UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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AND/OR COMMON	Trevett/Nunn House	)		, ,
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# 7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Trevett/Nunn House occupies a 70' x 100' site in King's 2nd Addition, originally a part of Daniel Lownsdale's Donation Land Claim. In 1852 another pioneer, Amos Nahum King, bought 513 acres from Lownsdale in Portland's lower west hills, an area that became a fashionable residential district during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While changes have occurred, the King's Addition area retains much of its historic turn-of-the-century character.

Built in 1891, the Trevett/Nunn House was among the earliest Colonial Revival designs by Whidden & Lewis, Portland's most distinguished architectural firm during the years 1889-1910. It was also the first of a unique group of three adjacent Whidden & Lewis Houses on N. W. Flanders Street. Next door to the west is the C. F. Adams House (1904-05), and adjacent to it, the 1908 Bates/Seller House, a recent nominee to the National Register (see map and photo No. 6). Across Flanders Street to the south is another distinguished late 19th century house built by the Noble family and later remodeled by architect A. E. Doyle, a protege of Whidden & Lewis.

### STRUCTURE - PLAN - INTERIOR

Construction materials and methods were typical of the period: brick foundation walls; concrete basement floor;  $2 \times 4$  stud walls in a modified balloon frame; and wood floor joists and roof rafters. The first floor structure consists of three north/south bays with two rows of  $8 \times 8$  posts supporting  $6 \times 12$  beams. Framing lumber throughout is Douglas Fir.

The full basement has a large open furnace room, utility and storage rooms, and a bedroom and bath originally used by the chinese house boy. One of the store rooms has an original cast bronze gas light fixture -- the only one remaining in the house.

The Trevett/Nunn House was used as a single family residence until 1959 when it was purchased by the present owner from the Nunn estate and converted into three apartments. Unlike many other house conversions in the area, the alterations were designed to maintain as much of the original fabric as possible. Original interior finish work is mostly intact and includes, on the first and second floors: oak floors; baseboards with top and shoe moldings; plaster walls (most covered with grass cloth during the 1959 alterations); plaster ceilings, some coved; and a picture mold. Typical doors are painted fir with stacked panels - five panel on the first floor and four panel on the second. Doors are trimmed with a classical casing at heads and jambs. Windows have

(See continuation sheets)

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

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a panel under the sill and casing identical to the door trim. Floor to ceiling height at the first floor is 10'-6'', and at the second - 9'-6''.

The ell shaped plan, symmetrical across the front, has a large central entrance hall originally flanked by the living room on the west and the dining room on the east, each with a slant bay facing the front (south). The original living room has been altered to create a sitting room, in the front bay, a bedroom at the rear, and a bath and closet between. Original sliding doors connect the bedroom with the entry hall. On the west wall of the bedroom is an original fireplace with 4 x 4 white glazed tile surround and hearth, and classically detailed wood pilasters, mantel, and frieze with festoons and bead mold border. The north wall features a triple window with original bottle glass.

Across the entry hall is the present living room where the space and detail is unchanged from its time as the dining room. Centered on the north wall is another original fireplace with 4 x 4 polychrome - green, blues and brown tile surround and hearth in a foliage pattern, and a classical wood frame with fluted pilasters, a frieze with fluted side panels and a plain center panel with bead and reel molding. Atop is the corniced mantel with egg and dart and dentil courses. Fireplace tiles were brought from Italy by the Trevetts. To the north is a pantry/dining area, and in the ell beyond, the kitchen. Much of the original pantry and kitchen cabinetwork is intact, including a solid 24" wide varnished fir countertop.

Aligned with the entry hall at the rear of the house is the original threequarter turn main stairway. This stairway was walled off in 1959 and is presently used by the second and third floor tenants who enter the house through the original back door. The open stairway features paneled newel posts, a formed rail of dark stained fir, turned balusters, and fir treads and risers. The balustrade continues around the opening at the second floor. A leaded stained glass window is located above the first landing. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The second floor plan is organized in a manner very similar to the first floor. Off the large central stair hall, which duplicates the entry hall below, were four bedrooms and two bathrooms. Mounted on the south wall of the hall is a large gilt frame mirror that belonged to the Nunn family. At the front (south) center a bathroom has been converted to a kitchen. To the east, the original large master bedroom is used as a living room and is essentially unaltered. West of the hall were two bedrooms. The front bay room is used as a den and is separated from the rear bedroom by a closet and bathroom, enlarged in 1959.

The present living room and northwest bedroom have fireplaces with carved marble facings and mantels that were also added in 1959. Marble trim in the living room fireplace came from the original First National Bank building. Tile hearths in both rooms are original.

