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NATIONAL REGISTER

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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 an 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 The Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
other names/site number Groom Agency

#### 2. Location

street & number 225 East Main Street  not for publication  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, 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.)

Mary M. Sampson 9/29/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

~~Entered in the~~  
National Register

Date of Action

Melous Byer 1/12/93

Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Name of Property

Columbia County, WA  
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	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business, professional,  
general store, restaurant

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling  
WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Tin, tar

other Cast iron, Stucco, Wood, Glass

**Narrative Description**

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

Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Name of Property

Columbia County, WA  
County and State

**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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1882 - c. 1918

**Significant Dates**

1882

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Robert F. Sturdevant, Dennis C. Guernsey

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown (see text)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Name of Property

Columbia County, WA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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5	1	2	9	8	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

Dayton Original Town, W. 14½ ft of 10 & NESly 45 ft of lot 11, blk. 18

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Sally R. Reynolds

organization Consultant, Planning & Historic Preservation date July 6, 1992

street & number 7015 East 44th telephone (509) 448-0311

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99223

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Daniel A. & Virginia M. Butler

street & number P. O. Box 442 telephone (509) 337-6802

city or town Waitsburg state WA zip code 99361

**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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Description

The Guernsey-Sturdevant building occupies a single lot on the northwest side of Dayton's Main Street between First and Second Avenues. Built in 1882, its style is Italianate, a popular form for the commercial structures then rising along main streets across Washington State. Two stories high, the brick building was originally constructed to accommodate offices above commercial uses at street level. Flanked by two 1880's brick buildings of similar style, the Guernsey-Sturdevant building's predominant features are its segmental-arch windows, stuccoed surfaces, and cast iron elements. The primary facade has undergone some alterations over time. Basic structural features and some architectural detail are original. In addition to replacement of street-level glass storefronts, and interior modification for commercial uses, the cornices were lost early. Second floor interior rooms were partially altered first to provide hotel space, and later, apartments. Recently restored, the building is in excellent condition and missing elements have been replicated.

Dayton's grid street system is laid out on a diagonal to conform with the course of the Touchet River Valley and Patit Creek. Main Street runs northeast to southwest. From the Guernsey-Sturdevant building's central location, the Columbia County Courthouse can be seen one block northeast. Dayton's Historic Depot is a half-block away. Extending from Main Street, to the northwest and southeast, are Dayton's two residential historic districts, their right-of-ways lined with mature trees. The Italianate Style of the Guernsey-Sturdevant building and its accented windows are repeated on neighboring Main Street facades, in the Courthouse, and in residential neighborhoods.

Sixty feet wide and seventy feet deep, the Guernsey-Sturdevant building stands two stories high over a full basement with partial dirt floor. Its foundation and walls are constructed of Dexter brick and, as was common with this soft brick, the exterior walls are stuccoed. The roof is flat, behind a plain parapet. Originally, at

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Columbia County, WA

## Description (continued)

street level, the building had three bays of equal width. The two side bays had recessed entries with glass doors and glass display cases above paneled bulkheads. The center bay consisted of a single display window to the left of a recessed store entry; to the right, glass doors accessed a stairway to second story offices. A small triangular pediment with dentils capped the entry, emphasizing the slight asymmetry of the facade. Above the display windows were glass transoms with vertical muntins, separated from the stuccoed walls of the second level by a projecting cornice with paired corbels at the ends. At bulkhead corners, slender cast iron columns with Corinthian capitals supported the cornice. Cast iron pilasters with Corinthian capitals and patera at either end of the facade are original. The bases are stamped "Walla Walla Foundry". At the time of renovation, one column remained, allowing replication of the missing pieces. The stairway and its entry, which separated the business interests of the two initial owners, at some point was moved to the right end of the building, and remains there. The left storefront has been restored in its original configuration. The storefront's center display windows have been arranged to retain a doorway opening at the original stairway entry while keeping the existing stairs.

