling project after the home was purchased. The following in the Polk County Observer for November 6, 1908 seems to point in that direction:

E. W. Strong is having a fine modern fireplace installed in his residence.

This chimneypiece was restored in the corner of the parlor by Lester and Virginia Wolgast. It still bears the manufacturer's mark.

Mrs. Strong lived in the house until she died in 1949 and owners after them had turned the house into apartments by the 1960s, and continued on this course until the Wolgasts bought the house in 1980, at which time they began the job of restoration. Lester Wolgast died before the project was completed in 1983.



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Bibliography and Resources:

Sanborn Map of May, 1892 (original located at OSU)  
1900 Census of Polk County, Oregon  
1880 Census of Polk County, Oregon

Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims, Vol. I, #570

Newspapers as noted throughout

Mrs. Iris Powell, 222 N. Broad St., Monmouth, Oregon 97361

Oregon Geographic Names, by Lewis A. McArthur, 4th edition

Stations West, by Edwin D. Culp

The O.C.E. Story, by Ellis Stebbins

"Great Events Which Made Polk County" pub. Feb. 25, 1976, by Sun-Enterprise Newspapers

The Centennial Story of Monmouth, Oregon, by Edna Mingus, 1956

Metsker Map of 1929