At the rear of the hall a doorway leads to the ell over the kitchen which housed a bedroom, now used as a study by the third floor tenant, a bathroom, and the back stairway which extends from the back entry at the first floor to the attic apartment. The stair has square newel posts with a cap molding, simple handrail, and 2 x 2 balusters, all of fir.

The attic which once housed the servants quarters -- three maids and a butler -has four bedrooms, a kitchen and a large "studio" room, and is basically as originally designed. Floors are varnished fir with a plain painted baseboard. Walls and ceilings are plaster -- ceilings slope from the outer walls to the central flat portion which is 10' high. Original skylights are intact. Fir doors have four stacked panels as at the second floor, and a plain 1 x 4 casing.

The unusual studio room features a central projecting fireplace of roman brick and a  $4 \ge 4$  beige tile hearth with black tile border. The fireplace is framed in fir with classical detailing -- three-quarter round corner pilasters with bead and reel mold adjacent to the brick, and a mantel with a cornice profile and dentil course. Above the mantel a plaster panel is similarly framed with classical trim which terminates in a cornice molding

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at a panelled soffit. The soffit which extends beyond the panel above the mantel also has a cornice on top of which is a small balustrade with shaped rail, turned balusters, and corner posts with finials. In the recessed spaces flanking the fireplace are oval windows with plain fir casings. The north wall is dominated by a large 21 light studio window.

#### EXTERIOR

The organization of the symmetrical front (south) facade reflects the interior plan -- a central entry bay flanked by slant bays that extend to the roof. Across the front is a full width porch, three steps above grade, with balcony above. Porch floor and stairs, originally of wood construction, have been rebuilt in concrete. The balcony is supported by four sets of spaced 6 x 6 posts repeating the three bays of the facade. Posts have trim at the caps and at the rail line where the rail profile is continued. Space between paired posts is paneled below the rail and filled with an open lattice in a diamond pattern above. Porch rail balusters are 1 x 2s tapering upward on the north/south axis to 1 x 1. Above the porch posts is a frieze board with a simple classical molding and a projecting cornice at the balcony level.

The balcony balustrade features paired square posts with finials aligned with porch posts below and a shaped rail and balusters same as at the porch. When the present owner acquired the house in 1959 the balcony balustrade was missing. It was accurately restored in 1968.

Centered at the first floor is a recessed entry framed with a classically shaped casing featuring a bead and reel molding, a detail used in several interior and exterior trim elements. The dark stained paneled fir door has a leaded glass panel with clear and obscure glass in a diamond pattern with linear border. The lower part of the glass panel is rectangular 'and contains the original house number "777", in gold leaf. The upper part is a semi-circle set in from the edges of the rectangle. Surrounding the door are side lights and transoms also of leaded glass similar in design to the door panel.

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The slant bays at both stories have a double-hung window in each face, six lights over two and a classical casing similar to the entrance opening. Typical windows on the entrance opening. Typical windows on the north, east and west walls are the same design. Second floor front windows have original shutters.

Above the second floor windows is an architrave molding, a wide plain frieze, and a cornice, all continuous around the building. The architrave molding features the bead and reel motif, while the cornice, which terminates as the roof eave, has a large ovolo molding and a dentil course. Between the front bays the projecting roof soffitt is paneled.

Siding on all walls is of cedar clapboards, 4-1/2'' to weather. Corners are trimmed with 7 x 7 corner boards that extend from the first floor water table to the roof soffitt.

The truncated hip roof has two symmetrically placed pedimented dormers at the front. Dormers are covered with cedar shingles, and have a single double-hung window, three lights over two. Similar dormers are located on the north and east. The original cedar shingle roofing is presently covered with asphalt shingles.

At the west is the large dormer housing the attic studio, also with cedar shingle walls. The gabled dormer roof ends with a narrow flat surface which returns to the main roof. Along the flat eaves, turning the corners, and terminating at the rake is a balustrade similar in detail to the front balcony except corner posts and balusters are turned. Oval windows flanking the brick chimney have a casing similar in profile to typical windows with a console bracket "keystone". On the north wall of the dormer is the large studio window previously described.

Except as noted above, the Trevett/Nunn house retains all original elements, and is in very good condition. A wood framed corrugated plastic canopy has been added over the back entry.

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#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

8 SIGNIFICANCE

The Trevett/Nunn House is an excellent and early example of Colonial Revival residential design that was introduced in Oregon by architects Whidden & Lewis, Portland's most distinguished architectural firm during the years 1889-1910. Completed in 1891 the Trevett/Nunn House is the oldest Whidden & Lewis house still standing, pre-dating by a few months the Milton W. Smith house, a recent nominee to the National Register.

Contributing to the significance is the unique setting on N.W. Flanders Street with three adjacent Whidden & Lewis houses -- all being well maintained or restored -- that display the range of the firm's designs in the Colonial Revival mode over a period of 17 years.