At the second level, piers support the segmental arches of the nine window openings. Tall and narrow, the windows are recessed, with pronounced hoods and keystones. Over the original stairwell, the window is divided by a muntin to accommodate an interior wall. Framed in wood, windows are one-over-one sashes and are original. At the building's ends, the pilasters are continued, in horizontally banded brickwork. A deep cornice that once marked the roofline has been replicated, along with brackets, modillions, and frieze panels. Constructed of wood and metal, evidence suggests it was destroyed by fire. A metal balustrade, with "Guernsey/1882/Sturdevant" spelled out in its rails, once decorated the roofline above the cornice, but was removed early, as was a curved pediment located on the upper cornice over the double window. Side walls are shared with adjacent structures.

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Columbia County, WA

## Description (continued)

The rear elevation, facing northwest on an alley, is stuccoed. The surface is plain, with segmental arch windows and plain surrounds, at both the first and second levels. Two plain doorways access the store spaces.

Newspaper accounts indicate the first floor interior originally had three commercial spaces. The left and center spaces were connected by an archway and served a single retailer. On the right of the stairwell, the original tenant operated a saloon. The current restoration retains original wall separations.

A series of offices initially occupied the second level. Left of the stairway were nine offices, and to the right, a suite of rooms incorporating four offices. The upstairs, with its ten-foot-high ceilings and transom lights intact, has been adapted to accommodate four apartments. Several interior walls, of plaster with service style wainscoting and deep baseboards, are unchanged; on others, original material has been reused or replicated. Original wood paneled interior doors, with transoms above, have been retained.

## Statement of Significance

The Guernsey-Sturdevant building, constructed during Dayton's most formative era, is historically significant because it is the best remaining example of the commercial buildings that once lined Dayton's Main Street. Since its recent renovation, it stands alone in accurately conveying the characteristics of the Italianate Style that marked Dayton's most important commercial structures. It is also significant for its association with two important Touchet Valley business and civic pioneers. Dennis C. Guernsey was one Dayton's earliest and most enterprising businessmen. Robert F. Sturdevant, an attorney, served both his region and the State during their political coming of age.

Located at the juncture of the Touchet River and Patit Creek, Dayton, Washington lies 30 miles northeast of Walla

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Walla, between the Palouse Hills and the Blue Mountains. On a favored transportation route, Dayton served as a stopping place for area Indian tribes before the arrival of the white man. When exploration of the northwest began, the Lewis and Clark expedition camped here, and over time, it became the site of wagon train, stagecoach and railroad line stopovers.

The first homesteaders came to the Valley in the late 1850's, when hostilities with the native Americans ended. Jesse N. Day arrived and purchased a 160-acre homestead in 1864. In addition to farming, he maintained the stagecoach station located there. Encouraged by the arrival of William Kimball of Walla Walla, with whom he opened a general store, he filed the town's first plat in November of 1871. Jesse Day then persuaded Sylvester M. Wait, owner of Waitsburg's mill, and William Matzger, to open a flouring mill. Other enterprises followed. Before the end of the year, Dayton grew from two to over two dozen homes.

Never a true boom town, Dayton nonetheless experienced a series of important growth periods, beginning with the decade of 1870. When Columbia County was designated in 1875, Dayton was named the county seat. A fire department was started, telegraph service set up, and the first newspaper began publication. A City Hall was constructed in 1878. By the end of the decade, Dayton had incorporated under the Laws of the State and elected its first public officials, and established the State's first graded school system east of the Cascades. During this period, Dayton's housing stock was represented by simple frame dwellings exhibiting folk victorian and gothic revival influence. Commercial buildings were mostly frame structures.

The decade of the 1880's saw Dayton evolve into a mature community with established political, social, and commercial institutions. The architectural character of the town's Main Street and residential areas evolved. Challenged by the smallpox epidemic of 1881, and a series of fires culminating with the great downtown fire of 1882,



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Columbia County, WA

## Statement of Significance (continued)

Dayton residents persevered, organizing a health district and rebuilding Main Street with more durable brick structures. The arrival of the Oregon Rail and Navigation Company in 1881, one of two rail lines that would eventually serve Dayton, opened shipping opportunities. By the end of 1882, Dayton was recognized as the third largest city in Washington Territory, with a voting population of 778.

Commerce flourished with flouring mills, lumber mills, banks, and numerous small businesses. Brick buildings increased from ten in 1882 to seventeen in 1883. Dayton's Dexter brickyard, on the east edge of town, supplied the brick. In 1884, the Columbia National Bank, one of Washington State's oldest banking institutions, was founded by Levi Ankeny. Henry Weinhard's nephew, Jacob Weinhard, who had come to Dayton in 1880, was developing his brewing and malting business. Several of Main Street's buildings represented Day, Weinhard and Guernsey interests.

Prosperity brought a change in architectural styles as many of Dayton's present-day commercial structures rose, and some of its finest residences appeared. That change in style and quality is best expressed in the Columbia County Courthouse. A tract of land for the courthouse was donated by Jesse Day in 1875. County voters rejected a proposal to build a \$7000 courthouse in 1882, preferring to see the County continue using rented offices. In 1886, the Territorial Legislature authorized counties to issue bonds for courthouse construction and Columbia County voters quickly approved a \$40,000 appropriation for a new courthouse. Completed in July of 1887, the Italianate structure featured an ornate cupola. The contract for stone, brick and concrete work was awarded to A. J. Dexter. The architect was William H. Burrows, Dayton's first architect. Arriving in the late 1870's, the first building he designed was Dusenbery and Stencil's brick store on Main Street. One of his most memorable buildings was the Dayton Hotel, completed in 1891. Fire-damaged in 1949, it is now severely compromised. Although no complete record of his work exists, he undoubtedly was

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Statement of Significance (continued)

responsible for many of Dayton's Italianate Style commercial and residential buildings.

Work began on the Guernsey-Sturdevant building in May of 1882. Built simultaneously with the Day building to the southwest, the structures replaced frame buildings destroyed by the fire that had ravaged much of downtown Dayton one month earlier. A. J. Dexter and L. W. Kribbs received the contracts for the brickwork and carpentry, the same businesses that would construct the Courthouse four years later. Building progress was closely followed with frequent reports in the weekly Columbia Chronicle. Brickwork on the Guernsey-Sturdevant building was completed in September and interior finishing was done in October and November. A new fourteen foot sidewalk was put down in front in November and tenants began taking occupancy.

The southwest portion of the building was owned by Guernsey and the northeast by Sturdevant, the stairway representing the dividing line. Guernsey leased his street level space to the general merchandise company of Oppenheimer and Smith. Sturdevant's storefront space was leased to saloon keeper Charles McClary, who went to "great expense" in "fitting up one of the most elegant places in town." The saloon had walnut and marble appointments, and a billiard room with electric call bells, reputedly the first such innovation in the northwest. Upstairs, Guernsey's nine "handsome" offices were "all plastered and hard tinned and supplied with glass doors fitted with figured glass." Sturdevant's office space included a suite for his own professional use. Among the other tenants were the Dayton Journal office, the District Court clerk, an attorney, and a commercial school.

Although Guernsey, whose trades in real estate were numerous, sold his interest in the building in 1887, Oppenheimer continued to lease store space. Charles McClary also maintained his lease despite a controversy over liquor sales to Sylvester Wait's minor sons that led to arrest and trial of McClary for incendiarism.

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Ultimately, one of McClary's bartenders pleaded guilty to attempting to burn Wait's mill in retaliation for his charges of illegal liquor sales. Sturdevant maintained his legal offices in the building while he practiced law in Dayton.

No records indicate who the architect was for the Guernsey-Sturdevant building, but the style and detail bears great similarity to features found on Dayton's Courthouse, from the segmental arch windows, the cornice brackets, and the brickwork of the corner piers to the ornamental balustrade of the roof. Whether he was directly or indirectly responsible for all of the numerous commercial and residential structures of Italianate design, William Burrows unquestionably left his mark on Dayton, and the Guernsey-Sturdevant building is a prime example.