Also of significance were the activities of the pioneer Trevett and Nunn families, particularly in the 1930s when they were in the forefront of the civil rights and world peace movements.

#### WHIDDEN & LEWIS

William M. Whidden and Ion Lewis were both trained at M.I.T., commonly known at the time as "Boston Tech." After graduation, Lewis worked in the Boston office of prominent architects Peabody & Stearns. In 1882 he formed a partnership with Henry Paston Clark (Clark & Lewis), also in Boston, a firm that became well known for their residential and hotel work.

Following graduation from M.I.T., Whidden went to Paris where he spent four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Upon his return in January 1882, he joined the New York office of McKim, Mead & White, where one of his earliest projects was Henry Villard's Portland Hotel. Later that year McKim and Whidden came to Portland to oversee the beginning of construction. Whidden stayed on to supervise the work until late 1883 when Villard's financial empire collapsed and work on the hotel stopped at the second story level. Whidden returned to the east where he formed a partnership with William E. Chamberlin. In 1888 the unfinished hotel was acquired by a local synidcate and Whidden returned to Portland as architect in charge of the project. A year later

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

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Whidden was visited by his friend and classmate Ion Lewis, who stayed on and joined Whidden in partnership.

The arrival of Whidden & Lewis also marked the arrival of current eastern styles, and architecturally speaking, Portland had, "come of age". In addition to their Colonial Revival residential work, the firm introduced the Second Renaissance Revival in public buildings (Portland City Hall, a National Register property, 1892-95) and the calssical treatment of office buildings (Hamilton Building, 1893, and Failing Building, 1900, both listed on the National Register). While their practice waned somewhat after 1910, Whidden & Lewis continued to receive important commissions until 1920 when Whidden retired.

### TREVETT AND NUNN FAMILIES

Theodore Brooks Trevett was born in Bath, Maine, in 1832, the oldest of three children born to Theodore Sayward Trevett. As with many young New Englanders of the era, he took to the sea at an early age. On January 25, 1849, a day prior to his ;first "round the Horn" voyage to the west coast from Boston, Trevett received his citizenship papers which 1. describe him as, "age 16, 5'-4-3/4" tall, brown hair and gray eyes ...". Trevett returned with his ship to Boston and made another trip the following year aboard the U.S. Navy ship Massachusetts where he served as captain's clerk. The ship arrived in San Francisco on July 8, 1850. Subsequently he served as the first purser on the steamer Mint, pioneer steamer craft on the Sacramento River.

1. Oregon Historical Society Manuscript Collection - Mss 854

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Trevett's father and family followed him to the Bay Area in 1851 and eventually settled in Umattilla Co., Oregon.

Little is known of T.B. Trevett's activities during the decade after his service on the steamer Mint, but it is believed he came to Portland and worked for Henry Failing, pioneer merchant and industrialist (a photograph of Henry and Theodore B. Trevett was published in the Oregonian in 1909 with the caption. "taken in the early fifties " In any event, Trevett found his way to Ft. Simcoe, W.T., in the early 1860s where he was employed as a clerk with the indian agency

While at Ft. Simcoe, Trevett met his future wife, Mary Melissa Bancroft, daughter of Ohioan, Ashley A. Bancroft, who was Indian Agent at Ft. Simcoe during the Lincoln Administration. (Mary Melissa's older brother was Hubert Howe Bancroft, who became the pre-eminent scholar of early west coast history, and for whom the Bancroft Library at the University of California is named. His multi-volume History of the Pacific States includes the History of Oregon, volumes 29 and 30.) Mary Melissa was born in Granville, Ohio in 1838. For a midwestern woman in the mid 19th century, her education was outstanding -- attendance at the Granville Frmale Seminary, and Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut

"Brooks" Trevett and "Liss" Bancroft were married in 1864 Soon after they moved to Portland where Trevett found employment with Corbett & Failing. Portland's leading hardware and iron business. (Trevett stayed with Corbett & Failing until 1893 when he joined Honeyman, Dehart & Co., a prominent builders hardware firm.) Within a few years two daughters were born, Katherine Lucy in 1866 and Emily Bancroft in 1869. Following her own experience, Mrs. Trevett saw to it that the girls received the best education possible. Beginning in the 1870s the girls were schooled in Germany. Subsequently they attended their mother's alma mater in Farmington

The Trevetts lived in a variety of Portland apartments until **1884** when they acquired a house on N.W. Glisan Street In 1890 Trevett commissioned Whidden & Lewis to design a house at 777 (now 2347) N W. Flanders Street

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A year leter the family moved in "Brooks" Trevett was to enjoy his new home for a brief 10 years as he died suddenly on March 7, 1901 at age 68 Trevett is buried at Lone Fir, Portland's pioneer cemetary.