One of the oldest commercial streetscapes left in the State of Washington, Dayton's otherwise exceptional Main Street has suffered from major alterations to its most important structures. To the right of the Guernsey-Sturdevant building, the Weinhard building's right half has been removed. On the left, the Day building has suffered a similar loss. Across the street and to the east, the Dayton Hotel, once a centerpiece on Main Street, has had its second and third stories removed and its primary facade modernized. Among Dayton's two-story buildings, only the small red brick immediately opposite the Guernsey-Sturdevant building, and Dingle's, one-half block to the southwest, retain a major portion of their architectural character. Like the Guernsey-Sturdevant building, Dingle's is Italianate, but its cornice has been removed and contemporary plate glass has replaced original storefronts. The restoration of the Guernsey-Sturdevant building provides Main Street with a historic commercial counterpoint to its newly restored courthouse. Regardless of the introduction of new material to replace missing features, today the Guernsey-Sturdevant building stands apart as the purest example of the commercial buildings that marked Dayton's Main Street during its era of growth and prosperity.

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Dennis C. Guernsey, born in Wisconsin in 1845, came to Columbia County in November of 1871, and took charge of the "Red Store", one of Dayton's earliest businesses, for Jesse Day and his partner, William Kimball of Walla Walla. The following year, he built his own store and leased it to fellow entrepreneurs Sylvester M. Wait and William O. Matzger. One of Dayton's pioneer businessmen, he invested in numerous real estate enterprises and with his brother, F. W. Guernsey, played an active role in local and regional government. When the town of Dayton was organized in 1876, Guernsey was elected President of the first Board of Trustees. In 1878, when Dayton was incorporated as a city under the Act of 1877, Guernsey was elected to serve as Dayton's first Mayor. He was appointed to serve on the first health board, organized in response to the smallpox epidemic in 1881. Married, he continued to be involved in real estate into the early 1900's.

Robert F. Sturdevant, a native of Warren County, Pennsylvania, grew up and entered the practice of law in Wisconsin. He was twice elected Prosecuting Attorney for Clark County in Wisconsin before coming west. He arrived in Washington Territory in 1873, stopping first in Olympia. In 1874, he moved to Dayton and opened his law practice there, assuming a prominent role in public life. When the town of Dayton refiled its incorporation papers in 1879, Sturdevant was chosen Mayor. On a regional level, he was elected Prosecuting Attorney of the first judicial district of Washington, consisting of all of Eastern Washington east of the Cascades except for Klickitat County. In 1889, he was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention, and represented Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia Counties in drawing up the State's Constitution. In that year, he also won election as the first Superior Court judge for those counties, serving in that capacity for seven years. By 1918, he had returned to Olympia, but maintained his personal ties to Dayton. He and his wife had two daughters.

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Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

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- Polk Directories and Gazeteers  
Columbia Chronicle. 1892.
- Dayton Chronicle. 1985, 1986.
- The Spokesman-Review. 1887-1900, 1985-1987.
- Manuscripts:
- Ankeny, Elizabeth. History of Dayton. ca. 1955. Dayton Memorial Library Collection.
- Compau, Nancy Gale. A Brief History of Dayton. Excerpt from Dayton Historical Survey. 1985.
- Photographs:
- Dayton Historic Depot Collection.  
Butler, Virginia

Boundary Justification: The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the original 1882 Guernsey-Sturdevant Building.

AUG 03 1992

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The Guernsey-Sturdevant Building  
Columbia County, WA

Photographs, black/white

Photographer: Sally R. Reynolds

Date of Photos: July 1992

Original negatives: Washington State Office of Archaeology  
and Historic Preservation

Photograph and #

- 1 Southeast (primary) elevation, looking west
- 2 Southeast elevation, looking north
- 3 Northwest (rear) elevation, looking southeast
- 4 Southeast (primary) elevation, entry detail
- 5 Second floor hallway, looking south
- 6 Second floor apartment, looking southeast
- 7 Second floor apartment, looking east
- 8 Main Street streetscape, looking southwest
- 9 Main Street streetscape, looking northeast