Mother and daughters continued on at the family home, and maintained their church (Trinity Episcopal) and community activities Lucy K was a teacher at Portland Acadamy and her sister, Emily gave music lessons at the house (In later years both sisters taught music at the house )

In 1902 Emily married prominent physician, Dr. Richard K. Nunn, a native of England who established his Portland practice in 1888 The newly weds made their home at the Flanders Street house Dr. Nunn, educated at Dublin University, was an "occulist-aurist", and a faculty member at the University of Oregon Medical School In 1915 Nunn joined the Medical Corps of his native country and served nearly six years in British and French hospitals A few weeks after his return from Europe, Dr. Nunn died while visiting his brother's (William H.) country estate, "The Wilderness" near Estacada. Surviving were his wife Emily and a son Richard. Together with Lucy K. and Mrs. T.B. Trevett life went on at 777 Flanders. Mrs. Trevett died in 1933 at age 95

The Trevett sisters maintained their active community life while also conducting music lessons at the house. Lucy Trevett was Secretary of the Consumers League of Oregon, the local branch of a national organization, which among other activities was concerned with women's rights, particularly better conditions for working women. In the mid 1930s the sisters were among a hardful of socially prominent civil libertarians who formed a local committee that eventually became the Oregon Affiliate of the ACLU. They were also involved in the formation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. These and other activities brought them to the attention of the notorious "Red Squad" an unofficial division of the Portland Police Dept. (actually run by Governor Charles H. Martin) whose purpose was to watch "subversives". maintain a "blacklist". and operate a clearance system for industrial workers The "Red Squad" was exposed and discredited in 1938 by the ACLU with support from the local press.

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Certainly one of the most memorable events in the lives of the Trevett sisters occurred in 1940 when Paul Robeson, the "Black Othello", attended a reception at the house following a concert at Civic Auditorium. Of special delight to the assembled guests was that Robeson sang at the reception.

In 1950, William H. Nunn, brother-in-law of Emily B T. Nunn, who was then 89 years old and a widower, moved into the Flanders Street House. William Nunn passed away in 1956, a year after Katherine Lucy Trevett's death. Nunn left his entire estate, valued in excess of \$300,000, in a trust fund to benefit the Alice B. Nunn Memorial collection of antique silver and goldware at the Portland Art Museum. Nunn also left a manuscript of his impressions of Portland and early Portland people with the Trust Department of the First National Bank which is not to be opened until the year 2000. It should be of great interest to local historians

Two years later Emily Nunn died, thus ending 57 years of continuous family occupancy at "777 Flanders". The present owner purchased the house from Emily Nunn's estate.

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-The Oregonian, March 9, 1901 (obituary on T.B. Trevett who dies March 7, 1901).

-Oregon Journal, March 9, 1901 (obituary on T.B. Trevett).

-The Oregonian, November 21, 1909 (photo of Henry Failing and T.B. Trevett, taken in the "early fifties").

-The Oregonian, November 28, 1909 (photo of Mary Bancroft Trevett, taken in "the fifties).

-Oregon Historical Society Library, Manuscript Collection, Mss 854 (( letters and diaries of Theodore B. Trevett, his wife, Mary Melissa (Bancroft) Trevett, and their daughters, Katherine Lucy Trevett and Emily Bancroft (Trevett) Nunn )).

-Oregon Historical Society Library, Biographical Index (Emily B. Nunn, T.B. Trevett, Katherine Lucy Trevett).

-Portland City Directories

-Portland Sanborn Map, 1889 corrected to 1898.

-The Oregonian, August 18, 1920 ((obituary on Dr. Richard K. Nunn, husband of Emily B. (Trevett) Nunn )).

-The Oregonian, May 17, 1956 (obituary on William Henry Nunn, brother of Dr. Richard K. Nunn).

-American Civil Liberties Union Handbook, Portland, 1972.

-Unpublished Manuscript: Job List of Whidden & Lewis, Architects, compiled by Herb Fredricks. Oregon Historical Society Library.

-Vaughan, Thomas, Ed. Space, Style and Structure, Building in Northwest America, Portland, 1974, Vol. 1 (re: Whidden & Lewis).

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**CONTINUATION SHEET** 

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-Oregon Journal, November 17, 1933, p. 15 (obituary on Mrs. Mary Melissa Bancroft Trevett).

-Conversation with Mrs. Julia G. Ruuttila, 6/25/79 regarding reception at house for Paul Robeson.

-Notes prepared by Arthur Spencer on the Trevett/Nunn families - Oregon Historical Society Library.

-Conversations with Mildred Steinmetz, owner since 1958.